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INTERNATIONAL

CONFERENCE ON WOMEN'S

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



24th to 26th
JULY, 2024



KENYATA UNIVERSITY
CONFERENCE CENTER (KUCC)

**BOOK OF
ABSTRACTS**

THE 2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

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KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

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Introduction

Kenyatta University is implementing a **six-year** project on “ Initiative for What Works to improve Women Economic Empowerment in Kenya (IWWWEE. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (B&GM-F)-funded initiative aims to create a body of knowledge that can be used to shape policies, programmes, interventions, and advocacy efforts that promote women’s economic empowerment (WEE) in Kenya. The project’s rationale is to alleviate Kenya’s weak nexus between WEE policies, programmes, and gender data. The initiative is being implemented in partnership with Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), the Institute of Economic Affairs-Kenya (IEA-Kenya), Yale University, Busara Behavioural Economics Centre, the Ministry of Gender, Culture, The Arts and Heritage, Ministry of Public Service.

The KU-WEE Hub is conducting thirteen analytical studies using a mixed-methods approach, involving the collection of quantitative and qualitative data and a Randomized Control Trial (RCT). The program also builds capacities of KU researchers and stakeholders in various research tools such as the construction of WEE indicators, feminist research methodologies, RCTs and program evaluation techniques. The hub brings evidence to policymakers and vigorously advocate for its use through stakeholder engagements, such as political dialogues with policy-makers, citizens, civil society and non-governmental organizations. The research assessment studies are divided into three thematic areas: (i) women’s roles in the public and private sectors; (ii) skilling and mentoring; and (iii) violence, crises and women’s work.

The KU-WEE Hub will host an International Conference from **24th -26th July, 2024** at the *Kenyatta University Conference Center (KUCC)*. The broad theme of the conference is “**Initiatives for What Works to Advance Women’s Economic Empowerment**”. The purpose of the Conference is to disseminate evidence so far generated by the Project as well as to expand networks, increase visibility and outreach. In that regard, the conference seeks to bring together researchers, scholars, networking groups and partners, stakeholders including policy-makers and policy implementers to share knowledge and experiences pertaining to the broad theme of the conference.

The objectives of the conference are:

- *To share experiences and learn lessons on the Initiatives for What Works to Advance Women’s Economic Empowerment.*
- *To network and collaborate through partnerships that will enhance the development of policies for increased women’s economic empowerment across Africa;*
- *To identify knowledge gaps that could be explored during future research, training and programming.*

The conference will adopt a hybrid model that will be conducted through a virtual and face-to-face platform to ensure wide participation. The conference will have a three-day program of events, which will include several modes of presentations: plenary sessions with keynote speakers, thematic parallel sessions, panel discussions and poster displays and Exhibitions.

The deliberations of the conference will revolve around the following sub-themes:

SUBTHEMES

- *Education and Skill Development for WEE*
- *Entrepreneurship and Business Development for Economic Empowerment of women*
- *Health, Well-being and WEE*
- *Role of Technology and Innovation to WEE*
- *Legal and Policy Advocacy for WEE*
- *Language, Culture and Social Norms' Effects on WEE*
- *Environment, climate Change, Sustainable Development and WEE*
- *Care Work and its Effects on WEE*

Prof. Nelson H. W. Wawire, PhD

Convener, Conference Organizing Committee

Prof. Judith Waudu, PhD

KU-WEE Hub Leader & Director, Centre for Gender Equity & Empowerment

THEME 1:

EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

1.1 EMPOWERMENT OF AFRICAN WOMEN IN THE DIASPORA

Rose Mutuota

The search for the holy grail to advance women's economic advancement has been long and hard. Researchers have expounded the barriers to women's advancement and made recommendations. But figures show that more needs to be done to advance women's economic empowerment. This paper explored the strategies used in Australia to empower African women. African women in Australia fall into several categories. Category 1 includes professional women immigrants who hold qualifications from their home countries such as doctors; category 2 contains refugee women running away from war, early marriage, domestic violence and persecution; category 3 comprises African women born in Australia or who grew up in Australia. The first and third categories of women are often in well-paying jobs and do not find it hard to integrate into the Australian society. This paper examined the second category, the refugees with little or no education who speak little or no English. These women face stigma, have low self-esteem and are more often than not dependent on welfare. Journal articles, policy documents, government and Non-governmental websites related to empowerment of African women in Australia were studied. Feminist theory was employed to explore women's lived experiences and power relations. The results indicate that among the strategies used to empower African refugee women economically include collaboration with corporations such as banks and large supermarkets which facilitate internships, facilitating provision of English-language classes, support in enrolment in training courses, spreading awareness of available services, providing driving lessons practice, and most important of all, culturally responsive support.

Keywords: professional women immigrants, Women's economic empowerment Framework

1.2 THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ACCELERATING WOMEN'S PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION IN KENYA. A CASE STUDY OF KIRIRI WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Dr. Emily Odhong, PhD (HRM), CHRP, Cynthia Achieng O.

Despite many efforts to accelerate women's empowerment in Kenya, only 29 percent of women between the ages of 15 and 49 are empowered. The main objective was to establish the role of higher education institutions in accelerating women's progressive education in Kenya. The study independent variables were: public-private nexus, blended learning, digitalization, and student retention. The significance of the study is to expand access to education for girls and women, improve quality education, inform policies, and enhance capacity to upscale women's empowerment through progressive education. The study shall also enhance holistic learning environment, and most importantly promote resilience and innovativeness among higher education institutions to emerge stronger. The study was anchored on John Dewey's theory of progressive education. The study adopted a mixed-method research design and a pragmatic and constructive research philosophy. The researcher adopted a triangulation approach in sampling technique. The study sample size comprised 129 - degree students and 26 lecturers. Questionnaires were adopted as the data collection tool. Based on the regression results, the study findings reveal that the R-squared is 0.62, the Adjusted R-squared is 0.61, the F-statistic of 31.94, and a p-value of 0.0000. This

implies that the model explains 61% change in women's progressive education. The study recommends strengthening of public-private nexus through institutional industry linkages, upscaling support through adequate funding of women's education and empowerment while considering Students as Partners in their learning. Institutions of higher education should embrace blended learning approach to reduce the dropout rate of female students and upscale women empowerment through the integration of ICT skills training. In addition, institutions should commit adequate resources to promote effective digitalization and improvements in ICT infrastructure that facilitates learning and are user-friendly to the lecturers, learners, and administrators. The study also recommends promoting students' retention through mentorship, semester check-ins, workshops, and effective lecturers, to enhance student's enrollment and acceleration. This will increase completion rate as well as school-to-work transition.

Keywords: Progressive-Higher-education; blended-learning public-private-nexus; digitalization; human-capital

1.3 EFFECT OF KENYA PUBLIC SERVICE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (PSIP) ON EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG WOMEN IN KENYA.

Purity Muthima, Joseph Muniu, Mary Mwangi, Winifred Mutuku, Ruth Ngina, Wilson Muna, Ruth Wanjau, Catherine Ndungo, Ebbyglorian Wamalwa

Research has shown that internship programs provide opportunities to empower the country's youth by imparting them with both practical and employable skills hence increasing their chances of securing meaningful employment, after demonstrating readiness for work. In Kenya, the Public Service Commission acknowledges the need for graduates to engage in internships and introduced graduate internship program. However, most students graduating from Kenyan colleges and universities do not participate in internship programs or practicums due to limited opportunities. Consequently, employers have raised concerns on work relevance of the skills possessed by young men and women joining the job market. This study evaluated the Kenya's Public Service Internship Program that was launched in 2016 and assessed its effect on young women and men career progression, income and employment in a gender perspective. The study was grounded on Social Relations Framework for Gender Analysis (Adapted from: ILO. 2010) This framework was used alongside the Theory of Change which focused on explaining the methods that needed to be used for the envisaged project to yield the desired results as conceptualized in this study and to generate knowledge as to whether a program is effective or not. The study was conducted through a non-experimental approach where both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to generate evidence. Both primary and secondary data were used. Cross sectional research design was adopted. Data collection instruments included, questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussions. The study sample comprised of a group of young women (69) and men (70) that were exposed to work readiness programs and another group which was not so as to act as the control group. Snowballing method was used to reach out to the targeted respondents. The data collected from three counties in Kenya namely Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu cities established the effect of work readiness programs on women employment, income levels and career progression. Quantitative data was analyzed using STATA while qualitative data was analyzed thematically. Although the study revealed a positive correlation between participation in the program and employment, career progression and income, unemployment still remains a major challenge in Kenya. Young men had a better probability of being employed compared to young women. It also emerged that there is a mismatch between areas of specialization and placement. Despite the unemploy-

ment challenges, the programs should be up scaled and include the profit and non-profit agencies to accommodate more beneficiaries. Additionally, the program needs to build their entrepreneurial capacities and provide resource support. Learning institutions should encourage students to be job creators as opposed to being job seekers. There is need to follow up success stories from the programs for visibility and mind-set transformation.

Key words: Skills, Employment, Career progression, internship, income

1.4 EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AMONG BENEFICIARIES OF THE KENYA YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND OPPORTUNITIES PROJECT BY GENDER IN THE SELECTED COUNTIES IN KENYA.

Ebby Glorian Nekesa Wamalwa, Purity Muthima, & Wilson Mutuma

In Kenya, the government in partnership with the World Bank launched an apprenticeship work readiness program known as the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project (KYEOP) in 2016 to solve the challenge of unemployment among the young people. However, there has been a growing concern regarding gender disparities in employment in Kenya. Statistics from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics of 2022 show that out of the 13.9% of the total unemployed youth in Kenya, the rate is higher among young women at 20.3% compared to 16.8% for young men. Moreover, Kenyan employers have expressed concerns that youths entering the job market lack employability skills needed for success in the workplace, which they have termed as part of the reasons for unsuccessful labor market entry. This study assessed the extent of employability skills development among beneficiaries of the KYEOP program by gender in the selected counties of Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu, Kenya. The study applied the theory of change. The study was based on a cross-sectional research design and a sample of 211 respondents was considered. Primary data was collected using questionnaire and focus group discussions. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression were used to analyze quantitative data while qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The study found variations in the extent of employability skills development between male and female beneficiaries, though they were insignificant. Specifically, a slightly higher percentage of male beneficiaries reported improved employability skills in areas such as decision-making, problem-solving, and control of resources compared to young women. The study recommends the need to incorporate tailored training modules to address the skill gap between genders to ensure equitable skill development outcomes.

