

CHALLENGE
FUND
FOR
YOUTH
EMPLOYMENT

Youth
Aspiration
Report

Kenya

November 2020



This report has been produced by the Challenge Fund for Youth Employment
<https://fundforyouthemployment.nl/>

The Challenge Fund for Youth Employment (CFYE) is a 6-year programme funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, managed by Palladium, VSO Nederland and Randstad.

1. Executive Summary

This report presents the findings from research conducted among four categories of youth in nine locations across Kenya: Mombasa, Kisumu, Nairobi, Makueni, Machakos, Nandi, Isiolo, Taita and Kilifi. The goal of this research was to get insights from youth directly on employment and employability including challenges, opportunities and sectors that should be taken into account when shaping the Call for Solutions of the Challenge Fund for Youth Employment (CFYE), which will launch activities in Kenya in 2021.



The CFYE aims to create a prosperous future for 200,000 young women and men in the Middle East, North Africa, Sahel & West Africa, and the Horn of Africa. This will be achieved by supporting private sector driven youth employment initiatives in these regions. Initiatives supported by the Fund will offer youth, and particularly young women, opportunities for decent work. By decent

work, we mean work that delivers better prospects for personal development, is productive, offers a stable income, social protection, and safe working conditions.

The objectives of this research were threefold: (a) to find out how young people look at decency in employment, (b) to understand the challenges and opportunities in youth employment, and (c) to gather and understand their aspirations and whether these differ between the categories of young people. Data was collected through surveys and youth focus group sessions. The research was conducted by youth researchers and facilitated with support from youth volunteers.

The research provided some valuable insights. Young Kenyans pointed out that they would like to have increased access to skilling and upskilling opportunities, mentorships, internships, and apprenticeships. The participants indicated that there are opportunities in the creative sector, agriculture sector, and sectors in which they can work virtually and access regional and online markets. They mentioned that for youth-led SMEs to be successful more attention should be given to supporting youth start-ups and creating an enabling business environment. This would also require the government and other stakeholders to be active in terms of policy reforms and establishing information hubs. For employers to hire and support young employees more awareness-raising is needed. Often the benefits of hiring youth are not clear or company policies and practices do not fit young people's ambitions. More attention can be given to the inclusion of women in the workforce and other specific groups. According to the participants, youth can take an active role in tackling unemployment issues. There is a need for youth to organize themselves and advocate for reforms in the educational sector. They can take a stand when it comes to tackling exclusion due to corruption, nepotism, and tribalism.

Quotes: Youth's perception of their challenges

I am currently unemployed because I have not been able to qualify for the jobs I have applied for

I also do not have anyone to mentor me or tell me how to grow this business, so I am doing it on my own

I currently do not have a job because of communication barriers. There are no sign language interpreters

I am unemployed because there are limited jobs slots in this country

Because I was not qualified to be hired as a teacher, I started my business

The main challenge is capital to start a business

Most jobs are advertised online I don't have an internet-enabled phone and I don't have money to buy data bundles. By the time I get information on the job through word-of-mouth it is too late to apply

There are no jobs. Public and private sector are looking for experience, which youth do not have

Quotes: Proposed solutions

We need connections and networks to keep young people informed and improve their chances of getting jobs

I feel that an Information Hub will help us as young people to access information on getting jobs or starting businesses.

Advocacy and lobbying for employers to minimize the requirements on job applications and business running

Investment is needed in the creative sector and sports sector; there's a lot of opportunities to make money here for us

Policies that protect us as young mothers, provide job breaks and private rooms for us to attend to our children during working days



Skills trainings in Innovation in agriculture and agri-business sectors. We need support in smart farming techniques, and access to finances and markets

2. Introduction and approach

The overall goal of this research was to capture the voice of youth in Kenya. We gained direct insight into the aspirations of Kenyan youth, their views on decent work and the sectors with a healthy demand and opportunities for youth employment. These insights were directly used to verify and shape the proposed CFYE Call for Solutions in Kenya.

