

CLOSING THE GENDER GAP: THE PROMISE OF DEVOLUTION, THE JOURNEY SO FAR

Background

Gender refers to the social roles of men and women, boys and girls, as well as the relationships among them, in a given society at a specific time and place. In societies the world over, gender is a key determinant of who does what, who has what, who decides and who has power. It patterns the range of choices and opportunities available to a person and defines what he or she is expected to do and be. - *The Gender Dividend, A Business Case for Gender Equality, UN Women, 2011*

It has been 3 years since Kenya rolled out the devolved system of government. In that time, there has been progress in a number of areas, in an effort to ensure equitable distribution of resources across the country. The underlying premise of devolution is inclusion of previously marginalised groups into the development agenda. Ensuring that all citizens – female and male – have access to information, choices, opportunities and resources therefore aligns neatly with the promise of devolution.

Beyond the compelling legal argument for promoting gender equality which the Constitution sets out, evidence from Kenya and other contexts has clearly drawn out the link between promoting gender equality with dividends such as inclusive and sustainable economic growth, lasting peace and the right to democratic participation for all citizens. The UN's support to devolution is carried out under the rubric of the UN Development Assistance Framework, 2014-2018 in partnership with the national and county governments.

Within the UNDAF Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) are addressed through a two pronged approach. This combines support for stand-alone initiatives to promote GEWE as well as mainstreaming across all the 4 Strategic Result Areas (SRAs).

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY OF DUTY BEARERS TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY

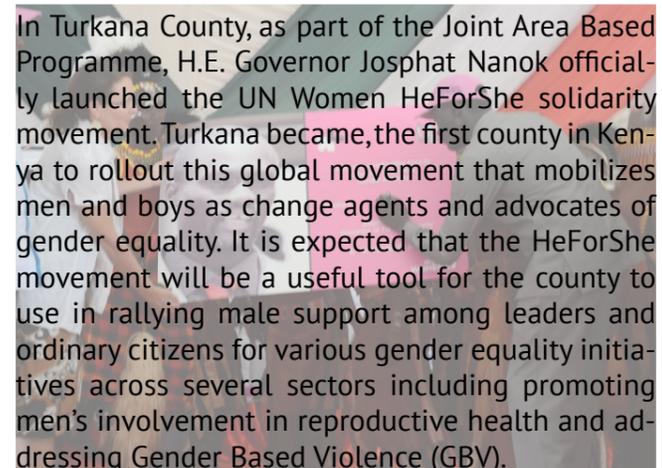
A key prerequisite for achieving gender equality is the presence of an enabling policy and legal environment, supported by a responsive institutional set up. The UN's support to counties has therefore focused on these elements. It is ensuring that counties and the national government have the necessary gender responsive policy and legal frameworks as well as institutional capacities to contribute to the achievement of gender equality across several sectors.

Policy dialogue on gender equality with the county leadership

Recognizing that, leadership is key in driving policy change towards gender equality, the UN has engaged the county leadership directly or through the Council of Governors in policy dialogue on a wide range of gender equality issues. Support has been provided to the Council of Governors Education, Gender, Youth, Sports, Culture and Social Services Committee to set up a multi-sectoral Gender Advisory Group to ensure its work addresses these issues.

Advocacy on gender equality

A feature of UN support to counties has been around advocacy campaigns to raise awareness and public support on key gender equality issues. In Taita Taveta, UNDP's support for the roll out of a campaign to mobilize public support for increased participation of women in leadership has helped raise the profile of this issue in the county.



In Turkana County, as part of the Joint Area Based Programme, H.E. Governor Joshat Nanok officially launched the UN Women HeForShe solidarity movement. Turkana became the first county in Kenya to rollout this global movement that mobilizes men and boys as change agents and advocates of gender equality. It is expected that the HeForShe movement will be a useful tool for the county to use in rallying male support among leaders and ordinary citizens for various gender equality initiatives across several sectors including promoting men's involvement in reproductive health and addressing Gender Based Violence (GBV).

Capacity building

A key strategy of the UN's support has involved investing in capacity building of the County Executive and County Assemblies to encourage an appreciation of gender issues and strengthen skills in gender mainstreaming. For example, building capacities of County Executives responsible for gender on gender mainstreaming, gender responsive budgeting, domestication of the SDGs to ensure these are integrated and inform the CIDP review process.