Keywords: work readiness, employment, and gender

1.5 EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN REFUGEE CONTEXT IN KENYA

Mercy Njung'e

The LEAP project, funded by Global Affairs Canada through World University Service of Canada and implemented by Africa's Voices in Kakuma refugee camp and Kalobeyei settlement in Kenya, aims to empower girls and young women in refugee and host communities. The project targets persistent challenges of poverty and aid dependence among girls and young women despite prior financial investments. It aims to enhance the equitable involvement of young women in formal and informal workforce sectors, addressing gender disparities highlighted in the SDGs. Using interactive radio methodology, target audiences contribute to radio conversations via SMS to a free short-code, responding to open-ended questions developed during a co-designing session with partners and beneficiaries. Initial SMS triggers a demographic survey, yielding qualitative and quantitative data. This is complemented by on-the-ground interventions like listening groups and drama clubs, the project aims to improve community-wide attitudes towards young women's employment decision-making and enhance their participation in skills training opportunities. Findings from the citizen engagement highlight various institutional, personal and socio-cultural barriers faced by host and refugee women, including Kenyan laws, lack of self-drive and gender norms. Community proposed solutions include advocacy for policy changes, providing targeted skills training and challenging gender norms. Community-wide campaigns seek to garner support from men and boys for sustainability. Empowering women in refugee contexts requires a holistic approach addressing barriers at multiple levels, paving the way for economic self-sufficiency and sustainable development.

Keywords: gender disparities, gender, equitability, women's work

1.6 TRANSFERABLE SKILLS AND WOMEN EMPLOYABILITY IN KENYA: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Hannah Bula, Jackline Nyerere and Christopher Shisanya, Daniel Otieno, Wilson Mutuma, Damaris Kariuki, Gilbert Kipkoech, Shem Onsomo, John Macharia, Eldah Onsomu, Martha Muhwezi, Charles Ondieki, & Jacqueline Onyango

The transition of women from tertiary education to gainful employment has remained low, despite efforts put in place to enhance this. The study's objective was to establish the nature of transferable skills provided in Kenya from the available literature. The methodological approach was a review of extant literature on the outcome of a synthesis of previous studies on transferable skills for women and girls to enhance their skills development and employability through evidence-based gender responsive policies. The approach consisted of an integrative review of literature on the nature of transferable skills in Kenya and their influence on employability of girls and women. The literature search was conducted using several databases for literature published in the last 5-8 years. Using keywords such as transferable skills, employability, women, and the initial search revealed over 150 references. A total of 58 sources were included in the review. The paper provides a typology of transferable skills that can enhance women's empowerment, as to what the literature suggests, and also based on the Basic Employability Skills Training model used by CAP Youth Empowerment Institute Kenya. The findings indicated that practitioners' and researchers' perception of transferable skills varied across a narrow spectrum but all the stakeholders agreed that the skills are required for economic empowerment of girls and women to improve their employ-

ability in the labour market These skills are represented as managerial, entrepreneurial, psycho-social, soft skills, life skills and 21st century competencies. This study recommends that all stakeholders, practitioners and learning institutions should integrate the transferable skills into their curriculum and more importantly adopt a gender responsive curriculum to enable the girls and women to achieve economic empowerment.

Keywords: Transferable Skills, Employability, Life Skills, 21st Century Competencies, Gender Responsive Policy, Kenya.

1.7 FIX THE WOMEN OR FIXING THE UNIVERSITIES' CULTURE? POSITIVE ACTIONS TO ENGENDER EQUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RE-SEARCH SPACE

Rose Atieno Opiyo, PhD

Lack of women in Higher Education (HE) leadership is problematized in literature world over. Often, contemporary discourses promote 'fixing the woman' rather than 'fixing institutional cultures". Regardless of supporting for women to break through 'the glass ceiling', the chilly climate still exists. Underrepresentation of women in Senior Level Administrative Positions (SLAPs) in HE in Kenya, remain intact. Women remain clustered in low level peripheral positions. A number contemplate quitting what they term "an endemically homosocial gentlemen's club" Glaring organizational barriers and protective memberships is highly linked to women's plight, the role of gendered organization culture remains unclear. This article discusses how gendered power relations and competitive academic culture in HE stubbornly maintains entrenched inequality. It explores phenomenon of glass ceiling from lived experience of Midlevel administrators in HE through a case study and establishes whether it is women who refuse, resist or dismiss SLAPs or they get rejected or disqualified from SLAPs through discriminatory processes, gendered career pathways or exclusionary networks and practices in women-unfriendly institutions. A documentation of voices may inform change in HE organization practices and policies and enable more women advancement opportunities. Midlevel administrators indicated that SLAPs are unattractive, onerous and undesirable. The article argues that it is universities themselves that need fixing, not the women, and that women's growing resistance, particularly of the younger generation, reflects their dissatisfaction with HE leadership communities of practice of masculinities. The paper urges effective practices to harness the female advantage in leadership by developing women at the interrelated and interdependent levels while at the same time engaging women's multiple identities and minding HE cultures.

Keywords: women in higher education; midlevel administrative positions, positive actions, organization culture.

THEME 2:

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

2.1 WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS' LAND OWNERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE OF MANUFACTURING ENTERPRISES

Nelson H. W. Wawire & Faith Achungo Tsuma

Despite the efforts the government has put in place to attract women into the manufacturing sector, ranging from legal, fiscal and affirmative actions, very few women entrepreneurs operate in this space. And yet manufacturing is a high value sector where women can enjoy producing and trading opportunities for their products and earn more leading to their economic empowerment. One of the hurdles to entry into this sector for women has been lack of ownership of land and other productive resources. The goal of the study is to contribute to knowledge on how ownership of land and other productive resources by women entrepreneur operating in the manufacturing sector has affected the performance of their enterprises. The objective of the study is to investigate the effect of women entrepreneur's ownership of land and other productive resources on the performance of their manufacturing enterprises. In the study, 55 women entrepreneurs were sampled using simple random sampling technique. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire and complemented with published data from the policy documents. Descriptive statistics, and regression analyses were carried out. The study found that land ownership by women entrepreneurs determines the performance of their enterprises. They make higher profits than those who do not own land. Experience gained by the woman entrepreneur, education level, networking, size of business and control of business earnings are other factors that were found to improve performance. The implications include: incentivizing women entrepreneurs to own land; repealing gender insensitive laws, regulations, cultural practices and traditions that prohibit women entrepreneurs from owning land and other properties.

Keywords: Land, land ownership, woman, woman entrepreneur, manufacturing, enterprise

2.2 ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS FINANCING AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN EKITI STATE.

Joseph Ojo EKIRAN (Ph. D)

Entrepreneurship has been conceptualized as the engine of economic growth both in developed and less developed countries. Nigeria population in 2022 was 218.54 million. Out of the figure, women population was 108.9 million, representing 49.46% of the total population. From IMF statistics, women constitute over 60% of the poorest people in the country. Based on the statistics and on the facts that women are naturally endowed with initiative, creativity and management of businesses, search to attain women's empowerment should be of priority for economic viability in Nigeria. This research work therefore examines the effect of entrepreneurship development on women's empowerment in Ekiti State. Data was collected from selected income generating activities, using a structured questionnaire. The target population consists of women which were grouped into two categories: full house wives and empowered house wives. Simple random sampling procedure was adopted. The study employed 4-point Likert-type scaling instrument and applied descriptive statistics analytical method. The research findings confirmed that women engaging in income generating activities were more empowered than those without enterprise income base. The study suggests that government should encourage women entrepreneurship by formulating skill acquisition policy and by providing soft loans, grants and social amenities to facilitate small scale businesses for women's economic empowerment and better life attainment.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, business financing, women's empowerment, small scale businesses.

2.3 DETERMINANTS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN KENYA: A LOGISTIC REGRESSION APPROACH

Pius Ng'ang'a & Paul Samoei

The purpose of this study is to use basic individual and household characteristics to estimate probability of a woman being empowered. Specifically, the study will use the logistic regression model to analyze determinants of women's empowerment to better understand the relationship between various factors and the likelihood of women achieving empowerment. The study will also identify if there is significant relationship between empowerment and wealth quintile (well-being) of a woman. Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA); Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis; and logistic regression will be used. The study will utilize the 2014 Kenya Demographic Household Survey (KDHS) data. The various domains of empowerment will be considered. This include: Attitudes towards wife beating; Human and social resources; Household decision-making (Familial/Interpersonal); Control over sexual relations; and Economic activity. The identified domains in the Exploratory and Confirmatory factor analysis will be assigned equal weights, and the weight of the domain will then be distributed equally to each of its constituting indicators. A woman will be considered empowered if her score is more than half of the total weighted score, and not empowered otherwise. In the second stage of analysis, basic household and individual characteristics of women (independent variables) will be used to estimate the likelihood of achieving empowerment using the logistics regression. After fitting the model, post estimation analysis will be carried out. Specifically, Pearson and Hosmer-Lemeshow test will be used to assess the goodness of fit of the model.

Key Words: Logistic regression, Empowerment, Decision-making, Score, Well-being

2.4 SOCIAL CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS AND PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN SMALL SCALE ENTERPRISES IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY KENYA

Bula Hannah Orwa(PhD)

This study focused on small scale enterprises (SSEs) owned and/or managed by women. Small Enterprises are recognized as enablers for economic growth in Kenya. Despite relevant government legislation and establishment of Micro and Small Enterprise Authority to provide a conducive business environment, small enterprises still face challenges of low performance. Additionally, efforts by the government to legislate and support gender equality have not realized better performance in women led businesses which ultimately would enhance women economic empowerment. The objective of this research was to establish the social-cultural characteristics of women entrepreneurs and evaluate the magnitude and

direction of their influence on performance. The resource base view and innovation theories anchored the study variables. A critical literature review shows that small enterprises owned by women have to deal with a range of the socio-cultural factors that may affect their performance. The research was based on a random sample from small scale enterprises in Nairobi. Social cultural characteristics were measured through a Likert scale of five. Descriptive research design was used to explain and predict relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Data was generated through the use of questionnaires. The data collected was analysed by use of descriptive statistics in form of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations and inferential statistical in form of correlation matrix and regression analyses. Findings from the research suggest that there is a negative but significant relationship between socio-cultural characteristics and performance. The study recommends that socio-cultural norms should be changed so as to offer support framework to enhance women economic empowerment. Additionally, men should be encouraged through various platforms within Nairobi city county wards and sub counties to support women led businesses.

Key Words: Women entrepreneurs, Economic empowerment, socio cultural characteristics performance

2.5 ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG) IN FLORICULTURE LABOR MARKETS CHAIN FOR MULTINATIONALS CORPORATIONS (MNCS) IN NAIVASHA, KENYA.

