

**Causes of Youth Unemployment in Clay City Ward, Kasarani Sub County, Nairobi County Kenya****Margaret Wambui Macharia<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Duncan O. Ochieng<sup>2</sup>**<sup>1</sup>Masters in Development Studies, St. Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Social Sciences, St. Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya**\*Corresponding author***Margaret Wambui  
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10.36348/sb.2018.v04i08.006



**Abstract:** The weight of youth unemployment is felt globally with over 70 million youths being unemployed across the globe causing a decline in youth participation in the labour force. Kenya with the largest economy in East Africa has the highest unemployment rate in the region with 39% of the active population unemployed. The various initiatives by the government to alleviate youth unemployment has achieved much and the rate of youth unemployment is high in Nairobi City County due to migration to the city in search for employment, with Clay City Ward being the highest hit. A descriptive survey design was adopted on a target population of 400 unemployed youths in Clay City Ward aged between 21-25 years. A sample size of 30% of the target population which is 120 respondents was obtained through simple random sampling and a questionnaire administered. Key informant interview was also carried out with five youth leaders. Lack of proper technical and vocational training, capital, experience and dependency on parents and relatives was a major cause of youth unemployment. This has led to low living standards, low self-esteems, moral decay and some youths opting not to marry due to unstable income to support themselves and family. However some youths have taken the initiative to exploit their soft talents to earn a living. Despite the government investment in youth's initiatives not much has been achieved due to poor governance and lack of accountability. The ministry of devolution and planning should devolve the youth's funds and make it more accessible with adequate training for sustainable job creation.

**Keywords:** Unemployment, Youths, Funds, Development, Jobs.

**INTRODUCTION**

The weight of youth unemployment is felt globally. If unchecked it can become a major setback towards development. According to ILO's report on Global Employment Trends for youths [1], it is estimated that 70.9 million are unemployed across the globe thus putting the global unemployment rate at 13%. Further, participation of youths in the labour force has declined within the last 20 years from 55% in 1997 to 46% in 2017 [1].

Africa's youth demographics are growing faster compared to other regions of the world thus surpassing its economic growth making youth unemployment a key concern to development stakeholders. According to ILO [1] youth unemployment rates in Sub-Saharan Africa reached 11% and it projected that the rate will increase in 2018. Kenya has the largest economy in East Africa yet it has the highest rate of unemployment in the region with 39% of the active population being unemployed in comparison to Tanzania's 24%, Uganda's 18%, Ethiopia's 22% and Rwanda's 17% [2].

**Problem statement**

Employment opportunities in Kenya have been declining over time in relation to population growth. As a result, youth unemployment has been a widespread and worsening problem over several decades. The government of Kenya has established numerous initiatives dating early 1964 with the establishment of National Youth Service, The Kenya National Youth Policy, and the *Uwezo Fund* amongst others to help alleviate youth unemployment. These interventions have not borne much fruit as current statistic indicate Kenya unemployment rate is at 7.4% with youths aged 21-25 being the worst hit by unemployment recording a rate of 19% [3]. The number of unemployed youths is high in Nairobi City County as most youths migrate from the rural towns to the capital city in search of employment. According to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [4], Nairobi North which hosts the Clay City Ward has the highest unemployment rates within Nairobi (13%) as compared to Nairobi East which comes in as the second highest at 12%. There is therefore need to address the root cause of youth unemployment so as to

ensure that the jobless youths are engaged in meaningful development, are not vulnerable to drug abuse and that they are not recruited into terrorism acts.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study with use of a mixed method approach incorporating a quantitative approach for purposes of coming up with measurable statistics and a qualitative approach which enabled collection of data and explanation of the phenomena of youth unemployment profoundly and systematically. The study was conducted at Nairobi City County, Kasarani sub-county, Clay City Ward. Clay City ward neighbours Kasarani ward to the east, Roysambu constituency on the south and Mwiki ward on the north. According to GoK and Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [5] census report, the Clay City ward has a population of approximately 30,658 and covers an area of 15.30 Km<sup>2</sup>. The researcher chose this area because of its high number of unemployed youths that made it possible for the study to meet its purpose.

The target population was the 400 unemployed youths of the Clay City Ward aged 21-25 years. This population had a common challenge of joblessness and were in a position to provide the information that was deemed useful to this study. There were five youth leaders who were selected through purposive sampling and interviewed as key informants within the Clay City Ward. Sample size of 30% of the target population of 400 unemployed youths which was 120 respondents was utilised in the study. Simple random sampling technique was applied in selecting the respondents. A questionnaire was administered and key informant interviews carried out to obtain primary data.

The returned questionnaires were numbered and analysed for any discrepancies. Responses for closed ended questions were coded while themes were generated for the open-ended question and both were entered into the computer for analysis using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel. The descriptive statistics were tabulated on frequency distribution and percentages. The output was presented in tables, charts and graphs which were easy to interpret. Continuous variables were examined using Chi-Square Tests.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The respondents were asked to rate causes of youth unemployment on a likert scale. Part of the respondents (28%) strongly agreed that lack of experience contributed towards youth unemployment, 31% agreed, 10% selected neutral while 17% disagreed and 14% strongly disagreed. On the other hand, 22% strongly agreed that lack of proper technical and vocational training causes youth unemployment 41%

agreed, 11% neither agreed nor disagreed 16% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed. Further, 24% strongly agreed that rural-urban migration causes unemployment amongst the youths whereas 22% agreed, with 31% chose neutral, 11% disagreeing and 12% strongly disagreeing. Approximately, 31% of the respondents strongly agreed that lack of information on available opportunities contributes towards youth unemployment, 39% agreed, 14% chose neutral, 12% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed.

