



Youth Policy Review

Tracing the steps. Marking the lessons

Report on the review of National Youth Policy in Kenya



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Youth Policy Review

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Author's statement

When we look back at any year, the different levels of youth inclusivity and participation seem to stand out and define the nation's youth space in its policy systems.

The 2002 revolution, which saw a sharp turn of events set in with a vision to bring back the culture of due process, accountability and transparency in any public office where government's decisions would be guided by teamwork and consultations. This was a call to the leaders to adhere to the principles and practice of the rule of law in a modern society.

Collaborative initiatives to revise the old policies became the rallying point for the pro-democracy Kibaki's governments. The foundation set up led to a number of initiatives including formulation of the National Youth Policy.

This report therefore outlines the foundations on which national youth policy was formulated and reviewed. The report complements the role of all agencies engaged in the national youth policy formulation and policy review process, services, facilities and activities they undertake to achieve the goals and objectives.

The Youth Congress engagement in the formulation and review was to ensure that the National Youth Policy is in accordance with the African Youth Charter and Constitution 2010 and is geared to support long-term development of the youth in Kenya. Equally, important engagement in the review process was to ensure that young people were meaningfully involved, and to ensure that youth development initiative is comprehensively conceptualized and achieved.

In this report, we tell the story of The Youth Congress engagement in the formulation and the review of the national youth policy. We present events, moments, challenges and opportunities that we encountered during the course of advocacy and engagement in the formulation and review of the national youth policy. Also, we share insights and suggestions for the successful implementation of the reviewed youth policy.

Raphael Obonyo

Convener, The Youth Congress/ Member, Ministerial Technical Working Committee on the Review of the 2007 National Youth Policy

Acknowledgements

The Youth Congress would like to appreciate the leaders who venture into an uncharted territory of reorganizing young people.

We pursue this opportunity to thank the respective governments and partners for providing financial, material and technical assistance for the youth policy review process. The organization would also like to recognize the national youth council, youth serving organizations and youths who participated in the policy review process. In deed your contributions were concrete.

We convey our gratitude to our partners for their contribution towards the documentation of the national youth policy document that will go a long way in inspiring other youth organizations, the youth and for institutional development through learning and sharing best practices.

We express our sincere appreciation to development partners, for supporting the review process of the national youth policy and for their generous material, moral and financial support over the years of implementing the youth policy.

The Youth Congress is indebted to so many people, who have come a long way with us and continue to offer support towards the interventions in the quest for a just and equitable society for all.



Without youth-centred planning, budgeting and development, and without youth contribution, it will be a formidable challenge for Kenya to realise the nation's development goals.

Executive Summary

This report describes the process and outcome of broad-based consultative processes that were designed to scale up youth policy review interventions as well as the youths' value contribution towards the document.

It highlights key principles and strategies that were involved. The report illuminates the key systematic processes involved during national youth policy review. Within this report, we have the articulated guiding frameworks and deliberated efforts that contributed to the policy review which include some of the reasons why Kenya needed a youth policy and how she got the first one in 2006.

In addition, the report proceeds to dissect the push for the national youth policy review into different levels of engagements, that further pinpoints key stakeholders and how they were actively involved in the process. It highlights how these actors performed their mandates in pursuing the guided principles in order to assist in the review of the national youth policy.

The transformational change as depicted in the report also portrays the youth themselves, the different partners and stakeholders through consultative and participatory processes comprising of regional public participation forums, stakeholder validation forums, expert consultations, technical team forums, executive meetings, and technical services and professional facilitation by relevant policy teams as the major contributors towards the national youth policy review.

In summary, review report also seeks to engage Kenyan youth on lessons learnt of the formulation and review of the National Youth Policy 2006. It remains a key derivative product of the review exercise, which sets the pace towards a more inclusive and sustainable decision-making process, a vision that the country began pursuing in 2002.

In this report, we tell the story of The Youth Congress engagement in the formulation and the review of the national youth policy. We present events, moments, challenges and opportunities that we confronted during the course for advocacy and engagement in the formulation and review of the national youth policy. Moreover, we share insights and suggestions for the successful implementation of the reviewed youth policy.

