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Measures Implemented by The Office of The Auditor General-Kenya on Gender Diversity, Inclusion and Equity.

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FASE II

PNUD

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INTRODUCTION

Gender Diversity

According to Adam and Alfawaz (2025), diversity in the contemporary workforce has become a central theme in organizational dynamics, reflecting a global paradigm shift in which businesses increasingly recognize its critical importance. Gender diversity in organizations entails the recruitment and representation of all gender categories, particularly men and women, and is widely acknowledged as essential for organizational success (Naima, 2016). Successful organizations thrive on the collaborative contributions of individuals from different backgrounds, regardless of gender (Sharma, 2023). In recent years, women have made significant strides into fields traditionally dominated by men, assuming leadership positions and challenging long-standing gender stereotypes (Mushi & Bujane, 2023).

Gender Inclusion

Gender inclusion refers to the intentional practice of ensuring that people of all genders have equitable access to opportunities, resources, and decision-making processes. It is a fundamental component of achieving gender equality, benefiting not only women but also men, girls, and boys. Promoting gender inclusion helps dismantle harmful stereotypes and social norms that perpetuate discrimination and inequality, fostering a more just and inclusive society.

Gender Equity

Gender equity, as defined by the European Institute for Gender Equality, refers to the fair and just distribution of benefits, responsibilities, and opportunities among women, men, and people of all genders. Gender equity is particularly important given that, historically, many societies have viewed women, transgender individuals, and nonbinary people as less capable or less valuable than men. Today, gender equity initiatives continue to reshape gender roles and expectations in workplaces, homes,

and broader society. A more equitable world allows individuals to be valued for their talents, skills, and abilities—regardless of gender.

Gender Inequality

Gender inequality in the workplace remains a persistent and widespread challenge that has garnered considerable attention from scholars, policymakers, and practitioners. Although progress has been made toward promoting gender equity, women continue to encounter barriers to career advancement and experience discrimination based on their gender. These obstacles negatively affect women's professional growth and economic security, while also generating broader social and economic consequences for organizations and society at large (Blau & Kahn, 2017; Catalyst, 2021).

Objective

Organizational programs such as affirmative action, employment equity policies, and diversity initiatives can effectively reduce gender disparities when implemented with clear targets and ongoing monitoring. This report outlines the programs that the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) -Kenya has implemented both internally (through its organizational operations) and externally (through its audits) to bridge the gender gap.

DEVELOPMENT

Historical Background

Gender equality has been recognized globally and nationally as a fundamental human right and a prerequisite for sustainable socio-economic development. At the global level, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development places gender equality at the center of development aspirations. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 seeks to *"Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"* and is complemented by cross-cutting gender considerations across the entire SDG framework. The Agenda emphasizes equal access to education, economic opportunities, political participation, and leadership for women and girls.

At the national level, Kenya Vision 2030—the country's long-term development blueprint—seeks to mainstream gender equity in all sectors. The Vision identifies four critical domains requiring transformation: opportunity, empowerment, capabilities, and vulnerabilities. It acknowledges that women continue to face systemic barriers in accessing labor markets, leadership opportunities, and productive resources.

Despite progress made over the past decade, Kenya continues to grapple with gender disparities, particularly within public institutions. This context informs the Office of the Auditor-General's efforts to mainstream gender internally and to audit gender-related programmes externally.

Literature Review

Studies indicate that organizations are more successful in retaining diverse talent when diversity considerations are embedded in performance, promotion, and leadership development processes (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995; Cleveland et al., 2000). However, short-term approaches—such as merely increasing the number of women hired without addressing institutional culture and structural barriers—may produce minimal

long-term impact and may even harm intended beneficiaries (Heilman et al., 1992, 1997).

Sustainable gender diversity requires comprehensive alignment of HR policies with organizational strategy, leadership support, culture, and climate. This holistic approach is demonstrated in organizations that pair merit-based hiring with support systems such as mentorship, inclusive decision-making structures, and robust anti-harassment policies.

Measures Implemented by the Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) – Kenya

The OAG has prioritized gender diversity, inclusion, and equity in two main dimensions:

1. **Internal measures**: integrating gender into institutional policies, HR systems, and workplace practices.
2. **External measures**: auditing gender-related public programmes to ensure accountability in the use of public resources.

A. Internal Measures

1. Gender and Disability Mainstreaming

The Office has established a Gender Mainstreaming Committee responsible for integrating gender considerations across policies, programmes, and operations. Its Terms of Reference include:

- Conducting or facilitating institutional gender analyses and audits
- Developing, reviewing, and implementing gender and GBV policies

- Ensuring a structured and institutionalized gender mainstreaming framework
- Coordinating gender sensitization and training for staff
- Reviewing all institutional policies to ensure gender responsiveness
- Representing gender considerations in committees such as procurement, recruitment, tendering, and budgeting
- Reporting progress on gender equality
- Monitoring implementation of gender interventions
- Receiving, reviewing, and communicating feedback on gender mainstreaming

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2. Recruitment and Hiring

Recognizing the potential for gender bias during recruitment, the OAG's HR policies promote:

- Inclusive hiring practices
- Equal access to employment opportunities
- Competency-based and merit-driven selection processes
- Diverse hiring panels where possible

These measures aim to eliminate bias and ensure equitable access to employment. The current office demographic stands at fourty three percent (43%) women and fifty six percent (56%) men reflecting steady progress.

