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KU-WEE HUB QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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KU-WEE Hub holds first International WEE Conference



AT A GLANCE:

WeProsper releases Research and Policy Publication Series on Women's Economic Empowerment

Sharing Findings at the Sexual Violence Forum Research Initiative in Cancun, Mexico



From the Hub Leader

Greetings from the KU-WEE Hub and welcome to the second issue of the Hub's newsletter. The Hub has been actively engaged in various activities since the last issue in March, 2022. Key among them are field work activities as our researchers moved from the piloting phase to main data collection phase. In this edition, we highlight some of the outputs from these field work and advocacy activities.

We also have highlights from our first International Women's Economic Empowerment Conference that saw the coming together of key

players in the WEE arena to share research findings and deliberate on best practices for sustainable WEE across the region and globe.

As always, we are glad to share with you our progress and look forward to your valued engagement. Feel free to give us your feedback through our various communication platforms.

Enjoy the read!

Prof. Judith Waudo



From the project leader

Our first major dissemination forum was the first international WEE conference held between 6th and 8th July 2022.

Hello, and welcome to the second issue of the Hub's Newsletter. Since the last issue, many of our teams have progressed in their fieldwork and are now gearing up for what we consider the most important part of our project – dissemination and advocacy. Our first major dissemination forum was the first international WEE conference held between 6th and 8th July 2022. We also held a dissemination planning workshop where all the research teams highlighted their key outputs thus far and shared ideas on the most impactful advocacy strategies

moving forward. Teams also shared on some of our engagements in the various WEE communities that we are part of.

I hope you find the information herein impactful, and look forward to sharing with you more of our progress in our future editions!

Dr. Regina Mwatha

KU-WEE Hub holds first International WEE Conference



Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Amb. Dr. Monica K. Juma (seated, center) was the Chief Guest.

The KU-WEE Hub in collaboration with implementing partners hosted an International Conference from 6th – 8th July 2022 at the International Languages and Culture Centre (ICLC) at Kenyatta University. The broad theme of the conference was “Women Economic Empowerment in the 21st Century: What Works?” The purpose of the Conference was to disseminate current findings of the above-mentioned Project as well as to expand networks, increase visibility and outreach. In that regard, the conference sought to bring together WEE stakeholders, including researchers, scholars, networking groups and partners, as well as policy makers and implementers to share knowledge and experiences pertaining to the broad theme of the conference.

The objectives of the conference were: To share experiences and learn lessons on women's economic empowerment – what works? to network and collaborate through partnerships that will enhance the development of policy for increased women's economic empowerment across Sub-Saharan Africa, and to identify knowledge gaps that could be explored during

future research, training and programming.

The conference, which adopted a hybrid mode of participation, had a three-day program of events, which included several modes of presentations comprising plenary sessions with keynote speakers, thematic parallel sessions, panel discussions and poster displays.

Several speakers from the private and public sector organisations and academic institutions, made presentations sharing their findings on Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment, Education, mentoring, skilling and innovation for Women's Economic Empowerment, Enhancing Women's role in governance and decision making through transformative leadership and inclusivity, Violence, crisis and women's work, and Creating an enabling environment for Women's Economic Empowerment in the formal and informal sectors.

Here, you can listen in to the conference deliberations during the [first](#), [second](#) and [third](#) sessions.



Prof. Grace Wamue makes shares research findings during the Gender sector working group on Women's Social Economic Empowerment and Financial Inclusion

KU-WEE Hub's participation in the Gender Sector working group on Women's Social Economic empowerment and Financial Inclusion

The state department for Gender's Sector working group on Women's Social Economic empowerment and Financial Inclusion hosted a forum to discuss ongoing research in various WEE aspects. The platform provides opportunity for dialogue and exchange of ideas among various institutions pursuing WEE research and all line ministries. KU-WEE Hub's advocacy and policy Lead, Prof. Grace Wamue shared findings on our ongoing research projects. Stakeholder engagement is at the core of the

Hub's approach as it 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.

