

2024 | Research and Learning Department



BOMA

POLICY SCAN

Review of Policy Frameworks on Youth Engagement in Food and Water systems in Kenya



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
1. Overview	3
2. Key findings from the Policy Scan	3
Recognition of the Youth in the Legal Frameworks	3
Intersectionality of gender inclusion and protection	3
Youth engagement in agriculture issues	4
National Legal Frameworks	4
1. Constitution of Kenya 2010	4
2. National Youth Development Policy 2019	5
3. National Youth Service Act 2018	5
4. Kenya Youth Agribusiness Strategy 2018-2022	5
5. Youth Enterprise and Development Fund (YEDF) State Corporations Act of 2007	6
6. The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock Fisheries and Irrigation Strategic Plan (2013-2017)	6
7. Kenya National Youth Policy 2007, Sessional No.2 of 2007	6
8. Women Enterprise Development Fund 2017	7
9. National Youth Council Act 2009	7
10. Micro and Small Enterprise (Mse) Act 2012	7
11. Technical and Vocational Education and Training Act of 2013	7
12. Uwezo Fund (Public Finance Management Act 2014)	8
13. The Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act, 2015:	8
14. Employment Policy And Strategy for Kenya Sessional Paper No. 4 of 2013.	8
15. National Government Affirmative Action Fund (Public Finance Management Act 2012)	8
16. KENYA VISION 2030	8
Marsabit County Legal Frameworks	9
17. County Integrated Development Plan 2023-2027	9
Conclusion	9
Recommendations	10
References	10



Acknowledgment

This document shares a policy scan of policies and strategies in Kenya that focuses on youth engagement in food and water systems. The policy scan was implemented as part of the Youth Excel project funded by USAID through an implementation research sub-award from IREX. The policy scan establishes the existing government strategies and policies, and the gaps needed to effectively support youth engagement in food and water systems' entrepreneurship.

The policy scan was led by two youth researchers (Perpetual Gakeni and Eliakim Lemuni), with support and guidance from Irene Opondo and Catherine Mwema.

Overview

BOMA is dedicated to promoting youth inclusion and protection by ensuring that young people from all backgrounds have equal opportunities to benefit from its REAP model. This model aims to eradicate poverty, youth unemployment, and radicalization in the ASALs of Kenya, and aligns with broader youth empowerment goals. BOMA collaborates with youth-centric initiatives, government ministries, departments, agencies, the private sector, civil societies, youth-led and youth-serving organizations, and local communities to holistically implement its interventions.

Despite the existence of policies to support youth involvement in food and water systems, their effective implementation remains a challenge. Advocating for policy alignment and creating an enabling environment is crucial for enhancing youth inclusion and engagement in agri-entrepreneurship. Below are some of the policies and legal frameworks in Kenya that promote youth's economic and social inclusion, protection, and engagement in food and water systems.

1. Key findings from the Policy Scan

Recognition of the Youth in the Legal Frameworks

- **Legal Framework:** The Constitution of Kenya (2010) and the National Youth Council Act (2009) provide a strong legal foundation for youth empowerment and development, recognizing the rights and importance of the youth in the nation's development.
- **Inclusivity:** Many policies and strategies aim to be inclusive, targeting marginalized and vulnerable youth groups, such as those from rural areas, youth with disabilities, and young women like the 2030 Vision
- **Comprehensive Approach:** Policies like the Kenya Youth Development Policy (2019) and the Kenya Youth Agribusiness Strategy (2017-2021) take a holistic approach, addressing various aspects of youth development, including education, employment, health, and civic engagement.
- **Promotion of Youth Participation:** Policies like the National Youth Council Act (2009) and the Kenya Youth Development Policy (2019) emphasize the importance of youth participation in decision-making processes and program implementation
- **Capacity Building:** Several policies and strategies, such as the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project (KYEOP), NGAAP, YEDF, and the Kenya Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy (2006-2010), focus on building the capacity of youth through skills development, mentorship, and access to finance.

Intersectionality of gender inclusion and protection

The policies recognize gender-specific challenges faced by young women and girls. There is an emphasis on promoting gender equality and mainstreaming gender perspectives in youth development programs. There are efforts to enhance access to education, skills development, employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities for young women.



