

## **Non-inclusion of Informal Work and Housework in GDP Determination in Kenya**

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### **Abstract**

Women's informal work has not been recognised in the gross domestic product in any country. When economic growth is measured, the contribution of women's informal work is usually not accounted for despite being vital in the growth and development of an economy. Moreover, the women engage in informal work that is difficult to measure. For instance, most women work in the agricultural sector, which limits their advancement due to a lack of ownership which translates to a lack of access to credits and agricultural inputs due to gender inequalities. The jobs women do in society starting from home are usually not attached to an economic value since the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measurement is done in monetary value. The contribution of women's informal work cannot be ignored if a country is determined to use all the resources for steady and optimum growth and development. Over the last two decades, economic growth and development have been rising even without this recognition; hence it would be more than the current records. Guided by the theory of change, this paper uses the employment data and GDP from the year 2000 to 2022 and analyses the contribution of women's informal work to the GDP within this period; recommends the appropriate measures to enhance the inclusivity of women's informal work to the growth and development and a country in line with sustainable development goal number eight, on decent work and economic growth.

**Keywords:** women informal work, housewives, empowerment, growth and development, measurement.

## **Introduction**

The challenges of gender and economic activities have been there since time in memorial. In 1940 the United Kingdom picked Richard Stone and Nobel Laureate James Meade to survey the economic situation of the United Kingdom during World War II (Luke Messac, 2018). Meade was a member of the Central Economic Information Service of the Offices of the War Cabinet in 1940. There was a need to have methods of accounting the national incomes and Meade and Stone hired a 23-year-old woman named Phyllis Deane and went to Malawi and Zambia, then British colonies. Deane noticed that it was impossible to do national income recordings since most of the work done in these African countries had no monetary value. She reported to Meade and Stone arguing that most of these countries have a lot of economic activities that are unpaid and hence it did not make any sense to exclude them from the national income accounting since it constitutes more of their daily economic activities and is hence critical to determining the GDP. (Messac, 2018).

It seems that Deane report and recommendations were not considered because since 1947, national income accounting has been using the Richard Stone's method and is now used by all international and global institutions.

Based on the above information, it is evident that gender issues emerged as early as important historically moments particularly when the British parliament was developing policies. It was imperative for the two economists to request a ready to help them in researching these policies and gender issues can be seen in the verge of identification of the two gentlemen are economists and a research assistant is the lady. This by itself shows gender discrimination at a higher policy-making level. However, the lady was able to identify gender complications when determining the GDP in Africa based on women's activities. Deane, at an early age in the development of the policy, was able to identify a problem that determination of the gross domestic product will be of no importance if the socioeconomic activities that women in Africa do are not considered in monetary value at a higher national level. Moreover, she could dictate that there would be a problem, and such determination would not have born fruits for two economists a point she crossed over to them. Today's systems of national accounts identify only the monetary value accrued to socioeconomic activities worldwide. Deane could not accrue anything in monetary value on what women were doing in Malawi and decided to inform her seniors of the impossibility of using monetary value to show the gross domestic product, particularly in Africa. Despite this identification at an early age, the economists went

ahead without considering what was put across by Deane. This is already a problem today because most of women's work is never recognised in the national domestic product or national accounts. Today this has been the trend where only the monetary values of everybody's work is included in the national income of accounts.

### **Objectives**

The objective of the study was to identify the housewives works in growth and development of a country. The study sort if the housewives work should be recognised and accounted in the national income accounting; in order to allow inclusion in all gender for efficiency, productivity and improving socioeconomic development.

### **Literature Review**

International Labour Organization (ILO) 2003 defines informal work as all remunerative work, including self-employment and wage employment that is not registered, regulated or protected by existing legal or regulatory frameworks, as well as non-remunerative work undertaken in an income-producing enterprise (Abdullah Al Mamun & Farid Uddin, 2021). Informal workers lack secure employment contracts, workers' benefits, social protection or workers' representation. Informal work exists in countries at all levels of socioeconomic development. It tends to be more prevalent in developing countries than in developed countries. It encompasses many jobs and economic activities with no work-based social protection. According to the ILO 2012, women are the majority of informal workers, particularly in low-income countries. They are concentrated in precarious forms of work at the bottom of the informal 'hierarchy' with less choice or agency than men over what work they do. Many factors could explain this difference, including women's lower education levels, legal barriers, social norms and demographic characteristics (Sumberg et al., 2020). Informal work is generally undervalued, and its contribution to a country's GDP is underestimated. According to Jackson (2019), the contribution of informal work especially by women, is not included in a country's GDP because its tax contribution to the revenue of a country is not defined. Monetary value is the unit used to measure a country's GDP; therefore, informal work that cannot be measured in monetary terms is excluded from the calculation (Bonnet, Vanek, & Chen, 2019). Even without recognition, women's informal work still significantly contributes to a country's GDP.

