



REPUBLIC OF KENYA



# NATIONAL GENDER RESEARCH AGENDA FOR KENYA





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# KENYA VISION 2030

TOWARDS A GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE  
AND PROSPEROUS NATION



  
VISION

An inclusive society free from gender inequality and all forms of discrimination

  
MISSION

To promote and protect gender equality and freedom from all forms of discrimination in Kenya, especially for Special Interest Groups through ensuring compliance with policies, laws and practice

  
CORE  
VALUES

- Dignity
- Equality
- Teamwork
- Integrity
- Inclusivity

## **Published by**

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## **PREFACE**



**K**enya has made significant strides in establishing a progressive legal and policy framework to advance gender equality. The Constitution of Kenya 2010 guarantees equality and freedom from discrimination, while national policies integrate gender considerations across sectors and promote equitable access to education. Despite these frameworks, persistent gender gaps remain, particularly among Special Interest Groups (SIGs) such as women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, and marginalized communities.

The National Gender and Equality Commission, established under Article 59 of the Constitution and the NGEC Act Cap7K, is mandated to promote equality and freedom from discrimination for all Kenyans. Central to this mandate is conducting research and generating evidence to inform policy, programming, and advocacy. Reliable, coordinated, and actionable data on SIGs is essential for addressing the root causes of inequality and supporting evidence-based decision making across the national, county, and private sectors.

This National Gender Research Agenda represents a critical step toward consolidating and strengthening gender research in Kenya. It provides a framework for coordinated research, capacity building, strategic advocacy, and multi-sectoral collaboration, ensuring that data is accessible, robust, and directly informs policies and interventions. By prioritizing areas such as root causes of inequality, intersectionality, gender transformation, systemic issues, and emerging gender concerns, this Agenda will enable Kenya to track progress, shift mindsets, and advance a transformative and inclusive society.

It is my hope that this Agenda will serve as a foundational tool for all stakeholders committed to promoting equality and inclusion, and that it will guide actionable, data-driven decisions that accelerate gender justice in Kenya.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and lines.

**HON. REHEMA JALDESA**  
CHAIRPERSON

# **Background**

## ***Gender Policy and Legal Framework***

Kenya has progressive policy and legal framework on gender. Firstly, the Constitution of Kenya 2010 guarantees equality and freedom from discrimination for all and advocates for at least one-third representation of either gender in elected leadership positions. Secondly, the National Policy on Gender and Development integrates gender across all sectors. Thirdly, the Education and Training Sector Gender Policy promotes equitable access to learning opportunities. Despite these notable efforts, gender gaps persist in Kenya, with women being less likely to get employed than men (60% vs. 70%) and earning 17.7% per hour less (UN Women, 2023). Further, women hold only 23% of elected and 37% of public institutions' leadership positions. They are more likely to experience gender-based violence (GBV) and discrimination on property ownership, especially land, and less likely to obtain post-secondary education as compared to men (19% Vs 21%).

## ***Research Mandate of the National Gender and Equality Commission***

As one of her efforts towards promoting a gender equitable society, Kenya established The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), a Constitutional Commission under the National Gender and Equality Commission Act Cap7K, pursuant to Article 59 (4) & (5) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. The Commission is mandated to promote gender equality and freedom from discrimination for all persons in Kenya, with a focus on Special Interest Groups (SIGs) that include: Children, Youth, Women, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), Older Members of Society, Minority and Marginalized groups. Section 8(i) of the NGEC Act, Cap7K mandates the Commission to conduct and coordinate research activities on matters relating to equality and freedom from discrimination as contemplated under Article 27 of the Constitution. Section 8 (n) further states that the Commission shall establish, consistent with data protection legislation, a database on issues relating to equality and freedom from discrimination for different affected interest groups, and produce periodic reports for national, regional, and international reporting on progress in the realization of equality and freedom from discrimination for these interest groups.

