Youth Employment in Kenya:

Analysis of Labour Market and Policy Interventions

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

FKE	Federation of Kenya Employers
GDP	Gross domestic product
ILFS	Integrated Labour Force Survey
ILO	International Labour Office/Organization
KACE	Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education
KAPEA	Kenya Association of Private Employment Agencies
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KKV	*Kazi Kwa Vijana*
KNFJKA	Kenya National Federation of Jua Kali Associations
KYEP	Kenya Youth Empowerment Project
MOYAS	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
NEB	National Employment Bureau
NHIF	National Hospital Insurance Fund
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
NYS	National Youth Service
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UNDP	United National Development Programme
YEDF	Youth Enterprise Development Fund
YEI	Youth Employment Inventory

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title **Page**

Acronyms and Abbreviations ii

LIST OF FIGURES iv

LIST OF TABLES iv

1.0 Introduction 1

1.1 Context 1
1.2 Review of Kenya’s Employment Policies 1
1.2.1 Employment Creation Policies in 1963-1979 2
1.2.2 Employment Creation Policies in 1980-1989 4
1.2.3 Employment Creation Policies in 1990 to 2011 5
1.3 Youth Employment Policies in 2000s 6

2.0 Labour Market Trends 9

2.1 Long-term Population Trends 9
2.2 Long-Term Economic Growth in Kenya 10
2.3 Employment Trends in Kenya 12
2.4 The GDP-Employment Nexus in Kenya 13
2.5 Working Age Population 15
2.6 Employment-Population Ratio for Kenya 17
2.7 Unemployment in Kenya 18
2.8 The Youth Bulge in Kenya 22

3.0 Population and Employment Projections 24

3.1 Population Projections 24
3.2 Employment Projections 26

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations 27

4.1 Conclusion 27
4.2 Recommendations 27
4.2.1 Youth and Informal Sector Survey 27
4.2.2 Labour Market Information 27
4.2.3 The *Kazi Kwa Vijana* Programme 28
4.2.4 Entrepreneurial Potential of the Youth 28
4.2.5 Skills of the Youth 28
4.2.6 Addressing Skills Mismatch 29

References 30

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Number of Youths Employed Under KKV 8
Figure 2: Population Trends (1972-2010).. 10
Figure 3: Trends in Annual GDP Growth Rates (1972-2010)... 11
Figure 4: Trends in Formal and Informal Sector Employment in Kenya (1972-2010).......... 12
Figure 5: Trends in Growth of Employment and GDP, 1972-2010 (%) 13
Figure 6: Unemployment in Kenya (1978-2005/2006) 19
Figure 7: Youth Bulge in Kenya (Per cent) 23
Figure 8: Population Projections (2009-2030).. 24

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Typology of Kenya's Employment Creation Interventions (1963-2011).................. 2
Table 2: Budgetary Allocation for NYS (Ksh.) 7
Table 3: World and Regional Estimates of Employment Elasticities (1992-2008)................ 14
Table 4: Distribution of Working Age Population, 1998/99 and 2005/06 16
Table 5: Labor Force Participation Rates, 1998/99 and 2005/2006 16
Table 6: Employment-Population Ratio for Kenya (1991-2008) 17
Table 7: Unemployment Rates in Kenya, 1978- 2005/06.. 18
Table 8: Unemployment Rates in Kenya by Age Group and Gender................................... 20
Table 9: Wage Employment in Modern Sector by Sex, 1993 – 2010 (000s) 21
Table 10: Youth Bulge in Kenya (Per cent), 1979-2009 22
Table 11: Projected New Formal Jobs in Thousands (2012-2030).. 26

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Context

For more than four and a half decades now, the Kenya government has continuously articulated the need to create sufficient employment opportunities to absorb the country's growing labour force. Just like in many other developing countries, unemployment and underemployment have been identified as Kenya's most difficult and persistent problems (Republic of Kenya, 1969; 1983; 2008b; 2008c).

Government policies have defined the youth as those between the ages of 15 and 30 or even 35. Kenya's *National Youth Policy* and the *National Action Plan on Youth Employment (2007-2012)*, for example, defines youth as persons resident in Kenya aged 15-30 years (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2006). Article 260 of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) defines youth as the collectivity of all individuals in the Republic who have attained the age of 18 years but have not attained the age of 35 years. The *Sector Plan for Labour, Youth and Human Resource Development (2008-2012)* defines youth as those aged between 15 and 35 years. Youth is a transition phase from childhood into adulthood. It is also the transition from being dependent on others to being independent. Key in this transition is access to a job. This makes the quantity and quality of jobs available to the youth to be of critical importance.

1.2 Review of Kenya's Employment Policies

Kenya's employment problem dates to the early decades of political independence. One of the earliest attempts to identify the nature and causes of unemployment in Kenya was made in the 1970-74 Development Plan (Republic of Kenya, 1969). In this Plan, the government identified urban and rural unemployment, educated unemployed and underemployment as the key types of unemployment afflicting the country. The causes of such unemployment were diagnosed as high labour force growth, use of modern capital-intensive technology and attendant increase in labour productivity. High wages and salaries were also identified as a key cause of the country's unemployment. According to the government, the high salaries and wages triggered adoption of labour-saving techniques of production. The causes of the country's unemployment problem were linked to inadequate training and consequent lack of appropriate skills, shortage of land and other resources, rapid expansion in school enrolments, skills mis-match, and rural-urban migration.

Another attempt towards understanding the nature and causes of unemployment in Kenya was made in 1983 in the *Report of the Presidential Committee on Unemployment (1982/83)* and the *Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1985 on Unemployment*. The Committee, in its Report, considered the problem of unemployment as one of lack of access to income earning opportunities, whether in wage or self-employment. Both the Report and the Sessional Paper identified the major causes of unemployment in Kenya as rapid growth of the labour force, low economic growth rate, job selectiveness, seasonality of some of the industries, and skills imbalance. Others were inappropriate technology and failure of development programmes to focus on areas with greater employment potential. The latest government policy document, *The Sector Plan for Labour, Youth and Human Resource Development Sector (2008-2012)* contends that unemployment in Kenya is both structural and frictional in nature. According to the Plan, Kenya's unemployment is mainly attributed to the slow growth and weak labour absorptive capacity of the economy, mismatch in skills development and demand, imperfect information flow and inherent rigidities within the country's labour market.

With the same breadth, the Kenya government has since attaining political independence in 1963, made various policy pronouncements aimed addressing the country's employment problem. Within this framework, the country has moved through three distinct employment policy periods. These were in 1963-1979; 1980-1989; and 1990 to 2011. Table 1 gives a typology of the key employment targeted policy interventions adopted by the government over time.

Table 1: Typology of Kenya's Employment Creation Interventions (1963-2011)

Employment Creation Interventions	Period		
	1963-1979	1980-1989	1990-2011
Kenyanization	√	×	×
Tripartite Agreements	√	×	×
Wage Restraint	√	√	√
Economic Growth	√	√	√
Macroeconomic Management	×	√	√
Fiscal Measures	√	×	√
Industrial Policy	√	√	√
Agricultural Promotion	√	√	√
Infrastructure Development	√	×	√
Public Works	√	√	√
Education and Training	√	√	√
Active Labour Market Policies	√	√	√
Informal Sector Development	√	√	√
Productivity Promotion	√	√	√
Rural Development	×	√	√
Employment and Labour Market Policies	√	√	√
Legal and Legislative Reforms	×	×	√

Source of Information: Government Policy Documents (various)

Table 1 illustrates that the Kenya government has, over time, identified and/or implemented a myriad of interventions to address the country's employment challenge. The measures, which can be broadly categorized into Kenyanization (1963-1979), active labour market policies (1980-1989) and macroeconomic management (1990-2011) were augmented with various short-term interventions aimed at providing quick fixes in employment generation. Notably, certain interventions such as wage restraint, economic growth, industrial and agricultural promotion, public works programs and active labour market policies have permeated through the periods as discussed in the sections that follow.

1.2.1 Employment Creation Policies in 1963-1979

The key employment creation policies implemented during the 1963-1979 period included short-term interventions such as Kenyanization, tripartite agreements and public works programs. The Kenyanization policy (1963-1972) aimed at increasing employment opportunities for Kenyans through replacement of non-citizens (Republic of Kenya, 1983). The strategies that were used to achieve this included exclusion of foreigners in rural trade, use of work permits to limit employment of expatriates, redistribution of large agricultural farms and increased investment in human capital formation. The tripartite agreements entered into between government, employers and workers in 1964, 1970 and 1979 aimed at increasing employment levels by at least 10 per cent. This was conditioned on workers and their trade unions observing a wage freeze besides refraining from any industrial action during the period of the agreement.

The public works programs were expected to provide mass employment in labour-intensive areas such as road construction. These short-term measures of employment creation were augmented by wage policies, which initially targeted payment of high wages (1964-1972) before a reversal to a wage restraint in 1973 (Republic of Kenya, 1973). While the high wage policy was meant to cushion workers against unfair labour practices and trigger productivity growth, it was realized that it was unsustainable. The government thus, in 1973, resorted to wage restraint implemented through minimum wage regulation and wage guidelines (Republic of Kenya, 1973). During the period, the government also implemented long-term employment creation interventions. These measures aimed at promoting economic growth, education and training, agricultural development, infrastructure, informal sector and industrial development, productivity growth and improvement in labour market information systems.

Mixed results were recorded from the strategies adopted under broad policy framework of Kenyanization. Between 1964 and 1972, wage employment increased by approximately 2.8 per cent per annum (Omolo, 2010) with most of the jobs being created by the government as an employer of last resort. Consequently, overall employment within the public service increased. Between 1964 and 1971, for example, the percentage of Africans in the public service increased from 14.6 per cent to 97 per cent in 1971, a direct result of the Kenyanization policy (ILO, 1995). Another outcome of the employment creation interventions adopted during the period was a 2.9 per cent annual increase in labour productivity of wage employees and a 6.8 per cent increase in capital-labour ratio. The implication is that the economy grew more capital intensive contrary to a desired labour intensive one given the labour surplus nature of the Kenyan economy (Omolo, 2002).

The bottom-line is that the Kenyanization policy was not appropriately targeted and did not yield the expected employment outcomes. While the Kenyanization policy was successful in increasing the level of absorption of the natives into wage employment sector, this did not translate into creation of new jobs. The programme involved a mere replacement of non-citizens with citizens, which was basically a realignment of the job holders. The emergency measures of employment creation (tripartite agreements) pursued by the government, employers and trade unions did not also create any meaningful employment. This is because while workers and their trade unions generally observed a strike restraint and wage increase freeze, employers did not increase their employments by at least 10 per cent as anticipated. Instead, majority of employers opted to convert their existing casual, contractual and temporary workers into permanent workers. This means that the tripartite intervention only had marginal and temporary effect (Omolo, 2002). The poor performance of the policy can be attributed to the fact that besides the tripartite agreements “forcing” employment, the policies did not have inbuilt mechanisms for ensuring compliance, monitoring and evaluation, and sustainability.

It is instructive to note that emergency employment policies, such as the Kenyanization and tripartite employment frameworks pursued by Kenya in 1964, 1970 and 1979 are highly unpredictable and unsustainable means of employment creation. At the same time, the tripartite agreements only tended to force rather than facilitate employment creation. However, given that the demand for labour and thus employment is derived, interventions for creation of productive and sustainable employment opportunities must be facilitatory in nature and not decreed. In the circumstance, establishment and maintenance of a conducive and pro-employment business environment would be more effective in growing employment than decreeing employment. In any case, what is required is not relief of unemployment as such but creation of productive and durable employment opportunities.

