



YOUNG WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE



A Review of Women's Participation in Political Leadership.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|--|
| AYT | Africa Youth Trust |
| CBO | Community Based Organization |
| CDF | Constituency Development Fund |
| CMD | Centre for Multiparty Democracy |
| CPM | The Communist Party of India |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women |
| GGP | Gender and Governance programme |
| LATF | Local Authority Trust Fund |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| REYA | Ruiru East Youth Agenda |
| RPF | The Rwandan Patriotic Front |
| UN | United Nations |
| UPDK | United Disabeld Persons of Kenya |
| UNIFEM | United Nations Fund For Women(now Un Women) |
| USAID | United States Agency For International Development |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commisioner For Refugees |
| YLD | Youth Led Development |



Foreword



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Young women have for a long time been excluded from decision-making processes - from the basic to the highest levels of policy making. Additionally, even with calls for young people to engage in governance structures, it is young men who still dominate and take up opportunities that result from such lobbying. Evidence indicates that there very few young women with the power to make decisions at local governance structures, compared to young men. Further, engagement is weak as structured consultative processes often fail to engage women sufficiently.

Africa Youth Trust recognises that the quality of governance is dependent on participation and representation of both men and women. It is with this recognition that AYT begun implementing the Young Women in Governance project in January 2011. The project sought to engage young women

in leadership, governance and development processes by involving them in defining policy and influencing the institutions that produce them.

This pilot project targeted young women in Kiambu, Machakos and Nairobi counties. As the first phase of this project comes to an end, AYT found it necessary to explore and document the contributions the project has made towards enhancing leadership among the young women leaders in the three counties. The publication documents stories of young women engaged during this project, sharing their successes as well as some of the challenges they face as young women trying to penetrate the political and governance structures in Kenya.

The publication also recognises that there have been many women who have worked hard to influence policy and legislation, individually, within parliament, through organisations lobbying for change, or by means of pressure groups advocating for positive change and inclusion of women in decision-making processes. By sharing their stories in this publication, it is our hope that their experiences will inspire other young women seeking to participate more actively in political and governance processes.

We look forward to a future where young women will be adequately represented in decision-making positions, a future where young women are actively involved in defining their interests; and ultimately a future where young women's needs will be taken into account in policy formulation and implementation.

|| Acknowledgement

AYT expresses its deep and sincere gratitude to all the people and organisations who participated in the development and production of this publication.

We are sincerely thankful to UN Women for their partnership and invaluable support for the Young Women in Governance Project. We offer our sincere gratitude to the seasoned women leaders who have shared their candid experiences with the hope of inspiring young women to take their rightful place in the leadership of this country.

We acknowledge the efforts of the AYT team led by the Executive Director, Nahum Okwiya; AYT Project team, Stella Agara, Susan Njambi, Naitore Gituma, Melissa Mawanda, Jessica Njui, Doreen Machogu and Iddah Tsumah. We also appreciate the work done by the research, editorial and design team from Topline Communications/Crossover Media who worked with the AYT team to publish this report.

Last but not least, we wish to thank the Young Women in Governance alumni. We salute their resilience, passion and determination to be part of a generation that will rise up and make a difference in their communities and in the nation.



Introduction

AYT is an independent, non-partisan youth development and advocacy organization. Established in 2005, AYT exists to harness the productive energies of youth towards peace, equity and prosperity within and across communities in Africa. AYT was created specifically to spearhead a Youth Led Development model in Kenya with a view for replication in other African countries.

Youth Led Development is about young people making a living and future for themselves and their communities and it involves economic and social investments such as business start-ups and community improvement projects, devised and managed by young people. YLD projects involve adult mentors with skills in respective areas being addressed, working with and mentoring the young people.

AYT has in its endeavours and networking realized that there is inadequate representation of young women even among the youth led initiatives. This is what informed the AYT partnership with UN Women in the third phase of Gender and Governance Programme focusing on Young Women in Governance.

GGP III seeks to build the balance of gender in parliament and other levels of governance including the county level, constituency level and ward level through awareness creation on the provisions stated in the constitution of Kenya, 2010 and capacity building initiatives for emerging leaders.

Previous observations and research have shown that lack of

information, a patriarchal system of leadership, as well as rigid governance systems create great barriers for women to participate in leadership and decision making processes. This leads to poor representation of women at all levels of governance and decision making.

With myriads of organizations lobbying for effective implementation of the Constitution of Kenya promulgated in the year 2010, and specifically the gains for women in the Constitution, women now have a platform. While there are still numerous barriers that hinder young women's participation in governance, the constitution provides young women



two platforms for participation. First, as youth and secondly as women. AYT recognizes that the quality of governance is dependent on equal participation and representation of all groups. However, young women are often excluded from decision-making - from the basic to the highest levels of policy making. Additionally, calls for young people to engage in governance structures are primarily dominated by young men.

Involving young women in defining these policies and processes and influencing the institutions that produce them makes it more likely they will respond to the different needs of both women and men and contribute to governance and gender equality. Young women's equal participation in governance is therefore an important end in itself and a recognition of their right to speak and be heard. Young women as leaders also shape how public resources are allocated and whether services take account of both women's and men's needs and interests.

The YWIG project provided an opportunity for young women to gain the necessary skills and knowledge to be able to engage pro actively and effectively in the governance process. The establishment of Constitution of Kenya, 2010 highlights opportunities for young women . It opens avenues for politically engendered processes and also offers an avenue for promoting the respect of women's human rights through the different provisions in the Constitution, including the Bill of Rights.

Under the new Constitutional dispensation, the new struc-

ture of devolution benefits women as national budgets are brought closer to the people - a minimum of 15 percent of the national budget will now be allocated at the local level. Currently, only the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and the Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATIF) are controlled at the county level – representing just three percent of the national budget.

Further, Kenya's Vision 2030 addresses the issue of gender, youth and vulnerable groups by stating a commitment to ensuring equity in power and resource distribution between men and women, improved livelihoods for all vulnerable groups, and responsible, globally competitive and prosperous youth. The vision further outlines specific strategies, which will involve increasing the participation of women in all economic, social and political decision making processes, highlighting higher representation of women in parliament as a starting point for government intervention.

The foregoing underlies AYT's initiative, with regard to available opportunities to channel intervention towards empowering and providing opportunities for young women to interact with governance systems in the country in a bid to contribute to the leadership, governance and eventual development of the country. This scenario provides an opportunity for AYT to prepare young women for the responsibilities of active citizenship and ultimately for the provision of leadership to governance and development processes.



1.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Young Women in Governance (YWIG) project is an off-shoot of a baseline survey undertaken in 2011 targeted at the three counties of Nairobi, Kiambu and Machakos. The aim was to establish the role of young women in policy making processes as well as their role in leadership and decision making processes in their respective locales.

A call for women between the ages of 18-35 Years to join the YWIG was sent out to the 3 counties. The qualification included:

- Being in a leadership position in any sector
- Good oral and written communication skills in both English and Swahili
- Ability to facilitate forums
- Minimum education requirement of 'O' level

There was an overwhelming response with AYT receiving more than 500 applications, out of which only a total of 27 were selected from the three counties.

The YWIG project benefited the young women at the county level by empowering them to pro-actively engage in governance issues and participate in governance processes. Additionally, the project provided practical support system for these young women to influence policy.

By targeting women across generations through leadership and governance inter generational dialogues, YWIG also benefited women leaders. The dialogues were organized at the county level to facilitate mentoring as well as provide for learning of best practices geared towards the next general elections in 2013. The dialogue utilised the platform of the networks already created by advocacy forums at county levels.

Benefits to respective communities were realized through the young women as avenues via which the needs of communities were raised and addressed. The local constituencies benefited through information and awareness building on pertinent issues and policy influence on governance.

The project's components included:

- Participation in the 16 day campaign against Gender Based Violence.
- Advocacy forums
- Governance forums
- Mentorship sessions

Participation in 16 day Campaign against Gender Based Violence.

This was realized by joining the international community in marking the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence-campaign between November 25th and December 10th 2011.

The broad objective of participating in this event was to provide an opportunity for the young women leaders to generate an increased level of awareness amongst young Kenyans pertaining to the incidences of violence against women and children, how it manifests itself within the Kenyan society, and the negative impact on these vulnerable groups. Forums were organised in the three counties of Kiambu, Machakos and Nairobi and convened community members with the sole purpose of raising awareness on gender based violence (GBV) .

The YWIG and AYT engaged in a community clean up exercise which was held in Kiambu County, at the Ruiru Market on 7th December, 2011.





In Machakos a public forum was held at the Machakos Municipal Social Hall, on December 9 2011. It was an informative session on GBV, its prevention and response mechanisms. The forum also brought together various professionals to address the community on various issues surrounding GBV.

In Nairobi County, a public debate was held at the Nairobi Charter Hall on 5th December 2011. The debate brought together young men and Women from the Nairobi County to engage in discussions surrounding gender based violence within the society. The debate allowed them to engage in topics that are considered taboo and hence raise level of awareness of gender based violence.

The participants had an opportunity to interact with various personalities who have excelled in attaining leadership positions in the Kenyan society who gave key note addresses that demystified gender based violence and emphasized the importance of participating in the 16 days Campaign”

Advocacy forums

The goal of the advocacy forums was to form working groups that would serve as vehicles for advocacy and lobbying for recommendations on specific governance policies and working with parliamentary, constitutional and local committees. The forums were specifically targeted at government policy institutions and bodies.

Advocacy meetings were designed to:

- Formulate recommendations on specific policies that will enhance young women's participation in governance to be forwarded to relevant parliamentary committees and targeted governance and policy institutions
- Present priority governance concerns for the young women leaders to local government officials, influential leaders and existing constitutional committees and commissions
- Share information on governance aspirations, needs and recommendations as identified in the young women in governance forums to enhance the work of public institutions as well as enhance their knowledge on the needs of young women.
- Facilitate inter generational dialogue, where influential women leaders of the community can transfer their knowledge and skills on leadership to the young women and provide an opportunity to take stock and ensure accountability of women leadership.



The strategy employed included the establishment of working groups of between seven and nine members per county; and the building of relationships with policy makers on governance issues of relevance to young women.

Governance forums

The key goal of the governance forums component was to increase young women's participation in governance issues and create competent, effective and committed women leaders in governance.

Mentorship sessions

The objectives of the mentorship programme were six-fold:

- **Empowering young women leaders:** Intensive training focusing on the understanding of gender concepts, governance and its structures and leadership skills. In addition, the young women were trained on facilitation and presentation skills. As part of the empowerment sessions, the young women leaders were mentored on how to engage in policy and governance dialogue.
- **Networking through the Young Women Governance Forums:** The young women were empowered on how to conduct and facilitate the governance forums efficiently and productively.
- **Establishment of young women advocacy working groups:** To ensure continuity and consistency of engage-

ment with and lobbying governance structures and policy makers on governance issues, leading to recommendations on specific governance policies being forwarded to relevant parliamentary committees and targeted governance and policy institutions.

