

**THE IMPACT OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF YOUTH POLYTECHNICS IN NYAMBENE DISTRICT, KENYA****Ibuathu Charles Njati**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study was built on three objectives. It sought the youth polytechnic (YP) responsiveness towards meeting the aspirations and needs of the trainees. It determined how graduates of YPs fared in the world of work and evaluated extent to which the community was involved by YPs in facing rural development challenges. The study was carried out in the four YPs of Nyambene District by use of questionnaires, interview schedules and check lists as study instruments. The study adopted a case study design involving 144 respondents. The study targeted YP managers, instructors, parents/ Board of Governors, second year trainees and the adult YP leavers serving within the host community. The main study findings included inadequate: training tools, equipment and infrastructures, number of instructors, finances, utilization of information communication technology; community poor attitude towards YP vocational training, unutilized physical resources, poor income generating projects, and low enrollment. Practically, the study enlightened the need for YP programme designers on redesigning the existing curriculum to suit the dynamic work of today's technology so as to address present and future challenges of vocational training. The parent ministry in charge of YPs would find the study useful in the formulation of future plans aimed at strengthening YP training in imparting relevant skills to trainees in readiness for self-employment in rural areas. The study is important theoretically in that it contributes to the advancement of knowledge about vocational programme development in YPs in Nyambene District in particular and in Kenya at large. The findings are key factors influencing trainees vocational training in various courses at youth polytechnics aimed at developing the local community economically. Finally, the study forms a basis on which other scholars could develop their studies in future in pursuant of unresolved issues in vocational training.

**Key Words:** *Training, Development, Needs*

## Introduction

Formal education in Kenya started with the arrival of the missionaries in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to the building of churches, they built schools, some of which were used to train children in teaching, evangelism, agriculture, vocational and technical skills to meet the social needs of the community. With time, the educational emphasis was shifted to producing manpower for clerical jobs to serve the colonial administration's personnel requirements (Mureithi, 2008).

Thus, grammar type secondary education was given prominence at the expense of technical and vocational education during the colonial era. By this prioritization, the best performers in pre-secondary institutions were attracted into the grammar-type secondary schools. Owigar, (2003) observes that Students who were found to be academically weak were directed to enter vocational and technical institutions or trade centres. This was the type of educational system Kenya, like many other countries which emerged from colonization, inherited on the attainment of independence.

After gaining independence in 1963, Kenya embarked on planning and expanding her education in order to make it more relevant to the needs and aspirations of the Kenyan youth. The belief behind this planned expansion is that education leads to national development (The Presidential Working Party on the Establishment of the Second University in Kenya, 1981). In this regard the International Labour Organization (ILO Report, 1972) noted that only 15% of primary school leavers in Kenya managed to continue with their formal education leaving 85% of young people to find their own way towards developing skills and knowledge. 15 years later the same agency (ILO 1987) reported that the number of Kenyan primary school leavers who did not obtain further education or training ranged from 50% to 75%. Hence primary school leaver problem was enormous and aggravated the countries already serious unemployment especially in rural areas. This has worsened in the light of ever growing population and diminishing opportunities for employment.

Moreover, the process of planning and expanding education has encountered various problems in many developing countries. For an example, although the Kenyan government spends over 40% of its total budget on education (Development plan 1993–1997, 1998-2002 and 2003-2007: Kenya Government), the economic worth of education has not been realized to a big extent. The above illustrates national preference for academic education as opposed to Technical and Vocational Education as was explained by the Philips Foster Vocational Education Fallacy findings on vocational education training in Ghana and Nigeria which contend that sampled respondents “viewed academic education as the gateway for their children to gain access to prestigious professions” (Foster, 1965 and 1979).

Technology has revolutionalized the world in many ways such as communication, education, health and many others; hence no society can afford to ignore the dynamic impact of change (Shantayanan, D. 2002:39). The changes so far made demand a corresponding advancement in the area of Technical, Industrial, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TIVET); if

technological advancement can be highly sustained for economic development presently and in future.

Chi-Yuen Wu (2005:57) observes that Chinese government believes that modernization of education by applying information technology referred to as '*informationization*' is essential in order to transform the heavy population burden into valuable human resource. This echoes the fact that education is the key driver of economic growth, competitiveness and human welfare. Poor education, "raw", reduces the value of human capital by impeding growth. This in turn slows down the adoption of new technologies. Most importantly, the accumulated technical organizational innovations of human kind can through training in principle enable poor countries catch up fairly fast with economic giants of the world.

Latin-American countries face serious difficulties in maintaining their adolescents from disadvantaged background in secondary schools and training institutions. Many strategies are being employed to retain them in regular schools and also to create alternative avenues that would give them vocational training which would improve their employment opportunities. Mostly these initiatives are linked with vocational training and social programs to facilitate and improve the transition of trainees to the world of work. A comparative review of programs that give youngsters an opportunity to reintegrate to secondary education in more flexible alternatives involving public and private partnerships, often linked with vocational training programmes and other strategies to facilitate the transition to work has been enforced in many Latin American countries such as Brazil, Argentina and Peru (Jacinto, 2002a).

In third world countries, 1980s saw structural adjustment and cost-sharing measures deeply affecting public provision of education and training. While rate-of-return studies appeared to weaken the case for external support for post-primary countries which vocationalised their formal education systems in the mid-1980s they had to go it alone, without donor aid. Nonetheless, while agency policy became critical of vocationalised education from the mid 1980s, it remained popular for many national governments. In other words, shifts in donor policy had a much greater effect on sub-Saharan Africa, with its relative dependence on external financing, than any other regions (King and Palmer, 2006). Furthermore, technical and vocational skills development (TVSD) has remained politically attractive in many developing and developed countries on account of its assumed close link with the world of employment and work.

