

**CRTP Research Series, No. 1/2022/01**

# **Women Political Leadership in Kenya:**

**A Needs Assessment Survey on  
Mentorship Program**

**Dr. Elias Opongo, SJ (Editor)**

with Faith Agnes Ondeng, *and* Leonard Omogo



**Centre for Research, Training  
and Publication (CRTP)**

**Hekima University College**



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Women Political Leadership in Kenya  
Hekima University College  
Published by Infocus Merchandisers  
ISBN 978-9966-8284-4-6  
Year of publication 2021

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACT	–	Alliance for Change and Transparency
AGI	–	Africa Gender Index
CCDM	–	Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo
CCM	–	Chama Cha Mapinduzi
CDF	–	Constituency Development Fund
CECs	–	Chief Executive Officers
CEDAW	–	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CREAW	–	Centre for Rights Education and Awareness
CRTP	–	Centre for Research, Training and Publications
CSOs	–	Civil Society Organizations
CUF	–	Civic United Front
EAB	–	Employment Amendment Bill
ENVIROCARE	–	Environmental, Human Rights Care and Gender Organization
FEMNET	–	African Women’s Development and Communication Network
FFRP	–	Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarian
FGD	–	Focused Group Discussion
GOK	–	Government of Kenya
HIPSIR	–	Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations
IANWGE	–	Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality
IDS	–	Institute of Development Studies
IPU	–	Inter-Parliamentary Union
IRI	–	International Republican Institute
KEWOPA	–	Kenya Women Parliamentary Association
KNUT	–	Kenya National Union for Teachers
LHRC	–	Human Rights Centre
LHRC	–	Legal Human Rights Center
MAD	–	Marriage and Divorce Bill
MCA	–	Member of County Assembly
MP	–	Member of Parliament
NCCR	–	National Convention for Construction and Reform
NDI	–	National Democratic Institute
NEA	–	National Election Act
NEC	–	National Electoral Commission
NEPAD	–	New Partnership for African Development
SAB	–	Succession Amendment Bill
SADC	–	South African Development Cooperation
SOB	–	Sexual Offenses Bill
SPSS	–	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TAMWA	–	Tanzania Media Women’s Association
TGNP	–	Tanzania Gender Networking Programme
TNA	–	Training Needs Assessment
TWCP	–	Tanzania Women Cross-Party Platform
UN	–	United Nations
UNDP	–	United Nations Development Program
UNSCR	–	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UWOPA	–	Uganda Women Parliamentary Association

# INTRODUCTION

This study explores baseline needs assessment on women political leadership. Globally, and Kenya in particular for this study, women are still underrepresented in political sphere and/or public spaces despite the local, regional and international instruments that push for gender parity. The study therefore, examines the levels of women engagement in governance; the support and mentorship programs they have received and leadership challenges they face in dispensing their duties. In realizing this, it draws on in-depth interviews conducted with a range of stakeholders who are the Members of County Assembly, political aspirants, former politicians and the County Chief Executive Officers in Kenya, and on available literatures on women in politics and public spaces. The findings of this study highlight the individual and collective experiences; challenges faced; strategies and tools women leaders have adopted to address these challenges; understanding the skills-gap in the implementation of governance duties; their main source of support as well as the need and mentorship programs for consideration. In relation to the findings, the authors conclude that challenges faced by women political leaders tend to surpass their competencies; low women representation hinders their contributions; negative effects of traditional male stereotype affect women participation; and the need for more mentorship and training programs.

## RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The Centre for Research, Training and Publication (CRTP) at Hekima University College is committed to offering training, research, consultancy and space for dialogue between scholars, practitioners and social activists in the area of: Conflict Resolution and Peace Building, International Relations and Diplomacy, Contextual Theology, History Church and Society, Forced Migration and Refugees, Democracy, Identity and Governance and Integral Development. The CRTP also offers short term accredited courses to leaders and practitioners from various sectors on a wide range of topics including, human rights and governance, conflict resolution, and leadership and management, among others.

In fulfilling its mandate, CRTP in collaboration with Ford Foundation, seeks to provide mentorship and mutual learning opportunities for women in social political spaces, particularly women working in leadership and governance at county and community levels in Kenya. In this light, the CRTP carried out a baseline needs assessment to find out the level of engagement of women in governance, the support they receive in realizing their goals and the challenges they face in dispensing their leadership obligations. The end objective was to establish, based on the identified needs from the survey, a women mentorship program in governance and strategic political engagement.

### Context and Rationale for the Baseline Needs Assessment

Women across the African continent and the world have showcased their competence in governance despite their low numbers in the legislatures and in public spaces. In the Eastern African region, the role of women in governance has improved over the years, with more and

more women taking up governance positions. Rwanda stands out as number one in Africa and the world, with more than 61% of women in parliament; Ethiopia follows with 50% of its cabinet composed of women, and 37% of parliamentary seats held by women.<sup>1</sup> Representation of women in Kenya's Parliament has been and remains the lowest in East Africa. However, following the amendment of the 1997 constitution and later the promulgation of the 2010 constitution, there has been an increase in the number of elected and/or nominated women at the national assembly, the senate or the county assembly. For instance, after the 2017 general election, 75 out of 347 seats at the national assembly (22%) are held by women while 21 out of 66 seats at the senate (32%) are held by women.<sup>2</sup> There have also been some outstanding Kenyan women leaders who have made major contributions to the country's political landscape such as Wangari Maathai, Phoebe Asiyo, Martha Karua, Charity Ngilu, Zipporah Kittony, among others. As such, the success of a few women leaders in the public sphere implies that increasingly, women's presence in positions of governance can be harnessed to have direct impact on social change.

## **Objectives of the Baseline Needs Assessment**

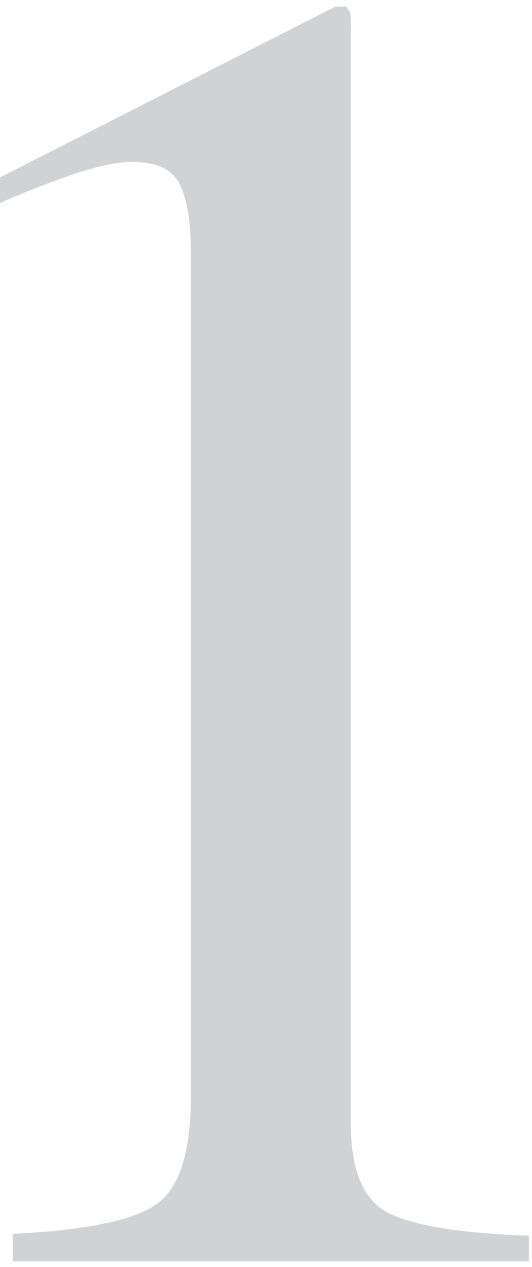
1. To identify the levels of legislative engagement of women in governance
2. To articulate the experiences and challenges faced by women in governance
3. To analyze the skills-gap in the implementation of specific governance duties for women in governance
4. To examine the tactics and support applied by women in governance as strategies of addressing the challenges they face
5. To propose diverse mentorship needs and possible programs that can be initiated to support women in governance

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1 IPU Parline (2020) Global data on national parliaments. Retrieved from: <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=10&year=2020>;

2 International institute for democracy and electoral assistance, Gender quotas database, available at <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/country-view/156/35>, assessed July 2021;





# **LITERATURE REVIEW**

# LITERATURE REVIEW

This section is organized around four thematic areas. First, historical and current trends of women participation in governance and the roles women have played in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. The section briefly introduces some of the legislative and/or policy frameworks that have been put in place to encourage active women participation in governance; second, assessment of the impact of women participation in governance and politics. This includes highlights of both individual and collective achievements of women who have ascended to formal leadership positions; third, challenges faced by women in governance. More specifically, this section highlights challenges faced by both women political aspirants and those in political positions; fourth, the roles of women in governance with particular attention focus on Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya.

## **Historical and Current Trends of Women Participation in Governance**

### **Roles of women during Pre-colonial and colonial period**

Women participation in politics can be traced back to pre-colonial and colonial period. Although the struggle for independence was linked to men's efforts, there was participation by both men and women in the nationalist movements such as the Aba Women's War in Southeastern Nigeria, the Mau Mau in Kenya, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front in Eritrea among others. It is indisputable that women influenced the success of these movements for independence through grassroots organization and mobilization. Women's contributions were vital in local and national organizing efforts, and occasionally, they joined men during the armed struggle. Women also led protests against taxation policies, distributed anti-colonial pamphlets, provided shelter, food and treated soldiers who were wounded during armed struggle.<sup>4</sup> For the effectiveness of the cause, men sought to reach out to women for advice which raised women hopes for further collaboration.

### **Roles of women during postcolonial period**

A compelling development in African political landscape during the post-colonial period has been a steady increase in the number of women representations and participation in governance. According to Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), between 1995 and 2015, Sub-Saharan African countries recorded an increase in women parliamentarians as compared to the rest of the world. In 1995, no country in this region had elected more than 30% women to their single or lower houses. This drastically changed with time as more women were elected to different legislative houses and by October 1, 2021, Rwanda was remarkably the world's highest ranked with 61.3% from 4.3% in 1995 of women representation in lower house of parliament. South Africa recoded an increase form 25.0% in 1995 to 46.4% in 2021, Senegal recorded an increase in women representation from 11.7% in 1995 to 43.0% in 2021 and Ethiopia recording 42.6% in 2021.<sup>3</sup> Currently, despite a few numbers of women representation, women are involved in decision making processes, lead different government institutions, political parties and representation in the legislative.

The increase in women representation stated above can be attributed to the various legislative and policy frameworks including, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

<sup>3</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union Parline, "Global data on national parliament"  
<https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=10&year=2021>



Discrimination against Women (CEDAW - 1979) which was adopted by the United Nations (UN) and ratified by African countries to promote gender equality through equal opportunities to political and public life; The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) that promotes human dignity focusing on women quota policy aimed at reserving special seats for women at a minimum of 30% in public or political spaces; The Africa's Agenda 2063, Aspiration Three and Six, focuses on improving women's political participation and active involvement of all citizens in all aspects of decision-making processes and promoting gender equality. This is in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 that seeks to promote the role of women in peace and security.

## **Women Participation in Governance: Impact and Achievements.**

Broadly speaking, political participation is treated as an activity only carried out through electoral process aimed at shaping and affecting the political sphere and government operations. However, political participation encompasses freedom of speech and association; ability to perform public duties; opportunity to participate in electoral processes; and holding of public office. Good governance demands inclusivity - active participation by both men and women in the decision-making process of a country as it advances its democracy agenda.

It is discernible that when a country empowers women through involvement and active participation in political activities, decision-making processes and policy formulation, it advances strong and enduring governance structures, improved democracy and sound economic systems. Women parliamentarians are known to initiate motions in parliament, influence policy directions and procedures, push for gender equality bills that focus on women and children rights, and serving as role model to other women. Women participation in governance has also strengthened and enhanced women's social, political and economic lifestyle. Active participation of women in governance therefore promotes democracy, developments, gender equality, strong government structures, and many more.

## **Individual and collective achievements of women in formal leadership positions**

Presently, a number of women are in the decision-making processes either as head of states, leaders in political parties, government and non-government institutions, legislature, among other governance roles. In addition to holding offices that influence decision making processes, women have also won both national and international awards. These women include: Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who became the 24<sup>th</sup> president of Liberia and the first African female head of state (2006-2018). United Nation – describes Ellen Sirleaf as a renowned promoter of freedom, peace, justice, women empowerment and democratic rule. She won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 and was elected as the first woman to chair the Economic Community of West African States.<sup>4</sup> Dr. Joyce Banda was elected as the 4<sup>th</sup> President (2012-2014) and the first female president of Malawi and Africa's second, and voted amongst the world's powerful women following her pursuit for the rights of women, children, disabled and the marginalized group.<sup>5</sup> Sahle-Work

4 Ellen Johnson Sirleaf First Female President of Liberia & Nobel Peace Laureate <https://www.un.org/en/conf/migration/assets/pdf/Ellen-Sirleaf-Bio.pdf>;

5 Denzer, L. "Joyce Banda." Encyclopedia Britannica, April 8, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Joyce-Banda;>

Zewde was appointed the President of Ethiopia in 2018 and became the first female president of Ethiopia.<sup>6</sup> Samia Suluhu Hassan was sworn in as the first female President of Tanzania in March 2021 making her the first woman president in East Africa following the demise of President John Pombe Magufuli in March 2021. She was the vice president before the death of the former President. Fatou Bensouda is the first female and first African to assume the office of the Chief Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court. Previously, she was the Minister of Justice in Gambia.