Nduta Gitahi

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) remains prevalent in agricultural labor markets, mainly where multinational corporations operate. Their indirect engagement with laborers through suppliers' contracts abdicates these institutions from effectively implementing their gender policy to external organizations. The change of labor markets from direct hires to outsourcing services prevents the hiring organization from exercising complete control of the internal activities of their suppliers except on the terms of business agreed upon in the contracts. Outsourcing labor is a business strategy focused on Capital and revenue expenditure rather than the workforce's well-being. This study explores the complexities of GBV in these settings and proposes practical strategies for prevention and intervention. By employing a multi-disciplinary approach encompassing sociology, psychology, gender studies, anthropology, and labor economics, the study seeks to identify the root causes of GBV, assess existing prevention measures, and propose innovative solutions tailored to the unique challenges faced by multinational agricultural enterprises, including contracted suppliers, including surveys, interviews, covert observation, and a review of existing literature. The study focuses on the flower farms in Naivasha. The aim is to provide actionable insights for policymakers, corporations, NGOs, and other stakeholders committed to ending GBV in the agricultural labor markets supply chain. Specifically, the study aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on GBV prevention and intervention strategies, focusing on multinational agricultural enterprises' unique challenges and opportunities. By identifying practical approaches tailored to this context, the study seeks to promote safer, more equitable, and sustainable agrarian labor markets for all stakeholders involved.

Key words: Violence Against Women and Girls, GBV, women's work

THEME 3:

HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

3.1 EFFECTIVENESS OF CFK AFRICA GIRL'S EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM IN ENHANCING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC STATUS IN KIBERA, NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA

Keith Obiero

CFK Africa has implemented a holistic girls' empowerment program through soccer in Kibera informal settlement for 20 years. This evaluation examined the impact of sports on their economic development. The monitoring, evaluation and learning employed a qualitative approach involving FGDs and key informant interviews to document progress, collect stories on their experiences and document significant changes in their lives. The objectives are to assess the effectiveness of soccer initiatives in promoting girls' empowerment, particularly in areas of social, sexual, and reproductive health, individual agency, and capacity building. Additionally, it explores the role of sports in providing socio-economic opportunities and enhancing leadership skills among young women as these contribute to economic empowerment. The findings show that soccer programs foster confidence, teamwork, and community engagement among the girls. Through participation in sports, girls develop physical skills as well as valuable life lessons that enhance their personal growth, SRH and economic empowerment. Some of these girls have played in the Kenya National Premier League, this has improved their incomes some from nothing to Kshs. 8,000 per month. The paper concludes that soccer initiatives play a crucial role in education and economic empowerment while challenging traditional gender norms and inspiring positive social change for girls in Kibera, offering them a platform to build resilience, leadership qualities, and women economic empowerment within Kibera. The paper recommends continued support and investment in soccer programs for the girls as these promote SHR, enhance social inclusion, well-being, and economic empowerment of young women in informal settlements like Kibera.

Key words: sexual and reproductive health

3.2 LESSONS LEARNED FROM THREE WOMEN EX-PRIME MINISTERS IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.

Dr. Mutuota Kigotho

With a focus on economic and social reforms we look at defining moments in the leadership of three ex-prime ministers in New Zealand and Australia. We look at their main challenges and achievements when in office and examine lessons learned. From New Zealand we look at the leadership of Helen Clark, Prime Minister from December 1999 – November 2008, Jacinta Arden, Prime Minister from October 2017- January 2023, and in Australia we look at Julia Gillard, Prime Minister from 2010 - 2013). Specifically, we examine aspects of motivation, strong-will and resilience and the role these qualities played in economic empowerment of women within their nations.

Keywords: Leadership, women economic empowerment.

3.3 THE POSTNATAL FINANCIAL SURVIVAL STRATEGIES OF TEENAGE MOTHERS ON WELL-BEING OUTCOMES IN KENYAN URBAN SLUMS

Magdalena Mueni Mutuku, Prof. Maurice Sakwa and Prof. Catherine Ndungo

The paper will evaluate the postnatal financial survival strategies of teenage mothers in Kenyan urban slums. This study will address the research theme on: Initiatives for What Works to Advance Women's Economic Empowerment. It is derived from ongoing PhD research entitled; The Postnatal Survival Strategies on the Well-being Outcomes of Teenage Mothers in Kenyan Urban Slums. It will examine specifically the postnatal financial survival strategies on the well-being of teenage mothers. The aim of the paper is to establish the financial challenges that teenage mothers encounter and recommend policies that can be instituted to enhance measures that can be adopted to ensure teenage mothers adopt the best financial survival strategies for economic empowerment. Moreover, the study aims at examining the best gender-responsive strategies that can be utilized to ensure that this demographic cohort is not left out in economic development even after attaining the status quo of motherhood. The study will be anchored on the Sarah Longwe's framework of empowerment. The data will be collected in selected urban slums in Nairobi. The sample respondents will be teenage mothers aged between 15 to 19 years picked through systematic and convenience sampling. Their views will be triangulated with data from key informants who include; clinical officers, nurses and counsellors in the health sector. The data collection tools will include questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guides, in-depth interview schedules and direct observation checklist. Inferential and descriptive statistics will be used for data analysis. Data will be coded and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis will be undertaken in accordance with the paper's objectives. Observations, conclusions and recommendations will be drawn to show the challenges encountered by teenage mothers in slum areas and offer suggestions on policies that can be drawn to alleviate their suffering.

Keywords: Wellbeing, Postnatal Coping strategies, Teenage mothers.

3.4 POST RETIREMENT ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT STATUS FOR RURAL WOMEN IN MURANG'A COUNTY, KENYA.

Prof. Elishiba Kimani, Dr. Felistus Makhamara, Dr. Judy Mwangi

This study investigates on the post retirement economic empowerment status for rural women in Murang'a County, Kenya. Globally, the number of the retired persons is increasing at an alarming rate. This is confirmed by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Help Age International (HAI), demographers whose projection is that for the first time in history, there will be more people aged 60 years and above than children under 15 by the year 2050 (UNFPA & HAI., 2012). The transition from being an employee to being a retiree is inevitable and can affect individual's livelihood to some extent. Further, retirees face major challenges as they try to navigate out of employment life. This is because when an individual retires, he/she leaves a significant part of the routine activity and earnings. The transition may be accompanied by many changes including reduction in income, increased free time and change of social settings, among others. The study investigates the perception of rural women retirees on the retirement itself, preparedness of the rural women for their retirement, economic challenges that the rural women encounter during retirement and related coping strategies. The study adopts mixed method design which yields qualitative and quantitative data. The target population are the women retirees from Education and

health sectors in Murang'a County. Data will be analyzed, triangulated and presented, based on the study objectives, to lead to the evidence based conclusion and recommendations on the status, necessary policy and action in support of the economic empowerment for women retirees in rural Kenya.

Key Words: Post, Retirement, Economic, Empowerment, Women, Retirees

3.5 QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE IN LIVES OF SGBV SURVIVORS: EVIDENCE FROM THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE STORIES' TECHNIQUE

Prof. Grace Wamue - Ngare, Prof. Lucy Maina

Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) is a global problem affecting more than 35% of all women. In Kenya, one in every 3 women has encountered SGBV and its effects can be serious and at times fatal. Interventional programmes targeting survivors of SGBV vary but mainly focus on counselling, medical services, legal assistance, economic empowerment, awareness creation, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, capacity building of vulnerable people to prevent and respond to SGBV, stepping up reporting mechanisms of incidences of SGBV and encouraging actors to use the existing services among others. Overall, the main purpose of interventions is to bring back meaning to the lives and families of survivors of SGBV and to minimize chances of recurrence of the vice. Studies have focused on how such interventions work to reduce violence, cost of GBV and impact of violence. Additionally, most studies adopt a quantitative approach seeking to quantify impact of interventions. However, little attention has been paid to how SGBV programmes and interventions catalyses change that transform survivors to overcome and rise above their experience towards greater achievement and self-realization. This study therefore seeks to utilize the Most Significant Change Technique (MSCT) to assess how SGBV survivors accessing various interventions are impacted at psychological, social and economic levels. The qualitative technique allows an explicit assessment of types and degrees of change emerging out of stories told by the survivors without necessarily using pre-determined indicators while delineating explicit valued outcomes. The study utilized data drawn from one GBVRC and two Recovery, Rehabilitation, Re-integration Programmes namely: The Gender Violence Recovery Centre (GVRC) located in Nairobi and Life Bloom Services International located at Naivasha. Results emerging from the study showed that overall, the RRRPs stimulated change and self-appraisal among survivors in their journey to recovery and transformation from the effects of SGBV. These changes were evident in the domains of self-discovery, acceptance and diligence, regaining capacity and independence, recovery, boldness and self-determination, overcoming SGBV trauma for economic transformation, empowerment and resilience as well as re-integration and self-determination. The study suggests increasing capacity of RRRPs to deliver multi-dimensional interventions that are responsive to both practical and strategic gender needs of survivors to achieve full-scale recovery of survivors.

Key Words: cost of GBV, Gender Violence Recovery Centre

3.6 SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF MICROFINANCE INTERVENTIONS AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: RESULTS FROM LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME CONTEXTS

Anaise Williams, Abigaël Malelu-Gitau, Grace Wamue-Ngare, Lori Heise, Nancy Glass, Cynthia Edeh, Yurie Aiura, Tabitha Gitahi, Joan Rakuomi, & Michele Decker

Women's economic empowerment is a cornerstone of the Sustainable Development Goals. A growing body of work has sought to measure its impact on violence against women (VAW). Past reviews have overall found null effects, with suggestion that gender programming is necessary for reducing VAW. Past reviews have typically focused on diverse economic empowerment programming inclusive of microfinance, cash transfers, and livelihoods, lending to less clarity on mechanisms and mixed results. Current frameworks differentiate microfinance from other forms of economic empowerment. Nine databases were searched for peer-reviewed articles published between January 2015 and July 2023 that assessed experimental or quasi-experimental impacts of microfinance on VAW. A team of six reviewers undertook abstract and full-text review in Covidence. In parallel, a grey literature search and a qualitative study scoping review were conducted. Synthesis investigated study quality and the effects of microfinance alone ("microfinance effect"), microfinance embedded in a larger multifaceted programming ("embedded effect") and delivering a non-microfinance program to microfinance participants ("plus effect"). A total of 27 studies qualified. Most studies assessed group microfinance in relation to intimate partner violence. Less than a third (24%) of comparisons were on microfinance effects; only two were rigorous, one finding a null and the other finding a protective effect. For comparisons on embedded effects, high-quality studies found about 73% were null. Over a third of studies did not report on economic effects as a critical process measure. Qualitative synthesis highlighted both benefits and potential harms of microfinance that varied by context. This study delivers synthesis of the existing VAW evidence base on microfinance evaluations published since 2015. Overall, microfinance programming shows some promise in reducing VAW, with little evidence of VAW harms. Future work must focus on gaps identified, specifically measuring microfinance singular effects, with theory of change process measurement. Differences in program context, complexities, and outcomes make it difficult to draw conclusions; future standardization is needed for comparability. The 2020 What Works review found overall null effects of women's economic empowerment on VAW, with little evidence of backlash and a need for complementary social empowerment interventions. Our study builds on this existing review by synthesizing more recent evidence and focusing exclusively on credit, loans, and access to bank accounts, for greater precision beyond economic empowerment programming broadly, while interrogating the economic impact of these interventions. We, similarly, found little evidence of VAW harms caused by microfinance, yet did not find evidence that adding social programming makes microfinance substantially more successful at reducing VAW. This seminal review contributes valuable insight through separating out different ways of delivering microfinance programming, such as to a women's group versus to individuals. Further contributions include discussion on mechanisms behind observed relationships, the economic success of a microfinance initiative as a key factor in the results, and heterogenous effects by sub-populations and context.