However, the utilization and allocation of skills in a dynamic, expanding economy are fundamentally different from macroeconomic situations in which there is no growth, and poor governance. For instance, In South Korea and China, there has been employment for TVSD graduates of almost all institutions; while in a stagnant economy like Sri Lanka, there may only be jobs for some of the very best students (Adams, 2006). King and Palmer, (2006) contend that one-sided prioritization of education in Africa remained unchanged even long after independence although manpower requirements have drastically changed over the years. This inadvertently led to admission culture which gave prominence to students who offered the so-called 'academic

programmes and underrated applicants who offered technical, vocational and agricultural subjects at the secondary school level and who aspired to enter the university to pursue these courses at the degree level.

This trend was borne out of the persistent traditional belief that vocational and technical courses were for the academically less endowed students and their place was in technical education like Youth Polytechnics. No doubt there is a school of thought that believes that the YPs of today have generally been too theoretical in the approach to their courses and have virtually ignored to give any training to their students in innovation and entrepreneurship to the extent that students who graduates from YPs are not in any way equipped for self-employment, but rather “employment”. However, this study endeavoured to determine how vocational training in YPs has impacted on Socio-economic development of rural areas of Nyambene region.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the rationale for the introduction of vocational education in YPs and other technical training institutes, many primary school leavers have not appreciated the role played by vocational training in economic development. Vocational training is considered a significant input towards social-economic development in any country. From different research authors and newspapers, it is evident that lack of vocational technical know-how is a major problem and hindrance to alleviating poverty by way of creating opportunities for employment especially in rural areas. In this light King and Palmer, (2006) contend that one-sided prioritization of education in Africa remained unchanged even long after independence; although manpower requirements have drastically changed over the years rather than developing education in the light of local circumstances and on the basis of multi-level decision making. Additionally wide participation of communities in educational management and financing is of great value in pulling together ideas and resources to create practical training experiences. Therefore the problem that was being investigated by this study was the impact of vocational training for rural development over the period of years 2006 to 2009 within the rural areas of Nyambene region.

### **Research Objectives**

This study was guided by three objectives. First the present study sought to explore views of the youth polytechnic community about responsibility of youth polytechnics in meeting training needs and aspirations of the trainees. Secondly, it aimed at determining how the YPs graduates fair in the world of work. Finally, the current study sought problems, if any, that hinders YP leavers from initiating and running businesses related to vocational skills acquired at YP.

### **Research Questions**

The present study was guided by the following research questions.

- 1 What are the views of the youth polytechnic community about responsibility of youth polytechnics in meeting training needs and aspirations of the trainees?

- 2 What occupational activities are the youth polytechnic leavers doing in the world of work?
- 3 What are the problems which hinder youth polytechnic leavers from initiating businesses related to vocational skills they acquired at YPs?

## Review of Related Literature

### Relevant Vocational Job Skills

From the international perspective, the skills to prepare students for the 21st Century have been classified into four components as outlined by Swarts (2009):

- a) Digital-Age Literacy: these include basic scientific, economic and technological literacy; visual and information literacy and multicultural literacy and global awareness.
- b) Effective Communication. These are personal, social and civic responsibility; training, collaboration and interpersonal skills; and interactive communication.
- c) Inventive Thinking. These include risk taking, high order thinking and sound reasoning; self-direction, curiosity and creativity and adaptability, managing and complexity.
- d) High Productivity. These are: prioritizing, planning and managing for results, effective use of real-world tools, and ability to produce relevant and high quality products.

In this respect, studies by various scholars suggest that appropriate national human capital specificity does not come by chance but through rigorous research and documentation of labour market information, (Marger and Beach (1967)) and Maxim and Robinson, (2008)). These studies continue to claim that in some countries particularly in the US, critical workforce skills that are required for moving the economy forward have been identified and documented in the 'Dictionary Of Occupational Titles' (DOT). The DOT serves as a mirror for educational institutions in developing curricula to ensure that graduates from the education system meet the demands of the jobs they were likely to engage in.

In curriculum development, information from the DOT was used as a frame and community labour market information was sought to update information from the DOT in making training programs meet current job market expectations, (William 1982). It was necessary to find out the preparations made by YPs in Nyambene region in terms of identifying critical jobs and skills for the development of the region.

### Vocational Skills Training Curriculum

According to Loubser , (1983: 61), the YP training program are to be determined on the basis of a survey of which skills are locally needed and should be kept flexible to respond to changing community needs as times and technology change. Thus, trainees would acquire a range of elementary skills that would enable one to be versatile in the services they offer. Ogula (2003:35) observes that: 'Without a training needs assessment, it is not possible to design courses that are relevant to the needs and concerns of children. These studies point out that

education and training has strong bearing on the nature of economic activities that exist in a country, particularly those of the formal sector and industrial set up.

Research findings on role of vocational education in economic development in Malaysia by Ramlee, Mustapha and James, Greenan (2002:11) found out that employers perceived that vocational curricula had questionable relevance to the contemporary needs of business and industry and that employers' participation in school-business partnerships was minimal. They suggested that vocational education and training institutions should conduct continuous needs assessments to create relevant curriculum.

