

The Survey among Youth Organisations and Youth-Serving Organisations in Koinadugu District, Sierra Leone

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Abstract

Young people are empowered when they realize that they have or can create choices in life and aware of the implications of those choices, make informed decisions freely, take action based on those decisions and accept responsibility for the consequences of their actions. The ongoing growth processes in which, the youth are engaged in attempting to meet their basic personal and social needs and building skills and competencies that allow them to function and contribute in their daily lives. The aim of this study is to help readers all over the world understand the main issues and challenges that youth organisations and youth-serving organisations face in Koinadugu district with respect to employment promotion. The survey adopted a questionnaire-based interviews approach covering a total of 250 youth organisations and a total of 8,598 members in the district. Most of the interviewed youth organisations are active in the field of agriculture (84%) and education (37.2%). Every area of activity and every objective of youth organisations is a means for income generation for their members. The most common reason for unemployment, according to the youth organisations covered in the survey, is the lack of job opportunities (77%).

Key words: Koinadugu District, youth organizations, Youth-Serving Organisations, survey, employment, education.

1. Introduction

This study is based on a survey conducted by the researchers in partnership with the Koinadugu District Youth Employment Promotion Committee (KDYEPC) in November and December 2011. The KDYEPC has been set up on the 5th of May 2011 with the backing of the District Council and the Ministry of Youth Employment and Sports, as well as the National Youth Commission. The KDYEPC unites key stakeholders from different sectors working towards empowering youth. Its main aim is to lobby and advocate in favour of promoting youth employment to support both local and national institutions solve the unemployment situation among youths.

2. Study objectives

This study aims to help readers understand the main issues and challenges that youth organisations and youth-serving organisations face in Koinadugu with respect to employment promotion. The specific objectives of the study are:

- To develop a database of youth organisations in the Koinadugu District,
- To develop a database of youth-serving organisations in the Koinadugu District,
- To assess what activities are already in place in promoting youth employment and empowerment in the Koinadugu District,
- To know the sources of funding for activities related to youth in the Koinadugu District,
- To find out the causes of unemployment among youth and the possible measures to address them Koinadugu District.

3. Methodology of the study

The study methodology included questionnaire-based interviews. Two questionnaires were designed: one for youth organisations and one for youth-serving agencies. Prior to interviews in chiefdoms, radio announcements were made to help youth organisations know of the survey, places and times of meetings for interviews. Invitation letters were also sent to all the 11 chiefdoms to encourage chiefdom youth leaders to organize youth organisations for the interviews. Most of the youth organisations had converged in chiefdom headquarters or at places that served a cluster of villages with the existence of youth organisations to be interviewed. The survey covered a total of 250 youth organisations in the district, which cover a total of 8,598 members. Even though the number of youth organisations covered is less than the total number of existing youth organisations in the district, the number surveyed represents 9.51% of the youth¹ in the district. The data presented provides

information that helps to understand the activities of youth organisations in general and issues related to the empowerment of youth in the district. Questionnaires were also distributed to almost all youth-serving organisations in the district. Constant reminders and follow-ups were made to explain the intent of the questionnaires, to solicit their support in responding to the questionnaires and to remind youth-serving organisations of the deadline of the survey.

The information gathered from interviewed youth and youth-serving organisations was entered into Excel according to chiefdoms. A database was developed and out of it, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were applied. The preliminary findings were presented and validated in Koinadugu on the 23th of February 2012.

4. General information on youth organisations in Koinadugu District

4.1. Location

The survey covered a total of 250 youth organisations in the district. These youth organisations are located in 82 villages in 11 chiefdoms, which mean that all chiefdoms of Koinadugu are represented in the survey. Folosaba Dembelia (with 41 or 16.4% of all youth organisations) is the chiefdom with the highest number of youth organisations, followed by Warawara Yagala (38 or 15.2% of the total). Regarding the towns and villages with youth concentration, Kabala Town hosts the highest number of youth organisations with 23, followed by Yogomaia with 16 organisations (see Table 1 below for more details).

