THE LEADERS' JOURNAL

A decolonial economic anthology amidst post COVID 19 economic renewal in Africa

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About The African Feminist LEADERS' Journal

The LEADERS' Journal is an integral part of the learning and knowledge creation culture that Akina Mama wa Afrika has initiated. It is a journal created to craft thought leadership in African Feminists and to create repositories of knowledge based on their contextual issues, using feminist analysis tools. To write is political, especially when histories of feminist knowledge have been historically undocumented or intentionally erased. The LEADERS' Journal aims to contribute to the growth of feminist scholarship and the development of the feminist movement, using writing as a form of liberation and conscientisation.

The LEADERS' Journal published its first issue in 2019 titled: ***Pushing the boundaries of feminist thought leadership in Africa.*** The issue was a success as an alternative platform for herstories to be shared and documented, and it has also added another platform for women's voices to be celebrated. In addition, the first issue of the LEADERS' Journal started the enormous and essential task of building a community of contributors and readers who value the skill of intellectual writing, its artivism and feminist analysis tools. Thus, the African Feminist Thought Leadership Series is an intervention that will further enhance the writing skills of young feminists and forges solidarities to strengthen intellectual activism in Africa.

The LEADERS' Journal therefore serves as a platform for creative exploration and feminist analysis of themes and topics relevant to African women, girls and gender-expansive persons. Through the African Feminist Thought Leadership (AFTL) Series, the Journal receives papers, articles and poems primarily from the AFTL training and commissioned pieces from African feminists. In addition, the Journal has devoted time and resources towards developing the writing skills of young budding writers and support them throughout the writing process so that they can articulate their experiences, familiarise themselves with the peer-review process and strengthen their writing skills to the level that mainstream or more established journals would feature.

A decolonial economic anthology amidst post COVID 19 economic renewal in Africa

The third edition of the LEADERS' Journal, under the theme, ***A decolonial economic anthology amidst post COVID 19 economic renewal in Africa,*** seeks to address a myriad of economic policy issues using evidence, and proposes policy alternatives to contribute to informing governments' macroeconomic policy processes in building back better and inclusively. We strive to disseminate the lived experiences of Africans and use them to draw lessons to inform economic policy development processes by governments, development thinkers, and partners. This way, we carry the African people's voice across Africa and worldwide since discussing a problem is the first step to solving it and sharing the burden.

About us

Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA) is a feminist Pan-African leadership development organization with headquarters in Kampala, Uganda. Our work is rooted in feminist principles and beliefs guided by the Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists which define our leadership development program and movement building activities. We envision a world in which African women are politically, economically and socially autonomous and are champions of change in their lives and society. Our thematic areas of focus include; Women's Political Leadership, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, and Economic Justice and Climate Action. The organization's work is advanced through feminist and transformational leadership development, feminist research and knowledge building, and policy influence and movement building. AMwA provides strategic direction in key Pan-African networks including NGO CSW Africa, Solidarity for African Women's Rights, and the Gender Is My Agenda Campaign. AMwA also has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

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Editorial

Dr. Lanoi Maloiy

Before colonial rule, women in Africa had economic autonomy; Okonjo (1981) asserts this through the concept of an economically independent African woman. She explains that women contributed economically to the household, from tilling farms to trading produce. This role and African women's role as traders is rooted in their traditional role as food providers. In this society, there was room for women's social and economic mobility within these pre-colonial social constructs. Thus, women could use their economic resources to gain status in those societies. For example, there is an account of a wealthy woman trader named Ndiko wa Gitura, from the Kikuyu tribe in Kenya, who led her clan due to her wealth and status (Robertson, 1997). For women, this meant a varied labour experience where their work was acknowledged and appreciated.

In contemporary Africa, women's roles are not as diverse, with often few opportunities for leadership and economic opportunities. And even fewer opportunities for economic and social mobility. Scholars have attributed colonisation to the decline of women's participation in the public sphere and the devaluation of women's work (Akyeampong & Fofack, 2014). Scholars such as Okonjo (1981) posit that modernisation and colonisation disrupted women's status and diminished their political participation. Similarly, Njoh (2006) believes that the introduction of Victorian ideals influenced the marginalisation of African women into largely domestic roles, often with little economic benefits and political exposure.

These Victorian ideals were introduced via Western concepts regarding African men and women. That is, gender roles were reconstructed to conform to the image of European manhood and womanhood. For instance, manhood and womanhood in Kenya were recreated to mirror the Victorian image of English gentlemen and ladies (White, 1990). To accompany this imagery, the concept of the private/public divide was constructed that relegated African women to the domestic sphere and males were elevated to the public sphere, with men as the providers and women as homemakers. These gender expectations have altered African women's indigenous roles and status while developing an economic and governance system that favoured men and largely excluded women (Amadiume, 2001). As a result, African women have been left without opportunities to exert influence in the economic and social realms as they have done previously (Mengara, 2001).

It is against this background that the articles within this journal are set. The articles are mainly opinion pieces with the aim that in the fullness of time authors will undertake empirical research to write papers grounded in primary data.

Nevertheless, the papers explore various issues, but all make similar concluding thoughts: the marginalisation of women from various aspects of public life, such as budget-making, family planning, and taxation. For instance, Najjuko Joanita explores the concept of debt justice and offers an African feminist view of Africa's sovereign debt. Najjuko avers that debt cancellation is a way out of the myriad of challenges that Africa currently finds itself in, as it would allow African nations to develop their own resources.

Oluwatobiloba Ayodele examines pre-colonial taxation concepts in Nigeria, particularly among the Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba. She contrasts these systems with contemporary taxation systems, which were set up by the British colonial government and the marginalisation of women in colonial and post-colonial taxation. Ayodele uses the vehicle of the Aba women's riots to examine this positioning of women in colonial Nigeria.

Sunshine Fionah Komusana applies a feminist viewpoint to Uganda's debt crisis. Sunshine asserts that a scan of the country's macroeconomic policy and practice in response to Covid-19 indicates that, like many developing countries, the pandemic exacerbated Uganda's huge public debt burden, with intersectional impacts across the country and largely on women.

Eunice Anyango Oyule, examines self-help groups in Kenya. She notes their potential to advocate for public service delivery for women in Kenya. However, Oyule reports that there is much needed for women's self-help groups to realise this potential.

Essy Atieno Olang applies a gender lens toward the social inclusion of women and men in healthcare, education and unpaid care work. She explicitly examines service delivery as well as public participation processes.

Farzana Abdikadir Ibrahim analyses Kenya's fiscal policy framework 2020 using a feminist lens and emphasises the importance of engendering fiscal policy in Kenya.

Irene Boke examines gender-responsive policy and legislative reforms necessary in Kenya for prudent public finance management, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. She reports that women in Kenya are still disproportionately affected in economic participation, with most women working in the informal sector and doing unpaid labour.

Najib Kasole explores the impact of post-COVID-19 economic recovery policies on women in the informal sector in Uganda. He uses the lenses of neoliberalism and privatisation to examine these impacts.

Pinno Ivan and Martha Kibukamusoke explore family planning approaches and decision-making in Uganda. Their paper aims to find out the family planning approaches used by women in Uganda.

Violet Mbiti explores how the perception of young women as reproductive labourers and not as individuals hinder their participation in public gatherings and subsequently in the budget-making process.

This journal is timely, and the authors depict the marginalisation of all categories of women from participating in the public sphere. The authors provide recommendations which will eradicate this marginalisation and lead women in Africa to become active participants in public and social life, just like their pre-colonial ancestors.

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A Feminist Perspective on Africa's Sovereign Debt

Najjuko Joanita

Introduction

Today, low- and middle-income countries face a vicious cycle of overdependence on external debt, taking loans under unfavourable terms skewed in favour of private lenders. As a result, Governments' budgets are squeezed, public services are privatised, social protection programs are cut, and groups who are already marginalised suffer the most. When the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) struck, it was called the "great equaliser". However, it did not take long to see that it was quite the opposite, as rich countries in the Global North pumped money into healthcare and economies, countries in the Global South were making interest payments to the rich world's private, public and multilateral creditors[1]. For many African countries, external debt-to-GDP has risen to more than 100% since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing the impossible choice between repaying debts or addressing pandemic-induced needs[2].

Debt, according to standard economic assumptions, emerges from a purely private exchange[3]. Independent rational agents willingly enter into a contract in a free market[4]. That market, in turn, sets a fair price for the debt. Freedom and fairness: these are the assumptions that underpin the common narrative about debt and indebtedness[5]. In her article, Debt as Colonialism[6], Joan Chaker argues that contrary to this common narrative, the massive dollar-denominated debts in the Global South did not arise from private exchange in a regulatory vacuum. Rather, they are the product of an international financial system carefully designed to facilitate neo-colonial extraction. Chaker avers that debt is a vicious cycle that is neither free nor fair. And that a mix of dependency and deprivation has forced governments and households to enter into debt in order to maintain basic living standards. A large share of this income flows to the creditors at the top of the income distribution, who in turn, invest their capital to lobby for laws, regulations, and foreign policies in their favour[7].

Economic imperialism by design: Recognising the history

"Debt is neo-colonialism, in which colonisers have transformed themselves into "technical assistants", Burkina Faso president Thomas Sankara told the Organization of African Unity in July 1987[8]. "Under its current form, controlled and dominated by imperialism, debt is a skillfully managed reconquest of Africa, intended to subjugate its growth and development through foreign rules." He went on to

1 Gilad Isaacs and Sonia Phalatse, Delete the Debt: Africa's Liberation from Debt Supremacy. Available at https://progressive.international/blueprint/b57afe92-e5ff-421e-a584-46c081b7def6-delete-the-debt-africas-liberation-from-debt-supremacy/en

2 Ibid

3 Joan Chaker: Debt as Colonialism, available at https://progressive.international/blueprint/ed7d1fa4-892c-49f6-b617-127c60712793-debt-as-colonialism/en

4 Benjamin E. Hermalin, Avery W. Katz & Richard Craswell, The Law and Economics of Contracts, HANDBOOK OF LAW AND ECONOMICS, A. MITCHELL POLINSKY & STEVEN SHAVELL, EDS., ELSEVIER, 2007; COLUMBIA LAW & ECONOMICS WORKING PAPER NO. 296 (2006). Available at: https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/faculty_scholarship/1416

5 Joan Chaker: Debt as Colonialism, available at https://progressive.international/blueprint/ed7d1fa4-892c-49f6-b617-127c60712793-debt-as-colonialism/en

6 Ibid

7 Ibid

8 Thomas Sankara; A United Front Against Debt, available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/sankara/1987/july/29.htm

argue that debt has to be seen from the perspective of its origins. And that debt's origins come from colonialism's origins. And those who lend money are also those who colonised; they are the same ones who used to manage our states and economies.

Financial debt has had a major role in defining colonial and neocolonial world history. The evolution of the global economic system, from the expeditions of Christopher Columbus in the 1490s to the international debt regime, has allowed a handful of rich countries to effectively control economic policies in the rest of the world. And yet we have been told that development is working: that the global South is catching up to the North, that poverty has been cut in half over the past thirty years, and will be eradicated by 2030[9]. While this is a comforting tale, and one that is endorsed by the world's most powerful governments and corporations, it is far from the reality. Since 1960, the income gap between the North and South has roughly tripled in size[10]. It is estimated that today 4.3 billion people, 60 percent of the world's population, live on less than $5 per day[11]. The richest eight people now control the same amount of wealth as the poorest half of the world combined[12]. Poor countries remain poor because they are integrated into the global economic system on unequal terms and it is important to acknowledge the link between the history of colonialism and the development trajectory in the Global South.

As colonial independence movements gained momentum, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was set up to preserve economic stability, in particular the centres of capital, while the World Bank was set up to drive the post-war recovery, initially focused only on the reconstruction of Europe[13]. Priya Lukka (2020) provides an overview of how both institutions were key in embedding and ensuring a hegemony that had racial demarcations in the aftermath of World War II. Unequal power relations that were explicitly racist shaped the mindset behind the earliest development policies. From early colonialism in the 15th century to neocolonialism from the 1950s onwards (when many African colonies began to gain formal independence from European control), to neoliberalism from the 1980s onwards, enshrined in Structural Adjustment Programmes centred around policies of debt, each phase has further compounded these power dynamics.

The Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) adopted by many African countries at the behest of the IMF and World Bank in the 1980s and 1990s are critical to understanding much of the current economic context in Africa[14]. The SAPs significantly undermined plans by African nations to move out of colonial economic dependencies[15]. Once structural adjustment was imposed, public sector cut-backs, deregulation, and privatisation crippled the strong state building necessary to manage and implement progressive macroeconomic policies which left many countries with a perennial challenge of "poor capacity" (Tsikata, 1995)[16]. De-industrialisation, a focus on export rather than domestic markets, import dependency, and a suppression of the role of the state came to characterise macro decision making following the SAPs[17]. Not much has changed as African countries remain beholden to the international institutions that embody this thinking. The IMF's continued push for reductions in public-sector spending via the conditionalities it imposes on its borrowers from poor countries is one example that highlights the wider globalised economic structures African countries must somehow navigate[18].

Priya (2020) argues that whilst commitments to look at internal anti-racism policies have been made by the IMF and the World Bank, these initial reflections have ignored the role that both institutions have played in the perpetuation of colonialism[19]. Today, the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs) seem to frame racism in terms of its current and most obvious manifestations, rather than through a recognition of the wider historical context[20]. In doing so, they ignore

9 Jason Hickel: The Divide, available at https://www.jasonhickel.org/the-divide.

10 Jason Hickel: Global inequality may be much worse than we think, available at https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/apr/08/global-inequality-may-be-much-worse-than-we-think

11 Jason Hickel: The Divide, available at https://www.jasonhickel.org/the-divide

12 Ibid

13 Priya Lukka, Repairing harm caused: What could a reparations approach mean for the IMF and World Bank? Available at: https://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/2020/10/repairing-harm-caused-what-could-a-reparations-approach-mean-for-the-imf-and-world-bank/

14 Fatimah Kelleher (2020), African feminist futures: Macroeconomic pathways, Bread & Butter Series: African Feminist Reflections on Future Economies, available at https://awdf.org/wp-content/uploads/African-Feminist-Futures_-Macroeconomic-Pathways.pdf

15 Ibid

16 Ibid

17 Ibid

18 Ibid

19 Priya Lukka, Repairing harm caused: What could a reparations approach mean for the IMF and World Bank? Available at: https://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/2020/10/repairing-harm-caused-what-could-a-reparations-approach-mean-for-the-imf-and-world-bank/

20 Ibid

the link between colonialism and the development trajectory in the Global South, where the IMF and the World Bank have contributed to a structural economic dependency through the extraction of resources alongside the manufacture of debt, which has impeded the industrialisation, diversification, and ultimately, the political independence of many countries[21].

The cost of sovereign debt

Debt is an anchor that entrenches unequal power between North and South. This unjust and devastating cycle demonstrates a multilateral system where the greed of international creditors, such as IFIs and financial corporations and commercial banks, supersedes both the economic and social rights of people[22]. The pressure of debt servicing, and associated loan conditions, reduces resources for public services, undermines indebted countries' policy environment and often leads to regressive tax policies. Since debt servicing is deducted from public resources, it means that high cost of debt servicing takes away badly needed resources for African countries to cover public services such as health, education, social protection and care services. Failure to provide these services has a disproportionate impact on the most marginalised in society, particularly those living in poverty who cannot afford private services.

A concrete example of this were the "lost decades" of the SAPs which had intersectional impacts across the continent, and largely, on women. Fadekemi Abiru (2018)[23] offers a comprehensive summary reflection on some of these: A move towards the commoditisation and commercialisation of agriculture pushed women further down the rural hierarchy, whilst the export drive led to increased work burdens on women without any redress for their unpaid care. Cuts to state education and its gradual commercialisation exacerbated the gender bias within state provisions as patriarchal norms revived to further marginalise girl's access to education. On the domestic front, the rising costs of goods and shrinking safety nets saw varying impacts on women from different backgrounds. More urban women with moderate incomes became increasingly dependent on rural women domestic workers to pick-up their unpaid care burdens. Progressive currency devaluations also impacted the health and education sectors the most. Given that these sectors were the largest employers of women, resultant cuts in financing led to a huge reduction in women's formal avenues for wage earning, ultimately increasing the marginalisation of their work.