- **Advocacy through dialogue:** To address priority governance concerns for the young women through initiatives such as invitation of local government officials, influential leaders and existing constitutional committees and commissions, to engage in advocacy meetings aimed at information sharing on governance aspirations, needs and recommendations as identified in the young women in governance forums.
- **Intergenerational dialogues:** To ensure proper transition from the old to the young women.
- **Media engagement:** Engaging community based radio stations to highlight the young women in governance forums and advocate for key emerging issues among the young women on devolved governance, constitutional process and human rights issues by participating in radio shows, among other programmes and initiatives.

CURRENT SITUATION IN KENYA

Young women in Kenya have not historically been known for their numbers in political participation. This may be attributed to socio-economic and cultural factors that act as barriers towards the rising of women's representation in



governance. In Kenya, there has been traditional socialization systems which have created a culture of male dominance, otherwise termed as patriarchy. This culture has for many years politically denied women (more specifically young women) the opportunity to come to the forefront and demand for their space.

Such cultures gave the male dominance over resource control and property inheritance. In addition, rituals such as female genital mutilation which prepared young girls for marriage and the commercialization of dowry, created a perception of women as property to be purchased subjecting them to further submission.

While there are encouraging developments such as affirmative action, the structures of leadership and governance remain the same, hence it is still difficult for many women to maintain their gender roles and balance these with political and leadership responsibilities.

Kenya has acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and a number of international conventions, as well as the Millennium Development Goals. However, becoming party to an international treaty does not automatically mean incorporation of its norms into national legislation or policy.

The passing of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 opened avenues for politically engendered processes and also offers an avenue for promoting the respect of women's human rights through different provisions in the constitution including the Bill of Rights.

In Kenya, leadership and governance has always been tilted in favor of men. According to Prof. Maria Nzomo, in *Engendering Governance through the Constitutional Review Process*, women have primarily participated in "making governors" (through their reproductive activities, participating in liberation struggles, voting in political elections etc.) but stop short of becoming political governors themselves.

She suggests that the key factors underlying the Kenyan political state of affairs are a combination of patriarchal social-cultural values and practices and a flawed and undemocratic legal and policy framework. Progress in women political participation has remained slow despite the fact that women have the right to vote on paper, the right to be eligible for elections, the right to appointment to the public office, and the right to exercise public functions.

Parallel to this, in *A snapshot on the Situation of Women's Rights in Kenya*, by the Kenya environmental and political News Weblog, the last pre-election period was characterized by violence generally, but disproportionately against women candidates. In addition it was clearly demonstrated that political campaigns cost a lot of money, which many women were unable to raise, especially the young woman. Women are also underrepresented in the executive and judiciary, though in the lower courts, women are relatively better represented.

According to *Feminist Theory and Practice* by the Sigrid Rausing Trust, social citizenship is a precondition for mean-



ingful and balanced democracy. It is stated that full and effective participation in democratic processes requires that every member of society gets access to all basic necessities, including information.

The argument here is that individuals who cannot access their basic human rights cannot be a part of resource control, which in essence is what is referred to as politics and governance.

Out of 222 MPs in Kenya's 10th parliament, only 22 are women, which makes up only 10 per cent. Of these 22 MPs, six are nominated and 16 are elected. There are three out of eight constituencies in Nairobi County that are represented by women in parliament.

There is no constituency in Kiambu that is represented by a woman, while one woman represents one out of the four constituencies in Machakos County.

In Kenya, there are 12 nominated members of parliament evenly split on gender basis. The total number of constituencies involved in the three-county baseline study was 17, yet there are only four women parliamentarians in these constituencies.

The representation percentage breakdown in these counties is as below:

- Nairobi County $3/8 = 37.5$ percent
- Kiambu county $0/5 = 0$ percent
- Machakos County $1/4 = 25$ percent

Percentage representation of women in the three counties therefore is $4/17 = 0.235$ percent.



Women representation in Kenyas' 10th Parliament.

The argument here is that individuals who cannot access their basic human rights cannot be a part of resource control, which in essence is what is referred to as politics and governance.



ment is Runyenjes Mp, Hon. Cecily Mbarire at 40 years of age.



WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

| NAME OF COMMITTEE | NO. OF WOMEN | NO. OF MEN |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| HOUSE BUSINESS COMMITTEE – S.O. 158 | 5 | 17 |
| ADMINISTRATION AND NATIONAL SECURITY | 0 | 11 |
| AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND COOPERATIVES | 1 | 10 |
| DEFENCE AND FOREIGN RELATIONS | 0 | 11 |
| EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY | 1 | 10 |
| ENERGY, COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION | 0 | 11 |
| FINANCE, PLANNING AND TRADE | 0 | 11 |
| HEALTH | 0 | 11 |
| JUSTICE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS | 3 | 8 |
| LABOR AND SOCIAL WELFARE | 1 | 8 |
| LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES | 1 | 10 |
| LOCAL AUTHORITIES | 0 | 9 |

| NAME OF COMMITTEE | NO. OF WOMEN | NO. OF MEN |
|--|--------------|------------|
| TRANSPORT, PUBLIC WORKS AND HOUSING | 0 | 11 |
| INVESTIGATORY COMMITTEES | | |
| PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE – S.O. 187 | 1 | 10 |
| PUBLIC INVESTMENTS COMMITTEE – S.O. 188 | 0 | 11 |
| LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND FUNDS ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE – S.O. 189 | 0 | 11 |
| HOUSE-KEEPING AND OTHER SELECT COMMITTEES | | |
| BUDGET COMMITTEE – S.O. 190 | 0 | 15 |
| COMMITTEE ON DELEGATED LEGISLATION – S.O. 197 | 1 | 8 |
| COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY – S.O. 192 | 1 | 8 |
| COMMITTEE ON IMPLEMENTATION – S.O. 196 | 1 | 10 |
| HOUSE BROADCASTING COMMITTEE – S.O. 195 | 0 | 10 |
| LIBRARY COMMITTEE – S.O. 193 | 1 | 9 |
| CATERING COMMITTEE (By the Resolution of the House | 1 | 11 |
| CONSTITUENCIES DEVELOPMENT FUND (CDF Act) | 0 | 11 |
| PROCEDURE AND HOUSE RULES COMMITTEE | 0 | 12 |
| SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE – S.O. 194 | 0 | 12 |
| COMMITTEE ON POWERS AND PRIVILEGES - (National Assembly Powers and Privileges Act | 1 | 10 |
| TOTAL | 19 | 286 |

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Until women are represented fully in local, national and international decision-making bodies, their priorities will not receive needed resources. Today, it is estimated that women hold only 18 percent of parliamentary seats worldwide. Women in conflict, post-conflict and transitional environments are particularly disadvantaged.

In countries emerging from conflict, there is a window of opportunity to ensure that women are involved in the process of creating new policy frameworks, institutional and governing structures, and new democratic cultures.

“Case Study” Ghana

In a December 2010 feature, Columnist Nii Amon writes that Ghanaian women cannot be underrated in the country’s current democratic dispensation at any level of governance. Many Ghanaian women have contributed in diverse ways to building the country and could do even better if given the chance.

But even the columnist concedes that the number of women currently participating in the country’s democratic governance is woefully inadequate. The number of women in Ghanaian parliament is low. More women need to be elected as Assembly Members, appointed as District Chief Executives and head of public institutions. Like in most African states, women in Ghana are victims of traditionalist mentality that bestows on men leadership roles and confines women to the background.

The National Democratic Congress in their manifesto promised Ghanaians to appoint about 40 percent of wom-

en to be at the helm of affairs of public institutions so as to whip up or spur other women to take up public offices. Initiative should be taken by the Government to fulfill that promise and bring women to the forefront of democratic governance. Such an undertaking will encourage women all over Ghana to avail themselves for public office appointment or election.

The few women given the opportunity have proven that they are ready to contribute towards national development. These women include, Justice Joyce Bamford Addo, Speaker of Parliament; Anna Bossman, the Acting Commissioner of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice; Joyce Aryee, the Chief Executive Officer of Ghana Chamber of Mines; and Mrs Gloria Lamptey, former head of training at the Agricultural Development Bank.

According to Amon (2010), the participation of women in local governance should be encouraged, since it will serve as a training ground for most women to participate in parliamentary elections and eventually being elected into parliament. “I think the way to go is to promulgate a law, which will allow the president to appoint about 50 percent of women to the position of District Chief Executive,” suggests the writer.

“Case Study” Rwanda

In *Strengthening Governance: The Role of Women in Rwanda’s Transition*, a summary report prepared by Elizabeth Powley for the United Nations Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women; for an ex-



part group meeting on *Enhancing Women's Participation in Electoral Processes in Post-Conflict Countries*, it is demonstrated how women came to be 49 per cent of Rwanda's parliament.

According to the report, in the immediate aftermath of the genocide in Rwanda, the population was 70 percent female (women and girls). Given this demographic imbalance, women immediately assumed multiple roles as heads of households, community leaders, and financial providers, meeting the needs of devastated families and communities.

With early and critical support from UNHCR, USAID, and UNIFEM (among others), women in Rwanda were leaders in reconstruction efforts.

Today, women remain a demographic majority in Rwanda, representing about 54 percent of the population and contributing significantly to the productive capacity of the nation. As the majority of the adult working population, they head 35 percent of households, are responsible for raising the next generation, and in this largely rural nation and produce the majority of all agricultural output. They are the majority constituency and the most productive segment of the population.

In its efforts to rebuild Rwanda, the RPF-led government has publicly committed itself to a platform of unity and reconciliation. Acknowledging the presence, needs, and potential role of this majority population, the government determined that women must be central to the process of governing, reconciling, and rebuilding the country. A number of women held critical positions within the ranks of the RPF. Such women have been appointed to strategic posts in the government; more significantly, their presence has contributed to progressive gender policies within the administration. On the key question of inclusivity, Rwanda's government has taken unprecedented steps to increase the participation of women and young people in governance.

Today in Rwanda, women play an important role even in discussions of national security, traditionally a male arena; highlighting the public recognition of women's contribu-



tions. The government's decision to include women in the governance of the nation is based on a number of factors. The perception that women are "better" at reconciliation and post-conflict peace building is a strong motivation. But the policy of inclusion also owes much to the RPF's exposure to gender equality issues in Uganda, where members spent many years in exile. Uganda uses a quota system to guarantee women's participation. In Uganda's parliament, one seat from each of 39 districts is reserved for a woman. Men and women in the RPF were familiar with this system, as they were with the contributions and successes of women in South Africa's African National Congress (ANC). RPF members witnessed, and embraced, notions of gender equality and this informed the development of gender-sensitive governance structures in post-genocide Rwanda.

Rwanda's commitment to the inclusion of women is evident throughout the government. At the level of national political leadership, the Rwandan government has made women visible with high-level appointments. In addition to these senior women, the government has attempted to address women's concerns and gender implications in their policy planning.

Rwanda is a signatory to various international instruments that uphold women's rights, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), and the Platform for Action adopted at the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995). Its constitution, adopted in May of 2003 references CEDAW and commits to



a representation of women of at least 30 percent.

