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## **Assessing Labour Productivity for West Pokot County**

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### **Overview of the County**

West Pokot County is a member of the North Rift Economic Bloc (NOREB) and is one of the six economic Blocs. The county is a semi-arid county that experiences between 30 and 84 per cent aridity. The county land size stands at 8,418 km<sup>2</sup>. It has five Sub-Counties namely: Kipkomo, Pokot Central, Pokot North, Pokot South, and West Pokot.

### **Key Highlights**

The productivity of West Pokot is characterized by the following:

- (i) The services sector has the largest share of gross value added. Livestock production is a key activity in agriculture sector, but marketed hides and skins are low implying livestock production is yet to be fully integrated into the leather value chain.
- (ii) The quality of labour requires efforts to address stunting, child poverty, enrolment, and teenage pregnancy to secure labour productivity. A high number of out-of-school children is hindering the early attainment of formal skills that are necessary to enhance productivity.
- (iii) The essential infrastructure requires interventions to improve access to electricity, rural roads, access to improved water and sanitation, housing, and financial inclusion.
- (iv) The agriculture sector is the highest employer while the industry sector is the lowest. Those in agriculture sector are employed as paid farm labour but there is potential for crop production. In industry sector, the majority are in construction while in manufacturing majority are in textile and wearing apparel. In the services sector, the wholesale and retail sectors dominate.
- (v) Labour productivity is high in industry, electricity, gas, steam, and air conditioning supply. In the services sector, transportation and storage dominate.

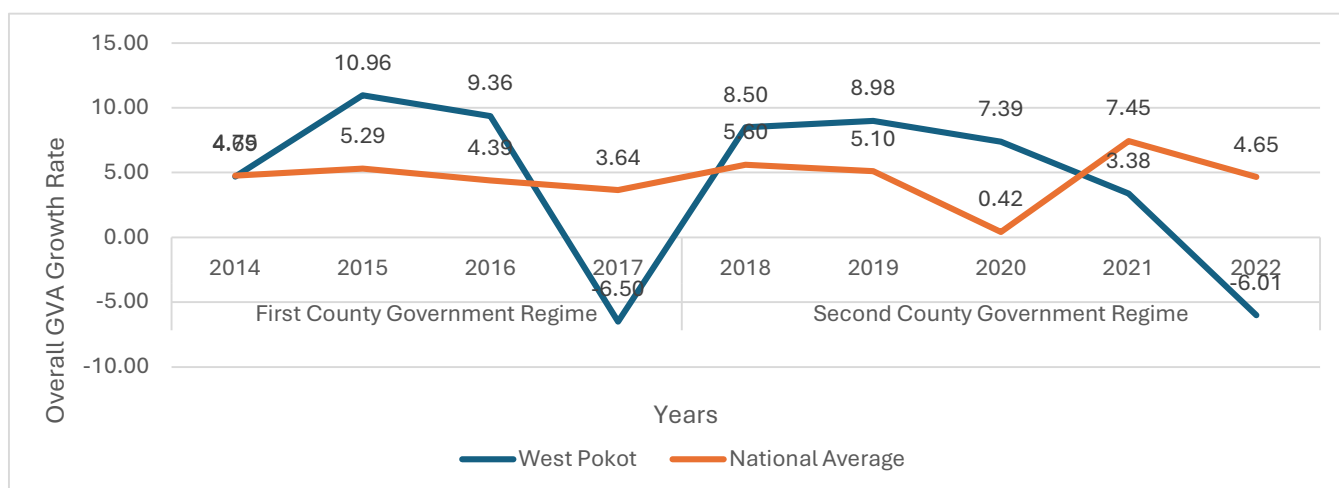
To enhance productivity:

- (i) Build climate resilience in the livestock sub-sector by increasing the uptake of weather-based insurance schemes for livestock production and creating awareness on the use of the information from the drought early warning systems.
- (ii) Integrate livestock production into the dairy and leather value chain.
- (iii) Create an enabling environment for private sector growth by enhancing access to electricity, rural roads, access to improved water and sanitation, housing, and financial inclusion.
- (iv) Improve the quality of labour by focusing on nutritional programmes to reduce stunting, social protection programmes that address child poverty, and encourage children enrolment and teenage mothers to go back to school. Also, encourage participation in the Adult and Continuing Education programme to improve the quality of the current labour force.

### West Pokot County Economic Performance

West Pokot County contributes on average 0.7 per cent to the National Gross Value added with an average GVA of Ksh 52,8157 million. The GVA per capita for West Pokot County is Ksh 85,018.49568 with an average population growth of 2.2 per cent and overall poverty levels at 61.4 per cent. West Pokot County has shown a steady growth in GVA with an average growth rate of 4.53 per cent from 2013-2022 which is slightly higher than the national average growth of 4.37 per cent. The highest growth rate was in 2015 and the lowest in 2017 (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: West Pokot County GVA growth rate**

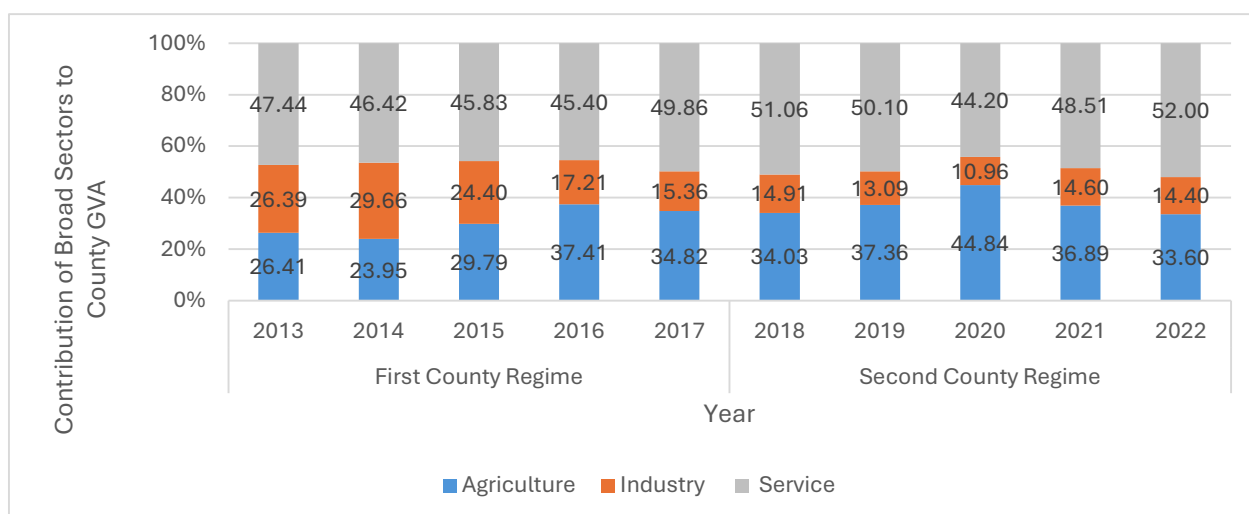


Data Source: KNBS 2023-Gross County Product

### Sectoral Analysis of GVA

The services sector is dominant in West Pokot County with an average contribution to GVA of 48.08 per cent. The agriculture sector is second, contributing an average of 33.91 per cent to the GVA while industry sector contributes about 18.10 per cent (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Contribution of broad sectors to West Pokot County GVA**