- **Constitutional Provisions:** The Constitution of Kenya (2010) enshrines principles of equality, non-discrimination, and affirmative action for marginalized groups, including women and youth. Article 27 specifically prohibits discrimination based on gender, while Article 55 mandates the state to take measures to ensure youth access to relevant education, training, and opportunities.
- **Kenya Youth Development Policy (2019):** This policy recognizes the unique challenges faced by young women and girls and aims to promote their empowerment and protection. It emphasizes gender mainstreaming in all youth development programs, addressing issues such as gender-based violence, early marriages, and access to sexual and reproductive health services.
- **National Gender Policy (2019):** While not specifically focused on youth, this policy provides a comprehensive framework for promoting gender equality and empowerment across various sectors, including education, employment, and leadership.
- **Education and Skills Development:** Policies like the Kenya Youth Agribusiness Strategy (2017-2021) and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Act (2013) aim to promote equal access to education and skills development opportunities for both young men and women.
- **Employment and Entrepreneurship:** Initiatives such as the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project (KYEOP) and the Kenya Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy (2006-2010) have targeted young women as beneficiaries, providing them with access to employment opportunities, entrepreneurship training, and financial services.

Youth engagement in agriculture issues

The policies and laws in Kenya diagnose the importance of engaging youth in agriculture and agribusiness, with specific strategies and initiatives aimed at enhancing their access to productive resources, skills development, and market linkages in the agricultural sector. These efforts highlight the emphasis on improving the perception of agriculture among youth and creating attractive agribusiness opportunities to foster their participation and entrepreneurship in this vital economic sector.

- **Kenya Youth Agribusiness Strategy (2017-2021):** This strategy specifically aims to promote youth participation in agribusiness and create employment opportunities along the agricultural value chain. It focuses on enhancing access to productive resources (land, finance, and technology), developing agribusiness skills, and creating market linkages for youth-led agribusiness enterprises. The strategy also seeks to improve the image of agriculture among youth and encourage participation through mentorship and role-modeling programs.
- **Kenya Youth Development Policy (2019):** This policy recognizes agriculture as a key sector for youth employment and entrepreneurship. It proposed initiatives to enhance youth access to land, finance, and modern agricultural technologies, as well as capacity building in agribusiness skills. The policy also emphasized the need for youth-friendly agricultural extension services and the promotion of climate-smart agriculture practices.
- **National Agriculture and Food Policy (2019):** While not youth-specific, this policy acknowledged the importance of engaging youth in agriculture and agribusiness as a means of addressing unemployment and food insecurity. It proposed measures to facilitate youth access to land, credit, and agricultural inputs, as well as the provision of agribusiness training and mentorship programs.
- **Vision 2030 (Kenya's long-term development blueprint):** The Vision 2030 strategy identifies agriculture as a key sector for economic growth and job creation, with a focus on enhancing productivity and value addition. It recognizes the need to attract and retain youth in agriculture through the modernization of the sector and the creation of attractive agribusiness opportunities.

National Legal Frameworks

1. Constitution of Kenya 2010



The Kenyan Constitution plays a crucial role in shaping the rights and opportunities available to young people. Article 55 of the Bill of Rights obligates the state to take specific measures to empower and protect the youth through;

- Vision 2030 (Kenya's long-term development blueprint): The Vision 2030 strategy identifies agriculture as a key sector for economic growth and job creation, with a focus on enhancing productivity and value addition. It recognizes the need to attract and retain youth in agriculture through the modernization of the sector and the creation of attractive agribusiness opportunities.
- Education and training: The state must ensure that young people have access to relevant education and training.
- Representation and participation: Youth should have opportunities to associate, be represented, and participate in political, social, and economic spheres of life.
- Employment: The constitution emphasizes youth access to employment.
- Protection from harmful cultural practices and exploitation: The state must safeguard youth from harmful cultural practices and exploitation.

2. National Youth Development Policy 2019

The Kenya Youth Development Policy (KYDP) 2019 is a comprehensive framework aimed at empowering and harnessing the potential of the youth while contributing to the Country's sustainable development. The KYDP recognizes the importance of harnessing the strengths and opportunities presented by the youth while addressing barriers that affect their productivity.

Its mandate is to promote youth empowerment for sustainable development through,

- Supporting youth development, health and nutrition, and wellbeing.
- Transforming agriculture to make it attractive to youth.
- Supporting transformative leadership, mentorship, participation, and representation
- Supporting entrepreneurship and employment,
- Youth mainstreaming and inclusion in social, economic, and political initiatives.

The KYDP emphasizes youth empowerment, skill development, and creating favorable conditions for youth engagement in agribusiness.

