**COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF MERU**



**DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AFFAIRS, SPORTS, GENDER AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**COUNTY GENDER MAINSTREAMING POLICY**

**SEPTEMBER 2023**



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# Vision

A leading provider of social services for quality life to the Meru County residents

**Mission:**

To promote, coordinate, monitor and evaluate talents development, and community empowerment as an integral part of County development.

**Core Values**

We are committed to upholding the following core values as the guiding principles for the  
operations of the County.

**Consensus:** We will engage all stakeholders in every critical process for informed decision making and follow-ups.

**Efficiency:** All County resources will be used prudently and for the intended purpose.

**Effectiveness:** County development will be result oriented to achieve desired outcomes and impact.

**Participation:** Participation of all key stakeholders in Count Development agenda will be core to our operations for priority generation and development ownership while observing the principles of equity, equality and non-exception.

**Accountability:** We shall always endeavor to be held responsible, answerable and liable

**Rule of Law:** We shall strive to uphold the legal principles in all decision making and development process.

**Responsiveness:** We act with a sense of urgency to address citizens’ needs, make qualified decisions in time and provide fiscally responsible solutions.

**Transparency:** Government operations will be based on openness, accessibility and scrutiny by the residents of the County

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CG | County Government |
| CRC | Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| CSOs | Civil Society Organizations |
| FBOs | Faith Based Organizations |
| FGM | Female Genital Mutilation |
| GBV | Gender Based Violence |
| GEWE | Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment |
| GOK | Government of Kenya |
| ICCPR | International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights |
| ICERD | The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of |
| IPV | Intimate Partner Violence |
| M & E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| NGOs | Non-Governmental Organisations |
| PWDs | Persons with Disabilities |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SGBV | Sexual and Gender Based Violence |

VMGs Vulnerable and Marginalised Group

# DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Access to Justice:**

This is the ability of any person, regardless of gender, income or status etc. to use the legal system to advocate for themselves and their interests or opportunity to seek and obtain justice when one’s rights have been violated.

**Capacity Building:**

This is a conceptual approach to social or personal development that focuses on understanding

the obstacles that inhibit people, governments, international organizations and nongovernmental organizations from realizing their development goals while enhancing the abilities that will allow them to achieve measurable and sustainable results. It involves the creation of an enabling environment with appropriate policy and legal frameworks; institutional development, including community participation (of women in particular); and human resources development

**Empowerment:**

Refers to the process of building critical analytical skills for an individual to gain selfconfidence in order to take control of his or her life. Empowerment of women is an essential process in the transformation of gender relations because it addresses the structural and underlying causes of subordination and discrimination.

**Equality of Treatment:**

Refers to meeting the specific and distinct needs of different social categories of women and men. This can often involve special programmes and the commitment of additional resources, for example in the case of women and men with disabilities. Equality of treatment does not mean treating all men and all women in exactly the same way (i.e. in a Gender blind fashion) as this would only serve to perpetuate existing disparities.

**Equality of Opportunity:**

Refers to a fundamental human right embedded in the Constitution of Kenya**.** This Gender Policy Framework aims towards the achievement of *equality of opportunity*, in access to and share of employment opportunities, services and resources as well as in equality of treatment by employers and service providers.

**Gender**:

Refers to the social roles allocated respectively to women and to men in particular societies and at particular times. Such roles, and the differences between them, are conditioned by a variety of political, economic, ideological and cultural factors and are characterised in most societies by unequal power relations. Gender is distinguished from sex which is biologically determined.

**Gender analysis:**

Refers to the study of differences in the conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources and development, control of assets, decision-making powers, etc., between women and men in their assigned gender roles.

**Gender Awareness**:

Refers to a state of knowledge of the differences in roles and relations of women and men and how this results in differences in power relations, status, privileges and needs. Gender awareness recognizes that the life experiences, expectations, and needs of women, men, boys and girls are different, and that they may involve inequities that are subject to change. Without gender awareness, development interventions might fail to meet the needs and interests of all people they are intended to support.

**Gender Issues**:

These are defined in the form of relationships between women and men, their roles, privileges, status and positions are identified and analysed. Gender issues arise where inequalities and inequities are shown to exist between people purely on the basis of their being female or male. The fact that gender and gender differences are socially constructed is itself a primary issue to deal with in the form of programming and legislation.

**Gender discrimination:**

Refers to the unfair treatment of a person based on their gender. Acts of gender discrimination can include sexual harassment, pregnancy discrimination, and unequal pay for either men or women who do the same jobs.

**Gender Equality**:

Refers to the state of equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women & men and girls & boys. Equality does not mean that women and men are the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. The concept of Gender Equality as used in this policy takes into account women’s existing subordinate positions within social relations and aims at the restructuring of society so as to eradicate male domination. Therefore, equality is understood to include both formal equality and substantive equality; not merely simple equality to men. Substantive Equality refers to a stage of real equality underpinned by equality of opportunity, access and treatment between women and men strengthening of managerial systems.

**Gender Equity**:

Refers to the fair and just distribution of all means of opportunities and resources between women and men. To ensure fairness, strategies and measures need to be in place to compensate for women’s historical and social disadvantages that might have prevented women and men from operating on a level playing field. Thus, Equity is seen as a precursor to the realisation of equality.

**Gender Identity:**

Gender identity refers to how someone feels about and expresses her or his gender and gender roles for instance how she or he chooses her clothing, behaviour, and personal appearance. **Gender Parity:**

Numerical concept related to gender equality. Gender parity concerns relative equality in terms of numbers and proportions of women and men, girls and boys, and is often calculated as the ratio of female-to-male values for a given indicator.

**Gender and Development (GAD)**:

Refers to a planning process which is based on an analysis of the different situations and needs of women and men. It aims at creating gender equity and equality between women and men. A gender and development perspective recognizes the importance of the relations between women and men.

**Gender Mainstreaming:**

The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

**Gender Responsive Budget:**

This is a fiscal-based mechanism for ensuring greater consistency between economic goals of a country and social commitments in as far as engendering gender equality is concerned. **Gender Responsive Indicators:**

Refers to a gauge of measure used as evidence to demonstrate that a change has occurred as a result of a policy, programme, initiative or action. Gender-sensitive indicators measure whether gender equality or gender equity is being achieved. These indicators are therefore designed to track gender related changes as a result of a policy, programme, initiative or action over a specific period of time. Indicators can be quantitative showing or qualitative, they are essential for monitoring and evaluation.

**Gender Responsive**:

Refers to a planning process in which programmes and policy actions are developed to deal with and counteract problems which arise out of socially constructed differences between women and men. **Gender Roles/Dynamics:**

These are set of societal norms dictating the types of behaviours which are generally considered acceptable, appropriate, or desirable for people based on their actual or perceived sex or sexuality and are usually centred on conceptions of femininity and masculinity. **Gender Sensitive**:

Refers to the state of knowledge of the socially constructed differences between women and men, including differences in their needs, as well as to the use of such knowledge to identify and understand the problems arising from such differences and to act purposefully to address them. **Gender stereotyping:**

Refers to thepractice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics or roles on the sole basis of her or his membership of the social group of women or men.

**Participation:**

Refers to the process of involving person(s) in the running of an organization. Participation can also be the joint consultation in decision making, goal setting, profit sharing, teamwork, and other such measures through which a firm attempt to foster or increase its employees' commitment to collective objectives.

