FUATILIA AHADI

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Kenya

NAVIGATING THE TRANSITION FROM EDUCATION TO THE DIGITAL LABOR MARKET: INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Ajenda Kenya

County Voice And Rights

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INTRODUCTION

The study examines how government policies (both National and County) facilitate or hinder the transition of young people from educational institutions into the job market, with a particular emphasis on the digital labor market. It tracks the journey of young individuals from graduation to employment, focusing on policy responsiveness and identifying both enablers and barriers to accessing essential documents needed for this transition, such as national identification, driving licenses, passports, KRA registration, and business permits. The study through a simple random sampling strategy interviewed 481 participants (256 male and 225 female) also explores the consequences of not having access to these critical documents.

The study plays a crucial role in uncovering the status of government promises against policy and legislative promises regarding young people's transition into the job market. By concentrating on Ajira Digital Centers managed by the national government and rural polytechnics operated by county governments, it aligns with national initiatives aimed at generating digital job opportunities. Additionally, it considers county government investments in rural polytechnics, highlighting a multi-level approach to addressing youth employment challenges. This dual focus ensures that both national and local strategies are informed by data-driven insights, ultimately fostering a more effective response to the employment needs of young people.

The study was conducted between 26th of August to 31st of August , focusing on Mombasa (urban), while also examining Kakamega and Homa Bay counties (rural). Both Kakamega and Homa Bay are rural counties with significant youth populations. This dual focus allows for a comprehensive understanding of youth employment transitions in both urban and rural contexts.

INTRODUCTION

Despite youth (men, women, and people with disability aged 18 to 35 years) constituting slightly over 60% of the population of Kenya, the country still lacks accurate data on the population especially on youth to inform policy and legislation. Every election presents hope and opportunity for better life but leaves young people more disillusioned. Leaders seeking political and governance positions make promises which appeal to public emotion but hardly provide lasting solutions to problems that face young people. In 2022, the Kenya Kwanza campaigned on the premise to create one million jobs every year.

In most cases, aspiring leaders make promises but deliver the contrary. They lack evidence-based data to inform the extent to which policy and legislative programs they are proposing and or implementing will respond to the needs of young people while young people also lack the platform to review and or propose the appropriate action that respond to their needs.

The fuatilia Ahadi program sought to Contribute to the building of evidence-based policy and legislative data on young people's transition into the job market to inform governance decision-making and advocacy.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

In view of the context above and particular the government promises, the program implemented was guided by the objectives:

1. To establish the existence and operations of Ajira centers as stated in the government websites/ Database.
2. To establish the employment status of youths transitioning to the labor market and evaluate the effectiveness of government programs such as Ajira centres and ICT hubs in creating job opportunities.
3. To assess the role and effectiveness of village polytechnics and vocational training colleges in equipping youths with relevant skills for the labor market, while identifying associated challenges.

It is our hope that this study will provide a concrete analysis of the Kenya Kwanza Manifesto's achievements, specifically focusing on youth transition to employment. By examining the alignment between the promises made and the existing policies and opportunities, the study aims to offer valuable insights into how effectively the government is fulfilling its commitments to create job opportunities for young people.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The study employed a comprehensive methodology to gather and analyze data for the final report. This included a **mapping and verification survey** aimed at collecting evidence on the existence and operation of government-run Ajira centers. A subsequent **validation forum** was held to verify the accuracy of the information obtained through the mapping exercise. In addition, a **survey questionnaire** was administered to assess the transition of youth from both Ajira centers and local polytechnics, followed by another validation forum to confirm the survey findings. The study used a **random sampling strategy** in the surveys and an **outcome harvest strategy** in the

validation forums to ensure the robustness and reliability of the data collected.

