



Comparative Impact Analysis Report on Women's Political Participation Interventions in Kenya, Tanzania, and DRC

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AU	African Union
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CENI	Independent National Electoral Commission (in French)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EALA	East African Legislative Assembly
FEMNET	African Women’s Development and Communication Network
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
International IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
KEWOPA	Kenya Women Parliamentary Association
MCA	Member of County Assembly
NEC	National Electoral Commission
WPP	Women Political Participation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TSM	Temporary Special Measures
UN	United Nations
GEF	Generation Equality Forum

Executive Summary

Introduction to women participation in Politics

Over the past few decades, notable strides have been made towards gender equality in political representation, though challenges persist. By 2020, only four countries globally had met the 50% female representation target with Rwanda leading at slightly above 60%. Women's representation in parliaments increased from 11.3% in 1995 to 25% in 2020. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979) marked critical turning points for women's empowerment, setting ambitious targets for gender balance in decision-making. Many countries adopted Temporary Special Measures (TSMs), such as gender quotas, to increase women's representation in elected bodies. However, the implementation of these legal frameworks faces challenges due to cultural norms, structural barriers, and gender-based violence. In Africa, women constitute 24% of parliamentarians, with significant disparities among countries. Key barriers to women's political leadership ¹include patriarchal systems, negative sociocultural values, inadequate financial resources, and exclusionary political parties. In East Africa², only 32% (634/1957) women occupy parliamentary seats with 33% women (581/1776) occupying seats in lower/single house chambers, and 29% (53/181) in the upper chambers.

The African Women's Development and Communications Network (FEMNET), with support from International IDEA, is implementing a project aimed at enhancing women's political participation in Kenya, Tanzania, and the DRC. This desktop impact comparative analysis was commissioned by FEMNET to assess the status of the women representation and participation in politics in Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania. The analysis findings will guide the future strategies for increasing the number and quality of women political participation in the target countries.

Study Methodology

The primary method of data collection for this study was a comprehensive desk review. Country-level desk reviews were conducted by a team of three consultants, each responsible for one of the countries under study. The consultants reviewed all relevant documents for their assigned country and recorded the information in a standardized template. To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data, the consultants held a day of reflection to evaluate the information collected and identify any gaps. This reflection process also helped in identifying key stakeholders for further follow-up.

To complement the desk review and ensure triangulation of the findings, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected stakeholders, particularly in the context of case studies. The project coordinator facilitated these interviews by mobilizing the identified stakeholders. The interviews were carried out on a case-by-case basis to fill any gaps or missing information, especially concerning case studies. Unlike the desk

¹ <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/ge/ge1/ge13>

² <https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/womens-political-participation-africa-barometer-2021>

review, the interviews did not use a standardized tool, allowing the consultants flexibility in engaging stakeholders and obtaining the necessary information. After each interview, the consultants recorded and transcribed the discussions into scripts, followed by brief reflections to consolidate the information generated.

The data analysis process involved multiple methods tailored to different aspects of the study. **Stakeholder analysis** was conducted to identify key players and institutions, focusing on their interests and levels of influence. This analysis also examined the interaction between stakeholders' roles and interests within existing policy and legal frameworks, particularly their impact on women's participation in politics and governance. The **leadership scorecard** method was used to assess women's leadership performance based on indicators such as mentoring, participation in policy-making, and advancing justice, equality, and inclusion. The consultants developed indicator statements and rated women's leadership abilities based on available evidence, producing an average score for different categories of leadership (executive e, parliamentary, and judiciary). Finally, the consultants collated case studies from each country.

Despite its comprehensive approach, the study faced several limitations. One of the main challenges was the difficulty in accessing and conducting interviews with women leaders who had benefited from the programs especially in Tanzania and Kenya. The study materials also indicated that many of the activities were one-time events, which made it challenging to track long-term progress and impact on women's political engagement. Additionally, there was limited published information available on women's participation in politics in the DRC and Tanzania, which constrained the depth of the analysis in these countries.

Key findings

Women's political participation in Kenya, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has registered progress amidst persistent challenges. This analysis specifically highlights advancements and opportunities for enhancing women's political leadership in the three countries.

Women Representation in Elective and Appointive Positions

The women's representation in elective and appointive positions in Kenya, Tanzania, and the DRC remains below the global target of 30%. Women are often nominated rather than elected, reflecting systemic issues within male-dominated and patriarchal political systems. For instance, the Kenya's 2010 constitutional provision of the 2/3 gender rule aims to ensure women's representation, yet achieving this has been challenging due to resistance from male legislators. The August 2022 general election saw an increase in women's political participation and representation. Female candidates comprised approximately 11% of the total number of candidates registered by the IEBC, and the number of women running for elective positions increased. This led to more women being successfully elected, including seven women as County Governors, representing a 32% success rate. ³President William Ruto appointed seven women Cabinet Secretaries out of 22, accounting for 32% of the cabinet. Additionally, 3 women were appointed to other key roles, bringing the

³ chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpajpcglclefindmkaj/https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/Women%27s%20Performance%20in%20the%202022%20Election-%20Final%20F%202%20pagens.pdf

overall representation of women in the Executive to 39%. While there has been progress, the representation of women in the National Assembly and the Cabinet does not yet meet the required two-thirds gender threshold mandated by the Constitution.

Similarly, Tanzania has made some significant strides in women's representation in leadership, as highlighted in the UN Women Report⁴. Women occupy key positions at both the national and regional levels, including the President, Speaker, and Chief Secretary. Women make up 37% of the National Assembly (NA) and 40% of the Zanzibar House of Representatives (ZHoR), with substantial increases in women ministers from 20% in 2015 to 36% in 2022. While there have been gains in women's participation, women still constitute less than 30% of elected and appointive positions in Tanzania. Representation in local councils and other leadership roles varies, often influenced by the appointing authority.

DRC continues to struggle with political systems where nominations and appointments are controlled by male elites, often side-lining women. In June 2022, the electoral law of DRC was enacted by the CENI (National Independent Electoral Commission). Article 13 paved the way for equality in Congolese politics, with new voluntary incentive mechanisms to encourage women's political participation. Nevertheless, the law differs from the practice and women continue to represent only 10% of the National Assembly.⁵

Cultural biases further compound these challenges. Traditional perceptions that women are less capable leaders affect their political participation. In Kenya, many women leaders hold either nominative or appointive posts, and those nominated often lack access to resources and opportunities, as they are perceived to have no real constituency. This discrimination hampers their effectiveness and diminishes their role in advancing women rights and gender responsive policies.

Legal Framework Supporting Gender Equality

All three countries are signatories to the [Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of women in Africa](#) (Maputo Protocol), indicating a commitment to gender equality. However, the implementation of policies promoting women's participation remains inconsistent. While Kenya has made notable progress with more prescriptive legal requirements, the general lack of political will and accountability undermines these frameworks. For example, Kenya's Article 177 mandates gender representation in county assemblies, yet adherence to these provisions faces challenges across the 47 counties. For example, in October 2023, the high court in Eldoret (Uasin Gishu County) had to issue an interim order suspending the Uasin Gishu County Assembly sittings due to not meeting the two-thirds gender rule. The county assembly had two fewer Members of County Assembly than needed to make it 11. This number meets

⁴ [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-01/evaluation_of_the_tanzania_womens_leadership_and_political_participation_pdf.pdf](https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-01/evaluation_of_the_tanzania_womens_leadership_and_political_participation_pdf.pdf)

⁵ <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2023/03/drc-the-electoral-reform-and-womens-political-participation>

the requirement of Section 191, which states that no more than two-thirds of any county assembly or executive committee shall be of the same sex⁶.

In contrast, Tanzania and the DRC have less explicit legal provisions, resulting in fewer legislative actions to support women's political engagement. During Kenya's 2022 general elections, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) refused political party nominations that did not comply with the 2/3 gender rule, highlighting the gaps between policy and practice. However, the decision was challenged in court by political parties⁷, resulting in the directive not being adhered to. Consequently, defective party nomination lists were accepted by the IEBC as they were. Such legal interventions are crucial but need robust enforcement to effect meaningful change.

Voices and Performance of Women Leaders

The influence of women leaders in Kenya, Tanzania, and the DRC shows mixed results. In Kenya, women's political participation gained momentum following the 2022 general elections. From the women leadership performance scorecard, parliament was rated higher than executive judiciary and local government. The increased number of women in the National Assembly has led to more vocal support for gender responsive initiatives and legislative activities. The Kenya Women Parliamentarian Association (KEWOPA) has been instrumental in driving political dialogue and advocating for women's issues, resulting in significant legislative achievements such as (i) contribution towards the realization of the family Bills:- Marriage Act 2014 and the Matrimonial Property Act 2013 and Protection Against Domestic Violence Act,(ii) spearheading the push for the realization of the two thirds gender principle as proposed by the Constitutional Amendment Bill 2015 (No. 4), that was previously introduced as a private members bill by KEWOPA Chair Hon. Mbarire in the National Assembly and Senator Sijeny in the Senate, (iii)development of gender responsive budgeting guidelines for Parliament and the (iv)development of a members handbook on sexual and reproductive health and rights.⁸

In Tanzania, President Samia Suluhu's leadership has enhanced women's political influence hence ranked higher than parliament, judiciary and local government. Her administration has seen the appointment of women to key positions, such as the defence minister and the first female speaker of the National Assembly. These appointments signify progress and inspire more women to pursue leadership roles.

Similarly, in the DRC, the [appointment of the first female Prime Minister](#) in 2024 marked a historic milestone. The appointment is expected to benefit Congolese women and demonstrate their potential to lead if given the opportunity. These high-level appointments, while significant, underscore the need for continued efforts to reach the critical mass of 30% women representation.

⁶ <https://nation-africa.webpkgcache.com/doc/-/s/nation.africa/kenya/counties/uasin-gishu/two-thirds-gender-rule-court-suspends-uasin-gishu-county-4389716>

⁷ <https://www.kenyans.co.ke/news/75508-relief-azimio-kenya-kwanza-court-stops-iebc-directive?page=10>

⁸ https://www.kewopa.org/?page_id=700

Impact of the Women Political Participation (WPP) Interventions Pre and Post Elections

Pre-election periods are critical for enhancing women's political participation. Training and support for female candidates are intensified, as seen in Tanzania, where affirmative action policies and special seats for women in Parliament have been implemented. In Kenya, court rulings and gender bills have raised awareness and increased the number of women nominated for parliamentary positions. The DRC has similarly revised its electoral laws to ensure better representation of women.

Post-election analysis reveals both progress and challenges. Although the number of women in leadership positions remains below the global threshold, there have been significant qualitative improvements. In Kenya, the 2022 elections saw three female presidential running mates, which positively influenced public perception of women in leadership. Tanzania's President Suluhu has furthered women's political engagement, while the DRC's new female Prime Minister symbolizes a potential shift towards greater gender equality.

At the sub-national level, data on women's representation is scarce. In Kenya, while there is notable representation in county assemblies, information on appointive positions is lacking. Similar gaps exist in Tanzania and the DRC. These sub-national levels are crucial breeding grounds for young women leaders aspiring to national politics.

Key recommendations

The following are the key actions that can be taken by FEMNET, consortium partners in WPP and other women rights organisations in the three countries to increase the number and quality of women participation in politics:

To address program design challenges and ensure the attainment of expected outcomes:

- FEMNET, in collaboration with IDEA, should invest in multi-activity, multi-year programs to ensure effective outcomes, sustainability, and the flexibility to address emerging issues.
- Programs supporting women candidates should start early, be well-resourced, and integrate with existing initiatives throughout the electoral cycle, including support for women inside and outside political party structures.
- FEMNET should develop a robust follow-up strategy, including thorough documentation and profiling of women leaders, to enhance accountability, address challenges, and promote long-term success.
- Robust evidence-based advocacy to push for constitutional and legal reforms ensuring gender parity in political representation, leveraging regional and global platforms like SADC, EALA, AU, and CSW.
- FEMNET should generate and share feminist research and knowledge to support policy and political reforms, capacity strengthening, and advocacy in current and future programs.
- FEMNET should continue collaborating with women parliamentary bodies to provide training in leadership, communication, negotiation, and policy analysis, empowering women politically.
- FEMNET should continue work with political parties, parliaments, media, and electoral commissions to build alliances and norms that support increased women's political participation.

1.0 Contextual Analysis of Women Participation in Politics

Over the past few decades, the journey for gender equality in political representation has made notable strides, yet significant challenges remain. By 2020, 25 years after the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing which expected to see progress on women's participation in politics, decision-making processes, and access to power (Declaration, 1995), only four countries had attained at least over 50 percent women in parliament.

