

**THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FUND AND YOUTH
EMPLOYABILITY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF HOMA BAY AND KISUMU
COUNTIES, 2017-2022**

**BY
MBOHA OLOO JOSEPH**

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MASENO UNIVERSITY

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DECLARATION

I declare ownership of this thesis as my original work which has not been presented for examination anywhere else.

Mboha Oloo Joseph

MA/DS/00073/020

Sign..... Date

Supervisors:

This thesis has been submitted with our approval as the University Supervisors.

Dr. Barack Calvince Omondi

School of Development and Strategic Studies

Maseno University

Sign..... Date

Dr. Jane Khasoa Lusenaka.

School of Development and Strategic Studies

Maseno University

Sign..... Date

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

The global youth demographic bulge presents a pressing challenge that requires strategic public policy interventions. Projections indicate that the current youth population, as defined by the United Nations, will increase from 1.2 billion to 1.3 billion by 2030. Concerns arise among academics and policymakers regarding the unpreparedness of the world, particularly sub-Saharan African countries, to harness this impending demographic surge into a demographic dividend. Policymakers acknowledge that sustained job creation offers the most viable path toward realizing this goal. This study investigates the impact of innovative public policy interventions, specifically implemented under the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF), on the employability of youth beneficiaries from 2017 to 2022 in Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties. The research specifically examines the influence of various skill sets supported by NGAAF on youth employability, assesses the impact of post-skills acquisition support on youth employability, and scrutinizes the challenges faced by the program in these two counties. Guided by the Social Partners Model and the theory of self-employment, data collection and analysis were structured. Employing a comparative case study design to appraise county-specific experiences, the study involved 29 key informants from NGAAF Management, industry experts/institutions, and National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) centers, as well as 680 beneficiaries of NGAAF training opportunities. The sample size comprised 381 (56% of total: 680) participants, with 157 from Kisumu and 224 from Homa Bay, determined using a formula that gave a sample size whose responses could be generalized. Data were collected through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) for qualitative data and semi-structured questionnaires for quantitative data. Simple descriptive statistics and thematic content analysis were employed to analyze quantitative and qualitative data, respectively. Triangulation of data from both sources revealed areas of convergence and divergence within each thematic area corresponding to the study's objectives. The findings highlight that the impact of youth empowerment interventions hinges on the skill sets supported, with graduates of quick-service, short-term courses demonstrating higher employability rates compared to their counterparts from long-term technical programs. Additionally, providing post-training support to youth enhances their employability by reducing the time taken to secure employment after graduation. Together both skill-sets and post-training support helped graduates seek employment; underscoring the value of solid practical vocational training as opposed to theory-based education. However, youth empowerment programs face a myriad of challenges, both structural and non-structural, necessitating a collaborative social partners approach to address these obstacles and establish sustainable momentum for reducing youth unemployment through employability-based empowerment initiatives. This study underscores the importance of allowing beneficiaries to choose courses aligned with their preferences, formalizing post-training support, and developing strategies to address contextual factors and policy issues. These include design considerations, stakeholder analysis and involvement, financing, and addressing beneficiary-specific limitations. Ultimately, the research contributes new insights to policy and academic discourse, emphasizing the significance of skill sets, post-training support, and the challenges inherent in these processes. The empirical evidence presented here shifts the ongoing policy dialogue from unemployment – as an ambiguous concept - to a more focused debate trajectories to youth employability.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AU	-	African Union
AYC	-	African Youth Charter
CWR	-	County Women Representatives
ILO	-	International Labour Organization
KII	-	Key Informant Interviews
KNYP	-	Kenya National Youth Policy
MS	-	Member States
NGAAF	-	National Government Affirmative Action Fund
NITA	-	National Industrial Training Authority
PCI	-	Program Collaborating Industries
PIA	-	Program Implementing Authorities
UN	-	United Nations
YB	-	Youth Bulge
YEPP	-	Youth Economic Empowerment Programs

OPERATIONALIZATION OF TERMS

Youth bulge: Employed as conceptual frame which points to the explosions in the youth population and its implications and calls for innovative initiatives by stakeholders, primarily the government for youth economic empowerment.

Youth: The Constitution of Kenya (2010) Article 260 defines youth as “ individuals in the Republic who have attained the age of eighteen years; but have not attained the age of thirty-five years ” This study adopts Kenyan definition which treats anyone between 18-34 years of age as a youth as applied in the Kenya Constitution.

Youth Employability: Attainment of requisite skills for job placement through education and training to support youth access to employment or self-employment opportunities.

National Government Affirmative Action Fund: Social protection initiative targeting the vulnerable categories of population in Kenya such as youths, women, and people with disabilities and so on. It is a special type of fund in Kenya which operates at the County Level under the patronage of County Women Representatives and the management of a County NGAAF Fund Manager.

Youth Economic Empowerment Programs: Programs in line with the national youth policy of Kenya, and whose primary objective is to solve youth poverty programs by providing the youths with opportunity for market-oriented technical training and/or employment/ post-training opportunities.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The demographic youth bulge, characterized by the substantial population of individuals aged 14-24 years, presents both an opportunity and a challenge for nations worldwide. As highlighted by TechSci Research (2023), there are approximately 1.2 billion youths in this age group in 2023, a number projected to increase to 1.3 billion by 2030. The pressing question for policymakers and researchers is how to transform this burgeoning youth population, often referred to as Generation Z, into a demographic blessing rather than a looming demographic bomb, as cautioned by the World Bank in 2012.

World Bank (2012) unpacks how the youth can be a dividend and a bomb, showing the necessity for tackling unemployment as the single most critical panacea. In a nation experiencing a youth bulge, as young adults reach working age, the country's dependency ratio, indicating the proportion of the population that is not of working age relative to those who are, is expected to decrease. If the growing number of individuals in the working-age bracket can secure gainful employment and engage in productive activities, all else being equal, there should be a rise in the average income per capita. This phenomenon is referred to as the demographic dividend, wherein the youth bulge translates into a demographic advantage (National Council for Population and Development, 2021; (Damon et al., 2016; Jhurree, 2005; USAID, 2014; USAID, 2022). However, should a substantial portion of the young population struggle to find employment and earn a satisfactory income, the youth bulge could transform into a demographic threat, as a sizable cohort of disillusioned youth may potentially become a source of social and political unrest. Hence, argues Calderon et al. (2022) writing for World Bank, and many other authorities, assert that a fundamental gauge of a country's success in harnessing the potential of the youth bulge is the rate of youth (un)employment. Regrettably, recent statistics do not paint an optimistic picture.

While it is natural for youth unemployment rates to be higher due to their limited work experience, the alarming double-digit figures depicted in developing countries (including Kenya) are a cause for concern. Typically, in most developing countries, youth unemployment rates tend to be approximately twice as high as those from the broader workforce. The situation is particularly distressing in the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and North Africa and in the some nations of Europe and Central Asia, where youth

unemployment hovers around 20 percent or even higher (World Bank, 2012; 2023). For SSA, an additional problem is that even those youths who can be categorized as employed find themselves in informal “Juakali” settings, with high susceptibility to shocks and stresses. Informality means that even those who are employed may face issues related to the quality of their jobs (World Bank, 2012).

To unlock the potential within this demographic surge, governments and stakeholders must focus on comprehensive strategies that encompass education, employment, and social well-being (ILO, 2022; Calderon, 2022; Senou & Soro, 2022; Kumar, 2023; Sumberg & Hunt, 2019; Afolabi, Raifu & Aminu, 2022). First and foremost, investments in education and skill development are paramount, ensuring that the youth are equipped with the competencies required for meaningful engagement in the workforce (Kumar, Kumar, 2022; 2023). Simultaneously, fostering an environment conducive to job creation, particularly in sectors with high youth employment potential, such as technology and innovation, should be a priority. Labor market reforms that lower barriers to entry and encourage companies to hire young workers are vital in this regard (ILO, 2022; Senou & Soro, 2022; Afolabi, Raifu & Aminu, 2022). Additionally, promoting youth entrepreneurship through mentorship, financial support, and access to resources can stimulate innovation and job opportunities (Afolabi, Raifu & Aminu, 2022). Moreover, the establishment of robust social safety nets, engagement of youth in decision-making processes, and focus on digital literacy and connectivity are all essential facets of a holistic approach (Calderon et al., 2022; ILO, 2022). Ultimately, addressing the youth demographic bulge necessitates a concerted, multi-dimensional effort that not only enhances the prospects of Generation Z but also fortifies the economic and social fabric of nations (TechSci Research, 2023)

In light of the global challenge posed by youth unemployment, this study embarked on an examination of the efforts made by the Kenyan government to address this pressing issue. The focus narrowed down to a recent initiative known as the National Affirmative Action Fund Program (NGAAF), which has been implemented across all of Kenya's 47 counties. This investigation aimed not only to bridge the knowledge gaps existing due to the scarcity of policy studies on the NGAAF program but also to shed light on significant insights that could inform a substantive, empirically-grounded discourse on how to transform the youth bulge, prevalent in the country, into an asset.

The urgency of addressing youth unemployment cannot be overstated, as it is a global crisis that continues to escalate. According to the International Labor Organization's (ILO) World Employment and Social Outlook Trends report for 2022, an alarming estimate of over 73 million youths are currently unemployed. The recovery from this crisis has been slow, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to a decline of 34 million youth employment opportunities between 2019 and 2020, as reported by the ILO in 2022. Recognizing the unique characteristics of the youth population, the United Nations (UN) emphasizes the need to target and engage them effectively in income-generating activities. The UN contends that youth represents a dynamic phase of transition from childhood dependence to adult independence, making this age category more fluid compared to fixed age-groups. However, age-based definitions remain essential, especially concerning education and employment, where youth is typically described as individuals between the ages of leaving compulsory education and entering their first job (UN, 2022, p. 1). This fluidity underscores the importance of tailored policies and initiatives to facilitate the meaningful engagement of youth in productive endeavors. In this context, the study scrutinized the NGAAF program in Kenya, aiming to uncover how it addresses the complexities of youth unemployment and enhances youth employability. The findings of this analysis have the potential to inform evidence-based discussions on leveraging Kenya's youth bulge for socioeconomic development.

Undoubtedly, addressing the challenges posed by unemployment, particularly the issue of unemployability due to a lack of essential skills, holds global significance. This concern is not confined to individual nations but extends to the collective efforts of states worldwide. Within the African context, the African Union Member States (MSs) have recognized the pivotal role played by youths in achieving the ambitious Agenda 2063. To guide the efforts of Member States in tackling youth-related challenges on the continent, the African Youth Charter (AYC) was established. This charter serves as a blueprint for the formulation of youth-supportive policies and the implementation of youth-sensitive programs and projects. The recommendations put forth by the African Union include policies aimed at transforming the employment landscape by providing African youths with education and training that align with the demands of the job market. Moreover, the charter advocates for affirmative actions to enable youths to access these opportunities, acquire necessary skills, and ultimately, contribute meaningfully to their nations' development. The overarching vision of the AYC is to bring about comprehensive transformation at the policy, institutional, and programmatic

levels. Specifically, Article 13 (3) of the Charter underscores the importance of revitalizing vocational education and training, particularly in rural and remote areas, to ensure relevance to current and prospective employment opportunities. Member States have taken these recommendations to heart, translating them into policies and practical programs aimed at rescuing young people from vulnerable unemployment situations, one such policy being the National Government Affirmative Action Fund Program. In this context, it becomes evident that this study's focus on the National Affirmative Action Fund Program in Kenya aligns with a broader imperative of addressing youth unemployment and enhancing youth employability in the African context.

Indeed, the youth demographic can be seen as a double-edged sword, with the potential to either become a demographic bomb or a critical asset, depending on how it is harnessed. Structural and non-structural factors play a significant role in exacerbating this challenge (Damon et al., 2016; Jhurree, 2005; USAID, 2014; USAID, 2022). As these factors persist, young people become increasingly susceptible to a range of shocks, including political, economic, socio-cultural, and ecological disruptions. Consequently, the discussion surrounding youth and public policy revolves around a central question: How can the potential demographic bomb posed by the so-called youth bulge be intentionally transformed into an opportunity for national development?

For policymakers, addressing the projected increase in the youth population and the prevailing high rates of youth unemployment, which affect both the educated and uneducated segments of this demographic, is a paramount concern. Sustainable solutions must be sought, not only for the present but also to secure a prosperous future. The urgency lies in creating pathways that empower young people with the skills, opportunities and support they need to become active contributors to their societies. This mission aligns with the broader goals of national development and socioeconomic progress, making it a critical area of focus for policymakers and researchers alike (USAID, 2022). By examining specific programs and policies, such as the National Government Affirmative Action Fund Program in Kenya, we can gain valuable insights into the practical measures being taken to address these pressing issues and potentially turn the youth demographic into a driving force for positive change and development.

In the African context, youth employability represents a pivotal component of comprehensive interventions aimed at addressing the multifaceted challenges of underdevelopment,

upholding human rights, and countering the threat of radical extremism on the continent. The significance of this issue is underscored by the demographic composition of Africa's population. As reported by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 2021, Africa has a notably youthful demographic, with approximately 20 percent of its population falling within the age range of 15 to 24. Astonishingly, this youthful segment constitutes a substantial 54 percent of the total labor force. Moreover, projections indicate that this demographic landscape will further intensify by 2050, with an estimated 25 percent of the global working-age population hailing from Africa, signifying that one in every four working-age individuals will be of African origin. This demographic reality places a profound responsibility on African governments and researchers to ensure that the large population of youths, many of whom are currently out of school and possess varying levels of skills, can acquire the necessary competencies to engage in legitimate economic activities, attain independence, and actively participate in the realization of Africa's developmental vision, Agenda 2063.

Researchers, in particular, play a critical role in this endeavor. Their task involves the comprehensive examination of ongoing youth empowerment programs, including their effectiveness and areas that may require improvement. By offering insights and feedback to policymakers, researchers facilitate a continuous process of learning and refinement of these programs, ultimately enhancing their impact and relevance. It is within this broader context that the current study assumes its significance. This research venture aims to assess the outcomes of a recent innovation known as the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF) Program. Notably, while implementing its affirmative action initiatives, NGAAF concurrently undertook youth employability programs spanning the period from 2017 to 2022. Such innovative initiatives hold the promise of delivering substantial benefits to both the youth and the government of Kenya. However, despite their potential, there remains a notable dearth of policy studies examining the extent to which these youth employability programs have effectively achieved their intended objectives. By delving into this critical assessment, this study contributes to the broader mission of comprehending the intricate dynamics of youth employability and its pivotal role in shaping the future of Kenya and Africa as a whole.

In the extensive body of literature addressing the issue of youth unemployment, three predominant factors have emerged as critical contributors to the challenge (United Nations Population Division, 2021). First, there is the stark and alarming growth in the labor force,

which has significantly outpaced the creation of employment opportunities in Africa. The United Nations Population Division (2021) estimates that within the last decade, over 100 million new job-seekers have entered the labor force in Africa, yet the continent has generated only 37 million remunerative job positions. This glaring discrepancy highlights a pressing issue: a large number of youths, who constitute the majority of new entrants to the job market (as emphasized by Samuel Hall, 2021), are grappling with unemployment irrespective of their possession of requisite skillsets.

The second factor contributing to the problem is the persistent mismatch between the skills possessed by job-seekers and the demands of available jobs. This discrepancy can be attributed in part to the historical neglect of technical and vocational education and training (TVET), a concern that extends to the Kenyan context as well. Samuel Hall's research in 2017 revealed that Kenya witnesses an annual influx of over 800,000 youths into the job market, far exceeding the country's capacity to provide suitable job opportunities. This imbalance intensifies as more young individuals graduate from universities and colleges, further exacerbating the challenges posed by youth unemployment. Consequently, it becomes imperative for governments to reconsider their approaches to addressing the complex dynamics associated with having a sizable youth population.

A third critical factor in the equation is the poor quality of non-job-oriented education, which is closely linked to the deficiency in the requisite skills for successful job placement. Across Africa, the educational systems at high school and specialization levels often fail to align with the evolving demands of the job market and the dynamics of labor requirements. In many cases, curricula lack responsiveness to emerging job needs. For instance, as highlighted by USAID (2021), graduates with theoretical academic backgrounds, particularly those with first degrees, tend to face higher rates of post-graduation unemployment compared to individuals who have received technical training from institutions that equip them with the skills demanded in service industries, such as food, motor vehicle, clothing, and beauty sectors.

This multifaceted issue underscores the pressing need for a comprehensive and systemic reevaluation of education and employment policies across Africa. It calls for a concerted effort to bridge the gap between education and the labor market, to create more job opportunities in tandem with the burgeoning youth population, and to ensure that educational systems are better aligned with the skills demanded by the evolving job landscape. The

outcomes of such endeavors have far-reaching implications not only for the youth but also for the broader economic and social development of African nations. This study, in particular, takes a critical step toward addressing these challenges, offering valuable insights into the NGAAF program's role in enhancing youth employability in Kenya, and by extension, contributing to Africa's pursuit of sustainable development and economic prosperity.

This study represents a concerted effort to delve into the effectiveness of one specific youth employability empowerment program facilitated by the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF) in equipping young individuals with job-oriented market skills and subsequently leading to their gainful employment. To provide a comprehensive analysis, a comparative approach was employed to assess both differences and commonalities in the implementation of this program in two counties: Homa Bay and Kisumu.

Youth employability has garnered significant attention from governments, donors, and development partners across the developing world, as underscored in the research of Damon et al. (2016) and the insights provided by USAID (2022). The pressing issue of high youth unemployment levels in developing economies carries multifaceted risks, including the potential for youth radicalization, involvement in conflict mobilization, heightened vulnerability to the effects of climate change, and insecurity, among other perilous consequences. Consequently, governments have embarked on the establishment of various programs aimed at ensuring that all categories of out-of-school youth are actively engaged in income-generating activities. In Kenya, a range of such initiatives has been implemented, including Kazi Kwa Vijana, Kazi Mtaani, the Kenya Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF), the Kenya Youth and Employment Opportunity Program (KYEOP), and the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF), among others. The overarching objective is to empower young people to participate in economic activities that not only deter them from potential misuse but also enable them to contribute significantly to the economic development of Kenya.

The NGAAF, in particular, represents a contemporary empowerment program within the Kenyan context, and as such, it warrants a thorough examination of its efficacy in youth empowerment and employability. The employability programs initiated initially in Homa Bay County and subsequently in Kisumu County, before expanding to other regions, are rooted in NGAAF policy and thus present an opportune subject for policy analysis. By dissecting the opportunities and limitations inherent in these programs at both the programmatic and policy

levels, this study endeavors to provide valuable insights into the NGAAF's role in enhancing youth employability and its potential for driving economic development in Kenya. Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute substantively to the discourse surrounding youth empowerment and employment in the country, shedding light on the practical aspects of NGAAF's impact on the lives of young Kenyans and the broader socioeconomic landscape of the nation.

The Kenyan government, like many other African nations, has recognized the pressing challenges posed by the youth bulge – a continuously increasing population of young individuals, often exceeding the available resources and opportunities for meaningful engagement. In response, the government has formulated comprehensive policy frameworks to address these issues, with the National Youth Policy (NYP) being a central component, mandated by Article 12 of the African Youth Charter (AYC). The NYP lays out the government's clear intentions and strategies for effectively addressing the needs and aspirations of its ever-expanding, youthful, and predominantly unemployed or underemployed population.

The latest National Housing and Population Census data underscore the demographic significance of this challenge. It reveals that individuals aged 15-24 years account for 18.83% of the population (male 4,398,554/female 4,411,586), while those aged 25-34 years make up a substantial 33.54% (male 7,938,111/female 7,755,128) (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2019). In accordance with Kenya's constitutional definition of 'youth' as individuals aged 18-34 years, this translates to a staggering 52.37% of the total population. This demographic reality holds significant implications for Kenya's future, and without deliberate and transformative policy interventions, this large youth population could potentially become a burden to the nation, especially in an era of increasing globalization marked by challenges such as violence, radicalization, porous borders, climate change, and the need to adapt to rapidly evolving technology that threatens traditional forms of employment. The insights presented in research by UNICEF (2012), USAID (2022), and ILO (2022) underscore the urgency of addressing these issues.

To operationalize the broader objectives outlined in the National Youth Policy, various program-oriented policies have been developed in Kenya. One such policy, and the focus of the current study, is the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF) Policy. This policy represents a targeted approach to addressing youth empowerment and

employability within the country. By examining the NGAAF Policy and its implementation, this study seeks to shed light on the extent to which it effectively addresses the needs and aspirations of Kenya's youth population, ultimately contributing to the broader goal of transforming the youth bulge into a demographic dividend for the nation. In essence, the NGAAF Policy serves as a vital component of Kenya's multifaceted efforts to harness the potential of its youth and align their energy, creativity, and skills with the nation's development agenda in an ever-evolving global landscape.

The National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF) holds a pivotal role within the government of Kenya, operating as a semi-autonomous government agency (SAGA) under the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs, within the State Department of Gender Affairs. Established by Legal Notice No. 24 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2012, and officially published on 13th February 2015, the NGAAF operates under the regulatory framework of the Public Finance Management Act, 2012, specifically the National Government Affirmative Action Fund Regulations of 2016. This agency represents a key initiative of the Kenyan government, strategically aligned with the nation's overarching development agenda as outlined in Kenya Vision 2030.

The primary aim of NGAAF is to facilitate the realization of the socio-economic commitments articulated by the government, with a particular focus on poverty reduction and the alleviation of inequality. This is achieved through the enhanced provision of financial resources to empower vulnerable groups, including women, youth, Persons with Disabilities, needy children, and elderly individuals across the country. The Fund serves as a conduit for promoting enterprise development and value addition initiatives, contributing directly to the socioeconomic empowerment of these marginalized groups (NGAAF, 2022).

Within the Kenyan County Governance Framework (CGF), NGAAF operates under the patronage of the County Women Representatives (CWR), with each CWR responsible for overseeing the NGAAF initiatives in their respective counties. Given the compelling case for youth population, a significant portion of NGAAF programs has been tailored to address the specific needs of young individuals. However, these programs exhibit variations in design and implementation, often customized to suit the unique context of each county. Funding for NGAAF programs is typically allocated based on specific program proposals submitted by the counties themselves. Consequently, these divergent approaches have likely yielded varying outcomes. To inform policy and programmatic improvements, there is a critical need

for empirical research into the impact, or lack thereof, of these publicly funded programs on the targeted youth population, particularly concerning the core concern of enhancing youth employability. This study thus takes on the task of conducting a comparative analysis of two similar NGAAF programs that were implemented differently in two distinct Kenyan counties: Kisumu and Homa Bay.

Based on preliminary expert surveys, it has been determined that the Kisumu program focused exclusively on girls and did not provide post-training support. In contrast, the Homa Bay County program targeted both girls and boys, specifically those engaged in Boda Boda and fishing activities, and went a step further by offering start-up packages in the form of tools. Despite these differences, both programs shared the commonality of sponsoring youths aged 18-35 to undergo training at various National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) Centers, where they pursued diverse technical and vocational courses, including hairdressing, boiler technology, electrical installation, and more. This policy study seeks to uncover the opportunities and challenges that were both similar and divergent in these two counties and assess the extent to which these NGAAF programs have achieved their objectives in terms of enhancing youth employability. By doing so, this research aims to contribute valuable insights that can inform evidence-based policy decisions and program refinements to better serve the youth population and promote sustainable development in Kenya.

This study deepened our understanding of two similar programs that were implemented differently in two different Kenyan counties. The research explored the nature of the courses and skill sets supported by these programs, shedding light on the relevance of the courses undertaken by sponsored youths and their suitability for employment opportunities. It revealed both variances and similarities in the types of courses prioritized in each county and the outcomes in terms of youth employability. One of the critical issues addressed was the existing gap between the skills acquired by young individuals from learning institutions and the skills demanded by employers in various industries. The expectation was that NGAAF programs, designed to bridge this gap, would provide support for relevant courses. However, the extent to which NGAAF effectively supported such programs had not been thoroughly investigated before this study.

Given its comparative nature, this study capitalized on the differences between counties to uncover policy gaps and formulate policy and programmatic recommendations. These recommendations are intended to inform future NGAAF initiatives and related youth

empowerment programs, ensuring that they are better aligned with the needs and aspirations of young Kenyans.

Furthermore, the study delved into the nature of post-skills acquisition support provided by NGAAF and, where such support was lacking, examined the post-skills acquisition experiences of program graduates. This inquiry provided a deeper understanding of the impacts of NGAAF's youth empowerment programs, revealing both commendable practices that can serve as models for other counties and areas that require improvement or avoidance. The study also explored the challenges encountered by NGAAF in the implementation of youth empowerment programs, considering the specific context of the comparative investigation. By doing so, this research has contributed to a more comprehensive comprehension of the dynamics surrounding NGAAF initiatives and their implications for youth empowerment in Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Kenya, as well as across many developing nations, the pressing issue of youth unemployment and unemployability has reached critical proportions, casting a shadow over the potential demographic dividend that the youth population represents. The statistics paint a grim picture: youth unemployment rates continue to soar, with the International Labor Organization's World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2022 revealing that an estimated 73 million youths worldwide are unemployed. In the context of Kenya, where the youth population comprises a significant portion of the total populace, the situation is particularly dire. The latest National Housing and Population Census of 2019 indicates that individuals aged 15-34 account for a staggering 52.37% of the Kenyan population. This demographic reality underscores the urgent need to address youth unemployment, as the failure to do so not only threatens the economic prospects of Kenya but also presents risks of youth radicalization, conflict mobilization, and intensified climate change impacts, among other perilous consequences.

In response to this crisis, Kenya has implemented various youth empowerment programs, among them the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF). NGAAF represents a critical intervention in supporting vulnerable populations, with a specific focus on youth, to equip them with the skills and resources needed for meaningful employment or self-employment. However, despite its transformative potential, there exists a notable research gap when it comes to comprehensively analyzing the processes and outcomes of

NGAAF programs, especially from a policy perspective. This gap hinders a nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of these programs in addressing the dual challenges of youth unemployment and unemployability. Furthermore, NGAAF programs have been implemented differently across counties, resulting in variations in approach and outcomes. To bridge this gap and inform evidence-based policy decisions, it is imperative to conduct a comparative study that delves into the nuanced differences in program design, execution, and impacts, particularly with a focus on enhancing youth employability.

Therefore, this study aimed to unravel the multifaceted problem of youth unemployment and unemployability in Kenya by scrutinizing the NGAAF programs. It seeks to assess the effectiveness of these programs in preparing youth for the job market and self-employment. By undertaking a comparative analysis of NGAAF projects in Kisumu and Homa Bay Counties, which have implemented the same program with distinct models, this research endeavors to unearth valuable insights into the challenges, achievements, and policy gaps that exist within these initiatives. This comparative approach enabled an appraisal of how contextual factors impacted policy innovation and implementation, providing a deeper understanding of the dynamics at play. Ultimately, this study aspired to unpack policy lessons that can guide future NGAAF programs and similar youth empowerment efforts towards effectively addressing youth unemployment and unemployability, thereby contributing to the sustainable development of Kenya and similar contexts grappling with this critical issue

1.3 Study Objectives

1.3.1 The Main Objective

The main objective of the study was to analyze the impact of National Government Affirmative Action Fund on youth employability by comparing where possible, its undertakings in the counties of Kisumu and Homa Bay.

