

# Women's political representation and effective participation in Ngara, Tanzania

Lilian Mtasingwa, Sophia Mgoba and Julius Bukobero



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Frontpage photo: Women Ward and Village Councillors during women's political leadership training. February 10, 2023, Ngara District (Photo: Lilian Mtasingwa)

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## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
Research Objectives	8
Lessons Learnt	8
<b>Literature Review</b>	<b>9</b>
Situation of Women's Representation in Local Government	9
Women's Representation and Participation in Local Government: Critical for Democratic Policy-making	10
Theoretical Framework: Empowerment Theory	13
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>13</b>
Study Area	13
Research Design and Approach	13
Ethical Considerations	15
Limitations of the Study	15
Respondents Profile by Sex	16
<b>Findings and Discussions</b>	<b>16</b>
Factors Limiting Women to Access WC Elected and Special Seats Positions	16
Factors Influencing Women Access Ward Council Elected and Special Seats Positions	19
Socio-cultural and Political Related Challenges that Limit Women's Effective Participation at the Ward Council	21
Proposed Modalities for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment at the Ward Council in Ngara District	22
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>25</b>

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1:</b> Ward Councillors' Contestants and Elected in the 2010, 2015 and 2020 General Elections by Sex in Tanzania	<b>9</b>
<b>Figure 2:</b> Ward Councillors' Candidates and Elected in the different Six Elections by Sex in Ngara District Council	<b>9</b>

## List of Tables

<b>Table 1:</b> Respondents Involved in IDIs by Sex and Category	<b>14</b>
<b>Table 2:</b> Respondents Involved in FDGs by Sex and Groups per Category	<b>14</b>
<b>Table 3:</b> Respondents Involved in Vignettes (story telling) by Sex and Category	<b>15</b>
<b>Table 4:</b> Respondents Involved in the Study by Sex and Category	<b>16</b>

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

AU	African Union
BDPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CCM	Chama cha Mapinduzi
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination and Discrimination Against Women
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DAS	District Administrative Secretary
EGBV	Electoral Gender-Based Violence
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GoT	Government of Tanzania
ICLD	Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy
IDIs	In-depth Interviews
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
NEC	National Electoral Commission
PWDs	People with Disabilities
RAS	Regional Administrative Secretary
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UDSM	University of Dar es Salaam
URT	United Republic of Tanzania
WC	Ward Council; Ward Councillorship
WCs	Ward Councillors
WDC	Ward Development Committee

## Abstract

This action research project aimed at understanding the factors obstructing and enabling participation of women in the Ward Councils of Ngara, and design a policy intervention. The study employed qualitative methods including interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews. Following empowerment theory, it reveals socio-economic, socio-cultural, and institutional factors hindering women's participation, such as financial difficulties, lack of political knowledge, social norms and stereotypes. It also identifies individual, community, and institutional factors that positively influence women's access to ward council positions, such as grassroots leadership experience, support from other women, mindset changes, and reduced gender stereotypes. The study emphasized the importance of quotas in enhancing women's representation but reviews the factors obstructing equal influence. Overcoming these challenges is concluded as crucial for women to have an equal voice, access resources, and shape development plans, policies, and strategies. It highlights the need for women's empowerment, resource sharing, and civil society support, and recommends additional leadership positions for women, coalition building, addressing gender-based violence, and promoting gender equality in nominations. The study concludes with targeted recommendations for local government, political parties, civil society and community members to promote gender equality and effective women's participation in decision-making bodies.

## Acknowledgments

We acknowledge the support from the Swedish International Centre for Democracy (ICLD) for funding this research. Our gratitude also goes to the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), Kagera Regional and Ngara District Councils officials for providing the research clearance to conduct the research. We are also thankful to all research assistants and respondents who contributed to this research.



## Preface



**By Johan Lilja, Secretary General, Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy**

The mission of the Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD) is to contribute to poverty reduction by promoting local democracy. In order to fulfil this, we promote and encourage decentralised cooperation through municipal partnerships programme; adding capacity-building through our international training programmes; and investing in relevant research and creating important research networks. ICLD documents and publishes key lessons learned from our ongoing activities, initiates and funds relevant research, engages in scholarly networks, connects relevant researchers with practitioners, and organises conferences and workshops. We also maintain a publications series. 'Women's political representation and effective participation in Ngara, Tanzania' is the 26th report to be published in ICLD's Research Reports series. It is the result of an "Impact research grant" – an innovative approach to research that starts from the policy end.

Following the request from Ngara District Council to investigate the barriers to women's political participation in its wards, this project set out to study obstacles and enablers in a manner that involved the community to directly address them. Lack of votes appears unrelated to the individual's opinions and politics, but to qualities associated with her gender. The report elucidates nuances of a quota system when both institutional and socio-cultural factors stand in the way of respect and participation on equal terms. It digs deep into the view on women's political participation in a particular district in Tanzania, allowing perceptions and community voices to surface. We understand grassroots perspectives, but also get an idea of how a

gender studies research team in Dar es-Salaam understand and tackle the problems raised.

This is an endeavor to connect research and practise by starting from expressed policy needs. My genuine opinion is, to fight poverty and reach the ambitious goals set out by Agenda 2030, change must be anchored at the local level through data-driven, community-based improvements in means of transparency, participation, and accountability. At ICLD we will continue to support local governments to be brave enough ask complex questions, to learn, and to fill the gaps identified. I hope that this research has inspired and informed the local policymakers to act even more toward making the world a better place for all.

Visby, Sweden, June 2023

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Johan Lilja', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Johan Lilja  
Secretary General, ICLD

## Introduction

This study is part of an action research project<sup>1</sup> which contributes to the ongoing debates on the contribution which an augmentation of women's representation and participation makes in local governance. The study argues that women's representation in local governance and decision-making is a human right concern. Given that women's diverse needs are different from men's, their absence leads to undemocratic policy-making hence ineffective governance that hinders inclusive sustainable development. This knowledge prompted the researchers to investigate how women's representation ensures women's participation and what impact is brought by such a connection in the local government. This report is divided into five sections. Section one presents the introduction and research objectives. Section two presents the literature review and section three, the methodology. The fourth section presents the study findings and discussions while the last section makes recommendations and conclusion.

## Research Objectives

This research project was guided by the following four objectives:

- I. To identify factors positively influencing women's to access Ward Council elected and special seats positions;
- II. To assess factors limiting women's access to Ward Council elected and special seats positions;
- III. To locate socio-cultural and political challenges that limit effectiveness of women's participation at the Ward Council;
- IV. To propose modalities for gender equality and women empowerment at the Ward Council.