In Africa, Rwanda is leading with over 60% of political seats taken up by women. The other three countries include the United Arab Emirates (+50%), Andorra (42.8%), and Bolivia (+42.3%.) representation. The rest of the countries are struggling to reach the global average of 25.5% gender representation. Globally, by 2020, the share of women in parliaments was at 25%, up from 11.3% in 1995(Inter-Parliamentary Union ,2020)⁹.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted in 1995 by the United Nations, came 15 years after the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by the United Nations General Assembly (UN General Assembly, 1979). Part two of the convention stipulates women's rights in public matters with a focus on political life, representation, and rights to nationality. The two instruments marked critical turning points for women's empowerment by recognizing women's rights and setting ambitious targets for gender balance in decision-making. The Beijing declaration set forth a campaign for a policy framework for countries to ensure gender parity is reached in politics and governance. Since then, progress has been made, especially on legal and policy frameworks playing a crucial role in enhancing gender equality in political participation. Many countries have adopted Temporary Special Measures (TSMs), such as gender quotas, to increase women's representation in elective positions. The quota system is present in 132 out of 156 states, implemented through reserved seats, party quotas, and legislative quotas. Gender quotas have proven effective, significantly boosting female representation. For instance, Rwanda has achieved over 60% women representation in its parliament, serving as a model for other nations.

The implementation of legal frameworks and especially quotas has faced and continue to face different challenges across the globe. The interplay of many complex factors hinders women's participation in leadership. These factors include restrictive and exclusionary cultural expectations and social norms, structural barriers associated with electoral systems and political party institutions, and gender-based and political violence, among others. They continue to undermine women's participation in politics. Across the globe, women who show up for leadership in politics face gender stereotypes, misogyny, and gender-based violence, all in the embedded patriarchal systems in society and governance.

The growth on women's political participation globally is accelerated by gender-responsive policies that promote women's participation not only in elective positions but also the political rights as voters, candidates, electoral administrators, observers, and civil society representatives. Women's movements across the world have pushed and continue to pressure governments to ensure that policies and legal frameworks are gender

⁹ <https://www.ipu.org/file/8993/download>

responsive. The agitation by women's movements has also contributed to a positive shift from patriarchy-based to a more gender-sensitive political culture. The global commitment through United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5 on gender equality is a remarkable boost to efforts by women's movements to achieve gender parity. As 2030 approaches, progress in increasing women's representation in management and political roles has been slow. As of January 2023, women held 26.5% of seats in national parliaments, a modest increase from 2015. At the local level, women occupied 35.5% of government seats, up from 33.9% in 2020.¹⁰ At the current pace, it will take over 40 years to close the gender gap in national parliaments and 30 years at the local level. Gender quotas have proven effective, with countries using them seeing higher women's representation. In the workforce, women accounted for nearly 40% of total employment but only 28.2% of management positions in 2021, with negligible progress since 2015. Achieving gender parity in management could take over 140 years. Sub-Saharan Africa has made the most progress, while Northern Africa, Western Asia, and Central and Southern Asia lag behind due to low female employment rates.

The campaign on women's political participation and representation remains a key development pillar in advancing women's political rights considering the lag. At the current pace, according to the UN¹¹, it might take another 130 years for women to be represented equally in positions of power and leadership in the workplace, and 47 years to achieve equal representation¹² in national parliaments to reach equal representation in national political leadership unless speedy measures are taken by individual countries.

In Africa, where the Women Political Participation (WPP) project is being implemented, women's political participation has witnessed growth, albeit marginal. Women constitute 24% of the 12,113 parliamentarians in Africa, with 25% in lower houses and 20% in upper houses of parliament (International IDEA, 2021). Close to two decades since the adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, better known as the Maputo Protocol, African women continue to face discrimination, and rights to participation in the political process remain far-fetched (Union, 2003). As at June 2023, only 44 out of 55 African Union member states had ratified Maputo protocol¹³. Even with those who have ratified, the rights to participation in the political and decision-making processes stated in Article 9 remain unfulfilled due to a lack of an implementation framework to guide execution of women's political participation by the member states.

In Africa, except Rwanda, according to the World Bank in 2022 on the proportion of women seats in the national parliaments in Sub-Saharan Africa, women are severely underrepresented with most countries below 20%. Just like other countries of the world, the barriers to their participation are multifaceted, including patriarchal political and governance systems, sociocultural and religious values, lack of financial resources, and exclusionary political parties.

¹⁰ — [SDG Indicators \(un.org\)](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/)

¹¹ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures#:~:text=As%20of%201%20June%202024,another%20130%20years%20%5B2%5D>.

¹² — [SDG Indicators \(un.org\)](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/)

¹³ <https://au.int/en/newsevents/20230705/maputo-protocol-20-years>

In East Africa, the East African Community (EAC) is a regional intergovernmental organisation of eight (8) Partner States, that include Republic of Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Republic of Kenya, Republic of Rwanda, Federal Republic of Somalia, Republic of South Sudan, Republic of Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania. Statistics shows that women participation in governance is still low.

The Treaty provisions in Articles 121-122 of the East African Community (EAC) highlight the crucial role of women in the region's economic, social, and political development. Despite comprising over 60% of the EAC population, women remain marginalized in decision-making and have less access to education, finance, and information technologies. To address these disparities, EAC Partner States have enacted various policies and legal frameworks. Key efforts include mainstreaming gender into EAC initiatives, as emphasized in the Treaty and operationalized through policy documents like the EAC Gender and Community Development Strategic Plan. Additionally, the EAC organizes conferences on women's socio-economic development and is developing a regional strategy and financial facility to support women-owned businesses, pending Council adoption¹⁴. According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2021, p. 177), in East Africa, Kenya still lags behind in the representation of women at both houses with only 22% compared to Rwanda which has the highest percentage score of 61%. Other East African countries include Burundi with a percentage score of 38, Tanzania with 37 and Uganda with 35. Interestingly, the youngest nation in Africa and the newest member to the East African Community—South Sudan—performs better than Kenya with 28%.

Governance Systems in the 3 Countries

The United Republic of Tanzania is a republic with an executive president elected every five years, with a two-term limit. The president appoints a prime minister and selects the cabinet from the National Assembly, which includes directly elected members, the attorney-general, female nominees, presidential appointees, and Zanzibar delegates. Zanzibar has its own semi-autonomous government with a separate president and legislature. Tanzania's judiciary is headed by the Court of Appeal, followed by the High Court, district courts, and magistrates' courts. The president appoints judicial officers, including the chief justice and judges, with recommendations from the Judicial Services Commission.¹⁵ Tanzania operates as a unitary presidential democratic republic where the President serves as both the head of state and government within a multi-party system. Executive power is held by the government, while legislative power is shared between the government and parliament. The political landscape is predominantly influenced by the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Revolutionary State Party). Importantly, the judiciary maintains its independence from both the executive and legislative branches.

The authority to make laws in Kenya is divided between Parliament. The national assembly makes laws that apply nationally. County Assemblies, legislate for their respective counties. Kenya's legislative structure has evolved from a bicameral Parliament with Regional Assemblies at independence, to a unicameral system, and

¹⁴ <https://www.eac.int/gender/gender-and-women>

¹⁵ https://www.commonwealthofnations.org/sectors- united _republic _of _tanzania /government/

back to the current bicameral Parliament alongside County Assemblies¹⁶. The history of the legislature in Kenya reflects significant changes in its structure and mandates since independence in 1963.

Initially, Kenya had a two-chamber Parliament consisting of a Senate and House of Representatives, along with Regional Assemblies that governed specific regions. This structure changed in 1967 when the Senate and House of Representatives were merged, creating a unicameral Parliament. The 2010 Constitution re-established a bicameral Parliament with the Senate representing counties and the National Assembly legislating nationally. Additionally, County Assemblies were formed to legislate at the county level, highlighting Kenya's commitment to devolved governance and regional representation.

In DRC, constitution was adopted on January 20th, 2002 in a nationwide referendum. The government is made of 3 branches, which include¹⁷: The Executive branch headed by the President, who is the Chief of State (*Le Chef de l'Etat*), Head of the Government and Commander-in-chief; The Legislative branch is bicameral. It is made up of a Senate and a National Assembly. The main task of both bodies is to make laws and recommend new laws. The House of Senate consists of 72 seats whereby members are elected by indirect vote and for a 5-year term. In contrast, the National Assembly is made up of 137 seats whereby members are elected by popular vote for a 5-year term; The Judiciary branch is headed by the Supreme Court. It is chaired by the President of the Supreme Court, who leads the judicial branch. It is the highest court in civil, commercial, social or criminal and administrative cases in the country. It has the ability to quash the judgments of inferior courts, if those courts misapplied law.

The Popular Movement of the Revolution (Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution; MPR) was the sole legal political party from 1970 until 1990. It was presided over by then president Mobutu and had branches at every administrative level throughout the country. The MPR splintered into factions after Mobutu was overthrown in 1997.

Women have held various posts within the government, including ministerial positions and seats in the national and provincial assemblies. In 2024, Judith Suminwa Tuluka became the first woman to be appointed to the post of prime minister. On the whole, however, women as well as ethnic minorities are underrepresented in government.

¹⁶ <http://www.parliament.go.ke/the-senate/history>

¹⁷ <https://www.ambacongo-us.org/en/about-congo/gouvernement>

Only 32% (634/1957) women occupy parliamentary seats with 33% women (581/1776) occupying seats in lower/single house chambers, and 29% (53/181) in the upper chambers.¹⁸ In Kenya, despite the introduction of gender quotas and a surge in women's participation, the country lags compared to its peers, with women holding only 23.6% of parliamentary seats¹⁹ compared to Uganda, which had 34% women in parliament and nearly half of its cabinet seats. This disparity underscores the varying effectiveness of gender quotas and the need for tailored strategies to address specific national contexts in African states.

Together with six other civil society organisations (CSOs), IDEA formed a gender consortium in 2019 to design and implement the WPP project with funding from the Embassy of Sweden in Ethiopia. The consortium comprises IDEA, Forum for African Women's Education, (FAWE), the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), Gender Links, University of Cheikh Anta Diop Gender Laboratory (IFAN), PADARE, and Women and Law Southern Africa (WLSA). The principal aim of WPP is to contribute to the enhancement of gender equality in politics and governance in Africa, with a specific focus on eight countries - Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe.

Within this reflection of the existing gaps in women's participation in politics, the African Women's Development and Communications Network (FEMNET) has been implementing the WPP project for the last 5 years in Kenya, DRC, Tanzania and at the region with the objective of increasing the quantity and quality of women's political participation in Africa. These was undertaken through research and situational analyses, trainings and capacity strengthening, policy and political dialogues, advocacy, visibility and outreach as well as peer to peer exchanges and mentorship initiatives at the grassroots, nationally and regionally.

The comparative analysis presented in this report is an attempt to compare women's participation in politics in Kenya, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Tanzania. The findings will facilitate FEMNET's current strategies to influence women's political participation in the three countries and other countries by other consortium partners.

2.0 Women participation in politics Interventions

The project "Enhancing the Inclusion of Women in Political Participation in Africa," led by International IDEA and funded by the Embassy of Sweden in Addis Ababa, aims to significantly boost women's political engagement across the African continent. This initiative aligns with the objectives of the Maputo Protocol of 2003, various sub-regional protocols and standards, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reflecting a comprehensive effort to achieve gender equality in political participation and representation.

¹⁸ <https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/womens-political-participation-africa-barometer-2021>

¹⁹ <https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/Women%27s%20Performance%20in%20the%202022%20Election-%20Final%20F%20%20%20pagers.pdf>

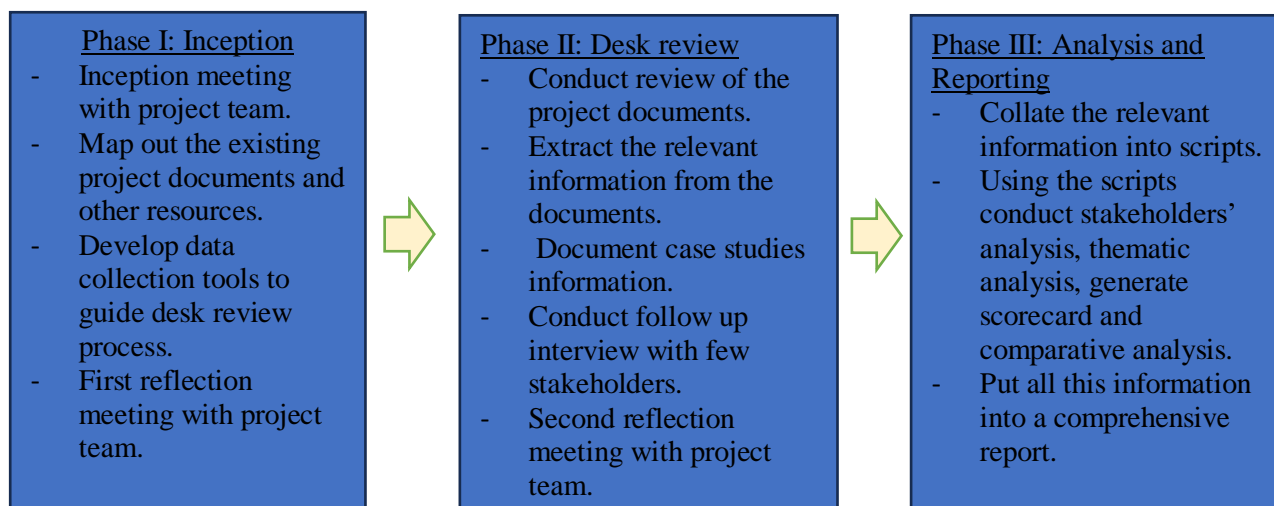
The project is divided into two phases. Phase I spanned from July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2022. Phase II commenced in January 2023 and will continue until December 2024. The project is implemented in collaboration with a consortium of six partners drawn from women's rights organizations, civil society, and academic institutions. I-IDEA provides project leadership and coordination, spearheading regional activities and reporting to the donor.