The Socio-Economic and Financial Inclusion Gender sector working group report is available [Here](#)



KU-WEE Hub's Dr. Purity Muthima (center) poses with some of the participants during the Gender and Youth advocacy grantees meeting

KU-WEE Hub represented in Gender and Youth Advocacy Grantees meeting in Nairobi

The Gates foundation held a Youth and Advocacy grantees meeting on Thursday, June 16, 2022 at Ibis Styles, Westland's Nairobi. The occasional meeting brought together several organizations funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to discuss progress in respective partner projects. Some of the organisations present included KU-WEE Hub ICRW, ACTION AID, and SDGKenya among many others.

KU-WEE Hub's Principal Investigator in the study on Improving Young Women's Work Readiness and Employability through Apprenticeship, Internship and Mentorship made a presentation on the 'Impact of Apprenticeship, Internship and Mentorship Programmes on Employment of Young Women. She shared preliminary findings from the pilot study. You can read the detailed pilot report [Here](#).

Sharing Findings at the Sexual Violence Forum Research Initiative in Cancun, Mexico



The Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) – a global network of more than 6 000 members – is the world's largest network on research on violence against women (VAW) and violence against children (VAC), providing a space where global role players in the field connect with one another, share and promote their research, work to influence policies and improve the lives of those who have experienced gender-based violence.

The SVRI 2022 Forum provided an opportunity to learn about the newest innovations for prevention and responding to gender-based violence in low- and middle-income countries. In line with our capacity building and knowledge sharing approach, the Hub was represented in the forum by Advocacy and Policy Lead, Prof. Grace Ngare. Prof. Ngare is also the Principal Investigator in the study on [Effectiveness of SGBV Mitigation and Prevention Programmes in Enhancing Women's Economic Empowerment](#). You can read the study pilot report on [this link](#).

Multiple reporting is expensive, time consuming and traumatizing

Data from our ongoing study on Impact of programmes and Initiatives addressing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence as a constraint to Women Economic Empowerment has pointed to a need for a centralized system that eliminates multiple reporting of Sexual and Gender Based Violence cases. Sampled respondents decried the fragmentation of services and confusion on the correct offices to approach. This was expensive, time consuming and traumatizing. Besides, it resulted to multiple reporting, thereby distorting the actual data on the prevalence, besides being tantamount to re-traumatization of survivors.

Findings also indicate a strong correlation between Gender Based Violence and economic disempowerment. Survivors, therefore, called for support for funding for economic empowerment from the government and other agencies.

Gender Responsive Budgeting:

Tracking the Effects of Budgets and Public Spending on Women's Economic Empowerment Initiatives (WEEI) in Kenya



National Gender and Equality Commission, Department for Social Protection, and State Department for Gender among the eight state departments that are the most WEE-sensitive ministries

A national budget analysis conducted in partnership with the Institute of Economic Affairs is complete! This study sought to establish whether the overall government spending and the initiatives by the state departments translate into improved women's economic empowerment initiatives in Kenya. Specifically, the study's objectives were to identify the main policies and initiatives on women's economic empowerment in Kenya and analyze whether government budget and spending respond to gender needs in terms of providing an enabling environment for women's economic empowerment.

Findings indicate that State Department for Gender, National Gender and Equality Commission and State Department for Social Protection accounted 100% of their total budget

on WEEI for the four fiscal years under analysis. The huge spending can be attributed to the fact that the first stop for initiatives on women would be the three state departments. In five out of the eight state departments, it was possible to isolate WEEI-sensitive programmes although it was not possible to specifically isolate spending on women's initiatives across the department as most of the figures on actual spending are highly aggregated.

Budget reviews at national and county levels showed some efforts of resource allocation to specific actions and interventions or programs that have a direct impact on addressing gender inequality. There is also lack of evidence to show if during budgeting processes, the practitioners interrogate how each of the budget allocations impact on women and men, girls and boys, respectively. Read more on the findings and recommendations of the study [HERE](#)

Women's Participation in Leadership and Governance in Kenya:

Analysis of the Strengthening inclusive governance and leadership for women programme



KU-WEE Hub has completed a study to evaluate the Strengthening Inclusive Leadership project under Women Empowerment Link's (WEL) [transformative and leadership project](#). The 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.

