



Vol. 14 | Social and development concerns in Africa (c)

Vol. 14 Article 6 | August 2021

Copyright © 2021 The International Journal of Social and Development Concerns (IJSDC) All Rights Reserved
(An International Publisher for Academic and Scientific Resources)

BENEFITS OF YOUTH LIVELIHOODS SECURITY EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES AMONG THE YOUTH IN EMBAKASI CENTRAL CONSTITUENCY, KENYA

Authors: ¹Dephne Mwende Ngila, ²Ann Ngendo Nding'u and ³Samuel Wakanyua

^{1,2&3}The Catholic University of Eastern Africa. Website: www.cuea.edu

P.O BOX 62157 – 00200 Nairobi Kenya

Corresponding author: Dephne Mwende Ngila. **Email:** dephdee@gmail.com

Chief Editor

Web:
www.ijsdc.org
Email:
info@ijsdc.org

**Editing
Oversight**
Impericals
Consultants
International
Limited

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to evaluate the benefits of youth livelihoods security empowerment initiatives Embakasi Central Constituency, Kenya. The objective of the study was to evaluate the benefits of livelihoods security empowerment initiatives in Embakasi Central Sub-County. The study was guided by the Critical Social Theory of Youth Empowerment which highlights the need for and essence of youth empowerment. A case study design was used for the research. The study targeted all the youth groups based in Embakasi Central Constituency. Sample size was therefore drawn from among the approximate 22,548 youth in Embakasi Central using the Slovin's sampling formula. This gave a sample size of 393 respondents. The youth were sampled using systematic random sampling technique while the key informants were purposively selected. Primary data was collected through interview method using researcher administered questionnaires. Secondary data was collected through extensive literature review of journals and reports on youth empowerment. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics with the help of SPSS version 23 while qualitative data using content analysis. The study findings revealed that, benefits were felt by the respondents with 84.2% saying they had been greatly impacted by the initiatives. Barriers in accessing youth funds were rampant (76.4%) with the bottlenecks put by the government being the major challenge and others such as corruption, inadequate funding and lack of access hindering improvement of livelihoods. The major conclusion of the study was that youth empowerment initiatives were very prevalent in Embakasi Central Constituency, which had in turn led to livelihood security among the youth. However, accessing these initiatives encountered some barriers including corruption, inadequate funds and inadequate vocational skills among other barriers. The study recommended that funds should be channelled to youth empowerment programs at every ward and the challenges that they faced be addressed.

Key words: *Youth, Livelihoods security and Empowerment initiatives*

1.1 Study background

The number of today's young people generation is slightly below 1.8 billion against a world's population of 7.5 billion (UN, 2017). The emergence of a sudden increase in large population of the youth can have an unprecedented effect on any country. This largely depends on governments' response to either the positive or negative effect of this growing population by laying out means of taking care of the young people's needs and assisting them to engage fully and responsibly in their economic and social affairs (UNFPA, 2014). According to the Commonwealth Secretariat (2015), empowerment will create an enabling environment under which young people gain the ability, authority and confidence to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people, including both youth and adults. In fact, the youth can be considered as empowered when they themselves acknowledge that they have created, or can create, choices in life, are aware of the implications of those choices, make informed decisions freely, take actions based on those decisions, and accept responsibility for the consequences of those actions.

In Netherlands, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs pledged its commitment to the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth. A program that was launched by the United Nations in February 2016 to be able to guarantee the young people an opportunity to secure decent jobs. In Asia and the Pacific, more than half of the world's youth population live there as per the Regional Human Development Report 2016. Among the half, almost a billion young people are aged below 15 years. This means by 2050 majority of the population will comprise of more working-aged people. Hence there has to be initiatives secured to enable them fight the poverty levels and climate change issues that they are currently facing, detailed in the report. Commonwealth Youth Program (CYP), one of the youth policies that exist in Asia was established in 1973, advocates the effective participation of young women and men in the development process and for social transformation, and aims at their full engagement at all levels of decision making. The program is financed by a special fund consisting of voluntary contributions from member governments. CYP Asia is based at a regional center in Chandigarh, India. The Asia Center responds to youth development for eight countries of the Commonwealth. The center has strategies that it aims to focus on which are mainly, youth enterprise and sustainable livelihoods; governance, development and youth networks; and youth work, education and training. This program is focused to improve the livelihoods security of the youth by empowering them to gain knowledge and incite on the various matters that will secure their tomorrow (UNDP, 2016).

In Ghana, despite the sharp increase in the economically active population, policy makers have failed to properly target the needs of the youth and failed to ensure their active participation and complete adequate analysis of their unique priorities. Youth policies have been touted to be more interested in the outcomes and improvements in the livelihood of young people (Godfrey, 2003) and not just the mere processes and altering of programmes name, usually vague and contested in terms of scope and objectives. For instance, National Youth Council (NYC) as established by law NRDC 241 in 1974 became known as National Youth Authority (NYA) in 2001 and the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP) is currently called Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency (GYEEDA).

Historically, Kenya's population is largely youthful and Kenyans who are under 30 years constitute 75 percent of the population, forming the largest human resource (KNYP, 2006). However, despite their numeric strength, Kenyan youth have been marginalized at all levels of decision-making and

access to economic and political opportunities. According to the Kenya National Youth Policy, the Kenyan youth have faced many challenges. The identifiable challenges include unemployment, restricted access to opportunities and services such as quality education, health care, training and skills creation that sometimes pushes them to engage in criminal behavior. Since independence, the country has been operating without comprehensive institutions, systematic and coherent policies targeting the rapidly emerging youth population until 2006 with the creation of the Ministry of Youth Affairs. This shows the need of increased emphasis on initiatives to empower the youth. Like many other urban slum settlements youth empowerment initiatives in Embakasi Central like the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF), Uwezo Fund, Youth Enterprise Programme (YEP), Women Enterprise Fund amongst others, has failed to trigger any successful meaningful results for the youth within the Kayole Wards. Maybe because the youth are unaware that such initiatives exist or someone is squandering the money set aside the initiatives for their own benefit. This has forced the youth to join dangerous gangs performing organized crimes as a life survival tactic due to lack of jobs and constructive measures to help better their lives. Research findings by (Mutuku, 2017) shows that organized crime in Kayole slums is mainly a problem of the youth, 48% of the gang members are aged 13-18 years and slightly another half 49% are between 19 to 26 years old.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Embakasi Central Constituency, is one of the most populated areas with youth being the majority in the population, is one among the most affected areas in terms of poverty-stricken, idle and frustrated young people. The recent programs targeting the youth have been struck by corruption, embezzlement of funds by the implementers and nepotism among other malpractices. One of the most recent and cited youth empowerment projects that encountered such challenges is the Kazi Kwa Vijana initiative, which despite its significance, the implementation has been poor. The current study therefore investigates youth empowerment initiatives and their contribution to the livelihoods security in Embakasi Central Sub County.

