

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



GOVERNMENT OF MAKUENI COUNTY



**DEPARTMENT OF DEVOLUTION, COUNTY ADMINISTRATION, PUBLIC
SERVICE AND YOUTH**

MAKUENI COUNTY YOUTH POLICY, 2020

2022

PREFACE

The Makueni County Youth Policy (2019) is the first framework formulated since the inception of the County Governments. Much progress has been made in various quarters of the Youth sector but much more need to be done. Young people need to begin to take ownership and participate fully in national and county development.

Youth are a priority of the County Government as they will continue to be the engine of growth and prosperity of our County, in recognition that they form the largest cohort of our population. For this reason, the Government of Makueni County will not relent in its efforts to give the sector the maximum attention it deserves. The policy focus on key sectors for better results and also recognizes Youth employment creation as a growing challenge and also attempts to provoke other County Departments with the opportunity to restructure and realign their implementation, coordination and monitoring mechanisms for effective service delivery to the youth. Clearly, now, more than ever before, is the time to collectively nurture, horn and proactively redirect the enterprising efforts of the Youth into the productive base of the National and County economies for rapid socio-economic development.

It is my hope therefore, that the policy is a reflection as much as possible of what the Youth want and I challenge County and its stakeholders to mobilize all their energies towards the realization of the Policy objectives. Opportunities created by the County Government are abound and it is hoped that the Youth will optimally utilize them for self, county and national development. In the same token, I urge our various development partners, private sector, civil society and all other stakeholders in general to continue to deepen their interventions in support of the Youth particularly in the areas of employment creation and skills training and development. The policy is indeed a complement to our development drive as we move forward in unison to transform Makueni into a dynamic high-income County as articulated in our Makueni Vision 2025 blue print.

County Executive Committee Member

DEVOLUTION, COUNTY ADMINISTRATION, PUBLIC SERVICE AND YOUTH

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Makueni County Youth Policy highlights the priorities and strategies to be adopted by the Government of Makueni County and stakeholders to ensure the development and empowerment of the youth in the county. This Policy underlines the desired need to see young people contribute positively to National and County development through the creation of an enabling environment which allows for youth to reach their full potential. The formulation of this Policy enabled the department together with other stakeholders actively engage the youth and interested parties with a view of soliciting ideas for inclusion in the Policy.

This Policy therefore reflects the commitment by the County Government to meeting the needs and aspirations of young people as expressed by the youth themselves. The policy was developed in consultation with all relevant stakeholders and aims to mainstream the youth of Makueni by systematically integrating their issues into all development programmes and projects at all levels and within all sectors, and at both public and private institutions and to harness their talents and energies as well as to address the challenges affecting the youth. This is a dynamic document which will be continuously reviewed in order to meet the realities on the ground.

This Policy aims at integrating their programmes and provides an overall sense of coordinated approach in tackling youth issues in the County. Efforts have been made to build on the existing programmes and avoid the tendency to reinvent the wheel. As a department we will essentially play a catalytic and coordinating role in the implementation of this Policy besides undertaking specific programmes and projects to supplement the overall efforts.

We are confident of the capabilities and the talents of the Makueni Youth and expects that facilitated by this Policy they will do their best to build a strong, prosperous, sustainable and vibrant Makueni.

I wish to sincerely acknowledge and appreciate the valuable technical guidance and contributions of Meshack Musyoki, County Liaison Officer, Dr. Philip Musyoka, Chair Service Delivery Unit, and the County Legal Directorate.

Chief Officer

DEVOLUTION, COUNTY ADMINISTRATION, PUBLIC SERVICE AND YOUTH

ACCRONYMS

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CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND AND POLICY CONTEXT

The decision to develop the Makueni County Youth Policy is based on the understanding of youth needs and abilities in being a resource that can spur development as well as social and economic growth at the county level. It is also based on the realization that youth are faced with many challenges in a rapidly changing world that mainly take the form of technological, economical, social, cultural and environmental factors.

This policy represents a declaration and commitment of the priorities, directions and practical support that the county intends to provide for the development of its youthful population. It defines the government's agenda and priorities in relation to the youth and provides for the development and implementation of measures aimed at involving the youth in the economic, social and political activities of the State.

The Kenya Constitution 2010 defines youth as anyone falling between the ages of 18 and 34 years¹. The Kenya Housing and Population Census Report of 2019² estimates the population of youth in Kenya, that is 18-34 years, at 26 percent of the country population while the youth population in Makueni county aged 15-34 currently stands at 334,777. This means that 34% of the population in Makueni County is aged between 15 and 34 years³. Nonetheless, for purposes of Makueni County and with much deference to the 2010 Constitution, the County Government in recognition of its own context and this policy instrument, defines youth as persons falling between the ages of 15 and 35 years.

The young people (youth) falling within this age bracket are characterized by energy, enthusiasm, ambition, creativity, and promise; they are also faced with high levels of socio- economic uncertainty and volatility thereby becoming the most vulnerable segment of the population. They represent the most active, the most volatile, and yet the most vulnerable segment of the county's population.

Also, the unemployment level among employable youth is quite high and thus requiring deliberate interventions on the part of the county government in all sectors geared towards ensuring youths are actively participating in economic and political activities in the county. Consequently, there is need to increase youth participation in agriculture and civil works construction (road, water works and harvesting), build an entrepreneurship culture among the youth, increase financial support and

¹ Section 260 of the 2010 Constitution.

²KNBS report, 2019

³ Makueni County CIDP (2018 – 2022).

access to market by youth enterprises, enhance employability of youths through training/skill development and enhance employment opportunities for them through sports and recreation, inter alia.

Some of the notable challenges that are afflicting the youth relate to inadequate access to life skills and knowledge, health challenges, unemployment, insecurity, inaccessibility to mentorship, financial constraints, social vices like drug and substance abuse, inter alia. These challenges have hindered the youth from achieving their full social, economic and political potential. In addition, youth with specific needs require particular attention including those that are socially disadvantaged or living with disabilities.

To redress the foregoing, this policy document is informed by the following intentions:

- a. adoption of a positive attitude that eliminates the marginalization of youth in government whilst also strengthening the concept of participatory development
- b. recognition of the needs, problems, aspirations and innovations of youth
- c. making use of youth capacities as a main asset to economic, social and political development across the county of Makueni

Consequently, the policy comprises of a vision, principles, aims and goals, and also suggests actions that can be taken to support the positive development of the youth in Makueni County.

It is a concrete and bold step to put the development and participation of young people at the centre of local development efforts. It is indicative of the readiness of the County Government to meet the needs and aspirations of the youth as well as seek solution to their problems. It sets guidelines and provides the framework for all stakeholders to empower the youth to realize their potential and take advantage of the opportunities available to make positive contributions to their well-being across the county.

To achieve the stated goals of this policy, joint inter-sectoral and cross-sectoral efforts, including governmental agencies and civil society organizations and the private sector, are essential. Service provision for sustainable development of youth requires coordination in programmes and decision making in both the public and private sectors, and procedures for monitoring and evaluation must also be developed.

CHAPTER TWO: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The youth form part of the critical mass that can be relied on to advance the growth and development interests of the county which include social change, economic growth and innovation in technology. It therefore behooves the County Government to take advantage of its youth population by devising long term solutions that cumulatively deliver on the youth agenda. Some of the programs that the County is committed to delivering on in aid of the youth comprise provision of access to markets for youth in agribusiness, access to affordable and youth friendly financial services for agri-preneurship as well as establishing an innovative information and knowledge sharing platforms that taps exhaustively tap into the potential that youth in Makueni County possess.

In the context of the National Policy⁴ on youth matters, youth are considered as a natural resource that present an immense opportunity for economic growth when aptly engaged and must therefore be engaged in the relevant planning and transformative processes of the country and the county too.

