

## **Equity in Access to Youth Polytechnics by Graduates of Primary and Secondary Schools in Kakamega County**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to investigate factors which determine equity and access of youth to YPs. The objective of the study was to determine equity levels in access to YPs in Kakamega County. There are many youth who drop out of school before completing a given level of education due to various challenges. Others after completing primary and secondary levels of education cannot proceed to the next level of education due to inability to afford the costs related to financing education and social challenges. Yet it is at those levels that are associated with imparting skills that can make them productive members of the society. It is estimated that, every year about 200,000 youth who sit for KCPE examination in Kenya fail to transit to secondary schools because of very low scores and lack of enough form one place. The study was guided by the social justice theory postulated by John Rawls 1950. The study adopted a descriptive survey. The population comprised 2450 respondents. A stratified sampling technique was used to categorise the youth into their respective years of study while proportionate sampling ensured equitable representation of students from different years of study. Simple random sampling technique was used to identify 230 youth polytechnic trainees to participate in the study the study will also used 62 instructors, 15 Youth Polytechnics' managers and 7 District youth officers to collect data. Questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis was used to collect data. Collected data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Qualitative analysis which included frequency counts, mean and percentages. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the equity in access to YPs.

From the findings it was noted that access to YPs in Kakamega County did not have equity as it was skewed towards male gender and it mainly attracted students from low socio-economic background. The study recommended that there was need for financial assistance inform of bursaries to allow more students to access YPs and affordable boarding facilities provided to enable more females to access YPS in Kakamega County.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Problem

In many in developing Countries, a bigger number of youth fail to access institution of learning and training. In 1990, Jomtien Declaration of the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) commenced its preamble by highlighting the failure to achieve access and equity in education. This has been a challenge in Kenya, despite the governments' effort to make education and training more accessible.

UNESCO (2009) notes that in Kenya children from poor households are less than half as likely to proceed to form one as those from the richest 20 percent. The report further states that in Nairobi, slum residents have a 20 percent attendance points lower than other city children. These inequalities are replicated in tertiary education. Tertiary institutions form a network of institutions that support the production of the higher-order capacity necessary for development.

The capacity for countries to adopt, disseminate and maximize rapid technological advancement is dependent on adequate systems of tertiary education. Improved and accessible tertiary education and effective national innovations systems can help a developing country like Kenya progress toward sustainable achievements in the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs), particularly those goals related to all levels of education, health and gender equity.

Kinyanjui (2007), Lewin (2007), Muya (1994) and Dey (1985) argued that by giving everybody a chance to access tertiary education, the Government would provide a level playing field for everyone to be economically productive. People from poorer backgrounds are less likely to burden themselves with debt as, relative to what they have lived their lives off. They are frightened from taking on too much debt comparative to their parents' income. They thus do not get a tertiary education.

The concept of Youth Polytechnics (YPs) was developed and popularized in the mid-1960s by the National Christian Council of Kenya (NCCCK) as a solution to the problem of education and employment of primary school leavers. YPs originated as a non-formal educational initiative, aiming to providing training opportunities to primary school leavers relating directly to the practical skill requirements (Dey, 1985). They were conceived as small, non-residential centers; providing generalized skills associated with the farming activities of the neighborhood (Thompson, 1981). YPs (originally called village polytechnics) were to provide rural youth with skills that could be used in the local economy. They would provide practical training, linked with production, and so assist in the formation of a cadre of trained artisans and other self-employed workers ((Oketch, 2007; DANIDA, 1985)

Originally the main financial support of the polytechnics was the NCCCK with additional funds from the local community and churches. YPs were gradually (1970-71) taken over by the Government, which paid mainly the salaries of the teachers. They were expected to become self-sustaining over time, on the basis of the production of goods for the local market. There are now over 700 YPs. Most of them are small training centers that provide local youth with an opportunity to learn practical skills, usually in masonry, carpentry, tailoring, dressmaking, knitting, home economics and livestock rearing. Earlier assessment of the YP Programme found that they were successful in changing the attitudes of young people towards technical education and manual work, and that they had enabled many young people to engage in gainful employment. Statement of the Problem