1.3 Study objective

The study objective for this research was to evaluate the benefits of youth empowerment initiatives on livelihood security among the youth in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Kenya

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study was significant because first, it may help to know what kind of livelihoods the youth in Embakasi Central have thus helping them improve their way of life. This, may mainly help by suggesting different ways of empowering the Youth. Secondly, the study will also suggest different forms of livelihood securities for them especially when it comes to education to improve the skills the youth. Recommendations done based on the findings will be invaluable in informing subsequent youth empowerment programs by organizations or other stakeholders.

1.5 Scope and Delimitations of the Study

The study focused on youth empowerment initiatives and livelihoods security. The study is limited to Embakasi Central Sub-County, (Kayole ward), Kenya. The population of the study was the group of youth targeted by the youth empowerment initiatives within the same area. The study further intends to look at the programs that have been implemented by empowerment organizations towards the improvement of livelihood securities in the study area. The sample size was drawn

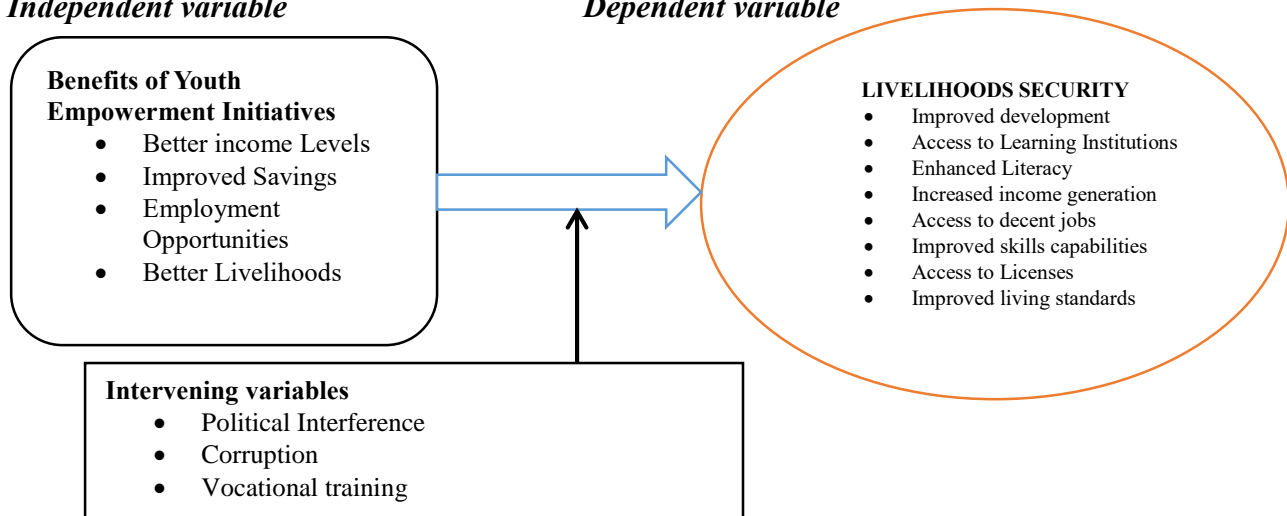
from the universe population included both the youth and the community leaders. The study delimited itself to only the youth aged 15-35 in Kayole wards only within Embakasi Central Sub-County. The study delimited itself to the youth only and not any other age group that may have initiatives meant for them. This was done in line with the objectives of the study and who it intended to interview so as to get relevant data pertaining to the study.

1.6 The Conceptual framework

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Independent variable

Dependent variable



Source: Own Conceptualization, 2020

1.7 Literature review

This section presents the literature review including the theoretical and empirical review on the importance of livelihoods security empowerment among the youth in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Kenya.

Theoretical review

Critical Social Theory of Youth Empowerment

Over the past few decades there has been a shift in focus on efforts to support youths' healthy development and integration into the community from risk-based preventive approaches to capacity building through empowerment initiatives (Small, 2004). Jennings Louise in the construction of the critical social theory of youth empowerment views empowerment as a multi-level construct consisting of practical approaches and applications, social action processes, and individual and collective outcomes. In the broadest sense, empowerment refers to individuals, families, organizations, and communities gaining control and mastery, within the social, economic, and political contexts of their lives, in order to improve equity and quality of life (Rappaport, 1984; Rappaport, 1987; Zimmerman, 2000). The theory emphasizes that in order to create change among the youth, collective efforts are needed. The six dimensions outlined of critical youth empowerment theory are elaborated as follows: ***A welcoming and safe environment***. This is where youth feel valued, respected, encouraged, and supported. Such an environment allows participants

opportunities to share their feelings, take risks, and feel as if they belong to a family-like community. A welcoming and safe environment is a social space in which young people have freedom to be themselves, express their own creativity, voice their opinions in decision-making processes, try out new skills and roles, rise to challenges, and have fun in the process. For youth to fully participate and have ownership of the process, adults need to be able to ensure the necessary level of support, trust, and encourage a welcoming safe environment in which the youth have the opportunity to experience both success and failure (Messias, 2005).

Meaningful participation and engagement. According to Cavet and Sloper (2004), services, programmes and policies that have a direct impact on young people will be more efficient and effective if young people are involved in their planning, delivery and evaluation.

Participation in community affairs provides opportunities for youth to learn and practice important leadership and participatory skills (e.g., planning, organizing, oral and written communication) and try on different roles and responsibilities. These activities need to promote underlying competences and intrinsic motivations of youth so that they can test and master their own interests, develop skills, and gain confidence (Cargo, 2003)

Equitable power-sharing between youth and adults. Power-sharing is unique because it creates a direct interpersonal collaboration between youth and adults, focusing on the attribution of responsibilities and tasks. The interpersonal dimension is by definition bidirectional, since adults do not have unidirectional relationships with young people. Young people should positively 'adopt' their adult mentors, for instance, and should never be perceived as passive recipients of assistance who have nothing to offer themselves. For Jennings (2008), the adult must find a balance both as the dominant person in the relationship and when giving support. Where there is no 'capacity to influence structures, processes, values and practices', youth empowerment cannot be fully achieved. Youth-determined and youth-directed activities are essential for CYE, but these rarely occur without some level of adult support and guidance.