Makueni County Youth Profile

The youth population in Makueni County (aged 15-34) currently stands at 334,777 which translates to 34% of the population in Makueni County being aged between 15 and 34 years⁵. The youth go through dramatic experiences in their life circumstances as they move from childhood to adulthood, having achieved many educational and social goals and have begun to make substantial contributions to national and county level development.

The existence of a dynamic young population is a great opportunity and wealth for Makueni County in terms of growth and prosperity. It is necessary to support the personal and social development of the youth, in order to create opportunities and that reveal their potentials by participating in every aspect of social life within the County.

Table 1: County Population Distribution by Age group and Sex among the Youth, 2019

Age Group	Projected population as at 2018-2019			% of the total Youth population
	Male	Female	Total	
15-19	63,932	58,927	122,859	36.7%
20-24	41,258	38,517	79,775	23.8%
25-29	32,837	33,047	65,884	19.7%
30-34	31,681	34,578	66,259	19.8%
Total	169,708	165,069	334,777	

⁴

⁵ Makueni County CIDP (2018 – 2022).

In order to form fundamental values for the development of youth in Makueni County, to set targets, to define main target groups, to ensure cooperation and coordination between all the relevant institutions/organizations and groups and youth, and to improve youth programs and determine priorities, there is need for qualified youth policies in which the targeted interventions are provided for.

Achievements by the County in the Youth Sector

The County Government of Makueni has over the past 7 years formulated and implemented several youth related programs across the county. Some of the programs and initiatives undertaken by the County Government include: provision of support to technical training institutions within the County for purposes of imparting skills and knowledge to the youth; ensuring youth get equal opportunity and treatment in employment, health, agribusiness and sports activities; providing support to transport service providers e.g. *boda boda*; Support to business start-ups and expansion through *Tetheka* Fund (a county youth, women and PWD’s empowerment fund) and access to government procurement opportunities (AGPO).

The table below defines some of the tangible achievements for the various interventions implemented by the Government of Makueni County.

Table 2: Some Achievements in Makueni Youth initiatives

Program	Achievements
Support to Youth in AGPO	Through training and sensitization on Access to Government Procurement Opportunities, a total of 1,306 youth, women and PWD have owned companies, which have been prequalified in the County database and are now able to access Government procurement opportunities.
Boda boda Sector	<p>A recent survey shows that there are 413 boda boda stages across the county and approximately 8,000 boda boda riders. Boda boda sector development has enabled establishment of a single SACCO in every ward. 28 of them have made progress from the seed capital and increased the number of motorcycles while others have diversified and invested in other ventures including purchase of shares in the proposed ENE microfinance bank. For instance, <i>Kisayani</i> boda boda Sacco has been able to purchase a water bowser that supplies water to the local residents. Their annual revenue is estimated to be Ksh. 3 Million.</p> <p>There has also been significant individual successes as a result of capacity building and economic commitment with some graduating from boda boda riders to motor vehicle drivers. About 5 others have been able to purchase their own taxi.</p>
Sports Development	Introduction of <i>Ligi-Mashinani</i> and rehabilitation of public sports grounds has exposed the talent and potential of the youth some of whom have secured slots in national football clubs. A total of 9 players have

	been scouted out of the County initiatives and joined professional clubs in the national super league (Football) and National Volleyball league teams.
Support to CTTIs	With the improved infrastructure in the CTTIs, the exam subsidy for second year trainees and upgrading of tools and equipment, the enrolment in the CTTIs has notably increased from 2958 in 2014 to 4121 to date.
Bursary and Scholarships	Through the intervention of scholarships, 15 students sponsored in 2014 were successfully retained in school and 14 successfully transited to the university to pursue relatively competitive courses
ICT Literacy Programme	The programme dubbed ' <i>Tusomee computer Nduani</i> ' initiative trained a total of 4,230 participants and 92.3% of the trainees were youth (4,135). The disaggregated data shows an equal number of male and female youth trained. As a result of this training, several youth have been employed in cyber cafés and others started their own small enterprises in printing, photocopy and type setting.

Legal and Institutional Framework

This policy is guided largely by other national policy initiatives around youth empowerment and it is also reflective of international programmes and conventions for which Kenya is party to. It takes into account the role of both national and county governments with respect to youth affairs from a policy and implementation perspective. Whereas, there are efforts at the national level towards the formulation of a national policy framework for youth affairs, the County Government has nonetheless proceeded to formulate this policy document for purposes of responding to and dealing with county specific circumstances around youth affairs.

a. The Constitution of Kenya (2010)

The Constitution has provided for the youth in Article 55 which provides that the State shall take measures, including affirmative action programmes, to ensure that the youth: access relevant education and training; have opportunities to associate, be represented and participate in political, social, economic and other spheres of life; access employment; and are protected from harmful cultural practices and exploitation.

b. National Youth Policy – Under Consideration

c. The Kenya National Youth Empowerment Strategic Plan 2016 –2021

The policy is the blueprint that will guide the implementation of policies, activities, projects and programmes towards youth empowerment in Kenya. The strategy strives to integrate and mainstream youth interventions in sectoral and macro policies at county and national levels;

provide strategic direction and a framework for coordinating and leveraging investments targeted at youth empowerment.

d. Makueni CIDP 2018-2022

This is aimed at increasing employment and empowerment of youths. It entails interventions in all the sectors geared towards ensuring youths are actively participating in economic activities in the County. It seeks to increase youth participation in agriculture and civil works construction (road, water works and water harvesting), build an entrepreneurship culture among the youth, increase financial support and access to market by youth enterprises, enhance employability of youth through training/skill development and enhance employment opportunities for them through sports and recreation.

e. Commonwealth Youth Charter – 2005

Provides the parameters within which youth policies in all commonwealth countries should be developed. It aims to empower young people to develop their creativity, skills and potential as productive and dynamic members of society. The charter highlights importance of full participation of young women and men at every level of decision making and development.

f. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) -2030

Sustainable Development Goals relevant to the Youth includes:

- i) SDG 1- End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- ii) SDG2- End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
- iii) SDG3- Ensure healthy lives and promotes well-being for all at all ages.
- iv) SDG4- Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- v) SDG5- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

g. Kenya Vision 2030

The Vision 2030 envisages responsible, globally, competitive and prosperous youth. Among the specific interventions under the vision are: establishment of youth centers, mentorship, development of creative industry hubs and youth enterprise financing.

h. Other International Conventions and Treaties

The relevant international and regional instruments providing for governance on youth matters include:

- i) The African Youth Charter, 2006.
- ii) Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment.
- iii) World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY).
- iv) Dakar Declaration on Youth Empowerment (2000).

Target Youth Groups

Accordingly, and having regard to current socio-economic and political realities, the Makueni County Youth Policy identifies target groups for special attention due to their vulnerability and circumstances of living. They include the following:

- i) Out of school youth.
- ii) Unemployed and underemployed youth.
- iii) Youth with disabilities.
- iv) Youth engaged in crime and delinquency.
- v) Female youth.
- vi) Gifted/ talented youth.
- vii) Rural youth.
- viii) Illiterate youth.
- ix) Youth in Diaspora.

Challenges affecting the Youth in Makueni County

The challenges facing the youth in Makueni County can be classified into economic, social and political.

1. Economic factors

- a. Youth employment:** Out of the 313,187 youth in Makueni County, 38 percent (117,670) were engaged in gainful employment. Majority of the youth (43 percent) were in the informal sector including self-employment followed by those employed of youth in small-scale agriculture and pastoralism (23.5 percent), formal private sector employment (13.2 percent), private household engagement (11.4 percent), public sector (4.1 percent), NGOs, FBOs and self-modern employment (4.3 percent) and other (0.1 percent). The ratio of employed youth to population ratio was 36 percent in 2015 and was lower than for more agro-ecologically favorable counties such as Vihiga (70.4 percent), indicating that agricultural activities are important in providing employment across Kenya's counties⁶.