1 Introduction

1.1. What is the report about

Owing to the fact that, youth issues were never a priority to the government in the 1990s, the journey set in 2002 has been slow in changing the discriminative trend in the socio-economic outcomes including employment among young people. Majority of the youth have remained on the periphery of the country's social, economic and political affairs. As if not enough, the highest rates of labor underutilization have been constantly observed among the youth and many of them continue to suffer from low education attainment, skills deficits, poor health; and lack sufficient economic empowerment.

However, The Government of Kenya and other stakeholders despite being centered in a rapidly changing global environment and social systems, they have continually designed and implemented various interventions to address the needs of the youth instead of placing their agenda in the other priority development sectors. Some of these interventions include;

- The introduction of Youth Ministry in 2002
- The national Youth Policy 2006
- The Kenyan constitution 2010
- Kenya Vision 2030 and its associated MTPs ;
- National Youth Policy in 2007

Since then, the changing national, regional and global context seemed to require comprehensive review of the National Youth Policy developed in 2007.

This national process offered an interesting radiography of the national policies on youth in the republic of Kenya. The exercise was aimed at providing a comprehensive review of the existing youth policies, their status of operationalization and strategic involvement of young people as a guide to going forward in understanding of the multifaceted constraints facing their empowerment based on the national, regional and international standards for youth policies.

This report therefore is written in the context of events that took and with youth engagement. It recommend the way forward for the future youth-development programs.

**“By leaving *youth behind*,
we are leaving Kenya
behind”**



1.2. How was The Youth Congress involved in Review of the National Youth Policy

The Youth Congress is a youth serving non-governmental organization that provides all the young people in Kenya with a platform to articulate their issues, opportunities to explore their potential in leadership and social economic developments. Its mission is to have an inclusive society where the youth in Kenya are able to enjoy all their rights. The organization is accelerating this mission by creating access to opportunities where they are able to enjoy their status and exploit their full potential. The congress employs a cocktail of approaches to attain this goal including policy making and implementation, leadership and governance, skill and economic empowerment, and access to resources.

Incorporated in 2007 as an NGO, The Youth Congress has made significant efforts in developing various guides and the frameworks that have assisted in the mobilization and utilization of young people's dynamism, energies, knowledge and innovative ideas in decision, and policy-making processes.

The organization is founded on key three objectives including:-

- a) **Policy making and implementation:** The organization has supported a number of policy development exercises by focusing on improvement of the status of the existing frameworks, including the national youth policy, gender policy
- b) **Leadership and governance:** They have an excellent working model that supports young people through all levels of responsive stewardship. The Youth congress offers practical training and capacity building workshops with a wider aim of enabling youth; aspiring and the current leaders to attain quality leadership skills with an over-arching goal to enhance a competitive and resourceful governance.
- c) **Socio-Economic development:** The organization advantages on capacity building to provide youth oriented learning and socio economic platforms for various players. The players include youth groups, youth organizations, government agencies and cooperatives.

The Youth Congress builds on its core mandate to fully develop the youths' potential participate in leadership and governance processes in order to improve their quality of life. The organization carried out a number of activities, which constituted youth-led strategic and localized action plans that proved to be of fruitful approach towards the policy review.

Significantly, the organization played a pivotal role in the development and review of the National Youth Policy, by working with young people to ensure that they informatively play their part, and ensuring that what is contained in the Policy come from young people and is fully implemented.

Some of these interventions include;

- The National Youth Leaders Convention
- The Youth Policy Guide
- Memorandum to the Ministry
- Follow up letters to the Ministry
- Targeted awareness campaigns for the review process
- International Youth Day 2016 youth policy awareness
- Courtesy call to the Cabinet Secretary
- Brief to Cabinet Secretary
- Newspaper Article/ Op-Ed on the youth policy review process

**Millennials add up to
10.1 Million**

out of Kenya's population of 49.7 million

2

National Youth Policy of 2006

2.1. Why there was need for a youth policy in Kenya

In the past, it was inevitable almost becoming a custom that the government had to sideline young people. No recognition were given to the needs and concerns of young men and women, and instead, they were left struggling to find their own way in a difficult and ever changing society that they least contributed towards.

