

**The Participation of Non-Governmental Organisations in Local  
Development: The Case of Aga Khan Foundation Youth  
Empowerment Programme in Garissa County**

**By**

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# UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) who have continued to support and encourage me on this long journey in pursuit of knowledge. This dedication also extends to my parents and close friends who taught and reminded me of the value of education, commitment, and perseverance.

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## **ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYM LIST**

ABC	AgriBusiness Cluster
ADB	African Development Bank
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
CLARION	Centre for Law and Research International
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CVE	Counter Violence Extremism
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EDC	Education Development Centre
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GCYB	Garissa County Youth Bunge
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IYFNET	International Youth Foundation
KIDDP	Kenya-Italy Debt for Development Programme
KII	Key Informant Interview
KKV	Kazi Kwa Vijana
KYEEI	Kenya Youth Empowerment and Employment Initiative
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
TVET	Technical and Vocational and Education Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
VTC	Vocational Training Centre
WB	World Bank
WEF	Women Enterprise Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WOKIKE	WomanKind Kenya
YEDF	Youth Enterprise Development Fund
YEF	Youth Enterprise Fund
YEP	Youth Empowerment Programme

## **ABSTRACT**

*Since the rise of the Washington Consensus in the 1980s, non-governmental organisations have increased their role as development actors at national and international contexts, implementing development projects and creating awareness on various issues to create change. They have been lauded in literature as implementers of doing good. Nonetheless, full-scale analysis of their operations on local development is yet to be fully documented to be awarded such appellations. Hence, the premise of this study was to analyse non-governmental participation in local development taking a case study of an NGO in Kenya – the Aga Khan*

*Foundation – and its recent implementation of the Youth Empowerment Programme in north-eastern Kenya, specifically looking at Garissa county. This study was underpinned by the human development paradigm that opines that beneficiaries in a given development project should be involved in the process to not only build their capabilities to determine their outcomes but also ensure project success and continuity once a project comes to an end. In this context, youth participation can best contribute to solutions and planning which can be powerful in fostering opportunities for youth leadership and change. Methodologically, the study employed gender-sensitive and innovative approaches to include local perceptions and opinions to explore project outcomes and impact on the community. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were deployed in the form of a quantitative phone survey, various key informant interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholders during a programme evaluation in which the data collected was used for this study. Additionally, follow-up key informant interviews were used to gather more information long after project completion to also complement primary and secondary data. Study findings revealed that though the programme was successful in its implementation and had created the seeds for the promotion of local development in Garissa (through self-reliance and capacity building) more still needs to be done. This is to ensure that the foundations laid by the programme are sustainable in the decades to come.*

# Chapter One: Introduction

## 1. 1. Background of the study

The proliferation of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) particularly in the global south has seen NGOs as playing different roles in society. For instance, NGOs have taken up different responsibilities such as implementing grass-root development, promoting human rights and securities, and fighting environmental injustices. The increasing role of the NGO sector can be attributed to the Washington Consensus of the 1980s when international financial institutions such as the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the African Development Bank (ADB) sought to institute the concept of democracy, and the rolling back of the state as the new development orthodox for developing states (Mercer, 1999; and Hershey, 2013).

It is within this discourse that NGOs came to be championed as development practitioners to alleviate poverty particularly in marginalised and isolate communities. According to Fowler (1991), the WB's strategy for poverty reduction entails helping the poor to obtain the means and opportunities they need to become productive within a national policy framework that is supportive of their efforts. According to some, NGOs are the ideal institutions to assist in this endeavour. Yet, the ability of NGOs to fulfil the positive narrative has increasingly been questioned by scholars and development practitioners. According to Bratton (1989), the positive reputation that is accorded to NGOs may have risen by default taken to be the solution to government shortcomings rather than from a review of actual accomplishments. Moreover, there are debates over the cost-effectiveness, efficiency, and 'scaling-up' surrounding NGOs and their contribution to civil society.

According to Mercer (1999), research on NGO performance to facilitate social change have been limited. Other scholars contend that NGO ability to effect meaningful political and social change is crippled by internal political struggles and accommodating donor expectations (El-Gawhary, 2000). This can sometimes constrain NGOs to fulfil their mission. While others point out that in weak democratic contexts, NGOs are often highly politicised (Hearn, 2007). Additionally, while NGOs are essentially non-state actors, national governments set the context in which they must work and be effective. Mercer (1999) further argues that local governments are better placed to liaise with and coordinate local development and sustainable initiatives.

Kenya is an exemplary example of the debate that surrounds NGOs particularly with youth initiatives as the youth comprise a large number of the Kenyan population. In Kenya, the number of NGOs has increased over the decades and have continued to expand their scope of operations in different fields including economic inclusion for the youth. However, with a large number of NGO operations in the country – particularly in remote communities such as north-eastern Kenya - the country is still dubbed as developing. Additionally, some sectors remain underdeveloped and a large number of unemployed youth fill the Kenyan economy.

An example of an NGO that falls in this category is the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF). It is one of the organisations in Kenya that often acts in collaboration with local and international partners. Moreover, Aga Khan Foundation takes bold steps to invest in fragile and complex settings – particularly with Kenyan north-eastern youth. In their mission, they try to mobilise, investment for the construction, rehabilitation/expansion of infrastructure, set up sustainable financial institutions, build economically viable enterprises that provide essential goods and services, and create employment opportunities (Aga Khan Foundation, 2005). On the hand, youth empowerment programmes have been promoted globally and by the civil society as a remedy to the challenges that youth face. Globally, these programmes have been promoted by international agencies such as WB, the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU) among others. Youth empowerment programmes in whichever scale work in close partnership with governments as well as other specific local agencies to ensure that youth at the grass-root level can access these programmes or the opportunities they present (Agufana, 2015).

In Kenya, youth empowerment programmes have become a central focus in development as the country is currently facing the ‘youth bulge’ where the youth comprises more than 20% of the entire population (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Additionally, the Kenyan labour market is not able to absorb the increasing number of youth who graduate from training and learning institutions. It has been recorded that only 100,000 out of 500,000 graduates can be absorbed in the formal sector, while the informal sector absorbs a large proportion of those not able to acquire formal employment (Agufana, 2015; and Samuel Hall, 2017).

Hence, this study sought to analyse NGO participation in facilitating youth empowerment programmes specifically looking at the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) 2016-2019 Youth Empowerment Programme (YEP) in Garissa as a case study.

## 1.2. Statement of the problem

In Kenya, youth unemployment has been termed as a development issue that has led the Kenyan government and other NGOs to initiate youth empowerment programmes that aim at equipping the youth with necessary skills and resources to become self-reliant. Yet, youth unemployment is termed to be an urban problem (USAID, 2015). Majority of youth initiatives are not a central focus in isolated communities particularly in north-eastern Kenya where development discourses tend to focus on security initiatives. This is because of the porous border between Kenya and Somalia that are used by extremist groups for trafficking and recruiting efforts.

A look at Kenya provides a context for the various types of youth empowerment programmes that exist. Youth unemployment continues to be at the forefront of the country's development challenges particularly in areas that continue to be marginalised from the development process. In northern Kenya, counties such as Turkana, Lamu, Wajir, Garissa, and Mandera – to mention - have remained and continue to be geographically, economically, and politically isolated from the rest of the country. Located in Kenya's arid and semi-arid regions, these counties face multiple challenges, including harsh climates, shifting market systems, weak governance, violence and insecurity for a nomadic population that is often on the move (Samuel Hall, 2017).

Moreover, in northern Kenya, the employment problem is much more acute where as many as 66% of youth are currently unemployed or underemployed (Samuel Hall, 2017). In 2013, UNDP reported that youth unemployment rates tended to be higher than adult rates across all regions in Kenya. However, further findings revealed that youth unemployment was the highest in the north-eastern part of Kenya with unemployment rates ranging between 30% - 70% (Garissa, Turkana, Wajir, and Mandera County Governments, 2018).

While the introduction of free primary and secondary education provides, in theory, the basics of education for most of the youth in Kenya, the 8-4-4 system did not prepare youth adequately for the realities of the labour market (Samuel Hall, 2017). This is because the curriculum<sup>1</sup> was perceived to be outdated, inflexible, and not driven by the dynamic changes in local labour market demands. Some scholars argue that the skills that were being taught before the introduction of the new education system such as interpersonal and problem-solving skills, teamwork, and critical thinking were below standards (Simuyu, 2009; Murgor, 2013; and Ngiro, 2015). For the few Kenyans that do graduate from tertiary education, employers still

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<sup>1</sup> In 2017, the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) – 2-6-3-3 was introduced to replace the 8-4-4 system that had been introduced during the Moi regime.

question their level of preparedness for employment (Samuel Hall, 2017). While technical and vocational educational training (TVET) courses which serve as other educational avenues – which can link up well to the existing labour market – are perceived as less prestigious and suffer from outdated curricula and limited resources (Samuel Hall, 2017).

To fill in these gaps and given the harsh realities that the youth face in Kenya, international development actors such as USAID, the WB, and AKF in collaboration with the national government and local stakeholders have been working to empower the youth in different parts of Kenya. These collaborations are to enable the youth to be change-makers not only of their realities but the environment they live in. Notable youth empowerment programmes in Kenya are the Kenya Youth Empowerment Project (KYEP), The Kenya Youth Empowerment and Employment Initiative (KYEEI), the Kazi Kwa Vijana (KKV), the Yes Youth Can initiative and national development funds such as Uwezo Fund, the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF), and the Women Enterprise Fund. Yet, it is worth noting that most of these programmes have been mostly implemented in the urban or peri-urban parts of the country where it is presumed that youth unemployment rates are higher than other regions in the country (Agufuna, 2015; USAID, 2015; and Sikineyi, 2017). For instance, the KYEP was launched and implemented in Kisumu, Nairobi, and Mombasa, while the Yes Youth Can initiative was launched and implemented in Kirinyaga, Kiambu, Murang'a and Nyeri counties. Seldom, have been successfully documented in marginalised areas of Kenya. Moreover, few have been studied to understand the success and impact of these initiatives on the national development narrative. Sikineyi (2017) for example, narrated that the success of YEDF in the rural parts of Kenya had been minimal due to difficult group dynamics, limited awareness, and the number of funds allocated.

To date, studies on youth programmes have not been sufficiently conducted and/or documented to determine their effectiveness, impact, and sustainability in fostering sustainable development for the youth and the areas they reside. Furthermore, the plethora of NGOs that exist in Kenya, in most instances, are found in urban and populated regions. In scarcely populated and isolated counties such as Garissa, Turkana, Mandera, Wajir, Marsabit, and Lamu, NGOs are but a few who focus their operations on violence and insecurity, humanitarian disaster and relief which questions the scale of NGO operations and activities in these counties (Rift Valley Institute, 2013). Hence, this study looked into the nature of NGO youth empowerment programmes and if the Aga Khan Foundation's Youth Empowerment



Programme had contributed to overall local development in a marginalised county such as Garissa.

### **1.3. Research questions**

- What is the nature of past and current youth programmes in Garissa?
- What are the effects of AKF involvement in youth empowerment in Garissa?
- How has the AKF youth empowerment programme contributed to sustainable socio-economic development in Garissa?

### **1.4. Research objectives**

#### **1.4.1. Broad objective**

The broad objective of the research was to analyse how the AKF youth empowerment programme has contributed to local development in Garissa.

#### **1.4.2. Specific objectives**

The specific objectives of the study were:

- To establish the nature of current and past youth programmes in Garissa.
- To analyse the effectiveness of AKF activities in youth empowerment.
- To examine the AKF youth empowerment programme's contribution to socio-economic development in Garissa.

### **1.5. Justification of the study**

This research was therefore premised on the assumption that existing literature suggests that NGOs can create and foster local development programmes in marginalised communities that can bring about positive change. However, this study also questioned the quality of development work undertaken by NGOs such as AKF and the impact they have on the lives of their immediate beneficiaries particularly when it comes to fostering youth empowerment programmes in remote communities.

The purpose of the study was to, therefore, investigate the nature of youth programmes, how NGOs such as AKF hold up to the acclaims placed upon them, and how they implement youth empowerment initiatives in marginalised communities. Moreover, the study sought to investigate what are the factors that enable successful youth empowerment programmes. The Aga Khan Foundation's youth empowerment programme in Garissa was the case study for this

research. The study ultimately aimed at contributing and establishing pertinent information that may benefit development and governance practitioners, policymakers as well as researchers on the interplay between NGO activities and youth empowerment programming.

### **1.6. Study limitations**

The study site for this research was Garissa county. Remoteness and insecurity were two of the major challenges in conducting research and accessing the area which affected the design of the research. Illiteracy which was another inhibitor posed as a limitation for this research because a majority of Garissa residents have not attained formal education or progressed beyond primary education. This drawback hence created extra difficulties for the researcher who had to account for the language barrier. Since the study took on a mixed-methods approach - with the majority of the research being highly qualitative - the use of qualitative tools and small sample sizes do not have statistical relevance. Hence, the findings of this research are not statistically representative and cannot be used to make generalisations beyond the study site.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **2.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, a detailed examination of the secondary literature of the study will be delved into. This chapter looks at a detailed and succinct analysis of NGO services in Kenya looking at their geographical scope, areas of operation, and to some extent their performance. Additionally, a look at what entails youth empowerment and the various youth empowerment programmes that have been developed and how these have managed over time.

### **2.2. NGO growth in Kenya**

The growth of NGOs in Kenya can be traced back as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During British colonial rule in Kenya, the colonial administration laid the foundation for NGO growth. This is because there was an expansive network of faith-based NGOs with missionary activity being an integral part of these faith-based NGOs. From the outset, missionary organisations interacted with colonial governments (Spencer, 1989). Missionary organisations during this time were heavily involved in social welfare work organising themselves for instance in the construction of homes and schools, particularly in the hinterland, which the colonial government lacked the resources to do (Hershey, 2013).

According to Oyugi (2004), basic needs services such as health and education could only be found in urban centres. Moreover, during the colonial period, the state did not prioritise rural development but concentrated on enforcing law and order. However, this does not imply that there was the separation of the church from the state. In contrast, Spencer (1989) notes that both the Colonial Office and the government in Kenya attached importance to the reputation of mission societies, the compatibility of their religious teaching government, and the educational attainments of their missionaries. Even in the area of governance, there was a very close working relationship between the missionaries and the colonial administration. Apart from playing the pacification role on behalf of the administration, the missionaries played an important role in fostering the emergence and development of various welfare associations (Oyugi, 2004). This cooperation between missionaries and the colonial government set a precedent for public-private partnerships that continues to cultivate cooperation between state and non-state actors.

According to Hershey (2013), civic association became robust in Kenya during the end of the colonial rule with the concept of *Harambee*.<sup>2</sup> This concept was consolidated during President Jomo Kenyatta's tenure which encouraged cooperation among communities to provide servicing of public goods. However, organisational activities began to fade during President's Daniel Arap Moi's regime as civil society organisations were closely watched and often oppressed and it was not until the end of his 24-year rule that the NGO society in Kenya became robust and vibrant (Hershey, 2013).

### **2.3. A desk review of NGO services and operations in Kenya**

The importance of NGOs in serving the poor and promoting sustainable development especially in rural communities has been repeatedly emphasised in literature. This importance resonates from multiple perspectives. According to Hansmann (1980), the relevance of NGO poverty reduction strategies emerges from the failure of private market actors to service the needs of the poorer segments as they do not have the means to afford such services that will provide benefits to them. This is also compounded by the growing inefficiency of government entities to provide these needs (Hansmann, 1980). Thus, NGOs arise to fill this gap. For intellectual and government failure theorists, NGO establishments may arise as outlets for goodwill behaviour, dissemination of ideas, a means to promote conceived socially accepted values and norms of behaviour in addition to providing a close collection of services that are not provided for by the public sector (Weisbrod, 1977; Rose-Ackerman, 1996; and Steinberg, 2006).

Irrespective of which theoretical perspective, it is agreed by most scholars that NGOs play crucial roles in reducing poverty especially in developing countries. In Kenya for instance, where disparities exist in different regions and households, the impoverished have mainly been identified in rural areas. NGOs can therefore target the poor in these areas to create positive change. Although data on NGO activities is difficult to find, there exist numerous NGOs that often direct services and funds to the poor. However, not enough efforts have been made to explore NGO service delivery to the poor particularly in isolated communities not only in Kenya but in other developing countries.

In Kenya, there exists thousands of NGOs working (NGO Co-ordination Board, 2019) in various sectors and geographies in the country. According to Hearn (2007), in 1988, an approximate number of 267 NGOs were registered in Kenya and this sector grew to 2,511

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<sup>2</sup> Harambee is a Swahili term meaning 'let's pull together.'

registered NGOs by 2003. Currently, the number of registered NGOs is 11,262 (NGOs Coordination Board, 2019). A noted challenge is that it is difficult to classify registered NGOs, by size, composition or other measures, due to the limited data collected by the NGO Coordination Board. Hershey (2013) contends that it is also impossible to know for certain whether all these are legitimate, functioning NGOs, rather than “briefcase” or “flash drive” NGOs acting as money-making schemes. Nevertheless, it is the role of the NGO Coordination Board both to register and verify the legitimacy of these organizations.