1.2.2 Employment Creation Policies in 1980-1989

In 1980-1989, the government deepened the use of active labour market policies as a means of employment creation (ILO, 1995). The interventions focussing on active labour market policies came out of the recommendations of the 1972 ILO employment advisory mission. The mission identified existence of an informal or *Jua Kali* sector, which was considered instrumental in facilitating employment creation and income generation, especially among the lower-income segments of the population (ILO, 1995). The active labour market policies sought to address the imbalances existing between population growth, growth of the labour force, mis-match in skills, provision of labour market information, and the problem of job selectiveness particularly amongst the youth. These measures were augmented by interventions targeting wage restraint, macroeconomic management and general economic growth. Others interventions were aimed at promoting infrastructure development, agricultural development, informal sector growth, re-orientation of education and training, and productivity promotion.

One of the active labour market policies that have been implemented by Kenya government is provision of public employment services. This has been undertaken through the National Employment Bureau (NEB). The NEB was established in 1986 as a Department within the Ministry responsible for labour matters. The NEB is mandated to provide public employment services such as registration and placement of job seekers. Inbuilt in this mandate is the collection, analysis and dissemination of labour market information. The mandate of the NEB is executed through 21 regional offices. At the same time, a number of private employment agencies have sprung up to possibly fill the void left by the NEB, and the growing levels of unemployment in the country. The private employment agencies are galvanized under the Kenya Association of Private Employment Agencies (KAPEA).

Registration, functions and conduct of these agencies are governed by Sections 55-60 of the Labour Institutions Act (2007). This part of the Act is enforced by the NEB. As of August 2011, there were 105 private employment agencies that were registered with the Ministry of Labour. The private employment agencies are required to renew their licences annually. The licenses are granted for a period of between 3 months and one year, depending on the extent to which the agencies meet the set conditions. According to the Ministry, five private employment agencies were blacklisted and 10 closed down during the year for misconduct. It is noted, however, that fairly well established private sector organizations that offer employment services such as Manpower Services Limited, Price Water House Coopers, KPMG and the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) are not registered with the Ministry. This means that enforcement of the Act is confined to the lower echelon of the private employment agencies. Equally, the private employment agencies are concentrated in the main urban centres where most industries, employment opportunities and job seekers are. This creates employment services gap in the rural areas, with implications on rural-urban migration.

A major pre-requisite of public and private employment services is the willingness and ability of employers to report vacancies to the agencies. The institutional framework of the agencies is also based on the premise that employers would be willing to source suitable job seekers from the bureaux to fill existing positions. This would then strengthen and reinforce the roles of the agencies as an employment reference point. Effective execution of the mandate of the public and private employment agencies also require that the agencies have requisite capacity to obtain, analyze, document, update and store, in a retrieval form, the profiles of job seekers, identify vacancies in organizations, and popularize their mandate and functions. These fundamentals require strong legal and institutional setting.

As for the case of the NEB, the requisite legal and institutional framework had prior to the enactment of the new labour laws in 2007 been largely lacking. Hitherto the enactment of the Employment Act (2007) and Labour Institutions Act (2007), the NEB relied on the Legal Notice No. 156 of 1977. Even though the legislation made it mandatory for all employers to report vacancies to the NEB (Republic of Kenya, 1983), it did not bestow any power on the employment officers to facilitate execution of their registration and placement mandate. Thus, the NEB would only get employers to declare vacancies through moral persuasion. As much as moral persuasion is viewed to be better than dictum, especially in areas with implementation and governance challenges, such a scenario may not be effective in labour surplus economies such as Kenya. At the same time, the NEB continues to suffer from human, financial and physical resource capacity limitations, with considerable impact on the effectiveness of their services and outreach. Compounded with this, is the unavailability of national skills and industry demands database, and the burgeoning unemployment levels, which makes it easier for employers to recruit job seekers right outside their gates. While direct recruitment outside the gates of employers would manifest knowledge on the part of job seekers of where hiring is taking place, existence of an efficient employment services would reduce the period of job search, the cost of long waits by the job seekers outside employers' premises and the real possibility of extortion of the job seekers by some of the bureaux.

It warrants emphasis that the though fronted by the government as employment creation measures, active labour market policies are in real sense not meant to create more jobs. These policies are useful in providing important pre-conditions for the creation of jobs in terms of enhancing the link between the supply and demand sides of the labour market. Active labour market policies generally contribute to a highly effective supply of labour by ensuring that the unemployed part of the labour force is actively seeking jobs and has the qualifications needed to fill new positions. The intervention also provides a targeted effort towards preventing marginalization and long-term unemployment by ensuring that the unemployed maintain their qualifications.

1.2.3 Employment Creation Policies in 1990 to 2011

The period from 1990 to 2011 has seen the Kenya government deepen the use of short, medium and long-term measures as a means of employment generation. The short and medium term measures have included public works programs such as the *Kazi Kwa Vijana* (jobs for youth), infrastructure and rural development. The long-term measures have targeted macroeconomic management for renewed and sustained economic growth, development of the informal sector, industrial promotion and agricultural development. Others were enhancement of private sector investment and participation in the economy, promotion of industrial harmony and productivity, liberalization of the labour market, formulation of labour and employment policies, re-orienting education and training systems to vocational and technical training areas, and legal and legislative reforms (Republic of Kenya, 1994a; 1994b; 1997a; 1997b; 1999; 2002; 2003a; 2007; 2008b; 2008c).

The outcomes of the employment policies implemented in the 1990s to 2000s were varied. The period 1990-2010 saw rapid growth in informal sector employment of 17.40

per cent per annum as compared to formal sector's 1.97 per cent per annum. Marked growth in informal sector employment was, however, recorded in 1990-1999 where the average annual growth rate stood at 27.67 per cent as compared to 8.06 per cent in 2000-2010. This is in contrast to formal sector employment growth of 2.13 and 1.83 per cent per annum in 1990-1999 and 2000-2010, respectively. The implication is the shifting relative importance of the contribution of the formal and informal sectors to employment in Kenya. Formal sector employment, for example, shrunk from 74.4 per cent of total employment in 1990 to 18.8 per cent in 2010. At the same time, the country's employment elasticity also diminished from 1.28 in 1992-1996 to 0.5 in 2004-2008, implying low employment creation potential of economic growth interventions.

Overall, structural reforms initiated by the government have not been effectively and/or completely implemented to make noticeable impact on employment creation in the country. While some significant improvements have been made in the formulation of national policies, including those targeting employment creation, implementation has not been satisfactory, effective, consistent and efficient. Whenever implementation of employment oriented policies and programmes have been undertaken, for example, they have not enlisted the full participation of the key beneficiaries such as the youth as would be expected in a youth targeted employment creation framework.

1.3 Youth Employment Policies in 2000s

Youth employment policies in Kenya have mainly focused on public works programs, entrepreneurial development and improvement in the skills of the youth. Deliberate action has also been taken to facilitate the youth to acquire employment in foreign countries. One of the youth targeted skills development programmes that has been implemented in Kenya over time is the National Youth Service (NYS). The NYS has been implemented as an avenue for acquisition of practical life and employment skills by the youth.

The NYS was established in 1964 and offers training on vocational, technical and professional skills. It also acts as a reserve force for the Kenya Armed Forces and undertakes rehabilitation and training of disadvantaged and orphaned youth (Republic of Kenya, 2008c). The NYS admits an estimated 3,500 service men and women per year in artisan, craft and diploma courses. These courses run for a period of one, two and three years, respectively. It offers training to youth aged between 18 and 22 years. The minimum qualification criteria are Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE), mean grade D+. In addition, one must be unmarried and without dependants. The NYS recruitment is done in 285 centres at district level. The NYS runs 16 training institutions spread throughout the country with a capacity of 10,000-15,000 at any given time.

Up to late 1980s, the NYS had a compulsory pre-university programme. This programme targeted successful graduates of the Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education (KACE) for a six-month pre-university training. The goal was to inculcate into the pre-university students the right attitude towards work and imbue a culture of tolerance and nationalism in them. This programme was discontinued in 1990 probably due to its limited impact and sustainability challenges.

The NYS is financed through the national budget, internally generated income and external funding from development partners. The external financiers are the Governments of Japan, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The Kenya government funding is provided through Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports

(MOYAS). Table 2 gives a summary of the NYS funding under Recurrent and Development Votes for the fiscal years 2007/2008 to 2009/2010.

Table 2: Budgetary Allocation for NYS (Ksh.)

Recurrent Budget			
Financial Year	MOYAS Budget	NYS Budget	% of MOYAS Budget
2007/2008	45,913,347	25,767,697	56.12
2008/2009	57,586,700	25,432,065	44.16
Development Budget			
2007/2008	25,476,142	8,098,571	31.79
2008/2009	45,688,571	21,417,500	46.88
2009/2010	50,286,350	23,172,857	46.08

Table 2 illustrates that the absolute value of the NYS's recurrent budget remained almost constant between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009. This is despite a 25.4 per cent increase in the Ministry's recurrent budget over the period. Overall, the NYS budget constitutes a considerable component of the Ministry's recurrent budget. In 2008/2009, for example, the allocation to the NYS was 44.16 per cent of the Ministry's recurrent budget. A similar trend is depicted in the development expenditure budget. The NYS's development expenditure component of the Ministry's budget increased from Ksh. 8.099 million in 2007/2008 to Ksh. 23.173 million in 2009/2010, representing 46.08 per cent of the Ministry's allocation for the year. Compared to the national budget, allocation to the NYS has remained below one percent.

The Kenya government has also been implementing the *Kazi Kwa Vijana* (KKV) program as part of the youth employment interventions. The KKV was launched in April 2009 as a nationwide program (Republic of Kenya, 2010). The KKV program aims at employing 200,000-300,000 youths annually in the rural and urban areas in labour intensive public works projects implemented by different line government Ministries (Office of the Prime Minister, 2011). The goal of the KKV is to facilitate income earning opportunities amongst the youth. The KKV program involves labour-intensive projects, running between 3–6 months. It uses low wage rates as self-targeting criteria for the youth. The KKV employment is in manual-based small projects within communities. Its activities in the rural areas include building of water dams and irrigation, repair of boreholes and access roads, clearing bushes, sowing organic fertilizers and seeds, and planting trees. Within the urban centres, the program beneficiaries are employed in building and operating water *kiosks*, developing and implementing waste management systems, and repairing and maintaining access roads. The KKV wage system provides for task and daily oriented payments. According to the KKV Manual, the daily wages are based on national minimum wage guidelines issued by the Ministry of Labour while the task rates are pegged at Ksh. 250 and Ksh. 150 per task for the KKV employees in cities and municipalities, and those in all other areas respectively.

The KKV program, which is funded through the national budget, has seen tremendous increase in allocation. The funding levels increased from Ksh. 3.4 billion (US$ 43 million) in 2008/2009 fiscal year to Ksh. 6.6 billion (US$ 84 million) in 2009/2010 financial year (Republic of Kenya, 2010).

Data obtained from the KKV website (http://www.kkv.go.ke/) gives the number of youths employed under the program as shown in Figure 1. The reported employment data, however, does not have a reference period to facilitate more in-depth analysis.

