

## Narok County Brief on A Review of Youth Employment Programmes

### Key Highlights

Youth employment (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 Narok County in 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 total unemployment rate stood at 4.0 per cent, which was lower than the national average of 8.5 per cent. The percentage of the youth who were neither in education, employment, or training was 7.4 per cent among males and 8.5 per cent among females.
- ii. The county had planned to implement several youth employment programmes including skills training, entrepreneurship support, and initiatives to enhance training programmes. Specifically, the county planned to provide start-up kits to vocational and technical centres (VTCs) graduates, support youth groups with business start-up funds, sensitize the youth on Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO), employ and deploy 12 professional sports officers, and construct five (5) swimming pools and a talent centre among other targets.
- 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 programmes, yet these have the potential to achieve better outcomes.
- iv. Some of the key recommendations emanating from the assessment include the need to: enhance the availability of financial resources by strengthening collaboration with other actors and improving budget absorption; design and implement comprehensive programmes<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

### County Youth Demographics and Labour Market Indicators

Narok County had a population of 1,157,873 people with a population density of 65 per square km as of 2019. The youth population was estimated at 377,450 (48.6% male and 51.4% female), with about 89.2 per cent residing in rural areas (KNBS, 2019). Both overall poverty and youth poverty were lower in the county at 21.9 and 20.8 per cent, compared to the national levels of 38.6 per cent and 34.2 per cent, respectively. While the proportion of stunted children had decreased from 32.5 per cent in 2014 to 21.5 per cent in 2022, in the county, the number of stunted children was still higher than the national average of 17.6 per cent. Poor performance in stunting rates in the county has implications on cognitive and psychomotor development and eventual labour force participation of the children in the subsequent years.

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

	County	National
County population (KNBS, 2019)	1,157,873	47,564,296
Male	579,042 (49.9%)	23,548,056 (49.4 %)
Female	578,805 (50.1%)	24,014,716 (50.6 %)
Intersex	26(0%)	1524(0 %)
Youth 15-34 years (per cent)	377,450(33.00%)	17,009,230 (36.10%)
Youth population (15-34 years)	377,450	17,009,230
Male youth	183,530(48.6%)	8,237,120(48.4%)
Female youth	193,920(51.4%)	8,771,410(51.6)
Population density (km2)	65	82
Persons with disabilities (per cent)	0.90	2.2
Population living in rural areas (per cent)	89.2	63.0
School going age (4-22 years) (per cent)	52.9	46.0
Overall poverty (2015/2016) (per cent)	23.0	36.1
Overall poverty (2021)	21.9	38.6
Youth poverty (2015/2016) (per cent)	17.2	28.9
Youth poverty (2021) (per cent)	20.8	34.2
Stunted children (KDHS, 2014) (per cent)	32.5	26.0
Stunted children (KDHS, 2022) (per cent)	21.5	17.6
Gross county product (Ksh million) 2022	217,130	1.7% of total GDP

Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

The youth unemployment rate stood at 4.0 per cent, which was lower than the national average of 8.5 per cent. Labour force participation stood at 63.0 and was highest in female and rural youth. Compared to the national average (65.7%), an estimated 81.9 per cent of the youth in Narok County contribute to family work. Concerning the employed youths, a significant share was engaged in poor-quality jobs 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	63.0	61.0	64.9	61.9	63.2
	National	55.7	57.1	54.4	55.3	56.0
Youth employment to population ratio	County	60.5	57.6	63.3	57.9	60.8
	National	51.0	51.1	50.9	49.0	52.2
Youth not in education, employment or training (NEET)	County	7.9	7.4	8.5	19.2	6.8
	National	15.5	13.3	17.6	24.1	11.4
Youth unemployment	County	4.0	5.6	2.5	6.5	3.7
	National	8.5	10.6	6.4	11.5	11.5
Share of contributing family workers and own account workers	County	81.9	72.4	90.0	49.6	85.6
	National	65.7	54.8	76.0	39.9	79.8

Source: Kenya Population and Housing Census (2019)

## Youth Employment Programmes and interventions in Narok County<sup>3</sup>

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 period under review. The planned projects included initiatives that aimed at enhancing the labour market, entrepreneurship support, skills training, and enhancing training programmes. The county did not plan to implement comprehensive programmes but implemented other related interventions that would empower and create jobs for the youth, including constructing five swimming pools and a talent academy and building four gymnasiums and four stadiums. However, a review of the second-generation CIDP reveals that most of the planned activities were not implemented (Table 3).