In Kenya, NGOs are sometimes accorded the task of alleviating localised problems as dictated by their mandates such as tackling an economic and societal problem, e.g. health, education, or youth unemployment. Areas of operation for NGOs are widespread. From the NGO Coordination Board, most organisations have indicated more than one area of functional operation, which means a given functional area can be mentioned by several organisations if not at all.

At a glance the top 10 sectors that NGOs in Kenya are involved in are; Health, HIV/AIDs, Education, Relief/Disaster management, Children, Population and Reproductive Health, Agriculture, Refugee relief, Environment, and Water and Sanitation (Government of Kenya, 2019). NGO activities that focus on the youth was ranked 13 out of 37 service sectors in 2019, and this sector experienced a decline in investment in NGO activities. What emerges from the findings is that health and education appear to be the most important functional areas for activities. Economic inclusion which is usually a primary area of activity was not mentioned in the list. An interesting finding as well was that most preferred areas of operation for NGO activities were Nairobi, Kiambu, Kisumu, Nakuru, and Kajiado (Government of Kenya, 2019).

Interestingly, even in remote areas such as north-east Kenya that face exacerbating development challenges across the board, NGO activities are predominantly centred on food security, livestock farming, social protection, and health despite the counties facing huge unemployment rates of over 60% (Turkana and Mandera County Governments, 2018). In Garissa, for instance, the unemployment narrative still comes into play. According to the Garissa County Integrated Development Plan (2018-2022), there is a disproportionate employment rate between males and females with the former recording a rate of 62.2% while the latter group records an employment rate of 37.8%. Most are employed by national and county governments, donor agencies, and business organisations. It is also stated in the report that a big number of the county population engage in informal employment such as *jua kali*, *mira* selling, hawking, and livestock selling (Garissa County Government, 2018-2022). NGO

presence, in Garissa, is exacerbated by the presence of the Dadaab refugee camp with most development actors participating in several sectors such as education, agriculture, health and nutrition, livestock, and social protection schemes (Garissa County Government, 2018-2022). Youth empowerment in Garissa can also be termed as a non-functional area of activity, as there exists no youth empowerment centre and uptake of national funds in the overall county is inadequate and low (Garissa County Government, 2018-2022). This is because the national development funds are perceived not to be compliant with *Sharia* law (Garissa County Government, 2018-2022).

Turning a look at NGO areas of operation, immediately noticeable is the dominance of work that is being carried out in the HIV/AIDS and health sector (Radley, 2008; and NGO Co-ordination Board, 2019). According to Radley (2008) when these two sectors are combined, they account for 30% of all NGO activity. Moreover, he noted that most of these programs, 12 to be exact, at the time were being implemented in the former Central province where the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate was three times lower than in the former Nyanza province where only 3 programmes were being implemented at the time. Similarly, whilst Rift Valley is home to almost one-quarter of Kenya's population and at the time had an HIV/AIDS prevalence comparable to the national average, the level of NGO activity in the area was limited to just three HIV/AIDS-related programmes (Radley, 2008). Likewise, studies conducted by Wamai (2004); Wang'ombe et al., (1998); and Berman et al., (1995), give extensive accounts of NGOs working in the health sector and playing a major role in providing health services to Kenyans. In 2004, a recorded figure of 20% was captured of NGOs running health facilities in the country while some providing the best services in some of the regions with a continued increase in the utilisation of NGO health facilities (Wamai, 2004).

Outside of associated health-related programmes, agricultural and livelihood activities are seldom in a country such as Kenya. There are only a handful of agricultural programmes being prioritised and implemented by major NGOs currently active in Kenya (only 6% of NGO operations are in the sector), even though more than half of the Kenyan population live in rural areas and the rural farming community constitutes 87% of all poor households (Kenya Agricultural Productivity Board, 2007; and NGO Co-ordination Board, 2019). A significant proportion of this work appears to be focused on supporting livelihoods such as supplying emergency and relief support (NGO Co-ordination Board, 2019). Yet, according to Radley (2008), creating pathways out of poverty through a focus in rural livelihood strategies appears to be lacking.

After the post-election violence in 2007, Kamungi and Klopp (2007) noted that NGO activity in this sector was also lacking despite the mass of over 400,000 displaced people. According to them, they argued that the reason for this was because NGOs and donors preferred to focus on more visible and serious conflict situations in Kenya and her neighbouring countries; Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda (Kamungi and Klopp, 2007). Also, for a long time now, gender programmes have been mainstreamed in NGO activities; where NGOs have been trying to improve gender relations and imbalances as it has become an international issue of concern (Radley, 2008).

This showcases that investment in economic inclusion and youth sectors has been on the decline suggesting that forms of participation and grass-root action commended in NGO literature is not strongly evident. For others such as Vivian (1994), she argues that it is an over expectation to place the burden of coming up with innovative ideas to development challenges on NGOs that have eluded those with resources and power. This compounds to the debate as to whether NGOs can create and foster youth empowerment initiatives in marginalised communities or even create innovative and better strategies that lead to inclusive development at the community level.

According to Gary (1996) and Mercer (1999), the disproportionate distribution of NGOs points to a new pattern of accumulation whereby elites in the face of diminishing state resources are finding new avenues for accumulation in the NGO sector. Others such as Zaidi (1999) contend that NGOs do not have the expertise, mandate, interest or political power to address the real determinants of poverty and inequality in the world today.

Turning a look at NGO locations, myriads of studies have found that NGOs do not always follow the principle of their mission statements, that is, distribution of services and goods to those most isolated in their communities. On the contrary, NGOs are not always located where the need is greatest. In Bangladesh, for example, Gauri and Galef (2005), reported that NGO concentration was lowest in the poorest of sub-districts. Locally, Radley (2008) noted that the former Central province, received the greatest NGO attention while having the lowest poverty rate out of all the other regions. Meanwhile, former North-eastern and Coast Provinces, home to the highest poverty rates in the country, were seemingly receiving far less attention than other areas. Meanwhile, there is also strong evidence from literature that supports the hypothesis that NGOs are located where the need is greatest. For instance, Brass (2012), found that the number of NGOs at the district level in Kenya is correlated with the objective need for

health services and infrastructure in that area. Nevertheless, this hypothesis is subject to some factors such as political environment, convenience, and donor interests.

Although NGOs in Kenya have grounded root in the development context and have found a niche in their areas of operation, practical and critical questions are increasingly being asked of their performance and accountability, particularly in promoting socio-economic development in marginalised areas. It is also clear that NGOs in Kenya have scaled back their operations on issues of importance to the country such as agriculture, forced displacement, and economic inclusion, particularly in remote communities. From so far, there is a clear gap between what NGOs espouse and what is done in practice. Coverage on the work done by NGOs is infinite within literature but there is far less systemic research on the outcomes of the programmes implemented, if so, NGO accountability has been shown to reflect ‘upwards,’ that is, to donors, trustees, and government regulators (Edwards and Hulme, 1996).

According to Jonas and Nji (1999), for government and NGOs to be efficient in local development programming directly targeting and servicing the very poor has proven to be pivotal in reaching poverty reduction strategies. For NGOs, this will ensure that programmes will be successful as they target their limited resources to the very poor. This approach can be taken in two ways; administrative, or self-targeting. Administrative targeting refers to targeting approaches that specifically encourage active participation of one desired group while discouraging others (Jonas and Nji, 1999). While self-targeting puts service delivery at the disposal of all, however, in some cases, services are packaged in a way that is unappealing to specific groups (Jonas and Nji, 1999). There have been attempts to assess targeting levels by NGO programmes in developing countries and even in Kenya. For instance, Irungu and Zeller (2002) assessed the targeting efficiency of child protection programmes carried out by two Kenyan based NGOs. They reported that NGO services benefitted more of the less poor compared to the very poor households. Households with lower social capital benefitted less than those with higher social capital. Nevertheless, the programmes were lauded to have succeeded geographically by targeting communities with higher poverty incidences. The same findings were replicated by Azibo et al., (2015).

When analysing an NGO in rural Cameroon, they (Azibo et al., 2015) confirmed that NGOs can generally be efficient in servicing the rural poor. This is because most beneficiaries were well off compared to their non-beneficiary counterparts suggesting an unsatisfactory servicing of the very poor by the NGO (Azibo et al., 2015). They concluded that because NGO service delivery is donor-driven, commercialisation can prove to be an option to improve the targeting



efficacy of such organisations. By assessing poverty before service delivery, it can increase the number of the of those who seek to benefit from NGO services (Azibo et al., 2015).

#### **2.4. NGO interventions in Garissa**

In 2004, Oyugi (2004) cited that the frequency of NGO operations in north-eastern Kenya was low with the former Rift Valley Province having the highest number of NGO development operations. In his analysis of NGO operations in Kenya, he stated that activities are usually functionally specific and target a specific group of people in society while some can target specific geographical areas (Oyugi, 2004). In Garissa, the county has registered 70 NGOs, with humanitarian intervention as an important function due to the Dadaab camp refugee presence that has brought an influx of humanitarian NGOs based within the environs of the refugee camp (Garissa County Government, 2018).

According to the Garissa County Integrated Development Plan (2018-2022), there is a strong presence of UN agencies such as the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and UNICEF with a myriad of international NGOs such as GIZ, CARE International, VSF Belgium, Mercy USA to mention. Humanitarian activities mainly involve the provision of relief food and access to livelihood strategies. Other NGO operational activities include health, education, and social protection schemes (Garissa County Government, 2018).

Pastoral activities dominate the Garissa economy and NGOs in the area have set up activities to develop agroforestry and livestock development and support services to increase economic opportunities and livelihoods for Garissa residents, particularly among the youth. NGOs that have been at the forefront of these endeavours include USAID and Education Development Centre (EDC) with the G-Youth project which was implemented from 2010 to 2012. The impact of the project had been recorded to have reached 2,500 beneficiaries who have received various training on work readiness, entrepreneurship, and leadership skills. Another youth empowerment project that was implemented by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the government of Japan in 2012 was the Youth Employment for Sustainable Development which aimed to support youth-owned micro-enterprises by training them to participate in road maintenance with the use of *donou* technology. According to Ismail (2018), this project did not achieve scale because it was short and did not make provision for follow-up support which was needed to establish sustainable road maintenance enterprises.

Even with some efforts having been made to empower the youth, youth unemployment continues to be a persistent challenge because it is noted that not only are youth empowerment centres non-existent in the county, and uptake of national development funds are low because they are non-*Sharia* compliant, but there are also disconnected realities between Garissa youth and economic demands and opportunities (Garissa County Integrated Development Plan, 2018-2022; EcoVentures International, 2010; and Ismail, 2018). For instance, the youth perceive ventures into the agroforestry and livestock sectors as last resorts and associate these sectors as yielding low returns (EcoVentures International, 2010; Ismail 2018).

Other scholars such as Obonyo (2016) contend that NGO youth empowerment projects based on skills training do not always pay attention to the following areas such as labour market linkages, training content and delivery, training materials and follow-up which are key ingredients to effective skills training. Others such as Ismail (2018) note that the effectiveness of youth empowerment programmes is affected by the following factors:

- Most youth empowerment programmes tackle one single issue yet the youth in these areas face other challenges related to ethnicity and region;
- There is a lack of coordination between similar initiatives in these areas and therefore little opportunities for synergies – hence the creation of duplicate programmes that create competing strategies to reach the youth;
- Youth in these programmes who are given grants sometimes lack awareness as they may be in fact loans that need to be repaid;
- Shortage of competent trainers to impart the youth with the necessary skills.

Although there may be NGO participation in youth empowerment, they may not achieve a large scale due to the factors mentioned above. Additionally, NGO activities in Garissa have not been fully documented to show the impact of their presence within local communities as the county continues to be isolated from the development narrative and faces challenges across the board.

## **2.5. Youth empowerment**

Youth empowerment, according to Vavrus and Fletcher (2006), is defined as an attitudinal, structural, and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability, authority, and agency to make decisions and implement change in their own lives, the lives of other people, including youth and adults. Empowerment can be linked to economic freedom whereby through having

the means to earn a living it can expand one's choices and actions to shape's one life. While for Mecha (2017), youth empowerment is defined as the means of creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their behalf, and terms, rather than at the direction of others. Hence, it may be inferred from the definitions given that youth disempowerment is not having the power, assets, and means to influence one's choices. Unemployment thus becomes a factor that can hinder the youth in gaining influence over events and outcomes of importance over factors in their environment (Nnadi et al., 2012).

According to Mecha (2017) and Lipton (2000), youth empowerment can take different forms or interventions through which the youth can realise their needs and interests to be able to make informed decisions. They state that development outcomes must be anchored on these interventions that can define positive outcomes of healthy youth (Mecha, 2017; and Lipton, 2000). The youth can realise empowerment through employment, skill development, leadership, collaboration, task accomplishment, project ownership, creation of a meaningful place, levels of responsibility, and accountability, entrepreneurship, training, education and youth-adult relationship. However, in most cases, youth empowerment programmes are usually taken as interventions through skill development, education, entrepreneurship, employment, and leadership that can contribute to local development. Some are discussed in the next sections.

### **2.5.1. Youth empowerment through employment and skills development**

Youth unemployment has become a serious challenge not only in Kenya but in other developing countries as more youth over the next years will continue to enter the economy in high numbers. This is because of limited formal employment opportunities to cater to all. For example, in 2006, Kenya statistics indicated that over 2 million youth were unemployed and 75,000 join this lot from educational institutions (Government of Kenya, 2006). This will continue to create a class problem if it is not addressed (Government of Kenya, 2006). Others opine that unemployment is much more acute in cities particularly among females (Zepeda et al., 2013). According to Madu and Muhingi (2017), the country's unemployment is exacerbated by poverty, lack of essential/inappropriate facilities and technology. This in turn will force a plethora of youth to drop out or not acquire the appropriate skills to gain employment or prepare them for the challenging formal and informal labour markets.

With this as a rising challenge not only for the youth but also for other demographics, key policies, mostly championed by the government with support from donors and/or NGOs have

been initiated aiming at employment creation focusing particularly on the youth. Initiatives in this regard are the Sector Plan for Labour, Youth and Human Resource Development Sector (2008–2012) and the Kazi Kwa Vijana (KKV) programme which aimed at annually employing between 200,000 and 300,000 young people in rural and urban areas in labour-intensive public works projects that are implemented by different government ministries (Zepeda et al., 2013). The underlying intervention in all these programmes was skills development.

Madu and Muhingi (2017) state that skills development has become the most common youth employment intervention in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is because youth are equipped with technical and general employability skills and basic competencies and qualifications that are not always acquired through formal education. With this intervention becoming an important part to play in improving economic prospects for the youth, many actors, aside from the government, are recognising and utilising skills development as part of their youth empowerment programmes. Dubbed as a long-term solution to unemployment, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in 2009, embarked on an ambitious programme of revamping the Kenyan polytechnics. For instance, equipping polytechnics with necessary facilities, equipment, and instructors with the support of development partners such as Kenya Italy Debt for Development Program (KIDDP).

### **2.5.2. Youth empowerment through entrepreneurship, training, and education**

Youth participation is not only perceived to be increased participation for the youth to be able to influence decisions but also as youth gaining competence through acquired skills and increase in incomes (Mecha, 2017). Another opportunity that exists for youth empowerment is creating referral systems for the youth. Madu and Muhingi (2017) note that NGOs involved in youth initiatives centre their activities on training, mentoring, and networking and providing seed capital, yet unemployment continues to be a challenge that threatens socio-economic progress. Other employment/empowerment interventions are the provision of basic social amenities, the creation of credit and loan schemes, and entrepreneurship activities to make the youth vibrant and productive (Nnadi et al., 2012). Access to finance, for instance, which has been recognised as a catalyst for youth empowerment and a powerful tool for self-empowerment can aid the youth to increase income, build viable businesses, and reduce their vulnerability to external shocks as they have the means to become economic agents of change (Bashir, 2008).

The Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) which had been created during Kibaki's tenure to foster youth empowerment according to some scholars has failed to do so. Susan (2012) asserted that the initiative which was supposed to improve youth participation in socio-economic development has been a failing mandate. This is because the programme (since inception) was dogged by technical, structural, and governance challenges. Additionally, the youth did not seem to be benefitting from it as banks and financial intermediaries exploited interests to lend to their clients (Susan, 2012). She further noted that the procedures and interest charged for accessing the youth fund remain the two biggest hurdles to realising the success of the YEDF in Kenya (Susan, 2012). Madu and Muhingi (2017) also stated that the youth owing to the lack of collateral and business experience are high risky lenders. Hence, this creates an opportunity for the private sector and NGOs to fill the gap as they can play important roles in not only training the youth but also funding youth activities (Madu and Muhingi, 2017).

