

**Quantitative Analysis and Modelling
of Youth Not in Education, Employment
and Training (NEET 15 - 24 years old)**

Country Report | Kenya



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UN WOMEN: Quantitative Analysis and Modelling of Youth Not in Education, Employment and Training
(NEET 15 - 24 years old). Country Report: Kenya
By Helen Perry, November/December 2021

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ALMP	Active labour market policies
EET	in employment, education or training
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
GDP	Gross domestic product
KCHP 2019	Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LMIC	Low to middle income country
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDG	Sustainable development goals
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN DESA	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UN Population Division	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UN Women ESA-RO	UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
UNW	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

1

INTRODUCTION



Kenya is in one of the best positions of all the countries in East Africa to harness the youth dividend. The current youth population has accessed one of the best education systems on the continent since their primary grades. A rapidly growing economy has been able to diversify into several productive sectors that are increasing the numbers of youth in employment (Munga et. al. 2021). High education enrolment levels of the 15-19 year olds and a relatively high uptake of young men into more technical and traditionally male dominated economic sectors has left young women between 20 and 24 the most susceptible to not being in employment, education or training (NEET). The NEET rate for 20-24 year old women is 53% and for men is 36% as calculated from the Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019 (KCHS 2019) used for the analysis in this paper.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on women in greater job losses than men where 20% of women and 12% of men have lost their jobs; severely reduced access to healthcare for themselves and their children; and an increase in gender based violence (Government of Kenya and UN Kenya 2020). Young women have been particularly affected by school closures which is one of the main reasons for the estimated 40% increase in teenage pregnancy during lockdown (Partridge-Hicks 2020).



To ensure that recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic also reduces the number of youth NEET, especially young women, the UN Women Eastern and Southern African Regional Office has commissioned a quantitative research report on the status of youth NEET in twelve East and Southern African countries. This report constitutes the investigation into the status and determinants of NEET in Kenya. To gain greater insight into which policies might best enable both a return to full-time education and a growth in youth employment, the report analyses data from the Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019 (KCHS 2019) which was conducted in 2019.

This report is structured to describe Kenya's economic and social development context, including the status of women. It then presents a descriptive and a statistical analysis of the data from the KCHP 2019. The statistical analysis will look at the determinants of NEET by developing a logistical regression model that estimates the probability of being NEET. The last section of the report will reflect on the findings of the determinants of NEET in the light of country policy on gender equity and youth development as well as international literature on youth employment.

1.1 Socio-economic background and demographic profile

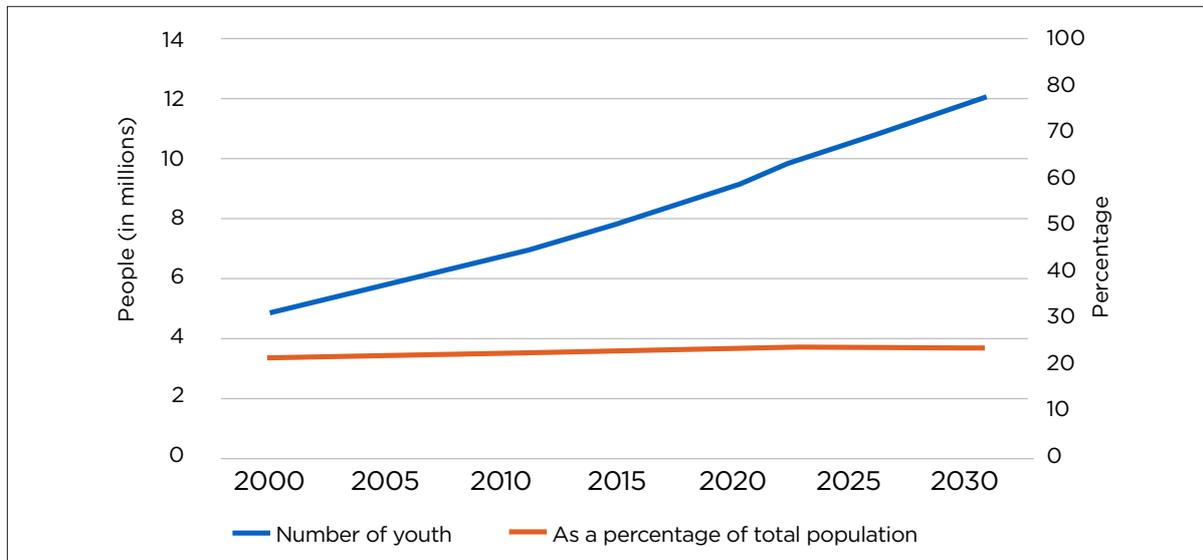
Kenya has, over the past decade, been an economic success story with an average economic growth rate of 5.7% and investments in human capital that have seen increases in healthcare, education and decreases in extreme poverty. However, 35% of Kenyans still live in extreme poverty which has a more profound impact on women and women headed households. (UN DESA 2020).

Demographic profile by sex and age

Intrinsic to wealth is population growth. This impacts at a macro level in per capita terms, in the labour absorption capacity and in the state's ability to provide services. At a family level without sufficient employment the number of dependents increases and the potential for a spiral of vulnerabilities increases. Those countries whose population growth rate has slowed down "are much  ter placed to achieve economic take-off and middle-income status." (Bryceson 2018)

Kenya's overall population growth rate is 2.25% per annum and is expected to continue at this rate (UN Population Division 2019). Figure 1 shows the number of youths between 15 and 24 projected to 2030. Kenya will see the number of youth increase from 11.248 million in 2020 to 13.573 million in 2030. While the youth population is expected to decrease as a percentage of the total population this is marginal with a decrease from 21% currently to 20% in 2030. For Kenya to benefit from the demographic dividend there would need to be a greater reduction in the next decade in the rate at which the population is growing (Drummond et. al. 2014).

Figure 1: Number of youth and youth as a percentage of the total population from 2000 projected to 2030 by sex (15-24)

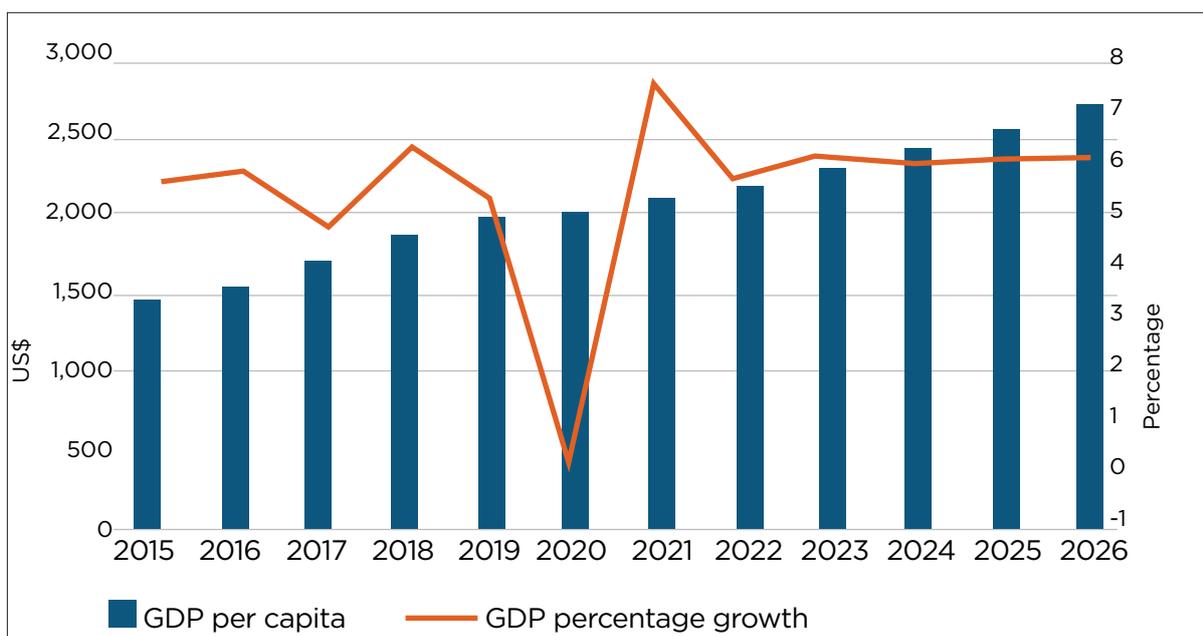


Source: UN Population Division (2019), author's calculations.