UN Women in partnership with the Council of Governors, the Ministry of Planning and Devolution (the then Directorate of Gender), the Kenya School of Government have supported training and induction: to institutionalize gender mainstreaming in Ministries, Departments and agencies by providing training to 47 County gender and youth officers. The training also included sensitization on the Kenya AIDS Strategic Framework.

1. Now the State Department of Gender in the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs

Through UNDP support, the Council of Governors has established a Female Deputy Governors' capacity building programme and the County First Ladies Association. The objective is to enable them to use their offices to champion a gender equality agenda.

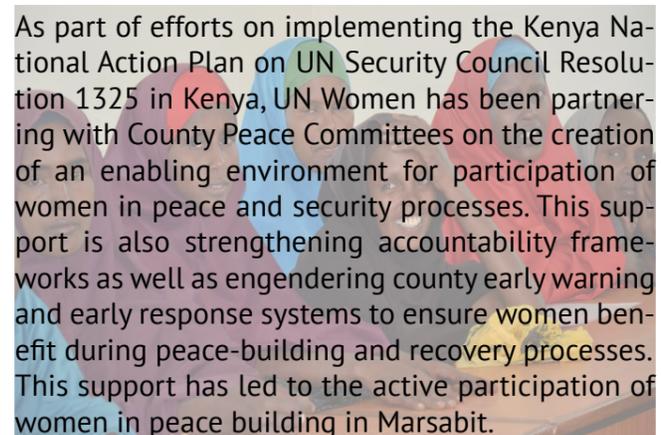
Gender mainstreaming in policy making

As part of the UN's support to HIV/AIDS, UN Women provided technical assistance to 3 counties, of the 9 counties with the highest HIV burden to develop gender responsive county HIV and AIDS plans. These plans contain clear targets and indicators to ensure enhanced uptake and access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services for Persons Living with HIV (PLHIV).

Legislating for Gender Equality

Support has been extended to the Council of Governors through the Education, Gender, Youth, Sports, Culture and Social Services Committee in partnership with the Kenya Law Reform Commission, for the development of model county laws. These laws address among other things, County Childcare Facilities, Social Protection, the Social Development Fund and Citizen Participation. They are a resource that is accessible to all counties that wish to develop similar laws. This approach also ensures that there will be minimum standards in terms of gender equality and other dimensions, in the laws county assemblies are drafting. It is also a cost-effective approach and will enable the scaling up of this intervention.

Integrating gender in peace, security and disaster risk reduction



As part of efforts on implementing the Kenya National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Kenya, UN Women has been partnering with County Peace Committees on the creation of an enabling environment for participation of women in peace and security processes. This support is also strengthening accountability frameworks as well as engendering county early warning and early response systems to ensure women benefit during peace-building and recovery processes. This support has led to the active participation of women in peace building in Marsabit.

UN Women, UNDP and UNISDR in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government and the Ministry of Devolution and Planning are supporting the strengthening of the county governments' overall disaster risk management strategies and programmes. Specific support has included creating awareness on the new global framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030), supporting the establishment and strengthening of gender responsive county DRR coordination structures in addition to creating awareness on the importance of gender mainstreaming within the county DRR strategies and humanitarian programmes.

Building an evidence base for gender responsive policy making

The UN Women partnership with the International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC) resulted in, two research studies on women's role in peace and security in Turkana and Marsabit counties. These are being used to provide evidence to county decision-makers on ways of engaging women in peace and security initiatives.

As part of anti-FGM programming, UNFPA supported baseline surveys in 5 counties focusing on social cultural dynamics which perpetuate the practice. This information will serve as benchmarks to inform future programming.

Since the inception of devolved system of governance, very limited research has been done on gender and land, particularly with a focus on specific counties. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and UN Women in collaboration with the National Land Commission and the County Land Boards of various county governments have undertaken two situational analysis and assessments of women and youth's access right to community land in Tana River and Turkana Counties. This information is being used in policy and legislative dialogue on land management to address gender gaps.

2. Women, Natural Resources Management and Peace Building in Turkana County
3. Women's Capacity in Peace Building: A Case of Marsabit County in Northern Kenya

SUPPORTING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AT THE COUNTY LEVEL

UN Women in partnership with key institutions such as the Public Procurement and Regulatory Authority, Kenya Institute of Supplies Management (KISM), entrepreneurs, the former Ministry of Devolution and Planning and other stakeholders is supporting efforts to increase the participation and benefit of women, youth and persons with disability from public procurement opportunities. In counties such as Turkana, UN Women has supported the Turkana County Government, Joyful Women's Organization, Maendeleo ya Wanawake and National Treasury to organize a capacity building forum for 75 women entrepreneurs.