One would have preferred to overlook some of the challenges that faced the young people in Kenya in the 1990s and forge ahead, but it was going to be unfair to the affected parties not to raise questions about certain deliberate actions or policies of the past that continued to have grave consequences on the way they lived. It was therefore a deliberate task to advance the youth's interests and ensure that they are well represented, their issues articulated, incorporated and implemented within the existing government frameworks.

2.2. How the youth policy was developed

The government, civil society organizations among other stakeholders saw the need for the country to have a green light on how to address the numerous constraints that affected the young people.

The vigor for this process began back in 2000 when civil society organizations supported by various UN agencies mounted the pressure on the government. During this time, the (then) Ministry of culture and social services was proactive in the quest for youth policy development. This gave an enabling setting for the National council for population and growth, Ministry of Health, Adolescent and reproductive health organizations to join forces and in effect produced the first draft of the youth policy.

In December 2005, Ministry of State for Youth Affairs (MOYA) was formed to address the issues of youth in Kenya. This was grounded in the realization that the government could not be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals without adequately dealing with the many socio-economic challenges facing the Kenyan youth with the ministry's mandate meant to expedite efforts in teaming up relevant line ministries, civil society organizations in a drive to sort the unemployment issue.

In reference to the African Youth Charter adopted in July 2006, the member states (out of which Kenya is one) were pressured to abide by the treaty signed as far as the article 12 of the charter is concerned.

The Treaty, which came into force in August 2009, tasked each member of the fraternity to develop a comprehensive and coherent national youth policy. Specific bare minimums for the national youth policies were given upon which they would qualify.

Some of the requirements entailed the cross-sectoral nature to consider the inter-relatedness of the challenges facing young people. That it had to be developed through extensive consultation process. The integration of the youth perspective was a must in all the planning and decision making and the implementing mechanisms were to be framed within the national framework for the country; and that they had to be adopted by parliament and enacted into law and institutionalized into national programmes of actions for implementation.

In the same year, the government developed its first Kenya National Youth Policy (KNYP). The KNYP, which defined the youth as persons resident in Kenya in the age bracket of 15–30 years, had as its vision a society where youth have an equal opportunity as other citizens to realize their fullest potential, productively participating in economic, social, political, cultural and religious life without fear or favor (Republic of Kenya, 2006).

The five key principles underlying the policy were;

- i. Respect of cultural belief systems and ethical values
- ii. Equity and accessibility
- iii. Gender inclusiveness
- iv. Good governance and
- v. Mainstreaming youth issues

In the same year, the Government of Kenya hosted a national youth summit – Youth Employment Summit, with the agenda of investing in young people and innovative policies and best practices to solve the issue of youth unemployment.

A year later, the parliament was lobbied to pass the bill and the Attorney General's office became key in drafting the final document which was then sensitized by a number of youth serving organizations.

3

Push for Review of the National Youth Policy

3.1. Promulgation of the Constitution 2010

The vision of the 2010 Constitution aimed towards resolving practices and patterns of social exclusion and establishing the basis for a different narrative of state-society relations. Those who drafted it engaged a number of youth serving organizations and aimed to unpack the previous concentration of political power and improve mechanisms of accountability, to create an environment that would allow more inclusive state-society relations and more equitable development outcomes.

In addition, the new Bill of Rights had a strong focus on the needs and entitlements of young people – a step change from the previous situation. Furthermore, specific considerations were given to the rights of young people and the principles of equality and non-discrimination as applied to them. Within the constitution, the youth were granted special representation rights; and affirmative actions prescribed to ensure equity for minority or marginalized groups. Finally, concrete entitlements were enshrined for children and youth (Arts. 53 and 55 respectively).

3.2. The Youth Policy Guide

This policy guidebook brings about the critical role of the youth policy in Kenya, its frameworks and instruments required for developing the policy and the attributes associated with it. Moreover, the policy guide shades light on the steps involved formulating a Youth policy. The whole idea about this guide was to look at how the Kenyan youth could be involved in policy-making in Kenya, the benefits derived from young people's participation, and the risks of locking them out of the process.

