

**Hitting the Target, Missing the Point: Youth Policies and
Programmes in Kenya**

Margaret Wamuyu Muthee

Africa Public Policy Scholar (July-December 2010)

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, DC

United States of America

Contents

Table of Contents.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	iii
List of Tables.....	iv
List of Boxes.....	iv
List of Abbreviations.....	v
1.0 Introduction.....	1
2.0 Who are Youth?.....	5
3.0 Youth and Development: A Conceptual Framework.....	8
4.0 Youth in Kenya.....	17
5.0 The Kenya National Youth Policy.....	21
6.0 Principles and Core Values of the National Youth Policy.....	22
7.0 Policy Goal and Objectives.....	23
8.0 Priority Strategic Areas.....	23
8.1.0 Employment Creation.....	24
8.2.0 Health.....	24
8.3.0 Education and Training.....	25
8.4.0 Sports and Recreation.....	25
8.5.0 The Environment.....	26
8.6.0 Art and Culture.....	26
8.7.0 Youth and the Media.....	26

8.8.0 Youth Empowerment and Participation in National Life.....	27
9.0 Why a National Youth Policy.....	28
10.0 Dynamics of Youth Participation.....	33
11.0 Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.....	38
11.1.0 Department of Youth Development.....	39
11.2.0 Department of Youth Training.....	39
11.3.0 National Youth Service.....	40
12.0 Youth Enterprise Development Fund.....	40
13.0 Kenya Youth Empowerment Project.....	44
14.0 Conclusions.....	46
15.0 References.....	48

Acknowledgements

This work is the outcome of a 6-month residential scholar program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (WWICS), Washington DC, United States of America. I am indebted to many people and organisations for supporting me in various ways while preparing this work. During my stay at the WWICS, I was fortunate to be hosted by the Africa Program, whose Director, Steve McDonald, supported my work in innumerable ways. His incisive comments and suggestions gave me the impetus to delve into a broad range of issues which relate to the young people in Kenya. Also within the Africa Program, I am grateful to Mame-Khady Diouf and Justine Lindemann, who did not tire in providing me with technical and logistical support, even before the arrangements for my trip to the United States materialized. I also wish to acknowledge the community of scholars and staff in different programs within the WWICS whose insights provided during a forum where this paper was first presented, helped to guide and shape my work. I am also indebted to the staff at the WWICS library for ensuring that I received all the materials that I requested in time. This work would not have been possible without the financial support that was provided through a grant from the Open Society Institute. Finally, I wish to thank all my friends and relatives in Kenya and the United States who supported me with prayers, advice and encouragement. I am particularly thankful to my husband, Charles Githui, for his support and encouragement during the 6-months of absence.

List of Tables

Table 1 Size and Share of the Youth Population in sub-Saharan Africa, 1980-2015.....	9
Table 2 Millennium Development Goals, Targets and Indicators on Young People.....	13
Table 3 Indicators for Youth Participation.....	35
Table 4 Funds Disbursed through Financial Intermediaries based on Province and Gender.....	42

List of Boxes

Box 1 The African Youth Charter: A Regional Commitment to Youth Participation in Decision Making.....	15
Box 2 Continuum of Youth Participation.....	38

List of Abbreviations

AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AU-YVC	African Union, Youth Volunteers Corps
AYC	African Youth Charter
CBO	Community Based Organisations
CIPEV	Commission of Inquiry into the Post Election Violence
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
ERS	Economic Recovery Strategy for Employment and Wealth Creation
GoK	Government of Kenya
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IYY	International Youth Year
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KKV	Kazi Kwa Vijana
KNFJA	Kenya National Federation of Jua Kali Association
Kshs.	Kenya Shillings
KYEP	Kenya Youth Empowerment Project
KYW	KANU Youth Wing

MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MET	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFI	Micro Finance Institutions
MoYAS	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
NARC	National Alliance Rainbow Coalition
NGO	Non-governmental Organisations
NSC	National Steering Committee
NYP	National Youth Policy
NYS	National Youth Service
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PEV	Post Election Violence
PRB	Population Reference Bureau
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations for Human Settlements
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health organization
WPAY	World Programme of Action for Youth
WYR	World Youth Report
YEDF	Youth Enterprise Development Fund

YK4R	Youth for Raila
YK92	Youth for KANU 1992
YP	Youth Polytechnic
YP4C	Youth Patriots for Change

1.0 Introduction

Kenya has adopted major governance reforms aimed at improving its socioeconomic and political environment. The reforms include a new constitution (2010), Vision 2030 and other sectoral policies focusing on specific issues and categories of the population such as youth, children, women and persons with disabilities, among others¹. Youth have increasingly received attention due to their large numbers, gravity of the challenges confronting them and their role in political and electoral violence as well as crime². The 2007/08 post-election violence (PEV) which the country witnessed following the disputed presidential election, leaving 1,300 people dead and 650,000 displaced from their homes, has also contributed to the growing interest on youth. Their role as the main executors of crimes that were planned and committed during the period is well documented³. An agreement signed on 28 February 2008, mediated by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to end the crisis identified four main agenda items⁴. These were identified as the guiding principles to end the crisis, reconcile communities and prevent future conflict by bringing sustainable peace in the country. Implementation of these agenda items, and other reforms developed prior to the PEV has led to a change in the approach on youth-related issues. From a “welfarist” and conformist approach, whereby policies and institutions focus on “soft” issues such as education and training, health and juvenile delinquency, the government has

¹ The 2003-2007 Economic Recovery Strategy and Employment and Wealth Creation (ERS) preceded the Vision 2030, which aims at transforming Kenya into a newly industrializing, “middle-income country providing a high quality life to its citizens by year 2030”.

² The past two decades have seen the emergence of several groups, mobilizing youth for community development work such as provision of security, running small businesses and organizing cleaning activities. However, some have metamorphosed into criminal gangs and engaged in activities such as extortion, political and electoral violence, and thus destabilizing the country (Anderson, 2002; and Kagwanja, 2003a).

³ ICC Statement, 2010; International Crisis Group, 2008; Human Rights Watch, 2008; CIPEV, 2010; and numerous local and international newspaper reports.

⁴ Agenda one was to stop the violence and restore fundamental rights and liberties, while the second agenda focused on the humanitarian crisis by resettling internally displaced persons (IDPs). Agenda three was aimed at resolving the political crisis by negotiating a compromise deal between the two principals. The fourth agenda was meant to examine and propose solutions for the long standing issues such as constitutional, legal and institutional reforms, tackling poverty and inequality as well as combating regional development imbalances; tackling unemployment particularly among the youth; consolidating national cohesion and unity; undertaking land reform; addressing land reforms; and addressing transparency, accountability and impunity (Transparency International, 2009).

adopted a more dynamic and reformist approach aimed at providing a platform for youth to participate in development and other public affairs.

Traditionally, public policies and institutions have focused on providing youth with education and skills, and shaping their behavior, often in a punitive manner, in order to conform to acceptable societal norms and values. However, these efforts have not had any significant impact on the lives of the majority of youth facing multiple challenges such as orphaned youth, youth infected with HIV/AIDS, unemployed and uneducated youth, youth in conflict with the law, and female youth. The responsibility of issues relating to children and youth has been limited to “soft” departments such as welfare, family and social services, and recreation (UN-Habitat 2004). Related to this is the politicization and criminalization of young people, which has masked structural and age related inequalities in society and led many young people to view their own transition to adulthood as a personal problem (Barry, 2004), rather than a social problem. Wyn and White (1997) argue that marginalization and criminalization of young people, because of their young age, low status and lack of citizenship, is a deliberate means of deflecting attention away from issues of poverty and unemployment as well as wider structural inequalities. Consequently, research on youth has tended to focus on youth in relation to crime, violence and politics, where they are characterized as lumpen, playing marginal and sometimes destructive roles in society (Kagwanja, 2003/07; Anderson, 2002; Ruteere, 2005; and Mwangola, 2005).

Globally, there has been a change in the youth discourse, with an emphasis on the youth’s participation in development and other public affairs. The new discourse views youth as useful resources to be engaged in development, peace building and other societal transformation processes, as opposed to looking at them as a marginalized group whose singular mission is to engage in destructive activities which destabilize the society. It also acknowledges the role of youth as active participants in the continuous construction of society, youth life and their own identities (Walther et al, 2002). This is in contrast with popular views of youth as victims of and authors of war and perpetrators of violence or social deviants (UNFPA, 2006). Walther et al (2002) argues that these accounts and descriptions play a role in constructing adults’ views, fears and anxieties about young people, but fail to consider the views of youth about themselves, their experiences and roles in society. The new youth discourse, continues to inform and shape new policies and programmes which aim at supporting youth to positively and meaningfully

contribute and influence development in their societies. In Kenya, this has led to the development of youth focused programmes and policies to address the needs of a specific category of people aged between 15-30 years, as defined by the Kenya National Youth Policy (NYP). This is a significant step since youth, unlike children, have often been lumped together with the adult population in policy terms, yet they are not equal under the law.

The law has provisions which restrict youth from engaging in certain activities such as voting, employment, marriage, driving and vying for elected positions. These age-based restrictions are ostensibly meant to protect youth and promote their well-being by not exposing them to the vagaries of public life. They are developed and sustained on the assumption that youth are dependent, immature, vulnerable and incapable of assuming responsibility, hence the need to confine them within the protection of home and school (Thomas, 2000 cited in Boeck and Honwana, 2005). This is viewed as proper and acceptable, since “youth-hood” is regarded as a transient stage socially and chronologically. Youth is largely seen as a state of becoming rather than a state of being (Annik, 2007). However, as the society grapples with multiple challenges and transformations, youth have come to bear adult responsibilities such as parenting, caring for parents and younger siblings, and working. They have also become defenders of their societies through participation in war and violent conflicts. The situation calls for a shift in policy and popular perceptions about youth in order to effectively perform their roles in society.

The formulation of specific policies and programmes that view youth as an important resource for Kenya’s development creates a favourable environment for youth to access basic goods and services in order to realize their potential and contribute to public affairs in a more effective way. A supportive policy framework creates common goals and collective action and serves as a basis for equitable and concerted distribution of resources to meet the needs of youth (UNESCO, 2004). However, it is instructive to note that, the policies have been developed at a time when most youth are facing major challenges, which have greatly scarred and irreversibly changed the trajectories of their lives. Related, most youth occupy multiple and diverse positions in the society, thus making them difficult to grasp and pin down analytically (Boeck and Honwana, 2005). They often occupy more than one position at the same time (Ibid). In addition, while the new policies acknowledge the need for youth to participate in decision making processes, youth are practically valued for what they will become in future. Wyn and White (2008) refer to this as

“futurity” and argue that there is an underlying tension about the extent to which young people can be regarded as citizens in any sense or whether they are citizens in training. This presents difficulties in defining youth appropriately and planning programmes that would comprehensively respond to their needs and integrate them in the mainstream economy and politics. The drawback of focusing on youth as future adults, citizens and workers is that it ignores the important role that young people play in society as youth. Futurity in youth policy has the effect of downplaying the significance of social change on the experience of youth and the implications of their life patterns for the experience and meaning of adulthood for their generation (Ibid).