1. National Youth Service Act 2018

The Act establishes the National Youth Service (NYS), which plays a vital role in youth development and empowerment through their involvement in national development projects, disaster response, and community service. The NYS provides vocational training and skills development programs for youth, contributing to their inclusion and employability. The NYS is mandated with;

- Training and capacity building: Providing vocational training, life skills, and leadership development.
- National Service: Engaging youth in national development projects, disaster response, and community service.
- Discipline and Values: Instilling discipline, patriotism, and ethical values among youth.
- Employment opportunities: Creating employment avenues for young people.

NYS ensures that its policies and programs are effectively implemented at the grassroots level and in compliance with established legal guidelines and procedures. It also collaborates with other government agencies, ministries and departments, youth organizations, civil societies, and local communities in its policy implementation.

2. Kenya Youth Agribusiness Strategy 2018-2022



This strategy promotes innovative, attractive, and sustainable employment to maximize the youth's full potential through participatory engagement in agriculture as an employment opportunity to serve their needs and aspirations. The strategy seeks to:

- Transform the mindset and perceptions of the youth towards Agribusiness.
- Equip youth with appropriate agribusiness skills, knowledge, and information.
- Enhance access to affordable and youth-friendly financial services for agri-preneurship.
- Engage youth in research, development, and utilization of innovative agricultural technologies.
- Enhance access to factors of production, utilization of modern technologies, and Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs).
- Support the development and review of policies that provide an enabling environment for youth in agribusiness.

3. Youth Enterprise and Development Fund (YEDF) State Corporations Act of 2007

The YEDF Corporation Act, formed the YEDF to economically empower Kenyan youth and address unemployment by supporting youth-led enterprises. The fund provides financial support to assist young entrepreneurs in starting and running viable businesses. YEDF represents a commendable effort by the government in addressing youth unemployment and promoting inclusion. The YEDF in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Service, Youth, and Gender Affairs and the Agricultural sectors offers;

- Incentives and attract youth to venture into the agricultural sector,
- Setting up processing plants for value addition, and
- Creating an enabling environment to provide employment opportunities for the youth, and
- Facilitate production of agricultural raw materials in the rural areas.

There have been issues related to the fund including disbursement delays, stringent requirements, limited funding, limited outreach, and the rural-urban divide.

4. The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock Fisheries and Irrigation Strategic Plan (2013-2017)

The MoALF Strategic Plan (2013-2017) highlighted measures to encourage youth to take up agriculture as a business and a form of gainful employment. Specific measures the strategy put in place to empower youth include:

- Capacity building under technical and vocational training and farming including Agriculture.
- Technical Vocational Education and Training Program (AVET) aimed at integrating agriculture education and training in vocational and tertiary institutions.
- Introduction of new farming technologies (Greenhouses, drip kits, fishponds, and water harvesting facilities) that reduce drudgery.
- Increase productivity and returns to labor; and
- Facilitating access to modern technology information through demonstration sites, print media, periodicals, and electronic media targeting the youth.

5. Kenya National Youth Policy 2007, Sessional No.2 of 2007

The National Youth Policy of Kenya (2007), outlined in Sessional Paper No. 03 of 2007, plays a pivotal role in promoting youth inclusion and safeguarding their rights. The policy acknowledges that;

- Young people are a critical resource for the entire nation,
- Emphasizes tapping into youth potential for the collective benefit of Kenya, and
- Acknowledges the involvement of various stakeholders including the private sector and civil society in achieving these goals.

The National Youth Policy (2006) highlights that the youth aged 18-35 years have been largely excluded from designing, planning, and implementing programs and policies. However, the policy framework does not address youth engagement in agriculture issues.



6. Women Enterprise Development Fund 2017

Women Enterprise Development Fund 2017 was established through the Legal Notice No. 147: Government Financial Management (Women Enterprise Fund) Regulations, 2007 to empower Kenyan women and improve their income. It fosters women's social and economic empowerment and inclusion through;

- Subsidized credit: Providing subsidized credit to Kenyan women entrepreneurs for enterprise development.
- Capacity building: Offering capacity-building programs for women entrepreneurs and their organizations.
- Infrastructure support: Attracting and facilitating investment in micro and small enterprises (MSEs) oriented infrastructure (e.g., business markets, incubators) beneficial to women-led enterprises.
- Linkages with large enterprises: Supporting women-oriented MSMEs in developing linkages with larger enterprises.
- Marketing support: Facilitating the marketing of products and services from women-led enterprises in both domestic and international markets.

