

# The Situation of Youth and Children in Kibera

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# 1 Background

The population of Kenya is young. The latest census found that 43 per cent of all Kenyans are below the age of 15 years, often referred to as a 'youth bulge'.<sup>1</sup> The young segment represents the future of the country. This demographic fact is compounded by increasing urbanisation which leads to a concentration of youth and children in cities. Many of them are compelled to settle and eke out a living in congested slums. The situation of urban youth and children poses a host of challenges, particularly in terms of providing shelter, education and employment opportunities. At present, the visions and aspirations of young people appear beyond their reach, thus causing frustration and anger.<sup>2</sup>

The youth of urban slums in Kenya's cities have proved to be a potent political force,<sup>3</sup> sometimes destructively such as in the 2008 post-election rioting.<sup>4</sup> However, the constructive potential of youth needs to be recognised and the broad context understood that largely determines whether this potential will come to fruition.<sup>5</sup>

Some 2.5 million slum dwellers live in 200 settlements in Nairobi, representing about 60% of the Nairobi population. This large proportion occupies only 6% of the available land in the city, demonstrating the severity of slum congestion.<sup>6</sup> The Kibera slum, in particular, houses 1 million of Nairobi's slum dwellers, and is considered the biggest slum in Africa, indeed one of the biggest in the world. Paradoxically, this situation has attracted tourism in recent years.<sup>7</sup> Although 90% the land in Kibera is reportedly owned by the government, the residents in this community live in 12 x 12ft houses better known as shacks owned by absentee landlords. The houses are built with mud walls, screened with concrete (cement), a corrugated tin roof and dirt or concrete floor. These shacks often house eight or more family members, many of whom sleep on the floor.

All the dwellers in Kibera are Africans with, Nubians constituting 15% of the population. The majority of the tenants of the shacks are Luo and Luhya from Western Kenya and Kamba from Eastern Kenya. This community is reported by most authors as characterized by overcrowded dwellings;

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<sup>1</sup> Kenya Central Bureau of Statistics (2009), *Kenya Population and Housing Census 2009*, Nairobi: Government Printer.

<sup>2</sup> Barakat, Bilal and Henrik Urdal (2009), *Breaking the Waves? Does Education Mediate the Relationship Between Youth Bulges and Political Violence?* Washington D.C.: World Bank (Policy Research Working Paper 5114).

<sup>3</sup> Kagwanja, Peter Mwangi (2005), 'Clash of generations? Youth identity, violence and the politics of transition in Kenya, 1997-2002', in Abbink, Jon and Ineke van Kessel (eds.), *Vanguard or Vandals: Youth, Politics and Conflict in Africa*, Leiden: Brill.

<sup>4</sup> Government of Kenya (2009), *Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence (CIPEV)*, Nairobi: Government Printer. It is referred to as the Waki Commission after the name of its chair, and by its acronym CIPEV; Tostensen, Arne (2009), 'Electoral Mismanagement and Post-Election Violence in Kenya – The Krieglger and Waki Commissions of Inquiry', *Nordic Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 27, No. 4; and Murunga, G.R. (2011), *Spontaneous or Premeditated? Post-Election Violence in Kenya*, Discussion Paper 57, Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute.

<sup>5</sup> Economic Commission for Africa (2011), *Africa Youth Report 2011: Addressing the youth, education and employment nexus in the new global economy*, Addis Ababa: Economic Commission for Africa.

<sup>6</sup> [www.kibera.org.uk/Facts.html](http://www.kibera.org.uk/Facts.html)

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1

unemployment; poor environmental conditions; limited water supply; poor sanitation; inadequate electricity supply and access to health facilities, even though efforts are being made to improve the situation.

Crime and domestic violence are also features of the community, where the majority of households are single-headed, often by women. Health facilities are poor and HIV and AIDS are a challenge to families, leading, in turn, to a rising number of orphans. *Chang'aa* (cheap liquor) is readily available, produced mainly to supplement the low incomes that characterize most households. Given the low income levels, as well as, the availability of cheap liquor, many men are reportedly not using condoms, leading to many unwanted pregnancies, especially among girls. As a result, 50% of girls aged 15–25 years get pregnant in this community. But many of these pregnancies are unwanted resulting in a high rate of abortion, despite the fact that legal abortions are allowed only in exceptional cases.<sup>8</sup>

Unfortunately, health facilities, such as public clinics and hospitals are not provided by the government. Therefore, Kibera slum dwellers depend by and large on services provided by NGOs, e.g. African Medical Research Foundations (AMREF), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and faith-based organizations.<sup>9</sup> The unemployment rate is reported to be very high in this community, perhaps as high as 50% of the employable population.

The above description is corroborated by information obtained from Langata Constituency Development Strategic Plan 2011–2015. The plan notes that insecurity in Langata Constituency is largely due to unemployment among youth. It further states that there is a huge income disparity between the inhabitants of the more affluent parts of the constituency and some of the informal settlements, creating an opportunity for crime to thrive.<sup>10</sup>

## 2 The Situation of Youth in Kenya

According to available information, youth and children constitute a large proportion of Kenya's population with those between 15 and 24 years account for 7.9 million, of whom 2.6 million live in urban areas (32.3%). Of this latter group, some 900,000 (34.4%) lived in poverty in urban areas in 2009.<sup>11</sup> The majority of youth in this group live in slum communities, Kibera included.

In slum areas, such as, Kibera almost 90% of the population, including youth, reportedly do not have piped water. Consequently, the dwellers pay 4–8 times more for water than do the well-to-do

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 1

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 1

<sup>10</sup> Institute of Economic Affairs (2011) Langata Constituency Development Plan 2011 – 2015, p 28 – 32. As a constituency, Langata covers a large geographical area which comprises some of the most affluent residential areas of Nairobi as well as the slums of Kibera.

<sup>11</sup> Johnson Alan G. (2011): Urbanization and Youth in Kenya: A Demographic Overview, pp. 6-9.

residents.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the majority of slum dwellers, including youth, use pit latrines, which are often poorly maintained and over-used by an average of 500 people to each toilet.<sup>13</sup> The poor sanitation environment exposes the children and youth to health hazards such as infections (tuberculosis, diarrhoea, among others).

Crime and violence are reported to be ‘normal’ occurrences in slum communities in Kenya and children and youth are exposed and vulnerable to these acts. According to some studies, youths are both victims and perpetrators of crime. Access to proper housing and education also poses a challenge to children and youth living in slum communities. With small rooms of 12 x 12 ft, congestion forces youth to leave their families to live on the streets with groups of other youth and children. In these groups taking drugs and alcohol is commonplace, which, in turn, leads them into criminal activities, as well as early exposure to and engagement in sexual activity. At the early age of 14 half of the school girls have already had sexual intercourse.<sup>14</sup>

Education is a major challenge for youth in Kibera. Reports have pointed out that there is lack of public primary schools which has spurred the mushrooming of private schools. In 2009 there were 86 informal private schools with a total enrolment of 11,310 students (5,914 boys and 5,596 girls). These schools are characterized by shortage of staff, overcrowded classrooms and lack of good learning facilities and materials.<sup>15</sup> Hence, the quality of teaching is sub-standard.

In summary, youth in slum dwellings in Nairobi and Kibera face numerous challenges as they transit from adolescence into adulthood. They find themselves in a rather hostile slum environment characterized by unemployment, poor housing, large family sizes, violence, crime, drug and alcohol abuse, poor education facilities and lack of recreational activities.<sup>16</sup> This situation subjects adolescents in the slums in Nairobi to early sexual activities three years earlier and twice more likely to have multiple partners than adolescents who live in non-slum parts of Nairobi.<sup>17</sup>

### 3 The Survey

The present survey report makes a contribution to an understanding of the predicament of youth and children in one of Kenya’s largest slum areas: Kibera in Nairobi. The survey was a collaborative endeavour between the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) and the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI). The principal researchers supervising

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<sup>12</sup> African Population and Health Research Centre (2010): *Water, Sanitation and Waste Management in Nairobi’s informal settlements: A Situational Analysis on Infrastructure, Knowledge, Behaviour and Morbidity*, APHRC, Nairobi.

<sup>13</sup> UN Habitat (2013): *Guide to Monitoring Target II: Improving the Lives of 100 Million Slum Dwellers. Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals*. Nairobi: UN Habitat.

<sup>14</sup> Zulu, E. M. et al (2002), pp. 311–323.

<sup>15</sup> Institute of Economic Affairs (2011): *Langata Constituency Strategic Plan 2011 – 2015* p. 19.

<sup>16</sup> Mugisha et al (2003): *Alcohol, substance and drug use among urban slum adolescents in Nairobi*, pp. 203–240; Zulu, E. M. et al (2002), p 311 – 323.

<sup>17</sup> Kenya National Bureau of Statistics et al (2012): *Violence Against Children in Kenya: Findings from 2010 National Survey*.

the survey have been Dr. Philista Onyango of ANPPCAN and Dr. Arne Tostensen of the CMI, assisted by Hugo Stokke. Research clearance was obtained from the Kenya National Council for Science and Technology (NCST).

