

Assessment of Strategic Gender Needs of Technical and Vocational Training Institutes in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya: Review of Gender Policies and Frameworks

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Abstract

The World Economic Forum Report of 2018 indicates a 32% index on the global gender gap in leadership and technology among men and women, despite the high enrollment of 65% and 66% for girls and boys in secondary education and 39% and 34% for women and men, respectively, in colleges and universities. When young people in Kenya transition from secondary to tertiary education, there are still sizable gender gaps, with more girls than boys dropping out of school. The low transition rates are attributed by a number of factors, including cultural and traditional barriers, attitudes toward women, financial and geographic constraints, a lack of family support, and teen pregnancies. The broad objective of this study was to empower technical-vocational institutions to actively participate and be agents of change in gender roles, structures, and socialization processes locally, nationally, and internationally. Specific objectives of this study were to review gender policies nationally, regionally and internationally, to develop a framework to conduct a baseline needs assessment survey and to assess the strategic gender needs of the Eldoret National Polytechnic in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. Data to assist in creating a structure for carrying out a baseline needs assessment survey was gathered through a desktop review, which involved a methodical examination of available documents pertinent to gender policies and frameworks. The results of this study provided the baseline data on gender policies that are currently in place to guide the creation of training materials for staff and students so that the institution can be proactive in promoting a gender-sensitive culture. Through improved monitoring and reporting of gender-related issues to relevant stakeholders to improve the institution's capacity to identify and address gender gaps.

Key words: Gender, gender equality, gender- sensitive, training, gender mainstreaming

1.0 Introduction

According to the World Economic Forum Report (2018), global gender index shows a 32% gap in leadership and technology between men and women despite the high enrollment rates in secondary education at 65% and 66% for girls and boys and colleges and universities attendance at 39% and 34% for women and men, respectively. In Africa, young men typically enroll in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), with the exception of secretarial and commercial fields, and many developing nations, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and some regions of Asia, do not permit girls to access education on an equal footing with boys. A number of gender disparities still exist in education, training, and labour market, which has an adverse effect particularly for prospects and freedom of choice for young women. Women enroll at lower rates than men do in Sub-Saharan Africa, South and West Asia, and the Arab States (UNESCO, 2012). One issue in Asia is that young women and girls face threats of gender-based violence both on their way to and inside school (UNESCO, 2012). According to a study among TVET institutions in Malawi, stereotyped cultural norms and traditional roles have undervalued women, leaving them without the proper educational foundation, career guidance, and financial resources to support their participation in training. Additionally, the respondents claimed that there are not enough infrastructure and facilities in colleges for women, as well as not enough female instructors (UNESCO, 2018).

Financial hardships, sexual harassment, inadequate educational facilities that cater to women's needs, and responsibilities of motherhood are some of the issues facing women in technical and vocational education (Williams, Chagbe & Achi, 2016). A study conducted among TVETs in Kakamega County established that negative gender stereotype created by culture and society, as well as a lack of infrastructure that takes gender equality are the main challenges of gender inequality (Oloo, 2018). Therefore, interventions to encourage women and promote gender equality in training and employment should target a specific context and group; designed to overcome existing barriers and respond flexibly to different needs (ILO policy brief, 2020). For example, the International Labour Organization (ILO) in collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh in 2019 implemented a program that promoted female enrolment to almost 27 percent in TVET institutions. Thus, in order to raise consciousness and encourage employers to provide on-the-job training, including apprenticeships, enterprise attachments, or internships to both men and women, trainers and managers in TVET institutions should receive training on gender awareness. Other strategies

to offer women opportunities in technology-intensive fields should include counseling, mentoring, and using positive role models (ILO policy brief, 2020). More specifically by increasing the role models such as female teachers and attaching young female scholars (Ngugi & Muthima 2017) as well as providing the required infrastructure and environment will facilitate women in their training (Williams, Chagbe & Achi, 2016).

