

BPFA +30 KENYA

**A CIVIL
SOCIETY
SHADOW
REPORT ON**

**GENDER EQUALITY, PROGRESS,
AND PERSISTENT GAPS**

Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW) | Sustainable
Development Goals Kenya Forum (SDGs Kenya Forum) | Community
Advocacy and Awareness Trust (CRAWN Trust)

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We honor the tireless efforts of all those who have advocated for women's rights and gender equality over the past three decades. At the same time, we recognize the ongoing need for collective action to dismantle the barriers that continue to hinder the full realization of gender justice, particularly for the most marginalized communities.

As we look ahead, let us reaffirm our commitment to advancing the rights of women and girls everywhere, ensuring that the promises of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals are fully realized for all. Together, we can create a more just, equitable, and inclusive world—one where every individual has the opportunity to thrive.

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List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immuno-deficiency Syndrome
ASALs	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
BETA	Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
BPfA+30	30th Anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action
CAT	Convention Against Torture
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COG	Council of Governors
COVAW	Coalition on Violence Against Women
CRAWN TRUST	Community Advocacy and Awareness Trust
CREAW	Centre for Rights Education and Awareness
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
ECDE	Early Childhood Development Education
FIDA-K	Federation of Women Lawyers-Kenya
FPE	Free Primary Education
FSD-Kenya	Financial Sector Deepening Kenya
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GRB	Gender-Responsive Budgeting
GVRC	Gender Violence Recovery Centre
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JLOS	Justice, Law and Order Sector
KDHS	Kenya Demographic and Health Survey
KEPSA	Kenya Private Sector Alliance
KEWOPA	Kenya Women Parliamentary Association
KHRC	Kenya Human Rights Commission
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KNCHR	Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MHM	Menstrual Health Management
MOH	Ministry of Health

List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

MSWG	Multi-Sectoral Working Group on The Realization of The Not More Than Two Thirds Gender Principle
NAP-WPS	National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security
NCAJ	National Council on Administration of Justice
NCKK	National Council of Churches of Kenya
NCIC	National Cohesion and Integration Commission
NCPWD	National Council for Persons with Disabilities
NGEC	National Gender and Equality Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NITA	National Industrial Training Authority
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PSC	Public Service Commission
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UDPK	United Disabled Persons of Kenya
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women (now part of UN Women)
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAW	Violence Against Women
VSLAs	Village Savings and Loan Associations
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WEF	Women Enterprise Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
WRO	Women's Rights Organization

Executive Summary

Overview of Kenya's Progress and Challenges

In commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) in 2025, Kenya prepared the Beijing+30 report, covering the period from 2020 to 2024. This comprehensive document assessed the country's progress in implementing the BPfA's critical areas of concern, aligning them with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The report highlighted key achievements, including the integration of gender perspectives into national development plans and the strengthening of legal frameworks to promote women's rights.

As the government presents a national progress report, non-state actors are essential in offering an independent, critical, and evidence-based analysis to promote accountability, identify gaps, and provide alternative perspectives on gender equality commitments. Consequently, a CSO shadow report strengthens transparency, inclusivity, and accountability by integrating diverse viewpoints, particularly from existing data, grassroots women's organizations, marginalized communities, and advocacy groups.

In this report, the CSOs provide an alternative lens to assess gaps in policy implementation, emerging challenges, and unfulfilled commitments, highlighting disparities between policy frameworks and actual lived experiences. Furthermore, this report plays a crucial role in amplifying the voices of women and gender rights advocates, ensuring that their realities and concerns are reflected in national and international gender policy discussions. We note that Kenya has made notable progress in advancing gender equality over the past three decades under the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). One of the most remarkable strides in gender equality post-BPfA is the promulgation of Kenya's 2010 Constitution, which enshrines significant gains for women, addressing the 12 critical areas of concern and beyond. Other key legislative and policy reforms, particularly in areas of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), political representation, and economic empowerment have been enacted and in the process of implementation. However, implementation gaps, socio-cultural barriers, and chronic underfunding continue to hinder the full realization of gender equality.

While we commend the adoption of progressive laws, such as the Sexual Offences Act (2006), the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act (2015), and the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2011), enforcement remains weak and inconsistent. The Two-Thirds Gender Rule remains unimplemented, reflecting a lack of political will and entrenched patriarchal structures. (Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is not fully institutionalized, leading to underfunded initiatives in women's economic empowerment and GBV response. Socio-cultural barriers remain a significant challenge, with harmful traditional practices such as FGM, early child marriage, and gender stereotypes in education and labor markets impeding progress. The unpaid care work responsibility disproportionately falls on women and girls, limiting their education, employment, and political participation.

Women's political representation remains low, with political parties failing to prioritize gender inclusivity and electoral violence, including technology-facilitated/online violence, disproportionately discouraging female candidates. Additionally, the lack of comprehensive, sex-disaggregated data has made it difficult to assess progress and ensure accountability in gender equality programs.

Key Policy Recommendations

- 1** *Strengthen law enforcement and accountability mechanisms for gender laws and policies.*
- 2** *Ensure adequate funding to gender machinery or institutions and for gender-responsive programs, including GBV response and economic empowerment initiatives.*
- 3** *Implement the not more than Two-Thirds Gender Principle to promote women's political participation in elective in elective and appointive leadership by enacting the legal framework recommended by the Multisectoral Working Group on the Realization of the Not More Than Two Thirds Gender Principle (MSWG).*
- 4** *Adopt the National Care Policy and develop an act of parliament to recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care work to support women's economic inclusion.*
- 5** *Adopt ILO Convention 190 to formally recognize and address equitable sharing of unpaid care work.*
- 6** *Ensure strict enforcement of equal pay laws, including penalties for violations, to close gender pay gaps.*
- 7** *Adopt and implement an intersectional gender equality policy that mandatorily mainstreams disability inclusion across all sectors, co-designed with women and girls with disabilities, supported by disaggregated data, accessible services, employment quotas, legal protections against intersectional discrimination, and dedicated funding to dismantle systemic barriers and ensure equitable participation in education, healthcare, employment, and governance.*
- 8** *Institutionalize gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) to ensure sustained funding for gender equality initiatives and Institutions .*
- 9** *Enhance the collection and use of gender-disaggregated data for policymaking and accountability.*
- 10** *Foster cultural and societal shifts through using evidence-based models for prevention and social norm change including sustained public education campaigns to challenge harmful gender norms and stereotypes.*
- 11** *Expand access to education and economic opportunities for marginalized women and girls to address persistent inequalities.*
- 12** *Strengthen CSO-government collaboration in tracking and implementing BPfA and SDGs commitments.*

Summary of Methodology

This CSO Shadow Report is based on:

- Stakeholder consultations, including women's rights organizations, girls, grassroots movements, and policymakers.
- National statistics, government reports, and firsthand testimonies.
- Policy analysis, including examining gender laws, budget allocations, and institutional frameworks.
- Feedback from diverse gender experts and advocacy groups.

Section One

**Introduction
and Background**

1.1. Context and Purpose: Why This Shadow Report is Necessary

1.1.1. The Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and Kenya's Commitments

The Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) was adopted in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women as a global framework for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. Kenya, as a signatory, committed to implementing the BPfA's twelve critical areas of concern, aiming to address systemic gender inequalities in governance, education, health, economic participation, and the eradication of gender-based violence (GBV).

Three decades later, Kenya has made significant legislative and policy strides toward gender equality. However, persistent gaps remain in the implementation, accountability, financing, and enforcement of gender-related laws and policies. Despite enacting gender-sensitive laws such as the Sexual Offences Act (2006), the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act (2015), and the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2011), enforcement remains inconsistent. Despite constitutional guarantees (e.g., Article 27(8) on the Two-Thirds Gender Rule) and Kenya's commitment to SDG 5, systemic barriers persist.

The unenforced Two-Thirds Gender Principle, widening economic disparities, pervasive gender-based violence, and underfunded care systems continue to undermine progress toward gender equality. This CSO Shadow Report provides an independent, critical assessment of Kenya's progress toward the BPfA+30 goals. It presents findings from civil society organizations (CSOs) working directly with affected populations. It serves as a counterbalance to the government's BPfA+30 national report, offering alternative insights, identifying systemic failures, and proposing actionable recommendations to bridge policy-practice gaps.

1.1.2. The Need for an Alternative Civil Society Perspective

Government progress reports often prioritize policy frameworks and institutional metrics, overlooking intersectional realities faced by women at the intersections of gender, class, ethnicity, disability, and other identities. Assessments must center lived experiences and evaluate whether policies tangibly improve equity for marginalized communities, particularly women, rather than relying solely on procedural compliance. The CSO Shadow Report is essential because :

- a** *It delivers an independent, evidence-based assessment of government actions, creating a framework to hold institutions accountable for their legal obligations to advance gender equality.*
- b** *It amplifies grassroots voices and brings a human-centered perspective to gender equality assessments by documenting lived experiences of marginalized women.*
- c** *It exposes gaps and systemic failures in implementing gender-responsive policies and laws.*
- d** *It highlights the structural and socio-cultural barriers limiting progress*
- e** *Provide evidence-based critiques to hold institutions accountable*
- f** *Ensure equity frameworks reflect actual needs, not just procedural benchmarks.*

CSOs play a crucial role in holding the government accountable to its commitments including the BPfA by documenting policy failures, advocating for necessary reforms, and ensuring that gender equality remains central to national, regional and international development agendas.

1.2. CSO Involvement: The Role of Civil Society in Monitoring BPfA Implementation

1.2.1. The Role of Civil Society in Advancing Gender Equality

Civil society organizations (CSOs) have been at the forefront of Kenya's gender equality movement, engaging in:

- a** *Policy advocacy influencing legislation, gender-responsive budgeting, and policy reforms.*
- b** *Advancement of the adoption of numerous progressive gender equality frameworks, largely due to their sustained advocacy and leadership in championing these initiatives.*
- c** *Conducting civic education and awareness campaigns through workshops, public forums, and media to promote gender equality, educate communities on women's rights, challenge discrimination, and encourage women's participation in social, economic, and political spheres.*
- d** *Service provision supporting survivors of gender-based violence, promoting women's economic empowerment, and providing access to reproductive health services.*
- e** *Legal actions challenging unconstitutional practices and advocating for full implementation of gender laws.*
- f** *Data collection, research, gender audits, and impact assessments of policies and programs.*

1.2.2. Monitoring and Accountability Mechanisms

CSOs have established independent mechanisms for tracking gender policy implementation, including:

- a** *Gender scorecards assessing progress in the BPfA's twelve critical areas.*
- b** *Community-based Monitoring Systems that document real-time challenges faced by women and girls.*
- c** *Litigation and legal support to push for enforcement of gender laws.*
- d** *Engagement with National and County Governments to demand budget allocations and gender-responsive programs*

1.2.3. Key Challenges Faced by CSOs in BPfA Monitoring

- a** *The lack of comprehensive, sex-disaggregated data undermines effective monitoring.*
- b** *Most gender equality programs rely on donor funding, leading to sustainability challenges.*
- c** *Resistance and cultural backlash from patriarchal structures affects gender advocacy efforts.*

1.3. Methodology: Data Sources, Stakeholder Engagement, and Validation Process

1.3.1. Data Sources

The report relies on qualitative and quantitative data collected through:

- a** *BPfA+30 national report, Ministry of Gender annual reports, and parliamentary records.*
- b** *Studies conducted and published by women's rights organizations, think tanks, and grassroots movements.*
- c** *Reports from international agencies and bilateral and development partners such as the UN Women, UNDP, World Bank, ILO, ICRW, Amnesty International, Transparency International, OXFAM, CREAW, SDG Kenya Forum, COVAW, UPDK, CRAWN Trust, among others.*
- d** *Actual voices and lived experiences of women and girls in Kenya.*

1.3.2. Stakeholder Engagement

The shadow report development process involved:

- a** *Consultations with gender advocates and activists to gather firsthand accounts.*
- b** *Roundtable discussions with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and women's rights organizations (WROs) to assess policy gaps and potential reforms.*
- c** *Multi-sectoral engagements, including private sector actors, academia, and media to ensure comprehensive perspectives.*

1.3.3. Validation Process

To ensure credibility and accuracy, the report underwent:

- a** *Peer review by gender experts from leading CSOs.*
- b** *Validation workshops with women's groups and community leaders to confirm findings.*
- c** *Fact-checking against government and international reports to ensure alignment with broader gender equality assessments.*

1.4. Structure of the Report

- a** *Executive Summary—this provides a snapshot of Kenya's progress, persistent challenges, and key policy recommendations based on CSO findings.*
- b** *Introduction and Background—this section explains the rationale behind the shadow report, the role of CSOs, the methodology, and the structure of the report.*
- c** *Thematic Analysis- assesses Kenya's progress across policy, economic, and social dimensions in implementing BPfA commitments.*
- d** *Critical review of the twelve areas of concern- this section provides an in-depth analysis of Kenya's performance in:*
 - i. Women and poverty*
 - ii. Education and training*
 - iii. Women and health*
 - iv. Violence against women*
 - v. Women and armed conflict*
 - vi. Women in the economy*
 - vii. Women in power and decision-making*
 - viii. Institutional mechanisms for gender equality*
 - ix. Human rights of women*
 - x. Women and the media*
 - xi. Women and the environment*
 - xii. The girl child*

- e** *National institutions and gender processes- this section evaluates the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming institutions and their alignment with BPfA commitments.*
- b** *Data and statistics on gender equality- this section examines gaps in gender-disaggregated data and the impact on policy implementation.*
- c** *Conclusion and next steps- this section outlines key recommendations and calls for urgent action from policymakers, donors, and civil society actors.*

This report calls for stronger policies, increased funding, and greater accountability to drive gender equality in Kenya beyond 2025.

Section Two

**Kenya's Progress
and Setbacks:
A Thematic Analysis**

2.1. Policy and Legislative Progress

2.1.1. Key Gender Equality Laws, Policies, and Institutional Mechanisms

Kenya has taken significant legislative and policy measures to advance gender equality over the past three decades. The adoption of The Constitution of Kenya (2010) marked a turning point by embedding gender equality as a fundamental principle of governance. Article 27(8) and Article 81(b) of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) are interconnected, as both provisions aim to advance gender equality, particularly in political and public representation. Article 27(8) places an obligation on the state to implement legislative and other measures to ensure that no more than two-thirds of the members in elective or appointive bodies are of the same gender.

Article 81(b) reinforces this principle by requiring that the electoral system adhere to the rule that no more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender. Together, these provisions establish a constitutional mandate for gender-balanced representation in governance and decision-making. However, their implementation particularly in Parliament has faced significant challenges, leading to ongoing debates and legal efforts to ensure compliance.

Political resistance to implementing the two-thirds gender principle persists, with entrenched opposition to placing women in leadership roles or centering them in decision-making power. This undermines equality, perpetuates systemic barriers, and excludes women from shaping policies that affect their lives. CSOs must mobilize advocacy, demand accountability, and challenge cultural/political norms to break this cycle.

The appointment of a presidential advisor on women's issues in Kenya is a significant step toward gender equality, as it integrates gender perspectives into national policymaking since the advisor influence policy decisions, advocates for gender-based reforms, and enhance accountability in implementing gender initiatives. Additionally, they bridge the gap between the government and women's rights organizations, ensuring that advocacy efforts translate into tangible reforms. However, the absence of a designated Ministry of Gender and a dedicated Cabinet Secretary overseeing gender affairs within the existing government departments poses a significant challenge to gender equality in Kenya. Without a centralized authority, gender-related policies and programs risk being fragmented and deprioritized, limiting their effectiveness.