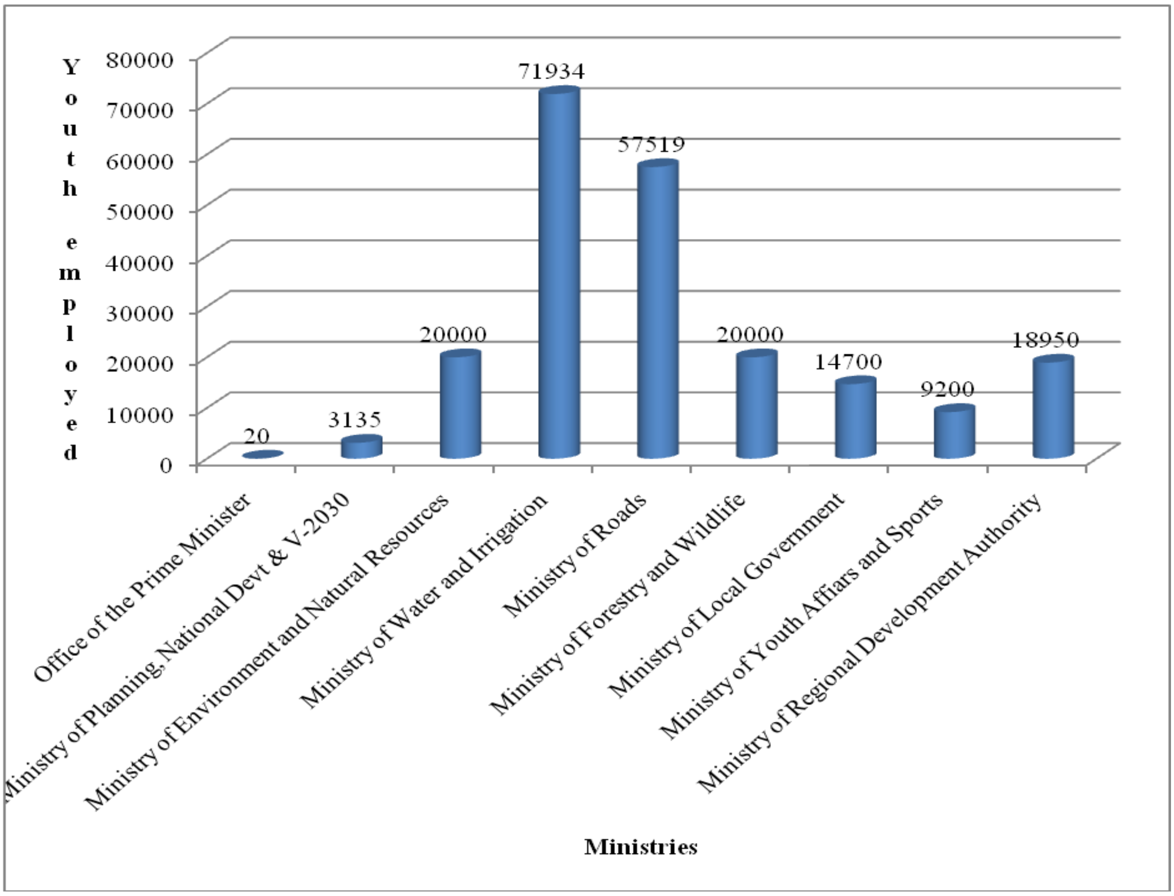

Figure 1: Number of Youths Employed Under KKV
Source of data: http://www.kkv.go.ke/

Figure 1 shows that much of the jobs created under the KKV programme were in the Ministry of Water and Irrigation followed by the Ministry of Roads. Other jobs were contributed by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife. However, there is no comprehensive and consistent data on the employment outcomes of the KKV program. This may be attributed to absence of a formal and/or documented review of the program to provide insights of its cumulative effect, effectiveness in implementation and contributions to youth employment.

A review of the KKV program against some of the identified features of effective public works programme based on international experiences shows some gaps. A Youth Employment Inventory (YEI) of 289 countries undertaken by Betcherman, *et al.* (2007) and Puerto (2007), for example, highlights some of the important features of an effective public works programme. According to the inventory, an effective public works programme should offer or pay a sufficient wage rate, target the poorest households especially when employment cannot be provided to all who require jobs, help create assets that benefit the poor and create economic opportunities for locals to supply non-wage inputs. Other features are that effective public works programmes should have work schedules that are harmonized with the survival requirements and copying strategies of the poorest households, be located close to where the poorest live to maximize their participation, have an exit strategy to allow long term employment opportunities to enable the poorest to lift themselves out of poverty, and encourage and allow participation of labour market institutions and other non-governmental organizations to guarantee the rights of the workers and vulnerable groups.

To upscale and consolidate the gains made under the KKV, the Kenya government launched the Kenya Youth Empowerment Project (KYEP) in July 2010. The KYEP is a US$ 60 million four-year project funded by the World Bank and coordinated by the OPM. It aims at enhancing the KKV, providing internships and training to the youth and supporting capacity building and policy within the MOYAS. The KKV enhancement programme focuses on promoting community participation in the identification of projects, setting of clearer criteria for project selection and optimizing the labour content of the KKV. Others are deepening program targeting and development of a monitoring and evaluation system. The renewed KKV is to prioritize projects in road maintenance, small scale water supply and sanitation, water harvesting, afforestation and waste collection.

The internship and training component aims at increasing the employability of the youth by facilitating provision of employable skills to the youth through internship and training by the private sector. It targets 10,800 youth aged 15-29 years with a minimum of eight years schooling and have been out of school/work environment for at least one year. The internships are programmed to last for 4-6 months with 50 per cent of the time being spent in the workplace and the balance spent with an identified training provider. The interns are to be placed in the key *Kenya Vision 2030* growth sectors such as energy, tourism, information and communication technology, manufacturing and the micro and small enterprises. Under this arrangement, each intern will be given a monthly stipend of Ksh. 6,000 while employers will get a monthly reimbursement of Ksh. 3,000 per intern. According to the program, youth aged 15-17 years will be restricted to take up internship in the informal sector. The component will link with existing interventions such as Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) and institutions such as the Kenya National Federation of Jua Kali Associations (KNFJKA). The third component of the KYEP will target provision of analytical support to government in key areas relevant to youth. It will also support capacity building in youth oriented institutions within government, finance studies in critical youth policy and labour market issues besides promoting institutional capacity building in institutions such as the MOYAS.

2.0 Labour Market Trends

2.1 Long-term Population Trends

Kenya has not only faced a long lasting weak economic performance but it has also been confronted with strong demographic pressures ((Njonjo, 2010; Republic of Kenya 2011a). The World Bank (2011) reports that the growth rate in Kenya's population increased from 3.1 per cent in 1960 to 3.8 per cent in 1984. This period marked the highest population growth rate phase in the country's history. The country's population growth rate then entered a declining phase, moving from a growth rate of 3.7 per cent per annum in 1985 to 2.6 per cent year in 1998. According to the World Bank (2011), the rate of growth in the country's population remained constant at 2.6 per cent between 1998 and 2009. The *2009 Kenya Population and Housing* Census, however, shows that the country's inter-censal growth rates remained constant 3.4 per cent in 1969-1979 and 1979-1989 periods but declined to 2.9 per cent in 1979-1989 period. It then increased marginally to 3 per cent in 1999-2009 (Republic of Kenya, 2010b).

In terms of numbers, Kenya had a total population of 5.4 million in 1948 (Njonjo, 2010). This increased to 8.6 million in 1962; 10.9 million in 1969; 15.3 million in 1979; 21.4 million in 1989; 28.7 million in 1999; 38.6 million in 2009 and 39.8 million in 2010 (Njonjo, 2010; Republic of Kenya 2011a). Figure 2 gives the trend of Kenya's population over the period 1972-2010.

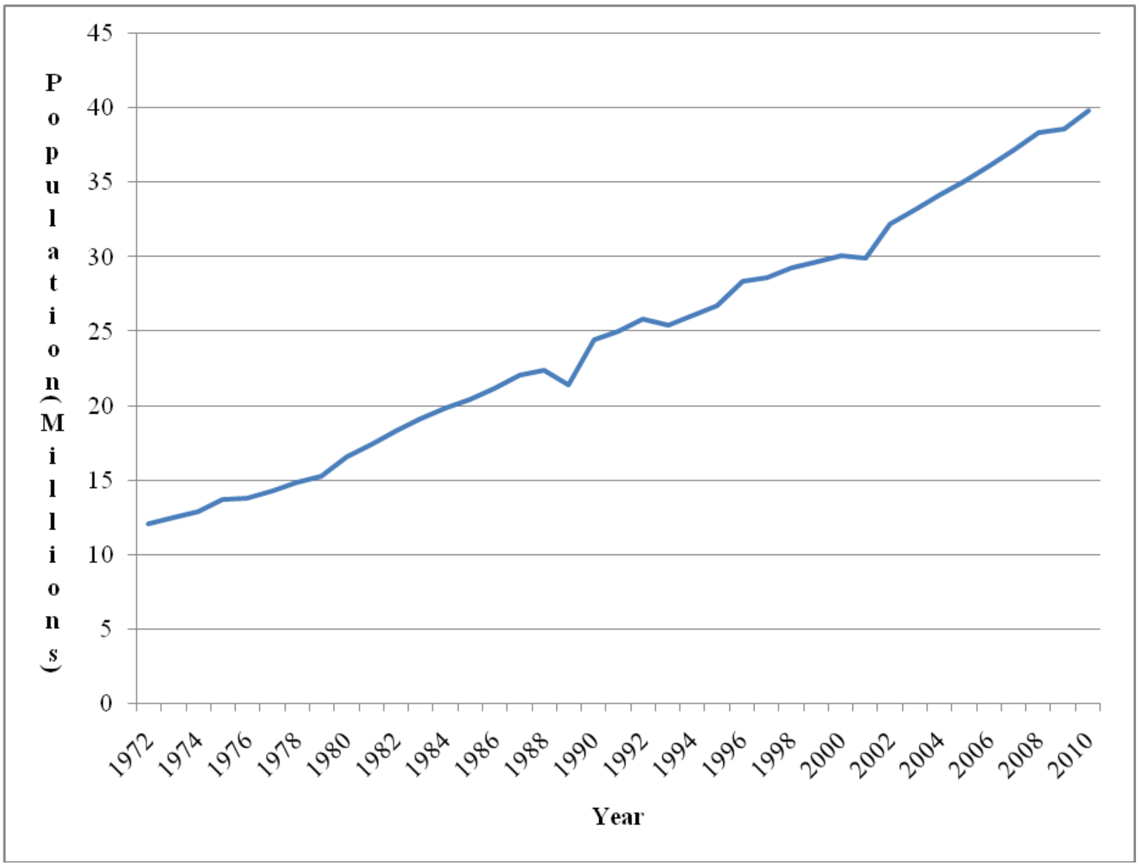

Figure 2: Population Trends (1972-2010)
Republic of Kenya, *Economic Survey*, various

2.2 Long-Term Economic Growth in Kenya

The performance of the Kenyan economy has been mixed over time. This is illustrated by the cyclical nature of the growth in the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as shown in Figure 3.