Furthermore, literature addressing disadvantaged urban youth exists at many levels; the individual, the county, and the city levels are prominent among them (Deschenes et al., 2006). Most government services are channelled to the urban youth who are usually stated to be at higher numbers compared to their rural counterparts. According to Mecha (2017), the Kenyan government has initiated and supported youth programmes from the inception of the National Youth Service in 1964 to date. Efforts to initiate youth development programmes have been made in other subsequent policy documents, such as Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1992 on Small Scale and Jua Kali Enterprises, 1997-2001, Development Plan and the National Poverty Eradication Plan 1999-2015 among others. While there exist other youth programmes, they are social and recreational in nature and are urban-based. According to Mecha (2017), problems faced by Kenyan youth are also exacerbated by the fact that there is no comprehensive youth policy to provide a blueprint for the youth.

As seen from above, the organisational scope of NGOs working in economic inclusion is not widely documented with only a few studies have been done. While those that have, indicate that NGO programmes working on economic inclusion with a focus on youth are centred on urban spaces. Moreover, although public involvement in this area is documented, youth empowerment initiatives are not widely monitored and evaluated implying that NGOs, particularly in the Kenyan context, are provided with a unique opportunity to act on an issue that is unchartered. This is because by investing in youth it provides opportunities for communities to realise development as people become active agents in the social and economic spheres.

### **2.5.3. Youth empowerment through participatory methods**

According to Nari and Mangala (2017), youth are the backbone of society and the development of a country is rooted in liberty and empowerment of the youth. The youth face myriads of problems particularly in developing societies such as Kenya. Hence, key areas of youth development and empowerment are education, health, civic, and political participation (Nari and Mangala, 2017). In youth empowerment initiatives, youth empowerment has become synonymous to participation approaches. According to Nari and Mangala (2017) and other scholars such as Francis (1993), and Narayan (2002), argued that empowerment can be achieved through participatory methods as it is better than the trickle-down approach to development.

According to Narayan (2002), he viewed that grass-root NGOs demand the establishment of participatory institutions especially for those excluded in the community. This is because people in fragmented societies are strengthened to become better and active community participants in addition to having the capacity to make their own decisions. Nari and Mangala (2017) revealed in their study – based in rural India - that NGO programmes have a positive influence on youth empowerment as the youth participate in various skill training programmes. However, more needs to be done to educate and create awareness among local community members about NGO development programmes in addition to providing training to NGO staff and volunteers (Nari and Mangala, 2017). Over the years, the role of NGOs in empowerment has received great attention because NGOs contest that they are better equipped to engage communities to participate rather than government actors. Nyangabyaki et al., (2004) stated that grass-root NGOs in Uganda have a long history of encouraging community participation as they rely on volunteers from the community. Alexander (1998) also opined that community participation is ‘inherently good’ as it helps promote a sense of ownership and control among the community.

For other scholars such as Khwaja (2004), and Eicher and Staatz (1998) they argued that youth empowerment has become synonymous to participation because the concept has achieved its status and reputation based on the attractive of the ideas underpinning the approach without providing much evidence. Eicher and Staatz (1998) went as far to state that participation in development as a tool of empowerment has been lauded to the extent that NGOs use it as a marketing approach to acquire international funds from international donors. Ngujiri (1998) articulates that despite the increase in NGO activities in development, that is participatory methodologies, it continues to be a challenge in many societies.

#### 2.5.4. Opportunities for NGOs?

According to Deschenes et al., (2006), NGOs play important roles in the community particularly for those who reside and grow up in marginalised and impoverished settings. This is because, with the flight of the market and the shortfall of the government in providing services, NGOs not only have the opportunity to provide resources to support positive development but also be a proactive change agent. Deschenes et al., (2006) further stated that in many instances NGOs function as the resource of last resort for youth. For example, NGOs, particularly in the United States, have stepped in to support disadvantaged youth. These NGOs are extraordinarily diverse, representing different missions, programmes, structures, funding sources, financial capacity, and political affiliation (Deschenes et al., 2006). This is because NGOs have one of the greatest strengths which is its connection to a place— to the culture and norms of a community which can facilitate the capacity of change in a community (Deschenes et al, 2006).

Nevertheless, according to Deschenes et al., (2006), some factors can hinder successful NGO participation or engagement in youth initiatives, for instance, **funding**. Funding can hinder NGO activity in communities. The level, nature, and source of funding can determine the types and quality of activities NGOs can pursue, their stability, and their reach. In a nutshell, NGOs in most instances get their funds from external actors who may impose requirements that strongly influence the work of NGOs. Additionally, donors have timelines or priorities that do not necessarily match local needs, and the pressure to secure funding often forces NGOs to change their work (Deschenes et al., 2006). This situation is also replicated in Kenya. According to Kameri-Mbote (2002), Kenyan NGOs are extremely dependent on northern NGOs for support largely because of competition for funds which may lead to duplication of roles as different NGOs strategically place themselves to receive resources from their northern allies which may result in piecemeal programming.

Another factor is the **external environment** in which NGOs operate. These may include community ecology and the legal environment. External factors influencing NGOs serving the communities they function in operate in complex ways. For instance, in a community where environmental degradation is prevalent, NGOs may devote their time in the community trying to solve this issue. Additionally, the legal/political environment in which NGOs operate in may also influence NGO activities. For example, NGOs in Kenya that devote their time to environmental governance have been known to face hostilities from the government. Notable examples such as efforts to save and preserve Karura Forest by environmental NGOs have been

met with violent confrontations by developers. While NGOs that openly criticise government activities have also faced antagonisms. For example, the case of the deregistration of the Centre for Law and Research International (CLARION) on the claims that the NGO had violated its terms of registration, and had published material that damaged the image and credibility of the Government of Kenya (Kameri-Mbote, 2002).

For other NGOs, the **political environment** they operate in also comes into play. According to Sheikh (2014), for countries and areas that experience political instability, this can also affect the level of NGO participation and activity in an area. According to the Aid Worker Security Database (2019), the upward trend of security attacks against aid workers is not on the decline. In 2017, numbers had increased to 313 and over 400 in 2018, and these numbers are recorded to be happening in some of the most volatile contexts; South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Syria, Afghanistan, and Central African Republic (Stoddard et al., 2019). With an unstable political environment, NGO operations can often be scaled down or back which further worsens the situations of those living in these contexts affecting both the quality and quantity of assistance beneficiaries receive (Sheikh, 2014). Nevertheless, there are no robust means of assessing claims that access is declining in areas as some NGOs may maintain or increase their presence in response to the withdrawal of other agencies (Sheikh, 2014).

**Internal organisation** may also play as another factor that may limit the scale of NGO operations. For instance, mission, age, size, and location may influence an organisation's ability to execute some or all the roles outlined above. According to Deschenes et al., (2006), NGO capacity is always traced as the number one challenge particularly when working in remote and challenging contexts as they may chronically face low human capital and infrastructure. NGOs located in poor settings may find it difficult to carry out their missions and goals because they may have a hard time attracting and retaining qualified staff – either because of low pay and/or because of the perceived danger of working in the setting. This results in high staff turnover and staff members who often lack the skills or background necessary to maintain programme quality. Deschenes et al., (2006) contend that staff knowledge and expertise are frequently crucial, not only in providing high-quality programming for young people but also in building a healthy relationship with the external environment and managing the funding domain.

The factors mentioned above can both enable and constrain NGO work not only with youth but other community profiles in poor populations. These factors are not only mutually exclusive but also complex, presenting tensions and trade-offs that NGOs must work through and with



to aid and assist people effectively in addition to helping them navigate the institutional gaps they face when growing up in disadvantaged communities (Deschenes et al., 2006).

### **2.5.5. Impact of past NGO development programmes**

Currently, there is little to judge NGO contribution to youth empowerment programmes let alone rural development. According to (Kipkemoi, 2013), there are few NGOs who have a portfolio of representative evaluations of past projects which they reveal to the public. He further stated where assessments have been carried out, especially using external evaluators, these have commonly focused on 'problem' projects, constituting an unrepresentative sample which, understandably, NGOs have not wished to distribute widely. This is attributed to the fact that there is uncertainty on how to evaluate developmental impact combined with the high costs of undertaking such endeavours which may sometimes exceed the cost of the programme implemented.

Nevertheless, the focus has shifted slightly where donors want to see accountability as to how funds are being used. According to Kipkemoi (2013) between 1988 and 1995, at least 11 official donors, initiated assessments of the impact of NGO development activities part-funded by them. These include Australia, Canada, the European Union, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. A notable absence from this list is the United States which accounts for nearly 50% of total OECD donor aid to NGOs. Seemingly, a two-tiered approach at the beginning was used as to how to evaluate development programmes (Kipkemoi, 2013). First, they assessed against the specific objectives for which the donor had provided the funds. For example, if a project was to construct a school, had the school been built. Second, they usually assessed also with a wider set of criteria, not least to try to judge how the lives of the beneficiaries have been helped (Kipkemoi, 2013). This approach was narrow as NGOs would conclude that the vast majority of projects did succeed in achieving their narrower and immediate objectives. However, from a broader perspective in terms of reach, community participation, flexibility, innovation, sustainability, and efficiency, most NGO projects would not be able to measure up (Kipkemoi, 2013).

### **2.6. Youth empowerment programmes in Kenya**

Turning a look to youth empowerment programmes, NGOs have been working in close partnership with governments as well as specific local agencies to ensure that youth at the grass-root level can access these programmes (Agufuna, 2015). International youth

empowerment programmes include The Commonwealth Youth Programme, Global Youth Empowerment Programme, and USAID Youth Programmes. The main aim of these initiatives is to offer different types of skills to the youth including life skills, mentoring services, and referrals for the youth to highlight their strengths (Agufuna, 2015).

In Africa, USAID youth programmes include Youth Map Africa, The Rwanda Youth Programme, and Yes Youth Can to mention (USAID, 2015). The International Youth Foundation (IYFNET) had a regional youth empowerment programme that covered Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tanzania that was implemented for three years (2007 - 2010) (IYFNET, 2015). In Kenya, there are many examples of youth empowerment programmes (some have been highlighted) which are supported by government and local agencies, including international organisations in collaboration with government and local institutions such as The Kenya Youth Empowerment and Employment Initiative (KYEEI), Kazi Kwa Vijana (KKV), and the Yes Youth Can initiative.

It is worth mentioning that these programmes are rarely assessed. For instance, the government cannot undertake comprehensive monitoring and evaluative processes which can assist actors in learning about the do's and don'ts when implementing youth programmes. Furthermore, research on completed youth empowerment programmes is lacking even more so in remote communities where these initiatives are not as prevalent. This is because as mentioned current NGOs in Kenya do not prioritise economic inclusion for the youth as an area of operation, and there is inadequate literature on the performance of past youth empowerment programmes.

As the youth are continually marginalised from the economic and political sphere, international development agencies have turned to local community-based organisations as their partners of choice to maximise youth voices and promoting socioeconomic inclusion. NGO/Civil Society Organisation (CSO) networks may also enhance the power and influence of youth voices in advocating for policies and improving governance. Thus, an enabling environment, such as a community-based network for youth empowerment may be particularly powerful in fostering opportunities for youth leadership and effective targeting of young people for interventions to reap these benefits.

However, with myriads of YEPs in Kenya that are spearheaded by foreign agencies, and availability of national development funds, these have not made a significant impact at the national scale. Furthermore, at the local level, few documentaries have been made on the impact and sustainability that these have had not only on beneficiaries they strive to aid, that is

the youth, but other local stakeholders such as the market and the community at large. The primary implementer for most of these YEPs has been the Kenyan government in consortium with other partners. Some scholars have stated that the successful implementation of YEPs has been marred with challenges such as impunity and donor interests (Agufuna, 2015). Additionally, the majority of these YEPs tend to focus on urban youth where urban unemployment rates are stated to be higher than in rural areas. Some studies have also been made to measure efficiency and impact of these programmes at the national level but very few have looked at YEPs that are implemented by NGOs particularly those that have been implemented in marginalised communities, and the impact they have not only on the beneficiaries but also other project stakeholders such as community members, and market actors to foster sustainable local development.

## **2.7. Aga Khan Foundation and youth empowerment**

Aga Khan Foundation, a non-governmental organisation, that aims to empower those marginalised from economic, political, and social spaces is an organised and structured institution that aims to create social change in the alienated communities they operate in. In operation for the past 40 years in different areas around the world (mostly in developing communities), Aga Khan Foundation has been working to strengthen civil society organisations (CSOs) in Kenya and the broader East Africa community and is making notable gains in strengthening linkages between governments and the private sector to better serve youth populations (Aga Khan Foundation, 2014). However, an overview of the organisation's thematic areas reveals that local development is one of the primary activities that the organisation is involved in. Other key thematic areas are health, education, civil society, and the environment (Aga Khan Foundation, 2014).

AKF's programmes historically focus on marginalised communities especially those that are resource-poor, degraded, and isolated. AKF's main objective in rural development is to empower people in these remote communities to have access to key services and opportunities with typical common elements in their programmes being; linking individuals to rural savings and credit, natural resource management, infrastructure development, increased agricultural productivity and human skills development, with a central focus on community-based participation and decision-making (The Aga Khan Foundation, 2014).

AKF's rural development strategy in East Africa include mobilising communities through the establishment and strengthening of village organisations; constructing or improving

infrastructure such as roads and dams; savings and credit programmes in support of income generation; and technical support for a range of self-help activities, such as agricultural production, natural resources management, livestock production, and small business schemes (The Aga Khan Foundation, 2005). In Kenya, their earliest work can be traced back to 1997 where they were implementing a coastal rural support programme to increase food security and improve livelihoods. This resulted in the construction of infrastructures such as dams, and village plots to improve food production as well as the development of 61 village-level development plans, and capacity building of 400 community persons (Aga Khan Foundation, 2005).

Even though Aga Khan Foundation has been implementing rural development programmes for some time now, detailed analysis and reporting of the NGO's role in rural development programming are yet to be documented. Most recently they implemented a rural development programme that focused on marginalised youth in northern Kenya. In pursuit of increasing human potential was the three-year Youth Empowerment Programme (YEP) implemented in Northern Kenya from 2016 to 2019. As it is alleged that African governments have fallen short of providing socio-economic programming, relief and development assistance in the remotest regions, governments share these responsibilities with non-state actors. Thus, the AKF YEP was created to fill in this gap. The main objective of the project was to harness the theoretical and practical advantages of bottom-up, community-driven networks to enable greater employment and income generation opportunities for northern Kenyan youth.

## **2.8. Theoretical framework**

The human development paradigm which is underpinned by participatory and capability approaches that were first espoused by Paul Freire and Amartya Sen respectively (Freire, 1969; Sen, 1999; and Mackie, 2012) was best suited to explore the outcomes of AKF's Youth Empowerment Programme in Garissa. The capability approach rejects monetary income as its measure of well-being and focuses on the indicators of freedom to live a valued life (Sen, 1999). In this framework, poverty is defined as the failure to achieve minimum capabilities that give the ability to satisfy crucially important functionings up to certain minimal adequate levels (Sen, 1993). The approach espouses monetary resources as the means of enhancing and achieving total well-being and shifts away from monetary indicators as a means of evaluating well-being and deprivation (Laderchi et al., 2003).

The human development paradigm is concerned with building human capabilities (through investment in people) and with using those human capabilities more fully. The capabilities approach takes people as active agents who can participate in the decision-making process (Laderchi et al., 2003). From this perspective, development engages with people's freedom to make decisions about their lives. The human development approach opines that project stakeholders should be involved in the development process to determine their outcomes rather than as project beneficiaries (Mackie, 2012).

According to Mackie (2012), the departure from the economic-centric view of development has led to new understandings of development and poverty. The human development paradigm takes a nuanced understanding of poverty and awards the accomplishment of capabilities as both the end and means of development (Gasper, 2002). It is further argued that to attain economic freedom, it cannot be achieved without social and political capabilities such as education, health, political, and civil rights (Mackie, 2012). The paradigm not only espouses social development but also equity whereby each member of the community has a stake in the development process. It is multidimensional containing four key principles: equity, efficiency, participation, and sustainability (Lardecki et al., 2003).

