

# **K-WASH – Gender and Social Vulnerability Assessment and GAP, Murang'a county**

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GLOBAL  
CENTER ON  
ADAPTATION



## Authors & Acknowledgements

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBO	Community based organization
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plans
CRA	Climate Risk Assessment
CRVA	Climate risk and vulnerability assessment
CWSSIP	County Water and Sanitation Strategic Investment Plan
DLI	Disbursement Linked Indicator
DRM	disaster risk management
ESHS	Environmental, Health and Safety
EWS	Early warning systems
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GAP	Gender action plan
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GCA	Global Center on Adaptation
GoK	Government of Kenya
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
HCF	Health Care Facility
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PDO	Program Development Objective
PIU	Project implementation unit
PMU	Project Management Unit
PCRA	Participatory Climate Risk Assessment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA/SH	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse / Sexual harassment
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
TA	Technical Assistance
UN	United nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WASREB	Water Services Regulatory Board
WB	The World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WRMA	Water Resource Management authority
WRUA	Water Resource User Association

<b>WSB</b>	Water Services Boards
<b>WSP</b>	Water Service Providers
<b>WSS</b>	Water Supply and Sanitation

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Project context

This document is developed as part of the K-WASH program led by the Government of Kenya and the World Bank. GCA is providing additional support to the project by bringing in Climate and Gender and social inclusion expertise through the Consultancy services of Groupe Huit.

The K-WASH program will contribute to increase sustainable access to improved water and sanitation services, eliminate open defecation, and improve the financial performance of water services providers in selected counties, including refugee-hosting counties.

Result areas across which these program development objectives (PDO) will be implemented are:

- Results Area 1: Increasing sustainable access to improved water services for households in climate vulnerable rural areas.
- Results Area 2: Increased sustainable access to improved sanitation services and elimination of open defecation in climate-vulnerable rural areas.
- Results Area 3: Improved operational and financial performance of Water Services Providers in participating counties.
- Results Area 4: Improving sector reforms, coordination, and M&E Capacity for integrated water management.
- Results Area 5: Improving integrated WASH services delivery for refugees and host communities.

As part of the GCA assignment, the Consultant has provided Climate Risk Analysis (CRA) for the Counties of Murang'a and Tana River and support to other counties for them to develop their own CRA. This has been done in parallel with ensuring that climate risk assessment outcomes were properly integrated into the Counties Water Supply and Sanitation Investment Plans (CWSSIP) for the latter to be validated by K-WASH task teams and the World Bank. CWSSIPs are guiding and strategic documentation which also enables to meet the first DLI of the K-WASH project.

An adaptation options deliverable has been developed to highlight technical recommendations to ensure K-WASH projects are resilient to the climate risks they'll face, social cross-cutting design considerations are also integrated in this report.

The present document aims at complementing the overall set of documentation related to climate and K-WASH activities to ensure that the gender and social inclusion dimensions of the projects are duly considered.

## 1.2 Background on gender and climate adaptation links

For more than ten years, the link between gender equality and climate change has been gradually incorporated into climate strategies and actions. Advances in knowledge about climate change, particularly the work of the IPCC, have highlighted the links between climate change and gender inequality.

It is now well documented that **the effects of climate change tend to increase pre-existing social inequalities and that gender-differentiated vulnerability to climate change is significant in contexts where people, and particularly women, are highly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods.** Consequently, in contexts such as sub-Saharan Africa, and particularly in rural areas, women are generally more vulnerable to climate change and the impacts of climate change than men, even when they are exposed in the same way. Based on the work of the IPCC, exposure can be defined as “the presence of people; livelihoods; species or ecosystems; environmental functions, services, and resources; infrastructure; or economic, social, or cultural assets located in places and contexts that could be negatively affected” by climate change; while vulnerability can be considered as “the propensity or predisposition to be negatively affected” and encompasses “a variety of concepts and elements, including sensitivity or susceptibility to harm and lack of capacity to cope and adapt” (IPCC, 2022). In other words, everyone in a given area may be exposed to the effects of climate change in the same way, but not everyone will experience them or deal with them in the same way or with the same resources.

In such contexts, **intersectionality** is especially important. Age, marital status, education level, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, disabilities, social status, displacement, etc., can intersect with gender and influence women’s abilities to adapt to climate change and its effects.

At the same time, women and vulnerable people are also **agents of change** and can play a key role in developing climate change adaptation strategies and/or implementing solutions.

## 1.3 Objectives of the gender and vulnerable people assessment

The gender and vulnerable people assessment aims to **provide a comprehensive understanding of the social and gender-related inequalities that shape vulnerability—particularly within the WASH sector.**

It will identify key gender issues in Murang’a and assess how climate-related risks disproportionately affect women and vulnerable households, and analyze the multidimensional stressors that influence their resilience. The assessment seeks to identify, quantify, and prioritize vulnerabilities, highlight gender gaps linked to climate impacts, and examine local coping mechanisms.

Recognizing that women often face limited access to resources and decision-making while simultaneously carrying significant caregiving responsibilities during crises, **the study will propose targeted actions to reduce inequalities through a dedicated Gender Action Plan for program’s implementation in the County.**

Ultimately, the objective is to ensure that women and vulnerable households fully benefit from the K-WASH program and related sub-projects through equitable participation and consultation throughout its preparation, implementation, and management.

## 2.METHODOLOGY

This document presents the social and gender vulnerabilities associated with the project. It was developed in parallel with the climate risk analysis in which the Gender and social inclusion (GSI) considerations were **mainstreamed** as a cross-cutting lens rather than treated as a separate quantitative exercise. The objective was to understand how climate risks interact with existing social vulnerabilities across **women, youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and other marginalized groups identified in the PCRA.**

Considering the lack of quantitative data it appeared difficult to compute a full set of quantitative sector indicators, the consultant therefore applied a **qualitative approach**, drawing on existing documentation and field engagement (focus group discussion, interviews on the field):

- **Desk review** of CCAP, PCRA, CIDP, health surveillance records, and other relevant county planning documents such as the CWSSIP.
- **Field missions and stakeholder consultations**, including interviews with water utilities, county officers, community representatives, and focus group discussions.
- **Observation-based assessment** of how climate-related WASH challenges manifest differently across demographic groups.
- **Integration with hotspot analysis findings**, which provided spatial and contextual evidence of differentiated exposure and vulnerability.
- **Consideration for adaptation options report development.**

The analysis was structured on the basis of a gender analysis framework that combines field observations with a grid for interpreting systemic inequalities.

The main areas of vulnerability assessed through this grid are the following :

- Gender roles in the community,
- Institutional and decision making,
- Access and control over WASH resources and facilities,
- Differentiated climate vulnerability.

# 3. SOCIAL AND GENDER BASELINE

## 3.1 Legal and Regulatory baseline

### 3.1.1 International agreements

Kenya has ratified a number of international treaties regarding of vulnerable groups and the eradication of harmful practices, especially those affecting women, children, and other at-risk populations which has considerable impacts considering that the constitution of Kenya establishes that the general rules of international law and all ratified treaties are automatically part of Kenyan law.

Said treaties are:

- the International Labour Organisation’s Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999)
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- the Maputo Protocol, officially known as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa
- the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children
- the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- the Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa
- the Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa
- the African Youth Charter

Parallel to these gender and vulnerable peoples’ related treaties Kenya has ratified climate commitments such as the **Paris Agreements** for which it submitted its **Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)** which includes gender mainstreaming and gender-responsiveness.

### 3.1.2 National regulations

At the National level, Kenya has a host of laws and policies that embed issues of gender governance and with a specific focus on gender issues in water management in the country.

The government of Kenya is committed to advancing women’s economic empowerment through a progressive legal and policy framework including the **National Policy on Women’s Economic Empowerment from June 2024**, and the **Women Economic Empowerment Strategy 2020-2025**

**The Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2019 on National Policy on Gender and Development** recognizes issues of access to natural resources including land and water and makes provisions that:

- Women need to be represented in decision making processes over the environment and natural resources, involve women in climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies;
- Enhance capacity of women on effects of deforestation;
- Reduce gender disparity in access to natural resources;
- Provide affordable clean water to reduce health risks; and
- Provide gender-disaggregated data on the impacts of environmental and natural resources’ degradation and climate change.

**Kenya’s vision 2030 is the country’s long-term development blueprint**, launched in 2008 based on a collective aspiration for a better society by the year 2030. Vision 2030 sought to mainstream gender equity in all aspects of society. Gender equity was to be addressed by making fundamental changes in four key areas:

- Opportunity,
- Empowerment,

- Capabilities and
- Vulnerabilities.

The vision acknowledged that : women are disadvantaged in accessing labour markets and productive resources. They are also underrepresented in social and political leadership. The capabilities of women have also not been developed to their fullest potential due to limited access to capital, education, training and health care. The vision for gender, youth and the vulnerable is to achieve equity in power and resource distribution, improved livelihoods for all vulnerable groups by increasing the participation of women in all economic, social and political decision-making processes, and improving the access of all disadvantaged groups to business opportunities, health and education services, housing and justice. Gender disparities are to be tackled through a number of strategies, including: providing financial support for women to raise their incomes and reduce the gap in estimated earned income between men and women; increasing the number of women in parliament; and giving priority to female employees in the public sector in order to attain at least 30 per cent representation in recruitment, promotion and appointment of women at all decision-making levels.

**The Kenya National Adaptation Plan: 2015-2030** is another provision for addressing gender equity on issues of climate change adaptation. Among others, it makes a provision for strengthening adaptive capacity for vulnerable populations where women and other vulnerable children are directly addressed. The plan also commits towards gender equity in populations living in ASAL areas as well as ensuring access to, and control of resources like capital and land to enable them to cope with climate shocks, through provisions of diverse social protection measures.

**The Community Land Act in Kenya of 2016**; which embeds equality among gender in terms of compensation for compulsory acquired land and equal right to land for both men and women.

### 3.1.3 Murang'a climate and gender commitments

Murang'a County's gender and social commitments are primarily articulated in the **County Annual Development Plan (CADP) 2025/2026**. While the document does not explicitly link gender and climate change, it does emphasize the promotion of gender equality and the livelihoods of vulnerable groups. Key priorities include addressing GBV, integrating gender considerations within the BETA approach, improving access to assistive devices for persons living with disabilities (PLWD), and supporting broader socio-economic advancement. Within the WASH sector, the CADP identifies a specific strategic priority focused on "gender mainstreaming and involvement of youth, women and physically challenged people in project implementation and management," operationalized through "**capacity-building in domestic water use, conservation, and recycling**". The plan also highlights the importance of collecting gender-disaggregated data—such as on trained municipal staff—which represents an emerging good practice.

Murang'a's climate-related commitments on their end are primarily outlined in the **County Climate Action Plan (CCAP)**. The CCAP incorporates gender considerations through a dedicated section on gender mainstreaming. However, this section relies primarily on national-level information rather than county-specific analysis. As a result, although it acknowledges that climate change disproportionately affects women and vulnerable groups, it does not contextualize these impacts within the specific realities of the county. It can still be noted that its key guiding principles are:

- ▶ **Equity and social inclusion** - ensuring a fair and equitable allocation of effort and cost, as well as ploughing back of benefits in the context of the need to address disproportionate vulnerabilities, responsibilities, capabilities, disparities, and inter- and intra-generational equity,
- ▶ **Special needs and circumstances** - the special needs and circumstances of people and geographic areas that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change will be prioritized. This includes, but is not limited to, vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly and persons with disability.
- ▶ **Avoiding maladaptation** - the climate change response will be conducted in such a way so as to avoid maladaptation, defined by the UNFCCC as any changes in natural or human systems that inadvertently increase vulnerability to climatic stimuli

## 3.2 Institutional baseline

### 3.2.1 At national scale

The State Department for Gender Affairs' (SDGA) strategic priorities was established in November 2015 within the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs to promote gender mainstreaming in national development processes and to champion the socioeconomic empowerment of women. The functions of SDGA are:

- Gender policy management,
- Special programmes for women's empowerment,
- Gender mainstreaming in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs),
- Community mobilization,
- Domestication of international treaties/conventions on gender, and
- Policy and programmes on gender violence.

### 3.2.2 At county scale

The Sessional Paper No.2 of 2019 on National Policy on Gender and Development, stipulates the roles, responsibilities and function of the county in respect to promoting gender equality. These functions include:

- Role of County Assemblies:
  - ▶ Enact relevant laws to promote gender equality and non-discrimination principles.
  - ▶ Enhance compliance to the 'not more than 2/3 gender principle' in all sectors at all levels;
  - ▶ Ensure national and county budgetary processes are gender responsive;
  - ▶ Undertake investigations and report on non-compliance to the equality and non-discrimination principles; and
  - ▶ Ensure compliance to equality and non-discrimination principles in approving development projects.
- Role of County Governments:
  - ▶ Integrate national standards and gender indicators in County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs);
  - ▶ Formulate and ensure implementation of county specific gender policies; develop and implement County Gender Action Plans;
  - ▶ Ensure allocation of adequate resources for implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment programs;
  - ▶ Ensure gender responsive budgeting is adopted in the budget cycle;
  - ▶ Identify and implement programmes targeting gender equality and women's empowerment;
  - ▶ Collect, collate and disseminate county gender data;
  - ▶ Report on policy implementation and county gender activities.
- Role of County Departments:
  - ▶ Develop, review and implement sector specific policies to integrate gender in their budget processes, plans and programmes;
  - ▶ Coordinate implementation of the policy components in their respective counties;
  - ▶ Enforce compliance with the National Gender Equality guidelines and standards;
  - ▶ Mainstream gender in training curricula at all levels and institute gender sector specific capacity building programmes.

More precisely the Education, Youth, Gender and Social Services department of Murang'a has a core mandate to:

- Empower young people through skills development, leadership training, and entrepreneurship programs.

- Contribute to cultural preservation, this being done through festivals, arts initiatives, and educational programs.
- Provide Social Services and support vulnerable groups, offer social welfare services, counselling, healthcare access, and educational opportunities to enhance quality of life.
- Contribute to Community Engagement and: engage communities in projects that promote social cohesion, volunteerism, and sustainable development..
- Develop Sports and Recreation and promote physical well-being and teamwork through sports activities and recreational events, encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle among residents.

### 3.3 Kenya Socio-economic profile

#### 3.3.1 Demographics and economy

Kenya’s current population is of **52.6 million people (2019)** and an **annual population growth rate at 2.3%**, it is this expending as shown in the pyramid’s profile. The current fertility rate is at 3.2 live birth per woman and life expectancy at 63.8 years (66.1 for females and 61.6 for males).

Currently, 31.3 % of the population of Kenya is urban (estimated 17,645,362 people in 2024), **this is projected to increase to 33% and 46% of the population by 2030 and 2050, respectively**. Main cities are Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru, Ruiru, Eldoret, Kisumu, Kikuyu, Ngong, Mavoko, Thika.