## Lessons Learnt

This study illustrates that the major barrier for women's representation is their willingness to contest for WC elected seats influenced by powerful threat emanating from socio-cultural stereotypes that define women as incapable and not fit for such positions. Similar obstructions also undermine the women who access the Ward Council (WC) through special seats despite that such an access is legitimate. Coupled with the patriarchal tendencies and socialization process women become more disinclined to access leadership positions. To overcome such deep-rooted challenges there is a need to mentor and coach current women WC members so that they impart similar knowledge to other women at the local government level. In addition, there is a need to strengthen quota ("special seats") in other local government leadership positions like chairpersonship so that more women become politically empowered for role modelling. Additionally, there is a need to build a women's political network of all women WC members (nationally) for cooperation, exposure and eliminating stereotypes.



A cross section of participants during the dissemination workshop on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 in Ngara District (Photo: Timotheo B. Sodoka)

<sup>1</sup> The study which informs this report was conducted in Ngara District Council in Kagera Region, Tanzania. It was supported by the Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD) and conducted by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) from October to December, 2022, following a Local Democracy Lab where Ngara had requested researchers' input on barriers to women's participation. This research project was informed with the theme "Wanawake katika Uongozi ni Chachu ya Maendelea Jumuishi: Acha Ndoto Zao Zitimie", in English "Women in Leadership is a Catalyst for Inclusive Development: Let their Dreams be Fulfilled". The research project produced three significant outputs, a research report, half day dissemination workshop and a one-day training to anticipated and current women Ward and Village Councillors. A total of 26 women were trained out of the 30 expected. The training was guided by the findings of this study and the UN Women Training Manual for Women Political Leadership (2019).



## Literature Review

### Situation of Women's Representation in Local Government

Women account for over half of the population world-wide and in Tanzania, in particular, yet they continue to be under-represented in decision-making bodies particularly at the local government level (MENA-OECD, 2018; IDEA, 2021). Women occupy only 36% of the world's local government level leadership positions (UN Women, 2021). According to UNSD (2020), out of 133 countries globally, there are only two countries where women occupy 50% of seats, while only in 18 countries the number stands at 40% and above in the local government. Globally, the regional variations for women's representation in local government decision-making bodies Central and Southern Asia stand at 41%; Europe and Northern America 35%; Oceania 32%; Sub-Saharan Africa 29%; Eastern and Southern Asia 25%; Latin America and the Caribbean 25%; while Western Asia and Northern Africa at 18% (UNSD, 2020).

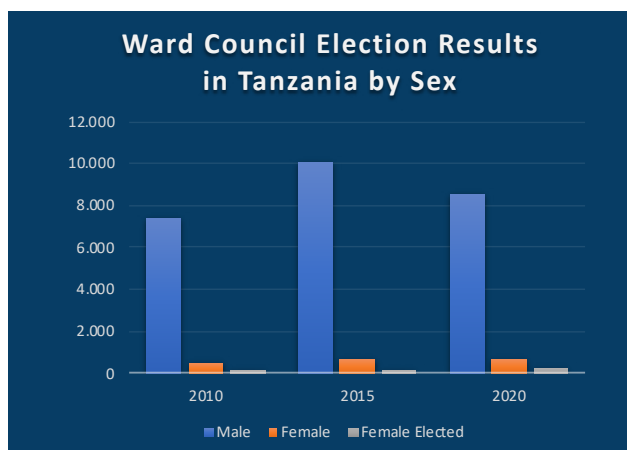
In Tanzania, women are under-represented at the local government elected positions (NEC, 2011; 2016; 2021a; Mtasingwa, 2018). Looking at the WC contestants' trends within three elections from 2010 to 2020 (Figure 1) women contestants were few standing below 8% (Figure 1). In addition, the elected women to WC was also very low: 2.01% in 2010; 5% in 2015; and, only

6.58% in 2020 (Figure 1). The trend shows a negligible improvement.

In 2019 and 2020, women's leadership statistics in the local government was as follows: 29.4% of Ward Councillors with only 6.5 elected; 2.1% Village Chairpersons; 12.6% Neighborhoods (Mitaa) Chairperson; while 6.7% for Hamlet (Vitongoji) Chairpersons (URT 2019; NEC 2021b).

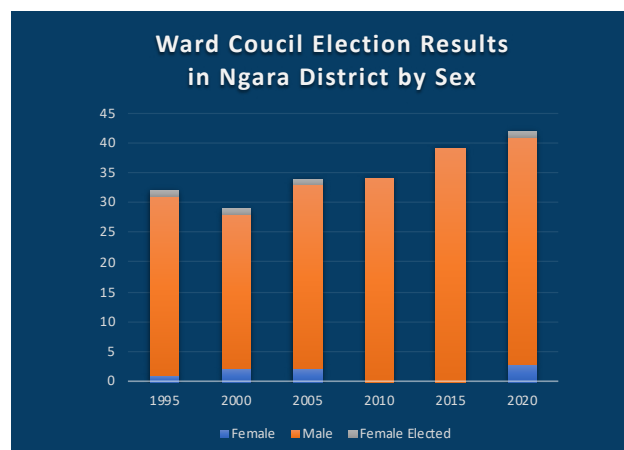
In Ngara District, out of the 22 elected Ward Councillors (WCs), nine are women (Ngara District Council, 2022). Out of the nine women WCs, eight passed through special seats and 1 (4.5%) elected to represent a Ward (Figure 2). The trend of women contestants and elected at the WC from 1995 to 2020, the year when multi party politics was constitutionalized is also unsatisfactory. In 1995 out of 31 candidates, one was a woman. 19 men and 1 (5%) woman was elected. In 2000 there were 28 WC candidates, 26 men and 2 women. Again 19 men and 1 (5%) woman were elected. In 2005 of the 33 WC candidates 31 were men and two women. 19 men and 1 woman were elected. However, within two years, 2010 and 2015 no woman contested for any WC elected position. Yet, in 2020 three women contested against 38 men and 1 was elected. According to Figures 1 and 2 there is a slow increase of women WCs' candidates as well as elected despite the government initiatives.

Figure 1: Ward Councillors' Contestants and Elected in the 2010, 2015 and 2020 General Elections by Sex in Tanzania



Source: (NEC, 2011; 2016; 2021b)

Figure 2: Ward Councillors' Candidates and Elected in the different Six Elections by Sex in Ngara District Council



Source: Ngara District Council (2010; 2015; 2020)

The United Republic of Tanzania (URT) is a signatory to various International and Regional instruments that ensure gender equality in decision-making, including the Convention on the Elimination and Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA), SDGs, African Union (AU) Protocol to the African Charter on Human Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (2008) and many others. Acceding to these instruments the URT has taken several initiatives to ensure gender equality in representation and participation in different sectors particularly in political institutions. The commendable initiative is the three times Constitution amendment (i.e. in 1995, 2000 and 2005) to cater for the quota system for women for the local government political positions. Such a situation shows that the URT Constitution (1977) amendment to cater for special seats has been very significant for women to access local government leadership positions. However, the challenge is that women access special seats more than elected seats. It is now perceived that the quota or special seat system is the only entry for women while elected seats are for men. Such a situation obstructs women from accessing other leadership positions which do not provide for special seats.