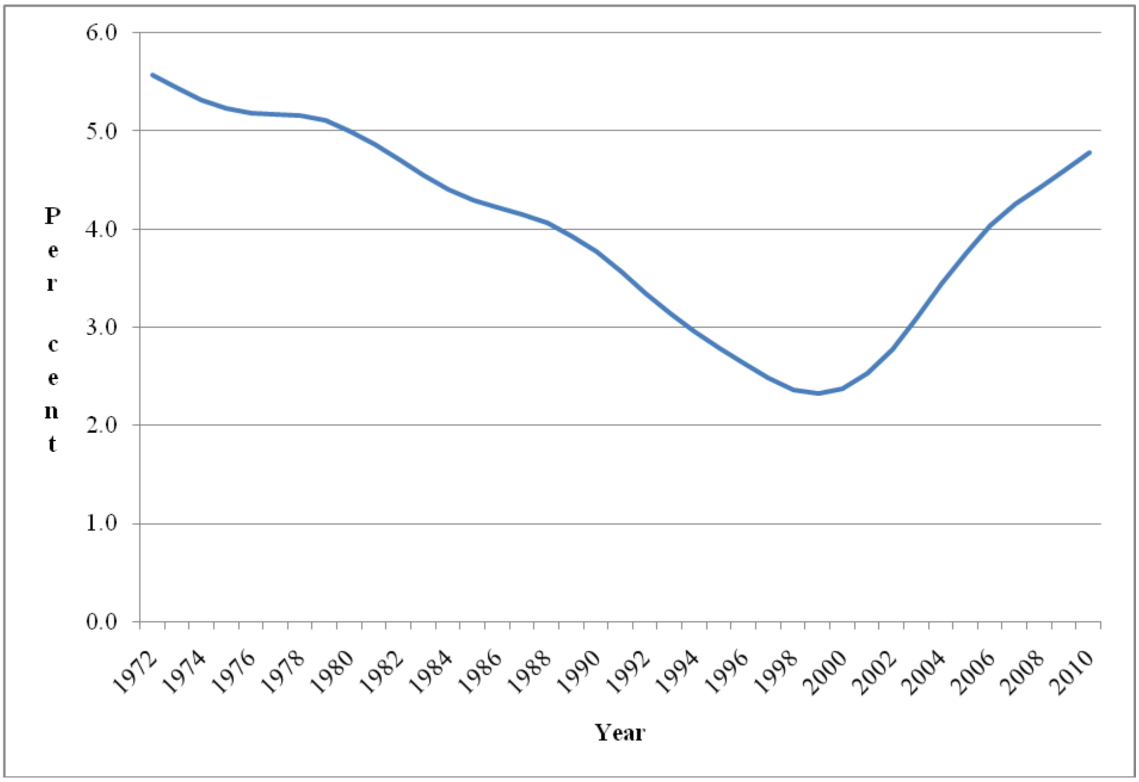

Figure 3: Trends in Annual GDP Growth Rates (1972-2010)

Figure 3 gives five main trends: i) moderately high growth with fluctuations during the 1970s; ii) a long lasting trend of declining low growth rates from the 1980s up to the early 2000s; iii) a period of growth in the 2000s with accelerating rates between 2006 and 2007; iv) a sudden fall in 2008 and 2009–due to global crisis and Kenya's own internal problems following the 2007-2008 post election disturbances; and v) recent signs of recovery. The improved growth performance of the economy, particularly between 2003 and 2007, corresponds to the implementation of the policies contained in the *Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (2003-2007).* The trends depicted in Figure 3 shows that Kenya has not been able attain and sustain a high economic growth rate. Whenever the country attained a relatively high economic growth rate, the same has not been sustained over time.

Kenya's current policy environment is guided by the *Kenya Vision 2030*. This economic blueprint contains the broad economic, social, and political strategies expected to steer the country to a newly industrialized country status by the year 2030. The growth objectives underpinning the *Kenya Vision 2030* targeted that the economy should grow at an enhanced rate of 6.1 per cent achieved in 2006 to 10 per cent by 2012/2013 and to sustain the growth thereafter to 2030 (Republic of Kenya, 2007). This target was, however, revised in the country's First Medium Term Plan (2008-2012). According to the MTP (2008-2012), Kenya's real GDP was expected to grow by 4.5 per cent in 2008; 7.9 per cent in 2009; 8.7 per cent in 2010; 9.1 per cent in 2011 and to reach the 10 per cent mark by 2012 (Republic of Kenya, 2008b). It is noted, however, that the set growth targets have largely been missed. The country's economy registered a dismal growth of 1.5 per cent in 2008 and 2.6 per cent in 2009. The dismal growth was partly attributed to the effects of the 2007-2008 post election violence. Even though the Kenyan economy experienced a rebound in 2010 with a growth rate of 5.6 per cent, this was still below the year's growth target of 10 per cent (Republic of Kenya, 2011a). The rebound of the Kenyan economy in the last couple of years, therefore, gives ground to optimism;

yet, past performance suggests that a target growth rate of 10 percent is over-optimistic, at least in the few years.

2.3 Employment Trends in Kenya

Creation of productive and sustainable employment opportunities remains the core of employment policy interventions in Kenya (Omolo, 2011; Republic of Kenya, 2007; 2008b; 2008c). The Kenyan labour market is dual in nature, presenting formal sector alongside the informal sector. Long term trends and dynamics of employment in Kenya show a declining number of jobs being created in the formal sector as compared to the informal sector. Figure 4 gives the long-term trends in formal and informal sector employment in Kenya over the period 1972-2010.

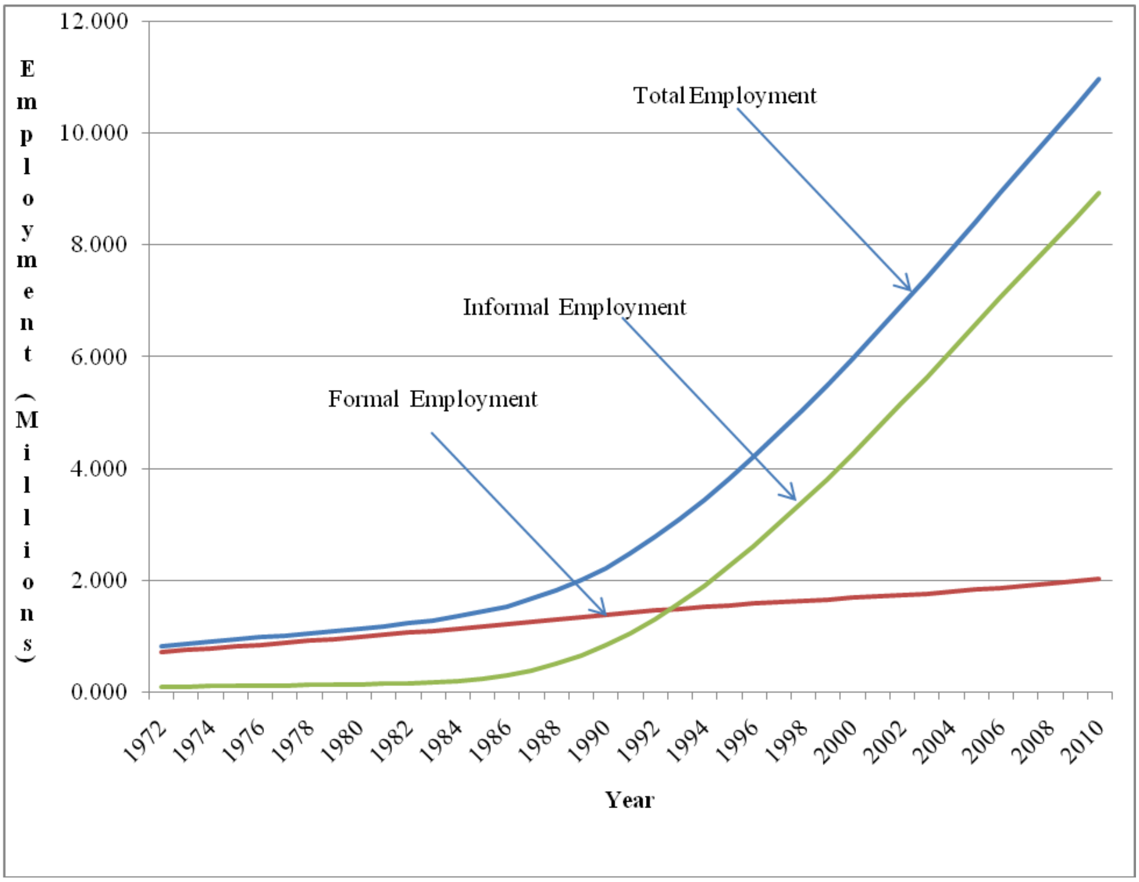

Figure 4: Trends in Formal and Informal Sector Employment in Kenya (1972-2010)

Source of Data: Republic of Kenya, *Economic Survey* (various)

Figure 4 shows that formal and informal employment in Kenya has continuously been growing since the 1970s. But the strength of pace at which informal and formal jobs have been created differs significantly, to the point that the composition of employment has been progressively tilting towards informal employment. While a constant of Kenya's job creation trends over the last 40 years has been the outnumbering of formal jobs by those in informal activities, it is in the 1990s that the rise of informal jobs started to dominate the job creation process. During these years, the number of jobs added by informal activities was, in each year, larger while the number of formal jobs added became smaller.

Figure 5 shows the trends in growth in formal and informal sector employment and the rate of growth of the country's economy over the period 1972-2010.

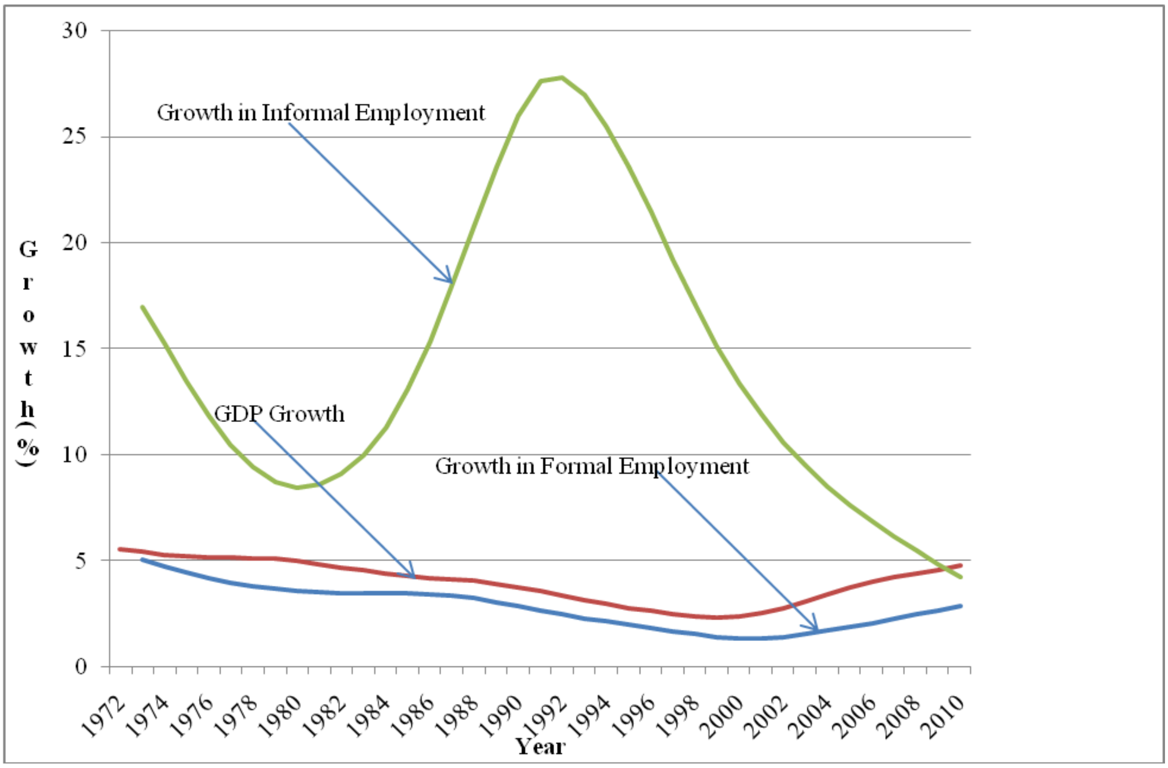

Figure 5: Trends in Growth of Employment and GDP, 1972-2010 (%)
Source of Data: Republic of Kenya, *Economic Survey*, various

The trends in the growth in formal and informal sector employment, and growth of the economy depicted in Figure 5 shows the subdued nature of the country's formal sector employment and GDP growth. As shown in Figure 5, rapid growth in informal employment was witnessed as from early 1980s peaking in 1992. Thereafter, there has been a steady decline in the rate of growth of informal sector employment. The phenomenal growth in informal sector employment in the 1980s-1990s can be attributed to the relocation or switching of workers from formal to informal sectors of the economy due to the negative effects of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), liberalization policies and globalization.

Overall, the rapid decline in the growth of informal sector employment in the face of a subdued growth in formal sector jobs implies that the informal sector is increasingly getting saturated. This trend also confirms that even though Kenya aspires to generate additional jobs through formalization of the informal sector jobs, this has not been realized. It is also noted that Kenya's informal sector jobs are precarious in nature. They are characterized by job insecurity, poor wages and terms and conditions of employment, absence of institutionalized social protection mechanisms, weak safety and health standards, and low job tenure. Even though informal sector employment has been a key driver to reducing unemployment in Kenya, informality remains a major productivity trap. Thus, without strategic interventions to formalize and improve the informal sector jobs, the sector cannot be relied on to effectively address the country's youth employment problem and poverty reduction goals.

