

Murang'a County Brief on A Review of Youth Employment Programmes



County Government of Murang'a

Key Highlights

The employment of youth (15-34) is critical in achieving sustainable development. This county policy brief provides an overview of planned and implemented youth employment policies and programmes in Murang'a County during the period 2018-2022. The brief describes: the county youth demographic and labour market indicators; youth employment programmes and interventions; county spending on youth initiatives; the constraints in implementing the youth programmes, and relevant policy recommendations. The key highlights are as follows:

- (i) The youth unemployment rate in the county is slightly higher (8.8%) than the national average at 8.5 per cent. The percentage of youth who are neither in education, employment or training is 8.1 per cent among males and 10.6 per cent among females.
- (ii) The county planned to implement several youth employment programmes, including skills training, entrepreneurship support, and initiatives to make training programmes work better. Specifically, among other targets, the county planned to train 200,000 youth on short courses aimed at imparting entrepreneurial skills; provide capitation grants to youth polytechnics; and organize 15 sports competitions. Regarding these plans, achievements included training of 26,583 youth, provision of capitation grants to 65 youth polytechnics, and organization of 8 (out of the targeted 15) sporting competitions.
- (iii) Only a few interventions targeting youth employment were implemented as planned. Some of the factors that affected seamless implementation included: fragmentation of programme interventions; inadequate financial resources; low absorption of available financial resources; and little room for effective monitoring, evaluation, and learning owing to inadequate comprehensive and/or accessible information on the implementation status of most youth employment programmes. In addition, the county did not plan for comprehensive programmes¹, yet these are known to have better outcomes.
- (iv) Some of the key recommendations emanating from the assessment include the need to: enhance availability of financial resources by strengthening collaboration with other actors and improving budget absorption; design and implement comprehensive programmes that have multifaceted interventions such as those that combine skills training, internship and job placement services; and enhance monitoring, evaluation and learning activities by, for example, adhering to the Guidelines for the Preparation of the County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs), where a comprehensive reporting of the performance review of the previous CIDP period is expected.²

County Youth Demographics and Labour Market Indicators

Murang'a County had a population of 1,056,640 people with a population density of 419 per square km as at 2019 (Table 1). The youth were estimated at 319,330 (50.6%) with a large share (85.4%) residing in rural areas. The overall poverty rate for the county was lower at 23.0 per cent as of 2016 and 26.7 per cent in 2021 compared to the national level of 36.1 per cent and 38.6 per cent, respectively. Youth poverty rate was at 23.8 per cent and 24.0 per cent in 2016 and 2021, respectively, comparing favourably with the national youth poverty rate at 28.9 per cent and 34.2 per cent in 2016 and 2021, respectively. Notable improvements were observed with the proportion of stunted children decreasing from 19.3 per cent in 2014 to 10.1 per cent in 2022, which is lower than the national average of 17.6 per cent. Reducing stunting levels is crucial in promoting optimal cognitive and psychomotor development of children, resulting in better human capital development that boosts their labour force participation and productivity in the subsequent years.

Table 1: County and national demographics and economic performance indicators

	County	National
Population (KNBS, 2019)	1,056,640	47,564,296
Population Density (km ²)	419	82
Male	523,940 (49.6%)	23,548,056 (49.5%)
Female	532,669 (50.4%)	24,014,716 (50.5%)
Intersex	31 (0.003%)	1,524 (0.003%)
Youth 15-34 years (%)	319,330 (30.0%)	17,009,230 (36.1%)
Male youth	161,550 (50.6%)	8,237,120 (48.4%)
Female youth	157,780 (49.4%)	8,771,410 (51.6%)
Persons with disability (%)	3.7	2.2
Population living in rural areas (%)	85.4	63.3
School going age (4-22 years) (%)	38.8	46.0
Overall Poverty (2015/2016) (%)	23.0	36.1
Overall Poverty 2021 (%)	26.7	38.6
Youth Poverty (2015/2016) (%)	23.8	28.9
Youth Poverty 2021 (%)	24.0	34.2
Stunted children (KDHS 2014)	19.3	26
Stunted children (KDHS 2022)	10.1	17.6
Gross County Product (Ksh million) 2022	247,592	2.0% of total GDP

Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (Various)

The youth unemployment rate in the county is slightly higher (8.8%) than the national average, which stands at 8.5 per cent as indicated in Table 2. More males than female youths are unemployed and most of the unemployed youth live in urban areas. The labour force participation rate stands at 61.7 per cent, which is higher than the national average of 55.7 per cent. For the employed youths, a significant share (61.7%) are engaged as contributing family workers and own account workers, which are characterized by informal working arrangements, low productivity, and inadequate earnings.

