



**KENYATTA UNIVERSITY  
WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT  
HUB**

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**COMMUNICATIONS, ADVOCACY & POLICY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

**September 2020 - August 2025**

## **KU-WEE Hub Fundamental Statements**

### **Vision statement**

A society free of gender inequities and inequalities with economically empowered women

### **Mission statement**

Generation of robust evidence to inform women's economic empowerment policies and programmes

### **Core values**

Gender equality, teamwork, accountability

### **Goal**

To promote women's economic empowerment through policy-driven research

## **FOREWORD**

Kenyatta University Women's Economic Empowerment (KU-WEE) Hub's initiative on what works to advance Women's Economic Empowerment was established to address the weak nexus between Women's Economic Empowerment policies and programmes, and gender data in Kenya. Kenyatta University therefore, appreciates the critical role that the Hub must play to generate evidence that can inform gender policies and programmes both at the national and county levels. Recognizing the project's contribution to the realization of SDG 5: To achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, the University supports the Hub's commitment to the generation and dissemination of robust data through policy-driven research guided by gender equality, teamwork and accountability. The project's 11 research concepts will generate valuable gender data related to women's role in the public and private sector, women's skilling and mentoring, and violence, crisis and women's work.

KU-WEE Hub's vision of a society free of gender inequities and inequalities with economically empowered women can only be realized with the help of other research, policy and advocacy partners. This cognizance has informed the Hub's partnerships both locally and internationally. The communication and advocacy partners, particularly, play a key role in ensuring that research evidence is properly packaged and effectively disseminated to various stakeholders at the national, county, and community levels.

This policy provides key partner engagement approaches that will ensure uptake and utilization of evidence from the Hub's project studies. It is my hope that all Hub researchers and other staff will embrace the communication and advocacy guidelines contained in this policy to effectively bridge the gap between research evidence generation and uptake. I reiterate the University's commitment to its responsibilities as enshrined in this, and other policy documents, aimed at enabling KU-WEE Hub achieve its objectives.

Prof. Paul K. Wainaina

Vice-Chancellor, Kenyatta University

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### **Abbreviations and acronyms**

ASALs	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
B&MGF	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
BBI	Building Bridges Initiatives
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CoG	Council Of Governors
GE	Generational Equality
GoK	Government of Kenya
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEA	Institute for Economic Affairs
IWWWEE	Initiative on what works for Women Economic Empowerment
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KNCHR	Kenya National Commission of Human Rights
KNEC	Kenya National Examinations Council
KU	Kenyatta University
KU-WEE	Kenyatta University Women's Economic Empowerment
MOUs	Memorandum of Understanding
NGEC	National Gender and Equality Commission
NGOs	Nongovernmental Organizations
NMG	Nation Media Group
PPGs	Party Parliamentary Groups
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UoN	University of Nairobi
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment

## **1.0 Introduction**

The Kenyatta University, Women’s Economic Empowerment (KU-WEE) Hub was established in September 2020 through a research grant supported by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (B&MGF) on their ongoing Initiative on ‘What Works for Women’s Economic Empowerment’ (IWWWEE). The Hub’s overall goal is **to build programs and policy evidence on What Works to advance Women’s Economic Empowerment in Kenya** that stakeholders can utilize to shape policies, programs, interventions, and advocacy efforts. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Advance women’s engagement in management and leadership positions
- ii. Enhance women’s employability and entrepreneurship skills
- iii. Prevent and reduce sexual and gender based violence and enhance women’s economic empowerment
- iv. Develop a women’s economic empowerment index and a tool for gender responsive budgeting
- v. Build capacity for junior researchers, post graduate students and partners in research
- vi. Influence policy advocacy and communication strategies on women’s economic empowerment.

### **1.1 Rationale for a communications, advocacy & policy strategy**

The Hub’s aim is to generate evidence-based research on What Works for Women's Economic Empowerment in Kenya. The Hub will engage in among other activities outlined in the Research Policy, carrying out an evaluation of existing policies and programmes in relation to “What Works” in WEE. It will be producing policy evidence, annual statistics with sex-disaggregated data thereby consulting, engaging , and networking with national and international groups to advance gender equality and WEE. In addition to improving and enhancing gender mainstreaming in policy development, it will advocate for institutionalisation and implementation of gender equality policy in organisations. The Hub will thus strive to raise awareness among stakeholders and partners about KU-WEE activities.

The goals for the Hub’s external communications are to:

- ✓ Manage the image of KU-WEE Hub, its programmes and activities.
- ✓ Facilitate timely communication with our stakeholders (partners, funder, policy makers

and the media)

- ✓ Meet expectations concerning KU-WEE hub’s compliance with legislation, regulations and standards relating to research and evidence communication activities.
- ✓ Share information with the media
- ✓ Strengthen confidence in KU-WEE hub, its brand, its staff, management, and projects.

