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YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

A case study of the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project

Kamau Wairuri & Brian Kimari

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Focus of the Study

Youth empowerment programmes have become popular political responses to respond to the threat of violence involving youth. This stems from the widely held idea that unemployed youth, especially young men, pose a security threat to their societies.[1] For instance, much of the criminal and political violence that occurs in cities in the global South have been said to be perpetrated by poor youth – especially young men – living in informal settlements.[2] As a result, several researchers have suggested, for quite a while now, that there is a link between a lack of livelihood opportunities for young people and the violence in these cities and communities.[3] For instance, one study argues that lack of livelihood opportunities in Sub-Saharan Africa pushes young men and women in informal settlements to engage in illicit economic activities.[4] Similarly, a recent report commissioned by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on violence prevention in the Great Lakes Region made a similar point.[5] With respect to terrorism, others have concluded that economic deprivation and lack of livelihood opportunities provide the context of vulnerability to recruitment of youths into extremist movements.[6] This idea has also gained significant purchase within communities in the urban areas, especially informal settlements. For instance, a 2010 World Bank study on urban violence concluded that there was the 'strong perception in all of the communities studied that unemployment, especially of youth, is driving violence.[7]

Nonetheless, there is limited empirical evidence to back these claims. There is very limited knowledge and data available on the extent to which such interventions actually contribute to reducing youth involvement in crime and violence; extent to which they reach the vulnerable and "at risk," youths; and what works well and what does not in addressing both the challenge of providing jobs and economic opportunities and reduction of violence. Further, there is limited micro-level scholarly and policy evidence that investment in economic inclusion, skills training and job opportunities lead to less criminal violence and insecurity. Equally, little is known with regard to how these state initiatives contribute to the economic empowerment of youths, how it shapes their inclusion in the socio-political life of their communities and ultimately the impact this has on governance at micro and macro levels.[8] Also, there are no empirical studies that interrogate the gender dynamics at play in these initiatives. Still, these youth empowerment programmes persist and are often promoted as interventions to address criminal and political violence. This study by the Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation

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[1] Awiti, A.O. & Orwa, C. (2019) 'Identity, values and norms of East Africa's youth', International Journal of Adolescence and Youth, 24(4): 421-437, DOI: 10.1080/02673843.2018.1554498, p. 421

[2] Moser, C. (2004) 'Urban violence and insecurity: an introductory roadmap', Environment and Urbanization 16(2): 3–16.

[3] A dated study in this respect is, Becker, G. (1968) 'Crime and punishment: an economic approach', Journal of Political Economy.

[4] Oduro, G. Y., Swartz, S., & Arnot, M. (2012) 'Gender-based violence: Young women's experiences in the slums and streets of three sub-Saharan African cities', School Field, 10(3), 275-294.

[5] Korongo, A. (2011) Regional Report on Youth Policies and Violence Prevention in the Great Lakes Region, Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002170/217098e.pdf (Accessed 24 July 2021).

[6] Schwartz, M. and Yalbir, N. (2019) 'De-Securitizing Kenyan Youth: Young People's Perspectives on Community Priorities in Mombasa', Policy Brief, Washington: Global Center on Cooperative Security.

[7] World Bank (2010) Understanding and Supporting Community Responses to Urban Violence, Washington, DC: World Bank, p. XV.

[8] Mutahi, P. and Ruteere, M. (2020) 'Youth Inclusion and Violence Prevention in Nairobi A Research Agenda', Nairobi: Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies, p.2, https://www.chrips.or.ke/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Youth-Inclusion-and-Violence-Prevention-in-Nairobi-A-Research-Agenda.pdf (Accessed 24 July 2021).

(CSVR) in partnership with the Center for Human Rights and Policy Studies (CHRIPS), investigates the role of these youth empowerment programmes in promoting social inclusion of youth and preventing violence involving youth. This report presents the results of empirical research examining the Kenya Youth Empowerment and Opportunities Project (KYEOP) which aims at increasing youth employability through skills training, internships, as well as skills matching of youth with private sector employers.[9] The objective of the Kenyan case study was to critically assess the extent to which the Kenya Youth Empowerment and Opportunities Project (KYEOP) has contributed to youth inclusion in economic and social spheres and its impact on the potential for violence.

This introductory section of the report is divided into five sections. Immediately following it, is a discussion of the conceptual framework guiding the study. This is followed in the third section by an overview of youth empowerment programs in Kenya, situating the Kenya Youth Empowerment Project (KYEOP) within its broader context. The fourth section presents the methodology adopted for the study while the fifth provides an overview of the structure of the report.

1.2 Youth and violence in Kenya

Criminal and political violence is a significant issue in Kenya. Government statistics indicate that nearly 90% of all adults in Kenya have experienced physical violence since they turned 15 years old.[10] The most significant violent crimes in Kenya are muggings, home invasions, car hijackings and murders. In 2015, the rate of robbery was 6.09 robberies per 100,000 people.[11] In a 2010 crime victimisation survey conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime (UNODC) & the Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research (KIPPRA), 3.7% of the respondents had experienced robbery, 5.1% had been assaulted/threatened.[12] A 2013 report by Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) noted that Kenya was the seventh most violent country in the dataset with just over 3,500 recorded politically violent events, which had resulted in over 7,200 fatalities.[13] Kenya's worst outbreak of political violence was experienced in 2007/2008 following a disputed presidential election, which resulted in the death of more than 1,333 people, nearly 600,000 people displaced, and economic losses valued at more than KES 300 Billion, equivalent to 3 Billion USD.[14] Kenya also faces frequent outbreaks of resource-linked conflicts, related to access to land, pasture, and water especially in the pastoral areas of the country.[15] It has also experienced many terrorist attacks some of which have resulted in dozens of casualties such as the Al-Qaeda bombing of the United States Embassy in Nairobi in 1998 and the more recent Al-Shabaab attacks in Westgate Mall, Garissa University and Dusit D2. In 2016, the National Counter-Terrorism Centre reported that approximately 900 people, including security personnel, had been killed in terrorist attacks in Kenya since the year 2000.[16]

The government has often noted that some of the violent crimes that occur in urban areas including armed robbery, muggings and kidnapping, trafficking of persons, extortion, firearms smuggling and the drug trade are committed by organized gangs, mainly comprised of young men. For instance, in 2013, the National Crime

[9] World Bank (2016) "World Bank Approves US$150 Million Support for Kenya's Youth," https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2016/05/20/world-bank-approves-us150-million-support-for-kenyas-youth (Accessed 24 October 2020).

[10] Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2014) Demographic and Health Survey. Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, Nairobi: KNBS p. 291-322.

[11] ibid.

[12] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime & Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (2010) Victimization Survey in Kenya, UNODC, p.4.

[13] ACLED. (2013) 'Country Report: Kenya. Armed Conflict Location & Event Dataset', December, 1.

[14] Republic of Kenya (2008) Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence, Nairobi: Government Printer.

[15] See for instance on the Laikipia clashes, Bond, J. (2014) 'A Holistic Approach to Natural Resource Conflict: The Case of Laikipia County', Kenya, Journal of Rural Studies, 34, 117-27.

[16] Ombati, C. (2016) "900 Kenyans killed in terror attacks in past 16 years," The East African Standard, https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2000194525/900-kenyans-killed-in-terror-attacks-inpast-16-years (Accessed 24 July 2021).

Research Centre reported that most criminal gangs were comprised of young men in their 20s.[17] Similarly, the resource-based conflicts are said to be perpetrated by young men, armed with crude weapons and increasingly firearms, that seek to exploit these conflicts for economic gain, with the suggestion that large numbers of livestock have been stolen during these attacks.[18]

1.3 Youth empowerment programmes in Kenya: From Jua Kali to KYEOP

Just like elsewhere in the world, social science analysis on violence in Kenya has partly linked violence with the lack of economic opportunities and inequality. For instance, in his analysis of the situation regarding violent crime in the 1980s and the 1990s, Kenyan historian E.A. Gimode argued that a great deal of violent crime that characterized Kenya in the period under study could be attributed to the worsening economic inequalities and growing poverty.[19]

Similarly, a study of violent crime in Nakuru County found that about 80 % of respondents highlighted the underlying causes as unemployment and idleness among the youth and poverty.[20] The government has often noted that many of the violent crimes that occur in urban areas including armed robbery, muggings and kidnapping, trafficking of persons, extortion, firearms smuggling and drug trade are committed by organized gangs, mainly comprised of young men. For instance, in 2013, the National Crime Research Centre reported that most criminal gangs were comprised of young men in their 20s.[21] Similarly, the resource-based conflicts are said to be perpetrated by young men, armed with crude weapons and increasingly firearms, that seek to exploit these conflicts for economic gain, with the suggestion that large numbers of livestock have been stolen during these attacks.[22] To put it simply, policy makers have tended to see youth as a social and political risk. Finding employment opportunities for young people has been seen as a means of mitigating these risks. Early attempts to address the issue of youth empowerment in Kenya can be traced back to the early 1990s when the government published the "Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1992 on Small Scale and Jua Kali Enterprises, the 1997-2001 Development Plans, and the National Poverty Eradication Plan 1999-2015.[23] " The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation (KNDR) agreements that ended the 2007 post-elections violence, acknowledged youth unemployment as one of the key factors behind the violence and called for the coalition government to prioritise creating livelihood opportunities for the youth. As a result, the National Youth Policy Sessional Paper No. 3, was formulated, which among others, provides guidelines on how to address youth unemployment in order to prevent a descent into crime and violence.

To actualise these policies, the Kenyan government has created youth affirmative action funds to provide young men and women with funds to establish and grow their businesses. For example, the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF), established in 2006, was to provide small loans to youths to establish and grow their businesses. The government also established the Uwezo Fund in 2013, to serve a similar purpose. It also

[17] National Crime Research Centre (2013) A study on criminal gangs in Kenya, Nairobi: NCRC (unpublished).

[18] Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies (2017) 'Conflict Assessment Report. DANIDA Peace, Security and Stabilization (PSS) Programme-Kenya 2016-2020', https://www.chrips.or.ke/chrips/conflict-assessment-report-2017-peace-security-and-stability-pss-programme-kenya-2016-2020/ (Accessed 24 July 2021).

[19] Gimode, E.A. (2001) 'An anatomy of violent crime and insecurity in Kenya: The case of Nairobi, 1985–1999', Africa Development 26 (1&2): 295–335

[20] Wairuri, K. Chemlali, A. & Ruteere, M. (2018) 'Urban Violence in Nakuru County, Kenya: A Study on urban violence", DIGNITY Publication Series on Torture and Organised Violence No. 16, https://www.chrips.or.ke/publications/research-reports/urban-violence-in-nakuru-county-kenya/ (Accessed 24 July 2021).

[21] National Crime Research Centre (2013) A study on criminal gangs in Kenya, Nairobi: NCRC (unpublished).

[22] Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies (2017) 'Conflict Assessment Report. DANIDA Peace, Security and Stabilization (PSS) Programme-Kenya 2016-2020', https://www.chrips.or.ke/chrips/conflict-assessment-report-2017-peace-security-and-stability-pss-programme-kenya-2016-2020/ (Accessed 24 July 2021).

[23] Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, Republic of Kenya. (2007). National Youth Policy for Youth Development. Retrieved June 15, 2007, p. 2., http://www.youthaffairs.go.ke/national_youth_policy.pdf (Accessed 6 October 2020).

sought to directly employ youth through the so-called Community Works Programmes. The most recent of these public sector programmes is the National Youth Service (NYS) Community Cohorts' Programme launched by the Government in 2014, which enlisted youth into low skills public works projects, such as drainage clearance in their own neighbourhoods.[24] By the end of the period in October 2017, the programme had engaged 236,250 community youth in 253 constituencies across all the 47 counties.