Under the transformative leadership and governance programme, WEL with support from Brot fur die welt, Germany, is implementing a project dubbed Strengthening Inclusive Leadership (SIL). The project focusses to increase the number and participation of women in decision making positions, socially, economically and politically in Kenya.

The project is staggered in three phases. The

first phase was geared towards increasing public support for women leadership and visibility in the communities. The two-year project targeted seven counties: Nakuru, Siaya, Mombasa, Taita Taveta, Kiambu, Machakos and Nyeri.

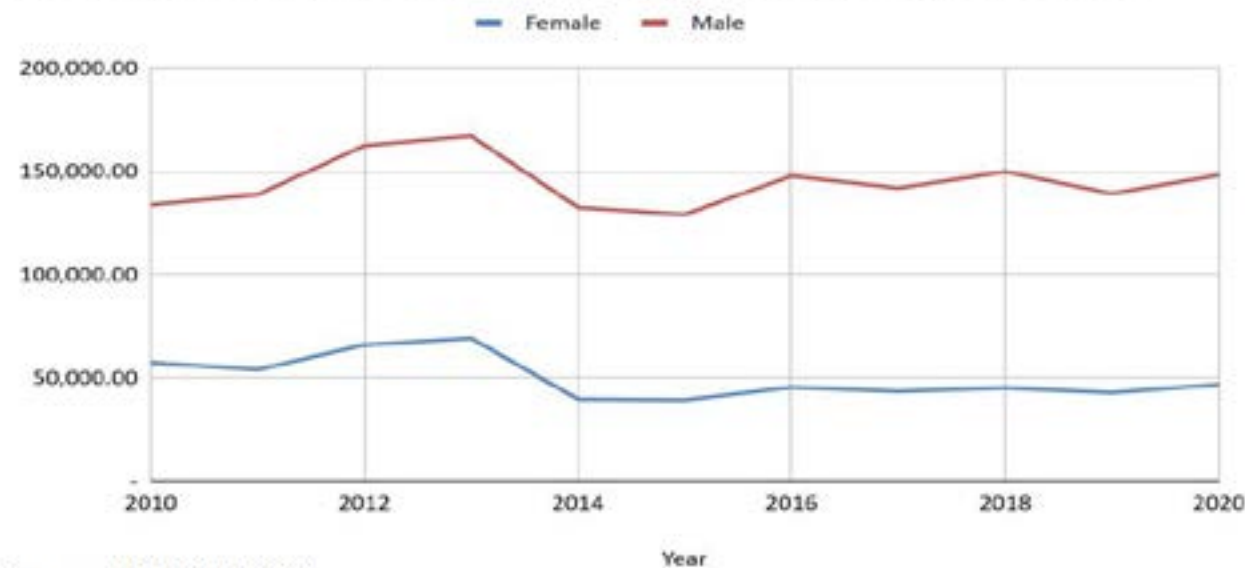
Findings of the study indicate that: that the training of trainers model that the strengthening inclusive leadership project is based on is effective in reaching most of the women at the grassroots. Further, the strategies used by WEL have a good retention rate as evidenced by the diverse social economic clusters of women at the grassroots that the project reached and was able to retain. However, too many gender roles around the family hindered women from attending project meetings regularly, and project targeting only women made it difficult for the same women to negotiate for space with men who are not part of their gender trainings

The comprehensive report will be shared on our [website](#) as soon as it is complete.

Overview of our Preliminary Research findings

Overview of our Preliminary Research findings

The Trend of Kenya's Public Sector employees in terms of Gender



Source: IPPD 2010-2020

Women's representation in upper management levels: Gender Audit trail shows steady but insignificant ascendancy



Despite Kenya's efforts to bridge the gap, women continue to be significantly under-represented in management and leadership positions in the formal labour markets and in government institutions in general. This underrepresentation has led to gender gaps not only in wages, but also all other indicators of empowerment

KU-WEE Hub's [gender audit trail](#) has revealed a steady but insignificant rise in the proportions of women's representation in Kenya's Public service management levels (Job groups Q to V). The gender audit trail from 2010 to 2020 tracks gender representation at the entry to management in all the 22 Ministries of Government, and will inform the hub's study on [Women's participation in management and leadership positions in the public sector: Closing the gender gap](#). The study's pilot report is complete. You can also access the study's policy briefs [here](#).

