Young Women in Politics

Experiences of 2013 General Election
In Politics
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List of Abbreviations

CAR  County Assembly Representative  
CSO  Civil Society Organisation  
CBO  Community Based Organisation  
CORD  Coalition for Reforms and Democracy  
CDF  Constituency Development Fund  
CWR  County Women Representative  
ECDE  Early Child Development and Education programme  
Ford  Forum for Restoration of Democracy  
FGM  Female Genital Mutilation  
GoK  Government of Kenya  
IDPs  Internally Displaced Persons  
IEBC  Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission  
MTP  Medium Term Plan  
NARC  National Rainbow Coalition  
ODM  Orange Democratic Movement  
PWDs  People With Disabilities  
SWAP  Sector-Wide Approach  
TNA  The National Alliance  
UDF  United Democratic Front  
URP  United Republican Party  
YAA  The Youth Agenda
Preface

The continued struggle of the women and youth movement in Kenya and the world over is one which cannot be ignored by the rest of the society. In redefining their position as that of an equal partner in development the women and the youth have made great strides ahead. Their role in policy and decision-making processes is slowly but painfully taking root in Kenya. But this slow pace is not that the movement has totally failed, but because there lacks political goodwill. The paternalistic leadership is resistant to change that involves giving women and youth political space. This has manifested itself even more among young women who have come out strongly to demand their space.

The new constitutional dispensation has offered young women key entry points for engagement in the political and democratic processes through elective, nominative and appointive positions in national and county government. As a result, young women decided to run for political office during the 2013 General Election and Kenya now celebrates a significant number of elected and nominated young women leaders. Though not comprehensively aggregated by IEBC an overwhelming number of 257 young women were nominated as county representatives so as to adhere to the gender equity principle where positions are guaranteed for women but regrettably only 21 were elected compared to a high number of 441 male youth who were elected for the same position.

Similarly, while in the 10th Parliament young women representation was 0.9 per cent with two women below 40 years of age i.e Runyenjes Hon Cecily Mbarire and Hon Rachel Shebesh Nairobi Women Representative, today in both houses (the National Assembly and the Senate) there are only 22 young women below the age of 35 years out of the 418 members. This statistically accounts for a depressing 5.26%.

One would then wonder why young women’s participation in political leadership continues to remain dismal compared to older women and even more so among young men. Another group of people would also wonder and keen to know the story behind the successful candidates however few they were and especially those elected. Likewise, a majority would be interested in understanding the experiences of these young women in terms of their challenges and their proposed solutions to increasing their performance in political leadership.

This publication titled Young Women in Politics records the experiences of young women participation in the 2013 Elections with a detailed account of their political party activities, campaigns, resource mobilization, factors motivating their involvement
in politics among others. It further provides a narrative of their challenges, development priorities as legislators and key lessons learnt.

It is a publication designed to provide an opportunity for broad reflection on the state of young women's participation in politics, a document for inspiring young women from the case studies and finally an advocacy tool for changing laws or policy that will provide young women a comparative advantage.

The achievements of Young Women's performance in 2013 are heavily attributed to many young women that we worked closely with as an organization and of whom we may not be in a position to name here and the great team of staff who sacrifice their time. We would like to acknowledge the tremendous responses from the 17 respondents drawn from the Members of the County Assemblies and Parliamentarians whose experiences form the backbone of this report.

Special appreciation goes to the Consultant Mr George Ojiema, Ms Judy Nguru Walla our Programmes Manager and Gitonga Muranga the Programme Officer in charge of the Young Women’s project for their technical support.

We are grateful for the financial support extended to YAA by UN Women towards this project whose goal was to scale up young women’s participation in the 2013 General Elections. We remain indebted. Our appreciations also goes to UNDP for their additional support that will ensure a wide circulation of this report and enhance young women’s capacity to participate in political processes.

Susan K. Mwongera
Chief Executive Officer
Chapter One

1.1 Introduction and Background

In spite of the ostensibly ineffective participation of young women in political processes and leadership in Kenya, concerted efforts and multi-faceted approaches have been made with a view to positioning the youth fraternity in to the mainstream political activities. However, impacts of these efforts have not received any significant visibility in the political arena for the young women. Moreover, leaders of most political parties have shown minimal focus in involving the youth, especially young women into core party affair and engagement. It is therefore an imperative undertaking to galvanize the youth factor, especially young women in political processes and shape them for competitive elections.

On the same seam, it is also recognized that there has been a change in the youth discourse, with an emphasis on the youth’s participation in national development and political affairs. The formulation of specific pro-youth policies and programmes has created a favourable environment for youth empowerment but with little emphasis on enhancing the potential of young women in active engagement in political participation.

With regards to policy support, there has not been a supportive policy framework for young women in political and electoral participation yet they are facing major challenges, which have greatly changed the trajectories of the livelihoods. In addition, while the new constitution acknowledges the need for youth to participate in decision making processes, little emphasis has been put on young women leaders.

This presents difficulties in mainstreaming young women needs in appropriate policy and planning programmes that would comprehensively respond to their needs and integrate them in the mainstream economic and political activities. The focus on young women as mere future housewives and adult citizens is retrogressive and ignores the important role that young women can play in our society as productive sector. This futurity syndrome in youth policy deters their meaningful participation and representation in electoral politics.

Thus, this study frames young women issues in politico-developmental terms and examines issues targeting them in terms of political representation and participation. The study is rooted on the premise that identification of the underlying causes
of young women marginalization in politics is a deterrent factor to Kenya’s socio-economic and political development. Therefore, it behoves all key stakeholders for the youth and women to tap and nurture the leadership potential of young women with a view to deepening governance principles, revolutionizing our politics, and ensuring transformative leadership in Kenya.

The discourse on young women can only be achieved through an enabling policy-driven environment that has the potential of integrating young women in the mainstream national development processes. This will also see development of favourable legal and policy frameworks for young women to widen their capabilities in order to access more opportunities in political leadership.