Some youth programmes sought to enhance the employability of young people through skills training and internship opportunities. The most notable of this was the US$ 15.5 million Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project (KYEOP) led by the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) and supported by the World Bank from 2010 – 2016.[25] It was implemented in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu and targeted youth who were: between the ages of 15 and 29, had at least eight (8) years of schooling, had been out of school for at least a year, and were not engaged in any paid employment. Each cycle of the programme was six months - 2 months of training and 4 months of workplace experience. Participants received a stipend of Ksh 6,000 each and employers received Ksh 3,000 per youth absorbed. Trainings were structured into three phases: life skills training, core business skill training and development, and job specific skills training. A total of 13,305 youth benefited from internship programmes and another 19,532 received trainings.[26] The project took a pilot approach, with an aim to create evidence and guide future design of similar youth empowerment programmes in Kenya. [27]

Based on lessons learned from KYEOP, the Kenyan government and the World Bank launched the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project (KYEOP) to be led by the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs in 2016.[28] The KYEOP, which is the subject of analysis in this study targets 280,000 Kenyan youth with an aim to increase their employability through skills training, internships, as well as skills matching of youth with private sector employers.[29] It supports youth to increase their employment and earnings opportunities by preparing young people for the labour market while also supporting the creation of new and better jobs in the market.[30] It targets youth aged between 18 and 29 years, with a Form Four and below education level, who are without jobs and have experienced extended spells of unemployment, or are currently working in vulnerable jobs. The applicants must not be enrolled in school or planning to do so within eight months. Young people are recruited directly by the government through publicity campaigns at the Ward level in the sixteen counties, and also supported by officials from the ministry to fill out the application forms and submit them online. As of June 16, 2020, there have been 49,754 Direct Project Beneficiaries, 50.4% of whom are female.[31]

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[24] Presidential Strategic Communication Unit (2008) President directs NYS to commercialise, play key role in industrialization," February 16, https://www.capitalfm.co.ke/business/2018/02/president-directs-nys-commercialise-play-key-role-industrialisation/ (Accessed 24 July 2021).

[25] KKV program was launched in April 2009 as part of the Agenda IV items to address the underlying issues identified as leading to the 2007/8 post-election political crisis. For more details, see Mutuku, D.N. (2014) 'Implications of social protection in urban poverty reduction: A case study of Kazi Kwa Vijana (Work for Youth) in Kenyan slums', Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Nairobi, 2014.

[26] Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (2018) 'Review of Government-Sponsored Youth Empowerment Programmes in Kenya', Discussion Paper No. 211, http://repository.kippra.or.ke/bitstream/handle/123456789/2183/review-of-government-sponsored-youth-empowerment-programmes-in-kenya-dp211.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (Accessed 4 September 2021).

[27] World Bank (2016) 'Implementation Completion and Results Report on A Credit In The Amount Of SDR 11.02 Million (Us$17.03 Million Equivalent) to the Republic Of Kenya for a Kenya Youth Empowerment Project', p.4, https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/710301471883981006/pdf/ICR00003730-08042016.pdf (Accessed 4 September 2021).

[28] World Bank (2016) 'International Development Association Project Appraisal Document On a Proposed Credit in The Amount of SDR106.5 Million (US $150 Million Equivalent) To The Republic of Kenya for A Youth Employment and Opportunities Project', p. 12. The program is now implemented by the Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs (MIIYA) following presidential directive moving Youth Affairs to the ICT docket in January 2020.

[29] World Bank (2016). "World Bank Approves US$150 Million Support for Kenya's Youth" https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2016/05/20/world-bank-approves-us150-million-support-for-kenyas-youth (Accessed 24 October 2020).

[30] World Bank, 2016, ibid.

[31] World Bank. 2016. 'Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities - Projects and Operations.' http://mis.kyeop.go.ke/?page_id=6140 (Accessed 24 October 2020).

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While an exact figure of beneficiary graduates is not given, the percentage of beneficiary youth satisfied with the training and internship program is given as 86.9%.

The USD 150 million-funded project has four components.

a) The first component (USD 75 million), improving youth employability, aims to address the skills mismatch of youth by engaging training providers and private sector employers to offer training and work experience to targeted youth.[32]

b) The second component is the support for job creation (USD 40 million), which includes:

   (i)   start-up grants and business development services for self-employed youth;

   (ii) a business competition for new and young firms with the potential to grow and hire targeted youth;and

   (iii) an innovation challenge to finance the proof of concept and scaling up of employment programmes for the most vulnerable of youth (e.g. disabled, those in conflict-affected and marginalized areas, single mothers). This study focused on the first aspect, focusing on the financing for participants embarking on entrepreneurial projects and businesses.

c) The third component (USD 13.5 million) that is termed as improving labour market information (LMI) seeks to help public and private actors make decisions and formulate policies by improving access to quality and timely information about labour demand and supply, as well as career prospects in Kenya.[33]

d) The fourth component (USD 20 million), relates to strengthening youth policy development and project management and its focus is also on monitoring, evaluation, and management of the project.

The study focuses on component 1 and 2(i), which directly engage the youth in skills training and job creation. The focus was also influenced by the fact that neither component 2 (ii) or 2(iii) had commenced at the point when the study commenced. However, on 24 February 2021, 750 youth-led businesses were awarded grants of between Ksh 900,000 and Ksh 3,600,000 as part of the business competition. On 8 September 2021, four youth organisations were selected to receive grant funding of up to Ksh30 million each disbursed in tranches. The 4 organisations are expected to create transformational solutions that will help create income-generating opportunities for orphan youth, youth affected by conflict, persons with disabilities, young single mothers, youth from the streets, vulnerable and marginalized communities.

The project was approved by the World Bank Board on May 20, 2016 and became effective in December 2016. The programme will end in December 2021 and will be implemented in eight cycles. The first cycle of youth intake was implemented in five counties (Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru, Kisumu, and Kwale) with beneficiaries finishing training in October 2018. The second cycle was implemented in nine counties (all first cycle counties in addition to Turkana, Migori, Kitui, and Kiambu). The third cycle was implemented in thirteen counties (all first and second cycle counties in addition to Kakamega, Mandera, Nyandarua and Kilifi counties). The fourth cycle was implemented in seventeen counties (all first, second and third cycle counties in addition to Kisii, Bungoma, Wajir and Machakos) and was concluded in January 2021.

By the end of September 2021, Cycles 1 – 4 had been completed with the remaining cycles running concurrently. Cycles 5 and 6 are currently ongoing with over 26,000 youth undertaking internships and apprenticeships and over 17,000 youth in the process of receiving grants. The fifth cycle started in October 2020 and is implemented in all 17 counties. The sixth cycle started in June 2021 and selected a total of 11,211 youth as follows: in all 17 counties for business support, and selected in 8 counties (Bungoma, Kakamega, Kilifi, Kisii, Machakos, Mandera, Nairobi and Wajir) for Training and Internship. Cycle 7A only sought applications from youth interested in

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[32] Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project (2016) 'Improving Youth Employability. http://mis.kyeop.go.ke/?page_id=6140 (Accessed 24 October 2020).

[33] Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project (2016) 'Improving Labour Market Information. http://mis.kyeop.go.ke/?page_id=6140 (Accessed 24 October 2020).

business support from all 17 counties. The deadline for application for cycle 7B was set for 30th September 2021 and aimed to select youth in all 17 counties for business support and youth from 7 counties for Training and Internship (the 8 counties in cycle 6 with the exception of Nairobi).

The key output and outcome indicators, and targets for the programme include:

i)   70% of youth receiving training to find a job or are self-employed after at least 6 months.

ii)   27,200 youth employed, including self-employed, at least 6 months after receiving a startup grant and/ or business development services (BDS).

iii)   50% increase in average earnings among workers (self-employed or wage) at least 6 months after receiving a startup grant, BDS, or a business competition award.

iv)   50% of direct project beneficiaries are women.

1.4 Conceptual Framework: Social Exclusion and Youth Empowerment

Many analysts have cautioned that the link between poverty and violence, is often too simplistic while the reality is far more complicated.[34] Scholars have pointed out that not all poor people engage in violence and that it is the poor who mainly bear the brunt of violence in the cities of the global South.[35] This has led analysts to call for a more nuanced analysis of the causes of violence.

For instance, Caroline Moser and Cathy McIlwane have argued that power and powerlessness (social exclusion) are fundamental to understanding the causal factors that underpin violence.[36] Social exclusion is the process by which certain groups are systematically disadvantaged because they are discriminated against on the basis of their identities such as ethnicity, race, gender, age, amongst others.[37] Citing examples of political violence in disparate countries including Northern Ireland, Guatemala, India, Burundi, Rwanda and Kosovo, a Department for International Development (DfID) policy paper argued that conflict is more likely when social groups feel unequal in society.[38] The paper also suggests that when young people feel alienated from society and excluded from job opportunities and decision-making, they may turn to violence and crime as a way of claiming power and space in society including, for instance, by joining territorial or identity-based gangs.[39] Other scholars, such as Heather Berkman, have added that people who feel socially excluded may turn to violence as an alternative way of gaining economic benefits.[40] As such, the issues of social exclusion and violence have come to be understood as critical developmental concerns that are also intertwined.[41]

As the idea that social exclusion fosters violence has gained currency, so has the reverse idea that social inclusion diverts young people from being engaged in violence. That is, better participation of these young men and women in community life has an impact in the reduction of violence, crime and insecurity in their communities.

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[34] Lemanski, C. (2012) Everyday Human (in) Security: Rescaling the Southern City. Security Dialogue, 43(1): 61-78.

[35] Kamau Wairuri, 2018, ibid.

[36] Moser, C. and McIlwane, C. (2006) 'Latin American Urban Violence as Development Concern: Towards a Framework for Violence Reduction', World Development 34(1): 89-112.

[37] Department for International Development (2005) Reducing poverty by tackling social exclusion, A DFID policy paper, London: DFID.

[38] ibid.

[39] Moser, C. and Rodgers, D. (2004) 'Change and violence in non-conflict situations', paper prepared for the DFID Urban and Rural Change Team. cited in Department for International Development (2005) Reducing poverty by tackling social exclusion, A DFID policy paper, London: DFID.

[40] Berkman, H. (2007) 'Social exclusion and violence in Latin America and the Caribbean', Working Paper, No. 613, Washington: Inter-American Development Bank, Research Department.

[41] McIlwane, C. (1999) 'Geography and Development: Violence and Crime as development issues', Progress in Human Geography, 23(3): 453-463.

As a result, there has been a growing consensus that preventing violence requires interventions that address socio-economic opportunities of marginalised groups. In Africa, youth empowerment programmes have been advanced as part of the solution to the social exclusion of young people. African countries have adopted this approach by developing various public employment programmes as documented in the 2017 UN Economic Commission for Africa report, Africa's youth and prospects for inclusive development.[42] These initiatives are founded on the idea that young men and women who have meaningful economic opportunities are less likely to be engaged in criminal and political violence.

For this reason, they are designed to target young people who are not gainfully employed or running their own businesses, due to one factor or another – most cited being lack of skills, lack of funding –problems these initiatives seek to solve. The idea is that through capacity development efforts, raising capital to start a business, provision of labour market information, skills training, internship opportunities – young women and men can gain meaningful livelihoods, enabling the youth to get higher quality jobs, or set themselves up in self-employment. Another dimension of these programmes is the idea that the youth would gain respect in the community, establishing them as role models for other youth and growing their participation in community governance. Cumulatively, these efforts are seen to culminate in the youth being diverted from possible deviancy, crime, and violence.

