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# Determination of policy interventions for enhancing youth participation in agricultural value chain development in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kenya

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## Abstract

Agriculture in Kenya can develop gainful employment opportunities for youth that would enable them to exploit their economic innovation and enhance their opportunities for economic growth. Improving youth participation in the agricultural sector is therefore important for nations to develop. Youth's interest in agriculture is, however, likely to be influenced by several factors: for instance, access to land, finances, markets, and negative perception towards agriculture. The Kenyan government and its development partners can enhance policy intervention measures for promoting youth participation in agriculture. The study used a cross-sectional survey design to collect data from 397 randomly selected youth and 22 youth and agricultural officers. Content validity of the youth and agricultural officers' questionnaires was ascertained by extension experts while reliability was determined through a pilot test involving 30 respondents. The reliability coefficient was 0.86α and 0.80α respectively, which was above the 0.70 threshold for acceptable reliability. The study revealed strategies that could be adapted to enhance youth participation in agriculture and suggested several measures to be put in place for youth's involvement in policy issues in agricultural sector in Kenya. For instance, 34. 7% of youth felt that their adequate training was crucial while 33.7% called for improved land policies. Government and other development partners should promote strategies and measures for enhanced youth engagement in agricultural value chain development.

***Keywords:*** Agriculture; Employment; Policy; Intervention Measures; Youth



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## 1. Introduction

Agriculture contributes about 30% of Kenya's total Gross Domestic Product (GDP), accounts for 65% of national export earnings and caters for over 80% of employment opportunities. It provides a livelihood to about 80% of the population (CIA, 2014). Rural households rely on agriculture for most of their income mainly from smallholder farming, which produces the majority of Kenya's agricultural output. Kenya government revised the Strategy for Revitalizing Agriculture (SRA), adopted in 2008 to create an improved agricultural legislation (GoK, 2013; Kangai et al., 2011). In 2010, SRA, originally intended to run from 2004-2014, was superseded by the Agricultural Sector Development Strategy 2010-2020 (ASDS) that foresees a food secure and prosperous nation by 2020 and aims to achieve a paradigm shift from subsistence to commercial agriculture.

Emphasizing agricultural growth, smallholder productivity as well as employment creation, however in bid to reducing the cycle of poverty raises a concern, especially given the ageing farmer population. The concern should address issues on whether Kenyan youth adequately participate in agriculture, whether youth are involved in policy dialogue and what intervention measures should be adopted to enhance their participation in agricultural value chain development. Studies by FAO (2014) and ILO (2013) revealed an ageing farming population with a mean of 60 years and high unemployment rate of youth of 75% in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA). The youth unemployment rate in SSA is related to higher levels of poverty. It is estimated that 20.1% of youth in SSA who are employed earn only USD 1.25 or less per day. This level is referred to as the 'working poverty rate, implying that most youth in SSA work by necessity rather than by choice. This situation can be changed by encouraging their full participation in agriculture (AGRA, 2015; ILO, 2013 and OECD, 2012).

Youths are the driving force behind economic prosperity in future decades, only if policies and programs are in place to enhance their opportunities (Brooks et al., 2013). All over the world, youth unemployment rates are higher than adult unemployment rates with Africa facing the world's greatest youth employment challenge (ILO, 2013). Modern agriculture can offer significant opportunities for youth's employment (World Bank, 2014). However, to attract youth to the sector, an adequate enabling policy and regulatory environment is fundamental (ILO, 2013). It is increasingly recognized that youth participation has an important role in decision making and policy dialogue, thus policy-makers should work with the youth.

Too often youth participation in policy remains passive while seniority is frequently associated with authority, and youth are not expected to voice their concerns or have a role in policy development processes (Lintelo, 2011). In many developing countries, young women's participation in policy-making is particularly challenging as a result of traditional beliefs about the suitability of women to hold decision making positions and the persistence of gender inequalities at household level (World Bank, 2014; IFAD, 2014). Further, young rural women face additional difficulties in accessing markets since in many communities their freedom of movement is restricted because of social and cultural prescriptions (FAO, 2013). Munang and Mwaura (2015) reported that women in many developing countries do not inherit land and only obtain user rights via a male relative. Several countries have reformed their formal law system so that women are granted equal property and inheritance rights, but the enforcement of these formal laws are challenging because parallel customary law systems might exist denying equal land access for women (White, 2012; FAO, 2013). It is difficult for young women to request enforcement of formal laws because they often lack the required knowledge, financial resources and confidence to protest against social norms and traditions (FAO, 2013; World Bank, 2014). Little

information is available on the participation of youth in policy processes specifically related to agriculture, access to land, markets, and rural development.

