

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

**STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN KENYA:
A CASE STUDY OF MAKADARA DIVISION, NAIROBI**

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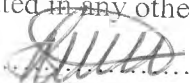
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Declaration

I declare that this project paper is the result of my own work and that it has not been submitted in any other University.

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Date .. 01/12/2008

Kurgat Kibet Benard

This project paper has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor.

Sign 

Date..... 01. 12. 2008

Dr. Edward Ontita

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my beloved mum, Juliana Marisin, my wife, Abigael and my children Brian and Derrick.

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Acknowledgment

I wish to convey my sincere thanks and gratitude to all those who supported me in any respect towards the success of this project. Particular thanks go to my supervisor Dr. Edward Ontita for his invaluable pieces of advice that helped in the planning and implementation of the project.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

- CBO - Community Based Organization
- GDP - Gross Domestic Product
- CDF - Constituency Development Fund
- NARC - National Rainbow Coalition
- ILO - International Labour Organization
- MA - Master of Arts
- NGO - Non Governmental Organization
- UN- United Nations
- UNO - United Nations Organization

Abstract

The youth, who form a critical mass of the Kenyan population, are unemployed. Efforts have been made to alleviate the problem of youth unemployment in Kenya. However, these strategies and efforts have come under intense scrutiny in the recent years with the ever rising unemployment rates. This research set to critically examine the existing strategies and efforts to alleviate unemployment among the urban youth with the view to make recommendations on how best the strategies can be implemented. The research also aimed to suggest other viable strategies to help reduce the unemployment problem.

The research was divided into various distinct sections. A situational analysis was carried out to provide an in-depth understanding of the research problem. The base data collected was analyzed to help in the formulation of the research problem.

During the research proper, the study population was segmented into strata to represent the various sub-groups in the population. A sample for the study was randomly drawn from the study population. Data was collected through the use of focus group discussions and interviews.

From the research findings, it is clear that the problem of unemployment and especially among the urban youth has grown to grotesque proportions. The existing strategies have not been effective enough to combat youth unemployment. The policy deficiencies are aggravated by the general lack of skills and job apathy among the youths, and the general decline in the national economic growth.

The research suggests ways through which *the existing strategies, and specifically the National Youth Policy and the Poverty Eradication Plan*, can be enhanced and be effectively implemented to create adequate job opportunities for the youth. There is need for concerted and deliberate efforts to encourage investment activities as this will expand the economy and the trickle effects would result in jobs creation. The education system should be re-oriented to make it relevant to the job market needs. The emphasis should be on skills acquisition and not merely to pass exams. The changes should be made at all levels of education.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The problem of unemployment, and especially among the youth, is one of the greatest challenges facing Kenya and other developing countries. After Kenya's independence in the 1960s, most youth programmes were largely social and recreational in nature. After the Kericho Conference on Education, Employment and Rural Development held in 1966, there has been a sustained focus on youth issues. The problem of youth unemployment was acknowledged in the Third National Development Plan of 1974 – 1978. Efforts to initiate youth development programmes are reflected in the subsequent policy documents such as the Sessional paper No. 2 of 1992 on Small Scale and *Jua kali* Enterprises, the 1997 – 2001 Development Plan and the National Poverty Eradication Plan 1999 – 2015.

The youth form 60% of the total labour force in Kenya, according to the Kenya National Youth Policy draft 2006. However, the majority of them have not been absorbed into the job market due to the country's high unemployment level. Statistics from the Ministry of Youth indicate that about 60% of all those who are unemployed are those below the age of 30 years and 45% are below 24 years (Ministry of Youth, Report, 2006); hence unemployment in Kenya is majorly a youth problem. The levels of unemployment and more so youth unemployment were highest in Kenya during the 1990s when the country began to implement structural adjustment programmes (Kenya, 2004). Implementation of the programmes was a pre-condition for governments in the developing world to get financial assistance from the Breton Woods institutions (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund). The implementation resulted in massive loss of jobs in the public sector through retrenchment programme. The KIPPRA discussion paper No. 31 (2004) identifies various predisposing situations for youth unemployment such as the high population growth; unclear and uncoordinated youth policies and programmes in various government ministries and youth organizations; and lack of national definition of 'youth'.

The World Bank Research Programme report on World Development (2005-2007) identified various factors that have aggravated the problem of unemployment in the developing world. Employment policies in most companies requiring several years of work experience are a hindrance. This has been a major hurdle to school-leavers since the curriculum being offered

does not offer much practical and entrepreneurial skill to the school leavers at the Secondary school level.

The World Bank report further notes that attitude is another factor causing unemployment among the youth. First, there is a cross-section of the society that believe that the youth are incapable of handling certain responsibilities. Some of the youth have a negative attitude towards certain jobs. The clamour for white-collar jobs (the white-collar-job syndrome) has taken a toll on them. They have not adapted to a saying that “the best education is that which trains the Head, Heart and Hand: (Youth Opinion, August/September 2003).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

It is instructive to note that, most of the youth, who form a critical mass of the Kenyan population, are unemployed. The result has been a general rise in crime and violence especially among the urban youth.

To help alleviate the problem of unemployment, a number of strategies and policy measures have been put in place, both at the government level and at the private sector and civil society levels. The government efforts to solve the problem of youth unemployment coalesce around the following two key initiatives:

- The establishment of the National Youth policy
- The National Poverty eradication strategies

The National Youth Policy was established to address issues affecting young people by providing broad framework within which all stakeholders, including the private, public sector and the civil society, can contribute to youth development.

One of the specific targets of the poverty Eradication Plan is the reduction of the materially poor in the total population by 20% by 2004, and by a further 30% by 2010. Urban youth unemployment is among the key aspects mitigating factors to urban poverty.

The government has also partnered with the private sector to provide opportunities for the youth to develop themselves.

However, these strategies and efforts have come under intense scrutiny in the recent years with the ever rising unemployment rates. As stated earlier in this report, there has been an increase in unemployment despite implementation of the poverty eradication and youth

policies. This research therefore set to critically examine the existing strategies and efforts to alleviate unemployment among the urban youth with the view to make recommendations on how best the strategies can be implemented. The research also aimed to suggest other viable strategies to help reduce the unemployment problem.

Specifically, the research focused on the implementation of the National Youth Policy provision on youth employment and the Poverty eradication strategy policy, with a bias on alleviating the problem of urban youth unemployment.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the state of youth unemployment in Kenya?
2. What are the existing strategies by the government, civil society and the private sector in alleviating material poverty in Kenya?
3. To what extent have the strategies in the national youth policy and the poverty eradication plan been implemented to alleviate youth unemployment in Kenya?
4. What resources, programmes and opportunities exist in the job market for the youth?
5. What are the proposed strategies to help alleviate the problem of youth unemployment in Makadara and the country at large?

1.4 Research objectives

The overall objective of this research was to assess the present policies and strategies in alleviating urban youth unemployment and recommend ways through which the policies can effectively contribute to the alleviation of urban youth unemployment.

Specific objectives:

The specific objectives include:

1. An assessment of the state of youth unemployment in Kenya
2. Examination of the existing strategies by the government, civil society and the private sector in alleviating material poverty in Kenya;
3. Review of the implementation of the provisions of the national youth policy and the poverty eradication strategy plan to reduce incidences of unemployment among the urban youth;
4. Identify resources, programmes and opportunities in the job market for the youth.