Kenya, while considered a lower middle-income country, has an emerging market and is the largest economy in East Africa. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2018 was US\$95.5 billion and the economic annual growth rate 5.4% (2019). Kenya had continued to implement significant economic and structural reforms, which have helped to sustain economic growth and political gains over the past decade. Key challenges continue to be seen in the country’s inequality and poverty levels, which has increased the country’s economic vulnerability to shocks.

Kenya plans to be a newly industrialized nation by 2030. The major industries driving the Kenyan economy include **financial services, agriculture, real estate, manufacturing, logistics, tourism, retail and energy**.

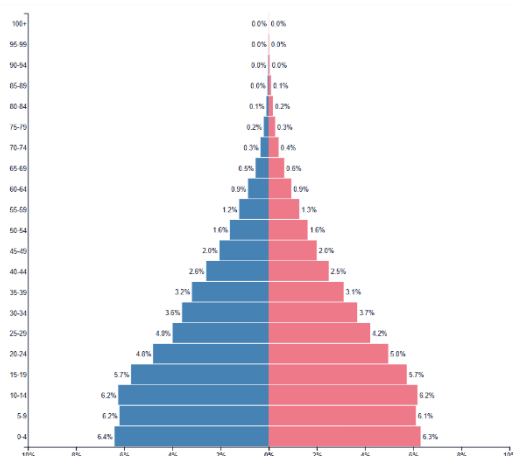


Figure 1: Kenya, pyramid of ages

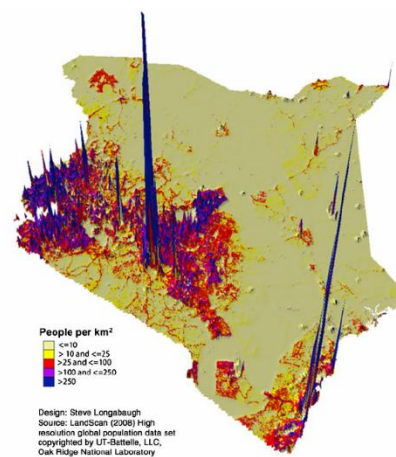


Figure 2: Kenyan population density map (2008)

#### 3.3.2 Gender equality baseline

Kenya is a country where gender inequalities are deeply entrenched, despite a progressive legal and policy framework in favor of equality. **Social norms and gender stereotypes are a major barrier to the empowerment of women and girls, often viewing them as inferior to men and confining them to traditional reproductive and care roles.**

These inequalities manifest themselves in a variety of areas, including access to education, employment, economic resources, and political participation. Women are overrepresented among

the poor, and in a multidimensional way. **Poverty, age, disability, HIV status and geographical location (rural/urban) exacerbate gender inequalities.**

In terms of socio-economic aspects, **the majority of women work in the informal sector**, where their contribution to the national economy is often underestimated and unrecognized. Women face significant barriers to accessing employment and business opportunities. **Responsibilities related to unpaid domestic work limit their ability to participate in income-generating activities.** Women make up the majority of the agricultural workforce, especially in small-scale farming, they are often paid less than men for the same work. Access to resources (land, credit, inputs) and training is often limited for women farmers.

**Vulnerable employment among women has remained nearly the same since 1991**

Workers in vulnerable employment are the least likely to have formal work arrangements, social protection, and safety nets to guard against economic shocks; thus they are more likely to fall into poverty. Vulnerable employment among women is 73.6% and among men is 56.4% in Kenya for 2023. The rate of vulnerable employment is lower for men and women in Kenya compared to the average rate in Sub-Saharan Africa.

**Vulnerable employment, by sex (% of total employment) (modeled ILO estimate)**

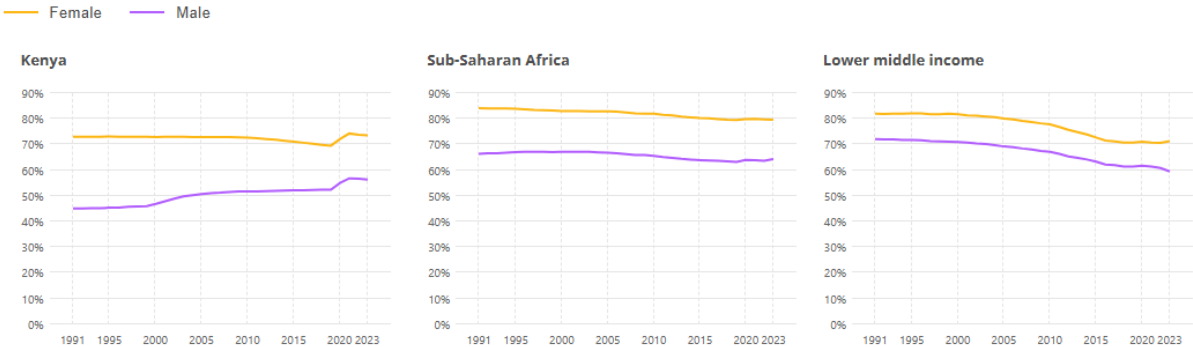


Figure 3: Vulnerable or informal employment data in Kenya (disaggregated by sex)

Source: World bank gender data portal

Regarding **decision making and political leadership** women are less represented than men in politics, however, there has been progress in the number of elected women since 2013. Findings from a study<sup>1</sup> has also shows that while the patriarchal structures remain the political field they are not the main obstacle to women’s participation anymore, the blockages have become more complex and involve, for instance the fact that **the cost of politics is on the increase and is higher for women**, but also the fact that “owners” of political parties hold the key to effective participation of women and the 2022 electoral competition reveals increased sexual harassment of women candidates as well as the use of vulgar and demeaning language against them which is meant to prevent them from participating or disillusion them altogether so that they withdraw from races. This new practice is widespread and threatens to delegitimize and belittle gains made in improving the number of women in political positions through nomination lists.

<sup>1</sup> Political Economy Analysis on Women Political Participation in Kenya.pdf

## Women Elected under the 2010 Constitution - 2013 to 2022

	2022	2017	2013
Governor	7	3	0
Senator	3	3	0
MNA	29	23	16
MCA	115	96	82
Deputy Governor	8	7	9
WMNA	47	47	47

Various sources

Figure 4: Women elected under the 2010 constitution - 2013 to 2022

Source: Political Economy Analysis on Women Political Participation in Kenya.pdf

### 23.3% of seats in national parliament were held by women in 2024 in Kenya

Women in parliaments are the percentage of parliamentary seats in a single or lower chamber held by women. The proportion of seats held by women in Kenya has increased since 2010. The current rate is similar to the average rate in lower middle income economies.

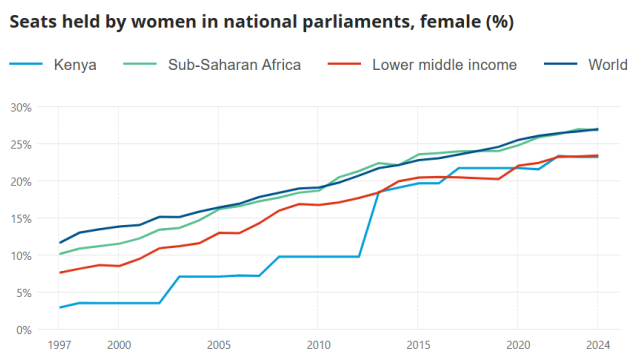


Figure 5: seats held by women in Kenyan and regional parliaments

Source: World Bank Gender Data Portal

Women also experience unequal access to resources and decision-making processes over the resources, with limited mobility in rural areas. Access to and control over environmental resources as well as land ownership is gender-biased. Men are the main actors in managing renewable and non-renewable natural resources such as forests, wildlife, minerals and natural gas. This has significant implications for the Gross Domestic Product and the livelihoods of Kenyans dependent on the environment and natural resources.

Such observation on decision making is also similar for households' decisions as presented in the figure below.

### 66.2% of women participated in making major decisions in the household in 2022

Women participating in making major decisions is the percentage of currently married women ages 15-49 who say that they alone or jointly have the final say in (i) making major household purchases, (ii) decisions about own healthcare, and (iii) visits to family, relatives, friends.

#### Percentage of women ages 15-49 participating in decisions about:

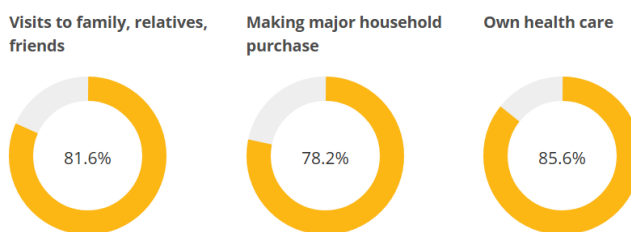


Figure 6: Women in decision making (household level in Kenya)

Source: World Bank Gender Data Portal

**Health is an area of significant gender inequality.** In terms of sexual and reproductive health, women face major challenges, with high maternal mortality rates despite improvement (from 1 375 in 2000 to 149 in 2023)<sup>2</sup>. Access to quality reproductive health services is limited, with regional disparities. Legal abortion remains a contentious issue, and the criminalization of abortion remains in place despite constitutionally permissible circumstances. Teenage pregnancies are a major problem, with high rates and negative consequences on girls' education and health, in 2023 56 of every 1 000 girls aged 15-19 gave birth. Women and girls are more vulnerable to HIV infection due to power inequalities and gender norms. HIV prevalence is higher among women than men. Finally, women are more affected by communicable diseases such as tuberculosis. Access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities is limited, which affects women more.

**Although there has been progress in girls' access to education, disparities persist at all levels.** Gender stereotypes and social norms continue to limit girls' full participation in education and training. Teenage pregnancies are a major factor in girls' dropouts. In Kenya, approximately 5,714,459 people are illiterate of which 2,285,968 are male and 3,428,491 are female. There are inequalities in access to vocational and technical training, with an under-representation of women in science and technology fields.

**In WASH sector multiple inequalities can also be highlighted.** Access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities is limited, **particularly in rural areas and slums.** Women and girls are often responsible for collecting water, which can be time-consuming and put them at risk to their safety. The lack of adequate sanitation facilities in schools affects girls' enrolment<sup>3</sup>. Gender inequalities exacerbate the impact of water and sanitation crises on women and girls.

**Finally, regarding disaster risk management (DRM) it has been shown that disasters** disproportionately impact women and girls due to their socio-economic vulnerability.

**Women play a critical role in disaster preparedness and response,** as first responders and caregivers to young children, the sick and the injured; they secure fuel, water and fodder and organize family meals. However, women are overlooked in decision-making and policy development at organizational levels. Thus, this excludes them from disaster risk governance processes, further contributing to unequal outcomes between men and women.

Engendered roles among women and girls and low literacy limit their capacity to prepare, respond, mitigate and recover from disasters. In Kenya, approximately 5,714,459 people are illiterate; of which, 2,285,968 are male and 3,428,491 are female. Consequently, this reduces their access to early warning information and access to information and communication technology on risks, thus further increasing their vulnerabilities. Also, this reduces their opportunity to report and share information on early warning that they have access to and is vital in prevention. A higher literacy level is advantageous among men and boys as it enables them to access early warning information and use ICT to access information.

Climate change impacts the livelihoods of girls and women as they tend to have livelihoods and small businesses liable to disasters; this affects their resilience and capacity to recover due to gender inequality of risks. **On the contrary, boys and men access better jobs with higher remuneration packages compared to girls and women. As a result, they can recover faster from disasters compared to girls and women—these further increase gender inequality between men and women in DRR.** Women and girls are also affected by climate change due to their primary responsibility of fetching water, firewood and farming. Among men and boys, climate change triggers out-migration, especially in arid and semi-arid areas (ASAL), thus leaving women with a lot of responsibilities at home. Equally, over 80 percent of Kenyans

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<sup>2</sup> The World Bank Group Gender data portal.

<sup>3</sup> "Despite the provision of Free Basic Education, many girls continue to miss out on education due to absenteeism that is related to reproductive health issues as they are forced to stay away from school when they are not facilitated to manage their menstruation. Studies have shown that girls from poor families miss 20% of school days in a year due to lack of sanitary towels.

Data from the Ministry of Education indicates that a girl that is absent from school for four days in 28 days (month) loses 13 learning days, equivalent to two weeks of learning in every school term. In an academic year (nine months) a girl loses 39 learning days equivalent to six weeks of learning time. A girl in primary school between grades 6 and 8 (three years) loses 18 learning weeks out of 108 weeks. Within the four years of high school a girl can lose 156 learning days equivalent to almost 24 weeks out of 144 weeks of learning." (Ministry of Gender, Culture, the Arts and Heritage, 2024)

rely on wood biomass for their energy requirements, particularly women and girls, due to their roles in cooking; this exposes them to health risks resulting from the gas emitted from the firewood. Also, in cases where they have to move further away in search of firewood and water, women and girls are at risk of being exposed to GBV.

Regarding humanitarian assistance, women and girls have more needs due to their higher vulnerabilities. However, priority in humanitarian response is generally given to shelter, water and food aid which are of necessity to both boys and girls and men and women. This is done at the expense of women and girls' need for safe spaces, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) and clinical management of rape and sexual abuses, thus contributing to gender inequalities among men and women.

### 3.3.3 Vulnerable groups equality baseline

#### 3.3.3.1 Elderly, children and sick<sup>4</sup>

Older people in Kenya often face violations of their social, cultural, political and economic rights. The erosion of traditional systems of protection, the commercialization of care and support, individualism, unsustainable urbanization, poverty and pandemics all contribute to their vulnerability. They can also be victims of abuse, often by trusted individuals such as family members or friends. **In urban areas, the elderly often lack traditional family support** and are limited in their ability to earn a living. It was also reported that **inability to squat could hinder elders' access to sanitation, more generally toilets access can be considered a challenge due to fees, accessibility** (closed at night, far away, etc.).

**Children are a particularly vulnerable group**, especially heads of household, orphans, street children and children from poor families. These children can face stigmatization, precarious living conditions, food insecurity, difficulties in accessing basic services and exploitation. Children with disabilities or from families with disabilities face additional challenges in terms of access to education and other opportunities. In the WASH sector children's vulnerability is also related to the importance of adequate water and nutrition for healthy growth and development.

#### 3.3.3.2 People with disability and or sickness

**Disabled people in Kenya are often victims of multiple discrimination and health problems.** Their physical limitations can make it difficult for them to participate in economic activities. Urban infrastructures are often not adapted to their needs (lack of footpaths, accessible toilets, etc.), hindering their mobility and well-being. People with hearing impairments may be excluded from health services due to a lack of sign language interpreters. As with the elderly, toilet accessibility can also lead to health and safety risks, as well as a negative impact on dignity.

