



A young Kenyan woman entrepreneur in her shop. Photo: Irene Angwenyi/USAID

KENYA

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

When women are economically empowered, they re-invest in their families and communities, producing a multiplier effect that spurs economic growth and contributes to global peace and stability. USAID's Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Initiative seeks to reach 50 million women in the developing world by 2025 through U.S. Government activities, private-public partnerships, and an innovative fund. The initiative aims to enhance opportunities for women to participate meaningfully in the economy and advance both prosperity and national security.

In the face of COVID-19, USAID's efforts to invest in and economically empower women is critical to Kenya's economic recovery. Kenyan women cannot prosper in the workplace, or succeed as entrepreneurs, until we break down the legal, policy, and social barriers that inhibit their full economic participation. While 80% of Kenyan women are engaged in smallholder farming, only 1% own land, access less than 10% of available credit, and access less than 1% of agriculture credit. USAID is addressing the barriers to women's full economic participation and is working to close the gender financing gap.

ACCELERATING WOMEN'S ACCESS TO FINANCE

The WEE Initiative is accelerating access to finance for women-owned enterprises. Through the Kenya Investment Mechanism (KIM) program, USAID is working with partner financial institutions to increase

lending to women entrepreneurs and to build an environment that focuses on women-centric financing solutions.

Through the WEE initiative, USAID's KIM program is:

- Accelerating new funding to women-owned businesses from commercial banks and alternative investors.
- Supporting commercial banks not just to adapt existing or introduce new women-focused products, but also to engender their staff and operations to enhance the focus on women lending.
- Developing a strong cadre of women-owned business advisors that support women-owned businesses.
- Identifying potential women-owned businesses and building their investment preparedness.

The program trains small and medium-sized women-owned businesses and women entrepreneurs who lack collateral on how to access cash flow-based long-term loans and on how to further develop their business skills to help their companies grow and thrive. KIM also works closely with the Government of Kenya, including the Ministry of Industrialization, Trade, and Enterprise Development, to improve the enabling environment for women entrepreneurs.

WEE PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

USAID supports the \$5 million WEE Microsoft Women's Digital Inclusion Partnership, which works to significantly increase the number of women around the world with internet coverage, by investing in locally owned and operated internet and communications technology companies serving rural areas in Kenya. USAID is also collaborating with UPS on a \$1.4 million program to help women in Kenya launch, fund, or scale their businesses through training and mentorship with American small and medium enterprises, through the Kenya Small Business Development Centers program.

RESULTS (2021)

- Mobilized over \$12 million in finance and investments for 20,000 women-owned businesses.
- Increased lending to women-owned businesses through our partner financial institutions – 72% of the loans disbursed last year by USAID's KIM program partners went to women-owned businesses.

BUDGET: \$3 million

DURATION: 2020– 2023

ACTIVITY LOCATIONS

Kenya

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

The Palladium Group

KEY PARTNERS

Private Sector (Business Advisory Service Providers, Financial Institutions, Women-owned Businesses)

Government of Kenya, Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and Enterprise Development

MISSION CONTACT

Benson Kimithi
Program Management Specialist
Tel: +254-20-363-2243
Email: bkimithi@usaid.gov

PARTNER CONTACT

Roger Bird,
Chief of Party
Email: InvestInKenya@thepalladiumgroup.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Email: usaidkea@usaid.gov
Website: www.usaid.gov/kenya
Facebook: USAIDKenya
Twitter: @USAIDKenya