The estimated proportion of people in informal employment worldwide is significant (Budlender, 2011). Globally, 2 billion of the world's employed population aged 15 and older is engaged in informal work (Chakraborty, 2021). This represents approximately 61.2 per cent of global employment, with the vast majority of employment in Africa (85.8 per cent) being informal. For example, in South and East Asia, with the exclusion of China, informal employment constitutes on average 60%, ranging from 42% in Thailand to 84% in India. In sub-Saharan Africa, it is estimated that 33% to 82% of people work in the informal sector.

According to Vanek et al. (2014), women represent a more significant percentage of the workforce in the non agricultural informal sector. In South Asia, the ratio is 83% of women to 82% of men; in Sub-Saharan Africa 74% to 61%; in Latin America and the Caribbean, 54% to 48%. According to Glazebrook, Noll, and Opoku (2020), women and girls make up 43% of the agricultural workforce in the global south. Women and girls from Eastern, Central, and Southern Africa, produce nearly 70% of the region's food crops by volume. Nevertheless, less than 15% of women in sub-Saharan Africa have control over the land they farm. In Ivory Coast, 90% of women have informal jobs compared with 70% of men (Vanek et al., 2014). In Uganda, nearly 14 million, or 98 per cent, of Uganda's total working-age population is engaged in the informal sector, with 87 per cent of these being women (Suubi et al., 2022).

The informal sector has consistently contributed more than 55 per cent to the GDP since 1992 when growth of employment in the informal sector increased significantly (Suubi et al., 2022). By 2019, the informal sector provided a livelihood to approximately 15 million people and absorbed up to 88 per cent of the women workers in Kenya. The 15 million workers in informal work are engaged as domestic workers, cleaners, beauticians, mechanics, and street vendors, among many more. Like the global trend, the informal sector in Kenya is not well regulated, making it lack government recognition and subsequent protection of its workers. According to the Kenya 2019 census, women accounted for 50.2% (9.89 million) of the total working population, compared to 49.8 % (9.79 million) of men. The majority of these women work in the informal sector besides also being heavily involved in care work at the household and community level. Their contribution on both fronts, both unpaid and underpaid work is not well quantified and valued (Republic of Kenya, 2019).

According to Muthyoi (2010), the informal sector in Kenya also known as 'jua kali' was borne out of Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 soon after independence as the government sought to

have a mixed approach to spur economic growth. However, it was not until 1973 that the government incorporated the informal sector in its development through Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1973 (Muthyoi, 2010). The contribution of the informal employment to Kenya's economic growth cannot be underestimated. For instance, it is estimated that there were 390,608 new job creations in the informal sector in 2009 (Muthyoi, 2010). This translated to new sources of income for many households. National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government adopted the Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) paper in 2003 shortly after taking over power. NARC set out a number of key economic recovery measures, informal sector being one of them. ERS targeted 500,000 new job creations annually between 2003 and 2007 with the high percentage (88) of the jobs being created in the informal sector (Republic of Kenya, 2003). The economic growth was targeted to increase from as low as 1.1 percent in 2002 to 7 percent in 2007. By the end of the ERS cycle, the economic growth in Kenya was at the growth rate of 7 percent, emphasizing the importance of the informal sector in economic growth.

Informal work especially the one that is not easier to measure in monetary terms is not recognized as being important in the GDP of any country, Kenya being one of them (Mulyaningsih, Purwaningsih, & Anggun, 2018). For example, household production is excluded from the GDP because its goods and services do not enter the market. Since the GDP of a country is measured in monetary value, it becomes difficult to include these goods and services in the GDP of a country and yet, they have a significant contribution to a country's GDP. According to Mbugua (2020), women in Kenya hold less than 15% of land titles individually, despite heading about 32% of households. This is partly because women are unaware that just like men, they are also entitled to land ownership though the gap between policy and practice is huge. Another reason why women do not own land is because of deep cultural and social practices that prevent them from owning land. Women's lack of land rights limits them from making decisions on how to utilize land in valuable ways (Ellis, Mark, Cutura, MacCulloch, & Seebens, 2007). The land is vital both because of the predominance of agriculture within the Kenyan economy and because of the significance of land in providing collateral for business finance.