Similarly, people with chronic illnesses can also be considered vulnerable, especially if their health limits their ability to work and support themselves.

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<sup>4</sup> (Kenya News Agency, 2023)

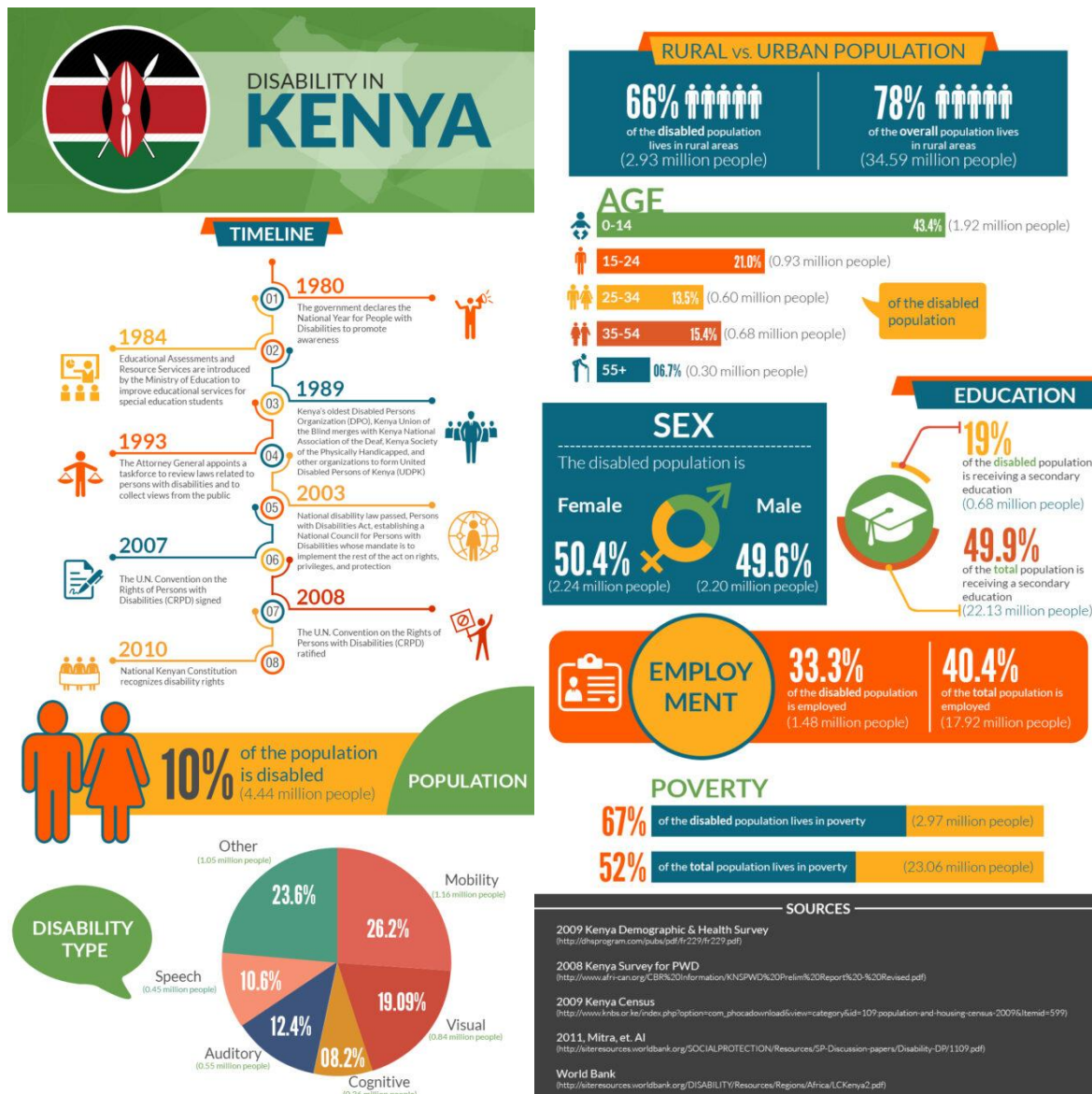


Figure 7: Infographic on disability in Kenya

### 3.3.3.3 Refugees<sup>5</sup>

The Kenya refugee situation is impacted by political developments and the humanitarian situation in the region, mainly in the two main refugee producing countries (i.e. Somalia and South Sudan). In Somalia, despite the moderate gains made in the past three years, the humanitarian situation in 2020 is expected to remain fragile, with over some 24.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, the situations in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ethiopia are responsible for refugee outflows.

The majority of refugees and asylum-seekers in Kenya are from Somalia (54%), followed by South Sudanese (24.5%), Congolese (8.9%) and Ethiopians (5.8%). Persons of concern from other nationalities including Burundi, Sudan, Uganda, Eritrea, Rwanda, and others make up 6.7% of the total population (501,049 as at the end of October 2020).

<sup>5</sup> (UNHCR, 2024)

Almost half of the refugees in Kenya reside in Dadaab (44%), 40% in Kakuma and 16% in urban areas (mainly Nairobi), alongside 18,500 stateless persons. Currently, Kenya continues to be among the top refugee hosting countries in Africa. UNHCR will also continue its advocacy on behalf of stateless persons

It is internationally recognized that “**Forcibly displaced and stateless persons are able to safely realize their basic rights, obligations and satisfy their needs**” as stated by UNHCR under the impact area “Realizing rights in safe environments”, and that Refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons have equitable access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene facilities as stated under the impact area “Clean water, sanitation and hygiene”.

Access to clean water remains a significant challenge in the Kenyan refugee camps, which rely on underground water that is affected by climate change, poor rainfall, and old water reticulation systems. Efforts to improve water system efficiency and to enhance rainwater harvesting by constructing water pans and dams are being prioritized. UNHCR will work with the municipal authorities and respective water boards during the transitional phase, which will set out the modalities for the eventual handover of the system to the local authorities for them to oversee service delivery in this sector.

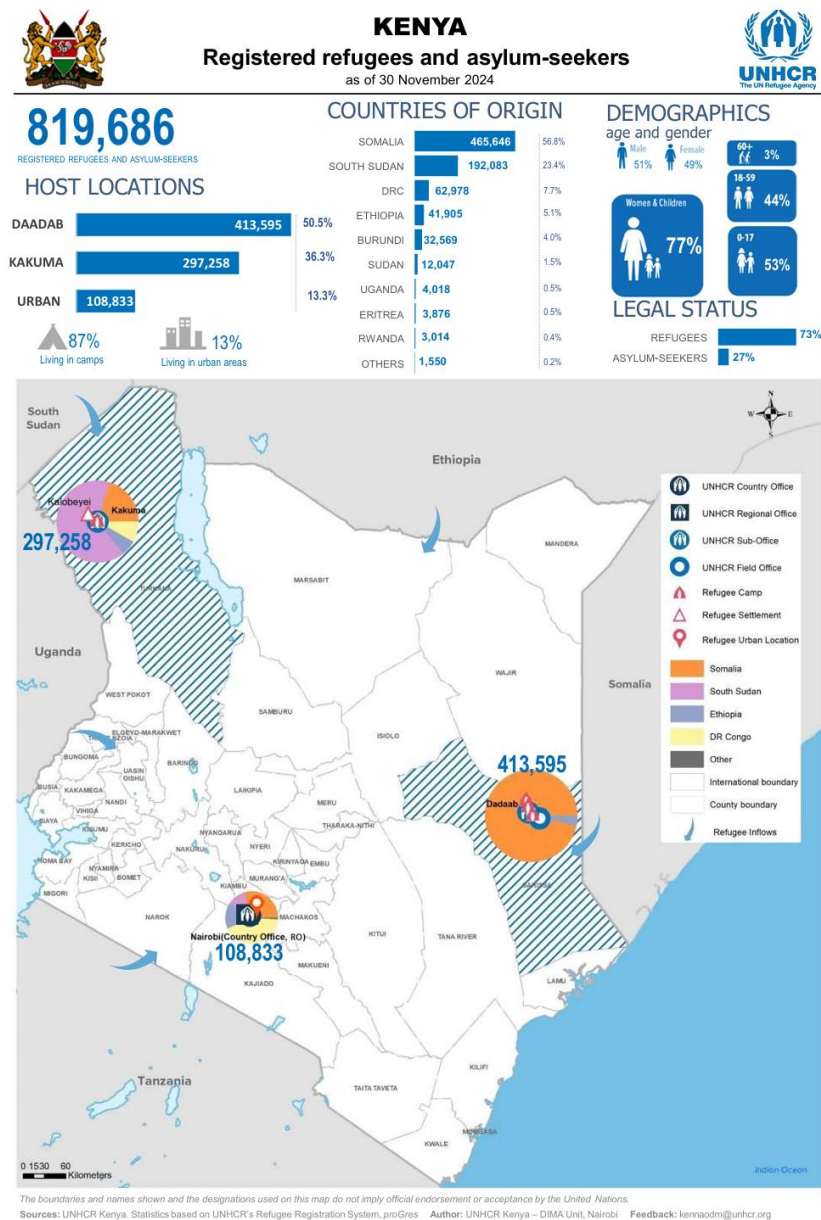


Figure 8: Kenya registered refugees and asylum seekers infographic

Source: UNHCR

### 3.3.3.4 Ethnic groups

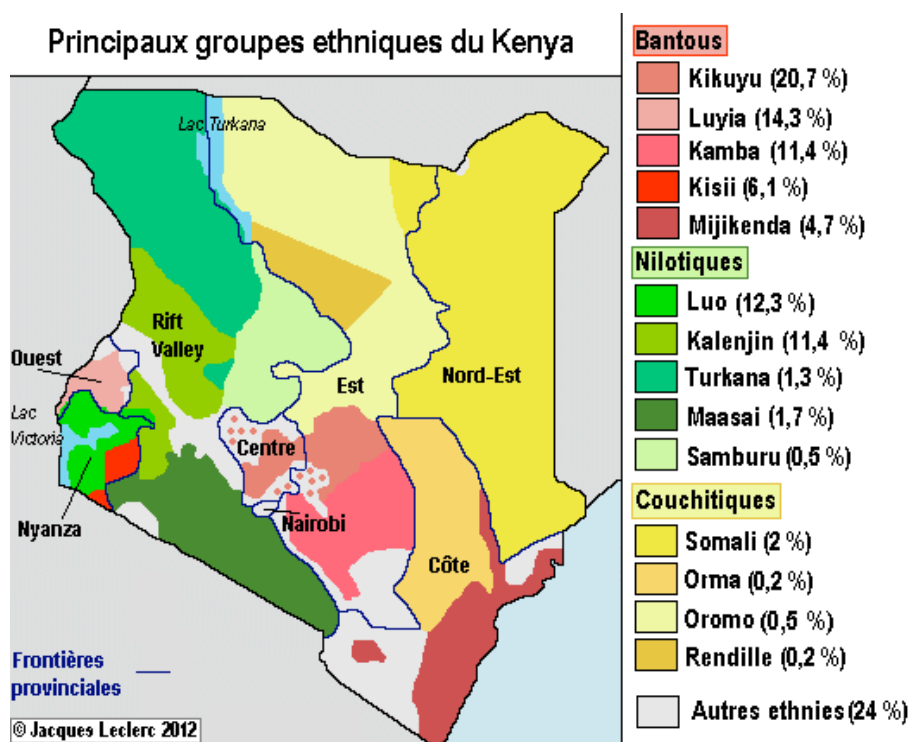


Figure 9: Main ethnic groups and their localization in Kenya

Kenya is a country of great ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious diversity. Kenya's population is divided into **three main language groups** – **Bantu** (*bantous on the figure above*), **Nilo-Saharan** (*nilotiques on the figure above*), and **Afro-Asiatic** (*couchitiques on the figure above*). Bantu speakers make up the largest group and live mainly in southern Kenya, including the Kikuyu, Kamba, Meru, and Nyika peoples of the central highlands. The Nilo-Saharan speakers like the Kalenjin, Luo, Maasai, Samburu, and Turkana inhabit western and central parts of the country and engage in pastoralism. The smallest group, the Afro-Asiatic speakers, live in arid northern regions as semi-nomadic pastoralists such as the Somali and Oromo

Ethnic/national minorities, such as the Nubians and Somalis, are not recognized as such by the Kenyan government and have problems accessing citizenship documents. In recent years political conflict on ethnic lines has increased dramatically, exacerbated by the combination of divisive politicians and economic decline. Nevertheless, ethnic categorizations are complex and sometimes overlapping. Such linguistic minorities as the Terik, Sengwer and Suba are challenged by the near-extinction of their languages. Agriculturalists and pastoralists often have competing claims to land, and nomadic pastoralists are in ceaseless conflict with the authorities, most of whom come from farming tribes. Although the relationship has generally been one of tolerance, divisions between Christians and Muslims are of growing significance.

No ethnic grouping is numerically dominant, and while a few groups have had opportunities at political power with its associated economic benefits, the Kikuyu, who make up 22 per cent of the population, have tended to dominate politics in the post-independence era. Some groups have never held political power. Competition for power and exclusion from it on an ethnic basis has been a major source of tension in Kenya. Particularly vulnerable minorities include Muslims and nomadic pastoralists such as Somalis and Maasai.

Hunter-gatherer communities, including the Ogiek, Sengwer and Yaaku peoples, have long faced marginalization and exclusion, including dispossession of land and forced evictions. Other groups include Aweer (Dahalo), a traditional hunter-gatherer community, numbering about 3,500 and living in the Lamu district of eastern Kenya, where they face insecurity, the threat of famine and loss of livelihood as a result of the government's ban in the name of conservation. Most men have left the region in search of work.

## 3.4 Murang'a County socio-economic profile

### 3.4.1 Background

Murang'a County is in the Central region of Kenya. The county lies between latitudes 0o 34''; 107'' South and Longitudes 36o; 37o 27'' East and covers a total area of 2,558.96 km<sup>2</sup>. The County borders Nyeri to the North, Kiambu to the South, Nyandarua to the West and Kirinyaga, Embu and Machakos counties to the East.

According to the KNBS GCP 2019, Murang'a County contributes 2.3 % to the National GDP. The main economic activity of Murang'a County is agriculture. Most of the residents (80%) practice food crop farming (maize and bananas) majorly in the lowlands, cash crop farming (tea and coffee) mainly in the highlands, livestock rearing and dairy farming are also prominent in the county.

The county has minimal mining activities such as quarrying which is practiced in some parts. Quarrying activities include sand harvesting, excavation of building blocks and ballast and extraction of clay soil for brick making and pottery. Some articular sites in the county are the Aberdares National Park and cultural heritage sites that have a rich history on the origins of the Agikuyu people (Mukurwe wa Nyagathanga and Karia Ka Mbari ya Ngware).