Keywords: violence against women, economic empowerment programmes

THEME 4:

ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION TO WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

4.1 NAVIGATING THE DICHOTOMY OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY DESIGN

Abigael Mwende Malelu-Gitau, Hilda Kinyua

This paper explores the intricate relationship between social media technology, women's economic empowerment, and the perpetuation of disempowerment through objectification, employing a multi-case study approach. The analysis focuses on influential female figures in the social media sphere, utilizing media reports like news articles, blogs, and social media posts for data collection. This information is then coded and analysed to uncover patterns, themes, and relationships regarding economic empowerment opportunities, challenges, and barriers. On one hand, women utilize social media to advance their economic empowerment by showcasing products, sharing success stories, and connecting with a global audience, leading to collaborations and the promotion of women-owned businesses. Despite facing adversity such as failed marriages, socioeconomic constraints, and gender inequalities, women demonstrate resilience through social media platforms. However, the pursuit of economic empowerment also presents challenges, including the perpetuation of disempowerment through exploitative content creation, the normalization of harmful practices like unrealistic beauty standards, and exposure to exploitative opportunities like pyramid schemes targeting vulnerable women. Social media also normalizes unethical behaviors such as deceptive advertising and reinforces gender stereotypes by objectifying and sexualizing women, reducing them to their physical attributes and undermining their credibility in professional contexts. Ultimately, this study highlights the complexities of social media's role in both empowering and disempowering women in their pursuit of financial freedom. Women's empowerment initiatives should prioritize economic progress while safeguarding the dignity of women in the digital age.

Keywords: perpetuation of disempowerment, Social media

4.2 LEVERAGING MODERN TECHNOLOGY: EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH REDUCTION OF UNPAID LABOR IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA

Abigael Mwende Malelu-Gitau, Hilda Kinyua

Women's economic empowerment has emerged as a central focus in discussions of gender equality and sustainable development, particularly given the longstanding burden of unpaid household labor disproportionately borne by women, limiting their engagement in economic activities. Scholars have identified the adoption of modern technology as a potential solution to alleviate this care work burden and enhance women's economic prospects. This abstract delves into the nexus between women embracing modern technology to address unpaid labor and its implications for their economic empowerment within Nairobi City County, Kenya. Employing an exploratory multiple case design alongside snowball sampling and social media analysis, the study investigates how women in Nairobi leverage modern technology to reduce unpaid labor, thereby bolstering their economic empowerment. Findings indicate that mobile technologies are the predominant form of technology used, facilitating connections to marketplaces and service providers. Additionally, the installation of CCTV enables remote household monitoring, affording women the peace of mind to focus on income-generating activities. Social media platforms serve as channels for sharing information on achieving work-life balance. Other technologies, such as washing

machines, refrigerators, and modern cooking methods, also contribute to easing the burden of care work on women, thereby supporting their economic empowerment. However, challenges remain, including ensuring affordable technology access and internet connectivity for women, as well as promoting digital literacy. These efforts must contend with prevailing hegemonic masculinity, which shapes societal perceptions of ideal femininity and can induce guilt-driven pressure to conform to these standards. Thus, future studies should address these complexities to further enhance women's economic empowerment in the digital age.

Keywords: Social media platforms, gender equality, sustainable development

4.3 DIGITAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGY AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Bolanle Morenikeji Adeoluwa & Adedeji Matthew Adedayo

Digital media technology is speedily becoming entrenched in society and has been described as 'innovative' considering its rapid levels of acceptance by the populace. Over the years, stakeholders have begun to emphasize the need for digital media to educate and facilitate women's economic empowerment and development. This is because women play crucial and critical roles in the economic development of society and the nation as a whole. Premised on this background, this paper focuses attention on establishing and ascertaining the link between digital media technology and women's economic empowerment and development; examining the impacts of digital media technology on women's economic empowerment and development in Nigeria; determining the extent to which digital media technology has impacted economic empowerment among women in Nigeria; investigate the challenging confronting women proper utilization of digital media as a tool for economic empowerment in Nigeria. In this study, Digital Literacy Theory was used as the theoretical framework for this study. The data used in this study are primarily and secondarily sourced. The questionnaire and interview were tailored towards eliciting information from key informants, including business moguls, mass communication experts, media practitioners, digital journalists, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) experts, economists, women in business, traders, artisans, and other stakeholders. The secondary data was derived from textbooks, academic journals, editorials, articles, and internet materials about the subject studied. Other instruments such as electronic media, and published and unpublished materials were utilized. The finding of the study revealed that digital media technology significantly contributes to women's economic empowerment by providing avenues for income generation, skill development, and entrepreneurship in Nigeria. The study concludes that the intersection of women's economic empowerment and development with digital media technology reveals a game-changing environment with enormous potential for progress. The swift advancement of digital media technologies has upended conventional beliefs, giving women in Nigeria never before seen chances to participate in the economy, obtain information, and express themselves more loudly.

Keywords: Women, Digital Media, Economic, Empowerment, Development

4.4 LEVERAGING SOCIAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION TO SPUR BUSINESS PRODUCTIVITY AMONG WOMEN-OWNED SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN KENYA

Prof. John Aluko Orodho, Prof. Judith Waudu, Prof, Caroline Thoruwa, Dr Francis Kirimi & David Ngigi

The purpose of this study was to establish the role of social media technology on the performance of women-owned small and medium enterprises in Kakamega and Machakos Counties. The study used a multi-phase mixed research methods design. The research adopted a sample size of 35 women-owned participants drawn from a population of 8,000 SMEs. The study utilized stratified random sampling techniques to obtain the required sample sizes in the study locales. The data collection instruments were structured questionnaires for the explanatory sequential quantitative phase and interviews for the qualitative strand followed by accessing a few case studies during community walk-about studies. The study found that adoption and use of social media diversity is positively correlated with the Performance of Women-Owned Small and Medium Enterprises in Kakamega and Machakos Counties. It was further concluded that social media diversity allowed for networking with other group members as well as customers. The study concluded that women use social media technology to grow and enhance their business turnover. The study recommended that the key stakeholders, especially their respective County Governments supplement the efforts of these women-led SMEs by organizing workshops and training where expertise from different researchers and government departments would be brought to give a talk on what works to assure women's economic empowerment.

Keywords: Social media technology, Innovation, Women-led Small and Medium Enterprises

4.5 TECHNOLOGY FACILITATED ABUSE AND COMPROMISED PRIVACY AMONG YOUTHS AGED 15-28 IN KENYA

Mercy Kamau, Ngare Grace, Mwatha Regina

Technology has significantly increased connectivity globally, particularly among youth. Despite many advantages, rising access to tech brings cyber abuse to the forefront as an emergent form of violence among youth. Little is known about rates and characteristics of cyber abuse and how it affects their ability to participate in economic development. The aim of this study is to assess the magnitude and nature of cyber abuse and tech-related privacy threats among youth in Nairobi, Kenya. Mixed methods analysis used primary data collected in June-August 2023 among youth ages 15-28, inclusive of survey data (n=871 young men, n=831 young women) and in-depth interview data (n=15 young men, n=15 young women, purposively sampled). Across the full sample, 57.7% of young men and 51.6% of young women experienced any form of cyber abuse in the past-year. For young men and young women respectively, 37.6% and 32.3% reported having someone look through their phone without permission, 42.7% and 37.2% reported being repeatedly asked where they were through text, post, etc., 10.1% and 8.2% reported ever being forced to reveal passwords, and 7.4% and 5.6% reported being forced to reveal Mpesa details. Current or former intimate partners were the most frequent perpetrators among both young men (67.0%) and young women (57.0%). Study findings highlight high rates of cyber abuse among youth in Nairobi, Kenya, with similar rates of experience across genders. We find that cyber abuse is most often perpetrated by romantic partners. Future work should explore more nuanced gender-based differences

as well as impacts on wellbeing and economic empowerment.

Keywords: Technology facilitated GBV.

4.6 TRACKING THE NATIONAL BUDGETS: WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES IN KENYA?

Fiona Okadia, John Mutua, Raphael Muya, Jairus Kedogo and Stephen Muathe

The Kenya National Census conducted in 2019 puts the percentage population of women at 50.5% of the entire population and thus their economic contribution is vital to the development of the country. However, the absence of gender-disaggregated data on spending poses a limitation in evaluating the impact of government initiatives in addressing inequalities in women's economic empowerment. This study sought to establish whether the overall government spending and the initiatives by the state departments translate into improved women's economic empowerment initiatives in Kenya. The research design involved Mapping out Policies on WEEI and also conducting Gender Responsive Budgeting Analysis. The researchers used both secondary data and primary data that was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The findings revealed that budget reviews at both the national and county levels have demonstrated some efforts toward allocating resources to specific interventions with a direct impact on addressing gender inequality. However, it is notable that only 11 state departments and ministries are gender sensitive and they represent 41% of the entire national executive budget. Moreover, the Controller of Budget documents lack a detailed breakdown of expenditures for these units. The study concluded that while the allocation of budgets for women's economic empowerment is crucial, the actual impact depends on the effective implementation of these financial resources, based on the findings the study recommends harmonization of reporting framework in the budget process and alignment between supplementary budgets and budget implementation progress reports by the Controller of Budgets.

Key words: National-budget, Gender sensitive, Women economic empowerment.