The burden of debt can be crippling. By the end of 2020, African governments had only budgeted about 2.6% of total GDP for COVID-19-related spending, compared to the 11.2% of GDP allocated by G20 countries[24]. Even prior to the COVID-19 crisis, as many as 30 African countries were spending more on servicing sovereign debt than on healthcare[25]. According to the World Bank, the pandemic has already triggered the first recession in Sub-Saharan Africa in 25 years[26]. This is in tandem with a deepening humanitarian crisis, as more and more people plummet into poverty.

Building back radically: In the face of multiple crises, everything must change!

While there have been growing calls for debt relief and temporary debt moratoriums from the international community, such as from the UN and the G20, these do not go far enough as they lack a binding framework compelling private, public and multilateral lenders to halt debt repayments. Debt relief is merely putting a plaster on a gaping wound, debt moratoriums or suspensions effectively just kick the can down the road, delaying what many have argued will be a widespread debt distress in Africa[27].

21 Ibid

22 Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung: The Impact and Influence of International Financial Institutions on the Middle East and North Africa, available at https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/tunesien/16107.pdf

23 Abiru, Fadekemi, (2018) 'Africa's Lost Decade: Women and the Structural Adjustment Programme', September 25th 2018 The Republic, accessed at: https://www.republic.com.ng/augustseptember-2018/africas-lost-decade/

24 Gilad Isaacs and Sonia Phalatse, Delete the Debt: Africa's Liberation from Debt Supremacy. Available at https://progressive.international/blueprint/b57afe92-e5ff-421e-a584-46c081b7def6-delete-the-debt-africas-liberation-from-debt-supremacy/en

25 Ibid

26 Ibid

27 Ibid

Before COVID-19, the African Development Bank (AfDB) estimated that African governments need extra finance to pay for a massive $68-$108bn worth of infrastructure every year up to 2030[28]. In a post-COVID-19 age this infrastructure is arguably more, not less, essential. Accordingly, not only are the solutions being applied so far insufficient in the short-term, they are also grossly inadequate to meet long-term needs. International debt markets, as currently shaped, exclude and penalise the poorest countries that need them most. This dilemma rests on the subordinate integration of Global South countries into the global financial system, a colonial and imperial architecture that continues to unfairly reward wealthier nations[29]. This state of affairs can only be reversed by concerted global action and collaboration, rooted in an acknowledgement of the historical forces that have led to this moment and the disruption of prevailing power relations and the intellectual edifices and material relations that sustain them[30].

Breaking the historical continuum means re-envisioning the structures of economic governance and asserting our own democracy in forming them[31]. Economic frameworks are only as effective as the values that underpin them. Ultimately, there is a growing case to reject all institutions that came out of colonialism, step out of their processes and create alternative governance and regulatory spaces. Dismantling the coloniality of the multilateral system begins with centering the lived experiences, Indigenous wisdoms and regenerative ways of being, practised by communities who endure the most harm. Outside the confines of the current multilateral system, a plurality of knowledge is thriving, therefore there is a need to prioritise the leadership and guidance of indigenous communities that bring us back to relational, experiential and ancestral wisdoms[32].

28 Hannah Ryder, African debt isn't the problem – the global financial system is, available at https://african.business/2020/11/finance-services/african-debt-isnt-the-problem-the-global-financial-system-is/

29 Gilad Isaacs and Sonia Phalatse, Delete the Debt: Africa's Liberation from Debt Supremacy. Available at https://progressive.international/blueprint/b57afe92-e5ff-421e-a584-46c081b7def6-delete-the-debt-africas-liberation-from-debt-supremacy/en

30 Ibid

31 Priya Lukka, Repairing harm caused: What could a reparations approach mean for the IMF and World Bank? Available at: https://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/2020/10/repairing-harm-caused-what-could-a-reparations-approach-mean-for-the-imf-and-world-bank/

32 Priya Lukka, Esther Stanford-Xosei and Bhumika Muchhala, It's time to decolonise our multilateral system for climate justice. Available at https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/oureconomy/its-time-to-decolonise-our-multilateral-system-for-climate-justice/

Conclusion

This contribution has centred financial debt across Africa as a foundational event in relation to questions of economics, politics and society. The dominant economic orthodoxy of the IMF and the World Bank posits that debt and economic development, as well as growth and poverty, can be held together in a nexus that just needs the right calibration to achieve progress for all. Priya Lukka (2020) argues that thinking of this kind ignores the damage these institutions have done and the racism they have perpetuated that needs to be tackled and addressed. She further avers that it is also incognisant of the fact that 'inclusive growth', a kind of growth that benefits the most marginalised groups in low and middle-income countries, whilst a useful utopia, fails to address the structural racism that itself stems from a colonial ideology that is hardwired into the operating models of both institutions and the economic models they support.

Currently, we are seeing the increased embeddedness of neoliberalism across all spheres of life in a way that has naturalised the logic of the market[33]. African development is heavily reliant on finance capital, foreign direct investment, and foreign aid. Many of the debates in the 1950s and 1960s clearly saw the problems with this over-reliance on foreign capital, especially Western capital. Debt cancellation was seen as the way out of this dilemma, as it would allow African nations to develop their own resources, of which they have plenty. Given the large amount of colonial activity in Africa today, it is imperative that African countries recognise the importance of resisting colonial interests and cooperating to resolve conflicts that continue to rage unresolved[34].

Sara Salem (2022) contends that regional cooperation must go beyond trade deals or institutional commitments to cooperation and instead poses the question: economic development for whom? She asserts that this was the question that drove many of the leaders and movements of the decolonisation period, to which the answer was that economic development must always serve both nation and continent. Any forms of regional cooperation

33 Sara Salem (2022), Radical Regionalism: Feminism, Sovereignty and the Pan-African Project, Africa Development, Volume XLVII, No. 1, 2022, pp. 159-191. Available at https://regionsrefocus.org/app/uploads/2022/01/Lessons-to-Africa-from-Africa-Post-Colonialisms-Today-project-.pdf#page=163

34 Ibid

should therefore be based on that principle. She further avers that the basis of the nation-state is also important to think about critically. The feminist proposal to re-imagine the nation-state as well as to think of sovereignty as something that could go beyond the nation-state both provide creative ways of thinking through some of the limitations of contemporary nation-state formations as well as the rise of right-wing forms of nationalism.

In sum, it is increasingly urgent for us to think of alternatives to these exploitative systems. Perhaps this does not mean only thinking of the future, but also revisiting the past. As Salem (2022) posits, there is much to learn from the decolonisation movement and the ways in which the future was imagined; radical forms of politics, whether emanating from Pan-Africanists or feminists, centred the idea that Africa should control its own destiny. Sovereignty was seen as the answer to the continuing control exercised by colonial power, and independent forms of economic development were crafted to counter the uneven global economic system. Since the 1970s, Africa has become increasingly entangled within neoliberal and ultra-nationalist forms of economic and political development. It is therefore critical for us to re-envision and dismantle these deeply entrenched hierarchies rooted in injustice and dehumanisation.

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Re-awakening the Aba women's riot era: A movement against gender insensitive taxation in Africa

Oluwatobiloba Ayodele

In late October of 1929, when the colonial masters had settled their presence and power in Nigeria, there was an elderly woman named Nwanyeruwa who would later become the initiator of one of the most powerful feminist movements in Nigeria. Nwanyeruwa was instructed to pay tax on her house and farm belongings by a colonial master with no prior explanation (Global Nonviolent Action Database). This is among the first documented taxation that took place in Nigeria.

Historically, African communities were organised and administered on a communal basis, with internal control mechanisms usually administered on a persuasive basis and appealing to the sense of collective belonging (Okaro, 2011). Part of the mechanisms for administering such societies included voluntary contributions to a common purse for meeting communal needs. Voluntary contributions were largely enforced not with a threat of sanction, but with an appeal to the sense of belonging. In Nigeria, there was a fairly well-developed system of taxation in most societies. The three prominent tribes - Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba - had a specific taxation system that was simultaneously applied in accordance with the religion and traditions of each tribe.

For example, the Hausa, who largely dwelled in the Northern part of the country, developed various forms of tax to sustain their rapid economic development. There was the zakat, a type of taxation established by the Holy Quran and levied on Moslems for charitable, religious and educational purposes. There were also specific taxes such as Kudin-kasa (land tax), Jangali (cattle tax), shukka-shukka (plantation tax), kudin sarauta (an accession duty paid by every chief or holder of an office on appointment) and also gado,(a death duty on a deceased's estate paid to the Emir when there was no recognised or proven heir). There were many other obligatory taxes that mostly depended on a sense of religious obligations, often there was rarely a compliance issue (Okaro, 2011).

In the Yoruba States, there was also a linkage to deities and an appeal to the divine for the imposition of taxes. Communities developed a system of annual levies and special contributions collected through the heads of families. These sources provided revenues to the ruler who relied on tributes, tolls and arbitrary levies for their revenues. Three distinct and recognised taxes in Yoruba land were: Ishakole: which was a kind of universal land rent; Owo ode: a tribute paid by men and women alike, partly in cash and partly in kind. Tax defaulters were usually ordered to leave their land; and Owo Asinghu: consisted of personal service (such as building and repairing town walls, including working on the farm of Chiefs, etc.) together with contributions of food. (Okauru, 2012).

The case of Igbo women

The Igbos who populate Eastern Nigeria, and where

Nwanyeruwa and her friends came from did not have monarchies like the Hausa and Yoruba. Therefore there was no ruling aristocracy that collected taxes in a systematic manner like in the North or West. Each group clan, village, or group of villages levied voluntary contributions, which were used for the welfare of all members. The only form of compulsory tax collected was the Egbu-nkwu (compulsory tax imposed before palm oil is harvested) (Okauru, 2012).

The Igbo, therefore, had the most inclusive and persuasive form of taxation amongst the major ethnic groups that were amalgamated in present-day Nigeria.

Furthermore, the role of women in the taxation system of each of these tribes was not specific. With this said, there were no special compliance rules for women either. It is clear that the pre-colonial tax system and tax compliance mechanisms in pre-colonial Nigeria were indifferent to gender.

Introduction of the colonial tax system in Nigeria

At the beginning of the colonial administration in Nigeria, colonial administrators used the local knowledge of district officers to introduce taxation. The colonial tax was first introduced in Northern Nigeria in 1906. This tax was extended to the Western territories in 1918 and to the Eastern territories in 1927. The colonial government passed several other legislations in order to regulate various taxes and administer aspects of taxation until Nigeria's independence in 1960 (Okauru, 2012). Notably, the tax tradition in Northern Nigeria enabled the smooth entry of the colonial government's tax system. As earlier stated, the Western region of Nigeria also had a functioning tax system and compliance structure which provided open doors for the colonial government. However, the Eastern region with a decentralised and inclusive tax system was a difficult entry for the colonial government. For instance, the colonial tax was introduced in the Eastern territories nine years after being introduced in the Western territories and twenty-one years after being introduced in the Northern territories.Ethnicity was perceived as a significant obstacle in the politico-economic development of Nigeria. (Odeyemi, 2014). With this said, the diversity of the population, as well as the different levels of development, religions and languages, presented a significant challenge to developing a uniform tax system in Nigeria.

In spite of these challenges, the desperate need to generate revenue, together with the desire to bring Africans into the market economy, led the British colonial government to impose direct taxation (colonial tax) on Africans from the first years of colonial rule. (Gardner, 2010). That is why when the colonial masters entered Nwanyeruwa's compound in the eastern region, she was instructed to pay tax on her house and farm belongings by a colonial master with no prior explanation, she rebelled. She recounted her story to her friends Ikonnia, Mwannedia, and Nwugo and organised a riot to ensure that they and other women in other clans would not be taxed (Ayodele, 2021). They did not have a problem with being taxed, as it was a communal ritual. However, they opposed a system that did not benefit them but wanted to benefit from them. Nwanyeruwa and her friends and other women from different villages sat outside the district office for several days, which resulted in the historical 1929 Aba Women Riot. (Global Nonviolent Action Database).

Women and the tax system in post-colonial Nigeria

Even now, 61 years after independence, Nigeria's tax system remains a caricature of the colonial tax system. The Federal Government of Nigeria under her taxation arm; the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) whose origins can be traced back to the year 1939 when the Companies Income Tax Ordinance was created, 21 years before independence.

In 2015, the federal government of Nigeria collected over 3.7 trillion Naira in taxes. (FIRS, 2015). This could come from several sources such as Personal Income Tax, Payroll Tax, Corporate Tax, Tariffs and many more.

The majority of working women in Nigeria are self-employed in the informal sector where they earn low incomes. In the wage sector, women tend to occupy the lower levels in the professions where they also earn lower incomes. The implication is that the majority of women are outside the income tax net or at the lower levels of the tax base. Thus, men are likely to bear a greater proportion of the income tax paid. Explicit gender biases exist in the personal income tax system where the tax law discriminates against married women with respect to tax reliefs and allowances. Thus children's allowances are claimed by the husband as long as he is not legally separated from his wife or wives. (Okojie, 2011)

Widows are only entitled to 20% of the tax relief per child for children born to their late husbands only. Furthermore, the majority of self-employed women with makeshift shops or none at all are not likely to benefit from the various expense allowances provided for in the income tax law such as relief from the interest rate on capital (women have limited access to capital), rent and premiums on lands and buildings occupied for purposes of earning income, and expenses on repairs of buildings and equipment (Okojie, 2011). With Nigeria being a patriarchal state where harmful widowhood/cultural practices, sexual and gender-based violence, and inheritance inequality still exist including poverty is one of the drivers of these issues, women, girls and marginalized groups are most affected, as they may need support that does not presently exist under colonial taxation relief systems.

The analysis of the burden of the personal income tax reveals that the average tax rate paid for equivalent levels of income is higher for individual female taxpayers than for male taxpayers. because married men are granted tax reliefs on the assumption that the men are the breadwinners. Thus, while men may bear a greater share of the income tax paid in the wage sector because they are more in number and tend to earn higher incomes, at the individual level, the tax burden is higher for women than the men, suggesting the absence of horizontal equity between men and women at the same level of income. (Okojie, 2011). Not only does this erase women's significant and unpaid care contribution to household sustainability, but it also upholds the heteronormative ideology of a man being the major provider in the home. Ultimately, the tax system affects women's access to property, incomes and public services, financial independence and further transmits gendered social expectations and stereotypes within societies and across borders. (Akina Mama wa Afrika, 2022)

It is asserted that one of the reasons taxes are collected from individuals and businesses is to serve as a source of revenue for the government to fund public services such as providing safe education, access to health for all, infrastructural public facilities, and unemployment benefits, etc. Another reason for taxation is to redistribute wealth among the different classes or individuals in society, especially between the well-to-do and the less well-off in the interest of social equity. However, Nigeria has achieved neither of these two reasons, it has however enabled neoliberal capitalism which has in fact increased poverty and inequality in Nigeria. In 2022, World Bank statistics show Nigeria currently has 95.1 million poor persons. (World Bank, 2022). The Nigeria Living Standards Survey results showed that over 50% of expenditure by female-headed households was on nonfood items which are likely to attract VAT (Okojie, 2011). Generally, total expenditure on food and non-food items was higher in female-headed households than in male-headed households. The implication is that any move to generate more revenues by increasing VAT rates is likely to impose a greater burden on female-headed households and very likely women in male-headed households as well, than on men. (Okojie, 2011).

Concluding comments

With current efforts by the Nigerian government to maximise tax revenue from non-oil sources, it is crucial that tax policies like PIT are gender sensitive. With the economic crisis, further compounded by the COVID-19 implications, tax policies like PIT must be reviewed from an intersectional feminist perspective. Clearly, the insensitivity in the tax system started with the colonial tax administration. The Aba Women's efforts significantly changed tax processes, particularly in the Eastern region of Nigeria. At the rise of the riot, the women camped in front of the house of the warrant chief who demanded tax payment from Nwanyeruwa. Even after his people threw stones and sticks at them, the women continued to camp in thousands around the District Office until the warrant chief was tried and sentenced to two years' imprisonment for assault. The gendered implications of the burden of the personal income tax show the urgent need to collectively disrupt the way things are currently being done.

