

VOLUNTEER ACTION FOR CHANGE KENYA

VACK Jitolee Afrika

"Volunteering to Better All"



WOMEN AID & EMPOWERMENT TOOLKIT ©2014

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Skills development is the key to improving rural productivity, employability and income-earning opportunities, enhancing food security and promoting environmentally sustainable rural development and livelihoods. Despite rural women's major role in agriculture and other rural activities, higher barriers in education and training limit their capacity to engage in more productive and remunerative work, perform managerial and leadership roles and participate fully in the development of their communities. Targeted action is needed to dismantle these barriers.

Word from Volunteer Action for Change Kenya

Our commitment to gender equity does not simply involve including more women in our programming. It calls for us to understand the gender dynamics between men and women within each program's context and to integrate interventions that address these dynamics. This process can be expensive, difficult and time consuming but we have found relatively cost-efficient ways to incorporate two important tools—gender analyses and gender assessments.

VACK works to empower people (women and men) in Kenya to succeed in the local and national economy. We have learned through years of experience that when it comes to achieving successful and sustainable economic development, women are essential.

We consider our work to boost community economies. Women grow, buy, cook and sell food, and in many counties, they play key roles in more expansive business. To achieve crucial improvements in agricultural production, business, marketing, lending, nutrition, food security and other endeavors, our programs must address the opportunities and obstacles women face.

A first step in doing this is to understand the gender dynamics between women and men in a given social setting. Information gleaned from analyses provides important insights that improve program design and implementation and yield specific indicators for project success.

The participatory, stakeholder-driven approaches we use in our community development programs increasingly address gender-based needs to help women and men rebuild their lives in economic development. In these contexts, recognizing gender roles helps us ensure that marginalized people gain a voice in their own communities.

At VACK, we have learned that using gender analysis and approaches in our programs is simply working smart.



Michael Musyoka

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INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

Gender equality refers to a society in which men and women enjoy the same rights, opportunities, resources, obligations, and benefits. Gender equality does not suggest that men and women are the same, but that everyone has equal value and the right to not be discriminated against based on their gender or biological sex.

Women's empowerment is a critical aspect of achieving gender equality. Women's empowerment is achieved when women and girls acquire the power to act freely, exercise their rights, and fulfill their potential. While empowerment often comes from within individuals themselves, cultures, societies, and institutions create conditions that facilitate or undermine the possibilities for empowerment. The process of empowerment is incremental and involves changes to multiple aspects of a woman's life. Furthermore, women are not a homogenous group, but a diverse group of people who experience empowerment and gender relations differently based on the context in which they live, their social relations (i.e., class, age, marital status), and their socially designated identities (i.e., wife, daughter, co-worker)

WHO WE ARE

Volunteer Action for Change Kenya (VACK Jitolee Afrika) is a voluntary service organization. Our aim is to bring people from different cultures to work together towards a common goal. In turn it is hoped this will help break down cultural stereotypes and lead to greater international understanding and peace. We do this by volunteer programme which works on offering services to community projects across Kenya where both local and international volunteers are involved.

Volunteer Action for Change Kenya (VACK Jitolee Afrika) is a non-profit and non-governmental organization that provides services using the voluntarism approach that is aimed at enhancing the development process and service delivery of community development initiatives. Its main purpose is to promote peace, understanding, justice, development, and information exchange among Kenyans and within the international community.

VACK Jitolee Afrika seeks to promote sustainable community development through: Voluntary Services; Capacity Building; Enterprise Development; Thematic approach

Vision: A society in which everyone has access to opportunities that are fulfilling and engaging, which contributes to the development of community initiatives and the betterment of the society life.

VACK Jitolee Afrika seeks to promote responsible citizenship based on the principles of solidarity, to act effectively to promote change, to sustain dialogue and mutual understanding among peoples for building a more just and united society.

A society in which the dignity of every person is safeguarded and promoted, in which each individual person may enjoy fundamental liberties, have access to resources and services, have the possibility to live in a healthy

environment and improve the quality of life in all aspects; a global society in which every single individual and all communities have the right of self-determination consistent with the cultural rights of other peoples and every man and woman on earth.