The overarching goal of this project is to enhance women's political participation in Africa, thereby advancing gender equality in politics and governance. Specific objectives include increasing the voice, presence, and influence of women in all domestic political processes and institutions; stepping up advocacy and expanding awareness to demand increased inclusion of women at local, national, regional, and global levels of political participation and decision-making; enhancing the capacity of local and national women's organizations, networks, mobilizers, community activists, and elected female officeholders to engage in advocacy and campaign for change; collaborating with key democratic institutions such as political parties, parliaments, the media, and electoral commissions to build alliances and set targets for reform towards greater women's political participation; and generating and sharing research knowledge to support policy and political reform, capacity enhancement, and advocacy.

The desktop impact comparative analysis is one of the project activities meant to generate evidence on status of the women participation in politics with focus on representation in the elected and appointive offices in the three countries. The analysis also sought to map out the impact of the WPP project in advancing the meaningful engagement of women in politics. Further, the analysis identified the key players and frameworks that advances women participation in politics in the two countries.

3.0 Study Methodology

Step by Step process was adopted for the implementation of the assignment a shown in the flow chart below.



3.1 Data Collection Methods

The primary method of data collection for this study was the desk review. However, to ensure triangulation and substantiation of results, this approach was complemented by additional tools as outlined below.

Desk Review: Country-level desk reviews were carried out by the consultants. The desk review was conducted as follows:

- From the team of the 3 consultants, each consultant was assigned a country to conduct the desk review.
- A tool developed at the inception stage guided the data collection, containing specific questions under each of the assignment objectives.
- All relevant documents for each country were reviewed.
- Information answering the questions was recorded in the tool/template.
- Consultants held a day of reflection on the generated information to establish its accuracy and identify stakeholders for further follow-up.

Semi-Interviews: Using the list of identified stakeholders, particularly for the case studies, the project coordinator mobilized them for the consultant.

- Case-by-case interviews were carried out based on gaps or missing information, particularly for the case studies, without using a standard interview tool.
- Consultants engaged stakeholders in generating missing information.
- The consultants recorded and transcribed the discussions into scripts.
- After the interviews, consultants reflected briefly on the information generated.

3.2 Data analysis process

The consultants conducted different data analyses as described below.

Table 1. Analysis methods

<i>Analysis method</i>	<i>Brief outline</i>
<i>Stakeholder analysis:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identified the key players and institutions, including the boundary partners as needed based on their interests, and levels of influence.• Compiled the existing policy and legal frameworks and their effects on women's participation in politics and governance.• Reflected on the interaction between the roles and interests of the stakeholders within the existing frameworks, focusing on driving and blocking roles.
<i>Leadership scorecard:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The consultants developed indicator statements on leadership performance with a rating scale based on the desk review findings. The statements included mentoring other women to engage in leadership, women leaders' participation in policy-making processes, advancing women's justice, equality, and inclusion, and women leaders demonstrating collaborative leadership and responsiveness in addressing citizens' needs.• Using the available evidence on the above leadership indicators, the consultants rated their abilities under each indicator while providing

	<p>examples to support the rating.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ratings were analysed to estimate the average score for categories of women leadership (executive, parliamentary, and judiciary). • Finally, the ranking of the categories of the women leadership was done based on aggregate score.
Comparative analysis:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generated project values/information for project indicators. • Disaggregated the data by leaders age, country and categories of leaders, among other variables to be identified during the desk review. • Compared baseline and end-of-project information to assess progress and identify areas requiring improvement.
Collating the Case studies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consultants recorded the case studies in each country using the guide provided by INTRAC on page 320 and reflect and select case studies per country.

3.3 Study Limitations

The Comparative Impact Analysis Report on Women's Political Participation Interventions in Kenya, Tanzania, and the DRC encountered significant challenges, including difficulty in accessing and conducting interviews with women leaders who benefited from the programs. Additionally, the study materials indicated that most activities were one-time events, complicating efforts to track long-term progress and impact on women's political engagement. There was also limited published information available for women participation in politics in the DRC and Tanzania.

3.4 Quality Assurance

This comparative desk review ensured adherence to quality assurance guidelines, by providing a thorough, accurate, and insightful comparative analysis of the WPP project in the 3 countries. Data Accuracy and reliability was observed through source verification and triangulation by ensuring that all data and statistics were derived from credible and recent sources such as IPU, UN Women, national electoral bodies and government official website reports. Cross-Referencing was also considered through Cross-check information from multiple sources for validation. The consultants ensured a comprehensive coverage looking at the scope by covering various aspects of political participation including candidacy, election results, appointments to key positions, and legislative quotas. Throughout the report, comparative analysis highlights similarities and differences between the three countries in terms of progress, challenges, and specific cultural or socio-political contexts.

²⁰ <https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Case-studies-and-stories-of-change.pdf>

4.0 Key Findings

Due to countries' contextual differences, women's participation in politics varies significantly. An in-depth analysis revealed some similarities, particularly in the women representation in politics. The findings shed light on various aspects of women's political participation and representation and further identify opportunities for future interventions by FEMNET and other consortium partners.

4.1 Status of WPP in the target countries

To establish the status of women's participation in politics, in line with the project-specific objective assigned to FEMNET within the broader project goal, an analysis was carried out on women's representation as a quantitative measure of impact. The extent of the meaningful contribution of women leaders in the target countries was also assessed as a qualitative element of women's participation. The findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Status of the women participation in Politics in the target countries

	Kenya	Tanzania	DRC
Women Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10.6 % (201) of the 1820 elected leaders are women. Including 23.4 % in National Assembly and 31% in senate²¹ 32% of the cabinet members are women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 37% of parliamentary seats and 35% of Cabinet positions Ascent of Woman President 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13% are elected members are women First female Prime Minister to be appointed.
Legal framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Article 27(8) of 2010 Constitution High court ruling on a Constitutional Petition No. 19 of 2017 on 2/3 gender rule on party nominations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Authorities (Election) Act 25 Article 66 of the constitution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Article 13 of the electoral law of DRC enacted in June 2021. Article 14 of 2006 Constitution, which guarantees gender equality
Voices and performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influenced many policies that have impact on women. Most outspoken women leaders agitating for women participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of Female to Defence Ministry Election of Speak of the National Assembly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of new and first prime ministers Changes in the electoral law in 2021 after Women rights movements campaigns.

²¹ <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:1706433>

The current state of women's participation in politics, as shown by the findings presented in Table 3-5, indicates a positive trend, although not as significant as expected.

Table 3. Elected women leaders in Kenya²²

Year	Women in Parliament	Women Governors	Women senators	Women MCAs
2022	29(10%)	7(15%)	3(6%)	1158%)
2017	23(8%)	3(6%)	3(5%)	96(7%)
2013	16(6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	82(6%)

Table 4. Elected women leaders in Tanzania²³

	Number of Seats (2010)	Number of Women (2010)	% Women (2010)	Number of Seats (2015)	Number of Women (2015)	% Women (2015)
President	1	0	0%	1	0	0%
Vice President	1	0	0%	1	1	100%
Cabinet Members	29	6	20.7%	34	7	20.6%
Members of Parliament (Total)	350	126	36%	372	13540	36.3%
<i>Prime Minister</i>	1	0	0%	1	0	0%
<i>Speaker</i>	1	1	100%	1	0	0%
<i>Constituency seats</i>	239	21	8.8%	256	25	9.8%
<i>Special Women Seats</i>	102	102	100%	110	110	100%
<i>Zanzibar Seats</i>	5	2	40%	5	TBD	TBD
<i>Presidential Appointed Seats</i>	4	1	25%	1	0	0%
Members of Zanzibar House of Representatives	80	28	35%	TBD	TBD	TBD
<i>Constituency Seats</i>	50	4	8%	TBD	TBD	TBD
<i>Special Women Seats</i>	20	20	100%	TBD	TBD	TBD

²² [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/Women%27s%20Performance%20in%20the%202022%20Election-%20Final%20F%202%20pagers.pdf](https://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/Women%27s%20Performance%20in%20the%202022%20Election-%20Final%20F%202%20pagers.pdf)

²³ [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.iri.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/tanzania_gender_report.pdf](https://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.iri.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/tanzania_gender_report.pdf)

<i>Presidential Appointed Seats</i>	10	4	40%	TBD	TBD	TBD
Mainland Local Councilors	3,375	172	5.1%	TBD	TBD	TBD
<i>Special Women Seats</i>	1,184	1,184	100%	1,408	1,408	100%
Zanzibar Local Councilors	141	N/A	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD
<i>Special Women Seats</i>	42	42	100%	TBD	TBD	TBD

Table 5. Elected women leaders DRC²⁴

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total women elected</i>	<i>Percentage of Women in parliament</i>	<i>Total members of parliament</i>	<i>Women in the senate</i>	<i>Percentage of women in the senate</i>	<i>Total number of senate members</i>
2006	44	8.40%	500	5	4.60%	120
2011	49	11%	500	5	4.62%	108
2018	50	10.30%	485	19	29%	100
2023	62	12.90%	477	23	21.10%	109

Further analysis of the three elements of women's participation revealed the following observations.

4.1.1 Women Representation in elective and appointive positions

It is evident that women's representation is below the global target of 30% across the three target countries. The following three observations were made during the analysis.

First, the current number of women in leadership is below the gender equality discourse. For instance, in Kenya, where the 2/3 gender rule is instituted and 47 county women seats are reserved, most of the women in parliament are nominated and appointed to political office. There is no gender-neutral mechanism that gives women and men equal opportunities. In Tanzania and the DRC, similar gaps exist. The women are brought on board as an afterthought to fill up the gap in numbers. The election or appointment of women in leadership in the three countries is left to political parties and the presidency, which are dominated by men. In Tanzania, for the appointive positions, the representation depends on the political willingness of the appointing authority, the president. As such, the number of appointed women differs from one appointing authority to the other, and this has been observed where there are differences between the fifth phase government under the late President John Pombe Joseph Magufuli and his successor, President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

²⁴ [L'évaluation de la participation politique de la femme congolaise aux élections de 2018-2019 - Justice et Paix Congo \(cejprdc.org\)](https://cejprdc.org/)

Although Kenya has the gender rule embedded in [Article 27 \(8\) of the constitution](#), it does not guarantee women getting fair share in elective and appointive positions in politics. Since 2010, when the constitution was promulgated, Kenya is still struggling to fulfil this legal requirement. The main reason is resistance from male counterparts to progressive legislative reform mechanisms. It risks leaving the decision to the political parties and the presidency.

Secondly, the perception that women are not able to lead persists and therefore nomination is sufficient. While this is a global phenomenon, in the three countries, politics is highly influenced by ethnic traditions and culture that for years have blocked women from political participation (UN-Women, 2022). As highlighted earlier, in Kenya, apart from 47 women representatives and elected women leaders, the majority have been nominated or appointed. The nominated members are denied resources and opportunities by the elected members in parliament, who are mostly men. They are perceived as having no constituency to represent and therefore do not require any resources. This means the political perception is that the nominated members do not really add value to the political discourse in the country. They are discriminated against in parliament for lack of a constituency and, in most cases, denied resources essential for advancing gender issues.

Thirdly, across the three countries, women in political leadership are often put in their positions through political leaders. In Kenya, according to Jeremy Horowitz in his book titled "Multiethnic Democracy: The Logic of Elections and Policymaking," the party system is weakly institutionalized, ethnically affiliated, and controlled by male political elites (Horowitz, 2022). This means the political process relies on patronage and ethnically inclined political interests. Nominations within political parties and appointments are controlled by male political elites. Women leaders who are nominated are more likely to serve the political interests of the party leaders rather than the gender issues they are meant to represent. This scenario is also repeated in the appointment of cabinet ministers in the three countries. Appointments are carried out by the presidency, which has been accused of appointing political allies to cabinet positions. Due to the dominance of men in the presidency, the number of women appointed remains low, except in Tanzania, where the current female president has increased the number of women to 35%.

4.1.2 Legal Framework Supporting Gender Equality in Electoral Processes

The three countries are signatory to the Maputo protocol of 2003. A mapping and analysis carried out in 2022 by FEMNET on [African Generation Equality Forum Commitments](#) identified notable progress on development of legal and policy frameworks across Africa. However, the implementation of the policies is the main challenge, and, in some instances, there is an attempt to claw back the legal gains. These findings are similar to the findings from this analysis as outlined in Table 2, the three countries have legal frameworks for women engagement in political and decision-making processes. Although Kenya seems to be ahead of the Tanzania and DRC, there is one common gap of lack of political will and accountability to the adherence of the legal requirements that gives women the opportunities to participate in politics.

