

Kericho County Brief on A Review of Youth Employment Programmes

Key Highlights

Youth (15-34 years) employment is critical in achieving sustainable development. This county policy brief provides an overview of planned and implemented youth employment policies and programmes in Kericho 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 youth unemployment rate in Kericho County was 6.2 per cent, which was lower than the national average (8.5%). Youth unemployment rate in the county was higher among male (8.2%) than female (4.5%) youths. The percentage of the youth who are neither in education, employment or training (NEET) was 6.8 per cent among males and 8.2 per cent among females and higher among urban youths.
- ii. The county planned to implement various youth employment programmes. This included enhancing the labour market through the establishment of one (1) county state of the art emerging technologies/CT innovation hub. The county also planned to construct and operationalize one (1) modern sporting stadium.
- iii. There were no achievements reported during this period apart from training of 300 youths on online business process and outsourcing, which was not planned for based on County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) II.
- iv. Some of the factors that affected seamless implementation of the planned programmes included the fragmentation of programme interventions; inadequate financial resources; low absorption of available financial resources; and limited effective monitoring, evaluation, and learning owing to the lack of comprehensive and/or accessible information on the implementation status of most youths employment programmes. In addition, the county did not plan for comprehensive programmes¹ yet these have the potential to achieve better outcomes.
- v. Some of the key recommendations emanating from the assessment include the need to enhance the availability of financial resources through enhanced collaboration with other actors and improved budget absorption; expand the scope of the implementation of county youth programmes to include skills training, entrepreneurship support programmes, enhancing training programmes and comprehensive programmes; and, enhance monitoring, evaluation and learning activities, 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

Kericho County had a total population of 901,777 people with a population density of 370 people per square km as of 2019 (Table 1). The youth population was estimated at 333,410 (48.6% male and 51.3 female), with about 87.7 per cent residing in rural areas (KNBS, 2019). The overall poverty rate for the county was higher at 42 per cent in 2015/16 and 39.8 per cent in 2021 compared to the national level of 36.1 per cent and 38.6 per cent, respectively. Youth poverty rate was 26.6 per cent and 34.6 per cent in 2015/16 and 2021, compared with the national youth poverty rate at 28.9 per cent and 34.2 per cent in 2015/16 and 2021, respectively. While the proportion of stunted

children decreased from 28.7 per cent in 2014 to 19.3 per cent in 2022, it was higher 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 their labour force participation and productivity in the subsequent years.

Table 1: County and national demographics and economic performance indicators

	County	National
County population (KNBS, 2019)	901,777	47,564,296
Population density (km ²)	370	82
Male	450,741 (50.0%)	23,548,056 (49.5%)
Female	451,008 (50.0%)	24,014,716 (50.5%)
Intersex	28 (0.003%)	1,524 (0.003%)
Youth 15-34 years (per cent)	333,410 (37.0%)	17,009,230(36.1%)
Male youth	162,180 (48.6%)	8,237,120 (50.7%)
Female youth	171,200 (51.3%)	8,771,410 (49.3%)
Persons with disability (per cent)	2.2	2.2
Population living in rural areas (per cent)	87.7	63.3
School going age (4-22 years) (per cent)	47.6	46.0
Overall poverty rate (2015/16) (per cent)	42.0	36.1
Overall poverty rate (2021) (per cent)	39.8	38.6
Youth poverty rate (2015/16) (per cent)	26.6	28.9
Youth poverty rate (2021) (per cent)	34.6	34.2
Stunted children (KDHS, 2014)	28.7	26.0
Stunted children (KDHS, 2022)	19.3	17.6
Gross county product (Ksh million) 2022	204,443	2.3% of total GDP

Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (Various)

The youth unemployment rate in the county was 6.2 per cent, which was below the national average of 8.5 per cent, as indicated in Table 2. The labour force participation rate for the youth was 60 per cent and was highest among females and urban youths. Compared to the national average (65.7%), a significant share (72.6%) of youths were either contributing family workers and own account workers, which constitute mainly 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	60.0	58.6	61.4	62.8	59.6
	National	55.7	57.1	54.4	55.3	56
Youth employment to population ratio	County	56.3	53.8	58.7	58.3	56.0
	National	51.0	51.1	50.9	49.0	52.2
Youth not in education, employment or training (NEET)	County	7.5	6.8	8.2	16.8	6.4
	National	15.5	13.3	17.6	24.1	11.4
Youth unemployment	County	6.2	8.2	4.5	7.1	6.1
	National	8.5	10.6	6.4	11.5	6.8
Share of contributing family workers and own account workers	County	72.6	62.4	81.4	46.9	76.3
	National	65.7	54.8	76	39.9	79.8

Source: Kenya Population and Housing Census (2019)

Youth Employment Programmes and Interventions in Kericho County

During the second generation CIDP, Kericho County envisioned to improve youth employability. Table 3 presents a summary of youth employment programmes, detailing their respective categories, types of interventions in each category and achievements for the period under review. The review revealed that none of the planned activities were implemented. Although there was no record of planned programmes under skills training, the county trained 300 youths on online business process and outsourcing. This is an indication of a weak link between planned strategic priorities and the budgeting framework.