This vision is being carried out through (memorandum and articles of association of the Association):

- *Planning and implementation of direct interventions of international solidarity, cooperation and humanitarian work*
- *The promotion of cooperation between countries and communities*
- *Undertaking to educate, inform and sensitize societies on the themes outlined above*
- *Researching and examining the causes of injustice and its consequences*
- *The promotion, in conjunction with relevant competent authorities and various institutions, of initiatives aimed towards removing situations of injustice and their consequences*
- *The promotion of an open and intercultural society*
- *The participation in networks or collectives whose work and aims are consistent with the objects of the organization*
- *The promotion of every other initiative that is consistent with the values outlined in the memorandum and articles of association of the organisation*

VACK Jitolee Afrika works on a non-profit basis and undertakes its work in a serious manner, looking for ways to carry out effective and innovative actions. VACK Jitolee Afrika recognises the central values of voluntary work in the various expressions of its activities, the spirit of voluntary service and its gratuitousness, as well as the idea of professionalism as a commitment to responsibility, competence and respect in the face of complexities inherent in the situations in which we to operate in.

Mission: Giving a change to the youths, women and the vulnerable members of the society a chance to be actively involved in the development process thus enabling individual development

Strategic objective

To recognize young and people and women as a valuable resource to society development, and upholding their rights to participate in the development of policies affecting them by means of a continuous structured dialogue with young people, women and youth organisations.

Objectives

1. To promote the active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people
2. To develop and promote viable voluntary service opportunities for both local and international volunteers thus actively contributing to the development of the society
3. To develop and support a national volunteering infrastructure that ensures best practice in volunteering

4. Supporting development of experimental projects and programmes to try out new and innovative ideas and to exchange good practices
5. Enhance the mobilization of resources in realizing sustainable community development initiatives
6. To create awareness and sensitize local communities, especially women and youth concerning environment sustainability development
7. To assist community resource centres to overcome their challenges and establish viable activities
8. To promote responsible attitudes for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care by increasing the level of awareness especially among the youth and women
9. To assist community institutions and organizations to Promote and Deliver sustainable services in education, skills transfer, health, leadership training, ICT development business development, and agriculture

The main fields of action that Voluntary Action for Change Kenya concentrates its activities are: Education and training; Employment and entrepreneurship; Health and well-being; Participation; Social inclusion; Youth and the world; Creativity and culture

Range of projects

Our service delivery is focused on the following key areas within community structures in Kenya:

- Community Development
- Environmental Sustainability
- Microenterprise/Microfinance
- Women's aid and Empowerment
- Children, Youth and Education

We believe that the above areas are critically addressed within our communities; they will be able to realize service delivery hence sustainable development.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

By aiming for inclusivity, a development effort seeks to transform the community setting so that it engages and benefits groups that have been traditionally excluded from or sometimes even exploited by that system. The prevalence of gender inequality around Kenyan communities often precludes women from engaging in traditional market systems development interventions. Women face unique barriers, such as lower ownership of assets, unequal access to productive resources, and disproportionate responsibility for unpaid, household work that limits their time to invest in profitable work—all of which prevent them from benefitting from these interventions. Empowering

women to overcome discrimination and exclusion is an essential component of achieving gender equality and transforming market systems to be more inclusive.

Promoting women's economic empowerment in inclusive market systems requires partners and implementers to understand empowerment within its local context and its interactions with the system(s) targeted for change by a development project.

IDEAS PUT IN PLACE FOR FACILITATING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Some of the core implications that are considered are highlighted below.

1. Gender-Responsive Systems Analysis

The systems analysis process needs to examine gender roles and relationships, as well as the unique constraints and opportunities faced by women within a system. This gender-responsive analysis should be completed as an integrated part of a project's overall analysis process. Each level of analysis will identify where gender inequality and empowerment opportunities exist. The analysis should incorporate an in-depth understanding of how the rules interact with the different subsystems—household, community, workplace, supporting institutions, and enabling environment—and the people the intervention is trying to benefit. These rules can draw out the interconnections within a system such as gendered power dynamics; gender relationships, roles, and rules; and the parts of the system that include the greatest catalyzers for reducing gender inequality.

2. Interventions that Support Access and Agency

Different interventions will support unique empowerment outcomes. Because much of systems work to date has focused on enhancing access, it is important to consider how interventions can also promote agency. This means that programs not only focus on the types of economic opportunities an intervention creates or expands but also whether the process of creating that opportunity promotes women's increased self-confidence and decision-making abilities. It also means that certain interventions like leadership development and enhancing support systems and networks become critical due to their effects on women's agency.