Engagement in critical reflection on interpersonal and sociopolitical processes. Youth programs tend to focus on activities, leaving little time or space for reflection. Although reflecting on a program's activities is important, the challenge is to provide youth opportunities to engage in an integrated participatory cycle of critical reflection and reflective actions with the goal of creating change in sociopolitical processes, structures, norms, and images. This type of critical reflection requires time, space, and commitment. It also requires adult leaders who are attuned to the sociopolitical realities of the topic at hand, and who have the skills and knowledge needed to guide youth in such critical examinations (Messias, Ibid). In addition to developing skills in facilitating critical reflection, adult leaders need to consider methods that appeal to young people. Photography, music, theater, and graphic arts can serve as triggers for reflection as well as the medium through which youth can express their views and messages regarding social issues (Messias, Ibid).

Participation in sociopolitical processes to affect change. Youth Empowerment involves youth gaining a critical understanding of the underlying processes and mastery through participation in transformative social action. An example would be the tackling of drug addiction through plays and skits by fellow youth. Use of peer counselors is another method than can effectively bring upon change.

Integrated individual- and community-level empowerment. Programs that empower youth need to provide opportunities for development at both individual and community levels. As noted by Zimmerman (2000), empowering processes at the community level include access to resources, tolerance for diversity, and open governance structures. Many youth empowerment programs offer civic service opportunities for youth that provide them with stronger ties to the community, a greater understanding of other people's needs, and a commitment to making that community a better place. Moreover, Zeldin (2003) found that youth engagement in community organizations produced "ripple effects" throughout the community. From the perspective of critical social theories, youth empowerment is not complete without critical reflection, reflective action, and social change at individual and collective levels. When these six dimensions are fully integrated within youth programs, there are numerous potential benefits to youth and communities. Individual-level developmental outcomes for youth include increased self-efficacy and self-awareness as well as positive identity development, positive social bonding, awareness of organizational operations and interpersonal relations, and a sense of purpose (Cargo, 2003).

The theory is applicable to the study as it shows how the youth can better their lives if certain conditions are made available to them by giving them access to youth-friendly services, developing positive relationships with them, acknowledging their roles, and offering them opportunities will lead to better livelihoods. The youth in this context cannot alleviate themselves from the challenges facing them but adults can engage them in meaningful projects that will contribute to a higher purpose and community well-being. A challenge that the theory faces is how effectively it can integrate individual, community and political empowerment among these disadvantaged young people. It is criticized on how it will achieve that inclusion to foster better living and development.

Empirical review

Benefits of Youth Empowerment Initiatives and Livelihoods Security

In a paper published by The UK department for education and skills (2013), youths given work opportunities and capital funding linked more than 560 young people to better opportunities. The grants which were funded by North Huyton neighborhoods showed tremendous benefits in the lives of the young people through workshops on life skills and social interaction of the young people in the community. Through participation by community members, the youth were empowered and this also led to proper partnerships in the neighborhoods. These benefits were similar to what the Critical Social Theory of Youth Empowerment which lays out that adults and youth should have reasonable power sharing between them and that the adults should help the youth gain opportunities that will better their lives (Hilfinger & Messias, 2008). Similar findings were found in a study by Shazhad (2017) to investigate the relationship between youth empowerment and sustainable development, a positive relationship was found between the two. With Pakistan being the sixth most populous country of the world and the youth population being around 55.7 million (31% off the population) as of 2013, the Prime minister's office recognized that these high numbers of youth populations can play an important role in social, economic and ideological developments of the country (Pakistan NHDR, 2015).

With the Commission of Pakistan Annual Plan, different schemes were undertaken to create increasing opportunities for them to develop their potentials, personalities, functional capabilities to enable them to sustain their livelihoods. The schemes included youth business loans, youth skills

development, provision of laptops, fee reimbursement for poor and underdeveloped areas and youth training/internship schemes. These and furthering of the youth development agenda were aimed at addressing the challenges that the youth face in the world today as well as enabling youth and poor segments of the population to get good opportunities of employment, financing, economic empowerment, acquiring skills needed for gainful employment, spreading use of computers and imparting on-the-job training for young graduates to improve the probability of getting productive jobs (Rehman, Khan & Gill, 2014).

Data collected from randomly selected respondents by Rehman (2014) showed that the respondents were satisfied with the program offerings and consider it a genuine effort towards youth empowerment for sustainable development. There were recorded incidences of an increase in University enrolment in one year thus improvement in education among the youth with emphasis on high enrolments from the administered tribal areas that were otherwise lagging behind in education with interns being placed in organizations in the public and private sector with monthly stipends. Through the Youth Skill Development Program, 75,000 youth had acquired training to enable them run businesses or get employment (Rehman, 2014; Shazhad, 2017).

The results in Waqa's (2016) study show the success rates of improving livelihoods that will in turn lead to sustainable development. An interesting fact to note is that not only direct beneficiaries but the potential-beneficiaries (in both urban and rural settings) are also on the same page regarding the program performance and its impressive role in preparing youth to shoulder future responsibilities with confidence. This study is relevant to this study as it shows the relationship between youth empowerment and livelihoods. It however falls short as it does not focus on individual livelihoods but the collective development that will be achieved. The respondents are also randomly selected as compared to this study which will purposively select respondents who are part of youth groups that have received a form of support to establish the benefits (Waqas, 2016). This was in support of UNFPA (2014) who found that the youth are the key to unlocking other potential areas of a society. Youth empowerment is viewed as the cornerstone of personal development and that of a society. As the cornerstone of nation's development, there is an established realization worldwide that the involvement of youth in development processes is essential to save the country from 'youth bulge' (African DPoA, 2011)

A study done by Plan international in Tunisia revealed that financial literacy training provided young people with the capability to finance their futures and be aware of the difference between needs and wants. The ultimate goal for empowering the youths on financial literacy was to disrupt the progression of economic poverty by empowering the youth with practical skills that can help them be self-reliant at the same time giving them a sense of hope and interest in participating in self-employment as effective career options (Plan International Report, 2012). The report revealed that groups which had adopted the financial literacy trainings involving monetary savings influenced the fight against youth unemployment, by supporting young people to participate more effectively in market opportunities and also through lessening these challenges to entrepreneurship. The Study concluded that Youth entrepreneurship and savings are approaches that share common methodologies and goals thus, incorporating financial education and activities help youth make good financial decisions (Plan International Report, 2012). The study will differ in that the study will be qualitative and will go further as to have focus group discussions with beneficiaries to address certain challenges.

