

## Gender Budgeting as an Instrument for Educational Attainment in Kenya

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**Abstract** *Gender issues have continued to play a key role in the formulation of sector wide public policy, worldwide. It is notable that gender gaps in many developing countries remain a challenge in the education sector. The purpose of policies is to guide action towards some identified practical goals; policies lose meaning when they remain unimplemented. Moreover, it is important to understand the process of policy formulation and implementation because it is crucial to the final outcomes. In contemporary education theory and practice, feminist thought provides invaluable direction on gender policies that seek to enhance inclusiveness and equality in education so that it does not discriminate against girls and women or any minority groups. This paper will, therefore, provide an overview use of gender budgeting as an important tool in the hands of the state to eliminate gender disparities from educational perspective against feminist theoretical frameworks. The purpose of the study is to establish the impact of gender budgeting on accessibility to quality education by the girl child. The study identified a wide range of factors that have led to gender disparities in Kenya and reveals that significant positive changes have been realized in the education sector although a lot more is required.*

**Keywords:** *Gender, gender gap, budget, gender responsive budgets and gender policies*

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### Introduction

Kenya is one of the East African countries with a population of 38 million according to 2010 census report and a total adult literacy rate of 87%. It is extremely heterogeneous with 48 ethnic tribes. It has Gross domestic product based on purchasing-power-parity (PPP) per capita US\$ 1,784 (2010est.). Agriculture is the second largest contributor to Kenya's gross domestic product (GDP), after the service sector. The principal cash crops are tea, horticultural produce, and coffee; horticultural produce and tea are the main growth sectors and the two most valuable of all of Kenya's exports. Coffee has declined in importance with depressed world prices. The production of major staple crops such as corn is subject to sharp weather-related fluctuations.

### Gender

The usage of "gender" seems to have first appeared among American feminists who wanted to insist on the fundamentally social quality of distinctions based on sex (Scott, 1986). Their aim was to understand the significance of sexes of gender groups in the historical past, the functioning and sustainability of the social order (Natalie, 1975). They made considerable contribution to the politics of gender empowerment, as well as the issues of equal opportunities and access to resources such as property, wealth and education over time.

Feminists have a common denominator as an interest in the interrogation of women's inequality and subordination to men. They have, over time, made considerable contribution to the politics of gender empowerment, as well as the issues of equal opportunities and access to resources such as property, wealth and education. The point of focus is issues of equal opportunity in access to resources for women and men, especially in education and employment and support of affirmative action as a compensatory strategy for redressing past inequalities, particularly against women and girls. Patriarchal ideologies tend harbor oppressive tendencies towards women, denying them autonomy and agency. Accordingly, patriarchy is accused of defining characteristics of society based on all forms of oppression that are extensions of male supremacy (Humm, 1995).

There is need to capture gender perspectives within social reality provides the foundation for greater

understanding of the complexities that characterize gender issues. In this sense, gender Perspectives prompts us to always ask the question 'how does this action, decision, outcome or benefit affect women vis-à-vis men or girls vis-à-vis boys?' It thus helps us to always locate femininity and masculinity as relational concepts and to critique how a decision that is gender blind can affect females and males in different ways (Graffins, 1985). Archaeologists and anthropologists have discovered much about early pre-class societies. They content that when people lived co-operatively and there was no division into classes women were not oppressed. Yes, there was a division of labour based on men's greater physical strength and on the demands of childbearing and breastfeeding. This division did not denigrate women in any way. A woman having a baby was recognised as the huge contribution to society which it is.

Globalization may be defined as the shrinking of the world into what is popularly referred to as "the global village." The 20th Century ends as the world moves towards a new era characterized by a globally integrated economy, where decisions regarding, production consumption and other aspects of social relations increasingly include transnational dimensions. Forces of globalization are real and their influences are felt everywhere. It entails free trade, free mobility of both financial and real capital, and rapid diffusion of products, technologies and information and consumption patterns. As indicated in the 1999 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, in the age of globalization, Governments' policy choices have shifted in favour of openness of trade and financial flow. Policies calling for lighter regulation of industry, privatization of state-owned enterprises and lower public spending have characterized the programmes of governments around the world. Liberalization policies coupled with technological advances in communications accelerated the impact of economic integration, thus eroding conventional boundaries particularly that of the national state.