Other prominent women worth noting for their achievements and contributions to women rights and humanitarian work include former first lady of Mozambique and South Africa Graça Machel Mandela who is an international advocate for women's and children's rights. She was made the honorary British Dame by Queen Elizabeth II in 1997 for her humanitarian work and became the honorary Fellow of the British Academy in 2017. She won several awards such as Nansen Medal, Global Citizen Award of the New England Circle, InterAction's Humanitarian Award, World Health Organization Medal, among others.<sup>7</sup> The former first lady of South Africa, Winnie Mandela, who served as a Member of Parliament and a deputy Minister of Arts and Culture, won Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award for human rights work in South Africa, and Candace Award for Distinguished Service from the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, and an honorary Doctor of Law degree from Makerere University in recognition of her fight against apartheid in South Africa, among others. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma was South Africa's Minister of Health, Home and Foreign Affairs, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Chairperson of the African Union Commission, among other roles. Professor Wangari Maathai was the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize, and the first woman in East and Central Africa to acquire a Doctor of Philosophy degree. She won several awards that include Nansen Medal, Global Citizen Award of the New England Circle, InterAction's Humanitarian Award, World Health Organization Medal, among others.

With diverse political vision and interests such as right to education, health, employment and voting, women defied the traditional perception of them as subservient, and directly engaged in politics, forming their own parties or seeking electoral positions in different parties. In Kenya, Martha Karua heads Narc-Kenya, and Charity Ngilu headed Social Democratic Party of Kenya. Rwanda has Victoire Ingabire Umuhoya chairing Rwandan Development and Liberty for All party, in Zambia Dr. Inonge Mbikusita-Lewanika formed Zambian National Party, and in Zimbabwe Margaret Dongo leads Zimbabwe Union of Democrats, while in Liberia Ellen Johnson Sirleaf headed Liberian Action Party.

## **Challenges Faced by Women in Governance.**

One of the world's agenda is to eliminate gender discrimination. International bodies and local institutions have put in place structures and processes that push for women participation in governance. Globally, as of April 2021, only about 25 women were serving as heads of states and governments.<sup>8</sup> On global ranking, women account for just 25.5% of all national parliamentarians as of January 1, 2021, an increase of about 14% from 11% in 1995. It is also

6 Council women world leaders, "Sahle-Work Zewde, President of Ethiopia 2018 – Present Biography," <https://www.councilwomenworldleaders.org/sahle-work-zewde.html>;

7 Morgan State University, "University Commencement, Gracia Michael" <https://commencement.morgan.edu/speakers/gracia-machel/>;

8 Council on foreign relations, "current women head of states and government," Accessed July 14, 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/article/womens-power-index#chapter-title-0-2>;

worth noting that only Cuba and Rwanda have more than 50% female parliamentarians in the Lower House. Still, there are 27 states globally that records less than 10% of parliamentarians in single or lower houses, including four single/lower chambers with no women at all.<sup>9</sup> The debatable portion of this inclusivity is whether a fair ground is set for both genders. Challenges affecting women in governance vary depending on the status of socio-economic development, geographical, cultural activities, and political system in place. Predominantly, political, socio-economic and cultural beliefs undermine women participation in politics and public sphere.<sup>10</sup>

Generally, African politics is marred by violence, intimidation and sexual harassment. Both genders fall victim of this but, it affects women more than men. According to the United Nations women feel “a sense of vulnerability to political intimidation and violence.”<sup>11</sup> The study shows that in Guinea, 64% of women are very concerned about political intimidation.<sup>12</sup> Studies done on factors influencing women participation in politics have also shown that in places of war, women and children are the most affected. In Sierra Leon, Northern Uganda and Kenya political conflicts led to displacement and deaths of many citizens, and in most cases resulting into abuse of women through rape, sexual harassment, and denial of basic education. Election violence is a deliberate strategy deployed by incumbents to attain their political interest in relation to an electoral contest.<sup>13</sup>

Women have also been politically marginalized due to structural and institutional biases. Institutional constraints include barriers such as political systems that operate through rigid schedules that do not take into consideration women’s domestic responsibilities, and the type of electoral quotas used.<sup>14</sup> Scheduling of political meetings at night or at odd hours when women prefer to be with their families has tended to marginalize women out of politics. It is also worth noting that, even though winning an election on independent ticket is possible, joining a political party and winning a party ticket through competitive nomination increases one’s chances of getting elected. However, the major stumbling block is that party nominations are never transparent, and political parties tend to determine who is nominated to vie for an elective position. Just like at national level, patriarchal ideologies play a role in undermining and denying women an opportunity to participate in political party activities.

George argues that women’s participation in politics as candidates, voters and campaign mobilizers is often influenced and shaped by gender social norms that drive wider social structures.<sup>15</sup> For instance, in traditional African set up, women are perceived as home keepers, as a result, these socio-cultural expectations on women’s roles affect their ability to run for office and participate in various political spaces. In addition, these norms shape the voting

9 UN-Women. “Facts and Figure: Women’s leadership and political participation” <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures>

10 Shvedova, “Obstacle to Women’s Participation in Parliament,” 2002, <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Obstacles-to-Women%27s-Participation-in-Parliament-Shvedova/d998eb3ddb02ef10d7a1b4f1d0fd15dbc95c557f?p2df>

11 United Nation. A celebratory rise in women’s political participation, “Obstacles to participation” <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/april-2015/celebratory-rise-women%E2%80%99s-political-participation>

12 Ibid.

13 Courage Mlambo & Forget Kapingura, “Factors influencing women political participation: The case of the SADC region,” *Journal of Cogent Social Sciences*, 5:1 (2019): 4 -5, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1681048>

14 Ann Kangas; Huma Haider; Erika Fraser; Evie Browne 2015 Gender, “Gender and Governance.” <https://gsdrc.org/topic-guides/gender/gender-and-governance/>

15 Rachel George, “Gender norms and women’s political participation: Global trends and findings on norm change,” *Align*, February 7, 2019, <https://www.alignplatform.org/resources/gender-norms-and-womens-political-participation-global-trends-and-findings-norm-change>, Accessed May 9

processes and how women should spend their time and behave, generating practical restrictions to their participation in public and political spaces.

Financial constraints have also been pointed out as a major contributor to women's low participation in political spaces.<sup>16</sup> For instance, political parties often require membership fee, registration fee and campaign financing, which can all be very expensive.

## Women Roles in Governance: Case Studies

### Rwanda

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Rwanda was ranked the highest and the first in the world to surpass the 30% gender quota policy, standing at 61.3% of women in Lower or Single House as of June 1, 2021 IPU.<sup>17</sup> Rwanda has shown commitment to gender equality, human rights and women empowerment through their constitution which was promulgated in 2003, with clear provision of the 30% special seats for women in all decision-making organs at national, regional and local levels. Article 25 of the Constitution, Amendment II, of 8 December 2005, explicitly recognizes the responsibility of political organizations to 'participate in education of citizens on politics based on democracy and elections and operate in a manner as to ensure that women and men have equal access to elective offices.'<sup>18</sup> Political organizations and political law was amended in 2007 to state that political party lists for all elective officers must have a minimum of 30% women candidates. Other legal acts like the prohibition of all forms of discrimination and sectarianism, and the Code of Conduct of Political Organizations and Their Members are indicated as some of the contributors to an increase in women participation and representation in Rwanda.

Abbott and Rucogoza argue that Rwanda's commitment to gender equality and human rights, and an increase in the number of women in parliament was a product of ratifying the international conventions and protocols that gave equal opportunity to both women and men.<sup>19</sup> International treaties that Rwanda ratified to encourage women participation in politics include: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1980, The Convention on Civil and Political Rights 1966, The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995 and The Convention on the Political Rights of Women 1993. Ratification and implementation of both international, regional treaties such as the South African Development Cooperation (SADC) on Declaration on Gender in 1997 and Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children in 1998; New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) on women empowerment; and local frameworks such as The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion aimed at promoting Gender equality and women empowerment.

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16 Ibid

17 Inter-Parliamentary Union. Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments. <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=6&year=2021>

18 Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Gender Quota Database: Rwanda. <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/country-view/255/35>

19 Pamela Abbott and Marklin Rucogoza, "Legal and policy Framework for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Rwanda," Institute of policy analysis and research, June 2011, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/43540646.pdf>

This increase in women representation has much to do with local structures put in place as a criterion supporting the selections. Rwanda has Bicameral parliament with legislated quotas for the single/lower house and upper house as well as at the sub-national level. This has seen 49 (61%) seats of 80 seats in the Chamber of Deputies being held by women.<sup>20</sup> Rwanda uses reserved seats quota type. Constitutionally, 80 member in the Chamber of Deputies gives 53 members elected by direct universal suffrage through a secret ballot using closed list proportional representation, of which a minimum of 30% are reserved for women; 24 women (2 elected from each province and from the city of Kigali by an electoral college with a women-only ballot).<sup>21</sup> There is also an electoral law under Organic Law 03/2010/OL Article 109 which states that the election of the 24 women deputies from across the country's provinces should be elected by specific organs in accordance with national administrative entities. A Presidential Order was issued to determine a national administrative entity and the number of women Deputies to be elected at each entity.<sup>22</sup> The 2005 Constitution, Article 82, states that of the 26 members of the Senate, who are either indirectly elected or appointed, a minimum of 30%, should be reserved for women. At the Sub-National level, Election Law Article 155 of law 27/2010 of 19/06/2010 on elections requires that at every sector, one female member and one male member of the Council be elected through direct and secret ballot. It further states in article 156 that 'a minimum of 30% of all District Council members be women and be elected through indirect and secret ballot as well as by the members of the Council Bureau of Sectors.' The article 5 of the Organic law on political organizations and politicians demands for a minimum of 30% of each political organization posts subjected to election to be occupied by women.<sup>23</sup>

Rwandan women set up alliances with men in government and their parliament stressing the importance of valuing women and mothers in accordance to their traditional culture. This has consequently given voice to rural women. Involvement of Rwandan women in civil society has paved the way for gender parity in the political sphere: *First*, the significant role women played in service provision after 1994 genocide helped to underscore the legitimacy of women's political participation and importance of creating gender-sensitive policies that gave women's movement opportunity to maneuver and influence policy compared to other civil society organization such as human rights or indigenous rights organization.<sup>24</sup> *Second*, experiences gained by women in civil society sectors presented a good foundation for more women to enter politics and government administration.<sup>25</sup> As a result, Rwandan government appointed more women to important political and juridical positions, mainstreamed women within the party and observed the quota system in the national legislature.<sup>26</sup> Rwanda women legislatures also formed a parliamentary caucus, Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarian (FFRP) in 1996. Through FFRP, women have achieved ambitious legislative goals such as

20 Ibid

21 The Constitution of Rwanda (rev.2008) <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/rw/rw032en.pdf>

22 Electoral Law. Organic law no.03/2010/OL of 18/06/2010 repealing Organic Law no.17/2003 of 07/7/2003 governing presidential and legislative elections as amended and complemented, Official Gazette, special issue, 19 June 2010. [https://nec.gov.rw/uploads/media/Itegeko\\_rigenga\\_amatora.pdf](https://nec.gov.rw/uploads/media/Itegeko_rigenga_amatora.pdf)

23 Electoral Law. Organic Law 16/2003 of 27/06/2003 governing political organizations and politicians as amended by Organic Law 19/2007 of 04/05/2007)

24 Jennie E. Burnet, Gender Balance and the Meanings of Women in Governance in Post-Genocide Rwanda, *African Affairs*, Volume 107, Issue 428, July 2008, Pages 361–386, <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adn024>

25 Debusscher, Petra & Ansoms, An. (2013). Gender Equality Policies in Rwanda: Public Relations or Real Transformations? *Development and Change*. 44. 10.1111/dech.12052.

26 Ibid

reduction in discrimination against women in national and citizen laws; women's right to inheritance and land ownership have also been secured. Through this caucus, gender-based violence legislation was developed. This bill became the first functional piece of legislation initiated by the legislature rather than the executive.<sup>27</sup>

The increasing number of women representations in the legislative brought about several changes as more women engage at each level of governance structures. This has seen women serve as cell, sector, and/or district elected official. Increased women representation/legislators have seen an increase of girls to access education since female legislators would push for female right to education in parliament; an increase in acceptance of women to speak in public as many women perceived that their willingness to speak in public to gender quotas since it creates a positive attitude among men and women on female citizen's competency.<sup>28</sup> An increase in autonomy of women is pointed out as a result of more women representation in governance. Increase in women legislators have downside as well. Passing of the inheritance law was not taken positively by male. The 1998 inheritance law increased friction between brothers and sisters as it gave girls and women rights to fight over inheritance after parents' death. It is also noted that from 1990, as more women were entering politics, more men were withdrawing since most of the time women won the elections and have access to opportunities. Civil societies were also noted to be favoring women candidates over male candidates.