In addressing electoral gender-based violence in connection with the electoral process (henceforth also referred to as electoral gender-based violence, or EGBV), the URT has put in place different acts such as the 1985 National Election Act, the 1998 Special Sexual Offences Special Act (SOSPA), the 2007 Prevention and Combating of Corruption Act (PCCA), the 2000 Women and Gender Development Policy and the National Strategy for Community Sensitization to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence in Tanzania-2012-2016 (IRI, 2015). The National Electoral Commission (NEC) and the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties also have mandate to regulate the political parties and elections. According to Article 2.2 (a-b) of the Electoral Code of Conduct political parties are prohibited to conduct any form of violence or discrimination against one's gender, race and persons with disabilities (PWDs) (NEC, 2020). Different civil society organisations also have been taking a lead to condemn any EGBV through campaign,

monitoring of Elections. A good example is during the 2015 URT General Election, UN-Women and T-WCP conducted a cross-country observation on EGBV (TWCP, 2016).

## **Women's Representation and Participation in Local Government: Critical for Democratic Policy-making**

Women's representation and participation in governance and decision-making is vital for democratic policy making (Phillips, 1995; IDEA, 2021; Anderson-Nilsson & Clayton, 2021). This follows the diversity of men's and women's interests, needs, experiences and priorities which when overlooked lead some to benefit and others disadvantaged. As observed by different scholars, women's priorities are more connected on their traditional reproductive roles like healthcare, and to poverty, compared to men whose priorities are related to their traditional productive roles such as agriculture, employment and military (Schwindt-Bayer, 2006, Kittilson 2008, Miller 2008, Swiss et al., 2012, Gottlieb et al., 2018, Clayton et al., 2019 as cited in Clayton, 2021). According to Allen & Cutts (2018) and others (see Weeks, 2019; Fernandez & Valiente, 2021; Clayton, 2021), the presence of women in decision-making bodies has increased the attention of social justice topics such as gender-based discrimination. With such a diversity of needs, interests, experiences and priorities which are linked to gender roles emanating from the socialisation processes, the society therefore links it to masculine and feminine tendencies. Given that women's issues are linked to reproductive roles they are perceived by the society as inferior needs, making women stereotyped as weak leaders. While for men whose needs are related to productive roles, they are stereotyped as superior, hence perceived as strong leaders. Such stereotypical attitudes influence the under-representation of women such that when they contest, they are not voted for. As Huddy & Terkildsen (1993) in Anderson-Nilsson and Clayton (2021) argue, in comparing men and women leadership competency, men have been viewed as competent by voters. The socio-cultural attitudes and traditional beliefs particularly in rural areas continue to undermine women's leadership roles (Mlambo & Kapingura,

2019). Such a stereotyped perception makes the community to underestimate women's performance although they might be doing better or equally to men (Heilman, 2012 as cited in Anderson-Nilsson and Clayton, 2021).

Given that the majority of women are closer to the local councils exercising their daily reproductive and productive roles at that level, such an area becomes very significant for women to be among the representatives so that they articulate and oversee the implementation of the local councils' policies in relation to their needs. In that sense, women's representation and participation in the local government is significant for advancing women's needs and for localising the international and regional instruments such as the BPfA, CEDAW, SDGs and SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

In Tanzania, the Ward Council exercises its functions through the Ward Development Committee (WDC). Section 32(1) of the Local Government (District Authorities) Act (URT, 1982: 22) specifies five functions of the Ward Development Committee namely: (a) promoting the establishment and development of cooperative enterprises and activities within the Ward; (b) the initiation or formulation of any task, venture or enterprise designed to ensure the welfare and well-being of the residents of the ward; (c) the supervision and co-ordination of the implementation of projects and programmes of the District Council within the Ward; (d) planning and coordinating the activities of, and rendering assistance and advice to the residents of the ward engaged in any activity or industry of any kind; (e) the formulation, and submission to the Village Councils or to the District Council, of proposals for the making of by-laws in relation to the affairs of the Ward. Taking an example of Ngara District Council the Ward Development Committee is formed by all the 30 (21 male and 9 females) WCs, elected and special seats and the District Director. The WDC is chaired by a WC who is voted for by the members, while the Secretary is the District Director. The WDC is made up of four sub-committees namely: HIV and AIDS Control Committee; Education and Health Committee; Planning, infrastructure and Economy Committee; and, Ethics Committee. The chairperson of the sub-committees is voted for by the members. All the four committees have

been chaired by men. In addition, the WDC has also been chaired by a man. Such a situation lessens women's ability and morale to influence women's needs in such an arena leading to inequitable plans, budgets and policies (IDIs, Ngara; Dec. 2022). As Sobolewska et al. (2018) argue, women's representation ensures for their needs to be advanced in decision-making, therefore integrated in policies. In that regard, gender equality in representation and participation in local councils influences equitable policy outcomes. However, the monopolisation of men in local councils hampers women's ability to articulate their rights and challenging the male chauvinism (Valdini, 2019; Mtasingwa, 2022).

## Obstacles to Women's Representation and Participation in Local Government

Several factors have been identified for the under-representation of women and their ineffective participation in local governance and decision-making. These include: election violence (Para-Mallam, 2015 as cited in Mlambo & Kapingura, 2019); social identity and acceptance; gender stereotypes, socio-economic development and discriminatory political systems (Meena et al., 2017; Ilesanmi, 2018; Eliona, 2018; Afolabi, 2019; Mlambo & Kapingura, 2019; George, et al., 2020; IDEA, 2021); patriarchal structures in politics (Meena et al., 2017; Eliona, 2018; Orisadare, 2019; IDEA, 2021); limited time, socialisation, lack of motivation and confidence, lack of female role models (Koda, 2004; Meena, 2004; Eniola, 2018; IDEA, 2021); family responsibilities, social norms, cultural and religious inhibitions (Eniola, 2018; Mtasingwa, 2018); unfamiliarity with electoral laws (Mtasingwa, 2018; Eliona, 2018; IDEA, 2021); women's economic dependence and financial difficulties (Mtasingwa, 2018; Mlambo & Kapingura, 2019) and party politics and political systems (Mlambo & Kapingura, 2019). It has been noted that many political parties lack a well-organized system in nominating candidates and selecting special seats for women aspirants. Given the patriarchal domination, the political party system is not women friendly (Killian, 1996; Meena, 2004; Mlambo and Kapingura, 2019; George, et al., 2020). Killian (1996; WILDAF, 2020) also revealed that given the male domination in political parties, women are limited to influence the

nomination of contestants. Such conditions make women susceptible not to be selected to contest for leadership positions despite having the needed qualifications. In that regard, the selection of contestants has been dominated by the know who rather than know-how.

