

The Status of NEET in Kenya

A Quantitative Analysis of Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) (15 – 24 years old)

Country Report

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Acknowledgements

The author thanks Robert Dalais for help with the math, Liz Ebersohn for assistance with research, graph content, layout and edits, Simon Nissling from the UN Women Uganda Country Office, Isabella Schmidt of the UN Women East and Southern Africa Regional Office, as well as the UN Women Research and Data Section for support and technical guidance, and Maria Payet, Yacouba Diallo, Yves Perardel and Kieran Walsh from the ILO Department of Statistics for input on data definitional issues and survey methodology and comments on the regional report

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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 employment, education or training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SACMEQ	Southern African Consortium for the Measurement of Education Quality
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
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

1

INTRODUCTION

Neither good quality education nor productive employment is universally available to the world's youth and reducing the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) is target 8.6 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN DESA 2021). The ILO, in their *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020* estimate that:

One-fifth of young people currently have NEET status, which means they are neither gaining experience in the labour market, nor receiving an income from work, nor enhancing their education and skills. Clearly, their full potential is not being realized, though many may be contributing to the economy through unpaid work, which is particularly true of young women. (ILO 2020a)

The NEET indicator, which measures the percentage of young people who are not in employment, education or training, is an important concept that captures a broad array of vulnerabilities among youth. Touching on issues of early school leaving, unemployment and labour market discouragement, NEET status also highlights the issues of youth who are engaged in family labour for own consumption or family domestic and care work and thus not employed. The consequences of high NEET rates are twofold. Firstly, on an individual level, absence from both education and employment increase the risk of poverty and a permanent disengagement from the labour market. Secondly, on a country level, high NEET rates are a loss in terms of unused labour supply, lower productivity and lower GDP output.

Young women in East and Southern Africa are disproportionately affected by NEET status. Leaving school early, marriage, assisting with subsistence farming, unpaid domestic work, taking care of family members and fewer opportunities to take up work which



UN GIS 2020

may be seen as inappropriate or unsafe for young women, all play a role in the NEET status of young women. NEET status is also more likely to become a permanent state for young women. The NEET rate in many developing countries declines very little for young women between 15 and 24 years old when ten years later the cohort is between the ages of 25 and 34 years (ILO 2020a).

Kenya is in one of the best positions of all the countries in East Africa to harness the youth dividend. Near universal enrolment in secondary education and a rapidly growing economy that has been able to diversify into several productive sectors has increased the numbers of youth in employment (Munga et. al. 2021). However, the uptake of young men into employment, especially into the more technical and traditionally male dominated economic sectors has left young women between 20 and 24 the more susceptible to NEET status. The NEET rate¹ for 20- to 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 had a greater impact on women than men. In 2020 twenty percent of women compared to 12% of men lost their jobs; COVID-19 restrictions impacted on severely reduced access to healthcare 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.

The report is structured as follows:

It will first give an overview of the economic, demographic and gender context of Kenya. Growth prospects and employment opportunities will affect strategies to address the lack of access that young people have to paid work. However, these are affected by the projected size of the youth population and their current socioeconomic status. The interaction between poverty, access to social services and gender norms frequently lead to young women leaving school and into marriage and childbearing before accessing employment (UNICEF and UNFPA 2021).

Using the country's survey data, the next section of the report gives a description of youth by status – NEET, employed or in education. This data is disaggregated by age group and sex. Methodological and definitional issues surrounding the calculation of the NEET rate and the definition of employment used in the survey is discussed in this section.

¹ Unless otherwise referenced, the data cited in this document comes from the Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019 (KCHS 2019) microdata. The data extraction and calculations are the author's.

The third section of the report presents analytical statistics and the determinants of youth NEET. Logistical regression models are used to calculate the probability of young women having NEET status depending on their circumstances. The variables tested for their effect on NEET status are age, marriage, highest level of education attained, time spent in unpaid family agriculture or enterprise, family structure, urban or rural residence.

The fourth section of the report is the conclusion and recommendations that arise from the data analysis. Most of these recommendations reinforce the country's current development agenda and the work done by committed stakeholders and development agencies.

2

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Kenya has, over the past decade, had 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). While there has been a substantial achievement of equality in school attainment, post school education and employment opportunities for young women are limited.

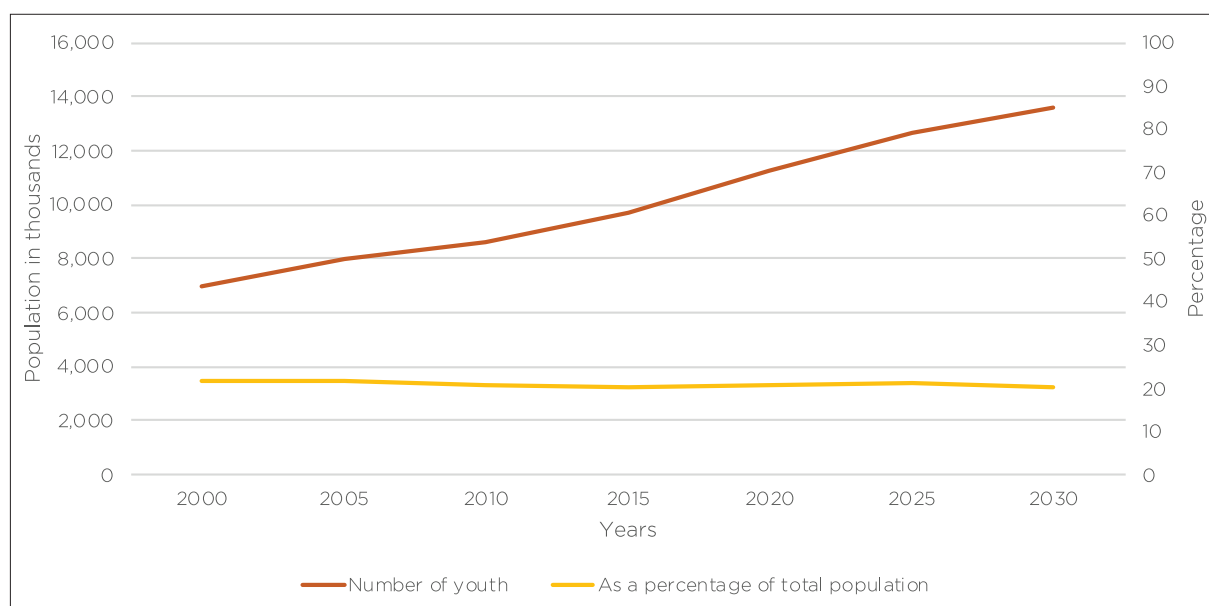
This section gives a description of Kenya's economic growth prospects in terms of GDP growth and GDP per capita; it presents the projected growth of the youth population; and an overview of progress in women's equality. Issues related to education and employment are considered as central to the NEET analysis and are therefore discussed in more detail in Section 3.

2.1 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 better 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 to 2030 (UN Population Division 2019). Figure 1 shows the number of youth between 15 and 24 projected to 2030. Kenya will see the number of youth increase from 11.3 million in 2020 to 13.6 million in 2030. According to the UN Population Division (2019) the demographic dividend can only be realised when the population of young people starts to decrease as a percentage of the total population. 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 2023 where it remains stable to 2030. A substantial decrease in the proportion of 15- to 24-year-olds will only be realised when the current population of 5- to 14 year-olds moves into the 15- to 24-year-old age category (Drummond et. al. 2014).