UNESCO's support to women entrepreneurs in Siaya and Bungoma Counties has focused on giving them access to ICTs to develop livelihoods in entrepreneurship in the agriculture sector.

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO SERVICE DELIVERY

One of the promises of devolution is bringing services closer to citizens and thereby improving access for all in an efficient manner.

Counties are faced with the challenge of delivering services to address complex issues such as Gender Based Violence. It is a human rights violation that is complex in its manifestations and causes and costs Kenya billions of shillings in lost earnings and the costs of treating survivors as well as administering justice. Recognizing this, many CIDPs have outlined efforts to prevent and respond to GBV.

Enhancing county capacities to prevent and respond to Gender Based Violence

With UN Support, counties are ensuring that as duty bearers they have the right skills to respond to GBV survivors. UN support has for example enabled training of duty bearers including the judiciary, law enforcement agencies and officers from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution

4. A GBV costing study carried out by the National Gender and Equality Commission estimated that over survivors and their families spend Kshs. 46 Billion (almost 1.1% of GDP)(total productivity loss) seeking treatment, reporting violence and pursuing justice. NGECC 2015

in Busia, Kisumu, Embu and Kitui, Kilifi and Homa Bay counties and Nairobi - Ruaraka sub-county.

The focus has been on raising duty bearers' awareness of the prevalence of GBV, supporting the prevention and response efforts.

These are supported jointly by UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO. UN support for example is helping counties to address the challenges of coordination and strengthening referral mechanisms by facilitating the functioning of county GBV working groups in Kisumu, Kitui, Nyeri, Nakuru, and Machakos, Kilifi, Homa Bay counties and Ruaraka sub-county.

UN support through the leadership of UNFPA is building the capacity of health workers to quell the medicalization of FGM in West Pokot, Narok, Marakwet, Samburu and Baringo counties. This support is also ensuring that coordination is improved and referral mechanisms amongst anti-FGM stakeholders are strengthened. Counties have received support to carry out alternative rites of passage for over 5000 girls and life skills training for girls and 450 boys. UNESCO's support to the GBV in Schools Project has resulted in the capacity enhancement of Country Directors of Education and County Teacher Management Directors to prevent and respond to cases of GBV in the education sector.

RESOURCING DEVOLUTION

A key challenge facing devolution is financing county priorities. Despite the fact that the Constitution of Kenya and the 2012 Public Financial Management Act provides that the principles of equality, fairness and equity in planning and budgeting is observed. Promoting these principles is therefore a key feature of the UN's devolution strategy.

Capacity building on gender responsive budgeting

A key strategy of the UN's support through UN Women has involved investing in mainstreaming gender in the Public Finance Management strategy, 2013-2018. In addition capacity building of the County Government officers and Members of the County Assemblies on gender responsive planning and budgeting

has been carried out to ensure adequate allocation, expenditure and reporting of resources to meet the needs of all citizens – male and female.

Upcoming areas of engagement will focus on providing evidence to provide technical guidance and promote political will among policy makers on upholding the principles of gender responsive budgeting. This will be done by undertaking jointly with national and county governments and other development partners, periodic public expenditure reviews of key devolved sectors.

Conclusion

The scorecard on devolution's contribution to gender equality at county level is one of gains as well as lags. However, the counties are putting in place the right foundations to accelerate progress towards gender equality. By investing in the creation of an enabling policy and legal environment; institutional strengthening; skills building for county staff; strong M&E systems alongside visible leadership accompanied by citizen participation, this score card can improve.

This publication has been compiled by UN Women. UN Women is the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. It was established in 2010, by the United Nations General Assembly.

UN Women's work in Kenya seeks to contribute to 5 key result areas:

- Women lead and participate in governance
- Economically empowered women and youth benefit from agriculture value chains and markets
- Women and girls live a life free from violence
- Peace, security and humanitarian action shaped by women's leadership and participation
- Governance and National planning to support the systematic integration of gender equality priorities in national and county sector planning documents, their related budgets and mechanisms for accountability.
- Improved coordination and accountability for gender equality and women's rights



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