

# Support for Gender Equality in Kenya

## OVERVIEW

Kenya's economy is growing. Poverty is declining and devolution is bringing government closer to Kenyan citizens. The benefits of growth are not always equally shared, however, and Kenyan women still remain disadvantaged economically, socially and politically. USAID supports efforts and activities to advance the rights of females enshrined in Kenya's constitution, including property rights, equitable access to education, quality health care and political representation. Promoting gender equality involves working with men, boys, women and girls to bring about changes at home, in the workplace and in the community.

## PROGRAM AREAS

### Democracy, Rights and Governance

#### Women's Political & Civic Participation

Devolution has created greater opportunities for women's participation in governance and decision-making. USAID programs increasing women's participation in local government and deepening their understanding of their responsibilities as elected officials; strengthening the voice of women in leadership positions; empowering men and women through civic education and public discussions.

Women's civil-society networks and nearly 5,700 citizens, more than half of them women remain especially active as community-level civic educators advocating for gender-sensitive budgeting at the local and county levels. These efforts have built stronger relationships between the community and local government officials while addressing specific policy needs of women and girls. More than 2,300 women across 26 political parties received training in leadership and governance, including 1,100 government officials ranging from deputy governors, members of county assemblies and executive committees.

USAID continues working to advance advocacy efforts and strengthening local civil society organizations to demand for accountability from the political and public leadership on implementing the constitutional provisions on gender equality.

#### Peacebuilding & Conflict Mitigation

Women and girls in Kenya disproportionately experience conflict and play a critical role in the peace and reconciliation process. USAID has expanded its Kenya Tuna Uwezo (KTU) activity to address factors used to manipulate a segment of Kenyan youth already estranged, frustrated and vulnerable. The activity uses a people-to-people approach focusing on dialogues and capacity building of youth, women, community leaders and civil-society organizations to address conflict and violent extremism.

#### Improving Health and Nutrition

#### Treatment and Prevention of HIV/AIDS

The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) provides Kenyan girls and women with prevention, care and treatment services for HIV/AIDS. Transmission of HIV from mothers to babies during birth is decreasing, thanks to innovative approaches like Mentor Mothers, an



#### USAID/Kenya Contacts:

##### Karen Freeman

Mission Director, USAID

Tel: + 254 (0) 20 862 2000

Email: [kfreeman@usaid.gov](mailto:kfreeman@usaid.gov)

##### Betty Mugo

Gender Specialist, USAID

Tel: + 254 (0) 708 284 421

Email: [bmugo@usaid.gov](mailto:bmugo@usaid.gov)

#### Activity Areas:

- Maternal health, HIV prevention and treatment, and family planning.
- Women's leadership and political participation.
- Prevention of gender-based violence.
- Education and youth empowerment.
- Peacebuilding and conflict mitigation.
- Economic growth and resilience.
- Environment and natural resource management.

#### Achievement Snapshots:

- A network of 500 peace advocates has helped more than 8,000 survivors of gender-based violence get support services.
- 26 political parties and more than 2,300 party members and activists are working to increase women's leadership and participation in governance.
- 1.3 million Mothers were tested, counseled and received antiretroviral drugs for prophylaxis to prevent the transmission of HIV.
- More than Ksh 127.5 million (\$1.5 million) worth of maternal and child health commodities delivered to the Ministry of Health, for distribution to all 47 counties.
- 365,000 women farmers are applying new technologies or management practices
- Through a partnership with Coca-Cola, more than 2,500 women entrepreneurs under age 35 have accessed loans.

initiative that trains HIV-positive mothers to provide information and counseling to other pregnant or breastfeeding women who have tested positive for HIV. The Ministry of Health and county health teams are already integrating the approach in a national Mentor Mothers Program, which will make these services available in every county.

USAID's programs also improve the HIV/AIDS knowledge, attitudes, and practices of primary and secondary school aged students through peer, school, and community-based interventions. Training targets peer educators who reach female and male students with HIV prevention messages, negotiations skills and other gender related roles and responsibilities to mitigate the impact of the AIDS epidemic on the younger generation. Similarly, through targeted support to the Ministry of Education at the county and sub-county levels, USAID is supporting training on the dissemination of the revised Education Sector Policy on HIV/AIDS with content on delivering gender-appropriate messages to both girls and boys.

### **Improving Maternal and Family Health**

The Government of Kenya introduction of free maternity services has removed financial barriers and opened access to care for all new and expectant mothers. To complement this policy, USAID provides essential maternal and child health commodities, training and supportive supervision to facilities and health workers, to better equip them to provide quality obstetric care.

### **Gender-Based Violence**

USAID supports networks and organizations that are increasing awareness of gender-based violence, increasing access and utilization of gender-based violence services provision through community outreach and providing safe spaces and support for victims throughout Kenya. These networks and organizations incorporate gender-based violence alerts into existing early warning mechanisms to directly disseminate specific threats and warnings regarding violence against women to local responders; train peace advocates, including "male champions," to build awareness around gender-based violence and provide survivors with access to integrated support services.

USAID's Peace Initiative Kenya (PIK) activity is strengthening target county governments to effectively address gender-based violence through improved provision of services and relevant policy implementation. At the national level, the activity contributed to the process leading to the enactment of the PADV Act 2015 which provides for the protection and justice of victims/ survivors of GBV. The activity also supports a national helpline, which allows GBV survivors to get immediate referral to medical/legal and psychosocial support services working to combat gender-based violence. The activity has reached nearly 6000 people with GBV messages through radio programming.

### **Economic Growth and Natural Resources**

Women provide 80 percent of Kenya's farm labor and manage 40 percent of the country's smallholder farms, yet they own only roughly 1 percent of agricultural land and receive just 10 percent of available credit. Feed the Future resources focus on innovations in agricultural labor-saving technologies and practices to reduce women's labor burden, linking women to extension services, markets and private enterprises and introducing alternative livelihoods in the pastoral areas. The result is economically empowered women, improved household nutritional status, and women farmers applying new technologies or management practices, savings accounts or insurance policies.

Women are on the front lines of conserving Kenya's resources and rejuvenating its degraded landscapes. Many women now have a greater say in the management of natural resources through their participation in community-resource governance structures, such as water-user associations, community forest associations and community conservancies. Women are also running successful nature-based businesses and earning Kshs 110.5 million through enterprises from natural products, eco-tourism, tree nurseries and traditional handicrafts. Productive engagement of women and girls in leadership positions and decision-making remains instrumental to improving natural resource management and household livelihoods while curbing conflict.

### **Education and Youth**

In partnership with the Clinton Global Initiative Global Give Back Circle and more than 20 other public and private entities, USAID has given 573 female students scholarships for tertiary education, mentoring and personal and professional support. The girls make a commitment to "give back" to their community as a condition of joining the initiative. An additional 2,678 disadvantaged girls are attending high school through a public-private partnership with Equity Group Foundation, MasterCard Foundation, UKAid and Germany's KfW.

USAID's Yes Youth Can (YYC) bunge endeavor to break traditional gender roles that hinder women from participating in entrepreneurial activities. 29 county youth bunge Savings Cooperative and Credit Organizations (SACCOs) are open to both men and women, and offer equal opportunities to establish and promote business ventures. YYC partners with Coca-Cola's 5by20 initiative to empower female bunge members to gain knowledge and promote healthy lifestyles while establishing local businesses.