The Tanzania Political Party Act Section 9 (1c) states that; No political party shall qualify for provisional registration unless: its membership is voluntary and open to all the citizens of the United Republic without discrimination on account of gender, religious belief, race, tribe, ethnic origin, profession or occupation (URT, 2015). Yet, it is not clear on the enforcement of gender consideration and affirmative measures for women given their vulnerabilities as members and candidates. According to WiLDAF, (2020) out of the five political parties' constitutions namely: Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA), Civic United Front (CUF), Alliance for Change and Transparency (ACT-Wazalendo) and National Convention for Construction and Reform (NCCR-Mageuzi), no constitution is clear on how men and women are assured nomination chances as candidates. In addition, no constitution has specified any special consideration for women to access candidature (Ibid, 2020). In that sense given the male dominance and patriarchal behaviours in such political parties there is no assurance that at least a critical mass (i.e. 30%) of women will be nominated to contest for leadership position at Local and National government levels. In addition, while all the five political parties have women wings but such wings have minimal power in selection of top parties' leaders (WiLDAF, 2020).

In relation to electoral gender-based violence (EGBV) practices, all the constitutions lack specific sections explaining on how they will address such acts despite the fact their manifestos are clear on human rights, non-discrimination and equality of all human beings (WiLDAF, 2020). Such a mismatch of the two significant documents makes it difficult to address the continued EGBV making women who are more susceptible not to take part efficiently during the electoral process thus limiting their democratic rights as enshrined in the URT constitution.

## Mechanisms for Strengthening Women's Representation and Participation

The under-representation of women in local government requires multiple responses. The significant response is empowerment of women to challenge the traditional beliefs and the socio-cultural attitudes that influence the stereotyped perceptions of superiority of men and the subordination of women. Such socio-cultural perceptions coupled with patriarchal stereotyping facilitates their vulnerability in accessing political leadership positions. In addition, given that the majority of women WCs in Tanzania get their positions through the quota or special seats they continue to face attitudinal barriers because such seats are undervalued despite being constitutional. Empowering women financially and politically is essential in realising gender equality in representation and participation. The BPfA (1995) recommendation of empowering women to access political positions towards promoting equal opportunity between the sexes which is supported by the SDGs-goal five (2015) continue to be valid. According to UNFPA, (2008; UNDP, 2007; Bayeh, 2016), women's empowerment is significant to achieving inclusive sustainable development and the realisation of human rights for all. According to Moser's (1989) empowerment increases women's capability in addressing their felt needs and challenging socio-cultural barriers that shape gender stereotypes which mask their confidence and capability.



Women Ward and Village Councillors during women's political leadership training - February 10, 2023, Ngara District (Photo: Lilian Mtasingwa)



## Theoretical Framework: Empowerment Theory

The proponents of critical mass theory proposed an increase to a threshold in representation to addressing the persisting gender gap through affirmative measures (Kanter, 1977; Dahlerup, 1988; 2006) for a democratic governance (Phillips, 1995; Ilesanmi, 2018; IDEA, 2021; Clayton 2021). In that regard, global measures taken for the augmentation of women in national and local governments was the endorsement of quota system. However, in Tanzania given the male domination and patriarchal tendencies in governance women's effective participation is still obstructed (Mtasingwa, 2022). In addition, provided that the quota system is not recommended in all local government leadership positions, women's access to elected positions remains a challenge (Mtasingwa, 2022). Such a situation limits the achievements of the endorsed global, regional and national frameworks that ensures for gender equality and women's rights. Subsequently, empowerment approach is significant for realising women's political participation (Kabeer, 2012; Mechkova et al., 2021; Mtasingwa, 2022).

Perkins and Zimmerman (1995) argues that empowerment is a process and outcomes. They contend that, empowerment as process can be measured in three levels, at individual, organisational and community levels. At the individual level, the empowering process is observed through individuals' participation in community organisation. At community level the empowerment process is looked upon the guarantee of communal action to access government and community resources while at organisation level it is an assurance of shared decision makings and leadership. According to Perkins and Zimmerman (1995) empowered outcomes at the individual level is seen through specific perceived control and resource mobilization skills, at organisational level over organisational networks, growth and policy leverage while at community level on a sign of diversity, organisational partnerships and access of resources.

In that sense empowerment as a process and outcome denotes a situation where individuals and community members realise their rights and capable to make strate-

gic choices which were previously limited, while at the organisational level it is transforming structures, which influences discrimination to individuals and communities to exercises their rights to attain their determined goals (Kabeer, 1999; Friere, 2000; Raj et al., 2017). Kabeer's, (2012) argument is thus noteworthy that women's empowerment can be achieved by increasing their rights, resources, capacity to make decisions, dignity, choices, opportunities and power. Various scholars have observed the significance of empowering women as it leads to advancement of women's interests in policies, economic growth and improved healthcare outcomes (Duflo, 2012, Swiss et al., 2012, Clayton et al., 2019 as cited in Mechkova et al., 2021).

## Methodology

### Study Area

Ngara District Council is one of the eight District Councils in Kagera Region located in Tanzania covering an area of 3,744 square kilometres. It is bordered to the North by Karagwe District, to the East, Biharamulo District, to the South, Kigoma Region to the northeast by Muleba District and to the West by the two countries, Rwanda and Burundi. According to the 2012 Tanzania National Census, the population of Ngara District was 320,056 (i.e. 152,443 males and 167,613 females). Administratively, the District has one constituency, four Divisions, 22 Wards, 75 Villages and 389 Suburbs. The local language is Kihangaza although Kiswahili is much used for communication given the diversity of people coming from outside the District for business. English is more used in schools given the URT academic guidelines. The District depends on agriculture and livestock as the main economic activities. Agriculture is the main source of the District's economy contributing 94% of the District's income.

### Research Design and Approach

The study used an explorative research design with a qualitative approach to explore women's representation and meaningful participation at the Ward Council in

the Ngara District Council. Qualitative methods included in-depths interviews (IDIs), vignettes (short stories telling), focus group discussions (FGDs) and document/desk reviews.

## In-depth Interviews

A total of 40 IDIs were conducted from eight different categories (Table 1). The respondents' categories were selected to show the diversity of attitudes and perceptions in relation to women's representation and participation as WCs. All the interviews were conducted in Kiswahili and recorded.

## Focus Group Discussions

Accompanying the IDIs, four different FGDs with 6 to 7 participants were conducted, also in Kiswahili and recorded, making a total of 25 participants involved (Table 2).