Despite a record of high number of women legislatures globally, a study done by the UN Women on the revisiting Rwanda five years after record-breaking parliamentary election points limited enforcement of gender equality laws; lack of campaign financing; lower levels of education and technical skills, as well as persistent gender stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes as some of the barriers to sustaining women's political participation.<sup>29</sup>

## Uganda

The 1995 Ugandan constitution gave hope for more women representation through the provision of quota system in both national and local government, and in administrative appointments.<sup>30</sup> Ugandan women representation in parliament stands at 174 (33) of 529 seats in lower house and national level. Uganda has a Unicameral parliament with legislated quotas for the single/lower house and at the sub-national level.<sup>31</sup> Women selection criteria is outlined in Article 78(1) of the Constitution - that parliament shall consist of one woman representative for every district of the 112 districts.<sup>32</sup> Uganda's electoral law requires that 112 women representative per district be directly elected by all voters on a special ballot in each district (for women candidates only) and out 10 representatives of the Uganda People's Defense Forces, 2 must be women; In 5 youth representatives, 1 must be a woman; in 5 representatives of persons with

27 The Institute for Inclusive Security. Advancing Women's Caucuses in Legislatures <https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Advancing%20Women%27s%20Caucuses%20in%20Legislatures.pdf>

28 The Effect of Women's Representation in Parliament and the Passing of Gender Sensitive Policies. <https://www.aeaweb.org/conference/2018/preliminary/paper/an5yEb5h>

29 UN Women. Revisiting Rwanda five years after record-breaking parliamentary election. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2018/8/feature-rwanda-women-in-parliament>

30 Goetz, Anne Marie. "No Shortcuts to Power: Constraints on Women's Political Effectiveness in Uganda." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 40, no. 4 (2002): 549-75. Accessed July 4, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3876025>.

31 Gender Quotas Database: Country view, <http://www.idea/data/gender-quotas/country-view> Accessed May 22, 2021.

32 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995. [https://statehouse.go.ug/sites/default/files/attachments/Constitution\\_1995.pdf](https://statehouse.go.ug/sites/default/files/attachments/Constitution_1995.pdf)

disabilities, 1 must be a woman and in 5 representatives of workers, 1 must be a woman.<sup>33</sup> At the sub-national level, Article 180 (2:b) of the 1995 Constitution states that one-third of the membership of each local government council shall be reserved for women. Women councilors are elected from special constituencies. Article 108 (3) of the Local Governments Act, 1997 states that, ‘the population quota for demarcation of electoral areas for women representatives shall be determined by the requirement of women constituting one-third of any local council being considered.’<sup>34</sup>

Uganda was one of the first countries in Africa to adopt the reserved seats gender quota system in 1989. Women who were elected to the reserved seats were female representatives of the districts because they were selected via electoral colleges made up of members of both women and local councils. These women candidates had to gather the approval of a small number of elites rather than a district wide constituency. This selection hence gave advantage to elite women who could easily secure the approval, rendering other women vulnerable to political patronage. These women were not selected based on their qualifications.<sup>35</sup>

A study on Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA) established that female parliamentarians are challenging the country’s male-centric political system through partnering with other women groups/organizations and collaborating with male MPs to successfully introduce gender-sensitive laws and policies.<sup>36</sup> This has brought change in the patriarchal nature of Uganda’s political system, which has systematically excluded women from meaningful participation. The UWOPA, a parliamentary caucus, was formed with an aim of empowering women politically and opening up space for free engagement in policies that affect women. Interestingly, the increased number of women in parliament has not matched their contributions to decision making process as most of the policies were never supported or passed: For instance, The Land Act in 1998 where women pushed for a clause to allow spouses to co-own land was not only rejected but deleted from the document as well. UWOPA works with the UN Women to lobby for pending bills such as Sexual Offence Bill 2015, Succession Amendment Bill 2018, Marriage and Divorce Bill, and Employment Amendment Bill, among others.<sup>37</sup>

Through UWOPA, women legislators’ lobby and advocate for networking, training and capacity building with the aim of giving women MPs room to discuss and share experiences. Women in political space, through UWOPA, collaborate with their male counterparts to support and pass bills that protect both women and children, such as: Domestic Violence Bill, Children Amendment Bill, among others. UWOPA’s Strategic Plan (2016-2021) outlines the need to advocate for the passing of the four Gender Bills on the floor of Parliament: The Marriage and Divorce Bill 2009 (MAD), the Succession Amendment Bill 2018(SAB), the Sexual Offences Bill 2019(SOB) and the Employment Amendment Bill 2019(EAB). Success of these bills will be one of greatest achievements by the Uganda women in parliament. The

33 Parliamentary Elections Act, 2005. <https://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/africa/UG/uganda-parliamentary-elections-act-2005/view>

34 Local Government Act, 1997. <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/94558/110993/F966556790/UGA94558.pdf>

35 The Effect of Women’s Representation in Parliament and the Passing of Gender Sensitive Policies. <https://www.aeaweb.org/conference/2018/preliminary/paper/an5yEb5h>

36 Hannah Muzee and Joice Mbongo, “Uganda women MPs joined forces with men to make their voices heard,” July 9, 2019, <http://theconversation.com/uganda-women-mps-joined-forces-with-men-to-make-their-voices-heard-119671>

37 UN Women, “UN Women and UWOPA leadership push for enactment of the pending gender sensitive Bills,” February 28, 2019, <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2019/02/gender-sensitive-bills-in-uganda>

increased number of women in parliament has seen the four gender bills outlined in UWOPA strategic plan, Sexual Offenses Bill 2019 was approved by Parliament on May 3, 2021 amidst criticism that it violated international human rights law by criminalizing consensual sexual acts between adults, while falling short of clear definition of consent.<sup>38</sup> The other two Bills passed by the parliament between October 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021 and are still awaiting presidential assent, are: the Succession Amendment Bill, which seek to address the inequality and marginalization of women and girls after death of a spouse; and the Employment Amendment Bill, which include provision addressing sexual violence and harassment in the workplace.<sup>39</sup>

However, according the United Nations Development Program on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Public Administration, even with the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act 2010, gender-based violence against women and girls which seems socially acceptable and accompanied by a culture of impunity, stands at over 60%.<sup>40</sup> The study further highlighted division of domestic chore as a challenge that burden women employed in Public Service rather than men and have to bear the demands of public and private duties.<sup>41</sup>

## Tanzania

Tanzania is one of the countries in Africa that has increased the number of women representations at the National Assembly in the past two decades. To attain this, Tanzania had to ratify both international, regional and local policies and frameworks. Tanzania is a member state of the South African Development Community (SADC) and one of the states that have met the SADC and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action's target of 30% women representation in parliament.<sup>42</sup> According to South African Gender links SADC Gender Protocol Barometer, women's representation in the Tanzanian cabinet is 34%, an increase noted to be faster than any other SADC member state.<sup>43</sup> Tanzania has a unicameral parliament that provides for voluntary party quotas and legislated quotas for the single/lower house and at the sub-national level. With ratification of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action that brought about the special/reserved seats for women, Tanzania managed to elect 37% (141/384 seats) of women to the National Assembly in the 2020 general elections.<sup>44</sup> It is certain that without the adoption of the special seats quota system in the National Legislation, only about 7% of women would have been in the legislature, considering that in 2005 elections, only 17 women were elected to represent constituencies.<sup>45</sup>

In 2020 elections, the sixth election since the introduction of multi-party politics in Tanzania in

38 Human Rights Watch, Uganda: Reject Sexual Offenses Bill, May 6, 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/05/06/uganda-reject-sexual-offenses-bill>

39 Westminster Foundation for Democracy, "Two crucial gender equality bills passed in Uganda after years of stalling," June 25, 2021, <https://www.wfd.org/2021/06/25/two-crucial-gender-equality-bills-passed-in-uganda-after-years-of-stalling/>

40 United Nations Development Program, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Public Administration. Uganda case study.

41 Ibid.

42 Mi Yung Yoon (2011) More women in the Tanzanian legislature: Do numbers matter? *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 29:1, 83-98, DOI: 10.1080/02589001.2011.539011

43 Gender links (2015) "SADC Gender Protocol Barometer 2015, <https://genderlinks.org.za/shop/sadc-gender-protocol-barometer-2015/>

44 International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, "Gender Quota Database: United Republic of Tanzania," January 29, 2021, Accessed July 6, 2021, <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/country-view/291/35>

45 Mi Yung Yoon, "Special Seats for Women in the National Legislature: The Case of Tanzania." *Africa Today* 55, no. 1 (2008): 61-86. Accessed July 6, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27666951>.



1992, women participation in various elective positions were significant compared to the previous elections. In a total of 15 nominated presidential candidates, two were women and five were vice-presidential candidates; in the National Assembly with a total of 1,257 nominated candidates, 293 were women; and out of 9,231 nominated candidates for local authorities, 699 candidates were women. The 2021 elections were guided by the 1997 Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania; the 1985 National Election Act (NEA); the 1984 Zanzibar Constitution and Elections Act among other legislation.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to the international policies and frameworks such as the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, Tanzania has put in place different processes that guide and oversee women representation in legislative and governance through reserved seats. These processes include the constitution, electoral regulations and party manifestos. The amendment to the 1977 constitution that was passed in 2005 states that, at the National Assembly under Article 66 (1:b) and 78(1), there should not be less than 30%, an increase from previous 15%, of women members in the parliament on the mainland and 40% on Zanzibar House of Representatives, and that special seats for women should be distributed among the political parties in proportion to the number of seats awarded to them in parliament.<sup>47</sup> In the National Assembly, which consists of 350 members, 102 seats are reserved for women, 239 members are elected in single member constituencies, seven are appointed by the president, five represent Zanzibar (two of whom are women) and one mandate belongs to the attorney general. A clause in Electoral Regulation 2010 in the same line states that: ‘Every Political Party which contests parliamentary elections may propose and submit to the Commission names of eligible women candidates for nomination of Members of Parliament for Women Special Seats.’<sup>48</sup> Rank order and/or replacement rules are also enshrined in the Electoral Regulation 2010 in a clause stating that ‘The names of the women candidates proposed to the Commission shall be in order of preference.’<sup>49</sup> The Commission then proportionally distributes special seats to the parties that received ‘at least 5% of all valid votes for parliamentary elections.’ In 1995 and 2000 elections, the Commission allocated reserved seats based on the number of constituencies’ seats each party won. From 2005 elections, the Commission has been allocating these seats based on the number of popular votes each party received in the parliamentary elections. Tanzania has no independent candidates and therefore parties use different internal mechanisms to nominate candidates for the special seats.<sup>50</sup>

At the sub-national level, the electoral law states that, at the local level, women must hold not less than one-third of the seats and these seats are allocated among political parties based on the seats that a party has gained.<sup>51</sup> To increase women representation and participation at the party level, political parties are required to reserve special seats for women under voluntary political party quotas policy which is clearly enshrined in party constitutions and manifestos. For example, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Revolutionary Party) in its 2005 manifesto had a goal

46 Electoral institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, EISA Election Observation Mission to the 2020 General Elections in Tanzania, October 30, 2020, Accessed July 8, 2021, <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3.sourceafrica.net/documents/120793/EISA-Preliminary-Statement-Tanzania-2020-General.pdf>

47 Tanzanian constitution, 41:48, Accessed July 6, 2021, <https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/constitution.pdf>

48 Elections Regulations 2010, Article 86A (2), Accessed July 6, 2021, <https://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/africa/TZ/tanzania-the-national-elections-act-2010/view>

49 Ibid

50 Wang, V, and Yoon M. “Recruitment Mechanisms for Reserved Seats for Women in Parliament and Switches to Non-Quota Seats: a Comparative Study of Tanzania and Uganda.” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 56, no. 2 (2018): 299–324. doi:10.1017/S0022278X18000174.

51 Elections Regulations 2010, Accessed July 6, 2021, <https://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/africa/TZ/tanzania-the-national-elections-act-2010/view>

to attain 50% women representation in all elective bodies by 2015.<sup>52</sup> Civic United Front (CUF), National Convention for Construction and Reform (NCCR-Mageuzi) and Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CCDM-Chadema) are among political parties that have adopted a voluntary political party quota that allows for at least a woman candidate to vie for election in each constituency.<sup>53</sup>

Along with the legal frameworks that Tanzania adopted, international and national organizations have been instrumental in bringing out women to participate in governance and political lime light through trainings. For example, the UN Women Tanzania have partnered with the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), the Tanzania Media Women’s Association (TAMWA), the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) and the Tanzania Women Cross-Party Platform (TWCP) to contribute and bring about an increase in number of women in the political sphere through training and support.<sup>54</sup> Towards the 2015 elections, these organizations managed to train 1,234 women, youth and persons living with disabilities, who were aspirant in the elections (2015). Training which is part of the UN Women Tanzania programme on women’s leadership and political participation called *Wanawake Wanaweza* (Women Can) majors on public speaking, leadership and campaign skills.<sup>55</sup> Out of the 1,234 who participated in the training program, a total of 72 were nominated to parliament, district level and for the Zanzibar House Representatives. The program also saw 1,039 women vie for elections (238 for Parliament, 770 at district level, 29 for Zanzibar House of Representative and 2 for Presidency/Vice-Presidency). Unfortunately, only 8.5% of the women candidates won the election. However, it was a positive move to number of women representations as they added to the women who got leadership roles through the special seats that parties fill after the elections.<sup>56</sup>

In previous elections, Tanzanian women participated as voters, poll workers, election observers, security personnel, journalists, campaign supporters, party agents and candidates as a way of throwing in their support to fellow women candidates to ensure more women are elected.<sup>57</sup> Data from National Elections Commission points that in 2015 election, 52.5% of registered voters were women and 29.6% of all registered voters were women between 18 and 35 years.<sup>58</sup> It was noted that these women voted more for their fellow women as compared to how they voted for the male candidates. As party members, women can engage with their parties’ women wing, volunteer to support their party campaigns, mobilize and help register more women to vote or join the party or participate as party agents during elections.<sup>59</sup> It was also noted in the 2015 election that Tanzanian women were actively involved in the campaign team for women candidates. For example, a significant portion of women threw their support behind CCM vice presidential candidate Samia Suluhu Hassan, the current president of the United Republic of Tanzania. The same was witnessed when CHADEMA women supporters traveled with Mrs. Regina Mumba Lowassa during the campaign on behalf of UKAWA

