

# Kenyan social policy and millennium development goals essay

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



## **Introduction**

Social policy often refers to a broad framework within which a country's social welfare plans and agenda is put together in order to achieve the fundamental ends of the government and people of the nation. This includes a set of policies and practices concerned with promoting social welfare and wellbeing. Social policy is a process where policy makers use scientific methods to formulate important processes and regulations for the attainment of results relating to the social wellbeing for individuals and for the communities within the society and community groups.

There are various constituents of social activities that affect and are affected by social policy in a given country. This is because different sectors and different activities are regulated by the government and this forms the crux of social policy in every country.

This paper will examine the social policy structure and systems of Kenya in order to critique the policy themes for education and women's right. To this end, the following objectives will be explored:

- A critical review of the Millennium Development Goals of Kenya;
- An evaluation of Kenyan educational and women's policy within the MDG framework;
- An assessment of the contributions and achievements made in relation to the social policies in education and women's development.

Kenya gained independence in 1963 and in the first few years, economic growth was rapid and it complemented social policy and social development. Poverty reduction has been the main driver and the central idea around

which the social policy of Kenya is built. This means that the country relies heavily on the need to move a large percentage of its population from poverty towards empowerment. Today, this effort is complemented by the contributions of the IMF, European Union, World Bank and other entities that come up with measures to help achieve the social policy vision of Kenyan governments.

One of the notable activities and processes utilized in the definition of the broad framework of social policy in Kenya is the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), set up by the United Nations and other international agencies and donor bodies. The idea was to reduce the world's poverty by 50% by the year 2015 and this was to be done through eight developmental goals that were to be achieved through the cooperation and commitment of Western leaders, leaders in poor countries and other international agencies and organizations.

This was to be done through a “ new public management” that was to ensure that social policy was clearly defined and focused on the true needs of the people in a given country. Kenya therefore redefined its social policy and aligned it to the demands and expectations of the Millennium Development Goals and streamlined its social policy in relation to the MDGs. These goals have effectively influenced the fields of education policy and gender equality and balancing through various explicit and implied views on the two ideas and concepts.

## **Kenyan Educational Policy**

The Millennium Development Goals seek to provide free and compulsory universal basic education to all young children around the world, particularly in developing countries. Kenya is one of the countries and the vision is to ensure that there is enough education to cover all the young people of the country.

The reports of the Kenyan authorities indicate that education of primary school children increased by over 100% by 2008 and 2009 and that is due to the fact that there were more children who were willing to go through school than in the previous era. This indicates that education is one thing that the Kenyan government has focused on in the aegis of the MDG.

Kenya did this by integrating the MDG into their Vision 2030 which is a plan for the country to achieve the best results in various social welfare pointers and views. Free primary education is the third variable in the training and education section of Vision 2030 of the plan put forward by the Kenyan government. This is strongly linked and connected to the MDG and it seeks to translate and transpose the various ideas and concepts that relate to education and total enrollment.

The first objective of the MDG Goal 2 is to ensure that all children gain free and compulsory basic education. This part of the educational policy of the government and has been modified in various forms over the years. This includes the introduction of boys and girls into various institutions in order to ensure that they learn and achieve important results that aid their progression into the higher levels of education. To this end, Kenya's government has been consistently improving the intake of children into

primary schools. This is because there are different institutions and different entities that exist which provide various levels of education that are now opened and made accessible.

The fundamental challenge faced by Kenya is the case of the existence of a large informal sector. This is because most people in Kenya work in the informal sector and this comes with the ability to employ child labor in achieving objectives. Hence, many parents and other cultural practices aid the prevention of children from entering into these primary schools. This is evident in the fact that there are many children who drop out of school due to the fact that they have to work and achieve various ends for adult employers. There are also many children who end up being excluded from institutions because of archaic cultural practices that require them to live in various lifestyles and various forms of activities. The government has embarked on various projects to educate and promote education amongst various classes of people.

Another hindrance to the achievement of free compulsory universal basic education is poverty and the lack of basic necessities. Most children from very poor parts of Kenya cannot afford food and other basic necessities. Hence, they have to provide labor for their parents in order to get some of the basic necessities they need to survive. Thus, they tend to stay away from school for long periods of time in order to satisfy their basic needs. To avert this, some countries like Ghana have introduced various pilot projects to complement their MDG agenda like provide school-feeding programs to encourage children from very impoverished backgrounds to go to school at the right time

The second component of the 2nd MDG pointer relating to education involves the completion of secondary education. This complements the first component which seeks to get all children in school. This element implies that there is the need for children to go through their primary education without hindrance. This is measured by the number of children who are able to go through their primary education and enter either secondary institutions or other vocational or technical courses.