The policy guide was developed in synergies between The Youth Congress and the UN-HABITAT. This collaboration ensured a success in developing the policy guide to facilitate effective Youth engagement in policy review and decision-making. The framework heavily identified the responsibilities assigned to the parties involved in youth agenda, through;

- a) The Constitution of Kenya
- b) The National Youth Council Act
- c) The East African Community Youth policy
- d) The African Youth Charter
- e) The United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth



“It should go without saying that the youth are Kenya - and we cannot leave Kenya behind”

3.3. Partnership with the National Youth Council

The Youth Congress reached out to the National Youth Council, shared with them copies of the Youth Policy Guide and forged partnership to jointly champion the review of the National Youth Policy. The National Youth Council Act, No. 10 of 2009 established the National Youth Council (NYC) to facilitate, co-ordinate, promote, monitor and advocate for youth issues and youth led initiatives under the Ministry in charge of youth. Also, the Council was established to promote and popularize the national youth policy and other policies that affect the youth.

3.4. Courtesy calls to Cabinet Secretary, Anne Waiguru

The Youth Congress paid courtesy calls on a number of government officials to discuss the important and urgent need for the review of youth policy. In 2015, The Youth Congress undertook the first official visit to the Ministry of Devolution and Planning, and met with the Cabinet Secretary, Ann Waiguru, who was responsible for youth affairs.

3.5. Letter to Cabinet Secretary, Anne Waiguru

To follow up on the proceedings based on the previous discussion, the Youth Congress wrote a letter on July 13, 2015 to Cabinet Secretary, Ann Waiguru proposing the formation of a task force for the review of the youth policy.

3.6. Development Partnership Forum, DPF

In 2005, Kenya signed the Paris Declaration on aid Effectiveness together with over 100 developed and developing countries, heads of multilateral and bilateral development cooperation. The government has since then been implementing the aid effectiveness principles with the objective of streamlining systems of delivering external assistance through harmonized and coordinated Development Partners(DPs). Later in 2009, the GoK and DP s who were part of the aid effectiveness group reviewed their coordination structure to improve their dialogue among different stakeholders. The parties later agreed on the Development Partnership Forum, which was set to be held twice a year to provide useful opportunities for both the government and these partners to engage in dialogues regarding the Kenya's development priorities and challenges, political and economic development.

In 2015, the dialogue prioritized the youth development agenda as part of the discussion. The aim was to review the then status of youth employment and identify areas of possible alliances to tackle the situation.

Parts of the discussion included;

- The review of the 2007 National Youth Policy; it was recommended that an inclusive process to be conducted in consultation with the Ministry of Public Service, Gender and Youth affairs.
- Need for a labor market information system
- Scaling up and coordination of evidenced-based youth entrepreneurship initiatives

To make this a reality , The Kenya Youth Employment Sector working group was proposed with membership drawn from national and county governments, civil society organizations , private sector, youth organizations and philanthropic societies.

3.7. Op-Ed article on the need for the review of the youth policy

Several studies have been carried out on how media can play an important role on social inclusion and youth participation in matters relating to the national agendas of their respective countries.

In reference to one of the Op-Ed articles published in June 22, 2015, some of the main challenges that seem to exist since time immemorial despite the frameworks in place were raised. Just to mention but a few, the article touched on the youth fund, a national entity meant to finance young people and how it has not operated to serve the capacity it was meant for; the 30 percent rule of procurement which no government set up seemed to adopt.

Concisely, the article illuminated that there were no clear guidelines on how to coordinate some of the government interventions on the youth agenda, which significantly compromised the outcomes of the respective non-complementing interventions. The article also emphasized on the need for review of the youth policy to exploit the existing opportunities in tackling the capital challenges.

3.8. Courtesy calls to Cabinet Secretary, Sicily Kariuki

The Youth Congress paid courtesy calls on a number of government officials to discuss the important and urgent need for the review of youth policy. In 2016, The Youth Congress undertook the first official visit to the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs and met with the Cabinet Secretary, Sicily Kariuki. This is perhaps the visit that kick started the review of national youth policy.



