Enrolment Trends in Youth Polytechnics in West Pokot County, Kenya

Luyali E. Patrick  Dr. Osel A. Maureen  Prof. Othuon Lucas
Department of Educational Management and Foundations, Maseno University

Abstract
The concept of Youth Polytechnics (YPs) was started as village polytechnics in 1968 by the National Christian Council of Kenya (N.C.C.K.). They are managed by local communities, Non-Governmental Organizations, the government and religious bodies. The YPs offer a route for acquisition of technical and entrepreneurship skills in line with TIVET. In West Pokot County, transition rate from primary to secondary has shown worrying trends, with only 47% of the 4,865 candidates who sat for Kenya Certificate of Primary Examinations in 2008 managing to enroll in secondary schools compared to the 70% transition rate in the country. Therefore, a considerable number of primary school leavers in the County do not proceed to secondary schools for academic education and 10% opt to enroll in youth polytechnics for various vocational skills such as masonry, carpentry, mechanics and tailoring for self or paid employment. However the curriculum in youth polytechnics has been criticized over time as lacking in levels of skills to train marketable courses and technical knowhow that respond to the labour market demands by the industry and the informal sector. The government is currently reviewing youth polytechnics curriculum with the view of making it more responsive and relevant to the needs and aspirations of the trainees. This study sought to establish enrolment trends in youth polytechnics in West Pokot County. The findings of the study found that, YPs operate without a clear curriculum, YPs are characterized by dismal rates of participation and gross inequalities in terms of gender, due to lack of adequate and relevant materials as well as insufficient and poorly trained staff the quality of training was below expected levels and that funding remained the most outstanding disincentive in implementation of YPs curriculum. The study recommended that courses should be offered after a more systematic investigation of people’s needs, there was need to equip YPs in view of increased enrolment, curriculum should be changed to adapt to the needs of the community and individuals, and community and aid agencies to be asked to provide essential facilities and assist in construction of YPs. The results of the study will be used by policy makers in the Ministries of Education and Youth Affairs in improving enrolment, curriculum and stakeholders attitude towards YPs in West Pokot County. The government will find the study useful in understanding the plight of the rural youths and the need to continue financing YPs in the semi-arid regions.

Keywords: Enrolment, Trends, Drop out, Responsiveness, Curriculum, Course, Youth Polytechnics, TIVET

INTRODUCTION
Technical, Industrial, Vocational Education and Training (TIVET) is the provision of skills, knowledge, attitude and values needed for the place of work. In contrast to general education, learning in TIVET is centered on applied as opposed to academics, practical as opposed to theory and skills as opposed to knowledge. TIVET is meant to prepare learners for careers based on manual and practical activities (Amkombe, 2000). TIVET relates to a specific trade in which the learner participates, hence the term vocational, while technical means that the learner directly develops expertise in a particular group of techniques (Chege, 2008). Skill training is critical for sustainable industrialization and poverty reduction in terms of creating a critical mass of technically and entrepreneurially qualified people, who are able to stimulate investment opportunities, create jobs and increase productivity. A well educated and trained workforce is a prerequisite for harnessing the potential of competitiveness and industrialization (MOEST, 2005).

Many vocational training programs have been set up in industrialized market economy countries in order to cope with youth unemployment problem. According to ILO Report of 2001, about 40% of roughly 11 million unemployed in European Community were under 25 years of age. The report further indicates that the United Kingdom has one of the largest percentage of young people leaving educational system without having received apprenticeship, technical or vocational training. According to UNESCO (2003), technical and vocational education in Germany Republic comprises of vocational apprenticeships and master craftsmen. They prepare youth who cannot afford formal education for either self – employment or wage employment.

Many countries of Latin America and Carribean have long been engaged in manpower training activities, some already possessing vocational education and training institutions. ILO Report (2001) points out that, these vocational training institutions have been obliged to assign priorities to their activities.