Data was collected through surveys and youth focus group sessions, which were facilitated with support from youth volunteer facilitators. The focus group sessions contained several open questions that were based on findings from literature research and sessions with youth employment stakeholders. Additionally, a participatory aspiration tool was used to ensure a direct focus on youth aspirations and capturing personal stories. This tool provided important insights into young people's views and the impact of the barriers to decent employment.

More specifically, the key research questions were as follows:

- ▶ To assess the views of youth on decent work.
- ▶ To gain insight into young people's career and work aspirations and whether these differ between different groups of young people;
- ▶ To get a detailed understanding of the challenges and opportunities for youth employment in Kenya.

A total of 196 youth informants were surveyed and asked about their views on decent jobs. The survey and focus group discussions provided both quantitative and qualitative data that are presented in this report.

3. Characteristics of Respondents

Who are the Kenyan 'youth'?

The Kenyan constitution generally defines youth as individuals between the ages of 18 to 35. During the youth aspiration sessions, we clustered the youth into four categories:

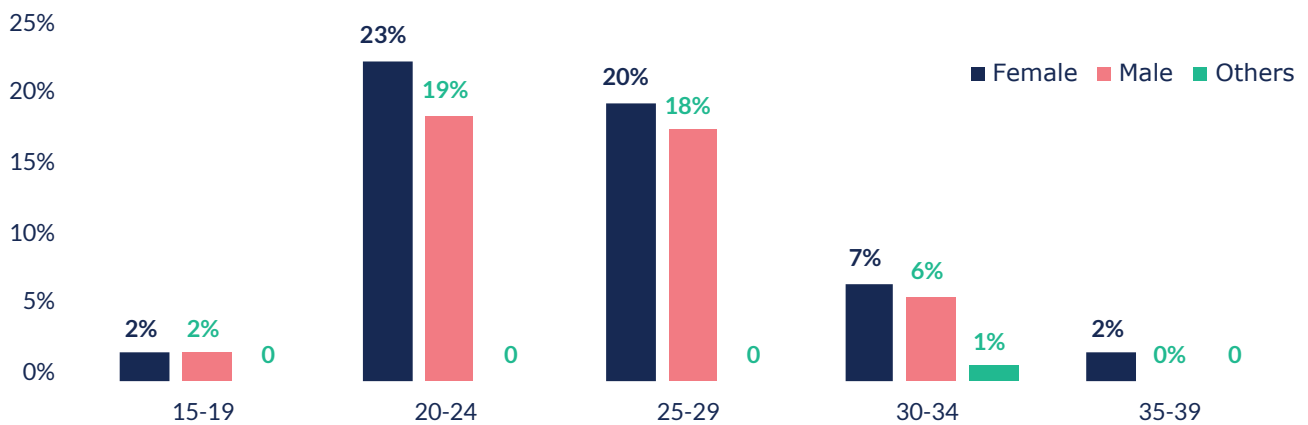
- ▶ **Category 1 - Marginalized, vulnerable youth with a distance to the labour market;** typically, youth with little to no formal education, young mothers from poor backgrounds, persons living with a disability, and youth from arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL areas). Most youngsters in this category have multiple vulnerabilities and the majority struggles to earn a living in their daily lives.
- ▶ **Category 2 - Rural-based youth with only/mostly access to unsustainable self-employment options but no additional social or physical challenges;** These young people generally live in peri-urban areas and often engage in agricultural activities. The highest level of education for most of them is either secondary school or certificate-level courses. This group would benefit from training opportunities to boost their skills and enhance access to entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.
- ▶ **Category 3 - Youth with a technical education (TVET) and the ability to become technical craftsmen;** This is the category of youth who are self-employed or employed and have studied in the area of mechanization, welding, plumbing, electricians, beauticians or similar vocational courses. This group has grown over time, with an increasing number of youths wanting to gain technical skills and to be self-employed.
- ▶ **Category 4 - University-educated youth based in urban areas (Nairobi, Kisumu, and Mombasa).** Approximately 50,000 graduates enter the labour market every year, and most migrate to urban areas in search of job opportunities creating vast competition for few available opportunities. According to the 2019 census, a majority of the population in urban areas is between the ages of 20 and 34. This group has the largest share of graduates.

