

**EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUTH POLYTECHNICS IN TRAINING THE YOUTH FOR EMPLOYMENT IN MACHAKOS DISTRICT, KENYA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Youth Polytechnics play an important role in training school leavers who do not proceed with higher education. They are trained in relevant skills for either salary or self-employment. This study was set out to investigate the effectiveness of selected Youth Polytechnics in Machakos District in training the youth for employment. The study examined curriculum relevance and its implementation in the Youth Polytechnics to meet the needs of the trainees, the competence of the instructors, adequacy of teaching and learning resources and the methods used to evaluate the Youth Polytechnics' training programme. The study adopted survey research design. Questionnaires were administered to the trainees and instructors while interview schedules were administered to the managers and the employers. Observation checklist and document analysis were also used. The study adopted Kirk Patrick's four levels evaluation model (1994). Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages with the help of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. The study showed that Youth Polytechnics' curriculum was irrelevant to the needs of the trainees in the labour market. Some needs of the trainees like the teaching of information and communication technology and entrepreneurial skills were not addressed. Additionally, teaching and learning resources in Youth Polytechnics were inadequate. The study concluded that to a great extent, Youth Polytechnics were not effective in training the youth for employment. The curriculum should therefore be reviewed occasionally to keep their current and future graduates as well as instructors abreast with technological changes in the whole Technical and Vocational Education and Training sub-sector to avoid obsolescence. Finally, the study recommended that there was need for increased funding towards vocational education and training which should be directed towards research and development as well as acquisition of appropriate teaching and learning resources for effective training.

**Key Words:** Youth Polytechnics, Efficiency, Curriculum, Training, Youth

## Introduction

The concept of Youth Polytechnics (YPs) was developed and popularized in the 1960s and 1970s by the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) as a solution to the problem of education and training of primary school leavers. The school leavers were unable to become self-employed or get wage jobs because of perceived inadequate education and training. YPs would provide technical training linked with production and so assist in the formation of a cadre of trained artisans and other self-employed workers. While initially the NCCCK was the main sponsor of YPs, they were gradually, in 1970-1971 taken over by the government, which paid salaries of the instructors and provided equipment and grants. Some YPs were established with the community and non-governmental organizations' (NGOs) support. These institutions have become increasingly popular even with secondary school leavers.

YPs, initially known as village polytechnics (VPs), are classified under non-formal vocational training institutions. The original concept of YPs was not that of formal technical schools but flexible training institutions in the villages. The decision to organize VPs from the village level rather than from the national level was due to the diverse economic activities in the various regions of Kenya. For instance, agricultural activities are dictated by the physical features, types of soil, weather and socio-cultural values. This approach however, has changed due to the government involvement in the institutions and resulted in the change of name from VPs to YPs (Kipkorir, 1992).

According to Coombs et al. (1985), non-formal education is any organized educational activity outside the established formal system, whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broad activity that is intended to serve identifiable learning clientele and learning objectives. Non-formal vocational training institutions are an offshoot of the formal school system in the sense that those who join them are school leavers. In most cases, they are educational institutions organized by the Ministry of Education (MoE), private bodies such as churches and NGOs. They offer academic as well as vocational courses but most of them emphasize practical courses which give trainees skills for immediate application for either wage employment or self-employment (Eshiwani, 1993).

In order to understand YPs and their role in preparing the youth for employment, it is important to briefly look at the non-formal sector in general. As early as 1950s and 1960s, the non-formal sector did not receive a lot of support from the school system generally in Africa and Kenya in particular (Tum, 1996). The school systems seemed not to provide for the great majority of pupils who did not proceed through the entire education cycle. The expansion of primary education in the 1960s and 1970s surpassed the rate of expansion in the secondary schools. As a result, most of the primary school leavers, who did not proceed to secondary school, could not obtain gainful employment. Castle (1966:68) states that: "these pupils enter a workless world with their hands. Their labor potential is very great but untrained and unused."

Speaking on the problems that unemployed youth face, Jehoda (1982) pointed out that an unemployed youth lacks a time structure in life, reduction of social conduct and contacts, lack of participation in collective purposes and absence of acceptable status and its consequences

for personal identification. Young people entering a workless world absorb these psychological, social and emotional impacts. Many of them in their middle adolescence cannot be regarded as adults and, therefore, they are unable to join the adult life. They suffer a generation gap which Ishumi (1988) cited in Maleche (1976), termed as turbulent and vulnerable transition period between leaving school and entering into some gainful occupation.

