

EMPowerHer



Chairperson's Spot

Dear Reader,

It is with immense pride and gratitude that I welcome you to the second issue of our 2025 KEWOPA Newsletter. This quarter has been defined by bold leadership, unwavering advocacy, and a collective push toward more inclusive governance, championed by women legislators across Kenya.

Our members continue to lead with courage and purpose. From the historic assent of the Persons with Disabilities Bill to the momentum around menstrual dignity through the Provision of Sanitary Towels Bill, these legislative milestones reflect the growing impact of gender-responsive leadership in shaping Kenya's future.

At the grassroots, KEWOPA remains active and committed. Through initiatives such as Komesha Dhuluma and civic engagement forums in Kakamega, Taveta, Turbo, and Kajiado, we are empowering communities to reimagine leadership as inclusive, participatory, and grounded in dignity. We stand firm in our efforts to end gender-based violence and to amplify voices that have long been excluded.

This quarter also saw significant policy engagement. In partnership with the Institute of Public Finance, KEWOPA submitted key recommendations on Health, Education, and Social Protection to the Budget and Appropriations Committee (BAC) for the 2025/2026 national budget.

We are encouraged that several proposals were reflected in the final BAC report, including calls for increased investment in social protection and equitable health reforms. While not all our recommendations were adopted, our continued engagement with parliamentary committees reinforces our influence in promoting gender-responsive and community-centered budgeting.

We also celebrate the power of collaboration, whether through enhancing digital advocacy, deepening male allyship, or promoting evidence-based policymaking, our collective efforts are laying the foundation for a more just, inclusive, and equitable society.

As Chairperson, I remain deeply inspired by the commitment and resilience of our members, partners, and communities. Let us continue to lead with purpose, speak with conviction, and act with compassion.



Hon. Leah Sankaire
Chairperson, KEWOPA

Bunge Highlights

Leading With Purpose: Women Legislators Driving Bold Policy Change.

In a season marked by dynamic parliamentary activity, women legislators in Kenya have continued to distinguish themselves as bold, principled, and visionary actors in the country's policy and governance spaces. From pushing critical legislative reforms to raising timely statements on social justice and inclusion, their efforts in the second quarter of 2025 have underscored the transformative potential of gender-responsive leadership.



One of the most significant milestones during this period was the historic assent of the Persons with Disabilities Act 2025, sponsored by Senator Crystal Asige. As Kenya's first visually impaired senator, her lived experience shaped the framing of this progressive legislation. The new law not only affirms rights and entitlements for persons with disabilities, but also institutionalizes inclusive service delivery, economic protections, and tax reliefs for PWDs. The Act's passage by Parliament and subsequent presidential assent signals a resounding win for inclusive policy and a proud moment for women's leadership in Parliament.



Another major focus has been on advancing menstrual health and dignity. Senator Gloria Orwoba championed the Provision of Sanitary Towels Bill, which sparked wide debate and much-needed dialogue on menstrual equity in Kenya. Through this bill 2023, Senator Orwoba calls for the establishment of national and county-level mechanisms to provide free sanitary towels and improve menstrual hygiene infrastructure.



The Environmental Management and Co-ordination (Amendment) Bill, 2023, sponsored by Hon. Irene Mayaka, County MP, was passed by the National Assembly on 4th June 2025. The Bill seeks to strengthen environmental protection by empowering the Cabinet Secretary to regulate the planting and maintenance of vegetation near water bodies, with a specific ban on eucalyptus trees due to their negative impact on water ecosystems. It aims to safeguard riparian and wetland areas through enforceable regulations. The Bill has since been transmitted to the Senate for further consideration.

Bunge Highlights



Economic equity and social protection were also on the legislative agenda. Catherine Omanyo, Busia Woman Representative, raised a statement concerning the abrupt KSh 500 million budget cut to the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF). Her intervention brought national attention to the implications of underfunding programs that directly impact women and marginalized groups. It also sparked broader conversations on resource allocation and the protection of gains made under gender-focused development initiatives.