In total, we interviewed 196 young people between the age of 15 and 35 and held 11 youth aspiration sessions across 9 counties, as follows:

- ▶ Category 1 - Marginalized and vulnerable youth sessions were held in Machakos, Isiolo and Nandi.
- ▶ Category 2 - Rural youth sessions were held in Makueni and Kilifi.
- ▶ Category 3 - TVET Youth sessions were held in Machakos, Makueni and Taita.
- ▶ Category 4 - University graduates' sessions held in Mombasa, Kisumu and Nairobi.

In some of the rural sessions, University-graduated youth with a distance to the labour market also participated.

Figure 1. Age ranges



Out of the 196 young people who participated in the survey, 54% were female, 45% male, and 1% identified as other. Out of the participants, 13% were youth with disabilities. 78% of the respondents were single, 19% married and 3% divorced. 58% of the participants were in

either formal or informal employment, or self-employed. Nearly half of the respondents (42%) were unemployed and currently seeking employment, in school, or preferred not to work or seek employment.

Figure 2. Marital status

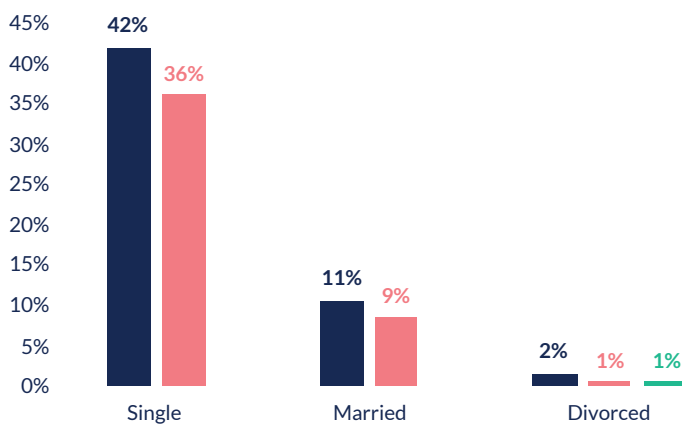
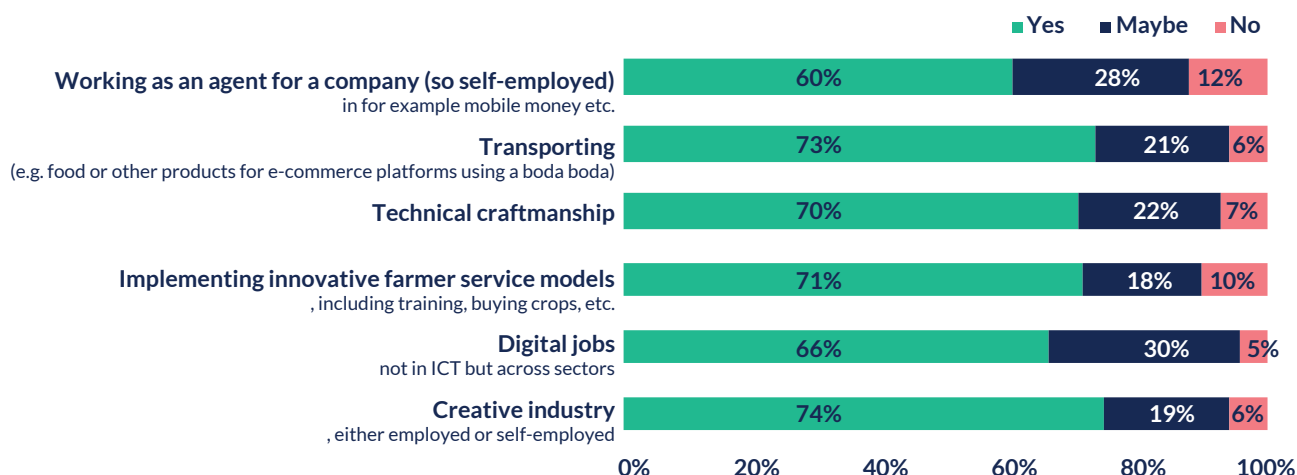


Figure 3. Employment Status

Categories	Female	Male	Total
Formally employed	7%	3%	10%
I prefer not to work because of circumstances	2%	0%	2%
In school	3%	4%	6%
Informally employed	10%	10%	20%
Seeking employment	19%	12%	31%
Not employed/Inactive jobseeker	2%	1%	3%
Self-employed	12%	16%	28%
Grand Total	55%	45%	100%

4. Youth Opinion on Job Sectors

Figure 1. Do the different categories of youth think the potential call windows would provide employment opportunities for them?