7. National Youth Council Act 2009

The Act established the National Youth Council (NYC), which serves as a platform for youth engagement, representation, and decision-making. The NYC plays a crucial role in advocating for youth rights and promoting their interests. The policy recognizes the importance of addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by young people. It also aims to create an enabling environment for youth participation, leadership, and socio-economic growth.

Here are the priority areas where the policy focuses:

- Youth participation and leadership: Encouraging active involvement of young people in decision-making processes and community development.
- Youth economic empowerment: Creating pathways for youth to access economic opportunities, skills training, and entrepreneurship.
- Health and well-being: Promoting physical and mental health among youth.
- Education and skills development: Enhancing educational access and vocational training.
- Social inclusion and gender equality: Ensuring equal opportunities for all youth, regardless of gender or background.

8. Micro and Small Enterprise (Mse) Act 2012

The Micro and Small Enterprises (MSE) Act 2012 provides a legal and institutional framework for promoting, developing, and regulating micro and small enterprises. The act aims to

- Create an enabling environment for MSEs,
- Facilitating access to business development services, financial support, technology, markets, capacity building, and data.

Moreover, the MSE Act contributes to youth inclusion in agribusiness by promoting capacity building for MSEs. The Micro and Small Enterprises Authority oversees the sector, regulating MSEs by managing their registration, certification, and governance.

9. Technical and Vocational Education and Training Act of 2013

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Act of 2013 serves as a critical framework for promoting youth skill development through the regulation and coordination of technical and vocational education and training programs. The Act established an authority responsible for licensing, registration, and accreditation of training programs and institutions overseeing the quality and relevance of training programs. The Act also



- Integrates internships into training, enhancing practical experience and
- Provides a comprehensive framework for youth inclusion, skill enhancement, and protection, contributing to Kenya's socio-economic development.
- Provides a framework for youth inclusion in agribusiness by creating accessible, quality, and relevant training opportunities.

10. Uwezo Fund (Public Finance Management Act 2014)

Uwezo fund's primary goal is to enable women, youth, and persons with disabilities to access finances for promoting businesses and enterprises. The fund aims to enhance economic growth and contribute to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. The mandate of the fund is to;

- Expand access to finance: The Fund aims to provide accessible and affordable credit to facilitate the initiation and expansion of enterprises.
- Generate self-employment: By supporting youth and women, it promotes gainful self-employment.
- Model community-driven development: The Fund envisions equitable socio-economic transformation for youth, women, and persons with disabilities.

11. The Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act, 2015:

This Act was enacted to give effect to Article 227 of the Constitution. Its primary purpose is to provide procedures for efficient public procurement and for the disposal of assets by public entities. Moreover, it aims to ensure transparency, fairness, inclusion and cost-effectiveness in procurement processes and asset disposal. The PPADA 2015 contributes to youth inclusion and protection by promoting fair procurement practices, inclusion of youth owned enterprises, capacity building and training of procurement practitioners and protects public resources, indirectly benefiting young entrepreneurs.

12. Employment Policy And Strategy for Kenya Sessional Paper No. 4 of 2013.

The Employment Policy and Strategy for Kenya, outlined in Sessional Paper No. 4 of 2013, is guided by principles such as equity, gender sensitivity, social justice, and sustainable development. Which serves as a critical framework for promoting youth inclusion, economic growth, and socio-economic development. The policy envisions a Kenya where productive, sustainable, and decent employment opportunities are accessible to all as well as having a pool of skilled, adaptive, self-reliant, and enterprising labor force.

13. National Government Affirmative Action Fund (Public Finance Management Act 2012)

The NGAAF was established to promote affirmative action by providing financial support to specific groups including women, youth, persons with disabilities, children, and the elderly. Its primary purpose is to empower and uplift marginalized communities. NGAAF specifically focuses on youth empowerment by providing financial resources and support. It also supports youth-led initiatives, vocational training, education, skills development, capacity-building programs, and support, to enhance youth entrepreneurship, economic participation, and protection. Through loans and other initiatives, the Fund contributes to youth self-employment and sustainable livelihoods.

