



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



## ENGENDERING UTILITIES PARTNER PROFILE KENYA POWER, KENYA

USAID is proud to work with Kenya Power in their commitment to improve gender equality in the energy sector as part of their path to long-term success.

When women serve as policymakers, executives, employees, and entrepreneurs, evidence shows that energy and water policies are more effective, utility products have higher sales rates and yield higher returns on equity and investment. **USAID's Engendering Utilities program seeks to strengthen the energy and water sectors by increasing the professional participation of women.** Kenya Power has been working with USAID through the Engendering Utilities program to collaboratively design tailored interventions to improve gender equality outcomes and meet core business goals.

Kenya Power owns and operates most of the electricity transmission and distribution system across the whole of Kenya and sells electricity to over 6.7 million customers.<sup>1</sup> In 2018, the utility reported employing more than 8,000 men and approximately 2,000 women. **Kenya Power is committed to increasing their gender balance and encouraging more women to enter the electricity sector. The utility will focus on increasing the female representation throughout the entire workforce, including senior management level.**

PHOTO: CLARE NOVAK / USAID

## KENYA'S ENERGY SECTOR

Kenya has one of the most developed power sectors in sub-Saharan Africa, having opened its market to Independent Power Producers (IPPs) in the mid-1990s.<sup>2</sup> Approximately 64 percent of the Kenyan population has access to electricity,<sup>3</sup> which is generated from a variety of resources, including hydro, thermal, geothermal, and other renewables.<sup>4</sup>

## GENDER EQUALITY IN KENYA

Kenya ratified a new constitution in 2010, which has improved women's rights. However, many women face challenges including a limited participation in the social, economic, and political processes. Labor force participation rates for men and women are nearly equal in Kenya (69 percent and 64 percent), however, almost 63 percent of Kenyan women work in agriculture.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, women are underrepresented in industry, with only two percent of total female employment.<sup>6</sup> According to the World Bank, 18 percent of firms in Kenya have female top managers.<sup>7</sup> However, the gender pay gap in Kenya remains: On average a man earns 55 percent more than a woman.<sup>8</sup>

In general, Kenyan women are well educated, with a literacy rate of 74 percent.<sup>9</sup> According to the World Bank, the female share of graduates from STEM programs was roughly 31 percent in 2016.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, gender-based violence, including sexual violence, rape, physical violence, and sexual harassment are a prominent topic in women's daily lives.<sup>11</sup>

## GENDER EQUALITY IN ACTION

Kenya Power is working with USAID's Engendering Utilities program to develop and implement a tailored action plan to incorporate gender equity into its business practices. Data collected and analyzed through Engendering Utilities revealed that women were represented in almost all areas of operations within the company. Kenya Power enjoyed a higher percentage of female employees than other utility companies in the sample. However, the utility had plateaued in recruiting women between 2010 and 2014. Additional findings illustrated disparities in employment outcomes and in the way the utility ran its business, both of which ultimately impact women's ability to fully participate in the company.

The action plan included targeted interventions, such as the institution of competency-based hiring selection processes to reduce gender bias during job candidate selection processes. Activities included the development of a Gender Equity in Action gender awareness media campaign within the company. The campaign focused on promoting gender equity in monthly communications and articles in *STEMA*, Kenya Power's corporate magazine.



PHOTO: RTI / USAID

Kenya Power's HR specialists also took part in Engendering Utilities' customized Gender Equity Executive Leadership (GEELP) program, in partnership with Georgetown University. The program's capstone project required participants to address methods to integrate gender equity into the HR employee lifecycle and utilize advanced change management approaches to maximize their company's cultural evolution. Participants then presented their recommendations to the utility's top leadership. The executive course was complemented by customized expert coaching, as well as the development of a global employee life cycle best practices framework and an equity scorecard to document lessons learned and track progress. This approach provided a model that can be applied to other corporate settings. The Kenya Power Team graduated from the GEELP program in 2018.

## IMPACT

Kenya Power's participation in the Engendering Utilities program has resulted in significant and substantial progress toward a gender-equitable future for the company, including:

- Kenya Power experienced a 61 percent increase in the number of women participating in training programs between 2014 and 2018.
- In 2018, the National Women's Day was celebrated with a self-funded event for the first time.
- Kenya Power adopted 10 days of paid paternity leave in addition to 90 paid days of maternity leave.
- Kenya Power partnered with the Institute of Engineers of Kenya to encourage girls to study STEM subjects for their careers. Women engineers have been visiting girls' high schools to discuss career choices in engineering with the aim of changing attitudes and perceptions towards engineering.
- One of Kenya Power's female engineers was featured in an article in the Kenyan newspaper *The Star*, where she talked about being an engineer in a male-dominated industry.
- Female engineers were sponsored to attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> Women Engineer's Summit to receive training.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*"Personally, I have been changed. My behavior is different, my thinking is different. I know more now about gender issues and gender mainstreaming and what is required to achieve gender parity. [During the program,] we had deep discussions about women's contributions and how we may be losing a lot of resources if we don't include women in leadership and other areas. Previously, I did not think about these issues."*

*– Francis Kangure, Manager of Human Resources, Kenya Power*

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Amanda Valenta**  
Energy Specialist  
Office of Energy and  
Infrastructure,  
USAID  
avalenta@usaid.gov

**Corinne Hart**  
Senior Advisor for  
Gender and Environment  
Office of Gender Equality and  
Women's Empowerment,  
USAID  
cohart@usaid.gov

**Jessica Menon**  
Program Manager  
Tetra Tech  
Jessica.Menon@tetratech.com

The Engendering Utilities program is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The program is currently implemented by Tetra Tech ES, Inc., under USAID's Scaling up Renewable Energy contract (AID-OAA-I-13-00019AID-OAA-TO-17-00011).

## NOTES

- 1 KPLC. (2019). Who we are: Retrieved from <https://www.kplc.co.ke/content/item/14/about-kenya-power>
- 2 USAID. (2019). Kenya Fact Sheet. Retrieved from <https://www.usaid.gov/powerafrica/kenya>
- 3 World Bank. (2019). Access to electricity. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.ELC.ACCS.ZS?locations=KE>
- 4 USAID. (2019). Kenya Fact Sheet. Retrieved from <https://www.usaid.gov/powerafrica/kenya>
- 5 World Bank. (n.d.). Gender Data Portal. Retrieved from <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/country/kenya>
- 6 World Bank. (n.d.). Gender Data Portal. Retrieved from <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/country/kenya>
- 7 USAID. IDEA Country Dashboard. Retrieved from <https://idea.usaid.gov/cd/kenya/gender>
- 8 GenderGap Africa. (2019). Retrieved from <https://gendergap.africa>
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 World Bank. (2019). Gender Statistics. Retrieved from [https://databank.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.TER.GRAD.FE.SI.ZS?id=2ddc971b&report\\_name=Gender\\_Indicators\\_Report&populartype=series](https://databank.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.TER.GRAD.FE.SI.ZS?id=2ddc971b&report_name=Gender_Indicators_Report&populartype=series)
- 11 UN Women. (n.d.). Kenya. Retrieved from <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/eastern-and-southern-africa/kenya>