The independent electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), which worked with FEMNET and other women rights organisations to ensure gender inclusion in the elections, had to challenge all the political parties because it did not adhere to the 2/3 gender rule according to the High court ruling that demanded the IEBC to ensure that all parties nomination lists adhere the 2/3 gender rule. In August 2023, the Public Service and Gender Cabinet Secretary Aisha Jumwa [appointed members of the Multi-Sectoral Working Group on the realization of two-thirds gender principle](#). The working group was meant to serve for a term of six months effective the date of the gazette notice and is based at the State Department of Gender. The terms of reference of the working group shall be to review and analyse previous proposals for the implementation of the two-thirds gender principle. There are however no available updates on the outcomes of this committee.

The only difference between the Kenya and other two countries legal frameworks is that for Kenya some are prescriptive. For example, Article 177 prescribe to the county assembly to ensure there is gender representation in assemblies. This has made 2/3 gender rule being achieved in the 47 counties. For Tanzania and DRC, the provisions in the law are not explicit and therefore not given legislative attention as it is supposed to be.

The findings showed that in the three countries there is consistent resistance to implementing the requirements stated in the legal frameworks. For instance, in [Article 27](#) of the Kenyan constitution and [Article 66](#) of the Tanzanian constitution; there should be at least a third of the same gender in public offices. However, the lack of political will and accountability to adhere to these legal requirements, which give women opportunities to participate in politics, has faced sustained resistance from male counterparts.

An instance where the legal framework was ignored by political parties occurred during the 2022 general elections in Kenya. The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), in collaboration with FEMNET and other women's rights organizations, endeavoured to ensure gender inclusion in the elections, which led to the rejection of the [nomination lists of 79 political parties](#). None of the nominees on the rejected lists met the constitutional threshold to represent special interests, youth, and Persons with Disabilities. The IEBC's action was prompted by a [High Court ruling on Constitutional Petition No. 19 of 2017](#) regarding the 2/3 gender rule on party nominations, aiming to ensure that political party nomination lists adhered to this rule.

4.1.3 Voices and Performance of Women Leaders

The voice of women to influence policies and gender issues has had mixed successes across the three countries. In Kenya, women's participation is gaining momentum after the 2022 general elections. The National Assembly fell short of 36 women leaders to meet the minimum constitutional requirements. This shortfall means that the voice of women in parliament will be significantly decreased, making it easier to pass bills that encourage gender equality. The [Kenya Women Parliamentarian Association](#), a stakeholder that works with FEMNET, has engaged in carrying out political dialogues with women leaders, playing a key role in ensuring women's participation in parliament. By the time of this analysis, KEWOPA, which is also a women parliamentarian caucus, had seen over [20 bills](#) presented in the parliament.

In the recent Parliament Scorecard report on the 12th Session by Mzalendo Trust, a Kenyan non-partisan Parliamentary monitoring organization whose mission is to hold Parliament accountable, it was revealed that women parliamentarians have sponsored 11 bills in the National Assembly and 14 out of 44 bills in the Senate. Among these bills, three were sponsored by WPP project beneficiaries; including the Geriatric bills by Gathoni Wamuchomba (former KEWOPA chairperson), the Assisted Reproductive Technology Bill 2020 by Millie Odhiambo, and the Public Services Internship Bill 2020 by Naisula Lesuuda. These women leaders benefited from the Women's Political Participation (WPP) program through support from FEMNET working with KEWOPA. The report also listed Beatrice Elachi among the top 5 most active members of Parliament (Mzalendo Trust, 2023).

Not only are women members active in the house, but they are also vocal in the media, criticizing the government on policies that have adverse effects on women. For example, during the development of the Finance Bill 2023/24, [women parliamentarians opposed a punitive tax regime](#) that had negative effects on

women. They presented a memorandum indicating how the tax regime will have residual effect on the Kenyan women.

In Tanzania, the ascent to power by President Samia Suluhu increased the voice of women. Since her ascension, the president has brought about three main changes that favour women. Firstly, the appointment of female defence forces during her [first cabinet reshuffle](#) and jumpstarting the constitutional review through formation of a [task force on democracy](#). The task force has recommended a raft of measures to anchor gender equality in the constitution and other laws, such as the amendment of the Political Parties Act of 2002. Finally, due to her influence as the party leader of Chama Cha Mapinduzi, Dr. Tulia Arkson, who was formerly the deputy speaker, was elected as the female speaker for the National Assembly in Tanzania and subsequently lobbied for her to clinch [the Inter-Parliamentary Union speaker position](#). Dr. Tulia's win remains an achievement for women leaders in Tanzania, regionally, and internationally.

Dr. Tulia Ackson's Election as IPU President²⁵

Dr. Tulia Ackson, the Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania, was recently elected as the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), a significant achievement marking a historic moment for African women in global leadership. The IPU, established in 1889, is a global organization of national parliaments that aims to promote democratic governance, accountability, and cooperation among its members. Dr. Tulia's election comes at the conclusion of Mr. Duarte Pacheco's three-year mandate, a parliamentarian from Portugal, who served until the end of the 147th IPU Assembly held in Luanda, Angola.

Acceptance and Vision

In her acceptance speech, Dr. Tulia expressed immense gratitude for the confidence shown by her peers, stating, "I am overwhelmed with gratitude and thank you for the confidence you have bestowed on me by electing me... I accept this position with all humility while recognising all the responsibilities that come with it." She emphasized her commitment to enhancing the effectiveness, accountability, and transparency of the IPU, promising to work collaboratively with all members and to integrate their ideas for the organization's advancement. "I reaffirm my commitment to working hand in hand with all of you to make the IPU the most effective, accountable and transparent organisation," she asserted, underscoring her inclusive leadership approach.

Dr. Tulia also acknowledged the efforts of all candidates who competed for the presidency, inviting them to contribute their ideas for the future direction of the IPU. "Thank you for the good fight that you have fought. We will work together... I am sure you had good ideas on how the IPU should move forward... I will need those ideas so that we propel the IPU to greater heights," she stated. Her vision includes ensuring that the IPU serves as a global voice for all, making it a better place for everyone.

Historical Significance and Reactions

Dr. Tulia's election is particularly noteworthy as she becomes the third woman to hold the IPU presidency, following Najma Heptulla from India (1999–2002) and Gabriela Cuevas from Mexico (2017–2020). This

²⁵ <https://www.ipu.org/news/press-releases/2023-10/tulia-ackson-elected-new-president-ipu>

milestone has been celebrated globally, with Tanzanian President Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan commending Dr. Tulia for her groundbreaking achievement. President Hassan remarked, “Your election is a manifestation of the remarkable job you are doing and the trust delegates across the world have in you and our country. It is a testament to your many years of hard work and dedication to public service and an inspiration to young girls in Tanzania, the African continent and beyond.”

Conclusion

Dr. Tulia Ackson's election as the IPU President marks a significant step forward for African representation in international leadership roles. Her commitment to inclusive governance, transparency, and collaboration sets a promising course for the IPU's future. As she embarks on this new role, Dr. Tulia aims to leverage the collective ideas and efforts of all IPU members to enhance the organization's global impact, fostering democratic values and cooperation worldwide. Her leadership is poised to inspire future generations and reinforce the importance of diverse representation in global governance.

In the DRC, sustained women's movements with support from UN women and FEMNET and other partners bore fruits after the [appointment of the first woman Prime Minister](#) (Judith Suminwa Tuluka) as fulfilment of his campaign pledges by the President (Felix Tshisekedi). It is expected that Congolese women are going to benefit from her appointment. It also sends a message to Congolese citizens that women have the potential to be leaders if given the opportunities. Tuluka, while presenting her action programme said she was proud to have broken the "glass ceiling" as the first Congolese woman to serve the country as prime minister

In her acceptance speech on June 2024, she reiterated *"By assuming this position, I am fully aware of the historical importance of this moment and the symbolism of this appointment for the Congolese nation. I feel both the weight of the responsibility on me and an immense pride in the idea of representing within the Republic, the culmination of the efforts of all Congolese men and women tending to break the famous 'glass ceiling'".*²⁶

She promised to lay the groundwork for an "emerging Congo" by creating around 2.6 million jobs and an academy of mathematics and artificial intelligence in Kinshasa, while laying out actions on national security, economic diversification, infrastructure connectivity, public services, and climate change.

4.2 Impact of interventions Pre and Post elections

The women's movement in Kenya, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) continues to grow despite pushback from male-dominated governments. While each country's journey is unique, there are similarities in dynamics concerning women's representation, legal reforms, social and cultural shifts, and the resilience of women striving for gender equality. Women's participation and leadership in these countries are significantly influenced by general elections. Every five years, these elections serve as critical junctures that highlight both advancements and ongoing challenges in gender equality within political spheres. General elections took place in 2020 for Tanzania, 2022 for Kenya, and 2023 for the DRC.

This section provides a comparative analysis of the impact of various interventions on women's participation and leadership, focusing on the pre-election and post-election periods in these three countries.

²⁶ <https://english.news.cn/20240613/a115ef7c8a494995ab8205cb0e6df2c9/c.html>

4.2.1 Pre-Election Period

Pre-election periods are marked by increased training and support for female candidates to enhance their visibility and chances of getting elected. In the three countries, the pre-election period was characterized by the mobilization of women through quotas and affirmative action policies. Women's groups and political parties engage in rigorous training programs to prepare female candidates for the electoral process.

The available evidence showed that significant strengthening of legal frameworks was carried out as the mechanism for political processes. In Kenya, three court rulings and gender bills 2018 rejection by the parliament are some of the major events that raised women's participation in Kenya's pre-election period. [The High Court, in Constitutional Petition No. 19 of 2017](#) (Katiba Institute vs Independent Electoral & Boundaries Commission), ordered the Commission to reject any political party nomination list for members of the National Assembly, Senate and county assembly that did not comply with the two-thirds gender principle. As reported earlier, this ruling led the IEBC to review the election regulations and take a bold step by rejecting party nomination lists that did not meet the two-thirds gender rule. Attempts to stop this [court order on gender principle](#) did not materialize, and the IEBC had to ensure the party nomination lists met the constitutional thresholds on special seats. Adherence to this ruling by the IEBC raised the number of nominated women in Parliament significantly.

In the DRC, similar steps were undertaken by the National Election Commission (NEC) and spearheaded the review of the electoral laws as a result of the agitation by the women rights organisations and women activities on gender inequality. The electoral laws were reviewed and passed in June 2021. Critical to elections was [article 13](#) of the waived deposit fees for political parties that submit a nomination list comprising 50 percent women. This step encouraged more women to contest for political seats in the 2023 general elections.

“The session organized by FEMNET to facilitate women's political participation has influenced the inclusion of young girls who have subsequently joined political activities, and led some of them to set up political foundations. After this period, I set up a foundation that not only enables me to care for the needy, but also serves as a forum for exchange with other girls and boys, with whom I discuss the political and social aspects of their community. Above all, I participated in the December 2023 elections as a candidate for the municipality. Although I did not win, I have not lost hope, and now I have more information on engaging in political processes” Chantal LUMBU.

The [second ruling was by the Kenyan Supreme Court on gender representation](#) in Parliament. It declared the Parliament unconstitutional and advised the president to dissolve the Parliament. Although the dissolution of the Parliament did not happen due to a [high court stay order](#), the ruling sent shockwaves through the male-dominated Parliament, indicating that women's representation could no longer be taken lightly in Kenya. Urgent measures had to be taken to ensure the provisions of the Constitution were implemented. It is the sole mandate of the Parliament to legislate mechanisms on how the two-thirds rule will be implemented. [The third ruling](#) which had women's participation and representation in politics was in the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI). Although women leaders were divided right in the middle, it proposed the scrapping of county Women Representatives seats and the introduction of 50/50 gender representation in Senate. Some opposing voices from Women's Movement, including FEMNET, claimed that this is regressive and would undo the gains made by women. In the [statement](#) they indicated mischief by the male political elites due to betrayal by

Parliament in passing the Gender Bill 2018. However, the BBI was declared unconstitutional, and the status quo remained until the elections were held in August 2022.

The lack of legal mechanisms for the implementation of the two-thirds rule in Parliament will remain a challenge to Kenya, and it is yet to be seen how women will undertake these campaigns. The [rejected of Gender Bill 2018](#) was the second and last attempt to pass legislation to effect Article 27 of the Kenya constitution before the general elections. Kenya's gender-based constitution crisis yet to be resolved.

Ahead of the national elections in Tanzania in 2025, it is observed that President Samia Suluhu Hassan, Tanzania's first female leader, who took office in 2021 has since worked to enhance women's representation in politics. In 2022, her administration backed a Presidential Task Force for Multiparty Democracy, which acknowledged women's marginalization and suggested legislative reforms to boost their political involvement. The joint NDI-Omuka Hub forum provided a platform for citizens to engage with government officials and MPs, discussing women's participation and the ongoing reform process. Civil society organizations (CSOs) also reached a consensus on recommendations to increase women's political participation, presented by the Assistant Registrar for the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP), the agency responsible for implementing the Political Parties Act (PPA).

4.2.2 Post-Election Period

Post-election analysis on women's representation and participation shows notable progress in both elected and nominated positions. However, women face the dual challenge of performing their roles effectively while advocating for broader gender equality within political institutions. As indicated in Table 2 and further discussed in section 4, the number of women leaders in parliament falls short of the global threshold of 30%. In Kenya, the representation stands at 10.6%, 9% in Tanzania, and 13% in the DRC. Although there was a marginal increase in the last elections in the three countries, the quality of women's participation improved significantly due to significant events that took place in the three countries as stated.