The lack of clear leadership weakens coordination, resource allocation, and accountability in addressing gender disparities, including gender-based violence, women's economic empowerment, and political inclusion. There is urgent need to strengthen institutional frameworks with a dedicated ministry or high-level representation would enhance policy implementation and ensure sustained government commitment to gender equality.

Other major legislative milestones include the Sexual Offences Act (2006), which strengthened laws against sexual violence, Protection Against Domestic Violence Act (2015), which criminalized domestic abuse, and the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Act (2011), which introduced strict penalties for individuals engaged in FGM practices. The Matrimonial Property Act (2013) and Land Act (2012) further strengthened women's rights to property ownership and inheritance, ensuring that women have legal recourse in property disputes. Additionally, the Employment Act (2007, revised 2022) introduced protections against workplace discrimination and expanded maternity and paternity leave policies, aligning labor laws with international best practices.

Despite these advances, the enforcement of these laws remains inadequate. A major challenge lies in the Two-Thirds Gender Rule, which has remained unimplemented since the 2010 Constitution was enacted. Multiple attempts to pass enabling legislation to operationalize the rule have failed due to opposition from political actors who argue that gender quotas undermine meritocracy. This has resulted in the continued underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions, limiting their influence in policy formulation.

Gaps in Enforcement and Legal Barriers

Several barriers hinder the enforcement of gender equality laws in Kenya:

- a** *Many GBV survivors face significant barriers to justice, including costly legal processes, lack of victim protection, and social stigma that discourages reporting. The judicial system is weak.*
- b** *Gender-focused policies and institutions such as the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) and the State Department for Gender and Affirmative Action (SDfGAA) suffer from chronic underfunding, reducing their capacity to monitor and implement gender equality initiatives.*
- c** *Deeply ingrained patriarchal norms continue to act as barriers to legal reforms, particularly concerning laws against FGM, child marriage, and domestic violence reproductive rights .*
- d** *Many women and girls , especially in rural areas, remain unaware of their legal rights, reducing their ability to demand enforcement of gender protections.*
- e** *Inconsistent Legal Enforcement and Weaponization of Laws in Kenya. The Cybercrimes Act's vague provisions at section 22 on false publication is invoked to suppress dissent under the guise of combating false information. Kenya's legal framework demonstrates contradictions in protecting women's rights as seen below. "Kenya's Cybercrimes Act, while ostensibly protecting against digital harms, disproportionately impacts women and activists. Reforms are needed to prevent its misuse and safeguard civic space." Another example is the Prohibition of FGM Act (2011) which criminalizes female genital mutilation (FGM), yet due to its weak enforcement leaves 4 million girls at risk of FGM and even early marriages.*

The impact of these inconsistencies is that survivors continue to face severe health risks and psychological trauma, while FGM persists in some communities. The crackdown on Women's rights defenders (WHRDs) using the provisions of cybercrime laws stifles advocacy and weakens the fight for gender equality while public trust in gender-based laws continues to fade as communities see anti-FGM measures as symbolic and cyber laws as tools of oppression. The government must take urgent action to protect survivors of female genital mutilation (FGM) and strengthen enforcement against this harmful practice. The government must enhance enforcement, safeguard WHRDs, and ensure laws reflect real community needs.

2.2. Economic and Social Dimensions

2.2.1. Women's Economic Empowerment

Kenyan women have made strides in economic participation, but structural inequalities persist. Access to credit and financial services remains a key barrier for women entrepreneurs. Many financial institutions require collateral, which most women lack due to historical and cultural land ownership disparities. Although initiatives such as the Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) and Uwezo Fund have sought to address these challenges, their sustainability is uncertain due to inconsistent government funding and lack of financial literacy programs for beneficiaries. The labor market remains highly gender-segregated, with women primarily concentrated in low-paying, informal sector jobs. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2023), women constitute over 80% of informal sector workers, with limited access to social protection, maternity leave, and job security.

The wage gap also persists, with women earning on average 23% less than their male counterparts in similar job positions. The labor market remains highly gender-segregated, with women primarily concentrated in low paying, informal sector jobs. Women constitute over 80% of informal sector workers, with limited access to social protection, maternity leave, and job security. The wage gap also persists, with women earning on average 23% less than their male counterparts in similar job positions.

A majority of women in Kenya work in informal jobs, which are characterized by low wages, lack of job security, and minimal regulatory protections. This denies them essential labor rights such as social security, maternity benefits, and fair wages. Additionally, women shoulder a disproportionate share of unpaid care work, which remains unrecognized in official labor statistics and further limits their participation in formal employment.

Barriers such as inadequate skills further exacerbate these inequities as statistics show that In Kenya, the lack of relevant skills remains a significant barrier to women's entry and retention in the labor market. Many women, particularly those from marginalized communities, have limited access to

quality education and vocational training, restricting their employment opportunities. The skills gap is especially pronounced in sectors requiring technical expertise, such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), where women's participation remains disproportionately low.

Additionally, gendered societal norms often confine women to low-paying and informal jobs, limiting their career progression and economic stability. The absence of continuous skills development and workplace training further exacerbates this issue, making it difficult for women to transition into higher-skilled, better-paying jobs.

Recommendations

To address these challenges, Kenya must implement targeted policies that enhance women's access to formal employment and improve conditions in the informal sector as well as enhance Women's Skills and Labor Market Participation. To address these challenges, Kenya must implement targeted policies that enhance women's access to formal employment and improve conditions in the informal sector as well as enhance Women's Skills and Labor Market Participation.

Key solutions include:

- 1 *Strengthening labor protections – Enforcing compliance with labor laws and extending social security coverage to informal workers.*
- 2 *Investing in childcare services – Expanding affordable childcare facilities to ease women's unpaid care responsibilities.*
- 3 *Providing financial support and training – Enhancing access to credit, business training, and market linkages for women in informal enterprises.*
- 4 *Promoting gender-responsive policies – Encouraging public and private sector initiatives that support equal pay, maternity rights, and career advancement for women.*
- 5 *Expanding Access to Education and Training – Strengthening technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs with a focus on gender inclusion.*
- 6 *Encouraging Women in STEM and High-Growth Sectors – Implementing scholarships, mentorship programs, and incentives to increase female participation in male-dominated industries.*
- 7 *Workplace Skills Development – Encouraging employers to provide upskilling and reskilling opportunities for women to enhance career mobility.*
- 8 *Entrepreneurship and Digital Skills Training – Equipping women with business and digital skills to improve self-employment opportunities.*
- 9 *Addressing Societal Barriers – Promoting awareness campaigns and policies that challenge gender stereotypes and encourage women's participation in diverse fields.*

2.2.2. Education Access

Over the past five years, Kenya has made uneven progress in girls' education, with advancements overshadowed by persistent inequalities rooted in intersectional barriers of gender, poverty, disability, geography, and ethnicity. While enrollment rates have risen (e.g., 95% primary enrollment in 2022), systemic exclusion persists for marginalized girls:

2.2.2.1 Girls in Kenya: Education Access

Key Achievements

Policy Initiatives

- a** *Free Primary Education (2003): Eliminated tuition fees, leading to increased enrollment, with primary net enrollment reaching 88% by 2020 (UNICEF). Gender parity achieved at the primary level (GPI $\approx$ 1.02).*
- b** *Constitution of Kenya (2010): Article 27 guarantees gender equality, and Article 53 emphasizes children's right to education.*
- c** *Basic Education Act (2013): Mandates 12 years of free schooling (8 primary, 4 secondary) and criminalizes school-related gender-based violence.*
- d** *National Policy on Gender and Education (2020): Addresses barriers like teen pregnancy and cultural biases.*

Programmatic Successes

- a** *Tusome Literacy Program (2015): Improved literacy rates in early grades through teacher training and materials.*
- b** *Sanitary Towels Program (2017): Distributed free sanitary products to 4 million girls, reducing absenteeism.*
- c** *School Feeding Programs: Enhanced retention, especially in arid regions*
- d** *Grassroots movements (e.g., Zizi Afrique, FIDA Kenya) advocate for inclusive policies. STEM initiatives (e.g., Coding for Girls) and anti-FGM campaigns (e.g., Amref Health Africa) show localized success.*

Gaps Challenges

Barriers to Girls' Education in Kenya: An Intersectional Analysis

- a** *Low Transition Rates- At the national level only 77% of girls transition from primary to secondary school vs. 82% of boys. In marginalized region these rates drop below 50% due to poverty, child marriage, and cultural norms.*
- b** *Menstrual Hygiene Challenges - 65% of women/girls cannot afford menstrual products, resorting to unsafe materials while 10% of the girls and women miss school during menstruation due to lack of sanitary towels or painful menses (30% in arid regions).*

- a** *,Inequities in Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC)-40% of rural households face financial strain from CBC costs due to poverty. Pastoralist girls (Turkana, Samburu) are three times less likely to access digital tools due to lack of infrastructure.*
- b** *Access & Retention Gaps-Enrollment: Gender Parity Index (GPI) of 0.95 masks rural-urban divides; hidden costs (uniforms, exams) hinder access.23% of girls drop out of school due to early pregnancies and child marriages; 15% of 15-19-year-olds are pregnant.*
- e** *Geographic & Socioeconomic Divides- whereas girls in urban areas have seen high enrollment in schools , girls in rural and marginalized areas (e.g., Turkana, Mandera) face 30% lower enrollment due to poverty and cultural biases. Post-COVID, 16% of rural girls dropped out vs. 8% urban.*
- f** *Disability Exclusion- Only 5% of girls with disabilities finish secondary school due to infrastructural barriers (e.g., lack of ramps, braille) and stigma.*
- g** *Ethnic & Religious Marginalization- 21% of girls nationally undergo FGM; 60% in Samburu marry by 18. Coastal counties (e.g., Kilifi) restrict girls' mobility due to cultural/religious norms.*
- h** *Gender-Based Violence (GBV) at School - 13% of girls report sexual violence; disabled, rural, and refugee girls face heightened risks with low reporting due to stigma.*

Recommendations

- **Policy Reforms:** Adopt intersectional approaches in implementing the Basic Education Act (2013) and 100% Transition Policy.
- **Financial Support:** Subsidize CBC costs for low-income households; eliminate hidden fees.
- **Menstrual Equity:** Scale up the National Menstrual Hygiene Management Policy (Ministry of Education, 2020) to reach informal settlements and refugee camps.
- Adopt an intersectional Policymaking that will mainstream disability and gender in all the education sector as per BPfA's call for inclusive governance.
- **Inclusive Infrastructure:** Invest in accessible facilities, e-learning tools, and teacher training that also caters for persons with disabilities.
- **Community Engagement:** Strengthen programs like Tusame Clubs to combat harmful norms and promote mentorship.
- **STEM Promotion:** Provide scholarships and role models for marginalized girls.

Kenya's education system perpetuates inequality, with urban, affluent girls benefiting disproportionately. Closing these gaps requires targeted, intersectional interventions addressing poverty, disability, culture, and gender-based violence.

2.2.2.2 Access to health Care

In healthcare, maternal health services have improved with the introduction of free maternity care programs, but women in rural area still struggle to access quality reproductive health services due to geographic and financial constraints.

Policy Initiatives

Kenya's advancements in maternal and reproductive healthcare since 2013—including the Linda Mama program, Reproductive Health Policy (2022), and Health Act (2017) —were driven by evidence-based policies, financial reforms, and inclusive service delivery. The Linda Mama program increased facility deliveries from 44% (2008) to 66%. The Reproductive Health Policy (2022) : Expanded access to family planning and adolescent health services while the Health Act (2017) prioritized marginalized groups, including women and girls by introducing accountability mechanisms that mandated public reporting on maternal outcomes to address disparities.

Programmatic Successes

- Beyond Zero Campaign (2014): Mobile clinics reduced maternal mortality from 488 (2008) to 342 (2022) per 100,000 live births.
- HPV Vaccination Rollout: Coverage exceeded 80% by 2023, targeting cervical cancer prevention.
- HIV/AIDS Programs: Reduced mother-to-child transmission rates to 8.6% (2022).

Gaps and Challenges

Exclusion of Reproductive/Maternal Care in SHA/SHIF. SHIF covers only 43% of maternal health costs, leaving families to pay KES 15,000–50,000 out-of-pocket for delivery. 56% of women in informal settlements lack insurance, relying on underfunded public clinics. Maternal Health: Persistent high mortality (342/100,000), with 42% of rural births lacking skilled attendance. Reproductive Health: 18% unmet need for family planning; 21% of girls (15-19) have begun childbearing. Structural Barriers: Regional disparities, cultural stigma (e.g., FGM prevalence at 15%), and GBV (45% of women report violence).

Female nurses in Kenya earn 30% less than male counterparts despite equal qualifications (ILO, 2022) while only 23% of senior health management roles are held by women.

Lack of Women in Health Leadership -Women comprise 70% of frontline health workers but only 10% of hospital CEOs. Only 5% of Kenya's health budget is allocated to gender-responsive programs.

Recommendations

Kenya's healthcare system must adopt an intersectional approach that addresses overlapping barriers of gender, disability, poverty, and geography. By centering the needs of marginalized women and girls in policy design, financing, and implementation, Kenya can transform healthcare from a privilege to a right for all. Some of the **recommendations include**

Amending the Social Health Insurance Fund (SHIF)

to explicitly cover maternal care, disability-related health services, and chronic conditions, drawing lessons from Rwanda's Mutuelle de Santé model. Integrate waivers for low-income households and rural populations to eliminate cost barriers.

Mandate disability-inclusive provisions

in all health policies, ensuring coverage for assistive devices (e.g., hearing aids, wheelchairs) and therapies (e.g., physiotherapy, mental health support).

Scale mobile clinics in underserved rural and informal settlements, prioritizing counties with high maternal mortality rates (e.g., Turkana, Mandera). Equip these units with disability-friendly infrastructure (ramps, tactile guides) and staff trained in gender-sensitive care.

Train community health workers (CHWs) on disability inclusion, including sign language for deaf women and girls, braille materials for the visually impaired, and protocols for respectful care for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). Partner with organizations like AMREF and LVCT Health to standardize training.

Establish dedicated disability desks in all public health facilities, staffed by professionals trained in inclusive communication and care. Ensure clinics meet accessibility standards (ramps, adjustable examination beds, sensory-friendly spaces).

Integrate sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services tailored to women and girls with disabilities (WWDs), including accessible family planning counseling, cervical cancer screenings, and trauma-informed care for GBV survivors. Collaborate with organizations like United Disabled Persons of Kenya (UDPK) to codesign programs.

Expand access to contraceptives through youth-friendly hubs in schools, community centers, and digital platforms (e.g., SMS-based referrals). Ensure services are confidential, stigma-free, and accessible to adolescents with disabilities.

Implement comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) curricula in schools and community forums, using inclusive formats (sign language interpreters, audio-visual aids) to reach girls with sensory and intellectual disabilities. Partner with grassroots groups like Sauti Skika to amplify outreach.

Create a national monitoring framework to track healthcare access for women and girls including those with disabilities, disaggregating data by disability type, region, and socioeconomic status. Involve civil society organizations (CSOs) like FIDA Kenya and Disability Rights Advocacy Fund in oversight.

Recommendations

Kenya's healthcare system must adopt an intersectional approach that addresses overlapping barriers of gender, disability, poverty, and geography. By centering the needs of marginalized women and girls in policy design, financing, and implementation, Kenya can transform healthcare from a privilege to a right for all. Some of the **recommendations include**

Enforce the Persons with Disabilities Act (2023) by penalizing health facilities that fail to comply with accessibility standards. Establish a toll-free hotline for reporting discrimination or denial of care.

