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WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT

Tanzania

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The women's political participation and leadership (WPPL) assessment in Tanzania, one of an eight-country pilot under the USAID Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) Learning, Evaluation, and Research (LER) II activity, uses the latest iteration of USAID's [WPPL Assessment Framework](#). The Tanzania WPPL assessment investigates the barriers and opportunities to expand women's participation and leadership in Tanzania. The research included a desk review of relevant literature and documents, a survey completed by 119 politicians, 20 key informant interviews, and eight focus group discussions with politicians, civil society, and media in Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar.

The [Tanzania WPPL Assessment Report](#) can be used by stakeholders to identify priority areas where investments in programs and initiatives to support WPPL are likely to have the greatest and most meaningful impact.

FINDINGS

BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

- Although WPPL has seen impressive gains in recent years, gender stereotypes continue to shape women's opportunities. Men continue to be widely viewed as the head of the family and decision-makers while women must often obtain approval from a man relative for political and civic participation.
- Due to their roles in the household, women are often not perceived as capable of leading and women who engage in politics are often seen as having deserted their families. Many men undermine and prevent women family members from participating in political activities. In some cases, women participating in political activities without their husbands' consent have faced violence or divorce.
- Violence against women in politics (VAWP) occurs, including online, though is often underreported for fear of retaliation. Women have faced both extortion and sextortion within political parties when seeking nominations as candidates, and may struggle to escape violence due to feeling unqualified or incapable. Although both the National Elections Act and the Political Parties Act prohibit VAWP, enforcement remains a challenge.
- Tanzania does not allow independent candidates; therefore, the success of the party depends on the single candidate it selects per electoral constituency or ward. Party nomination committees are often reluctant to select women for these competitive seats, partly due to the belief that voters are less likely to vote for women candidates. Political parties have women's wings, but their autonomy is limited, as they report to and depend primarily on the party to finance capacity-strengthening programs.
- Economic inequality, which can cause additional financial constraints on women, also limits their political activity and ambitions. Transportation to polling stations, party membership and candidate nomination fees, as well as financing campaigns may require cost-prohibitive amounts of money.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

- Although Tanzania has signed and ratified several general international and regional human rights instruments and enshrines gender equality principles in its national laws, they have not yet been fully implemented. The special seats system has challenges, but provides women with guaranteed representation in elected bodies; builds women's confidence, political knowledge, and financial capacity; and expands their political networks while also giving women political experience and opportunity. For example, the share of women in parliament has increased; in the 2020 general election, 35 percent of parliamentarians were women.
- There is growing interest among women to vote, join political parties, compete in elections, earn nominations for political positions, and engage in civil society. However, women need better access to information and more equitable support to engage in politics in greater numbers. In addition, some women also may not see themselves as voters or leaders due to existing societal roles and expectations that undermine women's confidence and skills.
- Women leaders often have opportunities to build their capacity as leaders through work with international organizations, regional parliaments and organizations, and through the cross-country caucuses of women's rights organizations (WROs). However, such capacity-building interventions are sometimes ad hoc in nature, uncoordinated, and externally funded, diminishing their prospects for sustainability.

SELECTED RECOMMENDATIONS SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

- Development partners should emphasize targeted mentoring and coaching programming for men that challenges patriarchal attitudes that impede women from equally and fully participating in political processes.
- Development partners should support WROs to undertake a comprehensive initiative to address violence against women in politics and public life. A capacity-strengthening mechanism for WROs should support the development of programming at the village, street, and ward levels—in addition to the national level.
- Civil society organizations (CSOs) and the Ministry of Education should support leadership development and norms transformation, including as part of the school curriculum. This is an opportunity to engage young people on gender equity and equality in ways that translate to inclusive behaviors.
- Development partners and CSOs should engage with the media, including with training, to provide more gender-sensitive coverage.

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

- Development partners should support Tanzanian stakeholders to 1) ensure that current or upcoming reviews of laws are inclusive and that women's groups are represented in these conversations, and 2) provide comparative technical expertise on potential legal reforms to better advance women's political participation.
- The Tanzanian government should explore reforming the Political Parties Amendment Act to ensure parties accountably and meaningfully promote WPPL. Opportunities include for political parties to implement a gender policy, set a 20 percent quota for women's representation in open constituencies, and a 40 percent quota for party leadership positions.
- The Tanzanian government should explore creating a new framework for the special seats system, including guidelines for selecting women for special seats representatives, allowing women elected to special seats to be nominated as prime ministers, and providing these elected officials with funding.
- Political parties should address violence against women politicians and adopt more inclusive internal party processes and policies. This could include awareness-raising within parties, having redress mechanisms, ensuring women's representation in candidate nomination committees, adopting voluntary candidate quotas, reconsidering candidate requirements, and ensuring that special seats are not used to disincentivize women from otherwise running in competitive seats.

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

- Development partners should work with CSOs to provide capacity-building support for women aspirants and candidates, including on public speaking, fundraising, and political resilience.
- Parties, WROs, and parliament should collaborate on a coaching and mentoring program that provides peer-to-peer support for women to build their confidence and resilience, as well as political participation abilities.
- Development partners, regional parliaments/organizations, and WROs should cooperatively provide training for women parliamentarians on issues such as their roles and responsibilities, effective communication, and negotiation.