52 Chama Cha Mapinduzi Manifesto 2005:127, Revised 2010, Section 204.

53 Ibid

54 UN Women, Women claim their space in Tanzania’s elections, October 23, 2015, Accessed July 8, 2021, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2015/10/women-claim-their-space-in-tanzania-elections>

55 Ibid

56 Ibid

57 International Republican Institute, “Tanzania National Elections Gender Assessment: Women Participation in the 2015 Elections,” October 25, 2015 Accessed June 15, 2021, [https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/tanzania\\_gender\\_report.pdf](https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/tanzania_gender_report.pdf)

58 Ibid

59 Ibid

alliance and her husband Edward Ngoyai Lowassa who was the presidential candidate.<sup>60</sup> From the elections report, it is evident that, Tanzanian women also participated as candidates for the top positions that were previously dominated by men. For example, in CCM presidential candidate party primaries, two women Amina Salum Ali and Asha Migiro made it to the party's final three candidates selected by CCM National Executive Committee, but lost to John Magufuli. Alliance for Change and Transparency (ACT) party also fielded Anna Elisha as the party's presidential candidate, according to Election's report. These women leaders have created a significant precedent for women to participate in politics today and in future elections.<sup>61</sup>

The increased number of women legislators has led to positive changes in the parliament. This has seen an increase in the proportion of women's contribution to parliamentary debates that broadens the parliamentary discourse. Issues touching on women, children, and families are frequently discussed and better addressed as a result of more women in parliament to support the motion.<sup>62</sup> An increase in women legislators made parliamentary environment more comfortable for female MPs to pursue a pro-women agenda. These legislators are known for their active contribution in parliament that has led to the passing of numerous laws such as the Labour Act of 1997, the Sexual Offences Act of 1998, the Land Act of 1999, the Village Land Act of 1999, the Land Amendment Act of 2004, and repealing, in 1996, of the law that expelled pregnant girls from school.<sup>63</sup>

Despite an increasing number of women in the political space in Tanzania, women still face challenges when it comes to operations, perception and human rights among others. Due to party quota system, some party leaders do not invest their limited resource on women or support women candidacy for direct elective positions at the constituency level.<sup>64</sup> Research conducted by the International Republican Institute (IRI) revealed that gender quota brought about class system in the parliament with a division between directly elected constituency seat members (considered as first class members) and special seat members (considered as second class members).<sup>65</sup> Special seat members are often sidelined from leadership positions since they have no constituents to represent. Even though women parliamentarians are able to advocate for issues affecting women, children, economy and country's development, their numbers do not give them the strength and political stamina to challenge the patriarchal norms and male dominance that controls the debate in the parliament. The Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) pointed out that women parliamentarians through special seats have limited access to key resources, such as the Constituency Development Fund (CDF).<sup>66</sup> Special seat MPs are also often told that they represent the "national interest" and not a specific constituency hence engages in limited constituency outreach.

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60 Ibid

61 Ibid

62 Elizabeth Asiedu, Claire Branstette, Neepa Gaekwad-Babulal, and Nanivazo Malokele, "The Effect of Women's Representation in Parliament and the Passing of Gender Sensitive Policies." <https://www.aeaweb.org/conference/2018/preliminary/paper/an5yEb5h>

63 Ibid

64 International Republican Institute, "Tanzania National Elections Gender Assessment: Women Participation in the 2015 Elections," October 25, 2015 Accessed June 15, 2021, [https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/tanzania\\_gender\\_report.pdf](https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/tanzania_gender_report.pdf)

65 Ibid

66 Ibid

## Kenya

In Kenya, for a long period of time, women representation in governance has been low. Men dominating all levels of decision making from the local leadership levels such as the council of elders and chief *barazas* to the national leadership levels has been the norm. The historical and current trends of women representation in governance and politics particularly between 1969 to 2013 demonstrate that women representation in politics slowly increased from 1.2 % (translating to 2 women in the national assembly) to 19.8% (translating to 68 women in the national assembly) while at the county level (at the 2013 general election results) 86 women were elected out of the 1450 elective seats available for the county assembly seats.<sup>67</sup>

In August 2010, Kenya promulgated a new constitution, which recognizes women rights as human rights. For instance, equality in marriage, employment and access to education, prohibition of discriminatory customary practices, protection of matrimonial property, women's right to inheritance and land ownership, equal parental responsibility and compliance with inclusion principles and gender among others are recognized in the new constitution.<sup>68</sup> The new dispensation further recognizes the principle of equality and non-discrimination as core values of leadership. As such, and with regard to political representation, the constitution provides 47 special seats for women representatives drawn from the 47 counties. In addition, Chapter 7, Section 81b of the constitution states that, "no more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender".

To strengthen women representation at party levels, Political Party Act of 2011 states that a party is not qualified for public funding if more than two-thirds of its elected official are of same gender.<sup>69</sup> In Upper House Senate, 16 seats are allocated to women members, nominated by political parties according to the proportion of seats won in the Senate. At the sub-national level, no more than two-thirds of the membership of the county assembly is of the same gender. However, records drawn from the Inter Parliamentary Union report (2018) show that the 2017 general election results fell short of the constitutional requirements where by only 76 women made it to the national assembly instead of 117 and 21 women to the senate instead of 23. One of the possible reasons for this challenge is that the political parties' leadership is male dominated yet the two-third gender rule largely depends on the political will of the party leaders.<sup>70</sup> Put differently, the lack of a clear implementation mechanism for the two-thirds rule coupled with the perception that women already have 47 special seats in parliament have resulted in a few women winning elective positions. Consequently, women leaders in politics lack significant numbers that can enable them influence policy or impact on decisions. Still, these provisions and/or affirmative action have remained a source of inspiration to women who seek to ascent to governance positions.

Women representation from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> parliament for single seat is reflected in Table 1 below.

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67 Winfred Lichuma, *Gender Equality Challenges in Kenya and Africa*. [Key Note address]. During the event: gender equality: international challenges and strategies for success organized by Australian federal police at the Australian high commission in London offices (2017, June 28)

68 Cf. Constitution of Kenya 2010

69 Political Party Act, no.11 of 2011. <http://www.kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/Acts/PoliticalPartiesAct.pdf>

70 Sarah Hewitt. *The Struggles for Women Participation in Kenya*. Australian Outlook. (Australian Institute of International Affairs, 2018). <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/the-struggle-for-womens-participation-in-kenya/>

**Table 1: Women representation in parliament (1963-2017)**

Date	Constituencies	No. of elected women	Total nominated members	No. of nominated women
1963-1969	158	0	12	0
1969-1974	158	1	12	1
1974-1979	158	4	12	2
1979-1983	158	5	12	1
1983-1988	158	2	12	4
1988-1992	188	2	12	0
1992-1997	188	6	12	1
1997-2002	210	4	12	5
2002-2007	210	10	12	8
2007-2013	210	16	12	6
2013-2017	290	16	12	5
2017-2022	290	23	12	6

Source: Centre for Rights Education and Awareness

Political institutions and gender equality policies can contribute to the gender power balance by encouraging the formation of interests' groups and by shaping perceptions and attitudes.<sup>71</sup>

Progressive improvement of women representation in the judiciary and the public service were also observed. Whereby in the former, a full gender parity is almost realized and, in the latter, efforts to correspond to the Kenyan Constitution demand of gender rule is still on course.<sup>72</sup> However, women representation in management boards – both in the public and private sectors is still low.<sup>73</sup>

In 2013, Mwatha et al. conducted a study on the experiences and challenges of young Kenyan women in political engagement and found out that young women who are aspiring for political seats lack the set of tactics required for wining over the media to their cause.<sup>74</sup> Whereas, veteran politicians, male or female, receive substantial public visibility.<sup>75</sup> Overall, challenges faced by women leaders are diverse and may depend on age, class, religion, ethnicity and education among others.<sup>76</sup> In other words, women are not a monolithic group, hence have different experiences and face different challenges.

The Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW) notes that corruption also tarnish party primaries/nominations. According to CREAW, political party's leadership are male dominated hence tend to carry with them gender stereotypes while fielding candidates for elective and appointive positions or solving party wrangles. Additionally, most women in

71 Miki Caul Kittilson. Comparing Gender, Institutions and Political Behavior: Toward an Integrated Theoretical Framework. Perspectives on Politics. (American Political Science Association 2010), 219 Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25698528>

72 Ibid

73 Ibid

74 Regina Mwatha, Grace Mbugua and Godwin Murunga. Young Women's Political Participation in Kenya: a study of experiences and challenges of young women in political engagement [Technical Report]. (Women Empowerment Link, 2013), 34.

75 Nyokabi Kamau. Women and Political Leadership in Kenya: Ten Case Studies. (Henrich Bolt, 2010), 77.

76 Hingston. Towards Gender Equality in Africa Author(s). Journal of African Union Studies (Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd, 2016) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26893813>

political spaces are nominated members of either national or county assemblies. As nominated members, their prospects of influencing decision or impacting policies are limited since political parties are inclined to nominate ‘manageable’ women who remain indebted to them and the political party’s agenda rather than those that may have the required competencies and skills.<sup>77</sup>

Arriola and Johnson (2014) study on *Ethnic Politics and Women’s Empowerment in Africa: Ministerial Appointments to Executive Cabinets* revealed that the ethnic political patronage approach used by most Africa countries to select and appoint the executive leadership also serves as an obstacle to women participation in the executive since there are hardly ever African women who are ethnic patrons.<sup>78</sup> CREAM therefore notes that the few women who win competitive elective posts are labelled as ‘tough’ or ‘iron ladies’. Such perceptions and attitudes can be interpreted that competitive political seats are frequently considered to be beyond women’s reach.

According to *Mzalendo*<sup>79</sup> a non-partisan entity launched in 2012 to keep an eye on Kenyan parliament, performances of political leaders are mainly assessed alongside three key areas, namely: the availability and accessibility of a political leader to their constituents; a member of parliaments’ participation in parliamentary proceedings (also referred to as Hansard appearance) and; through an assessment of funds earmarked for community projects (commonly known as CDF).<sup>80</sup> However, these measures may not adequately assess the performances of women in governance largely because most women in politics are not only first timers but are also nominated members of the parliament hence may not have access to a CDF kitty<sup>81</sup> for example.

Notwithstanding, Kenyan women leaders have publicly displayed great confidence in their ability to overcome masculinity and the patriarchal nature of politics among other barriers. For instance, in 1962, Mama Priscilla Abwao was selected on the basis of her experience by the then governor to sit in the legislative council (Legco) during the Lancaster conference when Kenya was negotiating for independence. In 1965, Grace Onyango was elected the first female Mayor of Kisumu City. She later became the first elected member of parliament of Kisumu town constituency in 1969 and served as a deputy speaker for five years. During her political life, Grace advocated for women inclusivity in politics, Africanized the streets of Kisumu and actively participated in parliamentary debates despite being the only female MP. She also lobbied for the abolition of taxes for bicycles.<sup>82</sup> Dr. Julia Ojiambo, is the first Kenyan woman to vie for a presidential seat. She has served as a member of parliament and an assistant minister in different ministries. She is also one of the founders of a non-profit women organization commonly known as *Maendeleo ya wanawake*. She is known for her

77 Sarah Hewitt. The Struggles for Women Participation in Kenya. Australian Outlook. (Australian Institute of International Affairs, 2018). <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/the-struggle-for-womens-participation-in-kenya/>

78 Leonardo R. Arriola and Martha C. Johnson. Ethnic Politics and Women’s Empowerment in Africa: Ministerial Appointments to Executive Cabinets. *American Journal of Political Science*. (Midwest Political Science Association, 2014), 507 <http://www.jstor.com/stable/24363499>

79 Mzalendo (Kiswahili word for Patriot): Eye on Kenya Parliament. <https://info.mzalendo.com/info/mzalendo-overview>. Retrieved on: May 15, 2021.

80 Ibid

81 Nyokabi Kamau. Women and Political Leadership in Kenya: Ten Case Studies. (Henrich Bolt, 2010)

82 Mactilda Mbenywe. Grace Onyango: I stood against 158 male MPs and beat them all in debates. *The Saturday Standard* (2018, July 22). Retrieved from: <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/politics/article/2001289000/aging-gracefully-the-untold-story-of-kenyas-first-woman-politician>

campaigns for affirmative action.<sup>83</sup> Phoebe Asiyo, is a successful and long-standing politician and gender activist. Phoebe is also known for becoming the first woman elder among other achievements.<sup>84</sup>

There is also evidence of other Kenyan women leaders who made it to governance positions after the pioneer leaders and equally made significant contributions on a wide array of issues of social concern. Martha Karua, an advocate of the high court and a veteran politician has served as an elected member of parliament since 1992. Martha has also served as a minister in different ministries including the ministry of justice and constitutional affairs. In 2013, she vied for the presidential position. Dr. Joyce Laboso, served as a deputy speaker of the national assembly. She was seconded by a council of elders to fill the Sotik parliamentary seat after her sister Lorna Laboso died in a plane crash. Joyce is known for prioritizing infrastructure development and education for her constituents during her political career. Dr. Agnes Zani, nominated senator, founded the Ford Foundation International Fellowship Alumni Program at University of Nairobi. She also sponsored the mining bill now the Natural Resources (Benefit Sharing) Act, 2018.