A study by MIJARC, FAO, and IFAD (2012) showed that rural youth rarely participate in the formulation of policies concerning them, and that in Africa and Latin America, the youth are often not seen as equal parties but rather as uninformed, indecisive and troublemakers. A report by IFAD (2014) confirmed that national policies related to youth in agriculture are often not implementable because they are designed by others who are unaware of the situation of youth in rural areas. Although some legal documents and policies, including the African Youth Charter, explicitly state youth's right to participate in policy design, many young women and men remain unaware of their rights in this regard. There is a lack of comprehensive data on rural youth as a distinct group, resulting in policies that do not respond to the real challenges faced by rural youth (IEG, 2013).

In order to be able to actively participate in policy dialogue, rural youth need the right skills and since not all rural youth are born leaders. UNCDF (2012) argued that organizations that can represent their interests and which can lobby on their behalf can have an important role to play. MIJARC, FAO and IFAD (2012) contend that rural youth are not sufficiently united thus a major reason for their limited voice in policy-making processes. There are only a small number of organizations representing rural youth, and those that do exist often lack financial resources, are rather small and informal, operate at local level, and have little bargaining power in policy processes (IFAD, 2014). In developing countries, young women face particular constraints to participating in rural organization management for a variety of reasons; they generally have lower literacy levels than men; they often lack the confidence to defend their interests and they have limited mobility and time availability due to the need to combine household duties with a heavy workload (World Bank, 2015).

Governments need to formulate rural and agricultural development policies and strategies that seek to create an enabling environment for youth participation in agriculture. In Kenya, employment creation is emphasized in the National Youth Policy, where creation of an environment enabling youth self-help initiatives for self-employment is recognized (FANRPAN, 2012). ASDS is the overarching national policy framework for the ministries and other stakeholders involved in Kenya's agriculture sector. This policy framework is anchored in the long-term development plan for Kenya, 'Vision 2030', whose main thrust is to transform Kenya into a middle-income country by 2030 and involve youth in agriculture by making it attractive to them (GoK, 2013; Kangai et al., 2011). In an effort to achieve this commitment, the Government launched a 'farming is Cool' campaign in 2012, which highlighted the possible monetary returns in farming that can accrue to youth and committed over USD 2 million in loans to youth groups for buying irrigation kits, greenhouses, water tanks, seeds, and fertilizers through the YEDF (Amenya, 2011). Subsequently other programes targeting youth in agriculture have come up for instance the ENABLE Youth Program Kenya that is currently ongoing (MOA, 2020).

It is not only the agricultural sector, however, that possesses untapped potential, but the youth themselves. As a result, facilitating and incentivizing youth participation in agriculture would not only provide their much-needed employment opportunities, but may also help in driving the innovations and growth needed to reduce rural poverty among youth and adults alike (ILO, 2013). Unfortunately, many youths do not perceive agriculture as a viable or attractive means of earning a living. Noorani (2015) observed that the drudgery and low productivity of agriculture is simply not attractive to youth, who instead migrate to cities in search of higher productivity and better-remunerated employment. A concerted and coordinated effort is therefore

required by the government, policy makers and development practitioners to develop a more modern agricultural sector to unlock the potential of the youth.

Njeru and Gichimu (2014) argue that the government could promote land reforms and ensure that arable government land is only used for agricultural purpose, fairly distributed among young male and female farmers and that mechanisms to be put in place to help youth have sustainable agriculture. FAO (2013) revealed that creation of laws that ensure youth's access to production resources that ensure equal opportunities for young men and women should be adopted. The government ought to implement legally binding consultation mechanisms with rural communities and rural youth movements while drafting policies related to productive resources. Such policies should respect mother earth and its natural production cycles and guarantee a healthy and sustainable environment for future generations.