Impact of lifelong learning on performance of women-managed small and medium enterprises: lifelong learning intervention outcomes vary across counties and by level of education.

33%

of respondents reported that lifelong learning through mentorship and follow-up mechanisms mounted by KWFT adequately prepared women beneficiaries to be effective in operating their business enterprises



Literature review indicates that Africans' prosperity hopes and place in the world can be realized through women who in the past were custodians of wealth, kingmakers, nation-builders and pillars of the society.

However, available data indicates that their full participation in the economy is limited. Several projects with funding components such as the Kenya Women's Finance Trust's Biashara Loan and other Non-governmental organizations have been put in place to implement policies on female empowerment (some using the Lifelong learning model- training, mentorship and follow-ups).

KWFT's Biashara loan is designed to support women with micro, small and medium scaled businesses to access affordable financial services. KU-WEE Hub is carrying out an evaluation on [Impact of lifelong learning on performance of women-managed small and medium enterprises: the case of KWFT Bank](#). The purpose of this evaluation is to produce evidence on what works

to advance WEE in the programme.

Preliminary findings indicate that the impact of lifelong learning interventions through mentorship and follow-up mechanisms mounted by KWFT varied across the sampled counties:

- Large percentage (29.41%) of Women in Vihiga County reported positive lifestyle due to Lifelong learning
- About 27.4 % and 23.5 % of women in Kakamega and Machakos reported positive lifestyle change, respectively.
- Kilifi County reported comparatively lower percentage of women whose lifestyles changed positively as a result of lifelong learning.
- The impact has not been similar in all the four study locales.

Overview of our Preliminary Research findings:



Gendered impact of travel restriction's government policy response to covid-19 pandemic on the tourism industry in Kenya

29% of the total female employees were put on unpaid leave as compared to 28% of the total male workers.

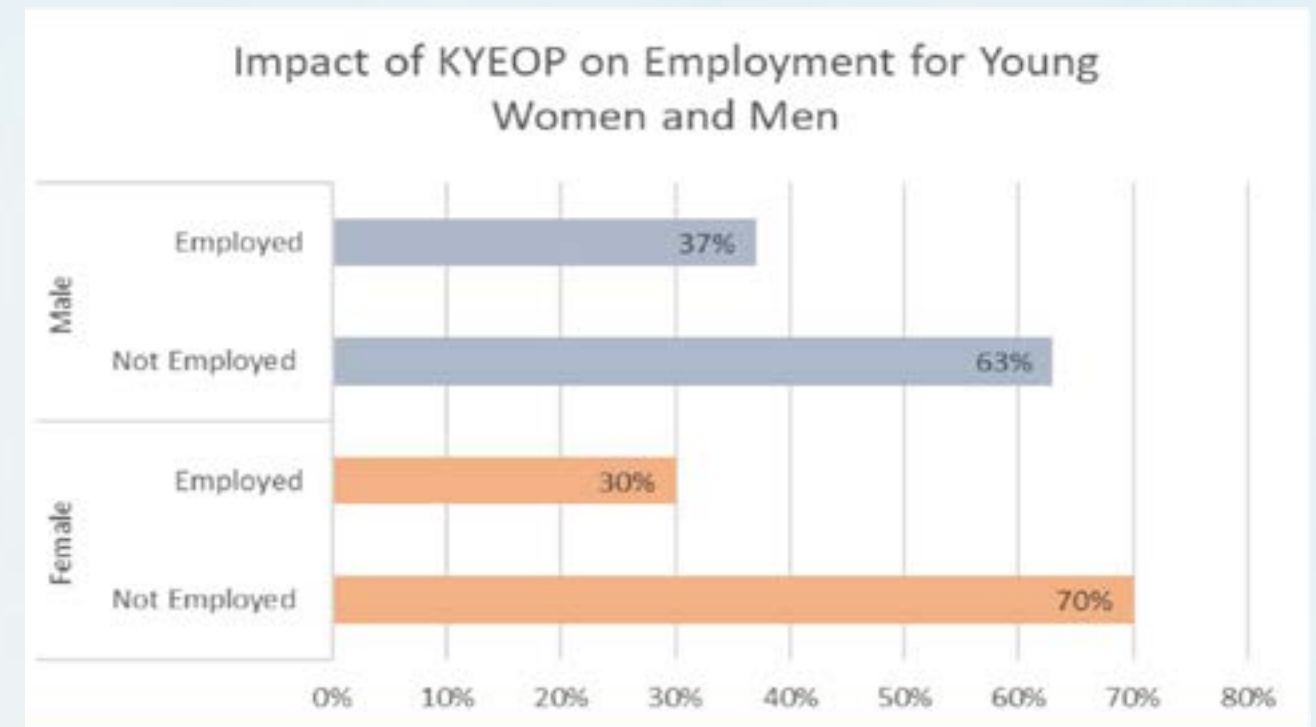
Preliminary findings of our study on the Gendered impact of travel restriction's government policy response to covid-19 pandemic on the tourism industry in Kenya indicate that most of the tourism enterprises in Nairobi City were male owned. The same applies to employees in this sector. However, most of the volunteers in all the 6 years under study were females. This means that any disaster which affects the sector women will be hit most. The Corona virus a disaster which affected the whole world led to many negative effects in all economies.