According to United Nations Women (2015) report, women often feel not empowered working in the informal sector as they are left without any protection from labour laws, social benefits such as pension, health insurance or paid sick leave. They routinely work for lower wages or no remuneration at all. Outside informal work at home, women in informal work sometimes

work in unsafe conditions, including the risk of sexual harassment. The lack of social protections has a long-term impact on women. For example, fewer women receive pensions globally, and as a result, more elderly women live in poverty (UN Women, 2015). Even in developed economies, such as in France, Germany, Greece and Italy, women's average pension is more than 30 percent lower than men's (UN Women, 2015).

### **Theory of Change**

The theory of change guides this paper. This theory is a methodology used for planning, participation, adaptive management, and evaluation in philanthropy, non-profit, research, international development, and government sectors to promote social change (Brest, 2010). It defines long-term goals and then maps backward to identify necessary preconditions. Theory of change can be traced to the field of theory-driven evaluation, which came to prominence in the 1990s (Coryn, Noakes, Westine, & Schröter, 2011). Its earlier origins however, trailed to Peter Drucker's articulation of Management by Objectives that was popularized in his 2012 book *The Practice of Management*. Drucker explains that management by objectives needs to identify higher-order objectives, and lower-order goals that, if achieved, are expected to result in the objectives being achieved. Weiss popularized the term "Theory of Change" through the work of the Aspen Institute and the Roundtable on Community Change (Anderson, 2005; Weiss, 1995). The initiative of the Roundtable centred on working through the challenges of assessing complex community initiatives. This work culminated in a 1995 publication, *New Approaches to Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives*. In this publication, Carol Weiss, one of the members of the Roundtable's steering committee on evaluation, hypothesized that a key reason why complex programs are so difficult to evaluate is that the assumptions that influence them are not well articulated. She argued that stakeholders of complex community initiatives are vague about how the change process unfolds and consequently put less attention on the early and mid-term changes required to achieve a longer-term goal. This lack of clarity about the steps along the way to a long-term outcome reduces the likelihood that all the important factors related to the long-term goal will be addressed. Theory of Change is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. Thus, this study adopts the

Theory of Change for analysis of its data. It is focused in particular on mapping out what has been described as the “missing middle” between what a program or change initiative does; its activities or interventions and how these lead to desired goals being achieved. It does this by first identifying the desired long-term goals and then works back from these to identify all the conditions that must be in place for the goals to occur. These are all mapped out in an Outcomes Framework. The central arguments of Theory of Change lie on uncovering the assumptions we make about what is possible in reaching a long-term goal. It specifies the correlation between program activities and outcomes. Theory of Change challenges the designers of complex community-based initiatives to be specific about their often implicit theories of how to achieve the change they seek. Doing so both improves their evaluation plans and strengthens one's ability to claim credit for outcomes predicted in their theory. The Theory of Change approach seems like common sense: lay out the sequence of outcomes that are expected to occur as the result of an intervention, and plan an evaluation strategy around tracking whether these expected outcomes are actually produced. Theories of change represent generalized knowledge about how change works. Theory of Change extends beyond goals and objectives to incorporate impact; the anticipated result of achieving stated goals. The way of doing things in the national income accounting where household works is not recognised; requires a change in the current world since the outcome is slowing down productivity to the socioeconomic development; where one gender is ignored in the contribution.

### **Methodology**

The study methodology is largely qualitative and quantitative involving a web survey; a data collection where survey questions are online and respondents can respond on the website and the data collected is stored on web-based database. Google drive was used to create the questionnaire and responses were stored in the system. The primary data gathered was complimented by a review of relevant literature, previous studies, reports and strategies. The stratified random sampling was used where questionnaire posted on various social media purposing the woman to participate.

Specific measures were taken to ensure quality of data gathered is controlled during process. This included screening and evaluation of respondents to eliminate/minimise any inconsistencies and errors that may have arosen. Data collection recorded accurately for effective processing and analysis done using the MS-Office Excel. This study was conducted

in June 2022 through females in Kenya and 34 participants participated in the study. Majority were aged between 30-39 years, married and have attained college and university education.

## Findings and Discussions

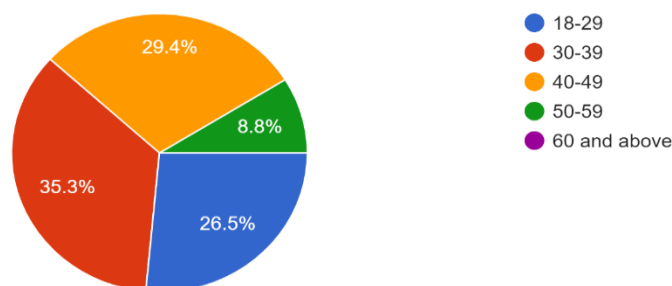
### Demographic Characteristics of respondents

This study draws from a total of 34 female respondents in Kenya. Based on the results, the respondents work in different sectors both formal and informal while others are fulltime housewives.