In the Senate, Senators Catherine Mumma and Esther Okenyuri made key contributions through statements on In Vitro Fertilization regulation, HIV/AIDS contingency funding, and the status of county-held public funds. These statements speak to the ongoing vigilance women senators are maintaining on health rights and fiscal accountability.



What these efforts collectively highlight is a growing ecosystem of female leadership that is strategic, people-centered, and impact-driven. Whether through Bills, Statements, or Motions, women legislators are actively shaping Kenya's legislative landscape not just through representation, but through bold and evidence-informed action.

#KomeshaDhuluma: A United Front Against GBV and Femicide



Hon. Dr Eve Obara leads the Komesha Dhuluma Campaign against GBV Kabondo Kasipul

Through education, legal awareness, and survivor-centered approaches, the campaign continues to amplify voices, change mindsets, and build safer communities. KEWOPA remains resolute in supporting this movement and ensuring that no woman or girl lives in fear. Importantly, the campaign has also opened spaces for men to become allies and advocates. It has encouraged local champions, teachers, elders, youth, and administrators to adopt zero-tolerance approaches toward violence and discrimination. In many areas, survivors have begun stepping forward, finding support where once there was stigma. The campaign's momentum signals a growing national commitment: that Kenya must uphold the dignity of every citizen. KEWOPA will continue walking with communities until every home, school, and public space is safe for all.

Across the country, KEWOPA has taken a bold stand against the rising tide of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and femicide through the Komesha Dhuluma campaign. With support from the Executive Office of the President, the campaign has been rolled out in over 20 constituencies including Baringo, Kisii, Kwale, Homabay, Nyakach, Kiharu, Uasin Gishu, Muranga, among others using impactful forums, solidarity walks, and sensitization sessions to mobilize communities to speak out, support survivors, and drive collective responsibility.

The campaign, backed by local leaders, state agencies, and civil society, emphasizes breaking the silence, shifting harmful cultural norms, upholding the rights and dignity of women, girls, and persons with disabilities and also enhancing access to justice for GBV victims.



KEWOPA Mashinani

Kakamega County: Shaping Equitable Budgets Through Gender-Responsive Engagement

In Kakamega County, KEWOPA held a forum that brought together women leaders, grass roots organizers, administrators, and community budget champions to explore gender-responsive budgeting as a practical tool for inclusion and accountability. The session aimed to demystify the budget-making process and emphasize the critical need to center women's voices and experiences in county planning.

The discussions focused on how gender responsiveness can be incorporated at every stage of the budgeting cycle, from planning and prioritization to allocation and expenditure tracking. Participants were exposed to real-life examples of how gender-blind budgets can lead to service delivery gaps, and how equitable resource allocation can enhance both social and economic outcomes for marginalized groups, especially women and girls.

Hon. Elsie Muhanda, the Kakamega County MP, emphasized that budget processes must not only be open and participatory but also intentionally inclusive. She underscored the importance of having women actively shaping budget priorities that affect their lives directly, noting that gender equity in fiscal policy is foundational to inclusive development. The forum marked a significant step forward in empowering communities to understand, engage with, and influence county budgets through a gender lens.



Hon. Elsie Muhanda during the GRB training in Kakamega County

Taveta County: Advancing Equity and Justice through Gender-Inclusive Budgeting

In Taveta, KEWOPA facilitated an engaging and reflective session with budget champions, civic actors, and community leaders to deepen their understanding of gender-responsive budgeting as a means to promote justice and accountability in governance. The event was part of KEWOPA's broader mission to build grass-roots capacity in influencing public financial decisions in ways that reflect the lived realities of both women and men.

Participants explored the structures and timelines of the county budget cycle, while also interrogating the gaps that often leave women and girls behind in resource allocation. They were challenged to consider how public funds can be made to work more equitably and how gender perspectives can be woven into county planning without being sidelined.



