

Policy mapping: Women's economic empowerment in Kenya



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Women's economic empowerment in Kenya

Report by Masheti Masinjila

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About the GrOW East Africa initiative

The Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women (GrOW) East Africa initiative seeks to spur transformative change to advance gender equality in the world of work. It is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett

Foundation, and Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC). Building on the success of the multi-funder GrOW program, GrOW East Africa aims to enhance gender equality and the economic empowerment of marginalized women in five countries of focus: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Uganda. It will foster new in-country knowledge, innovations, and solutions to inform policies and programs addressing unpaid care work, sex segregation in labour markets, and women's employment.

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Cover photo

(iStock) Young African Maasai woman in traditional clothes in studio. Close up portrait

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Acronyms

AAWORD	Association of African Women for Research and Development	CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
AGPO	Access to Government Procurement Opportunities	CSO	Civil society organization
AWSC	African Women's Studies Centre	EOWE	Enhancing Opportunities for Women's Enterprises
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action	FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
CCGD	Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development	FEMNET	African Women Communications and Development Network
CGEE	Centre for Gender Equity and Empowerment	GAME	Global Agribusiness Management and Entrepreneurship centre

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GDP	Gross domestic product	PSO	Private sector organization
IGERD	Institute for Gender Equity Research and Development	SDfG	State Department for Gender
IDRC	International Development Research Centre	SEED	Socio-Economic Empowerment Directorate
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
MTP	Medium Term Plan	SMEs	Small and medium enterprises
NGEC	National Gender and Equality Commission	WEF	The Women Enterprise Fund
NGO	Non-government organization	WEE	Women's economic empowerment
NPGD	National Policy on Gender and Development		

Executive Summary



According to the World Bank, Kenya has the potential to be one of Africa's success stories because it has a dynamic private sector, a skilled workforce, and a progressive constitution that buttresses a structural reform agenda and devolves government functions. But to realize this potential and achieve rapid, sustained growth rates that will transform the lives of ordinary citizens, Kenya must address challenges that include poverty, inequality, and weak governance. Women suffer well-documented inequality, and there is increasing evidence of feminized poverty and marginalization of women even as Kenya demonstrates considerable potential to grow its economy and strengthen its middle-income country status.

COVID-19 presents further challenges to the goal of empowering women in the economy: the service sector, where women dominate, is hardest hit, with job losses also heavy in the transport, aviation, tourism, hospitality, manufacturing, and agriculture sectors. Women are being affected by the shrinking of allocations for social safety nets and maternal health care services amidst increased demand.

Restrictions on mobility, meanwhile, are eroding women's fundamental freedoms and protection from violence, including in the domestic sphere.

About this paper

This study provides a policy mapping of women's economic empowerment (WEE) in Kenya, with a focus on policies and practices related to unpaid care work, workforce gender segregation, and women's collective action and agency. It was undertaken with a view of refining the Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women (GrOW) East Africa research agenda, which aims to add value to ongoing WEE initiatives. The study is conceived from a *feminist and intersectional perspective* that advocates identifying and addressing structural barriers to women's economic decision-making power in all interventions that seek to empower women economically. This paper results from a desk study that utilized published sources of information on the topics of concern, sourced largely online but also from hard copy publications. Document review was supplemented by interviews with five gender research faculty members at University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University and representatives of four civil society organizations working in WEE-related domains.

Core policies relevant to WEE

The core policy for WEE is the National Policy on Gender and Development (NPGD), which is operationalized through the State Department for Gender (SDfG) as the main institutional mechanism for oversight and implementation of gender policies in all national government sectors and county governments. SDfG has set up the Socio-Economic Empowerment Directorate (SEED) to coordinate implementation of WEE, but it largely falls short of expectations. It only manages women's enterprise funds and other allocations that are characteristically small and not properly contextualized within other existing macro- and micro-economic and policy frameworks to ensure better targeting of women. For example, the yet-to-be-fully-exploited mainstream empowerment policy, Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO), gives women, youth, and people with disabilities preferential access to 30 percent of government procurement at county and national levels. But women's access to AGPO is hampered by unrealistic institutional procedures and requirements that are exactly the same as for more established business sectors that do not need affirmative action. This has exposed the policy's "favoured status" to a high risk of abuse by better-off companies and individuals using proxies among marginalized groups.

WEE policy gaps

Our mapping finds that—despite considerable progress by the Kenyan government with regards to policies, implementation mechanisms, and finances for WEE—there are still worrying gaps. The current reformist Constitution guarantees equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex or gender and is supported by laws and policies favourable to closing the gender gap, including through diverse affirmative action measures. Though commendable, these efforts are not well integrated with the overriding national goal of increasing gross domestic product (GDP) which underpins the operational national economic policy framework: Vision 2030 and the Third Medium-Term Plan (MTP3) which covers 2018-2022. As a result, WEE initiatives often operate in silos as appendages of mainstream economic development programs with little coordination from the critical financial and economic development planning and implementation centres such as State Department for Planning under the National Treasury.

There are no specific policies that directly address workforce segregation and women's collective action, but Vision 2030 and MTP3 indirectly address these issues in their overall objectives and some specific ones.

Workforce segregation

Domestic and work conditions for women show little substantive improvement, even in the aftermath of the 2007 Kenya Employment Act that advocates for equal opportunities, pay, and benefits regardless of gender. Women's representation in key

The current reformist Constitution guarantees equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex or gender and is supported by laws and policies favourable to closing the gender gap, including through diverse affirmative action measures.

The National Policy on Gender and Development (2019) aims to balance the social and economic roles that hinder women's participation in entrepreneurship and to reduce the burden on women through investments in social services, infrastructure provision and social protection and by encouraging shared responsibility within households.

employment sectors shows significant disparities with men's. Decision-making at senior management and board levels in medium and large enterprises in the formal sector is still male-dominated. Part of the problem has been the slow enactment of laws to address specific inequalities along with supportive policies and mechanisms to guide implementation.

Women's collective action

All the government WEE initiatives utilize women collectives as a form of security to enable women to secure loans rather than using the prevailing asset-based security commonly used by banks and other financial institutions. They also use women-focused civil society organizations (CSOs) as the main focal points to mobilize participation. The stated expectation is that women shall collectively learn and support one another to borrow and utilize low interest loans to start or/and expand their businesses to a level where their investments will increase employment opportunities in their sectors.

Unpaid care work

With respect to care work, Kenya does not have a coherent policy framework. Policy implications for care work – which include creating supportive work environments, incentive schemes, regulatory requirements, appropriate financial support for care, and monitoring care impacts on women and the economy – are mentioned haphazardly in several policy documents. The National Policy on Gender and Development (2019) aims to balance the social and economic roles that hinder women's participation in entrepreneurship and to reduce the burden on women through investments in social services, infrastructure provision and social protection and by encouraging shared responsibility within households. Other relevant policies include those that mandate free primary education and free maternal and child health services. Sessional Paper No. 4 on Energy (May 2004) prioritizes connecting rural households to an electric grid, which may reduce the care burden on women by facilitating labour-saving technologies. In the work place, the Health Act (2017) requires all employers to support women employees to breastfeed. Most of these policies are not implemented fully, however, because of insufficient budget allocations and the resulting facilities are inaccessible to most women, including the poor.

Programming to address WEE

Uthabiti Africa, incubated by World University Services Canada, seeks to accelerate the provision of affordable, quality childcare services in urban Kenya through systematic policy-based partnerships between county governments and care centre operators. It endeavours to address the current gap where parents are paying for mostly unregulated, poor-quality childcare services that do not receive any of the technical, material, and financial resources available to county governments. This may make child care a viable social enterprise for sustainable investment while freeing mothers to leave their children at quality day care while they increase their participation in economic activities. GROOTS seeks to reduce the care burden on grandmothers by improving their livelihoods through forming care groups, providing training and savings initiatives, and providing a platform from which they can engage with development actors and government ministries about their needs.

At the national level, SDfG is establishing Biashara Bank to provide coordination in the delivery of affordable financing and support for business development. The move is beset with design and operational risks, but it is an opportunity to revisit financial support to WEE programs in a systematic manner, using evidence from experiences so far.

At the regional level, the 50 Million African Women Speak program provides the most comprehensive opportunity for mass documentation of women's enterprises in the

Africa region. It will provide a statistical data base on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) led by women and share knowledge on women's access to financial and non-financial services. Country management teams have the leeway to influence the initiative in ways that suit particular national circumstances and interests. Kenyan researchers have the opportunity to influence the data collection and utilization in a manner that may even have a multiplier effect on women's participation in the Africa Continental Free Trade Area.

Among non-state actors, Safaricom's (private sector) policies and practices that help support employees with children offer an opportunity to upscale implementation of workplace policies and laws that ease women's unpaid work responsibilities and boost their career development. The Kenya Private Sector Alliance Gender and Youth Sector Board is mandated to monitor how members are addressing issues of care in the workplace. This could provide an entry point for interventions with the private sector. Various CSOs have implementable and cost-effective innovations that could be also be scaled up through partnerships with university-based research institutions and government departments implementing WEE initiatives.

Monitoring and evaluation are not mainstreamed in Kenya's WEE programs and projects. The lack of baselines makes it difficult to set realistic targets. Systematic documentation is critically inadequate, so the results of these initiatives with regard to the actual economic empowerment of women is hard to discern. Success is most often measured quantitatively: amounts of money disbursed, repayment rates, and number of women "reached". These outputs fail to measure the specific empowerment value of a given initiative. While the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics annual Economic Survey now includes a chapter on gender and empowerment of women, it still focuses more on disbursement numbers than impacts. Impact evaluations of programs and interventions do not exist, making it difficult to point to empirical evidence of what works, what does not, what is scalable, and what knowledge gaps remain.

Research entry points

This study identifies a number of promising entry points whereby action research may support the development and implementation of more effective programs and policies to support WEE. These include:



Increasing access to financial services for women and women-owned businesses



Connecting and raising the visibility of women-owned businesses



Evaluating and scaling innovations and integrating them into the WEE national ecosystem



Strengthening women's local economic initiatives



Ensuring the health, wellbeing, and safety of women workers



Addressing the impact of COVID-19 and other shocks

Research collaboration through multisectoral partnerships with policymakers, program designers, and implementers can also help the Kenyan government and its partners tailor WEE initiatives to better meet the needs of poor and marginalized women, and adopt more inclusive and culturally appropriate approaches to empowering women.

1. Introduction



Gender and economic inequality must be tackled simultaneously to realize WEE. Feminist intersectional approaches call for addressing the social norms, laws and economic policies, and other structural barriers that restrict women's choices and opportunities.

This study aims to inform the second phase of the Growth and Economic Opportunities for women (GrOW) program – an action research initiative to advance gender equality in the world of work in East Africa. Jointly funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), GrOW East Africa seeks to foster partnerships with public and private sector actors to identify and scale successful solutions to address the continued segregation of women in low productive and low paid jobs and the burden of unpaid care work. It will deepen available evidence to support policies and interventions related to women's economic empowerment (WEE) and the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 of promoting gender equality.

The goal of this study is to provide expert input on where the GrOW program can add value in Kenya. It identifies who will likely champion some of the work going forward, and opportunities for leveraging relevant policies and initiatives for greater impact in the Kenyan context. Specific objectives are to:

- Identify and appraise the key existing and planned policies, programs, and interventions that aim to achieve and sustain WEE with regards to unpaid care, sex segregation, and women's collectives and agency;
- Assess the potential value addition of a research program on WEE in Kenya, and identify innovations that are critical, the challenges of conducting research on WEE issues, and barriers to policy and practice uptake of research;
- Identify key organizations that can contribute to shaping a future research agenda and/or champion some of the work going forward;
- Map and profile key policy stakeholders and intermediaries working on gender equality and WEE issues who can play an important role in linking evidence to policy and/or practice;
- Assess the most promising spaces for policy/program impact within prevailing governance structures and socio-economic trends; and
- Outline key principles that researchers should consider to maximize uptake in policy and practice.

1.1. Research methodology and limitations

This study is conceived from a *feminist and intersectional perspective* that advocates addressing structural barriers to women's economic decision-making power in all interventions that seek to empower them economically. It recognizes that women experience multiple and intersecting disadvantages due to their race, class, or religion, for instance, and are especially vulnerable to gender-based violence at home and in the workplace. Fundamentally, gender inequality and economic inequality are inextricably linked.¹ Gender and economic inequality must be tackled simultaneously to realize WEE. Feminist intersectional approaches call for addressing the social norms, laws and economic policies, and other structural barriers that restrict women's choices and opportunities. This involves supporting women's collective organizing and agency, connecting them to economic opportunities, and tackling inequalities through education, training, and access to relevant information and technology.

The research consisted mainly of a desk study, using published sources of information on topics of concern, which were sourced largely online but some hard copy publications were also reviewed. Selection of sources was mostly guided by their alignment with the three priority WEE domains: unpaid care work, sex segregation, and women's collectives and agency.

Desk reviews were supplemented with five interviews that targeted faculty members of the gender research institutions at University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University.

¹ March, Candida, Ines Smyth, and Maitrayee Mukhopadhy. "A Guide to Gender Analysis Frameworks." Oxfam. 1999.

The interviews were unstructured conversations, intended mainly to follow up on information obtained related to their research. Information was also sourced on the research environment within the institutions and related conditions of work. The conversations yielded some responses on what these faculty members considered research priorities and the added value (if any) of potential multi-sector policy research partnerships between them, CSO policy advocacy institutions, and organizations implementing WEE initiatives. We were also interested in gleaning information on current research initiatives, such as any studies on WEE that are at the inception stage.

Similar discussions were had with the heads of four CSOs, mainly to clarify their current activities, since online information may not be updated regularly. They were asked about the role of policy research in their work, activities of their respective organizations, and what they see as their successes and challenges with regard to the WEE roadmap in Kenya so far. These conversations assisted in categorizing the organizations and institutions working in different thematic and programmatic areas of WEE.

Key definitions and source selection

Source selection was started by deriving working definitions for key concepts and domains to guide the research, starting with a working definition for WEE as *the process by which women access their right to economic resources and decision-making power*. Caroline Moser prioritizes understanding women's triple role, including their reproductive (unpaid care and household maintenance activities), productive (income-generating), and unpaid community management roles.² She also highlights understanding and fulfilling women's practical needs and strategic interests as the means to achieve empowerment.

Sarah Longwe outlines five levels of empowerment: welfare, access, conscientization, participation, and control. *Welfare* refers to the ability to meet one's basic needs; *access* refers to one's ability to utilize resources; *conscientization* results from developing awareness of one's own rights; *participation* reflects one's ability to associate with others and influence decisions; and *control* entails the ability to manage one's own affairs and make independent decisions.³ UNDP recommends approaches that transform legal, policy and social norms to create a sustainable impact on WEE.^{4,5}

Unpaid care work was defined as activities done mostly within the domestic household and community space for the reproduction/maintenance of human livelihoods and welfare. Unpaid care work also includes activities that nurture others, such as taking care of children and adults and tending to the elderly and the sick. It is usually not monetized and not valued as a direct contribution to gross domestic product (GDP).

The research sought to understand how Kenyan policies seek to highlight gendered labour market segregation, such as by using sex or gender disaggregated data for planning purposes and, in particular, implementing affirmative action for women

2 Ibid.

3 Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala. "Experiencing and Coping with Change: Women-Headed Households in the Eastern Gangetic Plains." Australian National University. April 2014. https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Longwes-womens-empowerment-framework-adapted-from-March-et-al-1999_fig2_280614125

4 United Nations Development Programme. "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". Accessed September 2020. <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development.html>

5 United Nations Development Programme. "Equal Rights. Equal Contributors". Accessed September 2020. <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development/people/gender-equality.html>

The research sought to understand how Kenyan policies seek to highlight gendered labour market segregation, such as by using sex or gender disaggregated data for planning purposes and, in particular, implementing affirmative action for women through special projects intended to boost their livelihoods and employment.

through special projects intended to boost their livelihoods and employment. Sectors where the work force is largely dominated by women – often not by design but possibly influenced by specific policies – were also considered.

Information on women’s collective action in Kenya was sought from sources that focused on indigenous (Kenyan community-based) mechanisms of female mobilization and cooperation, historical experiences of women under colonialism and in the post-colonial period, and that relate to the present reality of corporate globalization, in relation to business and trade.⁶ Large numbers of women, for example, working in the flower industries that supply global markets usually organize as workers in such establishments.