From research article entitled “Partnerships with Industry for Efficient and Effective Implementation of VET” specifically in African countries by Jeongwoo, (2010) claims that communication with the industry is critical in VET practices on many levels to identify and anticipate skill needs in the future. The communication enables VET providers to learn what skills are in demand and to train for jobs that change regularly and allow employers to have input into the curriculum of VET and often gives them a recruiting tool to attract skilled workers. The industry should be brought into the design of partnership programs from the beginning. These studies concur that VET curricula be made in consultation with local industries. However, studies on local surveys by YPs in Nyambene to determine local vocational training requirements are not there. Hence this study examined the basis on which YPs in Nyambene undertook their VET curricula innovations so as to satisfy the local community vocational skills training needs.

Owigar, (2003:86) lamented that the curricula of YPs lack focus and are not flexible in content. Indeed training programs are not adequately adapted to the labor market needs. The fact that rapid technological developments render skills obsolete quietly, then vocational training institutions must demand higher level of initiative, innovativeness and more frequent retraining. Further Owigar, (2003:88) claims that feedback information about labour market outcome is an important step towards orienting the training system to output rather than input and the provision of labour market information to trainees not only influence occupational choices but also directs them to employment opportunities. The study further emphasized on the need of flexible curriculum providing short courses that would prepare the youths for employment in informal sector. The study concluded that, the vocational training programs in vocational training institutions in Kenya are based on fixed and predetermined criteria, which at times have no bearing on the labour market realities. How well YPs in EPK are preparing their trainees in their respective areas of specific vocational skills training in regard to information related to local labour market realities was one of the concerns for the current study.

Studies carried by Victor,(2009:146 ) entitled “Addressing Youth Unemployment and Poverty in Nigeria: A Call for Action, Not Rhetoric” as cited from (Hamel & Prahalad, July 1994) claims that for any person to compete effectively in the rapidly evolving knowledge-driven global economy he or she must possess relevant job competencies, including technical, business, cultural, interpersonal and intellectual competencies. These could be obtained in well-equipped

technical and vocational colleges. These studies continue to observe that to ensure standards, the graduates of technical institutions should be thoroughly tested, certified and registered before permitted to work as technicians in their chosen fields. These arguments are valid in that technology keeps on changing and advancing as society and environment demand new products and services. In this regard, did these attributes of vocational education and training exist among youth polytechnics in Nyambene region as recommended by the ministry servicing vocational skills training in Kenya?

The report of NVCET examinations released in March 2010 by the ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports indicated that 58% of students who sat national carpentry test in 63 YPs failed; while 6% were given referrals (fwangari@ke.nationmedia.com). The report added that the total number of trainees in the republic YPs who sat NVCET examinations dropped by 20% compared to 2009 candidates. The report lamented that this was mostly caused by a negative perception by class eight and four leavers about YP vocational training. While it is generally agreed that poor performance in any national examinations cannot be pegged to a single factor, it is widely accepted that poor performance can be improved on the positive if all the causative factors are adequately addressed. Indeed, this study examined the instructional training requirements available in YPs in Nyambene region against the requirements of NVCET examining body and hence closed this gap in literature.

According to studies carried in Kenya on education and sustainable development in selected model YPs by Kelemba (2010) and published by UNESCO-UNIVOC (2010:33), points that when managers and instructors were asked to state knowledge, skills and attitudes that the trainees needed to live in a sustainable way reported the following. Both managers and instructors said that the trainees needed exchange programmes, practical application of education and sustainable development, life-skills and collaboration with stakeholders, parents and guardians. However, the researcher observes that one instructor reported that:

The trainees need exchange programmes to enable them see how other people practice sustainable development and that their parents and guardians should also be involved.

While the researcher sought this information using a case study design, the same information is useful in predicting what may happen in future in similar circumstances but cannot be generalized to other institutions of vocational education because they operate under different training environment. However, these findings fell short of providing solutions to critical issues like; how exchange programmes, practical applications of vocational education, life skills and collaboration with stake holders could be implemented in order to mitigate problems barring adequate acquisition of vocational skills by YP trainees, which the current study sought answers to.

In similar studies on integrating education for sustainable development in centres of excellence in TVET in Kenya by Simiyu (2010) and published by UNESCO-UNIVOC (2010: 49-50) show that the vocational curricula need to be revisited and remodeled so as to allow a compatible orientation and smooth connectivity of sustainable development with TVET. It is clear that this study found the curricula weak in several aspects that need to be overhauled in order to address training challenges. These studies, having adopted descriptive research design fell short of describing certain aspects of the curricula that needed to be addressed. Thus, several links between interrelated trades in terms of knowledge and skills interconnectivity that would allow sustainable development within vocational education ought to have been brought to the surface, which was a contention of this study.

### **Vocational job Competences and Work Practices**

Okoro, (1993) as cited in the Journal of Career and Technical Education, Vol. 23, No. 1, (2007:58) interviewed teachers, young school leavers and students of pre-vocational subjects in Nigeria on the problems militating against proper imparting of vocational skills in schools and revealed that lack of funds, lack of facilities, mismanagement of resources, lack of qualified personnel, and lack of cooperation from principals, among others were the key challenges facing vocational education in Bauchi Metropolis of Nigeria. He further points out most of the employers require certain skills from school leavers before being employed. These studies further contend that some of these basic skills include; communication, image, and employability skills. Hence the current study ascertained how well these basic skills were developed and later utilized in the world of work in Nyambene region.

Research study conducted by Bello, et al. (2007) on Vocational Training Needs of 15 – 25 Years Old Out-of-School Youths in Bauchi Metropolis of Nigeria agree with findings of (Okoro, 1993) that general education provides the society with values, communicative and manipulative skills on which effective vocational education is based. Thus, vocational education builds on a foundation of good general education.

