



POLICY ACTIONS NATIONAL YOUTH SITUATION ANALYSIS

WE MATTER



Participants at the National Youth Workshop held in Nakuru.

Redefining the Place of Young People in Kenya

Policy Issues and Actions from the Youth Situation Analysis

Introduction

For every three people in Kenya, one falls under the category of youth – those aged below 30 years. As the most active age group in Kenya, the youth hold the key for the country’s political, social and economic development, hence the need to invest in their well-being.

Youth is a time of all-encompassing transition – physically, mentally and socially. It is a time of experimentation and new experiences, and a time when young people make choices that have a profound bearing on the future course of their lives.

Very often, their strengths and potential as constructive contributors to the society goes unrecognised and unsupported by those in various positions of authority. At worst, others seek to do them harm, such as by recruiting them into military service or involving them in criminal activities.

The socio-economic costs of not investing in the health and development of young people are immense and will contribute

to increased poverty and impede national development. Failure to focus on the rights and needs of adolescents and youth are enormous and has long-term consequences for them and their communities.

One such consequence was seen in Kenya during the post election crisis of early 2008, when the youth were at the forefront of the skirmishes, both as perpetrators and victims.

The role the youth played during that crisis brought to the fore the need for a youth-driven analysis of the situation of youth in Kenya. This situation analysis looks at the overall context of the youth and the different elements that contribute to what, where, when, who, how and why they do certain things.

Through a qualitative process, the facilitators probed into the conceptual frameworks of the young people and how they understand the immediate, underlying and basic causes of the situations in which they find themselves.

In their own words, the youth illuminated how they see themselves participating fully in development, their personal development, that of their families, local communities and Kenya as a whole.

This policy and advocacy brief summarises the process involved and the key findings from the consultations. It also gives a compilation of the recommendations by the youth themselves regarding the priority issues that concern them. It also includes suggestions for policy makers and programme staff to consider as interventions for greater participation by the youth in Kenya's development.

Why a Situation Analysis?

The initial concern about the role played by young people in the shocking violence that erupted in Kenya following the general elections at the end of 2007 was later seen as a concern that would only scratch at the surface.

It has been realised such activities are more a consequences of deeper phenomena, therefore the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports commissioned a study that would provide a wholesome picture of the diverse lives and aspirations of young people aged between 10 and 30 years throughout Kenya.

In line with the National Youth Policy and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the study sought to identify the needs of this segment of the population, which is the largest and most active population segment, and which has an important influence in the country's political and economic development.

MAIN REASONS FOR CARRYING OUT THE SITUATION ANALYSIS

- To address the multiple and diverse needs of this very large segment of the population, it is very important to know their own views and contributions
- In accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children should participate 'according to their evolving capacities'. This capacity is evolving particularly fast as they enter the official age of youth in Kenya, 15-30.
- It guides the prioritization of issues that affect the youth according to their local situations.
- It gives youth a chance to critically look at the causes of the issues that affect them.
- It offered the youth an opportunity for experiential learning where they have an opportunity to share real life experiences.

How the Analysis was Done

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports selected a group of 73 young people, both male and female, from all eight provinces in Kenya and trained them on the techniques for carrying out the analysis.

This group carried out research and consultations in their individual provinces, which were attended by various age groups, with all the province representatives attending a national workshop held in Nakuru. This workshop discussed the various findings and recommendations from the province and came up with the declarations and national recommendations. More than 1,000 young people took part in the exercise.

During the study, the young people expressed their dreams for themselves, their communities and the nation, and identified the opportunities and services available to them. They listed their strengths, and ranked the issues that needed tackling for all their dreams to be realised.

Nine issues emerged from the consultations, revolving around youth participation, and professionalisation of work, livelihoods, education, and health, support structures to empower young people, safety as well as justice, equity and good governance.

Overall the young people demonstrated the desire to serve their communities selflessly and to right existing wrongs, while emphasising entrepreneurship, innovation and talent. They wished for their greater involvement in tackling social problems and strongly appreciated those who support their dreams, including parents and other adults, non-governmental organisations and the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs and Sports. Young people's dreams for their communities and the nation as a whole betrayed, however, a strong sense of alienation.