Every year there are a number of youths who after primary level education are unable to transit to secondary education due to various obstructions such as; low performance in KCPE, lack of space for admission in secondary schools and lack of school fees (MOE, 2009). For instance in 2011, out

of 776,214 candidates who sat for KCPE only 372,583 scored average mark, while 403,630 scored below average. Most of these pupils (213,453) who scored below average did not transit to secondary education. In Kakamega county in the same year, out of 34,355 candidates of KCPE only 24,606 (71.62%) scored above average and were to proceed to secondary schools (MOE, 2011). Twenty eight percent (28.38%) who scored below average were unlikely transit to secondary education. There are also youth who drop out of primary school before completing class eight. The national figure on drop out currently stands 3.7% and 3.5% for girls and boys respectively in primary (MOE, 2005a) whereas others drop out from secondary school before completion.

## **1.2 Research Objective**

The specific research objective of the study were to:-

- (i) Determine equity levels in access to Youth Polytechnics in Kakamega County by student characteristics.

## **1.3 Theoretical Framework**

The study was guided by the social justice theory postulated by John Rawls upon which the concept of equity was founded (Rawls, 1971). Rawls focused on the idea of justice and fairness in distribution of goods and essential services while ensuring that social and economic inequalities are organized to offer the greatest possible benefit to the worst-off in society, while upholding fair equality of opportunity.

According to this theory, for justice to prevail the worse off or disadvantaged members of the society should be considered or compensated in the provision of goods and services. It also points out that due to lack of equity in distribution of essential needs, every society is always faced with the choice about whether to stay with the current laws and policies or modify them so as to achieve equity. Advocates of the theory observed that, for justice to prevail the society should change its policies and laws to raise the position of the least advantaged in the society (Rawls, 2001) the implication is that societies should focus on creating a system that is fair to every member of the society. It is inferred from the theory that for fairness to prevail even those who are not economically able, and those who are not able to score high marks to enable them transit to secondary schools and those who drop out of school should be taken care of, by providing an alternative avenue like YPs. This is to ensure that they are not disadvantaged in life due to lack of skills that can make them productive in society.

The theory of social justice will be used in this study to show the efforts made by the government in reviving YPs and tackling equity issues through provision of bursaries and access to YPs opportunities. This study will consider acquisition of skills as an important requirement by all members of the society in order to uplift them from abject poverty. All youth irrespective of their cognitive ability, family background or gender should not be disadvantaged. The theory will be utilized in describing the level of fairness in access to YPs by youth from different socio- economic background, both gender and the challenges they face in access.

## **2.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Research Design**

This study used descriptive survey research design. According to Koul (1990), descriptive research studies are designed to obtain pertinent information concerning current status of phenomenon. Descriptive studies have been classified into 3 categories; survey studies, interrelationship studies, and developmental studies. Survey research was employed in the study, Gay (1981) defines survey

research as an attempt to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables. The design shows how the research is set up, what happens to the subjects and what methods of data collection are used. According to Cohen and Manion (1994), survey studies are designed to determine the nature of an existing state of affairs. Survey method is suitable for the study because a survey study is a self report study which requires collection of quantifiable information from the sample. The specific sample survey employed by the study is the sample survey which studies a population through sampling method in order to not only discover the relative distribution and incidences but also the interrelationship of sociological and psychological variables (Kerlinger, 2004).

## 2.2 Target Population

The target population was the Youth polytechnic students of all public YPs in Kakamega County in 2012. Students were the target population because the questions of the study could be answered by the students as they were directly involved in the study and understand and are most suited to describe the situation in YPs. If the questions are correctly answered the objective of the study will be achieved.

Kakamega County is divided into eleven districts. It has a total of twenty three public YPs with a student population of 2,300. There are a total of 115 instructors, 23 managers, 11 District youth officers, one county youth officer and one county director of education.