Table 1: Location of youth organisations

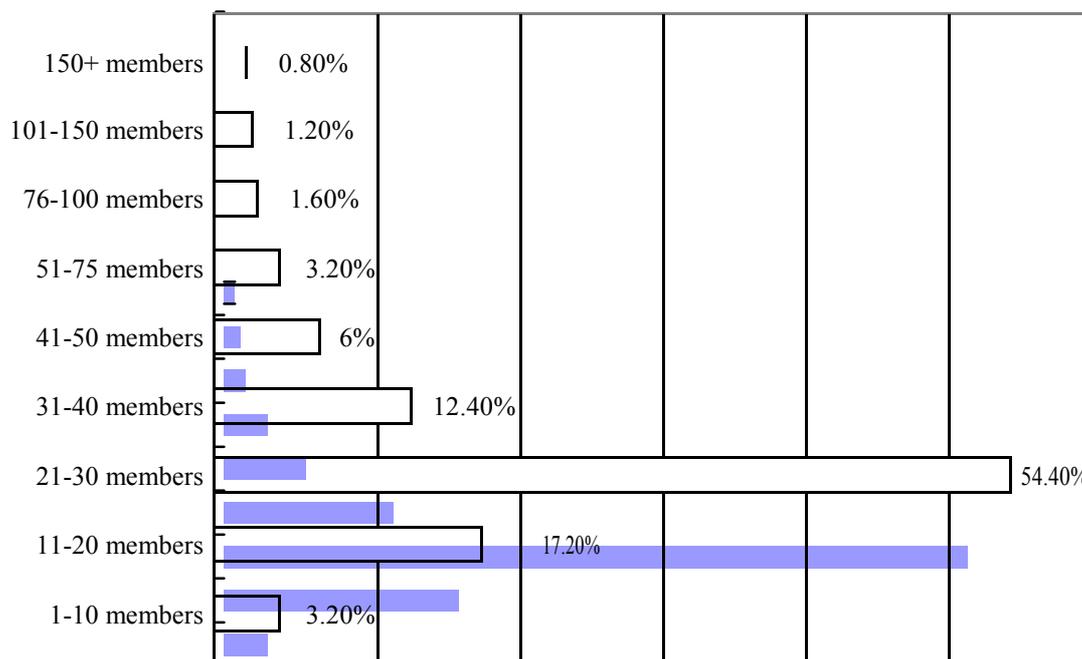
Chiefdoms	Number (and %) of youth organisations
Folosaba Dembelia	41 (16.4%)
Warawara Yagala	38 (15.2%)
Bafodia	24 (9.6%)
Mongo	24 (9.6%)
Dembelia Sinkunia	23 (9.2%)

Towns	Number (and %) of youth organisation
Kabala Town	23 (9.2%)
Yogomaia	16 (6.4%)
Falaba town	10 (4%)
Fadugu	10 (4%)
Yiffin	9 (3.6%)

4.2. Membership

The organisations consist of 34 members in average. In average, 21 (64%) of them are male and 12 (36%) are female (see Graph 1). There are 11 organisations which have only female members. About 79 organisations (31.6%) have more than 50% female members. However, 171 organisations have less than 50% female members. The smallest organisation has 2 and the biggest organisation has 850 members (Koinadugu Bike Riders Union). More than half of the organisations are in the size category of 21-30 members. Just 5 organisations (2%) have more than 100 members (see Graph 1 for further details).

Graph 1: Size of youth organisations



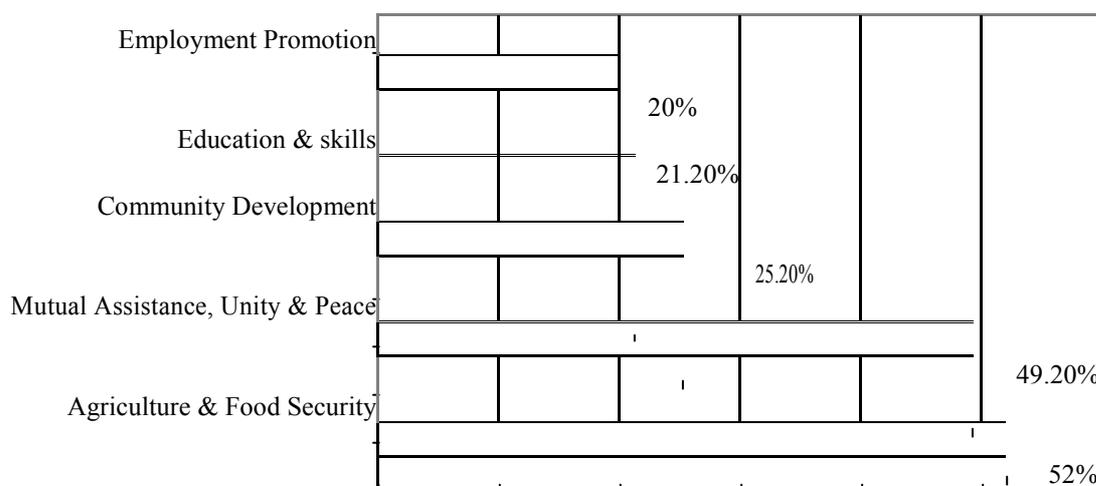
4.3. Age of youth organisations

The average age of youth organisations in Koinadugu is 4 years. The oldest organisation is 25 years old (Another Better Creation, Fadugu). About 21.2% (53) of the organisations are less than a year old. In addition, 28.4% (71) of the organisations exist since more than 5 years.

