



WHAT ACCOUNTS FOR WOMEN'S (IN) EQUITABLE CAREER PATHS IN THE KENYAN HEALTH SECTOR?

CONTEXT

In Kenya, Women in the health workforce face multiple barriers to career advancement, that are influenced by harmful gender norms which burden them with unpaid care work, discrimination and potentially prioritise and normalise men's careers and leadership.



To address the systemic barriers that hinder women's career advancement in Kenya's health workforce, stakeholders must implement and enforce gender equality policies that actively combat discrimination and promote equal opportunities for leadership roles. Additionally, fostering a supportive workplace culture with flexible working arrangements, comprehensive maternity benefits, and robust mentorship and capacity-building programs is essential. Encouraging family support systems that alleviate the burden of unpaid care work and challenging harmful gender norms that prioritize men's careers are critical steps toward creating a more inclusive and equitable work environment for women.

KEY INSIGHTS



- Family and parental obligations, including pregnancy and childbearing, hinder women from taking up certain job positions or furthering their education, limiting opportunities for career advancement and taking leadership positions
- Women with the required knowledge and skills, combined with certain personal attributes, are reportedly more likely to get leadership positions and advance in their careers. Personal attributes included self-discipline, determination, passion, commitment and ambition.
- Financial limitations prevent some women from advancing in their careers. Most reported having insufficient financial resources to further their own education and educate their children at the same time, which limited their career growth opportunities
- Lack of necessary equipment to do their jobs, poor transport to the workplace, lack of access to good schools for children, limited access to safe water and lack of suitable housing caused health workers to leave their jobs
- Nurses report that functioning legislative structures ensured a higher representation of national nurse leaders in policy development at all stages and helped to enforce gender balance



DID YOU KNOW...

Women comprise 70% of those working in health but hold only 25% of senior roles.