In its effort to support and uplift the non-formal sector, the Kenyan government decided to devise ways and means of re-orienting the aspirations and interests of most of the young men and women passing through the general education system by linking education out-put more closely to the needs of the society (Kenya Education Commission Report, 1964). This policy did not work, because pupils continued being prepared for examinations. The East African Standard of 14<sup>th</sup> November 1972:6 noted that: “of the 180,000 pupils to leave primary school in 1972 it was estimated that 100,000, not being able to find secondary school places would become superfluous members of the society”. This raised a lot of concern about the youth and alternative approaches to education and training were to be adopted to take care of them. This led to the establishment of many non-formal vocational training institutions including YPs.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) (1972) says that ideas and suggestions addressing this issue included a call for co-operation of parents, teachers, vocational guidance authorities and placement agencies, to develop and co-ordinate services capable of helping the young people into useful channels. This idea led to the establishment of many non-formal institutions among which were YPs. Maleche (1976) noted that YPs were the most important for primary school leavers who do not join secondary schools. Most of these institutions are situated deep in the rural areas and are aimed at equipping the youth with simple skills for immediate application. In the 1970s and 1980s, many YPs were established in the rural areas which gave the primary school leavers skills, understanding and values which would enable them to exploit money making opportunities in their neighborhood in the rural areas. Ishumi (1988:163-173) states that, the objectives of the Kenya YPs are to:

1. Establish an alternative to the existing formal system of education that would provide vocational training for young people unable to find places in the secondary schools;
2. Combine education and training with production which would help to cover costs and make the programme less expensive to run;
3. Provide young people with skills needed to employ them or find employment in their rural community; and
4. Cultivate values, attitudes and skills in the youth that would form a positive resource towards the development of their own community and the society in general.

By the year 1995, there were 621 YPs in Kenya, 320 of which were assisted by the government, while 301 were run by NGOs. Courses offered in these institutions have over the years increased since independence in 1963 due to changes in societal needs. These courses include: Masonry, tailoring and dress making, plumbing, carpentry and home economics, just to mention but a few, (Careers Information Booklet, 1995:92). What is apparent is that there is emphasis on practical courses to try to meet the multiple occupational needs of the youths.

A recent development concerning YPs was the establishment of the Ministry of State and Youth Affairs in 2003, under which YPs operated. According to the Daily Nation (20<sup>th</sup> September 2007:6), “the government through the Ministry of State and Youth Affairs, is rehabilitating and equipping the YPs to enhance the training of the young people and equip them with skills to develop a modern Kenyan community”. This will ensure that these institutions give quality and relevant training to the recruits, so that they can compete in the job market. The plan includes the development and improvement of classrooms and workshops in each of the targeted YPs. According to the Minister of State and Youth Affairs Ministry (Daily Nation, 4th October, 2007:8), there were already 750 YPs in the country. He said that the government had already hired 750 instructors to teach in these YPs. The government plans to increase the number of YPs to 1400 by the year 2015 which will enable as many as 150,000 students to enroll each year.

Through the Ministry of State and Youth Affairs, the government has come up with a “5-year target for youth” (The Standard Newspaper 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2007:3). This is a 110 billion shillings deal, which aims at equipping the young people with skills for the job market. The government is working in partnership with development partners including the World Bank and the United Nations (UN) agencies to implement various projects in YPs. Part of this money will be used in building 1,350 YPs, including equipping and rehabilitating them.

### **Statement of the problem**

Despite the impressive developments in the increase of the number of YPs, the number of courses offered, the increasing number of youths joining the YPs and the government efforts to support and establish many YPs, a majority of the YPs seem to be facing challenges that affect their effectiveness in preparing and training the youth for employment. A majority of the YP graduates do not enter into some gainful occupations whether formal or informal despite the efforts by the government, private bodies and NGOs, to establish YPs in order to train the youth for employment. Keller (1980:35-36) observed that: “The young educated flock into the cities in hopes of finding wage employment, but opportunities are few. Failing to find employment, a trained youth is relegated to the ranks of unemployed or under-employed”. Bearing in mind their numbers and their resourcefulness, the youth represent our nation’s best hopes. Given the role YPs play in reducing unemployment in the country by equipping the youth with the right knowledge and skills for the world of work, it is worth researching their effectiveness in training the youth for gainful employment. This will provide information that will enable policy makers to ensure a close linkage between the training programmes and the world of work. This study, therefore, investigated the effectiveness of the selected YPs in Machakos District, in training the youth for employment.

### **Purpose and objectives of the study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of selected YPs in Machakos District in training the youth for employment. The study had five: first, to establish the relevance of the YP curriculum to the needs of the trainees. Secondly, to find out how the training programme is implemented in YPs. Third, to determine whether there are enough

and qualified instructors in the selected YPs. Fourth, to establish the adequacy of teaching and learning resources for effective training of the youth in YPs. Finally, to determine the evaluation techniques employed in evaluating the YP programme.

## **Study Design and Methodology**

### **The study area**

This study was carried out in selected YPs in Machakos District in Kenya. Through extensive reading, the researcher found out that no similar research had been conducted in this area. The district receives unreliable rainfall. The Akamba community whose main economic activities are livestock keeping and farming predominantly occupy Machakos District. The district has many public and private youth polytechnics. Over the years, Machakos District has experienced the mushrooming of YPs and especially the privately owned. The researcher was therefore, interested in investigating on curriculum use and whether the YPs were efficient in training the youth for employment.

### **Research design**

Survey research design was adopted for this study. This design mainly deals with phenomenon, events and issues as they are (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). In this study, the natural setting in the selected YPs therefore provided the required data. In addition, the design provides accurate descriptive analysis of characteristics of a sample which can be used to make inferences about the population (Kerlinger, 1973).