There were similar positive findings in Uganda and Colombia through impact evaluations with young people engaging in entrepreneurship. This was brought about by encouraging young people to come up with a business plan and later they got entrepreneurship training on how to run businesses as well as funding. There was reported a 3%-point increase in the profitability of these businesses as compared to initial projections (Premand, 2012). UNICEF (2016) conducted a desk study and focus group discussions in Zambia to assess the benefit or effectiveness of programs aimed at youth empowerment in the country. The study was targeted at projects and programs aimed at uplifting the socio-economic lives of young people. Among these are; The National Youth Policy, The Citizens Economic Empowerment Fund (CEEF), The National Action Plan on Youth Empowerment and Employment Strategy and the Youth Development Fund (YDF).

The programs initiated aim is to promote active participation of youths in economic development by venturing into sustainable income generating activities and through sustainable youth employment opportunities. After acquiring business and entrepreneurship skills and being able to start and/or grow businesses, beneficiaries reported that they had seen remarkable improvements in their livelihoods. Almost all beneficiaries from the programs reported that they found the training helpful as it, among other things, motivated them in doing business, boosted their confidence, improved their customer care skills, instilled financial management skills, helped them separate business matters from personal / family issues and inculcated a culture of saving. Moreover, 74% of the respondents reported an improvement in access to food and clothing. This was attributed to having acquired knowledge on how to manage finances, keep track of profit and losses and distinguish family money from business money (UNESCO, 2016)

In a study by Nyale and Wanjira (2016) on youth empowerment activities on livelihoods, the findings portrayed a positive relationship between the activities aimed at improving livelihoods and the results on the ground. From the findings, the research concludes that the youth empowerment positively influenced the rural youth's livelihoods. The beneficiaries of the project, who were rural youth farmers had engaged in horticultural production lined to specific market outlets under the Farm Africa's youth empowerment in sustainable Agriculture (YESA) project. Activities such as financial literacy training had been undertaken and the study concludes that financial literacy training programs for the youths contributed heavily to the establishment of sustainable horticultural production enterprises in Trans Nzoia County. Majority of the respondents felt that the financial training and startup capital had improved their lives. This is also in line with a report by Plan International which revealed that groups equipped with financial trainings involving monetary savings will influence the fight against unemployment. The study revealed that the majority of the respondents had improved standard of living as represented by 55% of the respondents. Equally, 32.7% of the respondents indicated moderate improvement in their standard of living resulting from youth empowerment training programs. The study concluded that offering trainings that incorporate financial education will lead to better financial decisions that will help to take advantage of market demands and an enterprising culture (Plan International, 2012). The study in Trans-Zoia County is different in that it was set in a rural setting where the challenges or needs of the youth vary from that of Kayole Wards which is an urban informal setting. The indicators for better livelihoods may also vary.

1.8 Methodology

A case study design was used for in this research. Case study according to Heale(2018) can be defined as an intensive study about a person, a group of people or a unit, which is aimed to generalize over several units. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), a case study design as one that seeks to describe a unit in detail by looking at the object to be studied in detail. The reason for choosing a case study design for this study is that it was useful in this study as it gave an in-depth investigation of youth empowerment initiatives and their impact on livelihood security in Embakasi Central Sub-County. It will also help to conduct the research vigorously and give a better understanding of the problem.

Sampling

Embakasi Central Constituency is an electoral constituency in Kenya. It borders Mathare to the west and Embakasi North to the south. It is one of the constituencies in Nairobi County. It has 5 electoral wards in the constituency including Kayole North, Kayole Central and Kayole South wards. The three Kayole wards have a population of 112,740 people. This is where the sample was drawn from. Since the total population of the three Wards was 112,740 people, the youth according to KNBS (2019) comprised of approximately 20% of the total population in Kenya. Application of the same criteria came up with an approximate population of the youth of 22,548. This was the target population of the study. Since the target population of the study is comprised of 22,548 from Embakasi central, the sample size shall be computed using Slovin's sampling formula $\{n = N \div (1 + Ne^2)\}$ whereby, n = sample size, N = target population and e = the margin of error. A confidence level of 95 percent (giving a margin error of 0.05) may be accurate enough, therefore shall be employed in the study (Stephanie, 2019). The sample size shall therefore be computed as follows;

$$n = N \div (1 + Ne^2)$$

$$n = 22,548 \div (1 + 22,548 \times 0.05^2)$$

$$n = 22,548 \div (1 + 22,548 \times 0.05^2)$$

$$n = 22,548 \div 57.37$$

$$n = 393$$

The youth were sampled using systematic random sampling technique while the key informants were purposively selected.

Methods and Instruments of Data Collection

In this study, the researcher employed the use of face-to-face administration of interviews with key informants. The key informants in the study included the ward administrators, area chiefs and sub county administrators from Embakasi Central Sub-County. The study also used questionnaires to collect information from the youth. Both quantitative and qualitative data was collected. Quantitative data was cleaned and keyed in SPSS system for analysis. Analyzed data was presented in different formats for interpretation and dissemination. Qualitative data was recorded and summarized in to themes for presentation narratively.

1.9 Findings

Response Rate

The study used a sample size of 393 youth from Kayole North, Kayole Central and Kayole South Wards of Embakasi Central Constituency. The study further recruited a total of 9 key informants

comprised of a Ward administrator from each of the three Wards, a Sub County representative of the youth from each of the Wards and an area chief from each of the Wards. The study hence recruited a total of 402 respondents. They all furnished the study with essential information regarding the significance of livelihoods security empowerment initiatives among the Youth.. Data collection was however carried out at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic that made it difficult to find the youth empowerment offices open as most work had become remote and most youth groups could not congregate. The study therefore collected data from a total of 250 youth and 7 key informants. This gave a response rate of 63.9% of the total 402 respondents. Informed by Kombo & Tromp (2006) who posits that in a descriptive study, a response rate of 50% is adequate for data analysis while 70% and above is excellent, the researcher found 63% response rate to be adequate for the data analysis process.

