



UON WEE HUB NEWSLETTER



MOTTO: Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment through African Women Centered Research, policy change and collaboration with women's organizations, policy makers and other stakeholders.

Welcome to the Inaugural Issue of our Newsletter, UON WEE HUB NEWSLETTER

As we begin the new year, we are happy to introduce you to **UON WEE HUB NEWSLETTER**. This quarterly publication by



the University of Nairobi Women's Economic Empowerment (UoN WEE) Hub will bring to you updates on the research activities, findings, and plans on thematic areas such as affirmative action funds and entrepreneurship; women in formal and informal employment; care economy and women's work; and women's movement and self-mobilization for

women's economic empowerment (WEE).

The Hub prides itself in producing cutting-edge, innovative, rigorous, and accessible evidence through research that impacts policy formulation, implementation, and up-scaling for the full realization of women's empowerment. Through this newsletter, we will let you into our world of research by sharing our success stories, plans, and journey toward the full realization of women's economic empowerment.

As you enjoy reading our Newsletter, I would like you to reflect on the words of Brené Brown, a storyteller and research Professor at the University of Houston... *"The power of statistics and the clean lines of quantitative research appealed to me, but I fell in love with the richness and depth of qualitative research."*

I hope that our stories and research findings will inspire you to join us in this journey of economic emancipation not only for the Kenyan woman but for the women of Africa.

Prof Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira,
University of Nairobi WEE Hub Leader and
Director, African Women Studies Centre



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Data Driven Decision-Making in WEE



The University of Nairobi Women's Economic Empowerment Hub (WEE Hub) was established through a partnership between the University

of Nairobi and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in 2020 and is domiciled at the African Women Studies Centre (AWSC). The Hub's vision is the full realization of Women's Economic Empowerment and the mission is to be thought-leader in producing cutting-edge, innovative, rigorous, and accessible evidence through research for impacting policy formulation, implementation and up-scaling.

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Data Driven Decision-making in WEE (cont.)

It has been two years of extensive research work conducted by the UoN WEE Hub, and we are proud to launch our maiden newsletter that shall be a platform to share our research findings and engage our stakeholders for awareness and contribution to the journey of women's economic empowerment. Indeed, this journey requires collective action with multi-stakeholders involvement. Towards the fulfillment of the Hub's mission, we have continued to produce accessible research evidence in four broad thematic areas: affirmative action funds and entrepreneurship; women in formal and informal employment and women's economic empowerment; childcare and women's work; and in women's movement and policy advocacy for women's economic empowerment. In the first two-years of our presence, we have undertaken and articulated the findings and recommendations into a Priority Agenda for Women's Economic Empowerment in Kenya. The evidence from this research work has also been used by our advocacy platform: the Networking and Alliance Building for Women's Economic Empowerment (NABWEE) to inform policy discourse on WEE in Kenya.

The WEE Hub is multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral and works with partners in national and county governments, private sector, civil society, donors and academia among other collaborator institutions, to ensure that the women's agenda is at the center stage in all development initiatives and programming. Some of the key government institutions we have worked with to support data driven policy advocacy work include, the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, The National Treasury, Ministry of East African Community and Regional Development

We look forward to continued engagement and your support as we drive the women's agenda forward and wish you a

Happy New Year 2023!

Director of Research, UoN WEE Hub.

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Message from the Desk of the KMC Coordinator



Welcome to the first issue of our Newsletter. This is a great milestone to showcase our achievements at the University of Nairobi Women's Economic Empowerment (UoN WEE) Hub. As a multidisciplinary research-based Hub, we aim to strengthen the generation and use of evidence to advance women's economic empowerment and gender equality.

The Knowledge Management and Communication Unit strives to amplify the knowledge base of the WEE Hub by disseminating the research findings of the various research projects in the Hub by repackaging them for different audiences and sharing them across its various channels. The KMC has been able to achieve this through multiple publications, use of print, audio-visual and social media channels.

As we release this Newsletter, we are geared towards offering a platform for informing all stakeholders of the transformative work of the WEE Hub on Women's Economic Empowerment.

