

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

### 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 Nakuru 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 Nakuru County just as the national rate was 8.5 per cent. The percentage of youth who are neither in education, employment or training is 10.0 per cent among males and 16.2 per cent among females.
- (ii) The county planned to implement various youth employment programmes including entrepreneurship support programmes, skills training, and initiatives to make training programmes work better. Specifically, the county planned to develop 1 youth Endowment Fund Bill. Entrepreneurship programmes such as holding 5 National youth weeks to support entrepreneurs. The county also planned to train 8,350 youths on various life skills and entrepreneurial skills and 43 youths in agriculture; and to make training programmes work better, the county planned to revitalize and modernize 9 Vocational Training Centres (VTCs); equipping 27 VTCs and recruiting 300 trainers in VTCs.
- (iii) Only a few interventions targeting youth employment were implemented as planned, tracked, and reported in the third generation County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP). Some of the factors that affected seamless implementation included: fragmentation of programme interventions; inadequate financial resources; low absorption of available financial resources; and limited room for effective monitoring, evaluation, and learning resulting to noncomprehensive reporting on the implementation status of most youth employment programmes. In addition, the County did not plan for comprehensive programmes 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 programmes aimed at making the labour market work better and 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.

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

Nakuru County had a total population of 2.16 million people with a population density of 288 per square km as at 2019 (Table 1). The youth were estimated at 383,290 (48.5% male) with 46.5 per cent residing in rural areas. The overall poverty rate for the county was lower at 29.0 per cent as of 2015/16 and higher at 39.4 per cent in 2021 compared to the national level of 36.1 per cent and 38.6 per cent, respectively. The youth poverty rate was at 20.2 per cent and 36.5 per cent in 2015/16 and 2021 respectively, which is lower than the national youth poverty rate at 28.9 per cent and higher at 34.2 per cent in 2015/16 and 2021, respectively. Notable improvements were observed with the proportion of stunted children decreasing from 27.6 per cent in 2014 to 18.5 per cent in 2022, though still higher 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 youth demographics and economic performance indicators**

	County	National
County population (KNBS, 2019)	2,162,202	47,564,296
Male	1,077,272 (49.8%)	23,548,056 (49.5%)
Female	1,084,835 (50.2%)	24,014,716 (50.5%)
Intersex	95 (0%)	1,524 (0.003%)
Youth 15-34 years (per cent)	790,630(36.6 %)	19,009,230(40.0 %)
Male	383,290 (48.5%)	8,237,120 (50.7%)
Female	407,300(51.5%)	8,771,410 (49.3%)
Population density (km2)	288	82
Persons with disability (per cent)	1.8	2.2
Population living in rural areas (per cent)	46.5	63.3
School going age (4-22 years) (per cent)	44.6	46.0
Poverty (2015/2016) (per cent)	29.0	36.1
Poverty (2021) (per cent)	39.4	38.6
Youth Poverty (2015/2016) (per cent)	20.2	28.9
Youth Poverty (2021) (per cent)	36.5	34.2
Stunted children (KDHS 2014) (per cent)	27.6	26
Stunted children (KDHS 2022) per cent)	18.5	17.6
Gross County Product (Ksh. Million) 2022	600,518	4.9% of total GDP

Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (various)

The youth unemployment rate in the county is 8.5 per cent, which is the same as the national average of 8.5 per cent. The Labour force participation rate is 58.0 per cent, similar among female and male (60.4 per cent) and Rural youth at 58.8 per cent. Compared to the national average (65.7 per cent), an estimated 56.2 per cent of the youth in Nakuru County are contributing family workers or own account workers. Thus, for the employed youths, a significant share is engaged in informal working arrangements that are usually associated with low productivity, and inadequate earnings.