Majority of the residents belong to the mainstream Christian denominations including Catholic and Protestants.

### 3.4.2 Demography

The Murang'a County population as per the KNBS 2019 Population and Housing Census was 1,056,640 persons. With a population growth rate of 1.2 percent per annum, this **population is estimated at 1,135,521 in 2025** and is projected to rise to 1,163,103, 1,191,354 and 1,205,736 persons in 2027, 2029 and 2030 respectively. The population consisted of 523,940 Male and 532,669 females with **male-female sex ratio of 98 males against 100 females**.

**The most populated Sub-Counties in the year 2025 are Murang'a South and Kandara** with estimated population of about 198,622 and 188,170 persons respectively. Other than those people living in the Aberdares Forest (Forest guards and families), Ithanga has the lowest estimated population of 62,487 persons in the year 2025 and projected to grow to 64,005, 65,559, and 66,351 persons by year 2027, 2029 and 2030 respectively.

The most populated urban areas in the County are Kenol and Murang'a Towns, with the population estimated at 44,086 and 43,314 persons respectively as reported in the 2019 Population and Housing Census. This population is estimated at 47,376 and 46,548 persons in 2025 and projected to rise to 50,306 and 49,426 persons by the end 2030.

### 3.4.3 Social and Gender considerations

The available data reveals a mixed landscape of progress and persistent gender disparities across key socio-economic sectors.

In **education**, primary school enrollment is nearly gender-balanced, and girls slightly outperform boys in secondary school transition, representing 52% of enrolled learners. However, adult literacy still shows a gap, with women at 80% compared to 85% for men, indicating that historical inequalities continue to influence older age groups.

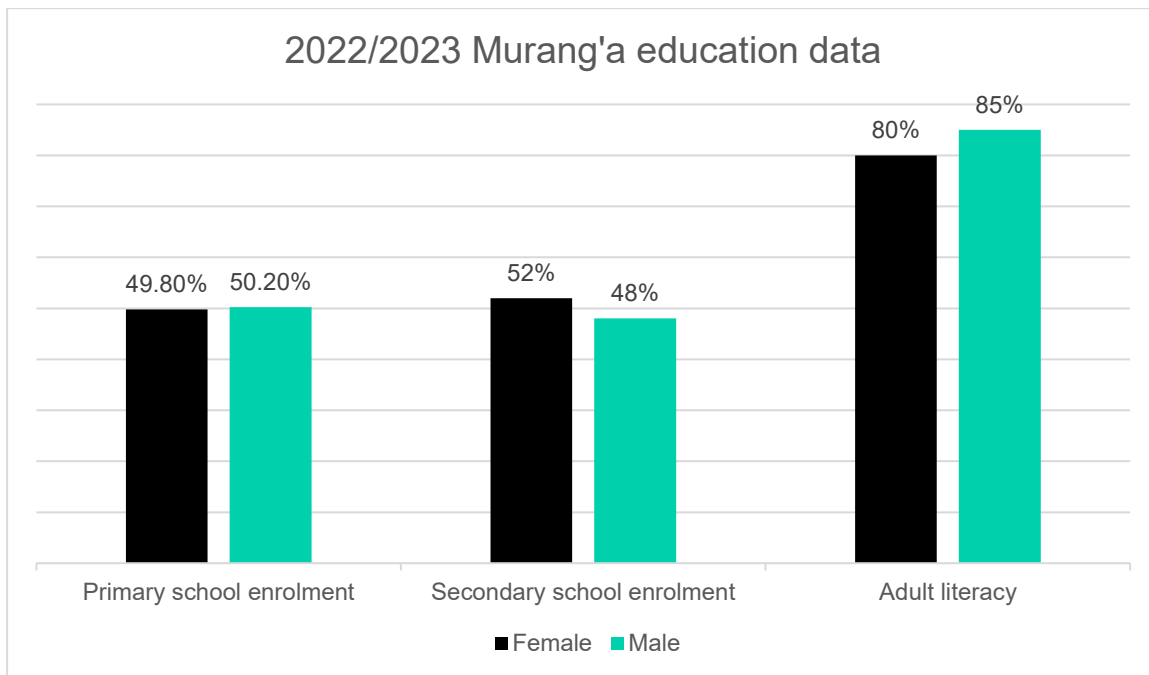


Figure 10: Murang'a county education data

In the **labor market**, women remain under-represented in formal employment, holding only 45% of such positions. Despite this, they play a dominant role in agriculture, which is the county's main economic activity, where women constitute 60% of the workforce, particularly in tea and coffee farming, while men are more involved in commercial-scale production. Commercial production is likely to bring more revenues hence such observation also reveals an economic gap. Youth unemployment also reflects gendered disparities, affecting young women at a higher rate (38%) than young men (32%).

Along to the formal labor market involvement **women dominate unpaid care work**.

**Health** indicators show that women have a higher life expectancy (approximately 68 years compared to 64 years for men), yet they also face a **higher HIV prevalence rate** (5.2% versus 3.8%). Access to maternal health services is relatively strong, with 78% of women attending at least four antenatal visits, since 2023 the Murang'a County Maternal Health Support Program aims to enhance maternal and infant health by encouraging expectant mothers to utilize antenatal and hospital delivery services. The program provides financial incentives to pregnant women, offering Ksh 1,000 during their seventh month of pregnancy to facilitate travel to health facilities, and an additional Ksh 2,000 upon delivery to assist with transportation back home. This initiative addresses financial barriers that previously led to a significant number of home births, thereby reducing maternal and infant mortality rates.

**Gender-based violence (GBV)** remains a significant concern, with around 1,200 cases reported annually according to 2023 data. Women and girls account for 85% of survivors, underscoring the gendered nature of violence and the need for strengthened prevention and response mechanisms.

Structural inequalities further compound these vulnerabilities, for **instance land ownership remains heavily skewed toward men** (65% compared to 35% for women). And **political representation continues to lag behind** as in 2022 women held only 30% of County Assembly seats, falling short of the two-thirds gender principle, and occupied just 20% of senior county leadership roles.

## 4. GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE K-WASH PROGRAM

This section is built on the CWSSIPs data which itself builds on county statistics including the ones developed through the PCRAs.

### 4.1 Main findings regarding gender and climate in the WASH sector in Murang'a

#### 4.1.1 WASH Social norms in Murang'a

When studying WASH sector it is relevant to question the social norms that surround the topic as these norms often reinforce gender inequalities, limit access to essential services, and heighten health risks for women, girls, persons with disabilities, and the elderly.

Some observations on cultural practices are common between social groups, for instance:

- Cultural beliefs that water treatment is unnecessary if water appears clean also persist, resulting in widespread consumption of untreated water and recurrent outbreaks of typhoid and cholera.
- Cultural belief that discussing toilets is shameful collectively delay the adoption of safe WASH practices and deepen inequalities

##### 4.1.1.1 Water supply

Gendered expectations strongly influence how water-related responsibilities are distributed. Water collection is widely regarded as women's domestic work, resulting in women and girls spending an estimated three to five hours per day fetching water. This time burden restricts their opportunities for education, paid work, and community participation.

At the same time, **men typically control decisions related to water infrastructure** (such as the siting of facilities like boreholes) often prioritizing agricultural needs over household water security.

##### 4.1.1.1.1 Sanitation

**Menstrual hygiene remains surrounded by stigma and silence**, discouraging open discussion and contributing to inadequate facilities in schools. As a result, a significant proportion of girls miss classes during menstruation, and many women rely on unsafe materials that increase infection risks.

Sanitation practices are also shaped by gender norms. **Latrine construction is commonly viewed as a man's responsibility, and because women rarely own land**, they have limited influence over whether or when sanitation facilities are built. **Female-headed households are also disproportionately likely to lack toilets**, and open defecation persists in some rural areas.

##### 4.1.1.1.2 Hygiene

Hygiene behaviors are similarly affected by social expectations, handwashing is often considered a women's concern linked to childcare, leading to **lower uptake among men** and contributing to the spread of diarrheal diseases.

#### 4.1.1.2 People with disabilities or mobility difficulties (elders) and WASH

Social perceptions of persons with disabilities and older adults as "dependent" further exclude them from WASH planning. This contributes to the **scarcity of accessible public toilets** and creates **mobility challenges** for elderly individuals who rely on traditional pit latrines which are not adapted, thus further exacerbating the "dependency" issue.

In addition to the scarcity of accessible sanitation facilities there are assumptions that people with disabilities cannot maintain sanitation facilities which further increases their marginalization.

## 4.1.2 Acces and control over water resources

The social norms mentioned above are also caused by, and result **from inequalities in the control and use of water resources or WASH infrastructure**. Beyond the cultural aspect, these elements are presented below.

### 4.1.2.1 Water supply

#### 4.1.2.1.1 Access and use

As mentioned therebefore women and girls carry the overwhelming responsibility for household water collection as primary water fetchers (82% are women/girls, compared to 18% men/boys), which constitutes an important time burden representing 3 to 5 hours collecting water daily when men spend less than one hour when involved. This has a direct education impact as girls in water-scarce areas miss 12% more school days than boys due to water-collection duties, this does not consider side factors such as fatigue which can impede learning in class.

It can be noted that drought impact is major on water fetching tasks, for instance in Kiru county the following time burdens are observed for water fetching and breakfast preparation, eating and cleaning:

	Normal day	Drought day
<b>Youths</b>	3 hours	5 hours
<b>Women</b>	2 hours (7am to 9am)	7 hours (2am to 9am)
<b>Men</b>	3,5 hours (5am to 8:30am)	3 hours (3am to 6am)

It can be noted that boreholes that provide better quality water (dependant on aquifers) are mostly male-managed (70%) while women depend more heavily on

- surface water which, when fluoride-rich or contaminated thus affects them and the children primarily
- springs located far from households which further increases the time burden and the safety one.

Indeed, regarding safety such water fetching task is associated with a differentiated **GBV risk as 22% of women report harassment at water points**, compared to less than 5% of men.

Access disparities are also more pronounced among groups facing structural exclusion:

- Persons with Disabilities (PWDs): Only 19% have adequate access; just 8% of water points are wheelchair-accessible, leading to dehydration and UTI risks.
- Elderly persons: Access rate stands at 23%, with mobility challenges and reliance on distant sources increasing health risks.
- Female-headed households: Access rate is 31%, constrained by limited land rights for borehole development and time-water trade-offs that contribute to child malnutrition.
- Pastoralist communities: Only 12% have stable access due to seasonal migration, increasing exposure to zoonotic diseases.

Another factor that impacts improved-water access is the geographical location, rural areas having much less access than urban ones. Some data from the Murang'a Water Sector Report, 2023 highlight this:

- Urban areas (Murang'a Town): 68% have piped water access.
- Rural highlands (Mathioya): 45% rely on protected springs.
- Rural lowlands (Kandara): Only 22% have improved access, with rivers as the main source.
- 70% of water projects target urban areas or said "wealthy areas"

#### 4.1.2.1.2 Control

**Women’s participation in water management bodies remains limited**, particularly in leadership and decision-making roles, the identified barriers explaining the following data are cultural norms, limited technical training, and heavy domestic workloads restricting women’s ability to engage meaningfully. While women are well represented at key positions at the county level:

- The department of water is led by a women
- The chair of the water committee at the county assembly is filled by a women,
- The chief officer who is the accounting officer in all matter of water sector is also a women.

They remain underrepresented in most executive positions:

- **County Water Boards:** Men constitute 75–80% of members and hold most leadership positions, while women (20–25%) are concentrated in secretarial or advisory roles.
- **Community Water Committees:** Women represent around 30% of members but hold only 10% of decision-making positions.
- **Management of boreholes:** Approximately 70% of borehole committees are male-led, limiting women’s influence over siting and management.

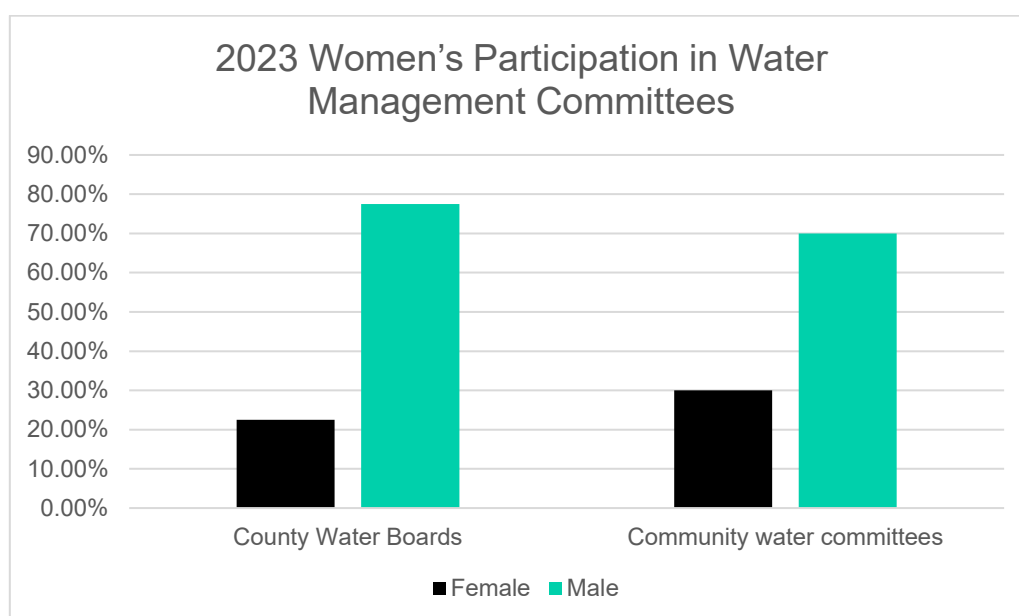


Figure 11: 2023 Women’s Participation in Water Management Committees

Such low women participation in decision making processes from women imply that male needs tend to be prioritized over women’s, for instance irrigation and commercial uses are prioritized, while women’s needs such as proximity of water points, safety, and menstrual hygiene management are often overlooked.

#### 4.1.2.2 Sanitation

##### 4.1.2.2.1 Access and use<sup>6</sup>

Sanitation access in Murang’a is deeply gendered, with women, girls, and marginalized groups facing disproportionate burdens due to cultural norms, poverty, and infrastructure gaps. Below is a detailed breakdown of differences between practices and impacts on vulnerable groups.