Dr. Dorothy Njiraine

Knowledge Management and
Communication Coordinator,
UON WEEHUB and
Chairperson and Senior Lecturer
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Celebrating Prof. Margaret Kobia, EGH

The outgoing Cabinet Secretary in the Ministry of Public Service, Gender, Senior Citizen's Affairs and Special Programs Prof. Margaret Kobia, EGH was honoured on 30th November 2022 in a celebration held at the Villa Rosa Kempinski Hotel in Nairobi.

Women leaders and trail blazers celebrated Prof. Kobia for having made significant contributions towards women's empowerment during her tenure as a Cabinet Secretary. The Trailblazers inducted Prof. Kobia into the rank of a Trailblazer in a colourful ceremony that was attended by over one hundred women leaders and officiated by PS Mary Kimonye, representing the Hon CS Aisha Jumwa.

Trailblazers are women who pioneered the gender equality movement in Kenya. They have held top government, non-government, and international jobs, leaving footprints of commitment, distinction, and success. These women have made exemplary contributions in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Some of the Trailblazers who attended the event include the Hon. Charity Ngilu, Prof. Maria Nzomo, Dr Jennifer Riria, Rahab Muhiu, Terry Kantai, Hellen Nkaissey and Prof. Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira, among others.

In 2018, during her five-years term as a cabinet secretary, Prof. Kobia spearheaded the establishment and launch of the Trail Blazers Program, which identifies and rewards women leaders who have made substantial contributions to Kenya's political

economy. She also supported several initiatives by women aimed at women's empowerment. She officiated the launch of the book *Conversations with Pathfinders: Kenyan Women in Politics, Leadership, Social Mobilisation and Constitution Making*, published by the Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) Hub of the University of Nairobi and facilitated the launch of the autobiographies of three trailblazers, that is, Prof. Julia Ojiambo, the Hon. Zipporah Kitony, and Dr Lydia Nzomo during the International Women's Day marked on March 8th, 2022.

In addition, the Professor was instrumental in the establishment and the launch of the Dr Joyce Laboso Gender Award, in honour of the late Dr Laboso of Bomet County, one of the first three female Governors in Kenya. The award intended to honour women who demonstrate determination, perseverance, and courage in the face of adversity.

Her contribution in championing the recognition and honouring of women's service to the country, as well as the contribution towards gender sensitive legislation, catapulted her to join the ranks of these exemplary women leaders. The initiation into the group was carried out by adorning Prof. Kobia in African regalia: a red flowing dress with a white skilfully beaded cape coat and matching crown, a belt and headgear, before being presented to the women who broke into song and dance in her honour.



Prof. Kobia receives a gift from the Executive Director of FEMNET, Memory Zonde-Kachambwa and a board member

The event was organized by a coordinating committee chaired by the UoN WEE Hub Leader and Director of the African Women Studies Center, Professor Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira, together with Dr Jennifer Riria and Daisy Amdany and co-funded by the UN Women, the UoN WEE Hub, Echo Network Africa and

CRAWN Trust. The event was also supported by other partners such as the Safaricom Women's Business Network, Absa Bank, Re-Invent, Kenya Commercial Bank, the Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development, Women in Business-the Mentorship Group, Maendeleo Ya Wanawake and the League of Muslim Women in Kenya.



Hon Charity Ngilu (left) and Dr. Jennifer Riria present a portrait to Prof. Kobia

Finding Voices In Women Economic Empowerment: A WEE Hub Researcher's Reflection

June Ombara, Research Fellow
University of Nairobi Women's Economic Empowerment Hub

In many African societies gender roles are culturally shaped through socialization. For girls this starts at a very young age with the mother manipulating the girl's self-concept, guiding her to do things or behave in a way that is considered to be feminine and thus suitable for girls.

The next stage is canalization and differentiation of activities between boys and girls. This involves encouraging the boys to be combative, abrasive, and aggressive while the girls are indoctrinated not to behave in a similar, "boyish" manner which leads to their lack of confidence, timidity, nervousness, apprehension, self-doubt, reticence, and submissive attitude.

Furthermore, girls may often be addressed by various negative verbal appellations. Another important aspect of socialization documented in many studies is that women and children were discouraged from



asking questions or voicing opinions. This is how stereotypes of masculinity and femininity have been directly or indirectly planted and reinforced throughout childhood and into adulthood.