5. Making recommendations on how the problem of unemployment, especially among the urban youth, can be alleviated.

1.5 Justification of the study

Some of the policies and strategies used in the attempt to alleviate youth unemployment could be productive if well-directed and if some form of harmony is infused in the various initiatives. This study aimed at creating awareness of the strategies used in Makadara Division. This will enable policy makers to make informed decisions in their attempt to tackle unemployment, not just in Makadara Division, but also in areas with similar conditions.

1.6 Research scope and Limitations

The study was carried out in Makadara Division, Nairobi East District, and Nairobi Province of Kenya. Some of the limitations to the research included:

1. Lack of co-operation or unavailability of some potential respondents especially the politicians, and the local administration. This was solved through constant tracking of the respondents
2. Lack of adequate time and resources limited the scope of the study to Makadara Division in Nairobi

1.7 Definitions of terms

Youth- Mbatia (1978) says each society defines someone as youth depending on what is under consideration. In the same society there could be a social cultural definition, cross culturally one would get different definitions. The Kenya National Youth Policy (2006) defines a youth as “one aged between 15-30 years”. This takes into account the physical, psychological, cultural, social, biological and political definitions of the term. This study used the definition of a youth as stated in the Youth policy.

Mbithi (1975) points out that UNO defines youth as – the population between 14 and 25 years. Hence the UN emphasizes the age criterion in the defining the term, with many categories of youth e.g. educated and uneducated.

The United Nations defines youth as – the population between 14 and 25 years. Hence the UN emphasizes the age criterion in the defining the term, with many categories of youth e.g. educated and uneducated.

Unemployment - According to Ndegwa (1975), he defines unemployed person as a person who has no opportunity to perform those tasks for which he is culturally adopted.

Turkham1971:19 states that unemployment is where those members of the population who are seeking work or additional work at going wage rates and who are not in fact employed. This excludes those unemployed.

This study defines unemployment as consisting of members of the labour force who are either seeking income generating work since they are not working or not seeking income through not working

Policy-oxford dictionary defines policy as a plan of action agreed or chosen by a political party or government or principal that one believes in that it influences how one behaves

• **Strategies**-it is a plan that is intended to achieve a particular purpose for example in my study it is to develop a plan for dealing with unemployment

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.0 Introduction

This chapter reviewed the available literature on unemployment in general and strategies which have been suggested to reduce unemployment among the youth. The review focused mainly on the implementation of the Poverty Eradication Plan (1999 – 2015) and the National Youth Policy.

Various scholars have defined the term ‘unemployment’ from different angles. According to Karl Priham (1946), “unemployment is a condition of labour market in which the supply of labour power is greater than the number of available openings”. Therefore, unemployment occurs when the labour market has excess supply of the required labour power. Madan’s (1965) definition of unemployment is closer to Karl Priham’s. He notes the term connotes the absence of opportunities of job for persons who are able to work and desirous to work.

The above definitions focus on the supply-demand dynamics of the labour market and tend to ignore the ‘value’ aspect of employment. In his definition, Fairchild (1978) acknowledges the value of employment. He says unemployment is enforced and involuntary separation from remunerative work on the part of the normal working force during normal time, at normal wages and under normal conditions. This view is supported by Beveridge (1931) when he philosophically claims “unemployment is like a headache or a high temperature – unpleasant and exhausting but carrying in itself any explanation of its course.”

Economics literature has often sought to distinguish **voluntary** from **involuntary** unemployment. Voluntary unemployment is attributed to the individual unemployed workers (and their decisions), whereas involuntary unemployment exists because of the socio-economic environment (including the market structure, government intervention, and the level of aggregate demand) in which individuals operate. The study focused mainly on involuntary unemployment. From the study findings, unemployment in developing countries is often caused by burdensome government regulations. The World Bank’s Doing Business project shows how excessive labor regulation increases unemployment among women and youths in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America.

The problem of unemployment has been very acute in Kenya for the last decade. Thousands of youth remain unemployed in cities and even villages. However, the problem of unemployment is not particularly in Kenya alone, countries like India experience unemployment as far back as 1924.

Efforts have been made to try and alleviate this problem by reforming the education system. According to the World Bank Research Programme report on World Development (2005-2007) people are unemployed because they lack the necessary skills to perform an assortment of jobs available to them in the informal sector. Since the sector is not regulated, the government is not aware of the workers' need for training. Further, if enough workers were to receive training, it is probable that the problem of chronic unemployment would begin to be addressed in formal terms. However, a larger part of this argument relies on the growth potential of this informal sector. The World Bank report further notes that "Kenya's informal sector constitutes 98 percent of all businesses in the country, absorbs annually up to 50 percent of new non-farm employment seekers, has an employment growth rate of 12 to 14 percent, and contributes 30 percent of total employment and 3 percent of GDP". As it only contributes 3% of the economy's output but takes on 30% of the total work force, we can establish at this juncture that though the informal sector hires a lot of workers it contributes relatively little of the country's output.

2.1.2 Employment

The formal sector has failed to meet the challenges of employment creation and income generation. According to the National Development Plan of 2002-2008, the main factors for the decline in the economic growth are: high production costs, increased competition from cheap imported products and the then public sector reforms programme. Traditionally, the government, through the civil service, has been the major source of employment. However, with the dwindling government fortunes and rapid population growth, there is an overwhelming number of people who can not find jobs in the government. In fact, at some point, the government had frozen all new job vacancies until when the NARC government took over after the 2002 General Elections. Even then, the available positions were too few to meet the demand from both trained and semi-skilled persons. The private sector and other Non-governmental organizations employ a relatively large number of people, but mainly skilled and professionals.

2.1.3 The National Youth Policy

The national youth policy in Kenya is one of the initiatives by the government to address issues affecting the youth. Drafted in 2006, the policy identifies, among others, the following as the key issues impinging on the youth:

- Unemployment and underemployment
- Health-related problems such as the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among the youth
- Increasing school and college dropout rates
- Crime and deviant behaviour
- Limited sports and recreational facilities
- Abuse and exploitation

Among the policy's priority strategic areas is employment creation. As earlier noted, about 500,000 youths graduate from various tertiary institutions every year, ready to enter the job market. However, due to the slow economic growth, corruption, nepotism, and demand for experience by potential employers, most of the youth remain unemployed. The policy identifies several interventions which form the basis of its implementation on the creation of youth employment opportunities. They include the following:

- Reviewing the existing youth programmes to identify their level of operation with a view to making them relevant and responsive to the needs of the youth.
- Identifying and partnering with civil society-owned programmes addressing the problem of youth unemployment
- Facilitating the establishment of resource centres at the community level where the youth can get information, training, recreation, and counseling on employment creation
- Establishing, in partnership with relevant organizations, a high-level resource centre for technical support to youth income-generating activities
- Initiating and promoting programmes that encourage youth initiative in credit management and involvement in the co-operative movement
- Reviewing employment and training policies to encourage companies to offer temporary employment, internship and volunteer opportunities to the youth
- Encouraging youth-groups' activities by providing them with necessary skills to build their capacities
- Allocating funds specifically for youth entrepreneurs
- Creating awareness on labour laws and workers' rights

- Prosecuting employers who exploit and underpay the youth
- Establishing minimum quotas for marginalized youths during recruitment in both public and private sectors
- Developing business incubators and providing mentorship to the youth.

