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# Can the Notion of ‘Transformative Thought Leadership’ Solidify Peace in Kenya?

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## Abstract

Although literature on *leadership* is saturated with schools of thought ranging from *essentialism*, *rationalism*, *critical theorists* to *constructionism*, however, none of these scholarships provide analysis on linkages between the notion of *transformative thought leadership* and gender equality as an integral part of political participation and peacebuilding processes. At a policy level, normative frameworks exist on inclusion of women in decision-making processes, yet participation of women remains ‘firsts’ and not ‘standard norm.’ In Kenya, although promulgation of the 2010 constitution marked a significant turning point for consolidating women’s participation in decision-making processes, representation of women in elective positions remains dismally at 19.7 per cent. Efforts by UN Women in a partnership with Kenyatta University to build a critical mass of women and youth leaders through the *African Centre for Transformative and Inclusive Leadership* (ACTIL) however, seem to experience *insolvency*, owing to several structural forces, including lack of shared vision among collaborating institutions.

**Keywords:** Transformative thought leadership, ACTIL, KEWOPA, peacebuilding, politics, Kenya.

## I. Introduction

This article provides an analysis of *Transformative Thought Leadership* idea within the framework of cooperation between international actors and local universities, as a mechanism of achieving women’s participation in politics and peacebuilding in Kenya. The case of the *African Centre for Transformative and Inclusive Leadership* (ACTIL), is utilized to uncover the potentials, challenges and future prospects for developing an Africa-based institutional mechanism for peacebuilding. ACTIL was established in 2014 as a path way for promoting women’s participation in politics and peacebuilding processes. ACTIL became one of the most influential frameworks in gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) towards increasing participation of women in politics. Transformative thought leadership is not a new idea, as it has informed thinking on how Africa should (dis) intricate itself from external dependence (Achieng, 2014). Its application to gender equality is however, premised on the understanding that participation of women in political

processes would contribute to peaceful democratic process and tranquility (Adejumobi, 2000).

The key contention of the transformative thought leadership is that ‘top-down’ leadership style, exercises personal power by a dominant few individuals as opposed to the power of collectivity. The latter characterizes women’s engagement in leadership and citizen’s participation in decision-making (Bombari et al., 2013). This conception concurs with Afrocentric scholars who argue that top-down approach to leadership only serves to promote capitalism, leading to domination and marginalization of other groups of people with limited influence (Gumede, 2015: 100; Kirk, 2009: 3-4). This model is established on understanding that women and girls are often excluded from politics and peacemaking processes (Angom, 2011).

In Kenya, for example, although the Constitution provides that membership of any gender in elective and appointive public bodies shall not be more than two thirds of either gender, but this provision remains in contention and thus has yet to be meaningfully operationalised. Women make only 19.7 per cent of the National Assembly and a mere 27 per cent of the Senate (Maloiy et al, 2016). The number of women represented within the ranks of political parties also falls below the legal threshold contained in the Political Parties Act (2011), which requires that one third of political parties’ office bearers be female. The low political participation of women, especially in the electoral process, has been attributed to lack of sustainable capacity building initiatives aimed at transforming the rather patriarchal mind-sets of both political leaders and electorates.<sup>i</sup>

Nothing limits women’s participation in politics and other peacebuilding process than cultural attitudes. On this note, leadership scholars have concluded that gender and political socialization patterns are so deeply embedded within these candidates that their agendas do not embody the priorities and issues that would increase Kenyan women’s substantive representation in Parliament (Bryman and Campo, 1996; Lawless and Fox, 1999). However, some of the challenges are endogenic to women ecosystem. In Kenya for instance, the fact that majority of female parliamentarians hold their seats as a result of the current top-up system, through nomination, their fellow peers view them as ineffective. Women become fixated to the internal party politics, hence, becoming reluctant to ‘fight’ for their fellow women. They instead, tend to be cautious, lacking the empowerment provided by an electoral mandate to pursue non-partisan beliefs and agendas. In part, this has hampered progress towards implementing the two thirds principle.<sup>ii</sup>