THEME 5:

LEGAL AND POLICY ADVOCACY FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

5.1 FACILITATING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE IN KENYA

George Stanley Njoroge & Catherine Wambui Kiama

The Constitution of Kenya has set the legal framework for women's participation in governance. Governance is a key facilitator of Women Economic Empowerment as it gives women the executive authority with regard to distribution of resources. Nevertheless, even after fourteen years after its promulgation, the requisite enabling Acts of Parliament have not been set in place. As it stands, political parties as vehicles of obtaining political power are required to guarantee at least a third of all persons nominated to be of either gender. Regrettably, this has not been enforced in the past three general elections even after the new Constitution dispensation. This is especially true with regard to Gubernatorial elections. With the ascendancy of Hon. Justice Martha Koome as Chief Justice in 2021, the attainment of the 1/3 threshold at the Supreme Court, the increase in female governors from three to seven, the promise of a female running mate in the subsequent elections and the agitation for the Constitutional provision to be fully implemented, Kenya has reached a defining moment in acceptance of women's role in leadership and governance. The proposed paper will analyse past efforts being made to enhance women's roles in securing decision-making positions in elective positions with focus on Gubernatorial roles. The paper will also explore the role of particular transformative leaders of both genders in promoting women's leadership in previous dispensations (upto 2022). It will further analyse past performance and use the same in predicting the outcomes in the 2027 elections. The study utilizes case study methodology and applies a blend of Carl Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation and Kotter's 8 Step Model as its theoretical model.

Key words: Transformative Leadership, Change, Governance, Economic Empowerment.

5.2 WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN KENYA: CLOSING THE GENDER GAP'S - GENDER AUDIT

Sheila Ncheri Mutuma, Sarah Fedha Barasa, Regina Gathoni Mwatha, Salome Mwongeli - Musau, Isabella Musyoka - Kamere, Francis Omondi, Justus Wafula Otiato, Wangui Kimaru & Osman Mohammed

In Kenya, the government has demonstrated its commitment to addressing gender disparities by ratifying various international agreements promoting gender equality and enacting local policies and legislative framework to align with these agreements. Despite these initiatives, women remain significantly underrepresented in management and leadership roles within formal labor markets and the public service. Women's Participation in Management and Leadership in the Public Sector in Kenya: Closing the Gender Gap conducted a gender audit spanning from 2010 to 2020. The audit aimed to assess the adherence of the public service to legislative and policy frameworks. The results of the audit trail indicated a decrease in the proportion of women employed in the public service from 2010 to 2020, accompanied by a notable increase in the proportion of men, thus widening the gender disparity during the period under review. The study recommended that there was need for a purposed intention by the Public Service Commission to ensure full implementation of the two thirds of either gender principle in order to successfully closing the gender gap in all sectors of the public service. The gender audit conducted by the National Government

marked the initial phase of the team's methodology, aimed at assessing the current state of the public service over the past decade. Quantitative data was sourced from the Ministry of State for Public Service, specifically the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Database (IPPD) from 2010 to 2021. The GA data reveals that despite the many efforts that have been put in place by the Kenyan government to promote gender equality in management and leadership position, the underrepresentation of women in the public service over the last ten years continues to persist. While the GA does not provide reasons to the prevailing situation, the question that lingers on is why the current situation continues to exist despite the clamour for gender equality from international communities and progressive forces in Kenya.

Key words: Participation, Management. Leadership, Gender gap and underrepresentation

5.3 IMPLICATION OF THE RCT INTERVENTION ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND SCHOOL READINESS: A CASE OF THARAKA NITHI COUNTY

Dr. Hudson Ouko, Prof. Judith Waudu, Prof. Simon Onywere, Dr. Teresa Mwoma & Dr. Margaret Mwangi

Globally, economic empowerment and participations of women is yet to be achieved among communities. The women's space is largely that of child-rearing and household chores. A Randomized control trial (RCT) intervention underway in Tharaka Nithi County women's participation in economic activities by enrolling their 3-year-old children in PPI to give them the extra time. The so enrolled 3-year-old pupils' cognitive, social, language and physical skills would be enhanced for school readiness. The intervention is joint venture of Kenyatta University, Yale University, Bangor University and the county government of Tharaka Nithi. The intervention is funded by Bill Melinda Gates Foundation and anticipates evidence for policy engagements on women economic and participation model. A baseline had revealed that most women were not engaged in any income generating activities making them dependent on their spouses. A house listing exercise would be conducted that mapped out families with children who would be 3 years by term one of 2024. A total of 60 intervention schools were determined. This paper therefore intends to provide an account from the regular intervention reports. This paper envisages providing evidence from the intervention which would inform policy at the local and national level on women empowerment and quality foundational learning.

Key words: childcare, Randomized control trial

5.4 IMPLICATION OF THE RCT INTERVENTION ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND SCHOOL READINESS OF 3-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN IN THARAKA NITHI COUNTY: A NATIONAL POLICY DILEMMA

Dr. Hudson Ouko, Prof. Judith Waudu, Prof. Simon Onywere, & Dr. Teresa Mwoma

The Randomized control trial (RCT) intervention in Tharaka Nithi would improve women's

empowerment by increasing their space for economic engagement opportunities and offering improved education for their children's quality school readiness by giving them an edge developmental dimensions including but not limited to the social skills, cognition skills, physical skills and language skills. The intervention will employ a randomized controlled trial (RCT) design, to examine the impact of allowing children aged 3 to attend pre-primary school against the current early childhood development policy framework in Kenya. Kenyatta University's women economic empowerment (WEE) Hub will implement the intervention alongside Yale University (USA) and Bangor University (Wales) in Tharaka Nithi County (TNC) Kenya. Bill Melinda Gates foundation will fund the intervention. Regular supervision and information-exchange will form part of the implementation process. This paper envisages to provide evidence from the intervention which would inform policy at the local and national level on women empowerment and quality foundational learning. This would redefine women's empowerment through increasing economic engagement opportunities and offering improved education for their children.

Key words: social skills, cognition skills, physical skills and language skills

5.5 WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN KENYA: CLOSING THE GENDER GAP - STUDY FINDINGS

Sheila Ncheri Mutuma, Sarah Fedha Barasa, Regina Gathoni Mwatha, , Salome Mwangeli-Musau, Isabella Musyoka-Kamere, Francis Omondi, Justus Wafula Otiato, Wangui Kimaru & Osman Mohammed

The significance of women in Kenya's economy is widely recognized; however, despite the increasing presence of women in paid employment, they remain underrepresented. According to the 2019 Census, women make up 51.2% of the total population and form half of Kenya's labor force. Their involvement in public service is vital due to its direct influence on incomes and, consequently, livelihoods. Considering the above, this study sought to establish the representation and participation of women in the laid out decision making positions within the National and County government. The study looked at the representation of women within job groups J-T (Entry level management positions to senior level management positions). The study was guided by four specific objectives. The study's primary objective was to attain a sustainable outcome by increasing the involvement of women in management and leadership roles within the public sector by 30% before the year 2025. Primary data collection was carried out in selected National government ministries, two County governments, National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) and Public Service Commission (PSC). Structured interview schedules were employed to collect data from both women and men at various career stages, within the selected Ministries. These interviews aimed to extract information concerning their roles, placement, involvement, and career progression. Additionally, key informant guides were utilized to gather insights from women and men in senior management. The research findings highlight several key issues that hinder women from progressing to positions of management and leadership. The study recommends that the Public Service Commission must make concerted efforts to ensure the full implementation of policy and legal frameworks and establish clear milestones for their achievement. These measures are essential to successfully closing the gender gap in the Public Service.

Key words: Participation, Management. Leadership, Gender gap and underrepresentation.

5.6 THE INFLUENCE OF LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK ON WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS' START-UPS IN KENYA

Dr. Teresia Ngina Kyalo & Dr. Isaac Muiruri Gachanja

Women constitute more than half of the population of Kenya and make a significant contribution to the economy accounting for about 48% of all micro, small, and medium sized enterprises contributing about 20% to Kenya's Gross Domestic Product. Despite the vital role of women entrepreneurs in economic growth in Kenya, women entrepreneurs continue to shy away from sectors that are viewed as male dominated. This study aimed at establishing the influence of legal and regulatory environment to women entrepreneurs in starting enterprises in male dominated sectors in Kenya. The study was carried out in Nairobi County and targeted 130 women enterprises. Descriptive and exploratory research designs were used and data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire, analyzed using a logistic regression model and presented using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study established that legal and regulatory environment had an insignificant influence on women entrepreneurs in starting enterprises on male dominated sectors with a t-test value of -.199 indicating that there was no significant statistical relationship between the variable legal and regulatory environment and women entrepreneurs starting enterprises in male dominated sectors. The study recommended that further studies be carried out to establish the determinants of women entrepreneurs to start enterprises in the male dominated sectors in Kenya.

Key Words: Entrepreneurship, Male dominated sectors, Legal and Regulatory Framework

5.7 PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP FOR WEE IN GOVERNANCE IN OF BOMET COUNTY

Elishiba Kimani, David Minja, Edna Moi, Felistus Makhamara, Jackson Mdoe, James Oringo and James Onditi

This study was done in Bomet County Kenya, as part of the larger Kenyatta University WEE HUB research programme. The focus was on participation of women in leadership Governance. The overall objective was to find out how women were participating in the county for WEE. The study was guided by performativity and theory of Change. A total of 330 respondents were targeted which included Key Informants. The study team collaborated with Women's Empowerment Link, an NGO based in Nairobi but having a program on WEE working in Bomet County, Kenya. Data was collected using semi-structured interview schedule and a Key informant's questionnaire. Data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The study established that Women had been actively involved in various economic and social activities in small levels in the county as well as participating in leadership and governance processes. The County Government had several development partner organizations which were championing empowerment of women in leadership, Governance and Economic Empowerment. Specifically, the study observed that 90% of the trained women were either farmers or business owners. The rest (9.37%) were employed. The statistics are an indicator of the economic empowerment. The study concluded that Bomet County Government were economically empowering women for increased participation in leadership and governance which translated to some extent on WEE. However, some grass root women were participating less due to barriers such negative culture beliefs and practices, low level of literacy. The study thus recommended policy actions that could scale up WEE in Bomet County.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Leadership, Governance, Participation

5.8 CRISIS-DRIVEN ADVOCACY: EMPOWERING WOMEN IN KENYA'S TOURISM SECTOR

Dr. Leah Wanjama, Dr. Esther Munyiri, Prof. Martin Etyang, Dr. Susan Okeri, Dr. Aflonia Mbutia, Mr. Robert Kamiti, Ms. Juliet Mesa & Mr. Kevin Onialo