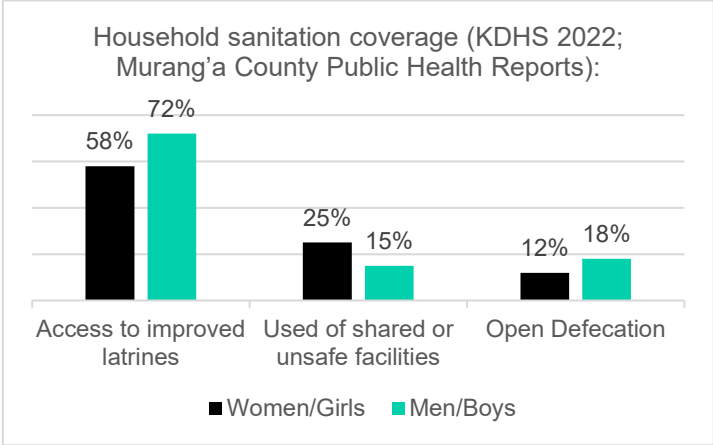
<sup>6</sup> Source: KDHS 2022, Murang’a County Public Health Reports; UNICEF WASH Survey 2023, Murang’a Disability Network; SNV Kenya, Murang’a Gender Department

To start with **women and girls appear to have more unsafe sanitation practice** than men as their use of shared and unsafe facilities increases the risk of GBV as well as open defecation does which also appears to be unsafe due to potential GBV risks and attacks from the wildlife.

The open defecation figure for boys and men is higher than the one for women and girls nevertheless it was mostly presented as being a convenience rather than a lack of other options. While women and girls' behavior on the other end tend to prioritize household sanitation but lack control over construction/upgrade decisions.

It can be noted that the access to improved latrines is lower for women and girls living in a female-headed household than for ones living in a male headed one. This is the result of affordability gaps, 45% of female-headed households cannot afford improved toilets (vs. 30% of male-headed households).

Beyond access to latrines women and girls face additional issues when menstruating. Indeed, taboos around menstruation remain important and therefore affect women's dignity and also lead them to hide sanitary waste, risking groundwater contamination<sup>7</sup>. This can especially be underlined as menstrual hygiene is impossible in most facilities (80% of facilities have no bins or water). In addition to the practical (unadapted facilities), psychological and physiological (period pain) challenges there is an economic one as sanitary pads cost KES 100/month some cannot afford it, specifically it is reported that those are unaffordable for 60% of HIV-affected households.



These overall gender gaps in sanitation access have direct health, education and safety impacts highlighted by the figures below:

- 40% of women and girls report sanitation-related UTIs and reproductive infections.
  - ▶ 62% of girls and women avoid using toilets after dark, and holding back from urinating increases urinary infections.
  - ▶ As mentioned menstrual hygiene is impossible in most facilities which also increases UTIs risks.
- 32% of schools lack private, functional toilets, causing girls to miss 3 to 5 school days per month.
- 22% experience harassment or GBV when accessing toilets at night and long distances to communal facilities increase exposure to insecurity.

In addition to the gender gaps observed other social inequalities can be identified. Notably **PWDs face very high physical barriers in accessing sanitation facilities as less than 5% of the latter are disability friendly**, that is to say accessible through ramps / handrails. It is reported than only 8% of schools have ramps to access sanitation facilities which hinders students in wheelchair or with mobility challenges to go to school, this coming as an addition to the fact that teachers assume disabled students "can't

<sup>7</sup> It should be understood that contamination could com from sanitary products' microplastics and bloodborne pathogens (malaria, syphilis, and brucellosis, and most notably Hepatitis B (HBV), Hepatitis C (HCV) and the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV))

manage" toilets alone. In addition to such physical barrier there is an important social one related to **dignity** which is lowered due to the fact that PWDs rely on family assistance, 62% of them report humiliation from this.

Difficulties related to mobility also touch elderly people which may also have a more difficult time to access latrines, also the continence challenges they face may exacerbate the problem and again have an impact on dignity.

HIV-affected persons also face heightens challenges as they're very stigmatized and are often excluded from shared toilets due to myths about contagion.

#### 4.1.2.2.2 Control

Representation at county government agency level is the same as for water supply as both sanitation and water supply as under the same department. Regarding sanitation, two main observations are made regarding the **decision-making power**:

- 80% of sanitation budget decisions made by men (county government data).
- Only 15% of water/sanitation committees are female-led.

This shown a male domination in decision making and a limited voice for women. This also translates in subsidies gaps as it is observed that Government programs often bypass widows/disabled households.

In addition the land ownership is also male-dominated with less than 20% of land owned by women. This again translates in control over the land and potential toilets construction as this cannot be done without male approval.

#### 4.1.2.3 Hygiene

Less information are available on hygiene compared to water supply and sanitation, nonetheless some striking points can be highlighted:

- Water tariffs force orphans to prioritize drinking over hand washing thus limiting their access to proper hygiene.
- On men's hand the gap of access is mainly linked with social norms and the fact that handwashing is often considered a women's concern leading to **lower uptake among men** and contributing to the spread of diarrheal diseases.

### 4.1.3 Differentiated vulnerability to climate hazards

As in most places **Climate change is intensifying pre-existing gender and social inequalities in Murang'a County**, particularly in relation to water and sanitation (WASH) services. Although social groups are all affected by floods, landslides, and droughts, their experiences and vulnerabilities differ significantly due to entrenched social roles, unequal access to resources, and disparities in decision-making power.

During disasters or emergencies social norms restrict women's mobility during emergencies, making evacuation and access to relief more difficult. For instance their clothes may limit their movement more than men's and their caregiving role may lead to them helping others and thus performing slower evacuation. In addition early warning systems which form a key item in disaster risk management reach men and women differently, with women being less alerted. On this topic much progress has been made through the CCAP implementation with SMS alerts on droughts or floods now reaching 65% of women compared to 30% in 2019<sup>8</sup>.

More broadly extreme weather events frequently damage water infrastructure, displace communities, and disrupt essential services. In these situations, **women and children are the most vulnerable. Women are expected to maintain domestic routines**—fetching water, preparing meals, caring for children—even when

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<sup>8</sup> Source: Murang'a CWSSIP.

resources are scarce or inaccessible. When schools close due to disasters, women also shoulder the responsibility of ensuring children return to learning as soon as possible.

Men, by contrast, face **heightened financial pressures**. When water systems fail and vendors raise prices, **men are expected to cover these unexpected costs**. They are also **typically responsible for rebuilding homes** after floods or landslides.

Climate change is worsening water scarcity in Murang'a, with disproportionate impacts on women, smallholder farmers, and rural communities. Key impacts include:

- **Increased water competition**, with men-dominated irrigation consuming **60% of available water**, leaving less for domestic use.
- **Women spending 35% more time searching for water** during droughts.
- **25% rise in inter-community conflicts** over water points since 2020.

In parallel other hazards such as floods lead to contamination of shallow wells, **45% of shallow wells are considered to be contaminated** by flood runoff. **Such contamination leads to higher disease burden** among women and children due to reliance on unsafe water sources.

Climate-related landslides in Murang'a, and particularly the case of Kiarathe, illustrate how **displacement triggered by climate hazards creates new layers of social vulnerability** for affected communities. Beyond the immediate physical danger, displaced households face social tensions and restrictions, loss of privacy and dignity, and family separation due to relocation conditions and governance arrangements within temporary camps. These constraints weaken social cohesion and reduce autonomy, making displaced groups vulnerable in ways they were not before the hazard.

For women and girls, these impacts are **even more pronounced**. Displacement has intensified unpaid care work, as women must travel long distances to fetch firewood and water, sometimes returning to landslide-prone homesteads to cook before carrying food back to the camp. Limited livelihood opportunities in the rural setting further restrict economic prospects for girls and young women, compounding pre-existing gender inequalities. The overcrowded housing arrangements also reduce privacy and safety, disproportionately affecting women's dignity and well-being.

Overall, the Kiarathe experience demonstrates that climate-induced displacement does not only expose communities to environmental hazards but also amplifies social and gender vulnerabilities.



Figure 12: IDP Camp housing at Kiarathe Academy

Source: Field Survey, 2025

#### 4.1.4 Climate governance and social and gender inclusion

The report has already highlighted significant governance and decision-making gaps within the WASH sector. It is equally important to examine the key governance gaps in climate-related decision-making, as these directly reinforce the vulnerabilities described above. Limited decision-making power and restricted access to assets further weaken the ability of women and marginalized groups to adapt to climate impacts. These gaps undermine the effectiveness of climate adaptation strategies and perpetuate patterns of exclusion. The most critical gaps include:

- Only **2 of 15** County Climate Committee members are women.
- Women own **less than 10%** of land with water rights, restricting their adaptation options.
- **80% of resilience funding** prioritizes infrastructure over social equity.

#### 4.1.5 Current climate resilience strategies

Murang'a County has introduced several resilience strategies, each with distinct social equity outcomes, including in the water sector with some key resilience strategies:

- **Rainwater harvesting** which benefits to women the most as it reduces women's fetching time. There is a 50% adoption rate in women-led households, but poor households lack storage tanks.
- **Sand dams** storage which can ease water fetching and/or reduce distance to water sources which primarily benefits women; maintenance of the dams often falls on women's groups.
- Water resource management is also reflected in the adoption of **climate-smart agricultural practices**, particularly in irrigation. The introduction of drip irrigation can reduce water use by up to 40%, helping to mitigate drought and water-scarcity challenges for all users. However, the ability to participate in this transition is uneven. Fewer than 15% of female farmers access subsidies to adopt drip irrigation, compared to 35% of male farmers. This gap persists even though markets for drought-resistant crops remain male-dominated (despite the fact that women also cultivate crops such as beans and sweet potatoes).

A social equity measure implemented by the county is to allocate 30% of the Murang'a Climate Fund (2022) to women- and youth-led water projects.

## 4.2 Gender considerations in each of the program's thematic areas - *Guiding questions and recommendations*

### 4.2.1 Improving Social and Gender Climate Resilience

Social and Gender Climate resilience			
Key questions			
Context			
Do men and women differ in their access to productive resources and services?	What practices, representations, and constraints (material, economic or cultural) can disadvantage women during a natural disaster?	What are women's expectations and needs in terms of green and culturally appropriate resources for development?	
What is the level of women's participation in decision-making at the community, local, regional, and national levels?	What differentiates men and women in terms of access to, control over, and ownership of resources (such as land, livestock, property, and income opportunities)?	Which local actors (NGOs, associations, cooperatives, religious groups, etc.) are working to strengthen women's resilience to the effects of climate change?	
	What differentiates men and women in terms of access to development resources such as credit, information, training, and labor-saving technologies?		
At project level			
Did the analysis of the project's impacts distinguish between the impacts experienced by men and those experienced by women as well as by marginalized groups?	Does impact monitoring allow for the documentation of the situation of women in relation to that of men as well as for the one of marginalized groups?	Do impact mitigation measures take into account differences between social groups and between women and men in the various categories of affected populations?	Does the project include a component for strengthening women's capacities? Marginalized groups' capacities?
			Does the project as defined respond to the specific needs of women and local cultural and social constraints?
			Have the proposed technical solutions been discussed with women or marginalized groups? Do they take into account their needs and expectations?
Identified social and gender-specific vulnerabilities			
Women are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change due to the social norms and the gendered division of labor within households and the community, and their specific needs are not taken into account.	As primary water fetchers and domestic water users women are more vulnerable to droughts. Women's caregiving roles further increase these vulnerabilities with an important unpaid care work burden.	Making up 60% of the agricultural workforce and being overrepresented in informal employment makes women highly sensitive.	Women have limited access to support mechanisms related to their increased climate vulnerability in agriculture. Although highly vulnerable, women are the guarantors of food security and water supply for households and communities.

## Good practices and Recommendations

Raise awareness among local authorities about gender issues to ensure that gender bias is taken into account in climate resilience projects.

Support women in implementing climate-smart and responsible agricultural practices adapted to climate change (drip irrigation, drought-resistant crops etc.) to reduce their vulnerability and place them as actors of change.  
Promote formalization of women's employment.

Promote the construction of food crop storage infrastructure to absorb crop losses due to climatic hazards and secure food supplies for households.



### Tools

- ✓ Gender-specific indicators
- ✓ Consultations: Group discussions, Questionnaires, Interviews with key stakeholders, etc.
- ✓ The climate-care nexus working paper (UN Women)
- ✓ The Gender Equality and Climate Policy Scorecard: Advancing Accountability in Nationally Determined Contributions (country scale but can serve as a model to be downscaled at county level)
- ✓ The Sendai Framework for DRR

## 4.2.2 Improving Social and Gender Inclusion in Water Resource Management

### Water Resource Management

#### Background

A gendered approach to the water crisis recognizes the hugely important role women play in their communities as the main collectors, protectors and managers of water. It demands their equal representation in leadership and decision-making and calls for engaging with women and their communities to incorporate their perspectives, including on the “rights of Nature” approach, as part of ecologically responsible and climate-smart water governance.

#### Key questions

##### Context

How are the communities organized for water distribution and use?

Do men and women differ in their access to productive resources and services? (What are the specific barriers faced?)

What is the level of participation of women in the decision-making process concerning water projects?

What are the differences between men and women in terms of water needs and use?

How does the lack of water infrastructure affect men and women differently in terms of health and economic activities?

How do seasonal changes and climate variability affect access to and use of water for men and women in the community?

How can we better balance the current roles and responsibilities for maintaining water supply systems?

How can conflicts in water allocation, between agricultural and domestic uses, be resolved?

##### Project design

Does the project, as defined, respond to the specific needs of women and local cultural and social constraints?

Have the proposed technical solutions been discussed with the women? Do they take into account women’s needs and expectations?

Does the implementation of the project involve expropriation or restrictions on access to spaces used by local populations, men and women?

Can the project create employment opportunities for women?

Does project monitoring make it possible to document the situation of women as distinct from that of men?

Project impacts

Did the analysis of the project’s impacts distinguish between the impacts suffered by men and those suffered by women?

Do impact mitigation measures take into account the differences between women and men in the different categories of affected populations?

