

Leadership, Civil Society and Democratisation in Kenya

Jacqueline Adhiambo-Oduol

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Development Policy Management Forum (DPMF)
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)
P.O. Box 3001
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel. 251 1 515410 (DL)/443197
Fax: 251 1 515410
Email: dpmf@uneca.org
Website: <http://www.dpmf.org>

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Policy Brief

1. Introduction

This policy brief summarises the policy implications of the case study dealing with gender, civil society and leadership issues in the Kenya Women's Political Caucus (KWPC).

2. Policy Issues and Recommendations

Policy Issue1: The need for democratic mechanisms and structures in all units, states, civil society, women led or not.

For structural arrangements to work in a democratic manner, there is need for a good constitution that clearly spells out checks and balances. The need for civil society organisations to be governed by 'constitutions is important for the creation of appropriate leadership arrangements and environment. A constitution spells *out* visions, ways as well as the relevant checks and balances in a democratic manner. The fact that the KWPC was run for over one year without a constitution was a major contributor to the leadership problems that resulted in the splinter group.

Recommendation: NGOs should demonstrate commitment to democracy through their internal structures. All key actors, including donors and other stakeholders, should expect NGOs to develop internal administrative mechanisms that encourage accountability as a policy measure.

Policy Issue 2: Assessment of the conditions that enhance democratic principles in evaluating the impact of Civil Society Organisations by focusing on leadership rather than leaders.

It is important to ensure better understanding of the dynamics of leadership through a systematic documentation and analysis of the issues, values, intricacies and contradictions as manifested in Civil Society Organisations.

Recommendation: Utilise the unique character, experiences and capacities of civil society to develop a more analytic understanding of leadership as an essential component of governance and democratisation processes in Africa.

Policy Issue 3: Recognition and support for self-funding and non-donor funding activities.

The way that civil society organisations are tied to the donors poses a threat to their sustainability and has a direct impact on the nature of leadership as the collective action or inter-relationships between its leaders. Funding has become extremely politicised and in some cases inhibits the evolution and sustainability of democratic internal structures. *NGOs* should strengthen and operationalise mechanisms for self-funding as a way of ensuring that their external linkages with donors do not undermine their internal democracy. The State could provide financial support to civil society.

Recommendation: It is necessary to encourage the development of innovative mechanisms for generating and sustaining non-donor funding in Civil Society Organisations.

Policy Issue 4: Building the capacity of civil society with regards to alternative leadership values, norms and practices through civic training in leadership.

There is need to develop and implement leadership programmes particularly at the level of the civil society that can tap its multiple and diverse potential while also providing for in-built sustainability and socialisation for democratic and responsible leadership.

Recommendation: Encourage the development and implementation of civil society leadership programmes that promote democratic and responsible leadership.

Policy Issue 5: Building the capacity of civil society leadership in women's organisations involved in politics and the democratisation process in Africa.

Both leadership and gender are complex phenomena that are not yet adequately understood. Facilitating the growth of new leadership practices, values and visions in the context of civil society with its many proponents and advocates poses a great challenge for women whose leadership is coloured by gender overtones as well. Unless otherwise stated or emphasised, women's organisations do not emerge as mainstream Civil Society Organisations and are often left out of the action.

Recommendation: Develop policies for dealing with building the capacity of civil society women's organisations that recognise the specific challenges that women's collective action faces in leadership.

Policy Issue 6: Political context in which the Civil Society Organisations and therefore leadership are operating in the respective countries.

There is need for a policy that defines the framework of the relationship between the state and NGOs in which the NGOs are looked upon as partners and which provides for putting in place mechanisms that can enhance dialogue.

Recommendation: Ensure a clear policy stand on how the state facilitates the work of NGOs especially with regard to the provision of civic education.