2.4 The GDP-Employment Nexus in Kenya

Kenya's employment policy landscape has consistently revealed reliance on growth-driven employment (Republic of Kenya, 1964; 2008a). Virtually all the country's past development plans, sessional papers on employment and the current long-term development blueprint: *Kenya Vision 2030*, and its attendant medium-term and sector plans have promoted economic growth as the panacea to employment creation. Economists have often used employment elasticity as a numerical measure of how employment varies with growth in economic output (GDP). This measure (employment elasticity) serves as a useful way to examine how growth in a country's GDP and growth in employment evolve together over time. Employment elasticity can also provide insights into trends in labour productivity and employment generation for different population subsets in a country, and assist in detecting and analysing structural changes in employment. Table 3 gives a summary of the world and regional estimates of employment elasticities over the period 1992-2008.

Table 3: World and Regional Estimates of Employment Elasticities (1992-2008)

Region/Country	**Employment Elasticities**				**Average Annual GDP Growth**			
	1992-1996	1996-2000	2000-2004	2004-2008	1992-1996	1996-2000	2000-2004	2004-2008
World	**0.3**	**0.4**	**0.3**	**0.3**	**3.1**	**3.7**	**3.3**	**4.4**
Developed Economies & European Union	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.5	2.4	3.3	1.9	2.2
Central and South Eastern Europe	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	-5.5	3.2	6.0	6.7
East Asia	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	10.2	7.0	7.8	9.3
South East Asia and the Pacific	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.4	7.8	1.6	4.9	5.8
South Asia	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3	6.0	5.4	5.5	8.4
Latin America and the Caribbean	0.6	0.9	0.8	0.5	3.3	3.0	2.3	5.0
Middle East	1.1	1.5	0.7	0.7	2.9	3.3	5.1	5.7
North Africa	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.7	2.3	4.3	4.3	5.6
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.5	2.9	3.0	6.0	6.1
East African Community								
Burundi	-0.15	0.41	1.52	1.18	-6.5	0.8	2.5	3.5
Kenya	1.28	1.77	1.03	0.5	2.7	1.6	3.1	5.3
Rwanda	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Tanzania	1.04	0.64	0.23	0.27	2.7	3.9	7.0	7.2
Uganda	0.34	0.51	0.54	0.4	8.8	5.7	6.8	8.8

Source: ILO (2009)
n.a-data not available

Table 3 shows that globally, the world's aggregate employment elasticity ranged between 0.3 and 0.4 during the period 1992-2008. This implies that for every one percentage point of additional GDP growth, total world employment grew by 0.3-0.4 percentage points during the period. It is also noted from Table 3 that the elasticities of employment were relatively high in the Middle East (0.7-1.5), Latin America and the Caribbean (0.5-0.9), North Africa (0.6-0.8) and Sub-Saharan Africa (0.5-0.7). Within the East African Community (EAC), Burundi had the highest employment elasticity (0.15-1.18) followed by Kenya (0.5-1.28), Uganda (0.34-0.54) and Tanzania (0.23-1.04). Employment elasticity statistics for Rwanda were unavailable.

According to the ILO (2009), there is no universally accepted benchmark figure against which a country's historical employment elasticities should be compared. It is argued that employment intensity required by a country to fix its employment needs depends on several variables. These include the country's rate of economic growth, amount of surplus labour and rate of labour force growth, the unemployment and labour force participation rates, the level and growth rate of labour productivity, and the poverty rate, particularly amongst workers (ILO, 2009). However, an ILO study by Khan (2001) argued that employment elasticities in developing countries should ideally be around 0.7 until these economies attain upper-middle income status.

It is evident from Table 3 that the employment elasticity for Kenya has been declining, particularly since 1996. It declined from 1.77 in 1996-2000 to 1.03 and 0.5 in 2000-2004 and 2004-2008, respectively. This means that the employment yield of the country's growth in GDP has declined over time. The statistics show that while in 1996-2000 a one-percentage increase in the country's GDP triggered a 1.77 percentage points increase in employment, a similar growth in GDP only yielded a 0.5 percentage increase in employment in 2008. This shows the declining responsiveness of Kenya's employment to growth in GDP.

Empirically, changes in GDP growth are equal to the sum of changes in employment growth and changes in labour productivity growth. Kenya has had positive GDP growth over the period 1992-2008 and employment elasticities ranging between 0.5 and 1.77 as illustrated in Table 3. Thus Kenya's GDP growth over the period has been attributable to positive employment growth interspersed with negative growth in productivity. For example, in the period 1992-2004, Kenya registered a positive GDP growth and employment elasticity greater than one. This corresponded with positive employment growth of 3.456, 2.832 and 3.193 percent in 1992-1996, 1996-2000 and 2000-2004, respectively. During the same periods, the country realised negative productivity growth of 0.756, 1.232 and 0.093 percent, respectively. The interpretation is that during the 1992-2004 period, the country's growth was more employment-intensive and less productivity-intensive. This has a lot of negative implication for a country's competitiveness and capacity to sustain the jobs created. However, the period 2004-2008 was marked by a positive GDP growth and employment elasticity of 0.5. A positive GDP growth and an employment elasticity of between 0 and 1 presents the ideal growth-employment-productivity balance, whereby job growth occurs hand-in-hand with gains in productivity.

2.5 Working Age Population

Kenya's population dynamics shows that the country's working age population increased from 15.9 million persons in 1989/99 to 19.8 million persons in 2005/2006. As illustrated in Table 4, the largest rise in the working-age population over the period was recorded among the youth cohort of 15-30 years.

Table 4: Distribution of Working Age Population, 1998/99 and 2005/06

Age Cohort	Employed		Unemployed		Inactive*		Total	
	1998/99	**2005/06**	**1998/99**	**2005/06**	**1998/99**	**2005/06**	**1998/99**	**2005/06**
15-19	843,909	1,056,015	270,217	352,357	2,349,270	3,210,685	3,463,396	4,619,057
20-24	1,435,405	1,895,834	533,078	605,167	485,067	992,053	2,453,550	3,493,054
25-29	1,584,271	2,088,468	291,679	388,747	165,931	335,359	2,041,881	2,812,574
30-34	1,541,604	1,897,206	185,927	154,360	94,668	169,153	1,822,199	2,221,097
35-39	1,533,196	1,497,662	140,147	122,725	91,739	101,214	1,765,082	1,721,601
40-44	1,128,190	1,357,371	113,165	92,262	68,964	91,978	1,310,319	1,541,611
45-49	992,261	1,070,783	88,596	64,636	67,260	81,760	1,148,117	1,217,179
50-54	702,199	787,417	66,839	38,666	82,769	95,607	851,807	921,690
55-59	412,639	624,308	64,235	26,350	87,107	91,389	563,981	742,047
60-64	351,936	432,972	46,739	11,024	106,457	96,536	505,132	540,532
Total	**10,525,609**	**12,708,035**	**1,800,623**	**1,856,294**	**3,599,231**	**5,266,112**	**15,925,463**	**19,830,441**

Source: Republic of Kenya (2003b; 2008a)

Table 4 also shows that an increasing proportion of the country's working age population is inactive. In this context, inactive labour consists of all those persons within the working age who are outside the labour market. Inactivity may be voluntary (persons who prefer to stay at home or still in school/college) or involuntary (prefer to work but discouraged and give up searching for jobs). It can be derived from Table 4 that the proportion of the inactive labour to the working age population increased from 22.6 percent in 1998/99 to 26.6 percent in 2005/2006. The data presented in the table also shows that majority of the inactive population were between the age of 15 to 19 years. At the same time, Kenya's labour market participants (employed and unemployed) increased from 12.3 million persons in 1998/1999 to 14.6 million persons in 2005/2006. This represents a 18.2 percent increase over the period.

Table 5 gives a summary of labour force participation rates for different working age cohorts over the period 1998/1999 and 2005/2006.

Table 5: Labor Force Participation Rates, 1998/99 and 2005/2006

Age Cohort	1998/99			2005/06		
	Male	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
15 – 19	28.1	30.5	29.3	30	30	30
20 – 24	66.6	69.8	68.3	73	68	70
25 – 29	91.5	87.7	89.4	93	82	87
30 – 34	96.6	91.6	94.1	97	86	91
35 – 39	97.4	92.3	94.8	98	90	94
40 – 44	97.5	92.9	95.2	98	90	94
45 – 49	95.6	90.7	93.4	96	89	92
50 – 54	94.0	86.9	90.3	93	85	89
55 – 59	87.8	82.5	85.1	92	82	87
60 – 64	85.0	77.4	80.9	89	76	82
Average	**74.7**	**72.6**	**73.6**	**76**	**70**	**73**

Source: Republic of Kenya (2003b; 2008a)

The data given in Table 5 shows that labour force participation rates for the youth aged 15-24 years increased, albeit marginally while for the participation rates for the other age cohorts (25 to 54) declined. Over the period, the female labour force participation rates edged downwards for all the age groups with the highest being among the youth cohorts of 25-29 and 30-34, which declined by nearly 6 percent. Overall, females had a lower labour force participation rates than males in both periods.

2.6 Employment-Population Ratio for Kenya

Employment-population ratio is one of the indicators that are used to assess the ability of an economy to create employment. It is defined as the proportion of a country's working age population (15+) that is employed. A high employment-population ratio means that a large section of the country's population is employed, while a low ratio means that a large proportion of the population is not involved directly in market related activities. Such a scenario could be because the section of the population that are not engaged are either unemployed or out of the labour force altogether. Table 6 gives a comparative analysis of Kenya's employment-population ratio by working age population, sex and youth cohorts over the period 1991-2008.

Table 6: Employment-Population Ratio for Kenya (1991-2008)

Year	Working Age	Males	Females	Youth
1991	73.4	80.0	67.0	62.4
1992	73.4	79.8	67.1	62.2
1993	73.3	79.7	67.1	62.0
1994	73.3	79.6	67.1	61.8
1995	73.2	79.4	67.1	61.6
1996	73.1	79.3	67.1	61.4
1997	73.0	79.1	67.2	61.2
1998	73.0	78.9	67.1	61.0
1999	73.4	79.4	67.6	61.6
2000	73.2	79.2	67.4	61.1
2001	73.1	78.9	67.3	60.5
2002	72.9	78.8	67.1	60.0
2003	72.8	78.6	67.0	59.6
2004	72.7	78.6	67.0	59.3
2005	72.8	78.6	67.0	59.2
2006	72.9	78.8	67.2	59.2
2007	72.9	78.7	67.2	58.8
2008	73.0	78.7	67.3	58.7

Source of Data: ILO (2009)

Table 6 shows that the employment-population ratio for Kenya remained almost constant at 73 percent for over the period 1991-2008. The data presented in the table shows that the employment-population ratio exhibited marginal declines from 73.4 per cent in 1991 to 73 per cent in 1998. It then increased slightly to 73.4 per cent in 1999 before taking another dip to reach 72.7 per cent in 2004. As of 2008, the country's employment-population ratio was 73 per cent. The employment-population ratio for Kenya is higher than the global and Sub-Saharan Africa's (SSA). In 2004-2008, for example, the global employment-population ratio averaged 60 per cent while that of the SSA was 65 per cent (ILO, 2009). This means that a relatively large proportion of Kenya's working age population is employed. However, consideration of the nature of the employment in terms of their rewards and ability to accord the worker and his/her family improved standards of living, security in employment and social protection is critical.