### 2.2.1 Sample Size

The sample sizes of YPs' instructors, managers, District youth officers and trainees were determined using a formula recommended by Watson (2001)

$$n = \frac{\{P(1-P)\}}{\frac{A^2 + (1-P)}{Z^2 N}} R$$

where

n = Sample size required

N = Number of people in the population

P = Estimated variance in population as a decimal 0.5

A = Precision desired, expressed as a decimal 0.05

Z = Based on confidence level. 1.96 for 95%

R = Estimated response

### **3.0 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.0 Equity Levels in Access to Youth Polytechnics in Kakamega County by Student Characteristics**

The student characteristics that the study considered were; socio-economic status of the family where the students were coming from, gender, distance the students were covering from home to access the YPs, education levels of the students who were joining YPs and the programmes the students were enrolled in, in relation to their socio- economic status.

The purpose of this objective was to enable the study establish if there was equity in access to YPs in Kakamega county by student characteristics. Access to education is determined by a number of factors such as cost, proximity to educational facility and availability of appropriate physical amenities such workshops and adequate instructional material. The parameters under equity the researcher considered were distance covered to access YP; availability of admission chances, allocation of bursary, access to information of admission, the number of students who are joining YPs outside their home sub- county and factors that contribute to high dropout. The student characteristics the researcher considered were; gender, socio-economic status and academic performance.

Equity in access requires that costs and benefits be distributed fairly among regions, individuals, and different social, economic and or ethnic groups, as well as to persons with disability (PWDs) (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985). Other scholars, such as Odebero, et; al. (2007) and Chiuri & Kiumi (2005), assert that the philosophy underlying the concept of equity is to ensure equitable access to educational opportunities for all without any form of discrimination because education is one means by which a nation's income can be redistributed. It is tied to the notion of justice. There are considerable differences in education participation of individuals classified by sex, socio-economic characteristics, and geographical location in Kakamega County.

#### **3.1 Distance Covered by Students to Access Youth Polytechnics in Kakamega County**

Kakamega County has twelve sub- Counties with thirty YPs which are unevenly distributed across the sub- Counties.. There are some sub Counties which have a high distribution of YPs while others have very few.

It was noted that the sub County with highest enrolment was Kakamega South with an enrolment of 688 while the least enrolled sub-County was Kakamega North. It can be deduced that the enrolment across the County varied directly as to the number of YPs.

Sub-Counties with high distribution of YPs have a high enrolment compared to those with few distributions. This in turn has effect on equity in access to YPs as most of the institutions are day institutions without boarding facilities which limit the distance one can cover to access them. As noted earlier most of the students in YPs are from poor background and can ill afford the daily transport cost. Most of these YPs are located in villages where hostel accommodation for the students cannot be found. Female students are the most affected by this unequal distribution because most of them cannot manage to ride bicycles to cover long distance to these institutions of learning. This has continued to deny equity in access to YPs especially by female students. This has left sub-counties with high number of YPs with high student enrolment while those with low number of YPs have low enrolment. This implies that there is low equity in access to YPs in Kakamega County as some Counties are having a high access rate than the others.

Students were asked to give the approximate distance from their place of residence to the polytechnic. Distance covered daily affects the level of accessibility to YPs.

It was noted that 47% of the trainees covered more than two kilometers to attend their training, 27% covered between one and two kilometers while 7% covered less than one kilometer every day to attend training. Distance greatly affected female students' access to YPs. This can be noted from the table, as the distance increases the representation of female students reduces. It was observed by the study that male students were able to cover longer distance to attend to YPs in the county because most of them were able to ride bicycles which was the main mode of transport while most girls were not able to ride bicycles. It was further observed that male students were secure to start their journey to YPs early in the morning without risk of being attacked on the way. It was further noted that out of the thirty YPs in the County only three had boarding facilities that could only accommodate a total of 240 trainees. This implied that distance was a challenge to accessing YPs. Most of the students come from low socio-economic status; they may not be able to afford daily transport. This has had an effect on the number of students who are enrolling in YPs. Previous research has shown that distance is an impediment to school enrollment, with some researchers arguing that female schooling may be more sensitive to physical distance to school due to safety concerns Alderman and King, (1998). The study concurs with the finding of data from the Western Kenya vocational training project which showed that on average approximately 23% of individuals in the study were within three kilometers of either public vocational institution. On average there were 2 public institutions within 10 kilometers of the homes of the over 2,000 individuals in the study (Hicks et al 2011).

