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#### 4. CRITICAL POLICY ISSUES IN YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

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##### Youth Control of Production Resources

In her essay on the economics of backwardness, Mary Douglas exposes the problem of "delayed bachelorhood" in the Kasai province of Congo. She argues that in this society a young man acquires rights to use land, possess livestock, utilize household tools for his own purposes only after he gets married. In this society where old men control property, young men never marry until about 30 years of age when parents are willing to pay bridewealth. She argues that this systematic deprivation of the means to earn a living deprives the society of perhaps the most active population group. Old men are poor in entrepreneurship, and often strive to retain the status quo and this leads to economic stagnation.

The issues raised above are very real in some African cultures where entry into the production economy is preceded by rites, initiation ceremonies, symbolic offerings or simply rites of passage. This will tend to be more the case for 50% or 40% of the youth who never receive any schooling at all. It therefore affects a very large proportion of the population group discussed in this paper.

Customary laws governing succession, acquisitions and control of farm household resources are at variance with western European concepts of "who owns what"? Legal research in East Africa indicates that customary control of land for example is vested in a community, village, clan, lineage, household and individual adults under varying rights. Control of land by illiterate youth is very limited. Yet at the same time illiterate youth are the least likely to benefit from migration into urban areas since

as indicated earlier, access to jobs in urban areas is open only to the educated. Such youth are buffeted by a vacuum of means to meet their rocketing aspirations which change as they grow and become increasingly exposed to mass media, advertising etc. The results are varied. In Kenya one reads in the press about the special mania of youth to beat up old men, increasing rural crime, assault on near kin by youth, restlessness and continuous idleness, drunkenness of youth etc. Mushanga (1974)\* shows that offenders of criminal homicide in Uganda have their highest rate between the ages of 20 and 29 and that most people are most violent between 20 and 34 years of age. Structural arrangements which alienate such people will tend to increase their criminality.

Needs of  
Illiterate  
Youth

Youth programmes should aim at pinpointing the structure of this population segment and the special problems which arise because of policies or acts of commission or omission against this group. Some solutions would include the following:-

- Establishing avenues for early entry into the production economy through some legal specifications on partnership with parents on farm business or other rural non-farm business.
- Designing easy graduation from youth programmes into effective income earning activities. This will affect graduates of agricultural youth programmes such as the poultry keeping and agricultural programmes, and also of graduates of village Polytechnics, the Sudanese Vocational and Home Craft programmes, the Brigades of Botswana and most youth programmes for girls which are home centred.

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\* Tibamanya mwene Mushanga: Criminal Homicide in Uganda, EALB, 1974, p. 49-51.

## Access to Jobs and Training Facilities

Given limited job opportunities, the process of selection into a job is increasingly determined by education. ILO statistics indicate that the chance of obtaining a job between those who have reached the primary terminal standard seven and those who have moved to secondary school, a difference of 1 year, is about 1:1.6.

Given that it is the educated who obtain jobs, it is these same educated who control to a great extent the informal entry into jobs through urban kinship and neighbourhood networks.

Careful study of table 1 shows that in the majority of cases work was obtained through friends or relatives. The labour exchange served only 7% and the higher percentage is due to only one centre. (see next page)

The above suggests a near monopoly of access to jobs by those who already have jobs and by educated youth as indeed is confirmed by vocational training statistics for university graduates, form IV leavers, primary school leavers and the uneducated in most African countries. Table 2 gives the case for Kenya.