However, great transformations have been made since the works of women such as Mary

Wollstonecraft, Dale Spender, Ann Oakley, Kate Millet, Adrienne Rich, Germaine Greer and Betty Friedan revealing issues of women's rights, gender roles, power, identities, and the role of women in the society gained traction. There is growing evidence that women, too, are and can be sources of untapped

knowledge, not only in the private but also in the public domain. Despite this development, higher education, exposure and opportunities, many women will still desist from speaking out and expressing their knowledge, thoughts and experiences. Their voices remain conspicuously absent in many platforms, and they still face a multitude of barriers that they need to overcome to find their voices and engage and challenge dominant male voices.

The Women's Economic Empowerment Hub of the University of Nairobi has created a platform for researchers to have the voices of women heard. During my fieldwork, I learnt that there are different, non-traditional ways of gathering information from the women

The Women's Economic Empowerment Hub of the University of Nairobi has created a platform for researchers to have the voices of women heard

by listening to their stories and using environmental and pedagogical strategies as well as a wide range of interventions to sharpen their ideas and voices through expression and argumentation.

As researchers, we should listen attentively rather than speak. We should be able to catch the unfolding arguments of moderators, visiting speakers, experts among many other presentations. The narratives of women on how the affirmative action funds had empowered them brought in a discussion with a great array of voices which presented a non-conventional way of understanding the women's realities through their voices which were very distinct.

Thus, through innovative research methods the WEE Hub invented ways for researchers to tap the knowledge of women and hear their voices - some loud and distinct, encouraging and firm. Moreover, the WEE Hub also opened spaces for young researchers where their voices have gradually drifted from private to public spaces through mentorship.

I am inspired by the writings of Molara Leslie Ogunipe in *Recreating Ourselves: African Women & Critical Transformations* that not only encourage and inspire women to engage in narratives and epistemologies that not only elevate their voice but also involve women in transformational discourses.

A participant voicing her views at a platform for researchers and stakeholders



Researchers technical workshop with BMGF team

The UoN WEE Hub Researchers held a technical workshop to update and discuss the program progress with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) representatives Jessie Shawver and Radu Ban. The workshop was held at the University of Nairobi Towers.

During the meeting, the research teams presented the status of the eleven (11) on-going projects of the Program implemented by the Hub and funded by the Gates Foundation. While reviewing the proposed plans it was noted that the plans needed to be aligned to the new government's strategy and manifesto. The new legislative frameworks would provide opportunities for new partnerships from the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

The partnerships with ATIC and KIRDI shall also take advantage of the new economic frameworks, the BMGF representatives took the opportunity to provide guidance on the research methodology to enrich the research process and strengthen the evidence base for WEE.

The researchers observed that such sessions provided good prospects for progressive discourse that strengthens WEE research base.

The meeting took place on October 19, 2022.



The WEE hub kickstarts the incubation project

Emily Owiti.

Recently the University of Nairobi Women Economic Empowerment (UoN WEE) Hub launched the Women's Business Incubation Project (WBI) with five main pillars:

- Access to credit;
- Linkage to information and technology;
- Access to markets and networks;
- Capacity building; and
- Mentorship.

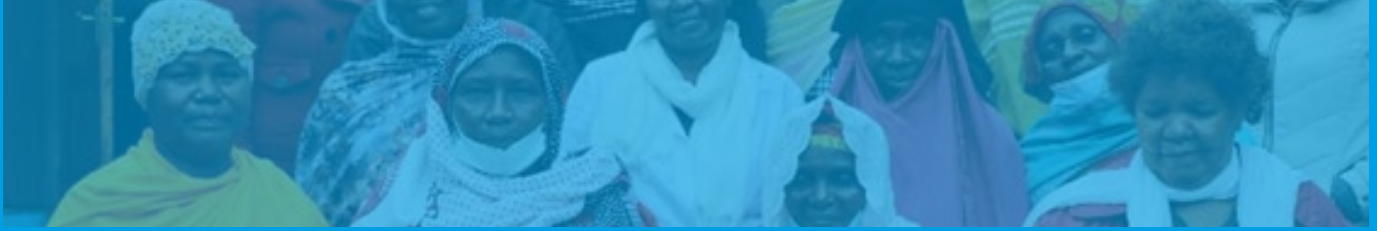
The Project targets to realize an increase in workforce size; an increase in the number of networks the business/owner is associated with; diversification in terms of products, markets, distribution channels; an increase annual turnover of sales and profit; increased capital investment in equipment, land, machines; increase in stocks; increase in the area/space of business operation; and an increased awareness of the Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) Initiative for the incubated enterprises.