## Vignettes (story telling)

Seven Vignettes (story telling sessions) were conducted; one was with an elected woman Ward Councillor, two were with women who contested for Ward Councillorship (WC) but did not win and four were women Ward Councillors through special seats (Table 3). All Vignettes were conducted in Kiswahili Language and recorded.

Table 1: Respondents Involved in IDIs by Sex and Category<sup>2</sup>

No.	Category	Female	Male	Total
1.	Special seats Women Ward Councillors	4		4
2.	Male Ward Councillors		3	3
3.	Men who contested for Ward Councillorship but did not win		2	2
4.	Political Party leaders (CCM, CHADEMA & NCCR)		3	3
5.	Religious leaders-Muslim, Catholic, AIC & KKKT		4	4
6.	Officials from NGOs		2	2
7.	People with Disabilities	2	2	4
8.	Community Members	7	11	18
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>40</b>

Source: Field Data (2022)

Table 2: Respondents Involved in FGDs by Sex and Groups per Category<sup>3</sup>

No.	Groups	Sex		Total
		Female	Male	
1.	Group one: Young men (20-25 years)		6	6
2.	Group two: Young women (20-25 years)	6		6
3.	Group three: Adult men and women (30+ years)	3	3	6
4.	Group four: Special seats women Ward Councillors	7		7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>25</b>

Source: Field Data (2022)

2 Each category in the findings section will be represented in relation to number on the table i.e. Category one will be IDI-C1 etc.

3 Each category in the findings section will be represented in relation to number on the table i.e. Category one will be FGD-C1 etc.



## Document Review

The researchers conducted a documentary review of associated scientific studies published and unpublished within the past ten years (2011-2021). The sources of information were identified by searching electronic databases through Google Scholar, web of science and other authentic academic sources. In addition, related unpublished reports from authentic web-pages were identified and reviewed. Hard copy documents were accessed through local government offices; research and academic libraries; political party offices; and, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) whose focus relate to the study.

## Data Analysis

The data from IDIS, FGDs and vignettes were transcribed, edited and coded in accordance to the research themes. The data was analysed through thematic analysis, where issues emerging from data obtained in relation to research objectives were structured. All similar coded information was then identified and organised in accordance to themes. The data from document reviews were qualitatively analysed guided by coding categories in relation to research themes. Then, the researcher continued by making judgements rationally on the research and emergent themes.

## Ethical Considerations

A research clearance letter was first obtained from the office of the Vice Chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) which was then sent to the Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS), Kagera Region. After the RAS's approval, the clearance letter was presented to the Ngara District Administrative Secretary (DAS) for research approval and commencement. During IDIs, FGDs and Vignettes all respondents were informed of the right to either agree or withdraw from the study. In addition, all respondents involved in the study were assured confidentiality and no names have been used in this report.

## Limitations of the Study

The major limitation noted during the field work research was that many of the respondents did not understand some of the questions raised and needed the researchers' clarifications. In addition, some of the Wards were far apart and more than 110 kilometers from Ngara town. Such a situation made it difficult and costly to bring together women Ward Councillors from different areas for FGDs. Despite of these limitations, almost 98% of the targeted respondents managed to be involved in this research.

Table 3: Respondents Involved in Vignettes (story telling) by Sex and Category<sup>4</sup>

No.	Groups	Sex		Total
		Female	Male	
1.	Woman Elected Ward Councillor	1		1
2.	Women who contested for WC but did not win	2		2
3.	WC Women special seat	4		4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>7</b>

Source: Field Data (2022)

<sup>4</sup> Each category in the findings section will be represented in relation to number on the table i.e. Category one will be Vignettes-C1 etc.

**Table 4: Respondents Involved in the Study by Sex and Category (N=65)**

No.	Category	Female	Male	Total
1.	Special Seats Women Ward Councillors	8		8
2.	Male Ward Councillors		3	3
3.	Men and women who contested for WC but did not win	2	2	4
4.	Political Party leaders (CCM, CHADEMA & NCCR)		3	3
5.	Religious leaders-Muslim, Catholic, AIC & KKKT		4	4
6.	Officials from NGOs		2	2
7.	People with Disabilities	2	2	4
8.	Community Members	7	11	18
9.	Elected woman WC	1		1
10.	Young people	6	6	12
11.	Adult men and women	3	3	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>65</b>

Source: Field Data (2022)

## Respondents Profile by Sex

This section provides a profile of respondents involved in the study with respect to sex. These variables are considered significant in interpreting the findings. This study involved a total of 65 respondents from 11 categories, (Table 4) who were involved in either IDIs, FGDs or Vignettes. However, the seven women from category one were involved in Vignettes, IDIs and FGDs. The category diversity was found important given the diverse perceptions in relation to women's representation and participation as Ward Councillors. However, sex representation within the categories was not equal, as males outnumbered females. This was not purposely made but it follows that many of the institutions involved in the study continue to be headed by men, for example; political parties, religious institutions and NGOs.

## Findings and Discussions

The findings identified diverse factors that limit women to access Ward Council elected and special seats, as well as factors positively influencing access. The result section begins with obstacles, which are grouped into socio-economic, socio-cultural, and institutional factors.

### Factors Limiting Women to Access WC Elected and Special Seats Position

#### Socio-economic factors

According to the FGDs and IDIs, financial difficulties were identified as a major barrier for the majority of women to access WC elected positions. It was argued that following the Tanzania environment when a person wants to contest for any leadership position, he or she needs money to campaign and reach voters. For that reason, given the women's financial situation, they have been unable to access nomination forms and even if they get money to take the nomination forms,

when they are nominated to contest for WC posts they have been unable to reach voters. This is due to the fact that a Ward has many scattered villages with large populations. It has been difficult for a poor woman to move around, do campaigns and reach voters. This has led most women to contest for village level leadership positions instead, given the small size of the population and the locale. In addition, it was noted that women contesting for special seats positions have been facing more difficulties given that they have to move around in all divisions, wards and villages within the district to campaign for votes. According to the findings, elected Ward Councillorship is very competitive due to the small number of Wards, but also it needs money to bribe voters and for conducting campaigns. Such a situation made women scared to contest for elected WC posts. However, a few female respondents said that they were supported by their husbands financially to reach voters especially when they had to visit Divisions and Villages located far away from their locale.

The findings also noted that many women possess less or lack political knowledge given that they spent much time in community and reproductive roles. In addition, it was noted that many women had little or no leadership experience as they had no time to be involved in community groups where they can become leaders, get exposure and capability. Additionally, it was observed that low education among women also made them lack skills which would have helped them inspire voters. This made them to feel incompetent and unconfident to stand in front of people to solicit votes as many people are eager to see the leaders who are experienced and independent. It was argued by some respondents that many women hesitate to contest for a WC position because of their shyness and feeling of incompetence. While others noted that this has been due to the community stereotyping that despise women. Hence, they stay behind fearing the community judgements even if they are capable.