Sources of information were mainly publications related to the main study areas of WEE. Government policies were prioritized over others because they are public and because they influence private sector and CSO policies. We sourced existing research largely in the form of findings contained in government and CSO reports, and from analytical pieces by academics, journalists, and development practitioners. The author was able to access the official government documents such as laws, policies, project reports, and some information on progress from reports of official statements by senior government officials, and relied on reports produced and published by non-state actors, including from development partners who had provided the resources to fund program activities. Online media reports allowed us to include relatively current information on government interventions.

Policy selection

The author first sought to select policies elaborated under the international (UN) treaties and protocols which had been ratified and adopted within Kenyan legal policy frameworks, as required by the law. These included:

- policies on, or directly addressing, unpaid care work, sex segregation, and women’s collectives and agency;
- policies that partially or indirectly address unpaid care work, sex segregation, and women’s collectives and agency;
- policies that relate globally to the achievement of women’s empowerment and that form a general conceptual framework for discussing WEE; and
- policy pronouncements by key policymakers, such as Kenya’s head of state, that were later translated into project objectives and guidelines for government-led interventions to achieve WEE. Some of these pronouncements lack an accompanying policy document or did not undergo the required protocols in the policy formulation and implementation chain; resulting activities have nonetheless been financed and implemented by relevant government departments.

The aim was to determine to what extent these policies contributed or attempted to contribute to WEE within the study parameters or, alternatively, what they inform us about the WEE-related intentions and actions of government. Policies that showed more purposive elaboration on the areas of study and that had led to tangible initiatives (planned or implemented) were selected for further analysis and discussion. We also sought literature on review and evaluation of various policies, by different types of stakeholders and scholars, along with appraisals by government departments and ministries on what they saw as the achievements or weaknesses of the policies.

6 Steady, F. *Women and collective action in Africa: Development, democratization, and empowerment, with special focus on Sierra Leone*. Palgrave Macmillan US, 2006.

Stakeholder mapping

The mapping of stakeholders was guided by first determining who is a stakeholder in relation to WEE in general and to the specific study domains. For this study, stakeholder referred to any person or collective who interacted with, influenced, or was affected by WEE. It also referred to organizations that play a well-defined role in pushing the objectives of WEE or benefiting from the formulation, pursuit, and realization of WEE. This included organizations and individuals who have something to gain or lose from the actualization of WEE, as individuals and/or as collectives. Collectives included organizations or constituencies, such as women as a whole or sociocultural/demographic groups within the category of women. Regarding organizations, stakeholders included government policy-making and implementation ministries, departments, and agencies; government-supported (public) research institutions or departments; the private/for-profit sector; and civil society (nonprofit) organizations. The common denominator for selection was being positioned in one way or another within the WEE policy chain, including as: policymaker, policy implementer, researcher or data/evidence provider, research/policy analyst, policy advocate, or as a policy beneficiary/target “constituency”. These stakeholders were then identified and weighted in relation to their role within the policy chain.

The roles of different stakeholders were further broadly categorized into mostly (government agency) “duty bearers” on the supply side and “rights holders” on the demand side. Non-state actors, such as development partners, found themselves on the supply side (though not as duty bearers) when they complimented government sector resources to meet the needs of rights holders and when they served as catalysts in accelerating the realization of rights by those on the demand side. The study sought to highlight differences in the ideological commitment of these stakeholders to facilitating the protection and realization of empowerment rights by women. CSOs that demonstrated ideological clarity and commitment as well as effectiveness in policy formulation, advocacy, and implementation of WEE have been highlighted, while those that tended to lean more towards a charitable focus on the realization of basic needs are given less attention.

Identifying gaps and opportunities

Gaps and opportunities were derived from analysis of the WEE policy chain and mapping and analysis of the prevailing situation and challenges. We endeavoured to identify gaps at each stage of the policy chain in relation to the intended purpose and/or feasibility of delivering intended results. At the policy formulation level, we looked at what problem the policy was intended to solve and its subsequent proposed remedies. The author also concerned himself with how the problem was identified, who was involved, and in what capacity and at what level. Regarding the policies themselves, the focus and feasibility of the projected actions and initiatives to tackle the problem were considered, along with any discernible results. How policies were implemented by different stakeholders also helped pinpoint gaps in the chain. Gaps were derived from discernible shortcomings in policy implementation, in terms of whether they satisfied the intended purpose. However, the weighting of gaps was in relation to results achieved for the ultimate stakeholders—women who were to be economically empowered within the scope-of-study domains. We aimed to identify gaps in the adequacy of policies with regards to their formulation, implementation, and results as well as pinpointing the absence of policies applicable to outstanding WEE problems.

There is increasing interest locally in women's potential contributions to GDP and how participation led by "affirmative measures" can level the economic playing field by reducing structural discrimination and making amends for past injustices.

Opportunities were identified in relation to the unmet potential at all stages of the policy chain. This included financial, human, and technical support resources in institutions such as universities' women's and gender studies departments, CSOs, and private sector organizations (PSOs). Ongoing policy and project initiatives by governments alone or in partnership with other agencies carried more weight because of the goodwill and resources already committed to implementation, but also on the basis of efficacy, scope and sustainability. Initiatives that attract, offer or are potentially open to multisector partnerships, institutional learning, and scaling up were preferred.

The policy focus was also partly influenced by the government of Kenya's conceptualization and operationalization of WEE initiatives in specific departments of line ministries with a clear-cut mandate and performance indices. It was also convenient that the current study should delve deeper into the "last mile" actualization of this government WEE agenda (i.e. its downstream impact on the ground). There is increasing interest locally in women's potential contributions to GDP and how participation led by "affirmative measures" can level the economic playing field by reducing structural discrimination and making amends for past injustices.

Limitations

The extent of stakeholder consultation and interviews with key informants for this study was limited by time constraints and compounded by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted in-person contacts.

A major limitation regarding research institutions was our inability to interrogate more deeply their policy research output, in terms of what they have produced and the quality and relevance of their studies. We relied mainly on their information about who they are and what they do. Other evaluations or independent appraisals (if any) of the research programs of these institutions were not considered. This was not possible within the time and space envisaged but also due to the inadequacy of "desktop" information available. Face-to-face interviews with researchers to discuss the interface between their private work and their institutional research projects were also not able to be conducted. Some individual researchers have published work relevant to WEE outside their organizational position. It was therefore not possible to attribute such publications to the research institution.

The downside of using reports generated by organizations about their own activities is that they may be subjective: there was no opportunity for independent verification to confirm the information. In the case of government speeches and reports identified through media sources, the full-text versions of the source material could not always be accessed. Where possible, the full reports were sourced, but in a number of cases these were not available on government websites or in hard copy.

Another challenging issue was the absence of comprehensive policies and related documents on substantive areas such as care work and unpaid care work in particular. The author sought and considered all policies that make reference to thematic areas such as unpaid care work and gathered information relevant to areas of interest to the study rather than just search for specific care work policies. In a very few cases, the texts of laws enacted to address inequalities were consulted to infer policy intentions. Such was the case with a Health Act that gave guidelines relevant to unpaid care work and addressing structural handicaps to women's participation in employment.

1.2. Women's economic and social status in Kenya

Labour force participation increased from 68.6% in 2000 to 71.9% in 2018.⁷ As a percent of the total workforce, women currently account for just over 49% of the total labour force—up from 47.1% in 2005, but slightly under their peak in 1999, when they made up 49.5%.⁸

There are rural and urban disparities in labour force participation. Women in rural areas make up 52% of the labour force vs men at 48%, while in urban areas, women make up 45.6% vs men at 54.4%. Kenyans are overwhelmingly employed in the informal sector, where incomes are low and jobs are precarious. Women are concentrated in agriculture, making up 75% of the labour force on smallholder farms.^{9,10}

In formal employment, women account for only about one-third (34%) of workers. Women's representation still lags behind men's in most key employment sectors as shown in the table below. Only in the service sector do they exceed men's participation.¹¹

Table 1. Women's participation in Kenyan formal employment sectors

Sector	Women as % of sector employment
Modern sector	34%
Agriculture	33%
Manufacturing	16%
Service sector	52%
Public administration	36%
Education	47%
Wholesale	23%

Source: KNBS Gender data 2019

In these waged positions, women constitute one-third and beyond in agriculture, the modern sector, public administration, education, and the service sector. The numbers in public administration and education may have benefited from favourable policies that supported affirmative measures for girl's education, such as requiring marginally lower points for university entrance, introducing universal primary education, and expanding girls' secondary school enrolment. The service sector is largely private sector-controlled and has traditionally had higher levels of female participation partly due to its alignment with women's gender-segregated service roles in unpaid work.

7 The World Bank. "Labor force, female (% of total labor force) – Kenya." The World Bank. June 21, 2020. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.FE.ZS?locations=KE>

8 Ibid.

9 Korea International Cooperation Agency and UN Women. "Economic Empowerment of Women through Climate Smart Agriculture." KOICA and UN Women. 2018. https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/pluginfile.php/66830/mod_folder/intro/UN%20Women%20Revised%20Proposal%20KOICA%20April%202020%2C%202018.pdf

10 UNCTAD and TradeMark East Africa. "New UN report spotlights gender-sensitive trade policymaking in the East African community." May 9, 2018. <https://unctad.org/press-material/new-un-report-spotlights-gender-sensitive-trade-policy-making-east-african-community>

11 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. "Women and Men in Kenya." Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, State Department of Basic Education and National Gender and Equality Commission. 2017.

64.5%
of women do more
home cleaning and
maintenance, compared
to 45.3% of men.

52.7%
of women were
spending more time
caring and instructing
children aged 6-17
years, compared to
39.2% of men.

Despite modest gains in employment, decision-making in formal sector medium and large private enterprises is still heavily male-dominated—well above the constitutional requirement in Article 81 (b): “Not more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender.”¹²

Table 2. Gender composition of private sector boards and companies (2015)

Positions	Portion occupied by women
Members of boards	Below 20%
Chairs of boards	Below 10%
Directors of registered companies	Below 20%

Source: KNBS, Women and Men in Kenya: Facts and Figures 2017

The Kenya National Board of Statistics (KNBS) Economic Survey 2020 shows only membership of county assemblies that met the threshold of the two-third gender rule, with women reaching 33.6% of elective positions in 2019.¹³ The percent of governors who are women fell to 4.3% in 2019 while that of deputy governors increased to 17.4% in the same period. Chief administrative secretaries comprised 33.3% of women in appointed decision-making positions in the public service in 2019. The percentage of county executive committee members who are women declined marginally to 31.5%, while in the judiciary, the proportion of women magistrates increased from 46.6% in 2016 to 53.3% in 2019.

While there are no nationally representative data sets on household time-use, available data shows that women still perform a disproportionate share of unpaid care work. A 2018-2019 Oxfam Household Care Survey targeting five informal settlements in Nairobi County found that women worked 11.1 hours per day on domestic care work compared to men’s 2.9 hours per day.¹⁴ Furthermore, a recent KNBS household survey on the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19¹⁵ suggests women’s burden may be increasing further due to pandemic restrictions. It found that a higher proportion of women reported increased time spent in all unpaid work activities compared to men. For example, 64.5% of women were doing more home cleaning and maintenance, compared to 45.3% of men at; 52.7% women were spending more time caring and instructing children aged 6-17 years, compared to 39.2% of men.

Women’s disproportionate share of unpaid care work may help explain why they mostly populate the less skilled and informal echelons of the employment pyramid. The Kenyan government has worked through different partners and mechanisms to address unpaid care work and provide social safety nets for the poor and marginalized. But there are still worrying inequality gaps that need urgent attention. Domestic and paid work conditions for women show little substantive improvement, especially among specific marginalized groups, such as female-headed households. The disproportionate burden of unpaid care work restricts most women’s choice of

12 Constitute. “Kenya’s Constitution of 2010.” The Constitute Project. 2020. https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Kenya_2010.pdf

13 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. “Economic Survey 2020”. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. April 28, 2020. <https://www.theelephant.info/documents/kenya-national-bureau-of-statistics-economic-survey-2020/>

14 Maina, Lucy W. and Elishba Kimani. “Gendered patterns of unpaid care and domestic work in the urban informal settlements of Nairobi, Kenya Executive Summary for a Household Care Survey 2019.” Oxfam, 2019. https://cng-cdn.oxfam.org/kenya.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/Eng_Kenya_HCS_ES.pdf

15 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. “Survey on Socio Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Households Report – Wave 2.” Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. June 30, 2020. <https://www.knbs.or.ke/?wpdmpromo=survey-on-socio-economic-impact-of-covid-19-on-households-report-wave-2>

sector and type of job, as they seek out jobs close to their homes. This leads many to take up informal, unregulated employment even if it is lowly paid. Responsibilities such as breastfeeding and child care may lead even women in senior management to forego career development opportunities if policies are not responsive to their gendered circumstances.

Despite making up more than half of the population, and their strong organization around social, economic, and political issues, women continue to face strong resistance from patriarchal structures within the public, private and domestic spheres. Women are still organizing to fight for 2010 constitutional gains, such as the two-thirds limit on a given gender's representation in elected or appointed positions. Women also continue to organize themselves in CSOs, women's groups, professional organizations, and co-operatives, among other collective forms, to advance their agenda. Current trends in women's collective agency can be traced to the claw back of gains Kenyan women made in the struggle for independence as freedom fighters in the armed struggle and the civil political agitation for independence. Women's movements and organizations have worked since then to ensure that their contributions are recognized and rewarded.¹⁶

16 Mgugua, Rosemary Wanjiku. "Women's Organizations and Collective Action in Kenya: Opportunities and Challenges – The Case of the Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization/" Pathways to African Feminism and Development – Journal of African Women Studies Centre. 1, no. 5. (May 2017)



COVID-19 is emerging as a tremendous threat to WEE. Immediate economic impacts include reversing GDP growth from last year's 5.4% to 1.5% in 2020

1.3 The WEE impacts of COVID-19 and other shocks

COVID-19 is emerging as a tremendous threat to WEE, although its repercussions are still becoming apparent. The Kenyan government has taken various measures – including restricting international and some local travel, testing, imposing quarantines and curfews, and offering some social subsidies to marginalized populations – to help contain spread of the virus. The measures have had immediate and widespread negative effects on people and the economy and may have repercussions for years to come. Immediate economic impacts include reversing GDP growth from last year's 5.4% to 1.5% in 2020.¹⁷ Most development funding has been diverted to managing the pandemic, including subsidies to marginalized groups. Lower revenues from income tax and the expected poor performance of businesses will further harm the economy. Reduced exports due to travel, trade, and supply-chain disruptions and increased health restrictions will in turn reduce income and make it more difficult and expensive for the poor to process for export.

Early estimates are that more than 500,000 formal sector jobs could be lost in the first six months due to reduced revenues, loss of business opportunities, loss of markets for goods and services, shortages of raw materials, and business restructuring occasioned by COVID-19.¹⁸ The service sector, where women dominate, is hardest hit: tourism is on its knees, with direct jobs in hotels and agencies seriously curtailed. Job losses are also heavy in the transport, aviation, hospitality, manufacturing, and agriculture sectors. Decreased remittances from Kenyan's abroad will also hinder the economy and deepen poverty for as long as it takes overseas economies to recover. Immigration restrictions are likely to increase with the expected spike in xenophobia in a deep global economic recession. External inflows of aid and loans are expected to decline.

Even as it struggles with the pandemic, Kenya has also been hit with natural calamities, including plagues of locusts, drought, floods, and destruction of key infrastructure in the early part of 2020. These will have longer-term negative economic impacts on populations throughout the arid and semi-arid lands of East Africa.

Women are being affected by the shrinking of allocations for economic social safety nets and maternal health care services amidst increased demand. Resources shall be diverted to manage the pandemic for quite a while to come. In addition to the loss of service sector jobs, women will be hard hit by a loss of earnings from agriculture, on which the majority of rural women subsist. Meanwhile restrictions on mobility are eroding women's fundamental freedoms and protection from violence, including in the domestic sphere. This may worsen the conditions for WEE, including the provision of affirmative action and other government measures.