In this section, the respondents were asked to rank six areas on the level of potential to employ them. These areas were defined based on the scoping research. In general, across youth categories, transporting products and the creative industry were ranked as having the highest potential for youth (self) employment. This is closely followed by Technical Craftsmanship and innovative farmer service models. Although digital jobs and working as an agent scored lower in terms of employment opportunities compared to other areas, still over half of the youth see these areas as having the potential to provide opportunities.

In addition to this, during the focus group discussions, the TVET-educated youngsters (category 3) stated that agriculture and manufacturing are sectors with a healthy demand for staff. The construction sector was also highlighted because of the constant work-flow, good wages, the fact that it does not require advanced education, flexible working conditions (no fixed contract) and the fact that the government supports youth with training for certification in the construction sector. But, according to the focus group discussions, youth are less interested in working in construction as it is seen as a low-status job and as working conditions can be poor (depending on the construction company). TVET youth are more interested in trade and agribusiness.

The transport sector is mentioned frequently by marginalized youth (category 1) as a sector with

opportunities during the focus group discussions because it doesn't require a high level of education. Young business owners have created employment in these sectors. Most marginalised youth stated owning businesses as their aspiration because it has no education prerequisites. Rural youth (category 2) mentioned in the focus groups discussions that they prefer to work in the trade sector because other sectors such as the government, NGOs, corporates and health have high levels of bureaucracy and long working hours with no flexibility.

When it comes to the aspirations of University graduates (category 4), they are keen on becoming self-employed and some of the sectors that they mentioned with a healthy demand differed based on their context and location. For instance, young people in Mombasa look at shipping and logistics as an interesting sector, young people in Nairobi mentioned telecommunication, while rural youth with a university degree were more interested in agriculture and agri-based sectors. A high number of female participants in Nairobi indicated that there are opportunities in the creative industry. The sectors with a healthy demand that were mentioned by all urban-based university graduates included banking, information science and technology, online writing, accounting, and hospitality.

During the focus group discussions, it was also noted that women have an interest and would want to work in

sectors that traditionally do not employ a high number of women, like technical craftsmanship or digital jobs but only if there is:

- ▶ Protection against discrimination, gender-based violence and harassment;
- ▶ Availability of job breaks and private rooms to help mothers attend to their small children during working days;
- ▶ The ability to adjust work hours for them to attend

to domestic duties – this was mostly mentioned by young mothers;

- ▶ To be respected as equal employees – including tackling stereotypes on women not being able to engage in some tasks;
- ▶ Paid time off;
- ▶ Membership of trade unions - which will give them power and respect amongst their male colleagues.

4.1 Skills and Aspirations

Most participants in the focus group discussions felt that the education they received in school did not adequately prepare them for the labour market. Others were unsure if their skills were sufficient.

Most rural youngsters (category 2) mentioned that the gap between education and the demands of the labour market was caused by less focus on practical work in the curriculum and no exposure to the companies/ organisations in their sectors to facilitate traineeships or internships.

Young people with a background in technical education (category 3) felt that their vocational education prepared them well for the job market. Most youngsters in this category were passionate about their skills and were ready to upgrade them if they found an opportunity.

University-educated youth based in urban areas (category 4) stated that the skills they received through their education did not equip them for the workplace. They have been unable to utilize their skills and knowledge obtained in university and had to learn additional skills through training, short courses, and workshops to meet the demands of the job market.