### Age of the respondents

This study sought to determine the age groups of the respondents. The legal working age in Kenya is 18 years. The Employment Act 2007 and the Children Act define a child as any person below the age of 18 years and therefore this study did not include respondents below 18 years of age. There were 34 responses with the age intervals classified into five categories. Figure 1 below represents the age intervals of the respondents. Overall, most the respondents are aged between 30 – 39 years at 35.3%, followed by those between 40 – 49 years at 29.4%. Others include those aged between 18 – 29 years at 26.5%, those between 50 – 59 years at 8.8%, and those aged 60 years and above at 3%. This is the working and reproductive age in the country. According to Abdiaziz and Kiiru (2021) , this group of women dominates in the household, human health and social work activities. Moreover, the mothers earn lower than the nonmothers (Abdiaziz & Kiiru, 2021).

Age  
34 responses

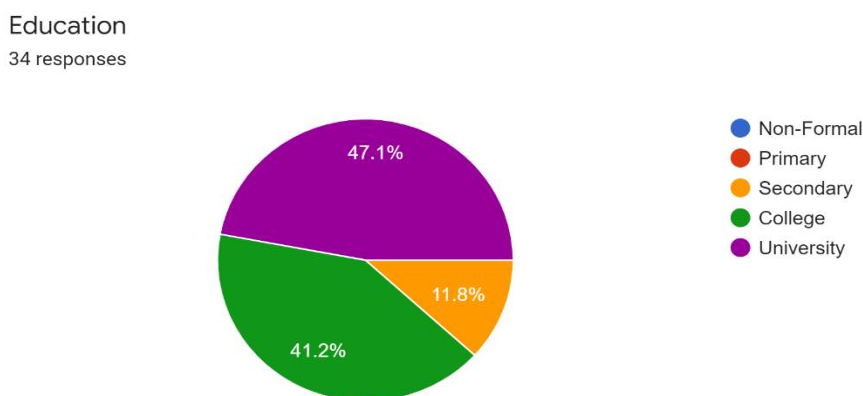




*Figure 1: Age of the respondents*

**Education attainment**

Educational attainment is defined as the highest grade completed within the most advanced level attended in the educational system of the country where the education was received. The study sought to establish the educational levels of the respondents as it is considered a significant factor in women’s engagement in formal and informal work in Kenya. The analysed data was presented below as shown in the results in figure 2. Overall, the majority of the respondents have attained a university education at 47.1%. The number of those who attained college education was 41.2% while 11.8% attained at least secondary education.



*Figure 2: Education attainment*

**Marital status of respondents**

Marital status refers to the state of being married or not. The respondents were asked to indicate their marital status and the results are as presented in figure 3. Generally, the highest number of respondents at 67.6% indicated that they are married while the percentage of those who indicated that they were single was 26. Only 5.9% indicated that they were separated, widowed or divorced.

Marital Status  
34 responses

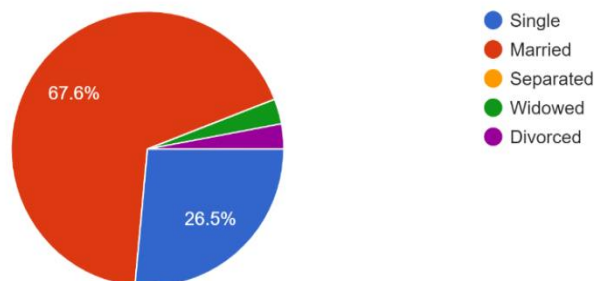


Figure 3: Marital status of respondents

According to The KNBS 2019, females accounted to 50.5% of the total population. It was strange to show that the GDP shrank due to COVID-19 in the year 2020 while as it was obvious the housewives’ activities were still going on; a clear picture that the housewives work is not captured in any way in the country. The GDP shrank in the year 2020 as shown on the figure 4 below due to the aforementioned pandemic.

