



**NGEC**

National Gender and  
Equality Commission

# Status of Youth in Governance

Perceptions of Youth on Equality of Opportunity in  
Representation and Participation in Governance in Kenya



Published by

National Gender and Equality Commission Headquarters

Solution Tech Place, 1<sup>st</sup> Flr, Longonot Road,

Upperhill, next to Crowne Plaza Hotel

P.O.BOX 27512-00506, Nairobi, Kenya

Tel +254 2(20)-272-7778/ +254 (20) 3213199

[www.ngeckenya.org](http://www.ngeckenya.org)

Twitter: @NGECKENYA

[www.facebook.com/NGECKKenya](https://www.facebook.com/NGECKKenya)

Toll Free Line: 0800720187

SMS: 20459

Kisumu Office

Reinsurance Plaza, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Wing B

Oginga Odinga Street

Nakuru Office

Tamoh Plaza, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Kijabe Street

P.O BOX 15263-401 NAKURU

Table of Contents

FOREWORD ..... iv

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ..... v

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... vi

1.0 INTRODUCTION ..... 1

2.0 LEGAL AND POLICY PROVISIONS FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE ..... 4

3.0. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY ..... 9

4. 0. FINDINGS BY COUNTY ..... 10

5.0. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS .....33

6.0. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....36

List of tables ..... 38

References ..... 39

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGPO	Access to Government Procurement Opportunities
CECM	County Executive Committee Member
COK	Constitution of Kenya
GOK	Government of Kenya
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
KKV	Kazi Kwa Vijana
KNYP	Kenya National Youth Policy
LPO	Local Purchasing Order
MOPSYGA	Ministry of Public Service Youth and Gender Affairs
MOYAS	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
MTP	Medium Term Plan
NGAAF	National Government Affirmative Action Fund
NGEC	National Gender and Equality Commission
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NYC	National Youth Council
NYS	National Youth Service
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
SIG	Special Interest Groups
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative
SP	Strategic Plan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WEF	Women Enterprise Fund
YEDF	Youth Enterprise Development Fund

## **FOREWORD**

The National Gender and Equality Commission was established in 2011 by an Act of Parliament (NGEC Act, 2011). The Commission's core mandate is to promote Gender Equality and Freedom from Discrimination in accordance with Article 27 of the Constitution. Section 8(m) of the Act requires the Commission to regularly conduct audits on the status of Special Interest Groups including Youth.

Youth are a major constituent of the society in Kenya. The latest population census in 2009 recorded that almost 30% of Kenya's population consists of young people. Such a big proportion of a population require to be considered in decision making especially on matters affecting them. The African Youth Charter (2006) provides that young people have a right to participate in all spheres of society. It calls on countries to guarantee participation of youth in governance at all levels. Kenya has a law and even a Policy establishing a National Youth Council. There is also a Government Department to deal with matters of Youth.

This study sought to assess perceptions of youth on their involvement and on equality of opportunity in representation and participation in governance. It was conducted in five counties. This report documents findings of the assessment in the five counties: Taita Taveta, Trans-Nzoia, Tharaka-Nithi, Nyeri and Vihiga. It makes recommendations to the National and County Governments on how to mainstream issues of youth and to ensure their effective participation in governance and development. One recommendation worth emphasizing is the need to review the National Youth Council Policy (2006), the National Youth Council Act (2009) to align them to the provisions of the Constitution (2010).

I am privileged to present this report of a study I personally coordinated as the Convener of the Youth and Children Department. I thank all staff in the Department and all other collaborators for their support and commitment. I hope that the report will stimulate debate on how involvement of youth in governance in Kenya can be made more effective.

**Dr. Florence Wachira, MBS**

**Ag. Chairperson**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The development of this report on the status of youth in governance in Kenya is the result of combined effort of Government ministries, departments and agencies at the National and County levels and the youth in various organisations and groups.

The Commission is particularly grateful for the facilitation and coordination of officers of the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs in the five county Governments of Taita Taveta, Trans Nzoia, Vihiga, Tharaka Nithi and Nyeri for their active participation in the provision of various data and for contributing valuable information that forms a large proportion of this report.

The Commission also wishes to acknowledge the NGEK staff who took part in the assessment; George Wanyonyi, John Nzomo, Davis Okeyo, Joseph Wasikhongo, Abdiwahab Ibrahim, Alice Njeri and Gideon Ndeti for their commitment to the whole process.

**Mr. Sora Katelo**

**Ag. Commission Secretary/CEO**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Article 10 of the Constitution provides the fundamental values and principles of governance. These include democracy and participation of the people, inclusiveness, equity, social justice, non-discrimination and protection of the marginalized. It is expected that effective participation of citizens in the governance process would lead to sound social economic development. Inclusive participation leads to decisions being made that are in tandem with the needs of the people at all levels.

Youth in Kenya constitute a big proportion of the population. Like all Kenyans, they are entitled to equality of opportunity in decision making and in accessing social goods and services without discrimination, prejudice or preferences. This principle is also buttressed in various international and Regional conventions including the African Youth Charter.

The overall objective of this study was to assess perceptions of youth on equality of opportunities in representation and participation in governance. Specifically, the study sought to find out how the youth had organized themselves for participation in governance; the programmes available for their empowerment by the county and national governments; their perceptions about their role in the governance process and the challenges that limited their meaningful participation.

The assessment adopted a descriptive survey design that involved collection of data from a variety of stakeholders through structured interviews, focused group discussions and open forums. It targeted youth in five counties purposively sampled; Taita Taveta, Trans-Nzoia, Vihiga, Tharaka-Nithi and Nyeri. The key informants in the study were county and national government officials, youth group members and individual youth in forums.

The study findings indicated that even though youth at local levels have organized themselves into groups and networks, these organizations were more for commercial purposes than for governance. In some counties, youth have no formal governance structures but have organized themselves into small groups. Only in exceptional cases did the study find any collaboration between the small groups. The study found that National structures like the National Youth Council (NYC) were inactive especially because elections have not been held for a long time. The study also found that the most common perception amongst youth is that they are not consulted or involved by both County and National

governments. They cited poor flow of information, high requirements for involvement in leadership like the requirement of job experience and also lack of financial resources. They however concurred that lack of unity, mistrust amongst them and corruption within youth ranks were key challenges to their effective participation in governance.

Many County Governments and National Government cited lack of organized structures amongst the youth, lack of interest and apathy, obsession with 'white collar jobs' as some of the key challenges they faced in their efforts to involve youth in development projects and programs. However all county Governments sampled had established a youth department to handle matters of the youth and some had draft bills targeting youth empowerment.

The study recommends fast tracking of the review of the NYC Policy (2006) and the NYC Act (2009) to align them with the Constitution (2010). It also recommends intensive capacity building of the existing youth groups, associations and organizations to make them more viable as vehicles for youth participation in governance, professionalization of youth initiatives and their enhanced participation in community activities and projects. It also recommends increased appointment of youth to leadership positions through affirmative action. It calls for enhanced partnerships between governments, civil society, private sector and youth organisations.



## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Youth:** In Kenya, the term youth refers to individuals who have attained the age of eighteen (18) years but have not attained the age of thirty five (35) years (COK, 2010)

**Gender:** is a social definition of men and women in terms of roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men, women, boys and girls. This definition differs among different communities and cultures, classes, ages and during different periods in history.

**Gender Equality:** Gender equality refers to **equal access** for both men and women to social goods, services and resources and **equal opportunities** in all spheres of life; Economic, Social and Political. It entails recognition of gender-specific challenges and barriers faced by women and men

**Gender Equity:** is the process of being fair to women and men. It implies recognition of gender differences to ensure fairness in the way men and women are treated-(Including respecting changes that have occurred in their roles with time).It is the process of allocating resources, programs, and decision making powers fairly to both males and females without any discrimination on the basis of sex. It also addresses any imbalances in the benefits available to males and females.