5. Access to Available Jobs and Decent Work

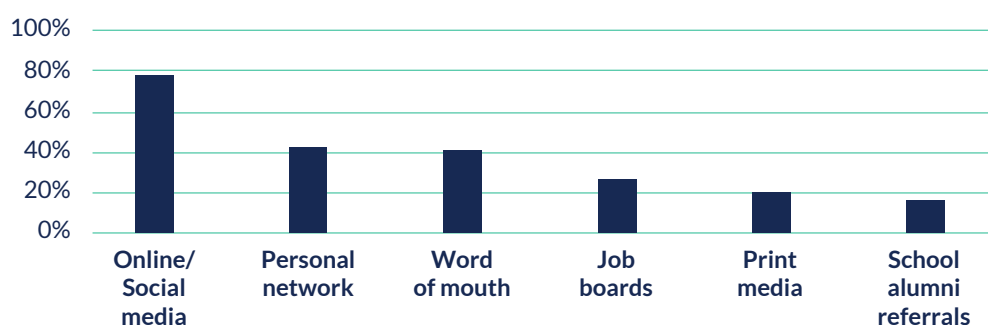
Youth were asked to give their view on what constitutes decent work. Key elements mentioned across categories of youth include:

- ▶ Compatible with your interest and passion;
- ▶ Provides job security and financial security;
- ▶ Is sensitive to well-being such as mental health and physical health;
- ▶ Provides safety and security;

- ▶ Has prospects for personal and career development;
- ▶ Provides freedom of expression, the possibility to speak out and to be heard;
- ▶ Provides an inclusive work environment catering to every person's needs.

Through the survey, we then asked youngsters to indicate how they access information on available jobs and work in their area. They could indicate multiple ways in which they access this information.

Figure 1. Where do you go to find information on available jobs/work in your area?



By far the most frequently mentioned way to access information on jobs was through online platforms and social media. This is followed by information through personal networks and word-of-mouth. The least used platforms were job boards, print media, and referrals made through school alumni. During the focus group discussions, youth also mentioned the local government administration, referrals, and announcements in religious groups as additional avenues of getting information on job opportunities.

It is interesting to note that although internet access remains a challenge in rural areas, youth do indicate social media as a leading information channel. It is also worth noting that the use of job agencies is only common among young people in urban areas.

With regards to study advice and employment

opportunities, young people can best be reached through the following channels:

- ▶ Formal youth group networks that work with grassroots youth
- ▶ Radio stations (including locally based media stations);
- ▶ Community leaders;
- ▶ Social media;
- ▶ Phone calls or emails;
- ▶ Forums, meetings, workshops organized by the different stakeholders;
- ▶ Information Education and Communication (IEC)

material such as posters.

The Challenge Fund for Youth Employment aims to work with implementing partners that offer different types of employment models. We, therefore, asked the youth to give more insight into how they perceive these models; Can you indicate how you would feel about the following employment models? Overall, the top 3 of the most popular employment models (scored positive or very positive):

Self-Employment

Standard Formal Employment in NGOs/Civil Society Organisations

Standard Formal Employment in Government/Public Sector

This is an interesting finding; while the Challenge Fund mainly works with private sector entities, the types of models that they introduce, or offer, may not (yet) be popular or well known among youth

Employment Models	Very Negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Very Positive	Rating	Popularity (1 highest, 8 lowest)
Agency Models	3,1%	17,9%	43,1%	29,7%	6,2%	35,9%	8
Internships	1,5%	9,2%	39,3%	42,3%	7,7%	50,0%	6
Self-Employment	0,5%	2,6%	10,7%	42,9%	43,4%	86,2%	1
Standard formal employment at Corporates	2,2%	13,4%	31,3%	45,8%	7,3%	53,1%	4
Standard formal employment at SMEs	2,0%	18,9%	29,1%	43,9%	6,1%	50,0%	6
Standard formal employment in Government/Public Sector	8,7%	18,4%	17,9%	39,3%	15,8%	55,1%	3
Standard formal employment in NGOs/Civil Society Organisations	1,0%	3,6%	23,0%	50,5%	21,9%	72,4%	2
Traineeships	0,0%	5,1%	41,8%	41,8%	11,2%	53,1%	4

In addition to the survey results above, participants in the focus group discussions also gave feedback on the different employment models:

- Agency models Positive but not so well-known yet; the models usually meet all criteria for a decent job as it is flexible but also can provide a good income.
- Internships Positive; because they help in personal growth and gain experience in careers, but in some instances, employers take advantage and overwork them.