The policy has been under implementation for the last two years. However, judging by the rising youth unemployment, the policy falls short of meeting its objectives. The only notable milestone in its implementation was the creation of the Ministry of Youth, and the subsequent launch of the Youth Enterprise Development Fund in June 2006. Most of the interventions stated in the Policy are yet to be actualized.

2.1.4 The National Poverty Eradication Plan 1999 – 2015

The Plan provides a national policy and institutional framework for urgent action against poverty in Kenya. The need for poverty eradication arose from the persistence of poverty despite past efforts to combat it through national development planning and special programmes.

The creation of productive employment opportunities is one of the most serious challenges facing Kenya today. The plan seeks to protect and enhance the assets and income streams of the poor, to build and enhance assets through group cooperation, support for new marketing initiatives, and the early removal of local and national government regulations which obstruct informal business.

One of the specific targets of the poverty Plan is the reduction of the poor in the total population by 20% by 2004, and by a further 30% by 2010. The plan has identified various aspects of urban livelihood and poverty and mitigating initiatives.

Urban unemployment

The 1998 Economic survey reveals that in the five years from 1991 to 1996, the urban workforce rose by 19% from 700,000 persons to 830,000 persons. Urban employment in Nairobi fell slightly from just over 51% in 1991 to 47% in 1996. Employment in community, social and personal services accounted for almost 40% of the total employment, followed by manufacturing industries at 21%. Wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels

contributed 16.5%, transport and communications, construction and business services each contributed 10% of the total employment.

Some features of urban poverty reflect the social character of the poor. For example, street children and disabled beggars in the major urban centers represent a category of individuals in especially difficult circumstances. Such people are assisted through programmes organized by the social services and children's departments. Other features of urban poverty are solved through physical improvement to informal settlements.

The main contributions to the eradication of income poverty in the urban areas come from:

- *Jua kali* and other informal sector activities
- Government protection of lawful informal sector
- Improvement in the quantity of employment created by the corporate private sector

The many licenses and controls imposed on small businesses are punitive and discourage small scale enterprises. The permissions and licences create an opportunity for corruption and harassment of the small business people and in effect, an uncontrolled tax on the informal sector which does not benefit Government revenues.

2.1.5 Informal sector

The informal sector is becoming an increasingly important feature of the Kenyan economy. It has overshadowed the formal sector and its employment growth averages over 10% annually, according to the 2002-2008 development plan. The 1997 Economic Survey records that almost 1.7 million people were engaged in the urban informal sector in 1996. Thus the informal sector accounted for about a third of the total urban population.

Despite the significant role of the informal sector in economic growth, productivity growth in this sector has been slow, a consequence of inadequate technical skills, lack of adequate and appropriate credit facilities and institutional support.

One of the ways to assist the informal sector is for the Government to help organize secure premises and other sites for the urban small scale enterprises. Land and premises close to markets are particularly scarce and expensive for the small business operators. Policies

towards this course are in place but their implementation has been hampered by rampant inefficiency, waste and lack of political goodwill.

Corporate sector support to the informal sector

Financial institutions have shown an increasing interest in small and micro-enterprises. Incentives range from reduced security requirements, low interest rates, and affordable loan repayment rates.

Whereas these measures are laudable, their sustainability is dependent on stable economic conditions and prudent management of the economy. We are yet to see this happen.

The 2002-2008 National Development Plan notes that, as a result of uncoordinated and unplanned rapid urbanization in Kenya, problems of insecurity, informal settlements, environmental degradation and deteriorating public health standards are manifest. Urbanization strategies in the plan focus on housing, water and sanitation, solid waste management, road and transport infrastructure. The plan does not provide any specific strategies for creating employment opportunities to the many urban youths.

2.1.6 The Kenya Vision 2030

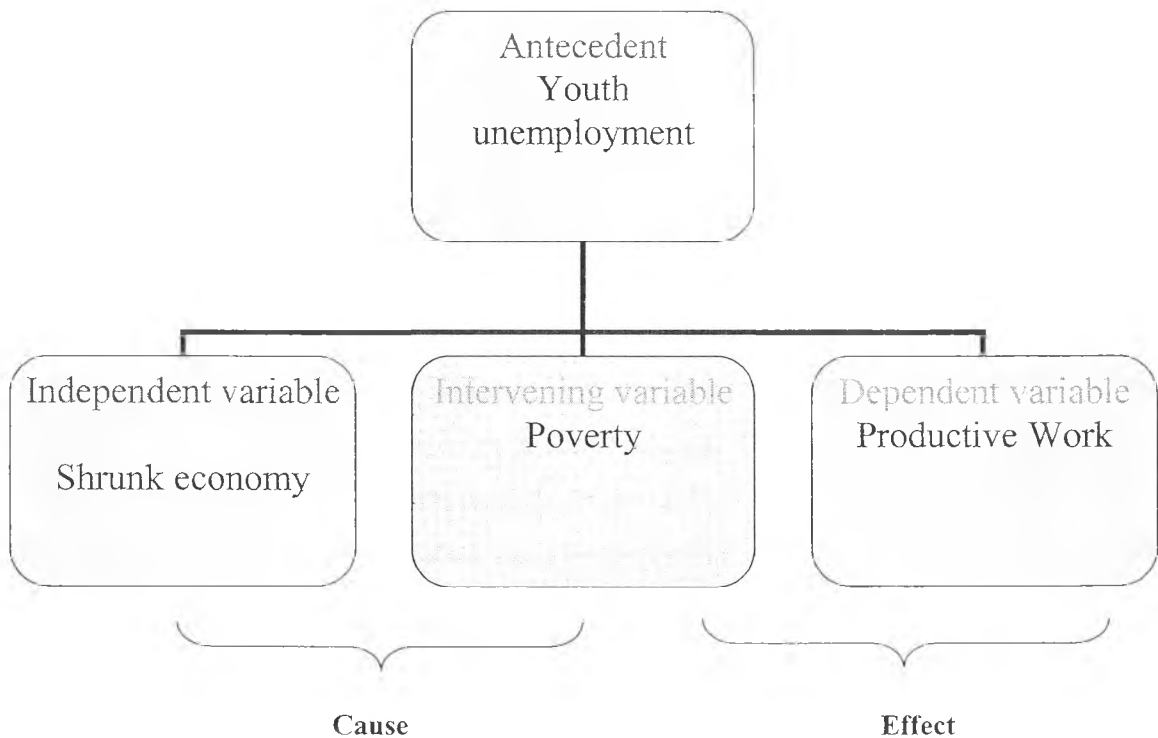
The Kenya Vision 2030 endeavours to enhance equity and wealth creation opportunities for the poor. It outlines, among other areas for special attention, the unemployed youth, women and other vulnerable groups. Under the flagship projects for the gender, youth and vulnerable groups are: to institutionalize the Women Enterprise Fund and increase its overall amounts and efficiency in projects launched by its beneficiaries, and to increase the Youth Enterprise Fund and ensure efficient and productive use of funds allocated to youth groups. These are steps in the right direction, especially in helping to redress the problem of unemployment and subsequently reduce poverty. However, as rightly noted in the vision, sustainable economic development with supportive political climate are imperative if the problem of poverty and its cause-effect constituents are to be effectively addressed and eliminated.