**Gender mainstreaming:** Gender mainstreaming is about ensuring that the concerns of women and men form an integral dimension of the design, implementation and evaluation of all policies, laws, projects and administrative procedures in the political, economic and social spheres to ensure that all benefit equally.

**Governance:** Governance is defined as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development.

**Inclusion:** is the management of diversity as an avenue to addressing equal opportunity issues based on gender, age, ethnicity, disability etc. It acknowledges that people are not homogeneous and have particular needs that should be considered in development processes.

**Public participation** is the process by which a government consults with interested or

affected individuals and other stakeholders before making a decision. It is two-way communication and collaborative problem solving with the goal of achieving better and more acceptable decisions.

**Special Interest Groups (SIGs).** In relation to the mandate of the Commission (NGEC), this refers to: Youth, Children, Women, Minorities and Marginalized persons and People with Disability.

**Strategic Plan:** This refers to a time- bound organization's pathway for achieving its goals and objectives in line with its mandate

### 1.1 About NGEC

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) was established pursuant to Article 59 of the Constitution of Kenya and the NGEC Act, 2011. The mandate of the Commission is to promote gender equality and freedom from discrimination. NGEC's core target groups include; persons with disability, the elderly, marginalized and minority groups, women, youth and children. Its key functions include conducting audits on the status of special interest groups including youth and facilitating, monitoring and advising on the integration of the principles of gender equality and freedom from discrimination in all policies, laws and administrative procedures in the National and county governments and in all public and private institutions among others. It also conducts research activities on matters relating to equality and freedom from discrimination.

**Governance:** Governance is defined as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development. It relates to structures and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based participation (UNESCO 2016). In 2012, the Department for International Development (DfID), emphasized that good governance means legitimacy (government should have the consent of the governed); accountability (ensuring transparency, being answerable for actions and media freedom); competence (effective policy making, implementation and service delivery); and respect for law and protection of human rights. Good governance involves the processes undertaken by government through the enactment of laws, norms or power and is synonymous with sound development management. It also demands the application of the rule of law. This means that decisions are consistent with relevant legislation and policies; and that they are fair and enforced impartially. Accountability by Government is a fundamental requirement of good governance. Governments have an obligation to report, explain and be answerable for the consequences of decisions they make on behalf of the citizenry. People should also be able to follow and understand the decision-making process to achieve general consensus. To achieve responsiveness, governments should always try to serve the needs of the entire community while balancing competing interests. A good governance structure ensures equity and inclusion to ensure

that all sections of the society feel that their interests have been considered in the decision-making process. This means that all groups, particularly the most vulnerable who include the youth have opportunities to participate (UNDP, 2012). Good governance is key in ensuring youth empowerment in Kenya, and the right to adequate information maximizes youth participation and access to equal opportunities.

**Equality of Opportunity:** Equality of opportunity implies that all people are able to access social goods and services and there is no discrimination, prejudice or preferences. It is about a '**level playing ground**' where the 'starting point' and 'finish line' is the same for men, women, youth, children and PWDs in the Political, Economic and social spheres of society.

**Rationale for the Assessment:** The African Youth Charter in Article 11, provides that every young person shall have the right to participate in all spheres of society. State Parties are expected to take measures to promote active youth participation in the society including: guaranteeing the participation of youth in parliament and other decision-making bodies in accordance with the prescribed laws; facilitating the creation or strengthening of platforms for youth participation in decision-making at local, national, regional, and continental levels of governance; ensuring equal access to young men and young women to participate in decision-making and in fulfilling civic duties; providing access to information such that young people become aware of their rights and of opportunities to participate in decision-making and civic life; and providing technical and financial support to build the institutional capacity of youth organizations among others.

In Kenya, the National Housing and Population Census (2009) recorded 38,610,097 million people of which almost 30% were young people (KNBS, 2010). Youth also constitute majority of registered voters. In 2013 for example, of the total number of registered voters the youth constituted 54.2% (NGEC 2016). The certified Register of Voters for the 2017 General Election has a total of 19,611,423 voters. Some 53% of those registered are male compared to 47% female, while 51% (9,930,315) of the registered voters represents persons aged 18 – 35 years (IEBC, 2017). Young people represent the most dynamic, creative and talented segment of society. Many have attained some level of formal education or have the ability to go to school. They take risks and are ready to experiment new things and ventures. Kenyan youth are well versed in ICT, are energetic and have been recognized worldwide as leaders of technological developments. These youth attributes could result in

positive consequences for development if properly harnessed. Further, Africa and many developing countries could harness the demographic dividend through recognition of youth not as a problem to be solved but as amongst the greatest untapped resources.

However, youth have faced institutionalized prejudice and political exclusion in many quarters in the past. Their numbers have not translated into meaningful political representation in key decision making organs at both the national and local levels and they are also some of the most vulnerable and powerless in the labour market. Many are engaged in small individual owned or family enterprises (self-employment) within the informal sector. The Human Development Index Report (2017) showed that in Kenya, nearly four out of every ten people of working age have no jobs (39.1%). It also recorded high dependency ratios for youth and children. High levels of unemployment has been related to insecurity and resultant sophisticated crimes like cybercrime and bank fraud (Awiti & Scott, 2016).

NGEC (2016) report on status of equality and inclusion in Kenya showed that 42% of the employed youth in the ages 15-34 years are engaged in the informal sector with about 30% involved in agricultural activities. Across the 47 counties in Kenya, employment in informal sector activities and agriculture dominate total employment of the youth.

## 2.0 LEGAL AND POLICY PROVISIONS FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE

**2.1 The Legal Framework:** The Constitution of Kenya in Article 10 provides the National Values and Principles of good governance. These include integrity, transparency and accountability and also participation of the people. Article 55 provides that the State shall take measures including affirmative action programs to ensure youth access to relevant education and training; have opportunities to associate, be represented and participate in Political, Social, Economic and other spheres of life; access employment and that they are protected from harmful cultural practices and exploitation. Article 174(c) considers one of the objects of devolution to be to give powers of self-governance to the people and enhance public participation of the people in the exercise of the powers of the state and in making decisions affecting them. Further, Articles 97, Article 98 and Article 177 on composition of National Assembly, the Senate and County Assemblies provide for inclusion of youth.

The National Youth Service Act, 1967 (revised in 2012) established the National Youth Service to be responsible for training of young citizens to serve the nation, and to have them employed in tasks of national importance and general service of the nation. The National Youth Council Act of 2009 established the National Youth Council (NYC) to act as a voice and as a bridge between the Government and other policy-makers and ensure they are kept informed of the views and aspirations of the youth. A major function relates to the promotion of the inclusion of youths in decision-making bodies, boards, agencies and other public institutions and organizations. The Act also provided for other issues affecting the youth; promotion of research, collation and analysis of data on youth issues and to promote the inclusion of youth agenda in the formulation of policy by public institutions and organizations.

The Basic Education Act (2013) provides for the establishment of mixed level institutions at the county level through county education boards in consultation with the government in a structured manner to provide and promote training and to continuously evaluate, review and monitor the standards, quality and relevance of training of the youth. The Sports Act (2013) on the other hand proposed to harness sports for development and participation of the youth, encourage and promote sports and recreation and to provide for the establishment of sports institutions, facilities, administration and management of sports in the country, and for connected purposes.

**2.2 Policy Framework:** Africa's Agenda 2063, is an ambitious 50-year framework for development, peace and security in Africa. It emphasizes the importance of youth for the realization of its goals and aspirations. Aspiration 6 of the Agenda calls for an “*Africa where development is people-driven, unleashing the potential of its women and youth*”, with strong emphasis on putting children first and engaging and empowering youth. In addition, in 2009, African Union Heads of State and Government declared the years "2009 to 2018 as the Decade on Youth Development in Africa to accelerate youth empowerment for sustainable development of the continent.