Primary Completion Rate (PCR) increased from 83. 2% in 2008 to 97. 8% in 2009 and this is due to the implementation of MDG targets and goals. This indicates that the number of students staying in school is improving steadily. It is credited to the fact that there are measures that have been put in place by the authorities to announce and promote primary education in the high-risk areas where the dropout rates are high. Also, there were various measures to educate and utilize stakeholder oriented measures to get parents and community leaders to understand and appreciate the elements of the MDG in their own local and private terms. This enabled the communities, particularly those in rural Kenya to get people to accept primary education as the most basic and the most essential.

Another issue of importance and relevance in this process is that there seem to be a gender bias which indicates that more boys are benefiting from these MDG plans of the country than girls. This is because the enrollment ratio of boys to girls is always a little higher. This implies that more people seem to accept boys' education as better and more beneficial. Early marriages still occur in various parts of Kenya and there are major rifts that show that

gender is a major indicator of the possibility of either getting an education or not.

## **Kenyan Women's Right Policy**

Goal 3 of the MDG aims at ensuring that girls and women bridge the gaps that exist between them and their male counterparts in nations around the developing world. Goal 3 requires the achievement and attainment of gender balance in all institutions in the countries. Kenya is working towards bridging these gaps and the idea is to ensure that primary education is balanced in order to ensure that there is a progression of a steady number of women in various institutions of higher learning throughout the countries.

Thus, under the aegis of the MDG, Kenya has been able to consistently invest in social services consistently over the past decade. The idea is to provide increased funding in the social services in order to combat issues with perceptions and traditions that are against the ability of women to integrate into the society.

Vision 2030 of the Kenyan government seeks to identify a group of vulnerable members of the society in order to protect them and enhance their achievements in terms of economic competencies and earning capabilities. Vision 2030 complements the MDG directly. This has culminated in the identification of women as part of this special group of people.

Therefore, they are protected and given the best form of opportunities in climbing the economic ladder. This is in sync with the plan to achieve the best and most important ends of MDG number 3. 2.

As a direct result of the MDG, the Kenyan constitution has been modified to

guarantee a minimum of 30% of women as representatives in parliament. This is clearly above the standard and expected levels that existed in the past. This implies that the role of women is guaranteed through a constitutional provision that makes women an important constituent in national matters and in public decision-making.

The integration and inclusion of women in decision making and top activities in the economic, social and political sphere of Kenya is spelt out clearly in Vision 2030 and it is done in such a way and manner that the country is to carry out its activities in order to encourage women in gaining leadership positions. This includes consciously identifying the disadvantages and challenges women face in entering the labor markets and in achieving top positions in the country.

Developmental partners like the Canadian government have made direct donations that are meant to provide important capital basis for women who want to work in business. This is part of the MDG's vision because the MDG aims at bringing together international partners to work with governments like the Kenyan government. Therefore, the Canadian government invested as much as \$1. 9 billion to the promotion of female small-scale enterprises. This is to get women to become more powerful and also demand equality and work to gain a better and happier life for themselves and their dependents.

## **Conclusion**

The study indicates that the MDGs of the international community set standards that are aimed at rapidly improving issues and matters in



developing countries like Kenya. Kenya in conjunction with its developing partners have set up a series of broad principles and ideas that are aimed at getting the institutions and branches of the government to be ordered in a way and manner that puts the nation and people closer to achieving goals within the confines of the MDG.

This paper has identified that the Vision 2030, signed by the Kenyan president in 2007 provide the springboard on which the different activities in the MDG are transposed to the national institutions and policy systems and structures. Vision 2030 aims at promoting total enrollment. However, Kenya's children are faced with issues like poverty, illiteracy, gender bias and other community resistance issues. The government has moved to formulate policies that proactively tackle these issues. This includes various activities like stakeholder-related activities and discussions that are meant to provide important guidelines on how to get local communities to understand and accept various levels of education and other methods.

The Vision 2030 also spells out various activities that are aimed at getting women to be given better guidance and direction and integration into economic activities. The strategy is to ensure that girls are educated and enrollment ratios in primary schools reflect gender equality. This is to promote the empowerment of women and ensure a continuous flow of female students at an equal ratio to men at the higher levels of education. Vision 2030 classifies women as a fundamental group protected by the constitution. And as such, they are to be given consciously defined measures that will always allow them to enter the labor force and access top positions without prejudice.

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