The survey on the situation of youth and children in Kibera forms but one element of a larger study. It serves three purposes: (a) describing the general living conditions for young people in Kibera; (b) comparing the present situation with that surveyed by ANPPCAN in 2001 to determine what changes have occurred; and (c) providing a socio-economic backdrop to the broader overall project on the effectiveness of advocacy for child rights by civil society organisations. The five complementary sub-projects comprise (i) a study of the legislative process leading to the enactment of the Counter-Trafficking Act; (ii) a study of the on-going process towards the amendment of the existing Children Act of 2001; (iii) a study of the blurred distinction between state (government) and civil society with regard to reporting procedures and practices before the CRC committee; (iv) tracing the steps of ANPPCAN's past work to address child labour in Kenya with a view to identifying the obstacles to reducing its prevalence and to documenting the effectiveness of CSO advocacy; and (v) a thematic quantitative survey (triangulated with in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with children, parents and teachers) on corporal punishment of children.

The quantitative survey was conducted with a stratified total sample of 400 respondents in the following five villages of Kibera (with overall population in parentheses): Makina (130,000); Kianda (80,000); Katwekera (80,000); Laini Saba (80,000); and Lindi (80,000). Youth aged 15–25 years were selected, 80 respondents from each village. Informed voluntary consent was obtained from each respondent's parents or guardian to participate in the study. Orphans who did not have any legal guardian were considered competent to give consent in their own right. The parents, guardians and the respondents signed simple consent forms to confirm their willingness to participate in the study.

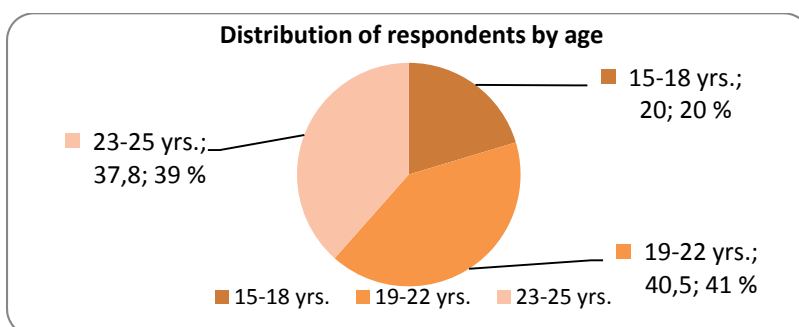
The sample was large enough to allow statistical manipulation by means of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Data collection was made in October-November 2012 by five enumerators who were youth living in Kibera – David Sande; Lydia Adhiambo Some; Lydia Mumbua; Vitus Miheso Sizzah and Geoffrey Bakhuya – by means of a pre-tested questionnaire with both pre-coded and open-ended questions. The enumerators were assisted by Bernard Morara of ANPPCAN, and Geoffrey Bakhoya, employed by Médecins sans Frontières as a community health worker in Kibera who also doubled as an enumerator.. Coding was done by Siri Bauge of the CMI on the basis of a carefully prepared code book to systematise the responses to the open-ended questions.

### 3.1 Background and Demographic Characteristics of the Study Sample

#### Age and Gender Distribution

The majority of those surveyed in the study were young adults and youth within an age range of 19–25 years. They constituted 80% of respondents (see figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Age Distribution

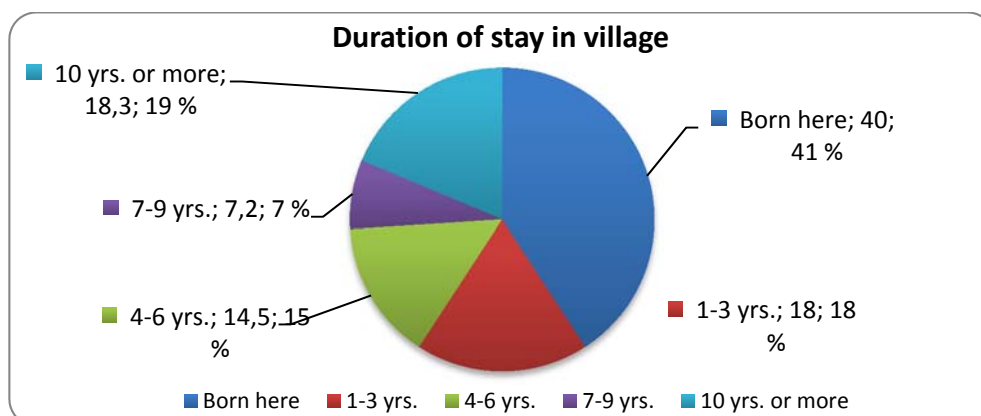


Twenty percent (20%) of the respondents aged 15–18 years are considered children because they fall below the age limit set by the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) which define minors. This age distribution of youth in Kibera is corroborated in other sources.<sup>18</sup>

#### Duration of Stay in the Villages and Parenthood

The majority of the youth were born in this community (40%) or had lived there for more than 10 years (18%).

Figure 2: Duration of Stay in Village



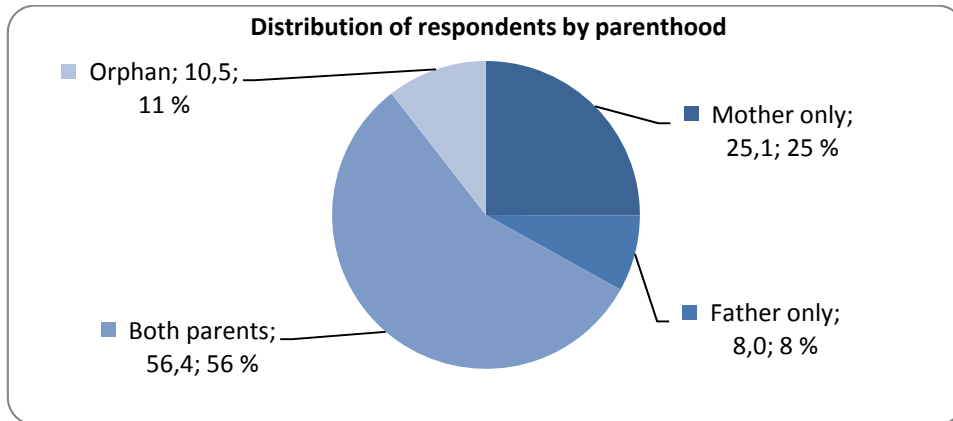
A significant proportion had lived in the slum between 7 to 9 years (7.2%). Those who had lived in the community 4–6 years made up 15.5%, while 18% had been living in the slum 1–3 years. Thus, the

<sup>18</sup> [www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom).



majority of the respondents were either born in the community or had been living there for a long time. In other words, there is a high level of residential stability.

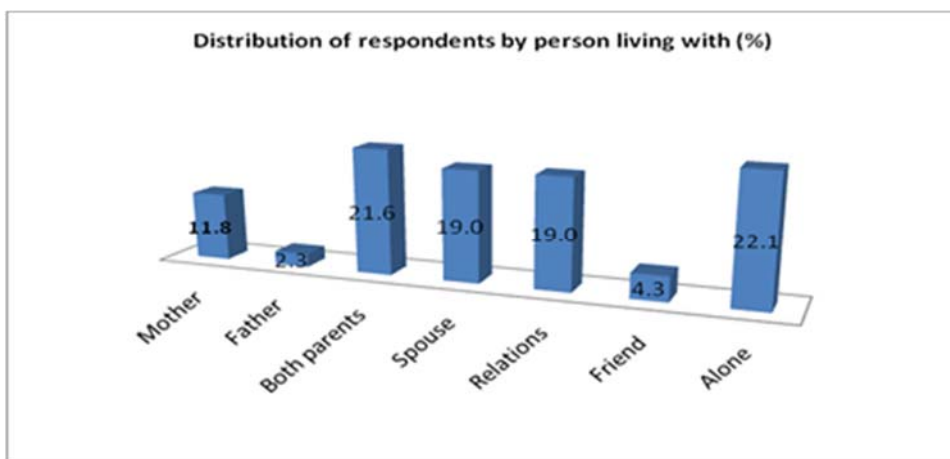
Figure 3: Parenthood



Most respondents (56.3%) reported that both of their parents were alive, while 25% and 8% were maternal or paternal orphans, respectively. Eleven percent (11%) of the respondents reported that both of their parents were deceased as illustrated on Fig. 3 above.

A significant number of the respondents were either living alone (22%) or with their parents (21.5%). Nineteen percent (19%) were living with their spouses and their relations (19%). Some 11.8% percent of the respondents reported that they were living with their mothers, while only 2.3% reported living with their fathers. Some 4.3% reported living with their friends (see Fig. 3 below).