Table 2: A review of labour market indicators for the youth

	Level	Total	Male	Female	Urban	Rural
Labour force participation rate	County	61.7	60.8	60.8	63.2	61.5
	National	55.7	57.1	54.4	55.3	56.0
Youth employment to population ratio	County	56.3	55.5	57.0	57.5	60.1
	National	51.0	51.1	50.9	49.0	52.2
Youth Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)	County	9.3	8.1	10.6	16.8	8.2
	National	15.5	13.3	17.6	24.1	11.4
Youth unemployment	County	8.8	11.4	6.1	8.9	8.8
	National	8.5	10.6	6.4	11.5	11.5
Share of contributing family workers and own account workers	County	61.7	49.2	74.2	41.0	65.3
	National	65.7	54.8	76.0	39.9	79.8

Source of data: 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census

Youth Employment Programmes and Interventions in Murang'a County

Proposed youth employment programmes by the County Government

During the second generation CIDP, the county envisioned improving youth employability. Table 3 presents a summary of planned youth employment programmes by the county government and the achievements during the review period. The planned projects included initiatives aimed at: (i) making the labour market work better such as provision of employment opportunities for the youth through direct labour engagement in public projects and establishment of an industrial park at Kenol; and (ii) entrepreneurship support programmes such as supporting inclusion of youth and women in agribusiness and access to entrepreneurship funds such as the Youth Fund; (iii) skills training such as the planned training of youth on short courses and employment of youth polytechnic instructors; and (iv) making training programmes work better such as procurement of tools and equipment for all public youth polytechnics in all the wards and identification and mentoring of talented youths.

The county did not plan to implement comprehensive programmes but implemented other related interventions that would empower and create jobs for the youth, including: promotion of sports among youths through talent identification, upgrading of sports stadia and facilitation of sports persons in sports events, supply of sports equipment and tools, talent academy, and establishment of a cultural studio for nurturing and development of talents, like in music, dance and drama.

Table 3: Status on implementation of youth programmes by the County Government

Category	Planned activities 2018-2022	Achievements
Making the labour market work better	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of employment opportunities for the youth through, for example, engaging direct labour in projects. Increase the number of private investments in industrial development by 5 to increase youth employment in the industries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged 1,200 youths in direct labour (construction of MCC, ICU, Mumbi and Ihura stadium).
Entrepreneurship support programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of employment opportunities for the youth by supporting SMEs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trained and linked 20 youth owned SMEs on access to youth fund.
Skills training	<p>The county planned to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train 200,000 youth on short course. Employ 105 new youth polytechnic instructors. Train all the 145 instructors in pedagogy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trained and graduated 26,583 short course trainees, which was about 13.3 per cent of targeted trainings. 274 casual Instructors employed which met the target but were temporary rather than permanent trainers.
Making training programmes work better	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 per cent provision of capitation for regular trainees in all public Youth Polytechnics (YPs). Produce quality assessment reports for all the 65 Youth Polytechnics. Organize 15 co-curricular competitions in 5 years. 100 per cent provision of tools and equipment in all the YPs. Improve infrastructure to 100 per cent. Provision of adequate training materials from 40 per cent to 100 per cent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 65 vocational training colleges (VTCs) received capitation from the national government. 8,250 regular trainees have graduated. No reporting on production of quality assessment reports. The sector held 8 co-curricular activities across the county (about 53 per cent achievement) against the target of 15. No information available on provision of tools, improvement of infrastructure, and provision of training materials. <p>Other achievements (not targeted) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five new VTCs started. Renovation and rehabilitation of 36 VTCs to improve the training environment.
Comprehensive approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comprehensive programme planned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable
Other youth programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade/construct and equipment provided for 5 stadia. Facilitate participation of 1,000 sportspersons in the County, National and International sports events. Establish 16 antidoping clinics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stadia development at Ihura Stadium and Mumbi Stadium entailed construction of a perimeter wall, gate installation, installation of pop-up irrigation system and levelling of the football pitch. Organized Under-18 Cricket Tournament at Kimorori playground, Taekwondo Youth Tournament at Kiharu grounds, Cross Country County Championship at Gakoigo stadium, and KICOSCA games that produced and presented a national and an international team. Sports Equipment and Teams Kitting; assorted equipment distributed to 400 football teams, and assorted equipment issuance to 50 volleyball teams.

