EAC YOUTH POLICY
Acknowledgements

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Glossary

EAYCP - East Africa Community Youth Policy
CSO - Civil Society Organisations
GAA - Girls Advocacy Alliance
AU - Africa Union
EE - Economic Empowerment
GBV - Gender based Violence
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About FAWE

FAWE is a pan-African non-government organisation founded in 1992 by five women ministers of education to empower girls and women through gender-responsive education in sub-Saharan Africa. The organisation’s members include female ministers of education, university vice-chancellors, education policy-makers, researchers, gender specialists and human rights activists. FAWE Headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya is a network of 34 National Chapters in 33 countries.

FAWE’s vision is a world in which all African girls have access to education, perform well and complete their studies and gender disparities in education are eliminated. FAWE’s mission is to promote gender equity and equality in education in Africa by fostering positive policies, practices and attitudes towards girls’ education.

FAWE works hand in hand with communities, schools, NGOs, Ministries of Education to ensure that African girls receive equal education and life chances so that they grow into women who have the knowledge, skills and opportunity to contribute to the economic, social and democratic development of their societies.

FAWE believes education is a human right and that all citizens, including women and girls must enjoy that right. Educating girls and women reduces fertility rates, child and infant mortality rates, improves nutrition and health, protects girls and women from abuse, exploitation and HIV/AIDS, increases economic productivity and growth and improves governance and democratic processes.

PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

FAWE acts as a watchdog on the implementation of national and continental education policies and strategies to ensure that they do not discriminate against girls and women. In 2017, FAWE conducted an assessment on existing key policies, laws, protocols and treaties that denounce Gender Based Violence (GBV) and promote Economic Empowerment among girls, women and the youth at the regional (AU) and sub-regional (EAC and ECOWAS) level.

In line with its objectives; FAWE is implementing a Girls advocacy Alliance Programme in partnership Plan international African Union Liaison Office, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to specifically enhance the capacity of selected regional and sub-regional CSOs network/alliance to influence regional policy-making and monitoring bodies on Gender-based Violence and Economic Empowerment of the youth at the East African Community (EAC) and the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) regional blocks. The goal of the Programme is;

“Girls and Young women in Africa, and their civil-society organisations use regional monitoring accountability mechanism to hold their governments to the fulfillment of their protection and rights.”

The information in this document is packaged for selected CSOs under the Girls Advocacy Alliance Programme to enable them play a critical role in pushing African governments to commit and report on these regional instruments.

This summarized version of the East Africa Youth Policy is therefore developed to:

• Enable selected CSOs better understand the existing AU, ECOWAS, EAC protocols and policies especially the clauses that relate to issues of Gender Based Violence and Economic Empowerment of girls and young women.
• Serve as reference points for selected youth led CSOs to engage, lobby and hold their governments accountable to fulfill their protection and rights at national, sub regional and regional level.

This document can however be used by any other organization advocating for ratification of policies. It should be noted that the original version of the East Africa Youth Policy was the main reference document for this work.
The East Africa Community Youth Policy 2013 (EAYCP) is a plan of action adopted by East Africa Community (EAC) Council of Ministers on Youth matters.

One of the considerations by the EAC Forum of Ministers that led to the development of the policy was the need for regional strategies on challenges in the areas of Gender, Youth, Children, Social Protection and Community Development, including Gender Based Violence (GBV), the need to harmonize Gender, Youth and Children policies, women and youth empowerment through skills development and life skills programmes, and community empowerment to facilitate effective participation in social development programs.

The Forum of Ministers identified several strategies among them; development of appropriate structures, policies and laws to improve youth participation; increased opportunities for vocational education and training, establishment of vulnerability indices and capacity building for communities. Upon approval of the recommendations of the East Africa forum ministers in their several meetings the EAYCP is one of the policies that was approved.