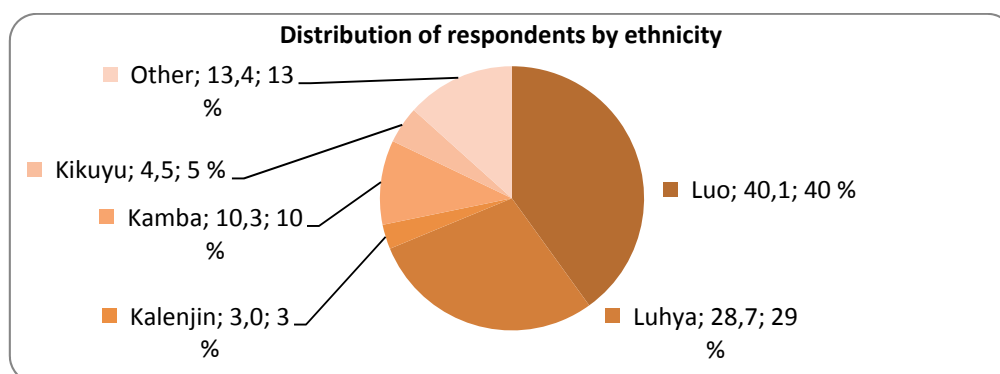
Figure 4: Persons the respondents were living with



## Distribution of Ethnic Groups in Kibera

The majority of youths came from the Luo (39.8%), Luhya (28.5%) and Kamba (10.3%) communities (ethnic groups). The Kikuyu and Kalenjin communities constituted 4.5% and 3.0%, respectively. The concentration of Luo and Luhya youth to some extent explained the post-election violence of 2007/8 which targeted some communities, especially the Kikuyu who were perceived as exploitative landlords and business people. Following the post-election riots, many Kikuyu moved out of Kibera. Figure 5 below shows the distribution of ethnic groups in the Kibera slum at the time of the study.

*Figure 5: Distribution of ethnic groups in Kibera*



The majority of the respondents (63.7%) had brothers and sisters (69%). A significant number reported to have 4–6 brothers (25.5%) and sisters (21.8%). In other words, the majority of respondents were members of large families. This finding tallies with other studies that a household in this slum comprises of seven members on average.<sup>19</sup>

## Educational Level of Respondents

Compared to a similar study done in 2001 on the same phenomena,<sup>20</sup> a significant number of the respondents had completed primary and proceeded to secondary school and joined vocational training and colleges. Some 21.5% of the respondents had completed secondary education. The study reveals that a large number of the youth interviewed had at least some secondary education (45.3%). Some 27% of the respondents reported being in middle-level colleges, while 7.2% were in vocational training and 3% were at the tertiary level (see figure 6 below). Overall, the educational level of youth in Kibera had improved tremendously compared to the findings of 2001 study.

This finding reflects, in part, the efforts by the government of Kenya in the educational sector in general. For example, the government introduced in 2002 a policy of free primary education and sponsorship of secondary education for children who come from poor families. This policy has been extended to free basic education throughout the country, which starts with pre-school education up to secondary education. Apart from that, Kibera slum has also been endowed with what in Kenya is called non-formal schools, spearheaded mainly by civil society organizations. These schools provide

<sup>19</sup> (2011) Emmanuel Mutisya & Masaru Yarime (2011): Understanding the Grassroots Dynamics of Slums in Nairobi. The Dilemma of Kibera Informal Settlement, in International Transaction Journal of Engineering, Management & Applied Sciences & Technologies, p209

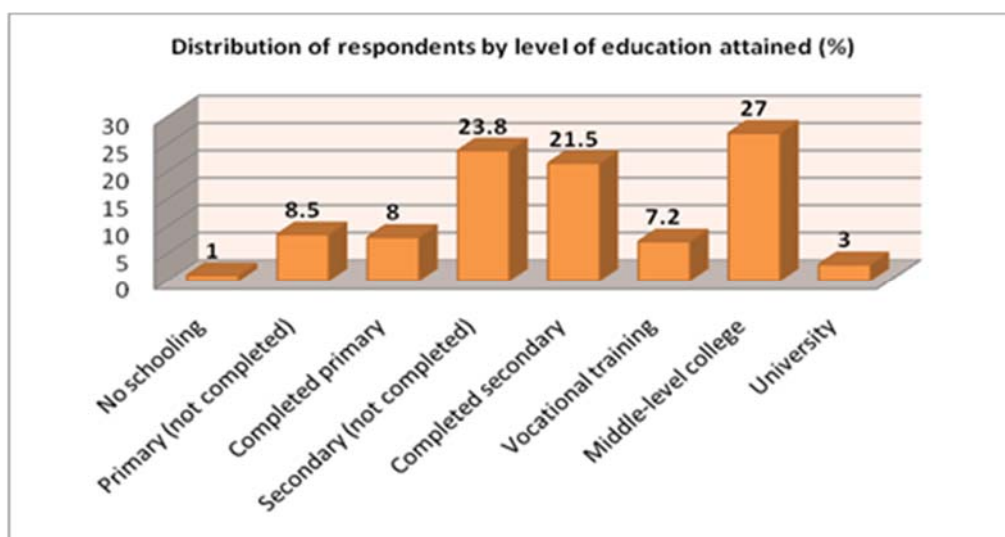
<sup>20</sup> ANPPCAN (2002): The Effects of Social Policy Changes on Adolescents at Risk of Violence, pg 4.

sponsorships and have adopted fee-payment process that is friendly to poor children, whereby fees are paid on monthly basis rather than as a lump sum at the beginning of the term. Although the fee is not reduced, payment by instalment eases the burden on the families.

According to the Langata Constituency Strategic Plan 2011–2015, the constituency, where the Kibera slum is located has some 16,673 pupils (8198 boys and 8475 girls) enrolled in 14 public primary schools. However, the Strategic Plan also noted six informal schools providing primary education to children in Kibera. These schools are reported to provide 11,310 pupils (5,914 boys and 5,596 girls) with primary education.<sup>21</sup> The constituency has only three secondary schools, serving both the formal and the informal (slums) settlements.

Compared to reports emanating from earlier studies of Kibera, the increase in the number of schools in this slum community has improved the education levels of the youth as indicated in the findings. Figure 6 below depicts the situation.

Figure 6: Distribution of respondents by level of education



The improvement of education among youth is further demonstrated by the findings that only 32 respondents (8%) and 95 respondents (23.8%) respectively reporting not having completing primary and secondary school. A fair number were actually still enrolled in school (11 respondents in primary and 52 in secondary schools), leaving only 3% of primary and 7.8% of secondary schools actually not having completed. Lack of school fees was reported as the main reason for not completing school.

## Occupation

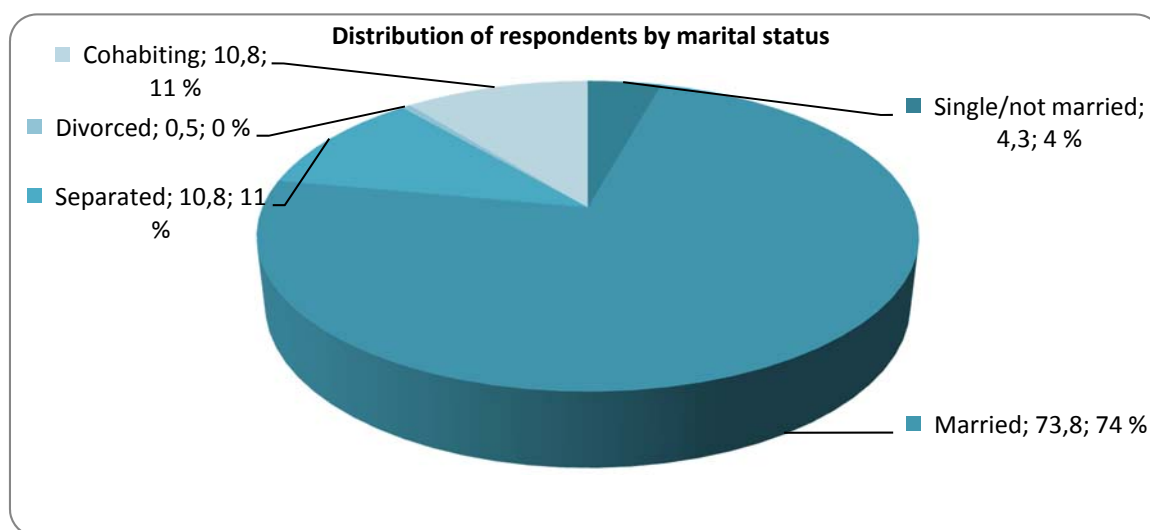
The majority of the respondents (60%) were still students or in training or had just completed education. Those who were out of school were engaged in the informal sector doing business or trading, reflecting the true situation of most youth who have either dropped out of school or completed their education and cannot continue further. The reported activities by the respondents regarding their

<sup>21</sup> 2011: Institute of Economic Affairs: Langata Constituency Strategic Plan 2011 - 2015

trade or occupation ranged from trading, hairdressing, tailoring to teaching. This finding accord with the responses to question 16 of the survey, where the majority of respondents reported being unemployed (74.5%) and only 25.5% of respondents employed. A significant number were still in school (63 respondents).

## Marital Status

Figure 7: Distribution of respondents by marital status



Notwithstanding their young age, the majority of the respondents were married (74%), while 11% were separated and those cohabiting constituting 11%. Only 4% of respondents reported not being married. The findings here are at variance with the responses to survey question 6 – which indicated that only 19% of respondents were living with their spouses, while 22% reported living alone. However, the apparent anomaly can be explained with reference to the economic situation of slum communities, where respondents reported to be living with their parents could also be married and depending on the parents for support. Similarly, a large number of respondents were still in learning institutions, which may mean that their spouses or partners are left to be living with their parents in their rural homes.