This paper frames youth issues in developmental terms and examines state level policies targeting youth development in Kenya. Young people’s experiences are largely shaped by policies that affect their lives (Wyn and White, 2004/08). The rules, constraints and opportunities provided by the policies define the manner in which youth access goods and services such as education, health care and protection (Ibid). However, all too often, policies adopt a “problem-oriented” approach to young people and reflect some deep anxieties in the public psyche (Williamson, 2005: 21). They also tend to be short-term, inflexible and over-coercive, seeking to achieve immediate results (Barry, 2005: 296), without necessarily altering the structures which hinder youth from meaningfully engaging in the development processes and reaping appropriate benefits. This is rooted in the failure to critically identify the underlying causes of youth marginalization, their distinctive needs and the resources they possess and utilize in negotiating their life trajectories. In this paper, I argue that state-driven policies have the potential of integrating youth in the mainstream development processes, by creating a favorable framework for youth to develop their capabilities in order to access more rewarding opportunities. However, they also have the potential to create tensions and conflict, and fail to change the circumstances of youth.

This is especially the case where the implementation structures are rigid and lack clear guidelines for engaging youth in the planning and implementation of policies and programmes. In addition, policies could remain irrelevant and too general, without having a real connection with the problems facing youth. Often times, the problems are multiple and linked, thus requiring policies that recognize this intricate connection. The paper examines the NYP and several programmes

which are under implementation, such as the Kenya Youth Empowerment Project (KYEP) and the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF). The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MOYAS-formerly known as Ministry of State for Youth Affairs) oversees development and implementation of youth-related policies and programmes.

2.0 Who are Youth?

Youth definitions are contextual, depending on the social, cultural, political and economic environment. According to Durham (2000), the concept “youth” is a “social shifter”, it is a relational concept situated in a dynamic context, a social landscape of power, knowledge, rights, and cultural notions of agency and personhood. The experiences of youth in various socioeconomic and political conditions and their outcomes largely define youth. Certain experiences such as war, conflict, poverty and the HIV/AIDS pandemic blur the social divide between youth and adult. Within these environments, young people constantly cross the frontier between childhood and adulthood, as they actively create and recreate their roles in the face of changing conditions (Boeck and Honwana, 2005). While these views construct youth as a fluid concept, other definitions look at youth as a static category in the society, with distinctive responsibilities based on their age. Consequently, youth-hood is viewed as a specific stage between childhood and adulthood when people have to negotiate a complex interplay of both personal and socio-economic changes in order to maneuver the “transition” from dependence to independence, take effective control of their own lives and assume social commitments (UNESCO, 2004).

The United Nations defines youth as persons between 15 and 24 years⁵. The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies three categories of youth- adolescents (10-19 years), youth (15-24 years), and young people (10-24 years). The African Union (AU) considers youth as persons between 15 and 34 years⁶. In Kenya, there are various aged-based definitions of youth. NYP defines youth as persons aged 15-30 years. The policy vaguely states that the definition takes

⁵ This definition is universally accepted and applied by international agencies involved in youth programmes and activities.

⁶ Most African governments use this definition as a basis for developing their specific age markers, which often reflect high upper age limits.

account of the physical, psychological, cultural, social, biological and political aspects, which explain the Kenyan youth situation. The new Constitution defines youth as all individuals in the republic of Kenya who have attained the age of 18 years but have not attained the age of 35 years (GoK, 2010). The youth development programmes which the government has been implementing target persons aged 15 to 35 years. Lack of consistency in the definition of Kenyan youth reflects the difficulty that most African societies have in specifying the age bracket of youth. In African societies, responsibilities such as marriage are more important in defining the category where one belongs-adult or youth.

Biological age has been used to define policies and laws of inclusion and exclusion, in contexts such as obligatory schooling, right to vote, obtain identity cards and driving license and drink alcohol (Hansen, 2008). The exclusionary tendencies of policies targeting youth have denied youth opportunities to contribute in development and also exposed them to tight regulations whose interpretation and implementation is left to the law enforcing authorities. Rather than promote young people's well-being and development, certain policies have been used to constrain and deny them rights which are integral to their transition processes. Essentially, youth transition is presented as a linear, psychosocial development process starting in late childhood, which progresses in a piecemeal fashion towards the conventional goals of adulthood (Barry, 2005: 100). Coles (1995 cited in Barry, 2005) identifies 4 main transitional stages:

- Leaving the parental home and establishing new living arrangements;
- Completing full time education;
- Forming close stable personal relationships outside the family; and
- Testing the labour market, finding work and possibly settling into a career, and achieving a more or less stable livelihood.

These transitions are interconnected. For instance, leaving parental home and setting up a personal home require an independent source of income, and to reach this stage, a young person generally has to have acquired qualifications and to have succeeded in demonstrating his or her skills in the labour market or some equivalent subsection of the society (United Nations, 2007). The transition model assumes a predictable linear progression to a mainstream endpoint-

adulthood (Barry, 2005). Ironically, the transition between home and work has become less discontinuous with many young people delineating the course of their lives (Leccardi, 2005 cited in Hansen, 2008: 7). The uncertainty of the process compels young people to draw on diverse resources (economic, social, cultural and political), depending on where and who they are in gender and class terms, as they negotiate their everyday lives and orient themselves toward the future (Hansen, 2008: 7). Consequently, there are not one but many trajectories along the continuum to adulthood, and no obvious point of arrival (Wyn and White, 1997; and Skelton, 2002 cited in Hansen, 2008: 7).

Significantly, debates about youth have raised concerns about the existence of youth as a distinct stage of life, since the realities facing most young people have negated the theoretical description of youth-hood. According to Bynner et al (1997 cited in Barry, 2005), youth is just an additional bridging stage between childhood and adulthood to exemplify the protracted transition brought about by tighter labour market restrictions on school leavers, extended education and often compulsory training. It thus offers a convenient sociological bridge between the widening poles of childhood and adulthood in the Western world (Barry, 2005). This sociological bridge is dynamic, and sometimes too weak to support youth to cross over without falling off course. In the contemporary society, a large proportion of young people do not experience the transition that the previous generation took for granted when they left school and went straight into full-time jobs. Thus, they enter adulthood much earlier than defined chronologically and biologically by dint of the responsibilities and roles they assume in the absence of proper functioning labour markets and in the face of changing social and political conditions. For Africa's youth, experience in adult responsibilities begins early, since children actively participate in productive tasks, paid labour, household chores and taking care of younger siblings (Riesman, 1995 cited in Boeck and Honwana, 2005: 4; and United Nations, 2007: 96).

Consequently, they do not enjoy the luxury of living under the care and protection of parents or guardians so as to gain education and skills to prepare them to live independently as adults as implied by the transition model. Rather, they become care givers, providers, parents and defenders of society at an age when they should be in school learning. Moreover, the household and other skills acquired by young people at an early age are generally inadequate to prepare them for work in the modern economy or, more generally, for effective participation in a

globalized world (United Nations, 2007: 96). Wyn and White (1997: 98) empathically argue that the term “transition” is a misleading concept in the contemporary society where the boundaries between youth and adulthood are blurred, employment insecure and often temporary and the conventional markers of adulthood (for example marriage and child rearing) are often purposely delayed. Given the difficulties of situating youth in the contemporary society, particularly African youth, within the “transition model,” this paper considers youth to refer to a series of transitions from adolescence to adulthood, from dependence to independence, and from being recipients of society’s services to becoming contributors to national economic, political and cultural life (United Nations, 2003). The definition is more encompassing since it recognizes that youth is a social process and young people are active agents in making the process more wholesome and meaningful. The definition is also realistic in recognizing the fact that the route to adulthood can be a continual maze of cyclical, reversible and uncertain pathways (Stephen and Squires, 2003 cited in Barry 2005).

3.0 Youth and Development: A Conceptual Framework

Youth aged 15-24 years account for 1.2 billion people of today’s world population (World Bank, 2009: 1). The highest proportion of this population, about 87%, lives in the developing countries. In Africa, 200 million people are in this age bracket, comprising more than 20% of the region’s population (United Nations, 2007). However, with the broader definition of the African Union, the population jumps to 34.3%, or 1 in 3 people (see table 1 for youth demographics). The demographic picture makes it patently evident that engaging youth fully in sub-Saharan Africa’s development is not a matter of choice but an imperative for national development (United Nations, 2007: 83). At the same time, youth are seen as Africa’s foremost social capital which presents the continent with an opportunity to accelerate growth, reduce poverty and build a sustainable and peaceful future (UNESCO, 2010: 4). However, the large size of youth cohort demands for more resources in order to meet their social and economic needs, and make a smooth transition from dependence to independence. Empirical evidence has shown that investing in the needs of youth for education, jobs, health care and information is not only beneficial to individual youth, but to the society as a whole (Knowles and Behrman, 2003 cited in UNFPA, 2005). However, for many youth, their transition process involves confronting and overcoming a number of uncertainties-“managing durations of radical uncertainty” (UNFPA,

2005). Consequently, most vital events such as marriage, motherhood and migration are negotiable and contested, fraught with uncertainty, innovation and ambivalence (Ibid).

Table 1

Size and Share of the Youth Population in sub-Saharan Africa, 1980-2015

Year	Population by age		Total sub-Saharan Africa Population	Youth aged 15-24 years as percentage of total population	Youth aged 15-34 years as percentage of total population
	Youth aged 15-24 years	Youth aged 15-34 years			
1980	73 457	124 274	388 063	18.9	32.0
1985	85 260	144 690	449 349	19.0	32.2
1990	99 418	168 292	519 391	19.1	32.4
1995	116 356	212 674	596 402	19.5	35.7
2000	136 099	228 043	679 873	20.0	33.5
2005	156 899	263 753	769 348	20.4	34.3
2010	177 255	302 591	866 948	20.4	34.9
2015	197 878	343 410	971 522	20.4	35.3

Source: United Nations Population Prospects (New York: 2007) accessed at www.unpopulation.org on 12/09/2010

The 2007 World Youth Report points out that despite the challenges associated with youth development in the contemporary society and inadequate access to education, the young people of today are on average, better educated than their preceding generations (United Nations, 2007). They are better connected to the world than any of the earlier generations of youth, and they are, as a result, more determined to find options to close the gap between their limited opportunities

in the region and what they perceive to be possible in the global economy (Ibid). Their energy, creativity and networking capacity, make them a significant resource for contributing to national development and addressing the social, economic and political impediments confronting them. This view has increasingly gained prominence and has been supported through multiple global initiatives and interventions to help youth realize their potential. These initiatives are informed by an emerging youth discourse which views young people as active agents who are negotiators of the uncertainties they face in their attempt to utilize the resources available to them to move towards independence. This perspective acknowledges the capacities of youth to make important life decisions regarding the important aspects of life such as work, family and education. It then seeks for ways to reduce their vulnerabilities and to enhance their capacities to utilize the resources available to meet their needs and to make a positive contribution in society.

