

In partnership with



Summary Scale of the implementation status of youth employment programs Case of Kenya.



Scale Measurement

Date May 2025

SUMMARY ON THE SCALE MEASUREMENT TOOL

The scale measurement tool was designed by the Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP) in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation. It aims to assess the level of implementation of specific youth employment policies and programs (YEPs) while allowing comparability across countries. Focusing on transitional progress, the tool addresses three key questions: what the policy aims to achieve, what gaps exist from the design of the policies, and how constituents perceive the policy's implementation.

The tool categorizes the YEPs into six clusters: YEPs to enhance youth employability, YEPs to promote youth entrepreneurship, Policies to protect youth rights at work, Economy-wide enablement policies, other employment/ labor market policies targeting youth, and Policies targeting vulnerable groups.

To attribute a score to the implementation level of each YEP within a cluster, this measurement scale tool uses a qualitative assessment method, employing a combination of banding categories and a color-coded system. Therefore, each YEP can be assigned one of the following four scores:

- **A- Orange:** Policy in place and operational,
- **B- Dark grey:** Policy in place, but weakly operational,
- **C- Blue:** Policy in place but not operational,
- **D- Light Blue:** Policy does not exist (given that each research team may also point out some key policies that it believes are missing from the YEPs package implemented in a specific country).

A column that includes comments is appended to each score to provide supporting evidence for the rating, with regard to the level of YEP implementation compared to what would have been expected.

For the country teams that conducted the review in both Year 1 and Year 3 of this Initiative, the tool provides two scores for each YEP: one informing about the level of implementation in the first review (Year 1), and the other concerning the second review (Year 3). Each of these scores is supported by an explanatory comment.

So, having both the score in the first review and the second review, the scale measurement tool provides a dynamic assessment between Year 1 and Year 3 of the initiative. In the event there is a YEP that did not exist in the Year 1 review, a new row is inserted in the corresponding YEPs category to represent it.

In this regard, the tool also features qualitative reviews to showcase achievements and gaps and provide insights for recommendations, in order to improve the YEPs design and implementation.

For a comprehensive explanation of the methodological approach, refer to the annex section for additional details.

Disclaimer:

This Scale measurement was produced in the context of the *What Works for Youth Employment in Africa: A review of existing policies and empirical analysis* in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation. It was a three-year initiative that ran between 2021 and 2024 to create a knowledge base of youth employment and related social development policies to inform policy and practices. The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the Foundation, its staff, or its Board of Directors."

Policies and Programmes		Score	Comments	Score	Comments
YEPs to enhance youth employability	CAPYEI Program	C	The programme is being implemented by the CAP Youth Empowerment Initiative as a pilot project. Project activities include training of youth in entrepreneurship skills. The graduating youth are not automatically supported to either start their business or join employment. The programme will need upscaling to cover more youth and ensure sustained link to the labour market.	B	<p>The programme is dynamic in nature incorporating new subprojects on a continual basis including the ongoing Agri Jobs 4 Youth Project. There are new partners including Conrad Hilton Foundation and Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) – suggesting great potential in enhancing the outcomes of the project including upscaling to cover more youth and ensure sustained link to the labour market.</p> <p>The Customised BEST (Basic employability skills training) model to aid TVET sector reforms through an adaptation of the model to support implementation of the Government's Competency Based Education and Training (CBET) framework.</p>
	Technical and Vocational training (TVET) program	C	TVET Act focuses on the supply side through training and aims to provide for a technical and vocational training system with the aim of expanding youth skills capacity for self-employment and employable skills. Key gap in the TVET Act of 2013, is the absence of a school to work transition strategy despite the provision for on-job training through attachment and internships.	B	The absence of a school-to-work transition strategy remains a significant gap. However, initiatives have been introduced to address this, including the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) Dual Training program launched in 2024, which aims to enhance skills alignment with industry demands for TVET graduates. Its scope is limited, and it targets 6,000 youth by 2026.
	Strategies to solve the challenge of education-employment mismatch	B	National Employment Authority Act 2016. Established The National Employment Authority (NEA) which provides a comprehensive institutional framework for youth employment. Since its establishment NEA has rolled out several interventions including: entering into bilateral agreements for overseas employment; online registration services for job seekers/interns, employers and recruitment agencies; and dissemination of information using handbooks, workshops and online channels. NEA has put in place portals for registration of job seekers such as nurses targeting overseas employment.	B	In addition to its institutional frameworks, the National Employment Authority (NEA) launched a nationwide recruitment program for overseas employment that is dignified and fulfilling. The program has gradually improved its reach and awareness, extending recruitment efforts beyond the capital to target a broader group of unemployed youth across Kenya including Machakos and Nakuru Counties in November and December 2024.

