



# The Work and Activism of Women in East Africa and its Relevance for Implementing Safe Water and Sanitation Strategies

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## BACKGROUND

In this poster, we explore the current political, environmental and socioeconomic state of Sub-Saharan Africa from an African feminist sociological perspective. Neocolonial relations, ethnicity, class, gender, globalization and other dimensions of oppression intersect upon the accomplishment of analyzing environmental sustainability and its affects on maternal and child health in countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Our goal is to unveil the inequities and uneven distributions of resources that partake in the lives of women and girls, who are the main providers of water in their households. We examine shortfalls of the current sociological state in these countries to later, utilize the opinions from women in this area in the creation of safe water and sanitation technologies and gender equality rights that do not add to existing inequities. On the basis of Africana feminist framework, we argue that early childhood morbidity and maternal health cannot be fully analyzed without women's perspectives in East Africa. This works elicits results that give rise to useful policy recommendation that may inform future discussions and movements towards safe water and sanitation.

## CONTEXT

In Sub-Saharan countries, many residents search for accessible clean water and sanitation. For households located in urban areas (the amount of improved water and sanitation technologies have increased in recent years. However, in rural areas the average of improved water and sanitation technologies and the proximity of these water sites (and facilities) are slim. Fortunately, we are able to examine through a feminist perspective, how traditionally women remain the primary individual responsible to secure the water needs for their families. Through this lens we have the ability to give these women the necessary voices to express the urgency for technological innovation and governmental intervention to increase accessible water and sanitation.



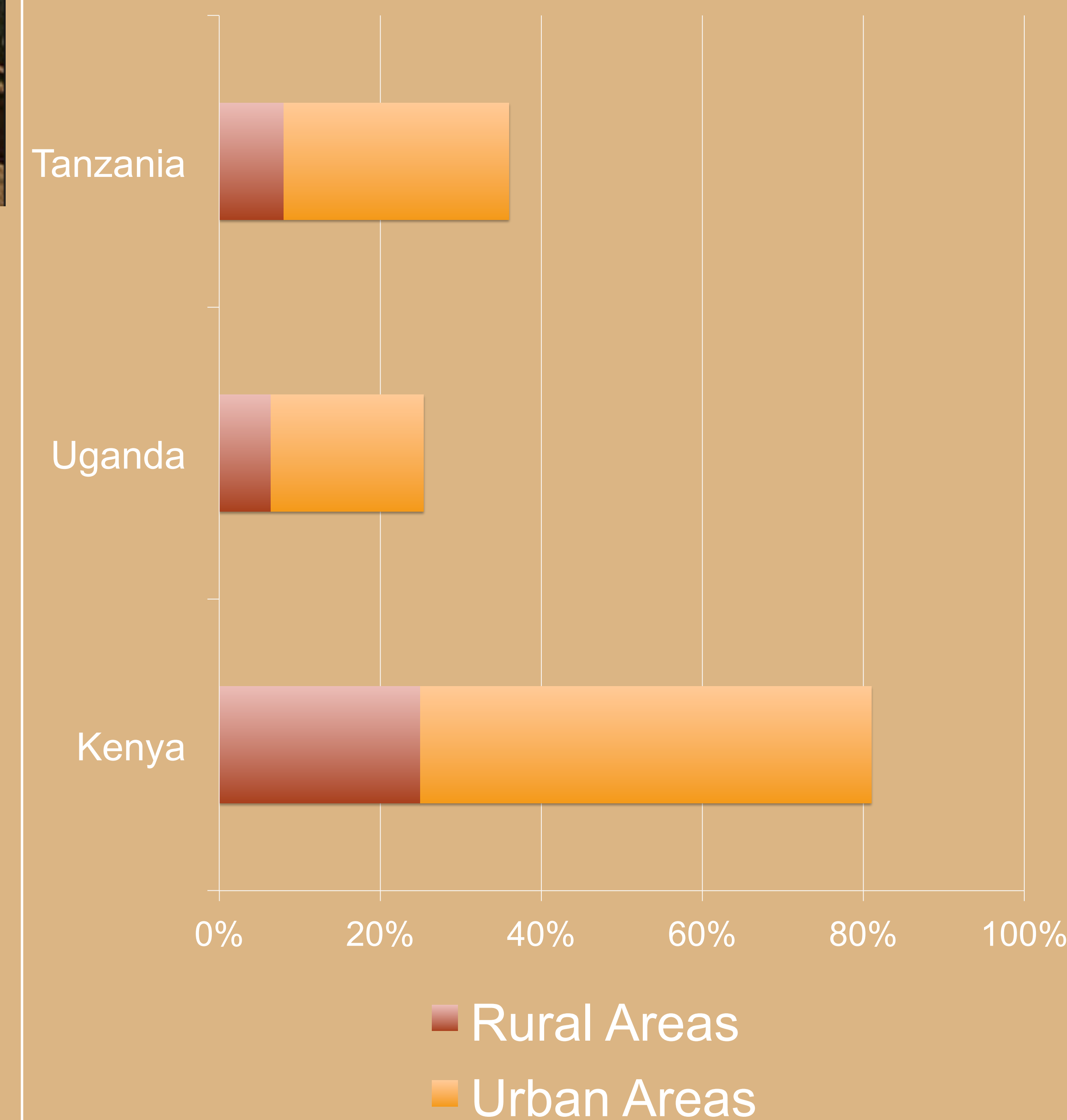
## PURPOSE

Across the globe, safe water and sanitation and the accessibility of natural resources are remaining low in rural areas in contrast to well-developed urban areas. We look to find the causes of the uneven distribution of safe water and sanitation facilities and relate the effects that it has on maternal and child health primarily within a Africana feminist perspective to elicit voices that are suppressed within a Sub-Saharan context who are often silenced by male counterparts. We aim to use these findings to close the gap between genders within Africa and create an all inclusive continent that stems from collective efforts to expand the percentage of populations who have access to safe water and improved sanitation.

## CURRENT FINDINGS

In this graph, it describes the altering percentages within the countries of Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya in both rural and urban areas. Specifically, in regards to the percentages of populations having access to improved water and sanitation facilities in urban areas Tanzania contains 26%, Uganda 19%, and Kenya 56%. In contrast these countries' counterparts in rural areas maintain 8% in Tanzania, approximately 6.4% in Uganda, and 25% in Kenya. These results illustrate

that these three countries, particularly in rural areas have approximately only half to a third of their population containing accessibility to improved facilities equating to the populations residing in urban areas. The percentage of populations with improved water and sanitation facilities are seen mainly in the well developed areas of all three countries with little expansion to rural areas, therefore leaving millions of women and girls having to travel long distances to provide water to their households.



## EMERGING THEMES

From the uneven distribution of water resources and sanitation facilities, women and girls are put at risk for:

- Traveling far distances for water and toilets
- Sexual assault
- Digesting fecal matter
- Inability to attend school (due to disease and illness)

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

In order to tackle the gap of gender equality and environmental sustainability, we must use a bottom-up process of listening to the voices of East African women with the addition of placing small numbers of improved sanitation technologies in rural areas to increase the percentage of populations with access. Later, we must illustrate technological necessities to policy makers in the hope of spreading development to the underdeveloped rural areas.

## CONCLUSIONS

Within the Sub-Saharan countries of Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya we view the existing state of water and sanitation and the effects on maternal and child health during a time of the oppression of women. Here we expand our knowledge upon current shortfalls within water and sanitation facilities in the hope for East African women and girls to express their need for improved facilities and gender equality to create a better, more inclusive community.

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