Allocate 15% of county health budgets to programs targeting women, girls, and women with disabilities, as per Kenya's commitment to the Abuja Declaration.

Leverage partnerships with global actors (e.g., UNFPA, Global Fund) to fund mobile clinics, assistive technologies, and CHW training.

2.3. Marginalized women

Kenya demonstrates partial progress in advancing gender equality for women and girls from marginalized groups, per policy frameworks such as the Persons with Disabilities Act (2023), *the Public Benefits Organizations (PBO) Act (2013)*, and the Inua Jamii social protection program. However, systemic exclusion persists, undermining the rights of women with disabilities, young girls, and older women.

Key Developments

- *The PBO Act* has enabled civil society advocacy for disability rights and women's empowerment.
- *Inua Jamii cash* transfers reach 1.2 million older persons (70% women), yet gaps in coverage and accessibility remain, particularly for rural women with disabilities.
- Constitutional Protections: Article 27(8) (Two-Thirds Gender Rule) and Article 54 (disability rights) provide legal safeguards, but implementation lags.

Gaps and Challenges

Women with Disabilities:

- Healthcare: Only 12% of health facilities meet accessibility standards.
- Economic Exclusion: 78% of women with disabilities are unemployed, compared to 47% of men with disabilities.

Young Girls

- Education: 23% of girls in arid counties drop out by age 15 due to child marriage and menstrual poverty.
- SRHR Access: 40% of adolescent girls with disabilities lack access to sexual health services.

Older Women:

- Poverty: 65% of older women live below the poverty line, with limited access to pensions or healthcare.
- GBV Risks: 1 in 5 older women report abuse, yet less than 10% seek legal redress.
- Data Gaps: National surveys rarely disaggregate data by age, disability, and gender, obscuring intersectional disparities.
- Underfunding: Only 0.5% of the national budget targets disability-inclusive programs.
- Cultural Barriers: Stigma against disability, ageism, and patriarchal norms restrict access to education, healthcare, and justice.

Recommendations for Accelerating Progress

a. Intersectional Policy Reforms

- Align the National Gender Policy with the Persons with Disability Act to address overlapping vulnerabilities.
- Expand Inua Jamii to include disability grants and youth-targeted stipends.

b. Data-Driven Accountability

- Mandate intersectional data collection in all gender audits and SDG 5 reporting.
- Establish a multisectoral taskforce to monitor implementation of the *Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA)*.

c. Targeted Investments

- Allocate 10% of county health budgets to disability-friendly maternal care and adolescent SRHR services.
- Reintroduce and scale up community-led programs (e.g., Linda Mama) to reach rural older women and girls with disabilities.

2.4. Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Human Rights

2.4.1. Status of GBV Laws and Challenges in Implementation

Despite the existence of strong GBV laws, implementation remains weak. A 2022 report by Amnesty International found that only 12% of reported GBV cases result in convictions, largely due to ineffective investigations, lack of forensic evidence, and police reluctance to prosecute offenders. Shelters for GBV survivors remain insufficient, with only two state-run shelters available nationwide in Makueni and , making access to safe spaces for survivors almost impossible. Additionally, there is limited psychosocial support and legal support available for GBV survivors, forcing many women and girls to remain in abusive situations.

2.4.2. Women's Human Rights, Media Representation, and Digital Inclusion

Whereas the County has made significant strides in digital transformation; the digital gender gap remains a major challenge, particularly as the country transitions to fully digitized government services. Women are disproportionately excluded from digital access due to limited digital literacy, affordability barriers, and social norms, restricting their ability to benefit from online services in healthcare, education, and finance; this gap is particularly concerning as AI and technology-driven economies expand, risking further marginalization of women in the workforce.

Women remain underrepresented in media leadership roles and are often depicted in stereotypical roles. Women, particularly in rural areas, lack access to digital literacy and internet connectivity, limiting their participation in the digital economy.

Recommendation

To bridge this gap, Kenya must implement targeted digital literacy programs, ensure affordable internet access, promote gender-inclusive policies in STEM education, and provide supportive infrastructure for women's digital engagement.

2.5. Women's Political Participation and Leadership

Women's participation in governance remains below the constitutional threshold. Despite numerous Supreme Court rulings affirming the need for compliance with the two-thirds gender rule, Parliament has failed to pass legislation to enforce this constitutional provision. Structural barriers, including high campaign costs and political violence against women candidates, discourage female participation in politics .

2.6. Institutional Challenges

Kenya has several gender-focused institutions, including the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) and the Ministry of Gender, but lack of coordination and inadequate funding continue to undermine their effectiveness. Gender desks at police stations meant to support GBV survivors are poorly staffed and lack resources, reducing their impact .

Section Three

**Progress across the
12 Critical Areas of
Concern**

3.1. Introduction

This section provides a detailed analysis of Kenya's progress in each of the 12 Critical Areas of Concern, assessing key achievements, gaps, challenges, and recommendations for accelerating gender equality. Each area is critically examined based on policy advancements, institutional frameworks, and statistical data to evaluate the country's efforts in fulfilling its BPfA commitments.

The analysis highlights areas where Kenya has demonstrated notable progress, as well as key structural and systemic barriers that require urgent policy interventions and stronger multi-sectoral collaboration.

The recommendations provided aim to inform policymakers, civil society organizations (CSOs), and development partners on strategic actions to drive forward gender equality in Kenya.

3.2. Women and Poverty

3.2.1. Key achievements

Over the past three decades, Kenya has made strides in reducing poverty among women through various legislative, policy, and economic empowerment initiatives. The government has implemented social protection programs, including the Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) and the Uwezo Fund, aimed at increasing access to credit for women entrepreneurs. Additionally, the expansion of cash transfer programs, such as the Inua Jamii program, has provided financial assistance to vulnerable populations, including elderly women, widows, and women with disabilities.

The Big Four Agenda (2017-2022) prioritized universal healthcare, manufacturing, and affordable housing, indirectly benefiting women by increasing economic opportunities and reducing household burdens. Additionally, affirmative action programs have promoted women's access to land and financial services, contributing to their economic resilience.

Another key policy achievement towards gender equality has been Kenya's Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) which aims to enhance economic inclusivity by empowering grassroots communities. This approach has significant implications for gender equality, offering both opportunities and challenges.

Contributions to Gender Equality:

- **Economic Empowerment:** By focusing on sectors like agriculture and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), BETA provides women with increased access to economic resources and opportunities. This emphasis enables women to participate more actively in income-generating activities, thereby improving their financial independence.

- **Enhanced Financial Inclusion:** BETA's commitment to supporting MSMEs facilitates women's access to credit and financial services, which are crucial for starting and expanding businesses. This access helps bridge the gender gap in entrepreneurship and economic participation.

Despite Kenya's gender equality commitments under BETA, several challenges hinder implementation. Bureaucratic inefficiencies, budget constraints, and regional disparities limit progress, particularly in rural areas where financial and logistical hurdles disrupt gender-focused programs. Weak accountability frameworks and a national-level focus often overlook grassroots realities, including gender-based violence and cultural barriers. A one-size-fits-all approach neglects intersectional issues such as disability and rural marginalization, while limited community participation weakens program ownership. Additionally, the digital divide disproportionately affects women, restricting their ability to leverage technology for economic opportunities.

However, Kenya's escalating debt burden poses significant challenges are eroding the gains made towards achieving gender equality. The diversion of funds to debt servicing often leads to reduced investment in social services such as healthcare and education, disproportionately affecting women who rely heavily on these services.

Kenya's public debt servicing for FY 2024/25 stands at Ksh 1.85 trillion, consuming 48% of the total budget and 55% of projected revenue. This heavy debt burden limits resource allocation to critical sectors, impacting economic growth and development. Debt servicing conditions often require austerity measures, leading to reductions in public spending on social protection programs. These cuts disproportionately affect women, who are the primary recipients of such services and are overrepresented in sectors like healthcare and education. As a result, fiscal constraints worsen gender inequalities by restricting women's access to essential services and employment opportunities.

3.2.2. Challenges

Despite these efforts, women remain disproportionately affected by poverty, with rural and marginalized women experiencing the highest levels of economic deprivation. Key barriers include:

- 1** *Persistent cultural norms and legal barriers limit women's land ownership, reducing their economic independence.*
- 2** *Gender pay-gap and job segregation, primarily due to the concentration of women in informal, low-paying sectors, earning approximately 23% less than men for similar work.*
- 3** *Inadequate financial literacy and access to credit. While microfinance programs have increased financial inclusion, many women still face stringent loan requirements limiting their ability to access business capital.*

- 4 *Unpaid care and domestic work burden: Women spend, on average, 4.7 more hours per day on unpaid household labor than men, limiting their economic participation.*
- 5 *Women in rural areas, particularly in arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs), face increased economic hardship due to climate change-induced food insecurity.*

3.2.3. Recommendations

To address these persistent challenges, the CSOs recommend the following necessary interventions:

- 1 *The government should strengthen land rights for women through intentional implementation, enforcing policies that grant women equal rights to land ownership and inheritance and ensure effective land tenure security .*
- 2 *The government and private sector should expand women-specific credit programs with reduced or gender-responsive and smart collateral requirements and integrate financial literacy training .*
- 3 *The government of Kenya should strengthen labor policies to reduce the gender pay gap and improve working conditions for women in informal employment .*
- 4 *Invest in public care infrastructure: The government must invest in public care infrastructure to provide affordable childcare, elder care, and social protection programs to alleviate the unpaid care work burden.*
- 5 *Government and non-state actors should develop gender-sensitive climate adaptation strategies, including access to sustainable agricultural resources and training for women farmers.*
- 6 *Implement Comprehensive Debt Relief Measures: Reducing debt payments to sustainable levels can free up resources, enabling the government to invest in social services that empower women and promote equitable development.*
- 7 *Integrate Gender-Responsive Budgeting: Incorporating gender perspectives into budgeting processes ensures that fiscal policies address the specific needs of women, thereby promoting equality.*
- 8 *Conduct Human Rights Impact Assessments: Evaluating the potential effects of debt servicing on women's rights can guide the development of policies that mitigate adverse outcomes.*
- 9 *The government should establish clear monitoring frameworks for the Implementation of Vision 2030 and the BETA policy with designated oversight entities and transparent reporting systems.*
- 10 *Tailor interventions to address the compounded discrimination faced by marginalized women and girls.*
- 11 *Ensure sufficient and sustainable funding for gender programs, particularly in underserved regions.*
- 12 *Strengthen partnerships between government, civil society, and local communities for inclusive policy formulation.*

By addressing these challenges and implementing targeted recommendations, MTP IV and BETA can more effectively promote gender equality, empower women and girls, and foster inclusive development

3.3. Education and Training of Women

3.3.1. Key Achievements

Kenya has made substantial progress in improving women's access to education through legislative frameworks, policy initiatives, and investment in gender-sensitive education programs. The Free Primary Education (FPE) Policy (2003) and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) Policy (2008) have significantly increased enrollment rates for girls. 96% of girls were enrolled in primary school as of 2022, marking a historic high in gender parity at the primary level. However, at the secondary school level, completion rates for girls remain at 78%, indicating continued dropout challenges.

The introduction of affirmative action policies in higher education, such as lower university entry requirements for female students in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields, has increased female participation in historically male-dominated disciplines. However, only 30% of students in STEM courses at university level are female, reflecting gender disparities. The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Act (2013) has also encouraged more women to enroll in technical courses, yet female participation remains low at 35% in TVET institutions.

Kenya has also developed policies to address gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual harassment in learning institutions, including the Basic Education Act (2013) and the Ministry of Education's 2021 GBV Prevention and Response Guidelines.

3.3.2. Challenges

Despite these achievements, systemic barriers continue to hinder full access to quality education and training for women and girls:

- a** *Twenty-three percent (23%) of girls drop out of school due to early marriage and pregnancy, particularly in rural areas .*
- b** *Women remain significantly underrepresented, with only 3 in 10 female STEM students. According to the Federation of Kenya Employers, ICT skills are required by 28.4% of Kenyan employers yet gender disparities continues to persist in education pathways leading to these opportunities. Women constitute 43.8% of undergraduate students in ICT-related fields and 34.9% in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs. Despite increased female enrollment in post-secondary education, rural areas still see a lower completion rate for girls in secondary school compared to boys, limiting their access to ICT careers (Federation of Kenya Employers, 2023).*

- c** *School-related GBV and sexual harassment whereby 1 in 4 schoolgirls report experiencing sexual violence in learning institutions, with weak enforcement of protective policies .*
- d** *Inadequate menstrual health management (MHM) support. 60% of adolescent girls miss school at least once a month due to a lack of access to sanitary products and inadequate hygiene facilities .*
- e** *Socioeconomic barriers prevent many women from enrolling in tertiary education, particularly in marginalized communities, where only 19% of women aged 18-24 are in higher education .*

3.3.3. Recommendations

To enhance education and training opportunities for women, the following steps should be prioritized:

- a** *Strengthen enforcement of laws against child marriage and teenage pregnancies: Implement stricter penalties for perpetrators and increase community awareness programs .*
- b** *Increase scholarships, mentorship networks, and outreach programs to encourage female participation in STEM .*
- c** *Strengthen reporting systems and improve teacher training on gender sensitivity and protection policies.*
- e** *Improve menstrual hygiene management (MHM) initiatives by providing free sanitary products in all public schools and improving sanitation facilities to reduce absenteeism among girls .*
- f** *Increase financial aid and affirmative action in tertiary education through the expansion of school capitation, fair, intentional, and targeted distribution of bursaries and scholarships for girls, and targeted funding to support women in higher education and vocational training .*

3.4. Women and Health

3.4.1. Key Achievements

Kenya has made significant progress in improving women's health through policy reforms, expanded healthcare services, and targeted interventions to reduce maternal and child mortality. Several legislative frameworks and policies have been enacted to support women's health, including:

- a** *The Health Act (2017): Establishes the legal framework for healthcare provision, including reproductive health rights .*

- b** *The National Reproductive Health Policy (2022-2032): Aims to enhance access to quality reproductive health services and reduce maternal mortality.*
- c** *The Free Maternity Services Policy (2013): Provides free maternal healthcare in public hospitals under the Linda Mama program .*
- d** *The Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) Bill (2021): Seeks to provide a legal basis for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services. However, it has faced opposition from conservative groups .*
- e** *The HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Act (2006): Protects the rights of women living with HIV/AIDS and promotes access to treatment .*

These policies have contributed to several health improvements:

- a** *Maternal mortality rate (MMR) declined from 530 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2010 to 342 in 2023 .*
- b** *Increased skilled birth attendance from 44% in 2008 to 89% in 2023 due to investments in maternal health programs .*
- c** *Expansion of family planning services, with contraceptive prevalence increasing from 46% in 2009 to 61% in 2023 .
Declining HIV prevalence among women, from 8.2% in 2010 to 4.9% in 2023, attributed to prevention and treatment programs .*

3.4.2. Gaps and Challenges

Despite these gains, women's and girl's health in Kenya continues to face numerous challenges, including:

- a** *High Maternal Mortality Rates: While maternal deaths have decreased, Kenya still has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in East Africa .*
- b** *Limited Access to Quality Healthcare: Many rural women lack access to adequate health facilities, with 30% of women in remote areas giving birth without skilled assistance .*
- c** *Inadequate Sexual and Reproductive Health Services: Cultural stigma, limited youth-friendly services, and restrictive policies limit access to reproductive healthcare, particularly among adolescents .*
- d** *Barriers to Safe Abortion Services: The Kenyan constitution (Article 26) only permits abortion under specific circumstances, leading many women to seek unsafe procedures, contributing to an estimated 21,000 hospitalizations annually due to complications from unsafe abortions.*
- e** *Menstrual Health Challenges: Over 65% of girls in rural areas lack access to adequate menstrual hygiene products, leading to school absenteeism and health risks .*
- f** *Rising Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs): Women are increasingly affected by diseases such as cervical cancer, diabetes, and hypertension, yet access to screening and treatment remains inadequate.*

