

EMPowerHer

Quarterly E-newsletter



Issue No. 1-2025

Chairperson's Spot

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the latest edition of our Quarterly Newsletter! As we turn the page on another quarter, we reflect on the milestones we have achieved, the challenges we have faced, and the opportunities that lie ahead.

Each quarter offers us a valuable opportunity to pause, reflect, and recommit to our shared mission: To strengthen the participation of women in all spheres through capacity development, partnership building and strategic community engagement. This issue captures the momentum we continue to build through advocacy, collaboration, and the power of collective action. From policy and legislative dialogues and community engagement, to the bold voices championing gender equality and women empowerment, we celebrate the milestones reached and the women leading the way. This newsletter is more than just a recap it is a testament to the strength of our network and a reminder of what is possible when women stand together. We hope these stories inspire you, inform you, and remind you that the work we do though not always easy is deeply impactful. Together, let's continue to rise, uplift-her, and transform-her.

We also acknowledge the unwavering support from KEWOPA's partners – the Parliament of Kenya, URAIA Trust, Institute of Public Finance, Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, UN Women, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, and the Government of Canada whose technical and financial support continues to power KEWOPA's vision.

Hon. Leah Sankaire, MP
Chairperson, Kenya Women Parliamentary Association



Bunge Highlights

KEWOPA has been at the forefront of championing a wide range of legislative initiatives in Parliament. Members' work spans key sectors such as health, security, agriculture, education, gender equality, and the rights of persons with disabilities. From advocating for gender-responsive budgeting to promoting inclusive policies and community-driven development, KEWOPA members continue to play a critical role in shaping laws that impact the lives of Kenyans. In this piece, we are highlighting just a few examples to showcase the depth and diversity of their legislative efforts.

STATEMENTS

Hon. Lillian Siyoi, the Member of Parliament for Trans Nzoia County, sought clarity on the country's efforts to address the high maternal and child mortality rates. While addressing the Departmental Committee on Health, Hon. Siyoi raised concerns over the persistent gaps in maternal health services, especially in marginalized and rural areas. Her inquiry highlighted the urgent need for strategic investments in health-care infrastructure, skilled personnel, and access to essential maternal and neonatal care to reduce preventable deaths and improve overall health outcomes for mothers and children in Kenya.

Hon. Irene Mayaka, a Nominated Member of Parliament, questioned the Departmental Committee on Social Protection regarding the status of the campaign to end Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) by the 2022 deadline. Hon. Mayaka underscored the importance of holding institutions accountable to their commitments in eradicating the harmful practice.

She emphasized the need for comprehensive data on the current prevalence of FGM, as well as the effectiveness of public education campaigns, legal enforcement, and community-based interventions aimed at protecting girls and women from this human rights violation.



BILLS

KEWOPA members have also supported the Persons with Disabilities Bill (Senate Bill No. 7 of 2023), which was passed by the National Assembly in January 2025. The bill seeks to restructure the National Council for Persons with Disabilities and provide an institutional framework for protecting, promoting, and monitoring the rights of persons with disabilities. It also offers tax incentives for donations and accommodations made for the benefit of persons with disabilities.

These initiatives underscore KEWOPA's commitment to advancing gender equality and protecting vulnerable groups through legislative action in 2025.



Bunge Highlights

MOTIONS

the House considered amendments proposed by the National Assembly to the Persons with Disabilities Bill (Senate Bills No. 7 of 2023). The Bill, originally sponsored by Senator Miraj Abdullahi and championed through the Standing Committee on Labour and Social Welfare, aims to strengthen the institutional framework for the protection, promotion, and fulfillment of the rights of persons with disabilities in Kenya. The consideration of the amendments marks a significant step toward finalizing the legislative process, paving the way for enhanced inclusivity, accessibility, and empowerment for persons with disabilities across the country.

Hon. Sabina Chege, Nominated Member of Parliament, introduced a motion urging the government to strengthen the implementation of the Kenya Universal Healthcare Coverage Policy 2020–2030. Citing Article 43(1)(a) of the Constitution, which guarantees every person the right to the highest attainable standard of health.