Kenya Vision 2030 is a long-term development plan aimed at making the country a globally competitive and prosperous nation with a high quality of life by the year 2030. The 2030 vision for youth is contained in the social pillar whose objective is to invest in the people of Kenya with the aim of improving the quality of life for all Kenyans. It targets the setting up of human and social welfare projects and programmes, specifically in education, health, environment, housing and urbanization. It also targets to advance gender equity and improve livelihoods for vulnerable groups including youth and turn them into responsible, globally competitive and prosperous persons.

The goal is to increase opportunities all round and specific strategies involve increasing participation in the political, social and economic spheres. The pillar identified several flagship projects including the establishment of a Women's Enterprise Fund (WEF), Youth Enterprise Centers and the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF). Under sports and culture it provided for the revitalization of youth polytechnics, increased subsidies to youth polytechnics, revision of the education and training curriculum and establishment of centers for arts and culture for youth. The Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) was therefore established in 2006 and then gazetted as a state corporation in 2007. It is one of the flagship projects of Kenya Vision 2030 and targets youth for enterprise development as a strategy for economic empowerment. The Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) is a revolving fund to provide loans to youth groups to either start businesses or expand existing ones. It was also created to facilitate employment of Kenyan youth in the international labour market. The fund is disbursed to youth through financial intermediaries including banks and SACCOs with a minimal interest rate charged.

The first Kenya National Youth Policy (KNYP) was developed in 2006 to address the youth



agenda. The KNYP recognized the youth as a basic component of society who should have an equal opportunity as other citizens to realize their fullest potential through participating in economic, social, political, cultural and religious spheres of life equally. The five key principles underlying the policy are: respect of cultural belief systems and ethical values; equity and accessibility; gender inclusiveness; good governance; and mainstreaming youth issues (GOK, 2006). The policy provided strategies on employment creation; health; education and training; sport and recreation; the environment; art and culture; youth and the media; and youth empowerment and participation in national life. The policy also created an inter-ministerial committee on youth comprising representatives of relevant ministries dealing with youth issues.

Based on the policy, a Strategic Plan (2007–2012) developed by the then Ministry of Youth and Sports in March 2007 set out eight thematic areas in addressing the youth agenda. These are: youth and employment; youth empowerment and participation; youth education and training; youth and information, communication and technology (ICT); youth and health; youth, crime and drugs; youth and environment; and youth, leisure, recreation, and community service. These thematic areas are still the key areas that the national government focuses on in addressing matters of the youth. However, the functions of youth and training, youth and health, youth crime and drugs, leisure and recreations are now functions of the county governments having been devolved in the Constitution.

A Kenya Youth Employment Marshall plan that was developed from the strategic plan put emphasis on comprehensive youth employment programs including interventions to address demand, side constraints, supply side constraints and labour market policies which would be implemented systematically to achieve the desired impact. The logic of the Youth Employment policy in the Marshall plan stressed skills enhancement, provision of employable skills, and reduction of labour market rigidities, making the labour market to work better for people, improving chances of young entrepreneurs and making training work youth friendly. The various thematic areas were placed under different ministries e.g. Agriculture, forestry and environment, ICT and health and the sectoral policies governing each have many aspects of youth participation e.g. adolescent and sexual reproductive health. However, to date there are no clear guidelines on how to coordinate the many



government interventions on the youth agenda which reduces the impact of the interventions and compromises the outcomes.

The National Government also initiated fund schemes targeting youth, women and PWDs to propel national economic growth. The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is a devolved fund that targets all the members of community and funds community groups carrying out projects that benefit the entire community. Funds given by CDF are not loans hence are not repayable. The youth, through organizing themselves in groups have been given the opportunity to identify eligible community projects in their localities and develop proposals which are then submitted to their respective CDF committees requesting funds to carry out developmental activities.

AGPO (Access to Government Procurement Opportunities) was officially launched in 2013. The program is founded on the Constitutional principle (Article 227) of fair, equitable, transparent and cost-effective public procurement of goods and services and targets Youth, Women and PWDs. The aim of the AGPO Program is to facilitate the enterprises owned by women, youth and persons with disability to be able to participate in government procurement and to do business with Government. Thirty percent (30%) of all government procurement opportunities are required to be set aside specifically for enterprises owned by women, youth and persons with disability.

The Uwezo Fund is a youth and women's fund set up in 2013 with the objectives of expanding access to finance through grants and credit to promote youth and women businesses and enterprises at the constituency level, thereby enhancing economic growth towards the realization of the goals of Vision 2030. It was also aimed at generating gainful self-employment among youth and women and modelling an alternative framework in funding community driven development. The Uwezo Fund provides interest-free loans, as well as mentorship opportunities to enable the target group take advantage of the 30% government procurement preference.

The latest affirmative action initiative by Government is the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF). This fund was set up with the purpose of complementing the National Government Programmes on affirmative action. It seeks to ensure enhancement of access to financial facilities for women through a revolving fund to

promote economic empowerment initiatives such as but not limited to table banking, savings and credit cooperative organization. It also seeks to support value addition initiatives by groups and socio cultural development and nurturing of talent for the youth which may include promotion of art, music and sports. The fund also aims at enhancing access to services for survivors of gender based violence, female genital mutilation and early child and forced marriages through the provision of rescue centers, shelters, and legal aid centres. It further aims to support out of school youth, orphans, children in child-headed homesteads and special needs children through bursaries and scholarships to access education opportunities.

The fund further seeks the establishment of rehabilitation and counselling centres for the control of drugs and substance abuse and rehabilitation of persons affected by drug and substance abuse, in conjunction with the National Authority for the Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA). A major objective of the fund is also related to carrying out civic education and community sensitization on government affirmative action programs and policies.

### 3.0. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

---

**3.1. General Objective:** The overall objective of the assessment was to assess perceptions of youth on equality of opportunities in representation and participation in governance.

**3.1.1. Specific Objectives:** The specific objectives of the assessment were to find out;

- i. How youth have organized themselves for purposes of association and participation in governance;
- ii. The programs undertaken by youth to improve their participation in economy and reduce poverty;
- iii. Perceptions of youth on their role in governance in Kenya;
- iv. The challenges limiting youth participation in governance;
- v. The programs undertaken by the National government and County governments for youth development
- vi. The challenges faced by the National and County governments in involving youth in development processes.

**3.2. Methodology:** The assessment adopted a descriptive survey design. This involved collection of data from a variety of stakeholders through structured interviews, focused group discussions and open forums. It targeted youth in five counties purposively sampled; Taita Taveta, Trans-Nzoia, Vihiga, Tharaka-Nithi and Nyeri. In each of the counties, key informants included County Commissioners, Governors, County Directors of Youth and Gender, National Government officers in charge of devolved funds and representatives of Youth groups. A county forum for select youth groups and leaders drawn from all sub-counties in each county was also convened and focus group discussions held. Desk review of relevant legal and policy documents was undertaken. Data analysis involved collation of responses given by the various stakeholders.

## 4.0. FINDINGS BY COUNTY

---

The assessment found common trends in youth perceptions about their participation in governance and also in their perceived roles. The findings in each county as well as a summary of the overall findings are described in the sections that follows.

### 4.1 Taita Taveta County:

Taita Taveta County is one of the six Counties in the Coastal region of Kenya. It is located approximately 200 Km northwest of the city of Mombasa and 360 Km south-East of Nairobi. It covers an area of 17,083.9 km. The capital is Mwatate, the fourth largest town in the county after Voi, Wundanyi and Taveta in that order. The county has four Sub counties namely Wundanyi, Mwatate, Taveta and Voi. By the year 2009, the population of the County was 284,657 (KNBS, 2009) with 139,323 females and 145,334 males. The county's youth population consists of 30,063 males and 35,809 females between the ages of ages 15-34 (KNBS, 2009).

#### 4.1.1 Youth Structures for Association and Participation in Governance:

The assessment found that the National Youth Council that used to be involved in managing issues of the youth was inactive after the expiry of their term. The council elections were yet to be conducted across the country. In the absence of the National Youth Council, the youth felt that they were not involved in the governance processes of the county. They felt there were no appropriate governance structures specifically for them. Youth also cited interference by politicians who give handouts to youth thus diverting them from advocating for their rights to participate in the governance process.