In the recent years, however, a more optimistic institutional development has occurred. The collaboration between the UN Women and Kenyatta University has led to formation of the *African Centre for Transformative and Inclusive Leadership* as an interlocutor for building capacities of women to harness their potential in promoting political participation, peace and tranquility in Kenya and across the region. In addition to this institutional development, UN Women also partners with the *Kenya Women’s Parliamentary Association* (KEWOPA) to deepen institutional approach to gender equality in political leadership.

The problem, however, is that such development conflates the symptoms of new dynamics of vicious cycle of external dependency and lack of strategy for ownership and sustainability. As demonstrated by this briefing, we need to critically examine whether or not this *transformative thought leadership* (TTL) model in building capacities of women in Kenya constitute a definitive break from long-term relationship of external material and intellectual dependency. This briefing aims

at interrogating the viability of ACTIL and KEWOPA as a means through which tenets of TTL can be infused to capacitate women in politics and peacebuilding processes. Section two anchors the analysis by building a conceptual framework based on concepts related to transformative thought leadership. Section three analyses challenges and opportunities that women face in politics and peacebuilding processes. Section four assess the viability of ACTIL and KEWOPA as an intervention towards addressing some of the challenges faced by women in politics and peacebuilding processes. The conclusion reflects over the future of ACTIL and KEWOPA by posing some thoughtful questions.

## II. Transformative Thought Leadership

The advancement of the idea of Transformative Thought Leadership was informed by the understanding that although Africa's economic growth was growing positively, this was being held back due to disproportionate representation of women in key decision-making processes. While policy makers continue to turn a 'blind eye' on the centrality of women in this progressive evolution of African economies, studies had indicated that unleashing the economic potential of the continent's women would yield even greater results for development (Bolden and Kirk, 2009). From the local to the global level, opportunities for women's leadership and political participation are restricted. Women are underrepresented as voters, as well as in elected or appointed positions, as parliamentarians, as ministers and as heads of state and/or government. This occurs despite their proven abilities as leaders and agents of change, and their rights to participate equally in governance and decision-making bodies. Women face several obstacles to participating in political life. One of the advocates of ACTIL had this to say,

*'To enhance women's resilience, there is need for a binary strategy that, on one hand, strengthens women's individual resilience and capitalizes on community resources to enable women and youth claim their rights and participate, more meaningfully, in development planning' (Personal Interview).<sup>iii</sup>*

Although these patterns are global in nature, there are important differences between regions and countries. For instance, it is important to recognize that the challenges and opportunities for women are driven in large part by the broader political context. Though the relationship is far from perfect, gender equality is strongly associated with a country's degree of democratic consolidation.<sup>iv</sup> Thus, an understanding of a nation's democratic trends is the starting point for defining leadership and political participation programming strategies.<sup>v</sup> On this note one of the proponents of ACTIL, reiterated that,

*'Africa as a continent needs a caliber of leaders at all levels that will make decisions, formulate policies and run national development that will accelerate growth and development with equity. In building this caliber of leaders, there must be equal representation of women in politics, government and civil society. Such leaders must be fully equipped with the knowledge, skills, competencies and support system to bring practical solutions to their communities, countries and continent' (Personal Interview).*

The current state of democratic governance in the world is a matter of concern. Scholars like Larry Diamond bemoan a period of “democratic decline,” pointing to 27 democratic “breakdowns” between 2000- 2015.<sup>vi</sup> Between 2006 and 2015, The Economist Intelligence Unit’s Democracy Index also registers a democratic downturn.<sup>vii</sup> Even scholars who dispute the “decline” perspective do so from a perspective that is just as gloomy. According to Levitsky and Way, for instance, the “backslider countries” were never democratic to begin with. Rather, since democratic gains in the 1990s were overstated, the widely touted “democratic rollback” is in fact an “authoritarian (re) consolidation.”<sup>viii</sup>