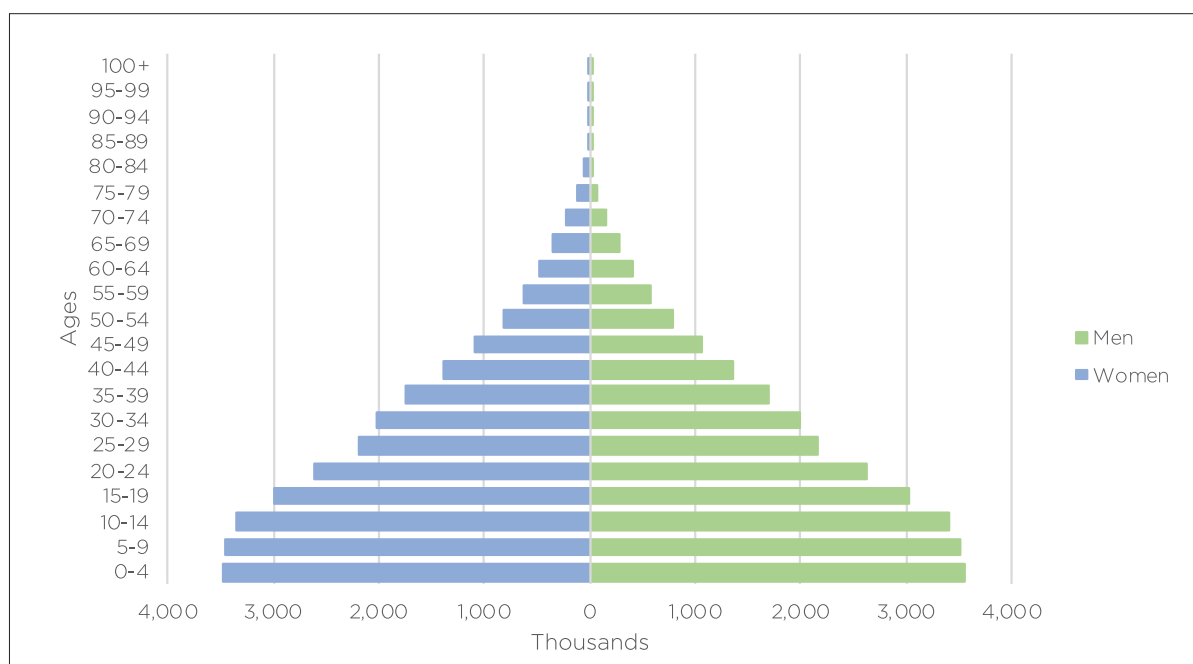
Figure 1: Number of youth (15 to 24) and youth as a percentage of the total population from 2000 projected to 2030 by sex



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

The population pyramid in Figure 2 shows the relative size of each cohort in five year age bands. The reduction in growth between cohorts from 0 to 14 shows promise for realising a demographic dividend in 10 to 15 years' time when economic growth can begin to absorb a higher percentage of young adults into the labour market and increases in GDP per capita can further reduce the number of people living in poverty.

Figure 2: Population pyramid of Kenya, 2020



Source: UN Population Division 2019, author's calculations. Other countries' population pyramids are in Appendix 3.

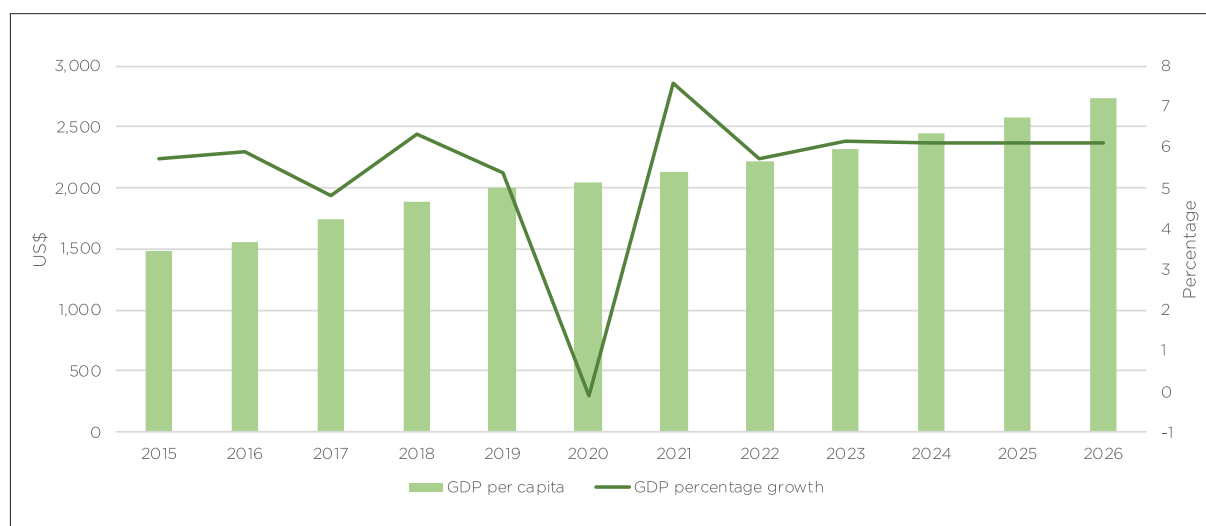
2.2 Economic growth prospects

“One of the most consistent, indeed universal, findings in the literature on the causes of youth labour market outcomes is that aggregate demand is a fundamental determinant of the state of the youth labour market. It is firmly established that what happens to young people as they enter the labour market is very much dependent on what is going on in the economy as a whole” (O’Higgins 2017).

Over the past decade Kenya has seen the greatest and most sustained economic growth of all the countries in East Africa. Since 2003, when the Kenya Vision 2030 was launched, real GDP growth accelerated to an annual average rate of 2.7% with the latter years seeing GDP growth rates of 6% (Figure 3). Growth has predominantly been in the agricultural, services and tourism sectors. While Kenya’s social development indicators have improved over the past decade with made major gains in education, healthcare and food security, challenges still exist with relatively high poverty rates in rural areas with limited infrastructure and greater susceptibility to climate instability (World Bank 2021).

The impact of COVID-19 on Kenya’s economy saw a drop in the economic growth to 0.3% in 2020. 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 3: GDP per capita and GDP growth rates projected to 2026



Source: IMF World Economic Outlook Database (2021).

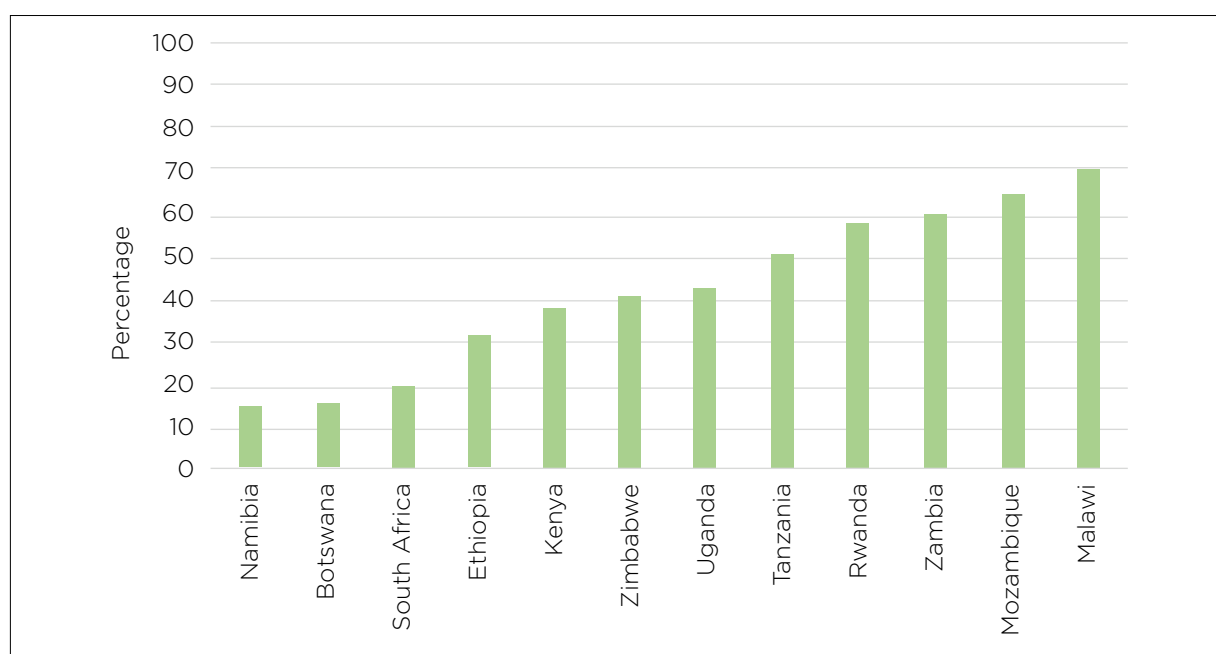
2.3 Poverty profile by sex and age

Kenya still 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 4 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 4: 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

