

## Laikipia County Brief: A Review of Youth Employment Programmes

### Key Highlights

The employment of youth (15-34 years) is critical in achieving sustainable development. This county policy brief provides an overview of planned and implemented youth employment policies and programmes in Laikipia County in the period 2018-2022. The brief describes: the county youth demographic and labour market indicators; youth employment programmes (YEPs) 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 Laikipia county is lower (7.5%) than the national average (8.5%).<sup>1</sup> The percentage of youth who are neither in education, employment or training is 9.4 per cent among males and 12.8 per cent among females.
- (ii) The county planned to implement skills training; entrepreneurship support programmes by training 6,250 youths on entrepreneurial skills set; make training programmes work better by holding 30 talent identification and nurturing events; among other interventions. The county did not plan for comprehensive approaches that have multifaceted interventions such as those that combine skills training, internship, and job placement services.
- (iii) There was partial and sometime non-implementation of planned interventions. The implementation of the YEPs was constrained by inadequate financial resources and unpredictable cash flows due to delayed disbursement from the National Treasury; and a weak monitoring, evaluation and learning system resulting in non-comprehensive reporting on the implementation status of most YEPs.
- (iv) Some of the key recommendations to enhance implementation of YEPs include the need to: ensure efficient monitoring, evaluation and learning by adhering to the Guidelines for the Preparation of the County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs) for comprehensive reporting of the performance review of the previous CIDP period<sup>2</sup>; enhance availability of financial resources by strengthening collaboration with other actors and improved budget absorption; and design and implement more comprehensive programmes<sup>3</sup> that have multifaceted interventions such as those that combine skills training, internship and job placement services.

### 1. County Youth Demographics and Labour Market Indicators

Laikipia County has a total population of 518,560 people with a population density of 55 per square km. The youth were estimated at 171,810 (Kenya Population and Housing Census, 2019). A large share of youth in the county reside in rural areas (70.6%). The overall poverty in the county was lower at 19.0 per cent and at 34.8 per cent in 2015/16 and 2021, respectively, compared to the national levels of 36.1 per cent and 38.6 per cent in same periods. Further, the youth poverty rate reduced from 39.5 per cent in 2015/16 to 31.1 per cent in 2021, while the national level increased from 28.9 per cent to 34.2 per cent. The proportion of stunted children decreased from 25.2 per cent in 2014 to 12.6 per cent in 2022, which is slightly lower than the national rate of 17.6 per cent. The high stunting rates in the county has implications on children's optimal cognitive and psychomotor development, human capital development and eventual labour force participation and productivity in the subsequent years.

The total unemployment rate is 7.5 per cent, which is below the national average of 8.5 per cent. Labour force participation rate is at 60.0 per cent, which is higher than the national average of 54.4 per cent and it is highest among men. Compared to the national average (65.7%), an estimated 62.6 per cent of the youth in Laikipia County were either contributing family workers or own account workers. This suggests that a significant share of the youth are engaged in informal jobs that are characterized by low productivity and inadequate earnings.

**Table 1: County youth demographics and economic performance indicators**

County	National	
County Population (KNBS, 2019)	518,560	47,564,296
Male	259,440 (50.1%)	24,014,716 (50.5%)
Female	259,102 (49.9%)	23,548,056 (49.5%)
Intersex	18 (0.0%)	82 (0.0%)
Youth 15-34 years (%)	171,810 (34.0%)	17,009,230 (36.1%)
Male youth	85,120 (49.5%)	8,237,120 (50.7%)
Female youth	86,690 (50.5%)	8,771,410 (49.3%)
Population density (km <sup>2</sup> )	55	82
Persons with disability (%)	3.6	2.2
Population living in rural areas (%)	70.6	63.3
School going age (4-22 years) (%)	42.2	46.0
Overall poverty (2015/2016) (%)	19.0	36.1
Overall poverty 2021 (%)	34.8	38.6
Youth poverty (2015/2016) (%)	39.5	28.9
Youth poverty 2021 (%)	31.3	34.2
Stunted children (KDHS, 2014) (%)	25.2	26
Stunted children (KDHS, 2022) (%)	12.6	17.6
Gross County Product (Ksh million) 2022	119,575	1.0% of total GDP

