County Government of Meru

Maua Municipality

MAUA MUNICIPALITY
MUNICIPAL MANAGER
27 FEB 2026
SIGN:
MERU COUNTY GOVERNMENT

GENDER INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK

SEPTEMBER 2025

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Definitions of Key Terms

Gender	Refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially and culturally constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time. Thus, gender not only refers to "sex" in a biological sense but also associates sex with specific roles and behaviors expected to women and men by society.
Gender perspective	A perspective that focuses on gender issues, needs, and impacts arising from the different social roles and power relations of women and men in all spheres of the society, including policies, programs, institutions, and organizations. In development projects, this perspective is indispensable to deliver equitable benefits to women, girls and all other beneficiaries regardless of their gender.
Gender Mainstreaming	It is the (re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.
Gender based violence	Refers to any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females. It is a violation of human rights that stems from unequal power relations and is rooted in structural, political, economic, and social imbalances.
Gender inclusion	It is the intentional, active process of creating environments - policies, workplaces, and societies—where people of all gender identities and expressions are respected, safe, represented, and given equal opportunities to participate. It goes beyond equality by addressing specific barriers that exclude women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals.

ABBREVIATIONS

GBV Gender Based Violence

FGM Female Genital Mutilation

CIDP County Integrated Development Plan

PLWD Persons Living With Disability

KEPHS Kenya Essential Package of Health Services

CBOs Community-based organizations

ECDE Early Childhood Development and Education

VTCs Vocational Training Centres

UN United Nations

CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women

ILO International Labour Organizations

EAC East African Community

SDGs Sustainable Development Goals

ICPD International Conference on Population and Development

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Scope

The County Government of Meru put in place gender policies to ensure gender equality, equity, inclusion and participation in its development agenda. The developed policies are the Gender Mainstreaming policy and Gender Based Violence (GBV) policy.

In line with these policies as well as national and international policies, Maua Municipality developed the Gender Inclusion and Participation Framework to provide a road map for gender inclusion in its planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes. The Municipality is responsible for urban planning and design which must be implemented by integrating gender inclusion and participation in decision making thus enabling urban and peri-urban areas to be more equitable, safe and accessible hence fostering sustainable development and service delivery centred on citizens.

Importance of gender inclusivity and participation in urban planning and design:

1. Safety and Accessibility:

Gender-inclusive planning ensures that public spaces, transportation, and infrastructure are safe and accessible for everyone, particularly women and marginalized genders. Features like well-lit streets, secure public transit and accessible pathways can reduce harassment and enhance mobility.

2. Economic Empowerment:

Supporting women-owned businesses and gender-sensitive labour policies. Designing market places, commercial areas, and public facilities with gender considerations can empower women and Persons Living With Disability (PLWD) economically. For instance, providing childcare facilities in markets and designing vendor spaces that cater to women and persons living with disability can enhance their participation in the local economy.

3. Health and Sanitation:

Ensuring that public restrooms and sanitation facilities are designed to meet the needs of all genders, is essential for health and dignity. This also supports the participation of women and girls in education, work, and public life.

4. Participation in Decision-Making:

Gender-inclusive urban planning involves engaging diverse voices in the planning process, ensuring that the needs of women, children, elderly, and persons with disabilities are represented.

Participatory frameworks encourage equitable decision-making and foster a sense of community ownership.

5. Social Inclusion:

Providing equal access to education, healthcare and social services that cater to diverse groups encourage social interaction, reduce gender-based violence, and build community trust. Designing reliable public transport and safe pedestrian walks can address mobility needs, enhancing overall urban efficiency and social inclusion.

Objectives

1. To promote equal access to urban infrastructure and services for all genders.
2. To enhance safety and security in public spaces, reducing gender-based violence.
3. To improve women's economic participation through gender-sensitive urban planning.
4. To ensure participatory governance by involving all genders in decision-making.
5. To create a sustainable and resilient urban environment aligned with Vision 2030.
6. Transparency and accountability.