World Development Report (1999/2000) draws attention to the strong reactions provoked by globalization, both positive and negative. According to this report globalization is praised for the opportunities it brings, such as access to markets and technology transfer, but it is also feared and condemned because of the instability and risks that can accompany it. Foreign investment and international competition can help poor economies to modernize, increase their productivity and raise living standards. The significant gender differences and disparities with respect to decision-making powers, participation, and returns for effort that prevail in different societies need to be taken into account when responding to the forces of globalization. Due to gender inequalities and discrimination in most parts of the world, women would be affected negatively by globalization processes to a greater extent than men. On the other hand, there can be significant gains for women with globalization. It is necessary to systematically monitor the gender impact of change so that the goals of gender equality and the expansion of human capabilities are not sacrificed.

At the policy level, the impact of globalization on women and gender relations continues to be neglected nationally and internationally. Entities of the United Nations system are taking steps to integrate the goals of macro-economics with those of social development. Yet more remains to be done to integrate gender equality dimensions in their normative, policy and operational work so as to ensure the continuing leadership of the system in promoting gender equality, development and peace within the context of globalization. The Beijing + 5 process provides an opportunity to reflect on the impact of globalization in determining further actions and initiatives for the full implementation of the Beijing commitments (World Development Report (1999/2000))

The growing integration of economies and societies around the world is a complex process that is variously affecting different regions, countries and areas and their populations. Among other things, globalization has enhanced employment opportunities for women, where previously they had not existed. It has also brought great freedom to women, especially those living in traditionally conservative countries like Indonesia, Ireland and Thailand, where women are able for the first time to be economically independent of men and to have at least some choice in their personal lives. Ultimately, by bringing women into the workforce, globalization has given women a power they lacked in the past--the power to end the system that breeds poverty, exploitation and oppression. The migration of women in search of employment opportunities

has helped to ease the problem of poverty in many cases and meet the labour needs of a number of countries. Globalization has also contributed to the creation of new associations of women and the strengthening of their networks to offer mutual support and resources. In several countries in the region, new information and communications technology (ICT) have improved the access of women to health, microcredit, employment opportunities and information in general.

At the same time globalization has had such negative consequences for women and children. It has made women to suffer disproportionately from IMF and World Bank policies as public services are cut and they are forced to care for sick, disabled and older relatives, as well as earn a living. Globalization threatens the livelihoods of workers, it can undermine banks, and it can destabilize whole economies when flows of foreign capital overwhelm them. The globalization process thus offers opportunities, as well as challenges for human development and gender equality. It has further reinforced many existing gender inequalities: The traditional sexual division of labour has been furthered through the addition of new locations and forms of work. What remains constant is the low economic value accorded to work performed primarily by women in conditions of exploitation, no job security and violations of human rights. Perhaps the most critical of the impacts of globalization on women is the worsening situation of violence against women. One aspect of this deserves urgent attention – the trafficking of women and girls.

Under conditions of globalization the limits on the states' ability to provide social protection, provisioning of needs and human capital investments has become more strained. This poses a major challenge to poverty eradication programmes and the efforts to respond to the needs of the less visible segments of the population especially women and children, in responding to their right to basic services and development of their capabilities. The withering away of the welfare state and increasing cost of social services has constituted a uniformly negative outcome for poor women, in developing countries.

The shift of societal costs of reproduction and maintenance of labour power and other welfare provisions from the public sector to a sphere where these costs are no longer visible, i.e. the household, is made possible by increasing women's workload within the household. The shock of market fluctuations, yet another immediate impact of integration into global markets with intensifying effects on poverty, is also absorbed by poor women by working harder both inside and outside the household. In many instances, women combine home making and piece working with reproductive activities in the household and rely more extensively on the use of children's labour for domestic work, households' production and cash earnings.

