



"Maji Safi, Maisha Bora"
"Quality Water, Healthy Livelihoods"

Kakamega County Water and Sanitation Company(KACWASCO)

Gender Equality Mainstreaming Policy and Strategy



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CMT	Corporate Management Team
CoK	Constitution of Kenya
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
GEM	Gender Equality Mainstreaming
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Manager
KACWASCO	Kakamega County Water and Sewerage Company
KIWASH	Kenya Integrated Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Project
LVNWSB	Lake Victoria North Water Services Board
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGEC	National Gender Equality Commission
USAID	United States Agency International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WSP	Water Service Provider

FOREWORD

Gender equality mainstreaming in Water Service Provision aims to address gender based inequalities, barriers and obstacles that hinder women and men from realizing their right to water services, opportunities and information. Water and sanitation providers have increasingly recognized the importance of gender perspective in developing water services and in day to day utility operations. A gendered approach improves utility performance and increases its commercial viability while creating a framework of cooperation between men and women, so that the insights and abilities of both are available to shape sector programs and meet objectives.

KACWASCO recognizes the legal protection accorded to women and men by the Constitution of Kenya of 2010 and the protected characteristic of their human right to water and sanitation. This policy is in line with the Constitution of Kenya 2010, Kenya Vision 2030 and the Kakamega County Water and Sewerage policy that promotes gender equality in service provision.

Discussions during the Gender Equality-mainstreaming workshop with KACWASCO staff revealed that gender discrimination is a structural issue in KACWASCO attributed to the power dynamics shaped by societal constructed gender roles, stereotyping and patriarchal system that values men/boys over women/girls. Gender inequality in KACWASCO is seen in organizational structures, processes, and practices. This includes in leadership, structures, organizational culture and climate. Nevertheless, KACWASCO has reported good progress in addressing gender inequalities and in particular, in job placement and in creating an environment conducive for female staff.

This gender policy aims to promote and strength gender equality mainstreaming at KACWASCO for both our internal and external stakeholders by providing a reference point for addressing the common but differentiated needs of women and men in water supply services. KACWASCO endeavors for equal access in employment, provision of opportunities and services /facilities, zero tolerance for any form of gender-based violence at work or service delivery, to involve all and strengthen the capacity of staff to understand and address gender equality needs and concerns within its institutional development, service delivery and day-to-day utility operations.

This policy is a product of great participation, consultations and partnership between the USAID-KIWASH Project, the Kakamega County Water Department and KACWASCO. Therefore I am thankful to the USAID-KIWASH Project and the Management Team of KACWASCO headed by the Gender Mainstreaming Committee who contributed enormously to the development and learning process of this policy under USAID-KIWASH Project support. I appreciate our C.E.C Water, Environment and Natural Resources who affirms that equal involvement of both genders correlates with improved water sustainability, and improved transparency as well as governance in resources management. We also appreciate our Governor, H.E. Wycliffe. A. Oparanya who is leading from the front in ensuring that gender equity and equality are taken into account in policy formulation in all departments in his government. Under my able leadership, we shall ensure the full implementation of the KACWASCO Gender Policy and support the gender committee and managers to mainstream in respective departments.

Mr. Fredrick Atwa

Managing Director - Kakamega County Water and Sanitation Company, (KACWASCO)

Definition of Gender related terms

These definitions are provided to enable the user to understand the meaning of the gender terminologies used in this document. These definitions are derived from various sources such as UN agencies and international organizations.

Accountability: In terms of gender within Water Service Providers (WSPs¹), accountability refers to whether or not an employee in the WSP can be held responsible for realization of gender equality and equity in the institutions.

Affirmative Action is a practical policy to increase the diversity of an organization through human resource initiatives, such as quotas for hiring women.

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. These roles vary within and between cultures, ethnicity and class, and change overtime.

Gender Analysis is the examination of the differences in women and men's lives, including those, which lead to social and economic inequity for women, and applies this understanding to policy development and service delivery. It is concerned with the underlying causes of these inequities with the aim to achieve positive change for women.

Gender Equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, opportunities, treatment and valuation of women and men. Gender equality does not necessarily mean equal numbers of men and women, or boys and girls, in all activities, nor does it mean treating men and women or boys and girls exactly the same. Gender equality is measured by looking at the representation of women and of men in a range of roles.

Gender equity means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, access, obligations and opportunities. In the development context, a gender equity goal often requires built-in measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of women.

Gender Mainstreaming: “The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality” (1997 UN Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC)

Gender stereotypes, or gender bias, are attitudes, opinions or roles applied to a particular sex and which function as unjust fixed assumptions.

¹WSPs are used interchangeably with utilities throughout this document.

Sex describes the biological differences between men and women, which are universal and determined at birth.