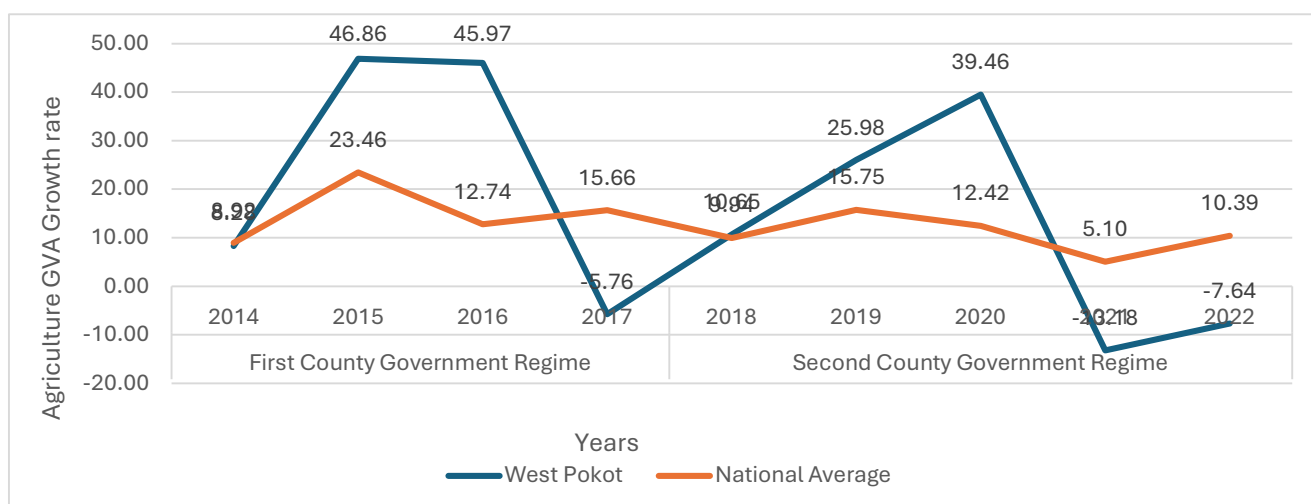


Data Source: KNBS 2023-Gross County Product

### Agriculture Sector

The average growth rate agriculture GVA in 2013-2022 is 16.74 per cent, above the national average of 12.71 per cent. Despite this, the growth rate showed an erratic trend with sharp growth rates and deep declines. The highest growth rate was in 2015 at 46.86 per cent while there was contraction 2017 (-5.76%) and 2021 (-13.18%) due to drought episodes (Figure 3).

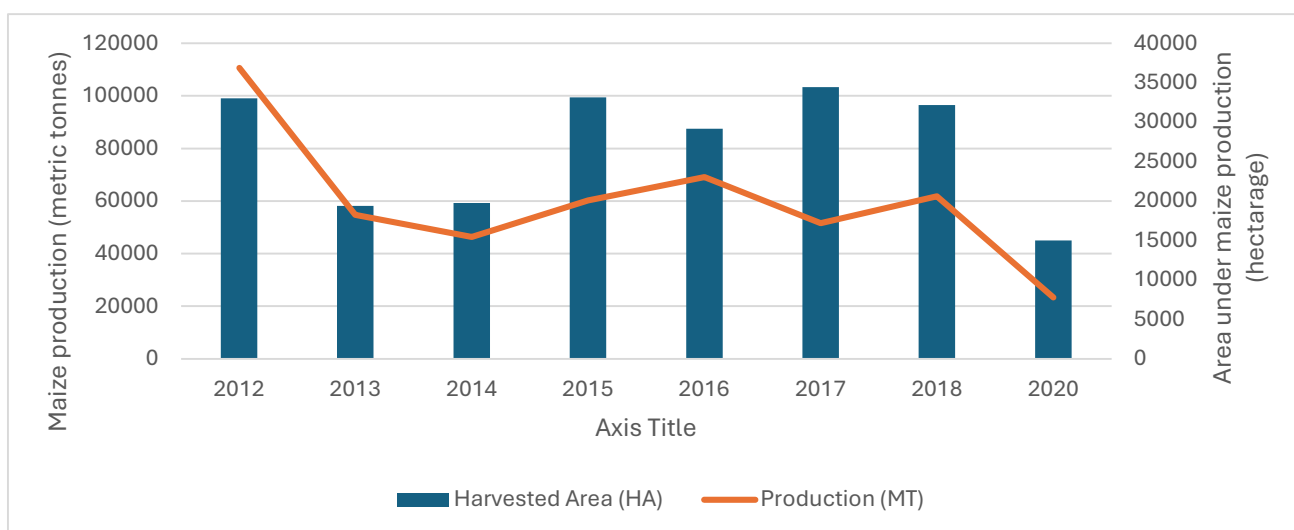
**Figure 3: West Pokot County agriculture GVA growth rate**



Data Source: KNBS 2023-Gross County Product

Agro-pastoralism is widely practiced in West Pokot, with maize, the main staple food in the country being the main food crop produced the county. Both maize production and area under maize production have been fluctuating over the years as shown in Figure 4.

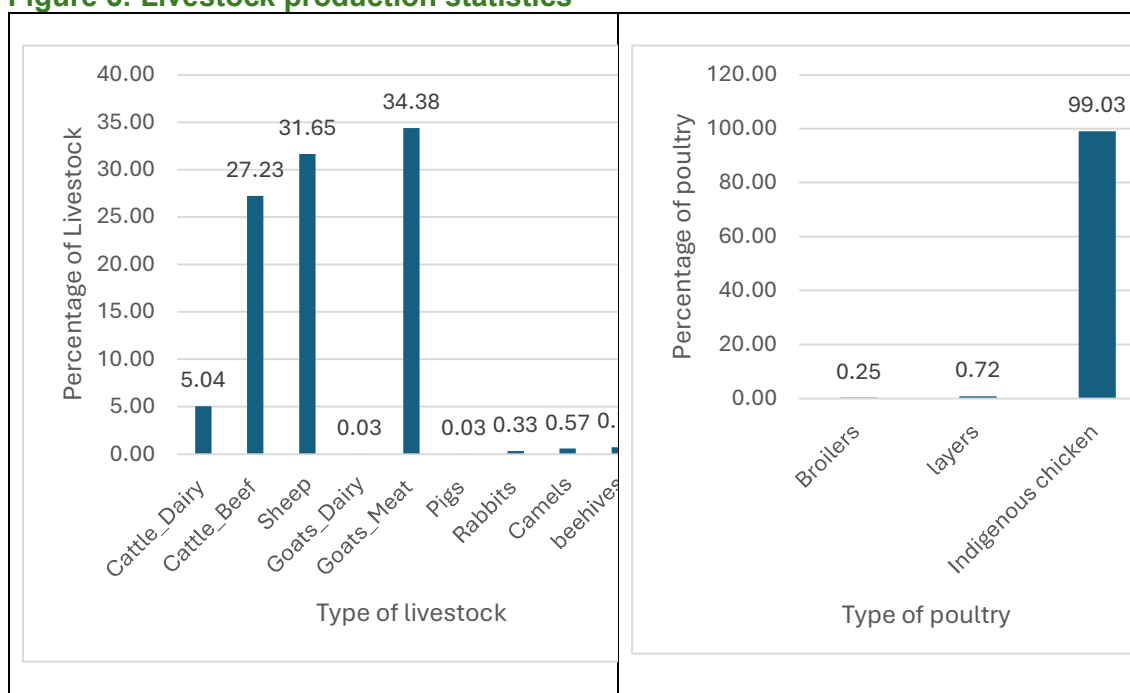
**Figure 4 : Maize production and area of maize harvested**

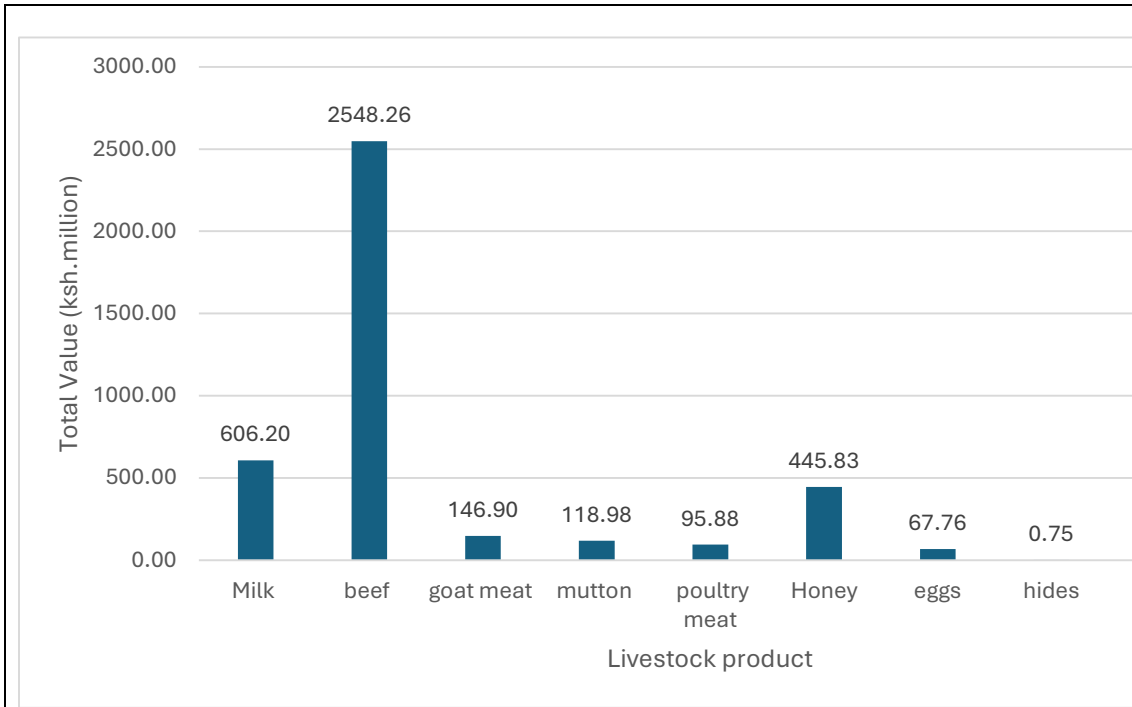


Data source: National Information Platform for Food and Nutrition (NIPFN)