Employment status of the respondents

Table 1: Employment status of the respondents

Employment status	Frequency	Percent
Self employed	63	25.2
Formally employed	39	15.6
Unemployed	122	48.8
Other	26	10.4
Total	250	100.0

Source: Field Data (2020)

Unemployment emerged to be very prevalent among the youth in the Embakasi Central Sub-County. This was evident from the study as 48.8% (122) of the respondents involved in the study were unemployed. Some of the respondents admitted having lost their employment opportunities as a result of COVID-19, and had no hopes of returning to work. This therefore made it difficult for the youth to survive, and hence some ventured into criminality to make up for their joblessness. Most of the respondents were therefore reliant on casual jobs, which were poorly paying. However, the youth empowerment initiatives emerged to have played a significant role in improving the access to income among the youth of Embakasi Central Sub-County. This was through skill development and capacity building, which created the ability for the youth to be self-employed. This was indicated by 25.2% (63) of the respondents involved in the study, who indicated to be self-employed. The later engaged in carpentry, masonry, electric installation, business, plumbing, tailoring and other SMEs, which earned them some income. Very few of the youth were employed in the formal sector. This was as presented in table 1 above.

Average monthly income of the respondents

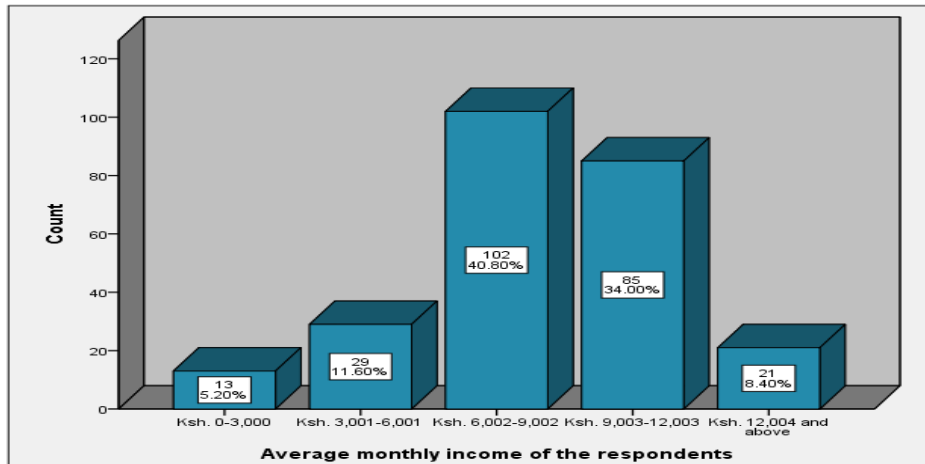


Figure 2 Average monthly income of the respondents
 Source: Field Data (2020)

Despite the massive unemployment in Embakasi Central Sub-County, most of the respondents went out of their ways to make ends meet. This was through involvement in casual labor, SMEs and other informal ventures. Therefore, when asked to indicate their average monthly income, 40.8% (102) of the respondents indicated to be earning an average of Ksh.6,002 to Ksh.9,002. Considering the numerous needs in the city, for instance paying house rent, buying food, electricity, water and supporting their households both living with them and at their rural homes; most of the respondents admitted that the income was insufficient. They ended up saving very little or even nothing by the time they were paid, and would starve before they received their next pay. This was as presented in figure 2 above.

Duration of service of the key informants

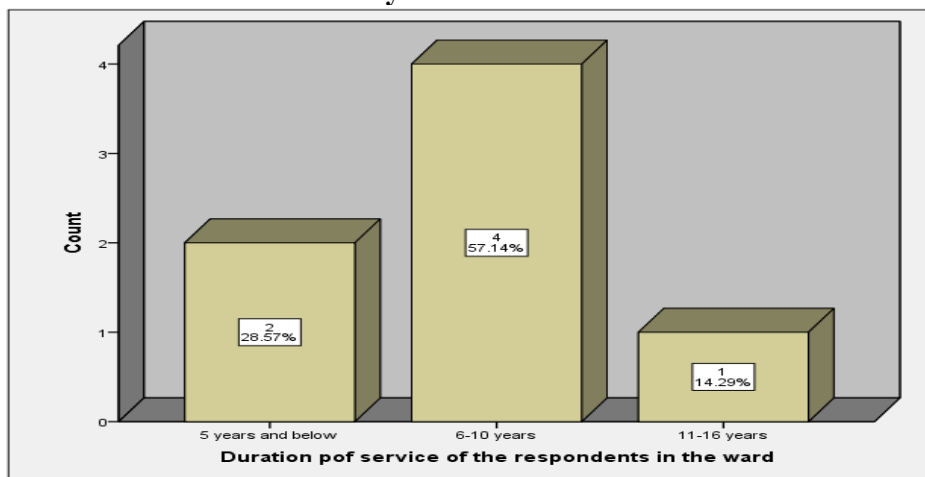


Figure 3: Duration of service of the key informants in their respective Wards
 Source: Field Data (2020)

The study investigated how long the key informants had served the various Wards of Embakasi

Central Constituency that were involved in the study. This was aimed at ascertaining the level of understanding of the youth empowerment initiatives and the improvement it had brought to the youth of the area. The findings were as presented in figure 3 above. From the findings, it was evident that slightly above average (57.14% (4) of the respondents involved in the study had served Embakasi Central Sub-County for between 6 years and 10 years, with a further 14.29% (1) having served the Constituency for a period of between 11 and 16 years. This therefore showed that the key informants had served Embakasi Central Sub-County long enough, that they were deemed conversant with youth livelihoods security empowerment initiatives. They hence were found to be viable responding in the study.

Prevalence of youth empowerment initiatives and livelihood security

The variable 'prevalence of youth empowerment initiatives' was measured using various indicators. These included the awareness of the key informants on youth empowerment initiatives, whether or not the youth were actively involved in them, whether or not the respondents had applied for government funds, the empowerment programs offered and their benefits to the youth.