The Technical and Vocational Training Authority (TVETA) strategic plan (2018-2022), categorize the National Polytechnics, Technical and Vocational Colleges (TVCs), Vocational Training Centers (VTCs), Technical Trainer Colleges, and any other category as specified by the Cabinet Secretary responsible for Technical Education as TVET institutions. Specialized vocational training programs are supervised by line Ministries while the oversight responsibility for TVET has been split between the ministry of technical education, ministry of labour, and TVETA. Despite a wide variety of institutional-based technical and vocational education programs with a range of durations, from hairdressing to electronics and auto repair, TVET enrollments in Kenya remains marginal. Therefore, it is necessary to redesign specific institutional responses to the needs of both men and women. There is also need to include gender focus in skills and development policies and strategies to ensure equal participation of women and men in training; designing and delivery of skills and training; management of skills development systems and institutions; lowering gender segregation within and between occupations; and enhancing uptake of STEM subjects by women. To encourage and support equal opportunities for girls and boys in TVET-related courses, specific strategies that have been demonstrated to work at policy level include allowing and encouraging a certain percentage of girls to enroll in technical-based courses (Ngugi & Muthima, 2017). Thus, the purpose of this study was to review gender-related policies and frameworks to address strategic gender needs of technical and vocational training institutes in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Gender inequalities continue to limit young women's freedom to choose their opportunities, particularly in the Arab world, Asia, and Africa (UNESCO, 2012). For example, reports of gender-based violence inside and outside of schools and of girls being denied access to education on an equal footing with boys have surfaced in Asia, while in Africa, young men have a propensity to enroll in TVET programs, with the exception of commercial and

secretarial programs. Similarly, men outnumber women in engineering, manufacturing, and construction in 83 out of 84 countries, which is an indicator of women underrepresentation in STEM courses (UNESCO, 2012). Thus, disparities in labour market resulting from the lack of equal access to education and training has decreased the women's bargaining power. Young women's access to TVET education is hampered by a number of obstacles, including culture and stereotyped traditional roles, a lack of appropriate educational background, inadequate career guidance, a lack of understanding of the concept of gender-responsive or inclusive education, and a dearth of female instructors (UNESCO, 2018). Consistently, women enrollment in TVET institutions has been impacted by financial constraints, sexual harassment, inadequate facilities to meet women's needs, and maternal responsibilities related to childbirth (Williams, Chagbe & Achi, 2016). According to a report by the Kenya Education for Employment Program (KEFEP, 2019), the government of Kenya through the TVET act of 2013 advocated for equal access and support in form of scholarships to help women further their studies at TVET institutions that is largely responsible for an increase in percentage of women participation in TVET from 39% in 2012 to 44% in 2018. Hence, there is need to review the gender-related policies and frameworks to address strategic gender needs of technical and vocational training institutes in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

2.0 Methodology

An independent review of literature and other related materials on global, regional, and national gender concerns was conducted to identify different policies to guide the development of frameworks and tools for conducting a gender needs assessment as well as develop tools for gender mainstreaming for the Eldoret National Polytechnic. The information generated was triangulated among three expert reviewers.

3.0 Results

3.1 Summary of global policies and gender frameworks

The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, Sustainable Development Goals, the 1993 UN Declaration on Elimination of Violence Against Women, and the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) were reviewed as key policies on global commitment to gender. The commitment to gender mainstreaming, addressing issues of violence against women, and empowerment as a global priority in eradicating poverty and promoting population growth were the key focus areas.

Table 1: Global gender policies and commitments

Key global policy	Focus
The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) provides a comprehensive framework to guide all rights-based action for gender equality, including that of UNDP	The focus is on equality in outcomes rather than opportunities. They define discrimination and the range of steps that states must take to eliminate it, affirms women's rights in specific areas, and makes provisions for ratification, monitoring, reporting and other procedural matters.
The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action	The Platform provides the first global commitment to gender mainstreaming as the methodology by which women's empowerment will be achieved.
Sustainable Development Goals	Specific to addressing gender issues are the following SDGs SDG 4: Quality education SDG 10: reduced inequalities SDG 16; peace, justice, and strong institutions
The 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women	The first international human rights instrument to address the issue of violence exclusively and explicitly against women.
The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)	This platform provided an avenue where delegates reached a consensus that the equality and empowerment of women is a global priority and is an essential step towards eradicating poverty and stabilizing population growth

3.2 Summary of regional policies addressing gender

The table below summarizes three key policies: The African Union Gender Policy of 2009, the East African Community Gender Policy of 2018, and the Gender Development of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The key focus areas addressed in these policies were the need to focus on women empowerment in order to reduce other social and economic disparities, discrimination reduction, capacity building, and policy development to reduce gender disparities.