The EACYP was therefore then developed by the EAC secretariat through wide consultation and adopted in August 2013 with the objective of guiding the EAC in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes to address youth issues in the region while assuring sustainable social, economic and political development.

In this policy the Youth are identified as persons between the ages of 15 to 35 years. The Policy has been in effect since it was adopted and has been implemented by a strategic plan which lapsed in 2016, a second strategic plan is in progress.
This policy seeks to institutionalize youth focused programming within the EAC development and integration processes, as well as set benchmarks and guidelines for Partner States mainstreaming of youth issues in national development and governance processes.

It is a clear framework to consider development and participation of the youth at the centre of all EAC integration processes.

The EAYCP;

• Prescribes strategic priority areas and actions to guide the implementation and address youth challenges;
• Articulates the need for harmonizing definitions of the youth, related legislation and programmes carried out across the region;
• Is based on guiding principles which underline the respect for cultural, religious and ethical values, equity and accessibility, gender inclusiveness, good governance and national unity, youth participation, youth empowerment, team work and partnerships.
• Is developed within the context of existing national, regional and international policy frameworks and charters including National Youth Development Policies, National development plans, the African Youth Charter and the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond among others. (It does not contradict or conflict any of the above but rather complements).

The EAYCP has 14 strategic priorities; out of which the following 4 are relevant for GBV prevention and Economic Empowerment.

1. Sustainable livelihoods and Youth Empowerment
To empower the youth to develop their potential, creativity and skills as dynamic members of the community through taking all appropriate measures with a view to achieving full realization of the right to gainful employment.

2. Education and skills development
To empower the youth to develop their potential, creativity and skills as dynamic members of the community through enhancing equal access to high quality education and training.

3. Gender dimensions
To mainstream gender in youth issues, policies, laws and Programmes at the National and regional level. This means taking care to address the specific needs of both young women and young men to avoid any inequality or discrimination because of gender in all laws and programmes developed.

4. Poverty Eradication and social –Economic Integration
To promote economic empowerment of Youth through meaningful participation.
This can be achieved through establishing youth enterprise development funds and relevant trainings in commerce, mining, industrial production and agriculture.
Implementation of the EAYC is the responsibility of the EAC Secretariat and the Partner states (Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and Rwanda (and now South Sudan).

Implementation instrument required to operationalize the policy include, an elaborate Youth Action Plan (Strategic plan).

Partner States are required to develop country specific youth policies, strategic plans, legislation and establish institutional arrangements for addressing youth concerns in line with the EAC Youth Policy.

The EAC secretariat is expected to work closely with relevant EAC organs and institutions and Partner States institutions in the execution of regional programs, projects and activities emanating from the Policy.

This is to be achieved through strengthening and mobilizing of capacities of existing relevant institutions and facilities in the region to meet pressing youth challenges.

The relevant institutions include:

**East African Legislative Assembly**

a) Spearhead enactment of youth friendly Legislation and Policies and ensure establishment of youth regional institutions

**EAC Sectoral Council on Gender, Children, Youth, Social Protection and Community Development**

a) For the preparation of a comprehensive implementation programme and the setting out of priorities with respect to the youth;

b) To monitor and keep under constant review the implementation of the programmes of the Community with respect to the youth;

**EAC Youth Council**

This council provides a platform and a reference body for the youth of East Africa. It has a role to effectively engage the youth in the integration process of the East African Community.

**REPORTING AND MONITORING MECHANISM**

- The EAC Secretariat is responsible for reporting on the implementation progress of the Policy to the Sectorial Council
- The EAC Sectorial Council on Gender, Children, Youth, Social Protection and Community Development has a role to Monitor and keep under constant review the implementation of the programmes of the Community with respect to the youth.

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**COUNTRIES Signed**

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**COUNTRIES Ratified**

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All GAA countries have adopted it.
2.1.9. Right to Own Property
a) Every Youth shall have the right to own and to inherit property and not be arbitrarily deprived of such property.