Through their involvement in youth organizations and associations, youth are continuously contributing towards political stability, social cohesion and economic prosperity. They are increasingly engaging in community action and voluntary activities to devise innovative responses to major issues affecting them and in the process, creating their identity (Boeck and Honwana, 2005). Given their energy, creativity and networking capacity, they have a significant potential to contribute towards addressing the economic, ethical and social challenges (UNESCO, 2010). For example, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), through its pervasive nature, has rapidly and fundamentally transformed the lives of youth who use ICT tools for entertainment, social networking, seeking and creating jobs, gathering information or communicating their interests and concerns to the government and other actors⁷. Consequently, youth appear more determined to find viable options to bridge the gap between opportunities available to them in their localities and what they perceive to be possible in the global arena (Ibid). They have gained unprecedented autonomy as a social category, both in and for themselves (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2005). In order to be successful, youth need an environment which can foster their talents, creativity and resilient spirit in seeking to improve their well-being. One way of doing this, is through formulating youth-specific policies that

⁷ *Ushahidi* (testimony), a social media application developed by young people has allowed people, mostly youth, and organizations, to engage in national processes such as the 2007 general election unrest and the 2010 referendum for the new Constitution

support them to better access opportunities such skills upgrading, credit facilities, platforms for participation in public affairs and improved juvenile system.

A major contributor to the development of this discourse is the United Nations and its agencies, which has developed global programmes, action plans and parameters to serve as a guideline to youth-related initiatives by both the state and non-state actors, including the international community⁸. The endorsement by United Nations Member States in 1965 of the Declaration on the “Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples,” provided the foundation for this development. The Declaration sets forth principles focusing *inter alia* on educating and training young people to positively contribute to the development of their societies and contribute to the ideals of peace, liberty, the dignity and equality and love for humanity (United Nations, 1965). Two decades later the UN General Assembly observed 1985 as the first International Youth Year (IYY), themed “Participation, Development and Peace”⁹. The Year emphasized the important role of young people globally, and focused in particular on their potential contribution towards development and the goals of the United Nations Charter (United Nations, 2010). In 1995, on the tenth anniversary of the IYY, the United Nations drew the attention of the international community to the challenges confronting youth and directed their commitment to addressing them. This happened through adoption of an international strategy-the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. The World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of youth (United Nations, 2010). It also contains specific proposals for action, aimed at increasing the quality and quantity of opportunities available to youth for full, effective and constructive participation in society (Ibid). The original format of the WPAY outlined 10 priority areas of

⁸ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has developed a strategy targeting African Youth to promote civic engagement among youth and empower them as agents of peace and key actors in their communities. The programme aims at assisting youth to make successful transitions from school to the workplace and to prevent violence.

⁹ It was during the preparations for the International Youth Year that the UN General Assembly (see A/36/25 and resolution 36/28, 1981) developed and endorsed the definition of youth to refer to persons between ages of 15 and 24 years, for statistical purposes (www.un.org/youth accessed on 12/16/2010).

action¹⁰. During the tenth anniversary in 2005, it was expanded to include five more areas, which were adopted in 2007¹¹. These 15 issue areas currently constitute the WPAY, which guides policy and action in the area of youth development (United Nations, 2010). In addition, the UN General Assembly declared the year 2010 as the International Year of Youth on “Dialogue and Mutual Understanding.”

The issue of youth has continued to receive growing attention, and attempts have been made to target specific issues that are facing them. For instance, in 1998, the international conference for government ministries focusing on youth affairs adopted the Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes, while in 2001, the Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy was unveiled. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted in 2000 during the 2000 United Nations Summit, are directly related to the needs facing young people. Indeed, five of the eight goals refer explicitly to the young people (see table 2 on MDGs, targets and indicators that relate to young people). The UN General Assembly Millennium Declaration states clearly that human rights underpin the MDGs¹². The World Development Report of 2003 states that human rights carry counterpart obligations on the part of others to not only refrain from violating them, but also to protect and promote their realization. Thus, a rights-based approach to addressing the needs of young people focuses on the root causes of their problems, and the obstacles they face in addressing them. It also provides a framework and specific criteria for developing and implementing programmes and policies to address specific needs, and places an obligation on the government and other actors in meeting the needs facing young people (UNFPA, 2005).

¹⁰ The 10 issue areas that were identified as of the highest priority to governments include education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure-time activities, girls and young women, and full and active participation of youth in the life and society and in decision-making (www.un.org/youth accessed on 12/16/2010).

¹¹ The five additional issue areas are: globalization, information and communication technologies, HIV/AIDS, youth and conflict, and intergenerational relations (www.un.org/youth accessed on 12/16/2010).

¹² The MDGs are based on the economic, social and cultural rights espoused in various international human rights instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993).

Table 2: Millennium Development Goals, targets and indicators on young people

MDG	Target	Indicator
Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	<p>Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than a dollar a day</p> <p>Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger</p>	<p>1. Proportion of population below \$1 per day</p> <p>4. Prevalence of underweight children (under five years of age)</p>
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	8. Literacy rates of 15-24 year olds
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015	<p>9. Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education</p> <p>10. Ratio of literate females to males of 15-24 year olds</p>
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	Target 6: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	16. Maternal mortality ratio
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	Target 7: Have halted by 2015, and begin to reverse, the	18. HIV prevalence among 15-24 year old pregnant

	spread of HIV/AIDS	women
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development	Target 16: In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth	45. Unemployment rate of 15-24 year olds

Source: United Nations, 2000

Guided by these global trends and developments, almost all governments in the world have increasingly devised and implemented new sets of policies and strategies that reflect the perspective of youth as important resources for national development. The African Union (AU) aptly captures this by stating that “Africa’s future cannot be mapped out and the African Union’s mission fulfilled, without effectively addressing youth development, empowerment and preparation of young people for leadership and the fulfillment of their potential” (African Union, 2006). In July 2006, the Heads of States and Government of the African Union adopted the African Youth Charter (AYC) to serve as a framework to guide and support policies, programmes and actions for youth development in Africa¹³ (see box 1.0).

¹³ In addition to the AYC, the Heads of State and Government declared the Year 2008 as the Year of African Youth and November 1 as African Youth Day. The African Union Commission (AUC) has finalized a Plan of Action to accelerate the ratification, popularization and implementation of the AYC (2008-2015). It has developed a 10- year consolidated and comprehensive Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment and Youth Development in Africa (2009-2018). It is also exploring possibilities of establishment of an African Youth Fund. In September 2010, AUC formed the African Union Youth Volunteers Corps (AU-YVC) project to facilitate the deployment of African youth between ages of 21-35 to serve in volunteer, internship or junior professional officer positions within the continent. [www. Africa-union.org/root/newsletter/AUCNEW-September 2010.pdf](http://www.Africa-union.org/root/newsletter/AUCNEW-September%202010.pdf). accessed on 12/20/2010

Box 1 The African Youth Charter: A Regional Commitment to Youth Participation in Decision-Making

Adopted in July 2006, the African Youth Charter provides a platform for youth to assert their rights and execute their responsibility to contribute to the development of the continent. The Charter asserts that “every young person shall have the right to participate in all spheres of society” and proposes several measures to promote active youth participation in public affairs:

- a. Guarantee the participation of youth in parliament and other decision-making bodies in accordance with the prescribed laws;
- b. Facilitate the creation or strengthening of platforms for youth participation in decision-making at local, national, regional and continental levels of governance;
- c. Ensure equal access to young men and women to participate in decision-making and fulfilling their civic duties;
- d. Give priority to policies and programmes including youth advocacy and peer-to-peer programmes to marginalized youth, such as out-of-school and out-of-work youth, to offer them with opportunity and motivation to re-integrate into mainstream society;
- e. Provide access to information such that young people become aware of their rights and of opportunities to participate in decision-making and civic life;
- f. Institute measures to professionalize youth work and introduce relevant training programmes in higher education and other such training institutions;
- g. Provide technical and financial support to build the institutional capacity of youth organizations;
- h. Institute policy and programmes of youth voluntarism at local, national, regional and international levels as an important form of youth participation and as a means of peer-to-peer training;
- i. Provide access to information and services that will empower youth to become aware of

their rights and responsibilities; and

- j. Include youth representatives as part of delegations to ordinary sessions and other relevant meetings to broaden channels of communication and enhance the discussion of youth-related issues.

Source: African Youth Charter, 2006

The AYC, along with other global initiatives has catalyzed the development of national policies and programmes by states, focusing on youth needs and enhancement of their inherent potential to contribute to national development. These initiatives help youth to see themselves as active agents of development within their communities, with the ability to shape the direction of their lives and transform their societies. Consequently, youth are perceived as assets in their communities, who can positively contribute to the advancement of the social, economic and political environment. This shifts the focus on population growth *per se* to looking more closely at the importance of a population's evolving age structure and its implication for development (WYR, 2007:84; and UNFPA, 2005). This helps to determine the demographic dividend or bonus, which refers to the opportunity provided by reduction in mortality and fertility rates, and the ability to reap benefits of a growing cohort of working-age adults relative to the dependent population ((Population Reference Bureau, 2007)). To fully reap the demographic dividend, options must be provided for broadening opportunities to enable young people to develop skills and to use them productively.

By taking advantage of the demographic dividend, countries lower their chances of experiencing civil conflict. Studies suggest that when young people, particularly young men are uprooted, unemployed and with few opportunities for positive engagement, they represent a ready pool of recruits for groups seeking to activate violence (Urdal, 2000; United Nations, 2007; World Bank, 2006/09; and USAID, 2005). An analysis of demographic and civil conflict data in the 1990-2000 period reveals that countries with a large youth share of the population and rapid urban population growth are more likely to be politically unstable with violent civil unrest (USAID, 2005). The findings show that where there is more than 40% of the population aged 15 to 29 years, the country is 2.3 times more likely to experience an outbreak of civil conflict compared with countries with smaller youth populations (Ibid). The study focused on conflicts which have

erupted in the period 1990 to 2000 and the data was collected from 145 countries. Utas (2005) argues that civil war in the eyes of youth is seen as a revolution—a chance to become someone in a national system that had marginalized them and also to get rid of the load of work and expectations that the parental generation had laid on them. In any case, the presence of a demographic ‘youth bulge’ is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition of violence. Factors such as poor governance, declining economy, polarized ethnic or religious and deeply divided political and economic situations exacerbate the potential for youth bulges to lead to conflicts¹⁴. In addition, absent or inadequate family support, and inability of authorities to protect youth and remove the obstacles likely to block youth to make a smooth transition could open up alternatives for youth to seek refuge, including extremist and rebel groups. Sommers (2006: 14) points out that unemployed, undereducated youth require positive engagement and appropriate empowerment, and participatory financial and programme support. He stresses that, the answer cannot be found in further youth marginalization or painting youth as fearsome security threats. In any case, youth, a demographic majority who are seemingly threatening, view themselves as an “outcast minority in many societies, particularly in the developing world” (Sommers, 2003: 1 cited in Sommers, 2006: 15).