From the study findings, it was evident that most of the respondents were aware of the existence of youth empowerment initiatives. This was indicated by 85.7% (6) of the key informants, who affirmed to be aware of youth empowerment initiatives. Furthermore, most of the youth involved in the study indicated that there were numerous youth groups and empowerment programs which were educational, business oriented, service oriented and community cleanup among others; and were generally geared towards increasing access to income by the youth. From the activities present in the area, the respondents expressed that they had been impacted by essential skills that had been made possible by these empowerment initiatives. This was evidenced by the following responses:

"I may not be able to identify the specific youth groups, because they are numerous, what I know so far, these groups provide education to the youth, Impact skills in them hence creating autonomy.....There are quite a number of them, some involved in financial empowerment of the youth while some focus on skill development... ..self-employment in the SMEs including shoe shining, car wash, hawking, selling mitumba among others.....some youth have come together with visions of improving each other's socioeconomic conditions, with the help of the local governance.... ..In my area, I see increased employability, youth have employed themselves instead of relying on government jobs that aren't available to them"

Respondent KI01

Source: Field Data (2020)

The presence of these empowerment initiatives did not necessarily translate to the youth being actively involved hence the study sought to investigate from the key informants on the prevalence of involvement by the youth of Embakasi Central Sub-County in the initiatives that were present. The study findings indicated that youth were reluctant to participate in such initiatives, despite the benefits they possessed. This was evident from the study as 71.4% (5) of the respondents indicated that the youth were not actively involved in those youth empowerment initiatives. Further to this, the key respondents gave various reasons as to why the level of involvement was seemingly low with indications that the youth were required to join groups in order to be registered and this ended up leaving out most of them. Ignorance by the respondents was also pointed out while a few said the level of youth involvement was satisfactory. This was based on the following verbatim:

“Quite a number of youth have been left out for not being in groups..... Some youth are just ignorant of the existence of such empowerment initiatives. However, so far so good, the involvement is not bad. We have quite a number of youth benefitting from the empowerment initiatives.....The level of involvement is satisfactory.”

Respondent KI07
Source: Field Data (2020)

From the study, the significance of the youth empowerment initiatives was evident and this was based on the findings that showed majority of respondents to be involved in youth groups that were recipients of youth empowerment initiatives. The rate was 81.2% (203) of the respondents involved in the study. This was also evidenced by the fact that despite lack of funding by external agencies, some youths had formed self-help groups that engaged in joint businesses, trainings and peer mentorship that aided in their empowerment. The respondents identified various activities that their groups were engaged in which involved joint tailoring, entrepreneurship, car washes and community cleanups. Others were engaged in brick making, making of face masks for distribution during the COVID-19 pandemic, selling second hand clothing and cake making. This was as presented in the verbatim below:

“We do tailoring.....We engage in entrepreneurship.....Car wash.....Our group takes part in community cleaning....Brick making....We make face masks....We have not yet started activities....We sell second hand clothes (Mitumba) in different locations within Kayole and even in town.....We have started an initiative of cake making”

Respondent YT200
Source: Field Data (2020)

Application of funds as well did not translate to receiving the funding. The study therefore investigated from the respondents on whether or not they had received the funds they applied for. From the study findings, it was evident that majority were not granted. This was indicated by 60% (150) of the respondents involved in the study. The respondents indicated that they had been disqualified for various reasons including not meeting the requirements. Some of the basic requirements for the funding was a requirement to be in a group, activity in the group and previous credit history of the groups, since some of the funds were to be repaid. The respondents hence found these conditions among others, not to favour most of the youth and youth groups. Some however had received the funding, and indicated to have been financially empowered.

Table 2: Nature of Youth Empowerment Initiatives

Programs	Frequency	Percent
Entrepreneurship training	29	11.6
Business financing	42	16.8
Skill development	99	39.6
Creation of employment opportunities	54	21.6
Psychosocial support	13	5.2
Others	13	5.2
Total	250	100.0

Source: Field Data (2020)

The respondents identified various empowerment initiatives that were present in Embakasi Central Constituency. Among them, was skill development, as indicated by 39% (99) of the respondents

involved in the study. The respondents indicated to have acquired skills in carpentry, tailoring, electric installation, plumbing, mechanics, masonry and making of construction materials including culverts, building blocks, *mazeras* and bricks among others. By so doing, 21.6% (54) of the respondents indicated that the youth empowerment initiatives created employment opportunities for them. Other initiatives offered included business financing, entrepreneurship training and psychosocial support among others. This was as presented in table 2 above.

When asked to suggest ways of increasing the effectiveness of the youth empowerment initiatives, the respondents suggested increased funding, easing the process of applying for funds, training of youth on entrepreneurship ventures, resource mobilization, creation of employment opportunities, investment in youth enlightenment on the existence of empowerment initiatives and lenience with the conditions. This was based on the following respondents:

“Increased funding...Ease the process of applying for funds....Training of youth on entrepreneurship ventures....Resource mobilization.....The government should create employment opportunities for us.....investment in youth enlightenment on the existence of empowerment initiatives.....Lenience with the conditions”

Respondent YT223

Source: Field Data (2020)

From the findings presented above, it could be deduced that youth empowerment initiatives were prevalent in Embakasi Central Constituency. This was evidenced by most of the respondents who were aware of existing youth empowerment initiatives where most were registered in youth groups that helped them secure funding including access to finances that promoted their self-sustainability. It further emerged that the utilization of these initiatives by the youth not as it ought to be brought forth by challenges in accessing these initiatives. Some initiatives for instance the ones that funded youth projects, would give credit to youth groups that engaged in income generating activities and with an outstanding credit score. Sometimes these conditions were not easy to meet, given the tough socioeconomic conditions of Embakasi Central, which pushed some youth into using such funds to buy food for their households instead of setting up an investment project. Repayment was a problem since such youth had no sustainable sources of income. The findings concur with the reviewed literature according to Akintayo and Adiat (2013), if developing countries like Nigeria that yearn for development and prosperity, then they need to invest in their youth. Non-formal education, vocational training, on-the-job training and other educational guidance of its kind should be advanced as an essential instrument of empowerment. In their mixed method approach in Rivers State, they concluded that most of the nation's problems could be solved by uplifting the young people to be self-sufficient and they could in turn also spur economic growth of the country. Only by addressing the needs of the young could future prosperity be achieved. Similar findings were concluded by Kolade (2014) who studied the relevance of entrepreneurship education and found that nations can gain competitive advantage due to human resource endowment thriving on quality manpower that can efficiently expedite economic growth. Furthermore, Malyadi and Sunama (2012) argued that the realization of youth problems by the state and action taking towards them could serve as an instrument for prosperity for all.

