



ICRW Africa 2024 Update

**Empowering
Women,
Transforming
Futures:** Research,
Action and Equity

From Africa Director



I am delighted to share some exciting news. The International Center for Research on Women is evolving into a network of affiliated Gender Centers of Excellence in Africa, Asia and the Americas. The Centres of Excellence will have operational and strategic autonomy, while aligning to ICRW's global mission, vision, values, strategy, brand, and policies.

This underscores ICRW's commitment to decentralize power and resources to the regions where our research and programs are based.

Our Nairobi office will serve as the Africa Regional Office, covering the entire continent, while the Uganda office will retain its status as a country office. The Africa Gender Center of

Excellence will play a pivotal role, serving as a multidisciplinary hub for African gender experts to conduct cutting-edge research. Additionally, it will function as a training and mentoring center, nurturing the next generation of gender researchers across the continent.

We have put in place a strong governance structure by establishing the [Africa Board](#). It is a robust, predominantly female board that brings diverse and strategic expertise to our work.

We are finalizing our Africa strategy to localize and adapt the global approach to address the continent's unique needs, culture, and context. We remain committed to promoting inclusion, equity, trust, sustainability, and

responsiveness to the diverse communities across the continent.

We are keen to place our research within the context of regional and national development priorities by disseminating evidence at well-timed moments to critical policy audiences and the public. We have developed an ICRW Africa communication strategy to facilitate the timely translation of evidence into action.

These changes align with our renewed commitment to non-extractive research and community engagement approaches. We are establishing research and program priorities that are anchored in local knowledge and are responsive to the aspirations of the communities we serve.

This commitment is particularly evident through our ongoing multi-stakeholder research agenda-setting exercise on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR),

as well as on enhancing women's economic security and inclusion in East Africa.

Much work lies ahead of us, but with our strong, grounded leadership, staff and expertise, the potential to deliver change has never been greater.

In the coming year, we will strengthen our partnership model to focus on fairness, inclusivity, equality, mutual respect and shared goals.

Join us in this journey of transformation and empowerment. We invite you to be part of shaping the future. With your support and partnership, we can make meaningful strides towards a more inclusive, equitable and empowered Africa.

All my best.

Evelyn Opondo



Institutionally, we are aligned on where we want to go. We are walking the walk, and we will continue to learn, unlearn and relearn until we get to our destination. That is our commitment.

ICRW BY THE NUMBERS



48

Years advancing gender equity and justice

2023-2026

The Strategic Plan restructuring ICRW into three Gender Centers of Excellence

30+ years

Extensive experience working in Africa to promote women's full participation in social and economic development

850+

Projects managed since founding in 1976

74

Countries worked in across Africa, Asia, Latin America, MENA and Eastern Europe

50+



Experts shaping global policies and practice through actionable insights and sharing knowledge

FACT FILE

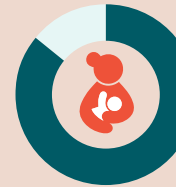
50.14%

of the population in Africa is women, with a life expectancy of 62.37 years in 2019 — WHO



40 billion hours

The duration of unpaid care work performed by women in Africa, according to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa



86%

of women in Africa work in the informal sector, according to ILO estimates



66%

of global maternal deaths are reported in sub-Saharan Africa. UNICEF estimates that 36% of women were aged 20-24 were married before turning 18

Where we work



ICRW Africa is the continent's leading center for afro-feminist research on gender equity for improved social, economic and health outcomes for women, girls and marginalised populations.

Selected Projects

Our team of economists, social demographers, behavioral scientists, anthropologists, sociologists, lawyers, and public health specialists, is working on four groundbreaking projects

1

Bold Initiative targets child sexual abuse across Africa

As part of our thematic work on SRHR, we are prioritizing efforts to end child sexual abuse (CSA) in Africa.

Supported by the OAK Foundation, this project aims to ensure that programs, policies and institutions seeking to end child sexual abuse in East Africa have the necessary evidence on what works and implement the most impactful policies and programs. [Learn](#) more.

2

Breaking gender inequality barriers for female youth in creative sector

The creative sector is tipped to be Africa's next goldmine, employing millions of young people and generating billions of dollars in revenue. Despite the sector's promise of prosperity, female creatives face systemic obstacles and gendered inequities that hinder their full participation. This three-year project, funded by Mastercard Foundation and spanning seven countries—Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal, Nigeria and Uganda – seeks to provide evidence and insights to drive policy and industry reforms to dismantle barriers and foster inclusion and empowerment for young female creatives across the industry. [Learn](#) more.

3

Social protection research and evidence use in Uganda and Kenya

This two-year project, funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, seeks to enhance understanding and implementation of effective social protection measures for women in Uganda and Kenya. **The overarching goal is to promote the design and delivery of social protection interventions that specifically cater to the needs of women in both countries** through evidence generation, multi-stakeholder engagement, and structural change. The research will provide insights to ensure that social protection measures in Kenya and Uganda build on evidence of what works, reflect the aspirations and needs of their anticipated beneficiaries, and are designed with effectiveness and inclusivity in mind. Ultimately, this should lead to improved access to social protection services, increased resilience to shocks, and enhanced livelihoods and wellbeing among women and other marginalized groups. [Learn](#) more.

