



2015 KENYA
NATIONAL

ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH SURVEY (NAYS)

**THARAKA
NITHI COUNTY**



January 2017



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(NAYS)

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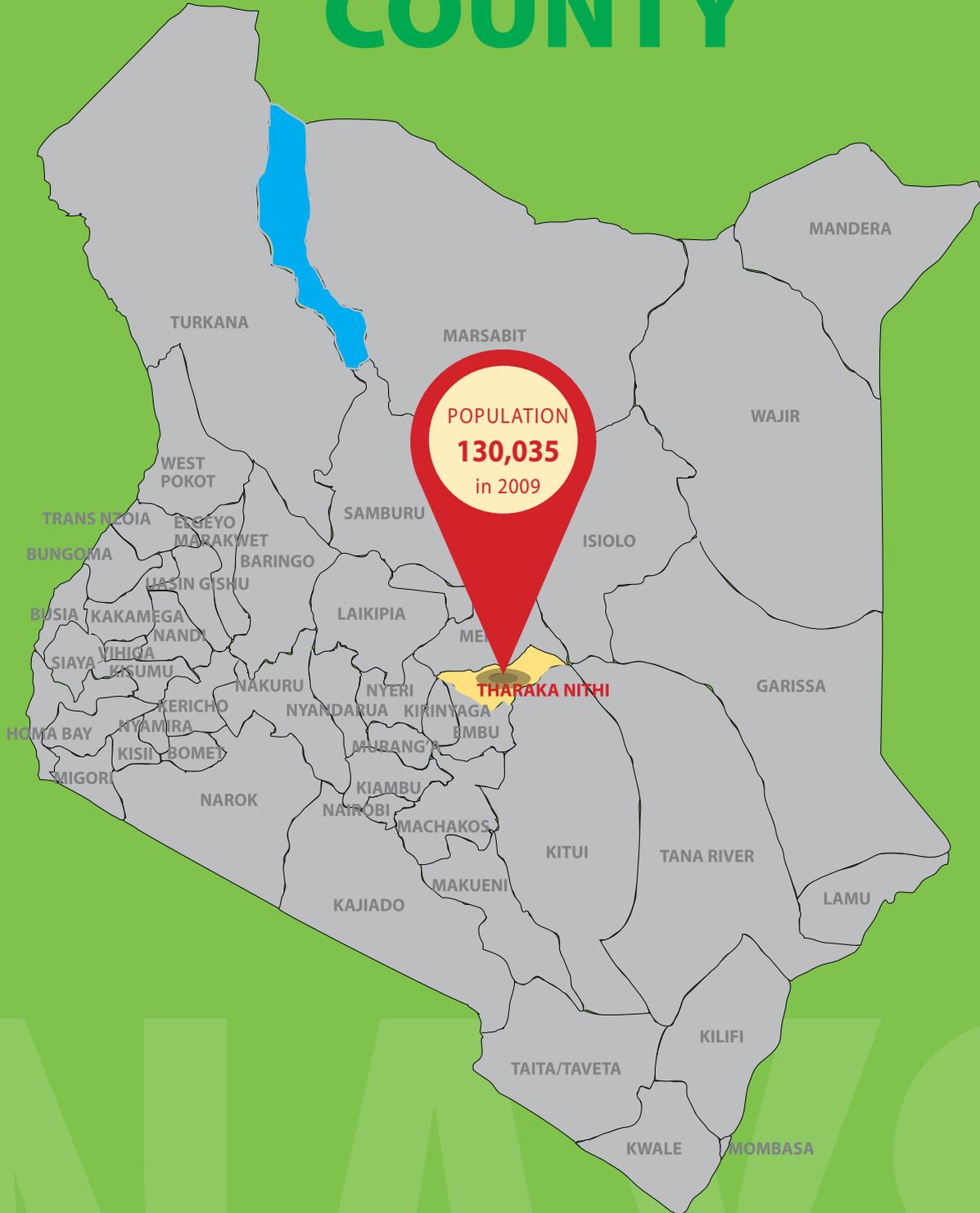
Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFIDEP	African Institute for Development Policy	M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome	NASSEPV	National Sample Survey and Evaluation Programme
AGPO	Access to Government Procurement Opportunities	NAYS	National Adolescents and Youth Survey
CBO	Community Based Organization	NER	Net Enrolment Rate
CDF	Constituency Development Fund	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CPC	County Population Coordinators	NYS	National Youth Service
CPR	Contraceptive Prevalence Rate	PADIS	Population, Administration, and Decision Information System International
DemDiv	Demographic Dividend	PWD	People with Disability
DSA	Drug and Substance Abuse	SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
FGD	Focus Group Discussion	SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation	STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
FHOK	Family Health Option Kenya	TFR	Total Fertility Rates
FP	Family Planning	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
FPE	Free Primary Education	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate	WEF	Women Enterprise Fund
HDI	Human Development Index	YEDF	Youth Enterprise Development Fund
HIV	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus	YFS	Youth Friendly Services
ICT	Information and Communication Technology		
IDI	In-Depth Interview		
KDHS	Kenya Demographic and Health Survey		
KII	Key Informant Interview		
KIPPRA	Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research & Analysis		
KKV	Kazi Kwa Vijana		
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics		

Glossary of Terms

Demographic Dividend	The accelerated economic growth that is achieved through a reduction in the population growth rate coupled with strategic investments in the health, education, and economic opportunities for the population.
Demographic Window	Period when the proportion of a country's population aged below 15 years falls below 30 percent of the total population while at the same time the proportion of those aged 65 years and above is still below 15 percent of the total population.
Gross Enrolment Rate (GER)	This rate identifies the number of children newly admitted to the first year of school, regardless of age as a percentage of children who are entitled to admission.
Human Development Index	The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite statistic of life expectancy, education, and income per capita indicators, which are used to rank countries into four tiers of human development. A country scores higher HDI when the life expectancy at birth is longer, the education period is longer, and the income per capita is higher.
Mwongozo	Code of governance for state corporations in Kenya.
Net Enrolment Rate (NER)	Age-specific corresponds to the legal admission age. Ratio of children of official school-age who are enrolled in school to the population of the corresponding school age.
Nyumba Kumi Initiative	Security model that encompasses groups of 10 houses with the aim of enhancing security.
Transition Rate	The proportion of children admitted, relative to the number of those who were, the year before, in the final school-year of the preceding level.

THARAKA NITHI COUNTY



Foreword

Kenya has a large population of young people below the age of 35 years. Three in every four Kenyans are young people. This population segment presents both a challenge and opportunity to the country's development agenda. The main challenge brought about by this population is the ever growing need for social services such as health, education, and other social amenities. Each year, an increasing number of these young people graduate from educational institutions thereby necessitating an increase in the creation of employment and income opportunities to meet the demands of this group. On the other hand, if Kenya can meet the social and economic needs of this population, then the socio-economic development of the country will be greatly enhanced. In this case the large population of young people will become an asset to the country. It is in recognition of this that the Government of Kenya has put in place several initiatives aimed at improving the socio-economic opportunities and well-being of young people.

The demographic dividend concept advocates for strategic investments in health, education, economic and governance with a view of ensuring that the population of young people is healthy, well-educated, trained for the job market, and economically engaged in a well governed environment. Kenya subscribes to the ideals of this concept whose eventual outcome is accelerated socio-economic growth and improved quality of life which is in line with the aspirations of *Kenya Vision 2030*. In this regard, Kenya's challenge is to match the population growth rate with the available resources.

Results from the modelling of Kenya's demographic dividend potential, which was done in 2014, showed impressive results that the country can achieve on the social and economic fronts when strategic investments are made in these sectors. However, for Kenya to realize these benefits, each of the forty seven counties in the country will have to make strategic investments in health, education, economic, and governance so that the full potential of young people can be harnessed and socio-economic growth accelerated. The 2015 Kenya National Adolescents and Youth Survey (NAYS) was occasioned by the need to provide each county with information on their respective demographic dividend potential and the specific actions that they need to undertake to realize this potential. This report will therefore be very useful to counties when planning for their respective development activities. It is my hope that each county will make use of this report and contribute to making Kenya a better country where citizens enjoy a high quality of life in a safe environment.

Mr. Saitoti Torome, CBS
Principal Secretary
State Department of Planning

Acknowledgment

The Kenya National Adolescents and Youth Survey (NAYS) was conducted in 2015 with the goal of contributing to the country's efforts of harnessing the potential of the young people in accelerating national development. Results from this survey will inform counties on the actions that they need to undertake in order to achieve accelerated economic growth

The 2015 NAYS was implemented through a collaborative effort between NCPD and various partners and stakeholders. In this regard, NCPD would like to thank the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Norwegian Government, through the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP), for both their technical and financial support to the survey.