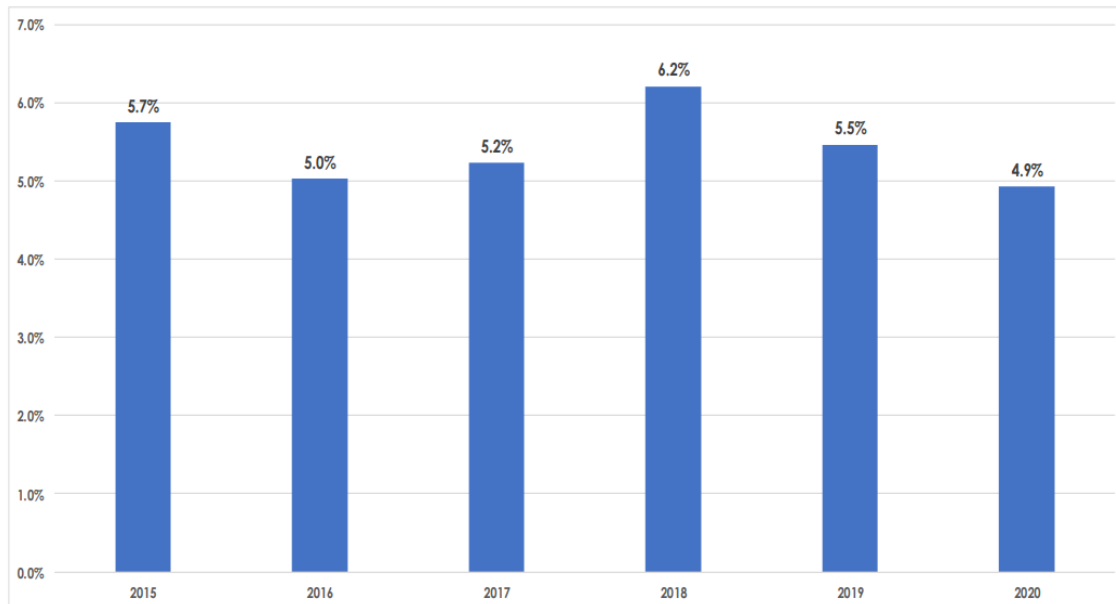


Figure 4: GDP status in Kenya; source KNBS 2020

**Employment status**

This study sought to establish the different forms of work that the respondents were engaged in. The results are as presented in figure 4. Overall, the number of those in formal employment

was highest at 61.8%. The number of those that are self-employed was 20.6% while that of housewives stood at 17.6%.

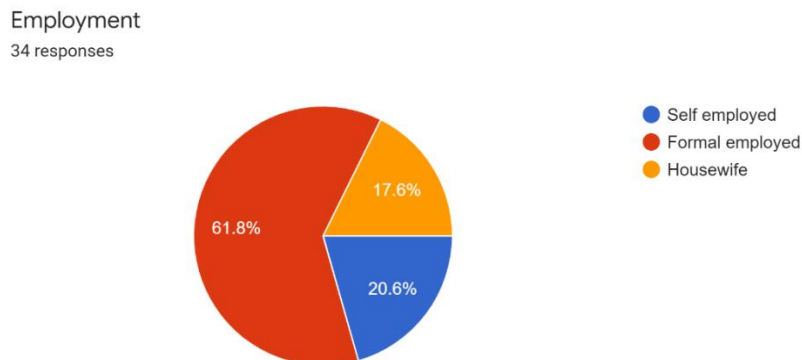


Figure 4: Employment status

**Amount, those in self or formal employment would pay house helps**

Respondents were asked to indicate the amount in Kenya shillings they would pay their house helps. Overall, majority of the respondents at 61.8% would pay a house help a monthly salary in the salary scale of 5001 – 10,000. 10% would pay their house helps a monthly salary in the scale 10,001 – 15000, 3.3% would pay them in the scale of 15,001 – 20,000 while 10% would pay them in the region of 25,001 - 30,000. 10% of the respondents would pay their house helps the lowest salary in the scale of 0 – 5,000 (see figure 5).

If self or formal employed, how much would you pay a houseboy/girl monthly?  
30 responses

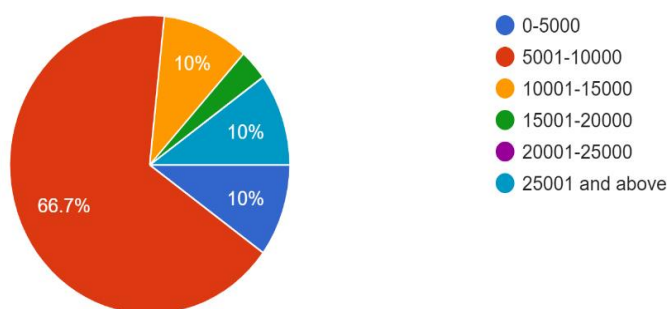
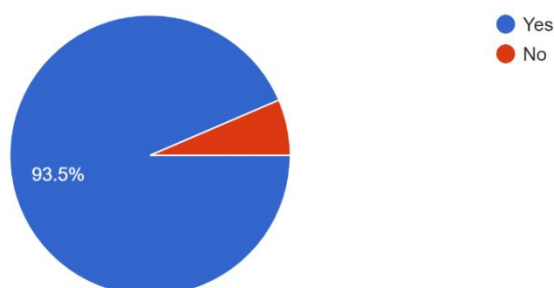