A report by AGRA (2015) revealed that youth inherit small plots of land and lack access to finance to buy more land. In India, cooperative farming has proved to be successful in overcoming this constraint a phenomenon that Kenyan youth can borrow in order to improve their level of participation in agriculture (FAO, 2013). Family land transfer can be considered as a good option, where the elderly can transfer part of their land to youth, where both parties can benefit since elderly lack the necessary capacity to manage their lands in the most efficient way and youth are keen to have their own land and have better access to new technology.

Governments should adopt laws and public policies relevant to youth that will facilitate access to credit for productive resources according to their specific needs (Purvis, 2014). IFAD (2014) argued that governments and farmer's organizations should work out financial support programs specifically directed to young farmers and promote the work, creativity and innovative spirit of young people; for organizing contests and the best projects can be rewarded with funding. According to Njeru and Mwangi (2015), agribusiness centers with storage and processing facilities should be created for young farmers to link them with traders and will act as a venue for training, sensitization and capacity building, particularly on market actors, financing opportunities and new agricultural technologies. Youth ought to be trained in financial sustainability and management of membership-based organizations in order to encourage creation of strong and sustainable young farmer's organizations (FAO, 2013). A report by Brooks et al. (2013) revealed that youth organizations can promote and facilitate youth participation in their own structures and can consider the need for gender equity and understand the issues affecting rural youth.

Leavy and Hossain (2014) argued that the apparent disconnect between agricultural research systems and farm operations needs to be addressed. Research could be organized in a way that the units responsible for a particular commodity are linked to the other institutions that are involved in the particular commodity so that information can flow directly from research to utilization through ICTs Leavy and Hossain (2014). Researchers require relevant training on how to package their research findings for the end user and post it into the appropriate communication channel for users to access (IFAD, 2014). Brooks et al. (2013) confirmed that the government should ensure promotion of research–extension–farmer linkages to facilitate demand-driven research and increased use of improved technologies. Optimizing rain fed agriculture and investing heavily in irrigation and other water harvesting technologies holds the key to increased productivity in semi-arid Counties (Brooks et al., 2013; Purvis, 2014). Counties could pick commodities in which they have competitive advantage over others and create trade relations with neighboring Counties (FAO, 2013).

Better production techniques and market-oriented strategies can generate a sustainable source of income while contributing to the supply of agricultural produce to satisfy the world's increasing food demands (Njeru

& Mwangi, 2015). A report by Mkulima Young (2013) revealed that ICTs could play a role in countering youth migration to urban areas by enhancing access to market information, production techniques, new technologies and financing opportunities. The use of ICTs enables choice, the option to stay on farms and take full advantage of new technologies and farming techniques, while incorporating valuable traditional practices and knowledge (Brooks et al., 2013).

A study by Purvis (2014) suggested that specialization needs to be encouraged in order to re-direct and train youth to specialize either on production, processing or marketing. This will be more effective than when one youth carry out all activities in a value chain. There is need to provide incentives for entrepreneurs in the sector by developing financial packages that are tailored to the diverse production, marketing conditions as well as risk factors (Mkulima Young, 2013). Investment in value addition through processing, branding, quality shelf-life improvements would lead to higher prices, new jobs and will eventually increase aggregate incomes for the youth and in the rural community in general (Njeru and Mwangi, 2015). Swarts and Aliber (2013) observed that sufficient investment in irrigation and other water harvesting technologies to facilitate full time engagement of the youth and shorter waiting time for economic returns is necessary. This is noted could be very pertinent especially in the dominant marginal areas of Kajiado County. There is need to improve the performance of the agricultural value chains in Kenya in order to deliver reasonable returns to all actors (IFAD, 2014). Currently the value chains for the different commodities are long, un-transparent and cluttered with many players making them inefficient, slow and unresponsive to needs of particularly the producers. A comprehensive approach to value chains for various commodities should be undertaken in partnerships involving the youth.

Tadele and Gella (2012) showed that capacity building activities of rural youth often focus on generating leadership skills. Education and capacity building programs for rural youth should be defined in a more participatory way and focus on agricultural best practices, land laws and knowledge sharing (Tadele and Gella, 2012). Governments should review their youth policies and propose measures which are adapted to rural life, guarantee the rights of rural youth and provide them with a better and more decent life. Kangai et al. (2011) and Leavy and Hossain (2014) expressed the need to address the long-held belief that agriculture and rural based activities are for those who cannot make a living anywhere else. Agriculture needs to be rebranded as the new unexplored frontier for growth in business opportunities. A report by FAO (2013) confirmed that women and men should have equal access to training and education and that gender aspects should be taken into consideration while deciding the themes and setting the timing of these trainings.