- Self-employment Very positive; again because of flexible working hours, quick decision making, and the chance to enhance personal development skills.

- Standard formal employment at Corporates Positive; because of the good pay, health insurance, opportunities for growth through the extensive training provided, and good career prospects.
- Standard formal employment at SMEs Neutral; because there are often no skills required and there is less job security. It is often preserved as a daily-labour

job or low-quality job.

- ▶ Standard formal employment in Government/Public sector Neutral; even though these jobs offer security and many other privileges like pension schemes, there are few opportunities for personal development and the work gets monotonous and boring.
- ▶ Standard formal employment with NGOs/Civil Society organisations Very positive; despite the lack of job security, there are more benefits and opportunities for growth through the extensive training provided.
- ▶ Traineeships Positive as it provides an opportunity for

personal growth.

Although most of the young people are positive about working at Corporates and NGOs, there are little opportunities in these sectors. Young people state that because of this situation, they rather go for self-employment than wait for opportunities that are not there. As the Challenge Fund for Youth Employment supports private sector growth and works with SMEs, it is an interesting finding that most young people consider jobs at SMEs low-level jobs and therefore less attractive. How to create a pathway towards decent work within the SME sector will be an interesting nut to crack for the Fund and its implementers.

Figure 2. What aspects do you find most important in your job/work?

Aspects of Employment	Percentage
Income and benefits	32%
Personal development (skills development and training)	20%
Health, safety, and wellbeing	19%
Security of employment and social protection	14%
Working hours and work-life balance	11%
Travel and adventure	4%
Workers' representation	1%

The table shows that income and benefits are the most important assets in a job, followed by personal development and health, safety, and wellbeing in the workplace. Workers' representation as well as travel and adventure are considered least important. With most youth currently underpaid, their current focus is on getting a job that provides sufficient income and benefits, and one that harnesses their skills to the optimum.

Although underpayment is a widespread problem, most youth indicate that they find workers representation less important. Despite trade unions being the best platform for the youth to get such grievances heard, unions or workers' representation is hardly mentioned as most youth, do not have a lot of information on how trade unions can support their interest. In fact, the youth in the sessions stated that they felt that if they would complain about their job, they might lose it as a result. Young people would need assurance, information, and training on how trade unions can work for them to start sharing information and to understand how unions can offer protection.

6. Barriers to finding aspired employment

Personal Barriers

- ▶ Low educational levels and the high qualifications and experience asked for in job adverts make it hard to secure jobs
- ▶ Social identities such as disability
- ▶ Lack of information on available employment and opportunities to gain more skills
- ▶ Financial capacity to upskill and reskill – some youth have gone ahead and done this to position themselves, but some sectors with a healthy demand are quite expensive to reskill/upskill for
- ▶ Limited exposure to the world of work
- ▶ Lack of confidence and self-esteem to apply for jobs – a barrier mainly for TVET Youth
- ▶ Change of perspective and attitudes on opportunities available amongst the youth themselves
- ▶ Issues with mental health and well-being. Most TVET youth stated stress and depression as one of the barriers. There is a need for personal resilience training, to avoid youth indulging in vices like drugs and substance abuse. Some have undergone traumatising life experiences that left them few choices to earn a living
- ▶ Lack of advocacy and civic education amongst the youth, for them to know and claim their rights and hold the duty bearers to account

Other gender-related barriers that were identified through the focus group discussions are:

- ▶ Ladies are thought of as incapable of some jobs e.g. technical jobs, that require field experience;
- ▶ Men are not considered for jobs labelled 'for ladies' such as midwifery;
- ▶ Lack of understanding of tasks that women wouldn't do and those that they were to do to avoid physical or mental harm based on the tasks;
- ▶ Most men mentioned the favouritism that would be done in the spirit of women empowerment or personal interest by employers to give opportunities to women;