Unemployed labour force of Bangladesh is estimated to be about 15 million. Besides a huge number of un – skilled labour force, skilled, semi – skilled and professional manpower, skilled workers and technicians play a key role in all sectors of the economy. To provide skilled technicians, there are middle – level technical and vocational training systems in the country (BAIRA, 2009). Middle – level technical education is provided after
tenth year of schooling. Polytechnic sub – systems offer well organized 3 years diploma courses in engineering and technology. There are twenty one polytechnic institutes in Bangladesh, with annual intake capacity of 5,268 students. Besides polytechnics, there are a number of agricultural and allied industrial, textile and leather technology institutes and commercial institutes offering courses in engineering, technologies and trades organizing short and special knowledge and skill updating courses, with particular emphasis on technical and vocational education (BAIRA, 2009).

In Sri Lanka, the government has taken measures to set up vocational training centers at the IDP camps for the victims of the war. The Sri Lanka Vocational Training Authority has set up vocational training centers for the benefit of the displaced families. The centers offer training in sewing, electrical mechanism, welding, motor mechanism, construction and computer technology. Sri Lankan government hopes to offer the youth in the camps opportunity to develop their skills in order to minimize their fears of unemployment and uncertainties of the future (Colombo Page News Desk, 2009).

In the year 2008, Kenya’s economic growth rate had declined from 6.5% to 3.5% and this was attributed to the post- election violence mostly carried out by the youthful population (Republic of Kenya, 2008). While 56% of the population was living in Poverty, the economic growth rate was minus 3% (Republic of Kenya, 2008). Estimates show that 75% of Kenya’s population is below 30 years of age. The young people aged (15 – 30) years comprise about 10.8 million (32%) of the total population, with female accounting for 57 % of this total. The majority of the young people live in the Rift Valley Province, the largest geographical area in Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 2008).

A healthy and vibrant youthful population is a valuable asset to Kenya currently and in the future. About 500,000 youths graduate from various Tertiary Institutions annually yet, due to slow economic growth, corruption and demand for experience from Potential employers, 75 % of the youths remain unemployed. The percentage of the youths without employable skills stands at 72% (Republic of Kenya, 2003). One of the challenges in youth’s empowerment and participation is how to ensure that young people take a leading role in causing transformation in Kenya. To address problems of the youth, Vis a vis unemployment and employment, the Government of Kenya has made efforts to initiate youth development programmes through Policy documents such as Sessional Paper No. 4 of 2005 on Policy to Education, Training and Research and Poverty eradication plan (1996 – 2015).

The government of Kenya recognizes the need to create opportunities for post primary school graduates and youth who for one reason or another do not complete primary or secondary school or do not transit to higher levels of learning. Their education is terminal and yet they have not acquired meaningful skills for self employment and have not attained the internationally acceptable age of 18 to qualify for employment. The government is therefore revitalizing the Youth polytechnics (YPs) so that they can offer market driven courses to cater for these groups of children (MOEST, 2004).

Despite youth polytechnics successful expansion over the past two decades since the year 1990, their programs have been regarded as having not performed to the expected level to achieve their objectives. Youth polytechnics have been criticized over time for their excessive formalization and orientation to certification and paid employment. In West Pokot the quality of training in youth polytechnics has been hampered by inadequate facilities, understaffing, lack of funding, and negative community attitude on youth polytechnics curriculum programs. This has led to idleness amongst the youth in the County which has resulted to violent conflicts within and between pastoralist communities. Conflicts such as raiding and cattle rustling have a long history and have to some extent become an aspect of traditional pastoralist culture (Kiprop, 2006).

In the year 2008, 53% of all children that sat for K.C.P.E in West Pokot County did not manage to proceed to secondary school and only 10% of them were expected to enroll in YPs (Republic of Kenya, 2009). Vocational training from youth polytechnics is considered a significant input towards socio – economic development and thus reduces idleness and unemployment amongst the youth especially those who do not manage to proceed to secondary schools. The County had primary school population of 77,025 (25% of the total population) at the start of the plan period in 2002 and was to grow to 101,812 in 2008 at the end of the plan period (Republic of Kenya, 2002). This rapid population growth does not augur well for the future development of the County, as most of this age group are expected to enter the job market yet lack skills to compete favourably. The level of skills and education amongst the youth in West Pokot County will determine the kind of income they earn. If they drop out of primary school level, their future will be very bleak (Republic of Kenya, 2002).The state of unemployment makes school leavers to be idle and unable to maintain their own living, hence many primary school leavers engage in economic and social evils like cattle rustling in their struggle to survive. The unemployed youth are a threat to national stability due to their deviant behavior like crime. While this is true for idle youth, ways of keeping the young and energetic busy earning a living have to be sought (Kiprop, 2006).