The study was carried out in Kjiado North Sub County, Kenya, where 80% of the population engaged in various subsistence agricultural value chain activities. The Sub-County was selected for study because it has potential for agricultural productivity with semi-arid area of only 8% (MoA, 2013). It also had a large number of educated unemployed youth and its close proximity to Nairobi city shows a reliable outlet market for agricultural products.

Agriculture in the study area was not embraced by the youth who perceived it as an occupation for the old, illiterate and the poor. The misconception led to rural outmigration among the youth to the nearest urban centers to seek for better livelihood. The majority of the youth who remained contributed to family labour with little income accruing to them thus, they hardily practiced agribusiness (KNSMBYS, 2014). Many youths who accessed youth fund did not invest it in agriculture but in small micro-enterprises that were quick in generating easy and cheap cash (MOA, 2013). Youth who practiced agriculture relied on traditional and labour-intensive

production techniques; thus, they concentrated on a narrow range of agricultural commodities mainly staple crops like maize, other cereals and few horticultural produces (MoA, 2013).

Low investment in infrastructure such as roads, hubs for produce consolidation, cooler houses and processing plants necessary for evolving of efficient value chains is likely to have made the sector unattractive to the youth (Swarts and Aliber, 2013).

The government and other actors should develop a coherent and integrated initiative to address the core challenges faced by youth when entering the agriculture sector. Njeru et al. (2015) confirmed that initiative should involve a transparent multi-stakeholder mechanism that ensures coherence, coordination and cooperation across different national government institutions and agencies, at central and local level, private sector organizations, youth organizations and development partners. Its goal should be to increase youth's access to the agricultural sector that offers great opportunities for agricultural productivity gains as well as food security and sustainability. It is against this backdrop that the paper determines policy interventions that could enhance youth participation in agriculture.

## 1.1. Statement of the problem

Youth in Kenya constitute about 45% of the total labour force. Some of these youth work mainly in agriculture, which supports over 75% of the population and contributes 30% to the GDP. Young people were estimated to comprise 80% of the Kenyan population by 2016. This tremendous youth population increase, rising unemployment and therefore high dependence ratio poses a great danger to Kenya's economy. Despite the Government's efforts to make agriculture more attractive and profitable to the youth, their participation in the sector is declining as they increasingly migrate to cities in search of remunerative and decent employment. Furthermore, although the youth hold Kenya's future due to their enormous energy and aspirations, most of them in the study area considered agriculture to be less attractive compared to other professions. Reducing youth unemployment through participation in agriculture is a challenge in Kenya since the average age of a farmer is about 60 years and at this age bracket, farmers are less venturous, averse to risks and hesitant to adapt innovations making it difficult to transform agriculture from subsistence to income generating activities. Although youth engagement in agriculture could greatly reduce youth unemployment in the country, 70% of youth in the study area were unemployed. The government and other actors should develop coherent and integrated initiatives to address the core challenges faced by youth when entering the agriculture sector. This is a challenge in Kajiado North Sub-County since these initiatives were poorly understood and documented. This therefore made it difficult for County leaders and their development partners to formulate innovative strategies for enhancing youth participation in agriculture. This study has provided information that the Government and other leaders can use to make informed decisions on how to improve and enhance youth participation in the sector.

## 1.2. Purpose and objective of the study

The study sought to determine the policy measures and innovative strategies to be adopted by government and other stakeholders for enhancing youth participation in agriculture.

## 2. Data and methods

A cross-sectional design was used to collect data from 397 randomly selected youth and 22 youth and agricultural officers. This design provides self-reported facts about respondents, their feelings, attitudes, opinions and habits and is excellent for collecting original data (Kombo and Tromp, 2008; Kothari, 2008). It enables the researcher to study a large population with only a portion of it being used to provide the required data (Kothari, 2008).

### 2.1. Sampling procedure and sample size

Kajiado North Sub-County was sampled purposively because of its potentiality in agriculture, being in close proximity to Nairobi, a market outlet for the agricultural output and having the highest number of educated unemployed youth compared to other Sub-Counties in Kajiado County. Census sampling was done to all the fifteen agricultural officers and the six youth officers, since they were few, it was appropriate to sample all.