A section of the KIRDI Research Scientists follow the discussions during the partnership meeting



Prof. Kabira and Dr. Mbithi of WEE Hub handover the Priority Agenda Booklet to Dr. Onyuka of KIRDI.



Ms. Catherine Ichoya of the UoN WEE Hub makes her remarks during the meeting

The UoN WEE Hub has now kick-started a baseline study and partnership engagement in relation to the recently launched Women's Business Incubation Project (WBI). The data collection exercise began at the beginning of August and will provide evidence-based information that will facilitate the decision making process in coming up with indicators to monitor the progress of the women's businesses and measure the project impact.

Furthermore, in a bid to secure strategic partnerships, the WEE Hub also held talks and technical sessions with government agencies that have expertise in the incubation of micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) as well as with other stakeholders such as banks and the private sector. At one of the partnership meetings Prof. Wanjiku Kabira, leader of the WEE Hub, reiterated that such partnerships are critical to the success of the Project.

Some of the partners the WEE Hub engaged with include the Kenya Industrial Estates, an institution that provides SME support in business incubation, including business advisory services and SME credit, among other support services. The Hub also entered into partnership with the Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institution (KIRDI) during a technical session where the Business Incubator for African Women Entrepreneurs (BIAWE) Project was unpacked. "The BIAWE Project is a success story in the business incubation sphere and is a great starting point from where critical lessons can be learnt," Dr. Mbithi, the WEE Hub Director of Research stated.



Members of the Mchanganyiko Women CBO pose for a photo with the WEE Hub researchers after the interview at their office in Kibera

Over 600 individual women's enterprises and over 20 business collectives have been enlisted in the Women's Business Incubation Project for incubation

Over 600 individual women's enterprises and over 20 business collectives have been enlisted in the Women's Business Incubation Project for incubation. These include in:

- Nairobi county - agro-processing/agribusiness;
- Turkana - posho mill and poultry farming;
- Kitui - beekeeping and poultry;
- Kilifi and Kwale - cassava and cashew nuts processing;
- Mombasa - women in Tuk-Tuk (transport);
- Busia - cross border grains trade;
- Meru - banana farming and production;
- Kisumu – fish processing and trade;
- Nyandarua - potatoes farming.

The *Mchanganyiko* CBO group, one of the groups to be incubated under the WBI Project, runs an education center for pre-primary and primary schools as well as a water and sanitation project and catering and hospitality services along Karanja Road in Kibera.



The Mchanganyiko CBO sanitation and school projects

Incubating Lobur Women Group Collective

The University of Nairobi Women's Economic Empowerment (UON WEE) Hub Women's Business Incubation (WBI) Project is a three-year evaluation of how women-focused incubation models contribute to the growth of businesses and enterprises in Kenya. The main purpose of the Incubation Project is to evaluate the extent to which women-focused incubation models contribute to the growth of business/enterprises in Kenya.

For the purpose of the (WBI) Project, the Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Hub of the University of Nairobi has entered into collaborations with partners such as CrownTrust, the University of Nairobi Department of Environmental Biosystems Engineering (EBE), the Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute (KIRDI) and the Kenya Industrial Estates KIE to incubate women's collectives with the aim of improving and expanding their business capacity.

The first women collective whose incubation journey took place from 31st October to 5th November 2022 was the Lobur Women Women's group from North Turkana where five women were trained on grain milling technology at the University of Nairobi Upper Kabete Campus. The Lobur Women's group intends to set up a grain milling light industry to address the perennial food shortages and help solving the prevalent hunger in Turkana which affects many

people because of the absence of food products.

The technology training was facilitated by the Department of Environmental and Biosystems Engineering (EBE). The women trainees were also linked with financiers such as the Women Enterprise Fund (WEF), and the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF) as well as with other collectives currently doing value addition projects.