2.4 Gender norms and women's equality in Kenya

Gender equality indicators in Kenya are higher than in many other East and Southern African countries. Implementation of gender equality as enshrined in the 2010 Constitution and an active non-governmental sector have had a substantial impact on women's rights and gender equality. Along with increased social spending, women's access to education, healthcare and land ownership have improved. Expanded provision of social services and infrastructure development such as the provision on primary health care clinics, electrification and clean water supplies have benefited women and their families by improving health outcomes and reducing the burden of household chores for women. (World Bank 2020, Wa-Shiko 2021 and UN Women 2022). Less progress has

been seen in the labour market where occupational segregation, the gender pay gap and the burden of unpaid domestic and care work still impact negatively on women's employment opportunities (Munga et. al. 2021). Implementation of some of the gender equality targets under the 2010 Constitution has been slow. Equality in women's political representation is lagging with only 22% of seats in the national assembly held by women. Implementation of laws aimed at preventing gender based violence and harmful practices such as teenage marriage and female genital mutilation has been slow (UN Women 2022).

A number of gender norms that impact negatively on young women persist. Young women's reproductive health is often negatively affected by conservative attitudes that limit young women's access to contraception. As a result, teenage pregnancy and childbearing rates remain high and in 2014 data from the Demographic and Health Survey showed that 18% of women between 15 and 19 are either pregnant or have had a child. Regional differences in the teenage birth and pregnancy rate range from as low as 6% to as high as 40% (Republic of Kenya et. al. 2016). Table 1 shows the percentage of young women who are pregnant or have had a child between the age of 15 and 19 in the countries included in this study. Kenya falls into the mid-range along with South Africa and Namibia (no data exists for Botswana).

Table 1: Percentages of women married at the age of 19 and 24 and percentages of adolescent pregnancies and births for selected East and Southern African countries

	Botswana	Ethiopia	Kenya	Malawi	Mozambique	Namibia	Rwanda	South Africa	Uganda
Percentage of women married at the age of 19	9	30	14	46	60	7	5	6	30
Percentage of women married at the age of 24	31	63	54	84	70	15	45	23	48
Percentage of women ages 15 to 19 who have had children or are currently pregnant	n. d.	6.7	18	33	38	19	7	16	32

Source: Mozambique adolescent birth and pregnancy rates from meta-analysis by Jaén-Sánchez et. al. (2020). South African adolescent birth and pregnancy rates from National Department of Health et. al. (2018). Kenya adolescent birth and pregnancy rates from Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2014 in Kenya Republic of Kenya et. al. 2016. Ethiopia adolescent birth and pregnancy rates from UNDP (2020). All other adolescent birth and pregnancy rates from meta-analysis by Kasa et.al. (2018). Marriage rates from country survey data, author's calculations.

Adolescent child-bearing will have increased over the past two years as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has increased adolescent pregnancy and marriage. Increased poverty has pushed more young women into marriage and transactional sex. The lengthy closure of schools has left girls without the social protection that it offers and has had a negative impact on campaigns to end teenage pregnancy and marriage (UN Women 2020b).

3

ANALYSIS OF THE KENYA CONTINUOUS HOUSEHOLD SURVEY 2019: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019 is part of an ongoing 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 those households and were present at the time of the survey. No data is 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.

“Youth NEET are a highly diverse group and reasons for being NEET vary. There are many reasons why a young person may leave school and not actively be seeking a job. They may face particular obstacles; have other demands on their time such as assisting in family own use farm or enterprise production; they may be disabled, and/or there may simply be (or perceived to be) no suitable jobs available” (ILO 2020b).

The relative number of youth NEET in a country is affected by how many 15–24-year-olds are able to access education or employment. To understand the drivers of NEET, it is also important to look at the prospects for youth in both of these areas. This section is not intended to be an exhaustive overview of the labour market or education system in Kenya but uses the country survey data to examine the number of youth enrolled in education and/or employed as well as the nature, where possible, of the work they do.

3.1 Definitions of NEET and employment

Across East and Southern Africa the NEET rates are affected by the precise definition of employment captured in the various household survey instruments – which may differ slightly by survey and by country. Many countries are still in the process of updating household and labour force surveys to reflect the definition of employment as revised at the ILO 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 2013 (ILO 2013).

The major revision in the definition of employment in the 19th ICLS is that it *excludes* “own use production work comprising production of goods and services for *own final use*” (ILO 2013). In East and Southern Africa NEET rates using the definition of employment from the 19th ICLS standards are substantially higher than the NEET rates using the 13th ICLS (1982) definition of employment (ILO 2013). The removal of “production of goods and services for *own final use*” from the definition of employment effectively increases the numbers of NEET youth – especially in largely subsistence agricultural countries where young people assist with family agricultural production for own final use. There may also

be more youth currently engaged in family production for own use that now become defined as unemployed – hence also potentially raising the youth unemployment rate.

The process of updating household and labour force surveys to reflect the 19th ICLS standards takes time and care needs to be taken with the design of the survey questionnaires so they reflect the standards as defined. Measuring the differences in work for pay or profit (and therefore employed) versus work for production of goods and services for own final use (and therefore not employed) can be particularly sensitive to questionnaire design – especially amongst groups in less formal employment such as youth and women. In a review by the ILO and the World Bank in Sri Lanka more detailed and carefully structured survey questions find differences in the numbers and hours of paid employment – including increased numbers of women engaged in small enterprise activities. They also find greater hours worked than previously reported in unpaid family work. (Discenza 2021).

A detailed review of employment data in household surveys by the World Bank finds that household and labour force surveys that do not have questions designed to elicit the revised definition of employment tend to collect data that overstates employment in both youth and women (Desiere and Costa 2019). Klasen (2018) points out that there is likely to be a discontinuity in comparisons of NEET before and after countries implement changes to the 2013 19th ICLS standards. In addition, countries are likely to have different time-scales for the implementation of the new standards. Care should be taken with both inter-country and in-country comparisons over time.

Definition of NEET

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 work seeker category as well as those who are outside the labour force and not in education or training (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 education and training who should not be counted as NEET.

**Education* is formal or non-formal education (institutionalised, intentional and planned by an education provider).

Employment is defined as all persons of working age who, during a short reference period (one week), were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit. This specifically excludes work in family agriculture or family enterprises for own consumption and it excludes unpaid domestic and care work.

Training is a non-academic learning activity through which a person acquires specific skills intended for vocational or technical jobs. (UN DESA 2021)

Implications of the 19th ICLS definition of the labour force for NEET rate calculations

This report uses the Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019 for the analysis of youth NEET. The published Quarterly Labour Force Report: Q1 which uses the same data set states that it follows “international standards” (KNBS 2019b) but does not give an explicit definition of employment according to the 19th ICLS protocol. However, the NEET rates in the QLFS report are 19% for 20- to 24-year-olds and appear to define family agriculture for own use as employed. This report shows a NEET rate for 20- to 24-year-olds as 45%.

