



# KU-WEE HUB QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

## ISSUE 1

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The first Year of KU-WEE Hub Project:

# Celebrating Milestones and looking ahead



### AT A GLANCE:

SGBV:

Husbands, boyfriends are primary perpetrators

CSW66 and IWD Celebrations



## From the Hub Leader

Prof. Judith Waudu

**G**reetings from the KU-WEE Hub and welcome to the first edition of the Hub's newsletter. The Hub was established through a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (B&MGF) to generate evidence on what works to advance Women's Economic Empowerment in Kenya. It was Officially launched on 28th January, 2021, by the Cabinet Secretary, public Service, Gender, Senior citizens' Affairs and Special Programmes, Prof. Margaret Kobia. Our project's title is Initiatives for what works to improve Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) in Kenya. The Rationale is to address the weak nexus between WEE policies and programs, and gender data in Kenya, with the goal to promote WEE through policy driven research. The Hub's overall outcome is Utilization of evidence by government's implementing agencies, the private sector players and donors to shape policies, programmes, interventions and advocacy efforts related to supporting Women's Economic Empowerment in Kenya.

The project is organized into three thematic areas, namely: Women's roles in Private and Public Sectors, Women's Mentoring and Skilling, and Violence, Crises and women's work. We are currently focused on evidence generation in all our thematic areas, having successfully completed the inception phase of the project.

As you will read in the ensuing segments, we have also engaged in various national, regional and international WEE activities where we have actively participated in a number of dialogues centering on the generation and use of gender data to influence policy.

We look forward to engaging you every quarter. Feel free to give us your feedback through our various communication platforms.

Enjoy the read!



## From the project leader

Dr. Regina Mwatha

**W**e are glad to share with you this first edition of the KU-WEE Hub's quarterly newsletter. Since our launch in January 2021, we have made major strides in all 12 of our research concepts. During the first phase of our project implementation, we developed the inception report as well as a landscaping report that provided an analysis of the context, trends, status and barriers to women's economic empowerment in order to validate the current studies being carried out by KU-WEE Hub. It also highlighted research gaps that will form the basis for future research for the hub, and provided timely literature for WEE studies in Kenya. All our studies are currently at different phases of fieldwork. We have held several stakeholder engagement fora, where we have shared our progress and sought the input of our stakeholders both in government and private sectors, in order to ensure that they understand our work and help us identify gaps in WEE programmes and policies. We have conducted many capacity

building workshops to enable our researchers conduct quality research that generates concrete evidence to inform WEE policy and programmes, which is our commitment.

We recently celebrated the first year of the project, where we took stock of our achievements thus far and deliberated on our way forward as we move into the next.

In this edition, we highlight some of the findings of our pilot studies in different areas of our project. We hope you find this first edition informative, and look forward to sharing more with you in our future editions!

# SGBV:

**Husbands, boyfriends are primary perpetrators**



Illustration from Freepik.

A pilot study conducted by Kenyatta University Women's Economic Empowerment Hub's Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) research team has identified Husbands (84.4%) and boyfriends (9.4%) as the primary perpetrators of the vice. The study on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of Rescue Recovery and Rehabilitation Programmes (RRRPs) in preventing and responding to SGBV in Nakuru and Makueni Counties, and test acceptability and efficacy of the Tamar Campaign Model packaged in Reflect Circles in challenging the culture of silence surrounding SGBV among families and communities in Tharaka Nithi County. The pilot targeted 32 women SGBV survivors from three non-state RRRPs and GVRs to establish the types of SGBV experienced, assistance sought and received, and the economic status of survivors. The study revealed that 62.2% of the women depended on the informal sources of livelihood, and more than half (62.5%) had attained only primary and secondary level of

education while only 28.1% had middle level college and university education. 90% of these survivors got married or started living with partners when they were aged 18-25 years.

Since the majority of the survivors were aged between 26yrs and 46yrs, the economically productive years of the individuals' lives were greatly affected. Many got married at a young age and depended on informal sources of livelihood. These factors predisposed most of the survivors to high dependency on the partners. This explains why the primary perpetrators were husbands and boyfriends. Dependency was also the main reason majority of the survivors stayed in the abusive relationships for a long period of time (more than 7 years) before seeking help. To read more about the pilot findings, [click here](#).