In Kenya, for the first time, the country had three presidential running mates, including Martha Karua, a seasoned women politician and activist. Although her coalition did not win the presidential race, the perception of women in leadership was shaped both in public and in the institution of governance. In Tanzania, the Presidency of Her Excellency Samia Suluhu propelled women to embrace top leadership in the country. Her ascent to the Presidency and the subsequent election of the First Woman Speaker of the National Assembly and Minister of Defence boosted the campaigns and gains of women's movements in Tanzania. The appointment of the first woman ever as the Prime Minister in the DRC also places women at an advantageous position to address gender issues facing Congolese women. These high-level events are counted as 'critical acts' with a high impact on women's leadership, although the three countries are struggling to reach the gender threshold (critical mass).

The appointment of women leaders in cabinet positions after elections was also evident. In the three countries, there is fair women representation in the cabinet. Tanzania has gone further to have a designated gender-responsive ministry ([Ministry of Community Development, Gender, and Children](#)). A ministry meant to promote gender equality, equity and children rights in the country. Upon her ascent to power, President Samia Suluhu carried out a cabinet reshuffle that saw an increase in the women appointed into ministry from 30% to 36%, which was a great stride (Jahari, Mpapalika, and Msafiri, 2023). The appointment of the cabinet in Kenya and the DRC remains at 31.8% and 10%, respectively.

“The WFP project enabled participants to meet a number of authorities, including the Parliament, accompanied by the Swedish Embassy which led to the pooling of efforts thanks to the action initiated by FEMNET.

The project has reached out to many women, influencing more or less 30% of participants to get involved in politics. As a result, some progress has been made in the selection/voting of women, albeit very timidly up to now. I was elected to the national and provincial deputations in the province of Lualaba.”Mrs. Fify MASUKA, DRC

The dynamics of women's participation and leadership in Kenya, the DRC, and Tanzania before and after general elections highlight both the progress made and the challenges that remain. Pre-election periods are marked by intensified advocacy, training, and efforts to overcome systemic barriers. Post-election periods reveal the gaps between legal frameworks and their implementation, underscoring the need for continued support and advocacy for women in leadership roles. While significant strides have been made, particularly in Kenya and Tanzania, the DRC's unique challenges require sustained international and local efforts to create a stable and inclusive political environment for women's political participation.

4.3 Electoral actors in women engagement in Politics

Numerous entities contribute to the advancement of women's participation in politics and elections in the three countries. These entities play critical roles in either facilitating or hindering women's participation. This analysis categorizes them as primary and secondary electoral actors based on their roles in electoral cycles (see Table 6).

Table 6. Electoral Actors in the three electoral cycle periods

Electoral Cycle	Primary	Secondary
Pre-elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral Management Body • Political Parties • Media Institutions • Candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women Organizations • Government gender /women agencies • Registrar of political parties
Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections Management Body • Media Institutions • Candidates/Aspirants • Traditional/ religious leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections Observers • Government gender/ women Agencies
Post Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parliament • Political parties • Media Institutions • Presidency • Elected and nominated leaders • Political caucus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government gender Ministries

4.3.1 Primary Electoral actors

These categories of electoral actors have a direct influence on increasing women's representation and participation in politics. Except for media institutions, the rest of the primary electoral actors are controlled by political leaders. The parliament has elected and nominated leaders from different political parties. Most

political parties are ethnically organized, and therefore, elections and nominations are influenced by traditional or religious leaders.

Parliament: Parliaments play a crucial role in advancing gender equality. Women in parliaments are known to be the main drivers of the change in terms of gender equality in parliament (IPU, 2021). Parliaments hold the executive (appointing authority) to account, draft relevant and adequate legislation, and draw attention to specific issues affecting citizens. The analysis of the parliaments from the three target countries showed that they played both facilitative and hinderance roles towards gender parity in the parliament.

In terms of facilitative roles, the parliaments in the three countries enacted legislation aimed at including more women in parliament in the last general elections. For example, in DRC, electoral laws were enacted in the run-up to the 2023 general elections to encourage women to vie for elective positions at national, provincial, and community levels, resulting in increased women's participation and election at all levels. In Kenya, a protracted debate on the Political Parties Act 2011 allowed the formation of political coalitions, which by chance helped presidential candidates select women running mates. There was also a significant number of women who ran as independent candidates in 2022 general elections made favourable by the electoral laws.

In Tanzania, the election of the women speaker was also a way for parliament to ensure women's representation in house leadership. In Kenya, women are also part of and chair house committees according to the Parliamentary Scorecard report by Mzalendo Trust, the women parliamentarians have been appointed as chairperson of the house committees where issues are processed in the parliament before debate in the plenary sessions.

In cases where parliaments played a blocking role, Kenya's Gender Bill 2018 was rejected in parliament despite a spirited campaign and persuasion of male members by women members in the house to vote for it. This was a blow to the women participation in politics in Kenya. The parliament also encouraged a court order to stay, preventing its dissolution on unconstitutional grounds due to lack of the 2/3 gender rule representation. The Building Bridges Initiative (BBi) was another bill passed in parliament despite the outcry of women leaders and women movements on its negative effects to women leadership. These incidents observed to stall the enhancement of the legal framework to attain the 2/3 gender rule in Kenya.

Electoral Management Body: In the three countries, the electoral management body; the IEBC (Kenya), the National Electoral Commission (NEC), Tanzania and Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI, in French), DRC has three roles to ensure women's representation. Firstly, to ensure gender representation in the commissioners and elections managers, which was observed to have been carried out when constituting the electoral bodies in the three countries. Secondly, to ensure that electoral laws developed and enacted by the parliament meet gender parity criteria. In Kenya and DRC, which had recent elections, the electoral bodies championed the change of electoral laws, facilitating electoral processes. For example, in Kenya, election regulations were changed to reflect the 2/3 gender principle in nominations lists. In DRC, as stated earlier, they led the change of electoral laws to allow women representation in elections. The third role of the electoral body is to ensure that political parties and other electoral actors respect and adhere to laws that advance gender equality. As cited earlier, where the electoral law is not prescriptive enough, in the three countries, political parties ignore gender representation and tend to give preference to men over women leaders.

Political Parties: Political parties bring together people with the same political ideas, hoping to get as many of their members as possible into representative bodies like parliament or municipal councils. In the three countries, the analysis confirmed that political parties are duly registered, meeting regulatory requirements,

including gender representation in management. However, the practices of political parties are in question. It is important to mention that political parties remain the only effective mechanism for women's participation and representation in politics. Political parties are the only legal entities that nominate and support political candidates to vie for any elective position. However, across the three countries, due to the state of political parties, they prefer men to women. Political parties are also instrumental in appointing their elected members into house committees. The practice in the three countries is that women are given leadership roles in weak house committees or sometimes dropped in preference for men.

Politicians and their Networks: Across the three countries, individual politicians and political caucuses were found to be effective ways of advocating for women's inclusion. For example, in Kenya, KEWOPA has become a movement of women leaders in parliament pushing women's agenda and succeeding. In Tanzania, the Tanzania Women's Parliamentary Group (TWPG), a women's parliamentary caucus, collaborates with multiple actors including civil society organizations (CSOS) in advancing gender equality through the work of the National Assembly. The Tanzania Women Parliamentary Group (TWPG) and Umoja wa Wanawake Wawakilishi Zanzibar (UWAWAZA) represent the most strategic entry point for the promotion of women's rights and gender equality (GEWE) through the National Assembly (NA) and Zanzibar House of Representatives (ZHoR) processes. In DRC Caucus of Women Parliamentarians of the Democratic Republic of Congo²⁷ (Caucus des Femmes Parlementaires de la République Démocratique du Congo, or CAFCO) aims to promote the participation and representation of women in politics and to address issues affecting women in the country.

Presidency: Presidents in the three countries are elected every five years. During the pre-election period, political parties and coalitions make commitments in their manifestos and public pronouncements on how women should be included in political leadership. However, after elections, as observed in this analysis, they often fail to appoint women. In the case of Kenya, where the Kenya Kwanza coalition leader, who is now the current president (Dr. Samoei Ruto), promised to form an inclusive government. The coalition even had a [women's charter](#) with its own commitments. Despite these pledges, women continue to fight for inclusion in his government.

However, the Presidents of Tanzania and the DRC have changed this perception to ensure women are part of the leadership in the country. Both presidents, as indicated earlier, have appointed women to powerful positions in the government and have met their commitment for women's inclusion in political offices.

Media Institutions: Media creates a platform for women leaders to sell their agenda and win public confidence. It is also through media that women leaders and women activists influence gender equality discourse. Across the target countries, the media has played a key role in showcasing successful women in politics.

²⁷ <https://data.ipu.org/parliament/Ci/specialized-bodies/Ci-LC-SB06/>

Civil society, the media and parliament have all contributed to the emergence of women in politics. Radio Okapi, Télé 50, Top 50, RTNC and Radio Maendeleo have all played an important role in raising voter awareness of the need for women to vote in the 2023 elections. Agnès Sadiki, woman leader and former provincial budget minister-DRC.

However, the media has also been used to propagate hate, gender stereotypes, and prejudice about women in politics.

Religious/Traditional Leaders: In the three countries, local politics are organized around religious and ethnic backgrounds. This gives traditional and religious leaders the opportunity to propagate their discriminatory beliefs about women in parliament. In some communities where they practice negotiated democracy such as Kenya, they prefer appointing men over women in leadership positions. In a positive sense, women candidates backed by religious and traditional leaders often find themselves in leadership positions.

4.3.2 Secondary Electoral actors

Secondary electoral actors are those found within the electoral environment who support gender parity in politics but do not directly influence the placement of women in leadership positions.

Government Gender Agencies: These encompass gender departments and ministries in the three countries. For instance, in Tanzania, there is a designated gender ministry overseeing women's empowerment. Similarly, Kenya has a [National gender Equality commission](#) tasked with ensuring gender inclusion in the country. These departments have been effective in monitoring gender issues and development, although their role in ensuring the election of women is not clearly defined. Regarding the DRC, information on the presence and effectiveness of government gender agencies is lacking.

Civil Society Organizations: Civil society organizations that include women's rights organisations such as FEMNET have played a pivotal role in advocating for increased women's political participation in Tanzania. These groups have engaged in activities such as voter education, leadership training for women, and lobbying for policy reforms supporting gender equality in politics. Despite efforts to promote women's political participation in Tanzania before the 2020 general elections, significant gaps and challenges persist. Addressing these challenges necessitates a multi-faceted approach involving legal reforms, institutional support, awareness-raising campaigns, and efforts to change societal attitudes towards gender roles.

Regional Bodies: These include the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) and others. One of the achievements of these bodies is pressuring member states to enact gender-responsive laws. They also participate in election observations where they highlight women issues especially around gender-based violence which is prominent around the elections in the three countries.

The below is a list of the organizations working to promote women's political participation and representation in the target countries:

Table 7. Women organisations in Tanzania

Organization	Category
The National Democratic Institute	NGO
Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF)	Foundation
Integrity Watch	NGO
UN Women	United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women.
United States Agency for International Development USAID	International development Organization
FAWE	NGO
Tanzania Media Women's Association-TAMWA	Media-NGO
Women in Law and Development in Africa WILDAF	Pan African women's rights network
Tanzania Women Empowerment in Action (TAWEA)	NGO
The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)	Funding partner
Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC)	Human Rights Advocacy organization
Tanzania Women Lawyers Association (TAWLA)	Association of women lawyers
Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP)	NGO

Table 8. Women Organisations in Kenya

Organization	Category
Federation of Kenya women Lawyers (FIDA)	Association of Women lawyers
CREAW	National Feminist NGO
GROOTS Kenya	NGO
KEWOPA	Parliamentary Association
CRAWN Trust	NGO
Woman Kind World wide	International Feminist NGO
Kenya Human Rights commission	National NGO
National Gender and Equality commission (NGEC)	National NGO
Women Empowerment Link	National NGO
Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)	African NGO

Table 9. Women organisations in DRC

Organization	Category
Womens <i>initiative</i> for Gender Justice	International NGO
National Committee for Women and Development CONAFED	National NGO
Justice et Paix-CEJP	National NGO
Cadre Permanent de Concertation de la Femme Congolaise -(CAFCO)	National NGO

Action de Bien Etre Communautaire (ABEC)	National NGO
Réseau Genre et Droits de la Femme (GEDROFE)	National NGO
Forum des Mamans de l'Ituri (FOMI)	National NGO
Forum de la Femme Ménagère (FORFEM)	National NGO
L'Association des Femmes Juristes Congolaises (AFEJUCO)	National NGO
Action pour les Femmes et Enfants Marginalisés (AFEM)	National NGO
Inter-Action	National NGO
TROCAIRE	Irish INGO

4.4 Women Representation in the Political offices

To gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of women representation in political offices, it's essential to consider both elective and appointive positions. In this analysis, both types of positions are regarded as political offices since they are established through elections. The composition of women in political offices at both the national and local government levels is examined in the sub-sections below.

