

Navigating Nairobi County's Youth Resource Centers: *Availability, Usage, and Relevance*



A Survey Findings Report

2023, July



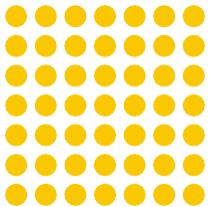
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Resource Rangers

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Executive Summary.

This survey report presents the findings of a baseline survey "Navigating Nairobi County's Youth Resource Centers: Availability, Usage, and Relevance" survey. The survey aimed to assess the availability, usage, and relevance of Youth Resource Centers (YRCs) in Nairobi County, as well as gather insights on the needs and preferences of Nairobi's youth. The report highlights key observations and findings, including the lack of awareness about existing YRCs, varying perceptions of their relevance, and challenges faced by the centers. The report concludes with a set of recommendations to improve the establishment, management, and accessibility of YRCs, ensuring they effectively cater to the needs of Nairobi's youth.





Background and Introduction

The Resource Rangers Project, implemented under Kariobangi Social Justice Center CBO, is an Advocacy Campaign sponsored by IRI (International Republican Institute) towards the establishment of functional youth resource centers (YRCs) in Nairobi County; as part of IRI's mentorship program "*Supporting Accountability Mechanisms for Youth Inclusion*" in Nairobi and Machakos counties. As a budget item highlighted in the CIDP 2023-27, Youth Resource Centers are key to mitigating the problem of unemployment, crime and other socio-economic challenges among young people. The centers act as a central place that provides comprehensive range of services and support, creating an environment that promotes skill development, positive engagement and personal growth. The campaign aims to achieve this through promoting the development of key actors' partnerships to increase investments and equipment of the resource centers for young people in Nairobi county. The project's implementation period is within a time frame of 5 months targeting the 17 sub-counties in Nairobi County.



Project Objectives

1. Advocate for the establishment and equipping of functional YRCs in each sub-county of Nairobi within the next 5 years
2. Undertake a study on issues affecting youth in Nairobi County and make recommendations on priority areas.

The project focuses on increasing awareness and opportunities for youth in Nairobi through collective lobbying and fostering partnerships between the government and local communities. Proposed solutions include resource mobilization, youth engagement, inclusion in decision-making processes, social media advocacy, and sustainability planning.





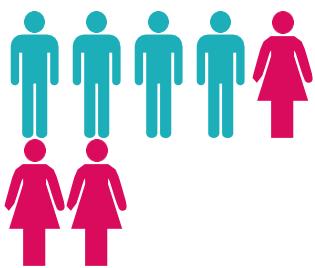
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Survey Design and Methodology

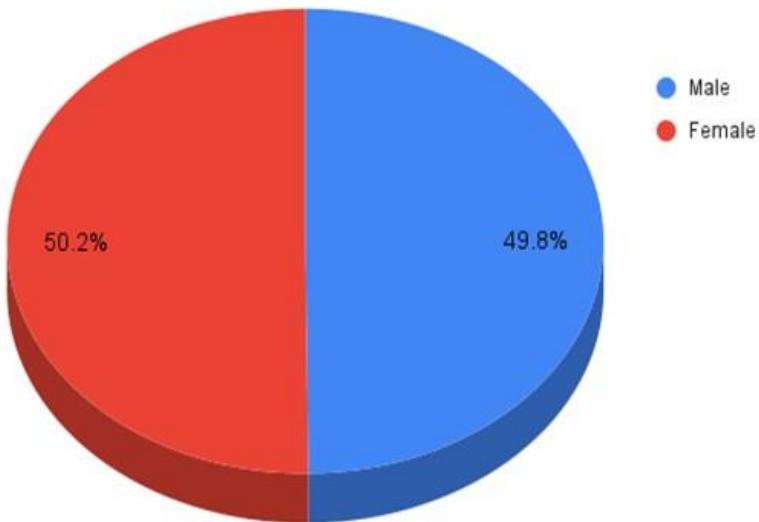
Given the current lack of available information about the specific issues affecting youth in Nairobi County, there was need to generate data that will influence policy direction and prioritization by the County. Therefore, analytical work, through an online and physical survey was undertaken to understand key issues affecting Nairobi's youth.

The survey sought to assess the number of existing county YRCs, inform decisions on how to make the most out of existing and future YRCs and explore why the centers matter and how they can make a positive impact on the future of young people. In this regard, therefore generate empirical data that will assist shape policy priorities and intervention by the Nairobi county government, focusing on the main issues limiting the potential of youth in Nairobi and the interventions that the county should put in place and prioritize in addressing them.