However, it must be noted that there has been weak and rigid institutional capacity that have impeded the implementation of young women agenda in political participation and electoral process. The situation has been exacerbated by lack of clear guidelines for engaging youth in the planning and implementation of policies and programmes. Besides, there has been little emphasis and no intricate connection of those polices to problems facing young women in political spheres.

It should be recognised that the Youth Agenda (YAA), has continued to take a leading role towards catalyzing the development and implementation of national pro-youth policies and programmes and enhancement of their inherent potential to contribute to national development. This has significantly contributed to the development of the youth sector as a foundation for societal/national transformation.

Therefore, it is against this background that the Youth Agenda (YAA) commissioned a study on documentation of the experiences, success stories and key challenges of young women in political and electoral participation processes. This is geared towards

1.2 Project Background

The Youth Agenda (YAA) is a youth organization that works towards a “Just, Equitable and Progressive society in which young people fully enjoy social, economic and political rights and opportunities’. This vision is grounded in the belief that it is possible to realize a globally competitive and prosperous nation with a high quality of life in the near future, as envisaged by Kenya’s Vision 2030. One of our core mandates is

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1) The youth development programmes which the government has been implementing target persons aged 15-35 years. Policies and Programmes referred here are: National Youth Policy; Vision 2030 and its Medium Term Plan (MTPs); Kenya Youth Empowerment Project (KYEP); Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF), among others.

2) Youth are perceived as assets in their communities, who can positively contribute to the advancement of the social, economic and political environment in the society/nation.
to facilitate technical and legislative support to youth and those in leadership positions.

In the run up to the Kenya’s 2013 General elections, Youth Agenda worked closely with young women in providing technical assistance logistical support to enhance meaningful participation of young women in political leadership. In doing so, Youth Agenda facilitated the purple zebra campaign and the purple triumph forums to rally the election of young women and to build capacity them once elected respectively. However, there is need to ensure that the journey that the young women underwent is captured and used as a platform for learning as well as to advocate for changes in law or policy to further encourage other young women to participate in vying for political leadership.

1.3 Scope of Work

a) To analyze the performance and experience of young women leaders in the just ended 2013 general election.

b) To document the challenges and success stories of young women in the 2013 elections.

c) To carry out case studies of young women leaders who successfully contested the last election and whose modus operandi can act as an inspiration to other young women aspiring leaders.

d) To draw lessons for the future arising from the performance and experiences of young women in the 2013 general elections.

1.4 Study Approaches and Processes

The overall study approaches and delivery processes drew heavily on goodwill data and information from various young women political leaders who were randomly sampled. In addition purposive sampling technique was used in selecting respondents for face-to face interviews and Focus Group Discussions. A brainstorm session was held between the consultant and the YAA at the onset of questionnaire design stage for comments and fine-tuning prior to data collection phase.

The tools were designed and tailored towards soliciting relevant information on experiences and success stories from young women leaders with a view to exploring ways, means and avenues towards increasing their participation in political and electoral processes.

In terms of data collection, a total of 17 respondents drawn from Members of County
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In terms of data collection, a total of 17 respondents drawn from Members of County Assemblies and young women parliamentarians drawn from the Senate and National Assembly were interviewed. The process also employed a literature review from various sources including previous studies and reports on young women with regards to political and electoral processes.

1.5 Study Limitations

Due to budget constraints, the views from the registered voters were not sought in order to gauge their perception of young female leadership and representation. On the same vein, the study was done when the Party Nomination lists were still being challenged in court and this affected an accurate representation of nominated young women hence could have compromised the precision of the findings. It was also not possible to interview all young women legislators. However, the study outcomes are expected to inform YAA and other relevant stakeholders on the need to upscale interventions for deepening Affirmative Action especially on young women leadership in Kenya at all levels.
Chapter Two

2.0 Key Findings and Analysis

2.1 Introduction

This section provides a comprehensive analysis of key findings on the level of participation of young women in electoral and political processes in Kenya during the last general election. It also identifies bottlenecks that have constrained the capacity of young women to meaningfully participate in the electoral processes. Lastly, it documents lesson learnt by young women, challenges and other emerging issues on young women leadership.

2.2. An Overview of Young Women Candidates Performance in the 2013 General Election

The study noted that in spite of policy support, the participation of young women in Kenya’s electoral and political processes remains dismally low due to chains of challenges ranging from socio-cultural barriers to poverty issues as identified in various section of this publication. The most underlying factor here is that political activities require huge financing as a primary precondition – a key challenge for young women politicians.

Besides financial constraints, it was established that structures of political parties create barriers that often hinder young women to participate fully in party’s leadership and core management. Indeed, the nomination process conducted by political parties in Kenya confirmed that the move to increase the number of young women in political leadership still remains an uphill task unless the principle of affirmative action respected and fully implemented.

Not surprisingly, women were the greatest casualties of a mismanaged electoral process. They suffered the blunt of violence and no wonder they performed dismally at all levels of the primaries. This is a vivid confirmation of the fact that Women Representatives posts were attractive to young women aspirants during the nomination phase. Hence, young women were shying away from other elective positions due to acrimonious nature of competitive politics and lack of management framework to support free, fair and credible primaries. The foregoing is further demonstrated by the figure below in which no single young female candidate vied for gubernatorial seat.

3) YAA 2012: Status of young women in political leadership in Kenya
2.3 Experiences of young women participation in 2013 Elections

2.3.1 Participation in Political Party Activities.

In terms of participation in parties’ activities, the study findings established that young women experienced a number of challenges at political party level. A number of the respondents cited anomalies during party nomination processes. Their lack of involvement in leadership and decision making, lack of funding from their parties. To deal with the identified challenges young women suggested the following strategies that could enhance young women political participation.

From a positive side a number of young women made it into political leadership through nomination.

From the figure above, the analysis reveals that 29% of young women leaders sampled were in the opinion that young women should be fully involved in decision making
regarding party activities this was followed by 23% of the sampled respondents who were of the view that young women should be involved in advocacy and public awareness. On the same seam of analysis, it was further revealed that 18% of the sampled respondents suggested that there is need to establish a Young Women League in various political parties to empower them. Others suggestions were: Involvement in full management of party affairs 12%; promotion of leadership and governance 12%; and spearhead youth agenda in their respective parties 6%.