The assessment further found that majority of the youth had organized themselves into groups for commercial purposes. There were *Boda Boda* groups for transport, farmers' groups, small business and mining groups spread across the county. Each of these groups had its own organisation structure but there was no strong collaboration between the groups.

#### 4.1.2. Programs Undertaken by Youth to Improve their Participation in Economy:

The assessment found that majority of youth practiced small-scale agriculture producing

mainly vegetables that had a ready local market. Others were involved in the transport (*bodaboda*) and mining industries. They were also involved in small retail businesses using government funding.

#### **4.1.3. Youth Perceptions about their Role in Governance:**

The assessment found that the youth felt they were not involved in the governance processes of the county as there was no appropriate governance structures since the National Youth Council had not been active. However, they felt they had a role to play if they were given the opportunity.

#### **4.1.4 Challenges Limiting Youth Participation in Governance:**

The youth highlighted various challenges that they felt were limiting their participation in governance. Among these was lack of involvement of youth by the county government; poor information flow about available opportunities; discrimination on age grounds where they were seen as lacking experience and not having adequate knowledge. They also cited political interference especially in misleading groups not to repay funds borrowed from the government.

The youth also acknowledged that they lacked unity of purpose and lack of trust amongst themselves hence the disjointed and dis-organized youth networks. More conspicuously, youth with disability expressed their exclusion by other youth and young women too claimed they were discriminated especially in groups. Additionally, corruption and misappropriation of funds belonging to groups was said to be limiting growth and success of youth groups.

#### **4.1.5 Programmes Undertaken by National and County Governments to Empower Youth:**

##### **(I) National Government Initiatives:**

The National government has allocated a number of devolved funds namely YEDEF, WEF, UWEZO and NGAAF for youth empowerment. The assessment however found that despite the existence of the empowerment funds in the county, uptake of the available funds was low. For example, of a total of Ksh.180m disbursed to women and youth in the county through WEF and Uwezo fund (as of November 2016); 530 women groups had benefited from the funds up to Ksh. 51,028,000; only 178 youth

groups had applied and received Ksh.6, 190,000 and only 41 groups of PWDs had received Ksh.1, 230,000.

In Wundanyi Sub County, a total of Ksh.15, 060,000 out of the allocated Ksh. 16,278,362 had been disbursed to 31 youth group, 144 women group and 2 PWDs groups (November 2016). In Mwatate Sub County, 58 Women Groups received Women Enterprise Fund compared to 16 Youth Groups who had received Youth Enterprise Development Fund. (See table 1)

Table 1: Status of Uptake of Uwezo Funds by Constituency in Taita Taveta County

S/N	Constituency	Constituency allocation (Kshs)	Amount disbursed (Kshs)	Absorption rate	Groups approved for funding			Amount repaid (Kshs)	Repayment rate
					Women	Youth	PWDs		
1	Mwatate	16,668,758	16,563,000	99.4%	147	17	7	5,000,000	52%
2	Wundanyi	16,278,362	15,060,000	92.5%	144	31	2	6,000,000	54%
3	Voi	16,867,231	17,550,000	100%	158	18	5	11,000,000	61.3%
4	Taveta	16,959,612	11,000,000	64.9%	81	112	27	11,000,000	61.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>66,773,963</b>	<b>60,173,666</b>	<b>90.12%</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>33,000,000</b>	

Source: MOPSYGA Taita Taveta County as at 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2017

## **(ii) County Government initiatives**

The assessment found that the county government had established a Youth Department responsible for mobilization and empowerment of youth. The department was tasked to engage youth in gainful activities and provide civic education against crime, drugs and alcohol abuse. It was also to promote and nurture talents amongst the youth.

The county government had also established youth empowerment centers in the 4 sub counties like the *Biashara* center in Voi where youth were trained on technology and entrepreneurship. The county government also trained youth on driving skills and met the cost of acquiring driving licences for them.

The county had recruited liaison officers based in all the sub counties to train the youth on opportunities available and to facilitate uptake of the 30% Access to Government Procurement opportunities. The County through the AGPO initiative had awarded forty six (46) contracts to youth at the time of the assessment.

The county assembly had enacted a law creating a '*Datu Sawazisha Fund* and had also approved Ksh 60million for the Fund set for youth and persons with disability. The fund allocates money to procure PWD wheelchairs and also gives cash for their upkeep. The county assembly was at the time of the study (November 2016) in the process of legislating an affirmative action bill which would set aside 2% of the county budget for use on SIGs. The bill also had a proposal to create a county PWD council.

### **4.1.6 Challenges faced by the County and National governments in engaging youth**

Through discussions with key informants, the study found out that both the National and County governments faced various challenges in engaging youth in governance. The main challenges cited are lack of proper structures and the disjointed and disorganized youth networks; failure by youth to repay borrowed funds hence limiting revolving funds from benefiting many more youth; high prevalence of drugs and substance abuse amongst the youth making it difficult for them to sustain their businesses. It was reported that a majority of their enterprises collapsed in early stage due to these factors.





**NGECC staff with select youth from Taita Taveta County**

## **4.2. Trans-Nzoia County :**

Trans-Nzoia County is located in the former Rift Valley Province of Kenya between the Nzoia River and Mount Elgon, 380 km Northwest of Nairobi. At its center is the town of Kitale which is the capital and largest town. The county borders Bungoma to the west, Uasin Gishu and Kakamega to the south, Elgeyo Marakwet to the east, West Pokot to the north and the Republic of Uganda to the Northwest. Trans Nzoia covers an area of 2495.5 square kilometers. The county population is 818,757 as per the 2009 Census. The county is largely agricultural with both large scale and small scale wheat, maize and dairy farming. The county is referred to as the basket of Kenya for its role in food production in the country. Historically the area has been inhabited by the Kalenjin and Bukusu people. After independence many of the farms vacated by white settlers were bought by individuals from other ethnic groups in Kenya.

### **4.2.1. Youth Structures for Association and Participation in Governance:**

The assessment found that youth still associated themselves with the National Youth



Council and the Youth Bunge in spite of the fact that these bodies have not held elections as per regulations of their establishment. The structures of these organisations had representation up to the Ward level with youth who had been democratically elected. The youth had formed groups through which they could access government funds to do businesses and had even established a SACCO. The assessment however found that while the Youth Bunge had a good working relationship with the county government, it was not the case with the National Youth Council and the two groups did not collaborate for the benefit of the youth across the county.

#### **4.2.2. Programs undertaken by youth to improve their participation in economy:**

The assessment found that youth were involved in various entrepreneurial activities including: *boda boda*, horticulture farming, keeping tree nurseries, offering catering services including hiring out of tents, salons and barber shops, *Mpesa* shops etc. The *boda boda* group had formed a SACCO and were giving out loans to members to improve their businesses. In addition, the youths were involved in games and sports activities sponsored by the county government through the Governor's office. Others included bidding through AGPO for National and County government tenders, textile industry, cereal business, hawking and retail businesses of household commodities, dairy farming through the SACCO and taxi business.

#### **4.2.3. Youth perceptions about their role in Governance:**

The assessment found that youth were fully aware that they have a role to play in governance. However, their view was that there lacked adequate awareness on opportunities available for youth. They also felt that there was not enough information available on how youths could actively participate in governance matters in their county. They acknowledged that they had a huge responsibility to actively build their county and country although the opportunities for their engagement were few. Further, the youth mentioned that the two levels of government had a critical role in establishing mechanisms to promote the participation of youth in governance if at all their contribution in development was to be realised. They were of the opinion that their County government and the National government should establish frameworks for youth participation as guided in the constitution.