14. KENYA VISION 2030

Kenya's commitment to youth engagement in agribusiness aligns with its Vision 2030 economic growth goals. By equipping young people with skills, resources, and supportive policies, the country aims to create a vibrant and sustainable agribusiness sector. Some of the initiatives include;

- Fostering youth engagement in employment and sustainable livelihoods
- Promoting conversion of raw and waste materials into valuable resources



- Promoting climate smart and regenerative farming practices and empowering youth with essential skills in sustainable agriculture.

Marsabit County Legal Frameworks

1. County Integrated Development Plan 2023-2027

Marsabit County in its CADP 2023-2027 outlines the development priorities, strategies, and resource allocation. While the CIDP does not specifically focus on youth inclusion in agribusiness, its broader objectives of youth empowerment, training, entrepreneurship, and economic and social inclusion indirectly impact their engagement in agri-entrepreneurship in aspects such as:

- **Economic Planning:** The plan allocates resources to various sectors, including agriculture and youth. Youth engagement in agribusiness can benefit from these allocations.
- **Public Participation:** Involving young people in decision-making processes ensures their needs and aspirations are considered.
- **Infrastructural Development:** Improving infrastructure (such as roads, irrigation systems, and markets) supports agribusiness activities.
- **Budget Performance:** Monitoring budget execution ensures efficient resource utilization.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regular assessments help track progress and identify areas for improvement. It aims to contribute to youth empowerment through promoting quality education, skills development through vocational training, and economic development.

Effective implementation of the CADP 2023-2027 will indirectly create an enabling environment for youth inclusion and active engagement in agribusiness.

Conclusion

The legal frameworks and policies in Kenya create a conducive environment for youth participation in agriculture. These initiatives recognize the importance of engaging youth in agriculture and agribusiness, with specific strategies and initiatives aimed at enhancing their access to productive resources, skills development, and market linkages in the agricultural sector. Additionally, there is an emphasis on improving the perception of agriculture among youth and creating attractive agribusiness opportunities to foster their participation and entrepreneurship in this vital economic sector.

Furthermore, these policies and legal frameworks acknowledge the intersectionality between gender inclusion and protection, emphasizing the need for gender mainstreaming in youth development programs, addressing issues such as gender-based violence, early marriages, and access to sexual and reproductive health services for young women. By striving to promote gender equality and empowerment across various sectors, including education, employment, and leadership, these initiatives encourage the active participation and protection of young women in agriculture and agribusiness. However, the implementation of these legal frameworks at the grassroots often faces challenges due to a lack of coordination among stakeholders, inadequate resources, and limited monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

There is a lack of specific targets and indicators for monitoring progress on gender inclusion and protection within youth empowerment programs. Of equal importance, limited focus on addressing deep-rooted sociocultural norms and practices that perpetuate gender inequalities and discrimination derail the impact expected from the policies and strategies. There is also inadequate resource allocation and capacity building for the effective implementation of gender-responsive interventions is extensive both at the national and county levels.



In addition, there is limited implementation and coordination of youth-focused agricultural initiatives, with challenges in resource allocation and capacity building. In all the existing policies and strategies, insufficient attention is paid to addressing land access and ownership issues, which remain a significant barrier to youth engagement in agriculture. Additionally, there is a lack of robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the progress and impact of youth agribusiness programs.

Recommendations

Legal frameworks in Kenya aim to create an enabling environment where the government ministries, departments, and state agencies in collaboration with the private sector, civil societies, youth-led/supporting organizations, and the local communities address challenges faced by young agripreneurs and promote their sustainable participation in the agricultural sector. This policy scan proposes some policy interventions to the Youth Excel Project to ensure intersectionality between gender inclusion and protection and active involvement in agribusiness in Marsabit County.

- Integrate comprehensive gender-sensitivity training and capacity building for stakeholders involved in policy implementation and service delivery.
- Address harmful socio-cultural norms and practices through community engagement, awareness campaigns, and targeted interventions.
- Advocate for policy reforms and reviews to ensure existing legal frameworks on youth involvement in agribusiness create an intersection between gender inclusion and protection.
- Address land access and ownership challenges through targeted policies and programs that facilitate youth access to land for agricultural purposes.
- Work closely with local authorities to ensure that proposed policies and strategies are implemented at the grassroots levels and youths of diverse identities are included and actively involved in the implementation process.
- Create learning platforms where young agripreneurs interact, share knowledge, collaborate, form partnerships, and actively participate in research, policy reforms, and advocacy.
- Promote innovative and technology-driven agricultural practices that appeal to youth, such as precision agriculture, agri-tech startups, and urban farming initiatives.

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