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THE ROLE OF YOUTH AND SPORTS IN COMMUNITY ADVOCACY FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN EDUCATION

WHERE ARE WE COMING FROM

Advocacy of women's issues can be traced back in:

- 1946 where the Economic and Social Council of the UN established the **commission on the status of women** emanating into the **1948 UN declaration on Human Rights**

- 1952 UN declaration regarding **the right of the woman to vote and hold public office on equal terms with men**

- 1962 and 1965 declarations upholding **the free consent to marriage** culminating into adoption of the UN General Assembly in 1976 on **declaration of elimination of discrimination against women**

Kenyan Government commitment supported community advocacy for girls and women

- 1979 marks the first time the government issued Identity cards to women

- Opening of more spaces for women to participate actively in areas predominantly a male domain i.e.:
 - Education (emphasis on girl child education)
 - Politics
 - Control of the Economy
 - Sports etc

- Women's empowerment movement as evidenced in the 1985 UN Nairobi and 1995 Beijing conference on women

- An achievement which is evidenced by the high number of women participating in sports,

Expectations

- Exploration of areas of strategic partnerships and networking between the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Forum for African women Educationalists Kenya Chapter

- Mandate of FAWE Kenya just like that of MOYAS is hinged on familiar National and International commitment i.e.

- Realization of gender equity and equality in social, economic and political development is a shared commitment clearly spelt in the vision 2030.

- MOYAS on the other hand has further translated the vision 2030 into the ministry's 5 years strategic plan and further developed annual performance indicators of measure towards this course.

- The strategic plan identifies eight (8) thematic areas to be given priority.

For realization of the Millenium Development Goals in Kenya by 2015

An investment should be expanded in building capacity for girls and women through

- Targeted interventions ,addressing their specific needs in terms of
- Education,
- Skills training and gainful employment .

The Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports provides a realizable road map to address this and other challenges facing youth which includes educating girls and women since it will have multiple benefits to the entire community

MOYA'S defines

A youth is as person within the age bracket of 15 – 30 years of age. Girls and women constitute about 52% of the 34 million Kenyans

Challenges facing youth

- Education and Training
- Unemployment
- Limited participation and lack of opportunities
- Limited access to information and communication technology (ICT)
- Health related problems
- Crime and Drugs
- Environmental problems

More efforts still need to be employed to ensure that the youth get a humble opportunity to participate in socio-economic development.

To address youth problems and more specifically unemployment and empowerment, efforts have been made by the Government to initiate Youth development programmes through:

- Policy documents such as: Sessional Paper No. 4 of 2005,
- Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1992 on Small Scale and Jua Kali enterprises, Development plan 1997-2001,
- Poverty Eradication Plan 1999-2015.
- The Youth Enterprise Development Fund .
- Development of National Youth Policy

Youth, Sports and community advocacy

Sports has begun to appear on the development agenda of many countries and international bodies

- Growing evidence strengthens the right of children to play enhancing their healthy development and builds stronger communities.
- Sports and play programs are being incorporated into international frameworks and conventions, lending further credence to the effort

However, while official government policy and the mission statement recognize the equal rights of boys and girls, implementation of gender equitable programs remains elusive

- Allocation of Ksh. 1 Million to each constituency in this year's budget for initiating sports competitions at constituency level is an important initiative that will promote sporting among the youth.

- Social and cultural norms and practices often prevent girls from participating in organized sports.
- MOYAS endeavors to develop program and policies that will include girls in sports and promote their social, economic and political development alongside that of the boys and men.
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- It is evident that sports combined literacy, life skills; training, learning and recreation, social empowerment is a powerful tool for community advocacy especially for girls and women education.
- The strategy of using youth and sports to challenge traditional concepts of gender appropriate behavior will empower girls and women

Successful models

Mathare youth sports Association – MYSA a community based organization based in urban slums of Nairobi

engages youth and sports in community advocacy activities in areas of education, gender, civic engagement, environmental conservation, HIV/AIDs and other awareness activities

offers girls exciting opportunities including participation in the Norway Cup which is one of the largest international youth football tournaments.

Excellence performance by Kenyan athletes

The Lewa Marathon

Ambassadors for girls Education

In conclusion, FAWE Kenya and the Ministry of Youth and sports can explore further possibility of partnerships in the following areas.

Explore the possibility of effectively using sports to bring out girls safely and confidently to the public domain through role modeling, participation and representation. .

Development of a gender policy in youth and sports

Situational analysis to evaluate sports program including review of policies and programs for gender responsiveness

Documentation and further research on social impeding or fostering factors to girls ability to participate and benefit from sports

Identify effective strategies for increasing girls mobility and visibility in their communities through sports

Thank you.