Structural Barriers

- ▶ Lack of inclusive opportunities - discrimination from the point of application because of marginalization (jobs requiring physically fit applicants locking out those with a disability) and education levels (employers preferring diploma holders to degree holders)
- ▶ Unfavourable government policies- Hefty business and job requirements - Licences and permits are too many and pricey for young entrepreneurs, such as a certificate of good conduct, KRA, HELB clearance
- ▶ Lack of support from both national and county governments- no extension services
- ▶ Corruption- embezzlement of funds that are meant to benefit the young people and marginalized groups such as youth with disabilities
- ▶ Nepotism and tribalism - you need to have the right connections or enough money for bribes to access training, jobs, start-up funding
- ▶ Harassment/intimidation from employers, such as employers asking for sexual favours as a condition for employment
- ▶ For Agriculture and Agribusiness ventures – There are no government extension services, and the climate change is unpredictable, need for smart and resilient farming

- ▶ Working hours are also a gender-related barrier as some women need to leave early to attend domestic duties and hence, they wouldn't do overtime that would then affect their level of income;
- ▶ Sexual harassment in male-dominated jobs;
- ▶ Misleading societal misconceptions about women and some professions;
- ▶ Favouritism based on gender in job interviews.

6.1 Issues specific to certain youth categories include:

Category 4 - University-educated youth based in urban areas (Nairobi, Kisumu, and Mombasa). Approximately 50,000 graduates enter the labour market every year, and most migrate to urban areas in search of job opportunities creating vast competition for the few available opportunities. According to the 2019 census, most of the population in urban areas is concentrated between ages 20 and 34, with the largest share of graduates.

- ▶ Discrimination by employers - most prefer diploma holders to degree holders
- ▶ Lacking relevant skills required in the job market
- ▶ Job requirements, not favourable such as experience levels, too much credentials documents

Category 3 - Youth with a technical education (TVET) and the ability to become technical craftsmen; This is the category of youth who are self-employed or employed and have studied in the area of mechanization, welding, plumbing, electricians, beauticians or similar vocational courses. This group has grown over time, with an increasing number of youths wanting to gain technical skills and to be self-employed.

- ▶ A lack of self-esteem and confidence hinders TVET youth from applying for jobs – fear of employer expectations and standards
- ▶ Unfavourable government policies for businesses e.g. permits, licences

Category 2 - Rural-based youth with only/mostly access to unsustainable self-employment options but no additional social or physical challenges; These young people generally live in peri-urban areas and often engage in agricultural activities. The highest level of education for most of them is either secondary school or they may have done certificate level courses. This group would benefit from training opportunities to boost their skills and enhance access to entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.

- ▶ Lack of information on available opportunities
- ▶ Unfavourable climate conditions and quality farm inputs for agribusiness opportunities
- ▶ Nepotism, Tribalism, and corruption

Category 1 - Marginalized, vulnerable youth with a distance to the labour market; like youth with little to no formal education, young mothers from poor backgrounds, persons living with a disability, and youth from arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL areas). Most youngsters in this category have multiple vulnerabilities and the majority struggles to earn a living in their daily lives.

- ▶ Opportunities do not address their unique needs – their education level, disability status, or employer expectations of hours to put in
- ▶ Uneven job competition grounds – competing for job opportunities with able-bodied peers, or exposed urban youth

7. Stories

Debora Cherono is a 22-year-old deaf woman based in Chemase, a rural part of Nandi. She is a student studying ECD and hopes to become a teacher in the future. Debora says she hasn't been able to get a job because opportunities are not inclusive. For the opportunities to be accessible, Debora says employers need to be trained on being inclusive and have Kenya Sign Language interpreters. According to Debora, youth also needs training on technical skills like hairdressing to be able to start their businesses.



28-year-old **Maureen Mwakio** is from the rural Kilifi county. A form four leaver (O-Level), and currently not employed. Maurine runs her own business. She hopes to get training in agriculture and business and employ herself because most public and private sectors are looking for experience, which many youngsters don't have. She says if the youth are trained and given grants to start their own businesses that will help reduce the rising unemployment rate in Kilifi, and eventually Kenya.

Harrison Kariuki, a 30-year old deaf man based in Nandi, was unemployed for a long time, and finally got a job at the government as a social development officer. Harrison says the biggest challenge has been for deaf children and youth to get access to quality education, which affects their employability. He hopes to start a school in the future, in order for his peers to get access to life-long learning opportunities and access employment opportunities in line with their interests.