Kakamega County has twelve sub-counties, with a population of about 800,989 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2009) which is distributed evenly apart from a few urban centers that may have a high concentration. The distribution of YPs in the county is not even. Some sub-counties have a higher distribution than others. This enables some school leavers to have more access to YPs than others given that most of the YPs do not have boarding facilities. It was further revealed that distance was one of the main challenges facing trainees in YPs in the county as it is indicated in Table 4.11. 45% of the respondents strongly agreed that distance was the main challenge that affected access to YPs. This is consistent with previous research that has argued that girls schooling is more sensitive to distance than boys schooling (Alderman and King, 1998). According to Kenya National Bureau of statistics (2009) Kakamega County had 185056 youths; a number of them about 740022 youth did not have any form of training or skill which can enable them to engage in meaningful economic production.

### **3.2 Level of Education for Students Who Enroll in Youth Polytechnics in Kakamega County**

According to Kakamega County examination officer, the County for the last five years has had a total of 173,430 candidates who sat for class eight. On average 70% of this number has been transiting to secondary schools while 30% remain, of which a few join YPs. During the same period, the County had 72,293 candidates who sat for KCSE. On average 12,400 qualified to join university while 50,666 qualified to join other middle level colleges for training. About 21,687 who scored between grade D and E qualify to join YPs. From the stated statistics it can be noted that there are many eligible youth who can join YPs for training.

On students' characteristics, YPs were noted to be attracting very few students who have completed secondary level of education. About 130 (57%) were class eight graduates, while 57 (25%) were form four graduates. 30 (13%) were students who had dropped out of secondary level of education while about 13 (6%) were students who had dropped out of primary school level of education. This

indicates that YPs in the County attract mainly primary school graduates and a few secondary school graduates and a few students who drop out at various learning cycles.

More than a half of the students who enroll in YPs in Kakamega County are primary school graduates. Students who had not completed class eight level of education formed the least percentage 6% of students enrolled in YPs. This implied that those students who dropout early from schooling may not benefit from any other formal training. This could be mainly as a result of the curriculum that requires some levels of literacy and numeracy, which majority of these early school leavers have not acquired by the time the dropout of formal learning.

Most of the class eight graduates 194(89.4%) who joined YPs scored below average mark at KCPE. Very few of the students 23(10.6%) had scored average and above average. This could be as a result of systemic barriers that lie in the YPs themselves. They fail to attract the best performers. A wide range of institutional practices can discourage participation. Poor quality of curriculum delivery and poor learning environment all may be contributing factors to failure to attract the best students.

Youth polytechnics need to tailor their training on module kind of structure that will ensure that the level of entry of a trainee will be determined according to education background. This will ensure that all the legible trainees are attracted to join as they will join at their respective levels.

### **3.3 Socio-Economic Status of Students and Access to Youth Polytechnics in Kakamega County**

School fees were noted to be one of the factors that hindered access to education and training in Kakamega County. Most parents and guardians struggled to see their children through education. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2009 the poverty index of constituencies in the County stood at an average of 63.96%. Most parents were observed not to be able to raise the required fee despite the fact that government gave a subsidy of Ksh. 15000 per student. Most families operate below poverty line.

### **3.4 Association between Students' Socio-Economic Status and Courses Undertaken**

It was observed that a total of nine courses are being offered in YPs, however it was observed that not all the YPs in Kakamega County were offering the nine courses. Some offered less due to constraints of teaching learning resources. This was noted to affect enrolment. Institutions that offered more courses were noted to attract more students than those that offered fewer courses. To establish the association, a cross tabulation was done on the course of study and the socio-economic status of the students.