1.2 Economic growth and structure of the economy in Kenya

Kenya has seen the greatest and most sustained economic growth of all the countries in East Africa. From 2003 with the launch of Kenya's Vision 2030 real GDP growth accelerated to an annual average rate of 2.7% with the latter years seeing GDP growth rates of 6% (Figure 2). The impact of COVID-19 on Kenya's economy saw a drop in the economic growth to 0.3%. While there has been significant economic recovery throughout 2021 it has been uneven across sectors with tourism and services not yet able to return to previous output. Employment in those sectors, which is predominantly women remains severely curtailed (AfDB 2021).

Figure 2: GDP per capita and GDP growth rates projected to 2026



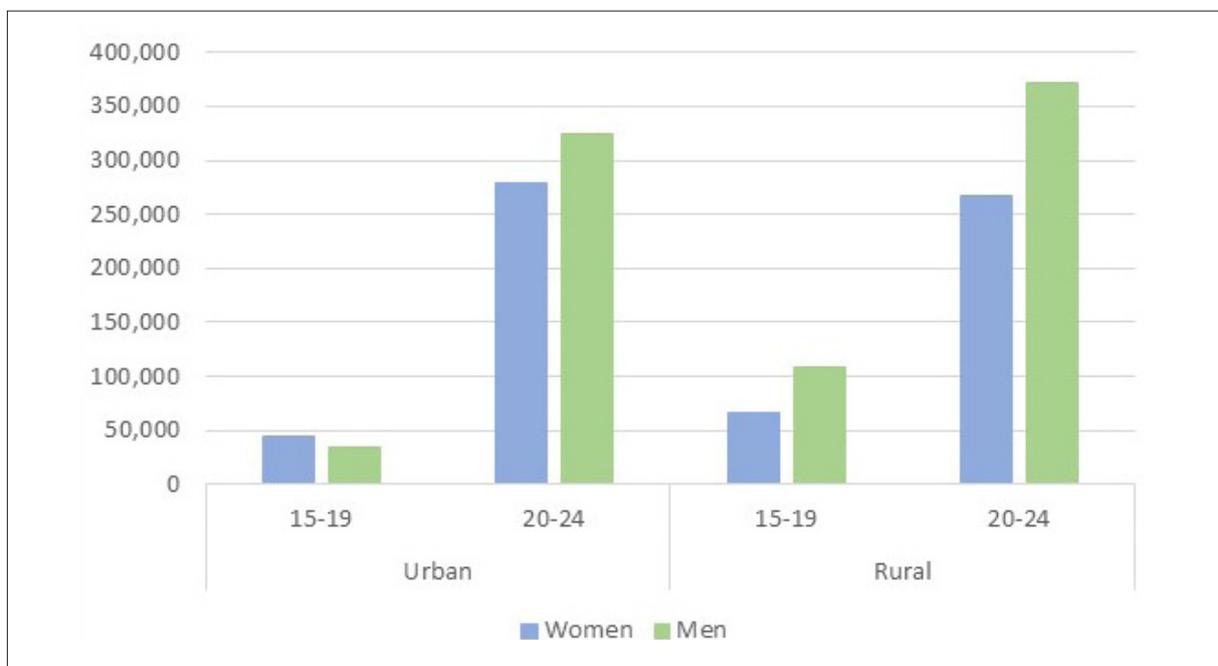
Source: IMF World Economic Outlook Database (2021).

1.3 Employment profile of youth (including type of employment)

Employment opportunities have been increasing for young Kenyans. Currently the employment to population rate for 15-19 year olds is 14% and for 20-24 year olds is 45%. Employment prospects increase rapidly for the 25-29 year age group which has an employment to population rate of 72 %. The 40-44 year age group have an employment to population rate of 88% (KNBS 2019b).

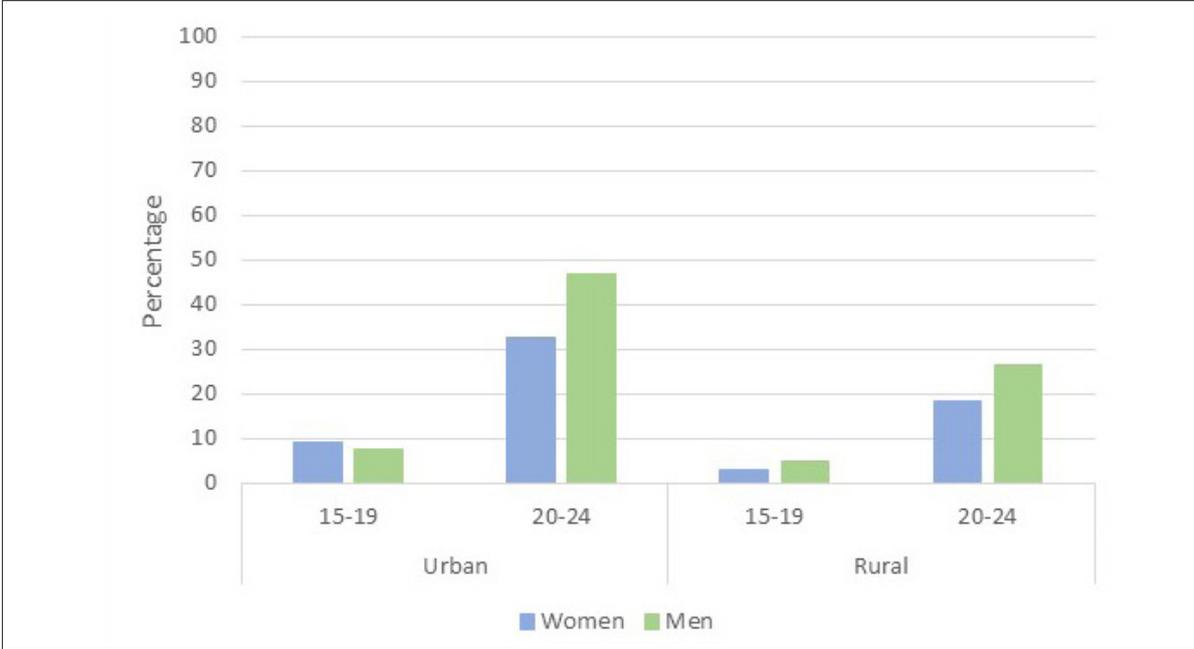
Figure 3 shows the number of youths employed in urban and rural areas by sex and age group. Given the far greater rural population in Kenya (72%), the ratio of employed youth in the rural areas is lower than urban. (KNBS 2019b) Figure 4 shows the number of employed youth as a percentage of youth in urban and rural areas by sex and age group. 9% of urban women aged 15-19 are employed compared to 3% of rural women. 32% of urban women aged 20-24 are employed compared to 18% of rural women. The employment rates of men aged 20-24 are 47% in the urban areas and 36% in the rural areas.

Figure 3: Number of youth employed in urban and rural areas by sex and age group



Source: Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019. Author's calculations.

Figure 4: Employed youth as a percentage and youth disaggregated into urban and rural areas by sex and age group



Source: Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019. Author’s calculations.