**Practical Gender Needs**:

Refers to the needs identified to help women and men cope bettering their existing subordinate positions. Practical needs are related largely to issues of welfare and do not challenge the existing gender division of labour or to women's subordinate positions in society.

**Strategic Gender Needs**:

Refers to needs which are identified as necessary to transform the existing unequal relations between women and men. Addressing women's strategic gender needs expedites women's empowerment and facilitates the fundamental social transformation necessary for establishment of gender equality.

**Transgender person:**

A person whose gender identity differs from the sex the person had or was identified as having at birth. Thus, it encompasses many gender identities of those who do not identify or exclusively identify with their sex assigned at birth. The term transgender is not indicative of gender expression, sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy, or how one is perceived in daily life.

# FOREWORD

Gender equality and diversity have positive bearings on organisations, institutions and the overall economy. The quest for gender equality is premised on two issues: equality between men and women is deemed a critical development goal, and second; women's economic participation, given their marginal position, is a part of the growth and stability equation.

In this respect, the *Constitution of Kenya 2010* is the single most important step in entrenching gender equality in Kenya’s political and economic agenda, therefore, the *Constitution* prohibits discrimination on the basis of among other spheres sex, pregnancy and marital status.

Thus, as Meru County, and in compliance with the letter and spirit of the constitution, we purpose to promote sustainable development premised on the principles of inclusivity, equity and equality. It is our belief and practice that people of diverse backgrounds, age and gender groups shall be treated with equity, equality and without exception in the development undertakings.

Essentially, both the County Integrated Development Plan and the Vision County 2040 commit to gender equality and socio-economic Empowerment. The realisation of these noble goals cannot be achieved in a policy vacuum; thus, the County Government of Meru has formulated County Gender Mainstreaming Policy in respect of constitutional provisions and the broader mission of realising equitable and shared prosperity at the County level.

It is my hope that moving forward, Meru County will be a space where women and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors, including economic participation and decision-making, and where the aspirations and needs of women and men are equally favoured.

**H.E Hon. Bishop Kawira Mwangaza**

**Governor, Meru County**

# PREFACE

The Constitution of Kenya contains important commitments to gender equality and empowerment and provides the National Values and Principles that bind all Kenyans in implementing public policies including those that relate to the marginalized groups. To effectively implement these constitutional provisions, it is necessary to formulate a comprehensive Gender Mean streaming Policy. This policy is aligned to the Constitution in particular the Bill of Rights and subsidiary legislations; National and County Government systems and their respective mandates, Kenya Vision 2030.

The goal of the policy is to “achieve gender equality and Empowerment in Meru county development so as to enhance participation of women and men, boys and girls, vulnerable and marginalized groups for the attainment of sustainable development”. The policy sets, legislative and administrative measures to address the existing gaps in the realization of gender equality and women’s empowerment.

To ensure that gender equality and Empowerment is integrated into sectoral policies, planning and programs, the policy identifies key thematic area in respect for the human rights, Sexual and Gender Based Violence; the girl child and the boy child, intersectional discrimination and access to justice

The policy recognizes that achievement of gender equality and Empowerment requires the concerted effort of all actors. In this respect, I call upon the National and County Governments, Constitutional Commissions and Independent Offices, Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the private sector to work together in ensuring its implementation. I urge all stakeholders to join me in ensuring the full implementation of this policy to achieve gender equality in Kenya.

**Dr. J.T. Kiambi Atheru,PhD**

**County Secretary & Head of Public Service**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This Gender Policy was prepared through consultative meetings organized by the Department of Youth, Sports, Gender and Social Development and is based on information gathered from the County Government Staff, the CECMs, the Directors, the CSOs, PWDS, youth and women group representatives. The Policy has been developed with the aim of ensuring that gender is mainstreamed into all departments of the of the County Government of Meru.

The County Government of Meru-Department of Youth Affairs, Sports, Gender and Social Development is indebted to the insurmountable insights and support offered by the Government, donor community and non-state actors in the process of policy development.

Our sincere appreciation to the CECMs, COs, Directors, MCAs and the County staff of various cadres who committed to seeing this process through. To the CSOs, FBOs, Council of elders, youth and women groups, your participation added the unique voice that is of essence to inclusive development, we thank you for the opportunity and value addition to the process.

Above all, I wish to sincerely thank His Excellency, the Governor of Meru County, Hon. Bishop Kawira Mwangaza for unrivalled leadership and interest in seeing the development and adoption of this Gender Policy become a reality.

**Monica Kagwima**

**CO - Department of Youth Affairs, Sports, Gender and Social Development**

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

# 1.1 Introduction

The Constitution of Kenya 2010, creates a platform for gender equality and nondiscrimination. It also provides an impetus for County level policy to chart a roadmap for the attainment of the constitutional provisions. Article 10 of the Constitution is on the National Values and Principles of governance. It highlights such principles as equality, equity, inclusiveness and non-discrimination. These principles provide an anchorage for gender equality. Further, Article 27 (1) provides that every person is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit; Article 27 (3) provides that women and men have the right to equal treatment including the right to equal opportunities in political, social, economic and cultural spheres. The Constitution also outlaws discrimination on any basis including, pregnancy, race, sex, marital status, health, ethnicity or social origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, dress, language or birth in Article 27.

To realize the above aspirations, the Constitution in Article 27 (6) requires the government to take legislative and other measures including affirmative action to redress disadvantages suffered by individuals and groups because of past discrimination. On public leadership, Article 27 (8) requires that not more than two thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies are of the same gender. Thus, the National and County Governments have come up with various institutions and functions to oversee compliance with these important provisions.

Within County Government of Meru, the Department of Youth Affairs, Sports, Gender and Social Development is responsible for promoting gender equality and empowerment in the county. One of its key responsibilities is to promote the development and review of gender policies and related regulations within the County. The Department has spearheaded the development of this Gender mainstreaming policy in line with the County Government vision of creating a United Prosperous Green Model County. The policy outlines County

Government of Meru’s agenda for gender equality, women empowerment and inclusivity. It further spells how these aspirations will be realised. Moreover, the policy details the overarching principles, which will be adopted and integrated into the County Government sectoral policies, planning, practices and programmes including activities undertaken by nonstate actors and the private sector. Arising from the foregoing, the policy is therefore premised on the following:

1. The values and principles set out in the Constitution of Kenya;
2. Pieces of legislation aligned to the Constitution, specifically on devolved functions;
3. The development approach envisaged in Meru County CIDP (2018-2022).
4. The applicable International and Regional Treaties and Conventions on gender equality that Kenya has ratified

# 1.2 The Problem

Despite a progressive Constitution that promotes gender equality and women’s empowerment, gender inequality remains a key issue of concern in Kenya generally. Meru County is not exempted from this reality. This is evident in employment sector, trade, representation in community and political leadership including other public spheres of decision-making, control of productive resources such as land, educational achievements and enrolments largely favouring the males. The disparities are further heightened by issues of disability, social and economic positions within and across the gender groups alongside elements ethnic marginalization especially for the minorities. Given the complexity and inter-sectionality at play, we note that these issues cannot be addressed by gender-neutral development approaches currently ongoing at the County level, but approaches (including planning and financing) based on gender and intersectional-sensitivity including deliberate efforts to address historical discrimination and their attendant root-causes. The absence of Gender Mainstreaming Policy at the devolved level has created a vacuum in planning, financing and monitoring the progress towards realisation of gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) goal at the County level. Further, this vacuum has ensured the persistence of structural inequalities in the private and public spheres, poor accountability mechanisms for GEWE goals at the county level, thus, the need for gender mainstreaming policy in Meru County.