Community engagement forum in Taita Taveta County.

Hon. Lydia Haika, the Taveta County MP, called on leaders to pursue fairness and dignity in resource sharing. She reminded participants that effective leadership must reflect empathy and a commitment to lifting every citizen. Her sentiments reinforced the idea that gender equality is not a niche agenda but a central pillar of just governance. The Taveta forum left attendees energized and better equipped to advocate for inclusive budgets that genuinely respond to community needs.

Empowering Leadership Through Civic Awareness: KEWOPA Hosts Forum in Turbo Constituency

In our continued efforts to promote inclusive leadership and civic engagement, we convened a community dialogue Forum in Turbo Constituency. The forum brought together women, youth, and local community leaders for a robust and timely conversation on governance, constitutional rights, and active citizenship.

The forum aimed to equip participants, especially women and youth with the knowledge and tools to participate meaningfully in governance. Key discussions focused on public participation, disability inclusion, and the roles of Members of Parliament and Senators.



Participants unite during a collaborative training session focused on empowering women

These sessions helped demystify the functions of elected leaders while emphasizing the importance of community involvement in legislation and oversight.

A central message throughout the forum was that leadership begins with awareness, integrity, and action. Participants were encouraged to take responsibility for shaping inclusive and value-driven leadership spaces. Hon. Janet Sitienei, the area MP, delivered a passionate address, stating, "Leadership without dignity is short-lived." She emphasized that true leadership is rooted in service, humility, and respect for all people, not in titles or positions. Her message underscored the need for leaders to build trust and remain accountable to the people they serve.

The forum concluded with a strong call to action: promote inclusive leadership, expand civic education, and support platforms that empower women and youth as changemakers in their communities.

Kajiado County: Empowering communities through Inclusive Leadership

Across the country, KEWOPA continues to take civic education and leadership conversations to the grassroots. In a recent KEWOPA Mashinani engagement in Kajiado, Hon. Betty Batuli led a community forum that brought together citizens for a dialogue on democratic participation, leadership, and accountability.

Participants engaged on responsible leadership, public participation, gender equality, and the inclusion of youth and persons with disabilities (PWDs) in governance. A strong emphasis was placed on the need to dismantle barriers that hinder women's political participation. The role of political parties in fostering meaningful engagement of women in elective politics was also spotlighted.



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

The conversation further tackled cultural practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and early marriages, which continue to deny many girls in Kajiado the opportunity to realize their full potential. Speakers called for stronger protection frameworks and community-driven efforts to end these practices. Other topical issues included land rights, succession, and property ownership especially how these intersect with gender and access to justice for women.

These discussions are sparking change in homes, schools, and communities. KEWOPA is demystifying governance, encouraging citizens to demand transparency, and reinforcing the belief that leadership is not only about holding office but also about informed and active civic engagement at all levels

Highlights & Engagements

1. UNFPA – Menstrual Health Day

Reframing dignity through policy: KEWOPA partnered with UNFPA Kenya in a bold conversation that challenged the status quo on menstrual health, exposing chronic issues such as inadequate pad distribution, poor sanitation, and exclusion of girls with disabilities. The dialogue emphasized the need for dedicated, year-round funding and stronger policy enforcement to uphold menstrual health as a fundamental right, not a privilege.



Participants engage in the UNFPA–KEWOPA dialogue on menstrual health and dignity.



2. HENNET– Sustainability of Immunization

Securing every child's shot at life: In collaboration with HENNET, KEWOPA joined national health actors in pushing for sustainable immunization financing to safeguard children's health and prevent avoidable disease outbreaks. The event reinforced our commitment to strengthening legal and financial frameworks that guarantee continuous vaccine access across all counties.

KEWOPA Members give a joint press statement on Immunization

3. NIMD Democracy School

Shaping future-ready leaders: KEWOPA took part in the final module of the NIMD-led Democracy School, engaging in a reflective learning space focused on legislative drafting, wellness, and ethical leadership. The experience strengthened our resolve to build public institutions anchored in integrity, service, and inclusive policymaking.