Strategic Objectives

Increase awareness and advocacy

- Conduct public campaigns to promote gender equality.
- Provide gender-sensitivity training for municipal staff and community leaders.
- Collaborate with local schools, faith-based organizations, and NGOs to disseminate inclusive messages.

Promote equitable representation

- Establish targets for gender representation in municipal decision-making.
- Support women participation in local governance through mentorship and leadership training.
- Facilitate forums for marginalized groups to voice their needs and concerns.

Enhance access to resources

- Ensure equitable allocation of municipal resources such as land, health care and education.
- Provide targeted support for women and youth-led enterprises.
- Develop inclusive infrastructure that accommodates the needs of all genders including health care facilities, public transport, public spaces, clean water and sanitation.

Strengthen institutional capacity

- Integrate gender-responsive budgeting in municipal planning.

- Appoint a gender focal person in the municipal office to oversee the implementation of gender policies.
- Establish a Gender Inclusion Committee to guide and monitor initiatives.

Prevent and respond to Gender-Based Violence

- Create safe reporting mechanisms for survivors of violence.
- Partner with law enforcement to ensure timely and effective responses to cases of abuse.
- Develop community programs to address harmful practices that promote gender discrimination.

Key Challenges:

- Failure of municipalities to factor and prioritize gender inclusion in the annual budgets and urban planning.
- Traditional roles that limit the participation of women and youth in leadership and decision-making.
- Economic Inequality: Women have limited access to land ownership, financing and employment opportunities.
- Education Disparities: Girls face higher dropout rates due to early marriages and household
- responsibilities.
- Gender-Based Violence: Cases of domestic violence, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and child marriage are prevalent.

Guiding Principles

- Equity: Ensure that both men and women have access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making platforms.
- Empowerment: Build capacity and confidence among marginalized groups to actively engage in governance and community development.
- Participation: Promote meaningful involvement of all genders in policy making and implementation.
- Intersectionality: Acknowledge and address the overlapping factors (e.g., age, disability, and ethnicity) that influence gender inequality.
- Accountability: Establish systems to monitor and evaluate progress toward Gender Inclusion.

CHAPTER 2: THEMATIC AREAS AND KEY ISSUES

Poverty

Poverty is defined to include not only lack of material or monetary resources but also the structural and systemic factors that impact on people's capabilities and opportunities in political, social and economic spheres. Given the inherent inequalities between men and women especially on socio-economic and political spheres, poverty makes it difficult for women to realize their rights in areas such as politics, decision- making, education, health, the economy and access to justice even when these are provided for in the law including in the development plans.

Key issues:

a) Implementing gender-responsive poverty eradication initiatives;
b) Equitable representation of women and men in key development management committees of the County Development Funds and a low concentration of women in high-ranking decision-making positions;
c) The largest segment of Meru population is the youth, majority of whom remain unemployed;
d) Capacity building women and special interest groups targeted for specific Affirmative Action;
e) Eradicating cultural practices that limit women's and girls' access to resources and assets.

Access to Education

Education is a fundamental right under Article 43 of the Constitution. Articles 53, 54 and 55 of the Constitution emphasize the primacy of the right to education for the youth, persons with disabilities and children. Article 56 emphasizes the need for affirmative action for marginalized groups such as women, girl-child and marginalized communities. As per the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) (2022-2028), the county is made up of 15 education divisions and zones with inadequate staffing for both teachers and education officers. At the Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) level, the total number of ECDE teachers is 1,698 making the teacher child ratio to be 1:50 which is higher than the recommended ratio of 1:25. Further, whereas the County boasts of 29 public Vocational Training Centres (VTCs), the instructor trainee ratio is 1: 24 which is higher than the recommended ratio of 1:10. The institutions have insufficient instructors, tools and equipment, inadequate infrastructure leading to low transition, retention and completion rates.