With Covid-19 travel restrictions the pilot survey results showed that total female employees dropped from 42% in the year 2016 to 39% in the year 2021 while for male employees it increased from 58% in the year 2016 to 61% in the year 2021.

The survey results suggest that women were most affected by COVID-19 as compared to male workers. The pilot survey results suggested that a higher percentage (69.4%) of women employees, in the tourism sector earn less than Ksh. 25,000 per month as compared to 64% male workers in the same category. During COVID-19, due to travel restrictions among other measures implemented by the government, the survey results indicated that 31% of the total female employees in the surveyed enterprises salaries were reduced as compared to 30% of male employees.

Additionally, findings indicate that 29% of the total female employees were put on unpaid leave as compared to 28% of the total male workers. With 28% of the enterprises having closed down because of travel restrictions, women were impacted most. The survey findings suggest that whenever there is a disaster woman suffer most due to loss of employment which is one of the major sources of income. This can lead to several other socioeconomic problems such as being pushed deeper into poverty, domestic violence, poor education, reduction in quality of life and health. You can read the detailed Pilot Report [Here](#).

Overview of our Preliminary Research findings:



Impact of KYEOP Program on employment for young women and men

The Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project (KYEOP) is a transformational project that aims to empower and uplift the well-being of the youth in Kenya by equipping them with essential training, internship, and business grant opportunities. The project was launched in 2018 and have successfully completed 6 cycles and currently on the 7th cycle. It targets youth aged 18-29 years whose highest level of education is High school or below and not enrolled in tertiary institutions. The project has four components: Improving youth employability, Support for job creation, improving market labour information and Strengthening youth policy development.

Preliminary findings on the impact of KYEOP indicate that beneficiaries of the program gained

entrepreneurship skills and life skill lessons that were fundamental in aiding them to start their own business. Through the skills learnt one could easily become self-employed thus did not have to rely on employment.

However, a significant number of respondents had not secured employment and those who had were still earning low wages which were not commensurate with their skills. The youths interviewed felt that the programmes did not have plans for transition from Apprenticeship to employment. The respondents complained that the government did not issue them with certificates as anticipated and hence lacked evidence of successful completion.