Sex Disaggregated Data means information that is collected and analysed separately for men and women. Disaggregating data by sex and carrying out a **gender analysis** is used to review the needs of men and women, assess the impact on women and men and identify possible imbalances between the position of men and women.

KACWASCO MD, Fredrick Atwa, addressing the gender team



I. INTRODUCTION

I.1 Rationale for Gender Mainstreaming

Gender equality is a basic human right and fundamental principle of sustainable development. Paying attention to gender equality has positive implications for business development and economic viability. Applying gender equality is critical in addressing gender based barriers to services, thereby expanding customer base, increasing staff productivity and subsequently growing revenues for the utility.

The mandate for gender equality mainstreaming is drawn from national and international commitments on gender equality and women empowerment. The Constitution of Kenya (CoK, 2010) and the Vision 2030 for Kenya have both reaffirmed Kenya's commitment to gender as stipulated in Article 10. (2) (b) on national values that have included (b) human dignity, equity, social justice, inclusiveness, equality, human rights, non-discrimination and protection of the marginalized; and Article 19 on Bill of Rights (2), recognising and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms is to preserve the dignity of individuals and communities and to promote social justice and the realization of the potential of all human beings.

This has been cascaded downwards through other sectoral policies. The water sector gives the mandate to protect the interests and rights of consumers in the provision of water and sanitation services to Water Services Regulatory Board, under The Water Act 2016 Section 70. (1).

Under the CoK 2010, water supply and sanitation services are functions of the county government who are required to maintain water supply and sanitation systems, while ensuring that all those living within their areas of jurisdiction get access to services. The Water Act 2016 has provided a supportive framework for devolved services, and has anchored the constitutional right water and sanitation.

Gender Equality in the County

In line with the Constitution of Kenya 2010, the County government of Kakamega in its CIDP has identified promoting gender equity and gender mainstreaming as core development priorities and strategies. The CIDP highlights the need to collect and use sex disaggregated data to facilitate efforts to reduce the gender inequalities.

In the same spirit, KACWASCO is formulating this Gender Equality Mainstreaming Policy in line with the national and county aspirations to promote gender equality in water supply and sanitation services. The policy provides KACWASCO with a framework for integrating the needs of women and men in investment planning, day-to-day operations and institutional development.

I.2 Background

Kakamega County Water and Sanitation Company limited (KACWASCO) is a County Corporation mandated to provide water and sanitation services within its area of jurisdiction as per WASREB license. Kakamega County took over the operation of water supplies from Lake Victoria North Water Services Board (LVNWSB) from 1st July 2016, following the separation of the joint operations of the water supplies between Kakamega and Busia Counties; this was in relation to the new Constitution that makes water provision services a role in the County Government. KACWASCO Schemes spread across 7 sub counties in Kakamega County; Lugari, Lurambi, Malava, Mumias West, Navakholo, Butere and Shinyalu. These Area

and Supply schemes include Shitoli, Murhanda, Tindinyo, Malava, Lumakanda-Kipkaren, Kakamega, Mumias, Butere, Shinyalu and Navakholo and other upcoming water community projects.

KACWASCO serves 346,078 people with water out of a population of 397,785 in the service area representing a 87% coverage. KACWASCO has 16% sewer coverage mainly located in Kakamega and Mumias towns and a total of 38,424 water connections out of which 31,518 are active.

1.3 Gender Situational analysis

Discussions during a gender equality mainstreaming workshop with KACWASCO staff revealed that gender discrimination is a structural issue, and is very much alive in KACWASCO due to the power dynamics shaped by society's constructed gender roles, valuing men/boys over women/girls. Gender inequality in KACWASCO is seen in organizational structures, processes, and practices. This includes in leadership, structures, strategy, culture, organizational climate. Gender stereotyping at KACWASCO is on a downward trend although there are still cases of discrimination in job placement and compounded by resistance by women and men who embrace the gender division of labour. There is practice of ascribing to women and men specific roles by both female and male staff, which has affected the way jobs in the company are distributed.

The traditional attitudes by which the water sector is viewed stems from patriarchal notions and stereotypes; at KACWASCO this has perpetuated an institutional widespread practice that has negatively affected the distribution of roles and job allocations. As such, majority of KACWASCO staff are male (of the 179 staff, 54 are female and 125 are male). Occupational segregation based on gender stereotypes is also visible especially when considering the distribution of staff in technical department that is male dominated and customer relations currently dominated by female staff.

The technical and financial capacity for gender equality mainstreaming at KACWASCO is inadequate. Staff highlighted the lack of budgetary allocation for gender equality mainstreaming. Among the staff, there lacks technical capacity for mainstreaming gender equality including gender analysis, collecting and using sex disaggregated data, as well as upgrading existing facilities to reflect the needs of women and men among others.