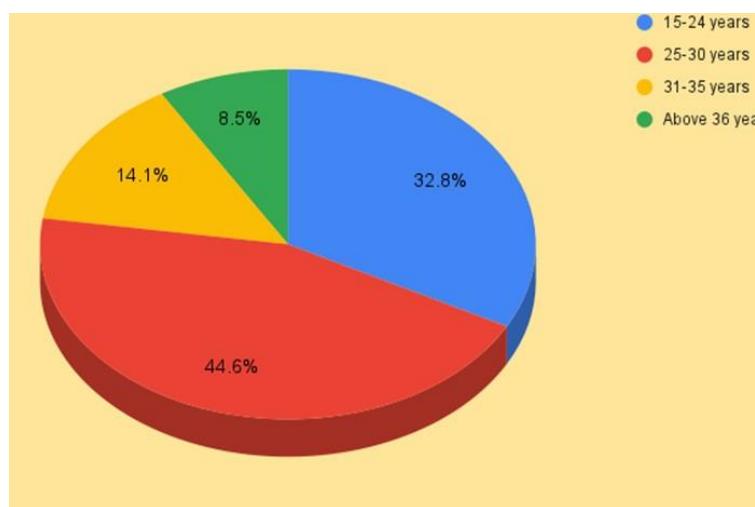
It also explored how governments (county and national), the private sector and civil society can work together to address youth issues in Nairobi County. This was to ensure that other components of this project are pursued on an evidence-based grounds thus influencing the direction of the action of the project. The survey targeted and got responses from over 300 youth from all 17 sub-counties.



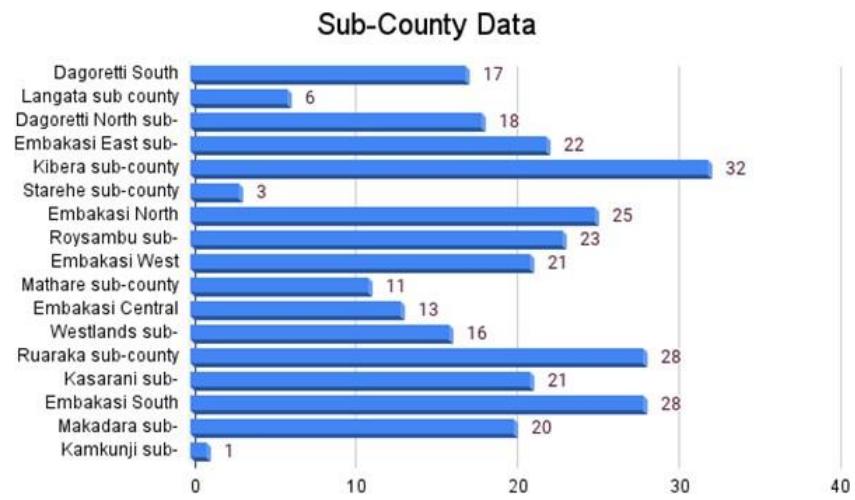
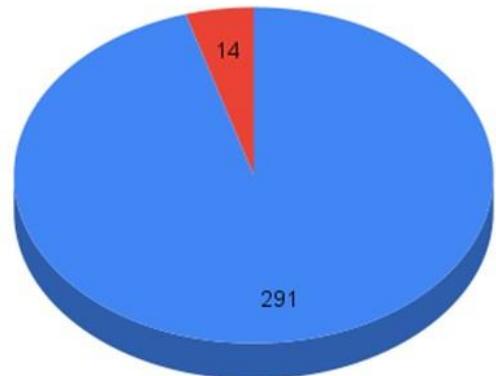
Demographics



A total of 305 respondents participated in the survey, including 153 males and 152 females. The age brackets included under 35 years and above 36 years.



The data was collected from all 17 sub-counties in Nairobi County, including 14 people living with disabilities.