## **The Problem**

Despite this mandate, NGEC, like other institutions researching gender in Kenya, continues to grapple with the challenge of limited amount of synthesized evidence to inform decision making, programming and policy formulation and practice. This problem

is more complex in respect to availability of research and data on and about the status of gender equality among SIGs, affecting utilization of data and evidence to inform programs and policy on SIGs. For decades, research institutions, sectoral think tanks and state and non-state organizations have independently produced valuable data including citizen-generated data on gender equality, but lacking proper coordination. In addition, there is limited use of contextualized frameworks for data collection and reporting that would allow pooled analysis and tracking of progress. Notably, this lack of coordination, even with availability of policies and guidelines to support gender equality, results in duplication of research and creation of siloed data that does not systematically build on each other. This results in limited research utility to inform policy, decisions and solutions to address root causes of gender equality. Consequently, the Commission's mandate of researching SIGs, as well as efforts by other institutions and individuals in researching gender, face a threat of being derailed by this lack of regular data from different actors that is necessary for providing real time insights into the well-being of these groups for relevance of policies and programs. It is critical that the Commission and other gender research institutions and individuals stay ahead of emerging complex societal changes that impact gender equality by proactively addressing issues based on quality data. Data that captures complex realities, that is sometimes difficult to measure, through improved metrics and focused data management, would help reduce data fatigue and promote relevance and insightfulness.

Accordingly, there is need for well-coordinated research and data management to fulfill the mandate of NGECE and like-minded institutions regarding promoting equality and non-discrimination for all Kenyans. Therefore, a well-structured research and engagement framework is essential to influence institutions, government, and communities toward a gender-inclusive and transformative society. In this connection, a National Gender Research Agenda will enable the generation of strategic evidence for informing programming and practice, sustained advocacy, and strengthened collaboration between state and non-state institutions. Additionally, to informing policy formulation and implementation aimed at shifting mindsets and practices across Kenya and its diverse cultures. The National Gender research Agenda would also be a source for holding institutions accountable for their actions, and support the country to accelerate progress towards gender equality.

It is against this backdrop that NGECE aims at bringing together diverse institutions and entities in the gender research space to collaborate and leverage each actor's strengths to create a more robust and holistic understanding of gender issues. The Commission observes that data can only be truly effective if it is robust, accessible, and actionable.

Hence, it sees an opportunity to utilize administrative and community-driven efforts, and improve communication and coordination of gender resources including data cataloging, modeling, and sharing practices.

## Action Taken

To address the problem of uncoordinated gender research, NGEC initiated discussions with stakeholders from 22 institutions representing the government, civil society organizations (CSOs) and academia in Nairobi on 15th October, 2024. This was followed by a two-day workshop in Machakos, on the establishment of a National Gender Research Agenda on 6th and 7th February 2025. The Machakos workshop drew its participants from 11 think tank institutions that were proposed at the initial stakeholder consultative meeting in Nairobi. The workshop successfully co-created strategies for strengthening a Gender Research Agenda in Kenya, which was validated at a second stakeholders meeting held in Nairobi on 30th April, 2025 and finalized in a two-day workshop in Naivasha on 7th and 8th August, 2025. The strategies are outlined in the following section.

## Strategies for Strengthening the National Gender Research Agenda 2025-2027:

- 1. Inform the implementation of the Gender Sector Statistics Plan (GSSP), and its governance framework:** This provides a good opportunity for strengthening the National Gender Research Agenda as part of the Kenya Strategy for the Development of Statistics (KSDS). This initiative complements the ongoing efforts by the GSSP to generate and enhance access to quality gender data and evidence to support decision making, programming and policy making.
- 2. Establish and Operationalize the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Data Hub:** To enable access to quality disaggregated (with an intersectional lens) data and empirical evidence on Gender, NGEC will set up a data hub that will be a one stop shop for real time information to inform decision making, policy formulation, interventions and programming by different actors. As a one stop shop, the hub will stamp out duplication and **promote and strengthen** access and utilization of gender resources and champion data dissemination and outreach to universities and research institutions and individuals.
- 3. Capacity Strengthening:** This will be mainly done through co-creation of capacity strengthening programs, e.g. masterclass programs, fellowships, mentorship and skilling of: data producers and users, policy and decision makers, communicators and gender researchers.