MAIN REASONS FOR CARRYING OUT THE SITUATION ANALYSIS

- To address the multiple and diverse needs of this very large segment of the population, it is very important to know their own views and contributions
- In accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children should participate 'according to their evolving capacities'. This capacity is evolving particularly fast as they enter the official age of youth in Kenya, 15-30.
- It guides the prioritization of issues that affect the youth according to their local situations.
- It gives youth a chance to critically look at the causes of the issues that affect them.
- It offered the youth an opportunity for experiential learning where they have an opportunity to share real life experiences.

SUMMARY OF PRIORITY ACTIONS

Education

All age groups emphasised the need for more schools and institutions of higher learning, as well as the provision of quality learning. In some areas like Central Province, the schools are too few for the large number of students while in North Eastern Province educational facilities are concentrated in towns so children from pastoralist communities cannot attend.

The older youth feel there should be more emphasis on access to higher education and vocational training as well as an increase in the number of universities.

All age groups agreed on the need to support orphans to access education.

They felt that the curriculum should be focused on relevance to employment opportunities and assessment of competence and intelligence should not be based on examinations alone.

Health

The quality of services and the number of public health facilities were a main concern among all age groups. The older age groups pointed to the need for good reproductive health services that were relevant to their needs.

They also called for youth-friendly health services (including maternal and child health services suitable for young mothers) and voluntary counselling and testing for HIV, orphan care and availability of condoms.

Recreational Facilities

All age groups ranked recreational facilities and playing fields as very important, arguing that youth have few places to engage themselves actively. Their absence was cited as one of the reasons young people turn to negative activities, including crime, violence and drug abuse.

They expressed the need for youth and resource centres where out of school youth could spend time and gain useful life skills, and where they could develop useful talents such as music and art.

Infrastructure and Utilities

Young people dream of good roads, piped water and electricity. They say proper infrastructure in the districts will help them in their informal businesses and will stem the tide of migration to towns. Other facilities such as information communication technologies will help them access information to help them cope with the evolving challenges.

The Economy

The central concern by all the age groups was how their communities were prepared to find them employment. They suggested that industries should be located at the source of raw materials to widen employment opportunities. For instance they said there is no factory for tobacco processing in Western Province where tobacco is grown. Other examples were the Coast (cashew nut factory) and North Eastern (for meat, hides and skins processing).

Security

All age groups singled out security as an important issue, particularly in relation to ending tribal clashes and eliminating crime. They were concerned about the collaboration between police officers and criminals and the mutual suspicion between youth and the police. For the 15 to 19 age group, insecurity is the single biggest impediment to the attainment of their dreams.

Governance

All age groups emphasised good governance and leadership, as well as the need for peace and security and corruption-free communities that concentrated their efforts on fighting poverty. They understand that a just society is predicated upon equitable distribution of resources and services throughout the country.

Gender Equity

The youth dream of a gender equitable society, in particular with regard to gender-based violence: They desire a society free from female genital mutilation, which interferes with girls' education and creates fear. Girls should receive equal opportunities with boys, and the plight of the boy-child should also not be forgotten.

Young People in Society

They youth say they have the potential to fulfill their dreams as long as they are given the chance to do so. Practices that deny them that chance include the conditions placed by most employers that job applicants should have experience, and

the policy that increased the retirement age from 55 to 65 years.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are suggestions for interventions that could be implemented under each of the priority issues identified by the youth. It is of course not in any way exhaustive and it is expected that further processes of review and stakeholder consultations regarding impact, feasibility and implementation capacity will determine which are viable or which others can be added.

The priorities and situations are also bound to change with time, so the interventions will also require updating over time and as the policy priorities for youth shift.

EDUCATION

There should be a review of educational and training curricula so that these are skills-based, rather than for academic achievement. The avenues for non-formal learning should be increased. Education should not only be about transmission of knowledge, but needs to further encourage collaborative learning, build on learners' interests and experiences, encourage creativity and flexibility.