Using the 19th ICLS standards, this report shows a NEET rate of 29% for both women and men between 15 and 24 years old; a 34% NEET rate for women and a 23% NEET rate for men; whereas the ILO *Modelled Estimates* in the ILO Data Explorer which use the 13th ICLS standards show a 20% NEET rate for women and a 12% NEET rate for men 15 to 24 years old (<https://ilostat.ilo.org/>).

Table 2 shows the data available in the Kenya Continuous Survey 2019 and the methodology used to extract the data according to the 19th ICLS standards.

Table 2: ICLS standards applicable in the Kenya Continuous Survey 2019

Country and survey used	ICLS standards used in survey	Implication for calculated NEET rates in this report
Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019	<p>ICLS standards used: Stated that “international standards are used” (KNBS 2019).</p> <p>The survey asks if the respondent worked in the past week on any of the following activities for family use or for sale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked on own account agricultural or non-farm business; • Helped in agricultural activity or non-farm business run by the household. <p>It is somewhat ambiguous which activity is being referred to (for family use or for sale) if more than one activity is confirmed.</p> <p>However there are a number of further questions which allow employment status to be confirmed. These are:</p> <p>1) Employed if primary or secondary activity status is classified as any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own-account worker; • Contributing family worker • Paid employee (within HH) • Paid employee (outside HH) • Working employer 	<p>Employed if in the past 7 days:</p> <p>1) Worked for a wage/salary</p> <p>OR</p> <p>2) Worked on own account agricultural or non-farm business OR helped in agricultural activity or non-farm business run by the family if the proceeds were for sale or mainly for sale</p> <p>OR</p> <p>3) Is temporarily absent from any of the above</p> <p>OR</p> <p>4) Primary or secondary activity status is classified as any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own-account worker; • Contributing family worker • Paid employee (within HH) • Paid employee (outside HH) • Working employer

Country and survey used	ICLS standards used in survey	Implication for calculated NEET rates in this report
	2) Employed if data is filled in for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usual work (KNOCS); • Economic activity (ISIC); and • Main employer. • Family agriculture: As above. • Household business enterprise: As above Other unpaid work related questions: Survey does not ask about other unpaid domestic or care work.	AND Employed if data is filled in for: Usual work (KNOCS); Economic activity (ISIC); and Main employer is not null Not employed if: 1) Worked on own account agricultural or non-farm business if the proceeds were for only or mainly for family use. OR 2) Helped in agricultural activity or non-farm business run by the household if the proceeds were for family use or mainly for family use OR 3) Unpaid apprentice or volunteer

3.2 Population of youth in the KCHS 2019 by sex and age (15 to 24)

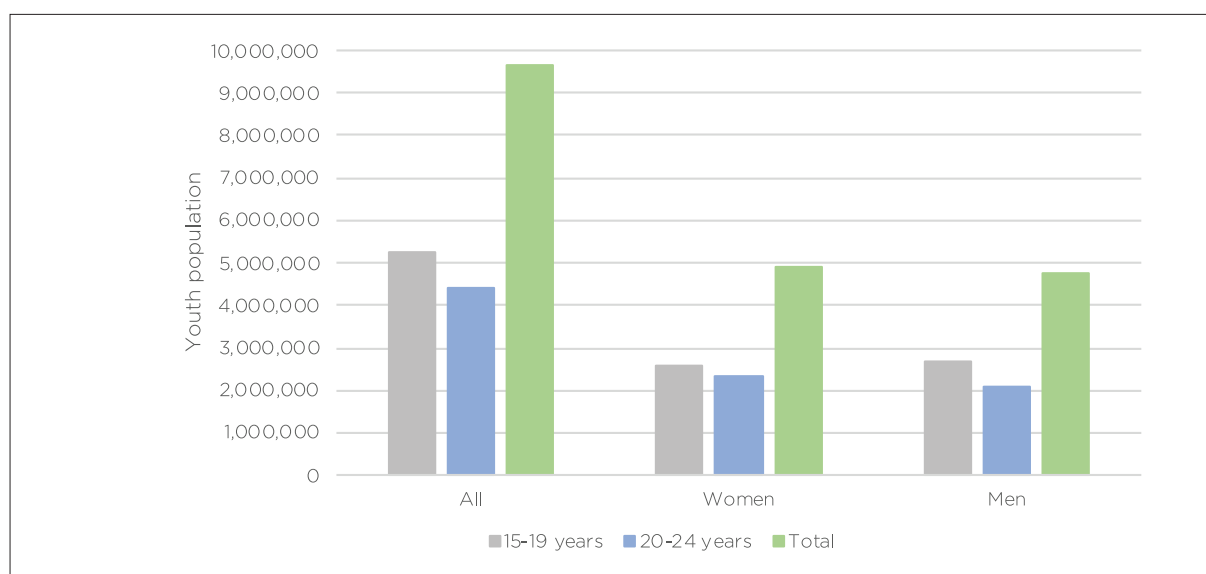
Table 3 and Figure 5 show the number of youth represented in the survey when weighted by their individual sample weight. There are a total of 9.7 million young women and men between the ages of 15 and 24, of these 4.9 million are women and 4.8 are men. While it is not unexpected for sample surveys to show some variation in the number of a particular population group, there appears to be an under-representation of young men aged 20 to 24 in the survey.

Table 3: Total number of youth included in the survey by sex and age (15 to 24)

Age	Total	Women	Men
15 to 19	5,246,942	2,580,379	2,666,564
20 to 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 5: Population by sex and age (15 to 24)



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

Table 4 shows 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- to 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). There appears to be some coverage bias in the survey with data not collected on young men living out of the household in school or university hostels or at places of work.

In many of the East and Southern African countries in this study, analysis of the data shows an undercount of young men in relation to women. This could be due to several factors for example:

- secondary school and university students living in hostels at school or informal hostels in nearby communities;
- employed youth who may be working and staying in worker's hostels or at their places of employment – especially those who work as day labour in the agricultural sector; or
- unemployed youth sleeping rough or sleeping where they hope to seek employment or piecework.

As with all household surveys, only family residents are included in the sampling frames.

Table 4: Percentage of women and men in the survey by age (15 to 24)

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

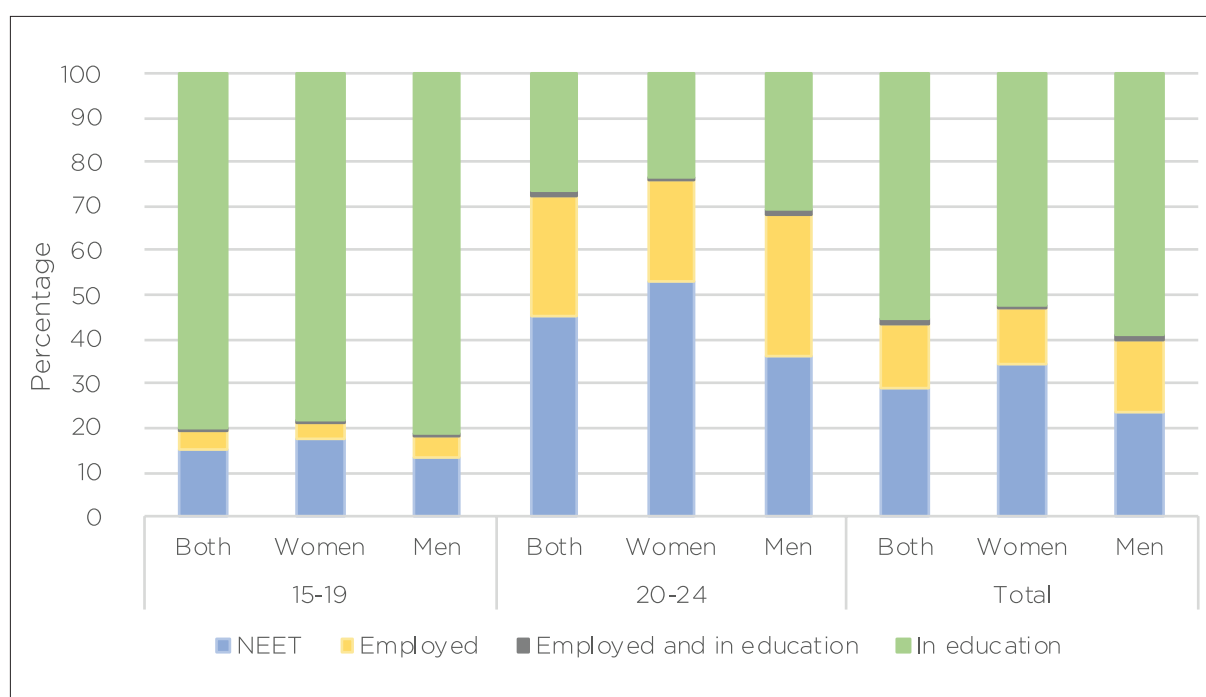
Source: Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019. Author's calculations.