The implementation of the 2015 NAYS was guided by a Task Force made up of two committees, namely; Steering and Technical Committees. The Steering Committee provided advice on the conceptualisation and the implementation strategies and modalities while the Technical Committee was responsible for the development of the survey tools, recruitment and training of the research assistants, coordination, and supervision of data collection, data processing, analysis and report writing. NCPD is grateful to members of the two committees.

The NCPD's County Population Coordinators (CPCs) were responsible for introducing the research assistants to the various counties under their jurisdiction and ensuring their smooth movement within the counties. They were also responsible for conducting the Key Informant Interviews. Given the success of the fieldwork, NCPD would like to thank all the CPCs.

Finally, NCPD would like to take this opportunity to thank the Council of Governors and the individual Governors for facilitating the entry of the research teams into the counties, and the respondents in all the counties who participated in the focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, and the key informant interviews. These respondents include community members, pupils, students, health workers, and heads of learning institutions, programme managers, employers, and government officials. The information that was provided by these respondents facilitated the development of this report. It is therefore NCPD's hope that this report will be useful to all the counties as they contribute to the national efforts towards harnessing the demographic dividend.

Dr. Josephine Kibaru-Mbae, OGW
 Director General
 National Council for Population and Development

Executive Summary

This report presents Tharaka Nithi County profile based on the findings of the 2015 National Adolescents and Youth Survey conducted by the National Council for Population and Development, (NCPD) in conjunction with Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Ministry of Health, Youth Department, KNBS and various development partners. The survey covered all the 47 counties with the multiple objectives of examining what potential exists for a demographic dividend in each of the 47 counties, identifying health, education, economic and governance issues that affect young people in each county, identifying what specific investment opportunities that could accelerate achievement of the demographic dividend and providing policy and programme recommendations based on the survey findings.

This report interrogates the demographic profile of the county and the prevailing socio-economic indicators of the county and further identifies the challenges and opportunities that exist for harnessing the benefits of a growing youth population. The report therefore presents an overview of the demographic, health, education, economic and governance indicators which are the main sectors whose performance impact on building a county that would be responsive to the young people.

The total population of Tharaka Nithi County in 2009 was 130,035 people and is projected to increase to 186,497 people by 2030 and to 232,852 people by 2050 if the current fertility and mortality levels persist. The County has a high proportion of the population (44 percent) below age 15 but this population is projected to decrease to 31 percent and to 24 percent in the year 2030 and 2050 respectively. As the proportion of population of the young people declines, it is projected that the working age population will increase from 52 percent in 2009 to 70 percent in 2050. These population changes will result in the dependency ratio decreasing from 93 to 44 over the same period. Consequently, the county's demographic window of opportunity is projected to open in the year 2035 and close in 2075.

Tharaka Nithi County has a fertility rate of 3.4 children per woman. Seventy-four percent of the married women in the county are using contraceptives. Seventy-seven percent of all births in the county are delivered by a skilled health worker and 95 percent of the children 12-23 months are fully vaccinated.

In regard to education, the primary school net enrolment rate is 96 percent. This means that about 4 percent of the primary school age children are out of school in the county. The secondary school net enrolment rate is 91 percent. These figures indicate that the county has almost universal school enrolment both at primary and secondary school levels. It is estimated that only 3,358 primary school age and 2,973 secondary school age children are out of school in the county.

Health issues affecting young people

The main health problems affecting young people in Tharaka Nithi County as reported by the participants include; STIs, teenage pregnancy, drug and substance abuse (DSA), and sexual violence attributed to the abuse of drugs and alcohol. The young people also reported they had limited access to sexual and reproductive health information (SRH) and services. For the health of the young people to improve, there is need to promote peer education to reach young people both in and out of school with SRH information and services, train health service providers and equip health facilities to provide youth friendly services, subsidize cost of healthcare services to young people and expand more health facilities in the county.

Issues affecting education of young people

School enrolment is very in Tharaka Nithi County. However, slightly over 3,300 primary school age children and about 3,000 secondary school-age children are out of school. The key issues identified to be affecting the education of young people in the county were; school drop outs and teacher/student absenteeism which is associated with Drug and Substance Abuse (DSA) by both students and teachers, lack of fees resulting to child labour, teenage pregnancy and inadequate learning facilities. To address this situation there is need to provide health talks and professional guidance and counselling in schools, promote motivational programs for both teachers and students, increase bursaries and scholarships for disadvantaged students, enforce laws on DSA and child labour, build more schools and tertiary institutions in the county.

Economic issues affecting young people

The findings show that young people in Tharaka Nithi County engage mainly in agriculture, trade, *boda boda* transport business, construction and casual labour. Majority of the young people lack the technical skills and know-how required to be involved in meaningful employment. In order to fully exploit the potential of young people, there is need to build more vocational and technical institutions, prepare young people for employment and entrepreneurship through apprenticeship and mentorship programmes, sensitize youth on accessing and utilizing existing funding and employment opportunities within the county government (YEDF, UWEZO, WEF, AGPO). There is also need to establish more ICT services and infrastructure in learning institutions and community to empower young people.

Governance issues affecting the youth

The main challenges affecting governance in Tharaka Nithi County as reported by the survey participants include; corruption, crime mainly rape, DSA, robbery and land disputes. These was said to contribute to insecurity in the county causing fears of expanding business. They also reported limited participation and involvement of young people in development projects majorly due to lack of awareness and corruption. For governance to improve in the county there is need to promote the *Nyumba Kumi* initiative of promoting security, create county committees to oversee projects with strict modalities in transparency and accountability, encourage youth participation in development, maintaining peace and security, promote civic education on governance.



INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Youth in Kenya

The United Nations uses the terms youth and young people interchangeably to mean people aged 15-24 years with the understanding that member states and other entities may use different definitions. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) defines youth as those individuals who have attained the age of 18 years but have not attained the age of 35 years. Those aged 18-34 years constitute about 30 percent of Kenya's total population while those aged 0-34 years constitute 78 percent of the population. This youthful population is a demographic asset and investing in their education, health, skill development and employment prospects will accelerate a demographic dividend. To reap the benefits of this dividend, Kenya must make sound investment in health, education and economic development.

1.1.2 The Demographic Dividend

The demographic dividend refers to the accelerated economic development that a country can attain by slowing down the pace of population growth while at the same time making strategic investments in the health, education, economic, and governance sectors. The demographic dividend concept is being popularized in developing countries as a potential solution to their development challenges. In embracing this concept, Kenya modelled the demographic dividend in 2014 using the *DemDiv* Model that was developed by Futures Group. The modelling of Kenya's demographic dividend was supported by USAID through the Health Policy Project. Results from the model showed that Kenya could achieve the following results by 2050 through implementation of activities aimed at achieving the demographic dividend: Investments per capita will increase to about US\$ 2,000 from the current figure of about US\$ 200; Fertility levels will decline to an average of 2 children per woman from the current 4 children per woman thereby decreasing the dependency ratio: Even with an increase in the population size, the employment gap (i.e. people in the labour force who are not active) will be 8 million which is less than the current gap of 10 million. These results are consistent with the aspirations of *Kenya Vision 2030*.

1.1.3 Population Size, Growth and Composition

The population of Kenya was enumerated at 38.6 million people in 2009. It was estimated to be increasing at a rate of 1 million people each year representing a growth rate of about 2.9 percent

annually. From the census results, the dependency ratio was recorded at 87 dependents for every 100 people in the working ages (15-64 years). The 2009 Census also indicated that Kenya's population-age structure is youthful because the population of children below the age of 15 years was 43 percent, way above the cut-off limit of 35 percent. This was corroborated by the fact that those aged below 35 years constitute 78 percent of the country's total population. This population-age structure does not lend itself to the country's efforts to attain a rapid economic growth because most of the resources are spent on meeting the ever increasing social needs (health, housing, education, water and sanitation) of the fast growing population.

Kenya's Population Policy for National Development recognizes that the rapid growth in the population size is a constraint to national development. To counter this, the policy proposes a reduction in the fertility levels from 5 children per woman in 2009 to 2 children per woman in 2050. According to the 2014 KDHS, the fertility level was 4 children per woman in 2014 which is a clear indication that the fertility levels are dropping. If this trend continues and Kenya achieves a fertility level of 2 children per woman by 2050 then the population size will increase to 59 million people in 2030 and 75 million people in 2050 with the proportion of those aged below 15 years decreasing to 33 and 25 percent respectively. The dependency ratio for the country in 2030 and 2050 will be 57 and 45 dependents for every 100 people in the working ages (15-64 years) respectively.