KEY FINDINGS

The study was seeking to establish the extent to which the government has fulfilled their promise of creating jobs to the youth with specific reference to Ajira digital. According to the Ajira digital website, the government had established a total of 27 ajira digital centres (12 in Kakamega , 9 in Homa Bay and 6 in Mombasa). The study however established that 14 (51.85%) out of the 27 were in existence and operational with Homa Bay and Mombasa leading with 4 out of 6, 6 out of 9 representing 67% while Kakamega had 4 out of 12 representing 33%. The study interviewed a total of 481 graduates from ajira digital 240 (49.90%) and rural polytechnics 241(50.10%) in the three counties.

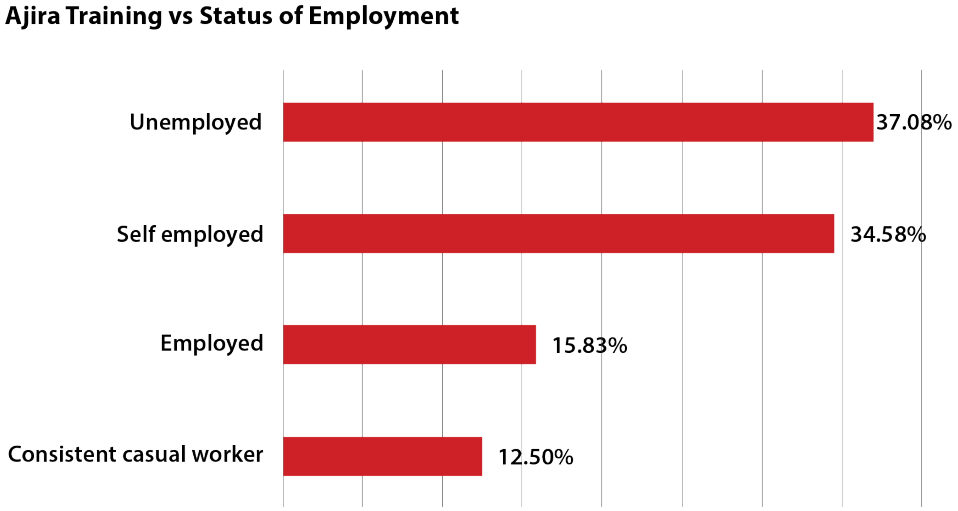


Figure 1: Ajira graduates Distribution of employment status

Of those who graduated from Ajira, 62.92% (151) had secured jobs in various categories including 34.58% self-employment , 15.83% employed and 12.50% consistent casual workers.

Of the people who secured jobs, the survey established their waiting period also varied with 48.84% waiting for less than 12 months, 24.42% waited for a period between 12-24 months and 26.74% waited for more than 24 months.

Of those who graduated from Ajira and were employed, the distribution of their monthly income also varies with those earning below 15,000 leading with 51% followed by those earning between 15,000 and 25000 being 23%. Those earning above 25,000 were 13% .

Ajira relevance and responsivness:

The study revealed that Ajira centers lacked standardized operational procedures. It identified three types of Ajira centers: 1) physical hubs listed on the official website, 2) mobile centers offering short-term courses (ranging from 3 to 5 days), and 3) Ajira centers established through collaboration between Ajira hubs and higher learning institutions.

While Ajira centers were found to be generally relevant, they were not always responsive to the market's demands. Those that formed partnerships with local institutions were more relevant and

responsive, as they offered a wider range of courses that aligned better with market demands. In contrast, standalone Ajira centers were less responsive because they primarily offered basic computer packages, which were not in high demand. Majority of those who appreciated Ajira centers were those who went through centers that had a collaboration with higher learning including Mawego Polytechnic (Homa Bay), Technical university of mombasa (Mombasa) because they offered courses in areas such as graphic design, content creation, and product marketing compared those that operated independently without a partnership like Matungu CDF centers without such collaborations focused mainly on basic computer skills, which were less aligned with current market demands.

Ajira relevance and responsivness:

The study revealed that, despite the Ajira Digital Program being housed under the Ministry of Information, Communication, and Digital Economy (MICDE) on the official website, its establishment lacked clear criteria, with some perceiving it as a political reward for loyalty. While the program was intended to benefit each constituency, the study found significant disparities, with some constituencies hosting multiple centers, while others had none at all.