The research team's policy brief recommendations are accessible via this [link](#)

## SGBV Primary Perpetrators

**Husbands**

**84.4%**

**62.2%**

of the women depended on the informal sources of livelihood

**28.1%**

of the women had middle level college and university education

**Boyfriends**

**9.4%**

**62.2%**

of the women had attained only primary and secondary level of education

**90.0%**

of these survivors got married or started living with partners when they were aged 18-25 years

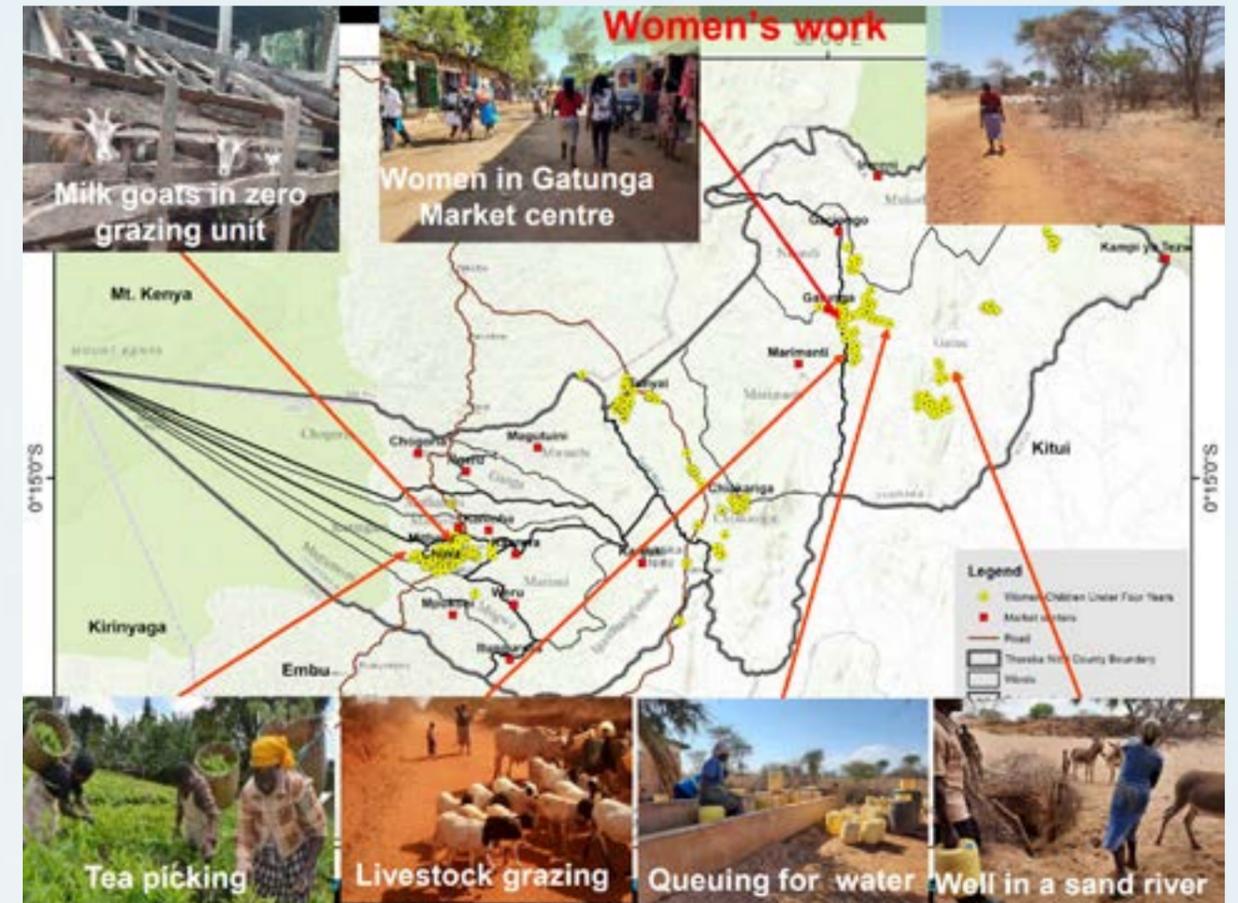
## There is a positive relationship between participation in an Apprenticeship, Internship and Mentorship programme and employability.

The findings of our pilot study on [Impact of Apprenticeship, Internship and Mentorship \(Aim\) Programmes on Employment of Young Women](#) indicated that beneficiaries of apprenticeship and mentorship programs had higher chances of getting employed than those who went through internship programme, and that the level of education and membership to a professional organization were significant determinants of employment. According to the research, bachelor's degree, Certificate and Diploma holders were more likely to get employed than those having a secondary school certificate. Similarly, membership to professional organisations enhanced chances of securing employment.

## Enhancing women's labour force participation and child development through the crèche programme in Tharaka Nithi county: Findings of The Rapid Needs assessment and Livelihood survey

Our project in Tharaka Nithi has three interrelated components:

- Women's Livelihoods,
- Impacts of Crèche on FLFP, child development, and
- women's psychosocial wellbeing and Female Labor Force Participation (FLFP).



Findings of the women's livelihoods pilot survey indicate that women spent an average of 5-6 hours on unpaid work per day (varies from 1-15 hours), married women participated less in unpaid work compared to single women, and the proportion of the money controlled by the women determines labour force participation.