## Socio-cultural factors

The findings disclosed that the majority of husbands have been prohibiting their wives from contesting for WC post. It was revealed by the majority of respondents that many husbands have been reluctant to support their wives who are eager to contest for political leadership. The study showed that many women who have been accessing political leadership are either divorced or widows. In that regard the study noted that the patriarchal systems continue to dominate at family level. The study also discovered that due to the stereotyped perceptions of women, emanating from the socialisation process, the majority of women have not been voting for fellow women. This is perceived as hatred but presumably stems from traditional beliefs and socio-cultural perceptions dominated by masculine characteristics that women are incapable to lead. When women contest for elected position, they get more votes from men than fellow women. One male respondent said:

*I don't know why women do not support fellow women. Last week I attended a meeting where a male WC gave us an example that they were once voting for a Deputy Chairperson during the Ward Development Committee (WDC), although one woman contested for such a position, she got only her vote. (male respondent, IDI-C8, Dec. 2022).*

The findings showed that erroneously women perceive that when women become leaders, they feel more superior and despise fellow women. However, the majority of women involved in the study noted jealousy as the main problem among themselves and they said that special seats women, for example, have not been cooperating with fellow elected woman representing a Ward. Furthermore, other respondents noted that such a situation is not only for women but also for men. It is more observed among women because they are still the minority in the decision-making bodies.

The study discovered that currently many women are capable but the majority of people, particularly men, experience jealousy and see women's political advance-

ment as a threat to their own political career. It was noted that after men had realized women's potential, they have been taking initiatives to pull them back, starting at family levels to the political realm. One respondent noted that men have been meeting in different informal fora to discuss on how to downgrade women. She added the observation that:

*When many women want to contest for WC posts, our husbands do not support us. When we take a step to force or divorce so that we contest for WC position during campaigns people particularly men, start to abuse us something that has been making us to lag behind. (female respondent, Vignettes-C3, Dec., 2022)*

In addition, one male respondent said that such a situation has been influenced by male chauvinism as they perceive that men are capable to lead and women who enter into politics go for sex work. Therefore, their households could not be managed in accordance with the family principles where the roles of a father and a mother are clearly observed (male respondent, IDI-C6, Dec. 2022). Such a perception therefore puts more women back as they are afraid to compromise their reputation and of their marital homes too.

Furthermore, respondents revealed that men and the community's perception on women to become leaders have been also making women unable to contest for leadership and those who do so have been unconfident and incapable to convince the community easily during campaigns as they are belittled. Moreover, one respondent said that such a situation emanated from the customs and traditions in such an area as people believed that a woman cannot stand and talk in front of many men. When she does so she is perceived as un-mannered. So, such perceptions continue today though outdated (male respondent, IDI-C5, Dec. 2022). In addition, such a situation made women in WC afraid to participate effectively in decision-making bodies as they do think of what will happen when they go home and what the community will say. Another notion that emanates from the community is that women are known as people working at home, taking care of their family and raising children.

Therefore, when it comes to leadership men think that they are the only one who are capable and can stand for the community.

In addition, the existing socio-cultural stereotypes make it more difficult for women to contest. It was revealed that the societal stereotypes on women, make women see themselves as incompetent for WC position.

*Being a woman who contested for elected WC position I experienced many challenges and did not even believe that I would win. I was abused during campaigns. Sometimes I did not even manage to campaign as when I started talking people shouted. I could not continue. The community despised me because of being a woman but when it came to articulating my agenda sometimes I did better than men (female respondent, Vignettes-C1, Dec. 2022).*

She added:

*What I learnt was to remain quiet when abused and to continue standing firm though it was not easy. But due to my work experience as a retired teacher who was committed, I won. The only thing I learnt is commitment and competence. When you are committed and you do all the work that you planned to do and show your competence without fear people will vote for you. I have become a role model to fellow women but in this community the patriarchal system is still dominant, women are despised (ibid).*

## Institutional factors

The FGDs and IDIs also noted that political party leadership continues to be dominated by men. A situation that made women to be discriminated against or not nominated to stand as contestants. The findings also observed sexual harassment in the electoral process that continue to limit women access WC post. Majority of respondents revealed that sexual harassment in the electoral process made men to obstruct their wives from contesting for WC position. Some respondents noted that women contesting for special seats have been promised to win if they agree to have sex with the political

party leaders (FGDs-C3, Dec. 2022). However, it was noted that not all women contesting for WC post either in elected or special seats were involved in sexual scandals. Yet, the few involved made people believe that all women who contest for WC position and other political leadership posts have been sexually abused.

Some respondents noted that during the nomination process you find names for women and men but when they go for final selections, men, are the ones nominated. The findings discovered that while women have been struggling to access WC post, they are still challenged by the political party system which is dominated by men who do not think of amending the constitution to be women friendly. The interviewed political party leaders however, said that the electoral process is not discriminating any person, men and women are given the same opportunities. The only thing they said was that in areas where people still despise women, they do not nominate women to contest as they would increase the chance of losing the seat and they would need extra effort to campaign for them. Other respondents noted that with multi-party politics in the country women have greater chance to be nominated. Despite indications that special seats is a mechanism that has enabled women to access WC, councillors holding special seats are not valued equally to elected ones. Altogether, this shows a situation that discourages many women to contest for such seats and other local government leadership positions.

## Factors positively influencing women's access to Ward Council elected and special seats positions

The findings revealed individual, community and institutional factors that drive women's access to Ward councilorship (WC).

### Individual factors

Women WCs perceived that experience from village councils, school committees, and women's wings of political parties enabled them to contest. However, it was noted that the majority of these women occupy special

seats, while access to the elected WC seats has additional challenges. Other women respondents argued that they have been motivated by women in the WCs and also have been eager to learn political skills by contesting for WC post.

*I contested for WC position through special seats in 2010 and did not win, but through the election campaigns I learnt a lot and was able to contest again in 2020 and won (female respondent, ID-Is-C1, Dec. 2022).*

The findings also noted that many women have been motivated to contest for WC post by the salary. Many women are currently seeking income so they found the WC position an opportunity to reduce their financial dependence. In addition, the findings showed that after many women accessed WC position their life changed, hence inspired other women to contest for such positions.

Most women currently have primary education, which is one of the qualifications needed to contest for WC post. One respondent noted that illiteracy used to eliminate the possibility for women to contest for the WC. Now, many women have primary and even college education (Male respondent, IDI-C6, Dec. 2022). Respondents also note that after their children grow up and start going to school, women's reproductive roles decrease allowing them to start practising politics. The majority of women said that child rearing has been difficult to mix with politics. Political activities need the whole day, a week and even sometimes the whole month and involve travelling. Some argued that sometimes if they try to mix politics and child rearing, they end up in marital conflicts leading some to divorce.