3. Interventions that Facilitate Systemic Changes for Women's Economic Empowerment

The complexity of empowerment can make it challenging to prioritize which aspects to focus on. This reflects the broader challenge of defining the intervention space within the "soft" boundaries of market systems. No program will be able to address all of the constraints that women face within a particular market system. Programs should use information generated from the gender-responsive market systems analysis to select and adapt interventions that will facilitate the greatest degree of systemic change for women's economic empowerment and is appropriate and feasible within the given context.

4. Facilitation for Both Structural and Bottom-Up Interventions

Applying a facilitation approach to project interventions is a cornerstone of systems development. It is important for sustainability and local ownership of development results as well as for stimulating a longer-term process that promotes adaptive behavior and practices. By definition, the process of empowerment corresponds with a facilitation approach because of its correlation to local ownership. The term “agent of change” is rooted in the concept of agency and defined by someone driving their own change process. Applying a facilitation approach to structural transformation and bottom-up change interventions will support the empowerment agenda to reach further scale and sustainability.

5. Planning and Monitoring for Adverse Impacts on Gender Relations Affecting Both Men and Women

Women’s economic empowerment is a complex process. It interacts with systems, which are also complex and dynamic. Unintended and unforeseen outcomes are therefore inevitable. Up-front intervention analysis and regular monitoring with effective tools must be able to assess and articulate potential negative consequences, particularly ones specific to women. It is important to follow “Do No Harm” principals and understand the circumstances under which risks become more acute. Monitoring systems should incorporate the potential risks into their theories of change and develop indicators to measure them. Projects must track these potential risks and develop response procedures to promote adaptations in interventions where needed. For women’s empowerment in particular, tracking and mitigating adverse effects includes collecting data from multiple perspectives and from both women and men and assessing people’s reactions to interventions and shifting gender norms.

6. Monitoring and Evaluating Empowerment Processes and Systemic Changes to Empowerment

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems must be regularly updated and adapted along with the changing needs of women in order to effectively address the market constraints they face. This requires a carefully designed M&E system that captures data on women’s economic empowerment from multiple perspectives. It should track empowerment indicators regarding both access and agency. The M&E systems should also allow for an assessment of whether the project has stimulated a pathway of empowerment—in terms of enhancing access and agency—for its female participants and beneficiaries.

Projects should also assess whether interventions have created system-level changes that are gender-responsive and relevant to women. Often, measures of systemic change focus on changes among institutions rather than the individuals within or serviced by those institutions. Changes in individual behavior, or within the households and/or community subsystems, are normally seen to be outside a system and are therefore not traditionally tracked as measurements of systemic change. Instead, households and communities are viewed as receiving the benefits of systemic changes. However, we define households and communities as systems in and of themselves. This viewpoint opens up new discussions around what constitutes system-level change and presents the case for programs to explore measuring systemic change across the various subsystems.

Past initiatives working on women aid & empowerment in Kenyan communities



STRONGER GIRLS AND WOMEN LEADS TO A STRONGER COMMUNITY AND ECONOMY

Throughout Kenya, overall poverty rates have decreased dramatically in recent years. However, while some populations flourish, other social groups remain mired in poverty, often outside formal employment and beyond the reach of basic services. Kenya is one of the countries with the greatest income inequality. VACK Jitolee Afrika believes that empowering girls and women will lessen that inequality.

Vulnerable populations are disproportionately female and are largely found in indigenous, conflict-displaced, rural, and marginalized urban communities. These girls and women face numerous challenges, including impediments to education, employment, and social inclusion. These problems stem from pervasive gender inequality, undercutting the self-worth of girls and women, and impeding the achievement of more widespread progress and prosperity.

VACK's work throughout the country acknowledges these disparities and challenges. All our programming is gender aware and ensures that issues related to girls and women are identified and addressed. We work both on programs that integrate women's concerns into activities as well as on programs that are focused primarily on women.

We achieve greater gender equity and women's empowerment through various strategies, including poverty reduction, democratic governance, disaster prevention and recovery, and environment and sustainable development. VACK's signature approach is to use a programmatic vehicle, such as entrepreneurship or environmental awareness, to provide leadership training, self-confidence, and raised self-esteem for girls and women.