Figure 5: Amount those in self or formal employment would pay house boy/girl

**Inclusion of value of housewives work in the calculations of national income**

Respondents were asked to indicate if they would want the value of housewives work to be included in the calculations of the national income. Results are presented in figure 6. Overall, the highest number of respondents at 93.5% indicated that it is important for the value of housewives' work to be included when it comes to calculating the national income. Only 6.5% of the respondents said that the value of housewives' work should not be considered in calculating the national income since it is hard to measure and estimate their work in monetary terms.

Would you want housewives value of work be included in the calculations of the national income?  
31 responses



*Figure 6: Inclusion of value of housewives work in calculations of national income*

### **Job satisfaction**

The respondents were asked to indicate their job satisfaction based on the work they were doing. A majority of the respondents at 91.2% indicated that were happy with their work. Women tend to enjoy job satisfaction more than men and particularly due to intrinsic factors (Andrade, Westover, & Peterson, 2019). Only 8.8% of the respondents indicate they were unhappy with what they were doing mainly because they felt that the pay they received did not match with their work output (see figure 7).

Are you happy with the work you do?  
34 responses

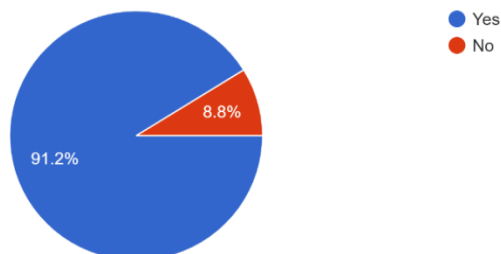


Figure 7: Job satisfaction

### Compensation for work done by housewives

The respondents were asked to indicate the amount in Kenya shillings they would want to be paid for the work they were doing as housewives. The results are presented in figure 8. Overall, majority of the respondents at 56% indicated that they would want to be paid 25,000 and above. Only 4% of the respondents said they would want to be paid in the scale of 0 - 5,000. 12% indicated that they would take between 5,001 and 10,000. 8% of the respondents indicated they would take a payment in the scale of 10,001 - 15,000 while 16% would be happy with a payment in the scale of 15,001 – 20,000. 4% would take a payment of 20,001 – 25,000.

If housewife, how much would you want to be paid from the work you do?  
25 responses

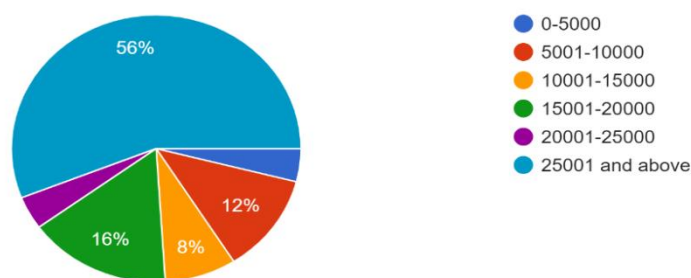


Figure 8: Compensation for work done by housewives

### Increase of income

Respondents were asked to indicate if they would want more income for the work they were doing. All the respondents, 100%, indicated that they would want more income than they were getting for the work that they were doing.

**The new amount of increased income**

Respondents were further asked to indicate the amount in Kenya shillings they would want their income to increase to if they indicated that they wanted an increase. The results are presented in figure 9. Overall, majority of the respondents at 90% indicated that they would want their income to increase to 25,000 and above. Only 1% indicated they wanted an increase in the scale of 0 – 5,000. 1% wanted their new income to be in the scale of 5,001 – 10,000, 1% in the scale of 10,001 – 15,000, 2% in the scale of 15,001 – 20,000, and 1% on the scale of 20,001 – 25,000.