Data Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (Various)

**Table 2: County labour market indicators**

Indicator	Level	Total	Male	Female	Urban	Rural
Labour force participation rate	Laikipia	60.0	61.1	59.0	61.7	59.3
	National	55.7	57.1	54.4	55.3	56.0
Youth employment to population ratio	Laikipia	55.4	55.2	55.6	56.4	55.0
	National	51.0	51.1	50.9	49.0	52.2
Youth Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)	Laikipia	11.1	9.4	12.8	17.3	9.1
	National	15.5	13.3	17.6	24.1	11.4
Youth unemployment	Laikipia	7.5	9.7	5.7	8.6	7.3
	National	8.5	10.6	6.4	11.5	6.8
Share of contributing family workers and own account workers	Laikipia	62.6	50.2	74.7	38.9	72.7
	National	65.7	54.8	76.0	39.9	79.8

Data Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (Various)

Note: Contributing family workers and own account workers are in self-employment the former working in a family unit/enterprise

## 2. Youth employment Programs and interventions in Laikipia County

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 enhancing youth participation in county development; (ii) entrepreneurship support programmes such as training 6,250 youths on entrepreneurial skills set; (iii) skills training such as training 5,000 trainees to graduate with hands on marketable skill; (iv) make training programmes work better such as developing 5 sporting facilities and utilities; organizing 15 sports activities, and holding 30 talent identification and nurturing events; and (v) comprehensive approaches; no comprehensive approach was planned.

**Table 3: Youth employment programmes by the County Government**

Category	Planned Activities 2018-2022	Achievements
Making the labour market work better	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced youth participation in county development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No achievement reported</li> </ul>
Entrepreneurship support programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train 6,250 youths on entrepreneurial skills set</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Enterprise Development Fund managed to fund 452 enterprises (168 for individuals and 284 for groups) which was a reduction from 1,200 beneficiaries funded in 2017</li> </ul>
Skills training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train 5,000 trainees to graduate hands-on marketable skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A total of 4,256 trainees against a target of 5,000 cumulatively graduated representing 85% achievement</li> </ul>
Making training programmes work better	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the number of VTCs from 8 to 15</li> <li>5,000 beneficiaries to be supported with bursary and scholarships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VTCs increased to 10</li> <li>An increased number of beneficiaries on bursary and scholarships awards to 39,211 against a target of 54,220, which translated to 72%</li> </ul>
Comprehensive approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No comprehensive programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not applicable</li> </ul>
Other programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop 5 sporting facilities and utilities</li> <li>Organize 15 sports activities</li> <li>Hold 30 talent identification and nurturing events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgraded 2 sporting facilities against a target of 5, representing 40%</li> <li>16 sporting promotion activities were held against a target of fifty translating to 32% achievement</li> </ul>

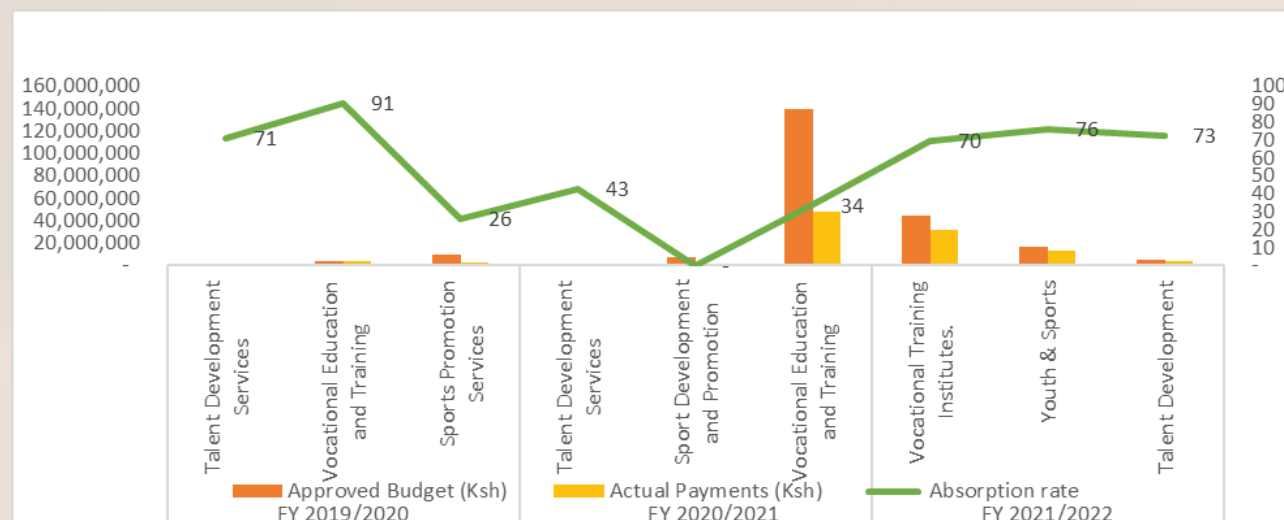
### 3. County Spending on Youth Initiatives (2019/20-2021/22)