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The Lobur Women's collective pose with the WEE Hub Director of Research, Dr Mary Mbithi after they were awarded certificates by the WEE Hub

The BMGF Team Visit KIRDI

On Thursday, October 20, 2022, Jessie Shawver and Radu Ban, representatives of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) visited the Kenya Industrial Research Development Institute (KIRDI) as part of their field visit to the Women Economic Empowerment Hub of the University of Nairobi (UoN WEE Hub) in Kenya. In their capacity as a technology incubator, KIRDI is collaborating with the UoN WEE Hub in the Women's Business Incubation (WBI) Project.

The WBI Project targets to incubate a total of 620 individual and collective women enterprises spread out in over 17 counties of the country. Out of these, KIRDI is expected to incubate over 30 women's enterprises in eighteen technologies, of which six in fish processing; six in cashew nuts value addition and six in cassava value addition technologies.



KIRDI Director General poses for a photo with the WEE Hub and BMGF team

The purpose of the visit to KIRDI was to enable the BMGF representatives to assess the facility; obtain first-hand information on its capacity; how the technology incubation would be conducted; the availability of machines and equipment, and the capacity of the workshops. Furthermore, the BMGF team sought to meet the technical team that will support the women whose businesses are to be incubated.

The consultations with the KIRDI research scientists started with a brief meeting where the deputy director of KIRDI, Dr Arthur Onyuka took the team through the history and growth of KIRDI and its work and impact in technology incubation. The WBI Project of the UoN WEE Hub builds from the model of the Business Incubator for African Women Entrepreneurs (BIAWE Project which successfully incubated over 30 women's businesses.



Prudence Njambi, a Scientist from KIRDI(left) explains a point to Radu Ban and Jessie Shawver of BMGF, and Prof. Kabira, UoN WEE Hub (right)



The team was then taken to the technology incubation workshops where the entrepreneurs are receiving a variety of technology-based training. Some of the technologies observed by the team were:

- Juice-making;
- Production of food spices;
- Honey processing;
- The Bakery unit.

After the tour of the facility the BMGF team felt the technology incubator was a suitable partner to offer technology training as part of the Women's Business Incubation project's key activities. The team was happy to note that in addition to the technology incubation and support to for the women's businesses towards certification, linkages for financial support were also offered.



The Communications Perspective

Emilly Owiti



Since its inception in October 2020 the Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) Hub of the University of Nairobi, as its name suggests, has been a “beehive” of research activities. The Hub, which by its nature is multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral, is a home to over forty

researchers and thirty research assistants and is one of only two women’s economic empowerment research hubs in Kenya.

While several organizations shut down their operations in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the UoN WEE Hub remained resilient. The staff of the Hub worked from remote locations to carry out field and desk research and to successfully deliver the various research outputs.

The WEE Hub research centre, established within the African Women Studies Centre of the University of Nairobi, has initiated fourteen research projects in four thematic research areas and utilized the findings from the research to strengthen its advocacy work championed by the Networking and Alliance Building for Women’s Economic Empowerment (NABWEE).

NABWEE is a platform established through the leadership of the UoN WEE Hub, together with other like-minded partners, for the purpose of bringing together stakeholders from diverse backgrounds with interest in women’s economic empowerment. These organizations include government departments and agencies; women’s organizations; women leaders;

women entrepreneurs; scholars and policy makers. NABWEE has coordinated policy dialogues that most recently include the review of the proposed Financial Inclusion Fund, Regulation 2022, popularly known as the Hustlers’ Fund and has contributed to and influenced policy development with the support of the Hub’s Rapid Response Unit which makes submissions from the gender lens perspective on policies under review.

During the second and third years of its launch, in partnership with well-established incubators, the Hub conceptualized and implemented the Women’s Business Incubation Project. Another project of

the WEE Hub is the establishment of the Childcare facility for cross border women traders at the Busia border. Preliminary findings from monitoring reports show that this has enabled women to free-up more time from the unpaid care work and dedicate their time to grow their businesses. Some women have reported improved health and safety of their children and increased business profits.

The Hub has been recognized as a thought leader in the generation and use of evidence to advance women’s economic empowerment and gender equality in Kenya ...