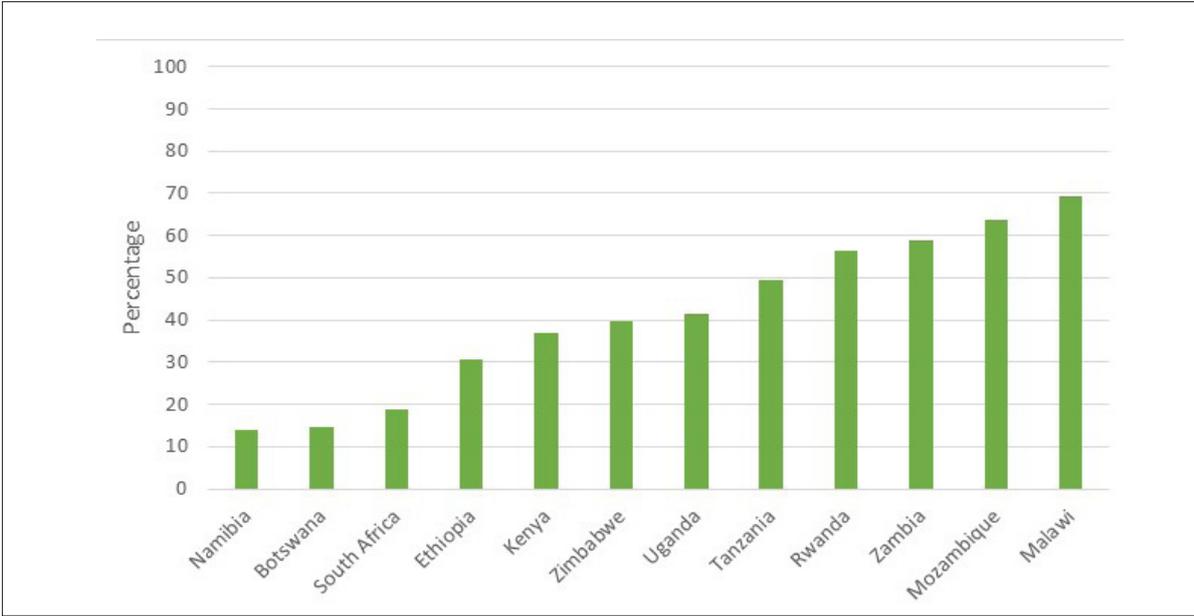
1.4 Poverty profile by sex and age

Kenya has a number of human development challenges. Despite an increase in their human development index in relation to education and health, poverty and inequality remain pervasive. Regional disparities are pronounced in rural areas that are most vulnerable to climate instability, lack of infrastructure and are more difficult to reach with social services.

Children, youth and women living in communities that lack access to basic services, weekly markets, and public infrastructure, and in areas prone to external shocks were more likely to be multi-dimensionally and monetarily poor (KNBS 2020).

Figure 5 shows the percentage of the population in Kenya living in extreme poverty in relation to the other East and Southern African countries in the study.

Figure 5: Percentage of population living in extreme poverty at less than US\$ 1.90 per day in East and Southern African



Source: World Bank PovcalNET data. Accessed on 17/07/2021

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ANALYSIS OF THE KENYA NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS' CONTINUOUS HOUSEHOLD SURVEY 2019

The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics' (KNBS) Continuous Household Survey 2019 is part of a programme to collect data in modules on various aspects of national importance – such as the labour force and agricultural surveys. The survey has a sample of 20 691 households and 86 647 individuals of all ages. This country report looks at the profile of youth between the ages of 15 and 24 who live in the households and were present at the time of the survey. No data is specifically included on household members who may have been absent at the time – either studying and living in hostel accommodation or working and staying in workers lodging.

2.1 Definition of NEET

The literature review written as a background to this report has a more detailed definition of NEET and employment as well as a discussion on several of the statistical issues surrounding the calculation of the NEET rate. This will not be repeated in this report, rather a brief definition of NEET and the calculation of the NEET rate is presented.

Youth not in employment, education or training is the indicator of the Sustainable Development Goal 8, Target 6: “By 2020 substantially reduce the proportion of youth aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training”. According to UN DESA (2021) the youth NEET rate differs from the youth unemployment rate as it includes the discouraged worker category as well as those who are outside the labour force due to disability or engagement in household chores (ILO 2013).

The NEET rate is calculated as follows:

$$\text{NEET rate (\%)} = \frac{\text{total number of youth aged 15-24} - (\text{number of youth aged 15-24 in employment} + \text{number of youth aged 15-24 in education or training})}{\text{total number of youth aged 15-24}} \times 100$$

It is important to note that the indicator is composed of two different sub-groups – unemployed youth (actively seeking work) not in education or training as well as youth outside the labour force (not actively seeking work) not in education or training. Unemployed youth who are in and training who should not be counted as NEET.

Implications of the new international definition of the labour force for NEET rate calculations

Increasingly country level household and labour force surveys are being updated to include questions that return data on employment according to the new international definition established in 2013 by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS). This means that there is not necessarily synergy between country data based on surveys using the new definition of employment and the ILO modelled estimates.

This particularly affects countries where large percentages of the population depend on agricultural, fishing or manufacturing for household consumption only. While this remains defined as “work” according the 2013 definition, it is no longer defined as “employment”. As such there is, in some countries, a substantial drop in the proportion of the population employed and an increase in the percentage of NEET – by between 10 and 30 percentage points. This difference is especially apparent for women who are the predominant producers of subsistence agriculture. This paper will be using the new definition of employment for its NEET calculations.

The other consequence of the change in the definition of employment is that time series analysis and tracking of trends with country survey data is problematic and will not be attempted in this paper. It should also be noted that the household surveys in the ILO Stat database do not necessarily contain NEET rates according to the 2013 definition and caution should be exercised when observing changes in the NEET rates over time.

2.2 Population of youth in the KCHS 2019 by sex and age (15-24)

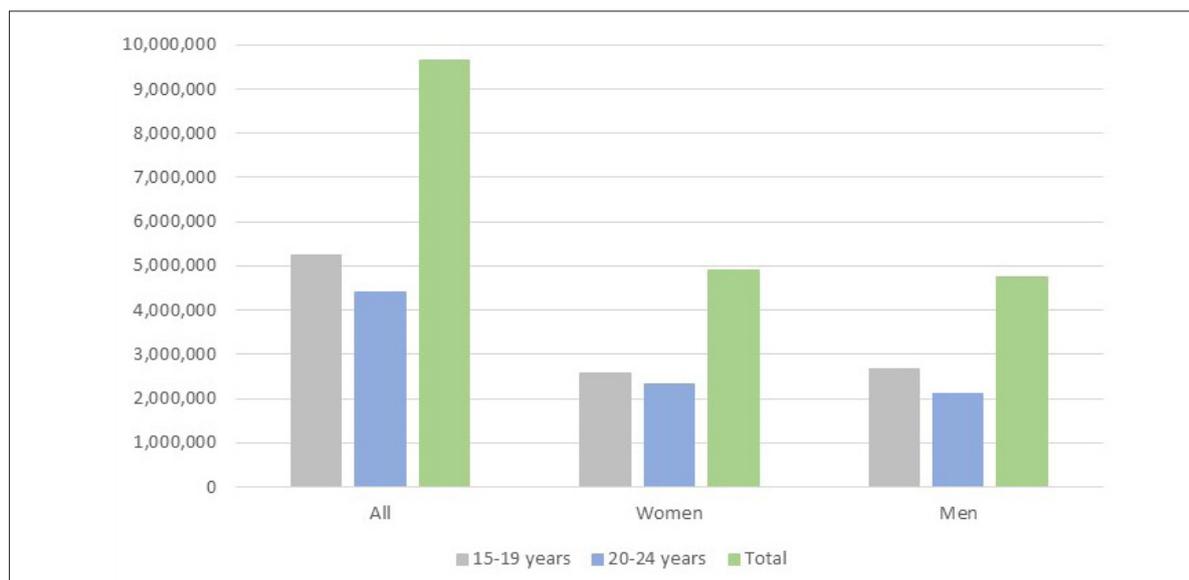
Table 1 and Figure 6 show the number of youths represented in the survey when weighted by their individual sample weight. There are a total of 9.662 million young women and men between the ages of 15 and 24, of these 4.898 million are women and 4.764 are men. While it is not unexpected for sample surveys to show some variation in the number of a particular population group, there appears to be an under-representation of young men aged 20-24.

Table 1: Total number of youth included in the survey by sex and age (15-24)

Age	Total	Women	Men
15-19	5 246 942	2 580 379	2 666 564
20-24	4 414 851	2 317 655	2 097 196
Total	9 661 793	4 898 034	4 763 760

Source: Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019. Author’s calculations.

