

# Youth demand involvement in policy decisions affecting them



Youth Employment Creation (YEC) in Agriculture and Agro-processing National Policy Convening organized by Utafiti-Sera (Policy-Research) in Nakuru

BY BERNADINE MUTANU  
(MYGOV)

Young people are demanding full involvement in discussions concerning their welfare.

At a recently concluded policy forum, the youth emphasized that they want to be included in key decision-making processes. They noted that some resolutions made in their absence do not necessarily benefit them, highlighting that their input is especially important in efforts to address youth unemployment in the country.

"Why would millennials speak and decide for us? We also want to be engaged," said Fibian Domongole Cheptoo, a youth champion in the potato value chain from West Pokot County.

During the Youth Employment Creation (YEC) in Agriculture and Agro-processing National

Policy Convening organized by Utafiti-Sera (Policy-Research) in Nakuru, young agripreneurs stressed the need for policies that support their ventures. They showcased products including dried mango crisps from Iviani Farm in Makueni and Lomut in West Pokot Counties, as well as potatoes from Nyandarua and West Pokot Counties.

Despite support from partners such as county governments, government agencies, the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR), and the Centre for African Bio-Entrepreneurship (CABE) Africa, these youths said they still face significant challenges.

They decried lack of involvement during key policy formulation processes as one of the issues hindering them from fully participating in employment creation.

They said they lack capital,

land, infrastructure, market, networks (linkages) and the necessary policy support.

"How do I lease land without getting conned? I recently leased one, unfortunately, I did not get it, and I lost my money in the process. I did not know what to do and so I let it go," said Caro Ndegwa, a youth, also in the potato value chain.

Her sentiments were echoed by Cheptoo: "We have a challenge, the lease agreements are very different. Some of the people require to be paid five years upfront to lease their land."

"That is a long period which requires more finances which we do not have as young people. There should be a standard rate and a period for agricultural land leasing that favors the youth. There should be uniformity," she said.

Responding to the issue and

giving an example, Mophat Mandela, the Kakamega County Executive Committee Member for Social Service, Sports, Youth, Gender and Culture said his county had developed land lease guidelines to provide a framework for informal land leasing.

This was in a bid to address the lack of specific laws and the high costs of official leasing processes for smallholder farmers, particularly women and youth, he said.

He added that there is a need to implement the Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security (2003) whose goal was expanded in 2014 to have governments set aside 10 per cent of the national budget to fund agriculture.

"We need to formulate policies that subsidize inputs to allow youth to continue supporting themselves along those value chains. We need policies that support production and commercialization," said Lenox Ochieng', a public policy expert.

"Today I can decide to develop a solution...but, it is very expensive for me as a young person. That is why we need to formulate policies that support and protect the developers," he added.

But, policy should be informed by evidence, said PASGR Executive Director Professor Fadel Ndiame. "Policies do matter, but policies cannot work alone, they must be implemented through a structure," he said.

Data from the Federation of Kenyan Employers (FKE) shows that out of the unemployed in the country, those aged 15-34 years are the most affected as 67 per cent of them do not have jobs.

In 2024, the national unemployment rate stood at 5.43 per cent (Statista), highlighting the scale of the crisis.

"Youth unemployment in Kenya is complex and requires a well-coordinated effort and greater collaboration among different stakeholders," Lucy Adoyo, the YEC Project Manager, said.

She observed that Kenyan youth are creative and full of energy which presents a significant opportunity for economic transformation if they are effectively managed.

## PS urges youth to turn monetize their talents

BY MUOKI CHARLES (KNA)

Higher Education Principal Secretary Beatrice Inyangala has urged young people to pursue creativity as a career path, noting that music and drama have proven to be high-earning industries.

Speaking during the recently concluded 2025 Kenya Music Festival in Meru County, the PS said the government is committed to supporting learners talented in the creative arts and providing them with exposure to the market.

She added that the festival showcased the remarkable creativity of Kenya's youth, highlighting the need to create an environment that nurtures their talents through the provision of necessary musical instruments in schools and mentorship opportunities.

"These performances have told stories on climate change, gender based violence among others which call for necessary action from policy makers," noted Inyangala.

National chairperson for the festivals Prof Frederick Ngala raised concern over the gender disparity, noting that female participants far outnumbered their male counterparts.

"We must make a concerted effort to help the boy child participate at the festival.

We had over 95,000 females against 45,000 male participants recorded this year, a difference I find unacceptable and needs to be bridged," he said.

During the event, Kenyatta University won the overall category among institutions of higher learning, closely followed by Mount Kenya University (MKU).

Other institutions of higher learning that made a big impact on the national stage included the University of Nairobi, with Daystar University making serious inroads at the fete.

MKU had 17 wins, and was ranked runners-up on 10 categories and took position three in eight competitions.

The institution's Head of Sports, Film and Creative Arts activities Mr. William Luta welcomed the achievement attributing it to the support the institution gives its students and staff members.

"The competition has been stiff. We are proud of the team. However, we have identified areas that need improvement and we will be working towards that as we prepare for the 98th edition come 2026," Luta vowed.

The MKU team had much prominence in African wind instrument, African solo drum, African and western instrumental assemble, African string fiddle and brass solo.

## Experts push for counselling as key to solving mental health problems

BY SAMUEL MAINA (KNA)

The Government is now rooting for enhanced counselling and rehabilitation efforts as one way of assisting persons battling mental health challenges.

Addressing the press in Nyeri on the sidelines of the ongoing Jukwaa la Usalama forum Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen noted that without proper remedy for mental illnesses, the issue may soon get out of hand as more and more persons fall victim.

Murkomen stated that the problem of drug abuse and consumption of illicit brews has fuelled the problem which has in turn led to a spike in the number

of people committing suicide in Nyeri county. He said it was shaking that on average the county is losing eight people to suicide with men bearing the brunt.

"It is really shocking to learn that we are losing eight people a month who commit suicide. In two months we have lost 16 people. This is unbelievable. This is a large number and we need these people to go for rehabilitation. We also need counselling services in this county and we have agreed to continue working with NACADA and the county government. There is also a need to train religious leaders and chiefs to assist and see whether they can supplement in terms of helping to counsel people and give them di-



Interior CS Kipchumba Murkomen addressing the press outside the Central Region Headquarters in Nyeri. PHOTO KNA

rection of life," he told the media.

Murkomen remarks come barely two months after Nyeri County Commissioner Ronald Mwiwawi disclosed that suicide cases were on the rise in the county with men taking the lead in terms of numbers of victims.

Mwiwawi had told a Service Delivery meeting for Heads of

Department in May that hardly a day passed without his office receiving report of a suicide case.

The administrator said his office had opted to take over the problem as a matter of urgency through professionals in areas like Kieni East, Kieni West and Mukurwe-ini that were hardly hit by the problem.