**4.2.4. Challenges limiting youth participation in governance:**

According to the findings, the youth found information flow from the National and County governments on opportunities available quite insufficient. In their view, this was the main reason for them being left behind in decision making on issues affecting them. They felt that requirements set for leadership were too high and therefore denying them opportunities. They cited lack of experience, lack of proper mentorship programmes and lack of resources to maximise the opportunities in AGPO as limiting their participation. The youth also cited delays in payment by the county government for goods supplied or services rendered as holding their enterprises back.

**4.2.5. Programmes undertaken by National and County governments to empower youth.**

**(i) National Government**

The assessment found that the National Government revolving funds such as UWEZO, YEDF, NGAAF and WEF were available to the youth up to sub-county level. The AGPO initiative was also available. Table 2 shows uptake of Uwezo funds by Constituency as at July, 2017.



**NGEC staff paying a courtesy call to Trans-Nzoia County Commissioner.**

Table 2: Status of uptake of Uwezo Funds by Constituency in Trans-Nzoia County

S/N	Constituency	Constituency allocation (Kshs)	Amount disbursed (Kshs)	Absorption rate	Groups approved for funding			Amount repaid (Kshs)	Repayment rate
					Women	Youth	PWDs		
1	Cherangany	20,473,579	20,426,000	100%	121	124	5	3,083,024	20.85%
2	Endebess	17,204,397	14,380,000	84%	114	63	5	2,116,699	24.66%
3	Kiminiini	19,875,833	24,400,000	123%	210	87	6	7,348,345	51.90%
4	Kwanza	19,954,775	17,194,775	86%	178	68	6	2,032,925	14.83%
5	Saboti	18,369,359	22,590,000	123%	96	89	4	5,989,003	38.75%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95,877,943</b>	<b>98,990,775</b>		<b>719</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20,569,996</b>	

Source: Source: MOPSYGA Trans-Nzoia County as at 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2017

## (ii) County Government

The assessment found that the county government had established its own fund for youth and women dubbed '*Jiinue Fund*' that lent money to fund businesses established by these groups. At the time of the assessment, they had disbursed Ksh 159 million. Further, it was reported that capacity building for entrepreneurs' in bindery and textile sectors was on going through the department responsible for youth.

The County Executive Committee Member (CECM) responsible for Youth Affairs reported that the county government had conducted a feasibility study and also done benchmarking in China with a view of establishing enterprises in the county to employ the youth as an alternative to giving funds. A '*Rudi mashinani*' policy campaign by the governor's office was used to encourage skilled youths to build their county.

The assessment established that the county government was using sports and games as a vessel for information dissemination. Annual sporting events interwoven with celebration of county and national events were used to scout for unique talents for exposure both locally and internationally. Other initiatives by the county government included the “*Chanuka Youth*” Initiative providing youth friendly reproductive health services.

### **4.2.6. Challenges faced by National and County Government in involving youth in development:**

Key informants from the National and County governments reported they faced enormous challenges in involving youth fully in development initiatives. The key challenges cited included: negative perceptions of the youth about doing business with the government; lack of interest and apathy among the youth and unwillingness to seek for relevant information from concerned agencies. In particular, many youths were reported to be ignorant of the existence of the government funds and procedures involved in benefitting from these. Infighting among the groups due to political affiliation and high mobility of youth were also cited as limiting engagement. Mistrust and lack of cohesion amongst youth

even where youth leadership structures existed due to differing interests was cited. In this county, it was reported that many young people would tender for AGPO but when successful, they would sell the opportunity to others not in the target groups.

### **4.3 Tharaka-Nithi County**

Tharaka-Nithi County is located in Kenya's former Eastern Province. The county has an area of 2609 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 365,330 (KNBS, 2009 census). Tharaka-Nithi County is the home to the Chuka, Muthambi, Mwimbi and Tharaka ethnic groups of the Ameru (Meru) community. The people of Tharaka-Nithi County are now predominantly Christian with the Catholics, the Presbyterian, and the Methodists being the predominant groups. The county headquarters is at Kathwana, a site that is at the intersection of the three constituencies (Maara, Tharaka and Chuka/Igamba-ngo'mbe).

#### **4.3.1. Youth structures for association and participation in the governance:**

The assessment found that the youth had organized themselves into a '*Tharaka Nithi Youth Network*' made of at least 30 CBOs and which had a clear governance structure. The network managed a SACCO that lends money to youth enterprises. The officials of the NYC are still on the ground in spite of their term expiring and no election have been held to-date. The youth were also in many groups for purposes of accessing National Government revolving funds: UWEZO, YEDF, WEF and NGAAF.

#### **4.3.2. Youth perceptions on their role in governance:**

The assessment found that the main perception amongst the youth is that they were not involved in governance at the county level. However the youth were aware of their roles in governance and cited them to include; the participation in elective politics and enhancing public awareness of rights of the youth. The assessment established that one of the reason why youth had no formal structures to advocate for their rights was interference by politicians who diverted them from advocating for their rights to participate in the governance process.

**4.3.3. Challenges limiting youth participation in governance:**

The assessment established that the key challenges limiting youth participation included: mistrust amongst themselves; poor information flow; misunderstanding among youth groups and lack of mentorship to build their capacity. They cited lack of entrepreneurship skills and lack of proper structures for their representation in the county assembly and other leadership positions. This was because of lack of platforms for structured engagement at both levels of government and corruption in the way appointments were done. They reported that political interference especially 'divide and rule' tactics were used on youth. It was also established that due to the mistrust between the youth and political interests, majority of those elected as youth leaders only used the opportunity to get chances for self-gain rather than advocating for rights of the youth who elected them.

**4.3.4. Programs undertaken by youth to improve their participation in economy:**

The assessment found out that the Tharaka-Nithi Youth Network manages a SACCO that lends money at a predetermined interest rate to youth for their businesses. However, it was reported that the leaders of the SACCO's source money from Government revolving funds (interest free) and then lends the youth at an interest. Youth also participate in several income generating activities such as; *Boda boda* businesses, pig rearing, making of soaps, entertainment and arts, table banking/merry go rounds etc.

**4.3.5. Programmes undertaken by the National and County governments to empower youth.**

**(i) National Government**

The assessment found that all the revolving funds by the National Government; YEDF, WEF, UWEZO and NGAAF are available to the youth. However, the uptake is considerably low and there is a high rate of defaulting on re-payment. Women uptake of the funds was found to be higher than that of youth.

*Table 3 shows the status of uptake of Uwezo funds by March 2017 by Constituency.*



**Table 3: Status of uptake of Uwezo Funds by Constituency in Tharaka Nithi County**

S/N	Constituency	Constituency allocation (Kshs)	Amount disbursed (Kshs)	Absorption rate	Groups approved for funding				Amount repaid (Kshs)	repayment rate
					Women	Youth	PWDs			
1	Maara	20,609,000	20,609,000	100%	141	63	11		9,538,207	82%
2	Tharaka	20,549,698	20,469,000	99.6%	76	39	7		6,509,909	48%
3	Chuka/Igamba N'gombe	20,550,000	20,550,000	100%	103	52	12		8,437,314	71%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>61,708,698</b>	<b>61,628,000</b>	<b>99.86%</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>30</b>		<b>24,485,430</b>	

Source: MOPSYGA Tharaka Nithi County as at 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2017.

## **(I) County Government**

The county government has established a department for youth affairs under the Ministry of education, youth and gender affairs. The department has youth officers based at the ward levels to coordinate issues affecting the youth and to build their capacity to take up the revolving funds provided by the National Government.

A bill proposed by the county government on youth empowerment in 2013 is yet to be enacted. It was to create a fund targeting youth, women and persons with disabilities. The County Government had partnered with civil society actors and NGOs like Plan International to offer trainings on matters of governance to the youth. The County Government had programmes to promote sport activities amongst the youth. They also had mentorship programs and held cultural festivals. They had plans to hold yearly cultural festivals targeting the youths in the county.