The detailed information on each specific suggestion is provided here below:

i) **Involvement in political party decision making** - Decision making processes within political parties continue to be spearheaded by male party leaders and mandarins with women and youth being pushed into obscurity of the core party agenda and programmes. Thus, it was in the view of young women that they should be integrated in decision-making committees as an avenue towards empowering them into political and electoral participation.

ii) **Promotion of good leadership and governance** - Political parties continue to be characterised with weak institutional capacity that has severely compromised the ethos of intra-party democracy, leadership and governance. In view of this, the study established that there is need for young women to promote good leadership and governance within their respective political parties. This will go towards entrenching democracy within various political parties as well as ensuring that the concerns of young women are comprehensively internalized and addressed at party levels.

iii) **Involvement in management of Parties’ Affairs** - It was found that various political parties still continue to be micro-managed by the top party echelons to the detriment of youth especially young women. This often leads to embezzlement of funds, botched nomination processes, entrenched ethnicity and a culture of impunity and intolerance. It now behoves all political parties to fully engage young women into managing party affairs and activities, as suggested by young women leaders. In this regard, they should be accommodated in party structures such as the National Executive Committees and National Governing Council among others.

iv) **Spearhead young women agenda in political parties** - As mentioned earlier, the participation and representation of young women and youth in parties’ activities continue to receive minimal attention. This has yielded sub-optimal results
with young women being relegated to peripheral positions. Therefore, it is incumbent to task young women to champion youth agenda in political parties with a view to enhancing their participation and representation hence achieving the tenets of political democracy.

v) Establish young women leagues - The rationale to establish Young Women League in political parties was to encourage them and provide platforms for enhancing their participation in political parties’ activities. This will also enable young women to fight and compete for party leadership and vying for political positions. Moreover, it was established that even mainstream parties (ODM, TNA, UDF, WIPER and URP) do not have young women league in their party structures rather youth wings.

vi) Advocacy and awareness creation - Public awareness on the pivotal role that young women can play in political parties is still a critical challenge that needs multi-faceted approaches to remedy. It was noted that young women leaders should engage in advocacy and awareness creation though various platforms including chief barazas, churches and markets to sensitize public on the significance of electing young women in various elective positions and the need for them to vie for more seats.

The study further sought to determine the measures that political parties can institute to enhance the level of young women participation in party activities as analysed in the figure below.

Fig 3: Measures that political parties can do to ensure participation of young women
The above analysis on each specific measure is further detailed as follows:

i) **More funding to young women** - It was established that participation of young women in political party activities continues to be constrained by extremely minimal financing mechanisms. The situation has been compounded with escalation of poverty, societal prejudice and stereotype against women especially in marginalized communities. The net effect is lack of finance hence low level of political participation and representation among young women. As a policy imperative, it was suggested that political parties should establish a special kitty (Young Women Political Fund) within their respective financial framework towards supporting young women’s activities up to adequate levels. This will motivate many potential young women into joining politics and actually participate in electoral processes.

ii) **Capacity Building and Training** - Capacity development is a requisite intervention to scaling-up young women participation in political and electoral processes. In Kenya young women continue to face serious hindrances to meaningful participation due to capacity-related gaps. The study thus established that young women leaders should be capacity built and trained in order to strengthen their potential for leadership positions due to enhanced political literacy. Capacity development should target the following thematic areas for serious training: Preparation of resource mobilization strategy, campaign manifesto, voters’ mobilization strategy, collaborative and networking strategies, good transformative leadership and governance skills.

iii) **Civic Education programmes** - It was established that political parties have not fully adopted the concept of civic education to create public awareness regarding the role of young women in socio-economic and political development. In this regard, it was suggested that political parties should deepen their civic
education programmes in order to raise awareness on the importance of supporting and involving young women in political and electoral processes.

iv) **Deepen Affirmative Action** - It was suggested that Affirmative Action should be deepened by setting aside more slots (political seats) for young women as a strategy for their empowerment. This should also be seen in the composition of parties’ National Executive Committees and Governing Councils which currently are dominated by male.

v) **Empowering Youth and Women Leagues** - Youth and Women Leagues have not been conspicuous and active contrary to their tacit constitutional mandates in various political parties in Kenya. These Youth and Women Leagues appear weak with inadequate capacity to realize maximum impacts at grassroots. Therefore, it is suggested that political parties should establish functional youth leagues, especially for young women (Young Women Leagues) as a platform for their meaningful engagement in political participation. The proposed Young Women Leagues will be used an advocacy and resource mobilization tool which eventually will positively and specifically impact on young women participation in political and electoral process.

vi) **Waive membership and nomination fee for young women** - Huge membership (especially life membership) coupled with exorbitant nomination fee were cited as hindrances to active participation in political party activities. In this regard, it is practically necessary to reduce these fees to affordable minimum levels. The study further revealed that various political parties have strived to show adherence to the principle of Affirmative Action as enshrined in Article 55 of the Constitution, which has seen various parties reduce nomination fee for youth and women to enhance their participation in electoral politics. This has seen women, youth and disabled get nomination as County Assembly Representatives and Members of Parliament.

### 2.3.2 Factors motivating Young Women in Political Participation

The study findings revealed that there are various motivating factors that enabled young women to join politics and vie for positions in political contests. Key factors

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4) Constitution of Kenya 2010: Article 55 stipulates that the State shall take measures, including Affirmative Action programmes to ensure that the youth access relevant education and training, have opportunities to associate, be represented and participate in political, economic and other spheres of life; access employment, and are protected from harmful cultural practices and exploitation.
that motivated young women into joining politics and vying for elective positions are summarized in the pie chart below:

![Pie chart showing motivating factors for young women into politics](image)

From the figure above it is observed that 35% of young women were motivated into joining politics because of the marginalization of young people in economic, social and political spheres. This was followed by 23% of young women who confirmed that they are lured into politics by activities of young female MPs while 18% of young women joined politics because of the unsatisfactory performance of legislators whose personal interests transcend societal interests and national aspirations. Lastly, it was further revealed that the new constitution which provided opportunity for young people in political participation as well as past demonstrable leadership capabilities was also a key motivating factor as they accounted for a respective proportion of 12%.