Overview of our Preliminary Research findings:

Hub's RCT Design and Implementation progress: Playgroup Curriculum Designs Development, Validation Workshops Held



KU-WEE Hub's Child Specialist, Dr. Teresia Mwoma, facilitates the workshop

The proposed Randomized Control Trial (RCT) intervention in Tharaka Nithi County seeks to examine the impact of allowing children aged three years to attend preschool and introduce them into an adapted curriculum from the preprimary one curriculum designs. The preprimary school teachers and child caregivers will be inducted on how to handle three-year-old learners as well as receive regular coaching while implementing the curriculum. The intervention is hypothesized to improve child development and school readiness for children aged three years old. It is also hypothesized that the mothers with children aged three years will be relieved of their child care activities to undertake economic activities as well as labour force participation. The RCT will be implemented in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya to evaluate the impact of this intervention.

The intervention will target 3 year-olds and will use the infrastructure of Pre-primary one (PP1) classroom. According to the National Preprimary Policy (2017) PP1 is the first part of the Pre-Primary program, which currently admits only four-year-old children for one year before proceeding to PP2 in the second year. Under the proposed intervention children will attend PP1 starting when they are three years old. They will remain in PP1 for two years.

For the 3-year-olds the first year will be known

as play group and in the second year they will proceed to PP1. The intervention will ensure to accommodate PP1 (4-year-olds) and playgroup (3 year-olds) in a way that is consistent with their ages. Caregivers will be hired to support the three-year-old children who will be accommodated in PP1 class under the guidance of the PP1 teacher.

In order to come up with adapted curriculum designs for children aged three years, a three days' workshop was held in Chuka comprising of child specialists in collaboration with preprimary school teachers and county government officials from Tharaka Nithi County to adapt the PP1 curriculum designs into the content level of three year olds. The workshop sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Introduce participants into the objectives of the proposed playgroup curriculum designs development in relation to the implementation of RCT in Tharaka Nithi County
2. Adapt the pp1 curriculum into the curriculum designs for the three year olds
3. Strategize on the way forward for seamless implementation of the curriculum for 3 year olds.

The three days' workshop happened at Southern Star Conference Hall in Chuka Town, attracting twelve participants drawn from preprimary school teachers, early childhood specialists drawn from universities, teacher training colleges and Tharaka Nithi County.



Stakeholders pose for a photo during the RCT curriculum validation workshop in Tharaka Nithi County on October 27, 2022

Overview of our Preliminary Research findings:

Transition from Field Research to Advocacy:

KU-WEE Hub Holds planning and dissemination workshop



KU-WEE Hub Researchers and staff pose for a photo with the DVC (Research Innovation and Outreach) Prof. Vincent Onywera (seated, center)

The KU-WEE Hub, completed its Second year in September 2022. The Hub is now transitioning from a phase of data collection into a phase of dissemination, policy and advocacy as it enters its third year (October 2022 – September 2023). In this phase the research teams within the Hub are expected to disseminate the data that they have gathered from the field using different platforms including journal publications, stakeholder engagements etc. They are also expected to engage in national-level policy dialogues to discuss evidence and constraints, involving policymakers to advocate for evidence-based policy making. In order to plan how this next phase will be carried out, project researchers and partners came together in a 3-day dissemination and planning workshop. Key on the agenda was to reflect on the initiatives'

achievement against targets, chart a way forward, and strengthen teamwork and collaboration. The planning and dissemination workshop took place from 3rd to 5th October 2022 at the Kenya School of Monetary Studies (KSMS).

Emphasis was on the need for each team to formulate a clear plan for a seamless transition from field research to advocacy to enhance uptake of the evidence generated through research. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research Innovation and Outreach), Kenyatta University, Prof. Vincent Onywera called on researchers to use the findings to change lives, adding that research institutions ending up in what he termed the valley of death - research data without significant policy influence.

Strengthening Partnerships and stakeholder engagement:

KU-WEE Hub, Tharaka Nithi County Government, B&MGF hold consultative meeting



Governor Muthomi Njoki (third from left) poses with the teams from KU-WEE Hub and the B&MGF.

Tharaka Nithi Governor H.E Muthomi Njoki held a consultative meeting with teams from the Kenyatta University Women's Economic Empowerment (KU-WEE) Hub and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (B&MGF), to discuss the working relationship between the County government and the Hub. The delegation to the County Government offices in Chuka town was led by the Hub Leader, Prof. Judith Waudo and Jessie Shawver, B&MGF's Investment coordinator and senior program coordinator for gender equality.