Figure 6: Population by sex and age (15-24)



Source: Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019. Author’s calculations.

Table 2 shows the gender parity by age group. In total 51% of 15- 24 year-olds in the survey are young women and 49% are young men. However, 52% and 48% of 20-24 year olds are women and men respectively which is a slightly higher proportion of women to men than is reflected in the Census 2019 (KNBS 2019a).

Table 2: Percentage of women and men in the survey by age (15-24)

	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Gender parity index
15-19 years	49	51	0.97
20-24 years	52	48	1.11
Total	51	49	1.03

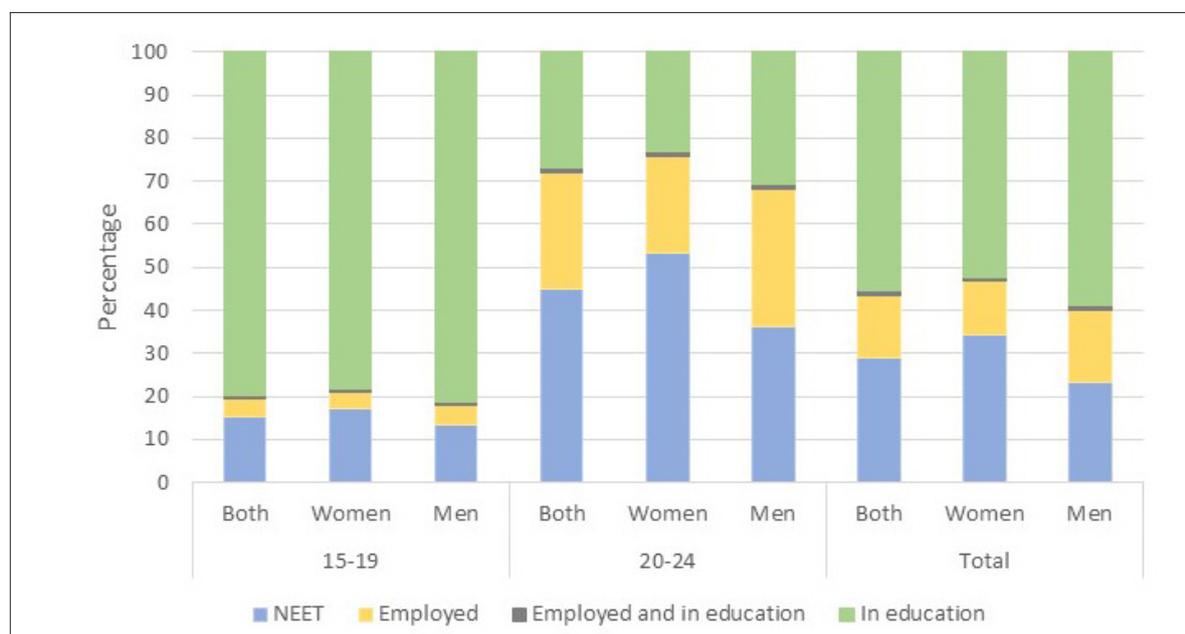
Source: Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019. Author’s calculations.

2.3 Overview of youth by activity status

Figure 7 and Table 3 shows the number of youths by activity status – NEET; employed; employed and in education; and in education only, by sex and age group. The highest percentage of youth NEET are women aged 20-24 (53%). Young men in that age group are much less likely to be NEET (36%) with 33% employed and 32% in education (including those who are employed and in education). 22% of young women in the 20-24 year age group are employed and 24% are in education.

Young women in the age group 15-19 are predominantly in education, at 79% (including those in both the categories of “in education” and “employed and in education”). Five per cent are employed (including those who are employed in the category “employed and in education”). Finally, 17% are NEET. Similarly, at this age, young men are also predominantly in education (82%). 6% are employed (including those employed in the “employed and in education” category) and 13% are NEET.

Figure 7: Percentage of youth by activity status - NEET; employed; employed and in education; and in education only, by sex 15-24



Source: Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019. Author's calculations.

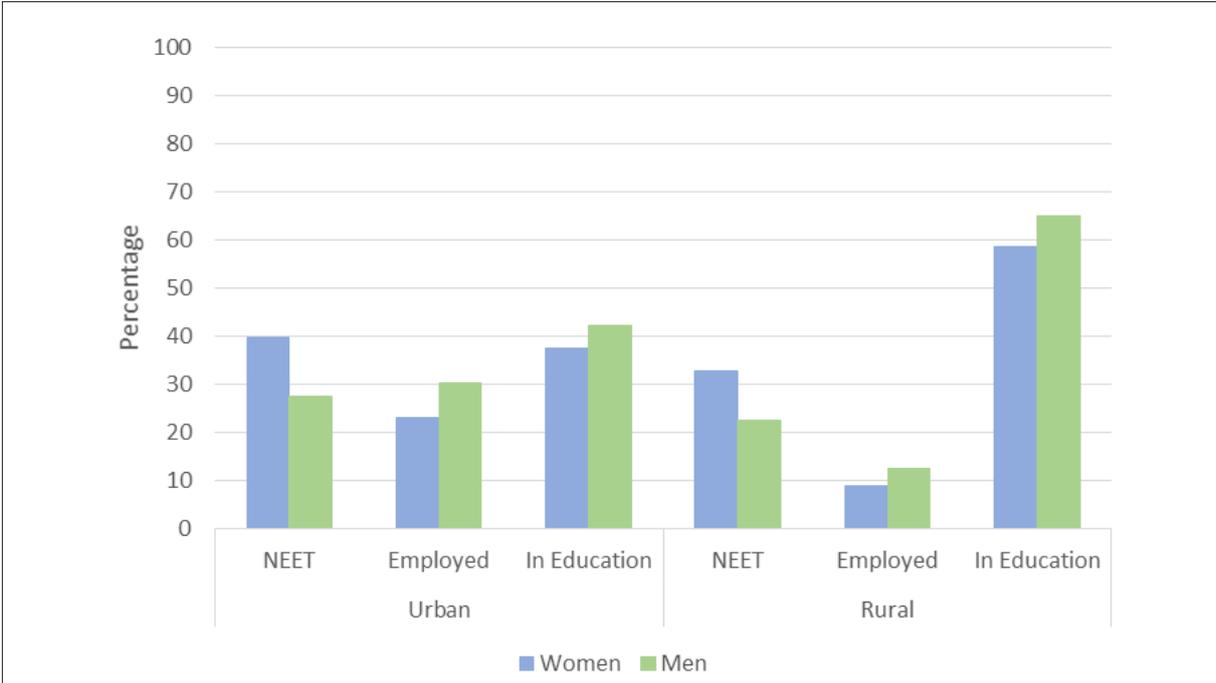
Table 3: Percentage of youth by activity status - NEET; employed; employed and in education; and in education only, by sex 15-24

Activity status	Age group	Total Per cent	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Gender parity Index
NEET	15-19	15	17	13	1.26
	20-24	45	53	36	1.63
	Total	29	34	23	1.51
Employed	15-19	4	4	5	0.79
	20-24	27	22	32	0.78
	Total	15	13	17	0.78
Employed and in education	15-19	1	1	1	0.76
	20-24	1	1	1	0.88
	Total	1	1	1	0.83
In education	15-19	80	78	81	0.93
	20-24	27	23	31	0.84
	Total	56	52	59	0.91

2.4 Urban and rural youth by activity status

Given the high percentage of the population of Kenya who live in rural areas, it is important to look at the relative distribution of youth by activity status in urban and rural areas. As seen in Figure 8, the percentage of NEET in urban areas is higher than in rural. The percentage of youth employed in the rural areas is lower than in urban areas, however, the lower rural NEET percentages are driven off the relatively rural high education enrolment.

Figure 8: Percentage of urban and rural youth by activity status - NEET, employed and in education, by sex 15-24



Source: Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019. Author’s calculations.