Survey Questions

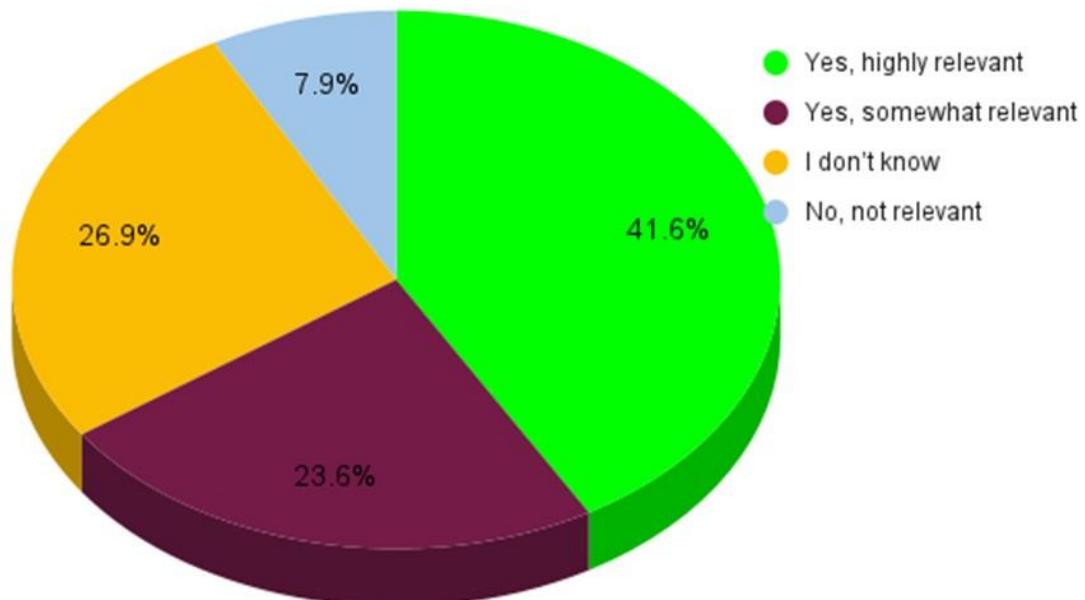
1. Relevance of YRC Services to Young People's Needs.

The relevance of YRC services is evident based on feedback received from the online and physical survey. Positive feedback from respondents highlighted the appreciation of many young people for the space provided by YRCs. They described it as a safe environment where they can gather, connect with peers, and share ideas. The recognition of YRCs empowering young individuals through training, mentorship, and access to information and resources is also noteworthy. These centers play a crucial role in nurturing talents, providing job opportunities, and helping young people acquire new skills. Additionally, YRCs have a positive impact through counseling services and mental health support, which are highly valued by the youth.

~~X~~ The support for public YRCs was based on the importance of the centers in facilitating access to services and resources for a larger number of young people compared to private centers that may be expensive and exclusive. This inclusivity aspect is an important consideration in ensuring equal opportunities for all.

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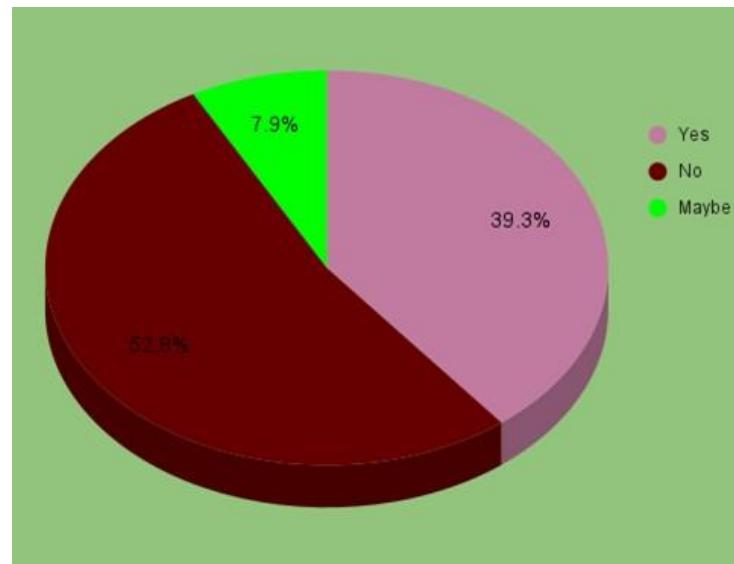
of Nairobi's Youth agree
that YRCs are very relevant