The study revealed a significant disparity in access between rural and urban areas, with urban residents benefiting disproportionately compared to their rural counterparts. Rural areas faced greater challenges, including non-functional centers, while some rural constituencies had limited access, with centers open only once or twice a week. In contrast, urban centers were more frequently operational, often opening five days a week.

Location: The study also establish that some of the areas where the centers were established were not conclusive for young people.Some of the centers were within the ict hubs within the constituency offices which the youth had no problems with while others were established within police station and chiefs office and the youth had problem indicating that those spaces are more associated with intimidation. The study therefore recommended that the centers needed to be located in neutral, youth-friendly environments to encourage participation and create a welcoming atmosphere.

The study recommended that the government make a deliberate effort to standardize content and content delivery by forming partnerships and collaborations with already established institutions. In areas without such institutions, the government could implement mobile centers equipped with standardized content and all necessary tools to facilitate effective delivery.

The study highlighted the absence of a standardized application process across the centers, which, in some cases, limited access for certain individuals. In some regions, the centers were used as political tools, with management controlled by local Members of Parliament or their affiliates. The forum recommended establishing a nationally recognized standard for the application process and operation of the centers, ensuring that they are free from political interference. Additionally, it emphasized the need for equity to guarantee fair treatment across all regions.

Center specific status.

The study compared what the government had posted on the website and the reality on the ground. The matrix present the specific centers results

COUNTY SPECIFIC STATUS



Homabay County





Centre	Status	Observations
Oyugis Town Location (CDF)	Operational	Operates daily; graduation every three months. 10 people graduated in the first graduation. 21 people graduated in the second graduation. 3rd graduation in the process, 20 people expected to graduate.
East Kamgak Sikri	Operational	Trains twice a month; has trained 120 from January to July.
Kachien South	Operational	Trains twice a month; targets 200 participants per month. Expected to receive 30 computers from CONSA technology. Often train participants with their own gadgets(phones and computers or laptops)
Kodera South (Ombek Chief Hall)	Operational	The center is non-operational. The computers are placed in one room, and there is no activity taking place.
Omiro CDF	Not Operational	Exist on the website but does not exist on the ground
Kosene	Operational	Operates twice a month.
Ratanga	Operational	Operates daily.
Magunga	Does Not Exist	Exists on the website but does not exist on the ground .
Sindo	Operational	Operates twice a week.

Mombasa County



Centre	Status	Observations
Shika Adabu	Not Operational	The center is non-operational. Computers were supplied then relocated to the Likoni NG-CDF.
Likoni NG-CDF	Operational	Fully operational and equipped; benefits from equipment transferred from Shika Adabu.
Hatua	Operational	Well-equipped and actively engaged in providing digital skills and resources.
Nyali NG-CDF	Operational	Fully operational with 6 desktop computers; supports youth with digital tools and has a community library supported by SOS.
JKUAT	Not Operational	Equipment broke down; no designated structure for the center in the campus.
Mikindani Youth Empowerment	Operational	Fully operational with some desktop computers and laptops available.

Kakamega County





Centre	Status	Observations
Malinya CDF	Operational	Has 3 functional laptops out of 30; serves 600 institutional students and 1,670 hub collaborators since 2022.
Navakholo CDF	Operational	Working, but institutional information is confidential.
Matungu CDF	Operational	Given 39 laptops, only 2 are functional; has WIFI but no electricity due to unpaid bills.
Butere CDF	Operational	Active but warned against giving out information.
Khwisero	Not Operational	Center exists but is not working. One person employed at the center but warned against giving any information
Koyonzo Chiefs Camp	Not Operational	The center is non-operational. It has 10 faulty laptops, making it unsuitable for training, and an instructor has been posted to this facility
Butere Shiatsala	Not Operational	The center exists within the DO's offices. It has no computers.
Butere Iunza Acc	Does Not Exist	Exist on the website but does not exist on the ground
Eregi chiefs camp	Does Not Exist	Exist on the website but does not exist on the ground
Iguhu police station	Does Not Exist	Exist on the website but does not exist on the ground
Shiseso Health Centre	Does Not Exist	Exist on the website but does not exist on the ground
Butere Marenyo chiefs camp	Does Not Exist	Exist on the website but does not exist on the ground