# 1.3 Rationale for the Meru County Gender Mainstreaming Policy

The need to have gender policy follows precedence set by County Government of Meru CIDPs (2013-2017; 2018-2022, 2023-2027), the development of the county specific Gender Based Violence (GBV) policy. These documents provide a framework for people-centred development, hence, there is need for mainstreaming gender within development planning, financing and implementation. The Gender mainstreaming policy provides an avenue for equitable consideration of the special interest groups in the development process by way of planning as well as assessing the impacts of such initiatives from gender and inter-sectionality lenses.

It is within this context and the Constitutional requirements for equality and nondiscrimination that the development of this gender mainstreaming policy was necessitated. The Constitution is explicit on its gender equality provisions and aspirations. Article 2(6) obliges the Government to implement the obligations of the international treaties it has ratified. We are cognisant of the need of the County Governments to contribute to the realisation if these broader regional, international and national goals at the devolved level. As such, the development and adoption of this gender mainstreaming policy remains timely in fulfilling the aforementioned as well as leveraging equitable development in Meru County.

# 1.4 Policy Context

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

At the national level, the Government of Kenya has put in place programmatic, policy, legislative and administrative measures towards realisation of gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) including supportive institutional frameworks. The Declaration of the

United Nations (UN) Women’s Decade in 1975 led to the establishment of the Women’s Bureau as the first single most important National Machinery for the advancement of women’s rights in Kenya. The Bureau was mandated among others to: formulate policy, implement, coordinate all Government initiatives and programmes for women, collect and analyse data and information required for the design, monitoring and evaluation of policies and projects for women and support to liaise with NGO projects and women organisations.

This broad and comprehensive mandate clearly reflects the government’s commitment to the advancement of women. However, it is not the sole focus on women that leads to equitable and shared prosperity, the institutional blindness on the questions of inter-sectionality within and across the gender groups alongside other structural barriers lead to unequal participation and benefit from development. This is in addition to the deliberate consideration for the marginalised and minority groups at the national and county levels.

At the end of UN’s first decade for women in 1985, Kenya hosted the United Nations Third World Conference on Women which yielded the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies, which provided a blueprint for action linking the promotion and maintenance of peace to the eradication of violence against women throughout the broad spectrum of society. Member states were also urged to take constitutional and legal steps to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, and tailor national strategies to facilitate the participation of women in an effort to promote peace and development. Within this context, Kenya has taken steps in ratifying international treaties and regional conventions on gender equality summarised in table 1.1 below.

**Table 1.1: International legal and Policy frameworks underpinning the gender policy**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **International instruments** | |
| **Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):** | Signed in 1981 and ratified in 1984 by the Government of Kenya. Kenya abides with the reporting obligations by submitting reports to the CEDAW committee. It provides for equality and nondiscrimination. The spirit of CEDAW is amplified in Kenya’s Constitution 2010 under Article 27. Nondiscrimination is a key principle to the operations of County Government of Meru. |
| **International Conference on**  **Population and Development**  **(ICPD)** | Ratified and signed in 1994. It calls for advancing gender equality and equity and the empowerment of women, elimination of all kinds of violence against women and ensuring women’s ability to control their own fertility. Given that health is a devolved function and Counties have a responsibility to contribute to zero tolerance on GBV, ICPD remains important in underpinning this policy. |
| **ILO Conventions 100/1951; 101/1958 and 183/2000** | Stipulates the principle of equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value. It is amplified in Article 27(3) of the Constitution of Kenya which provides that women and men have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in the political, economic, cultural and social spheres. This means that the County Service Board must pay due diligence to gender and intersectionality in recruitment and promotion in the public sector. Such trends will be expected of the nonstate actors and the private sector. |
| **Beijing Platform for Action** | Reinforces the provisions of CEDAW. Kenya has put in place legal and policy frameworks in line with the BPfA. Such includes the Bill of Rights in Kenya’s Constitution addresses key issues on women empowerment, including affirmative action in policies and programmes. The Constitution also proposes the enactment of laws to enhance equality and non-discrimination |
| **Sustainable Development Goals(Goal 5)- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls** | Kenya constitution lays the foundation for the sustainable growth and socioeconomic development. The constitution has created more space in governance by codifying participation, consultation and stakeholder involvement through the bill of rights. The entitlements espoused in the bill of rights are consistent with the principle of “leave no one behind” in sustainable development. There is need to have a policy that guides the mainstreaming of gender in all policy, planning and budgeting processes that contribute to the SDG targets which includes   * . Eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere by 2030 * Reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions * Ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable have equal rights to economic resources as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of poverty, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services |
| **Regional Commitments** | |
| Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the  Rights of Women in Africa  **(Maputo Protocol)** | Endorsed by African Heads of States in 2003, and came into force in November 2005. It envisages social, economic and political participation of women in Africa. It covers a range of rights addressing women’s rights in their countries. The rights include: elimination of discrimination against women; right to dignity, right to life, integrity and security of the person; elimination of harmful practices; marriage; separation, divorce and annulment of marriage; access to justice and equal protection before the law; right to participation in political and decision-making processes; right to peace; protection of women in armed conflict; right to education and training; economic and social welfare rights; health reproductive rights, right to food security; right to adequate housing; right to positive cultural context; right to a healthy and sustainable environment; right to sustainable development; widows right to inheritance; special protection of elderly women; special protection of women with disabilities; and special protection of women in distress. These actions are not limited to the national government but remain a shared responsibility with the Counties |
| **The East African Community Treaty** | Treaty envisions the mainstreaming of gender in all endeavours and enhancing participation of women in cultural, social, political, economic and technological development. Kenya has strived to achieve the commitments spelt in this treaty through affirmative action for women in employment and providing access to higher education to more girls which has enabled them to gain more skills. The County Government of Meru in its unique way needs to create affirmative programmes and spaces for realisation of equity in the socio-economic and political spheres. |
| **Africa’s Agenda 2063** | The agenda recognizes gender inequality as a challenge in Africa that has resulted in women facing disproportionate incidences of poverty, illiteracy and disease. The county governments play significant roles in the eradication of these three maladies since transition to devolved governance in 2013. |

**1.4.1 National Policies and Legislation**

The Parliament has legislated laws to implement the Constitutional provisions for gender equality. These include the Matrimonial Property Act, 2013 which safeguards women’s property rights during and upon dissolution of the marriage; the Marriage Act, 2014 that gives effect to constitutional provisions on equality between parties to a marriage; and the Land Act and Land Registration Acts which secure women’s rights to land. Revision of the Succession Act Cap 160 is also at an advanced stage and is expected to address gender issues in succession. Similarly, the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act, 2010, the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Act, 2011 and the Sexual Offences Act, 2006 outlaw specific forms of violence against women and the girl child. Similarly, the Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2006 on Gender Equality and Development which envisaged women empowerment and mainstreaming the needs of women, men, girls and boys in all sectors of development in Kenya so that they can participate and benefit equally from development initiatives.