The data presented in Table 6 also reveals that the employment-population ratio has been higher for males than for females. Over the period 1991-2008, for example, the employment-population ratio for males averaged 79.12 per cent as compared to 67.16 per cent for females. At the same time, the youth have continued to bear the greatest brunt of the employment problem with an all time lower youth employment-population averaging 60.64 per cent for almost two decades. The implication of Kenya's almost constant employment-population ratio is that even though the Kenyan economy may have realized net employment creation (after taking into account the new jobs and job churning) over time, the rate at which the net jobs were created was almost the same as the rate of labour force growth. This effectively meant that more job seekers, both the new labour market entrants and those out of employment through the various labour separation mechanisms, ordinarily remained out of employment for a longer period hence swelling the ranks of the discouraged job seekers. The other implication for Kenya as may be derived from Table 6 is that there continues to be disproportionate participation of men and women, and the youth in the country's economic activities. These negative differences in access to employment opportunities by women and the youth illustrate some of the key employment challenges that the country is facing.

2.7 Unemployment in Kenya

The employment challenge in Kenya has grown over time. The level of open unemployment in the country increased from 6.7 per cent in 1978 to 25.1 percent in 1998/1999 before easing to 12.7 percent in 2005/2006 (Table 7).

Table 7: Unemployment Rates in Kenya, 1978- 2005/06

Age Cohort	1978	1986	1998/99	2005/06
15 – 19	26.6	36.2	47	25.0
20 – 24	18.5	29.2	47.3	24.2
25 – 29	4.8	8.6	25.1	15.7
30 – 34	2	2.7	14.3	7.5
35 – 39	1.8	2.1	12	7.6
40 – 44	0.7	0.7	11.2	6.4
45 – 49	1.1	2.0	14.7	5.7
50 – 54	1.4	0.9	18.9	4.7
55 – 59	1.5	4.1	40.6	4.0
60 – 64	3.2		45.2	2.5
Total	**6.7**	**9.7**	**25.1**	**12.7**

Republic of Kenya, *Statistical Abstract*, various

Table 7 also reveals considerable variations in unemployment amongst the different age cohorts, with the youth category recording relatively higher rates of open unemployment. Overall, youth unemployment has persistently been at least double the national unemployment rate. Figure 6 gives a graphical presentation of the open unemployment rates amongst the youth cohorts of 15-19; 20–24; 25-29; and 30-34 years. It also makes a comparison these trends with the total unemployment rates over time.

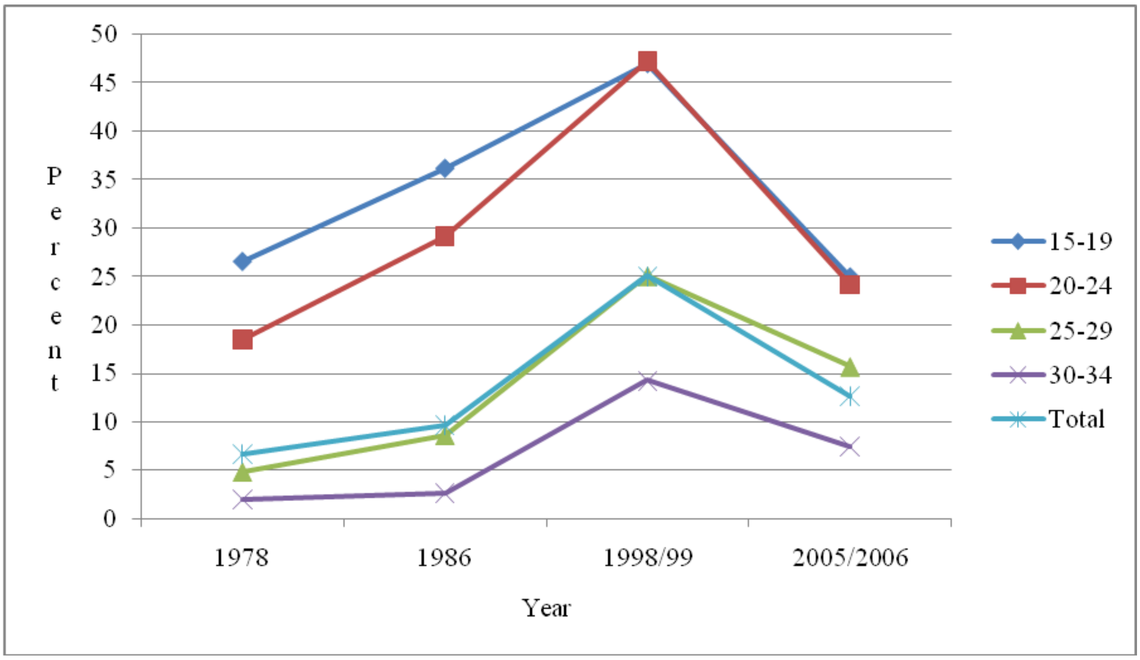

Figure 6: Unemployment in Kenya (1978-2005/2006)
Republic of Kenya, *Statistical Abstract,* various

Figure 6 confirms the variation in the rates of unemployment for the different youth age cohorts. It shows that the rate of unemployment of the youths aged 15-19 and 20-24 have been particularly higher than the national average. The unemployment rate for the 25-29 years youths have almost mirrored the national rates, while that of the youth in the 30-34 years cohort have, in all instances, been lower that of other groups and the national economy.

In Kenya, the 15-19 years youth cohort that also represent the entry node of the labour market have in all instances constituted the largest proportion of the working age population. In 2005/2006, for example, this category of the youth totaled 4,573,740 and reduced marginally to 4,169,543 in 2009 (Republic of Kenya, 2010a). Considering that about 60 per cent of the youth between 15-19 years are full time students, it follows that 1,829,496 youths in this age cohort may have been actively looking for work in 2005/2006 compared to 1,667,817 youths in 2009. However, the Kenyan economy has been sluggish in creating employment, particularly in the formal sector. The total number of new jobs created in the economy between 2005 and 2006 was 469,000 out of which 10.9 per cent (51,000) were in the formal sector. In 2009, a total of 445,900 new jobs were created with 12.6 per cent (56,300) being in the formal sector (Republic of Kenya, 2011b). It follows that the new jobs created in 2005/2006 and 2009 could only absorb 25.6 and 26.7 per cent of the youths at the entry point of the labour market in 2005/06 and 2009, respectively. The youth bulge pressure increases even more with the consideration that the bulk of the jobs were in the informal sector, which has a generally low level of appeal amongst the youth. At the same time, the unemployment problem is cumulative in nature with new jobs attracting jobseekers in the entire spectrum of the labour force.

These trends, inclusive of those depicted in Figure 6 confirm that the youth faces specific challenges in accessing the labour market and this lowers their chances of finding rewarding employment. Besides finding it difficult to get jobs due to the tightness of the labour market, the youths also have higher chances of losing their jobs in case of redundancies. In Kenya, for example, Section 40(1c) of the Employment Act

(2007) requires employers to take into account seniority in time and to the skill, and ability and reliability of each employee in the selection of those workers to be declared redundant. Obviously, this criterion puts young workers at a disadvantage in the event of redundancies. The youth also faces barriers to entry into the labour market arising from lack of or inadequate work experience, and path dependence, which dictates that early unemployment increases the likelihood of subsequent unemployment (Omolo, 2010; Coenjaerts *et al*., 2009). Remaining out of employment for long is, especially worrying for the youth. This situation may make the youth to get trapped into a lifetime of weak attachment to the labour market alternating between low paid insecure work and open unemployment with considerable socio-economic and political implications to the country.

Gender disaggregated data on unemployment presented in Table 8 shows relatively high unemployment rates for females than for males. This is true for all age groups.

Table 8: Unemployment Rates in Kenya by Age Group and Gender

Age Group (Years)	1998/99			2005/06		
	Total	**Males**	**Females**	**Total**	**Males**	**Females**
15 – 19	24.3	21.8	26.4	19	19.2	18.8
20 – 24	27.1	19	33.9	32.6	31.1	33.8
25 – 29	15.5	8.2	21.6	20.9	20.2	21.5
30 – 34	10.8	4.8	16.8	8.3	8.1	8.5
35 – 39	8.4	5	11.8	6.6	6.6	6.6
40 – 44	9.1	7.8	10.6	5	5.6	4.5
45 – 49	8.2	4.9	12.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
50 – 54	8.7	6.3	11.1	2.1	2.6	1.7
55 – 59	13.5	14.2	12.7	1.4	2	0.9
60 – 64	11.7	7.5	15.7	0.6	1.1	0.2
Total	**14.6**	**9.8**	**19.3**	**12.7**	**11.2**	**14.3**

Source of Data: Republic of Kenya, *Statistical Abstract*, various

The data summarized in Table 8 shows that overall, the unemployment rates for women eased from 19.3 percent in 1998/99 to 14.3 percent in 2005/2006. Even though the male unemployment rate increased by 1.4 percentage points from 9.8 percent in 1998/99 to 11.2 percent in 2005/2006, it was still lower than the females unemployment rate. The relatively high unemployment rate amongst women in Kenya is also manifested in the gender related inequities in access to employment opportunities in the country’s formal sector as illustrated in Table 9.

Table 9: Wage Employment in Modern Sector by Sex, 1993 – 2010 (000s)

Year	Women	Men	Total	Women (%)
1993	341.0	1,133.9	1,474.9	23.1
1994	347.6	1,156.8	1,504.4	23.1
1995	407.8	1,149.2	1157.0	26.2
1996	461.3	1,157.5	1618.8	28.5
1997	473.4	1,174.0	1647.4	28.7
1998	487.1	1,177.8	1664.9	29.3
1999	490.5	1,183.1	1673.6	29.3
2000	500.6	1,194.8	1695.4	29.5
2001	496.7	1,180.4	1677.1	29.6
2002	503.4	1,196.3	1699.7	29.6
2003	511.2	1,216.1	1727.3	29.6
2004	521.3	1,242.4	1763.7	29.6
2005	532.3	1,275.4	1807.7	29.4
2006	562.7	1,297.0	1859.7	30.3
2007	575.5	1,334.3	1909.8	30.1
2008	586.8	1,356.7	1943.5	30.2
2009	570.1	1,430.0	2,000.1	28.5
2010	591.4	1,469.0	2,060.4	28.7

Source of Data: Republic of Kenya: *Economic Survey*, various

Table 9 shows that the proportion of women employed in the formal sector increased marginally from 26.2 percent in 1995 to 29.5 percent in 2000, depicting a 3.3 percentage point increase over the five-year period. The proportion of women in formal sector employment remained constant at 29.6 percent in the period 2001-2004 but declined to 29.4 percent in 2005. It then increased marginally to average 30.2 percent over the 2006-2008 period before dipping further to stand at 28.7 per cent in 2010. Trends exhibited in Table 9 shows that even though there were some growth in formal sector employment during the period, averaging 2.54 per cent per annum, the employment opportunities were not accessed equally by women and men. The negative impact of such inequity in employment is worsened by the fact that on average, men earn more than women. Results of the 1998/99 Integrated Labour Force Survey (ILFS), for example, showed that the mean monthly earnings from paid employment for males are about 1.5 times that of females (Republic of Kenya, 2005).

Analysis of the employment data for Kenya shows, for example, an increasing trend in the engagement of workers on casual terms of employment. The data shows that the proportion of casual workers in the formal sector gradually increased from 17.9 percent in 2000 to 21.2 per cent in 2005. The size of employees on casual terms then increased thereafter to reach an all time high of 32.2 per cent in 2008 before declining marginally to 30.1 per cent in 2010 (Republic of Kenya: *Economic Survey*, various). The increase in formal sector employment between 2002 and 2003, for example, was wholly attributed to the increase in the number of casual workers. In this case, while the number of workers on regular terms remained constant at 1,381.1 thousands in 2002 and 2003, the number of employees on casual terms of engagement increased by some 27.6 thousands. Between 2009 and 2010, the number of workers on casual terms of employment increased by 5.4 per cent as compared to 2 per cent for employees on regular terms (Republic of Kenya, 2011a).