Public Service Internship Program (PSIP)	A	The policy has been in place since 2019. Eligible beneficiaries are required to be unemployed Kenyan graduates from recognized training institutions who have completed their degree courses within the last three years and have not been exposed to work experience related to their area of study and graduates of degree and diploma programs, for whom internship is a requirement for registration by their respective professional bodies. The program has increased the chances of tertiary education graduates placement into internships, the world of work and subsequently transition to gainful employment.	B	The policy has been in place since 2019. The program appointed 3,105 graduates in cohort VII (2024 December). The program continues to offer opportunities to build skills, understand government operations, and contribute meaningfully to national development. The difficulty in transitioning a significant share of its graduates into full time employment is an emerging challenge.
Kenya Youth Employment and Skills and (K-YES) Program – Skill training	A	Implemented between 2015 and 2020. The programme aimed at Accelerating Vocational Training Transformation Systems; Increasing Enterprise Development and Access to Finance (Cumulative) and increasing Employment Opportunities for Youth in Agribusiness. The program has aided youths gain both soft and technical skills and resulted in successful transition to employment. Over 300,000 youth have been trained and the program's target of placing 48,000 youths in meaningful employment was surpassed. ¹	NA	The program was concluded in 2020
Presidential Digital Talent Program (PDTP)	A	This ongoing program by the ICT Authority is a strategic intervention aimed at developing and preparing ICT graduates to take up employment opportunities. The program has provided participating youth opportunities to gain workplace experience and build professional networks in application development, graphic design, information security, network & infrastructure, and project management. The program, which has benefitted over 2,100 ICT graduates, provides crucial exposure to youth on not only training in digital skills but also application of training to the world of work.	A	The PDTP program is ongoing and 400 ICT interns were recruited in cohort IX for the period 2024/25. Its alumni provide good feedback on gaining workplace experience, building professional networks, and employment.

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1huQyrl7NeE>

Kenya Youth Development Policy (2019)	A	The main aim is to harness and optimize the strengths and opportunities that the youth present while addressing personal and structural barriers that affect their productivity. The key priority areas for the Policy include Addressing youth unemployment, underemployment, and inactivity; Building capacity of the youth to fully integrate them into the Country's technological transformation; Ensuring sustainable financing of youth programs among others. One of the milestones of the policy is the development of a coordination mechanism that has great potential in enhancing public sector interventions.	B	There is need to enhance the implementation of the policy across Ministries, Counties, Departments and Agencies.
The Kenya <i>Jua Kali</i> Voucher Program	C	The Kenya <i>Jua Kali</i> Voucher Program was aimed at making the training system work better (Johnson and Adams, 2004). It was initiated in 1997 as a pilot scheme under the Micro and Small Enterprise Training and Technology Project. The program evaluation results indicate its potential in enhancing the efficiency of training interventions as well as improving chances of employment of its beneficiaries. A key challenge that needed to be overcome was the need to transition to a market driven process rather than one funded by the public sector or donors.	NA	Program was concluded (no new development)
The Makueni Youth Apprenticeship Program (MYAP) Program	B	The program started in 2019 and is implemented by the County government. It is a youth empowerment approach through which youths seeking employment are attached to the county projects in different departments to gain knowledge, skills, and experience. It is a good complement of the national internship program and offers many youth a door through which they may transition into gainful employment. The program shall require more resources to cover more youth.	B	The Makueni Youth Apprenticeship Program (MYAP) is currently ongoing. The County Government recently announced a call for project interns under MYAP, with applications invited as of January 15, 2025. The program offers a four-month, non-renewable apprenticeship, attaching job seekers to county projects across various departments to gain practical knowledge, skills, and experience.