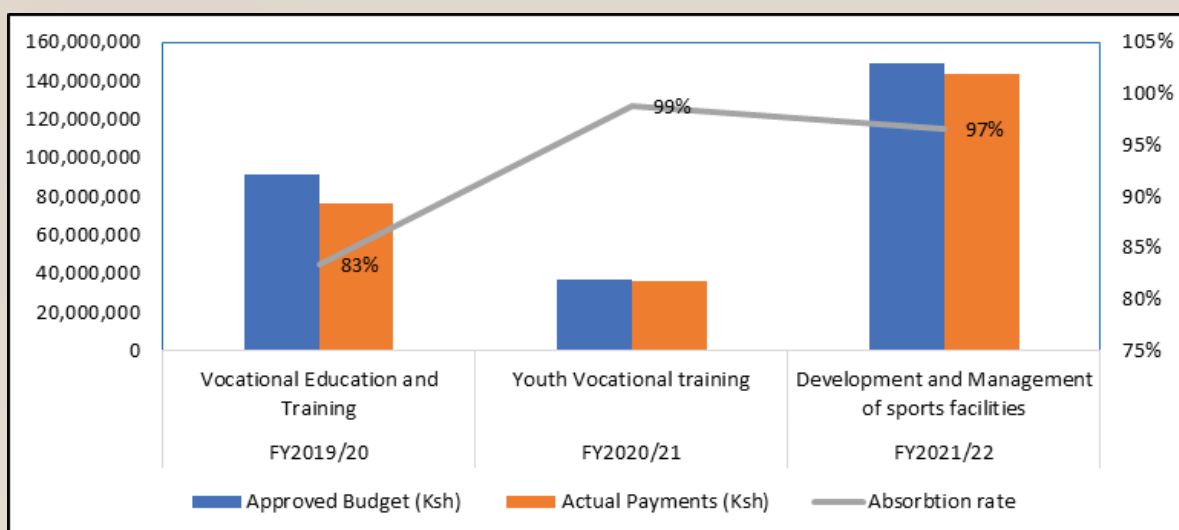
**Table 3: Status of the implementation of youth programmes by the county government**

Category	Planned activities (2018-2022)	Achievements
i. Enhancing the labour market	Provide start-up kits to VTCs graduates	i. Recruited 2,188 youths and vulnerable and marginalized groups (VMGs) for casual employment (off plan). ii. No record of the provision of start-up kits to VTC graduates.
ii. Entrepreneurship support programmes	Support youth groups with business start-up funds	No report of whether youth groups were supported with start-up funds for business
iii. Skills training	i. Sensitize youth on AGPOA ii. Train youth groups on income generating activities	No record of training youth on AGPOA and income generating activities
iv. Enhancing training programmes	i. Employ and deploy 12 professional sports officers ii. Upgrade infrastructure in VTCs to increase enrollment upgrading/modernization of the existing nine VTCs iii. Construction of 15 VTCs across all sub-counties iv. Increase the number of needy students receiving bursary funds in secondary and tertiary institutions v. Sensitize the youth on technical skills careers vi. Establish new VTCs	No achievements reported
Comprehensive approach	No programmes planned	Not applicable
Other youth programmes	i. Construct five swimming pools ii. Construct a talent academy iii. Build four gymnasiums iv. Build four stadiums v. Support sporting clubs with equipment and other facilitation vi. Increase number of athletes joining professional sports	Hosted three sporting activities (governor's cup)

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

A budget analysis shows that Narok County had two youth sub-programmes aimed at vocational education and training and development and management of sports facilities. Budgetary allocation towards youth vocational training declined from Ksh 91 million to Ksh 34 million between 2019/20 and 2020/21. Despite the decline in allocation, the absorption rate increased to almost 100 per cent during the same period. In 2021/22, allocation towards the development and management of sports facilities was Ksh 148 million with an associated high absorption rate (97%).

**Figure 4: County spending and absorption rates on youth sub-programmes 2019/20-2021/22)**



Source: Office of the Controller of Budget Report

## Constraints in Implementing Youth Programmes

Various crosscutting factors impacted on the effective implementation of youth employment programmes in Narok County. These include:

- i. Difficulty in targeting the most vulnerable youths 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. These set of challenges were linked to 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 periods before the funds are disbursed.
- vi. Shortcomings 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 have the potential to achieve better results.

## Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The overall objective of the policy brief was to review the implementation of youth policies and programmes in Narok County. Findings from the review indicate that the county has made efforts towards planning for programmes aimed at enhancing the labour market, skills training, entrepreneurship support programmes, enhancing training programmes, and other related programmes, singly and in collaboration with other stakeholders. However, most of the programmes planned were not implemented during the review period. An analysis of county expenditure patterns shows high absorption rates across programmes during the period under review. To ensure the effective implementation of youth programmes, the county needs to:

- i. Improve the reporting on the review of the performance of sector programmes as envisaged by the Guidelines for Preparation of CIDPs. The reporting for the period under review was weak on information useful for monitoring, evaluation, and learning on the implementation of planned YEPs. The sector reviews can be improved through:
  - a. having 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; and
  - c. 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 to 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. Ensure consistency in reporting on the activities by creating standardized reporting procedures and formats to ensure consistency in the way sub-programmes activities are reported 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, which 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.
- 3 <https://cog.go.ke/cog-reports/category/106-county-integrated-development-plans-2018-2022?download=355:narok-county-integrated-development-plan-2018-2022>



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### The 'What Works for Youth Employment in Africa' initiative

The Partnership for Economic Policy is partnering with the Mastercard Foundation for a three-year initiative on What Works for Youth Employment in Africa. The initiative aims to provide evidence that can drive policy reform to increase youth employment in 10 African countries: Ghana, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and South Africa. The initiative aligns with the Mastercard Foundation's Young Africa Works strategy that seeks to enable 30 million young Africans, particularly young women, to access dignified and fulfilling work by 2030. Teams of local researchers and policy stakeholders are carrying out gender-aware policy and impact reviews in each country. The resulting analysis and findings will build a body of knowledge on youth employment policy in Africa, and will be stored in a new online knowledge repository.

For more information, please visit:

[www.pep-net.org/programs/youth-employment](http://www.pep-net.org/programs/youth-employment)

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