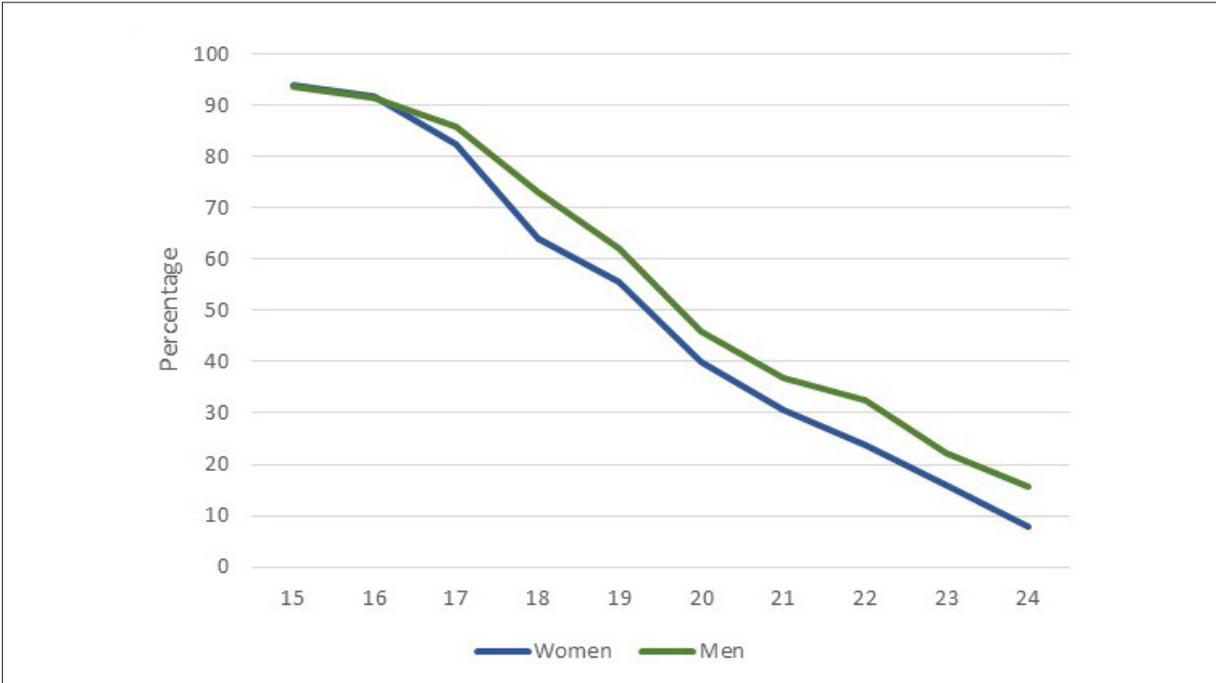
2.5 Education profile of youth

Enrolment in secondary education in Kenya has increased steadily over the past decade with over 90% of 15- and 16-year-olds enrolled in school and over 80% of 17-year-olds enrolled in school (Figure 9). The quality of education in Kenya has also increased including in poorer and rural areas (Bashir et. al. 2018). Kenya has the second highest performance (after Mauritius) in both the maths and reading tests of the Southern African Consortium for the Measurement of Education Quality (SACMEQ). More than 50% of Kenyan students read at the top three of the 8¹ SACMEQ reading levels which are “inferential reading”, “analytical reading” and “critical reading”. The average across all countries participating in SAQMEC was 28% (Bashir et. al. 2018).

With parity in education enrolment having largely been achieved, Kenya is in a similar situation to many of the East and Southern African countries in this survey. Young women are moving through the school system more efficiently than young men and attain, on average, more years of schooling. Figure 9 shows the percentage of youth enrolled in school by age in single age years. While it looks like young women start dropping out of school at 17 in greater numbers than young men *they are actually repeating less and completing schooling earlier than young men*. As described in more detail in the analysis of Figure 10, higher percentage of women in the age group 15-19 have reached both lower secondary and higher secondary than men in the same age group.

¹ The 8 SACMEQ reading levels are: pre-reading, emergent reading, basic reading, reading for meaning, interpretive reading, inferential reading, analytical reading and critical reading

Figure 9: Percentage of youth currently enrolled in education by sex and age in single years (15-24)



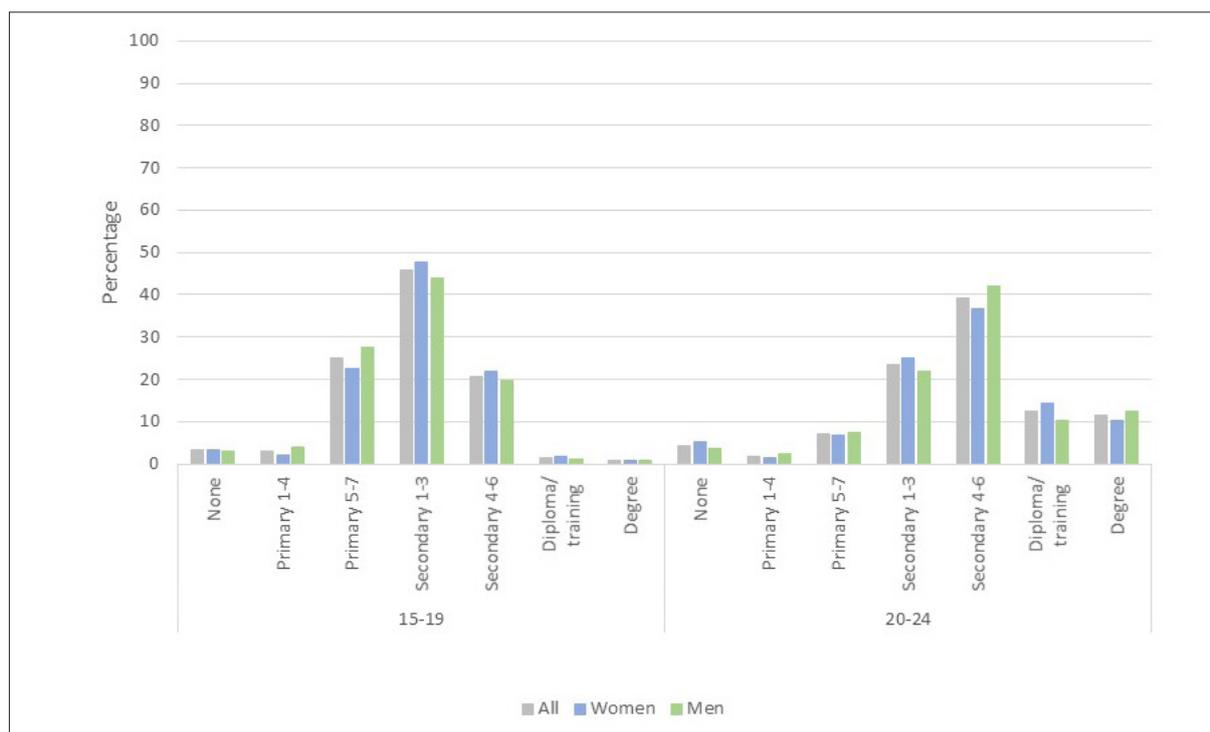
Source: Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019. Author’s calculations.

As a result of a variety of programmes to improve access, retention and quality in Kenyan schools, students in general are progressing through the system without substantial numbers repeating (Bashir et. al. 2018). The age-grade appropriate enrolment in Kenyan schools can be seen in the percentage of each age group by highest grade attained in Figure 9 and Table 3. 46% of all youth between 15 and 19 are in lower secondary and 20% are in upper secondary.

Within this the most important observations are first, a higher percentage of women in this age group have reached both lower secondary (48%) and higher secondary (22%) than men of whom 44% and 20% have reached lower secondary and higher secondary respectively. Second, more women who have left school attained secondary school grades than men who have left school. Finally, more young women have already attained diploma level education by the time they are 19. This is most likely to be a diploma in primary or pre-primary teaching. (Munene 2021)

As with the data presented in Figure 9, education enrolment in the age group 20-24 is lower for women. However, this is masking the higher numbers of young women who have already completed secondary school and are enrolled at the diploma or training level. While there are fewer women than men enrolled in degree level education, there is no data in the KCHS 2019 that allows for a more detailed analysis of enrolment in higher education or completion of a degree.