The study therefore recommends the need for government 1) to standardize courses across all Ajira centers 2) prioritize partnership with Institution 3) Regularly review courses based on market demand

The rural polytechnics

Of the 241 respondents who graduated in the rural polytechnics. 164 (68.05%) of those who graduated from the county based village polytechnics got jobs in various categories including 31.95% being self employed, 19.92% being employed and 16.18% being consistent casual workers.

The waiting period for those who graduated and got jobs from the local polytechnics varied, including 41.67% waited between 0-12 months, 25% waited between 12-24 months and more than 24 months 33.33%.

And those who secured jobs also had various levels of monthly income. 53.66% were earning below 15,000, 17.68% were earning between 15000 and 25000, 10.98% were earning 25000 while 17.68% preferred not to disclose their income.

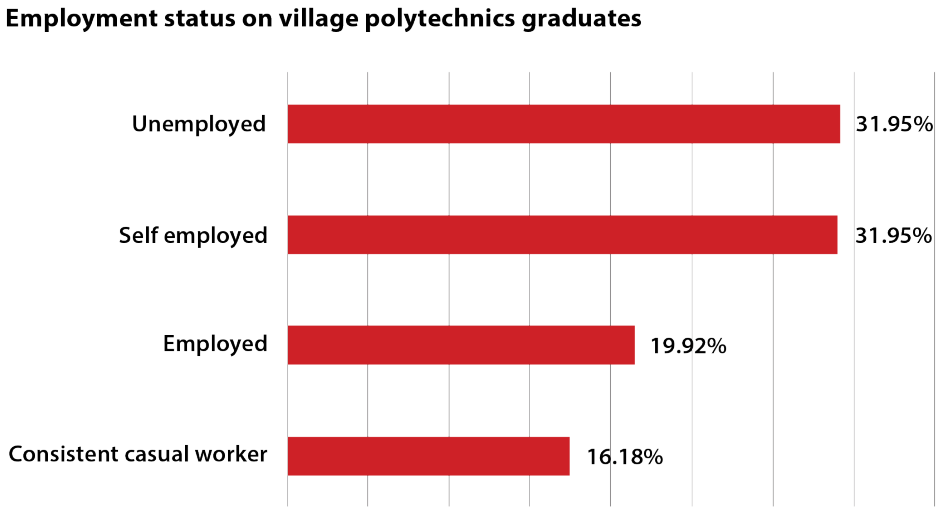


Figure 2: Village polytecnics graduates Distribution of employment status

Responsiveness and Relevance

The study found that county-based village polytechnics were generally effective in creating job opportunities for their graduates, with hands-on training in technical skills significantly enhancing their employability.

However, the survey also highlighted challenges related inadequacy of modern equipment to facilitate learning. 41.67% of the respondents felt that the polytechnics were well equipped to offer the courses they needed, 34.54% believed the facilities were partially adequate while 21.79% felt that the facilities were not adequate, which has negatively impacted the quality of training. For example, issues such as outdated equipment and poor working conditions for both instructors and learners were prevalent.

Documentation

The study established that to secure a job one required various documents which were costly and did not have specific waiting periods.

No	Document	% of employees asked	Cost	Waiting period
1	National Identification card	39.09%	1000	10 days
2	Tax compliance certificate	24.74%	Free	Instantly
3	Business permit	18.71%	County: Cost Mombasa: 5,000 Homabay: 4,000 Kakamega: 4,250	1 - 2 days

4	Certificate of good conduct	18.50%	1050	14 Days
5	Driving license	5.20%	3050	l32 working days
6	Traveling passport	1.25%	7550	14 days

The study observed inconsistency, lack of standards, Long waiting period and cost in acquiring the documents with respondents alluding to experiencing challenges such as the lengthy processing times and corruption that make these documents difficult to obtain. Respondents reported instances of corruption that hindered their access to these documents. A respondent lost a job opportunity due to delays in obtaining a certificate of good conduct, which took two months to process—long after the job had been filled.