Working with community-based groups, non-profit organizations, national and local governments, corporations, and multilateral organizations throughout Kenya, we strive to ensure that girls and women have a strong voice and participate equally in making the decisions that will determine the future of their communities.

VACK constantly draws from its extensive experiences in order to create programs that not only enhance gender equity, but also work alongside marginalized girls and women across the country, integrating them into the workforce, and improving their leadership capacity, while giving them access to education, skills training, health services, and opportunities for greater economic independence. We work to support and strengthen their efforts and, as appropriate, we provide direct services in collaboration with others, meanwhile raising awareness of the problems faced by girls and women and the capacity and commitment to address them. In other programs, VACK focuses primarily on women's challenges, such as business planning and psycho-social health. We believe that independence and psychological well-being are the cornerstones of women's advancement and inclusion in the progress of our hemisphere.

Being a Woman in Kenya

Vulnerable girls and women are often:

- Victims of displacement
- From indigenous groups
- Single and/or teenage mothers
- From poor and marginalized urban and rural areas
- Migrants
- Disabled
- Victim of domestic violence

Threats and Barriers:

- Gender-based violence
- Social exclusion
- Racial and gender discrimination
- Access to formal employment
- Lack of education and training
- Forced labor
- Income inequality
- Teenage pregnancy
- Poverty
- Societal attitudes that devalue girls and women

Why We Invest in Girls and Women

VACK is well versed in addressing and catalyzing shifts in gender norms in a culturally sensitive manner. Providing girls and women with increased access to education, jobs, healthcare, and other services has a substantial ripple effect, improving not only individual quality of life, but also that of the surrounding community.

We know that girls and women multiply the impact of investments by extending the benefits far beyond

themselves. They are heads of families, leaders in their communities, business owners, and change-makers. Through our programs, VACK takes a nuanced approach to combatting inequality, assisting communities through targeted support to girls and women.

Economic Empowerment

Stimulating inclusive environments that encourage the growth and success of women and girls

Companies, communities and organization are increasingly realizing what VACK already knows: that women are crucial to economic growth around the world. As more people understand this, a larger share of investments will be shifted toward investing in women. Based on our experiences, women who are able to support themselves economically see the world differently, which means they also do things in different ways. Understanding this, VACK develops programs and works with partner community initiatives to support equal economic access—from artisans looking to sell their products in new markets, and small business owners working to make the sale of renewable energy stoves a strong creator of jobs, to home-based micro-enterprises aiming to augment family incomes.

To empower women entrepreneurs, VACK provides technical assistance, business training, social counseling and in-kind and cash assistance when necessary. In some instances, we also provide matching grants to help grow women's businesses and spur job creation, and connect women with local business associations and banking institutions to obtain seed capital.

Leadership and Participation

Ensuring gender-aware participation of women and men, girls and boys in the implementation of our initiatives

Women are rarely given a platform to voice their needs, and those of their community. However, as heads of households and caregivers, they frequently understand and are able to assess these needs best. In order to empower women, VACK works within communities to create education and awareness around the importance of giving voice to women.

We consult with girls and women in a variety of ways to prioritize and enact all of our activities, and directly link concrete results to their valuable input. VACK takes pride in ensuring that voices are not only heard, but acted upon in all of our programming.

Social Inclusion

Ensuring equitable inclusion of women and girls in our projects' activities

VACK considers social inclusion to be much more than a marker of economic development: it is a measurement of equal access to services, and one that we build into programming on topics ranging from democratic governance to judicial system strengthening. Increased participation of women in the labor force has already

reduced extreme poverty, proving that women are an integral part of any economy. Consequently, VACK views social inclusion not only as a vehicle for social change, but also one that promotes and creates sustainable economic prosperity in our communities of operation.

Life Skills

Focusing on women- and girl-targeted initiatives that equip them to counter violence and external pressures and realize their own potential.

Girls and women play multiple, critical roles, and VACK supports them in doing so. This support comes in many forms, among them: working with young mothers to learn about effective nutrition and sanitation; facilitating girls' access to education; teaching job application and interviewing skills; and building self-esteem to help shield women from gender-based violence. Our aim for girl and women beneficiaries of VACK programming is for them to come out with a comprehensive tool kit of life skills that they can draw upon and pass on to their own daughters and friends.