Statement of the Problem
As indicated in the introduction, the importance of skills acquired from youth polytechnics as pertains to
alleviating youth and unemployment is crucial. However, despite the inputs and emphasis the Government has put in youth polytechnics, the enrolment in the programme has dwindled and the programme remains low - keyed, ineffective and has nearly collapsed in some parts of the country where it once thrived. In West Pokot County, out of the 4,865 pupils who sat for KCPE in the year 2008, only 487 pupils (10%) were enrolled in YPs. These meant that due to lack of access, a large majority was denied vocational skills, which could help them acquire skills and join the labour market to reduce idleness which results to cattle rustling. This study, attempts to establish enrolment trends in YPs in West Pokot County.

Research Design
This study adopted a descriptive survey design because it was meant to gather evidence relating to the current status of enrolment in youth polytechnics in the County. This is because survey was used for gathering information on people’s feelings, attitudes, opinions, interests and problems. It also permits the researcher to come into contact with the people earmarked for the study (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The descriptive survey research design was suitable for this study because the descriptive study determines and reports the way things are (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Typical descriptive studies are concerned with the assessment of attitude, opinions, demographic information conditions and procedures. The descriptive data are usually collected through a questionnaires, interviews and observation. A conceptual framework was used in the study to help focus on training in youth polytechnics that leads to human capital formation. Survey research design was adopted. The population of this study comprised 9 youth polytechnic managers, 503 trainees, 25 instructors, 9 parents instructors association representatives (PIAs) and 3 district youth officers (DYOs). Having included 1 Youth polytechnic manager, 3 instructors, 1 parent instructors representative and 1 district youth officer in piloting, saturated sampling technique was used to select all the remaining 8 managers, 22 instructors, 8 PIAs, and 2 DYOs in the county. Quantitative data obtained were coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics to give percentages, frequencies and means for enrolment rates. Qualitative data collected from interviews and questionnaires was analyzed on an ongoing process as themes and sub themes emerged from the data.

Enrollment Trends in YPs
Primary school leavers from within the immediate community are the trainees recruited to YPs, more so those who miss Form one places. The YPs trainees take a period of two years to complete the training. They train in vocational skills such as masonry, carpentry and joinery, metal work, plumbing and tailoring. On completion of the initial training they are supposed to sit for government grade test. The YPs system is by far the largest vocational training program in Kenya today in terms of enrolment and number of institutions involved. The enrolment in YPs is approximately 25,017 trainees (Republic of Kenya, 2008). Table 1 shows students intake by sex in youth polytechnics in Kenya from 2003 to 2007, while Table 2 shows enrolment in youth polytechnics in West Pokot County in 2010.

Table 1: Students intake in Youth polytechnics in Kenya 2003 – 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>13,255</td>
<td>64.89</td>
<td>7,771</td>
<td>35.11</td>
<td>20,426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>13,918</td>
<td>61.79</td>
<td>8,605</td>
<td>38.21</td>
<td>22,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>14,196</td>
<td>62.03</td>
<td>8,691</td>
<td>37.97</td>
<td>22,887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>14,210</td>
<td>61.91</td>
<td>8,741</td>
<td>38.09</td>
<td>22,951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>15,489</td>
<td>61.91</td>
<td>9,528</td>
<td>38.09</td>
<td>25,017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The tables indicate that though student’s enrolment in YPs has been increasing, the number is still low as compared to those pupils who do not transit to secondary schools. TIVET programs in Kenya target to absorb large proportion of students who cannot progress to the secondary and higher levels of education. Out of approximately 600,000 graduates of primary education in the year 2005, only 55%(350,000) proceeded to secondary schools (Republic of Kenya, 2006). At the end of the secondary cycle only 20,000 proceed to universities, the rest (270,000) are expected to be catered for by the middle level colleges and TIVET institutions whose existing capacity is inadequate. The Gender Policy in Education (Republic of Kenya, 2007) indicates that enrolment in public TIVET institutions increased from 40,622 in 1999 to over 66,500 in 2004, with females constituting 49.1% of the total enrolment. However, female students’ enrolment has been highest in YPs and lowest in National polytechnics. Between 1999 and 2004, female enrolment in youth polytechnics was over 50% of the total number of students enrolled.