4.0 Youth in Kenya

Kenya’s population is largely youthful. 75% of the country’s population is made up of persons aged 1 to 30 years. Youth number 10.1 million, accounting for 32% of the country’s population. Of these, 51.7% are female and 48.3 % male. Youth form about 60% of the total labour force in the country, but a majority, about 65%, are unemployed. Out of 750,000 youth who graduate from various tertiary institutions in the country, only 25% access employment. The rest, 75% have to bear the burden of unemployment. Furthermore, some of those absorbed in the labour market have jobs that do not match their qualifications and personal development goals (GoK, 2006: 3). A high level of youth unemployment is associated with lack of adequate education and marketable skills, fluctuating demand for labour, demand for experience by potential employers

¹⁴ A configuration of factors contributed to the 2007/08 post-election violence, whereby youth have been identified as the main perpetrators and victims. Deep ethnic rivalry, historical land issues, electoral irregularities and malpractices and manipulation of ethnicity by an elite and powerful political class, are among the factors which precipitated the violence.

and the relatively high youth population. Like many developing countries, open youth unemployment in Kenya is compounded by substantial levels of underemployment and poor quality jobs in the informal sector (O'Higgins, 2001). Coupled with this, youth are confronted with other social problems such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, drug and substance abuse and crime and violence. The HIV/AIDS scourge has broadly affected youth, with 33% of all the AIDS cases in Kenya being associated with people aged 15 to 34 years. 75% of all new HIV/AIDS infections are among people aged 20 to 45 years. This situation presents youth as needy, helpless and unprepared to make any contribution to national developmental affairs. Consequently, they are marginalized in national state policies and have a weak legal position (Abbink, 2005).

Their subaltern position exposes them to misuse and manipulation by political stalwarts to intimidate and oppress their opponents. Others resort to crime and violence, problems which are widespread in both rural and urban areas. Crime and violence largely inform public perceptions and attitudes towards youth, and also define the actions taken by state security organs against youth. Yet youth also form the majority of the victims of violence and are often at the tail end of the perpetration chain (Youth Agenda, 2007). While youth have been "labeled" criminals and received universal condemnation for executing violence, politicians have not been punished for incitement, hate speech, bribes and manipulations of ethnicity, which are strongly linked to political and electoral violence (Ibid). Consequently, youth, who account for a third of Kenya's population, are increasingly viewed as a problem in the society, which the government and other non-state actors need to ameliorate. In fact, being young is widely and constantly perceived as problematic (Abbink, 2005). Boeck and Honwana (2005) note that youth often appear as "breakers" in various ways: as risk factors for themselves through suicide, drug abuse, alcohol, and unsafe sex; by breaking societal norms, conventions, sometimes by breaking limbs and lives; and sometimes by breaking the chains of oppression. Thus, policies and programmes should seek to integrate the youth factor as a necessary and autonomous element in the society, as well as actors capable of reshaping social relations and power formations.

Although youth have been instrumental in the nationalist movement and the struggle for social and political transformation under Kenya's post-colonial state, they have continued to occupy a liminal position, without having any influence on public policy issues. Their liminal position is reflected by the nature and trends in Kenya's political processes and developments. Kagwanja

(2005) notes that tension between elders and youth in Kenyan politics has a long historical pedigree in the gerontocracy politics of the national struggle that was overlaid with the generational conflicts of the post-colonial era. While political pluralism in the early 1990s widened the space for political participation, youth remained at the periphery, as the dominant elders in both the ruling and opposition parties entrenched themselves. Members of the political old guard like Jomo Kenyatta, Daniel Arap-Moi, Oginga Odinga and Mwai Kibaki, who dominated Kenya's political arena from the 1950s onwards, assumed political leadership of their respective parties in multiparty politics. Politically eligible youth, widely touted as "Young Turks," were rendered powerless and kept in the service of their respective elders. Thus youth constitute a powerless "counter-public" to the hegemony of the elders who dominate the state, political parties and other instruments of power (Kagwanja, 2007). Moreover, youth violence and the consequent instability they cause, hinder the establishment of the hegemony of a youth-led social movement to counter the hegemony of the elders. This has also blocked efforts to mobilize, consolidate and construct youth identity to push the agenda of youth in public policy. Without an organized, unified and strong social movement for youth, public policies have either by-passed or have had limited impact on youth.

The fragmentation of youth as a category has created opportunities for the powerful political elite to define ways and means of engaging them in political endeavors in a disorganized and often destructive manner. Thus, youth are seen as a fundamental group to engage in politics, but under unclear terms, which render them as "puppets" to use and discard, once individual selfish political interests have been met. For instance, during the single party rule under the leadership of Daniel Moi, the Kenya African National Union (KANU) established the ruling party's Youth Wing (KYW) which operated as the *de facto* police, with power to mete out instant justice to anyone who opposed the government (Mwangola, 2006). With the advent of multiparty politics, the KANU youth wingers remained central as they defended the party through harassing, intimidating and meting out violence against actual or even suspected multiparty advocates. Their red uniforms (reminiscent of Mussolini's Brown Shirts) gave them a faceless identity affirming their marginal role in decision making processes (Ibid). The youth wings existed to ostensibly give direction to young people, provide purpose and support so as to harness their energies "productively." The KYW gave way to private armies with the re-introduction of multiparty politics in 1991. Anderson (2002) identifies some of these: *Jeshi la Mzee* (Army of

the Elder), *Jeshi la Embakasi* (Army of Embakasi), *Jeshi la Mbela* (Army of Mbela) and Runyenjes Football Club.

While some were specifically started as political “support” groups for individual politicians, others took advantage of the political context to offer their services to particular factions or emerged in response to insecurity, poverty or other needs (Anderson, 2002). These categories are by no means clear-cut or fixed, as has been demonstrated by the most visible of these groups, the Kikuyu-based *mungiki*, which has been identified with each of these different agendas during its history (Kagwanja, 2003a/07; Anderson, 2002; and Ruteere, 2005). The other form of youth wing legacy in politics has taken the shape of “lobby groups” that first emerged in the run-up to the 1992 elections. In contrast to the “goon squad image” of the KYW and the private armies, the lobby groups present a highly articulate, well-educated and progressive image, designed to impress, attract and ultimately motivate Kenyans into voting for their sponsors (Mwangola 2006). Instead of brute force, groups such as Youth for KANU '92 (YK'92) refined the culture of “buying” public support. The group became a conduit for minting money to bank roll the campaign for KANU during the first multiparty elections in 1992. The newly issued 500 Kenya Shilling note came to be informally known as “Jirongo” the YK'92 chairman. Consequently, it came to be associated with mass bribery, violence and the printing of excess currency, an economically daft strategy that ended up injuring the country's struggling economy.

The operations of the YK'92 helped KANU to sail through, and also catapulted the political careers of some of its members. In the run-up to the 2002 elections, Moi dramatically introduced the discourse of generational transfer of power to the young politicians, to ostensibly appeal to the youth to support his unilaterally chosen youthful successor, Uhuru Kenyatta. Whereas youthfulness in post-colonial Kenyan politics had been equated with naivety and thus glossed over wherever possible, it now became equated with the push for a new moral order (Mwangola 2006; and Kagwanja, 2007). KANU launched its campaign dubbed *Kienzi Kipya, Mwongozo Mpya* (New Generation, New Leadership). The opposition which had conglomerated under the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) presented its own youthful brigade, in order to attract young voters¹⁵. A similar pattern emerged during the 2007 elections, with lobby groups

¹⁵These include Yvonne Khamati, Najib Balala, Jackson Mwalulu, Cecily Mbarire and Danson Mungatana.

such as *Vijana na Kibaki* (Youth and Kibaki), Young Patriots for Change (YP4C), *Vijana na Raila* (Youth and Raila), Young Kenyans for Raila (YK4R) and *KIPYA* (New) to rally support of the burgeoning youthful voters. In addition, a drive to mobilize youth to register as voters, dubbed *Vijana Tugutuke* (Lets shout Youth) was founded with support from NGOs and young artists. The historic large vote (60%) among youth during the 2007 elections has been attributed to the active mobilization of youth registration as voters. Like other previous initiatives to accommodate youth in Kenya's politics, this was another ploy to help the elders ascend to power, without necessarily providing a viable platform for youth to constructively and actively engage in public affairs and decision making processes. However, it is instructive that the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC), which ascended into power in 2002, established the National Youth Policy Steering Committee in 2003 to prepare the Kenya National Youth Policy (NYP) which was formally launched in 2006¹⁶.

5.0 The Kenya National Youth Policy

The NYP views youth as the largest source of human resource in the country, and recognizes their exclusion from national affairs, including the design and implementation of programmes and policies that affect them (GoK, 2006). The policy provides a broad framework to address the issues affecting youth through meaningful engagement in socioeconomic and political development programmes. It blames the historical marginalization of youth on personal, structural and social factors such as high population growth, lack of appropriate and marketable skills, unclear and uncoordinated youth policies and programmes, lack of adequate resources and the low status which is accorded to youth in the existing structures (Ibid). These constraints are compounded by the prevailing attitudes in the society, which fail to recognize youth as important actors in decision making processes (Ibid). Thus, the NYP seeks to create an environment where youth have an equal opportunity to realize their fullest potential through active participation in economic, social, political, cultural and religious life without any discrimination. The policy proposes a comprehensive and multi-sectoral implementation strategy to work in harmony with

¹⁶ "The policy reflects a holistic and inclusive approach by taking into consideration existing sectoral policies, national development plans, international policies and charters to which Kenya is a signatory. These include the Charter of the United Nations, the Commonwealth Youth Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations World Programme for the Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond" (GoK, 2006).

other existing laws and development priorities to help meet the needs of youth. To this end, it proposes the establishment of two bodies namely, a National Youth Council (NYC) and an inter-ministerial committee. The latter comprises representatives of relevant ministries dealing with youth-related issues, with the responsibility of monitoring and reviewing the youth activities carried out by other players in the government.

6.0 Principles and Values of the National Youth Policy

The NYP is seen as a vehicle for prioritizing public actions towards creation of an environment conducive for youth to fully achieve their aspirations. It emphasizes the importance of connection of youth development with other national laws and development priorities. There are five principles which underlie the NYP:

- **Respect for cultural belief systems and ethical values:** the policy respects the cultural, religious, customary and ethical backgrounds of the different communities and conforms to the universally recognized human rights, without discrimination based on gender, race, origin, age, ethnicity, creed, political affiliation or social status.
- **Equity and accessibility:** the policy endeavors to promote equitable distribution and accessibility of socio-economic opportunities to youth.
- **Gender Inclusiveness:** the policy seeks to promote gender equity and equality and to eliminate discrimination and violence against women and men.
- **Good governance:** the policy seeks to promote the values of good governance, a just and tolerant society, promotion of transparency and accountability and a spirit of nationhood and patriotism. It also serves as a channel to promote the values of conscientiousness, inclusiveness, selflessness, volunteerism and pursuit of good conduct.
- **Mainstreaming youth issues:** the policy aims at increasing visibility of youth issues and ensuring that they are considered in all sectors of national development at both macro and micro levels within the public and private sectors. It also advocates for affirmative action for youth as a strategy of participation and empowerment.