4.4. Areas of work of youth organisations

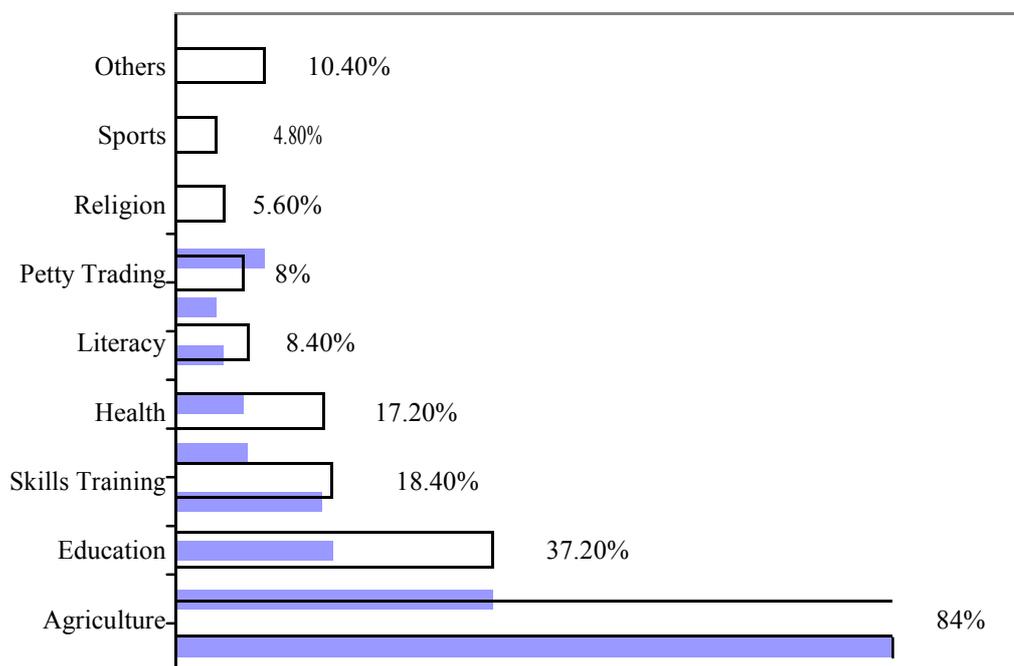
Most youth organisations (74%) have one or two objectives. The five most common objectives are improving agricultural productivity & food security (52% of youth organisations), mutual assistance, peace & unity among the group members and their communities (49.20%), community development, especially road construction/maintenance, health and sanitation improvement (25.20%), education, skills & sensitization of youth (21.20%), employment promotion and microfinance (20%) (see Graph 2).

Graph 2: List of objectives of youth organisations



Most youth organisations (73%) have one or two areas of work. The most common areas of work are agriculture (84% of youth organisations), education (37.2%), skills training (18.4%), health (17.2%), literacy (8.4%), petty trading (8%), religion/preaching (5.6%) and sports (4.8%) (see Graph 3).

Graph 3: Main areas of work of youth organisations



4.5. Registration status of youth organisations

The survey shows that 175 (70%) of the youth organisations in Koinadugu are not registered at all. Only 75 are registered, but with different institutions. Most of those who are registered did so with the MYES (32, 12.8%), Social Welfare (28, 11.2%), District Council (28, 11.2%) and/or MAFFS (26, 10.4%). About 43 are registered with only one institution. Only 29 are registered with two or more institutions. The fact that youth organisations are registering with different institutions is a structural problem. On the one side it's a problem because youth organisations have to pay a certain amount for each registration, which reduces their possibility to invest in their own activities. On the other side it's a problem because they have to register with different institutions if they work in different areas. In any case, they seem to receive little support from the institutions they registered with.

4.6. Management level of youth organisations

Almost all youth organisations have a constitution (94.8%), have elected leaders (87.2%), are charging membership fees (88.8%) and have an office or meeting place (93.6%). However, just 8 youth organisations (3.2%) own office equipment. In addition 89.6% of youth organisations take minutes of their meetings, while they meet at least once a month (besides one exception that meets every second month). Only 30% of youth organisations meet at least once a week.

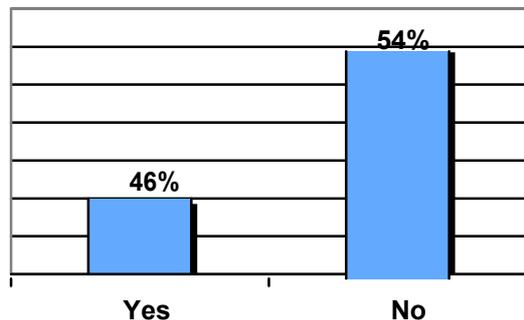
4.7. Support to youth organisations

About 51% (128) of the interviewed youth organisations do not receive any support at all. Only 40 % (100) receive support from donors/NGOs, 22.8% (57) receive support from traditional leaders and only 12.8% (32) receive support from Councilors. In addition, 10.8% (27) receive support from all of the three mentioned types of organisations.