KEWOPA members at the NIMD Democracy School final module.

Highlights & Engagements

4. Nigerian Delegation Visit

Cross-border solidarity for women in leadership: KEWOPA hosted Nigeria's Select Committee on Constitutional Review for a strategic exchange on legislative approaches to gender equity. The visit created a valuable platform for peer learning, where shared experiences in reform, advocacy, and capacity-building enriched both countries' paths to women's political empowerment.



KEWOPA members meet the Nigerian Delegation.



KEWOPA Chairperson Hon Leah Sankaire hands over KEWOPA's submission to the Task Force

5. Submission to the Technical Working Group on GBV and Femicide

KEWOPA submitted comprehensive recommendations to the GBV Technical Working Group, addressing legal gaps, digital violence, and weak survivor support systems. The call for urgent reforms including operationalizing the Victim Protection Fund and strengthening justice systems aimed to protect survivors and hold perpetrators accountable.

6. IPF Annual National Shadow Budget

Budgeting with purpose, not just numbers: KEWOPA proudly supported the launch of IPF's 5th Annual National Shadow Budget under the theme "Recalibrating Budget Performance in the Face of Constraints." We view the Shadow Budget as a transformative tool for evidence-based advocacy and a catalyst for more gender-responsive, people-centered fiscal policies.



Daniel Ndirangu(IPF), Mercy Mwangi(KEWOPA), Hon. Ndindi Nyoro(BAC Member) Launch of IPF's ANSB 2025



KEWOPA Members and Secretariat and CPST Staff group photo

7. Gender Responsive Budgeting Forum

Reimagining budgets for everyone: KEWOPA convened a high-level engagement focused on strengthening Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) as a key tool for equitable development. Using the 2025/26 Budget Estimates as a backdrop, members assessed whether resource allocations truly reflect the needs of women, men, youth, PWDs and older persons.

Digital Champions: Building the Voice Behind Women Leaders



In a move to strengthen communication around women's leadership, KEWOPA, in partnership with the Institute of Public Finance, conducted a capacity-building workshop for social media managers supporting women parliamentarians. The training, held in three phases, focused on digital engagement, advocacy messaging, and political storytelling.

Participants covered key topics including brand consistency, content strategy, and digital safety. Special emphasis was placed on digital security in light of increasing cases of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) targeting women in politics and public life.

The sessions were interactive and practical, helping participants sharpen their skills and align content with the broader agenda of gender equality. Social media was recognized not just as a platform, but as a powerful political tool and space for mobilization. By equipping digital teams with these skills, KEWOPA is building a professional support system that ensures women leaders are visible, protected, and celebrated online.

The training comes at a time when online narratives greatly influence public perception. Many of the trained officers now create content that showcases women MPs' development work and legislative efforts. They also play a role in countering misinformation, pushing back against gendered disinformation, and building strong, authentic digital brands for their principals.



Rooting Policy in Facts: Women MPs Push for Data-Driven Decisions

KEWOPA members recently convened for a high-level forum focused on the critical role of data and research in shaping effective public policy. Organized in collaboration with global research firm IDinsight, the forum explored how evidence-based decision-making can strengthen parliamentary work, particularly on issues such as healthcare, technology, and social protection.

Speaking on behalf of KEWOPA Chairperson, Hon. Mary Emaase emphasized the responsibility parliamentarians hold in ensuring laws are anchored in both national values and verified data. She noted that since their decisions affect millions of Kenyans, policy must be informed by facts rather than assumptions.



Hon. Millie Odhiambo speaks on the power of data in driving inclusive laws

Hon. Millie Odhiambo participated in a panel discussion that delved into the intersection of gender, leadership, and evidence. She highlighted the often-overlooked issues women leaders bring to the table, such as unpaid care work, access to healthcare, and family wellbeing. She stressed that development projects in historically underserved counties like Homa Bay must be backed by data, not dismissed as political gimmicks.