Hon. Chege emphasized the government's commitment to achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) for all Kenyans. She noted that although the Ministry of Health launched the Kenya Universal Healthcare Coverage Policy in 2020—anchored on expanding access through the Social Health Insurance Fund—there remains a critical need to improve the quality of care in public health facilities. Expressing concern over inadequate funding for these services, she highlighted the disparity in access, pointing out that civil servants and State officers currently benefit from comprehensive medical covers often utilized in private hospitals. To bridge the funding gap and enhance service delivery in public health institutions, the motion proposes a policy mandating all civil servants, public officers, and State officers to utilize public healthcare facilities for their medical needs, thereby ensuring increased resource allocation and utilization within the public health sector. The motion is currently awaiting debate in the House



Empowering Women Leaders Across Kenya: KEWOPA's Bold Strides

Over the past quarter, KEWOPA has continued to champion women's leadership, and inclusive governance across the country through impactful forums and capacity building initiatives.

In **Murang'a County**, KEWOPA conducted a leadership and empowerment workshop for women MCAs, equipping them with essential skills in political branding, legislative knowledge, and how to be an effective legislator. Hon. Veronica Maina inspired leaders to serve with excellence and mentor others to create a pipeline of visionary women in politics. Discussions also emphasized mental health and the importance of engaging both women and men and boys and girls in leadership development.

In **Meru County**, women leaders explored themes of public participation, disability rights, and integrity in governance. Hon. Elizabeth Kailemia noted the rising confidence among women to vie for leadership positions, marking a positive shift in political ambition and agency.

Kakamega and Homa Bay women MCAs gathered for a mentorship and peer learning forum. Where they were encouraged by Senator Beth Syengo to exude boldness, while Senators Catherine Mumma and Beatrice Ogolla stressed unity, party affiliation, and positioning for influence. The women MCAs pledged to work collectively to increase women's representation and policy advocacy.

In **Garissa County**, the community engagement forum highlighted the resilience of women leaders facing cultural, financial, and societal challenges. KEWOPA amplified the importance of mentorship, economic empowerment, and male allyship to achieve gender-inclusive leadership.

A major milestone was the launch of "**Komesha Dhuluma**", KEWOPA's flagship campaign to combat gender-based violence (GBV) and femicide. With a Ksh.100 million commitment by the President, the campaign will mobilize communities and advocate for justice, reaching over 10 million Kenyans through direct engagement and digital platforms.

On the global stage, at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 69), KEWOPA co-hosted a high-level side event in partnership with the Council of Governors. The session reflected on Kenya's progress post-Beijing and shared global strategies for replicating women's leadership success.

The quarter also spotlights **Hon. Sabina Chege**, a trailblazer in media and politics whose journey from the airwaves to Parliament showcases the power of communication in driving change and KEWOPA's Executive Director Ms. Mercy Mwangi sharing her personal insights.

KEWOPA remains steadfast in building a future where no woman is left behind through empowering leaders, transforming communities, and pushing for a just and inclusive society.

KEWOPA Mashinani

KEWOPA ENGAGES MURANG'A MCAS IN LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT SESSIONS

KEWOPA held a successful leadership and empowerment workshop with the Members of the County Assembly (MCAs) in Murang'a County. The workshop themed, "how to be an effective legislator" aimed at empowering women leaders with necessary leadership skills, constitutional provisions, electoral procedures, mobilization of resources, political branding, campaign strategies, and legislative laws

Hon. Veronica Maina called upon the MCAs to perform their duties diligently, saying, "Whatever you do, ensure that you do it thoroughly and in an excellent manner." She also highlighted the need for women leaders to mentor others, building a pool of qualified and visionary women in leadership.



Murang'a MCAs during KEWOPA's leadership and empowerment forum

The forum adopted an inclusive learning session was an open forum where the participants were sharing their leadership challenges and how they can overcome them. One of the greatest resolutions was that they would engage more women to leadership by uniting them with a common goal and ensuring for the inclusion of women in the county government.

Mental health was also highlighted in the discussions, where the participants recognized the importance of leaders taking care of their own well-being and also taking steps to work with citizens on health issues. The session also underscored the importance of supporting both boys and girls to achieve holistic development and equality in society.

KEWOPA continues to advance women's leadership through capacity building and advocacy, empowering women leaders at all levels and advancing governance and community development.

KEWOPA Mashinani

KEWOPA CHAMPIONS WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN MERU COUNTY

KEWOPA recently held a transformative training session in Meru County, aimed at fostering public participation, disability rights, civic engagement, and leadership with integrity. The session provided a platform for participants to gain insights, share their experiences, and discuss the challenges they face in leadership and governance.

Hon. Elizabeth Kailemia, the key speaker at the event, urged women to step forward with confidence and take up leadership roles while upholding integrity. She celebrated the growing confidence among women in Meru, noting, "Women of Meru did not know they have the confidence to vie for political positions but now, they feel empowered and ready to take up the challenge."