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

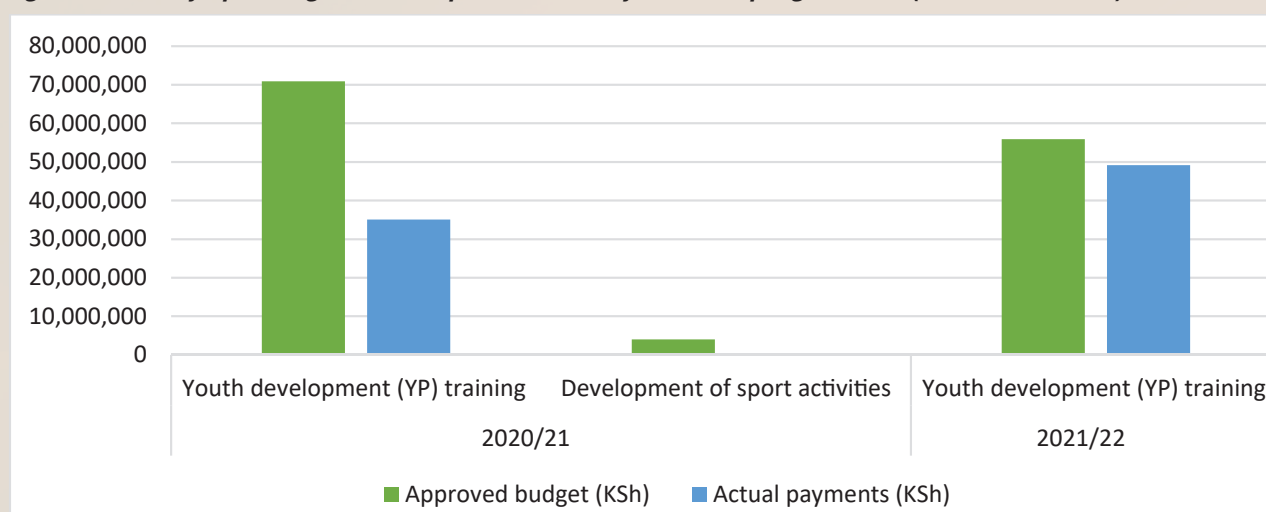
Category	Planned activities (2018-2022)	Achievements
Enhancing the labour market	Establish (1) one county state of the art emerging technologies ICT innovation hub with the aim of harnessing ICT innovations and creation of digital job opportunities for the youths	None reported
Entrepreneurship support programmes	No programmes planned	None reported
Skills training	No programmes planned	Trained 300 youths on online business process and outsourcing
Enhancing training programmes	No programmes planned	None reported
Comprehensive approach	No programmes planned	None reported
Other programmes	Construct and operationalize one modern sporting stadium	None reported

Source: CIDP II 2018-2022 and CIDP III 2023-2027

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

Kericho County Government implemented two youth sub-programmes, that is, youth development training and development of sports activities. The county allocated financial resources towards these two programmes although budgetary allocations varied. In 2020/21, Ksh 70.9 million was allocated to youth development training and Ksh 4.0 million was allocated to the development of sports activities, with an absorption rate of 49 per cent. The low absorption rates is an indication of poor utilization of resources in youth programmes, which has implications on the success, effectiveness, and impact of these programmes on the target population. In 2021/22, the county implemented one (1) programme, youth development training, which was allocated Ksh 55.9 million, with an absorption rate of 87 per cent.

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



Source: Office of the Controller of Budget Annual Reports

Constraints in Implementing Youth Programmes

Various crosscutting factors impacted on the effective implementation of youth employment programmes in Kericho County during the period under review. These include:

- i. Inadequate financial resources and low absorption of available resources. These set of gaps was linked to erratic resource flows and delayed disbursements from the National Treasury.
- ii. Inadequate data and information to inform planning, 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.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The overall objective of the policy brief was to review the implementation of planned youth policies and programmes in Kericho County. The review showed that there was low prioritization of the youth in county planning and budgeting processes with only two programmes planned during the review period and one achievement from an off-budget activity (training of 300 youths on online business process and outsourcing).

There were 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 the reallocation of resources towards 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 the 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. Expand the scope of planning and implementation of county programmes to include other significant aspects such as entrepreneurship support, skills training, and comprehensive programmes in the county to ensure a holistic approach in youth empowerment.
- iii. Create more partnerships with other actors including the private sector and enhance older 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 activities and financial performance are reported.

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 have the potential to achieve 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 the 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.

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In partnership with



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

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