Owning a Business

In an effort to improve job opportunities locally, VACK and its partners selected a group of women who either had or were planning to start their own small businesses. As part of the program they received business consulting in various areas, including business plan development, marketing, sales, financing, among others. These consultancies were conducted with successful business owners, university students and in partnership experts in the field.

GENDER INTEGRATION AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Using an Integrated Approach to Transform Opportunities for Women and Men, Girls and Boys

Women are key drivers of economic growth within our communities in Kenya. VACK finds that their unique and important roles in agriculture and other industries coupled with their responsibilities as family, household, and community members often provide the basis for multiple gains.

VACK is committed to gender equitable development as a means toward closing gender inequality gaps, reducing global poverty, and increasing food security.

How Investments in Women and Girls Pay Multiple Dividends

Investing in women and using gender analysis and approaches leads to better results for everyone. Consider what we know:

Less Hunger

- If women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20 to 30 percent. This could reduce the number of hungry people worldwide by up to 17 percent. (FAO)

Healthier Families

- When women and girls earn income, they reinvest 90 percent of it into their families, compared to men who reinvest 30-40 percent. (Yale News Daily)

Stronger Economies

- The World Bank found that states in India with the highest percentage of women in the labor force over the past five years grew the fastest and had the largest reductions in poverty. (World Bank)

VACK's Gender Approaches

VACK has devised ways to improve agricultural systems for the well-being of farmers and rural workers since our earliest years, including, importantly, women. Often, rural women work in small and less visible trades like growing and selling vegetables in local markets, weaving carpets, or sewing clothes. Increasingly, women assume crucial responsibilities in agricultural and rural businesses—roles that we help expand to provide communities greater economic and food security.

Keys to success are reducing gender-based constraints, improving social dynamics, and creating environments where women can thrive. VACK uses a variety of gender approaches, tools, and methods to ensure that our integrated programs are customized to specific local community contexts.

Gender Policy

VACK has a company-wide gender policy that outlines programmatic steps to promote gender equity and support non-discrimination. Gender equality is part of VACK's vision to empower people—both women and men—to succeed in the global economy. Closing gender inequality gaps and responding to the gender dynamics of a development context is part of running effective and efficient programs. The policy applies to all VACK projects, regardless of whether they are required by project donors, and details specific guidelines on integrating gender equity into core processes, including program design, start-up, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, learning, and recruitment.

Gender Analysis, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

Our experts use gender analyses and quantitative and qualitative monitoring and evaluation methods to assess how projects influence community gender dynamics as well as how existing issues can affect outcomes. We use our experience from our projects to shape initial program design as well as assess progress throughout a program lifecycle.

Gender and Food Security

Women's role in food security and agriculture spans the full spectrum of interventions: women grow, buy, cook, and sell food. Yet gender constraints in many countries prevent women from realizing their full potential.

VACK uses a gender lens to guide our nutrition education, food distribution, and agricultural development activities to create supportive environments where women have access to the tools and resources they need and are involved in key decisions related to their reproductive and economic roles. Approaches range from public awareness campaigns on health and nutrition to women-targeted agriculture skills training to the creation of social support networks, such as mother care groups, women's producer groups, and gender-equitable cooperatives.

Gender and Value Chain Analysis

VACK's value chain approach analyzes the different parts of a market chain—from input suppliers to final buyers—and the relationships among them. By bringing gender awareness to value chain analysis and development processes, we ensure that interventions produce sustainable results for both women and men.

Key VACK lessons for value chains include

- Addressing gender inequalities that create market inefficiencies and distortions, such as in labor, can improve value chain competitiveness, thereby increasing economic opportunities.
- Integrating gender approaches into programs **does not** equate to increasing women's participation. Gender approaches are about understanding social norms for men and women and how they affect both problems and solutions.
- Gender roles within a value chain may limit opportunities. By helping communities to consider expanded gender roles, such as women as leaders of firms or exporters (men's roles in some communities) or men as seaweed harvesters or vegetable growers (women's roles in some communities), new economic opportunities may arise.

Reducing Gender-based Resource Constraints

Gender inequality is multidimensional and can limit opportunities for households and communities, as well as for women themselves. By using gender-informed approaches to help remove or lessen inequalities, both women and men are more likely to participate in economic activities and reach their full potential.