2.1.7 Conceptual framework

According to the Economic Survey 2005 report, 'employment' refers to performance of work. The term is used to measure the number of persons employed, including persons at work during a short reference period, and those temporarily absent from work but holding a

job. The concept of ‘work’ covers all the people undertaking economic activities either for pay, profit or family gain. From the point of view of the System of National Accounts, economic activities include all market production and certain types of non-market production namely: the production of primary products for own consumption, the processing of primary commodities, the production of fixed assets for own use and the production for own consumption of other commodities.

This research study focused on the concept of ‘work’ and how work relates to employment. The study framework identifies ‘work’ as any activity whose results are productive in economic and or material terms. Therefore, in defining youth unemployment, the guiding principle is ‘work that is economically productive to the youth, directly or otherwise.’ The diagram below shows the inter-dependability of the concepts:



Theoretical Framework

People have been thinking about and developing theories of social life service early in history. Many early theorists like Max Weber, Karl Marx and Simmels were occupied with the great social upheaval and conflict brought about by all as a reaction to the industrial

revolution and capitalization. They studied problems caused and tried to find ways of solving them through change and social reform.

Some theories and theories of classical sociologists are applicable and relevant today. For example, Karl Marx (1818-1883) writings on class, conflict, capitalism, economics and structure are manifest and practical in many forms today. Max Weber (1864-1920) theories on status, power ratio realization, bureaucracy are still largely significant in the modern social theories and widely applicably in the current social realities.

Karl Marx (conflict and social change) is one of the well-known conflicts theorists who view social change as only possible through conflicts. He was critical of the political economists for failing to see the inherent conflict between capitalists and the laborers and for denying the need for a radical change in economic order. This view continues to influence many people in Kenya especially those in agricultural industry. In the large tea growing estates in Kericho owned by multinationals who are capitalists, the conflict has been labor-intensive methods. When tea-picking machines were introduced in 2000, many tea-pickers were laid-off. This led to a serious labour strife between the trade unions representing the workers and the employers. When the employers kept deaf ear, the workers resorted to either a go-slow system' or demonstrated.

Class stratification in Kenya is reflected in all spheres of life such as health, education and employment. The youth from affluent families have access to good education; health facilities, which lead them, secure lucrative jobs and live decent lives. Those from poor families or low class families are largely disadvantaged when it comes to access to quality education. Hence social status determines who gets what.

The majority of the youth now unemployed come from poor families. They have in most cases general education and semi-skilled. Jobs advertised are already compromised and the youth from affluent families do always have people canvassing on their behalf. This is what causes conflicts, as the majority of youth are not considered due to bribery, nepotism and favoritism.

Stratification and structure theory is also evident during any demonstration in urban centres be it political or social. During such demonstrations, the youths who form a bigger percentage

of the proletariat show their anger against the capitalists by destroying and looting their (capitalists) property. It has been claimed that the majority of these youths are unemployed and idlers who are easily swayed into such actions by any slight opportunity.

The foregoing pattern keeps on re-occurring and perpetuates the struggle between the capitalist and the proletariat. With the high population rate in Kenya and large number of graduates from institutions of learning every year the number of unemployed youth is also bound to increase faster every year.

Conclusion

From the literature reviewed, it is evident that there exist deliberate efforts by the government to address the problem of unemployment in Kenya. However, the efforts have not had a significant success impact in alleviating unemployment in Kenya. As noted in the review, Kenya faces challenges as a developing nation and the economy is not growing at a rate consistent with the rate of population growth. Whereas the review does not include literature on urban youth unemployment, provisions of the national policies reviewed can be extrapolated to help conceptualize urban youth unemployment on youth unemployment in Makadara Division in Nairobi.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter highlights the research methodology used in constituting the sample for the study, tools used to collect data and how the data collected was analyzed and presented.

3.1 Research Design

This study was qualitative in approach and design. From the study population, a sample for study was selected to typically represent the key characteristics of the target population. Qualitative tools were used during data collection and the data was analyzed using qualitative methods.

3.2 Research Site

The study was carried out in 7 Locations in Makadara Division, Nairobi East District. The locations are: Maringo, Harambee Jericho, Makadara Lumumba, Makongeni Kaloleni, South B, Viwandani, Landi Mawe and Mbotela Location.

3.3 Target Population

The population from which the sample for the study was drawn is segmented into sub-groups, namely: the youth, local administration officers, parents, youth employers, managers of training institutions and community based organizations within Makadara Division.

3.4 Sampling and Sample size

The sample for the study was obtained using the purposive random sampling technique. In this approach, the target audience segments comprised the study strata and typical units from each stratum were selected randomly for inclusion in the sample. Equal numbers of units were drawn from each stratum, i.e. equal representation was used.

The sampling comprised respondents in each study group and they were randomly selected from the target population, i.e. the youth leaders, employers, parents or guardians of the youth, local administrators and representatives from community-based organizations working in Makadara Division. A total sample size of 55 respondents was used. The sample was segmented as follows:

Parents

Parents have a strong influence on their children and especially when the children are in their formative years e.g. the youth stage. The ability of the parents to provide good education to their children and to give them a career orientation through guidance is an important determinant to the children's employment status. In this study, 6 parents were sampled for interview.

Employers

Employment opportunities are often begged on the employment policies and business strategies designed by employers. 3 employers within the Makadara Division were identified for interview. They comprised one business owner, one human resources manager in an NGO and a human resources manager in the civil service.

The Government

The government is responsible for creating a conducive economic and political climate to the creation of job opportunities including self employment. The government established the Ministry of youth affairs to help address issues affecting the youth. Unemployment is one of the major problems the youths face. 3 officers from the Ministry of Youth and the Makadara Division Officer were interviewed.

Youth representatives

This study focuses on youth unemployment and it is imperative that the youths were included in the sample to give their opinions and inputs to the study. A total of 30 representatives of 5 youth groups in the project target District participated in the study. 20 representatives (4 from each group) participated in the focus group discussions while 10 representatives (2 from each group) were interviewed.

Civic leaders

Councilors are perceived to be closer to the people at the grassroots level. They also have access and influence development policies at the community levels. In the recent times, the leaders have come under close scrutiny after accusations that they misappropriate CDF funds and other funds aimed at helping people at the constituency level. 2 seating councilors from Makadara Constituency were interviewed.

Business persons

One of the strategies to alleviate youth unemployment is to encourage them to come up with entrepreneurial initiatives. 2 business persons were interviewed to give more insights on how the youth can be assisted and encouraged to be self employed.

Non-governmental organizations

8 representatives from 4 organizations (2 each from one organization) were interviewed. These organizations provide a varied range of employment opportunities to the youths.

In general, the youth comprised the largest percentage of the sample. This was deliberately designed to elicit more information from the primary audience of the study, who were the youth.