Figure 10: Percentage of youth by highest level of education, sex and age (15-24)



Source: Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019. Author's calculations.

Table 4: Percentage of youth by highest level of education, sex and age (15-24)

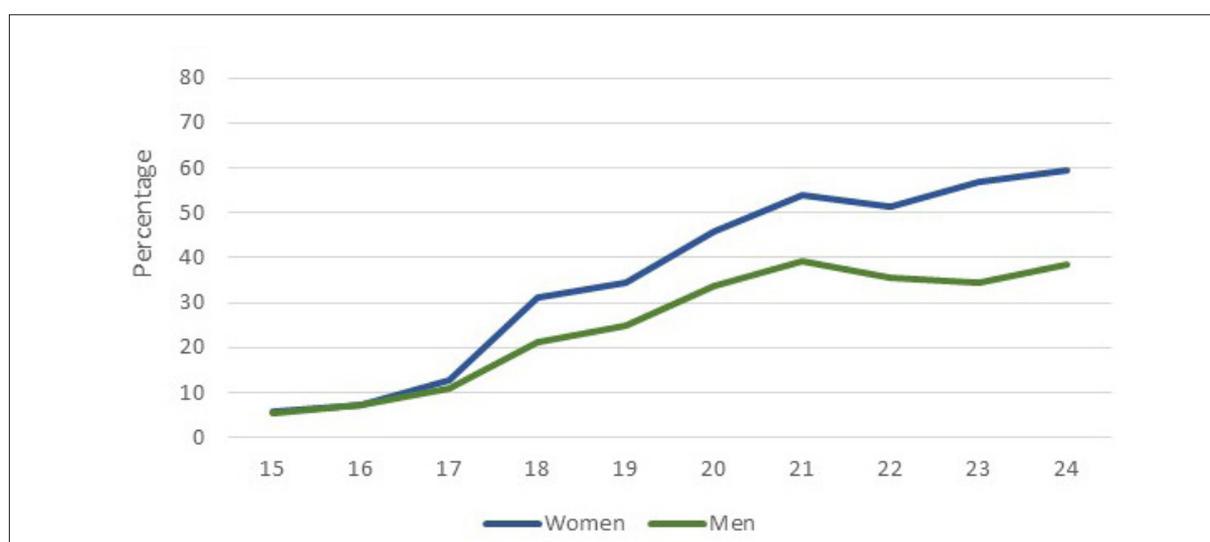
	Highest level of education	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Gender parity index
15-19 years	None	50	50	1.00
	Primary 1-4	35	65	0.55
	Primary 5-7	44	56	0.80
	Secondary 1-3	51	49	1.05
	Secondary 4-6	52	48	1.08
	Diploma/training	58	42	1.36
	Degree	50	50	0.99
20-24 years	None	62	38	1.60
	Primary 1-4	42	58	0.73
	Primary 5-7	51	49	1.03
	Secondary 1-3	56	44	1.26
	Secondary 4-6	49	51	0.96
	Diploma/training	61	39	1.55
	Degree	48	52	0.91

Source: Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019. Author's calculations.

2.6 Profile of NEET youth

Due to Kenya's high enrolment of youth in the education system the percentage of NEET amongst the 15, 16 and 17 year olds is relatively low, ranging from 5% at 15 years old, 7% at 16 years old to 13% for women and 11% for men at 17 years old. At 18 years old the number of women NEET begins to increase at a faster rate than men NEET and is 30% and 21% respectively. As was seen in the analysis of Figure 11, the increase in NEET rates of women between the ages of 18 and 21 are not due to them dropping out of school prematurely. They are due to women moving through the education system more efficiently while young men tend to repeat grades or may leave school temporarily to work. However, once women finish school they have relatively few post-school training and work options.

Figure 11: Percentage NEET youth by sex and age in single years (15-24)



Source: Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019. Author's calculations.

There is large regional variation in the NEET rate of both women and men; as well as a difference between women and men. Table 5 and Table 6 show the national and county NEET rates respectively. The national NEET rates of both age groups are 34% women and 23% men. Due to Kenya's high enrolment in secondary school, the NEET rates for the 15-19 year age group are relatively low at 15% for both of women and men. Nationally NEET rates are 30 percentage points higher at 45% for the 20-24 year age group. There would be similar variations in the county NEET rates but it is not possible to disaggregate the county data into age groups as the sample size becomes too small.

Table 5: Percentage NEET youth in each County (15-24) by sex and age

Age group	Total Per cent	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Ratio of women to men
15-19	15	17	13	1.26
20-24	45	53	36	1.63
Total	29	34	23	1.51

Source: Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019. Author's calculations.

Table 6: Percentage NEET youth in each county (15-24) by sex and age

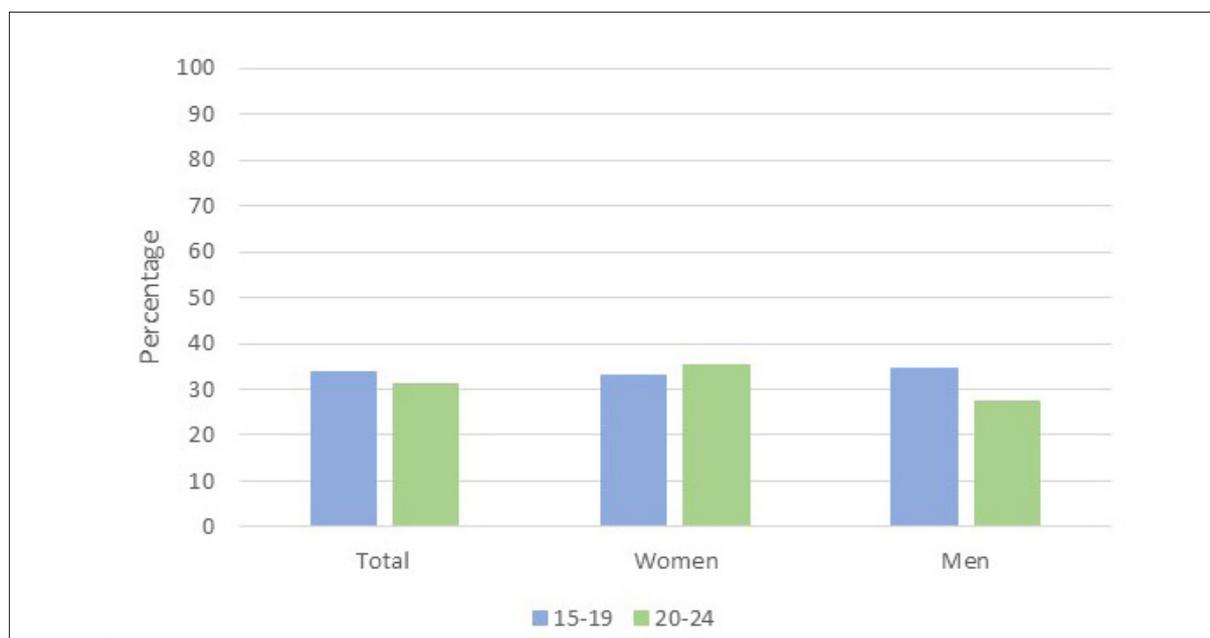
County	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Percentage point difference
Baringo	21	16	5
Bomet	22	7	15
Bungoma	22	20	2
Busia	36	21	15
Elgeyo Marakwet	35	36	0
Embu	35	23	12
Garissa	66	50	16
Homa Bay	24	18	6
Isiolo	53	52	1
Kajiado	34	42	-7
Kakamega	34	18	16
Kericho	32	21	11
Kiambu	29	21	9
Kilifi	42	17	26
Kirinyaga	26	8	17
Kisii	31	22	9
Kisumu	26	11	15
Kitui	50	36	13
Kwale	34	23	11
Laikipia	25	17	7
Lamu	50	43	7
Machakos	35	22	13
Makueni	28	21	7
Mandera	60	41	19
Marsabit	60	42	18
Meru	28	16	12
Migori	38	28	10
Mombasa	42	21	21
Muranga	22	11	11
Nairobi	46	35	12
Nakuru	41	25	16
Nandi	23	17	7
Narok	36	27	9
Nyamira	26	25	2
Nyandarua	17	12	5
Nyeri	23	13	10
Samburu	37	35	2
Siaya	35	16	18
Taita Taveta	38	19	19

County	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Percentage point difference
Tana River	49	39	10
Tharaka	23	17	6
Trans-Nzoia	31	18	12
Turkana	43	30	14
Uasin Gishu	27	20	7
Vihiga	29	23	7
Wajir	53	40	14
West Pokot	37	33	3

Source: Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019. Author's calculations.