At present day, of the countries included in The Economist Democracy Index<sup>ix</sup>, democracies account for slightly less than half (79 of 168 or 48 per cent) of the world’s nations, while the rest (88 or 52 per cent) are classified as “authoritarian” or “flawed democracies.”<sup>x</sup> Contexts are dynamic however and a country’s classification may change from one year to the next. In fact, an important lesson of recent years has been the lack of a clear-cut democratic trajectory or irreversible pathway to consolidation. Rather, democratic progress in a country today may stall tomorrow or even veer back towards authoritarian rule.<sup>xi</sup> Furthermore, the prospect of violent conflict looms over many democratic transition processes, threatening to derail the development of solid institutions.

It is therefore evident that Transformative Thought Leadership as an idea is deeply connected to the women’s movement and struggle for gender equality. It is not possible however, to discuss all the various conceptions of transformative thought leadership (TTL) in this briefing. In this briefing, there are five ways in which TTL is perceived: 1) strategic framing; 2) thought liberation; 3) thought leadership; 4) critical consciousness; and 5) peacebuilding. Frames provide political and cultural shorthand that bring together a broad movement, constructing an umbrella that justifies a number of specific policies introduced by leaders who want to reshape the policy debate (Garrison, 2001: 776). Moreover, frames ‘diagnose the problem, evaluate; define the problem; offer and justify treatments and prescribe particular solutions (Entman, 1993). The idea of strategic framing has been particularly influential in the literature on social movements such as the women’s movement. Such movements are known to employ different approaches in highlighting their grievances, including, use of frames to disseminate ideas, mobilize support from policy makers and provoke policy change (Smith, 2002).

The second concept related to TTL is thought liberation. There is slim dividing line between the economic and political liberation movement in Africa. This is because the contemporary perspective of cause-effect relationship of liberation movement identify issues such as the need to increase attractiveness of African markets to foreign investors; positive and sustained rates of GDP growth, as well as productivity growth; developing new infrastructure projects; and the growth of a middle class with considerable consumptive capacity and potential political weight (Beresford, 2016). Of specific interest to political liberation is the struggle of a homogenous group of people (in this case women) to safeguard human security needs of its people (Cantwell, 2015).

The third concept is thought leadership. The fathom of thought leadership is characterized by four qualities: 1) ability to inspire other leadership; 2) they ignite imaginations; 3) explode old myth; and 4) illuminate paths to the future that others can follow (Butler, 2012). This implies that under the influence of such leaders institutions should depict radical departure from the norms or ‘business as usual’, instead, champion new ideas rather than anything to do with managing people (McCrimmon, 2005). Furthermore, TTL is egalitarian, non-hierarchical, and is not easily monopolized (Alhaddi, 2014a).

This means that, unlike traditional leadership that needs to exist for the life of the organization, TTL starts with the spark of a new idea and ends with the implementation readiness for the idea (Alhaddi, 2013b).

Fourth is critical consciousness. The link between critical consciousness and governance lies in the ability of thoughtful leaders to set the agenda and ensure that conducive conditions are set for its implementation and that citizens are free to provide checks and balances through existing accountability mechanisms. In his argument, Gumede (2015), asserts that there can be no thoughtful leadership if leaders are not trusted by citizens. This conception concurs with our argument in this briefing that critical consciousness lays the foundation for an Africa that is self driven and has a reputable and equal standing in global affairs. The integration and involvement of women, and youth to facilitate cohesion amongst African people is also a key aspect of African unity (Gumede, 2015).