Most students who enroll in YPs in Kakamega County come from low socio-economic families 57.4%, middle socio-economic families 36.5% and 6.1% came from high socio-economic families. Most students from high socio-economic status enrolled in electrical and electronic 66.7% and ICT 28.6% courses. Other courses offered by YPs in the county did not attract students from high socio-economic status. Hair dressing and ICT courses were most popular with students from medium socio-economic families at 76.9% and 64.3% respectively. Students from medium socio-economic families also enrolled in other courses being offered by YPs in the County although their representation varied from 11.1% in Agribusiness to 40% in building and construction.

Students from low socio-economic families were the most enrolled in YPs in Kakamega County 57.4%. It can be noted that they enrolled in almost all the courses offered apart from electrical and electronics, however it can be observed that only three courses, dress making 81.6%, agribusiness 88.9% and motor vehicle mechanics 77.8% were popular with students from low socio-economic families. These courses were popular with low socio-economic students because they were the most

familiar and they hoped that they would easily provide them with economic opportunities in the juakali sector upon completion of the course.

It was further observed that most of the students who enrolled in YPs were mainly from low socio-economic status and they tended to enroll in the traditional courses which they were familiar with yet they were even qualified to study other courses like ICT. Disparity is distributed according to socio-economic status. About 67% of those taking ICT were from high socio-economic status, while 33% were from medium socio-economic class and none was from low socio-economic class. Those from medium economic status are represented although on small scale in fabulous courses those are ICT and Electrical and Electronics equally they are also in traditional courses like Motor vehicle mechanics, Carpentry and joinery, Building and Construction and Dress making. Those from low socio-economic status are locked out from expensive courses like electronics. Interview with YP managers revealed that the course required the students under taking it to purchase additional training tools and materials which made most students from low socio-economic status to shun it due to related costs. As noted by Odebero in 2008 that SES is a major determinant of type of course one would take, not just in universities but also in middle level colleges and YPs. They also tended to trust those courses to enable them secure a job or were easy to start their own income generating enterprises with the skills acquired.

It was noted that there is no equity in enrolment in the courses offered in YPs. Some courses were popular with particular socio-economic groups. There is need to review the curriculum offered in YPs with a view of making the courses offered attractive to students from high socio-economic status.

It was observed that about 156(78%) of trainees' school fees was paid by their parents while bursaries catered for less than 5(5%) while 3(0.3%) got support from constituency development fund and other organizations. This clearly indicates most of the students in YPs do not benefit from bursaries or any other form of assistance apart from their parents and guardians. Inadequate finances to cater for all eligible needy students, weak administrative systems as evidenced by delays in communicating the bursary awards to beneficiaries and questionable bursary eligibility criteria has even made the situation worse.

On allocation of bursary, the study observed that all the trainees were given a government subsidy of Ksh 15,000 and were expected to pay Ksh 10,000 per year and meet other costs like purchase of uniform and lunch expenses which totaled to about Ksh 15000 per year. This was still a challenge to most students' whose parents were finding it difficult to meet the cost. The distribution of incomes in Kenya is skewed in favour of the higher income groups. In 1999, the top 10% of the households in Kenya commanded 42.72% of the total income while the bottom 10% had only 0.76%. In Nyanza Province the figures were 42.81% and 0.63% respectively and in Nairobi Province they were 45.2% and 1.61% respectively. Similarly, the distribution in rural areas was 41.06% and 0.84% and in urban it was 39.04% and 1.39% respectively (Society for International Development, 2004: 5). These differences translate into the differences in ability to pay school fees with the rural folk and the poor being more disadvantaged than the urban population and the rich respectively.

### **3.5 Access to Information about Admission to Youth Polytechnics in Kakamega County**

Dissemination of information is important in assisting people to make informed decision. In order for parents and students to make informed decisions about joining YPs, there is need for proper sensitization through well coordinated publicity. Interview with YP managers revealed that about 95% of colleges advertised their courses.