There should be programmes to encourage young people to stay in school through in-kind incentives such as the school feeding programme, especially for vulnerable areas. Conditions for accessing the incentives could be varied according to specific circumstances in particular regions. Keeping youth in school has a range of positive benefits for individuals and society, including lower

chances of poverty, higher incomes, lower chances of participating in criminal activity, higher agricultural output, as well as higher levels of trust, social capital and political participation.

- Institutions that offer second-chance education should be established for those, especially girls, who drop out of school. The education provided here can be made more relevant to the realities of these youth, e.g. by having flexible schedules, practical curricula and selected skills training linked to the labor market, accelerated programs and incorporation of life-skills.
- Programmes dedicated to the plight of the boy-child should be enhanced. The traditional attitude that boys should be left to fight it out in society may have contributed to neglect of the circumstances and choices that boys face when growing up, especially those that lead them to drop out of school. Because of their leadership role in most spheres of development, well-educated men are a pre-requisite to achievement of society's goals.
- Youth Education Councils, made up of students representing schools throughout the districts, should be established to work with the district education office to promote youth voice and vision in running of schools. The youth council can research the problems in local schools and come up with youth-driven solutions to address them.
- Schools and colleges should work closely with employers to develop

customised or contract training for potential workers. This will ensure that curricula are serving the needs of the local economy and enhance the employability of the youth.

- Schools should be required to provide approaches and accommodations to support students with disabilities depending on individual needs e.g. extended time on tests, tailored to individual students' needs.

EMPLOYMENT

- In government projects, local youth need to be given priority over any outsiders when recruiting for small scale unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, particularly in the areas of contract work. Empowering youth to participate in nation-building could help to address youth disillusionment and bring wider benefits to the country. The situational analysis observed that there are strong feelings of disillusionment with the government and of exclusion from the nation-building process especially with 10 % quota for youth procurement in government tenders. It is likely that these feelings help to propel youth into violent protest as a form of civil disobedience
- The government should institute labour market interventions that can support youth engagement by offering youth employment or apprenticeship tax subsidies. This will help the youth gain the experience that is so often a

condition for formal employment, and which most of them lack.

- Programmes that encourage youth to invest in modern agriculture should be expanded as an income-generating alternative, particularly in rural areas. Agriculture will remain the mainstay for a major part of the population for a long time to come. In order to reach its potential, youth need to appreciate the importance of, and opportunities in, the agricultural sector. Overall, there are no projects that directly target young people's agricultural skills.

HEALTH

- Stand-alone youth-friendly health centres should be established. Apart from dealing with matters of sexual and reproductive health, these centres should address personal, social and mental concerns of the youth. The facilities should be linked to local youth centres and services should be free.
- Staff manning the facilities should be trained to provide services in a client-centred manner. Apart from offering services, the staff should be able to provide information and education on sexual and reproductive health, counseling, recognition of physical and sexual abuse and mental health problems.
- The youth friendly facilities should not just be located in the towns where young people in rural areas have limited access to services.
- The physical environment of the facilities should be conducive to the youth, with availability of drugs, supplies and equipment to provide the essential service package for adolescent-friendly services.

EQUITY

- Involving youth in the delivery of services can impart skills and experience, encouraging active citizenship, and decrease the likelihood of conflict and criminal activity. These services should be taken as professional engagements and not as tokenism so they should be remunerated. The Kazi kwa Vijana programme is one such programme but should be expanded to operate on a sufficient scale and to produce relevant outputs.
- Youth with disabilities and those in specific situations of vulnerability should have a quota set for them for employment in public organisations and community development initiatives. Specific programmes to identify which services can be offered by which category of vulnerable or people with disabilities should be drawn up, and affirmative action taken to engage them in those services.
- Youth centers should be established at grassroots levels to facilitate the productive use of after-school time by offering both serious and fun activities. They should be run by the youth themselves, and should offer life-skills, vocational and skills training, psychological support and employment information. Trained peer-educators should instill

values such as gender equality, non-violence, and healthy living. They should also be equipped to develop youth talent such as sport, music, theatre, painting and poetry. They should also be equipped with computers, radio and television.

