

PERCEIVED IMPACT OF THE YOUTH ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT FUND ON THE YOUTH TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SMALL SCALE RURAL ENTERPRISES IN TURBO DIVISION, UASIN-GISHU COUNTY, KENYA

Jasper.E. Nyaura^{1}, Paul.C. Sutter² & Phillip.K.Rono³**

¹ Egerton University, Department of Peace Security & Social Studies, P.O. Box 536-20115
Njoro-Nakuru County, Kenya

² Moi University, Department of Sociology & Psychology, P.O. Box 3900-30100, Moi
University-Eldoret, Kenya

³African International College, Department of Business & Applied Social Sciences, Eldoret,
Kenya

Corresponding Author email: enyaura@gmail.com

Abstract

The inception of the Youth Enterprise Development Fund has seen the rise of youth groups in rural areas. This paper is thus aimed at understanding the impact of the fund towards the youth establishment of small scale enterprises in Turbo Division. A descriptive research design was used in this paper. Data was collected using focused group discussion and self-administered questionnaires thus they were administered to the selected youth groups found in selected parts of the Turbo Division. Purposive technique was used in the specific youth of aged bracket 18 year to 35 years. Further, purposive and stratified sampling techniques were used in targeted youth groups. The sample size used was 147 drawn from Turbo Division. The salient findings of the study are that indeed the youth joined the small scale enterprises to obtain benefits through collaborative efforts, to gain and obtain skills and experiences, obtaining start-up capital and finally due to the unemployment. Moreover, impact made by the fund on individual life included; promoting togetherness, promoting income and sustained livelihoods thus improved economic statuses, and eventually enhanced skills and experience that led to acquiring of more skills by joining polytechnics. Furthermore the fund had enhanced group development and participation. It is recommended that there should be enhanced youth group sustainability towards proper utilization of the fund.

Keywords: Youth; Impact; Contribution; Enterprises; Small scale

I. Introduction

The YEDF status report (2012) indicates that the Kenyan Government has established an initiative that aims to acquire at least 10% of its procurement needs from youth enterprises. This has been shown where the government has been committed to support youth run enterprises by establishing a policy of buying goods/services from the youth run enterprises. However, the volume of goods procured by government from youth run enterprises is still small judging by the high level of competition in the market.

The YEDF status report (2012) further indicates that the fund has so far supported only 1,800 youth enterprises to market their products through trade fairs and another 32 youth to exhibit their

goods in Egypt, Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda. It has also engaged the City Council of Nairobi and Local Authorities to partner with the Fund in establishing market infrastructure appropriate for youth enterprise needs. However, whether or not there had been established support of youth enterprises, it was still unclear if there was government commitment on the ground.

The Youth Fund Report statues (2009) stipulates that the growth and sustainability of the fund is dependent on the number and quality of partnership identified and developed to leverage its interventions to optimize benefits to the youth of Kenya. Some of the partners identified and being engaged in implementing the fund's mandate include the Financial Intermediaries. The leverage partnership entered into with the financial services providers such as Equity Bank, Kenya Commercial Bank, Family Bank and First Community Bank provide the platform on which young people will continue to access credit to start and expand their businesses.

Gudda and Ngoze (2009) posited that through collaborations and strategic partnerships, business incubators can support the successful development of entrepreneurial projects of youth business ideas through an array of business support resources and services. Furthermore, collaborative relations and strategic partnerships necessitate infrastructural growth that contributes greatly to substantial enhanced employment creation. Moreover, there is enhanced entrepreneurial culture to self-employment by creating jobs directly and successful businesses innovation, through the use of new technologies, increases productivity and further expands existing market opportunities. This in turn strengthens incentives to innovate. Therefore, small businesses contribute to one of the key pillars of sustained economic growth (Bruton *et al.*, 2006). Therefore, the study aimed to fill the gap on whether there was perceived impact by the government to provide these linkages in the study area in order to expand youth enterprises.

Accordingly, a report in the United Kingdom by OECD (2001) points out that the youth especially the graduates inclined to entrepreneurship, are motivated largely by the desire for independence and flexibility and not necessarily money. A study by Gray *et al.*, (1995) points out the main reasons often cited for starting a business in the North America, Europe and Japan are: to be one's own boss, with more control over one's own work and life; to obtain an alternative route for advancement from a dead-end job; to obtain additional money; and to provide products not elsewhere available.