1.3.2 The Specific Objective

- i. To examine the impact of different skill-sets supported by NGAAF on youth employability in Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties;
- ii. To assess the impact of post-skills acquisition support on youth employability in Kisumu and Homa Bay Counties and;
- iii. To appraise the challenges faced by Homa Bay and Kisumu counties in implementing NGAAF employability program.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. How did the types of skill-sets supported through National Government Affirmative Action Fund impact on the youth employability in Homa Bay and Kisumu counties?
- ii. How did the strategies applied to undertake post-skills acquisition support given by National Government Affirmative Action Fund to the beneficiaries in Homa Bay and Kisumu counties impact on their employability?
- iii. What are the challenges impeding national government affirmative action fund youth empowerment Programs in Homa Bay and Kisumu counties?

1.5 Justification of the Study

Policy Significance. This study's policy significance extends beyond the surface-level examination of youth empowerment programs. It delves into the heart of these initiatives, scrutinizing their real-world impact on the lives of young individuals in Kisumu and Homa Bay Counties. By doing so, it has provided concrete evidence and actionable recommendations for policymakers and program developers as well as other secondary actors in the policy processes such as donor and the civil society organizations (CSOs) in general. These insights are indispensable for policymakers tasked with refining existing youth empowerment policies and formulating new ones. The study has served as a critical compass, guiding the way toward policies that are more attuned to the specific challenges and opportunities faced by the youth in different regional contexts.

Furthermore, the policy significance lies in the study's ability to bridge the gap between policy intent and on-ground reality. While policies may be well-intentioned, their effectiveness ultimately hinges on how they are implemented and received by the target population. This research has brought this implementation aspect into sharp focus, offering a holistic view of the youth empowerment landscape. It has emphasized the importance of adaptability in policy design, encouraging policymakers to consider the unique characteristics of each county when crafting and executing youth-oriented interventions. Ultimately, the policy significance of this study lies in its capacity to transform well-meaning policies into practical solutions that can catalyze positive change in the lives of Kenya's youth.

Normative Significance. The normative significance of this study transcends the realm of academic inquiry, touching upon the fundamental principles of social justice and inclusivity. It has provided a platform for reflecting on the broader normative debates surrounding youth empowerment, highlighting the imperative of ensuring that no segment of society is left

behind in the development process. By shedding light on the barriers that hinder youth participation and access to opportunities, the study has underscored the moral and ethical imperative of addressing these disparities. It has ignited a critical conversation about the ethical responsibilities of governments and development agencies in safeguarding the rights and aspirations of the youth.

Moreover, the study's normative significance extends to the global discourse on sustainable development. It aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 10, which aims to reduce inequalities within and among countries. By uncovering the challenges faced by youth in Kisumu and Homa Bay Counties, the research contributes to the broader objective of achieving more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable societies. It reinforces the notion that sustainable development cannot be achieved without active and meaningful youth participation. In this sense, the normative significance of the study lies in its call to action, urging policymakers, development practitioners, and civil society to prioritize youth inclusion and equity in their agendas for a more just and prosperous future.

Academic Contribution. This study represents a significant academic milestone, pushing the boundaries of research and public policy analysis in several ways. First, it breaks new ground by examining public policy through the prism of program implementation. Traditionally, policy analysis has often focused on dissecting policy content, overlooking the critical dimension of how policies are translated into actionable programs and their real-world impact (Anyebe, 2018). By delving into the actual implementation of youth empowerment initiatives, this study has provided a much-needed bridge between policy formulation and program execution. It has illuminated the intricate processes, challenges, and opportunities that exist in the realm of policy implementation, enriching the academic discourse with a deeper understanding of the complexities involved.

Secondly, the study's academic significance lies in its unique approach to comparative analysis. While many studies have explored the impact of youth empowerment programs in isolation, this research opted for a comparative examination of similar programs in two different counties. This approach has enriched the academic landscape by offering insights into how contextual factors and local dynamics can shape program design and outcomes. It underscores the importance of considering regional nuances when crafting and implementing policies, a valuable lesson for scholars and policymakers alike. Furthermore, this comparative

approach has the potential to serve as a model for future research, encouraging scholars to adopt a broader lens when investigating the effectiveness of public policies and programs.

In addition, the academic significance extends to the methodological innovation employed in this study. The rigorous examination of NGAAF projects in Kisumu and Homa Bay Counties demonstrates a commitment to empirical research and evidence-based policy analysis. By employing a mixed-methods approach that encompasses surveys, interviews, and data analysis, the study sets a high academic standard for future research endeavors. It serves as a testament to the power of interdisciplinary research, seamlessly integrating insights from sociology, economics, and public policy to provide a comprehensive understanding of the youth empowerment landscape. Ultimately, the academic contribution of this study lies in its potential to inspire future scholars to explore the intricacies of policy implementation, embrace comparative analysis, and employ innovative research methodologies to address complex societal challenges.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study is multifaceted, encompassing various dimensions that extend beyond its objectives and timeline. The study adopts a comparative approach to assess the implementation of NGAAF youth economic empowerment programs in Kisumu and Homa Bay Counties. This comparative analysis serves as a robust framework for evaluating the nuanced variations and similarities in program implementation between these two counties. The study focuses on three primary groups of stakeholders: the primary beneficiaries who have directly experienced the NGAAF programs, the primary implementers responsible for executing the programs on the ground, and the policymakers engaged in the oversight and development of the policy program under examination. The specific objectives guiding this analysis are threefold: examining the skillsets offered and their impact on the employability of the beneficiaries, assessing the post-skill support provided and its influence on the beneficiaries, and identifying and understanding the challenges encountered throughout the program.

Methodologically, this study adopts a mixed-methods design, leveraging both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques. This methodological choice enables a comprehensive exploration of the research questions, allowing for the triangulation of findings and a more holistic understanding of the NGAAF youth economic empowerment programs. Qualitative data, gathered through interviews, enriches the study with in-depth

insights into the experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced by the stakeholders involved. On the other hand, quantitative data, collected through surveys and program records, provides empirical evidence that supports the qualitative findings, adding rigor and statistical validity to the study's conclusions.

Limitations: During the course of this study, certain limitations were encountered, and efforts were made to effectively mitigate their impact on the research process and findings.

One limitation that emerged during the research process was the challenge of obtaining critical financial information related to the NGAAF programs, particularly from program leads in each study site. While this limitation initially posed a potential obstacle, the research team adopted a pragmatic approach by shifting the focus of the study towards an examination of the program's processes and its impact on beneficiaries as well as designing an approach to reach to key policy people of NGAAF at national, as well as their collaborators (especially NITA Centres). This adjustment allowed the research to proceed effectively, relying on information obtained directly from program beneficiaries who offered valuable insights into their experiences. By prioritizing beneficiary perspectives and program-concerned people beyond NGAAF County officials, and experiences, the study successfully navigated the limitation associated with limited access to financial data.

Additionally, to enhance the reliability and validity of the data collected, the research team implemented a comprehensive data triangulation approach. This involved engaging with a diverse range of stakeholders involved in the NGAAF programs, including NGAAF Managers, NGAAF Committee Members, the County Director for Gender, and the National NGAAF Team, among others. By gathering input and feedback from various sources, the study not only addressed the potential limitation of limited financial data but also enriched the research with multiple perspectives, contributing to a more robust and comprehensive analysis.

Furthermore, the research team encountered the challenge of site selection bias, which is common in comparative studies. The choice of Kisumu and Homa Bay Counties as study sites raised questions about the selection criteria. To mitigate this limitation, the study provided a detailed rationale in section 3.3, explaining why these counties were chosen for comparative analysis. This transparency in the selection process aimed to address potential concerns and provide a clear justification for the research approach.

In conclusion, while these limitations were experienced during the study, proactive measures and adjustments were implemented to ensure that they did not hinder the research process or compromise the quality of the findings. The study's commitment to adaptability and methodological rigor allowed it to navigate these challenges effectively and contribute valuable insights into the NGAAF youth economic empowerment programs.

1.7 The Conceptual Framework

In the absence of a singular comprehensive theory that could underpin this study, the research employs two widely recognized models utilized globally to address the complex issue of youth unemployment, with a particular focus on enhancing youth employability. These models include the Social Partners Model (SPM) and the Theory of Self-Employment, each offering distinct perspectives and valuable insights into the dynamics of youth employability.

1.7.1 Social Partners Model

The Social Partners Model (SPM) proved instrumental in tackling the persistent issue of youth unemployment, particularly in European and OECD countries. Scholars such as Jimeno and Rodriguez-Palenzuela (2003) emphasize the need for a social action approach to address the rising rates of youth and female unemployment. The approach encourages key stakeholders, including employers, workers, educators, and policymakers, to collaborate in devising solutions and committing to tangible changes in the employment landscape.

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) (2013) assert that youth unemployment remained a significant challenge in the European Union (EU) and underscored the importance of adopting an SPM. This model emphasized that addressing youth unemployment was not the sole responsibility of employers or policymakers but required a collective effort involving various actors at different stages of young people's lives. In the context of this study, these actors encompassed the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF), the Ministry of Labour, National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) Centers, and industry employers.

The SPM emphasized the link between education, young people's expectations and labor market needs, with a focus on facilitating the transition from school to the labor market to increase employment rates (ETUC, 2013). While this model had been predominantly applied in the EU, its relevance has been tested to contexts like South Africa (SA), where the

National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) (2011) recognized the need for collaborative efforts among all societal institutions to address youth unemployment.

In Kenya, youth empowerment programs acknowledge the multifaceted nature of youth unemployment, involving multiple social actors. The NGAAF program serve as a case study for examining how these social actors interacted and contributed to enhancing the employability of NGAAF beneficiaries. This study offered empirical insights into the roles played by these stakeholders, shedding light on opportunities, challenges, and forms of engagement. By formalizing such partnerships, policymakers could develop more effective and responsive policies and programs in the future.

1.8 The Theory of Self-employment and Solid Education

The Theory of Self-Employment posits that individuals could leverage their acquired skills to create employment opportunities for themselves and others, thus alleviating societal pressures stemming from unemployment (Dale, 1991). Central to this theory is the concept of "solid education," which emphasize the impartation of market-oriented practical skills to learners, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world market demands.

This notion of self-employment aligns with the NGAAF program's objectives, particularly within the framework of NITA policy in Kenya. The NITA policy prioritized the development of practical skills among learners, enabling them to transition smoothly from education to self-employment or immediate entry into the job market (Government of Kenya [GoK], 2018). Under the NGAAF program, students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds were sponsored to undertake short courses at NITA centers across Kenya, with courses typically lasting up to six months (3 months class work and 3 months for attachment).

The study's significance lay in its evaluation of the extent to which this program, operating under both NGAAF and NITA frameworks, accomplished its self-employment objectives. The presence of similar programs in the selected study sites made this evaluative research particularly relevant, as it offered valuable insights for policy reforms and programmatic enhancements in the future. By focusing on the practical outcomes and impact of these initiatives, the study contributed to the discourse on youth employability and self-employment as viable strategies to address unemployment challenges.

Moreover, the Theory of Self-Employment underscores the potential of young people to become not just job seekers but job creators, aligning with global efforts to foster entrepreneurship among youth. The NGAAF program's emphasizes on sponsoring economically disadvantaged youths to acquire practical skills aligned with this entrepreneurial spirit, as it equipped beneficiaries with the tools to establish their businesses or contribute meaningfully to existing enterprises. Evaluating the effectiveness of this approach within the NGAAF program shed light on the feasibility of youth-led entrepreneurship as a means to combat unemployment and contribute to economic growth.

In summary, the adoption of the Social Partners Model and the Theory of Self-Employment in this study was justified by their relevance to the NGAAF program and its objectives. These models offered a conceptual framework for understanding the roles and interactions of various stakeholders, the link between education and employment and the potential of self-employment as a solution to youth unemployment. By employing these models, the study was able to analyze the NGAAF program comprehensively and provide valuable insights for policy and program improvements in the future.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section highlights key issues from the preliminary assessment of secondary materials relevant for this study. The review is organized within the framework of the study objectives and highlights on the gaps and takes note of key issues raised. These key issues formed the basis for defining research questions of this study.

2.2 Unemployment and Youth Demographics

Unemployment, in the context of youth demographics, signifies a state of joblessness and the active pursuit of employment opportunities. An individual is considered unemployed if, during a specified week and upon reaching the minimum employment age (e.g., 15 years), they were "without work," available for work," and actively searching for employment (ILO, 1982). This definition implies that individuals who are not currently employed but are available for work, yet do not engage in active job searching due to various reasons, are not classified as unemployed; instead, they may be referred to as discouraged workers. Furthermore, an individual who is already fully employed but seeks additional work with another employer can be described as participating in "moonlighting" (Baah-Boateng et al., 2013; Jimeno & Rodriguez-Palenzuela, 2003).

However, the suitability of the job-seeking-based definition of unemployment has raised concerns, especially within the context of African countries (Dale, 1991). This definition is perceived as inadequate in capturing labor market dynamics in low-income nations (Cling et al., 2007; Fares et al., 2006; World Bank, 2006). In Africa, a substantial number of jobless individuals may be available for work but may not actively seek employment due to factors like the perceived scarcity of job opportunities or seasonal fluctuations in employment, contributing to a significant discouraged worker phenomenon (Baah-Boateng, 2015; World Bank, 2014).

During periods of economic downturns and the accompanying challenges of unemployment, the demographic group most severely impacted is typically the youth. Curtain (2001) defines youth as individuals in a distinct life stage between childhood and adulthood. In demographic analysis, the Commonwealth expands the definition of youth to encompass ages 15–29, which differs from the African Youth Charter's definition of youth as those aged 18–35 (African Union (AU) Commission, 2006). In terms of policy, countries like Ghana, Kenya,

and Tanzania adopt the African Union's definition of youth as individuals aged 15–35 years, while Nigeria employs a range of 12–30 years. South Africa's National Youth Policy categorizes youth as those falling within the 14–35 years bracket (Mkandawire, 2000).

2.3 Youth Employment Profile in Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties

Homa Bay County, as outlined in its Integrated Development Plan for 2018-2022, grapples with a significant youth population, constituting nearly half of its total population (Homa Bay County Government, 2018). Recognizing this demographic composition, the county underscores the need to establish avenues for youth employment (Government of Kenya (GoK), 2018). The county's Integrated Development Plan acknowledges the youth as a pivotal demographic, accounting for 49.1 percent of the total population. With a high dependency ratio of 107, the plan asserts the necessity for increased investments in education, health, and employment opportunities to harness the demographic dividend. Despite this, over 73% of the population (excluding students) remains unemployed, predominantly among the youthful populace, leading to engagement in subsistence agriculture.

In this context, the present study assumes great importance as it delves into the effectiveness of youth employment programs implemented in Homa Bay County, shedding light on whether these initiatives have succeeded in addressing the pressing issue of youth unemployment. By focusing on the experiences and outcomes of these programs, through a focused analysis of NGAAF, this research contributes valuable insights to the ongoing efforts to harness the potential of the youth population and mitigate the challenges associated with youth unemployment. The study underscores the significance of not only identifying the existing gaps but also recommending policy improvements and programmatic enhancements to empower the youth economically and foster sustainable development within the county.

Similarly, Kisumu County's Integrated Development Plan estimates a total population of 1,358,837, with youths aged 15 to 34 accounting for around 39% of this figure. As such, both counties view youth empowerment as a top priority due to the burgeoning youth population, which poses a threat to realizing the demographic dividend and overall development. Addressing youth unemployment emerges as a pressing concern for both counties. However, despite these concerns, Kisumu County's unemployment rate among the youth remains persistently high, with a significant portion of them unable to secure gainful employment even after completing their education or vocational training programs.

In light of these challenges, the current study's significance lies in its examination of the youth empowerment programs implemented in Kisumu County, seeking to understand the impact of these initiatives on youth employability. By investigating the experiences, outcomes, and challenges faced by program beneficiaries, this research contributes crucial insights to the efforts aimed at reducing youth unemployment and fostering economic self-sufficiency among the youth population. The study serves as a catalyst for identifying areas for policy reform and programmatic improvements to better equip the youth for employment opportunities and enhance their contribution to the county's development.

2.3.1 The Concept of the Youth

This study adopted the Kenyan definition of youth, which considers individuals between the ages of 18 to 34 as youth (Government of Kenya, 2010). However, it's important to note that the age bracket referred to as "youth" is not consistent and may vary depending on the actor or the specific development program being discussed. For instance, the United Nations (UN) defines youth as individuals aged between 15 and 24. According to the UN, this age group is considered vulnerable and faces various sources of vulnerabilities. For example, it is noted that approximately 6,500 new cases of HIV/AIDS infections occur daily within this cohort globally (UN, 2022). This vulnerability underscores the importance of targeting youth populations in public policies, and examining programs meant to empower them.

Moreover, the youth population, particularly those aged 15 to 24, is a substantial demographic, constituting over half of the African population. This demographic bulge has strained the capacity of governments to provide employment opportunities. Enhancing the employability of youth is seen as a crucial step in addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by this demographic (Jimeno & Rodriguez-Palenzuela, 2003).

However, it's worth highlighting that the definition of "youth" is not standardized globally. Even within the UN system, the age range considered as youth can vary among different functional institutions. Additionally, these definitions may differ from one region to another and even from one country to another. Some experts argue that the definition of youth is context-dependent, especially in the context of empowerment programs (USAID, 2014; UN, 2022). In the case of Africa, the African Youth Charter (AYC) of 2006 provides guidance by defining youth as individuals whose ages range between 15 and 35. Nonetheless, it's important to acknowledge that there isn't a uniform understanding of what age group constitutes youth across all 54 African countries. For example, Kenya, the focus of this study,

defines youth in its 2010 Constitution as individuals aged 18 to 34 years old. This diversity in definitions emphasizes the need for clarity and consistency when addressing youth-related issues in different contexts and programs.

2.4 Youths Empowerment Programs

Most existing studies in the field of youth empowerment have predominantly focused on examining government policy interventions. These interventions include various programs such as the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF), Constituency Development Fund (CDF), county government funds for youth, and the Kenya Youth Employment Opportunity Program (KYEOP), among others. For instance, a study conducted by Otiende, Mose, and Juma (2020) centered on 120 youths aged 18 to 35 in Nairobi, aiming to assess the impacts of the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF). The study revealed that the YEDF had provided youths with opportunities to access investible capital, initiate businesses, and achieve economic empowerment. Consequently, YEDF played a role in reducing youth unemployment through self-employment and entrepreneurship. In addition to supporting entrepreneurship, the program also facilitated skills acquisition among youths, offering training in fields such as welding, electrical installation, mechanics, hairdressing, carpentry, hospitality, and plumbing, among others. Other studies, such as those conducted by Irungu and Kamau (2015), Githeka (2017), Mohamud (2019), Gachugia (2014), Kiprop (2016), Runyora (2017), and Sikenyi (2017), have also explored the impact and implications of YEDF.

However, despite the substantial attention given to YEDF and similar youth-focused programs, there remains a dearth of studies that have delved into the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF) to uncover potential policy implications and lessons that can be learnt from its initiatives. NGAAF operates as a semi-autonomous entity with the capacity to significantly transform the lives of its beneficiaries when well-designed. Thus, this study seeks to bridge this gap by investigating the extent to which NGAAF programs transform the lives of the targeted youth beneficiaries by sponsoring them into technical courses that provide skills in demand by industries.

An analysis conducted by Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development (K4D) revealed four critical findings related to youth empowerment programs (K4D, 2018): I) The combination of life skills training, vocational training, and internships leads to improved employment prospects and higher earnings for youth. II) Mentorship programs for young

entrepreneurs do not necessarily result in increased sales or profits. III) The effectiveness of youth-based funds, such as YEDF, is often hindered by inefficiency and corruption. IV) Cost-benefit analyses indicate that the cost of training can be offset by higher earnings within one to three years after the intervention.

Notably, the K4D analysis did not encompass NGAAF, leaving uncertainty about whether these general trends in youth empowerment programs are applicable to NGAAF or not. This study aims to address this gap by determining whether the support provided by NGAAF, particularly through vocational training in Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties, genuinely transforms youth beneficiaries into employable individuals. By exploring the successes and challenges of NGAAF's approach, this empirical evidence not only enhance the understanding of the dynamics of such an empowerment program but also guide development partners in improving their programming and inform government policymakers about areas that warrant policy enhancements in the context of youth empowerment and employment.

Studies conducted in both Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties have provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities related to youth participation and employability within the context of community development programs and training initiatives. In Homa Bay County, a study by Were (2020) revealed low participation rates among youths, with employment and income levels playing a pivotal role in determining their engagement in community development programs. This finding underscores the significance of addressing youth employment as a critical factor influencing their participation in such programs. Additionally, Naomi's study in Kisumu County (2014) highlighted the positive association between technical, business-oriented, and human resource management training and youth employability. Graduates who attended the Kenya Youth Employment Program (KYEP) in Kisumu Center reported higher employability compared to their counterparts who did not receive such training. These studies collectively emphasize the importance of youth-focused interventions that enhance their skills and employability.

Furthermore, a study conducted among youths in Homa Bay County, specifically in Rachuonyo Constituency, by Ochieng' (2014) shed light on the inadequacy and inefficiency of youth empowerment funds (YEF), including the Uwezo Funds, NGO-related funds, and Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF). It revealed that youths in Homa Bay County had negative attitudes toward these funds. The funding-based approach to youth empowerment appears to be plagued by issues of inefficiency, as corroborated by the

findings of the K4D analysis (2018). Conversely, the technical training approach seems to be more effective and sustainable, aligning with point I from the K4D analysis mentioned earlier. However, there remains a limited body of comparative evidence across counties in Kenya's new governance structure to inform policymakers about the need for a paradigm shift away from disbursing funds, characterized by corruption, inadequacy, and inefficiency, toward a vocational training approach that equips beneficiaries with market-oriented skills through collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

This study built upon these insights by examining the experiences of NGAAF programs in Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties, thereby contributing to the broader discussion on effective strategies for youth empowerment, employment, and community development. By comparing these two counties, the research aims to shed light on the potential advantages and disadvantages of different approaches to youth empowerment, providing policymakers with valuable guidance on designing more impactful and sustainable initiatives to address youth unemployment and enhance their overall well-being.

2.5 Multilateral Approaches to Youth Empowerment

Multilateral approaches to youth empowerment have gained significant recognition worldwide, especially in developing nations. This is largely informed by the acknowledgement that the misalignment between theoretical skills acquired in tertiary educational institutions and the practical skills demanded by industries is a prominent contributor to youth unemployment (USAID Labour Force Report, 2021). This issue has been collectively acknowledged by African countries through initiatives like the African Youth Charter (AYC), and many nations have taken individual steps to domesticate the AYC by establishing policy and legal frameworks to address the challenges faced by their youth populations. Kenya, for instance, has implemented a robust set of programmatic interventions aimed at empowering vulnerable groups, including its youth demographic.

The Organization for Economic Development (OECD) (2018) has highlighted the necessity of redesigning education processes to adapt to current and unforeseen challenges while leveraging the opportunities presented by globalization and rapid technological advancements. OECD's Education and Skills 2030 Project underscores the importance of student agency, emphasizing that educational curricula should be designed around students to motivate them and acknowledge their prior knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. This approach promotes the active participation of learners and empowers them to take

responsibility for their education. Learners are not only equipped with industry-relevant skills but are also prepared to seize employment opportunities that may not yet exist but are anticipated due to the accelerated pace of technological progress.

Damon, Glewwe, Wisniewski & Sun (2016), in the World Report on Education in Developing Countries, identified four key challenges contributing to suboptimal outcomes in education investments in developing nations: low household demand for education, inadequate school resources, ineffective teaching methods, and poor school governance. These challenges underscore the need for education systems in developing countries to align the learning process with the realities of the world beyond the classroom, particularly the demands of the industry. This resonates with the existing literature, emphasizing the importance of bridging the gap between the educational system and the industry as a means of mitigating unemployment and its associated challenges.

UNICEF (2019) underscores the pivotal role of skills in transforming the world, emphasizing that all children and adolescents require access to quality education and learning experiences that foster skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values. Such education should equip them to become lifelong learners capable of adapting to evolving circumstances, making informed decisions, and actively engaging with their communities. UNICEF identifies three key issues hindering the achievement of this goal, including the exclusion of many children from educational opportunities, the mismatch between the skills acquired by youths and industry needs, and the prevailing focus on knowledge acquisition rather than the development of practical skills that prepare individuals to meet contemporary challenges. In this context, the study's focus on job-specific skills aligns with UNICEF's call to equip students and youths with a comprehensive range of transferable, digital, and occupation-specific skills. Job-specific skills, as defined by UNICEF, play a critical role in facilitating the transition of older adolescents into the workforce, bridging the gap between education and employment.

By delving into the challenges and opportunities surrounding youth empowerment, skills development, and employability within the context of NGAAF programs in Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties, this study aimed to contribute to the ongoing discourse on effective strategies for addressing youth unemployment and fostering their overall well-being. It did so by investigating the implications of these programmatic interventions, offering valuable insights that can inform policymakers and development partners on the design of more

impactful and sustainable initiatives to empower youth and enhance their readiness for the job market.

2.6 Post-Skills Acquisition Youth Empowerment Packages

This second scope of the current study is a grey area in light of academic research. However, related documentations on the type of support given to beneficiaries of an economic empowerment programs can stand instructive to the current study. Otiende, Mose & Juma (2020) found that YEDF also sponsored youths to train on in given skills. However, the beneficiaries of the sponsorship were not guaranteed for a post-skills acquisition support. The researchers also established that some of those supported at the training level did find it easy to join the job markets. This points to the criticality of the post-training support in terms of internship or attachment at an industry where the skills acquired can be put into practice by graduates. From the reports got by the researcher from NGAAF Homa Bay County office, this is the approach that they used. Nevertheless, no studies have been done to deepen understanding of policy makers on the manner in which this intervention is good or no working and the different ways through which it should be made better or expanded. This study aimed to generate insights to fill these gaps.

Such an empowerment program in Kenya include KYEOP. According to the Micro and Small Enterprises Authority [MSEA] (2022), the Kenya Youth Employment Opportunity Program (KYEOP), the program which is funded by the World Bank and the Government of Kenya, aims to empower the jobless youths who have experienced extended spells or are working in vulnerable jobs of unemployment and age ranges between 18-29 years old. Three interventions are rendered through the program namely; training in technical and vocational fields, post-training internships and offers for business grant. The post-training internship involves facilitating graduates of the program to move into an industry set-up offering a chance for them to practice knowledge learnt. Courses supported by the program include: plumbing, tailoring, house-keeping, hospitality, electrical fitting and installation, water works, among others. (KYOP Website, 2022). The program targeted 280, 000 youths.