Based on the sampling formula provided by Yamane (1967) and adopted by Israel (1992), a sample size of 397 youth was arrived at.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2},$$

where,

n is the sample size

N is the population size

e is the level of precision or the significance level.

Therefore:

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{100525}{1+100525(0.05)^2} = 397$$

**Table 1.** Distribution of sample size in various wards

| Ward | Male Population | Female Population | % Male | % Female | Sample (Male) | Sample (Female) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Ongata Rongai** | 13,834 | 14,836 | 13.761 | 14.758 | 55 | 59 |
| **Ngong** | 12,448 | 13,820 | 12.382 | 13.747 | 50 | 55 |
| **Olorua** | 11,700 | 11,800 | 11.638 | 11.735 | 47 | 47 |
| **Ngaimurunya** | 10,287 | 10,800 | 10.233 | 10.743 | 40 | 44 |
| **Total** | **49,269** | **51,256** | **49.01** | **50.092** | **192** | **205** |

### 2.2. Instrumentation and data collection procedures

A self-administered questionnaire with information on the determination of policy interventions on youth participation in agriculture, developed by the researcher with open and closed-ended items, was used for the youth and agricultural extension officers. The questionnaires' content validity was ascertained by five extension experts while a pilot test involving 30 youth was conducted to determine its reliability, which was 0.83α. This was above the 0.70 minimum acceptable for educational research at a significant level of 0.05 set *a priori.*

### 2.3. Data analysis

Data analysis involved qualitative and quantitative methods. In the qualitative data analysis, emerging trends were categorized based on research objectives. The data on youth access to land was summarized into categories (males and females) and analyzed using a t-test at 0.001a significance level. It found out if the mean difference between the level of participation in agriculture between the male and female youth was significant. Frequency tables and percentages were used to summarize and present quantitative data.

## 3. Results

A respondent's age was important in determining the average age of youth involved agricultural production in the Sub-County. Most of the youth (63.4%) were 26-35 years while the rest (36.6%) were 18-25 years implying that agriculture in the Sub-County had attracted very few young people between 18 and 20 years. In terms of formal education, 60.2% had secondary (Form 4) to college (certificate or diploma) education. Of the remaining 39.8%, 7.3% had no formal education, 20.4% had primary education (standard 1-8) and only 12.1% had university education as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Age, academic level and marital status of the youth (n=397)

| **Age (years)** | | | **Academic level** | | | **Marital status** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | % | | F | % | | F | % |
| 18-20 | 53 | 13.4 | No school | 29 | 7.3 | Married | 217 | 54.7 |
| 21-25 | 92 | 23.2 | Primary | 81 | 20.4 | Single | 170 | 42.8 |
| 26-30 | 111 | 27.9 | Secondary | 132 | 33.2 | Divorced | 7 | 1.7 |
| 31-35 | 141 | 35.5 | College | 107 | 27.0 | Widower | 2 | 0.5 |
| | | | University | 48 | 12.1 | Widow | 1 | 0.3 |

### 3.1. Gender of respondents

Youth engagement and participation in activities related to agriculture can be affected by gender. The sampling took this into consideration in order to maintain the gender balance. The frequency distribution of the variable gender is given in figure 1.

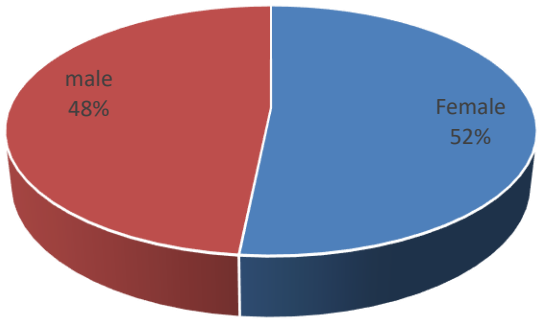


**Figure 1.** Gender representation of the respondents

### 3.2. Relationship between youth access to finances and their participation in agriculture

The Hypothesis to test this relationship was, there is no statistically significant relationship between youth access to finances and their participation in agriculture in Kajiado North Sub-County.