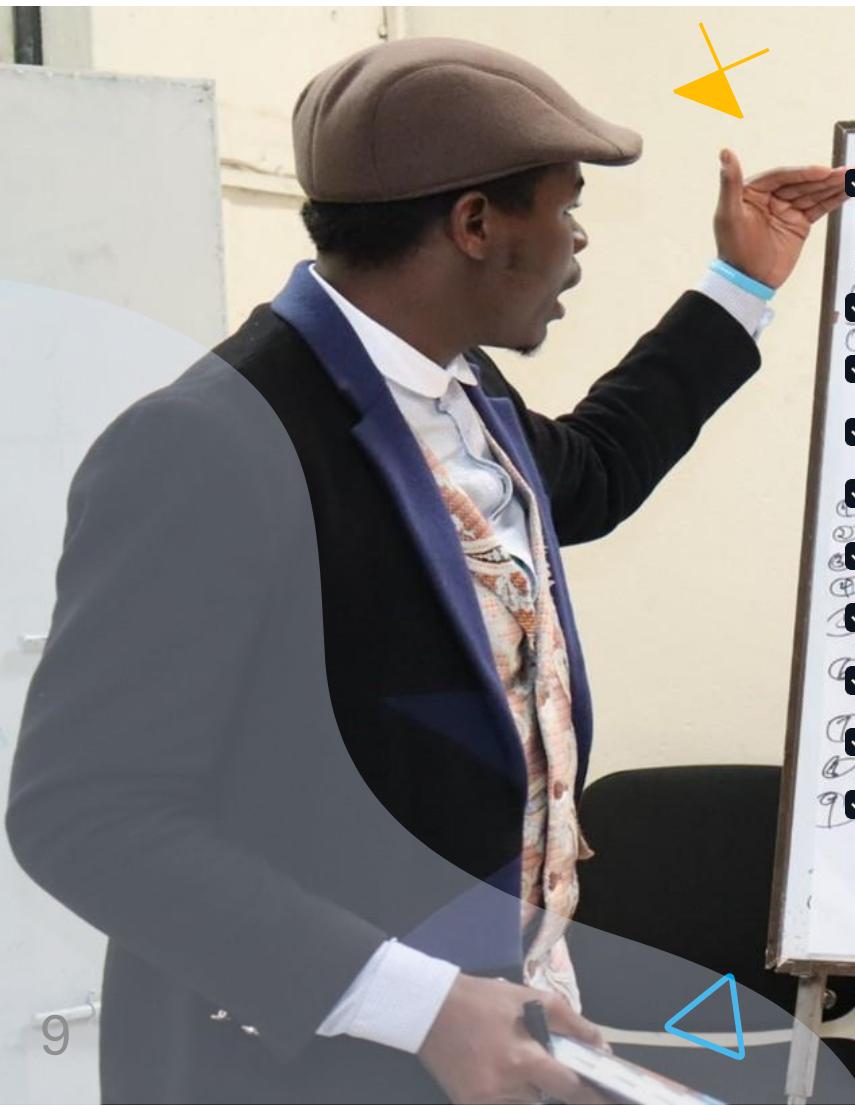
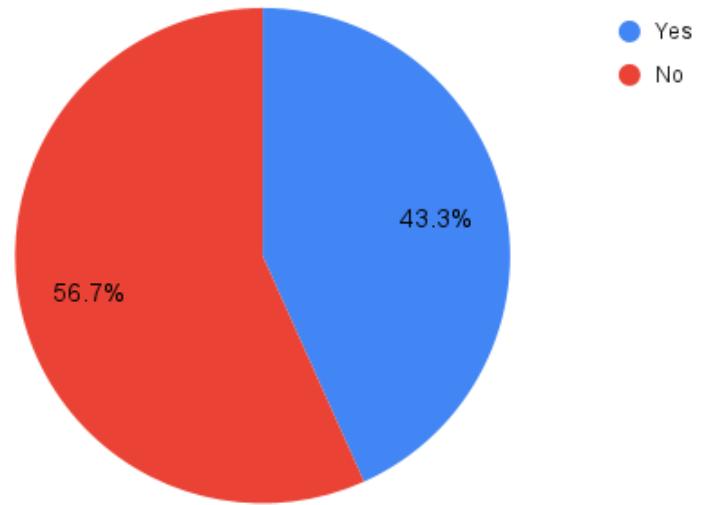
Survey Questions

2. Utilization of Youth Resource Centers

Are you aware of the existence of public Youth Resource Centers in Nairobi?



Have you ever visited a public Youth Resource Center in your sub-county/Nairobi County?



Reasons for not visiting YRC

- Lack of awareness of its existence/its location.
- Never been invited.
- No existing YRC in my region.
- Have not created time to visit.
- Never seen the need to.
- The centers are not functional.
- They are not youth friendly.
- There are no opportunities there.
- The centers have been privatized.
- They are not accessible to the public or the youth.