Fifth and final concept is peacebuilding. Stephen Krasner and Carlos Pascual, defines peacebuilding as an 'external' interventions that are designed to prevent the eruption or return of armed conflict (Krasner and Pascual, 2005: 155). Its conceptual underpinning outside the UN system is not too far from what the then United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali defined it as '*action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict*' (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). Indeed, emphasis is usually laid on 'building support structures', 'laying down foundation for institutions to function' and adopting 'preventive' measures to curb any possible return to armed conflict in fragile states (Coate and Puchala, 1990:127).

There are three dimensions of peacebuilding (Barnett et al., 2007: 40) desire to reinforce stability and discourage the combatants from returning to war; 2) assisting to (re) build or restore key state functions that have the capacity to generate basic public goods and possess a modicum of legitimacy; 3) an attempt to transform not only the states but also society's ability to manage conflict peacefully and develop the socioeconomic infrastructure necessary to underpin transformational change. The third-dimension fits well in the mandate of ACTIL and KEWOPA with potential of contributing to transformational processes. Building organizational capacity of the two institutions will not only assure ownership of the outcome, but also sustainability by expanding investment entries and building knowledge hub for women's leadership. Indeed, scholars have echoed institutional capacity development as single most pillar for promoting gender equality at the same time building bridges between different communities, and more significantly increasing women's access to decision making opportunities (Parver and Wolf, 2008:60; Orjuelo, 2003; Bah, 2013: 315).

### III. Lessons For Gender Advocates

ACTIL and KEWOPA may feel at least partially vindicated by the fact that women's increased participation in decision-making positions, in the Kenyan government, has brought about some level of transformation and change and yielded tangible results in policy spaces. This is particularly the case with increased inclusion of women in departments such as defence and internal security, traditionally held by men. This marginal achievement in Kenya, however, confronts one important criticism of ACTIL and KEWOPA; that given their limited influence in the country's policy environment, such achievement cannot be directly attributed to their capacity building intervention. Indeed, our research on 'participation'

front highlights four important contradictions that continue to limit women's participation in politics and peacebuilding processes in Kenya.

### i. *Women's participation in politics*

Kenya lags behind its East African Community (EAC) counterparts in terms of gender equality with respect to women's participation in parliament. The country is currently ranked at position 75, under the World Classification of Women in National Parliaments.<sup>xii</sup> At present, the number of female parliamentarians stands at 19.7 per cent within the National Assembly and at 26.7 per cent within the Senate.<sup>xiii</sup> The positions of deputy speaker and deputy majority leader are held by women. Out of the 27 parliamentary committees within the National Assembly, only seven are chaired by women (25.9 per cent).

In regard to executive leadership, a third (six) of the 18 Cabinet Secretary posts in government are held by women.<sup>xiv</sup> At the time of writing this briefing, almost 30 per cent of the Principal Secretary seats are also occupied by women. In total, women occupy approximately 31 per cent of the seats in the entire Kenyan Cabinet. Significantly, women are also in charge of security matters, with Ambassador Raychelle Omamo holding the cabinet secretary post for Defence. Fatuma Ahmed became the first female brigadier in the history of the country in 2015, as a result of a recommendation from the Chair of the Kenya Defence Council, Rachel Omamo, who is also the Cabinet Secretary for Defence.<sup>xv</sup> Ambassador Monica Juma, is among the few women who have held the position of Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of Government. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is also led by a woman, Ambassador Amina Mohamed.<sup>xvi</sup>

In contrast, women's representation at the county level is also low. For instance, out of the current 47 county governors, none is female. Only 19.2 per cent of the deputy governors are female. Also, only 6.1 per cent of Members of the County Assembly and Councillors are female.<sup>xvii</sup> Indeed, out of a total of 1 450 persons who were directly elected as respective County Assembly Members, only 82 women were elected as members representing only 5 per cent of those directly elected. Based on these figures, there is clearly a need to encourage and support women to take up elective positions particularly within political parties, parliament and at the devolved levels of government within the counties.