Cabinet Secretary Sicily Kariuki receives the youth policy guide from Raphael Obonyo the Convener The Youth Congress

3.9. International Youth Day 2015

The UN-Habitat and the Youth Congress hosted a discussion the International youth day 2015 that provided a moment of celebration and reflection on some of the most critical challenges facing in their respective communities. The discussions focused on the review of youth policy, which were intended to have young people, be included in public conversations on youth constraints with specific focus on entrepreneurial and vocational skills development and access to financing.

“By excluding the youth, the society misses out on fresh ideas, creativity, talent and energies required to move forward”



3.10. State House Youth Summit

On 3 October 2016, the government in its agenda to empower and guarantee active youth participation in the decision making process, held a State House Youth Summit to discuss the state of youth affairs. The forum brought together more than 200 youth representatives who raised concerns about the ineffectiveness and non-inclusive procurement for government tenders.

The President underscored the fact that some frameworks seemed to be obstacles to address the youth issues. He made it clear that some of those policies ought to be constructively amended just as any other policy in order to empower the young people.

President Kenyatta emphasized that those frameworks were established for young people and that they must be enforced by the respective government offices. He encouraged the use of available opportunities such as the media, technology as some of the assets for informing new development within the existing structures that might not work for the young people and how to rectify them. In his statement, it was clear that his government has interests to support and work together with the young people necessarily by law.

It on her part Cabinet Secretary Sicily Kariuki touched on some of the mechanisms that promoted inclusive engagement of youth in policy making and development at all levels. Some of the structure in place mentioned were;

- The National Youth Council
- Technical level consultations
- The Youth Sector Working Group
- Intergovernmental forum on youth
- National Youth Empowerment strategy
- The National Youth Dialogue in 2014
- The National youth Policy

She pointed out that the government was in the process of reviewing the national youth policy that according to her statement was outdated. She declared that her ministry was ready to incorporate the inputs from the youth.

3.11. Formation of Ministerial Technical Working Committee on the Review of the 2007 National Youth Policy

Owing to the session paper passed by parliament in 2007 and the changes made in the Constitution 2010, the Ministry of Public Service, Gender and Youth Affairs saw the need to initiate a comprehensive review process of the national youth policy. The mission was to develop a robust policy framework that is responsive to youth issues. This initiative called then for a formation of a ministerial technical working committee to fast track on the review of the 2007 policy document.

Raphael Obonyo, Convener Youth Congress was nominated on the 13 October 2016 as a member of The Ministerial Technical Working in the policy review process.

The technical working group was mandated to undertake the following ;

- a) Prepare a work plan for the review process
- b) Prepare the working budget for the review
- c) Identify key stakeholders to participate in the review process
- d) Identify the gaps in the 2007 policy
- e) Come up with policy priority areas
- f) Prepare a revised youth policy zero draft
- g) Develop TOR for consultancy towards finalizing the revised draft.
- h) Advise on appropriate changes to legislation and institutional frameworks to implement the revised 2015 youth policy

3.12. Formation of the National Youth Sector Working Group

In addition to the courtesy call made earlier to Cabinet Secretary Ann Waiguru, The Youth Congress paid another courtesy call on Cabinet Secretary Cecily Kariuki to follow up the review process as far as the last discussions were concerned . In response, CS Cecily Kiruki formed and implemented the National Youth Sector Working Group with members drawn from national and county governments, youth organizations, private sector, philanthropist and development partners.

The working group was constituted to provide a framework for coordination of the numerous youth employment initiatives at both the national and county level. The working group was co-chaired by CS Willy Bett, Ministry of Agriculture and Jutta Frasch, ambassador of Germany to Kenya. The members of the Youth Sector Working group included, Dr Chris Kirubi from Haco Industries, Siddharth Chatterjee from UNDP, Diarietou Gaye from World Bank, Raphael Obonyo-The Youth congress, Susan Mwangera from Youth agenda among others.