The tax system in Nigeria should be reviewed from an intersectional feminist perspective. Nigerian government and policymakers must acknowledge gender issues within the current tax system, instead of ignoring systematic inequalities that heavily place the burdens of domestic work and unpaid care on women. The gender bias in the personal income tax system (whereby husbands claim child and dependants' reliefs) should be addressed. The same applies to the situation of widows who are granted only a fraction of child dependent reliefs. Conclusively, the current economic crisis in Nigeria further proves the need for feminist economic alternatives that center on care and strive for a society that is gender just.

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Feminist reflections on Uganda's Public Debt

Sunshine Fionah Komusana

Introduction

A scan of Uganda's macroeconomic policy and practice in response to Covid-19 indicates that like many developing countries, the pandemic exacerbated Uganda's huge public debt burden. According to Uganda's National Budget for the financial year, 2022/2023 presented by the Minister of Finance Planning and Economic Development on June 14, 2022, loan repayment will take up to 32% of the national budget. Since debt servicing is deducted from public resources, it means that the high cost of debt servicing takes away from badly needed resources for Uganda such as public services which include health (including sexual and reproductive health services), education, social protection and care services. In 2021, cuts to the health budget specifically affected two parts: The Uganda Cancer Institute and Uganda Reproductive and Maternal Health (RMH) Programme. There is no indication of increased allocation to health in the current financial year, making women the creditors to both new and old public debts when there is no proof that government borrowing is for the benefit of women.

Public debt as a gendered issue

" A feminist reading of Africa's indebtedness requires that we take into account how debt has led to policy externalization, characterized by neoliberal policies which have undermined the role of states in provisioning the basic goods and services needed to reproduce our societies; it requires the recognition of how, in the absence of state provisioning, the debt burdens have been transferred to households, with women disproportionately bearing the costs" **-Busi Sebeko -feminist economist and researcher**

Due to the patriarchal neoliberal state machine, women have no political agency to participate in macroeconomic decisions. Ugandan feminists have over the years called out state and private entities for excluding women in from discussions through constituting manels on an array of issues in media and beyond. This exclusion is reinforced during discourse about national budgets, taxation and the political economy. The omission of women from such spaces means that decisions are made without insight into how they will impact women's lives.

For instance, women are overrepresented in the informal sector. A June 2022 analysis by Relief Web indicates that in Uganda nearly 14 million or 98% of Uganda's total working age is in the informal sector and of those, 87% are women workers. This explains why the pandemic and the pandemic-induced lockdowns, had a disproportionately detrimental effect on women. Women were the first to quit working once lockdown measures were implemented in March 2020 because they were already highly represented in industries and occupations that were vulnerable and had greater caregiving responsibilities. Women informal traders had to sleep at the market and domestic violence victims were forced to stay with abusers due to the sweeping bans on public transport. The irony of this is that Uganda's "covid loans" borrowed in the name of recovery from Covid19 have addressed none of the women specific challenges in the pandemic

The unequal expense of debt payment that falls on women has long been a source of concern for feminists. Concern has focused in particular on the detrimental effects of sovereign debt on the delivery of public services, which is essential to how feminists conceptualize social reproduction. The pressure of debt servicing and associated loan conditions not only reduces resources for public services (health, education, housing- for which women are disproportionately deprived) through undermining indebted countries' policy environment it also often leads to regressive tax policies. From gender pay gaps to bearing, subsidising labour for the government through unpaid care work to the fact that most of Uganda's revenue is collected from consumption taxes like Valued Added Taxes, on basic goods and services (whose prices continue to skyrocket with no relief from the government) it is needless to say that it women's backs that are hurting and purses bleeding from carrying and repaying public debt.

Feminist Alternatives to the Debt Crisis

Feminist economic justice advocates have made a case for first progressive tax policies and the curbing of illicit financial flows through among other ways, ensuring that corporations pay their fair share of taxes. In Uganda, companies, mainly foreign-owned, have benefits including lengthy tax holidays to start operations, supported by the false idea that it will boost the local economy and investment. These corporations are also often gifted free land, guaranteed cheap labour with no consideration for paying living wages, health insurance or retirement benefits for their exploited employees or safeguards for occupational safety and health, and also were beneficiaries of the Covid19 financial relief packages to mitigate the economic shock of the pandemic.

While the government's role is critical in creating an environment where the debt crisis is not a crisis for women, there is a larger issue with the global financial system dating back to the 1980 structural adjustment programmes that keep countries like Uganda in an endless loop of borrowing and servicing debt instead of investing in public services. The Economic Commission of Africa has recommended that in order to support African countries to get back on their feet a temporary debt freeze for up to two years, would suffice, however, debt cancellation altogether and the demand for more favorable conditions that lower the burden of debt incurred by women is the more radical feminist alternative.

Conclusion

Women cannot continue to be the creditors of seemingly insurmountable public debt while receiving crumbs. The demand remains that there should be deliberate government effort towards funding public services, especially health, substantive representation of women in governance and macroeconomic policy decisions, making tax policies progressive, and addressing violence against women (rapid response, strengthened referral pathways, access to justice, shelters). If women are going to keep working to pay back loans, loans must work for women, that is the bare minimum.

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"Due to the pandemic, Uganda's public debt has risen to epic proportions. The country's debt increased by UGX. 16.82 trillion (34%) in a space of one year to UGX.65.82 trillion (47.2% of nominal GDP) in December 2020 from UGX. 49 trillion (38% of nominal GDP) at the end of 2019. With continued borrowing, the public debt is projected at 51.9 per cent of the GDP in FY 2021/22"(WHERE DID COVID 19 MONEY GO? INTERNATIONAL FINANCE INSTITUTIONS FUNDING TO UGANDA: 2021 Report by the Initiative for Social and Economic Rights ISER)

Uganda Budget Speech; Financial Year 2022/2023; T

Manels refers to all-male panels and is used to highlight the exclusion of women as subject-matter experts. Manels are prevalent in social and work domains. From health, economics, politics, and policy debates to myriad other conversations in the public domain, we see men given platforms despite the large number of women who are involved in these fields. In this respect, manels perpetuate the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of women by completely ignoring them.

@EndManels on Twitter A feminist collective using public shaming to end #manels (all male panels) in Uganda and all over the world

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Investing in social infrastructure as a means of a productive economy: A case study of Kenya

Essy Atieno Olang

Introduction

This paper focuses on the gender lens toward social inclusion of women and men in healthcare, education and unpaid care work. It specifically covers service delivery as well as public participation processes within the social aspects mentioned above. These thematic areas informed the instrumentalization of desktop reviews of articles.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated inadequate provision of social infrastructure and further magnified the structural gaps in Kenya, particularly on levels of accessibility of services between men and women. Schools were closed indefinitely at some point as a containment measure against COVID-19. Health institutions shifted their focus to COVID-19. Therefore, important services, such as reproductive healthcare, were not given priority. Similarly, the burden of unpaid care work increased since most people were confined in their homes.

It is against this background that the article interrogates gendered aspects of inclusive education, employment, healthcare and social care services as a key contribution to developing economies. As Antonopoulos and Kim (2011) suggest, state investment in social infrastructure generates employment and contributes to gender equality. With this said, Kenya's Vision 2030 development blueprint exclusively features social strategy in ensuring a just and cohesive society that enjoys equitable social development throughout key areas including health, Education, Gender, Water and Sanitation. As the state progresses to a middle-income country with a steadily growing gross domestic product (GDP), it is important to put in place solid action plans.

Research on social infrastructure for productive economies

Over the years, a number of scholars and philosophers have conducted research and published papers on the value of social infrastructure for productive economies. This includes Keya and his colleagues from The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, who in 2017, wrote a paper titled "The Influence of socio-economic infrastructure on economic growth in the Dandora slum in Nairobi, Kenya," (Keya et al., 2017). They note that for countries to attain development targets education and health services, including sanitation and housing, are required.

In 2008, Saad Yahya studied how financing social infrastructure contributes to the alleviation of poverty in Kenya and Tanzania, particularly within the coastal cities like Mombasa, Malindi, Lamu, and Zanzibar (Yahya, 2008). Yayha's work assessed the implementation of structures and institutions that provide frameworks for social protection to residents of the coast. He covered the utilisation, operationalization and institutionalisation of WAQF endowments along the coast which have been in existence since the 20th century to date. WAQF endowments under Islamic law are considered as the donation of land or building for charitable purposes without the intention of reclaiming the property back.

The Keynesian school of thought in the 1930s believed that the greatest contribution to lack of expenditure is unemployment. This school of thought presented a strategic footing whereby post-Keynesian thinkers such as Mark Carney advocated for diversity in macroeconomics and created a shift in economic thinking where women can equally contribute to economic progression.

Other works that inform, the intent of this article includes, a published report on Establishing standards of social infrastructure (Casey, 2005) which largely defines 'soft' infrastructure as social infrastructure and the development of standards that guide planning processes towards social infrastructure pinned under key principals around equity, equality and active civic engagement

In terms of economic and social contributions of care work, Public investment in caring also contributes to resolving the care deficit that arises because more women are in paid employment than ever before but men have not increased the amount of domestic work or caring they do sufficiently to make up the difference (Esping-Andersen, 2009).

The Case of Kenya and Social Infrastructure

While Kenya has adequate resources, it requires provisions around progressive laws/policies and regulations to improve citizens' quality of life. This requires implementation frameworks and gender indicators that measure the extent to which guidelines and regulations are acted upon in tandem. Also, the lack of gender-responsive budgeting denies a country an economic boost by expanding the gap in the workforce and violating labour rights.

Corruption, including tax injustices, has contributed to a dwindling economy. Amidst all the inequities, women and girls appear to largely carry the burden of poor service delivery. It has been noted that when hospitals or health centres are fully equipped and offer better services, citizens' standards of living improve over time. With a properly integrated education system that offers quality and equal learning opportunities for all regardless of gender, age, or identity, a state propels itself to produce skilled labourers who are highly competitive in global markets. A healthy and informed citizenry provides a sustainable workforce that will drive the country to greater economic heights.

Well-designed social protection programs are cost-effective, that is costing countries on average about 1.5% GDP (Gross Domestic Production). With this trajectory in mind, if Kenya would consider having recurrent budgetary allocation on reproductive health services, it would reduce the mortality rate. This would, in turn, lead to an increased workforce. It would also improve access to information around reproductive health rights among young women and adolescents hence reducing the rate of teenage pregnancies and school dropouts ensuring the sustained transition of all children throughout school resulting in the production of skilled human resources. Evidently, another reason to ensure we invest in social infrastructure is that we may actually realise a reduction of public expenditure from the reduction of unemployment and social security payments. An increase in the workforce means workers are subject to tax which should also not be exorbitant.

Barriers to social infrastructure

Economic structural barriers continue to be present because women are not involved in decision-making during development processes. For example, when the government makes decisions in the health and education sectors, women's voices are not included. Additionally, the government has not put in place measures to reduce unpaid care work, the burden of which largely falls on women. Looking at different County Integrated Plans in Kenya, prioritization of health care projects that put women's needs as an essential concern, are often given little to no finances. This is mainly because during the development of the plans County departments fail to employ gender-responsive plans. Gender financing is equally important to ensure gender departments are able to track project/program implementation processes across county departments and country ministries in tandem with gender data and indicators.

Despite the free primary education policy in Kenya in 2003, inequalities in education are still present. Most rural schools have massive enrollment, however, the learning environment is not conducive due to a lack of infrastructure, such as windows, doors, and desks. Schools in urban areas have limited enrollment due to the magnanimous gap in social classes. Most children from rural, peri-urban, and slum areas still continue to perform dismally in school due to their unfavourable social backgrounds. In particular children with disabilities are still stigmatised because the education system is not fully integrated to provide space for them, and few schools have developed disability-friendly structures. Further, girls with disabilities experience double tragedy as they often skip school due to their disability and during their menstrual periods.

Health infrastructure is not only limited to building hospitals or dispensaries but also ensuring proper service delivery in access to information through health service charters, availability of reproductive health services, Gender Based Violence (GBV) services, psychosocial support services, and palliative care within a health facility. Young people face discrimination when seeking contraceptives due to the belief that they should abstain from sexual intercourse until marriage. However, the reality is that most young people often from the onset of adolescence are sexually active.

Women of reproductive ages also do not receive or have enough access to contraceptives. However, in counties such as Kisumu, the County government together with civil society organisations, effected a family planning implementation cost plan 2019-2023. This has allowed more people to use contraceptives. Family planning has the power to transform economies, experts estimate that achieving universal access to contraception would have a higher return on investment among attainment of 169 targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The level of burden of unpaid care work on women has not decreased despite having women rise in economic spaces. As Kenya continues to assert the implementation of the 2/3rd gender rule in socio-economic and political spheres, the looming burden of unpaid care work continues to remain a thorn in the flesh. This is due to the inability to quantify the level of domestic care work and the unfelt need to monetize paid care work. Unpaid care work has been proven to be a major obstacle towards realising gender equality since women circumstantially have to miss out on economic opportunities in order to assume the caring role within their household.

Conclusion

With the Government of Kenya integrating the education system with a data disaggregated dashboard which addresses the different vulnerabilities that children face, it can be able to provide quality education for all. With regards to health, the Kenyan government needs to consider having strategies laid out to promote civic engagement on the benefits of voluntary family planning. For instance, if a woman is able to have a manageable family size, she can save up to an average $7 from her income and therefore ensure all children within a household attain education up to tertiary/ university level. At the micro level, this translates to proper planning for a country's population and the ability to equitably allocate resources.

Through gender-responsive budgets, governments will be able to plan for the development of evidenced advocacy intervention and behavior change communication plans for civic engagement that demystify gender roles and encourage men to assume responsibilities in caring roles and domestic work. This ensures both genders competitively participate in socio-economic spheres hence increasing the country's productivity.

County governments also need to also consider conducting community score cards to assess the social impacts of the projects undertaken. The lack of involvement of community members in the project design phase up to implementation has been seen to result in the underutilization of available structures.

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The Potential of women self-help groups to improve access to public service delivery in Kenya: A case study of Kayole sub-county

Eunice Anyango Oyule

Introduction

There has been growing interest in Women's self-help groups (SHGs) as a tool of social, economic and political empowerment.While some self-help groups have been successful in elevating the livelihoods of women, some still live in abject poverty in informal settlements as the lack financial services to boost their income. This paper examines the ability of the self-help groups to advocate for public service delivery for women in Kenya

Poverty has been a pressing issue in Kenya's less developed counties. People in these areas have been unable to access credit and financing, partly due to the high interest rate that is imposed on the loans by financial institutions. Economic disempowerment not only affects the development of the affected areas but also the livelihoods of millions of Kenyans who are disadvantaged relative to accessibility of public services from the mainstream institutions. The far reaching implications of economic empowerment necessitates the need to understand the link between the power of self-help groups membership, and public service delivery in Kenya.

The aim of this paper is to assess organisational and decision making skills within women self-help groups. It is acknowledged that these self-help groups rarely translate to meaningful engagement or voice in political, economic or good governance platforms where they can influence basic public service provision and yet, they bear the brunt of the lack of access to these services. It will also articulate the interconnection of self-help groups as agents of change within county governments by harnessing the power of women organised within self-help groups to advocate for public service delivery and equality in Kenya.

Self-help groups

Self-help groups, (commonly known as chama[1]) are small voluntary groups formed by people related by affinity for a specific purpose, and for the purpose of mutual support (Brody, Dworkin, Dundar, Murthy & Pascoe, 2013). The concept of self-help groups is based on the self-help approach pioneered in India in the 1980s. It stresses group ownership, control and management of goals and processes of concern. The groups can be seen as a mobilising, organising, social safety net and platform for sustaining socio-economic livelihoods in urban informal settlements.