It is noted that most employers in Kenya, including the public sector have resorted to the increasing use of casual, temporary, part-time, contract, sub-contracted and outsourced workforces to ostensibly reduce labour costs, achieve more flexibility in management and exert greater levels of control over labour. This trend allows the de-politicization of hiring and firing that makes it easier for companies to avoid labour legislation and the rights won by trade unions. The trend is mainly attributed to strive for global competitiveness and weak enforcement of labour legislations, with the youth bearing the brunt of such trends. The nature of employment of casual workers, for example, do not facilitate them to enjoy the fundamental rights of workers such as freedom of association and collective bargaining, right to paid leave (sick, maternity and annual leave), and the right to social protection as provided under the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) and the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF). This revelation contrasts sharply with the country's desire to reduce poverty and enhance social protection. Overall, the casual relationships between employers and workers have impaired labour relations, eroded worker protection and transferred additional responsibilities, such as social and trade union protection, job security, and wage negotiations to the worker. This leads to lack of motivation and increases shirking, which decreases effort. This could partly explain the persistently low levels of labour productivity, low enterprise competitiveness and the slow economic growth rates in Kenya.

2.8 The Youth Bulge in Kenya

Kenya has a youthful population. In 1969, the youth (15-34 year olds) constituted about a third (30.38%) of the country's population. By 1979 census period, the youth population had increased by about two percentage points to 32.25 per cent. By 2009, the youth constituted 35.39 per cent of the country's population 2009. These trends show that Kenya is facing a youth bulge. According to the UNDP (2010), a youth bulge occurs when more than 20 percent of a country's population is composed of young people. Urdal (2006), however, argues that measuring the youth bulge as a share of the national population underestimates the problem. Urdal (2006) defines youth bulge as an unusually high proportion of youths as a proportion of the total adult population, aged 15 years and above. Using Urdal's (2006) definition, the youth averages 63.71 per cent of Kenya's adult population (Table 10).

Table 10: Youth Bulge in Kenya (Per cent), 1979-2009

Age Group	1979	1989	1999	2005/06	2009*	Average
15-19	22.08	30.16	43.15	22.29	20.32	27.4
20-24	16.83	24.13	35.92	16.67	18.40	22.4
25-29	13.38	20.66	28.65	13.06	15.60	18.4
30-34	10.37	14.70	21.37	10.11	12.28	13.6
35-39	7.80	11.65	17.99	7.97	9.79	11.2
40-44	6.79	9.28	13.10	7.15	7.19	8.6
45-49	5.59	7.28	10.63	5.78	6.20	7.2
50-54	4.74	6.04	8.68	4.43	4.66	5.8
55-59	3.49	4.57	5.83	3.64	3.47	4.2
60-64	2.75	4.04	5.19	2.67	2.89	3.6
65-69	2.32	2.92	3.82	2.17	1.90	2.6
70-74	1.63	2.21	3.22	1.55	1.65	2.2
75+	2.21	3.85	4.78	2.50	3.04	3.4
Youth Bulge	**62.67**	**63.36**	**63.80**	**62.13**	**66.60**	**63.71**

Source: Republic of Kenya, *Statistical Abstract* (Various); * Republic of Kenya (2010a)

The trend illustrated in Table 10 shows that Kenya has had a youthful population over time. From the Table, the proportion of youths in the age cohorts 15-19, 20-24, 25-29 and 30-34 have at all times been higher than the other adult cohorts. Consequently the youth in the country represented 62.67 per cent, 63.36 per cent, 63.80 per cent, 62.13 per cent and 66.60 per cent of the adult population in 1979, 1989, 1999, 2005/2006 and 2009, respectively. Figure 7 schematizes the youth bulge problem in Kenya over the period 1979-2009.

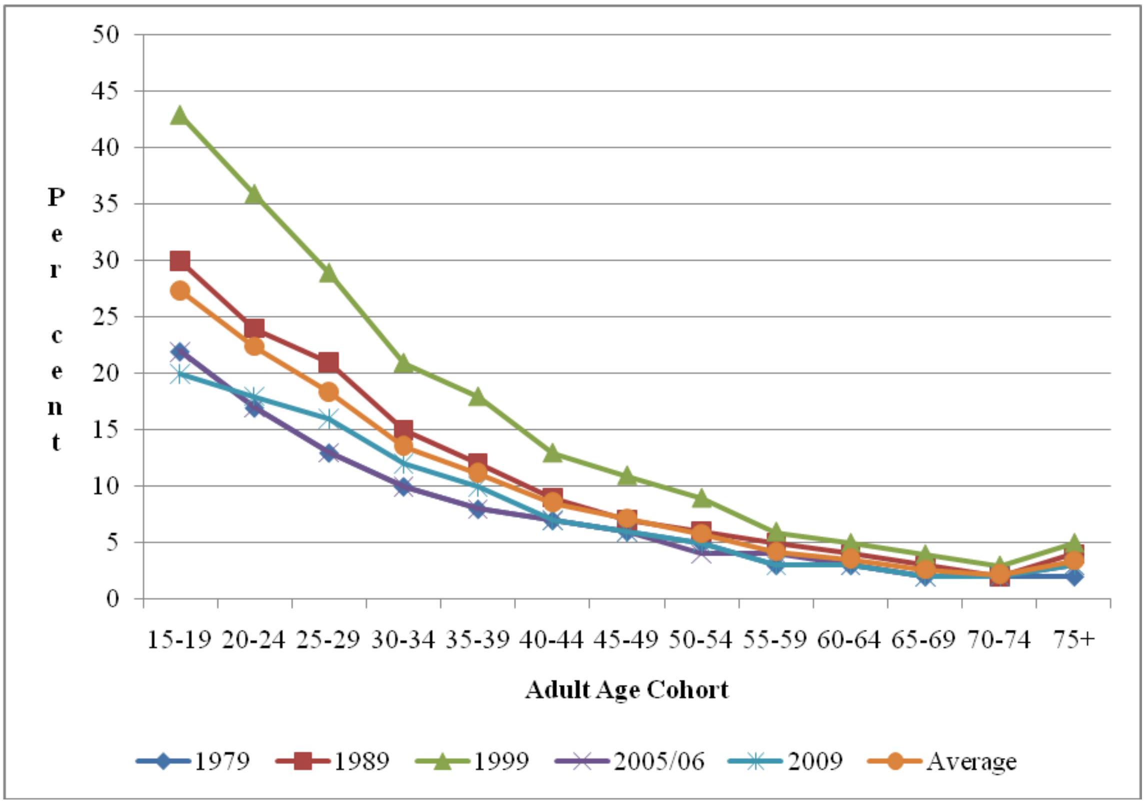

Figure 7: Youth Bulge in Kenya (Per cent)

Source: Republic of Kenya, *Statistical Abstract* (Various); Figures for 2009 computed from Republic of Kenya (2010a)

Kenya's population dynamics manifested by a large and growing proportion of the youth presents key policy challenges. With more than a third of the total population or more slightly below two thirds of the adult population being young, the energies of these youths must be redirected to productive ventures for sustainable growth and development, otherwise it becomes a liability. The youth bulge coupled with rapid growth in working-age population and low absorptive capacity of the labour market has the capacity to exacerbate unemployment, prolong dependency, diminish self-esteem and fuel frustrations. This may make the country to be more unstable in general and thus more susceptible to domestic armed conflict, particularly in situations of economic stagnation. Within this context, a large youth cohort faced with subdued employment creation and/or inequitable access to employment opportunities may develop a generational consciousness. This may particularly be so out of awareness of belonging to a generation of an extraordinary size and strength, enabling them to act collectively. Such consciousness and frustration may explain the formation of youth vigilante groups as witnessed in many parts of Kenya. These groups make it easy for violent actions to take place.

3.0 Population and Employment Projections

3.1 Population Projections

The World Bank (2011) reports that Kenya's population growth rate stand at 2.6 per cent per annum while the Kenya Government estimates it at 3 per cent (Republic of Kenya, 2010b). Based on a 3 per cent annual population growth rate reported by the Kenya Government, the country's population is projected to change as illustrated in Figure 8.

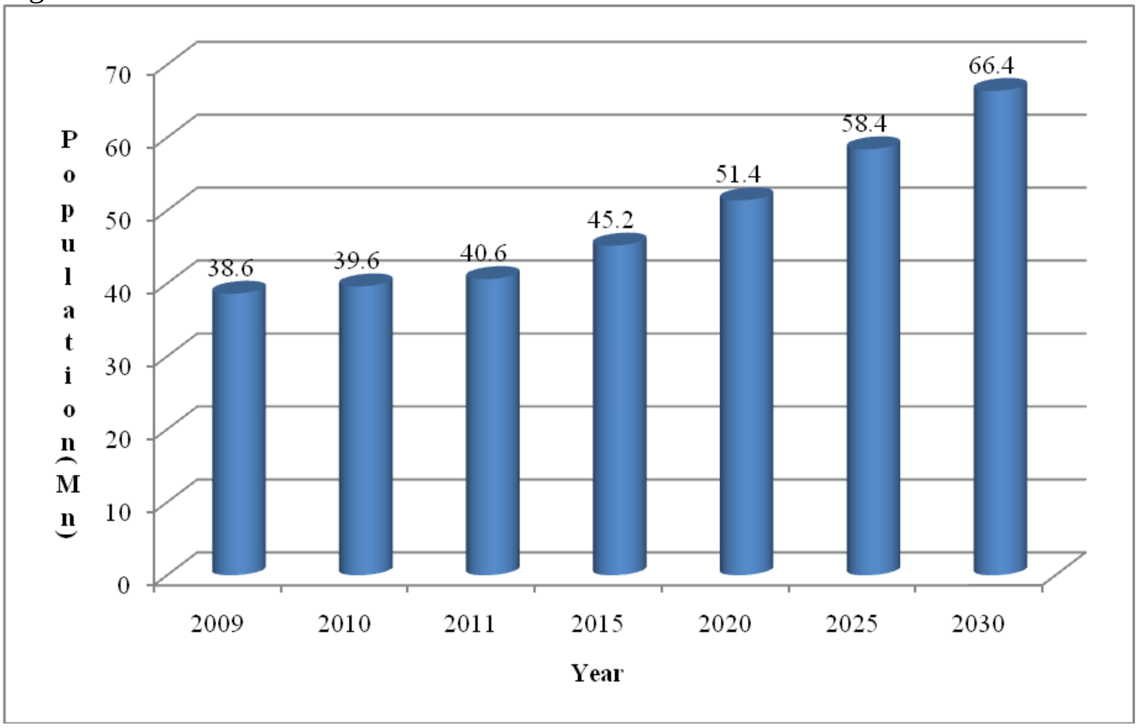

Figure 8: Population Projections (2009-2030)

Figure 8 shows that Kenya's population is poised to increase to about 41 million in 2011 and to reach 45 million by 2015. It is projected that the country's population will be about 66 by the end of the *Kenya Vision 2030* horizon.

The foregoing discussions on population dynamics shows that different population groups have grown at different rates. The number of those in the working age category has grown faster than the total population since around 1970s and will continue to do so up to about 2070 (Figure 9a). Within the working age the youth, aged 15 to 34 years, grew faster from 1955 up to 2010 (Figure 9b).