17 The World Bank. "Overview". The World Bank in Kenya. July 31, 2020. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kenya/overview>

18 Nyamori, Moses. "Uhuru: Over 500,000 jobs at stake due to Covid-19" The Standard. Accessed May 2, 2020. <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/kenya/article/2001369841/uhuru-half-a-million-to-lose-jobs-due-to-coronavirus>

2. WEE Policy Framework in Kenya



According to the World Bank, Kenya has the potential to be one of Africa's success stories because it has a dynamic private sector, a skilled workforce, and a progressive constitution that buttresses a structural reform agenda and devolves government functions. But to realize this potential and achieve rapid, sustained growth rates that will transform the lives of ordinary citizens, Kenya must address challenges that include poverty, inequality, and weak governance.¹⁹ Women suffer well-documented inequality, and there is increasing evidence of feminized poverty and marginalization of women even as Kenya demonstrates considerable potential to grow GDP and strengthen its middle-income country status. The growing incidence of female-headed households now stands at 32.4 percent of all households, among which 30.2 percent are poor compared to 26 percent poor among male-headed households²⁰.

2.1. International and regional commitments that shape WEE policies in Kenya

Kenya has ratified six of the nine main global human rights instruments:

- the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and
- the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The growing incidence of female-headed households now stands at 32.4% of all households, among which 30.2% are poor compared to 26% poor among male-headed households.

All have gender equality imperatives as a state obligation. Kenya has also been party to other international initiatives that have drawn attention to the need for gender equality such as the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights; the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA); the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD); the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals; and the SDGs. Critical areas of concern to Kenyan policy under BPFA include: women in power and decision making, the girl child, women and the economy, women and poverty, education and training of women, and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women.²¹

Kenya has also adopted the African Union's Agenda 2063, which sets out the vision of an inclusive continent where no child, woman, or man will be left behind or excluded on the basis of gender, political or ethnic affiliation, religion, locality, age, or other factors. The Africa of 2063 will have gender parity, with women occupying at least 50% of elected public offices at all levels and half of managerial positions in the public and private sectors. The economic and political glass ceiling that restricted women's progress will have been shattered.²² WEE policies in Kenya also enshrine the promotion of gender equality principles found in Article 4 (I) of the AU's Constitutive Act.²³

19 The World Bank. "Overview". The World Bank in Kenya. July 31, 2020. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kenya/overview>

20 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. "Basic Reporting on Well-Being in Kenya." Republic of Kenya, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, The World Bank, and UNICEF. 2018.

21 UN Women. "12 Critical Areas." Accessed June 2020. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw59/feature-stories>

22 African Union. "Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want". Accessed September 2020. <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>

23 African Union. "AU Strategy for Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment." 2018. https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/36897-doc-52569_au_report_eng_web.pdf

Kenya's policy framework that applies to care work is derived from international rights and work-related treaties and conventions. The key ones include: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, CEDAW, and BPFA. Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the gendered division of unpaid care work as a human rights issue that necessitates member states to provide policy frameworks to address women's economic, social, and cultural rights. CEDAW calls for reducing unpaid care work to achieve gender equality, sustainable development, and economic growth and to eliminate discrimination in economic and social benefits that have disadvantaged women due to their disproportionate participation in unpaid care activities. The BPFA raises the unequal distribution of unpaid care work by women and men as a barrier to gender equality and calls on states to establish and increase data collection on unpaid care work, design policies that recognize its importance, and provide equal rights to those who perform such work.²⁴ Kenya's care policy framework is also informed by a number of International Labour Organization conventions that introduce labour standards addressing recognition of women's unpaid care work: Convention No. 156 (1981) on workers with family responsibilities; Convention No. 182 (1999) on maternity protection; and Convention No. 189 (2011) regarding decent work for domestic workers.

Regionally, Kenya has ratified:

- the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights;
- the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (2005);
- the African Union Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa;
- the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; and
- the Maputo Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

²⁴ BPFA refers to other treaties, namely: the International Convention on Economic and Cultural Rights (1966), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1979), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).



Parliament has legislated laws to implement the constitutional provisions for gender equality.

It expressed some reservations with the Maputo Protocol, including on the promotion of women and Article 14 (2) (c), which refers to the medical termination of pregnancy.²⁵ Other regional instruments that Kenya has adopted include the African Union Agenda 2063 and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

Africa regional policies that inform Kenya's unpaid work policy framework include the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Rights of Women (2003), which reaffirms the principle of promoting gender equality as contained in relevant declarations, covenants, and decisions, which underline the commitment of the African States to ensure the full participation of African women as equal partners in Africa's development.²⁶ Similarly, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004) reaffirmed commitment to the principle of gender equality as enshrined in existing commitments, principles, goals and actions set out in the various regional, continental and international instruments on human and women's rights.²⁷ The 2009 African Union Gender Policy is also key to Kenyan care policies. It commits to guiding the process of gender mainstreaming and empowering women to influence policies, procedures, and practices that accelerate the achievement of gender equality, gender justice, non-discrimination, and fundamental human rights in all aspects of economic development in Africa.

2.2. GE and WEE in Kenya's legal and policy frameworks

Kenya's Constitution (2010) captures the spirit and letter of these international and regional policies and forms the main reference for generic and sector-specific policies and laws. It guarantees gender equality and freedom from sex-based and other forms of discrimination.²⁸ As noted above, Article 81 (b) of the Constitution states that "not more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender" which ensures a minimum one third representation by each gender.²⁹ Parliament has legislated laws to implement the constitutional provisions for gender equality. These include the Matrimonial Property Act (2013) which safeguards women's property rights during and upon dissolution of the marriage; the Marriage Act (2014), which gives effect to constitutional provisions on equality between parties to a marriage; and the Land Act and Land Registration Act which secure women's rights to land. Revision of the Succession Act Cap. 160 is also at an advanced stage and is expected to address gender issues in succession. Similarly, the Counter Trafficking in Persons Act (2010), the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2011), and the Sexual Offences Act (2006) outlaw specific forms of violence against women and the girl child. Thus, Kenya has ratified and domesticated both international and regional obligations on protecting the rights of women and girls. Additionally, the Kenya Citizenship and Immigration Act (2011) provides for dual citizenship. Married women can now confer citizenship on their foreign-born husbands, a break from the past when only men could confer such status on their wives. The constitutional and statutory provisions for the rights of women, as well as

25 Kenya restricts abortions to cases of sexual assault, rape, incest, and where the continued pregnancy endangers the mental and physical health of the mother or the life of the mother or the foetus.

26 Among them the constitutive act of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

27 These include Article 4 (l) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the Dakar Platform for Action (1994), the African Plan of Action to Accelerate the Implementation of the Dakar, the Beijing Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women (1999), and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003).

28 Republic of Kenya. "Constitution of Kenya, 2010." National Council for Law Reporting. 2010. <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/ke/ke019en.pdf>

29 Ibid page 51

the policies, operational guidelines, and action plans, have laid a firm legal foundation for the protection of women's rights that is essential to the achievement of WEE.

Kenya's national development plans – specifically, Kenya's Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth Creation (2003-2007), Kenya Vision 2030, and the Medium-Term Plans 2008-2012, 2013-2017, and 2018-2022 – have also recognized that women should have equal access to opportunities and assets for the purpose of sustainable development. The National Land Policy (2009) recognizes women's rights to own property on an equal basis with men. The National Policy for Prevention and Response to Gender Based Violence and the National Policy for the Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation have also been adopted to enhance conditions that free and enable women to pursue economic development.

2.3. Policies relevant to workforce segregation and collective action.

There are no specific policies that directly address workforce segregation and women's collective action. The policies discussed below have aspects of workforce segregation and women's collective action implied in the overall as well as some specific objectives.

Vision 2030, the national economic policy framework, is the overarching policy for WEE. It is currently implemented through MTP3. The social pillar of Vision 2030 seeks to build a just, cohesive, and equitable society where everyone participates to realize inclusive growth and development in Kenya. It seeks to address the following challenges: inadequate financial and human resources; inadequate gender-disaggregated data for effective policy formulation, planning, budgeting and assessing women's contribution to the economy; implementation of the two-thirds gender rule;³⁰ an inadequate coordination framework on social protection; limited awareness of opportunities; and the under-valuing of women's contribution to the economy. By seeking to achieve just and equitable participation in development, in accordance with the Constitution, the policy implies action to increase women's status in the workforce and demonstrate it through data.

More specifically, the MTP 3, which is the implementation framework for Vision 2030, sets up several WEE-related “flagship projects” under the social sector. Affirmative Action Funds, and the Women Enterprise Fund, which aims to double loan disbursement to women,³¹ upscale their training in entrepreneurship skills,³² and increase logistical and financial investment in women-owned enterprises, all have direct relevance to women's workforce participation through SMEs. Further, the *Uwezo* Fund is to be scaled up,³³ while the National Government Affirmative Action Fund aims to enhance women's access to financial facilities.³⁴ The government is also establishing the Access to Government Procurement

30 As per Article 81 (b) of the Constitution of Kenya which sets up a maximum threshold of two-thirds for any one gender in elective positions.

31 The National Treasury and Planning. “Third Medium Term Plan 2018 – 2022”. Government of Kenya. 2018. <https://planning.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/THIRD-MEDIUM-TERM-PLAN-2018-2022.pdf>

32 From 956,493 trained during MTP II period to 1,632,806 by end of the Plan period.

33 The *Uwezo* Fund is a flagship program for Vision 2030 aimed at enabling women, youth, and persons with disability to access finances to promote businesses and enterprises at the constituency level, thereby enhancing economic development. It is being increased by KSH2.5 billion to reach 500,000 additional beneficiaries. Capacity building will also be undertaken for 25,000 groups, and exchange programs will be facilitated amongst the groups for learning and benchmarking.

34 This will boost socio-economic empowerment initiatives such as table banking, savings and credit cooperative organizations, value addition, and nurturing of talent, among others.

Equality for men and women in the political, social, economic and cultural development spheres is among the indicators for measuring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy agenda.

Opportunities (AGPO) Preference and Reservations Secretariat to offer technical and advisory services to procuring entities to help youth, women, and people with disabilities to access government tenders.³⁵ The AGPO policy directive established in 2013 reserves 30% of all government procurement for women, youth, and persons with disabilities. By increasing opportunities for women to win government tenders in areas where they have a business advantage, it is expected that they will expand their businesses and thus increase employment in their sectors. There are also plans to establish Biashara Bank³⁶ to coordinate the delivery of affordable financing and support for business development.

All the government WEE initiatives utilize women collectives as a form of security to enable women to secure loans rather than using the prevailing asset-based security commonly used by banks and other financial institutions. They also use women-focused CSOs as the main focal points to mobilize participation. The stated expectation is that women shall collectively learn and support one another to borrow and utilize low interest loans to start or/and expand their businesses to a level where their investments will increase employment opportunities in their sectors.

The National Policy on Gender and Development (NPGD)³⁷ is the core policy for WEE. Its goal is to “achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment in national development so as to enhance participation of women and men, boys and girls, vulnerable and marginalized groups for the attainment of sustainable development.”³⁸ The policy sets out legislative and administrative measures to address gaps in the realization of gender equality and women’s empowerment. Legislative measures include rights protection against violence, such as the Sexual Offences Act and Protection Against Domestic Violence Act; the harmonization of marriage laws under one Act; and the review of divorce and inheritance laws to protect the rights of women. The NPGD acknowledges that evaluations point to clear gaps in promoting gender equality such as disparities in education and economic opportunities, representation, participation, and adequate access to health.³⁹ The priority areas of focus at both national and county government levels include: improved livelihoods, promotion and protection of human rights, participation in decision-making and governance, recognition of gender, and promotion of women’s empowerment in macro-economic management, among others. Special focus is given to the empowerment of women “who are currently the marginalized gender.”⁴⁰ Equality for men and women in the political, social, economic and cultural development spheres is among the indicators for measuring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy agenda.

NPGD recognizes the need to address poverty through “adequate”⁴¹ representation of women in key development management committees of national and devolved funds and by building the capacity of women targeted for specific affirmative action funds, such as AGPO. Under access to labour and economy, inequalities in the job market are recognized, such as the fact that only 30% of women work in formal employment and they dominate in poorly paid informal sector jobs, including family-owned and

35 This will increase the number of AGPO-registered, prequalified, and certified enterprises to 210,000 during the plan period.

36 By merging the Kenya Industrial Estates, Development Bank of Kenya, Industrial Development Bank of Kenya, the Youth Enterprise Development Fund, the Women Enterprise Fund, and the Uwezo Fund.

37 Republic of Kenya. “Session Paper No. 02 of 2019 on National Policy on Gender and Development: Towards creating a just, fair and transformed society free from gender based discrimination in all spheres of life practices”. Republic of Kenya. 2019.

38 Ibid., p. 2

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid, p. 13

41 The policy does not specify what is adequate but in other sections cites the not more than two-thirds constitutional representation principle as setting a minimum of one-third representation by women.

home-based businesses, and in unpaid domestic labour. This negative workforce segregation that keeps women in lower-pyramid workforce areas with low pay and job insecurity are flagged for program attention, as provided for in affirmative action funds and advocacy for more participation by women in higher managerial positions and in the skilled workforce. The policy also singles out macro-economic and sectoral policies as not being responsive to women's lack of collateral, including land title, among structural restrictions to credit. It prioritizes harmonizing laws to secure land rights for women to enable their participation in and benefit from agriculture. NPGD recognizes that many impediments to the advancement of gender equality and WEE are based in institutional mechanisms, such as limited financial and human resources; overlaps in the mandates of various institutions; and unclear linkages among different actors and levels, including the county governments.

2.4. Policies relevant to care work

Kenya does not have specific policies dedicated to care work, but sections of the social sector policy frameworks discussed above refer or apply to care work. The Health Act (2017), for example, requires all employers to support working women to breastfeed at work. They are to provide lactation stations and paid nursing break intervals in addition to the regular breaks for meals.⁴² The Constitution—specifically Article 27, sections (3) and (4) that uphold the rights of all citizens—recognizes gender equality and prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender. The National Policy on Gender and Development (2019) adopts the constitutional principles in its analysis of women's work context noting that “women work longer hours (12.9 hours) compared to men (8.2 hours) yet they earn less because most of these hours are taken by unremunerated work despite contribution to mainstream economic activities”.⁴³ The policy identifies among the key issues: “balancing the social and economic roles which hinder women's effective participation in entrepreneurship.”⁴⁴ Under labour and economy (section 4.d), the policy targets unpaid care and domestic work “to ensure shared responsibility within the house and invest in social services and infrastructure provision and social protection policies to reduce the burden on women.” The Kenya Employment Act (2007) advocates for equal opportunities, pay, and benefits regardless of gender.

Kenya Vision 2030's social and economic pillars support equal participation in economic, political, and social development and empowerment of the marginalized through skill development and training: these strategies are necessary for the recognition and reduction of unpaid care work. Other policies that may have positive effects on care work include the 2003 introduction of free primary education, which saw a dramatic increase in girls' enrolment, particularly among traditionally marginalized communities, such as pastoralists and those in urban informal settlements. The Provision of Free Maternal and Child Health Services policy and the ongoing implementation of universal healthcare policies⁴⁵ have the potential to reduce the time taken by women seeking medical care for themselves and their children along with reducing maternal and child morbidity rates. With regards to development and domestic infrastructure, Sessional Paper No. 4 on Energy prioritizes rural electrification, connecting households to the main grid, and investment in accessible renewable energy. It has potential to facilitate labour-saving technology appropriate to meeting domestic needs, and spur the growth of SMEs, including those led by women.

42 Provided that such interval is not more than a total of one hour for every eight-hour working period.

43 Ibid., p. 15.

44 Ibid., p. 16.

45 This is currently underway in selected counties on a pilot basis.

Kenya Vision 2030's social and economic pillars support equal participation in economic, political, and social development and empowerment of the marginalized through skill development and training; these strategies are necessary for the recognition and reduction of unpaid care work.