3.3 Overview of youth by activity status

Figure 6 and Table 5 show the number of youth 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 to 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- to 24-year age group are employed and 24% are in education.

Young women in the age group 15 to 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 6: Percentage of youth by activity status – NEET; employed; employed and in education; and in education only, by sex 15 to 24



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

Table 5: Percentage of youth by activity status – NEET; employed; employed and in education; and in education only, by sex 15 to 24

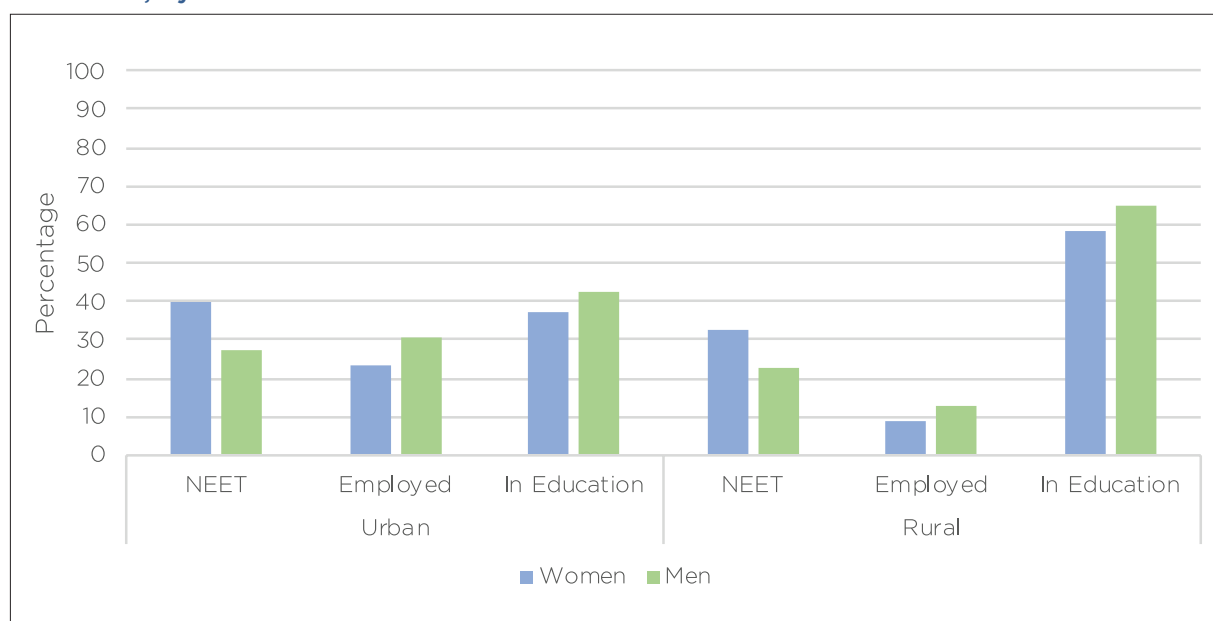
Activity status	Age group	Total Per cent	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Gender parity Index
NEET	15 to 19	15	17	13	1.26
	20 to 24	45	53	36	1.63
	Total	29	34	23	1.51
Employed	15 to 19	4	4	5	0.79
	20 to 24	27	22	32	0.78
	Total	15	13	17	0.78
Employed and in education	15 to 19	1	1	1	0.76
	20 to 24	1	1	1	0.88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

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

3.4 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 7, 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 7: Percentage of urban and rural youth by activity status – NEET, employed and in education, by sex 15 to 24



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

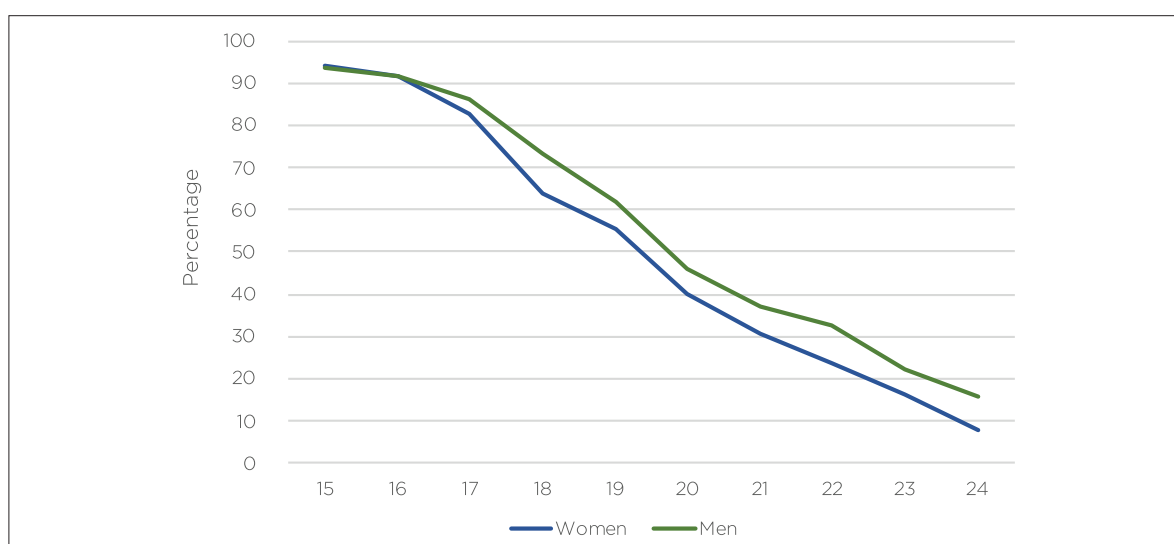
3.5 Education profile of youth

Kenya has seen substantial improvements in education enrolment, quality and gender equality. 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 8). 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 8 SACMEQ reading levels². The average across all countries participating in SAQMEC was 28% in the top three reading levels (Bashir et. al. 2018).

With gender parity in education enrolment having largely been achieved, Kenya is in a similar situation to Botswana, Namibia and South Africa where young women move through the school system more efficiently than young men and attain, on average, more years of schooling.

Figure 8 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 in Figure 9, a higher percentage of women in the age group 15 to 19 have reached both lower secondary and higher secondary than men in the same age group.