Youth in developing countries in contrast tend to join business for economic necessity or need to survive, or out of failure to find productive work. According to Chigunta (2001) he conducted a survey in Zambia that showed that the main reason for the youth venturing into entrepreneurship entailed socio-economic problems thus was cited as a major reason for starting the small scale enterprises. Other factors entailed employment, the need to provide for households, poverty and also accumulation of wealth.

Furthermore, recognizing the various reasons why young people decide to start a business is important for the promotion of youth entrepreneurship. White and Kenyon (2000) stress that the challenge of unemployment lie the promotion of entrepreneurship as a genuine career alternative for young people, especially as a way to achieve greater financial reward and work satisfaction, rather than focusing on self-employment as a way to escape the negative circumstances of unemployment and poverty. The fact that no study had been carried on socio-economic impact of the fund towards the youth groups and individual youths, left a gap for the study to investigate the impacts of the fund towards the youth well being. In this regard the study aimed at understanding the perceived impact of the fund to the youth in the youth groups.

Statement of the Problem

For long, the youth have been unable to secure formal employment in the public or private sector thereby failing to gainfully contribute to economic development. The resulting idleness has sometimes made them drift into undesirable activities and becoming unproductive. The youth engaging in the small scale enterprise can be seen to be a solution the problem of unemployment. The government's initiative to create the Youth Enterprise Development Fund in 2006 has targeted the majority of the rural poor youth. However, the impact of the fund has not been understood on the ground. Therefore, the concern of the study is aimed at understanding the perceived impact of the fund on the ground. Since the youth groups are on the ground the study will provide an understanding of whether the fund has impacted in the wellbeing of the youth in the ground.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to investigate the impact of the fund towards the youth well being; specific objectives of the study included; to establish the reasons for the youth joining the enterprises; to find out the impact the fund has made in their life as a group and individually; to establish the future prospects of the youth in the youth groups and finally to establish perceived impact of the government in establishing the linkages.

II. Methodology

Study Area

This study was conducted in Turbo Division, Eldoret West District (formally) in Uasin-Gishu County. Eldoret West District is 1,090 Sq. km which is part of the wider Rift Valley Province (formally) where it is divided into Soy Division and Turbo Division. Turbo Division borders Kakamega County, Soy Division and Kapseret Division. Turbo Division has five locations (wards) within it namely; Ngenyilel, Kapsugoi, Kamagut, Kamukunji, Kapyemit respectively. Accordingly, this paper is an output of a study that was conducted in Turbo Division in June, 2013.

Sampling Design

The study used descriptive research design. This design was appropriate because it gave a profile picture of what is actually happening on the ground. Descriptive research design described the

state of affairs as it exists and also helped in organizing the data in an orderly way. It was used to ascertain respondent's experience, perspectives, and perceptions in the regarding the fund in the study area. This design offered a snapshot of the current situation the youth face when accessing the fund. Furthermore, the design provided a platform for information gathering without changing the participant's experiences and examined the perception of the youth regarding the fund.

Sampling Procedure and Sampling Size

The groups were purposively selected with the help of the key informants. Fifteen (15) youth groups benefitting from the Youth Enterprise Development Fund and engaging in small scale enterprises, totaling to 150 youths were thus selected. Furthermore, stratified random sampling was used in selecting 10 respondents according to age group. However, the study used 147 due to the availability and response rate of the respondents. Where group members were more than ten (10) the study used simple random sampling. The youth groups that are active were identified with the help of the key informant. However, the study used 147 due to the availability and response rate of the respondents.

Data Collection tools

Data for this study was collected using self-administered questionnaires and focused group discussions. The study used questionnaire to elicit responses from the respondents for purposes of statistical analysis. They were developed and mainly administered to the youth. Direct questions and Likert scale questions were mainly used in the collection information. Focused group discussions were also conducted to supplement what had been elicited from the questionnaire. The questionnaire, which had closed ended questions and a few open-ended questions, the interview schedule mainly, had open-ended questions. The use of the three data collection tools encouraged triangulation thus this ensured the achievement of the research process gaining information wholly. The application and combination of several tools of in the study ensured overall data collection.