### ii. *Women in peace-making processes*

Although women participate in mediation committees, lack of disaggregated data on women's representation in this peace negotiation platforms limits their significant contribution. This however, has not deterred women from playing central role in peacebuilding initiatives in the country. During the Kenyan post-election violence, women played a significant role as negotiators, mediators. Through inter-regional networks, the South African first lady Graca Machel was among the mediating team, as were two other women-Sally Kosgey and Martha Karua (both political protagonists in the conflict). Despite this anecdotes of participation, poor operational capacity for the gender desks in key administration of justice structures such as police across the country, lack the capacity and continuous training for gender officers. Such are opportunities for ACTIL and KEWOPA to leverage on their rich regional and global partnerships to train police officers key principles of gender equality on the adoption and implementation of UNSCR 1325 so as to ensure the inclusion and

participation of women in governance processes.<sup>xviii</sup>

### iii. *Women navigating through state-centric security approaches*

The state-centric approach to peace and security issues limits women from grass-root from participation in Kenya. Kenya has a system of local peace structures in the form of peace committees, but the participation of women in these and in peace processes is quite low. Their representation at the county level and sub-county level peace committees is mostly in supportive roles and few women hold leadership positions.<sup>xix</sup> An important role of the peace committees is to provide early warning and response to conflict and security matters, for instance providing alerts on activities around radicalism, small arms and light weapons, and the activities of gangs in their designated areas. The poor participation and representation of women in leadership positions in these important committees has been attributed largely to, among others, lack of confidence and capacity shortfalls in terms of skills training. The much-needed intervention towards building grass-root capacities is hampered by the fact that ACTIL and KEWOPA has taken an elite standing, hence, inability to gain entry in communities and collaborate with other community based organizations-this hints to clientele approach to leadership, more often practised through acts of patronages and manoeuvres (Miki Caul,1999). Studies have however, shown that women leaders rarely survive in an environment polarised by politics of machination (Chritensen and Utas, 2008).

### iv. *Women and security sector reform*

Security sector reform is a function of peacebuilding. Women are under-represented in Kenya's rule of law sector-police service with available figures estimating that out of the 73 000 members, only 11 per cent are women.<sup>xx</sup> Police reforms, which are still ongoing, are intended to address such gender imbalances through gender mainstreaming but the pace of reform is slow. The creation of women's networks in the Police Service has assisted women to organise, share experiences and articulate their concerns.<sup>xxi</sup> This network forms a perfect fit to benefit from ACTIL's network of coaches and mentors for transformative leadership development.<sup>xxii</sup> Women are quite fairly represented within certain positions in the justice sector. At the Supreme Court, women make up 28.8 per cent of the seven Supreme Court Justices.<sup>xxiii</sup> The Supreme Court has five male and two female judges, one of which is the deputy chief justice. In the Court of Appeal, female judges stand at 30.8 per cent; 40.7 per cent at the High Court, and at 44.7 per cent in the Magistrates Courts. The rapidly changing political environment in Kenya raises concerns on sustainability of this progress.

### v. ACTIL: Women's Leadership In Peacebuilding

The establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in July 2010, was part of the broader mandate and reform of the United Nations system (UN Women Coordination Division, 2015) to accelerate the UN's goals on gender equality and women's empowerment. As earlier noted in this briefing, the partnership between UN Women and Kenyatta University established the *African Centre for Transformative and Inclusive Leadership*. ACTIL's mission is anchored on principles of gender equality, 'To raise transformative leaders, particularly



women and youth, as agents of change for more equitable, accelerated and sustainable development in Africa, through capacity building, mentorship and transformative alliances.<sup>xxiv</sup> The location of ACTIL at Kenyatta University was well thought idea as it provides ready supply of future leaders among students and faculty members from the academic community. The later also form part of the resources for driving transformational processes-training, education and policy research. Moreover, the academic freedom engrained in a university environment provides vantage point for this partnership.