### **The study population**

Information obtained from the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs office in Machakos District revealed that the district had twenty nine YPs. Out of these, seven were public while twenty two were private YPs. Out of the twenty nine, fourteen were selected to participate in the study. The sample population was, therefore, drawn from the fourteen YPs. Some employers of the YP graduates also participated in this study. The study population from which the sample was drawn was one thousand and sixty five comprising twenty nine managers, one hundred and two instructors, nine hundred and twenty trainees and fourteen employers.

### **Sampling Procedures and Sample Size**

Out of the twenty nine YPs in Machakos District, fourteen were selected to participate in the study. Out of these, seven were privately owned. This was done through convenient sampling. The other seven were public YPs and, therefore, were purposively selected. This was due to the fact that there were only seven public YPs in the district.

Through stratified random sampling technique, the trainees were divided into groups according to their areas of specialization, after which simple random sampling was adopted in selecting respondents from the various areas of specialization. A total of one hundred and

eighty two trainees were sampled to participate in the study. Out of these, one hundred and one were male while eighty-one were female.

Through stratified random sampling, instructors were categorized according to their areas of specialization. Then, through simple random sampling, instructors were selected from each stratum. Here pieces of paper equal to the number of instructors needed from each strata were written the word “Yes” and the rest were written the word “No”. The papers were put in a container after which they were shaken to mix well. The instructors were then allowed to pick the papers. Those who picked the papers that were written the word “Yes” participated in the study. A total of sixty one instructors were sampled to participate in the study. Out of the sixty one instructors, forty three were male and eighteen were female.

All the managers from the fourteen selected YPs participated in the study. This was purposive sampling. Through convenient sampling, seven employers were also selected to participate in the study. The managers assisted the researcher in identifying the employers of some of their graduates, though it was not an easy task leading a limited number of employers as participants in this study. The sample size for the study was two hundred and sixty four respondents, which is 25% of the study population.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

In data collection procedures, a research permit allowing the researcher to collect data was obtained from the MoE. A covering letter from the Department of Curriculum Instruction and Educational Media, School of Education, Moi University, was attached to each of the copies of the questionnaire. Since the researcher is visually impaired, there was need for a research assistant, who together with the researcher presented the questionnaire to the participants and requested them to fill. The field questionnaires were then collected for analysis whereby the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program was used.

### **Research Instruments**

Two types of questionnaires were used, for the instructors and the trainees. The questionnaires had both open-ended and closed-ended question types. The closed-ended questions adopted the Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree), to measure the level of the respondents’ agreement or disagreement to the questions asked. To find out how often the respondents’ engaged in different learning experiences in the course of their training, terms such as always, frequently, occasionally, seldom and never were used in the closed-ended questions. Closed-ended questions enabled the researcher to collect adequate data and also saved time during data analysis.

Managers of the selected YPs were interviewed. Some of the employers of the selected YP graduates were also interviewed. Interview questions were developed through reading books and research materials relevant to the study. In this case, only open-ended questions were developed. The purpose of the interview questions was to verify the information obtained through the questionnaires as well as getting more information concerning the topic under study.

Document analysis involves reviewing the content of the target documents with the aim of deducing relevant data (Kerlinger, 1973). The following documents were analyzed: admission qualification records, class registers to check absenteeism, CATs and examination past papers to check their consistency with the set objectives of the YP curriculum and teaching staff returns to establish the work load of the instructors.

The researcher used an observation check list with the help of the research assistant, to establish the availability and adequacy of workshops, tools for practical work in the workshops and physical facilities like libraries as well as production units.

### **Validity and reliability of research instruments**

Validity is the extent to which research instruments are able to measure what they are supposed to measure (Kerlinger, 1973). Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) assert that validity is the accuracy and the meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on research results, that is, the degree to which the results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon and the variables of the study. This is done to ensure that the instruments are relevant to the objectives of the study. It therefore means that, the items in the instruments should arise from the objectives of the study. The use of the four types of instruments that is, questionnaires, interviews, document analysis and observation check list enabled the researcher to verify the collected data. These helped in determining the relevance of the content. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), research experts should help to determine the validity of research instruments. For this reason therefore, instruments were developed with the assistance of the supervisors and other research experts in the Department of Curriculum Instruction and Educational Media, School of Education, Moi University.

Reliability is the extent to which an instrument triggers the same results every time it is used (Kerlinger, 1973; Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999 and Bryman, 2000). The questionnaires so developed were tested for reliability. This was done at three levels, that is, pre-tryout, tryout and piloting. The aim of the pre-tryout is to determine if the items in the questionnaires are clear. It also helps in checking for double question, relatedness, readability and ambiguity. At this level, the items are usually more than at the tryout stage, which is an improved version of the pre-tryout. Tryout was aimed at checking the same items as in the pre-tryout stage. The participants in the pre-tryout and tryout levels were different from those who participated in the pilot level but had the same characteristics. Pilot study was therefore carried out.