A study by Anyango, Alupo, & Opoku, (2018) on *Women in Politics in Kenya: An Analysis of Participation and Barriers* revealed that despite women's low numbers in the Kenyan political realm, their representation, participation and involvement in National Assembly has been integral in policy formulation. The study noted that female legislators brought about changes in legislative and policies such as tax exemption on sanitary towels and diapers, sexual offence bill, acts on children's right and employment, and increasing of parental leave which was increased to four months (for Civil Servant) that favours women.<sup>85</sup> The findings of the study further indicate that, female legislators have also pushed and succeeded in having women representation enshrined in the constitution which have enable them to have a chance to control a development kit within the counties that targets the youth and women together with other county development activities.

Kenya is one of the countries lagging behind the gender quota requirement, with only 22% of women at the National Assembly. Several challenges could be noted as contributors to this. There are still cultural perceptions of women that affect their chances of being elected even though there are legal provisions to strengthen this.<sup>86</sup> Female candidates who have tried to win elective positions in Kenya have faced numerous obstacles ranging from limited resources to finance campaigns, limited information about electorates, lack of support from political parties to being rejected by the community due to cultural factors that dictates women to be subordinates.<sup>87</sup> This can be narrowed down to culture, poverty and patriarchal structures. Besides the obvious challenges that are openly discussed, women fail to make noticeable political participation due to party structures that create barriers which mostly hinder full participation of women in these parties' leadership's roles.

83 Government of Kenya. State Department for Gender: Ministry of Public Service and Gender. (2018, September 14). Retrieved from: <https://gender.go.ke/prof-julia-ojiambo/#>

84 Okello, R. (n.d). Mama Phoebe Asiyo becomes first woman elder. African women and child feature services. Retrieved from: <http://www.awcfs.org/index.php/component/k2/item/645-mama-phoebe-asiyo-becomes-first-woman-elder>

85 Anyango, B., Alupo, B., and Opoku, M. (2018). Women in Politics in Kenya: an Analysis of Participation and Barriers. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Gender Studies*. 7. 1505-1530. 10.17583/generos.2018.3179.

86 Experiences with reserved seats or constituencies for women in parliament. <https://aceproject.org/electoral-advice/archive/questions/replies/425403891>

87 Ndirangu, L. N., Onkware, Prof. K., and Chitere, Prof P. (2017). Challenges Facing Women in the Participation of Politics in Nairobi and Kajiado Counties. *The strategic Journal of Business and Change Management: ISSN 2312-9492*

## Strategies and tools women leaders utilize to respond to challenges

There are various international instruments that encourage inclusion and gender equity. As earlier mentioned, some of the instruments that put emphasis on women empowerment and inclusion in decision making processes include; the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the subsequent conferences, The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and, the United Nation Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000) and the subsequent resolutions among others. Broadly speaking, the Beijing platform for action states that women participation in all levels of decision making is a prerequisite ingredient for achieving equality, development and peace. As such, the platform encourages women empowerment to help them fully participate in decision making and leadership process. UN Resolution 1325 underscores the importance of women participation in all levels of decision making and peace processes.

The above instruments have in turn opened political spaces for women, who in turn have leveraged on these commitments to lobby and advocate for their political rights. In fact, women political movements<sup>88</sup> in Africa have increased over the years. The increase in African women activism can be attributed to changes in political systems and decline in conflicts among other factors.<sup>89</sup> Additionally, women movements are likely to thrive in democratic regimes.<sup>90</sup> Tripp *et al.*, cited in Turner, 2000 notes that within a span of 10years (1990s to 2000s), 38 African countries referenced gender equality in their constitutions while 32 African countries prohibited gender and sex-based discrimination in their constitutions. Still, the 2018 Africa Gender Report, demonstrate that major gender gaps remain across the continent. For instance, the report shows that male legislatures still dominate parliaments with an Africa gender Index score (AGI)<sup>91</sup> of 25.3% and senior decision-making positions in firms with an Africa Gender Index score (AGI) of 22.9%.<sup>92</sup>

In Kenya, at both the national and county levels, women caucuses such as the League of Kenyan Women Voters, Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA), and Kenya Women Political Caucus have been established to mainstream gender into existing laws and policies. Government initiatives and development programs such as women enterprise fund, youth enterprise development fund, *uwezo*<sup>93</sup> fund, social protection fund, 30% procurement reservation affirmative action to special interest groups and government affirmative action fund have also been put in place in an effort to empower women economically and increase their access to leadership positions. Memory Kachambwa, head of programs at The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) notes that her organization empowers women political aspirants through training and coaching on political dynamics with the aim of enhancing their skills set.<sup>94</sup> In addition, Kachambwa pointed out that they Iso

88 the League of Kenyan Women Voters (LWV); the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA); the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA); the Tanzania Women Cross-Party Platform (TWCP), the Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA); the Libyan Women's Union (LWU); Nigeria Women Situation Room among others.

89 Adebusola Okedele. The United Nations and African Women's Movements. In: Yacob-Haliso O., Falola T. (eds) The Palgrave Handbook of African Women's Studies. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019). [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77030-7\\_20-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77030-7_20-1)

90 Peace A. Medie. "Fighting Gender-Based Violence: The Women's Movement and the Enforcement of Rape Law in Liberia." *African Affairs*, 2013. doi: 10.1093/afraf/adt040 [Crossref], [Web of Science \*], [Google Scholar]

91 According to the 2018 Africa Gender Report (2020), the average AGI score is illustrated using a scale of 0-1, where, 1 being the parity between women and men.

92 African Development Bank and United Nations Economic Commissions for Africa (2020). Available at: <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/africa-gender-index-report-2019-analytical-report>

93 Ability

94 Memory Kachambwa. Political Participation for Kenya's Women Still a Far Cry from Its Constitutional Provision



organize sessions for political parties to encourage them to adhere to their political party by-laws.<sup>95</sup>

Hingston contends that some religious norms and cultural practices are the root causes of the challenges faced by African women, hence may not be solved by legislation alone.<sup>96</sup> As such, Hingston proposes an aggressive approach referring to it as aggressive *woman centricism*. According to this policy, greater efforts should be placed on engaging religious leaders, community leaders and traditional leaders on the journey towards achieving gender parity.<sup>97</sup> These leaders should also be encouraged to work towards altering harmful norms and practices that undermine women.<sup>98</sup> Additionally, girl child education should be promoted, gender studies taught in African schools and massive media campaigns and advocacy rolled out to influence attitudes and behaviors.<sup>99</sup>

## **Mentorship needs and possible programs that can be initiated to support women in governance**

The above analysis demonstrate that there are diverse mentorship needs for women that can help them counter the challenges they face in governance. Women need mentorship support in: strengthening and diversifying their leadership skills in a male dominated political space; negotiating with patriarchal attitudes that define the style and manner of politics; mobilization strategies for political support; conflict resolution and mediation skills; self-protection against sexual harassment and self-exposure to situations of vulnerability; and support to family life and mental well-being. To a great extent women in Kenya have made tremendous efforts to support women in leadership, however there are still glaring gaps that need to be addressed in order to increase women agency in political space. Support to women political leadership should not be seen as a single task of women alone, but one that involves both men and women.

## **Gaps in Women Leadership**

Broadly speaking, women representation in governance and participation in formal leadership roles varies with each African country. Women representation in governance has been conspicuously low in the past. However, a tremendous growth of women in political positions has been recorded since 1955, with an increase of 13.6% in a span of 25 years reaching an overall of 24.9% women parliamentarians in 2020 up from 11.3% in 1995.<sup>100</sup>

Atkeson and Rapoport (2003) examined the gender differences in political attitudes among men and women in USA and concluded that women have a lower political attitude compared to the men. Atkeson and Rapoport further pointed out that these differences are essentially

[Featured Story]. (Women Deliver, 2018, February 28). <https://womendeliver.org/?s=website+>

95 Ibid.

96 Hingston. Towards Gender Equality in Africa Author(s). Journal of African Union Studies (Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd, 2016), 44 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26893813>

97 Ibid.

98 Ibid.

99 Ibid.

100 Inter-Parliamentary Union. 25 years after Beijing, IPU analysis shows that gender parity is possible, <https://www.ipu.org/news/press-releases/2020-03/25-years-after-beijing-ipu-analysis-shows-gender-parity-possible>

observable at three levels, namely; in political resources such as education and income, psychological resources such as political self-esteem and awareness and, on socialization.<sup>101</sup> A study by Nyokabi cited above also revealed that women political leaders, particularly first timers and those holding appointive (nominated) positions sometimes lack confidence in their own worth and abilities, enthusiasm and understanding of politics and legal/legislative process.<sup>102</sup>

From the literature review it is clear that gender stereotypes have contributed to the perceptions and attitudes that undermine women leadership, including women political activities. As such, women particularly those who are young (both in age and in politics) and, unmarried women tend to fear engaging actively in political spaces.<sup>103</sup> Male dominance in political parties also tends to limit the prospects of women leaders influencing decisions or impacting certain policies.<sup>104</sup>

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101 Lonna R. Atkeson, and Ronald B. Rapoport. "The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same: Examining Gender Differences in Political Attitude Expression, 1952- 2000." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 2003, 518

102 Nyokabi Kamau. *Women and Political Leadership in Kenya: Ten Case Studies*. (Henrich Bolt, 2010)

103 Ibid

104 Sarah Hewitt. *The Struggles for Women Participation in Kenya*. Australian Outlook. (Australian Institute of International Affairs, 2018). <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/the-struggle-for-womens-participation-in-kenya/>



# **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## Data collection and selection of respondents

The study began by examining the existing literature on women leadership and governance in political spaces. This secondary data was organized around four thematic areas: historical and current trends of women participation in governance; women participation in governance: impact and achievements; challenges faced by women in governance; and, women roles in governance.

All ethical requirements including; consent, confidentiality, privacy and safety of the respondent were adhered to at each phase of the survey. The objective of the research, as well as adherence to confidentiality and anonymity were clearly explained to the respondents and their verbal consent sought before they could undertake the interview.

The primary data collection was largely based on a survey design measuring perception of women leaders in governance at the county level. A total of 154 respondents participated in this study. The research applied two sampling methods namely, convenient sampling and snowballing given the diverse probability of the availability of the potential respondents. Members of various County Assemblies (MCAs), political aspirants and former politicians across the counties participated in the study. To complement the list of respondents' other women leaders whose offices were deemed appropriate to the study such as the County Chief Executive Officers (CECs) were also mobilized and participated in the survey.

A semi structured questionnaire was posted on survey monkey web application. A link was generated and shared with the identified respondents. A total of 78 questionnaires were answered online by the respondents. The survey questionnaire had 20 questions that sought to collect information on the following areas:

- a) Demographics,
- b) Current role in the society and level of satisfaction,
- c) Extent to which specific values influence commitment to political leadership,
- d) Kinds of support received in relation to dispensing political duties,
- e) Mentorship program (if any) on leadership and governance and its utility,
- f) Challenges faced by women in leadership,
- g) Any other suggestions.

A total of 35 phone interviews that lasted between 30–40 minutes were conducted. Respondents who participated in the phone interviews were largely from - Kisumu, Narok, Bomet, Isiolo, Migori and Siaya counties. The choice of these leaders was influenced by their availability within the limited time-frame of the data collection period. The category of respondents' who participated in the phone interviews is reflected in the Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Phone Interviews Respondents**

Category of Respondent	Number Women Leaders Reached
Elected MCAs	7
Nominated MCAs	16
Former MCAs	2
County Executive Committee Members	2
Former Member of Parliament (MP)	1
Former minister	1
Aspirants	3
Other women leaders	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>

Four focused group discussions (FGD) comprising of at least 10 women leaders from each county were conducted. A total of 41 women leaders participated in the FGDs. To identify locations, a regional survey was done based on the past and present women representation and participation in politics and governance. The previous provinces/regions were regrouped for this study to form five regions/sample points for the FGDs namely, Western Kenya, Rift Valley, Northern Kenya, Coastal and Nairobi regions. In Western Kenya region, Kisumu was chosen following better access to women MCAs. Both Isiolo and Narok Counties registered no elected MCAs, despite the latter having a female deputy governor. Narok and Isiolo counties failed to meet the 30% of women representation in the county government making the two stand out as good locations for conducting FGDs for Rift Valley and Northern Kenya, regions respectively. Nairobi County was selected following a record of high number of women representations in politics and governance compared to other counties. Nairobi county FGD also acted as a pilot study that its lessons were to help improve on the three other locations. Coast region was left out after the required number for the FGD locations were attained. These sessions were essential for providing nuanced insights to the study. The FGD discussions sought to fill in gaps in the following areas:

- a. Leadership – experiences and challenges,
- b. Tactics and strategies women leaders utilize to address challenges,
- c. Perceptions on mentorships.

The composition of the FGD participants were as follows:

- a. Nairobi County:** Ten participants took part in FGD conducted at Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations auditorium, Nairobi. These participants included: 1 MP, 1 elected MCA, 2 nominated MCAs, 5 CSO leaders and aspiring MCAs, and 1 CEC.
- b. Kisumu County:** Eleven participants took part in FGD conducted at Young Women

Christian Association (YWCA), Kisumu. These included: 3 current MCAs, 3 former and aspiring MCAs, 4 CSO leaders and aspiring MCAs, and 1 CEC

- c. **Isiolo County:** Ten participants took part in FGD conducted at Grande Hotel, Isiolo. These participants included: 1 MP aspirant, 2 nominated MCAs, 3 CSO leaders and aspiring MCAs, 1 CEC, and 3 CSO leaders.
- d. **Narok County:** Ten nominated MCAs participated in the FGD conducted at Zebu Hotel, Narok.