3.5 Research Instruments

The research utilized both primary and secondary resources. Primary data was collected through the use of checklist for focus group discussions and checklist for in-depth key informant interviews. Secondary data was obtained from existing policy and reference documents relevant to the area of study. The Key documents reviewed were the National Youth Policy and the National Poverty Eradication Plan. Other documents included: The Kenya Vision 2030, reports by Non-governmental organizations, Community based organisations and other agencies on existing programmes on youth employment in the target division of Makadara.

Two instruments were used to collect data, namely: focus group discussion checklists and checklist for key informant interviews. The instruments were constructed and piloted for validity and reliability.

Interviews

The checklist for key informant interviews was mainly be used to obtain data from employers, local administration and community-based organizations. A total of 35 respondents were interviewed. The interviewees comprised 5 parents, 3 employers, 2 Councillors from Makadara, 8 representatives from local NGOs, 2 self-employed business

people, 10 representatives from 5 youth groups, the Makadara Division Officer and the Makadara Division Youth Officer and 2 officers from the Ministry of Youth Affairs. The interviews were guided by the questions in the checklist for interviews (see appendix i).

Focus Group Discussions

Use of checklist for focus group discussions involved representatives from the self-help groups, parents/guardians and business people. The focus group discussions involved 20 participants drawn from 3 self-help groups, and 5 business people operating in Makadara Division. The main objective of the discussions was to brainstorm on issues concerning youth employment as guided by the discussions checklist (see appendix ii).

3.6 Pre-testing the research instruments

The research instruments were pre-tested with the aim of validating them. The exercise was carried out in two wards randomly selected from the 5 wards in Makadara Division. Subjects for pre-testing were selected purposively to represent the various strata in the study sample. Pre-testing took one week and it involved the researcher and data collection assistants who underwent a two-day orientation training on piloting of the instruments.

3.7 Training research assistants

Before embarking on the data collection exercise, the researcher trained 2 research assistants for 2 days on data collection procedures.

3.8 Data collection

In collecting data, a checklist was used to obtain data from key informants during interviews. These informants comprise employers, local administration officers and community-based organizations. The interviews involved in-depth probing of the interviewees to obtain as much information as possible. The interview consisted of the question areas and themes in line with the project objectives and expected outcomes. The interviews aimed to deeply explore the respondent's point of view, feelings and perspectives. In this sense, in-depth interviews yield information but must expound on the topic.

The researcher interpreted responses from the interviewees and sought for clarification and a deeper understanding from the respondents throughout the interviews. The responses were

written down. In essence, in-depth interviews involved not only asking questions, but the systematic recording and documenting of responses coupled with intense probing for deeper meaning and understanding of the responses.

A focus group discussion checklist was used to obtain data from the youth and parents/guardians. The focus groups integrating representatives from each target group, e.g. the youth, were constituted and discussions for each group scheduled to take place at different times. Focus group discussions involved more than one person. The strategy was to have the representatives of the various groups come together and engage in a discussion, guided by the Focus Group Discussion checklist. The discussants brainstormed on the various themes and issues as per the project objectives and made conclusions or recommendations.

The researcher paid a courtesy call to the District Development officer, District youth officer and District officer in charge of the Makadara Division and explained the purpose of the study. In some cases, the researcher made prior arrangements with the target groups, especially, Youth Groups, employers, parents and community based organizations. The researcher conducted the interviews and guaranteed the respondents of confidentiality in their identity.

3.9 Data analysis

Data analysis involved bringing order, structure and meaning to the data collected in form of responses during the interviews and focus group discussions. In this study, data analysis sought to meaning and explanations of the data in each thematic area as per the interview schedule.

Field notes from the interviews and group discussions were transcribed, edited and repackaged at the data organization stage. The arranged data was then categorized into themes and sub-themes according to the project objectives. Relationships between the distinct categories were established to orient the process of data analysis to the project overall objective. Data in each category was analyzed as per the objectives and recommendations and suggestions made from the analysis.

The analyzed data was summarized and used to write the report on the basis of the objectives of the study.

3.10 Expected outcome of the project

The study expected to identify viable and effective approaches through which the existing and suggested strategies to alleviate unemployment among the urban youth can be realized. The study provided useful feedback on the effective implementation of the National Youth Policy and the Poverty Eradication Plan in mitigating the problem of youth unemployment in Kenya, and other potential strategies to reduce youth unemployment.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1: Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected during the study and gives analyses of the findings. Data was collected through two main approaches namely the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Representatives from the various groups in the sample population were involved in the data collection exercise as primary sources of information.

4.2: Research Findings

4.2.1 The state of youth unemployment in Kenya

The first specific objective of the study was to assess the state of youth unemployment in Kenya. During the study, focus was on the magnitude of the youth unemployment in urban set up, with reference to the project target area of Makadara Division in Nairobi province.

Despite government efforts to reduce youth unemployment, the problem is still persistent, especially in urban areas. According to the parents interviewed, the government has not done enough to assist the youth in Makadara Division. Virginia Munyi, a parent interviewed said she has four children who have completed their college studies but are unable to get employment. As a result, most of the youths in the constituency are idle and this has increased the incidences of crimes. Rono, one of the parents interviewed regretted:

Our children have turned to gangs and even one of my son steals from me... this is not just a youth problem as it affects the society as a whole...the only free thing the government gave out to the youths were campaign T-shirts during the last General elections.

This presupposes the notion that the youth are used as instruments by politicians to get to power. It can also be inferred that, the society has branded the youth as social deviants and sees nothing good in them. As a result, no tangible and deliberate efforts are made to provide the youth with productive employment opportunities.

Employers interviewed said most of the urban youths lack the necessary skills for the job market and as a result they are unemployed. They also noted that most youth are not ready to take up jobs they feel are not well paying or are not consistent with their perceived social

status, e.g. working as waiters in hotels. Grace Nyakio, a bar owner, noted that many youths are always looking for white collar jobs. She observed:

This has largely been inherited from the colonial era and the parent's attitude towards the available jobs who insist that their children have to be employed in jobs that are white collar than the Jua Kali sector.

This underscores the thinking in most people that the main motivation for people to get educated is to get the white collar jobs. The white collar jobs are limited in an underdeveloped economy such as that of Kenya. This helps to explain why the rate of youth unemployment is going up because, whereas there are many youths joining the job market every year, the rate at which the white collar jobs are being created is lower.

The government representatives interviewed (from the Ministry of Youth affairs and Provincial Administration) had a different opinion. According to them, although youth unemployment is still a major problem, there has been a significant improvement in alleviating the problem. They cited various government initiatives such as the Youth Fund as some of the ways the government has tried to create employment opportunities for the youth. Nancy Gathinji, a National Youth Officer, observed that youth unemployment is a complex issue. She noted:

There are many youths who are well educated but are not employed...therefore there is no direct relationship between education and unemployment among the youths.

Her point of view further dispels the notion that unemployment among the youth is mainly because they lack the skills and the pedagogical orientation to work in the various fields.

Another youth officer, Mr. Okoth acknowledged youth unemployment is a major problem in the country. He noted this mainly arises from the high transition rate in the schooling system where the transition rate is approximately 500,000 students per year and no absorption in the job market. This also arises from the fact that the youths are not skilled since the education that is provided does not provide skills but is rote learning.

