

# FAST FACTS



United Nations Development Programme

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Resilient nations.

## UNDP and Gender in Africa



Women across Africa are becoming more empowered, with more girls attending both primary and secondary school and more women in positions of political power. Nearly half the countries in Africa have achieved gender parity in primary school, and while parity at the secondary and tertiary levels has improved, limited data makes measuring progress difficult. Thanks to affirmative action, the proportion of seats held by women in African national parliaments (nearly 20 per cent) is second only to that in Latin America and the Caribbean. Early marriage, inequitable household power dynamics and low economic opportunities for women, however, are slowing progress.

Women in Africa will continue to bear much of the consequences of external shocks such as climate change and the global economic crisis. They take overall responsibility for securing food, water and energy for their families and communities. Prioritizing women's health, education, political participation and access to paid work can have powerful spillover effects on many MDG targets.

### UNDP in action

#### 1. *We promote women and gender in decision-making*

Through our global and African networks, we work to ensure women have a real voice in all governance institutions, from the judiciary to the civil service, as well as

### MATTERS OF FACT

- Many countries in Africa are seeing progress on MDG 3, especially on gender parity in primary school and on the number of seats women hold in national parliaments. Promoting better access for women to paid non-agriculture jobs and land remains a challenge.
- Women in Sub-Saharan Africa spend 40 billion hours per year collecting water. This is equivalent to a year's worth of labour by the entire workforce in France.
- Africa is not short on human rights declarations and treaties. The main challenge is implementing them to protect women and children's rights.

in the private sector and civil society, so they can participate equally with men in public dialogue and decision-making and influence the decisions that will determine the future of their families and countries.

More than 350 women from seven rural regions of **Kenya** were trained on leadership skills ahead of the country's general election in 2013, while in **Nigeria**, 2,043 female politicians and candidates were trained in 2011 on how to engage in electoral processes at the national and state levels.

We also work with countries to ensure they take gender into account in their development planning. In June 2010, **Uganda's** Makerere University launched Africa's first Master's Degree in Gender-Aware Economics, developed in collaboration with UNDP. The one-year programme provides African policy-makers with the knowledge to incorporate gender in economic policy-making. Our technical support contributed to the adoption by a number of African countries of national visions and development strategies that take gender considerations fully into account (**Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, DRC, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Zambia**).

We are collaborating with the UN Economic Commission for Africa to support regional institutions involved in gathering statistics that include gender-disaggregated data, such as the African Centre for Statistics. We are also directly working with 12 countries to help them analyze such data.

## 2. We help reduce poverty among women

Equality between men and women is more than a matter of social justice - it's a fundamental human right. But gender equality also makes good economic sense. When women have equal access to education, and go on to participate fully in business and economic decision-making, they are a key driving force against poverty.

In **Kenya**, UNDP, ILO, UNIDO and the Equity Bank have been supporting women entrepreneurs to establish businesses and help their communities to do the same. Thanks to the scheme, Equity Bank opened three branches in Nairobi to serve women only, providing funds for medium- and long-term lending to increase women's capacities in the business world. An initial 2,000 businesswomen were selected for free training under the programme.

With support from UNDP, UN Women and **Liberia's** Ministry of Gender and Development, the Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf Market Women's Fund established 13 markets in rural and urban areas across the country and trained 500 women how to read and write.

Under a broad-based programme set up by UNDP in 2003 at the request of **Burkina Faso's** National AIDS Council, 142 civil society organizations and six national networks are working to prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS in the country. Since January 2009, HIV/AIDS education sessions have reached some 150,680 people, more than half of whom are women.

## 3. We bolster the role of women in tackling crisis situations

Aiming to enhance women's, political, social and economic empowerment in armed conflict and disaster settings, we strengthen rule of law and access to justice for women, help them participate in peacebuilding efforts and promote post-crisis livelihood opportunities benefitting men and women equally.

In the North of **Uganda**, young volunteers trained in peacebuilding and conflict resolution helped to settle land disputes and mitigate domestic violence under a programme to facilitate the recovery and resettlement of displaced populations in areas affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Through this scheme, a total of 12,578 farmers, half of them women, were trained on improved farming techniques and given access to seeds and fertilizers.

UNDP helped set up twelve community centres in the two, war-affected provinces of the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, providing women with leadership training, as well as

mediation, literacy classes, financial advice, work-skills training and other services.

In the run up to **Senegal's** 2012 general election, UNDP worked with a network of 20 influential women's groups – from the highest levels to the grassroots – who set up meetings among civil society organizations, encouraging them to call for calm.

On polling day, they also served as monitors, reporting incidents to a 'situation room' based in Dakar, also staffed by the women.

In collaboration with UNDP, **Liberia** has adopted a National Plan of Action to prevent gender-based violence. The country has established a professional police force within the Ministry of Justice to fight the problem.

## 4. We promote energy access for women and help them contribute to sustainable development

UNDP helps include women in environmental planning, delivers energy and environment services to poor women, leverages financing for women's organizations working on climate mitigation or adaptation, and harnesses women's local knowledge to protect, sustain and manage the environment and its resources.

UNDP led a vast programme that is providing energy services for 3.5 million rural dwellers in seven countries of **West Africa**. Thanks to the installation of diesel and biofuel stations in rural communities, the initiative has helped to reduce the time women and girls devote to domestic chores by two to four hours a day, enabling them to attend school or raise revenue from other activities.

In **Burundi**, thanks to a reforestation and livelihoods programme led by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and UNDP, 1,300 women and around a hundred men, all economically vulnerable, are taking part in reforestation activities. Approximately 300,000 seedlings of indigenous plant varieties made it possible to re-timber 116 hectares of forest over two years. Environmental activities make it possible to fight poverty by generating income for the local population.

In **Mali**, more than 30,000 people, primarily women and youth, have access to renewable energy and women's and youth associations are generating revenue managing solar dryers, cookers and water heaters, while young volunteers have learned to install and maintain solar panels. The scheme is helping to limit carbon emissions from kerosene and charcoal in targeted communities and will generate important health benefits. *For more information, please visit [www.undp.org/africa](http://www.undp.org/africa)*



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