Robert Gitau is 23-year-old a university graduate, with a bachelor's in actuarial science, based in Nairobi. He says he hasn't been employed because he doesn't qualify for most jobs. He needs access to professional exams and avenues to gain experience. His aspiration, however, is to be self-employed in the creative design sector. His biggest barrier is access to capital and the business permits are very expensive. He needs access to information on how to get started in business and needs a mentor to guide him on the expectations and requirements, including access to capital. He speaks for other artists as well and says more investment and support is needed for start-ups in Creative arts.

Florence Chege, a TVET graduate based in the peri-urban Machakos county, is currently not employed and is keen to start a beauty shop. She studied something totally different in school and looked for platforms for her to learn on the job. She aspires to own a beauty shop because that's where her passion is. Florence says training on beauty, and capital will help her make her dream a reality.



8. Conclusion and recommendations¹

The research shows five overarching conclusions and recommendations that are critical according to youth in Kenya:

- 1. Linking and brokering remain essential to ensure Kenyan youth have access to information and learning opportunities** - Kenya is a large country with strong regional differences. Youth across these regions indicate that they gather information on jobs and internships more and more through social media, in addition to the use of personal networks. The usage of internet and social media offers the opportunity to explore the usage of online platforms to support reskilling and upskilling, as well as sharing of job and learning opportunities. Youth recommend accompanying this with creating physical information hubs at a local level, to ensure less digital connected youth are reached. A brokering role by CFYE or CFYE implementing partners could support youth's recommendation to support business start-ups, scale-ups and providing of linkages to government or private business development services. The services need to be made accessible, as currently the cost of accessing is frequently too high and a major barrier. Youth recognize that digital business development services (BDS) can support many other actors on the demand side – both individuals and businesses - to improve their own businesses (B2B) or improve access to products and services (B2C).
- 2. System level change needs to be considered to enable Kenyan youth to thrive** - While youth indicate that skills and opportunities are important, so is an enabling environment. They recommend attention to influencing or advocating for creating an enabling business environment through CFYE investments, especially for start-ups. This includes attention to government systems and policies. This may also include attention to corruption, nepotism, and tribalism, across sectors including the education sector.
- 3. Decency and valuing diversity are key messages for Kenyan employers** - Youth highlight the importance of awareness and capacity of employers to provide decent and inclusive jobs. They aspire to work in an environment that is safe, values diversity, provides good pay, and supports personal development. Often, the benefits of hiring youth are not clear or company policies and practices do not fit young people's ambitions. Although youth could benefit from connecting with trade unions, only few of them see the value of workers' representation. Most young people are not informed about the role that these unions can play in ensuring decent working conditions and providing workers protection.
- 4. Invest in a resilient future through a focus on green and emerging sectors, with an explicit focus on rural areas** - Youth are future focused and are looking for ways to deal with (sudden) challenges that arise on a continuous basis. They welcome investment in developing skills that prepare them for the future (including digital skills) and that support them to navigate successfully towards what they aspire to. The impact of Covid and climate change are apparent as causing major challenges. Climate-resilient agribusiness ventures are identified as an opportunity in this, especially since the majority of the unemployed and underemployed youth are currently based in rural areas. Youth working in agriculture therefore mention to continue to be heavily impacted by the effects of climate change. Building a green(er) economy can contribute to this more resilient future. This also goes for diversifying of investments in non-agri emerging sectors, such as the creative industry, arts and sports, virtual work solutions. Entrepreneurship opportunities in these areas are especially identified as major areas of interest and opportunity. The rise and embrace of the digital era has been evident across the youth categories, they recommend a focus on competency in digital skills.
- 5. Kenyan youth remain to experience diverse barriers to employment that can be jointly solved by actors** - Barriers to achieving youth aspirations mentioned by the Kenya youth can be categorised into three levels: social-cultural (e.g. tasks are not assigned to women because of their gender), personal (e.g. lack of confidence in applying for jobs) and systematic (unresponsive education and training system)

¹ Note - the recommendations need to be place-based, responding to the local context, the varying needs of young people and the employment ecosystem in the respective counties within Kenya.