YEPs to promote youth entrepreneurship	Ajira Digital YEPs promoting empowerment / business for young people	A	The Ajira Digital Program is designed to empower young people to access digital work opportunities. The program provides skills training on digital marketing, transcription, data entry, virtual assistance, and content writing. The program has trained over 82,844 youth in both the universities, technical vocational education and training (TVETs) and Constituencies and established 42 Ajira Digital Clubs in Universities across the Country. Ajira's mission is the enable 1 million Kenyan youth earn decent wage from digital and digitally-enabled employment in meaningful work annually through training and demand linkages. This is important intervention that would continue to retain Kenya ranking as a top technology hub in Sub Saharan Africa. It opens doors and complements government efforts to enhance the growth in business process outsourcing and other digital work opportunities.	A	The Ajira Digital Program is currently active and empowers the youth to access digital and digitally-enabled employment. The program offers various resources, including training courses in transcription, online marketing, design, social media, and basic e-commerce.
	Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) – Enterprise development	B	To create enabling opportunities through enterprise development fund and focuses on the supply side through provision of business support and start-up loans for the youth. The fund is geared towards improving chances for entrepreneurs as well as offering skills relevant to the entrepreneurial journey. The funds targets youth groups and individuals who are trained on financial management, book-keeping, and business management before disbursement of funds. The Fund is tasked with promoting enterprise development as a strategy for increasing employment and youth participation in nation-building. Despite its challenges some of which include issues of accountability, the Fund is dotted with numerous examples of youth who have successfully established ongoing business ventures.	B	Recent debate has pointed out that the YEDF focuses on youth enterprises while there is an additional need to support startups. The fund has also been affected by governance challenges. The Fund received a budget cut of about more than a half in the latest budget allocations. This would suggest that other newer programs might take up its space with time.
	Hustler Fund	B	The Hustler Fund is relatively new and started in December 2022 hence cannot be evaluated. It is a priority for the Current Government.	B	The Hustler Fund is a priority for the Current Government and has several achievements including: providing previously underserved Kenyans with access to financial resources especially those excluded from formal financial systems. Its mandatory savings component has aided mobilization of savings.

National Youth Service (NYS)	A	The National Youth Services was established by the National Youth Service (NYS) Act; (1964) and amended more recently by the National Youth Service Act 2018. The revamped Service places more focus on technical skills acquisition by the youth. Beneficiaries can access training in TVET institutions across various disciplines. The NYS is particularly crucial for social mobility as its beneficiaries are from the low-income households who benefit from free training. Its graduates are valued for their skills and this offers them higher chances of getting employment (relative to untrained youth).	A	The National Youth Service continues to be relevant for skills training of youth and providing second chance opportunities for youth from low-income households.
Meru youth service	A	The Meru Youth Service (MYS) was formed through the Meru Youth Service Act of 2018. The main aim is to reduce youth poverty, unemployment and helplessness; promote participation of the youth in development programs including agriculture, health, forestry, urban development, and environmental rehabilitation; provide for the maintenance of a database of all trained Meru youth. It represents an innovative intervention by a devolved government that has bettered the labour market outcomes of many youth.	A	The Meru Youth Service (MYS) is actively operating and recent activities include involving youth in skills development initiatives including: plumbing, construction and first aid. The youth are also involved in enhancing access roads and in sports.
Uwezo Fund	B	Uwezo Fund (Public Finance Management Act 2014). It was established as an affirmative intervention to provide technical and financial support to the youth, women and persons with disability. The fund focuses on the supply side of the youth labour market through provision of funds to youth. The Fund has benefitted more than 1 million youth since its inception in 2014 with a repayment rate of over 40 percent.	B	The Fund continues to empower women, youth, and persons with disabilities by providing access to grants and interest-free loans, fostering entrepreneurship and economic growth at the grassroots level. Beyond financial support, the Uwezo Fund offers mentorship opportunities to beneficiaries. A key gap continues to be its relatively low cumulative repayment rate of 38.3 per cent in June 2023.