This study underscores the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Kenya's tourism sector, particularly highlighting its disparate effects on women and advocating for tailored policy measures to address these challenges. Drawing from a comprehensive study involving 363 tourist enterprises across Nairobi, Central, Western, South Rift, and Malindi, critical gaps in health and safety protocols, mental health support, and crisis-oriented financial assistance were identified, disproportionately affecting women within the industry. In response, three strategic policy advocacy initiatives are proposed: Firstly, the Affirmative Action for Women's Empowerment in Tourism seeks to rectify gender disparities by implementing targeted interventions such as mentorship programmes, skills development initiatives, and facilitating access to finance and resources for women in tourism. These efforts aim to not only advance gender equality but also enhance the overall resilience and sustainability of the sector. Secondly, the establishment of a Cushioning Fund for Employees and Businesses is advocated to provide crucial financial support, especially to vulnerable groups like women-owned businesses and employees. This fund would serve as a safety net during crises, mitigating economic hardships and bolstering the recovery and resilience-building endeavors of women entrepreneurs and workers in tourism. Lastly, the Amalgamation of Taxes and Levies policy proposal aims to streamline taxation and levy systems within the industry, reducing administrative burdens, enhancing compliance, and ensuring equitable tax distribution. By consolidating and rationalizing taxes and levies, this initiative aims to create a conducive business environment for tourism enterprises, including those owned by women, fostering growth, investment, and economic empowerment. In summary, these policy advocacy initiatives are pivotal for addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by women in Kenya's tourism industry amidst the COVID-19 crisis. By promoting gender equality, providing targeted financial support, and streamlining taxation, these initiatives aim to cultivate a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable tourism sector that empowers women economically and contributes to broader socioeconomic development objectives. Through concerted policy efforts, Kenya can navigate future crises and emerge stronger and more equitable.

Key words: Women, Policy, Tourism, Crisis

5.9 LEGAL AND POLICY ADVOCACY IN WOMEN'S LIVELIHOODS, ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN THARAKA NITHI COUNTY, KENYA.

Lilian G. Kiruja

Understanding the factors that influence women's livelihood choices is critical for fostering gender equality, sustainable development, and poverty reduction. This study provides insights into the problems and opportunities experienced by women in pursuit of livelihoods in Tharaka Nithi County, with childcare burden taking the centre stage among the challenges women face in the county. This is done through investigating the livelihood and empowerment effects of the interplay among socio-cultural dynamics, access to resources, education, and social networks within the county. Using survey data, we find that employ various livelihood strategies to support themselves, their children and families. The main factors influencing women's engagement in the various livelihoods include education, access to financial resources, age, zone of residence, and public infrastructure. The research process employed a mixed-methods approach that combined qualitative interviews with key informants, and quantitative surveys using questionnaires. For data collection, a random sample of women from varied socioeconomic levels and geographical areas within the county was chosen. Data obtained from qualitative interviews was used to investigate effects of the socio-cultural backdrop, gender norms, and women's experiences on engagements in livelihood activities. On the other hand, the quantitative survey data was used to assess effects of participants' access to resources, education levels, market involvement, and social networks. The study highlights a variety of interventions to improve women's economic empowerment, drawing on successful initiatives and best practices from various studies and from the analysis of data collected. The interventions include targeted education and vocational training programs, increased access to credit and provision of financial services to promote women's entrepreneurship, and enactment of gender-responsive policies. Based on the findings, the study makes a number of practical recommendations to policymakers, stakeholders, and the County Government. Among these are the need to strengthen legal frameworks to protect women's rights and address discriminatory practices faced by women, increase access to quality education and vocational training for women, promote women's leadership and representation in county and national level institutions, support financial inclusion initiatives for women, and encourage women's private sector engagement through gender-responsive business practices. By removing barriers to women's economic engagement, Tharaka Nithi County Government would at last create a more equal and prosperous future for everyone in the County.

Key words: Economic Empowerment, Labor, Livelihood, Livelihood choices

THEME 6:

LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND SOCIAL NORMS' EFFECTS ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

6.1 THE ROLE OF THE NGAS WOMAN IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

Yilritmwa Irene Goyol

Historians believe that the economic prowess of the Nigerian women has been in existence from the pre-colonial period. Although literature has portrayed the Nigerian woman as hardworking, the fact that women are full time entrepreneurs need to be emphasised. This study compliments existing literature on women's entrepreneurship activities in Ngasland. The paper examines the entrepreneurial ability and features of the Ngas woman. The Ngas is a tribe in Plateau State, Nigeria. Linguistics and historians have identified the Ngas to have originated from Yemen and belonged to the Sudanic Kash group of people who were originally cognate to the Nubians. The Ngas language belongs to the group of a very ancient Egyptian language. This tribe migrated into Nigeria through Borno to Bauchi and finally to the various places they now occupy in Plateau State. The study will be carried out through the theoretical lens of the socialist feminist theory. This theory seeks a radical change of the oppressive structures to liberate women to end the negative consequences of the patriarchal system, which makes women economically dependent on male individuals due to an uneven balance of wealth. In the pre-colonial period, the main occupation of the Ngas woman was subsistence agriculture. This improved with the introduction of cash economy during the colonial period. This paper highlights the role Ngas women play in entrepreneurship today.

Key words: Ngasland; entrepreneurial ability; hilly terrain; Farming; migration; patriarchal system

6.2 INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AND THEIR ROLE IN WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Prof. Catherine Ndungo & Prof. Peter Githinji

Although the linguistic approaches to the functions of language emphasize its role in maintenance social structures, it is important to bear in mind that language is never neutral and always represent reality from a biased perspective. Deviating from the Saussurean structuralist approach that claims that linguistic signs are arbitrary, linguistics anthropologists and ethnographers disentangle various facets of language that demonstrate that merely viewing it as a linguistic system whose sole purpose is communication fails to capture various structures, norms and taboos encoded in language that project reality from a biased perspective. In many communities in Kenya which are overwhelmingly patriarchal, language is bound to represent social structures that are products of the patriarchal order. Against this background, our goal in this paper is to look at how the mainstream languages in Kenya limits women's to information and services that are critical to their economic empowerment. We argue that while indigenous languages are regarded as the most accessible and logical means of communication amongst most rural women, these languages have been neglected to an extent that appear as though they are not well equipped to address various challenges that impede women's economic empowerment. They are hardly reformed to rid them of sexism, misrepresentations and underrepresentation which makes women invisible and hence marginal participants in the economic affairs in their communities. We argue that these disadvantage notwithstanding, indigenous languages when well harnessed are still the best option for empowering rural women, however, there is need for linguistic

and cultural reforms aimed at minimizing their possibility of being misused to entrench outdated gender stereotypes or to enforce cultural norms that hinder women's economic empowerment. The data for the paper will be derived through literature review guided by the Feminist Literarily Theory as expounded by Kolodny (1986). The paper rests on the premises that Women Economic Empowerment is best achieved through utilization of their indigenous languages which is their tool of self-expression.

Key words: Indigenous; Languages; Patriarchal; Economic; Empowerment; Cultural Norms

6.3 BELIEF SYSTEMS GENDER INEQUALITIES IN POST CONFLICT CONTEXTS: A CASE OF COMMUNITIES IN BOR, JONGLEI STATE, SOUTH SUDAN

Joy Obando, Thomas Kibutu, Chris Shisanya, Pacificah Okemwa, Susan Mwangi, Kennedy Gitu, Tedson Nyongesa, James Mutonyi, Okumba Miruka, John Maraigwa

The Kenyatta University (KU) staff and partners Catholic University of South Sudan and AG-MARK under the SPARC project team has been conducting research in Jonglei State, South Sudan. The goal of the research is to establish pathways to building gender responsive climate resilient communities in Bor. This paper presents part findings from the study based on both qualitative and quantitative primary data as well as secondary data collected in the year 2023. The paper argues that indigenous beliefs and practices including social and gender norms play a key role in entrenching gender inequalities and fueling conflicts in the region. On the other hand, the paper underlines indigenous practices that can be relied upon to bring about meaningful change in livelihood in South Sudan. The paper is based on both primary and secondary data collected during the aforementioned period. It is also informed by the socio-ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, (1977) which underlines the need for gender and social inclusion (GESI) in initiatives (projects and programmes) aimed at addressing the practical and strategic gender needs of the peoples in communities in Bor. The paper will therefore, explore indigenous beliefs and practices that inform adaption and resilience to climate change including those that inform food preservation and storage, live-stock management practices.

Key words: Adaptation, Climate change, GESI, Indigenous Knowledge, Resilience

6.4 GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: RECONFIGURING THE WAMKWASE CULTURAL NORM AMONG THE TIV (CENTRAL NIGERIA).

Terna Paise Agba, PhD

Culture and development are intricately interwoven and each influences the other in a progressive or retrogressive manner. While it is generally argued that the African continent is faced with the crisis of underdevelopment, it is also a fact that she harbours several cultural groups that have their unique practices in all aspects of life including gender relations and roles. The existing literature on African norms has extensively argued how some of them af-

affected women's equality and slowed their development. This piece is also intended to add to the body of existing literature by specifically examining the Tiv (in the central Nigeria's area) cultural group's wankwase cultural norm and determine how it has served as a clog to women's equality, empowerment and development. It will accordingly proffer solutions to the encumbrances inherent in the wankwase cultural norm and practice that serves as the clog to women's equality, empowerment and development. The paper will adopt the qualitative research method by employing the historical, descriptive and analytical approaches to the gathered evidence, which shall be obtained from oral, written and digital sources as well as participant observation/group discussions.

Key words: Culture, Development, Inequality, Patriarchy, Tiv society, and Women

THEME 7:

ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

7.1 SOCIO-CULTURAL AND GENDERED NORMS AFFECTING YOUNG WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN HORTICULTURE, POULTRY AND OIL CROPS VALUE CHAINS IN 8 COUNTIES IN WESTERN

Pacificah Okemwa & Joan Rakuomi

Young women's economic empowerment is to the Sustainable Development Goals. However, socio-cultural and gender norms impede their equal engagement in agricultural value chains in Western Kenya. These limit young women's equitable access to and control over resources, financial services, technology and markets that are key to their full involvement in the selected agricultural value chains with the aim of informing gender transformative interventions. A mixed-methods approach was employed. Both quantitative data and qualitative data from both primary and secondary sources. Key informant interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data from participants. Purposive sampling was used in identification of key informants and focus group discussion participants. The findings indicate that socio-cultural and gendered norms influence perceptions and govern behavior which in turn informed practices the key gender domains. Additionally, these restrict women's rights and access to land, financial services, markets, agricultural information and equipment. In furtherance, young women with disabilities and those living with HIV were twice as disadvantaged. Hence, while the government has good programs and forward-looking laws and policies, lack of gender disaggregated data and their poor implementation hinder progress and young women's economic empowerment. The paper concludes that a Gender transformational approach dealing with the discriminatory socio-cultural and gendered norms anchored on the social ecological framework and spread across all the GESI domains; access, decision-making, wellbeing, participation, and systems is needed if the young women are to fully participate in the selected value chains and be economically empowered.