The detailed information on each specific suggestion is provided here below:

i) **Youth marginalization in political leadership** - It was observed that young people, especially women are being marginalised by political leadership in various parties. These retrogressive tendencies continue to push youth fraternity into obscurity of political participation. Thus, young women were in the view that they were motivated by the fact that youth continue to be marginalized hence wanted a platform for their active participation and voice their concern.

ii) **New Constitution** - The current Constitution provides an avenue for a new dispensation where young people are empowered in both political and socio-
economic fronts through effective implementation of the Affirmative Action in which the 30% Gender Rule is key to empowering women and by extension young women. Thus, many young women were motivated into joining politics due to Constitutional provision on youth empowerment (Article 27 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010) and the Government resolve and commitment to deepening interventions for youth empowerment as embodied in Vision 2030 and other national development priorities.

iii) Disappointment with MPs - Many young women were motivated to join politics to represent the voices of the constituents that were in their opinion not adequately being addressed by political leaders previously elected into political office.

iv) Activities of Young Women Parliamentarians - It was established that young women were motivated into joining politics by the activities of many young women legislators who had joined parliament at their youthful age such as Hon. Rachel Shebesh, Hon. Millie Odhiambo and Hon. Cecily Mbarire. Indeed, their polished and intrepid contribution on national issues in parliament on pro-youth and women issues were attractive to many youth and young women, hence their involvement into active politics.

v) Past leadership skills and capabilities - It was also established that many young women were motivated into joining politics due to the fact that they were once involved in politics/leadership at the various levels of learning institutions. This actually demonstrated vividly that they were capable of ascending to leadership positions through political engagement.

In terms of contested positions, the study revealed that many young women were motivated into vying for positions of Country Assembly Representatives and County Women Representatives as shown below, mainly due to minimal campaign resources required especially at ward levels.

5) The Kenya Vision 2030 is a long term development blueprint that is expected to transform the county into a rapidly industrializing middle-income nation by 2030. Under its Social Pillar, the Vision envisions Gender Equity in power resource distribution, improved livelihoods for all Vulnerable Groups and a Responsible, Globally, Competitive and Prosperous Youth.
2.3.3. Campaign Strategies and Mobilization skills

Further analysis revealed that even though young women participated in the election and nomination processes, they were however short-changed at nomination phase as certificates were given to other aspirants who were rich and could manipulate County party leaders. This saw many young women locked out since the IEBC gave a very short period to conduct primaries in order to avoid party-hoping menace.

Developing a successful campaign strategy still continue to be a herculean task for young women candidates. The study revealed that that fewer i.e 7 of the 17 sampled respondents had campaign manifesto reflecting 41% while 10 respondents confirmed of not having manifesto thereby accounting for 59% as shown the in figure below. This calls for concerted efforts by relevant stakeholders (Government, Youth Agenda, Development partners, CSOs, etc) whose core functions are very pertinent to the youth to embark on capacity building and training on development of campaign manifesto among young aspirants and candidates.

Fig 6: Whether candidates had a campaign manifesto

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Fig 6: Whether candidates had a campaign manifesto
Furthermore, the study established that National Democratic Institute was critical in assisting some young women in developing Manifesto. Others confirmed that even though they did not develop manifesto, they had outlined policies which identified community needs and priorities.

With regards to mobilisation, the study further revealed that excellent mobilization skills coupled with good policies observed as key facilitating factor (enablers) that contributed significantly towards victory of young women both at party primaries as well as general elections. This was confirmed by 7 (41%) and 5 (29%) respectively. Additionally, it was revealed that commitment to the party enabled some young women to get direct nomination as shown by 3 of the sampled respondents thus accounting for 18%, as shown below.

![Fig 7: Key Facilitating Factor](image)

### 2.3.4 Resource mobilization strategies

Aware of the inadequate financial resource capacity to mount a successful campaign, many young women had the various strategies for resource mobilization. It was found that sources for funding campaigns among young women mainly came from friends’ contributions and personal savings which had a respective proportion of 41% and 21%. Other sources of financing cited were as follows: Harambee 18%, Political party 12% and Personal loan 6%.
2.4 Challenges faced by Young Women during the 2013 elections

As shown in the figure below, young women face serious challenges in political and electoral processes. Further analysis revealed that the lack of finance and political violence against young women are the major challenges faced during the nomination and electioneering period as they accounted for 23% and 17% respectively. Other key challenges cited include; manipulation by rich politicians, tribalism which accounted for 12% each. While others challenges such as skewed nomination rules, corruption at party levels, weak institutional capacity, lack of intra-party democracy and reluctance by the youth to register accounted for 6% each.
A detail on specific challenges for the above analysis is further provided in the section below:

i) **Weak institutional capacity** - It was observed that weak institutional capacity within political parties compromised their ability to deliver a credible nomination process. This was due to the fact that there were no clear structures to guard and facilitate the nomination process which eminently contributed to botched nomination which did not favour young women.

ii) **Lack of intra-party democracy** – It was established that rich politicians did not subscribe to the nomination rules and guidelines hence open windows for outright rigging. In some cases, most political parties gave direct party nominations to particular candidates in sheer disregard to party rules and ethos. For instance, a young woman aspirant won her nomination in Wajir County as a county representative, however ODM gave the nomination to a male counterpart who had defected from another party.

iii) **Tribalism and political euphoria** – During the nomination processes, many people aligned themselves with their tribal political parties or coalitions of their tribal leaders due to their perceived strongholds regardless of the policies they propagated. This worked to the detriment of young women, for example, as captured in the box above by an ODM candidate from Rift Valley.