1.2 Survey Rationale

In 2014, NCPD and various partners modeled Kenya's demographic dividend using the DemDiv model. The results obtained from the modeling exercise showed that Kenya could achieve accelerated socio-economic growth through targeted investments. However, it was recognized that for this to happen, each of the 47 counties would have to play a role. Unfortunately, information on the demographic dividend potential for each county and the specific activities that they each need to implement so as to benefit from this potential was largely lacking. Given the differences in the health, education, economic and governance status of the counties, it was necessary to conduct this survey to generate county specific information on the demographic dividend potential and activities that need to be implemented. With this information at hand, each county would know what they need to do to harness the potential of their youthful population.

1.3 Survey Goal and Objectives

Survey goal

The goal of the 2015 National Adolescents and Youth Survey was to provide solid evidence on how the growing youth population can be harnessed to accelerate economic growth and achieve a demographic dividend.

Survey objectives

The objectives of the 2015 NAYS were:

- a. To generate a profile of adolescents and young people in each county. This includes the population size, age distribution, and socio-demographic characteristics.
- b. Identify Health, Education, Economic and Governance issues that affect young people in each county.
- c. Identify investment opportunities in the key sectors in each county.
- d. Provide policy and programme recommendations based on the survey findings.

1.4 Survey Organisation

The implementation of the survey was facilitated by two committees; Steering and Technical committees whose members were drawn from different organizations representing the different sectors that have a key role in the country's efforts to harness the demographic dividend. Members of the Steering Committee were involved in providing policy guidance and field work monitoring while members of the Technical Committee were involved in giving technical input and supervision of field teams alongside the NCPD County Population Coordinators.

1.4.1 Pre-test

The survey pre-test was conducted in April 2015, where 26 Technical Committee members and a selection of research assistants participated. The purpose of the pre-test was to check on the flow and meaning of questions, language used in the tools, and the time it would take to administer each tool. During the pre-test, the programme for the fieldwork training was developed and reviewed to ensure that the training for the fieldwork would cover all the necessary aspects that are required to fully equip the research assistants in readiness for the data collection exercise.

1.4.2 Trainings

The Technical Committee members were trained for three days, in February 2015, on demographic dividend and its applicability in the Kenyan context so that they could be conversant with the concept before embarking on the development of the survey tools. This enabled the Technical Committee members to develop the data collection tools that responded to the objectives of the survey.

In April 2015, thirty-four (34) research assistants were competitively recruited for data collection in the 47 counties. They were trained from 29th April to 9th May 2015 in Nakuru. The trainees were taken through the survey tools, materials and modalities of recruiting the respondents for the different tools that were to be administered. They were also trained on how to conduct interviews. Different methodologies and approaches were used in the training to ensure that the research assistants were well equipped to collect quality data.

1.5 Survey Methodology and Implementation

The NAYS survey used two methodologies namely; quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative methodology involved the desk review of secondary data from the *2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census*, the *2014 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS)*, the *2014 Economic Survey* and the *2014 Basic Education Statistical Booklet*. These sources were used to generate information on population, health, education, and economic issues at both national and county levels. It presented a synopsis of the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the country and each of the counties. The quantitative methodology also involved the generation of population projection data for each of the counties using **PADIS software**. The qualitative methodology involved the collection of qualitative data through focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, and key informant interviews.

1.5.1 Survey Tools

In collecting the qualitative data, the following tools were used:

- a. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) guides for conducting focus group discussions.
- b. Key Informant Interview (KII) guides for conducting key informant interviews with policy/ decision makers at county level.
- c. In-Depth Interview (IDI) guides conducting in-depth interviews with service providers in health, education, and economic sectors.
- d. Check list for youth-serving organisations.

The FGD, KII, and IDI guides were used to solicit information on the key issues affecting the wellbeing and participation of young people in terms of health, education, economic opportunities and governance. In addition to this, the tools were used to collect information on how the identified issues could be addressed. The checklist for youth serving organizations was used to assess the state of health and education facilities and services for young people.

1.5.2 Sampling

The sample for the qualitative component of the survey was national in scope covering the 47 counties in Kenya. These counties were clustered into 16 survey regions based on social-demographic characteristics. Table 1.1 shows the clustering of all the counties from which the set of all the tools were administered.

Table 1.1 Cluster counties by study regions

	Region	Counties
1.	Nairobi	Nairobi
2.	North Eastern	Garrisa, Wajir, Mandera
3.	Upper Eastern	Isiolo, Marsabit
4.	Central Eastern	Meru, Embu, Tharaka Nithi
5.	Lower Eastern	Kitui, Makueni, Machakos
6.	North Rift (1)	Trans Nzoia, West Pokot, Turkana,
7.	North Rift (2)	UasinGishu, Elgeiyo Marakwet, Nandi
8.	Central Rift	Nakuru, Kericho, Bomet, Baringo
9.	South Rift	Kajiado, Narok, Samburu
10.	Western	Kakamega, Vihiga, Bungoma, Busia
11.	Nyanza South	Kisii, Nyamira, Migori (Kuria)
12.	Nyanza North	Kisumu, Siaya, Homa Bay, Migori (Luo)
13.	Central (1)	Kiambu, Murang'a, Kirinyaga,
14.	Central (2)	Nyeri, Nyandarua, Laikipia
15.	Coast (1)	Mombasa, Kwale, TaitaTaveta,
16.	Coast (2)	Tana River, Lamu, Kilifi

In mapping out areas where the data was collected from, the survey was guided by the National Sample Survey and Evaluation Programme (NASSEP V) which is developed and managed by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. Each tool was administered to targeted respondents who had been determined using criteria that had been set prior to the survey field work. The criteria used to recruit those who would participate in the focus group discussions were age, sex, and schooling status. FGDs were conducted for the following age groups 10-14, 15-19, 20-24, 25-34 and 35-60 year olds. Given the survey objectives, the young people responded to issues on health, education, economic, and governance that touched on their daily lives. The older age groups (35-60 years) gave their perceptions on health, education, economic, and governance as it relates to the young people. In order to triangulate the information collected, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) were used to collect information from key informants and service providers respectively. The KIIs

were administered to policy makers' in-charge of the specific sectors of interest in the counties. The respondents to the IDIs were service providers in the health, education and economic sectors.

Table 1.2 and 1.3 show that the target for each county was 8 Key Informant Interviews, 8 In-Depth Interviews, and 9 Focus Group Discussions.

Table 1.2 Key informant interviews and in-depth interviews sample frame for each county

Sector	Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)
Health	County Executive Committee Member (CEC) – Health OR Chief Officer Health OR County Director of Health	1. Health Facility In-charge 2. Manager In-charge of Youth Serving Organisation in Health
Education	1. County Director of Education (CDE) 2. County Executive Committee Member (CEC) - Education	1. Primary School with Pre-primary – School heads (1 public School) 2. Secondary School – Principals (1 public school) 3. Tertiary Institutions – Dean of student (1) 4. TVET (1)
Economy	1. County Director of Youth Development 2. County Executive Committee Member (CEC) - Youth Affairs 3. CEC to be selected depending on the main economic activity of the county	1. Enterprise Development Fund Representative (UWEZO, YEDF, WEF etc) 2. A leading employer in the County
Governance	1. County Commissioner 2. County Executive Committee Member (CEC) – Public Administration	N/A

Table 1.3 Focus group discussions sample frame for each county

Group	Additional Criteria	No. of FGDs	Place
Young people, Age 10-14	1 for males and 1 for females	2	School
Young people, Age 15-19	1 for males and 1 for females	2	School
Young people, Age 15-19	1 mixed group out of school (male & female, married & unmarried)	1	Community
Young people Age 15-24	1 for marginalized populations	1	Community
Young people, Age 20-24	1 for married and unmarried youths	1	Community
Young people, Age 25-34	1 for married and unmarried youths	1	Community
Older people, Age 35-60	1 for older people (male and female)	1	Community

1.5.3 Data Collection

Data collection was done by 16 teams, each consisting of two research assistants. The fieldwork commenced on 11th May and ended on 31st July 2015. Each team was assigned two or three counties for data collection. In addition to this, each team had a vehicle and a driver to ensure smooth movement during the data collection exercise. Using the field work plan developed during the fieldwork training, the research assistants systematically collected data from their assigned regions. Throughout this process, they were guided by their respective supervisors. At the end of each day the team members got together to share their experiences and prepare the day's summaries. This sharing helped the teams to strategise the next day's work. Table 1.1 summarises the response rate for the interviews conducted using the FGD, KII, and IDI guides.