Items used in the pilot study were less than those of the tryout level. The purpose of the pilot study was to establish if the instruments provided the required data. In the pilot study, a test-retest technique was used to establish the reliability of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were presented to a group of respondents with similar characteristics as the real research respondents. These were from polytechnics outside the area of study and this avoided the idea of participants influencing each other and therefore, interfering with the research findings. The questionnaires were presented in the first instance and participants were allowed to respond. The completed questionnaires were collected and analyzed. After two weeks, the same questionnaires were presented the second time to the same group of respondents. The

results were again analyzed. This was then compared with the first results. A coefficient of correlation was calculated at the level of 0.5 using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Formula, for reliability. The reliability coefficient was found to be 0.76 making the instruments reliable enough to be used for data collection.

### **Methods of data presentation and analysis**

Data were presented and analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques whereby frequencies, percentages and tables were applied. This was done with the help of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program.

### **Research Results and Discussions**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of YPs in training the youth for employment using a case of selected YPs in Machakos District. In order to capture the objectives of the study, discussions were made on the basis of the objectives of this study.

### **Curriculum relevance**

From the analysis of the findings of this study, it was revealed that the YP curriculum was not relevant to the needs of the trainees in the labour market. This was supported by 45(73.8%) of the instructors who said that the content of the curriculum was irrelevant. This was also supported by a majority of the interviewed employers as well as the results from the document analysis. From document analysis, it was established that there was no concrete curriculum developed for YPs. 55(90.1%) of the instructors also stated that the existing YP curriculum (which existed in form of guidelines from the Directorate of Industrial Training) should be revised occasionally in accordance with the changes in the society. This was also supported by a majority of the managers who suggested that some needs of the trainees were not addressed in the YP curriculum, for instance, the teaching of ICT, entrepreneurial skills, computer literacy as well as guidance and counseling.

Republic of Kenya (2006), states that curriculum at all levels of education and training must be reviewed occasionally in order to deal with obsolescence. According to the Sessional Paper Number 2 (1996), economic and industrial development are the objectives of virtually every country at the present time, and human resource development is usually seen as the most important element in their achievement. In fact, human resource is considered as the most important productivity factor and investment item. There is, therefore, the need to occasionally review the YP curriculum in order to produce employable graduates with relevant knowledge, skills and attitude to the world of work. This will require a working relationship between the training institutions and the business industry. In agreement, the ILO (1999) considers quality education, pre-employment training and learning throughout life as the three pillars for building and maintaining individual employability.

Kenya must strive to improve productivity in all sectors of the economy if she is to compete favourably in this era of rapid economic and technological changes. This requires not only capital investment, but also a work force that is knowledgeable and has the flexibility to acquire new skills for new jobs. Flexibility and the productivity of the workforce are



dependent on the availability of skilled workers. The level of a country's skilled workforce determines the quality and efficiency of product development, production and maintenance as well as the efficiency of supervision and training of people who are less skilled. Consequently, development of sound training programmes in our training institutions such as YPs is central to the nation's desire of becoming self reliant. Identification of the required training gaps followed by appropriate staff development is therefore a vital ingredient in planning this wholesome situation. Acquisition of appropriate skills is necessary to cope with the challenges presented by the evolving needs of the job market. By providing learning experiences designed to broaden skills through the curriculum, YPs can increase productivity and significantly improve the fortunes of the unemployed, thereby reducing unemployment (Sessional Paper Number 2, 1996).

Training should be flexible and relevant. The content and the organization of the training programme should therefore be relevant and flexible to achieve effectiveness. Since YP training is directed towards formal and self employment, it should therefore be relevant to the realistic opportunities for such employment, and as these opportunities change, flexibility is important to adjust to the new situations. The training programme should therefore be reassessed often to institute relevant changes depending on environmental variations. Relevance not only regards the skills but also the level to which they have been developed and on their practical applicability. It is not only providing the right skills but also an influence in the work habits and positive attitude to manual labour. It also relates to facilities and equipment provided.

### **Curriculum implementation**

A majority of the YPs concentrated on learning experiences in their institutions but rarely allowed their trainees to engage in learning experiences outside the institutions, for instance, attachment in small scale businesses and industries, inter-institution educational visits as well as exchange programmes were rare. In implementing the curriculum, instructors engaged the trainees in more practical work than theory work as indicated in the analyzed staff returns where by the instructors had few teaching lesson per week during which they concentrated on practical work in the workshops which were also inadequate from the observation check list. The class registers also indicated that managers often sent trainees home for fees which resulted in absenteeism of the trainees hence impacting negatively on curriculum implementation. Evident also is that, more practical oriented teaching methods such as question and answer, observation and demonstration were more frequently used in programme implementation than the other teaching methods. This means that such methods were effective for good mastery of skills by the trainees.

In order to prepare adequately to achieve industrial development especially through the youth, Kenya as a country needs to train the requisite human resource with proper knowledge and by using appropriate training techniques. This in turn requires qualified personnel. Relevant vocational training programmes properly implemented can be effective in preparing school leavers to be competitive in the job market (Tum, 1996 and Bamford, 1986). Effective implementation of a curriculum mainly requires positive attitude and adequate resources

(Shiundu, 1986; Eshiwani, 1993 and Gross et. al, 1971). This is in congruence with Tyler (1949) who contends that, for effective curriculum implementation, content and learning experiences must be effectively organized.

