



# KENYA

## CITIZENS CALL FOR A GENDER-EQUAL WORLD : A ROADMAP FOR ACTION<sup>1</sup>



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### WHAT DO RESPONDENTS IN KENYA THINK ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY?

- ➔ **The vast majority of respondents in Kenya declare that gender equality is “important” to them personally (96 percent).**
- ➔ **Seventy-two percent of respondents think gender equality in Kenya is “better” now than it was 25 years ago.** In comparison to male respondents (76 percent), slightly fewer female respondents believe that gender equality is “better” today (67 percent), and slightly more think gender equality has gotten “worse” (12 percent female; five percent male). Older women (aged 45–59) are the least likely to think that gender equality has improved (51 percent) and the most likely to think gender equality has gotten “worse” (35 percent).
- ➔ **The vast majority of respondents (92 percent) think that the Kenyan government “should do more” to promote gender equality,** seven percent think it is “doing the right amount,” and two percent think it is doing “too much.”
- ➔ **To advance gender equality in the country, 57 percent of respondents in Kenya think the government should “reform laws to promote gender equality and end discrimination against women.”** This view is held more strongly by female respondents (62 percent) than male (51 percent). They would also like the government to “focus efforts on marginalized women to leave no one behind” and “implement mass media campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of gender equality issues,” with each measure receiving 45 percent of support from respondents.
- ➔ **The most agreed-upon reason why women may not be equal to men in Kenya is “because of religion and culture that do not treat women and men as equals” (55 percent).**

<sup>1</sup> This country data sheet captures findings from a public perception survey on gender equality for Kenya. This work is co-led by Focus 2030 and Women Deliver. The survey was executed through an online poll, conducted by Deltapoll, in 17 countries. Approximately one thousand respondents in each country were surveyed in July/August 2020. Demographic data collected included: gender, age, income level, education level, last vote in national elections (where applicable), ethnicity (where applicable), migrant status, and region of residency. In Kenya, 1,080 respondents were surveyed, including 489 female respondents, 585 male respondents, and 6 respondents who identified “in another way”. Of the 1,080 respondents, 394 were aged 18 to 24, 639 were aged 25 to 44, 46 were aged 45 to 59, and 1 was aged 60 and older. Please see [www.focus2030.org](http://www.focus2030.org) and [www.womendeliver.org](http://www.womendeliver.org) for more information.

<sup>2</sup> Text in italics and quotes reflect survey response options presented to respondents.



## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

- ➔ **Gender-based violence is the top priority for respondents in Kenya**, with 31 percent ranking *“end violence against women”* as the first priority their government should focus on to improve equality between women and men in the country. Seventy-eight percent choose this as a top-three choice.
- ➔ To address gender-based violence, **most respondents (78 percent) believe that the Kenyan government should “end traditional practices that are harmful to women and girls (for example, child marriage and female genital mutilation).”** There is also support for *“funding programs to support women who have experienced violence”* (58 percent) and *“increasing accountability for [perpetrators of] physical and sexual crimes against women”* (54 percent). *“Funding programs to support women who have experienced violence”* is more important for female respondents (66 percent), and in particular for those aged 45 and older (77 percent).
- ➔ **The vast majority of respondents in Kenya (96 percent) feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault or harassment** in some place or another. The most common place where respondents feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, is *“public spaces,”* where 77 percent of respondents, and 81 percent of female respondents, feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk. Older age groups are also noticeably more likely to feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, *“in public spaces”*: 84 percent of those aged 45 and 59 and 100 percent of those aged 60 and older cited this, compared to 72 percent of those aged 18 to 24.
- ➔ Fifty-three percent of respondents in Kenya believe it is *“acceptable”* for women to always obey their partner, while 22 percent believe it is *“unacceptable.”* For 36 percent of respondents, it is *“acceptable”* *“for women to refuse sexual intercourse with their partner,”* while another 36 percent believe it is *“unacceptable.”* However, the vast majority of respondents in Kenya believe that it is *“unacceptable”* *“to whistle at a woman in the street, to touch a woman without her consent”* (90 percent), and to *“tell or share a sexist joke about a woman with friends or on social media”* (82 percent). Female respondents are more likely to find whistling at women (93 percent) and sexist jokes (89 percent) *“unacceptable.”*