⁶Status of Equality and Inclusion in Kenya. National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) and Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA), 2015

- b. Youth unemployment and underemployment.** About 62 percent of the youth were not engaged. Further, some of the working youths in the County are underemployed, on part-time employment, or left idle thereby underutilizing their skills. This poses a risk since idle youths likely engage in defiant behaviors and other social challenges. There are also a large number of graduates and skilled youth in the County but employment opportunities are limited.
- c. Youth not in education, employment or training (NEET).** A complementary indicator that can be used to gauge the labour market status of the youth, given that a large share of youth could be in school is the youth not in education, employment, or training (NEET). This is a good indicator to capture the non-utilized working potential of the youth population, with a focus on ages 15 to 24, which is a common definition of youth across the globe.⁷ In Kenya, this age group coincides with individuals who should be in secondary school or tertiary education. For the overall youth population (ages 15 to 34), about 26.5 per cent of youth in Makueni County were non-utilized in 2015 based on not being in education, employment or training in 2015.
- Being NEET for an extended period of time may result in difficulties in getting employment later in life. It may also lower subsequent earnings and introduce adverse effects on mental and physical health. There is also a higher risk of engaging in anti-social activities, such as illicit drug consumption and crime. The youth radicalization emerging in many developing nations (especially in the Middle East and Africa), can also be aggravated by a NEET status. Given these challenges, Kenya needs to enhance current youth employment programmes to meet the promises of the Constitution, whose Article 55 states that “the State shall take measures, including affirmative action programmes, to ensure that the youth – access relevant education and training; and access employment.”
- d. Youth in vulnerable employment.** Vulnerable employment is marked by informal working arrangements, lack of adequate social protection, and in most cases low productivity, and hence low earnings or pay. In 2015, 46.6 percent of the youth in Makueni County were in vulnerable employment. The relatively high rates indicate most of the working youth are in own account workers and contributing family workers; an indication of a large agricultural sector and low growth in the formal economy.

⁷ The youth are defined as those aged 15 to 24 by the UN Secretariat, UNESCO, ILO, UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA. The African Youth Charter defines the youth as those aged 15 to 35 years while UN Habitat uses 15 to 32 years.

The dominance of these forms of employment suggests there is likelihood of little formal job growth for youth within the County economy, and consequently need to focus on improving productivity in sectors with higher potential for job creation such as agri-business and services.

- e. **Lack of collaterals and bureaucracies in accessing loans:** Youth especially those from poor backgrounds have no collaterals to get finances from financial institutions. The bureaucratic ways on the detailed proposals for the Government funds clearly locks away potential youth. Proper mechanisms to mobilize, train, offer the resources with clear monitoring mechanisms should be in place to ensure no one is left behind because of any inability of any nature. It will also be important to delink youth loans from land collateral requirement.
- f. **Low youth participation in agricultural economic activities.** Agriculture is one of the main activities in the County. However, youth are not adequately involved in agricultural activities. There is need to develop mechanisms of enhancing youth involvement in agriculture. It will also be important to support the youth to engage in other emerging sectors such as the blue economy.

2. *Social factors*

- a. **Health related challenges.** Apart from the common health problems like malaria, tuberculosis and the more conservative sexually transmitted diseases and drug abuse have become issues of major concern. HIV/AIDS remains a bigger threat with adolescents aged 10-19 years and young people aged 15-24 years contributing to 26% and 49% of all new HIV infections in the County respectively in 2015. (NACC Kenya HIV County Profiles, 2016). Mental health is increasingly becoming a common problem among the youth. Depression, anxiety, eating disorders, psychosis and substance abuse are also becoming leading mental problems among the youth.
Furthermore, reproductive health is one of the issues with the greatest impact on the youth. Some related problems and side effects include teenage pregnancies and abortion. Other common health problems are malaria and acute respiratory infections, which account for about one half of outpatient cases. Other diseases the youth grapple with include skin infections, intestinal worms and diarrhoea.

- b. **Current health facilities are also not youth-friendly.** As such, there is a need for facilities that offer preventive and curative health services for the youth. Information on health should be made available to the youth too.
- c. **Skills mismatch:** There is a mismatch between the courses offered in higher institutions of learnings and the needs in the job market. Higher education institutions still offer courses which may not be relevant to the current job market. Even those who offer courses that are practical to the current dynamics, do not properly guide the youth on career selection and therefore they end up being unemployed for many years even after training. There should be a deliberate effort to inform the youth about the options available and dynamics of the labour market.
- d. **The challenge of school drop-out.** Some youth drop out of school due to retrogressive cultural factors or practices such as early marriages, cost of education and poverty, and inadequate implementation of the school re-entry policy in the case of young mothers, among other reasons.
- e. **Low health performance indicators among the youth.** The median age at first sexual intercourse in Kenya was 18.2 years for women and 16.6 years for men in 2015/16. This exposes youth to early unintended pregnancies, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), and Reproductive Tract Cancers (RTCs) which often disrupt their participation in education, training and empowerment activities, and raises the risk of morbidity and mortality. According to the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS, 2014), the teenage pregnancy and motherhood rate in Kenya stood at 18 per cent among girls aged between 15-19 years.
- f. **Low Education and training attainment.** Education is designed to facilitate learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits that enables an individual to run a prosperous life. However, due to the high costs, poverty and lack of facilities, there have been high school dropout rates. Most of the youth either drop out of school or graduate without necessary skills for self-employment. Teenage and early pregnancy is among the main cause of girl dropout rates.
- g. **The county's training institutions lack the essential facilities and technology to prepare students for the challenging market demands.** Emergence of sub-standard training institutions have taken advantage of shortage of appealing training opportunities to exploit desperate youth. In most cases, there is no linkage between the training institutions and either the formal or informal sector. The youth trained in these institutions cannot meet the demands of the existing job opportunities.

Besides, society's attitude towards the 'Jua kali' sector discourages many youths from venturing into it, as they do not want to be regarded as failures in life.

- h. **Crime and Drugs.** There is a rapid increase in crime, drug and substance abuse among the youth. Alcohol, cigarettes, khat (*miraa*), *Muguka* and cannabis sativa have remained the most popular abused substances. There is a fast-emerging trend of injecting drug use especially narcotic. Moreover, abuse of drugs is highly associated with the risks of contracting HIV/Aids and other sexually transmitted diseases especially among the youth. Violent criminal attacks, including rape, mugging, armed carjacking and home invasions are increasingly being associated with the youth.
- i. **Inadequate leisure, recreation, and opportunities for community service.** Leisure, recreation and community service are important for the psychological and physical development of the youth. It contributes to one's personal development by promoting good health, personal discipline, leadership and team building skills. It also provides opportunity for appreciation, participation and creative experience in leisure, music, art, dance, drama crafts, novelty events service and cultural activities. This helps engaging the youth to make good use of their leisure time, express their beliefs and values as well as promote and preserve local art and culture for the benefit of the future youth. However, current investment in leisure and recreation has not reflected its importance. The sector suffers from inadequate funds and facilities while the talented youth lack motivation and are often exploited by organizations. Due to these constraints, it has not been possible to tap fully the talents of many youth.
- j. **Low uptake of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) among the youth.** Emerging issues that affect the youth include limited access to information and communication technology (ICT) which constraints youth from exploiting career, business and education opportunities available especially in rural areas, and high ICT access costs and negative use of ICT and social media. Other challenges include: radicalization, gambling, cyber-crime.

3. *Political Factors*

- a. **Low representation in decision making.** Limited participation in socio-economic spheres and inequality of opportunities: Despite their numerical superiority, youth are the least represented in political and economic spheres due to societal attitudes, socio-cultural and economic barriers, and lack of proper organization, orientation and empowerment.

Policy Goal and Rationale

The overall policy goal is to provide an appropriate framework that will promote the enjoyment of fundamental human rights and protect the health, social, economic and political well-being of the youth whilst also enhancing their participation in the county' development process with the intention of enhancing their quality of life.