The percentage of unemployed² youth is shown in Figure 12. A third (33%) of women and 25% of men in the 15–19-year age group are unemployed. These figures climb with the 20–24 year old cohort, namely 35% of women and 28% of men are unemployed.

Figure 12: Unemployed as a percentage of the labour force



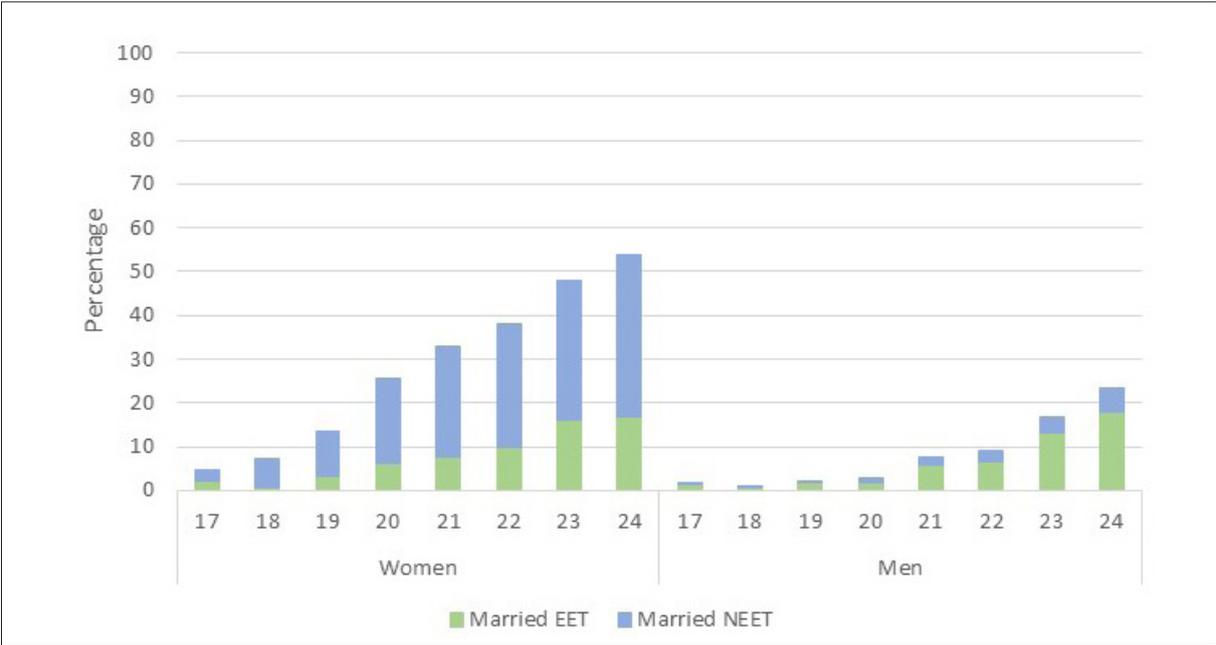
Source: Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019. Author's calculations.

2 Every effort was made to calculate unemployment on the basis of the official international definition – currently not in employment, want work, actively searching and available to begin work. There were cases where data was missing for the fields “available to start working” and cases where data was missing for “actively seeking work”. It was decided that unless the answer to either was “no” the person was considered unemployed, thus this is a broad definition of unemployment.

2.7 NEET and marriage

Unlike many countries in East and Southern Africa, Kenya’s NEET rates for younger women do not appear to be directly related to leaving school due to early marriage (or cohabitation)³. The total percentage of all youth between 15 and 24 who are married is 12%. This is 19% of all young women and 4% of all young men. Figure 13 shows the percentage of married youth by age and NEET status. At 15 and 16 years old less than 1% of youth are married. At 17, 3% of women NEET are married and 2% of women EET are married. Marriage rates rise slowly and even at 20 years of age only 25% of women are married. 19% of 20 year old women NEET are married and 6% of 20 year old women EET are married. At 24, 37% of women NEET are married and 17% of women EET are married. In total 54% of 24 year old women are married.

Figure 13: Youth by marriage status and age, NEET and non-NEET



Source: Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019. Author’s calculations.

3 Married refers to those legally married and those in union or cohabiting.

3

DETERMINANTS OF YOUTH NEET

In order to develop policy to mitigate the likelihood of youth becoming NEET and remaining outside of the labour market permanently, it is important to try and understand what factors in the Kenyan context might determine NEET status. Given that young women are more likely to be NEET than young men it is important to see whether there are factors determining NEET in young women that differ from those for men.

3.1 Structure of the model

This section looks at the determinants of youth NEET by applying a binomial logistic regression with NEET status as the dependent variable. Numerous independent variables from the survey data set were coded and tested in the logistic regression for both their strength and statistical significance. Variable choice was guided by previous research as outlined in the literature review, the data collected in the survey and the methodology appropriate to the categorical nature of survey data. In some cases, variables selected did not impact on NEET and/or were not statistically significant. These were removed but it is useful to note which variables were tested and removed from the model.

Variables used in the final model are:

Dependent variable: NEET or not NEET

Independent variables: sex, age group, married, highest level of education, number of children under 10, number of adult dependents, number of adult wage earners and total number of household members.

The model is:

$$\log(\pi/(1-\pi)) = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 \dots\dots\dots$$

$$\text{where } \Pr(Y=1) = \pi$$

Due to the heterogeneity of NEET observed in the descriptive data both in terms of age group and gender, three separate models were run as follows:

- All 15-24 year-olds;
- All 15-19 year-olds;
- Women only 20-24 year-olds.

3.2 Findings of the model



The results of the logistic regressions are in Table 4 which show the probability of being NEET. Most of the coefficients were statistically significant at $p < 0.01$. Several coefficients are retained in the table that have p values greater than 0.1 due to their relative impact or not on the probability of being NEET.

Household characteristics

Family structure

In terms of family structure, women headed households appear to increase the probability of being NEET in the regression of all ages and genders and the 15-19 age group by 1.11 times and 1.08 times respectively. It might reduce the probability of being NEET on women in the age group 20-24. However, the results are not statistically significant so these results would need to be seen as a trend rather than definitive.



The regressions were run with the number of adult dependents, the number of children under 10 and the number of children under 4 in the household. All these factors increase the chance of being NEET with the number of dependent adults having the greatest effect. The impact of increased numbers of dependent adults on all youth is 1.62 times the probability; the impact on 15-19 year olds is 1.44 times; and the impact on women aged 20-24 is 1.83 times the probability of being NEET.

The number of children under 5 in a household has a lower impact on the probability of being NEET than the impact of the number of children under 5. Interestingly they both have an impact and if either is removed it doesn't affect the impact or statistical significance of the other. The number of children under 5 has the greatest impact on young women between the age of 20 and 24 at an increase of 1.51 times the probability of being NEET.

Household size

The size of the household reduces the chance of being NEET by approximately 20% for every additional family member. This is potentially due to both the increased likelihood of having a wage earner as well as increased labour for family farming for profit.

Unpaid family agriculture

Being engaged in unpaid family agriculture is a predictor of NEET status with the impact ranging from 2.4 times for 15-19 year-old young women and 3.23 times for women between 20 and 24. In several of the other countries in this study the impact of being engaged in unpaid family agriculture is much higher than in Kenya. This is possibly due to the higher percentage of the population in these countries living in poverty and extreme poverty and therefore, having a greater dependence on subsistence agriculture for livelihoods.

Individual characteristics

Female

The descriptive data in Section 3 showed a greater number of women NEET, especially in the 20-24 age group where the percentage of women who are NEET is 53%. This result is confirmed by the logistic regressions where being a woman increases the probability of being NEET in the 15-19 age group by 1.22 times and in the 20-24 age group by 1.55 times.