Table 1.4 shows that IDIs had the highest response at 93 percent followed by FGDs at 92 percent. KIIs, which targeted the policy makers at county level, had the lowest response rate at 78 percent.

Table 1.4 Survey response rates

	Focus Group Discussions	Key Informant Interviews	In-Depth Interviews
Interviews Targeted	423	376	376
Interviews Conducted	389	294	348
Coverage (percent)	92%	78%	93%

1.5.4 Data Processing and Analysis

As part of the data collection exercise, the interviews were captured using both digital recorders and note books. The data was then transcribed in the original language of the interview after which it was translated into English language in cases where the interview language was not English. The hard copies of the English scripts were then typed using Microsoft Word to convert them into soft copies. This was done by the research assistants. On receipt of the data at NCPD headquarters, the same was handed over to data clerks for checking, cleaning and processing.

The quantitative data was processed using SPSS and PADIS while the qualitative data was processed using NVIVO QRS (version 10) software. NVIVO software was used to access, organize, manage, shape, code, explore, extract and analyse the textual data. A team of thirteen (13) data clerks were trained on how to process the data using this software. To ensure consistency and quality, two supervisors reviewed and verified the coded data.

2

THARAKA NITHI COUNTY SURVEY FINDINGS

2.1 Background

Tharaka-Nithi County borders the Counties of Embu to the South and South West, Meru to the North and North East, Kirinyiga and Nyeri to the West and Kitui to the East and South East. The county lies between latitude 00° 07' and 00° 26' South and between longitudes 37° 19' and 37° 46' East. The total area of the County is 2,662.1 Km²; including the shared Mt Kenya forest estimated to have 360 Km². The County is divided into four administrative sub-counties namely Tharaka North, Tharaka South, Meru South and Maara. It has 63 locations, 164 sub-locations, 3 constituents and 15 wards. Physical features include Mt. Kenya, Kijege hills, Tana River Basin, Meru National Park and several waterfalls along Kathita and Tana Rivers.

2.2 Demographic and Socio-economic Situation

2.2.1 Population Size and Age Distribution

Table 2.1 represents the demographic profile of Tharaka Nithi County.

Table 2.1 Demographic profile

Demographic	2009	2030	2050
Population Size	130,035	186,497	232,852
Proportion of Population Below Age 15	43.7%	31.1%	23.5%
Proportion of Population Above Age 64	4.4%	3.8%	7.0%
Proportion of Population in the Working Ages (15-64)	52.0%	65.1%	69.5%
Dependency Ratio	92.5	53.5	43.8%
Year Demographic Window of Opportunity Opens	2035		

According to the 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census report the population size for Tharaka Nithi County was 130,035 people. This population is projected to increase to 186,497 in 2030 and to 232,852 people in 2050. About 44 percent of the population is below age of 15. The population above 64 years is only 4 percent but is projected to increase to 7 percent in 2050. The two factors however create a high population dependency ratio of 93. The county's demographic dividend window will open in 2065 and close in 2105.

2.2.2 Socio-economic Characteristics

Table 2.2 summarizes the social economic profile of Tharaka Nithi County.

Table 2.2 Socio-economic profile

Socio-economic characteristics	Indicators	
Health	Average Number of Children Per Woman	3.4
	Proportion of Married Women Using Contraception	74.0%
	Proportion of Births Attended by A Skilled Health Worker	76.6%
	HIV Prevalence	3.7%
	Children 12-23 months fully vaccinated	95.3%
Education	Primary School Net Enrolment Rate	96.0%
	Primary School Pupil-Teacher Ratio	20.3
	Number of Primary School-Age Children Out of School	3,358
	Secondary School Net Enrolment Rate	91.4%
	Secondary School Pupil-Teacher Ratio	20
	Number of Secondary School-Age Teenagers Out of School	2,973
Socio-economic	Human Development Index	0.51498

The average number of children per woman in Tharaka Nithi County is 3.4 children against the national average of 3.9 children per woman. The relatively low fertility rate can be attributed to the high proportion (74 percent) of married women who are using contraception

In addition, about 77% of births are attended by a skilled health worker while 95% of children between 12 and 23 months have been fully vaccinated. The net enrolment rates in both primary and secondary school are 96 percent and 91 percent respectively. Nonetheless, 3,358 primary school age children and 2,973 secondary school age children are out of school in the county...

The Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.515 is an indicative of the County's overall achievement in providing quality education, improving life expectancy and income per capita. The value is lower than the national average of 0.520. This implies the county is performing fairly well in providing education, health and improving the economic status of its population.

2.3 Health and Young People

2.3.1 Health Issues Affecting Young People

In order to establish the main health issues among young people in the county, discussions were held with young people, adults, health service providers and policy makers. A summary of the responses is presented in this section. The section outlines the main health problems affecting young people in the county, the main causes of these health problems, the consequences and effect they have on young people and possible ways of addressing these problems. The section also addresses issues of accessibility and availability of health information and services to young people. The main organisations that are providing health information and services have also been highlighted, as well as the suggested ways of improving health within the county. Some quotations are provided, where appropriate, to support or reinforce some of the issues or points raised by the respondents.

2.3.2 The Main Health Problems Affecting Youth

Table 2.3 Main health problems affecting youth

Main Health problems	Causes	Consequences	Ways of addressing these problems
Drug and substance Abuse Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) Communicable diseases Teenage Pregnancy Sexual and Gender based violence (SGBV)	Peer pressure High levels of poverty	School drop out Poor health Death Stigmatization	Public health education Sensitization Parental guidance Abstinence

Drugs and substance abuse emerged as one of the main health concerns among young people in the county. It was generally felt that the involvement of young people in the consumption of Miraa (Khat), Bhang, cigarettes, alcohol and heroin is on the rise. This was attributed mainly to idleness, stress and peer pressure. In particular, idleness due to lack of jobs was expressed as the cause of the indulgence of the youth in drugs and substance abuse;

“Another thing affecting young people of that age is smoking bhang and cigarettes. The way many young people have no jobs after completing school, they join groups that smoke bhang and cigarettes.”

[FGD. Mixed young People 25-34, Tharaka Nithi]

The discussions established that teenage pregnancies, STIs, sexual and gender based violence are also issues of concern among young people in the county. With regard to gender based violence,

young people were concerned that cases of rape have been on the rise. When asked about incidents of teenage pregnancies in the county, respondents described them as being rampant.

The main health issues discussed above were reported to have a number of effects. In particular, the high rates of school drop outs were reported to be as a result of drugs and substance abuse and teenage pregnancies.

In order to address the health issues highlighted above, a number of steps were proposed. Public education targeting young people was recommended as an effective way of bringing change in the society. Young people felt that cases of STIs, HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancies and GBV can be reduced through sensitization and health talks. Older people felt that lack of employment is the leading cause of lifestyle diseases and risky sexual behaviour and were of the opinion that creation of employment opportunities for the youth would help to reduce idleness and some of the emerging health issues, such as depression and bad eating habits, which could be addressed if proper guidance and counselling mechanisms were in place.

“Health talks, you know what contributes mostly to diseases is bad eating habits and psychological problems. Because when you have no money this destroys your thinking capacity. This is because you cannot sleep well, you have no job, you know even food becomes a problem and you end up being depressed. All I say is lack of earning is the problem to youth.”

[Mixed older People 35-60, Tharaka Nithi]

Peer pressure, coupled with poverty, was identified as a leading cause of risky behaviour and teenage pregnancies. This view is summarised by a young person in the county;

“The other thing is early marriages, this is because when one of their age mates is married to a rich person, the other one might get involved in the same activity so that she can be rich in her early stage.”

[Mixed young People 20-24, Tharaka Nithi]

2.3.3 Access and Availability of Information and Services

Discussions were held in order to establish the availability of health information and services to young people in the county. Table 2.4 summarises the main sources of health information and services, the type of information and services provided and perceptions of young people on the contribution of the information and services to their wellbeing. In addition, the discussions sought to identify the preferred sources of information and health services by young people.