## Employment status of Respondents

The majority of the respondents (74.5%) were found not to be employed; only 25.5% considered themselves employed. Given the fact that 66 respondents were still in school (11 at primary and 52 at secondary school level), and that a large number were not conventionally employed in a formal employer-employee relationship, many were engaged in small businesses in the informal sector as is common in Kenya. The majority of Kenyans of employment age are found in this sector (non-formal). In Kenya, engagement in such informal activities is not perceived as employment proper, but rather a residual default category of sustenance for the unemployed who have failed to secure formal employment. This situation typically applies to youth. Officially the informal sector is categorized *jua kali*, which literally means ‘hot sun’, meaning that the activities are performed in open air rather than

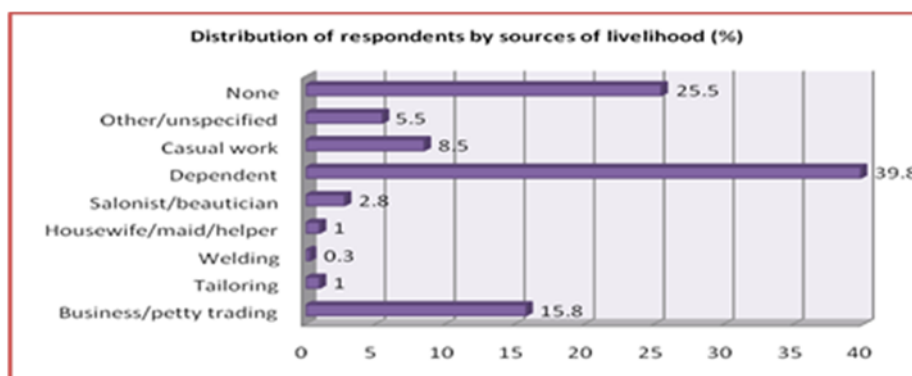
in stalls protected from sun and rain.<sup>22</sup> The informal sector is acknowledged as a fact and worthy of support as expressed in Sessional Papers.<sup>23</sup>

The reported incomes ranged from KES 3,000 to KES 20,000 and tended to reflect the wage levels of most workers living in slum communities. The overwhelming majority (75.5%) of the respondents, who reported to be employed, were earning a monthly wage between KES 4,000 and KES 15,000. Only 25 respondents (24.5%) of those who reported to be working earned KES 15,000–20,000.

### Sources of Livelihood

The study revealed that most of the youth in Kibera are dependants (39.8%), because they are unemployed or are still schooling as shown in other earlier sections of this report. Those reporting to have some livelihood source accounted for 29.4%, while most of them reported to be in casual work and petty trading (24.3%) as shown in Fig. 8 below.

Figure 8: Distribution by sources of livelihood



A significant number of the youth enumerated reported to be self-employed (31%), where 68% of this earned below KES 10,000 per month. This finding reconfirms the amount self-employed individual Kenyans earn in the *jua kali* sector elsewhere.

<sup>22</sup> King, Kenneth (1996), *Jua Kali Kenya: Change and Development in an Informal Economy 1970-1995*, London: James Currey.

<sup>23</sup> Republic of Kenya (1992), *Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1992 on Small Enterprise and Jua Kali Development in Kenya*, Nairobi: Government Printer.

## 4 Major findings

### The Problems Facing Youth in Kibera

Attempts were made to determine what problems are facing youth in Kibera based on the survey sample from five villages. Most respondents (26.6%) mentioned unemployment as their main problem. Drug abuse and lack of education were mentioned by a significant number of respondents (15.2% and 12.5%, respectively). When considered together, crime and insecurity were mentioned by 12.4% of the respondents as a problem facing youth in this community

In the 2001 study, a large number of youth (32.7%) were reported to be unemployed and dependent. In that study, 51.1% of the youth were found to be dependent and only 28.5% of youth were found to be engaged in small-scale income-generating activities and only 16.45% reported to be in formal employment.<sup>24</sup> The youth in Kibera still consider lack of education, violence expressed as crime, insecurity and drug abuse, as major problems still facing them as was also the finding of the 2001 study. In other words, the perceived problem scenario had not changed much in more than a decade.

### Problems Youth Face vis-à-vis their Parents

Low incomes (poverty) force families into poor housing conditions. This remains an issue that the youths interviewed consider a problem in relation to their parents because it leads to tension within households. Some 23% of respondents considered this a problem, while in 2001 study 33% of the respondents reported this as a problem. In other words, the housing problem was perceived to be less severe now than more than a decade ago. This may reflect some improvement in housing standards or less overcrowding, but it should be underscored that the responses are perceptions rather than reflecting a factual situation. Lack of parental guidance is still considered an issue by youth, mentioned by 13% of the respondents.

### Causes of Problems

Poor communication with parents was mentioned by 13% of the respondents as causing problems vis-à-vis parents. Some 12% of youths reported that their parents do not respect and trust them. Some youths were reported by their parents to have a problem of substance abuse, which is close to what youth said about their parents in the 2001 study (2.8% and 3.8%), respectively. Some (3%) still reported parental abuse.

### Programmes for Youth in the Village

Most of youth programmes in Kibera are reported to be self-help initiatives (33%), while 25% and 18% of the programmes are those supported by civil society groups and UN agencies, respectively. Government is reported to be providing 12% of the youth programmes. Thus, a significant number of

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<sup>24</sup> ANPPCAN (2002), *The Effects of Social Policy Changes on Adolescents at Risk of Violence*, Nairobi: ANPPCAN, p. 47

programmes (53%) for youth in Kibera slum are being provided or undertaken by CSOs and UN bodies. The ILO, in particular, has initiated a programme to support local groups to address youth unemployment.<sup>25</sup>

### Positive Activities Youth get Involved In their Villages

Youth reported being involved in positive activities in their communities, ranging from sports and other recreational and income generating activities (28.6%) to community service (23.8%), youth group campaigns (12.2%) and religious activities (2.4%). Thus, a significant number of youth are engaged in activities that are constructive in the community compared to 2001 where the activities of youth appeared predominantly destructive.

At the individual or personal level, youth respondents tended to get more involved in sports (32%), religious activities (78%) and youth group campaigns (17.5%). Youth in the Kibera slum at individual level participate less in income-generating activities or business; only few interviewed reporting doing so.

### Negative Activities of Youth in Kibera

*Table 1: Negative Activities reported in 2013 and 2001*

Activities	Percentages	
	Year	Year
	2013	2001
Excessive drinking of alcohol	97.5	98.5
Sexual abuse	71.5	87.9
Prostitution	80.3	96.7
Roaming on streets	92.3	92.9
Abortion	84.3	95.2
Stealing/Mugging	98.8	96.2
Robbery	93.0	96.0
Trafficking drugs/Alcohol	89.5	95.5
Number of Respondents	400	396

<sup>25</sup> [www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo).

Although there have been changes regarding negative activities in which youth are involved in Kibera compared to the 2001 study, the negative activities remain prevalent in Kibera slum, although on the decrease. For example, sexual abuse, prostitution and abortion appear to have decreased significantly. On the other hand, excessive drinking, trafficking of drugs/alcohol and robbery remain quite commonplace in the community. Many youths are still roaming the streets while stealing and mugging is on the increase.

To verify the above, the youth respondents were asked whether they knew other youths involved in crime. A majority (76.8%) reported having knowledge of youth involved in crime. The type of crimes the respondents reportedly involving youth included theft, mugging and robbery (30.2%); drug peddling and abuse/use (13.5%); prostitution (5.6%); rape (4.4%); and abortion (4.2%).

Some 75 respondents (18.8%) reported themselves being involved in crime. Although, most of them did not state the type of crime they were involved in, 1.8% reported being involved in drug use and abuse and 1.1% in sexual abuse (1%).

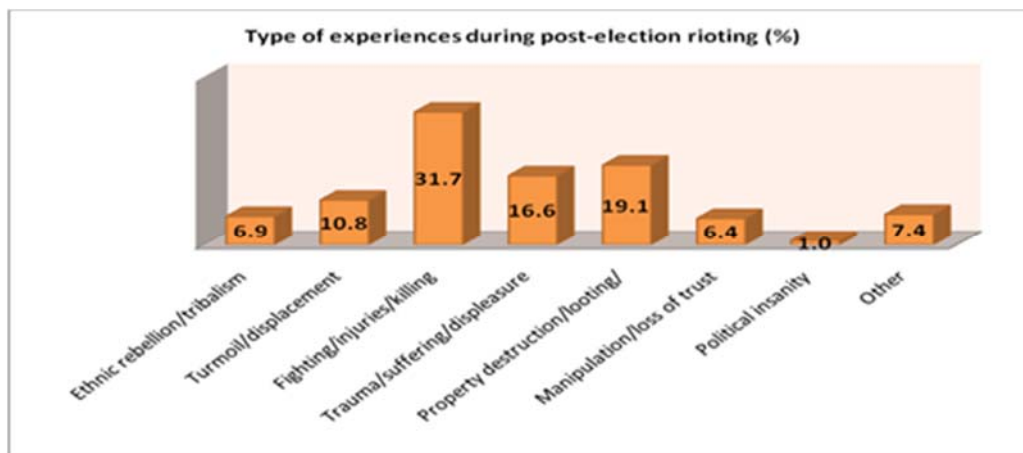
Respondents who stated not being involved in crime refrained from such activities for internal and personal reasons, ranging from moral or religious values to self-respect and dignity. External factors emanating from parents, community, law and order played a minimal role in deterring youth from engagement in crime. Only 8.2% respondents mentioned parental guidance, fear of the law/police (6.5%) and community/family monitoring (4.3%) as determinants of staying out of crime. Again, the above table demonstrates that a large number of youth continue to be involved in activities considered negative as well as having issues with their parents. The squalid living conditions may also undermine the ability of parents to provide guidance to their children.