With support of global icons of capacity development (CD), such as the Israel based Mount Carmel International Training Centre (MCTC), ACTIL has continued to develop and implement training initiatives across sector; transformational leadership, agribusiness development, women's political leadership, conflict resolution and transformative extractives industry. Despite this potential partnership and opportunities for north-south exchanges, like, many other similar institutions in the global south, the ACTIL model is yet to establish systems approach to capacity building, which is pre-requisite ingredient in ensuring a cogent network of knowledgeable women leaders as a basis for operationalization of the mentorship and coaching modalities.

ACTIL represents a case example of capacity development-peacebuilding intersection. Scholars have described such intersection as source of sustainable peace, conditions for inclusivity and people-centered development (Hallward et al. 2016: 4). In this briefing, we postulate that foundations of thought leadership are pointers to the practical empowerment of the most vulnerable people in the society-women and girls. Although ACTIL model has set up initial structures to address this need through its on-line knowledge hub for coaching and mentorship initiative, developing an appetite and inventive for women and girls to sustain their networking remains insolvent. This notwithstanding, women and youth trained at the centre are (on ad hoc basis) able to share information, exchange leadership ideas and contributed to political engagement. An interview with one of the mentees from Uganda had this to say:

*"I am currently developing some online courses on agribusiness and outreach programmes for organizations and schools. I have started Alexijan Farms – a fish farm with 1,500 fingerlings and vegetable farm. My business growth has seen young people being employed to lead on farm management. Also through networks, we have been able to host the 1<sup>st</sup> National Youth Agricultural Festival in March 2015, and Farm Community Outreach in Mpape in April 2015" (Personal interview with Nnaemego Nkiruka Stella from Uganda).*

From this interview, it is clear that the concept of *TTL* as advocated by the ACTIL model and its relevance to women's salient contribution to stability is a subtle form of what this briefing refer to us '*peacebuilding from the roots.*' This is a typical example where when local people particularly women are capacitated they go beyond livelihood and survival to wealth creation by initiating income generating activities. Studies from West Africa and other post-conflict societies have revealed that *development diplomacy* works effectively within the African socio-cultural, economic and political context (Issifu, 2016: 145; Amanda, 2016:75). In northern Uganda, for example, violent conflict adversely affected economic livelihoods, including access to land and household resources and the exacerbation of poverty (Reinke, 2016: 83). Experiences from successive *cohorts* of trainees from the ACTIL model have demonstrated that opportunities available for



women are like '*dormant volcano*', they are capable of causing massive impact when triggered-thought leadership is therefore, the catalyzer for the anticipated transformational change.

Ethos and practice of thought leadership manifest themselves through various forms. Since its establishment in 2014, ACTIL's interaction with women leaders has generated appetite for innovative leadership. Trainees are assisted to discover for themselves the means and ways of identifying specific constraints and challenges they face in day to day life including power relations with their spouses on ownership of key production resources (land) and how that can be addressed and finally facilitate development and harmonious living. The case of Augustina who benefited from the ACTIL transformative training in 2014 operates from a remote location in Northern Volta region of Ghana. Although the region is rated as the most deprived of modern infrastructure such as bad roads (UNDP, 2012), the entrepreneur has navigated through such challenges to acquire more land to support the production of rice and maize and sustained trade. This is a demonstration of how ingredients of *TTL* could find their way deep into the minds of leaders. This confidence building process is critical for preparing women for political leadership as well as reconstructing societies previously ravaged by war.

Similarly, application of thought leadership through to peacebuilding processes through the ACTIL's model would require not only institutionalization of the concept, but also a conscious understanding that improvement begins with the admission that challenges are inevitable. The most effective *framing* for social change should therefore, aim at promoting cross-functional teams of women and other gender advocates that can be empowered to challenge the status quo and drive the change through a learning process-the ACTIL model provides such a platform. For example, the *Heforshe* campaign, being led by UN Women is typical example of how the ACTIL model could systematically configure, standardize and customized their transformational initiatives to different contexts and create advocacy for policy makers. In essence, transformative thought leadership ethos and practice goes beyond 'women' ecosystem to embrace inclusivity and stewardship in politics and peacebuilding processes.