Livestock production is a key economic activity in the county practiced by both agro-pastoralists and pastoralists. The county has high number of beef cattle, sheep, and meat goats in the country. Meat goats are the most popular livestock kept, although the number of poultry farming is comparatively low in the county, indigenous chicken is more popular. Intensive dairy production is practiced in the highland parts of the county. Milk and beef, products of cattle farming have the highest value in the county. Although West Pokot County has significant livestock resources the value of marketed hides and skins is extremely low, as livestock production is yet to be fully integrated into the leather value chain. Additionally, climate change through frequent and severe droughts is also inhibiting the realization of full potential in livestock production (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Livestock production statistics**



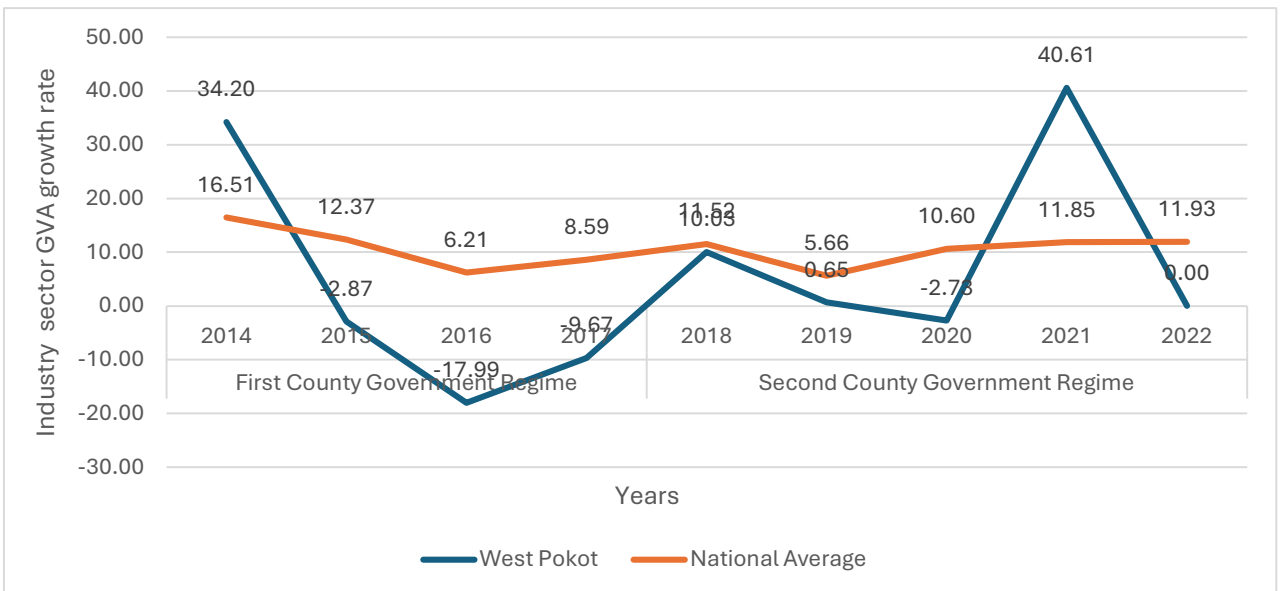


Data source: National Information Platform for Food and Nutrition (NIPFN)

### Industry Sector GVA

The average growth rate of industry sector is 5.80 per cent which is below the national average of 10.58 per cent (Figure 6).

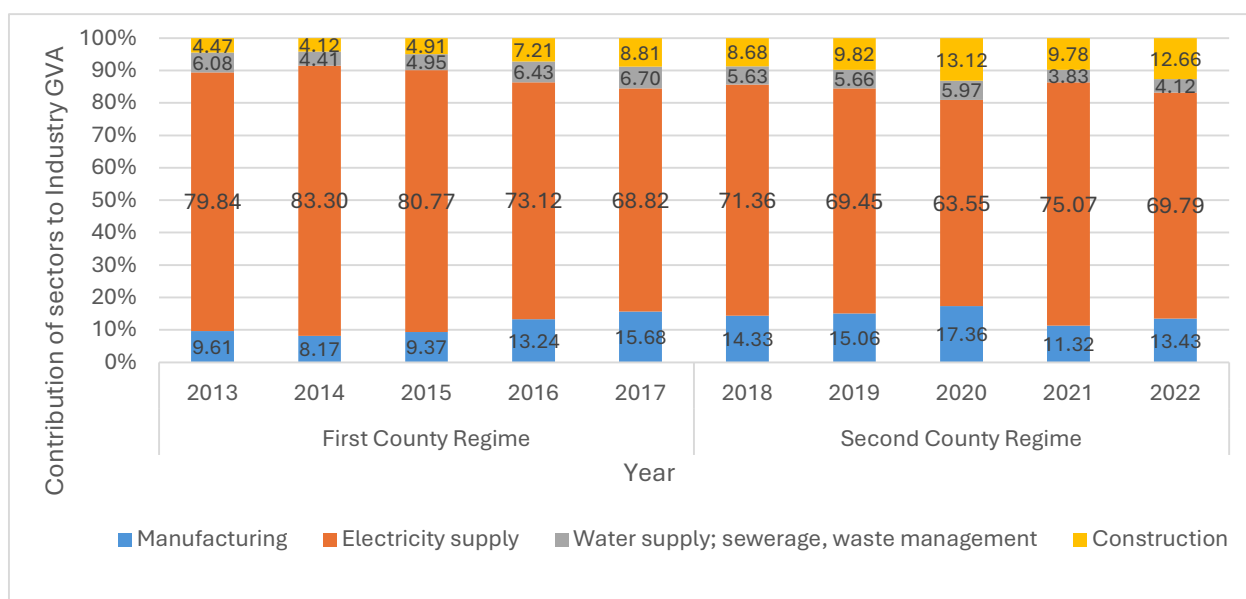
Figure 6: West Pokot County industry sector GVA growth rate



Data Source: KNBS 2023-Gross County Product

Electric Supply is another important sector in West Pokot County as it dominates the industry sector as shown in the Figure 7. Notably the county hosts the Turkwel Hydroelectric Power Station.

**Figure 7: Contribution of industry sub-sector to industry GVA**

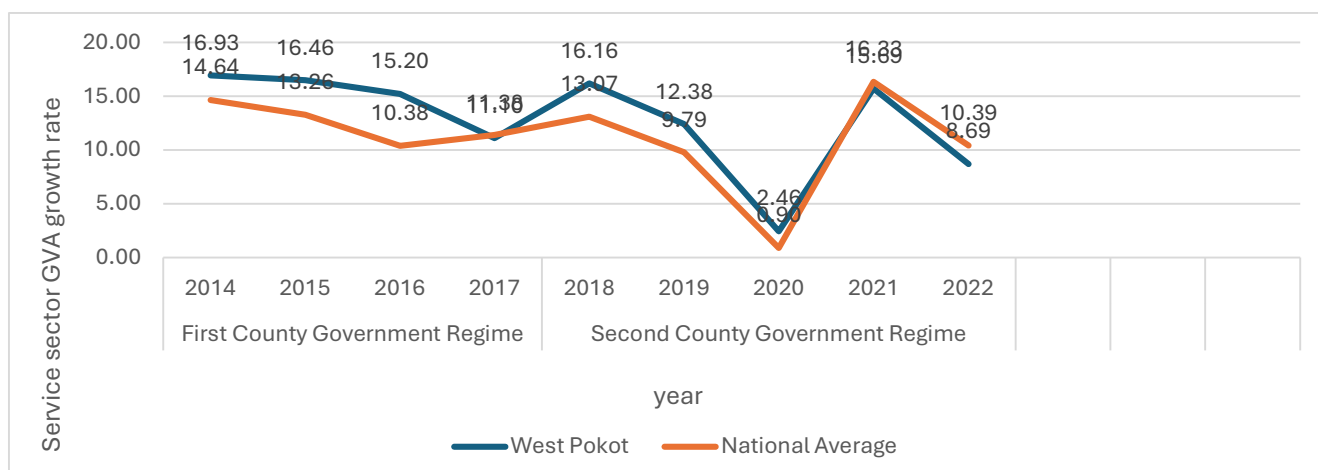


Data Source: KNBS 2023-Gross County Product

### Services Sector

The average service sector growth rate is 9.54 per cent, which is below the national average of 11.13 per cent (Figure 8).