The total enrolment in public TIVET institutions in Kenya increased to over 79,000 in 2003. Female students enrolment constituted 44% of the total enrolment, but there exists gender disparities in terms of overall enrolment in science and technology related professions. Due to limited places available in TIVET institutions, only a small proportion of eligible school leavers are absorbed. Every year less than a half of those graduating from primary schools either join the YPs for artisan training or enroll directly for apprenticeship training within
the ‘jua kali’ sector (MOEST, 2005).

Table 2: Enrolment in Youth polytechnics in West Pokot County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Polytechnic</th>
<th>Enrolment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapenguria YP</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Chepareria YP</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mercy Centre</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tamugh YP</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Chepnyal YP</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Kodich YP</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigor YP</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sina YP</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ortum YP</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Youth Affairs, West Pokot County (2010).

In Kenya, although it is recognized that a functionally skilled population is an important factor in a society’s efforts to sustain socio-economic advancement, a significant proportion of youths misses out on formal education during their youth age (Republic of Kenya, 2003). According to the Master Plan on Education and Training (MPET), this is further complicated by a declining enrolment and high dropout rates in YPs. The level of participation of trainees in YPs program has been declining over the years due to a combination of social, economic and cultural factors (Ekundayo, 2002). Statistics at the Ministry of Youth Affairs in West Pokot as shown in Table 2 above confirms that, enrolment in YPs has been low. That both enrolment and participation are low is a sign of problems in concept and implementation of YPs program in the County.

Recommendation by Ndegwa report in Republic of Kenya (1991) asserted that YPs be expanded from existing 600 to 1,400 to cater for at least 150,000 youth who fail to get form one places. The report added that the success of those would depend on the support the government of Kenya gave to the development of small scale enterprises directly and through developing markets for them. The report further recommended that the image of YPs be improved by admitting students during Form one selection. This would synchronize YPs students throughout the country and give the trainees hope of joining the YPs immediately after the release of K.C.P.E results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Enrolment by course and Gender

The trainees were asked to indicate the courses which they had enrolled in, in YPs and why they had chosen such courses. Their responses were as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Course Enrollment across Gender – 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Female (2010)</th>
<th>Male (2010)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tailoring</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>58.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masonry</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpentry &amp; Joinery</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>5.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>2.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>82</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 3, tailoring and dress making had the highest enrolment (58.93%) among the youth polytechnics in West Pokot County. DYO’s asserted that,

“Tailoring and dress making had the highest enrolment, because female trainees had few alternative courses to enroll in unlike their male counterparts who had a variety of courses to select for training”.

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The enrolment by sex in the year 2010 in West Pokot County YPs as shown in Figure 1, indicates that female enrollment was higher than male enrollment in Chepareria, Mercy Centre, Sigor and Ortum YPs. Most of the female trainees had registered in the tailoring and dress making course.

![Figure 1: Bar graph showing enrollment by sex in Youth polytechnics in West Pokot County, 2010](image)

DYO’s concurred with the trainee’s assertion that,

“There was increased demand for tailoring and dress making services within Kapenguria Township and the surrounding urban centers such as Chepareria and Kacheliba. The high demand for skilled tailors and dress makers for making school uniforms was due to the increase in enrolment in primary schools as a result of the free primary education launched by the government in 2002.”

However from the observation checklist, it was observed that the number of sewing machines in Ortum and Chepareria did not match with the number of trainees. There were only 10 sewing machines for the 30 and 40 trainees enrolled in the YPs respectively. This compromised the quality of training in most YPs.

Studies on gender parity in science and technical education have established that the idea of treating some professions as male courses leads to low enrolment for females (UNESCO, 2003). With promulgation of the new constitution which stipulates that county governments will be in charge of village polytechnics and home craft centers (Republic of Kenya, 2010), development committees should be gender sensitive and should have adequate representation of women and youth (Republic of Kenya, 2009).