Post-training support has emerged as a crucial factor in enhancing employability, as highlighted in the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Program (KYEOP) and various related studies (Charles, n.d.). Charles (n.d.) conducted a stakeholder analysis of the KYEOP program, revealing that the program's design was highly responsive to the needs of its beneficiaries. The commitment to provide business grants and technical tools after training

was rated as a critical factor for enhancing the employability of these beneficiaries. This finding underscores the significance of post-training support in ensuring that individuals are well-prepared to enter the job market or establish their own businesses.

In a study conducted by Menya (2020), it was observed that entrepreneurship training for members of the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) community in Kisumu County was rendered ineffective when not accompanied by a post-training support package. This study underscores the importance of not only equipping individuals with entrepreneurial skills but also providing them with the necessary resources and support to apply these skills effectively in real-world settings. Such post-training support is instrumental in bridging the gap between training programs and actual employability.

Given the prominence of post-training support in programs like KYEOP and its relevance to the NGAAF initiatives in Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties, this study aimed to shed light on the impact of such support on the employability of the youth who have undergone training. By exploring the experiences and outcomes of NGAAF beneficiaries in the context of post-training support, this study contributes to the broader understanding of how support mechanisms can significantly enhance the employability of youth, thereby informing future program design and policy decisions in youth empowerment and skill development initiatives.

2.7 Challenges facing the Successful Implementation of Youth Economic Empowerment Programs

A number of challenges have been identified as impeding youth empowerment initiatives in prior research. The lack of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms has been a recurring challenge in the implementation of youth empowerment programs (Menya, 2020; Sumberg & Hunt, 2019). In Indian context, Kumar (2022) argues that in many instances, the impact and effectiveness of these programs have been difficult to assess due to inadequate monitoring and evaluation frameworks. This challenge hampers the ability to measure the real outcomes and impacts of such initiatives, making it challenging to identify areas for improvement. To address this issue and enhance the success of youth empowerment programs like NGAAF, a comprehensive understanding of how NGAAF's implementation has progressed and the specific monitoring and evaluation challenges it has encountered is crucial. Generating evidence in this context is essential to inform ongoing programs and

future interventions, allowing for better-informed decisions and targeted improvements in monitoring and evaluation processes.

Stakeholder analysis and involvement have also posed significant challenges to youth empowerment programs (Charles, n.d.). In evaluating KYEOP, Charles (n.d.) asserts that in many cases, the perspectives and needs of key stakeholders, including the youth beneficiaries, have been adequately considered during program design and implementation. This lack of stakeholder involvement, he argues, lead to a misalignment between program objectives and the actual needs and aspirations of the youth. To address this challenge and ensure the success of youth empowerment initiatives like NGAAF, it is essential to understand how NGAAF's implementation has navigated stakeholder dynamics and the extent to which stakeholder involvement has been integrated into the program. This knowledge is crucial for generating evidence that can guide future programs in fostering greater stakeholder engagement and participation.

Thirdly, insufficient funds have been a persistent hurdle in the implementation of youth empowerment programs (Were, 2019; USAID, 2014; USAID, 2022). Many of these programs operate with limited financial resources, which constrain their ability to reach a larger number of beneficiaries or provide comprehensive support (Kumar, 2022; USAID, 2022). Inadequate funding can also lead to the discontinuation of valuable initiatives and limit the sustainability of program outcomes as Edwin, Y. (2022) established in Zimbabwe. To address the challenge of insufficient funds and optimize the impact of youth empowerment programs like NGAAF, it is imperative to understand the specific financial constraints that NGAAF has faced and how these limitations have affected program delivery. This understanding is essential for generating evidence that can inform resource allocation and funding strategies in ongoing and future programs, ultimately enhancing their effectiveness.

Politically motivated interventions have introduced complexities and uncertainties into youth empowerment initiatives (Ouko et al., 2022; USAID, 2014; USAID, 2022; Senou & Soro (2022). USAID (2014) assert that in most cases in Kenya, political considerations drive the design and implementation of programs, diverting resources and attention away from the genuine needs of the youth. Such politically motivated interventions, argues Ouko et al. (2022) can compromise the integrity and effectiveness of youth empowerment efforts. To navigate this challenge and safeguard the authenticity of programs like NGAAF, it is vital to

gain insights into the extent to which political influences have shaped the program's implementation and outcomes. Generating evidence in this context can serve as a basis for promoting non-partisan and youth-centered approaches in future initiatives.

Lastly, a common challenge to successful youth empowerment is that government institutions often are working in silos, despite the complexity of youth empowerment issues, thus hindering the coordination and synergy of efforts (United States Agency for International Development [USAID], 2014). Many youth empowerment programs involve multiple government institutions, each with its own mandate and priorities. When these institutions operate independently and do not collaborate effectively, it can lead to duplication of efforts, inefficiencies, and fragmented support for the youth (World Bank (2012; Calderon et al., 2022)). To address the challenge of siloed government institutions, it is crucial to examine how NGAAF's implementation has navigated inter-agency coordination and identify any challenges faced in this regard. This knowledge is essential for generating evidence that can advocate for more integrated and collaborative approaches to youth empowerment, ensuring that government institutions work together cohesively to maximize impact.

In conclusion, understanding how NGAAF has confronted these challenges in its implementation is imperative for generating evidence that can inform the improvement of ongoing programs and the design of future youth empowerment initiatives. By addressing issues related to monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder involvement, funding constraints, political influences, and inter-agency coordination, this study contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding youth empowerment. This evidence-based approach is essential for enhancing the effectiveness and impact of such programs, ultimately benefiting the youth and society as a whole.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the used methods and techniques in this study and the justifications for the chosen methods and techniques. It highlights on the design, area, population, sampling procedures and size, data collection techniques and tools, methods of data analysis, reliability and validity and finally ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

This study used comparative case design. According to Kothari (2004) a comparative case design is suitable in studies of a similar phenomenon which has variations in different contexts. This design was suitable for this study because NGAAF youth empowerment in Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties support youths but in Homa Bay County an extra support is given in the post-training. The comparative case design enabled the researcher to unravel the manner in which the projects are undertaken in the two counties in terms of the technical skills supported, post-skills acquisition support and the challenges faced from different contexts.

3.3 Study Population

The target population of this study were the youths, especially those enrolled in the NGAAF skills and post-skills support programs. Homa Bay County supported a total of 400 male and female beneficiaries in cohort one and two (Office of the NGAAF Homa Bay County, 2022¹). On the other hand, Kisumu County, 280 female youths were supported to acquire various technical and vocational skills (Office of the NGAAF Homabay County, 2022²). To increase generalizability, the study determined the sample size by taking 56% out of the entire population targeted which gave rise to 381 as the sampled size for QUANT. The females reached from Kisumu were 56% (280) which was 157 since all are females while in Homabay, the researcher got a number of 224 (details of the sampling procedure as below). This is meant to enable the researcher get perspectives of both male and female participants from Homabay and Kisumu Counties. This helped the researcher understand in-depth the

¹ This is unpublished information and could only be retrieved through office visit to NGAAF and retrieve documents for verification. The verification was done by both getting verbal communication and signed lists of beneficiaries from each cohort.

² This is unpublished information and could only be retrieved through office visit to NGAAF and retrieve documents for verification. The verification was done by both getting verbal communication and signed lists of beneficiaries from each cohort.

variances between the programs in Homabay and Kisumu in terms of the impacts they have had on the target population as regards employability.

The other population categories concerned with the program were also involved to ensure the researcher delved deeper into the policy aspects, and other issues that the beneficiaries could not answer to. This additional category participated in interviews/qualitative level and their information helped corroborate the statistical findings from the beneficiaries. These involved the NGAAF Managers at the County and at the National level at the qualitative level to gain nuances about project design and whether the outcomes were in line with the original intended outcomes, and perhaps impacts. This was key information that only project designers and Managers of NGAAF, in this case, could answer. This category involved the NGAAF Managers from both counties, 3 NGAAF Committee members from each County, the NGAAF CEO, and Finance and Director of Programs officers from the national level.

The third and fifth categories of the study population included NITA Centre Managers and Trainers, which was critical to uncover the stories about the courses chosen and completed by students and the factors that may have facilitated or hindered employability beyond the course itself. It also explored the linkages between a course taken and the prospects for employment, considering gender differences. Since the counties could have supported different courses and assigned different periods, NITA played a vital role in helping the researcher understand this dimension comparatively.

The fourth category involved industry experts/institutions where NGAAF graduates were employed. This category allowed the researcher to gain in-depth insights into the experiences of NGAAF graduates in the workplace. It aimed to answer questions such as whether they were effective and possessed the skills as described in the literature, or if other factors came into play beyond employability, particularly concerning sustainability and other needed job-related soft skills. These were challenging questions to answer from any of the categories mentioned above. This was done with a comparative intention to discern variances between the two counties. The actual individuals in each of these targeted roles were mobilized upon successful mapping, which involved the researcher working closely with NGAAF managers from each of the counties. The population of the study was summarized as follows:

3.4 Sampling Procedures and Sampling Design

The sampling procedure involved first recruiting the sample population into the study. Based on statistics (details on beneficiaries supported) retrieved from the two counties, Homabay County had supported about 400 and Kisumu had supported 280. Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) assert that for a population which is lower than 10,000, any sample size of not less than 10% is good enough for generalization. They also add that the more the sample the better. This study took 56% as it gave enough opportunity to enumerate the project beneficiaries. Upon establishing the total population, the researcher then retrieved 56% of the total sample [56% [680] = 381], totaling to (rounded off to nearest whole number gives 381) as the total sample size.

For Kisumu applying this standard;

56% of 280 = 156.8 (rounded off to the nearest whole number gives us = 157)

For Homabay using the same standard;

56% of 400 = 224.

Total = 381.

Upon establishing the sample size (overall/total and county-wise) the researcher then chose appropriate sampling techniques to recruit the size. This study employed a random, purposive, and snowball sampling design. Random sampling involved obtaining a list of beneficiaries from the NGAAF managers and then using that list to randomly schedule phone calls or physical interviews with selected beneficiaries. This approach aimed to ensure that the questionnaires were filled in without biases such as automatic exclusion of a participant from the study. In addition to the youths who benefited from such a program, the perspectives of implementing institutions and individuals were also considered, allowing for a balanced analysis and interpretation of the data and, ultimately, balanced policy recommendations. Therefore, this study applied a purposive design to identify key individuals and implementing institutions, including NITA, NGAAF management personnel, and selected industries where students practiced during the post-training. Finally, as the snowball sampling method allowed the researcher to be flexible enough to reach out to those who were not initially mapped participants during stakeholder mapping but were referred to as critical and capable of providing valuable insights to answer the research questions posed by the respondents.

Table 3.1: Population Distribution

CATEGORY	SPECIFIC OFFICE/PERSON	SAMPLE SIZE	Nature of Research
Youths/NGAAF Beneficiaries	Homa Bay	157	Quantitative
	Kisumu	224	
NGAAF Management	National		Qualitative (QUAL)
	CEO	1	
	Finance	1	
	Director Of Programs	1	
	COUNTY		
	MANAGER	2	
	County Director Of Gender	2	
	NGAAF Committee Members	6	
	Project Collaborators	2	
NITA Centres	Centre Directors	4	
	Trainers	4	
Industry Experts/Institution	Largely depended on findings from NGAAF Manager on where students are attached	At least 3 from each County [total of 6]	
TOTAL		Key Informants = at least 29; surveyed = 381	

3.5 Research Area and Rationale for Comparing

This study was undertaken in Kisumu and Homa Bay Counties. Homa Bay County is special case to study a youth employability program under NGAAF because it was the first ever county to implement such a program (NGAAF Report, 2022³). Moreover, the county was ranked the best in implementing NGAAF programs in both 2019 and 2020 financial years (*Ibid*). The county also supported both male and female youths. Most importantly, Homa Bay's approach to employability of the youths involved a post-training start-up package whereby graduates are furnished with tools of work. What has the county achieved, and what has the experience been like? How can other counties learn from such an innovative program with the potential to transform the lives of the vulnerable Kenyan population cohort? How

³ This report was retrieved during primary field visit to the NGAAF CEO's office in Nairobi. Such report has not been published and was only shared for viewership and use by the researcher.

can these lessons be used to inform policy reforms within and without NGAAF? These questions warranted a systematic policy study of the NGAAF youth employability program.

On the part of Kisumu, the county exhibit certain important and contrasting characteristics to Homa Bay in terms of the program at hand. The County began the program after Homa Bay and the NGAAF Manager being trained on the program by the Homa Bay counterpart. This implies the county's program is informed by Homa Bay's experiences. Moreover, the County supported females only. The county also provided beneficiaries with pocket money to enhance their concentration in their courses. Lastly, the county's model of post-training support was remarkably different involving informing but very useful linkages to job employment. These are important grounds which the researcher thought would make the two cases significant for a comparative analysis. Together the counties were the first to implement an empowerment model in this framework, as was underscored by the NGAAF Nairobi Officers, followed thereafter by a cohort of others.

3.6 Data Collection Techniques

3.6.1 Secondary Sources of Data

This study stood on the shoulder of giants by building from previous academic works, national, regional, and global reports, and other documents. Secondary data included: analysis of policy and legal documents, national, regional and global in nature; previous relevant theses; Kenya youth workforce analysis reports; other governmental and non-governmental documents as may be found on their websites, or other locations for archiving such materials.

3.6.2 Primary Sources of Data

This study applied a mixed-methods design hence enjoyed the benefits of using both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data was gathered using survey questionnaires and was only administered among the youth beneficiaries of the NGAAF empowerment program. Questionnaire results helped the researcher retrieve quantitative dimensions of the impact of the NGAAF program on its primary targets. It also enabled gathering of socio-demographic variable which is key in understanding the context of any social policy interventions (Babbie, 2008). Thirdly, socio-economic variables enabled the researcher to triangulate how these variables affect beneficiaries' rates of success after the training. The study thus examined how idiosyncratic variables of program participants contribute to the program success or failure. KIIs on the other hand enabled the researcher understand the

issue of employability of the NGAAF program from the perspective of the program designers and implementers such as NGAAF Management, NITA Centres, and Industry experts/institutions. Key informant interviews to reach to the implementers and policy persons concerned with the NGAAF youth empowerment program. Using a key guide tool, the researcher utilized this technique to engage with experts, policy makers, implementers and selected industry people to understand issues concerned to the study problem also from an implementer's point of view. This further enabled triangulation of data. On occasions when KIIs agreed, audio recording was used to collect interview data for accuracy of documenting results. This is an ethical issue and only those who consented had their interviews recorded.

3.7 Methods of Data Analysis and Presentation

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach to explore the question on the dynamics of NGAAF youth empowerment program in light of enhancing youth employability. As such, both qualitative and quantitative data was be collected and consequently analyzed.

3.7.1 Analysis of Qualitative Data

The qualitative data (QUAL) was collected through key informant interviews (KIIs) as already described both in handwritten notes and audio recording in cases when the participants agreed and consented to their voices being recorded. Audio recorded data was first transcribed into text, sorted out thematically, and analyzed through thematic content analysis. The process involved sorting the textual data into major themes, ideally the study specific objectives, and thereafter studying emerging themes under each objective which informed discussions under each objective. The themes were aligned with variables tested in the survey research, so that both QUANT and QUAL findings triangulated in a way that interview findings help to make sense of the quantitative results – summarized in the form of percentages. Importantly, direct verbatim quotes were used to reinforce arguments under discussions of each sub-thematic category, and outlining convergence or divergence between QUAL findings and QUANT findings, and describing reasons for such scenarios. QUAL by its nature was presented narratively in logical textual format.

3.7.2 Analysis of Quantitative Data

On the other hand, quantitative data (QUANT) largely entailed the use of a semi-closed questionnaires. The closed questions enabled the researcher to undertake a descriptive statistical analysis of the findings using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The data was first cleaned, further coded (the questionnaire is already coded but as it usually happens, some open-ended questions may be coded after the study if the responses portend a trend), entered into the SPSS, missing values tested, and outliers identified for further cleaning, before analysis is conducted. The analysis generated descriptive statistics of each closed question in each objective. The discussions of each finding aided by the findings from the qualitative aspects (thus enabled data triangulation) but also by use of confirmatory questions (closed questions asked as follow-up to test consistency and hence enhance reliability of findings).

The QUANT data was presented using frequency tables, pie charts, histograms, and cross tabulations to show how different variables concerned with the study are similar or different in the two study sites. Overall, the data analysis plan envisages an approach where data from both methods are triangulated to nuance the discussion under each objective through quantitative variables and coinciding thematic and sub-thematic findings from analyzed interview data.

3.8 Reliability and Validity of the Study

Reliability and validity are a very important aspect of scientific enquiry. Three measures were undertaken to ensure that reliability is ensured. First of all, Kothari (2004) argues that to increase internal validity a first important step to be taken relate to clear problem definition and setting of scientifically feasible objectives. This, to him, involve as first step conducting expert surveys with experts and policy makers in the subject of interest and doing a mapping survey to refine thoughts in literature and from experts. In this study, the researcher conducted an expert survey with concerned personnel from the two study sites with NGAAP program as well previous researchers on related topics. This survey was conducted in a systematic manner to enable the researcher establish to what extent the gaps identified in the literature coincide with practical aspects as perceived by practitioners and researchers. The previous researchers were sought through Google Scholar and their contacts was established and interviews arranged. Moreover, empowerment and livelihoods experts are also domiciled in the SDSS and whose inputs have been critical in formatting this study, but whose farther input was critical to revise the proposal and the research tools before actual research.

Conducting a Pre-test: According to a renowned research methodology scholar, Earl Babbie (2008), internal validity, the extent to which the constructs can measure what they are supposed to measure is greatly enhanced by conducting a pre-test before the actual study. The

researcher tested the questionnaire tool among randomly selected students from Kisumu National Polytechnic. The KII tool was also tested by pseudo KIIs with key program implementers from the three categories highlighted in section 3.5 but who have worked in other programs with similar intension as NGAAF such as KYEOP. One person/mentor or business owner in plumbing, electrical fittings, and building and construction each drawn from the *Juakali* Site, Kisumu County at *Ka Mass*. The results from pre-test study allowed the researcher to a) revise the tools appropriately; b) re-plan the data collection accordingly; and revise the questions for each of the target audience.

Triangulation: As a mixed methods research, triangulation of QUAL and QUANT was an important step to verify the reliability of information received from both ends. Hence by jointly presenting QUAL and QUANT and identifying convergences and divergences, the researcher made more authoritative assertions about his findings because both data from QUAL – policy makers and data from QUANT – project beneficiaries conform to the same narratives. Also, it could be the case that this is not the case, and this again was critical for the consumers of the results as well as future studies as methodology is concerned.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The following ethical considerations underpinned the study.

Due authorization from relevant departments at Maseno University and a research permit from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation was sorted for before conducting the field research. Within Maseno University, the student ensured that all the scientific procedures as required by the institution are covered. This involved presentation of concept note which was passed at both the department and school level. The presentation and subsequent authorization of research proposal and the department and the school levels, which have also been passed successfully. The student has also got authorization from Maseno University School of Graduate Studies (SGS), and obtained a research permit from NACOSTI and Maseno University Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (MUSERC). It is until these approvals and certificates obtained when the researcher was able to go to the field to do data collection. These measures are taken to ensure that the principles of data collection were adhered to.

The researcher sought the consent and voluntary participation of the respondents by formerly seeking for their consent through an information and consent form, which was emailed to the purposively identified respondents at least two weeks to the field work. They

were then asked to read and understand, and append their signatures if they agreed. No minor was involved in this study hence all participants signed for themselves, as they were adults of sound mind. Consent was also sought before audio recording from the respondents.

The study informed the participants of their rights and the security of their data. This was comprehensively explained in the consent and information forms. Moreover, **data storage** and security were guaranteed by ensuring that all a) audio records are stored in the researcher's laptop and not anywhere else. The researcher then set a unique password only known to him to avoid unauthorized access. Moreover, to avoid data storage the researcher backed up the audios to his personal Gmail account. b) Secondly, audios were transcribed by the researcher and kept and backed-up in the same manner as the original audios.

Confidentiality and doing no harm was realized by ensuring that no personal names and organizational names exist in any research outputs. Hence wherever need be, anonymous names were used. Any confidential information gathered was not used for any other purposes, the researcher and the research participants entered into an agreement through a signed consent form which means that these promises are subject to legal procedures when breached especially in the context that NACOSTI, a national research regulator had provided the permit based on the fact that these commitments were to be adhered to by the researcher.

Expected Output: The expected output of this study is a thesis research and at least 3 journal articles.

Dissemination Strategies: The output of this research was disseminated through the following avenues:

- i) Through Maseno University Library – Maseno University Graduate Library is usually used by the university to disseminate postgraduate research in hard copy. The Siriba Campus host the post-graduate library at the New Library Building. Research participants were told of this so anyone interested in reading the results of the findings can access through this avenue.
- ii) Refereed Journals: Three articles were published in refereed journals dealing on public policy. These articles were published on free access journals to increase accessibility and use of the study findings to improve youth empowerment programs in future NGAAF and related programs.

iii) Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook: The researcher also used these social media platforms to disseminate the findings and increase reach of the potential users of the study findings. As many youths are usually on these platforms, this strategy provided the researcher with the opportunity to showcase to the youths the manner in which government programs are implemented and impacting on their lives, and provide them with evidence upon which to call upon duty bearers to improve and expand on such programs.

CHAPTER FOUR

COMPARATIVE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT SKILL-SETS SUPPORTED BY NGAAF ON YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY IN HOMA BAY AND KISUMU COUNTIES

4.1 Introduction

The intension of this thesis study was to examine the comparative impact of National Government Affirmative Action Fund Policy on youth employability in Kisumu and Homa Bay counties. In the content of the swelling youth bulge, and unemployment, the NGAAF policy, especially the technical education support for the youth policy adopted by some county governments before COVID-19, is likely an innovative policy intervention for the youths. There remains, however, a lack of understanding of whether such a pro-youth policy has improved their employability or not. This study aimed to deepen understanding and unravel lessons critical for policy learning and reconceptualization. The objectives of the thesis were three: To examine the comparative impact of different skill-sets supported by NGAAF on youth employability in Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties; To assess the comparative of post-skills acquisition support on youth employability in Kisumu and Homa Bay Counties and; To examine the challenges faced by Homa bay and Kisumu counties in implementing NGAAF youth employability program.

This first chapter has the main goal of presenting findings for the first objective of this study which was to assess the comparative impact of the NGAFF policy on youth employability from the lens of the skill-sets offered in Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties. Before that analysis is presented, however, this chapter present preliminary analysis including outliers, and missing values and also present analysis of socio-demographic variables which did not only serve as a critical background analysis to this chapter but also the other chapters of this thesis.

4.2 Preliminary Analysis

Preliminary analysis is the analysis undertaken before the actual analysis of the core objectives of a scientific study (Brandt et al., 2014). It enabled the researcher to be sure of the validity of the observations he or she finally used while conducting actual analysis on the relationships between variables. Important issues in preliminary analysis include outliers and missing values. Below is a description of the manner in which these considerations were made and dealt with before actual analysis.

4.2.1 Questionnaires Return Rate

Rate of return of questionnaires is important because it shows whether the researcher met the population sample size from each of his pre-identified and actual frames to enable him/her make scientific arguments out of his findings (Kothari, 2004). As shown in the table below, out of this study, a total of 381 questionnaires and hence 381 observations were expected. However, due to reasons beyond the researcher's control such as unavailability, unwillingness, and other respondents-based limitations, 309 questionnaires were returned. This calculated against the projected observations translates to 81.1%. This is an excellent return rate since Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) advice that a 50% return rate is just but good enough to facilitate scientific analysis. Further, out of those returned upon cleaning and checking for outliers and missing values, 303 questionnaires/observations of those returned were found to meet the threshold for analysis, hence the study sample size on which the observations building the findings of the thesis were meant (N=303) (more of this in subsequent sections).

Table 4.1: Questionnaires Return Rate

Category	Frequency		% of Sample
Total Administered (Original Sample)	Kisumu	157	40
	H/Bay	224	60
	TOTAL	381	100
Total Received Back	Kisumu	153	49.5
	H/Bay	156	50.5
	TOTAL	309	100
Total Rejected due to Outliers	Kisumu	0	0
	H/Bay	0	0
	TOTAL	0	0
Total Rejected due to Missing Values [excess of what was received and used]	Kisumu	5	1.7
	H/Bay	1	0.3
	TOTAL	6	2.0
Total Used [Actual N=303].	Kisumu	148	48.8
	H/Bay	155	51.2
	TOTAL	303	100

Source: Mboha (2023)

4.2.2 Detection and Removal of Outliers

Outliers are values that appear inconsistent with most of the values realized at the end of a study. They are observations that seem to be on the lowest (almost impossible extreme) or

highest (almost impossible extreme) based on the trend being observed in terms of the manner of responses given by respondents in each question (Haires, 2010). In order to detect such occurrences, the researcher after cleaning the data manually through one-by-one checking of the questionnaires, the researcher then entered the observations in to SPSS and ran a frequency for all the questions asked. After that, he checked across the results noting if there were any outliers in each of the responses given. Fortunately, the researcher didn't note any of such cases. This implied two things: data collection went on well and that questionnaires were properly filled by research assistants upon asking relevant questions. Secondly, that the respondents all understood the questions being asked and were able to give responses that were within similar ranges, based on their experiences with the NGAAF program.

4.2.3 Missing Values Analysis

Missing value analysis involves a process geared towards detecting if any questions were not answered by the respondents, hence reducing the ability of the researcher to make a generalizable claim, as the sample size then reduces as the number of missing values increase in a given question or across questions. To underscore this important stage of analysis, the researcher was able to run a complete frequency analysis in SPSS, and studied keenly if any questions had a mismatch between the number making a given choice and the tally of the choices made against the total number of respondents. Based on this analyze, the researcher was able to note that 6 questionnaires contained a total of 16 unanswered questions by the respondents. These were then traced from the physical questionnaires filled and their entries in SPSS detected and deleted. Hence, the researcher was able to ensure that actual analysis was based only on questionnaires that were at least fully filled an on missed responses not exceeding 2% that is only a maximum of 2 out of 56 questions in the used questionnaire not answered.

4.3 Analysis of Socio-demographic Variables

Socio-demographic variables are important to put the findings of a research in their correct context. This study asked respondents gender, county of residence, age, and ward, disability status, Centre where they trained; employment status before enrollment in to the program, and level of education at enrolment. These were critical contextual factors as regards the study objectives as served to profile respondents for better analysis.