This idea of youth empowerment has been the subject of much discussion and debate in literature addressing the challenges facing the youth. According to Akin Iwilade & Ugochukwu Okeje, youth empowerment means expanding the opportunities available to young people, taking cognizance of their ideas, vision, and skills, and channelling them towards development.[43] In his turn, Kempe Hope Sr., understands empowerment as a process that strengthens and activates the capacity of the youth to satisfy their own needs, solve their own problems, and acquire the necessary resources to take control over their lives.[44]

He adapts the six dimensions framework offered by Louise Jennings and her colleagues[45] arguing that in the consideration of Kenya's policies, researchers should pay particular attention to the first three of these dimensions which he terms as: (1) Experiencing an environment of safety, closeness and appreciation, (2) Meaningful participation and engagement and (3) Experiencing and exercising power. He contends that it is more likely to realise the objectives of youth empowerment when these three elements are fully integrated within youth planning and programmes, because they enable the youth to have the capacity to address the various structures, processes, social values, institutions and practices that confront them daily.[46] This study adopts this framework as elaborated below.

The first dimension, *experiencing an environment of safety, closeness and appreciation* relates to what Jennings, et al, refer to as a welcoming and safe social environment where youth feel valued, respected, encouraged, and supported is a key element of youth empowerment. On this dimension, this study will examine the extent to which the youth are allowed to express their own creativity and be free to voice their opinions in decision-making. The study will explore whether the participants of the KYEOP project, judged the project as

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[42] Economic Commission for Africa (2017) 'Africa's youth and prospects for inclusive development: Regional situation analysis report', Ababa: UNECA.

[43] Ukeje, CU & Iwilade, A (2012) 'A farewell to innocence? African youth and violence in the twenty-first century', International Journal of Conflict and Violence, 6(2): 339-351, p.348.

[44] Hope, K.R. (2012) 'Engaging the youth in Kenya: empowerment, education, and employment', International Journal of Adolescence and Youth, 17(4): 221-236, DOI: 10.1080/02673843.2012.657657

[45] Louise Jennings and her colleagues on noted six key dimensions of critical youth empowerment: (1) a welcoming, safe environment, (2) meaningful participation and engagement, (3) equitable power-sharing between youth and adults, (4) engagement in critical reflection on interpersonal and socio-political processes, (5) participation in socio-political processes to affect change, and (6) integrated individual- and community-level empowerment.

Jennings, L., Parra-Medina, D., Hilfinger-Messias, D., & Mcloughlin, K. (2006) 'Toward a Critical Social Theory of Youth Empowerment' Journal of Community Practice 14(1-2): 31-55.

[46] Hope, K.R. (2012) 'Engaging the youth in Kenya: empowerment, education, and employment', International Journal of Adolescence and Youth, 17(4): 221-236 p. 228.

such. In keeping with the gendered and intersectional perspective, we will particularly explore any variations in this dimension of the project between the young men and women.

The second dimension, ***meaningful participation and engagement***, relates to whether the youth participate in activities that are relevant to their own lives. For this dimension, we will examine whether the KYEOP enabled the youth to engage in activities that helped their overall well-being, enabled them to develop skills and self-identity as well as a sense of self-worth and self-efficacy. Here, we will also examine whether the young people feel that their involvement in KYEOP has resulted in their own personal development economically and professionally. We will examine whether young men and women feel that this work has helped to develop skills that are important in the efforts to secure and retain work or establish businesses. We will also examine whether it helped them to achieve financial goals and/or acquire financial skills.

The third dimension, ***experiencing and exercising power***, which is at the root of empowerment, examines the extent to which the youth are allowed to equitably share power with adults to result in youth-determined and youth-directed activities and decision-making. For this dimension, we will examine whether the youth were involved in activities that helped them to learn and practice important leadership and participatory skills. We will also examine whether the involvement of young people in the KYEOP has resulted in them being part of community governance structures such as committees or initiatives to address problems in the community. Such participation and inclusion is a marker for growing social recognition and could begin to tell us that the enlisted youths status and social contribution was changing.

1.5 Methodology

This study was designed as an exploratory qualitative study to assess the extent to which the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project (KYEOP) has contributed to youth inclusion in economic and social spheres and the impact on violence.

The study was conducted in the cities of Nairobi, Kenya's capital, and Kisumu, Kenya's 3rd largest city. In Nairobi, the study was situated in Kawangware, one of the city's poorer neighbourhoods, characterized by a dense population and deprivation.[47]

Kawangware occupies an area of approximately three square kilometres and is located towards the west end of Nairobi, an estimated 12 kilometres away from the central business district. Many reports suggest that the area is marked by high levels of criminal and political violence armed robberies, carjacking's and violent muggings of pedestrians, a number of which have resulted in deaths or seriously wounding individuals.[48] In Kisumu, the study was situated in Kondele, also an informal settlement that is marked by dense populations, and high levels of poverty, like other slums.[49] The area is known as a hotspot for political violence, especially around elections. For instance, following the 2013 election, police shot and killed five people and injured at least twenty-four others during street demonstrations against the Supreme Court's confirmation of Uhuru Kenyatta's win in the 2013 presidential elections.

These two sites were selected for study for both theoretical and pragmatic reasons. Based on their socio-economic and political profiles, we believed that these two neighbourhoods presented the potential to generate critical insights for the study. Additionally, the residents of these neighbourhoods are said to experience high levels of physical and political violence. As a result, we believed that these two neighbourhoods could generate fresh insights on youth empowerment and the issue of violence. Practically, given the time constraints on the

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[47] Ayiera, E.A.M. (2017) 'Community-Led Security Mechanisms: The case of Mlango Kubwa and Kawangware in Nairobi,' African Review 44(1): 27-61

[48] Elfversson, E. and Höglund, K. (2019) 'Violence in the city that belongs to no one: Urban distinctiveness and interconnected insecurities in Nairobi (Kenya)', Conflict, Security & Development 19(4): 347-370, DOI: 10.1080/14678802.2019.1640493

[49] Simiyu, S. (2015) 'Socio-Economic Dynamics in Slums and implications for sanitation sustainability in Kisumu, Kenya,' Development in Practice 25(7): 986-96, https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2015.1073223 (Accessed 4 September 2021).

project, we selected these neighbourhoods because we have experience of working there and have existing networks, which facilitated access.

The data for this study was collected through focus group discussions and in-depth interviews conducted in both study sites. The primary data collection method for the study was focus group discussions with young people in both locations. The focus group discussions were augmented with in-depth interviews with some key informants. In total we spoke to 104 people- 93 FGD participants and 11 key informants. We conducted eleven focus group discussions, six in Kawangware and five in Kondele. Of the FGDs held, 4 were with KYEOP participants, 4 with youth who applied for the programme but were not successful, and 3 with youth who never applied for the programme. The groups comprised of 7-10 people who were selected by the research assistant with the assistance of a local liaison and local government officials responsible for the recruitment and training of youth in the program. The focus groups were split by gender: 4 with young men, 5 with young women, and 2 with a mix of both young men and young women. The selection ensured that the participants were a heterogeneous group, especially comprising of young people of different ages and ethnicities. We also balanced between young people who had already graduated from the programme and those who were current participants.

The key informants for in-depth interviews were selected based on the presumed custody of knowledge on the programme as well as the dynamics of violence in these neighbourhoods. Of the 11 interviews held - four were in Kisumu and seven in Nairobi County. These were held with 4 representatives from the KYEOP national office, 3 KYEOP field officers, 2 community youth leaders, and 2 chiefs, one from each location. By gender, 6 of the interviewees identified as female and five as male.

The researchers sought oral consent for the interview and FGD respondents to participate in the study, and for the discussions to be recorded for subsequent transcription. The research participants were informed about the project, its purpose, its approach and the intended outcomes of the project. They were assured of confidentially, including the anonymization of their identities. As such, in this report all the identities of the respondents are not disclosed but are instead identified in generic terms. The interview and focus group transcripts were coded thematically using N-Vivo, the qualitative data analysis software. The analysis was guided by the conceptual framework developed for the study.

1.6 Structure of the Report

The report is divided into four chapters. Following this introduction, which presents the background to the research, the conceptual framework and the methodological approach, is the empirical core of the study, spread over three chapters. The empirical chapters follow the three key themes of the study. Chapter 2 presents an analysis of KYEOP on the three elements presented in the conceptual framework: the safety of the environment, meaningful participation and engagement, and experience and exercise of power. Chapter 3 proceeds to consider the impact of the KYEOP on both political and criminal violence. Chapter 4 is the conclusion, and presents a summary of the findings of the study and proposes some recommendations for the improvement of the programme.

KYEOP'S POTENTIAL TO FOSTER SOCIAL INCLUSION

As noted above, some youth empowerment programmes are designed to address the issue of youth engaged in violence. Underlying such programmes is the idea that social exclusion leads young people to engage in violence. As such, these programmes are designed to foster social inclusion of the youth. To be effective however, these programmes would need to target and recruit the young people who are most at risk and, flowing from the conceptual framework presented above, provide them with an environment of safety, offer them meaningful engagement and the experience of exercising power. This chapter of the report examines the extent to which the design and implementation of KYEOP meets these requirements. The analysis focusses on the two components of KYEOP, improving youth employability and support for job creation, that engage directly with the youth.[50]

2.1 Recruitment of youth into the programme

Even though the requirements for registration into the KYEOP programme appear to be quite simple and the process of recruitment was designed to select participants randomly, the participants in this study understood the process to have been characterized by some exclusions. The programme required that applicants be jobless Kenyan citizens, aged 18-29 years, in possession of National ID and with no more than a secondary school education. Young people who met these requirements and were interested in joining the programme were required to make their applications by completing a form. Initially, they could complete a physical form, but after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the forms had to be completed online to minimize physical contact.[51] Following the online application process, the successful participants would be selected randomly through a computerized management information system, in order to avoid unfair selection of the participants.[52] This system was designed to address the accusations of favouritism (especially nepotism and tribalism) that have characterized recruitment into previous programmes.

The programme has been able to recruit high numbers of young people. One KYEOP Youth Development Officer explained that in the sixth cycle of the programme that was active at the time of interview, they received upwards of 130,000 applications but only had 12,000 available slots.[53]

For cycles 1- 6: over 742,000 applications were received for a total of approximately 85,000 spots in technical skills training and business support services.[54] This means that many young people were able to access the relevant information through the various avenues that KYEOP used to reach them. However, it is important to note that even though some of these requirements may seem innocuous, they pose challenges for some young people who may not be able to obtain them.

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[50] KYEOP (2016) 'Improving Youth Employability' (ibid)

[51] Interview, KYEOP field officer, Kawangware, 13 January 2021

[52] World Bank (2016) 'International Development Association Project Appraisal Document On a Proposed Credit in The Amount of SDR106.5 Million (US $150 Million Equivalent) To The Republic of Kenya for A Youth Employment and Opportunities Project', page 17, http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/867311468197383244/pdf/PAD1654-PAD-P151831-IDA-R2016-0077-1-Box394888B-OUO-9.pdf (Accessed 4 September 2021).

[53] Interview, KYEOP Youth Development officer, National, July 2021.

[54] World Bank (2021) Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project. Implementation Status & Results Report, June 2021.

We discuss some of these in the paragraphs that follow.

Entry requirements

The requirement that the young people have a National ID is often noted by young people as a major barrier to accessing government services. Previous analysis has showed how young people, especially from certain ethnic communities such as the Somali, have been denied IDs by subsequent Kenyan administrations. While most young people from across the country do not face the same challenges in obtaining National IDs, it is notable that the process of taking an ID is bureaucratic and takes time.

