

Gender & the Knowledge Society: assessment of 4 East African countries

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National Assessments of Gender, Science and Technology assessments

- **Ethiopia:** Helina Beyene, University of California
- **Kenya:** Natasha I. Froshina & Grace M. Mwaura, African Centre for Technology Studies
- **Rwanda:** Verdiana Masanja, University of Kibungo
- **Uganda:** Irene Murungi, Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET)
 - Studies at: <http://owsd.net/resources/data-collection-and-analysis>
 - <http://wisat.org/national-assessments/>



Common points

- Good policy, but . . .
- Precarious health situations, but improving
 - Gender-based violence (GBV)
 - Infectious diseases
 - Deaths from abortion
 - Growing contraceptive use
- Social status: patriarchal structures and gender stereotypes



- High rates of women's economic participation, but few in salaried employment
 - Generally large gender wage gap
- Big time-use gaps
- High disparities between urban and rural areas in gender equality, especially in electricity
- Low access to credit, loans.



Education

- Parity in **primary education**
- **Secondary** varies from country to country
 - Girls staying in school despite very uncomfortable situations
- **Tertiary**: No parity in any country. Numbers larger, but still low for girls/women in STEM fields
 - Sexual harassment continues



- **Attitudes/trends towards women in science:**
government promotes, society impedes:
- Constraining impact of private universities
- Brain drain – lack of data, but very serious



Technology

- Lower rates of Internet access and mobile phone ownership among women than men
- Knowledge access may come through mobile education, available on non-smart phones
- Rwanda and Kenya highest on technological readiness
- No data available on level of computer skills by sex.




Rwanda: a standout

- Superb policy, along with implementation, monitoring and evaluation
 - Highest % of women parliamentarians globally (58%)
 - High level of women's participation in decision-making
 - High involvement of women in peace-building (post-1994 genocide)
 - Big reduction on maternal and infant mortality rates
 - Parity boys/girls in primary school enrolment and retention
 - Low rate of gender inequality




Rwanda challenges

- High degree of rural-urban social inequality
- Most women work in agriculture (82%), unpaid or lowly paid
- Patriarchal attitudes limits girls entry into technical fields
- Women 45% of all university students, but only 21% of engineering students
- Low rates of Internet use among both men and women
- Very low rate of rural electricity (7%)



Ethiopia- positive policy, with reservations

- Numerous policy advances guaranteeing equal rights to women, affirmative action
- Increasing numbers of women in office
- FGM outlawed and dropping, but still widely practiced
- Strong government policy on gender and ICT
- Progress in girls schooling
- Few women in formal sector employment, but often the majority in manufacturing
- STI policy calls for increasing females in engineering, science, TVET



Ethiopia: challenges

- Constitution overly empowers religious and customary laws on marriage, divorce, inheritance
- Women's voice constrained due to civil society law
- High cultural overvaluation of boys and men
- High adolescent pregnancy rates
- Low female literacy rate
- One of lowest ICT penetration rates in the world (M/F)
- Country scores poorly on technological readiness (130/143)



Kenya: women big in Silicon Savannah

- Kenya Govt policy to become “Silicon Savannah”
 - Numerous women involved in S&T innovation
[Ushahidi](#), [Isis N’yongo](#), [AkiraChix](#)
- Women in Kenya active in leadership and decision-making (of the non-elected variety):
 - High percentage (for Africa) of women directors of boards, companies
 - Women in leadership positions at leading universities



Kenya challenges

- Lack of core government agency charged with gender
- Equal rights in Marriage Law (2014) empowers polygamy
- Geographical differences: major gaps in gender equality



Uganda: formal sector progress

- Conducive atmosphere for women in political leadership
- Decrease in HIV/AIDS prevalence due to govt policies and programs
- More girls in science at university (33%)
- Many female science researchers
- Two women vice-chancellors
- Women lead in rates of entrepreneurship and ownership of registered businesses
- High number of women on public boards



Uganda challenges

- Many gender-sensitive policies, but lack of effective gender policies in KS, STI, ICT
- Maternal mortality, infectious disease, HIV/AIDS prevalence rates still high
- World's highest fertility rate
- High rates of sexual abuse of girls
- Less land ownership than men
- Low rates of Internet connectivity for women



No single factor is enough – you need it all!

- Policy
- Implementation
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Improvements in women's health
- Status improvements
 - Attitudinal changes about abilities and roles of girls and women
 - Diminishing customary traditional law inhibiting women's autonomy
- Women need voice (political participation)
- Education essential, of course
- Improved access to resources: land, credit, technology
- Economic – paid labor, equal pay
- Sharing responsibility: equalizing women's multiple roles