4.3.1 Respondents Distribution by Gender

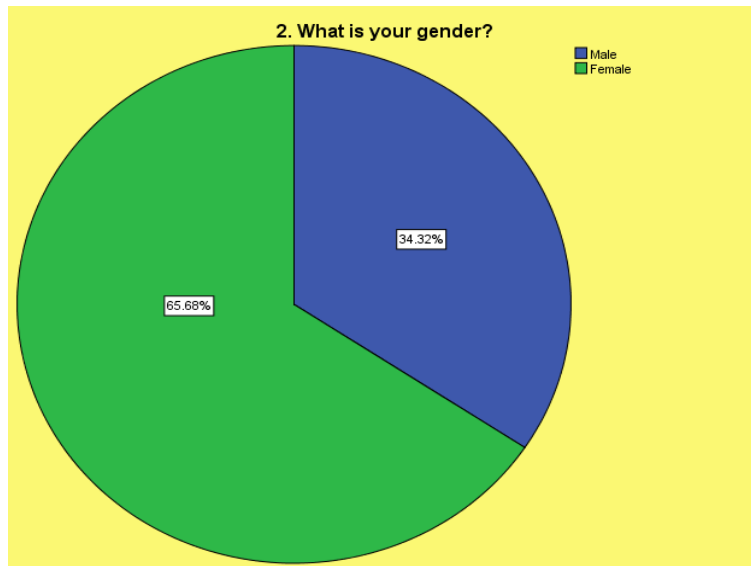


Figure 4.1: Respondents Distribution by Gender

Source: Mboha (2023)

As figure 4.1 above shows, the study findings are based on responses from 34.3% (104) male participants and 65.7% (199) female participants. As all participants from Kisumu County were females 48.84% (148), this means that only 51 of the participants were females from Homa Bay. This is consistent with the reality of the program implementation as it appears Homa Bay, based on the list of NGAAF beneficiaries the researcher was able to retrieve (and which enabled planning for surveys and interviews), more of the beneficiaries were male youths as opposed to women. However, since the list was shared in confidence, further details cannot be provided in this study. It is important to note that there is need for a gender balance especially if the program is targeted at both genders as was the case in Homabay County. For Kisumu where the assumption leading to only targeting girls was that NGAAF ideally should be for the girls who are presumably vulnerable. We cannot make any claims about gender since the project was out rightly gender-biased.

4.3.2 Respondents Distribution by County of Residence

Based on SPSS analysis of the variable of county of residence the respondents came from, it was found that 148 observations came from Kisumu County while 155 came from Homa Bay County. It should be noted however, that a total of 157 questionnaires were administered to respondents from Kisumu while at least 224 were administered to those from Homa Bay. This relatively high return rate can be explained by the fact that the researcher properly trained his two research assistants, worked very closely to project people to recruit the

participants and used innovative techniques such as flexibly applying physical one-on-one interviews as well phone call interviews/surveys, and zoom and other online platforms as situation on the part of the respondents demanded. Overall, 48.8% of the study respondents came from Kisumu while 51.2% were supported under Homabay NGAAF program. This reflects a rather balanced sample from each of the study sites, hence enabling utility of a comparative approach. This data is summarized in figure in 4.2 below.

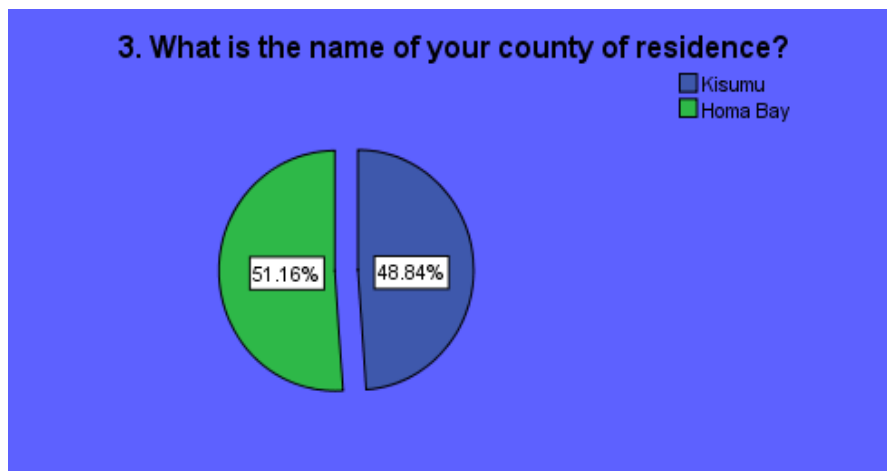


Figure 4.2: Respondents Distribution by County of Residence

Source: Mboha (2023)

4.3.3 Respondents Distribution by Age

The study found that of sampled respondents, majority (72.94%) were younger and have the age range of 18-25, followed by 25.41% belonging to age cohort 26-33. The last cohorts 34-41 and 41 and above had less than 2% (see figure 3 below). By county, Kisumu had the youngest beneficiaries with 135 (44%) of the total sample being between ages of 18-25. In Homa Bay, the age distribution was almost the same for 18-25(86 or 28.4%) and 26-33 (65 Or 21.5%). These findings show that the project indeed was meant for the youths in the two counties, with most being fresh high school graduates (18-25 age cohort).

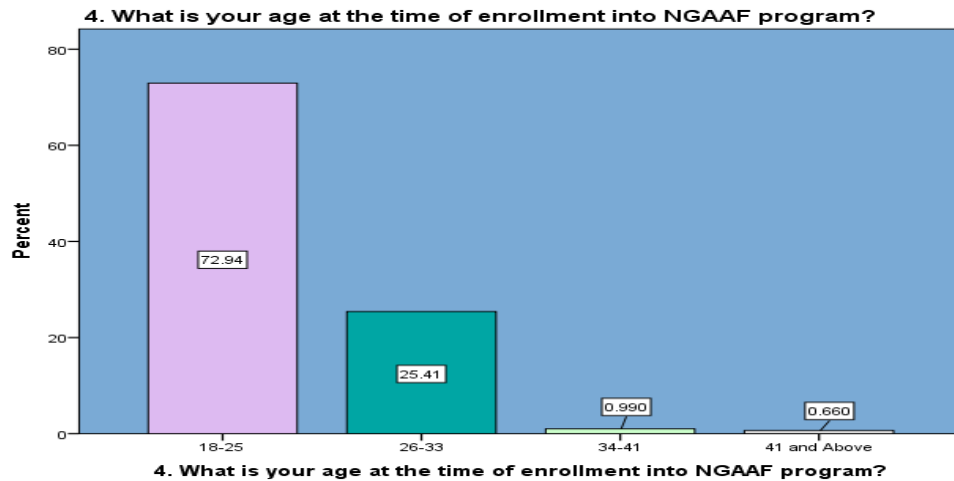


Figure 4.3: Respondents Distribution by Age

Source: Mboha (2023)

4.3.4 Respondents Distribution by Ward

The Constitution of Kenya requires that development be equally distributed across the counties and across all vulnerable peoples (GoK, 2010). Therefore, any development program brought to the counties or conceived in any sector of the counties must reach the vulnerable people across the smallest administrative units that is the wards. However, this study established that the NGAAF empowerment program was not as spread across the wards in each of the counties and was largely concentrated in wards within the city (for Kisumu) and within the town areas (for Homa Bay). For example, the wards with the highest frequencies in Homa Bay were the Kochia and Arujo (constituting 40%) which all are within the town environs. For Kisumu, most respondents were from the wards within Kisumu Central and town part of Kisumu West and East sub-counties (cumulatively 46%), with very less participation of beneficiaries from rural sub-counties like Nyakach and Seme.

4.3.5 Respondents Distribution by Disability Status

Both the Kenya National Disability Act 2003 and National Disability Policy 2018, argue for mainstreaming of disability in development and legitimize the participation of PWDs in any government policy intervention (Kabia et al., 2018; Gebrekidan, 2012). However, this study established that PWDs participation in terms of uptake of the program was very low compared to those who were able bodied. As table below shows, only a total of 6.2% of the sample size were PWDs. Kisumu had 3.6% of this (of the total sample) while Homa Bay had supported only 2.6% of PWDs. The percentage of the able bodied people who participated in the study were 93.8%. This calls for the need of NGAAF youth employability policy makers

at the county level to rethink their recruitment to incorporate more PWDs in accordance to the laws and national policies on PWDs.

3. What is the name of your county of residence? * 8. Are you a person with disability? Cross-tabulation

Table 4.2: Respondents Distribution by Disability Status

Count

		8. Are you a person with disability?		Total
		Yes	No	
3. What is the name of your county of residence?	Kisumu	11(3.6%)	137 (45.2%)	148 (49%)
	Homa Bay	8(2.6%)	147 (48.5%)	155 (51%)
	Total	19(6.2%)	284 (93.8%)	303 (100%)

Source: Mboha (2023)

4.3.6 Respondents Distribution by Centre of Training

The NGAAF youth empowerment project through supporting their acquisition of market-oriented skills involved three major stakeholders, the youth/beneficiaries, the county governments NGAAF Team, and the training institution – the NITA. As figure 4 below summarizes, many of the beneficiaries received their training from NITA-Kisumu and NITA-Nairobi which received the same number of students, 123(40.59%) each. This was followed by Mawego 31(10.23%), NITA-Athi River 19(6.27%) and seven (2.3%) respondents did not mark the question appropriately.

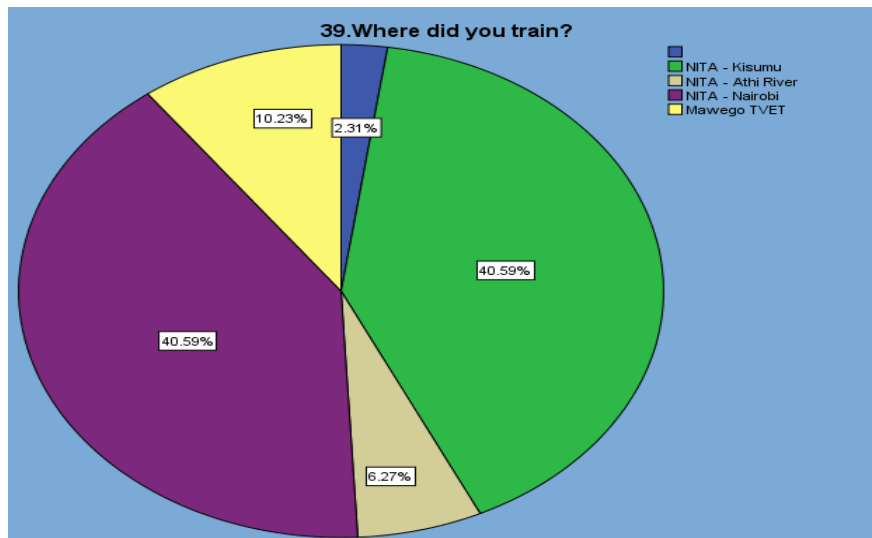


Figure 4.4: Respondents Distribution by Centre of Training

Source: Mboha (2023)

This shows that most of the project beneficiaries went to Kisumu and Nairobi to receive their training. According to NGAAF Officials from Kisumu and Homa Bay, far off centres from the counties were preferred to ensure beneficiaries were able to concentrate. Hence Kisumu justified their collaboration with mainly Nairobi because it was far from home, while Homabay preferred Kisumu for the same reasons. NGAAF Official from Kisumu asserted this point by arguing that:

We thought this would help our students concentrate and get the most out of the courses they did. Most were coming from around and would easily go back home every time they felt like if they did their training here [NGAAF Official Kisumu County, during a Key Informant Interview at his Office, 20th April 2023].

4.3.7 Respondents Distribution by Employment Status at Recruitment into the Program

To understand whether the project led to employability of the youth who participated in it, it is important to understand the employment status of the youths before recruitment into the program. As the figure 5 below summarizes, this study found that at the time of joining the program most of the participants described themselves as not employed at all (88.78%). 3.96% were in Boda Boda, 6.27% were salaried but on temporary basis, and the rest (0.99%) were in Juakali sector. This means that most of the youths were needy youths in terms of employment.

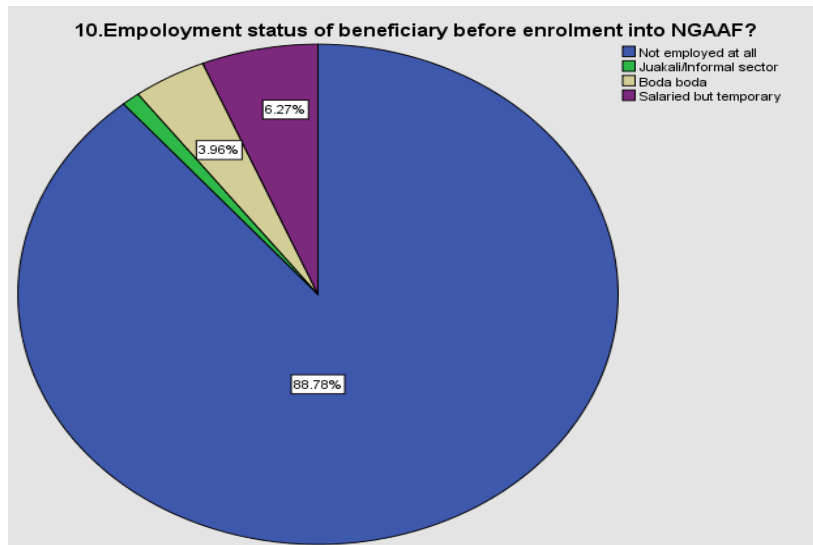


Figure 4.5: Respondents Distribution by Employment Status at Recruitment into the Project

Source: Mboha (2023)

4.3.8 Respondents Distribution by Level of Education at Recruitment Time

Education is an important socio-demographic variable that may have negative or positive influence in one's access to employment, and further education. The former relates to acquisition of required skills for employment and the latter relates to once ability to grasp the technical or theoretical knowledge that comes with further education. As figure 6 below summarizes, all study participants either had completed secondary education (92.41%) or had joined and dropped out from secondary education (7.59%). This further confirms that these youths targeted were in need for skills to enter the job market, and further that they had been those from humble backgrounds who were unable to join next levels of their education due to financial constraints.

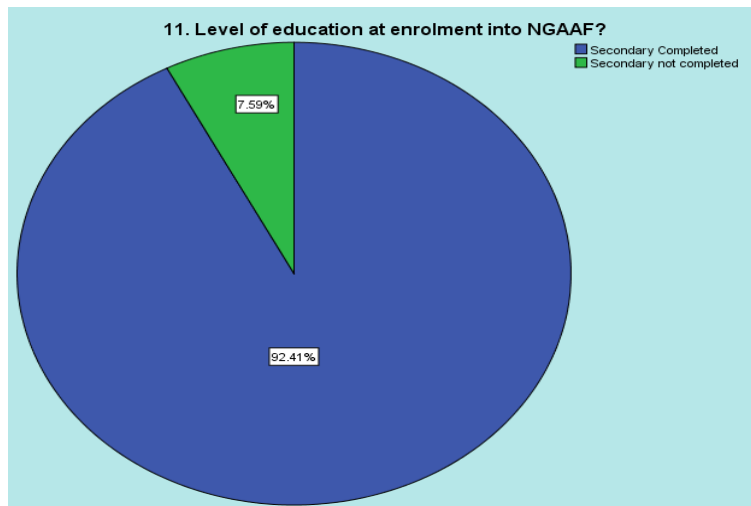


Figure 4.6: Respondents Distribution by Level of Education at Recruitment Time

Source: Mboha (2023)

4.4 The Influence of NGAAF Youth Empowerment Program on Youth Employability

This section of this chapter is the core of it as it presents findings on the first objective of the study. It analyses findings taking a lens of inter-county comparison of the influence of the program to youth employability in terms of the types of skill-sets the programs supported. To achieve this, it starts by identifying the different skill sets, then the results of training in terms of employment, before it finally looks at which skills led to employment among beneficiaries from each county.

4.4.1 Skill-sets supported Under NGAAF Youth Training Program

This study found that 15 skill-sets were supported by NGAAF in both Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties. As the table below shows, 20 (6.6%) trained in auto engineering, which involved skills such as panel beating, motor vehicle, electrical, painting, among others. 4 (1.3%) studied Computer repair and ICT related trades. 19 (6.3%) beneficiaries were enrolled in electrical wireman and installation, 14 (4.6%) specialized in welding, 24 (7.9%) in plumbing, 2(0.7%) in masonry, 2 (0.7%) in cleaning, 51 (16.8%) in hospitality, 10 (3.3%) in boiler technology, 28(9.2%) dress-making, 22 (7.3%) screen printing, 28 (9.2%) salon and related trades, 1(.03%) in plant mechanics, 65 (21.5%) beauty therapy and finally 13(4.3%) in fabric design.

21. What skill set were you trained in?

Table 4.3: Skill-sets supported Under NGAAF Youth Training Program

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Auto Engineering	20	6.6	6.6	6.6
Computer Repair and ICT	4	1.3	1.3	7.9
Electrical wireman/Installation	19	6.3	6.3	14.2
Welding	14	4.6	4.6	18.8
Plumbing	24	7.9	7.9	26.7
Masonry	2	.7	.7	27.4
Cleaning	2	.7	.7	28.1
Valid Hospitality	51	16.8	16.8	44.9
Boiler Technology	10	3.3	3.3	48.2
Dress-Making	28	9.2	9.2	57.4
Screen Printing	22	7.3	7.3	64.7
Salon and Related Trades	28	9.2	9.2	73.9
Plant Mechanics	1	.3	.3	74.3
Beauty Therapy	65	21.5	21.5	95.7
Fabric Design	13	4.3	4.3	100.0
Total	303	100.0	100.0	

Source: Mboha (2023).

This shows that a list of courses were at the disposal of the beneficiaries to choose from depending on their capacity and interests. However, an interview with one NGAAF Official revealed that courses to be supported depended on the cost of each course, hence there was need to sometimes regulate how many beneficiaries could choose which course. A NGAAF key informant explained that:

Most of the courses they learnt were good. However, sometimes we had to intervene on what courses they could choose just so that we could cut coats according to our sizes. So yet they had the opportunity to choose but we could intervene also so that whatever they choose we are able to pay fees for. [NGAAF Key informant during a Key Informant Interview, 14th January 2023].

This finding aligns with the observations made by Agwani (2014) in his study on the Local Enterprise and Skill Development Programme (LESDEP) in Ghana. Agwani's research highlighted that resource limitations often constrained the freedom of choice when it came to selecting courses for program beneficiaries. In such cases, project sponsors and donors could exert control over the courses beneficiaries were allowed to join. This level of external

control can have detrimental effects on the impact of skill development programs. For instance, during interviews with beneficiaries from the first cohort in Homa Bay, it became evident that some participants had reverted to their previous livelihoods, such as operating Boda boda (motorcycle taxis) or offering Mpesa services. This was partly attributed to their enrollment in courses they did not have a genuine interest in. In contrast, Kisumu County offered more flexibility, allowing participants, to choose courses that resonated with their preferences. As a result, many female participants in Kisumu were able to secure employment based on the courses they had chosen.

This comparison underscores the significance of participant agency and the importance of aligning skill development programs with the interests and aspirations of the beneficiaries. It reinforces the idea that when individuals are allowed to choose courses they are passionate about, they are more likely to excel and leverage their newly acquired skills for meaningful employment. Understanding these dynamics within the NGAAF program is crucial for refining the program's design and ensuring that it aligns with the needs and preferences of the youth it seeks to empower. Therefore, investigating how NGAAF's course selection process was and participant agency influence outcomes is essential for program improvement and better outcomes for beneficiaries, and future studies can further delve into this perspective.

The findings from this study underscore a theoretical misalignment between the NGAAF project and both the Social Partners Model (SPM) and the Self-Employment Theory.

First, in the context of the Social Partners Model (SPM), it advocates for addressing the issue of financial limitations in youth empowerment by involving a multitude of stakeholders or actors. This approach emphasizes collaboration and contributions from various sectors, including government, civil society, and private industry. However, the lack of choice in course selection observed in the NGAAF program can be seen as a departure from the SPM's principles. By limiting beneficiaries' agency and choice, the program seems to have missed opportunities to tap into the diverse skills and interests of the youth. Involving beneficiaries in course selection and allowing them to align their training with their passions and strengths can enhance the effectiveness of youth empowerment initiatives, in line with the SPM's collaborative approach.

Secondly, the revelation that some beneficiaries resorted to activities like Boda boda servicing due to a lack of motivation resulting from their course assignments is indicative of a

misalignment with Self-Employment Theory. The Self-Employment Theory suggests that individuals who are motivated and passionate about their chosen field of work are more likely to create their own employment opportunities using the skills they have acquired. In the case of NGAAF beneficiaries, a lack of optimal engagement with the assigned courses can hinder their ability to harness their skills for entrepreneurial ventures or self-employment. This theoretical misalignment highlights the importance of not only providing skills training but also ensuring that beneficiaries are genuinely motivated and engaged in their chosen areas of skill development.

In light of these theoretical disparities, the immense contribution made by this study by assessing the NGAAF program's design and implementation to better align with the principles of the Social Partners Model and the Self-Employment Theory for ongoing and future programs becomes clear. The study reveals the need for a realignment to involve greater participant agency in course selection, fostering motivation and passion among beneficiaries, and ultimately improving the program's effectiveness in enhancing youth employability and entrepreneurship. Therefore, understanding these theoretical gaps and their practical implications is vital for optimizing the NGAAF program's impact and outcomes. These findings confirm findings by previous scholars (Afolabi, Raifu & Aminu, 2022; Agwani, 2014). Afolabi et al. (2022) found that development partners prioritize to give short term skills to the youth. However, the study does not undertake an analysis of the impact that these skills have on beneficiaries, a gap that constitute the main contribution of this thesis.

4.4.2 Employment Status in the post-Training

In terms of employment status following their participation in the NGAAF program, there was a significant transformation in the beneficiaries' situation. Before enrolling in the various skill-set programs facilitated by NITA centers through NGAAF support, a substantial majority, comprising 88.78% of the participants, were unemployed. However, by the time of this research, this scenario had seen a remarkable shift, with those employed surpassing those still without employment. According to the data, 54.31% of the participants considered themselves employed due to the skills they had acquired, while 45.87% remained unemployed.

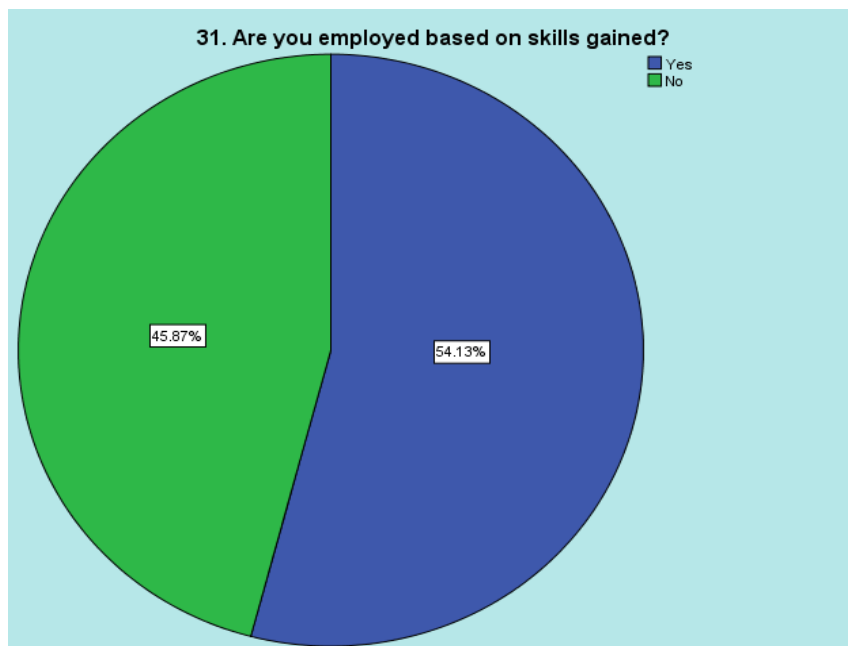


Figure 4.7: Employment Status in the post-Training

Source: Mboha (2023)

This data underscores the positive impact of the skill-sets offered by the NGAAF program, as it contributed to increased employability among the youth. The skills imparted were tailored to meet industry demands, providing beneficiaries with the necessary tools for thriving in the job market. Although various stakeholders highlighted different factors contributing to this transformation, the appropriateness of the skill-sets for industry placement emerged as a common perspective.

For instance, the NITA Key informant in Kisumu emphasized the program's unique approach, emphasizing a strong focus on practical skills. The manager noted that theory constituted only a small portion (10%) of the program, with the majority dedicated to hands-on training, both at the institute and during industrial attachments. This approach, according to the key informant, adequately prepared graduates for the industry, potentially giving them an edge over peers from other institutions.

NGAAF managers also played a crucial role in ensuring students acquired employable skills. They emphasized their commitment to supporting students by providing continuous bursaries, ensuring students could stay in school throughout their training. Timely payments for fees and accommodations enabled students to focus on their skill development.

We were very committed with our support and we were prompt in making the payment for fees and accommodation throughout the session. This way we were able to give the students a chance to stay in school and get the most out of the skill-sets they specialized in [NGAAF Key informant during a Key Informant interview, Feb 20th 2023].

Trainers echoed the significance of student commitment and determination during training. They commended proactive students who actively sought introductions and connections within the industry, contributing to their employability. Trainers highlighted the importance of a student's attitude and dedication, which significantly influenced their employment outcomes. One trainer asserted:

From what I know, employment is not straightforward after training. It gets back to whether the student was determined and had self-determination. Those whom I knew and who were disciplined and were committed and even requested us to introduce them while almost completing their courses, I know they are doing very well and are employed formally or informally [Industry Trainer during a Key Informant Interview at Mawego Technical Institute, 23rd January 2023].

Beneficiaries shared similar views regarding employment outcomes. They acknowledged that employment wasn't guaranteed after training and emphasized the role of individual determination. Those who secured employment were often the ones who demonstrated seriousness, discipline, and commitment throughout their training. In contrast, some students, seemingly more privileged, exhibited a lack of commitment, skipping classes and neglecting practical training opportunities. One student argued:

It is not a must to get jobs after training. All of us got the skills and taught by the same teachers and did our exams 90% of which was practical with only 10% being theory part. But some were serious and were doing it as their only way out of unemployment. But others were not serious, and missing classes, not attending practical lessons – I think they were the well-off students who just came to buy time. Only my serious classmates are employed I can tell you [Successfully employed Plumbing student supported by NGAAF Homabay, during an open-ended Survey on phone call, 25th April 2023].

The students' emphasis on the practical aspect aligns with the study's findings on the mode of course delivery. The data, as illustrated in the figure below, indicates that a significant portion of the courses had a practical orientation, further enhancing beneficiaries' prospects in the job market. This finding corroborate the finding by Calderon et al. (2022) who argue that practical skills are key to leading to the employability of the youths and that development

partners should prioritize them. However, they go ahead to show how empirically this study has filled this gap by revealing the dynamics of post-skill-oriented training.