4.4.1 National Level

At the national level, the analysis focused on women's representation in parliament and the executive. The findings regarding representation are contained in Figure 1.

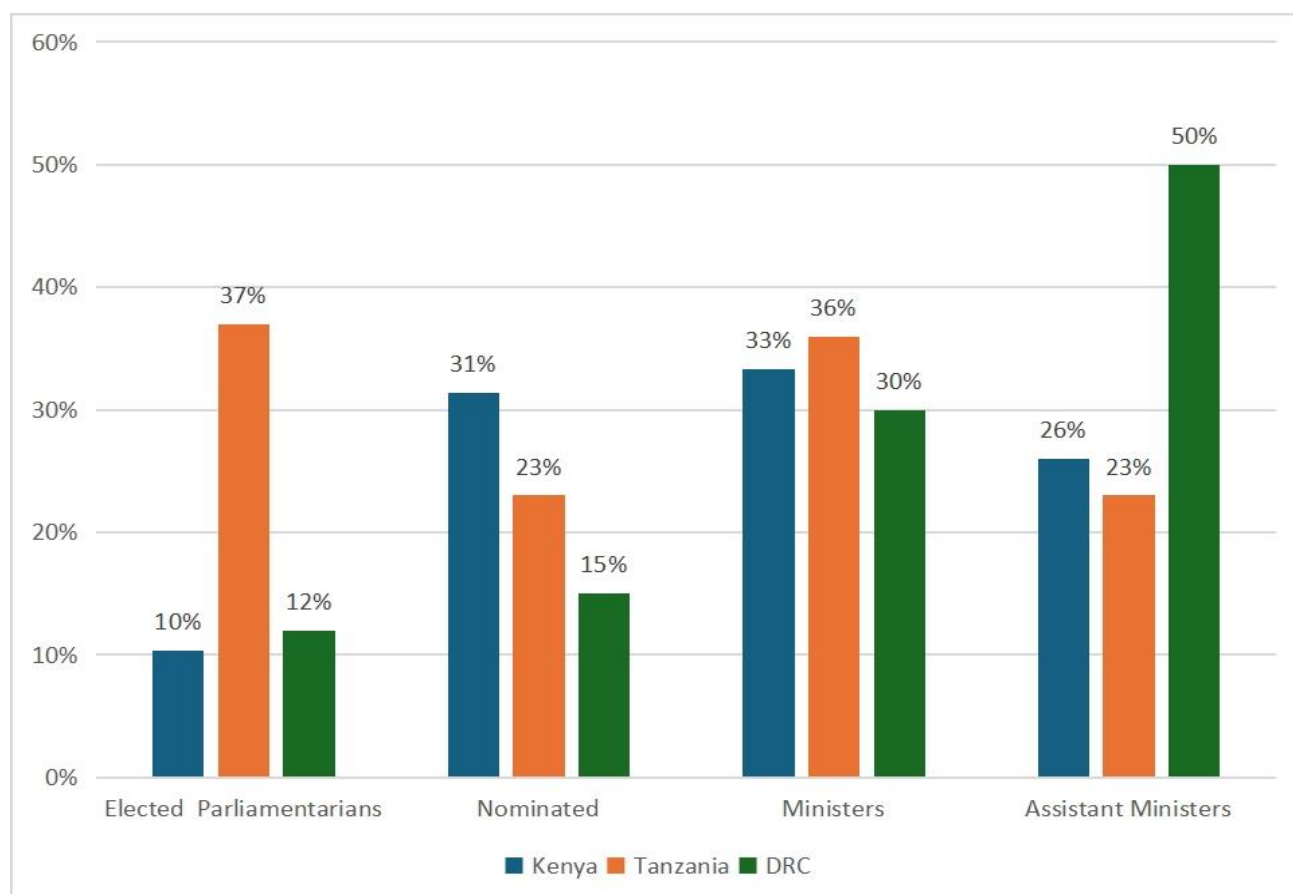


Figure 1. Women's representation in the parliament and the executive

In terms of parliament representation, Kenya and the DRC lag behind Tanzania. This disparity can be attributed to weak legal frameworks, particularly evident in Kenya where the rejection of the Gender Bill 2018 has hindered progress. Additionally, Congolese women face numerous challenges stemming from decades of conflict, which disproportionately affect them and worsened by unfavourable electoral laws.

Interestingly, Kenya leads in the number of nominated women leaders, largely due to the "top-up" mechanism adopted by political parties. This mechanism often sees women being encouraged to wait for nomination and appointment by party elites, contributing to a higher number of women leaders being nominated rather than elected.

The trend analysis across the three countries reveals an overall increase in women's representation in parliament. Kenya saw an increase from 9.1% in 2017 to 11% in 2022, Tanzania from 20% in 2015 to 36% in 2022, and the DRC from 11% in 2018 to 17% in 2023. This rise can be attributed to increased political awareness fostered by women's movements in these countries. For instance, FEMNET's collaboration with women leaders and rights organizations in DRC facilitated training for women aspirants and public education initiatives.

Joëlle KOBÉLE, a member of the "Travailliste" political party, took part in the workshop organized by FEMNET, and motivated by the modules taught at the meeting, she returned to her party, used the strategies she had learned to carve out a special image for herself, and 6 months later was appointed national president of the women's league of her political party, and in 2023 was a candidate in the elections (for provincial deputation in the city of Kinshasa). *'Although I was not elected, I dared to make my mark on the electoral*

process, and continued to campaign and cultivate my political ambitions within my political party, which is an opposition party. I am now coaching people with disabilities to learn trade, particularly mothers, in my electoral district, and thanks to this, I am building up an electoral base and I now have over 1,000 women with disabilities who have joined the association.” **Joëlle KOBELE**

In June 2023, FEMNET brought together women leaders from public institutions, the private sector and civil society organizations to strengthen their solidarity in promoting inclusive democracy in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The women who took part in the training workshop on improving women's political participation set up a mechanism to bring together women (former parliamentarians and/or members of government) and new (novice) potential candidates for the December 2023 elections, to enable the latter to gain experience from the former (mentors). They also lobbied parliament for the adoption of policies favouring the election of women. It was in this context that Mme Chantal LUMBU, a young girl from the town of Kananga (Kasaï Central Province), who had never taken part in politics and had nothing political in her. A dynamic young girl in her neighbourhood, where she takes part in neighbourhood forums. *‘After the FEMNET workshop I decided to get involved in politics. I have set up a soccer team and a foundation, and I am now providing care for the malnourished. I am proud to have carved out a sizeable image for myself in my community, and I run for the municipal election.’* **Chantal LUMBU**

Regarding ministerial appointments, the three countries range between 30% and 36%. While this may seem positive, considering that women comprise 50% of the population and voters, true gender equality demands a 50/50 distribution. Tanzania's case highlights the need for strong political will from appointing authorities to achieve this balance. Moreover, maintaining these positions requires exceptional performance from women leaders to dispel the notion that women are inferior leaders compared to men.

In Tanzania, President Samia Suluhu Hassan's inauguration in 2021 marked a significant milestone as the country's first female leader, offering hope for improved women's representation in politics. Under her administration, a Presidential Task Force for Multiparty Democracy was established in 2022, acknowledging women's marginalization and recommending legislative reforms to enhance party policies and increase women's participation. In Kenya, women's rights movements play a crucial role in ensuring women leaders remain in their positions, as they are often subject to attacks from men and the media.

4.4.2 Local Government level

Local government arrangements vary across the three target countries. In Kenya, which has devolved governance, there are 47 county executives and assemblies. Tanzania, on the other hand, has local councils, while the DRC has provincial and community councils. However, it appears that there are three levels in local governance in all three countries.

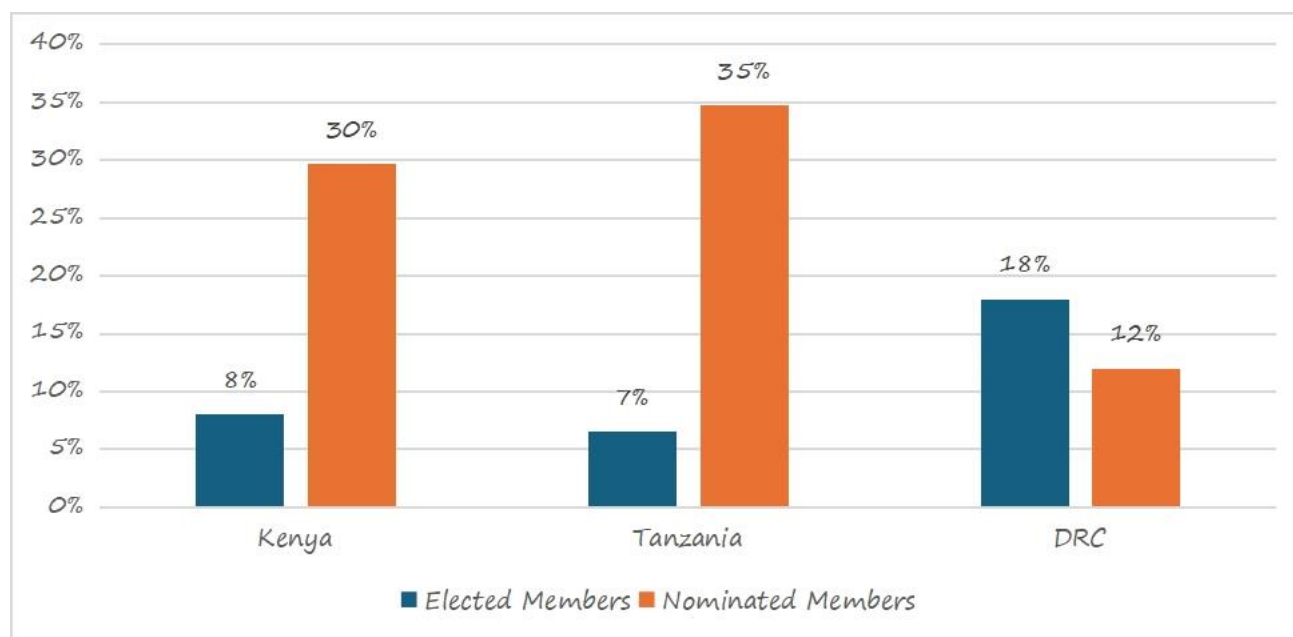


Figure 2. Elected and nominated members in the target countries

At the local government level, the ratio of nominated women is higher than elected women in Kenya and Tanzania. This is facilitated by gender quotas that mandate the nomination of women leaders to supplement the list of women leaders in local assemblies. In contrast, in the DRC, where there is no gender quota in place, more women were elected than nominated. This phenomenon can be explained by the implementation of gender quotas, which aim to increase women's representation in local government. In Kenya and Tanzania, the existence of gender quotas incentivizes political parties to nominate more women candidates to meet the required quota. As a result, the number of nominated women often exceeds the number of elected women.

Conversely, in the DRC, where there is no such quota system, the selection process relies solely on the electoral outcomes. In this context, if women candidates are successful in securing electoral victories, they will be elected rather than nominated. This highlights the impact of policy interventions, such as gender quotas, in shaping the composition of local government bodies and enhancing women's representation in politics.

4.5 Women Political leaders Performance Scorecard

The findings reveal a mixed performance across the executive, parliament, judiciary, and local government in the three countries (Figures 3,4 and 5).

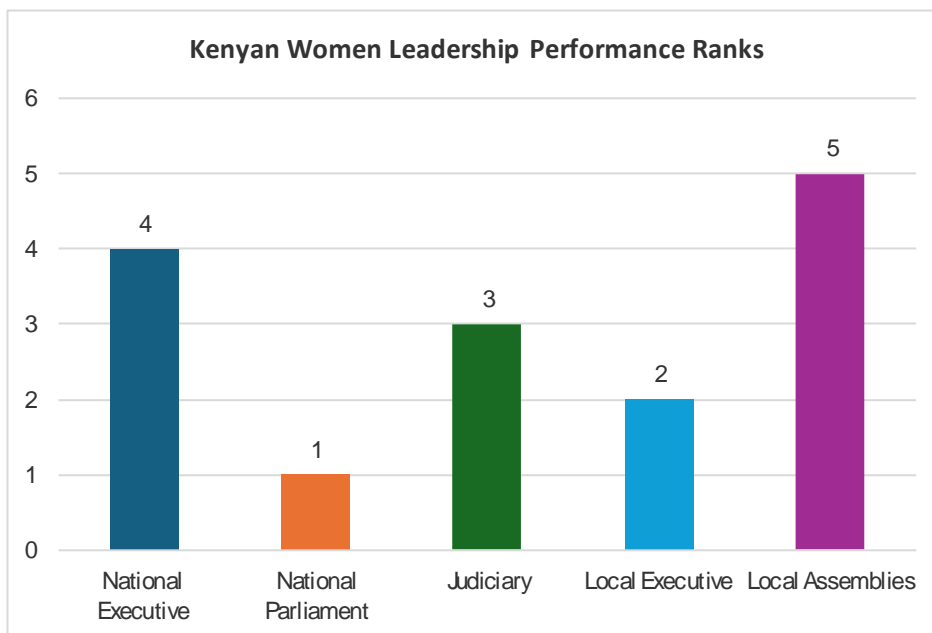


Figure 3. Kenya Score Card

In Kenya, women leaders in parliament were ranked first in performance. This ranking is attributed to both nominated and elected leaders being vocal advocates for gender equality in Kenya. These leaders actively participate in parliamentary debates and hold influential positions in key house committees where they champion gender issues. Surprisingly, despite having the highest number of women serving as Members of County Assembly (MCAs), they were ranked low in performance based on available evidence.