The Crèche Rapid Needs Assessment results showed that use of daycare centre increased women's participation in wage employment and that women were willing to use crèches within 3 Km from their homes but not farther than that. The findings also indicated that many informal daycare centers and crèches did not have playgrounds or children's sleeping places during the day, and lactating rooms were preferred in market

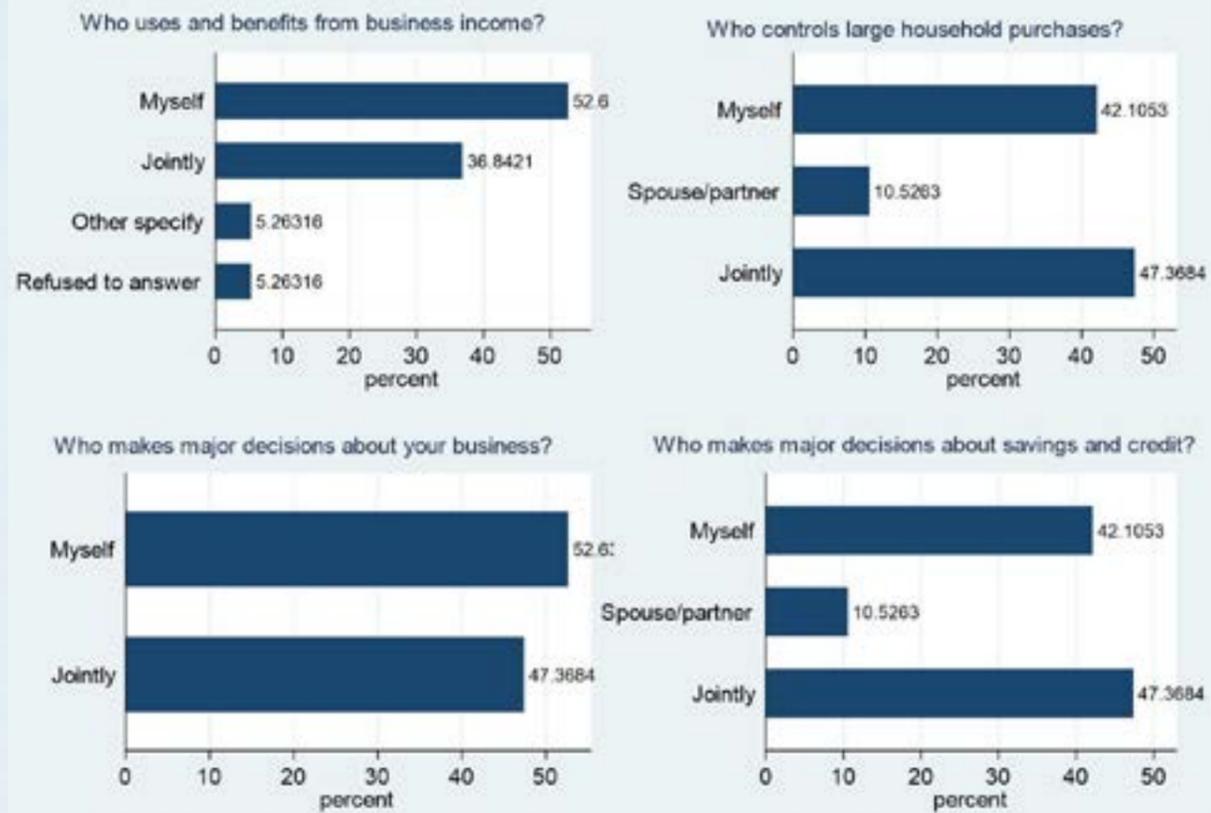
centres or in a shared office/business area for use by all mothers. For details of the findings [click this link](#)

women spent an average

# 5-6 Hrs

on unpaid work per day  
(varies from 1-15 hours)

**Women In Manufacturing program improved the leadership skills of the women participants, and facilitated utilization of voice and agency**



In recognition of the government's prioritization of manufacturing in its development agenda, Ku-WEE Hub is conducting a [study](#) on **Effectiveness of the Women-in-Manufacturing program (WIM) in promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in Kenya**. Here is a highlight of the pilot study findings on **Decision making, access and control of productive resources contained in policy brief by the research team**.

Other key findings of the pilot study indicated that: Women reported limited

control over household productive assets and could not make exclusive decisions about business and household income. Spousal dominance and control over Women's personal, resources and business life is a major problem that hinders business development among women. Most women have power in time agency, but with significant variations between those engaged in domestic work and those income generating activities.

Read the policy brief recommendations [here](#)

# Exploring the Global Gender Gap Index 2021:

## Kenya's Policy Choices

The World Economic Forum has been publishing the 'Global Gender Gap Report' on an annual basis from the year 2006. The data collected is helpful in tracking the progress on the relative gaps that are there between women and men particularly in respect to parameters such as health, education, economy, and politics. The intention is to find out how equitably the wealth and opportunities are distributed between women and men regardless of how an economy is performing. In the year 2021, the Global Gender Gap index benchmarked 156 countries in comparison to the previous year's 149 countries.