Examples of how VACK works to reduce gender-based constraints include the following:

- **Financial services** give women access to loans, savings programs, and business start-up grants. Innovative financial instruments—such as targeted warehouse receipts, land rights, and asset ownership initiatives—can improve women's access.
- **Business development and market access services** support economic growth and market opportunities for female entrepreneurs, farmers, and cooperative members. Gender-informed initiatives include international certification programs, Farming as a Family Business training, youth vocational programs, financial skills training for women, and market intelligence services that address both women's and men's needs.
- **Improved public services delivery and infrastructure** are vital to expanding women's economic and social opportunities. Women's time poverty—the unequal distribution of time women spend in caring for their households—often is exacerbated in communities with poor services and infrastructure. For example, women who must collect firewood and water for cooking may have more limited opportunities because they lack free time. VACK uses gender-informed, context-driven methodologies to shape our community development work.

Women and Leadership

Women's needs and priorities will not receive the full resources and attention they deserve until women are represented more fully in local, national, and international decision-making bodies. Women in conflict, post-conflict, and transitional environments are particularly disadvantaged, though those environments sometimes present opportunities to make legal frameworks and social institutions more responsive to women's needs.

VACK facilitates women's representation and voices in decision making by actively promoting or requiring women's leadership in community groups and cooperatives and by providing venues where women have the time and place to voice their opinions. We also strive to build women's local capacity through leadership trainings and support networks.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Empowering communities for social and economic gains

Communities, as centers of power, influence, and economic opportunity, are fundamental building blocks of all societies. They are also natural development partners for VACK.

VACK applies community-driven development approaches to contribute to livelihoods, alternative development, and community stabilization. Through these efforts, we help create the basic conditions and fundamental building blocks for sustainable and equitable development.

Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods

We work at the community level and in marginal urban areas, targeting vulnerable populations. These groups include the poor, ethnic minorities, disabled people, the elderly, youth, and women.

We assist them in identifying market-based economic opportunities that have long-term potential. Our support includes value chain activities, climate-smart agriculture, micro and small business development, and vocational training and employment programs.

Building Trust in Communities Emerging from Conflict

In environments that are emerging from or currently in conflict, we address multifaceted challenges to revitalize economies, rebuild infrastructure, and instill a culture of participatory decision making into the local government process.

Activities include value chain interventions that address food security and increased incomes, participatory land mapping processes, and climate-smart agriculture.

We also enhance local governments' ability to identify, articulate, and meet the needs of their constituencies, and we build the capacity of citizens to advocate for and obtain resources for priority community needs.

VACK Gender and Rural Employment Policy

INVESTING IN SKILLS FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN

Did you know?

- Education and training are powerful tools against poverty and hunger, and for women's empowerment. Educated women are more likely to be healthier, have higher earnings and exercise greater decision-making power within the household. They are also more likely to ensure that their own children are educated, thus breaking the cycle of poverty and hunger.
- Over two-thirds of the world's illiterate persons are women – many of whom live in rural areas.
- When women receive the same levels of education, experience and farm inputs as men, there are no significant differences in male and female farmers' productivity
- Evidence from Kenya suggests that better education enables rural workers to find high-paying non-farm employment, whereas a lack of education tends to limit their choices to agricultural and low-wage nonfarm employment
- From a developmental perspective, investing in girls' education has the highest rate of return of any possible investment in developing countries: educated mothers have fewer children and are also more likely to send them to school, thereby raising the productivity of future generations, increasing their income, and generating sustainable growth.

Why is action needed?

Education and training are essential components of any strategy to improve agricultural and non-farm productivity and pull households out of poverty. Learning about improved production technologies and methods, new products and markets, business skills, as well as life skills (such as health management, decision-making, self-confidence, or conflict management) can make a big difference. Skills development is particularly important to rural women; who are more likely to be contributing family workers, subsistence farmers or home-based micro-entrepreneurs in the informal sector, or performing low-paid, unskilled work as seasonal workers. Women often have different training needs than men, linked to their domestic work and care responsibilities, as well as to gender-based division of labour for managing or undertaking specific tasks in crop, livestock or fish production and processing.

1. Gender biases in education and training start early and accumulate

Although primary and secondary school enrolment has improved significantly for rural girls in Kenya over the past ten years, they generally continue to suffer disadvantages in access that tend to accumulate throughout their lives as basic education is often a prerequisite for further skills development. Thus,

- Women receive less vocational training than men.
- Women are less likely than men to be reached by agricultural extension workers.
- Women make less use of formal or informal apprenticeship systems, which often operate in male-dominated trades.
- Self-employed women are not regarded as entrepreneurs in many rural communities and thus have difficulty accessing entrepreneurship development training and services.