In the sector and district elections in 2001, Rwanda introduced an electoral mechanism aimed at including women (and youth who also have been defined as a formerly under-represented group) in governance. In these elections, each voter was given three ballots - a general ballot, a women's ballot, and a youth ballot. In each sector, voters selected one person on each ballot thus picking a general candidate (frequently, but not necessarily, a man), a woman and a young person. Through a subsequent indirect election, a district council was chosen from candidates who won at the sector level. This district council included all of those elected on the general ballot, one-third of the women, and one-third of the youth. From that group, the district mayor and other executive committee officials were chosen. This system has

been very successful at getting women into office.

The second structure that Rwanda has established is the parallel system of women's only elections. Women's councils are grassroots structures elected at the cell level by women only (and then through indirect election at each successive administrative level), which operate parallel to the general local councils and represent women's concerns.

The Ministry of Gender and Women in Development established the women's councils shortly after the genocide, and their role has since been expanded considerably. These 10-member councils include representatives for legal affairs, civic education, health and finance. Rather than a

policy implementation function, these councils have an advocacy role. They are involved in skills training and making local women aware of their rights, as well as in advising the generally elected bodies on issues that affect women. These councils ensure that women's views on education, health, security and other issues are articulated to local authorities. While the women's councils are important in terms of decentralization and grassroots engagement, lack of resources prevents them from maximizing their impact. Nevertheless, women in these grassroots councils have been effective in carving out new political space.

The head of the women's council holds a reserved seat on the general local council, ensuring official representation



The perception that women are “better” at reconciliation and post-conflict peace building is a strong motivation. But the policy of inclusion also owes much to the RPF’s exposure to gender equality issues.

of women’s concerns. Rwanda’s constitution demonstrates a dramatic commitment to women’s councils and women’s elections - beginning with the September 29, 2003 elections, 24 of 80 seats in the lower house of Parliament derive from the women’s elections.

Women in most parts of the world face barriers to political participation and elected office in terms of both access and capacity/education. In Rwanda, barriers to access have been largely removed. However, attention must be paid to training and education for women candidates and women elected officials in order to strengthen their capacity and help consolidate these gains.

“Case Study” India

In India, as Malathi Subramanian, the retired Principal of the Daulat Ram College for Women (University of Delhi) notes, historical, social and cultural factors have limited women’s capacity and chances to exercise their freedom to participate in political processes. In her Political Participation and Representation of Women in Indian Politics, Malathi says that the under representation of women in the po-

litical sphere is inextricably linked with the low and inferior status of women in society in India, especially in the context of the declining sex ratio, increasing violence and crimes against women and their marginalized status in employment, education and health sectors.

A few women have however attained positions as members of parliament and state legislatures and as leaders of opposition, mostly through family dynasties or through male political patronage. Nonetheless, the percentage of women in legislatures and decision still remain low. Women do not share the power of decision making and are not involved in policy making in Indian democracy in proportion to their numerical strength.

The women’s wings of political parties may have given visibility to women in the form of a platform for participation rather than integrating them into central power structures. Women do not have necessary resources to enter and compete in contemporary political arena. Women in India constitute nearly half the population of the country, but they are poorly represented in the various governance and decision making bodies. Less than eight percent of parliamentary seats, less than six percent of cabinet positions, less than





four percent of seats in high courts and the Supreme Court have been occupied by women. The average percentage of women's representation in the Parliament, Assemblies and Council of Ministers taken together has been around 10 percent.

Historically many women have been active in the informal political sphere in terms of political mobilization and they have participated in large numbers in political demonstrations and mass agitations as well as in the activities of nationalist and political bodies and organizations.

Candidates fielded by various political parties are still predominantly male and women account for only five to 10 per-

cent of all candidates across parties and regions. Among women who manage to rise in the political echelons, in spite of their ability in administration and the art of political articulation, very few women reach the level of cabinet ministers. Mostly, they remain deputy ministers or ministers of state. When women attain the few ministerial positions, they are generally assigned portfolios in the social service sectors of Health, Education, Social Welfare, Women and Child Development.

More recently, major political parties have made a conscious effort to induct more women into the various levels of the party organization. The Communist Party of India (CPM) has made an effort to induct more women into its district committees and state level bodies. The membership of women in the party however remains below 10 percent. The CPM changed its stance on gender-based reservation only after 1988. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had the highest percentage of women in decision-making bodies from the Parliamentary Board and the Election Committee down to the ward level.

Traditionally, the Congress Party has fielded the largest number of women candidates and has had the largest number of women members in Parliament though the Congress working Committee has a rather low level of representation of women.

In spite of the low political representation of women in Indian politics, some women leaders have had an important place in Indian politics. Jayalalitha as leader of All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), Mamata

Bannerji as leader of Trinamul Congress and Mayawati as leader of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) are instances in point. Some of them head important and strong regional political parties which have been in alliance with major national political parties both outside and in national government. Even though the rise of some of these women leaders might be linked to their proximity to male leaders, they hold positions of leadership within the parties in their own right.

In addition, the example of Indira Gandhi who rose to be Prime Minister of India, and later of Sonia Gandhi, leader of the Congress Party, both of whom had the dynastic advantage underpinning their leadership and position of power and decision-making in the Congress Party and the government can hardly be ignored. But the positions of authority of these women leaders did not include any specific mandate to address only women issues. In this sense, as leaders of political parties, they were as power-driven as their male peers. Political leadership by women is not dramatically different from that of men. Women leaders are no better or worse than men. Nor have women leaders been typically anxious to give greater representation to other women within their own organizations or in the political process generally. Representation of women has not necessarily in-

creased greatly under the leadership of women.

Various strategies have been proposed to further the political representation of women in India. From a reservation of 33 percent seats at various levels including the Parliament, it has also been suggested that political parties reserve 33 percent of their seats for women in the elections. The BJP announced such a reservation in its organization. However, it has been questioned whether women constitute an undifferentiated category and whether collective identification and mobilization of women as a 'disadvantaged' group in general on the basis of gender is a viable proposition in the politically accepted sense of the term particularly in view of caste and class differences among them.

Less than 8 percent of parliamentary seats, less than 6 percent of cabinet positions, less than 4 percent of seats in high courts and the Supreme Court have been occupied by women.



Mere presence of women in parliament even if greater in numbers will not mean much unless they are truly representative of women's concerns covering all categories.



|| AYT'S YOUNG WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE ALUMNI

AYT identified four women from each of the three counties covered by the project to give their journey under the young women in governance project, their challenges, aspirations and what they have learnt from the project.

WAMBUI MURAGU

Age: 24

Current

occupation: Intern with Life Ministry, Kenya – Campus Ministry (Egerton University)



Brief

Having graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Design in the year 2011 Wambui is keen on making a difference in her community. She is dead set on running for an elective post as a County Representative in Gatong'ora Ward in Juja, where she hails from.

Her passion for community work and mobilization is the one constant trait that defines her character. After finishing her fourth form education in 2005, prior to being admitted to the University of Nairobi in 2007; she together with other form four leavers in her community came together to form Ruiru East Youth Agenda (REYA).

Community work

REYA became an instrumental vehicle for Wambui's community work and means of serving the community. Through REYA, she worked closely with local leaders, such as chiefs, elders and parents in initiating charitable projects such as visits to children's homes, mobilization of resources for secondary school girls and the internally displaced persons following the post-election violence in 2007/2008. Other projects she was involved in at the time through REYA included environmental conservation. REYA's education project also had a mentorship component by which the youth played the role of big sisters to the school-going girls. Activities under this project included counseling on drug abuse (by REYA, local leaders and institutions like the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse Authority (NACADA).

Call for participation in YWIG programme

These initial involvements in community work and the leadership role she had taken at such an early stage proved to be vital motivators for her to respond to the call for applications by AYT for the YWIG programme.

"AYT's advertisement for young women in leadership programme was well timed. It came at a time when REYA had collapsed since we had formed the group as we waited for our form four examination results.

When most of us were admitted to the university, nobody was left to drive the organisation," says Wambui.

Admittedly REYA's fall was as a result of a lack of strategic direction, the primary objective having been a stop-gap

measure to help the underprivileged. The youth were not well equipped to move REYA to the next level or network to build capacity and skills. Most of the projects undertaken were understandably welfare-oriented.

Wambui was however still interested in getting involved in her local community leadership and development. AYT's offer of advocacy and governance skills, as well as mentorship was what she needed.

Lessons learnt

Constitution: Wambui singles out training on the constitution as the key lesson she has learnt through the AYT programme that will help her meet her leadership goals. "Learning and fully appreciating the constitution was an eye opener. I know of many youth who voted ignorantly during the referendum, but who would have voted differently had they taken time to go through the document," she says. She has taken up the challenge to train other youth on the constitution and never misses an opportunity to engage the youth in her community on the same.

Gender and governance: Besides the constitution, she identifies training on gender and governance as an important lesson. Wambui is familiar with cultural impediments to women's leadership that expected men to lead and women to get married. This has impacted even on women who have made a breakthrough and managed to get into leadership positions. "From what I have learnt, I realised that I need to go into leadership positions beyond the culturally 'acceptable' and package myself as a leader, and not

as a 'woman leader'.

"My leadership should not be determined by my gender, but by my agenda and ideals so that I am not chosen as a leader because I am a woman, but because of the better alternative I am offering and the positive difference my leadership is likely to foster," explains Wambui.

Advocacy: She is grateful that the programme also trained her on advocacy. "It is important to know who to engage, how to engage and when to engage. This is what the advocacy training taught me," she says. Wambui says that by learning how to engage, she is able to harness her energies as a youth. The training instilled in her the need to appreciate that society is inclusive and that she needs to engage all stakeholders and visit key government offices like the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) offices, District Commissioner's (DC's) offices, Youth Affairs offices, Gender Offices, Social Services offices for assistance and information or to volunteer her services on a continuous basis and not just in times of emergencies or crises.

Leadership

Wambui is banking on her continual engagement with stakeholders in her community, her leadership credentials (as a local youth leader and mentor, student leader – SONU Faculty Representative at the University of Nairobi), work with the youth (through REYA and Concerned Youth Initiative), and her work with the church in her plans to vie for political office in Gatong'ora Ward.

“My vision is to see a community living in harmony. This is the basis of development at all levels. This together with a relationship with God, for if you do not have a relationship with God, you would not know your purpose in life,” is her parting shot.

Roles models: She has great admiration and respect for great leaders and role models like the late Wangari Maathai, Patrick Lumumba (former Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission Director), Daniel Ndambuki ‘Churchill,’ Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa and Mahatma Gandhi for their “selflessness and mentorship.”

DAMARIS KAGOTHO

Age: 28

Current occupation:
Business lady



Brief

Damaris is a devout Christian and serves as an Assistant Pastor in her church, the African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPCA). She is particularly passionate about the girl child and takes time to mentor girls to help them grow into empowered, successful and spiritual women. She is currently engaged in a number of businesses.

AYT programme

Damaris’ interest in the AYT programme was underpinned by her desire to sharpen her leadership skills so that she could take up the leadership challenge in her constituency by addressing pressing matters of importance to her community.