At the County level, this policy builds on the Meru County Integrated Development Plan, Meru County SGBV policy.

# 1.5 The Scope of Meru County Gender Mainstreaming Policy

The Policy will apply specifically and directly to all County Government Departments of Meru County. It is also expected that the principles, strategies and approaches in the policy shall also apply to the, private sector and civil society operational within Meru County. This Policy aims at achieving equality of opportunity and outcomes with respect to access to and control of county resources and services; and equality of treatment that meets the specific and distinct needs of different categories of women and men including persons with disability, children, the youth and ethnic minority. Targeted programmes and the commitment of additional resources (material, financial and human) will be required to achieve these outcomes.

Although this Policy is concerned with all categories and aspects of gender, special focus will be on the empowerment of women and members of the special interest groups currently marginalized. The policy identifies a set of factors that will act as indicators for measuring the implementation and effectiveness of the gender and development agenda. It is envisaged that the policy will create an equitable and transformed society that benefits both genders across different socio-economic categories.

Assuming strategic partnership, programming, planning and financing on the backdrop of strong accountability mechanisms are realised, the policy is expected to deliver on the much anticipated equity, inclusivity and equality on the following fronts:

1. Skilled duty bearers at the County level on planning, financing, implementing and monitoring development interventions from gender and intersectionality lenses;
2. Respect for the provision of the Bill of rights in execution of County functions within the territories of County Government of Meru;
3. There’s gradual realization of equality of enjoyment of economic, social, cultural and political rights among men and women of different intersectionality in Meru County;
4. Respect for the human rights of women, men, boys, girls including the elderly.

# CHAPTER TWO: SITUATION ANALYSIS AND KEY ISSUES

# 2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a broad sectoral overview of the critical issues which impact on county government of Meru’s progress towards gender equality and women empowerment. The situational analysis focuses on key development sectors that are thematically sequenced in reflection of the CIDP. and a range of gender-related challenges and problems have been identified in each thematic area and key issues identified.

# 2.2 Thematic Areas and Key Issues

**2.2.1 Poverty**

Poverty is defined to include not only lack of material or monetary resources but also the structural and systemic factors that impact on people’s capabilities, opportunities and agency in political, social and economic spheres.1 Poverty has taken a gender dimension in Kenya, and Meru County, where women are poorer than men according to the various Economic Surveys. This is exemplified by the fact that men by far outnumber women in various categories of basic human development indicators as indicated by UNICEF (2016).

It is underscored that poverty is a product of multifactorial issues commonly bundled as systemic and structural. Given the inherent inequalities between men and women especially on socio-economic and political spheres, poverty makes it difficult for women to realize their rights in areas such as politics, decision- making, education, health, the economy and access to justice even when these are provided for in the law including in the development plans.

**Key issues:**

1. Implementing gender-responsive poverty eradication initiatives;
2. Equitable representation of women and men in key development management committees of the County Development Funds;
3. Capacity building women and special interest groups targeted for specific Affirmative Action
4. Eradicating cultural practices that limit women’s and girls’ access to resources and assets.

**2.2.2 Access to Labour and the Economy**

Labour force comprises of the population aged between 15 and 64 years. According to Meru County CIDP 2018-2022, the county has a total labour force of 915,083 persons comprising 55.9 per cent of the total population. This labour force comprises of 462,700 females and 452,383males. This portrays a good image of a light burden on the workforce as every person works for approximately one dependant. The opportunities to engage those willing to work are curtailed by low investment in job creation ventures and lack of resources to start up small businesses as a form of self-employment. Child labour is high at 35 per cent and is mostly engaged in the agriculture sector especially in *Miraa* production and supply chain system. This calls for special protection measures for these children. Table 1.2 below summarises the gender balance in the County service.

**Table 1.2: County Service profile 2023**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Position** | **Total** | **Gender** | | **% Female** |
| **M** | **F** |
| **CAC (Chairperson)** | 18 | 15 | 3 | 16.6 |
| **CAC (Vice Chairs)** | 18 | 14 | 4 | 22.2 |
| **County Assembly Service Board** | 6 | 5 | 1 | 16.6 |

**Source: Meru County Government, 2023**

**Key issues:**

1. Gender inequalities in employment with a low concentration of women in high ranking decision making positions;
2. The largest segment of Meru population is the youth, majority of whom remain unemployed;
3. Lack of capital to facilitate small business start-ups to create new employment platforms for the youth and women who are largely unemployed;

c) High child labour prevalence in the county especially in the *miraa* value chain

**2.2.3 Access to Education**

Education is a fundamental right under Article 43 of the Constitution. Articles 53, 54 and 55 of the Constitution emphasize the primacy of the right to education for the youth, persons with disabilities and children. Article 56 emphasizes the need for affirmative action for marginalized groups such as women, girl-child and marginalized communities. As per the CIDP (2018-2022), the county is made up of 15 education divisions and zones with inadequate staffing for both teachers and education officers. At the ECDE level, the total number of ECDE teachers is 1,698 making the teacher child ratio to be 1:50 which is higher than the recommended ratio of 1:25. Further, whereas the County boasts of 29 public Vocational Training Centres (VTCs), the instructor trainee ratio is 1: 24 which is higher than the recommended ratio of 1:10. The institutions have insufficient instructors, tools and equipment, inadequate infrastructure leading to low transition, retention and completion rates.

**Key Issues:**

1. Masculine nature of TIVET courses and enrolment across the county
2. Limited funding for Early Childhood Development and Education Centres (ECDE) alongside predominance of the sector by females

e) Socio-cultural practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), defilement; unwanted pregnancies and child marriages hamper girls’ education;

**2.2.4 Access to Health Care**

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

**Key Issues:**

1. Maternal mortality remains high in the County, but has shown a decline from 488 deaths per 100,000 live births;
2. Low number of medical personnel to meet the growing demand of healthcare at the county level.
3. The growing burden of preventable disease among women such as Tuberculosis (TB), HIV, Malaria

1. Out-dated cultural practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM/C), which exacerbate discriminatory practices against women and girls.
2. There is a growing concern on Maternal Mental Health which is least attended to at both the County and National Level

**2.2.5 Land and Agriculture**

Land is critical to the economic, social and cultural development of Kenya. It is a key factor of production and lack of access to land affects the enjoyment of other rights. Culture and traditions continue to support male inheritance of family land while the implementation of gender sensitive family laws is slow. Moreover, women are not equitably represented in institutions that deal with land and their rights under communal ownership are not defined making it easy for men to dispose of family land without consulting women. Few women have land registered in their names.3

Without secure rights to land, women’s participation in and benefit from land uses such as agriculture is inhibited. Yet, women provide up to 75% of agricultural labour. They produce food crops for domestic consumption and provide labour for commercial farming where they are paid a pittance. Women also have less access to modern farming technology significant in climate smart agriculture response. The situation is compounded by the delineation of agriculture as a function of the county government necessitating coordination and cooperation between the national and county governments through the Intergovernmental Relations Act, 2012.

**Key issues:**

1. Lack of secure land rights for women affect their effective participation in and benefit from agriculture through legislation;
2. Majority of ancestral land remain under the control of men limiting women and youth’s capacity to exploit them for commercial value;
3. Overdependence on Kaguru Agricultural Training College to provide the necessary extension services in agricultural mechanization.