7.0 Policy Goal and Objectives

The overall goal of the NYP is to promote youth participation in democratic processes as well as in community and civic affairs. Specifically, the policy seeks to:

- Sensitize national policy makers on the need to identify and mainstream youth issues in national development.
- Emphasize, support and partner with positive and effective initiatives and programmes set up by non-state actors that help youth to fulfill their expectations and meet their needs.
- Create proper conditions for youth to empower themselves and exploit their potential.
- Identify ways of empowering youth.
- Promote a culture of volunteerism among youth.
- Explore and suggest ways of engaging youth in the process of economic development.
- Identify constraints that hinder Kenyan youth from realizing their potential.
- Propose ways of mentoring youth to be just and morally upright citizens.
- Promote honest hard work and productivity among youth.
- Guarantee employment for those willing to work.

8.0 Priority Strategic Areas

The NYP spells out strategic areas that should be addressed so as to enable young people to effectively play their role in nation building. These include employment creation, health, education and training, sports and recreation, the environment, art and culture, the media and participation and empowerment. The policy also recognizes the unique needs of certain groups of youth such as female youth, youth with disability, street youth, youth infected with HIV/AIDS, unemployed youth and out of school youth. It points out that the achievement of these priorities is primarily a task of high-level planning in areas such as educational and training institutions as

well as a systems level issue, whereby allocation of national resources is re-evaluated in order to consider specific needs of youth. Yet reforming the systems does not necessarily recognize individual needs and difficult life situations, which may require support mechanisms outside of the formal educational school systems. Self-employment, a strategy which is widely recognized as important for securing employment among certain categories of youth should be combined with efforts to build life skills in order to enable youth to manage and sustain the opportunities that are accorded to them. These skills can also complement the formal qualifications acquired through schooling to improve youth employability.

8.1.0 Employment Creation

Due to slow economic growth, corruption, nepotism and demand for experience by potential employers, most youth remain unemployed. The unemployment crisis, according to NYP, requires affirmative action in order to unlock more employment opportunities for youth. An environment that will enable youth to pursue self-help and self-employment is also required. The government proposes to intervene through various ways, among them: establishing partnership with community based organizations (CSOs) which address the youth employment crisis; creating community resource centres to enable youth access to relevant information, training, recreation and counseling on employment; providing micro-credit facilities and technical support (incubators, marketing and mentorship) to enable youth to start income generating activities; protecting youth against exploitation by employers; supporting rural agricultural production and industrialization; and, promoting specialization of young people in diverse fields to create more job opportunities.

8.2.0 Health

Reproductive health poses the greatest challenge among youth. This is related to HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancies, abortion and sexually transmitted diseases. Young women, aged 25-29, years and young men, aged 30-34 years, face the greatest risk of new HIV infection. Yet this age group includes the most productive people of the society. There still exists a huge gap for youth friendly health facilities. Among other things, the NYP proposes to: Incorporate youth in efforts to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS; promote and establish home and community-based welfare programmes to help youth orphaned by HIV/AIDS; provide affordable drug rehabilitation

centers; enhance youth's capacity in leadership and advocacy to enable them manage health promotion programmes such as peer-to-peer counseling and behavior change.

8.3.0 Education and Training

The system of education and training in Kenya has been blamed for failing to impart appropriate skills for enhancing (self) employment. The 8-4-4 system of education was introduced in 1985, and comprises 8 years of primary education followed by 4 years each for secondary and university education. It was geared towards changing the “academic” bias of the previous system with a strong emphasis on practical and technical subjects (Ikiara et al, 1995). However, due to high costs of education, poverty and lack of appropriate facilities, most youth are forced to drop out, and those who graduate do not possess adequate skills to facilitate employment (GoK, 2006). A number of female students are unable to complete their education due to pregnancy and other cultural practices such as early marriage and female genital mutilation. The country's training institutions are not only inadequate, but lack the essential facilities and technology to prepare students for the challenging labour market demands (GoK, 2006). In addition, training institutions have no linkages with the labour market, including the informal sector. The society's negative attitudes towards the informal sector discourages some youth from venturing into it. To enhance education and training for the youth, the NYP proposes to: improve affordability and accessibility of quality education at all levels of schooling; promote non-formal education, life skills development and vocational training; enforce re-admission policy for girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy; strengthen civic education and family life education in schools; and create linkages between educational institutions and the private sector through research, technical education, internship opportunities and financing.

8.4.0 Sports and Recreation

Sports contribute to the psychological, physical and personal development of youth. Through sports, youth gain skills to promote peaceful co-existence, leadership, development of talents and personal discipline. The value of sports and recreation is not reflected in the facilities provided, which lowers motivation levels among youth. The NYP calls for provision of more resources (personnel and facilities) in order to develop young people's talents; protect sportsmen and women from exploitation by private agencies; use sporting platforms to advocate for important

issues such as HIV/AIDS prevention and peaceful coexistence; and include youth in committees that make decisions on sports.

8.5.0 The Environment

The livelihoods of many people who directly and indirectly depend on the environment are threatened by continued degradation of the environment through pollution, poor waste management and deforestation. The consequences of these practices include destruction of water catchments, depletion of fish and other marine stock, pollution of rivers and destruction of plants and animals. The situation presents a bleak future for youth since it reduces their livelihood opportunities and denies them healthy and clean environments to live in. There are many organizations that have come up to engage youth in environmental protection activities such as tree planting, clean-up campaigns, bio-diversity conservation, wildlife preservation and bio-diversity. The NYP promises to promote environmental protection clubs by the youth in order to strengthen the involvement of youth in environmental conservation programmes. It also recommends establishment of linkages between youth environmental conservation clubs and local and national initiatives, as well as provision of information and training to improve their work.

8.6.0 Art and Culture

Youth in Kenya find themselves at crossroads between a modern, Westernized Kenya and the remnants of traditional culture. Under the circumstances, the country risks losing its traditional heritage since efforts are not being made to preserve it by way of passing knowledge and practice to the young generation. To reverse the trend, the NYP proposes to promote local arts and culture through establishment of cultural/community centres and theatres for material and non-material aspect of culture, facilitation of intergenerational exchange between adults and youth, and training and empowering young artistes. The policy also seeks to enact and enforce laws to stop proliferation of obscene literature and material.

8.7.0 Youth and the Media

An evolving media has contributed to degradation of morality among youth through exposure and perpetuation of Western culture and pornography. Important issues such as the campaign

against HIV/AIDS and drugs and behavior change among others have not received due attention. Thus the NYP seeks to ensure youth have access to information which improves their livelihood through subsidizing the cost of producing youth development programmes and improving access to information for youth.

8.8.0 Youth Empowerment and Participation in National Life

The purposes of youth empowerment is threefold (GoK, 2006), to build their capacity to realize their aspirations and boost their self-motivation and awareness, facilitate youth to forge partnerships with other groups in society, and instill a sense of ownership in the efforts to improve their wellbeing. Youth empowerment is based on the belief that youth are the best resource for promoting development and they are agents of change, with the ability to provide sustainable solutions to their problems. According to the NYP, youth become empowered when they attain a position whereby they can make free choices in life, take action based on their decisions and accept responsibility for the action. The NYP identifies several prerequisites for youth empowerment: stable economic and social base; political will; adequate resources and a supportive legal and administrative framework; a stable environment for equality, peace and democracy; access to knowledge and information and communication tools and skills; and a positive value system. According to the NYP,

“Managers, leaders, teachers and parents should identify new ways of educating youth about the future. Youth should no longer be taught what to learn, but how to learn, not what they are committed to but rather the value of commitment. Societal systems need to adopt open and flexible social norms. Adults should change from working for the youth to working with the youth”. (GoK, 2006)

To address the issues of youth empowerment and participation in national life, the NYP proposes the following strategies:

- Involving youth at all levels of governance and in decision-making processes through affirmative action;
- Encouraging youth to engage in discussions on economic, political and social issues at all levels-local, national and global;

- Establish micro-finance programmes to cater for the financial needs of youth;
- Provide training in entrepreneurial, leadership and management skills for the youth and their organizations; and
- Encourage youth to fight against all form of injustice and discrimination

9.0 Why a National Youth Policy?

The scale of the problems facing a large proportion of youth in Kenya make planning and implementing policies and programmes a daunting but urgent task for the state and non-state actors. This is because youth are constantly shaken and shaped, pulled and pushed into various actions by encompassing structures and processes over which they have little or no control (Boeck and Honwana, 2005). Consequently, youth, despite their numeric strength and high degree of mobility, versatility and adaptability lack adequate space to organize in order to design their own credible path towards realizing their potential and meeting their needs (Akwetey, 2006). Youth-focused policies and programmes have been identified as fundamental in defining a suitable path and putting in place structures which enable youth to utilize their skills, develop their potential and contribute in the mainstream economy, politics and other affairs of public life. Well-designed policies have the ability to transform an environment which has hitherto been repellant to youth development and participation, to one where youth are recognized, supported and encouraged to actively contribute to national development. Youth policies are therefore viewed as critical in consolidating and amplifying young people’s voices so that wrong assumptions and perceptions that have long persisted can give room for more informed ways of planning and meeting the needs of youth.

Writing about *Rarry Boy* culture in Sierra Leone, Abdullah (2005) notes that colonial officials, through a process of social engineering, targeted two groups of youth, those in formal education and the “deviant youth.” In educational institutions, attempts were made to promote leisure through recreational facilities, while reformist institutions were established to tackle the problem of juvenile delinquency and promote rehabilitation of delinquents (Abdullah, 2005; Wyn and White, 2008/04). The Western world on the other hand, emphasized legislation on work (prohibition of children of a certain age from working) and education (introduction of compulsory education) (Wyn and White, 2008/04). Both approaches served the purpose of

promoting a sense of civic awareness and adherence to societal rules, norms and values. They also shared a common limitation. They denied agency to youth in transforming their own lives and foreclosed the need for a dialogue or conversation between youth and adults (Austin and Willard, 1998 cited in Abdullah, 2005). Thus the state acted as both a facilitator of youth development by establishing youth-specific institutions and as a key agent in the social control of youth activities (Wyn and White, 2005). This limitation about youth-hood survived the colonial era and has been reproduced *ad infinitum* in the national discourse about youth in postcolonial Africa (Abdullah, 2005).

Youth largely depend on the established societal structures to facilitate and shape their uncertain transitions to family, work and citizenship¹⁷. This implies that for youth to successfully utilize and benefit from the structures in place, such structures should subjectively accommodate individual needs and priorities. A national youth policy is a declaration of the commitment a country gives to setting and meeting the priorities and development needs of its young men and women and clearly defines their roles in the society and the responsibilities of that society to the young people themselves (UNESCO, 2004). It is a broad statement which provides a framework that governs the provision of services to young people, and provides the possibilities and limits for young people to participate in decision-making (Wyn and White 2004). According to UNESCO (2004), a national youth policy should embody strategies that empower youth to actively influence and shape the political agenda. A progressive national youth policy obliges traditional decision-makers to work not only for young people but with them and let their experiences inform the development of appropriate interventions and services (Ibid). An integrated and cross-cutting youth policy strengthens the capacity and effectiveness of government to respond to the needs of youth (UN-Habitat, 2004). The development of a sound youth policy requires the involvement of a wide variety of social actors and large-scale cross-sectoral consultation with the civil society (UNESCO, 2004). In addition, young people must be considered as primary actors with whom to develop partnerships, not as spectators or advisers, but as active agents of change. Such a policy ought to be gender sensitive and pay special

¹⁷<http://www.up2youth.org/index2.php> accessed on 10/28/2010

attention to the needs and experiences of the most vulnerable youth, those in conflict with the law, those living with HIV/AIDS, or in the most vulnerable and risky situations.