### **Adequate and qualified instructors**

The study revealed that most of the YPs did not have enough instructors, however, a majority of those who were already working in these institutions were employed on merit basis as suggested by 29(47.5%) and 31(50.8%) of the respondents, respectively. In order for the training to be effective in training the youth for the world of work, instructors must be professionally trained. Instructors need to have formal classroom and workshop instruction skills as well as non-formal skills. They should offer a continued service and culture of hard work and create an in-depth understanding and a rapport with the trainees for effective training to take place. In other words, there should be enough, qualified and committed instructors for effective training (Bamford, 1986). Additionally, incentives for motivation were rare as supported by majority of the respondents, that is, 30(49.1%) and the instructors were also poorly remunerated as suggested by 50(82%) of the respondents, leading to inefficiency in executing the programme. There is need therefore to employ more instructors, encourage staff development and staff motivation in YPs.

The quality of training offered in YPs and the quality of trainees graduating from these institutions is questionable. Rao (1996) and Kerre (1999) argue that the poor quality of training can be attributed to the problems which include lack of responsiveness of the curriculum to the changing labour market, decline in teaching standards, lack of maintenance facilities and equipment, lack of research and development as well as lack of dialogue with the employers. In the same vein, the TVET sub-sector in Kenya under which YPs operate is characterized by inflexible and outdated curriculum, a mismatch between skills taught and those demanded by the industries, inadequate quality assurance mechanism, inadequate physical and learning resources and low participation of the private sector in curriculum planning and development necessary to bridge the school-work gap (Kenya, 2003 and Kenya, 2005). Necessary measures therefore need to be taken to improve the quality of training in YPs by encouraging staff development.

### **Availability of teaching and learning resources**

From the data analysis, it was found that most of the YPs had limited teaching and learning resources for the execution of the training programme. Though few, there were more books for practical work than for theory work as expressed by the instructors who implement the training programme. Further, there were inadequate teaching and learning resources in most of the courses offered in a majority of the institutions as expressed by the respondents. This may have contributed to poor mastery of skills. From the observation checklist also, most of the teaching and leaning resources available were obsolete, for instance, tools and equipment in the workshops. This implies that there was a mismatch between the YP curriculum and the labour market demands as also mentioned by some of the employers interviewed. For instance, they stated that in motor vehicle area of specialization, trainees were supposed to

learn about hydraulic engine repair as well as manual engine repair yet some trainees had never come across these tools in their lives, neither were they available in the workshops.

Ellis (1983) pointed out that an instructor who has adequate and relevant teaching materials and facilities will be more confident, effective and productive. Instructors might also have the competence and positive attitude but if there are inadequate resources, their efforts will come to naught. He also argued that it is of paramount importance that instructors get the required materials early enough to be able to give quality services. In most of the vocational training institutions, there are inadequate physical facilities for training coupled with lack of sufficient modern equipment, expensive training materials and text books (Blaug, 1973). This affects the efficiency of YPs in training the youth for employment.

### **Curriculum evaluation**

A variety of evaluation techniques were employed in evaluating the YP training programme. Both formative and summative evaluation techniques were employed as indicated in document analysis. Formative evaluation is concerned with the identification and remedying problems during the developmental stages of a programme. It refers to the continuous evaluation which takes place during the life of a programme. In this study, trainees engaged in CATs in practical work and theory work as well as end of term examinations as part of formative evaluation. Trainees were also involved in summative evaluation at the end of the year under DIT. Summative evaluation aims at giving judgments as to the value or worth of the completed programme. It is used to provide some terminal judgment regarding the quality of the resorting programme (Shiundu and Omulando, 1992).

In order for the YP training programme to be effective in training the youth for employment, there should be periodic evaluation. This results to modification and invention of more effective programmes. Evaluation can be done in three levels:

1. A simple check on whether trainees are in the occupation in which their newly acquired skills will be used. It is thus important to keep permanent records of past trainees and their occupation after completion. In most cases, YPs do not keep these records. This implies that there is no follow-up of the trainees after the two years' training and, therefore, YPs may not be able to assess themselves through their graduates. Provision of follow-up on trainees is especially important if the trainees were geared towards self-employment. It is most vital in the first one to two years after completion, when the graduate is trying to adjust. Together with the training staff, there should be collaborations with local extension agencies, the government and NGOs. This may be done through visitations, where the staff may receive valuable feedback on problems and constraints that help further adjustments of the programmes. Refresher courses, periodic meetings of ex-trainees are also excellent ways of maintaining contacts.
2. A more in-depth check on the degree to which the skills are being used (Bamford, 1986). In this case, personal interviews may be carried out.

3. An in-depth evaluation based on the economic effects of using the skills, that is, cost-benefit study. A detailed survey and statistical analysis is required in this level with an untrained group as a control group. Other unquantifiable aspects for instance, attitude change, ought to be evaluated also. It is only through evaluation that VET can assess to what extent its objectives have been achieved, if any modifications are required and to what direction. It is necessary therefore, to encourage YPs to ensure periodic evaluation of their training programmes in order to facilitate their effectiveness in equipping the youth with demand-driven knowledge and skills.