**2.2.6 Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)**

Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) is based on socially ascribed gender differences between men and women which define power relations between men and women regarding makes decisions and who owns resources. SGBV affects women; girls, men and boys, however, national statistics indicate that women and girls are disproportionately affected. All forms of SGBV are a major cause of mental health problems to the respective survivors.

**Key issues:**

1. Poor implementation of Sexual Offenses Act (SOA)
2. Persistence of customary practices on land ownership, FGM and Masculine leadership which discriminate against women and girls.
3. Various initiatives have been taken to deal with Sexual and Gender Based Violence in the county including the development of the SGBV policy;
4. Increased cases of defilement and teenage pregnancies in the county
5. Encourage use of Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms for the prevention of

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence such as the Njuri Ncheke Council of elders

**2.2.7 Tourism**

The County has 39 profiled and mapped operational and potential tourist attractions in the county with Meru National park being the major tourist centre. The Lewa Downs ranch which is privately owned attracts tourists and competitive sports like the cross country, rhino charge and marathon. The county also has Mt. Kenya which is a major tourist destination. The diverse cultures and heritage among the Meru community are another form of tourist attraction such as conservation of traditional worship places by the ‘Njuri Ncheke’ elders. These sites have sustained attraction of adventure tourists and competitive sports like the rhino charge and the Safaricom marathon. These sites offer additional activities mountain climbing, canopy walks, camping, trekking, and diving at waterfalls, bird watching and safari drives.

**Key issues:**

1. Engage the youth, women and persons with disability in the county tourism value chain as business operators and direct service providers;
2. Create county-tourism trust fund to be re-invested in community development and conservation efforts;
3. Partner with the hotel and other tour site developers to tap into local-market sourcing of goods and services including the hotel labour.

**2.2.8 Trade, industry and co-operatives**

The County has continued to promote growth of trade through provision of market facilities. In each and every sub county headquarters there is a market that facilitates wholesale and retail trade. Notable markets include; Gakoromone Market, Makutano fresh Market, Nkubu Fresh Produce Market, Maua Cereals and Fruits Market, Mutuati Fresh produce market, Athiru Ruujine Market, Nchiru Market, Mikinduri Cereals and Livestock Market, Katheri Market, Kangeta Market, Kiguchwa Market among others. The county has been facilitating producer business groups and SMEs in promoting their products through participation in Trade exhibitions and trade fairs outside the County. The County has continued to support the growth of MSMEs through implementation of policy framework, provision of affordable finance, and support in access of tools and equipment, provision of market facilities and facilitation in creation of market linkages. MSMEs within the County have continued to benefit with the capacity buildings programs offered by the Department of Trade, Tourism and Cooperatives.

**Key issues:**

1. Gender neutral approach to the allocation of market spaces perpetuating incidences of structural inequalities;
2. Gender neutral selection and engagement with the producer business groups and SMEs in the County;
3. Lack of gender and intersectional-sensitive tracking tools on the effects of SMEs support across the youth, women and persons with disability;

**2.2.9 Intersectional Discrimination**

Multiple identities exist within the broad gender categories. There are women who are young, old, living with disability and members of marginalized communities. The gender identity in these circumstances intersects with other inequalities amplifying the impact on the woman. This raises the intra-categorical complexity of inter-sectionality to demonstrate the inadequacy of programmatic interventions for these target groups. Article 27 (4) of the Constitution lists grounds for legal action on discrimination on the basis of race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, health status, ethnic or social origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, dress, language or birth.

Gender intersects with each of these inequalities creating layers of discrimination for women and girls which may be more overwhelming than for men because of women’s limited access to opportunities, agency and capacity to negotiate and move between different intersections as the situation demands.

**Key issues:**

1. Inadequate programmatic interventions to address intersectional discrimination at the county level;
2. Lack of affirmative funds at the county level to address the plight of special interest groups.

**2.2.10. Institutional Mechanisms for the advancement of Gender Equality and Empowerment of**

**Women**

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

**Key issues**

1. Limited financial and human resource commitment;
2. Lack of /limited use of gender accountability tools;
3. Poor linkages across different departments and sectors on realization of gender agenda at the county level.

**2.2.11 Climate change and environmental conservation**

Climate change has a greater impact on populations that are most reliant on natural resources for their livelihoods and/or who have the least capacity to respond to natural hazards, such as droughts, landslides, floods and hurricanes. Deforestation poses a serious challenge which is the loss or reduction of tree cover and forests. Most of the public hills have been demarcated and allotment done to individuals, this has posed challenges making conservation planning slow or impossible. Within the grazing areas, there has been reported cases of invasive species colonizing the area. The invasive species have colonized the grazing lands due to their unpalatability.

Women commonly face higher risks and greater burdens from the impacts of climate change in situations of poverty, and the majority of the world’s poor are women. Women’s unequal participation in decision-making processes and labour markets compound inequalities and often prevent women from fully contributing to climate-related planning, policy-making and implementation.

1. Limited gender and sex-disaggregated data on climate change effects;
2. Limited use of local knowledge of men and women in climate response;
3. Limited engagement of women and men equally in in the development and implementation of County climate policies and regulations.

# CHAPTER THREE: POLICY GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

# 3.1 Introduction

The policy framework is geared towards ensuring gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE). These elements of empowerment span the social, economic, political and cultural spheres as envisaged in the Constitution. The development of this policy national instruments for GEWE that emphasize gender mainstreaming as the key strategy for the achieving development. Additionally, and contextually, the Meru County CIDP, MTP III and Meru County Vision 2040 form the basis for the preparation of sectoral annual work plans and budgets. Other considerations include the situation analysis, stakeholder engagements and lessons learnt from the CIDPs for Meru County.

# 3.2 Policy Goal

The overall goal of this policy is to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women by creating equitable society and development environment for Meru County.

# 3.3 Objectives

Objectives of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy are:

1. To provide guidance on the realisation of the Constitutional provisions on gender equality and women’s empowerment at the County level;
2. To mainstream Gender in County development planning as well as resource allocation;
3. To promote rights-based approach in achieving the gender equality goals at the County level
4. To define institutional framework and performance indicators for effective tracking, monitoring, evaluation and reporting implementation of gender equality and Empowerment in Meru County.

# 3.4 Guiding Principles

In cognisance of inter-sectionality and the differences between men and women within Meru County, this policy is guided by the following principles:

1. Equality, equity and non-discrimination;
2. Recognition of differences, diversities and inequalities among women and men in Meru

County;

1. The inseparability of public and private spheres of life;
2. Public participation, consultation and co-operation;
3. Protection, inclusion and integration of the marginalized and special interest groups.

# 3.5 Policy Approach

The following approaches will be used in realizing the objectives of this Policy:

1. Gender mainstreaming and integration in all planned interventions in different departments and sectors;
2. Work with gender champions to create awareness around Sexual and Gender Based

Violence;

1. Undertake gender responsive budgeting to ensure allocation of funds to gender related activities;
2. Provide equal opportunities for men and women in employment especially management positions. This includes fair remunerations for women and men in same positions of employment;
3. Undertake financial literacy to enhance women, youth and persons with disability economic empowerment;
4. Provide conducive work environment for those with disabilities e.g., provision of Braille services for visually impaired, sign language interpreters and ramps at the County offices; g) Engaging men including the informal community leadership as key stakeholders in addressing gender equality issues;

h) Generating data and indicators that are disaggregated by sex, age and disability including other special interest groups within the County’s operations.