Lessons learnt

She says that participating in the programme has taught her that she has what it takes to be a leader, and that her background, status or gender should not hold her back. “I now realize that I have a lot to offer to my community and Kenya at large and should not dwell on negativity or insecurities that may curtail my potential as a leader,” she says.

Damaris explains that the programme has enabled her to network with other leaders in her county and in the process she has gained immensely by growing her understanding of governance. “I have been enlightened on avenues through which I can source for funds and as a result, I was able to organize a forum for young girls to sensitize them on the importance of abstinence,” she says and thanks the programmes mentors who joined her in the forum as speakers.

She says that the programme equipped her to organise trainings for youth above 18 years on the importance of abstinence, shunning drug abuse, the negative effects of HIV/ Aids and matters of the church to encourage them to

embrace Christianity and grow spiritually.

Leadership

Besides her position as an Assistant Pastor at AIPCA Damaris also coordinates of the Initiation of girls into adulthood through counselling and mentorship. She is also the coordinator of the Victoria Youth Group, a chamaa (self-help group) for the youth.

She trains young girls and youth groups every Sunday on abstinence, drug abuse, spirituality, and HIV/Aids. She has been able to successfully mobilize young women to form common interest groups. "I also do a lot of training on stress management and first aid, which are in line with my role as a mentor for the youth," she adds. She is very passionate crusader against female genital mutilation and single-parenthood and is on a mission to sensitize her community on the importance of personal hygiene, and for young women to form self-help groups.

She is considering vying for political office (County Representative) in future, probably in 2017. In order to achieve her political leadership ambitions, Damaris says she is working towards being economically empowered and that she will mobilize the youth, whose wellbeing forms the basis of her ideals. She also plans to register as member of a promising political party that represents her aspirations and democracy, besides getting involved in more community-based activities.

Role models

The late Wangari Maathai's dedication to her environmental conservation cause, democratic governance and rule of law

makes her one of Damaris' role models.

She is also inspired by Martha Karua, the Narc-Kenya party leader and presidential aspirant. Beyond Kenya, she looks up to Barack Obama, USA's president for his legendary achievements despite his humble background.

SARAH NJIRAINI

Age: 26

Current occupation:
Facilitator, Youth Inter-
community Network,
Thika



Brief

Sarah is the founder and Treasurer of Donor Community Club Society. She is also in charge of the leadership docket in the society and serves as a teen mentor in her church.

She mentors teenagers and young girls and has hosted blood donation drives in Embu. In addition, she has facilitated forums on HIV/Aids prevention and management and reproductive health.

AYT programme

She was motivated to participate in the Young Women in Governance programme by the need to gain experience in

advocacy, governance and policy-making. “I am passionate about issues related to health and participating in the AYT programme was going to equip me with the necessary skills and tools to help me advocate for health accessibility, delivery and reforms in health structures.

Lessons learnt

“By participating in the AYT programme, I have been able to learn how to engage relevant authorities and negotiate with them on issues that I would want to be addressed,” says Sarah. She says that she is now conversant with the craft of advocacy.

The programme has built her confidence in dealing with authorities and engaging her community to deal with pertinent issues affecting her community. “I have learnt the importance of networking and having mentors at an early age. Besides, I am now more aware of the critical roles young women can play at different levels of governance,” she adds.

She is proud that as a leader, she has pushed for the adoption of a two-thirds representation for women in the leadership of the Donor Community Club Society.

Challenges

She is aware of the challenges young women are faced with in her county, especially those aspiring to be leaders. Key among these challenges are financial constraints that may act against many of the young women interested in leadership positions. Early marriage is another challenge facing young women in her county, as this tends to limit the

leadership potential of the women. Additionally, the women tend to be reserved and shy away from leadership positions, hence putting themselves at a disadvantage.

She is campaigning for capacity building programmes in her community to train young women in communication, decision making and mentorship.

Leadership

As part of her plan to play a key role in political leadership in her community, Sarah intends to join a political party that is democratic and accommodates the interests of youth and women. She says that she will also continue to lobby for young women and the youth and carry on sponsoring blood donation drives, as well as mentorship programmes.

Role models

Martha Karua is her local role model because she considers her to be firm and focused on issues she believes in and that she is a person of integrity. Internationally, She admires Michelle Obama, especially because of her campaign for healthy lifestyles to avoid lifestyle diseases like obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes.



ANN MUIGAI
AGE 24 Years

**Current
occupation:** student



Brief

Ann is currently a student at the Kenyatta University undertaking her Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology. She is the Youth Representative of Persons with Disabilities in Limuru, and the Secretary General of Persons with Disability, Kenyatta University chapter. Ann would like to see the creation of programmes that will empower young women with diverse skills and information.

She is also of the opinion that mentorship programmes should be part and parcel of Kenya's social and educational fabric.

AYT Programme

Ann was motivated to respond to the call for applications to participate in the programme because she wants to play an instrumental role in governance and eventually seek an elective leadership post to enable her bring a meaningful change to her community. The AYT programme presented her with a unique opportunity to enable her to realize her ambitions.

Lessons learnt

"The programme equipped me with valuable knowledge in governance, the constitution and leadership. I am also now more informed on issues concerning persons with disabilities. This has put me in a unique position to inform and train others who have no access to this information," says Ann. In addition, she is thankful to the AYT programme for enlightening her on the new constitution, especially the gains outlined for the youth, young women and persons with disability. The programme, Ann adds, has motivated her to aspire for leadership and equipped her with fundamental skills for effective leadership. "I have been exposed to the workings of facilitating forums and mobilizing common interest groups and advocacy issues. In addition, I have developed a valuable network of people who can add positive value to my aspirations as an individual, as well as an aspiring young leader," she adds.

As a community leader, Ann has mobilized 52 persons with disability and 250 youths to attend forums on the constitution. She has further rallied the alumni of her former school, Joy Town Special School in Thika town to form a club whose objective is create awareness on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Her leadership drive is evident in initiatives she has taken such as joining a political party and the registration of the Young Women Connection Kenya, a CBO of young women with the objective of unlocking young women's abilities to catalyse change and mobilise their communities for the same purpose. Her other accomplishments include playing a pivotal role in having UDPK and Handicapped International to visit the Kenyatta University Association and disseminate information on the rights of people with disability and the provisions of the new constitution.

Community leadership

She plans to vie for an elective post in the next general elections as a Special Representative for youth. She is confident that her engagement in the community and spearheading initiatives with positive impact on her community will endear her to her constituents. Her main platform of campaign will be rights of the disadvantaged, including persons of disability, who also need to be heard and accorded equal opportunities.

Challenges

Ann notes that a great challenge facing young women is their attitude towards leadership. "Many of these women have become indifferent and resigned to the misconception that they cannot lead and have to contend with whoever takes charge of the political direction of their communities," states Ann. Furthermore, she adds, young women are not very familiar with current affairs. Other constraints she notes include, lack of finances and inadequate education.

Role models

Ann is inspired by Njeri Kabebere, whom she considers a role model because of her "activism for a better society." She also looks up to Nelson Mandela for his selflessness and sacrifice so that South Africa can be free and independent.

MACHAKOS COUNTY

MERCY MUTEMI

Age: 22

Current occupation:
Student, University of
Nairobi



Brief

Mercy is an ardent youth leader at her church (Global Vision Church) and is also involved in mentorship at her community to encourage the youth to study law. She would want to see the establishment of a database for women leaders in the country to guide and mentor aspiring Kenyan leaders, provide network opportunities and bring together professional women from all walks of life to interact, network and exchange ideas on matters affecting women.

AYT Programme

Her interest in the AYT programme was roused by the project's focus on community development, which she is passionately keen on. She has been a strong advocate of community development as well as civic education, especially on the new constitution – issues that the programme paid great attention to.

Lessons learnt

Mercy is thankful for the exposure she has gotten through the programme, particularly in regard to the process of project planning, which is essential in matters related to community development. “The programme shed light on how to mobilize the community towards a common goal, which is crucial for someone like me who works closely with the community,” she says. She is also grateful that she can now engage her community more productively.

“Through the AYT programme, I have been able to identify gaps in leadership and mentorship in my community. In addition, I have learnt the importance of backing credible people for leadership positions for the benefit of the community at large,” adds Mercy. She notes that the programme challenged her to appreciate her inner strengths and capabilities as an aspiring young leader in the community.

Community leadership

As a leader in her community, Mercy has facilitated and conducted training on the new constitution. She has also mobilized youth groups to participate in forums to discuss issues that affect their day-to-day lives, in addition to mentoring girls in high schools and in her village. She’s been instrumental in ensuring people in her community have access to the new constitution and in ensuring that the local CBO (Community Legal Education and Advisory) abides by the two-thirds gender equity rule as stipulated in the new constitution.

Challenges

Mercy notes that young women in her county tend to be complacent and lack motivation, especially when it comes to leadership. She also lists financial constraints, inability to seize opportunities that present themselves, and lack of role models and mentorship programmes as challenges facing young women interested in leadership. “There is a need for more programmes like the one by AYT to sensitize young women on gaps they can fill in leadership, as well as development of policies that will empower women in accessing education and equal opportunity in all spheres of life,” she adds. She is advocating for the government and society at large to develop mentorship programme structures that begin at an early stage, such as the primary school level to offer direction to Kenya’s future leaders.

Role Models

Locally, she looks up to Martha Karua as a role model because “she represents virtues that women leadership is all about. She is a straight-talker, does not waver in her stand, is independent and issue-oriented.” Mercy also identifies Michelle Obama as her role model at the global level.

She is particularly inspired by the US first lady’s demeanour and humility despite her influential position. “Michelle is collected, well educated, discerning, but still humble as a mother and wife free of any scandals,” explains Mercy.



Damaris Syombai

Age: 21

Current occupation: Student,
Shanzu Teachers Training College

Brief

Damaris has an interest in human rights and considers it her responsibility to be an activist and stand up for those who cannot speak for themselves in her community.

Community Leadership

Even before the AYT programme, Damaris had already taken up leadership initiatives in her community in Yatta. She vied for the position of Kombe Division's Secretary during the National Youth Council election and emerged victorious.

As a leader in her community, Damaris has successfully organised youth groups for gainful employment, by having them participate in activities such as building of dams. She has encouraged young women not to shy away from elective governance positions in her community, especially if they have all the requisite qualifications.

AYT programme

Damaris' interest in the AYT programme was because it embodied her aspirations as a young woman seeking empowerment and wishing to make a difference in her community. "It was clear that this programme was going to give us young women the necessary skills and tools to play an important role in the governance of our communities as envisaged in the constitution," reveals Damaris. Her interest was also piqued by the belief that participating in the programme will put her in a good position to train and enlighten other women in her community on the leadership possibilities and opportunities.

The programme has had a significant impact in Damaris' life. She lists the lessons she has taken away from this initiative as:

Women's rights as enshrined in the constitution: These include affirmative action, such as the requirement that one third of elective positions be reserved for women, women's right to own and inherit property from their parents/spouses, and the Bill of Rights that does not discriminate against women.