2.5. Policy oversight and implementation mechanisms for WEE

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), a constitutional commission⁴⁶ mandated to promote gender equality,⁴⁷ provides accountability oversight for WEE. NGEC monitors, facilitates and advises on the integration of the principles of equality and freedom from discrimination in all national and county policies, laws, and administrative regulations. It acts as the principal organ of the state in ensuring compliance with all treaties and conventions ratified by Kenya relating to issues of equality and non-discrimination and those relating to special interest groups including women. It coordinates and facilitates the mainstreaming of gender issues in national development and monitors, facilitates and advises on the development of affirmative action implementation policies. Its roles also include investigating violations of the principles of equality and non-discrimination, conducting audits on the status of special interest groups, and making recommendations to improve the functioning of the institutions concerned. NGEC works with other relevant institutions to develop standards for the implementation of policies for the progressive realization of economic and social rights.⁴⁸ It reports annually to Parliament on the implementation of its obligations, in addition to producing periodic progress reports for national, regional and international audiences. It also keeps databases on issues relating to equality and freedom from discrimination.

In its current strategy (2019-2024), NGEC commits to monitoring and reporting on Kenya's implementation of all SDGs with a special focus on Goals 5 and 10. Within national planning, NGEC works with PSOs, including SMEs, to ensure equality of opportunity as specified in Kenya Vision 2030: MTP3.

The State Department for Gender is the main institutional mechanism for oversight and implementation of gender sector policies that include WEE in all national government sectors and county governments. It is responsible for managing special programs for women's empowerment, for gender mainstreaming across ministries, departments and agencies; and for the domestication of international treaties and conventions on gender. SDfG is also mandated to oversee the coordination of gender functions at both levels of government, particularly because "gender" is not devolved to the counties. The SDfG has set up the Socio-Economic Empowerment Directorate (SEED) to coordinate implementation of WEE. SEED has laid down strategies to implement policies to improve the welfare of women and girls. These include providing functional skills on entrepreneurship and access to Government Affirmative Action Funds and AGPO. SEED's main function is to promote equitable socio-economic development between women and men through several financial policy initiatives. Among its key achievements, SEED lists the development of the Women Economic Empowerment Strategy 2015 to harness the momentum of WEE initiatives at national and county levels, and Kenya's success in winning awards for its socio-economic programs

Specific initiatives are briefly outlined in the following sections.

46 Established by the National Gender and Equality Act. No. 15 of 2011 pursuant to Article 59 (4) & (5) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010.

47 And freedom from discrimination for all people in Kenya with focus on special interest groups, which include: women, children, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs), older members of society, minorities, and marginalized groups.

48 Specified in Article 43 of the Constitution and other written laws.

3. WEE Programs and Initiatives



The government and a number of non-state actors categorize various development initiatives targeting women exclusively or as a larger part of a disadvantaged group as WEE programs. A common thread among such initiatives is that they often focus on promoting entrepreneurship and income generation as a major driver of WEE. They also use improved financial status as a major indicator of socio-economic empowerment for women. These initiatives mostly seek to increase women's economic status through direct financing and capacity-building business modules that require monetary or in-kind contributions from the participants.

3.1. Highlights of WEE initiatives by state actors

The Women's Entrepreneurship Fund has expanded women's access to financial resources and economic opportunities.

The Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) was launched in 2009 as part of the government's commitment to gender equality. Its mission is to mobilize resources for sustainable access to affordable financial and business support services to economically empower Kenyan women. It aims to reduce gender inequality in entrepreneurship by creating opportunities, developing capacity and infrastructure to support women. The fund disburses micro-credit to marginalized women who have little or no access to credit, education, training and social capital, taking into account good loan repayment and demand.

WEF has simplified the application process by having loans approved at the local community level. Loan repayment is through easily accessible mobile money transfer options. WEF has expanded women's access to financial resources and economic opportunities. As of April 2017, the Fund had reached nearly 650,000 female entrepreneurs since its inception and loan repayments stand at 92%.⁴⁹ Working in partnership with local organizations, women have been trained on skills such as record keeping, financial literacy, and diversification of their businesses. The Fund proposes to increase product offering, financial training, and delivery channels to improve access to services and promote women-owned savings and credit co-operatives societies.

The Uwezo Fund was launched in 2013 as an avenue for incubating enterprises, catalysing innovation, promoting industry, creating employment, and growing the economy to benefit women, youth and persons with disabilities. These marginalized groups are provided resources for credit and access to affirmative action programs such as AGPO.

The Youth Enterprise Development Fund⁵⁰ focuses on employment creation through enterprise development by Kenyan youth. As of 2019, the government says the Fund had disbursed loans of KSH12.8 billion nationally⁵¹ to upwards of 886,313 youth enterprises and trained 364,368 youth in entrepreneurship skills.

49 SNV. "Enhancing Opportunities for Women's Enterprise – Analysis of Policy Environment for Women's Economic Empowerment." SNV. Accessed June 2020. <https://snv.org/project/enhancing-opportunities-womens-enterprises-eowe>

50 This Fund is a state corporation established in 2006 to reduce unemployment among the youth aged 18 to 35.

51 Nyawira, Susan. "Youth Get Millions from Uwezo Fund." The Star (Daily Newspaper), October 24, 2019.

Comprehensive data on WEE initiatives is difficult to access as most is exchanged between resource partners and implementing organizations. It only becomes public when such initiatives receive media attention, and media highlights are often not informative enough.

It had helped 5,666 young entrepreneurs market their products through trade fairs and helped 20,976 youth secure jobs abroad through the Youth Employment Scheme Abroad program.

The **Ushanga Initiative** aims to create jobs and transform the living standards of pastoralist women in the counties of Baringo, Kajiado, Marsabit, Narok, Samburu, Turkana, and West Pokot by commercializing beadwork. It seeks to strengthen their bargaining power by improving product quality, value addition, and marketing. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Natural Resources oversees Ushanga Initiative under the Department of Culture. In addition to promoting entrepreneurship to sustain livelihoods Ushanga aims to strengthen women's bargaining power while raising awareness on the cultural and economic value of beadwork. Funding is allocated to the Ministry of Tourism and county governments involved in the initiative, which is also part of the government's efforts to diversify tourism sector product offerings.

The **50 Million African Women Speak** initiative (2018), largely resourced by the African Development Bank, is a digital platform that links and promotes women enterprises. It is implemented by three regional economic communities: the East African Community, the Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa, and the Economic Commission for West Africa. Its development objective is to contribute to the economic empowerment of women by providing a dynamic networking platform that allows women to access information on financial and non-financial services and to network in ways that foster peer-to-peer learning and mentoring. SDfG coordinates implementation of the project in Kenya, with a target of reaching 2.4 million women. Women entrepreneurs will connect across the region and have access to trade, finance, and market opportunities between urban and rural areas, and across borders and between countries.

The platform will also contribute to the statistical data base on WEE by systematically capturing and providing accurate data on SMEs led by women, on financial institutions' products by country, and on women's access to financial and non-financial services. The project is potentially one of the most comprehensive regional initiatives at systematically identifying, making visible, and connecting African businesswomen in the wake of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area.

3.2. Highlights of WEE initiatives by non-state actors

The key non-state actors are international and national/local CSOs, and PSOs such as businesses or associations that represent them. Comprehensive data on such initiatives is difficult to access as most is exchanged between resource partners and implementing organizations. It only becomes public when such initiatives receive media attention, and media highlights are often not informative enough. Even though CSOs work within government policy frameworks and administratively report to government agencies⁵² on their activities and expenditures, reports are not readily available and do not have enough information for in depth analysis. We highlight selected initiatives for which information is available and which show notable WEE focus and trends that provide relevant lessons for this study. More details on these selected WEE initiatives are highlighted in Appendix 1.

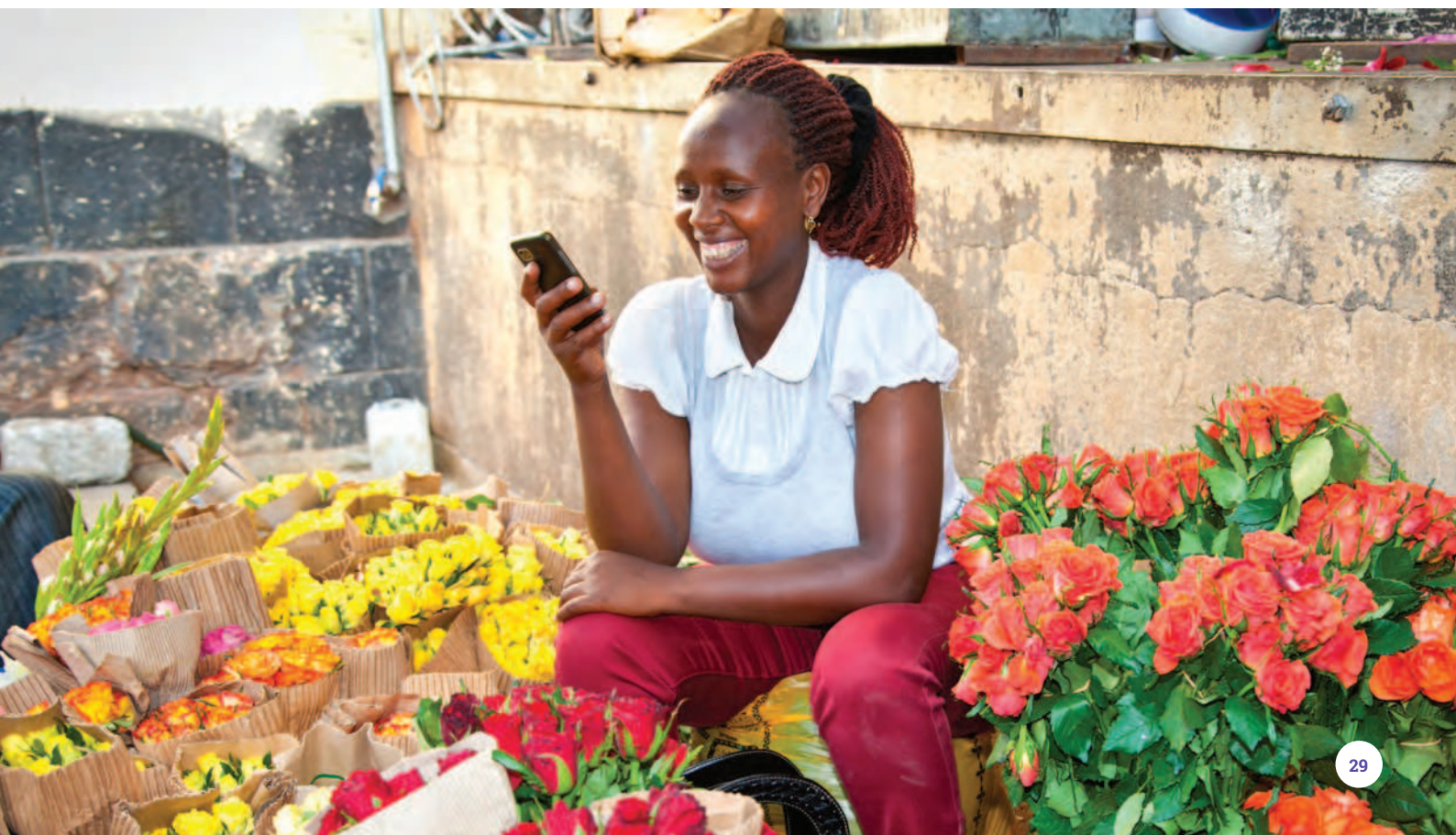
52 The NGO Coordination Board and Kenya Revenue Authority.

- **CARE Kenya's Women and Girls Economic Empowerment**⁵³ program targets livelihood-insecure women and girls in urban informal and rural community settings. It enables them to access and control productive assets through financial inclusion and asset building. The project aims to build their capacities, and those of their communities, using a Group Savings and Loans methodology and a broad range of interventions that include: financial literacy, rural sales agents, micro enterprise development, linkages to formal financial institutions, market engagement, and poverty graduation models.
- **SNV Kenya's Enhancing Opportunities for Women's Enterprises (EOWE)** program enhances the implementation of gender-sensitive policies while tackling socio-economic barriers at local levels to enhance economic opportunities for women entrepreneurs.⁵⁴ It equips CSOs with tools and skills appropriate for influencing county government policies and budgets so that they are gender-sensitive and include allocations on priority issues that address the needs of women entrepreneurs.
- **United States International University**⁵⁵ is implementing the research project, "The Effectiveness of the Metro Agri-Food Living Lab for Gender Inclusive Youth Entrepreneurship Development in Kenya" through the Africa Global Agribusiness Management and Entrepreneurship (GAME) Centre and the Busara Center for Behavioral Economics. Sixty percent of the project targets women in agribusiness. This project seeks to work closely with financial institutions that will provide funding for successful initiatives. Gender will be mainstreamed to empower women and young girls in agribusiness. The project integrates training, mentorship, and financing with action research that provides data to improve its chances of success.

53 Care. "Women and Girls Economic Empowerment." Accessed July 2020 <https://www.care.or.ke/index.php/what-we-do/womenempowerment>

54 SNV. "Enhancing Opportunities for Women's Enterprise – Analysis of Policy Environment for Women's Economic Empowerment." Accessed June 2020. <https://snv.org/project/enhancing-opportunities-womens-enterprises-eowe>

55 Through a grant of KSH56,886,900 by Cultivate Africa's Future (CultiAF), a joint program of IDRC and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research. The project timeframe is 2020-2022.



185,000
women shifted from
farming to business
occupations due to
access to M-Pesa.

- **GROOTS** has been implementing the **Empowering Elderly Caregivers project** in Muranga and Kiambu Counties targeting female caregivers who care for orphans affected by HIV/AIDS. The project aims to increase recognition of elderly carers by collecting information on the challenges they and their grandchildren face. It seeks to reduce the care burden on grandmothers by forming care groups to improve their livelihoods, providing training and savings initiatives, and providing a platform for them to engage with development actors and government ministries. The project also seeks to improve the quality of care by enhancing food security and increasing knowledge on paediatric care and access to health care services. Group community saving has been initiated through which carers contribute monthly to a group bank account. They can then invest in income-generating activities, complemented by entrepreneurship and book-keeping training.
- **Uthabiti Africa - Quality Affordable Childcare for All in Kenya**, incubated by **World University Services Canada**, is a collaborative multi-stakeholder initiative to accelerate the provision of affordable, quality childcare services in urban Kenya. The overall aim is to improve developmental outcomes for all children in urban Kenya aged 0-4 and empower mothers and siblings by freeing them up to pursue livelihoods and education. The initiative kicks off officially in June 2020 with a six-month “design confirmation phase” process that will enable stakeholders to fine-tune interventions to transform the childcare market in three cities: Kisumu, Nairobi and Mombasa. The lead organizations for the design confirmation phase are the Early Childhood Development Network for Kenya, Kidogo, Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development, Daraja Civic Initiatives, and the Africa Population Health Research Centre. Other stakeholders will include the County Governments of Kisumu, Nairobi and Mombasa as well as the Ministries in charge of Health, Education and Gender.
- **Safaricom corporation's M-Pesa mobile money service** appears to boost women's savings and entrepreneurship. A study on the long-term effects of access to mobile money in Kenya revealed that when the mobile money banking and transfer service M-Pesa came to an area, women engaged in more entrepreneurships and their savings went up.⁵⁶ It was also observed that the number of female-headed households living in extreme poverty fell by 22% in areas where M-Pesa outlets opened within a six-kilometre radius. At least 185,000 women shifted from farming to business occupations due to access to the service.
- **Safaricom** also provides a rare private sector policy initiative to improve working conditions for parents (mostly mothers) among its employees at call centres.⁵⁷ The policy provides for breastfeeding rooms and on-site crèches for younger children. Additional benefits include maternity leave beyond statutory provision and a reduced working hours option for mothers. Children are covered under the company medical insurance and provision is made for an on-site doctor for them. It is notable that this policy is in keeping with the Health Act's guidelines to employers on breastfeeding, which to date have been ignored by the overwhelming majority of employers, including in the public sector.

56 Tavneet, Suri and Jack, William. "The Long-Term Effects of Access to Mobile Money in Kenya." Innovation for Poverty Action. 2015. <https://www.poverty-action.org/study/long-term-effects-access-mobile-money-kenya>

57 Admin. "Safaricom lauded for policies and practices that support staff with children." Apantech. March 17, 2018. <https://aptantech.com/2018/03/safaricom-lauded-for-policies-and-practices-that-support-staff-with-children/>

- **Vocational education vouchers** may have an impact on out-of-school youth in Kenya. In a non-government organization (NGO) administered randomized Youth Vocational Education intervention, undertaken primarily in western Kenya, 2163 out-of-school youth aged 17-28 years applied for vocational tuition vouchers and half were awarded enough to cover tuition costs for private vocational education programs and government-run youth polytechnics.⁵⁸ The initiative provided vouchers for vocational training to male and female youth. It also had an information component that, among other things, encouraged women to consider and, ultimately, enrol in traditionally male-dominated trades. It led to more women taking up non-traditional courses and a significant increase in hourly wage earnings among young wage earners. The program also increased the likelihood of working in wage employment among those who had been out of school longer.