Key words: Agriculture, Young women, Economic empowerment, Value chains.

7.2 BUILDING WOMEN'S RESILIENCE IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

Faith Kariuki & Damaris Kariuki

The 21st Century has witnessed major breakthroughs in scientific and technological development. Unfortunately, these developments have left in their wake environmental and climate change hazards, which include: droughts, floods, famines and pandemics. These have to a large extent dislodged the equilibrium that had existed prior to the onset of these changes. All these changes have had major impact on women, who find themselves at the centre of these scenes, either as victims or caregivers to victims of the hazards; with more socio-economic responsibilities. All these call for not only greater economic empowerment of women, but also greater resilience on their part, to be able to cope with the myriad of responsibilities that fall under their care. This study will conduct a desk review of issues facing women due to environmental and climate changes, as well as document working interventions to build their resilience, as a way of improving their economic situations. The results of the research, will be useful to administrators and policy makers among others.

Key Words: Climate change, Economic empowerment, Environment, Sustainable Development,

7.3 CLIMATE CHANGE AND WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Dr. Caroline Wandiri Mwea & Dr. Evans Onyango

Environmental degradation and climate change in arid region results to resource based conflict Propagated by resource use. As a result of these conflicts, women and children become victims of oppression and dehumanization. During settling of the conflict, women largely miss in this discussion yet they have been disempowered during the conflict. This paper seeks to examine post conflict peace building and whether it enhances women empowerment in societies emerging from environmental based conflict in Baringo County. The study will be guided by the assumption that peace building enhances women status after distress and dehumanization. The justification of this study is that women empowerment in conflict zones are issues that need a keen focus since the level of dehumanization during a conflict is high. The scope of the study will be Baringo County between 2012-2022; an explanatory design will be employed to collect qualitative data. The population of the study will be local men and women, administrators, opinion shapers and peace building champions, from whom oral interview will be conducted. The theory to interpret findings will be Environmental security theory by Thomas Homer-Dixon, (1956).

Key words: Conflict, Environment, Peace building, Women

7.4 THE CONSIDERATION OF GENDER IN THE MANAGEMENT OF DOMESTIC SOLID WASTE

Dr. Willy M. Mwangi

This paper will examine approaches employed differently by men and women in the management of domestic solid waste within informal settlements in Kenya. The migration of people, both men and women from the rural areas into the urban areas in search of better life has caused the increase of informal settlements. This has acted as a trigger to the increase of the generation of domestic solid waste at the household level. The paper will therefore examine the consideration of a gender perspective in the management of domestic solid waste, not only as a measure to reduce environmental degradation, but also as an initiative for advancing women's economic empowerment. This paper will investigate the DSWM practices men and women engage in within Kiandutu Informal Settlement in Kiambu County, Kenya. The consideration of gender is paramount as communities are made up of the two genders. With each displaying different characteristics, perceptions and behaviour towards a given situation. The study will employ exploratory research design whose choice will allow an in-depth view of the generation of both qualitative and quantitative data. Random sampling of the households and purposive sampling of the respondents will be used to identify the study sample. The study will be guided by two theories: Identity Theory and Social Context Theory. While the former assumes the rigidity of gender, the latter assumes its flexibility. The paper will also document the process, successes and challenges experienced in the endeavour of DSWM from a gender perspective.

Key words: Gender, Domestic solid waste management, informal settlements, environmental degradation, economic empowerment

7.5 THE SLOW VIOLENCE OF URBANIZATION: FEMINIST POLITICAL ECOLOGY PERSPECTIVES

Vani Bhardwaj

Slow violence wrests agency from the marginalized such as rural, indigenous women. The protracted consequences of environmental violence caused by the urbanizing processes of rural and peri-urban areas reflect the colonized dominant version of masculinities. Water, air and noise pollution represent the polluted ecosystems that foster slow violence, particularly on women's health. Such intersectional health injustices contribute to climate Change-Induced-Gender Based Violence (GBV). Inter alia, nano and micro pollution with toxins and aerosol pollution result in Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) disorders in women and girls across class, race and other intersections. Urban policymaking with its inclusivity in gender-responsive placemaking needs to integrate perspectives of ecological masculinities within the theoretical framings of Feminist Political Ecology (FPE) to empower women. Extrapolating solutions for urban policy in terms of the socio-economic, political-cultural ecosystems within the urbanizing landscape is serviced by the desk-based review of secondary literature and grey literature. This paper examines the effects of climate change-induced slow violence on marginalized women and girls. The invisible power asymmetry of gender-skewed urban policies causes deprivations congruent to slow violence caused by simultaneous processes of the Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect, desertification due to land use change, indoor and outdoor air pollution, water pollution and scarcity. The gender dimensions brought about by decolonial FPE in terms of urban policies, bring intersectional health equity for gender-marginalized communities in the 'Majority World' societies.

Keywords: Feminist Political Violence, Slow Violence, Urbanization, Health, Gender Based Violence.

7.6 ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Faith Adhiambo

Environment, climate change, sustainability is closely interconnected to either promote or impede women's economic empowerment. There's a strong dependency on fossil fuels to produce heat and electricity. Burning of fossil fuels releases a lot of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. The more gases are released into the atmosphere, thus more heat is trapped, strengthening the greenhouse effect. Compounded stress on water resources from current over-exploitation leads to degradation of the environment as well as excessive cutting of trees. Climate change can lead to drought, water stress and floods. When climate change occurs everyone is affected but women are greatly affected since they will go for longer distances in search of food, water and even fuel-wood because they are the major users, managers and producers of natural resources. It is believed that many women from in developing countries are in direct contact with natural resources and also that they have in-depth knowledge on maintenance of natural resources. Women's empowerment is vital for the establishment of sustainability. Increasing women's participation in environmental and climate mitigation discussions will enable creation of a sustainable and equitable future for all. Investing in resources that would ensure productivity and efficiency will boost women's economic engagement thus being an empowering factor. Creating an enabling environment such as ensuring women have access to credit, land and other resources that would be beneficial in ensuring their economic empowerment.

7.7 SYSTEMS THINKING ON CLIMATE CHANGE, WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH AND LIVELIHOODS IN KENYA

Njuguna, C.W., Wafula, T. J., Kerongo, S. O., & Mutune, F. M.

Climate change presents multifaceted challenges, with women disproportionately affected across various dimensions. This study synthesizes insights from existing literature, employing a system thinking approach to explore the nuanced impact of climate change on women's mental health and livelihoods in Kenya. A comprehensive review of reputable databases, yielded 445 articles and association reports, from which 163 were selected. This research delves into the complex interplay between climate change, mental health conditions such as anxiety, mood disorders, depression, and women's livelihoods. The findings underscore that women, due to societal and biological factors, are more vulnerable to the mental health impacts of climate change, experiencing heightened psychological distress amidst extreme weather events and disruptions to traditional livelihoods. The effects of climate change on women's mental health can be direct or indirect, short-term or long-term. Acute events may lead to immediate psychopathological patterns resembling traumatic stress, while prolonged exposure to extreme weather can result in delayed consequences such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), with potential intergenerational transmission. Understanding and mitigating these effects are crucial not only for empowering women economically but also for preventing the transmission of mental illness to future generations. Collaborative interventions involving policymakers, civil society organizations, and stakeholders are crucial in mainstreaming gender perspectives, fostering economic inclusion, and enhancing resilience against climate-related mental health challenges. Leveraging geographic information systems for climate change projections and technological advancements strengthens the research's impact and contribution to sustainable solutions for women in developing communities.

Key Words: Systems Thinking; Climate Change; Mental Health; Women Livelihoods; Empowerment

THEME 8:

CARE WORK AND ITS EFFECTS ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

8.1 CARE WORK AND ITS EFFECTS ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN AFRICA

Prof. Julius Omona

Care work is part of the informal economy where the majority of women in Africa are employed. In sub-Saharan Africa, informal employment varies in the different regions of the continent (33 per cent in South Africa, 44 per cent in Namibia, 82 per cent in Mali and 76 per cent in Tanzania). In all the regions, women constitute the majority of care workers. This submission is part of an ongoing research being conducted under GETSPA. It's a desk review and qualitative in approach. Across Africa, there is a range of care work under taken by women from domestic chores to gardening. Care work affects girls' enrolment, attendance, performance in school and abuse their right to education, protection and future decent work. The time spend to do unpaid care work gives women no time to engage in decent safe and waged employment and affects their health and access to other services. The opportunity cost of engaging in care work is hardly documented. Care work does not give room for women to participate in local political engagements. Even with formal working women, the care work has been found to persist across their life cycles-from child care to education and training. The effects have been found to have escalated during COVID-19 where women reported direct and indirect increase in care work. All these effects dis-empower women, and cause them to remain vulnerable to exploitation and marginalization in society. It is recommended that to empower women economically, governments in Africa have to, amongst other interventions, rethink their social policy, especially in respect of Social Security, Social Protection, Maternity benefits and domestic workers.

Key words: unpaid care work.

8.2 HOME BASED CHILDCARE WORK & ITS EFFECTS ON WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Catherine Ndungo & Daniel Ngugi

Childcare is one of the occupations for women at their reproductive age, and many times they get bogged down by the work and are unable to engage in productive work, yet the economic situation prevailing in the world today demands that women engage in productive work, and some cannot afford to hire a house help. This forces them to get out of their homes to go and engage in productive work because childcare leads them to getting into poverty. Recently in Kenya, there has emerged a group mostly of elderly women who are now providing home-based childcare services to the younger and productive women, who now attend their productive work while the old women look after the children. This was an Indigenous African societies' phenomenon where the grandmothers used to look after the children. Today, those grandmothers and the younger women don't normally share the same homesteads. Young women invite groups of older women into their spaces who are taking their time off, or they use their spaces to take care of these young women's children. The younger women bring food, diapers and clothes to ease the work of the older women's childcare while they become economically productive, while the older women also get economically empowered through income earned from their childcare work, hence meeting their needs; especially at this time of their age when they're not energetic enough to engage in productive work outside their areas of occupation. This economic structure benefits both the young and the old women. The proposed paper is derived from a study of this phenomena. Its objectives are to establish how child care work transferred to the elderly

women releases time to the young women to do productive work as well as enabling the older women to be empowered economically, it will explore the benefits of this symbiotic relationship between the young and the old women as far as care work is concerned, the challenges encountered by the two parties and mitigation measures in place to address the limitations of the structure. The study will be guided by the theory of change. The study site will be in Thika sub county in Kiambu county. Data will be conducted using online questionnaire. It is anticipated that the findings will provide evidence that this economic structure can be formalised and replicated for enhancing professional home-based childcare, easing the burden of women while providing economic empowerment for both young and old women.