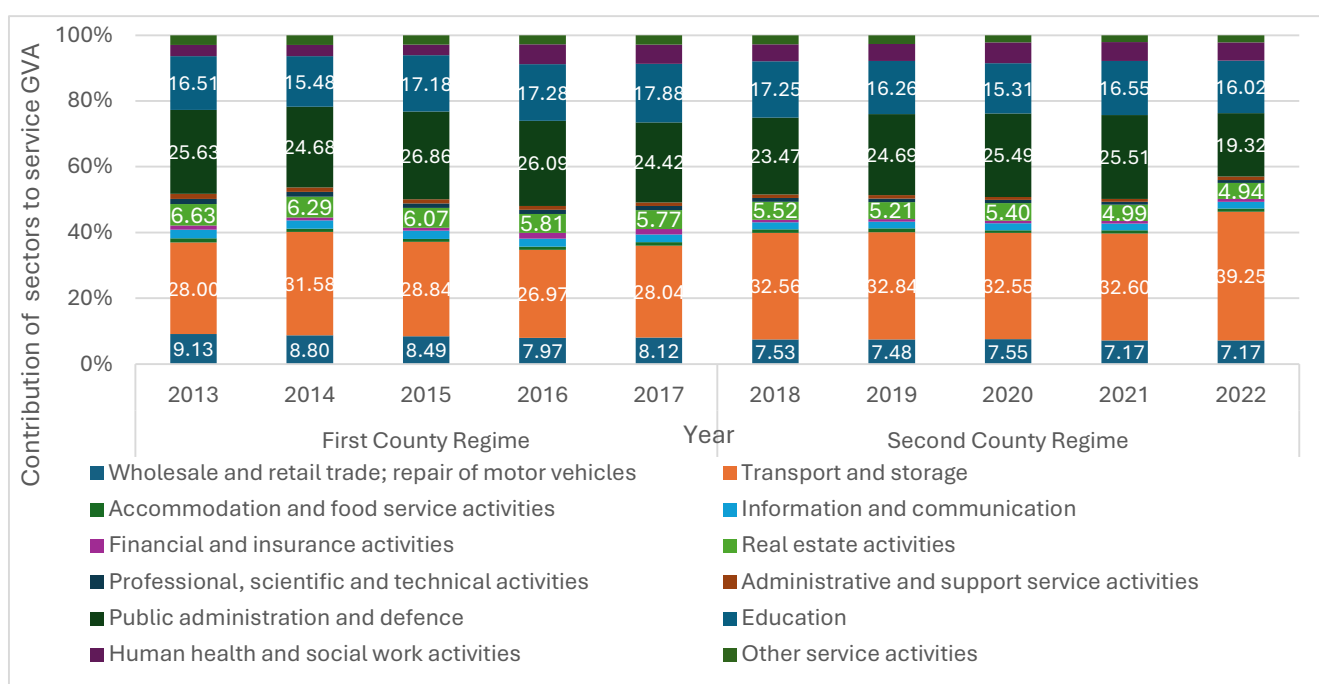
**Figure 8: West Pokot County services sector GVA growth rate**



Data Source: KNBS 2023-Gross County Product

The transportation and storage sector dominates the services sector with the highest contribution to services sector GVA at 31.32 per cent. The public administration and defence sub-sector is the second highest contributor to services sector GVA at 24.62 per cent. The education sub-sector is third at an average of 16.57 per cent (Figure 9).

**Figure 9: Contribution of sub-sectors to service sector GVA**



Data Source: KNBS 2023-Gross County Product

### Quantity and quality of labour force in West Pokot County

West Pokot County has a total of 285,874 working-age population is low as it constitutes 46.02 per cent of the county population. Most of the working-age population is youthful (18-34 years) at 54.09 per cent (Table 1).

**Table 1: Distribution of the working-age population by age categories**

Working age population	Male	Female	Total	Percentage of total working age population (%)
15-17	22,980	21,390	44,370	15.52
18-24	36,822	40,162	76,984	26.93
25-34	37,287	40,351	77,638	27.16
35-64	43,109	43,773	86,882	30.39
<b>Total</b>	<b>140,198</b>	<b>145,676</b>	<b>285,874</b>	

Data Source: KNBS (2019), Kenya Population and Health Census - KPHC 2019

Less than half of the population in West Pokot sub-counties are persons of the working age categories. West Pokot sub-county has the highest percentage of working-age persons at 49.13 per cent (Table 2).

**Table 2: Sub-County distribution of working age population by age category**

Sub- County	Total population	Working age population categories				Working age population (15-64) as a percentage of the total sub-county population
		15-17	18 –24	25 –34	35-64	
Kipkomo	102,626	7,798 (16.43)	13,135 (27.68)	11,753 (24.77)	14,766 (31.12)	47,452 (46.24)
Pokot Central	119,013	8,092 (15.23)	13,987 (26.32)	14,512 (27.31)	16,552 (31.15)	53,143 (44.65)
Pokot North	134,482	8,573 (14.95)	15,162 (26.44)	16,754 (29.22)	16,851 (29.39)	57,340 (42.64)
Pokot South	80,659	6,514 (17.46)	10,426 (27.94)	9,391 (25.17)	10,981 (29.43)	37,312 (46.26)
West Pokot	184,446	13,393 (14.78)	24,274 (26.78)	25,228 (27.84)	27,732 (30.60)	90,627 (49.13)

Data Source: KNBS (2019), Kenya Population and Health Census - KPHC 2019

Most of the socioeconomic indicators that affect the quality of labour in West Pokot County perform below the national average. Interventions are required to improve education and health indicators that will improve the quality of labour (Table 3).

**Table 3: Human capital indicators**

Human capital indicators	County	National average
Literacy rate	61.50	78.41
Pre-primary net enrolment rate (2019)	46.18	67.51
Primary school net enrolment rate (2020)	86.40	77.72
Secondary school net enrolment rate (2020)	52.30	54.18
Average years of schooling (2014)	6.30	7.78
Percentage of children 12-23 months fully vaccinated (%)	31.20	74.97
Percentage of stunted children	33.5	19.75
Percentage of teenage pregnancy	36.30	15.79
Primary to secondary transition rates (2020)	82.00	86.13
Pupil-teacher ratio (primary school)	29.00	28.28
Food poverty head count (%)	46.80	33.63
Child poverty head count (%)	59.80	42.67

Source: KNBS (2022), Kenya Demographic and Health Survey - KDHS 2022; KNBS (2019), Kenya Population and Health Census - KPHC 2019; Ministry of Education (2020; 2021 Basic Education Statistical Booklet; KNBS 2021- Kenya Poverty Report

For West Pokot County majority of the essential infrastructure and capital indicators that support production of county output performed lower than the national averages as indicated in Table 4. There is a need for interventions to improve the quality and quantity of essential infrastructure to enable the county to exploit its latent resources.