Despite the wide range of benefits associated with youth policies, they often suffer from limitations which impact their effectiveness in terms of allowing youth to meaningfully engage in decision making processes. Wyn and White (2004/08) argue that policies affecting youth share a common theme of futurity- the valuing of young people for what they will become. They are based on the common view that young people are not important as youth, but as future adults. Their language draws on youth development to assert that young people are important because they represent the future cultural and social capital of the society. In her study on Youth Polytechnics (YP) in Kenya, Kinyanjui (2007) points out that YP education is not necessarily a direct or immediate route to employment, rather it is a futuristic investment that parents and households make to equip their children with skills in the hope that they will have a better life than themselves. Policies that locate young people's value in their future as adults also tend to emphasize "governmentality" (Kelly, 2001 cited in Wyn and White, 2008), whereby, they provide a rationale for monitoring and controlling young people's lives in the interest of protecting the future of young people and of the society.

The NYP for example states that "the government is obliged to carefully plan and be involved in developing youth to be responsible and available to contribute to the current and future nation-building efforts." Accordingly, the state is obliged to "be the lead agent in supporting the implementation of the youth policy, by creating sufficient employment opportunities and education and health facilities for youth." It also requires the state to provide the necessary framework for young people to fulfill their obligations. These include:

- Be patriotic and loyal to Kenya and promote the country's well-being;
- Contribute to social-economic development at all levels including through volunteerism;
- Create and promote respect for humanity, sustain peaceful co-existence, national unity and stability;

- Protect the environment;
- Help to support and protect those who are disadvantaged and vulnerable;
- Promote democracy and the rule of law;
- Create gainful employment;
- Take advantage of available education and training opportunities;
- Develop a positive attitude towards work;
- Avoid careless and irresponsible sex; and,
- Take responsible charge of their lives.

Underlying the development of a youth policy is often the assumption that young people should not be taken seriously because they are not yet adults (Wyn and White, 2008/04). This tendency is definitely in tension with the increasing acknowledgment that young people should participate in decision-making, as espoused in many national and global youth policies and initiatives. In addition, there is contestation about the extent to which young people can be regarded as citizens in any sense or whether they are “simply citizens in training” (Ibid). Consequently, youth are trained for their future roles and not equipped with skills and understanding that can be given expression immediately (Owen, 1996 cited in Wyn and White, 2008). This reduces them to either non-citizens or at best, apprentice-citizens (Ibid). To be relevant to youth, training should encompass issues that help young people to play roles in forming, maintaining and changing their societies. From this perspective, youth would be valued and valuable citizens in the present, as well as citizens of the future. The NYP proposes the formation of the NYC to help “coordinate youth organizations, design youth programmes and continuously review the implementation of youth-focused policies and programmes.” In addition, the NYC is meant to mobilize, sensitize and organize youth, in order to consolidate their voice regarding political, economic and socio-cultural activities. However, almost five years since the operationalization of the NYP, the NYC has not been formed, and the government, through the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, still oversees the implementation of the NYP and other youth related programmes. Parliament passed the legislation establishing the NYC in August 2010, but it was shelved awaiting further

consultations within the government about its operationalization. Notably, the youth policy and programme implementation process has proceeded without proper mechanisms to accommodate the voice of youth, and effectively mobilize them towards setting a progressive and comprehensive youth development agenda.

Pais (2003) describes youth transition and trajectories in recent years as a maze, and policies are developed to help them out of the maze. However, he argues that oftentimes policies could lead to misleading trajectories and outcomes, whenever their primary focus is just to get youth out of the maze, without making any effort to support them within the maze. Supporting transition processes, rather than focusing on the end point, is more beneficial since it recognizes young people's agency and allows them to actively take part in managing their lives as youth. In any case, a number of youth may already be undertaking "adulthood" responsibilities such as parenting, marriage and work but lacking a supportive environment to effectively carry on with these responsibilities. Thus, youth need to secure access to appropriate forms of social support, which are flexible enough to meet the different needs of various categories of youth. While the language of youth policies reflects efforts to foster inclusivity in public affairs, there is usually conflict with other existing legal provisions which threaten to undermine the trust that youth may have in the policies. For instance, the need to maintain security and order in the society may target youth who tend to "hang out" in the streets through arbitrary arrests, instituting curfews or other restrictive measures. Consequently, youth are denied the right to leisure, free movement and other fundamental freedoms even they are accorded opportunities to participate in work, education and training. Conflict between policy and practice reduces the trust that youth have in the institutions offering support and increases resentment of programmes targeting their needs.

The NYP broadly proposes a mechanism to harmonize sectoral policies and adapt all government programmes towards youth development, including promotion and protection of their rights. However, this has not been fully and effectively operationalized. This is reflected by the delays in establishing the NYC, reforming the justice and security agencies and failure to recognize other non-state actors working towards youth empowerment. Indeed, the government has raised its own suspicions about the youth development programmes that are supported by international agencies and implemented by NGOs and local community based organizations

(CBOs)¹⁸. A new legislation, The Prevention of Organised Crimes Act, 2010, which seeks to criminalize all groups undertaking organized crime, could have unprecedented consequences for youth, who are required to network and mobilize in order to meet their collective needs (GoK, 2010). The law identifies 33 organized criminal groups, which are mainly composed of youth. It criminalizes even non-members who abet or aid the group's activities by allowing them to use their property to carry out their activities (Ibid). Unlike the law providing for the establishment of the National Youth Council, which was passed by Parliament but shelved without specific details on implementation, the law on Organized Crime took effect immediately. While the NYP and other programmes, such as Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) and Kenya Youth Empowerment Project (KYEP), encourage youth to network and form groups, the new law could lead to isolation of some youth who belong or formerly belonged to the criminalized groups. The law has received criticism, especially regarding the groups identified as criminal. The Prime Minister pointed out that *kamukunji* Youth group, which is listed as an illegal group was not a criminal group, but a platform for people, especially youth, to debate public affairs and seek solutions to the problems facing them¹⁹.

10.0 Dynamics of Youth Participation

In Kenya, youth policies and programmes increasingly make reference to youth participation. Youth participation is linked to social capital and empowerment (Walther et al, 2002). Youth participation is only beneficial if it narrows the gap between policy makers and young people due to the historical marginalization of youth from decision-making processes on issues regarding their welfare and their communities (UNFPA, 2006). However, in their attempt to allow youth to actively participate, policies tend to resort to traditional practice, whereby they control rather than, empower youth. Most formal youth policies seek to involve youth on an *ad hoc* basis or consult them in a structured manner only on specific issues. Others seek to influence youth to move in a certain direction, where youth have minimal or no input. Writing about youth participation in Europe, Walther et al (2002) argues that:

¹⁸ Daily Nation 12/01/2010

¹⁹ Daily Nation 12/05/2010

- Involvement in formal education is assumed to directly lead to participation in public processes.
- Young people experience participation as tokenism while activities such as political protest are criminalized rather than acknowledged as legitimate ways of seeking audience with authorities over some specific concerns.
- Participation is reduced to “soft” policy areas such as temporary employment or other labour market programmes and training, while leaving out “hard” issues such as criteria (qualifications, employability) which are more important.
- Young people want to participate now, yet programmes aim at reducing them to later on participation.

The institutional expectation on how youth should participate often differs from young people’s actual activities and priorities. The absence of public space for individuals to communicate their needs, interests and aspirations reduces the ability of formal institutions to understand which forms of participation are meaningful to youth and how they can be integrated into the established societal institutions. Underlying this is the widely held belief that youth lack the necessary competencies needed for active participation. This view has been used to legitimize young people’s restricted scope of participation. This is especially manifested in politics, whereby, youth are locked out of political parties’ decision making processes, while being used to mobilize supporters, distribute campaign materials, fill up the stadiums where campaign rallies are held and, in some instances, to harass and intimidate other candidates from different political parties. In schools, students are encouraged to participate in activities such as drama and music, while issues of curricula, qualifications and discipline are left to the parents and schools authorities to decide. Youth policies emphasize formal channels of involving youth in decision – making processes, while there are many informal ways in which youth engage and participate in the society. Policies which recognize and seek ways of engaging youth in the informal settings are more beneficial since they reach out to youth who may not fall within the realm of formal channels such as schools, employment, religious institutions and NGOs among others. There are multiple and diverse forms of participation which occur beyond the sight of public authorities, and whose results could be more meaningful to specific categories of youth operating at the

margins of the society. Finally, policies should seek to integrate and link the informal participation setting to wider institutional structures such as education, welfare, and labour market in order to enhance their capacity to empower youth.

Youth participation has been presented in different ways and varying degrees. Using the concepts of minimal and maximal citizenship, Evans (1995 cited in Wyn and White, 2008) distinguishes between maximal and minimal notions of citizenship, which determine the level of youth participation in public affairs. He points out that, under minimal citizenship, emphasis is on civil and legal status, and rights and responsibilities in the society, and citizenship is gained when civil and legal status is granted. This approach has traditionally informed most youth policy. On the other hand, maximal citizenship denotes a consciousness of oneself as a member of a shared democratic culture. It emphasizes a participatory approach to political involvement and considers ways to overcome the social disadvantages that undermine citizenship by denying people full participation in society. It is this dimension of citizenship that young people are most frequently denied because of assumptions about youth that frame education, social services, politics and other important policies that are relevant to youth (Wyn and White, 2008). Thus, youth are viewed as recipients of goods and services, but not contributors in decision making processes. The United Nations (1999) identifies nine key areas in the processes of organizations in which young people can participate. In each of these areas, organizations can be structured to provide minimal or maximal participation for youth.