When questioned if youths were disinterested with available opportunities, 9% strongly agreed, 14% agreed, 23% thought it's not the cause hence chose neutral, 26% disagreed while 27% strongly disagreed. Upon questioning if lack of capital has in any way contributed to making youths jobless, 56% agreed strongly, 21% agreed, 11% neutral on this matter, 4% disagreed and 8% strongly disagreed. Additionally, on dependency on parents as a cause of unemployment amongst the respondents, 20% strongly agreed, 24% agreed, 18% ranked it as neutral, 10% disagree with 27% strongly disagreeing. The respondents supported the view that one of the major causes of youth unemployment is lack of capital. This is supported by A report by the Youth Agenda and County Youth Leaders Convention On Youth Unemployment [6] which established that most youth desire to venture into self-employment. However, lack of capital draws them behind as they cannot access loans from the banks due to lack collateral to enable them secure loans.

Analysis from the study showed that most of the respondents got support from their parents, siblings and spouses. A minimal 4% of the respondents pointed out they had other ways of supporting themselves. Upon being probed further some of the male respondents stated that they were peddling drugs, stealing while their female counterparts engaged in prostitution and others asserting that they had "sponsors" who paid their bills. Some of the respondents had taken unemployment positively and they were using various gifts and talents to support themselves. A study by Lorenzini and Giugni [7], on youth coping with unemployment confirm the findings of this study that indeed family members, the spouse and friends help young people to deal with the effects of long-term unemployment by providing them either moral support, psychological support or financial support or both.

Upon probing further on how long the respondents have been unemployed 14% had been unemployed for less than 3 months with 16% indicated to be out of employment for 6-12 months whereas 29% had been unemployed between 1-3 years and 27% had no jobs for over 4 years. In addition, those not actively seeking for employment were questioned more for reasons why they were not looking for job

opportunities. Approximately 10% of them stated that they were still in college or university while 4% who were all female stated reasons such as “they had no one to leave their children with to search for a job,” another one also stated that “the husband could not allow such,” while a third one stated that she was expectant therefore she couldn’t be able to do most of the casual jobs she does.

The respondents were required to specify how unemployment had affected them as individuals and

majority of the respondents 51 (46%) stated that unemployment has led to low living standards (Table 1). This response was common amongst most of the respondents thus recording the highest frequency “I cannot afford basic needs” and/or “I sleep hungry” alongside responses such as “I get late in paying my rent.” Further, 19 (17%) of the respondents indicated that they had a low self-esteem for instance one respondent specified “I feel I am ugly since I don’t have nice clothes and I cannot afford makeup like my friends”.

**Table-1: Effects of unemployment on respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Moral decay	15	14
Low self-esteem	19	17
Delay in marriage	6	5.5
Low living standards	51	46
Unable to continue with studies	5	4.5
Exploitation of talents	14	13
Total	348	100

Source: Field data (2018)

Moral decay was mentioned as an effect of unemployment at 15 (14%). Some of the responses that depicted moral decay include “unemployment ruined my moral life” whereas some of the female respondents mentioned that they had sponsors or were practising prostitution. On the other hand, some of their male counterparts mentioned that they sell and use drugs and others are into crime like mugging. Some of the respondents 6 (5.5%) pointed out that unemployment had caused them to delay marrying as they didn’t have a stable source of income to support a family while some of them said that their spouses had left them due to unemployment. Inability to continue with college/university studies was also pointed out by 5(4.5%) of the respondents.

Despite having negative responses, the researcher noted that 14 (13%) of the respondents pointed out that the unemployment has made them exploit their talents for economic gain. For instance, one respondent wrote “Unemployment has made me to use my talents and now I don’t have to sleep hungry.” A research report by European foundation found out that unemployed youths are unhappy, anxious, miserable, quarantined, have high levels of stress, unfocused hence they have little or no direction [8].

Cross tabulations of respondents’ age and supporting self with unemployment was done to determine existence of a relationship between these two variables. The statistical tests showed a Chi-Square value  $\chi^2_{6, 0.05} = 9.208$  of  $P = 0.162$  at 95% confidence interval with 6 degrees of freedom and Spearman Correlation  $R = 0.176$  at  $P = 0.066$  indicating a significant positive weak relationship between age and youth supporting self without employment.

**CONCLUSION**

From the study findings, it is clear that the government has invested enough resources in the creation of youth employment initiatives through allocation of funds such as the *Uwezo* and youth fund respectively. However, these funds have not benefited the youths as they have been marred with poor governance and lack of accountability. Lack of accessibility of the funds has also worsened youth unemployment

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The government through the Ministry of Devolution and Planning should devolve the *Uwezo* fund and the youths fund to ensure that the funds are easily accessible to the youths. Besides that, there should be adequate training before securing the loans to ensure there is transparency in the allocation and use of funds meant to empower the youths and the youths initiatives are sustainable and will eventually create more jobs.

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