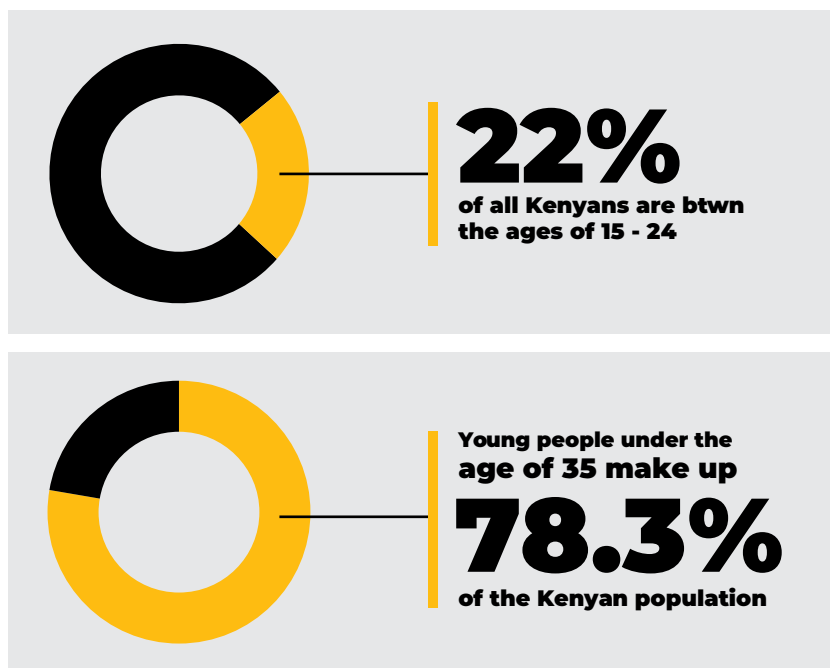
3.13. National Youth Leaders Convention

Every year, The Youth Congress hosts a national dialogue platform where young people across the country converge to engage the duty bearers and explore opportunities for participation on thematic issues that affect young people.

In 2016, the concrete discussions held lead to the agenda of;

- National youth policy review
- Youth and devolution
- Youth and elections
- Youth and employment

In 2017, the forum focused on the need for to review the national youth policy and pointed out some of the issues that needed to be articulated.



4

Review of the National Youth Policy

4.1. Public Participation Forums

In view of the national youth policy review and to align it to the Constitution of 2010, the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs held public participation workshops in Nairobi, Nakuru, Eldoret, Kapenguria, Kisumu, Kakamega Machakos, Nyeri, Isiolo Garissa and Momabasa. These forums aimed at getting variable inputs from youth, youth serving organizations, representatives of the NYC, partners and stakeholders including other Ministries, Government Agencies, Public-Benefit Organizations (PBOs) and Learning institutions among others.

4.2. County Directors Engagements

What is evident is that we are in the dispensation of a devolved government system and matters that appertain to national agenda ought to be implemented at the county levels. The push for the national policy review penetrated up to the counties' development policies where continuous involvement of the youth by the county directors were reported. Some of the engagements spearheaded by the respective directors are not limited to the following;

- a) County youth forums at the ward, and respective sub county levels
- b) County youth and public participation in the CIDPS

4.3. Online engagements with the youth

Involving youth and encouraging their participation was such an important exercise in promoting the policy review. The Ministry of Public Service, Youth and gender affairs, spearheaded the push for online engagement and Gender Affairs, civil society organizations like Siasa Place, ELF, development partners like Action Aid among others. The initiated online programs like; #ToaMaoniYouth-Policy, #YouthDialogueKE, ensured involvement of youth from diversified background.

Among the sample trending views that were captured are as follows;

- @vwerimo. 13th Apr. 18
#ToaMaoniYouthPolicy
'One focus we need to have is that the youth policy to expand the freedom of the youthful people people...'by Kwame Owino
- @TISAKenya
'As youth let our voices be heard, let us be proactive and participate in the review of a policy that will speak volumes about us. Let us all turn up in big numbers for the NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY REVIEW in our counties' #ToaMaoniyoungpolicy #Wakilishavijana @Kenyagovernors
- @ActionAid_Kenya
'Going forward @mo_psyga needs to develop a national youth development indicator to inform the policy review and implementation' #ToaMaoniyoungPolicy
- @HeMureithi
'And for your information fellow Kenyan youth, it is our constitutional right to be able to access employment; chapter 4 article 55 c mandates the state to do this! Has our government made any significant effort towards this?'