Data Analysis techniques

The study descriptively analyzed the data. This study utilized the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS, Version 16.0) in the organization and analysis of quantitative data from closed-ended questions. This data was presented in form of frequency and percentage tables. Furthermore, qualitative data from open-ended questions and further probing was classified into various themes on the basis of data presentation and analysis. Direct quotations were also used in the process of interpreting the findings.

III. Results & Discussions

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the respondents

The study set out to find the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. This was in form of the gender/sex, marital status, age, education level, group activity and role played by group

members. The number of the respondents who participated in the study totaled to 147. A majority of the respondents (70.1%) were males while more than a quarter (29.9%) of the female represented the gender of the respondents as shown in **Table 1**.

The respondents' age in years was also considered as part of the socio-demographic characteristics of the study. When asked to state their ages, it was established that 35.4% constituted the ages ranging from 22-25, while 30.6% were below 21 years and 28.6% were aged 26-29 years. The rest were above 30 years whom constituted 5.4% as shown in **Table 1**. In sum, it is evident that majority of the respondents were aged 25 years and below 66%.

The results of the study indicated that majority of the respondents were married of which they accounted for 76.2% of the sample population while the rest were single who accounted for 23.8% as shown in **Table 1** below. When asked about their highest education level, it was established that more than half (51%) of the respondents had attained secondary/high school level. Attaining the university education less than a quarter (20.4%) was second, followed by primary school education (15%) and those that attained the Tertiary (polytechnic) accumulated for less than fifteen percent (13.6%).

In relation to the group activity, the study revealed that respondents, who were practicing agriculture which includes crop farming and animal husbandry, account for 27.2% a clear indication that agriculture is the main economic activity in the study area especially in Rift-Valley region. Transportation sector (Mini-van referred to as *Matatu*¹) and stationery and printing services were equal (20.4%). Another area of transportation which included the motorbike and bicycle riders (normally referred to as the *bodaboda*) accounted for 13.6%. The rest includes those who operated salon business (cosmetics) 11.6% and the respondents who were hiring of tents and chairs which accounted for 6.8% as shown in **Table 1**.

Role played in the groups is one of the essential indicators determining the allocation of responsibilities among group members. The reason why the study considered this factor was to determine whether there was equal gender participation in the allocation of responsibilities. In the study, role played was categorized in seven groups. Less than sixty percent (59.0%) were members. When compare with male-chairman 8.8%, the study revealed that female-chairperson accounted for 1.4%. This is in contrast when comparing male-vice chairman 2.7% and female-vice chairperson 7.5%. The rest were secretary and treasurer equaled 10.2% respectively as shown in **Table 1**.

¹*Matatu* is a term in Swahili referring to the means of transport common to the Kenyans, refereeing to micro-van transportation

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency(n)	%
Gender (n=147)		
Male	103	70.1
Female	44	29.9
Age in years (n=147)		
<21	45	30.6
22- 25	52	35.4
26 - 29	42	28.6
>30+	8	5.4
Marital Status(n=147)		
Married	112	76.2
Single	35	23.8
Highest Education Level attained (n=147)		
Secondary/High School Level	75	51.0
University	30	20.4
Primary Level	22	15.0
Tertiary (polytechnic)	20	13.6
Group Activity (n=147)		
Agriculture(-Crop faming & Animal husbandry)	40	27.2
Transportation sector: (Mini-van ‘Matatus’)	30	20.4
Stationery and printing services	30	20.4
Cosmetics(Saloon business)	17	11.6
Hiring of tents & chairs	10	6.8
Role played (n=147)		
Male- Chairman	13	8.8
Female- Chairperson	2	1.4
Male- Vice chairman	4	2.7
Female- Vice chairperson	11	7.5
Secretary	15	10.2
Treasurer	15	10.2
Members	87	59.0

n=147, %= Percentage

Section 2: According to the Study Objectives

This section of the paper sought to find out the youth perceived impacts of the fund towards the small scale rural enterprises. The following are the factors that the section examined; reasons for joining the small scale enterprises, impacts made by the fund individually and group wise, the future prospects of the group and finally youth perceived impacts of the government on the fund.