The team discussed the progress of a project that will see KU-WEE Hub conduct research on the three interrelated areas of Women's Livelihoods, Female Labour Force Participation (FLFP) and Impacts of Crèche on FLFP, child development, and women's psychosocial wellbeing, with funding from the B&MGF. The Governor reiterated his commitment to continue the cordial working

relationship to ensure success of the project.

So far, the research team has conducted a [Rapid Needs Assessment as well as a Pilot Survey](#) and developed Randomised Control Trial (RCT) Design awaiting implementation. The study titled Enhancing women's livelihoods, labor force participation, psychosocial wellbeing, and child development through the crèche programme in tharaka nithi county, Kenya, will evaluate the impact of the crèche programme on women's labour force participation and on child development using an RCT approach.

The two teams agreed to continuously strengthen the partnership that will see study findings up scaled to not only other parts of the county, but also across the country.

Global Assessment of Care Services:

WeProsper releases Research and Policy Publication Series on Women's Economic Empowerment



Photo Credit: WeProsper

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic highlight longstanding gender inequities in both unpaid and paid care work—and have brought care to the forefront of social and economic policy dialogues. WeProsper, the Global Women's Economic Empowerment Hub launched the first report in a two-part series aimed at synthesizing a wide range of existing research and evidence on one aspect of care policies—care services—with

a focus on low- and middle- income countries (LMICs).

In the report, WeProsper makes the case for policymakers to take action on and invest in care, as they weigh the full range of COVID-19 recovery measures and other competing investment priorities. You can read the full report [Here](#).

WeProsper's

UNGA Side event



On September 22, [WeProsper](#), the global Women's Economic Empowerment Hub, held an unofficial United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) side event.

The hybrid event brought together policymakers, researchers, and CSOs for a vibrant discussion on how to mainstream care considerations in traditional infrastructure, how care intersects with climate change, and how this relates to sustainable and inclusive economies. This event focused discussions on how investments in aspects of

social infrastructure, such as long-term care (LTC) services, provide clear economic benefits. These investments create more jobs than traditional infrastructure, while also fulfilling care needs that impact unpaid caregivers' ability to participate in the labor force. The event also explored the intersection of climate change and care, as the impacts of climate change are exacerbating time spent on domestic responsibilities like water collection. You can watch a recording of the event [Here](#).



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.

[Let us support girls and young women to pursue engineering - The Standard \(standardmedia.co.ke\)](#)

[Time to seize Post-Covid opportunities in Tourism](#)

[Apprenticeships and internships key to tackling unemployment - The Standard \(standardmedia.co.ke\)](#)

[KU voted to sit in global women's empowerment committee | Nation](#)

Project Leader, Dr. Regina Mwatha and Researcher Dr. Pacificah Okemwa discuss the Hub's project and WEE conference [Here](#)

Project Leader discusses Women and political Participation on Impact Kenya, KTN News, available [here](#)



JUDITH WAUDO

Let us support girls and young women to pursue engineering

The International Women in Engineering Day is celebrated annually on June 23. Its aim is to raise the profile of women in engineering focusing attention on the amazing career opportunities available to the girls in the engineering industry. It celebrates the outstanding achievements of women engineers around the world.

In 2014, the Women Engineering Society launched National Women in Engineering Day in the United Kingdom. Over the years the campaign grew to a global event and in 2017, this day became international.

It is a day that is set aside to inspire girls and young women around the world to take up engineering courses and celebrate women engineers who have had successful careers. It is a day to support young girls in Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects through organising outreach events to demonstrate to the young girls and women that engineering is an exciting field.

This day is also a day when practising female engineers showcase their skills and experience as role models to the girls and young women aiming to take up engineering careers.

Engineering in Kenya has remained a male-dominated field for years. Women



20 | OPINION



JUDITH WAUDO

Translate policies into actionable plans for girl child empowerment

On December 19, 2011, United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 66/170 to declare October 11 the International Day of the Girl Child. The day recognises girls' rights and the unique challenges they face around the world. This year, we commemorate the 10th anniversary of the day under the theme 'Our time is now-our rights, our future'.