Figure 8: Percentage of youth currently enrolled in education by sex and age in single years (15 to 24)



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

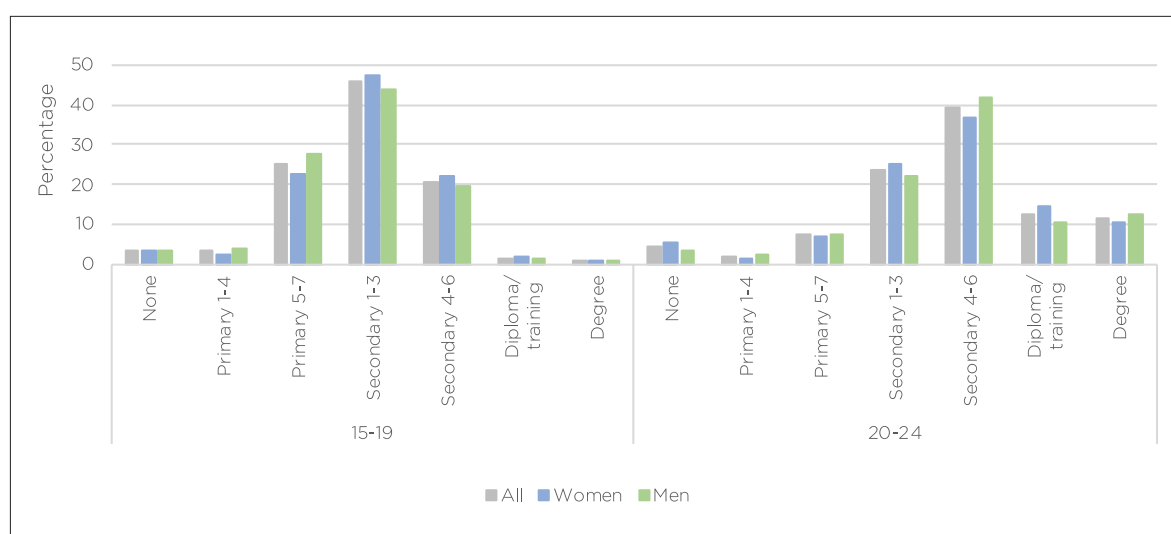
Figure 9 and Table 6 show the percentage of youth by highest level of education attained. 46% of all youth between 15 and 19 are in lower secondary and 20% are in upper secondary. Within this the most important observations are first, a higher percentage of women in this age group have reached both lower secondary (48%) and higher secondary (22%)

² The 8 SACMEQ reading levels are: pre-reading, emergent reading, basic reading, reading for meaning, interpretive reading, inferential reading, analytical reading and critical reading

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 8, secondary school attainment in the age group 20 to 24 appears to be 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. Fewer women than men attain degree level higher education.

Figure 9: Percentage of youth by highest level of education, sex and age (15 to 24)



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

Table 6: Percentage of youth by highest level of education, sex and age (15 to 24)

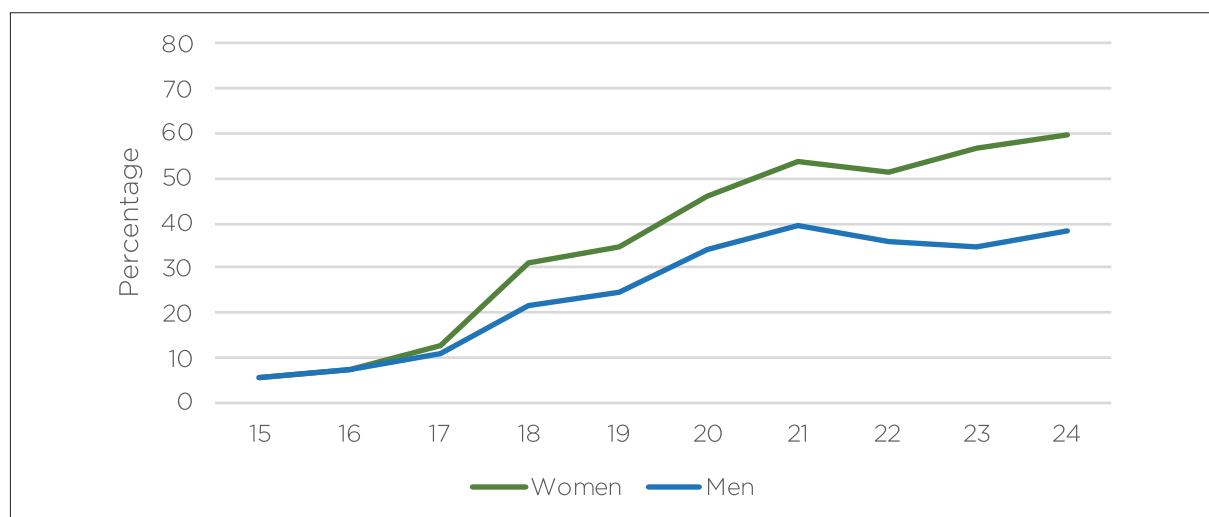
	Highest level of education	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Gender parity index
15 to 19 years	None	50	50	1.00
	Primary 1-4	35	65	0.55
	Primary 5-7	44	56	0.80
	Secondary 1-3	51	49	1.05
	Secondary 4-6	52	48	1.08
	Diploma/training	58	42	1.36
	Degree	50	50	0.99
20 to 24 years	None	62	38	1.60
	Primary 1-4	42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

3.6 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.

Figure 10: Percentage NEET youth by sex and age in single years (15 to 24)



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

There is large regional variation in the NEET rate of both women and men and 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- to 19-year-old 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- to 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 7: Percentage NEET youth (15 to 24) by sex and age

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

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

Table 8: Percentage NEET youth in each county (15 to 24) by sex and age

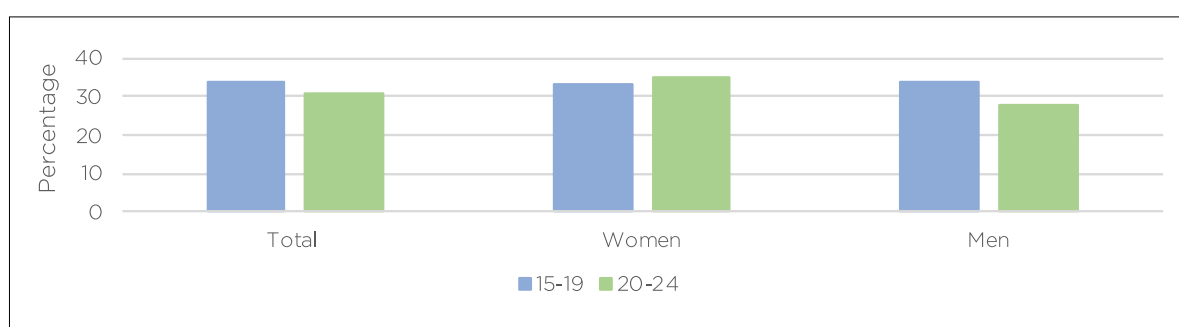
County	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Percentage point difference
Baringo	21	16	5
Bomet	22	7	15
Bungoma	22	20	2
Busia	36	21	15
Elgeyo Marakwet	35	36	0
Embu	35	23	12
Garissa	66	50	16
Homa Bay	24	18	6
Isiolo	53	52	1
Kajiado	34	42	-7
Kakamega	34	18	16
Kericho	32	21	11
Kiambu	29	21	9
Kilifi	42	17	26
Kirinyaga	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
Tana River	49	39	10

County	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Percentage point difference
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 unemployed youth is shown in Figure 11. A third (33%) of women and 25% of men in the 15-19-year age group are unemployed. These figures climb with the 20- to 24-year-old cohort, namely 35% of women and 28% of men are unemployed.