Criticisms and Concerns

There were criticisms and concerns expressed by young people where some expressed dissatisfaction with the services provided at YRCs, citing issues such as limited services, lack of resources, and ineffective management.

Another key concern was the lack of awareness and knowledge about the services offered by the centers. Accessibility barriers, including communication issues, lack of transportation, and physical location, hinder the utilization of YRCs. Furthermore, there is a perception among the youth that the centers are not modernized, lack updated equipment, and fail to align with the needs and interests of today's youth. Concerns were also raised about the inclusivity of YRCs, particularly regarding specific groups such as young mothers and disabled youth.

These criticisms and concerns emphasize the need for improvement in various areas, such as expanding services, allocating sufficient resources, enhancing management effectiveness, raising awareness about available services, addressing accessibility barriers, updating equipment, and ensuring inclusivity for all youth.



Essential Resources to be Provided by the County Government through Youth Resource Centers (YRCs)

1. Education and Career Development:

- Career counseling and mentorship programs to guide youth in making informed career choices.
- Provision of educational resources, including books, reference materials, and access to online learning platforms.
- Skills training programs that equip youth with practical skills relevant to the job market.
- Linkages to internship and job opportunities to facilitate their entry into the workforce.

2. Mental Health and Well-being

- Availability of mental health services to provide counseling and support for youth facing mental health challenges.
- Conducting classes and workshops on drug abuse prevention and awareness.
- Health counseling, including awareness and support for HIV/AIDS and other health-related issues.
- Providing youth-chill-out safe spaces designed to provide a comfortable and welcoming environment for young individuals to socialize, unwind, and engage in personal reflection.

3. Recreational and Leisure Activities

- Organizing recreational activities and providing access to sports facilities to promote physical well-being and social engagement among youth.
- Offering indoor games and other leisure activities that foster creativity, relaxation, and stress relief.
- Provide edutainment services and products such as movie places, video games, interactive exhibits, and live performances incorporating storytelling, gamification, multimedia presentations, and interactive elements



4. Entrepreneurship and Business Support

- Establishing business-oriented services within YRCs, including business incubation programs, guidance in business planning, and access to relevant networks.
- Providing financial literacy training to enhance youth's understanding of financial management and entrepreneurship.
- Facilitating access to information about youth funds and other financial resources available to support business initiatives.
- Offering financial support, such as grants or loans, to enable youth to start their own businesses and create job opportunities.



5. Social Issues and Awareness

- Addressing gender-based violence matters through awareness campaigns and support services.
- Establishing a Human Rights Desk within YRCs to provide guidance and assistance on human rights issues.
- Conducting civic education programs to enhance youth's understanding of their rights, responsibilities, and civic engagement.
- Organizing sensitization programs on mental health, skills development, job opportunities, and support available for youth.



6. Access to Resources and Opportunities

- Providing access to ICT services, including computers and internet connectivity, to enhance digital literacy and facilitate online research and learning.
- Linking youth to employment opportunities through partnerships with local businesses and organizations.
- Establishing content creation sites within YRCs to encourage creativity and innovation among youth.
- Creating public resource centers within YRCs that offer a variety of resources, such as books, computers, and information on various topics.
- Facilitating networking opportunities for youth to connect with professionals, mentors, and peers.

Exploring Service Access Points for Nairobi's Youth: Where Do They Currently Access These Services?

Online Access

Many young people mentioned accessing resources and services through online research, websites, social media, online training, YouTube, and online resources in general. This highlights the importance of digital connectivity in YRCs and the potential of online platforms for reaching this audience.