3.4.3. Recommendations

To enhance women's health outcomes, Kenya should prioritize the following interventions:

- a** *Strengthen investment in emergency obstetric care, increase the number of skilled birth attendants, and improve access to prenatal and postnatal care. Increase access to family planning and reproductive health services through the implementation of comprehensive sexuality education, expand access to contraceptives, and improve reproductive healthcare for To enhance women's health outcomes, Kenya should prioritize the following interventions:*
- b** *Adolescents .*
- c** *Increase investment in rural health facilities, deploy more healthcare workers, and enhance mobile health services to reach underserved women.*
- d** *Provide free or subsidized menstrual products in schools and public institutions, improve sanitation facilities, and integrate menstrual health into national healthcare policies.*
- e** *Scale up cervical and breast cancer screening, improve early detection programs, and subsidize treatment for women.*
- f** *Enhance legal protections for Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) by developing and adopting progressive policies such as the SRHR Bill and ensure legal clarity on abortion access within the existing constitutional framework.*

3.5. Violence Against Women and Girls

Kenya has made significant strides in addressing violence against women (VAW) through the enactment of laws, policies, and multi-sectoral interventions aimed at prevention, protection, and prosecution. Some of the key legal and policy frameworks include:

- a** *The Sexual Offences Act (2006): Provides a legal framework to combat sexual violence, defining various sexual offenses and prescribing penalties .*
- b** *The Protection Against Domestic Violence Act (2015): Criminalizes domestic violence and offers legal protection to survivors.*
- c** *The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Act (2011): Prohibits FGM and establishes penalties for offenders.*
- d** *National Policy on Gender-Based Violence (2014, revised 2023): Outlines government commitment to preventing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV) .*

- b** *The Victim Protection Act (2014): Provides mechanisms for the protection of survivors and witnesses of GBV cases.*
- c** *Specialized Gender Justice Units: The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) and Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) established 16 Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Units and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Courts to expedite cases.*
- d** *GBV Module in 2019 Census: Kenya became the first African country to include a GBV module in its national census, enabling data-driven policymaking.*
- e** *Kenya's government has taken significant steps to address the femicide crisis, driven by sustained advocacy from women's rights organizations and human rights defenders. Key milestones include the formation of a specialized police unit to enhance investigations and victim protection, the allocation of Ksh100 million to support gender-based violence initiatives, and the establishment of a 12-member presidential task force to develop policy responses. Additionally, the government has officially recognized femicide as a national crisis, reinforcing the urgency of comprehensive interventions. These efforts signal a commitment to tackling gender-based violence through strategic planning and resource allocation.*

As a result of these frameworks, Kenya has recorded key improvements, including:

- a** *Increased reporting of GBV cases, with an estimated 70% rise in GBV-related police reports from 2019 to 2023 .*
- b** *A decline in FGM prevalence, dropping from 32% in 2003 to 15% in 2023, due to aggressive anti-FGM campaigns and legal enforcement .*
- c** *Increased conviction rates for GBV cases, with specialized GBV courts improving prosecution efficiency .*
- d** *Expansion of survivor support services, including 52 government-run gender desks in police stations and 16 operational safe houses .*
- e** *is the establishment of a specialized police unit to combat femicide. This initiative underscores the government's recognition of femicide as a critical national issue and its commitment to implementing targeted measures to address gender-based violence.*

3.5.2. Gaps and Challenges

Despite these achievements, violence against women and girls remains widespread, with many systemic barriers limiting full enforcement and protection. Key challenges include:

- a** *An estimated 45% of women in Kenya have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime.*
- b** *An estimated 500 femicides were reported in Kenya between 2020 and 2023, averaging 12 killings per month in 2023. 45% of femicide cases are perpetrated by intimate partners, often linked to domestic violence. Kenya's femicide rate is 2.1 per 100,000 women, higher than the global average of 1.3.*
- c** *Despite strong legal frameworks, enforcement remains inconsistent due to corruption, lack of resources, and weak judicial follow-up.*
- d** *Many survivors struggle with high legal costs, prolonged court cases, and lack of legal representation .*
- e** *Only 30% of GBV survivors report incidents due to fear of stigma, retaliation, or lack of confidence in law enforcement .*
- f** *There are only 16 safe houses nationwide, which is insufficient for the high number of GBV survivors needing protection .*
- g** *GBV prevention and response programs are often underfunded, with donor reliance creating sustainability challenges.*
- f** *Deeply ingrained patriarchal attitudes contribute to normalized violence, particularly in rural and marginalized communities.*
- i** *Underreporting and Impunity: Only 10% of femicide cases result in convictions due to poor evidence collection, victim-blaming, and corruption.*
- j** *Limited GBV reporting mechanisms in rural areas, with just 15% of police stations having gender desks.*
- k** *Inadequate Support Systems: Kenya has only 16 public GBV shelters (serving 50 million people) and underfunded psychosocial support services.*

3.5.3. Recommendations

To effectively combat violence against women and girls, Kenya should focus on the following priority actions:

- a** *Strengthen law enforcement and judicial systems by improving police training on handling GBV cases, increasing the number of gender justice courts , and fast-tracking cases to reduce delays .*
- b** *Expand survivor support services by establishing more shelters and safe houses, counseling centers, and gender desks in police stations to provide comprehensive support to survivors .*
Enhance To effectively combat violence against women and girls, Kenya should focus on the following priority actions:
- c** *community awareness and engagement by implementing sustained public education campaigns targeting harmful cultural practices, gender norms, and bystander intervention strategies.*
- d** *Improve access to justice by offering free or subsidized legal aid/ representation for GBV survivors and increase funding to the National Legal Aid Programme and for pro bono legal services .*

- a** *Strengthen economic empowerment programs for survivors by expanding livelihood and skills training initiatives to support GBV survivors in gaining financial independence .*
- b** *Ensure sustainable government financing for GBV prevention, protection, and rehabilitation programs .*
- c** *Amend the Penal Code to recognize femicide as a distinct crime with enhanced penalties.*
- d** *Strengthen Law Enforcement by training police, prosecutors, and judges on GBV/femicide case handling and survivor-centered approaches.*
- i** *Allocate KES 2 billion annually to expand GBV shelters, hotlines, and forensic labs*
- j** *Launch national campaigns to challenge patriarchal norms, using platforms like the 16 Days of Activism).*
- k** *Establish a national femicide observatory to track cases, causes, and outcomes.*
- i** *Improve data disaggregation by gender, age, and disability to inform evidence-based interventions.*
- j** *Improve on data management by ensuring an integrated GBV data management system*
Strengthen the national referral mechanism to provide an uninterrupted end to end survivor centered support for survivors of violence .

3.6. Women and Armed Conflict

3.6.1. Key Achievements

Kenya has made notable progress in addressing the impact of armed conflict on women through legislative, policy, and institutional reforms. Some of the key measures include:

- a** *The National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (NAP-WPS) (2020-2024): Aligned with UN Security Council Resolution 1325, this policy framework aims to enhance women's participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.*
- b** *The Prevention of Torture Act (2017): Provides legal protections against torture and ill-treatment, particularly for women in conflict-prone areas .*
- c** *The Refugees Act (2021): Strengthens protection for displaced women and girls, ensuring access to asylum and humanitarian aid .*
- d** *The Kenya National Policy on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management (2011): Emphasizes the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution. The Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act (2010): Criminalizes human trafficking, which disproportionately affects women and girls during armed conflicts.*

These policies have led to some tangible improvements:

- a** *Women are increasingly represented in peacebuilding and mediation processes, constituting 38% of local peace committees.*
- b** *Gender-responsive humanitarian interventions, including gender-segregated shelters and trauma counseling for conflict-affected women .*
- c** *Expansion of gender-sensitive refugee services, with 75% of refugee women and girls accessing specialized support in camps such as Kakuma and Dadaab.*

3.6.2. Gaps and Challenges

Despite these achievements, Kenyan women in conflict-affected regions continue to face disproportionate vulnerabilities, including sexual violence, displacement, and economic marginalization. Key challenges include:

- a** *High prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in conflict zones, with reports indicating that over 60% of women in conflict-prone counties have experienced SGBV, often perpetrated by both state and non-state actors (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights).*
- b** *Limited access to justice for survivors of conflict-related GBV, as many cases go unreported due to fear of retaliation, stigma, and weak legal enforcement mechanisms.*
- c** *Inadequate representation of women in national security and peacekeeping, whereby women constitute only 12% of Kenya's armed forces and security personnel, limiting their role in decision-making on peace and security matters.*
- d** *Ongoing conflicts in regions such as Laikipia, Baringo, and the Kenya-Somalia border have displaced thousands of women and children, with 43% of displaced women lacking access to basic healthcare .*
- e** *Climate change has exacerbated inter-communal conflicts over water and grazing land, further increasing women's vulnerability to violence and displacement .*
- f** *Limited funding for women-led peace initiatives. Women-led organizations receive only 10% of conflict resolution funding, restricting their ability to lead grassroots peace efforts .*

3.6.3. Recommendations

To enhance women's protection and participation in conflict resolution, the following measures should be prioritized:

- a** *Strengthen enforcement of GBV laws in conflict zones by enhancing accountability mechanisms and prosecution of GBV perpetrators, including military and security personnel .*

- a** *Increase women's representation in peace and security sectors by implementing affirmative action policies to ensure at least 30% female participation in security forces and peace negotiations.*
- b** *Expand trauma and psychosocial support for conflict-affected women to increase safe spaces, counseling centers, and reintegration programs for survivors of conflict-related violence.*
- c** *Employ an intersectional gender-responsive humanitarian approach by integrating women's health, sanitation, and economic recovery programs into emergency response plans .*
- d** *Enhance funding for women-led peacebuilding initiatives by allocating at least 30% of peace and security funding to grassroots women's organizations to enable community-driven conflict prevention efforts .*
- e** *Strengthen policies that mitigate climate-related conflicts and support alternative livelihoods for displaced women.*
- f** *Establish mobile courts and legal aid programs in remote conflict-prone areas to facilitate justice for survivors of conflict-related violence .*

3.7. Women and the Economy

3.7.1. Key Achievements

Women play a vital role in Kenya's economy, contributing significantly to the agricultural sector, informal businesses, and small-scale enterprises. Various policy and legal interventions have been introduced to promote women's economic empowerment and financial inclusion. Key initiatives include:

- a** *The Employment Act (2007, revised 2022): Prohibits workplace discrimination based on gender and provides for maternity and paternity leave.*
- b** *The Micro and Small Enterprises Act (2012): Establishes a framework to support women in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) .*
- c** *The Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act (2015): Reserves 30% of government procurement opportunities for women, youth, and persons with disabilities. The Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) (2007): Provides interest-free loans and business training to women entrepreneurs.*
- d** *The Hustler Fund (2022): Facilitates access to affordable credit for small businesses, including women-led enterprises .*
- e** *The Kenya Vision 2030 Economic Pillar: Aims to increase women's participation in economic development through affirmative action policies).*

These policies and programs have led to significant progress:

- a** *Women-owned businesses constitute 33% of all enterprises in Kenya, employing over 46% of the labor force .*
- b** *Financial inclusion among women has risen from 30% in 2006 to 82% in 2023, due to the adoption of mobile banking and microfinance initiatives. An increase in female employment in the formal sector, rising from 29% in 2010 to 41% in 2023, facilitated by labor market reforms .*
- c** *Greater access to government procurement contracts, with women-owned businesses receiving over KES 20 billion in tenders annually.*
- d** *The rise of mobile banking and digital lending platforms in Kenya, such as M-Shwari and Fuliza, has provided an avenue for women, especially in rural areas, to access quick and relatively low-cost credit. Expanding these platforms and ensuring they are inclusive can further support women's economic empowerment.*

3.7.2. Gaps and Challenges

Despite these gains, women in Kenya continue to face structural and systemic barriers to full economic participation:

- a** *Gender wage gap: Women in Kenya earn, on average, 23% less than men for equivalent work .*
- b** *The disproportionate burden of unpaid care work, whereby women and girls spend four times more hours than men on unpaid domestic and care work, limits their participation in education access and formal employment .*
- c** *The cost of credit in Kenya is relatively high, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), where women are often more likely to operate. These high rates make it difficult for women to afford loans, particularly those from marginalized communities or rural areas.*
- d** *Although financial inclusion has improved, 62% of women entrepreneurs still rely on informal lending due to a lack of collateral and stringent loan conditions. 75% of employed women work in informal jobs with low wages, no social protection, and poor working conditions .*
- e** *Underrepresentation in leadership and decision-making roles: Women hold only 25% of top executive positions in major industries and less than 15% of board seats in listed companies .*
- f** *Despite legal provisions, only 10% of women own land independently, impacting their economic security and ability to access agricultural credit.*
- g** *Many women experience workplace sexual harassment, with 42% of female workers reporting discrimination based on gender .*
- f** *Declining Funding for Women and Girls' Programs. There have been significant Budget Cuts to Critical Funds:*

- The Women Enterprise Fund (WEF), designed to empower women entrepreneurs, saw its allocation drop by 15% between 2018/19 (KES 1.3 billion) and 2022/23 (KES 1.1 billion).
- The Affirmative Action Fund (AAF), aimed at supporting marginalized women, remained stagnant at KES 1 billion annually since 2018, failing to adjust for inflation or population growth.
- The Uwezo Fund, targeting youth and women, was effectively phased out after its budget was slashed by 90% (from KES 4 billion in 2018 to KES 400 million in 2023) and merged into other programs .

g *Reduced Health and GBV Funding:g. Reduced Health and GBV Funding:*

- Funding for gender-based violence (GBV) prevention programs decreased by 30% between 2020 and 2022, despite a 42% surge in reported GBV cases during COVID-19.
- Maternal health programs, critical for girls and women, received only 12% of the total health budget in 2023, far below the 15% Abuja Declaration target.

a *Donor Dependency and Inconsistent Commitments: Over 70% of Kenya's gender programs rely on donor funding, which fluctuates annually. For instance, the UK's Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) cut its gender-focused aid to Kenya by 25% post-2020 .*

b *Systemic Gaps in Funding Allocation and Utilization evidenced by the following: by Weak Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB).Only 20% of Kenya's national and county budgets integrate gender-responsive priorities, despite constitutional requirements (Article 201) . A 2021 audit revealed KES 2.3 billion allocated to women's programs in counties was either misused or unaccounted for .*

c *Exclusion of Marginalized Groups: Women with disabilities, women in rural and informal workers receive less than 5% of dedicated gender funds. Only 10% of county governments have functional gender desks to address local needs.*

d *Lack of Transparency: Public access to gender budget documents remains limited, with 60% of women's rights NGOs reporting difficulty tracking allocations.*

3.7.3. Recommendations

To enhance women's economic empowerment, the following policy actions are recommended:

- a** *Enforce wage transparency laws and labor market monitoring to eliminate gender pay disparities.*
- b** *Increase access to affordable credit and financial literacy programs by expanding collateral-free loan schemes and financial education programs targeted at women entrepreneurs .*
- c** *Financial institutions can develop products that are specifically designed to meet the needs of women, such as lower interest rates, flexible repayment schedules, and products that consider women's unique income patterns.*
- d** *The introduction of alternative forms of collateral, such as social capital or movable assets, could help women access credit. This would be especially beneficial in rural areas where women may not have access to land.*
- e** *Providing financial literacy education targeted at women can empower them to manage their finances better and improve their ability to secure credit. This should be incorporated into both formal and informal education systems.*
- f** *Recognize and reduce the burden of unpaid care work by investing in and establishing government-supported care facilities, providing tax incentives for employers offering family-friendly policies, and promoting shared household responsibilities.*
- g** *Develop policies that enhance labour protections for informal work, ensure minimum wage regulations, and provide social security for women in informal employment .Enforce equitable land inheritance laws and provide legal aid to women seeking land title deeds .*
- h** *Implement corporate gender quotas and mentorship programs for women in leadership to increase female representation in corporate leadership.*
- i** *Strengthen sexual harassment policies, enhance workplace reporting mechanisms, and ensure strict enforcement of labor protections.*
- j** *Expand women's access to public procurement opportunities by simplifying the registration processes for women-led businesses to qualify for government tenders and expand training on procurement procedures .*
- k** *Raise allocations to the Women Enterprise Fund and AAF to at least KES 5 billion annually, indexed to inflation, as recommended by the National Gender and Equality Commission.*
- i** *Strengthen Accountability Mechanisms by mandating the National Treasury to publish quarterly gender expenditure reports, as stipulated in Kenya's Public Finance Management Act (2012) with Parliament's Budget and Appropriations Committee holding public hearings on gender budget performance (Article 221).*
- m** *Partner with the private sector to scale initiatives like the Women in Enterprise Program and adopt innovative financing models (e.g., gender bonds).*
- n** *Amplify Grassroots Participation by allocating at least 30% of county development funds to women-led community projects, with oversight by County assemblies as per Article 174 on devolution.*

3.8. Women in Power and Decision-Making

3.7.1. Key Achievements

Through legislative and policy interventions, Kenya has made notable progress in increasing women's representation in political and decision-making positions. Some of the key milestones include:

- a** *The Constitution of Kenya (2010): Establishes the Two-Thirds Gender Rule, which mandates that no more than two-thirds of elective or appointive positions be held by one gender.*
- b** *The Political Parties Act (2011): Requires political parties to promote gender equity and comply with the constitutional provisions on gender representation.*
- c** *The Public Service Commission (PSC) Gender Policy (2016): Encourages gender mainstreaming in public service employment and leadership.*
- d** *The Election Laws (Amendment) Act (2017): Introduced provisions to enhance women's participation in elections, including campaign financing regulations.*
- e** *The National Policy on Gender and Development (2019): Provides a framework for achieving gender equality in leadership across all sectors.*
- f** *Establishment of the MSWG on two thirds*

Key outcomes of these policies and legal frameworks include:

- a** *Increase in the number of women in Parliament, from 9.8% in 2013 to 23% in 2023 .*
- b** *Higher women's representation in county governments, with 33% of Members of County Assemblies (MCAs) being female in 2023, up from 15% in 2013 .*
- c** *Growing participation of women in the judiciary, where 40% of judges and magistrates are female .*
- d** *Expansion of women in executive positions, including seven female Cabinet Secretaries in the 2023 government, compared to three in 2013.*

Gaps and Challenges

Despite these advances, Kenya still faces significant barriers in achieving full gender parity in decision-making roles:

- a** *Failure to implement the Two-Thirds Gender Principle: Multiple attempts to legislate the provision have failed due to political resistance and lack of enforcement mechanisms.*

- b** *Gender-based electoral violence including TGBV: Women politicians face higher levels of violence, intimidation, and harassment compared to their male counterparts, discouraging female participation.*
- c** *Limited access to campaign financing: Female candidates often struggle to fund their campaigns, as financial institutions and political party structures do not prioritize women's leadership.*
- d** *Underrepresentation in key decision-making sectors: Women hold only 15% of senior leadership roles in the private sector and less than 10% of board chairperson positions in state corporations .*
- e** *Cultural and societal barriers: Deeply rooted patriarchal norms and gender stereotypes continue to limit women's advancement in leadership roles.*
- f** *Weak enforcement of gender quotas in political parties: Despite legal requirements, many political parties do not comply with gender representation policies in nominations.*
- g** *Any effect of negotiated democracy Negotiated democracy—where political seats are allocated via elite ethnic/clan agreements rather than elections—excludes women by prioritizing male-dominated power-sharing. For example: In Mandera and Wajir, only 2 out of 60 seats in 2022 were reserved for women, as male elders control negotiations reinforcing patriarchal norms, and sidelining women from decision-making.*
- h** *Effects of mergers and coalitions Pre-election alliances between parties often marginalize women during candidate nominations.*

3.8.2. Recommendations

To accelerate progress in women's representation in decision-making, Kenya must prioritize the following actions:

- a** *Enforce the Two-Thirds Gender Principle by introducing penalties for non-compliance and develop a clear implementation roadmap to ensure gender parity in all levels of government.*
- b** *Strengthen laws against gender-based electoral violence and enhance protection mechanisms for female candidates, including strict enforcement of electoral security laws.*
- c** *Expand women's access to campaign financing by establishing a national fund to support female political candidates and encourage financial institutions to provide affordable credit to women leaders.*
- d** *Increase gender quotas in public and private leadership by a requirement of at least 40% female representation in boardrooms, public service, and state-owned corporations .*
- e** *Invest in mentorship initiatives for young women to build their leadership skills and confidence.*
- f** *Registrar of political parties and IEBC to enhance gender inclusivity in political party structures by enforcing compliance with gender representation policies in political party nominations and leadership roles.*

- g** *Promote public awareness and attitude change through targeted nationwide campaigns to challenge gender biases and promote women's leadership at all levels of society and in all communities, addressing specific community social and cultural norms.*
- h** *Fully implement the recommendation of the Multisectoral Working Group(MSWG) on the two thirds.*

3.9. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

3.9.1. Key Achievements

Kenya has established several institutional mechanisms aimed at promoting gender equality and advancing the rights of women. These mechanisms function across various levels of government and civil society to drive policy implementation, monitor progress, and ensure accountability. Some of the key institutional mechanisms include:

- a** *The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) (2011): Established to oversee gender mainstreaming and ensure compliance with gender equality laws.*
- b** *The KNHRC*
- c** *The Ministry of Public Service, Gender, and Affirmative Action: Responsible for policy development and coordination of gender equality programs at the national level. Update to align with the current Ministry of gender , Culture and the heritage*
- e** *The National Gender Policy (2019): Provides a framework for integrating gender concerns into national development strategies.*
- f** *County Gender Offices: Established under devolved governance to implement gender policies at the county level and provide support for women's empowerment programs.*
- g** *The National Policy on Gender-Based Violence (2014, revised 2023): Guides efforts in preventing and responding to gender-based violence.*
- h** *The Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) and Uwezo Fund: Provide financial support to women entrepreneurs to promote economic empowerment.*
- h** *The Anti Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Board*
- i** *The National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF)*
- j** *The setting up of Gender Sector Working groups and Court Users Committee are notable progress*

Some of the key outcomes of these institutional mechanisms include:

- a** *Increased gender-responsive policymaking, leading to enhanced participation of women in economic and political spaces.*
- b** *Integration of gender mainstreaming in public service, with gender desks established in ministries and public offices .*
- c** *Expansion of financial programs for women, benefiting over 2.5 million women entrepreneurs through WEF and Uwezo Fund.*
- d** *Improved legal protection for survivors of gender-based violence, with over 100 gender desks in police stations and increased funding for GBV prevention programs*

3.9.2. Gaps and Challenges

Despite these advancements, several barriers hinder the effectiveness of institutional mechanisms in promoting gender equality:

- a** *Many gender policies remain unimplemented due to lack of political will, funding constraints, and bureaucratic inefficiencies.*
- b** *Limited funding for gender institutions which affect county gender offices, receiving less than 1% of the national budget, affecting their capacity to implement programs.*
- c** *Multiple institutions operate independently, leading to overlaps and inefficiencies in gender program delivery.*
- d** *Many women remain unaware of their rights under gender laws, leading to low uptake of services such as the Women Enterprise Fund.*
- e** *Patriarchal resistance and socio-cultural barriers particularly in rural and marginalized communities.*
- f** *Many GBV and discrimination cases take years to resolve due to backlogs and underfunded legal aid programs.*

3.9.3. Recommendations

To strengthen institutional mechanisms for advancing women's rights, the following measures should be prioritized:

- a** *Allocate at least 5% of the national budget to support gender equality programs and enhance institutional capacity.*
- b** *Establish an inter-agency task force to streamline policies and programs across government and civil society actors.*
- c** *Ensure that all government ministries and agencies implement gender-responsive budgeting and policy frameworks.*
- d** *Improve public awareness campaigns on women's rights: Launch nationwide campaigns to educate women and communities on gender laws and available support services.*

3.10. Human Rights of Women

3.10.1. Key Achievements

Kenya has made notable progress in promoting and protecting the human rights of women through constitutional provisions, legal frameworks, and policy initiatives. The government, civil society, and international partners have contributed to strengthening women's rights in areas such as political participation, economic empowerment, protection from gender-based violence, and access to justice. Some of the key legal and policy frameworks that safeguard women's rights include:

- a** *The Constitution of Kenya (2010): Guarantees equality and freedom from discrimination under Article 27 and provides for affirmative action in political, economic, and social spheres.*
- b** *The Sexual Offences Act (2006): Strengthens laws against sexual violence and provides protection for survivors .*
- c** *The Protection Against Domestic Violence Act (2015): Establishes legal protections for survivors of domestic violence.*
- d** *The Matrimonial Property Act (2013): Recognizes women's rights to property acquired during marriage.*
- e** *The Employment Act (2007, revised 2022): Prohibits gender discrimination in the workplace and provides for maternity and paternity leave.*
- f** *Operationalization of the PBO Act (2022): After years of civil society advocacy, the Public Benefits Organizations Act was fully operationalized in 2023, streamlining NGO registration and reducing bureaucratic hurdles.*
- g** *The Kenya National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (2020-2024): Enhances women's participation in peacebuilding and security processes. The National Policy on Gender and Development (2019): Provides a framework for integrating gender equality in all sectors of development.*

Key achievements from these policies include:

- a** *Increased access to justice for women, with over 60% of GBV cases being reported and prosecuted under the Sexual Offences Act.*
- b** *Enhanced representation of women in political and leadership roles, with women comprising 23% of the National Assembly and 33% of County Assemblies .*
- c** *Increased awareness and enforcement of labor rights, leading to a rise in female employment in formal sectors from 29% in 2010 to 41% in 2023.*
- d** *Reporting Commitments: Kenya submitted overdue reports to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in 2023 and a working group set up to accelerate the ratification of the ILO Convention 190 on workplace violence. High-Level Pledges: Political leaders publicly condemned abductions and enforced disappearances, though enforcement remains weak.*

3.10.2. Gaps and Challenges

Despite these advancements, systemic challenges persist, affecting the full realization of women's human rights in Kenya:

- a** *Persistent gender-based violence (GBV): 45% of women aged 15-49 have experienced physical or sexual violence, with low conviction rates for perpetrators.*
- b** *While legal provisions exist, gender discrimination remains prevalent in employment, property ownership, and political participation.*
- c** *Many women lack financial resources and legal representation, delaying or denying them justice.*
- d** *Deep-rooted patriarchal norms and harmful practices such as FGM and child marriage continue to violate women's rights.*
- e** *There is persistent underrepresentation in economic decision-making. Women hold less than 15% of board positions in major companies, limiting their influence in shaping economic policies.*
- f** *Weak enforcement of land and property rights: Although the Matrimonial Property Act grants women land rights, only 10% of women own land independently due to male-dominated inheritance practices and weak enforcement of land and property rights.*
- g** *Despite Kenya's constitutional guarantees (Article 54) and international commitments (CRPD, CEDAW), women with disabilities face institutional neglect. Laws like the Persons with Disabilities Act (2003) remain poorly enforced due to underfunding and lack of political will. Women with disabilities and refugees face heightened legal and social barriers in accessing their rights (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights).*
- h** *Shrinking Civic Space: Restrictive amendments to the NGO Coordination Act (2013) and Public Order Act led to deregistration of 87 NGOs in 2021 and suppression of protests under administrative pretexts, with the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act (2018) being weaponized and used to arrest WHRD for their online dissent against GBV.*
- i** *Abductions & Gender-Specific Threats: At least 37 enforced disappearances (2020-2022), including WHRDs like Elizabeth Ekaru (2023). Women face sexual violence, intimidation, and police inaction.*
- ii** *Deficient International Reporting: Overdue reports to UN mechanisms (CEDAW since 2018; ICCPR/CAT since 2020) and only 45% of UPR recommendations implemented.*
- iii** *Accountability Vacuum: No prosecutions for abductions/police killings; 90% of rights violation cases unresolved. Restrictive laws like the ICT Act 2023 stifle dissent.*

3.10.3. Recommendations

To strengthen the human rights of women in Kenya, the following actions should be prioritized:

- a** *Strengthen policing, prosecution, and judicial capacity to ensure full implementation of women's rights laws.*
- b** *Increase funding for pro bono legal representation and establish gender-sensitive legal aid centers across all counties .*
- c** *Train police officers and judicial officials on handling GBV and discrimination cases effectively .*
- d** *Implement nationwide campaigns to challenge harmful gender norms and advocate for women's rights.*
- e** *Introduce mandatory gender quotas in corporate leadership and public office appointments.*
- f** *Provide legal aid and sensitization programs to empower women on their property rights and inheritance laws .*
- g** *Strengthen policies addressing discrimination against women with disabilities and refugees, ensuring full inclusion in human rights frameworks .*
- h** *Increase investment in GBV response mechanisms by scaling up funding for safe houses, mental health and counseling centers, and survivor support services .*
- i** *Legal Reforms: Repeal/amend the Public Order Act, NGO Coordination Act, and Cybercrimes Act to align with Article 37 (Constitution) on assembly.*
- j** *Investigate Abductions: Establish an independent task force to probe enforced disappearances, prioritizing WHRDs.*
- k** *Enhance Reporting: Allocate resources to clear preparation and submission of overdue reports to ICCPR/CAT and CEDAW by 2025.*
- l** *Protect WHRDs: Implement gender-sensitive protection mechanisms, including safe houses and legal aid.*
- m** *Civil Society Collaboration: Formalize partnerships with NGOs to monitor UPR recommendations*

3.11. Women and the Media

3.11.1. Key Achievements

Women's representation and participation in the media in Kenya have improved over the years due to legal reforms, policy initiatives, and increased awareness of gender representation in journalism, entertainment, and digital spaces. Key achievements include:

- a** *The Constitution of Kenya (2010): Guarantees freedom of the press and prohibits discrimination in media representation.*
- b** *The Media Council Act (2013): Establishes a regulatory framework that promotes gender sensitivity in media content and protects women journalists from harassment. The National ICT Policy (2020): Encourages women's inclusion in the digital space and protects against online harassment.*
- c** *The Kenya Information and Communications Act (2013): Regulates media ownership and content, ensuring equitable representation of women in broadcasting. The Gender and Media Policy (2022): Aims to address gender disparities in media ownership, editorial policies, and representation of women in news coverage.*

Some key improvements include:

- a** *There has been an increased presence of women in media leadership. In 2023, 36% of senior editorial positions in major media houses were held by women, up from 22% in 2015.*
Growth in women-focused programming, with media outlets dedicating 20% more airtime to gender-related topics in 2023 than in previous years.
Improved gender sensitivity in journalism, with 64% of media houses adopting gender-inclusive language and balanced reporting.
Expansion of digital content creation by women, with a 45% increase in female-led online media platforms in the last five years.