Generally, the non-state actor initiatives above show a marked difference from the government-led ones by being much more comprehensive in their conceptualization and addressing the empowerment needs of women and girls. They attempt to understand contextual circumstances of their target group and provide appropriate capacity to enhance uptake. Additionally, the Care and SNV initiatives are grounded in gender analysis and have potential to affect other areas such as dealing with care work issues. There is, however, not enough evidence generated so far to make conclusions on their scalability beyond the pilot stage.

58 Hicks, Joan, Michael Kremer, Michael, Isaac Mbiti, Edward Miguel. "Evaluating the impact of vocational education vouchers on out of school youth in Kenya: Impact Evaluation Report 37". International Initiative for Impact Evaluation. 2016. <https://www.3ieimpact.org/sites/default/files/2019-01/ie37-kenya-vocational-education.pdf>



4. Challenges and Barriers to WEE Implementation





WEE policies and programs are faced with numerous challenges as they endeavour to focus on women's ability to gain access to and control over productive resources and gain recognition as significant economic actors. Most of these challenges are embedded in the underlying factors that inhibit women's agency and voice in both private and public sectors. WEE policies fall short of guiding program plans and implementation mechanisms to overcome structural gender-based inequalities in the socio-economic spheres that women must navigate to be empowered. We highlight some of these challenges below.

4.1. Gaps in policy oversight

Both gender policy oversight institutions – NGEC and SDfG – face challenges in tandem with their respective mandates: some are shared and some unique. We begin by highlighting challenges they self-identify through internal reviews as impediments to achieving their mission.

In its current strategic plan, NGEC highlights limited financial resources as hampering effective discharge of the Commission's mandate. Implementation of planned programs is undermined by inadequate human resources, especially in technical areas. Limited public awareness of the functions of the Commission also limit the number of citizens seeking assistance from the Commission, even when their complaints and needs fall within the functions of the Commission.

The weaknesses highlighted in internal reviews tend to be understated since to discharge its mission fully NGEC needs expert human resources in key sectors of national development to lead monitoring of progress on gender equality and non-discrimination policy implementation. They also need a well-established research department and/or capacity to outsource key studies to provide data on progress from reliable secondary sources. This has not been possible in the past six years of its active existence since NGEC has tended to rely on Kenya National Bureau of Statistics data: it does not have any role in initiating and determining what studies are undertaken or the timing. The very few reports it has produced on its own have been late in publication and submission to Parliament. In most cases, these don't have national coverage because of limited funding. There is also no clear mechanism/procedure in Parliament for receiving, debating, and adopting the reports in order to act on recommendations, which has weakened their effectiveness.

The use of public interest litigation to ensure compliance to the Constitution with regard to the stipulation that women should make up at least one-third of Parliament has yielded positive rulings to support affirmative measures, but Parliament and the executive have been lethargic at best and court deadlines have passed without much happening. Limited political will to enforce affirmative action has been the major barrier. NGECE has also commissioned studies on the cost of gender-based violence to the survivors/victims and the state as well as on gender-responsive budgeting, leading to the publication of policy guidelines. However, these have not been taken up sufficiently by the relevant implementing agencies, such as the Office of The Attorney General and the national and county budgeting offices.

SDfG cites similar problems with financial resources and personnel as major challenges to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment objectives. Beyond this internal appraisal, the major structural barrier SDfG faces is its inability to provide implementation oversight on gender goals to sectors and departments not under its departmental mandate, including finance, health, education, agriculture, and trade which are critical to the achievement of WEE. Its role in practice is therefore reduced to elaborating policy and technical support advisories. SDfG therefore operates in siloes related to the specific WEE initiatives the department is mandated to implement. These initiatives (largely micro-finance/credit) are insufficient to empower women or to attain gender equality.



4.2. Overlooking the context and needs of target groups

Part of the problem lies with initiatives such as the Women Empowerment Fund (WEF) not having been properly contextualized within existing economic and policy frameworks to ensure better targeting of women—within groups and as individuals. A 2014 study shows that a major shortcoming of the WEF is that it provides limited loan amounts so that beneficiaries are never able to transcend specific levels of poverty.⁵⁹ The authors found that some women used microcredit for purposes other than starting or expanding an existing business because the amounts were too small to invest in ventures that required higher capital.⁶⁰ Such small loans most likely keep women in unproductive traditional gender-segregated businesses that they are already involved in. WEF also has limited scope: very few women have been reached even among the poor and marginalized target group. WEF only addresses marginal aspects of these women's access to financial services; it does little to give them access to employment and nothing to ease their share of care work.

The *Uwezo* Fund has attracted criticism for compromising its effectiveness by attempting to target both youth and women, using a similar model that may not meet the specific needs of each group or even the specific gender needs of young women and men.⁶¹ The Fund has no specific gender focus. It has also been faulted for applying stringent regulations and requirements leading to the “majority of the groups that received soft loans from the government’s KSH5 billion *Uwezo* Fund to promote their enterprises defaulting on paying back the amounts within stipulated time.”⁶² Appropriate technical support to young entrepreneurs at the local level has been wanting. The amounts disbursed, mainly to groups, have proved inadequate to serve the intended purpose of incubating enterprises—it is therefore questionable how much impact the Fund has on increasing women-owned businesses.

There are also challenges with the accessibility of the much lauded AGPO procurement initiative. There are no customized processes for the marginalized: application for tenders is exclusively web-based, which assumes target groups have access to electricity and Internet services. Applications also require onerous documentation such as a business registration certificate or certificate of incorporation, a partnership deed (for partnership businesses), a tax compliance certificate, and a national construction authority letter for construction activities. These entail capital outlay and financial and business literacy that many women do not have. Information on tender opportunities is placed in newspapers, which very few women have access to. Experience so far suggests a high possibility of abuse of the favoured status by companies and individuals that fall above the target bracket, using economically challenged women/youth as proxies to win tenders they do not qualify for.

59 Ijaza, Alice Kadurenge; Mwangi, Samsom Wokaabi; and Ng’etich, Kibet A.. “Challenges Faced by the Women Enterprise Fund in Kenya: A Survey of Hamisi Constituency, Vihiga County.” *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4 no. 14 (2014): 20-28.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 20

61 SNV. “Analysis of Policy Environment for Women’s Economic Empowerment.” Kenya: SNV. 2017. https://snv.org/public/cms/sites/default/files/explore/download/kn_analysis_of_policy_environment_for_wee_final_1.pdf

62 Contributor. “Youth Fail to Repay *Uwezo* Funds.” *Business Daily (Kenya)*, February 1, 2020.

4.3. Focusing on outputs rather than transformative results

Monitoring and evaluation is also not mainstreamed in the programs/projects. Without establishing firm baselines, realistic targets cannot be set. Since the goal posts keep shifting during project implementation, mostly in response to political pressure of different interest groups, it is difficult to figure out the real contribution some WEE initiatives and those targeting other marginalized groups.

The Youth Enterprise Development Fund, which attracts young women participants, exhibits low repayment rates, at 57%.⁶³ Like Uwezo, the Fund also treats targeted youth as a homogeneous group and applies uniform requirements such as being members of a registered group with an existing bank account, which certain categories of youth may not meet. Requirements for collateral further alienate deserving young women entrepreneurs. The Fund has yet to provide evidence that it empowers young women in any of the WEE areas that are the focus of this study. Its weaknesses in part may stem from the lack of an overall youth employment policy, which Kenya is yet to develop.⁶⁵

The Socio-economic Empowerment Directorate of the SdFG cites achievements based on immediate activity outputs, such as the quantities of loan recipients and repayments: it says little or nothing about how much they have empowered women. According to SNV, the results of these funds in terms of WEE is unclear, given this focus on outputs.⁶⁶ Further, the absence of a central coordination mechanism also means that the different funds do not harmonize their targeting, capacity building plans, or data (even when the target beneficiaries are similar or the same).⁶⁷

4.4. Politicization of the WEE agenda

Some of these funds stem from populist measures and pronouncements by political leadership seeking to demonstrate that they are responding to pressing needs such as youth unemployment. Funds are set aside (based on a presidential speech) with no prior planning, program analysis, or document development: these follow in haste to implement the directive in the shortest time possible. The reactionary and ad hoc nature of such funding initiatives means logical structures lag behind delivery, at least in the first phase. For example, even though the Ushanga Initiative may demonstrate Government's desire to boost the earnings and efficacy of pastoralist women, it has failed right from the project inception phase to modernize and systematize the effort in an economically viable manner. The management structures set up, particularly at county level, are more politically compliant than business-orientated to the extent that government risks being accused of denying women entrepreneurs autonomy over their activities, without their full knowledge and involvement.

63 57% according to Margaret Kobia, the Cabinet Secretary (Youth and Public Service) who said it compares badly with commercial loan repayment rates of 95 – 97%.

64 Muthethia, Gerald. "Youth borrow empowerment cash but fail to repay – CS." The Star Newspaper, Oct 2, 2019. <https://www.the-star.co.ke/counties/eastern/2019-10-02-youth-borrow-empowerment-cash-but-fail-to-repay-cs/>

65 SNV. "Analysis of Policy Environment for Women's Economic Empowerment." Kenya: SNV, 2017. https://snv.org/public/cms/sites/default/files/explore/download/ken_analysis_of_policy_environment_for_wee_final_1.pdf

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.



4.5. Lack of coordination between sectors and levels of government

County governments currently implement the bulk of WEE initiatives as part of their service delivery role in 47 counties. Even though “gender” is not a devolved function,⁶⁸ county governments have taken up related responsibilities mainly because of the national government’s inadequate capacity and because gender issues tend to cut across social development, social justice, and service delivery, particularly at the lowest levels. All county governments have a ministry, department, or unit in charge of gender. Currently, they are at different stages of putting in place appropriate legal/policy frameworks for addressing WEE. All counties have in the past allocated funds to “women initiatives” aimed at enhancing service provision or boosting women’s livelihood opportunities. This has often been done in an erratic and ad hoc manner with little thought for efficiency and sustainability. There is also a weak link between national and county government sectors partly because of unclear responsibilities and relations. This has led to situations where the SDfG has gender officers implementing national WEE initiatives in various counties without involving the county government. The thin spread of national government sectors (except for security and education) at the county level means the projects they implement are poorly supervised and supported.

68 Implies that the national government takes charge of direct implementation and coordination under the ministry in charge of gender.

5. Gap Analysis





Sparse attention is paid to tackling unpaid care work, for example, as a fundamental factor that works to women's disadvantage in general but especially among the poor and marginalized women that most WEE programs target.

The need for a research program on women's economic empowerment (WEE) is underscored by existing supply and demand factors in meeting women's identified needs. While considerable progress has been made by the Kenyan government in working with different partners on supply-side responses, such as creating policies and mechanisms for WEE, providing human and financial resources along with social support frameworks and networks, and building women's capacity and skills, there are still visible policy and programming gaps that need further investigation.

5.1. Policy gaps

Existing WEE policies show limited appreciation of the dynamic determinants of women's economic status, meaning policies narrowly focus on skills development for entrepreneurship and other forms of income generation without factoring in the intersectional influences that shape women's disadvantaged position. Sparse attention is paid to tackling unpaid care work, for example, as a fundamental factor that works to women's disadvantage in general but especially among the poor and marginalized women that most WEE programs target.

Labour force participation

The current data shows women's participation largely still lags behind men's. Part of the problem has been the slow enactment of laws as well as supportive policies and mechanisms to address specific inequalities and guide implementation. Article 2(6) of the constitution prevents international law such as that which supports gender equality from being watered down or blocked by local legislation by stating "any treaty or convention ratified by Kenya shall form part of the law of Kenya under this Constitution."⁶⁹ This makes international treaties and conventions ratified by Kenya automatically part of national law.

Even as women's labour force participation increases, the quality of their employment remains poor because most of their gains have been in low paid, mostly informal, insecure, and often unsafe jobs. Wages for domestic work, where

69 Republic of Kenya. "Constitution of Kenya, 2010." National Council for Law Reporting. 2010, p. 14. <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/ke/ke019en.pdf>

women dominate, still suffers from perceptions and norms around unpaid care work—that it is unskilled and part of women’s traditional social role and therefore not deserving of fair wages. Attempts to address the skill-building needs of women through vocational training have been largely unsuccessful. In general, there has been limited uptake of available training opportunities by youth and by young women in particular to the extent that employers complain that institutions are not producing people with the skills they need.⁷⁰ Kenya’s Vision 2030 sets an ambitious target to become a middle-income country by 2030, which requires not only uninterrupted growth of 10% per year, but also citizens with globally-competitive skills. The labour market is not prepared to absorb youth and they are largely not ready for the Kenyan labour market. Furthermore, gender skills stereotyping abounds; vocational training interventions in Kenya do not motivate women to take up male-dominated trades. There is a pervasive occupational segmentation by gender: men overwhelmingly prefer traditionally male-dominated courses such as motor-vehicle mechanics, while women study traditionally female-dominated courses such as hairdressing.⁷¹

Public sector vocational training has been largely seen as failing to provide marketable and relevant skills to students. Such programs are typically slow to respond and adapt to rapidly changing labour markets driven by technological advances.⁷² Private sector vocational training institutions are more dynamic and flexible, offering students the opportunity to gain skills that are more relevant on the job market. There is growing recognition within Kenya of the importance of the vocational education sector. Technical, industrial, and vocational education and training is one of the 23 investment programs under the ongoing World Bank Kenya Education Sector Support Project. There is currently a policy dialogue on the topic of technical, industrial, and vocational education and training and youth labour market skills development more broadly.

Women’s collectives and agency gaps

There are no specific policies or direct emphasis on strengthening women’s collectives and agency, even though existing WEE policies use solidarity groups as a non-asset-based means of security for loan repayment. The formation of women’s groups is narrowly premised on their potential use in easing outreach to targeted women and expanding the reach of development efforts in a cost-effective way. Policies shy away from the issue of agency as a means to women’s socio-economic autonomy, social solidarity, and collective advocacy and protection of their rights as women. Generally, government-led WEE projects use women collectives to mobilize and access women, but largely ignore women’s agency. There is always an underlying assumption that more income-generation and profit by women will automatically diminish gender-role segregation and women’s political under-representation.

Women continue to demonstrate they can use their collective association in groups to take advantage of accessible finance and business opportunities to increase their productivity and incomes. Government records and pronouncements show that their investments in WEE fall far short in meeting demand, partly because their policies and actions are not based on a holistic understanding of the problem. The state offers solutions that fail to grasp the magnitude of the challenge facing women, and which overlook the opportunities that women’s collectives offer beyond loan security.

70 Macharia, Ian. “Employers: Kenya Graduates Lack Essential Skills.” *The Standard*. November 11, 2015

71 Hamory, Joan Hicks, Michael Kremer, Isaac Mbiti, and Edward Miguel. “Breaking Gender Barriers: Vocational Training Vouchers and Kenyan Youth.” Policy Brief Issue 3 (September 2011). <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/657811468088157439/pdf/755610BRI0ARGP00Box374337B00PUBLIC0.pdf>

72 Hicks, Joan, Michael Kremer, Michael, Isaac Mbiti, Edward Miguel. “Evaluating the impact of vocational education vouchers on out of school youth in Kenya: Impact Evaluation Report 37”. International Initiative for Impact Evaluation. 2016. <https://www.3ieimpact.org/sites/default/files/2019-01/ie37-kenya-vocational-education.pdf>

What we have are fragments of policy, regulation, and law that are siloed in different sectors such as employment, maternal and child health, and affirmative action to redress gender inequality and sex discrimination.