Accordingly, the Policy recognises the large number, strategic importance and immense potential of the youth with respect to the county's development initiatives. It however notes that the youth have not been fully or successfully involved and their potential less harnessed in the socio-economic development initiatives of the county.

The Policy therefore advocates for mobilisation of resources to promote youth participation and integration in the mainstream of county development.

Guiding Principles

The County Youth Policy will be guided by the following principles, derived from existing national and international frameworks, such as the African Youth Charter (AYC) and the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY).

- a. **Non-discriminatory approach:** development initiatives should not discriminate against young people based on age, gender, race, disability or any other form, in accessing resources and services as enshrined in the Constitution of Kenya.
- b. **Holistic perspective** which embraces all aspects of physical, emotional, social, economic, political and spiritual development of youth.
- c. **Transparency and accountability** incorporated in all actions undertaken by all organisations working towards the policy objectives.
- d. **Social cohesion and unity** –youth development interventions should promote the inclusion of youth as a strategic part of societal structures by involving them in governance and democratic processes.
- e. **Civic engagement and participation** - include strategies and programmes for youth by sharing information, creating opportunities and involving them in decision-making leadership, economic empowerment initiatives and creating space for youth to voice their democratic ideals.
- f. **Equality:** all youths shall be given equal respect, opportunity, dignity regardless of their experience, ethnicity, physical and mental capacity, sex, age, vulnerabilities and disabilities.

- g. **Sustainable development** – youth’s assets, potential, capacity and capability must be harnessed and maximised so that they can respond effectively and efficiently to challenges, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- h. **Diversity** – youth interventions ought to recognise and acknowledge the diverse backgrounds from which the youth originate and celebrate the roles played by different agents of socialisation, tradition, culture and spirituality in the development of young women and men.
- i. **Youth service** – the youth should be involved in meaningful activities which benefit communities, while developing their sense of patriotism and their abilities through learning and services provided.
- j. **A gender-inclusive** approach to the development of youth, equal treatment and opportunity for all youth (male and female) is central to the policy document.
- k. Appropriate strategies and mechanism including transparency, financial accountability systems for effective delivery of youth development programmes as a crosscutting issue shall be adopted and reviewed periodically to enhance explicit and measurable progress towards policy implementation.

Objectives of the County Youth Policy

The Youth Policy aims to provide an enabling environment where youth development is mainstreamed into the various focal areas of county development and the formulation of operative strategies for implementing this policy instrument.

- a. Identify fundamental needs of youth and provide the legal framework and strategic guidelines for sustainable youth development;
- b. Reduce youth unemployment through the promotion of self-employment enterprises;
- c. Increase youth involvement in decision-making, leadership, community based and other development programmes;
- d. Mobilize resources for youth programmes and projects at all levels;
- e. Identify gaps and shortfalls in existing policies and programmes and provide a framework for addressing these gaps;
- f. Call for the mainstreaming of youth issues into the respective agenda of all government agencies, non governmental organisations and developmental institutions;
- g. Strengthen coordination and cooperation between the various government and non-governmental organizations involved in youth related issues;

- h. Promote the use of wide range of participatory methodologies to ensure maximum participation and contribution on youth development projects;
- i. Provide a framework for designing, implementing and monitoring mechanisms for youth related programmes and interventions;
- j. Include youth development priorities in the main programmes of government;
- k. Improve coordination among relevant government entities, international organizations and NGOs for effective and sustainable political, economic and social youth development;
- l. Build effective capacity of youth by meeting their needs;

Policy Objectives and Strategies

The successful development and implementation of the County Youth Policy rests on the identification of priority themes that affect youth in the county, and the recognition of strategic interventions and informed practical strategies which address these identified priority themes. In this regard, the following priority areas and critical concerns afflicting the Makueni Youth have been identified:

- Youth and Education – (Technical/Vocational training)
- Youth and Health
- Youth and Agriculture.
- Youth and Employment.
- Young Women and Girls.
- Youth Participation in Politics and Decision making.
- Youth and Information and Communication Technologies(ICT)
- Youth and Drug abuse
- Youth and Crime.
- Youth, Sports and Recreation.
- Youth and Arts & Culture.

For ease of reference, the above critical areas have been broadly categorized into three pillars, that is, economic, social and political pillars.

A. ECONOMIC PILLAR

Transform agriculture and agri-business to make it attractive to youth in Makueni County:

Agriculture contributes immensely to the economy of the County and is a key livelihood pillar for most of the youth. The sector accounts for about 40 percent of Kenya’s total exports and provides both formal and informal employment in urban and rural areas. Makueni County’s economy is

driven by Agriculture sector which contributes 78% of the total household income. Agriculture sector contributes 47.2% of the total county gross product based on the KNBS County Gross Product Report 2019. However, the sector contribution towards the National gross value added is 1.68per cent. Manufacturing sector contributes 0.4 percent while mining and quarrying contributes 0.7 percent.

The main agricultural products include mangoes, dairy, green grams, poultry, beef, honey, industrial crops, fish among others. However, the agriculture sector in the country is dominated by an ageing population where the average age of a Kenyan farmer is 60 years that utilize the unreliable and erratic rain fed farming methods and are less inclined to embrace modern farming techniques. Youth participation in the agriculture sector is likely to encourage use of ICT to assist in establishment of innovative and modern farming methods, value addition, marketing and job creation and eventually contribute to improved food security and nutrition.

The involvement and full participation in the agriculture sector by the youths especially in the fields of research, training, and production, preservation, processing and marketing of the produce of agriculture will certainly make a difference. Unfortunately, a good number of the youth involved with or have the potential in agriculture lack the necessary support to improve their productive capacity. Very often they do not have access to land, credit as well as extension services.

The Policy, therefore, aims to ensure that the energy, innovation, aspirations and passion of the youth are fully integrated in the operations of the agricultural sector. The government will therefore implement the following initiatives.

- a) Position youth at the forefront of agriculture growth and transformation. This will be achieved through boosting youth employment in agriculture and agribusiness. Specifically, the County government in collaboration with stakeholders will;
 - i) Promote youth participation in agriculture as a livelihood through value addition of agricultural outputs and put in place processes that motivate youth to participate in agribusiness;
 - ii) Remold the negative perceptions on agriculture among the youth;
 - iii) Promote agriculture, livestock and blue economy skills development, innovation, information sharing and access to finance;
 - iv) Support youth to access land for agri-business and agricultural adoption to climate change;

- v) Strengthen youth's agribusinesses through enhanced coordination, monitoring and evaluation of product development and supply chains in agribusiness activities;
- b) Identify and address the fragile and increasing vulnerabilities of sustainable youth self-employment opportunities particularly in agriculture and entrepreneurship. The County government in collaboration with all stakeholders will provide a conducive environment for youth engagement in agriculture through the following interventions:
- i) Rebrand agriculture as the new unexplored frontier for growth in business opportunities;
 - ii) Re-direct and train youth to focus either on sections of the value chain activities such as production, processing, value addition or marketing;
 - iii) Develop innovative financial packages(subsidies) that provide incentives for youth entrepreneurs in the sector;
 - iv) Encourage youth to invest in fishing farming;
 - v) Invest in value addition through processing, branding, quality, shelf life improvements
 - vi) Invest in irrigation and water harvesting technologies to facilitate full time engagement of the youth and shorten waiting time for economic returns;
 - vii) Digitize agricultural production and marketing information into web-based resources;
 - viii) Invest in emerging livestock and agricultural technologies;
 - ix) Profile successful youth role models in agro-business who can mentor other upcoming youth;
 - x) Promote the participation of the youth in modern agriculture as a viable career opportunity for the youth and as an economic and business option;
 - xi) Increase credit and other financial opportunities for youth entrepreneurs into the sector;
 - xii) Conduct agricultural sector entrepreneurship education for young youth across the county;
 - xiii) Devise institutionalized platforms where youth entrepreneurs and investors can come together;
 - xiv) Increase access, ownership and rights of the youth with respect to land ownership while encouraging the adoption of modern agricultural knowledge and practices;

- xv) Provide youth who are farmers with market information and agricultural extension services;
- xvi) Engagement of the youth with cooperative schemes that produce and market agricultural goods and services;
- xvii) Develop and operationalize county agricultural information system hub.