3.11.2. Gaps and Challenges

Despite these achievements, significant challenges persist that hinder gender equality in media representation, access, and influence:

- a** *Underrepresentation of women in news coverage. Studies show that only 26% of sources quoted in mainstream media are women, limiting their influence in shaping public discourse.*
- b** *Women in journalism face pay disparities, limited career progression, and workplace harassment, with 40% of female journalists reporting workplace discrimination.*
- c** *67% of women journalists and digital content creators report experiencing online abuse and cyberbullying, which affects their participation in digital spaces.*
- d** *Women own only 15% of media outlets, restricting their control over content and decision-making in the industry.*
- e** *Stereotypical portrayals of women in the media whereby women are often depicted in passive or victim roles, with limited representation in stories on politics, business, and governance.*
- f** *While policies exist, enforcement of gender-sensitive media guidelines remain weak, leading to continued gender bias in reporting.*

3.11.3. Recommendations

To enhance gender equality in media representation and access, the following steps should be taken:

- a** *Implement strict compliance mechanisms for media houses to ensure equitable gender representation in reporting.*
- b** *Support women in media leadership by increasing affirmative action and workplace policies to promote women to executive roles in media organizations.*
- c** *Introduce stronger legal protections and reporting mechanisms for women in digital spaces, including cyber harassment laws.*
- d** *Promote fair representation of women in news coverage through ensuring minimum quotas for women's voices in political, economic, and governance news reporting .*
- e** *Provide financial incentives and business support to encourage women-led media startups.*
- f** *Train journalists on ethical reporting and eliminating gender stereotypes in storytelling*
- g** *Support female content creators and influencers through grants and investment in digital skills training .*
- h** *Conduct regular media audits to track gender representation trends and accountability*

3.12. Women and the Environment

3.12.1. Key Achievements

Kenyan women play a critical role in environmental conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable resource management. Over the past decades, various policies and initiatives have been developed to support women's engagement in environmental governance and climate action. Key legal and policy frameworks include:

- a** *The Environmental Management and Coordination Act (1999, revised 2015): Provides a legal framework for environmental conservation and recognizes the role of women in sustainable development.*
- b** *The Climate Change Act (2016): Mandates gender-responsive climate action and ensures women's participation in climate governance.*
- c** *The National Policy on Climate Finance (2018): Prioritizes women-led climate adaptation initiatives and provides financing mechanisms for women in agriculture and conservation.*
- d** *The National Environment Policy (2013): Emphasizes the integration of gender equality in natural resource management .*

- e** *The Green Belt Movement: A globally recognized initiative founded by Wangari Maathai to empower women in afforestation and environmental restoration.*
- e** *The Kenya National Adaptation Plan (2016-2030): Advocates for gender-responsive climate adaptation and resilience strategies*

Key outcomes of these initiatives include:

- a** *Increased women's participation in environmental leadership, with 35% representation in community-based conservation groups.*
- b** *Expansion of women-led afforestation projects, leading to the planting of over 300 million trees nationwide.*
- c** *Growth of women's involvement in sustainable agriculture, with over 60% of female small-scale farmers adopting climate-smart practices.*
- d** *Development of gender-responsive climate policies, incorporating women in disaster risk reduction and resource management strategies .*

3.12.2. Gaps and Challenges

Despite these achievements, women continue to face structural and systemic challenges in environmental governance, climate adaptation, and access to green financing:

- a** *Limited access to land and natural resources. Women own less than 10% of titled land, restricting their ability to engage in sustainable agriculture and conservation efforts.*
- b** *Women are underrepresented in climate governance constituting only 22% of policymakers involved in environmental decision-making.*
- c** *Due to gendered economic roles, women in arid and semi-arid regions (ASALs) bear the brunt of climate-related food insecurity.*
- d** *Women-led environmental projects receive only 12% of national climate funding, limiting their ability to scale sustainability initiatives.*
- e** *Despite legal provisions, many environmental policies lack clear gender-disaggregated data and gender-specific interventions.*
- f** *Women in regions affected by land and water conflicts face heightened risks of GBV when collecting firewood, water, and other resources.*

3.12.3. Recommendations

To enhance women's participation in environmental governance and climate action, the following policy measures should be implemented:

- a** *Implement policies that ensure at least 30% of land titles are allocated to women to facilitate their participation in climate adaptation.*
- b** *Ensure a minimum of 40% female representation in environmental policy-making bodies.*
- c** *Allocate at least 30% of climate funds (green financing) to women-led sustainability projects and provide low-interest loans for female entrepreneurs in the green economy.*
- d** *Establish clear gender indicators in national climate policies and improve gender-disaggregated data collection.*
- e** *Provide training and resources for women in climate-smart agriculture, water management, and renewable energy sectors.*
- f** *Strengthen community-based natural resource management through supporting women's involvement in community-led conservation efforts and create incentives for their participation.*
- g** *Implement gender-sensitive conflict resolution mechanisms and strengthen legal protections for women affected by resource conflicts.*
- h** *Scale up afforestation and renewable energy projects led by women by increasing investments in women-led reforestation, eco-tourism, and clean energy initiatives.*
- i** *Adopt gender responsive benefit sharing practices particularly in communities with mining and conservation or enhance the participation of women in benefit sharing discussions/ negotiations.*

3.13. The Girl Child

3.13.1. Key Achievements

Kenya has made significant strides in promoting the rights and well-being of the girl child through legal frameworks, policy interventions, and education programs. These efforts have improved access to education, protection from harmful cultural practices, and gender equality initiatives aimed at securing the future of young girls.

Key legal and policy frameworks include:

- a** *The Constitution of Kenya (2010): Guarantees the rights of children, including protection from abuse, child labor, and harmful cultural practices.*
- b** *The Children Act (2022): Strengthens protection for the girl child against abuse, neglect, and exploitation.*
- c** *The Basic Education Act (2013): Mandates free and compulsory primary and secondary education for all children, reducing gender disparities in schooling. The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Act (2011): Criminalizes FGM and provides legal protection for girls at risk.*

- d** *The National Policy on the Elimination of Child Marriage (2021): Aims to eradicate child marriage and promote alternative empowerment programs for young girls.*
- e** *The Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy (2015): Provides a framework for access to health education and services for adolescent girls.*

Key outcomes from these policies include:

- a** *Increase in girl's school enrollment, with primary school completion rates for girls rising to 87% in 2023, up from 72% in 2010.*
- b** *Reduction in child marriage rates, with a 22% decline between 2010 and 2023, due to legal enforcement and community sensitization programs.*
- c** *Decline in FGM prevalence, from 32% in 2003 to 15% in 2023, following aggressive anti-FGM campaigns.*
- d** *Expansion of school feeding programs, increasing retention rates of girls, especially in arid and semi-arid regions.*
- e** *Increased access to menstrual health management (MHM), with free sanitary pads distributed to over 4.2 million schoolgirls annually.*

3.13.2. Gaps and Challenges

Despite notable progress, significant challenges remain in ensuring the full realization of the rights of the girl child:

- a** *Teenage pregnancies and early marriages contribute to over 20% of girls dropping out before completing secondary education .*
- b** *Limited access to sexual and reproductive health services especially to adolescent girls who lack access to youth-friendly health services, contributing to high rates of teen pregnancies (18%) and unsafe abortions.*
- c** *1 in 3 girls in Kenya experiences sexual or physical violence before age 18, with many cases going unreported.*
- d** *FGM and child marriage persist in some communities, despite legal bans, due to deep-rooted traditional beliefs.*
- e** *While education access has improved, only 30% of girls pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).*
- f** *Weak enforcement mechanisms and lack of adequate funding hinder full implementation of laws protecting the girl child .*
- g** *Reports indicate that 30% of schoolgirls have faced School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) from teachers or fellow students.*

3.13.3. Recommendations

To advance the rights and well-being of the girl child, the following actions are essential:

- a** *Ensure full implementation of The Children Act, the Anti-FGM Act, and the Education Act by increasing monitoring and accountability mechanisms.*
- b** *Expand adolescent reproductive health programs by provide age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health education in schools and increase access to contraceptives and healthcare services for adolescents.*
- c** *Enhance retention programs for schoolgirls by scaling up interventions such as mentorship programs, school feeding initiatives, and safe boarding facilities to prevent school dropouts .*
- d** *Implement re-entry policy by ensuring support services to the girl to go back to school including providing access to care services*
- e** *Strengthen efforts to eradicate child marriage and FGM through intentional engagement of the men and women, community leaders, religious groups, and traditional elders to enforce laws and create alternative rites of passage.*
- f** *Introduce targeted scholarships, mentorship programs, and internship opportunities for girls in science and technology.*
- g** *Increase investments in menstrual hygiene management (MHM) by ensuring sustainable provision of free sanitary products, safe sanitation facilities, and menstrual education in schools.*
- h** *Address school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) by strengthening anti-harassment policies, reporting mechanisms, and disciplinary actions in schools to create safer learning environments.*
- i** *Empower communities to champion girls' rights, end harmful practices and create safe spaces for adolescent girls to express their concerns.*

Section Four

**National Institutions
and Gender Processes.**

4.1. National Institutions & Processes

Kenya has established several national institutions and mechanisms to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. These institutions play a crucial role in implementing policies, coordinating gender programs, and ensuring compliance with national and international commitments, such as the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

4.1.1. Key gender institutions and ecosystem in Kenya

Gender institutions and ecosystem actors	Gender institutions and ecosystem actors
The State Department for Gender, and Affirmative Action	- i The lead government institution responsible for formulating and implementing gender policies, programs, and interventions. - ii Coordinates gender mainstreaming across various ministries and government agencies. - iii Oversees the Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) and the Anti-FGM Board.
The Office of the Women's Rights Advisor to the President	- i Established in November 2022 under President William Ruto to advance women's rights and implement the Women's Charter. - ii Its Mandate is to advise on safeguarding women's rights within the Executive Office of the President.
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The Office of the Women's Rights Advisor to the President

Key Responsibilities of the office include:

- i Implements the Women's Charter.
Promotes gender equality and addresses societal inequalities.
 - Enhances women's participation in leadership and decision-making.
- ii Policy and Legal Focus:
 - Strengthens frameworks to combat sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).
 - Advocates for women's economic empowerment through financial and business access.
- iii Recent Initiatives
 - Launched the Women's Economic Empowerment and Investment Curriculum at MMUST. Aims to empower 30,000 women-led MSMEs in Kakamega, Bungoma, and Vihiga counties.

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) (2011)

- i Established under Article 59 of the Constitution, NGEC is mandated to monitor, promote, and advise on gender equality and non-discrimination.
- ii Assesses compliance with gender equality laws and policies within government institutions and the private sector.
- iii Conducts periodic gender audits and provides recommendations to policy-makers.

The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR).

- i Monitors human rights violations, including gender-based violence and discrimination.
- ii Conducts investigations and provides legal redress for victims of gender-related injustices.

The Office of the Women's Rights Advisor to the President	i Works closely with CSOs and government agencies to enhance women's rights
The Anti-FGM Board (2011)	- i Tasked with coordinating anti-FGM campaigns and enforcing laws against the practice. - ii Works with local communities, religious leaders, and civil society organizations (CSOs) to eradicate harmful cultural practices.
The Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) and Uwezo Fund	- i Provide financial resources and business training to women entrepreneurs to enhance economic empowerment. - ii WEF has supported over 2.5 million women-owned businesses across Kenya (National Treasury, 2023).
The National Council for Population and Development (NCPD).	- i Oversees policies related to reproductive health, family planning, and population dynamics affecting women and girls. - ii Provides gender-disaggregated data to inform national policies on gender equality.
The National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD):	- i Advocates for the rights and inclusion of women and girls with disabilities. - ii Works on policy reforms to ensure that disability inclusion is integrated into gender policies and programs.
The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS)	i Collects, analyzes, and disseminates gender-specific data to track progress in gender equality and policy implementation.

	ii Works closely with CSOs and government agencies to enhance women's rights. Produces reports such as the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) that provide insights into women's health, economic participation, and social status.
The Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA) and County Assembly Women Caucuses	- i Advocates for gender-sensitive legislation and policies within Parliament and County Assemblies. - ii Strengthens women's political participation and leadership through capacity-building programs. - iii Plays a crucial role in pushing for the realization of the Two-Thirds Gender Rule.
The Council of Governors (COG) Gender Committee	- i Coordinates gender mainstreaming efforts at the county level. - ii Works with county governments to implement gender-responsive policies and ensure access to gender-related services at the grassroots level.
The National Treasury and Economic Planning Gender Unit	- i Integrates gender-responsive budgeting across all sectors to ensure adequate financial resources for gender equality initiatives. - ii Monitors and evaluates economic policies to assess their impact on women's economic empowerment.

4.1.2. Gaps and Challenges in the Gender Ecosystem as observed by CSOs

Despite these institutional advancements, several challenges limit the effectiveness of Kenya's gender ecosystem:

- a** *Many gender-related laws lack clear implementation mechanisms, leading to low compliance rates.*
- b** *Fragmented coordination of synergy between national and county government agencies and civil society organizations hampers efficiency in addressing gender inequalities.*

- c** *Gender programs receive less than 1% of the national budget, making implementation difficult.*
- d** *Patriarchal resistance, socio-cultural barriers, and opposition from conservative groups, particularly in rural communities continue to hamper gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) efforts.*
- e** *Survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) often face long court processes, lack of legal aid/support, and stigma when seeking justice. This exacerbates their vulnerabilities.*
- f** *Most gender equality initiatives in Kenya are heavily reliant on donor support, raising sustainability concerns if funding is withdrawn.*
- g** *Women's economic programs and gender-responsive budgeting remain underfunded, receiving only 15% of economic stimulus packages.*
- h** *Many government gender offices lack trained personnel, resources, and research capacity to effectively implement gender policies.*

4.2. Review of the Government's BPfA Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms (Perhaps we expand to highlight the govt participation with other processes – HPLF , ACPHR ,

Kenya has been actively engaged in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) monitoring and reporting since 1995.

Beijing+10 (2005): A decade after the BPfA's adoption, Kenya conducted a thorough review of its implementation efforts. The Beijing+10 report highlighted significant achievements, such as the development of gender-responsive policies and the establishment of institutional frameworks to support women's advancement. However, it also identified persistent challenges, including cultural barriers and inadequate resource allocation for gender-focused initiatives.

Beijing+25 (2019): Marking 25 years since the BPfA, Kenya's Beijing+25 report provided an in-depth analysis of progress made between 2014 and 2019. The report emphasized advancements in women's political representation, economic empowerment, and legislative reforms aimed at protecting women's rights. Notably, it discussed the enactment of laws addressing gender-based violence and efforts to increase women's participation in decision-making processes. The report also underscored ongoing challenges, such as the need for more robust data collection mechanisms and the enforcement of existing gender equality laws.

Beijing+30 (2024): In anticipation of the 30th anniversary of the BPfA in 2025, Kenya prepared the Beijing+30 report, covering the period from 2020 to 2024. This comprehensive document assessed the country’s progress in implementing the BPfA’s critical areas of concern, aligning them with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The report highlighted key achievements, including the integration of gender perspectives into national development plans and the strengthening of legal frameworks to promote women’s rights. It also identified areas requiring further attention, such as addressing gender disparities in economic opportunities and enhancing support systems for survivors of gender-based violence.