4.8. Existing partnerships

The survey shows that 46% of youth organisations are engaged in existing partnerships with other organisations. About 54% are however not partnering with other youth organisations within and outside their areas of operation. This means they undertake independent activities without seeking collaboration or assistance from youth organisations engaged in similar activities (see Graph 4).

Graph 4: Existing partnerships



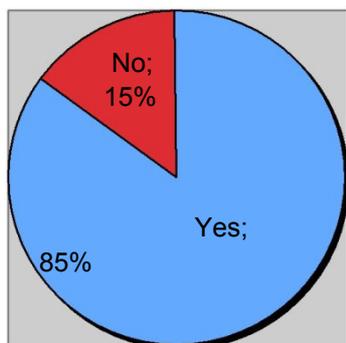
4.9. Types of partnerships

Among those youth organisations that are already working in partnership with other organisations, five most common activities were embarked upon: agriculture and labour exchange (47%), road works (22%), soccer activities (13%), information sharing (9%) and mutual assistance (9%).

4.10. Interest in partnerships

The study indicates that 84.96% of those youth organisations not yet engaged in partnerships are interested to partner with other youth organisations and youth-serving organisations in furtherance of their objectives, while 15.04% were not in any way interested in partnership (see Graph 5). Even though most of these organisations did not give reasons why they are not engaged in a partnership, it was clear that they did not understand the strategic importance of partnership. Koinadugu is a very heterogeneous district in terms of tribes and ethnicities. This background seems to make it difficult for youth and youth organisations to seek and engage in partnerships.

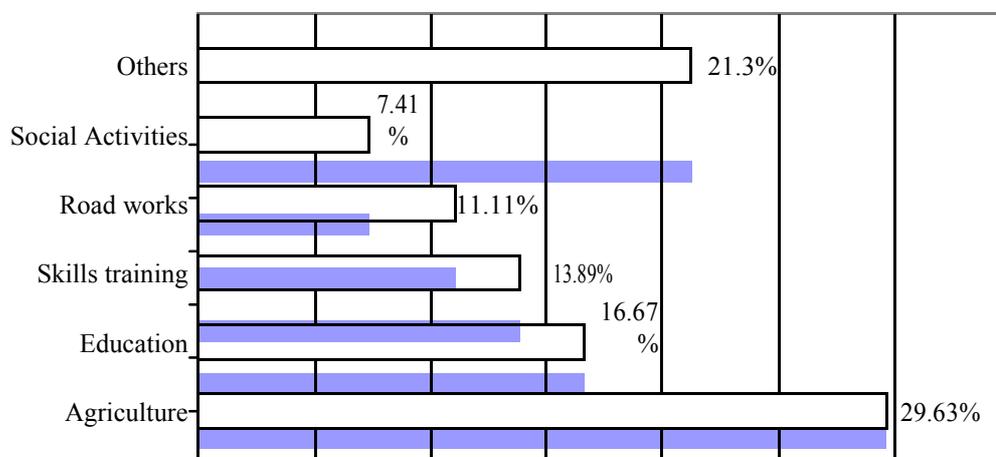
Graph 5: Interest in partnership



4.11. Areas of interest for partnerships

For youth organisations interested in partnership, 108 organisations mentioned at least one specific area of interest. The most common are geared towards agriculture (29.63%), while 16.67% had an interest in activities that are education-oriented. Only 13.89% were seeking a partnership in activities related to skills training, while 11.11% and 7.41% are interested in road works and the organisation of social activities respectively (see Graph 6 for more details).

Graph 6: Areas of interest for partnerships



5. Youth Unemployment as seen by youth organisations

5.1. Perception of unemployment

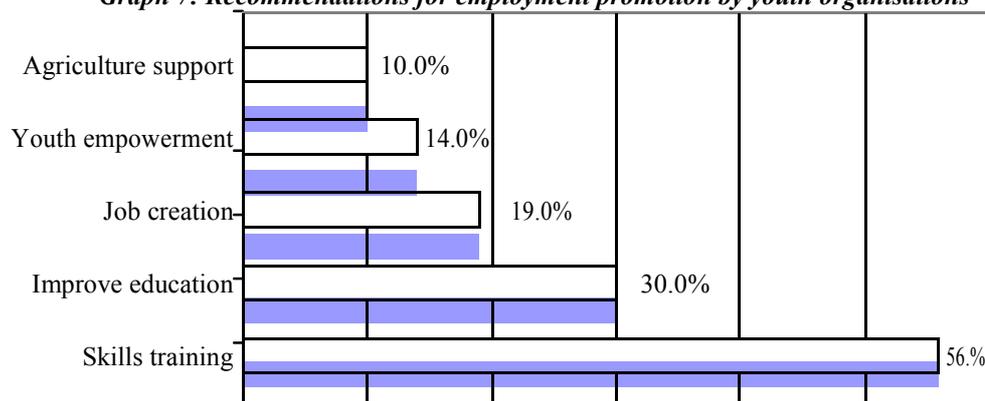
Out of the 250 youth organisations covered in the survey, 94% believe that unemployment is a problem affecting the development of the youth in the Koinadugu district. Only a few youth organisations (6%) did not see unemployment as a problem among youth in Koinadugu district.