One of our key partners, Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), is exploring [Gender Responsive Budgeting: Tracking the Effect of Budgets and Public Spending on Women's Economic Empowerment Initiatives \(WEEI\)](#). We jointly developed a policy brief in which

we recommended, among others, that the ministry of public Service, Gender, Senior citizens' Affairs and Special Programmes should use the global gender gap report findings to track areas of progress in achieving gender parity and the existing gaps that require resources to be addressed, the Kenyan parliament has the responsibility of channeling funds to programs and initiatives that address the barriers to the achievement of gender parity, and the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) and Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA) should use the findings to coordinate and facilitate mainstreaming of issues of gender in national development. The private sector also has a role to play and can use this report in helping to bridge the gap in specific areas. You can read details of the policy brief [here](#)



One of our researchers engages a women's group during field work in Kitui County

## Women's Participation in Governance in Kenya

**W**e are partnering with Women's Empowerment Link (WEL) on a study to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the Strengthening Inclusive Leadership and the transformative and leadership projects under Women's Empowerment Link. WEL is a non-profit, non-partisan, non-governmental women's rights organization that seeks to empower women and girls to realize their full potential, worth and strength politically, socially and economically through advocating

for their human and social justice rights. Our researchers have completed a pilot study in Kitui County where the programs under evaluation have been implemented. The pilot study revealed that the programmes had an impact in enhancing the likelihood of a woman participating in community leadership and governance, such as church leadership, school governance and groups (chamas) leadership. You can access the detailed pilot report via this [link](#).

# We are positioning ourselves Nationally and Globally!

Here are some of the national and international WEE communities we are actively engaged in

### Our Members



## KU-WEE Hub voted member of the Global WEE Hub's Steering Committee

**K**U-WEE Hub was recently voted to sit in the Global Women's Economic Empowerment Hub's steering committee. The Global hub works to build and utilize the global evidence base on women's economic empowerment using a feminist and intersectional approach as the basis for strategic advocacy to shape policy and increase funding to advance gender equality, address structural barriers, and foster women and girls' voice and power as economic actors at the global, regional, and in select national levels.

KU-WEE Hub will be at the center of the Global hub's vision of creating a gender-equitable world without discrimination, inequality or poverty, in which sustainable and inclusive economic systems support decent work and livelihoods and the equitable distribution of wealth. As a women's economic empowerment data hub the vote provides the Hub a critical platform to advance advocacy for the recognition, reward, representation and equitable distribution of care work within households across the country and behold. KU-WEE Hub will play a key role in ensuring that policymakers and

international institutions center the needs of women and girls, and design, implement, and fund inclusive, evidence-based, feminist, intersectional, and gender-transformative solutions to the challenges they face. This is especially critical as Kenya and the world gear up for post pandemic economic recovery.

As a steering committee member, KU-WEE Hub will serve for 18 months, actively participating in monthly Steering Committee meetings, quarterly full coalition meetings, and relevant working groups, shaping coalition advocacy strategy and work planning and contributing to/voting on coalition decisions as needed. It will contribute to the development and implementation of the coalition's advocacy strategy, including regular review of progress against agreed goals/objectives/benchmarks and ensuring accountability to our goals, among other key responsibilities.

The Hub was officially launched on March 17, 2022 in an online event during which the KU-WEE Hub leader presented on SGBV. You can watch a recording of the event [here](#).

## KU-WEE Hub sits in the gender sector working Group

KU-WEE Hub was admitted to sit in the gender sector working group, chaired by the ministry of public Service, Gender, Senior citizens' Affairs and Special Programmes. This provides the Hub a great opportunity to share gender data with policy makers and advocate for its use in WEE policy and programme formulation and implementation.



## We are represented in the National WEE Advocacy Coalition

**S**takeholder engagement and advocacy form the core of our project approach, and, in keeping with this, we are glad to be represented in the National Advocacy Coalition on Women's Economic Empowerment in Kenya. Established by ActionAid Kenya, the coalition aims to streamline bilateral advocacy engagements between the WEE stakeholders and the government. This representation positions the Hub well enough to contribute in the packaging and linking of research evidence to WEE policies and programmes through government engagement. We are represented in the steering committee by our communication and Advocacy Lead.

KU-WEE Hub Project Leader, Dr. Regina Mwatha (far right), and Advocacy Lead Prof. Grace Wamue-Ngare (third left) joined other stakeholders during the launch of the coalition.

Watch the launch of the National WEE Advocacy Coalition on [this link](#)

## KU-WEE Hub is a member of the WEE Community of Practice

The women's Economic Empowerment - Community of Practice (WEE-CoP) is a three-year project funded by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and implemented by International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), to create a learning and sharing space for best practices in the WEE work. CoP members mainly constitute researchers who generate evidence to inform WEE policies and interventions. Our researchers on the [Apprenticeship Internship and Mentorship \(AIM\) study](#) shared their findings during the community's quarterly meeting themed Skillset Development for Young Women on 10th March, 2022. You can watch the launch of the WEE community of Practice [here](#).