1 Chama means investment or welfare group in Swahili.

Women and self-help groups

Women's economic empowerment is vital for sustainable development and the achievement of sustainable development. Through self-help groups (SHGs), women have changed their living standards and quality of life for themselves, and close family members including children and spouses. Self-help groups are vital since they can eradicate poverty in a country, especially in rural areas (Beevi & Devi, 2011). These groups result from persons who share common problematic conditions or experiences coming together for mutual assistance to deal with the phenomena they share (Zastrow, 2009). These groups are self-governing and self-regulating and create a productive ground for the emergence of communication networks. In SHGs, leadership is rotated among members. Membership is voluntary, with members joining and leaving at any time (Eyben et al., 2008). Members benefit from these groups through mutual assistance from others dealing with similar problems. The SHGs do not require a lot of resources to run because members share what they have.

Women in Kenya are not homogeneous, they have different needs. Poverty and lack of access to public services continues to disempower women who are disproportionately affected and many have little or no say in the decisions which affect their lives. They often get less food, receive less education, and are disproportionately affected by poor sanitation. Many have little or no money of their own which makes them dependent on others. The budget analysis for 2021-2022 by the UON WEE Hub reported the total budget allocated to sectors that have an impact on women's work was 406 billion shillings, which is 0.1% of the total government spending for the year 2021-2022 (UON WEE Hub, 2022). The sectors include education, health, water and sanitation, social protection, agriculture and affirmative action. Underfunding and reducing budget allocations points to a lack of prioritisation of issues that affect women in Kenya.

Literature review

There are several studies on the positive impacts of different measures of empowerment. However, there is a scarcity of literature on the effect of self-help groups (Kumar et al, 2018). Specifically, the contribution of women in self-help groups toward the politics of the country has not been recognized. A lot of research in Kenya on self-help groups, mainly focuses on the aspect of the evaluation of self-help groups as a tool for socio-economic empowerment emphasising that women play a crucial role in developing the economy, but their contribution has been negatively affected by limited financial services access. To fill this knowledge gap, this paper examines how self-help groups can improve awareness and advocate for public service delivery.

Kumar and colleagues (2018) undertook research in five Indian states examining self-help group membership. They found that most members of the group were more politically engaged. Kumar et al (2018) further explains that in terms of social networks, mobility, and political participation in India women's self-help groups have been used as a vehicle for social, political, and economic empowerment as well as a platform for service delivery.

Brody et al. (2017) review the literature on the impact of economic SHGs on women's empowerment and hypothesise pathways through which SHGs may empower women. They discuss how access to resources (such as credit and training), exposure to group support and accumulation of social capital can, in the long term, lead to positive economic, political, social or psychological empowerment of women.

Were and Kimaru-Muchai (2021), in their evaluation of self-help groups in Kenya, state that women involved in SHGs also improved social status and learned legal and political awareness as leadership positions were elective to all members. The study results show that group training and interaction with stakeholders had increased women's awareness and achieved social recognition. The study also revealed that the group structure was less hierarchical and more informal than in most formal organisations.

Women in self-help groups have been involved in political mobilisation, advocacy and awareness creation (Okoth, 2017). As leaders within self-help groups, most of these women are also involved in political parties as ward Chairs and representatives. Being community leaders enables them to take care of the needs of the people in their wards, for example, handling issues to do with gender based violence, political campaigning for aspirants and lobbying for bursaries for their constituents (Okoth, 2017).

Overall, their review of the literature suggests that SHGs can have positive effects on women's economic, political and social empowerment, but they emphasise the need for more rigorous quantitative analyses.

Desk review findings

The findings below were informed by a desk review of relevant information. Women in informal settlements organise and come together in self-help groups, what is commonly known as "chamas".

Chama women in the community play a significant role in community mobilisation and organising for political parties as mobilizers (Okoth, 2017). It is therefore necessary to strengthen the engagement of Chama women within political parties or the self-help groups to engage meaningfully and be able to elect their own leaders from their own community, to represent them at the county and National level in the general elections. Such elections will enable these women groups to solve some of the issues faced within the community and facilitate public service delivery for the realisation of the Economic, Social and Environmental rights of the community as enshrined in the 2010 Constitution of Kenya.

It was found that most women had not got a clear idea of what political empowerment means, however, chama women participants had an understanding of political participation, focused on voting or running for office rather than engaging in policy debates (Okoth, 2017). Once they learned about additional opportunities for engagement, they expressed interest in exerting greater influence on public policy (Okoth, 2017).

An important insight is that the self-help groups themselves cannot be expected to increase knowledge of public entitlement schemes in absence of a deliberate effort to do so by an external agency.

Discussion

Self-help groups have always been organised and have a structure of leadership, where if one fails to adhere to the rules of the group, one loses their membership automatically. These women have the ability to save money together and some, have invested and elevated their living standards, which means, they possess the capacity of self-organisation and discipline. This means that if the capacity of the women in self-help groups is built to a standard where they can comprehend the connection between their presence in those groups as political mobilizers, and public service delivery, then great change can be achieved.

The loopholes that political aspirants have always used in targeting these women, is the fact that most of them are poor and therefore, politicians take advantage of their vulnerability to use them. Therefore, this gap can be filled by ensuring that the economic status of these women are catered for by training on how to negotiate for themselves, and also offering support. They also need to be encouraged to vie for the political seats which improves the chances of better representation in their constituencies.

Conclusion

When political aspirants are campaigning, most of them go to the communities to seek votes. Most of the time, women in informal settlements and communities will endorse the political aspirants depending on the quality of service the political aspirants promise to deliver. This means that these women understand that politics is linked to public service delivery, therefore, if they are empowered enough to see their value and worth in the political space, then politicians will be accountable to their citizens.

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Engendering Fiscal Policy: A case for gender-responsive budgeting in Kenya.

Farzana Abdikadir Ibrahim

Introduction

This paper analyses the current Kenyan fiscal policy framework 2020 from a feminist lens and emphasises the importance of engendering fiscal policy in Kenya. It investigates the utilisation and application of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in resource planning and budgeting in Kenya. The paper carries out a retrospective analysis of the 2019 budgets and gender responsiveness. An assessment of the various factors hindering the use of gender responsive budgeting (GRB) tools within Kenya is undertaken, including benchmarking countries that have successfully adopted GRB tools in planning and budgeting and the benefits of such approaches.

Background

In June of every year, the Kenyan government budget is read out by the National Treasury and Planning Cabinet minister. The budget document entails a plan of action on how the government intends to deliver on their campaign promises to its constituents. It also details resources that have been allocated to the different sectors of the economy. Several factors influence decisions on resource allocation and budget planning. One key factor influencing resource allocation and the budget planning process is political clientelism and patronage (Simson, 2019). As a result, particular sectors or regions will receive allocations because of their political affiliation or influence on voters during the election period. The government's development plan also influences the process. Thus the budget document acts as an implied indicator for the government's development priority areas and policies, and it is a crucial policy instrument that reflects the administration's priorities (Hyndman et al., 2014). The allocations entail budgets for facilities and infrastructure such as a new healthcare facility, newly tarmacked roads, and classrooms, all of which require considerable resources to implement.

Kenyan policy context

The Kenyan government has committed to eradicating gender inequality by signing various continental and international agreements on promoting gender equality. Kenya is a signatory to the Beijing Platform of Action of 1995, the Maputo Protocol of 2003 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), of which 12 of the 17 SDGs have direct gender targets, particularly SDG No. 5 which focuses on Gender equality. Nationally, Kenya has created the legal frameworks for promoting gender equality as seen in the Constitution of Kenya (2010), County Government Act (No 17 of 2012) and the Public Financial Management Act (2012), amongst other policy papers which relate to Gender equality. In addition, Kenya has commissions and state departments dedicated to gender mainstreaming; these are the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) and State Department for Gender. To show the government's commitment to promoting gender equality and incorporating a gender perspective in the budget-making process, Kenya has adopted Gender Responsive Budgeting

(GRB) in the budget-making process. The main focus behind the GRB is to emphasise the principle of gender equity in all stages of the budget process, both at national and county government levels. This tool seeks to ultimately achieve better results for the budget in general and especially for women. With the double goal of advancing gender equality and improving development, certain African countries have recognised the application of gender responsive budgeting as an essential tool to attain these goals. The GRB is one way to ensure the budget planning process is engendered and women are included at a macro level. Despite Kenya's numerous legal and policy commitments, the country has yet to fully utilise the GRB tool for its resource allocation and national fiscal policy.

Given these well-known benefits of GRB, this paper also seeks to investigate and understand why many countries, more specifically Kenya, have yet to adopt the GRB tool fully. This paper also analyses the current state of implementation of GRB in Kenya. It will also analyse countries that have adopted GRB in their budgeting process and highlight the applied and practical implementation strategies.

Literature review

Budgets are not gender neutral and they affect women and men in different ways. The current set up of government budgets ignores the impact on women, thus reinforcing gender inequality by insisting that the national budget formulation ignores the different, socially determined roles, responsibilities and capabilities of men and women', (Broomhill & Sharp, 2002).

What is a Gender Responsive Budget?

The need to adopt GRB as a tool for promoting gender equality is a discourse emerging in many countries. But what counts as GRB? According to Elson (1998), gender responsive budgeting (GRB) involves analyzing the allocation of public spending, the tax system and public service delivery to identify gender-specific impacts of budget policy and it refers to a comprehensive sex disaggregation of the ultimate beneficiaries of government spending in the different sectors and public goods and services in general. It entails a gender focused analysis of the government's national as well as county level budget in total expenditure, total revenue collection including the deficit financing in the budget. Another definition for GRB as put forth by Stotsky is "an approach to budgeting that uses fiscal policy and administration to promote gender equality and girls' and women's development." (2016, p.4). GRB has been identified by other labels such as 'women's budgets', 'gender mainstreaming' and 'gender-sensitive budgets'. These refer to questioning and evaluating governmental budgets based on gender, (Broomhill & Sharp, 2002).

Global studies on Gender Responsive Budgeting

In 1979 a significant step was taken by The United Nations (UN) General Assembly. The Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (Elson, 2006). While gender perspectives have been neglected in the past decade of formal econometric studies, economists have long noted the crucial role of GRB in the budget planning process. Researchers in economics have focused on exploring the vital role of gender in the macroeconomy, for example by using input-output analysis, De Henau et al. (2016) found that, for seven OECD countries, investment in social infrastructure would create roughly double the number of new jobs as investment in physical infrastructure (directly and through a strong multiplier effect). Their findings also note a decrease in the gender gap in employment with more investment in social infrastructure, reflecting the concentration of women in the social sector. Other studies show that a country's macro-policy goals are often undermined by macro-level policies that include fiscal, monetary, and even trade policies that more often have differential effects on gender (Seguino, 2020).

The Government of Nepal, for example, introduced gender responsive budgeting in the fiscal year 2007/2008 through gender audits of line ministries, gender assessments, awareness raising and the establishment of a Gender Responsive Budget Committee. In addition, the Ministry of Finance has developed a budget tracking system to measure the gender responsiveness of public spending and donor aid along with five indicators. As a result, gender-responsive budget allocations in Nepal have increased steadily since 2007, with a cumulative positive change from 11 per cent to almost 22 percent in 2014. This has contributed to better public service for women and girls (Heintz, 2021).

Continental studies on Gender Responsive Budgeting

Moving down further to a regional context, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) introduced the Protocol on Gender and Development which came into force in 2012 (SADC, 2008). According to Article 15 of this Protocol on Gender and Development, “shall ensure gender sensitive and responsive budgeting at the micro and macro levels, including tracking, monitoring and evaluation” (UNECA, 2015, p. 2). By 2014, all sub-Saharan countries had ratified the CEDAW and had mechanisms in place to monitor its adoption and implementation progress. Continentally, African ministers in charge of gender and women’s affairs took the mantle to promote the adoption of gender-sensitive planning and budgeting and strengthen resource mobilisation and allocation for women’s rights.

An IMF working paper by Kebhaj, Kolovich and Stotsky (2016) conducted a survey of Gender Budgeting Efforts in Sub-Saharan Africa which looked at two East African countries, Uganda and Rwanda. They found that while many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have adopted GRB for over two decades, the most successful initiatives have been in Uganda and Rwanda. These two countries have adopted gender budgeting as an integral part of the budgetary process and fiscal policy formulation. However, there are still areas of improvement in the overall gender budgeting in both countries. The paper identifies the role of the institutionalisation of gender budgeting in government laws as critical. The Ministry of Finance has been noted as a critical player in this process of institutionalisation since they can mandate sectoral ministries and local governments to incorporate gender-oriented goals into their plans.

A recent study by Mirwobe (2013), reports on Rwanda’s progress in implementing gender budgeting. Findings indicate that the Rwandan Ministry of Agriculture spent a third of their budget on gender centred projects and outputs (Mirwobe, 2013). The large share by the Ministry of Agriculture is reflective of the priority attached to promoting agricultural productivity for women who account for the highest number of workers in the sector.

Challenges of Gender Responsive Budgeting

The adoption of GRB is not without its challenges. The slow or complete lack of adoption of GRB in many countries around the world can be attributed to the lack of accountability and transparency. The process of policy formulation is a technocratic one that is conducted with almost no participation from the different interest groups. This is mainly because women are absent or underrepresented in the decision-making process in positions such as the Central Bank Governor who is mandated to come up with monetary policies (Heintz, 2021). The second challenge facing most sub-Saharan African budgets is the limited resources on which they must operate, which is often below 25 percent of GDP. This is coupled with the limited borrowing opportunity in the international financial markets and the global events that affect the exchange rates because of their susceptibility to these international events, (Berg et al., 2009).

A study on Gender Budgeting baseline review in Kenya which looked at the budget planning process both at national level and selected counties, reported on the challenges faced by county governments in producing a gender responsive budget, the paper’s conclusion on the national level budget was greatly undermined by the lack of sex-disaggregated data in the national budget allocations (SDG Forum group, 2020).

The take away from these studies is the centrality of Governments in the implementation of gender responsive budgets. Governments must analyse the distributive impact evaluation of their macroeconomic policy on women and men as in its commitment to gender equality. One way to do this is through the adoption of gender responsive budgeting.

Civil society organisations may also persuade the government to conduct a gender analysis, or do it themselves to illustrate the importance of government consideration of gender issues. The outcome can be utilised to influence political decisions on resource collection and allocation as well as review Gender Responsive Budgeting analysis frameworks.

The Government of Kenya has recognized that its expenditures will be used more efficiently and effectively if a comprehensive framework promotes gender mainstreaming within different sectors and ministries. Therefore, a desk review of the literature was undertaken to analyse how gender has been incorporated in different contexts by examining different gender responsive analysis approaches.

The critical areas will guide the government expenditure to gather data for making decisions for the next steps. The successful implementation of the gender responsive budget is pegged on following proper guidelines before the budget cycle. To analyse the impact of gender at all levels of the budgeting process so that gender is reflected in budget decisions, the following considerations were used to analyse the current government expenditure.

(a) Gender aware policy appraisal: The first step involves conducting a gender aware policy appraisal of the programmes and policy; This includes an initial evaluation of the current state of all government departments and programmes and a review of how the policies within different departments impact men and women and contribute to gender equality. In Pakistan, The Ministry of Finance together with the technical and financial support of UNDP, carried out a gender-aware policy appraisal of the education sector and found that an increase in allocation to education did not automatically result in more girl's enrolment (Lauritto & Haider, 2013).

This is because the status quo has been that boys account for the high enrolment and thus any new allocation for education led to more boy's schools being built unless the funds were specifically earmarked for the construction of a girl's school.

(b) Gender-disaggregated beneficiary assessment: A gender-disaggregated beneficiary assessment of service delivery and budget priorities is the study of the extent to which programmes and policies meet women's and men's needs and priorities. It involves understanding how public investment in the provision of public services meet the priorities of the people who use the services. Vinay et al. (2001) review of the anti-poverty programme in Mexico known as "Progesa" which was initiated to provide education, health and nutrition for children was found to have been relying heavily on unpaid labour by women. Women volunteered for 29 hours of unpaid labour hours per month on average and reported that it was not worth the investment in time to comply with the requirements of the programme and that they are already overburdened. This gender-disaggregated beneficiary assessment of governments' public investments will provide the evidence required to discontinue some of the programmes within departments that are perpetuating gender inequality.