From Table 2,\* and other data not included, it can be concluded that:

- The existing youth organisations in Kenya and other African countries are concentrating their services to a small sector of young people - the school going and school leaver population.
- Most of the programmes are not sufficiently geared or relevant to the current needs of African youths. Some are inherited from another era and another culture (western).
- The national education system does not suffi-

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\* see page 17

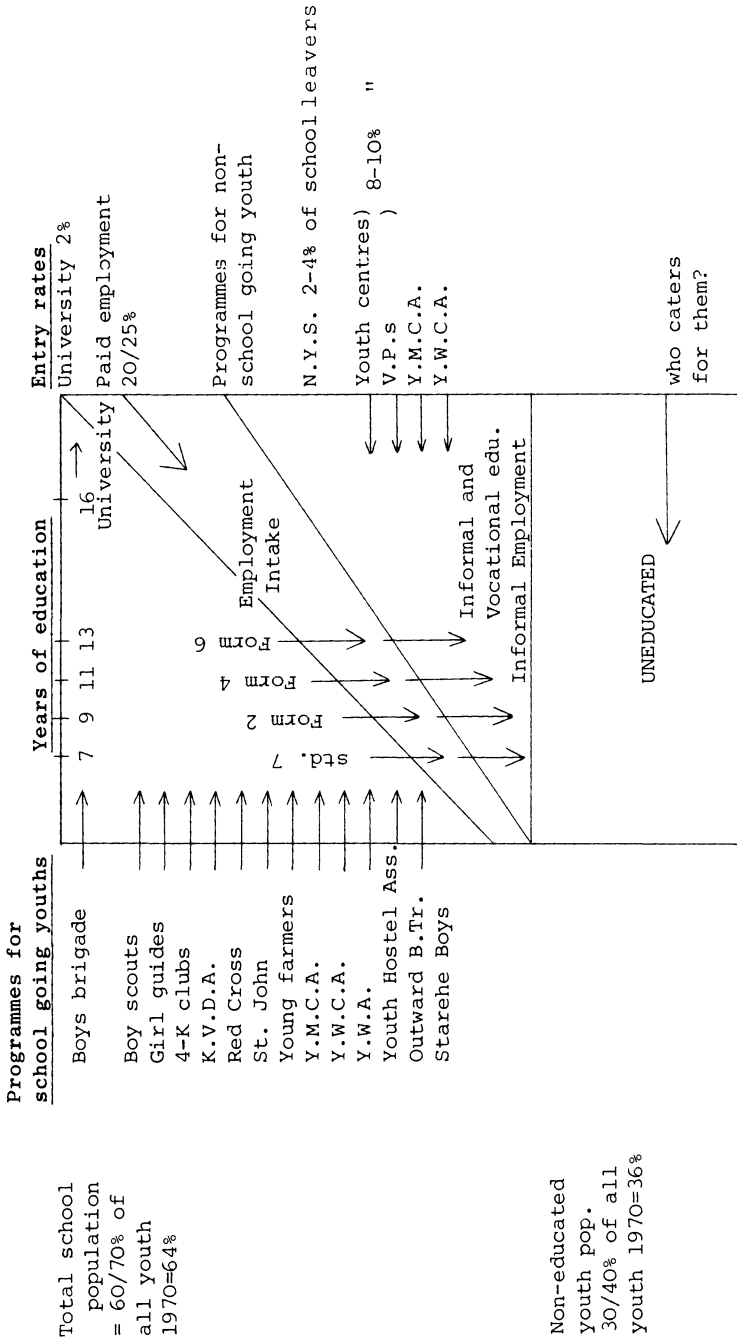
TABLE 1  
Methods used by males for  
obtaining their first job

Method Used	Urban Centre										TOTAL
	Nairobi	Mombasa	Kisumu	Nakuru	Eldoret	Thika	Nanyuki	Nyeri			
Friend or Relative	35.3%	33.5%	50.4%	38.8%	34.6%	30.9%	48.0%	42.2%			37.6%
Newspaper	6.4	5.9	10.8	1.5	1.9	6.2	6.0	3.6			6.0
Labour Exchange	4.8	4.3	8.5	3.0	1.9	33.3	8.0	2.4			7.0
Radio	0.3	-	-	1.5	-	-	-	-			-
Heard of job and applied	15.2	21.6	10.8	4.5	3.9	9.9	-	7.2			13.3
Other method	18.2	19.7	9.3	16.4	17.3	13.5	34.0	32.5			18.8
Started his own business	5.1	3.2	-	-	-	-	2.0	4.9			2.9
Still unemployed	14.1	11.8	9.3	32.8	40.4	6.2	2.0	7.2			13.8
No response	0.6	-	0.9	1.5	-	-	-	-			0.4
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100			100

Source: Henry Rempel, Labour Migration into Urban Centres and Urban Unemployment in Kenya 1970 (unpublished Ph.D. thesis).