### **4.3.6. Challenges faced by the National and County Governments in engaging youth:**

Key informants cited key challenges in engaging the youth to include: negative attitudes; failure by youth to seek relevant information on matters affecting them; high mobility of the youth and high levels of mistrust and lack of commitment by existing youth leadership structures

## **4.4 Nyeri County**

Nyeri County is located in the central region of Kenya. It borders Kirinyaga and Meru to the East, Laikipia to the North, Nyandarua to the west and Murang'a to the South. The County covers an area of 3,337 Km<sup>2</sup> and has population of 693,558 people (KNBS, 2009). The County has eight sub-counties namely: Mathira East, Mathira West, Kieni East, Kieni West, Nyeri Town, Mukurweini, Othaya, Tetu, with the headquarters of the county being Nyeri Town. The main economic activities include tea, coffee and dairy farming, milk processing firms, maize millers, agricultural crop cultivation such as maize, potatoes, cabbage and also ballast mining.



#### **4.4.1. Youth structures for purposes of association and participation in governance:**

The assessment found that there used to be a Nyeri County *Youth Bunge* as an umbrella body for youth. However, the structure had failed to fully establish itself due to insufficient funds as it was initially funded by USAID. However, a Bunge Sacco with eight hundred members and a capital base of ten million shillings is in operation. In addition, the youth also have organized themselves into small groups for purposes of accessing the government revolving funds and for their socio-economic development especially in agriculture and transport. Some of the groups are church based.

#### **4.4.2 Programs undertaken by youth to improve their participation in economy:**

The youth in the county are mostly in small scale farming and the popular 'boda boda' industry. There are *Boda Boda* cooperatives used to save money and lend out to members. The Saccos are headed by chairpersons who provide overall leadership. The youth also belong to various prolific self- help groups and CBOs with membership ranging from fourteen members to 800 members.

#### **4.4.3 Youth perceptions about their role in governance:**

The assessment also found that the youth felt they were not involved in the governance at county level. However, they acknowledged that they knew they had a role because of their education and exposure. They seemed to think that participating in chief's barazas was not part of governance and they said they did not attend such meetings.

#### **4.4.4. Challenges limiting youth participation in governance:**

Having acknowledged that they had not really participated in governance issues, they cited the factors holding them back to include; lack of capital, unemployment and lack of appropriate information on existing opportunities. They also cited individualism, unwillingness to participate, lack of commitment and failure to own processes meant to benefit them. Majority of youth have an individualistic approach to issues and fail to use their numbers to agitate for opportunities in the two levels of government. Over-reliance on social media to access information is limiting to matters of a social nature and not on concrete opportunities available for them in the county. Many relied on hearsay about the

supposed difficulties in accessing affirmative action funds without seeking actual information, 'I was told it is difficult to access the YEDF' said one. Other challenges revolve around handouts from politicians to the youths especially during election period. Alcohol and drug abuse was also cited as a major challenge facing the youth.

#### 4.4.5 Programmes undertaken by National and County governments to empower youth;

##### (i) National Government

The Youth Enterprise Development Fund has an officer based in the County. This fund aims to increase economic opportunities for youth and enhance their levels of participation in nation building through enterprise development and strategic partnerships. The fund provides loans to youth owned enterprises and markets support to youth enterprises.

UWEZO fund, National Government affirmative action fund (NGAAF) and Women enterprise fund have liaison offices in the county to ease access of government funds to youth in the county. The fund is disbursed through devolved offices across all the sub counties in Nyeri for ease of service delivery. Table 4 shows uptake of Uwezo funds by July 2017 by Constituency.



Commissioner Dr. Florence Wachira facilitating a session in Nyeri

**Table 4: Status of uptake of Uwezo funds by Constituency in Nyeri County**

						Groups approved for funding					
S/N	Constituency	Constituency allocation (Kshs)	Amount disbursed	Absorption rate	Women	Youth	PWDs	Amount repaid	Repayment rate		
1.	Nyeri town	15,029,000	20,250,000.	134.74%	154	98	11	7,025,000	90%		
2.	Mukurwe-ini	16,130,667	16,130,667	100%	237	77	10	7,417,342	88%		
3.	Mathira	16,821,547	21,100,000	125.43%	169	39	5	10,318,245	96%		
4.	Tetu	15,491,537	12,600,000	81.33%	133	70	11	3,037,313.08	90%		
5.	Othaya	15,720,000	22,140,000	140.84%	196	80	5	9,713,324	94%		
6.	Kieni	19,281,022	19,895,000	103.18%	206	51	3	7,100,302	89%		
	TOTAL	98,473,773	112,115,667	113.85	1095	415	42	44,611,526.08	90.6%		

Source: MOPSYGA Nyeri County as at 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2017

## (ii) County Government

The County Government had established a department responsible for special programmes, gender and youth. The office has a liaison officer (youth and sports officer) to act as a link between the youth and their government. Through the office, communication with the youth helps to enhance their participation in governance processes of their county. Further, the youths are represented in all ward committees to enable them to participate in development projects.

The county has a draft *Jiinue Bill*, 2015 already at the County Assembly of Nyeri. When enacted, it will provide a mechanism and framework for the county to engage its youth, women and persons with disabilities. The bill establishes a *Jiinue Fund* of Ksh. 100M (Ksh. 60m for women, Ksh. 30m for youth and Ksh. 10m for PWDs). The fund is envisioned to promote and develop enterprises that enhance economic activity through the youth and other special interest groups through provision of grants and credit facilities. The bill further establishes a committee known as the *County Jiinue Fund Committee* which has representation of youth, persons with disabilities, women and the Chief Officer responsible for youth and gender affairs. Most importantly, the youth have been involved in drafting the bill through the public participation.

The county government signed a memorandum of understanding with NHIF to establish *Bima Afya* scheme that provides health insurance. Already, 3,079 persons have benefited from the scheme as well as all PWDs registered with National Council of Persons with Disability. Albinos also get free sun screen. There is also a proposed County Youth Policy that seeks to empower youth in the county and which was at documentation stage at the time of the assessment (January 2017).

### 4.4.6 Challenges facing National and County governments in engaging youth:

Although public meetings and chiefs' *barazas* are traditionally the source of vital administrative information and provide an opportunity for the public to engage the governments in planning and development; the youth reported they had not shown interest or engaged much in the Barazas. They were reluctant and unwilling to participate

stating that such forum were reserved to parents. Other challenges cited included alcohol and drug abuse; obsession with white color jobs as the choice for employment and lack of interest in applying for government tenders available to them through AGPO. The youth were said to focus more on short-term projects that bring quick money rather than on long-term investments.

#### **4.5. Vihiga County**

Vihiga County is one of the four Counties in the former Western Province and has five Constituencies; Luanda, Emuhaya, Hamisi, Sabatia and Vihiga. Its headquarters is in Mbale. It borders Nandi to the East, Kisumu County to the South, Siaya County to the West and Kakamega County to the North and covers an area of 563 square kilometers. The County's population stands at 554,622 (2009 census). However, the age distribution is given as 0-14 years (45%), 15-64 years (49%), 65 years and above (6%) with the youth representing 25% of the population.

##### **4.5.1. Youth structures for association and participation in governance:**

The youth have formed groups such as the *Youth Bunge*, Vihiga Youth Network, Vihiga Senate, 'Yes Youth Can', Youth SACCOS and Youth Agenda courtesy of USAID. Another structure is the NYC which has members from the sub-wards to sub-counties. Other structures found included groups for *boda boda* riders, which have also formed SACCOS and also theatre groups.

##### **4.5.2 Programmes undertaken by youth to improve their participation in economy:**

The youth have formed groups through which they engage in businesses such as: *Boda boda* riders. They have cooperatives and SACCOS that offer loans to both members and non-members, beauty salons, barber shops, poultry farming, tree nurseries, hospitality and bee keeping. Some of the groups have received money to start up the businesses from UWEZO Fund, YEDF, WEF and NGAAF.