Finally, a validation meeting for this study was conducted in Nairobi with twenty-two participants drawn from various civil society organizations as well as selected women MCAs dealing with governance related issues. Also included were some of the women leaders who participated in the study during the data collection exercise. This validation meeting aimed at establishing whether the research findings followed the objectives and methodology of the study.

## **Data Analysis**

Quantitative data was organized and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This method of data analysis sought to determine the frequency of variables forming a parameter through which data can be presented in terms of tables, pie charts and graphs for easy analysis and interpretation.

Qualitative data was analyzed thematically using content analysis. Direct quotes were included to reflect respondents' views. This method was useful in bringing out perceptions and subjective realities which in turn is useful in clarifying the 'how' and 'why' questions from quantitative data.

In the final analysis, quantitative and qualitative data were merged to highlight the findings and conclusions. The findings were presented in line with the stipulated objectives of the research.

## **Limitation of the study**

Due to the COVID 19 restrictions and challenges, the first phase of primary data collection was carried out remotely through phone interviews and online questionnaire posted on survey monkey web application. This limited the use of other essential data gathering techniques employed during face-to-face data collection methods such as deep probing. Still, the data collected was relevant and important. Also, phone interviews were not carried out with women representatives commonly known as women reps. because every attempt made to reach out to them were futile.

Although the respondents were informed of the focus of the data collection, which is, the identification of leadership gaps to inform the mentorship program, other interests - political and financial, emerged during the FGDs discussions. For instance, some participants tended to use the FGD platform to talk more about their political parties in anticipation of the of the 2022 general elections, while some demanded high rates for transport reimbursements. However,

based on the researchers' experience, the latter tactfully negotiated with the participants to ensure the study objectives and goals were realized.

In Kisumu County, Narok County and Isiolo County, FGD participants were only available for afternoon meetings despite having confirmed meetings during the morning hours. These incidents demonstrated the importance of flexibility and patience in data collection processes

Some of the questions in the survey questionnaires were not properly answered while a few were not attended to completely. The information collected was however still valid enough to make some conclusive trends in the data analysis.







## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The following section presents the findings of the primary data collection. The structure of this section is as follows: first is a brief profile of the respondents who participated in this study; second is the discussion on the women level of engagement in governance. This includes findings on roles played by women leaders, their level of satisfaction and values that influence their commitment in governance; third, challenges faced by women in political spaces, while dispensing their duties. This is followed by highlights on the support women leaders receive and their perceptions on mentorship programs including, suggestions on relevant and helpful topics for mentorship programs.

### Profile of the Respondents

A total of 153 respondents participated in this study, of which 78 were through survey questionnaire; 35 through in-depth interviews; and 40 participated in the focused group discussions (FGDs).

Respondents who participated in the survey questionnaire were asked to indicate the roles they play in their communities. Of the 78 respondents, 76.9% indicated that they were currently not holding any political position, 12.8% indicated that they were elected members of the county assembly, 5.1% reported that they were nominated members of county assembly while 5.1% stated that they were political party officials. Table 3 below reflects the above findings.

*Table 3: Elected and Nominated Positions*

Elected Position	Frequency	Percent
MCA	10	12.8
Nominated MCA	4	5.1
Party Official	4	5.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>23.1</b>
Not in office	60	76.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Analysis from administered questionnaires*

### Aspiring positions by respondents

All respondents who participated in this study were asked about their prospects in political leadership. Broadly speaking, a majority of the respondents (100 out of the 154) who participated in the study stated that they would vie for the position of a member of the county assembly in the next general elections. Of the 78 respondents who participated in the survey questionnaire, 51 respondents stated their interest in the MCA position. Of the 35 respondents who participated in the in-depth interviews, 27 respondents indicated that they would vie for the MCA position in the fourth coming elections. Of the 40 respondents who participated in the focused group discussions, 22 indicated their interest for the MCA position. This finding is unsurprising because most of these respondents were either serving as nominated/elected MCAs or formerly served as MCAs or vied and lost in the 2017 elections.

Table 4 below reflects the breakdown of the responses from the quantitative data.

**Table 4: Aspiring Positions**

<b>Aspiring positions</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
MCA	51	65.4
MP	14	17.9
Senator	2	2.6
Governor	2	2.6
Women Rep	7	9.0
Party Official	1	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>98.7</b>
No response	1	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Analysis from administered questionnaires*

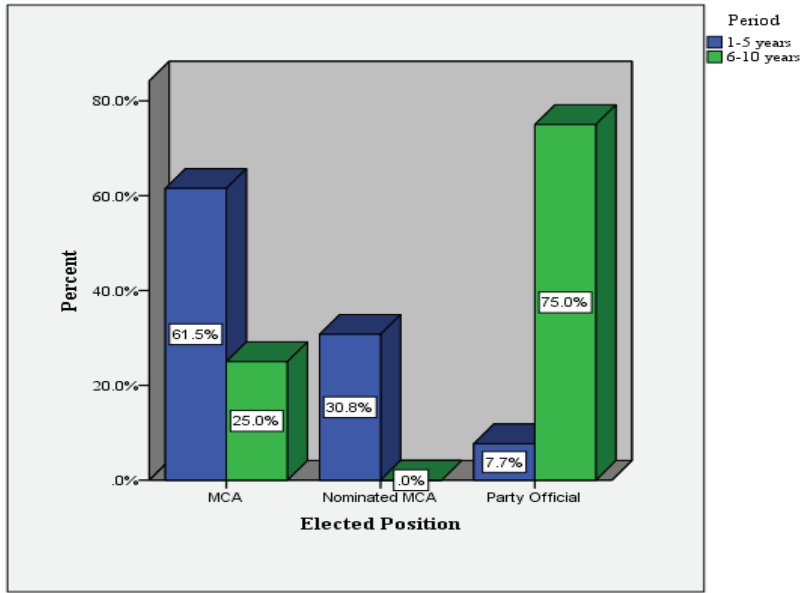
As indicated in Table 4 above, majority of the respondents (65.4%) showed their interest in becoming members of the county assembly. Only 17.9% of respondents showed their interest in vying for Member of Parliament position and another 9% were interested in becoming County Women Representative. However, 2.6% showed interest in most contested positions, governor and senator, and 1.3% showed interest in holding party official positions.

### **Period in Office**

The study sought to establish the length of time respondents had served as either elected or nominated members in various governance/ political positions

From the quantitative data, Figure 1 below shows that, 75% of the respondents have served as party officials for more than five years while 7.7% served in the same position for less than 5 years. This study also found out that 61.5% of the elected Members of County Assembly respondents are serving their first term in office with 25% of the respondents serving their second term in office. The study also found out that 30.8% of respondents who are nominated Members of County Assembly are serving their first term with none in their second term.

**Figure 1: Period in Office**



Source: Analysis from administered questionnaires

Findings from the qualitative data reiterates the above findings given more than 50% of the respondents who participated in the in-depth interviews and focused group discussions indicated that they were serving for the first time in their current positions.

**Roles of women leaders in the society**

To assess the level of women engagement in governance, an understanding of the current roles of women in the society was considered as one of the important aspects of the study. The increased number of women aspiring for different elective positions in governance is a clear indication that, following the constitution review on two-thirds Gender Rule,<sup>105</sup> and several women leadership training programs available, women have been encouraged to actively participate in politics and vie for political positions.

Table 5 below on ‘roles of women leader in the society’ depicts that majority of the respondents were aspirants for different elective positions with 44.9% of the respondents aspiring for the MCA positions, 16.7% aspiring for the Member of Parliament (MP) positions, 6.4% aspiring for the County Women Representatives and 2.6% of the respondent were interested in Governor and Senator positions each in the forthcoming 2022 General Elections.

**Table 5: Roles of women leaders in the society**

Roles of women leaders	Frequency	Percent
Member of County Assembly (MCA)	9	11.5
MCA position in the past	2	2.6
MCA aspirant	35	44.9
MP aspirant	13	16.7

105 The Republic of Kenya Constitution.

Roles of women leaders	Frequency	Percent
Governor aspirant	2	2.6
Senator aspirant	2	2.6
Political party official	5	6.4
Community service (Children and Gender Based official)	3	3.8
Women Rep aspirant	5	6.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>97.4</b>
No response	2	2.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100.0</b>

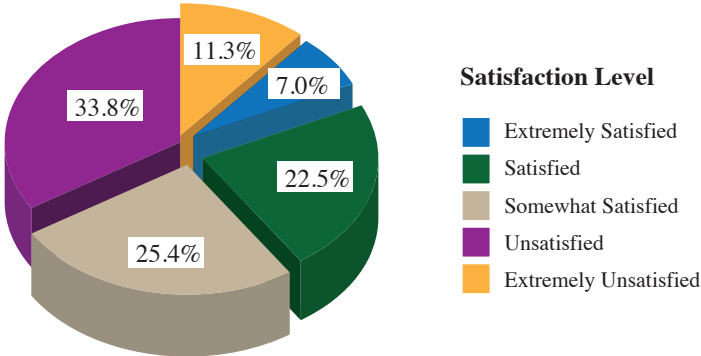
Source: Analysis from administered questionnaires

Current serving respondents in different positions that were reached recorded a total of 17.9% with 11.5% serving as MCA and 6.4% serving in political parties as party officials. From the findings, it emerged that women tend to vie for those positions that have advantage of being close to the people such as the MCA positions. This position attracts more women due to several issues ranging from more advantages and a few challenges related to their roles as well as high chances of winning those seats. Currently, MCA positions has no minimum education level and term limit, (minimum of bachelor degree from 2022 election); it also doesn't require much finances during campaign as compared to other positions; MCAs represent residents of a particular ward covering a small location that is easier to reach out during campaigns and serve thereafter. It is also worthwhile noting that, most of these MCAs aspirants/candidates grew up in those wards or have lived there for a while hence their relation with the residents plays a big role when it comes to campaigns and winning elections.

**Level of Satisfaction**

Respondents who participated in the survey questionnaire were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction as political leaders. This was a close ended question. The study found out that 45.1% of the total respondents expressed dissatisfaction with regard to their political leadership. A total of 33.8% of the respondents stated that they feel 'unsatisfied' as political leaders while 11.3 % stated that they feel 'very unsatisfied' as political leaders. These findings are represented in the pie-chart in Figure 2 below.

**Table 6: Level of satisfaction as a political leader**



Source: Analysis from administered questionnaires

Despite the displeasure displayed by the majority of the respondents with regard to political leadership 22.5% of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their political leadership, and 7% stated that they were extremely satisfied with their political leadership.

Respondents who participated in the in-depth interviews and the FGDs helped to demystify the above findings by highlighting some of the challenges they face while trying to dispense their duties. For example, some respondent stated:

Because I stand up to my values I was removed from key committees and often sidelined on important decision-making circles....

*[Nominated MCA, Kisumu]*

I had questions regarding government [county] expenditures. We had conducted a spot check on one of the projects that was being implemented. I received threats. I was told 'you are not a son of the soil' ... Intimidations, insults and threats makes it hard for one to speak [work].

*[Elected MCA, Kisumu]*

The motions we table don't get enough support from our male counterparts. Not because they are bad or poorly done but because it's a woman who is fronting it

*[Nominated MCA, Narok]*

The above findings demonstrate the frustration women in political leadership face while performing their duties. They also present an opportunity for mentoring women leaders on how to stand up for their values among other relevant topics.

## **Influence of Values**

Politics have always been shaped and influenced by cultural norms, moral values, and spiritual beliefs among others that, to some extent, sideline women from the political spaces. This patriarchal ideology has dominated African countries for decades making it difficult for women to ascend to political leadership. In the past few decades, women have come out to exercise their democratic rights, pushing for their political interests and ambitions. With the consistency of these values on influencing women's participation in politics, the study therefore sought to understand the level at which they determine and influence women commitment to political leadership.

As such, respondents who participated in the survey questionnaire were asked to rate the extent to which the following values: Spiritual faith, moral values, cultural values, standing up against corruption, servant leadership, forgiveness, honesty, service to the poor and the marginalized influence their commitment to political leadership.

As shown in Table 6 below majority of the respondents (71.8%) stated that their level of commitment to political leadership is highly influenced by service to the poor and marginalized, while 33% of the respondents feel that cultural values moderately influence their commitment to political leadership.

**Table 7: Extent of value influence on commitment to political leadership**

Values	Very high influence	High influence	Moderate influence	Low influence	No influence
Spiritual faith	57.7	23.1	17.9	-	-
Moral values	47.4	35.9	9.0	2.6	-
Cultural values	28.2	28.2	33.3	7.7	-
Stand against corruption	62.8	24.4	5.1	2.6	1.3
Servant leadership	62.8	25.6	6.4	-	-
Forgiveness	51.3	33.3	5.1	6.4	1.3
Honesty	65.4	19.2	7.7	2.6	-
Service to the poor and marginalized	71.8	11.5	9.0	2.6	1.3

Source: Analysis from administered questionnaires.

According to 65.4% of the respondents stated that honesty is the second value that very highly influences their commitment to political leadership. On the other hand, 62.8% of the respondents felt that their commitment to political leadership is influenced by servant leadership values, and their standing against corruption.

Service to the poor and the marginalized as a key driver to women’s commitment to political leadership was reiterated by participants who participated in the in-depth interviews and the focused group discussions. According to these discussions, the motions, bills or projects supported by these women to a larger extent revolved around youth, women and people with disability. However, it is worth noting that women have also initiated and supported other non-gender issues such as infrastructure development.<sup>106</sup>

### Challenges Faced by Women Leaders

Understanding challenges faced by women leaders serves as an important backdrop for contextualizing leadership gaps that may hinder women from dispensing their duties. As such, all respondents who participated in this study were asked about challenges women leaders face.