Established Reasons for Youth joining Small Scale Enterprises

The study investigated the reasons why the youths joined the youth groups thus impacting on the small scale rural enterprises. Of the total number of respondents who had formed the youth groups, almost a half (42%) indicated that they joined the small scale enterprises to obtain benefits through collaborative efforts. This meant that they formed these groups for the purposes of engaging the members of the community obtaining services hence encouraging togetherness among the members of the community as shown in **Figure 1** below. This was supported by the following sentiments:

“Tulianza biashara ya kuweka tent ili wenzetu wawe wakifanya harusi kwa amani” that; We started this tent business so that our community members can celebrate wedding occasions in peace (Female respondent, tent & chairs).

Almost thirty percent (29%) of the respondents who joined the small scale rural enterprises indicated that they did so to gain and obtain skills and experiences. For those who were to get the start-up capital for their venture were less than twenty percent (17%). Some of the sentiments that led to them joining the youth groups were given as follows:

“Mimi ni mtu wa reserve sikuweza operate boda (motorbike) so nilijiunga na kikundi hiki kujifunza kabla ya kuendesha boda..... lakini sasa niko stage na mimi ni mmoja wa hawa watu wa boda...” that; I am from the rural area and I did not have skills to operate bodaboda (motobike) so I had to learn by joining the group as a bodaboda operator... but now I am an operator at this stage (Male respondent, bodaboda-motorbike operator).

“...Nilicheki Sharon akisuka nywele vipoa kwa salon na walikuwa wamejiestablish so me nikawajoin kwa salon ndio nipate skills alafu plus vile sikuwa na doo...” that; I saw that Sharon knew how to plait hair very well and they had established themselves very well so I decided to join them since they were well established so as to get skills and also to get money (Female respondent, Saloonist).

A small number (12%) of respondents indicated that they felt that they joined the small scale rural enterprises due to the factors of unemployment as shown in **Figure 1**. This was supported by a Female respondent, Farming when she said;

“Time mi nilikuwa mtaani, nilicheki siget job na nilikuwa nimepata diploma so nikadecide kujoin hii group....” That; the time I was still at home I saw that I was not getting a job and I had obtained a diploma so I decided to join the group.