## We love Partnerships...

We recognize that to achieve meaningful, sustainable change in WEE, we cannot walk alone! Within the first year of our project, we have concretized partnerships with Tharaka Nithi County government, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Institute of Economic Affairs, Federation of Kenya Employers, Kenya Association of Manufacturers, among others.

We have established Research affiliations with Chuka University, UN women Geneva, Busara center for Behavioral Economics, Yale, and Strategic Impact, UK. We look forward to working together with many more like-minded institutions/organizations to champion the generation and use of gender data in policy and program implementation across the world.



Photo by @rasapied.com - Freepik

In solidarity with the world against Gender Bias...

## 16 days of activism against

# SGBV



In collaboration with Kenyatta University's Centre for Gender Equity & Empowerment and the Department of Sociology, Gender & development Studies, we marked 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence from **25th November – 10th December 2021**. **Students and staff** participated in various activities that demonstrated the institution's solidarity in eliminating all forms of violence against women, not only in Kenyatta University but also the larger community.

We held a two - hour roundtable discussion that engaged various key speakers on the theme. The Thursday November 25th 2021 virtual seminar incorporated Masters, and Doctorate students, and Faculty. The day was embraced by Dr. Richard Wafula, Dean, School of Humanities & Social Sciences, who gave the opening remarks on the endemic of

SGBV in Kenya. Prof. Judith Waudu, Director, Centre for Gender Equity & Empowerment and Hub leader (KU-WEE Hub) and Dr. Samuel Mwangi, Ag. Chairperson Sociology and Gender, also spoke about the urgent need to end SGBV, especially in institutions of higher learning. Josephine Thua, a gender Ph.D student deliberated on the **Manifestations of SGBV Among Female Postgraduate Students in Kenyan Universities** while Edith Murogo, from the Centre for Domestic Training & Development, gave a presentation on **SGBV Response Models in Kenya**. Dr. Grace Okong'o, Lecturer & Researcher at the KU-WEE Hub's SGBV Project spoke on the **SGBV Prevention Models**, including the **Tamar Campaign**, on schedule to be pilot tested in Tharaka Nithi County in 2022. To climax the day was Pamela Karimi, an M.A gender student, who summed the presentations by giving a paper highlighting the **Government's Commitment Towards Eradication of Gender Based Violence, Progress & Gaps**.

A key highlight of the season was the Community Outreach, led by Prof Grace Ngare, four other Faculty members and 21 students who took the gospel of anti-SGBV to the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) Evergreen Congregation, based in Runda. Prof. Ngare highlighted the theme and sensitized the community about the issue, which was well received with requests for repeat presentations.



## Hub in the Media

We have initiated media coverage to create awareness of our work this far and share our focus moving forward. Here are the links to some of the print media articles and TV discussions we were part of in our first year.

<https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/opinion/article/2001434873/we-need-research-evidence-to-boost-women-empowerment>

<https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/opinion/article/2001424135/research-will-enhance-fight-against-gender-based-violence>

<https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/opinion/article/2001419457/creche-programme-could-be-a-game-changer-for-working-mothers>

[Endeavour to improve strained spousal relations on Men's Day - The Standard \(standardmedia.co.ke\)](https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/news/article/2001419457/creche-programme-could-be-a-game-changer-for-working-mothers)

<https://www.pd.co.ke/news/hub-to-lead-study-on-effectiveness-of-women-empowerment-projects-116923/>

You can watch the broadcast news items [here](#)

We are also on social media: [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and Instagram

## CSW66 and IWD Celebrations

We held a series of activities, the climax of which was the event held on 8th March, 2022, to celebrate CSW66 and International Women's Day. The Chief Guest the Honourable Lady Justice Martha Koome, Chief Justice and President of the Supreme Court of Kenya, was represented by the Registrar tribunals, Ms. Ann Asugah. In a speech read on her behalf by Ms. Asugah, the Chief Justice reiterated the critical role that women play in climate change adaptation, mitigation and response and called for more disaggregated gender data to inform Women's Economic Empowerment policies and programmes.

# Hub to lead study on effectiveness of women empowerment projects

The Kenyatta University research centre will establish whether such programmes have an impact on women's life in bid to guide policy formulation

By William Muriigi  
@williammuriigi

In Kenya women's economic empowerment programmes have been operating for a long time. However, no available data shows how successful they have been.

Against this background, early last year, Kenyatta University launched the Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Hub. Financed by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the centre will serve as the national research facility for gender-related matters and its research will be used to formulate policy in the country.

Under the initiative 'What Works for Women's Economic Empowerment', the project operating under the Centre for Gender Equity and Empowerment aims to build evidence on gender equality to guide policymakers and others when formulating transformative policies on empowerment of women in Kenya.

"Women's representation in the economy is hampered by poor gender representation at the policy decision-making levels. Lack of clarity in policies to address workforce segregation while existing programmes and policies have not been independently evaluated are some of the national issues the programme," says Prof Judith Ndlovu-Wanda, the hub leader.