The ACTIL model has focused on promoting women's sense of identity and political and economic empowerment, by providing specific skill sets. In partnership with UN Women and the MCTC-Israel, the centre has conducted training to more than 25 African states in diverse aspects of transformative leadership. The case of Zimbabwean members of parliament is implausible. After the 2008 general election, the country's political atmosphere was filled with rage and hatred. ACTIL and UN Women designed a course aimed at exposing participants to the tools and skills on resolving political tensions. MPs from both the African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) attended the training. This outcome of the training revealed attitude change-MPs from both side of the political divide were able to appreciate each other came to a common understanding that, as women MPs, they have common challenges. One of the alumni had this to say:

*'When we started the Level I training in Nyanga there was so much tension and we were shouting at each other and calling each other names. There was so much anger and the facilitator and UN Women staff had to constantly watch out for these dynamics. One day two women from different political parties nearly got out of hand; I almost thought they were going to engage in fist fighting. I am surprised that now we have gone beyond our political party*

*division and we are getting somewhere. I thank UN Women for bringing me to Kenyatta University' (Personal Interview).*

Another avenue for nurturing transformative thought leadership is through the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA). KEWOPA seek partnership with individual women leaders and institutions mainly to mobilize women and curve a *constituency* for common interest. Underpinned by the need to fast-track the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, KEWOPA was set to address some of the challenges that affect its implementation and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. As such, its mission is to, '*promote the advancement of parliamentary democracy by enhancing knowledge and understanding of democratic governance and facilitate the networking of women parliamentarians for the socio-economic and political development of Kenya.*'<sup>xxv</sup>

It is therefore, regarded as a political strategy used by various groups to achieve common goal (Ferree and Mueller, 2015; Shreiber, 2016; Stevenson, 2016). As such, KEWOPA is best placed to challenge perennial gender inequality and domination of men in political leadership in Kenya. And that women's self-determination portend improving socio-economic wellbeing of the society, beyond individual women. However, the struggle must be directed against structural forces that are largely informed by the capitalist relations of the Kenyan society. Nevertheless, partnership between KEWOPA and UN Women has contributed to strengthening the *Association*, making it more visible through a tripartite partnership with media outlets and other civil society machineries.

## IV. Conclusions

The establishment and implementation of ACTIL and other similar political structures such as KEWOPA indicate some limitations in their application: which is too elitist and less interactive with grass root realities; insufficiently attuned to the salience of national political and peacebuilding machineries; too focused on deliverable as opposed to long-term institutional ownership; and overly prescriptively committed and blind to the benefits of *localization*. As a result of this conceptual and practical discrepancies, ACTIL is, riddled with structural challenges. And such, there are questions that will require reflection: 1) Do partners (UN Women and Kenyatta University and others) to the formation of ACTIL have shared vision and mission? 2) What should be the strategic comparative advantage of ACTIL and KEWOPA to other similar structures in the country or in the region? 3) Who should be the rightful owner of the transformative thought leadership idea, UN Women or Kenyatta University? Responding to these set of questions, will require some reflection on the UN Women-Kenyatta University partnership strategy in defining the scope, content and rules that *frames* its partnerships. In my conclusion, I feel vindicated to agree with the analysis that further institutionalization of *transformative thought leadership* idea, may help the partners understand that politics and peacebuilding processes are not events, but, a highly webbed network of institutional development that should be designed to respond to societal perennial challenges, particularly those that require mind-set transformation. In this case, ACTIL and KEWOPA should be treated as the 'means' and not the end to the inclusion of women in politics and peacebuilding processes, as such, the idea of *TTL* should be added to the Kenya national peacebuilding too-box.