Unpaid care work gaps

The dearth of policies on care work reflect the lack of official recognition of its value as a contribution to GDP and of its detrimental impacts on the development and empowerment of women and girls. There is no comprehensive policy framework informed by women's experience in care work. What we have are fragments of policy, regulation, and law that are siloed in different sectors such as employment, maternal and child health, and affirmative action to redress gender inequality and sex discrimination. Often the policies do not speak to each other, leading to situations where lactating mothers may be paid less for time spent away from work or forced to take unpaid leave when there is a law requiring employers to support working women. This suggests a need for consolidation of policy interventions across sectors and ministries. It is apparent, for example, that the government has no policy on parental care and does not have public day care centres. The 2017 Health Act law is yet to be implemented partly because of this policy lacuna and the implied costs to the employer. The private sector wanted subsidies from government to augment the operational costs. Operationalizing this law requires a multisectoral policy framework, including the labour and employment and industry and services sectors, along with social services at national and county government levels.

The sparse attention to care work stems largely from Kenya's economic policy priorities, which emphasize the "business sector" as the "productive" sector to be supported to increase GDP, relegating the public sector to a regulatory and administrative support role. Such singular emphasis on supporting business has been at the expense of strengthening households as the primary unit of production or supporting the non-profit sector, which has traditionally worked with poor and marginalized communities. While households and non-profits operate outside the formal business sector, together they constitute the largest contributors to GDP and wealth creation. Specific policy measures to address care work—including issues of market structure, work environments, incentive schemes, regulatory requirements, and appropriate financial support for care—and its impacts on women and the economy are mentioned only haphazardly in policy documents. There is no systematic appraisal or signalled intent to create a coordinated policy response. There is, however, an opportunity in the Kenya Private Sector Association Gender and Youth Sector Board mandate to monitor how members are addressing issues of care at the work place. Data generated from the exercise may inform policy review and formulation and put peer pressure on businesses to mainstream care into workers' benefits, in accordance with the law.

Part of the problem is conceptual: care work is still associated with unpaid domestic work even when the informal economy and non-profit sector show gradual growth in sustainable enterprises that include institutional care facilities that provide early childhood education, care, and development. Kenya's increasing urbanization has also catalysed the growth of paid care work, but this is largely undocumented. While the available data shows that women still hold sway in this growing sector, there is little analysis of trends and implications, partly attributable to inadequate data collection by mainstream research agencies and the government Bureau of Statistics. The growth of paid care work, however, has little implication for the nature and functioning of unpaid care work, which still consumes a disproportionate amount of women's labour. It remains officially invisible as it is not considered "production" in the system of national accounts and therefore not counted in GDP calculations.⁷³

73 Fäth, Anna and Blackden, Mark. "Unpaid Care Work." Policy Brief Gender Equality and Poverty Reduction 1. October 2009. <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womens-empowerment/policy-brief-unpaid-care-work.html>

Coordination between county and national governments and across ministries, agencies and sectors is a major area of concern. There is need for a systematic coordination in formulating and delivering WEE programs across these various actors.

The implementation of aspects of policies related to care work is hampered by several factors. Key among them is insufficient spending on social services, which therefore lack adequate personnel and “last mile” provisions and facilities that the poor and marginalized can access. For example, the retention of girls from poor families is still a problem under Full Primary Education because of hidden costs for equipment, activity, and development that the government does not cover. The same applies to free health services, which are understaffed and poorly equipped, leading to congestion. The limited impact of energy sector policies on care work demonstrates the lack of political will as the target groups (women and the poor) have been unable to access needed services due to the high end-user tariffs charged to low-income groups. Government has promised in annual budget statements to reduce the cost of power but has done the opposite by raising tariffs, despite investing heavily in cheaper renewable energy. Retrogressive socio-cultural beliefs and practices are also recognized as a fundamental roadblock to the equitable redistribution of care work between men and women.

5.2. Implementation gaps

The implementation of policies and programs is hindered by a shortage of qualified personnel and, among other things, the weaknesses in policy oversight outlined in Section 4.1. Key government mechanisms and agencies, such as SDfG and NGECC, charged with responsibility for overseeing gender-related initiatives tend to be bureaucratic and “political” rather than business-like. Government structures have also partnered with commercial banks to disburse loans using a banking model ill-suited to the circumstances of the target groups’ capacities and needs. The Funds created are disbursed through existing government administration structures poorly designed to deliver.

Coordination between county and national governments and across ministries, agencies and sectors is a major area of concern. There is need for a systematic coordination in formulating and delivering WEE programs across these various actors.

WEE operates in a heavily politicized environment, where the political party in power has to demonstrate change in the shortest time possible: big numbers are thus the priority for the implementing government mechanisms. Microfinance provided to spur entrepreneurship, for instance, aims to disburse the money to as many women as possible using the solidarity group model based on women’s collectives, but only small, economically unviable sums are disbursed, and many poor women are ill-equipped to avail themselves of the credit. The circumstances of poor and marginalized women – the target groups for WEE credit initiatives – call for engagement with their representative groups to capture how they may best be adapted to enable these women compete on a more equitable footing.

As noted above, most government WEE initiatives also make little if any reference to women’s agency. Financing initiatives often support traditional women’s enterprises such as chicken keeping, zero-grazing dairy animals, or market stalls, which tend to duplicate their gendered roles. Planners appear not to take into account whether these activities actually reflect women’s preferred routes for entrepreneurial investment.

Government’s laxity in implementing responses to care work, such as provisions of the 2017 Health Act that support working mothers’ right to breastfeed at work, is another setback. Private sector players have collected data to demonstrate that the costs of implementation may adversely affect their bottom lines if government does not provide some financial relief, ranging from tax rebates to subsidizing public services for breastfeeding and childcare. In the absence of government action, women must choose between agitating for implementation of the law (at the risk of losing their jobs) or giving companies an excuse to limit employment opportunities for women.



5.3. Research and measurement gaps

Evidence-based planning, building on comprehensive baseline data, is often lacking. Many projects and programs are developed without a logical framework or theory of change, making it difficult to monitor and evaluate them. Context analysis has been lacking to the extent that projects are often implemented on the basis of stereotypical assumptions about the marginalization suffered by women and other target groups. Monitoring structures are often limited to quantifying numbers of women who have benefited, with their success pegged on their repayment rates rather than the outcomes of their enterprises. Indicators of economic empowerment are not well established as initiatives do not arise from logical analysis of what empowerment results would look like. This implementation reality calls for more aggressive action research that should include both government implementers and beneficiaries.

The fact that government does not conduct evaluations of its WEE programs is also a big gap since there is no serious stock-taking to learn and review program outcomes. Most studies have flagged the inability to define WEE across women's diversity, taking into consideration the social variables of empowerment, as a limitation. This calls for a more coordinated and robust response from researchers, to design and conduct appropriate studies.

There is also a considerable gap in data collection on unpaid care work. Government rarely invests in domestic time-use surveys that may show household gender-disaggregated responsibilities. Even though CSOs and university research institutions have occasionally conducted such studies, they have generally been limited in scope and coverage and are often not sustained to reveal trends useful to policy analysis. Even when their data is available, it is rarely included by KNBS in official data to be used by government in policy formulation and planning.

There are also gaps in the institutional environment and arrangements for policy research on WEE, which typically is conducted through university women's and gender studies research departments. The departments are not well established in terms of financial and human resources (researchers) to conduct research on prioritized aspects of WEE, including unpaid care work and employment. Universities cover the costs of paying faculty in part from tuition fees and mostly from government budgetary allocations, which have been falling short of projections. Faculty time is mostly taken up by teaching and supervision amid increased enrolment of undergraduate students. The research agenda has thus been compromised, as even faculty employed as researchers are required to teach and supervise students.

Women's and gender studies departments are also expected to take on institutional matters of "gender management", such as monitoring how the universities are mainstreaming gender and dealing with sexual and gender-based violence on campus. Even though the universities expect the departments to raise resources for research, there is little evidence of strategic resource mobilization plans and systematic implementation. Faculty members interviewed could not identify any notable difference (in practice) between teaching and gender research departments.⁷⁴ Bureaucratic delays and personality differences were also cited as reasons for not mobilizing enough resources for research. There has therefore been relatively little consistent focus on conducting research on WEE in these departments. Generally, university knowledge management systems are inadequate to guide researchers in finding and using relevant research. It is difficult, for instance, to find a thematic listing of students' academic research across universities through an easily accessible portal. One needs to visit libraries of individual universities and, even then, little assistance is available.

74 From unstructured interviews with Faculty from University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University.



The production and use of gender statistics in Kenya has also been hampered by the inadequate coordination and collaboration between data producers at various levels, due to a lack of trust and siloed data communities, and the limited popular demand for data-driven decision-making.

With reference to policy research, there are no systematic links between government policy-making systems and research institutions. Even state universities have no direct ties to the National Bureau of Statistics that would allow their data to be captured in official data sets and analyses for use by policymakers. Universities are also not formally linked to policy-making ministries and departments and the latter are not in the habit of looking for evidence from researchers. A 2018 KNBS assessment found that a lack of alignment between the current policy and legislative arrangement and constitutional requirements regarding the use of data and information.⁷⁵ The Statistics Act of 2006 legislative arrangements fail to encourage wider statistical participation by recognizing the roles of universities and research institutions in collecting and producing sub-national data. Even county governments do not have a policy or legal framework to guide statistical activities, nor do they have the systems necessary to generate and use (sub-national data). It is the understanding of KNBS that it is solely mandated by the law to collect national data for planning. This is despite constitutional requirements for entities such as counties to generate data for their own planning.

The production and use of gender statistics in Kenya has also been hampered by the inadequate coordination and collaboration between data producers at various levels, due to a lack of trust and siloed data communities, and the limited popular demand for data-driven decision-making.

To address the lack of government use of data outside official statistics, university research institutions need an advocacy unit that reaches out to policymakers to interest them in the data they generate. In the absence of such a unit, partnership with CSOs that are proactive in gender policy advocacy could be another avenue. Unfortunately, university research departments also have very few links with policy advocacy CSOs. Some researchers from university gender departments work on a consultancy basis with policy advocacy CSOs, but their respective universities are not involved. Institutional arrangements for inclusive and complimentary policy research and advocacy between CSOs, PSOs, and government policy makers are also weak. Even though CSOs engaged in WEE policy advocacy and implementation have shown greater flexibility to innovate and launch pilot initiatives that tackle the issues in a more comprehensive manner, there is no mechanism for adopting and sustaining successful initiatives within mainstream government WEE programs. These weaknesses in institutional learning and interlinkages within the policy chain sees government policymakers working independently from researchers and often struggling to accommodate CSO advocacy efforts. The end result is that the potential value addition of better policy advocacy skills by CSOs does not trickle down to institutions such as universities that have stronger capacity to generate evidence.

Public university research departments also suffer from limited government funding. Traditionally, most research funding has been from development partner and private sector foundation grants without any direct linkage to national priorities, and often not suited to institutional capacity needs. Such funds are also project-based and may not adequately cover staff development and operational costs.

75 UN Women. "Making every Woman and Girl Count. 2018 Annual Report." Accessed September 2020. <https://data.unwomen.org/publications/making-every-woman-and-girl-count-2018-annual-report-implementation-phase>

6. Potential Partners In A WEE-Focused Research Agenda



Broadly, university-based research institutions focused on gender or women's empowerment have arisen from the efforts of lecturers/researchers associated with NGOs that were doing policy advocacy on women's empowerment.

We have noted a considerable overlap between policy-focused CSOs and the university research community at the individual level, but few institutional links. Here we discuss the origins of WEE-focused research in Kenya and introduce the main organizations that may be relevant to a future GrOW East Africa agenda.

6.1. Universities and research institutions

Research on gender by Kenyan researchers is a relatively recent⁷⁶ endeavour that started with policy advocacy, mostly by university researchers operating from NGOs or as consultants for the UN and multi-lateral agencies such as the World Bank. Policy advocacy has centred largely around UN-led initiatives such as the Decade for Women, efforts leading up to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, promotion of reproductive rights and health issues that informed the International Conference on Population and Development, and the emphasis on the “girl child” in the World Conference on Education for All. Regional advocacy organizations founded in Kenya included the African Women Communications and Development Network (FEMNET) and Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). Kenyan researchers, who formed the bulk of the FEMNET Gender Trainers Team,⁷⁷ formed the Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development (CCGD) in 1995, forging a national research and advocacy agenda on issues of gender equality and women's empowerment. CCGD prioritized capacity building for gender awareness and mainstreaming, evidence-based gender advocacy, mainly targeting key government ministries such as for education, finance and planning, health and agriculture. The then Central Bureau of Statistics (under the Ministry of Planning) was strategically (and successfully) directed to disaggregate data by sex and conduct gender analysis, while the Ministry of Finance Budget Office adopted gender-responsive budgeting.

These university researchers—mostly women—led the push to establish women's/gender studies courses, institutes, and departments in a number of public universities. Further afield was the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD), which brought together a number of feminist-leaning researchers under the Kenyan local chapter.

Broadly, university-based research institutions focused on gender or women's empowerment have arisen from the efforts of lecturers/researchers associated with NGOs that were doing policy advocacy on women's empowerment. There was also pressure from students and staff resulting from increased incidents on-campus of sexual and gender-based violence and complaints of work-based discrimination against women. University administrators also had to comply with performance objectives on gender, particularly gender mainstreaming, which nearly all universities have adopted as a guiding principle. Finally, the rise of women's and gender studies research programs also stems from a pan-African feminist push to institutionalize women's empowerment.

We highlight some of the research institutions most likely to advance a WEE agenda in Appendix 2.

Most of the WEE programs by university research departments have tended to focus on:

- ensuring gender mainstreaming within universities policies and workplaces
- different aspects of women involvement in SMEs and micro-credit initiatives
- women's participation in political leadership and executive level leadership
- women participation in formal sector employment and businesses, and
- women in small-scale trade

⁷⁶ From the late 1980s and early 1990s.

⁷⁷ Beginning of the 1990s.

A limited number of studies relate to gender aspects of public policy. There is more interest being shown in care work as shown in research initiatives under discussion by teams/hubs at the Kenyatta University Centre for Gender Equity and Empowerment (CGEE) and the University of Nairobi African Women's Studies Centre (AWSC). The two universities are completing funding and partnership agreements to implement WEE projects that include a direct focus on care work.

Research studies done for Master's and PhD programs show greater diversity but are beyond the scope of this study.

6.2. CSOs and other policy research and advocacy champions

The research activities of CSOs have traditionally focused on action-focused policy advocacy, generating data to support policy solutions to bridge gender gaps. Because their research on inequalities and discrimination affecting women is aggressively disseminated and informs their lobbying and advocacy campaigns to get government to respond appropriately, CSOs have been visible actors in the struggle for women's empowerment. They have also fostered working relationships with funders such as bilateral donors, UN agencies, and increasingly international private sector foundations, giving them an advantage in attracting government attention for the resources they bring with them.



Chief among these CSOs are: AAWORD, CCGD, Consumer Unit Trust Society, Equality Now, FAWE, FEMNET, the Federation of International Women Lawyers, GROOTS Kenya, and Women Empowerment Link. Key areas where CSOs have conducted and utilized action research data include:

- education, including producing gender-disaggregated data on adult literacy and basic, higher, and tertiary education attendance, retention and performance, and girl child education
- women's political participation and leadership
- women in agricultural development and employment
- achievement of gender equality across sectors using gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment strategies
- gender participation in access to and control of resources, including public finance, budgeting processes, and utilization of public resources
- issues negatively affecting women's empowerment such as sexual and gender-based violence, patriarchy, and other harmful cultural practices
- structural gender-based discrimination in laws and policies
- women's participation in livelihood sectors and the overall economy
- their employment and social contributions through unpaid work, and
- environment, climate change and energy issues.

The AWSC at the University of Nairobi has a provision for partnership with implementing CSOs for practical engagement in action research but also for dissemination and policy advocacy purposes. GROOTS is one national CSO already working in such a partnership, alongside Oxfam Kenya.⁷⁸

Among the CSOs, FEMNET has had the longest engagement with highlighting unpaid care work as a central issue to WEE. Their advocacy has called for women and men to share unpaid care work more evenly; for governments to invest in high-quality public services to free up women's time and ensure quality care services are universally available; for carers to be actively included in decisions around care provision; for employers to be obliged by law to provide paid maternity and parental leave and flexible work proportionate with caring responsibilities; and for recognizing, measuring, and valuing the amount of unpaid care work that is carried out by women.⁷⁹ FEMNET has also continuously called on donors and governments to fund time-use surveys in every country to count the full extent of unpaid care work. GROOTS approach is to integrate time-use surveys into WEE project implementation among its rural women collectives as a way of enhancing their agency.