### Document Analysis

The following documents were analyzed to give relevant information on the efficiency of YPs in training the youth for employment: Admission qualification records, class registers, teaching time tables, the YP curriculum, CATs and examination past papers as well as staff returns.

#### Admission qualification records

The stipulated entry requirements into YPs are standard eight leavers, secondary school dropouts and form four leavers. However, from the admission records, there was no starting entry point. Twelve out of the fourteen YPs studied had admitted three categories of students that is, primary school drop outs, standard eight leavers and secondary school drop outs. The other two had the three categories plus Form Four leavers. The implication here is that YPs are considered as places for failures. For instructors to be able to handle these diverse categories of trainees effectively, they need to be professionally trained. Training in pedagogical skills enables the instructors to meet the needs and interests of the trainees. Professional competence also generates confidence necessary for self motivation. Additionally, professional training also gives instructors the confidence to deliver their services. It is therefore imperative that instructors be trained if they are expected to make training in YPs more effective. This is because they will be able to deal with the diverse categories of students admitted in YPs.

#### Class Registers

In all the YPs studied, class registers were available. It was realized that a majority of the trainees were often absent either during the last week or the first week of the month. This means that the managers usually sent trainees home for fees during this period. This implies that, absenteeism due to school fees impacted negatively on curriculum implementation. Some of the class registers had not been marked for about three consecutive weeks especially in public YPs. From these records, it was clear that lack of school fees was a problem to the majority of the trainees. In some cases, this made trainees to drop out. It can also be deduced here that there was poor management of the public YPs as evidenced by the class registers, which indicated that there was little supervision of the instructors if any, by the managers. Effective marking of the registers helps to know the trainees affected by absenteeism. This enables the instructors to organize for remedial classes. This in turn partly contributes to

effective training of the youth in YPs. It can therefore be concluded that, poor marking of class registers by instructors and absenteeism of the trainees due to lack of school fees caused inefficiency in preparing the trainees for employment. Demoralization and demotivation due to poor remuneration among instructors especially in the government sponsored YPs may also have contributed to their reluctance in marking the registers.

### **Teaching timetables**

All the YPs studied had time tables that guided the instructors in implementing the curriculum. They were organized in three learning sessions, that is, from 8a.m to 10a.m, then from 10:30a.m to 12:30 p.m. and 2p.m to 4p.m. However, staff returns, which indicate the number of sessions an instructor teaches in a week, indicated that most of the instructors had only four teaching sessions per week. This could be as a result of improper supervision which may have caused absenteeism among the instructors.

### **The YP curriculum**

There were no curricula available for grade three trainees in all the YPs studied. The YPs had examination guidelines from DIT which guided the teaching. In some cases, instructors would sometimes decide to use their own notes given to them during their training, for instance, in national youth service (NYS) to prepare their trainees for examinations. The conclusion here is that, the absence of curricula for grade three levels and a revised one for that matter implies that trainees acquire the same knowledge and skills year after year. This is due to the fact that they follow the same examination guidelines and not a curriculum or even a revised one. This therefore means that, failure to revise the guidelines (which are used as the YP curriculum) makes the trainees acquire skills that are not demand-driven. There is therefore the need to develop a concrete curriculum for YPs and review it occasionally in order to meet the labour market demands.

### **Past CATs and Examination Papers**

A comparison between the past examination papers given to the second years in CATs and end of term examinations and the examination guidelines which acted as the curriculum in YPs indicated that there was a consistency between the two. This contributed to high and good performance by trainees during the summative evaluation at the end of the year by DIT. However, the skills the trainees were tested in were not compatible to the labour market demands. In other words, there was a mismatch between the examination guidelines and the labour market needs. This therefore implies that there was some degree of inefficiency in training the youth for employment.

### **Staff Returns**

Staff returns indicated the number of sessions an instructor taught per week. From most of the staff returns analyzed, it was evident that a majority of the instructors had few teaching sessions per week during which they concentrated on practical work in the workshops. It was noted here that there was an imbalance between the time allocated for practical and theory

work. This may have negatively affected the trainees' mastery of skills because it is never easy to apply what one has not internalized.

### **Observation checklist**

To obtain more information on the facilities in the institutions, observation method was used. A spot check on physical facilities was done. These included availability of workshops, tools and equipment in the institutions, library and production units.

### **Availability of workshops, tools and equipment**

In most of the YPs, workshops were inadequate and poorly furnished. Tools and equipment in these workshops were outdated and this affected curriculum implementation hence poor training of the youth for the job market. This in turn made many students to drop out in addition to school fees problem. Where workshops for practical work were inadequate, classes were used. In some cases, even the classes for theory work were inadequate and this may have been a contributing factor to ineffective training of the youth for employment. One of the instructors is quoted to have said: "the YP's training only ends in the village. Only a few trainees end up in the industries. In dress making for instance, we use manual machines but when trainees go to work in companies like the Export Processing Zones (EPZ) they have to be retrained so as to meet the work requirements in the company. In carpentry and joinery, no trainee has ever seen the modern machines that are used in the wood industry. In our institution, the hand plane is the best tool in the workshop. In masonry, trainees use clay models as motor vehicle where as in the current training in the YPs, modern vehicles are used. In our workshops we use Fiat Engine, Block and the Latticed Engine of Datsun 160J but nowadays vehicles are automated. This proves how irrelevant the YP curriculum is".