Participation in governance: That women have an opportunity and the right to fully participate in governance in Kenya at all levels – from the county to the national level.

Damaris says that as a result of the young women in governance programme, she now has the courage, skill and tools to speak to other women on leadership and empower them

to take advantage of such opportunities. She also now fully understands the constitution and makes an effort to train young women to understand it.

Challenges

Despite the gains and opportunities presented by the constitution, Damaris concedes that women, especially in her county, still face a number of challenges. These include

- Lack of education
- Cultural beliefs that expect men to be leaders
- Women not supporting fellow women because of jealousy
- Poverty

Despite these challenges and perceptions, Damaris has made up her mind to run for an elective post in the next elections.

Her priorities, if elected, will be to advocate for children's rights, develop strategies to overcome poverty and lobby for more women to participate in leadership in their respective communities.

Role models

She considers her Ward Councillor, Jacqueline Nziva as an exemplary leader because of her devotion to work and having risen to a leadership position that was previously a domain of men.

Similarly, she looks up to Susan King'oo a chief in the neighbouring Matuu Location for the positive changes she

has brought since being appointed to the position, and as an inspiration to other women wishing to take leadership roles in their communities. Her other role model is the late Wangari Maathai, who proved that where there's passion, consistency and determination, success is a guarantee.

NAIROBI COUNTY

Florence Keya

Age: 32

Current occupation:

Social Mentor



Brief

Florence runs a mentorship programme (Maisha Young Women Institute) for young girls and women. Over time she realized that there was a gap in the representation of young women in the country. The level of women's participation in community development is still way below acceptable levels. Her desire to fill this gap and the promise of positive synergy made AYT's young women in leadership programme an attractive prospect. YWIG presented a perfect opportunity to advance what she is currently engaged in - learning how to effect change instead of complaining.

Lessons learnt

Florence says that she has learnt that young women need to engage in capacity building. “The more one engages the more one learns and becomes conversant with issues touching on the wider society. Through the programme I have come to realize that as young women, we can do and achieve just as much as men,” says Florence. She is appreciative of the direction provided by YWIG’s mentorship for young women. She admits that the programme has broadened her thinking made her more focused also realize her net worth.

Leadership

Florence currently sits in a committee set up by the Ministry of Youth Affairs, whose mandate is to ensure that the youth have access to loans. She also coordinates the Young Women Network in Kamukunji Constituency and is the Organizing Secretary for the Maisha Young Women. In addition, she is a community mobiliser, a paralegal and a social auditor of the devolved fund.

As a leader in Kamukunji, she has mobilized women in the constituency towards issues of anti-corruption in the devolved fund. “I have mobilized and advocated for implementation of governance and education policies within my locality and successfully pushed for funds from the CDF to be channeled towards scholarships for young girls,” she adds. She also mentors young girls. As a paralegal, she has referred a number of cases to relevant authorities and has been involved in arbitration and sensitizing her community about violence against women. Florence plans to present her candidacy for the position of County Representative in

the next elections. She believes that the positive impact of what she has been doing in her community, continuous engagement of the community to understand the needs of the local population, especially those of the youth; are great accomplishments that will make her appeal to the voters.

Challenges

She points out that young women in her community are not yet fully empowered due to lack of information, and lack of financial resources, and are bogged down by family obligations at a young age. These, together with lack of mentors are some of the challenges that hinder young women from stepping forward to participate in governance and public life.

She would like to see more diverse organizations initiate mentorship programmes and borrow a leaf from the initiative by AYT. She would also like to see civic education being customized for the information needs of young women and the revision of government policies to accommodate the young woman.

Role models

Florence says she is inspired more by situations rather than personalities. “I am an agent of change. Success inspires me,” she explains.



WINNIE OBURE

AGE: 23YRS
Student



Brief

Winnie is a gender representative in an organization called Youth Network in Langata. She is also the founder of Sebuleni Community Organisation in Kibera. She is aspiring to run for political office for the position of County Assembly Representative, and describes herself as issue-oriented, outspoken, and well networked.

Community work

As founder of Sebuleni Community Organisation in Kibera and as the gender representative for Youth Network in Langata, Winnie has organized gender forums and also mobilized youth and women, including students, to participate in environmental clean-up exercises, and to discuss governance issues. Winnie's self-initiated efforts also include urging families to shun domestic violence and promoting male participation in events concerning reproductive health.

ATY Programme

Winnie showed interest in the programme because she perceived it as a platform for interaction with stakeholders, policy makers and mentors at a local and national level on issues affecting young women. This, she believed, would deepen her knowledge on the subject. To her, the participation of young women from different walks of life was an opportunity to open up her view on matters of interest to women, and also to expand her networks. In her view, the programme is an apt capacity-building platform.

Lessons learnt

She has learnt that for her to grow, it can't happen in isolation. Teamwork and networking with like-minded individuals, groups, organisations and institutions would be useful in pushing the women agenda forward. But first, she has to know how to manage herself effectively. This, she now understands, requires her to be goal-oriented, issue-based, focused and confident enough to be principled and grounded.

"From the programme, I have learnt to take a long term view. For instance, I now appreciate that political leadership and maturity is like a baby's growth. Growth, success and political wisdom is a process and just like a baby, I have to learn how to first crawl, stand and walk before I can run. I have also realized the need to be a go-getter if I am to succeed politically," she says.

She confesses that before the AYT programme, she was not

well versed with the constitution and hardly followed parliamentary proceedings. That is no longer the case. She says she is now better informed about the constitution, and that she has developed an interest in what goes on in parliament. She reads a lot more now as well "I have realized that to be a good leader I have to be a good reader, and that not all good readers are good leaders, but all good leaders are good readers."

Leadership challenges

According to Winny, young women tend to prioritize career and relationships more than politics. She would like them to change their attitude towards politics and consider it important because it influences every other sphere of life.

She would like to see the following policies, plans and programmes put in place to assist young women in leadership or those aspiring for leadership positions:

- Political parties should embrace mentorship and coaching programmes at every ward level for young women who are aspiring to ascend to leadership.
- The Government should ensure that the quota representation in political parties is implemented for young women positions.
- Measures should be put in place to protect women from emotional and physical attacks.
- The media should give attention to young women and support them in their advocacy for leadership positions.
- The Government should publish a handbook on the Bill of Rights and translate it into all ethnic languages to create awareness amongst women about their rights.

Role models

Former legislator Phoebe Asiyo is one of Winny's role models. "She struggled to be a Kenyan parliamentarian. She fought for the new constitution and is passionate about the doctrine of inclusivity," explains Winny. Her other role model is Martin Luther King: "He faced many challenges on his way up."

He opposed violence and subscribed to Mahatma Gandhi's school of thought of non-violence in conflict-resolution. He believed that the populace could never be oppressed forever; that you could be oppressed physically but not psychologically," she says of her role model.





Yvonne Nasuboh

Age: 22yrs

Current occupation: Student,
Kenyatta University (BSc in Food
Nutrition and Dietetics)

Brief

Yvonne is the Project Manager for Female Students in Science and Technology at Kenyatta University. Away from school, she participates in her church's mentorship programme and plays a lead role in organizing mentoring events for high school girls and bringing in mentors to talk about life skills.

She is also an active member of the I Choose Life organization in her county where she takes an active role of educating the youth on HIV/AIDS

These are in addition to organizing clean-up exercises in Gatine, Kilometre and other areas.

Community leadership

Yvonne says she is not yet keen on vying for any political seat. However, she has identified the church as a podium she can stand on to promote youth interests. For example, she convinced the management of her church to support

her idea of a youth empowerment movement. The movement, Faith Evangelistic Ministry Young Adult Setup, is already in place and the church is behind it, she says.

AYT programme

Yvonne's main drive to participate in the AYT programme was the need to sharpen her leadership skills. She had found herself being thrust into leadership positions, such as the ones she presently holds at the university and at her church, and so she figured the programme would come in handy in equipping her with the necessary skills.

"I also had a feeling that the programme would be dealing with matters affecting communities, and since I am passionate about community development and other related issues, I needed to hone my skills in that field,"

These and other major factors encouraged her to join the Young Women in Governance Alumni.

Lessons learnt

From the programme, she realised that she needed to be continually get involved in her community, and not just step in during a crisis or when there was a need to push a particular agenda. Leadership, she learnt, was all about passion and vision.

Yvonne also mentioned that her participation in the 16day campaign against gender based violence greatly exposed her to the various ways in which she can deal with gender violence in her community.

As a young woman interested in engaging in community service, the programme, she says, greatly exposed her to the logistics of organising and managing community forums.

Leadership challenges

Yvonne believes that the demand on young women’s time is a major challenge that most of these women face on a daily basis. They have to juggle their responsibilities and obligations – both public and private to find a balance.

“This can be overwhelming and there is a need to develop mentorship programmes to help the young women cope,” she advises.

This explains her involvement in mentoring of high school students, who besides school work also have to responsibilities in the home. She is of the opinion that Kenya should initiate donor-supported leadership schools for young women. In addition, she would want to see the government and parliamentarians pursuing and instituting youth-friendly policies. She adds: “Men should also be sensitized to fall into step with women’s points of view and accord them the necessary support.”

Role models

Yvonne admires Peter Kenneth for his ability to stay in touch with the people of his Gatanga Constituency, as this has helped him to understand and appreciate their concerns. She would like to emulate that, and at the same time show

the kind of humility that Michelle Obama demonstrates despite wielding so much power and authority as the First Lady of the United States of America.

She also regards Koffi Annan highly for the efforts he played in bringing peace back to Kenya after the 2007 Post elections violence in Kenya. She hopes that the Kenyan leaders can emulate him.



MAUREN OMINO

CURRENT OCCUPATION:

SOCIAL WORKER



Brief

Maureen is the Head of Training at Map Kibera Trust. She mentors young girls in Kibera about leadership skills and reproductive health. In her work with the organization, she has initiated outreach programmes that adopt bottom-up approach to resolving issues of the community. This entails engaging the very community in developing policies that affect them.

AYT programme

As a social worker, Maureen works with communities and understands that leadership should be tailored for the benefit of the community. In her experience, she has noticed a gap when it comes to the participation of women in the community at management level. Most women, she says, are relegated to subordinate level. It was realization of the need to start shifting this balance that piqued her interest in the AYT programme to enable

her learn more about leadership in the community.

Lessons learnt

Having participated in AYT's Young Women in Leadership programme, Maureen has taken a keen interest on the dynamics of leadership and governance. She says that following her participation in the programme, she has realised that governance should take a bottom-up approach and that women need to be engaged in awareness programmes.

"I have learned organisation skills, how to write reports and other skills required of a leader," she says. She states that the programme brought out the leader in her, a quality, she confesses, she was not aware she possessed before participating in the programme.

Challenges

Maureen notes that cultural beliefs still work against women. The belief that women are home makers who should stay out of politics has worked against women. Such beliefs frown upon any initiative by women to take leadership as a potential for family breakdowns. She says that political violence, be it sexual, physical or emotional, is another barrier that young women have to contend with and need to be protected against. "Women should not be cowed by these forms of violence, but instead take action, such as seeking legal redress and lobbying political leadership to challenge such aggression. Young women should be assertive and not let others kill their ambitions," she adds.