The *Uthabiti* Africa – Quality Affordable Childcare for All in Kenya initiative has inbuilt collection of data and documentation at every phase, along with workforce development and policy/legal advocacy to entrench childcare in county and national policies/laws. As described in Section 3.2, a number of implementing agencies and other stakeholders are involved in its consultation-driven design.

78 This information was discerned from interviews with researchers from respective institutions with no documentation to back up the information as the planning and contractual process had not been finalized.

79 FEMNET. "We Must Recognize the Care Economy and Redistribute Care Work This is #The Africa We Want!" FEMNET. October 11, 2016. <https://femnet.org/2016/10/we-must-recognize-the-care-economy-and-redistribute-care-work-this-is-theafricawewant/>

7. Policy Entry Points and Principles for Policy-Research Uptake



Here, we highlight some of the most promising spaces for policy and program impact, looking at both the supply and demand side and taking on board the unfolding implications of COVID-19. On the supply side, the investment of government, private sector and CSO resources necessitate formulation or review of policies, guidelines, action plans and implementation mechanisms. For this reason, it may present more immediate entry points.

Increasing access to financial services for women and women-owned businesses

Partnership between government affirmative action funds and commercial financial institutions to widen their access to loans and other financial services has increased the number of women reached within a shorter time span. The immediate result has been a rapid increase in the number of women having accounts and accessing funds and increasing registration of businesses by women including into formal medium, small and micro enterprises.

This expansion has come with its challenges, including opening women's informal businesses to taxation without adequately preparing and guiding them. There is also evidence, mostly anecdotal, that the relatively good repayment rates don't reflect strong performance by these enterprises, but rather the pressure women's group members feel to pay, despite their circumstances. In some cases, women have borrowed money from their relations to service loans. Signs are that commercial banks are finding the concept profitable since quite a number have come up with their own special accounts⁸⁰ and services for women, which resemble the joint ventures with government. This is a potential area of growth for WEE since it is now being mainstreamed into lending practice. Research is needed to document, review, monitor, and contribute to regulatory frameworks and banking/financial policies and to explore a greater diversity of women could benefit. Policy spaces to influence include: Central Bank-managed regulatory frameworks to make banking rules more responsive to women's needs and circumstances; sectoral policy organs such as in agriculture and entrepreneurship managed by line ministries; and WEE initiative-specific policy-making and oversight organs such as SDfG and NGEc.

80 Such as the Diva account offered by Standard Chartered bank, which is exclusive to women: <https://www.sc.com/ke/save/diva-current-account/apply/>



Since 2018, the government has been reforming the administration of affirmative funds with a view to consolidating them into a banking institution – Biashara Bank – for purposes of better coordination and accessibility. The policy decision has already been made but specific regulations and operational guidelines are still in the works. As alluded to before, criticism of the move has centred on the fact that the government appears only to be concerned with how the money will get into the hands of the end user rather than the nature of the problem it is trying to solve through the many funds. The idea of a consolidation is not bad in and of itself, but more in-depth research is needed on the administration and outcomes of existing funds and their strengths and weaknesses to inform the restructuring. This presents a major opportunity to shape the next funding and implementation phase to better address WEE.

Connecting and raising the visibility of women-owned businesses

Among the new program initiatives highlighted earlier is 50 Million African Women Speak, which provides a unique regional opportunity to expand women’s access to markets make their businesses more visible and more formal. Kenya is planning to register 2.4 million businesswomen, increasing networking among them, and share existing WEE resources for easy accessibility. There has not been an initiative for women before on this scale – this in and of itself calls for serious engagement by the policy research community. One of the low-lying fruits is the data the initiative will generate, which may be utilized to support other program initiatives, including financial services and capacity building. Forward planning is also needed to ensure the sustainability of the initiative beyond the planned project phase, when ownership is set to pass on to respective African governments. There is a need for research to determine how this will be done, factoring in the specific needs of Kenyan businesswomen while increasing their solidarity with women elsewhere in Africa.



The biggest demographic challenge to WEE programming is that millions of mostly poor women are forced into informal micro-enterprises as a basic means of survival.

Evaluating and scaling innovations and integrating them into the WEE national ecosystem

Business spaces that were not initially designed in a gender-responsive manner, such as mobile money transfers and banking platforms, have shown a high rate of adoption by women-led micro, small and medium enterprises. One case study on women in the fishing industry showed benefits that range from more secure savings by businesswomen to easier, more reliable payments that boosted trust in these small traders and enabled them to increase profit margins and expand their businesses.⁸¹ Women have also shown higher participation in managing cash points such as M-Pesa/Airtel shops and generally benefit significantly from this finance model. Transfers and savings of SMEs led by women is set to be influenced even more by default as the COVID-19 pandemic increases consumers' fear of handling cash. This calls for more research on how to maximize the use of cashless transfers while reducing their risks and costs.

CSOs have traditionally implemented, and are still implementing, a number of innovative pro-poor approaches to WEE, such as those highlighted by SNV. But such initiatives are often not sustained beyond the project phase or focus only on narrow profit pursuits that compromise empowerment goals. This is an area where research is essential to document and evaluate the impact of past similar initiatives and draw lessons for inclusion in policy formulation and review. Research focus should be on the design of policies that reinforce coordination and collaboration between public and private sectors, and truly empowering programs led by CSOs that can facilitate uptake by women, on terms they can afford.

Strengthening women's local economic initiatives

The demand-oriented spaces such as women's solidarity groups provide a big opportunity for growing businesses and empowering women. Such groups are most notable in financial models such as table banking that enable poor women to save and lend their savings at an interest. Despite the good press about the success of these efforts, little objective evidence is available on their WEE value. It does not help that some group members mostly borrow for subsistence rather than starting or growing businesses. The main value of such "home grown" models remains the fact that they reflect poor women's own needs and they increase trust among members. The fact that they continue to increase numerically and in terms of the money they collect is indicative of resilience. Supporting their modernization and upscaling may lead to faster gains. This should be explored further by research and supportive policy based on data trends.

Tailoring WEE initiatives to meet the needs of poor/marginalized women

The biggest demographic challenge to WEE programming is that millions of mostly poor women are forced into informal micro-enterprises as a basic means of survival. Most are within the agricultural food chain but some are in urban petty trade, such as the resellers of second-hand clothing. Poor women entrepreneurs ought to remain a priority for WEE efforts, with a view to reducing subsistence-driven businesses and showing qualitative gains in the lives of the women. This calls for action research that involves the poor and marginalized in the design and execution of projects and programs in a manner that accords them respect, consults with them, and enhances their voices and identity.

81 White, Danielle. "The Social and Economic Impact of Mpesa on the Lives of Women in the Fishing Industry on Lake Victoria." Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection. Spring 2012. https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/1246/

Effective outreach to marginalized women through community-based, women-friendly media and providing appropriate information and affordable solutions is key. It is pointless to come up with a policy such as AGPO that opens procurement to the poor and marginalized but excludes them through procurement protocols that require specialized knowledge, institutional connections, and capital outlays that are far beyond the target group. Such initiatives should include bridging methods such as preparatory programs that level the playing field for poor women.

Ensuring the health, wellbeing, and safety of women workers

Policy research should monitor, document and spur advocacy on the implementation of laws such as the Health Act that support a safe working environment for women and ensure women receive requisite support for unpaid care work to free them to engage in paid employment. The focus should be on researching solutions to repetitive time-consuming activities such as childcare responsibilities that reduce women's mobility and identifying accessible domestic appliances and sources of energy that reduce the time taken to perform tasks.

Special programs that end up employing many women even when that was not the intention, such as industrial parks and export processing zones, often exploit poor and vulnerable women through long hours of work, poor and unsafe working conditions, and low pay. To avoid inadvertent exploitation of women, researchers should engage women to identify programs that promote enterprise development, and supply chain and marketing practices that purposively empower women. It may also help for researchers to document case studies and lessons learned from gender analysis of low pay, mass employment initiatives such as export processing zones to inform more gender-responsive planning and implementation practices. Such practices may include social safety nets, subsidized child care, and pro-poor housing development for the low-paid workers.

Expanding policy research on care work

Research initiatives on care work by gender research hubs at the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University promise to shine light on the policy issues. Their partnership with policy advocacy CSOs addresses some of the gaps identified in this paper,



In the face of the pandemic and concurrent multiple shocks, WEE policy advocacy efforts should aim to enhance collaborative partnerships across the policy cycle to generate evidence and use it strategically to mitigate their negative impacts on women, while promoting policy innovations for women-led enterprises.

related to different policy chain actors working in silos. The same goes for *Uthabiti Africa – Quality Affordable Childcare for All* in Kenya, which is still at inception stage but promises to use a model grounded in policy research to design and pilot holistic and sustainable models of child care for working mothers. Research niches related to care work include: action research on accessible and affordable quality childcare models for poor working mothers; supporting (county) governments to collect/ access and utilize gender-disaggregated data to make gender-responsive budgets; and partnering with KNBS to conduct time-use surveys with a view to making them part and parcel of the periodic national survey data they produce.

Adopting an inclusive and culturally appropriate approach to WEE

Inclusiveness should become the hallmark of WEE initiatives, including and respecting the full diversity of women in their design and planning. Those with disabilities, those suffering stigma because of HIV status, those engaged in sex work or who face discrimination on the basis of gender or sexual orientation, single mothers, widows, and refugees should not suffer double marginalization as women and as carriers of stigma. Factors that define and entrench such stigma should be addressed in project design, with resources set aside to increase awareness, accessibility, and redress mechanisms for these groups.

It is also important that WEE programs be culturally appropriate to the lives and circumstances of targeted women. Cultural appropriateness does not mean blind conformity to existing – usually discriminatory patriarchal – cultural norms. Norms that inform negative cultural beliefs and practices should be problematized and locally feasible solutions sought to free women. WEE projects should be planned as a means through which women are liberated from regressive cultural beliefs and practices.

Addressing the impact of COVID-19 and other shocks

In the face of the pandemic and concurrent multiple shocks, WEE policy advocacy efforts should aim to enhance collaborative partnerships across the policy cycle to generate evidence and use it strategically to mitigate their negative impacts on women, while promoting policy innovations for women-led enterprises. There is a need to research and advocate for interventions that will cushion the impacts on both formal and informal production sectors. Policy research and advocacy should also aim to strengthen the institutional capacities of state and non-state actors to effectively address other negative impacts such as rising sexual and gender-based violence and to protect and secure women's lives and livelihoods. Policies should also seek to improve the management of data and knowledge on WEE within the context of COVID-19 to ensure the efficacy and accountability of interventions.

Even though WEE initiatives are often presented as charitable undertakings to “support women” and may seem expendable during the pandemic, there is a need to move away from this mind-set and apply research-based, standardized performance measures, both for good design and accountability. Some of the more effective measures to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic have come from the private sector. Safaricom⁸² is implementing a fee-waiver on money transfers below KSH 1000 (about US\$10) through the M-Pesa network to reduce the use of cash during the outbreak.⁸³ It will also allow SMEs to increase their daily M-Pesa transaction limits from KSH70,000 to KSH150,000 (~ US\$700 to \$1,500).

82 Kenya's largest telecommunications company.

83 Bright, Jake. “Kenya turns to M-Pesa mobile-money to stem the spread of COVID-19”. Tech Crunch. March 16, 2020. <https://techcrunch.com/2020/03/16/kenya-turns-to-its-mobile-money-dominance-to-stem-the-spread-of-covid-19/>

8. Concluding Recommendations

Judging by the existing policy frameworks and related initiatives, Kenya demonstrates considerable potential to enact, review, and implement WEE policies and practices on unpaid care work, sex segregation, and women's employment. While the performance of existing policies has not been independently evaluated, it is clear that implementation falls short. Some existing policies need to be reviewed and new ones enacted to bridge existing gaps. The biggest gaps relate to policies on unpaid work and the concentration of women in the largely unregulated informal sector. It is apparent that the uncoordinated implementation of WEE initiatives, as a series of separate projects with a singular focus on aspects such as micro finance/savings and credit, makes it difficult to comprehensively address the intersectionality of factors that undermine policies and programs addressing unpaid care work, sex segregation, and women's collectives and agency.

The need for research is underscored by the mismatch in supply and demand factors. CSOs have traditionally led in mostly action-oriented policy advocacy research that aims to generate data to support policy solutions to bridge gender gaps. Because their research has often targeted inequalities and discrimination that affects women and followed up with informed advocacy campaigns to get government to respond, CSOs have been more visible as actors in the struggle for women's empowerment. We suggest this offers an opportunity for greater policy research partnerships between CSOs and university-affiliated research institutions to collaboratively work on generating data and evidence for WEE policy formulation, review, and implementation. The following are some recommendations to address identified gaps.



On strengthening coordination of WEE policy formulation, review and implementation

- Develop multi-sectoral partnerships for policy research and advocacy linking university institution researchers, government policy formulation and oversight agencies, CSOs, and private sector initiatives and organizations to benefit from the complementarity in the roles and expertise of the different players.
- Support studies and multi-sectoral partnerships to strengthen effective coordination at the State Department for Gender and accountability oversight by the NGEC to improve the design, monitoring, and evaluation of projects and stakeholder participation.

On unpaid care work

- Work towards policy research partnerships that will harmonize existing policies touching on unpaid care work and review and develop new policies for consideration.
- Support the development and strengthening of policies to facilitate implementation of laws addressing women's care work, such as the 2017 Health Act.
- Support studies on employment law and policies related to maternity and child care to address the impacts of women's unpaid work roles and explicitly prohibit discrimination against women in employment, including in hiring and promotions.
- Support research and advocacy on quantifying and valuing women's unpaid care work activities and recognizing their contributions to the gross national product.

On evaluations

- Advocate for and support government in conducting impact evaluation on programs implemented in key areas, such as on unpaid care work, skills development, affirmative action, protection of women and girls against violence, and social safety nets for different categories of women, such as mothers.

On emerging opportunities

- Work through multi-sectoral partnerships⁸⁴ as policy research associates with government to seize key opportunities identified in this study, such as 50 Million African Women Speak, to enable longer term sustainability and ensure proper monitoring, evaluation and documentation, as well as clarity on policy direction.

On sex-disaggregated data

- Support comprehensive policies and implementation mechanisms that support collection and publication of data disaggregated by sex/ gender, ethnicity, disability, and age, in order to inform policies and programs on women and girls and assist in tracking progress toward the gender-related targets of the SDGs.

On labour and employment

- Support research on policies and laws that will strengthen regulatory frameworks for the informal and agricultural sectors to provide affected women with access to social protection and monitor their working conditions.

On COVID-19 impacts

- Support an initial scoping study on the effects of the pandemic on WEE that shall form the basis of a longitudinal study on how the diversity of women are coping with the impacts of COVID-19.

84 Those that have membership of CSOs, university researchers, and development partners.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Highlights of WEE initiatives by non-state actors

CARE Kenya's Women and Girls Economic Empowerment⁸⁵ program provides opportunities for women and girls to access, and take control of, productive assets through financial inclusion and building of assets for a sustainable livelihood. It is aligned to SDG 1 on ending poverty, SDG 5 on reducing gender inequalities and SDG 8 on sustainable economic growth. The target is livelihood insecure women and girls constrained by lack of access to, and control over, productive assets, basic services and denial of rights living in urban informal and rural settings. The project aims to build their/ respective communities' capacities using Group Savings and Loans methodology as an entry point. A broad range of interventions include: financial education/literacy, rural sales agents, micro enterprise development, linkages to formal financial institutions, market engagement and poverty graduation models. This ongoing intervention is driven by innovative approaches to reach the target group while leveraging on technology.