Table 2: Regional Gender policies and commitments

Key policy	Focus
The African Union Gender Policy 2009.	The African Union's commitment to gender equality stems from the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. The emphasis is on removing major barriers to gender equality in order to increase the participation of women and girls in economic, political, and social endeavors.
The East African Community Gender Policy of 2018	The EAC Gender Policy recognizes that investing in women education, health, and economic participation is critical to breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty, necessitating support for comprehensive women empowerment programs.
New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Gender development	The policy commitments are aimed at creating an enabling and stable political environment; legal protection actions against discrimination to ensure gender equality; mobilization of different players for gender equality in Africa; rationalization and harmonization of RECs' gender policies and programs; resource mobilization; capacity building for gender mainstreaming; gender mainstreaming in all sectors; and maintaining peace, security, and stability.

In Kenya, there are nine policies that addressed gender issues. The main emphasis is on ensuring gender mainstreaming in all government programs, policies, and plans, empowerment of boys and girls in all sectors, non-discrimination and equality in training programs and institutions, and participation of both boys and girls in all sectors to contribute to the well-being of the society.

Table 3: National Gender policies and commitments

Key policy	Focus
Kenya Constitution 2010	The key focus is providing equality and freedom from discrimination.
Kenya Vision 2030	Gender mainstreaming was mandated in Vision 2030 to be implemented in all government policies, plans, and programs to ensure that the needs and interests of each gender (women and men, girls and boys) are addressed. This will be accomplished by recognizing and appreciating the numerous ways in which women contribute to the economy and society.
National Policy on Gender and Development, Sessional paper no 2, 2019	This policy builds on the National Policy for Gender and Development from 2000, as well as Sessional Paper No. 2 on Gender Equality and Development from 2006, which envisioned women empowerment and mainstreaming the needs of women, men, girls, and boys in all sectors of

	development in Kenya, so that they can participate and benefit equally from development initiatives. The policy establishes a framework for accelerating the realization of gender equality, gender equity, non-discrimination, and fundamental rights in Africa.
National Human Rights Policy and Action Plan	The policy's goal is to provide a framework for the integration and mainstreaming of human rights in development planning, implementation, and evaluation across all sectors in order to fully implement Kenya's Constitution. One of the policy guiding principles is equality and non-discrimination, which holds that all people are equal as human beings with inherent dignity.
TVET ACT 2013	The TVET Act (2013) prioritizes quality CBET programs offered in the country to ensure a strong link between skills learned and labour market needs by producing graduates with superior employability. One of the key priorities in the TVET strategic plan 2018-2022 is access and equity, which ensures that all trainees, regardless of origin or status, have equitable access to TVET programs that meet quality training standards for males, females, underprivileged, and physically disadvantaged individuals.
The National Gender and Equality Commission Bill, 2011	The commission has several gender-specific functions, including: promoting equality and freedom from discrimination; monitoring, facilitating, and advising on the integration of equality and freedom from discrimination principles; and acting as the primary organ of the state in ensuring compliance with all treaties and conventions ratified by Kenya relating to issues of equality and freedom from discrimination and relating to special interest groups.
Education and Training Sector Gender and Policy 2 nd Edition 2015	The overall goal of this policy is to promote gender equality issues in the education sector, such as access, equity, and equality, as well as to increase empowerment for all to participate in and contribute to national development. Finally, this policy will work to ensure gender equality, empowerment, and the mainstreaming of the needs and concerns of women, men, girls, and boys in the sector.
Kenya Medical Training College Gender mainstreaming policy May 2019	The overarching goal of this policy is to promote gender equity and equality in all aspects of Kenya Medical Training College operations. The Gender Mainstreaming Policy goal is to ensure equal opportunities for men and women, girls and boys, at Kenya Medical Training College in areas such

	as enrollment, employment, governance, health, education, training, research, and linkages. This policy's key activities include: Gender and Education; Gender and Governance; and Gender and the Learning Environment.
Mainstreaming Gender in the National Science, Technology & Innovation (NSTI) Policy in Kenya: African Technology and Policy Studies Network – Technopolicy Brief No 44	They advocate for the inclusion of women and men in all NSTI-related programs, activities, and decision-making to ensure that the benefits are felt by all segments of society.