From grassroots activists to aspiring political leaders, the stories highlighted KEWOPA's commitment to equipping women with the tools and confidence necessary to lead and engage in governance.



Participants unite during a collaborative training session focused on empowering women leaders

As part of KEWOPA's broader mission, these initiatives are helping to increase women's representation in leadership, contributing to gender equality and inclusive governance across Kenya.

KEWOPA Leadership and Mentorship Program

EMPOWERING WOMEN LEADERS: KEWOPA HOSTS PEER LEARNING & EXPERIENCE-SHARING FORUM FOR WOMEN MCAS

KEWOPA held a two-day women MCAs' forum for the Kakamega and Homa Bay counties women MCAs, a platform for mentorship, strategic planning, and peer to peer learning. The forum aimed at bringing together leaders from different counties to learn and share their experiences navigating county assemblies as women leaders.

Experienced leaders provided insights, urging the MCAs to be brave, firm, and proactive. Senator Beth Syengo urged them to claim their space in politics. "You need to step forward and fight for your space," she reiterated.

One of the key messages was cooperation and unity. Senator Catherine Mumma emphasized that women leaders need to work together across party lines. "We need to keep our eyes on the larger picture, making sure women's voices are heard," she said.

Discussions also raised issues of integrity and positioning of common issues. Senator Beatrice Ogolla called on MCAs to affiliate with political parties that support women leadership. "The rise of women in politics depends on how inclusive political spaces are," she noted.

Despite such challenges, the women leaders committed to bring change and to increase women's representation, advocate for policies supporting female leaders, and advocate for a more inclusive political landscape. The forum cemented the power of women leaders to shape the future through unity, strategy, and collective action.



Women MCAs at the KEWOPA Experience sharing Forum

GARISSA WOMEN RISE: KEWOPA CHAMPIONS WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

In Garissa County, the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA) engaged women, youth, men, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) on the importance of women in leadership and decision making. Women shared their challenges and the realities of running for office in a male dominated space.

Despite societal stereotypes, financial constraints, and cultural barriers, they claimed resolute determination to break through. Several participants shared individual testimonies of endurance, varying from lack of encouragement to campaigns of intimidation. KEWOPA members encouraged them to run for elective positions, reciprocally support one another, and bring about change.

One of the key takeaways was the power of allies, men who believe in women's leadership and communities that support them. Actual empowerment comes from working together where women, men, and youth speak up for inclusive leadership. The discussion emphasized mentorship, economic empowerment, and policy advocacy to ensure more women are elected.

The support from KEWOPA through our partners is creating pockets of change as women are getting empowered and enabled to change the game. These dialogues are designing a tomorrow in which the norm is inclusive leadership.



Community engagement forum in Garissa County.

Policy and Advocacy

KEWOPA LEADS CAMPAIGN TO END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE

KEWOPA launched the highly anticipated “Komesha Dhuluma” campaign, a bold initiative to address the increasing cases of gender-based violence (GBV) and femicide in Kenya. Supported by H.E. President William Ruto’s allocation of Ksh. 100 million, the campaign seeks to bring transformative change at the grassroots level by addressing the root causes of GBV.

KEWOPA Chairperson Hon. Leah Sankaire, speaking at the pre-launch event, stressed the urgency of the campaign, stating, “This initiative is about more than just awareness. It is about engaging communities directly, empowering survivors, and advocating for reforms that ensure justice for victims.”

The campaign will be led by KEWOPA’s 102 members, who will conduct various community activities, reaching 106,000 individuals directly and over 10 million Kenyans through digital platforms. The alarming rise in femicide and GBV cases, including intimate partner violence and crimes involving young women, has sparked national concern, prompting civil society to call for action.

Hon. Sankaire urged collective responsibility, stating, “We can no longer stand by as women and girls live in fear of violence. This campaign is a clarion call for all Kenyans to unite in eradicating GBV and ensuring accountability for perpetrators.”

The initiative will also involve key stakeholders such as the Judiciary, law enforcement agencies, and women’s rights organizations to ensure comprehensive support for survivors.

KEWOPA reiterates that the fight against GBV is not just a women’s issue but a national priority, and calls for a united effort to build a society grounded in equality, justice, and respect.



KEWOPA launches the 'Komesha Dhuluma' campaign to combat femicide and other forms of GBV

KEWOPA AT CSW 69



The main focus of the sixty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The review included an assessment of current challenges that affect the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and its contribution towards the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

At the sidelines of the the CSW, KEWOPA in partnership with the Council of Governors hosted a high-level side event themed on “The Impact of Women’s Leadership and Decision-Making Post-Beijing: Lessons from Kenya and Global Strategies for Replication.” Facilitated by KEWOPA deputy Chair, Hon Catherine Mumma, this event brought to light an enhanced understanding of Kenya’s journey in advancing women’s leadership and the impact of these efforts on the broader gender equality agenda.