Masonry was the second most popular course in terms of enrollment which accounted for 19.05% of the trainees. These findings contradicts with those of Maroria (2008) who found out that, carpentry and joinery was the second most popular course in Kisii central district and the country at large. Data from trainees questionnaire indicated that 19.05 % preferred masonry course because trained masonries were in great demand in rural and urban areas where new houses were being constructed. Increased enrolment in West Pokot County in this course was due to transformation and socio – cultural change from traditionalism to modernity (Republic of Kenya, 2008). When modernization takes place, old practices are abandoned in favour of new ones and more viable technologically oriented practices (Ibuathu, 2005). The local community was shifting from living in “manyattas” to semi-permanent and permanent houses which had led to a higher demand for masonries. In addition to these, the prospects of constructing a cement factory in Ortum (Central Pokot district) was viewed by trainees as an avenue for construction boom near the factory and the surrounding areas.

Carpentry and joinery which involves making of all types of furniture had an enrolment of 11.31%. Data obtained from trainees questionnaires indicated that this group were motivated to do these course because most of the graduates in these course were either employed among local carpentry workshops or had started their own carpentry workshops.

Mechanics which was the fourth popular course in terms of enrolment, was only offered in one youth polytechnic, that is, Ortum youth polytechnic, which accounted for 5.95% of trainees. Most youth polytechnics...
opted not to offer it due to high cost of inputs and equipments required. However most managers were optimistic that with the inception of the new curriculum and government grants, as well as the devolved funds such as CDF and LATF, they had hopes of introducing the course in their institutions. Other courses such as plumbing and leather work were still in their infant stages at 1.77% and 2.98% respectively and thus more awareness and advocacy need to be disseminated to the trainees so as to encourage them to enroll in such courses. Information and communication technology (ICT) programs were yet to be fully developed in West Pokot despite the Ministry of Youth Affairs assurance that ICT was a compulsory course for all trainees in YPs as per the DYO response from the in depth interview. The observation checklist noted that the problem of underutilization of facilities including workshops and other specialized facilities was evident in a number of institutions. For the under enrolled courses, the option of sharing such facilities should be explored as opposed to each youth polytechnic having incomplete and poorly equipped facilities.

Table 4 Factor for enrolment in certain courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Number of Trainees</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructors</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>34.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends /Past Trainees</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Guided</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>36.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>168</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 4, 36.31% of the trainees were not guided followed by 34.52% of trainees who sought to be advised by their instructors on the relevant course to enroll in. Influence from past trainees who were working and earning incomes either as self employed or wage employed influenced 20.24% of the trainees to choose a particular course. The DYO confirmed from the interview that, “Most of the graduates who had completed training and acquired trade test examination certificate had gotten jobs in both public and private sector.”

The parents who guided the trainees in choosing a given course accounted for 8.93% of the trainees. The low involvement of the parents in guiding their children on what course to undertake and the higher percentage of those who were not guided (36.30% of the trainees) is as a result of the local people’s negative attitude towards vocational training in youth polytechnics. The local people do not place a lot of value on education and treat it as the responsibility of the government to sponsor anything relevant to education like cost of building, equipping educational facilities and provision of bursary (Republic of Kenya, 2009). This has led to a high dropout rate in the educational institutions. Since their instigation, YPs have been looked upon as means of promoting rural development. The success of YPs is partly determined by the level of rural prosperity. YPs tend to be highly dependent on local wealth for their instigation and rate of growth (Ibuathu, 2005). The degree of success in placing leavers in local employment varies according to the condition of the local rural economy. In a poor rural environment like West Pokot where more than 60% of the people are poor (Republic of Kenya, 2009) and their reluctance to sell livestock, there is difficulty in raising fees and selling goods to the local people. These findings agree with a study carried by Mureithi (2008) on challenges facing youth polytechnics in Rift Valley Province, Kenya which revealed that peoples’ attitude towards YPs was negative and parents believed that YPs was for failures. This notion arose from the idea upon which YPs were established. The youth polytechnics were established to complete the unfinished business of primary school (Tum, 1996). From the DYO interview, it was noted that it has always been a challenge to change the mindset of parents, the community and stakeholders about vocational education being second choice to academic education. The DYO indicated that most parents (even ones with TIVET backgrounds) want to see their children become engineers, doctors, lawyers just because they believe this will give them better job opportunities.