Based on the findings of the current study and Kenya being one of the developing countries, the emphasis would be on youth empowerment initiatives. Despite the inception of plenty of youth empowerment initiatives, some youth remain to be left out in accessing the initiatives; just as was

the case in studies by Akintayo & Adiat (2013), Kolade (2014) and Malyadi & Sunama (2012). Therefore, despite the high prevalence of the youth empowerment initiatives, gaps still exist in the implementation of these initiatives to the target group. This helps identify the gaps that exist and how they can be filled to achieve the intended results.

Benefits of youth empowerment initiatives and livelihood security

In the analysis of the benefits of youth empowerment initiatives and livelihood security in Embakasi Central Sub-County, the study assessed various indicators. These included the impact of youth empowerment initiatives to respondents' lives, the socioeconomic condition of the respondents, and the benefits of youth empowerment initiatives. The findings were as discussed. The findings revealed that the impact was felt by majority of the respondents who expressed the importance of the youth initiatives present that had helped improve their lives with a response rate of 84.2% (211). The respondents stated that the benefits were evident either directly or indirectly through seeing other people's lives being transformed. Some of the benefits reported were transformation of their livelihoods with some who had been engaged in crime establishing small businesses that became their sources of income. Self-employment had also increased in the area as a result of these groups leading to better livelihoods.

The benefits were rampant with a majority 81.2% (203) of the respondents involved in the study affirming that their socioeconomic condition was better after the youth empowerment initiatives. This was measured from the respondents by their level of income, ability to meet their basic necessities and the level of social interactions; measured through group membership. The study found out that the levels of income had increased, the respondents were able to meet basic needs to a certain level than before and that the respondents had joined groups, which acted as checks and balances in their economic activities. The contribution of the youth empowerment initiatives was evident in the lives of most of the respondents, who had benefited from the programmes.

Table 3: Likert scores of the benefits of youth improvement programmes

Benefit	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	S.D
Better income levels	250	1	5	2.00	1.022
Improved savings	250	1	5	2.09	.781
Creation of employment Opportunities	250	1	5	2.34	1.277
Improved standards of living	250	1	5	2.21	.947

Source: Field Data (2020)

The study sought to understand the benefits of youth empowerment initiatives to the respondents. This was done through a 5 point Likert analysis of the various benefits presented to each of the respondents. In this, 1 represented strongly agree, 2-Agree, 3-Neutral, 4-Disagree and 5-Strongly agree. Therefore, a rating of 1 meant the respondents had strongly agreed with the specific benefit while a rating of 5 meant a strong disagreement with the challenge. The study findings were as presented in table 3 above.

From the findings, the mean score for better income levels was 2 (SD=1.022). This implied that

majority of the respondents agreed that the empowerment initiatives resulted to better income levels among the youth. The mean score for improved savings was 2.09 (SD=0.781), implying that majority agreed that youth empowerment initiatives improved the savings among the youth. The mean score for the creation of employment opportunities was 2.34 (SD=1.277) and that of improved standards of living was 2.21 (SD= 0.947). This implied that most of the respondents agreed that youth empowerment initiatives created employment opportunities, thereby improving the standards of living of the youth. By implication therefore, the benefits of youth empowerment initiatives evident in the study included better income levels, improved savings, creation of employment opportunities and improved standards of living.

Key informants revealed similar findings with the respondents indicating that youth empowerment initiatives had increased access to income by the youth, autonomy access to credit facilities, better skills and knowledge base in the area, ease on the quest for employment opportunities by creating self-employment, ability to sustain households and further education and generally, better quality of lives among the youth. This was based on the following verbatim:

“Access to income.....Increased autonomy, access to income and credit facilities.....Better skills and knowledge base in the area.....It eases on the quest for employment opportunities by creating self-employment.....The youth are able to sustain their households and even further their education.....Better Quality of lives among the youth”

Respondent KI05

Source: Field Data (2020)

From the above analysis, youth empowerment initiatives had proven to be beneficial to the respondents with lives of the youth having been transformed. They partly attributed the improvement to youth empowerment initiatives. Therefore, it could be concluded that the benefits of youth empowerment initiatives evident from the study include among others: better income levels, improved savings, creation of employment opportunities and improved standards of living. From the reviewed literature, Nyale and Wanjira's (2016) study findings portrayed a positive relationship between the activities aimed at improving livelihoods and the results on the ground. From the findings, the research concludes that the youth empowerment positively influenced the rural youth's livelihoods. The beneficiaries of the project, who were rural youth farmers had engaged in horticultural production lined to specific market outlets under the Farm Africa's youth empowerment in sustainable Agriculture (YESA) project. Activities such as financial literacy training had been undertaken and the study concludes that financial literacy training programs for the youths contributed heavily to the establishment of sustainable horticultural production enterprises in Trans Nzoia County. Majority of the respondents felt that the financial training and startup capital had improved their lives. This is also in line with a report by Plan International which revealed that groups equipped with financial trainings involving monetary savings will influence the fight against unemployment. The study revealed that the majority of the respondents had improved standard of living as represented by 55% of the respondents. Equally, 32.7% of the respondents indicated moderate improvement in their standard of living resulting from youth empowerment training programs. The study concluded that offering trainings that incorporate financial education will lead to better financial decisions that will help to take advantage of market demands and an enterprising culture (Plan International, 2012).

The current study findings, just like Nyale and Wanjira's (2016), emphasize on the essence of

youth empowerment initiatives. Despite the fact that the settings differ in terms of geography and locality in that Nyale & Wanjira's (2016) study investigates in Trans Nzoia County and in the rural settings; the current study investigates the situation in the urban setting. The study therefore emphasizes that youth empowerment initiatives have a positive relationship with the livelihoods of the youth. Similar sentiments are shared in Plan International's (2012) report, which further justifies the essence of youth empowerment initiatives. The study therefore helps address the issues that the youth face and the importance of these initiatives as it is evident that they pose a significant improvement in the livelihoods of those targeted by them especially the young people. The benefits had been felt by majority of the respondents either directly or indirectly and this shows the potential of solving many problems faced by young people. This gives ideas to future initiatives and research to show what is needed by young people.

1.10 Conclusions of the Study

Based on the summary of the findings, the following conclusions can be made:

The study findings lead to the conclusion that the youth in Embakasi Central Sub-County have benefited from the initiatives in the area, however most feel that more can be done to benefit them especially by the government.