Table 2.4 Access and availability of information and services

Sources of health information	Types of Health Information & Services	Usefulness of Information	Preferred Sources
Health Facilities	STI/HIV	Increased knowledge	Health Facilities
Schools	Treatment and medication	Disease Prevention	Media
Public Health Talks	Drugs and substance abuse	Behaviour change	Schools/learning institutions
Religious Institutions	Sex education		
Parents	Disease prevention and diagnosis		
Media	Sex Education		
Internet			

It was established that a wide range of sources of health information and services are available in the county. Young people in schools identified the school and the media as the leading sources of health information. With regard to the media, radio and television were found to have a wide reach to young people. Other available sources that were mentioned include; health facilities, religious institutions, public health talks and the internet.

Among these sources, media, and in particular the radio emerged as the preferred sources of health information. Perhaps this owes to the fact that almost all young people have access to radio in their homes and can listen to radio on their mobile phones.

A wide range of information and services was observed to be available from these sources. This includes treatment and medication, information on STI/HIV, drugs and substance abuse, sex education and disease prevention. The type of information provided and available was noted to vary depending on the target group and the roles of provider; for example parents were reported to mainly focus on the dangers of STI/HIV and teenage pregnancies when disseminating health information to young people.

“From the parents it is obvious that if you are a girl it would be like telling you, don’t do this, if you sleep with that boy you will become pregnant, so you find that most parents, if their children are girls, most of the time they emphasise on risk of getting pregnant and for the boys you find that the parents say that when you go out there take care you can get HIV. So you find that you get information about HIV and pregnancies from the parents.”

[FGD. Female young people 15-19, Tharaka Nithi]

Discussions were held to establish the main SRH/FP information and services available within Tharaka Nithi County. This information is summarised in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 SRH/FP information and services

Main SRH/FP information & services available & accessible	Challenges in accessing SRH/FP information & services	Addressing Challenges
Condoms Contraceptive pills Injectables	Stigma and Fear Inadequate health facilities Lack of enough drugs Time constraints Ignorance Cost of services Negative attitude by providers Inadequate personnel	Youthful health care providers Youth friendly services Create public awareness Provide free or subsidised services Gender preference for health care providers

It was reported that the main contraceptives available in the county were condoms and injectables and pills. Condoms were reported to be available in commercial outlets as well as in health centres. However, young people reported that they would be embarrassed to buy condoms from commercial outlets and instead prefer to obtain them from dispensers. In addition, they reported that they would be afraid if their parents got to know that they were involved in sexual activity and seen buying the condoms. One young person said;

“You fear to buy or ask for condoms in hospitals, you fear the people providing them...this is because this person selling might know your mother so they can go ahead and inform them.”

[FGD. Mixed young people 15-19, Tharaka Nithi]

Other challenges that emerged as being associated with the available SRH/FP information and services include the cost of services, lack of youth friendly services and existing myths and misconceptions. A number of respondents reported that there exist misconceptions on various health issues, some of them emerging from belief in witchcraft. In this regard, it was pointed out that such misconceptions may prevent some young people from seeking SRH/FP information and services. Instead, such young people are more likely to seek help in the form of prayers from churches or even visit traditional medicine men. Nevertheless, the survey established that youth friendly services are available and offered in a number of the health outlets as reported below;

“Those who reach this facility don’t get many problems. Because there is a youth centre, a MCH. If any client is noticed to be less than 24 years, they are taken to the youth centre. Even at the outpatient they know how to take care of those people. So they will just be directed to the youth centre.”

[IDI. Health Facility Tharaka Nithi]

In order to address these challenges, a number of interventions were proposed. Establishment of youth friendly services was expressed as an effective way of encouraging and enabling young people to seek services and information without fear and embarrassment. Creating the youth friendly atmosphere may also involve hiring of young service providers and training of peer educators to help disseminate accurate information to young people. This would help to mitigate some of the challenges emerging from inter-generational barriers. The stakeholders should create SRH/FP awareness among young people in order to dispel misconceptions that may impede their search for proper health services.

2.3.4 Organisations Addressing Health Issues

Organisations addressing youth health issues were reported to be government and NGOs. These were seen as having improved health awareness in the county. Some of the issues that the NGOs in the county are addressing include campaigns against FGM and provision of clean water in schools. Plan International and the Kenya Red Cross Society were mentioned as some of the visible NGOs. In addition, governmental organisations and institutions, such as NACADA, the area chiefs and the Nairobi University were reported to be active and playing the role of sensitizing young people on the dangers of drugs and substance abuse.

2.3.5 Opportunities for Improvement

The opinions of the respondents were sought regarding areas to improve access to information and health services among the young people. Among the youth respondents, majority felt that having a qualified counsellor in school to provide information on SRH/FP would be useful. They were concerned that what they were receiving in schools at the moment is ‘general’ counselling which may not be effective in providing the information that they need. They asked for ‘personalised’ counselling. Many participants acknowledged the need for frequent awareness creation forums among the young people. Participants highlighted that there should be qualified guidance and counselling resource people within the schools at all times. Among the youth out of school, the need to have guidance and counselling facilitators who can speak mother tongue was also emphasised

The point on training health workers for better provision of youth-friendly services was echoed by the service providers. From these discussions, it would seem there are inadequate numbers of trained personnel who can effectively deliver guidance and counselling to young people in the county. Shortage of guidance and counselling personnel was said to impact more the poor and marginalised

rural areas in particular. Even within well-established health institutions, lack of capacity by the staff to handle specific guidance and counselling needs of the youth was reported.

“I think most of the staff should be educated about counselling of the youth. You know what we have is general counselling of everything. That is, the basic components, but I think there is a course for people working with the youth. There is need for more qualified staff because we have only one staff and when she is away the youth friendly centre will be closed. So if there are many counsellors, more youth can get attended.”

[IDI. Health facility, Tharaka Nithi]

2.4 Education and Young People

Providing education and developing skills among young people are important for economic development. The survey identifies major issues in the education sector that affect young people in Tharaka Nithi County. These include the main causes of the problems’ how they affect education of young people and suggested ways of addressing the problems.

2.4.1 Main Education issues Affecting Young People in Tharaka Nithi County

During discussions with respondents in Tharaka Nithi County, the main issues that affect education in the county were identified. The summary of the qualitative findings are illustrated in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6 Issues affecting education

Main Education Issues	Causes	Consequences	Ways of addressing these problems
Drugs and substance abuse	Peer pressure	School dropout	Provision of bursaries
Absenteeism of teachers and students	Poor parental guidance	Lack of concentration	Create awareness on drugs and substance abuse
Child labour	Poverty	Poor academic results	Law enforcement on drugs and substance abuse
Poverty	Lack of role models	School absenteeism	Investment in learning facilities
School dropouts			

Participants discussed in detail the main issues affecting education in the county. Of greatest concern from these discussions was the prevalence of drugs and substance abuse among the youth. Participants noted that young people were increasingly coming into contact with alcohol, *Miraa* (Khat) and even Bhang as these are readily available. From their own views, young people lamented that the trend is quite common among school going young people.

“You find students missing classes to go and drink alcohol. When they have stress they leave school work and go to ‘open lock’ ...that is, using drugs or alcohol in order to be active.”

[FGD. 2 Mixed young People 15-19, Tharaka Nithi]

From the discussions it also emerged that the issue of alcohol is not limited to students; it affects some teachers as well. It was reported that some were engaging in the vice to extent that they were no longer effective in their work. This view is expressed in the following comment by a school student;

“It is a challenge because in some schools you will find the teachers come to school drunk and when they come to teach in class they don’t teach in a way that you can understand.”

[FGD. Female young people 10-14, Tharaka Nithi]

The discussions also touched on other problems, such as absenteeism of both students and teachers from school. It emerged that one of the leading causes of student absenteeism is due to lack of school fees. With regard to child labour, poverty has aggravated the situation as children have to work to earn some money for food or even to pay school fees. Generally, poverty in some parts of the county was also highlighted as the main cause of school drop outs. Poverty would seem to create a vicious cycle where young people who are not in school due to lack of school fees become vulnerable to drug and substance abuse due to idleness.

During discussions on possible causes of the issues affecting education mentioned above, it has emerged that peer pressure and lack of positive role models could be the main driver of drugs and substance abuse among young people. This would seem to be a major problem especially in instances where some teachers and some parents, who would otherwise be the role models of the students, seem to be victims of alcohol addiction. This would be an indicator that young people are growing up in environments where alcohol is widely used or even tolerated.

“Yea, it affects because the parents who take alcohol, for example, their children happen to follow the same path. This is because these small children mostly in primary school end up carrying these behaviours to school so it affects them...some carry these substances in their school bags and end up giving other kids in school.”