(c) Gender-disaggregated benefit incidence analysis: This is an examination of the distribution of expenditure between men and women. It involves a deeper analysis of how women and men benefit from government expenditures on public services such as agriculture, security, judiciary services, education, and healthcare.

(d) Gender-disaggregated revenue incidence analysis: It examines the distribution of the burden of government revenue-raising avenues. For example, income taxes, fines, levies, or fees. This type of analysis can be a gender-disaggregated tax incidence investigation. The tax structure for countries in the Global south rely more on the informal sector. For example, in Kenya, the informal sector is the largest employer of women in the economy. The taxes and levies applicable to a small and medium enterprise in Kenya include but are not limited to; a business permit, turnover tax, income tax, withholding tax, digital services tax, value-added tax etc. In many countries, their tax structures force women to pay more taxes than men and yet women in the official labour market are fewer and benefit less from public services available.

Gender-disaggregated beneficiary assessment on the Government of Kenya 2016-2020 budgets

A review was undertaken of the Government of Kenya's (GoK's) medium-term expenditure framework budgeting process reports in the past five fiscal years at the national level by analysing 2016-2020 budgets and the supporting documents. A Gender-disaggregated beneficiary assessment was undertaken examining the beneficiaries of the government's budget allocation over the last five years. it looked at the allocations under the State Department and the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender. An analysis of the Budget Review Outlook Paper, the budget hearing report, the budget statements, and the program-based budget for the selected sectors took place. Table 1 below shows the national budget by year according to their classification into sectors as categorised by the national treasury.

Table 1. National Budget by Year and Budgeting Sectors

SECTOR	BUDGET IN KSH. MILLIONS				
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Agriculture, Rural & Urban Development	41,089	38,397	52,958	59,638	63,236
Energy, Infrastructure & ICT	430,455	415,743	418,796	435,107	362,769
General Economic & Commercial Affairs	19,323	19,691	31,964	29,890	27,906
Health	57,472	61,701	90,007	92,725	111,702
Education	339,924	374,989	442,328	494,807	505,101
Governance, Justice, Law & Order	164,398	201,780	190,153	209,625	197,794
Public Administration & International Relations	158,463	234,147	251,038	288,821	289,312
National Security	129,207	146,267	142,265	159,270	154,532
Social Protection, Culture & Recreation	51,599	46,619	52,868	68,690	70,089
Environment Protection, Water & Natural Resources	70,879	73,586	77,830	90,247	105,216
	1,462,809	1,612,920	1,750,207	1,928,820	1,887,662

Source: *The National Treasury GoK*

In the sectoral budget allocation, there is no indication of gender allocation in the budget. The gender element falls under the Governance, Justice, Law and Order represented by the State Department for Gender within the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender.

The Gender Agenda within the State Department for Gender

The Kenyan State Department for Gender was established in November 2015 following a reorganisation of government ministries. The Ministry of Public Service and Gender, now the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender, has two departments, State Department for Public Service and State Department for Gender. The department is mandated to champion the socio-economic empowerment of women and promote gender mainstreaming in the national development plans. The Budget for the financial year 2019/20 was heavily influenced by the government's "Big Four Agenda", as announced by President Uhuru Kenyatta. President Uhuru Kenyatta's development blueprint, The Big Four Agenda, comprises Food Security; Affordable Housing; Manufacturing and Affordable Healthcare. The "Big Four" Agenda is the Government's set of priority programs and reforms, which will be implemented over a period of five years, that is, from 2018 to 2022 (the final term of the presidency).

Table 2: Total Allocation of The Big 4 Agenda

	DETAILS	AMOUNT (KSHS. BILLION)
1	**Enhancing Food and Nutrition Security**	
	National Value Chain Support Programme	2.0
	Cherry Coffee Revolving Fund	3.0
	Smallholders Dairy Commercialization	0.6
	Irrigation Programmes	7.9
2	**Providing Universal Health Coverage**	
	Cover for the Elderly and Severely disabled	3.2
	Scaling up Universal Health Coverage	6.0
	Free Maternity Health Care	4.1
	Transforming Health Systems for UHC	4.9
	Conditional grant to Level 5 hospitals	4.3
	Regional Cancer centres	0.4
	Vaccines and Immunizations	3.3
3	**Provision of Affordable and Decent Housing**	
	Social Housing	1.0
	Construction of affordable housing units	1.0
	House mortgage Schemes	2.5
	National Housing Development Fund	5.0
	Housing units for police and Kenya Prison	1.0
4	**Support value addition to the Manufacturing sector**	
	Leather Industrial Park Development	0.1
	Support to SMEs in Manufacturing Sector	1.7
	Constituency Industrial Development Centres	0.4

Source: *The National Treasury and other budget documents.*

In 2018, the government launched Universal Health Coverage (UHC), aiming to provide all 47 million citizens with affordable healthcare by 2022. However, several contentious policy changes announced by the National Hospital Insurance Fund exhibited how difficult it would be for Kenyans to enjoy the full benefits of the agenda. Some of the rules included requiring individuals who voluntarily join the scheme to wait for three months before accessing scheme benefits, a decision that would definitely hamper access to healthcare under the UHC (Anami, 2020). The success of the programme is also dependent on the improvement of health facilities in the counties and the employment of more health workers yet the government has frozen employment as one of the measures to control public spending (Anami, 2020). On food security, recent official estimates show that over 10 million Kenyans are food insecure with the majority of them living on food relief while households are incurring huge food bills due to costly food prices (Anami, 2020).

Discussion

The Kenyan government has made great strides in creating the legal framework for promoting the implementation of gender-responsive budgeting. While all the efforts are commendable and well-intentioned the government has done very little in promoting gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgets. There is no specific allocation to gender within the different sectors.

The Department's budget allocation for the Financial Year (FY) 2016/17, 2017/18, and 2018/19 was Kshs.4.2 billion, Kshs. 4.5 billion and Kshs. 4.2 billion respectively. The budget allocation for the year 2019/20 and 2020/21 was Kshs 4.4 billion and Kshs 3.4 billion respectively. The increased or decreased allocation to the State Department for gender is employed as a proxy indicator of the government's commitment to promoting gender equality within the country.

Table 3: Total Allocation to State Department for Gender as a Percentage of Total Budget

Financial Year	Total Allocation to State Department for Gender	Total Budget	Total Allocation to State Department for Gender as a percentage of total budget
2016/17	429,000	1,462,809	29%
2017/18	450,000	1,612,920	28%
2018/19	420,000	1,750,207	24%
2019/20	440,000	1,928,820	23%
2020/21	340,000	1,887,662	18%

Source: *The National Treasury*

An analysis of the yearly trend of the budget allocation indicates a continuous decline in the allocation to the State Department for Gender. The State Department's efforts to promote gender mainstreaming within the budget process has faced numerous challenges. The department has grappled with inadequate funding, as seen above, to cater for programmes and activities among other challenges. A deeper analysis of the allocations to the State Department of Gender shows the specifics of the allocation between capital and recurrent expenditures. According to the 2020/21 Programme Based Budget, "major achievements based on planned outputs for 2016/17-2018/19 budget includes provision of bursaries and scholarships to 113,166 students, disbursement of Kshs.13 billion to 66,031 groups through Uwezo and Women Enterprise Fund and provision of sanitary towels to 4.7 million school going girls". While these outputs are highly commendable, they do not reflect gender responsive budget planning in the budget allocation. The creation of a State Department for Gender is in of itself not equal to having a gender responsive budget. The Kenya government has not utilised the tools of gender responsive budgets in its budget planning process.

It was found that Kenya has not so far utilised and thus realised the importance of centring gender in its planning and budget despite being amongst the few African countries that recognise the importance of GRB tools in resource planning and budgeting.

Adopting GRB in the budget process: challenges

There is a lack of clarity on budget item lines and how they can support gender programs. The budget allocation is categorised into ten different sectors and not a specific line in the budget relating to gender programmes. Even the State department for gender falls under the Governance, Justice, Law and Order sectoral allocation (see Table 3) above.

There is no proper coordination between the budget planning department at the National Treasury and the state departments that would be implementing the programmes aimed at supporting gender equality at the local and county level. In comparison to Uganda's experience on its own gender responsive budget, there was a guideline on how to properly address gender-oriented goals within the budget that were attached as annexes for sector ministries and local governments. The planning entailed an initial focus on key ministries within the government; Ministries of Education; Health; Agriculture; Justice, Law, and Order; Energy; and Water and Sanitation. This approach ensures that all sectors are gender responsive and an understanding that gender is not limited to only a state department mandated to promote gender equality.

Another challenge in GRB implementation is the lack of gender disaggregated data to support gender budgeting. This lack of data has frustrated both the national government and the counties in programme implementation. The program-based budgeting and resource utilisation is fairly gender blind and assumes equal net effect on everyone. The information available within some of these departments about their interventions lacks sex disaggregated data to show how much effect each intervention had on women and men. It has resulted in the start of the UN Women project dubbed "Women Count Project" in Kenya. In an assessment conducted in early 2018, several challenges, such as the inability of county governments to collect, collate and manage the data. This is often due to inadequate funding, limited technical capacity or weak coordination in the Kenyan statistical system. The government will not be able to benefit from the implementation of GRB without clear evidence-based data.

Despite the challenges, this provides an opportunity for the Kenyan government to get it right in learning from some of the case studies of successful implementation of the GRB in African countries and Kenya in our context.

Recommendations

A key recommendation is for The National Treasury and Planning department to utilise GRB tools during its budget planning. Studies have shown that when GRB is headed by the Ministry of Finance or in the case of Kenya by the Ministry of Treasury and National Planning, Gender budgeting is more likely to be successfully integrated into ministerial and departmental programmes and policies when there is a directive to prioritise women's needs by an institution such as The National Treasury.

Conclusion

The broad conclusions, described below, may be summarised as follows: Budgets are not gender neutral. The creation of a National Gender and Equality Commission and the State Department for Gender within the Ministry of Public Services, Youth and Gender is not equal to having a gender-responsive budget. Furthermore, the Kenyan government has not utilised the tools of gender-responsive budgets in its budget planning process.

Kenya has shown commitment towards addressing gender inequality over the last three decades. Kenya is a signatory to various international, continental, and regional agreements to promote gender equality. The most successful of these efforts was the creation of legal and regulatory frameworks and various policy papers on promoting gender equality at national and county levels. The creation of the National Gender and Equality Commission and the State Department for Gender within the Ministry of Public Services, Youth and Gender is also a step in the right direction in working towards gender equality.

Notably, gender responsiveness is not at the centre of the budgeting process at both the national and county levels. The implementation of GRB has remained in the shadows of the development agenda in Kenya. The government's current Big Four Agenda which is focused on four main sectors does not directly show the programme interventions to support women and girls.

Findings from the annual sectoral budget allocation indicate that there is no clear budget line item that is allocated to the women-specific programmes. The allocation to women under the allocation to the State Department for Gender is bundled up together within government services and still receives less than 25% allocation of the total budget.

The main challenges noted in the adoption and implementation of GRB is the lack of technical capacity and data on the sex-disaggregated impact of government public expenditures. There is no easily accessible data to determine the impact of government public services provision on women and men. These challenges provide an opportunity for the government to learn from the various case studies on successful implementation of the GRB in African countries and Kenya.

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Gender responsive policy and legislative reforms necessary for prudent public finance management: A case of Kenya and COVID-19

Irene Boke

Introduction

Kenya recognizes the importance of building an inclusive society that empowers marginalised groups such as women, children, youth, older people and persons with disabilities, to reduce poverty and increase their participation in the economy. In this regard, the Government of Kenya has put in place various programmes and measures that include gender mainstreaming, affirmative action, gender responsive budgeting, availing catalytic funds that support vulnerable groups, and the provision of social protection schemes such as social assistance, social security and social health insurance, among others. These mechanisms notwithstanding, women in Kenya are still disproportionately affected in economic participation with most women working in the informal sector and doing unpaid labour work.

The impact of COVID-19 on the economy

The COVID-19 pandemic saw a decrease in employment in Kenya down to 17.4 million in 2020 from 18.1 million in 2019 (FSD, 2021). Within the informal sector, women and young people were the most affected by these job losses, with a decrease of 14.5 million jobs from 15.05 million in 2019. (FSD, 2021) Statistics indicate that there was a 10% decrease in women employed in any kind of waged work as compared to the 4% decrease in men, 6% decrease in women regularly employed in waged work, as compared to 8% increase in men and a 27% decrease in women casually employed in waged work, compared to 40% decrease in men (FSD Kenya, 2021).

The pandemic has negatively impacted the economy, particularly the informal economy. The pandemic has also compounded the vulnerabilities of informal women workers and their families. Women constitute the majority (66 percent) of the informal workforce (Ajema et al., 2021). If they are not involved in planning and implementation, it will be harder to recover economically. Therefore, governments should create macro-and microeconomic stimulus packages and policies that address the unique conditions and businesses of women, (Ajema et al. 2021).

The total labour force in Kenya was 23.7 million as at 2020 (World Bank, nd). Kenya's informal sector accounts for at least 87% of the employment opportunities, offering employment to approximately 15 million Kenyans (World Bank, 2021). These 15 million Kenyans are largely domestic workers, cleaners, hairdressers, informal eatery operators, cobblers, shoe shiners, beauticians, mechanics, and street vendors, with women as the majority.

Women workers constitute the largest share of the workforce within the informal sector. With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, women were affected across all levels economically, healthwise and socially. Workers in the informal sector tend to be less skilled and lower-paid, with less access to finance and social safety nets, than workers in the formal sector. Workers in vulnerable employment, the majority being women were the first to lose their jobs at the onset of the pandemic. Loss of jobs and inability to engage in productive work resulted in increased care burden for women.

Barriers towards women's participation in the economy in Kenya.

The main challenges facing women's participation in the economy include; under-employment in rural areas, low level of employment in urban areas, unregistered employment, the huge wage gap, exclusion from social security, male-dominated structures of unions excluding women (ILO, 2018). This is reflected by the statistics that indicate that globally, women perform two-thirds of the work for 10% of the income and only 1% of the assets (Otunba, 2019).

Globally, the informal economy employs approximately two billion people, representing about 61% of the global employment. Notably, women are over-represented in the informal urban economies. Possible drivers of working in the informal sector for women workers include gender-based discrimination in the labor workforce, unequal responsibilities for unpaid care and domestic work, fewer opportunities for skills development, lack of resources, and social norms that limit their choice of work (Ajema, 2021).

In Kenya, the total labour force was 23.7 million in 2020, out of this labour force, 49.2% account for the total working population (World Bank, 2020). Kenya's informal sector accounts for at least 87% of the employment opportunities, offering employment to approximately 15 million Kenyans (World Bank, 2020). These approximately 15 million Kenyans are largely domestic workers, cleaners, hairdressers, informal eatery operators, cobblers, shoe shiners, beauticians, mechanics, and street vendors, with women making up the majority of these roles.

Examining legislative and policy frameworks and their support for women participation in the economy

The government is implementing a number of initiatives aimed at empowering women, youth and persons with disability, including: access to alternative financial services through the creation of three funds, that is Women Enterprise Fund (WEF), Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF), Uwezo Fund, as well as the Access to 30% of Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) (GoK, 2020).

Kenya has made significant efforts towards the development of policy and legislative frameworks that promote the equal participation of men and women in finance. Gender friendly legal and policy frameworks in the country include the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 which mainstreams gender at its core and calls for the integration of the principles of equality and freedom from discrimination in policies, laws and regulations. The next section examines various legislative and policy frameworks including how they support women's participation in the economy.

Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act, 2015

The Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act, 2015 provides explicit affirmative action, encouraging women's participation in public procurement. It mandates county governments under the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act No 33 to reserve 30 percent of small and micro enterprise schemes for women and youth. At the national level, the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act 2015 asserts that 30 percent of all procurements and asset disposal should be reserved for women, youth, and other marginalised groups.

National Policy on Gender and Development, 2019

The National Policy on Gender and Development, 2019 aims at gender equality and women's empowerment in national development to encourage the participation of all genders including vulnerable and marginalised groups in sustainable development. In this vein, the policy sets legislative and administrative measures to tackle existing gaps in the realisation of gender equality and women's empowerment (National Policy on Gender and Development, 2019).