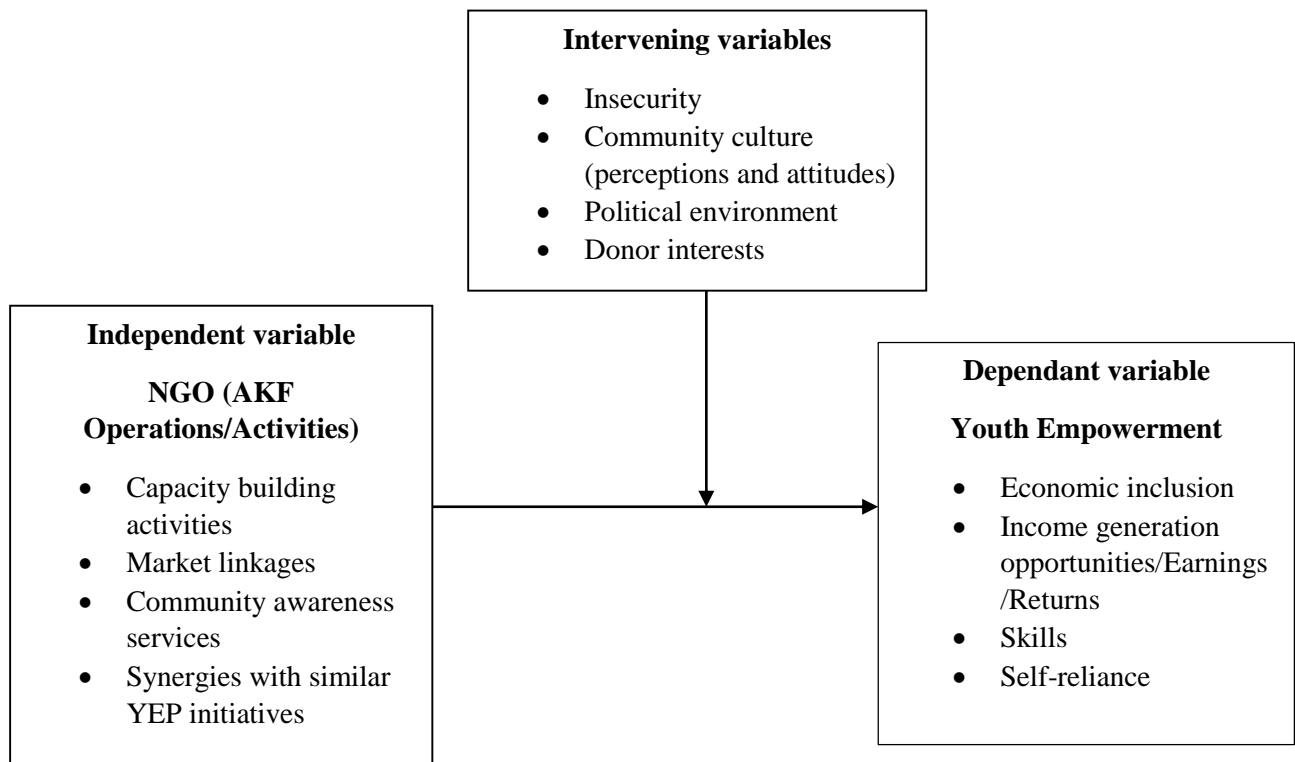
Participation has become a dominant and lauded approach for development programming particularly for some programmes such as youth empowerment where there exists no separation between the two concepts. This approach permits for the input of local beneficiaries to voice their opinions, and perceptions of freedom and the values they ascribe to their lives in the face of adversities and thus shape and/or inform their development strategies (Srinivasan, 1994). The human development approach is also rooted in the idea that beneficiaries will contribute to the project by not only participating in planning but also through the provision of manpower, labour, and other resources, hence increasing project efficiency (Heck, 2003).

Nevertheless, participatory methods are not devoid of challenges. According to Inagaki (2007), the pitfall of this approach is when there are diverse stakeholders in the decision-making process of a development project, power imbalances among the actors will threaten the integrity of the strategy as some voices within the group may be marginalised over others. For instance, the youth, elderly, and people with disabilities may be overshadowed by elites, academics, and formal agencies. Despite the shortcomings of the approach, current development projects and programmes are built from the human development approach. The use of the human development paradigm erases the benefactor and beneficiary approach to one that is a provider and client approach so that development projects can be sustainable (Mackie,

2012). Thus, the human development theory is appropriate when looking into NGO operations and youth empowerment initiatives as it is stated that youth are empowered through having the capabilities that give them the ability to achieve certain functionalities. Also, when the youth acknowledge they have choices, they can make informed decisions and freely take action based on those decisions (Srinivasan, 1994). Empowerment will only occur when conditions under which young people can act on their terms rather than being directed by others (Mohamud, 2015) and it is through empowerment that development can be achieved.

## 2.9. Conceptual framework

The independent variable for this study was NGO activity/operations. In this research, the case was Aga Khan Foundation’s activities. As noted from the human development approach, NGO operations should entail the incorporation of not only the youth but community voices for successful project implementation and sustainability. This in effect would lead to empowerment among the youth and ultimately socio-economic development. These activities should take the form of capacity building of members in various trainings, information sharing/linkages among programme stakeholders, and market linkages. The dependent variable was youth empowerment which cannot be attained without NGO activities in the area. However, the relationship between NGO activities and overall youth empowerment could be affected by insecurity in the area and community culture. This is shown in the figure below.



## **Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter is divided into six sections with each section detailing the research design such as sampling procedures, population to be sampled, study site, and data collection methods. The research was conducted using a mixed-methods approach. This involved a survey data set that briefly describes the socio-economic context of Garissa and results of the AKF programme and a key informant interview guide that captured the responses of Garissa residents in line with research objectives. Additionally, primary data of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with Garissa residents – taken from the end line evaluation of the AKF Youth Empowerment Programme - and scholarly work was used to enrich the research.

### **3.2. Research design**

The methodology for this research was a mixed-method approach whereby both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed. The quantitative approach used an end-line evaluation survey data set to describe the socio-economic conditions of Garissa youth and the programme outcomes of the AKF Youth Empowerment Programme. While a qualitative approach was taken with project stakeholders in Garissa county. This involved the use of FGDs with youth beneficiaries, CSO/TVET staff, and community members (parents and teachers of youth beneficiaries) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with local and national stakeholders, private sector and community-based actors involved during programme implementation. This approach was taken to measure the intended, unintended, and potentially hidden impacts of the programme on target beneficiaries. It is worth noting that this research included substantial stakeholder participation in the qualitative components. This is captured in Table 1 in the next section.

Involving youth beneficiaries and relevant stakeholders in the study was helpful as the researcher gained more meaningful insight on programme effectiveness and sustainability and its overall contribution to socio-economic development in Garissa. While youth perspectives were essential, they were not the only source of data. Collecting data from other stakeholders, such as their peers, and project partners, or other adult mentors ensured that the analysis was more accurate and comprehensive.

### 3.3. Population and sampling techniques

The population for this research were Garissa residents who were involved during programming in addition to community/local stakeholders who had/had not directly benefitted from the programme. The units of analysis were youth beneficiaries of the AKF Youth Empowerment Programme. Other units of analysis were local civil society organisations, local government actors, market actors, and community members. Totals of the population sampled are shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Sample sizes of populations targeted**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Phone survey respondents (Mixed group)</b>	<b>*FGDs with Community members (1 Male and 1 Female group)</b>	<b>**FGDs with youth beneficiaries (1 Male and 1 Female group)</b>	<b>FGDs with CSO and TVET implementers (1 Male and 1 Female group)</b>	<b>KIIs (Mixed group)</b>
Garissa	132	2	2	2	23

\* Parents only

\*\* TVET graduates and attendees

This study used purposive and snowballing sampling techniques to identify key informants who were either directly/indirectly involved during programming and/or had key insights into the youth economic context in Garissa. Purposive sampling was best suited for this study because the researcher was not only relying on their experience of the study site and group but also to ensure that different sub-groups of the population were included.

### 3.4. Study site

The study site for this research was Garissa township – see a map of Garissa county in Annex 2. Garissa county is situated in the former north-eastern district of Kenya and comprises of six constituencies: Lagadera, Fafi, Dadaab, Garissa township, Balambala, and Ijara. The main economic activity in the area is livestock farming as residents of Garissa are nomads/pastoralists with a population of around 400,000 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). The Youth Empowerment Programme was implemented in the whole of Garissa county. However, this research was limited to Garissa town due to insecurity, network challenges, and poor road infrastructures to reach programme beneficiaries in remote areas of Garissa.



### 3.5. Sources of data and data collection methods

This study gathered data from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources of data were obtained from Garissa community based-organisation actors, youth beneficiaries, Garissa county government actors, business owners, and Aga Khan Foundation staff. The survey had both qualitative and quantitative data from the youth that reflected their perspectives on the Youth Empowerment Programme and how, if at all, did they benefit from the programme. Additionally, an interview guide was used to get additional perspectives from project stakeholders about the Aga Khan Foundation’s Youth Empowerment Programme.

Secondary data was also used to enrich the study and to compound to the study literature. This was obtained from scholarly sources such as journals, books, published reports, and published scholarly work.

### 3.6. Data analysis

The qualitative KIIs were first transcribed, cleaned, and then coded into themes to generate preliminary findings. While for the FGDs, transcripts were first obtained and then coded into themes as well to generate findings. Afterwards, findings were analysed to present narratives that were in tandem with quantitative findings. The quantitative data was analysed using simple descriptive statistics such as tables and charts. The next section details the type of data that was needed and collected during the research process.

### 3.7. Data Needs Table

Below presents a data needs table that captures the type of data collected according to each instrument for the study.

**Table 2: Data needs table**

Research Questions	Data Needs	Types of Data	Sources of Data	Instrument
What is the nature of past and current youth programmes in Garissa?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic context</li> <li>• Type of activities implemented</li> <li>• Duration of programmes</li> <li>• Scope of programmes</li> <li>• Profile of beneficiaries/stakeholders (gender, educational level, employment status)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nominal variables</li> <li>• Ordinal variables</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community members, youth, local civil society organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open-ended interview guide</li> <li>• Focus group discussion transcripts</li> </ul>

<p>What are the effects of AKF involvement in youth empowerment in Garissa?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type of activities implemented</li> <li>• Programme outcomes on beneficiaries and/or stakeholders</li> <li>• Community/stakeholder perceptions and/or attitudes</li> <li>• Scope of programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nominal variables</li> <li>• Ordinal variables</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey data set</li> <li>• AKF stakeholders, programme beneficiaries</li> <li>• Community members</li> <li>• Local civil society organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey</li> <li>• Open-ended interview guide</li> <li>• Focus group discussions transcripts</li> </ul>
<p>How has the AKF youth empowerment programme contributed to sustainable socio-economic development in Garissa?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status of beneficiaries</li> <li>• Labour market profiles</li> <li>• Market/credit linkages</li> <li>• Skills development</li> <li>• Community attitudes/perceptions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nominal variables</li> <li>• Ordinal variables</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey data set</li> <li>• Garissa community members and youth</li> <li>• Local civil society organisations</li> <li>• Market actors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey</li> <li>• Open-ended interview guide</li> </ul>

## Chapter Four: Data Presentation, Findings, and Analysis

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the research results following the structure of the data collection instrument and the survey data set in regards to investigating the independent and dependant variables and the relationship between the two. First, a profile and distribution of the survey respondents will be presented following a presentation of preliminary findings of the data under subheadings in line with research objectives. The following subheadings are; The socio-economic and political context of Garissa, The nature of youth programmes, AKF programme activities, and Contributing factors to socio-economic development. After a presentation of preliminary findings, an in-depth analysis of study findings will be discussed.

### 4.2. Profile and distribution of survey respondents

The survey which was phone-based was administered to youth who were directly involved in AKF programming. The goal of the survey was to facilitate an overall understanding of the perceptions and satisfaction with overall programming of the AKF Youth Empowerment Programme that was implemented in north-eastern Kenya. However, for this study, the profile of survey respondents was disaggregated by location and gender.

**Table 3: Distribution of survey respondents by gender**

Garissa		
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	72	55%
Female	60	45%

### 4.3. The socio-economic and political context of Garissa

Situated close to the porous Somalia border, Garissa residents stated that the county is prone to political instability which hampers economic growth in the area, and one of the main inhibitors for youth to access economic opportunities. Respondents of different profiles cited political insecurity as an area of concern as it impedes business growth particularly for those who are in the Small and Medium-Sized Entrepreneurial (SME) sector. For instance, one respondent mentioned the existence of a night curfew from 6 pm – 6 am - after the 2015 Al-Shabaab attack on a nearby local university – which affected the local economy before it was lifted. Another participant mentioned that Garissa lacks a vibrant private sector as it is

considered as an insecure place to invest in. These findings echo scholarly works that have reported that areas such as Garissa and the rest of north-eastern Kenya are chronically insecure as they are characterised by high incidences of inter-communal violence as well as attacks by Al-Shabaab (IRIS, 2015).

With an economic sector that is weakened by political insecurity, most people are unemployed/underemployed as they rely on the public sector (the government), and NGOs for jobs<sup>3</sup> which are both not able to absorb the large numbers of unemployed youth - the largest demographic and the most disadvantaged group - in the area. It was also revealed that majority of the unemployed youth depend on family and friends to sustain a livelihood and/or engage in other activities such as drug abuse and criminal activities to as well keep themselves occupied. Some youth respondents also mentioned that because they are economically marginalised, some of their peers have decided to engage in violent extremism as a quick method to earn money. These findings mirror current reports on the area as being a hotspot for youth radicalisation as poverty, inequality, and high unemployment rates contribute to socio-economic grievances which facilitate the recruitment of young individuals into armed groups such as Al-Shabaab (IRIS, 2015).

Tethered to the weak economic sector is the high incidence of poverty in most Garissa households. Respondents mentioned that poverty is an inhibitor for accessing economic opportunities as most do not attain formal education in schools that is needed for white-collar jobs. This is because adequate education prepares young people for successful transition from school to work and increases their capacity and opportunities at work. Yet, in Garissa where limited economic opportunities exist, this leads to fierce competition leaving low-skilled youth to not have access to stable employment (Baart and Maarse, 2017).

Survey results echoed the opinions and perspectives of respondents on the matter. For instance, the majority of Garissa residents – particularly females – have either not attained formal education or have only received primary school teaching from local education institutions as seen from Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Level of formal education of Garissa Youth**

Formal Education	Gender	
	Female	Male

<sup>3</sup> Garissa hosts a large number of NGOs due to the existence of the Dadaab refugee camp.

No education	15	3
Primary education	20	30
Secondary education	10	14
Tertiary education	2	3
Vocational training	13	22

Moreover, most respondents mentioned that to venture into self-employment, capital is a requirement for business start-up and success which most Garissa residents lack. These qualitative statements are in line with survey respondents – in Table 5 below - who mentioned that their household economic situation is the ‘same,’ while others mentioned that the economic situation has worsened.

**Table 5: The rate of the household economic situation in Garissa**

<b>Household Economic Situation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Better	19
Much Better	2
Much worse	7
Same	69
Worse	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>

Discrimination was also another determinant in accessing jobs in Garissa. Most mentioned that impunity/tribalism/nepotism have become entrenched in job recruitment which discourages youth from making job applications. These findings conform to secondary literature that reveals the Kenyan political and economic system to be marred with competitive clientelism and patronage which weaken and undermine these spaces (Diwakar and Shepherd, 2018). Additionally, it was reported that the youth are biased towards the kind of jobs they would like to be involved in as most prefer formal (office jobs) over informal (manual) jobs. These findings reflect secondary sources that have written extensively on labour market opportunities available in Garissa.

According to EcoVentures International (2010), there exist disconnected realities between youth expectations and employer demands in Garissa. While job employers perceive youth capable of providing casual labour or other support-oriented services, Garissa youth prefer employment in managerial-oriented positions. This creates a mismatch and a division between employer demands and youth employment preferences, thus furthering youth unemployment/underemployment grievances in Garissa (EcoVentures, 2010). Compounded to these challenges was also the issue of early marriages among female youth. These challenges are not mutually exclusive as a combination of inhibitors were commonly reported among respondents as factors that contribute to the socio-economic grievances that Garissa youth encounter while accessing or acquiring employment.

Nonetheless, opportunities do exist for Garissa youth as it was revealed that there are potential sectors that Garissa youth could look into for future employment opportunities. According to respondents, many mentioned self-employment in the form of small-scale businesses in various service sectors that the youth and others in the community can venture into. Some of the service sectors that were frequently mentioned were tailoring, salon and beauty therapy, carpentry, plumbing, and the transport sector. Livestock farming and agribusiness were mentioned as other viable industries that the youth could tap into due to the existence of a wide range of livestock, and the presence of Tana river. However, the latter are underexploited because youth - particularly from Garissa township - are most interested in acquiring white-collar jobs. These findings reflect secondary sources that report self-employment initiatives as dominant livelihood pathways for Garissa residents with nearly 9 out of 10 households drawing their incomes from rural enterprises and self-employment initiatives (EcoVentures, 2010).

Some service sectors such as teaching and nursing as mentioned by some respondents have large unemployment gaps which the youth could potentially fill. These service sectors are mostly occupied by non-locals and because of the political instability ravaging the area, most of these non-local teachers and nurses have fled. Hence, these could be potential sectors that the youth could also exploit as a few of the educated youth in the area volunteer to teach in the education centres. However, for these sectors to be potential pools of employment, it requires the traditional route of formal education and buy-in from the government as it is the employer for these service sectors.

#### 4.4. The nature of youth programmes

According to some respondents, past and current youth programmes have been inclined to focus on peace-building and community advocacy as insecurity and conflict are endemic in the area. International actors – that is international NGOs - have been the main implementers of these programmes. However, in recent years, youth programmes have transformed the nature of their programmes to focus on *skills-based interventions* to empower the youth. International actors spearheading this approach – as mentioned by participants – have been RTI International, Kenya Red Cross, USAID, ActionAid, and the Aga Khan Foundation. It was also reported that local community-based organisations in Garissa – that have a long-standing rapport with the community – such as WOKIKE and Silver Lining Kenya have been executing youth programmes that focus on social issues such as gender-based violence, human rights, and access to justice for the youth.