5.2. Reasons for unemployment among the youth in the Koinadugu district

Several reasons are advanced as causes of the high rate of unemployment among youth in the Koinadugu district. About 76.8% of the interviewed youth organisations strongly believe that the lack of job opportunities is the greatest cause of unemployment among youth. Still, 62.4% believe that the high unemployment is caused by lack of education in the district, while 22% are sure that lack or inadequate skills deprive the youth from being employed. Only 13.6% believe that the lack of training centres prevents the youth from acquiring the necessary technical skills for employment. Several youth organisations claim that they do not get any support from government, NGOs or even their parents (7.2%). Other explanations given for youth unemployment were poverty and school dropout (4.8% respectively).

A number of recommendations were given by the youth organisations covered in the survey to help promote youth employment in the district. Specific among the recommendations are skills training, improvement in education, job creation, empowerment of the youth, and support of the youth in agriculture-related activities. The majority of the youth organisations (about 56%) strongly believe that the provision of skills training will empower the youth with both the technical and soft skills for employment. Little over 30% perceive the improvement in education in the district as another way to tackle the unemployment problem among the youth, while almost 19% recommend the creation of job opportunities for the youth in the district. Two other recommendations to help promote youth employment are youth empowerment (14%) and support of youth in agriculture (10%) (see Graph 7).

Graph 7: Recommendations for employment promotion by youth organisations



6. Capacity building of youth organisations

The survey shows that 64% of interviewed youth organisations did not get any capacity building support from youth-serving organisations like the government institutions, donors or NGOs. However, 36% of the youth organizations received capacity building support from youth-serving organisations to enhance their activities in the district.

6.1. Types of capacity building support

Out of the youth organisations which received capacity building support, about 42.22% got capacity support in agriculture-related activities, while 8.89% received support in skills trainings in activities not further specified. Other support mentioned was grant support (6.67%), business training (5.56%) and leadership training (4.44%).

7. Youth-serving organisations in Koinadugu District

The survey has covered only 8 youth-serving organisations in Koinadugu district. The response rate among youth-serving organisations was very low. Community Base Organizations (CBOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and donors working with the youth were targeted in the survey, but many of them were reluctant to provide information. This can be explained due to the fact that most youth-serving organisations had to refer to or consult their respective head offices at the national level before providing information. This made it difficult for some youth-serving organisations to respond to the questionnaire.

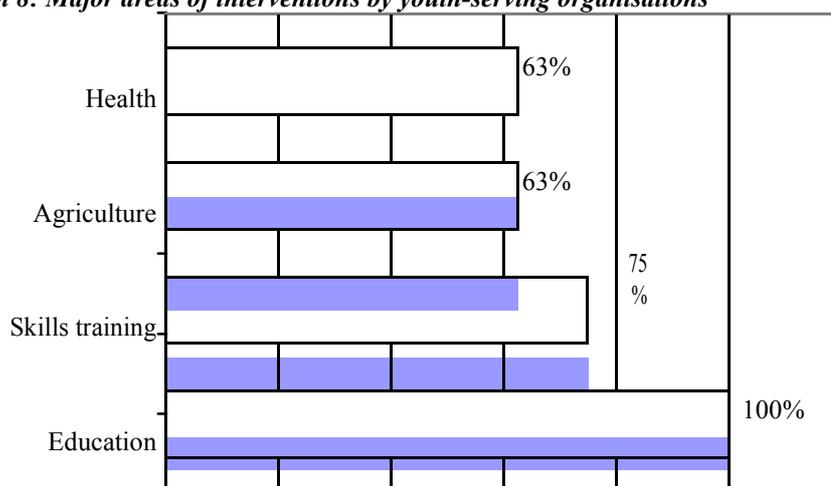
Out of the few that responded to the questionnaire, the highest numbers are working in the two chiefdoms where the district capital Kabala is located: Warawara Yagala (87.5% of youth-serving organisations), and Sengbeh (87.5%). Just a few youth-serving organisations work in chiefdoms that are far away from the district capital like Neya, Mongo or Neini (see Table 2 for more details). One deduction that could be made is that Warawara Yagala and Sengbeh are the chiefdoms where the major towns in the district are situated, making it effective for youth-serving organisations to operate here. Table 1 has shown that the largest number of the youth can be found in these chiefdoms. On the other hand, it could also mean that for logistical purposes it is easier to serve those areas closest to the district headquarter town.