# 3.6 Policy Outcomes

The anticipated outcome of this policy include but not limited to:

1. Equality and economic empowerment for men, women, youth and persons with disability in Meru County;
2. Diversity and inter-sectionality become grounds for evaluating inclusivity in Meru county operations and programming;
3. Women, youth, persons with disability have equality of opportunity to participate in decision making and to contribute to the political, social, economic and cultural development agenda of Meru County;
4. Sexual and Gender based Violence will abate and men, women, boys and girls will live with dignity.

# CHAPTER FOUR: POLICY PRIORITY ACTIONS

# 4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the policy priority areas. Policy actions taken on each priority area are expected to guide County gender mainstreaming efforts and ultimately lead to gender equality and women empowerment. Commitment to gender equality requires that the views, needs, interests and rights of women, girls, men and boys and those of the special interest groups, shape the development agenda to ensure that all participate in and benefit equally for development.

This chapter therefore outlines the specific policy priority areas and the policy actions and their respective commitments. To achieve the policy objectives, an action plan will be developed separately specifying key result areas and the implementing institutions and indicative budgets assigned.

# 4.2 Poverty eradication

**Empower women and men to have access to and control over economic opportunities and resources.**

**Policy Actions**

1. Increase and strengthen access to credit opportunities for women, youth and persons with disability through affirmative action initiatives;
2. Review and enforce implementation of appropriate social protection systems and measures to ensure that all women and men, girls and boys in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services;
3. Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for the country, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions; and,
4. Enhance and intensively promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, economic or other status.

# 4.3 Labour and the Economy

**Eliminate discrimination in access to employment, promotion and training including equal remuneration to enhance income security for men and women**.

**Policy Actions**

1. Enhance compliance to the “not more than two thirds‟ gender principle in recruitment, appointment and promotion of women and men in all spheres for greater inclusion and visibility in the County;
2. Establish a database on employment records of women and men in formal and informal sectors to track, evaluate and improve employment conditions for all particularly women;
3. Review skills development programmes and projects and target them at increasing decent employment for all particularly women;
4. Sensitisation on Affirmative Action Funds as means of accessing funds to start income generating activities;
5. Build capacities of men and women’s entrepreneurial skills linked with start-up capital;
6. Undertake the needs and gaps assessment among the youth, women and persons with disability and continuously capacity build according to a person’s training needs.

# 4.4 Access to Health Care

**Facilitate** **affordable, accessible, acceptable and quality health care for women and men, girls and boys.**

**Policy Actions**

1. Strengthen the universal healthcare insurance scheme and enhance its coverage to provide comprehensive and integrated preventive, curative and rehabilitative health services for all;
2. Enforce targeted implementation of existing health and nutrition programmes to benef it vulnerable children in ECDE centres;
3. Free clinic and delivery services for expectant mothers;
4. Provide the supplements to boost the immunity of the expectant mothers’ pre- and postnatal care;
5. Dissemination of information on child care for the mothers who have given birth; and,
6. Regularly review programmes targeted at women and girls (water, sanitation and hygiene - WASH) and recommend improvements.

# 4.5 Land and Agriculture

**Implement measures to overcome barriers inhibiting women’s access to and control of productive resources**

**Policy Actions**

1. Enhance extension services and avail agricultural information and appropriate technologies to particularly benefit vulnerable women, youth and ethnic minorities in agricultural practices;
2. Facilitate and enhance adoption of engendered climate processes, smart inputs and out markets, to ensure that agricultural and other livelihood practices are climate resilient;
3. Enhance land ownership by women and youth which they can use as security in accessing credit facilities from financial institutions; and,
4. Enhance women’s, youth’s and persons with disabilities’ participation in fisheries sector.

# 4.6 Governance, Power and Decision-Making

**Ensure** **equitable and meaningful participation and representation of women and men in governance, power and decision-making positions.**

**Policy Actions**

1. Sensitisation of the community on the equal opportunities given to women, youth and persons with disability in political and governance platforms to enable people in the community to support a woman’s political/ leadership aspirations;
2. Support effective collaboration of state and non-state actors to build the capacity of women, youth and persons with disability to participate and engage in competitive politics, leadership and governance; and,
3. Support and encourage active and meaningful participation of women, youth and persons with disability in political and decision-making processes from the grassroots level.

# 4.7 Tourism

Establish strategic partnership with the private developers in the tourism industry to engage the youth, women and persons with disability in the tourism value chain.

**Policy actions**

1. Support local TVETs in produce sufficient human resource among the young men and women to work in the hotel and related tourism sectors;
2. Create County-level tourism fund to benefit the conservation of the tourism site and directly engage members of the special interest groups in executing this mandate;
3. Support (by way of training and enhanced access to finance) the engagement of youth, women and persons with disability businesses in the tourism value chain.

# 4.8 Trade, industry and co-operatives

**Continuously work with the youth, women and persons with disability to tap into the county government support in the trade sector and benefit equitably from such engagement.**

**Policy actions**

1. Institute gender and inter-sectionality sensitive approach in market analysis, construction and loaning for start-ups to ensure equitable participation for women, youth and persons with disability;
2. Establish gender lens in the tracking of selection and business engagement with producer business groups including financing regimes.

# 4.9 Intersectional Discrimination

This is discrimination that takes place on the basis of several personal grounds or characteristics/identities, which operate and interact with each other at the same time in such a way as to be inseparable. There is need to put in place measures to ensure that gender is considered in dealing with other forms of inequalities including those touching on the ethnically marginalised, elderly men and women within Meru County.

**Policy Actions**

1. Support evidence-based generation of data on the extent, effects and implications of different inequalities presented by intersectional and multiple discrimination;
2. Ensure compliance with constitutional and legal provisions against discrimination; and,
3. Develop targeted measures to address intersectional and multiple inequalities.

# 4.10 Sexual and Gender based Violence

**Eliminate sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against women and men, girls and boys in both public and private spheres**.

**Policy Actions**

1. Ensure enforcement of SGBV related policies;
2. Promote and establish safe spaces and shelters for SGBV survivors at county level;
3. Promote advocacy and education programmes with a view to changing attitudes and culture that contributes to the acceptance and tolerance of SGBV;
4. Develop and strengthen the capacity of relevant institutions to undertake effective and timely investigations and prosecution of SGBV related offences;
5. Assist in the preservation of evidence in cases of rape, defilement and molestation to build a strong case against the perpetrator;
6. Undertake research to identify underlying and systemic causes of SGBV and provide appropriate response measures for mitigation; and,
7. Promote male involvement in managing and responding to SGBV.

# 4.11 The Girl Child and the Boy Child

**Enhance the respect and promotion of children’s rights for girls and boys.**

**Policy Actions**

1. Eliminate all forms of discrimination, negative attitudes and practices that prejudice the girl child and the boy child;
2. Support women and men to work with children and youth to break down persistent gender stereotypes, taking into account the rights of the child and the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents;
3. Embracing co-curricular activities where the skills and talents are identified at a young age and sharpened. This will help the boys and girls know that one can not only succeed by being employed but also through rightfully harnessing their talents and skills; and,
4. Support appropriate age sex education for boys and girls with parental involvement and emphasize on their respective responsibilities regarding their sexuality and fertility.