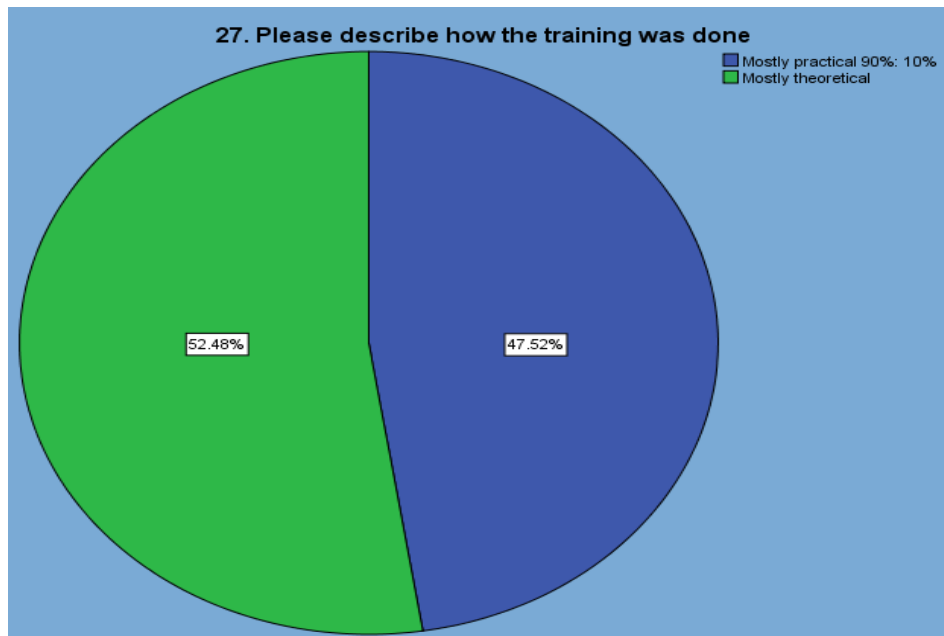


Figure 4.8: The Mode of Training at NITA

Source: Mboha (2023)

The findings from this objective provide valuable insights into the dynamics of the NGAAF youth empowerment program in the context of enhancing youth employability, particularly concerning the types of skill-sets trained in. These findings align with the Social Partners Model (SPM) and Self-Employment Theory to a significant extent. From the perspective of the SPM, which emphasizes the involvement of multiple actors in addressing financial limitations for youth empowerment, the NGAAF program's approach aligns with this model. The program collaborates with various stakeholders, including NITA centers, industry experts, and financial supporters, to provide comprehensive training and support to beneficiaries. This multi-stakeholder approach contributes to the program's success in equipping youths with employable skills. However, from the funding perspective, this appeared not to be the case as reported and analyzed in section 4.4.1.

Additionally, the findings shed light on the importance of choice and motivation in the effectiveness of skill development programs. The lack of choice in selecting courses, as observed in some instances, can negatively impact motivation and, subsequently, the utilization of acquired skills. This aspect resonates with the Self-Employment Theory, which

emphasizes on the importance of self-determination and motivation in creating employment opportunities. When participants are genuinely interested in and committed to the courses they undertake, they are more likely to succeed in the job market.

Furthermore, the findings highlight the significance of practical, industry-oriented training in enhancing employability. The emphasis on hands-on experience and practical skills aligns with the principles of both SPM and Self-Employment Theory. Practical training equips beneficiaries with the skills demanded by the job market, bridging the gap between education and industry needs. In conclusion, these findings underscore the compatibility of the NGAAF program with the theoretical frameworks of SPM and Self-Employment Theory. The program's collaborative approach, commitment to practical training, and the importance of choice and motivation in course selection all align with these theoretical perspectives. These insights provide a robust foundation for the program's continued success in empowering youth and enhancing their employability.

4.4.2.1 Type of Employment Gained in the Post-training

While more beneficiaries were employed than those were not already employed at the time of study, the study established that the type of employment varied. As the figure below shows, majority of those employed were in irregular employment based on demand (26.07%). 19.14% were employed in a relevant organization, while 5.28% were in regular self-employment. Of those who were in irregular employment based on demand, 20% were from Homabay County while 6% from Kisumu County. This was explained during the interviews with most beneficiaries explaining that they were given tools and this enabled them to start their own hustles or be useful in relevant sites wherever their services were demanded for. On the other hand of those who were in regular relevant organization, 14% were from Kisumu with only 5% from Homabay hence more Kisumu beneficiaries were in the formal sector. This is again by the fact that in Kisumu County, tools of trade though not provided, the beneficiaries were linked directly to industries in beauty, hospitality and clothing, whereby most could do their industrial attachments and later be recruited on formal basis. The state in Homabay sits very well with the self-employment theory which argues that the most important value for solid education is that it equips learners with skills that gives them a head-start in the job market. Hence beneficiaries from Homabay were able to start their own self-employment without waiting for employment. On the other hand, the finding from Kisumu sits well with the social partners model of youth empowerment, and show cases the

power of social partners working together to unlock the industry doors and mitigate youth employability. Through the links between NGAAF Kisumu and industry actors, they were able to forge relationships which were useful for the employment of the graduating girls after training.

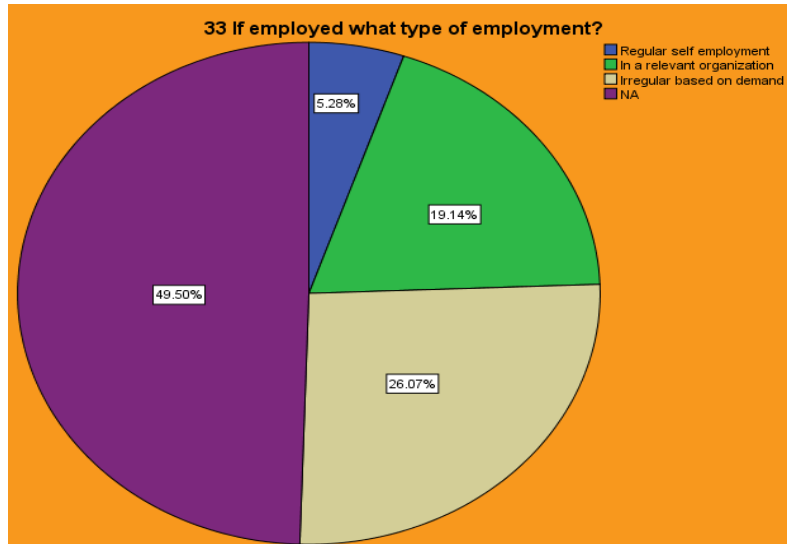


Figure 4.9: Type of Employment Gained after Training

Source: Mboha (2023)

Therefore, the foregoing triangulation with survey and qualitative findings on the status of employment of program beneficiaries in the post-training reveal that the dynamics of employability is rather nuanced than what statistics themselves reveal. This is even clearer when different skill-sets trained in are cross-tabulated per county per employment status after training, as discussed in the next section.

The findings regarding the type of employment gained in the post-training phase offer a nuanced understanding of the employability dynamics among NGAAF beneficiaries. This analysis aligns with the Self-Employment Theory and the Social Partners Model (SPM) while highlighting the diverse employment outcomes for program participants.

The predominance of irregular employment based on demand among beneficiaries, particularly in Homa Bay County (but also in Kisumu County), reflects the relevance of the Self-Employment Theory. This theory emphasizes the value of education in equipping learners with practical skills that provide them with a competitive advantage in the job market. The fact that a significant portion of beneficiaries in Homa Bay County engaged in self-employment after training demonstrates that they were able to utilize the skills acquired

to start their own businesses promptly. This aligns with the theory's emphasis on self-determination and self-reliance as pathways to employment.

Conversely, the findings in Kisumu County, where a higher percentage of beneficiaries secured employment in relevant organizations, resonate with the principles of the Social Partners Model. This model emphasizes collaborative efforts among various stakeholders, including industry actors and educational institutions, to enhance youth employability. The linkages established between NGAAF Kisumu and relevant industries facilitated formal employment opportunities for program participants. This collaborative approach, reflected in the higher rate of beneficiaries in regular relevant organizations, underscores the effectiveness of the SPM in mitigating youth unemployment.

In summary, the findings reveal a multifaceted landscape of post-training employment outcomes among NGAAF beneficiaries. These outcomes are influenced by both the Self-Employment Theory's emphasis on self-reliance and the SPM's focus on collaborative efforts between social partners. This nuanced perspective underscores the complexity of youth employability dynamics and highlights the significance of tailored approaches to address the varying needs of program participants.

Looking at previous studies, this study corroborates and builds them further. Charles (n.d) argues that Kenyan youths can benefit from skill-based empowerment programs as such programs lead to employability. However, the study does not reveal/analyze the type of employment, and trajectories in the post-training of these skill-based training. This study shows that post-training employment is complex and is influenced by a number of factors.

4.4.3 The Relationship between Skills Trained in and Employability

The findings regarding the relationship between the skills trained in and employability among NGAAF beneficiaries highlight the critical role that the choice of skill-sets plays in determining employment outcomes. This analysis aligns with the broader trends in the job market and underscores the importance of tailoring youth empowerment programs to market demands.

The data clearly indicate that quick-service-oriented skills-sets (QSOS) tend to lead to higher employability rates compared to more highly technical vocational courses. This observation is particularly evident in the cases of hospitality, salon and related trades, and beauty therapy,

where a significant proportion of graduates reported successful transitions into the job market. The employability rates for these courses ranged from 67% to 100%. These findings underscore the market demand for skills in service industries, which often provide immediate employment opportunities for program participants.

In contrast, traditional courses and high-demand technical skills courses (HTSC) demonstrated lower employability rates. Graduates from these courses, such as auto engineering, computer repair, electrical installation, and others, reported significantly lower employment rates, with some courses showing 0% employability. These findings highlight the challenges faced by graduates seeking employment in technical sectors, where market demand may be lower, and competition is more intense.

The experiences of graduates from HTSC programs further illustrate the influence of job-market demand on employability. For instance, the difficulties reported by boiler technology graduates in securing employment due to the perceived preference for self-taught individuals highlight the challenges faced by those in highly specialized technical fields. These findings align with the USAID Workforce Development Study, which suggests that the demand for skills varies between developed and developing countries, with service industries often offering better employment prospects in the latter.

The study's findings underscored the need for policymakers and program implementers to align youth empowerment programs with market realities. The NGAAF's approach, focusing on enhancing youths' capacities to meet job market demands, offers a promising avenue for sustainable empowerment. This approach, as seen in Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties, prioritizes skills enhancement over financial grants, emphasizing long-term employability. Such innovative strategies should serve as a model for other government youth empowerment initiatives.

In contrast, non-market-based interventions, such as cash grants or loans, often fall short in terms of sustainability and impact. The study echoes previous research, like Ochieng's (2014) work, which highlighted the limitations of grant-based empowerment programs that lack a skills-enhancement component. In conclusion, the study's findings emphasize the importance of aligning youth empowerment programs with market demands to enhance employability. The employability-oriented approach, as demonstrated by NGAAF programs in Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties, represents a more sustainable and impactful strategy for youth

empowerment. This approach should guide the design and implementation of future youth empowerment policies and programs by ensuring that they create a pool of skilled and employable youths who can contribute meaningfully to the job market.

Table 4.4: Skill-sets supported Under NGAAF Youth Training Program

21. What skill set were you trained in?

	Frequency	Employed	Not Employed	Total
Auto Engineering	20	4(1.3%)	16(5.3%)	6.6
Computer Repair and ICT	4	0(0%)	4(1.3%)	1.3
Electrical wireman/Installation	19	0(0%)	19(6.3%)	6.3
Welding	14	4(1.3%)	10(3.3%)	4.6
Plumbing	24	4(1.3%)	20(6.6%)	7.9
Masonry	2	2(0.7%)	0(0%)	.7
Cleaning	2	2(0.7%)	0(0%)	.7
Hospitality	51	35(11.6%)	16(5.2%)	16.8
Boiler Technology	10	0(0%)	10(3.3%)	3.3
Dress-Making	28	12(4%)	16(5.2%)	9.2
Screen Printing	22	0(0%)	22(7.3%)	7.3
Salon and Related Trades	28	23(7.4%)	5(1.8%)	9.2
Plant Mechanics	1	0(0%)	1(0.3%)	.3
Beauty Therapy	65	65(21.5%)	0(0%)	21.5
Fabric Design	13	13(4.3%)	0(0%)	4.3
Total	303	164(54.13%)	139(44.87%)	100.0

Source: Mboha (2023)

The theoretical appraisal of the findings in this sub-section underscores the significance of aligning youth empowerment programs with two key theoretical frameworks: the Self-Employment Theory and the Social Partners Model (SPM). First, the findings resonate with the Self-Employment Theory, which posits that education and skill development can empower individuals to create their employment opportunities. This theory becomes particularly evident when examining the employability outcomes of beneficiaries from Homa Bay County. The data show that those trained in quick-service-oriented skills (QSOS), such as hospitality, salon-related trades, and beauty therapy, achieved high employability rates, with some reaching 100%. These individuals were well-equipped to enter the job market or

start their own businesses immediately after completing their training, aligning with the principles of self-employment theory.

Conversely, beneficiaries trained in traditional courses, such as auto engineering and computer repair, encountered lower employability rates. This finding highlights the challenges faced by graduates seeking employment in technical sectors, where self-employment opportunities may be limited due to the specialized nature of their skills. Thus, the Self-Employment Theory underscores the importance of skills acquisition that lead to immediate employability or entrepreneurship, as observed in the case of QSOS.

Secondly, the findings also support the Social Partners Model (SPM), which emphasizes the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including government, industry, and education institutions, in youth empowerment initiatives. Kisumu County's success in facilitating graduates' entry into the formal job market reflects the power of social partnerships between NGAAF and industry actors. By establishing strong links between NGAAF Kisumu and various industries, graduates could participate in industrial attachments and secure formal employment opportunities.

In contrast, Homabay County, while achieving high rates of self-employment, did not emphasize social partnerships to the same extent (although this argument was relaxed in objective two). This variation in approach highlights the role of collaboration between NGAAF and industry partners in enhancing youth employability. The SPM, with its emphasis on collective action and collaboration, provides a valuable framework for understanding the importance of these partnerships in connecting graduates with formal employment opportunities.

In summary, the findings in this sub-section not only provide insights into the dynamics of employability among NGAAF beneficiaries but also offer theoretical support for the Self-Employment Theory and the Social Partners Model. The Self-Employment Theory emphasizes the value of skills that lead to immediate employability or entrepreneurship, while the SPM underscores the importance of collaborative efforts between various stakeholders to enhance youth employability. These theoretical frameworks offer valuable guidance for designing effective youth empowerment programs that align with market demands and create sustainable pathways to employment and self-sufficiency.

4.4.4 Skills trained on by County by Employability

To understand whether different courses or skill-sets trained on by the NGAAF beneficiaries had different significance in terms of enhancing the employability of the beneficiaries, the study undertook a cross-tabulation of the questions on skill-sets, county of residence and the question on whether one was employed or not. This analysis expands the general analysis summarized in table three above by revealing intra-county and inter-county differences as shown in the modified/simplified cross-tab in table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Skill-sets trained in by County by Employment Status after training

Skills-sets	County	Frequency	Employed	Not Employed	Total
Auto Engineering	Kisumu	4	0	4(1.3%)	4(1.3%)
	Homabay	16	4(1.3%)	12(3.9%)	16(5.3%)
Computer Repair and ICT	Kisumu	4	0	4(1.3%)	4(1.3%)
	Homabay	0	0	0	0
Electrical wireman/Installation	Kisumu	4	0	0	4(1.3%)
	Homabay	15	0	0	15(5%)
Welding	Kisumu	4	0	0	4(1.3%)
	Homabay	10	4(1.3%)	6(2%)	10 (3.3%)
Plumbing	Kisumu	4	4(1.3%)	0	4(1.3%)
	Homabay	20	0	20(6.6%)	20(6.6%)
Masonry	Kisumu	0	0	0	0
	Homabay	2	2(0.7)	0	2(07%)
Cleaning	Kisumu	0	0	0	0
	Homabay	2	2(0.7)	0	2(07%)
Hospitality	Kisumu	35	35(11.6%)	0	35(11.6%)
	Homabay	16	0	16 (5.2%)	16(5.2%)
Boiler Technology	Kisumu	4	0	4(1.3%)	4(1.3%)
	Homabay	6	0	6(2%)	6(2%)
Dress-Making	Kisumu	12	12(3.9%)	0	12(3.9%)
	Homabay	16	0	16 (5.2%)	16 (5.2%)
Screen Printing	Kisumu	0	0	0	0
	Homabay	22	0	0	22(7.3%)
Salon and Related Trades	Homabay	12	6 (2%)	0	10(3.3%)
	Kisumu	21	17 (5.4%)	0	17(5.4%)
Plant Mechanics	Kisumu	0	0	0	0
	Homabay	1	0	1(0.3%)	1(0.3%)
Beauty Therapy	Kisumu	56	56(18.6%)	0	56(18.6%)
	Homabay	9	9(2.9%)	0	6(2.9%)
Fabric Design	Kisumu	0	0	0	0
	Homabay	13	13(4.3%)	0	13(4.3%)
Total			164(54.13%)	139(44.87%)	303 (100%)

Source: Mboha (2023)

As table 4.5 above summarizes, across the 15 different skill-sets offered at NITA through NGAAF support, it is clear that some skill-sets have a positive relationship with employability (possibility of getting a job after training) while others have no change on trainees employment status at the end of the training. For example, in Kisumu, none of the four students who completed a course in auto engineering was employed at the time of this study (up to July 2023) while the 16 students who did the course in Homabay, only 4 (1.3%) had secured a chance to work and put their skills into productive work. Concerning computer repair and ICT courses, none of the 4 who did it from Kisumu had secured employment. For electrical installation none was employed at time of study in both counties. For welding, out of the 14 who did the course (4 Kisumu and 1 from Homabay) none of the Kisumu participants were employed while only 4 from Homabay were employed.

Looking at plumbing, everyone (4) who did the course under NGAAF Kisumu were employed while all (20) of the Homabay beneficiaries had not got any employment opportunities. On masonry, the two (0.7% of the total sample) students who did the course both from Homabay and Kisumu based on the sample size were employed. Cleaning as a skill-set was similar to masonry. Hospitality had a total of 51 students. Of the 35 who did the course from Kisumu, all were employed while all (16) those who did the same course in Homa Bay reported to have not got any employment. None of the students who did boiler technology from both counties were employed, the same was for the case of dress-making where all (12) who did the course in Kisumu were employed while 16 (5.2%) of the graduates of the same course from Homa Bay had not got employment. Screen printing was only done by students from Homabay – based on the study participants – and none of them were employed at the time of the study. 6 (2%) of the 12 people who did salon and related courses from Kisumu were employed while 17 (5.4%) of the 21 who did the course in Homa Bay were also employed and the rest not employed. Only 1 student graduated with a trade in plant mechanics and was only from Homabay and had not got any employment. Beauty therapy on the other hand was done by 65 students and all were employed. 56(18%) from Kisumu and 9(2.9%) from Homa Bay. Fabric design, the 15th course in the list of courses studied was done by 13 (4.3%). All were from Homa Bay and all were employed at the time of this study.

From these findings, four revelations are clear. First, just a handful of Kisumu County beneficiaries did the HTSCs compared to QSOSs. For example only 4 out of 20 did auto

engineering; only 4 out of 21 did computer repair and ICT related courses, only 4 out of 14 did welding, only 4 out of 24 did plumbing, none did masonry and cleaning, only 4 out of 10 did boiler technology, none did screen printing, plant mechanics and fabric design. This finding can be corroborated by the finding on the gender perspectives on the skill-sets pursued by the beneficiaries. When asked whether they perceived the courses they did, it was clear that courses were gendered with female and male participants doing HTSCs categorizing such courses as meant for men while female and male participants that did QSOSs thinking such courses were meant for females. This engendering of the courses implies that female participants took the root of service – hospitality and beauty related skill-sets because they are traditionally perceived to be for the females and vice versa. The figure 7 below summarizes this observation. It shows that most (74.92%) of the participants had started changing their perspectives on the notion of some courses being males’ and other females’. Equal number thought these courses were still dichotomized between male and female. Since all beneficiaries from Kisumu were females as the County only supported girls in the program, the findings are therefore consistent when they show that most of the program beneficiaries from Kisumu did female-related courses, in the traditional sense of gendered dichotomy of courses. Likewise, most beneficiaries were male from Homabay because while the county supported male and female, most were male based on the list of program beneficiaries provided to the researcher for planning and slotting survey and interviews with the beneficiaries.

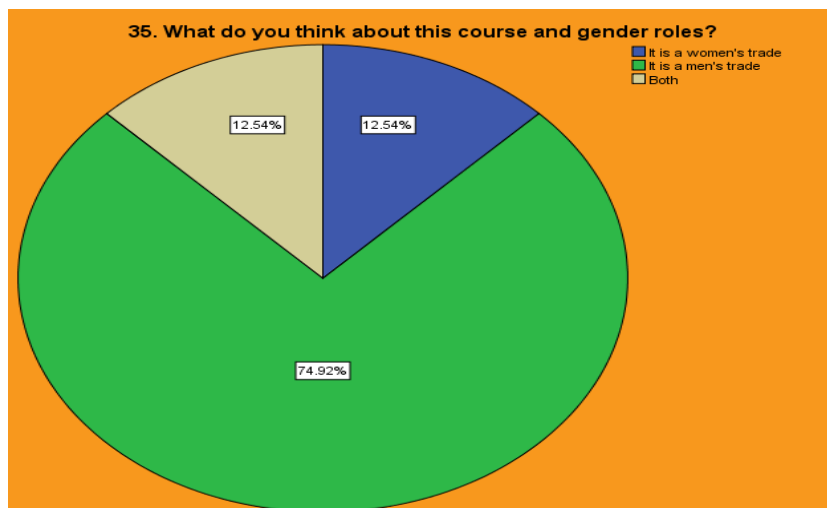


Figure 4.10: Gendered Perception on the Skill-sets

Source: Mboha (2023)

The second observation from table 4.5 is that for Kisumu beneficiaries, employment was highly likely from those who did graduate with the QSOS courses. For example all (56) those who did beauty therapy had got employment; half (6) of those who did salon and related trades were employed; all (12) those who did dress-making were employed; all (35) that did hospitality were also employed, among others. This further shows that even within the county, there were variances in terms of influence of skill-sets studied and employment after graduation.

Thirdly, it is observed from the table 4 that concerning inter-county, Kisumu County exhibited more numbers of those employed accounting for the many girls who did QSOSs which made transition from school into the job market easier compared to those from Homa Bay who did HTSCs which likely were not very demanded in the market compared to courses such as in hospitality, dress-making, salon and related courses among others. Lastly, unlike in Kisumu, most program beneficiaries from Homa Bay did the HTSCs and yet employment was not guaranteed and up to this level it is not clear why. This is explored in the following chapter in terms of the impact of the post-training support on employability of the beneficiaries.

These findings can be appraised in the face of the theoretical frameworks adopted. Concerning the SPM, the study established that the implementation of the NGAAF youth empowerment program in Kisumu County showcased a successful application of the Social Partners Model (SPM). This model emphasizes collaboration between government agencies, employers, and training institutions to enhance youth employability. The research revealed that NGAAF's strong partnership with relevant industries, particularly in fields like beauty, hospitality, and clothing, significantly improved employment outcomes for program beneficiaries. This collaboration was characterized by a direct linkage between NGAAF Kisumu and local industries, allowing students to gain practical experience through industrial attachments and increasing their chances of securing formal employment. Such partnerships aligned with the principles of the SPM, which highlights the importance of social partners working together to unlock job opportunities for youth. The study's findings underscore the significance of cooperative efforts in addressing youth unemployment and enhancing the employability of young individuals.

The observed county disparities can also be appraised using the SPM framework. The study's findings revealed notable disparities between counties in terms of employability outcomes. Kisumu County, which effectively engaged with industry partners, exhibited higher employment rates among program beneficiaries. This observation reinforces the idea that the Social Partners Model can be a potent strategy when implemented efficiently. In contrast, Homa Bay County, where fewer partnerships were evident, experienced lower employability rates. These county-based disparities highlight the critical role of local context and collaboration in shaping the success of youth empowerment initiatives. They underscore the need for tailored approaches that consider the unique circumstances and opportunities within each region. The study's findings emphasize that effective implementation of the SPM can mitigate youth unemployment but requires adaptability to local dynamics and engagement with relevant stakeholders.

Turning to the application of Self-Employment Theory, the study found that beneficiaries from Homa Bay County often pursued self-employment after completing courses such as plumbing, masonry, and cleaning. This aligns with the core premise of Self-Employment Theory, which posits that education equips individuals with the skills and motivation to create their employment opportunities. The research demonstrates that these individuals leveraged the skills acquired through the NGAAF program to initiate their businesses or ventures, showcasing their entrepreneurial spirit. The diversity in self-employment choices among beneficiaries, including plumbing, masonry, and cleaning, highlights the versatility of skills gained and their application in various entrepreneurial endeavors.

In conclusion, the study's findings provide valuable insights into the practical applications of the Social Partners Model and Self-Employment Theory within the NGAAF youth empowerment program. They emphasize the importance of collaborative efforts in enhancing youth employability and highlight the role of education in equipping young individuals with the skills and motivation to pursue self-employment opportunities. Additionally, the study underscored the need for context-specific strategies to address county-based disparities in employment outcomes, further emphasizing the importance of localized approaches within the framework of the SPM and Self-Employment Theory.

4.5 Summary of Chapter Four

This first chapter of the findings chapter did a comparison of the extent to which skill-sets NGAAF beneficiaries were trained on in Kisumu and Homa Bay counties determined their

employability. The comparison in this chapter was done within and between the counties. Intra-county analysis showed that those beneficiaries who enrolled for QSOS skill-sets, such as hospitality, dress-making, beauty therapy, salon and related courses were likely to get employed compared to their colleagues in the same county that enrolled for the HTSC courses such as plumbing and electrical installation. This is also consistent with the general trends exhibited by data across counties. For example only 4(1.3%) of those who did auto engineering were employed compared to beauty therapy where the entire 65 of the students who enrolled into these courses were reportedly employed.

Inter-county wise, the study established that Kisumu county beneficiaries were likely to be employed than their Homa Bay counterparts for two reasons. First, all of them were girls, and secondly, the courses the beneficiaries enrolled in were largely gendered with girls preferring first moving quick service-oriented courses traditionally viewed as female-based such as beauty therapy and the like. On the other hand, male beneficiaries would prefer male-dominated courses such as plumbing, electrical installation etc., which as this study finds out were sort of characterized by low rates of employability. For the girls in Homa Bay who were enrolled for courses such as beauty therapy, their employability was enhanced just like those from Kisumu. For example as table 4 shows, all the girls who did beauty therapy in Homa Bay did report that they were all employed.

These findings thus show that employability of the youths supported under the NGAAF empowerment program was among other factors, a function of the type of skill-set one was trained in. This is a finding which is consistent with USAID (2022) labor market analysis of the Kenyan context. The analysis concludes that service based TVET skills are on high demand and recommend that if the purpose of education of the youths is employment, such courses should be prioritized.

Theoretically, the chapter's findings revealed a remarkable alignment between the NGAAF program in Kisumu County and the principles of the Social Partners Model (SPM). This model emphasizes collaboration between government agencies, employers, and training institutions to enhance youth employability. In Kisumu, the NGAAF's effective partnership with relevant industries, particularly in beauty, hospitality, and clothing, resulted in significantly improved employment outcomes for program beneficiaries. The study highlighted the importance of social partners working together to unlock job opportunities for youth, as exemplified in Kisumu County.

