

GIZ-AGRIJOBS 4 YOUTH PROJECT-Kisumu county-Kenya

GIZ gender competition.

"Gender parity has a fundamental bearing on whether or not economies and societies thrive. Developing and deploying one-half of the world's available talent has a huge bearing on the growth, competitiveness and future-readiness of economies and businesses worldwide" (World Economic Forum, 2019).

Currently, Kenya is ranked 109 out of 153 countries on the Global Gender Gap Index 2019. Out of the total population of Kenyans, 50.5% are women. One in five women aged 23 and above have never been to school compared to one in seven men. Two in five of 1.3 million Kenyans who are university graduates are female. Women earn Sh68 for every Sh100 men get for similar work. Over a third (36 percent) of about 2.8 million people in wage employment are women. In addition to that, our country is also experiencing the following:

1. Restricted access to land, a central obstacle to working in agriculture, especially for women.
2. High rates of school dropouts for girls negatively influence their agribusiness engagement.
3. Most of the gender discriminations are culturally deeply rooted in the societies of Western Kenya.
4. Training facilities and service providers are available, but young women often do not receive the necessary information and are not consulted in designing and planning services and trainings.
5. Women are underrepresented in leadership and business management at all levels.
6. Youth and young women's concerns are not well articulated in policies and programs at County level.
7. Restricted access to land, a central obstacle to working in agriculture, especially for women.

Agri jobs 4 youth initiative since its inception has seriously considered gender issues in decision making especially in its early stages. The main objective of the initiative is to create opportunities and to empower young people and women to build their livelihoods through gainful salaried employment or self-employment in agribusiness.

In the course of our project, various efforts have been put in place to promote gender equality in our country especially in the society we live in. These efforts and approaches used include the following:

1. Giving proper value to 'women's work'

-The unpaid work women and girls do provide the foundation for the global economy. This fact needs to be highlighted more in the media, with the private sector, and in communities.

2. Getting women into power.

- A proven way to overcome many systemic barriers to a woman's success has been increased participation by women in local, regional and national legislation as empowered change agents.

3. Encouraging women into non-traditional vocations

- Supporting women in non-traditional jobs is crucial in not only making long-lasting change in their lives but also help break social taboos.

5. Talking to women and girls.

- A fundamental reason we have not yet achieved gender equality in every realm is that women and girls' voices are too often excluded from global and national decision-making.

6. Stopping child marriage and sexual harassment.

- If we want girls to be able to complete education we have to end child marriage. We also have to seriously address sexual harassment of girls.

7. Make education gender sensitive.

- There has been much progress in increasing access to education, but progress has been slow in improving the gender sensitivity of the education system, including ensuring textbooks promote positive stereotypes.

8. Raising the aspirations of girls and their parents.

- We need to give girls images and role models that expand their dreams

9. Empower mothers.

- When mothers are educated and empowered to make choices in their lives, they enable their daughters to go to school.

Our initiative has managed to achieve the following objectives:

1. Strengthening agency and decision-making
2. Changing mindsets, strengthening self-confidence, agency and decision-making.
3. Changing mindsets, changing decision-making structures, fostering institutional change.
4. Changing mindsets, strengthening agency and self-confidence.
5. Changing mindsets and creating new narratives, agency and self-confidence.
6. Influencing policy, changing mindsets and creating new narratives.

The following are some of the results of our initiative:

1. Increased yields and income;
2. Improved nutrition;
3. Improved awareness of domestic violence in the community; improved capacity of women leaders.
4. Improved gender perspectives in decision making;
5. Increased ability of women's organisations to negotiate with government;
6. Increased respect for women leaders.

From the above information, we are expecting it to yield the following impacts into our society which include:

Short term	Medium term	Long term
1.This reduces poverty. - When women receive better education, healthcare, and job opportunities, they can thrive. Investing in gender inequality is a sustainable, highly-effective way to reduce poverty.	1. It leads to better legal protections - Increasing women's legal rights keeps them safe and able to build productive happy lives.	1. It leads to better racial equality. -When gender equality considers race as a factor, it improves race equality at the same time. 2. It's good for the economy. - it would lead to a GDP increase equivalent to \$6 trillion. Gender pay

Gender equality is a very good feature in every work place in that it results to:

1.Enhanced collaboration

Having women on teams can help improve team processes and boost group collaboration. Researchers have observed that women have stronger skills reading non-verbal cues.