By and large, the adjustment costs associated with economic restructuring in many countries have increased the economic hardship for the poor. The human damage caused by economic deprivation in terms of one's capabilities and future prospects in life, is greatest for those who are least prepared to withstand it, i.e. poor women. In the long run, the impact of the shifting and adjustment costs onto society's most vulnerable groups results in disinvestment in human capabilities with far reaching effects on society at large (Human Development Reports 1997 and 1999). At global level, developing countries have experienced exploitation by dominant powers that had occupied and extracted resources through colonialism, post-colonialism and cultural imperialism including the multinational corporations. Coupled with structural adjustments policies the national states are left vulnerable economically and politically. They cannot sustain themselves without SAPs that negatively impact on the poor and especially women. According to Usher: The increasing centralisation of the state, and the intensification of resource use for industrial development, is causing the gradual erosion not only of natural resources but also of people's customary rights to land, cultural integrity, local knowledge and sense of belonging.

### **Globalization and the Kenyan Woman**

The Kenyan woman, regardless of her community of origin and regardless of her station in life, occupies a second-class position. Ours has been and is still a male-dominated society. The patriarchal hierarchies designed by our great grandparents, implemented by our grandparents and perfected by our fathers are still

alive and being justified by contemporary society. At birth, three beatings of the drum and three ululations instead of five are heard faintly. The parents of a new born baby girl receive half-hearted congratulations. These are the responses when a girl is delivered instead of a boy.

The Kenyan women form slightly over half of the country's 38 million people. They are the tillers of the land, they are the food processing and marketing resource people, and they are the psychological and physical nurturers of families. In other words, when we talk about the position of Kenyan women in the global village, we are referring to the half of the population on whose shoulders the country stands. For the Kenyan woman, the global village seems to be a mirage or an elusive spring of water. To begin with, the rural woman lacks not only the tools but also the necessary training and information to take advantage of this spring thus the need for education. Education empowers individuals through imparting knowledge and information. In addition, it broadens one's perspective to alternative means of survival. Without it, therefore, how would the rural woman be expected to take cognisance of what the global village offers? Similarly, if these women are not equipped to venture further than their homesteads, it would be difficult for them to stand up and walk before they can see these alternatives.

Structural adjustment policies mirror colonial policies in that conditions imposed by IMF and World Bank for countries borrowing money at a higher interest rates under austerity measures, combined with corruption of national officials leave their populations, especially women worse off than they were. "What kind of choices do women have when subordination, poverty and degrading work are the options available to most?" The point is not to deny that women are capable of choosing within contexts of powerlessness, but to question how much real power these 'choices'... have. They do not make them under conditions they create but conditions and constraints that they are often powerless to change" (Wangari 2002, p.299). Some of these choices come with a price over their bodies. Women are sold as sex slaves in their entry to Western countries while others become the so called "illegal aliens" working as domestic workers or in sweatshops under horrible conditions. According to US central intelligence agency (CIA) report in 1999, each year "50,000 of women are brought into the U.S to work in sex industries, domestic labor and sweatshops" (Kempadoo, 2001, p.31).

According to Kempadoo, the operational of foreign or allied troops produce particular forms of prostitution which has been tolerated and regulated by local government. In this case, women's bodies have been sacrificed for global political alliances. Sex tourism can also be understood within the context of SAPs to the extent that Third World countries cannot depend merely on the exploitation of other resources. Debt payments and interest rates demanded by the international financial institutions situate the Third World at a point in which they cannot participate in the global markets. Sex tourism becomes the venue for earning foreign exchanges. HIV/AIDS has become a global crisis in which more often than not the people in the Third World have been accused of their uncontrollable sexual behaviors. However, HIV/AIDS should be seen within the context of globalization in which resource allocation and control are in hands of the major players in global economy.

An unfortunate scenario presents itself with regard to the urban poor women. In most cases, the urban poor women and girls are uneducated, semi-skilled and unskilled, constantly in search of means of survival for themselves and their children. Owing to lack of job opportunities many of them have ended up selling the only wares at their disposal: their bodies. Hence they have become commodities and lost the human face that would enable them to access the global market as human beings. Subsequently the global market has ended up trading in them, either at home or as sex exports abroad. On the other hand, from my conversions with urban Kenyan women, in most cases, the supposed head of the household "The man" becomes the head only in figurative terms. The woman not only pays the helper, but also often pays for school fees for the children, electrical bills, telephone, water and food. Thus the entry of women to labor force is not necessarily a road to an empowerment for most women in the Third World. However there is need to equip the woman with "access tools" in order to reap the fruits of globalization and participate in the global market.