Parliament's Director of Legal Services, Ms. Vane Akama, also shared how research is already being used within the National Assembly to support legislative processes. Experts from CPST, IDinsight, and UN Women joined the conversation, reinforcing the value of research and data in crafting inclusive, impactful laws that respond to the real needs of citizens.

MALE ALLIES IN LEADERSHIP

Male MPs Commit to Driving Gender Equality Through Political Allyship

As part of its continued efforts to promote gender equality in leadership, the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA), in partnership with the Institute of Public Finance (IPF) through the SPALTA initiative, convened two strategic sessions in Naivasha bringing together male Members of Parliament under the Kenya Young Parliamentarians Association (KYPA).

The first session focused on building the capacity of male allies in Parliament, emphasizing mentorship, political party reforms, and the creation of opportunities for women leaders. Lawmakers explored how to transition from statements of support to actionable strategies that enable women to access leadership positions.

The second session delved deeper into gender and health issues in parliamentary work, spotlighting the persistent underrepresentation of women in committee leadership and the structural reforms needed to address it. Legislators reflected on partnerships with civil society and oversight institutions to strengthen gender outcomes in public budgets, drawing lessons from regional best practices.

Both forums addressed the growing challenge of online harassment against women leaders, with calls for stronger legal protections to safeguard their participation in public life. Participants also emphasized the importance of using data to inform inclusive policies and enhancing public participation in decision-making processes.



Male MPs join KEWOPA to champion allyship and inclusive leadership.

GUEST ARTICLE

Partner Spotlight: Advancing Informed Policymaking through Data and Evidence



IDinsight is a global advisory, data analytics, and research organization that helps leaders in Africa and Asia combat poverty and improve lives. They use data and evidence to help partners design effective programs and rigorously test what works. Their services include randomized evaluations, monitoring systems, strategic advising, and data science, tailored to real-world decision-making needs. IDinsight works with governments, multilaterals, foundations, and nonprofits to inform high-stakes decisions and drive better outcomes. The organization has offices in Dakar, Lusaka, Manila, Nairobi, New Delhi, and Rabat, with additional team members working remotely around the world.

KEWOPA is proud to partner with IDinsight on a multi-year initiative to strengthen the use of data and evidence in legislative and oversight processes, particularly around gender equity and women's economic empowerment (WEE). This collaboration is part of a broader project supported by the Hewlett Foundation, focused on inclusive macroeconomic policymaking in Kenya and Zimbabwe.

As part of this work, we are co-designing a capacity-strengthening workshop for KEWOPA members and research support staff. The training will provide practical support for enhancing the use of data and evidence in policymaking and oversight.

Recently, IDinsight supported KEWOPA in convening a high-level panel discussion on enhancing parliamentary work through evidence. The event brought together legislators, researchers, and civil society actors to reflect on how to embed evidence use in policymaking.

We value this ongoing partnership and look forward to deepening our shared work to ensure that national policy processes are more inclusive, data-informed, and responsive to the lived experiences of women and girls across Kenya.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Hon. Jane Njeri Maina: A Rising Star in Kenyas Political Landscape

Hon. Jane Njeri Maina, the youthful and vibrant Woman Representative for Kirinyaga County, continues to inspire a new wave of leadership in Kenya. Elected at just 28 years old during the 2022 general elections, she made history as the youngest MP from Central Province, representing the United Democratic Alliance (UDA).

A trained advocate, Hon. Njeri began her education at Kiangoma Primary, later attending Kabare Girls High School. She holds a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from the University of Nairobi and a Postgraduate Diploma in Law from the Kenya School of Law. She is an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya and is passionate about social justice, womens rights, and youth empowerment.

Through her Mama Na Kazi (MNK) Foundation, she has impacted over 3,000 students and 200 women's groups in Kirinyaga via scholarships, skill-building, and enterprise support. Her foundation operates under the broader Tupange Kesho vision and leverages the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF).