The research observed an inconsistency in the waiting periods and cost which varied from different county to county. While the service charter stipulated a waiting period for replacement if an ID of 10 days and the cost as KES. 1000, youth experiences in the counties varied. The youth stated to have paid KES 1,200 for an ID, and waited for over a month to be given the ID. Based on these accounts, many youths expressed frustration with the high cost and long waiting periods.

The study found that the information on the website on Tax compliance was consistent with the experience on the ground hence KRA was given a clean bill of health.

Certificate of Good conduct Service charter	**Ground experience**
	The study found that the waiting period for a certificate of good conduct was inconsistent with the information on the website. while the website stated a waiting period of 14 days , being inconsistent with what is in the ground that youth waited more than 3 months to get the certificate of good conduct with key challenges being securing slot for fingerprint collection.

DIRECTORATE OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

SERVICE DELIVERY CHARTER

VISION

"Excellence in Criminal Investigations for a Secure and Prosperous Kenya."

MISSION

"To embrace a proactive and professional approach in investigation of crimes, protection of life and property, apprehension of offenders and support prosecution processes."

CORE VALUES

Professionalism:	Courtesy, respect, work ethics, competency development, integrity, fairness, transparency, accountability and honesty.
Alliances and Partnerships:	Engage all relevant stakeholders and cooperate with both internal and external customers, upholding patriotism and respect for diversity.
Rule of Law:	Respect for Human Rights, the Rule of Law and Legality in all service delivery.
Teamwork:	Commitment to work, respect, timeliness, loyalty and gender mainstreaming.

Clarion CALL: "Play Your PART"

CORE FUNCTIONS

Undertake investigations on serious crimes including homicide, narcotic crimes, human trafficking, money laundering, terrorism, economic crimes, piracy, organized crime and cyber-crime among others;

Collect and provide Criminal Intelligence; Maintain Law and Order; Detect and prevent crime; Maintain Criminal Records; Conduct Forensic Analysis; Co-ordinate Country Interpol Affairs; Investigate any matter that may be referred to it by the Independent Policing Oversight Authority; Execute directions given to the Inspector General by the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP);

MOTTO

"Justice, Integrity and Impartiality "

"Haki, Uadilifu na Kutopendelea"

SERVICE RENDERED	CUSTOMER REQUIREMENTS	USER CHARGES	TIMELINE
Provision of criminal intelligence	Cooperation by general public	Free	24 Hours
Investigation of serious crimes	Cooperation, accurate,timely and precise information	Free	Within 7 days
Preventing and detecting crime	Cooperation	Free	24 Hours
Maintain criminal records	Accurate information	Free	24 Hours
Prompt attendance to scenes of crime	Non interference with the scene and provision of accurate precise information	Free	Within 2 Hours
Conducting forensic analysis in criminal cases	Preservation of exhibits and provision of accurate information	Free	Within 2weeks
Apprehension of offenders	Cooperation	Free	Immediate
Protection of life and property	Cooperation	Free	24 Hours
Enforcement of all laws and regulations with which the Directorate is charged	Cooperation	Free	24 Hours
Response to distress calls or emergencies	Accurate and precise information	Free	Immediate
Issuance of Police Clearance Certificates	Availing of fingerprints and providing accurate bio data online on e-citizen portal	Kshs 1,050/=	Within 2 weeks
INTERPOL Motor Vehicle Clearance	Request for clearance and provide a copy of Log Book and other related Documents	Free	24hours after application
Confirmation of the genuineness of Imported Motor Vehicles through Interpol Database	Import Documents	Free	24 Hours
Investigation of Public Complaints	Trust, honesty and high integrity	Free	24 Hours