[FGD. Mixed older people 35-60, Tharaka Nithi]

The need for parental guidance emerged during discussions about the concerns raised on the ways by which young people access alcohol people in their homes. It was reported that young people who are growing up in homes where illicit brews are prepared and sold were particularly vulnerable to alcohol abuse, which would inevitably have negative effects on their education.

“It affects them too. In some areas you get students from homesteads where alcohol is prepared and sold. So when one gets up in the morning there is nothing to eat, all the child finds is alcohol, so they definitely feast on it.”

[FGD. Mixed young people 20-24, Tharaka Nithi]

In terms of access to learning institutions in the county, most participants and policy makers mentioned lack of enough schools and facilities to promote education in the county,

“..I would say a strong no because when you look at the primary schools and secondary schools that we have in the county, they are not enough. If you visit most of them, they lack science laboratories, libraries. And... even where they are available they are ill equipped, they don't have the basic equipment. So would say that they are inadequate.”

[FGD. Mixed young people 15-19, Tharaka Nithi]

Participants were asked about their views on what needs to be done to address the issues mentioned above. Participants of all ages felt that the impact of poverty on education can be reduced through provision of bursaries to needy students to enable them to pursue their education. The respondents felt that the cost of education was too high and beyond the reach of many people. It was recommended that they should subsidize the cost of education to make it affordable. Some participants felt that one of the factors that increased cost of education is the hiring of teachers by the Board of Governors (BOG) to alleviate shortage of teachers in schools where the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) had not posted sufficient teachers. It was therefore recommended that schools should be well staffed by the TSC to mitigate the need for parents having to pay higher schools fees to cater for the salaries of the teachers on BOG payroll.

Creation of awareness on drugs and substance abuse among young people was emphasised. Young people in particular felt that teachers should also be sensitized on the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse as one way of ensuring that quality education standards are maintained in schools. This should be accompanied by the establishment of rehabilitation centres for those young people who are already addicted to drugs.

Owing to the impact of poverty on education, the underlying causes of poverty should be addressed. As illustrated in the discussions with the participants, poverty has a direct link to school dropout rates, alcohol and drug abuse, child labour and school absenteeism. Participants noted that the county has the potential to generate wealth the agricultural sector to address some of the effects of poverty within the local communities. In addition, educational institutions should explore ways of generating income that could help to offer, expand or supplement existing bursaries for needy students. It was reported that this model is already being implemented in some institutions.

“...efforts are being done to put land under irrigation and to buy animals and raise finances at the university farm. We face a lot of limitations when parents tell us they have no money to pay schools fees.”

[IDI. Service Provider, Tharaka Nithi]

Most county education policy makers and service providers interviewed for the survey were in consensus that there is need to address the education issues be addressed by use of a multi-sectoral approach, as was stated by one of them,

“We can talk about open days or education days may be organized at the local level, the zonal local level where students, parents and teachers are sensitized on their roles. There could also be opportunities for benchmarking; there are places that are known to be best performers in terms of education. So opportunities could be given to school communities to go and benchmark in other areas that relatively do better than us here in Tharaka Nithi. This will improve learning in our schools.”

[KII. County Education Policy Maker, Tharaka Nithi]

“We should all promote programs that work...we have the national program known as TUSOME which has been received very well by the teachers especially those in class one and two. Another one is rolling out on Pride, Pride will target teaching of mathematics, still in class one and two, and these ones are funded. And apart from that one when KCSE results are released, sub-counties organize for training, subject based, to look at the areas where performance may not be appealing enough. So there are subjects based both at the primary and secondary school levels, organized at the District level, okayed by the quality assurance and standards officers, based at the District through the tact tutors and serving partners in secondary schools.”

[KII. School head, Tharaka Nithi]

2.4.2 Organisations Addressing Education Services

It was reported that the government, NGOs, FBOs, community leaders and individuals were in one way or another addressing education of young people in the county. The CDF was highlighted as one of the government programmes offering bursaries to needy students. This however, was reported to be insufficient to cater for the large numbers of young people who needed support. More still, others

complained that their efforts to secure bursaries from the CDF have not been successful, and that ‘those who need to be assisted are not the ones getting help’. There were however young participants who reported to have benefited from career fairs and career guidance organised by the county government.

Various NGOs were recognised as being active in the county, supporting needy students in schools and promoting educational infrastructural development. Participants across all groups also acknowledged individuals who were contributing towards the education of young people, such as private enterprises offering bursaries and private schools that offered scholarships to bright but needy students. The dominant opinion among the respondents was that such efforts, if replicated by others, would boost education status in the county.

Discussions with participants also established the importance of taking care of the health concerns of young people within learning institutions. Respondents felt that supporting the health and well-being of young people in schools through provision of water and wash prospects would help to reduce cases of school absenteeism that emerge from mild sicknesses. In turn, this would also go a long way in raising standards of education in the county. A number of NGOs were reported to be involved in such projects.

“HopeCo has helped us counsel our pupils on reproductive health and hygiene, they also went as far as providing us with water tanks to maintain health and hygiene, where pupils wash hands after visiting toilets. This curbs at least some of these common illnesses... Since they started we don’t have many complaints with the pupils. So they concentrate in school and they are ready to learn.”

[IDI. Service provider, Tharaka Nithi]

The role of religious institutions, especially in providing life skills, psychosocial support and moulding young people to be responsible members of the society was recognised. Participants commented that active participation of young people in religious programmes was one of the easily available means of addressing issues of teenage pregnancies, drugs and substance abuse and other delinquent behaviours that are common among young people in learning institutions.

“...we are working together with all religious organisations, the Christian Union, the catholic YCAs which handle the Christian student activities are doing quite well, as well as the SDA, ...that is how the students are helped by the various religious groups they belong to.”

[IDI. Service provider, Tharaka Nithi]

2.4.3 Opportunities for Investment in Education

One of the pressing concerns that emerge from discussions with the youth and other stakeholders in the educational sector is on the poor standards of primary education. In this regard, it was felt that the county should promote educational standards at the lower levels. Some of the interventions that were proposed include building more schools; equip existing ones, construction of libraries and provision of ICT services.

The role of parents in supporting the education of young people has widely helped to improve educational standards in the county. Promotion of awareness among parents would help them take a more active role and interest in education. In this regard it was felt that there should be strong partnerships between educational institutions and the parents to help to address emerging educational issues in the local environment.

“...we need to sit down as parents and teachers, and decide on the way forward and how to improve the performance of the school together. Because even if we sit down as teachers alone and other stakeholders are not there, we will be thinking of our own things which are very difficult to others. But if we come together and we reason, I think we can come to a very good plan on how we can improve on the education.”

[IDI. Service provider, Tharaka Nithi]

2.4.4 Opportunities for Young People to Gain Skills

Most study groups indicated that there were few opportunities for young people to gain practical skills through mentorships and internships in the county. Most of the available opportunities were said to be in a few private sector. Some employers interviewed for the survey mentioned that the young people lacked relevant skills required in the market.

“My own experience is that we are having a challenge as a county, the youth are not skill based, there are young people who have fast tracked themselves through the education system and they have papers but the papers do not translate into skills, they lack professional courses required by the employer...so you find that you have to do a programme of retraining them or inducting them so that they can perform well.”

[Leading employer, Tharaka Nithi]

2.5 Economic Status and Young People

Discussions were conducted with participants to generate information on young people and their economic status. The survey sought to establish the main income and employment opportunities available in the county and the challenges faced by young people in accessing these opportunities. In addition, the survey sought to identify the main economic activities that young people in the county were engaged in and the reasons why they were engaged in those activities. Further, the survey sought to identify key ongoing interventions and programs for job creation targeting the youth, the challenges faced by young people in accessing these interventions and what can be done to address these challenges.

2.5.1 Main Employment and Income Opportunities

Due to the favourable weather conditions in the county, agriculture was identified as yielding high potential for engaging young people in economic activities. It was pointed out that agriculture provided opportunities for self-employment as well as opportunities for paid labour. Agriculture was reported to provide additional economic opportunities in the form of small scale trade where young people can become entrepreneurs or provide hired labour.

Other existing opportunities that were highlighted include *boda boda* business and the construction industry which tend to focus on young people as opposed to elderly ones. Young participants also felt that there could be opportunities in the education sector where young people can work as ECD tutors. However, although ECD education is a devolved function, young people felt that the county government has not done enough to establish ECD centres that would provide these opportunities.

“Young people from this area go towards Chuka Ndagani where they seek casual jobs and those with education ask for teaching jobs but majority remain at home because the opportunities are limited...last year the county government promised to build more ECD classes but not even a single one has been erected. So because many men and women did this course they remain jobless.”