##### **4.5.3 Youth perceptions about their role in governance:**

The youth felt that they needed to participate more actively in the public forums and advocate for inclusion in budget making processes and public *barazas*. Despite this, the

youth were aware of their role in governance and in many cases, group leaders lobby for positions in both elective and appointive posts. Youth also disseminate information to others and to the community e.g. through use of theatre groups, music, drama. However, they felt that participation was based on how wealthy and popular one was and they therefore didn't go for the already available opportunities fearing they would not be considered.

**4.5.4 Challenges limiting youth participation in governance:**

Some of the challenges reported to limit youth participation in governance include political interference; perceptions of youth as being inexperienced and therefore unfit to get elected to leadership positions. Inadequate information on opportunities, politicization of devolved funds.

**4.5.5. Programmes undertaken by the National and County governments to empower youth**

**I) National Government**

All the funding initiatives by the Government for the youth were found to be operational. These included UWEZO Fund, WEDF, YEDF, AGPO and NGAAF. Through the registered groups, youth have been able to access these funds. However, the youth appeared not to be very conversant with the provisions for NGAAF.

Table 5 shows uptake of Uwezo funds as at February 2017 by Constituency

**Table 5: Status of uptake of Uwezo funds by Constituency in Vihiga County**

S/N	Constituency	Constituency allocation (Kshs)	Amount disbursed (Kshs)	Absorption rate	Groups approved for funding			Amount repaid (Kshs)	Repayment rate
					Women	Youth	PWDs		
1	Emuhaya	17,516,392	19,755,000	112.78%	129	70	4	6,491,721	32.86%
2	Luanda	16,725,357	16,580,000	99.13%	171	25	2	5,400,000	32.57%
3	Vihiga	16,087,400	15,990,000	99.39%	179	48	5	4,429,663	27.7%
4	Hamisi	19,802,233	19,100,000	96.45%	116	46	7	1,483,625	7.77%
5	Sabatia	16,148,226	18,100,000	112.09%	147	64	5	5,553,077	30.68%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>86,279,608</b>	<b>89,525,000</b>	<b>103.97</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23,358,086</b>	

Source: MOPSYGA Vihiga County as at 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2017



## **ii) County Government**

The County Government had established Vihiga County Community Empowerment fund which offered loans for SMEs. It is administered at the Ward level by a ward committee that is comprised of members who are nominated by the community to include (1 youth, 1 PWD from the ministry of trade). In addition, the County Government is partnering with development partners like USAID where they build capacity of the youth on their various rights and offer entrepreneurial skills through local polytechnics to equip the youth for jobs.

### **4.5.6. Challenges faced by National and County governments in engaging youth:**

#### **i) National government**

Key informants in the national government reported that it was a challenge to engage the youth because they did not participate in local meetings like chief's barazas and hence their views on matters affecting them were not incorporated. They reported that disbursement of devolved funds was highly politicized and patronized. It was not possible to engage youth in forums because they have commercialized forums e.g. when called for meetings they demand for payments (reimbursements). Youth leaders have allowed themselves to be used by unscrupulous officials for benefit; they are used as bait to enable them get the monies.

### **4.6 Summary of Findings :**

From the findings in all counties assessed, it is clear that the youth have organized themselves for participation in governance. The assessment found that leaders that were elected to the National Youth Council (NYC) are in position but inactive. They continue to wait for the National government to review the NYC Act to align it to the Constitution and hopefully, national elections for NYC can be held. In Trans-Nzoia and Vihiga counties the Youth Bunge is active on the ground and has considerable membership. This organization receives support from USAID, other local NGOs and from the county government. The Youth Bunge having received recognition by county governments seemed to be working closely with the executives responsible for youth matters.



In all other counties, youth have no formal governance structures but have organized themselves into small groups for income-generating activities. Each of the small groups has its own leadership structure. The study did not find any collaboration between the small groups except in Tharaka-Nithi where more than thirty CBOs have come together to form the Tharaka Nithi Youth Network that manages a SACCO. The main programs managed by youth for income generation include the *Boda Boda*, small retail businesses, hawking, horticulture and other agriculture based enterprises.

The most common perception amongst youth in all counties is that they were not involved in governance at both the County and National levels. They cited lack of consultation or involvement. Many believed they have been discriminated against because they lacked resources to '*buy their way*' into leadership positions. They did not consider their representation in the various funds disbursement committees for funds as meaningful involvement. They claimed the patron who is the local Member of Parliament or women representative appointed youth loyal to politicians therefore represented the interests of the politician rather than those of the youth.

The study found that in all counties, youth were active on social media. They subscribe to Facebook and WhatsApp groups. However, they decried poor flow of information on existing opportunities as a key challenge to their participation. Others cited lack of experience and lack of financial resources as hindering their involvement in leadership.

Many County Government and National government officers claimed it was difficult to involve and engage youth in governance. They cited lack of structures amongst the youth, poor commitment, drug and substance abuse; lack of interest and apathy amongst the youth as some of the key challenges they faced in involving youth in development. Other challenges included lack of unity of purpose; unwillingness to seek relevant information; negative attitudes to government initiatives and high mobility especially of the males. Obsession with '*white collar jobs*' made youth look down on local initiatives meant to empower them. Youth favour short-term approaches to development for '*quick money*' benefits which unfortunately are not sustainable.

The County Governments in all the counties assessed had established a youth department to handle matters of the youth. They had also appointed youth officers up to ward levels

especially in Vihiga and Taita Taveta. Some had established funds targeting youth e.g. the Youth and Women enterprise fund in Trans-Nzoia, Taita Taveta and the Community Empowerment fund in Vihiga.

In many other counties, they had only draft bills that proposed establishment of funds like the '*Jiinue bill*' in Nyeri and a draft empowerment bill in Tharaka- Nithi. Taita Taveta had established empowerment centers e.g. one in Voi where youth attended courses on entrepreneurship paid for by the County Government. The County Government also paid for youth to take up drivers' courses. The assessment established that where these funds were operational, they were independent of the National Government revolving funds and were being administered through different structures.

## 5.0. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

---

A survey conducted by the UNDP (2012) in 186 countries of the world highlighted lack of opportunities for youth to effectively participate in decision making. According to the study, lack of appropriate structures made the youth feel excluded and marginalized in their counties and communities. These findings were validated in this assessment showing that in spite of the good intentions to have youth participate in governance as spelt out in Kenya Vision 2030, the country is yet to establish enabling and appropriate structures. This has resulted in under-representation and exclusion. The NYC Act was to be reviewed to align with the Constitution promulgated in 2010. This has not happened and therefore no elections have been held to replace officials whose term expired some time back. This has left the youth vulnerable and without credible leadership.

The assessment found that the government has provided for youth representation in the various revolving fund schemes. This happens through nomination or selection to committees disbursing the revolving funds and usually by the local politician who is patron. This has made majority of youth perceive those appointed as representing interests of local politicians who nominate them and has created high levels of mistrust and lack of commitment by youth leadership on matters affecting them. This has also resulted in disjointed representation where youth have no 'common voice' about their issues and has ended up in most decisions being made for them without their participation. It is critical that youth are facilitated to enjoy their rights to participation. This include allowing youth elect their representatives in organisations and agencies. More youth empowerment and public awareness is required to forge a collective approach to youth issues. Individualistic approach has denied the youth adequate voice to agitate for opportunities and leadership positions within government. Across all the counties, the youth structures of engagement among them the National Youth Council and the Youth Bungenes lacked numbers which would be the basis on which negotiations for engagement with their leaders especially on political participation.

A study conducted locally in 2016 confirmed vulnerability of youth to political manipulation (Awiti & Scott, 2016) According to the study, 62% of the youth were found to be vulnerable to electoral bribery, with 40% saying they would only vote for a candidate who bribed them. This casts doubt on the willingness of youth to drive their agenda. It is a serious issue

considering their big numbers, their education status and their energy that would be harnessed to forge a unanimous voice on issues affecting them.