# 4.12 Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

**Strengthen the County Gender Department to advance gender equality in all sectors in the county.**

**Policy Actions**

1. Support the definition of the mandate and functional responsibilities of different actors at the county to avoid duplication, which can lead to competition between institutions and gaps in interventions hampering the realisation of gender equality;
2. Ensure gender-sensitive budgetary allocation, planning and monitoring to ensure sustained realisation of gender equality and women empowerment goals;
3. Encourage collaboration with and between civil society groups supportive of gender equality so as to effectively address any gaps in the implementation of gender equality agenda.

# CHAPTER FIVE: INSTITUTIONAL AND IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

# 5.1 Introduction

The implementation of the policy takes a multi-sectoral approach. Department of Youth Affairs, Sports, Gender and Social Developmentwill take the leading role of coordinating all the other players in the county so as to enhance harmony and avoid duplication. Along with the policy, an action Plan for implementing the policy will be developed in collaboration with key stakeholders. The action plan will provide clear roles and responsibilities as well as targets and timelines for each actor, among other key requirements.

# 5.2 Implementation Framework

Different aspects of the policy will be implemented by various actors within the county government. Development partners will be engaged at various levels to support implementation of the policy. The table below specifies some of the key institutions identified in the different sectors and their specific the roles;

**5.2. 1 The Establishment of a Humanitarian Assistance Programme**

A large component of this policy will be implemented under the Meru Humanitarian Assistance Program. The program seeks to promote VMGs and ensure implementation of affirmative action measures enshrined under Article 21 of the Constitution of Kenya. The program will be managed by a board under the patronage of the Governor. The Board will be appointed by the Governor to carry out the following duties:

1. Develop a strategy that will promote women, Youth, PWDs, Widows, OVCs, Vulnerable, marginalised and minority empowerment in Meru County.
2. Prepare a budget for the Meru Humanitarian Assistance program.
3. Oversee implementation of program activities in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.
4. Prepare a comprehensive work plan for the program.
5. Provide supervisory role for the execution and implementation of the program.
6. Receive and review reports on the progress of the program.
7. Source and reach out to stakeholders and partners to support the program.

**5.2.2 The Establishment of a Board of Directors**

The Humanitarian Assistance Programme will be managed by a Board under the patronage of the County First lady / Gentleman and the board will be appointed by the Governor.

**Table 2.1: Matrix of actors and their respective roles**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Implementing Organ** | **Roles and Responsibilities** |
| Department of Youth Affairs,  Sports, Gender and Social  Development | Develop Strategic Action Plan and establishing relevant structures for the implementation of the policy;  Develop gender and inter-sectionality sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and establish targets and guidelines for achievement of desired results;  Coordinate regular collection of gender and sex disaggregated data on all key success factors, its synthesis, interpretation and dissemination;  Mobilize resources and skills necessary for the successful implementation of this policy;  Provide technical guidance and supporting all implementing partners and gender focal points across all sectors |
| County Department of Finance  (County Treasury) | Ensuring Treasury support towards implementation of the Gender Policy;  Work with GTWG in development of Gender-responsive budget for the County;  Track gender-responsive financing activities in the County departments. |
| Meru County Assembly | Facilitate the effective implementation of the Gender policy by passing relevant county bills required to achieve gender justice;  Provide legislators’ forum for discussion on matters affecting women in the county;  Take a leading role in promoting the effective involvement and participation of women in all political spheres;  Sensitize all County Assembly Members to the principles of gender equality in the County; |
| Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Working Group | County research on the status of SGBV and disseminate findings to stakeholders;  Coordinate the provision of services for SGBV among stakeholders;  Monitor the implementation of SGBV policy outcomes;  Report regularly to the relevant Department. |
| Women and Community Men’s Forums | Provide platforms for discussions, lobbying and advocacy;  Undertake Monitoring and evaluation of the targeted programs and projects. |
| Private Sector | Incorporate gender policy priorities in private sector policy, legislation and practice;  Implement the monitoring and evaluation framework in the private sector in line with the gender policy priorities;  Ensure that gender disparities are addressed through equity in employment, access to resources and decision making;  Develop and implementing corporate social responsibility programmes designed to contribute to the policy objectives |
| Development Partner • | Collaborate with the Department of Gender and relevant Ministries, civil society and private sector on matters of gender mainstreaming in development programming;  Support some of the budgetary requirements for the implementation of the national gender policy and other strategies for gender equality;  Provide technical support towards implementing gender policy priorities |

# 5.3 Resource Mobilization

The successful implementation of this policy will require adequate financial, human and technical resources to ensure effective and efficient implementation for desired policy outcomes. Funding will be sought from the County Treasury driven by the annual budgetary provisions. Additional support will be sought from development partners and Non-State Actors. The strategies include:

1. Budgetary allocation from the County Treasury;
2. Partnerships through bilateral agreements and support by other international development and grants agencies;
3. Partnerships with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Meru County;
4. Partnerships with Faith based Organisations, Civil society Organisations, private sector institutions and other funding agencies for specific projects; and,
5. Fundraising activities.

# CHAPTER SIX: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

# 6.1 Introduction

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) shall be an essential strategy in the implementation of the Meru County Gender Mainstreaming Policy. This will ensure that results frameworks on each policy action detailing outputs, outcomes, impacts and key actors shall be developed to facilitate annual plans and development planning processes in all sector at all levels. The M&E processes will follow a strategic implementation plan that will be put in place for each component of the policy commitments. The M&E strategy will involve quarterly and annual updates.

# 6.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

**Establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure the policy objectives are monitored, tracked and evaluated Policy Actions**

1. Task the Gender Technical Working Group to monitor and report on the policy implementation annually;
2. Develop and implement monitoring and evaluation tools and performance indicators that are integrated in the annual plans and development planning processes at the two levels of

Government; and,

1. Develop and institutionalise tools for effective monitoring and evaluation.

The key monitoring activities will consist of:

* Quarterly review meetings to measure the performance indicators
* Collection of Gender, sex and age disaggregated data on SGBV cases and disability reported in health facilities, police stations, etc.
* Develop and disseminate annual report to the county assembly through the County Executive officer in charge of Gender and social Development.
* Coordinate partner monitoring visits to measure progress of output and measure indicators
* Identify best practices as informed by programmatic and advocacy mechanisms
* Mid and End Term reviews of the policy.
* Develop framework for measuring milestones.

# 6.3 Research and Documentation

**Enhance the collection, collation and analysis of gender disaggregated data to inform policies, planning and decision making Policy Actions**

Monitoring and evaluation components aiming at:

1. Researching issues of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment at the County level;
2. Establish a gender management database to be updated regularly and include disaggregated data as a minimum standard;
3. Develop and implement County Guidelines on Collection, Collation and Analysis of Sex

Disaggregated Data;

1. Strengthen capacity to the develop and use of the County Government guidelines on collection, collation and analysis of sex disaggregated data;
2. Assessing all programmes to ascertain whether they meet the policy targets and aspirations of GEWE;
3. Evaluating whether implemented programs have had positive impacts on target beneficiaries.

# 6.4 Reporting

**Policy Action**

1. Produce quarterly and annual progress reports in a consultative manner;
2. Facilitate timely reporting, decision making and direction on progress of implementation in

Meru County; and,

1. Initiate and harmonize of reporting on gender equality.

# 6.5 Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed after every five years or any such other period as may be determined by the Department of Youth Affairs, Sports, Gender and Social development.