**Table 4: Essential Infrastructure and capital indicators**

Essential infrastructure indicators	County	National average
Percentage of households with access to electricity (2019 Census)	11.80	38.52
Distribution of population using the internet (2019 census)	8.10	18.69
Rural Access Index (2018)	43.34	63.72
Access to improved sanitation (2018)	27.00	59.04
Access to improved water (2018)	37.20	65.33
Financial inclusion level (2021)	57.70	81.01
The proportion of primary schools with Internet	19.95	27.65
Proportion of secondary schools with functional internet	33.10	35.13
Percentage of households by housing material composite-finished materials(adequate) (2019)	25.16	51.71
Percentage of households using bank usage (overall)	26.30	38.18
Percentage of households using mobile money	54.50	78.58

Data Sources: KRB 2018, KPHC 2019, FinAccess 2021, KIHBS 2015/16

### County Labour Statistics

Employment to population ratio at 63.18 per cent. Most of those working is the youth (18-34 years) at about 34.35 per cent while those 35-64 at 25.60 per cent. The percentage of the employed by gender is 37.59 for male and 40.01 for female. The unemployment rate is at 6.60 per cent with unemployment and slightly higher for the youth (18-34 years) at 4.08 per cent.

There is a high percentage of persons 5-17 years old working at 22.90 per cent. The cultural practices may explain this as children and teenagers in pastoral communities play a key role in livestock production grazing the livestock. Although this is critical in helping them attain indigenous knowledge that is critical for the sustenance of pastoralism it is at the expense of early attainment of formal skills that are needed for alternative livelihoods and industrial transformation of counties. Climate change through frequent drought that forces communities to migrate in search of resources and incidences of insecurity that disrupt learning activities are also a cause of the high out-of-school children who are engaged in economic activities.

The inactivity rates are higher for the youth category (15-24 years) at 23.73 per cent which is expected as they are pursuing schooling while low for the persons of prime age (25-64 years) at 5.81 per cent (Table 5).

**Table 2: West Pokot County employment statistics**

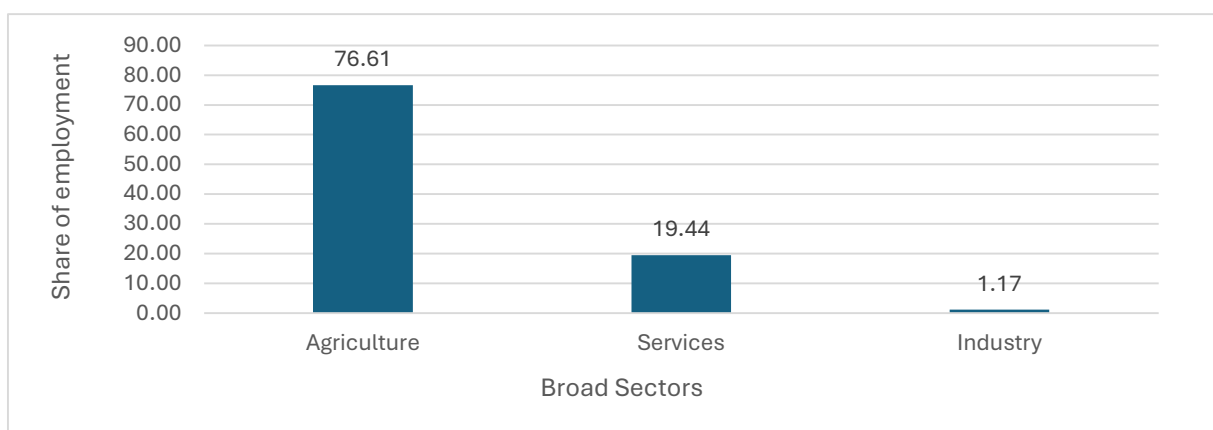
Employment statistics	Youth	Non-youth
Employment to population ratio (%)	34.35	25.60
Unemployment rate	4.08	2.11
Percentage of persons 5–17 years old working	22.90	-
Inactivity rate	23.73	5.81

Data Source: KNBS (2019), Kenya Population and Health Census - KPHC 2019

### Sectoral employment

The agriculture sector is the highest employer in West Pokot County at 76.61 per cent followed by the services sector at 19.44 per cent. The industry sector is third at 1.17 per cent (Figure 10).

**Figure 10: Percentage share of employment in the broad sectors**

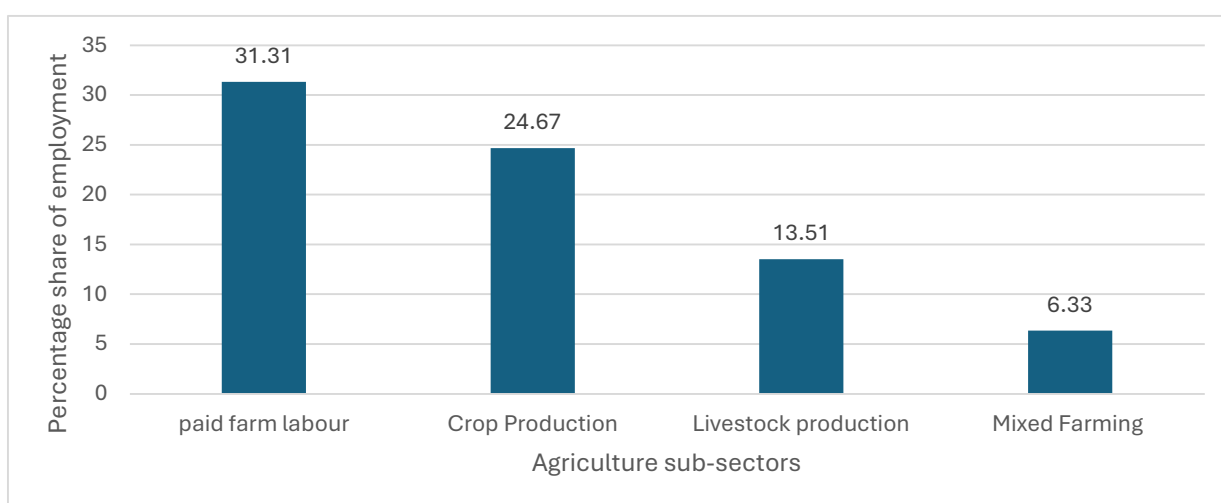


*Data Source: KNBS 2021- Kenya Continuous Household Survey*

### **Agriculture Sector Employment**

In agriculture sector, paid farm labour and crop production dominate the share of employment among the sub-sectors (Figure 11).

**Figure 11: Percentage share of employment in agriculture sub-sectors**

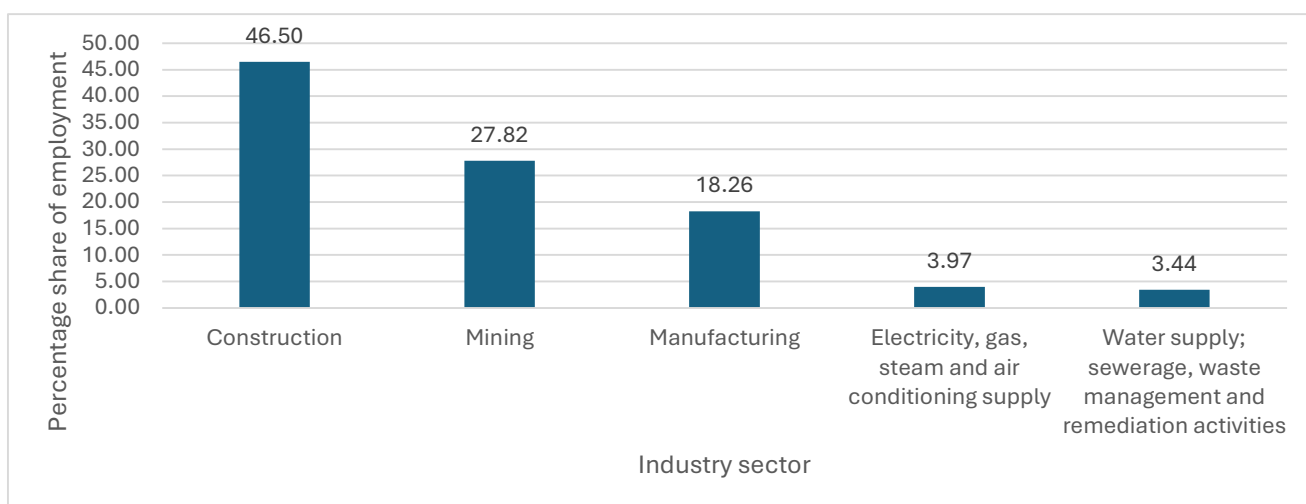


*Data Source: KNBS 2021- Kenya Continuous Household Survey*

### **Industry Sector Employment**

The majority of those working in the industry sector are in construction which is dominated by the construction of buildings. Mining also has a high share of employment, and it involves mining of non-ferrous metals which are important economic minerals. In West Pokot, this is artisanal gold and gemstone mining (Figure 12).