Key Issues:

a) Limited funding for ECDE alongside predominance of the sector by females

e) Socio-cultural practices such as FGM, defilement; unwanted pregnancies and child marriages hamper girls' education;

Access to Health Care

The right to health is provided for under Article 43 of the Constitution. This includes the right to reproductive health care. It also provides that a person shall not be denied the right to emergency health care. Health Services provision at the County Level is centered around the tenets described by both the Kenya Essential Package of Health Services (KEPHS) and Schedule IV of the Kenya Constitution 2010. These two key documents define mandates/roles/responsibilities for interventions and service delivery at Level - 1 (Community), Level – 2 (Dispensary), Level I – 3 (Health Centre), Level – 4 (Sub-County/ district) and Level - 5 (County Referral) of the health system. A major barrier for women to the achievement of the highest attainable standard of health is inequality, inaccessibility, unacceptability and unaffordability of quality health services both between men and women.

Key Issues:

a) Low number of medical personnel to meet the growing demand of healthcare at the county level.

b) The growing burden of preventable disease among women such as Tuberculosis (TB), HIV, Malaria

c) Mental Health which is least attended to at both the County and National Level.

Intersectional Discrimination

Multiple identities exist within the broad gender categories. There are women who are young, old, living with disability and members of marginalized communities. The gender identity in these circumstances intersects with other inequalities amplifying the impact on the woman. Article 27 (4) of the Constitution lists grounds for legal action on discrimination on the basis of race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, health status, ethnic or social origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, dress, language or birth. Gender intersects with each of these inequalities creating layers of discrimination for women and girls, youth, PLWDs and marginalized groups which may be more overwhelming than for men because of women's limited access to

opportunities and capacity to negotiate and move between different intersections as the situation demands.

Key issues:

a) Inadequate programmatic interventions to address intersectional discrimination at the county level;

b) Lack of affirmative funds at the county level to address the plight of special interest groups.

Advancement of gender equality and inclusion

County-level mechanisms and institutions for the promotion and empowerment of gender are critical for the promotion of gender equality and inclusion. While there are well crafted national institutions and mechanisms, the gender functions at the County level are either less resourced (materially and in terms of human personnel) and normally intertwined with other functions. Further, there are no clear monitoring and evaluation mechanisms including accountability tools on realization of gender inclusivity operational at County level.

Key issues

a) Limited financial and human resource commitment;

b) Lack of /limited use of gender accountability tools;

c) Poor linkages across different departments and sectors on realization of gender inclusion at the county level.

Climate change and environmental conservation

Climate change has a greater impact on populations that are most reliant on natural resources for their livelihoods and/or who have the least capacity to respond to natural hazards, such as droughts, landslides, floods and hurricanes. Women commonly face higher risks and greater burdens from the impacts of climate change in situations of poverty, and the majority of the world's poor are women. Women's unequal participation in decision-making processes compound inequalities and often prevent women from fully contributing to climate-related planning, policy-making and implementation.

a) Limited gender and sex-disaggregated data on climate change effects;

b) Limited use of local knowledge of men and women in climate response;

c) Limited engagement of women and men equally in the development and implementation of County climate policies and regulations.

CHAPTER 3: LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

This Gender Inclusion Framework is informed by the regional, international and national commitments to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and the broader agenda for inclusive development.

At the national level, the Government of Kenya has put in place programmatic, policy, legislative and administrative measures towards realization of gender equality and women's empowerment including supportive institutional frameworks. The Declaration of the United Nations (UN) Women's Decade in 1975 led to the establishment of the Women's Bureau as the first single most important National Machinery for the advancement of women's rights in Kenya. The Bureau was mandated among others to: formulate policy, implement, coordinate all Government initiatives and programmes for women, collect and analyze data and information required for the design, monitoring and evaluation of policies and projects for women and support to liaise with NGO projects and women organizations.

The Constitution of Kenya, 2010, Article 27 (8) which provides for affirmative action where the 'State shall take legislative and other measures to implement the principle that not more than two-thirds (2/3) of the members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender.' Article 81 further reiterates that the same rule should be applicable in elective public bodies. In Kenyan public institutions, gender balance is skewed against women, thus the gender rule generally tries to bring in women into the lime light.