Figure 11: Unemployed as a percentage of the labour force



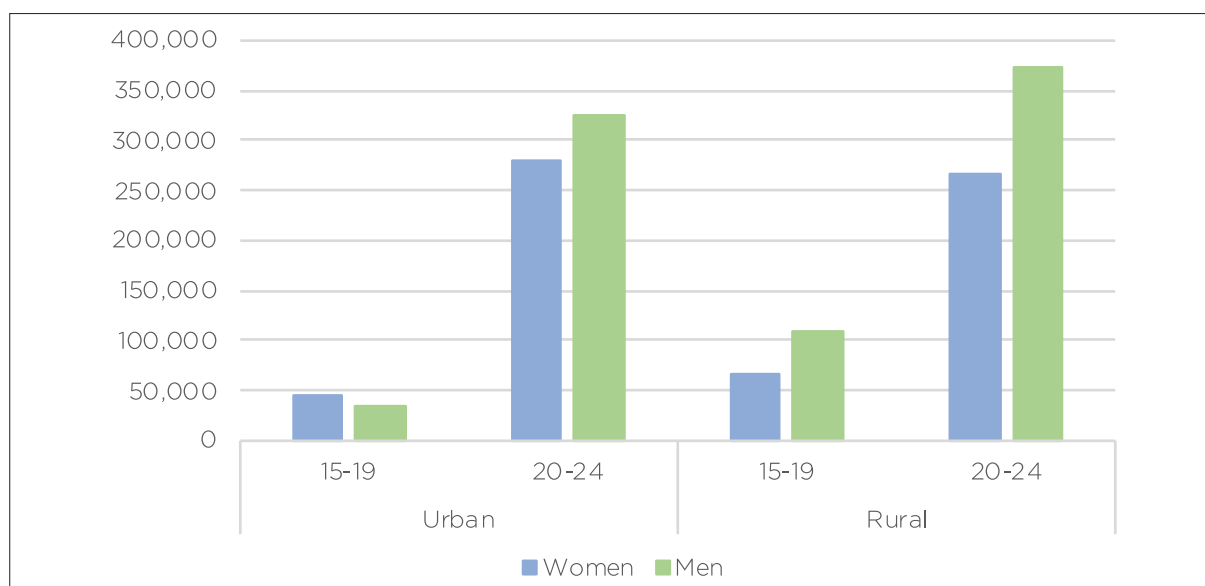
Source: Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019. Author's calculations.

3.7 Employment profile of youth (including type of employment)

Employment opportunities have been increasing for young Kenyans. Currently the employment to population rate for 15- to 19-year-olds is 14% and for 20- to 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).

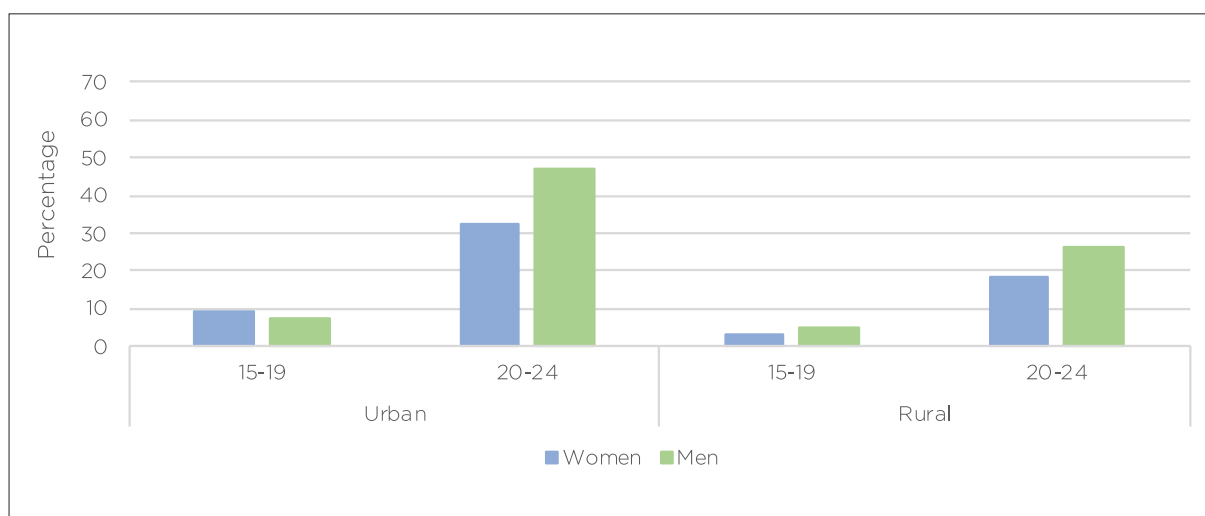
Figure 12 shows the number of youth employed in urban and rural areas by sex and age group. Given the far greater rural population in Kenya (72%), the ratio of employed youth in the rural areas is lower than urban. (KNBS 2019b) Figure 13 shows the number of employed youth as a percentage of youth in urban and rural areas by sex and age group. 9% of urban women aged 15 to 19 are employed compared to 3% of rural women. 32% of urban women aged 20 to 24 are employed compared to 18% of rural women. The employment rates of men aged 20 to 24 are 47% in the urban areas and 36% in the rural areas.

Figure 12: Number of youth employed in urban and rural areas by sex and age group



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

Figure 13: Employed youth as a percentage and youth disaggregated into urban and rural areas by sex and age group

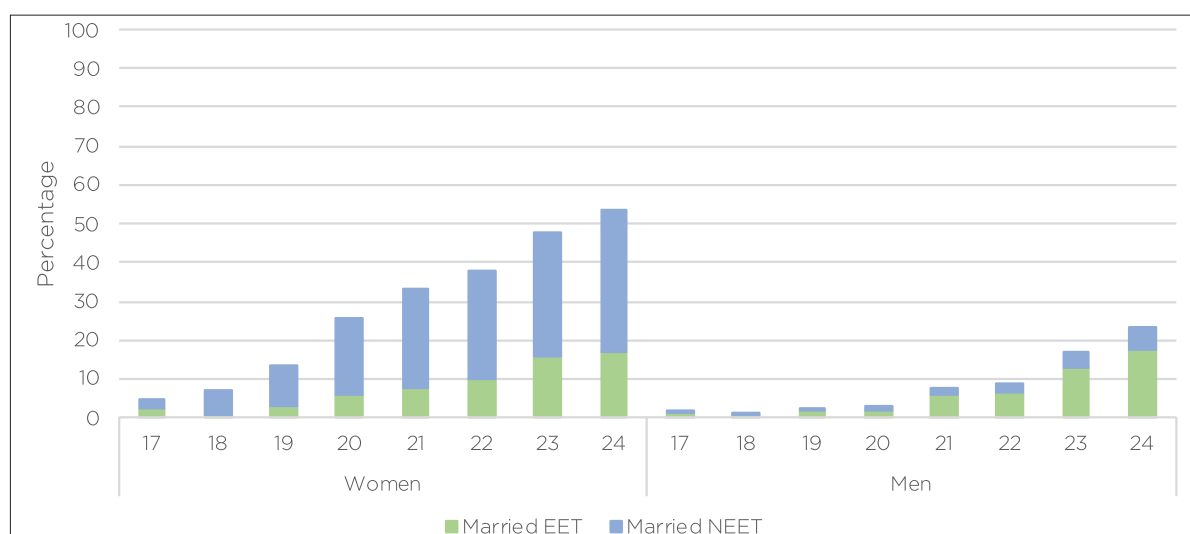


Source: Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019. Author's calculations.

3.8 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 14 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 14: 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.

4 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.

The descriptive data from the Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019 shows the differences in young women and men in terms of their enrolment in education, employment status and NEET status. While more young women are enrolling in higher levels of education than men, they are not entering the labour market at the same rate as their male peers. Women have higher NEET rates and higher unemployment rates than men. It is important to attempt to understand what identifiable factors in the Kenyan context might determine why women are more likely to be NEET than men.

In other research on the individual and household factors associated with the number of years of education attained it has been fairly widely ascertained that socioeconomic status, education levels of parents, availability of learning resources such as books and electricity, time spent on household chores, distance from school and nutritional status are amongst the most important (Bashir et. al. 2018, Karamperidou et. al. 2020 and Lewin 2011). Similar factors are associated with the probability of youth and women's employment (Klasen 2018 and O'Higgins 2017). For young women in particular, early marriage, childbirth and gender norms around the cost benefits of further years of education as well as gender norms around household roles and the suitability of certain employment for women, impacts on both education levels attained and employment (Comblon 2017 and Nieuwenhuis 2018).