TABLE 2

**Educational Selection Process -  
(Kenyan Case Study)**



Total school population = 60/70% of all youth 1970=64%

Non-educated youth pop. 30/40% of all youth 1970=36%

ciently prepare the young people for the life they are to live bearing in mind that only 20-25% will enter paid employment or the modern sector of society.

There is, therefore, a need for a national educational curriculum aimed at equipping school leavers with the necessary tools for use at the different stages of breaking from the formal educational pipeline to coping with the problems of establishing a career.

This calls for urgent coordination of: formal educational curriculum, technical training, skill creation, voluntary organisations' youth assistance programmes and implementing government youth services.

-There is systematic and deliberate neglect of the 40% who never go to school or drop out early in a decade where, internationally, there is a growing concern with the lower 40% of our population. This needs serious review.

### **Rural to Urban Migration**

The critical problem of urban unemployment is related to the increase in urban population at a higher rate than the rate of job creation. This, as we saw earlier, is related to rural to urban migration, 80% of which is attributed to educated youth. Among the hypotheses explaining selective rural to urban migration of youth are those developed by Tanzania, relating this drift to the irrelevant formal educational curriculum which creates youth aspirations which cannot be met by rural communities. The growth of a white collar mentality of rural youth, accompanied by the growth of urban centres with higher incomes, and amenities is seen to cause a dynamic flow of school leavers towards the "bright lights". Prof. Walter Elkan, (1970) and Calorine Hutton (1969) see this explanation as reinforced by another one which relates migration to the presence of kinsmen in towns or other social net-

works. Income differences between urban and rural areas where urban incomes of households may be two times those of rural households of similar status even after correcting for urban cost of living is another widely accepted explanation. The growth of population pressure in rural areas leading to landlessness and hence total uprooting of families from rural areas is again an explanation which might gain momentum.

Given that school leavers are therefore choosy about jobs, where they are located, whether they are manual, their social prestige, and given parental expectations and hence pressure that youth leave rural areas and obtain urban jobs, it is not surprising that school leavers are willing to spend 6-9 months looking for an urban job. They appear to have high tolerance for insults from office clerks, the relatives they live with, they often go hungry, semi-naked, they are willing to attend any impromptu political meeting, are first on the scene of an accident.....It is obvious that this state of affairs is growing in geometric proportions all over Africa.

#### Programmes of Youth Departments

Predictably enough this too has been a major pre-occupation of youth departments. Most of their programmes have aimed at arresting this drift. But are the programmes designed effective in achieving this goal? First, the programmes cater for a very limited population. The Kenyan National Youth Service for example caters for only 2-4% of the Kenya's school leavers every year. The village polytechnic programme and the youth centres programme cater for 8-10%, an extremely significant input. Given that only 20% of the entrants into the labour market obtain wage employment, we still have over 65% of the school leavers unaccounted for.

The limitation of youth programmes in terms of scope is further confounded by their short term nature and poor anticipation of their long term employment potential. On one hand training

hundreds of masons without careful market studies runs the risks of over-supply and on the other hand most training activities have no relevance to the requirements of either the rural economy or even the urban economy, especially given the limited purchasing power of rural areas and the dominance of international standards in the urban market.

The requirements of trade test certificates and the view by youth trainees that such training is a useful prelude to a more substantial urban job makes a review of the role of youth training programmes in arresting rural-to-urban migration urgent.