She decries lack of funds as another a serious setback for young women wishing to take up leadership positions. Her

advise is for women to be enterprising to build financial muscle and avoid being dependent.

Leadership

Maureen is certain that she will vie for the position of a Youth Representative, even though she is not ready to embark on that ambition in the upcoming elections. "I am good at identifying relevant issues on the ground, issues that affect the community and need urgent attention,"

She says as she enumerates her leadership qualifications. She adds that she also values integrity, a quality she insists is a basic requirement for all good leaders.

She emphasizes the need to adopt technology in planning and execution of development projects, such as tracking the utilization of CDF funds.

Wish list

As a young woman leader, it is Maureen's wish that the government institute programmes to create awareness on the constitution, which is a crucial reference document for women aspiring for leadership position. She would also want to see the Judiciary setting up special courts to deal domestic violence, particularly where women are the victims, as is often the case. She is appreciative of AYT's Young Women in Governance programme, especially the mentorship component and hopes that there will be more of such programmes throughout the country to empower women.

Role models

Maureen says despite the bad press that he sometimes gets, Madaraka MP, Mike "Sonko" Mbuvi, embodies the basic tenets of true leadership – being with and standing for

your constituents. It is obvious that 'Sonko' spends a lot of time with his constituents and he truly cares for their well being and plight.

Most MPs would wait until the electioneering period before they start making appearances in their constituencies and pretending to agitate for the rights of their electorate. I like the fact 'Sonko' stands by what he believes and is not afraid to express his views regardless of whom he may rub the wrong way.



|| **SUCCESSFUL WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE**

Despite the challenges and difficulties that women in Kenya have to overcome to rise to influential leadership positions in Kenya, there have been a number of success stories. Stories of women, who against all odds, have managed to rise to prominent positions in Kenya's political landscape.

These women are case studies for younger women who can follow in their footsteps by learning how they managed to ascend to leadership positions

By providing mentorship to the young women, these successful women leaders will engender the transitional process of empowerment and inspire even more young women to take up leadership roles in their communities.

Some of these women are:

- 1 **Sophie Ngugi**, Consultant Gender Governance and Human Rights
- 2 **Monica Amollo**, Womens' Shadow Parliament
- 3 **Sarah Muhoya**, Centre for Multiparty Democracy
- 4 **Pollyne Owoko**, Executive Director Foundation For Young Women in Politics
- 5 **Mary Mutinga**, Executive Director, Maendeleo ya wanawakes
- 6 **Prof.Catherine Ndungo**,Lecturer Kenyatta University
- 7 **AMB.PROF Maria Nzomo**,Professor in Political Sciences & International Studies
- 8 **Susan Mwendu**, Administrator



In your opinion, how has the leadership landscape changed today compared to your days? And what was the level of involvement of young women in leadership?

When I was growing up, I found a nation with limited democracy where one party state ruled, and the concept of 'youth being the leaders of 'tomorrow' was rampant. Most of the times the agitation for recognition was demonstrated by university students going on rampage. In my college days, Kenya was still quite under developed in ICT and hence interactions and linkages were not easy but with the new millennium a lot of changes happened rapidly.

Today due the ICT revolution, people can engage more and this has been an important platform where young people have taken lead.

There are more opportunities outside the formal learning institutions for young people to take up public space. I am lucky to have grown in this era where women have more rights in public expression in most cultures. However, on the issue of young women and leadership, I would say nothing much has changed. At one time, I was vying for the chair person of a university group, and some people told me later on, that the only reason they didn't vote for me was because it didn't look fit for a lady, though I had what it took. "Women fit better in the position of secretary", they say. That was ten years ago, I have never forgotten that phrase.

I have seen this repeated in different ways. A lot has remained the same, though our mothers would tell us a lot has changed.

What can the young women in the country do in order to ascend to political leadership in the country?

Young women need to first assess the strength they have as individuals and as a group. As individuals one of the hindrances to their access to political leadership is lack of early involvement in politics. While mentoring young women, I have realized that many are not in political parties. Many will point to 'dirty politics' and, lack of credible political parties as reasons why they fail to engage in politics. However, there is no perfect political party and yet they still hold a very critical key to ascending to power. Being a member of a registered party or other organized groups is a great resource as young women will get to learn more and hence build their capacity and skills.

The organization of the political arena is masculine and this has often discouraged women. Young women need to first recognize their individual strength and capacity and the values, principles and ways of organizing that have been successful in other spheres of life. The lessons learnt from these other social aspects should be used in the political sphere. Young women can organize differently and make a difference in how they ascend to political space but must conform to integrity. They can inject a new way of thinking and doing things instead of just conforming.

Do you think that there is any need for special measures or attention for young women to enable them take political leadership in Kenya today?

I believe there is need to put some special measures in place in order to ensure that young women take up political leadership in Kenya today. This will start with an appreciation that the political arena does not offer a level playing field for women and men, and for the youth. Young women therefore suffer the consequences of the unfairness that is meted on women and on youth as they represent both. The socialization process empowers boys public life participation while the girl is more at the domestic sphere. Public space therefore is alien to most women and by the time they make decision to engage, their male counterparts have already learnt the ropes and are miles ahead. While we have laws that provide for fairness in representation, the society has not yet embraced young women's role in the public space fully. Recently while mentoring young women, many of them expressed how the reproductive roles have acted as a hindrance to their participation due to the societal expect-



tations. At the family level some experience lack of support as the public space is seen to interfere with their reproductive roles. Appreciating this, various measures need to be put in place to ensure their participation.

The measures need to target the whole society at different levels, and more so the young women. Young women need to be empowered and mentored to have the passion and belief that they are capable and deserving to have critical roles in the political arena. The society should appreciate this and avoid the double standards often used to judge young women. Increased civic engagement is pertinent to get young women actively engaging on various issues that are of interest in their country.

What are some of the challenges that the young women in the country still have to grapple with in their quest for leadership?

The challenges that young women face in their quest for leadership are social, economic and personal. At the personal level some young women have been socialized in an environment that does not promote their engagement in leadership hence do not believe in their ability. Lack of self-awareness, assertiveness and self esteem is a major obstacle as the desire and belief in oneself is the first step before other external factors. This could be attributed to personal attributes and also socialization where if one was brought up in a society that holds that public space and leadership is for the males, they don't believe in themselves and their capacity to lead and make a difference. Socially, some lack the familial or societal support while making attempts in leadership. Without support of the persons who are close

to them, young women therefore falter. Other social factors include the attitude of society members, women and men regarding the space of young women in the public arena.

Lack of exposure and illiteracy also hinders engagement in civic duties. The national identification card registration is one of the first crucial steps for citizens of legal age. There are more challenges for young women accessing IDs more so those who get married early.

The requirement of introduction by the husband has left many young women without IDs for long. The gender roles of women often restrict them to the household level hence lacking exposure in realizing the nature and means of engaging in the public space. Illiteracy also plays a major role since literacy and some level of education is necessary for engagement in leadership.

Lack of economic empowerment has also been a challenge as economic power is necessary in getting the resources required to effectively engage in the political space.

The gender dynamics in access and control over resources has been a major challenge where women have less control and hence less ability to dispose off property or use it as collateral.

Political violence has also been more rampant among women seeking public office and this includes sexual violence and assault. This discourages younger women who would be interested in public space.

What kind of obstacles did you face and how did you succeed



to be where you are today despite the obstacles?

Growing up and socializing in a patriarchal society is a challenge for any girl who is determined to achieve her goals. While growing up I was lucky to grow up in a supportive home environment, but not so in the external environment. I recall some experiences while growing up where some adults in my life, teachers and others encouraged me while others discouraged me. I particularly remember a teacher in my former primary school who punished me for being assertive about a fellow classmate who I felt was being treated unfairly. The girl was not bright in class and the teacher took to mocking her and expected the rest of us innocent girls and boys to laugh 'at the joke'. I protested and I became a 'marked' person by the teacher in the class.

It did not help that I was very small and bright in class, a combination that particularly irritated the teacher who used any opportunity he had to inform me how stubborn I was and would not succeed in life. I worked hard to prove this teacher and other detractors wrong and I had a strong sense of justice and integrity hence did not allow my conviction to be altered.

As a youth and young adult I have faced various discouragements, personal failures, witch-hunt among others that have made it a challenge to take another step. However, I have pursued and persisted in what I believe in to rise above this. One of the most important aspects is the belief in self. There is a poem that says *"if you can keep your head when others are losing theirs and blaming it on you..."* and this has been an encouraging message for me. Self awareness and continued reflection, critiquing myself and affirming

myself has been my guiding light.

I try to reflect even for several minutes every evening on how I have spent the day and how to make a better day tomorrow.

I also love reading; I have a personal library that I replenish every so often, at least every month but more often than that. Reading is both nourishing and informative and I read a range of books on social, psychosocial and other necessary skills. I also read a lot of biographies of various persons who have made a mark in life in various ways. I get encouraged and learn many lessons from other people's experience. I write to express myself too and share ideas. I have an active blog though I have been a bit infrequent this year. Spiritual nourishment has also been vital for me. It gives inner strength to go on and on and handle matters that happen even when they don't particularly make sense. Self care is important where one gets to re-energize and pamper oneself. This is easier said than done as the hassles of life often leave us with little time for this. I have made a personal commitment for this where I take time out to pamper myself and do things that I enjoy, and this is replenishing.

I like mentoring and giving back to the society. I do mentoring both informally and in more organized forums. I mentor young people more so young women. I find myself getting refreshed by these experiences. I often get young women and young men turning to me to seek counsel on various issues or just a listening ear. I have founded an ini-



tiative called 'Dare to Dream' Mentors where we have been mentoring boys and girls in primary school in the last three years. This is always a refreshing experience and one testimony I have is that regardless of how I am feeling before such forums, I am always uplifted.

What advice will you give to the young women of today who are interested in political leadership?

My advice is that, if you want it, go for it, if you wait for someone to discover you it may be too late.

They also need to cultivate value-based leadership at whatever level they are in, being woman or young should not be the 'selling point' but rather the principles that one holds dear and lives with. Having younger persons in leadership should also reflect a change not just in age but in values that are upheld. My dream is that one day Kenya will have leaders of integrity at the helm and I believe young people have what it takes to do this.

In your current position/occupation how can you work with the young women to help them attain political leadership?

I work with young women in promoting proactive leadership. I am also keen in linking young women to mentors who have more experience in their particular area of interest. I believe that older women and even men who have tried

whether successfully or not in engaging in politics are good mentors for young women who want to take up the political leadership. I am always willing and ready to mentor others and learn from them in return.

What are your future plans in so far as political leadership in the country is concerned?

Right now I know I want to influence in whatever small ways what happens in this country, which I do in the spaces that I access. I know I have what it takes to make a difference and one day I will vie for political office, but I have not yet made that decision!

Any message for young women in Kenya?