##### Representative Quotes

*“Yes, I have heard of the Legal Aid program and it was recently implemented by WOKIKE - WomanKind Kenya.....The one for WOKIKE it was kind of like a workshop where they were telling us about access to justice. It was based on paralegal issues. They were telling us (youth) how to access our rights and get access to justice, and not necessarily by fighting back and by using the constitution. They were just enlightening us about the constitution and the rights that are there and also what exists in the courts.” – KII (1), Male, Garissa Youth Respondent*

*“In terms of skills, there are so many organisations that are focusing on that. One of them was Aga Khan Foundation and there was also Red Cross and RTI. I think for all of them their main goal has been the promotion of skills so that the youth can be self-sustained in the future.” – KII (2), Male, Garissa NGO Respondent*

*“There is also ActionAid which is in partnership with WomanKind Kenya. They are also running a programme on girl child empowerment. They are mostly based in the villages, they run a bigger project focusing on empowering young girls who are out of school and do not have a chance to go back to school.....they teach them basic entrepreneurship skills like bookkeeping starting up small businesses, hands-on skills. – KII (5), Female, Garissa Youth Respondent*

Other programmes that were frequently mentioned were those established by the national government such as Uwezo Fund, Women’s Enterprise Fund (WEF) and Youth Enterprise Fund (YEF) that make loans available to women and youth to assist them in establishing and

managing small-scale businesses. Even though these programmes have been established in the Garissa community, one respondent mentioned that they are frequently not accessed because people lack awareness as to the nature and process of these programmes. Yet, they are preferred as a means to access capital than other financial intermediaries because they are *flexible*. This is because loans are not bound to assets which majority of Garissa youth do not have. It was also confirmed that people still have misperceptions about the 5% administration fees that are tethered to national youth funds. These findings mirror secondary sources that reveal that youth in marginalised settings such as Garissa do not frequently access credit facilities because of lack of awareness, unfairness in selection, bureaucracy, limited access points and interest charges given that inhabitants in Garissa are predominantly Muslim (Adan, 2010; and Sikineyi, 2017).

#### Representative Quote

*“We have another initiative such as Takwa SACCO and these give out Sharia-compliant loans. The difference between the Youth Enterprise Fund (YEF) and these other initiatives is that the YEF do not require these things we call an asset, that is in case we don’t pay we don’t take these assets from you. But for these others, you must have a plot or a logbook to access these loans, so that in case you don’t pay back they can take ownership of these things, and for the youth, this is difficult. For instance, a person will not have his car or a plot, so that is the problem of borrowing from these other initiatives.” – KII (1), Male, Garissa Youth Respondent*

*“You know these areas are Islamic and we normally deduct 5% for administration fees. Hence, most of these people think it is interest which goes against their culture. According to their culture, they are not supposed to pay any interest on the loans. Thus, we normally get the locals during training and they talk to them in the local language, to explain to them that the 5% administration fee is not interest. Some take these loans while others say no. That is where you get a challenge because you see the uptake becomes a problem. Some of them with the low levels of education think it is interest which is against their religion.” – KII (10), Male, Women Enterprise Fund Representative*

Interestingly, reports on labour market structures and opportunities in Garissa note the existence of financial intermediaries that are explicitly available for entrepreneurship purposes. The challenge that exists for youth entrepreneurs (and other marginalised groups) appears to be accessibility rather than availability. Hence, in Garissa, it has been frequently mentioned that there is need to support youth and the community at large in understanding and navigating



the process of acquiring capital (EcoVentures, 2010 and Garissa County Government, 2018). This will assist in furthering youth livelihood demands through entrepreneurship activities.

#### **4.5. AKF programme activities: Fulfilling programme objectives and more**

With economic and political marginalisation of the youth being prevalent in Garissa and the greater north-eastern region of Kenya, the Aga Khan Foundation Youth Empowerment Programme sought to address these issues to increase youth agency in the social, economic, and political spheres. It was revealed from participants and through source documents that the YEP had three objectives over the course of three and a half years from 2016-2019. These are mentioned below:

1. Strengthen the institutional capacity of networks of CSOs to deliver effective, inclusive, socio-economic programming for youth.
2. Enhance school and TVET curriculum to deliver value-based education and market-led skills for vulnerable youth.
3. Improve dialogue, engagement, and understanding between county government, youth, and various stakeholders on matters affecting youth.

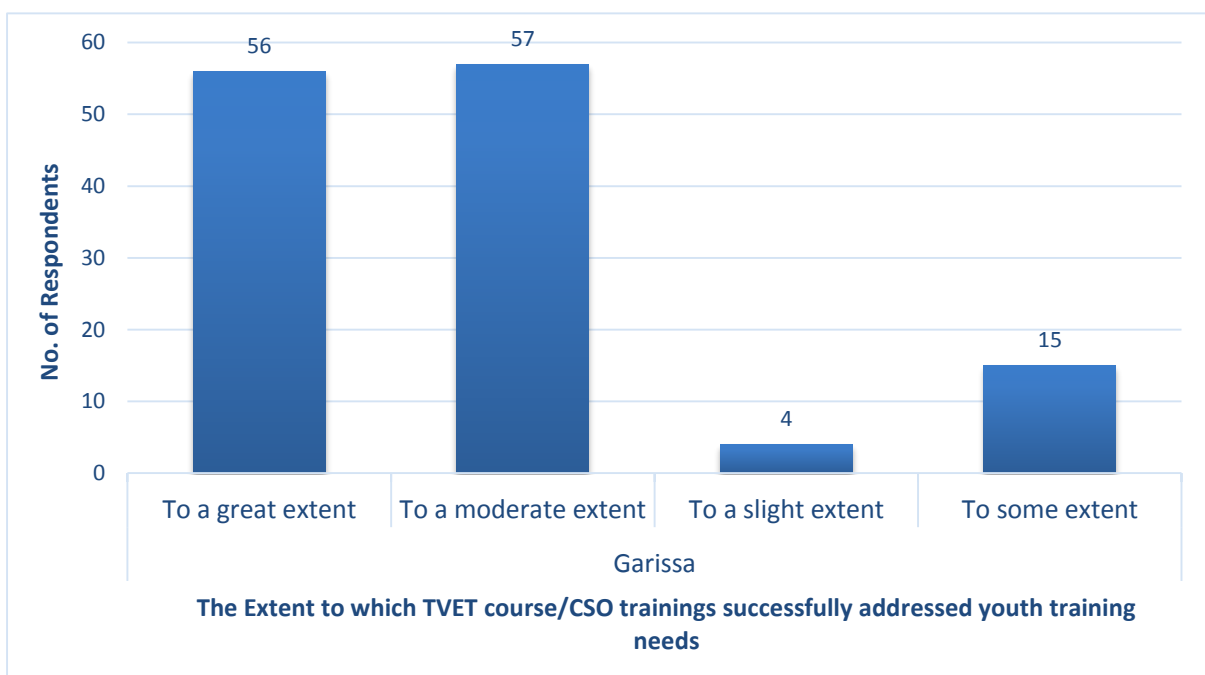
Some participants reported that the programme was not only implemented in Garissa but also in other counties of north-eastern Kenya such as Lamu and Mandera as they would sometimes liaise with their counterparts in workshops and seminars in other intervention areas. The extent to which AKF was able to achieve programme objectives varied as seen from participant responses. Although programme objectives were implemented simultaneously over the course of three years, it was evident that *skills-based intervention* took precedence during programme implementation. This is because it was repeatedly noted by respondents as one of the project objectives that had tremendous success on not only the youth but also the wider community.

##### **4.5.1. Enhancing school and TVET curriculum to deliver value-based education and market-led skills for vulnerable youth**

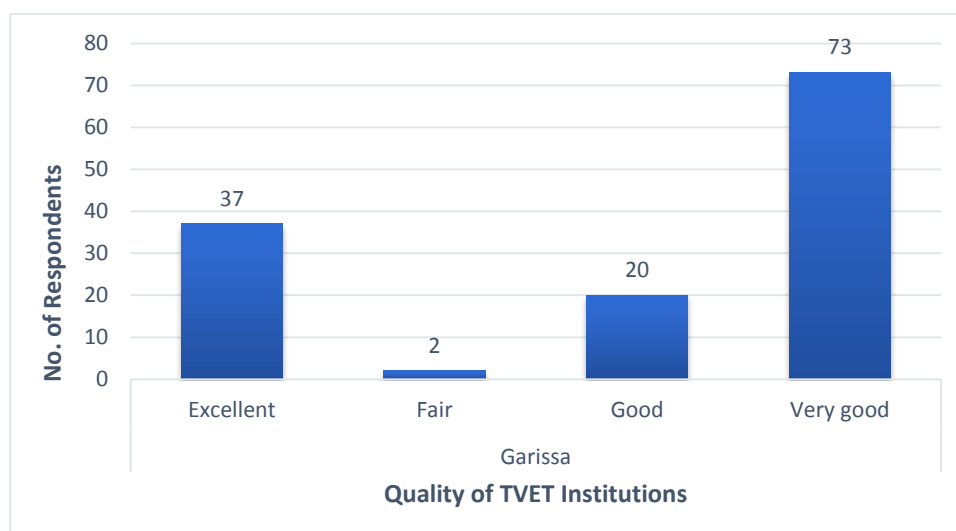
In achieving the second objective, respondents have noted significant strides. It was commonly mentioned that the youth have gained access to technical skills through polytechnics/vocational training institutions as well as others offered by CSOs such as WOKIKE (WomanKind Kenya) and Garissa County Youth Bunge (GCYB). Moreover, the polytechnics which were not fully operational have been significantly improved through the implementation of a new curriculum and by donations of equipment and materials. Currently, the revised curriculum is anchored on

practice rather than theory and the diversification of courses. Moreover, equipment donations, and increased capacity of TVET staff to deliver market-led skills for youth, are some of the activities that have led to a positive shift in perception of Garissa polytechnics. These statements are reflected from the phone survey data which discovered that **43% of youth respondents countered that their training needs were addressed ‘to a moderate extent’** through TVET courses. While **55% of youth respondents rated the quality of the TVETs found in the area to be ‘very good.’** These are depicted in Figures 1 and 2 below and backed by qualitative statements.

**Figure 1: The extent of TVET courses/CSO trainings in successfully addressing youth training needs**



**Figure 2: The overall quality of TVET institutions in Garissa**



### Representative Quotes

*“I think it had many components within the programme. One of the components was skills and supporting vocational training centres in terms of improving their enrolment. Aga Khan ensured that the students had enough material for the training throughout the programme and also enhancing the capacity of the instructors so that they could deliver quality training to the students. Another thing was sensitising the community through radio talk shows, enrolment drives so that they could change their perceptions towards these institutions.” – KII (2), Male, Garissa NGO Respondent*

*“This curriculum has changed the lives of the youth, in the sense that a young girl can discover her talent and passion to own/work in a saloon or a young boy wanting to join the mechanic industry. They can register in one of these vocational training centres whereby they do not have to wait till fourth form then join the centres. They can make their dreams come true by starting on it earlier through these systems.” – FGD (6), Female, Garissa TVET Staff Respondent*

Some respondents noted that to achieve the second objective, AKF along with government and CSO actors would conduct awareness-raising campaign drives and use media outlets to boost TVET enrolment. These efforts were revealed to be successful as Garissa polytechnics recorded high enrolment numbers during programme completion as compared to before. The AKF Youth Empowerment Programme also had a component of empowering the youth through leadership training not only at youth camps but also in high schools, targeting both in and out of school youth. Thus, it was not only focused on skills-intervention and creating linkages between the youth and various market actors as designed, but also focused on developing value integration and behavioural skills among youth of different profiles. For example, some beneficiaries noted that they had achieved personal growth through attending workshops learning the values of leadership, collaboration, and responsibility. These lessons, skills, and values learned are now being imparted to their younger peers.

### Representative Quotes

*“It (the TVET training) has brought interaction amongst the students and the teachers who are from different backgrounds. They learn their varying cultural activities from one another thus familiarizing diversity.” – FGD (2), Male, Youth Beneficiary, Garissa TVET Student Respondent*

*“Some of those that were trained in these centres and institutions are now serving as trainers themselves, whereby they pass the knowledge and the skills that they had acquired/gained from the institutions to others so that others can also help themselves and become contributing members of society.” – FGD (6), Female, CSO Representative, Garissa Respondent*

*“What I can say is that Aga Khan gave me responsibility and leadership, that is what I call personal development. That is what I got from them. All the VSLA groups that participated in Aga Khan programmes now know what it means to have a goal. For our VSLA, we have our personal goals and targets and that is what we got from AKF and it made us identify and analyse our talents.....I was planning I get some students who are in secondary, like a maximum of 20 people, and we look for an affordable place and we can have our programme... Although, we cannot accommodate all of them, so we were thinking of accommodating people half-day and sharing our ideas from what we got from AKF so that at least when they come out of schools we can encourage them on how to innovate their ideas.” - KII (1), Male, Garissa Youth Respondent.*

Other skills that were imparted on Garissa youth, with support from local CSOs and government actors, were financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and life skills. Respondents noted that through the Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) and Agribusiness Clusters (ABCs) – that had been formed before programme implementation – youth had learned financial skills in book/record keeping to help sustain businesses/generate income, and increase financial independence.

#### *Representative Quote*

*“The project had two components which were VSLAs (Village Savings and Loans Associations) and ABCs (Agribusiness clusters). The VSLAs which we (CSOs) have registered which their work was doing the commercial business only like shops, salons, and other businesses, but most work in shops and salons, like cosmetic shops and the beauty shops, that is, selling cosmetic products so these are the VSLAs which we were giving capacity on financial literacy because there is a Swahili proverb that says “Mali bila daftari hupotea bila habari” which means anything that you buy, you must keep records. We taught the breakeven that is entrepreneurial skills, that is what we were doing, such as the record-keeping through the support of the technical officers of the government that is from the youth department and the social service department which the youth were very happy to get that knowledge on the VSLA issue.” – KII (3) Male, Garissa CSO Representative Respondent*

Nevertheless, with these changes in the quality of vocational training centres and the curriculum, some stakeholders stated that they still face obstacles. Others mentioned that more could have been done during programming to enhance the quality of school for youth beneficiaries. One noted challenge that was frequently mentioned was the scarcity of equipment for some of the courses being taught. Hence, some students would share the equipment when learning. Another challenge was the lack of skilled and/or qualified teachers in some of these polytechnics. However, this is beyond the purview of AKF as this challenge is tied to the issue of political instability in Garissa (as mentioned) as well as the fact that the county government manages the TVET centres (discussed in the next objective). A few also noted that in some of the courses they would only be taught the basics, for instance in the ICT classes. Others mentioned that there is still a need for additional courses and other different courses that appeal to the youth such as driving, barbering and culinary skills. Hence, there was only so much that AKF could have done in terms of equipment donation or enhancing the quality of schools and TVET institutions. These are seen in the quotes below.

#### Representative Quotes

*“Advanced programmes like programming to be added to the ICT departments. We are just offered the basics here. Also, advanced coding should be included in the programme for ICT students.” – FGD (2), Male, Youth Beneficiary, Garissa TVET Graduate Respondent*

*“We are also asking for counselling programmes that can help the youth and others too.” – FGD (3), Female, Youth Beneficiary, Garissa TVET Student Respondent*

*“Driving is lacking in the institutions and it is one of the sectors that’s viable.” - FGD (6), Female, CSO Representative, Garissa Respondent*

*“Barber, massage and physiotherapy should also be included in the programme. This is a request on behalf of the community and fellow youth.” - FGD (2), Male, Youth Beneficiary, Garissa TVET Graduate Respondent*

#### **4.5.2. Strengthening the institutional capacity of CSO networks to deliver effective, inclusive socio-economic programming for youth in Garissa**

In achieving the first objective, Aga Khan Foundation worked with two local CSOs; WOKIKE and GCYB to not only increase TVET enrolment in schools and change social perceptions of TVETs but also increase the organisational capacity of the two CSOs. By strengthening institutional capacities of local CSOs this would ensure that the work of socio-economic programming would continue in Garissa county. As revealed by respondents, the Aga Khan

Foundation during programming was able to strengthen the institutional capacity of the two CSOs through trainings. Learning how to increase financial resources, record keeping, reporting, and other skills to ensure organisational continuity and delivery of services to their beneficiaries.