### **Library**

A library is a learning center charged with the responsibility of selecting, acquiring, processing, storing and disseminating appropriate information to the user. None of the YPs studied had a library. This means that the trainees mainly relied on the instructors' notes and reference books. As discussed earlier on, most of the instructors used notes acquired during their training. This therefore implies that, the skills acquired by the current trainees were not demand-driven. Further, there were few and in some cases no reference books for instructors. This greatly affected curriculum implementation.

### **Production units**

A production unit is important because it enhances the trainees' skills. This is because they are able to apply the skills acquired in making items which they in turn, sell. This reduces the cost of training the students because the finances acquired may form part of their school fees. None of the YPs had a production unit. Since most of the YP management committees mainly depended on school fees to pay the instructors and purchasing tools and equipment, they could not afford to put up production units. Even the government sponsored YPs spent the little they got in paying the instructors in order to motivate them as well as to purchase a few workshop equipment. Additionally, lack of awareness on the importance of YP training

and the general negative attitude by parents and the trainees towards YP training also hampered their support towards the construction of production units.

### **Interview schedule for employers**

In order to establish how efficient YP graduates were in applying the acquired knowledge and skills, employers of YP graduates in different areas of specialization in the job market were selected and interviewed. From the interviews, employers suggested that the acquired knowledge and skills were to a great extent irrelevant to the job market. They also suggested that some of the products by the YP graduates were of low quality and this led to less profit to the employers. Further, majority of them added that sometimes they had to retrain the YP graduates in order to improve on their job performance which was a major challenge to the employer. In dress-making and tailoring for instance, those employed at EPZ had to be retrained or go through on-the-job training. This to the employer was wastage of time and finances. "Majority of the YP graduates have neither seen nor used Electric sewing machines", one of the employers said. This confirms that certification is not evidence that one has the required knowledge and skills for efficient job performance in the labour market. Further, in motor vehicle area of specialization, trainees are supposed to learn about hydraulic engine repair as well as manual engine repair. One of the employers said: "Some trainees have never come across a hydraulic engine, so how do they repair it? I cannot employ such". This still confirms that the YP curriculum is not demand-driven.

A majority of the interviewed employers were of the opinion that there should be a working relationship between the training institutions and the business industry. This would help the curriculum developers, managers and trainers to understand the labour market demands and make the necessary adjustments in the YP curriculum to meet the business expectations.

When interviewed on the commitment of the YP graduates to their job in the labour market, some of the employers seemed dissatisfied with the level of commitment of the YP graduates in the labour market due to lack of professionalism and technical skills. Some of the YP graduates had low self esteem and poorly motivated to undertake their duties and responsibilities as a result of low standards of training. Most YPs do not offer professional training and the level of technical training is sub- standard. Business productivity is reduced as a result of lack of technical skills by the employees. Employers therefore, do not employ YP graduates who are poorly trained. Those employed are sometimes sucked and laid-off due to poor performance.

Concerning the duration of attachment in the industries and small scale businesses by the YP graduates, some employers admitted that it was sufficient for testing the skills the graduates had gained from their institutions. However, a majority did not support this fact saying it was a short period of time to determine the productivity of the graduates in the job market. Employers noted more particularly on technical courses such as motor vehicle wiring, electrical wireman, arc welding, electricity/ wiring/house installation and motor vehicle mechanics who had their attachment in their last year of training while other courses like masonry, plumbing, tailoring and dressmaking, leather work, metal work and spray painting,

had attachment only in their last term of the two years training, with a majority not going for a attachment at all. They suggested that substantial amount of time is required to determine the levels of training by these graduates. This meant that the duration of attachment was inadequate and needed to be increased. Employers also recommended that the importance of attachment be stressed and that those who never went for attachment should create time to do so.

None of the employers was involved in the development of the YP curriculum. This may have been as a result of the use of DIT examination guidelines instead of a well developed curriculum. There is the need therefore, to encourage a good working relationship between the training institutions and the business industry by involving employers in YP curriculum development. When asked to make general comments on the YP curriculum in Kenya, the employers suggested that YP Curriculum/DIT examination guidelines should be reviewed occasionally to make it more demand-driven. They should also set a standard qualification entry into the YPs, especially for electricity related courses. Such courses should be mainly for Form Four leavers, who have basic knowledge in physics unlike class eight leavers. They also recommended that there should be a working relationship between the employers, the training institutions and the government. In this case, the business industry should be allowed to participate in curriculum development. Further, modern tools and equipment for effective implementation of the curriculum should be made available. Additionally, instructors should be trained and retrained on the use of the modern tools and equipment.