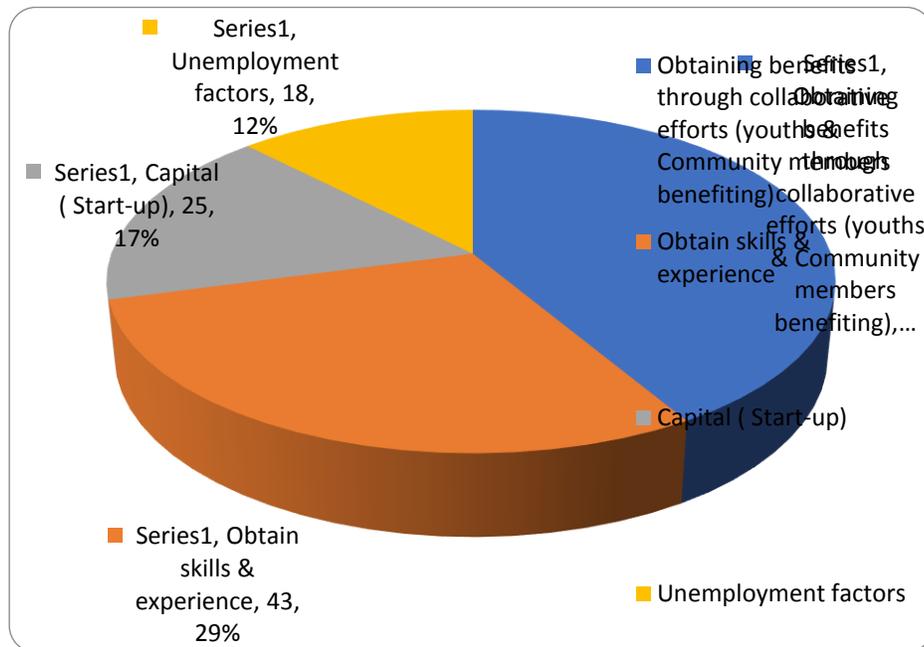


Figure 1: Respondents reasons for joining the Small Scale Enterprise

Perceived Impacts of the Fund on Individual’s Life and Group Wise

The study went further to investigate on the impact the fund has made on the respondent’s life. Of the total number of the respondents who had obtained the fund, a third (33.3%) indicated that it had contributed in income generation and sustained livelihoods thus improved income household; the rest equaled to twenty two percent (22.4%) who indicated that the fund has enhanced development of skills and experience (entrepreneurial skills) and thus some of the respondent opted joining polytechniques to develop their skills and develop their capacities thus improving their education status. At the same time they indicated that the fund had promoted togetherness among group members, thus they bond as they share ideas hence creating their capacities as unemployed to create new business ventures. Nearly a quarter (21.8%) indicated that the fund had improved their economic status thus improved their well-being. Therefore, beneficiaries have become independent and at the same time they have sustained their families as shown in **Figure 2** below. The findings above concur with Alisultanov *et al.*, (2003) who argued that the youth who joined entrepreneurship had a higher chance of increased household incomes by 85 % within two (2) years.

Furthermore, study findings concur with findings by Chigunta (2001) who found out that youth in developing countries tend to go into business out of economic necessity or need to survive, or out

of failure to find productive use of their energy in other avenues. Survey data from Zambia show that the overwhelming majority (92.3 percent) of the respondents cited socio-economic problems as the major reason for starting the business (Chigunta, 2001). Of these, close to half (46.2 percent) cited lack of employment, a third (30.8 percent) the need to supplement household income; and 15.4 percent poverty. Only 7.7 percent of the respondents cited the need to accumulate wealth as the major reason for starting the business.

Furthermore, those who had not completed schooling especially primary and secondary schooling had joined polytechnics in order to improve on their skills, thus the ability to benefit from the fund made the youth obtain skills. For instance, one of the respondents echoed the following sentiments:

“...mi niliacha chuo nikiwa class 8...Venye niko kwa hii group yetu ni discover kuna skill lazima nipate so nilirudi chuo (polytechnic) nipate ma skills....na saa hizi niko na cert ya kuwa farmer” That; I left primary school in class.... As I am in this group I discovered that I must have skills so I decided to back to our local polytechnic....I now have a certificate on farming (Male respondent, Agriculture).

Therefore, the perceptions of youth polytechnics may be changing the youth thereby offering training and offering skills especially in rural areas. Ohba (2011) provides such evidence that finds many primary leavers identifying technical and vocational training as a more promising route to securing a livelihood than joining secondary schooling.

The study went further to investigate on the impact the fund has made on the youth groups as shown in **Figure 2** below. Of the total number of the respondents who had obtained the fund, more than half (55.1%) indicated that it had enhanced group participation towards community participation, more so it had improved their chances of participation in groups whereby they had developed leadership skills. This in turn enhanced youth empowerment. The following sentiments were echoed by the respondents during the focused group discussion:

“....When I was given a chance to become a vice-chairperson it gave me an opportunity to become involved in group activities and serving the community at large...if I can lead here then I can become a member of the County Assembly” (Female respondent, Agriculture- crop farming).

“....The leadership skills here have empowered us, as the youth and we have become part and parcel of communal participation and development...” (Male respondent, Agriculture).

The findings concur with White and Kenyon (2000) who indicates that social and cultural identity is promoted through youth enterprises, as it is a stronger sense of community where young women and men are valued and better connected to society. Youth enterprises give young people,

especially marginalized youth, a sense of ‘meaning’ and ‘belonging’. This can shape the identity of youth and encourage others to treat them as equal members of society.