Young women candidates also suffered the perils of negative ethnicity which was cited as an impediment to their political participation. For instance women who were married in a certain community faced opposition from the community on the ground that they were not part of that community as happened to Mrs Regina. As a young woman aspirant for the Women Representative seat, she had to pull out of the race and stop campaigning because women in the community in which she was married were not ready to give her the chance to do so on the grounds that she came from another tribe. Lack of support from her fellow women proved to be a challenge to her. In addition, another candidate also faced the same discrimination on the basis of tribe. The fact that she was a woman married in West Pokot was enough to deny her the political right to participate in the elections. The residents in this community were not ready to support her.

“As a young candidate, political euphoria contributed significantly to my loss since I ran on an ODM ticket in Rift Valley which was then a URP/Jubilee stronghold. I was perceived to be a traitor to my tribe and in view of this; I was victim of political violence and tribal chauvinism which cost me victory” ODM CAR candidate.

6) Mainstream parties have a tribal fanatical following. For example, ODM- Nyanza, TNA-Central, URP-Rift Valley, Wiper- Lower Eastern and UDF-Western
iv) **Lack of finance and huge nomination fee:** Inadequate funding mechanisms were cited to minimizing the effective participation of young women in political and electoral processes. Most of the young women aspirants faced financial challenges that led them to giving up. Thus, lack of money to carry out campaigns and even pay for registration fees was a big hindrance to the young women.

Huge nomination fee levied on young aspirants was found to pose a serious hindrance to young women participation in electoral and political process. This is confirmed by the fact that on average political parties were demanding between Kshs. 5,000-10,000 for CAR positions, while 50,000-100,000/= for National Assembly and CWR positions. However few parties gave a 50% waiver on their nomination fees to the youth, women and people with disabilities. This led to many young woman vie for County Assembly Representatives which attracted a comparatively lower cost for financing unlike other posts such as National Assembly and County Women Representatives, Senators, Governors and Presidency which had higher nomination fee.

v) **Lack of political support by peers:** It was established that young women themselves have little support from young female aspirants and candidates due to perceived suspicion on their commitment to development and lack of interest in political activities. However, they support old people with money which cannot match the meagre resources of the young women aspirants.

vi) **Manipulation by rich politicians:** It was found that the popular young women aspirants were often manipulated by the rich to step down in their favour. This saw a significant number of youthful candidates, especially young women step down at the last minute to support specific individual aspirants after being prevailed upon by party stalwarts at the County level. There is also challenge of negative perception of the young women among old people with regards to political experience hence should be treated as mere supporters without any political influence and clout.

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7) Parties that gave 50% waiver include; Safina, Grand National Unity Party, Social Democratic Party and Chama Cha Uzalendo.
8) Hon. Senator Halima Abdile Mohamud, a 25-year old ODM nominated Senator from Wajir County was forced to step down during nomination phase as County Women Representative to pave way for another candidate on grounds of financial constraints and clan politics. She had no option but to step aside. However, she was later nominated as ODM Senator.
vii) Corruption and poor management of parties: Management of political parties is often done by party mandarins to the detriment of young women. This stems from the view that young people especially women have feeble political managerial skills couple with lack of finance which make them vulnerable for political corruption.

viii) Non-registration by youth – It was also found that some youth, especially young women (6% as shown in the analysis below) aren’t registering as members of political parties yet they want to hold key party positions. This had a negative impact on young women representation due to low voter turn-out.

ix) Incidence of political violence - the Culture of Political violence was found to be rampant before and during campaigns and mostly propagated by the youth who are bought by rich old politicians to intimidate young women aspirants. Indeed, political power is a serious contributor to violence against women.

x) Unfavourable political parties ‘nomination rules’ - The political party nomination rules are supposed to ensure that affirmative action is adhered to in accordance with the Political Parties Act. This includes making sure that marginalized groups such as women, youth, and peoples with disabilities are accommodated by in the parties. However majority of the parties have structured their nomination rules in such a way that they don’t accommodate these individuals as depicted by huge nomination fee that were not attractive to the above vulnerable groups. Young women aspirants in various counties complained that they were dominated by men and the nomination rules did not act in their favour due to high fee levied which was not within the reach of young women. They faced harassment from their male counterparts who were given the first priority.

2.5 Development priority areas for Young Women Legislators

The study further sought to know key priority areas that young women would immediately tackle in developing their areas. The following were cited as the key areas that need urgent attention.

a) Full implementation of new constitution - Young women leaders confirmed that they will push for full implementation of the new constitution, especially

10) Political Parties Act 2008 requires the constitutions of political parties to list the party’s practices with respect to gender, nomination procedures, and human rights in order to receive government funding. Despite the new law many Parties face challenges implementing the necessary internal reforms and streamlining their procedures to ensure compliance with the Act.
adherence to the principle of affirmative action for the youth as enshrined in Article 55. This will ensure affirmative action within affirmative action that will guarantee young women equal opportunity as older women resulting in young women empowerment and mainstreaming of their agenda into national policy and priorities.

b) **Youth and Women empowerment** - The youth, especially young women continue to be vulnerable in our society with myriad of socio-economic problems (such as unemployment, drug abuse, HIV/AIDS and economic marginalisation) that have not been holistically addressed. In this regard, the study revealed that youth empowerment and, especially for young women still remains a core concern among young women leaders.

c) **Fight corruption in management of devolved funds** - Over the years the devolved funds, especially Constituency Development Funds (CDF) have been plagued with inept management and serious corruption by management committees. This has led to poor project prioritization, implementation and skewed resource allocation which do not favour youth and young women in particular. In this regard, young women leaders committed themselves to tackling corruption and mismanagement of devolved funds to conform to community needs through creating platforms for awareness and networking with Anti-corruption/security agencies.

d) **Job creation** - The twin challenges of poverty and unemployment among the youth, especially young women still remain a key impediment to realizing economic growth objectives. In this regard, young women leaders reaffirmed their commitment to addressing unemployment through engaging the youth to establish Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and help them secure credit facilities from loaning institutions.

e) **Focus on Early Child Development** - In order to achieve Early Child Development and Education Programme (ECDE), young women leaders committed to embark on community mobilization to sensitize parents on the need to promote Girl-Child Education. For example, Hon. Senator Halima owes her success to educating her community (Wajir County) on the importance of Girl-Child Education where there is extremely low level for Girl-Child Education.

f) **Security** - Insecurity and violence against young women was cited to be a critical constrain to young women in political participation empowerment. Hence
Lessons Learnt

It emerged that young women participation in political processes is limited and impeded in many ways, especially through voter registration processes and voting rules. It also emerged that high level of illiteracy makes it difficult for young women to understand their voting rights hence a need for political literacy. In marginalized communities such as Northern Kenya, young girls are not sent to school, as their fathers believe that it is a waste of time and money to educate a girl, as her only role will be that of a wife.