On publicity and knowledge on the courses offered by YPs, it was noted that all the YPs advertised their intake through public forums or barazas within their area of location. A few YPs about 6 (46%) advertised their courses through posters. None of the YPs in Kakamega County advertised their courses through print or electronic media. This implied that circulation of information was mainly limited in the locality where the institution was located. This limited circulation and in turn it also limited the applicants who were attracted to join the institutions. Low rate of advertisement which was mainly confined in the local surrounding of the institutions may be one of the contributing factors to low enrolment.

### **3.6 Equity in Access to Youth Polytechnics in Kakamega County by Gender**

Enrolment in YPs in Kakamega County is skewed in favour of male gender, that 1,417 out the total enrolment of 3,691 (38.4%) were female. It was further established that more females than males dropped out YPs before completing the course. This reduced equity and access to YPs for females. Courses offered in YPs in Kakamega County were mainly nine in number., It was noted out of the nine courses offered, females were not represented in three courses as compared to two for males. This implied that that there were more courses appealing to the male trainees than to female trainees.

The fewer number of female students than their male students reflects a disparity in equity and access to YPs in favour of males in Kakamega County. The finding of the study is in agreement with earlier studies of Ndegwa (1991), and Gatheru & Shaw (1998), Ndegwa observes that in the 1980's the unemployment rate among females was more than double (24.1 %) than that of males (11.7 %). This was partly attributed to lack of training among girls and women, especially in technical skills needed in the informal sector. Ndegwa (1991), Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1996, and Gatheru and Shaw (1998) concur that when gender inequities occur in education and the labour market, girls and women are the most disadvantaged. They continue to point out that the problem is complicated by the absence of reliable data needed for policy decisions. Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1996 recommended that girls should be encouraged and assisted to undertake training in non-traditional female occupations. The Sessional Paper partly bases its recommendation on the assumption that males and females are equally likely to go for technical training. Stromquist (1998) pointed out that government reductions in support of education and training negatively affect poor families to a larger extent. He continued to assert that when this happens, it is the girls in the poor families that are affected most. Negative changes in an economy, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, are likely to cause a disproportionate increase in the workload of women and the girl-child as they are required to participate more in earning an income for the household's survival. Jaquette (1997) observed that women presented the most persistent outcry against the costs and the assumptions of structural adjustments because of increased poverty and inequality of opportunities. Programmes aimed at encouraging and sensitizing women and girls, especially those from marginal areas, on the need for training should be initiated.

A report of a presidential committee on employment in Kenya recommended that efforts be made in technical training institutions to encourage girls to take up training skills that give them more options and opportunities for employment (Ndegwa, 1991). The report noted that more girls than boys drop out from school, especially in marginal areas. In view of this, out-of-school education and training (informal) would increase literacy and offer work skills to girls who constitute the majority of dropouts. A study of factors that account for gender differences in access to postsecondary education in Uganda found out that the school system and household and labour market factors interact in a way that discourages girls' participation in training institutions (Kasente,

1995). Kasente's findings show that females want to be trained; however, there are barriers that discourage them from going for training.

UNESCO (2008) found out that women worldwide constitute 46.8% of training students' population. Therefore, the finding from this study agrees with the UNESCO study which indicates that there is gender disparity in access to YP training in favour of male in Kakamega County.

### **3.7 Equity in Access to Youth Polytechnics by Students of Special Needs in Kakamega County**

There were about 3823 learners in primary schools in the County according to County statistics officer, who are special as a result of mental, physical or sensory impairment in Kakamega County. Every year, about 350 learners with special needs sit for their KCPE examination in the county, and there after very few proceed to secondary schools because of the low marks they score. Every year a number of candidates who sit for KCPE and are with special needs. There are others also because of their challenges they are unable to cope up with the normal curriculum hence drop out of normal learning system. These learners have not been catered for in YPs because the instructors do not have the skills required to handle them.