<b>Data producers:</b>	They will be equipped with knowledge and skills in: collection, processing, management, storage, and retrieval of data.
<b>Data users including diverse community members, teachers, and parents:</b>	They will be supported to gain knowledge and skills in accessing the right databases, mining, analyzing, interpreting and presenting available data; and research ethics.
<b>Policy makers:</b>	Their capacity will be strengthened on evidence-based decision making.
<b>Communicators:</b>	They will be trained on effective evidence-based communication on GESI research.
<b>Gender researchers:</b>	Strengthen researchers' capacity on theory, methods, approaches, policy, and practice for contextually relevant gender research.

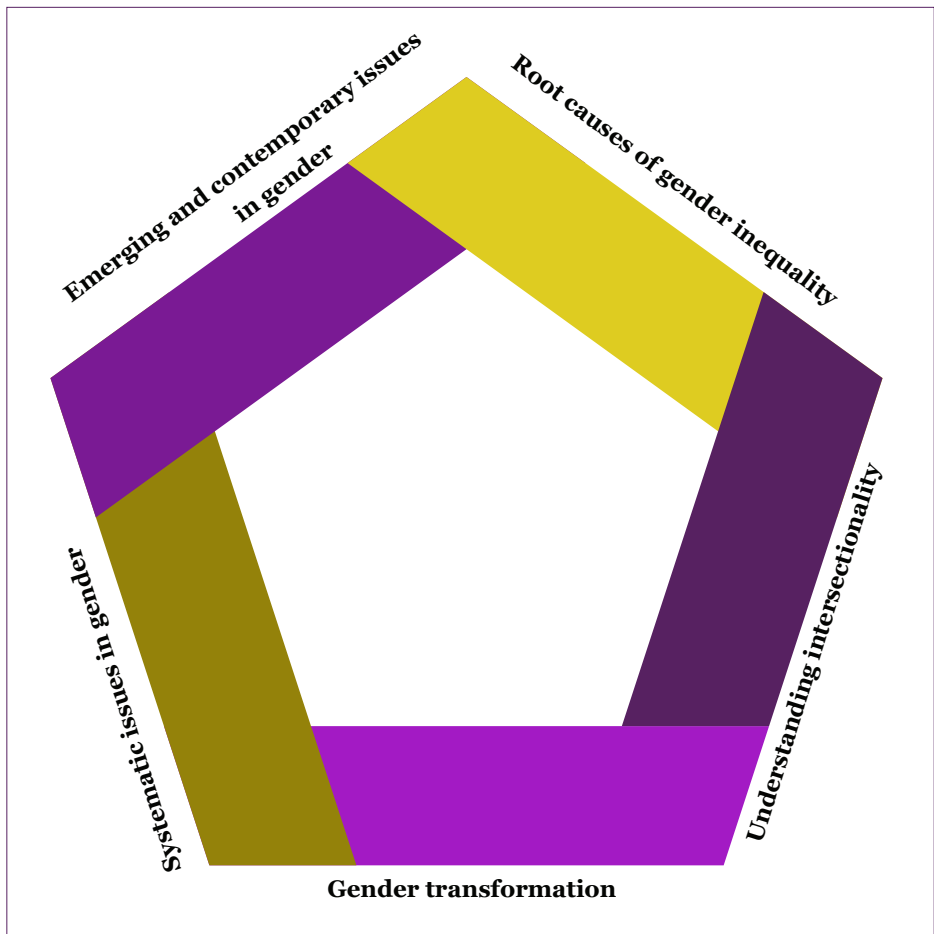
#### **4. Strengthening Collaboration and Partnerships in Gender Research**

This would include bringing together researchers, practitioners and policy makers from various fields (e.g., health, education, agriculture and technology) and sectors such as government, civil society organizations (CSOs), academia and the private sector. The 22 institutions that are already collaborating in the co-creation of National Gender Research Agenda form a good starting point for collaborative multi-sectoral research. This provides diverse expertise and perspectives necessary for tackling complex problems such as uprooting systemic gender inequalities.