### **Conclusions**

According to the findings of this study, the YP curriculum was found to be irrelevant to the needs of the trainees. There is need therefore to occasionally review the YP curriculum in order to produce employable graduates with relevant knowledge, skills and attitude to the world of work. This will require a working relationship between the training institutions and the industry. If YPs are expected to effectively train the youth, the skills so developed should be able to lead to self reliance in the absence of salaried employment. In addition, for YPs to be able to play their role effectively, it is important to ensure that there exists an enabling environment nationwide. Such an enabling environment can be achieved by putting in place a harmonized TVET policy, developing positive social attitude towards training and especially youth polytechnic training, which for long, has been looked down upon, provision of adequate funds and enhanced management. The government should also recognize that YP training is an investment and not a cost, especially when the youth are equipped with market-driven skills.

A majority of the YPs concentrated on learning experiences in their institutions but rarely allowed their trainees to engage in learning experiences outside the institutions. For instance, attachment in small scale businesses and industries, inter-institution educational visits, educational tours as well as exchange programmes were rare. For effective curriculum implementation therefore, trainees should be allowed to engage in learning experiences outside their institutions. This will give them an opportunity to interact and share ideas with there colleagues in similar institutions.



In order for YP training to be effective in training the youth for the world of work, instructors must be adequate and professionally qualified and trained. Additionally, instructors were poorly motivated. Necessary measures therefore need to be taken to improve the quality of trainees in YPs, by encouraging staff development, use of incentives and better remuneration to motivate them.

Limited teaching and learning resources affected curriculum implementation in YPs. In order to achieve high quality training in YP institutions therefore, there must be a balance between the practical and theoretical perspectives of vocational training. It is of paramount importance therefore that instructors get the required materials early enough to be able to give quality services.

A variety of evaluation techniques were employed in evaluating the effectiveness of YP training programme. In order for the YP training programme to be effective in training the youth for employment, there should be periodic evaluation. This results to modification and invention of more effective programmes. Well articulated education policy and programmes will also contribute to effective training of the youth and assist in the creation of employment.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made in relation to the findings of the study:

YPs should look for ways of keeping their current and future graduates as well as instructors abreast with technological changes in the TVET subsector to avoid obsolescence. This is by providing well articulated vocational education programmes that will contribute to effective training of the youth and hence assist in employment creation. Enough funds should also be marked for the development of the human and material resources for vocational education. The clientele, users of the products, the industries and companies need to participate in designing the curriculum of vocational institutions so that their graduates would be found employable. Current information about labour market needs, job requirements and technological changes therefore become imperative. In order to develop a curriculum with relevant technical and vocational skills, it should be recognized that TVET is an instrument that facilitates economic development. Rao (1999) and Afenyendu et al (1999) recommends that to be effective, VET institutions need to have a lot of flexibility to operate, especially in terms of introducing new courses, collaborating with the industrial sector and providing autonomy and competent people to head these institutions. In addition, there should be a periodical review of the skill needs in different sectors of training. Such review should make thorough assessment of the existing skill, project future needs and gaps as well as carefully assessing adequacies and inadequacy of the existing education and training facilities and strategies.

Attachments are a vital component of training at all levels. They are intended to provide trainees with an opportunity to acquire and sharpen knowledge, skills and attitude from a real work environment. Attachment in industries and small scale businesses, as a curriculum component therefore strengthens the practical training. It provides the trainees with an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge, develop practical experience, as well as interact

with staff and clientele of the organizations in which they are attached. Through supervision of trainees, an institution has an opportunity to assess the employment prospects of its trainees. Attachment in small scale businesses and industries, inter-institution educational visits, exchange programmes and educational tours also help the trainees to develop problem solving abilities, inter-personal and communication skills. It is therefore important for the YPs to set aside enough time for learning experiences outside the institutions.

There is need to ensure that manpower needs of vocational institutions are met by employing people who have the basic human capacity and knowledge of vocational courses. In order to achieve this, the ministry responsible should introduce refresher courses in pedagogical skills for instructors and training officers to enable them offer better training to the trainees. Further, since incentives for motivation were rare and the instructors were poorly remunerated, leading to inefficiency in executing the training programme, there is need for staff motivation and staff development in YPs.

There is need for increased funding for VET in Kenya. This should be directed towards research and development, acquisition of appropriate and modern materials as well as general maintenance and effective management of VET institutions. Teaching and learning resources used in training should be geared to the level of the training of the user. They should be simple and designed especially for pedagogical purposes, without however being obsolete. To ensure that YP training is more market-driven, it is necessary for the government to involve all the stakeholders in the formulation and evaluation of the curriculum as well as in the certification of skills.

There is also the need to look into the existing economic policies in the country. Ways and means in which capital can easily be obtained by those with entrepreneurship skills but are unable to start income generating activities due to lack of capital should be established. Graduates of the training programmes should be encouraged to be self-employed by assisting them with soft loans and micro-credits. An innovative idea in the YP programme is that the length of the course should be governed by the amount of time necessary to master the desired skills.

In conclusion, since the management of TVET in Kenya is under various government ministries, in the absence of a comprehensive legal framework to govern TVET, various aspects are governed by different sectoral legislation. This has been the main source of conflict among the various TVET providers. There is therefore the need for a national legalized TVET umbrella body that will lead to the establishment of a legalized national training authority to oversee the management of TVET in Kenya.

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