The Hub has been recognized as a thought leader in the generation and use of evidence to advance women’s economic empowerment and gender equality in Kenya and continues to pursue this agenda.

This Newsletter is committed to sharing insights about the Hub’s research and policy advocacy work as we work together to bridge the gender gap through the initiatives on what works for women’s economic empowerment.

Communications, Policy Advocacy and Knowledge Management Officer
UoN WEE Hub

Staff Training and Capacity Building

The Purpose of the Report Writing Workshop

More than fifteen University of Nairobi Women Economic Empowerment (UoN WEE) Hub researchers attended a three-day Report Writing Workshop in Machakos County.

The team, led by the UoN WEE Hub leader Prof. Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira and the Director of Research Dr Mary Mbithi, retreated to the Kyaka Hotel in Machakos to sharpen their skills on report writing in preparation of finalizing the Fourth Progress Report. The meeting took place from August 21 to August 23, 2022.

During the session, members of the team presented independently draft reports on the work they had done. The presentation of each draft report was followed by an intensive review and feedback sessions. Finally, the presenters re-wrote and completed their various sections of the report, incorporating the feedback and harmonizing any overlaps.

The presentations covered the following studies/projects:

1. The Status of the Women's Business Incubation Project.

2. The Networking and Alliance Building (NABWEE) Status Report.
3. Social Protection: Inua Jamii Na Kazi Mtaani.
4. Social Legal Digest; Employment and Entrepreneurship.
5. Gender-Responsive Budgeting.
6. Credit Guarantee Scheme.
7. Partnerships and Collaborations.
8. Women's Self- Mobilization for WEE.
9. Policy Advocacy Progress.
10. Report on the Proposed Submissions for Inclusion into the Medium Term Plan IV.
11. Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO).
12. Knowledge Management and Communication.
13. Administration and Finance.
14. Progress and Plans for the Feminism and Grounded Theory Publication.

Project Highlights

During the meeting attention was drawn to some points that needed to be noted and/or further clarified as follows.

Women's Business Incubation

The baseline survey and training curriculum for the business collectives should be urgently completed and the on-going training of women entrepreneurs to be highlighted.

Rachael Njagi, a research fellow at the Hub explains a point during the workshop



Networking & Alliance Building for WEE

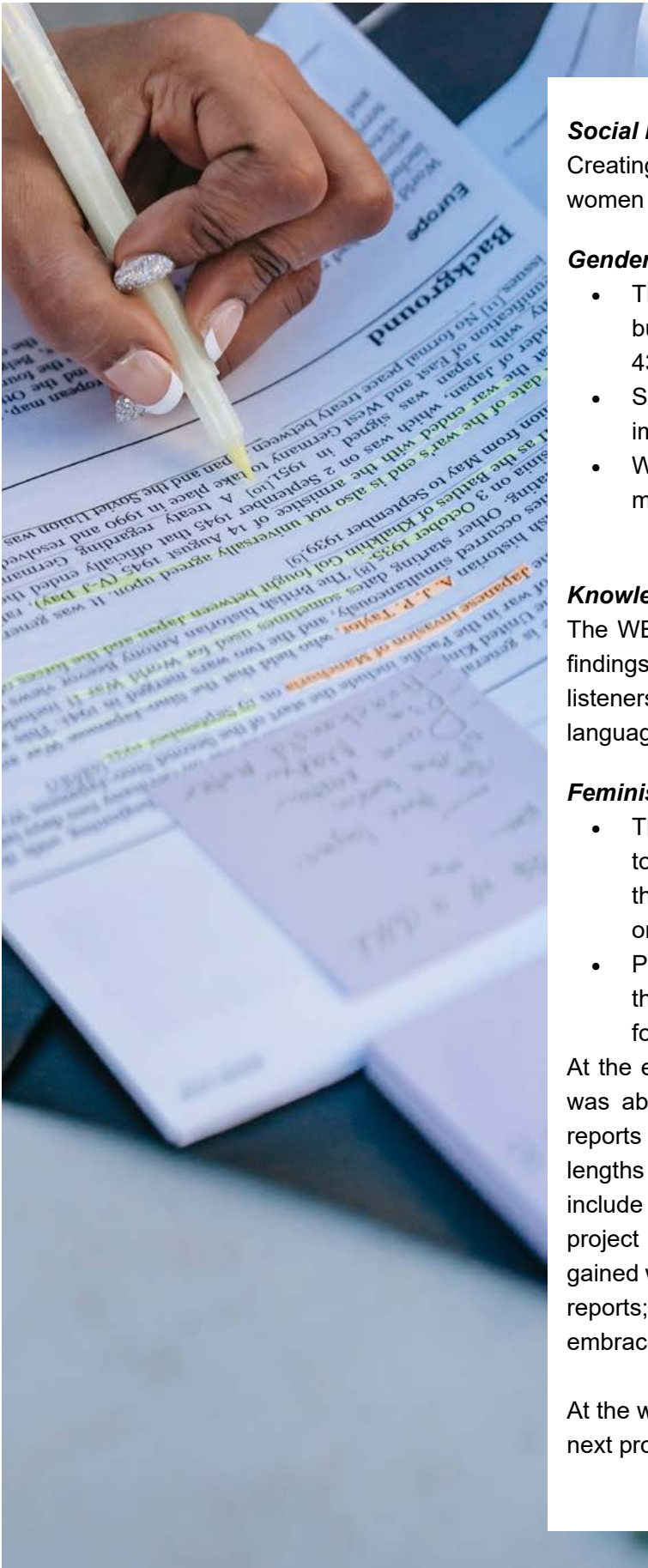
- Expanded network of partners owning and driving the agenda should be built and maintained;
- Policy makers in the government have been noted to be keen to develop women enterprises.
- It emerges, however, that the efforts by banks towards ensuring financial inclusion may be serving the bank's own interests which makes it critical to strike a balance.