In addition, the issue of family voting practice where young women are led to the voting by their male relatives or spouses limit their representation and participation in political and electoral process. This hugely constricts and constrains their freedom to vote for candidates of their choice.

It was also noted that raising sufficient resources to fund a successful campaign is extremely difficult, particularly for young women who often lack established funding networks or collateral. Indeed, young women who run for political posts face societal opposition, from both male and female citizens in some communities. Most opt to drop out of the political race.

Cultural impediments, such as the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as a rite of passage in some communities, stigmatize and traumatize
young girls and women. When young women are forced to marry men old enough to be their fathers, they lose their independence hence have to abide by the wishes of their husbands on voting patterns."

- Young women can make good leadership as they would not wish to be embroiled in corruption given their future -which shall only receive societal accolade through good reputation.

- Young women must learn mechanisms of surmounting leadership challenges. Hence, women must navigate the political landscape carefully, assert themselves forcefully and never act in a stereotypically feminine way, in order to be seen as strong leaders.

- The botched manner in which political parties handled their primaries was a deterrent factor to young women political participation. This should not be encouraged in future primaries to encourage more young women participation in electoral process.

- As indicated earlier, huge nomination fees made many young women not to participate in the electoral process. This is because political parties (such as ODM, TNA, URP, Wiper ) were levying close to Ksh 20,000/= for CAR. Where, for example, would a young female candidate without funding secured such an amount.

- On the issue of campaign funding, civil society/NGOs can assist by establishing an framework to raise funds for young women running for office. Such a framework can seek funding from both international and national donors whose tacit mandates are young women political empowerment. In addition, under the Political Parties Act, the party leaders should set aside a special kitty to finance young women campaigns after the nomination process. IEBC on the other hand should waiver fee its favour of young women and youth in general.
Chapter Three

3.1 Recommendations

i) **Address unfavourable nomination rules** - The Register of Political Parties and IEBC should liaise with National Gender and Equality Commission to ensure that political parties strictly adhere to the Political Parties Act 2008 which explicitly provides for respect to Affirmative Action on party nomination rules. Furthermore, they should put a legislation requiring that young women and youth pay reduced nomination fee that allows more young women and youth to be encouraged to participate in elective politics. In addition political parties should establish mechanisms to support financing of their campaigns such as the establishment of special funds or grants.

ii) **Involve Young Women in decision making process** - There is need for political parties to involve young women to participate actively in decision-making process to fulfil their civic duties within their respective political parties. This will provide a platform for young women to assert their rights and execute their responsibility to contribute to the political development. In addition, it is important to facilitate the creation or strengthening of platforms for young women participation in decision-making at local and national levels of governance.

iii) **Establish special fund for young women** - As a policy imperative, every political party should establish a special kitty (Young Women Fund) within their respective financial framework as a strategy to support young women activities. This will motivate many potential young women into joining politics and actually participate in electoral processes.

iv) **Need for further research on young women leadership** – Civil Society Organisation, political parties, National Gender and Equality Commission, and other stakeholders should facilitate further research on young women political leadership. Such research could be geared towards identifying success stories and weakness of young women leaders by identifying areas of strength that should be tightened and weaknesses that need policy interventions. The findings of such research would then be synthesized, lessons drawn and emulation of areas of strength undertaken.
v) **Policy support** - Give priority to policies and programmes including young women advocacy and peer-to-peer programmes to offer them with opportunity and motivation to re-integrate into mainstream political development in the society. In this regard, the Government should take a leading role to provide policy direction.

vi) **Access to information** - Provide access to information such that young women become aware of their rights and opportunities to participate in decision-making and civic duties.

vii) **Capacity building and Training** - Institute measures to professionalize youth work, especially young women and introduce relevant training programmes to enhance their capacity on issues like developing manifesto; resource mobilization and networking. In addition, the government and other Non-State Actors should work closely to offer capacity building for young female candidates to improve their leadership skills. This calls for collaboration between various stakeholders including government and civil society organizations.

viii) **Establish Young Women Leagues** - Establish Young Women Leagues within political parties and provide technical and financial support to build their institutional capacity.

ix) **Networking and mentoring young women** - It was recommended that platform be established for mentoring young women to enhance their political participation. Networks can be developed for young women that can be used to advocate for concerns affecting young women political and economic aspirations.

x) **Address the problem of family voting** - It was established that young women are coerced by their spouses during the voting process. There is need for civic education to provide for an environment in which young women can make independent political choices.

xi) **Need to decentralize political entry positions** - Young women should be sensitized on strategies for entry into the political arena. This is critical because it will enable them benefit from decentralization by creating and contesting for local positions that enable them to gain political experience first. As such, young women can run for posts such as County Assembly Representatives (CAR) and slowly climb the political ladder and move to more senior positions such as County Women Representative, Senators, Governors, Deputy President and President.
Role of Media - The media should stop stereotyping young women and instead cultivate a positive image about women in electoral politics. They should take advantage of young women’s multiple roles in the society and immense contribution in national development including political participation.

3.2 Conclusion

Empowering young women is a prime precondition for overall development and empowerment of a nation. Although this might seem to be a daunting task at the onset since they can’t be empowered instantaneously, mechanisms towards that direction should be immediately instituted.