## Identified social and gender-specific vulnerabilities

<p>Access to safe drinking water is crucial for health, hygiene, and overall well-being, but many communities face significant challenges in ensuring a reliable water supply.</p>	<p>As primary water fetchers and domestic water users women already have a high time burden related to water, this adding to the burden of unpaid care work.</p>	<p>The impacts of climate change tend to increase the workload associated with water collection for women and girls.</p>	<p>Women play a key role in water collection, transport, use, and management, yet they are rarely involved in decision-making in the sector.</p>
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## Good practices and recommendations

<p>Extend water supply coverage to reduce women's water fetching burden.</p> <p>Ensure that water points are strategically located near women's homes and workplaces.</p> <p>Balance the considerations of water use between agricultural and domestic uses.</p>	<p>Involve women in community consultations on the location, type, and maintenance of water infrastructure.</p> <p>Include women in decision-making and water infrastructure management: village water consultations, create a women's water cooperative to give women a platform to make their voices heard.</p> <p>Train women to help run and maintain water supply.</p>	<p>Consider intersectional gaps, for instance that fact that rural women are even more vulnerable than ones in urban areas regarding water resource management.</p>
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### Tools

- ✓ Access and Control matrix
- ✓ Consultations: Focus Group Discussions, Key informant interviews...
- ✓ Daily activity clock (refer to PCRA)
- ✓ Decision making pile sorting
- ✓ Data disaggregated by sex
- ✓ Gender-specific indicators (see *Appendix 4: guidelines for indicator definition*)

Maps of water resources from gender perspectives



### 4.2.3 Improving Social and Gender Inclusion in WASH Practices

#### Management Excellence in WASH operations

##### Background

Women have primary roles in the collection, transport, use, and management of water and the promotion of sanitary practices, and yet are hardly involved in decision making in the sector. Women and men differ in their roles, needs, and perceptions regarding WSS; failure to consider these differences can cause poor performance or even suspension of projects. At the household level, the understanding of gender perceptions is important for introducing alternative sanitation systems.

##### Key questions

###### Context Level

<p>Do men and women differ in their access to productive resources and services?</p> <p>What is the participation of women in water and sanitation sectors?</p>	<p>What are the practices, representations and material and cultural constraints of men and women, boys and girls, in terms of water, sanitation and hygiene?</p> <p>Is it common for men and women to use the same latrines?</p> <p>What are the preferred methods of men and women, boys and girls for hygiene awareness?</p>	<p>What are the expectations and willingness of men and women to pay in terms of water and sanitation in the different social categories?</p> <p>Who pays or will pay for access to water and sanitation between spouses?</p>
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###### Project Level

<p>Does the project as defined respond to the specific needs of women and local cultural and social constraints?</p> <p>Did the analysis of the project's impacts (benefits and negative impacts) distinguish between the impacts suffered by men and those suffered by women, did it fully integrate other vulnerable groups (PWDs, people affected by illness, elders) ?</p>	<p>Have the proposed technical solutions been discussed with the women and marginalized groups ? Do they take into account their needs and expectations?</p> <p>Do the proposed technical inclusion ensure <b>accessibility, affordability and safety</b> for all ?</p>	<p>Does project monitoring make it possible to document the situation of marginalized groups and the one of women as distinct from that of men?</p> <p>Can the project create employment opportunities for women?</p>	<p>Did the analysis of the project's impacts distinguish between the impacts suffered by men and those suffered by marginalized groups ?</p> <p>Do impact mitigation measures take into account the differences between marginalized groups and women and men in the different categories of affected populations?</p>
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## Identified social and gender-specific vulnerabilities

<p>Access to safe drinking water is crucial for health, hygiene, and overall well-being, but many communities face significant challenges in ensuring a reliable water supply.</p> <p>Women play a key role in water collection, transport, use, and management, yet they are rarely involved in decision-making in the sector.</p>	<p>As primary water fetchers and domestic water users women already have a high time burden related to water, this adding to the burden of unpaid care work.</p> <p>The impacts of climate change tend to increase the workload associated with water collection for women and girls.</p>	<p>Women have limited access to proper sanitation, with even lower access among female headed households.</p> <p>Women face heightened safety risks (GBV, human-wildlife conflict) when practicing open defecation, using shared latrines, or walking long distances for water.</p>	<p>Latrines are not adapted for persons with disabilities, creating dependency and dignity issues.</p> <p>Taboos and inadequate sanitation facilities cause girls to miss school.</p> <p>Higher prevalence of HIV and UTIs among women reflects gaps in health access and sanitation conditions.</p>
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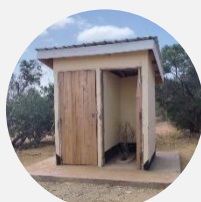
## Good practices and recommendations

<p>Good practices on water resource management also benefit WASH topics (reducing water fetching task burden and enhancing women's adaptation agency).</p> <p>Associate development of WASH infrastructures with awareness raising campaign to alleviate taboos and stigma as well as ensure proper use and maintenance.</p> <p>Train women to help run and maintain WASH infrastructures (WTP, WWTP, kiosks, networks, latrines).</p>	<p>Consider social norms (separate latrines for men and women or not, stigmas surrounding diseases transmission etc.)</p> <p>Implement safe and accessible designs according to Kenyan and international guidelines (ramps, lights).</p> <p>Ensure menstrual health management through awareness raising campaigns and bins/water points around latrines for disposal of menstrual hygiene products.</p> <p>Provide free menstrual hygiene products for girls in schools and subsidize these for all women (particularly female headed households)</p>	<p>Involve women and vulnerable groups in community consultations on the location, type, and maintenance of WASH infrastructure. Especially on latrines siting.</p> <p>Include women in decision-making and WASH infrastructure management: village water consultations.</p>
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Tools and literature:

- ✓ Access and Control matrix
- ✓ Daily activity clock (PCRA)
- ✓ Decision making pile sorting
- ✓ Data disaggregated by sex
- ✓ Gender-specific indicators (see Appendix 4: guidelines for indicator definition)

Consultations: Focus Group Discussions, Key informant interviews...



## 4.3 Social and gender considerations in K-WASH program

### 4.3.1 Gender consideration as E&S safeguards

#### 4.3.1.1 Approach

As a programme partly financed by an international financial institution (the World Bank Group), the K-WASH programme is required to comply with the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF). The ESF provides the overarching safeguards for environmental and social risk management, including the identification and mitigation of risks that may disproportionately affect women, girls, and other vulnerable groups.

This safeguard dimension is essential, as it ensures that potential negative impacts are anticipated, minimised, and addressed through a gender and social inclusion lens. However, the ESF's primary focus is on **avoiding harm**. It does not, in itself, drive the programme toward proactively shaping interventions that promote inclusive adaptation or reduce structural gender inequalities. In other words, **while the ESF ensures that gender-related risks are mitigated, it does not automatically position gender equality as a core objective of the programme's design.**

#### 4.3.1.2 Identification of Potential risks of program and subprojects from a gender perspective

General potential risks that could be borne by the program and its subprojects from a gender perspective are cited below, the list does not intend to be exhaustive but provides a preliminary identification of potential impacts that can be referred to when conducting the sub-project level impact assessments and gender analyses:

- Health and safety risks, gender-based violence (GBV):
  - ▶ During the construction phase, the influx of external workers and a predominantly male wage base on worksites can induce social tensions, increase the risk of gender-based and sexual violence as well as increase the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases. *Mitigation measures examples: ensure Contractors include code of conduct in their workers contracts, raise awareness on STDs, provide a Grievance redress Mechanism which specifically targets GBV.*
  - ▶ During the implementation of projects, practices may expose women and men differently to dangerous and pathogenic fluids, thereby increasing the risk of water-related health problems and illnesses. *Mitigation measures examples: Protective equipment should be provided and should fit all (sizes are inclusive, consider breasts not to create discomfort, consider longer hair to fit under helmets, etc.)*
- Access to resources
  - ▶ Changes in access, control and power over the water resource may be altered as a result of project implementation, particularly if ownership or operation of water and sanitation infrastructure is gendered. *Mitigation measures examples: Use Access and Control matrix in Impact assessment of the project.*
  - ▶ Similarly, issues of accessibility to water and sanitation services are associated with their affordability. If the issue of budgets is not managed from a gender perspective, there is a risk of reinforcing gender gaps. *Mitigation measures examples: Ensure data is sex-disaggregated when conducting household surveys, realize focus group discussions with men and women to see if affordability to pay varies, assess sources of income for men and women as well as control over their own income.*
- Limited access to program benefits
  - ▶ If the benefits of the sub-projects are not thought out with a gender perspective, then they risk being part of design standards that are biased because until now they have been mostly designed with the vision of a homogeneous population. Because these design standards are biased, they impact in gender-differentiated ways and can then exclude and reinforce

- inequalities that already exist. *Mitigation measures examples: Designs should be reviewed by gender-experts, Designs should rely on outputs of consultations which should have been gender disaggregated and therefore consider both women and men opinions.*
- ▶ Subprojects are expected to enable for job opportunities. Such opportunities can create or widen a gap by perpetuating gendered job allocation. This has an impact on opportunities for capacity building, training, on levels of income and on the identification of girls and boys with certain trades in the project area. *Mitigation measures examples: Ensure capacity building programs are reviewed by gender experts, provide capacity building for both men and women (adapted to needs and wills), ensure job offers are gender inclusive.*
  - Increased unpaid workload for women
    - ▶ During construction, if the project has health impacts (dust and air emissions, noise, etc.) or restricts access to certain infrastructure, it is likely that this will represent an additional workload for women who are responsible for caring for sick people, providing support to people with reduced mobility or who themselves make more different journeys during the day because of certain gender roles. *Mitigation measures examples: Health impacts should be mitigated through water sprinklers, use of well-maintained equipment, when traffic management plans are developed, they should be reviewed with a gender perspective.*
    - ▶ After construction, it is possible that if the water and sanitation infrastructure have not been designed with a gender perspective, they will increase the workload for women. For instance, if better quality water is available but the water-fountains are far away women are likely to spend more time fetching water considering it is seen as their responsibility. *Mitigation measures examples: conduct specific consultation with women to discuss designs and ensure designs are reviewed with a gender perspective.*
  - Loss of livelihoods
    - ▶ Since women are usually more active in informal sectors, their activities and sources of income are sometimes excluded from the analyses. Not including the informal sector and a gender perspective to impact assessment can lead to loss of livelihoods. *Mitigation measures examples: Livelihood Restoration Plans should provide details on compensation measures for informal land users, a specific attention should be given to restitution of land areas and land titles for women as the gap between women landowners and men landowners is already expected to be important, the gap should not be widen.*
  - Increased vulnerability due to resettlement
    - ▶ If the program involves involuntary displacement of population and economic activities, this can make women even more vulnerable, as they have, on average, fewer formal business registered and may then not be eligible for the same compensation.
    - ▶ On the other hand, with regard to economic displacement, the impacts can be differentiated according to gender, with women evolving more significantly in informal sectors and therefore they may not be compensated equally.
    - ▶ *Mitigation measures examples: Resettlement action plans and Livelihood Restoration Plans should provide details on compensation measures for informal land users, and informal economic activities.*
    - ▶ Impact on self-esteem, reputation and dignity. A lack of understanding of local perception, uses and customs through gender lenses can result in projects reinforcing gender-specific marginalization factors, lowering dignity and self-esteem. For instance, if opportunities for women are given mainly for septic tank emptying jobs, there is a risk of associating women with dirty, unhygienic work, and of associating women with a health risk, which would make them feel like pariah/outcast, leading to a loss of self-confidence and dignity. *Mitigation measures examples: WSS gender diagnosis regarding local context should be performed, GAPS of subprojects should ensure cascading impacts of proposed actions are assessed.*

### 4.3.2 Considering gender for the program to contribute to gap closure in Murang'a

Beyond risk mitigation, the K-WASH programme and its sub-projects have significant potential to **enhance the resilience and well-being of women and marginalised groups**, particularly given that climate-smart WASH interventions intersect with multiple pre-existing inequalities. As demonstrated in earlier sections, women and vulnerable populations face disproportionate barriers in accessing and controlling water and sanitation resources, and climate change further amplifies these disparities.

Therefore, in addition to addressing the risks associated with sub-projects, the programme can intentionally aim to **close gender gaps** and move toward becoming gender-responsive—or even gender-transformative. The levels of gender integration are illustrated in the figure below. Considering the current legal and regulatory framework governing the programme, it is recognised that K-WASH should, at a minimum, be **gender-sensitive**, and ideally evolve toward a **gender-transformative** approach.

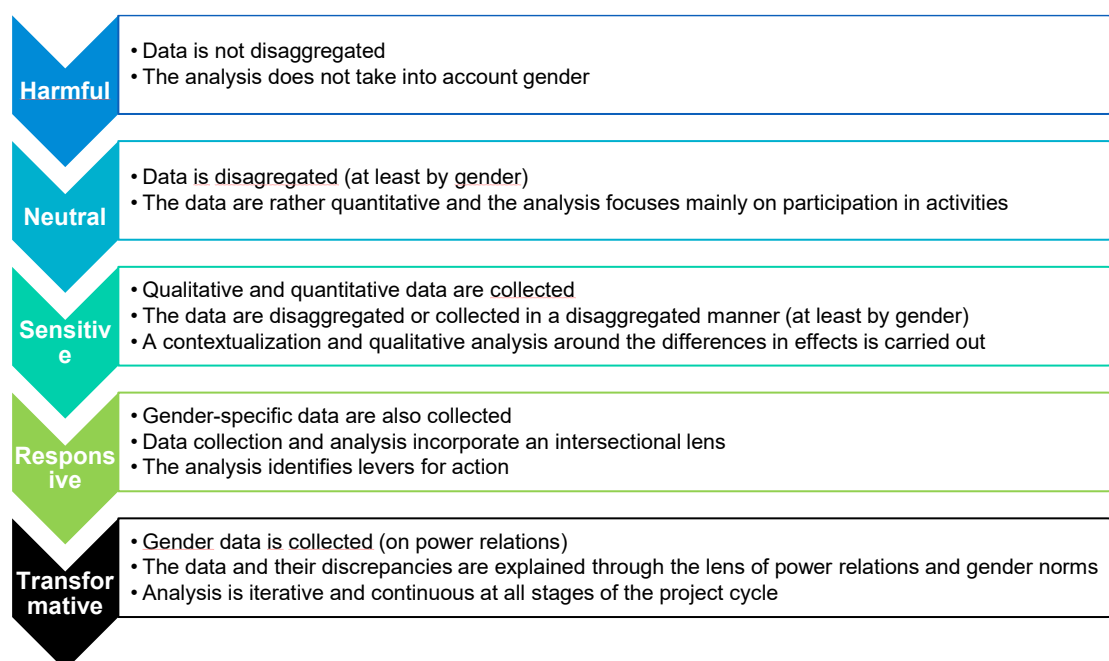


Figure 13: Gender approach levels

To do so a reminder of the key needs, areas for intervention and recommended actions are developed below.