However, county-based disparities emerged as a key theme within the chapter. Kisumu County, with its strong engagement with industry partners, showcased higher employment rates among program beneficiaries. This illuminated the significance of local context and collaboration in shaping the success of youth empowerment initiatives. The findings underscored the need for customized approaches that consider each region's unique circumstances and opportunities. Effective implementation of the SPM, the study demonstrated, hinges on adaptability to local dynamics and meaningful engagement with relevant stakeholders.

The chapter also explored the application of Self-Employment Theory, revealing that beneficiaries from Homa Bay County often pursued self-employment after completing courses such as plumbing, masonry, and cleaning. This finding resonated with Self-Employment Theory's central premise that education equips individuals with the skills and motivation to create their employment opportunities. Beneficiaries leveraged the skills gained through the NGAAF program to initiate various entrepreneurial endeavors, showcasing their entrepreneurial spirit and versatility in their choices of self-employment.

In conclusion, this chapter provided a comprehensive analysis of the study's findings, emphasizing the practical applications of the Social Partners Model and Self-Employment Theory within the NGAAF youth empowerment program as regards skill-sets supported. The research highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts in enhancing youth employability, the role of education in equipping individuals for self-employment, and the need for context-specific strategies to address county-based disparities in employment outcomes. These findings contribute valuable insights for policymakers, program implementers, and stakeholders seeking to empower and employ the youth effectively.

CHAPTER FIVE

COMPARATIVE IMPACT OF POST-SKILLS ACQUISITION SUPPORT ON YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY IN KISUMU AND HOMA BAY COUNTIES

5.1 Introduction

This chapter expands the previous chapter by furthering an analysis of factors that contributed to employability of some graduates while not some graduates despite them doing the same courses sponsored by the same County NGAAF framework and even offered at the same NITA Centre. The question explored in this chapter was: to what extent did the post-skills acquisition support given to beneficiaries lead to relative employment? That is to say, does the post-skills acquisition support given by NGAAF increase chances of employment/enhance employability of the beneficiaries or not? The chapter is based on quantitative and qualitative findings which were triangulated together with the theoretical frameworks adopted in the study.

5.2 Beneficiaries Perspectives on Program Effectiveness

To understand the impact of post-skills acquisition support given by the counties upon the beneficiaries' completion of the different skill-sets/courses they did, it was important to undertake a cross-table analysis of what the perspectives of the beneficiaries were according to their different cohorts of training. This is because, based on survey results (beneficiaries responses to open-ended questions) and key informant interviews with the NGAAF managers and committee members representing the sub-counties, certain cohorts were supported while others were not for the case of Homa Bay. While in Kisumu some beneficiaries got post-skills acquisition support while others did not, but this support was not targeted at a specific cohort.

As the comprehensive cross-tab analysis show, there appears to be a relationship between rating (beneficiaries perspective of the training) and their county origin as well as cohort (the latter especially applying for Homa Bay County). The tables for example, that for cohort 1 in Homa Bay County, a total of 88(29%) rated the program as either very good (21%) or good (8%). On the same note, and in very sharp contrast, cohort 2 beneficiaries from Homa Bay only 1(0.3%) rated the program as very good and only 4(1.3%) rated it as good, but majority in that cohort 62(20%) only ranked to it have been moderately good.

3. What is the name of your county of residence? * 37. How can you gauge the training you received? * 6. Which cohort of NGAAF were you? Cross-tabulation

Table 5.1: Training Program rating by the Course Beneficiaries, Cross-tabulated by Cohort and by County

Count

6. Which cohort of NGAAF were you?			37. How can you gauge the training you received?			Total
			Very good	Good	Moderate	
One	3. What is the name of your county of residence?	Kisumu	43(14%)	21(7%)	11(4%)	75(25%)
		Homa Bay	64(21%)	24(8%)	0(0%)	88(29%)
	Total		107(35%)	45(15%)	11(4%)	163(54%)
Two	3. What is the name of your county of residence?	Kisumu	50(17%)	20(7%)	3(1%)	73(24%)
		Homa Bay	1(0.3%)	4(1.3%)	62(20%)	67(22%)
	Total		51(17%)	24(8%)	65(21%)	140(46%)
Total	3. What is the name of your county of residence?	Kisumu	93(31%)	41(14%)	14(5%)	148(49%)
		Homa Bay	65(21%)	28(9%)	62(20%)	155(51%)
	Total		158(52%)	69(23%)	76(25%)	303(100%)

Source: Mboha (2023)

Through open-ended questions in the survey and selected key informant interviews with beneficiaries from Homa Bay, the study realized that cohort 1 students who had joined the course in 2018, upon graduation were supported by start-up packages in terms of tools of trade to begin practicing and facilitate the ease of transition from learning to working. However, the second cohort beneficiaries had not been given such a package. One unemployed student from cohort two narrated that:

Cohort 1 people were lucky. They received tools and many could start working almost immediately after graduation. But us, we were never given such things. Actually we have not even graduated and we don't have a certificate to show that we have learnt anything. We have WhatsApp group and we keep on making noise but nothing has changed [Cohort 2 beneficiary Homabay County, 20th May 2023].

A discussion during key informant interviews with NGAAF committee members from Homa Bay, as well as with County Gender Focal Person who sits in the committee as a representative of the national government revealed that the claims put forth by the beneficiaries were real. They however justified that the second cohort had not been treated similar to the first cohort. One committee asserted that:

This cohort joined in 2019, and before long, COVID 19 happened and things were really disrupted. Their learning was disrupted and they had to break and go back to finish when schools reopened. The NGAAF also began to focus on COVID 19 and funds were redirected to COVID 19 related items (although fees were paid) hindering the extra support in the post-training. [Key informant from Homa Bay NGAAF committee]

Concerning the graduation and certification, the committee members were not aware this was the case. However, the NGAAF Key informant (who is a former employee at the time of research) argued that things were on course, and that there was just a little hike-up due to regime change as the former Women Rep had become the Governor and a new Women Rep, NGAAF Fund Patron, was in office and was yet to decide whether to proceed with the program or take a different empowerment direction. This revelation reveals yet another layer of hindrance of NGAAF Policy implementation – the interaction between politics of change – short horizon political offices – and the sustainability of such innovative programs as this.

From the same table 5 above, it can be seen that there is a sort of balance on the ratings given to the program by the beneficiaries from Kisumu County. For example, in cohort 1, of the total 75 (25%) from that cohort, 43(14%) rated the program at very good, 21(7%) at good and 11(4%). The same trend is visible in cohort 2 where of the total 73(24%), 50(17%) rated it as very good, 20(7%) as good and lastly 3(1%). Key informant interviews with Kisumu County NGAAF officers revealed that although they did not provide tools of trade as Homa Bay did, they tried to link their girls who graduated from the program with relevant industries for their placement. These industries were those in beauty, hospitality, and dress-making tailoring. They did this to both cohorts, but it was not all-encompassing, meaning others did not get it.

Moreover, unlike Homa Bay, all students from Kisumu had graduated successfully and were in possession of their certificates. In addition, besides being linked to industry after training, the county offered a support of 1,000 Kenyan Shillings weekly to all the girls as a form of pocket money during the training. These factors combined, can explain the high positive

ratings Kisumu NGAAF empowerment program beneficiaries had toward the training. Interpretively, this section provides empirical evidence of the impact of post-skills acquisition support on youth employability. The disparities between Cohorts 1 and 2 in Homa Bay County, with the former receiving tools of the trade and the latter not, reflect how specific support measures can significantly affect beneficiaries' perceptions about the program's ability to enhance their employability. This finding substantiates the theory's core premise that equipping youth with relevant skills and tools enhances their employability. The impact of political transitions on program continuity, as discussed in the section, underscores the theory's limitation. It highlights the vulnerability of youth empowerment programs to short-term political office tenures and budgetary shifts. This aspect is worth further exploration to understand how political factors can hinder or facilitate youth empowerment initiatives.

The section also hints at how external factors like the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted youth empowerment programs. This reflects the model's acknowledgment of external influences on program outcomes. It is important to recognize and adapt to such external shocks when implementing youth empowerment initiatives, as they can affect the success of industry partnerships and support mechanisms. In essence, this section of Chapter Five provides valuable insights into the real-world application of the two theoretical frameworks. It highlights the importance of targeted support, industry linkages, and political stability while also underscoring the challenges posed by short-term political transitions and external disruptions. The theoretical frameworks provide a lens through which to analyze and understand these dynamics, contributing to a nuanced appraisal of the NGAAF youth empowerment program's impact on youth employability in these counties.

The theoretical frameworks of the Social Partners Model (SPM) and the Theory of Self-Employment offer insights into the findings presented in Table 5.1, which depicts the Training Program rating by the Course Beneficiaries cross-tabulated by Cohort and County under the NGAAF. The SPM, emphasizing collaboration and collective responsibility, can be applied to interpret the collaborative efforts reflected in the beneficiaries' ratings. The diverse ratings across cohorts and counties suggest a collective evaluation of the training programs, aligning with the SPM's notion that addressing youth unemployment requires cooperation among various stakeholders. The differing perceptions of training effectiveness may stem from the involvement of multiple actors, including government bodies and industry partners,

in designing and implementing the programs. Simultaneously, the Theory of Self-Employment provides a lens through which to understand the beneficiaries' perceptions of the training they received. The theory underscores the importance of practical skills and their applicability in real-world scenarios. The varying ratings, including "Very good," "Good," and "Moderate," may reflect the extent to which the training programs equipped beneficiaries with practical skills relevant to their specific counties and cohorts. The Theory of Self-Employment implies that the perceived quality of training is crucial for individuals to leverage their acquired skills effectively, either in seeking employment or pursuing entrepreneurial endeavors.

5.3 Influence of Post-Training Support on Time of Employment after Training

This study then moved to examine if the post-skills acquisition support influenced employability in the two counties. While Homa Bay NGAAF officers claimed they had a post-skills acquisition support as part of the design, Kisumu County revealed that it was not part of the design. However, the study found that both counties undertook forms of post-skills acquisition support and that this was clearly important as it reduced the time lapse between post training and employment. The table below summarizes the findings in a cross-tab analysis which is then discussed.

3. What is the name of your county of residence? * 33. How Long did you take to get employed? * 35. Did you receive Support after Training?

Table 5.2: Cross-tab: Post-training Support against Time Taken to get employed after Training against County of Residence

34. Did you receive Support after Training?			33. Time taken to get employment?			Total
			Within Three months	Within 6 months	More than Six months	
Yes	3. What is the name of your county of residence?	Kisumu	46(15%)	2(1%)	0(0%)	48(16%)
		Homa Bay	62(21%)	4(1%)	0(0%)	66(22%)
		Total	108(36%)	6(2%)	0(0%)	114(38%)
No	3. What is the name of your county of residence?	Kisumu	10(3%)	10(3%)	6(2%)	26(9%)
		Homa Bay	8(3%)	14(5%)	4(1%)	26(9%)
		Total	18(6%)	24(8%)	10(3%)	52(17%)
Total	3. What is the name of your county of residence?	Kisumu	56(18%)	12(4%)	6(2%)	74(24%)
		Homa Bay	70(24%)	18(6%)	4(1%)	92(30.4%)

Total	126(42%)	30(10%)	10(3%)	303(100%)
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From table 6 above, the study established that in deed post-skills acquisition support reduces the time taken for NGAAF beneficiaries to get employed in both counties. The summary in cross-tab 6 shows that in both Kisumu County and Homa Bay County, those who received support and were employed got employed faster (within three months) 108(36%) of 164 (54% of the total number employed) than those employed but never got post-skills acquisition support. Majority 46(15%) of beneficiaries from Kisumu who were employed within 3 months after completion of the course said they were supported against only 10(3%) who were employed at the same time but were not supported. For Homa Bay, this trend was the same. For example majority 62(21%) of those who were employed within the first 3 months after completion were those who received post-skills acquisition support in the form of start-up packages (the cohort 1 as already revealed in previous analysis). In sharp contrast, only meagre 8(3%) of those not supported had got employment at the same time period after completion.

Concerning the columns on within 6 months and beyond 6 months, it is visible that those who were employed at the time of the study and were not supported were the majority across the counties. Further reinforcing the argument that post-skills acquisition support is necessary as the program’s influence on employability is concerned. Important to note is that support for the NGAAF beneficiaries was largely informal especially for Kisumu County and was not informed by the project design. The NGAAF Key informant of that County reported that:

Although we supported many students after graduation, this was not our original plan. But it is perhaps a good practice which we may need to continue with [NGAAF Key informant, Kisumu County, Phone Call Interview, 4th May, 2023].

For the Homa Bay County, it was alleged that this was according to the design. However the researcher could not confirm this from any of the documentations provided. Moreover, it was also characterized by lack of systematicity since not all students got the post-training package and additionally, the NGAAF officers could not pronounce themselves on of the laid out criteria for selecting those who were to benefit from start-up package. Finally, the study also revealed that for both counties the support had been turned into a political tool towards the August 2022 elections, and for Homa Bay for example, the tools were strategically provided to students to come from larger constituencies such as Ndhiwa and could also be given at

times haphazardly even to those who did not partake of the trainings. One student reported during a phone call interview:

I know of two people who did not even train but because they know someone closer to the politicians who were concerned with distribution of the tools, they got. Us, especially in cohort 1, we are still waiting for them. [Cohort 2 beneficiary from Homa Bay County, 3rd May 2023].

Political influence or interference is a key hindrance to successful implementation of public policies, even as transformative as this under study. Konyango (2019) found that the patron-client mechanisms of governance in Kenya hinder greatly the implementation of public policies across many counties. This study makes similar findings but provides an empirical case on how it manifests, hence expands Konyango (2019) and other previous studies, especially those that have dealt with this notion at the theoretical level. It is imperative that controls are made at policy level and programmatically that the benefits of empowerment programs should reach to the intended beneficiaries' without hindrance.

Overall, the revelations about post-skills acquisition support and employability sits squarely within the theoretical lens of this study. First, it is clear that a social partner's model is required for full support of the youth. As the study shows, NGAAF as an empowerment program is deficient to meet the societal goal of youth empowerment. One, just a few youths are recruited into the program and secondly, the framework cannot support a critical component, the post-skills acquisition support. This calls upon other actors to work in unison with the NGAAF in implementation of this policy. This leads to expansion and efficiency and effectiveness through division of labor and more and better targeting. This also reduced the negative political underpinnings of the intervention. Indeed, a social partner's framework has not been adopted in this particular policy implementation. Figure 5.1 below shows that only NGAAF was supporting the post-skills acquisition and not any other actors.

This study contributes new insights to the extant research. A number of youth empowerment programs analyses (Cherutich, 2016; Edwin, 2022; Irungu & Kamau, 2015) recommend that practical skills obviously lead to employability. However, this study has shown that this is not a straight forward thing and that part of the dynamics includes post-training. This is important because it shows that policy makers have an extra work to do even after training by providing tools of work for the beneficiaries' transition into work.

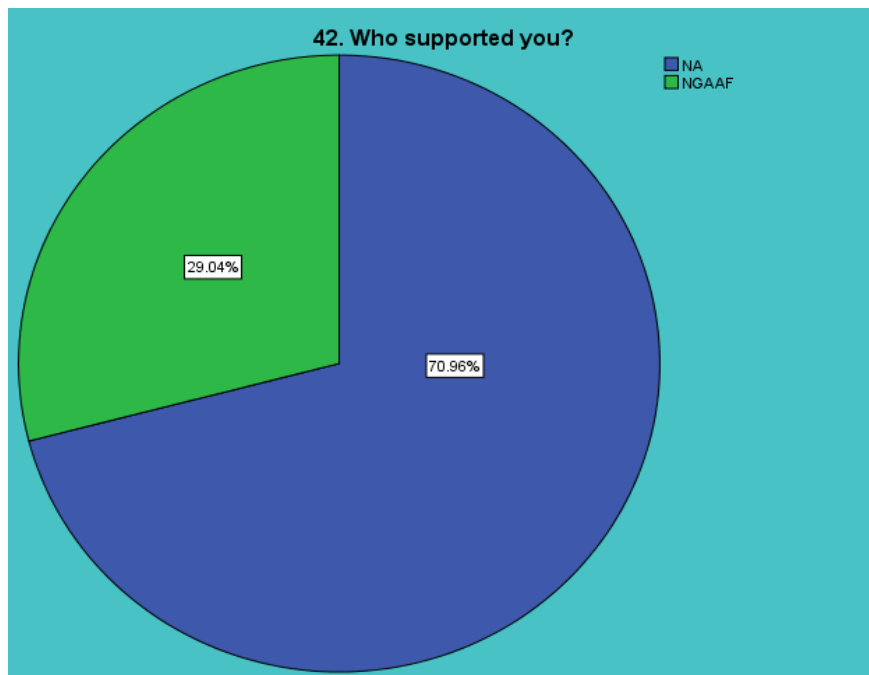


Figure 5.1: Source of Post-training Support

Source: Mboha (2023)

Secondly, the theories of self-employment and solid education also helps us to put these findings into context. First, the main tenet of the self-employment theory is that people can gain solid (practical oriented) skills and put them into use sits well with the study findings. The study found that majority of the respondents were able to create their own opportunities due to the practical-oriented courses. However, this study shows that the theory of self-employment needs an extension because skills alone are not enough hence the social partners need to come in and support the youths not just through skills acquisition but also through post-skills acquisition support with linkages to industry as was attempted by Kisumu as well as through provision of tools of work.

Theoretically, the section can be appraised as follows. Let's look first at the Self-Employment Theory. The findings strongly support the self-employment theory's premise that practical skills acquisition empowers individuals to create their own opportunities. The study reveals that beneficiaries who received post-skills acquisition support were more likely to secure employment within a shorter time frame. This aligns with the idea that youth equipped with practical skills can swiftly transition into self-employment or entrepreneurial ventures. However, analysis extends the self-employment theory by highlighting the significance of post-skills acquisition support. It emphasizes that skills alone are insufficient,

and the provision of tools, start-up packages, and support in establishing businesses is essential for empowering youths to become self-employed. This nuanced perspective underscores the importance of holistic support systems in the youth empowerment programs.

Concerning the Social Partners Model of Youth Empowerment the study revealed that for both Kisumu and Homa Bay Counties, despite differences in program design and execution, offered various forms of post-training support. This aligns with the principles of the social partners' model, where different stakeholders collaborate to support youth empowerment. The role of counties and NGAAF in providing this support highlights the need for multi-sectoral partnerships. Additionally, the findings shed light on the negative impact of political interference in the distribution of post-skills acquisition support. This aspect aligns with the challenges associated with governance mechanisms, as discussed in the social partners' model. It emphasizes the need for transparent and accountable governance to ensure that support reaches the intended beneficiaries without political bias.

In summary, this section underscores the importance of not only acquiring practical skills but also receiving the necessary support to transition into self-employment or employment within a reasonable time frame. The findings emphasize the need for a broader collaboration among stakeholders and highlights the challenges posed by political influences, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of youth empowerment dynamics in the context of NGAAF programs.

5.4 Summary of Chapter Five

This second chapter presented analysis of what was found out under objective two. The objective aimed to undertake a comparative impact analysis of the influence of post-skills acquisition support on youth beneficiaries' employability under the NGAAF Youth-targeted empowerment program. The study found that the two different counties undertook this intervention differently and with different impact, all of which improved the employability of those who were targeted. In contrast, those who did not receive the post-training support in both counties had their employability reduced, and took longer to get employment opportunities.

Concerning an intra-county perspective of this analysis, the study found variances in the two counties. In Homa Bay County, most of the cohort one beneficiaries were provided with start-up tools of trade, including beauty therapy and salon equipment for those who did salon

and related courses and beauty therapy. For cohort two, none reported to have received such support. This way, most 62(20%) cohort participants ranked the training as having impacted on them only moderately compared to cohort 1 beneficiaries who ranked the course as either good or very good 88(29%) with none ranking the course as moderate. The support indeed led to employability for the cohort 1 in Homa Bay. For example, as table 6 summarizes, 62 (21%) of the beneficiaries were able to get themselves in some sort of employment within the first 3 months after graduation, and 4 (1%) within the first 6 months. This compares differently with those who were not supported but got employed. For example only 8(3%) of those supported could secure employment in the first 3 months after training.

Kisumu County model of post-skills acquisition support was both informal and largely effective at the same time. The county undertook a referral model, linking the graduating girls to industries that dealt with the skills they had gained and tried to link as many girls as possible. Thanks to this intervention, 46 of the girls got employed within 3 months of training and 2 within the first 6 months. The experience of those from Kisumu not similar to those in Homa Bay as only 10 (3%) could secure employment within the first 3 months.

In overall, the chapter reveals that post-skills acquisition support is an integral component of youth empowerment policy and that policymakers should take it very seriously to ensure skills-gained get transformed into employment for the youths. In light of the existing empirical literature, this study shows that despite many studies asserting that practical training is good and leads to employment, formal and informal, it is not clear that this will be the case, because post-skills acquisition support provides an added advantage.

CHAPTER SIX
EXAMINATION OF THE DYNAMICS OF THE CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED
IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NGAAF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT
PROGRAM IN HOMA BAY AND KISUMU COUNTIES

6.1 Introduction

The last chapter of this study examined the challenges facing the innovative NGAAF youth empowerment program implemented by Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties. Based on the interviews conducted with the beneficiaries, the policy implementers and the policy makers, three themes emerged which informed analysis of the challenges in this final chapter. These are: publicization and recruitment; student-based challenges; program-based challenges; policy-based challenges – from within NGAAF and also NITA, and lastly Structural/Society-based challenges. The main contribution of this chapter is that it highlights in a systematic manner the key challenges that faces the programs examined to present information that can help policy makers and policy implementers improve future programs.

6.2 Student/Beneficiary-Based Challenges

Student-based factors are those challenges that the beneficiaries of the program faced after training. These challenges did not depend on whether the foregoing interventions were made or not such as post-skills acquisition support. The challenges that emerged as salient themes across the population cohorts were issues around place of stay after graduation and entry behavior.

6.2.1 Place of Stay after Training

The table below is a cross-tab analysis of where a student stayed after the training, the employment status after training and the county of residence of the person to enable cross-county analysis. As the table shows, staying in urban and to some extent peri-urban increased an individual's ability to get employed after the training. For example, a total of 136(45%) of the total sample were who employed after the training also stayed in the urban setting. On the other hand, only a cumulative percentage of 5(3%) from both counties who stayed in the rural areas were employed after the training. Looking at the unemployed category, it appeared that Homa Bay County was the most affected. For example, the table shows that out of the 112 (37%) who stayed in the rural area and were not employed, Homa Bay County accounted for 29% (87) while Kisumu only accounted for 8% (25). This further explains why most of the ladies from Kisumu County though not fully supported and informally supported were many as compared to those who received the support but were able to get employment. This is

furthered by the fact that within the urban settings there is high demand for services such as hospitality and design and beauty as well as market for electrical wiremen since electricity covers the urban centers compared to rural areas where such social amenities are not available.

3. What is the name of your county of residence? * 39. Where do you stay? * 38. Did you receive Support after Training?

Table 6.1: Influence of Place of Stay on Employability

Count		39. Where do you stay?			Total
38. Are you employed based on skilled gained?		Urban	Peri-Urban	Rural	
Yes	3. What is the name of your county of residence? Kisumu	75(25%)	4(2%)	1(1%)	80(26%)
	Homabay	61(20%)	19(6%)	4(2%)	84(28%)
	Total	136(45%)	23(8%)	5(3%)	164(54%)
No	3. What is the name of your county of residence? Kisumu	2(1%)	10(3%)	25(8%)	37(12%)
	Homabay	1(0.3%)	14(5%)	87(29%)	102(34%)
	Total	3(1%)	24(8%)	112(37%)	139(46%)
Total	3. What is the name of your county of residence? Kisumu	79(26%)	14(7%)	26(9%)	119(39%)
	Homabay	62(21%)	33(11%)	91(30%)	184(61%)
	Total	141(47%)	47(10%)	117(39%)	303(100%)

Source: Mboha (2023).

In overall, place of stay after graduation with trade test from NITA is a determinant of employability of the youths. It is a causative factor which of course does not work in a vacuum and which from the analysis above increases one chances of employment if she/he stays in urban area, and regressively reduce possibilities for employment if he/she does shift to the rural areas after completion of the cause. Policy makers can encourage graduates to stay in towns as a measure to making the program impactful by providing any necessary incentives. One way is to reduce quantity of recruitment and emphasize quality, such as through supporting just a few needy cases who can then be supported through to employment.

The theoretical frameworks of the Social Partners Model (SPM) and the Theory of Self-Employment provide a lens through which to interpret the findings presented in Table 6.1, which explores the influence of place of stay on employability and the receipt of support after

training. The SPM, emphasizing collaboration and collective responsibility, can be applied to understand the impact of place of stay on employability. The varying levels of employability across urban, peri-urban, and rural settings may reflect the collaborative efforts of different stakeholders, such as government bodies and employers, in tailoring training programs to meet the diverse needs of these locations. The SPM's principles of joint action and shared responsibility underscore the importance of considering regional nuances in addressing youth unemployment.

Simultaneously, the Theory of Self-Employment sheds light on the relationship between place of stay and employability. The theory suggests that individuals, equipped with practical skills, can create employment opportunities for themselves. The higher levels of employability in urban and peri-urban areas may be attributed to the concentration of economic activities and opportunities for self-employment. In contrast, the lower employability rates in rural areas might indicate a need for targeted interventions to enhance the feasibility of self-employment ventures in such settings.

Moreover, the receipt of support after training, as depicted in the table, aligns with the SPM's emphasis on collective efforts. The varying levels of post-training support across different areas may reflect the collaboration between various actors in providing ongoing assistance to individuals in their respective places of stay. The Theory of Self-Employment, with its focus on sustained support for entrepreneurship, further underscores the importance of continuous assistance to maximize the impact of acquired skills on employability.

6.2.2 Beneficiary's Entry-behavior

Beneficiary's entry behavior is another student-based challenge that was raised by trainers and NITA officials during the interviews. It became apparent that the entry behavior of most students coming to join the courses, which was either secondary completed or had dropped out before completing secondary school affected their uptake of the courses. Most NITA trainers narrated how most of the students who had come to undertake technical courses had to keep on transferring to other courses thereby denying them the expected concentration and to fully gain from the courses they enrolled in. According to one NITA Key informant, most students who had not completed secondary education had poor academic records. According to her, it actually appeared that the poor records were the main reason for their drop-out of school. This category of the beneficiaries is faced with quite a lot of challenges catching up

with the courses they chose, though ultimately they got what they could. The Key informant narrated:

The secondary school drop-out most particularly faced immense challenges understanding the courses especially those that enrolled for high demanding courses such as electrical installation. They had to keep trying their luck, transferring from course to course thereby wasting their time, and I think this might have had a negative impact in their job search and even productivity if at all they got employed [NITA Key informant, 4th April 2023].