Women Enterprise Fund	A	The mandate of the Women Enterprise Fund is to provide accessible and affordable credit to support women start and/or expand business and capacity building. The Fund has been relatively successful in achieving its mandate, a feat aided by its relatively high repayment rate of about 95 percent. In 2023, the Fund was relaunched by the government and its revolving Fund increased from Kshs. 4.5 Billion (USD 35 million) to Kshs. 13.5 Billion (USD 104 million)	A	The Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) has demonstrated its sustainability as it enjoys a high repayment rate compared to similar government funds in Kenya. In the fiscal year 2022/2023, WEF achieved a repayment rate of 97.0 per cent under the Constituency Women Enterprise Scheme (CWES).
Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO)	B	AGPO was operationalized in the Public Procurement and Disposal Act 2005. The program has set aside 30 per cent of government procurement opportunities for enterprises owned by youth, women and persons living with disability. Not all eligible youth are supported to access the opportunities. There is also lack of awareness about the initiative among the youth at both national and county levels. Despite these challenges, the initiative offers good prospects for enhancing entrepreneurship and creation of dignified and fulfilling work among the youth.	B	The initiative offers good prospects for enhancing entrepreneurship and creation of meaningful work among the youth. Despite its challenges that include: capacity constraints of beneficiaries, lack of awareness, delayed payments, and inadequate coordination among government agencies,
Makueni county youth, men, women, persons with disabilities and table banking groups empowerment fund (<i>tetheka</i> Fund)	B	Makueni county Tetheka Fund established in 2016 which targets youth, men, women, persons with disabilities and table banking groups. Among other objectives the fund aims to: provide access to capital and financing facilities to micro and small enterprises owned by youth, men, women and persons with disabilities resident in the County. It is one of the two inaugural and innovative interventions by a devolved governments that has improved the labour market outcomes of many youth.	A	The fund is ongoing and more recent improvements include a process of digitization supported by a leading private sector firm in a PPP agreement

Policies to protect youth rights at work	Labour Law	B	The Labour Relations Act (2007). The Act governs the registration and relations of trade unions and employers' organizations and promotes employees' freedom of association. Employment Act (2007). The Act governs the relationship between employers and employees and provides for the minimum conditions of employment. The Laws have not been fully enforced.	B	The laws remain largely the same with the exception a few amendments.
	Legislation	B	The Labour Institutions Act (2007) governs the creation of labour institutions such as: the National Labour Board, which advises the cabinet secretary for labour on employment matters and other employment bodies, such as the Wages Council, which handle inspections and administration of labour relations. The Laws have not been fully enforced.	B	The law is still in force
Economy-wide enablement policies	Kenya Vision 2030 strategies	B	The Vision has guided government interventions since 2008. Major achievement is the enhanced focus on economywide interventions – such as infrastructure projects. Challenges include failure to implement all the envisaged plans owing mainly to limited resources and inefficiencies.	B	Vision 2030 continues to guide government interventions.
	Medium Term/Development plans I,II, III	B	The Youth Employment commitments in medium term plans (MTPs) have not been fully implemented due to limitation of funds. Even so, the plans have been crucial in ensuring macroeconomic stability with growth.	B	The government is currently implementing the Fourth MTP for the period 2023-2027 – which is the last 5 year plan for Vision 2030. The Plan targets to create 1.2 million dignified and fulfilling work opportunities per year.
	County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs)	B	The Youth Employment commitments in the County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs) have not been fully implemented due to limitation of funds. There is observed improvement in the development and implementation of the successive CIDPs which include the first generation (2013 to 2017), second generation (2018-2022) and the forthcoming third generation 2023-2027. The 3rd generation CIDPs will be much more comprehensive and will mainstream issues on the youth as well as emerging issues such as climate change.	B	An assessment of second-generation CIDPs under Phase I of the PEP Mastercard Foundation project identified significant gaps in youth intervention planning and implementation. Many planned initiatives were partially or not implemented due to weak monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) systems and unpredictable Treasury funding. Additionally, comprehensive, multifaceted programs were lacking. To enhance implementation, it is recommended to strengthen MEL systems by following CIDP guidelines and develop integrated programs that combine skills training, internships, and job placement services for greater impact on youth employment and empowerment.