In addition, it will strengthen internal communication in order to:

- ✓ Communicate with the hub’s internal customers about decisions and events that affect them
- ✓ Contribute to KU-WEE hub’s achievement of its vision and mission.
- ✓ Enhance staff’s knowledge of the hub’s objectives, programmes and values.
- ✓ Internally disseminate information on the projects’ progress
- ✓ Enhance understanding of the hub’s goals, policies and guidelines.

### **The Hub thematic areas and Research Topics**

Theme	Research Topic
1. Women’s Role in Public and Private Sectors	1.1 Participation of Women in Corporate Governance in Kenya
	1.2 Promoting Participation of Women in the Manufacturing Sector in Kenya
	1.3 Closing the Gender Gap of Women’s Participation in Kenya’s Public Sector Management for Women’s Economic Empowerment
	1.4 Developing and Measuring Women’s Empowerment Index in Kenya using Small Area Estimation Methods
	1.5 Gender Responsive Budgeting: Tracking The Effects Of Public Spending On Women’s Economic Empowerment Initiatives In Kenya
2. Skilling and Mentoring	2.1 Transitioning Women And Girls To The Work Environment Through Enhancing Access To Transferrable Skills
	2.2 Enhancing Young Women’s Work Readiness Through

	Apprenticeship, Internship and Mentorship
	2.3 Capacity Building of Girls and Women in SME through Lifelong Learning and its impact on Women’s Economic Empowerment
3. Violence, Crisis, and Women’s Work	3.1 Effectiveness of SGBV Response and Prevention Programmes in Enhancing Women’s Work
	3.2 Gendered Impacts of Kenya Government Policy Response to Covid-19 Pandemic
	3.3 Promotion of Child Care Programme and Policy for Economic Empowerment of Women in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

The overall aim of all this initiative is to generate evidence that will be used to influence and guide policy on what works for women’s economic Empowerment in Kenya. To achieve this goal, the Hub recognises the crucial process of policy engagement, which in itself is a political process. Policymaking is informed by values. This document gives a pathway for setting a vision, mobilising support and managing opposition where found in the process, in order to have a clear pathway(s) on gathering and interpreting evidence that would be utilisable in policy formulation.

**2.0 Identifying Policy Makers**

The main indicator of the success of the KU-WEE Hub is the implementation of effective interventions by the relevant stakeholders. The Hub therefore, as a first step, recognises the layers of government that make policy. In Kenya, these include the national government and its various wings such as the Executive (Head of State & Cabinet Secretaries) the latter heading the ministries, which are also distributed in the line ministries & State departments. Key in these will be:

- ✓ Ministries of Public Service and Gender- State department of Gender Affairs

- ✓ Ministry of Education, Science and Technology with the state departments of: Early Learning and Basic Education, Post Training and Skills and University Education and Research Development
- ✓ Ministry of Devolution and Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) - State department of Devolution
- ✓ Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (State Department of labour)
- ✓ Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and Enterprise Development with the State Department of Industrialization

The Hub will also form synergies with existing bodies like:

- ✓ Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) - (which is one of our partners)
- ✓ Kenya National Commission for UNESCO
- ✓ Kenya National Commission of Human Rights (KNCHR)
- ✓ Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC)
- ✓ Media Council of Kenya
- ✓ National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) - very critical in Kenya

In addition, the National Assembly and Senate are crucial and core. The Hub will leverage on individual MPs -Party Parliamentary Groups (PPGs) - as well as cross-party groups of parliamentarians who have an interest in the specified thematic areas.

Finally, considering that the research will be taking place across the entire Country, the Hub will work closely with the Council of Governors (CoG) that coordinates the 47 Counties. The Hub understands the departmental committees and their range of functions in different Counties and will thus build a collaborative and consensus stand therein. In addition, the Hub will establish links with the local people/communities affected directly by the issues under research.

The KU-WEE hub will also identify and form synergies with other policy influencers who include but not limited to:-

- i. Civil society- trade unions
- ii. Think tanks
- iii. Lobby and interest groups
- iv. International & National Based Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

- v. Industry bodies
- vi. Media – mainstream and social
- vii. Academia
- viii. International organisations and governments
- ix. CBOs such as churches, self-help groups; advisors and opinion leaders (teachers, pastors and elders); Local service providers in rescue and rehabilitation centers
- x. Private sector players e.g. International Communications Networks, Kenya Curriculum Developers, and potential beneficiaries.