During the session, members of the team presented independently draft reports on the work they had done. The presentation of each draft report was followed by an intensive review and feedback sessions.



Prof. Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira guiding the team during the workshop

The WEE Hub researched and disseminated research findings for the six priority projects to over fifteen million listeners in thirty KBC radio talk shows in thirteen local languages.



Social Protection

Creating awareness and broader ownership of the women priority agenda should be highlighted.

Gender Responsive Budget

- The focus should be on the different phases of budget allocations and the implications of article 43 and women's care work;
- Set accountability mechanisms to monitor the implementation of budgets;
- Work with partners and women leaders in monitoring the budget allocations.

Knowledge Management & Communication

The WEE Hub researched and disseminated research findings for the six priority projects to over fifteen million listeners in thirty KBC radio talk shows in thirteen local languages.

Feminist and Grounded Theory

- The research team was encouraged to contribute to the dissemination of the feminist and grounded theory by writing chapters in various publications on the feminist theory.
- Prof. Kabira urged the researchers to recognize the opportunity afforded to them by the WEE Hub for their academic and professional growth.

At the end of the three-day training the research team was able to gain skills on how to organize progress reports in a structured manner as well as the appropriate lengths of reports. The areas of focus for the reports include activities, output, outcome and impact of the project and any unintended outcomes. Other key skills gained were on the use of appropriate tone for technical reports; the need to avoid conversational tone and to embrace brevity.

At the workshop the team also made projections for the next project implementation phase.



NABWEE Third Consultative Meeting on the Draft Public Finance Management Regulation

On November 17th, 2022, the Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) Hub and partners convened the Third National Networking and Alliance Building for WEE (NABWEE) Consultative Meeting to discuss the proposals to the draft Public Finance Management Regulation of the Public Finance Management Act.

NABWEE is a platform established by the University of Nairobi (UoN) WEE Hub and partners, whose main objective is to advocate for the development of policies that promote women's economic empowerment. More specifically, the meeting which was held at the Emory Hotel aimed to discuss suggested proposals to be included in the submission by the NABWEE.

The first National Consultative meeting of the NABWEE discussed the proposed Priority Agenda for Women's Economic Empowerment developed through research on women economic empowerment conducted by the WEE Hub and partners. During this third consultative meeting, critical areas of impact for WEE in the proposed Fund were identified and proposals made to be presented as part of the public participation process.

The Hub supported women to make submissions at the county level and at the alliance convened to respond to the call for public participation by preparing and submitting the proposals to the national level for inclusion in the regulation.