Entrepreneurship and employment in Makueni County

The Makueni County Government has implemented several initiatives that focus on enhancing self-employment, access to finances and promotion of skills development and work experience for the youth. The *Tetheka* fund and access to government procurement opportunities (AGPO) are some of the initiatives aimed at enhancing self-employment for youth where the government provides interest free loans to the young people. It is imperative that a third of Tetheka fund is set aside for youth to access within a friendly environment.

Through the County Technical Training Institutions (CTTIs), the county government provides training and skills development opportunities to the youth. Makueni County Government also provides mentorship opportunities through internships, industrial attachment and apprenticeship programs to youth fresh from colleges and universities. However, there is still a challenge of unemployment in the county. Unemployment in Makueni County like other parts of Kenya, results due to rapid population growth and increased pressure on land and other resources, is exacerbated by imbalance of skills among the youth caused by the education system and over-reliance by Kenyan industries on foreign technologies. This phenomenon puts a considerable pressure on the Kenyan youth entrepreneur.

Employment opportunities in diaspora: The youth Policy shall educate on measures to protect the rights of all young people living and working in the Diaspora and encourage them to participate in national, political, cultural, social and development programmes. The establishment of Makueni service placement unit charged with the responsibility of forward and backward linkages will guarantee placement of youth in different job opportunities. Some of the critical concerns for youth employment include:

- i) High levels of unemployment among young women and rural youth;
- ii) Employment in vulnerable jobs that fail to meet the objectives of decent work;
- iii) High levels of time-related underemployment;
- iv) Lack of social protection in the informal economic sector where there is a high degree of youth participation;

- v) Societal (including youth) attitudes limiting career options for young people;
- vi) Lack of transparency in recruitment procedures.

Policy interventions

To address the challenges, the government of Makueni will:

- i. Continuously review and enhance the reach, scope, accessibility and financial resourcing of the TETHEKA fund in the context of youth empowerment.
- ii. Diversify employment opportunities across public, private as well as non-governmental, sectors and create awareness among youth about diverse and innovative job opportunities;
- iii. Establish Makueni Service Placement Unit charged with the responsibility of employment linkages;
- iv. Establish an organized structure for all professionals in the county for labour outsourcing and mentorship among other activities;
- v. Integrate youth needs in county level initiatives e.g. poverty alleviation strategies (Operation Mwolyo Out – OMO, among other strategies), human resource development and economic development programs;
- vi. Establish labour standards and social protection schemes for youth in informal sector focusing on addressing shocks and enhancing job security;
- vii. Promote a merit-based and rational system of employment in the public sector while keeping a close eye on evidence based affirmative action programmes;
- viii. Establish a complaint reporting mechanism for those who have been discriminated by recruiting agencies including government;
- ix. Promote self-employment and entrepreneurship through facilitating links with regional Chambers of Commerce so that young people have access to mentorship and other forms of support;
- x. Enhance career guidance services in selecting trainings and jobs;
- xi. Promote financial support, information and technology for small scale entrepreneurs and self-employed persons;
- xii. Incentivize the formalization of the informal economy;
- xiii. Conduct local labour market analysis and direct youth to vocational education and apprentice training according to the local labor needs;
- xiv. Encourage international, national and local capital investments in the sectors which will increase youth employment;

- xv. Develop new internship and work practice opportunities by way of reinforcing cooperation between universities and vocational training institutions with industrial and public institutions in the county;
- xvi. Remove bureaucratic, economic and other obstacles in the way of the efficient use of support packages given for entrepreneurship;
- xvii. Support youth associations and non-governmental organizations encouraging entrepreneurship and youth employment.

Cottage industries in Makueni County

Development of cottage industries is important as they improve the social and economic conditions through creation of employment. The cottage industries (also referred to as household-based industries) identified in Makueni County include: pottery, brick-making, quarrying and masonry, carpentry, charcoal production, basketry, decorations and weaving, shoe-making and repair, baking and bicycle repair. Cottage industries are production units mostly based in homesteads, which make use of locally available raw materials, are driven by fuel or manual power and skills and whose products end up in the local market.

The industries are characterized by accessibility to raw materials, low costs of operation, and proximity to markets. A major benefit of cottage industries is that they allow people to work from their homes. Women have benefited the most because they can work from home while still attending to their families. Many cottage businesses include the entire family in their operations including children.

The County Government will implement the following interventions for Cottage industries:

- i) Ensure that all the household-based industries in the county are documented. The objective shall be to source the necessary data and information necessary to guide more targeted interventions at the county level.
- ii) Establish apprenticeship schemes for youth in these sectors to build capacity and create self-employment.
- iii) Ensure youth with acquired skills from TVETS/CTTIs or apprenticeship program are supported with tools of trade.
- iv) Formulate legislations and policies that support the growth and development of household-based industries.
- v) Enhance the flow of information on formal and innovative sources of capital for household-based industries.

- vi) Facilitate the acquisition of modern equipment used in cottage industries including machines for brick making, masonry and carpentry to boost output, employment and productivity.
- vii) Develop the cottage industry value chain including marketing systems through the development of Co-operative system, exhibitions and trade shows etc. for cottage industry products.

Service industries in Makueni County

This involves the provision of services to other businesses as well as final consumers. This sector deserves attention because the service sector plays a central role in serving individuals and society. Service providers face obstacles selling services that goods-sellers rarely face. Services are intangible, making it difficult for potential customers to understand what they will receive and what value it will hold for them.

Enhance skills development and vocational training

Skills development and vocational training should ideally respond to the large mass of youth who opt for a range of non-traditional employment opportunities. There are many employment opportunities in newly emerging economic areas where high quality skills development and training is essential. While the TVET sector is rapidly expanding in Makueni, the following specific measures will go a long way in addressing challenges faced by the youth in technical education and training. The Makueni government will invest in:

- i) Promoting awareness on skilled labour, informal occupations, non-traditional occupations;
- ii) Introducing subsidized programmes for TVET;
- iii) Ensuring that vocational training institutes are accredited and conduct competency-based training and market driven courses;
- iv) Establishing acceptable labour standards for skilled labour work;
- v) Recruiting qualified vocational instructors through introducing an attractive salary scheme and proper staff recruitment process on basis of competencies and qualifications;
- vi) Equipping youths with modern training skills.

Employment opportunities for the Youth

Improving employment opportunities for young people requires a broad and concerted effort from all stakeholders. The County Government is primarily responsible for creating an enabling

environment for youth employment. The county government will support youth employment through;

a. ***Direct action concerning skills development and training***

The County has a central role in the identification (and subsequent design and implementation) of the appropriate education, training and general skills requirements that economies need. Interventions by the government in this area shall include:

- i) Enterprises' participation in national vocational training systems and training programmes through interventions aimed at facilitating the transition of young people to the world of work (e.g. enterprise-based training).
- ii) Measures to increase the number and scope of training opportunities for young people within the private sector (e.g. campaigns geared towards businesses to create or expand training places; joint efforts by employers and educational authorities to increase vocational training places and apprenticeship places in enterprises).
- iii) Special training schemes organized by employers, individually or collectively, outside the framework of national training systems in order to generate the skills required by a specific industry or company, including schemes targeting disadvantaged youth.
- iv) Establishment of school-industry partnership arrangements in order to enhance the relevance of education and easing young people transition from school to work (e.g. workplace learning initiatives within the educational framework).
- v) Establishment of an apprenticeship program targeting skilled and unskilled youth

b. **Direct actions concerning job creation.**

Private sector growth is a key engine of job creation and more than ad hoc measures are required to enable employers to create jobs for young people on a sustainable basis. Examples of action in this area shall include:

- i) Job facilitation and placement schemes to match young jobseekers with job offers all across the county;
- ii) Use of government programmes and incentives to create new jobs for young people (establishment of Funds as is necessary);
- iii) Mentoring of young entrepreneurs and business start-up assistance;
- iv) Establishment of young entrepreneurs' networks or support to ease access to enterprise networks;

- v) Establishment of a Makueni Service Placement Center charged with the responsibility of forward linkages with potential employers, employability skills training, career guidance and mentorship.

c. Policy making and advocacy.