The individuals are often limited by both physical and social barriers which exclude them from society and prevent them from actively participating in the development of their nations. They require training and skills that can enable them become self reliant and productive members of the society. Education for All means ensuring that all children have access to basic education and training of good quality. This requires creating an environment in schools and in basic education and training programmes in which learners are both able and enabled to learn. Most of these learners with special needs do not transit to secondary schools after class eight level of education. This is mainly because of low scores that most of them attain in KCPE. They would be expected to join institutions like YPs where they would acquire skills to become productive members of the society.

Enrolment in YPs in Kakamega County did not have any special needs students. Interview with YP managers revealed that such cases were referred to special needs training centres because they did not have trained human resource to handle the special needs. Physical facilities available also did not help matters as they were all constructed without the students' with disability in mind. Learning environments is an essential part of the overall efforts by institutions to increase access to, and improve the quality of learning. The few learning materials available were also not adapted to the needs of special persons. This was noted to disadvantage students with disability who would have wished to join these institutions of learning. This implied that there was no equity in access to YPs among students with disability as they were not allowed admission in main stream YPs.

County Youth Officer confirmed that there was need to bring on board learner with special needs. She however noted that it has been a great challenge because all the instructors in YPs in the County have not been trained to handle the special needs cases. She further observed that YPs in the County being mostly day institutions proved a big challenge for learners with special needs to access. UNESCO (2008) views inclusion as "a dynamic approach of responding positively to students' diversity and of seeing individual differences not as problems, but as opportunities for enriching learning." All children and young people of the County, with their individual strengths and weaknesses, with their hopes and expectations, have the right to education and training. It is not our education systems that have a right to certain types of children. Therefore, it is the school system of a county that must be adjusted to meet the needs of all children. (Lindqvist, UN-Rapporteur, 1994)

All students with organic disabilities, learning difficulties or social disadvantages should benefit from a learning environment equivalent to that of other students. Every child, regardless of disability, has the right to access the same opportunities that any other student has.

## **SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **4.1 Summary of Findings**

Equity and access to YPs by student characteristics, it was established that equity levels were low and varied across the County. Some sub-counties had more YPs while others had very few institutions. This forced some trainees to cover more than five kilometers to access the institutions. This had contributed to high dropout of female trainees who could not manage the long distances. Very few 20% YPs provided boarding facilities which locked out most of the potential trainees who came from far to access the institutions especially female students who were not able to commute long distances.

It was noted that YPs attracted very few students from high socio-economic backgrounds, at the same time the few who enrolled were mainly undertaking ICT, electrical and electronic courses. Most of the students who enroll in Yps are from low socio-economic background. They were noted to avoid market competitive courses like ICT, electrical and electronics.

It was further established that there was gender parity in favour of the boys in all the YPs for the period that was under study.

It was established that YPs in Kakamega County did not admit students with special needs due to lack of trained personnel to handle them and lack of modified equipments to enhance learning of the special needs students.

### **4.2 Conclusion**

Equity in access to YPs in Kakamega County was found not to have been achieved as most trainees covered long distances to access YPs. It was noted that dropout occasioned by lack of school fees was common. Beneficiaries of bursaries were noted to be very few. Students with special needs were not admitted in YPs. Students from low socio-economic status shunned some courses while students from high socio-economic status were not attracted to enroll in YPs.

### **4.3 Recommendations**

#### **Equity in Access to Youth Polytechnics in Kakamega County**

I recommend for provision of boarding facilities in YPs, equipping workshops in all YPs; encouraging trainees especially females to rejoin after dropping out due to various reasons, allocating more bursaries to female trainees to encourage them to trainee. Constant review of courses to ensure that they remain relevant to market needs. Reach to all potential trainees to ensure that everybody has information about the courses being offered and the minimum requirement to join the courses. Youth Polytechnics should have provision to cater for students of special needs through training instructors on how to handle special needs cases and also improve on physical facilities to accommodate students with special needs. Review curriculum more regularly to make it more competitive and attractive to students from all socio-economic status.

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