### Experiences Reported by Youth During Post Election Violence

The Kibera slum is one of the communities greatly affected by post-election violence. A lot of property was destroyed and residents were displaced from their dwellings. Attempts were made, therefore, to inquire about the experiences during the three-month period in 2008 after the 2007. Most of the respondents reported fighting injuries, including killings (31.7%), property destruction (19.1%), trauma and suffering (16.6%), and displacement (10.8%) as their main experiences in the community during the post-election rioting. A few saw the rioting as an ethnic rebellion (6.9%) and loss of trust (6.4%). Figure 10 below depicts the findings in this regard.



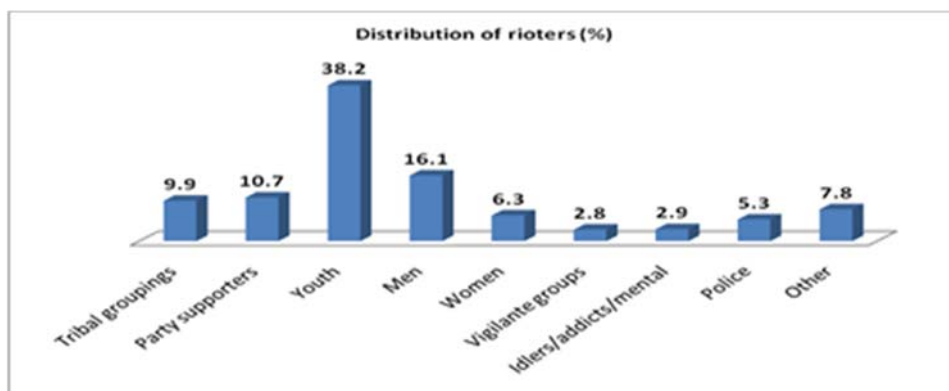
Figure 10: Types of experiences during post-election rioting



Given the fact that the majority of youth are unemployed and already involved in violent types of behaviour, it is not surprising that the majority of the youth were rioters after the flawed 2007 elections. Adult men, party supporters and tribal groups also participated in the rioting as they obviously stood to lose or gain depending on the outcome of the elections.

Youths were reported by 38.2% to have been the main rioters. Some 16.1% reported men, while 10.7% mentioned party supporters as rioters. Tribal groupings were not spared by 9.9% of the respondents as rioters, while 6.3% of respondents reported women and 5.3% the police as rioters. Figure 11 below shows those reported to have been rioters.

Figure 11: Distribution of the Rioters

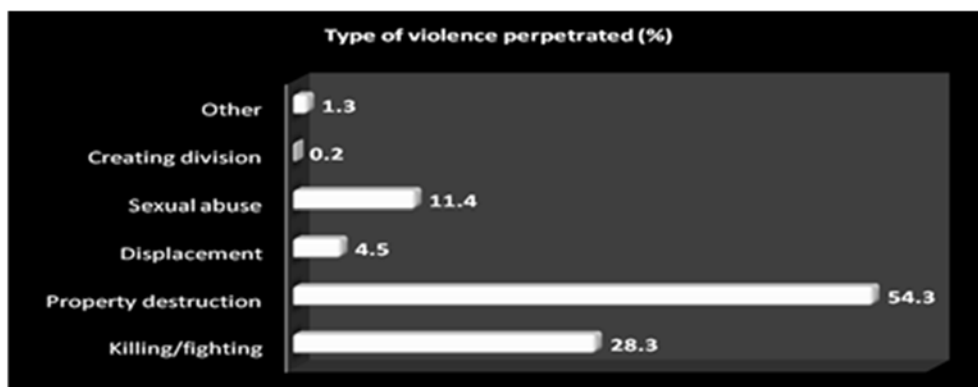


When asked about the main reasons that led to the riots, the respondents reported unfair elections as the main reason (46.8%). Party politics and political incitements were also mentioned as reasons (14.8% and 9.3%, respectively). Some 9.8% of the respondents attributed the riots to Raila Odinga’s defeat.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Raila Odinga was the presidential candidate of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) which, according to the Electoral Commission of Kenya, lost the election to the incumbent President, Mwai Kibaki of the Party of National Unity (PNU). Kibera is located in Odinga’s constituency, Lang’ata, and with its large Luo population – Odinga’s own ethnic community – Kibera was considered an ODM stronghold in Nairobi.

When respondents were asked what type of violence perpetrated on the people in Kibera, most of them mentioned property destruction (54.3%), killings and fighting (28%), and sexual abuse (11.4%). Some 4.5% reported displacement.

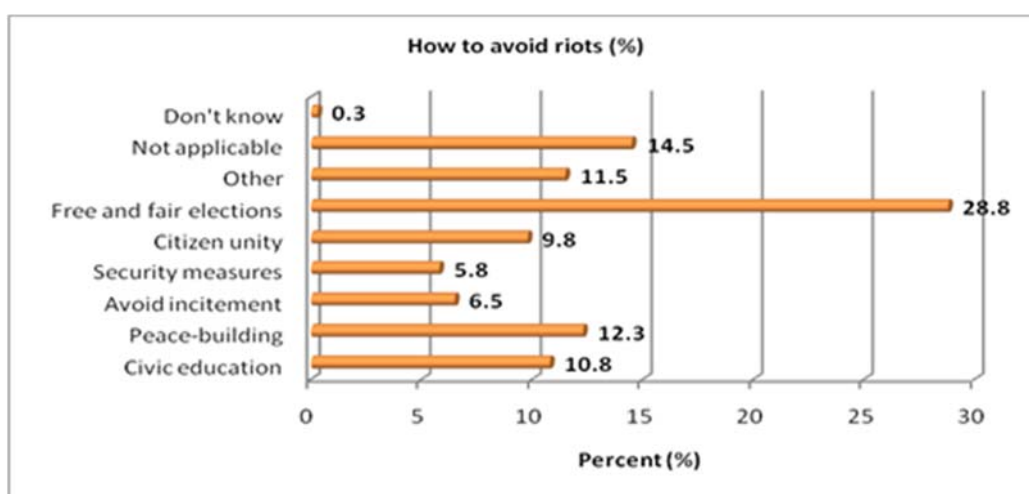
Figure 12: Type of violence perpetrated (%)



An attempt was made to establish what situation prevailed in Kibera after post-election violence since the next elections were approaching (early 2013). The majority of the respondents (63.1%) viewed the current situation positively and stated that it was good. However, a significant number of respondents reported the situation still to be tense (33.4%).

On a follow-up question, the majority of the respondents (85%) were of the view that riots would be avoided in 2013 elections. Riots could be avoided through free and fair elections (28.8%), peace building (12.3%), civic education (10.8%) and citizen unity (9.8%) as shown on Figure 13 below.

Figure 13: How to avoid the riots in the future

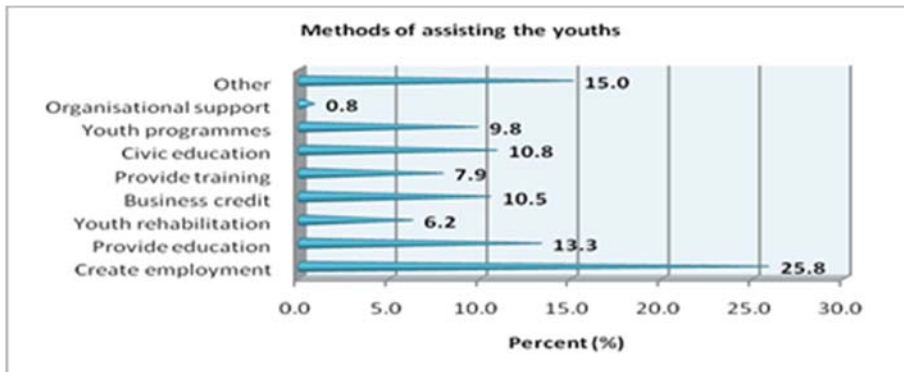


The few respondents who felt the riots could not be avoided mentioned that Kenyans are corrupt (7 respondents), slum dwellers are desperate (4 respondents), elections are likely to be rigged (4 respondents), and elections involve high stakes for the candidates (4 respondents)

### How to Assist the Youth in Kibera

The study explored how youth could be assisted. Many respondents stated employment creation (25.8%) while 21% stated the provision of education and training. Some 9.8% of the respondents stated that youth could be assisted through youth programmes, business credit facilities (10.5%) and civic education (10.8%). See figure 14 below for details.