## Notes

- <sup>i</sup> The Gender rule quagmire: implementing the two-third gender principle in Kenya, Available at <http://iedafrica.org/index.php/policy-legal-reforms/143-the-gender-rule-quagmire-implementing-the-two-thirds-gender-principle-in-kenya>
- <sup>ii</sup> Lord Steel, Baroness Armstrong, Pauline Latham MP and Gavin Shuker MP, **16th July 2016, The struggle for gender equality in Kenyan politics. Available at:** <https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/opinion/commonwealth-parliamentary-association/61946/struggle-gender> (Accessed on 19 March 2017).
- <sup>iii</sup> Opening Remarks by Ms. Simone ellis Oluoch-Olunya, UN Women Deputy Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa during the 2016 Regional ShareFair on Gender and Resilience. Available at: <http://africa.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2016/11/opening-remarks-by-un-women-deputy-regional-director> (Accessed on 19 March 2017).
- <sup>iv</sup> The Economist, “The Mayoress of Mecca: Democracy and inequality between the sexes,” September 27, 2011.
- <sup>v</sup> Carothers, T. ‘Democracy Support Strategies: Leading with Women’s Empowerment,’ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 2016.
- <sup>vi</sup> Diamond, L. “Democracy in Decline: How Washington Can Reverse the Tide,” Foreign Affairs, July/August 2016.
- <sup>vii</sup> The Economist Intelligence Unit, “Democracy Index 2015: Democracy in the Age of Anxiety,” p. 17
- <sup>viii</sup> Levitsky, S and Way, L. “Is Democracy in Decline?” Journal of Democracy, January 2015.
- <sup>ix</sup> A total of 168 countries are included.
- <sup>x</sup> The Economist Intelligence Unit, p. 2
- <sup>xi</sup> For in-depth analysis, see Carothers, T “The End of the Democratic Transition Paradigm” Journal of Democracy, January 2002.
- <sup>xii</sup> Ibid
- <sup>xiii</sup> Women in National Parliaments, Available at <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>
- <sup>xiv</sup> Ministry of Information, Science and Technology, Available at <http://www.information.go.ke/?p=591>
- <sup>xv</sup> Fatuma Ahmed makes history to become first woman brigadier in Kenya Defence Forces, Available at <http://awcfs.org/kw/article/fatuma-ahmed-makes-history-to-become-first-woman-brigadier-in-kenya-defence-forces/>
- <sup>xvi</sup> See Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, Kenya’s Report, 2014, Available at [http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/national\\_reviews/kenya\\_review\\_beijing20.a\\_shx?v=1&d=20140917T100723](http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/national_reviews/kenya_review_beijing20.a_shx?v=1&d=20140917T100723)

<sup>xvii</sup> See Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, Kenya's Report, 2014, Available at [http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/national\\_reviews/kenya\\_review\\_beijing20.ashx?v=1&d=20140917T100723](http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/national_reviews/kenya_review_beijing20.ashx?v=1&d=20140917T100723)

<sup>xviii</sup> As above

<sup>xix</sup> In peace committees, women take subordinate roles

<http://awcfs.org/kw/article/in-peace-committees-women-take-subordinate-roles/>

<sup>xx</sup> Kenya moves to increase women in its police force, and improve their work environments, Available at

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<sup>xxi</sup> Ibid

<sup>xxii</sup> Kenya moves to increase women in its police force, and improve their work environments, Available at

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<sup>xxiii</sup> As above

<sup>xxiv</sup> The mission for the African Centre for Transformative and Inclusive Leadership (ACTIL) available at:

<http://www.ku.ac.ke/actil/about-actil/vision-mission-objectives/> (Accessed on 18 March 2017).

<sup>xxv</sup> The mission for the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association, available at: [http://www.kewopa.org/?page\\_id=7](http://www.kewopa.org/?page_id=7) (Accessed on 18 March 2017).

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