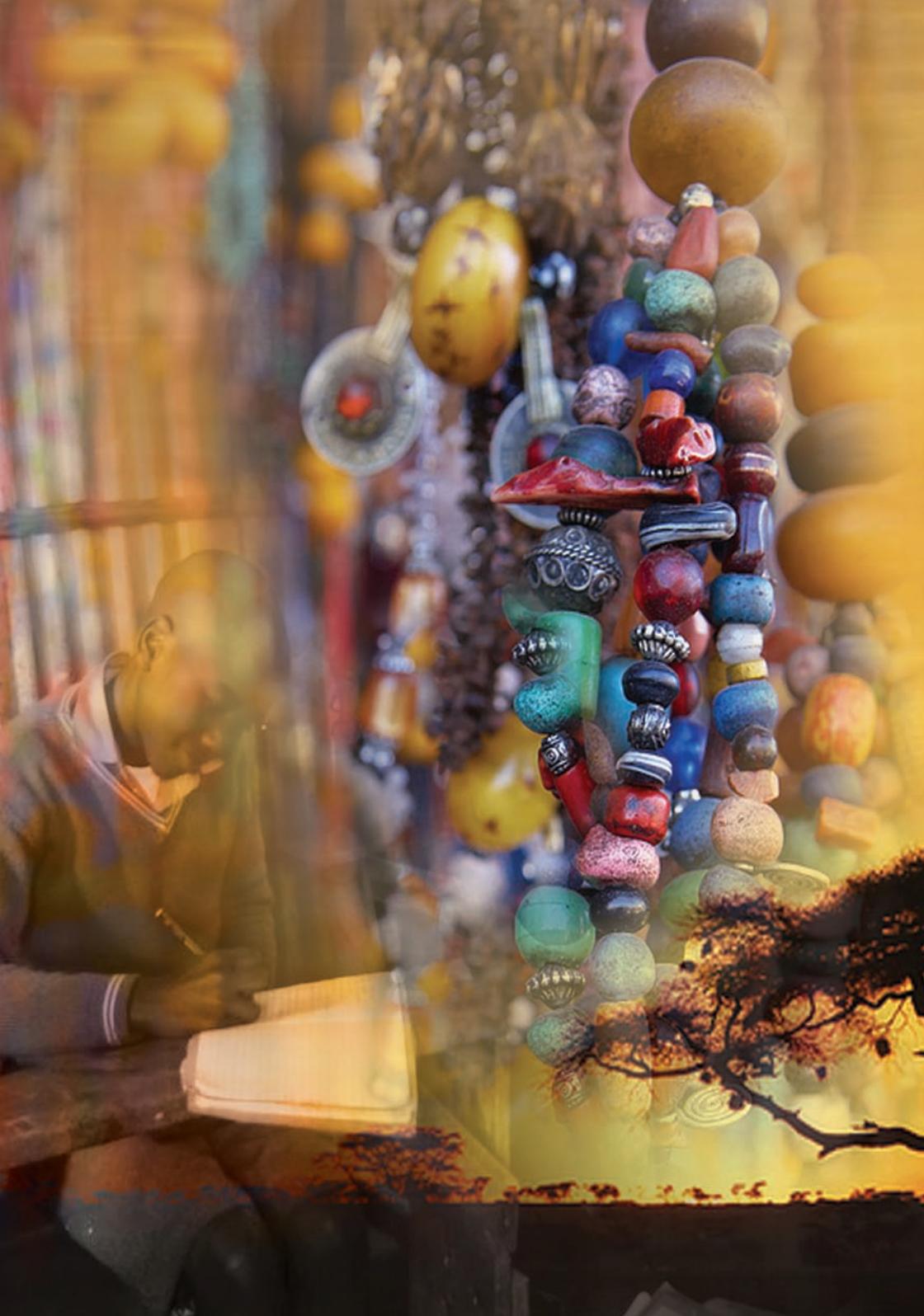
- The amount allocated to the Youth Enterprise Fund should be increased to enable broader small enterprise development activities. Assistance programmes that need to be expanded include the provision of market information, business establishment and management skills, general life skills, technical assistance and professional mentoring.