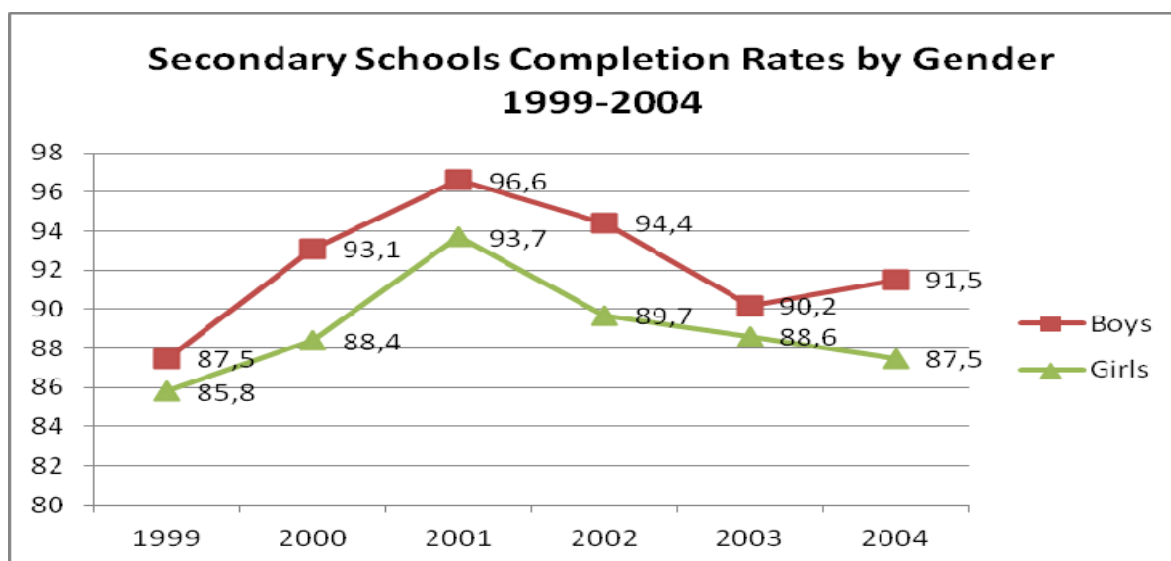
## Education

Female education has been recognized as one of the critical pathways to promote social and economic development. Female participation in education has been cited as the single most important investment that a developing country can make, translating into better living conditions for families and increased productivity. The international community has made commitments to universal primary education and free education for all (EFA), particularly for the girl child. For example at the 2000 Dakar World Education Forum, one of the goals was to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and to achieve gender equality in education by 2015. However, realization of these goals appears to be elusive, particularly in the Third World. Evidence from sub-Saharan Africa indicates that although there have been improvements in female participation, girls and women's access to education remains limited in many countries across the region, and there has actually been a drop in girls' enrolment and retention rates in both primary and secondary education (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995). This is due to a combination of socio-economic, socio-cultural, political and institutional factors constraining women's education.

Education empowers one to fight against oppression, exploitation for transformation of the society (Beijing Declaration September 1995). Therefore it is important for both individual as well as social freedom. Education empowers women to bring about necessary changes such as smaller and healthier families (Wamahui, 1996). The benefits of women's education to society in general are immense. In the workplace, education increases skills needed for job entry, improves chances of vertical mobility, and enhances overall labor market productivity. It also has positive consequences at home, including improved health, increased child survival rates, reduced fertility rates; lower infant mortality rates, and better protection against HIV and AIDS (Tembon et al 2008). Education of women and girls is therefore not only a moral and human rights issue, but also an economic and development issue.

Having the opportunity for education and the development of an education capability expands human freedoms. Not having education harms human development and choosing and having a full life. Education argues Sen (1999) fulfills an instrumental social role, has instrumental process role and has empowering and distributive roles in facilitating the ability of the disadvantaged, marginalized, and the excluded to organize politically. Overall education contributes to interpersonal effects where people use its benefits to help others hence contributing to the social good and democratic freedoms.