Key Words: Women Economic Empowerment, Home based Childcare, Income, Home Space, Home Time, Economic structure

8.3 SUPPORTING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOUR FORCE: RAPID EVIDENCE REVIEWS FROM RIGOROUS STUDIES

Dr. Jemima Okal

The increase in unpaid labor such as childcare has often resulted in women reducing their participation in the labor force or shifting into informal work, and these women are more likely than men to bring their children to work. Researchers have found that childcare responsibility is associated with a “baby-profit gap”—where a business with a child present earns 48 percent lower profits than even other women-led businesses where a child is not present. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, women cited childcare as a major reason why they do not seek employment. However, the COVID-19 containment and response measures such as out-of-school periods, stay-at-home orders, and protections in response to heightened health risks for the elderly increased the time and intensity of unpaid care work that women perform. IPA reviewed rigorous evidence on interventions that support women's return to the labor force and/or increase their participation in the workforce. We also share evidence-based insights from a meta-analysis of randomized evaluations in low and middle-income countries (LMIC) on how to support young women's skill-building and their transition into the labour force in low- and middle-income countries, with a focus on the COVID-19 crisis. These studies show that access to free or affordable childcare services enables and increases women's participation in the workforce. Interventions such as vouchers for subsidized care, free public preschool programs, free after-school programs, stress management programs and soft skills trainings have been shown to increase women's employment and labor force participation. Similarly, soft skills training and programs that build women's self-confidence show promise in increasing women's participation in economic activities, as well as programs with features that give women more control and agency over their resources could increase the performance of women-led businesses. These insights coupled with a review of emerging evidence on the impact of interventions during the COVID-19 crisis may help inform the design of programs and policies to support women-led businesses in the LMIC during the pandemic and beyond.

Key Words: Unpaid care, Women's skilling, Randomized trials

8.4 EFFECT OF CHILDCARE COSTS ON WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE LABOUR FORCE. EVIDENCE FROM. THARAKA NITHI COUNTY, KENYA

Kirema Maruta Abraham, Dr. Christopher Nkonge Kiboro, Dr. Tabitha Mbungu, & Grace N. Ngigi

Women's participation in childcare and workforce is currently a significant topic of scientific interest and policy significance. However, the availability of child care facilities has not kept pace with the rise in the number of mothers who have small children, especially in less developed countries. There is an absence of dependable statistics concerning the association between women's engagement in the labour market in Kenya and the childcare costs. There is some evidence from both Europe and the United States that points to a favourable association between women's engagement in the labour force and child care costs; however, cultural constraints prohibit these findings from being generalized to a nation like Kenya. As a result, the purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which childcare costs influences a woman's choice regarding whether or not to participate in the labour force in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. This research was grounded in the rational choice hypothesis. The study aimed to reach 24,000 moms to infants and toddlers, who were dispersed over 577-day cares, as indicated by the County Development Plan for 2018-2022. The descriptive research method was used for this study. There were a total of 384 people who took part in the study, and they were all chosen at random. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to examine the quantitative data obtained through questionnaires. The findings demonstrated a strong correlation between women's labour force participation and the childcare costs.

Key Words: Child Care costs, Women's Participation, Labour Market, Children

8.5 CARE WORK AND ITS EFFECTS ON WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Dr. Edna Moi

Care Work plays a critical role in human well-being and economic development, particularly emphasizing the disproportionate burden shouldered by women globally. Care work, which includes unpaid or underpaid activities related to caregiving, has profound implications for women's participation in the workforce and their ability to achieve economic independence. This report synthesizes key findings from research conducted in different projects at different times and provides insights into the challenges, opportunities, and potential interventions in this domain. Women's extensive involvement in unpaid care work significantly impacts their economic empowerment, leading to gender disparities in labour force participation, wages, and job quality. The study found that unequal distribution of caring responsibilities between men and women, rooted in social norms, is a barrier to women's full engagement in the paid economy. Addressing these inequalities in unpaid care work is crucial for advancing gender equality and enhancing women's economic empowerment. Neglecting the recognition, reduction, and redistribution of unpaid care work perpetuates gender disparities and limits women's opportunities for economic advancement and leadership roles. The study recommends efforts to alleviate the unequal burden of care work on women to transform their economic empowerment and contribute to broader gender equality goals.

Key words: care work, women economic empowerment, unpaid, workforce, caring responsibilities.

8.6 HARMONIZATION OF APPLICATION OF ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR THREE YEAR OLDS IN THARAKA NITHI COUNTY, KENYA

Esther Gachara, Eunice Mvungu, Samson Oteyo, Judith Waudu, Simon Onywere, Jackline Kanana, Veronica Kaburu & Naomi Kawira

The Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) intervention in Tharaka Nithi County seeks to examine the impact of enrolling 3-year-olds to PP1 class under an enhanced curriculum and learning environment. To pave way for the implementation of the intervention a baseline survey was conducted to determine the developmental status of children participating in the project. The baseline assessment of children focused on children's motor skills, emergent literacy, emergent numeracy and social emotional development. Due to lack of culturally relevant tools the assessment utilized adapted tools from western culture: Daberon-2-screening tool for school and learning readiness; Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI-2030) and Preschool Self-Regulation Assessment (PSRA). This necessitated harmonization of the assessment process to ensure standardization of tool administration, fidelity, protocol adherence, proficiency and competency of assessors. Fifteen (15) assessors with proficiency of the dialects spoken within in the county were recruited and trained for 6 days in a group didactic learning process and three weeks' simulation based training for fidelity check using a sample of 80 children. The sampling of children was conducted in households that were within the radius of 3kms. Training was done by child specialists and child psychologist through demonstrations and role plays. Trainees were able to improve their proficiency in terms of tool administration and scoring. The training also ensured harmony in assessment of children from various parts of the county with different dialects as observed during fidelity checks during assessment in the field.

Key words: Standardization, Assessors, Assessment, Simulation, Role play

8.7 INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN WHOSE CHILDREN ARE IN RANDOMIZED CONTROL TRIAL (RCT) INTERVENTION IN THARAKA NITHI COUNTY, KENYA

Dr. Margaret Mwangi, Prof. Judith Waudu, Prof. Simon Onywere, Dr. Teresa Mwoma & Dr. Hudson Ouko

Unleashing women's economic potential requires changes in how care work is valued and distributed within households and workplaces, and shared between men and women. Studies show that good quality childcare services may enable women participate more in income generating activities. Providing care for children is an indispensable but grossly undervalued part of the global economy. While both men and women rely on quality care to enable their participation in economic, political, and social life, most unpaid care is provided by women and girls, leaving them with less time for engaging in income generating activities. Women perform three times more unpaid care duties than men. Lack of childcare support for mothers can prohibit them from entering the labor market, or restrict them to take sub-optimal jobs to balance and manage the childcare responsibilities. One of the ways to assist women engage in income generating activities is to relieve them unpaid care work by allowing their children join pre-primary school at an early age. RCT project has been launched in 60 primary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya that allow children who are below four years to join pre-primary school. The current paper focuses on the extent to which women whose children are in the intervention programme are engaged in

income generating activities. It further discusses the types of activities that allow women participate in economic development. The paper recommends policy formulation and development of a tool by the Ministry of Education to guide teachers teaching children who are below 4-year-old with a view of enhancing children's learning and allow women engage in income generating activities.

Keywords: Women Participation, unpaid care work

8.8 CAREGIVING AND CHILDREN'S PRESCHOOL ATTENDANCE: A CASE OF THARAKA NITHI PRESCHOOL INTERVENTION PROJECT

Teresa Mwoma, Simon Onywere, Dorothy Naivasha, Judith Waudu, James Onditi, Hudson Ouko, Margaret Mwangi, Jonathan Mwiti, Joseph Mutegi

Caregiving involves ensuring that children are safe and have opportunities to learn and develop positive relationships with caregivers and other children. It is a service provided for children with the primary objective of taking care of them, while their parents are away. Various types of caregiving exist among them; home-based, centre-based as well as family and other informal arrangements. This paper focuses on centre-based caregiving with reference to preschool centres. The paper utilizes preliminary findings on attendance from a randomized controlled trial evaluation of the effects of a preschool intervention on child learning and women's economic empowerment in Tharaka Nithi County. The research seeks to test whether a preschool based cost-effective intervention approach in rural Kenya influences child development and economic participation for women. The project is examining the impact of allowing three-year-old children in Tharaka Nithi County (TNC) to attend preschool versus the current preprimary education programming which allows children aged 4 years and above to attend preschool. Implementation of the intervention started in January 2024 in 60 intervention schools where five three-year-old children were admitted to play group (PG) in the preprimary one (PP1) class. Twelve mentors and sixty caregivers were recruited and trained alongside sixty PP1 teachers from the sampled preschools to implement an adapted PP1 curriculum. The twelve mentors coach the teachers drawn from five schools each, on implementation of the curriculum. This paper presents preliminary findings on preschool attendance for the PG and PP1 children based on weekly attendance data collected in term one 2024 by mentors on the day they visit schools. The findings reveals that schools located in upland high productivity zones, such as Magumoni, Karingani, Ganga, and Mwimbi, consistently had higher learner numbers (averaging over 5 children) in PG compared to those situated in lowland areas of Igambang'ombe, Gatunga and Mukothima. Mukothima in particular exhibited the lowest attendance rates, with all her schools registering fewer than 5 learners on average. Conversely, Magumoni and Mugwe demonstrated higher attendance averages, with all selected schools in these areas having more than 5 learners. The disparity in attendance rates between upland and lowland schools can largely be attributed to physical geographical environment and the distances travelled to schools. The distance that children living in remote lowland areas must travel to reach school is significantly greater than that of their counterparts in upland regions. Given the age of these children, the physical effort required to navigate these distances can be prohibitive, further compounded by the time commitment involved by their parents to taken the children to school.

Key words: Caregiving, Playgroup, Pre-primary, Preschool attendance, Preschool intervention

Acknowledgments

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