There is no doubt that over the last 10 years, many governments, civil societies, United Nations organisations and other stakeholders have increased their focus on ensuring that the girl child has her voice heard and her needs met at the national, regional and global stages.

In Kenya, there has been increased attention to the issues facing girls. The promulgation of the 2010 Constitution and subsequent devolution of functions provided opportunities for a more focused attention to the contextual needs of women and girls across communities.

Despite the increased attention and awareness on the challenges of the girl child, investments in girls' rights and needs are yet to reach optimal levels. While many policies exist, we need to translate them into practice through programmes with clear indicators for measurement, monitoring and evaluation. Only then can we truly track progress of the level of girls' rights inclusion in development agendas both at the county and national levels.



Time to seize post-Covid opportunities in tourism

The Covid-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented destructive impact on all facets of life. Most economies, both in the developed and developing regions, saw a downward trend in their gross domestic product (GDP) growth projections. Thousands of people died.

To safeguard lives and livelihoods, the government went out of its way to increase disposable incomes for households and firms, instituted tax reviews and reliefs, established a national emergency Covid-19 fund into which even the private sector made significant contributions and reallocated resources to addressing the effects of the pandemic.

But the disease continued to ravage the economic and social lives of Kenyans. One of the most affected, but which offers great promise post-pandemic, is tourism. In 2019, the industry contributed 10.4 per cent of global GDP or a value of over \$8.8 trillion (\$11 quadrillion). The industry directly created one in every 10 jobs globally—or 319 million jobs.

In Kenya, arrivals grew by 3.9 from 2.02 million tourists in 2018 to 2.05 million in 2019. The industry was said to be the fastest growing and one of the leading earners of foreign exchange before Covid-19.

The country has shown significant recovery after registering a 34.76 per cent growth in international visitor arrivals last year, at 870,465 compared to 567,848 in 2020. This was especially due to its linkages with other sectors such as including agriculture, wildlife, manufacturing, banking, handicrafts, entertainment and hospitality. This gives the sector the potential to transform the social and economic fac-



Tourists on a beach in Mombasa last year.

There's a need for strategic recovery, innovation and transformation



Leah Njambi Wanjama & Esther Kagure Munyiri
Tourism

ets of peoples' lives post-pandemic

Over the years, there has been over-dependency on nature-based products, which drive 80 per cent revenue in the industry. While they are important, there is a need to diversify. Travellers don't invest so much time, effort and resources to enjoy a cozy hotel bed but rather a memorable experience.

For instance, the Global Tourism Resilience and Crisis Management Centre for Eastern Africa, in collaboration with the Tourism and Wildlife ministry, is spearheading a project to capture the 'Unique Selling Proposition' and 'Emotional Selling Proposition' within tourism products and experiences.

Recovery in the tourism industry and expanding product choices and quality is not enough. There is a need for strategic recovery, innovation and transformation upon which resilience can be built. There are blessings in disguise post-Covid-19 which, if seized and exploited, would create more resilient, adaptive, and competitive tourism businesses and creative economics. However, these opportunities need to be guided by research-driven solutions that are required to catalyse change in tourism industry.

We need to enhance human capacity to offer value-based professional services to domestic and international tourism. That calls for training and professionalising of services like tour guiding, especially in the fast-rising ecotourism and agrotourism.

Dr Wanjama (wanjama.leah@ku.ac.ke) and Dr Munyiri (kagure.esther@ku.ac.ke) are researchers at Kenyatta University Women's Economic Empowerment Hub.

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 issue, we shout out to:



Prof. Caroline Thoruwa, KU-WEE Hub's Advisory Board Chair, on her appointment as Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) of Kenyatta University



Dr. Esther Kagure Munyiri on her nomination for the Top 100 Women in Travel and Tourism in Africa, 2022 awards. Dr. Munyiri is the Co-Principal Investigator, **Gendered impact of travel restriction's government policy response to covid-19 pandemic on the tourism industry in Kenya.**

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