### 1.1.1. Identification of needs

Based on the different consultations (interviews, focus groups) and the literature review that enabled baseline assessment the main social and gender concerns that arise were the following, they have been associated with the related needs identified:

Topic	Observation	Climate link	Needs (for Gender Action Plan)
Sanitation latrines –	Women have limited access to proper sanitation, with even lower access among female-headed households.	/	Ensure equitable access to improved latrines through targeted support for female-headed households (subsidies, prioritisation in infrastructure rollout).
Sanitation latrines (accessibility) –	Latrines are not adapted for persons with disabilities, creating dependency and dignity issues.	Floods further hinder accessibility and damage infrastructure.	Integrate universal design standards in all sanitation facilities; prioritise accessible, flood/landslide-resilient latrine construction.
WASH – safety	Women face heightened safety risks (GBV, human-wildlife conflict) when practicing open defecation, using shared latrines, or walking long distances for water.	Climate change increases water scarcity, leading to longer distances to water points and heightened exposure to GBV and safety risks.	Develop safe-access WASH strategies: closer water points, well-lit and gender-segregated latrines, GBV-sensitive site planning, and community protection mechanisms.
Sanitation menstruation –	Taboos and inadequate sanitation facilities cause girls to miss school.	Reduced school attendance lowers girls’ education levels, limiting their long-term adaptive capacity.	Improve menstrual hygiene management (MHM) facilities in schools; provide MHM education; ensure availability of private, functional toilets and disposal systems.
Sanitation health –	Higher prevalence of HIV and UTIs among women reflects gaps in health access and sanitation conditions.	Climate hazards increase disease outbreaks and health fragility (heatwaves, droughts, injuries, water contamination).	Strengthen gender-responsive health and WASH services, including hygiene promotion, disease-prevention measures, and targeted support for women’s health needs.
Water supply – water fetching	Water fetching is primarily the responsibility of women.	Drought, scarcity, and flood-related contamination increase the time and burden of water collection.	Reduce women’s time burden by expanding safe, nearby water points; invest in climate-resilient water supply systems.
Water resource allocation	Water allocation favours agriculture (male-dominated) over domestic use (female-dominated).	Water scarcity and drought intensify competition between agricultural and domestic needs.	Promote equitable water allocation; include women in water-use planning; support women farmers’ access to irrigation and boreholes.

Topic	Observation	Climate link	Needs (for Gender Action Plan)
Hygiene	Men have lower adherence to safe hygiene practices (handwashing), increasing disease spread.	Climate hazards increase disease outbreaks and health fragility.	Implement targeted hygiene behaviour-change campaigns, including male-focused outreach to reduce disease transmission.
WASH governance	Women are excluded from decision-making processes.	Only 2 of 15 County Climate Committee members are women.	Strengthen women's leadership and representation in WASH and climate governance bodies; set minimum quotas for women's participation.
WASH – socio-economic roles	Women are overrepresented in informal work and unpaid care roles.	Limited economic and decision-making power reduces women's adaptive capacity.	Support women's economic empowerment (skills, financing, formalisation); reduce unpaid care burdens through improved WASH services.
WASH – funding priorities	WASH and especially water supply infrastructure limited resilience have increased impacts on women and vulnerable groups.	80% of resilience funding prioritises infrastructure over social equity.	Rebalance funding to include social equity measures; ensure dedicated budget lines for gender-responsive and inclusive WASH interventions.

#### 4.3.2.1 Social and gender actions highlighted for the program

##### 4.3.2.1.1 Planning

The following planning actions emerge from the identified gender and climate vulnerabilities:

- **Ensure equitable access to improved sanitation** by prioritising female-headed households in sanitation infrastructure rollout and subsidy schemes.
- **Integrate safety considerations into WASH planning**, including the siting of water points and latrines to reduce GBV risks and exposure to human-wildlife conflict. (This is also to be considered at design stage)
- **Strengthen menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in schools** by planning for private, functional toilets and appropriate disposal systems. (This is also to be considered at design stage)
- **Embed gender-responsive health considerations** in WASH planning to address women's higher vulnerability to UTIs, HIV-related sanitation needs, and climate-induced disease outbreaks.
- **Apply universal design standards** to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities and resilience to floods (some measures are detailed below in the design section).
- **Expand climate-resilient water supply systems** to reduce women's time burden and exposure to unsafe water sources.
- **Promote equitable water allocation** between agricultural and domestic uses by integrating women's needs and roles into water-resource planning.
- **Promote climate-smart agricultural activities to manage irrigation**, for instance drip irrigation can benefit all and women can be used to empower women as actors of change.
- **Rebalance resilience funding** to include social equity measures and ensure dedicated budget lines for gender-responsive WASH interventions.

- **Increase women’s representation in WASH and climate governance bodies** by establishing minimum participation quotas and integrating gender criteria into committee selection processes.
- **Plan for women’s economic empowerment** by integrating livelihood support, job creations and measures that reduce unpaid care burdens into WASH programming.

#### 4.3.2.1.2 Capacity building

The following capacity-building actions are required to support inclusive and gender-responsive implementation:

- **Strengthen women’s leadership skills** to enable meaningful participation in WASH and climate-related decision-making bodies.
- **Train WASH and climate governance institutions** on gender-responsive planning, budgeting, and monitoring.
- **Support women farmers’ access to climate-smart water technologies**, including training on irrigation systems and water-use efficiency.
- **Develop targeted hygiene behaviour-change campaigns**, particularly addressing men’s lower adherence to safe hygiene practices.
- **Build community capacity on GBV risk mitigation** linked to WASH access, including safe-access protocols and community protection mechanisms.
- **Train school staff and community workers** on menstrual hygiene management, stigma reduction, and inclusive sanitation practices for girls and PWDs.
- **Strengthen technical capacity for universal design** among local artisans, contractors, and WASH service providers.
- **Provide training for women and youth** on climate-resilient livelihoods and WASH-related economic opportunities.
- **Enhance institutional capacity** to integrate gender and disability assessments into all resilience and WASH projects.

#### 4.3.2.1.3 Design

In addition to good global practices related to design including the practices aimed at climate-proofing the different WASH facilities, it is essential to consider cross-cutting social measures. These aspects will be further developed in the Gender and Vulnerable People Assessment Report and the related Gender Action Plan. However, the main considerations to keep in mind include the following:

- Physical Accessibility
  - ▶ Proximity and distance from users
  - ▶ Safe and convenient access routes
  - ▶ Inclusive design features (ramps, handrails, door widths, tactile paving, etc.)
  - ▶ Adequate lighting and signage for all users

→ The use of the Compendium of accessible WASH technologies, Hazel Jones and Jane Wilbur (2014) is most useful to consider accessibility design features in small infrastructures – [clickable link](#)
- Affordability
  - ▶ Services and facilities should remain accessible to low-income users
  - ▶ Transparent and fair fee structures, if applicable
- Safety and Security
  - ▶ Well-lit and monitored areas, particularly for women and children
  - ▶ Clear evacuation routes and accessible emergency exits
  - ▶ Measures to prevent harassment or violence

- Dignity and Comfort
  - ▶ Cleanliness and regular maintenance
  - ▶ Privacy in use of facilities (e.g., separate and lockable spaces)
  - ▶ Respectful and non-discriminatory service delivery
- Consideration of Diverse Needs
  - ▶ Menstrual hygiene management and adequate disposal facilities
  - ▶ Facilities suitable for children (e.g., lower sinks, child-friendly toilets, safe play areas)
  - ▶ Accessibility for older persons and persons with disabilities (e.g., seating areas, non-slip surfaces)
  - ▶ Space for caregivers accompanying dependents
- Community Participation and Awareness
  - ▶ Engagement of local communities, including women, youth, and marginalized groups, in planning and feedback processes
  - ▶ Awareness and training programs to promote inclusive and respectful use of facilities

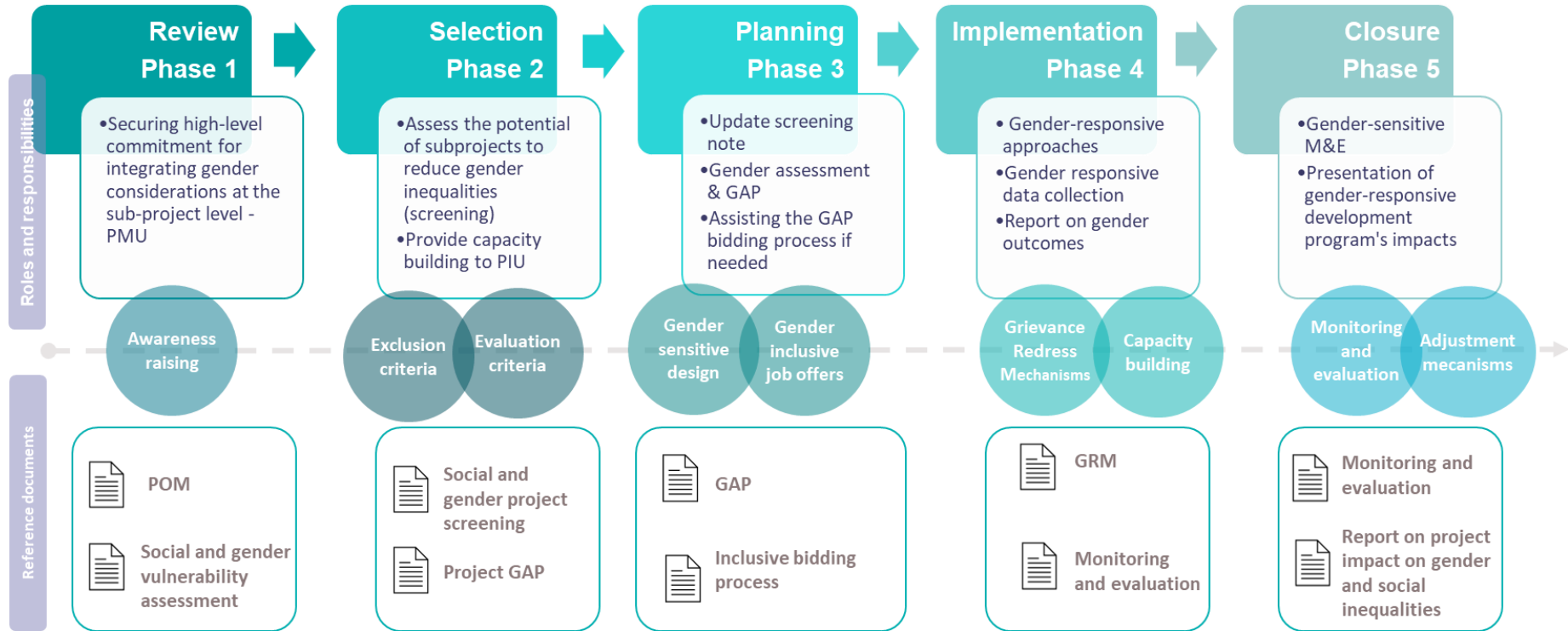
#### 4.4 Operational gender mainstreaming guidelines

Gender mainstreaming should occur at both the programme and sub-project levels. The K-WASH task team should develop and provide the necessary tools to help project holders integrate gender analysis from a cross-cutting perspective. Some of these tools can be drawn directly from this report, such as the “Guiding Questions and Recommendations” sheets.

All sub-projects supported by the K-WASH Programme should incorporate gender analysis from the very beginning of the project cycle and embed it throughout the preparation, maturation, and implementation phases. Gender considerations should not be treated as elements that can be added later or as optional components.

Given the nature of the programme’s sub-projects—often small-scale infrastructure such as latrines—there is significant flexibility to integrate social and gender considerations early on, allowing for rapid improvements and visible quick wins.

## Project cycle and steps for gender integration



# Projects review

## Actions for PMU

Proposed investment should undergo an environmental and social analysis that takes into account the impact on women and vulnerable groups.

- Gender-sensitive approach and gender-specific data collection
- Environmental and social analysis of projects incorporates gender indicators
- E&S analysis enables gender-sensitive categorization

## Key questions and actions for counties

- Who are the target groups?
- Whose interests are being promoted or goals pursued?
- Does the project have gender-differentiated influence (positive or negative)? How is this influence gender-differentiated?
- How will social and economic diversity among the target population be incorporated within approaches to project planning and design?

A mandatory initial socioeconomic and gender assessment, to proactively build in a gender-sensitive approach to project planning design and implementation arrangements

## Tools and strategies



### Strategy

The program launch is an opportunity to raise awareness. Counties must be able to show their intention to mainstream gender.



### Resources

Counties have a PIU including a GBV specialist and a social risks management specialist. It is considered these specialist should screen investments proposals with a social and gender promotion lens



### Communication material

Leaflet on Gender Mainstreaming in the WASH sector (Based on *guiding questions and recommendations sheets* above)



### Program related documentation

POM, Gender and social vulnerability assessment, Social and gender project screening checklist

# 2

## SELECTION

### Actions for PIU

Project prioritization takes into account gender-specific needs and the analysis of risks and impacts on vulnerable populations. Each project proposal is evaluated based on gender indicators.

Each project is reviewed to identify key gender issues and potential risks and benefits associated with the project.

Assess the potential of projects to reduce gender inequalities

Local consultations were held with women to ensure that their specific needs were prioritized

### Key questions and actions for cities

- Are there gender risks and negative impacts that could be associated with the project?
- Are there actions identified to advance gender equality?
- What gender-specific characteristics and differences are important in the Project context and sector?

### Tools and strategies



#### Strategy

Sub-projects selected should show an intention to mainstream gender in their projects even if it has not been designed or implemented yet.



#### Resources

Gender expert having knowledge in WASH can be engaged from time-to-time basis, to support PIU teams.



#### Rapid social and gender review

Rapid analysis of each project should be context specific consider climate vulnerability, gender risks and beyond to facilitate the adoption of transformative measures



#### Program related documentation

POM, county-wide KWASH social and gender vulnerability analysis, Social and gender project screening checklist

# 3

## PLANIFICATION

The selected projects will receive assistance from technical experts to improve the proposed project (design quality, impact on climate resilience, sustainability, policy reform, etc.) during the preparation of detailed studies and the drafting of all deliverables, including procurement documents.

### Actions for PIU

Ensuring findings (gaps) from the rapid social and gender review/screening are integrated in project implementation considerations

Root social and gender considerations as mainstreamed principles

### Key questions and actions for cities

- How can strategies be developed for the project that promote and achieve gender justice and equity?
- What can be done towards greater social inclusion?
- ✓ Training on gender for WASH county staff.
- ✓ Include gender considerations in procurement processes.

### Tools and strategies

<p><b>Strategy</b></p> <p>Add value and sustainability to the sub-projects by mainstreaming gender and reflecting this in the design and resources allocated to the sub-projects</p>	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <p>Gender expert having knowledge in WASH can be engaged from time-to-time basis, to support PIU teams.</p>	<p><b>Ideas of measures</b></p> <p>Have job descriptions that clearly identify the possibility of women and men applying for positions.</p> <p>Have quotas<sup>9</sup> for teams' composition, training attendance.</p> <p>Require adequate representation of communities among surveyors/facilitators of consultations</p> <p>Gender-responsive design highlighting privacy, safety, dignity and hygiene.</p>	<p><b>Program related documentation</b></p> <p>POM, county-wide KWASH social and gender vulnerability analysis.</p>

<sup>9</sup> Gender segregation might be relevant; however, it should be used wisely not to reinforced marginalization

# 4

## IMPLEMENTATION

The projects will be implemented under the overall supervision of the PIU. The project teams should receive technical assistance throughout the implementation of the project and training to raise awareness and address gender inequalities.