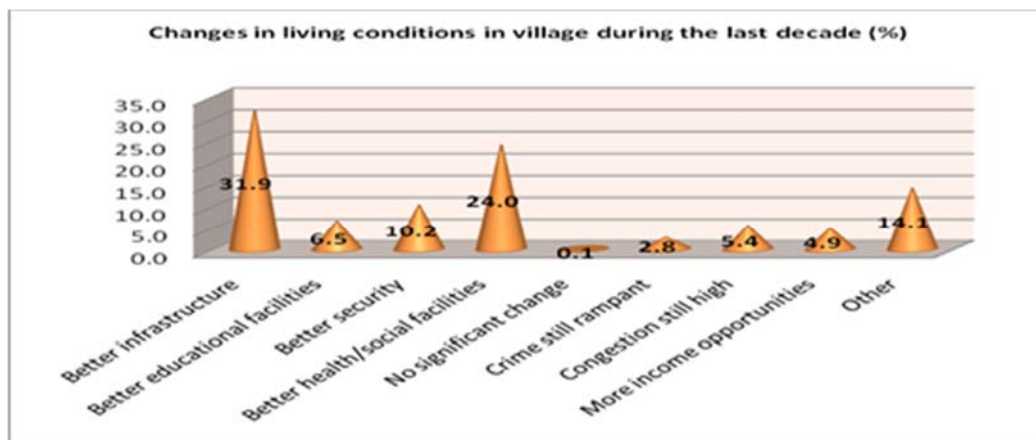
Figure 14: How to assist youth



### Changes in Living Conditions in Kibera During the Last Decade

The respondents were asked what they had heard or witnessed as changes in living conditions in Kibera slum in relation to the 2001 study which found the living conditions to be wanting. The most important changes identified by the respondents included better infrastructure (32.7%), health facilities and social conditions (20.3%), security (8.4%), educational facilities (7.2%) and income opportunities (4.1%).

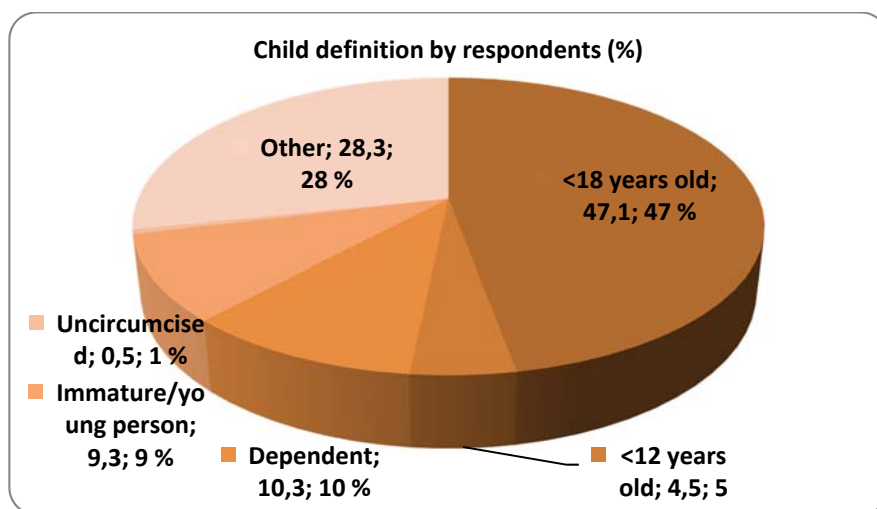
Figure 15: Changes in living conditions in the last decade



The same changes were reported for each of the sampled villages. It seems clear that considerable improvements had occurred during the decade in question, in Kibera generally as well as in each of the sampled villages.

## Exploitation of Children in Kibera

Figure 16: Definition of a child



Attempts were made to determine the prevalence of child labour in Kibera. To begin with, the respondents were asked who they considered a child. Nearly half (47%) of the respondents knew the official definition of a child and stated that a child was an individual below 18 years. However, most of those interviewed (53%) had their own definitions of a child. The responses ranged from dependant on others (10%), someone immature/young person (9%) to below 15 years old (4.5%), and uncircumcised (0.5%).

A majority of the respondents reported that most children were attending school (58%), while a large proportion (42%) reported that most children in Kibera were not in school.

As reasons for making children attend school, 20.5% of the respondents stated that it was government policy. Personal ambitions, as part of which education is considered important (8.1%) and the attitude of parents (5.2%), were also mentioned as reasons for school attendance. However, when respondents were asked why children do not attend school, the majority of them attributed this to lack of school fees (26.8%) and a negative attitude on the part of parents (5.8%).

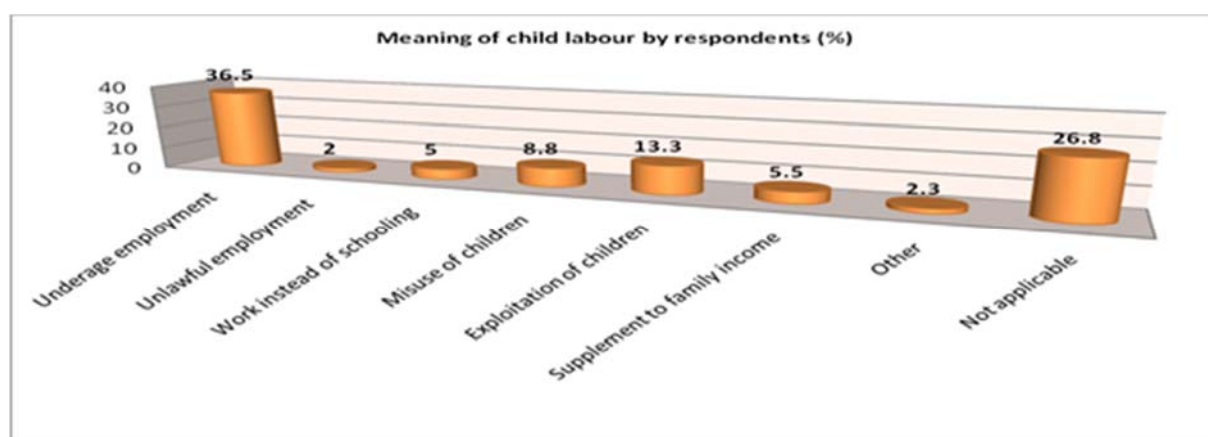
Although primary education is free in Kenya, parents are still expected by the schools to make some contributions, ranging from tuition to school trips or special programmes. Kibera has only two government primary schools, and competition is always tough given the number of children seeking enrolment. Consequently, many children in Kibera attend non-formal schools, where some fees are paid, but generally lower and by instalment. Some parents cannot afford even the fees charged by non-formal schools.

In Kenya, all students are required to wear uniforms. Often, poor parents are the most affected by this requirement; many children from poor families are sent home when they turn up without uniform. As a result, some children drop out of school. Although there is a policy of free primary education and now basic education, the implementation of this policy is facing challenges. While primary education is nominally free it is not compulsory. The uniform requirement, additional activity fees combined with parents' abuse of alcohol rather than using income for their children's school fees are all factors that cause drop-out.

## Knowledge About Child Labour

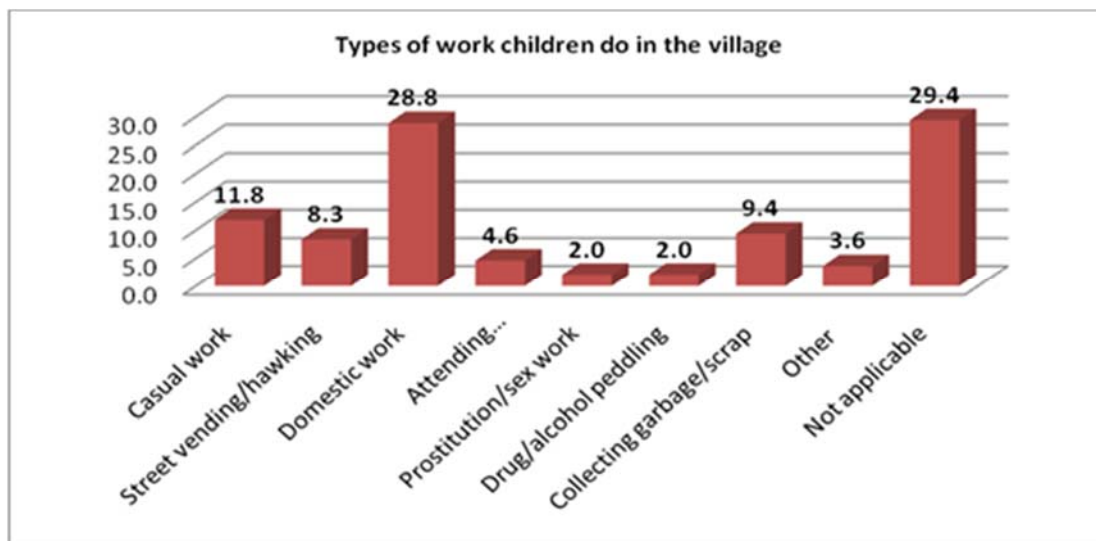
The respondents were asked if they had heard of the term 'child labour'. The majority of respondents (73.5%) knew the concept, while a significant number 26.5% did not know the term. When asked the meaning of child labour a significant number of respondents identified child labour correctly suggesting underage employment (36.5%), exploitation of children (13.3%), misuse of children (8.8%), and supplementing the family income (5.5%). The responses might be an indication that the efforts since 1992 to fight child labour in Kenya has actually produced a level of awareness of the problem as youth seem well informed the phenomenon. Fig. 17 below shows the distribution of responses.