A portion of secondary school certificate holders, especially those who had grades D- and E faced almost similar challenges. One student, narrating his experience with the first course (Plumbing) he enrolled in captured this succinctly thus:

My first course at Nairobi NITA was plumbing. I was in class for about 2 weeks and I couldn't understand a thing. I mean I was very worried because others were just good except me and another student who was a lady. I think it was because of poor grade at high school. I got an E...why I think so is that other students were those who had performed better in high school. We even had C students in the class [A Student who had enrolled for a Plumbing Course at NITA-Nairobi, 3rd April 2023].

It is important to note here that though this was a cross-cutting issue for both Homa Bay and Kisumu County beneficiaries, however, most Homa Bay students were affected especially because most of those who enrolled into the program and had not completed secondary school came from this county. A matter of fact, of the 7.59% (23) respondents who had not completed secondary education, 19 (6%) were from Homa Bay. This translates to 83% of those without secondary education certificates due to drop-outs coming from Homa Bay County. This implies that most beneficiaries from Homa Bay County faced a huge challenge in regards to their uptake of especially those high demanding technical skill courses (HTSCs). This revelation is key for future program planning of such policy interventions and as such policy implementers are called upon to beware of the technical need of each course and advice students to not only choose what they want but that which they can successfully do.

Theoretical frameworks such as the Social Partners Model (SPM) and the Theory of Self-Employment can provide valuable insights into understanding the challenges associated with beneficiary entry behavior in the NGAAF training program, as highlighted in section 6.2.2. The SPM, emphasizing collaboration and collective responsibility, can be applied to address the issue of poor academic records and dropout rates among students entering technical courses. The collaborative efforts advocated by the SPM suggest that addressing entry-

behavior challenges requires a joint approach involving educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders. This approach aligns with the need for concerted efforts to support students who may have struggled in traditional academic settings, ensuring that they receive appropriate guidance and resources for successful course completion.

Simultaneously, the Theory of Self-Employment, which focuses on leveraging acquired skills for employment, entrepreneurship, or self-sustainability, can be employed to understand the impact of entry behavior on the beneficiaries' ability to fully gain from the courses. For students entering technical courses with incomplete secondary education, the theory suggests that practical skills development is essential for creating employment opportunities. It highlights the potential for these students to become job creators, aligning with the NGAAF program's objectives. The theory also underscores the importance of "solid education," emphasizing the need to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world market demands, which is particularly relevant for students with varying academic backgrounds.

6.3 Program-Based Challenges

A second group of challenges that faced the NGAAF Youth empowerment program was the program-based challenges. This group involves those thematic areas that emerged during interviews and survey touching on challenges related to programmatic areas such as finances; Overall students perspectives on the intervention; Program Team; Policy Design; Policy Implementation; Policy Monitoring; Policy Evaluation; Policy Learning and Reconceptualization. Three of these themes; policy design, financing, and monitoring and evaluation were salient during the interviews and engagements and are examined as follows:

6.3.1 Student Perspectives on Key Program Challenges

Before exploring through in-depth interviews the manifestations of the challenges in terms of programmatic, financial, and design indicators, it is important to set the ball rolling by highlighting what the beneficiaries themselves highlighted as challenges with the program. As the table below shows, five challenges were identified as hindering the successful and sustainable realization of the NGAAF Youth Empowerment Initiative through skills acquisition and post-skills acquisition support. 23 (7.59%) beneficiaries [11 from Homabay and 12 from Kisumu] were of the opinion that sustainability was hindered by regime change – the change of the holder of the Women Rep Office which almost automatically come with the change of the holder of the office of NGAAF Manager and the NGAAF Committee which according to the NGAAF Act is to be drawn from each sub-county.

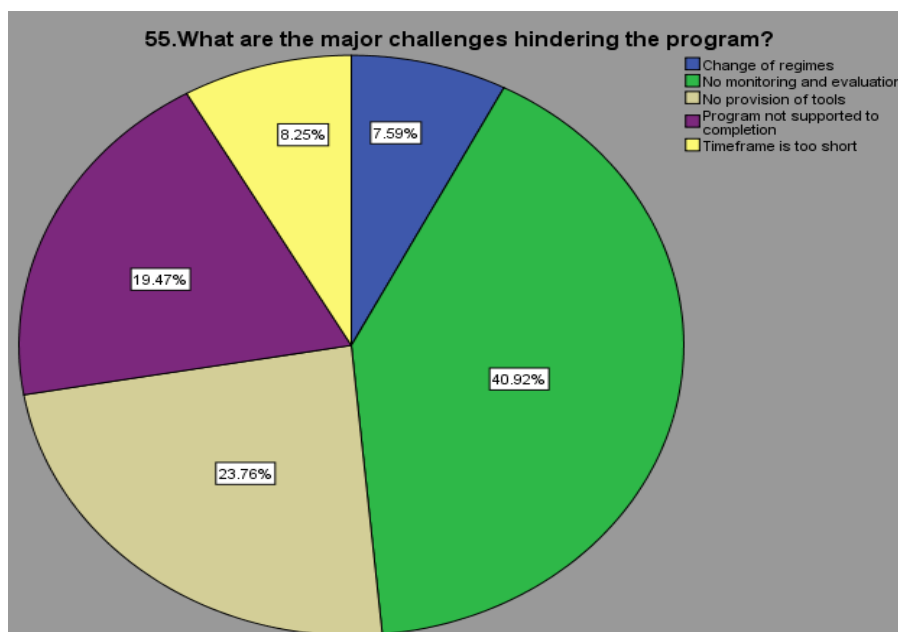


Figure 6.1: Student Perspectives on the Program Challenges

Source: Mboha (2023)

The study established through key informant interviews that this was actually the case. This had caused a serious disconnection between students and policy implementers especially in the face of yet another great challenge – lack of proper documentation of the program’s implementation. For students who had neither graduated nor got their certificates e.g. cohort 2 in Homa Bay for example, it was a terrible time for them trying to reach out to the new office holder to facilitate the completion of their training. Speaking to the current County Gender Focal Person from Homa Bay, he expressed this dual challenge as follows:

I am just new in this office and still trying to catch up with the information about the NGAAF intervention from the previous regime. But then I don’t think that such information is here in this office. When we get it we will share it with you. The Cohort 2 students are complaining yes but we can only do so much now that the former office has the full details and is no longer in office. [Key Informant Interview with NGAAF Committee Member and the County Gender Director/County Gender Focal Person, 4th February]

Figure 12 also show that majority of the beneficiaries like 40.92% (124 out of 303) thought that lack of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) was a key challenge since none of them from both counties had been involved in either monitoring or evaluation in a systematic way. This challenge was explored further through the program implementers and will be discussed in detail in the subsequent sections in this chapter.

Yet still a handful of the participants 23.76% (72 respondents; 60 from Homa Bay and 12 from Kisumu) reported that the greatest challenge they faced was the lack of tools of trade after training. Homa Bay County did not provide tools for cohort 2, and it was actually most of the cohort 2 beneficiaries who lamented that this was their main challenge as the researcher undertook interviews with the beneficiaries. This shows that even in Kisumu, tools provision would have boosted employability, and obviously that it was a key limitation to employability of the cohort 2 beneficiaries from Homa Bay County. This is consistent with another challenge raised by beneficiaries as (19.7%) of them, all of whom came from Homa Bay indicated that the empowerment program was not supported to its completion by them not graduating, not given certificates and them not receiving tools as their fellow cohort 1 students. The final challenge that figure 12 highlights is about the time taken for the training. As it shows, 8.25% of the respondents felt that their challenge was simply the fact that the courses were only compressed within 3 months of training something they felt was not commensurate with the demands of the more technical courses such as electrical installation and plumbing. One electrical installation student argued that this timing is actually a hindrance to employability:

The time taken for the training was too short. We could not catch up well and this is actually affecting us in the post-training while looking for employment. They give you a test which you didn't learn about and they just disqualify you like that. [Former electrical installation beneficiary supported at NITA-Kisumu by NGAAF Homabay County, 26th June 2023].

6.3.2 The Design of the NGAAF Youth Empowerment Policy Intervention

The design phase is crucial as it lays the foundation for the entire policy implementation process (Kingdon, 1995). This study found that several challenges affect policy design of the NGAAF intervention in both counties hence highlighting them in this study is a step towards addressing them appropriately and is very vital in ensuring the effective implementation of future similar interventions. One challenge which came out and which negated the design stage of NGAAF policy was the complexity of youth empowerment issues. Youth empowerment problems are multifaceted and interconnected hence requiring comprehensive and integrated solutions. Overlooking important aspects or failing to consider the broader context can lead to unintended consequences or partial solutions that do not address the root causes of the problem. This was the situation in both counties. The design overlooked the role that different sectors and departments could play. For example, the intervention was implemented by purely NGAAF without the involvement of the private sector and even key

county departments such as industry, finance among others. The reality is that the design was rushed and unilaterally undertaken by NGAAF through the officials.

Moreover, policy design often involves balancing diverse and sometimes conflicting interests. Different stakeholders may have varying perspectives and finding common ground can be challenging. Hill (2007) argue that policy makers must engage in robust stakeholder consultations and consider their inputs to build support and ownership for the policy. Failure to do so may result in resistance thereby making it difficult to implement the policy effectively. While no cases of resistance to the policy was reported, lack of stakeholders involvement constrained the impact the intervention could have had had it been that key sectors and county departments were involved. Many beneficiaries could have been enrolled and perhaps more funds could have been given to the post-skills acquisition package thus increasing their chances of employment.

The challenges identified in the design phase of the NGAAF Youth Empowerment Policy Intervention, as discussed in section 6.3.2, can be analyzed through the lenses of theoretical frameworks such as the Social Partners Model (SPM) and the Theory of Self-Employment. The SPM, which emphasizes collaboration among various stakeholders, can be applied to address the complexity of youth empowerment issues highlighted in the study. The multifaceted and interconnected nature of these challenges necessitates a comprehensive and integrated approach involving not only NGAAF but also the private sector, key county departments, and other relevant actors. The SPM underscores the importance of collaboration and engagement with different sectors to avoid unintended consequences and ensure that the policy design considers the broader context.

Simultaneously, the Theory of Self-Employment, which emphasizes leveraging acquired skills for self-sustainability, can be employed to understand the impact of insufficient stakeholder involvement on the policy's effectiveness. The theory suggests that a well-designed policy should empower beneficiaries with practical skills and support for self-employment opportunities. The lack of involvement from key sectors and county departments, as indicated in the study, may have limited the scope and impact of the intervention. The Theory of Self-Employment highlights the potential for robust stakeholder consultations to enhance policy effectiveness and increase the chances of employment for beneficiaries by enrolling more participants and allocating additional funds for post-skills acquisition packages.

In summary, successful implementation of youth empowerment is contingent on addressing the financial constraints, building a competent and motivated program team and overcoming challenges in the policy design. Policy makers must strategize to secure adequate funding, allocate resources wisely and consider alternative funding options to sustain policies in the long run. Cultivating a skilled and cohesive program team, addressing team dynamics, and encouraging knowledge sharing are vital for effective policy execution for sustainable youth empowerment. Additionally, policy makers must navigate the complexities of policy design, engaging stakeholders while considering the broader context and striking the right balance between thoroughness and timeliness. By proactively addressing these challenges, public policies can be more likely to achieve their intended goals and contribute positively to societal well-being.

6.3.3 Financing NGAAF Youth Empowerment Programs

The availability and management of finances play a crucial role in shaping the implementation of public policies on youth empowerment. The study established that funding constraints significantly impacted the scope and effectiveness of the NGAAF intervention. The financial constraints was as a result of competing priorities for NGAAF as the empowerment program was just but one among a host of others. This meant that the number of potential beneficiaries were constrained and the extent of support of the youths were actually limited. For example, the study established that in both counties, the courses supported were only at the basis level, that is, three months class work, three months industrial attachment. One member of NGAAF Committee in Kisumu argued that:

Actually the funds were limited that we could not risk supporting the students past 3 months. Moreover, funds had not been released from national government and at one point we had to stop other NGAAF programs just to sustain students at the various training institutions. [NGAAF Committee Member, 5th April 2023].

Moreover, youth empowerment initiatives often require a diverse range of programs, including education and skills development, job training, mentorship, and access to capital for entrepreneurship, findings which are in line with previous studies (Menya, 2020; Kabia et al., 2018; Agwani, Afolabi, Kumar, 2022; Raifu & Aminu, 2022; 2014; Konyango, 2019). However, due to limited financial resources this led to the prioritization of certain aspects (training for employment) while neglecting others thereby resulting into an incomplete or fragmented approach to youth empowerment which is visible for the lack of follow-up and the fact that a whole 139 youths who graduated from the program were not employed. Kumar

(2022) researching in India, assert that involving the youths in the industrialization agenda of the government requires that funding sources be diversified and stakeholders work in partnerships as opposed to working silos.

Another issue about financing that emerged from the study was budgetary constraints that made it challenging to sustain the program in the long-term. UNICEF (2014) and USAID (2022) argue the success of youth empowerment policies rely on continuous support and investment. However, most NGAAF program implementers reported that due to budget cuts that were witnessed towards the elections time, the program faced reduced funding thereby hindering its impact and causing disengagement among the target youth population. As we speak for example, none of the counties are continuing with the youth empowerment though. New offices have been established and new County Women Reps with their new NGAAF Managers have taken the offices. To address this challenge, policy makers should explore innovative funding mechanisms such as public-private partnerships or social impact investing to ensure a stable and sustainable financial base for youth empowerment initiatives. Additionally, rigorous cost-benefit analyses can help policy makers identify the most impactful interventions within limited budgets. Neither of these good practices were conducted before or after the implementation of the program in both counties hence the counties stand to learn from this study.

Theoretical frameworks such as the Social Partners Model (SPM) and the Theory of Self-Employment offer valuable insights into the financing challenges identified in the NGAAF Youth Empowerment Programs, as outlined in section 6.3.3. Applying the SPM to this context reveals that the financial constraints faced by NGAAF might be mitigated through collaborative efforts with various stakeholders, including government bodies, private sector entities, and industry players. The SPM emphasizes the need for joint action and shared responsibility, suggesting that involving additional partners in financing could alleviate the pressure on NGAAF's resources. By fostering partnerships with other sectors and securing diversified sources of funding, NGAAF could potentially overcome competing priorities and expand the scope of its empowerment programs.

Simultaneously, the Theory of Self-Employment, which focuses on leveraging acquired skills for self-sustainability, can be applied to understand the impact of funding constraints on the depth and effectiveness of the intervention. The theory suggests that adequate financing is crucial for providing comprehensive training programs that go beyond basic levels. The

identified limitation to basic-level courses, as mentioned in the study, may restrict the depth of skill acquisition and potentially limit the employment opportunities for beneficiaries. The Theory of Self-Employment underscores the importance of sustained financial support for post-training activities, which may include advanced courses, mentorship programs, or startup capital for entrepreneurial ventures.

6.3.4 Monitoring and Evaluation of the NGAAF Youth Empowerment Policy

Policy evaluation is a critical stage in the public policy process particularly in the context of youth empowerment initiatives. This process should involve systematically assessing the effectiveness, efficiency and the impact of policies to determine their success in achieving the intended goals. However, this study established that monitoring and evaluation is not as valued as it should be and none of the counties had undertaken it especially, evaluation. Neither of the trainers, trainees, NITA Centres Managers, nor the NGAAF committee members, and managers could report that they had done or participated in any systematic monitoring and evaluation of the empowerment project.

The NGAAF Committee explained the circumstances making it difficult for them to invest in M&E and bolster the impact of the intervention. First, they asserted that measuring the outcomes and impacts of youth empowerment policies is often multifaceted and requires a comprehensive approach. Youth empowerment encompasses various aspects, such as education, skill development, employment, mental health, and civic engagement. Each of these components may have its own set of objectives and indicators making it difficult to capture the overall impact of the policy accurately. Due to this, NGAAF Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties showed that the difficulty that accompanies careful selection of appropriate evaluation methodologies that can capture the diverse outcomes of youth empowerment programs made it difficult to rush the exercise. Many are optimistic that its future programs should consider it though ‘political’ programs such as this are difficult to say with certainty that it will done. NGAAF Kisumu informant expressed that;

M&E is the best thing that can happen to an intervention. We hope to do it in future but it is not easy especially for politically instigated programs such as this. This programs are started for political reasons and those who lead them have political timelines. For example, the former Women Rep is gone and we have a new one. It is unimaginable that we will evaluate a project we did not implement [NGAAF Key informant Kisumu, May 2023].

These thoughts are confirmed by the survey results that show that monitoring and evaluation was not a priority for the policy implementers. Only 6.60% of the 303 respondents agreed that there was sought of follow-ups from NGAAF after training, 9.90% agreed that follow-ups were done seldom with a larger percentage (83.50%) showing that there were no follow-ups at all.

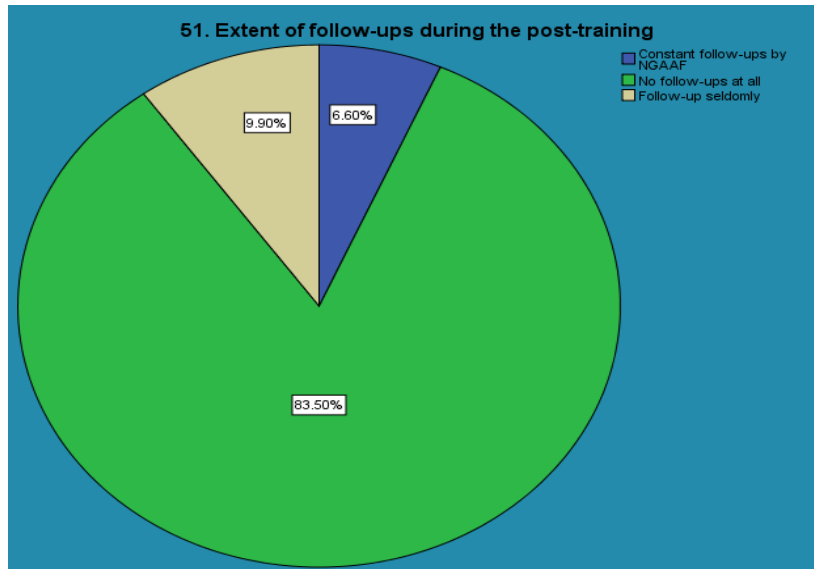


Figure 6.2: Extent of post-Training Follow-Ups with the Beneficiaries

Source: Mboha (2023)

A second reason particularly enforced by NGAAF Homa Bay key informant (now former employee) was that the long-term nature of youth empowerment policies poses challenges in evaluation. This is in congruent with the thought expressed by USAID (2022) which argues that meaningful changes in the lives of young individuals may take time to manifest and measuring these long-term impacts requires sustained efforts and resources. In this case, the lack of immediate visible results may lead to impatience and a tendency to shift focus or discontinue policies prematurely. However, to overcome this challenge, policy makers should adopt a patient and realistic approach to evaluation, emphasizing the importance of longitudinal studies and tracking progress over time. This calls in to sharp focus the value of policy research in enhancing youth empowerment. Though uptake of evidence for policy making and implementation remains low in the African policy context (Aiyede & Muganda, 2023), this study pushes the need for evaluation research to inform policy implementation and making. These findings are hoped to be utilized in this direction.

The challenges identified in the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the NGAAF Youth Empowerment Policy, as discussed in section 6.3.4, can be effectively understood through the application of theoretical frameworks such as the Social Partners Model (SPM) and the Theory of Self-Employment. The SPM, emphasizing collaboration and shared responsibility, suggests that involving multiple stakeholders, including trainers, trainees, NITA Centers Managers, NGAAF committee members, and managers, in the monitoring and evaluation process is essential for comprehensive assessment. The lack of participation from these key actors in systematic M&E indicates a potential gap in collaborative efforts, hindering a holistic understanding of the policy's effectiveness.

Simultaneously, the Theory of Self-Employment, which underscores the importance of leveraging skills for self-sustainability, can be applied to understand the complexities involved in monitoring and evaluating youth empowerment policies. The multifaceted nature of youth empowerment, encompassing education, skill development, employment, mental health, and civic engagement, aligns with the Theory of Self-Employment's emphasis on diverse outcomes. The difficulty in selecting appropriate evaluation methodologies may stem from the need to capture the diverse impacts of the policy accurately. The theory suggests that a well-designed monitoring and evaluation system should align with the comprehensive nature of empowerment programs, ensuring that each component's objectives and indicators are considered.

6.4 Structural Challenges

The fourth salient theme concerning the objective on challenges touched on issues beyond the students and the program. These are called in this thesis the structural/societal factors that limit the extent which TVET –based education can impact on the beneficiaries and to the society generally. These societal limitations permeate the whole society something which is reflected in this study since the issues were raised from all quarters involved in this study – policy makers – NGAAF Officers at the national level, policy implementers – NGAAF Officials at the county and sub-county; trainers at NITA Centres; NITA Centres Managers; trainees/beneficiaries of the NGAAF empowerment. Six societal issues raised as a challenge from NITA trainings relate to public perspectives on NITA courses and the impacts such perspectives have in light of youth employability. These are highlighted.

First area relate to the perceived stigma. Study revealed that the Kenyan society (through the representative cohorts) perceive NITA trade courses as often stigmatized as being inferior to

traditional academic pathways such as university degrees. Most NITA Centre managers and trainers most particularly expressed that this perception leads to a lack of interest and reluctance among students and parents to pursue NITA courses. As a result, many young individuals may opt for academic courses even if they are not suited to their interests or aptitudes, leading to unemployment or underemployment as they may not possess the required skills for the job market. In the context of this study, it was evident that such a perspective had an implication on the beneficiaries' ability to take the courses seriously as avenues for employment. Most trainers shared that NGAAF sponsored students who scored Grade C were so disconnected from others with D and below grades and saw themselves as over qualified for the courses. One trainer asserted:

The stigma accorded to NITA courses is serious. The sponsored students for example who had grades C and above saw themselves as passersby and never took the courses seriously. Though they performed well due to their ability to understand concepts, they saw themselves like people who were unfit for Juakali (informal sector). [NITA Trainer 2nd April 2023].

Such assertions were verified from students themselves. Interviewing a student who had got grade C and was a graduate of the program, she expressly argued that:

"I enrolled because I was told to enroll. Though I did well, I cannot say that I was interested in the course. I mean I passed by secondary education and I should be in a college. Am actually preparing to join in September" [Former Student sponsored by NGAAF Homa Bay, 4th May 2023].

A second sub-theme that highlights structural challenges include; limited career opportunities for NITA graduates. Negative societal perspectives about NITA trade courses result in the belief that these courses only lead to limited career opportunities with low pay and social status. As a consequence, potential students may not consider NITA courses as a viable path to secure stable and well-paying jobs only preferring other fields perceived to offer more prestigious and lucrative careers. This hampers the potential of NITA courses to equip youths with skills that are in demand by industries and restricts their access to employment opportunities. This was evident in Homa Bay and Kisumu counties. NGAAF managers reported that when calls for applications were placed, only a few turned up. Even though they had a few chances, they showed the researcher that this is still an alarming development and obviously was a societal issue as opposed to a single student's problem.

A third society-wide challenge was the lack of information and guidance. The study found that negative societal perceptions about NITA courses may be perpetuated due to a lack of accurate information and guidance. NGAAF Managers shared that this was perpetuated mainly because educational institutions, parents, and communities may not be aware of the diverse and promising career paths available through NITA training. Thus a lack of information can lead to misconceptions and biased opinions about the value and relevance of NITA thereby deterring potential students from exploring these courses as a viable option. A NITA Key informant shared in this regard:

What is the greatest problem is the lack of information on the courses we offer. The public, both educated and not have no clear understanding of what a NITA course is about. In fact this was the case for most students sponsored under this program. Many joined and began to shift from course to course. This limited the students ability to get the most out of the courses as time went so first and were also fixed at 3 months. [NITA Key informant, 4 June 2023].

A fourth challenge established was the inadequate investment in NITA. Study found that most trainers and managers of NITA saw a negative relationship between negative societal perspectives on NITA and policy makers and governments' allocation of funds. Most managers showed that it is due to the negative perception about NITA that can be partly blamed for the allocation of fewer resources and investments in NITA programs. This lack of support was seen as responsible for the underfunded institutions, outdated facilities, and lack of employment of qualified teachers. Consequently, the quality of education and training offered in NITA courses were reportedly suffering, further reinforcing negative perceptions and limiting the potential of these courses to create a skilled and employable youth workforce.

The fifth challenge relate to employer biases. The study established that negative societal perspectives can influence employers' attitudes towards graduates of NITA trade courses. Some employers may hold the belief that university graduates are more suitable for professional roles even if the skills required can be adequately provided by NITA-trained individuals. This bias may lead to a preference for hiring university graduates perpetuating unemployment among NITA-educated youths. This notion on the challenge was a common narrative among the unemployed NGAAF program graduates who especially who had undertaken HTSCs such a computer studies and ICT, electrical and auto engineering. Students narrated that employers saw them as half baked. Some had only tried seeking employment once since completion of the course due to the responses they received such as:

'You cannot get employed here. You have to go back to school and enhance your skills'. We prefer Diploma and above. [Unemployed NGAAF Youth Empowerment graduate, 4th Feb 2023].

Lastly, the challenge of lack of industry integration which emerged from a negative perceptions about NITA courses was also perceived to hinder their integration with industries with the job market. One trainer narrated that:

If employers do not value the skills obtained through NITA training, they may not actively participate in apprenticeship programs or collaborate with NITA institutions to develop relevant curricula. This lack of industry integration can lead to a mismatch between the skills taught in TVET courses and the demands of the job market hence reducing the employability of TVET graduates [NITA Trainer, 15th March 2023].

This assertion by the trainer touches on the theory of social partner's framework. It shows that a social partners' framework is hindered by the negative perception that exists on the part of potential partners.

A general survey question captured and confirmed these challenges as summarized in the figure below. As the figure shows, 1.32% of the respondents despite having gained the skills embarked on their businesses they did previously. 20.13% (62) thought they lacked tools and that was the main reason for their unemployment status. Another 7.59% thought that they had not secured a chance for employment due to the fact that opportunities for NITA graduates are narrow. 7.92% thought they stayed in the village/rural areas and so lacked the chance to be employed or practice privately. 6.27% thought the reason for their unemployment was due to the fact that they had not been provided with employment. The question was irrelevant to 56.77%.