The same studies indicated that a Survey of “Vocational Training Needs of 15 – 25 Years Old Out-of-School Youths in Bauchi Metropolis of Nigeria” showed percentages of the responses of the respondents when requested to identify a vocational training area in which they were interested in pursuing from a list of options provided. The youths chose Computer Maintenance and Operation Works (18.75%), followed by Tailoring (9.38%), then Electrical Installation and Maintenance work (8.59%), Furniture Making (6.25%), Further Education (5.47%), Hair Dresser/Barbing (4.69%), and Carpentry and Joinery (3.91 %). Other training needs options attracted percentages from 3.13% and below, indicating that they were not very popular among the youth.

Similarly studies carried out by Squire, (2000:6,9) about vocational training needs of 10 - 18 years-old out-of-school rural youth in the north-east district of Botswana, found out that, when the respondents were requested to identify a vocational career in which they were interested in pursuing training from a list of options provided; majority of the youth (51%) chose careers in farm trades, 16% in building and construction trades, 8% in metal trades and 5% wanted to

become football players. Other career options attracted percentages from 4% and below, indicating that they were not very popular among the youth for training. It is clear that youths who are undergoing preservice vocational training in vocational education may perhaps have different reasons for joining and eventually training for certain vocations. This is because the environment, family background, role models among other factors influences trainee's career choice. However, what influences choice of certain trades by YP trainees in Nyambene was not known, hence creating a potential gap in literature which this study fulfilled.

Akubudike (2003) as cited by Journal of Career and Technical Education, Vol. 23, No. 1, (2007:58) also reports other hindrances facing VET as; inadequate staffing, poor attitude of students, lack of proper guidance and counseling, un-coordination of career-oriented school clubs or association, lack of exposure to public lectures as some of the problems militating against vocational education offered the youths. However, these studies did not explore the extent to which these problems were addressed through vocational instructions which would form the basis for molding the youths into the world of work by introducing them to theoretical concepts leading to actual practice at the workshop floor. Moreover, different training environments encounter varied challenges, hence the current study need found out specific hindrances that affected adequate VET programs in YPs in Nyambene.

According to Mureithi, (2008:4) on studies entitled "challenges facing vocational training centers in human resource development: the case of Youth Polytechnics in Rift Valley Province, Kenya", argues that the informal sector has a lot of potential to create jobs, develop future entrepreneurs and to produce quality and attractively priced products. Unfortunately, there is consistent lack of adequate and appropriate technical and vocational skills in this sector. This limits its ability to contribute in the creation of jobs and income generating activities and also affects the quality of goods and services produced reducing their competitiveness in a global market. Besides, these studies continued to claim that vocational education has the potential to curb high rates of unemployment especially among the youth and women. By offering hands-on skills, VET has the potential to offer the much needed skills to develop the informal sector by enabling individuals to develop self employment. In this regard, how YPs in Nyambene region managed to offer VET programs whose with relevant skills documented by the current study