As a result, young people who meet the age requirements may be unable to enrol for the programme because they have not yet obtained the National ID. For instance, some of the participants noted cases where people had recently completed their secondary education and had not yet received their National IDs. A male respondent in Kisumu highlighted the case of his friend who *"… who finished Form 4 and couldn't go to college; he hasn't applied for an ID. It must be your ID and your phone number."*[55] For this reason, many young people had attempted to be enrolled on the programme using the IDs of their parents or friends. Another said that his relative, who had been selected was dropped off because it was discovered that he had used his sister's ID.[56]

Information

Many of the participants in the focus groups attributed their participation in the programme to luck, noting that too many young people could have benefitted from the programme but were not able to join for a variety of reasons.[57] To begin with, they felt that communication about the programme was not tailored to the way that young people consume information. For instance, while some of them learnt about the programme from radio announcements, most of them said that they found out about the project from their friends and social networks, especially through links shared via social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp. As a result, they felt that the young people who did not have access to these platforms would therefore have been left out of the programme.[58] Further, while some of them applied from their smart phones, those who did not have access to smart phones went to cyber cafes to apply, often with the assistance of the attendants, both of which required one to spend money which would exclude those who could not afford it. Nonetheless the KYEOP officials noted that they were aware of this and had attempted to mitigate these challenges by making it possible for young people to go to the office of their local chief and pick up a form.

Some of the respondents also noted that the design of the programme's outreach efforts failed to appreciate the negative sentiments of the youth towards the government. For instance, some of them suggested that the choice of the local chief's camp, as the base for the distribution of information about the programme was misguided. Both in Nairobi and in Kisumu, young people noted that many of them were unwilling to go to the Chief's Camp to get the information. For some, the Chief's camp was a feared place, '… *it's not a place you just walk into unless you have a pressing matter."*[59] As such, even though the posters were hung there, very few young people could see them. This was corroborated by a KYEOP officer in Kawangware who noted that many young people had refused to come to the Chief's camp for information and instead sent their mothers.[60]

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[55] Focus group, male youth, Kisumu, 29 December 2020.

[56] Focus group, female participants, Kisumu, 28 December 2020.

[57] Focus group 1, Kawangware, 14 January 2021.

[58] Focus group, KYEOP participants, Kawangare, 14 January 2021.

[59] Interview, Female youth leader, Kisumu, 31 December 2020.

[60] Interview, KYEOP field officer, Kawangware, 13 January 2021.

For others, going to the chief's office for information was an unnecessary expense especially considering financial strains due to Covid-19.

Other participants noted that it was generally difficult for them to trust information from the government, especially on an empowerment programme because of their experiences, with government agencies. These experiences that young people had with the state police were noted as one of the reasons why they struggled to trust the government. A young woman in Kisumu said *"...youths can never trust the government any time soon, because of this issue of arrests. ... and so people have that attitude that this is the government, even if they come with something good, they will think it is bad.'*[61] While it appears that this distrust did not seem to deter a very large number who still applied, these fears were also exacerbated by incidences where some unknown people attempted to take advantage of selected candidates by calling to inform them that their slots had already been filled in what they understood to be a fraudulent strategy intended to have other people take their position or to extort and sell them back their own slots.[62] The frequent reports of corruption and regular frustrations in government programmes made the young people cautious about sharing the information with other young people because they couldn't really trust that it was genuine, and would not want to be blamed if it turned out to be a scam. From a discussion with women who did not apply for the programme, one respondent observed that in her experience with community programmes like KYEOP: *"... (Sometimes) you've already committed your energy and time but at the end of the day you find it's not legit. And some other time you've also invested your emotions. So it's a must you evaluate the details if they are legit from information given but when you don't have information you wouldn't know where to start or finish."*[63]

Others also explained that it is easier to trust information when it is advertised on television and radio, rather than social media because it was less likely to be a scam. While the programme could have mitigated this by advertising on both radio and television, it is evident from our study that many young people still accessed the information about the programme from social media. Their sentiments pointed to the growing difficulty to discern fake news from truth due to technological advancements that allow creation of fabricated information that closely mirrors the original, and since false information tends to affirm the readers' political and ideological beliefs and prejudices.[64] One participant noted *"It's true that information has barriers because you find most of the time even in WhatsApp, those groups, you get those links are sent many. There are others which for instance, I personally don't open them. You have already set your mind many of them are scams."*[65] While many had more trust in the programme when they heard it from their peers, they said that they did not share the information with their peers because they feared that high number of applications would limit their chances of being enrolled, especially since they were selected at random.[66]

Randomised selection process

The random selection process was a source of contention amongst the respondents. A KYEOP officer in Kawangware noted that the process was fair because it locked out any chance of corruption and political interference.[67] Many of the youth agreed with this assertion, arguing that it was much fairer in comparison to previous and existing programmes like the ongoing (since 2020) *Kazi Mtaani* (National Hygiene) programme,

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[61] Focus group, female participants, Kisumu, 28 December 2020.

[62] Focus group, female participants, Kisumu, 28 December 2020.

[63] Focus group, female participants (never applied), Kawangware, July 2021

[64] Mutahi, P. and Kimari, B. (2020) 'Fake News and the 2017 Kenya Elections', South Africa Journal for Communication Theory and Research 46(4): 31-49.

[65] Focus group, male participants (never applied), Kawangware, July 2021.

[66] Focus group, female participants (not successful), Kawangware, July 2021.

[67] Interview, KYEOP field officer, Kawangware, 13 January 2021.

whose registration process they felt was marred by corruption at the Chief's office.[68] This process generated some resentment amongst some young people who did not get accepted, which seems to have discouraged many of them from reapplying in later cycles of the programme.

Crucially, some of the respondents felt that the process was inherently unfair because random selection would not enable the programme to offset the structural conditions that exclude disadvantaged and vulnerable youth from joining such programmes. A youth leader in Kisumu argued that while the random selection of participants may appear to be fair, it means *"… that those people who are really needy, the target group that is supposed to be targeted actually they are missing the opportunity."[69]* In other words, there were structural conditions that made it difficult, if not impossible, for some of the young people who would have most benefitted from the programme to apply. For instance, some of the respondents felt that the youth who had more education were at more advantaged position than those with less education.[70] Others were sceptical about the 'randomness' of the process altogether, with a female participant in Kisumu arguing, *"… the rich who got in had some form of connection."[71]* Thus, even where selection process are randomised and the selection processes conducted in public and witnessed by stakeholders to ensure transparency as was the case with the KYEOP,[72] they still exclude some of their intended beneficiaries.

The potential exclusion of young people from certain social categories was recognised by the officials of the KYEOP. As a result, the randomised selection process was structured so that the programme met the constitutional requirements of representation with regard to gender (male and female) and to ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities."[73] Even though the computer-based algorithm was designed to randomly pick the youth from a set of data of eligible applicants who are divided into homogenous subgroups based on their identities, the challenge of inclusion persists because the categories are not adequate to capture the various intersectional categories that young people belong to. The government recognizes this as a report published in 2015 noted that the targeting of youths from the marginalized communities and groups, as per the Constitution (Article 260), is often faced with numerous challenges. The report further noted the "… need for an affirmative screening, mobilization, applying, selection and support to ensure they access the opportunities availed by the (KYEOP) project."[74] There is nothing in our analysis here that suggests that additional steps were taken to address this.

2.2 Experiencing an environment of safety, closeness and appreciation

As noted earlier, analysts of youth empowerment argue that the youth empowerment programmes need to offer young people an environment of safety, closeness and appreciation. In this study, we examined this by asking participants in the KYEOP programme, whether they felt that their input in the programme was valued; whether they could express their own creativity and be free to voice their opinions in decision-making. We also explored whether the youth were able to share grievances about their experience in the programme.

On the question of involvement of young people in the design of the programme, the view of some of the officials differed from those of many of the youth that we spoke to for this study. For instance, a senior KYEOP officer at the national headquarters of the programme argued that the programme had been designed with

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[68] Focus group, female participants (never applied), Kisumu, July 2021.

[69] Interview, Male youth leader, Kisumu, 29 December 2020

[70] Focus group 1, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

[71] Interview, Female youth leader, Kisumu, 31 December 2020; Focus group, male participants (not successful), Kisumu, July 2021

[72] KYEOP, KYEOP Cycle 6 Randomization, https://kyeop.go.ke/cycle-4-jsst-resumption/ (Accessed 12 September 2021).

[73] Interview, KYEOP Youth Development officer, National, July 2021.

[74] Ministry of Public Service, Gender and Youth Affairs (2015) 'Kenya Youth Employment Opportunities Project (KYEOP). Social Assessment report For Marginalized Groups', December 2015, https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/zh/813581469094425881/pdf/SFG2337-IPP-P151831-Box396279B-PUBLIC-disclosed-7-20-16.pdf (Accessed 12 September 2021).

effective input from young people. She argued that youth consultation had to be done because it was required by the law.[75] One official argued that the views of the youth on the design of empowerment programmes had also been gathered during the implementation of the KYEOP, which as noted earlier functioned as the pilot for the KYEOP.[76]

However, the fact that the views were sought is not always evidence that they were incorporated into the design of the programme. The World Bank pointed out that lessons learned from KYEOP and reflected in the KYEOP project design included:

(a) Training is more relevant when employers are engaged in defining the competencies taught by schools and training institutions;

(b) The teaching of life skills is popular with employers and youths, but the payoff is higher when these skills are combined with other skills training and work experience;

(c) The programme impact can be increased by connecting those who want to start their own business with financing and BDS;

(d) The benefits of six months of training and work experience in additional employment and earnings are sufficient to yield a positive return to the investment;

(e) Programme retention rates can be increased by ensuring that all training and the internship experience are delivered in a seamless fashion without delays between activities; and

(f) Using taxpayer money to finance the full cost of a training and work experience programme is justified if it properly targets the most vulnerable youth.[77]

This also shows that despite robust evaluations, as was done in the case of the KYEOP, beneficiaries may still not perceive the design as being representative of their views.

In fact, the majority of the participants felt that they were not adequately consulted, and that that programme reflected the top-down approach that the government usually adopts. One participant noted that if young people had been more involved in the design and roll out of the programme, more of the young people who deserved it could have benefitted from it. She said, *"I do not want to seem ungrateful but it feels like there are people who woke up one day and decided on doing this and that but did not plan on how to involve people."*[78] A youth leader in Nairobi, stated that the motivation of the youth was simply to access the money because they were desperate, but that the programme did not actually reflect the needs and realities of young people. In his words,*" I don't know where it was imported from. They just believe they know what's happening but they don't understand."*[79] One KYEOP officer on the ground in Nairobi agreed with these sentiments, arguing that there was no space for young people to shape the programme. He said, *'.. to be sincere I was just told to implement KYEOP. '*[80] The top-down and patriarchal approach of the government in designing the programme that young people complained about was encapsulated in the sentiments of the local Chief in Kisumu, a government appointee. When asked whether the youth had been involved in the design of the programme or could shape how it was implemented, he said that he was not sure, *'... but I believe it was a good idea whether there was an opinion of the youths or not, ... the designers thought so much of the youths.'*[81]

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[75] Interview, Female KYEOP Youth Officer, National level, June 2021.

[76] Interview, KYEOP Youth Development Officer, National, July 2021

[77] World Bank (2016) 'International Development Association Project Appraisal Document On a Proposed Credit in The Amount of SDR106.5 Million (US $150 Million Equivalent) To The Republic of Kenya for A Youth Employment and Opportunities Project', p. 12,

[78] Interview, Female youth leader, Kisumu, 31 December 2020

[79] Interview, male youth leader, Kawangware 15 January 2021

[80] Interview, KYEOP field officer, Kawangware, 13 January 2021

[81] Interview, Local chief, Kisumu, 22 December 2020

Some of the officials were quite self-congratulatory on the inclusiveness of the programme, especially on the issue of gender. Another senior KYEOP officer at the headquarters claimed that this was the most inclusive programme that the government has implemented because it provides for 5% of PWDs, and also provides for a 50-50 gender parity.[82] However, many of the young women felt that the programme was not inclusive because it was not genders sensitive.