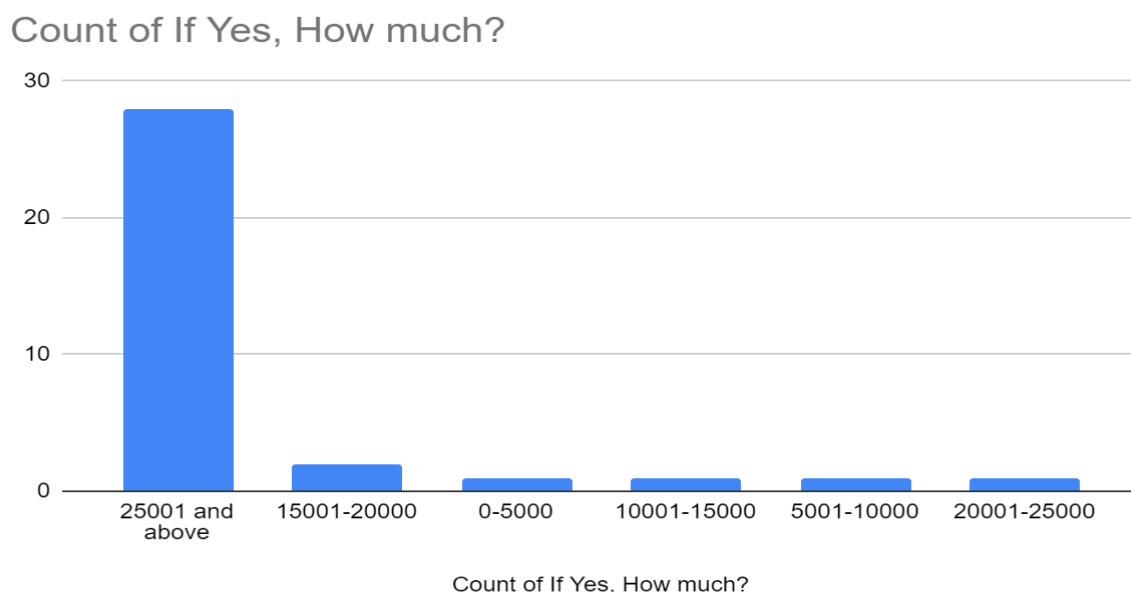


Figure 9: New amount of increased income

**Determination of Household work in Kenya**

Several arguments have been emerging in regard to the value of work that women or housewives contribute in the country. More details in the country that shows that there is need to recognize the work done by housewives can be seen in the Kenyan courts; as it is demonstrated in this excerpt.

“Although this labour is necessary for the economy because it produces fit workers, and raises children who are workers in waiting, this work is not counted in gross domestic products —the total value of what a country produces GDP. It is invisible. Little or no value is attached to caregiving roles..” (Manji, 2021, p. para 1)

**KATIBA CORNER**

**MANJI: Why housewife is full-time payable job |**

*Courts are recognising that this unpaid labour can amount to a non-monetary contribution to the acquisition of property.*

**In Summary**

- Justice Matheka pointed out that because labour in the home is overlooked, it is often said that women ‘contributed nothing’.
- This case is very important for the judicial recognition it gives to a woman's unpaid work in the home.

It is becoming difficult nowadays to account for the value of women's household/housewives work in the courts of law as demonstrated above. When disputes arise and there is need to share the wealth of spouses, when a man is the breadwinner and the woman the housewife, it then becomes difficult to account contribution of each partner in the divisibility method due to non-monetary value of work done by the housewife.

Most of the unpaid work is usually in the households as describes by a study done by Verbooy et al, in 2018). In this study, the respondents were asked how much they would pay their house helps and how much they would wish to be paid for the work they do in the households as unpaid.