The establishment of the hub, she says, was informed by the need for gender data

### WHAT IT ENTAILS

• The project will involve analytical studies that encompass impact evaluations on women's roles in the public and private sectors, skilling and mentoring, and violence, crisis, and women's work.

• It will also involve capacity building and stakeholder engagement, where the public, the policy makers and civil society will advocate for evidence-based WEE programmes.

• The project came from a need for gender data and robust evidence that informs the WEE architecture in the country and region.

and robust evidence that informs WEE architecture in Kenya and the Eastern Africa Region.

"The goal of the hub is to build programme and policy evidence on 'What Works' to advance and scale-up WEE in Kenya through research and innovation. This evidence will be used to shape policies, programmes, interventions, and advocacy efforts related to supporting WEE in Kenya," she says.

### Gender responsiveness

She adds that the hub is coming to bridge the research gap, which is often with a mission of providing quality research-based evidence and innovations on advancing WEE in Kenya.

The research has projects under three pillars: Women's Roles in the Public and Private Sectors; Skilling and Mentoring; and Violence, Crisis, and Women's Work. Its objective is to enhance women's engagement and influence in all spheres of the economy, increase women's employability through training, internships and skilling, prevent and reduce sexual and gender-based violence and secure women's empowerment and agency as well as creating indicators for tracking progress made in empowering women.

The hub also hopes to promote gender responsive budgeting processes, strengthen capacity to conduct policy driven research and to generate gender data and statistics to advance the well-being of women, girls, men and boys. Priority outcomes envisaged to be achieved through this project is to boost the representation of women in leadership positions, corporate governance, manufacturing sector, as well as reduce gender-based violence by half by 2025.

Apart from that at least four gender-responsive policies must be implemented to



protect women and communities against sudden adverse socio-economic shocks by 2025.

"We also hope that a new women's economic empowerment measurement index will be constructed and demonstrated. Additionally, we hope that a new gender-responsive budgeting tool will also be developed and shared with stakeholders by 2025," Prof Wanda adds.

Prof Simon Ouyewere, the hub's Field Coordinator, says there are data gaps when it comes to knowing what works for WEE and that is why research is needed to understand success factors and track

progress. Once statistics are available, they will help researchers and implementers track progress and understand the full extent and nature of women's economic opportunities.

To ensure they get accurate information, they have been sending researchers to collect data. They are also using different approaches to get to the target population. Among the main partners working with the university are Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), Tharaka Nthi County government, the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) and the Ministry of Public Service and Gender.

"We have made a lot of progress with the project. So far all concepts have been drafted, all projects approved, initial stakeholder engagement done and some policies made. We have about 102 researchers onboard and we have carried out three pilot projects," says Ouyewere.

He reveals that to address the work gaps between WEE policies, programmes and gender data in Kenya, the hub has initiated 12 research studies to gather the required data. The studies are using mixed methods, which include collection of quantitative and qualitative data and one Randomised Control Trial (RCT). The project's aim is to use credible research evidence to shape policies, programmes, interventions, and advocacy efforts that move Kenyan women forward in all spheres of the economy.

### Creche programme

"We will be producing foundation research to understand what matters for WEE and understand pathways that enable women's work. We will carry out an impact evaluation in one of the thematic areas using RCT to generate evidence on causal relationships and the effectiveness of a promising intervention to improve WEE," adds Ouyewere.

The project will involve capacity build-



Women participate in a discussion under the Women in Corporate Governance study in Kilifi Central. PHOTO: TESHU WEE HUB



PROF WANDA  
This evidence will be used to shape policies, programmes, interventions, and advocacy efforts related to supporting WEE in Kenya

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



# Implement policies for women to participate at all levels in society

Considerable efforts and commitment has been made by government and non-state actors towards the realisation of the sustainable development goals geared to ensure gender equality and decent work and economic growth. Kenya has made great strides in the quest to increase women's equality through policies and legislative frameworks such as the Sexual Offences Act 2006, the Prevention Against Domestic Violence Act 2015, Policy on Eradication of FGM 2015, and the National Policy on Gender and Development 2013. However, reports such as the Global Gender Gap Report 2020 shows the country is still lagging in progress towards achieving gender parity, scoring lower than some of its peers in the region.

A report on the Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index (CRDI) in East African Community (EAC), shows that commitment has been minimal among the member countries in 2020 with South Africa doing twice as much. Kenya ranks at 26 with a score of 0.51 followed closely by Tanzania at 130 with a score of 0.25 while South Sudan tails at 158 out of the 158 countries under study. With regards to taxation, Kenya ranks 8th with a score of 0.06 on tax policies among the EAC countries. On labour policies, the study found that most labour rights are only on paper with poor implementation, and most countries scoring low in respect of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions in Law and Practice. None of the countries including Kenya meets the ILO threshold.