### **3.0 Levels of Interventions**

The KU-WEE Hub levels of interventions are:

- i. Successful channeling of outcomes through the parliamentary process; gazette notice by relevant ministries
- ii. Departments and county governments
- iii. Information published in reports
- iv. Policy briefs
- v. Journal articles- accessed and utilised by researchers and other potential beneficiaries.

### **4.0 Approach**

The Hub will use the following approaches:-

#### **4.1 Stakeholder Mapping & Engagement**

The Hub will map out key stakeholders to understand the full range of individuals, groups and activities involved in policy making. In this, the Hub will strive to advertise the project by contributing to stakeholders’ debates. Policy areas where research may contribute will be identified through the research timelines, and all the people and organisations with an influence in those policy areas mapped. Areas of consideration include the identification of who makes decisions, who influences them, who implements them etc. By so doing, the Hub will look at all the links and synergies needed and hence utilise them. The whole policy process will be considered in the research process especially when analysing routes for engagement. The Hub will also engage potential collaborators at project design and implementation stages.

#### **4.2 Core Outputs**

The overall goal of the KU-WEE Hub is to bridge the gender gap in economic empowerment by evaluating programs and policies and generating policy-relevant evidence to improve the existing situation. The core outputs in this mammoth project is evidence from research studies on WEE in Kenya packaged in policy briefs, journal articles, conference papers, media briefs, reports, policy papers, and television and radio programs. Through advocacy and partnerships, the Hub will disseminate the generated evidence to national policymakers through policy and media briefs. Evidence dissemination to the wider community will be achieved through advocacy, awareness creation and partnerships with county governments, civil society, the media and Community-Based Organisations to scale up what works for WEE.

The Hub will engage in national-level policy dialogues to discuss evidence and constraints, involving policymakers as well as citizens and civil society groups. The aim is to have a range of informed stakeholder groups that can come together to advocate for evidence-based policymaking. In addition, collaboration with policymakers through participation on government committees and taking on advisory roles will be core. The B&MGF Advocacy and Communications arm in collaboration with the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) - KU's advocacy partner - will help disseminate the evidence from studies under different research pillars in KU (and across Hubs).

Intermediate outcome regarding advocacy consists of evidence shared in workshops, conferences, and used in the documents such as reports, policy briefs, and media briefs. Anticipated intermediate outcomes of the project include the sharing of evidence during moments such as reconstituting national and county corporate boards in favour of women after the national elections in 2022, and advocating for gender inclusion. Performance of women in corporate boards is foreseen as a final outcome.

#### **4.3 Political Contexts, Narratives and Terrain**

The KU-WEE Hub will strive to understand and utilise the political context in the thematic areas under evaluation, in particular, existing narratives around them. In this, the focus is to see frequently- highlighted issues by the media, mapping out who is talking and what they are saying - in other words, the national mood surrounding a subject. This also includes a clear focus on the political spectrum especially on the different perspectives highlighted by numerous bodies and

people. The Hub will capture opportunity and, for instance, target moments when policy is more likely to change. By choosing and capitalising on such existing windows of opportunity, activities will be organised, which include meetings with identified stakeholders. In short, the Hub will constantly do an analysis of the current political landscape, political cycle as well as priorities of the policy makers, and ultimately stay connected.

## **5.0 Advocacy and Communication**

To enhance communication, writing reports that are specifically aimed at policy makers is crucial. As such, besides face-to-face meetings, the Hub will tailor messages aimed for policy makers. This will be done in the cognisance that policy makers are busy and need quick understandable information, which identifies an understanding of the latest thinking and current debates on a research before waiting for the finer end and details. The Hub will run open public events and consultations with policy partners through the entire research process. Most important, the reports will be toned from academic sounding to a language of policy implementers. The research will also be made visible to and accessible by people outside the Hub, and in useable formats. These will have practical and realistic recommendations that will take into consideration availability of resources, constraints, government priorities and as said earlier, current political narratives. The Hub will constantly be in harmony with policy makers' agendas and their areas of interest, hence tailor-make conversations accordingly.

The B&MGF media partner will train researchers in the advocacy and communications strategy in the following areas:

- ✓ Packaging of research evidence for media
- ✓ Effective policy communications and advocacy
- ✓ Modes of communicating evidence effectively
- ✓ Effective evidence packaging for optimum impact.
- ✓ Modes and levels of engagement

The Hub's aim is to develop a solid local network of world class WEE researchers who are on hand to support evidence-based policy making and encourage the use of gender data and evidence in the policy making process.

## **6.0 Advocacy and Communications Structures**

The Hub will establish an Advocacy and Communications Office. The team of specialists at the

office will be able to package evidence and policy messages, understand all the categories of stakeholders to be reached with the evidence, package messages in different languages, design appropriate communication tools and identify relevant channels for messages, and support the Hub's ICT team in designing, developing and regularly updating its website/web portal.