GOVERNANCE

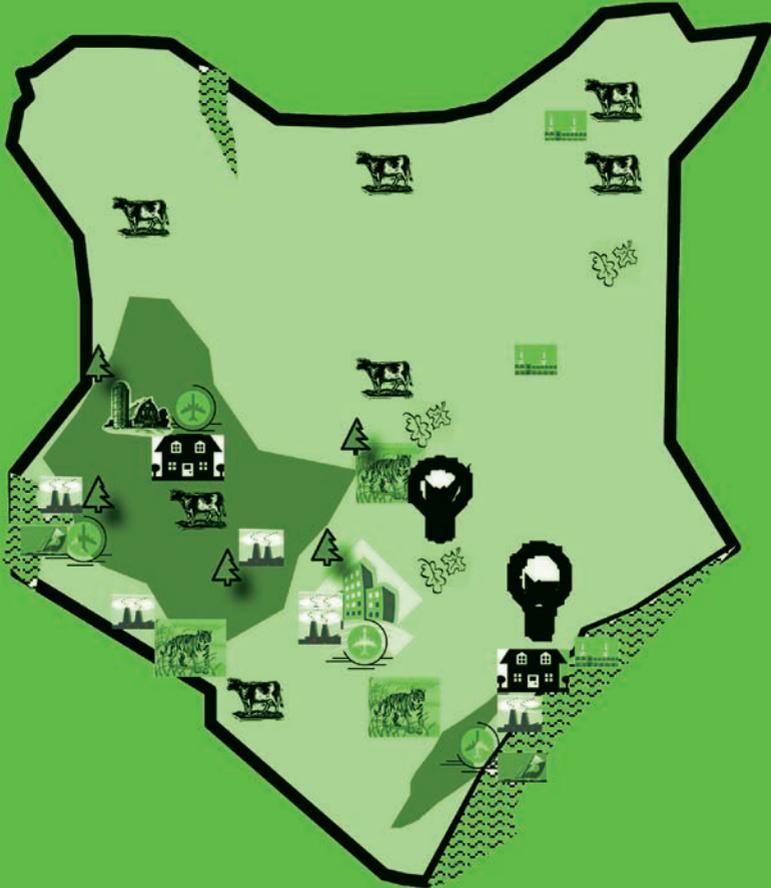
- Youth policies and programmes should be repackaged for relevance at the provincial levels, with the provinces being facilitated with appropriate manpower and financial support. This will enable local ownership and prioritisation according to specific needs of the population.
- There is need to stem the current idolisation of politicians, which makes the youth be easily drawn into political interests without due consideration of their benefits or consequences. The real challenge is to facilitate constructive role

models for youth at the school and community-level and to reduce the current preoccupation of youth with popular political figures. Such role models can be found in spiritual leaders, national heroes or sports celebrities. They can be established as ambassadors and proactive programmes can be instituted for regular engagement with in and out of school youth.

- Youth should be empowered to participate responsibly in the nation-building process through legislation for creation of youth cadres of political parties. By legislation, youth should also be represented in local development committees such as CDF and LATF.
- There should be programmes that aim to establish youth friendly policing to change the adversarial relationship between youth and law enforcement agencies. This will enable the youth to appreciate their role in community policing and discourage entry into crime.
- There should be grassroots-based advocacy programmes to create public awareness and garner broad support for youth engagement in community governance. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child could provide a context for policy education and a focal point for mobilisation.



WE CAN



Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
3rd Floor Kencom House, Moi Avenue
P.O. Box 34303 - 00100, Nairobi
Tel: 254 20 2240068/ 2245294
Fax: +254 20 312351
Email: infor@youthaffairs.go.ke
www.youthaffairs.go.ke