Representatives from the Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) supported the view that the rate of youth unemployment is increasing every year. While acknowledging the many socio-economic and political challenges the government is facing, the interviewees blamed the sorry state of unemployment on corruption and poorly formulated policies, both at the local and national levels.

Due to being idle, the youth engage in socially deviant behaviour. All the respondents said the youths engage in criminal activities and drug and substance abuse. They also felt unemployed youth are susceptible to irresponsible sexual behaviour such as prostitution and alternative life styles, e.g. gay relationships. Dr. Otieno who runs a private clinic in Makadara remarked:

I was trained as a Gynaecologist but had to also train in counselling so that I can help the many youths who are already prisoners to their deviant habits such as smoking marijuana.

To some extent, therefore, the society acknowledges the negative effects unemployment has on the youths.

All the discussants in the focus group discussions acknowledged that youth unemployment is very high in Makadara Division. They attributed this high rate of unemployment to poor government policies, corrupt leaders and a stagnating economy that has limited job opportunities.

While contributing on the issue of those affected most by unemployment, most of the respondents felt that male youths are more affected than female youths. It was pointed out that, the problem of youth unemployment is a linear factor to the overall state of the economy. Thus, if the economy is doing badly, the problem escalates and vice versa. The respondents felt male youths are more affected than females since girls readily accept jobs despite the low pay since they have other ways of adjusting to their budgets and they are more readily accepted in interviews than boys.

Most respondents noted girls and women are socialised to depend on their male counter parts or husbands. They therefore seldom seek for employment and prefer to stay at home as

housewives. One of the respondent said, this notion is however changing. The urban youths suffer more compared to the rural youths since everything in town is pegged on money, according to the respondents.

4.2.2 Resources, programmes and opportunities available in the job market for the youth

The 3 self-help groups that participated in the study are: Mnazi youth group, Forever Vision Youth Organisation and Jericho Arise Youth Group. The groups are involved in a wide range of activities providing services to the community. These services include: garbage collection and community policing.

According to the records at the Makadara Division Youth office, the Division has about 155 youth groups that are registered with the Ministry of Youth Affairs. Some of the most active organisations helping the youth in Makadara as identified by the interviewees include the following:

Organisation	Activity area
Hope World Wide	HIV/AIDS sensitization and community health programmes
Mukuru Slums Development Project	Training youth on different Skills
The Kenya Human Rights Commission	Advocacy for the respect and observance of Human rights especially of the minority in the society
Youth Agenda	Fighting for rights of the youth
Green Belt Movement	Tree planting and environmental conservation
Marie Stopes	Health interventions

The discussants said most of the youth engage in *Jua Kali* activities such as hawking and the selling of second hand clothes. These are small-scale businesses that require relatively less financial input and technical training to carry the activities.

4.2.3 Existing strategies to alleviate unemployment and youth unemployment in Kenya

The study aimed to identify and evaluate the effectiveness of the existing strategies to alleviate youth unemployment in Kenya and which have a trickle effect to the youth in Makadara Division. Two main government strategies were reviewed, that is, the National Youth Policy and the Poverty eradication Plan.

The parents interviewed opined that most of the government strategies to assist the youth such as the Youth Fund, the women Fund and the Poverty eradication strategies have not had a significant impact in alleviating the problem of youth unemployment in Makadara Division.

National Youth Policy

Various groups have benefited so far from the youth fund which is a product of the youth policy. According to Mr. Kang'ethe, a youth officer in Makadara Division, over 5000 youth groups have benefited from the fund so far countrywide. He attributes the many complaints about the implementation of the fund and the youth policy to the fact that the policy is a relatively new initiative, hardly two years old and appealed to citizens to be supportive of the initiative.

The youth policy has elicited less significant impact to the youths and has failed to achieve its objectives. Most of the respondents were of the opinion that the youth fund was introduced without proper due diligence and the youths were not involved in the whole process of planning and implementation of the policy. One of the respondents, Samuel Kagia, was critical of the approach used to implement the youth policy:

The logical framework approach adapted in the fund implementation concealed the youths who are the real beneficiaries and in the process overlooked certain key assumptions on the actual objectives of the fund and prevailing conditions that might affect its implementation.

This calls for a participatory approach to involve the beneficiaries of any policy initiatives from the planning to the implementation stages. It is only through this approach that the policies will be effective and receive support from all the stakeholders.

The interviewees opined that the National Youth Policy is meant to create employment to the youth. The policy has not achieved this objective and this was attributed to two main factors by the interviewees. First, the policy has not translated into an Act of Parliament, thus hampering its implementation. Secondly, there is lack of harmonisation of the policy with related policies in other African countries.

15 respondents noted the fund management is riddled with corrupt and underhand dealings. As a result, many youth organisations have had their proposals rejected and in some situations undeserving cases are allocated the money. This has compelled some youth groups to set up their own revolving fund which they contribute amongst themselves and lend to the members. However, the District Youth Officer Mr. Kang'ethe had a different opinion. According to him, the youth fund has made significant progress:

Loans are given under the Constituency Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme. Under this scheme, every youth group is issued with 55,000 Kenya shillings. Only youth groups that have membership of 12 members are issued with this fund. They are then expected to pay it back and the interest rate is 1% which is charged before the money is given out in form of deductions... Some youth groups just stick together for the purpose of acquiring the money after which they disintegrate and divide the money amongst themselves and later they fail to repay the loans.

Apparently, if there is lack of effective communication of public and government policies, it would be difficult for the youths to know that the loans are disbursed through the Constituency Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme.

Nancy Gathinji, the National Youth Officer outlined the following as the main objectives of the youth fund: Loaning money to the banks, Assisting the Youths market their goods and services, Linking the youths to bigger business ventures, Assisting in setting up business incubators and Linking the youths to outside world (Labour exports). This is applied through giving them 10% of procurement chance in the government tendering process.

The Poverty Eradication Plan

Most of the respondents felt the poverty eradication programme has not had any tangible impact, especially to the youths. One respondent noted that there are no government structures at the community level to plan and implement the poverty eradication programme. Omondi, a representative from one of the youth groups in Makadara singled out the committees formed to oversee the implementation of the poverty plan.

This ...has completely not brought any impact in the ground. The Committees that the Government talks of are never in the ground and even the structures are non existence.

Therefore, implementation of the strategies has been hampered by structural inadequacies within the approach adopted by the government.

From the interview, a number of employment opportunities to the youths were identified. Some of the opportunities identified during the interview include: tree planting, the Youth Fund and foreign or international jobs. The Ministry of Youth affairs officials interviewed said about Kshs. 300 million was allocated for tree planting. This money was and is still being used to pay the youths who are involved in the tree planting programmes. However, Makadara Division has a limited number of tree planting projects.

Through the Youth Fund, the youth can have access to loans given under the Constituency Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme. Unfortunately, most of the youth have been disqualified as beneficiaries of the fund due to stringent criteria used to disburse the funds and rampant corruption in the fund management. With globalisation, foreign jobs are now more accessible to the local job market. The interviewees noted that the East African region has a huge potential for semi-skilled labour. However, they noted, most of the Kenyan youths are not ambitious enough to venture into the cross border market.

The existing strategies have, however, been hampered by a number of constraints. During the focus group discussions, the following were identified as the major factors to be addressed if the existing and any suggested strategies are to achieve their objectives in alleviating unemployment.