# 6.6 Timeframe of the Gender Policy

The life span of this County Gender Mainstreaming Policy is five (5) years. Within the first six months following the approval of Policy, the Department Youth Affairs, Sports, Gender and Social development and the Gender Working Group in the county will develop a detailed Gender Policy Implementation Strategy and Action Plan and a Monitoring and Evaluation

Framework. The Department of Youth Affairs, Sports, Gender and Social development and its implementing partners will conduct a midterm review in 2025 and an end of term review in 2027.

**ANNEXES**

# Annex 1: Policy implementation framework

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objectives** | **Policy action** | **Indicators** | **Responsible** | **Time**  **in years**  **(3)** |
| Provide  guidance on implementation and realisation of the  Constitutional provisions on gender equality and empowerment | Enact legislation at the County level to operationalise this policy;    Develop and gazette the regulations related to GEWE, social inclusion and nondiscrimination at the  County level;    Amend the existing finance Act to accommodate gender financing agenda | No. of laws enacted at the county level;      Gazetted  GEWE  regulations in  Meru County;    Legislation amendments passed in this respect. | County Assembly of Meru    Department of Youth Affairs, Sports, Gender, and Social  Development and relevant  Departments at the County  County Treasury, Legal Office and County Assembly of Meru |  |
| Mainstream  Gender in  County development planning as well as resource allocation; | Develop guidelines for mainstreaming gender in all the County Departments and Development planning;    Creation of multisectoral working group to streamline the implementation of policy recommendation  Develop Annual  Gender Action plans to allow for tracking of the implementation process    Financial allocation on the basis of gender equitable needs for the projects | Meru County-  specific guidelines for mainstreaming gender into all  the sectors and departments;    No. of functional inter-sectoral working groups in Meru County;    Operationalised gender action plans with clear monitoring indicators    Gender responsive budget lines | Department of Youth Affairs, Sports, Gender and Social  Development and relevant departments at the  County      County Treasury |  |

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| Promote the County aspired rights-based approach in achieving the gender equality goals at the County level, | Develop Gender  Action Plans for Meru  County    Implement the County established standards practices for gender mainstreaming across  the sectors;  Establish the resource envelop (human and financial envelop) for gender mainstreaming at the County level;  Work with the CSOs in raising communitylevel awareness on  GEWE objectives; | No. of Gender Actions Plans    Extent to which guidelines are operationalized at the county    % of County resources to realisation of  GEWE goals  No. of  community awareness meetings  across the county/ | Intergovernmental Gender technical sector working  groups              CSOs, Council of  Elders |  |

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| Define institutional  framework and performance indicators for effective tracking, monitoring, | Established inter-  agency gender working group to review regulations and legislations on  GEWE in Meru  County | Gender policy working group established and functional | Department of Youth Affairs, Sports, Gender and Social  Development and relevant departments at the  County |  |

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| evaluation and reporting implementation of gender equality and women empowerment at the county level. | Establish monitoring mechanisms on the progress on GEWE and social inclusion implementation    Establish specific gender and inter-  sectionality indicators to track the  implementation process    Inter-sectoral  mechanisms for reporting sectorspecific gender  implementation process | No. of  monitoring tools developed and operationalised |  |  |

# Annex 2: Human Resource Practical Guide

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| **PRACTICAL WAYS TO HAVE A BALANCED TEAM OF WOMEN, GIRLS,**  **BOYS AND MEN** | |
| 1. | Widely distribute vacancy announcements to attract a diverse pool of applicants |
| 2. | Rather than using technical competencies and educational background as the primary filter in screenings and interviews, general life & work experiences-related competencies are valued too |
| 3. | Where women or men are underrepresented, the vacancy announcement could say  “qualified women/men are encouraged to apply |
| 4. | Include both women and men on interview panels, i.e. the HR representative can be switched easily depending on whether a male/female is needed to balance the panel |
| 5. | Evaluate all candidates against the same criteria |
| 6. | Do not assume that some jobs are too difficult or dangerous for women |
| 7. | Consider alternative working arrangements to overcome cultural limitations for employment of women, staff with disabilities, staff with minimal education etc. |
| 8. | Provide training on gender and cultural diversity to all staff. |
| 9. | Offer separate facilities (toilets, sleeping quarters) for women and men |
| 10 | Keep all staffing data disaggregated by sex for easy monitoring |
| 11 | Promote generous family friendly policies i.e. provide childcare to staff, where possible |
| 12 | Gender-sensitive job descriptions (JDs) - A standard criterion for JDs, which would be universal and standard for ALL job descriptions can be very general, e.g. ' proven experience and understanding of gender-sensitive work |
| 13 | Gender-sensitive interview questions - Interview questions could be simply focusing on people’s experience adapted to the particular position |

# Annex 3: Applying a Gender Lens to Develop an M&E Plan

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| **M&E Plan**  **Component** | **Gender Lens Application** |
| **Programme Overview, Description** | |
| Problem Statement | Describe norms and known gender differentials that influence, affect, or relate to the specific outcomes addressed at the programme and activity levels. |
| Conceptual Framework,  Theory of Change | Demonstrate the effect and influence resulting from addressing gender norms and gender differentials on the county’s strategic objectives |
| Goals and Objectives | List programme goals and objectives and clearly state expected results from integrating gender in the programme or addressing gender differentials or norms. Goals and objectives should be specific, measurable, appropriate, realistic, and time-based. |
| Description of  Interventions | Describe how gender norms or known gender differentials in knowledge will be addressed in programme strategies and interventions. |
| **Monitoring Plan** | |
| Performance Indicators | Include data disaggregation by sex and age on indicator reference sheets.  List gender performance indicators relevant to the programme. |
| Data Sources and  Reporting systems | Identify data sources for gender indicators, considering the requirements for data disaggregated by sex and age.  Set up data reporting systems to collect information for gender indicators and data disaggregated by sex and age. |
| Data Quality Checks and Audits | Ensure that data quality checks and audits include a review of gender indicators and data disaggregation by sex and age. |
| Data Analysis | Ensure that the data analysis plan explains the process for gender data analysis |
| Data Use and  Dissemination Plan | Identify stakeholders, including key gender stakeholders, in the data use and dissemination plan.  Identify recipients of shared programme data  Explain how identified stakeholders will use gender data. Describe the plan to disseminate gender data to stakeholders over the life of the programme. |
| **Evaluation Plan** | |
| Evaluation Questions | Ensure that gender-specific questions are included in the comprehensive list of evaluation Questions |
| Planned Evaluations | | List different planned programme evaluations and how gender will be incorporated or gender measures will be assessed in evaluations. |
| Sharing and  Disseminating  Evaluation Results | | Ensure that the evaluation dissemination plan identifies stakeholders, including key gender stakeholders, who will receive the evaluation findings and how the findings will be used (for example, to inform policy and programme design). |
| **M&E Plan Implementation** | | |
| Detailed  Implementation Plan | | Include a description of gender-specific data collection, compilation, analysis, reporting, use and dissemination tasks; a timeline for the tasks; the person(s) responsible; and associated costs. |
| Roles and  Responsibilities | | Identify key personnel and focal points who will collect, compile, analyse, report, use, and disseminate gender data. |