The organizations represented at the NABWEE Consultative Meeting included:

- The State Department for Trade
- The State Department for Planning
- Oxfam
- UN Women
- CRAWN Trust
- WEE Sector Coordination(Murang'a County)
- Women in Business
- KEPSA
- Investment Promotion, Trade and Industry.

The proposed Fund dubbed "Financial Inclusion Fund" and popularly known as the *Hustler's Fund* targets the unserved population to enable them to participate fully in the economic activities.

The proposals presented at the Consultative Meeting considered the design of the Fund as seen through the WEE lens, accountability in management of the Fund, and the unintended effects.

Some areas of concern were identified and suggestions for their improvement were made. The areas of concern were that:

- The amounts available for the Fund may distract from the intended purpose and lead the administrators to focus more on investment rather than lending;
- "...A financial intermediary may apply for the loan." This introduction of middle-men (financial intermediary) will increase the costs of acquiring the loans and may lead to predatory lending;
- "Regulation 23: the administrator of the Fund may invest money available in the Fund but not required immediately." This regulation may change the incentives and lay more focus on



The Hub has been recognized as a thought leader in the generation and use of evidence to advance women's economic empowerment and gender equality in Kenya ...

investment, not taking into consideration the seasonality of livelihoods;

- "Operations": this regulation is neutral and does not mention the target.



The Consultative Meeting suggested:

- As regards the maximum limit of Ksh50bn from Treasury it was proposed to have a minimum amount whose ceiling will be determined by the needs;
- Proposed amendments to be done by Parliament based on demand;
- Organize a forum for relevant stakeholders to discuss the Fund;
- Not more than 50% of the Fund's Advisory Board should be from the public sector;
- The NABWEE proposes lessons and findings from other studies conducted by the Hub on the Affirmative Action Funds to be used to improve the design and implementation framework for this Fund. These include:
 - access to funds and the ability for women to use the funds for designated purposes;



NABWEE partners pose for a photo after the consultative meeting held at Emory Hotel

- access to information, education and communication on the AAFs;
- stringent eligibility criteria;
- training on technical literacy by women to manage and repay the funds among other issues.
- Increase information sharing with beneficiaries and the lowest levels of the community;
 - Consider the marginalized and disadvantaged groups in the design of the Funds;
 - Offer financial literacy support to the beneficiaries;
 - Set favorable determinants for access to credit, such as quick TATs and favorable interest rates;
 - Expedite the payment of the bills for goods supplied to both national and county governments.

The Consultative Meeting further recommended that there is need to:

- Streamline eligibility criteria for the Fund;

Upcoming Events January – April 2023

The Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE) Hub has already planned a number of events for the first quarter of the coming year. Here are some of them.

Training on the Hustler’s Fund

The WEE Hub intends to collaborate with the Ministry of Cooperatives and MSMES (Kenya) to train women on the access and effective utilization of the ‘Hustler’s Fund’ a fund established by the Kenyan Government with aim of providing affordable credit to marginalized individuals in Kenya. The training will be opened to all women who might be interested. *(Details of the training will be announced at a later date)*



We hope that you enjoyed reading the first issue of our Newsletter on women economic empowerment and that you found it interesting and informative. We would be happy if you would share your thoughts and suggestions with us. If you or your organisation have done some research on women economic empowerment, please let us have the link so that we can publicise it through this Newsletter. Please, contact us through: weehub@uonbi.ac.ke

Here are a few links to some other publications by the University of Nairobi Women's Economic Empowerment Hub:

1. ***Pathways to African Feminism and Development***. This is a biannual peer-refereed journal of the University of Nairobi Women's Economic Empowerment Hub and the African Women Studies Centre. The focus of the Journal is on all aspects of African women's studies, both on the continent and in the Diaspora. This Journal promotes scholarship on African women in all spheres of life. Here is the link to the last issue of the Journal which is specifically on women economic empowerment: <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/162013>
2. Women's Business Incubation Project-Regulations & Syllabus for the Women's Incubation Project: [Women's Business Incubation Curriculum](#). This curriculum is a tool designed to provide tailor-made courses for mentorship, coaching, and training as well as to create linkages for women. This tool guides the participatory, action-oriented training of the women whose businesses are incubated by the UoN WEE Hub.

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