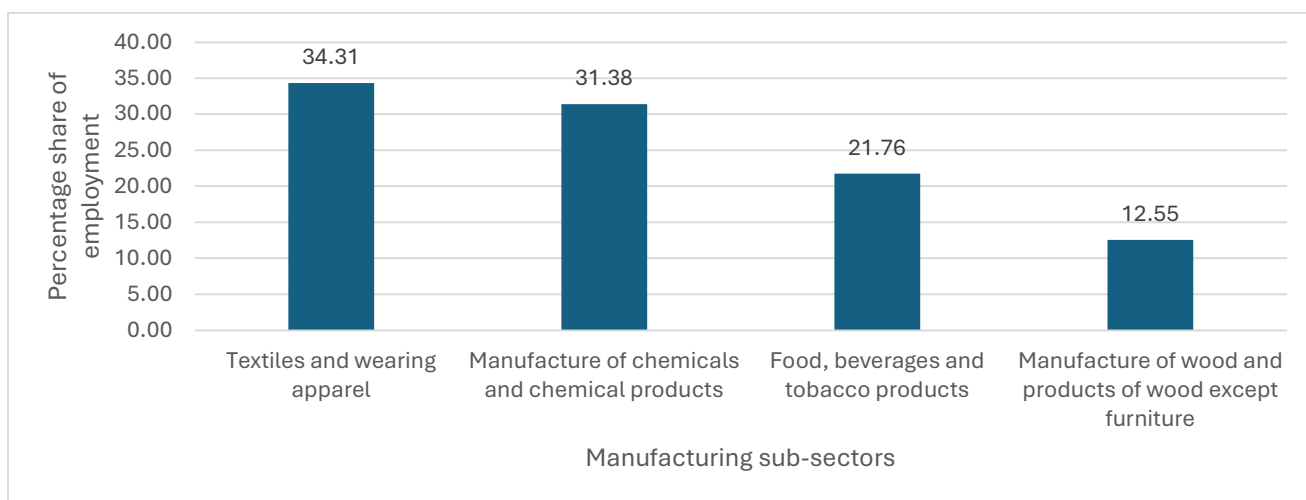
**Figure 12: Percentage share of employment in the industry sectors**



*Data Source: KNBS 2021- Kenya Continuous Household Survey*

A disaggregation of employment in manufacturing shows that the majority of those employed in the sector, work in low-technology manufacturing sub-sectors such as textile and chemical industries (Figure 13).

**Figure 13: Percentage share of employment in manufacturing sub-sectors**

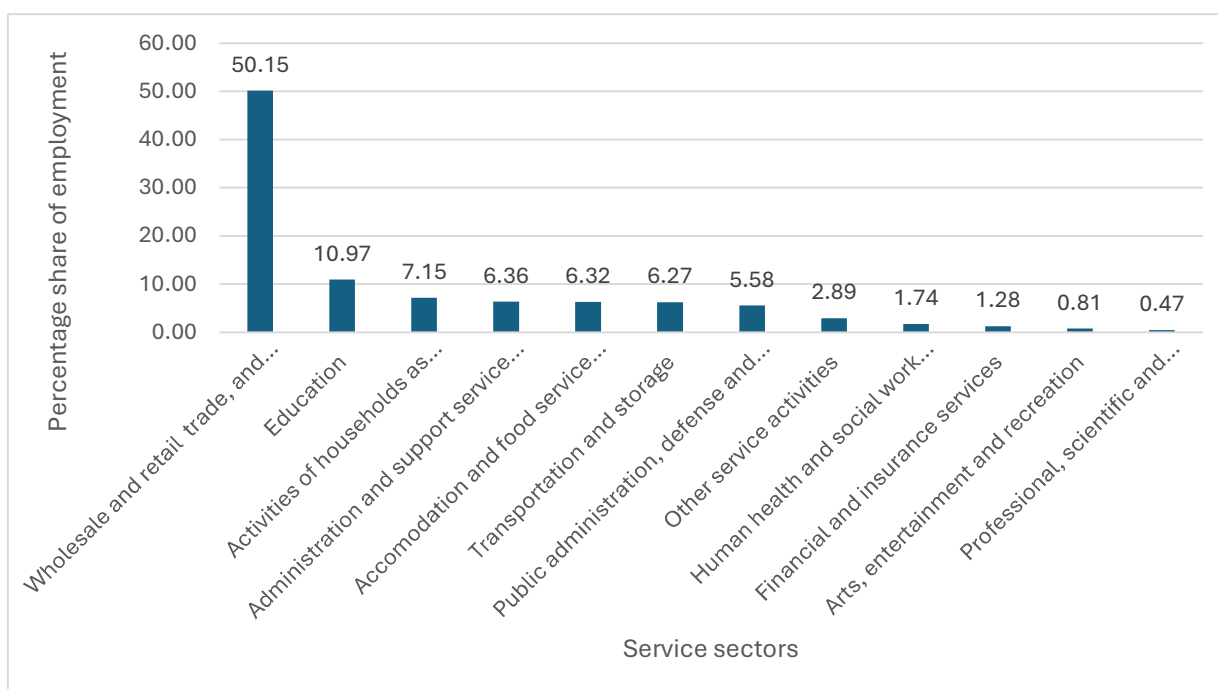


*Data Source: KNBS 2021- Kenya Continuous Household Survey*

### Services Sector Employment

The majority of those working in the service sector are in wholesale and retail trade (Figure 14). Retail and wholesale industries represent the intermediate steps in the distribution of merchandise between producers and consumers of goods. Despite the higher share of employment in the service sector, the output of the sector remains low with the sector having elevated levels of informality.

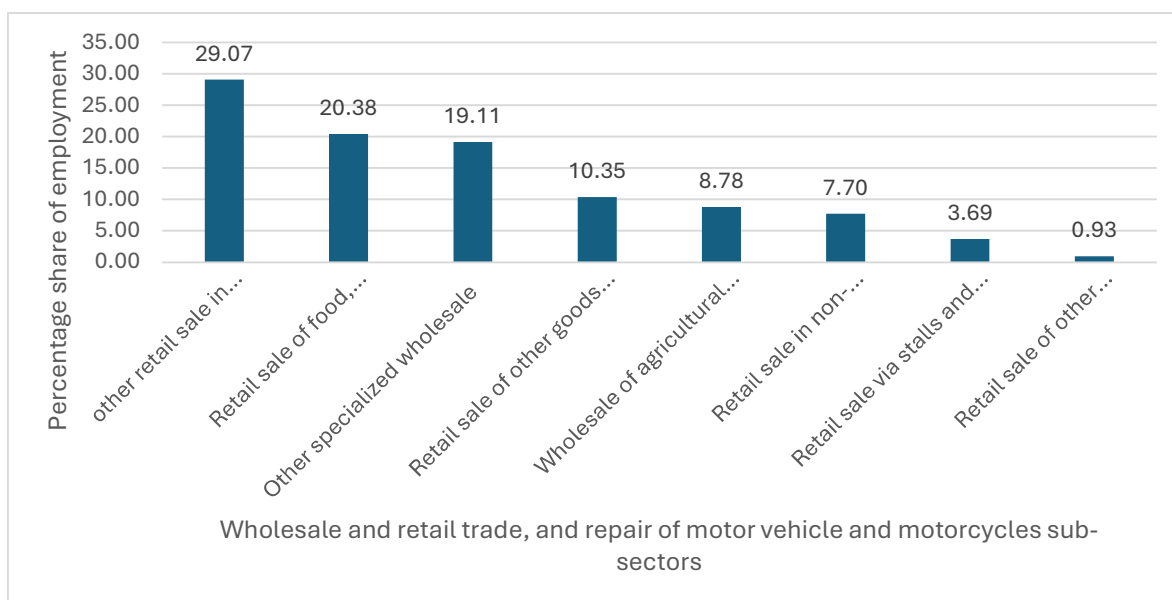
**Figure 14: Percentage share of employment in the service sector**



*Data Source: KNBS 2021- Kenya Continuous Household Survey*

In the wholesale and retail trade the majority work in other retail in specialized stores (Figure 15).