My final message for young women in this country is:

"There is no such thing as being non-political. Just by making a decision to stay out of politics you are making the decision to allow others to shape politics and exert power over you. And if you are alienated from the current political system, then just by staying out of it you do nothing to change it, you simply entrench it." Joan Kirner at Women into Power Conference, Adelaide, October 1994.



Monica h Amolo
Age: 49 years
Occupation: Executive
Director, Women
Shadow Parliament

In your opinion, how has the leadership changed today compared to your days? And what was the level of involvement of young women in leadership?

There's been positive attitude change towards women in leadership. Kenyans have realized that women bring value in leadership. They are not corrupt, the face of corruption is rarely dotted with women. Kenyans have realized that women do fit the public domain's bill and not just a people only to be found in the kitchen and bedroom. Young women were never to be found in leadership. They were whitewashed with the "You're the leaders of tomorrow" myth.

What can the young women in the country look forward to in order to ascend to political leadership in the country?

Young women should take advantage of the new constitution as it has recognized them. But they should make a deliberate move into politics and not just wallow in the fact that the constitution has recognized them. What will make them successful in politics is how issue-oriented they are and not their young age. They should be development conscious.

What opportunities can young women look forward to with regards to the current leadership?

It all lies in the new constitution. They will embark their political journey on a positive note if they draw opportunities from the new constitution.

Do you think that there is any need for special measures or attention for young women to enable them take political leadership in Kenya today?

Socio-economic, political and cultural empowerment is of paramount importance if the young woman is to ascend to political leadership.

What are some of the challenges that the young women in the country have to grapple with in their quest for leadership?

Young women are normally discriminated politically on different fronts. The young woman will find herself being sidelined because of her gender, age and matters pertaining to culture. Her dress code can have her losing her chance to ascend to leadership simply because the culture has it that a woman has to dress in a particular manner.

What kind of obstacles did you face and how did you succeed to be where you are today despite the obstacles?

More or less what today's young woman is facing. The anti-dote is to remain focused and fight for what you believe in. Understand the law and use it to argue your case and cause. Expose ills in the society, challenge injustices and discrimination.


What advice will you give to the young women of today who are interested in political leadership?

Young women should identify and join political parties. Be issue-oriented and be persons of integrity. The young women who are vying for elective positions should make the Constitution, Political Party Act, Electoral Act and Devolution Act 2012 their Bible.

In your current position/occupation how can you work with the young women to help them attain political leadership?
Women Shadow Parliament is all about mentoring young women hence young women should take advantage of this space.

What are your future plans in so far as political leadership in the country is concerned?

My quest is geared towards voting in women and men of integrity at all levels of leadership. My commitment goes towards educating the electorate on the constitution so that they can vote from an informed point of view.



SARAH MUHOYA

Occupation: Senior programmes Officer

Centre for Multi-Party Democracy

In your opinion, how has the leadership changed today compared to your days? And what was the level of involvement of young women in leadership?

It is different. There is a new dispensation resultant of the new constitution. The last 20 years before the new constitution were used for pushing for an environment that is conducive, sufficient and friendly to the woman. The crop of women leadership is clearly different as more young and educated women leaders take charge.

Now the arena is one for engagement and not pushing. After 1992 women movements took root as gender issues became national issues. However pro-activity on the part of the young woman is required. In the past there was no involvement of young women in leadership. There were no breeding grounds for young women to become leaders yet

it should start while they are in colleges as is witnessed in developed economies. In Kenya, women tend to venture into politics when they are in their 40s - this is after they have stabilized financially, managed to get good education and married with children. Forty-five years seems to be the comfort age for women to get into politics.

What can the young women in the country look forward to in order to ascend to political leadership in the country?

The constitution makes for the only solace. The provision of two young people to be nominated into parliament is very modest. The National Youth Council should be used as the breeding ground to nurture and mature the young woman.

What opportunities can young women look forward to with regards to the current leadership?

The National Youth Council needs to be the breeding ground for the young woman. But the council is yet to be vibrant. The young woman is left to grow in colleges. Senior women in politics need to mentor these young women. However the likes of Charity Ngilu have nurtured Cecile Mbarire till she rose to become an assistant minister. Martha Karua has also taken young girls under her wing to mentor them. The young woman should look for opportunities and not solely rely on political parties, since a majority of the parties only want to engage with personalities who will financially invest in their parties.

Do you think that there is any need for special measures or attention for young women to enable them take political leadership in Kenya today?

Definitely. There should be more investment in the youth council. The young woman should be motivated into leadership. Girls should start being nurtured right from high schools through to university. Many young male leaders like James Orengo, Ababu Namwamba and Cecile Mbarire honed their leadership skills through university movements. There should be programmes to target young women in these catchment areas where they are more concentrated.

What are some of the challenges that the young women in the country have to grapple with in their quest for leadership?

Access to leadership is difficult. Financial implications also weigh down the aspiring young women leaders. In addition, young women are kept away from politics due to the dirty trickery of politics, especially at party level. Furthermore, the young woman is afraid of political violence, lack of information and exposure, while mentorship programmes are weak.

The culture of clinging onto leadership is a challenge the young woman has to bear with. To crown this, older women leaders rarely mentor young girls into leadership. The fact that mentorship programmes are concentrated in urban areas also poses a challenge.



What kind of obstacles did you face and how did you succeed to be where you are today despite the obstacles?

I did not face challenges as such because I had skills. However the young woman has to break from the pack. She should advance academically if she is to ascend the leadership ladder. Generally, a young woman who lacks direction will grope around and never reach the 'promised land' in politics. Hence mentorship programmes will play a crucial role.

The young woman should learn to take initiatives and risks. However, to be successful, one also needs to have people to motivate her. In my case, my sibling supported my ambitions and this was a great help. The people around you should help you to see opportunities. Often times, one does not venture out there because of the inability to see opportunities.

What advice will you give to the young women of today who are interested in political leadership?

The young women should look for organizations that work with politicians so that they can get the much needed exposure. They should volunteer to work with politicians. That way they will be impacted on the way things are run politically. The young woman should be pro-active and get into politics at whatever level, she should improve herself, be competitive and have something to offer.

In your current position/occupation how can you work with the young women to help them attain political leadership?

CMD is involved in institutional mentorship programmes. The mentorship programme takes two months and those being mentored are paid in order to get them motivated.

What are your future plans in so far as political leadership in the country is concerned?

I am happy doing what I am currently doing - empowering young people to get into leadership, playing a supportive role, mentoring, educating and equipping the young with effective skills to get to be good leaders.

POLLYNE OWOKO

Age: 33

Occupation: Executive
Director Foundation for
Young Women In Politics



In your opinion, how has the leadership changed today compared to your days? And what was the level of involvement of young women in leadership

It has evolved a lot. A new constitution is now in place that is friendly to groups that have historically been systematically marginalized. There is freedom of speech, Kenyans are now more informed and exposed to politics. In the past, the young woman was not involved in politics. It is now that she wants to get involved. Initially she was relegated to subordinate positions - secretarial, cooking, serving tea, ushering in visitors and cleaning.

What can the young women in the country look forward to in order to ascend to political leadership in the country?

The new constitution protects the rights of the youth, such as the right to education. With the right level of education, the young woman can articulate issues and she can secure positions in all levels of leadership. She can tap into the social media, use it to mobilize people and excel politically.

What opportunities can young women look forward to with regards to the current leadership?

There is no one who is creating leadership opportunities for the youth. The young woman should take it upon herself to create those opportunities. The structures are already in place, so all she has to do is to tap into them. There are opportunities in political parties. The young woman should take it upon herself to do the donkey work and in the process learn the ropes and grow through the ranks.

Do you think that there is any need for special measures or attention for young women to enable them take political leadership in Kenya today?

Special measures are a must. Affirmative action is necessary to correct the injustices of the past. Young women need to also create networks to be visible within women movements. I also strongly believe that two nominees should be selected amongst the youth for the senate.

What are some of the challenges that the young women in the country have to grapple with in their quest for leader-

ship?

Young women are still marginalized. There are no succession plans for this group and no one seems to be interested in creating the necessary space for the young woman in the political front. Besides having to contend with a lack of mentors, young women also have to grapple with insufficient resources.

Then there is the matter of balancing family responsibilities with the call to public duty, which tend to push young women away from politics. Cultural barriers also weigh heavily on the aspiring young woman leader, just as much as the lack of public speaking skills.

What kind of obstacles did you face and how did you succeed to be where you are today despite the obstacles?

A major challenge was insufficient resources and convincing people that you are capable as a leader. Unfortunately, even older women in politics may urge you to concentrate on your studies and get married, instead of encouraging you to venture into politics. My advice is to maintain a positive attitude and ignore your critics.

What advice will you give to the young women of today who are interested in political leadership?

They need to know that time is not on their side. They should take the plunge and hit the ground running. Waiting for someone to hold their hands may lead them nowhere. In politics, each day is a learning day with a different experience. Make a decision, get into it and learn as you go.



In your current position/occupation how can you work with the young women to help them attain political leadership?

Through identifying them in all counties and lobbying political parties, working and encouraging the women in these parties and raising their visibility at every available opportunity.

What are your future plans in so far as political leadership in the country is concerned?

To see the next government having at least 50 percent of young women within the two-third provision in the new constitution. I also plan to start mentoring young women in high schools to prepare them for the possibility of getting involved in politics earlier. I am also striving to ensure that young women volunteer and participate in politics by the time they are 23. This is the only way to guarantee they get experience, develop a track record and have their presence felt at much earlier.

Mary Mutinga

Age: 49 Years

Occupation: Business Lady /
Chairperson Maendeleo Ya Wawake Organization - Machakos



In your opinion, how has the leadership changed today compared to your days? And what was the level of involvement of young women in leadership?

The landscape has not changed a lot because the new constitution is yet to fully implemented.

What can the young women in the country look forward to in order to ascend to political leadership in the country?

The awareness that they should come out and claim their space in the political arena.

What opportunities can young women look forward to with regards to the current leadership?

The new constitution has empowered young women. When fully implemented the new constitution will go a long way in enabling young women ascend to positions of leadership.

Do you think that there is any need for special measures or attention for young women to enable them take political leadership in Kenya today?

Yes. They should be empowered financially because that is their biggest challenge. Culturally, the woman was not allowed to own property. Today's young woman is still fighting to disentangle herself from such cultural grips that hold them back. Without finances, it is very hard for the young woman to get into leadership.

What are some of the challenges that the young women in the country have to grapple with in their quest for leadership?

In many cultures young women are not taken seriously. They are looked down upon and rarely considered for leadership. Religion has enforced some of these cultural beliefs as well. Besides lack of finances, women are still not allowed to make decisions at the family level in some cultures.

What kind of obstacles did you face and how did you succeed to be where you are today despite the obstacles?

Men used women in trying to bring me down. It has often been said that women are their worst enemies, but we should remember that it is the men who manipulate women to undermine their fellow women. Finances were also big challenge for me. Thankfully, my husband and children were very supportive. I also realised that I needed to engage the men to succeed and hence had some of the local male leaders to endorse me.

What advice will you give to the young women of today who are interested in political leadership?