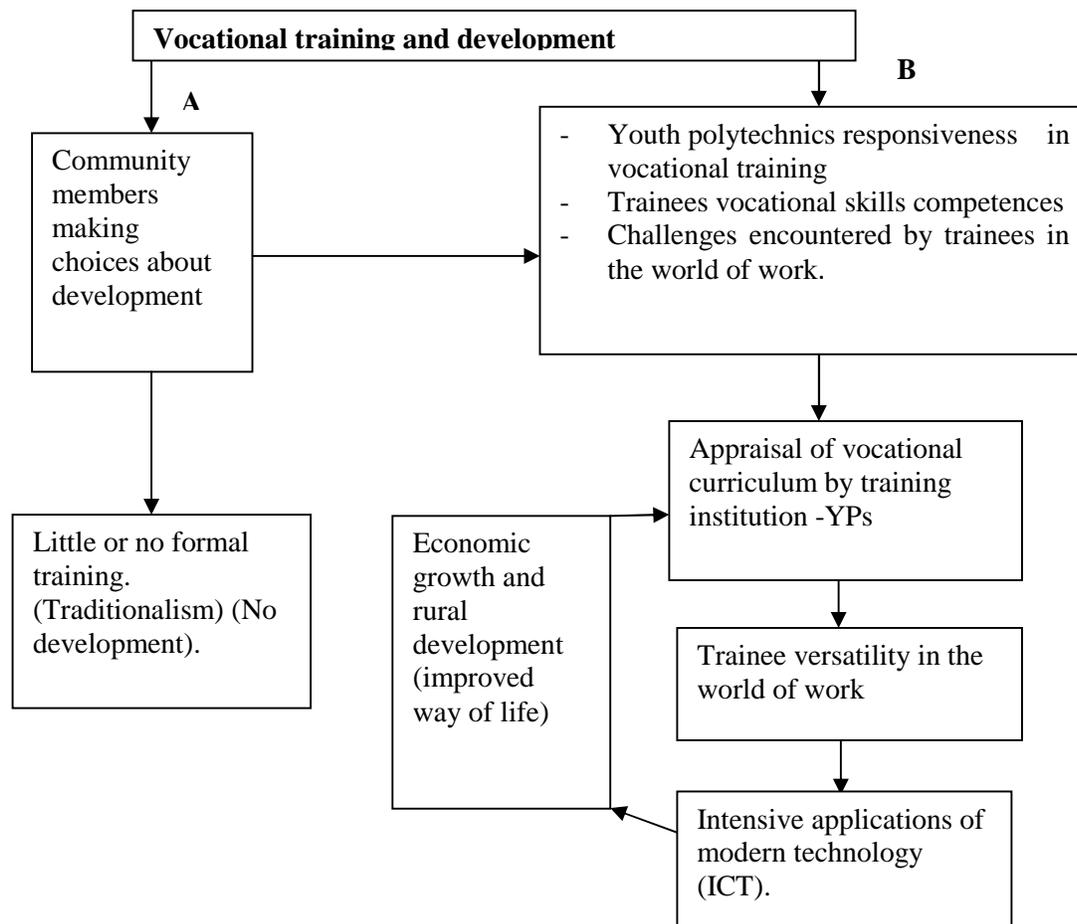
### **Theoretical Framework**

This study investigated into the impact of vocational training for rural developments. Therefore, the theory of agrarian transformation and socio-cultural change guided the study, especially the dimension of the theory touching on agrarian transformation laid more emphasis (Todoro, 1982) as cited by Orodho (2003). The theory concretizes transition from 'traditionalism' to 'modernity' leading to societal transformation in developments. When modernization of agriculture takes place, old practices are abandoned in favour of new and more viable technologically oriented practices. Thus, change in vocational training mechanism by giving trainees hands on experiences, provision of modern training tools and techniques as well as following leavers to

identify how they are doing in the field of work results to good training outputs. Thus, when these changes are realized, they would form the basis for ensuring training environment that are adequately equipped for trainees’ acquisition of specific skills competencies.

**Conceptual Framework**

The initial conceptualization is that community members have a choice to make between development in modern technology and stagnation in the tradition way of life. Training on vocational skills is the springboard to development, and the community people (youth) are the necessary human resource for manpower in economic growth. The framework conceptualizes that the core problems of wide spread poverty, raising unemployment and rapid population growth are as a result of stagnation and often retrogressions of economic life in rural areas characterized by tradition methods of farming, craft, poor shelter among others as shown in figure 1, (A–Conservative path – retrogression).



**Key**  
 A-conservative path -Retrogressive  
 B-Dynamic path –Development

**Figure 1**

## Research Methodology

### Research Design

On the contrary, the framework conceptualizes development to individual's acquisition of vocational training skills that leads to a more complex, technologically advanced and rapidly changing style of life as shown in figure 1 by path B – dynamic path of development. The vocationally acquired skills are manipulated by trainees to be versatile in the world of work within the community and the rest of the world.

### Design of the Study

This study used case study approach in exploring ways vocational training at YPs was conducted; and to what extent it had impacted on socio-economic development of rural communities. In view of Robson (2002:178) case studies have the strength of bring out rich understanding of the salient features and characteristics of a given event such as vocational training at YPs. Similarly, a case study had considerable ability to generate answers to questions such as 'why?', 'how?' and 'what?' by use of variety of questionnaires, interview schedules, focused group discussions and check lists as advocated by (Kumar, 2005).

### Study Population and Sample size

Cohen and Manion, (1995) states that the specification of the population to which the inquiry is addressed affects decisions that a researcher must make both about sampling procedures and resources. Since this study was descriptive in nature adopting case study design, it involved the 4 out of 6 YPs of Maua, Muthara Kianjai and Athwana that were government supported from Nyambene region. The population for the study comprised of the following YP community informant resource persons shown in table 3.1 below.

**Table 1: Study Target Population**

S/No	Target informants	Population	Sample size
1	YP manager	4	4
2	Second year trainees	$3 \times 4 \times 20 = 240$	$6 \times 3 \times 4 = 72$
3	Instructors	$1 \times 3 \times 4 = 12$	12
4	YP leavers	160	$5 \times 4 = 20$
5	Parents of second year trainees	240	$9 \times 4 = 36$
Total		652	144

Gay, (1992) observes that for small and big populations 20% and 10% of the population and above respectively may be adequate. Thus, a reasonable sample size 22.08% equal to 144 of 652 target informant resource persons was picked. Moreover, purposive sampling technique was used to pick 4 YP managers and 12 trade instructors. Lottery form of simple random sampling was used to sample a total of 72 second year trainees in the trades of masonry, tailoring and carpentry and 20 YP leavers who left between 2006 and 2009 using snow ball sampling.

### Data Collection Procedures

The questionnaires for trainees were administered by research assistant with the help of YP instructors. Out of 72 trainees 69 (31 boys and 38 girls) returned the questionnaires. Interviews for instructors and managers were conducted by the researcher in the respective YP manager's office in the morning sessions. In total, the researcher conducted 4 focused group discussions with sampled parents in their YP in afternoons. Of the 36 parents, 24 (66.6%) women and 12 (33.3%) men turned up for focused group discussions. The response to questionnaires was high and this was attributed to the establishment of a good rapport by the researcher with the respondents during the research. Later, the researcher followed leavers (2006-2009) and obtained data from 18 respondents. Out of 144 sampled informant resource persons, 139 respondents participated in the study. This constituted an overall response rate of 96.53%.

### Research Findings

#### Vocational Trades Offered Trainees

In order to capture a holistic picture of the training at YPs, the researcher documented and ranked all trades offered at YPs in terms of enrolments. During the interview schedules, the managers were asked to rank the trades offered in terms of popularity. Findings on the ranking of trades offered at sampled YPs in terms of trainees' enrolments indicate that the most popular trade in all sampled YPs was tailoring followed by hair dressing and beauty therapy with 86 and 66 trainees respectively. Electrical installations and motor vehicle mechanics were ranked 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> with 22 and 17 total trainees respectively. However, motor vehicle mechanics was done at Kianjai YP only. During trainees conversation interviews it was revealed that: *'the land rover used for driving practice had broken down and trainees had to book for driving practice at nearby driving school in Meru town' (motor vehicle trainee, June 2010)*.