The participation of the county in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes for youth employment has proven critical for enhancing the relevance of interventions and make them more respondent to labour market requirements. The county shall play an important role in raising-awareness, generating and disseminating information, and mobilizing support around youth employment issues.

Key interventions in this regard will include:

- i) Participation in national tripartite policy-making bodies dealing with vocational education and training and job creation (e.g. boards of educational and training institutions; funding bodies for grant allocation to young entrepreneurs).
- ii) Contribution to policy and programme development and implementation through social dialogue and collective bargaining.
- iii) Research into and dissemination of information on youth employment issues, specifically with regard to private sector needs concerning skills and job requirements.
- iv) Promotional campaigns and other initiatives targeting different groups depending on circumstances (e.g. young people, parents, schools, industry partners, etc.) using tools such as advertisements, radio spots, television chat shows, videos, newspaper articles

B. SOCIAL PILLAR

The Makueni Youth Policy shall focus on addressing social issues among the youth which include sports, culture, performing arts and music, nutrition and HIV/AIDs, education /technical skills development, youth identity, social exclusion and discrimination, family and parenting, sexual gender based violence, drug and substance abuse, attitude and mindset change, moral and ethical development for the youth among others.

a. Sports, Culture, Performing Arts and Music

There are wide disparities with regard to opportunities and resources in arts, sports, recreational and leisure opportunities for youth. At the same time, a highly competitive education system has resulted in many young people not having the time for such activities. At another level, such activities have also become highly competitive. These factors affect the personality and character development of young people. Qualities such as sharing, building trust, confidence, self-esteem,

generosity and creativity are developed through such activities. Cultural and social constraints result in youth-led activities to be frowned upon or requiring close adult supervision which is sometimes not welcomed. Critical issues to be addressed include:

- i) Over emphasis on examinations and academic excellence in educational institutes ignore the importance of leisure activities;
- ii) Undue emphasis in achievement and success in sports and leisure activities;
- iii) Lack of opportunities for youth to initiate and organize leisure and sports activities;
- iv) Significant regional and socio-economic disparities in the availability of opportunities and resources for arts, sports and leisure activities;
- v) Lack of institutional support for youth to pursue careers in arts and sports.

Policy interventions;

To address the challenges, the County government shall:

- i) Strengthen county support and reward system for participation in sports at county, national and international level and develop the Makueni Sports Policy.
- ii) Encourage private sector participation in the promotion of arts and sports sectors for young people.
- iii) Identify and establish an area for leisure in each of the urban areas such as Wote green park.
- iv) Establish youth empowerment centers in each ward with phased approach of one per Sub County.
- v) Review and implement global best practices in youth recreational programs and adapt for Makueni context.
- vi) Strengthen and promote extracurricular activities in CTTIs.
- vii) Identify and promote regional and local recreational opportunities such as outdoor activities, sports and opportunities for enhancing creativity.
- viii) Establish institutions to promote diverse arts and cultural activities.
- ix) Reward excellence in Arts and Sports when providing educational and employment opportunities.

b. Health, Nutrition and well-being

Makueni's Universal Health Care has made great strides in improving the health of its citizens. Compared to other Counties at a similar developmental level, Makueni county health indicators are impressive. Within this context and in the increasing prevalence of risk factors for non-

communicable diseases in Kenya, understanding the social determinants of health and adopting a multi- sectoral approach to health and well-being is extremely important. It is also important to ensure that young people have the capacity and knowledge to make responsible choices and that there is a supportive environment for them to make the right choices.

The key health issues facing youth in Makueni include:

- i) Increasing prevalence of risk factors for non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and cardio-vascular diseases;
- ii) Lack of information and access to youth friendly services on sexual and reproductive health education;
- iii) Increased risk of mental health issues thereby increasing the risk of self-harm and suicide among young people;
- iv) Increased teenage pregnancy;
- v) Increased accidents among boda boda riders and other transport service providers;
- vi) Increase in drugs and substance abuse among young people especially *muguka*; and
- vii) Lack of awareness about existing services and inadequate professional counselling services for young people.

Policy intervention

The Government of Makueni will:

- i) Enhance the improvement, provision and expansion of access to services including information, guidance and counselling and make them youth friendly by removing all legal, regulatory, structural, medical and attitudinal barriers to accessing such services;
- ii) Improve the quality of health services and access by the youth;
- iii) Establish youth friendly centers with coverage of 2 wards across the county;
- iv) Establish psychosocial services including counselling services at community level;
- v) Build capacity of health professionals to respond to youth health issues;
- vi) Provide protection and support services for young people who have experienced sexual violence, domestic abuse and mental illness;
- vii) Create awareness among youth on lifestyle associated diseases and promote physical activity, healthy lifestyles and healthy dietary habits; and
- viii) Enhance life skills especially on decision making and critical thinking to avoid risk behaviors.

- ix) Training youth in transport services on road safety measures and issuance of driving licenses for different categories of drivers;
- x) Build partnerships and coordination among stakeholders involved in youth health and development.
- xi) Ensure full protection of young women and men from all forms of violence, including gender-based violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, and promoting the psychological recovery and the social and economic reintegration of the victim.
- xii) Provide media support and communicate cautionary messages to young people about the problems and negative situations drug addicted youth face;
- xiii) Institute and strengthen local capacities to gather, analyse, disseminate and use youth related data and set up a data bank;
- xiv) Conduct information activities for the youth on chronic diseases and prevention of such diseases and related health awareness;
- xv) To carry out work on informing the youth sufficiently on subjects such as health, nutrition, obesity and sports activities.

Drug Abuse:

Substance or drug abuse, which refers to any non-medical or excessive use of a drug or any substance that changes the normal operation of the mind and body, is a health hazard for young people and has significant implications for their physical, psycho-social and mental development.

Alcohol and cigarettes are the most common substances abused by young people, and constitute “gateways” to the use of other substances and illicit drugs. Makueni has also been beset by the onset of drugs like muguka and miraa which are continuously piling up the numbers of drug addicted youths.

Policy Interventions:

The Government of Makueni will:

- i) Adopt and implement a strict drug control policy.
- ii) Address drug use within the overall context of poverty reduction, social inclusion across all sectors of society, and equal opportunity for all in order to be effective and credible.
- iii) Increase the number and accessibility of rehabilitation and treatment centres for youth drug addicts.
- iv) Provide psycho-social services for young drug addicts and their families.

- v) Enhance awareness about drug addiction by means of education provided by experts to families through youth centres.
- vi) Extend and to make more active the centres for the treatment of youth drug addicts.
- vii) Put in place well articulated demand-reduction programmes targeted at young people, particularly those at risk of drug abuse. The content of such programmes shall respond directly to the interests and concerns of vulnerable youths including addressing the underlying factors that cause the youth to indulge in drug use.

c. Education, ICT and technical skills development:

Makueni County has made great strides in education as a result of free education policies covering primary, secondary and tertiary education. Makueni County has impressive human development indicators and this is primarily the result of the entire Kenya's progressive free education policy which has existed for several years. It is important that these foundations are built upon and strengthened since a large number of young people are engaged in educational activities. Issues in the education sector have a direct bearing on their sense of well-being and growth.

The youth are among the first to take advantage of new developments in ICT and are at the forefront of information revolution. They are capable of using ICT in diverse and novel ways; and stand to benefit most from the ICT revolution.