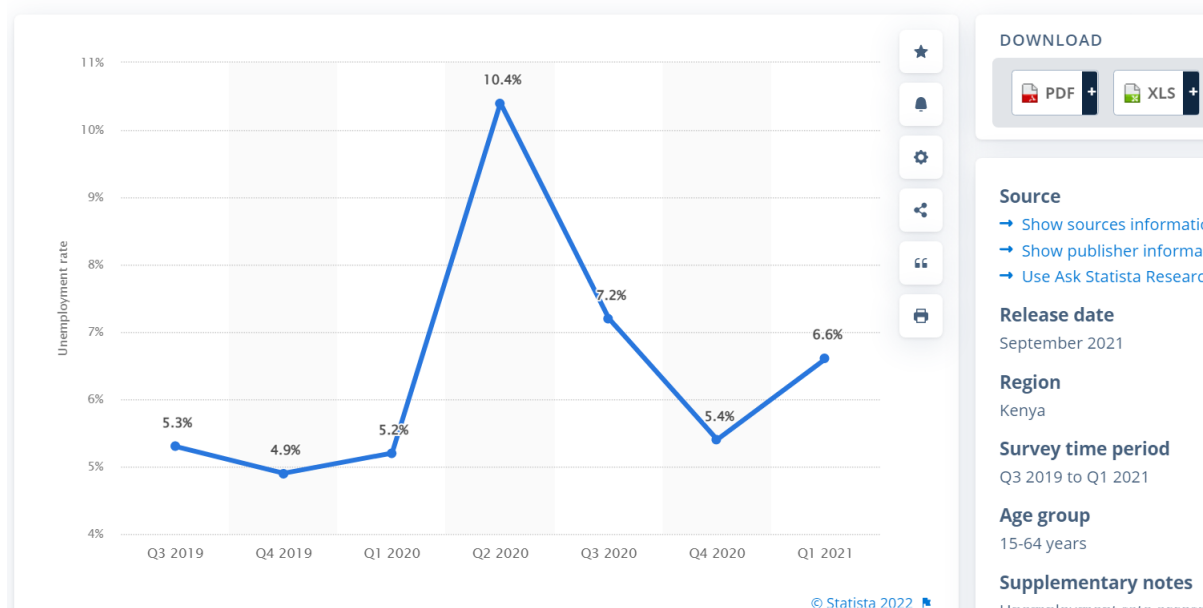
61.8% of the participants are formally employed while 20.6% are self-employed. Over 100% of the respondents would wish to have more income than they currently earn and 93.5% want their contributions to GDP be recognised, valued and included in the national income accounting.

In this study, 56% of the participants wish to be paid over Kes 25,000 monthly for their unpaid work. In Hirway (2015), the unrecognised paid work is critical to the growth and development of an economy. The number of the unpaid housewives in Kenya constitutes a great number whose contributions is not accounted nor recognised in the national incomes yearly.

The above information has been triangulated using the available data on unemployment statistics in Kenya in order to show the amount of monetary value that is lost in the national income accounting in the country. Participants are even aware of the amount of wages that they

are supposed to be paid monthly. Bergeron (2016) critically looks at the unpaid household works and how it is not visible in the national income accounting considerations; adding that since majority in these workers are women, it leads to gender inequalities in regard to socioeconomic contributions to country's growth and development.

### Unemployment rate in Kenya from 3rd quarter 2019 to 1st quarter 2021



In Kenya, the total labour force is 23,658,574. Among these, the females are 49.2%, thus amounting to 11,640,018. 5.3% of these (11,640,018) are unemployed (World Bank, 2022). This translates to 616,920 of housewives. The statistics also shows that there is higher number of females who are unemployed compared to males in Kenya (Statista, 2022).

According to the data analysed, the monthly salary expected by housewives in accordance to this study is kes 25,000 which translates to an amount Kes 185,076,000,000 approximately US\$ 1.57 Billion. In other words, 1.57 billion US\$ are not recorded in Kenya's National Income due to lack of monetary value attached to it. If related to a GDP of 2021, that was 110.35 billion, 1.57 US\$ is about 1.4% of GDP.

This is a significant amount of GDP that is not recognised nor recorded in Kenya's national income and thus rendering the work of housewives of no importance, as also seen in the genesis of the methods of determining the GDP by Richard stone and James Maende.

### Conclusion



The tasks performed by housewives are standard unpaid and often unrecognized and unpraised. This non-recognition of the household workers results in the deprivation of their rights, leading to scarcity and poverty (Sathua, 2014). The issue of informal work, particularly the housewives work not recognized by the national income accounting, has been there for over a century. When GDP uses what has been sold or bought using money, the housewives' work does not have monetary value and the contribution has been magnificent.

The study concludes that housewives doing unpaid work in the household should be recognised and attached a monetary value. There is also recognition of housewives' contribution to the national income accounting and a desire that the policy policymakers include their unpaid and unvalued work. Moreover, since the majority of this unpaid work is done by women, there is a greater challenge to the socioeconomic development of nations due to the facilitation of gender inequality, which eventually reduces the empowerment of women is the ultimate goal of sustainable development goals (SDGs) number five; on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

Using the sample of Kenyan statistics, significant monetary value at work is lost in the yearly national income generation; this enhances questioning the reality of these accounts when significant work done by housewives is not recognised.

The majority of Kenyan women are in tandem with recognising the work done by housewives in the national income. They even have a figure in the monetary value of the work mentioned above. Inclusion will lead to complete GDP accounting and the monetary value gives the housewives motivation, productivity, rights, and overall participation in the socio-economic growth and development of any economy.

### **Recommendation**

The study recommends housewives work to be recognised in the national accounting yearly and tagged a monetary value. This will enhance growth and development of a country through an inclusion in participation of both gender in national output recognitions.

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