4.3. Data and Statistics

4.3.1. Availability and Quality of Sex-Disaggregated Data in Kenya

Sex-disaggregated data is crucial for monitoring gender equality progress, shaping policies, and ensuring accountability in achieving commitments under the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Significant efforts have been made in Kenya to collect and analyze gender-specific data, but gaps remain in ensuring consistency, comprehensiveness, and accessibility.

4.3.2. Key Data Collection Agencies and Systems

Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS)	- i Collects national data through surveys such as the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS), Kenya Economic Survey, and the National Census. - ii Publishes gender-disaggregated reports on health, education, labor force participation, and gender-based violence (GBV).
National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC)	- i Conducts gender audits and monitors compliance with gender policies. - ii Develops indicators for tracking progress in gender equality across public and private sectors.
Ministry of Public Service, Gender, and Affirmative Action	i Monitors gender-responsive budgeting, policy implementation, and representation in decision-making structures.

	ii Works with KNBS to integrate gendered perspectives into national development statistics.
Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR)	- i Collects data on women's rights violations, GBV cases, and discrimination complaints. - ii Provides policy recommendations based on data-driven reports
Non-Governmental and Development Organizations	i UN Women, UNICEF, CREAM, SDG Forum, FIDA, COVAW, GVRG, Wangu Kanja Foundation, UPDK, Plan International, ICRW, and Kenya Land Alliance contribute to data collection on women's economic empowerment, child marriage, and social protection.

4.4. Key Gender Indicators and Monitoring Gaps

While Kenya has improved the collection of sex-disaggregated data, gaps persist in ensuring that gender-sensitive statistics are comprehensive, timely, and effectively utilized for policymaking. Some key gender indicators and monitoring gaps include:

4.4.1. Progress in Key Gender Indicators

a Education:

- i. Primary school completion rates: Girls – 87%, Boys – 88% .
- ii. Transition to secondary education: Girls – 79%, Boys – 81%.
- iii. STEM participation: Women comprise 30% of students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

b Health and Well-being:

- i Maternal mortality rate: 342 deaths per 100,000 live births.
- ii Contraceptive prevalence rate: 58% among married women.
- iii Prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): 15% .

c Participation:

- i Female labor force participation: 62%, compared to 79% for men.
- ii Gender wage gap: Women earn 23% less than men for similar work .
- iii Women's land ownership: 10% of land title deeds are held by women.

d Political Representation:

- i Women in Parliament: 23%.*
- ii Women in county assemblies: 33%.*
- iii Women in corporate boardrooms: 15% of top leadership positions in major firms.*

4.4.2. CSO observations on gaps in gender data

- Many surveys do not consistently capture gender-specific data, making it difficult to track long-term trends.
- Underreporting of gender-based violence due to fear, stigma, or inadequate data collection mechanisms.
- Women dominate the informal economy, yet limited statistics exist on their income, working conditions, and contributions.
- Although women bear the majority of unpaid domestic and caregiving responsibilities, no national dataset captures the economic value of care work.
- Weak integration of digital and technology-based gender indicators. This is manifested by a lack of data on women's participation in the digital economy, access to financial technology, and online safety.

4.5. Data Challenges for Tracking BPfA Progress

Despite Kenya's commitment to BPfA goals, data-related challenges hinder effective monitoring and evaluation of gender equality initiatives. The notable challenges include but are not limited to:

a Limited funding for gender-responsive data collection:

- i National gender institutions rely heavily on donor funding rather than sustainable government financing.*
- ii Lack of investment in gender statistics departments within KNBS and other institutions.*

b Inconsistencies in data collection methodologies:

- i Different agencies use varying methodologies, leading to discrepancies in reported gender indicators.*
- ii Lack of standardized tools for measuring women's economic empowerment and social inclusion.*

c Weak gender data utilization in policymaking:

- i Existing gender data is not fully utilized in shaping government programs and policies.*
- ii Ministries do not always integrate gender-specific targets into budgeting and national development plans.*

d Insufficient real-time gender data:

- i Many reports rely on outdated or five-year interval surveys, limiting real-time decision-making.
- ii Limited gender-disaggregated data on climate change, technology use, and economic shocks.

e Barriers in accessing official statistics:

- i CSOs and researchers often face bureaucratic challenges in obtaining official gender statistics.
- ii Data centralization restricts access to gender reports beyond government agencies.

4.6. Recommendations for Strengthening Gender Data and Statistics

To improve the quality, accessibility, and impact of gender data, Kenya should:

- a** *Increase government funding for gender statistics by allocating at least 5% of the KNBS budget to gender-focused data collection and research.*
Develop digital and mobile-based gender data tracking tools for continuous monitoring and real-time data.
- b** *Standardize indicators and reporting frameworks across government, CSOs, and development partners.*
- c** *Collect gender-disability disaggregated data to track progress and allocate resources.*
- d** *Expand gender-focused labor market surveys to capture statistics on informal workers, unpaid care work, and women's contributions to the economy.*
- e** *Improve accessibility and public transparency, ensuring that gender statistics are open-source and easily accessible to policymakers, CSOs, and researchers.*

Section Five

**Conclusions and
Next Steps**

5.1. Final Assessment of Progress and Major Gaps

Kenya has made notable strides in advancing gender equality through the implementation of various policies, legal frameworks, and institutional mechanisms. The Constitution of Kenya (2010), the National Gender Policy (2019), and sector-specific policies have provided a strong foundation for addressing gender disparities. Kenya has achieved measurable, though uneven, progress toward gender equality. In education, near-parity in primary school enrolment (95 girls for every 100 boys) reflects strides in access, yet stark disparities emerge at the secondary level, where only 52% of rural girls transition compared to 61% of boys.

Economically, women's labour force participation has risen to 75%, but the majority (83%) remain trapped in informal, low-paying jobs with little social protection. Politically, representation has improved—women now hold 23% of parliamentary seats, up from 9% in 2013—but they occupy a mere 6% of county assembly positions, far below constitutional mandates. While reported cases of intimate partner violence dropped to 34% in 2022, 60% of survivors still avoid seeking help, and GBV surged by 30% during the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, significant gaps remain that hinder full gender parity. These include:

- a** *Persistent gender-based violence (GBV) with inadequate response mechanisms and weak enforcement of protective laws.*
- b** *Limited economic opportunities for women, including the gender wage gap, low land ownership, and restricted access to credit.*
- c** *Underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions at the national and county levels, with the Two-Thirds Gender Principle remaining unimplemented.*
- d** *Weak enforcement of gender-responsive policies and programs, particularly at the grassroots level.*
- e** *insufficient gender data and monitoring frameworks, affecting evidence-based policymaking.*
- f** *Inadequate budget allocation for gender equality initiatives, with overreliance on donor funding rather than sustainable government investment.*

To accelerate progress, Kenya needs to address these challenges with urgency and strategic action.

5.2. Strategic Actions for Kenya to Accelerate Gender Equality

To achieve gender equality and fulfill commitments under the **Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA)**, Kenya must undertake the following strategic actions:

- a Strengthen implementation of gender laws and policies:**
 - i *Fully implement the Two-Thirds Gender Rule to ensure equal representation of women in leadership.*
 - ii *Strengthen legal protections against GBV through setting and operationalization of specialized units including specialized courts, fast-tracked prosecutions, and survivor-centered support services.*
 - iii *Amend the National Gender Policy to include targeted protections for women with disabilities, older women, and young girls.*
 - iv *Enhance enforcement of gender-responsive labor laws to close the gender wage gap and improve workplace protections for women.*
- b Expand economic opportunities for women:**
 - i *Scale up financial inclusion programs that considers the different vulnerabilities of women including survivors of violence, women and girls with disability, women entrepreneurs, including low-interest loans and grants.*
 - ii *The judiciary should develop a consistent legal precedent on matrimonial property rights, explicitly recognizing the value of care work to ensure clarity and uniformity in judicial decisions.*
 - iii *Increase women's access to land ownership and inheritance rights by strengthening enforcement of existing property laws.*
 - iv *Enhance support for women in STEM fields through targeted scholarships, mentorship, and skills training.*
- c Enhance gender-responsive budgeting and investment:**
 - i *Increase government funding for gender equality programs by allocating at least 5% of the national budget to gender-focused interventions.*
 - ii *Scale Up Inclusive Programs by allocate 30% of GEF to disability-friendly livelihoods and elderly healthcare.*
 - iii *Strengthen gender-responsive budgeting at the county level to ensure equitable resource distribution.*
 - iv *Promote public-private partnerships (PPPs) to boost funding for gender-related initiatives in business, technology, and education.*
- d Improve data collection and gender monitoring systems:**
 - i *Strengthen the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) capacity to collect real-time, sex-disaggregated data across all sectors.*

- i *Strengthen Data Systems by Integrate disability and age metrics into the 2027 census module.*
- ii *Ensure all national and county-level policies have gender-sensitive indicators for effective tracking and evaluation.*
- iii *Establish a centralized gender data portal to improve access to information for policymakers, researchers, and CSOs.*
- iv *Support the adoption of CGD as official data source and / or utilization of citizen generated data*

e

Strengthen GBV prevention and response mechanisms:

- i *Expand Prevention programs and male engagement, safe shelters, legal aid services, and crisis response centers for GBV survivors in every county.*
- ii *Increase training for law enforcement officers and judicial officers to improve GBV case handling.*
- iii *Integrate comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in schools to address early pregnancies and harmful cultural practices.*

f

Increase women's participation in leadership and decision-making:

- i *Enforce gender quotas in public and private sector leadership roles to increase women's representation.*
- ii *Strengthen capacity-building programs for women leaders through mentorship and leadership training initiatives.*
- iii *Support grassroots women's movements advocating for policy changes at the community level.*

g

Strengthen Accountability Mechanisms through the State of the Nation Address (SONA) to Advance Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Kenya

- i *The Government of Kenya should institutionalize accountability for gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE) by mandating that the annual State of the Nation Address (SONA) includes a dedicated section to report on progress, challenges, and commitments to achieving gender parity.*
- ii *This section should be informed by sex-disaggregated data, align with Kenya's constitutional obligations (Article 27, 43) and international commitments (e.g., CEDAW, SDG 5), and be subject to parliamentary scrutiny and public oversight.*
- iii *Annual Reporting: The President should use SONA to outline specific achievements (e.g., increased women's access to credit, reduced gender-based violence cases) and gaps (e.g., stalled Two-Thirds Gender Rule implementation).*
- iv *Data-Driven Metrics: Use indicators from Kenya's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Sector Plan (2023–2027), such as women's land ownership rates (currently 5% in rural areas) and maternal mortality ratios (342 per 100,000 live births).*

- v *Public Participation: County-level gender forums should feed into SONA preparations to amplify grassroots voices, per Article 10 on public participation.*
- vi *Parliamentary Oversight: Parliament should debate the SONA's GEWE commitments and mandate quarterly progress reports from the State Department for Gender.*

5.3. Role of CSOs in Advancing BPfA Implementation

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) remain critical actors and enablers in accelerating gender equality and ensuring Kenya meets its BPfA commitments. Their roles include:

- a Advocacy and policy engagement:**
 - i *Lobby for implementation of gender-responsive policies and hold the government accountable for gender commitments.*
 - ii *Advocate for gender-responsive budgeting and increased resource allocation to gender equality programs and institutions.*
- b**
 - iii *Push for legal reforms that address harmful cultural practices, GBV, and gender-based economic disparities.*
- c**
 - Capacity building and community engagement:**
 - i *Train women and girls in leadership, entrepreneurship, and digital skills to enhance their economic and political participation.*
 - ii *Work with local communities and traditional leaders to shift gender norms and eliminate barriers to women's empowerment.*
 - iii *Promote awareness campaigns on gender equality through media, social networks, and grassroots mobilization.*
- d**
 - Service delivery and support for women:**
 - i *Provide legal aid, shelter, counseling, and rehabilitation services for survivors of GBV.*
 - ii *Support women-led businesses by offering financial literacy programs and market access opportunities.*
 - iii *Strengthen access to sexual and reproductive health services, particularly for adolescent girls and marginalized communities.*
 - Monitoring and accountability:**
 - i *Conduct gender audits and policy evaluations to track the effectiveness of government interventions.*
 - ii *Publish shadow reports on Kenya's BPfA implementation progress to ensure independent assessments of gender policies.*
 - iii *Partner with international organizations to strengthen data collection and evidence-based reporting on gender equality.*

- e Building strategic partnerships:**
 - i *Collaborate with government agencies, development partners, and the private sector to advance gender equality initiatives.*
 - ii *Strengthen regional and international alliances to leverage funding, expertise, and policy influence.*

5.4. Conclusion

Kenya has made substantial progress in advancing gender equality, but persistent structural and systemic barriers continue to slow progress. Addressing economic disparities, GBV, gender/women representation in leadership, and weak policy enforcement must be prioritized. Multi-stakeholder collaboration is needed to sustain progress, with government, CSOs, the private sector, and development partners playing complementary roles. Strategic investments in gender-responsive policies, financing, and monitoring mechanisms will accelerate Kenya's realization of gender equality commitments under the BPfA. Kenya needs to accelerate efforts to bridge existing gaps and challenges by adopting a decisive, action-oriented strategy to ensure gender equality is systematically integrated into national development frameworks, economic policies, and governance systems. Strengthening policy implementation, investing in comprehensive and disaggregated data collection, securing sustainable funding, and fostering deeper collaboration with civil society organizations (CSOs) will be crucial in achieving meaningful and lasting gender equality..

Annexes

Annex 1: List of participating CSOs.

Kindly find below the list of organizations that have contributed to the shadow report and should be acknowledged:

CREAW	■ Our Lady Of Charity Of The Good Shepherd
FIDA Kenya	■ Wangu Kanja Foundation
SDGS Kenya Forum	■ Kenya Network Of Women And Girls With Disabilities
UNICEF Kenya	■ Superb CBO
Hummingbird Grassroots Centre	■ Zamara Foundation
Polycom Girls	■ Crown Trust
My Body My Body	■ Youth Alive Kenya
UDPK	■ IIN
COVAW	■ KUDHEIHA
GROOTS Kenya	■ Wounded Healers Foundation
WEL	■ Generation Guiders
KEWOPA	■ Hami Imani Africa
	■ We Defenders

Annex2: CASE STUDIES OR TESTIMONIES (WOMEN AND GIRLS).

This report evaluates Kenya's advancements and persistent gaps in addressing the 12 critical areas of the BPFA, drawing on anonymized case studies, national data, and policy reviews.

Women and Poverty

Case Study 1 : Systemic Gaps in Social Protection – Delays and Vulnerability in Kenya's Inua Jamii Cash Transfer Program
Challenges in the Inua Jamii Cash Transfer Program

Background

Launched in 2014, Kenya's Inua Jamii Cash Transfer Program aims to alleviate extreme poverty among vulnerable groups, including the elderly, widows, and persons with disabilities. By 2023, it had reached 1.2 million beneficiaries, with notable success in marginalized counties like Kitui and Turkana. However, urban informal settlements face persistent challenges, as illustrated by the experience of Mama A., a 76-year-old widow in Nairobi.

Case Profile

- **Name:** Mama A. (anonymized for confidentiality)
- **Age:** 76 years
- **Location:** Kibera, Nairobi
- **Household:** Widow caring for three grandchildren (ages 8-15)
- **Status:** Enrolled in Inua Jamii since 2020

Objective of the programme versus lived experience

Despite the program's goal of providing a Ksh 2,000 (\$15) monthly stipend to alleviate poverty, Mama A. frequently faced delays of 2-4 months due to bureaucratic inefficiencies. Although financial inclusion was promoted through mobile money (M-Pesa), she experienced theft twice (in 2021 and 2022) due to insecure payment points. The program also aimed to reduce reliance on harmful coping mechanisms, yet payment delays forced her to borrow from loan sharks at 30% interest to meet basic needs like food and school fees.