The situation in Kenyan secondary and universities is as below:

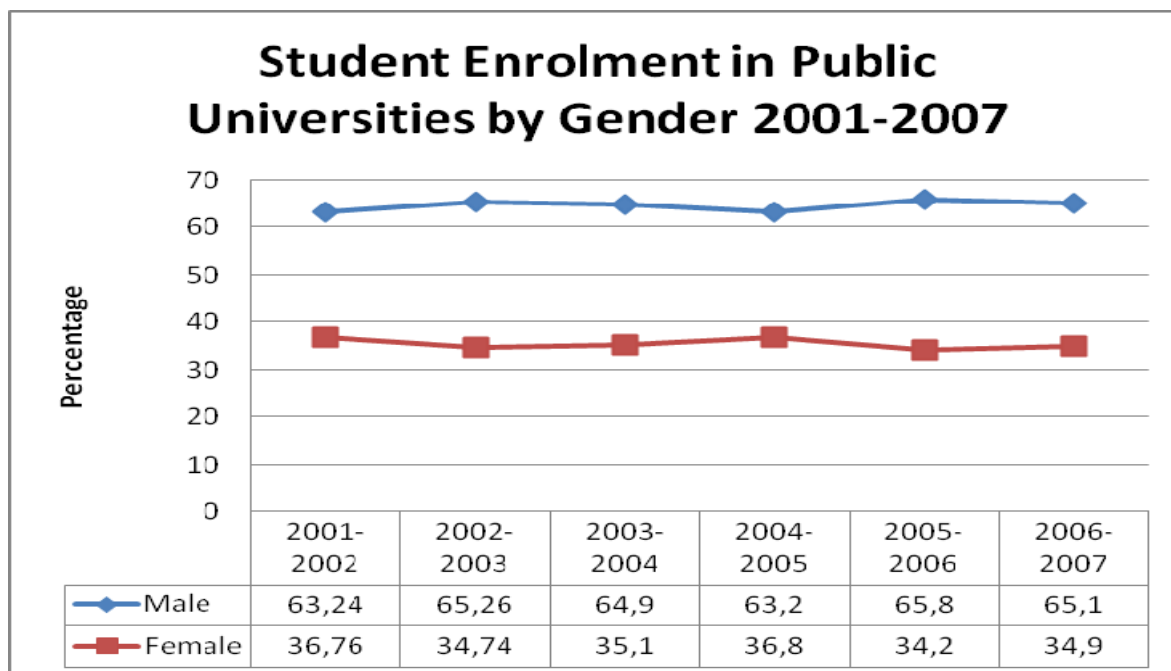


Source: Statistics Section – Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, (RoK) 2006.

The completion rates for boys are higher than for girls implying a significant gap in completion rates between the boys and the girls at secondary school. The reasons attributed to drop out at this level are high cost of schooling coupled with high poverty levels, unfriendly school environment especially for girls, socio-cultural factors and the low anticipation of future benefits of education. Other factors include teenage pregnancies, early marriages, and social attitudes towards women, cultural practices, inadequate and gender-based curriculum and teaching materials, family preferences to educate boys, sexual harassment and heavy domestic workload for the girl child, cost-sharing arrangements prompted by Structural Adjustment Programmes, (SAPs) reductions in government expenditure in education, inadequate facilities in public girls' schools and worsening poverty (Republic of Kenya 1999b). Gender inequality is reinforced in the classrooms in many ways. Research studies show how girls conform to sex roles stereotypes indulging in "female behavior" such as being quiet, reserved passive which is expected of them by teachers. Seating arrangement, allocation of tasks carries the same notion. All these restrict their classroom performance and academic achievements. As Nambissan states, all these form the "hidden curriculum" of the school and tend to reinforce gender identities among children (Nambissan, 1995; Chanana, 1990; Probe Report, 1995; Ramachandran, 2000).

According to Wamahiu (1997), a multiplicity of inter-related factors contributes to the under-participation (non-enrolment, lower persistence and poorer performance) of girls in formal and non-formal education programmes in Kenya. A complex interplay of macro-level policy and micro-level practices, beliefs and attitudes determine whether households and communities feel it profitable to educate their daughters. A pervasive patriarchal ideology influences policy and practice at the national, community and school level, marginalizing Kenyan girls in education. Some of the concerns raised at the Beijing Conference and framed within the Kenyan context still persist to a large extent Jacobs (1994).