4.0 Discussion

The findings in table 1 are specific global policies, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, with a focus on gender mainstreaming and gender equality. The UN Women report connects gender equality and sustainability in order to strengthen policy development among various actors. They recognize the rationale and actions required for long-term development by recognizing the role of women in economic and social development. They have pledged to ensure equal rights, access, and participation of women in leadership, the economy, society, and political decision-making (UN, 2014).

The commitment of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to an equal future for all girls and to achieving equitable outcomes for women, girls, and boys reaffirms and contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and aligns directly with the gender equality outcomes identified in the United Nations Common Chapter (UNICEF, 2018). As one of its core pillars, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) strategy for TVET 2016-2021 must promote equity and gender equality. This will be accomplished by supporting measures that increase women's and girls' access to relevant TVET programs and provide equal opportunities in the workplace. The International Labour Organization (ILO) advocates for gender equality not only as a matter of basic labour rights, but also for economic efficiency. Children's health and education improve, and the economy grows faster and more equitably when girls are educated and trained equally with boys, and women participate equally with men in economic life (ILO Policy Brief, 2020).

The World Health Organization (WHO) gender policy of 2002 aims to improve health for both men and women by promoting equity and equality between men and women through health research, policies, and programs that take gender into account. They seek to analyze

and address gender issues in policy, program, project, and research planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation (WHO, 2002).

Results in table 2 shows that the African Union Gender Policy of 2009 provide commitments on gender and women's empowerment. The African Union's commitment to gender equality stems from the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. This commitment is reinforced, among other things, by the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), and the Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development adopted by African Heads of State and Government in 2006. The AU's vision is to create a just and peaceful environment in which men and women can live dignified and harmonious lives while benefiting equally from socioeconomic development (AU, 2009). According to the 2018 East African Community Gender Policy, they are committed to increasing access to education and training opportunities for women, men, girls, and boys, as well as ensuring the elimination of all forms of discrimination in the sector, in order to improve human capital development in the region. The African Union Gender Policy, adopted in 2009, guides NEPAD's gender policy commitments. The policy commitments are overarching and anchored on the institutional policy statements, strategic plans, roadmaps, and action plans of AU organs, RECs, and member states for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

Locally, Article 27 of the Kenya Constitution of 2010 contains several clauses that guarantee equality and freedom from discrimination. Kenya Vision 2030 aims to transform Kenya into a newly industrializing, middle-income country that provides a high quality of life to all of its citizens in a clean and secure environment by 2030. Gender mainstreaming was mandated in all government policies, plans, and programs to ensure that the needs and interests of each gender (i.e. women and men, girls and boys) are addressed. The National Policy on Gender and Development, Sessional Paper No. 2, 2019, provides a foundation for the government to emphasize its commitment to advancing women's rights. This policy builds on the National Policy for Gender and Development from 2000, as well as Sessional Paper No. 2 on Gender Equality and Development from 2006, which envisioned women empowerment and mainstreaming the needs of women, men, girls, and boys in all sectors of development in Kenya, so that they can participate and benefit equally from development initiatives. Kenya's

Sessional Paper No.5 of 2005 proposed a TVET progression structure with the goal of providing TVET learners with equal opportunities to advance to the highest level of learning via academic or TVET channels. Following the Kenyan Constitution of 2010, the Kenyan Government developed the National Policy and Action Plan on Human Rights in recognition of its primary responsibility to observe, respect, protect, promote, and fulfill the rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA) is a public corporate agency established under the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Act No. 29 of 2013 to regulate and coordinate training in the country through program licensing, registration, and accreditation of institutions, and trainers. The TVET Act (2013) prioritizes quality CBET programs offered in the country to ensure a strong link between skills learned and labour market needs by producing graduates with superior employability. One of the key strategic areas in the TVET strategic plan 2018-2022 is access and equity, which ensures that all trainees, regardless of origin or status, have equitable access to TVET programs that meet quality training standards for males, females, underprivileged, and physically disadvantaged individuals. The Education and Training Sector Gender and Policy Second Edition 2015 takes a broad view of equality, including girls and boys, women and men, rather than focusing solely on girls and women.

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The policies listed above serve as a road map for gender mainstreaming in technical and vocational institutions. There is a global, regional, and local (Kenyan) commitment to advancing men and women roles in promoting sustainable development and ensuring equity in the promotion of equal opportunities in education and industry. There is a need to ensure that programs and policies within institutions provide those opportunities, as well as address gender inequality challenges through collaboration and shared responsibility with all stakeholders.

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