Kenya’s regional and international competitiveness heavily hinges on its ability to empower and educate young women to realize gender equality – giving young women the same rights, responsibilities, and opportunities as men. Numerous studies confirm that reducing gender inequality enhances productivity and economic growth.\(^{12}\) Thus, the government and other relevant stakeholders should place more emphasis on narrowing the gender gap in order for young women to access opportunities for development.

It is true the large voter turnout by the youth coupled with emerging trend of many young female candidates during general election (as witnessed in 2013 General Election) is a clear indication the youth want a refreshing wing of change which will herald a new dispensation that is sensitive to their modern aspirations. The myriad of challenges experienced by the young women during election depicts a deplorable situation and should be swiftly addressed prior to enable them succeed in future elections. In addition, political parties and their leaders need to be informed of the importance of the young women in political participation and electoral process. On the other hand more similar studies should be done periodically towards addressing the identified challenges in order to enhance the participation of young women in political and electoral processes in Kenya.

It is also critical to adopt a more dynamic mechanism to mobilize and engage young women and support them in order to make more contribution towards development activities and political participation. The prudent policies and structures should be provided to guarantee an enabling environment conducive for youth development.
ANNEX I: Success Stories of selected Young Women MPs and CARs

Part I: Experiences From Young Women Members of Parliament

Hon. Senator Halima Abdile M.P Wajir County-nominated

Hon. Halima Abdile is one of the youngest female legislators in Kenya’s history having been nominated by Orange Democratic Movement Party (ODM) at the age of 25 years. She holds a Bachelors Degree in Education Science from Kenyatta University having graduated in 2011. Prior to proceeding to the University she was the best performing student at Wajir Girls Secondary School- a move that awokestruck her community and colleagues since few students from this region hardly make it to the University through Joint Admission Board criteria. She was also the Vice-Chairperson of Kenyatta University North Eastern Students Association (KUNESA).

At first, she admits that Wajir County is one of the poverty-stricken regions in Kenya with over 80 per cent of the entire populace below poverty line which is also far below the national average poverty levels that currently stands at approximately 46per cent. All development indicators in this County are below the national average i.e. low school enrolment rate; low teacher –pupil/student ratio; low transition rates; low doctor/nurse-patient ratio; high child and maternal mortality rate and high rate of unemployment due to lack of critical entrepreneurial and employment skills. The situation is exacerbated by worsening insecurity due to frequent attacks by terrorists which has negated the prospects of doing business by investors.

After graduation, she volunteered to work as a teacher while sensitizing her communities to promote girl-child education since Wajir residents do not want to empower women due to their cultural beliefs- a woman is there to be a wife, bear many children and attend to family obligations while a man is entailed to marry many wives of his choice.

After voluntary work, Hon. Halima was absorbed as a Project Officer for Arid Lands Development Forum which was a NGO whose primary programmatic area of intervention was to promote Girl-Child Education. It is due to her job that she started to gain grassroot visibility and support from the local communities.
She was motivated to join politics by her past experience as a Student leader for KUNESA, her volunteering teaching job and activities to promote Girl-Child Education. These earned her respect and admiration by local communities, especially her peers who urged her to run for an elective post. However she was challenged by her father who was very upset upon hearing of the move. Besides, she lacked adequate fund for successful campaign as she only got meagre financial support from friends. She campaigned for six months and when it dawned that she was going to clinch the nomination ticket for Wajir County Women Representative to the National Assembly, the ODM Wajir County leaders and party stalwarts had a crisis meeting and prevailed upon her to step down for another female candidate who was rich but not young –she happens to be her fiercest competitor.

She first declined because even though she did not have financial muscles, the ground was favouring her in almost all clans given the fact that she also came from majority clan. However, she was later given a line-up that she steps down in favour of her competitor and will be put in Party’s Nomination List. Since she could not do anything due to pressure she opted out. Eventually, she was elated when it was confirmed that she was actually nominated by the party gazetted by IEBC.

She feels her party has done extremely well in adhering to the Affirmative Action principle as espoused in the Constitution. She however feel that political parties should reduce nomination fee for the youth in general and young women aspirants in particular. Her key and immediate priority areas that she wants to address include: empowering young women through sensitization forums; promotion of education especially Girl-Child Education; Ensuring that Government fully implements devolution; Addressing insecurity and reversing poverty levels in Wajir County.

She attests that the main challenge of young women candidates is the notion by community that they are inexperienced, poor and lack leadership skills. She recommends that YAA should partner with her in order to have a joint strategy and set up advocacy platforms, sensitization forums and capacity building among young women in Wajir County.
Hon. Senator Daisy Kanainza M.P Kakamega County-nominated

Hon. Daisy Kanainza is the youngest parliamentarian at the age of 24 years of age. She is a nominated Senator in the Orange Democratic Movement and hails from Kakamega County.

She states that her political participation was supported and influenced by the various trainings she attended as part of belonging to a political party. She attended the Political Leadership Training Program for young politicians in Africa at an early age while still in campus aged 22 years. She served in her political party as the Secretary General for the Young Democratic league in Kakamega County having been elected in about 12 constituencies. She was also the defacto spokesperson for the League. This allowed her access to political rallies in Kakamega County and an opportunity to speak at the rallies where top party officials were in attendance including the party leader. She gained experience and build her network based on her political party position and was nominated to attend on behalf of the party various trainings including the inter-parties youth forum. She also had the responsibility to run the volunteer program in the County.

She has been in active politics since 2008 and also experienced her share of bullying from her more accomplished and settled male counterparts.

She believes that more needs to be done to train and reach out to those youth outside the urban areas in order to boost political participation of young women. She mentions that many times trainings are concentrating in the urban areas and the same people are trained over and over and no opportunity is given to those in the far to reach areas in Kakamega County.

She hopes to use her position as a Senator to push for each County to have a University, Polytechnics to offer basic education skills in entrepreneurship and to have more allocation of resources at the County level. She also promises to bring legislation to address youth concerns, and stresses to tackle the unemployment problem of the youth by removing the high requirements of qualifications often used to lock out youths from jobs. She proposes to seek funding for graduates as they await employment to participate in income generating activities. She proposes to start a “Youth Day” that will be used to share information with the youth on the various opportunities available, career advice, link employers with the youth seeking employment, and services such as those offered by commercial banks and the youth enterprise funds.
Youth are often deprived of information which is a major hindrance towards youth taking opportunities.