2.1.11. Right to Gainful Employment
a) Every youth has the right to:
i. Freely choose a lawful occupation (job, formal or informal);
ii. Receive equal pay for equal work;
iii. Work under equitable and satisfactory conditions that respect their dignity.

2.1.12. Right to Participation
The Youth shall have the right to be involved in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national and regional development plans, policies and poverty reduction strategies.
Through the established organs 9-(Youth Council) of the EAC youth CSO can participate as observers in the sectorial council meetings as observers as well as Annual forums among other key meetings and discussions on GBV and EE.

2.1.14. Right to Education and Skills Development
Every youth shall have the right to education of good quality.

Relevant rights and freedom to GBV prevention and EE
a) Every youth shall be entitled to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms recognized and guaranteed in this Policy irrespective of their race, ethnic group, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth or other status.

2.1.10. Right to Development
a) Every youth shall have the right to social, economic, political and cultural development with due regard to their freedom and identity and in equal enjoyment of the common heritage of mankind.

2.1.15. Right to adequate standard of Living
The Youth have the right to a standard of living adequate to their health and wellbeing including food, water and sanitation, and shelter/housing.
**Implementation challenges**

- Plans and programmes in the Strategic plan were not fully implemented due to resources.
- Monitoring mechanisms are weak.

**Participation**

- The policy has not yet been effectively implemented due to inadequate participation of the citizens (Youth).
- Youth not adequately engaging with the EAC structures identified as necessary by the youth policy.

**Reporting**

- The report submitted to the Council by the Sectorial council did not report or did not capture initiative to support the youth take advantage of the opportunities.

**Communication**

- The EACYP and related relevant information is not adequately communicated to the youth.
- Language barrier; English French and translation issues hinder communication and harmonisation.

**Lack of inclusiveness**

- The youth should not be engaged as homogenous group but rather as diverse taking into consideration the unique needs of the 21 categories specified in the policy.

The East Africa Youth Network which is the focal point for youth CSOs need to be strengthened. It is currently challenged and therefore not effectively discharging its mandate.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Enhance youth participation by Youth organizations through the following:
  1. Getting observer status to get opportunity to attend meetings of the organs of the community.
  2. Through MOU the youth alliance can engage with the EAC secretariat to supplement efforts of the EAC at local, National and regional levels especially in championing GBV prevention and promotion of EE.
  3. Through EALA, youth CSO’s can submit recommendation or information to input in to the legislative processes as well as lobby for allocation of resources for relevant youth programmes to prevent GBV and promote EE.
  4. Through expert working groups person youth with expertise or information in GBV prevention and Economic empowerment of young people can participate by invitation in the EAC policy and decision making.
- Advocacy initiatives should be developed based on the commitments made in the EAYCP to lobby for more resources for youth Programmes including GBV prevention and EE.
- The youth should not be engaged as homogenous group, but rather as diverse taking into consideration the unique needs of the 21 categories specified in the policy.
- There should be better coordination of youth platforms for their effective engagement at the regional level. The youth council should improve its operations for effective engagement with the EAC organs on GBV and EE.
- Reporting to the council should be comprehensive and should articulate progress on specific issues such as GBV prevention efforts and EE Promotion initiatives.
- CSO to learn the EAC structure to understand the decision making processes.

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**KEY MEETINGS**

- The EAC Secretariat an EAC-PSO-CSO consultative Dialogue Framework (CDF) which ensures continuous dialogue in accordance with the EAC calendar of activities and an annual forum convened by the secretary general of the EAC.
- Participate in sectorial meetings as observers
- Participate in East Africa Regional youth Annual Forums
- Engage with the East Africa youth council for research and participation in monitoring and development of policy.
- Engage with the East Africa Youth Network as it is the link with the EAC Secretariat on youth involvement with East African youth.
- Debates and Public meetings as scheduled by EAC
- Lobby the EAC to include the youth in their delegations to various regional meetings.