Table 3: Indicators for Youth Participation

Organizational	Type of youth participation	
	Minimal	Maximal
Analyzing needs and setting objectives	-adults design and execute project and inform young people as a target group -young people are consulted in	Young people define the project with adults or young people plan and execute the project and can choose to

	the early stages but ignored later	involve adults
Information and communication	Young people are not informed or consulted, or information is accessible to them (one-way flow)	Youth and adults collaborate, or young people inform each other and possibly adults
Decision making	Young people are not consulted or are consulted but not taken seriously	Shared decision making between adults and youth, or young people have power over allocation or resources and the direction of the project but can seek the assistance of adults
Administration	No young administrators, or youth are volunteers doing menial tasks	Young people play an integral role in the running of the project
Design and implementation of activities	Youth are consulted in the design which is by adults	Design and implementation by youth-possibly in cooperation with adults
Advocacy	Youth are present at public campaigns only	Young people have a significant role in public debate
Service, support and education personnel	Young people are consulted on support, service and education related issues	Young people are trained to become counselors with adult, or are the only counselors
Employees	Young people are employed in jobs not related to project objectives	Young people are employed as experts and may manage the project

Monitoring and evaluating	Young people are involved	Youth design evaluation tools, and may implement and report on evaluation
---------------------------	---------------------------	---

Source: United Nations 1999

Maximal participation entails allocating substantial roles to the youth in the institutions where they are engaged (Ibid). It recognizes and respects young people’s ability to act and contribute in building their societies. It is also integrative-it provides a mechanism for building connections between young people and communities (Wyn and White, 2008: 111). By so doing, it enhances the relations that exist between youth and other members of the society, particularly the older generation. It provides an opportunity for learning, sharing experiences and ideas on the most suitable ways of addressing societal problems, as they affect not just youth but all the other categories of the population. This is especially true at a time of rapid social change that involves fragmentation of social life and the erosion of citizenship (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002 cited in Wyn and White 2008: 112). In this context, youth participation is not simply a process that lets new members into the decision-makers’ club, but a necessary strategy to ensure that societies build the capacity of all their members to belong and develop connections to the new forms of society and emerging social relationships. Minimal interpretations of participation have the effect of perpetuating youth marginalization and involve them under pre-determined terms which do not give a lot of value to the views and contribution of youth in the issues affecting society (United Nations, 1999). Consequently, it ends up supporting fragmented, narrowly targeted approach to youth that often reinforces rather than solves the problems the programmes are intended to address (Ibid). Moreover, consultation exercises can serve to alienate young people, since most consultations involve small numbers of young people, mainly the elite educated youth from families that are well-off. Thus, a small minority of chosen or self-selected individuals enjoy and benefit from ongoing participatory activities and groups, while the majority who are oftentimes from disadvantaged families, are not consulted or have experience of short one-off consultations. This makes them resentful, alienated and cynical.

Youth participation ranges between high and low involvement. This is depicted by a continuum developed to measure the nature and level of youth participation. The continuum shows that there are 6 levels of youth participation ranging from *ad hoc* to having youth control over

policies and programmes which affect them (Wierenga 2003, cited in Wyn and White, 2008/04). As policies in Kenya seek ways to engage youth more deeply, there is a tendency to dwell only on the first two levels, whereby youth are either engaged on an *ad hoc* basis, or consulted in a structured manner. This is reflected in the programmes such as YEDF and KYEP, which are aimed at empowering youth economically. These policies developed and implemented under the guidance of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports seek to integrate youth in the mainstream economy by supporting them to start small businesses, improve their skills and enhance their opportunities for employment. The institutional set up and structures put in place to oversee their implementation follows the traditional government’s bureaucratic system, which is inflexible, with limited or no room for solid engagement with youth. Essentially, the programmes are designed and implemented by government agencies, and youth are only engaged as beneficiaries for as long as they meet the criteria developed such as, age, possession of a bank account and a business plan. In some cases, they are required to raise training fees and have a registered youth group in order to access a business loan.

Box 2 Continuum of youth participation

1	2	3	4	5	6
Ad hoc input	Structured consultation	Influence	Delegation	Negotiation	Control

Low involvement ←————→ High involvement

Source: Wierenga, 2003 cited in Wyn and White, 2008: 112

11.0 Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports

The Ministry of State for Youth Affairs was established in December 2005. It was later renamed Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in 2009. The formation of the ministry is viewed as an important step in the efforts to address youth needs, given their high population and underrepresentation in national affairs and decision making processes. Its functions include:

- Promote youth development by designing policies and programmes that build young people's capacity to resist risk factors and enhance protective factors;
- Develop a National Youth Policy to ensure young people's participation in the development of the country;
- Facilitate the establishment of a National Youth Council to popularize the youth agenda;
- Coordinate youth organizations in the country to ensure youth development through structured organization, collaboration and networking;
- Develop youth resource centres;
- Rehabilitate and expand youth polytechnics and the National Youth Service; and,
- Facilitate training and preparation of youth for nation building

To effectively discharge its mandate, the ministry is organized around three departments: youth development, youth training and National Youth Service.

11.1.0 Department of Youth Development

Its mandate is to develop interventions to address strategic issues in the areas of employment; empowerment; crime and drugs; leisure, recreation and community service; health; environment and human resource development. It promotes youth development by designing policies and programmes that build young people's capacity to resist risk factors and enhance protective factors.

11.2.0 Department of Youth Training

The department has previously operated as a unit under the Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development. It is meant to provide youth with opportunities to gain relevant skills, knowledge and attitudes for the labour market. Its functions include:

- Review and develop curriculum for Youth Polytechnics (YPs);
- Develop national Youth Policy for YPs;

- Develop YPs infrastructure;
- Facilitate equipping YPs;
- Offer training in leadership;
- Empower youth with ICT skills; and
- Equip youth with entrepreneurship skills

11.3.0 National Youth Service

The National Youth Service (NYS) was established in September, 1964, through an Act of Parliament, NYS Act Cap 208. Its mandate is to “train young citizens to serve the nation and the employment of its members in tasks of national importance and otherwise in the service of the nation.” Specifically, the NYS is responsible for:

- Providing training to Kenyan youth for discipline and vocational skills development;
- Service to the nation in tasks of national importance;
- Coordination, monitoring and evaluation of youth training programmes for national development;
- Reserve force for the Kenya Armed Forces; and
- Rehabilitation and training of disadvantaged youth

12.0 Youth Enterprise Development Fund

The Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) was established in December 8, 2006 through Legal Notice No. 167. It was transformed into a state corporation in May 11, 2007 through Legal Notice No. 63. The Fund focuses on enterprise development as a key strategy for increasing economic opportunities for youth as a way of enabling them to participate in nation building. YEDF focuses on multiple areas, namely to provide capital to young entrepreneurs, avail business development services, facilitate linkages in supply chains, and create market

opportunities for goods and services produced by youth enterprises. Realizing that not all young people have a keen interest in entrepreneurship, YEDF has broadened its focus to include facilitation of employment of young people (skilled and semi-skilled) in the local and international labour market. Its operations are fairly decentralized and funds are disbursed through banks, Micro Finance Institutions (MFI), NGOs (dealing with community economic empowerment) and Savings and Credit Cooperatives, which have branches across the country. Besides, there are funds that are channeled through lower levels of governance such as constituency and division, to support effective identification of viable youth group enterprises.

The 2009 status report of YEDF outlines a number of successes that have so far been achieved in supporting youth entrepreneurs. Notably, about 1.53 billion Kenya Shillings had, by March 31, 2009 been disbursed to finance 57,075 youth enterprises countrywide. In addition, the Fund provided other services such as training and mentoring, business incubation, holding a business plan competition, and developing partnership with private and public institutions. The report further states that, the government increased capital available for borrowing, thus, expanding its operations in order to cater for more youth. Acknowledging the challenges confronting youth entrepreneurship, the report stresses that, the “growth and sustainability of the Fund is pegged on development of multiple and quality partnerships with diverse state and non-state development players.” It further identifies the administrative and management challenges facing the Fund:

- Negative public perceptions and attitudes mainly influenced by the timing of its establishment. The Fund was established on the eve of the 2007 general election which was closely contested and created strong political divisions in the country. Thus, it was perceived as a campaign tool to influence youth to vote for the ruling party. The loans that were given out were considered as political goodies in some parts of the country, resulting in poor loan recovery.
- Inadequate policy and legislative framework to support growth of youth enterprises and sustainability of the Fund, given the scale and complexity of youth unemployment.
- Lack of financial intermediaries and avenues for loan repayment in some regions, particularly in the rural areas.

- Huge capital outlay to cater for non-credit services such as business development services, market support, operational overheads and public sensitization and education. While these services are important to ensure quality in the delivery of the Fund, a lot of public focus is on the amount of money disbursed and the number of beneficiaries.

Table 4: Funds Disbursed Funds through Financial Intermediaries based on provinces and gender

Province	Female	Amount	Male	Amount	Total Male and Female	Total Amounts Disbursed
Central	5,629	141,224,750	6,016	197,161,894	11,645	338,386,644
Coast	4,241	87,711,863	1,475	50,520,781	5,716	138,232,644
Eastern	6,000	116,226,397	5,561	163,027,957	11,561	279,254,354
Nairobi	2,437	98,817,535	3,032	137,826,321	5,469	236,643,856
North Eastern	186	6,767,472	465	18,387,477	651	25,154,949
Nyanza	3,434	74,109,791	2,141	57,145,798	5,575	131,255,589
Rift Valley	8,791	149,875,266	3,985	148,057,313	12,776	297,932,579
Western	2,376	47,110,645	1,306	39,776,436	3,682	86,887,081
Total	33,094	721,843,719	23,981	811,903,977	57,075	1,533,747,696

Source: GoK, 2009

From the table, it appears that more young women (33,094), than young men (23,981) accessed the funds disbursed through financial intermediaries. This is positive, given that female youth are harder to engage, and even locate, particularly in cities, where many female youth tend to live more private lives (Sommers, 2007: 17), mostly as domestic workers. The figures also reveal high regional disparities, with some regions such as North Eastern recording less than 1000 loan beneficiaries. While the women beneficiaries were more than men, they received less money than men. Women received 47% of the monies disbursed, while men, even with fewer enterprises, accessed 53% of the Fund. The most plausible explanation behind this outcome is that young women propose low capital ventures in order to minimize their risks and to be able to repay the loans granted. On the other hand, men have no qualms about developing huge business plans which require sizable start-up capital. The fear of enterprise failure and inability to repay seems not to be a major concern for young men. The male youth bias is also likely influenced by fear of this group. Marginalized male youth are thought of being the most potentially violent population, so they appear to have become the primary target group of youth development programmes (Ibid). Overall, the impact of YEDF among the youth population is still too small given their numbers and the magnitude of unemployment. The status report does not adequately measure the impact of YEDF on the lives of youth, and only provides scanty details about the enterprises which have been supported through the Fund, and lacks information on the owners of the enterprises. The impersonal and superficial nature of the report makes it difficult to determine the quality of the programme and its ability to transform the lives of young people. This situation conforms to Sommers (2007) findings in his field work focusing on youth unemployment challenge in West Africa. He points out that

Most (but not all) of the evaluation documents reviewed are not of high quality, and do not, for example, examine the lives of program graduates after programmes have ended. Many also do not critically compare the situation of programme participants to their counterparts who did not participate in the programmes. Indeed, profiles on which youth are in and not in a programme is either often unclear or not mentioned. It is frequently difficult to determine the gender, class, educational accomplishment, war experience, household stability, and ethnicity of youth in these two groups (Sommers, 2007: 17)

A proper evaluation report, capturing the voices of youth, would serve to improve the Fund's delivery mechanisms and enhance the well-being of youth who have an entrepreneurial spirit, and the ability to sustain a successful business venture. A sound, unbiased, professional, independent, and youth-inclusive assessment, monitoring and evaluation work should be mainstreamed in all youth employment activities, with sufficient funds to insure for quality evaluative action (Ibid).