- 5. Strategic and high-level advocacy:** This will involve mapping of actors that have power, influence and interests to promote the gender agenda. The NGEC will reach out to these actors with distilled messages, data and evidence gaps, gender innovations to interest them to engage and influence decisions and policy based on current research and evidence in the gender space. To achieve this, NGEC will produce knowledge products such as policy briefs and advisories, and convene high level round table discussions.

**Leverage technology and AI-driven solutions** and make critical gender data widely accessible and open to customization and use.

Priority areas for gender research were also co-created around the following areas:



**1. Root causes of gender inequality:**

- » Re-examine the root causes of gender inequalities in the contemporary context.
- » Promote the generation of data and evidence that address the root causes of gender inequality.
- » Establish the socio-economic costs of gender inequalities.
- » Examine, draw learnings, and scale good practice to address root causes of gender inequalities.
- » Contextually understand gender norms, practices and structures and shifting mindsets (interrogating contextual solutions).

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## **2. Understanding intersectionality:**

- » Examine the factors that interact with gender (disability, economic status, age, race and ethnicity) to produce multidimensional inequality.
- » Examine and explore the demographic dynamics and geographic contexts (spatial relationship) and how they influence gender dimensions.
- » Analyze the combination of factors that have the greatest impact in reducing gender inequalities and associated costs.
- » Applying an intersectional lens in GESI research.

## **3. Gender transformation**

- » Understanding gender transformation across diverse contexts.
- » Foundational anchors of gender transformation including theories and concepts including use of African frameworks and theories and documentation of indigenous knowledge.
- » Understanding various gender markers continuums.
- » Evaluation tools and indicators that credibly track gender transformation.
- » Unlocking the potential of education and parenting systems in realizing gender transformation.
- » Positioning men and boys in the gender transformative research agenda.

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## **4. Systemic issues in gender**

- » The role of power, religion, politics, culture, matriarchy and patriarchy on gender transformative efforts across various sectors.
- » How institutional laws, policies and practice systematically shape gender transformative efforts.
- » Women and girls leadership and agency.