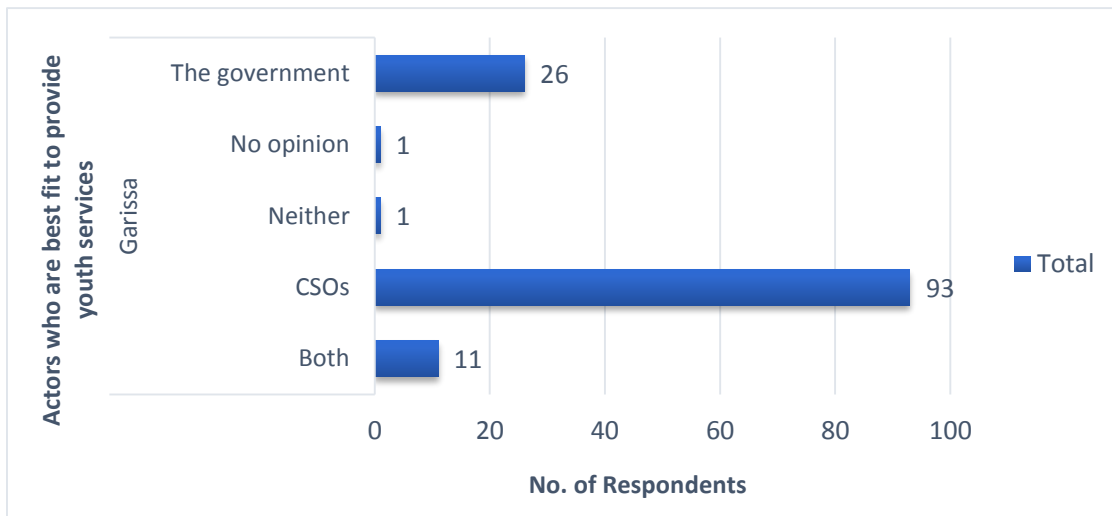
For WOKIKE and GCYB, delivering socio-economic services to the youth was part of their existing work. For instance, Womankind has been in operation for more than 30 years, while GCYB - a budding organisation - has been working with Aga Khan Foundation and other international actors to provide socio-economic services to the youth. Feedback on CSOs being efficient actors to continue the work of socio-economic programming in Garissa was met with mixed responses. A few were confident while some were less confident. However, a few youth beneficiaries from VSLA groups who attended CSO trainings experienced an improvement after interacting with them. While **70% of youth respondents from the phone survey believed that CSOs are better suited to provide services than the government**. These findings are reflected in the quotes and Figure 3 below:

#### Representative Quotes

*“If people cannot get support from the government, they may get from the CSOs even better than from the county government. The little time the CSOs were with you, you feel some improvement which in the past they did not have that capacity.” – KII (4), Male, Garissa Youth Beneficiary, Private Sector Respondent*

*“For financial reasons, I do not think youth-led organisations have the capacity to sustain economic empowerment for young people because they hardly get financial support for livelihood programmes.” – KII (5), Female, Garissa Youth Respondent*

**Figure 3: Actors who are best suited to provide services to Garissa Youth**



Conversations with CSOs highlighted that during programming, they had increased youth awareness on access to economic and social opportunities to begin/sustain youth business ventures. For instance, one CSO representative noted that during programming they – in collaboration with government representatives - had successfully led ID registration exercises in Garissa. Additionally, they had linked over 100 youth groups to acquire national youth funds in which the majority were successful.

Representative Quotes

*“You know there are other government opportunities like Uwezo Fund, Women Enterprise Fund, and Youth Enterprise Fund and the youth were not aware, so we have created another platform for sensitisation and mobilisation for the youth to acquire these funds. We conducted training on selected youth and government officials who are responsible for the youth funds and they have drawn a work plan for what are the requirements, when can they apply and repay, and how to get to know the process of the application. Now in that period, 105 groups acquired loans from different funds such as the Uwezo Fund, and Women Enterprise Fund.” - KII (6), Male, Garissa CSO Representative Respondent*

*“Some youth in which we were building the capacity we have linked to the government financial institutions so they can get the microfinance. These are the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which have been restructured through this project. The youth enterprise where they borrowed credit or loans so that they can improve or expand the business that they are doing, that is the engagement we did.” – KII (3), Garissa CSO Representative Respondent*

### **4.5.3. Improving dialogue, engagement, and understanding between county government, youth and other stakeholders**

Respondents noted that there has been increased civic engagement between the county government and the youth as they are knowledgeable of government funds that they can access to improve their economic situation. Additionally, with the rollout of the new constitution in 2010, civic engagement is encouraged by the law as one respondent stated. Aside from the law, this relationship to some extent has been influenced in due part because of CSOs. During programming, CSOs were tasked with holding community engagement forums and dialogues to develop partnerships and structures between the community and the government which has increased understanding and dialogue between the two groups. While ***48% of youth respondents from the survey expressed that the government has improved in addressing youth challenges***. These findings are shown from the quotes and Figure 4 below.

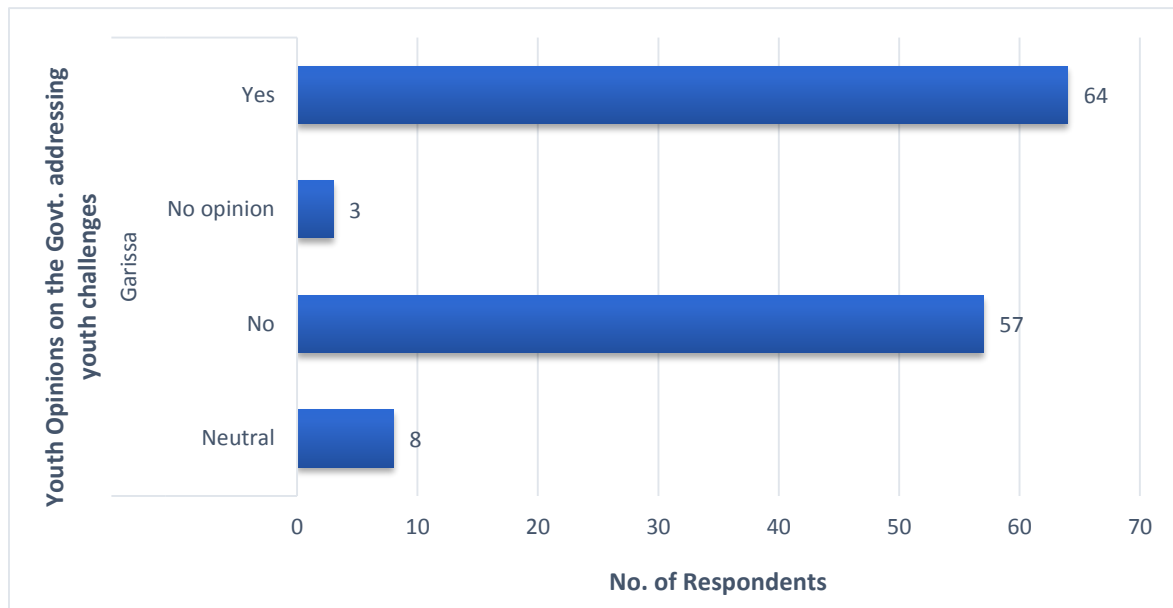
#### *Representative Quotes*

*“They (CSOs) have really helped in terms of harmonising between the government and the targeted youths by sensitisation, awareness etc. and that is why there are those synergies because of these efforts.” - KII (8), Male, Garissa County Government Respondent*

*“The youth groups were linked with microfinance institutions and affirmative action offices such as women representative office, CEC trade and enterprise development as well as Youth Enterprise Fund.” – FGD (6), Female, Garissa CSO Staff Respondent*



**Figure 4: Youth opinions on the government’s improvement in addressing youth challenges**



CSOs are often the hyphen between the government and people and often can improve and influence the relationship as CSOs are tasked in reaching to and linking people with the government. Though, it was reported by some that there is still more room for improvement on the part of the government when it comes to engaging the youth, particularly on socio-economic affairs. This is because some noted that the government sometimes lacks the political will to engage effectively with the youth. Hitherto, some respondents still note challenges in the government’s level of support which appears to be the most difficult to achieve as it requires continuous buy-in as seen from the quotes below.

*Representative Quote*

*“The fact is that on the ground when regarding youth, very few play a major role like our MP here, he kind of gives 80% of his development plans for the youth. For instance, giving out bursaries. He sometimes as well links scholarships, or he may even start small businesses or get jobs so that the youth can get their daily bread. We are also being given 30% of any contract so that the youth can be involved, so at least on the political side of Garissa, I cannot say they are 100%, but at least they contribute to the development of the youth.” - KII (1), Male, Garissa Youth Beneficiary Respondent*

*“The CSOs would sometimes call for meetings with the youth and the government would sometimes be involved to discuss issues, but we never saw the results. On the side of the government we never saw direct support, they would go to the vocational training centres to support them. They would engage with us because of AKF, once this contract of AKF is over*

*we are hoping to see some other kind of support.” - KII (4), Male, Private Sector Youth, Garissa Respondent*

It was also revealed from respondents that the relationship between the county government and TVET centres is subject to politics. As TVET institutions and structures fall under the devolved governance of Kenya, this can hinder effective and efficient TVET leadership and management. For example, a few reported that appointments and payments of TVET managers are the responsibilities of the county government. Some reported late payments and ineffective TVET instructors being employed as a challenge to effective management and operation of vocational training centres. Hence, to subvert this problem, it was mentioned that training for TVET staff was included as a component of the programme to increase financial independence and standing of these polytechnics. These findings are reflected in the quotes below.

#### *Representative Quotes*

*“From what I see, the teachers (in public TVETs) are waiting for money because some people go as far as to say that in these institutions you do not even see teachers. Even sometimes you would find a teacher in a class and she says the things she is teaching she does not know, and she is earning because she has been employed by the government. I see this as a problem especially if students are staying there for 6 months.” - KII (4), Male, Private Sector Youth, Garissa Respondent*

*“We (AKF) expect that the resource mobilisation training we have given, they (polytechnics) can have the capacity to write proposals for development partners on their own, maybe when they can do that besides the overall connection with the county government, they can mobilise for their resources outside, knowing how the county government operates and the little budget they give to institutions, now they can look for their initiatives outside the government, if they succeed and come up with a good proposal and get partners, that is something we can be proud of.” - KII (2), Male, Garissa NGO Respondent*

#### **4.5.4. Additional programme activities**

Through conversations with NGO and community-based actors, synergies and linkages were created with other NGOs who were implementing similar youth empowerment initiatives in the area such as RTI International and Kenya Red Cross. These efforts translated in AKF having coordination meetings and activities with like organisations to increase programme effectiveness and efficiency through sharing of resources and experiences.

### Representative Quote

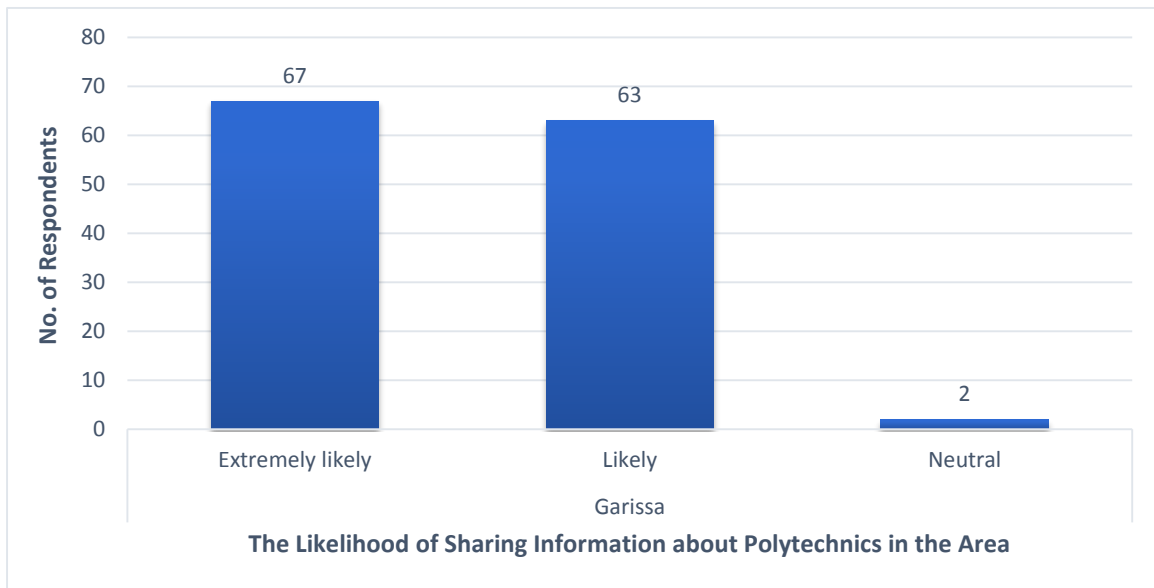
*“We (AKF) had coordination meetings so that we could share experiences and the challenges and see where we could maybe team-up. We had that close contact and coordination frequently. I remember one of the organisations, that is Kenya Red Cross, had a programme that they were doing at the TVET centres and they were being funded by the EU as well as AKF so it had that close coordination.” - KII (2), Male, Garissa NGO Respondent*

## **4.6. Contributing factors to promoting socio-economic development**

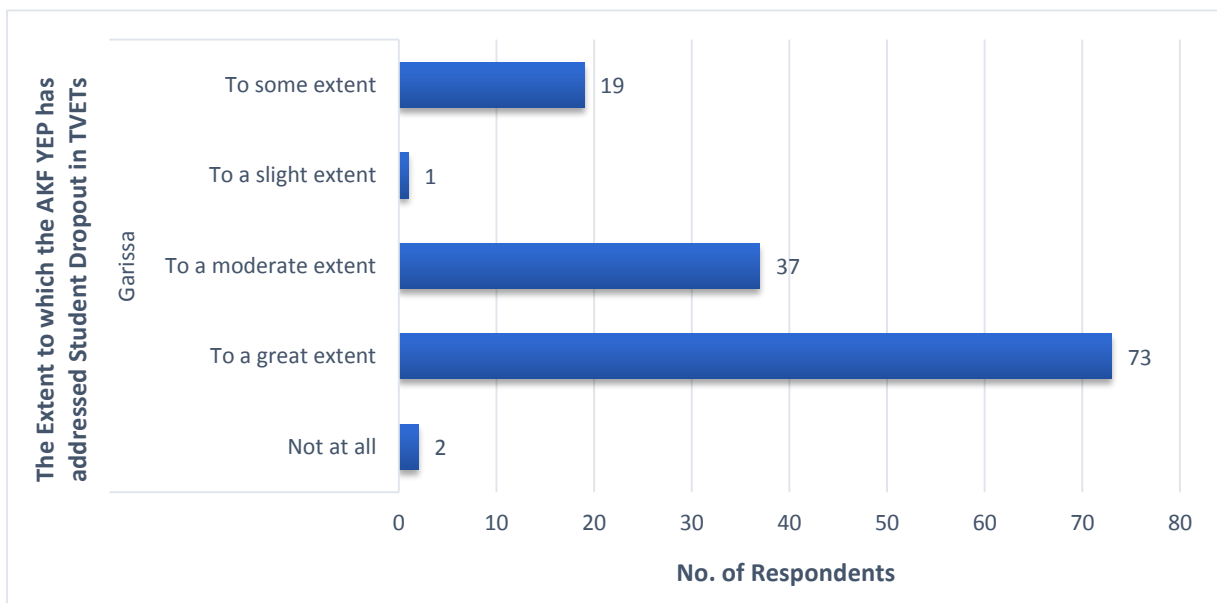
### **4.6.1. Changed perceptions and increased visibility of Garissa VTCs**

Negative perceptions about TVET institutions have drastically changed since programming began. Before, the AKF Youth Empowerment Programme, polytechnics were perceived to be for high school failures. However, during programme implementation, this led to a shift in perceptions, increased enrolment in polytechnic schools (exact figures could not be provided, only estimates), and the changing perception of white-collar jobs as the only means of deriving a livelihood. Thus, significantly increasing TVET visibility. Furthermore, based on the data collected, it is apparent that youth and community members were sharing information on the gains of joining a TVET institution and would continue to do so. Most stated that they shared and would continue to share with family and friends. Results from the phone survey also indicated that *51% of youth respondents were ‘extremely likely’ to recommend a TVET centre to a family or friend while 55% of youth beneficiary respondents stated that the programme addressed student dropout ‘to a great extent.’* These findings are shown in Figures 5 and 6 below.