SNV Kenya is implementing the Enhancing Opportunities for Women's Enterprises (EOWE) programme to enhance the implementation of gender-sensitive policies while tackling socio-economic barriers at local levels to enhance economic opportunities for women entrepreneurs.⁸⁶ EOWE is building the capacity of local (mainly) CSO actors, to lead this change. CSOs are targeted to foster collaboration among relevant stakeholders, influence agenda-setting and hold the (local) government accountable. SNV therefore equips CSOs with tools and skills that are appropriate for influencing county government policies and budgets. They have engaged in advocacy training since 2018 of local actors from eight target counties to enhance their capacity to mobilise and empower rural women and engage with county government to implement gender-sensitive policies and to allocate budgets on priority issues that address the needs of women entrepreneurs. Local actors used the acquired skills to influence increased women's involvement in the processes of (five year) County Integrated Development Plans and the development of the annual budget of the 2018/2019 financial year. Lessons and experiences from these advocacy activities were used

to develop an EOWE Advocacy Manual to guide CSOs to advocate for the empowerment of women entrepreneurs involvement in political processes⁸⁷. The manual presents a set of guidelines and tools on how to influence policies and budgets at the county level through advocacy.

United States International University-Africa GAME Centre⁸⁸ is implementing "The Effectiveness of the Metro Agri-Food Living Lab for Gender Inclusive Youth Entrepreneurship Development in Kenya" project⁸⁹ through GAME Centre and Busara Center of Behavioral Economics. Sixty percent of the project targets women in Agribusiness. This project seeks to work closely with financial institutions that will avail funding for successful initiatives. Gender will be mainstreamed to ensure that it leads to gender empowerment of women and young girls in agribusiness. The project will also focus on innovative solutions to improve food security. It aims to expose trainees to business concept evaluation and development, business planning, marketing and feasibility studies, linkages to finance and marketing channels, strategic advice and legal assistance, specialized technical assistance and development of a business plan to be presented to potential financiers. Successful applicants will be assigned business mentors. The project is expected to spur youth businesses, especially in the Agricultural sector and create jobs for the youth. The most significant thing about the project is its good planning that integrates training, mentorship, and financing with action research to that provides data to improve chances of success.

85 Care. "Women and Girls Economic Empowerment." Accessed July 2020 <https://www.care.or.ke/index.php/what-we-do/womenempowerment>

86 SNV. "Enhancing Opportunities for Women's Enterprise – Analysis of Policy Environment for Women's Economic Empowerment." Accessed June 2020. <https://snv.org/project/enhancing-opportunities-womens-enterprises-eowe>

87 The manual provides information on the policy environment for WEE in Kenya and presents a set of guidelines on how to influence policies and budgets at the county level through advocacy.

88 Through a grant of KSH56,886,900 by CultiAF, a joint program of IDRC and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research.

89 Project period 2020-2022.

Appendix 2: University research institutions

Kenyatta University Centre for Gender Equity and Empowerment (CGEE) is committed to achieving gender equity, equality and inclusiveness. It is tasked with mainstreaming gender in all the University's operations.

Egerton University: Institute of Women Gender and Development Studies was established in 1991 to address and respond to the demands and challenges⁹⁰ faced by female students and as a forum for debates and discourses on gender issues. Its mandate is to promote gender equity by undertaking gender-related research, policy formulation, advocacy, training, consultancy, documentation and dissemination, and to provide expert advice and services on gender issues to students and staff of Egerton University and surrounding communities. It also seeks to be in the forefront in networking with other organizations in advocating for change in laws, policies and systems that continue to perpetrate gender disparities.

University of Nairobi: African Women Studies Centre (AWSC) has a Panafrican orientation that is anchored in the recognition that experiences of African women have not been part of mainstream knowledge development and have often not been a source of public and "legitimate knowledge" that guides development in Africa⁹¹. It is focused on making visible African women's knowledge through academic and policy debates in academic institutions and other fora at the national and regional levels. AWSC is also cognizant of the important linkage between women of Africa and those of African descent living in other parts of the world. Its mission is to promote intellectual inquiry by and on the experiences of women of Africa and the Diaspora through research, teaching, publication and dissemination of knowledge, and to engage with policy makers, women's organizations and civil society in order to bring African women's perspectives into development and scholarship in Kenya, Africa and around the world. AWSC takes on an African feminist approach to women's empowerment by women.

AWSC core functions include academic Programmes and Research Division that offers academic postgraduate programmes; generation of knowledge and dissemination of research findings; being a resource for policy-makers in their development; formulation of policies affecting women; and bringing African women's experiences and concerns into mainstream knowledge development. The Policy Advocacy Division champions change to ensure women's views and perspectives find their way into policy formulation and institutional development using evidence from research and dialogue among African women. The Outreach, Linkages and Mentoring Division seeks to consult and engage governmental organizations and NGOs in the formulation and development of programmes and policies affecting African women; collaborate and link up with global institutions and organizations involved in women's issues; promote collaboration, links, and exchange programmes with African scholars, organizations and institutions committed to the study and research on women's issues in the African Diaspora; and to promote collaboration in areas of teaching, research and consultancy on Programmes targeting African women. Publication and Documentation Division aims to document the activities of the Centre, publish research findings and any relevant information, collect publications regarding women issues and serve as a source of information on data pertinent to women issues in general.

Kenyatta University Centre for Gender Equity and Empowerment (CGEE) is committed to achieving gender equity, equality and inclusiveness. It is tasked with mainstreaming gender in all the University's operations. CGEE activities are intended to create awareness of the gender dynamics and issues affecting the University such as gender-based violence and sexual harassment. Its expected result is "improvement of relations and welfare of all staff and students at the University,

90 Such as unwanted pregnancies, sexual harassment, student leadership representation as well as underrepresentation in science based curriculum such as Engineering and Medicine courses

91 College of Humanities and Social Sciences. "African Women Studies Centre." University of Nairobi. Accessed June 2020. <https://chss.uonbi.ac.ke/index.php/schools/african-womens-studies-centre>

Among the constitutional commissions, the NGEC has also been leading at commissioning research on key legal policy areas affecting women including WEE.

where rights and privileges are respected and adhered to⁹². Among the guiding principles is the recognition that “although gender mainstreaming will apply to men, it is important to consider and/or enhance women’s - based interventions to redress historical imbalances⁹³.”

Regular activities of CGEE include: inducting new staff and students through training on gender awareness; equipping university community with skills on the need to take responsibility of their safety within Campus and outside Campus; students’ Training of Trainers who then become gender ambassadors among their peers; regular provision of sex-disaggregated data obtained from staff recruitment and employment at all levels; ensuring compliance to the constitutional mandate of not less than one third gender inclusion. CGEE offers consultancy services in: gender awareness training; development of Gender Policies; gender gaps assessment/ Impact studies; gender sensitive research; gender monitoring and evaluation including development of gender sensitive Indicators for programs and projects. Its staff often take on institutional research and capacity building consultancies including with the UN.

Moi University Institute for Gender Equity Research and Development (IGERD) was officially set up in 2005 to “enhance gender balance and equity in staff recruitment, promotion, student enrolment and in the overall University policy decision making processes.”⁹⁴ Its mission is to advocate, develop, and promote gender equity in all aspects of life through research, policy development, education, and collaboration and linkages at local, national, regional and international levels. IGERD has the mandate from the university to implement performance contract targets under gender mainstreaming and disability mainstreaming. IGERD is managed by a board, drawing representatives from schools nominated by deans. The board gives policy direction on implementation and planning of the university gender policy and the targets set out in the performance contract, which are spelt out each financial year. The board is chaired by the deputy vice chancellor (Academic Affairs, Research and Extension). Among the constitutional commissions, the NGEC has also been leading at commissioning research on key legal policy areas affecting women including WEE.

Appendix 3: Key policy stakeholders and intermediaries working on WEE

There are many organizations dealing with different aspects of WEE that may not all be accommodated in the selection we make in this paper. The criteria for selecting the organizations was that they contribute relatively significantly to the WEE areas of study focus in a specific way and they do so purposively to the extent that it is possible to independently verify what they are doing.

- The first category of stakeholders are government agencies mandated by law to make WEE policy; these include ministries, departments and independent constitutional commissions.
- In second place are international and local CSOs, as well as private sector consortia whose main mandate is evidence-based policy advocacy – meaning that they conduct mainly action research in specific areas of their policy interest and work with the relevant government policy makers to make or review policy. These CSOs may also help mobilize resources for government to facilitate research and action planning to implement policy, as well as pilot projects of the same – usually on a smaller scale before possible scale up by government.

92 Kenyatta University Centre for Gender Equity and Empowerment. “About”. Kenyatta University. Accessed June 2020. <http://ku.ac.ke/gender/41-about>

93 Ibid.

94 Institute of Gender Equity, Research and Development. “Institute of Gender Equity, Research and Development.” Accessed July 2020 <https://igerd.mu.ac.ke/index.php>

Universities and research institutions were selected on the basis of past and present research interest and work in any of the study domains.

- In third place are university research institutions and teaching/research departments that conduct institutional – mostly longitudinal academic – research that is of policy relevance to government planners. The academic departments also produce master and PhD student research projects that give insights into different aspects of WEE.
- The last category are CSOs and PSOs that implement WEE initiatives on a noticeable and traceable scale, and also collect implementation related data such as records of savings, loans and repayment as well as profiles of enterprises.

Mapping of organizations in WEE with preferred actors highlighted.

- The criteria for recommending/preferring some government agencies over others mainly had to do with: their relevance to provision and/or oversight regarding technical and other support to WEE initiatives in such areas as planning, monitoring and evaluation, accountability to principles of gender equality and non-discrimination as well as women's empowerment, policy oversight at national and regional/international levels, housing/management of projects/ programs and WEE implementation mechanisms.
- CSO/PSO research policy advocacy institutions were preferred based on existing information regarding current programs/projects and advocacy initiatives they are engaged in that are within the core study domains, as well as showing initiative to be innovative in tackling the issues. It also mattered that these non state actors show deliberate efforts to influence government policy making and implementation in a systematic manner such as through established multi agency Sector Working groups and other committees and Task Forces set up by government to address aspects of the study domains. The organizations demonstrate capacity to add value to concerns of the study.
- Universities research institutions were selected on the basis of past and present research interest and work in any of the study domains. It also mattered that such interest is consistent with their department/faculty mandates on gender equality and women's empowerment. The three recommended have ongoing research projects in at least one of the study domains.



Government: Policy Making	Cso/Pso Research / Policy Advocacy	Universities Research Institutions
Ministry of Finance	SNV	University of Nairobi: African Women Studies Centre (AWSC)
Ministry of Planning and Economic Development	Care	Kenyatta University: Centre for Gender Equity and Empowerment (CGEE)
Ministry of Public service, gender and youth	Oxfam	Moi University: Institute for Gender Equity Research and Development (IGERD)
Ministry of ICT and youth	Plan International	Egerton University: Institute of Women Gender and Development Studies
Ministry of Lands	Hivos	United States International University
Ministry of East African Community and Regional Development	TechnoServe	
Ministry of Trade	Hope Foundation for African Women	
Department of Justice (Attorney General Office)	Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)	
National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC)	Women Education Researchers of Kenya	
Ministry of Devolution	African Women Communication and Development Network (FEMNET)	
Council of Governors	Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD)	
County Governments	Refugee Consortium of Kenya	
East African Community Secretariat	Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development (CCGD)	
Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa	Center for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW)	
	Federation of International Women Lawyers	
	Consumer Unit Trusts	
	Kenya Private Sector Alliance	
	East African Business Women Platform	

WEE Implementation CSOs and PSOs

The organizations selected have immediate past and/or current projects they are implementing in at least one of the areas of the study.

Name	Comments on Mandate/Scope	Projects in relevant domain
GROOTS Kenya	National grassroots organization	Unpaid care work Women collectives and agency
Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization	National grassroots organization	
Sauti Ya Wanawake Pwani	Regional grassroots organization	Women collectives and agency
Coast Women in Development (CWID)	Regional grassroots organization	Women Collectives and Agency
Women Empowerment Link (WEL)	National advocacy organization	Women Collectives and Agency
Rural Women Peace Link	Regional grassroots organization	Women Collectives and Agency
Single Mother Association of Kenya	National advocacy organization	Women Collectives and Agency
Hope Foundation for Women	Rural Community Development	
Womankind Kenya	National advocacy organization	Women Collectives and Agency
Joyful Women's Organization	Regional grassroots organization	
Marsabit Women Advocacy & Development Organization	Regional grassroots organization	Women Collectives and Agency
Horn of Africa Peace Advocacy	Regional grassroots organization	
Reproductive Health Youth Friendly Environment	Regional grassroots organization	Women Collectives and Agency

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Annex 1: Summary Tables for Women's Economic Empowerment Policy Landscape

Policy, Program, and/or Intervention	Geographic Reach	Target Groups	Theme	Implementation Capacity and Intensity	Intended Outcomes	Level of Effectiveness	Comments
Unpaid Care Work							
Safaricom employee childcare program	Kenya, Nairobi (Company Headquarters)	Employees who are mainly mothers	Unpaid care work	High capacity low intensity	Welfare	High – services accessible to all company employed carers (mothers/fathers)	Good practice that supports government policies on childcare through private sector participation as well as assures lactating mothers career progression
<i>Uthabiti</i> Africa Quality Affordable Childcare for All in Kenya	Nairobi, Mombasa & Kisumu in pilot phase	Caregivers, institutions offering childcare services/ advocacy & policy makers	Unpaid care work	Medium and medium intensity	Welfare, participation & control	At inception stage	The study found it innovative and considerable in scale to impact positively on the burden of unpaid care work for women as well as to their income and employability
Skill Development							
Enhancing Opportunities for Women Enterprises (SNV)	Selected counties in Kenya	CSOs working with women & women	Labour market segregation	High and low intensity	Access and participation	Medium but hard to tell	The initiative is innovative and aligned to policy implementation requirements
Vocational Education Vouchers for Out of School Youth in Kenya	Western Kenya	Out of School Youth	Labour market segregation	Low and medium intensity	Access and participation	High	It is an effective skills development initiative
Property and Asset							
Women and Girls Economic Empowerment (Care Kenya)	Selected counties	Livelihood insecure women and girls in informal urban and rural community settings	n/a	High and high intensity	Access, participation & control	Not yet determined	It is an intense skills, investment and mentoring initiative that relies on many other factors to succeed – probably too ambitious in scope
Collective Action							
The Effectiveness of the Metro Agri-Food Living Lab for Gender Inclusive Youth Entrepreneurship Development in Kenya” USIU Kenya	Selected counties	Women (60%) and youth	Labour market segregation	High and low intensity	Access and participation	Too early to tell	The study noted that it is a research project basically aimed at contributing to knowledge so may be limited in concrete empowerment achievements for women
Empowering Elderly Care Givers Project (GRROTS Kenya)	Murang’a and Kiambu Counties	Mostly women elderly caregivers	n/a	Low and low intensity	Welfare & participation	Medium/difficult to tell	The study lauded the idea but lacked strong basis for appraisal
Access to Markets							

Policy, Program, and/or Intervention	Geographic Reach	Target Groups	Theme	Implementation Capacity and Intensity	Intended Outcomes	Level of Effectiveness	Comments
50 Million African Women Speak Program	EAC & COMESA trade areas	Women in Business	Labour market segregation	Low capacity and high intensity	Access	Low just beginning – Kenya targets 2.5 Million but has registered about 2000 so far.	Study found it a viable data-oriented market access initiative for masses of women businesses in spite of regional and national inception challenges.
Ushanga Initiative	7 Arid and Semi- Arid Lands Counties	Pastoralist women in the beading industry-producers and marketers	Women collectives and agency	Low capacity medium intensity	Access & participation	Low but potentially high if fully supported.	Study found the initiative highly viable and potentially effective at transforming Ushanga (mainly currently traditional crafts industry) into a booming high paying export-oriented business that would significantly contribute to job creation and improved livelihoods among women from pastoralist communities.
Affirmative Action							
Biashara Bank	National	Women, youth, persons with disabilities	n/a	High capacity and high intensity	Access and participation	Low- still at planning and inception stage	Potentially critical for coordination and delivery of affordable financing to women but needs institutional development support
MTP3: Affirmative Action funds (WEF, Uwezo, National Government Affirmative Action Fund)	National	Women, youth, persons with disabilities	n/a	Medium capacity and high intensity	Access and participation	Low since it has involved small allocations to small groups of women	Commendable response to needs but needs to be better structures and scaled up.
Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO)		Women, youth, persons with disabilities	Labour market segregation	High capacity and high intensity	Access, Participation, control	Low for target group as they lack capacity	Best opportunity for WEE but structural barriers to access need to be addressed.