Lack of experience

It was noted that most job advertisements require a certain level of experience, which most of the youths especially those straight from college, lack. Although this problem is mainly encountered in the private sector, the discussants said the civil service locks out the youth when they advertise jobs and specify the applicants must be civil servants.

The problem of inexperience is compounded by the deterioration of knowledge between the period of graduation and job acquisition. It was pointed out that graduates take long before they are employed. Even when they get the jobs, most likely the jobs are not in their areas of specialisation, thus amounting to irrelevant experience and career stagnation.

Tribalism and corruption

One of the most powerful human instincts, according to the discussants, is affinity to greed. Due to this instinct, they said, most of the job recruitments are characterised by favours anchored on tribal segregation and perceived individual gains by those recruiting. They cited the civil service as the most corrupt when it comes to recruitments. One of the parents Juliana Kemunto made reference to the claims in the media of corruption during the recruitments in the army and the police force this year. According to the allegations, some people were recruited without going through the due process as required:

Whenever there are recruitments in government, those conducting the recruitments always ask for 'kitu kidogo' which is actually 'kitu kikubwa' to us the ordinary wananchi. We thought things will be better with the new government but we are disappointed our children cannot get jobs because we don't have money for bribes.

Many Kenyans had hoped the new government after the Moi would be help fight corruption. However, the vice is still manifest in public institutions.

One of the parents only identified as Mama Mike claimed tribalism has been a major contributor to unemployment:

People who have no skills and required training are employed because they come from the correct tribe... Some of our children are trained and qualified but they cannot get employment because they come from the wrong tribe.

Tribalism has been a major problem in Kenya, not just in politics but also in other aspects of the public sector such as recruitments. During general elections, people get polarised on tribal lines because they believe they will gain if one of their tribes people ascends to power.

The youth groups claimed they had sent numerous proposals to secure funding from the national youth kitty but all the proposals have been rejected. According to the youth, there is corruption and only those working in cahoots with the managers of the Youth Fund have access to the money.

Despite the inchoate state of government support to the youth, other organisations, the civil society and churches have also failed to tangibly solve the problem of youth unemployment. As noted by the interviewees, many organisations are out to enrich themselves and often use the youth agenda for their self interests. Youths from the Jericho Youth Arise alleged that:

One organisation used their name to get funds and only gave them Kenya shillings 20,000 to make the Party of National Unity bags and disappeared with the balance of their money once they had received the items and closed their NGO without notice.

This not only rings the bell on corruption but also serves as a reminder that there is need for effective checks and controls to ensure the funds are utilised for the intended purposes. One of the ways would be to compel the youth groups to register as NGOs and be closely monitored by the NGOs council to ensure they conform to the regulations governing the NGOs in the country.

The attitude of youths towards jobs

Overwhelming majority of the participants in the focus group discussions agreed that most youths are averse to self employment. The negative attitude is motivated by the fear to fail in business and lack of self confidence and the protestant ethics of hard work, self belief and need for achievement. The youths who have attained some level of education always pitch for white collar jobs which are limited compared to the demand on the job market.

It was noted by the respondents that most youth look for jobs where they can make quick money. They therefore avoid engagements that will take long to elicit monetary returns such as starting a business.

Poorly planned and coordinated Government policies

According to the respondents, the government is not reaching out to the people at the grassroots level and instead sends middlemen who are the policy implementers to reach the ground and in the long run do not reach the ground. The government is thus not the problem but those charged with the responsibility of policy implementation.

While acknowledging the efforts made by the government to provide funds to the youths through youth groups, the respondents observed that the funds are seldom adequate to carry out meaningful and sustainable business activities. This, coupled with the fact that most youths are illiterate and lack skills, has aggravated the problem of youth unemployment.

One of the respondents, Mr Njogu observed that:

When the vision 2030 plan was launched, the poverty eradication plan became redundant... This and many other policy clashes have impaired efforts to address the problem of unemployment in Kenya.

This is a clear manifestation of lack of coordination and proper transition in policies when governments and government policy priorities change.

The forums identified two main challenges the employers face when it comes to providing job opportunities to the youths, especially in urban set up. These are: lack of requisite skills by the youths and slow economic growth.

Failed and corrupt leadership

Elected leaders in Makadara do not help the youth. This is according to most of the discussants. The leaders use the youth as objects to fight their political enemies and give them handouts. One of the respondents said “This culture of tokenism has made most youths to be reluctant in seeking for employment. They simply idle around waiting for the leaders to issue handouts to them.”

4.2.4 Suggested strategies to alleviate youth unemployment in Makadara and generally in the country

Having critically examined the two main strategies by the government to address the problem of unemployment in Kenya, the study sort to establish ways through which the strategies can be made more effective. The study also aimed at identifying any other strategies and measures, policy or otherwise, that would help mitigate youth unemployment in Kenya.

Several strategies were identified in the interviews and the focus group discussions to help alleviate the problem of youth unemployment. Whereas some of suggested strategies aim to fill gaps and mitigate on weaknesses inherent in the existing strategies, the discussions elicited some strategies that were purely new.

Funding

It was acknowledged one of the critical problems facing the youth is lack of funds to start self-employment initiatives. It was proposed Ward funds be set up in every Ward and the money be given as grants to the youths with or those who intend to operate small businesses. The levies that are normally collected on small businesses should be centrally managed and recycled to assist the businesses as soft loans.

Public communication

Most of the youth are not aware of the government initiatives and policies thus they are often left out. The discussants proposed the creation of a Public Spokesperson's office to highlight issues of national and public interest such as youth unemployment. They noted the current government spokesman only focuses on reactionary announcements mainly designed to defend the government. The government ought to provide more information on the youth funds and other government policies through public awareness campaigns and programmes.

The discussants also suggested the establishment of regular forums where youths can meet and exchange ideas on different developmental agendas.

Political and Economic stability

The discussants said that, due to the political instability occasioned by the allegedly bungled 2007 presidential elections, the economy took a nose dive and many businesses closed down.

Thus, the various youth economic initiatives were adversely affected resulting in mass unemployment. The overall politico-economic environment in the country should be made conducive and friendly to the youth so that they can participate and harness any existing and potential business opportunities. The discussants called for the abolition of some business taxes to encourage the youth to start businesses.

During the interviews, the Chief of Makongeni Location in Makadara Division Mr. Korir suggested that:

CBOs and NGOS should invest in the youths, more industries should be created to absorb the youth and the government should give the youth money to start small businesses.

The concept of development through partnerships manifests itself here. The need for collaborative efforts between the government and the private sector in addressing the problem of unemployment comes to the fore.

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Other respondents gave the following proposals during the interviews:

Engagement in productive activities

Youths, especially males, are conscripted in terror gangs which operate in Makadara and Nairobi. The government should explore possibilities of recruiting the youth into the Police force, the Kenya Army and other jobs relevant to their academic status.

Review education system

The education system should be re-oriented to focus more on development of skills. This will enable school leavers to have skills that will help them to get jobs as opposed to the current system that is mainly exam-oriented and theoretical-based.

Review retirement age for civil servants

The retirement age for civil servants should be reduced to 50 years. This would see many of the civil servants attain their retirement ages faster, thus creating more job opportunities for the youth.

