



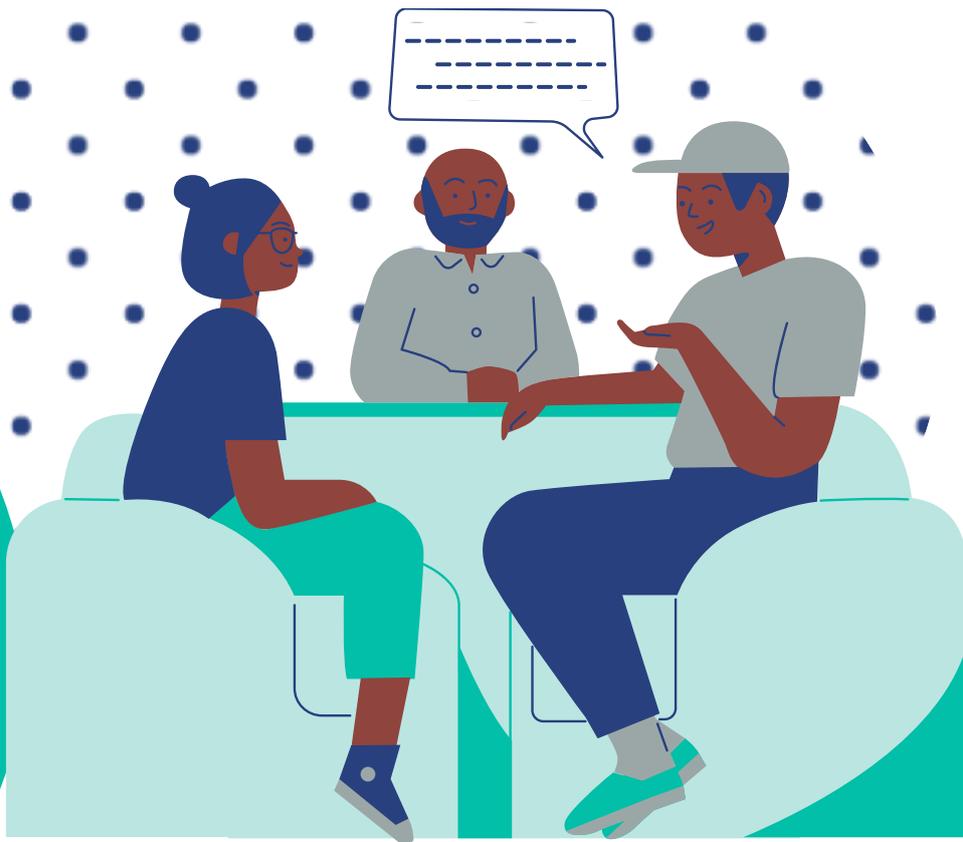
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Supporting Youth in Accessing Decent Employment in Kisumu, Kenya

According to Kisumu CIDP (2022-2023), the county's youth is estimated to account for approximately 40% of the total county's population which comprises 1,155,574 , with 556, 942 males; 594,609 females; and 23 intersex. **Alarmingly, 61% of them remain unemployed.** There currently exist government and private sector policies and programmes and interventions such as Uwezo Fund, National Youth Service, Kazi Mtaani, AGPO, KYEOP, Ajira Digital, County Revolving Fund for Women, Youth and Persons With Disability and Women Enterprise Fund that address the issue of youth unemployment in Kisumu County. However there remain **unfavorable conditions for youth to access the aforementioned interventions.** It is in this regard Youth Alive! Kenya embarked on research to understand the impact of government and private policies on youth skills development and entrepreneurship in Kisumu, with the goal of better supporting youth in accessing decent employment.



Disconnected Trainings and Incentives.

There exist government strategies, interventions and Vocational Training and Education (VET) centers equipping youth with new skills; however, the motivation of some youth is not always to acquire new skills. It appears that some youth are more interested in the stipends provided than in gaining skills.

“ We actively participated in the KYEOP program because of the Kshs 6,000 stipend we received at the end of the training and not because of the interest in gaining new skills”

Limited Skills and Experience Significantly Contribute to Unemployment.

As fresh graduates, youth lack the experience that most employers would require, and in addition to this, youth do not have the appropriate training that matches the job requirements despite having completed their studies.

“When we talk about high levels of unemployment, it should be understood that almost 90% of them are unemployable because they lack skills required in the job market.” -County government official-

Corruption and Nepotism are the Biggest Hurdle to Employment in Kisumu.

80% of youth and women respondents listed corruption and nepotism in the county government as the biggest hurdle to the current unemployment situation. This rings true not just for employment but for other interventions, where the youth respondents reiterated that these interventions only reach specific targeted people based on connection from the officials in-charge.

“Whenever county jobs are advertised and at the time of recruitment, the human resource officers are always likely to select only people from their families regardless of whether they are qualified or not; sometimes such people did not even apply for the jobs” -Youth respondent during a Focus Group Discussion-

PWDs not accessing funds designated for them.

There exists public procurement funds in the County, however PWDs only get 2% of the existing 30% reserved for youth, women and PWDs. The approval process by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection is highly bureaucratic and highly stringent, thus discouraging PWDs from accessing these funds.

Recommendations

The county government of Kisumu Department of Education, ICT and Human Resource–Youth and Gender Directorate should **design an inclusive and gender-lens policy making framework**- injecting the voices, perceptions and possible most felt need for the youth and women thus bottom-up ownership.

The county government of Kisumu Department of Education, ICT and Human Resource –TVET Directorates should **invest in equipping the existing vocational training centers with equipment and tools for training** to help mainstream youths to access market driven courses.

Public and private sectors should **make deliberate effort to employ persons with disabilities** in compliance with the relevant Kenyan employment policies.

The government should **formulate and implement policy instruments that provide for budgetary allocation to support increased employment opportunities for persons with disabilities** both in private and public sectors.

The **AGPO** capacity building initiative should be reviewed in order to address gaps and challenges relating to access of business grants and tender procurement opportunities by PWDs.

Methodology: this product is the result of a mixed methods research, conducted by Youth Alive Kenya, that involved 345 participants from Kisumu Kenya. Research respondents comprised yincluded youth from the informal settlements of Nyalenda, Manyatta and Kondele areas, rural areas of Tieng’re and Kibos areas of Kisumu West and East Sub-Counties, students from Maseno University, Government officials from the department of Education, ICT and Human Resource, National Employment Authority, Youth Enterprise fund, Local Chiefs from Nyalenda B ward, Central Kisumu and Parner civil society organizations TINADA, KEFEADO, OAY, YWCA, Njema Disability Group and Lakehub. The data was collected through the following mechanisms:

- 182 Surveys
- Focus Groups with 109 participants
- 54 Key Informant Interviews



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