Moreover, these findings contrasted sharply by study findings on a survey of "Vocational Training Needs of 15 – 25 Years Old Out-of-School Youths in Bauchi Metropolis of Nigeria". These studies showed percentages of the responses of the respondents who were requested to identify a vocational training area in which they were interested in pursuing from a list of options provided. The youths chose Computer Maintenance and Operation Works (18.75%), followed by Tailoring (9.38%), then Electrical Installation and Maintenance work (8.59%), Furniture Making (6.25%), Further Education (5.47%), Hair Dresser/Barbing (4.69%), and Carpentry and Joinery (3.91 %). Other training needs options attracted percentages from 3.13% and below, indicating that they were not very popular among the youth. It was observed that YP in Nyambene region were not offering a wide range of vocational trades as compare to YP in Nigeria. Most notable missing course from list of those offered in Nyambene was information communication technology.

On the other hand studies by Squire, (2004) about vocational training needs of 10 - 18 years-old out-of-school rural youth in the north-east district of Botswana, found out that, when the respondents were requested to identify a vocational career in which they were interested in pursuing training from a list of options provided; majority of the youth (51%) chose careers in

farm trades, 16% in building and construction trades, 8% in metal trades and 5% wanted to become football players. While these studies found out 51% of trainee wanted careers in farm related trades, the researcher found out that YPs in Nyambene offered agriculture only as a support subject and was not given any weight at all.

### Training Facilities at YPs

**The first research question was:** *What are the views of the youth polytechnic community about responsibility of youth polytechnics in meeting the training needs and aspirations of the trainees?*

For the purpose of meeting research objectives the researcher felt a need to probe into the nature of existing facilities in Youth polytechnics with a view of establishing their relevance to training. The respondents were asked to state their opinion on the nature of training facilities in their YPs based on the ratings appended in the table. 75% of the instructor respondents thought that the existing facilities in their institutions were un-satisfactory, while 25% reported that the facilities were satisfactory. None of the respondents were neutral, nor found the facilities to be highly unsatisfactory. On the other hand 65% and 35% of trainees felt the training facilities were un-satisfactory and satisfactory respectively. These observations reinforce finding by (Mureithi, 2008) findings that when YPs fail to offer hands-on skills, vocational technical training has no potential to offer the much needed skills to develop the informal sector by enabling individuals to develop self employment. This is made impossible by unavailability of adequate training facilities, trainees and instructors.

### Effects of lack of Facilities on Fulfilling Institutional Objectives

The consequences of lack of facilities or their inadequacy cannot be over emphasized. The researcher was interested in knowing how lack of facilities hampered vocational training for rural development. The respondents were asked to give their views on how lack of adequate facilities affected trainees' acquisition of vocational skills on the provided ratings in the table below. Majority of the informants thought that Inadequacy of teaching/training materials had high effects on attaining institutional objectives with scores: 80%, 70%, 82.5%, 85.5% and 70% managers, trainees, leavers, instructors and parents respectively. Only 1% of the trainee respondents were neutral on the effects of lack of facilities on Youth polytechnics training objectives. These findings agreed with (Okoro, 2007) findings on problems militating against proper imparting of vocational skills among the youth in Nigeria which revealed that lack of funds, lack of facilities, mismanagement of resources and lack of qualified personnel among others seriously affected quality of training.

### Sources of Finances for Youth Polytechnics

Further, the study sought from respondents how the YPs financed their training. From questionnaires responses of trainees, parents' focused group discussion, manager and instructors interview schedules; the researcher obtained the data in histogram below about sources of financing YP vocational training. It is clear from the findings that constituency development

fund (CDF 2.5 million) was the main source of financing the YPs followed by fees paid by trainees 0.924 million. Otherwise income generating projects like tree nurseries and farm produce sales contributed to 40000 and 80000 shillings respectively.

Most of the respondents said that: *CDF money was used to put up workshops and buy training facilities though they were never enough. Otherwise, fees paid by trainees was supplemented by income generating projects to meet recurrent training expenditures like buying of stationery and paying YP board of governors' employees. Parents' have turned away from raising funds through harambee which had proved very unpopular with the local people (female parent participating FGD, June 2013).*

From the study findings, the informants noted their income generating projects were limited because they lacked capital to procure materials to initiate projects at trade levels. For an example on instructor said: *YP did not make goods like carpentry products for sale due to lack of finances to buy timber. The projects for income generating activities were not taken seriously due to inadequate financing systems available to Youth Polytechnics (Carpentry instructor Muthara YP, June 2010).* These shows a need of the community and government to come in strongly and assist revamp YPs.

#### Youth Polytechnic Instructing staff

From the checklist schedules, the research assistant documented YPs members of instructing staff in the sampled YPs against their trades and professional qualifications. Majority of instructors fall below the academic and pedagogical required qualifications of instructors to instruct at YPs. According to YP managers interviewed, they observed that:

*The least qualification for an instructor to instruct at YPs is GTT I (Maua YP Manager, June 2010).* Therefore, majority 17 out of 24 (70.8%) instructors fell below this threshold requirement.