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3. Prevention of Sexual Harassment

The OAG's HR Policy explicitly prohibits all forms of harassment—verbal, physical, or psychological. Key provisions include:

- Zero tolerance for sexual harassment

- Protection for both staff and members of the public
- Clear disciplinary processes for violations
- Emphasis on maintaining ethical and professional conduct

This framework enhances safety and promotes a respectful workplace.

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4. Work–Family Balance

Work–family conflict can hinder women's career progression. The OAG actively supports staff through:

- Ninety (90) days fully paid maternity leave
- Three hours daily breastfeeding breaks for up to four months after resuming duty
- Guaranteed return to pre-maternity position or a suitable equivalent
- Mental health support, including workplace counseling
- Provisions for mothers who experience miscarriage or stillbirth (6 weeks leave)

These measures promote retention and well-being of employees with caregiving responsibilities.

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5. Performance Appraisal and Feedback

To minimize bias in performance evaluation, the OAG employs the Staff Performance Management System (SPMS), which:

- Aligns individual targets with organizational objectives
- Uses SMART criteria
- Encourages continuous feedback between supervisors and staff

- Provides avenues for appeal at multiple levels (supervisor → committee → Auditor-General)
- Requires supervisors to support staff in addressing performance gaps

A structured and transparent system helps reduce gender bias in performance assessments.

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6. Promotions and Leadership Opportunities

The OAG emphasizes equitable promotions by ensuring:

- Equal access to career advancement
- Non-discrimination on the basis of gender, disability, ethnicity, youth, or minority status
- Transparent promotion criteria and fair evaluation

Although the institution has not yet achieved the desired one-third gender representation in senior leadership, the current level stands at twenty seven percent (27%) women, reflecting steady progress.

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7. Equal Pay for Equal Work

The Office enforces equal pay principles by:

- Aligning remuneration with approved job cadet structures
- Ensuring pay is based on job role rather than gender
- Providing equal access to training, mentorship, and development opportunities

This enhances fairness and contributes to gender equity in compensation.

8. Flexible Working Arrangements

The OAG supports flexibility to promote gender equality:

- Paternity leave of ten (10) working days
- Pre-adoptive leave and adoption leave
- Extensive maternity support
- Flexible breastfeeding periods
- Leave for miscarriage or stillbirth

These provisions create an enabling environment for both male and female employees to balance personal and professional responsibilities.

9. Creating an Inclusive and Supportive Work Environment

The Office further promotes inclusivity through:

- Opportunities for professional development and advanced training
- Provision of equipped lactation rooms in all stations
- Facilitating a nanny to accompany a staff member with a child under two years during official duties away from station
- Continuous sensitization on gender equality and inclusiveness

These measures foster a supportive organizational culture that enables optimal staff performance.

B. External Measures

In line with Article 229 of the Constitution of Kenya, the Auditor-General is mandated to provide assurance that public resources are used effectively, lawfully, and for the intended purposes. As part of this mandate, the OAG conducts performance audits that have evaluated the implementation of gender-related public programmes. Notable audits include:

1. Implementation of the Linda Mama Programme by the National Hospital Insurance Fund (2022)
2. Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence (2023)
3. Provision of Maternal and Neonatal Health Care (2023)
4. Provision of Sanitary Towels to Girls in Public Primary Schools

These audits enhance transparency and accountability in public spending targeted at reducing gender inequalities, thereby indirectly contributing to gender diversity, inclusion, and equity in the country.

Key Challenges Facing the Office in Achieving Gender Equality

i. **Policy and Institutional Framework Gaps**

Absence of institutionalized gender indicators, regular reporting mechanisms, and impact assessments.

ii. **Inadequate Financing and Resources**

- Insufficient funding to support staff participation, particularly in regional offices, for consultation and input on gender matters.
- Lack of adequate resources to support gender-related activities such as training, sensitization sessions, and mainstreaming initiatives.

- Inadequate budget for capacity-building in key areas such as gender analysis, gender-responsive budgeting, and gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

iii. **Data and Evidence Limitations**

Absence of gender-disaggregated data, making it difficult to identify gender gaps, measure inequalities, track progress, or design targeted interventions.

iv. **Organizational Culture and Perceptions**

General awareness challenges, including limited understanding of the importance of gender equality across the institution.

CONCLUSION

The Office of the Auditor-General – Kenya has undertaken significant initiatives to promote gender diversity, inclusion, and equity both within the institution and across the public sector. Internally, the Office has strengthened HR policies, established gender-supportive structures, and enhanced work–family balance, leadership opportunities, and anti-discrimination mechanisms. Externally, the OAG has ensured accountability for gender-related public programmes through rigorous performance audits.

Collectively, these measures position the OAG-Kenya as a key actor in advancing both national and global gender equality goals. However, numerous challenges persist—most notably the limited financial resources, which significantly hamper the Office's effectiveness and impede the full realization of gender equality objectives.

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