Job experience

The Government should abolish the requirement that one must have a certain level of experience to get a given job. This requirement often leaves the youth at a disadvantage since most of them lack the experience.

Placement/internship programmes for the youth

Through public private partnerships, graduate placement programmes should be established to provide the graduates with internship opportunities to build their skills. The interviewees propose the various government ministries forge collaborations with relevant industry partners to provide internship opportunities for the youths at various levels of qualifications. They noted most companies have internship programmes but few youths benefit from the programmes due to lack of awareness and accessibility.

Economic growth

The interviewees said a healthy economy is able to provide job opportunities especially in the manufacturing sector. They suggested the government should expand the national economy and the job market by establishing more industries where the youth can be absorbed.

Government procurement

Youth programmes at the market sourcing especially for public endeavours, should be established. For example, the present government procurement system allocates 10% of procurement to the youths.

Entrepreneurial empowerment

The interviewees noted that most youths do not have the requisite skills and motivation to operate businesses. They are also averse to self employment for fear of failure and lack of capital. It was thus recommended that business-mentoring and incubation programmes be established to equip the youths with skills to build their capacities and prepare them for self-employment through the youth programmes. The interviewees recommended such trainings be subsidised or provided at no fee to the youths. The establishment of a youth grants scheme to supplement the national youth fund was suggested.

The youth should be trained in entrepreneurial soft skills such as how to start a business and basic financial management. Some suggested the National Youth Service Programme should

be re-introduced before the youths proceed for tertiary training. This would provide them with hands-on skills and expose them to a variety of economic activities.

Youth career awareness

According to the interviewees, most youths are media illiterate and seldom seek for information. As a result, they are not aware of existing job opportunities both in the public and private sector. The interviewees suggested there should be awareness programmes among the youth on existing government policies and initiatives that can help them youth be involved in productive employment.

Establishment of Employment Public Service

One of the respondent Mr Dominic Kilonzo who has been working outside the country proposed that there is need to establish Employment Public service which will work with the government and the private sector to establish job opportunities and keep records of all unemployed youths, their qualifications and skills so as to be linking them to available jobs and the employers.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter gives a summary of the conclusions made from the findings and the suggested recommendations.

5.1 Conclusions

From the findings and inferences made, it is clear that the problem of youth unemployment has not been adequately addressed. As a result of being idle and at the same time in financial need, youths engage in behaviour and activities that are morally repugnant and impinge on the peace in the society such as drug abuse and criminal acts such as theft.

The scarcity of jobs is aggravated when educated youths are not ready to take up available job opportunities because they are not 'white collar' jobs. The education system has inculcated the notion that people go to school to get good jobs.

The youth are mainly involved in activities characterizing the informal sector such as hawking. The informal sector, though a major employer of the youth and many Kenyans, is yet to receive adequate consideration to enhance its employment capacity. Most of the youth activities coalesce around emerging issues such as environmental conservation, basic health care, drug and substance abuse. These activities are mainly done on voluntary basis and thus there is limited material gain to the youth.

The magnitude of youth unemployment grows with a shrinking economy. Thus, there is need to focus on accelerating overall economic growth so that more job opportunities can be created. However, this can only translate into tangible solutions to the problem of unemployment if other related factors such as training of the youth and their attitude towards jobs are aligned with the industry expectations.

The urban youth are most affected by the consequences of unemployment because the cost of living in towns is far much higher compared to the rural areas. Everything in town has to be bought unlike in rural areas where some basic goods and services are freely available, e.g. farm produce.

The existing strategies, both by government and the society, to combat unemployment have not been successful. The policies were either formulated wrongly or are not being implemented properly. This is aggravated by the culture of corruption and rampant inefficiency in public institutions.

The government and the private sector should establish Employment Public Service so as to establish job opportunities and keep records of all unemployed youths, their qualifications and skills so as to be linking them to available jobs and the employers.

This study, in its recommendations, has identified viable and effective approaches through which the existing and suggested strategies to alleviate unemployment among the urban youth can be realized. The study provides useful feedback on the effective implementation of the National youth policy and the Poverty Eradication Plan in mitigating the problem of youth unemployment in Kenya.

5.2 *Recommendations*

Based on the foregoing, it is apparent that the government has a much bigger role to play in addressing the problem of youth unemployment in Kenya. Existing relevant government policies such as the Youth Fund and the Poverty eradication plan should be made more effective in providing the youths with resources that will enable them to engage in economically productive activities.

The private sector and the civil society have a major role to play in creating job opportunities for the youth. There is need for concerted and deliberate efforts to encourage investment activities as this will expand the economy and the trickle effects would result in jobs creation.

The education system should be re-oriented to make it relevant to the job market needs. The emphasis should be on skills acquisition and not merely to pass exams. The changes should be made at all levels, i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary and university levels of education.

The government should set up a public communications office or unit which focuses primarily on dissemination of information on government policies to the public. The public awareness programmes should be mounted from the national to the community level. This can be done through the provincial Administration structures or in collaboration with development partners such as Non Governmental organisations.

There is need to establish Employment Public service which will work with the government and the private sector to establish job opportunities and keep records of all unemployed youths, their qualifications and skills so as to be linking them to available jobs and the employers.

There is need for a streamlined approach when formulating government policies to avoid duplication of efforts and interference with already going on policy implementation programmes.

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Conclusion

This research study is not conclusive in itself. It simply charts the way and provides useful bits for further research in the area of youth unemployment in Kenya. It is hoped policy makers and other stakeholders at the country and sector levels will find these recommendations useful in their policy reviews, planning and implementation.

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APPENDICES

(i): Checklist of questions for Councilors, Parents, Business Persons and Government officials

1. The state of youth unemployment in Kenya
2. Existing strategies to alleviate unemployment and youth unemployment in Kenya and Makadara Division
3. The extent to which the National Youth Policy and the Poverty Eradication Plan have helped to alleviate youth unemployment in Kenya
4. Resources, programmes and opportunities available in the job market for the youth.
5. Existing gaps and areas of weakness in the fight against youth unemployment in Kenya
6. Suggestions and recommendations to alleviate youth unemployment in Makadara and generally in the country

(ii): Checklist of questions for the Youths, Self Help Group members, NGOs and Business persons

1. The main activity areas of the youth groups
2. The magnitude of youth unemployment in Makadara Division
3. Resources, programmes and opportunities available in the job market for the youth.
4. Challenges faced by the youth in getting productive jobs
5. Role and challenges faced by employers in creating job opportunities for the youths
6. Suggested remedies in combating the problem of youth unemployment in Makadara Division and in Kenya

(iii): Schedule of activities

Week	Activities	Remarks
August	finalize research proposal	Researcher and supervisor
01/09/2008 05/09/2008	– Identify the actual sample/ persons to be interviewed	Researcher
08/09/2008 12/09/2008	– Prepare and pre-test data collection tools train two research assistants	Researcher
15/09/2008 19/09/2008	– Collect the data (through interviews and focus group discussions)	Researcher and research assistants
22/09/2008 26/09/2008	– Data presentation and analysis	Researcher
29/09/2008 03/11/2008	– Compilation and presentation of the project report	Researcher