Progress so far

KACWASCO has put in a number of measures to promote gender equality that have included awareness raising on the role of gender in improving institutional performance and economic viability. The senior staff were trained on gender equality to ensure they are adequately skilled to cascade the same to their teams. In addition, a gender mainstreaming Committee was appointed by the Managing Director to support the gender mainstreaming activities within the utility. The committee has undertaken a number of actions to this end, including adopting and implementing temporary measures to minimize gender based occupational segregation by providing opportunities and effecting redeployment for female and male staff to take up non-traditional jobs.

1.4 Policy statement

- KACWASCO recognizes the legal protection accorded to women and men by the Constitution of Kenya, the protected characteristic of their human right to water and sanitation.
- KACWASCO is committed to providing an equitable and conducive environment that is free from discrimination on basis of sex for all its employees and customers. The utility is thus committed to ensure equal access in employment, provision of opportunities and services /facilities.
- KACWASCO has zero tolerance for any form of gender-based violence at work or service delivery. In line with the national Sexual Offenses Act, any incidents of gender based violence against women or men at work place or in service delivery will be treated with the seriousness it deserves.
- KACWASCO endeavors to involve all and strengthen the capacity of staff to understand and address gender equality needs and concerns within its institutional development, service delivery and day-to-day utility operations.
- KACWASCO will thus work to mitigate discrimination based on sex/gender, promote equality of opportunity between women and men, and encourage/support staff to appreciate and meet the different needs of women and men at work and service area.

2. GOAL, PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Goal

The goal of this policy is to ensure that KACWASCO embraces gender equity, equality and empowerment in its programs towards achieving universal water and sanitation.

2.2 Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to set out a framework for KACWASCO's work towards promotion of gender equality mainstreaming, and how the utility will ensure that inequalities between women and men are eliminated. The policy will guide the collective effort of the WSP to ensure that women and men benefit equally from opportunities and services, and inequalities are not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality as a means of realizing universal goal on water and sanitation.

2.3 Specific Objectives

- To set out KACWASCO'S commitment to gender equality and equity
- To create an equitable and inclusive work environment for both men and women, that promotes work and family balance
- To provide a common understanding for mainstreaming gender equality in institutional strengthening, development of water and sanitation services, and in day to day utility operations.
- To promote a gender-responsive organizational culture that values women and men equally
- Provide capacity building through knowledge sharing and research on gender issues to all employees and our customers.

3. STRATEGIES AND ACTION AREAS

The gender equality mainstreaming policy will focus on ensuring that gender equality is integrated in the broader business and strategic planning framework of KACWASCO. The business model for gender equality mainstreaming at KACWASCO is derived from its broad mandate that can be summarized into 4 critical areas where gender mainstreaming will take place including: institutional development, Investments/development of services, regular utility operations, and corporate governance.

3.1 Gender in Institutional Development

Strategy: Ensure organizational growth is informed by principles of gender equality and that systems and processes support implementation of the Gender Policy. Human Resource policies, procedures and practices need to promote a gender responsive culture and equality of opportunity for women and men at all levels of the organization.

Actions:

- i. Develop, review and strengthen existing institutional policies and procedures to ensure inclusion, equal treatment and valuing of both women and men in the organization.
- ii. Adopt and implement affirmative action on recruitment, promotion, performance management and training to ensure that equal opportunities for women and men are secured at all levels.
- iii. Design human resource information system to provide sex-disaggregated data for human resource policy, including identification of discrimination in recruitment, remuneration, promotion, performance management and training.
- iv. Create a more supportive and safer work environment where all categories of women and men benefit.
- v. Develop staff skills and institutional capacity for mainstreaming gender at all levels through training, development of tools for mainstreaming gender such as guidelines, gender equality action plans and budget allocation to help translate gender mainstreaming into practice in the organization's daily actions.
- vi. Articulate boundaries, incentives and mechanisms that redress violations, recognize and incentivize gender equality and female empowerment efforts at all levels of the organization's work.
- vii. Establish Monitoring and Evaluation system for gender mainstreaming work that tracks implementation and results (Gender equality targets and indicators); measurement of impacts on how KACWASCO activities has translated into benefits for men and women differently; and effectiveness of mechanisms in place to redress inequities/inequalities.
- viii. Appoint a designated focal staff and a gender mainstreaming committee (or both) with clear mandates and terms of reference and job descriptions to coordinate gender mainstreaming efforts and provide advice and support to all departments.
- ix. Allocate sufficient time and resources (human & financial) to communicate and educate about gender.
- x. Ensure equal representation in the appointment of all working committees
- xi. Inculcate a gender sensitive culture that avoids stereotyping

3.2 Gender in Investments/Development of services

Strategy: Design and implement water and sanitation investments that are targeted to the user needs and ensure that socio-economic benefits accrue equitably to women and men. KACWASCO's investments will be informed by adequate gender analysis, including consideration of the different concerns and needs of women and men, as well as the likely impact of investments on gender equality.