They also conclude that groups with more women were better at taking turns in conversation, which helps them make the most of the groups combined knowledge and skills.

This will benefit groups both when they're collaborating on projects face-to-face. And it will also help when employees use modern business communication tools that enable people to share ideas, start conversations and collect feedback.

2. Improved staff retention

Having an inclusive culture in your workplace boosts morale and opportunity. Inclusive workplaces tend to have lower employee churn rates - which represents big savings in terms of time and money spent on recruitment.

3. Improved recruitment and reputation

Having an inclusive workplace is a powerful recruiting tool. Female millennials look for employers with a strong record on diversity, according to research by PwC, with 85% saying it's important to them.

A reputation as an inclusive employer will also demonstrate your positive company values and that will enhance your reputation in the recruitment marketplace.

In addition to that, our contributions in promoting gender equality in the society in the course of the project's initiative has been acknowledged especially by our partners at the work place in that, this was done by them submitting their signatures in support of gender equality both in the society and also at the working place.

Moreover, we have highlighted the contributions promoting gender equity and reduction of gender-based discrimination in our project initiative in that, women have been included in every stage of the project and hence, this has boosted the productivity of our project initiative especially in the areas we are implementing the project. The results in the area of gender equality together with the mechanisms for measuring them, have been clearly stated and elaborated in our project evaluation report.

Promoting gender equality is not an activity that one can manage to handle alone in that, it's a large task which needs joint efforts from different people so as to strongly and bravely implement it in the society. Due to that, we joined hands with different partners of our organization together with our sister GIZ organizations within our region so as to accomplish the mission of promoting gender equality in all aspects of life apart from the working zones only. As a group, we were united by the following values:

1. Honesty- This was by doing our best to share our thoughts and feelings as they arise during a group meeting.
2. Giving back feedback- When we received feedback from other members, we tried to remain open and simply listen to what they have to say.
3. Engaging our fellow group members. - This was by asking questions of one another, Challenging each other when you notice someone is silent or vague, when you disagree or see a different perspective, or when you see others are disengaged or defensive.

During the exercise, we experienced certain challenges as a group which include:

1. Optimal Conditions- Many of the members operate in fast-paced work environments, where change is constant. It was hard to keep pace with work, let alone move our teams forward in the face of this disruption.

However, these optimal conditions helped the team be cohesive, nimble, and productive, despite the difficulties posed by pace and change.

2. Team member self-awareness- At a point, some members felt the frustration of working with someone who demonstrates the traits of low self-awareness: resistant to feedback, blames others for failure, appears to know it all, takes undue credit, and the list goes on.

Despite the challenges, we had major success factors that made us accomplish our mission at the end which include the following:

1. Trust among team members-Building trust took time hence it was the responsibility of the team leader to focus first on building trust, i.e. getting team members to open up (among the team) and expose their weaknesses and fears to each other.

2. Holding one another accountable against their plans. - Team members were always prepared to check among themselves to assure progress and overcome obstacles to progress. We always had Ad hoc meetings so as to coordinate actions between departments or groups to assure progress.

3. Learning to commit to decisions and plans of action-Team results came about as a result of team commitment to team decisions, this includes agreeing on the specifics of action plans. The team members were very consistent with their commitments, hence the team succeeded.

Contributions to internal gender mainstreaming

During the process of promoting gender equality, there were several measures and approaches we used so as to make gender equality visible as part of our corporate culture in the society. Some of the approaches used include:

1. Fighting Gender Stereotypes-In that, we do learn a lot from our immediate surroundings e.g. families, friends, school, neighborhood, media and books. By us teaching ourselves as an organization, about gender-equality makes us to believe in gender stereotypes.

2. The Right Gender Messaging (Gender Is Not Synonymous with Women and Girls)- Gender is often misrepresented as pertaining only to women and girls hence, we created awareness on how the society can create gender norms and stereotypes. Gender stereotypes impact all of us, yet affect women, girls and the 'third gender' more.

3. Gender Sensitise Service Providers- In that, we engaged the service providers in different sectors such as in education, health, financial and legal departments. They really do assist in playing significant role in reinforcing gender stereotypes.