[FGD. Mixed old People 35-60, Tharaka Nithi]

During discussions with participants, it emerged that young people do encounter many challenges in their quest to secure employment and income opportunities. For those intending to start their own income generating activities, lack of capital was cited as a major handicap. It was observed that young people do not have collaterals to acquire. This challenge is compounded by the ignorance of young people who do not have information about existing opportunities to secure capital for business start-ups or are unable to meet the requirements.

Another challenge that was mentioned was the lack of skills, especially ICT skills, which has become a standard requirement for jobs in the formal sector. A major contributor to lack of skills was observed to be poverty and lack of fees to cater for technical or vocational training.

“There are many challenges because you must go to college to be equipped and maybe you don’t have fees so you do not get good training, so in as much as you wish to get higher pay, you do not have what it takes.”

[FGD. Mixed older People ,Tharaka Nithi]

“Challenge is that many young people here lack knowledge and most of them don’t think ICT is good for them to use in business.”

[IDI. Service Provider, Tharaka Nithi]

In addition to the above challenges, it was also mentioned that insecurity has been a major challenge to business owners. The fear of being robbed was expressed as a concern. Some participants felt that the authorities were not promptly responding to the security threats.

The perceptions that corruption has contributed to young peoples’ inability to secure employment and income opportunities also emerged. It was reported that when opportunities are limited, corruption takes the centre stage in the determination of who gets a job and who doesn’t.

“Let me take you back a little bit, what makes these youth to lack jobs is bribery. If you have no cash, you cannot get no a job... Even if you have good grades but have no money, no job for you. Those having money with poor grades get the jobs.”

[FGD. Mixed older people 35-60, Tharaka Nithi]

2.5.2 Economic Activities That Young People are Involved In

Notwithstanding the challenges mentioned above, the survey sought to identify the main economic activities that young people in the county were engaged in. Further, these discussions also sought to identify the specific challenges faced by the young people while engaged in these economic activities, while at the same time seeking the views of the participants on what needs to be done in order to address these challenges.

Table 2.7 Economic activities young people are engaged in

Main economic activities	Challenges faced	Proposed ways of addressing the challenges
Business	Poor pay and exploitation	Create awareness
Boda Boda	Health complications	Enforcement of laws on child labour
Domestic work	Harassment by authority and employers	Formation of empowerment groups
Casual jobs	Financial constraints	Government aid
Teaching	Lack of skills	Creation of employment
	Accidents	
	Drugs and substance abuse	

The discussions on the kind of economic activities that young people are engaged in indicate that a large proportion of them are in what was referred to as 'business', which means small business enterprises involving buying and selling goods or providing some services.

Another business enterprise that has gained currency over the last few years is the Boda Boda business. This seems to be quite popular among male young people. Domestic work and casual jobs also emerged as key activities undertaken by young people, perhaps owing to the fact that young people lack sufficient vocational and technical skills. Discussions also indicated that a number of young people, especially those with tertiary education, were involved in offering tuition and private lessons to primary and secondary school students during school holidays.

From the discussions with the participants, it emerged that there are young people of school going age who are engaged in economic activities on part time basis or on temporary basis. Among the reasons provided for this situation was the need to earn money with which to buy food and to pay school fees.

“You will find young girls drop out of school so that they can get school fees, they will go to the market so that they can earn a living or they can buy food. Some are employed as house girls; they are employed in the house so that they can get money to go back to school.”

[FGD. Female young people 10-14, Tharaka Nithi]

There are a number of challenges that affect young people who are engaged in economic activities. A recurrent theme in these discussions was poor pay and exploitation by the employers. In this regard, young participants felt that many employers exploit young workers because they know that 'you are young and there is nothing you can do'. In any case, many young people have limited choices at work place due to their vocational skills. An opportunity to work, however harsh the working conditions are, cannot be wasted. In addition, harassment by authorities, especially due to lack of compliance to business regulations was also highlighted.

“When the council comes to collect the tax, the ones who are selling mangoes there in the market, maybe she has not collected any money from morning, so she will not have any money to pay the council.”

[FGD. Female young people 10-14, Tharaka Nithi]

Discussions with the participants also pointed to the high number of accidents involving young people in *boda boda* and other forms of employment. This was attributed to lack of proper training as well as rising cases of alcohol and substance abuse among young people.

In view of the above challenges, the participants recommended a number of interventions. These include creation of decent employment opportunities for the youth, creation of awareness on the dangers of drugs and substance abuse and enforcement of child labour laws. Training in vocational skills has also been recommended as a way of mitigating the identified challenges.

2.5.3 Interventions and Programmes Addressing Youth Unemployment

Unemployment among young people has been an issue of concern for government and other stakeholders. Consequently, a number of initiatives and efforts have been directed towards the creation of decent livelihoods among the youth. The survey sought to establish the main interventions for job creation in the county and also to identify some of the challenges facing the youth in accessing these services.

Table 2.8 Interventions and programmes addressing youth unemployment

Main interventions and programmes	Challenges in accessing the interventions	Ways to address these challenges
UWEZO	Lack of awareness	Sensitization on interventions
YEDF	Fear of loans	Ease access to the funds
NYS	Programme restrictions	Address corruption
WEF	Distance	Bring services closer to the people
Microfinance institutions		Training

The prominent interventions that were mentioned as existing in the county are national government programmes such as UWEZO Fund, the National Youth Service, the Women Enterprise Fund and the Youth Enterprise Fund. It was also reported that microfinance institutions in the county were also running programmes for job creation, mainly in the form of providing loans.

In spite of the existence of these interventions, there are a number of challenges that were seen as barriers to accessing the services. Lack of awareness on the requirements for the services emerged as a major concern. Discussions with young people in particular indicated that a large number of the respondents did not really have the right information on what was required to access the funds. Fear of loans, corruption and distance to the county/sub county headquarters where the services are located

also came up as key issues of concern. One of the county officials in charge of youth affairs expressed his concern;

“The main challenge is that they concentrate on a very small group in urban areas, the ones which they know will do well, but I know there are many young people in remote areas who have a lot of potential out there but they have never gotten the opportunity, they don’t know that this opportunity exists...there is need to reach them.”

[County policy official, youth affairs, Tharaka Nithi]

For the identified interventions to function, young people should be informed of the existence and be actively involved in their planning and execution. In order to address the lack of information and awareness on the ongoing interventions, it was proposed that young people be sensitized on the interventions. It was also observed that in spite of information about these interventions being available online, a lot of young people are still not aware. This is because many of them may not have the capacity to use the internet, others have no access and others may find it expensive. Building the capacity of the youth on ICT and providing the infrastructure would therefore be one of the available means of providing useful information to the youth and addressing the information gap.

“In my opinion on what can be done, I think that training the youth on how they can acquire information from the internet is important because they can find information on say something like bee-keeping or how to start small business, they can find this information in the internet as well as where the market can be found because when they rely on the local market they cannot go far because the competition is high.”

[IDI. Service Provider, Tharaka Nithi]

Other interventions that were mentioned include bringing services closer to the people, addressing corruption and reducing requirements for accessing the services.

2.6 Governance and Young People

Within the governance module, the survey sought to establish the existing governance situation and practices and the challenges encountered. In addition, the survey sought to find out how challenges faced in governance structures can be addressed in order to promote development.

2.6.1 Rule of Law

2.6.1.1 The justice system

Participants reported that the main cases in the county revolve around land disputes, family disputes, rape, drug abuse and murder. It was also reported that instances of crime, robbery and corruption were on the increase. It was felt that the increase in incidents of rape could be related to the increasing cases of drugs and substance abuse. Land grabbing and conflicts between family members were reported to be the main causes of land disputes.

2.6.1.2 Security

Concerns were raised about the security in the county, with participants expressing worry about their safety. The security situation in the county was described as poor.

A number of participants decried the lack of security agencies within the rural areas, saying it contributed to rising cases of robberies and other forms of crime.

“I would say that mostly in the villages the security is not as in the towns because the police don’t prefer to take much time in the villages, they prefer the towns so in the villages there is more insecurity.”

[FGD. Female young people 15-19, Tharaka Nithi]

Poor security was described as a product of several factors that included lack of proper lighting within the neighbourhoods and corruption in the security agencies. Other factors that were mentioned include delayed police response and few numbers of police officers.

Participants mentioned that among the key mechanisms put in place to address security concerns was the *Nyumba Kumi* initiative. In addition, the chiefs were reported to play an important role of ensuring security at the local levels. It was reported that the government has also established police posts in areas that are volatile and prone to skirmishes.