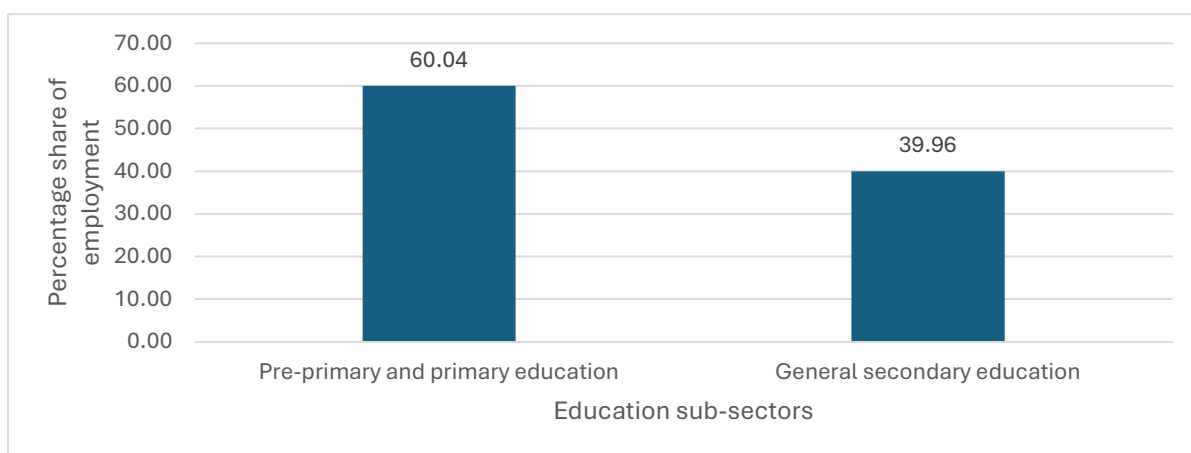
**Figure 15: Percentage of persons employed in the wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicle sub-sectors**



*Data Source: KNBS 2021- Kenya Continuous Household Survey*

In the education sector, the majority of those employed are in pre-primary and primary education (Figure 16).

**Figure 16 : Percentage share of employment in education sub-sectors**

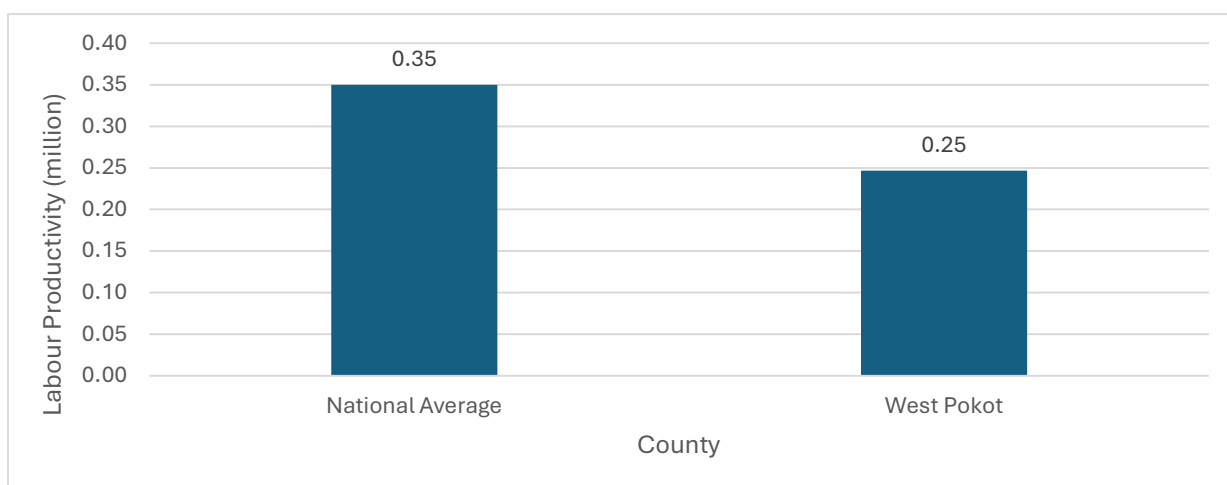


*Data Source: KNBS 2021- Kenya Continuous Household Survey*

### **Labour Productivity**

Labour productivity<sup>1</sup> for West Pokot County is below the national average labour productivity (Figure 17).

**Figure 17: Labour productivity ratios (million)**

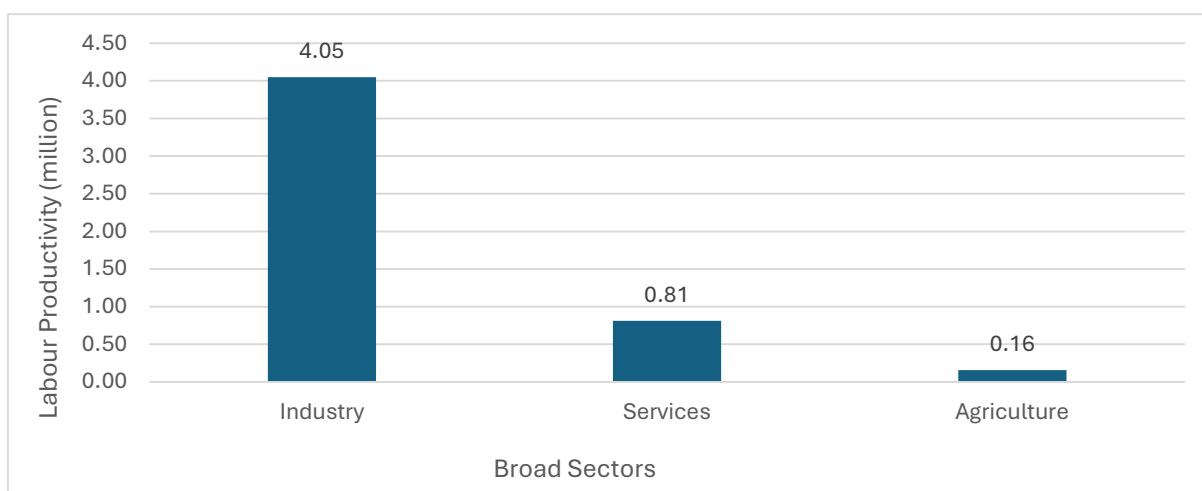


*Data Source: Author's computation using KNBS 2023-Gross County Product and KNBS 2021- Kenya Continuous Household Survey*

The industry sector has the highest productivity followed by the services sector while the agriculture sector has the least labour productivity among the broad sectors (Figure 18).

<sup>1</sup> The measure used is the apparent labour productivity measured as gross value added per person employed.

**Figure 18: Labour productivity by sectors**

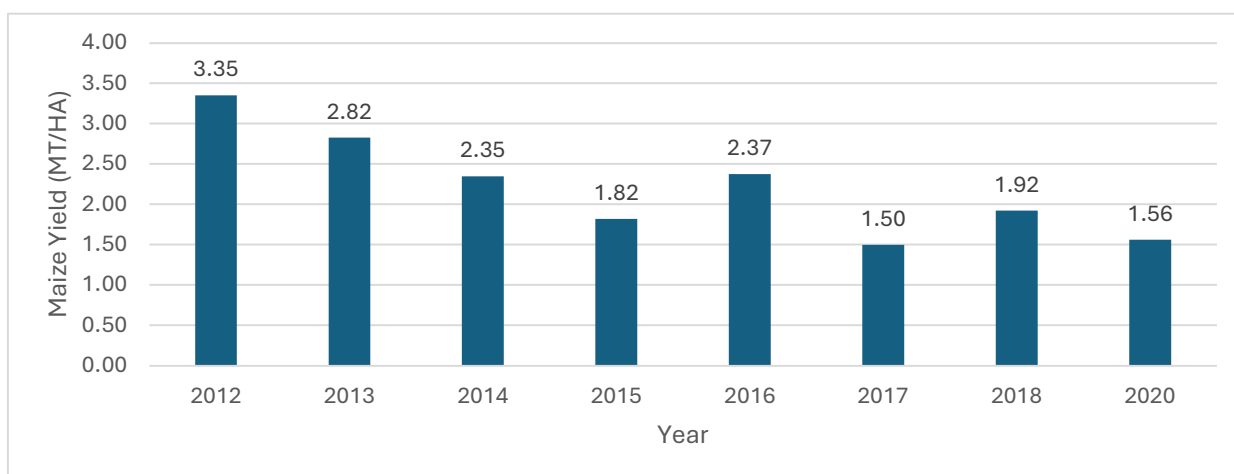


Data Source: Author's computation using KNBS 2023-Gross County Product and KNBS 2021- Kenya Continuous Household Survey

### Agriculture Productivity

Although maize productivity is higher in West Pokot compared with other ASAL counties at an average of 2.12 MT/HA, it has been declining over the years (Figure 19).