Correlation analysis using the index of youth access to finances and their participation in agriculture were used to test the hypothesis and the results are given in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Correlation analysis for youth access to finance and their participation in agriculture

| Variables | r | p | n |
|---|---|---|---|
| Youth participation in Agriculture | 0.197 | 0.01 | 397 |
| Youth access to finances | | | |

The results in Table 3 of the correlation analysis between youth access to finances (independent variable) and youth participation in agriculture (dependent variable) show there is a statistically significant positive relationship (r=.197, p=.01). We reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that there is a statistically significant relationship between youth access to finances and their participation in agriculture. This means that youth access to finances was positively related to their participation in agriculture thus it was a dominant factor that influenced the level of their participation in Kajiado Sub-County. Youth who had easy and better access to finances had increased levels of engagement in agricultural activities than those who had no access or had difficulties in accessing the finances. This is in accordance with the study by Leavy and Hossain

(2014) that confirmed that access to financial services such as savings and loans is just like access to land is of fundamental importance in starting any agricultural activity. The findings support study findings by Atkinson and Messy (2012) which observed that youth require finances to cover the costs of planting and harvesting, as well as investments in improved productive capacities. Moreover, the agricultural sector is often exposed to adverse natural events that negatively affect production as underscored by Dalla Valle (2012), thus access to insurance schemes is crucial for young farmers in developing better agricultural risk management strategies for their farms. To improve such services, appropriate policies should be drafted, and existing services revised to reach a younger clientele. However only 3.5% youth in the Sub-County had borrowed finances from microfinance institutions while only 2.3% used money from their own salary since majority lacked formal employment implying that youth access to finances influenced their level of participation in agriculture. Atkinson and Messy (2012) observed that collective action is crucial for rural youth, and they need to be organized in self-help groups that could provide the means of generating savings and improving the borrowing power of both individual members and the group, something that could be really applicable to youth in Kajiado North Sub-County thus agreeing with the research findings.

### 3.3. Interventions that could enhance youth participation in agriculture

The respondents gave their opinion on various intervention measures and strategies that could be adapted to enhance youth participation in agriculture. They also suggested several measures that need to be put in place to ensure youth's participation in policy issues in the agricultural sector in the Sub-County.

**Table 4.** Interventions by elders or parents

| Intervention | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Help by formation of societies | 64 | 16.6 |
| Help by training/educating the youth | 132 | 34.3 |
| Encouraging and giving moral support to the youth | 4 | 1.1 |
| Adapting modern methods of farming | 17 | 4.4 |
| Assist the youth with capital | 12 | 3.2 |
| Ensure timely land allocation to the youth | 126 | 32.8 |
| Involve the youth in decision making | 8 | 2.1 |
| Mentorship of the youth | 21 | 5.5 |
| **Total** | **384** | **100.0** |

Over one third of the respondents, 34.3% reported that parents should support them through training, especially in agricultural related disciplines. This was followed by 32.8% who indicated that land should be allocated to the youth in good time. Others 16.6% stated that parents could help in formation of groups which the youth can join, 5.5% indicated that mentorship programs were crucial, 4.4% stated that adoption of modern farming methods was important. Few respondents 3.2%, 2.1% and 1.1% indicated that parents should assist the youth with the required capital, involve them in decision-making processes, encouraging and giving them moral support as required. This is in accordance with the report by FAO (2014) which revealed that the youth often lack access to finance to buy land.

Cooperative farming in some countries for instance India has proved to be successful in overcoming this constraint, a phenomenon that Kenyan youth could borrow to improve their level of participation in agriculture. However, this requires support from the elders. The study findings are also in line with those of Proctor and Lucchesi (2012) that efforts aimed at fostering youth involvement in agricultural activities and decision-making processes are pertinent and that these efforts can seize on the youth's capacity and their propensity for taking higher entrepreneurial risks thus making them succeed in agriculture. Also, Dalla Valle (2012) confirmed that organized self-help groups could provide the means of generating savings and improving the borrowing power of both individual youth members and the group, thus will help mitigate the issue of financial constraints faced by the youth.