#### Meeting Needs and Aspirations of Trainees

Fulfilling needs and interests of learners adequately determine how they perform in their courses. The researcher intended to find the perceived opinion of the respondents as appertains to the role of YPs in meeting needs and aspiration of trainees in order to produce qualified artisans versatile in their immediate community. It is clear from the findings that (25%) of the trainee respondents felt that trainees' needs and aspirations were met. Equally, 10% of the informant trainees said their aspirations on vocational training were highly met by the YPs. Proportionally, majority of the instructors (15%) said trainees' needs were partially met. Moreover, 10% of the leavers said trainees' aspirations and needs were met. However, one instructor reported that: *'The trainees needed exchange programmes between YPs and the local industries to enable trainees see how other people practice sustainable development'* (Male instructor Muthara YP, 2010).

However, these findings showed that trainees' needs and aspirations were not adequately met by the respective YPs. Moreover, these study findings complimented research findings by UNESCO-UNEVOC (2010) that when managers and instructors were asked to state knowledge,

skills and attitudes that the trainees needed to live in a sustainable way reported the following: “Trainees needed exchange programmes, practical application of education and sustainable development, life-skills and collaboration with stakeholders, parents and guardians”.

### **YP Leavers in the World of Work (2006 – 2009) Groups**

***The second research question was: What occupational activities are the youth polytechnic leavers doing in the world of work?***

The primary purpose of a youth polytechnic is to train artisans who eventually get absorbed into the neighbouring community either into self-employment or gainful employment. In this study, the researcher intended to find out how the leavers of Youth polytechnics of between 2006–2009 were doing in the world of work within their community. From the research findings 60% of the instructor respondents concurred that Youth polytechnics graduates were marketable while 7.5% said they were very marketable. However, 56.5% of the leavers’ informants had the opinion that YP leavers are fairly marketable within their communities. This analysis agrees with the observation schedules carried out by the researcher in various workshops manned by Youth polytechnics leavers. Majority of YP leavers (60%) were running their own businesses, that is, tailoring shops, carpentry shops and metal workshops/welding shops.

Others have opened up other related businesses like buying and selling of cereals. Some, like those running carpentry workshops had opened two workshops in different places. One mason leaver had the following to say: *‘The masonry artisans are getting awarded some of the construction works in schools, dispensaries and individual homes. However, they are unable to secure big contracts due to financial handicaps’* (YP leaver, June 2010).

When asked whether his YP knew what business he was engaged in, he reported that: *‘The Youth Polytechnic does not follow up their graduates to find out how they fair in the world of work. On the other hand, none of the respondents who had left YP said they wanted go back to Youth Polytechnic to upgrade their skills. Therefore, there was no linkage between leavers and YPs’* (YP leaver, June 2010). Thus, YPs should endeavours to keep links and contacts with her leavers.

### **Community Involvement by YP in Facing Rural Development Challenges**

The researcher inquired from the respondents how far Youth polytechnics involved her neighbouring community in facing rural development challenges. The question attracted multi responses from informants. Findings depict the opinion of respondents appertaining to the contribution of Youth polytechnics by involving her neighbouring community in facing rural development challenges. 17.5% of the parents said YP involved community ordinarily in facing rural developments. During focused group discussions, one parent said that: *I don’t see youth polytechnics advertising their courses or involving us- the community members in ways of raising standards of doing economic activities we do. For an example, I expect youth polytechnics to mount training and demonstration canters like agriculture farms, bee keeping*

*among others for us to visit and learn. They should also avail their finished goods in agricultural shows for us to see* (Parent Maua YP, 2010). However, 60% of the parents lamented that YPs do not involve host community members in facing economic challenges. Further, 74.5% and 48% of instructors and trainees allayed fears that YPs hardly involves host community in facing development challenges within their locality.

Majority of the respondents during interviews were of the opinion that the YP institutions should regularly hold exhibition shows of her finished products to public and even open a stand at the local Nyambene District Agricultural Society Show of Kenya. The researcher during an interview with the managers found out that:

*Youth polytechnics do not have demonstration farms for agricultural practices while the institution serves a community that is both potential in crop farming and dairy keeping* (MutharaYP manager, June 2010). Thus, YPs need to go beyond theoretical training to practical and hands on training by doing projects. These could serve as sources of motivating and inspiring trainees to be innovative in their trades.

### **Hindrances to Implementation of Vocational Training Programmes**

***The third study question was: What are the problems which hinder youth polytechnic leavers from initiating businesses related to vocational skills they acquired at YPs?***

Based on the findings of options to boost adequate learning and training by YPs the researcher intended to highlight barriers to proper implementation of vocational training programmes for rural development. The instructor informants reported inadequate resources 92.5% and financial handicap 80% as the greatest hindrances to adequate implementation of vocations training programmes in Youth polytechnics. 82.5% and 80% of the parent informants said inadequate resources and financial handicaps were the greatest hindrances to vocational training. Inadequate resources 87.5% and financial handicaps 67.5% were cited by trainees as the greatest hindrances to proper implementation of vocational education. Majority of the leavers 77.5% and 75% said inadequate resources and financial handicaps respectively were the critical factors hindering implementation of vocational education. On the other hand 95% and 85% of the managers said financial handicaps and inadequate resources respectively affected implementation of vocational training. One of the instructors during interview lamented that: *'The current poor state of vocational training here has been attributed to withdrawal of government funding to Youth polytechnics. These institutions run on fees charged trainees and harambee which are unpopular with the local community'. Only a small grant is given each year, and sometimes it's not there* (Instructor at Athwana YP, 2010). This has worsened the dream of realization of benefits from adequate vocational training by the community.