In all the counties assessed, a general lack of interest by youth, myths held by youth about certain youth initiatives and apathy amongst majority of the youth population was reported. For instance in Nyeri County, the officer in-charge of WEF reported that the fund was associated with adult women. Youthful women were not interested in accessing the funds even though WEF targets all women including those below 35 years of age. Elsewhere, it was reported that youth did not apply for government tenders because of a misconception that one needed huge finances to do business with government.

The same study (Awiti, 2016) found that only (11%) of the youth wanted to become farmers. Majority wanted high level careers intensifying demand and competition for off-farm employment. This means that most were in agricultural based income generating activities because of lack of alternatives. Not surprisingly, many youth are in the *Boda boda* business which is not only unproductive but also poses health risks and is unsustainable. The Kenyan youth are educated but because of this dislike for farm-work and the shortage/absence of white collar jobs, many have remained unemployed (UNDP, 2012) and therefore exposed to increasing levels of poverty.

Concerns have been raised worldwide and especially in Africa that current National Youth Policies have not responded effectively in mainstreaming youth participation in economic activities and other national governance processes. Kenya is yet to develop a National Action Plan for youth empowerment to replace the current almost adhoc distribution of funds. In some counties, the National Government and the County governments disburse funds to the same population of youth due to lack of collaboration resulting in duplication of effort. This results in only a small group of the youth population benefiting.

Lack of data contributes to invisibility in official statistics and exclusion in planning and implementation. In four of the five counties assessed, data and clear information on number of youth and programmes undertaken by youth was lacking to enable governments make policy and framework decisions. Only Trans-Nzoia County had data and projections of the number of youth and youth programmes the administration was planning for in its integrated county plans. The other counties relied on data from the Kenya

National Bureau of Statistics which is not always up-to-date.

Misinformation and ignorance amongst a significant population of the youth and reliance on social media to access information on youth opportunities in the county contributed to a lack of participation in the governance process for the youth. *'I was told it's difficult to access the YEDF, so I have never applied'* said one of the youth participant in the Nyeri forum. While both the National and County governments posted a lot of information on their websites, youth do not visit such spaces choosing instead to be active participants in general social media.

This *'self-inflicted ignorance'* caused by over-reliance on ineffective communication channels among the youth denied them opportunities in both government and private sector. In all the counties assessed, youths cited social media as their major source of information and communication channel. This was despite governments' over-reliance on traditional means of communication through its administrators which was unpopular among the youths. Consequently youth deny themselves the opportunity to participate in governance processes within their counties. Only 10% of youths accessed information from traditional government communication channels. In all counties assessed, a general lack of interest, myths about government initiatives and apathy among majority of the youth was reported as factors inhibiting youth participation in programs meant to empower them. **6.0.**

## 6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**6.1. Conclusions:** Youth involvement in governance requires formal structures recognized at all levels. Such structures do not exist both at the National and County levels. However, there is goodwill as shown in policy (Kenya Vision 2030) and in law (Constitution of Kenya, 2010) as well as in established departments dealing with youth affairs in county governments. There is need therefore to operationalize the NYC by reviewing the relevant legislation and facilitating establishment of an effective National Youth Council.

Both National and county governments should collaborate in the initiatives to empower youth to avoid duplication of efforts. This should include sensitization of the youth on their rights to participation and electing their representatives in all matters and at all levels. The existing small groups should be used to widen youth networks for leadership development. Since youth have taken to social media as a medium of communication among themselves, both National and County governments should explore how they could use social media to pass information, to educate them on their rights and sensitize them on their role in governance. The youth need civic education and encouragement to avoid being manipulated by politicians. At the same time loopholes for corruption on funds meant to benefit the youth should be sealed and the processes of disbursement streamlined.

Governments should intensify capacity building including entrepreneurship trainings in all the counties. These trainings should be well structured and targeted so that the beneficiaries are empowered to run viable businesses or projects.

### 6.2. Recommendations

Based on the finding, this study makes the following recommendations to Government:

- (i) Review the NYC Policy (2006) and the NYC Act (2009) to align them to the Constitution (2010).
- (ii) Build the capacity of existing youth groups, associations and organizations to make them more viable as vehicles for youth participation in governance.
- (iii) Institute measures to professionalize youth work
- (iv) Develop relevant training programmes in higher education and such other training

institutions to instill entrepreneurial skills.

- (v) Attract Private Sector interest in establishing and expanding mentorship programmes and support for youth attachment and internships to prepare and enable the youths to take up opportunities in government and private sector institutions.
- (vi) Ensure that youth are encouraged to participate in community activities and projects.
- (vii) Intensify use of alternative media and social media platforms to reach the youth with useful information.
- (viii) Reduce corruption in disbursement of youth funds and in programs meant for youth.
- (ix) Use affirmative action to appoint youth to leadership positions at all levels.
- (x) Liaise with Civil Society to conduct civic education on youth rights and their role in governance and community development.
- (xi) Maintain a credible database on youth participation at all levels to help document successes in youth empowerment.
- (xii) Address the mismatch existing between the school achievement and need for skills by industry

List of tables

Table 1: Status of Uptake of Uwezo Funds by Constituency in Taita Taveta County .....12

Table 2: Status of uptake of Uwezo Funds by Constituency in Trans-Nzoia County ..... 17

Table 3: Status of uptake of Uwezo Funds by Constituency in Tharaka Nithi County ..... 21

Table 4: Status of uptake of Uwezo funds by Constituency in Nyeri County ..... 25

Table 5: Status of uptake of Uwezo funds by Constituency in Vihiga County ..... 29



## References

- African Union Commission. (2006), *African Youth Charter*. Addis Ababa
- African Union Commission (2015), *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*. Addis Ababa
- Awiti, A., & Scott, B. (2016), *The Kenya Youth Survey Report*. Nairobi. East African Institute.
- Government of Kenya (2012), *The National Youth Service Act, Revised Edition*. Nairobi
- Government of Kenya (2013), *Transnzoia County Integrated Development Plan (2013-2017)*. Nairobi
- Government of Kenya (2007), *Kenya Vision 2030 Popular Version*. Nairobi
- Government of Kenya (2009), *The National Youth Council Act*. Nairobi
- Government of Kenya (2010), *The Constitution of Kenya 2010*. Nairobi
- Government of Kenya (2011), *The National Gender and Equality Commission Act*. Nairobi
- Government of Kenya (2013), *Basic Education Act No. 14 of 2013*. Nairobi
- Government of Kenya (2013), *Sports Act No. 25 of 2013*. Nairobi
- Government of Kenya (2017), *Acess to Government Procurement Opportunities*. Nairobi
- Government of Kenya (2017), *Youth Enterprise Development Fund*. Nairobi
- Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2009), *Population and Housing Census*. Nairobi
- Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2010), *Kenya Demographic and Health Survey*. Nairobi
- NGEC (2016), *Status of Equality and Inclusion in Kenya*. Nairobi
- UNDP (2012), *Human Development Index Report*. New York
- UNESCO (2005), *Guidelines for Inclusion. Ensuring Access to Education for All*. Paris:
- UNESCO (2016), *Concept of Governance*. New York

Published by

National Gender and Equality Commission Headquarters  
Solution Tech Place, 1<sup>st</sup> Flr, Longonot Road,  
Upperhill, next to Crowne Plaza Hotel  
P.O.BOX 27512-00506, Nairobi, Kenya  
Tel +254 2(20)-272-7778/ +254 (20) 3213199  
[www.ngeckkenya.org](http://www.ngeckkenya.org)  
Twitter: @NGECKENYA  
[www.facebook.com/NGECKKenya](http://www.facebook.com/NGECKKenya)  
Toll Free Line: 0800720187  
SMS: 20459

Kisumu Office  
Reinsurance Plaza, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Wing B  
Oginga Odinga Street

Nakuru Office  
Tamoh Plaza, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Kijabe Street  
P.O BOX 15263-401 NAKURU