**Table 5.** Government and other development partners interventions

| **Interventions** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|
| Funding youth in agriculture and involving them in policy dialogues. | 100 | 25.4 |
| Improved land policies | 132 | 33.5 |
| Reduce interest rates by financial institutions | 20 | 5.1 |
| Improve the infrastructure | 95 | 24.1 |
| Ensure accessibility to markets | 15 | 3.8 |
| Training on use of ICTs in agriculture | 20 | 5.1 |
| Formation of youth organizations | 12 | 3.0 |
| **Total** | **394** | **100.0** |

Over two thirds of the respondents, 33.5%, wanted the government to come up with better land policies. This was followed by 25.4% who stated that funding youth in agriculture was of paramount importance. Others

24.1% reported that the government should improve the infrastructure while 5.1% said that they needed training on agriculture and ICTs skills and youth in agriculture could be assisted to access credits at a reduced interest rate. A few respondents, 3.8% and 3.0% indicated that markets accessibility should be enhanced and that support in formation of youth organizations was pertinent. These study findings agree with those of Noorani (2015) who found that the government could ensure that arable government land is only used for agricultural purpose, fairly distributed among young male and female farmers and that mechanisms should be put in place to help the youth practice sustainable agriculture. FAO (2013) found that promotion of land reforms and creation of laws that ensure young people's access to production resources that ensure equal opportunities for young men and women should be adopted.

The study findings also concur with those of Purvis (2014) that the government can adopt laws and public policies relevant to youth that facilitate access to credit for production according to the specific needs of the youth and that governments and farmer's organizations should work out financial support programs specifically directed to young farmers. Studies by AGRA and Njeru and Mwangi (2015) supports the study findings that agribusiness centers with storage and processing facilities should be created for youth to link them with traders and act as venues for training, sensitization, and capacity building, particularly on markets and financing opportunities as well as agricultural technologies. FAO (2013) found that youth ought to be trained in financial sustainability and management of membership-based organizations in order to encourage the creation of strong and sustainable young farmer's organizations.

## 4. Conclusions and recommendations

Several policy guidelines and intervention measures could be adopted by the government and other stakeholders to enhance youth participation in agriculture. Over one third of the respondents, 34.3% reported that parents should support them through training, especially in agricultural related disciplines. 32.8% indicated that land should be allocated to the youth in good time. Others 16.6% stated that parents could help in the formation of groups which the youth can join while 5.5% indicated that mentorship programs were crucial. 33.5% wanted the government to come up with improved land policies and 25.4% stated that funding youth in agriculture was of paramount importance. Others 24.1% reported that the government should improve the infrastructure while 5.1% said that they needed training on agriculture and ICTs skills and youth in agriculture could be assisted to access credits at a reduced interest rate.

### 4.1. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the researcher recommend as follows:

- For an increased understanding of youth's challenges in the agricultural sector and the reflection of these challenges in policies, the County government should ensure that data is aggregated concerning age, sex and geographical location, and the aspirations, needs and concerns of young people as a heterogeneous group should be taken into account in order to come up with policies that make agriculture more attractive to them.

- In order to enhance youth access to finances, policy makers and their development partners together with other stakeholders in the Sub-County should strategize on how to increase youth access to agricultural credit.
- In order to enhance youth access to market, leaders and other stakeholders in the Sub-County should strategize on how to improve market infrastructure, market information as well as knowledge on market requirements and negotiation skills.
- In order to address the issue of gender equity that has implication on youth participation in agriculture, leaders in Kajiado North Sub-County together with their development partners and other stakeholders should promote land reforms that ensure equal agricultural opportunities for both males and females.
- In order to attract the youth to the agriculture sector and create positive agriculture perceptions among them, education policy makers and their development partners should ensure that agriculture is included in primary and secondary school curricula so that youth can learn from an early age to appreciate its importance. The training should include practical sessions and models that portray agriculture as a lucrative career choice.
- National and County government should come up with a coherent and integrated response to address the core challenges faced by youth when entering agriculture. The government can partner, with a transparent multi-stakeholder mechanism ensuring coherence, coordination and cooperation across different National and County government, institutions and agencies, at central and local level, private sector organizations, youth organizations and development partners.

### 4.2. Further research

Other researchers can replicate the study in other areas, in order to come up with a more coherent policy interventions and integrated response in addressing the core challenges faced by youth when entering agriculture in Kenya. This would come in handy in determining whether the situation could be different in other areas, and how it can be arrested to promote youth participation in agricultural value chain development not only in Kenya but beyond.

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