Critical issues in the education and ICT sector are as follows:

- i) Growing disparity in terms of resources and quality among educational and training institutions at all levels
- ii) Poor standards in career guidance and mentorship
- iii) Relevance and quality of curriculum of CTTIs
- iv) Knowledge and skills of teachers not being updated in a rapidly changing educational environment.

Policy interventions

Promotion of Skills Development, Vocational training and ICT

Promotion of vocational training programmes are very essential. Effective vocational training that is based on real labour market demands could greatly improve the economic growth of the county and the engagement of the youth thereto.

Vocational training should be tailored to meet the demands for labour in the country. The focus should be on increasing the overall employability of youth trainees, rather than just training them for narrow occupational categories. Skills development and vocational training should ideally respond to the large mass of youth who opt for a range of non-traditional employment opportunities.

There are many employment opportunities in newly emerging economic areas where high quality skills development and training is essential. While the TVET sector is rapidly expanding in Makueni, the following specific measures will go a long way in addressing challenges faced by the youth in technical training and information technology:

- i) Promote awareness on skilled labour and non-traditional occupations
- ii) Introduce subsidized fee structures for TVET courses;
- iii) Ensure that vocational training institutes are accredited and conduct competency-based training and market driven courses;
- iv) Establish acceptable labour standards for skilled labour work;
- v) Recruiting qualified vocational instructors through introducing an attractive salary Scheme.

d. Social inclusion and non-discrimination

Youth believe that there is a high level of social exclusion and discrimination in Kenya. Such perceptions are not merely a problem of ‘wrong attitudes’ among young people, but based on their experience of everyday life, such as obtaining a service from local authorities to the more serious instances of accessing education and employment. Exclusion and discrimination is not based simply on age but in a combination of other factors such as gender, ethnicity and political affiliation among others which seriously impact on young people from low socio-economic backgrounds.

The challenge of exclusion and discrimination manifests itself in various ways including:

- i) Socially conformist practices that limits young peoples’ cultural choices;
- ii) Increased reliance on patronage in almost all forms of social engagement;
- iii) Declining trust of young people in key public institutions such as law enforcement, state bureaucracy and the judiciary;
- iv) Injustice caused by class, caste, religion and ethnicity against youth;
- v) Increased levels of radicalization, violence and criminal activity.

Policy interventions

The Government of Makueni will:

- i) Develop equal opportunity policies in key sectors, especially with regard to job; recruitment and establish systems for review and implementation;
- ii) Strengthen transparency, accountability and access to information in the public sector;
- iii) Establish a Youth Ombudsman to respond to instances of discrimination and exclusion;
- iv) Create spaces for youth to participate meaningfully at family, community, county and national level; and
- v) Identify and increase opportunities to fulfil the aspirations of disabled and differently abled youth.

e. Deepening ICT development and Innovation

The County Government/Youth has/have not tapped into the opportunities presented by the presence of ICT infrastructure. There is inadequate ICT infrastructure across the sub-counties.

The County Government will put in measures to encourage and promote youth participation in economic growth through online platforms.

The County Government shall establish, develop and renovate ICT infrastructure in all sub-counties

Policy intervention

The Government will:

- i) Develop the knowledge and skills of youth through the innovation hub and other channels to meet the needs of labour market through use of ICT;
- ii) Partner with the National government and private stakeholder to create a conducive environment to reduce the risks involved in venturing into online businesses (cybercrime);
- iii) Enhance/promote the access to ICT infrastructure across all sub-counties (setting hotspot zones, Innovation hubs, Community Information Centers–CICs, among others);
- iv) Build capacity and competence of the youth to fully integrate them into the County’s technology transformation; and
- v) Enhance e-government services by ensuring provision of 70% of government services online.
- vi) Maximize internet access in order to provide easy access of young people to information and communication technologies.

f. Youth, Sports and Recreation:

It is necessary to support the personal and social development of young people, to create opportunities and to provide ground for them to truly reveal their potentials and to help them participate actively in every aspect of social life. Sports, with its economic, social and individual aspects, has a very important role in raising healthy generations, public health protection, economic development, building social peace and the development of social harmony.

Apart from the fact that sports improves physical health, contributes to the development of positive self-concept and values such as team work, it can be a veritable tool to unite the young people of Makueni County. Sports are a universal language that can bring people together, no matter their origin, background, religious beliefs or economic status.

Policy Interventions

The Government of Makueni will:

- i) Advocate for formulation and implementation of a County Sports Policy that addresses sports for all across the county;
- ii) Encourage organisations to promote development of sports, traditional and modern, for recreations and competition among the youth;
- iii) Promote sports, recreation and leisure activities and develop models that appeal to the youth;
- iv) Preserve and promote positive traditional sports across the county;
- v) Create and promote a sports and recreation culture throughout the county;
- vi) Promote the leisure needs of young people in the process of urban planning and development to ensure the availability of a wide range of leisure activities and opportunities for youth to relax and wind down;
- vii) Create and promote a sports and recreation culture throughout the county.

C. POLITICAL PILLAR

Involvement of youth in transformative leadership

Youth leadership is training young people as change agents in their communities. The development of youth leadership contributes greatly to the positive development of young people and their communities. Leadership skills, such as goal-setting, problem-solving and sound decision-making,

are not just necessary for senior political leaders - these skills are needed among Makueni leadership cadres.

Despite making up more than half of the population in Makueni County, young people (ages 18-34) often find themselves marginalized from mainstream politics and decision making. They struggle to gain the respect of public officials and are seen as lacking the skills and experience to engage in political activity and lead positive change in their communities. This exclusion, combined with limited educational and economic opportunities, can leave young people both idle and frustrated with the status quo.

Youth require opportunities to participate in political processes and contribute to practical solutions that advance development. When given or create an opportunity to organize, voice their opinions and play a meaningful role in political decision making, young people consistently demonstrate their willingness and ability to foster positive, lasting change. They are also more likely to demand and defend democracy, and gain a greater sense of belonging. This Policy supports young people to channel their energy, creativity and aspirations and become political leaders and activists. The activities build young people's skills; knowledge and confidence while helping them more effectively express their voices, build relationships with political leaders, and break down sociocultural and institutional barriers to participation. The benefits of youth participation in political leadership include:

i) From political to civic engagement

The involvement of youth in political leadership leads to civic engagement which is broader than political engagement because it can include service to the community through involvement in public participation, health, education and charity work. Political engagement is a more targeted aspect of civic engagement and can be expressed through voting, participating in political demonstrations and signing petitions for specific issues.

ii) Better Citizen

Young people who participate politically in their community from early on are more likely to become engaged citizens and voters. So, in order to have better "young" citizenship, political engagement is one of the best tools.

iii) Youth for Youth

The youth face many problems in Makueni County that go unheard. Since the youth would better understand other young people, the best way to improve this newer generation would be through politics, which is a tool used to take action for development.

Strengthening County Governance for improved service delivery

Young people are underrepresented in government leadership positions, such as elected office, nominations and appointments. The policy will provide guidance to inform assistance for young people to effectively engage informal politics and governance. The policy provides for the appointment of youth representatives or focal persons in all County government departments to ensure that youth issues are mainstreamed in all facets of development in all levels that is from the County, Sub County, ward, sub-ward and the village level. Strengthen Youth Development coordination structures at all levels and build youth analysis/planning expertise in the different sectors in county government, to influence sector plans.

Civics and Citizenship

The participation of youth in civil society is declining or linked closely to various political parties. While youth must be free to learn and subscribe to various political ideologies, they must also have the opportunity to engage in civil society initiatives independent of party politics. Most often young people are manipulated by political parties both in and out of power.

The lack of civil society participation among young people reflects their apathy and disinterest in matters of social importance. Youth are becoming increasingly disillusioned and cynical about politics, civic engagement and the possibility of peaceful social transformation. They are focused more on individualistic goals and the pursuit of personal ambitions.