Figure 1 shows variations in county spending on youth initiatives between the years 2019 to 2022. In 2019/20 and 2021/22, Lakipia County government allocated financial resources towards programmes aimed at skills training. These programmes included talent development services, vocational education and training programmes, and sports promotion services. There was no budget allocated to other significant sub-programmes, such as comprehensive programmes, entrepreneurship programmes.

Talent development and vocational training were consistently allocated financial resources over the period, with variations in budgetary allocations. In 2019/20, allocation towards talent development services increased from Ksh 0.3 to Ksh 0.5 million in 2020/21 and Ksh 5.4 million in 2021/22. The allocation towards vocational education and training increased from Ksh 0.3 million in 2019/20 to Ksh 139.8 million in 2020/2. However, the allocation dropped to Ksh 44.7 million when the programme was converted to vocational training institutes in 2021/22.

Over the years, absorption rate was highest for vocational education and training, with 2019/20 (91%) being the highest. Sports promotion services programme did not use any of the resource allocation in 2020/21.

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



Sources: Office of the Controller of Budget (OCOB) Report

## 4. Constraints in Implementing Youth Employment Programmes

There are various cross-cutting factors that affect effective implementation of youth employment programmes in Laikipia. These include:

- (i) Weak monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework, with hardly any focus on evaluation of the youth employment programmes and hardly any resource allocation towards M&E-related activities.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) Relatively weak reporting and inadequate data and information to inform planning and monitoring, evaluation, and learning. This is based on observed reporting of achievements in the consecutive CIDPs.
- (iv) Limited use of comprehensive programmes targeting the youth.

## 5. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The overall objective of the policy brief was to review the implementation of youth policies and programmes in Laikipia County. The findings from the review indicate that the county has made efforts towards planning for sub-programmes aimed at skills training, entrepreneurship support programmes, and making training programmes work better. Gaps exist in planning for comprehensive approaches and initiatives aimed at making the labour market work better. An analysis of county expenditure patterns shows large variations in absorption rates across programmes during the period under review. In some programmes within the same year, the absorption rate was as high as 91 per cent, while the lowest was 26 per cent. To ensure effective implementation of youth programmes, the county needs to:

- (i) Expand the scope of implementation of county programmes to include comprehensive programmes

that have the potential to accelerate youth employment and empowerment in the county and improve the labour market for the youth.

- (ii) 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 greater focus on reviewing all (and not just some) planned interventions in the previous CIDP.
  - Providing a review of the challenges, emerging issues, and lessons learnt for each YEP.
  - Clearly highlighting the non-implemented programmes and the reasons for their non-implementation.
  - Clearly documenting lessons learned from implemented programmes by the county government and other partners to improve subsequent implementation.
- (iii) Increase 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.
- (iv) Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation function to enhance availability of data and information to support for decision making.

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### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Unemployed persons include those who took action to seek work and those who did not act. It also includes those who would start work at a future date, and unpaid apprentices, interns, and volunteers.

<sup>2</sup> Employed persons are those who worked for pay, worked in own/family business, worked in own/family agricultural holding, and paid apprentices, interns, and volunteers. 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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 Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project that has multifaceted services, including skills training and job placement.

### 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.

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### 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](mailto:admin@kippra.or.ke)

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

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