Figure 17: Distribution on knowledge of child labour



The respondents were also asked about the kind of work children do as child labourers in their villages. The majority identified domestic work (28.8%), casual work (11.8%), collecting garbage/scrap (9.4%), street vending/hawking (8.5%) and attending kiosks and bars (4.6%) as the main types of child labour. Once more, the respondents were able to identify correctly the forms of child labour in which many children are engaged in the housing estates or residential areas, including in the Kibera slum. This finding also demonstrates that awareness-raising activities that have been undertaken by different groups on child labour have increased knowledge, also among youth in Kibera. Figure 18 below shows the results.

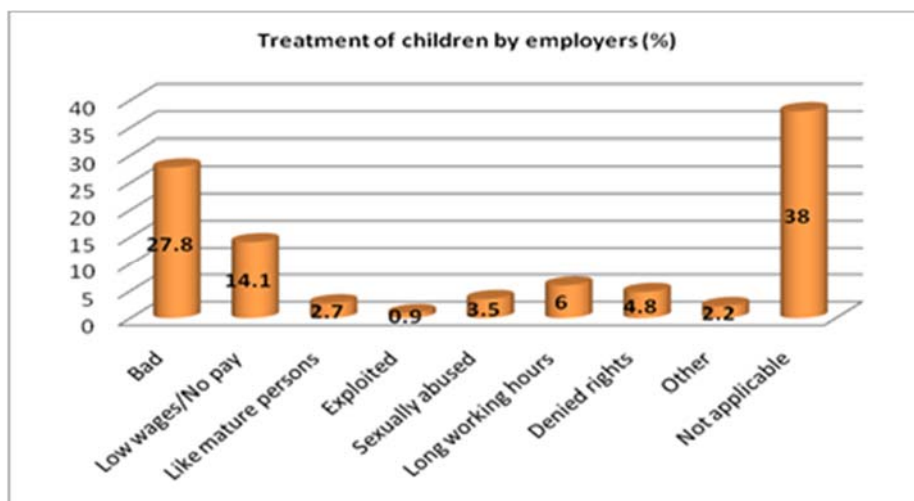
Figure 18: Types of work children do in the village



### Treatment of Child Labourers in the Villages

The study explored how children in child labour are treated in their villages. The respondents observed that children who work are treated badly and exploited (27.8%). Children are working for low wages or no pay at all (14.1%). They work long hours similar to those of adults (8.8%) and are denied their rights (4.8%). Again, the respondents’ responses are very close to the reality of the majority of child workers go through in Kenya. Fig. 19 below shows the findings.

Figure 19: Treatment of labouring children



Some 16.8% of the respondents reported to have been involved in child labour. Most of these respondents have been engaged in domestic child labour, which is common in urban centres, while the rest were in casual work, mainly hawking.

Some 10 respondents reported working without pay. Two respondents earned less than KES 500 while 28 respondents earned less than KES 2,000 and 18 children earned more than KES 2,000. These

wages are consistent with what children working in low-income groups earn, especially in slum communities. The majority of respondents who were working did so for long hours. Altogether 34 respondents reported working more than 40 hours a week.

## Problems Facing Children in the Village

Attempts were made to inquire into the general problems facing the children in their villages and the following emerged as reflected in Figure 20 below:

*Figure 20: Problems facing children in the village*



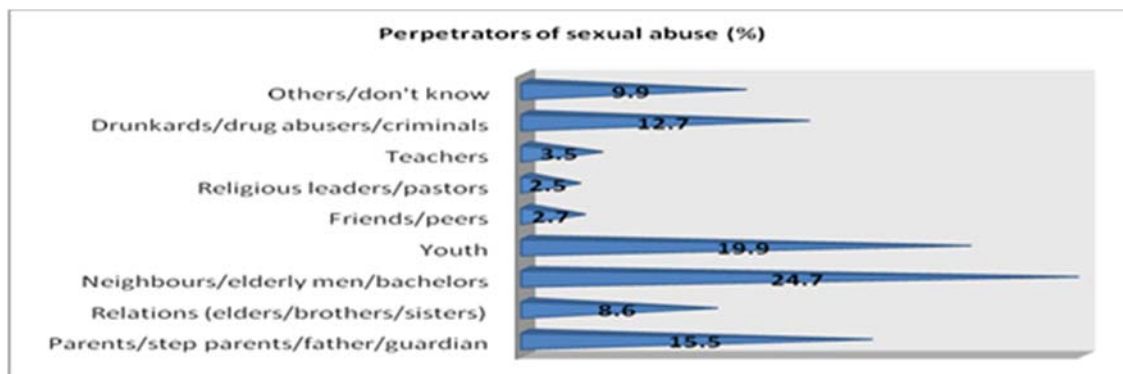
The majority of children face problems of meeting basic needs, such as food. A significant number of children report suffering from parental neglect and abuse and overcrowding in the household. Child labour is also a problem. Children without good role models and guidance were reported as a problem by 4.7% of the respondents. Although drugs have been reported to affect youth in this community, only 1% of the respondents considered it a problem to children at the time of the interview.

## Perpetrators of Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse of children was reported as a problem by 6% of the respondents. Previous studies and media reports have indicated high incidents of sexual abuse in slum communities. The survey endeavoured to find out from the respondents who the perpetrators of sexual abuse were in the slum communities. Most respondents identified non-family members, e.g. referring to neighbours, both young and old (25%). One-fifth of the respondents identified youth as the perpetrators, while family members (parents, step parents, fathers or guardians) were mentioned by 16% as perpetrators. Those who abuse drugs and criminals were mentioned by 13% of the respondents as perpetrators, while 9% of respondents mentioned relations (older siblings) as the perpetrators of sexual abuse.

A large number of respondents did not respond to this question owing to the sensitivity discussing issues related to sexual abuse. Only a few respondents (4%) mentioned that teachers are the perpetrators while 3% mentioned religious leaders and pastors as perpetrators. Friends and peer groups were also mentioned by 3% of the respondents. Figure 21 illustrates this.

Figure 21: Perpetrators of sexual abuse

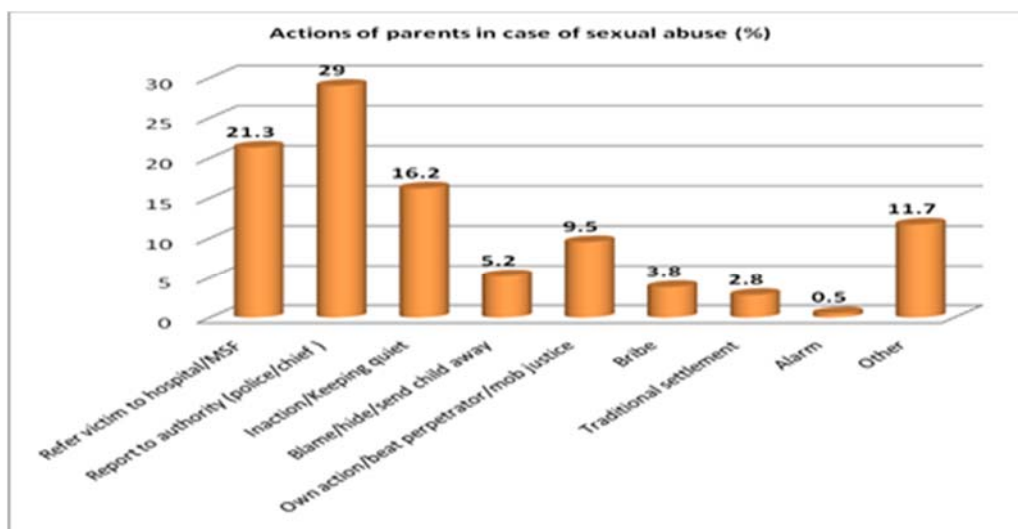


It is important to note that the majority of children who suffer sexual abuse are victims at the hands of persons who know them and who are supposed to protect them. Close family members such as parents/guardians, brothers and sisters constitute 29% of the reported perpetrators. The neighbourhood of children where uncles, aunts, cousins, friends and peers reside is definitely not safe for children. This group of individual perpetrators made up 47% of those who sexually abuse children. Slums are known for harbouring criminals and 13% of whom sexually abuse children. These findings confirm other findings that many young girls living in the slums have been victims of sexual abuse.

### Actions of Parents in Case of Sexual Abuse

Respondents were asked what parents do in case a child has been sexually abused. A significant number of respondents (29%) mentioned that parents report such cases to the authorities, e.g. the police and the chief. Some 21.3% of respondents mentioned that such children are referred to hospital or to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). A significant number (16.2%) reported that parents do nothing when sexual abuse occurs and just keep quiet.

Figure 22: Action of parents in cases of sexual abuse.





Mob justice where the perpetrators are beaten was reported by 9.5% of the respondents. Perpetrators bribing their way out and traditional settlements were reported by 4% and 3% of respondents, respectively. Concealing the incident by bribing or sending the child away or blaming the child was mentioned by 5.2% of the respondents.