Table 2: Areas of intervention of youth-serving organisations

Chiefdom	Number of youth-serving organisations	Percentage of total
Warawara Yagala	7	87.50%
Sengbeh	7	87.50%
Dembelia Sinkunia	6	75.00%
Folosaba Dembelia	5	62.50%
Kasunko	5	62.50%
Sulima	4	50.00%
Diang	4	50.00%
Warawara Bafodia	4	50.00%
Neini	3	37.50%
Mongo	3	37.50%
Neya	2	25.00%

Youth-serving organisations in Koinadugu intervene in four major areas: education (100%), skills training (75%), agriculture (62.5%) and health (62.5%) (See Graph 8).

Graph 8: Major areas of interventions by youth-serving organisations



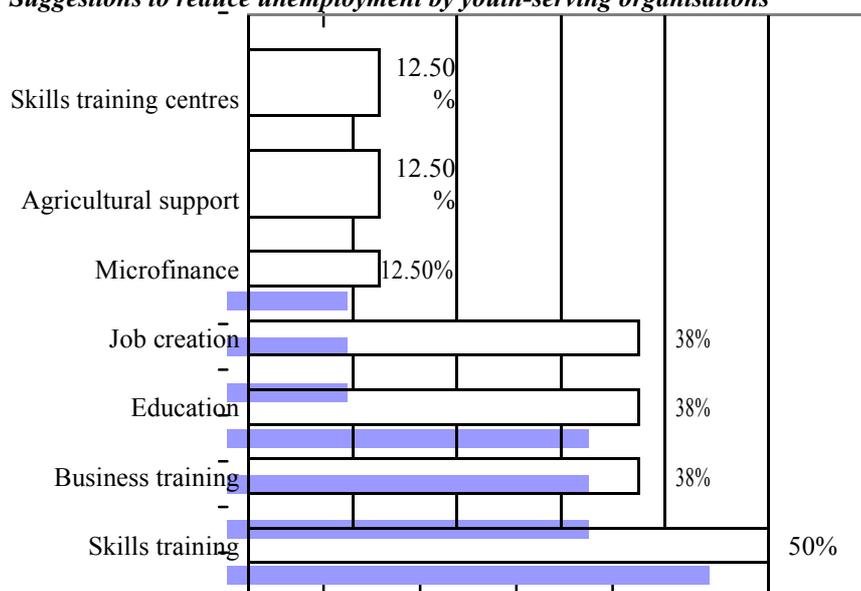
Since most donors, NGOs or CBOs have a broad range of activities, not all of them are targeted at the youth. However, two thirds of the activities of the youth-serving organisations that responded to the questionnaire had youth as specific target groups, such as skills training, agriculture, feeder roads rehabilitation, sensitization on education and health, and construction activities.

All of the youth-serving organisations surveyed work in partnership with other youth-serving organisations. The partnerships are with other donors, NGOs, ministries or the councils for example.

Youth-serving organisations that are local NGOs received their funding from various donor agencies and international NGOs in the country. Youth-serving organisations that are donor organisations however had their funding from their national governments, while government youth-serving institutions had their financial support from the national government or through the support from donor agencies. Funding of activities related to the youth in Koinadugu district is fully externally driven as the district lacks the capacity to generate local resources to be used in financing youth activities.

Similar to the youth organisations, youth-serving organisations perceive unemployment to be a major problem among the youth in the country and in Koinadugu district specifically. To solve this socio-economic problem, the following suggestions were made: support for skills training (50%), business training, education and job creation (38% respectively) were the most common recommendations from youth-serving organisations to solve the high unemployment rate among the youth in the district. Other recommendations include support to microfinance, agriculture and the establishment of skills training centres (see Graph 9).

Graph 9: Suggestions to reduce unemployment by youth-serving organisations



8. Main findings

Most of the interviewed youth organisations are active in the field of agriculture (84%) and education (37.2%). In general, every area of activity and every objective of youth organisations is a means for income generation for their members. There is a difference between youth organisations located in the urban centres and the rural areas in the perception of agriculture as a means of employment: for the youth in (remote) rural areas, agriculture is considered to be the major source of employment. However, for the youth living in largely populated towns and are exposed to modern formal education, have a rather low perception towards agriculture as a means to employment creation.

In addition, about 70% of the youth organisations are not registered with the District Council or any another institution. Majority (51%) of the youth organisations do not receive any support from NGOs/donors, traditional leaders or local Councilors. The question arises if youth organisations do not receive any support because they are not registered or they do not register because they do not expect any support from the various institutions.