**Table 2: County labour market indicators**

Indicator	Level	Total	Male	Female	Urban	Rural
Labour force participation Rate (%)	Nakuru	58.0	60.4	60.4	57.2	58.8
	National	55.7	57.1	54.4	55.3	56.0
Youth employment to population ratio (%)	Nakuru	53.0	54.2	51.9	51.3	55.0
	National	51.0	51.1	50.9	49.0	52.2
Youth Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) (%)	Nakuru	13.1	10.0	16.2	18.4	7.9
	National	15.5	13.3	17.6	24.1	11.4
Youth Unemployment (%)	Nakuru	8.5	10.3	6.7	10.3	6.5
	National	8.5	10.6	6.4	11.5	6.8
Share of contributing family workers and own account workers (%)	Nakuru	56.3	45.1	67.4	41.6	72.1
	National	65.7	54.8	76.0	39.9	79.8

Data Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (various)

## 2. Youth Employment Programmes and Interventions in Nakuru County

### i) 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 developing 1 youth Endowment Fund Bill; and (ii) entrepreneurship support programmes such as holding 5 National youth week to support entrepreneurs; (iii) skills training such as training 8,350 youths on various life skills and entrepreneurial skills and 43

youths in agriculture; and (iv) making training programmes work better such as revitalizing and modernizing 9 VTCs; equipping 27 VTCs and recruiting 300 trainers in VTCs.

The county did not plan to implement comprehensive programmes but implemented other related interventions that would empower and create jobs for the youth including acquiring and distributing sports equipment, nature sports talents, and grade sports grounds among others.

**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"> <li>Develop 1 Youth Endowment Fund Bill.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No achievement reported</li> </ul>
Entrepreneurship support programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold 5 National Youth week.</li> <li>Develop Youth Data Bank.</li> <li>Capture 85% of Youth in data bank.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No achievement reported</li> </ul>
Skills training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train 8,350 Youths on various life skills and entrepreneurial skills</li> <li>Train 43 youth in agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trained 2,100 youth in various socio-economic skills</li> </ul>
Making training programmes work better	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revitalize and modernize 9 VTCs</li> <li>Equip 27 VTCs</li> <li>Recruit 300 trainers in VTCs</li> <li>Rease 152.5 million capitation fund for VTCs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately Ksh 681.7 million was disbursed to 154,560 students in secondary and tertiary institutions</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>Rehabilitate 5 stadia.</li> <li>Grade 10 sports grounds</li> <li>Nurture 2,150 sports talents</li> <li>Acquire and distribute 10,000 sports equipment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established 22 sporting facilities (including Keringet high altitude training Centre)</li> <li>Purchase of sports equipment, implementation of the sports fund, and training sport facilitators</li> </ul>

Source: County Integrated Development Plans (various)

In tracking progress of the planned activities, a review of the third generation CIDP reveals that some of the planned activities were implemented while others were not. As an example, the county reported achievement attained in skills training by training 2,100 youth on various socio-economic skills. Making training programmes work better, such as allocating and disbursing approximately Ksh 681.7 million to 154,560 students in secondary and tertiary institutions. Other programmes such as establishing 22 sporting facilities (including Keringet high altitude training Centre).