There are treaties and conventions that Kenya has ratified and or signed commitments on matters relating to gender equality and development. These instruments include: The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Right of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, the International Labour Organizations (ILO) Conventions on Equal Remuneration, and the East African Community (EAC) Treaty, the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for Women's Empowerment, the Beijing Platform for Action, the International Conference on Population and Development, and the African Union Agenda 2063. The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognizes the place of gender equality and equity in development. Goal 5 of the SDGs seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. SDG Target 20 states that: "Realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets.

In 2021, Kenya embraced the Generation Equality forum. Generation Equality is an international platform that seeks to accelerate the implementation of the gender equality commitments in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 to achieve transformative change by 2026. At the national level, the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, the Kenya Vision 2030, and Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2006 on Gender and Development provide the blueprint for gender equality and development. Chapter 4 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 that deals with the Bill of Rights recognizes the rights and fundamental freedoms of all citizens, and guarantees gender equality and women's empowerment. It obligates County Governments and the National Government to take legislative and other measures including affirmative action programmes and policies to deal with gender discrimination and social exclusion. It is against this background that the County Government of Meru dedicated the Department of Youth Affairs, Sports, Gender, Culture and Social Development to be responsible for all matters relating to gender in the County.

Table 1: Legal and institutional frameworks underpinning the gender policy

International instruments	
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):	Signed in 1981 and ratified in 1984 by the Government of Kenya. Kenya abides with the reporting obligations by submitting reports to the CEDAW committee. It provides for equality and nondiscrimination. The spirit of CEDAW is amplified in Kenya's Constitution 2010 under Article 27. Nondiscrimination is a key principle to the operations of County Government of Meru.
International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)	Ratified and signed in 1994. It calls for advancing gender equality and equity and the empowerment of women, elimination of all kinds of violence against women and ensuring women's ability to control their own fertility. Given that health is a devolved function and Counties have a responsibility to contribute to zero tolerance on GBV, ICPD remains important in underpinning this policy.
ILO Conventions 100/1951; 101/1958 and 183/2000	Stipulates the principle of equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value. It is amplified in Article 27(3) of the Constitution of Kenya which provides that women and men have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in the political, economic, cultural and social spheres. This means that the County Service Board must pay due diligence to gender and intersectionality in recruitment and promotion in the public sector. Such trends will be expected of the nonstate actors and the private sector.

Beijing Platform for Action	Reinforces the provisions of CEDAW. Kenya has put in place legal and policy frameworks in line with the BPfA. Such includes the Bill of Rights in Kenya's Constitution addresses key issues on women empowerment, including affirmative action in policies and programmes. The Constitution also proposes the enactment of laws to enhance equality and non-discrimination.
Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 5) - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	The constitution has created more space in governance by codifying participation, consultation and stakeholder involvement through the bill of rights. The entitlements espoused in the bill of rights are consistent with the principle of "leave no one behind" in sustainable development. There is need to have a policy that guides the mainstreaming of gender in all policy, planning and budgeting processes that contribute to the SDG targets
Regional Commitments	
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol)	Endorsed by African Heads of States in 2003, and came into force in November 2005. It envisages social, economic and political participation of women in Africa. It covers a range of rights addressing women's rights in their countries. The rights include: elimination of discrimination against women; right to dignity, right to life, integrity and security of the person; elimination of harmful practices; marriage; separation, divorce and annulment of marriage; access to justice and equal protection before the law; right to participation in political and decision-making processes; right to peace; protection of women in armed conflict; right to education and training; economic and social welfare rights; health reproductive rights, right to food security; right to adequate housing; right to positive cultural context; right to a healthy and sustainable environment; right to sustainable development; widows right to inheritance; special protection of elderly women; special protection of women with disabilities; and special protection of women in distress. These actions are not limited to the national government but remain a shared responsibility with the Counties
The East African Community Treaty	Treaty envisions the mainstreaming of gender in all endeavours and enhancing participation of women in cultural, social, political, economic and technological development. Kenya has strived to achieve the commitments spelt in this treaty through affirmative action for women in employment and providing access to higher education to more girls which has enabled them to gain more skills. The County Government of Meru in