For instance, some of the young women that we spoke to noted that the specific difficulties that women face in accessing information were not taken into consideration. For instance, one participant stated that strategies specifically targeting women should have been attempted. She argued *"most of us are indoors taking care of the kids by the time you get out to get information it's hard unless now like this situation (women-only meetings) you're talking to us."[83]* Without overly generalising the experiences of young women, it is important to acknowledge that this raises important question about the gender-sensitivity of the programme. In particular, that many young women in the target group of the programme were also parents or had other care giver responsibilities. This was reflected in the indication by a senior female official of the KYEOP at the national office that the most common requests that they received from the female participants was for them to be transferred to convenient locations that would allow them to be closer to their children.[84]

The programme design included a mechanism for the young people to raise their grievances. There is an online Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) on the KYEOP portal, which the youth could access at any time, to report any issues.[85] Further, youth could express their views through commenting and engaging KYEOP officials on their Twitter and Facebook pages, as well as their YouTube Channel.[86] It seemed, however, most of the people reported technical concerns, relating to accessing the portal. She noted that there had been a few cases reported of not receiving their stipends, or being mishandled by some programme facilitators.[87] She noted that the reporting of complaints was one of the areas on which the participants were trained on during their induction into the programme.[88] Some of the participants felt that the KYEOP officers were easily reachable and so they could contact them in case they had any difficulties.

However, just because the youth could share their grievances did not mean that they were always addressed in a timely or even effective manner. One of them noted that he had written a letter the year before and was still waiting for a response.[89] The World Bank also reported that serious challenges have been noted in addressing complaints within stipulated timelines.[90] A youth leader in Nairobi noted that even when they raised an issue, they would be referred back to the KYEOP officers on the ground, who often were not in a position to help resolve the matter.[91] In Kisumu, another noted that their suggestions, for instance to increase the period of time that the training took because some of them were struggling to keep up with the training, were not taken into account.[92]

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[82] Interview, KYEOP officer at National Project Coordinator office, Nairobi, 2021.

[83] Focus group, female participants (never applied), Kawangware, July 2021

[84] Interview, Female KYEOP Youth Officer, National level, June 2021.

[85] Interview, KYEOP field officer, Kawangware, 13 January 2021

[86] Interview, Female KYEOP Youth Officer, National level, June 2021.

[87] Interview, KYEOP field officer, Kawangware, 13 January 2021

[88] Interview, KYEOP field officer, Kawangware, 13 January 2021

[89] Interview, Female youth leader, Kisumu, 31 December 2020

[90] World Bank (2020) Restructuring Paper on a Proposed Project Restructuring of Kenya Youth Employment And Opportunities Project Approved On May 20, 2016,

https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/144241588230047020/text/Disclosable-Restructuring-Paper-Kenya-Youth-Employment-and-Opportunities-P151831.txt (Accessed 12 September 2021).

[91] Interview, male youth leader, Kawangware 15 January 2021

[92] Interview, Female youth leader, Kisumu, 31 December 2020

Furthermore, many of the young people noted that they feared raising concerns about the programme because they did not want to seem ungrateful. One respondent in Kawangware, for instance, said "Even if I have a complaint, I just have to keep it to myself since you don't know how they will take it."[93] This suggests that the youth did not feel that their opinions and grievances would be received in an open and accommodative manner. It is not surprising that most of the feedback from the young people was of a technical nature. The KYEOP official in Kawangware noted that most of the grievances related to delayed deposit of the grants, which often resulted from the participants entering the wrong details on the platform.[94]

Still some of the participants claimed that the KYEOP officials expressed frustration when the youth complained about delayed payments, and sometimes suggested that they should be grateful when they receive the money, which the youth interpreted as requests for kickbacks.[95]

2.3 Meaningful participation and engagement

Effective youth empowerment programmes are those which enable the youth to engage in activities that are relevant to them, and which result in their own personal development economically and professionally. This means that programmes should help young people to develop skills as well as to earn money, in the present and/or in the future.

Training

The programme design includes training for the youth and financial incentives for participation. Training is part of the first core component of the programme termed as "Improving youth employability", which seeks to address the skills mismatch of youth by engaging training providers and private sector employers to offer training and work experience to targeted youth.[96]

The job specific skills training offered to youth is either in the form of:

(i)   three months of technical/vocational training and three months of internships with a formal sector employer, or

(ii)   five months of apprenticeship training in informal sector with master craftsmen, after which they are certified in the trade.

At the point of entry into the programme, the youth first complete six weeks of training in Life Skills and Core Business Skills. This component is jointly implemented by the Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs (MIIYA) and the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA).

In this study, we asked the participants whether they felt that the six-weeks training was relevant to their lives, and most of them felt that it was. Most of the participants indicated that it was the life skills training that they found most beneficial because it helped them to improve their self-efficacy. Some of them noted that the training helped them to build their self-confidence. A female participant noted that her self-confidence had improved significantly from the training. Before the training, she said that she lacked the confidence to engage people '... *my heart used to beat fast ... I trembled and had fear, wondering if they would listen to me. ... but now I have learnt that there are so many things I can do to be listened.'[97]* Others noted that it had improved their social skills making it easier for them to build and maintain good relations with people in their circles. A male youth leader in Kisumu said that he gained *'... ideas and knowledge on how to stay in our workplace*

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93 Focus group 2, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

94 Interview, KYEOP field officer, Kawangware, 13 January 2021

95 Focus group, male youth, Kisumu, 29 December 2020

96 KYEOP (2016). 'Improving Youth Employability' (ibid)

97 Focus group, female participants, Kisumu, 28 December 2020

and maintain the good relationship with the manager and my fellow workmates and the importance of team building, and I have seen that is working for me.'[98]

Many of the participants also found the Core business skills training very useful, as it imparted them with useful skills on how to start a business. One male participant in Kisumu noted that he had no idea what was needed to start a business, but the KYEOP had offered him the knowledge he needed and as such *'.... If I want to start a business tomorrow, I know what I will look for."[99]* Others noted that it helped them to learn how to budget and manage their finances. One participant in Kawangware noted that while she had always wanted to start a business, she had the challenge of *'... spending money aimlessly'*, which she felt she had been able to address following the training.[100]

Some of the participants, however, felt the quality of the core business skills training was often substandard and did not adequately prepare them to offer services professionally. One of the young men in Kisumu argued that they were taught basics, *'...that someone can get through You Tube, or Wikipedia.'[101]* He was however challenged by another participant in the same focus group who felt that the training was adequate for some of the targeted youth who had not finished primary school or high school. Even though he also agreed that the quality of the training being offered was low, he said that for *'... someone who dropped out of school in class 8, to them that is the beginning of his success and it is the best opportunity he/she has ever had.'[102]* He continued to note that *'what we were taught in school is probably twice than what we are offered there.'* This probably reflects the challenge in balancing the quality of training to diverse groups of youth, ranging from those who had not completed primary school to those who had complete secondary education. The Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs (MPSYGA) contracted several providers for delivery of life skills and core business skills using a standard curriculum.

Internship and Apprenticeship

After the six weeks training, beneficiaries of the training and internship component proceed to job specific skills training. They can select from two options:

i)   to attend 2 months of Skills Training in a Classroom and a 3-month Internship in a Company; or

ii)   to attend a 5-month Apprenticeship with a Master Craftsman to learn a trade area.

The project also provided selection steps and guidelines to help the beneficiaries select their preferred trainers and training areas. In addition, they provided data from previous KYEOP cycles ranking the different training areas by earnings and by the employment prospects. All the trainees then sit for Trade and Proficiency Tests as applicable on their training area and trainer.

Respondents were most excited about the internship because it was diverse and they could learn practical and easily monetizable skills in a variety of trades. Some of the participants particularly appreciated the artistic pursuits such as photography and music production. A female youth leader in Kisumu noted that she felt that she was in the right place, because she could train in photography, which has been her main area of interest.[103] A female participant in Kawangware noted that KYEOP had given her the opportunity to rekindle her passion for art, which she had abandoned since leaving high school.[104] Notably, some of respondents were not able to train in the field they chose because of limited spaces. However, the project appeared to have anticipated

[98] Interview, Male youth leader, Kisumu, 29 December 2020

[99] Focus group, male youth, Kisumu, 29 December 2020

[100] Focus group 2, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

[101] Focus group, male youth, Kisumu, 29 December 2020

[102] Focus group, male youth, Kisumu, 29 December 2020

[103] Interview, Female youth leader, Kisumu, 31 December 2020

[104] Focus group 2, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

this challenge and required youth to select four different trainers (from one or more training areas) in order of priority so as to increase their chances of participating in the trade of their choice.

Some of the participants felt that the apprenticeship was beneficial to the whole community since they were offered by local business owners who volunteered to train the cohorts in return for monetary incentive as well as assistance by their trainees. A youth officer explained that the business owners would join KYEOP by filling forms at the offices after which they would be contacted and a visit would be made to their premise to find out if they have all the facilities needed to train someone.[105] The project also sought to improve the quality of the training offered by master craftsmen by upgrading of master craftsmen skills and development and updating of NITA certification standards for traditional apprenticeship trades. In cycle 1, 1,061 master craftsmen were upskilled and 12,452 youth participated in trade tests following their technical skills training.[106]

Additionally, some felt the impact of the programme went beyond the direct participants because they could also teach others the skills that they had learnt. One participant argued that apprenticeship was very good because once you have the skill, '…*you can also pass the knowledge down to others."*[107] Some of them noted that the project had been helpful for them to secure jobs. Some of them noted that their master craftsmen had offered them jobs following the training.[108]

KYEOP List of Training Areas

AGRIBUSINESS	BEAD WORK	CHILDCARE HOSPITALITY FOOD AND NUTRITION	ICT	METAL WORK
POULTRY	DRESS MAKING	PHOTOGRAPHY	ICT - COMPUTER PROGRAMMER (MICROSOFT TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATE)	WELDING & FABRICATION
FOOD EXTRACTION	DRESS MAKING & EMBROIDERY	PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO GRAPHY	ICT - COMPUTERISED FRONT OFFICE	MOBILE PHONE REPAIR
FOOD PROCESSING	EMBROIDERY	CINEMATOGRAPHY	ICT - ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGY ARTISANS	PHONE REPAIR
ART & DESIGN	EMBROIDERY AND BEADWORK	FILM/VIDEO PRODUCTION	ICT - NETWORK ENGINEERING	MOTOR CYCLE REPAIR
ARTWORK	KNITTING	MEDIA	ICT - REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE	MOTOR REWINDING
SCREEN PRINTING	TAILORING	DEEP SEA DIVING	ICT – COMPUTER PACKAGES	MOTOR VEHICLE ELECTRICIAN
SPRAY PAINTING	TAILORING AND DRESS MAKING	FASHION & DESIGN	ICT – CYBER SERVICES	MOTOR VEHICLE MECHANIC
AVIATION	TAILORING AND KNITTING	DISK JOCKEY AND MUSIC PRODUCTION	ICT – NETWORKING	PANEL BEATING
BAKERY/ PALSTRY/ BAKING	UPHOLSTERY	MUSIC PRODUCTION	ICT – TEACHER SUPPORT SERVICE	PANEL BEATING AND SPRAYING PAINTING
CAKE BAKING AND DECORATION	LEATHER & UPHOLSTRY	DJ	CODING AND PROGRAMMING	PLANT MECHANIC
HAIRDRESSING	LEATHER WORK	ELECTRICAL & ELECTRONICS	COMPUTER NETWORKING	PLANT OPERATOR
HAIRDRESSING & BEAUTY	BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION	ELECTRICAL WIREMAN	COMPUTER REPAIR	CHEMICAL PRODUCTION
HAIRDRESSING & BEAUTY THERAPY	CARPENTRY AND JOINERY	ELECTRICAL WIREMAN & INSTALLATION	WEB DESIGN	PLUMBING
BARBERING	CADASTRAL SURVEY	ELECTRICAL WIREMAN & INSTALLATIONN	INTERIOR DECORATIONS	PLUMBING AND PIPE FITTING
BEAUTY THERAPY	CATERING SERVICES	ELECTRONICS MECHANIC	INTERIOR DESIGN	PLUMBING AND PIPE FITTING,ELECTRICAL & ELECTRONICS,FOOD & BEVERAGE
BASIC COOKERY	HOSPITALITY	GIS - GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM DATA MONITORING	MASONRY	REFRIGERATION & AIR CONDITIONING
FOOD & BEVERAGE	EVENTS MANAGEMENT	GRAPHIC DESIGN	MEDICAL	

Table 1: KYEOP List of Training Areas.[109]

Nonetheless, the apprenticeship was also marked by some challenges including a limited number of master craftsmen who could take on youth in the programme A KYEOP youth officer noted that there were many skilled master craftsmen "but they do not have the pedagogical skills to transfer the skills to the youth" and who did not have certificates from NITA.[110] Master craftsmen must be certified by NITA to deliver this training and an internship. Some of the participants also reported having been neglected by their master craftsmen.[111]

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[105] Interview, Male youth leader, Kisumu, 29 December 2020

[106] World Bank (2021) 'Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project. Implementation Status & Results Report', June 2021

[107] Focus group 1, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

[108] Interview, Male youth leader, Kisumu, 29 December 2020

[109] Drawn from KYEOP Website, https://kyeop.go.ke/trade-areas/ (Accessed 12 September 2021)

[110] Interview, Female KYEOP Youth Officer, National level, June 2021.