2. Social, cultural and economic constraints limit rural girls' and women's education and training

They include:

- **Social norms and attitudes**

- Negative attitudes towards the benefits of educating girls and lower priority for girls' education, especially if women's remuneration is lower than men's and employment opportunities are scarce. In addition, girls are seen as relatively "transitory assets"
- Not worthy of long-term investment– as they leave their parents' household upon marriage.
- Higher opportunity costs for girls' education in most cultures, as families tend to rely significantly on girls to help with household chores such as cooking, cleaning and caring for younger siblings.

- **Women's triple work burden**

- Women's reproductive responsibilities, which restrict their time for training and economic activities.
- Fixed training hours and durations, often incompatible with household and care responsibilities, and/or farming cycles

- **Gender-insensitive facilities, curricula and attitudes**

- Long distances to schools/training institutions and lack of public transport.
- Lack of safe and accessible boarding and sanitary facilities in schools/training institutions.
- Fear of sexual harassment and insecurity in attending schools and training institutions.
- High education and training fees, while women generally have little cash of their own and limited bargaining power to access household money for training.
- Education and training curricula and delivery ill-adapted to women's learning needs.
- Trainers and educators who often have discriminatory attitudes towards girls and women.
- Lack of female teachers and trainers, especially in rural areas.

3. Lower work status traps women in a vicious circle with limited development perspectives

- Rural women's limited access to productive resources, lower educational levels, and social norms about appropriate work for women, tend to confine them to lower paid, lower status work where opportunities for skills training and thus advancement are reduced, thus perpetuating their lower status.
- Widespread patterns of insecure employment relations and contractual arrangements in many rural enterprises, such as temporary, precarious jobs, do not encourage employers to offer training to women.
- Vocational education and training for rural women are often limited to a narrow range of female-dominated fields that reinforce their traditional roles and responsibilities. While this may improve their income-generating opportunities, it will not give them the chance to benefit from newer, nontraditional fields, such as information and communication technologies (ICT), renewable energy and in Non-Traditional Agricultural Export industries that can offer women higher earnings and more skilled technical or managerial jobs.

4. New challenges require more creative, gender-balanced approaches

- Environmental degradation and climate change pose threats to subsistence farming and call for new technologies, alternative crops or growing processes.
 - Which demand new skills? Evidence suggests that climate change affects women and men differently and their skills needs may thus also differ.

What are the policy options?

Skills development for rural women and men often requires a combination of training in formal settings (such as schools and training institutions), non-formal settings (such as community groups and NGOs) and informal ones (such as learning from family or peers).

It can comprise basic education, vocational training, life skills training, entrepreneurship training, and agricultural extension services. Policy makers should aim at designing and implementing a package of complementary measures to address the specific needs of each category of rural individuals. These include the following policy options:

1. Ensure a targeted education and training strategy

- Develop a gender-responsive strategy for education, training and entrepreneurship development that responds to the needs of rural girls and women
- Set clear objectives, use indicators and establish evaluation mechanisms to plan and assess the education and training programmes for rural people.
- Collect sex-disaggregated statistics and qualitative data on rural and urban women and men in education and skills training to improve programme design and evaluate progress.
- Conduct gender-sensitive analyses of economic opportunities and assessments of the related skills needed, and ensure that rural skills development activities take into account the local socio-economic context.

2. Stimulate participation in basic education²¹ with gender-sensitive approaches

Extend girls' participation in free, quality basic education on an equal basis with boys by promoting a gender-responsive learning environment, which includes:

- Safe school facilities and separate sanitation facilities; safe and gender friendly transport to schools and/or building of schools in strategic locations near underserved areas.
- School times and hours that allow for seasonal agricultural or household work.
- Incentives for teachers to work in rural areas, including female teachers.
- Legislation and/or school rules against sexual harassment, and gender awareness training for teachers.
- Improved curricula that respond to rural realities, such as combining agricultural training with conventional subjects. The KCEC School in Mozambique, for instance, has its own learning field where pupils grow vegetables. This "local curriculum" activity improves diets by introducing new vegetables to the community and teaches children practical skills.
- Information, to raise parents' awareness about the importance of educating girls and financial incentives (such as vouchers), and/or non-financial financial incentives (such as meals at school, take-home rations) for families of school children.
- Involvement of families and communities in planning and managing local education and schooling so they better meet the needs of the boys and girls, their families and their communities.
- Reduced gender stereotyping in curricula to improve the classroom environment and particularly to "dismantle" stereotyped profiles of rural women and men that reinforce inequality and inequity in households and the world of work.