4.4. Follow up letters by The Youth Congress

The first follow up was made through a letter to the CS Ann Waiguru. The letter addressed to her requested for a formation of a task force to review the national youth policy. The initiative was later picked up and implemented by The Cabinet Secretary for Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs, Sicily Kariuki.

In a bid to fast track the policy review process, a number of structures were put in place, some of which include Youth Sector Working Group, The Technical Working Committee among others to assist in the process of developing the review strategy.

On 29 January 2019, The Youth Congress addressed another letter to Prof Margaret Kobia, to request for the status update on the review of national youth policy. On 31 January 2019, The Youth Congress was invited for a consultative meeting (held on 13 February 2019) that was to provide a platform for sharing ideas and updates on the review process.

4.5. Youth Policy Dialogues by Youth serving organizations

As part of the process, it was imperative to engage the youth in constructive dialogues organised by both the national and county governments, civil society organizations, private sector organizations among other stakeholders.

These dialogues organized in coordination with a number of stakeholders from the public and private sectors in different part of the country.

4.6. Memorandum by The Youth Congress

On 11 June 2018, the organization submitted a memorandum about the review of the policy to The Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs and The National Youth Policy Review Committee.

The memorandum emphasized in review of the following thematic areas;

- i. Thematic Area 12: Structure of the National Youth Council:- the general feeling according to the findings called for a restructure with representations at all levels coordinated through electoral processes
- ii. Thematic Area 11: Coordination of Youth Programs by GoK:- the government to leverage on the Youth Sector Working Groups formed with a balanced representation.

In summary , some of the priority areas included in the memo were; an enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship and cooperatives; the unemployment factor and how to tackle it, access to mutual exchange within communities of practice among the youth; harnessing the robust skills and talent among young people; government strategy on youth empowerment; Government strategy on criminal investigations ; healthcare and substance abuse; youth representation; synergies between the government and youth on SDGs among others.

4.7. Validation meetings

In February 2019, The Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs organized validation meetings with different stakeholders, to ensure that that policy was an outcome of a broad-based consultative process as envisaged by the Constitution 2010. The validation divided stakeholders into seven main sectors;

- Labour and Social Welfare Committee both National Assembly and Senate
- Kenya Young Parliamentarian Association
- Faith Based Organizations
- Youth Serving Organizations and Youth Networks
- Private Sector
- County Executive Committee Members for Youth
- Development Partners/Donor Community

Governments and other actors were called upon to ensure that the proposed strategies in the policy are effected to contribute towards conditions to support the youth's engagement at all levels of economy. Going further, the ministry of public, youth and gender affaires tasked itself to engage various sectors in order to gather their input into the reviewed policy before finalization.

***“To make real and sustainable progress,
Kenya must invest in the youth”***

5

Summary & Key elements of the Kenya Youth Development Policy

The Kenya National Youth Policy (KNYP) 2006, defined the youth as persons resident in Kenya in the age bracket of 15–30 years, had as its vision a society where youth have an equal opportunity as other citizens to realize their fullest potential, productively participating in economic, social, political, cultural and religious life without fear or favor (Republic of Kenya, 2006). The five key principles underlying the policy were: respect of cultural belief systems and ethical values; equity and accessibility; gender inclusiveness; good governance; and mainstreaming youth issues. Although aimed at all the youth in Kenya, the KNYP targeted some priority groups and that was; youth with disability; street youth; youth infected with HIV/AIDS; female youth; the unemployed youth; and out-of-school youth. The priority strategic areas included employment creation; health; education and training; sport and recreation; the environment; art and culture; youth and the media; and youth empowerment and participation in national life. Among the institutions to be created, as part of the mechanisms for implementing the KNYP, incorporated the inter-ministerial committee on youth comprising representatives of relevant ministries dealing with youth issues, and a National Youth Council (NYC)

On the other hand, the Kenya Youth Development Policy (KYDP) 2019 defines a youth as a person aged between 18–34 years, and to some extent covers the ones between 15 to 17 years. It operates in two reference terms that is the 'youth-hood' the period of transition for example learning, work, forming families e.tc and the 'success' as a period that requires development of human capital at national and international level.