**Figure 5: The Likelihood of making a recommendation to a family/friend to enrol in a TVET institution/youth polytechnic or other types of training in the area**



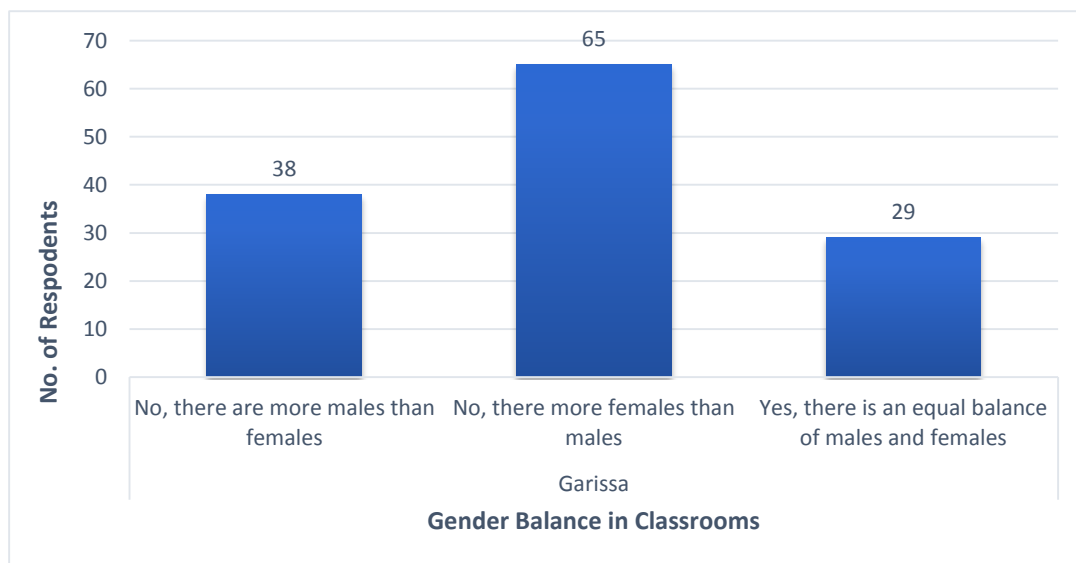
**Figure 6: The Extent to which the AKF Youth Empowerment Programme has helped in addressing student dropout from TVET institutions over the last three years**



By some accounts, the AKF Youth Empowerment Programme sought to increase rural-urban disparities across programming, but this was to a limited extent. Some respondents stated that they could not reach all parts of rural Garissa because of insecurity, poor road infrastructures, and financial constraints. A few mentioned that because of the limited existence of TVET centres in rural areas, getting rural youth to relocate to Garissa town – where most polytechnics exist - would be costly as most would not be able to afford.

In addition, cultural perceptions/stereotypes came into play when TVET students would enrol for courses. It was frequently mentioned that because of culture, some courses such as salon and beauty therapy, and motor vehicle mechanics would only be taken up by one gender or would predominantly have one gender. For instance, only female students could take up salon and beauty therapy courses, while mostly male youth would enrol in motor vehicle mechanics as female youth perceived the course to be difficult to learn. Nevertheless, from the phone survey, it was revealed that females dominate TVET classes which is a positive shift in female empowerment in the community. This finding is represented in Figure 7 below.

**Figure 7: Gender-balance in TVET classrooms**



While the programme reflects a high level of flexibility in terms of accommodating and engaging different youth as well as the areas targeted in light of local realities, there may have been a missed opportunity for AKF in adapting programming to accommodate a larger number of Garissa rural residents. Moreover, there was also a missed opportunity in creating buy-in for the different types of courses offered at TVET institutions.

#### **4.6.2. Increased access and awareness of income-generating and financial opportunities**

Study findings revealed that the AKF Youth Empowerment Programme applied to the Garissa context. It addressed some of the economic-related challenges that the youth face. For example, encouraging the acquisition of skills in TVET institutions. The programme was also responsive to market needs of the youth, albeit as mentioned, additional courses (other than those that were added) could have been introduced that appeal to the youth such as driving, catering, and advanced ICT classes. Nonetheless, the programme was able to equip requisite market skills and knowledge to the youth. For instance, vocational training, life skills, and financial literacy skills can assist the youth to not only be employed and cope in the job market, but also have the opportunity to be self-employed if formal employment is not readily available.

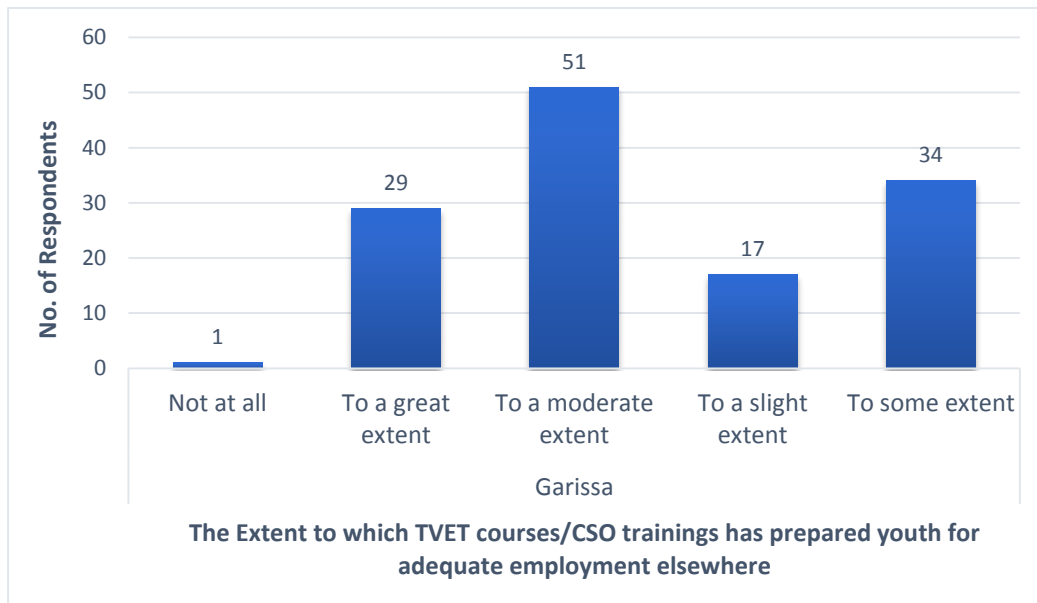
Some respondents also noted that they have either found work or started small businesses in various sectors of Garissa. Survey responses as well mirror these findings as Garissa youth affirmed that the training sessions provided – even outside TVET institutions – have adequately prepared them for employment outside Garissa. Additionally, more youth groups have increased awareness of capital and financial opportunities that are provided by the government and can thus create an ecosystem of knowledge transfer to empower other youth and populations. Such feedback reaffirms the relevance of the project to the lives of youth beneficiaries. This is shown by respondent feedback and Figure 8 below.

##### *Representative Quotes*

*“Things got better in my community because through the AKF programme many youth are now working in various sectors of the economy. Their living standards have changed. Before they had no skills to earn but now, they are skilled and can offer skilled manpower.” – FGD (2), Male, Youth Beneficiary, Garissa TVET Graduate Respondent*

*“This is where we are trying to address issues of unemployment, trying to give the youth skills and knowledge that will make them more employable in the job market and even giving them the capacity to employ themselves without necessarily depending on people to employ them, so it was addressing to a large extent.” – KII (9), Male, Garissa County Government Respondent*

**Figure 8. The extent to which TVET courses/CSO training received have been successful in preparing youth adequately for gainful employment elsewhere**



Furthermore, the existence of the AKF Youth Empowerment Programme confirms the relevance of the project on the community at large. Skills-intervention youth programmes have become a popular approach in empowering the youth in contexts where markets are constantly shifting and subject to political and social issues. This is regurgitated by the existence of other similar initiatives from Kenya Red Cross and RTI that also focus on skills-based interventions. Most importantly, programme collaborations among different NGO actors working on the same issues provide an ingredient for success as it creates synergies and effective strategies for NGOs. By streamlining activities and resources, it creates a bigger impact to reach the youth and the community at large.

Nevertheless, even though the programme empowered Garissa youth with requisite market skills and knowledge - implying that the revised curriculum was tailored to Garissa market needs - there were still other challenges that the youth faced. For example, not all youth would find employment after graduating from TVET courses. A few mentioned that some of the skills being taught at the institutions were not marketable. Additionally, a majority of respondents stated that after acquiring the skills from a polytechnic institution and graduating, the challenge ahead was getting start-up capital or financial means to start their businesses. This is reflected in the responses below.

### Representative Quotes

*“We are requesting the institute to open for us saloons that can provide employment once we are done with the training because most times you will find the girls have finished their trainings but do not have a place to work or start up their own saloons because of capital.” – FGD (3), Female, Youth Beneficiary, Garissa TVET Student Respondent*

*“I did ICT and completed the course sometime back. I have not secured any job up to know. There are few cyber cafes in the town which are run by owners. It is hard to get an economic opportunity with such a course. There are few jobs available for this course.” – FGD (2), Male, Youth Beneficiary, Garissa TVET Graduate Respondent*

#### **4.6.3. Strengthened local CSO capacities to deliver community services**

Looking at Garissa CSOs, the AKF Youth Empowerment Programme highlighted CSOs as significant and important actors in the community through their engagement and cooperation with them. CSOs are the link to community members. This was not only showcased by their awareness-raising activities about TVETs in Garissa but also acting as intermediaries between the youth and the government. For instance, CSOs would use media channels such as radio, and community engagement forums to create awareness and erase misperceptions on accessing national youth funds. These efforts have led to more youth groups having access to loan and capital facilities while others have gained professional development and life skills that can make them more self-reliant.

#### **4.6.4. Strengthened social and psychosocial needs**

Unintended outcomes of the programme that were revealed during the study were enhanced social and psychosocial needs. From respondent accounts, the AKF Youth Empowerment Programme had strengthened social cohesion among the youth of various profiles and motivated the unemployed (irrespective of background) to join a polytechnic to empower themselves. This showcases that Garissa youth have a renewed sense of purpose. Results from the phone survey as well revealed that **73% of youth respondents are optimistic about their future** (as seen from Figure 9) implying that the programme has made Garissa youth confident in not only themselves but also the future.

### Representative Quotes

*“The programme is good. It has helped so many youths who were jobless and hopeless. It has changed the lives of so many youth. Some who were chokoraa (vagabonds) are now family*

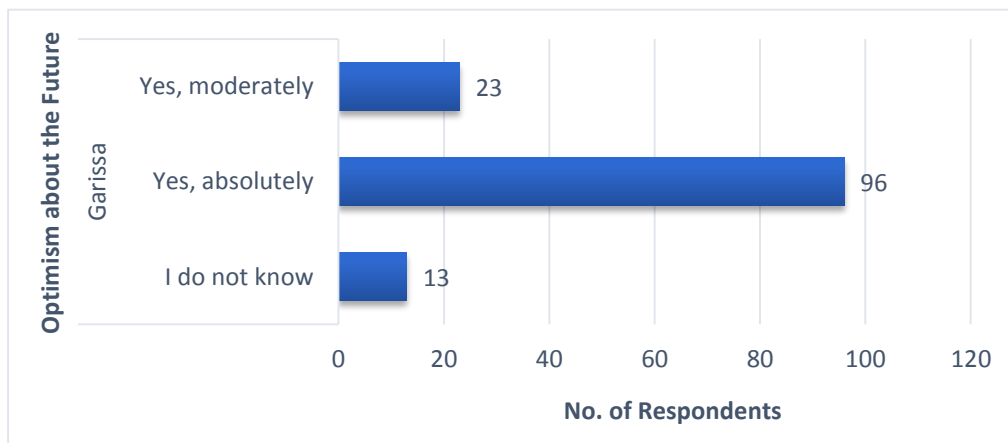


*providers. Some who used to waste their time on chewing miraa (khat) are now fully engaged. Many thanks to AKF.” – FGD (1), Male, Garissa Community Member Respondent*

*“Yes, most youth are taking their training here, and they are maximising their time to acquire skills. I no longer fear talking to boys and sharing ideas.” - FGD (3), Female, Garissa TVET Student Respondent*

*“I will give myself as an example. I was a miraa (khat) addict. I had no other business. I had no source of income. I lived on shaxaad (hand-out from friends). Luckily when this programme came into being, I joined this institution and did plumbing. Alhamdulillah (Thanks to God) I am now earning not less than 300 shillings per day. I can feed myself and my family. I take this as an economic opportunity.” – FGD (2), Male, Garissa TVET Graduate Respondent*

**Figure 9: Youth perspectives about being optimistic about the future**



#### **4.7. Discussion of study findings**

Research findings reveal that inhibitors to achieving socio-economic development in Garissa county are the pre-existing weak political, social, and economic systems. Garissa residents constantly face high incidences of poverty, violence and insecurity, corruption/discrimination, and weak educational systems that preclude the youth from accessing socio-economic opportunities. Nonetheless, the study revealed that Garissa county still provides promising opportunities – particularly in the informal sector - for the youth and the community at large to tap into despite the challenges that Garissa residents encounter. Commonly mentioned informal labour market opportunities were salon and beauty therapy (for women and girls), carpentry, plumbing, ICT, the transport sector (*boda boda*, *matatu*, and *tuk tuk*), donkey riding, tailoring, owning a small shopfront, charcoal-selling, hotel work, mining, and domestic work.

Other economic opportunities exist in the agricultural and livestock sectors due to the presence of Tana River – the largest river in Kenya – and pastoralism as a dominant livelihood activity in the county. These sectors can create economic opportunities through the production of fruits, milk, hide and skins, and meat by providing value-addition opportunities to individuals in the trades. Although, uptake in these sectors is slow in addition to being perceived as non-lucrative sectors particularly among the youth. At the same time, these sectors are vulnerable and fragile as Garissa county faces seasonal droughts and floods which means that Garissa youth must look into innovative ways to tap into these sectors to circumvent the challenges that these sectors experience. Furthermore, the medical and education sectors – though require the traditional academic route rather than vocational training – also provide other labour market opportunities that not only the youth can fill but also the local population as they are constantly filled by non-locals. Thus, increased awareness and investment in the teaching and medical professions should be harnessed to not only create labour opportunities for the youth but also fill in these gaps to increase access to social services for the local population.

Research findings also revealed that various actors have implemented youth programmes in Garissa such as the government, CBOs, and NGOs. With NGOs only recently coming into the Garissa scene. What is apparent is that all these programmes have taken different forms. Government-implemented youth programmes have focused on youth empowerment through entrepreneurship and training. Although, these programmes have faced difficulties and hence have had a limited impact on local development in Garissa. Some of these difficulties include cultural misperceptions about administration fees which are tethered to national funds, and government budget constraints to implement youth programmes. It also appears that youth empowerment through skills development is a novel concept that is currently being taken up by NGOs compared to the traditional approaches of empowering the youth through entrepreneurship and leadership that have been implemented in the past by both NGOs and CBOs. Although, the latter interventions still feature in NGO youth programmes.

On the account of the AKF Youth Empowerment Programme, the programme had a profound impact not only on the youth but also on various stakeholders. Feedback from community members, youth beneficiaries, and project stakeholders attested to the positive change the programme has brought in Garissa. As the youth join vocational training centres to be economically empowered, the impact of the programme is the growth of an entrepreneurial society that can lead to the development of the private and local economy in Garissa county.

However, from data findings, programme implementation identified both programme strengths and weaknesses in its design. Designed to create awareness on TVETs, improve the TVET curriculum, increase value integration among in and out of school youth, and build connections between the youth and programme stakeholders and build the capacity of CSOs, the likelihood of continued long-term benefits of the programme depended not only on these but also on local ownership, duration, and scope of the programme.

During the research study, it was frequently mentioned by participants' responses that many youth who would graduate from TVET courses would not be immediately employable as finding work would be challenging. Others mentioned that they could not be able to start their businesses because acquiring start-up capital was a challenge. Hence, one solution that was offered was that AKF could have provided start-up kits to graduates who successfully completed TVET training. This would help TVET graduates to not only rely on the existing labour market to employ them but also have the potential to start-up their microenterprises that could also employ others within the community.

Additionally, the programme had many components which all could not have been achieved in a short period. This led to missed opportunities for some programme beneficiaries as not all activities could be adequately implemented in a short time. Moreover, with the programme showing some degree of flexibility in trying to accommodate both genders and different Garissa county residents, some programme beneficiaries - particularly those residing out of Garissa town according to some participant accounts - did not get to participate. This attests to a flaw in programme design. Rural participant perspectives were not included on how best the programme could have been implemented in the rural regions of Garissa county, while people with disabilities rarely featured in the programme or were mentioned as beneficiaries.

Furthermore, from beneficiary feedback, it was revealed that the programme may have lacked ownership from the community as some would state that TVETs were not always fully adequately equipped and procurement of TVET equipment would sometimes face delays. While equipment and material donation by AKF was certainly beneficial and well-meaning to not only the polytechnics but also market actors, this intervention would have been more successful if local participation in the process was included. This would not only, for instance, decrease procurement delay times but enhance local ownership in the donation process.

By most accounts, one of the strengths of the AKF Youth Empowerment Programme was to create a network of like-minded CSOs who could work together on a common goal. These

CSOs called for more partnerships across the programme which as well contributed positively to building CSO capacity. A step in creating sustainable development in Garissa through CSOs. Yet, one structural weakness of the programme was the lack of cross-actor collaboration during programme implementation. Study findings revealed that partnership among project partners was weak, that is, between implementing CSOs and Garissa polytechnics as both groups of actors would be working with AKF independently and would only meet each other during workshop and training sessions. Yet, this could have been an opportunity to build/improve on project stakeholder relationships. Additionally, it was not only CSO-TVET partnerships that were lacking but it was also revealed by participants that the relationship between Garissa polytechnics and the county government is subject to politics which can affect the quality and efficiency of vocational training provided by Garissa VTCs.