"When the money comes late, we sleep hungry. My grandchildren miss school.... They know we are poor and desperate. They grab our phones and demand PINs." – Mama A.

A 2023 World Bank audit revealed that 30% of beneficiaries experience payment delays due to systemic inefficiencies. While Inua Jamii has successfully reduced rural poverty, cases like Mama A.'s highlight how urban vulnerabilities, delays, theft, and insecurity undermine its impact. Addressing these challenges requires rethinking social protection with an intersectional approach that prioritizes the safety and dignity of beneficiaries.

Education and Training

Case Study 2: The Impact of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) on Girls and Women in Kenya

Background

Kenya's 100% Transition Policy has increased girls' secondary school enrollment to 73%, supported by initiatives like the Sanitary Towels Program (MoE, 2022), which has reduced absenteeism linked to menstrual health. However, the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) introduces new challenges, particularly for girls in rural and low-income households.

Key Issues

CBC's high costs, including continuous assessments, project-based learning, and required materials, place a financial strain on families, leading to higher dropout rates. Some families, unable to afford these expenses, marry off daughters to ease financial pressure. The curriculum's emphasis on home-based learning also reinforces gendered divisions of labor, as girls are disproportionately burdened with household chores, leaving them with less study time.

Additionally, CBC's packaging of subjects along traditional gender roles limits career choices, steering girls toward domestic and caregiving fields, while boys are encouraged to pursue STEM and technical disciplines.

Lived Experience: Wanjiku's Story (Pseudonym)

Wanjiku, a 14-year-old girl from a rural County, was among the top students in her primary school. However, after transitioning to secondary school under CBC, she faced challenges:

"Our teacher told us to bring a tablet for digital learning. My mother, who sells vegetables, could not afford it. I had to miss school some days. Then, when we had an agriculture project, I couldn't buy the seedlings. I felt like I was always behind. Eventually, financial strain forced Wanjiku to drop out. She now works at a local market to support her younger siblings."

Her experience mirrors the struggles of many girls in rural Kenya, where CBC's resource-heavy approach inadvertently excludes the most vulnerable students. Addressing these gaps requires policy adjustments, including targeted financial support for disadvantaged girls and stronger community-based interventions to keep them in school.

Women and Health

Case Study 3: Bureaucratic Barriers in Kenya's Maternal Healthcare Under SHIF/SHA

Kenya's Linda Mama Program, launched in 2013, guaranteed free maternal healthcare, including antenatal, delivery, and postnatal services. However,

the 2024 transition to the Social Health Insurance Fund (SHIF/SHA) introduced bureaucratic bottlenecks, particularly in rural counties and informal settlements. This case examines maternal healthcare failures at a Level 4 hospital in Nyanza County (anonymized as County X), where systemic inefficiencies led to preventable maternal and neonatal deaths.

Case Profile

- **Interviewee:** A 24-year-old nursing student (anonymized as Student Nurse Z).
- **Location:** Level 4 Hospital, Nyanza County.
- **Context:** Internship coincided with SHIF/SHA rollout (October – December 2024).
- **Incidents:** Three maternal/neonatal deaths due to denied emergency care.

Key Incidents

- **Mother (28) and baby died during labour;** staff refused care due to incomplete SHIF/SHA registration and lack of funds for out-of-pocket payment.
- **Baby died;** mother survived with severe complications— staff cited unpaid salaries as reason for not giving treatment,
- **Baby died;** mother referred too late to another facility—staff feared disciplinary action for treating unregistered patients.

Student Nurse Z's Account

“In Case 1, the mother arrived in active labour but hadn’t completed SHIF/SHA registration. The queues were hours long. The doctor said, ‘No clearance, no treatment.’ She bled out while waiting. In Case 3, the nurses whispered, ‘If we help without approval, we will face disciplinary action.’”

Student Nurse Z’s testimony reveals how Kenya’s SHIF/SHA transition is costing lives. While universal healthcare is a constitutional right, bureaucratic inefficiencies, delayed salaries, and punitive policies disproportionately harm women in rural areas. Reinstating Linda Mama’s patient-centered approach and implementing urgent SHIF/SHA reforms is critical to preventing further maternal and neonatal deaths.

Case Study 4 : Systemic Exclusion of Women with Disabilities from Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare in Kenya

Background

In Kenya, women and girls with disabilities (WGWD) face pervasive discrimination in accessing sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, violating constitutional rights to healthcare (Article 43) and equality (Article 54). This case study highlights the intersectional barriers faced by WGWD through the anonymized experience of “Grace”, a 16-year-old girl with a physical disability.

Case Profile

- **Name:** Grace (pseudonym).
- **Age:** 16 years.
- **Disability:** Mobility impairment (uses a wheelchair).
- **Incident:** Denied family planning services in 2023 at a public health facility in Nairobi County.

Experience :Denial of Family Planning and Derogatory Treatment During Childbirth

Grace sought contraceptives after childbirth but was refused. A nurse stated, *“Why do you need these? Someone like you shouldn’t be having sex.”*

During labor, she remembers some healthcare workers mocking her disability, asking, *“Who even wanted to sleep with you?”*

This experience made Grace develop postnatal depression and avoided follow-up care.

Parallel accounts from women with hearing impairments reveal clinics lack sign language interpreters and accessible SRH materials, violating the Health Act (2017). Healthcare workers often infantilize WGWD, assuming they are asexual or unfit to parent. The public health facilities they visited lack ramps, adjustable examination beds, or Braille materials while Kenya’s National Reproductive Health Policy (2022) lacks disability-specific SRH guidelines.

The Impact is an Increased risks of unplanned pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and maternal mortality. Grace’s story reflects systemic ableism embedded in Kenya’s healthcare system. Addressing these barriers requires centering WGWD in policy design and upholding their right to dignity and bodily autonomy.

Violence Against Women

Case Study 5 : Barriers in Gender-Based Violence Case Processing – Institutional Challenges in Seeking Justice

Background

In a rural community, a woman in her mid-30s (referred to as “Survivor A”) sought medical and legal assistance following a gender-based violence (GBV) incident. Survivor A’s experience highlighted systemic gaps in institutional responses to GBV, particularly regarding documentation required for legal redress.

Her account, later shared anonymously through a local advocacy network, resonated with numerous women and Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) in the region, revealing a pattern of institutional barriers in GBV case processing.

Key Issue

Survivor A reported that healthcare providers at the facility she visited refused to complete the mandatory P3 form (a legal document required to initiate judicial proceedings in GBV cases). Staff cited reluctance to engage with time-consuming court processes, including potential summonses or testimony, as their primary reason. This refusal stalled Survivor A's case, leaving her without a pathway to legal justice. Further interviews with WHRDs and other survivors confirmed that health workers' avoidance of P3 form completion was widespread, often rooted in:

- Lack of training on GBV protocols and legal obligations.
- Fear of retaliation or social stigma from perpetrators' networks.
- Overburdened healthcare systems with no dedicated support for forensic documentation.

Impact

- Without the P3 form, GBV cases could not proceed to court, resulting in:
- Case attrition: Most survivors abandoned legal action due to bureaucratic delays.
- Revictimization: Survivors felt institutions prioritized administrative convenience over their safety and rights.
- Erosion of trust: Community confidence in health and justice systems diminished, deterring future reporting.

This systemic failure perpetuated impunity for perpetrators and normalizes GBV as a "private" issue rather than a legal violation. Survivor A's case remained unresolved due to evidentiary gaps, underscoring the need for sustained institutional accountability. This case illustrates how institutional reluctance to engage with legal processes undermines GBV justice. Survivor A's experience underscores the urgent need to align healthcare mandates with survivors' rights to justice.

Women and the Economy

Case Study 6 : Lived Experience of Economic Abuse and Systemic Barriers to Women's Empowerment

Background

"Survivor B," a 32-year-old woman from a semi-urban community, faced persistent economic abuse within her marriage, compounded by systemic barriers to financial independence. Her husband controlled all household income, restricted her access to employment, and weaponized financial dependence to perpetuate control.

When Survivor B sought to start a small business to gain autonomy, she encountered a web of structural and sociocultural obstacles mirroring challenges reported by women and Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) nationwide. Her story, anonymized and shared through a local women's collective, reflects broader systemic failures in addressing economic disempowerment and abuse.

Key Issues

Survivor B's experience highlighted intersecting barriers to women's economic empowerment: Male relatives dismissed her entrepreneurial aspirations as "unfeminine," reinforcing gender stereotypes. She spent 6–8 hours daily on childcare and household labor, leaving little time for income-generating activities. Lack of education on savings, loans, or budgeting left her vulnerable to exploitative lending practices.

Structural Barriers

"When I went to the bank for a loan, they asked for a title deed but the land is in my husband's name. I have no collateral, so they turned me away. I thought the government's Women Enterprise Fund would help, but they told me I needed to join a chama first. I don't have time or extra money for group contributions, so I had to give up on the loan."

Economic abuse is multidimensional thus addressing it requires dismantling both household power imbalances and systemic inequities. Funding programs must adapt to women's realities (e.g., time constraints, lack of collateral). Unpaid care work must be quantified and compensated to unlock women's economic participation.

Conclusion

Survivor B's lived experience underscores how economic abuse thrives in ecosystems that devalue women's labor, limit financial access, and prioritize patriarchal control. While localized interventions offer pathways to empowerment, transformative change demands structural shifts from recognizing care work to redesigning financial systems that center women's autonomy and safety. Her journey highlights the urgent need to treat economic justice as a cornerstone of gender equality.

Women in Power and Decision-Making

Case Study 7 : Exclusion and Tokenism in Political Representation of Women with Disabilities

Background

"Participant C," a 26-year-old woman with a physical disability from a peri-urban county, sought to contest a seat for the member of the County Assembly to advocate for inclusive infrastructure and disability rights.

Despite her qualifications, she faced systemic barriers rooted in ableism, gendered stereotypes, and institutional indifference. Her experience, documented by a national disability rights coalition, reflects broader patterns of exclusion faced by women with disabilities (WWD) aspiring to leadership roles. Participant C's story—and similar accounts from activists—reveals how tokenism and a lack of disability appreciation undermine political participation.

Key Issues

Underrepresentation and Tokenism- Political parties often select one "token" PWD representative, typically a man with a visible disability, while ignoring diverse disabilities (e.g., intellectual, psychosocial, or sensory).

Stereotyping: Participant C was discouraged from running, with party leaders claiming, "They should wait for a nomination or an appointment after elections. Rally venues lacked ramps, and candidate materials were not available in Braille or sign language formats.

As a woman, Participant C faced scrutiny over her caregiving roles ("Who will manage your children?"), which male PWD candidates did not and threats of gender-based violence during campaigns deterred her from public engagement. The Participant C withdrew her candidacy due to hostility but became a vocal advocate. Her campaign spurred three political parties to adopt disability quotas.

Participant C's experience highlights how political systems conflate minimal inclusion with genuine representation. Tokenism silences marginalized voices, while inaccessible processes exclude WWD from shaping policies that affect them. Sustainable change requires dismantling ableist structures, centering WWD in leadership pipelines, and treating disability inclusion as a right—not a charitable afterthought.

Women and the Media

Case Study 10 : Editorial Priorities and the Capacity Gap in Gender-Sensitive Journalism

Background

In a mid-sized media market (referred to as "Country X"), a seasoned journalist ("Journalist A") sought to investigate systemic workplace harassment faced by women in the informal labor sector. Despite compiling survivor testimonies and data from labor unions, their pitch was repeatedly rejected by editors at "Media Outlet Y," a prominent news organization.

Journalist A's experience, echoed by peers in a regional press freedom network, highlights how editorial decisions prioritizing revenue and sensationalism over substantive reporting undermine coverage of gender-related issues.

Key Issues

A journalist at Media Outlet Y described the editorial challenges:

“Our editors push for stories that drive traffic—celebrity scandals and political theatrics always make the cut, but gender issues? Only if they’re trending. We tried pitching in-depth pieces on workplace discrimination and gender-based violence, but they were reduced to clickbait headlines. The nuance, the systemic context—it all gets lost.”

Another reporter highlighted the risks of misinformation:

“Without proper training, we sometimes rely on stereotypes. I’ve seen articles subtly blame survivors for harassment because the writer didn’t know better. It’s frustrating.”

The fear of backlash was also a major barrier:

“We avoid stories that critique powerful institutions, whether it’s corporations or religious groups because no one wants to deal with the fallout. It’s an unspoken rule...The good thing is that alternative media has opened up but we also are careful with it.”

Impact

Public misinformation: Superficial reporting reinforced stereotypes, such as framing the gender pay gap as a “women’s issue” rather than a structural economic failure.

Conclusion

Journalist A’s struggle underscores a global tension in media ecosystems: the clash between commercial imperatives and the democratic role of journalism. While training and alternative platforms can mitigate gaps, transformative change requires dismantling profit-driven editorial hierarchies that sideline gender issues. As Journalist A noted, “When media reduces gender equality to ‘trending’ hashtags, it fails its mandate to inform and empower.”

Women and the Environment

Case Study 11 : Gender Gaps in Climate Action and the Struggle for Inclusive Environmental Advocacy in Kenya

Background

In rural Kenya, women bear the brunt of climate change, yet they remain excluded from key decision-making and resource access. Women Rights Organizations (WROs) have long fought for gender-responsive climate policies. However, systemic barriers continue to limit women’s participation in climate solutions, despite their critical role in agriculture and natural resource management.

Lived Experience: Esther’s Story

Nthenya, a 42-year-old farmer from Kitui County, has struggled with worsening droughts that threaten her family’s food security. She learned about

community climate funds found the application process overwhelming. ***"The forms are full of complicated words. Without formal schooling, how can I apply?" she laments.***

Even if she could access funding, Esther does not own land. Customary laws favour male inheritance, leaving her dependent on her husband's decisions. ***"I want to plant trees to stop soil erosion, but without land rights, I can't make long-term plans," she explains.***

Her daily survival also forces tough choices. With deforestation worsening, she spends hours collecting firewood, further degrading the environment. ***"I know cutting trees is bad, but what else can I do? My children need to eat and I need to burn charcoal to sell for money."***

Discussions about climate action often focus on carbon markets and renewable energy, sidelining women's immediate needs. ***"They talk about big projects, but no one asks how we will get water tomorrow," she says.***

Key Takeaways

Esther's experience highlights the urgent need for climate policies that reflect women's realities. Simplifying funding processes, securing land rights, and integrating women's knowledge in environmental planning are essential steps toward inclusive climate action.

12. The Girl Child

Case Study: Period Poverty, Stigma, and the Consequences of Systemic Neglect in Kenya

Lived Experience: The Cost of Period Stigma

Anna and Zawadi aged 15 and 16, live in a rural Kenyan community with their mothers who are the sole bread winners. Both girls say they miss school from time to time due to the lack of sanitary products and have to use rags. Anna also gets very painful periods and is not able to attend classes. She has been told it is a sign of infertility. Falling behind in their studies, they became easy targets for ridicule from classmates and even teachers.

"One day, Zawadi bled through her uniform. The teacher humiliated her in front of the class, saying she should 'learn to be clean.' After that, she stopped talking much," a classmate recalled.

Menstruation is still treated as shameful, and their mothers, bound by cultural taboos, never openly discuss it. With no support system, the girls internalized the humiliation.

Anna and Zawadi's story is a painful reminder that menstrual equity is not just about access to pads but about dignity, education, and survival.

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