In order to ascertain whether there is an association between these factors and the probability of being NEET a multivariate logistic regression model was constructed with NEET status as the dependent variable. Independent variables were tested based on research as mentioned above and the descriptive analysis of the data from the Kenyan Continuous Household Survey which shows possible correlations between NEET and sex, age group, marriage, highest level of education attained, urban or rural residence and involvement in family farming for own use.

This section of the report is structured as follows: The first section gives the structure of the model and the method used in coding the variables for analysis is given. In the second section the findings of the model are presented and the associations between NEET and background characteristics such as sex, age, marital status, and family composition are analysed. Lastly, some limitations of the model are explained.

4.1 Structure of the logistic regression model

A multivariate logistic regression is a widely used statistical method appropriate to the categorical nature of survey data. As well as the dependant variable (NEET status) being categorical, many of the independent variables in the survey data are categorical such as sex, married, highest level of education, urban/rural.

The logistic model is:

$$\log(\pi/(1-\pi)) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 \dots\dots\dots$$

where $\Pr(Y=1)=\pi$

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3 \dots\dots$ are the Odds Ratios of X_1, X_2, X_3 respectively

The model was run in *Stata* as a weighted sample of the survey set.

Individual level data for all 15- to 24-year-olds was compiled from the Kenya Continuous Household Survey 2019 for the regression analysis. The following data from the survey was used: Individual demographic information; individual education and employment data; household composition data and urban/rural location. Data was coded as noted in Table 9 which lists the variables used in the model.

Table 9: List of variables used in the logistic regression model and method used for compiling the coding

Variable	Type of variable and code used	Method used to compile codes
Dependent variable		
NEET status	Dummy variable 0 = not NEET 1 = NEET	Labour and time use data was used to establish employed or not; Education data used to establish in education or not.
Independent variables		
Sex	Dummy variable Male = 0 Female = 1	Data on individual respondent.
Age group	Dummy variable 15 to 19 = 0 20 to 24 = 1	Data on individual respondent. Age in years coded as age group.
Married	Dummy variable No = 0 Yes = 1	Data on individual respondent.
Has had a child in the past 12 months	Dummy variable No = 0 Yes = 1	Data on individual respondent.
Female head of household	Dummy variable No = 0 Yes = 1	Data on individual respondent's household members.
Urban/rural	Dummy variable Rural = 0 Urban = 1	Household data.

Variable	Type of variable and code used	Method used to compile codes
Highest level of education	Dummy variable with 7 categories None or Prim 1-3 = 0 Prim 4-7 = 1 Sec 1-3 = 2 Sec 4-6 = 3 Diploma/training = 4 Degree = 5	Data on the highest grade attained was coded into none; lower and senior primary; lower and senior secondary; training; higher education; and adult literacy.
Household composition	Number of children under 5 years old Number of children under 10 years old Number of adult dependents Household size	Data on individual respondent's household members.
Engaged in unpaid family agriculture	Dummy variable No = 0 Yes = 1	Data on individual respondent.

There were substantial differences observed in the descriptive data between the age groups and between women and men. This includes the number who are NEET, in education, employed, married and type of household they may live in. In order to establish whether the various factors impact differently on the NEET rate depending on age group and gender two separate models were run as follows:

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

4.2 Findings of the model

The results of the logistic regressions are in Table 10 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, living in women headed households is associated with a slight increase the probability of being NEET in all ages and genders and the 15 to 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 to 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 are associated with an increase in 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- to 19-year-old olds is 1.44 times; and the impact on women aged 20 to 24 is 1.83 times the probability of being NEET.

The number of children under 10 in a household has a lower impact on the probability of being NEET than the impact of the number of children under 5. 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. It may also mean that there are more family members available for care responsibilities.

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- to 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 to 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 to 19 age group by 1.22 times and in the 20 to 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 to 19-year age group.

Marriage: Being married has the expected impact of increasing the probability of being NEET especially amongst the 15- to 19-year-old-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- to 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- to 19-year-old-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- to 24-year-olds this is 1.53 times the likelihood and in the case of urban 15- to 19-year-old olds this is 2.08 times that of rural women.

Table 10: Results of logistic regressions for youth NEET status – individual characteristics

Category (omitted variable in parenthesis)	Variable	All 15- to 24-year-old-olds	All 15- to 19-year-old-olds	Women only 20- to 24-year-olds
		Odd ratios		
Sex (Men)	Women	1.55***	1.22**	
Age group (15 to 19)	20 to 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***
Number of children under 10		1.21***	1.18**	1.16*
Number of children under 5		1.30***	1.43***	1.51***
Engaged in 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.

4.3 Limitations of the model

Prevailing literature finds that the socio-economic status of households has a positive and determining effect on the health, education attainment and employment outcomes for individuals (Deaton 1997). In the absence of detailed calculations of household income or expenditure, a proxy for household wealth is usually possible to construct – such as housing type, access to water and ownership of household items reported by the household (Malpezzi 2002). All these proxies were tested and there was no meaningful differentiation in the impact on NEET – even when controlling for urban and rural location. This in itself may have been instructive if any of the variables were statistically significant and in many cases several of the variable values dropped by *Stata* when running the estimation.

Not only was there no impact on NEET status of this relative poverty index (nor any of the individual components) but it's inclusion in the model created collinearity to the extent that it weakened both the impact and the statistical significance of nearly *all* the other variables – but most especially highest education level attained. While there are certainly various statistical methods to correct for this – most notably by creating interaction terms, it was felt that interpreting the interaction terms would be too complex for the policy reader. (See O'Higgins 2017 pp 179 to 197). In any event, while there is research that shows a relationship between number of years of school attained and socioeconomic status (Bashir et. al. 2018, Karamperidou et. al. 2020 and Lewin 2011), there is less direct evidence of a relationship between women's employment prospects and socioeconomic status (Klasen 2018).

5

NEET POLICY AND PROGRAMMES

NEET rates for young women in Kenya are 17% for the age group 15 to 19 (13% for men). Levels of enrolment in secondary education are directly related to the NEET rates in the 15 to 19 age group and transition from school to work is extremely low with 4% of women and 5% of men aged 15 to 19 employed. In the age group 20 to 24, 53% of women and 36% of men are NEET. Employment rates in this age group are 23% for women and 33% for men (including those employed and in education). Involvement in family farming for own use increases the probability of NEET status as does marriage. Unfortunately no data exists on the impact of having children on NEET status.

This section looks briefly at possible policy priorities that emerge from the data analysed. It is outside of the scope of the report to reflect on the policy priorities and achievements of government and non-government sectors.

5.1 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- to 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.

5.2 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, a lack of rural infrastructure 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.

5.3 Reducing early marriage and adolescent motherhood

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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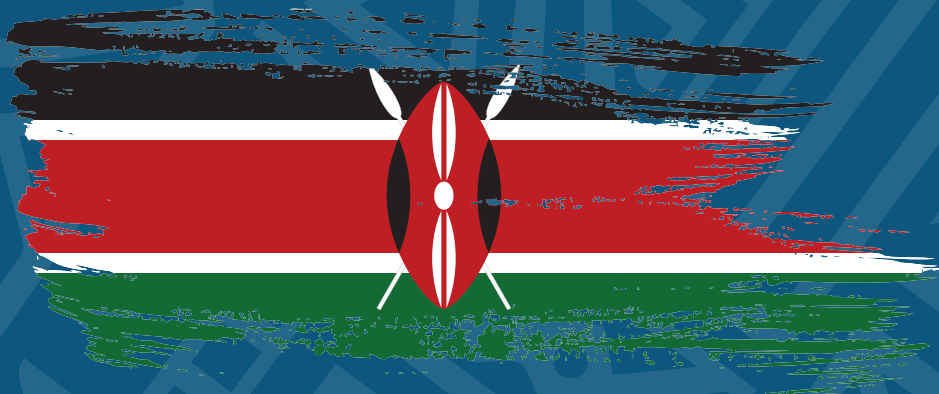
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