1.11 Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings and the conclusions, the study therefore recommended that:

- (a) The national government in collaboration with the local government should set aside funds for every Youth Groups and this may be through different wards that will help the youth in developmental projects, this is from the study that shows that most of the youth in the area do not have access to these funds and NGOs seem to be contributing more towards developmental and empowerment projects.
- (b) Youth groups should set out to mobilize more members of the community through community awareness forums, by demonstrating the benefits that the groups will bring about as most of them may lack awareness on the purpose of the groups.
- (c) The youth should be involved in the designing and implementation of the youth empowerment initiatives to express their interests as to the areas they would wish addressed through their leaders and representatives and areas of concern. This will also ensure interventions are adopted on funding developmental projects.

References

- Cargo, M. (2003), Empowerment as fostering positive youth development and citizenship. Culture, and Mental Health Research Unit, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
- Cavet, J. & Sloper, P. (2004) Participation of disabled children in individual decisions about their lives and in public decisions about service development. *Children and Society*.
- Commonwealth Secretariat (2015). The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment Commonwealth Secretariat. (2015), The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment 2007-2015
- Gilmore, D. (2009). Expanding Opportunities for Low-Income Youth: Making Space for Youth Entrepreneurship Legal Services. *Journal of Affordable Housing & Community Development Law*, 18(3), 321-334. Retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/25782849
- Godfrey. (2003), Youth employment policy in developing and transition countries - prevention as well as cure. Insights from the ECA and LAC regions
- Gok,(2003) Economic Recovery strategy for wealth and employment creation. Nairobi:

- Government Printer.
- Gok,(2006) Kenya National youth policy. Nairobi: Government printer.
- Gok, (2007) "Kenya VISION 2030. Nairobi: Government Printer
- GoK, 2007. Kenya integrated household budget survey-2005/2006.
- GoK (Government of Kenya) (2012) National Youth Enterprise Development Authority Bill, Nairobi: Government of the Republic of Kenya
- GoK (Government of Kenya) (2011) Youth Enterprise Development Fund: Fund Status Report, Nairobi: Government of the Republic of Kenya
<http://www.youthpolicy.org/mappings/regionalyouthfunding/asia-pacific/regional>
- ILO. (2017), Global Employment Trends for Youth 2017. Paths to a better working future
- Jennings, L. B. PhD. Parra-Medina D. M. MPH, PhD. Messias, H. D. K. PhD. (2006). Toward a critical Social Theory of youth empowerment
- John, C (2001). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches, 3rd Edition. Sage Publications, USA
- KNYP (2006). Factors influencing repayment of youth's enterprise development Fund. University of Nairobi Kenya.
- Kombo, K. D. and Tromp, L. A. D. (2006). Proposal and thesis writing: an introduction. Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa.
- Kothari, C. (2004). Research Methodology: Methods & Techniques, 2nd Edition. New Age International Publishers, New Delhi, India
- Makanga, P. (2014). Influence of Kenya Youth Empowerment Project on graduates' perceived employability: a case of Kisumu Center, Kenya
- Messias, D. K. H. (2005). Adults' roles in community-based youth empowerment programs: Implications for best practices. Family & Community Health.
- Ministry of Youth Affairs (2010). Annual report on youth enterprise development fund
- Ministry of Youth AFFAIRS (2006), Child and youth general policies, laws, strategies & plans, service standards. WHO MiNDbank.
- Mugenda A (2008), Social science research. Theory and principles, Nairobi Applied Research & Training Service.
- Mutuku (2017). The implication of the shortage of health workforce specialist on universal health coverage in Kenya. MOH, Afya house Kenya.
- Nyale, M., Nyawira, J. (2016) Youth Empowerment and Livelihoods: A case of rural youth registered in groups involved in horticulture production in Trans-Nzoia county, Kenya
- Olive, Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003 Research Methods: Quantitative & Qualitative approaches
- Pakistan, (2015) National Human Development Report.
- Plan International, (2012), Annual Review 2012 Retrieved from <https://plan-international.org/publications/annual-review-2012>
- Premand, P. (2012) Entrepreneurship Training and Self-Employment among University Graduates: Evidence from a Randomized Trial in Tunisia.
- Rappaport, J. (1984). Studies in empowerment: Introduction to the issue. Prevention in Human Services.
- Rappaport, J. (1987). Terms of empowerment/exemplars of prevention: Toward a theory for community psychology. American Journal of Community Psychology.
- Republic of Kenya (2009). Youth Enterprise Development Fund. Fund status Report as of 7th June 2019

- Republic of Kenya (2010) Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS). Government printer, Nairobi
- Shahzad Ali Gill, Dr. Rashid Aftab (2012) Youth Empowerment and Sustainable Development: An Evidence from Pakistan's Prime Minister Youth Program
- Sikenyi, M. (2017). Africa's Youth Employment Challenge: New Perspectives. *Ids Bulletin UK*.
- Sikenyi (2017), Strengthening Kenya's youth enterprise development fund to serve young people. MasterCard foundation
- Stephanie, E. (2019), Slovin's Formula Sampling Techniques retrieved from <https://sciencing.com/how-6188297-do-determine-audit-sample-size-.html>
- United Nations (2012) Regional Overview: Youth in Africa, New York NY: United Nations Bureau for Development Policy
- UN, (2017), World Population Prospects Report
- U. N. (2018), Youth and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development: Advancing Youth Development
- UN (2006), Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.
- United Nations Development Programme (2010) Kenya National Development Report (KNHDR) 2009: Youth and human development: Tapping the untapped resource, Nairobi: UNDP Kenya.
- UNESCO (2012 CHANGE-MAKERS for Peace and Sustainable Development Youth as Beneficiaries Youth as Actors Youth as Partners
- UNESCO. Consultations of the Director-General with Member States Youth as CHANGE-MAKERS for Peace and Sustainable Development Youth as Beneficiaries Youth as Actors Youth as Partners 21 November 2012
- UNICEF Zambia (2018) An Independent Assessment Of Building Young Futures (Byf) And Wheels For Change (WfC) Projects In Zambia Final Report
- UNDP (2016) Human Development for Everyone. Human Development Report
- UNDP. (2016), The Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace
- UNFPA. (2015), Youth empowerment, education, employment key to future development
- Youth Participation in Development Summary Guidelines for Development Partners. 2010 publication 'Youth Participation in Development – A Guide for Development Agencies and Policy Makers.'
- Zeldin, S. (2003), Toward an Understanding of Youth in Community Governance: Policy Priorities and Research Directions Social policy report / Society for Research in Child Development
- Zimmerman, M. A. (2000). Empowerment theory: Psychological, organizational and community levels of analysis.