With these grave statistics of high inequality, women are over-represented in informal and vulnerable employment. Recent statistics indicate that the *portion of women in formal employment is 46 per cent higher than that of men*. A research report on women's empowerment, using the novel measure, the Kenya Women's Empowerment Index (WEI) by Kenya National Bureau of Statistics released in 2020 shows that only 20 per cent of Kenyan women can participate equally and effectively in political, economic, and cultural life and that their involvement is largely dependent on household circumstances. These reports reflect a situation that is far from the anticipated economic empowerment for women.

Support by UN Women also suggested women are less likely than men to have access to financial institutions or have a bank account. In this study, 65 per cent of men report having an account at a formal financial institution, only 58 per cent of women do worldwide and the fact that women entrepreneurs face more challenges when starting and running a business as opposed to their male counterparts. With women earning less, the likelihood of decision-making within the household on the "menial"



EMILLY OWITI  
Data driven interventions are key to crafting solutions

household budget is minimal. In the just concluded Women Economic Forum organized by CRAWN Trust in partnership with the University of Nairobi Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Hub, the discussions pointed to improved debt relief opportunities at the workplace for women to participate in technology. Although organisations such as Huawei, Google and Safaricom making intentional decisions to open the tech-space for women, statistics still indicate a grim situation where the digital divide remains gendered; women and girls still experience less access to technology, especially those in the rural areas.

Data driven interventions are key to crafting solutions that will ensure women's economic empowerment. With the support of Bill and Melinda Gates the University of Nairobi WEE Hub has embarked on rigorous, cutting-edge research that is already informing policy. The findings also help identify what works for WEE initiatives. Such interventions must have a critical focus on affirmative action initiatives such as hands and how they ensure women's economic empowerment, childcare services, which is a critical area to the success of women's enterprises, women's business inclusion and women's self-mobilisation for their economic empowerment. Women should be able to hold each other's hands and grow without over-relying on initiatives by others and hence the need to support and build the capacity of women from all spheres of life to be able to build and nurture such initiatives.

The women in Kenya to be empowered, they must be able to participate equally in decision making, have access to and control of the productive resources, their livelihoods must be protected, they must access decent work and have control over their own time, lives and bodies, and increased voice, agency and meaningful participation in economic decisions. The government's support is critical in the implementation of the policies and guidelines already set and the constitutional provisions that enhance the process of realisation of WEE in Kenya.

- The writer is the Communications, Policy Advocacy and Knowledge Manager, University of Nairobi Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Hub

ing to ensure that strong institutions and networks emerge and are available to partner with governments and others an evidence generation for WEE. They will also train researchers in advocacy and communication strategy to ensure that they pack the evidence well so that it is impactful.

"The hub is expected to build capacity of junior researchers, postgraduate students, and partners in research, policy advocacy, and communication strategies on women economic empowerment," he says.

Wanda says some findings from the research done so far shows that unpaid work, especially child care, is one of the major reasons most women don't participate in the labour force actively or are not economically empowered as most of them spend between one hour to 16 hours offering child care.

Scaling up

To come up with a solution to this problem, the center has initiated a further research in Tharaka Nthi county to evaluate the effectiveness of the centre programme, set up in Chuka market to enable women leaders accomplish the due role of childcare and participation in income generating activities.

"In partnership with the Economic Growth Center-Yale University, the research aims to establish crèches with children's feeding rooms and mothers' lactating rooms, and evaluate the effects of such a programme on child development, women's labour force participation and psychosocial well-being of both children and mothers," she adds.

Researchers will seek to determine and evaluate factors that influence use of crèche, and gainfully time spent on childcare and its application on women's livelihood strategies, economic empowerment and well-being. They will then make a policy recommendation, based on evidence, for institutionalisation of the crèche and

Researchers conduct a focus group session in Kisumu Central, County Women's Economic Empowerment Hub



PROF ONYWERE

We will be producing foundation research to understand what matters for WEE and understand pathways that enable women's work

Lactating rooms programme

"The primary outcome of the study is improvement of women economic productivity or well-being by 20 per cent through reduced childcare burden in at least five sub-counties in Tharaka Nthi County by 2025. Anticipated research outputs will be key in informing governments and other stakeholders at the county, national and regional levels on what works to enhance WEE, particularly through female labour force participation," she adds.

She explains that they opted to work with Tharaka Nthi county because it is the only county that had an ongoing child care programme and were willing to partner with them. Once the programme is successful at the county level, they aim to replicate it to other counties.

To ensure this is a success they are training those who will be managing these facilities and are also coming up with a curriculum to ensure that children who will be using those facilities are handled professionally. This will help improve not only the children welfare, but also the well-being of the caregivers.

Prof. Wanda, however, reveals that it has not been easy to achieve this because of several obstacles such as lack of infrastructure, lack of policy to guide those taking care of children below the age of four years, shortage of funds among others. "We have been forced to improvise the existing early childhood development and education centres for this research to go on. We didn't foresee this, but since there is no other way out, we have to work with what is readily available. Our vision was to build modern childcare facilities with play areas, sleep areas, lactating rooms and toilet and all relevant tools and equipment. With such facilities we will improve the child care services and be able to relieve mothers from child care and enable them to participate in other economic activities," she says.