In regard to the role of young people in ensuring security, participants were of the view that young people can play an important role of reporting law breakers to the authorities. Participants felt that this can only be achieved through sensitisation of young people to play this role. ; However, it was reported that on the contrary, a lot of young people usually revert to mob justice rather than report law breakers to the authorities.

“For example among the youths, if a case arises and there is a thief and police take a long time to get to that place, most of the youths tend to take the law into their hands and deal with the criminal so that other aspiring criminals do not do the same thing.”

[FGD. 3 Female youth people 15-19, Tharaka Nithi]

From the discussions, participants observed that above situation could be as a result of lack of confidence with the security agencies.

“Let’s say someone from Nyumba Kumi has arrested somebody and taken him to the police, even before the Nyumba Kumi person gets home, the accused is already set free. What is then the need of reporting to the police?”

[FGD. Mixed young people 25-34, Tharaka Nithi]

The above quote represents some of the concerns that the participants raised as major challenges in ensuring that there is security. Corruption was reported to be a major barrier to security. Participants reported that one may be asked to facilitate the police with bribes for them to arrest a suspect. On the other hand, manufacturers of illicit liquor were said to be enjoying protection from the security agencies who allow them to operate.

“Like here behind the market there are dens of illicit brew and the police officers go there to take bribes and leave them to sell the alcohol.”

[FGD. Mixed young people 20-24, Tharaka Nithi]

In order to address the security challenges, a number of proposals were made. These include the establishment of more police posts, motivation of security groups, and creation of job opportunities for the youth and regular rotation of police officers within stations.

2.6.1.3 Cohesion

Cohesion within the society is important as it creates an enabling environment for development. The survey sought to identify some of the factors that need to be addressed in order to create a cohesive society in the county. Participants felt that negative ethnicity between different communities was an issue of concern. Other factors that were reported to fuel conflicts include differences between the rich and the poor and land ownership conflicts. It was further felt that the rising cases of alcohol and substance abuse were creating conflicts in the community.

In order to promote cohesion in the community, participants suggested that there should be peace meetings and civic education should be conducted. Young people felt that there should be initiatives aimed at encouraging and supporting sporting activities between communities.

“I would say games and sports and cultural activities where people from every community come out and show their talents and their diverse cultures will bring unity because they want to work together. I would say that those kinds of things should be encouraged.”

[FGD. Female young people 15-19, Tharaka Nithi]

2.6.2 Consensus, Equity, Inclusiveness, Participation and Responsiveness

Participation of young people in the decision making process is an important ingredient of youth empowerment. In this regard, the survey sought to identify mechanisms that have been put in place to inform and seek young people’s opinions on ongoing and planned development programmes.

Young participants reported that they mainly rely on radio to know what is happening within the community. Local radio channels were considered to be informative on current affairs, not just from the county but also on issues of national importance. Young participants indicated that they found service charters in public institutions, such as hospitals, quite useful. They also reported that public announcements on meetings and other forums helped them to know what is happening in the community. Regarding the feedback mechanisms available for young people, participants acknowledged that administrative offices, such as the local chief’s office, had suggestion boxes. Nevertheless, they felt that they should be involved in decision making all stages of community development projects.

“I would say that the youths would like to be involved in community affairs, they should be given that chance to innovate and come up with their own ideas and be given the chance to implement them because it’s through this implementing that they can avoid some social problems that they may tend to turn to if they are not listened to.”

[FGD. Female young people 15-19, Tharaka Nithi]

The involvement of young people in community projects was reported to be hampered by a number of factors. When asked about the challenges that hampered their involvement in project implementation at the community level, corruption emerged as an issue of concern. Participants felt that only young people who are ‘well connected’ would be involved in projects while those with no one to assist them were left at the periphery. In addition, it was reported that inter-generation barriers hindered effective

engagement of young people in community projects as many of the projects were implemented by older people who viewed the youth as not having much to offer.

2.6.3 Transparency and Accountability

With regard leadership and integrity, participants generally felt that there are no mechanisms in place to ensure accountability and transparency within the county. Participants reported that they were aware of a few cases where public officers had been transferred due to misconduct.

2.7 Views about the Population Structure

Participants were asked about their views about the growing population in relation to health, education and economy and their main concerns recorded.

Young people were concerned that with the growing population, there is likely to be increased drugs and substance abuse by the youth due to increased cases of unemployment. There was fear among young people that there is likely to be more congestion in health centres and that the cost of health care is likely to go up. In regard to education, participants were worried that school dropout rates might go up. They felt there they should establish more schools and subsidize the cost of education.

“People will be educated but there will be no jobs. The youths in this area, who completed college in 2007 and trained as P1 teachers, they have not yet been employed. This delay from 2007 to 2015 will make people to retire before they are ever employed.”

[FGD. Mixed young people 25-34, Tharaka Nithi]

2.8 Conclusion and Recommendations

The NAYS survey sought to establish the main issues affecting young people in health, education and training, economic status and governance and identify potential areas for investment in those key sectors that will accelerate economic growth in the counties. The survey findings show that there are key issues affecting health, education, economic status of the population in Tharaka Nithi County. The survey reveals that drug and substance abuse teenage pregnancy, rising cases of school absenteeism and dropouts, inadequate technical skills and unemployment are major impending challenges that are likely to slow economic growth in Tharaka Nithi County and delay the demographic window of opportunity from opening. This implies that there is urgent need to address these issues a call for improvements in the following key sectors of health, education, economic status and governance.

Recommendations

Health

1. Promote peer education program in passing correct Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) information and services to young people in and out of school.
2. Train health service providers and equip facilities to provide youth friendly services.
3. Build more health facilities in the county to serve the growing population.
4. Increase public awareness and sensitization on sexual and reproductive health issues affecting the young people in schools and in the communities.

Education

1. Build more schools, vocational and technical institutions in the county and equip them with learning facilities.
2. Promote health talks and professional guidance and counseling in schools.
3. Increase bursaries and scholarship allocations to more students.
4. Promote public education on importance of education by use of role models in education and targeting parents to improve parental guidance.
5. Promote motivational and exchange programs in learning institutions to motivate both students and teachers to improve performance.
6. Enforce child labour laws.

Economic

1. Create awareness and educate the youth on accessing and utilizing existing income and employment opportunities in the county and remove restrictions that hinder access to these opportunities (collaterals, interest rates).
2. Promote technical and skills development in tertiary and TVET institutions.
3. Promote internship/apprenticeship/mentorship programs in the county's economic sectors.
4. Establish more ICT centers in learning institutions and in the county.

Governance

1. Establish more police posts and promote community policing to reduce insecurity.
2. Curb corruption by exposing those involved and coming up with mechanisms for transparency and accountability in County offices.
3. Promote civic education on good governance as stipulated in the constitution.
4. Encourage full involvement and participation of young people in development projects, peace keeping and security initiatives and utilization of resources.

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Annex 1: County Demographic Windows

The United Nations defines the demographic window as the period when the proportion of those aged below 15 years permanently falls below 30 percent of the total population while the proportion of those above 64 years is still below 15 percent of the total population. This period is estimated to last about 40 years and it presents an opportunity for a country to achieve a much faster economic growth driven by the large population of people in the working ages. Table A1.1 below shows that Kenya's demographic window will open in 2038. The proportion of those in the working ages will be 66 percent of the total population and the dependency ratio will be 52. An analysis of the beginning of the demographic window for each of the 47 counties in Kenya shows that the window will open at different times for each county.

Table A1.1 Demographic dividend window opening year

2010s	2020s	2030s	2040s	2050+
Kirinyaga	Kiambu	Makueni	Lamu	Mandera
Nyeri	Embu	Machakos	Nandi	Marsabit
Murang'a	Taita Taveta	Nakuru	Elgeyo Marakwet	Migori
	Meru	Nyandarua	Kajiado	Tana River
	Nairobi	Tharaka Nithi	Kitui	Garissa
	Mombasa	Uasin Gishu	Bomet	Narok
		Laikipia	Siaya	Samburu
		Kisumu	Kakamega	Turkana
		Nyamira	Vihiga	West pokot
		Kericho	Baringo	Wajir
		Kisii	Busia	
			Isiolo	
			Kwale	
			Bungoma	
			Homa Bay	
			Kilifi	
			Trans Nzoia	

Annex 2: Survey Personnel

Central Eastern Region Survey Personnel

Table A2.1 Central Eastern Region

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THARAKA NITHI COUNTY