	its unique way needs to create affirmative programmes and spaces for realisation of equity in the socio-economic and political spheres.
Africa's Agenda 2063	The agenda recognizes gender inequality as a challenge in Africa that has resulted in women facing disproportionate incidences of poverty, illiteracy and disease. The county governments play significant roles in the eradication of these three maladies since transition to devolved governance in 2013.
National Policies and Legislation	
Matrimonial Property Act, 2013	Subject to section 6(3), ownership of matrimonial property vests in the spouses according to the contribution of either spouse towards its acquisition, and shall be divided between the spouses if they divorce or their marriage is otherwise dissolved.
The Land Act (2012) and Land Registration Act (2012)	These provide the comprehensive legal framework for land administration, management, and ownership. The Land Act focuses on usage, administration and compulsory acquisition, while the Land Registration Act standardizes documentation, title registration, and the protection of ownership interests. Together, they regulate public, private, and community lands.
Revision of the Succession Act Cap 160	Introduced key revisions to enhance gender equity, define dependents, and protect spouses/children from disinheritance.
Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2006 on Gender Equality and Development	Purpose of this paper was to promote women empowerment and mainstreaming the needs of women, men, girls and boys in all sectors of development in Kenya so that they can participate and benefit equally from development initiatives.

If Kenya is to achieve the sustainable development goals as well as its national development plans such as the Vision 2030, then gender equality and equity must be addressed as a matter of priority since development requires concerted efforts of both men and women. This can be achieved through the counties by integrating gender inclusion and participation in decision making and development projects.

CHAPTER 4: GENDER INCLUSION IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

Stakeholder Engagement

- Identify and involve key stakeholders to include in the budgeting, planning, implementation and decision making. Involve private sector players, local government authorities, Community-based organizations (CBOs), Community leaders, Institutions, churches, Civil society and NGOs.

Policy and Legislative Support

- Review and revise local by-laws to align with national gender equality standards.
- Advocate for gender-inclusive legal reforms where gaps exist.

Capacity Building

- Organize workshops and training for municipality staff and community representatives.
- Provide technical support to local businesses and cooperatives to ensure inclusivity.

Data Disaggregation

- It is crucial for identifying, understanding, and addressing gender inequalities, gaps in resources, and different impacts of policies or programs on diverse populations.

Community Engagement and Mobilization Strategies

Community engagement is a cornerstone for the successful implementation of gender inclusion initiatives. Effective strategies ensure that both men and women, as well as marginalized groups, are actively involved in all stages of the process, from planning to execution. Carry out community sensitization campaigns through:

- Public Education: Organize roadshows, open forums, and town hall meetings to discuss the importance of gender equality and participation.
- Peer-to-Peer Advocacy: Train community influencers, including local youth and women leaders, to act as advocates for gender inclusion.
- Social Media and Digital Platforms: Use platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and local radio stations to reach a broader audience, especially youth, who are active on these platforms.

Cultural Considerations in Gender Inclusion

Cultural sensitivity is key to designing programs that are accepted and embraced by communities. Efforts should be made to challenge harmful traditions while respecting cultural heritage.

Infrastructure Development for Gender Inclusion

- Physical infrastructure plays a pivotal role in ensuring equal access to services and opportunities.
- Gender-sensitive infrastructure makes it easier for women and marginalized groups to participate in both public and economic life.

Inclusive Health and Educational Facilities

- Reproductive Health Access: Ensure that women have easy access to maternal and reproductive health services, such as clinics for antenatal care, family planning, and postnatal care.
- Female Education and Skills Development: Expand vocational training centers focused on women and girls, providing opportunities for women to acquire marketable skills.

Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth

For gender inclusion to be truly effective, economic independence is essential. Programs that promote entrepreneurship, access to financial resources, and economic literacy will enable women to have a stronger voice in society.