Gender Policy in Energy, 2019

Similarly, the Gender Policy in Energy, 2019 is groundbreaking, it is a first-of-its-kind sectoral policy whose entire focus is the mainstreaming of gender in the energy sector. As opposed to the more common approach of general sectoral policies that focus on gender minimally and in passing, the Gender Policy in Energy, 2019 exemplifies a best practice approach to ensure the mainstreaming of gender at the sector-level (Wambua & Ndolo, 2021).

Covid-19 and the Labour Force

Despite these progressive efforts in policy formulation, there are still policy decisions that derail these efforts. One such example is the pandemic, which affected many gender equality gains. With the emergence and surge of COVID-19, labour force participation was greatly affected with a decline reported between 2019 and 2020 due to lockdowns, curfews, and school closures. Women's participation in the labour force particularly declined by 20% between 2019 and 2020 as compared to men participation which declined by 5% in the same period.

In addition, the differential impacts on women during the pandemic were prominent within the informal economies, heightening socio-economic insecurities, increasing care burdens, and spurring more incidents of domestic violence. A gendered assessment on the impact of COVID-19 on informal women workers conducted by Ajema et al. (2021) on behalf of the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) found that informal workers, particularly women, were rendered 'invisible' in terms of fiscal and macroeconomic policies intended to mitigate against the pandemic's socio-economic shocks.

Although the government had specific economic packages tailored to mitigate the social-economic impact on individual and small and medium enterprises, these packages targeted the formal sector. The packages include;

1. Reduction of PAYE from 30% to 25%
2. Reduction of VAT from 16% to 14%
3. 100% tax relief for persons earning monthly gross salary of less than Ksh. 24, 000
4. Reduction of the Central Bank Rate (CBR) from 8.25 percent to 7.25 percent.
5. Reduction of the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) from 5.25 percent to 4.25 percent.
6. Extension of the maximum tenure of repurchase agreements from 28 to 91 days to allow flexibility on liquidity management.
7. Lowering of the base lending rate and reduction of cash reserve ratio by 1 percent to enable cheaper credit to entrepreneurs.

The informal nature of work women does limit their access to formal financial stimuli, different government structured aid, and cash incentives. Such exclusionary measures continue to impede the economic recovery, growth, and livelihoods of the informal women labourers.

How can gender responsive policy making support and ensure prudent public finance management in Kenya?

Public finance management systems and the financial policy decisions affect men and women differently. As a result, countries need to be aware and put in place gender responsive public finance management systems. In addition, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) highlight the important linkage between gender equality and financing for development with SDG indicator 5.c.1 that measures government efforts to publish and track budget allocations for gender equality throughout the budget cycle being a good indicator to enhance gender responsive public finance management.

Other useful indicators include;

1. Gender impact analysis of budget policy

proposals to assess the impact on beneficiaries of expenditure and revenue policy proposals developed during budget preparation, including new or additional expenditures and proposed reductions in expenditures. Changes in policies can have different impacts on the delivery of services and distribution of opportunities to men and women, this helps in improving the design and planning of the policy under consideration in order to avoid any negative impacts on gender equality and to strengthen gender equality through better-designed, transformative policies. (Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Secretariat, 2020).

2. Gender responsive public investment management to include a gender perspective in the economic analysis of major investment projects. This includes targeted gender responsive participation in decision making. To ensure women are well represented, participate and the feedback considered in all proposed financial processes and projects.

3. Gender responsive budget circular and budget proposal documents to provide information on the effects of proposed budget policies on men and women.

4. Oversight and tracking budget expenditure to tame corruption that adversely affect budget implementation especially on key services like education, healthcare and sanitation which in turn negatively impacts on women.

Conclusion

Women's participation in the economy, although not regularly and effectively measured, is significant. This is visible in the key findings highlighted above and the day-to-day participation particularly in the informal sector and the unpaid labour categories. If well streamlined and supported through effective policy and legislative performance, women participation will improve Kenya's economy and heavily support in the post pandemic economic recovery process.

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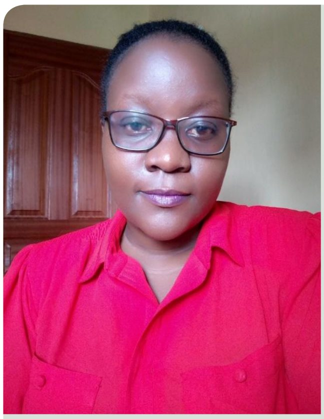

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Analysing the Impact of the Post-Covid Economic Recovery Policies in Uganda on Women in the Informal Sector

Najib Kasole

COVID-19 emerged in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and quickly spread across the country and around the world. On January 31st, 2020 The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared COVID-19 an emergency, with the virus spreading outside China. Uganda confirmed its first case on March 21st, 2020. The Government's interventions to combat the disease's spread were unprecedented in scope and scale. They harmed the economy and citizens' rights, particularly women who make up the majority of workers in the informal sector.

In light of the pandemic, neoliberal states and economies like the United States and the United Kingdom have struggled, with many sectors of their economy requiring state bailouts unlike more socialist countries like New Zealand and Sweden. In Uganda, no comprehensive recovery plan or intervention has been proposed to help the general public, especially women, recover from the pandemic that has left many jobless and unable to work.

Introduction

The coronavirus crisis has dominated international news coverage since 2020 and is expected to continue to do so for the foreseeable future. This is largely due to the negative effects of the pandemic on human life all over the world. The events surrounding the pandemic reveal patterns of inequality that cannot be explained by free-market ideology.

Uganda has been a proponent of the free market and the concept of neoliberalism for several years. Since the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) -Obote II era, structural adjustment programs (SAPs) have been in place in Uganda, and they have proven to be effective (1981-1985). By this time, Western governments and Bretton Wood institutions (the World Bank and the IMF) had determined that the African state needed to be reformatted to prevent the government from engaging in investment and development, as well as from providing public and social services. A series of uncritical and rash privatisations would follow, with foreign investors gaining control of the economy and only a few regime-connected individuals acting as local compradors. According to Ddumba- Ssentamu and Adam Mugume, the privatisation process and its impact on society led to the privatisation and retrenchment of the Ugandan state in the 1990s marked the ideological beginning of the debunking of common and public interests or what one should call "the common good," in favour of private and generally anti-social interests. (Ddumba-Ssentamu James, 2001, p. 12)

System flaws were exposed as a result of 'knee-jerk' reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic, which consisted of private medical players charging exorbitant prices (as much as USD 30,000) for treatment of COVID-19-related symptoms, and demanding cash deposits of up to USD 5,000 before admitting patients, withholding the bodies of loved ones to coax payment, lack of hospital beds and oxygen in government hospitals including the closure of schools and Internally displaced people (IDP) camps. The pandemic's web of devastation is constantly unravelling, leaving a trail of destruction and havoc in its wake. (Agiresaasi, 2021)

However, the aforementioned unravelling of the country's economic foundations provides an opportunity for some introspection into the theoretical frameworks that underpin our country's economic structure and functioning. The question is specifically whether the neoliberal ideological framework has been beneficial to citizens, and whether there has been any empowerment or improvement in the economic situation of women as a result of the implementation of this framework in Uganda.

While the number of COVID-19 cases has increased at a relatively slow rate, the spillover effects of the global recession, as well as domestic containment measures, have had a severe impact on livelihoods and the economy in the country. Economic activity has been slowed as a result of the pandemic. Travel restrictions stifled the tourism industry, and the sharp decline in world oil prices slowed foreign direct investment inflows. Real gross domestic product (GDP) growth fell to 2.9 percent in the fiscal year 2020 from 6.8 percent the previous year as major trade partners experienced a recession. Furthermore, the recession in other parts of the world, as well as job losses, reduced remittance inflows. Meanwhile, the partial closure of businesses and industries across the country has disproportionately harmed low- and middle-income earners, increasing the vulnerability of the country's most vulnerable citizens. In addition to the latest official estimate of 8.7 million people who were affected by the pandemic, between 1.1 and 3.2 million people were pushed into poverty as a result of the epidemic. It is also important to note the presence of 1.4 million refugees in Uganda. The country is one of Africa's largest refugee-hosting countries and the third-largest in the world. As such the pandemic added to the enormous pressure on the country's ability to provide essential services during this crisis period. (The World Bank, 2021)

Notwithstanding, the pandemic has exacerbated the plight of women who own informal businesses in many developing countries. In some countries, COVID-19 control rules and guidelines were enforced by police who harassed women owners of informal businesses, confiscated their goods, demanded bribes, imposed fines, or physically abused them. Many informal businesses suffered forced evictions as harsh measures are used to close trading spaces and dislodge street vendors. The pandemic has harmed the productivity, operations, sales, business opportunities, and incomes of many women-owned informal businesses in developing countries. Several unregistered business owners are currently unable to repay or obtain business loans. Many women-owned informal businesses have little chance of surviving the pandemic due to their limited access to social protection and capacity to absorb economic shocks. (Lakuma, 2020)

Through a review and analysis of academic articles, reports, and newspaper articles on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy and the various economic stimulus mechanisms and policies that have been employed by the government of the Republic of Uganda, the first section of this paper will examine Uganda's Neoliberalism and Privatisation history. The second section will examine the impact of COVID-19 on the Ugandan economy, particularly on women employed in the informal sector. Followed by the third section which will examine the economic recovery mechanisms that have been put in place to support economic recovery in Uganda post-COVID-19. Section four shall discuss the impact of these policies on women in the informal sector. Finally, part five will look at recommendations and a way forward for economic recovery in Uganda, focusing on women in the informal sector.

Literature Review

Some of the fundamental arguments that have been made in favour of free-market economics and neoliberalism among others have been the fact that the free market allows for a proper allocation of resources and capital to those sectors where they are most likely to generate a favourable return on investment by market forces of demand and supply as such free markets. As guided by the aforementioned forces of demand and supply, there is a tendency towards equilibrium and actors can do so without any interventions from the government.

In recent years, a specific type of capitalism (neoliberal capitalism) has come to be widely recognized as the primary driver of global economic inequalities. Its main characteristics are deregulation, privatisation, externalisation and a reduction in government redistributive or pre-distributive interventions. Labour market deregulation, the weakening of social democratic parties, and the decline of labour unions in wealthy countries have resulted in increased unemployment, underemployment, and precarious employment rates, as well as lower wages and benefits for standard workers, all of which have hurt the general public's health. (United Nations, 2020)

Furthermore, the vast majority of workers impacted by these trends are women, young people, people of colour, indigenous, migrant, and disabled people, as well as those without recognized qualifications. Only a small percentage of the population has benefited financially from these developments, typically white, male property owners and upper management in wealthy countries. Because the informal sector employs a large proportion of the workforce in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), these workers are ineligible for employment-related rights and benefits, are precarious by definition, and rely on social protection programs. (United Nations, 2020)

Neoliberalism worked by 'freeing up' the private sector from state constraints and resurrecting the supply side of the economy, as advocated by the 'Washington consensus,' which included major international organisations such as the IMF and the World Bank for much of the period corresponding to the Neoliberal Boom. Neoliberalism has been chastised for failing to achieve these objectives.

Neoliberalism was thought to make the labour market more 'flexible' by reducing 'disincentives' to work (such as the generous nature of unemployment insurance schemes) and removing or lessening the influence of 'impediments' to wage adjustment (such as trade unions). Increased employment and, as a result, higher output and income were claimed to be the result of a more flexible labour market (when accompanied by a passive and accommodating adjustment of aggregate demand to the economy's increased potential output). According to supporters of the approach, any initial increase in inequality associated with labour-market access to credit depends on flexibility measures would be offset by income gains among the least affluent that would 'trickle down' from aggregate income gains accruing disproportionately to more affluent people.

While delivering harsh austerity to people across the globe, the last decade has seen the transformation of failed 'privatised Keynesianism' policy regime (Crouch, 2009), reliant on private debt, to a policy of a 'quantitative easing ad Infinitum's. Simply put, Central banks provided cheap money to commercial banks for loans to big corporations, which used them, not to create jobs, but to buy back their stock and so enrich their shareholders. The gravity of an increasingly exhausted real economy was bound to have serious consequences. This situation was visible in the aftermath of the sale and dismantling of the Crane Bank Uganda Limited, owned by Ugandan business magnate Sudhir Ruparelia, a bank that has been suffering from liquidity issues and was refinanced by the Bank of Uganda before being sold off to another commercial bank in Uganda.

In the UK, a decade of austerity has meant the financial squeeze on the health services has been immense; there is a shortage of doctors and nurses, as well as a shortage of hospital beds and medical equipment (Gersdorf, 2020). Germany has performed remarkably well, especially compared to the UK, because Germany refused to pursue a harsh neoliberal economic model. Instead, Germany adopted a social market economy with aspects of neoliberalism, called ordoliberalism. A similar scenario played out in Uganda. Recent budget cuts to the Ministry of Health and massive privatisation of Health care services have over time caused a shortage in Intensive Care Units (ICU) beds throughout the country. Private care providers took advantage of the shortage to overcharge patients which eventually resulted in many deaths during the second wave of COVID-19 in Uganda.

In direct response to the economic disruptions that have been occasioned by COVID-19, countries across Africa took steps to cushion their populations against the aftershocks. For example, by the end of March 2020, 65 countries had enacted fiscal stimulus packages totalling $4.8 trillion. By April 2020, 106 countries had implemented or modified COVID-19-related social protection and job programs. Non-contributory transfers are the most commonly used tools in these packages, followed by social insurance and supply-side labour market interventions.

COVID-19 interventions must include gender-disaggregated data, a gender lens, and a female-centred focus. Cash transfers, for example, are used in the majority of social assistance interventions. To retain female workers, women-dominated industries and supply chains should have adequate access to credit, loans, and grants. (United Nation, 2020)

A review undertaken on behalf of the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) in 2021 found that informal workers, particularly women, were rendered 'invisible' in terms of fiscal and macroeconomic policies intended to mitigate against the pandemic's socio-economic shocks (Ajema, 2021). While the government's economic packages are geared toward small businesses, ICRW's research also found that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) showed promise. The analysis revealed that these packages were primarily intended to provide liquidity to formal companies. This boost to businesses was caused by, among other things, the reduction of the Central Bank Rate (CBR) from 8.25 percent to 7.25 percent. The Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) was reduced from 5.25 percent to 4.25 percent. Extending the maximum term of repurchase agreements from 28 to 91 days to allow for greater liquidity management flexibility. A 1% reduction in the cash reserve ratio and a 1% reduction in the base lending rate enabled entrepreneurs to obtain cheaper credit. (Holmes, 2016) However, the informal nature of women workers' operations limited their access to formal financial products, a wide range of support structures/government aid, and cash incentives. Such exclusionary policies continue to stymie economic recovery, growth, and the livelihoods of informal women workers, who make up the majority of household income earners. (Ohnsorge, 2021)

The literature reviewed seems to suggest that although the government has put in place strategies and policies to mitigate the negative effects of COVID 19 on the economy, most of these strategies are geared at providing liquidity support and reducing the barriers to trade such that companies can remain afloat during these times. Though well-intentioned, the government seems to have heavily omitted women from the planning process of these strategies and has not effectively accounted for gender mainstreaming of these policies which leave out certain vulnerable groups from accessing these funds, in particular the women in the informal sector.

External Aids to the Economy in Uganda

In comparison to other nations, Uganda fared relatively better in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic registering fewer deaths per number of infections from March 2020 to January 2021. The government acted quickly to contain the virus, restricting travel and closing Entebbe International Airport and all borders to passengers. President Yoweri Museveni also promoted better hygiene and health safety habits, prohibited public gatherings, and closed schools. Personnel not providing essential services were asked to work from home (The World Bank, 2021).