The study further found out that the desire to advocate for transformation and address gender-based violence (GBV) was among the factors influencing their interest in the WC. It was revealed that the majority of women face discrimination at home and within the community. Such a situation made them contest for WC post so that they can advocate for changes. Accordingly, one female respondent had this to say:



*When my husband was a leader, I saw people coming to our house asking support for their children, but a bad thing I saw was that many parents who had more than one, say a boy and a girl, when they needed support, they were asking for support for their male children, and females were left out and the majority went to work as house maids, this made me think of contesting for WC post (Female respondent, Vignettes-C3, Dec. 2022).*

Another female respondent noted that, previously, women were not given a chance to contest for WC posts and even if it happened, were not given the opportunity even if she were capable.

*The patriarchal system dominated to an even greater extent, a situation that made me to think of engaging in politics and start encouraging women to change the system and have women to represent fellow women (Female respondent, IDI-C1, Dec. 2022).*

Another female respondent noted that for a long-time now women have not been listened to in local government offices. For example, when they fight with their husband and report to local government offices, women were not treated justly (IDI-C1, Dec. 2022). This motivated her to contest for WC position to help fellow women.

## Community factors

The identified community factors that positively influence women to access WC were manifold. The first identified was motivation from fellow women. The majority of respondents argued that many women, after realising that fellow women are the ones who will support them, have been convincing capable women to contest for WC position. When women engage in community activities is when their capability is manifested. This shows the strong association between community engagement and voter's awareness of the experience and capability of fellow women, hence a greater chance to entrust them with votes.

The second community factor identified was the community change of mindset, leading to voting for women when they contest for WC post. One respondent said that the community members are currently willing to vote for women when they contest as the majority of women who contested for WC post won, for example in the 2020 Elections (male respondent, IDI-C2, Dec. 2022). However, since the introduction of multiparty politics in Tanzania, only four women have managed to access elected WC in Ngara and it was during the 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2020 elections (see Figure 2). Several respondents said the presence of women in the WC has made a practical contribution for women and the community at large. The third community factor is the lessening of patriarchal stereotypes influenced by the increase of women leaders through special seats who also managed to show their strength (male respondent, IDI-C3, Dec. 2022).

The findings further revealed that women are more likely to access local government leadership positions when people perceive them as trustworthy, honest and hard workers. The majority of respondents perceived that women are not greedy and when they work, they think of standards and are eager to achieve their goals successfully. In addition, some respondents said that women are trustworthy even when they head the financial committees, it is difficult to experience corruption compared to men. One respondent noted that the majority of those involved in corruption scandals are men compared to women something that has currently motivated voters to vote for women when they contest (male respondent, IDI-C7, Dec. 2022). However, the female WCs noted that they have been neglected in financial committees. Men wanted to earn more given that the financial committee is responsible to supervise the community projects and those involved are paid allowances.

## Institutional factors

The quota or special seats system in Tanzania appears as the main institutional factor for enhancing women's representation. The findings noted that the special seat mechanism is perceived as a rescuer for women given that the patriarchal system continues to limit women from access to elected WC and other political leadership



posts. “In Ngara, if not special seats system, women would not have accessed WC posts” (female respondent, FGD-C3, Dec. 2022). Likely, it is similar countrywide as, to date, women hold only 6.58% of WC elected seats in Tanzania (Figure 1).

The findings also noted a political party willingness to provide space for women to access nomination forms and nominating women to contest for WC post. However, the majority of respondents argue that not all political parties are willing as some have been limiting women saying that they are not liked by the community following the gender stereotypes, so they would not be voted for. Yet, the few women who were given the opportunity were able to go through. “In 2020 three women were nominated by their political parties to contest for WC and one won” (male respondent, FGD-C3, Dec. 2022). Similarly, in 1995, 2000 and in 2005 women managed to contest for elected WC and were voted for though their number as contestants was very low compared to men’s (Figure 2).

## Socio-cultural and political challenges to women’s effective participation at the Ward Council

Even having acquired a WC position, the study noted socio-cultural and political challenges that continue to make women unable to participate *effectively*.

### Socio-cultural factors

The patriarchal system and gender stereotypes at family level, political party and in the community was found to obstruct women from articulating their voices. It was revealed that most women representatives have been afraid to present community issues, particularly gender-based violence, since when they return home, they find their husband already informed. Given that some of the husbands are perpetrators of GBV, they would perceive that their wives have been reporting them indirectly. Therefore, women have been reluctant to discuss GBV during meetings as it would have been perceived as accusing their husbands. Consequently, they might expe-

rience more violence and during elections they might not be supported. In addition, other respondents noted that because the majority of women WC are there through special seats, they are looked down upon. When one is a special seat WC no elected WC value you, respondents noted, even if you have an important issue to present. This has kept women silent.



Women Ward and Village Councillors deliberating on mechanism to fight gender inequality in electoral process during women’s political leadership training-February 10, 2023, Ngara District (Photo: Lilian Mtasingwa)

### Political factors

The study discovered that given the continued gender stereotypes which label on women as incompetent, unconfident and unaware of community and political issues, they have been unable to participate effectively thinking of how they would be judged. However, the majority of women involved in the study revealed that in spite of such a situation they have been taking different initiatives to make their voices heard. Some noted that when you talk you are not valued, when you remain silent again you are labelled as incapable and unconfident. Therefore, many women have decided to talk more rather than keep silent. The majority of women thought of raising their voice to maintain their reputation for future elections and for other women whom they inspire. However, the majority of women leaders said that their voice is raised more in community meetings rather than in WDCs. The majority of women leaders involved in the study said that they have been more engaging in the community through different activities and fora so that their competence is observed though still limited in the WC.

It was found that the majority of men have been pushing back women who are more vocal during meetings. It was noted that men have been using all means to push down women during meetings so that they feel inferior and incompetent for elected positions and if they contested would not be voted for. In addition, it was revealed that when women continue to participate effectively, they have been threatened as men think that their positions will be taken in future elections. However, some women leaders disclosed that given such a situation, they have been afraid to be effective as they felt that when their husbands would be informed, they would not permit them to re-contest. In addition, it would have been perceived as they have changed status and hence dominate their husbands. Additionally, the findings revealed that those women who accessed WC through sex have been unable to participate effectively as they felt that they are scorned at. The study revealed that sexual abuse made women to be ineffective participants as when it happens, whenever they try to challenge any issue they are not listened to and sometimes abused during meetings. Such a situation demeaned other women.