MEASURES TO EMBED GENDER INCLUSION IN THE MUNICIPALITY

The municipality has put in place concrete measures it will implement at the various levels to effectively embed gender inclusion across its activities. The successful implementation of gender inclusion and participation activities necessitates cross-departmental collaboration. Each level has a unique role to play in ensuring an equitable, gender-inclusive environment.

Institutional level: mapping and analyzing the existing gender-based situation and the ongoing different programs, projects, policies, processes and administrative operations, both quantitatively and qualitatively, seeking to identify gender gaps and inequalities so that appropriate measures to address the gender disparities can be determined.

Policy level (the Municipal Board): Mapping and analyzing the existing gender issues within the institution and sectors to inform responsive policy decisions and interventions.

Programmatic level (Technical): an in-depth focus at the training programming cycle, inculcating gender training needs assessment, designing programs/projects, establishing monitoring and evaluation systems, and gender-responsive indicators.

Partnership's level (Private Sectors and Donors): striving to foster strategic partnerships (with the private sector, development partners, and non-state actors) for the advancement of gender-sensitive and inclusive urban areas.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION:

To operationalize gender inclusivity in a sustainable manner, the Municipality will commit and avail funds for gender-inclusive initiatives, training, and development programs as well as run regular audits to ensure these finances are being used effectively as intended. These efforts are aimed to allow full participation and contribution, towards county development.

To demonstrate commitment and enable effective implementation, the Municipality will allocate resources dedicated to supporting the listed gender inclusion measures, both in terms of financial resources and human capital describing the resource allocation approach, including:

- Annual budgets and human resources dedicated to gender inclusion initiatives including the proportion of resources devoted to each level (operational, institutional, and monitoring and evaluation).
- The criteria used to assess resource allocation and adjust as needed.
- The mechanisms for ensuring accountability and transparency in resource use and impact.
- The frequency of reviews (e.g., annual, bi-annual).

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Maua Municipality has committed to advancing gender inclusion and participation by ensuring equal opportunities, eliminating discrimination, and embedding gender equity into its governance, planning, and service delivery. These commitments focus on empowering women, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups to fully participate in leadership, economic activities, and decision-making processes.

Key Commitments of Maua Municipality in Gender Inclusion Framework

1. Equality and Non-Discrimination

- Commitment to eradicate discrimination based on gender in all municipal activities and services.
- Adoption of policies that guarantee equal access to resources, services, and opportunities for men, women, and persons with disabilities.
- Recognition of existing inequalities and pledge to bridge gaps in representation and participation.

2. Inclusive Governance and Leadership

- Promotion of women's representation in leadership positions, including elective and appointed offices.
- Support for affirmative action measures to increase women's participation in political and administrative structures.
- Encouragement of community participation in municipal decision-making, ensuring diverse voices are heard.

3. Policy and Program Integration

- Integration of gender perspectives into planning, budgeting, and implementation of municipal programs.
- Development of gender-responsive policies that address social and economic disparities.
- Commitment to mainstream gender equity in all development initiatives.

4. Economic Empowerment

- Support for women-led businesses through affirmative funds and access to municipal contracts.
- Promotion of capacity-building programs for women and marginalized groups to enhance skills and economic participation.
- Encouragement of inclusive community groups that foster collaboration across gender and wealth divides.

5. Protection and Justice

- Alignment with national laws on domestic violence and sexual offences, ensuring municipal services protect vulnerable groups.
- Commitment to safe spaces for women and girls in public institutions and community programs.

Challenges Noted

- Low representation of women in elected positions despite legal frameworks supporting gender equity.
- Cultural and patriarchal barriers that inhibit women's full participation in leadership.
- Need for sustained enforcement of gender policies to move beyond symbolic commitments.

Table 2: Summary Table of key achievements in gender inclusion and participation in Meru County

Program/policy	Focus Area	Practical Impacts
Meru Gender Policy	Equality & GBV protection	Equal access to services, protection for women
Twaweza Program	Economic empowerment	Training Mentorship Funding for women led business
Leadership initiatives	Governance	Women in leadership eg Deputy Governor of Meru, 4 CECM members of the county cabinet, County Attorney