#### Students' enrolment in public universities by Gender, 2001/2002-2006/2007



Source: Economic survey (RoK), 2008-2009.

At the university level, women remain underrepresented, forming about 40 percent of the total student population in 2007 (Republic of Kenya 2008). Women's low rates of attendance at the university level reflect the cumulative effect of factors that hinder their progression in education from the time they enter school at

the preprimary level. Women's representation remains low despite the fact that the government has lowered girls' required university entry points (calculated based on grades and difficulty of courses taken at the secondary level) by one point to improve women's access to university education (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 2006). The effects of this low representation in education are reflected in the labor market, where women represent only 30 percent of all wage employees in the modern sector (Republic of Kenya 2008).

The challenge for girls' education in Kenya is to ensure that girls enroll in school and successfully complete their educations. The Kenyan government needs to address limitations on access and retention. Current efforts have centered on removing financial barriers to access by making primary education free and by subsidizing secondary education. These policies and programs have not been wholly successful, and despite increased total enrollment, significant regional and gender disparities exist. Poor students' access has improved overall, but for many girls, access and retention remain elusive. Equal opportunity will depend on infrastructural changes, such as expanding access to water and electricity to reduce girls' responsibilities, building boarding schools in arid and semiarid areas, and providing security to make sure girls attend school consistently. Kenya has also recorded milestones in fighting the traditional rite, including passing and implementing legal instruments such as the National Policy for the Abandonment of FGM/C, the Children's Act of 2001 and the Sexual Offences Act of 2006.

Women in Kenya remain disadvantaged, with opportunities for educational, social, and economic advancement inferior to those of men. Women are underrepresented in modern sector wage employment, political and judicial decision making, and all major public service appointments. Numerous social, economic, and cultural barriers limit women's participation in these areas. Women's underrepresentation in education is a primary factor. Given the significant benefits of women's education, equity in education is essential to improving circumstances for all Kenyans. As the leading provider of education, the government should acknowledge that compensatory mechanisms may be required to level the playing field for disadvantaged girls, and it should adopt an approach that uses these mechanisms. To make education's accessibility equitable to all means, adopting policies and initiatives that support equal provisions across genders.

### **Policy Issues in Kenya**

The policy measures for addressing the problems related to retention began with the enforcement of the Children's Act which provides for the right to education by every Kenyan child. Further, a policy that prohibits repetition in schools is being strictly enforced. This should work in favour of girls who have been victims of repeating levels. Adult education Programmes are being strengthened to enlighten parents to appreciate the value of girls' education in particular. At secondary school level, issues regarding girls' low participation in education is being addressed.

Policy measures are also in place to enhance transition and entail the expansion of existing secondary schools to an average of three streams. To complement this policy measure, the government deliberately promotes the establishment of new secondary schools especially in deficit areas. Girls' schools are supposedly receiving extra attention to enhance their retention. Day schools to reduce the cost of secondary education are emphasised. Despite the advantages of having boarding schools, the cost has in the past shut many girls out. Furthermore, emphasis is laid on refurbishing existing secondary schools with the aim of enhancing the quality of the learning environment. Although day's schools would be far much cheaper, would the girls manage to cope with the pressure of house chores and education? What about the distance to the schools, would parents allow their daughters to travel far away daily to access the schools? On such grounds boarding schools then become the first best option for girls.

The government has started targeted bursary schemes to benefit those in the poorest quintile. Girls are receiving a lot of attention in this regard. The question is which girls are receiving this attention? Are they the poor and needy or the rich and well connected? Additional measures to improve the quality of learning and to

reduce the costs entailed in the direct provision of teaching and learning materials, especially in sciences, an area where girls are most disadvantaged. The policy entails regulating the cost of secondary education by rationalizing the learning costs through curriculum review and enhancing the teacher/ pupil ratio. The policy priority for university education is to expand opportunities to all deserving Kenyans. The government seeks to expand available places in public and private universities. Policy on gender mainstreaming in universities has also received attention. There is a focus on the enhancement of internal efficiency in the utilization of resources. More importantly, policy focuses on enhancement and sustainability of quality. While this is happening, affirmative action is used to increase the enrolment of girls in degree programmes.