COMPLAINTS AGAINST POLICE

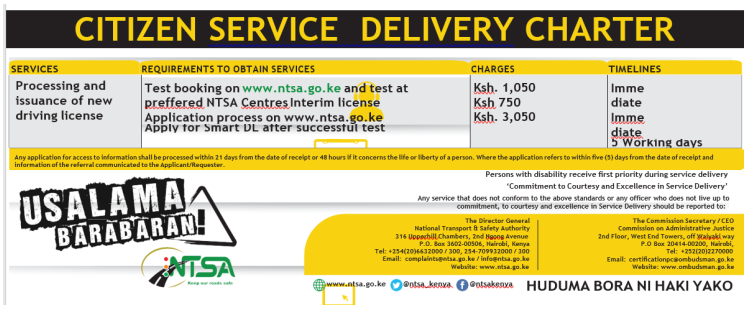
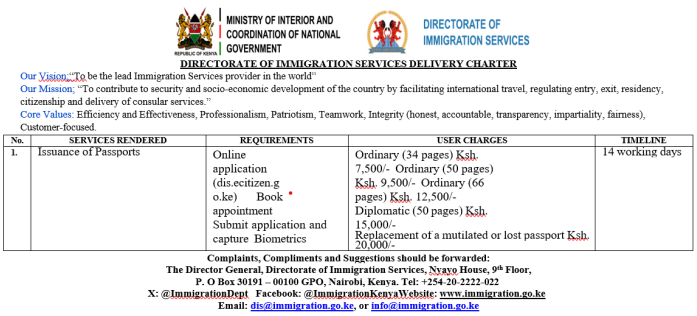
Complaints may be made to the Sub-County Criminal Investigation Officer (SCCIO). Where dissatisfied, the complaint may be made to the County Criminal Investigation Officer (CCIO) or to the Regional Criminal Investigation Officer (RCIO) or Director Complaints DCI Headquarters or the Director Directorate of Criminal Investigations as the case maybe.

In case of emergency call our toll free numbers 999 or 112

Enquiries, Kindly Contact

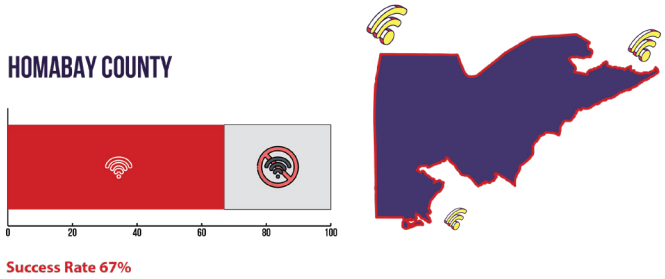
Directorate of Criminal Investigations, Mazingira Complex, Kiambu Road,opp. Kenya Forest Service Headquarters,Karura P.O. BOX 30036 - 00100, Nairobi. Telephone: 020-3343312,020-7202000.Email: director@cid.go.ke/ Web: www.cid.go.ke

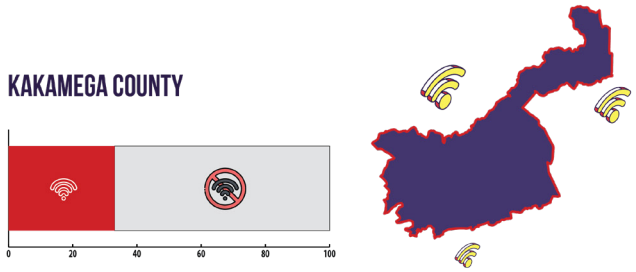
Other documents requested by potential employers were perceived to be irrelevant to certain documents required by employers. For instance, employers often demand documents like HELB clearance from applicants who did not benefit from the loans.