3. Increase participation in gender adapted technical and vocational education and training

- Increase the quality and quantity of gender-responsive vocational education and training institutions in rural areas.
- Support, design and deliver gender responsive community-based training initiatives, including skills training in employment-intensive infrastructure programmes, especially in areas lacking formal educational institutions.

- Develop targeted strategies to allow rural women to access formal and non-formal vocational education and training. These include:
 - Reducing financial barriers for rural women to access skills training (for example, through stipends).
 - Considering issues of timing and location of training, and developing flexible curricula that fit rural women's needs.
 - Increasing the number of women trainers and agricultural extension workers, and providing gender awareness training to trainers and other staff of training institutions (including on issues related to sexual harassment and to gender stereotypes in households and the world of work).
 - Providing infrastructure support and facilities, including accommodation, safe and female-friendly transport facilities, childcare services and tool kits.
 - Developing curricula that match rural women's needs. Take into account the different kinds of indigenous knowledge and skills they have, and complement them with up-to-date knowledge and technology.
 - Raising awareness among rural women, their families/communities, and training institutions, about the benefit of training women in non-traditional trades, in using new technologies, and in traditionally male occupations.
 - Developing gender-sensitive delivery mechanisms that match rural women's and men's different needs, such as mobile training units, extension schemes and distance learning using mobile phones, radio and internet.
 - Designing interventions to include women who are the most disadvantaged (such as women with disabilities, from ethnic minorities, associated with armed forces or ex-combatants).
- Expand rural women's access to science and technical education and ICT, such as mobile phones and computers, to facilitate their access to quality education and training, such as distance learning.
- Encourage girls to study technical subjects, for example, through scholarships.
- Complement vocational and technical training with numeracy and literacy training for rural women who need it. Women, particularly the most disadvantaged, may also need training on gender issues and life skills, such as health and nutrition, confidence building, negotiation and leadership skills.
- Link women with mentors/masters via apprenticeship systems. Upgrade traditional and informal apprenticeship systems by improving working conditions or combining apprenticeship with formal vocational training or links with business associations.
- 4. Support women's self-employment**
 - Combine technical and entrepreneurship training, for example through community-based initiatives, as many rural women make a living through self-employment.
 - Strengthen the capacity of entrepreneurship service providers to better address the needs and potentialities of rural female entrepreneurs.
 - Provide post-training services such as access to credit or savings programmes, business development services, training in product design and marketing, and linkages to new markets. New markets, especially value chains, can also provide opportunities to adopt new technologies and production practices.
 - Support rural women's networks and groups, such as cooperatives. Groups can lead to informal learning of skills and provide the collective power that may be required to reach new markets.

PROJECTS WHERE WE ARE IMPLEMENTING THE WOMEN & GIRLS EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

NO	PROJECT NAME	ACTIVITY	REGION
01	Kipepeo Community Empowerment Program	Micro-finance training, street girl rehabilitation	Kima, Western Kenya
02	Network for Youth in Action	FGM, business training, alternative rite of passage	Oloitoktok, Eastern Kenya
03	Nelly Children Centre	Empowerment of orphaned girls through skills based training	Hola, Coastal Kenya
04	Ukweli Farmers CBO	Promotion of agro-business among women	Waluka, Western Kenya
05	Believe Africa Volunteer	FGM, business training, alternative rite of passage	Oloitoktok, Eastern Kenya
06	Usife Moyo Women Group	Enterprise development	Western Kenya
07	Cannan Orphanage	Empowerment of orphaned girls through skills based training, business training	Mombasa, Coastal Kenya
08	Oguyo Orphaned Project	Empowerment of orphaned girls through skills based training, business training	Rarieda, Lake Victoria Region

Planned additional interventions: 2015 – 2018

1. Setting up an enterprise fund for the groups being trained to acquire startup capital (the pilot fund will be carried out in the western Kenya region and we hope to mobilize resources to a tune of US\$ 35295)
2. Assisting women groups acquire agricultural lands