## 5 Discussion and Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident that youth in Kibera face unemployment challenges which is worse in slum communities than elsewhere according to available information.<sup>27</sup> The present study confirms that while a significant number of youth were still in school the majority of those interviewed were out of school, either working in what is known in Kenya as the '*jua kali*' (informal) sector or simply unemployed. The state of not being employed and out of school, while doing nothing worthwhile, makes the youth in Kenya vulnerable to violence, both as victims and perpetrators.

According, to the Kibera UK – The Gap Year Company (2007), the unemployment rate in Kibera stands at 50 percent.<sup>28</sup> This is higher than the national unemployment rate estimated at 40 percent.<sup>29</sup> This situation makes youth in Kibera vulnerable to criminal activities, which the present study identified as negative activities, ranging from stealing and mugging to robbery and rape.

Although, the present study found some changes regarding some of these activities, a large number of respondents reported that youth in Kibera are still drinking excessively, trafficking drugs and alcohol. A large number of female youth are still engaging in prostitution and abort unwanted pregnancies. The youth living in these circumstances are in dire need of efforts to mitigate these challenges.

Since the 2001 study, programmes to address the challenges facing youth emerged in Kibera. Educational programmes, in particular, increased, principally as a result of the introduction of free primary education as from 2003, as well as support for non-formal schools. Significant international groups joined with health and recreational programmes.

However, the programme introduced to reduce violence among youth in Kibera came only after post-election violence of 2007/8. By 2010, international organizations such as the ILO led initiatives to support employment creation for the youth under its Coop Africa Challenge Fund. Thus, the Umamde Trust Co-operative has been able to create some 50 bio centres across informal settlements in Kenya, including in Kibera. The Bio Centres are places where youth are trained to make manure from garbage which they use to grow vegetables and produce gas to generate power to light their houses and to use for cooking.

Environmental conditions in the slums in general and in Kibera in particular subject children and youth in these communities to a difficult and deprived living. Sanitation is still considered a luxury rather than a necessity. Drinking water is a problem and the sporadic water kiosks are more of business enterprises than the provision of services. Residents, also have to pay to enter public toilets.

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<sup>27</sup> African Population and Health Centre (APHRC) 2014: Population and Health Dynamics in Nairobi.

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.kibera.org.uk/Facts.html>

<sup>29</sup> [www.tradingeconomics.com/kenya/unemployment-rate](http://www.tradingeconomics.com/kenya/unemployment-rate)

The question is, therefore, given the fact (based on many studies from Kibera) that about half to four-fifths of the youth in Kibera are unemployed, where would they get money to buy these services?

The living conditions in Kibera have not changed significantly in the last decade. The houses are still predominantly one-roomed, where family members live in cramped conditions. As youth get older they move from the one-roomed house managed by their parents into outside group living. Many children and youth are reported to be roaming the streets, because the community does not even have places for recreation and play. All these conditions make youth and children vulnerable to hazards, notwithstanding their resilience that several studies have shown. It is not surprising, therefore, that the prevalence of diseases, such as HIV and AIDS is being reported to be high among the age group 15–24.

Sexual abuse and abortion among girls are reported to be rampant. The majority of the girls are living alone and working as domestic workers. Others are engaged in hairdressing, tailoring, washing clothes and hospitality (bars and restaurants). The present study has confirmed these observations. The living conditions and the type of work performed by the girls, the majority of whom are youth, expose them to exploitation and sexual abuse, which in turn leads to unwanted pregnancies and abortion.

The economic activities in which the girls engage are of low-paying in nature. It is not surprising, therefore, that many girls resort to prostitution to earn an income. This inclination and practice may also be related to the findings in literature that individuals who have been sexually abused as children themselves tend to end up in prostitution.

The relationship between youth and parents has been found to be challenging. This starts with sharing the little resources the family commands, where parents often find it difficult to put food on the table. The tendency for parents to send their children away after reaching the age of 4 or 5 to help out the family, has been observed in some studies. In the first study of 2001, the majority of youth reported being driven into the streets by their parents. Similarly, a study on street children has revealed the same.<sup>30</sup> Failure to provide for their children makes many parents lose control of guiding their children. Thus, it is almost impossible to expect the youth to respect their parents who cannot even fend for them. Because of the difficulties the parents face as they too are likely to be doing low-paying jobs and above all the easy availability of alcohol (*chang'aa*), a significant proportion of these parents may be abusing alcohol as well as drugs.

According to the present study, most youth consider their parents poor and failing to guide them. Some felt that their parents do not respect or trust them. Some youth reported that their parents were abusing drugs and alcohol which made them incapable to look after their children. However, in the study of the street children the majority of children were not living with their parents. The majority of these children had only their mothers who were single. A large number of children were being taken care of by their grandmothers. Almost all of the street children interviewed lived in slum communities in Kenya. This situation has not changed much. The majority of youth interviewed were actually living alone and those reporting to live with their parents the majority of whom were living with their mothers. Thus, single parenting in slum communities is a real challenge to children and youth.

In the present study, over 50% of respondents reported that both of their parents were alive, while 30% reported being maternal or paternal orphans, or being double orphans. The 2001 study confirmed the

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<sup>30</sup> ANPPCAN (1991), A Report on a Study on Street Children in Kenya. Pp. 74-79.

tendency by children and youth in their quest to prevent the social stigma of being born out of marriage claimed that they had fathers, while in reality they only had their mothers.

The changes that are taking place in Kibera are based on programmes being driven by NGOs, faith-based organizations, UN agencies and CBOs in the area. These groups, especially the UN agencies, recognize the need for education and skills development for the youth. Their driving principle is the need to involve youth in addressing the issues affecting them. Thus, youth is being targeted by programmes in the recognition that youth are often not adequately engaged in the development agenda. Convincing statements by the UN Secretary General such as “It is time that we stop viewing our young people as part of the problem and start cultivating their promise and potential” makes a lot of sense, expressing a global concern about the youth.

In these efforts, Kibera is considered to be at the fault line of the youth unemployment crisis with an estimated 80% of young people without employment. Hence, either find jobs for youth or face the consequences. Thus, initiatives to support programmes intended to create jobs for the youth, such as bio gas centres, and efforts to prevent a repeat of the post-election violence in 2008, saw some 100 youth trained on conflict resolution and peace-building in Kibera.

These groups also make the significant observations that the Government has neglected Kibera, with resultant major gaps in public service delivery. Up to 300 people (mainly youth) share a single toilet. There are no toilets, showers and running water in youth homes.

However, the major concern is the role of the government. The initiated programmes are of an experimental nature, busy identifying good practices and models for the government to emulate. This is the same government which considers slum communities non-formal settlements and in essence illegal communities and do not deserve to be targeted with services as they are not part of the formal system. The Kibera slum is yet to be formalized by the government and this is a major challenge that requires urgent and effective action.

The present study has confirmed that violence remains rife among youth in Kibera, with youth as victims as well as perpetrators. The unemployment rate is very high which largely explains the criminal activities witnessed.

Living conditions in Kibera have not changed significantly and the dwellings are still small and overcrowded, subjecting children and female youth to risks of defilement and rape, which the study shows is high. Furthermore, this situation puts this group at risk of infectious diseases such as HIV and AIDS and other STIs, which has been observed by other studies<sup>31</sup> Risks related to pregnancies and abortion among this group is high.

Sanitation is still a major problem in this community and houses have no toilets or running water. This adds to the risk of sexual abuse by the male residents as the bath and toilet facilities are shared by both sexes.

Notwithstanding the above catalogue of challenges, there have also been positive changes in Kibera, especially with respect to education. More children and youth are currently attending school, although the schools are non-formal and sub-standard in terms of quality teaching. The government has been

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<sup>31</sup> The Population Council (2007), *Adolescence in the Kibera Slums of Nairobi*, Pp. 16-23.

making contributions to these schools in terms of providing teachers. There have been attempts to upgrade the Kibera slum, but the efforts have not been sustained

After the post-election violence of 2007/8 international organizations joined others to address the challenges facing the youth in Kibera. These efforts included supporting initiatives to create employment for the youth and to provide access to health facilities and skills training. These measures have been considered preventive measures to reduce crimes among youth. Some youth have also been trained on conflict resolution and peace building.

However, these efforts fall short of addressing the grave environmental conditions, as well as congested housing. The type of employment being created still confines youth to the non-formal sector. Thus, these activities remain within the subsistence part of the economy, where what is being done is merely for survival and barely meeting basic needs. At the time of the study, despite the economic activities introduced by different actors, crime among youth remained high in the community. Cases of sexual abuse of children and women were many and reported frequently in the mass media. Child labour is still rampant, including the worst forms of child labour such as prostitution and domestic labour.

Another major challenge is the lack of clarity about the role of government in providing shelter and other services to this community. Despite the recognition that Kibera is the biggest slum community in the country, indeed on the continent, the government is still to act decisively to address the problems facing youth and children.

## 6 Recommendations

1. Given the challenges children and youth are facing in these overcrowded communities in Kenya, the findings of this study could be used for policy changes on shelter and other social services for the poor who live under slum conditions. These communities do not only generate criminal activities, but deprive children and youth normal growth, development and transition to adulthood.
2. In view of the numerous studies on Kibera over the years, it is recommended that the findings of all these studies be reviewed to assess the state of implementation existing policies and programmes, and to identify obstacles to positive change. The generated information from Kibera should be used as a basis for direct efforts to upgrade and remove the slums of the towns in Kenya.

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