To demonstrate the devaluing of special seats women WCs, some respondents argued that when a special seat WC says something in a meeting, the elected WC shows despidal her by asking which ward she represents. One respondent said that *"sometimes we act freely, but such a situation made us complain as we were neglected although we are also constitutionally recognized leaders"* (Female respondent, IDI-C1, Dec. 2022). Another female special seat WC revealed that *"When you want to solve a problem within your Ward, you are first required to inform the elected WC of that Ward, so it makes us so despised"* (female respondent, IDI-C1, Dec. 2022).

However, the contribution of special seats WC have been noted by many respondents and continue to be significant in inspiring many women to access leadership positions regardless of the patriarchal system and community's stereotypes.

## Proposed Modalities for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment at the Ward Council in Ngara District

The findings revealed three significant areas to focus on in order to address all the challenges that limit gender equality and women's participation in Ngara District Council namely: addressing socio-cultural perceptions and patriarchal domination; empowering women WCs and strengthen the government's commitment to enhance gender equality and women's participation at all levels.

### Addressing socio-cultural perceptions and patriarchal domination

The study noted that in order to ensure gender equality and women's representation in WC there is a need to create awareness on gender issues so that people change their mind sets. This was noted by the majority of respondents who said that women have not been accessing WC because of the community stereotyped perceptions that they are incompetent and unconfident. However, this emanates from the customs and traditions that continue to perceive women as working in the reproductive and family spheres only. In addition, the community continue to think that only men can be leaders. Additionally, the majority of respondents revealed that it was the right time to address patriarchal domination as it continues to be the major hindrance to women, to access WC.



Women Ward and Village Councillors presentation during women's political leadership-February 10, 2023, Ngara District (Photo: Lilian Mtasingwa)

The majority of respondents said that the eradication of oppressive traditional beliefs and socio-cultural perceptions would enhance the change of mind set on women, hence vote for them. The findings revealed that in spite women being the majority population wise and as potential voters, but when a woman contests more often has been unsuccessful. In that regard, the findings noted that if women have to access WC post fellow women have to take a lead in supporting them during the electoral process. However, it was observed that, there is a need to sensitize women on the importance of having women representatives in the WC. This ensures that human rights issues like GBV, child violence can only be well articulated by women given that they are the main victims and share similar experiences and challenges. In addition, some respondents argued that given that women have been the victims of GBV and gender inequalities they are therefore in a better position to address such situations as men cannot do properly as they are the main perpetrators. However, with the change in social norms the few women who have been contesting for WC have been elected.

### Women's financial and leadership skills empowerment

According to the findings the majority of respondents saw the need of empowering women through seminars and workshops so that they learn new leadership skills. It was noted by many respondents that it is only capacity building for women that will make them access WC. In addition, other respondents said that women's leadership skills should start from primary school to make them more competent. In addition, the findings revealed that women have to be financially empowered so that they are able to access WC. The FGDs and IDIs revealed that women's self-awareness is also significant for them to be capable and eager to contest for WC. Additionally, majority of respondents argue that women's willingness to contest for WC would influence their capacity to advance women's needs during policy-making.

### Strengthen the government commitment to gender equality and women's political participation

The study revealed that even if the government has endorsed the quota or special seats system which have enhanced the women's representation, the government has to amend the mechanism to increase the percentage as well as to be practiced in other local government leadership positions like chairpersonship at hamlet, village and neighbourhood level. Such a reform would increase women representation in different local government organs to inspire more women to join politics. In addition, it will support the advancement of women's needs in different local councils. The findings also noted the importance of the government to effect the policies on eradicating electoral gender-based violence particularly sexual violence rather than shelving them. The findings discovered that many women have been reluctant to contest for WC following sexual abuse as they do not want to tarnish themselves and the family's reputation. Because of that many husbands have been reluctant to support their wives politically following sexual abuse. Therefore, urgent responses to address sexual abuse is noteworthy. Additionally, the findings revealed that there is a need for the government to increase its budget on women's capacity building and gender awareness to ensure the eradication of stereotyped socio-cultural norms and women's effective participation.



Women Ward and Village Councilors in a group discussion during a political leadership training-February 10, 2023, Ngara District (Photo: Lilian Mtasingwa)



## Conclusion

This study revealed that women experience multidimensional inequalities in accessing political representation and effecting the local government. The findings discovered that, women's attitudes and behaviours are still dominated by gender stereotypes emanating from the socialisation process, maintaining their vulnerability in accessing political leadership positions. The community still holds beliefs that women are meant for reproductive roles and thus incompetent in political leadership. The family continues to be dominated by men, who are the ones to give women consent to access WC posts. Furthermore, it is limiting that a person needs to be sponsored by a political party to contest for WC, as men dominate top leadership positions and nominate those they desire. Women do continue to access WC through special seats. However, their voices are not equally valued and therefore slow to challenge the status quo. Therefore, the quota needs to be paired with empowerment of women to realise gender equality and women's representation and effective participation in the Ward Council.

## Recommendations

Based on the identified barriers, drivers and challenges to representation and effective participation, this report proposes recommendations to different sets of actors in Ngara. Though this specifically targets Ngara, these recommendations are in all likelihood relevant to actors in different regions displaying similar contextual and cultural conditions.

### National and Local Governments

First, the government, as the main admittance of political parties needs to analyse political parties' Constitutions and inquire how they ensure gender equality and women inclusion. Second, given that most women work closer to the local levels of government, the government need to create more leadership spaces for women at all levels through an expanded quota system. Third, the local government should set aside a portion (proposedly 3-5%) of its annual budget for awareness-raising on gender issues and for women's training on political leadership. Fourth, the local government should educate elected WCs to recognize

the constitutionally equal value of special seats WC and sanction non-compliance.

### Political Parties

Firstly, political parties need to put in place effective affirmative measures to support women access political parties, local and national leadership positions. Secondly, they should make their constitutions explicit on how to address gender-based violence in the electoral process and provide assurance of working for gender equality in nomination of candidates at all leadership posts. Third, to take extra initiatives to motivate women to contest for elected leadership positions as through such positions their competence would be observed and valued hence changing the community mindset that women are for household chores and are also capable. Fourth, to ensure that 5 or 10% of their annual income are set for women's leadership training and financial support during Electoral process for nominated women candidatures.

### Civil Society Organisations

Civil society organisations (CSOs) need to support the government in reaching rural women for awareness creation, sensitisation and women's leadership trainings.

### Women in the community

Firstly, women at the local government level can create a platform to encourage and support each other to access elected leadership positions. This means that it is women who will make women access local government representation. Women are in a better position to present fellow women's needs given that to a large extent, despite significant diversity within the group, they share experiences, priorities and socio-cultural challenges. Secondly, politically interested women could create a coalition across political party affiliations and find appropriate mechanisms to empower themselves financially and capacity-wise.

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# **THE GLOBAL GOALS**

For Sustainable Development