13.0 Kenya Youth Empowerment Project

The objective of Kenya Youth Empowerment Project (KYEP) is two-pronged: first, to provide youth with labour intensive employment opportunities and second, to impart marketable skills to improve their chances of accessing more sustainable jobs. Under the KYEP, the government launched the *Kazi kwa vijana* (KKV which translates to jobs for youth) programme in 2009. The programme is aimed at providing employment opportunities to youth in both rural and urban areas in labour intensive public works projects implemented by different government line ministries. The KKV programme is implemented under the overall supervision and guidance of a National Steering Committee (NSC) chaired by the Prime Minister and comprises other senior government officials such as Ministers and Permanent Secretaries (PS) from ministries which have KKV sub-projects. The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) is in charge of overall coordination and monitoring of the programme. The programme gives priority to sub-projects which can be implemented rapidly using labour intensive techniques such as road maintenance, small-scale water supply and sanitation, water harvesting, afforestation and waste collection. These are meant to improve food security and promote productivity especially in drought prone areas.

The labour intensive public work programmes for youth are seen as useful in the short term, due to their flexibility, which allows for scaling up or down based on demand of the labour. The main criterion used for job selection is age, which targets persons aged 18 to 35 years. The wage rate used is set at the legal minimum, which differs between rural and urban areas. To cater for female youth participation, the programme includes social services such as elder and child care.

It also seeks to provide life skills training to ensure effective participation and benefits to the youth. The KYEP is funded by both the government and donors. The GoK allocation for the Financial Year 2010 was 6.6 billion Kenya Shillings (USD 84 million). Funding from donors, mainly the World Bank supports community outreach activities (the community in this case includes private sector, relevant government agencies such as YEDF and non-governmental agencies such as the Kenya National Federation of Jua Kali Associations-KNFJA), which are meant to ensure ownership and sustainability of the project. In addition, it is meant to broaden the activities of KYEP, to include training (vocational, life skills and entrepreneurship) and internship, in order to enhance young people's employability.

The flexibility of programmes implemented under KYEP reflects the common views in the society, that youth is a transitory period and young people are being prepared to be able to perform more solid roles in the future. However, for the majority of youth, the transition process is neither smooth nor continuous, and temporary or insecure work would not transform their lives. It only offers temporal relief, without changing the structural obstacles hampering their ability to lead quality lives. A more comprehensive approach to unlock blocked youth potential, enhance their capabilities and contribute in reshaping their lives would help to improve their wellbeing. The ability to sustain whatever opportunities they are able to access is very important and programmes need to place emphasis on the activities which promote youth's confidence, leadership and organizational skills and development of other positive attributes which foster general well-being. The KYEP focus on female youth is rather traditional given that it provides them with the opportunity to work and enhance their skills in domestic work. This reinforces popular stereotypes such as a "woman's place is in the kitchen." Female youth should be supported to acquire education and training in order to find employment opportunities outside the sphere of the home, where they can compete on an equal footing with the men. Finally, the KYEP establishes a new implementation framework to undertake activities which are similar to those under YEDF. The mandate of MoYAS is to coordinate all youth related programmes that are under the ambit of the state, to avoid wastage of resources and duplication of efforts.

In his employment model for marginalized urban youth in West Africa, Sommers (2007:18) shows the need to develop a pilot experiment that would be monitored and evaluated over time. He emphasizes the need to target poor, marginalized male and female youth in urban areas, with

the aim of building their confidence, life and work skills, economic stability and broader acceptance in society. Identifying and training qualified youth to become Youth Employment Trainers is another key feature, since it taps into the young people' abilities and potential. The trainers help youth to develop viable, demand-driven business plans over time, through careful analysis of the market sector that each youth group seeks to enter. The trainers also provide youth with relevant apprenticeship, vocational and life skills (such as HIV/AIDS awareness and parenting) to enhance the stability of the young group of entrepreneurs, who are in many cases facing linked challenges such as illiteracy, orphaned at an early age, conflict with the law, drug and substance abuse among others. Failure to focus on these multiple and complex problems and life histories could lead to total collapse of a youth employment programme. Sommers (2007: 19) recommends that, once the youth groups are ready to start their enterprise, they receive small start-up grants (or a low interest loan). Additional grants can be obtained provided the group achieves predetermined benchmarks. An eight months intensive engagement through careful monitoring and evaluation is viewed as reasonable in order to stabilize the enterprise. An important component is the Monitoring and Evaluation Team (MET), comprising urban youth who are trained to carry out market and enterprise assessments. Once the pilot project is carefully evaluated, it can eventually be expanded and mainstreamed as a programme for reaching the significant numbers of unemployed and marginalized male and female youth.

14.0 Conclusions

Youth in Kenya are confronted with multiple challenges, with unemployment featuring prominently. The magnitude of the problem suggests that majority of young people have been unusually patient and peaceful. However, just how long this unsteady peace can hold is unclear, given the events of the PEV and rising crime in both rural and urban areas. As the government seeks to engage more closely and deeply with youth, as a starting point, it is important to specifically and accurately identify youth, their needs and the resources which they possess in order to work on supporting and enhancing them. Youth is not a waiting period, but a period of radical life transformation, which should be supported to facilitate development of a stable pathway for individuals as they assume more independence in their living, decision-making and building social relationships. The feasibility of the current youth programmes and policies lies primarily in active and sustained engagement with organizations that work with communities to

address their needs, and harmonization with other existing laws and policies. It also requires adoption of more dynamic mechanisms to mobilize and engage youth (of all categories) and support them in order to make more contribution towards development activities. The new policies and structures provide an environment conducive for youth to develop appropriate skills, to enable them transform their lives, and confidently integrate in the society without feelings of alienation and deficiency or as “apprentice-citizens”.

15.0 References

- Abbink, J and Ineke Van Kessel, 2005. *Vanguard or Vandals: Youth Politics and Conflict in Africa*. Leiden: Brill
- Alcinda, Honwana and Filip De Boeck (eds), 2005. *Makers and Breakers: Children and Youth in Postcolonial Africa*. Oxford: James Currey
- Akwetey, Emmanuel, 2006. Youth and Political Development: Deploying Youth Capacities, Confronting the Challenge. Thematic Issues Paper prepared for the Africa Development Forum V (ADF-V). Accra: Ghana
- Anderson, David, 2002. 'Vigilantes, Violence, and the Politics of Public Order in Kenya', *African Affairs*, 101 (405): 531-55
- Barry, Monica (ed), 2005. *Youth Policy and Social Inclusion: Critical Debates with Young People*. Rutledge: London
- Comaroff, J. and Comaroff, J. 2005. 'Reflections on Youth: From the Past to the Post colony', in Alcinda, Honwana and Filip De Boeck (eds), 2005. *Makers and Breakers: Children and Youth in Postcolonial Africa*. Oxford: James Currey
- Durham, Deborah, 2000. 'Youth and Social Imagination in Africa: Introduction'. *Anthropological Quarterly* 73(3): 113-20
- GoK, 2006, Kenya National Youth Policy. Nairobi: Government Printer
- GoK, 2010, The Prevention of Organised Crimes Act, 2010. Nairobi: Government Printer
- GoK, 2009, Youth Enterprise Development Fund: Fund Status Report. Nairobi YEDF
- GoK, 2003. Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation, 2003- 2007. Nairobi: Government Printer
- GoK, 2007. Kenya Vision 2030. Nairobi: Government Printer
- GoK, 2007. Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey – 2005/06. Nairobi: Government Printer

GoK, 2009. End Term Review of the Economic Recovery Strategy for wealth and Employment Creation, 2003-2007. Nairobi: Government Printer

GoK, 2010. Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2008-09. Nairobi: Government Printer

Hansen, Karen, 2008. *Youth and the City in the Global South*. USA: Indiana University Press

Honwana, Alcinda, 2005. 'Innocent and Guilty: Child-Soldiers as Interstitial and Tactical Agents', in Alcinda, Honwana and Filip De Boeck (eds), 2005. *Makers and Breakers: Children and Youth in Postcolonial Africa*. Oxford: James Currey

International Labour Office, 2009. Global Employment Trends. Geneva: ILO

Kagwanja, P. M. 2007. 'Clash of Generations? Youth Identity, Violence and the Politics of Transition in Kenya, 1997-2002', in Abbink, J and Ineke Van Kessel, 2005. *Vanguard or Vandals: Youth Politics and Conflict in Africa*. Leiden: Brill

Kagwanja, P.M. 2003a, 'Facing Mount Kenya or Facing Mecca? The Mungiki, Ethnic Violence, and the Politics of the Moi Succession in Kenya, 1987-2002', *African Affairs*, 102 (406): 25-49

Mwangola, M.S. 2005. 'Leaders of Tomorrow? The Youth Democratization in Kenya' in

Population Reference Bureau, June 2007. *Africa's Youthful Population: Risk or Opportunity*. Washington DC: United States

Population Reference Bureau, May 2006, *Youth in a Global World*. Washington DC: United States

Republic of Kenya., 2010. *The Constitution of Kenya*. Nairobi: Government Printer

Ruteere Mutuma, 2008 'Dilemmas of Crime, Human Rights and the Politics of Mungiki Violence in Kenya' *Occasional Paper 01/08* Nairobi: KHRI

Sommers Marc, 2007. *West Africa's Youth Employment Challenge: The Case of Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d' Ivoire* United Nations Industrial Development Organization Report

Sommers, Marc, 2006, Fearing Africa's Young Men: The Case of Rwanda. Social Development Papers, Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction. Paper No. 32/January 2006

The World Bank, 2007. Development and the Next Generation. Washington DC: The World Bank

Transparency International, 2009, Is there Political Will Towards Achieving Agenda 4...? Adili March 2009

United Nation Population Fund, 2005 The Case for Investing in Young People as Part of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy. Paper commissioned by the United Nations Population Fund, New York: UNFPA

United Nations Educational, Science and Cultural Organization, 2010. UNESCO SHS Strategy on African Youth: Towards and Enabling Policy Environment for Youth Development and Civic Engagement in Africa (2009-2013). Executive Board Report 184th session in Paris

United Nations Human Settlement Programme, 2007. Youth Entrepreneurship and Empowerment. UN-Habitat: Nairobi

United Nations, 2007, "World Youth Report 2007: Young People's Transition to Adulthood: Progress and Challenges." New York: United States

United Nations, 2007. World Population. New York: Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations, 2010. World Youth Programme for Action. New York: Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United States Agency for International Development, 2005: Youth and Conflict: A Toolkit for Intervention. Washington DC: United States

Utas, Mats, 2005. 'Agency of Victims: Young Women in the Liberian Civil War', in Alcinda, Honwana and Filip De Boeck (eds), 2005. *Makers and Breakers: Children and Youth in Postcolonial Africa*. Oxford: James Currey

World Bank, 2009. Youth and Employment in Africa: The Potential, the Problem, the Promise. Africa development Indicators 2008/09. Washington DC: World Bank

The World Bank, 2007 World Development Report on *Development and the Next Generation*. The World Bank: Washington, DC

Wyn, Johanna and White, Rob, 2008, *Youth and Society: Exploring the Social Dynamics of Youth Experience*. USA: Oxford University Press

Wyn, Johanna and White, Rob, 2008, *Youth and Society: Exploring the Social Dynamics of Youth Experience*. USA: Oxford University Press