Hon. Njeri recently sponsored the Health Amendment Bill No. 56 of 2024, seeking to outlaw the detention of deceased bodies in hospitals over unpaid bills a bold move promoting dignity and justice.

She was recently honored with the "Voice of Reason" award at the Thamani Awards, cementing her reputation as a progressive, outspoken, and impactful leader

With her sharp intellect, bold voice, and unwavering dedication to service, Hon. Jane Njeri Maina continues to inspire a new generation of leaders. She stands as a symbol of youthful leadership done right grounded in empathy, driven by justice, and anchored in action.



**Hon. Njeri Maina
Kirinyaga County M.P**

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Daniel Murakaru, Legal Fellow

Can you tell us a bit about your role as a Legal Fellow at KEWOPA and what your day-to-day looks like?

Parliament is not for the faint-hearted. Every day is a storm of legislation, oversight, and advocacy. As KEWOPA's Legal Fellow, I'm basically in the engine room, researching laws, breaking down complex legal issues for our women MPs, and making sure they have what they need to speak with impact, whether on the floor of the House or at international conferences. One day it's analyzing a Bill, the next it's prepping submissions to the Budget and Appropriations Committee or National Finance and Physical Planning Committee. Never a dull moment!

What's the most rewarding part of working on gender-responsive legislation and policy within Parliament?

It's seeing impact in real time. Like when Parliament finally allocated funds for sanitary towels under NGAAF after years of advocacy, or when KEWOPA MPs boldly presented submissions on the 2024 Finance Bill. Even when outcomes aren't immediate, witnessing women step into spaces of power and influence because of collective effort is

You're known for your strong oratory skills. What's your secret to delivering a powerful message?

It's a mix of practice, purpose, and presence. I rehearse. A lot. I test my messages, refine my tone, and study my audience. But more importantly, I remind myself that what I'm saying matters. Confidence is built. Clarity is earned. And when you speak with both, people listen.

If you were to give a one-minute speech to young women aspiring to leadership, what would you say?

If you're breathing, you're still in the fight. That's all you need. Push back. Take up space. And remember, anything imagined under this sun is possible, you've just got to start.

How has your time at KEWOPA shaped the way you think about leadership, law, and advocacy?

KEWOPA has taught me that laws don't just happen, they're fought for. Behind every clause and comma is a story of grit, strategy, lobbying, and women who refuse to be silenced. Advocacy isn't always instant; sometimes it feels like shouting into the void. But I've learned that real change takes persistence, patience, and courage, especially when the system resists. Leadership, too, is not about titles. It's about using your voice to push through noise, showing up even when it's uncomfortable, and believing that every effort, no matter how small, adds up to something bigger.

What's your dream legal or advocacy goal for the next 5 years?

To take the fight for gender and human rights to global platforms. Whether it's at the UN, the African Union, or international courts, I want to be part of shaping the global human rights agenda, especially for African communities.

If your legal career were a movie, what would it be titled?

Scandal: The Legal Edition □ (Starring me as Olivia Pope)

Why? Because just like Olivia, I live at the crossroads of power, policy, and public interest. It's about being a fixer and making sure justice and change actually happens, even when things are messy or feel like they're going nowhere. It's not always glamorous, but it's always worth it. And yes, I'd absolutely rock the trench coat, with purpose and a little flair.



***Daniel Murakaru,
Legal Fellow***

Gallery



We extend our sincere appreciation to our esteemed partners—Parliament of Kenya, Institute of Public Finance(IPF), ID Insight, DANIDA, URAIA, UN Women, Centre for Parliamentary Studies (CPST), NIMD-Kenya, State Department of Gender, Global Affairs Canada, NGEK, UNFPA, CREAM, CRAWN TRUST, KAS and KYPA for their invaluable support, collaboration, and commitment in making this second quarter a success.

