

WOMEN LEAD, PARTICIPATE IN AND BENEFIT EQUALLY FROM GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS



Photo: UN Women/Faith Bwibo

Lessons from the following evaluations:

(all evaluations available at <https://gate.unwomen.org/>)

2018

Country Portfolio Evaluation.
South Sudan.



2017

Mid-term evaluation of the
Malawi Gender Based Governance
Programme.



2018

Country Portfolio Evaluation.
Tanzania.



2016

Country Portfolio Evaluation.
Burundi.



2018

Evaluation of Joint Programme
“Advancing and Sustaining Gender
Equality Gains in Rwanda”



2017

Final Project Evaluation:
Wanawake Wanaweza Project on
Women Leadership and Political
Participation. Tanzania.



2017

Mid-term Evaluation of UN Women
Country Strategic Note. Kenya.



2015

Country Portfolio Evaluation.
Mozambique.



2016

Country Portfolio Evaluation.
Ethiopia.



1. WHY IS WOMEN LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT?



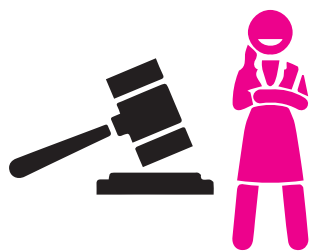
Photo: UN Women/Faith Bwibo

The effective participation of women in leadership, politics and governance processes is still of great concern in many countries in the East and Southern Africa region, and there are persistent patterns of gender inequalities and discrimination against women.

They result in low levels of female representation in parliament and different levels of government positions. While most countries have adopted affirmative measures to increase opportunities for

women participation in leadership overall, there has been little progress in the active political participation of women. However, UN Women has engaged in various areas of supporting women in such spheres in the region. They include strengthening the legal and policy environment for enhancing women's political participation, training women political candidates to help build their capacities, voter and civic education and sensitization campaigns on gender equality.

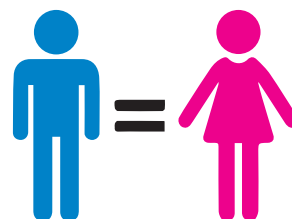
Key strategies to strengthen women leadership and political participation.



**STRENGTHEN
THE LEGAL AND POLICY
ENVIRONMENT**



**CAPACITY BUILDING FOR
WOMEN
POLITICAL CANDIDATES**



**CAMPAIGNS
ON GENDER
EQUALITY**

2. WHICH APPROACHES HAVE PROVEN EFFECTIVE FOR INCREASING WOMEN LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION?



Photo: UN Women Africa

The support of UN Women to gender equality advocates and women's groups for developing a women's common agenda for national dialogue processes, e.g., supporting engendering the constitutions, has proven critical in several countries. Further examples include the production of position papers and advocacy materials that call on political parties and governments to do their part in empowering women.

Another critical area of support from UN Women was on changing attitudes of influential people such as political party leaders, religious and community

leaders, to make them more supportive of women's

leadership and political participation. Analyses of the critical constraints to women's access to leadership positions confirmed the need for such support. These include harassment, intimidation and violence during elections, but also the political parties' nomination procedures and codes of conduct.

Evaluations acknowledge that UN Women provided valuable inputs to developing the next generation of potential women national leaders in various countries in the region. A key strategy included providing access to transformational leadership skills training for women in government, civil society, and the private sector. This effectively contributed to the repositioning of women in the national administrative machineries. It also supported the social inclusion of youth and persons with disabilities (PWDs) in electoral processes.

Experiences in many countries have shown that top leadership commitment to gender equality is critical for advancing women leadership, political participation and benefit from governance systems. Accordingly, leaders in all sectors at national and community levels must be involved, engaged and be held accountable for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Leadership commitment should go together with the allocation of financial resources and the alignment of institutional objectives towards the achievement of gender equality in the various leadership, political and governance spaces.

Key enablers for enhancing women leadership and political participation



ATTITUDES OF
INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE,
E.G., POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS,
RELIGIOUS AND COMMUNITY
LEADERS



TOP LEADERSHIP
COMMITMENT
TO GENDER
EQUALITY

3. HOW CAN UN WOMEN IMPROVE ITS WORK ON WOMEN LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION?



Photo: UN Women/Faith Bwibo

A useful starting point for interventions in the area of women leadership and political participation for UN Women and its partners is to strengthen the country political context analysis based on its Theory of Change (ToC). The Theory of Change provides the ‘big picture’ of how the intervention is expected to contribute to a chain of results that produce impacts. Very importantly, it also shows the other factors which contribute to creating impacts such as context, assumptions and risks.

This allows for a more analytical and holistic approach to the political empowerment of women and its strategic integration into the country development agenda, including human rights and poverty reduction. Together with the rest of the UN Family, UN Women should continue their long-term investment from the UN System as a whole. There is a need for more analytical and holistic approaches to empower women as well as for more effective direct

advocacy with key stakeholders. These initiatives should be coupled with increased investment in approaches that strategically integrate women's political participation and leadership in the national poverty reduction and human rights agenda.

Several evaluations point to the critical importance of engaging men as gender advocates. Achieving gender equality is about transforming unequal power relations between men and women. It requires men to question power dynamics at the personal and societal levels and to give the space to women and youth in political leadership and governance systems.

In the area of capacity building, UN Women should scale up the mapping and training of political aspirants and candidates, gender advocates, representatives from the women's caucus, and women's groups across countries in East and Southern Africa. For an effective scaling up, UN Women should establish a pool of experienced trainers, e.g., from selected civil society organizations' networks and training institutions through women Training of Trainers (ToTs). Training manuals developed in one country should be shared and disseminated to facilitate and replicate similar leadership capacity building programmes in other countries. Evaluations, for instance, in Kenya, have also recommended that UN Women should advocate for political parties to 'walk the talk' regarding their commitments towards gender equality so that women take part in and benefit from political leadership and decision-making positions. The advocacy could include nominating political leaders and distributing party committee slots from among the pool of female members having undergone leadership trainings.

Evaluations have also highlighted the critical nexus between women's leadership and their role in peace building. The political empowerment of women has increased awareness of the need to support and sensitize fellow women in leadership and administrative institutions. In Kenya, this proved as an effective strategy for enhancing their role and capacity in peace-building and countering violent extremism (CVE) in particular.