## **5. Emerging and contemporary issues in gender**

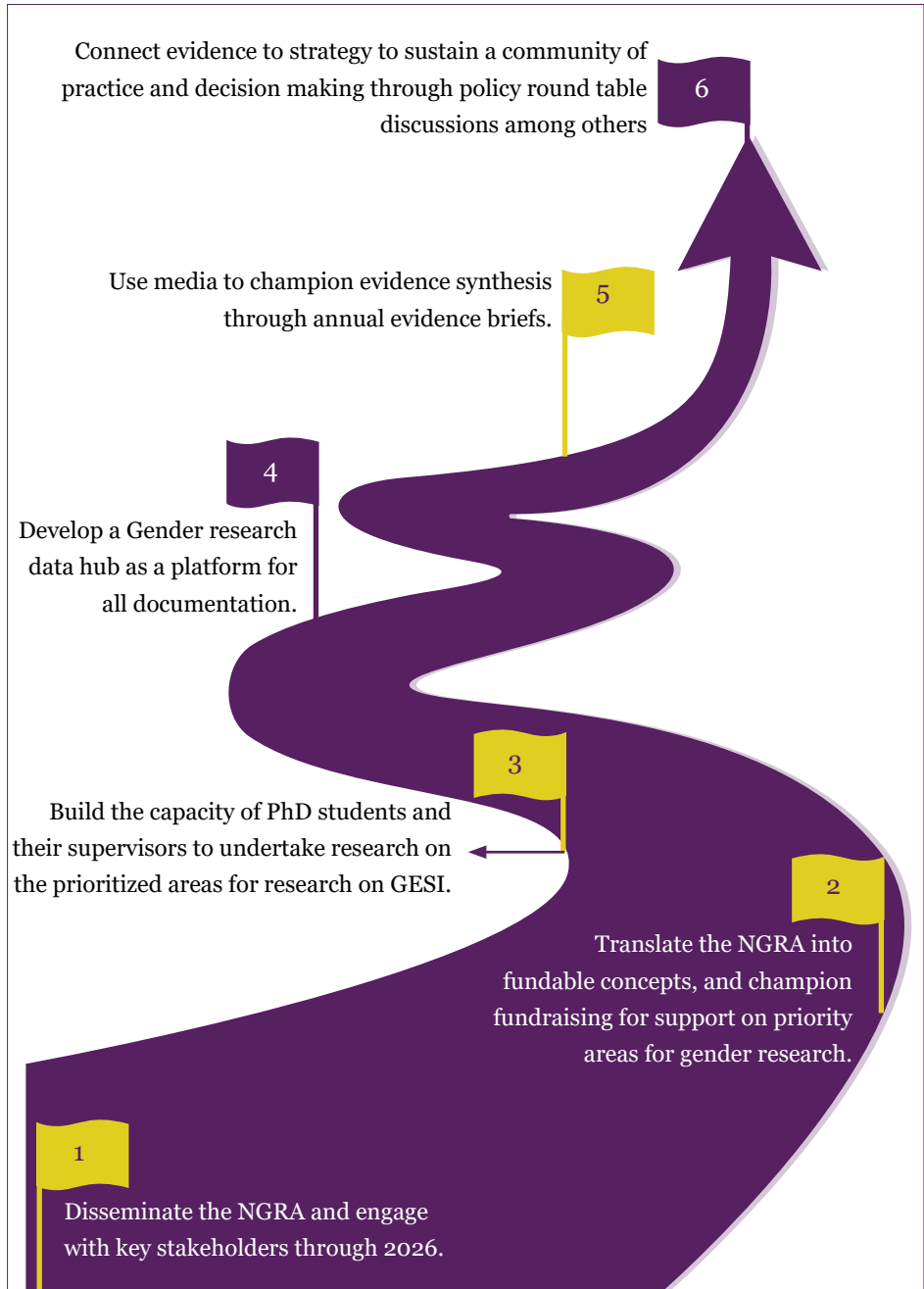
- » Gender and inclusion issues in advanced technology including AI, climate change, health, foreign policy, GBV (including Femicide and technology facilitated GBV) and pandemics.
- » Gender and emergency response to humanitarian crises.
- » Gender and disaster preparedness, early warning systems.
- » Role of digital divide in driving gender equality.
- » Data mining and evidence synthesis on emerging and contemporary issues.

## **Conclusion**

This document outlines the background and rationale for establishing a National Gender Research Agenda in Kenya, led by the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), to address the persistent challenge of uncoordinated gender research and limited synthesized evidence. Despite Kenya's strong legal and policy frameworks, significant gender gaps remain, evidenced by lower employment rates for women (60% vs. 70% for men), a 17.7% wage gap, and women holding only 23% of elected leadership positions. The NGEC, mandated to promote equality for all and conduct research, is initiating this coordinated research agenda to overcome the current fragmentation, duplication, and limited utility of data, especially regarding Special Interest Groups (SIGs). The resulting strategies, developed in consultation with multiple stakeholders, include establishing a Gender and Equality Data Hub, strengthening capacity for data producers and users, fostering collaboration, and driving strategic advocacy and technology leverage to focus research on priority areas like root causes, intersectionality, gender transformation, systemic issues, and emerging contemporary issues.

## The Way Forward

Through 2025 to 2029 the NGRA committee will undertake the following initiatives:











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