With an effective engagement strategy among project partners, potential synergies could have been mapped and harnessed not only between TVET institutions and the Garissa county government but also with local CSOs. The programme may have improved youth engagement and dialogues with the government, private sector, TVETs, and CSOs, but the programme failed to harness cross-actor collaboration and coordination among programme actors. This finding attests to a missed opportunity in building solid partnerships that could have resulted in the harmonisation of activities and resources, tapped into unreached populations, and build profiles within the community that could have created greater gains in line with local priorities to create sustainable impact (Jeffrey, 2017).

Moreover, from beneficiary feedback, even though there have been significant improvements in building youth and government relationships, and CSO visibility in the Garissa community, the fragility of these relationships with the youth and the community were highlighted. For example, even though some community members trust CSOs to continue the work of delivering socio-economic services to the youth, more still needs to be done to build CSO visibility among youth and community members. It is through the bonds with CSOs that youth groups and local populations can tap into an information ecosystem on the processes of acquiring government procurement or capital opportunities in addition to erasing misperceptions and mistrust that surround the process. While on the side of the government it requires continuous buy-in for the youth to tap into socio-economic services provided by the government.

Participant accounts also revealed that both CSOs grew in their capacities to carry out their organisational mandate because of the trainings they had received. Learning various skills to ensure organisation continuity such as financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and

resource mobilisation. However, it was reported that GCYB was still in its infancy compared to its partner organisation that has been in operation for decades. This implies that youth empowerment remains a new realm of work for the organisation in question. Nevertheless, there is hope that requisite skills and knowledge gained from the trainings, will not only ensure long-term organisational continuity but also sustainability. Furthermore, study results indicate that Garissa CSOs have found methods to continue their work with the community as they partner with international NGOs to carry-out socio-economic programming to Garissa youth.

However, study findings reveal that there were missed opportunities of creating stronger synergies with other international actors in Garissa such as RTI International and Kenya Red Cross who implement similar youth empowerment programmes. This would have been an opportunity to reach out to untapped populations to create a greater success of youth empowerment programmes in the area. Thus, making Garissa youth and the community at large active economic and social agents in addition to building organisational profiles and creating stronger linkages among NGO actors to increase complementary strategies to not only harness programme resources but also reach youth beneficiaries.

While this research was not able to capture the number of youth who have gained skills, employment and/or increased their entrepreneurship and leadership skills, it is evident from participant anecdotes that the programme was successful. A great shift from past and current youth programmes that view Garissa youth as vulnerable victims to CVE but as potential socio-economic agents of change. Despite the challenges, it laid the foundation for socio-economic development in Garissa through increasing social cohesion, strengthening CSO capacities, economic inclusivity, and shifting perceptions of TVET centres. In addition, the programme has created an impact on the labour market by filling gaps in certain local labour sectors such as construction and welding that are currently less filled by non-locals.

## **Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

### **5.1. Introduction**

In this section, a summary of the study will be provided, and then followed by conclusions made from the study findings. Recommendations will be offered to provide actionable points for NGOs operating in Garissa (or other marginalised contexts) when implementing youth programmes that promote socio-economic development. These will be based on fieldwork findings. Lastly, the chapter will give possible areas for further research.

### **5.2. Summary of the study**

The study sought to analyse NGO participation in promoting local development looking at the Aga Khan Foundation's Youth Empowerment Programme in Garissa. Using three study questions and the human development paradigm to guide the research, study findings revealed that NGOs can create foundations for local development through activities that promote self-reliance and capacity building. This is also achieved through beneficiary participation/input and cross-collaboration among actors involved in the process so that development programmes can have a sustainable impact on the community.

In answering the study objectives, the study revealed that youth programmes in Garissa take a traditional route in responding to challenges that Garissa residents face. Most particularly focus on peace-building and CVE efforts as solutions to the vulnerabilities that Garissa youth encounter. However, recently these programmes have transformed to focus on entrepreneurship, leadership, training, and skills-based interventions to empower the youth so that Garissa youth are less vulnerable to economic and political shocks that are endemic in the area. Notable actors that have been in the scene are NGOs such as Kenya Red Cross, RTI International, USAID, ActionAid, and Aga Khan Foundation in addition to other prominent actors such as the government and local CBOs that have a long-standing rapport with the community. Hence, the Youth Empowerment Programme of the Aga Khan Foundation is a novel approach to promoting socio-economic development through youth empowerment.

The Aga Khan Foundation Youth Empowerment Programme had significant success as revealed from participant narratives. It used skills-based, leadership, training, and entrepreneurship interventions to empower not only the youth but the community at large. Study findings revealed that through these successful interventions, Garissa youth have not only been equipped with requisite market skills but have a new sense of purpose and hope as they join VTCs to increase their agency in the local economy. Others have attained knowledge

on financial literacy, gained access to capital and financial loans, and life skills that they can use to engage in economic activity. Additionally, local CSOs and TVETs – particularly those involved in the programme – have increased institutional capacity to continue their work to their communities. This intervention has led to a positive shift in perceptions among the youth and community members towards community-led organisations. Moreover, programme results were all achieved not only by AKF efforts but also through cross-actor participation and involvement in the programme such as the Garissa county government, local CSOs and TVETs and buy-in from the youth and community members. It is because of various stakeholder involvement and engagement that the research revealed that there is still strong grassroots support for the continuation of the programme long after completion and that NGOs such as AKF – through their participation – have planted seeds that promote Garissa socio-economic development.

Yet, study findings revealed that though the Youth Empowerment Programme increased youth agency in the socio-economic spheres, it still faced challenges in its design and implementation which can affect the sustainability of programme outcomes. With many programme components to be achieved in a short time, the programme was not able to fully implement each component while other programme objectives were over-emphasised. Additionally, though the programme highlighted local perceptions during implementation, for example, the addition of requisite vocational training courses (as emphasised by the human development paradigm), some programme components such as equipment donation did not include stakeholder participation leading to less local ownership in the process. This created a model of dependence where Garissa polytechnics relied on AKF for the supply of equipment and materials thus decreasing the sustainability of this programme objective. Moreover, if the programme had accentuated cross-actor collaboration among TVET centres, local CSOs, and the government, this would have increased actors' communication and participation to continue the practice of supporting and advocating for the youth to become active social and economic agents in Garissa long after programme completion.

Additionally, the lack of provision of seed capital and resources to successful TVET graduates was a challenge for some youth who could not afford to start their microenterprises or be absorbed in the labour market immediately. Even though many Garissa youth learned a skill from a polytechnic and some had either found employment or started their microenterprises, other TVET graduates remain unemployed. Nevertheless, despite the shortcomings of the programme, a key feature and value of the AKF Youth Empowerment Programme was that it

showcased that Garissa youth are important agents in the society who have the potential of furthering social and economic development in Garissa with the support of local CSOs, government, community members and other local stakeholders.

### **5.3. Conclusions**

The AKF Youth Empowerment Programme made significant steps in achieving programme objectives. Yet, the human development paradigm showcases that the sustainability of programme outcomes requires more than three year's work at the community level. The study concludes that NGOs such as AKF can lay the foundations for local development through inclusive community participation, and promoting activities that empower the youth. For instance, by encouraging Garissa youth to access credit and loan facilities provided by the government, and investing in gaining requisite market skills from polytechnics, it can permit Garissa youth to earn an independent income and contribute financially to their households and communities. This will not only lead to economic empowerment but also allow social empowerment whereby youth have increased self-esteem, respect, and participation in decision-making processes (Nikkhah and Redzuan, 2010).

Though, it is also worth noting that local development is not only hinged on economic and social agents but also on political contexts that individuals operate in. Hence, though Garissa youth may have an increased economic and social agency to be active agents in their communities, these may be precluded by the political environment in which they function. Hence, the call for government actors to be active and engaging in creating favourable/conducive conditions that can permit for youth empowerment is imperative.

With regards to local development, with the assistance of the human development paradigm as a lens to the implementation of the programme, the AKF Youth Empowerment Programme highlighted the importance of capacity building, skills-based interventions, entrepreneurship and leadership as key strategies in establishing and fostering socio-economic development. For example, Garissa youth have been trained on various capacities from acquiring a technical skill to financial literacy, and life skills. These have empowered individual youth and established youth groups such as the ABCs and VSLAs to bring their ideas to fruition with limited technical and financial assistance. Besides, the youth have not only learned to increase their financial positions but are also cooperating and coordinating to create knowledge transfer systems to their peers who were not part of the programme to as well empower them. These continued efforts may not translate to immediate results but over time will lead to the growth of the local



economy and a socially cohesive community in Garissa. This compounds to the narrative that development is a multi-faceted and multi-phased concept that cannot be achieved within a short period.

Turning a look into the relationship between the youth, government and local stakeholders this is a continuous process that requires buy-in from all involved. For instance, study participants revealed that CSOs can act as interlocutors in supporting youth in having access to social, political, and economic opportunities but need support from external agencies to be able to fulfil their missions. This is because they sometimes face challenges in technical and financial matters. Furthermore, with increased enrolment in TVET centres, they require support from the county government to be effective in their operations and management so that they can efficiently deliver quality training to Garissa youth. In addition, there is a need for the government to develop plans that cater to TVET graduates who can successfully enter the Garissa labour market. Hence, reaching a local collective action, and consensus by leveraging local knowledge and resources from all actors including the private sector – without programming support – is the best approach to sustaining programme outcomes, decreasing external dependency and should be a long term objective (Nikkah and Redzuan, 2010).

NGOs such as AKF, ActionAid and RTI International (as revealed from the study) act as outside change agents that are supposed to help the local community realise their potential through awareness-raising, provisions/donations of simple technologies, capacity-building, and start-up kits. It is the stress on community self-reliance that programme outcomes will be sustained by community efforts beyond the period of NGO assistance (Korten, 1990).

#### **5.4. Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions made, the study makes the following recommendations for current and future NGOs present in Garissa, local CSOs, the government, private sector actors, youth, and community members, given that NGO participation in isolated settings has a bearing on local socio-economic development.

##### **5.4.1. Provision of refresher courses, and start-up kits and/or internship placements for TVET graduates**

With increased enrolment numbers in the newly refurbished Garissa polytechnics, it is natural that these institutions will experience challenges as they accommodate new students in addition to handling graduates. Hence, to cater to students who are not immediately absorbed into the Garissa labour market upon graduation, it is recommended that future NGO programming

provides start-up kits or seed capital to successful polytechnic graduates. This will assist youth in establishing their microenterprises in addition to having the capacity to absorb other graduates who subsequently enter into the labour economy. Furthermore, for those who struggle to find work in the labour market, TVET institutions can set up internship placements (maybe a month) for their graduates in the market economy. This will ensure that graduates are not only exposed to the realities of the labour market but potential employers can witness the added value and skills of the youth. These efforts may, later on, result in temporary or permanent employment (Baart and Maarse, 2017). While those who are neither placed at an internship nor able to find employment (through formal or self-employment) can be permitted to take up refresher courses at TVET institutions so that newly acquired skills are not easily lost. These efforts will not only lead to sustainable employment but subsequently, economic development in Garissa as more youth join the labour economy, become highly skilled and gain decent incomes that can be channelled into the Garissa economy.

#### **5.4.2. Provide continuous monitoring to beneficiaries**

Change cannot be made and achieved with one-off trainings. Hence, based on the findings of this study, continuous monitoring should be provided to beneficiaries of the programme so that skills and knowledge acquired are continuously adapted. In this case, CSOs involved in the programme should continuously follow-up with youth groups such as the ABCs and VSLAs to ensure that they are putting to use the skills acquired. Moreover, they can continue to provide support where the youth still face challenges such as accessing national funds. Additionally, TVET centres can regularly follow up with TVET graduates (for at least a year) to ensure that skills attained are not only retained but are being applied. TVET centres can also provide support to graduates who still face employment challenges after graduation. Future NGO programming should also establish a mechanism whereby local organisations such as CSOs, government actors, and TVETs involved in capacity building trainings are monitored and also supported where they face challenges.

#### **5.4.3. Creation of a local stakeholder and engagement strategy/plan**

During AKF programming it was revealed that even though the relationship the youth shared with Garissa VTCs, the government, the private sector, and CSOs had significantly improved, relationships among these actors was a primary area of concern for sustained dialogue and change within the Garissa community once programming ended. For Garissa youth to realise their potential, engagement and dialogue among these actors are crucial for formulating youth

agendas and managing youth affairs independent of outside agents. For future NGO programming, it is thus recommended that a local stakeholder engagement strategy is devised to improve relations and advocacy among actors while paying attention to trust-building in CSOs and the government while creating further linkages with the private sector. These actions may lead to the establishment of a collaboration mechanism among actors in which there is a likelihood that sustainability plans to generate funding for TVETs and CSOs that support youth needs are created. Furthermore, with linkages to the private sector, government and TVET actors can devise job strategies such as job sharing, carving, and creation opportunities that not only nurture youth potential but enhance inclusion among youth of different profiles.

#### **5.4.4. Integrate greater local knowledge and perspectives in all NGO programme components**

The human development paradigm showcased that building programmes with local knowledge and perspectives is not only feasible but recommended for successful and sustainable outcomes. The AKF Youth Empowerment Programme was able to feed local perspectives into some programme objectives such as enhancing the quality of TVET centres to equip youth with requisite market skills. However, the programme would have benefited greatly if local participation was holistically incorporated in all programme elements to understand the unique challenges faced by different stakeholders, mitigate programme implementation difficulties as well as generate greater programme support beyond intervention areas. For instance, calling on rural and different population sects to be active participants in the programme.

#### **5.5. Recommendations for further research**

This study focused on the participation of NGOs in local development using the Aga Khan Foundation Youth Empowerment Programme in Garissa as a case study. The study was limited to the urban areas of Garissa. It would have been useful to understand NGO participation in the rural areas of marginalised counties. For instance, the type of programming they implement and the subsequent impact (if any) on rural communities and economies. Additionally, how do rural and urban development rates compare? Where do NGOs in this instance have a greater margin for creating sustainable socio-economic development? Hence, this is an area of interest that is suggested for future research that can generate more knowledge on the work of NGOs and the scale and impact of their development work.

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## APPENDIX I: Key Informant Interview Guide

### The Participation of NGOs in Local Development: Aga Khan Foundation's Youth Empowerment Programme in Garissa County

Targeted population group for phone interviews (due to the current COVID-19 context):

- CSO/NGO workers/officials, government officials, religious leaders, market actors, women/youth groups.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT AND GETTING CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Thank you very much for setting time aside for us today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. This key informant interview is a research on *the Participation of Non-Governmental Organisation in Local Development looking at a Case Study of the Aga Khan Foundation's Youth Empowerment Programme*. My work as a researcher is to make sure that you express your views on my study. Before we begin this discussion, I want to let you know that all information we discuss during this session will not be connected to any specific person. You will not be identified in any report. Your participation is completely voluntary, and feel free to answer the questions am going to ask you. The interview will take about less than an hour, around 40 min. I hope this fine with you.

(Proceed to the next section if consent has been provided)

**ASK PERMISSION TO RECORD:** If you don't mind, I wish to record our conversation purely as a reminder later of what I will not be able to write down during the interview to write the study. Is that ok with you? (If not, take written notes only).

- ❖ **YES, consent provided to audio record**
- ❖ **NO, consent not provided to audio record** (do not record; take written notes only)

Key informant interview details	
Interviewer Name	
KII Respondent Name	
KII Respondent Position	
Organisation and Department	
Phone Number	
Email address	
Date of Interview	
Time of Interview	
Place of Interview	

## **QUESTIONS**

### **NATURE OF YOUTH PROGRAMMES**

1. Please describe the **socio-economic and political situation** in Garissa?
2. What are the **primary opportunities** for youth in Garissa and elsewhere? Please explain.
3. Do you think there are **any barriers to opportunities for youth/and or the community** in Garissa? Please explain.
4. Do you know of any **youth programmes in Garissa**? If yes, what are the purposes of these programs, what do they address/entail?
5. Kindly give me a **brief background of known youth programmes in Garissa**, and their impact on their community.

### **AKF PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES**

1. Can you please describe **Aga Khan Foundation's activities in Garissa**? Beginning with the nature of their operations. If at all you are aware of their activities.

### **CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

1. Do you know if the **AKF Youth Empowerment Programme has helped Garissa youth access socio-economic and political opportunities**? If so, please explain.
2. Overall, **what do you think are the gains and shortcomings of the AKF Youth Empowerment Programme development in Garissa**? Please explain.
3. In your opinion, what do you think are the **long-lasting benefits of the AKF Youth Empowerment Programme to the community** – or Garissa county? Please explain. *(If the respondent needs prompting, ask about the possible lasting social, economic or technical capacities of other involved stakeholders.)*

### **CONCLUSION**

1. What questions do you have about this discussion? Is there someone else whom you can recommend I can talk to about this study?

## APPENDIX 2: A Map of Garissa County

Garissa County: Gini Coefficient by Ward