In addition, it seems that the expectations to receive support from NGOs and donors are much higher than from traditional leaders or local Councilors. Therefore, NGOs and donors are already the biggest supporters of youth organisations in comparison to traditional leaders and Councilors. However, the youth organisations claim that they do not receive enough support from NGOs and donors.

The most common reason for unemployment, according to the youth organisations covered in the survey, is the lack of job opportunities (77%), followed by low education (62%), lack of skills (22%), while 14% claim that there are not enough skills training centres. These findings are very much related to each other.

More so, 85% of the youth organisations are not in partnership and are not interested to partner with other youth organisations to achieve their objectives. Of those who were willing to cooperate and collaborate with others, the most attractive areas of interest were in agriculture (29.63%), which is the backbone of the district's economy, and education (16.67%). This may be the reason why most youth-serving organisations target their intervention areas in education (100%), skills training (75%) and agriculture (63%).

Notes:

Detailed data on youth organisations in Koinadugu

Table A4.1 Membership of youth organisations

Average number of members (male and female)	34 (34.4)
Average number of male members	21 (21.3)
Average number of female members	12 (13.1)
Largest organisation (total number of members)	850 (Koinadugu Bike Riders Union)
Smallest organisation (number of members)	2

Table A4.2 Number of youth organisations with ...members

Number of youth organisations with ...	Number	% of total
Up to 10 members	8	3.20
11-20 members	43	17.20
21-30 members	136	54.4
31-40	31	12.4
41-50	15	6.00
51-75	8	3.20
76-100	4	1.60
101-150	3	1.20
More than 150 members	2	0.80

Table A4.3 Gender proportions in youth organisations

Number of youth organisations with ...	Number	% of total
Only male members	5	2.00
Up to 10% female members	9	3.60
11 to 25% female members	25	10.00
26 to 50% female members	156	62.40
50% female members	24	9.60
51 to 75% female members	35	14.00
Between 75 and 99% female members	9	3.60
Only female members	11	4.40

Table A4.4 Age of youth organisations

Average age of youth organisations	4,1
Youngest organisation	Less than half a year old (23 youth organisations)
Oldest organisation	25 years old (Another Better Creation, Fadugu)

Number of youth organisations ...	Number	% of total
Less than half a year old	23	9.20
Between half a year and 1 year of age	30	12.00
Between one year and 2 years of age	47	18.80
Between 2 and 3 years of age	39	15.60
Between 3 and 4 years of age	23	9.20
Between 4 and 5 years of age	17	6.80
Older than 5 years	71	28.40
Between 5 and 10 years of age	58	23.20
Between 10 and 15 years of age	5	2.00
Between 15 and 20 years of age	5	2.00
Between 20 and 25 years of age	3	1.20

Table A4.6 Objectives of youth organisations

	1 objective	2 objectives	3 objectives	4 and more objectives
Number of youth organisations with ...	95	91	52	12

Table A4.7 List of objectives of youth organisations (broad clusters)

Objectives	Number	% of total
Promote agriculture	108	43.20
Promote unity among youth	56	22.40
Education/skills training	43	17.20
Community development (construction)	42	16.80
Employment promotion	35	14.00
Mutual assistance	33	13.20
Food security	22	8.80
Fundraising	21	8.40
Health and sanitation	16	6.40
Microfinance	15	6.00
Conflict prevention/peace building	13	5.20
Citizen rights/sensitization	10	4.00
Promote sport activities	7	2.80
Women/girl child empowerment	6	2.40
Security	5	2.00
others	16	6.40

Table A4.8 List of Objectives of youth organisations (narrow clusters)

Objectives	Number	% of total
Agriculture & Food Security	130	52.00
Mutual Assistance, Unity & Peace	123	49.20
Employment Promotion & Microfinance	50	20.00
Community Development: Construction, Health, Sanitation	63	25.20
Education, Skills & Sensitization	53	21.20
Others	29	11.60

Table A4.9 Areas of work of youth organisations

	1 area of work	2 areas of work	3 areas of work	4 and more areas of work
Number of youth organisations with ...	105	77	47	21

Table A4.10 List of main areas of work of youth organisations

Areas of work mentioned	Number	% of total
Agriculture	210	84.00
Education	93	37.20
Skills training	46	18.40
Health	43	17.20
Literacy	21	8.40
Petty trading	20	8.00
Religion / preaching	14	5.60
Sports (i.e. soccer)	12	4.80
Cultural activities (music, dance, drama)	5	2.00
Trade	3	1.20
Road construction or maintenance	3	1.20
Business	2	0.80
Loans, micro-credit to members	2	0.80
Communal labour	1	0.40
Construction	1	0.40
Village savings and loans	1	0.40
GBV	1	0.40
Sensitisation	1	0.40
Human rights	1	0.40
Hair dressing	1	0.40
Photography	1	0.40
Masonry and carpentry	1	0.40
Mechanics	1	0.40
Mining	1	0.40

Table A4.11 Registration status of youth organisations

	not registered	registered	registered with ...				
			Council	Social welfare	MAFFS	MYES	MEST
Number of YO	175	75	28	25	26	32	1

(2 did not indicate with whom they are registered)

Table A4.12 Youth organisations registered with...