Hon. Daisy was not initially on the party list but was called before the nominating committee for the work she had done for the party. She was able to persuade the panel of her credentials and what she had done for the party in mobilizing support in her County despite strong opposition. Her name was recommended by the County Selection Committee and later supported by the National Executive Committee of the Party.

She pledges to work with youth agenda in driving the social and political empowerment of youth.
Hon. Gladys Wanga County M.P Homabay County-elected

The Hon. Gladys Wanga was of the view that the nomination was a sham and was badly handled by the party. She is of the belief that political parties do not have the capacity to conduct nominations to identify flag bearers of the party to contest in a general election.

There were various challenges she was able to note, such as violence in parts of the County, youth hired who disrupted the voting process and ballot boxes were delivered late due to this. Some polling stations were opening at 9 a.m. There were incidents of ballot paper burning that occurred as well.

After the nomination process it was chaotic getting the nomination papers from the party headquarters in Nairobi.

One specific incident that she remembers that caused anguish was when another person was named the winner despite the fact that she had won the nomination process as the media was used to disseminate the information. The matter was however later resolved.

She did not experience any violence to her person but had to rely on youth for protection. The party was unable to provide any monetary support to her campaign but lowered the fee for nomination to 75,000/-.

She holds the view that political parties need to have young women holding key positions and that the upcoming elections for her party’s National Executive Committee should be used as an opportunity to have young women included in leadership positions. Waiting for a general elections will not guarantee achievement of the 1/3 rule in electing women if the political party does not include them in the party leadership. She is of the view it must begin with the political party level and that implementation of the 1/3 rule at the political party will ensure there is a direct benefit during elections and that it will be achievable to have more women elected.

The Registrar of political parties needs to be engaged more even by the young women leaders to put in place measure within political parties that may support affirmative action.

Hon. Gladys got elected as the County M.P with support from friends and what she
calls “Team Gladys” that steered her campaigns. Team Gladys was composed of friends, colleagues, schoolmates at various levels and well wishers. She also used savings to support her campaign. She points out that she was not from a privileged background and that both her and her husband are orphans and did not depend on any “godfathers” for support. Coming from a middle income family there were not wealthy to oil constituents with handouts and relied on what she was offering to deliver for her County.

Hon. Gladys Wanga also reiterated her commitment to youth issues and pledged to work with Youth Agenda in advancing social and political empowerment of youth in Kenya.
Part 2: Experiences from Young Women CARs

“I started politics in 2007 when I was in college. This all came about when I had an inner feeling that I was born to be a leader. This was because in primary I was a prefect, in high school I was a captain as well all the way to the university. It is from then when I realized that I had a passion for youth and especially young women and resolved to represent them through thick and thin. It so happened that my grandfather who was a former minister saw an advert in the newspaper and decided to call me. It was an ODM grassroots election and I thought that it was a great opportunity for me to take advantage of as a conduit into the political arena. I started campaigning from the sub branch level all the way to the national level and I was picked unopposed due to my confidence and knowledge despite the fact that I was a lady in Kalenjin land where women are perceived to be housewives.

I was selected as the Chairperson from the sub branch to county level and up to the national level. I am currently the National Youth Coordinator. The main challenge I faced was due to the fact that I come from Uasin-Gishu which was URP dominated and yet I was in ODM. I however stood firm and represented my party. Another challenge was that women are not to take up political positions in Kalenjin tradition as such positions are perceived to be for men. All in all am still in ODM firm and strong fighting for youth and women in politics, also inspiring those who wish to join”.- Sheila Koskei-Uasin Gishu County

“I vied for a County Member Assembly seat in Dagoretti North Constituency, Kawangware ward. The journey was a tough one since I decided to fully go into politics in 2012. I started my campaigns in 2013 but at first I faced a lot of intimidation due to the fact that I was young and the only aspirant for this seat. Prior to the nominations I was once attacked by a group of around twenty men while I was conducting my campaigns and I came to realize that one of my opponents had a hand in this. One of my opponents constantly threatened me and when I had had just about enough I challenged him to a fight. My decision was influenced by the fact that I wanted respect between us and I saw that it was the only way I could earn it. Be that as it may, the physical abuse did not end there for on the nominations day; one of my opponents organized a gang to beat me up after the vote counting due to fears that I would defeat him. Luckily I was rescued by a group of young men since the police, who were supposed to provide security had already been compromised. In the meantime the vote counting went on and indeed I won but at the tallying centre one very influential politician who is also a member of my party threatened to give my certificate to an opponent. At that time the Member of Parliament who won on my party
ticket was very co-operative and defended me and ensured that I got my certificate. After nominations my party had promised to offer financial assistance to all candidates who won but this never happened. My greatest financial supporter was my father whom I thank to this very day. The journey was not easy but I somehow managed to sail through. My journey would also never have been the same had it not been for Youth Agenda that did a road show under the name Purple Caravan in the area I was voting that gave me a lot of visibility and publicity. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to YAA”- Caroline Awuor, County Assembly Member for Nairobi County.

“I hail from a marginalized community which is El-molo from the Eastern shores of Lake Turkana. After being an active youth member of a Catholic Church in the Diocese of Marsabit, I joined the Peace Caravan Initiative. This was a movement formed by elites from different pastoralist communities. The movement started prior to the 4th March General Election in Nairobi and later spread to different counties. In Marsabit County we had the Oasis Peace Caravan. Through this initiative I happened to interact with many youth that one day suggested to me that I should join them as a committee member in the planning of the county campaigns. This is because they wanted representation from all the communities, including the El-molo who are marginalized. As the only young woman from the El-molo community, I gained publicity and was literally hand-picked as a nominated member of the County Assembly to represent the youth. I appreciate my community, friends, the Catholic Church and the peace caravan”. - Danila Ntalason Lenatiyama, County Assembly Member, Marsabit County