PROF JUDITH WAUDU, DIRECTOR, CENTRE FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPLOYMENT AND LEADERSHIP, KU WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT HUB

# Endeavour to improve strained spousal relations on Men's Day

About 60 per cent of the world's population is made up of women. Of these, only 46 per cent are participating in the labour force as compared to 74 per cent of the men. Although girls and women build substantial personal, they still face barriers to their participation in the labour force and other economic activities.

These issues are multifaceted, ranging from gender-based violence to under-representation in decision-making processes at all levels. Women and girls in many rural communities still spend long hours collecting, tending and weeding household crops that affect school attendance and work options. Women and girls have less access to and control over the benefits from land, loans, education and employment opportunities.

In Kenya, there have been several initiatives by governments, agencies and different organisations to address the various forms of gender discrimination and violence against women across communities. As the world marks the International Day of the Girl Child, we need to explore ways to ensure equality between men and women in our society. We need to ensure that we are not only Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE), but also gender equality empowerment. We need to evaluate critically the role of men in creating positive outcomes from the various WEE programmes.

What roles do men play in realising the vision of gender equality and equity? Is what men do in their homes in WEE initiatives? What is the relationship between men and women in the achievement of WEE? Is it the role of men to ensure that women in the family? It is important to evaluate the role of men and women in their households and communities to ensure that they are not only WEE advocates but also WEE practitioners.

This good relationship is fundamental to the positive well-being of women. It is important to ensure that men are not only WEE advocates but also WEE practitioners. It is important to ensure that men are not only WEE advocates but also WEE practitioners. It is important to ensure that men are not only WEE advocates but also WEE practitioners.

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In situations where men would not play a positive role in supporting women's economic empowerment or financial resources, we risk a perpetually regressive social system, and either other harmful behaviours, they can be more obvious. However, there is also significant evidence that failure to engage thoughtfully with men can lead to negative unintended consequences in WEE initiatives, including re-orientation of women's resources, assets and progressive benefits and, even in some cases, a measurable increase in domestic violence or sexual harassment.

Rather than approach them as obstacles, WEE champions should help men identify and act as allies in the quest for a gender equitable society. WEE campaign strategists should involve men and emphasise the powerful roles they play as not only allies but also beneficiaries of gender-to-having work and living environments. Using well-packaged messages and appropriate imagery in campaigns will help men, whether as employees, employers, leaders, associations members, leaders, regulators, agri-dealers,

or otherwise—identify as allies and envision positive ways to promote gender equality, and ultimately well-being. Engaging men and boys out of efforts to advance gender equality and especially WEE also addresses the potential positive influence of the many men who raise their families, societies, and market systems. Research evidence suggests that men who experience a positive role, giving influence from men in their households are more likely to have gender-equal attitudes, more likely to participate in care work and less likely to use violence against female partners later in life. As the men understand their critical role in supporting gender equality, WEE advocates.

Men are also key in eradicating regressive cultural practices like female genital mutilation and early marriages, which hinder WEE initiatives. For example, in many FGM-practising communities, men perpetrate the practice by their refusal to marry girls who are not cut. A case study on the role of adolescent boys of passage in some communities in Kenya showed that some boys have been used to persuade girls to undergo FGM. These men need to be engaged effectively for the successful elimination of these practices and promotion of WEE.

For WEE initiatives to yield tangible and sustainable results, it is important to work through an operation rather than initiatives. While engaging groups, institutions, leaders, or men is sometimes essential, we need to be careful not to perpetuate harmful divisions and differences between men and women.

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## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**WEE HUB CONFERENCE**

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## Upcoming Event

Watch out for our first ever research conference soon. We will share the call for abstracts and date of the conference on our [website](#) and social media platforms.

# Shout outs Segment

Welcome to our shout outs segment! Our researchers are actively engaged in various national regional and international events and activities, enhancing our opportunities for wider networks, stakeholder engagement and advocacy. Every quarter, we will highlight here some of our researchers doing us proud on the national, regional and international fronts. On this edition, we shout out to:

Speaker 

**Prof. Judith Waudu**  
Hub Leader, Kenyatta University WEE Hub



**Prof. Judith Waudu** for championing the election of KU-WEE Hub to the Global WEE Hub's steering committee and representing the Hub as a speaker during the launch



**Dr. Regina Mwatha** on her appointment to the Selection Panel to select nominees for appointment as members of the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR)



**Prof. Nelson Wawire** on his appointment to chair the Kakamega County Investment and Development Agency



**Prof. Grace Wamue-Ngare** on her appointment as the first Chairperson of the Presbyterian University of East Africa's Governing Council



**Prof. Elishiba Kimani** on her appointment as Chair of the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development's Council

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