Actions

- i. Undertake gender and social analysis to inform on design, planning, implementation and delivery of water and sanitation services.
- ii. Equitable access to safe and affordable water and adequate sanitation for both men, women, and other categories
- iii. Transform gender relations and ensure equitable participation of women and men in different roles and positions.
- iv. Promote market responsive solutions that take cognizance and accommodate socio-economic situations of the target groups
- v. Collect, analyse and use sex disaggregation data at all levels.
- vi. Ensure equitable participation of women and men in planning and implementation of projects.
- vii. Design and implement a gender responsive community outreach and education programme, using participatory learning approaches (PLA) to maximize participation of women and men with different learning needs
- viii. Employ an inclusive/household approach in case of displacement/resettlement and compensation for land up-take for the pipeline or sewer way leave in order to mitigate associated negative social impacts.
- ix. Based on the gender analysis, develop gender responsive indicators to measure change and impacts of water supply and sanitation services.

3.3 Gender in Regular utility operations

Strategy: Ensure gender is mainstreamed in regular utility operations including connecting and disconnecting citizens to the network, billing, targeting subsidies, metering, customer care, managing rationing programs, ensuring water quality and regular operations and maintenance.

Actions

- i. Identify (on a continuous basis) and remove barriers of access to services by women and men of different social and economic status
- ii. Ensure equal participation of women and men in customer satisfaction surveys, by adopting an affirmative policy of at least 50% of each gender.
- iii. Increase involvement of women and men in utility decision making by applying an affirmative action for female and male representation in the utility operations.
- iv. Communicate in a gender sensitive manner through various but relevant forms of communication channels accessible to different categories of women and men. These should include electronic complaints handling, hotlines, transparent and timely follow up of complaints.

- v. Collect, analyse and use sex disaggregated data on customer surveys and complaints records in service delivery.
- vi. Ensure customer care services that are responsive to specific views to women and men and promote open and efficient communication including service interruption.

3.4 Gender in Corporate Governance

Strategy: Develop an appropriate and supportive institutional framework that will facilitate gender diversity and successful gender mainstreaming within the utility governance frameworks.

Actions

- i. Approval of the gender policy
- ii. Explicitly state the organization's commitment to the principle of gender equality.
- iii. Adopt an affirmative policy of equal representation and participation of women and men in leadership and decision-making (Board, Board Committees & Corporate Management).

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY

The first step towards implementation of this policy is to ensure that all staff understand this policy and are trained on gender equality mainstreaming. All the staff, consultants and interns will be inducted on the gender policy and informed on how they will be expected to contribute to its implementation. The gender committee will lead in the implementation of the policy and actively support staff on gender mainstreaming.

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

- i. **Managing Director (MD)** – The ultimate responsibility for implementation of the gender policy is with the MD. He will from time to time appoint the gender focal persons and the committee, and ensure availability of resources to implement the policy.
- ii. **Human Resource** – Currently, the HRM is the focal person and coordinator in regard to policy implementation. The HR is responsible for making regular reports to relevant bodies (e.g., NGEN), convenes and chairs the gender committee meetings. HRM will present the annual work plan and budget to the MD and report back on activities in line with the work plan.
- iii. **Gender mainstreaming committee** - the committee is the principal oversight mechanism to monitor implementation of this policy. The committee provides technical support and guidance to staff on mainstreaming gender including awareness raising and training, conducting gender analysis and advising on all matters of gender equality. The Committee will develop and implement an annual work plan and budget.

4.2 Oversight and coordination

The Managing Director of KACWASCO has the overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the Gender Policy. The core management team has a key role to play in providing leadership for gender mainstreaming in their respective departments.

Currently and unless decided, the sole coordination of the implementation of the gender policy will be by the Human Resource Manager (HRM). HRM will be supported by the gender committee.

4.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Recognizing the importance of monitoring this policy implementation, the gender committee will regularly monitor compliance with this policy provision by departments, its effectiveness and outcomes. The company will establish indicators to ensure that departments report progress towards gender equality mainstreaming, and will encourage knowledge-generation on the same. The policy will be reviewed after every 2 years, to determine its relevance and recommend any changes if needed.

4.4 Partners

To realize full implementation of this gender policy, KACWASCO will identify and work with other like-minded institutions. The company will explore different partnerships to accelerate its work on gender equality. In particular, KACWASCO will continue to reach out to USAID and other development partners, as well as the national gender machineries such as, National Gender Equality Commission (NGEC) and the State Department of Gender Affairs.

Annex: Gender policy validation workshop images

Gender committee presentation on the GEM progress at KACWASCO during the workshop



Group work: Policy validation session