### Actions for PMU

Trainings provided to project teams and other stakeholders include gender mainstreaming aspects or target it specifically.

### Key questions and actions for cities

- How can the project assess its impact on the overall well-being of women by using gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation indicators?
- ✓ Worksites and constructed infrastructure are gender-responsive and inclusive
- ✓ Benefits from the project do not exclude women
- ✓ Webinars on gender and participatory approaches for selected city officers
- ✓ Social and Gender project screening checklist
- ✓ A Gender Action Plan (where needed), Gender equitable stakeholder consultations, Gender-responsive approaches, Gender sensitive data collection, Report on gender outcomes

### Tools and strategies



#### Strategy

Add value and sustainability to the sub-projects by mainstreaming gender and reflecting this in the design and resources allocated to the sub-projects



#### Resources

Gender expert having knowledge in WASH can be engaged from time-to-time basis, to support PIU teams.



#### Ideas of measures

Job offers in project management are inclusive  
The design takes gender into account, emphasizing the specific needs of women



#### Program related documentation

POM, county-wide KWASH social and gender vulnerability analysis, M&E framework, Social and Gender project screening checklist.

# 5

## CLOSURE

Implemented projects will be evaluated (end-term evaluation). Selected projects will be promoted through knowledge-capitalization activities such as webinars, workshops, twinning programs, study trips, policy dialogues, and other experience-sharing events.

### Actions for PMU

- Program and sub-projects evaluation regarding gender indicators
- Presentation of gender-responsive program's impacts.

### Key questions and action for cities

- How can strategies be developed for the project that promote and achieve gender justice and equity?
  - ✓ Archiving and transfer of all project documentation
  - ✓ Defining next steps for project monitoring and supervision during the operation period
  - ✓ Report on gender outcomes

### Tools and strategies



#### Strategy

Evaluate the program's performance regarding gender, and to analyse it as a lesson for future projects.

One challenge is to ensure that the infrastructure built and its benefits remain equally accessible and controllable regardless of gender.



#### Feedback

Overall feedback from the project regarding gender mainstreaming approach as well as incidents or successes should be gathered and properly formatted for easy use in other projects.



#### Evaluation

Ensure specific gender targets were achieved, if not report on why. Also report on success.



#### Program related documentation

POM, county-wide KWASH social and gender vulnerability analysis, Social and Gender project screening checklist, M&E framework.



# 5. ACTION PLAN

## 5.1 Action plan for K-WASH program implementation in Murang'a

As previously outlined, K-WASH is a broad programme composed of multiple WASH-related sub-projects. Regarding gender and social aspects the overall objective is twofold:

To ensure that no new social or gender inequalities are created or exacerbated during programme implementation, and

To actively contribute to reducing existing gender and social gaps in Murang'a County.

Achieving these objectives requires actionable measures at two complementary levels:

- **At the K-WASH programme implementation level (county scale):** This involves integrating gender considerations into programme governance, planning, budgeting, monitoring, and institutional processes.
- **At the sub-project or investment level:** Each proposed intervention under K-WASH (e.g., water points, latrines, small infrastructure) must integrate gender analysis and inclusive design features tailored to its specific context.

Given the large number of sub-projects and their varying stages of development, this report focuses on **programme-level actions**. The consultant does not provide detailed gender actions for each individual investment, as these will need to be adapted case by case.

The next table therefore presents the **Gender Action Plan for K-WASH implementation in Murang'a County**, outlining the strategic actions required at programme level.

The GAP is fully aligned with the CWSSIP and enhances its proposed actions through the addition of **precise indicators, timelines, and responsibilities**, while also incorporating **complementary measures** to support coherent program implementation.

Activities	Description and rationale	Indicators and targets	Timeline	Responsibilities
Train all PIU on gender mainstreaming	Strengthen institutional capacity on gender integration	All PIU trained	By Mar 2026	PIU
Specific training on gender, climate & WASH for GBV and social specialists	Climate-resilient inclusive WASH MOOC	Training completed by both – training certificates	By Jun 2026	PIU
Integrate social & gender screening for all K-WASH projects	Ensure early identification of risks and opportunities for inequalities reduction	Screening tool applied to 100% of projects ( <i>guiding questions and recommendations presented above in the report</i> )	Continuous	PIU GBV & social specialists
In-depth gender & social vulnerability analysis + GAP for projects above XXX KES	Provide targeted and context-specific transformative measures	GAP developed for all qualifying projects	At project feasibility / design stage	PIU GBV & social specialists
Reserve seats for women/PWDs in inclusive WASH committees	Promote inclusive decision-making	Number of seats reserved	Continuous	Community leaders / Youth Affairs, Culture & Social Services Department of Murang'a County
Reserve 50% of water committee seats for women	Gender-balanced governance	50% women	Continuous	Community leaders / Youth Affairs, Culture & Social Services Department of Murang'a County
Develop a women-to-women mentorship program	Pair younger women politicians/practitioners and experienced WASH politicians/practitioners /leaders to overcome intra-women tensions and limited support for emerging female candidates	Number of mentorship pairs established; satisfaction feedback from mentees	2027-2029	PIU GBV & social specialists / community leaders support from : Youth Affairs, Culture & Social Services Department of Murang'a County

Activities	Description and rationale	Indicators and targets	Timeline	Responsibilities
<b>CLIMATE RESILIENCE</b>				
Expand community-based adaptation training for women & youth	Soil conservation, agroforestry	Number of rainings delivered	2027-2030	Youth Affairs, Culture & Social Services Department of Murang'a County
Engage women as adaptation agents (drip irrigation subsidies)	Empower women farmers (can also be a lever to formalize some women's jobs)	Sex-disaggregated data on beneficiaries of subsidies and amounts (target: no less than 50% women being beneficiaries of subsidies and no less than 50% of the subsidies – in amounts benefitting to women –) <i>monitoring to ensure woman to not give the subsidies to women or that this doesn't create negative control over women's assets.</i>  % of women farmers adopting drip irrigation	2026–2028	PIU / county agriculture dept. / Youth Affairs, Culture & Social Services Department of Murang'a County
Ensure climate funding reviewed with gender-sensitive budgeting lens	Improve equity in climate finance	The PIU makes a formal request for a Gender-responsive-budgeting (GRB) study to completed	By 2027	Department of Finance and economic planning / Youth Affairs, Culture & Social Services Department of Murang'a County / Department of water, irrigation, environment and natural resources

Activities	Description and rationale	Indicators and targets	Timeline	Responsibilities
<b>GLOBAL WASH MEASURES</b>				
Anti-stigma WASH awareness campaign	Reduce stigma on HIV, menstruation, sanitation	1 public meeting per sub-county + 1 meeting per school	2026	PIU / community leaders
Siting of infrastructure considering GBV risk	Improve safety	Consultations with women & girls	At design stage	PIU / contractor
Low-interest loans for women's rainwater harvesting	Improve resilience	Deployment of low-interest loans and monitoring if loan uptake (indicator: department of finance and economic planning reporting and gender-segregated data)	2026–2028	PIU / Department of Finance and economic planning / microfinance partners
<b>WATER SUPPLY</b>				
Engage men in water-fetching via media campaigns	Reduce women's time burden. The example of Kandara can be used	Number of trainings completed (target one training in each sub county during the first year and reminder 2 years later)  The evolution of daily clock activities and share between water fetching time burdens between male/female	First training in 2026	PIU / Youth Affairs, Culture & Social Services Department of Murang'a County
Train women as water technicians	Increase women's technical roles	Number of women trained and economic/job opportunities resulting from the training	2027	PIU
Sliding-scale tariffs for poor households	Improve affordability	Tariff structure adopted	2026	PIU / water utilities
Mandate disability-friendly infrastructure	Improve accessibility	Reach 10% inclusive facilities	2028	PIU / Department of water, irrigation,

Activities	Description and rationale	Indicators and targets	Timeline	Responsibilities
				environment and natural resources
Ensure boreholes benefit domestic & agricultural use incl. women farmers	Reduce burden on women	Gender-disaggregated usage data (both for agricultural use and domestic use)	Annual	PIU / Department of water, irrigation, environment and natural resources
Ensure M&E of improvement of water access and control	Ensure program's efficiency and sustainability	Daily clocks exercise and assessment similar to PCRA is renewed every 3 to 4 years	every 2 to 3 years	County / PIU
<b>SANITATION</b>				
1 disability-friendly toilet per school/clinic	Accessibility	1 per facility	Continuous	PIU
50% women in sanitation planning committees	Gender-responsive policy	50% women	Continuous	Community leaders / Youth Affairs, Culture & Social Services Department of Murang'a County
Targeted subsidies for female-headed/PWD households for menstrual hygiene products	Female headed households and PWDs are considered most vulnerable and face increased economic barriers.	Subsidies delivered	Annual	PIU / Department of finance and economic planning
MHM-friendly toilets in schools/markets	Safe & inclusive sanitation is necessary in key public areas	Number and %age of facilities upgraded. (target: 100%) And number of new facilities integrating the requirement (target: 100%)	2027 Continuous	PIU
For each latrines implementation screen the need or not to create	Prioritize high-needs beneficiaries (PWDs, female headed households,	Note on screening results justifying the final choice is to be integrated into project	Continuous	PIU

Activities	Description and rationale	Indicators and targets	Timeline	Responsibilities
separated facilities for men and women	women and girls) or double sanitation provision when cultural norms cannot be shifted safely  Conduct awareness campaigns when cultural norms can shift safely	documentation (100% of projects to integrate this note)		
Adopt Kenya Universal Design Guidelines and international best practice	Inclusive infrastructure	All new latrines accessible	Continuous	PIU/ Contractor
Train male leaders on sanitation & women's health	Engage men as allies (as per Kandara sub-county example) (Can be combined with water fetchin training)	Trainings completed	One training in each sub county in 2026	PIU GBV & social specialists
Strengthen school-based menstruation education	Break taboos	Programs implemented	Annual	PIU / schools
Build 5 disability-friendly units per market	Improve access	5 units/market	2026–2028	Contractor
Amend bylaws to enforce 1:50 toilet ratio	Policy reform	Bylaw amended	2026	County govt.
Install lights/locks in shared toilets	Improve safety	All shared toilets upgraded	2026–2027	Contractor / PIU
<b>HYGIENE</b>				
Free soap/sanitary pads for HIV-affected households	Subsidize hygiene	Distribution records	Annual	PIU / health facilities
Free soap & sanitary pads in schools	Reduce absenteeism	Supplies delivered	Annual	PIU / schools

## 5.2 Tools for K-WASH projects implementation

### 5.2.1 Social and Gender project Screening Checklist

This list can be considered a living document throughout the project and serve as a **tool for collecting/group relevant data on the gender and social aspects of the project**, while the main structure should remain concise and allow for comparison between projects. It can be supplemented with other relevant information (in annex or as part of a side note).

Social and Gender project Screening Checklist
Project name/Title
Project main components
<b>Location</b> (coordinates)
Person filling this screening checklist ( <i>name and position</i> )
Peer review for this screening checklist ( <i>name and position</i> )
Is the main objective of the project focused on gender issues?
Is the main objective of the project focused on social inclusion?
Has the project been examined using the questions presented in the “guiding questions and recommendations sheets” <sup>10</sup> ?
Were consultations with men/women/PWD in focus group discussions undertaken ?
Did these analysis/consultation lead to any changes in the planning/design of the project?
If no, why ?
If yes, list the changes:
Can this project serve as a pilot project to be replicated in terms of good social and gender practices?
Are there any specific lessons learnt from this project in terms of social and gender issues?

<sup>10</sup> These documents can be attached to the checklist.

## 5.2.2 GAP example for K-WASH projects

Activities	Indicators and targets	Timeline	Responsibilities	Costs
<p><b>Impact statement:</b> Summary of the difference the subproject will make over time. The Impact statement should also states the long term gender, social, economic, environmental impacts to which the subproject will contribute.</p> <p><b>Outcome statement:</b> The outcome statement should be specific and measurable. An outcome statement describes specific changes in knowledge, attitude, skills, and behaviours that will occur due to actions undertaken by the subproject.</p>				
<p><b>Output statement 1:</b> Highlights what the subproject intends to achieve in the short term due to its activities.</p>				
Activity 1.1				
Activity 1.2				
...				
<p><b>Output statement 2:</b> Highlights what the subproject intends to achieve in the short term due to its activities.</p>				
Activity 2.1				
...				

## 5.3 Resources

Regarding the financial objectives and resources required for implementing the Gender Equality Action Plan, the following commitments are proposed:

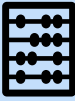



- PIU GBV and social specialists will receive training to strengthen their skills and their capacity to support project implementation.
- The PIU will identify external experts who can provide support when needed and mobilize this expertise periodically.
- A GAP oversight committee will be established at the start of sub-project implementation to ensure adequate monitoring of GAP execution and coordination with all project activities.
- Annual sub-project action plans will be financed through the sub-project budgets. Gender expertise will be mobilized when required by the sub-project GAP; when not required, enhanced monitoring will be expected from the PIU.

## 5.4 Monitoring and reporting

At sub-project level detailed targets should be defined in the GAP, and should be associated with relevant monitoring indicators, following the guidelines and principles displayed in the table below.

The different GAPs indicators evolution should be reported as an annex of the M&E reporting made by the counties to K-WASH task team / the World Bank.

Table 1: guidelines for indicator definition

Effective indicator	Indicator	Definition	Examples
Good monitoring indicators should be SMART:  Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Time bound	 <b>Quantitative</b>	Expressed in numerical measurements.  They are commonly used to measure inputs and outputs and can be collected through structured data collection methods.	Number of women and men participating in diagnostic bodies, local public administration or in executive positions related to WASH projects.  Increase in women's participation in community assembly meetings and in the project activities.  Percentage of women beneficiaries of livelihood development activities...
	 <b>Qualitative</b>	Expressed in subjective perceptions and attitudes.  They are more commonly used for evaluating the effectiveness or efficiency of processes.	More targeted actions to increase women's contribution to decision making or the opening of new opportunities for women in nontraditional skill areas.  Development of gender awareness and skills among policymaking, management, and implementation staff.  New skills, knowledge, resources, opportunities, or services for women.
	 <b>Results</b>	They measure the consequences of interventions	All projects design and implementation are focused on gender-sensitive measures.  Adequate female representation on steering committees.
	 <b>Impact</b>	They measure the results implied by the work or intervention.  They determine whether a program has had the desired effects and whether any unanticipated effects have occurred.	Reduction of the incidence of gastrointestinal diseases in a community through a WSS project.  Reduction of women's workload.