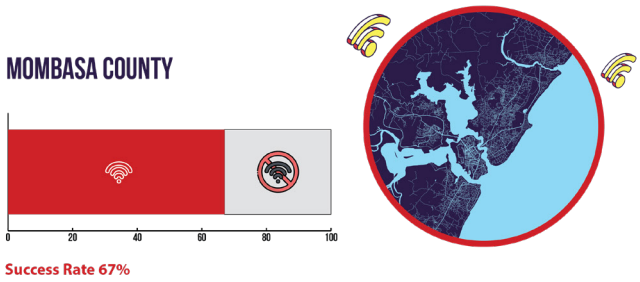
Driving charter & Passport service charter	Ground Experience
	The timelines were consistent with the service charter however, the ground experience observed normalized corruption/brokerage, where the driving schools asked learners to pay up to kes 1500 bribe money to the examining officers. Those who fail to comply are compelled to retake the driving exams without assurance of success by the examining officers.
	While only 1.25% of the surveyed respondents had passports, the majority of the youth who had applied stated that the information on the service charter was inconsistent with the reality of acquisition of the document. The amount paid to acquire the document on the government portal was consistent, however the waiting period to get an appointment was dependent on the bribery one offered. As a result the period for getting the passport was found to be between 1 week to over a year The office has several brokers facilitating acquisition of passports.

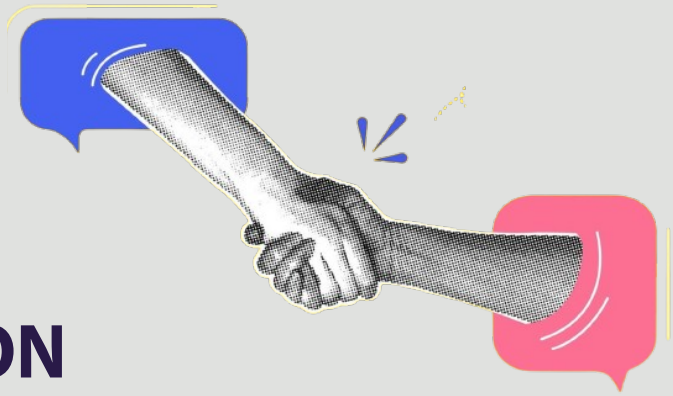
Employers require several documents that are costly and sometimes irrelevant for the applicants , based on the jobs they apply for. For example employers demand HELB clearance for applicants who never benefited from their loans. National ID was required by 39.09% of the respondents in their current jobs, 24.74% required a Tax compliance certificate, Business Permit(18.71%), Certificate of good conduct (18.50%), Driving License (5.20%) and Traveling passport (1.25%)

COUNTY PERFORMANCE SCORE









CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

CONCLUSION

This study provides critical insights into how government policies, both national and county-level, facilitate or hinder the transition of young people from education to the labor market, with a particular focus on the digital economy. The research revealed that while government initiatives like the Ajira Digital Centers and rural polytechnics aim to create job opportunities, they face significant challenges in terms of operational consistency, responsiveness to market demands, and accessibility of essential documents required for employment. The study also highlighted the low completion rates of Ajira centers and the limited job-readiness of many youth due to the inadequate resources at rural polytechnics. Additionally, the lack of standardized operational procedures for Ajira centers, the high costs, and long waiting periods associated with obtaining key employment documents such as national IDs, driving licenses, and tax certificates, exacerbate the challenges facing youth employment.

The study underscores the importance of aligning government promises with tangible outcomes, ensuring that youth-focused programs are both relevant and responsive to current market needs. The findings also show that despite the government's efforts, many young people still face barriers that prevent them from accessing employment opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Need for standardization of Ajira Centers: The government should standardize courses and operational procedures across all Ajira centers to ensure consistency and relevance. Collaboration with local educational institutions should be prioritized to offer market-driven courses that align with the demands of the digital economy.
2. Investment in Rural Polytechnics: County governments need to increase investment in rural polytechnics, particularly in upgrading equipment and facilities. This would improve the quality of technical training and enhance the employability of graduates, ensuring they are job-ready upon completion of their courses.
3. Streamlining Documentation Processes: The government should streamline the process of acquiring essential documents such as national IDs, business permits, and tax certificates. This

could include reducing waiting times, lowering costs, and addressing corruption within the system, ensuring that young people can access the necessary documentation without facing delays or financial hardship.



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