Age

The difference in NEET between women and men is not as acute as the difference between age groups. Being in the 20-24-year age group increases the probability of being NEET by 3.21 over being in the 15-19-year age group.

Marriage

Being married has the expected impact of increasing the probability of being NEET especially amongst the 15-19 year-old women where they are 9.05 times more likely to be NEET than their unmarried counterparts. However, as shown in the descriptive section there are extremely few women under the age of 19 who are married. 1% of 17 year-olds, 6% of 18 year-olds and 10% of 19 year old women in Kenya are married. 20-24 year-old women have 3.5 times the probability of being NEET as opposed to those who aren't married.

Education

Higher levels of education attainment reduce the probability of being NEET for both age groups except for secondary grades 4-6 for 15 to 19 year olds but this coefficient is not statistically significant, most probably due to the large enrolment of 15-19 year-olds who are still in secondary education.

Urban

Youth living in urban areas are more likely to be NEET than their rural counterparts. In the case of 20-24 year-olds this is 1.53 times the likelihood and in the case of urban 15-19 year olds this is 2.08 times that of rural women.

Table 7: Results of logistic regressions for youth NEET status – individual characteristics

		All 15-24 year-olds	All 15-19 year-olds	Women only 20-24 year-olds
Category (omitted variable in parenthesis)	Variable	Coefficients		
Sex (Men)	Women	1.55***	1.22**	
Age group (15-19)	20-24	3.21***		
Married (Not)	Married	2.64***	9.05***	3.50***
Urban/rural (Rural)	Urban	1.53***	2.08***	1.48***
Highest level of education (Prim 1-4)	Prim 5-7	0.27***	0.24***	0.43**
	Sec 1-3	0.29***	0.22***	0.45**
	Sec 4-6	0.63***	1.09	0.49*
	Diploma/training	0.29***	0.40*	0.33***
	Degree	0.19***	0.08***	0.16***
Female head of household		1.11	1.08	0.82
Household size		0.80***	0.79**	0.81***
Number of dependent adults		1.62***	1.44***	1.83***

		All 15-24 year-olds	All 15-19 year-olds	Women only 20-24 year-olds
Number of children under 10		1.21***	1.18**	1.16*
Number of children under 5		1.30***	1.43***	1.51***
Unpaid family agriculture (No)	Yes	3.00***	2.40***	3.23***
Constant		0.11***	0.25***	0.54

Note: Statistical significance indicated as follows: * = $p < .10$; ** = $p < .05$; *** = $p < .01$. Some coefficients with statistical significance of up to $p < 0.3$ where retained - these have no asterisk. Source: Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019. Author's calculations.

4

NEET POLICY AND PROGRAMMES

4.1 Employment

Employment in Kenya has increased over the past decade for all sections of the population including rural women and youth. The labour market is also expanding in terms of the increasing number of youth and young women who are actively looking for employment. Munga et. al. (2021) attribute these changes to structural changes in the economy that are developing more productive economic sectors such as services – most particularly in the financial and ICT sectors. The construction sector has grown due to government investment. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect the tourism industry which employed a large percentage of young women. In this regard the Kenyan labour market still has strong gender differentiation where women are under-represented in skilled technical fields, construction and ICT. Women predominantly work in services, agriculture, horticulture, tourism and domestic services (Munga et. al. 2021).

Munga et. al. (2021) raise a concern that in some sectors, such as horticulture and financial services, the increase in employment has been in the number of informal and temporary jobs. In horticulture small-scale producers and family farms now constitute 80% of horticultural production. Given the number of NEET and active work seekers amongst 20-24 year-old women, it would seem that this development would be beneficial to women who have families to care for and who are already engaged in agricultural production for unpaid family use. However, Munga et. al. (2021) comment that the process of:

“informalization” of new jobs and workspaces....will persist with further mechanization and/or automation. As a result of these changes, it’s very possible that a large share of new jobs in Kenya will be of lower quality (i.e., informal non-wage jobs characterized by precarious or vulnerable employment, low pay and low coverage of social protection). Importantly, this process may undermine the decent work agenda and compromise achievement of the Goal 8 of the sustainable development goals (SDGs), “decent work and economic growth.” (Munga et. al. 2021)

In the light of this, it would be important that increases in the number of youth employed also include improvements in the quality of the employment. Such improvements should ensure that working conditions are conducive to women’s employment and don’t exploit the gender pay gap.

4.2 Education

Despite Kenya's impressive record of providing a quality education and of almost universal secondary schooling, there are regional differences in women's access to school in Kenya. This is often the result of cultural norms and socio-economic conditions. These disparities need to be addressed.

While there is relative gender equity in schooling, women are not enrolled in higher education and post school training in the same numbers as men. Fewer females enrol in science, technology and engineering and therefore, miss employment opportunities in the skilled industrial and technology sectors (Munga et. al. 2021).

Continued efforts need to be made to assist girls to access education in regions where gender parity is low and to assist women to access opportunities in maths, science and ICT.

4.3 Teenage marriage and pregnancy

Increases in education attainment, decreases in poverty and concerted advocacy efforts have reduced the number of teenage marriages. At 15 and 16 years old less than 1% of youth are married. At 17, 5% of women are married, at 18, 7% are married and at 19, 24% are married. However, in terms of those teenagers who are married, their probability of being NEET is increased 9 times.

Unfortunately, the KCHS 2019 does not collect data on the number of children a women has and the impact of children on NEET cannot be calculated. However, 18% of teenagers in Kenya have a child by the time they are 19. Teenage pregnancies in Kenya are related to teenage marriage, lower years of education attainment and a lack of access to reproductive health facilities (Republic of Kenya 2021). It is estimated that there was up to an 40% increase in teenage pregnancies during the first six months of the COVID-19 lockdown and school closures in 2020 (Partridge-Hicks 2020).

The Kenyan government in their 2021 Policy Brief on teenage pregnancy make several recommendations to ensure that young women are truly able to operate with dignity and self-determination in their own fertility decisions. These are: invest in education so that girls transition from primary to secondary school and beyond; invest in adolescent and youth friendly reproductive health facilities; integrate reproductive health into the school curriculum and other available platforms; fully implement and enforce existing laws pertaining to teenage pregnancy and motherhood; initiate campaigns and community dialogues to address harmful practices that affect girls and young women (Republic of Kenya 2021).

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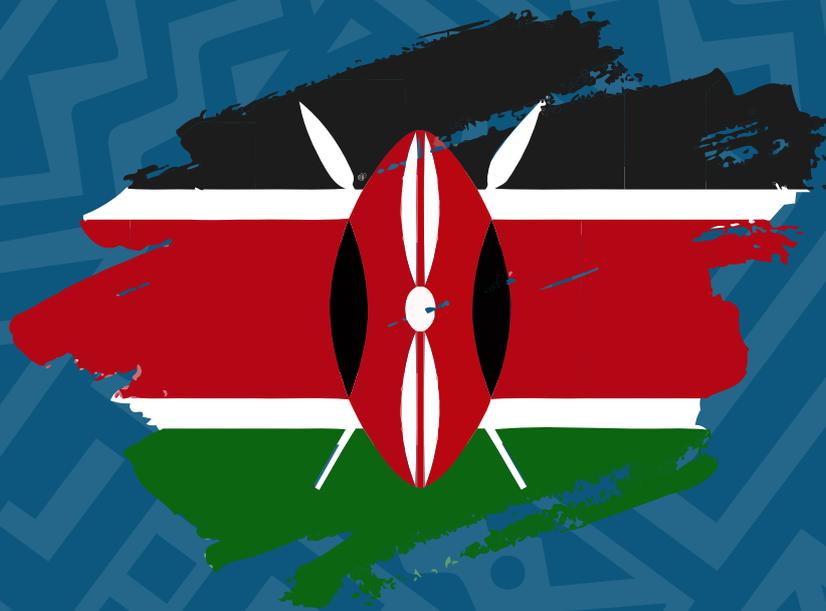
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