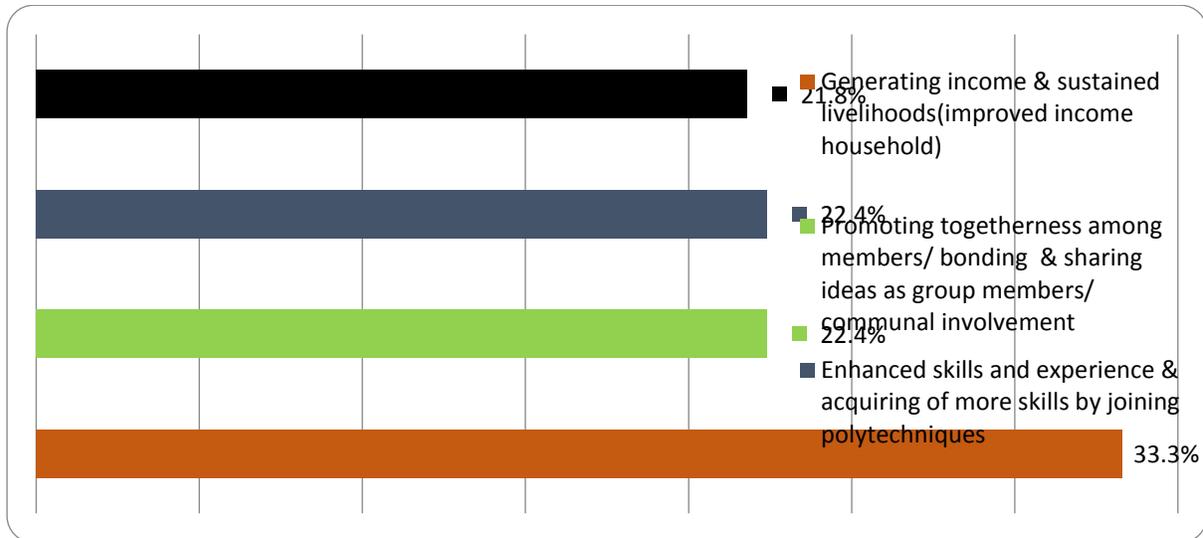


Figure 2: Impact the Fund has made to Respondent’s Life

In addition, nearly a quarter (24.5%) indicated that the fund had contributed to expansion of infrastructure and acquiring assets thus it was a boost to their development through enhanced provision of services. The rest whom were above twenty two percent (20.4%) indicated that the fund contributed to economic gain thus there was improved financing of group activities such as expanding their businesses as shown in **Figure 3** below. The following sentiments were echoed by the respondents:

“...we have been able to buy a new vehicle second hand for our group.... This has made our group more profitable.... We are able to transport persons publicly and at the same time hire the vehicle for personal use.....” (Male respondent, Transportation-Minivan).

“....this fund has made us realize our potential.... We have bought more tents and chairs so this means we can host more events in our village.... Formally we used to host one but we can do three hosting in the weekend especially on Saturday when we are having more weddings in our village...” (Female respondent: Hiring of Tents and Chairs).