Respondents who participated in the survey questionnaire were asked to rate seven most perceived challenges experienced by women when dispensing their duties. These challenges were broadly categorized as: Demand for financial assistance from the voters, pressure to tow the party position, temptation to engage in corruption to get things done, insecurity, sexual harassment by male politicians, resources to finance elections and, party politics in nomination process.

<sup>106</sup> Example: Dr. Joyce Laboso served as a deputy speaker of the national assembly. She was seconded by a council of elders to fill the Sotik parliamentary seat after her sister Lorna Laboso died on a plane crash. Joyce is known for prioritizing infrastructure development and education for her constituents during her political career. Dr. Agnes Zani, nominated senator, founded the Ford Foundation International Fellowship Alumni Program at her former University. She also sponsored the mining bill now the Natural Resources (Benefit Sharing) Act, 2018

The aggregate analysis drawn from Table 7 below indicate that 66.7% of respondents very frequently experienced demand for financial assistance from the voters while 56.4% indicated that party politics in nomination process was very frequently experienced. The high demand for financial support by the electorates might be argued from different angles mainly: when leaders give financial support promises during campaign once they get elected; and/or a representation of poverty level brought about by unemployment. It is worthwhile to note that voters are fond of handouts and in most cases would elect leaders who give most payout money rather than offer service. However, with devolved system of governance, this mentality is gradually changing and leaders being elected more on their performance. This was followed by resources to finance elections at 53.8%.

**Table 8: Level of Experience of Challenges**

Challenges	V. frequently experienced	Frequently experienced	Moderately experienced	Rarely experienced	V. rarely experienced
Demand for financial assistance from the voters	66.7	14.1	5.1	2.6	3.8
Pressure to tow the party position	43.6	29.5	11.5	3.8	-
Temptation to engage in corruption to get things done	21.8	19.2	19.2	15.4	14.1
Insecurity	37.2	24.4	21.8	3.8	1.3
Sexual harassment by male politicians	32.1	15.4	14.1	14.1	9.0
Resources to finance elections	53.8	14.1	7.7	3.8	7.7
Party politics in nomination process	56.4	14.1	10.3	7.7	-

*Source: Analysis administered from questionnaires.*

Pressure to tow the party position emerged as the fourth very frequently experienced challenge at 43.6% followed by insecurity at 37.2%. Sexual harassments by male politicians and temptation to engage in corruption to get things done scored 32.1% and 21.8% respectively.

The above challenges pointed out as ‘very frequently experienced’ by women leaders were



echoed by both respondents who participated in the in-depth interviews and those who participated in the focused group discussions. However, these categories of respondents were quick to point out that challenges’ women leaders face largely depend on ones’ level of leadership and roles therein. This finding confirms Hingston’s (2016) view that challenges faced by women are diverse and may depend on age, class, religion, ethnicity and education among others. Table 8 below reflects varied as well as overlapping challenges presented by respondents who participated in both the in-depth interviews and focused group discussions.

**Table 9: Challenges faced by women leaders at various levels of leadership**

Level of leadership	Challenges
Political Aspirants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial limitation for campaigns</li> <li>• Entrenched negative perceptions regarding women in politics</li> <li>• Limited support from political parties</li> <li>• Sexual harassments and intimidation</li> <li>• Cultural leaders have a lot of influence on who gets nominated for an elective post/ Arranged democracy</li> <li>• High expectations (mostly monetary) from the electorate</li> </ul>
Elected MCAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited capacity (Knowledge and skills) regarding bill making processes and house business</li> <li>• Threats and intimidation from rogue political party officials</li> <li>• Manipulation from male colleagues</li> <li>• Entrenched negative perceptions regarding women in politics</li> <li>• Sexual harassments and intimidation</li> <li>• Inadequate representation of women</li> <li>• Deliberate exclusion from chairing key committees.</li> <li>• High expectations (mostly monetary) from the electorate</li> <li>• Timid</li> <li>• Trust deficit from male colleagues</li> </ul>
Nominated MCAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited support from political parties and other elected leaders</li> <li>• Few in numbers to influence decision making particularly on issues regarding gender, youth and People with Disabilities (PWD)</li> <li>• Poor coordination between nominated and elected MCAs</li> <li>• Sexual harassments and intimidation</li> <li>• Timid</li> <li>• Exclusion in some house activities</li> <li>• Trust deficit from male colleagues</li> <li>• High expectations from constituents</li> <li>• Lack of preparedness for MCA roles once nominated</li> </ul>

Level of leadership	Challenges
Other women leaders e.g. CECs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cronyism among men is deeply rooted. Men favour men when opportunities arise.</li> <li>• Entrenched negative perceptions regarding women in top leadership positions/decision making positions</li> </ul>
Former Politicians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political parties tend to nominate loyalties over literacy/merit</li> </ul>

*Source: Analysis administered from phone interview.*

Broadly speaking, the challenges presented above by all the respondents who participated in this study can further be grouped into various categories: Economic issues, Cultural/Patriarchal, governance and political issues, and leadership issues as discussed below.

### **Economic Issues**

Political campaigns require visibility and branding. A discussion that came into the limelight both Nairobi and Isiolo FGDs was on electorates' interest in handouts than manifestos, particularly during campaign periods. Participants also noted that vying under a political party ticket also require finances. It emerged that women tend to shy away from aspiring for political seats due to the huge amounts of money required to realize the above needs.

The elected MCAs across all the FGDs noted that preparing and tabling a motion require resources particularly during advocacy and lobbying phases, while nominated MCAs pointed out that they have limited budgetary allocations, and are hence unable to implement projects for their constituents.

It was also observed that women and men tend to have different priorities, with regard to the policies and projects they support. As such, the competition over resources between elected and nominated members of the county assembly often result into limited contributions emanating from nominated members of the assembly, who are mostly women.

### **Cultural/ Patriarchal Issues**

Despite efforts by the government to increase leverage for women in governance, most respondents held the view that negative perceptions regarding women in political spaces is pervasive and entrenched. An aspiring Member of County Assembly in Isiolo during FGD pointed out that consultations and lobbying for political seats are carried out with key stakeholders such as council of elders, which is mainly composed of men. She further stated that most of the political decisions are made by the legislators, of which, is male dominated. This was seconded by a nominated MCA and an aspiring MP. This challenge was first brought up by one nominated MCA in Narok during phone interview, who shared her experience:

*I vied for MCA post in the last election. I won in all polling stations (party level). My opponent said 'mwanamke awezikuniangusha' [Swahili word meaning: for refusing to admit defeat by a woman]. I sued the party and my opponent but later received threats and withdrew the charges. I was eventually nominated (NIDI2, personal communication, April 9, 2021).*

The above sentiments came out in all the four focused group discussions -Kisumu, Narok, Nairobi and Isiolo. Such stereotypical statements are consistent with findings by Mwatha *et al.* (2013) who stated that perceptions and attitudes that tend to undermine women political activities are largely attributed to entrenched gender stereotypes.<sup>107</sup>

It also emerged from this study that some of the respondents who participated in the FGDs and in-depth interviews have at one point in time experienced sexual harassments and intimidation from male colleagues. According to these respondents, actions that demean women, particularly unmarried women, affect the number of those who vie for political posts and/or pursue leadership roles including key decision-making positions. An inspiring MCA in Nairobi was fast to bring to the FGD her encounters when she showed interest in politics. She informed how the question on whether she was married or not took a turn that forced her to go and buy a ring for herself ‘to be seen married.’ During phone interview with one of the elected MCA in Kisumu, she noted that:

*Propaganda has cost one of us her marriage. If a woman was to seek a political post in that ward, will she be elected?* (KIDI5, personal communication, April 9, 2021).

## **Governance and Political Issues**

It emerged from this study that majority of women who fail to win their political seats at the county or national government levels are disadvantaged. Respondents across all the four FGDs noted that the biggest burden of any general elections is experienced during the party primaries. Corruption, bribery and minimal support from political party leadership often leave women at the periphery of the elections. As reported in the literature review, corruption tarnishes party primaries elections. Given that most African countries employ ethnic political patronage approach to select and appoint their executive leadership, women remain disadvantaged as there are hardly ever any African women who are ethnic political patrons.<sup>108</sup> Consequently, respondents pointed out that the voices of the nominated members of the assembly are stifled. This finding may be attributed to what was stated by Hewitt (2018) that prospects of nominated women leaders influencing decisions or impacting policies are limited, given that political parties are inclined to nominate ‘manageable’ women who remain indebted to them and the political party’s agenda, while compromising on competencies and skills. One Kisumu elected MCA, recounted her experience during the in-depth interview:

*I had questions regarding government [county] expenditures. We had conducted a spot check on one of the projects that was being implemented. I received threats. I was told ‘you are not a son of the soil’ ... Intimidations, insults and threats makes it hard for one to speak [work].* (KIDI6, personal communication, April 9, 2021).

Another nominated MCA in Narok during FGD said: “When you try to oversight you are accused of not supporting the governor, the party is used to intimidate us” (NFGD3, personal communication, June 15, 2021). The above sentiments demonstrate that despite the legislative and policy frameworks in place that encourages gender equality, women meaningful participation in some decision-making spaces have not yet fully been embraced.

107 Regina Mwatha, Grace Mbugua and Godwin Murunga. Young Women’s Political Participation in Kenya: a study of experiences and challenges of young women in political engagement [Technical Report]. (Women Empowerment Link, 2013), 34.

108 Leonardo R. Arriola and Martha C. Johnson. Ethnic Politics and Women’s Empowerment in Africa: Ministerial Appointments to Executive Cabinets. *American Journal of Political Science*. (Midwest Political Science Association, 2014), 507 <http://www.jstor.com/stable/24363499>

## Individual capacity Issues

Although most respondents agree that ‘men favor men’ when opportunities arise and that men do not trust women with top leadership positions, others believe that women themselves have limited knowledge, attitude and skills that would not enable them thrive in leadership positions. Some respondents provided the following reasons during phone interviews to explain these capacity challenges: Three of the elected MCAs stated that women leaders, particularly, nominated members of the county assembly do not have the prerequisite educational background and leadership skills to actively participate in legislative and oversight duties. This was further echoed by one former member of parliament who through phone interview stated that women tend to be easily intimidated, this, she notes, affect their self-confidence and self-esteem. The above sentiments were brought forward by most respondents during FGDs conducted in the four different locations. In addition, one of the nominated MCA in Nairobi FGD noted that rarely are women elected to chair sectoral committees within the county assembly, attributing it on the one hand to the capacity challenges, and on the other hand to the lack of political will to support women for top leadership positions.

One CEC member from Bomet County during phone interview, pointed out that women themselves tend to play the second fiddle. She said:

*A couple of months ago Kenya National Union for Teachers (KNUT) was conducting sub county elections. The three top positions – the chair, vice chair and executive secretary positions all went to the men. I met with some teachers, all women and asked them if they vied or if any woman vied for the top positions.... They had no answer... Women fear losing. They don't believe in themselves (BIDI2, personal communication, April 9, 2021).*

In Kisumu FGD, one respondent observed that most of the motions tabled by women in parliament or county assemblies tend to focus on women issues despite the fact that these women are elected or nominated to serve their constituents and not just women. A sentiment that was proposed by four members in the same FGD where another respondent interjected saying that the bill making process is complicated and requires continuous capacity building, strategy, research and resources. According to these respondents, women tend to find these processes tedious and frustrating. Of the twenty-four women MCAs who participated in the phone interviews, only four reported to have tabled motions in the county assembly. A nominated MCA in Kisumu during phone interview noted that:

*A matter on the floor is subject to criticism. Unless women are assertive, they will keep on losing on important bills/ policies. There are people who just wait for an opportunity to weaken the matter tabled if you let them... Our role as MCAs is to oversight the executive. One MCA stood up to explain herself. She was unable to pronounce the word ‘operationalization’. She received backlash from the members. She got confused, shrunk and could not continue. Some women are sensitive. Nowadays, the said MCA, rarely speak in the house (KIDI7, personal communication, April 11, 2021).*

## Strategies and Tools Women Leaders Utilize in Responding to Challenges

Respondents who participated in the phone interviews and focus group discussions were asked to point out how they address the challenges they face. While most respondents provided

insights on the strategies and tools, they use to achieve their desired goals, they still believed that cultural and patriarchal stereotypes remain a major hindrance to women leadership. This sentiment is not surprising. Most women, both in political spaces and other governance positions who participated in this study, often identified gender stereotypes as the first obstacle to their leadership roles. The above sentiments are consistent with Hingston's (2016) that some of the religious norms and cultural practices are the root causes of the challenges faced by African women hence may not be solved by legislation alone. As such, Hingston points out that greater efforts should be placed in engaging male leaders/decision makers to work towards altering harmful norms and practices that undermine women.<sup>109</sup> An elected MCA in Kisumu noted: "The motions we table don't get enough support from our male counterparts. Not because they are bad or poorly done but because it's a woman who is fronting it."