4

Enhancing evidence-informed decision-making for improved childcare ecosystem in Kenya

This two-year project, supported by Co-Impact Philanthropic Funds Inc., addresses the critical need for evidence to improve the quality and accessibility of childcare services for marginalized women and households in Kenya, focusing on Nairobi, Kisumu, and Vihiga counties. With childcare services facing quality and accessibility challenges, especially among vulnerable households, this practitioner-driven initiative aims to bridge knowledge gaps regarding women-owned childcare enterprises. Through research and implementation, it will offer actionable solutions to enhance the operations of these enterprises and expand affordable childcare access for marginalized communities. [Learn](#) more.

Our Impact

Our work continues to inform policy and practice across sectors - government, public and industry

1

Pioneering study sets the base for understanding GBV on digital and online spaces

Our seminal work on Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) in Uganda and India in 2018 provided a working definition of and framework for understanding the concept of online violence and cyber-bullying. The study explored how gender mediates an individual's vulnerability to TFGBV, and how it is experienced across a spectrum of contexts globally. The findings have enabled key stakeholders — researchers, practitioners, governments, and tech titans alike — to craft strategic interventions for prevention, response, and mitigation.

[Learn](#) more.

2

Research spurs action to address gender inequality within the manufacturing sector in Kenya

In 2019-2020, ICRW-Africa carried out the first-ever research examining the status of women in Kenya's manufacturing sector.

Supported by the Business Advocacy Fund (BAF) and conducted in collaboration with the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), this pioneering study delivered crucial insights, demonstrating how our work informs policy and practice across sectors – government, public, and industry. As a direct outcome, KAM is actively exploring strategic alliances to establish a revolving fund to enhance women's access to credit and financing. Additionally, the association launched the uKAMilifu initiative, dedicated to promoting Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) best practices to advance sustainability efforts within the sector. [Learn](#) more.

3

Unveiling the gendered impact of COVID-19 policies on urban informal women workers

In 2020, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation supported ICRW Africa to undertake a policy research study in Uganda and Kenya to understand the impact of the national policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic on women workers employed in the urban informal sectors. The study examined the socio-economic and health effects of the policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic on informal women workers. Completed in 2023, the study provided a framework for government and donors to design effective and responsive social protection mechanisms for resilient and sustainable communities and economy. [Learn](#) more.



ICRW conducted a study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the informal economy in Uganda which recommended shifts in social protection. The Ministry heard you and is utilizing insights from the study in drafting a comprehensive strategy for the implementation of the 2015 Social Protection Policy.”

Onzoma Apollo, Assistant Commissioner, Labour and Industrial Relations – Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda.

Africa Board



Mette Kjaer Kinoti, Africa Board Chairperson, is a renowned international development expert and programme leader.



Prof Joachim Osur, Africa Board Member, is the Vice-Chancellor Amref International University, a medical doctor and a sexual health expert.



Yvonne Okwara, Africa Board Member, is an award-winning Kenyan broadcaster and a senior news anchor and business editor at Citizen TV.



Hellen Owiti, Africa Board Treasurer, is an experienced feminist, humanitarian and development practitioner with over 17 years' experience in high-impact programming.

Africa Board



Gwen Kinisu, Africa Board Member, is a change and strategy leader with extensive experience in the financial sector. She is the CEO of Prudential Kenya.



Phylis Wakiaga, Africa Board Secretary, is a renowned corporate leader and strategist. She's a Senior Advisor at the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change.



Nice Nailantei Leng'ete, Africa Board Member, is a multi-award winning youth and community organiser. The TIME listed her among the world's most influential 100 people in April 2018.



We believe in collaboration and amplifying African voices of change. Together, we can make meaningful strides towards a more inclusive and equitable empowered Africa.

Uganda Board



Dr. Fred Muhumuza, Uganda Board Member, is a renowned corporate leader with extensive experience in public policy, strategy, finance, and development. He was previously an Economic Advisor to the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in Uganda.



Moses Mulumba, Uganda Board Member, is the Executive Director of the Center for Health, Human Rights and Development. He has special interest in international human rights, global health and sexual reproductive health and rights.



Jacqueline Asiimwe, Uganda Board Member, is a Uganda and US-trained lawyer with extensive experience in policy research and analysis, lobbying, governance, and women's rights across civil society, government, and donor agencies. Jacqueline leads with compassion, empathy, and integrity.



Anne Nkutu, Uganda Board Member, is a multi-disciplinary social scientist with a passion for women and girls' rights. She has extensive experience in gender equality and social inclusion, and has supported efforts on feminist organizing, movement building and leadership development.

Senior Leadership

To meet the rest of our team, visit our [staff](#) page



Evelyne Opondo, Africa Director, is a skilled strategist, human rights, reproductive health and gender justice advocate with over two decades of practical experience working side by side with activists on the ground.



Dr. Chimaraoke Izugbara, Director Global Health, Youth and Development, is a leading international scholar and researcher on gender, youth, sexuality, and maternal, sexual, and reproductive health.



Josphat Njeru, Operations Director, is a seasoned finance and strategy leader. He is responsible for administration, financial management, business development, compliance and governance.



Deborah Nakisuyi is the Associate Director of Program Management and Operations based in Kampala, Uganda. She has extensive experience in project implementation, capacity building and managing change.



Marion Ouma is a Senior Research Scientist based in Nairobi, Kenya. She designs and leads research projects promoting women and youth economic opportunities and security.

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Our deep regional presence and a globally-connected network of researchers allows us to build bridges between those closest to the issues and those holding the most power to create change.



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