Speaking at the event, Hon Jane Kagiri outlined how Women in leadership are advancing legislative and policy frameworks for gender equality post Beijing in Kenya. She emphasized the pivotal role that specifically the women parliamentarians have played in legislative advocacy, ensuring that the laws of the land reflect the lived realities of women and girls. Through their efforts key laws such as the Family Laws (The Marriage Act, The Matrimonial Properties Act) have been passed. She reiterated that women leaders have also been at the forefront advocating for reproductive health rights, pushing for legislation such as the Assisted Reproductive Technology Bill, the Family Reproductive Health Bill, and the Reproductive Maternal and Newborn Health Bill. These policies are essential to securing the health and well-being of families across Kenya. Beyond legislation, women leaders have mobilized resources to empower women economically.

This event during the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was a great and unique opportunity for delegates to engage in a dialogue on the concrete impact of women in decision-making roles, learn from Kenya’s policy innovations, and discuss



#BEIJING30

UN WOMEN CSW69

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Hon. Sabina Chege, MP.

Driving Change and Empowering Women: Hon. Sabina Chege:

Hon. Sabina Wanjiru Chege, is a Kenyan politician with a background in media and a passion for public service. She attended Our Lady Consolata Mugoiri Girls High School before pursuing a Bachelor of Education degree at the University of Nairobi. She later earned a master's degree in communication, which enhanced her ability to engage with the public and advocate for key policies.

Before entering politics, she had a successful media career, gaining national recognition for her role as Rehema in the popular television soap opera Tausi. She later transitioned into radio, working as a presenter at Coro FM before taking up leadership roles at Kameme FM and the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC). Her media career allowed her to interact with Kenyans and understand the challenges they faced, shaping her leadership journey.

In 2013, she was elected as the Woman Representative for Murang'a County under The National Alliance (TNA) party, winning with 96.6% of the vote. She was re-elected in 2017 under the Jubilee Party. In Parliament, she chaired the Education, Research, and Technology Committee and later the Health Committee, where she championed policies on education, healthcare, and women's empowerment.

Her legislative contributions include the Kenya National Blood Transfusion Service Bill (2019), the Breastfeeding Mothers Bill (2024), and the Horticultural Crops Authority Bill (2024), all aimed at improving healthcare, workplace conditions for women, and the agricultural sector.

Now a nominated Member of Parliament, she continues to advocate for policies that uplift communities and promote gender equality. Her career reflects a commitment to public service, using both media and politics to drive meaningful change in Kenya.



Hon. Sabina Chege speaks during a committee meeting



Hon. Sabina Chege addresses key legislative matters in a crucial discussion

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

If you could have a coffee date with any inspiring female leader—dead or alive—who would it be and what would you ask her?

Malala Yousafzai, A Pakistani activist and Youngest Nobel Peace Laureate, who was shot at a tender age while fighting against the Taliban restrictions on girls' education in Pakistan. I would ask her what gave her the courage and inspiration to fight for girls education at such a tender age.

What's the most unexpected or funny thing that has happened in a serious meeting with women parliamentarians?

One time we were at a meeting in a Nairobi Hotel when a stranger stumbled into our meeting room and sat in the room. During introductions, she introduced herself as a Member of Parliament of a certain Constituency not knowing that the area MP was in the meeting and that we had already identified them as a stranger.

If you could create a mentorship boot camp for young women leaders, what's one rule or challenge you'd include to prepare them for politics?

To have a community (1 or 2 people) who act as their sounding board.

What's one myth about women in leadership that you wish you could completely debunk?

Behind the faces you see on TV or newspapers lies human beings who are very kind, funny and fun.

What's a moment in your career when you thought, 'Wow, this is exactly where I'm meant to be'?

I have had many of these moments, but a memorable one is the first time I visited State House and met the former President, H.E Uhuru Kenyatta.

Lastly, if you had to describe your leadership style using the title of a popular song or movie, what would it be and why?

I would say my leadership style encourages team members to collaborate but also inspires them to do their best work and shine individually. Therefore a song that would describe my leadership style would be Emeli Sande's, Shine. It says You got to let love lead you let love shine through, express yourself and SHINE!



Mercy Mwangi
Executive Director, KEWOPA

Gallery