Large players stepped in to spearhead various economic reforms to ensure that the economy remained afloat. For example, the World Bank provided $300 million in budget support to help protect the poor and vulnerable. The budget support was coordinated with other interventions in the country, including health, water and sanitation, agriculture, environment, private sector development, and job creation. The project complemented and leveraged other development partners' support, including a $490 million IMF Rapid Credit Facility delivered in May 2020 to strengthen foreign exchange reserves and finance the national budget (The World Bank, 2021). The money was primarily allocated to supporting the most vulnerable and those most affected by Uganda's various COVID-19 related crises, this pillar aimed to support the health response by lowering the cost of medical supplies and equipment needed to prevent, manage, and treat COVID-19. It backed the implementation of several social protection measures, including cash transfers to the elderly and temporary cash-for-work for informal sector workers in the country's major cities and flood-affected districts. Also, by delaying tax payments and restructuring loans with commercial banks, this policy aimed to improve markets for agricultural inputs, raise productivity through the use of electronic vouchers, and improve debt transparency to help manage future public debt accumulation.

Uganda's economic program was financed for three years by the Extended Credit Facility loan. The loan has no interest, a grace period of 512 years, and a 10-year maturity. The loan is $1 billion, paid in tranches.

These payments are subject to half-yearly reviews that assess the government's economic reform progress. The budget will be funded by available funds. When the program was approved in June, Uganda received the first disbursement of $258 million. (International Monetary Fund, 2022)

To contextualise the importance of the additional liquidity and support financing that was provided by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, it is necessary to note that before the pandemic, Uganda's economy grew by 6% annually. Even so, rapid population growth slowed per capita income growth. Shocks from abroad and at home slowed Uganda's real GDP growth to 3% in 2019/20, exposing large fiscal and external financing gaps. An earlier disbursement in May 2020, along with other donor funds, aided the government's pandemic response efforts. But they could not stop the rise in poverty, especially in cities. Poverty rose to about 7.5% by early 2021. (International Monetary Fund, 2022)

a) Internal Policies to Aid Economic Recovery Post COVID-19

Amid concerns about the potential for distorting effects of COVID-19 containment measures, various countries have implemented expansionary monetary and fiscal policies, though the intensity and extent of these policies have varied.

To offset the negative effects of COVID-19 containment measures on the Ugandan economy, the government adopted an aggressive expansionary monetary policy aimed at improving liquidity and maintaining affordable private sector credit access. The goal was to keep the economy moving forward for a smooth and robust recovery. So the Central Borrowing Rate was reduced to 8% in April 2020 by the Bank of Uganda. It was further reduced to 7% in June 2020 and remained at 7% until March 2021. The Central Borrowing Rate reduction was intended to encourage commercial banks to lower their credit rates and provide credit to Small and Medium-scale Enterprises across the country (World Bank, 2020).

The government adopted a fiscal stimulus package targeting both households and the private sector. In the private sector, the government adopted the following tax relief measures: deferred payment of corporate tax income or presumptive tax for corporations and MSMEs; deferred Pay as you earn (PAYE) until September 2020 for sectors most severely affected by COVID-19 pandemics such as manufacturing, tourism, and floriculture; they waived interest on tax arrears, provided for tax-deductibility of donations for the COVID-19 response and committed to expediting payment of outstanding VAT refunds.

While Africa has not seen the same rate of COVID-19-related deaths and infections as other parts of the world, the pandemic has taken a massive toll on the continent, particularly on tourism-dependent economies, oil-exporting economies, and other resource-intensive economies, as well as deepening inequality. Governments used stimulus packages, and fiscal and monetary policies aimed at businesses, to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19. According to research co-developed by the Bank's Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa initiative (AFAWA), however, most of those efforts do not address existing or entrenched gender barriers that prevent women entrepreneurs from growing and accessing business opportunities. (African Development Bank Group, 2021). For example, the majority of women-led businesses in Africa are in the informal sector. That means they aren't registered, don't pay taxes, and don't have insurance, (African Development Bank Group, 2021)

Some of the stimuli were also pumped into the economy by way of increased government spending in essential areas of the economy such as health care and security. The Ugandan government allocated 0.2 percent of GDP in FY 2019/20 to improve health systems, increase security, and mitigate the impact of COVID-19 containment measures on livelihoods, particularly in Kampala and Wakiso.

Loss of jobs and livelihoods forced the government to intervene and provide food to vulnerable households in Kampala and Wakiso. This was commendable, but it left out vulnerable households in other urban, peri-urban, and rural areas that were also affected by COVID-19. But on a positive note, the government increased the number of senior citizen grant recipients from 150 000 in FY2018/19 to 350 000 in FY2019/20. The increased government spending was intended to increase the income and spending power of the citizens through trickle-down economics. (Proscovia, 2020).

Another sector in which this mechanism for increased government spending was implemented was agriculture. The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries expanded the e-voucher system to 10 more districts to improve agricultural input distribution. In FY2020/21, 288,900 farmers registered for e-vouchers, up from 268,991 in FY2019/20. Also, labour-intensive public works created 637 000 jobs for vulnerable but able-bodied people affected by COVID-19 in FY2020/21, compared to 136 571 in FY2018/19, a 366.4 percent increase. This increased investment in works within the districts of Uganda was meant to employ citizens who had lost employment as a result of the prolonged lockdowns and COVID-19 pandemic (World Bank, 2021).

The government also proceeded to capitalise on and revitalise already existing programs for purposes of ensuring that the informal sector remained afloat during the pandemic. Examples of this include The Presidential Initiative on Wealth and Job creation known locally as the EMYOOGA fund which was introduced by the government in August 2019. The government launched the EMYOOGA fund, a UGX 165 billion ($45.2 million) poverty eradication scheme to target youth who had already been saving capital but required larger amounts of capital in order to scale up their economic activities. In addition to Boda Boda riders, EMYOOGA targets Savings and Cooperative Credit Society (SACCOs) formed in 18 specialised fields such as BODA BODAS, women entrepreneurs, carpenters, and welders. The major prerequisite to receiving this grant from the government was the formation of a SACCOs. SACCOs were formed at the constituency level but operated at the parish level through established parish associations.

The government has budgeted UGX 560 million ($153 421) for each constituency. In a study named the impact of savings and credit cooperatives (Saccos) on women's livelihoods in Kampala district, it was noted that SACCOs have significantly reduced poverty, contributed to education, aided in the mobilisation of savings, and provided emergency housing loans and funeral insurance (Kaaya, 2018). SACCOs were found to have contributed to increased social protection and inclusion, reduction of risks and vulnerabilities faced by women entrepreneurs, and decision-making ability. Inclusion of disabled women workers and entrepreneurs in the SACCOs, increased responsibilities at home including their ability to participate in community activities, assisting women to network and build relationships (Kaaya, 2018).

Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the fact that informal businesses, in particular those run by women, frequently lack state protection, registered interests or assets, and are vulnerable to government business impact mitigation programs, as well as social safety nets and protection provided by formal labour contracts. Small and medium-sized businesses that continue to pay rent for vacant premises have been hampered by the lockdown and other COVID-19-related restrictions. Some continue to pay wages to non-working employees, service non-productive loans, and purchase inputs at above-average prices. Given that nearly half of Ugandan businesses fail before their third birthday, the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to destroy investments, jobs, and livelihoods. During the lockdown, food distribution largely targeted urban poor vulnerable households and had little impact on reducing COVID-19 effects on Ugandans living in poverty. This also applies to misdirected economic stimulus that favours the formal sector over the informal sector.

COVID-19 harmed the global and local economies. As an open economy, COVID-19's distortionary effects permeate Uganda's economy via the external sector. The disruption of international trade in goods and services, as well as capital flows, has implications for Uganda's economy – notwithstanding the containment measures. But the Ugandan government, through the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, and the Central Bank of Uganda, adopted expansionary fiscal and monetary policies to counteract COVID-19's impact on livelihoods and the private sector. Despite this, the advantages are severely skewed with very few of the policies particularly aimed at alleviating the plight of women in the informal sector in Uganda.

The tax relief measures were instrumental in enabling businesses to enjoy a temporary liquidity shield amid dampened aggregate demand and risk-averse creditors. However, this came at the cost of a revenue collection shortfall, the effect of which is an increase in public debt. The increase in public debt has been both in terms of external and domestic borrowing. Unfortunately, the increase in domestic borrowing has enhanced the crowding out of the private sector while increased external borrowing has resulted in increased external debt vulnerability as indicated by the present value of external debt to exports ratio (Bank of Uganda, 2020). Despite the definite need to protect businesses from folding from overwhelming tax burdens as a means to protect employment opportunities and prevent poverty, little or no stimulus was provided in the form of assistance to informal sectors, and of the little that did come, none was earmarked as being for women-led or run businesses.

Government projects such as EMYOOGA provide some hope to women in the informal sector with the ability to access affordable credit remaining a huge hindrance to the development and sustainability of many projects within the informal sector for women. However, even though EMYOOGA is a poverty-eradication program focusing on the informal sector, it may fall short of its goals partly because of the formation of SACCOs. As a result, people may form SACCOs solely to gain access to funds, rather than to start a business or inject more liquidity into their existing ones. Furthermore, because the fund is limited to youths aged 18 to 35, it excludes potentially more appealing business entities that would otherwise be eligible but are not because the owners are not in the aforementioned age category.

The UGX 165 billion EMYOOGA poverty eradication scheme targeted the informal sector, especially the youth. However, the Ugandan government should work to reduce credit leakages, especially those caused by corruption. Making the funds available to people not only in the 18 to 35 age group could ensure inclusivity and, more importantly, ensure funding to the most viable SACCOs. The government can also reach vulnerable rural households by expanding the coverage of the e-voucher system under the Ministry of Agriculture. A more deliberate stance should be taken by the government to ensure that funds such as these are also earmarked with a specific quota for women entrepreneurs within the formal sector as this is more representative of the economic situation across the country with many women being breadwinners in their homes through their participation in the informal sector.

Overall, the lack of transparency, limited participation, and clear accountability mechanisms continue to be major challenges in implementing and distributing the economic stimulus package. The government did not publicly disclose detailed specifications on the measures, including costing and transparent eligibility criteria, aside from the amount of money allocated for various purposes. As a result, monitoring by civil society and other actors has been difficult. In June 2020, SMEs urged the government to share a detailed plan for revitalising the economy through the proposed stimulus package. Despite the government's announcement of a proposed economic stimulus package and various measures to provide liquidity for private firms affected by the COVID-19 induced national lockdown, many information gaps remain regarding how this money will be accessed and monitored for effective distribution and use (Kasemiire, 2020).

The dissemination of information regarding eligibility criteria and application processes was left to the various implementing Financial Institutions, the majority of which uploaded the same information to their websites. Given the targeted demographics' frequent lack of internet access, having information only on websites presents a challenge. Only 9% of Ugandans in rural areas have access to the Internet, while roughly one-third (30%) of urban dwellers do. (Gilliwad et al., 2019) Out of this number, it is estimated that Women in Uganda use the internet far less than men according to a survey from the World Wide Web Foundation which found that 27% of men in the country are online, compared with just 19% of women. (World Wide Web Foundation, 2020). Furthermore, given the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, extensive consultations with stakeholders and the general public were not conducted to tailor and fine-tune the economic stimulus package's parameters. Regardless of the need for speed and flexibility in the face of the pandemic, the design of the support package should have adhered to established standards of transparency and participation to ensure the package's effectiveness and avoid any misappropriation of funds disbursed.

None registration of interests or assets make informal business operations vulnerable and excluded from government impact mitigation programs for businesses social safety nets and protection afforded by formal labour contracts. These restrictions have hampered the operations of small and medium-sized businesses that continue to pay rent for vacant premises. Some keep paying non-working employees and servicing non-productive loans, while the few that are operating buy inputs at above-normal prices. (Research ICT Africa, 2019)

Therefore, within a neoliberal ideological framework, the government has decided not to use COVID-19 as an opportunity to review its privatisation of social services, particularly in the areas of education and health. Furthermore, it is an indictment of the opposition political parties that they did not take advantage of this opportunity to map out an alternative ideological framework for solving Uganda's socio-economic problems. As a result of COVID-19, all of the flaws in the privatisation of health and education and neoliberalism in general have been exposed.

Other African Countries have also embarked on more gender-centric approaches to COVID-19 recovery. The African Development Bank has documented the efforts being carried out in different states and made further recommendations on how these efforts can be improved for example in Burkina Faso: Women-owned businesses account for the majority of trade in the informal sector (65.4 percent). (African Development Group, 2021) Women who work in cross-border trade have been particularly hard hit financially as a result of the closures of border crossings (TMEA-EASSI, 2021). The pandemic increased the amount of unpaid work that women had to do (TMEA, 2021). According to the Malawi gender profile, increased dialogue is required to facilitate the change of gender norms through the formation of men's groups that challenge the norms. (African Development Group, 2021)

As was noted from the post-Ebola recovery strategy, Ebola's economic impact was disproportionately female. Women dominated or played a key role in the most affected economic sectors, such as informal trade, agriculture, and tourism. Women were using their business capital and savings to cope with Ebola's hardships, which depleted their future economic capacity and small business viability. All recovery strategies and initiatives must consider the economic role of women by including them in all social and political decision-making processes. (Garmer, 2015).

Conclusion

Overall, the distortionary effect of COVID-19 containment measures on the economy is unprecedented. This is especially because of the contraction in the industrial and service sectors and subsequent job losses that are ultimately likely to unwind the gains made in reducing vulnerability and poverty in the country. The government continues to argue that the measures it took protected the citizens from the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic and preserved their lives. However, it is important to note that livelihood is just as important as the state of being alive, and in formulating policy for economic revival post COVID-19, the impact must be calculated by taking into consideration all parts of the population including women in the informal sector as they make up the greater percentage of the citizens involved in economic activities.

Improving access to information and promoting transparency and accountability should be the goals of implementing institutions and the government. Implementing institutions should do more than just post information on their official websites and newspapers to ensure long-term economic recovery, meaningful beneficiary participation before, during, and after the stimulus package. Institutions should adopt flexible credit access policies that include smaller businesses and the informal sector, which are currently excluded. To improve MSMEs' access to credit, the use of the movable property as security, as defined by the Security Interest in Movable Property Act, should be encouraged. This reduces the risk of stimulus exacerbating economic disparities.

The economic recovery policies also highlight the major difficulties plaguing women in the informal sector in Uganda. Among them is the fact that women's barriers to equality are exacerbated by informality. It reduces their access to finance, their ability to exercise property, business, and labour rights, their networks, their vulnerability to extortion, and their voice and visibility. Women who own informal businesses are also more likely than men to work from home and participate in less profitable ventures hence it is imperative that in designing such economic rescue packages for the nation, special interest and consideration are given to the unique circumstances of women, especially those in the informal sector.

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The Role of Family Planning Approaches and Decision-Making Processes in Uganda

Pinno Ivan Louis and Associate Professor Martha Kibukamusoke

Introduction

Over the last few decades, we have seen the transition from traditional to modern family planning methods. This is relevant as Uganda has the youngest population worldwide. Additionally, Uganda's fertility, maternal mortality, and teenage pregnancy rates remain among the highest globally. While the country has committed to scaling up the use of modern family planning methods to ensure that every Ugandan woman can choose when and how many children to have, the pandemic led to an increase in the number of teenage pregnancies. This paper aims to explore the effects of the choice of family planning methods among women in Uganda.

Various studies indicate that Uganda's population continues to grow at a rate of 3% per annum. With a population of 34.6 million, the population is expected to double every 20 years, that is, Uganda will have nearly 150 million people by 2050. Although Uganda's economy has experienced an average rate of growth of 4.6% over the past five years, sustained high fertility rates have undermined poverty reduction efforts, stretched national capacity to provide necessary services, and created an enormous youth bulge.

While Uganda's total fertility rate (TFR) has declined from an average of 7.0 births per woman in the year 2000 to 5.8 births per woman in 2014, it remains one of the highest in Eastern and Southern Africa. At current rates of fertility, the population of the poorest quintile will nearly triple by 2035 and then double again by 2050. Uganda needs to enhance family planning access to those in lower socio-economic groups in order to manage this population growth. Underlying these statistics are major differences in Family planning utilisation between rural and urban women, across wealth quintiles, level of education, and age. Uganda has a large fertility differential between wealth quintiles. While the total fertility rate (TFR) of the wealthiest quintile is 4, the poorest quintile is 7.9. Additionally, adolescent pregnancy rates are especially high, as childbearing begins early in Uganda, with the median age of sexual debut of 16.4 years. With a 25% rate of child mothers, Uganda is one of the countries with the highest rates of teenage pregnancies in Africa.