[111] Focus group 2, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

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Even where young people were taken on by a master craftsman, it was not always clear that they engaged in the learning process as was intended. One KYEOP officer at the national office claimed that some of the participants colluded with their master craftsmen to not take part in the apprenticeship and they would then divide the money allocated for apprenticeship between themselves.[112] While the officials may attribute this to unethical behaviour, it could also reflect a misalignment of incentive for both the youth and the master craftsmen, further indicating a lack of proper involvement of the appropriate young people in the design of the programme, in a way that best captures their reality, interests and needs.

	No. of youths who have benefited from training and placed in jobs	No. of youth who received grants	No. of youth who received Business Development Support	Participating counties
Cycle 1	2256	1041	_	Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, and Kwale. (5)
Cycle 2	4749	2486	504	Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, Kwale, Kiambu, Kitui, Migori and Turkana. (9)
Cycle 3	9869	4068	1264	Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, Kwale, Kiambu, Kitui, Migori, Turkana,Kakamega, Kilifi, Nyandarua and Mandera. (13)
Cycle 4	16293	2327	2075	Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, Kwale, Kiambu, Kitui, Migori, Turkana, Kakamega, Kilifi, Nyandarua, Bungoma, Mandera, Machakos, Kisii and Wajir (17)

Table 1: KYEOP project beneficiaries, cycle 1 to cycle 4

As of March 2020, the first component of improving youth employability was rated as moderately unsatisfactory due to slow progress towards achieving target numbers of beneficiaries and the low percentage of youth reporting being employed 6 months after completing training and Internship. Only about 51% (below expected target of 70%) of youth are estimated to have found paid employment based on a non-random sample using short message service contacts for cycles 1 and 2 of youth training; 63.5% according to preliminary tracer study results for cycle 1. In 2021, 64% of Youth who completed Job Specific Skills Training & Internship had been employed. This from the 4 completed cycles with 33,167 youth completing internships and apprenticeships as part of the Component 1 technical skills training.[113]

Financial Benefits

The programme includes payment of a monthly stipend of KES. 6,000 (~ USD 60) to support the youth to meet their expenses during the training phase of the programme. The financial benefits offered by the programme was one of the key factors that drove young people to apply for the programme. Youth explained that they were under pressure to contribute to their household expenses. Young women also pointed out that the funds were specifically beneficial to them because they allowed them to be more independent and to escape the

[112] Interview, Female KYEOP Youth Officer, National level, June 2021.

[113] Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project, "Impact of the Project. Results Summary," https://kyeop.go.ke/# (Accessed 12 September 2021).

[114] Focus group, female participants (not successful), Kisumu, July 2021

[115] Interview, Female youth leader, Kisumu, 31 December 2020

confines of the patriarchal societies they live in. In Kisumu, one woman explained *"When a girl has their own money, they won't be thinking about marriage, she will go after what she wants. It won't be about looking for a man who can provide for you, you will be able to take care of yourself. When you don't have money, you will think getting married is the only solution."*[114]   Some of them noted that the amount was adequate for them to cover their expenses when they were going through the training. Some noted that they could use this money to pay rent,[115] or even to hire someone else to do some to the things they were struggling to get done because they were busy with the training.[116]

Some of the KYEOP officials were suspicious of the intentions of the youth, arguing that some youth who were only interested in the stipend, without expecting to attend classes, dropped out when they realized that they would not receive the stipends if they fail to attend trainings.[117] This position was however challenged by some of the participants who noted that the money was not sufficient to meet their needs, in some circumstances. Some for instance noted that the training was sometimes too far away, meaning that they had to bear high transport costs that further reduced the amount available to them to cover expenses.[118]

Moreover, the stipend was not always paid in time, with some of the participants noting that payments were delayed for several months. Some of them claimed that in some cases, new cohorts in later phases of the programme were recruited without them having received their stipends.[119]

Despite these challenges, the training did not allow them the time to simultaneously hold other jobs elsewhere. A youth leader in Kawangware put it into perspective, "Most of them are not working, they are promised an allowance of 6000ksh per month so that they can be able to concentrate with their studies, and along the way the KYEOP is unable to deliver in good time. Most of them have stopped hustling in order to pursue these technical skills but they don't get their allowances."[120] These issues were argued to have contributed to some of the participants dropping out of the programme. As one respondent pointed out: *'… someone won't leave the class because they are not being given money, they will leave because they want to sustain themselves.'*[121] The World Bank also observed that attrition was a challenge. A total of 26,850 youth were targeted in 13 counties to participate in the first three cycles of KYEOP, but attrition resulted in 20,197 completing the first month of general training under Component 1, representing a 75% completion rate.

 Financial benefits were also offered as part of the second component of the KYEOP, job creation. The project provided: grants of USD 400 (KES 40,000) in business development support for the young self-employed and entrepreneurs; and grants of USD 400 (KES 40,000) in seed funding for youth-led start-ups to invest in tools and inputs. The funds would be awarded to selected youth after they complete their technical training and was disbursed in two equal instalments of USD 200 (KES. 20,000) each.[122]

KYEOP officers interviewed in the study felt that the amount was adequate to support a business. A KYEOP officer in Kisumu said, " we have the grants and if you were a hairdresser you get the funds to start up the salon, the components are good."[123] Indeed, some had got money for their own businesses.[124] A Kisumu youth leader noted that his friend had been one of the successful ones. He said that after the KYEOP training in electrical installation, he had opened his own shop where he's selling electrical items and doing installations.'[125]

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[116] Focus group 2, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

[117] Interview, KYEOP field officer, Kawangware, 13 January 2021

[118] Focus group 2, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

[119] Focus group, male youth, Kisumu, 29 December 2020

[120] Interview, male youth leader, Kawangware, 15 January 2021

[121] Interview, male youth leader, Kawangware, 15 January 2021

[122] Focus group 1, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

[123] Interview, KYEOP field officer, Kisumu, 30 December 2020

[124] Focus group, female participants, Kisumu, 28 December 2020

[125] Interview, Male youth leader, Kisumu, 29 December 2020 1

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Majority of the participants, however, felt that the amount was not adequate. They argued that the grant amount was too little considering the expenses of most businesses. This was especially for start-ups, since they incur higher expenses, including registration and tax costs. One of the participants in Kawangware noted that '…if you followed all the steps which you have been given you could have been left with maybe KES 8,000 (~USD 80).[126] According to the World Bank, the cap amount of USD 400 was decided upon based on the experience with similar programmes in the region, as well as consultations with local academics and Jua Kali associations.[127]

Some of them complained that they were denied the business grant despite having gone through the trainings. A KYEOP field officer in Kawangware however argues that many of the youth were denied the funds because they did not meet the required criteria. She noted: "Yes they come and apply, but you see at times any money has preconditions…and for individual we don't want start-ups we want people who already have business because you can't risk money with the youth, they'll go with everything. We will be left with nothing. Part of the criteria is that you must have a business first."[128]

For the youth, this argument makes the case for offering more money to start-ups because it was understood that they bore more costs and also risked failure.[129] A number of them noted that they had not succeeded because they lacked the finances to start businesses after going through the training.[130] However, the project reported that the business support component performed very well with beneficiaries of the business grants in cycle 1 exhibiting a high percentage of paid employment (mostly self-employment). By the end of the fourth cycle, 26,922 youth had received grants of 40,000Ksh each, and 5,264 had received business development support to help manage a business. 87% of those who received business grants have created employment for themselves and others.[131]

2.4   Experiencing and exercising power

Successful youth empowerment programmes are also understood to be those that enable young people to practice leadership and participate in decision-making in their communities. We examined whether KYEOP helped develop the cohorts' participatory and leadership skills.

The KYEOP officer in Kisumu noted that the programme enabled and fostered leadership amongst the participants. The programme created elected positions of presidents for each of the training components. For instance, there is a Life Skills Training (LST) president elected to lead the nine hundred others.[132] She noted that most of these continued to serve as leaders in the community. Some of the participants noted that the programme had helped them develop leadership skills. In Kisumu, both the male and female participants felt strongly that the programme had developed their leadership skills.[133] One of the male participants said that he felt that he was a good leader.[134] The local Chief in Kisumu noted that the training had given the young people confidence, noting that they were participating more easily and airing their views on issues of community governance among other issues.[135]

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[126] Focus group 1, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

[127] World Bank (2016) 'International Development Association Project Appraisal Document On a Proposed Credit in The Amount of SDR106.5 Million (US $150 Million Equivalent) To The Republic of Kenya for A Youth Employment and Opportunities Project', p.13.

[128] Interview, KYEOP field officer, Kawangware, 13 January 2021

[129] Focus group 1, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

[130] Interview, Local chief, Kisumu, 22 December 2020

[131] Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project, "Impact of the Project. Results Summary," https://kyeop.go.ke/# (Accessed 12 September 2021).

[132] Interview, KYEOP field officer, Kisumu, 30 December 2020

[133] Focus group, female participants, Kisumu, 28 December 2020; Focus group, male youth, Kisumu, 29 December 2020

[134] Focus group, male youth, Kisumu, 29 December 2020

[135] Interview, Local chief, Kisumu, 22 December 2020.

2.5 Summary

To sum up, the KYEOP programme was designed in a way that sought to address some of the most pertinent challenges that have plagued youth empowerment programmes before, such as nepotism. Despite these efforts, the process of recruitment was inherently biased in favour of those with higher levels of education and access to digital platforms, and who were also least likely to be in conflict with the law. Nonetheless, those who participated in the programme judged it to have been effective and meaningful overall, in helping them develop, even though they noted some significant challenges with it.   For instance, they noted that their input was not really taken into account and they felt that the restriction of the business grants to only those who had running businesses was not appropriate. This assessment of the programme is important because it highlights some of the critical issues that need to be examined in the examination of the programme's impact on violence. This is the subject of the next chapter.

3

THE POTENTIAL OF KYEOP TO PREVENT VIOLENCE IN KENYA

At the core, this research project sought to assess whether youth empowerment has an impact on the criminal and political violence in Kenya. As noted above, youth empowerment programmes are anchored on the idea that social inclusion of young people is likely to result in a reduction of violence by young people. In the preceding chapter, the report examined the extent to which the KYEOP met the requirements for social inclusion highlighting some of the concerns that young people raised about the programme. In this chapter, the focus of the report shifts to the perspectives of the young people on the extent to which the programme has contributed to reducing the potential for violence involving them. At the outset, however, it is important to note that a positive outcome requires both that the intervention targets the rights group of youth - those most at risk to engage in violence - and to effectively address the reasons behind their participation in violence. This chapter examines both of these questions with respect to criminal and political violence.