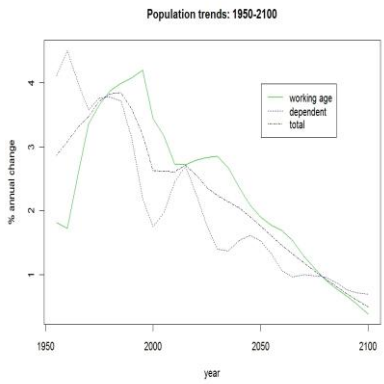

Figure 9a

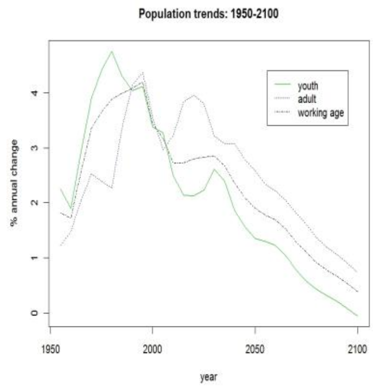

Figure 9b

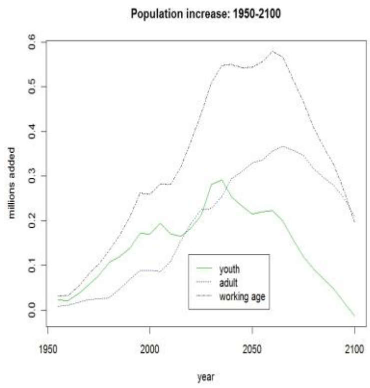

Figure 9c

The strength and timing of the country's population growth have resulted in acute pressures in labour markets as shown in Figure 10a, as well as a significant presence of young people within the working age population (Figure 10b). The proportion of young people (15-34 years) in the working age population has been increasing since the 1950s to represent around two thirds of the working age population between 1980 and 2010. From this year on, the proportion of the youth in the working age population will be decreasing down to 55 percent in 2050 and 43 percent in 2095-2100 as illustrated in Figure 10c. However, the number of young people will not start to decrease in absolute terms throughout the entire 21st Century even though the number of young people added each year will be small towards the end (Figure 10b). The employment challenge is to create as many jobs as possible to provide an adequate standard of living for the population and opportunities for the youth.

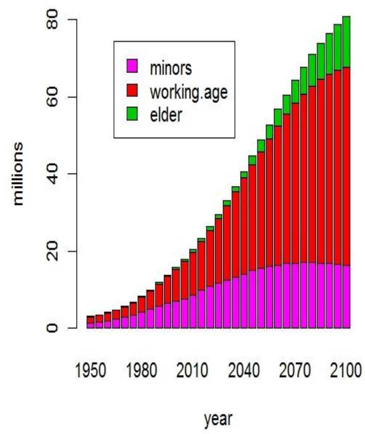

Figure 10a Population

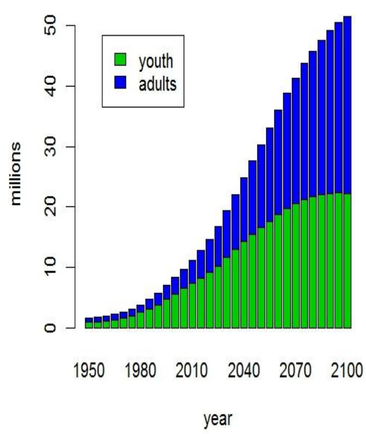

Figure 10b Working age (m)

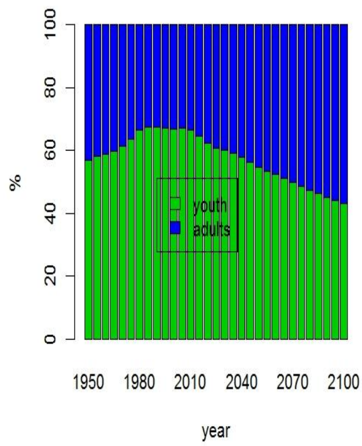

Figure 10c Working age (%)

Kenya's employment challenge over the next 10 years is to provide adequate jobs for the working age population. This is projected to expand at the pace of 321 thousand people per year up to year 2015 and 377 thousand people between 2015 and 2020. In this respect, the annual additions to the working age population will split in half between youth and adult up to 2020, with slightly more young people up to 2015 and slightly more adults between this year and 2020. Demographic trends, thus, suggest that Kenya's employment problem is at least half a youth problem and half an adult issue as can also be deduced from Table 10 on youth bulge.

3.2 Employment Projections

Kenya's MTP (2008-2012) envisaged that the country's GDP would grow by 4.5 per cent in 2008; 7.9 per cent in 2009; 8.7 per cent in 2010; 9.1 per cent in 2011 and to reach 10 per cent in 2012 (Republic of Kenya, 2008b). Long-term trends in Kenya's GDP growth over the last decade (2000-2010) show, for example, that the country's annual growth rate averaged 3.5 per cent over the period. The highest rate of growth was 7 per cent realized in 2007. However, between 2002 and 2007 when the country recorded rapid growth rate, the economy grew at an average of 5.4 per cent. Within the context of the GDP growth-employment nexus, the average employment growth during the same period was 2.4 per cent. However, the MTP (2008-2012) projects that the country's employment would grow almost in tandem with the growth in GDP. It was projected that employment would grow by 4.7 per cent in 2008; 8.4 per cent in 2009; 8.7 per cent in 2010; 9.1 per cent in 2011 and 10 per cent in 2012. Using the 5.4 per cent average economic growth rate and mean employment growth of 2.4 in 2002-2007, the country's employment elasticity of growth during the period was 0.44.

Based on the average and highest GDP growth rates of 3.5 and 7 per cent attained in the last decade, respectively; Kenya's dream GDP growth rate of 9.1 and 10 per cent in 2011 and 2012 onwards, respectively; and the lowest, desired and highest employment elasticities of 0.4, 0.7 and 1 in that order, the new formal jobs that are likely to be created over time is as shown in Table 11. In this case, formal employment level of 2,060.4 thousands recorded in 2010 is taken as a base employment figure (Republic of Kenya, 2011a).

Table 11: Projected New Formal Jobs in Thousands (2012-2030)

Year	GDP Growth Scenarios	Employment Elasticity Scenarios		
		Lowest (0.4)	Desired (0.7)	Highest (1.0)
2012	Average (3.5%)	29.25	51.72	74.64
	Highest (7%)	59.31	105.91	154.32
	Desired (10%)	85.42	153.42	224.79
2017	Average (3.5%)	31.36	58.37	88.65
	Highest (7%)	68.09	134.52	216.45
	Desired (10%)	103.92	215.17	362.03
2022	Average (3.5%)	33.61	65.88	105.28
	Highest (7%)	78.17	170.87	303.58
	Desired (10%)	126.44	301.79	583.05
2027	Average (3.5%)	36.03	74.35	125.04
	Highest (7%)	89.74	217.05	425.78
	Desired (10%)	153.83	423.28	939.00
2030	Average (3.5%)	37.57	79.95	143.33
	Highest (7%)	97.49	250.54	555.73
	Desired (10%)	173.04	518.53	1,363.43

Source: Authors' own computations

As shown in Table 11, if Kenyan economy continues to grow at an average of 3.5 per cent per annum and the country maintains its GDP-employment yield of 0.4, new formal jobs would increase from 29.25 thousands by 2012 to 37.57 thousands by 2030. However, a higher GDP growth rate of 10 per cent per annum envisaged in the MTP (2008-2012) would lead to a considerable increase in the number of new formal jobs from 85.42 thousands by 2012 to 173.04 thousands by 2030. Trends in employment growth in Kenya over the period 1972-2010, however, show that employment creation in the formal sector has been subdued with a paltry 35.3 thousand new jobs being created annually. This is compared to an average of 232 thousand new jobs being created by the informal sector.

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

Kenya's employment challenge is to a large extent, a youth challenge. The country's demographic momentum makes the youth employment challenge more acute. Even though the youth bulge pressure is starting to ease, employment frustrations of the youth resulting from weak absorptive capacity of the labour market has been accumulating over time. Kenya's youth employment problem is one of late absorption in formal jobs and the adoption of informal activities at early ages. This does not lead to work career improvements, which also complicates absorption of the youth into formal jobs. Further, the youth employment problem is more acute for women. Even though Kenya's long term employment policy interventions have been anchored on economic growth, the country's employment elasticity is low. Only phenomenal and sustained growth rates can lead to required levels of job creation.

4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 Youth and Informal Sector Survey

The Kenyan labour market is experiencing a shrinking formal sector employment and a burgeoning informal sector employment. This is happening in the midst of a growing youth bulge with weak entrepreneurship culture. In this context, a youth and informal sector survey should be undertaken to provide the entry point in designing and implementing an effective youth employment intervention in the country. The surveys should help assess the relative ease or difficulty of the youth's transition from school-to work-life. The variables that could be under investigation should include but not limited to: education and training experience; perceptions and aspirations in terms of employment; job search process; barriers to and supports for entry into the labour market; the preference for wage employment versus self-employment; attitudes of employers towards young workers; and nature of informal sector employment and the level of acceptance of the youth to this type of employment.

4.2.2 Labour Market Information

Interventions within this track of programs are relevant to Kenyan situation as majority of the youth do not possess appropriate labour market skills, knowledge and attitude. Majority of the Kenyan youth are out of school and are not involved in productive labour market activities. Programs under this theme should be aimed at enhancing access to information through formulation and implementation of active labour market policies, which integrate access to labour market information, career guidance and counseling, offering job search skills, and placements.

4.2.3 The *Kazi Kwa Vijana* Programme

The KKV is key public works program. It, however, requires effective targeting if it has to benefit the youth. This is crucial since evidence from other countries indicates that the effectiveness of public works projects may be diminished or made marginal if the programs are not well targeted. Currently, the KKV programme does not effectively target the youth from the poorest households. It merely employs the principle of "first come first served" to enlist beneficiaries. As the initiative progresses, it would be advisable to design and adopt a more effective targeting strategy that reaches the youth from the poorest households, if the KKV is to achieve its intended objectives and to disabuse the perception that is generally held among the youth that the intervention benefits the old than the young. An exit strategy is also crucial for the KKV programme. This should protect its beneficiaries that have attained the "cut-off age" from shifting back to unemployment.

4.2.4 Entrepreneurial Potential of the Youth

Youth employment interventions should increasingly target the enhancement and promotion of the youth entrepreneurial potential. This can be achieved within the framework of the YEDF integrated with schemes to promote linkages between youth enterprises with medium and large firms, mentoring programmes, entrepreneurial exchange initiatives, and exhibitions to promote markets and market information. Equally important is the need to change the attitude and perception of the society and the youth about the informal/*jua kali* sector. The negative attitude and perception about the sector discourages many youth from venturing into it, as they do not want to be viewed as failures in life.

4.2.5 Skills of the Youth

Majority of the Kenyan youth lack appropriate skills. This limits their participation in the labour market. The following strategies should be prioritized to enhance technical and vocational training for the youth:

- Developing a labour market driven curriculum for use in technical and vocational training institutes;
- Promoting the exchange of information, knowledge and human resources between the public and the private institutions as well as increasing bursary provision for needy students in Youth Polytechnics;
- Maintaining and improving access to technical and vocational skills through the expansion of Youth Polytechnic subsidized tuition and re-introduction of *Jua Kali* Voucher training program;
- Provision and improvement of existing technical and vocational training facilities for the youth and mainstreaming youth with special needs in youth vocational training;
- Formulating and reviewing of the education and training policy as well as creating linkages between training institutions and the private sector through research, internship opportunities and finance and encouraging the private sector to get involved in technical education and training. Care should, however, be taken not to make internship and industrial attachments as avenues of cheap labour.

4.2.6 Addressing Skills Mismatch

Skills mismatch is a key antecedent to youth employment in Kenya. To address the problem of skills mismatch within the labour market, the business community needs to be closely engaged with educational and training institutions. Some aspects of the relationship can include:

a) industrialists sitting in as members of the boards of educational and training institutions so as to provide input into the curricular for students to learn skills needed by the industries;
b) School-Industry link programs that aids students in appreciating the relevance of learned theories in the world of work;
c) Teacher placements in businesses/industries during school holidays to facilitate sensitization of teachers on the skills their students need to acquire;
d) Setting up career advisory services and making this accessible to all job seekers looking for information and guidance. This should be both online and phone in. Courses offered by educational and training institutions in the country and what jobs they can lead to should also be availed through websites.

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