**Figure 18 : Maize yield (MT/HA)**

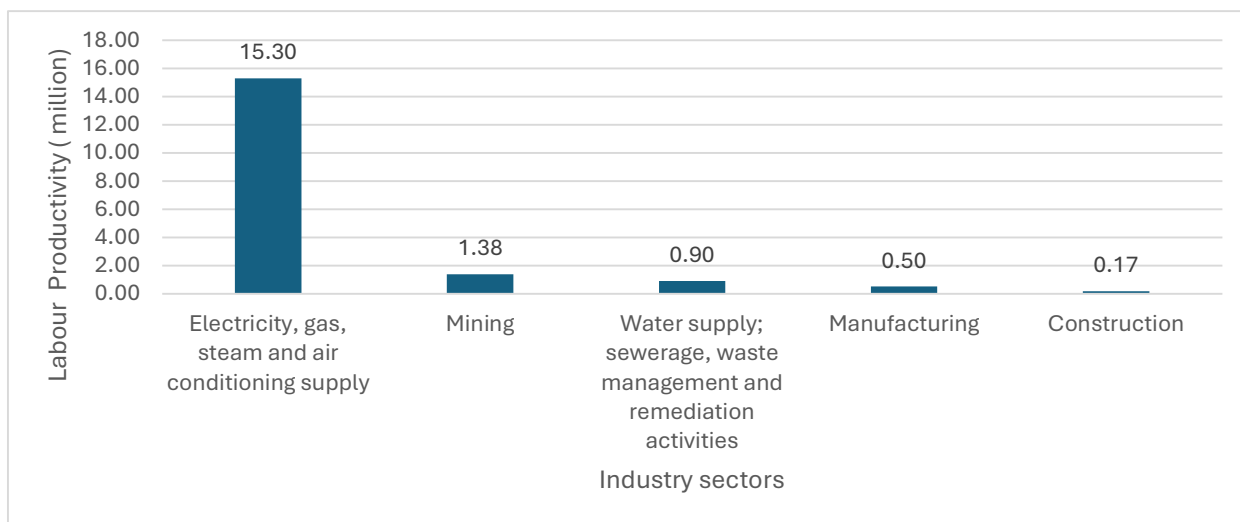


Data source: National Information Platform for Food and Nutrition (NIPFN)

### Industry Sector Labour Productivity

Electricity, gas, steam, and air conditioning supply and mining sub-sectors had the highest labour productivity in the industry sector (Figure 20).

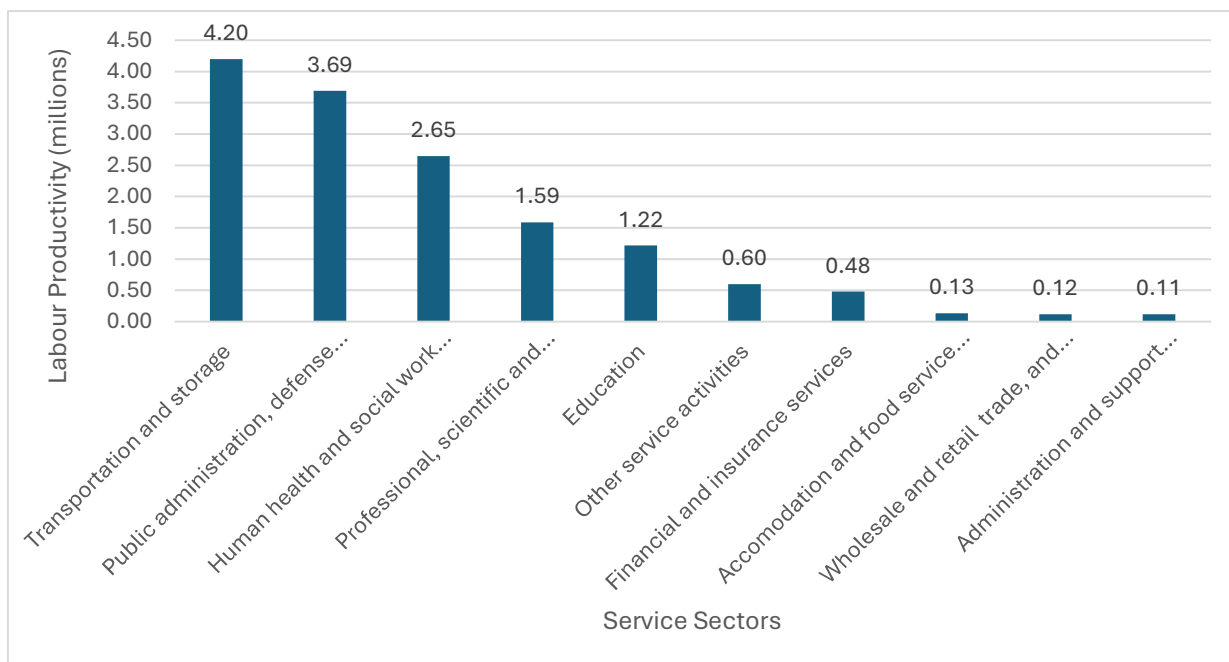
**Figure 20: Labour productivity by industry sectors**



*Data Source: Author's computation using KNBS 2023-Gross County Product and KNBS 2021- Kenya Continuous Household Survey*

The transportation and storage sub-sector had higher labour productivity when compared with other sub-sectors within the services sector (Figure 21).

**Figure 21: Labour productivity in services sub-sectors**



*Data Source: Author's computation using KNBS 2023-Gross County Product and KNBS 2021- Kenya Continuous Household Survey*

### Key Messages

- (i) The services sector has the largest share of county GVA while the share of industry has declined over time. Livestock production is a key activity in agriculture sector with cattle and goat for meat. Marketed hides and skins are low

implying livestock production is yet to be fully integrated into the leather value chain. In industry, electricity supply dominates while the transportation and storage sub-sector has the highest share in services.

- (ii) Several of the indicators of the quality of labour are lower than the national average. It is necessary to address stunting, child poverty, enrolment, and teenage pregnancy to secure labour productivity.
- (iii) Most of the essential infrastructure and capital indicators, which support the production of county output, performed lower than the national averages. There is a need for interventions to improve access to electricity, rural roads, access to improved water and sanitation, housing, and financial inclusion.
- (iv) There is a high percentage (22.90%) of persons 5–17 years old working. The high number of out-of-school children who are engaged in economic activities hinders the early attainment of formal skills that are necessary to enhance productivity.
- (v) The agriculture sector is the highest employer while industry sector is the lowest. Those in agriculture sector are employed as paid farm labour but there is potential for maize production. In industry sector, the majority are in construction while in manufacturing the majority are in textile and wearing apparel. In the services sector, the wholesale and retail sector dominate.
- (vi) Labour productivity is below the national average labour productivity. In industry, electricity, gas, steam, and air conditioning supply dominates the sector. In the services sector, transportation and storage dominate.

### Policy Recommendations

- (i) Build climate resilience in the livestock sub-sector by increasing the uptake of weather-based insurance schemes for livestock production through promoting the use of asset-backed insurance and subsidizing premiums for disadvantaged pastoralists. Create awareness of the use of the information from the drought early warning systems.
- (ii) Further, integrate livestock production into the leather value chain. This can be achieved by commercializing the supply of hides and skins by creating awareness among pastoralists on the value of hides and skins, increasing extension services to improve the quality of hides and skins, facilitating aggregation and pooled sales of hides and skins to increase producers' bargaining power. This is to go in tandem with efforts that would increase the number of leather processing facilities by providing incentives to local leather product manufacturers to establish tanneries in arid counties.
- (iii) Create an enabling environment for private sector growth by providing the necessary essential infrastructure including enhancing access to electricity, rural roads, access to improved water and sanitation, housing, and financial inclusion.
- (iv) Improve the quality of labour by focusing on nutritional programmes to reduce stunting, social protection programmes that address child poverty, and encourage children enrolment and teenage mothers to go back to school. Also, encourage participation in the Adult and Continuing Education programme to improve the quality of the current labour force.



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### About KIPPRA Policy Briefs

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