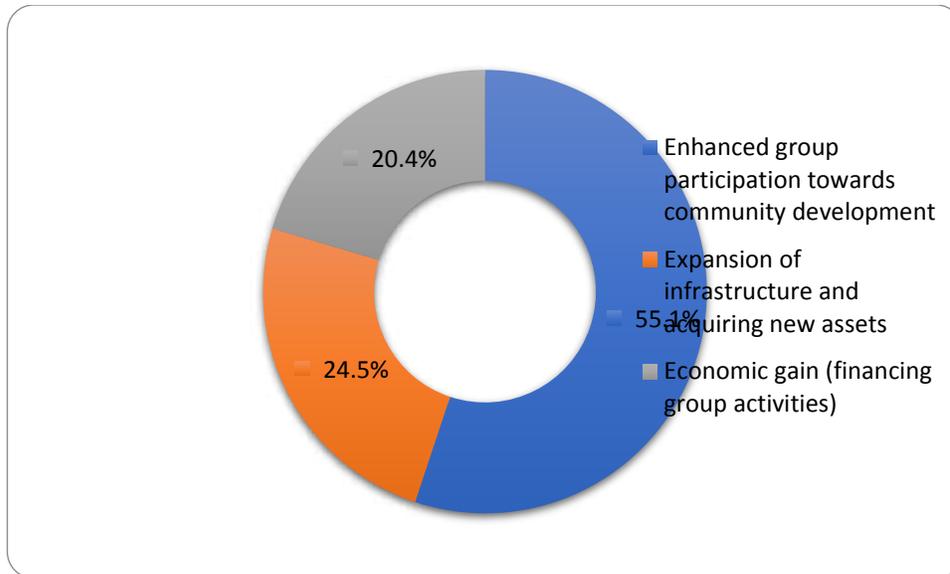


Figure 3: Perceived Impact the fund has made towards the Youth group

Future Prospects of the Youth Groups engaging in Small Scale Rural Enterprises

The study investigated on whether there were future plans of the business enterprises as a group. Of the total number of respondents who were in the various youth groups, nearly sixty percent (59.9%) indicated that after obtaining the benefits from the group they would wind-up. This is because of the various factors attributed to locality and tribal/cultural factors, a clear indicator that although the youth groups are utilizing the fund, there is no group sustainability in the long run.

Less than a third (29.9%) indicated that they were aiming towards growth through expansion of infrastructure and asset ownership, while 10.2% of the respondents indicated that they had no future due to disagreements and lack of co-operation by members as shown in **Figure 4**. During discussions the following sentiments were captured:

“Mimi nikipata benefits za group na time nitapata share yangu ya doo mi nacheki nikifungua biz ingine coz sioni nikikaa hapa for long..... wasee wametoka different (tribe) places na mi pia nina place....” That; I want to get the group benefits and the time I get my share of money from the group I am going to open another business because I see myself not staying here for long... I come from a different place (tribe) so I have a place (Male respondent, practicing agriculture).

“Hii group watu huongeleana vibaya sana na hiyo huleta utatanishi na kukosana mwingi sana wenyewe kwa wenyewe na mi sioni kama hiki kikundi kitanifaa ama pia kuendelea kama kikundi sioni....” That; this group people normally back-bite each other too much that there are too many disagreements amongst members and I don’t see this group benefiting me and also I don’t see this group lasting.. (Female respondent; Saloon business operator).

Moreover, in an interview with the key informants who included the District Youth Officer and the local area chiefs, they indicated that there is disunity among members in the youth groups. According to the local area chief in Turbo, he indicated that he normally solves disputes associated with the various youth groups hence has to call for the *baraza* meeting which includes the youths and elders. This applies to statements supported by the District Youth Officer:

“.....that these youth groups have disputes that associate with the leadership wrangles and running the group affairs especially when venturing into a new business idea....”

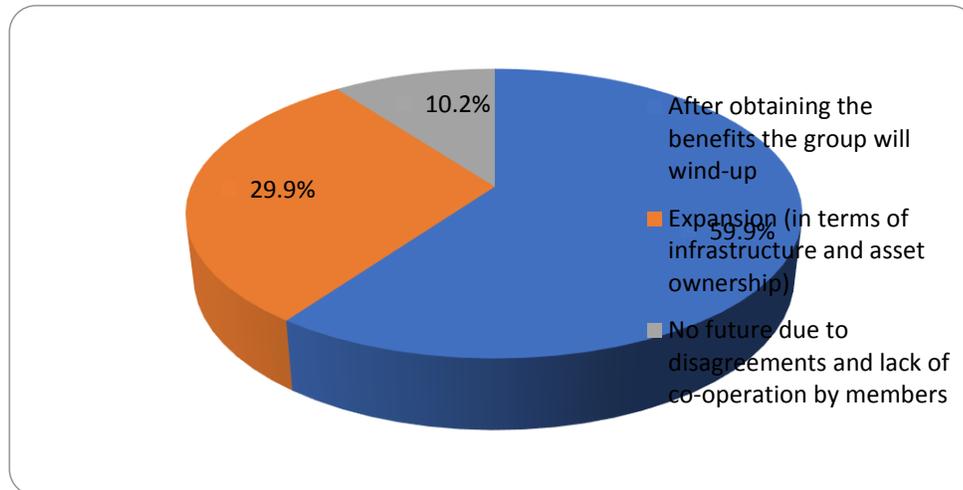


Figure 4: Future Plans of the Business Enterprises

Accordingly, study established that after the 2007 general elections, there is still tribal animosity in the area. The inter-ethnic hostility is as a result of historical injustices and grievances that have not been addressed. Therefore, there is still perceived differences among the youth. According to the EDC (2009) report, the youth are still a vulnerable group therefore there is need for options on youth programming to transform what continues (tribal element) to be a highly destabilizing conditions. Nonetheless, living conditions, livelihoods and employment prospects for youth, continued to worsen. Therefore, if the youth are to better their livelihoods, they must unite and utilize the fund.