3.1 Criminal Violence

Respondents, in both Kisumu and Nairobi, felt that criminal violence remained quite high in their neighbourhoods. They noted street-based crimes such as mugging, pickpocketing, and snatching of items as the more prevalent forms of crime.[136] Respondents in both counties also noted that *bodaboda* (motorbikes) were increasingly being used to commit these crimes. Some of them however pointed out that most of the crime in their neighbourhoods was opportunistic theft, which was not violent. In *Kawangware*, for instance, one of the respondents noted that most crimes were committed by neighbours, who may have needed money to buy food.[137] A few of them noted cases of burglary and robbery as being major concerns, though they noted that these may have declined due to night curfew imposed by the government to control the spread of the Covid-19 virus.[138] However, some felt that robbery and burglary cases were still prevalent but just not as easily detected since they now occur during the day rather than at night due to the curfew.[139] Others also believed that the *nyumba kumi* community policing initiative and development infrastructure such as street lights helped to make their neighbourhoods safer.[140]

Several respondents also pointed to sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) as a prevalent form of crime in their neighbourhoods, especially affecting women and girls.[141] Participants noted that the perpetrators are in most cases known to their victims, with one arguing that known perpetrators enjoy impunity by paying off investigating police officers to frustrate the case, and by taking advantage of poor victims and their families through paying them not to report or follow the case up.[142] Female participants described SGBV as emanating from multiple forms of conflicts in the home, including conflicts over sex or food provision in the home.[143]

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136 Interview, male youth leader, Kawangware, 15 January 2021

137 Focus group 1, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

138 Interview, male youth leader, Kawangware, 15 January 2021

139 Focus group, female participants, Kisumu, 28 December 2020

140 Interview, male youth leader, Kawangware, 15 January 2021

141 Focus group, female participants, Kisumu, 28 December 2020

142 Focus group, male participants (not successful), Kawangware, July 2021

143 Focus group, female participants (never applied), Kawangware, July 2021.

Some of the women also felt that poverty increases their vulnerability to SGBV because some are forced to engage in survival sex work where they are subjected to higher levels of violence.[144] However, some of them noted that it was also important to acknowledge that men are also victims of SGBV but don't speak out because of the stigma attached, as one respondent notes: *"sometimes they might be there but they can't talk about it."*[145] A respondent in a focus group with men in Kawangware also explained that male SGBV victims are discouraged from reporting out of fear that the report will be ridiculed and not treated with urgency: *"there are cases for boys but their cases are different. For the girl cases, they are sped up and the culprit is locked up fast. For a boy, even when you go to report, the first thing is that people will laugh."*[146] Respondents in the same discussion also explained that men raped by women also face an uphill task in proving the woman's culpability. The sexual offences act defines rape as occurring where one *"intentionally and unlawfully commits an act which causes penetration with his or her genital organs".*

While the respondents felt that crime affected all people in the community, they noted that the young people were themselves the major victims of crime. For instance, they noted that many were victimized in turf wars between different criminal groups.[147] This is consistent with most of the data on criminal violence in Kenya. Government statistics indicate that nearly 90% of all adults in Kenya have experienced physical violence since they turned 15 years old.[148] The most significant violent crimes in Kenya are muggings, home invasions, car hijackings and murders. In 2015, the rate of robbery was 6.09 robberies per 100,000 people.[149] In a 2010 crime victimisation survey conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime (UNODC) & the Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research (KIPPRA), 3.7% of the respondents had experienced robbery, 5.1% had been assaulted/threatened.[150]

Respondents in both Kisumu and Nairobi counties identified young men as the most common perpetrators of criminal violence.[151] It was noted that, as a result of school closures in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, even younger boys, aged about 12 years, were also engaged in violent crime.[152] Respondents noted that most of the criminals operated in organised groups and are often mainly armed with machetes, knives, and other crude weapons, while a few of them had guns.[153] The respondents noted that these groups also included young female perpetrators.[154] They claimed that the young women lured the victims to the spots where the male gang members would accost and rob them.[155]   Some argued that the female gang members were also the custodians of the weapons, because they were least likely to suspected.[156]   The respondents also noted that there were many female perpetrators who operated independently, drugging their male victims and stealing from them.[157] In Nairobi, the respondents also explained that police contributed to crime by hiring out their firearms and uniforms to criminals, and that in other incidents police were themselves implicated in committing the crimes. [158]

[144] Focus group, female participants (never applied), Kawangware, July 2021.

[145] Focus group, female participants (never applied), Kawangware, July 2021.

[146] Focus group, male participants (never applied), Kawangware, July 2021

[147] Interview, Female youth leader, Kisumu, 31 December 2020

[148] KNBS (2014) 'Demographic and Health Survey', (ibid) p. 291-322.

[149] ibid

[150] UNODC & KIPPRA (2010) 'Victimization Survey in Kenya'

[151] Interview, Female youth leader, Kisumu, 31 December 2020

[152] Interview, Female youth leader, Kisumu, 31 December 2020

[153] Focus group 2, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

[154] Focus group 2, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

[155] Focus group, female participants, Kisumu, 28 December 2020

[156] Focus group, female participants, Kisumu, 28 December 2020; Focus group, female participants (never applied), Kawangware, July 2021.

[157] Focus group, female participants, Kisumu, 28 December 2020; Interview, KYEOP field officer, Kisumu, 30 December 2020

[158] Focus group, female participants (never applied), Kawangware, July 2021

As in most other studies on crime, most of the respondents in both Kisumu and Nairobi, identified poverty as the underlying cause of crime. They claimed that scarcity in the household led to expectations that the young people would also contribute to the household incomes, leading some of them to engage in crime.[159]

Some of them argued that many of those who were engaged in crime had been unable to complete primary and highschool education or proceed to tertiary education, and were therefore idle and unemployed.[160] Several of the respondents noted that drug and substance abuse, was another important factor in explaining youth engagement in violent crime.[161] Others noted that youth engagement in criminal violence was also influenced by their peer networks as well as social media. For instance, one participant claimed that young people in Kisumu had started a gang called Gaza after learning about a similar gang in Nairobi through Facebook. He said, ' ... *they want to be like those boys in Nairobi.'*[162]

Some of the youth felt that the KYEOP programme had addressed some of the key issues that led the youth to engage in violence. Some of them felt that by keeping them busy in the training, and offering them a stipend which helped them to meet their needs, the programme addressed some of the issues that led the youth to engage in crime.[163] Respondents also noted that the soft skills they gained from trainings on topics such as self-identity, community responsibility,[164] and how to manage their emotions,[165] would help them avoid violence. Women pointed out that the training on emotional intelligence particularly helped men avoid violence, arguing that "...f*emales share their problems but men keep it to themselves and most of them they usually end up killing their partners, kids or even committing suicide because they don't know how to express themselves."*[166] *Further, one respondent stated that "Even though it didn't improve completely but those 6 months has really grounded them to be better people."*[167] This speaks to the benefit that KYEOP introduced them to the modern formal economy, and instilled in them time management and saving skills that allowed them to organise their lives and meet their basic needs without having to venture into crime.

Most critically, some of them noted that KYEOP had not enrolled the youth who were most likely to engage in violence. A youth leader in Kawangare noted that the young people who were engaged in crime and political violence viewed themselves as outcasts and thus were unlikely to join the programme In his view, it was those who were already the 'good guys' who applied for the programme,[168] while those engaged in crime, those used to getting quick money '... *would see this as a waste of time.'*[169] Others noted that by restricting the age to between 18 and 29, the programme had locked out many other young people – younger (12 -17) and older (30-40) – who were also perpetrators of violence.[170] This is a critical insight because the issue of social exclusion that is understood to be underlying the dynamics of violence, is not restricted to a particular age group. Furthermore, many of the young people who never applied to the programme felt that poverty and inequality remain major problems for many young people - and criminal violence was therefore likely to persist.

[159] Focus group 1, Kawangware, 14 January 2021; Interview, Female youth leader, Kisumu, 31 December 2020

[160] Interview, Female youth leader, Kisumu, 31 December 2020

[161] Focus group 2, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

[162] Interview, Male youth leader, Kisumu, 29 December 2020

[163] Focus group, female participants, Kisumu, 28 December 2020, 28th December 2020; Focus group 2, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

[164] Interview, Male youth leader, Kisumu, 29 December 2020

[165] Interview, Female youth leader, Kisumu, 31 December 2020; Interview, KYEOP field officer, Kisumu, 30 December 2020

[166] Focus group, female participants (not successful), Kawangware, July 2021

[167] Focus group, female participants (not successful), Kawangware, July 2021

[168] Interview, male youth leader, Kawangware,15 January 2021

[169] Focus group 1, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

[170] Interview, Female youth leader, Kisumu, 31 December 2020; Focus group 2, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

3.2 Political violence

Political violence is an issue of concern in Kenya. A 2013 report by ACLED noted that Kenya was the seventh most violent country in the dataset with just over 3,500 recorded politically violent events, which had resulted in over 7,200 fatalities.[171] Kenya also faces frequent outbreaks of resource-based conflicts, related to access to land, pasture, and water especially in the pastoral areas of the country.[172] It has also experienced many terrorist attacks some of which have resulted in dozens of casualties such as the Al-Qaeda bombing of the US Embassy in Nairobi in 1998 and the more recent challenge of Al-Shabaab attacks in Westgate Mall, Garissa University, and Dusit D2. In 2016, the National Counter-Terrorism Centre reported that approximately 900 people, including security personnel, had been killed in terrorist attacks in Kenya since the year 2000.[173]

Most political violence is associated with periods of heightened political competition including elections and referenda. Most of the respondents in both Kisumu and Nairobi noted that they have witnessed political violence in the form of protests and riots during such periods.[174] Kenya's 1992 and 1997 elections were preceded by inter-ethnic violence that aimed at disenfranchising opposition supporters. In the period preceding and following the 1992 election, over 1,500 people died, and more than 300,000 people were internally displaced in the violence in the then Rift Valley province.[175] A further 100 people died and over 100,000 people were displaced in the 1997 election violence in the then Coast Province.[176] Even though the judicial inquiry into the violence, led by Justice Akilano Akiwumi (hence the Akiwumi Commission), mainly blamed the violence in the Rift Valley on Maasai and Kalenjin "warriors", the parliamentary select committee investigating the violence (the Kiliku Inquiry), found that politicians affiliated to the then ruling party KANU and state security agencies were complicit in the violence.[177] Kenya's worst outbreak of political violence was experienced in 2007/2008 following a disputed presidential election, which resulted in the death of more than 1,333 people, displacement of nearly 600,000 people, and economic losses valued at more than KES 300 billion (~3 Billion USD).[178] Most recently, the disputed 2017 election was also marked by violence that is estimated to have resulted in the deaths of more than 214 people. [179]

Some of the respondents said that the direct perpetrators of the violence are the youth, especially young men, and politicians. This is consistent with much of the analysis that present the youth as the threat; a 'ticking time bomb'. However, some of them noted that placing the blame on the youth amounted to scapegoating, because it downplayed or disregarded the role of politicians and other political actors in fostering the violence. Some of them noted that the young people who participated in the riots were sometimes funded by politicians to do so. Still, others argued that the government, particularly the police, is also a major perpetrator of political violence. One male respondent in Kisumu noted that instead of solving the problem, the government made things worse by sending the police to beat everyone up instead of arresting the perpetrators of the violence.[180] This phenomenon, often termed as 'police riots', has been documented by some scholars elsewhere.[181] This phenomenon is described as a situation where the police, in policing a protest, act with brutality and impunity

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[171] ACLED. (2013) Country Report: Kenya. Armed Conflict Location & Event Dataset, December, 1.