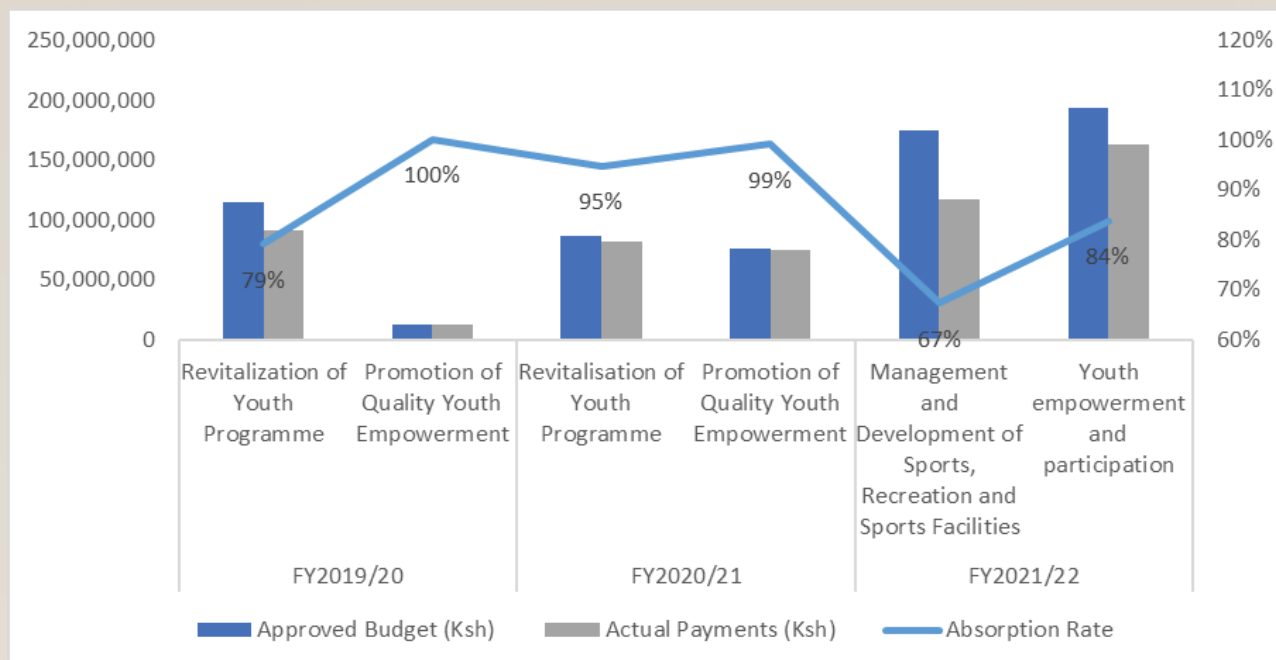
### 3. County Spending on Youth Initiatives (2019/20-2021/22)

In 2019/20 and 2021/22, Nakuru County government allocated financial resources to a programme aimed at making the labour market work better. These programmes included promotion of quality youth empowerment, revitalization of youth programmes and management and development of sports, recreation of sports activities.

In 2019/20 and 2020/21, Nakuru county consistently implemented two programmes, namely: youth empowerment and revitalization of youth programmes. In FY 2021/22 the county introduced a different youth programme called management and development of sports facilities which was allocated 174.6 million. Allocation towards revitalization of youth programmes decreased from Ksh 115 million in 2019/20 to Ksh 86.1 million in 2020/21 whilst there was an observable increase in allocation towards youth empowerment from Ksh 11.8 million to Ksh 75.9 million during the same period and later increased to Ksh 194.0 million in 2021/22. This decline in allocation could be attributed to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic that led to prioritization and reallocation of financial resources towards sectors most affected by the shock.

Promotion of quality youth empowerment recorded an absorption rate of 100 per cent in 2019/22 while management and development of sports, recreation of sports activities recorded the lowest absorption rate of 67 per cent in 2021/22. The low absorption rates point towards poor utilization of resources in youth programmes which has implications for the success, effectiveness, and impact of these programmes on the target population.

**Figure 3: County spending and absorption rates on youth sub-programmes (2019/20- 2021/22)**



Sources: Office of the Controller of Budget Reports

#### 4. Constraints on Implementing Youth Programmes

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

- (i) 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.
- (ii) Inadequate financial resources as well as low absorption of available resources. These set of gaps were linked to erratic resource flows and delayed disbursements from the National Treasury.
- (iii) Inadequate data and information to inform planning as well as 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.
- (iv) Shortcomings in the design of youth employment programmes tend to focus on a single aspect such as skills training rather than planning for comprehensive programmes which are known to have better outcomes.

#### 5. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The overall objective of the policy brief was to review the implementation of planned youth policies and programmes in Nakuru County. The county has made efforts towards the implementation of several programmes including skills training by training 2,100 youth on various socio-economic skills. Making training programmes work better, such as allocating and disbursing approximately Ksh 681.7 million to 154,560 students in secondary and tertiary institutions. There are disparities in absorption rates across programmes during the period which could be attributed to delayed disbursement of funds from the National Treasury as well as the effects of COVID-19 which led to reallocation of resources towards the sector affected by the pandemic.

- (i) Expand the scope of implementation of county programmes to include comprehensive programmes which have the potential to accelerate youth employment and empowerment in the county as well as improving 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. 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 (and not just some) 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

- d) 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 decision making.

#### **Endnotes**

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 programs including challenges, emerging issues, and lessons learnt.

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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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