YO registered with ...	Number
only one institution	43
Koinadugu District Council (only)	5
MAFFS (only)	11
MYES (only)	20
SW (only)	7
2 institutions	19
KDC & MAFFS	5
KDC & MYES	5
KDC & SW	4
MAFFS & SW	3
MYES & SW	2
3 institutions	9
KDC & MAFFS & MYES	1
KDC & MAFFS & SW	5
KDC & MYES & SW	2
MEST & MYES & SW	1
4 institutions	1
KDC & MAFFS & MYES & SW	1

Table A4.13 Management level of youth organisations

Youth organisations ...	Number	% of total
... with a constitution	237	94.8
... with elected leaders	218	87.2
... charging membership fees	222	88.8
... with office or meeting place	234	93.6
... with office equipment	8	3.2
... taking minutes of their meetings	224	89.60

Table A4.14 Regularity of meetings of youth organisations

Youth organisations ...	Number	% of total
... that meet 4 times a week	3	1.20
... that meet twice a week	3	1.20
... that meet once a week	69	27.60
... that meet 3 times a month	4	1.60
... that meet twice a month	57	22.80
... that meet once a month	113	45.20
... that meet every two months	1	0.40

Table A4.15 Support to youth organisations

Youth organisations receiving support from ...	Number	% of total
Councillors	32	12.80
traditional leaders	57	22.80
donors / NGOs	100	40.00
... one donor/NGO	42	16.80
... two donors / NGOs	38	15.20
... three donors / NGOs	15	6.00
... more than three donors / NGOs	5	2.00
Councillors only	2	0.80
traditional leaders only	18	7.20

donors/NGOs only	62	24.80
Councillors & traditional leaders	2	0.80
Councillors & donors/NGOs	1	0.40
traditional leaders & donors/NGOs	10	4.00
all three	27	10.80
none	128	51.20

Table A4.16 Areas of interest for partnerships with youth organisations

Area of Interest	Number	% of total
Agriculture	32	29.63
Education activities	18	16.67
Skills training and empowerment	15	13.89
Road works	12	11.11
Organisation of social activities	8	7.41
Others	23	21.30

Table A4.17 Types of support received

Types of Capacity Building	Number	Percentage
Agricultural support	38	42.22%
Skills training	8	8.89%
Grant support	6	6.67%
Business training	5	5.56%
Leadership training	4	4.44%

Table A4.18 Types of capacity building needed

Capacity Building needed in ...	Number	Percentage
Agriculture	54	22%
Education	32	13%
Skills training	21	8%
Business management	11	4%

Table A4.19 Suggested reasons for unemployment in the district

Reasons	Number	Percentage
Lack of job opportunities	192	76.80%
Lack of education	156	62.40%
Lack of skills	55	22.00%
Lack of skills training centres	34	13.60%
Lack of support	18	7.20%
Poverty	12	4.80%
School dropout	12	4.80%

Table A4.20 Recommendations by youth organisations to empower youth

Recommendation	Number	Percentage
Skills Training for youth	140	56%
Improvement in education	76	30%
Job creation	48	19%
Empowering Youth	34	14%
Support youth in agriculture	26	10%

Detailed data on youth-serving organisations in Koinadugu**Table A5.1 Geographical areas of intervention of youth-serving organisations**

Chieftdom	Number	Percentage
Warawara Yagala	7	43.75%
Sengbeh	7	43.75%
Dembelia Sinkunia	6	37.50%
Folosaba Dembelia	5	31.25%
Kasunko	5	31.25%
Sulima	4	25.00%
Diang	4	25.00%
Warawara Bafodia	4	25.00%
Neini	3	18.75%
Mongo	3	18.75%
Neya	2	12.50%

Table A5.21 Areas of intervention of youth-serving organisations

Area of Intervention	Number	Percentage
Education	8	100.00%
Skills	6	75.00%
Agriculture	5	62.50%
Health	5	62.50%

Table A5.322 Suggestions by youth-serving organisations to empower youth

Suggestions	Number	Percentage
Skills training	4	50.00%
Business training	3	37.50%
Education	3	37.50%
Employment promotion	3	37.50%
Microfinance	1	12.50%
Agriculture support	1	12.50%
Skills training centres	1	12.50%

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