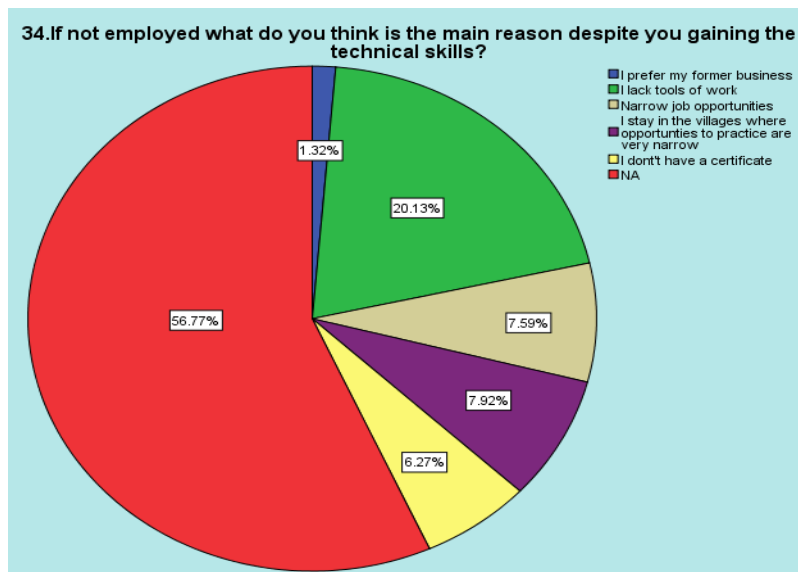


Figure 6.3: Perceived Challenges Hindering Uptake of the NGAAF Youth Empowerment Policy

Source: Mboha (2023)

In summary, addressing negative societal perspectives about NITA trade courses is crucial to enhance their uptake and create a pool of employed youths in the counties. Public awareness campaigns, effective career guidance and increased investment in TVET and NITA institutions are essential steps to change perceptions and improve the value and relevance of TVET and NITA courses in creating a skilled and employable youth workforce. Additionally, fostering collaboration between TVET institutions and industries can ensure that the skills taught align with market demands leading to increased employment opportunities for graduates.

The identified structural challenges in the NGAAF Youth Empowerment Programs, as outlined in section 6.4, can be comprehensively analyzed through the application of theoretical frameworks such as the Social Partners Model (SPM) and the Theory of Self-Employment. The SPM, emphasizing collaboration and shared responsibility among various societal actors, offers insights into addressing challenges related to societal perceptions of NITA trade courses. The perceived stigma and biases against NITA courses can be mitigated through collaborative efforts involving policymakers, educational institutions, industry players, and the public. The SPM suggests that fostering partnerships and engaging in robust stakeholder consultations can contribute to changing negative societal perspectives and promoting the value of NITA courses in the eyes of students and parents.

Simultaneously, the Theory of Self-Employment, which emphasizes leveraging skills for self-sustainability and employability, can be applied to understand the impact of societal challenges on the beneficiaries' attitudes and behaviors. The theory suggests that societal biases, such as the perceived stigma and limited career opportunities for NITA graduates, may influence the choices of potential students and their commitment to the courses. To overcome these challenges, the NGAAF program could emphasize the potential for self-employment and entrepreneurship, aligning with the Theory of Self-Employment. By fostering a mindset shift and promoting the idea that NITA graduates can be successful job creators, the program may increase its attractiveness and appeal to a wider audience.

In summary, the structural challenges identified in the NGAAF Youth Empowerment Programs can be effectively addressed by applying the theoretical frameworks of SPM and the Theory of Self-Employment. The SPM's emphasis on collaboration and shared responsibility points toward the need for a collective effort to change negative societal perceptions about NITA courses. The Theory of Self-Employment highlights the importance of promoting self-employment opportunities and entrepreneurship to counteract biases and enhance the appeal of NITA courses. By integrating these theoretical perspectives into awareness campaigns, career guidance programs, and collaborations with industries, the NGAAF program can contribute to changing societal perspectives, improving the value of TVET and NITA courses, and ultimately creating a skilled and employable youth workforce.

6.5 Summary of Chapter Six

This very final chapter of the findings section systematically examined the challenges that accompanied the NGAAF Youth empowerment policy intervention. Highlighting the dynamics of these challenges is critical for policy learning and improvement of future policies and programs for youth empowerment. The chapter examined the challenges along the salient themes that emerged in the course of the study. The study revealed through the analysis for the NGAAF program that youth the implementation of youth empowerment can be hindered by challenges bordering on themes including: student/beneficiary-based challenges – which encompass their place of stay after training and their entry behavior; program-based challenges – which can be analytical examined through student perspectives on the program, program design factors; financial issues; monitoring and evaluation; and finally society-wide/structural challenges.

Study revealed that where a student lived after training has an impact on their employability. Those who live in urban and in some cases peri-urban regions get employed faster than those who get back to their rural villages. Moreover, most trainers thought that students with lower entry behaviors wasted a lot of time transferring from course to course denying them the opportunity to engage with course content. Programmatically, most students reported that the lack of monitoring and evaluation was a great hindrance to the success of the course, followed by lack of tools/after training support. Program design factors also played a key hindrance especially owing to the lack of stakeholder analysis leading to lack of involvement of youth empowerment initiative. Finally, structural challenges which emanate largely from the negative attitude the society as a whole has towards NITA-based trades impacted both the offering/training, students uptake of the training, employment [due to employer bias], and students lack of motivation to use skills gained to search for employment.

Summarily, these are important lessons that policy makers and implementers as well as other stakeholders such as training institutions such as NITA can consider going forward to put forward an empowerment initiative with greater impact on youth employability.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This thesis examined the comparative impact of NGAAF youth empowerment intervention implemented between 2017 and 2022 on youth employability in Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties. Because the youth empowerment program had varying strategies in the two counties as was established during a pilot study in the two counties, a comparative approach was utilized to undertake the analysis. The study was undertaken from April to July 2023 in terms of fieldwork and set out to examine the problem through three specific objectives that included: to examine the comparative impact of the type of skill-sets supported on youth employability in the two counties; the comparative impact of post-skills acquisition support on youth employability in the two counties; and finally to undertake a systematic analysis of the challenges that faced the program for policy learning and change. The chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations based on the discussions already made in the foregoing chapters. This is presented as informed by the findings per each objective, the significance of the study, and the theoretical relevance of the findings.

7.2. Summary

Objective one. Pertaining to the study objective one, it was established that two different skill-sets are offered at NITA, the highly technical skill-set courses (HTSC) such as engineering fields, computer, auto and electrical and low demanding quick service oriented skill-sets (QSOSs) such as beauty therapy and others. The study found that NGAAF Youth empowerment beneficiaries stand a chance to be quickly employed if and when they successfully enroll for QSOS courses than when they graduate with HTSCs skill-sets. Coupled by the fact that more ladies/girls were likely to enroll for QSOS courses than the males due to the gendered perspective on HTSC courses as men-oriented and owing to the fact that all beneficiaries from Kisumu were ladies/girls, the study found more beneficiaries were likely to be employed in Kisumu than in Homa Bay in light of skills-sets trained in as a factor. For example, comparing beauty therapy and electrical installation; the study revealed that of the 56 that undertook this course in Kisumu all were employed (100%) transition rate, while in very sharp contrast of the 15 who did electrical installation in Homa Bay County, none (0%) reported to have been employed at the time of collecting data for this thesis.

Objective two on the other hand aimed to compare the effects that post-skills acquisition support had on the youths in terms of their employability after graduation. The study

established that indeed post-skills acquisition support improved a beneficiary's chances of employment. The study found that both Kisumu and Homa Bay undertook post-skills acquisition support differently. Homa Bay provided start-up package for the cohort one in terms of tools of trade while Kisumu only a-link-me-to-the-industry strategy which involved using strategic friendships and partners in the relevant industries to seek paid internship and/or employment opportunities for their graduating girls. Either of these strategies worked to enhance employability as the study established through cross-tab analysis that those who received the support not only got employed but also did so sooner after training, with most getting employed within the first 3 months of training. Moreover, the extent to which the beneficiaries could rank the intervention as very good, good and moderate was dependent on whether they were supported or not. This further showed that those were supported and were employed after training had a good perspective of the intervention.

Objective three, as well, made important findings that can be summarized as follows. Examining the challenges faced by the NGAAF Youth empowerment intervention, the study found that challenges facing the intervention exist in five analytical (interdependent) categories. The first relate to those challenges that were born within the beneficiaries themselves. These included where one stayed after schooling with those resorting to their rural areas seriously reducing their employability and those staying in urban having their employability seriously enhanced. This category also involved student entry behavior with those with Grades E especially facing serious challenges grasping the technical courses and resorting to course hopping hence in the end reducing their employability due to lack of understanding of what they ought to do while at the field. A second category of challenges was around project design. A key indicator of which was stakeholder analysis and involvement. Here the study established that due to lack of stakeholder analysis and consequently involvement, the project was limited both qualitatively – number of those employed and quantitatively, number of those enrolled. The other three categories of challenges discussed in objective three included; financing youth empowerment, M&E, and structural challenges. Together, the dynamics and manifestations of these challenges form a good ground for policy learning and provide data for reform and policy change.

Theoretically this study has shown that there is immense value for adopting a social partner's approach to going about the youth empowerment programs in Kenyan Counties. This however requires that youth empowerment interventions are underpinned by a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectorial approach which then can bring forth the social partners

aiming to alleviate youth poverty resulting from lack of employment due to unemployability. Moreover, the theory of self-employment is key for consideration by youth empowerment policy makers and implementers. They need to ensure that the youths are acquainted with solid (practical) skills which are needed in the job market. For this study such courses which lead to quick self-employment fell in the category of QSOSs but with post-skills acquisition support especially through investments in youth-based enterprises and through their promotion and provision of tools of trade, even HTSC graduates can have their employability properly enhanced.

7.3 Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study four striking inferences can be drawn on the main objective, and the three specific objectives which defined the scope of this study as follows:

The main conclusion or the thesis of the thesis we can draw in the face of the foregoing discussions of findings is that while NGAAF interventions on youth empowerment programs 2017-2022 in Kisumu and Homa Bay counties played a significant role to enhancing youth employability leading to employment of 164 (54.13%). However, the intervention did not achieve an optimal result hence this calls upon policy makers, implementers and other stakeholders to learn lessons for improvement.

Based on objective one, the study concludes that although skill-sets that fall under the category of QSOS appeared to be more marketable and should be encouraged, there is need to deal with gendered perspectives which continues to limit girls from joining HTSCs courses and boys from joining QSOS courses. Limitations that hinder employability of the two categories of skill-sets should be dealt with at both project design and implementation levels so that both sets of skills, which have different contributions to the society are enhanced in terms of job prospects after training. Yet still, it is important that parents and youth empowerment stakeholders aiming at solving youth unemployment through employability enhancing interventions to beware that certain courses can achieve this goal quickly than others.

Concerning objective two, the study concludes that for effective youth empowerment interventions, programs should not end at training as is the case traditionally (see Ochieng', 2014) but go an extra mile to provide the critical support in terms of tools and linkages aimed at employment. As this comparative study shows, regardless of context (county) and strategy (tools of trade or linkages to industries) post-skills acquisition support enhances

employability of youths immensely and is a direction which is worth to invest public resources in.

Objective three leads us to the conclusion that policy makers must appreciate the challenges faced by the program and use these lessons for the future planning's. The study revealed that such categories manifest in five major ways and encompass a complex dynamic, which force-feed into each other and undermine the possibilities for attaining optimal results. Policy makers, implementers, NITA and other training institutions are thus invited to appreciate these challenges, and work in a social partners' model framework to play their parts in mitigating what concerns their sector for the betterment of the youth's welfare, and for the good of the society as a whole.

To wrap it all up, it is critical to point at the major ways this study adds value to existing body of work. Significance of these findings are immense. Three important contributions this study make to extant literature and especially to policy-focused research: First, extant studies have largely failed to undertake an in-depth analysis of the implementation dynamics of youth empowerment-oriented public policies. As such, there is a huge way in which studies such as those by (Konyango, 2019; Cherutich, 2016; Irungu & Kamau, 2015; Ochieng, 2015; Were, 2020) deal with the issue of youth empowerment at the descriptive level. Secondly, a systematic study of NGAAF generally and a focused study on how its interventions influence youth employability are very scarce or none-existent at all. This study therefore begins a debate which places NGAAF as an actor viable for analytical exercise by policy researchers. Lastly and related to the second point, public policy interventions that target youth empowerment through enhancing their employability are not only rare, but studies that have applied systematic tools to unravel the dynamics and impacts such interventions are very rare (USAID, 2022). This study is one in this direction and has unraveled important insights relevant to not only future researchers, but also policy makers and implementers, public and private in scope

7.4 Recommendations

National Government

1. Reform the NGAAF Policy to enhance inclusion of communities and equal and equitable benefiting of all youths

Through reforming the NGAAF Policy national government through ministry of Social services, Youths and Labour should consider expanding the structure of the NGAAF Committee to involve representatives from the wards who understand the needs of their communities. This may ensure that communities gain equally and equitably from NGAAF interventions, and solve challenges such as concentration of the intervention within sub-counties near-by towns (Homa Bay) and cities (Kisumu), or over targeting certain politically bigger constituencies (Ndhiwa in Homabay) at the expense of others.

2. Regular and expanded disbursement of NGAAF funds

NGAAF requires continuous funding to sustain her youth employability interventions. Owing also to the fact that youth employability is one of the greatest challenges facing the government at the moment, and that this is the majority cohort (over 50% of the population ages 18 – 34 years) the Government therefore has the responsibility to provide continuous funding to this entity, especially as this study shows that NGAAF investments in youth employability is justifiable investment leading to employability at the rate of 54% in terms of transition into formal and informal employment.

3. Need for Program approach to NGAAF Interventions to limit reactive politically instigated Youth-targeted Interventions

The concerned ministry can make it a requirement that NGAAF at the county level while applying for funds, disaggregate the fund they require according to projects they have at hand. This should include the requirement of which exact programs they hope to implement, and the project designs they have put into place spelling out all the stages from conceptualization, need assessment and opportunities costs, to monitoring and evaluation. This may ensure that NGAAF patrons, the County Women Reps do not misuse the opportunities with the open-ended funding to pursue political mileage enhancing activities, like likely was the case with the program examined as all of the them (Kisumu and Homa Bay) have gone under water with the coming of a new political office.

NGAAF and County Governments

1. Collaboration is key especially for sustainability of youth employability programs

NGAAF should consider collaboration as a key undertaking while implementing youth employability programs. Youth issues are obviously multi-sectorial, and multi-actor. But NGAAF in both counties appear to go alone, not involving even key county ministries such as department of youths, finance etc., this not only limit the qualitative and quantitative coverage of the program, it also does a big blow to sustainability of the program. One way is to forge a good working relationship between the county leadership (Governor's office) and the NGAAF patron's office and commit to collaborate on youth matters for the betterment of the nation and the county.

2. There is a proper need for documentation of the entire process of NGAAF Youth intervention

This can help with continuity of the program even as the office of the county women rep experiences changes after every five years. Data on the benefits achieved by the previous regime can form a good starting point for the new regime. But without such information about who was recruited, where they came from, what has been the impact of the program on them, there appears to be no basis for continuity upon new office holders.

3. As Women Representatives change Office every election cycle, the NGAAF Managers recruitment should be de-politicized – that is, be retained

The possibility for a new Women Rep coming into being after every five years cannot be denied. However, the study found a situation where each rep come in with a new team. This is a dangerous reality since new office holders usually start from the scratch and are not aware of the on-goings from the previous leader and attempt to begin on a whole different plate – new programs with new strategies, instead of completing especially impactful programs to groups such as the youths, as was being implemented by the previous NGAAF team.

7.5 Recommendations for Future Research

While this study has tried to answer the question: what is the comparative impact of the NGAAF Policy on youth employability in Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties? This study cannot purport to have answered all the related questions to this subject. This calls for future studies to fill such limitations of the current study. Gaps for future research can be identified as follows:

1. Future studies can apply the same framework as used in this study to examine the impact of other government programs such as those supported by the National Government Constituency Development Fund (NGCDF) which are also informed with a similar philosophy. It emerged during the study for example, that NGCDFs such as Ugenya had supported their youth to different NITA centers at the same time as NGAAF. A comparative analysis of NGCDF's and NGAAF's intervention may highlight important lessons for policy learning than the current study has achieved.
2. The relationship between gender and employability after graduating with a technical/vocational course at NITA also needs to be systematically examined by future studies.
3. Other factors that also affect employability other than types of skill-sets gained, and post-skills acquisition support, such as interventions by NGOs, political support due to clientelism, favouritism, and such like factors are important factors that the future studies may want to control while undertaking such studies.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

My name is **Joseph Oloo Mboha** doing Masters of Research and Public Policy (MRPP) in Maseno University. To complete my course, I must undertake a research and write a masters dissertation.

This is why am undertaking entitled: **THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FUND AND YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF HOMA BAY AND KISUMU COUNTIES, 2017-2022.**

I aim that this study will help unearth different challenges and opportunities that have riddled the NGAAF programs for economic empowerment of the youths. The objectives of this study will be as follows:

- A) To examine the comparative impact of different skill-sets supported by NGAAF on youth employability in Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties;
- B) To assess the comparative impact of post-skills acquisition support on youth employability in Kisumu and Homa Bay Counties and;
- C) To examine the challenges facing the effectiveness of the National Government Affirmative Action Fund programs on enhancing youth employability in Homa Bay and Kisumu counties.

If you agree, the interview will take about 45 minutes to 1hour 30 minutes. I will really appreciate if you allow me (or my research assistant to fill in all the questions). There are no risks to taking part, and we hope that it will help community members who are women by highlighting important issues that they face.

One important thing to know is that we will keep the interview information confidential, this means not sharing your name or anything which would allow people to guess who has been interviewed (even our own assistants helping us write up the interviews will not know). We will use the information to write reports, articles and presentations, but no one will be able to know who has been interviewed.

You are free to refuse to take part in the research, or refuse to answer a question, and you can stop the interview at any time and ask us not to use the information you have given. This is your right and you will not be affected negatively if you refuse. We are not conducting

research for any organization or person, or for personal hidden motives. This is purely an academic research and you can make references to any of the following persons who are the supervisors of the student. Maseno University Dean School of SDSS or Maseno University School of Graduate Studies, or even to the National Commission for Science and Technology (NACOSTI) to confirm the legality of this study as an academic work. The immediate contacts (supervisors) are as below.

To Contact the supervisors: If you have questions or concerns about this research, please contact reach out to:

1ST Supervisor: Dr. Barack Calvince Omondi (barackcalvince@gmail.com)

2ND Supervisor: Dr. Jane Khasoa Lusena (janelusenaka@gmail.com).

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name of Respondent: _____

Signature:

Name-of-Research/Assistant

.....

APPENDIX 2: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

1. Tell me about yourself [your work as concerns NGAAF]
2. How has NGAAF supported youths in this county?
3. How do you recruit the youths [do you have a criteria for identifying the vulnerable and needy youths; how does the criteria look like?
4. Who are your partners in training stages? How long does it take to train? Who train?
5. Do you offer post-training packages/ what does it involve? What is the rationale behind it?
6. What challenges do you face with NGAAF:
 - a. At policy level.
 - b. At legal level.
 - c. At political level
 - d. At the program level.
7. What solutions can you suggest to better the intervention?

APPENDIX 3: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

A) SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES		
1	Respondent name	
2	What is your gender?	1. Male 2. Female 3. Non-binary
3	What is the name of your resident county?	1. Kisumu 2. Homa Bay
4	What is the name of your ward?	
5	Are you a person with a disability?	1. Yes 2. No
6	Are you married?	1. Yes 2. No
7	What was your employment status before being enrolled in the NGAAF empowerment?	1. Not employed at all 2. House-wife 3. Juakali/informal Sector 4. Boda Boda 5. Salaried but temporary 6. Salaried and permanent 7. Any other (specify)
8	What's your Level of education?	1. No formal education 2. Primary completed 3. Primary not completed 4. Secondary completed 5. Secondary not completed 6. College/university completed
B. PREPARATORY STAGES OF THE PROGRAM		
9	When were you enrolled in the NGAAF Youth empowerment program?	
10	How did you learn of the program?	1. Chief 2. DCC/ACC 3. Radio Ramogi 4. Referred 5. Any other (specify)
11	If referred, please specify by whom	
12	Did you fill out a form in order to enroll?	1. Yes 2. No
13	If number 12 is NO, describe how you were enrolled.	
14	Was it easy to enroll in the program?	1. Yes 2. No
15.	Explain your answer in	

	14 above	
16	Do you think your other colleagues who secured the chance were all needy?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No 3. Any other (specify)
17	Please explain your answer in 16 above	
C. TO EXAMINE THE COMPARATIVE IMPACT OF RELEVANT SKILLSETS OFFERED THROUGH NGAAF ON EMPLOYABILITY IN HOMABAY AND KISUMU COUNTIES;		
18	What skill sets were you trained in?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plumbing 2. Hairdressing 3. Saloon and related trades 4. Hospitality and related trades 5. Electricals 6. Electronics 7. Carpentry 8. Boiler 9. Any other (specify)..... ..
19	How long did the training take?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 3 months 2. 6 months 3. One and a half years 4. Any other (specify).....
20	Was this time commensurate with the technical needs of the course? (please describe)	
21	Please describe how the training was done	
22	What kinds of support did you get from NGAAF during the training?	
23	What's your general perception about the job prospects of the course you did?	
24	Why do you think so?	
25	Are you employed based on the skills you gained?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No
26.	If employed, what form of employment?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-employed 2. In a relevant organization
27	If not employed, what do you think is the main reason despite you gaining the technical skills?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I prefer business 2. The skills were not adequate 3. Job opportunities are so narrow 4. Any other (specify)
28.	What do you think about the course you did and gender roles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is a women's trade 2. It is a men's trade 3. Any other (describe)

29	List all the challenges you faced during the training	
30	How can you gauge/rate the training you received?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Very good 2. Good 3. Moderate 4. Bad 5. Very bad
31	Please explain your answer in 30 above.	
32	Where did you train?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NITA – KISUMU 2. NITA – ATHI RIVER 3. NITA – NAIROBI 4. MAWEGO TVET 5. Any other (specify)
D. OBJ. 2 TO ASSESS THE COMPARATIVE POST SKILLS ACQUISITION OFFERED THROUGH SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FUND ON YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY IN HOMA BAY AND KISUMU COUNTIES		
33	Were you supported after completing the training?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No
34	If your answer to question 33 is YES, how were you supported?	
35	Who supported you?	
36	What are the key challenges you have faced after completing the training?	
37	What remedies or opportunities for change can you advise different stakeholders to pursue improvement?	
E. OBJ. 3: TO EXAMINE THE CHALLENGES FACING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FUND PROGRAMS ON ENHANCING YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY IN HOMA BAY AND KISUMU COUNTIES.		
38	Was the publicizing done in a manner that could reach most people from the interior parts of the county?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No
39	Explain your answer in 38 above.	
40.	What do you think of the recruitment process?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fair 2. Nepotism 3. Bribery 4. Clannish

		5. Favoring those who know or align themselves with the politicians
41	What do you think of the timeframe of the training?	1. Very good enough 2. Very short 3. Moderately short
42	What were the other challenges during the training?	1. Late disbursements from NGAAF 2. Short training timelines 3. Difficulty concentrating due to parental obligations 4. Any other (specify).....
43	What has been the experience during the post-training period?	1. Constant follow-ups by NGAAF 2. No follow-ups at all 3. Follow-ups at times/rarely 4. Any other (specify).....
44	Have you ever received these forms of support from NGAAF after graduation?	1. Referral for work 2. Internship aid 3. Attachment 4. Any other (describe)
45	Please comment on the level of commitment of the NGAAF staff as regards promptness in reacting to your need during the training and post-training	
46	What are the major challenges hindering the program	
47	Please suggest solutions to remedying these challenges to your cohort and future beneficiaries	

APPENDIX 4: SCHOOL LEVEL AUTHORIZATION LETTER



MASENO UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF THE DEAN, SCHOOL OF DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Tel. +254 720 975 105
Email: cobarack@maseno.ac.ke
Web: www.maseno.ac.ke

Private Bag
Maseno, KENYA

Date: January 18, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

Ref: Mboha Oloo Joseph-ADM NO.: MA/DS/00073/020

This is to introduce to you **Mr. Mboha Oloo Joseph** of Admission Number **MA/DS/00073/020** as a student of Maseno University pursuing Masters of Research in Public Policy. Mr. Mboha has successfully completed his coursework and is set to go to the field to collect data for his dissertation entitled: "*Assessment of the National Government Affirmative Action Fund's Impact on Youth Employability: A Comparative Study of Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties 2017-2022*". As a procedural issue in data collection, Mr. Mboha is required to carry out a pre-test of his data collection tools in sharpening such tools for actual data collection. This letter is therefore to introduce to you Mr. Mboha and to seek for your support in helping him pre-test his tools. Your support and positive feedback is highly appreciated.

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'Calvince Omondi Barack'.

Dr. Calvince Omondi Barack, Ph.D.

Chair, School Post-Graduate Committee

APPENDIX 5: SGS AUTHORIZATION LETTER



MASENO UNIVERSITY **SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

Office of the Dean

Our Ref: MA/DS/00073/020

Private Bag, MASENO, KENYA
Tel:(057)351 22/351008/351011
FAX: 254-057-351153/351221
Email: sgs@maseno.ac.ke

Date: 24th Feb, 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**RE: PROPOSAL APPROVAL FOR MBOHA OLOO JOSEPH —
MA/DS/00073/020**

The above named is registered in the Master of Research and Public Policy programme in the School of Development and Strategic Studies , Maseno University. This is to confirm that his research proposal titled “The National Government Affirmative Action Fund and Youth Employability: A comparative Study of Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties 2017-2022” has been approved for conduct of research subject to obtaining all other permissions/clearances that may be required beforehand.

Dr. Patrick Onyango

ASSOCIATE DEAN SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES



Maseno University

ISO 9001:2008 Certified



APPENDIX 6: MASENO UNIVERSITY SCIENTIFIC AND ETHICS REVIEW AUTHORIZATION LETTER



MASENO UNIVERSITY SCIENTIFIC AND ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Tel: +254 057 351 622 Ext: 3050
Fax: +254 057 351 221

Private Bag – 40105, Maseno, Kenya
Email: muerc-secretariate@maseno.ac.ke

REF: MSU/DRPI/MUSERC/01211/23

Date: 29th May, 2023

TO: Mboha Oloo Joseph
MA/DS/00073/020
Department of Political Science
School of Development and Strategic Studies
Maseno University
P. O. Box, Private Bag, Maseno, Kenya

Dear Sir,

RE: The National Government Affirmative Action Fund and Youth Employability: A Comparative Study of Homa Bay and Kisumu Counties, 2017-2022

This is to inform you that **Maseno University Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (MUSERC)** has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is MUSERC/01211/23. The approval period is 29th May, 2023 – 28th May, 2024.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

- i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA) will be used.
- ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by Maseno University Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (MUSERC).
- iii. Death and life threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to Maseno University Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (MUSERC) within 24 hours of notification.
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to Maseno University Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (MUSERC) within 24 hours.
- v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
- vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to Maseno University Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (MUSERC).

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://oris.nacosti.go.ke> and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely






Prof. Philip O. Owuor, PhD, FAAS, FKNAS
Chairman, MUSERC



MASENO UNIVERSITY IS ISO 9001 CERTIFIED



APPENDIX 7: NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION (NACOSTI) RESEARCH PERMIT LETTER

 <p>REPUBLIC OF KENYA</p> <p>Ref No: 127776</p>	 <p>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION</p> <p>Date of Issue: 16/March/2023</p>
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
<p>This is to Certify that Mr. JOSEPH OLOO MBOHA of Maseno University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Homabay, Kisumu on the topic: THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FUND AND YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF HOMA BAY AND KISUMU COUNTIES, 2017-2022, for the period ending : 16/March/2024.</p>	
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