### Suggested Solutions to Problems of Smooth Implementation of Vocational Training Programmes

In light of varied hindrances raised by respondents, the researcher wanted suggested solutions that could overcome the highlighted problems. Many and varied suggestions were listed in a multi response question. Government grants (80.5% and 90%) were the most commonly suggested solutions by instructors and trainees respectively. This has a bearing to the introduction of the famous Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in the year 2003. These funds would solve numerous problems hindering smooth implementation of vocational training programmes. On the other hand income generating activities (55% and 60%) were viewed by instructors and trainees respectively as second possible ways of minimizing vocational training.

### Future of YPs in Light of Socio economic Development

The researcher sought the opinion of respondents as to the future of Youth polytechnics vocational training programmes in light of socio-economic development. The future of Youth polytechnics vocational training programmes appear depending on revitalizing of YP programmes according to 72.5%, 82.5%, 80% and 50% parents, instructors, trainees and leavers respectively. However, 37.5%, 25%, and 44% of the trainees /parents, instructors and managers respectively view it as depending on government policy on Youth Polytechnics. They said it should be streamlined to suit the dynamic world of today's training needs. Moreover, one parent during focused group discussion said:

*That Youth Polytechnics should reach out more to her neighbouring community in order to sustain her training activities for economic growth. This would have the effect of marketing YP to the community youths in need of sharpening vocational skills (Parents of Kinajai YP, 2013). This could have a positive effect of attracting more youths to train at YP institutions.*

### Summary

This research was about the impact of vocational training for rural development, a case study of Youth polytechnics-Nyambene District. The essence of youth polytechnic ideal is that YPs exist for the services and enrichment of the immediate community. The indicators of the strength of relationship with the local communities are firstly whether the catchments area of the trainees is from the surrounding locality and more importantly whether the leavers working places are within the same local catchments area.

This study was guided by three research question. The first question was: What are the views of the youth polytechnic community about responsibility of youth polytechnics in meeting training needs and aspirations of the trainees?

Questionnaires, interview schedules and observation schedules were used to collect data. During data analysis, it was realized that lack of facilities in the institution affected vocational training resulting in time wastage and teacher frustrations among others. The YPs had roughly seventy percent (70%) of her training staff unqualified without pedagogical skills. However, it was realized that during training hardly do instructors send their trainees for supervised attachment.

The YP offers training courses in carpentry, masonry, tailoring/ dress making and plumbing. The institution suffers lack of requisite resources like piped water therefore failure to initiate courses like agriculture with demonstration farms and making good use of farms.

The second research question was: What occupational activities are the youth polytechnic leavers (2006-2009) doing in the world of work? The findings of the research revealed that majority of the leavers had settled to work with masonry artisans getting awarded some construction works at the construction sites. They expressed optimism that their businesses were doing well. It was noted that none of the leavers said went back to YP to upgrade their skills. However, the leavers pointed out that YP should effectively train and motivate her training staff to enhance supervision, and consider introducing loan schemes to leavers if possible in order to market aggressively.

The third research question was: What are the problems which hinder youth polytechnic leavers from initiating businesses related to vocational skills they acquired at YPs?

The finding generated via this questions revealed inadequate resources for initiating own businesses while direct from college. This was the greatest hindrance to implementations of vocational training. It was also observed that most of the potential employers were asking applicants of certain job to have had a number of years of experience which leavers did not have initially.

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, apart from planning, the institution should effectively train and motivate her training staff in carrying out surveys on the existing occupational opportunities not exploited within the neighbouring community. Secondly the government policies on YPs should be reviewed and developed in the light of social dynamic economic changes and the need for modern training. The instructors' motivation in servicing into the modern technology should be given preference so as to transform from classical craft to modern technology.

### **Recommendations**

In view of the discussions in the proceeding chapters, the following recommendations were offered. Although facilities are rather satisfactory, there is need to upgrade and enhance existing ones as well as add modern ones. The YP should ensure that adequate teaching materials are availed and provided in order to enhance overall student performance.

Apart from the fees levied on students, Youth polytechnics should develop and exploit alternative sources of finance in order to effectively meet her budgetary requirements. This can be done by the management committee, and Parent Teachers Association (PTA) should be allowed to participate in decision making and monitoring of income generating activities carried out by the YP. The relevant mother ministry in charge of YPs should develop an act that enhances community support needed in running income-generating activities.

Parents and community will have a sense of ownership attitude.

BOG and YP managers should discourage “free use” of institution’s facilities and other resources so that it can earn needed revenue from the user of such facilities. This will create diversified sources of income-generating activities in the institutions and so better their contributions towards the community for socio-economic development.

Feasibility study should be carried out before income-generating activities are set up. The BOG should give priority to income-generating activities by including them in the Youth polytechnics development plan.

Youth polytechnics should develop and maintain both agricultural demonstration farms and dairy cows (zero grazing) in her vast land. This is so because the institution serves a community that is both pastoral and agricultural oriented. This shall go a long way to boost the economic status of the Nyambene community.

The institution should introduce new courses like computer training, painting, mechanic and driving among others to cater for youths who are seeking these services elsewhere.

Apart from introducing new courses, Youth polytechnics management should ensure her trainees are attached and supervised once or twice before graduating in order to enhance their vocational skills and competency.

The government policy on YPs should be developed in the light of dynamic economic changes in economy and need for modern training. The instructors’ motivation in servicing into modern technology should be given preference so as to change from old to modern craft.

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