Source: CIDP 2018-2022 and CIDP 2023-2027

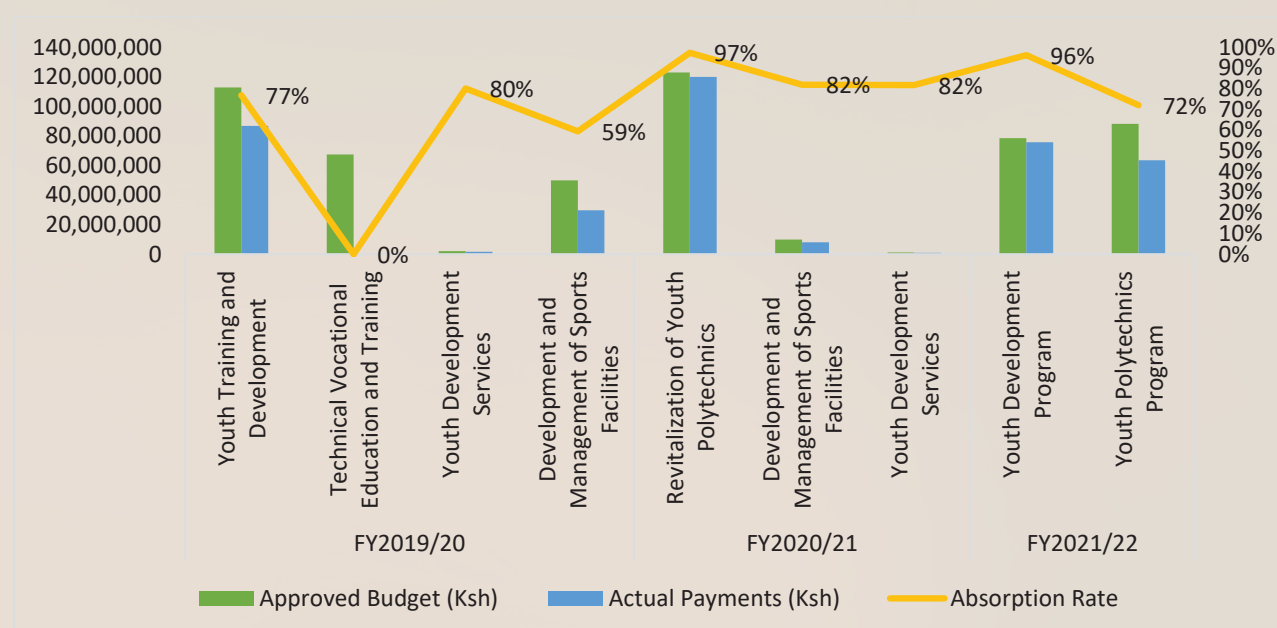
In tracking progress of the planned activities, a review of the second generation CIDP reveals that some of the planned activities were implemented while others were not. As an example, the county reported achievement attained in entrepreneurship support where it supported youth-owned SMEs on access to the youth fund. Further, to create employment opportunities for the youth, the county engaged 1,200 youths in direct labour (construction of Mumbi and Ihura stadiums). The targets whose progress was not reported include the status on participation of 1,000 sportspersons in the County, National and International sports events and the establishment of 16 antidoping clinics, among others. Although not planned in the second generation CIDP, the county trained 800 youth on access to government procurement opportunities (AGPO). This is an indication of a weak link between planned strategic priorities and the budgeting framework.

County Spending on Youth Initiatives (2019/20-2021/22)

In 2019/20 and 2021/22, Murang'a County government allocated financial resources towards programmes aimed at skills training. These programmes included youth development services, vocational and technical training programmes, and sports management services. There was no budget allocated to other significant sub-programmes such as comprehensive programmes, entrepreneurship programmes, programmes aimed at making the labour market work better and programmes aimed at making training work better.

Over the years, youth programmes have witnessed a decline in budgetary allocation. For example, budgetary allocation towards development and management of sports facilities declined from Ksh 50 million in 2020/21 to Ksh 8 million in 2021/22 (Figure 1). Fluctuations in budgetary allocation toward sub-programmes was also observed. As an example, allocation towards youth development services was Ksh 2.1 million in 2019/20, which dropped to Ksh 1.1 million in 2020/21 and later increased to Ksh 78 million in 2021/22. Further, there has been a fluctuation in the absorption rates, with the highest rate being 97 per cent for 2020/21 and in some instances, such as 2019/20, there was no expenditure of allocated funds towards technical vocational education and training. The low absorption rates point towards poor utilization of resources in youth programmes, which has implications on the success, effectiveness, and impact of these programmes on the target population.

