



World Food Programme

SAVING  
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LIVES

REGIONAL BUREAU FOR **EASTERN AFRICA**

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## Gender

2021 Regional Achievements & Outlook

**MAY 2022**

## Regional Overview

The gender landscape in RBN is generally progressive, as most countries in the region have existing legal frameworks and policies to support gender equality and women's empowerment. Improvement can be seen in the increase in women's access to leadership spaces. However, gender inequality remains a significant impediment to WFP's food assistance programmes. Specifically, climate shocks have a significant effect in the region because of the role of agriculture in food security and employment creation. Women remain central to agricultural production in this region. For example, 96 percent of women in **Burundi**, 76 percent in **Kenya**, 84 percent in **Rwanda**, and 77 percent in **Uganda** comprise the labour force in agriculture<sup>1</sup>. The majority of these women are concentrated in the low value capture production modes of agricultural value chains, and they work in informal arrangements that render them disproportionately susceptible to climate shocks. Their contribution to domestic work and childcare, is time-consuming, unpaid, and limits their ability to get paid work. Their land tenure remains low due to obscurities in national laws or conflict with gender discriminative customary law. Few of the women in this region have access to bank accounts or mobile money accounts and fewer have the financial ability to borrow money. The gender digital gap is exacerbated by poor affordability, as well as limited literacy, and skills. Sexual harassment and gender-based violence remain significant barriers to moving the dial towards gender progressive change. These gaps pose a challenge to effectively addressing gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of climate change.

## Regional Achievements

Much of the CO support in 2021 emphasised capacity enhancement through the below initiatives:

### Gender Transformation Programming

The gender transformation programming in program design is a capacity enhancement initiative that targeted all CO gender officers and the team in the Gender Results Network. The program provided the participants with the tools to effectively implement gender-responsive and gender-transformative interventions in strengthening food systems. Beyond capacity strengthening in gender transformative program design, WFP worked with an external firm that has expertise in gender-transformative approaches in food systems to; (i) conduct an intersectoral gender analysis and develop case studies based on WFP programming interventions (ii) design and deliver an intersectoral training on gender transformative programming, with a focus on resilient livelihoods and inclusive local agricultural value chains. While participants reported better knowledge of gender-transformative programming, the final report from the training recommended continuous follow up and in-depth gender trainings at country level to allow a nuanced reflection on gender integration in country-specific context and programs.

### Regional Workshop on Gender

The objective of the regional workshop was to provide a knowledge exchange/peer sharing platform for enhancing capabilities on gender integration in food systems. The workshop strengthened cross-country collaboration and facilitated dialogue among Headquarter Gender Office (GEN), RBN gender team, and the respective CO Gender Advisors. Following the workshop, each CO in the region designed a gender action plan based on the knowledge gained from the workshop. The country-specific gender action plans will help to frame the respective country and regional gender trajectory.

## 16 Days of Activism Campaign

To commemorate the 16 days of activism, RBN conducted virtual discussions and disseminated an opinion piece. The commemoration created awareness – among all employees, offices, and partners about Gender-based violence (GBV) and other forms of violence, its root causes, and how they have increased during recent climate crises. It also created a platform to share information about actions (programs, projects, and services) that tackle, respond and address GBV, particularly around strengthened Climate Adaptation/Resilience. Finally, it advocated for gender equality and women’s empowerment as one of the ways to minimise risk of GBV.

## Mastercard Foundation project

In 2021, WFP partnered with the Mastercard Foundation (MCF) to implement an integrated project with a common goal: strengthening local food systems and making them more inclusive for youth, in particular young women. The project has a strong focus on gender, youth, and livelihood expansion, and will be implemented across eight COs in Africa, three of which are within this region: **Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda**. This specific collaboration between WFP and the Mastercard Foundation opens new opportunities to work with youth in the nexus of food systems and innovation. Additionally, the project is an opportunity for CO to explore gender transformative programming (where feasible like **Kenya**) by strengthening local food systems and empowering women and youth all at once.

## Development and Implementation of FFA Work Norms that have Gender Responsive and Gender Transformative Outcomes.

The Asset Creation Program is characterized by a high proportion of clients being women, whose over participation may increase their burden of work, compromise their other responsibilities including childcare and household maintenance and may result in unintended negative outcomes for women. The RBN gender team in partnership with the University of Nairobi developed guidelines to foster equal participation of both men and women in asset creation activities, to achieve better gender-responsive and gender-transformative outcomes. The development of these guidelines is part of the broader work to strengthen gender equality and women’s empowerment in food systems.



## CO Highlights

Through the climate action fund, the gender unit supported COs to apply the knowledge disseminated from the varied capacity building initiatives. The COs that participated supported a gender-transformative food systems approach to programs/interventions and integrated climate adaptation as a cross-cutting theme as follows:

- **WFP South Sudan** conducted a gender analysis for Smallholder Agriculture Market Support (SAMS) interventions for strengthening Gender-transformative impact to ensure gender-equitable resilience. The key outcome of this study was evidence and recommendations on closing gender gaps in SAMS activities.
- **WFP Kenya** conducted a gender analysis on the Pasture and Orange Fleshed Sweet Potatoes Value Chains to assess the link between gender equality and nutritional impacts. The analysis will generate evidence-based data on the gender and socio-economic and cultural dynamics in the respective value chains and the results will be used to inform the selection of priority food value chains for the Mastercard Foundation Project.
- For the MCF project, the CO targets 150,000 smallholder farmers and 9,000 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and traders (half are women) to benefit from WFP's post-harvest loss management and smallholder farmer support activities. The project will empower women and youth in local food systems by accelerating access to or improving the benefits derived from both on and off-farm jobs, in Arid and Semi-Arid regions (ASALs) and High Productive areas (HPA).
- **WFP Rwanda** conducted a gender capacity assessment of WFP Rwanda Cooperating Partner engagement. The assessment aimed to understand the extent to which cooperating partners met GEWE integration standards and the results of the exercise will inform the WFP Rwanda's CP gender capacity enhancement plan.
- For the MCF project, the CO targets about 200,000 smallholders in Rwanda, with a minimum of 50 percent women's participation, and about 600 youth-led MSMEs with 60 percent of these being women-led. The project facilitates smallholders' access to markets by mobilizing agro-processors and off-takers, promotes a vibrant youth-led market for small scale post-harvest equipment to improve quality and reduce post-harvest losses, and catalyses investments in nutrition-sensitive agricultural value chains for youth-led MSMEs.
- **WFP Uganda** provided financial literacy trainings under its CBT activities, to enable Persons of Concern (POCs) effectively utilize the Cash-based Transfer (CBT), enhance their agency, and expand their opportunities and choices. The trainings employed a Trainers of Trainers (ToTs) approach and created employment opportunities for women as trainers. Notably, 35 percent of the trainers were women. Both women and men were trained together on improving joint decision making on household financial resources. The financial literacy trainings enhanced women's financial management knowledge and skills. This was evident when more women started savings groups (Village Savings and Loans Associations) and were actively involved in the income-generating activities. Enhanced access to the income-generating activities eventually created the space for more women to make joint decisions at the household level.
- For the MCF project, the CO will target about 90,000 beneficiaries with a minimum of 60 percent women's participation across these categories: national smallholder farmers, refugees, youth smallholder farmers, national youth smallholder farmers, and refugee youth smallholder farmers. Additionally, it will target about 2,000 MSMEs owners with 40-60 percent of the total being women-led. Applying a strong Agriculture and Market Support (AMS) component, the project seeks to improve post-harvest loss management, increase pro-smallholder marketing among smallholders especially women and youth, and strengthen national institutions for pro-smallholder policies and programs.
- **WFP Ethiopia** facilitated a workshop to incorporate gender analysis and gender-transformative design into Anticipatory Action (AA) planning in the Somali region. They also conducted a capacity strengthening workshop on integrating gender equality within emergency response and preparedness activities through Forecast based Financing and AAs for climate actions. The output from the workshop was revised Forecast based Financing indicators aligned to gender-responsive outcomes to contribute to engendering interventions in AA.



- WFP Somalia** engaged men with targeted Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) to support nutrition outcomes at the household level in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. The gender transformative interventions sought to dismantle stereotypes on domestic and unpaid care work through targeting men with SBCC at an interpersonal level; forming peer support groups; identifying and promoting male nutrition champions; and integrating kitchen gardens and/or animal husbandry into the father-to-father support group activities. It is envisaged that more men will willingly engage in better nutrition and health-related practices such as childcare, growing of vegetable gardens, and animal husbandry - roles traditionally reserved for women.
- WFP Sudan** conducted a baseline study to investigate the linkages between gender, energy and environmental safeguarding. The study concluded that the burden of collecting firewood lies on women, and household reliance on unclean sources of cooking energy results in increased indoor air pollution, respiratory illnesses, stunted growth in children, and increased adult and child mortality rate. Informed by the findings, the CO rolled out a project on “Adaptation to climate change in humanitarian settings” in the White Nile and East Darfur states. The project targeted 25,000 participants and 52 schools from WFP’s school meals programme. Through the targeted 25000 participants, women were provided with alternative livelihood opportunities and fuel efficient stoves. Because of their disproportionate dependence on natural resources, they will benefit from the reversal of deforestation and soil degradation in the long run.

## Challenges

The new gender policy outlines an implementation framework that provisions staff capacity at regional and country levels. Gender transformative change is slow, gradual, and non-linear. Thus, to meaningfully integrate gender in WFP’s food system’s programming, more staff capacity and funding are required for sustained periods.

## Looking forward to 2022: Operationalization of Gender Policy

Operationalization of the new Gender Policy (2022-2026) will be an area of priority for 2022. The new policy addresses for the first time the root causes of gender inequality, and it has expanded the scope of potential partners to consider (local and local women’s rights groups). To this end, in-country missions will be conducted to sensitize staff on the new policy and the regional gender team will work with country teams to co-design country-specific gender action plans. Beyond in-country sensitization, efforts will also go towards capacity assessments and capacity enhancement of staff and cooperating partners. Partnerships remain the core of WFP’s efforts to accelerate progress in gender equality and women’s empowerment. For this reason, the regional emphasis will be on identifying the right partners (for example feminist and women’s Civil Society organisations that are best positioned as first responders and key development partners in humanitarian settings) that complement the ambition of the policy.

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## PHOTO CREDITS

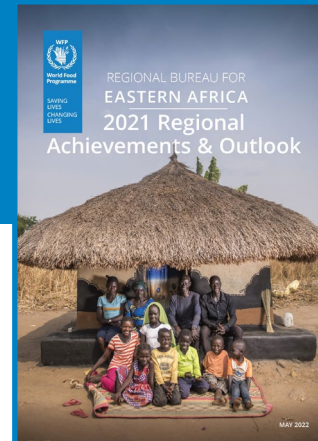
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## ENDNOTES

- 1 USAID. East Africa Gender Fact Sheet.  
<https://www.usaid.gov/documents/east-africa-gender-fact-sheet>



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