## FEMINIST MOVEMENTS AND LEADERSHIP

- ➔ **Feminist movements and leadership is the second most often cited priority**, with 28 percent of respondents selecting *“improve women’s participation and leadership in politics, and cultural and social movements”* as the top priority. Seventy-one percent choose this area as a top-three priority.
- ➔ **For 61 percent of respondents, “achieving equal representation of women in politics” is a key action that the Kenyan government should take in this area.** This view is held more strongly among female (72 percent) and older respondents (71 percent of those aged 45 to 59). Fifty percent of respondents believe the Kenyan government should *“support women’s participation in peace processes and as human rights defenders.”* This view is also held more strongly among female respondents (56 percent) than male (45

percent). Additionally, 48 percent of respondents believe that their government should “support women’s political leadership and participation,” with more male respondents supporting this measure compared to female respondents (52 percent compared to 44 percent).

- ➔ **Four in five (80 percent) respondents “agree” that imposing gender quotas in all political decision-making bodies is a good way to advance gender equality in Kenya,** with only eight percent disagreeing. Female respondents aged 18 to 24 are more supportive of gender quotas (98 percent) than older females (62 percent of those aged 45 and older) and males of the same age cohort (86 percent).



## ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND RIGHTS

- ➔ **Promoting women’s economic justice and rights is the third priority overall for respondents in Kenya,** with 15 percent selecting “implement access to well paid jobs, equal pay, financial independence, and property rights” as a top priority for the government to improve gender equality in the country. Fifty-three percent choose this area as a top-three priority.
- ➔ **In order to improve women’s broader economic opportunities and decision-making powers, respondents prioritize four issues: “increase the number of women in leadership roles” (54 percent), “guarantee social protection and decent working conditions for women in low-paying jobs” (53 percent), “achieve equal access to education and professional training for women and men” (51 percent), and “prevent violence and sexual harassment in the workplace” (51 percent).** More female than male respondents cite increasing the number of women in leadership roles (60 percent compared to 47 percent) and the prevention of violence and sexual harassment (58 percent compared to 44 percent). Female respondents who migrated for a job or better economic opportunities are particularly likely to call on their government to “guarantee social protection and decent working conditions for women in low paying jobs” (70 percent, compared to 46 percent of female respondents who did not).
- ➔ Eighty-three percent of female respondents declare that they have faced at least one of the prompted gender discriminations in their life. Forty-six percent “have not or will not receive the same inheritance as their male relatives,” 36 percent have had their “freedom of movement restricted against [their] will by a family member or a partner” (54 percent of those aged 18 to 24), and 31 percent “did not have the same access to promotion opportunities in [their] job as [their] male peers.” In addition, 29 percent of female respondents report that they are “not paid as much as their male counterparts,” and 17 percent “have had difficulty accessing education and professional training compared with their male peers or relatives.”
- ➔ For 58 percent of respondents in Kenya, it is “unacceptable” “to let women do the majority of housework, childcare, and elderly care.” Additionally, 69 percent find it “unacceptable” “to ask a woman in a job interview whether she has, or would like to have, children.” The majority of respondents (84 percent) also believe it is “unacceptable” “that women earn less than men for the same work.” Female respondents (89 percent) are more likely than male respondents (79 percent) to find it “unacceptable” “for women to earn less than men for the same work.”

- ➔ The economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic hit female and male respondents in Kenya similarly, with both citing not being able to “do as many hours of paid work” (34 percent female; 34 percent male) and who “faced unexpected financial hardship” (70 percent female; 71 percent male) in the same proportions. **Gender differences do arise when looking at household work, with 71 percent of female respondents, compared to 42 percent of male respondents, whose “time doing housework has increased.”** This is particularly the case for women aged 45 and older, of whom 94 percent spent more time doing housework than normally. Additionally, more female (43 percent, and 63 percent of those aged 18 to 24) than male (35 percent) respondents could not spend as much as time “pursuing [their] own education or training” as they did before the pandemic.



## TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY

- ➔ **Technology and innovation for gender equality is the fourth most often cited area for government action**, with 10 percent of respondents ranking “invest in technology to improve women’s access to health services, education, and economic opportunities” as the top priority. Forty-four percent choose this area as a top-three priority.
- ➔ To promote the use of technology and innovation for gender equality, respondents would like their government to “provide equal opportunities for girls and women to study and work in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)” (69 percent) and to “address barriers preventing girls and women from accessing, designing, and developing technology” (58 percent).