Figure 1: County spending and absorption rates on youth sub-programmes (2019/20-2021/22)



Source: Office of the Controller of Budget

Constraints in Implementing Youth Programmes

There are various crosscutting factors that impact on effective implementation of youth employment programmes in Murang'a. These include:

- (i) Difficulty in targeting the most vulnerable youth to participate in the public projects aimed at creating direct jobs for the youth.
- (ii) Limited capacity and/or restricted mandate of some interventions, such as entrepreneurship support programmes to provide strong business support services such as mentorship after delivery of credit.
- (iii) Inadequate financial resources and low absorption of available resources. These set of challenges were linked to erratic resource flows and delayed disbursements from the National Treasury.
- (iv) Inadequate data and information to inform planning and effective monitoring, evaluation, and learning. This is linked to inadequate focus on the monitoring and evaluation function, including limited capacity to capture, record, collate and disseminate data in the departments and across the county.
- (v) Tedious application and approval processes for entrepreneurship support programmes. These programmes also face poor governance, delays and long waiting period before the funds are disbursed.
- (vi) Shortcoming in the design of youth employment programmes, which tend to focus on a single aspect such as skills training rather than planning for comprehensive programmes, which are known to have better outcomes.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The overall objective of the policy brief was to review the implementation of planned youth policies and programmes in Murang'a County. The county has made efforts towards implementation of several programmes, including in skills training by offering short courses to 26,583 youth to promote entrepreneurship and inclusion of youth and women in agribusiness. Further, the county implemented interventions that are aimed at making training programmes work better by supporting capitation grants and recruiting trainers. Despite these efforts towards implementing youth interventions in the various categories, there was no implementation of comprehensive initiatives by the county government. There are disparities in absorption rates across programmes during the period, which could be attributed to delayed disbursement of funds from the National Treasury and the effects of COVID-19, which led to reallocation of resources towards the sectors affected by the pandemic.

To ensure effective implementation of youth programmes, the county needs to:

- (i) Improve the reporting on the review of performance of sector programmes as envisaged by the Guidelines for Preparation of CIDPs. The present reporting is weak on information useful for monitoring, evaluation and learning on the implementation of planned YEPs. The sector reviews can be improved through:
 - (a) A greater focus on reviewing all planned interventions in the previous CIDP.
 - (b) Providing a review of the challenges, emerging issues, and lessons learnt for each YEP.
 - (c) Clearly highlighting the non-implemented programmes and the reasons for their non-implementation.
- (ii) Plan for and implement comprehensive programmes in the county to ensure a holistic approach in youth empowerment. There are opportunities to enhance synergies by implementing comprehensive programmes that, for instance, support trained youths in job placement and entrepreneurship support.
- iii) Create more partnerships with other actors, including the private sector and strengthen the existing ones to reduce the resource gaps associated with the implementation of YEPs.
- (iv) Improve budget absorption across all the sub-programmes and ensure consistency in reporting on the activities by creating standardized reporting procedures and formats to ensure consistency in the way sub-programmes report on their activities and financial performance.

Endnotes

- 1 Comprehensive programmes refer to those that encompass several types of interventions in one programme. An example is a programme that combines training, internship, and job placement. These programmes are known to have better outcomes than interventions that focus on single aspects of the youth employment problem. An example in Kenya is the KYEOP programme that has multifaceted services including skills training and job placement.
- 2 The Guidelines for Preparation of CIDPs include a chapter on performance review of the previous CIDP period. This section provides for a review of the performance of sector programmes, including challenges, emerging issues, and lessons learnt.

Acknowledgements

The County Youth Brief was prepared by Ms Violet Nyabaro, Mr Boaz Munga, Dr Eldah Onsomu, Ms Melap Sitati, Dr Judith Nguli, Mr Dancun Oguta, Ms Grace Waweru, Ms Mercy Jimmy, Ms Janet Chebwogen, Mr Charles Ndichu and Mr Collins Napareng. The entire process of preparing the brief was guided by the KIPPRA Executive Director, Dr Rose Ngugi. We are most grateful to the 47 County Governments for their input during the preparation of the Briefs; and Partnerships for Economic Policy (PEP) and Mastercard Foundation for financial support in the development of the County youth policy briefs under the Project on “An Empirical Review of Youth Employment Policies and their Impact in Kenya”

About KIPPRA Policy Briefs

KIPPRA Policy Briefs are aimed at a wide dissemination of the Institute’s policy research findings. The findings are expected to stimulate discussion and also build capacity in the public policy making process in Kenya.

KIPPRA acknowledges generous support from the Government of Kenya, and development partners who have continued to support the Institute’s activities over the years.

For More Information Contact:

Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis
Bishops Road, Bishops Garden Towers

P.O. Box 56445-00200, Nairobi

Tel: 2719933/4, Cell: 0736712724, 0724256078

Email: admin@kippra.or.ke

Website: <http://www.kippra.or.ke>

 @KIPPRAKenya