Youth unemployment has been rising and the accompanying serious social problems of increased crime and dependency, present a major challenge to Kenya government. Young people form 60.00% of the population (Republic of Kenya, 2010). The need for employment influences the unemployed who see the youth polytechnic as an instrument through which they can acquire skills for employment (Maroria, 2008). Data from trainees questionnaire indicated that about 80.00% of the trainees joined youth polytechnics because they thought it was the easiest way they would access self-employment.

Table 5 Sources of YP trainees Enrolment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>No. of Instructors that cited the factor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sec. School drop out</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School Drop out</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jua Kali Artisans</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained Artisans</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The secondary school dropouts as a source of YPs trainees accounted for 45.45% as indicated by instructors’ questionnaire as shown in Table 5 above. Dropouts are considered a waste because they do not complete their cycle of education to meet societal needs as planned by the government. A dropout is a liability to his/her family and society at large (Olweya, 1996). Olweya suggests that dropouts become an economic burden and more often that not social misfits and that some female dropouts are likely to resort to prostitution, early marriages and premarital pregnancies. For boys, dropouts are likely to resort to drug abuse and other anti-social behaviour like cattle rustling as for the case of West Pokot County. The high dropout rate in the County is attributed to ignorance and retrogressive cultural practices like cattle rustling, early marriage and FGM (Republic of Kenya, 2009). However this trend was changing with the introduction of Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE), school feeding program and establishment of rescue centers for girls (Republic of Kenya, 2009). The primary dropouts as a source of YPs was at 27.27% according to the instructors questionnaire. This indicates that despite the provision of free primary education by the government, completion rate is still low. Primary education in ASAL regions like West Pokot continues to experience a number of challenges such as: overstretched facilities, overcrowding in schools, high teacher: pupil ratio and diminishing support by community. Most parents are under the impression that it is the government’s exclusive responsibility to provide all the necessary resources to support the primary education (Republic of Kenya, 2009).

Data collected from instructors’ questionnaires indicated that 18.18 % of the instructors asserted that “jua kali” artisan formed part of the trainees while trained artisans who came to upgrade their skills on part time and full time basis comprised 9.08% as indicated by the instructors. Orwa (2004) asserted that, in Kenya, the millions of entrepreneurs and workers in the informal sector have long been disorganized and without a voice. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why a smaller percentage of them sought to upgrade their skills in the YPs. The few jua kali artisans who upgraded their skills was due to the fact that most local employers in the field ascertained whether prospective employees had the required skill by testing one’s ability on the ground. Only those who sought employment in the formal sector were asked to provide certificates.

The “Jua Kali” sector faces numerous challenges that include cumbersome laws and regulations that tend to inhibit the growth of the jua kali sector. Business owners are unable to secure ownership over their shops and land and it is difficult to access credit facilities. ILO (2001) Report indicated that there was need for credit facilities scheme to support the ventures started by YPs graduates and to assist them to purchase tools and equipment as data from trainee’s questionnaire indicated that 80% of trainees wanted to engage in skills similar to the ones they had trained in after completion.

Conclusions
i. The YPs programs operate without a clear curriculum thus runs short of addressing the aspirations and needs of trainees.
ii. YPs programs are characterized by dismal rates of participation and gross inequalities in terms of gender.
iii. The context of YPs training and materials used did not relate to the realities of the needs of the local people hence low attitude from the community.
iv. Insufficient funding remains the most outstanding disincentive in implementation of YPs curriculum programs.

Recommendations
The following recommendations were made based on the study findings.

i. Courses should be offered after a more systematic investigation of the peoples’ needs so that training responds to different needs of learners.
ii. There is need to adequately equip the YPs especially in view of increased enrolment, a reflection of popularity of YPs and the gradually changing negative attitude that these YPs have attracted.
iii. As society changes, curriculum should be changed to adapt to the needs of the community and individuals.
iv. Where possible, communities and aid agencies can be asked to provide essential facilities and assist in construction of YPs.

REFERENCES


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