## BODILY AUTONOMY AND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

- ➔ **Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights is respondents’ fifth most cited priority for government action**, with nine percent ranking “provide access to contraception and family planning, good maternal health, and sex education in schools” as a top priority. Thirty-five percent choose this area as a top-three priority.
- ➔ **To advance women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights, respondents in Kenya would like their government to “increase access to sexual health services” (56 percent), “increase access to accurate information, including sexual education in schools” (52 percent), and “prioritize the needs of women from marginalized groups (for example, women with disabilities, ethnic minorities, LGBT+ individuals, refugees and migrants)” (49 percent).**
- ➔ More female (61 percent) than male respondents (43 percent) highlight the importance of “increasing access to accurate information including sexual health education in school.” In particular, younger women (aged 18 to 24) are most likely to think this is an important issue for their government (68 percent).

- ➔ **Twenty-three percent of female respondents in Kenya have had difficulty in their lives “accessing [their] chosen method of contraception,” rising to 29 percent among those aged 18 to 24.** Additionally, six percent of female respondents have had “difficulty accessing abortion and post-abortion care” in their lifetime. Again, this is more pronounced (11 percent) among younger women aged 18-24.
- ➔ The Covid-19 pandemic further jeopardized access to sexual health services: five percent of respondents have had “difficulties accessing contraception and other sexual health services” during the pandemic, with younger respondents aged 18 to 24, having had the most difficulty (seven percent).



## FEMINIST ACTION FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

- ➔ **The sixth most often cited priority to improve gender equality in Kenya is feminist action for climate justice,** with four percent of respondents ranking the “*promotion of women’s participation in climate change action*” as top priority. Ten percent choose this area as a top-three priority.
- ➔ To promote women’s efforts to respond to climate change, 72 percent of respondents would like their **government to “promote the training and hiring of women in jobs related to climate change,” 71 percent would like the government to “increase girls’ and women’s participation in the development of solutions to tackle climate change,” and 70 percent support “increasing funding for women-led organizations that are working to fight climate change.”**



## FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

- ➔ **The vast majority of respondents in Kenya (93 percent) think that their government should increase funding for gender equality in Kenya,** and 82 percent think that it should increase its funding for international projects and organizations fighting for gender equality around the world.
- ➔ **Eighty-seven percent of respondents in Kenya “agree” that achieving gender equality is essential to end poverty in all countries,** compared to four percent who “disagree.”



## WHAT ACTIONS ARE RESPONDENTS IN KENYA WILLING TO TAKE?

- ➔ To encourage policymakers to tackle gender inequality around the world, 71 percent of respondents in Kenya are willing to “*promote gender equality in everyday conversations and interactions,*” this proportion being higher among female (77 percent) than male respondents (64 percent). Sixty-four percent of respondents would “*share information about gender equality on social media*” (69 percent of female and 60 percent of male respondents). Additionally, 61 percent of respondents would “*volunteer with an organization working on gender equality*” (68 percent of female and 55 percent of male respondents) or “*vote in an election for a candidate supporting gender equality.*”



## IMPACT OF COVID-19

- ➔ Forty-three percent of respondents “agree” that the government’s response to support people through the Covid-19 pandemic in Kenya has met the needs of women and men equally, while 40 percent “disagree.”
- ➔ Forty-four percent of respondents “agree” that inequality between women and men will rise as a consequence of Covid-19, while 35 percent “disagree.”
- ➔ A significant majority of respondents (96 percent) believe that women should be involved in all aspects of the global health response and recovery efforts to Covid-19, including in the development of policies and treatments.
- ➔ More female (68 percent, and 73 percent of those aged 25 to 44) than male respondents (57 percent) cited experiencing “emotional stress and mental health issues” as a result of Covid-19.

*This country data sheet is a supplement to Citizens Call for a Gender-Equal World: A Roadmap for Action, a global report on the findings from a 17-country public perception survey on gender equality. For the full report and all country data sheets, please visit: [www.focus2030.org](http://www.focus2030.org) and <http://womendeliver.org/citizens-call-for-a-gender-equal-world/>.*