A gender education policy framework that provides for planning and implementation of gender responsive education sector programmes was mooted in 2003. The key gender concerns highlighted in education include disparities in enrolment, retention and transition rates, negative socio-cultural practices and attitudes which inhibit girls' access, learning environments that are not conducive to girls, stereotyping in learning materials and in class teaching, and the drop-out of girls due to pregnancy and early marriages. The Gender and Education Policy developed in 2003 makes provision for the re-admission of girls who become pregnant while still at school, even allowing them to seek a place at a different institution to the one they originally attended. This is to avoid the girls being stigmatized by their former schoolmates, as a result of pregnancy. However, parents who are willing to allow daughters to return to school might struggle to provide care for their new grandchild while its mother was at school – or be hard pressed to feed an extra mouth. Without family support, a teenage mother could find herself forced to leave school, no matter what the law stipulates.

A major contribution to the gender debate in the Kenyan education system is the publication of the current policy framework for the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme 2005-2010, entitled 'Delivering Quality Education and Training to All Kenyans'. It is noteworthy that this policy recognizes gender equality as being central to the attainment of the EFA and MDG goals and has proposed a number of strategies to address gender concerns in education (Republic of Kenya, 2005).

Most governments have expressed a commitment to gender equality objectives and to gender mainstreaming, but often there is a gap between policy statements and the ways in which governments raise and spend money. They have also expressed commitments to greater transparency and accountability of resource allocations through the national budget. Since the budget determines the origin and application of public financial resources, it plays a central role in the process of government, fulfilling economic, political, social, legal and administrative functions (Elson et al. 2000). Budgets focus as such would fail to address specific areas of gender disparities given that women and men are at asymmetric levels of socio-economic development. This calls specific intervention by the government thus the need for gender responsive budgeting.

### **Gender Responsive Budget Initiative**

A gender responsive budget initiative is a tool and a process designed to facilitate a gender analysis in the formulation of government budgets and the allocation of resources. It is an attempt to disaggregate the government's mainstream budget according to its impacts on women and men. It refers to the process of conceiving, planning, approving, executing, monitoring, analyzing and auditing budgets in a gender-sensitive way. It does not aim to produce a separate budget for women. Gender budgeting is actually seen as a socio-economic tool for ensuring gender equity in the development process and lays a strong emphasis on engendering public expenditure and policy. Budgets focus as such would fail to address specific areas of gender disparities given the unequal social order that exists in the society. Benefits would be unequally appropriated thus the need for specific interventions. Gender Responsive budgeting initiatives are very diverse, but they all have in common one essential question: What is the impact of the government budget, and the policies and programmes that it funds, on women and men, girls and boys? The gender budgeting



exercise would potentially assist and lead to the following empowering measures (Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability):

- Addressing gap between policy commitment and allocation for women by emphasizing on adequate resource allocation.
- Putting pressure and focus on gender sensitive programme formulation and implementation.
- Mainstreaming gender concerns in public expenditure and policy.
- By being a tool for effective policy implementation where one can check if the allocations are in line with slated gender sensitive policy commitments and are having the desired impact.

Gender responsive budgeting helps to ensure the realisation of gender equality goals and improved compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. They promote greater accountability for public resources to the people of a country, especially to women, who are generally more marginalized than men in decision-making about public money (Elson, 2002). The key question gender responsive budget initiative raises is: what impact does this fiscal measure have on gender equality? Does it reduce gender inequality; increase it; or leave it unchanged (Budlender and Sharp 1998)? Intervention should be both at institutional and individual level. Incentives to the girls and also parents seem to work well. In Bangladesh parents are food baskets, in Pakistan oil is dished out and some parts of India cycles have been given to the girls to help them access schools easily. However what parents' value cannot be controlled by the government. This should not be reason for not initiating gender responsive budgeting for governments especially Kenya which has stagnated at the first stage of awareness. Policies enacted have to be implemented fully to arrest the gaping gender gap in education at all levels of the system. Universities should aim at channel out more girls so that the Kenyan woman can compete favourably with others in the job market. Women should therefore be equipped with "access tools".

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