They should not shy away from politics. Even if they are abused and shaken to their very core, they should remain courageous and work towards attaining their political goals. It is also important that they identify and work with organizations that will support them and believe in their political ambitions.

In your current position/occupation how can you work with the young women to help them attain political leadership?

I can assist the young women by:

- Working with them through forums
- Encouraging and supporting them
- Helping them to network
- Assisting them financially, when I can
- Educating them on pertinent issues

What are your future plans in so far as political leadership in the country is concerned?

I am aiming to attain an even higher political leadership position. In the upcoming elections, I will be contesting for the post of Women's Representative in Machakos County. Later on I plan to contest for a seat in the Senate.





**PROF. CATHERINE
NDUNGO**

AGE: 54

Occupation: Lecturer,
Kenyatta University

In your opinion, how has the leadership changed today compared to your days? And what was the level of involvement of young women in leadership?

The leadership has changed a lot. It is now more accommodative of young women. Because leadership in Africa is heavily associated with family, age, gender and financial muscle, young women have always been disadvantaged. But our society today is more inclusive. Now the young woman's opinion counts for something.

In the past, the young woman was unfortunately more of an instrument of leadership, to remain invisible, except when entertaining guests.

What can the young women in the country look forward to in order to ascend to political leadership in the country?

Young women must understand that the new Constitution makes a provision for them in leadership. The constitution provides for inclusivity and gives plenty of opportunities for the youth and women. Since 60 percent of voters in the

country are the youth, young women should take advantage of this in their quest to ascend to political leadership. They should utilize the perception that they are more reliable than young men to their advantage in order to realise their leadership potentials.

What opportunities can young women look forward to with regards to the current leadership?

They should use political parties and even vie as independent candidates to ascend to leadership. The provisions of the constitution, Vision 2030, the law and even the social media all present great opportunities for the young woman of today.

Do you think that there is any need for special measures or attention for young women to enable them take political leadership in Kenya today?

Yes. There should be capacity building so that they can be given the skills necessary to participate effectively in leadership. Structures should be put in place to create space for them to explore their leadership potential. It is important that the youth fund is utilized by young women because women still are financially dependent on their men.

What are some of the challenges that the young women in the country have to grapple with in their quest for leadership?

Some of the challenges are:

- Financial
- Gender stereotyping
- Culture and religion

- Stiff competition from the established political order

What kind of obstacles did you face and how did you succeed to be where you are today despite the obstacles?

My parents were not financially sound and I only got to school at the age of 10 after my uncle realized my potential and sponsored my education. The culture of my community was another hindrance, since at the time girls were seen more as a source of dowry and had to be married off as early as was possible. Since I enrolled in school at an advanced age I had to fight off peer pressure. Young men in the village as well as teachers viewed me sexually since I looked mature to them. The only advantage I had was that I was bright and focused. I also received a lot of support from my parents. Support from whatever quarters is important if the young woman is to achieve her goals.

What advice will you give to the young women of today who are interested in political leadership?

My advice is for her to identify structures, such as political parties, that will nurture her into political leadership. It is very hard to be nurtured politically outside these parties. Young women should expose themselves to political parties that give them the platform for leadership. They should understand the political landscape through reading, research and interacting and applying what they learn. They should also learn that it is very rough in politics. This should however not discourage them, but inspire them to deconstruct the status quo.

In your current position/occupation how can you work with

the young women to help them attain political leadership?

I do a lot of political mentoring to expose the young women to knowledge and skills in leadership. I also make available to them literature on politics.

What are your future plans in so far as political leadership in the country is concerned?

I look forward to inclusive leadership for both the youth and young women. My hope is to see the day when there will be change of attitude toward young leaders.

I would like to see structures of apprenticeship in politics. This was there in the yesteryears in the traditional community. Seasoned leaders should hold the hands of the young and handover the mantle of leadership.

The old leaders should assume the archival stance and let the young learn from them, otherwise the leadership vacuum will continue to widen if the young are not nurtured.



In your opinion, how has the leadership landscape changed today compared to your days? And what was the level of involvement of young women in leadership?

Young women are now more educated and more aware of their rights than two decades ago.

However, the majority of young women seem to gravitate more towards economically rewarding or lucrative professions than towards political leadership.

I see many more young women private sector executives than I see in political leadership. In this latter regard, there seems to be a general view among young women that it is the older generation of women leaders that has failed to mentor them or to “*pass the*

baton” to the younger ones, that would otherwise wish to join political leadership. This view in my opinion is inaccurate. I, and many other women of my generation for example, had no one to mentor us or to “*pass us the baton.*” We were groping in the unknown at a time when patriarchy was vicious; communication technology low; and with no laws and support networks to protect us from a hostile environment.

For me in particular, I derived the courage to struggle to attain the highest education possible, from my faith in God (as my shield and defender), and from a deep conviction that I had a responsibility to succeed and be the best I could be - if only to serve as a role model to other women and give them courage to fight for their own emancipation.

What can the young women in the country look forward to in order to ascend to political leadership in the country?

There is no shortcut. They must be ready and willing to do the necessary preparatory work and then plunge into action. Political leadership is a profession like any other. Here, as anywhere else in the world, it requires dedication and a willingness to confront and manage the challenges that come with it.

What opportunities can young women look forward to with regards to the current leadership?

There are many more opportunities for political leadership for young women than previously. The devolved system of government created by the new constitution means that there are numerous political positions that women can vie for at all three levels of government - at county, senate and national assembly levels. Affirmative action provisions



AMB. PROF MARIA NZOMO

Occupation: Professor
of Political Science &
International Studies

have further enhanced the possibility of many more women accessing political seats through quotas and appointive nomination seats.

Do you think that there is any need for special measures or attention for Young women to enable them take political leadership in Kenya today?

The constitution has already provided adequate measures. It is now up to the young women to exploit these and to participate more actively in ensuring that the emerging legislations adequately elaborate the constitutional provisions.

What are some of the challenges that the young women in the country still have to grapple with in their quest for leadership?

Despite the promulgation of the new constitution, patriarchy and retrogressive cultural values are still prevalent and are likely to continue to impair women's quest for empowerment and emancipation. Young women must now take the lead in rejecting divisive politics that tends to divide the women's struggle for leadership- in particular; politicized ethnicity must be fought by all of us.

What kind of obstacles did you face and how did you succeed to be where you are today despite the obstacles?

Additional obstacles for me included being born in poverty and in a highly patriarchal environment where I had no role model or mentor, and where I was the odd one out; almost single-handedly going against the trends of the time. I owe it to God who gave me the capacity to excel and qualify for admission to one of the few national girls' high schools

of the time and my mother who struggled to get me the fees required. From there on, I acquired the wings to fly to greater heights. It has been a long and challenging journey - nothing has ever come easy in my life. But I am glad and grateful for the wonderful opportunities that my education has given me to serve women, Kenya and Africa.

What advice will you give to the young women of today who are interested in political leadership?

To believe in themselves and aim to be the best they can be without looking over their shoulders.

In your current position/occupation how can you work with the young women to help them attain political leadership?

I have been working with and mentoring women of all ages for the last 32 years. I continue to do so.

What are your future plans in so far as political leadership in the country is concerned?

I would wish to serve in the next government so that I can effectively apply my wealth of technical skills and practical experience as a political scientist and a skilled leader or manager.





**NAME: SUSAN
MWENDE KING'OO
AGE: 42**

Occupation: Administrator
(Chief), Matuu Location,
Yatta District

In your opinion, how has leadership changed today compared to your days? And what was the level of involvement of young women in leadership?

In the past, a woman's place was considered to be the kitchen. The girl child was rarely educated and was married away at an early age. Boys were given preference when it came to education.

Today, however, things have changed. Women have proved themselves in all spheres from corporate, business to political leadership – areas that were previously the sole domain of men.

What can young women in the country look forward to in order to ascend to political leadership in the country?

Young women need to develop self-confidence and realize that they have the capability to take up leadership positions,

just like men. There is need for a change of attitude and for astuteness amongst the women to take advantage of opportunities that are now opening up for them.

Do you think that there is any need for special measures or attention for young women to enable them take political leadership in Kenya today?

Yes. Special measures are necessary. Young women need to be engaged in seminars that will sensitize them on who they are and their potential. Women need to develop self confidence and this can be achieved through initiatives such as mentorship programmes. The church also has an obligation to mentor women into leadership positions.

What are some of the challenges that the young women in the country have to grapple with in their quest for leadership?

- There are a number of challenges facing young women today including:
- Illiteracy and semi-illiteracy
- The misconception that women, particularly the young ones, cannot be leaders
- Girls getting married at very young ages
- Lack of exposure amongst the young women
- Financial constraints

What kind of obstacles did you face and how did you succeed to be where you are today despite the obstacles?

Before getting into my current position I was a teacher for 19 years and in the community as a woman, it was hard to be taken seriously. When the opportunity arose to apply for the position of a Chief, I faced a lot of obstacles and was

discouraged even by my extended family, since the position was seen to be suited for a man. I prayed a lot and made the right decision. Even though some people expected me to be relieved of my position, I am still a Chief today and have proven myself at my job.

What advice will you give to the young women of today who are interested in political leadership?

I would advise self-confidence, that they ignore critics and instead go ahead and prove their capability. They should be aware that leadership has challenges. If they are married, it is important to have a common vision as a family. They should first sell their dreams to their spouses since having the support of your family as a crucial part of the support system they will need. Importantly though, young women should first have a vision for the people and community they intend to lead before venturing into leadership. It is this vision that will give you direction and sense of motivation. There is also the need to be principled, but nonetheless still attentive and accommodative of dissenting views and opinions.

In your current position, how can you work with young women to help them attain political leadership?

I can organize barazas and invite aspiring young women leaders to use these forums as a platform to meet the community and advance their cause.

There are also CBOs and NGOs operating under my area of jurisdiction. I can mobilize these organisations to engage and facilitate programmes that will mentor young women into leadership positions.



|| CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

When AYT began the Young Women in Governance (YWIG) project, we envisioned a future where young women will be adequately represented in decision-making positions and actively involved in defining their interests.

The YWIG project having come full circle, has experienced successes and challenges in equal measure. Being a pilot project, it also came across uncharted territories, which served as eye-openers and marked the beginnings of active work in advocating for young women to take on participatory roles in leadership and governance processes.

The project noted the following in regard to steps that need to be taken to ensure a future for young women's inclusion in leadership and governance in Kenya:

- There is a need to mobilize young women to actively participate in political parties. Registration and active participation in a political party is an entry point to seeking elective and nominative positions.
- There is need for mentorship of young women, as this is an important tool in their political leadership advancement. Mentorship provides the much needed guidance from women who have encountered some of the challenges young women are currently facing and should continue to be emphasized to inspire and encourage the young women.
- There is need for continued civic education, specifically to educate young women on the gains in the New Constitution of Kenya, and the ways in which they can take advantage of these gains as women, and as youth.
- There is need to lobby for relevant action to ensure increased attention is given to mainstreaming young women living with disabilities into leadership.
- There is need for young women to be trained in communication and negotiation skills to build their confidence.



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