Other employment/ labor market policies targeting youth	Direct job creation (e.g.: recruiting young people into the civil service or public works, etc.)	B	The Youth Employment commitments have not been fully implemented due to limitation of funds.	B	The situation remains largely unchanged, with youth employment commitments facing incomplete implementation due to financial constraints. While internship programs are ongoing and commendable, challenges persist in securing gainful and meaningful employment for graduates. These difficulties are attributed to stringent austerity measures within the public sector and an unfavorable macroeconomic environment that hampers private sector job creation.
	Kazi Mtaani Program	B	This was conceptualized as an extended public works project (EPWPs) aimed at utilizing labor intensive approaches to create not only employment but also sustainable public goods in the urban development sector. The program was designed as a short-term intervention to ameliorate the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on households. Although no rigorous evaluation results are available, anecdotal evidence suggests that the program was important in alleviating the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. There are concerns about implementation challenges including poor targeting outcomes and delayed execution or rollout.	NA	The program was concluded (no new information)
	National youth services	A	The National Youth Services Act of 1964 was recently amended (National Youth Service Act 2018) and more focus is now placed on technical skills acquisition by the youth. Since 2013 about 10,000 youth were recruited annually and in 2023 this shall be doubled to 20,000 youth. The Service is a key intervention resulting in upward social mobility of youth from low-income households.	A	The National Youth Service continues to be a key intervention resulting in upward social mobility of youth especially from low-income households.

<p>Placement services and job-search assistance</p>	<p>A</p>	<p>Placement services and job search assistance is supported by the National Employment Authority – under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. The Authority offers online placement services and connects job seekers, employers and employment agencies. The government also has labour officers across the counties – whose services may need to be enhanced e.g by enhancing financial resources at their disposal.</p>	<p>A</p>	<p>Placement services and job search assistance is supported by the National Employment Authority – and other agencies. Even so, there are numerous informal activities in this space that should be curtailed.</p>
<p>The Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project (KYEOP)</p>	<p>A</p>	<p>The Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project (KYEOP) is a five-year initiative that was started in 2016, targeting youth between 18-29 years with Form Four education level and below and has been focused on improving youth employability, support meaningful employment, improve labour market information systems and strengthen youth policy development. It is one of the few interventions which underwent rigorous evaluation and whose evaluation results show positive impact on creation of fulfilling and dignified work. The programme is currently being redesigned (by the State Department in charge of Youth) for a relaunch of its next phase.</p>	<p>A</p>	<p>The Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project (KYEOP) transitioned into a new program referred to as the National Youth Opportunities Towards Advancement (NYOTA) project aimed at empowering Kenyan youth. NYOTA is designed as a scale-up of KYEOP, building upon its successes and lessons learned to enhance youth employment and financial inclusion across the country. NYOTA's components include: training in social and technical skills, job placement support, supporting youth entrepreneurship and social enterprises, and promoting a culture of saving through incentives. NYOTA aims to reach a broader demographic, including refugees.</p>

Policies taking care of vulnerable groups	Migrant workers, refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)	A	Kenya is a signatory to UN ILO conventions that protect migrant workers, refugees and IDPs. Examples of ratified Conventions include: the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised) 1949 No. 97 and Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) 1975 No. 143. Kenya has also been the home of a large refugee population that has been successfully integrated into the local and international economies.	A	The Refugee Act of 2021 allows refugees in Kenya to work and start businesses. The law grants refugees the right to work, freedom of movement, and access to financial services.
	NEETs, Young people with disabilities, Rural workers, and other marginalized groups.	B	The AGPO program is in place and has set aside 30 per cent of government procurement opportunities for enterprises owned by youth, women and persons living with disability. The policies need to be implemented effectively for even better results.	B	The AGPO program is in place and now the The Kenya Social Protection Policy (KSPP) of 2023 and provides for shock-responsive social protection as well as complementary programs to promote human capital development, strengthen social welfare structures, and improve the capacity of social workers

Note: NA = data/scoring not available. **A** represents that the Policy is in place and operational; **B** represents that the Policy is in place but weakly operational; **C** represents that the Policy is in place but not operational; and **D** represents that the Policy does not exist.