KU-WEE Hub will continuously liaise with the B&MGF advocacy policy arm in order to communicate rigorous evidence and advocacy messages to general and specific audiences. It will get advice from the umbrella advocacy arm on: transfer and development of policy advocacy skills, packaging of information to be communicated, appropriateness of communication materials, completeness, timeliness and relevance of the messages, and development of communication policy briefs.

The advocacy and communications strategy adopted will pass messages to national and county level policy makers, ensuring strong advocacy for design and implementation of WEE policies. The strategy will leverage on traditional and customary Councils of Elders in various communities, some of which serve as gatekeepers for programmes designed to benefit women. For effective communication and synergies, there will be a joint communications and advocacy strategy implemented jointly with the UoN hub. Since the goal of communications and advocacy strategy is to support evidence sharing, effective funding and the capacity to implement, the policies are crucial for its success. Alternative communications strategies will be considered, and the best will be adopted.

**The messages expected to be communicated include:**

1. Use of women funds to increase women's productivity
2. How achievement of gender equity can be fast-tracked
3. Programs for increasing skills and mentorships for women and girls
4. Mechanisms to reduce violence against women
5. Evidence usable in design and implementation of policies that boost economic status of women.

As the messages are disseminated to the relevant bodies, effectiveness will be judged by among other things, how mainstreaming is done in development of strategies and in preparation of annual budgets of ministries. This will be a key indicator of the success of the communication

strategy.

**Policy message-content and packaging will vary by audience and purpose.** On the demand side, effectiveness and impacts of communication and advocacy strategies will be measured by the extent to which the potential beneficiaries would have taken up services or products offered by programmes implemented using the evidence communicated to policy makers. On the supply side, the number of programs discussed at high-level policy meetings, designed, funded or implemented will measure effectiveness. Such moments of intervention where evidence on gender gaps could be required include budgeting cycles of governments, announcement of constitutional changes (debate on the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI); the 2022 general elections and formation of the new government; meetings on curriculum development where evidence can be incorporated and when announcements on disease pandemics are imminent.

The Hub will hold continuous discussions with relevant authorities on ways of effectively translating the findings into policy. The policy windows expected to be available include the period during the budgeting process, bi-annual national gender action plans, UN Women gender mainstreaming agenda (e.g. forthcoming Generational Equality Forum) strategy periods and during the preparation of the medium-term expenditure frameworks. The findings of the study will be shared with the public through carefully chosen media channels. Specifically, leveraging on the KU pre-existing arrangements with Nation Media Group (NMG), KU pre-existing MOUs with government Ministries and Departments; co-producing research questions, and collaboratively conducting research with other institutions to create policies, suggesting programs to be evaluated and tracking policy debates to capitalise on windows of opportunities and critical moments when evidence should be adduced.

## **6.1 Tracking**

The Hub, in collaboration with the KNBS, will establish a unit to track, monitor, and measure and evaluate use of evidence. The indicators of the unit's impacts will be:

- ✓ Use of evidence for policy design or implementation as documented in public or private reports Evidence incorporated in reports by media
- ✓ Evidence and ideas debated by various groups, including the private sector
- ✓ Researchers appointed to boards of various institutions because of the expertise gained

from the project

- ✓ Researchers absorbed into various institutions due the evidence provided from the research project.

The Hub will develop tools to track impacts.

## **6.2 Language**

The translation of evidence for effective use will focus on:

- ✓ Translation of gender terminologies into a languages and forms that are understood by ordinary people
- ✓ Change of the language of evidence to make it understandable by targeted audience(s); and Translation of evidence from English to Kiswahili and, when necessary, local community specific languages.
- ✓ Packaging in various forms such as art, song and dance, and blog posts for impact. To get to the youthful audience
- ✓ Use of tweet storms, comic strips and cartoons for youthful audience.
- ✓ Use of gender- inclusive language in all circumstances

## **6.3 Policy Evidence Storage & Sharing**

The KU-WEE Hub will develop and maintain its own open access data and evidence portal, and repository with comprehensive gender-related statistics and indicators of WEE reports, which will be shared with the UoN and vice versa. This will provide a one-stop shop for policy evidence. The packaged evidence will be shared through the community information centers, such as chief's office, dispensary noticeboards, and weekly market centers.

## **7.0 Implementation of the Policy**

Hub Leader, who will also be in charge of its monitoring and evaluation and advise the KU-WEE Hub Advisory Board accordingly, will do the responsibility of implementing this policy.

The Policy will be implemented alongside the Administration, Finance and Procurement Policy, Field Protocols, Research policy, Partnership Policy, Service Delivery Charter, and Advisory Board Charter.