Youth perceived impact of the Government towards Youth Enterprise Development Fund

The study determined to know the youth perceived impact of the government towards the Youth Enterprise Development Fund. A likert scale was used for establishing the accurate level of response: 1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2= Agree (A), 3= Not Sure (NS), 4= Agree (A), 5= Strongly Agree (SD). Thus, this question was analyzed by using the percentage and means to identify the rank of each attribute.

The study showed a majority of the respondents disagreed that the government provided a platform where the youth can engage in the procurement process that indicated that 30% of all procurement should be assigned to the youth. This is attested by the statement having a mean of 2.37 as shown in **Table 6** below. Furthermore, respondents strongly agreed with the statement that indicated that provision of linkages and partnerships supports successful development of entrepreneurial projects and encourages youth business ideas. This is attested by having a mean of 4.82. This indicates that there is a strong belief that the procurement process is not open and fair thus youth cannot invest in the procurement process. However the youth believe that the government has provided linkages and partnership support as shown in **Table 6** below.

Findings by White and Kenyon (2000) indicates that in order to promote entrepreneurship and a culture of enterprise amongst young women and men the government should promote linkages between the formal and informal sectors thus establishing entrepreneurship networks. Government's contribution in youth entrepreneurship impacts on youth involvement in the small scale rural enterprises.

Table 6: Government's contribution towards the Youth Enterprise Development Fund

	Minimum (Strongly Disagree)	Maximum (Strongly Agree)	Mean	SD	Rank
Government has provided the youth with 30% procurement process	1	5	2.37	1.06	1
Provision of linkages and partnerships promotes youth entrepreneurship	1	5	4.82	0.39	2

n=147

IV. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study findings revealed that indeed the youth joined the small scale enterprises to obtain benefits through collaborative efforts, to gain and obtain skills and experiences, obtaining start-up capital and finally due to the unemployment. Moreover, impact made by the fund on individual life included the following; promoted togetherness, promoting income and sustained livelihoods thus improved economic statues, and eventually enhanced skills and experience and acquiring of more skills by joining polytechnics. Furthermore, when asked about the fund's contribution in relation to the youth groups the study findings revealed that it had enhanced group participation towards community participation, expansion of infrastructure and group activities thus increased assets acquisition and finally economic gain for the group.

However, the study findings revealed that future plans by the youth groups was seen inevitably as unsustainable when they indicated that after obtaining the benefits from the group they would

wind-up because of factors such as locality and tribal/cultural factors. Having no future due to disagreements and lack of co-operation by members was seen as another factor. Only a small number of the respondents showed optimism as they indicated that they were aiming towards growth through expansion of infrastructure and asset ownership. This is a clear indication that there is lack of group sustainability.

It is recommended that there should be government intervention in youth group sustainability through enhanced sensitization and promoting unity in the youth groups. Furthermore, the procurement process where the youth are supposed to benefit from the 30% allocated by the government should be increased to enhance youth participation in the country's development process thus the government is supposed to make it transparent for the youth to access the programmes from the government..

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Author Contributions

Jasper Edward Nyaura: Conceptualization of the study, development of the research instruments, analysis of the data, interpretation and discussion of results.

Prof. Philip. K. Rono: Supervision of the study conducted and helped in the preparing/ input of the article.

Mr. Paul Sutter Chebet: Supervision of the study conducted and helped in the preparing/ input of the article.

Conflicts of Interest

This research paper/article is original and contains unpublished material. The authors have confirmed, read and approved the manuscript for publication without alteration whatsoever. There are no foreseen ethical implications of the article. The article has appropriately cited various authors thus did not require ethical approval.

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