The critical issues to be addressed for Makueni County include: declining participation of youth in civil society initiatives including community service and volunteerism; political manipulation of youth movements; shrinking opportunities for civic and social engagement; declining trust and confidence in civic and political institutions among young people; lack of mentoring process in terms of leadership; lack of a civic education across educational and training institutions.

Policy interventions

The Government of Makueni County shall:

- i) Establish community service for youth and promote volunteerism;
- ii) Establish a reward system including Makueni Medal for Outstanding Youth Achievement to recognize outstanding community service among youth at the county level;
- iii) Promote and encourage independent, youth focused civil society initiatives;
- iv) Establish youth mentorship and youth leadership programs focused on civil and political rights, responsibilities and obligations

CHAPTER THREE: STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In order to strengthen youth empowerment in Makueni County, the Policy envisages to bring on board all the key stakeholders in the County and their different capacities and roles as stated herein:

S/No	Stakeholders	Roles
1	Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote positive youth development activities. • Explore opportunities and seek sustainable solutions. Promote social cohesion among themselves. • Renew and refresh the current status of our society including leadership, innovations and skills. • Advance the current technology, education, politics and peace of the County. • Maintain our culture or good values of our society. • Mentoring teenagers and our young generations.
2	National/County Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a conducive working environment for the youth. • Formulating and implementing youth policies. • Ensure that there is equal distribution of resources. • Involve and empower all stakeholders from the beginning in the design, implementation and evaluation of the policy. • Make profile of the development situations of the young people in the Country/County. • Define vulnerable groups. • Set aside budgets for implementation of the Youth Policies. • Develop a vision of the implementation of the policy. • Ensure community cohesion.
3	County Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass the Youth policy for implementation • Approve the budget for policy implementation; • Youth sensitization on the policy entails.
4	County Department Responsible for Youth Matters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop County Youth Action Plans for policy operationalization and implementation. • Provide overall leadership, monitoring and reporting on the youth policy implementation; • Mobilize resources/funds for implementation of the youth policy;
5	Development Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop youth skills and capacity. • Provide platform for participation. • Access to information, publications and reports.
6	Faith-based organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide moral guidance on values and virtues to the youth.
7	Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote responsible parenting. • Provide positive role modelling. • Provide equity and equality among the youths. • Offer guidance and counselling to the youth. • Socializing the youth into different skills. • Offer financial support to youth projects.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide room for the youth to participate at all levels of leadership and governance. • Challenge the youth to realize their full potential and goals. • Ensure access to land for agriculture.
8	Non-state Actors (NGOs and Civil Societies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jointly with the County Government, formulate a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of the young people. • Seeks to address more effectively the problems of the young people and to increase opportunities for youth participation in the society.
9	Private sector (Corporate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avail resources for training and advocacy. • Providing information and transfer of technology. • Providing equal opportunities for the youth.
10	Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating awareness on youth programs. • An agent of promoting positive social change to the youth. • Dissemination of information. • Platform for youth expression.
11.	Academia (Schools)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, Training and Research on Youth issues.

CHAPTER FOUR: POLICY COORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The overall coordination of the youth activities in the County shall be anchored in the office of the Governor. The Department responsible for youth affairs shall ensure establishment of effective institutional framework for collaboration of all stakeholders in implementation of youth activities and programmers in Makueni County. The Department of youth will also guide establishment of a youth economic movement led by youth from the village to county level.

The Department of Devolution, County Administration, Public Service and Youth will essentially play a catalytic and coordinating role in the implementation of the Policy besides undertaking specific programmers and projects to supplement the overall efforts. The success of this Policy will depend upon the commitment and passion of all the stakeholders whether in the public or private sector. This is an investment which will see Makueni benefit immeasurably and it is my hope that all stakeholders will rise to this immense opportunity. The Department is confident of the capabilities and the talents of the Makueni Youth and expects that they will do their best to build a strong, prosperous, sustainable and vibrant Makueni.

The implementation of this policy will depend on a sound institutional framework, adequately coordinated implementation support, effecting resource mobilization and funding, effective programmer monitoring; and active political, administrative and technical support for the translation of goals, objectives and strategies outlined in the Policy into actual programmers at all levels of society. A concerted and coordinated effort is required by National and County Governments, non-government and private institutions, churches, youth groups and community organizations to address youth issues in a comprehensive way.

Policy Implementation Strategies

The policy shall be implemented through an action plan detailing strategy, activities, target groups, time frame and the budget lines. Implementation will require involvement of all agencies dealing with the youth. These include Government departments as the main agencies, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and various youth organizations. The department responsible for youth affairs shall spearhead the overall policy implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review, in addition to mobilizing resources necessary for the implementation. Partnerships within the different organizations will play a key role in achieving the policy's objectives.

In order for policy to be successfully implemented it is important to have in place a suitable institutional framework. At the same time, it is vital that mechanisms are in place to review the

policy and its impact in order to make appropriate changes and adjustments. This policy proposes institutional mechanisms for implementing, monitoring and reviewing the MYP.

Institutional Framework

The multi-sectoral focus of the MYP means that coordination among different organs of the state is an essential factor for the success of the MYP, the main focus being:

- i) All county policies and plans integrate youth development principles in the planning process
- ii) County policies and plans affecting youth are aligned with the principles, values, objectives and recommendations of the MYP
- iii) All county departments make deliberate efforts of working with the youth by setting aside budgetary allocations for targeting youths.

The Government of Makueni County will guide in the establishment of a youth led economic structure from the village level to county. The youth focused structure will closely work with the steering committee in the implementation of youth empowerment strategies. In order to facilitate this approach, it is proposed that a County Youth Development steering committee be established under the Department in time responsible for Youth affairs

Makueni County Youth Development Steering Committee.

The County Government shall establish a Youth Development Steering committee domiciled at the County Department responsible for youth affairs to coordinate and facilitate the work of youth empowerment and inclusion.

Responsibilities of the Makueni County Youth steering committee:

- i) To monitor implementation of MYP.
- ii) To ensure independent evaluation of the impact of MYP at regular intervals and renew policy initiatives accordingly.
- iii) To review county policies in alignment with MYP and to advocate the objectives of
- iv) MYP with relevant County departments.
- v) Promote Research and Development (R&D) in the youth sector.

Enactment of laws on youth affirmative action

The Government of Makueni County shall develop and enact frameworks including legislation that enhance and support youth empowerment and affirmative action. The enacted legislations shall:

- i) Promote a culture of entrepreneurship to develop and sustain youth labour that is market relevant
- ii) Improve social services, infrastructure and promote rural development
- iii) Promote talent identification, development and management
- iv) Encourage private sector participation in the promotion of arts and sports sectors for young people.

Policy Monitoring, Evaluation and Review:

The objective of monitoring is to ensure compliance with the guidelines, goals and principles outlined in the Youth Policy. Evaluation is concerned with assessing the extent of achievement of the set goals and targets. The importance of monitoring and evaluation is to ensure successful implementation of the youth policy.

Monitoring and evaluation shall be an essential strategy for the delivery of the Youth Policy. Appropriate tools, templates and modalities shall be developed to facilitate annual review of the performance of the youth policy.

The policy's Monitoring and Evaluation components shall aim at:

- i) Assisting stakeholders to operationalise the policy as it relates to their specific sectors and/or organisations and generate indicators for assessing performance and progress towards policy goals;
- ii) Assessing levels of efficient and judicious use of resources and youth development programmes;
- iii) Measuring the long-term impact of the policy on youth development in the county;
- iv) Establishing data bank on youth activities and youth development, and regularly update the situational analysis of youth development programmes in the county;
- v) Undertaking research on youth development issues;
- vi) Support and strengthen M&E systems for effective policy monitoring;
- vii) Conduct periodic M&E reviews on youth development programmes in the country.

Since the society is dynamic, and changes are the norms rather than the exception in the contemporary world, it is therefore necessary that the Youth Policy be reviewed periodically (every three years).