Contrary to the former Youth Policy, the latter recognizes the fact that youth is not a homogenous group and diverse needs. The key principles underlying the policy are: shared responsibility for decision and actions affecting young people; opportunities for productive and profitable service delivery; political and social-economic empowerment; access to knowledge and information; and stable environment for equity, peace and democracy.

The policy objectives are:

- (i) Realize a healthy and productive youth population;
- (ii) Build qualified and competent youth workforce for sustained development;
- (iii) Create opportunities for youth to earn decent and sustainable livelihoods;
- (iv) Develop youth talent, creativity and innovation for wealth creation;
- (v) Nurture values, morals, ethical generation of patriotic youth for transformative leadership;
- (vi) Effective civic participation and representation among the youth;
- (vii) Promote a crime free, secure, peaceful and united Kenya where no young Kenyan is left behind; and

The formulation of the Kenya Youth Development Policy was through a consultative and participatory approach. The process involved various stakeholders both at national and county levels. These included the public sector, private sector, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and development partners. Extensive consultative meetings took place with a wide range of stakeholders including the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and county governments. In addition, National and County forums were held targeting youth and youth organizations.



6

Key Lessons

It has taken about more than a decade for the country to come up with the youth development policy. In deed, the process has involved steep learning curve in relation to both the process of reviewing and its content.

Lessons

1. It is crucially important to engage the youth in policy making
2. Multi stakeholder approach and strategic alliances are critical for youth development.
3. There can never be anything for the youth without the youth getting involved
4. It is vital that there be a clear understanding, by all stakeholders on the definition of a youth policy in the context of the youth-perspective.
5. The implementing partners may need to balance the best practices with what is possible in a given context and young people should not be put at a higher risk when exploring for 'best practices' to achieve a goal.
6. Youth participation in policy developments becomes more meaningful when more power and control is devolved to them.
7. It is vitally important to meet with young people in an environment where they feel comfortable and safe whenever you want them to give views.
8. Its important to view and engage youth as active participants in the creation of program and policy- youth engagement needs to be prioritized.
9. Good planning by organizations and the policy working groups and committees in advance of engagement is able to make it far easier to build preparation work into the policy review or formation process.
10. It is crucial to have a good gender lenses and gender equity awareness in order to cater for young women's specific needs particularly vulnerable groups like youth with disabilities and youth in the informal settlement can be engaged largely with the same principles as other youth - it is important to specifically target these youth who are traditionally excluded.
11. There's a need to better understand youth, conceptually and as individuals. Young people want and need different things at different stages in their lives, and youth policy needs to consider this fact most closely, It is important to view and engage youth as active participants in the creation of programming and policy - youth engagement needs to be prioritized.

7

Conclusion

The 2019 policy, which is an outcome of a broad-based consultative process, was designed to scale up youth empowerment interventions as well as their value contributions to nation building. The interventions are to be implemented and further develop in a close interplay between the local youth communities, private and public partners and the local government.

Therefore, despite all the methodological guidance as well as theoretical frameworks and processes invested in the youth policy redesign, the implementation should challenge the prevailing top-down approach when it comes to youth involvement into decision making. The reviewed youth policy should not only aim at generating new evidence-based gender/youth-sensitive data but should also build a consensus with effective translation on the ground.

***Nothing for us
without us***

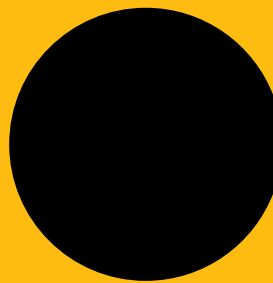
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