Governors were ranked second, supported by evidence indicating that the seven women governors are among the most high-performing governors in the country. Examples such as the governors of Homabay and Meru have received high ratings for effective governance, as per the [recent report by Infortrack](#). Building on their performance, the governors are now in the process of developing female governors strategy dabbled [G-7 Strategy](#) that seeks to empower and support women leaders in the counties.

The recent debate in the national assembly saw the majority leader, Kimani Ichungwa, praising the [performance of female governors](#). He stated, "They (women governors and women leaders in parliament) are good at managing finances." This acknowledgment further underscores the competence and effectiveness of women leaders in governance roles, particularly in financial management, as recognized by key figures in the national assembly.

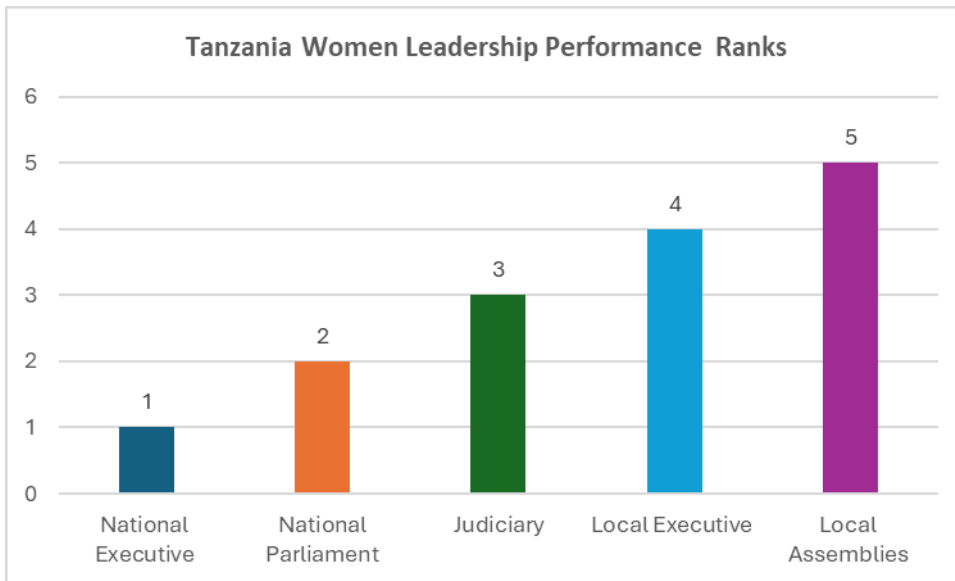


Figure 4. Tanzania Score Card

In Tanzania, the results from the scorecards differed with that of Kenya. The national executive was ranked first, largely due to the significant impact of President Samia Suluhu. Since assuming the presidency, her leadership has made a substantial impact, particularly in amplifying women's voices across the country. This shift in perception has led to increased women representation in the executive.

As mentioned earlier, President Suluhu doubled the number of women ministers in the current cabinet, signalling a tangible commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment within the highest levels of government. Her leadership has not only increased the visibility of women but also inspired confidence in their ability to lead effectively in executive roles. This recognition underscores the transformative role that women leaders can play in reshaping governance structures and fostering greater inclusivity in political decision-making processes.

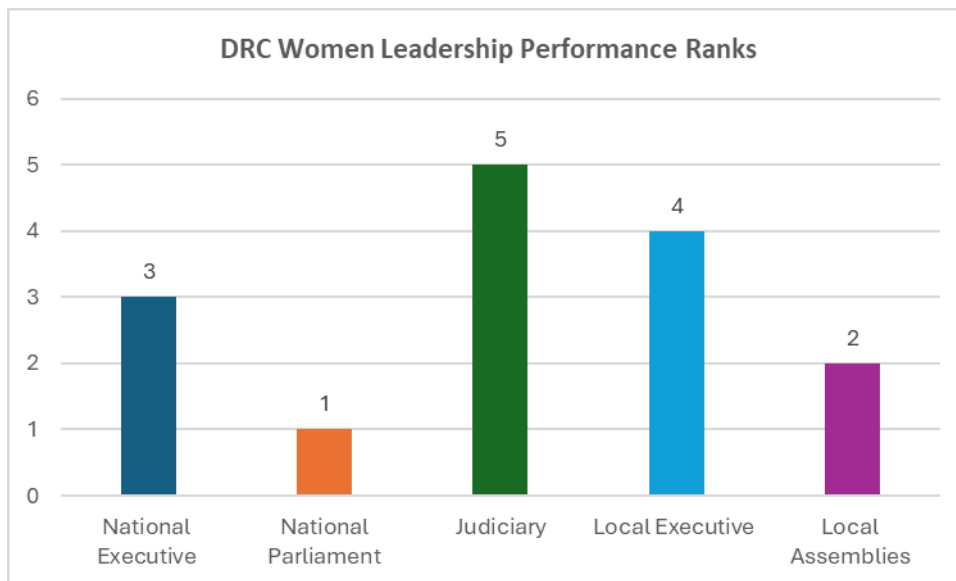


Figure 5. DRC Score card

In the DRC, the national parliament was ranked high due to the history of women parliamentarians' agitation for women's inclusion in governance. Such leaders include Mrs. Jeannine Mabunda (former President of the National Assembly), who inspired many women to become involved in politics, including Mrs. Rose Mutombo, currently Minister of Justice, who claims to have been inspired by Mrs. Jeannine Mabunda. It was also observed that the new electoral law, which encourages 50% gender participation in elections, strengthened women's participation in the bicameral parliament. Since the law applies to all elections from local to national, there was also a high number of women participating in local assemblies, resulting in a second-place ranking.

5.0 Challenges and Gaps

The challenges to women's political participation in Kenya, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are multifaceted, with overlapping and distinct issues rooted in policy, legal, cultural, economic, educational, and institutional barriers. This desk research identified the following common themes.

Cultural and Social Norms:

Across the 3 countries, Traditional gender roles and patriarchal attitudes persist, often discouraging women from pursuing political careers. Social expectations often prioritize domestic responsibilities over political engagement for women. In Kenya, societal norms deeply rooted in patriarchal values discourage women from entering politics. Women are often seen as domestic caretakers, and men are viewed as natural leaders. These stereotypes are reinforced by cultural beliefs and traditional institutions such as councils of elders, which do not support women's political ambitions. Similar to Kenya, societal norms in Tanzania reinforce gender stereotypes that view political participation as a male domain. Women often need permission from male family members to engage in political activities. There is a prevailing perception that women should focus on domestic roles. In DRC discriminatory social norms from an early age contribute to the limited political participation of women. Patriarchal systems and gender stereotypes continue to marginalize women, both within political parties and in broader society. Women's political maturity is often questioned by society, with many believing they lack the necessary maturity to engage in politics. Men dominate decision-making positions within political parties, relegating women to mobilization roles. Social stereotypes and the challenge of balancing personal and political responsibilities further hinder ambitious women. Additionally, women face

difficulties accessing justice due to geographical remoteness, high costs, and unfamiliarity with procedures, with vulnerable groups like widows often marginalized in the legal system.²⁸

Economic Barriers:

Many women lack the financial resources necessary to run effective political campaigns. Political activities and campaigns require significant funding, which many women do not have access to. In Kenya, financial constraints are significant, with women having less access to resources and property ownership, which hinders their ability to finance campaigns. The high cost of electoral processes exacerbates this issue. In Tanzania, economic disparities significantly affect women's ability to participate in politics. Many women lack reliable sources of income, making it difficult to afford campaign expenses. In DRC, economic disparities are pronounced, especially in rural areas, further limiting women's political engagement. Women often lack economic power, reducing their participation in political activities. The main challenges facing women in DRC politics are security concerns and economic barriers, including the high, non-refundable deposit²⁹ required to apply to the CENI, which many women cannot afford due to poverty and economic dependence. This financial burden makes it difficult for women to finance their electoral campaigns, leading some to withdraw their candidacies. Additionally, women are often subject to the political decisions made by men, further complicating their political participation.

Educational Disparities:

While there have been improvements, educational inequalities still exist, particularly in rural areas. Limited access to education reduces women's ability to compete in the political arena effectively. In Kenya, educational disparities exist, particularly in rural areas, impacting women's ability to compete effectively in politics. Women in urban areas have better access to education and resources. In Tanzania: educational requirements for political positions are low (basic literacy in Swahili or primary education), yet many women still lack access to education, limiting their political participation³⁰. In DRC: High levels of illiteracy among women, especially in rural regions, severely restrict their political involvement and awareness of their legal rights.

Gender Based Violence and Sexual Harassment:

Women in politics often face gender-based violence, harassment, and intimidation. These threats can discourage women from running for office or participating actively in political processes. In Kenya women face significant violence and harassment, both verbally and physically, during electoral processes.³¹ Gender-based violence (GBV) aims to deter women from participating in politics. In Tanzania, violence against women, including in the political sphere, is normalized. Women face harassment and intimidation from male political leaders, discouraging their political participation. In DRC: Women aspiring to political positions face abuse, harassment, and sexist stereotypes, deterring them from pursuing political careers.

Legal and Institutional Barriers:

²⁸ <https://www.ebuteli.org/publications/notes/femmes-et-elections-en-rdc>

²⁹ <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/west-and-central-africa/democratic-republic-of-congo>

³⁰ <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/documents/research-briefing-niambie-women-politics-tanzania-2023.pdf>

³¹ chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.fida-kenya.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Fida-ESGBV-Report_Print_Final-_compressed-1.pdf

Despite constitutional provisions for gender equality, there are gaps in the implementation of these laws. Political parties and institutions often lack mechanisms to enforce gender quotas and support women's political participation. In Kenya, there are gaps in the implementation of laws promoting gender equality. Political parties often do not fulfill their obligation to support women candidates adequately. In Tanzania, despite signing international human rights instruments, the implementation of these laws remains weak. Voter registration is challenging, particularly for women with disabilities. In DRC, customary and legal constraints, along with a lack of genuine political will, continue to limit women's political opportunities. There are no affirmative action measures to ensure women's representation. The DRC has robust legal provisions for gender equality, but these laws often face challenges in implementation and insufficient dissemination, particularly regarding women's voting rights and their knowledge of these rights. Electoral laws are weak in enforcing women's representation in political parties, with Article 13 of the electoral law suggesting gender representation but not mandating it, thus non-compliance does not disqualify electoral lists. Women comprise only 17% of legislative candidates, 28% of provincial candidates, and 43% of municipal candidates. This highlights a constitutional paradox where Article 36 of the Parity Act calls for measures to reduce discrimination, yet gaps in practical application persist

Political Party Dynamics:

Across the 3 countries, many political parties are male-dominated and may not prioritize or support female candidates. Women often struggle to gain influential positions within these parties. In Kenya, Political parties are male-dominated and often do not prioritize female candidates. Women struggle to gain influential positions within these parties³². In Tanzania political parties are influenced by sociocultural beliefs that favor men for leadership positions. Women are often relegated to subordinate roles within parties. In the DRC, women face significant barriers within political parties, where gender stereotypes and a lack of support hinder their progress.

Media Representation:

In Kenya, women politicians are often subjected to biased media coverage that focuses on their personal lives or appearance rather than their policies and capabilities.³³ This negative portrayal can affect public perception and support. In Tanzania: Media representation reinforces gender stereotypes, portraying political participation as a male domain and limiting women's visibility while in DRC, gender stereotypes in media further marginalize women, both before and after they enter politics.

Policy Gaps:

There is often a lack of policies specifically aimed at promoting women's political participation. In Kenya, existing policies are often not effectively implemented or enforced, resulting in minimal impact³⁴. In Tanzania, despite some progress, significant gaps remain in policies supporting women's political

³² chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3072&context=jiws
³³ https://www.idea.int/news/women-politics-and-media

³⁴ chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/enhancing-inclusive-political-participation-and-representation-in-africa-en.pdf

participation, particularly for women with disabilities. In the DRC, the absence of affirmative action measures and the poor implementation of existing laws continue to impede women's political representation.

While Kenya, Tanzania, and the DRC share common barriers to women's political participation, each country also faces unique challenges. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive strategies, including legal reforms, economic empowerment, educational initiatives, protection against violence, and measures to promote gender equality within political parties and institutions. By tackling these challenges, these countries can create more inclusive political environments that encourage and support women's active participation.