Nevertheless, this study illuminated a number of strategies and tools women leaders utilize to address challenges. Across the four FGDs conducted, respondents reported that they do identify male colleagues who are pro-women to initiate motions on their behalf or help them with the lobbying and advocacy process. One nominated MCA in Nairobi during the FGD reported working with organizations on related issues to gather data and necessary information before tabling a motion. A member of parliament who participated in Nairobi FGD pointed out that her most preferred strategy is never to give direct answers or respond to any demeaning questions such as marital status, she would respond by saying, "am here to serve the people." Mentorship and trainings also emerged as a tool that has enabled women leaders dispense their duties and confront leadership challenges. In all the four locations where FGDs were conducted, women political leaders reported that encouragement and support from family, friends and colleagues have been helpful. Conversely, five respondents who participated in the in-depth interviews pointed out that women tend to withdraw when frustrated. According to these respondents, some women cannot stand criticisms, intimidations and insults. They give up while a few more bounce back after being encouraged. One nominated MCA in Kisumu said:

*Because I stand up to my values I was removed from key committees and often sidelined on important decision-making circles. I am not going back to politics (KIDI10, personal communication, April 12, 2021).*

### **Support women political leaders receive to help them dispense duties.**

In quest to establishing the source of support that women political leaders receive to help them in dispensing their duties, respondents were asked to state the type of support they have received. Both financial and emotional support were suggested to the respondent so as to have a broader spectrum of the support they ever received. The findings are as shown in the Table 9 below.

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109 Hingston. Towards Gender Equality in Africa Author(s). Journal of African Union Studies (Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd, 2016),44 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26893813>

**Table 10: Support received**

Support received	Frequency	Percent
Family support	59	75.6
Political supporters have encouraged me	6	7.7
Financial support from well wishers	1	1.3
Spiritual support	7	9.0
No one	1	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>94.9</b>
No response	4	5.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Analysis administered from questionnaires.*

From the above table, 75.6% of the respondents indicated that the source of support received was from family members. From the findings, we can conclude that limited access to resources and support have a direct impact on low participation of women in politics. Family members, who seem to be the main source of support to women leaders, might have limited resources and support needed for political career development resulting into low percentage of women participation and representation in political spaces. Support received from spiritual leaders and encouragement from political supporters accounted for 9% and 7.7% respectively. One of the unique findings was that out of the respondents who answered this question, 1.3% have received financial support from well-wishers to help them dispense their duties.

## **Mentorship program**

One of the main objectives of the study was to establish the need for women mentorship program in governance and strategic political engagement. The study therefore sought to determine different mentorship programs already encountered by women in leadership, and how these programs have developed their skills, prepared and sharpened them for the leadership positions. To a great extent, more than half of the total respondents reported to have participated in a mentorship program at one given time.

As shown in Table 10 below 33.3% of the respondents who participated in the quantitative survey stated that they had received leadership quality training program in the past. This was then followed by authentic leadership program and civic education, accounting for 16.7% and 6.4% respectively. However, it was noted that 6.4% of the respondents indicated that they have never received any mentorship program. Other mentorship programs cited by respondents include women empowerment, governance and leadership, entrepreneurship training, peace building, moral values, campaign strategies, spiritual mentorship and political leadership and governance. To a great extent these were noted as one off training rather than long term trainings.

*Table 11: Mentorship program received*

<b>Mentorship Program</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Leadership quality training program	26	33.3
None	5	6.4
Authentic leadership program	13	16.7
women empowerment	1	1.3
Governance and leadership	3	3.8
Entrepreneurship training	2	2.6
Moral values	1	1.3
Peace building	4	5.1
Campaign strategies	2	2.6
Civic education	5	6.4
Spiritual mentorship	2	2.6
Political leadership and governance program	2	2.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>84.6</b>
No response	12	15.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Analysis administered from questionnaires*

## **Mentorship Programs for Women in Governance**

### **Topics covered in the mentorship program**

With plans to roll out mentorship program, the study found it relevant to take note of the topics covered in the previous mentorship programs. As indicated in Table 11 below 12.8% of the respondents stated that their mentorship program focused on capacity building and authentic leadership. Other topics mentioned by various respondents include; women in leadership training, justice and peace, gender-based violence, financial management and mobilization, policy making process and understanding 2010 constitution as presented in Table 11 below.

*Table 12: Topics covered in the mentorship program*

<b>Topics covered</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Benefits/qualities of an authentic leader (authentic leadership)	10	12.8
Capacity building	10	12.8
Gender Based Violence	3	3.8
Women in leadership training	7	9.0
Justice and peace	6	7.7

Topics covered	Frequency	Percent
Policy making process	1	1.3
Financial management and mobilization	3	3.8
Understanding 2010 constitution	1	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>52.6</b>
No response	37	47.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Analysis from administered questionnaires.

## Sponsors of the mentorship programs

The study also sought to identify different sponsors of the mentorship program. The majority of the respondents reached through various data collection tools – questionnaire, phone interview, and FGD identified the Association of Sisterhood of Kenya (AOSK) as the dominant sponsor of the programs they attended. This was followed by a sizeable portion of the respondents who indicated that they have attended mentorship programs organized by National Democratic Institute (NDI), while others identified their respective churches as main sponsors of mentorship programs. Other organizations reported to have offered mentorship programs for women in governance include; Kenya Female Advisory Organization (KAFEADO), Yes, Youth Can, Association for media women in Kenya, Women Concern, International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Media Focus on Africa, Miss President Academy *etc.*

An encouraging aspect is that, over twenty (20) organizations and institutions were mentioned to have organized and sponsored mentorship programs that have been attended by one or two of the respondents.

## Benefits of the Mentorship Programs

Respondents were asked to state how the mentorship programs have benefitted them/helped them in dispensing their duties. The study found out that of the respondents who participated in the survey questionnaire, 25.6% stated that they had developed a stronger personality, 14.1% stated that their leadership skills had improved, 9% stated that their interactions with the community had improved, 7.7% stated that they had gained planning strategies and understanding of the electorate, and, becoming authentic leaders as indicated in Table 12 below

**Table 13: Benefits of mentorship programs**

Benefits of Mentorship Program	Frequency	Percent
Stronger personality	20	25.6
Interaction with community	7	9.0
Improved integrity and emotional intelligence	3	3.8
Mentoring young ones/role model	4	5.1
Know opportunities available for women	2	2.6



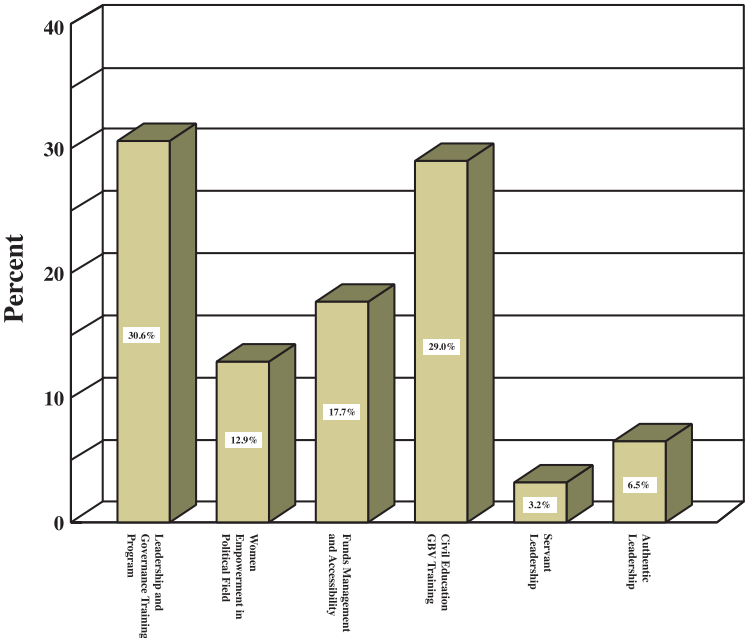
Benefits of Mentorship Program	Frequency	Percent
how to become an authentic leader	6	7.7
Planning strategies and understanding electoral process	6	7.7
Improved leadership skills	11	14.1
Improved management skills	1	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>76.9</b>
No response	18	23.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Analysis of administered questionnaires.

### Recommended skill - building topics for a women mentorship programme

The study also sought to identify different mentorship programs that could be rolled out for women in political governance. As demonstrated in Figure 3 below, all respondents except two, stated that they were interested and willing to be mentored for various women political leadership positions. Respondents also highlighted a number of skill building topics they anticipated in the mentorship programs. Those who participated in the survey questionnaire (30.6%) recommended leadership and governance training program while 29% recommended civic education and GBV training. Other respondents (14.1%) proposed the following topics for the mentorship program: strategic leadership and financial management, integrity and peaceful coexistence; building love, hope, faith and transparency, self-awareness/growth; and development.

Figure 2: Recommendations on Mentorship Program



Source: Analysis administered form questionnaires.

Fund management and accessibility and women empowerment in political field were also suggested, with 17.7% and 12.9%, respectively. Another mentorship program recommended by respondents is on authentic and servant leadership program.

## Important Aspects of Mentorship

The study was equally interested in identifying different aspects of mentorship programs that could interest women in political governance. Of the total respondents reached, 16.7% suggested capacity building in the planned mentorship program. A total of 14.1% of the respondents suggested topics such as: strategic leadership and financial management, integrity/peace, love, hope, transparency and faith, and self-awareness/growth and development, as shown in Table 13 below.

*Table 14: Important Aspects of Mentorship*

Aspects of mentorship programs	Frequency	Percent
Integrity/ peace, love, hope, transparency and faith	11	14.1
Self-awareness/ Growth and development to be fit for the position	11	14.1
Capacity building	13	16.7
Avoiding corruption in/to get public office	4	5.1
Strategic leadership and financial management	11	14.1
Challenges faced by women in politics	2	2.6
Training on proposal writing and resource mobilization	2	2.6
Training on communication and public speaking	1	1.3
Managing expectations from voters	1	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>71.8</b>
No response	22	28.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Analysis from administered questionnaires*

The above findings indicate that women in governance need more training on topics that will impact change of attitude, encouragement, development of skill required for leadership positions and resource management. Undoubtedly, even though external factors influence women participation in leadership, they too have some personal limitation holding them back.

## Mentorship program topics

The study was interested in assessing the topics that could be included in the mentorship program. Table 14 below depicts some of the suggested topics. A total of 52.6% of the respondents held that all of the suggested topics<sup>110</sup> to be included in the planned mentorship program as they are important in the development and strengthening of skills and creating awareness.

110 Servant leadership, Skills in conflict resolution; Standing up to your values; Political engagement strategy; Managing the pressure of party politics; Responding to corruption; Responding to sexual harassment; Managing expectations from voters (constituents); Inclusivity in political leadership.

Conflict resolution was singled out by 9% of the respondents as an important topic to be covered in mentorship program. Another 7.7% of the respondents were of the opinion that there is need for inclusion of political engagement strategy as well as mechanisms of managing pressure of the party politics in the mentorship program. Suggestions by respondents on different topics are indicated in Table 14 below. These findings therefore demonstrate that topics for inclusion in the mentorship program should be broader and contain skill building strategies in governance.

**Table 15: Topics for Inclusion in the Mentorship Program**

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Servant leadership	10	12.8
Skills in conflict resolution	7	9.0
Standing up to your values	4	5.1
Political engagement strategy	6	7.7
Managing pressure of party politics	6	7.7
Responding to sexual harassment	1	1.3
Managing expectations from voters (Constituents)	1	1.3
All of the above	41	52.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>97.4</b>
No response	2	2.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Analysis from administered questionnaires*





**CONCLUSIONS**

## CONCLUSIONS

The baseline needs assessment set out to: establish the levels of engagement of women in governance; highlight the experiences and challenges faced by women legislators and community leaders while dispensing their duties; analyze the skills-gap in the implementation of specific governance duties for women legislators and community leaders and highlight the strategies for support to women in governance.

The results reveal that the challenges women political leaders face tend to overshadow their competencies. The number of women elected at the county assemblies is conspicuously low. For instance, Narok and Isiolo counties have no women elected MCAs. However, through affirmative action and in accordance with Chapter 4, Section 81b of the 2010 constitution “*no more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender*” -women have been nominated by various political parties to fill special seats at the various county assemblies. Still, the study revealed that the likelihood of women leaders influencing decisions or impacting policy is low. For instance, a nominated MCA who participated in the Narok FGD explained:

*We are 47 in the county assembly, 17 are nominated MCAs of which 15 are women. In the budget committee we only have 2 ladies out of 9. We have 2 women in PAC [Public Accounts Committee]. One chairlady out of 9 chairs [sectorial committees in the assembly] when she goes for liaison meetings, she has no voice – (NFGD respondents, Narok, personal communication, June 15, 2021).*

Apart from the representation challenge, it emerged from the study that women leaders are also faced with economic challenges, cultural/patriarchal domination, political pressures and limitations in leadership skills. Frustrations that arise therein affect women’s confidence, self-esteem thus, deeming their abilities and capabilities. In response, most respondents reported using lobbying and advocacy skills, some reported leveraging on the good will of their male counterparts, others emphasized enhancing their leadership skills and knowledge through mentorship and training.

The validation exercise that was conducted in September 2021 with participants from various political spaces and representation from the civil society organizations further illuminated the following:

1. There should be continuous mentorship programs for empowering women.
2. A comparative study on women in political leadership should be carried out at the county level to access why some counties e.g., Bungoma have many women elected to political positions while in other counties such as Kakamega, women are rarely elected for the same position yet the counties have more or less similar cultures.
3. Participants in the validation meeting also recommended the following topics for the upcoming mentorship program: Leadership and management training, interpersonal/intrapersonal skills training, communication skills training, life-skills training, peace and conflict management.

4. CSO's, academic institutions and other relevant agencies should support women in leadership through trainings, mentorships and organizing platforms for dialogue.
5. There should be inclusion of youth and different age groups in the survey.

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ISBN 978-9966-8284-4-6



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