[172] CHRIPS (2017) 'Conflict Assessment Report' (ibid)

[173] Ombati, C. (2016) "900 Kenyans killed in terror attacks in past 16 years," The East African Standard, https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2000194525/900-kenyans-killed-in-terror-attacks-inpast-16-years

[174] Focus group, male youth, Kisumu, 29 December 2020 (Accessed 20 October 2020).

[175] Kagwanja, P.M. (1998) 'Killing The Vote: State Sponsored Violence and Flawed Elections in Kenya', Nairobi: Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), p. 1.

[176] Ibid, p. 2.

[177] Mulli, L. (1999) "Understanding election clashes in Kenya, 1992 and 1997". African Security Studies 8(4): 75-80.

[178] Republic of Kenya (2008) Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence, Nairobi: Government Printer.

[179] Human Rights Watch (2019), 'World Report 2019: Kenya' https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/kenya (Accessed 19 June 2021).

[180] Focus group, male youth, Kisumu, 29 December 2020

and thus end up doing ' … more to inflame and agitate protesters than it does to calm the situation and bring order to the streets."[182]

Some of the participants argued that political violence was the result of incitement by politicians.[183] As has been noted by many analysts before, they noted that politicians mobilize their supporters, usually their co-ethnics, against their opponents and their supporters.[184] Some argued that the youth engage in violence owing to ignorance and lack of awareness that leads them to be swayed by political leaders who offer them money and alcohol.[185] Expectedly, some government officials such as the local chief in Kisumu, argued that politicians take advantage of the youth's vulnerability, using them for their own political agendas.[186]

Similarly, the KYEOP officer in Kisumu argued that politicians are the problem, '… *most politicians are thugs I'm sorry to say. They know how to get thugs to work for them. … they hire them to beat people'[187]* She argued that the youth who were desperate could not refuse the money. Some of the young people challenged this argument, however, noting that many of the youth are knowledgeable and only engage in political violence due to desperation stemming from poor socio-economic conditions.[188] This is important because it highlights the agency of young people in making their decision on whether to participate in political violence or not. One of the respondents for instance noted that some youth engaged in political violence with an objective to steal from people during the chaos. [189]Some also noted that youth engaged in political violence because they felt that they were marginalized from the political process, and sought to express their frustrations.[190] To be effective in addressing political violence, the KYEOP would need to effectively address these factors.

A common trope, within the 'ticking time bomb' frame is that youth engage in violence because they have nothing to lose, suggesting that if they had investments they would be less likely to engage in violence. In fact, one KYEOP official argued that since some of the youth had started their own businesses, that they wished to protect and preserve, they would want to avoid violence.[191] However, this reduction of violence to loss of investments is reductive because it disregards broader concerns about injustice, that is rooted in various political factors and events such as perceptions that an election has been rigged or perceived unfairness in the distribution of public resources. It is unlikely that such structural and systemic problems can be addressed through a youth empowerment programme, no matter how effective.

The young people that we spoke to held different views on the effectiveness of the KYEOP in addressing political violence. On the one hand were those who argued that through the programme they had gained the confidence to meaningfully engage during political processes and to challenge narratives that encourage violence as well as incitement by politicians.[192] This reflects a belief that the primary cause of political violence in Kenya is incitement of the youth by politicians. On the other hand, most of the respondents expressed scepticism on whether the programme had the capacity to reduce violence, predicting that the 2022 election would still be characterized by violence. Some of them argued that this was because the programme did not

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[181] See for instance, Stark, R. (1972) Police Riots - Collective Violence and Law Enforcement, Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co.

[182] Bouie, J. (2020) "The Police Are Rioting. We Need to Talk About It". The New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/05/opinion/sunday/police-riots.html , (Accessed on 29 July 2021)

[183] Focus group, male youth, Kisumu, 29 December 2020

[184] Focus group, male youth, Kisumu, 29 December 2020

[185] Interview, Local chief, Kisumu, 22 December 2020,

[186] Interview, Local chief, Kisumu, 22 December 2020

[187] Interview, KYEOP field officer, Kisumu, 30 December 2020,

[188] Interview, Male youth leader, Kisumu, 29 December 2020

[189] Focus group, male participants (not successful), Kawangware, July 2021

[190] Focus group, female participants, Kisumu, 28 December 2020

[191] Interview, KYEOP field officer, Kisumu, 30 December 2020

[192] Interview, Female youth leader, Kisumu, 31 December 2020

specifically address or sensitize them on political violence.[193] Some of them also argued that since poverty and inequality remain major concerns for a lot of young people, many of them could still be enticed with money to get involved in violence.[194]

Crucially, however, some of the young people we spoke to noted that the various youth empowerment programmes, collectively, could serve to reduce the potential for violence by reducing the hostility of youth towards the government. One participant in Nairobi said that even though the youth have been bitter with the government for failing to get them jobs, these youth empowerment programmes that the government has adopted, such as the KYEOP, has helped many of them get jobs and earn a living.[195] If that continued, he added, '... *then the trust will be held between us and the government*.'[196] However, some respondents felt that some of these programmes were more effective in addressing the problems that the youth face than others. For instance, some of the participants argued that the NYS cohorts programme and *Kazi Mtaani* programme which enrolled more youth across the country, engaged them for longer working hours, and also offered higher stipends, were more effective.[197]

This is consistent with the findings by Mungai that the NYS cohorts programme ' ... had an elaborate economic scheme that included many youths in a wide range of economic opportunities comprising jobs, a regular source of income, a savings fund and training on investments."[198]

3.3 Summary

This chapter examines the extent to which young people and other relevant stakeholders felt that the KYEOP had the potential to reduce criminal and political violence in Kenya. With respect to addressing criminal violence, some people felt that the programme could have a positive impact because it had addressed some of the factors they considered to be behind youth involvement in crime such as poverty and idleness. However, many others were not convinced. Crucially, some of the participants in this study believed that KYEOP had not enrolled the youth who were most likely to engage in criminal violence, the most marginalised, but rather had created opportunities for the 'good guys', as it were. From this perspective, for youth empowerment programmes such as KYEOP to be effective in addressing criminal violence, they would need to specifically target the young people who are most likely to engage in criminal violence and who may not be attracted by such broad and general programmes.

Similarly, on political violence, those who believed that youth participated in riots because they were enticed by politicians believed that such a programme could reduce the potential for them to participate in the violence. However, this was unconvincing to many others who felt that poverty and inequality remained major issues affecting many youths who could be paid to participate in riots. Beyond that, the reduction of youth participation in political violence maybe misguided because it overlooks other dynamics such as feelings of injustice, which may not be entirely addressed by youth empowerment programmes. Nonetheless, some of the respondents crucially noted that collectively, the various programmes that the government had established for young people could serve to reduce the potential for violence by reducing the hostility of youth towards the government.

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[193] Focus group 2, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

[194] Focus group 1, Kawangware, 14 January 2021; Interview, KYEOP field officer, Kawangware, 13 January 2021; Interview, male youth leader, Kawangware, 15 January 2021

[195] Focus group 2, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

[196] Focus group 2, Kawangware, 14 January 2021

[197] Focus group, female participants (never applied), Kisumu, July 2021

[198] Mungai, M. (2021) 'Impact of NYS cohorts programme on reduction of crime and violence in Mathare and Kibra, 'Policy Brief No.1, January 2021. Nairobi: Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies

4

CONCLUSION

4.1 Summary of the findings

This study had two related, though distinct, goals based on the idea that social inclusion of the youth - through empowerment programmes such as KYEOP - has the potential to reduce the potential for young people to engage in violence. The study did this by examining the perception of young people on the ongoing Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project (KYEOP), in two locations: Kawangware in Nairobi and Kondele in Kisumu with young people who participated in the programme and those who did not. The data for the study was collected mainly through focus group discussions (four), and augmented by in-depth interviews with youth leaders, KYEOP officials and local government officers. In total, the study includes the perspectives of 63 people.

With regard to the social inclusion potential of the programme, the study examined the KYEOP programme through a conceptual framework that highlighted three key components of a successful youth empowerment programme derived from a review of the extant literature.[199]

The core elements of success were identified as the youth;

i)   experiencing an environment of safety, closeness and appreciation

ii)   meaningful participation and engagement and

iii)   experiencing and exercising power

On the first, the youth noted that their experience in the programme was, overall, positive even though they noted that their grievances were not always addressed. They also felt that there was limited opportunity to their input into the design of the programme On the second, the youth were mainly happy with the training which they felt helped them develop skills, through which they enhanced their self-efficacy and also enhanced their employability. They also noted that the stipends they received helped them to meet some of their needs and those who had received business grants, had been able to set-up or grow their businesses.

However, they raised concerns about the quality of the training and the criteria that was used to decide who deserved to get the business grants. On the third element, the evidence was thin, but some of them noted that the programme had helped them become better leaders and to participate even more on the governance of their community.

On the question of violence, the potential for the KYEOP to address both criminal and political violence is noted to be, at best, limited. With regard to criminal violence, many of the study participants noted that the programme could have been more effective if it had specifically targeted the young people who were most likely to engage in crime. They felt that as it is, the programme had not effectively targeted this group, as a result of which many of them could not or would not participate. On political violence, though some of the study participants believed that these programmes were serving to redress the distrust that young people have towards the government, many felt that the KYEOP was unlikely to have a strong impact on political violence because it had not fully addressed questions of poverty and inequality, which foster feelings of injustice, amongst the youth and which may underlie their participation in political violence. For this reason, many of the participants in the study feared that the 2022 election was still likely to be marked by violence.

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[199] Hope (2012), p. 228

4.2 Recommendations

In order to be successful in enhancing the social inclusion of young people and potentially contributing to a reduction in violence, we propose that youth empowerment programmes such as the KYEOP be supported by:

a) A targeted programme design

Rather than designing a catch-all youth empowerment programme, policy makers should design and implement programmes targeting specific categories of youth and tailored to address the particular challenges facing the groups, especially the barriers to access for existing programmes. This would include:

i)   Designing a programme that specifically targets young people who are most at risk of participating in criminal and political violence using the most suitable interventions for this group. One example here is the application of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and cash grants that was tested in Liberia with criminally engaged young men, which showed a lasting reduction in criminality.[200]

ii)   Entrepreneurship training should be tailored and targeted specifically towards the young people who are interested in starting or have already started businesses rather than being presented as a suitable solution for all young people. The training should be tailored to their level of education and current status on the entrepreneurship and level of education so that it is more relevant for them.

iii)   Skills-training with properly vetted and certified trainers, especially the Apprentice-Masters, for the young people who are interested in obtaining specific technical skills and tailored to their current levels of education and skill.

b) Inclusive programme

i)   Ensure effective participation of young people in the design of future youth empowerment programmes – including challenging existing assumptions about young people that has characterised the design of many youth empowerment programmes that are designed using the top-down approach.

ii)   Enhance the feedback mechanisms within the youth empowerment programmes to ensure that the grievances of the participants are addressed effectively and adopt a more flexible approach to programme management so that the learnings during the roll-out of the programmes can be incorporated into the programme without undue delays that reproduce the same complaints over and over.

c) Business grants: enhance the funding and support start-ups

i)   Establish separate funds that are tailored to the young people who have already started and are running their businesses and those looking for support to establish businesses. The latter should also provide more funding to cover set-up costs, such as registration and licensing.

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[200] Blattman, C., Jamison, J.C and Sheridan, M. (2017) 'Reducing Crime and Violence: Experimental Evidence from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in Liberia' American Economic Review 107(4): 1165–1206.

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These initiatives are also assessed in terms of the lessons they provide for upscaling and replication in the region and for strengthening regional policies addressing youth inclusion and violence prevention.

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