6.0 Opportunities for Intervention

Based on the findings from this analysis, FEMNET and other consortium partners can strengthen their strategies by capitalizing on the following opportunities at regional, national, and local government levels:

6.1 Regional Scope

The literature indicates that 44 out of the 55 African countries, which are member states, have signed the Maputo Protocol of 2003. This indicates there is more work to be done at the regional level for remaining states to ratify the protocol. Further analysis conducted by FEMNET during the Mapping and analysis of Generation Equality Forum (GEF) commitments reveals that the states which signed the protocol have also developed legal frameworks. However, gaps remain in strengthening these policies, particularly in terms of national-level implementation.

Through the support of the Women's Political Participation (WPP) project, FEMNET and other consortium partners continue to exert pressure on the African Union (AU) and other regional structures to ensure that the remaining states sign the protocol.

FEMNET, in collaboration with Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR) coalition and other stakeholders, has been instrumental in driving policy advocacy efforts towards ratification and implementation of the Maputo Protocol. Through high-level missions and engagements with governments, FEMNET facilitated commitments for ratification. These efforts included a successful advocacy mission to Botswana, joint country missions to Madagascar and Sudan, and participation in national dialogues and commitments on ratification. At the invitation of the AUC, Women, Gender and Youth Directorate, Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa (SRRWA) [led an Advocacy Mission to Botswana](#) for the ratification of Maputo Protocol, from the 13 to 17 December 2022. The Mission was fielded in collaboration with Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR), represented by FEMNET and the UN OHCHR. The Mission held High-Level consultative meetings with key Government institutions, such as, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Justice; the Ministry in charge of Gender; the National Human Rights Commission; and Civil Society.

The election of Dr. Tulia Arkson to the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) holds significant importance for women's participation in regional politics. According to project reports, she has previously participated in a WPP forum organized by FEMNET in Tanzania aimed at encouraging women leaders and discussing effective strategies for enhancing women's participation in politics. This indicates her commitment and potential to influence change at both regional and national levels across AU member states.

6.2 National Scope

Five opportunities at the national level could serve as stepping-stones for women's participation in politics. These positive factors need to be further exploited:

- ***Nominated Women Leaders in Politics:*** Despite facing prejudice, nominated women leaders form a critical mass in parliament. For instance, in Kenya's Senate, out of 67 seats, 16 are nominated senators, constituting a significant portion. This gives them leverage to introduce gender-responsive bills and motions. Additionally, being visible at the national level allows them to champion gender equality both within and outside the house, enhancing their profile for potential election to competitive seats.

Caroline Agwanda and the Advancement of Disability Inclusion

6.2.1.1 Background

Hon. Caroline Agwanda, a renowned advocate for disability inclusion, a former nominated MCA, Kisumu County was honoured as the first runner-up in the Diversity and Inclusion category at the Maputo Protocol's 20 for 20 Solidarity Awards. Agwanda is a former Member of the County Assembly of Kisumu and currently serves as the Advisor to the Governor of Kisumu County on Disability Inclusion. Her role as a WPP Academy facilitator and her significant contributions to the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities have earned her recognition and respect both locally and internationally.

6.2.1.2 Achievements and Contributions

Caroline Agwanda has been a tireless champion for the rights of women and girls with disabilities. She has facilitated discussions on disability inclusion at international conferences organized by FEMNET and has developed a module for the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) that integrates disability mainstreaming into political participation training manuals. Through her activism, she has empowered over five hundred women with disabilities to engage in business, fostering economic independence and inclusion.

Her innovative approach has also garnered several prestigious awards, including the Economic Justice Award in Egypt and the UN Innovation Award for utilizing water hyacinth weed to benefit women with disabilities. Agwanda has been a prominent speaker at various UN conferences, such as CSW67, the Conference of State Parties on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the World Women with Disabilities conference in Korea. Her presentations on best practices for the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities, aligned with global legal frameworks, have highlighted her as a thought leader in this field.

6.2.1.3 Advocacy and Future Vision

Aligned with the 2024 International Women's Day theme, "Inspire Inclusion," Caroline Agwanda has emphasized the critical need to integrate women with disabilities into political and social spheres. She has urged stakeholders to amplify disability awareness and inclusion to combat discrimination and stigma, which often keep people with disabilities hidden in rural areas.

Agwanda advocates for widespread awareness campaigns targeted at duty bearers to inform them about the rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). She also stresses the importance of educating PWDs about their own rights to empower them fully. "A lot of disability inclusion awareness needs to be done to avoid discrimination and stigma. People are still hidden in the villages. Awareness creation to the duty bearers so that they know what rights are there for Persons with Disability (PWDs) and for PWDs themselves, as some of them do not know their rights," she stated. She believes that starting with the judiciary and extending to all government stakeholders and media, showcasing the privileges and best practices of PWDs can offer hope and inspiration.

6.2.1.4 Conclusion

Hon. Caroline Agwanda's work in Kisumu County and beyond illustrates the transformative impact of dedicated advocacy for disability inclusion. Her efforts have not only empowered individuals but also shaped policies and practices that promote inclusivity and equality. Her recognition at the Maputo Protocol's 20 for 20 Solidarity Awards underscores the importance of her contributions and sets a powerful example for future leaders in the field of disability rights.

- *Successful Women Leaders:* Across the three countries, there are examples of successful women leaders who serve as role models for aspiring female leaders. The presidents of Tanzania and the newly elected Prime Minister exemplify that women can effectively lead at the highest levels of government. In Kenya, women cabinet secretaries have been recognized among the best performing in the country. From the [TIFA recent report](#) the female cabinet secretary for health was among the best performing ministers. In parliament, women leaders such as Dr. Dula in Tanzania and active contributors such as Millie Odhiambo and Beatrice Elachi in Kenya demonstrate women's trusted positions in shaping the nation's future.
- *Upcoming Young Women Leaders:* FEMNET places great value on fostering intergenerational interaction among women leaders. Through initiatives like the Women's Political Participation (WPP) project, FEMNET facilitates exchange forums between seasoned and young women leaders. These forums serve as platforms for mentorship and strategy development, empowering young women to actively participate in politics. As part of this effort, young women leaders are often nominated by political parties to run for parliamentary seats, thereby increasing their visibility early in their political careers. Additionally, programs like the WPP academy provide valuable opportunities for these emerging leaders to learn effective political strategies and skills. In instances of extreme need, such as the case of Editar Ochieng vying for a by-election in Kibra Constituency following the demise of the former Member of the National Assembly, FEMNET takes proactive steps to support women candidates.

FEMNETs support to Editors' campaign

Editar Ochieng a feminist and human rights activist declared her intention to run as a candidate for the Kibra MP seat in September 2019. The seat was declared empty after the elected MP Hon Ken Okoth succumbed to cancer. Article 101 (4) of the Constitution stipulates that whenever a vacancy occurs in the office of an elected member of the National Assembly or Senate, the respective Speaker shall, within 21 days after the occurrence of the vacancy, give notice in writing of the vacancy to the electoral commission.

Editar, a natural leader in the community has an uphill task to represent the community she has served. Kibra is a melting pot of cultures and communities in urban Nairobi. A hot bed of talent and great people, it nevertheless is plagued by challenges that make it difficult for women and girls to thrive let alone strive for leadership. Negative cultural practices, strong patriarchy, violence (especially SGBV, Insecurity and poor sanitation plague Kibra. Despite that women like Editar emerge to respond to these challenges, fight for equal opportunities and access to services for "Kibrans" like all Kenyan deserve. Editar does this come rain or shine, across communities, parties etc.

FEMNET recognised the potential in Editar and wanted to support her candidature. With high stakes nature of politics and challenges in Kibra, this support needed to be more holistic. Thus, after consultations with experts in the field of politics and elections, a mini-programme was borne to provide practical capacity building and support for the Campaign and Editar herself.

Although she did not emerge victorious in the election, Edith expressed gratitude for the support provided by FEMNET. During a political dialogue forum organized by FEMNET in Kenya, Edith shared her experience and expressed determination for the future, stating, "If I didn't win, I will win in the future." This statement exemplifies the resilience and motivation that emerge from challenging experiences, underscoring the importance of continued support and empowerment for women leaders.

- *Legal Frameworks:* As indicated earlier in this report, the constitutions in both countries uphold the right to political participation, providing opportunities for qualified candidates of all orientations to vie for elective seats. Although legal frameworks on gender quotas and women's participation exist across the three countries, they may be weak due to lack of regulations for implementation. As observed in Kenya, developing such regulation is a difficult process. The women leaders there should advocate for more prescriptive laws and policies to ensure gender equality in politics.
- *Local Assemblies as Breeding Grounds for Women Leaders:* Sub-national levels, such as local assemblies, serve as breeding grounds for young women leaders to enter national politics. In Kenya, with its devolved government, county assemblies provide a platform for women to gain experience and visibility. Positive shifts, such as increased female candidates in communal councillor elections in the DRC, highlight opportunities for women's leadership at the grassroots level.

Exploiting these opportunities can help advance women's participation and representation in politics, fostering inclusive governance and driving positive change in society.

7.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

This analysis sought to interrogate the impact of Women in Political Participation Interventions in Kenya, Tanzania, and DRC. The findings showed that women's representation in political leadership has been increasing every other election in Kenya and DRC. In Tanzania, women's representation in parliament has stagnated for the last two elections. The increase in DRC and Kenya is associated with continuous strengthening of electoral laws to meet gender parity. In each of the countries, in the last elections, there was a change in electoral laws, and gender equality was one of the issues that informed the review of the electoral laws. Women's movements in these countries also mounted a rigorous campaign and worked with electoral bodies to ensure that electoral laws are changed and adhered to during elections.

While the number of elected leaders continues to grow, the number of appointed women in ministerial positions has remained less than 10 members, which is between 30% to 36%. Significant improvement was observed in Tanzania after President Samia Suluhu took office in 2021. In her reshuffled cabinet, the number of women ministers doubled. It is important to mention that in the three countries, according to the latest census, women constitute half of the country's population. Women's inclusion at 30% scores is therefore below the expected 50% representation in the leadership of the country.

The analysis noted a critical mass of women leaders at the local government level across the three countries. The proportion of nominated women leaders is higher than elected women leaders. From the perspective of women's leadership, this is a step towards achieving women's participation in politics because these women leaders at the local government level become national women leaders in subsequent elections. Women's movements should pay attention to women leaders at the local government level, build their capacity, and support them in contesting for elective positions.

Women's participation in politics has yielded many benefits for women in the three countries. From the political leadership performance scorecard, it is evident that women leaders have made significant contributions to the policy-making processes in parliament and the advancement of gender equality discourse in the three countries. Across the three countries, it was observed that women leaders in Kenya performed better in parliament than in the executive, judiciary, and local government. In contrast, in Tanzania, performance was observed in the national executive rather than in parliament, judiciary, and local government. Surprisingly, based on the available evidence, women leaders in local government were rated low. This could mean that less attention is given to this level of political participation, and therefore, women's movements need to shift their attention to it.

7.2 Key Recommendations

- Given the programme design challenges highlighted in FEMNETs quarter reports, one-off activities as noted in the 3 countries pose a risk in attaining the expected outcomes and participants expectations. It is recommended that FEMNETs, in consultation with IDEA, invests in multi- activity and multi year programming to meet its objectives, effectively deliver its expected outcomes, sustainability and flexibility in addressing critical and relevant emerging issues and sustaining the project gains.
- As elections are ongoing cycles, it is recommended that future programmes supporting women candidates, start early, be sufficiently resourced and work with existing initiatives throughout the electoral cycle. Furthermore, FEMNET should also include supporting women within and without political party structures.
- FEMNET should consider investing in a clear follow-up strategy, which should include a robust documentation and profiling of the women leaders, which is essential for ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of women political leaders who have been mentored or provided capacity-building support. This will strengthen networks, enhances accountability, addresses ongoing challenges, and promotes gender equality. By investing in comprehensive follow-up mechanisms, FEMNET can ensure that their efforts in supporting women in politics have a lasting and transformative impact.
- Advocating for implementation of constitutional and legal provisions ensuring gender parity: FEMNET should capitalize her efforts using existing evidence generated data (for example the WPP Barometer report) to ensure that advocacy efforts should focus on pushing for constitutional and legal reforms that guarantee gender parity in political representation. Regional and global advocacy spaces are critical in enhancing WPP work. There is need for strategic positioning and sustained collaboration with key regional and global organizing and platforms that are critical in advancing women's political leadership agenda such as the SADC, EALA, COMESA, African Union, EAC, Pan-African Parliament, African Regional Forum for Sustainable Development (ARFSD), Generation Equality, High Level Political Forum and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which are key platforms where FEMNET advocates.
- Given her mandate and strategic positioning within the WPP consortium, FEMNET should invest in generating and sharing feminist research and knowledge materials to serve the goals of policy and political reform, capacity enhancement, and advocacy that will be pursued in the current and future programme interventions.
- Continue with strengthening women's skills and confidence: FEMNET should continue working in collaboration with women parliamentary bodies and associations in the capacity strengthening efforts. This will play a pivotal role in empowering women by offering training programs focused on leadership, communication, negotiation, and policy analysis. This will not only enhance

women's political competencies but also boost their confidence to navigate the often-challenging landscape of politics.

- Continue working with key institutions of democratic governance such as political parties, parliaments, the media, electoral commissions, etc. to build constituencies, alliances, norms, and targets for reform and change towards greater women's political participation.

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