While the use of family planning is increasing, the unmet need for contraception remains high. According to the 2011 Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS), about a third of married women of reproductive age reported having an unmet need for family planning at the time of the survey.

Background of the study

Over the last few decades, traditional norms and customs have elevated men as decision-makers in women's use of family planning methods. Uganda had the highest level of unmet need for family planning among married women (Aryal, Pathak, Dottel, & Pant, 2008). In 2000-01, the UDHS results showed that approximately two of every five births were unplanned in the five years preceding the survey (UBOS & ORC Macro, 2001).

Until the mid-1990s, family planning services in Uganda were restricted to married women accompanied by their husbands or to married women who had their husband's written permission to use contraception (Blacker et al., 2005). In 1995, after many other East African countries had already done so, the Government of Uganda (GoU) created its first national population policy. The Ugandan Ministry of Finance (MoF) has noted the limited progress of family planning in Uganda and that Uganda's traditionally large family sizes were becoming an impediment to the speed of economic growth and social and structural transformation (MoF, 2004).

Political support for the family planning movement in Uganda appears inconsistent. The Government of Uganda (GoU) stated that it would ensure that family planning services are accessible to all those who need them (MoF, 2004). To ensure access to family planning services, the government made several revisions to the 1995 National population policy and included provisions in its poverty eradication action plan designed to reduce the unmet need for Family planning (UDHS, 2006; MoF, 2004). However, reports from the Uganda Family Planning Atlas (2019) appear to show that the use of prevalence of modern contraceptive usage is high among sexually active unmarried women (UDHS, 2016)

The overall objective of this paper is to find out the family planning approaches used by women and understand the general perspective of those methods used by women in Uganda.

Literature Review

The demand for family planning in Uganda has increased to 67% from 64% in 2011. There is also an increase in the percentage of that demand satisfied by modern methods which has risen from 41% in 2011 to 52% in 2016. Today, 28% of Ugandan women have an unmet need for family planning, although there is a decline from 34% in 2011, there remains an unmet need. Uganda's overall aim is to reduce the unmet need for family planning to 10% and increase contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) to 50% by 2020 (UDHS 1995- 2006).

There have been various methods of family planning that have been availed to Ugandans. This is done by both private and public health facilities. The most common family planning method is the use of condoms. This is because male adolescents are taught condom use from secondary school as a protective mechanism to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Government health facilities have made it a point to provide free condoms for both males and females in places of convenience. While this provision is commendable, the method has some shortfalls largely due to the low prevalence and usage of female condoms. For women, implants have become the most commonly used contraceptive. Implants release hormones into the female body to prevent pregnancy. They tend to be quite high priced, so in most cases, the issue of pricing still hinders access to it which creates inequality in accessibility. As such there are concerns regarding the equality and access to female condoms and contraceptive measures, especially a concern as to why female condoms are not considered a priority when it comes to distribution to the public. Also, the reason for a higher price tag for female condoms than on male condoms. Lastly, there are questions on which agency or body there are regulations on these prices and rationale behind them.

Over time, due to traditional customs and cultures, perceptions have been changed when it comes to the usage of some contraceptives. Religion and culture are very pivotal factors in influencing perceptions and have made it quite difficult for health centres and medical workers to push the agenda of contraceptives. When it comes to women making decisions on the types of method that works for them most times, customs and cultural norms influence their reluctance because of the assumption that men have the power to make decisions for women.

Why family planning is important

While Uganda's total fertility rate (TFR) has declined from an average of 7.0 births per woman in the year 2000 to 5.8 births per woman in 2014, it remains one of the highest in Eastern and Southern Africa. At current rates of fertility, the population of the poorest quintile will nearly triple by 2035 and then double again by 2050. There is a need for family planning services particularly in low socio-economic areas.

A great number of initiatives have been put in place in Uganda to appreciate equitable access to quality services, improved individual and community outcomes, and strengthened health systems. The Government of Uganda has committed itself to increasing the modern contraceptive prevalence rate (mCPR) to 50% and lowering the unmet need to 10% by the year 2020. To achieve these ambitious goals, the mCPR must grow by nearly 4.0% points annually. Experience globally, as well as in Sub-Saharan Africa, demonstrates that a country cannot cost-effectively meet its lowered fertility goals without widespread availability and use of modern contraception. Furthermore, underlying these statistics are major differences in Family planning utilization between rural and urban women, across wealth quintiles, level of education, and age.

Uganda has a large fertility differential between wealth quintiles. While the total fertility rate (TFR) of the wealthiest quintile is 4, the poorest quintile is 7.9. Additionally, adolescent pregnancy rates are especially high, as childbearing begins early in Uganda, with a median age of sexual debut of 16.4 years, Uganda is among the countries with the highest rates of teenage pregnancies in Africa. Within the country the rate of teenage pregnancy is 30.6% for East Central Uganda, 30.3% for Eastern, 29%, 7% for Karamoja, 26.4% for West Nile and 25.6% for the North (Ishrat et al., 2016).

While the use of Family planning is increasing, the unmet need for contraception remains high. According to the 2011 Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS), about a third of married women of reproductive age reported having an unmet need for Family planning at the time of the survey. This translates into approximately 1.6 million women and 1 in 4 pregnancies being unplanned. The need to use contraception fluctuates due to shifts in fertility desires that occur in response to changing life circumstances such as entering a serious relationship or changes in household finances. The more we understand life's reproductive transitions, the characteristics of women with needs, and their reasons for not using family planning, the more we can improve family planning services in Uganda.

The met demand for Family planning remains low with less than half of the current demand in Uganda (44%) satisfied with a modern contraceptive method. On average, Ugandan women give birth to nearly 1.5 children more than they want (6.2 to 4.8). The burden of unintended pregnancy and its consequences disproportionately fall on poor women and adolescents, impacting women's health and challenging the ability of women and families to manage the household and natural resources, secure education for all family members, and address each family member's health care needs.

Family planning among the youth and the community

Many factors influence the uptake of Family planning, including access to information, levels of education, and awareness among the youth, within the community, commodities security, adequate and skilled human resources, and affordability, social, gender and cultural factors. High total and adolescent fertility rates and the significant unmet need for Family planning suggests that many of these factors are still present in Uganda. These factors combined with Family planning services still below desired levels impact on family planning uptake among Ugandans. Despite efforts by the government and its partners, recent analysis found that Uganda's Family planning program is currently off-track to meet its goals with the national mCPR increasing only 1.0% points annually since 2011 (Uganda DHS, 2011).

Top-down development practices and programs often fail to deliver the expected outcomes especially when they ignore the transformational agency of potential beneficiaries. Programs to improve access and delivery of family planning services have always targeted women since women face all the health-related risks associated with pregnancy and childbirth. Yet, men are key decision-makers in all aspects of life, particularly in patriarchal societies like Uganda. Some studies have been conducted about men's involvement in family planning. Mbizo et al (1997) for example found out that a lack of men's involvement in Family planning increases the risk of unplanned pregnancy by up to 8 times. Past research has also indicated that men are willing to use modern Family planning methods (Piotrow et al., 1992).

However, Kaida et al (2005) demonstrate that men's willingness to participate in family planning services rarely translates into actual participation due to various programming-related shortcomings. For example, the domination of female agents and volunteers for the delivery of Family planning information and products portrays a wrong image to men regarding their involvement in Family planning and the potential for open communication with women about Family planning services and products. Past studies also indicate that Family planning services do not reach men adequately and that they are regarded as a women's affair, thereby suggesting a need to broaden the scope of family planning approaches and strategies to include men as key decision-makers. Kaida et al (2005) underscore the need to apply non-clinic based means of disseminating family planning services and products.

Conclusion

Enough awareness-focused interventions have been implemented to sensitize people about the importance of using family planning services, methods and products but there is no adequate evidence of effective uptake to date. There is, therefore, a need to work with men to engage community members to devise grassroots-led initiatives to improve access to family planning services and products. A campaign to recruit people into a movement that supports the use of Family planning to avert unwanted and unplanned pregnancies among women of childbearing age is vital in working towards changing the norms that deter the use of family planning specifically the involvement of men in making Family planning related decisions before every sexual encounter.

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The Budgeting Process in Kenya and Young Women in the Unpaid Care Economy

Dr. Violet Mbiti

Introduction

The budget is one of the most important tools of government as it outlines national development plans and goals. Kenyan county and national budgets reflect how the government mobilises and allocates public resources including how they meet their people's social and economic needs. Across the budget cycle, budget documents are deliberated in public participation forums, in which young women and girls are encouraged to share their views. In these meetings, they can articulate their needs and priorities, including how services provided are impacting them in the budget.

It is essential to monitor compliance of government budgets to the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Specifically looking at General Recommendations 25, paragraph 6 which includes the requirement that the government secure women's participation as active citizens in decisions about budgets and their ability to hold governments to account for the way in which public money is raised and spent. This includes women in the unpaid care economy. Article 2 of CEDAW also states that the expenditure and revenue side of the budget should not discriminate against women in the provision of access to rights. Article 7 (a) and (b) of CEDAW provides for women to participate in the formulation of government policy.

Evidently, not all women are included in the budget formulation and allocation. National Treasury data reveals that in the financial year 2021/22 budget estimate, 5.7% was allocated to health; 3.6% to social protection, culture, and recreation; 5.2% to environment protection, water and environment, and 3.2 % to agriculture, rural and urban development. The International Labour Organization (2020a) states that of 136 million workers in the health and social care sectors, 70% are women while 80% of the world's domestic workers are women (International Labour Organization, 2018b). These sectors contribute to Kenya's GDP while unpaid care where these women work remains unseen, unrecognised, and absent from public policies. It is thus imperative for women in the unpaid care economy to participate in public participation forums on budgets organised by the government to share their input so that their issues can be prioritised.

As discussed, participation and consultation in the formulation of Kenya's budget is still limited, so the different priorities of women are not fully reflected in the way finances are actually allocated and used. Some of this is attributed to the great responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work which can hinder women's ability to attend public participation forums on government budget processes. Women need to be included in the budget making process so that they can give their inputs with regard to health, water and social protection.

The engagement of young women, in the unpaid care economy, in public budgeting decisions is a fairly new discussion and the literature on the subject is limited. This opinion piece bridges this gap by exploring factors that enable and inhibit the participation of young women in the unpaid economy in the budget-making process. Secondary data was collected from research papers, reports, and government published data.

Factors enabling and inhibiting the participation of young women in the budget-making process

One of the main factors enabling the participation of young women in the budget-making process is the establishment of the Basic Education Act 2013 article 28 (b) which provides an opportunity for young women to leave their children in preschools to attend budget deliberation forums called by the government.

Factors inhibiting the participation of women in the budget-making process include young women being seen as reproductive labourers and not as individuals who can share their views in public gatherings. According to the World Youth Report (2003, p.249) "girls and young women are viewed mainly as "reproductive labourers". They have fewer rights to political and economic participation in comparison to boys and young men. Girls and young women perform essential work for which they are neither paid nor fully recognized. They still live and work mostly in the private sphere, as the public sphere remains largely a male domain. The World Youth Report (2003, p.3) states that "throughout history, young women have been scrutinised with regard to their attitudes, behaviour, sexuality and general conduct." The monitoring and setting of cultural and moral standards, in particular the policing of young women's sexuality, is conducted in public, in private and through the media. For example, young single mothers are identified as a problem group and are discussed as such in an effort to find ways to alleviate the problem they represent. Some countries have experienced periods of moral panic over teenage pregnancy, to the extent that many issues and crimes are attributed to young single mothers. The World Youth Report (2003, p.3) states that

..some girls and young women are far more vulnerable than others owing to a structural lack of resources, primarily in terms of education, vocational training, health and housing. Those girls and young women exposed to poor quality of life tend to experience higher levels of vulnerability; immigrants and ethnic minorities are the most seriously affected.

A lack of structural resources in terms of education, training, health, and housing has also impeded young women's participation in budget forums. Governments allocate resources that are supposed to be used equitably and efficiently and this calls for women to raise their voices so that their issues can be prioritised during the budget-making processes. Failure of women to submit their inputs during public participation forums usually leads to a reduction in funding to sectors such as social protection, housing, education and health. Reduction in funding has a myriad of effects which includes deplorable living conditions being experienced by women living in urban informal settlements which also leads to poor health as a result of poor sanitation services.

In Kenya, women are not participating in the National and County Governments' budgets public forums due to increased workload at home. According to the International Labor Organization (2018a), globally, women are responsible for the majority (76.2%) of unpaid care work, spending an average of 201 days on unpaid work during a year, compared to 63 days spent on unpaid work by men. There is, therefore, no doubt that national and international legal frameworks have given women opportunities to take part in decision-making processes as it is their human right. Despite the presence of these legal frameworks - women are still not taking part. Oxfam and partners Youth Alive Kenya and NOPE conducted a Household Care Survey in 2019 on the gendered patterns of Unpaid Care Domestic Work in five urban informal settlements and the study revealed that women and girls are spending a disproportionate amount of time providing unpaid care work within their households and communities which has multiple impacts on their ability to realise their social, economic and political rights as well as negative effects on their health and wellbeing. The same can be said for women across the globe. For instance, research carried out by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy with support from DFID in Brazil revealed that women do not participate in public forums due to their multiple responsibilities. According to Valente (2000), women do not perceive themselves as rights-bearing subjects because of their nonrecognition as economic subjects in national budgets. They are thus unable to see themselves as producers of wealth because of their low wages, unemployment and underemployment in unpaid care work.

How we can involve women in the budget-making process

Elson (2000) asserts that an informed discussion should be facilitated and ways found to enable the public to participate in the setting of budget priorities, paying particular attention to enabling women to formulate and express their ideas. Studies such as Svaljek, Bakaric and Sumport (2019, p. 4-6) state that "although the involvement of citizens in the budget process comes in various intensities ranging from the only formal and symbolic to tight cooperation between the authorities and various stakeholders, it is usually taken that there are three levels of participation – information disclosure, consultation and active participation of citizens."

Information disclosure entails only one-way communication between government and citizens, in which the government provides data and information on the planned and adopted policy decisions to the citizens. Consultations comprise asymmetrical relationships in which citizens can give recommendations and suggestions or express criticism on policy decisions, but the authorities do not have the obligation to incorporate this feedback into policy formulation. Active participation supposes the partnership between citizens and government, that is. the actual influence of citizens on the budget.

It is important to learn from other countries how they are engaging women in the budget-making process. Data from the Government of Tanzania (2000) revealed that few women make decisions about the budget at the policy level. Valente (2000) states that Bolivia has extensively engaged women in the budget process by undertaking capacity building with them so that women may dialogue and negotiate with local authorities. In Ecuador, workshops were conducted with women from municipalities and leaders of civil society organisations on how they can incorporate their issues into the budget for it to have a gender perspective. In Peru, women groups engage the government in the planning and development of municipalities. UNIFEM (2000) states that when programmes and activities aimed at women rely on women's voluntary labour or view women as passive recipients, women's contribution to the economy is blurred. There is therefore a need for a broader macroeconomic perspective within the domain of the care economy.

Conclusion

This paper examines factors inhibiting and enabling the participation of young women in decision-making in the budget-making process. To date, the academic literature on the unpaid care economy has not addressed these issues using an intersectional lens. It explores whether women in the unpaid care economy add their input during public participation in the budget-making process in Kenya and the study concludes by sharing its findings. From the literature review, factors enabling the participation of young women in the budget-making process is the establishment of the Basic Education Act 2013 article 28 (b) which provides an opportunity for young women in the unpaid care to leave their children in preschools to attend budget deliberation forums called by the government. However, there are also factors inhibiting participation of women in the budget-making. These factors include young women being seen as reproductive laborers and not as individuals who can share their views in public gatherings. A structural lack of resources in terms of education, vocational training, health, and housing which have in turn also impeded young women's participation in budget forums because they are not able to articulate their views, due to their poor health and lack of housing facilities. There is a need for additional research on the space of young women in decision-making in the budget-making process in order to facilitate young women's participation in the same.

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