Community-Based Access

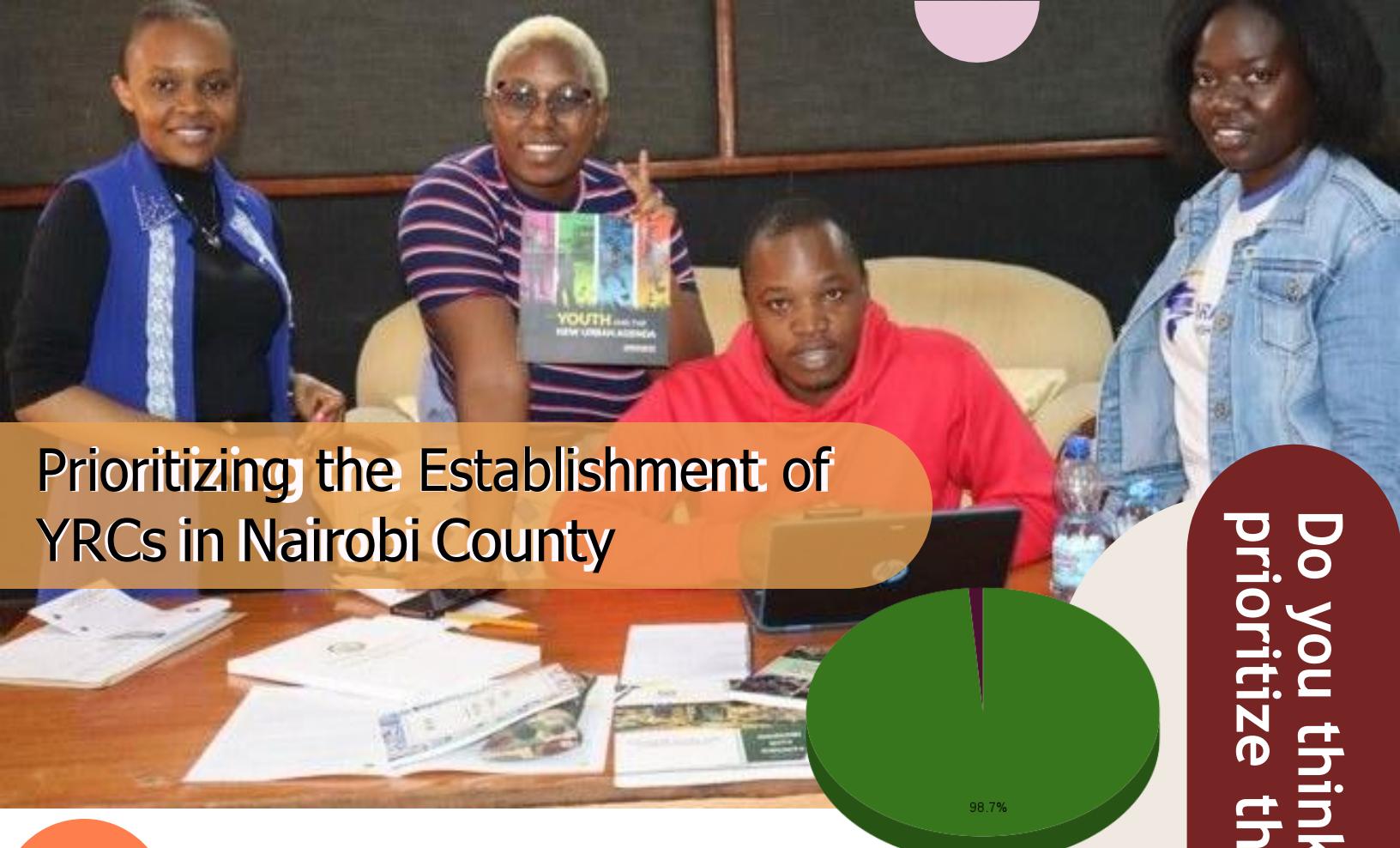
Some access YRC services through affiliated community-based organizations, NGOs, and community dialogues, indicating the value of incorporating localized initiatives and organizations in the management and establishment of YRCs to meet the needs of young people.

Personal Initiative

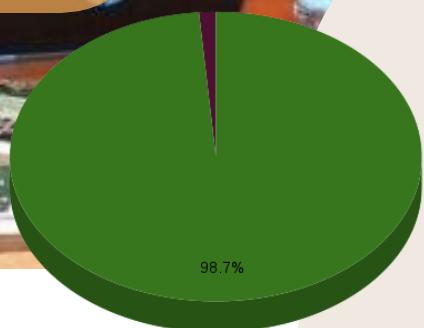
Some take personal initiatives to access services and better themselves. This included self-directed research, personal resources, attending seminars, participating in workshops, and joining youth community organization groups. It demonstrates a proactive approach among Nairobi's young individuals in seeking out opportunities for personal growth and development.

Multiple Service Providers

Some access services from a wide range of providers, including NGOs, CBOs, private institutions, government agencies (e.g., Huduma Centers), churches, schools, and non-profit organizations. The involvement of various stakeholders is imperative in catering to the needs of young people.



Prioritizing the Establishment of YRCs in Nairobi County

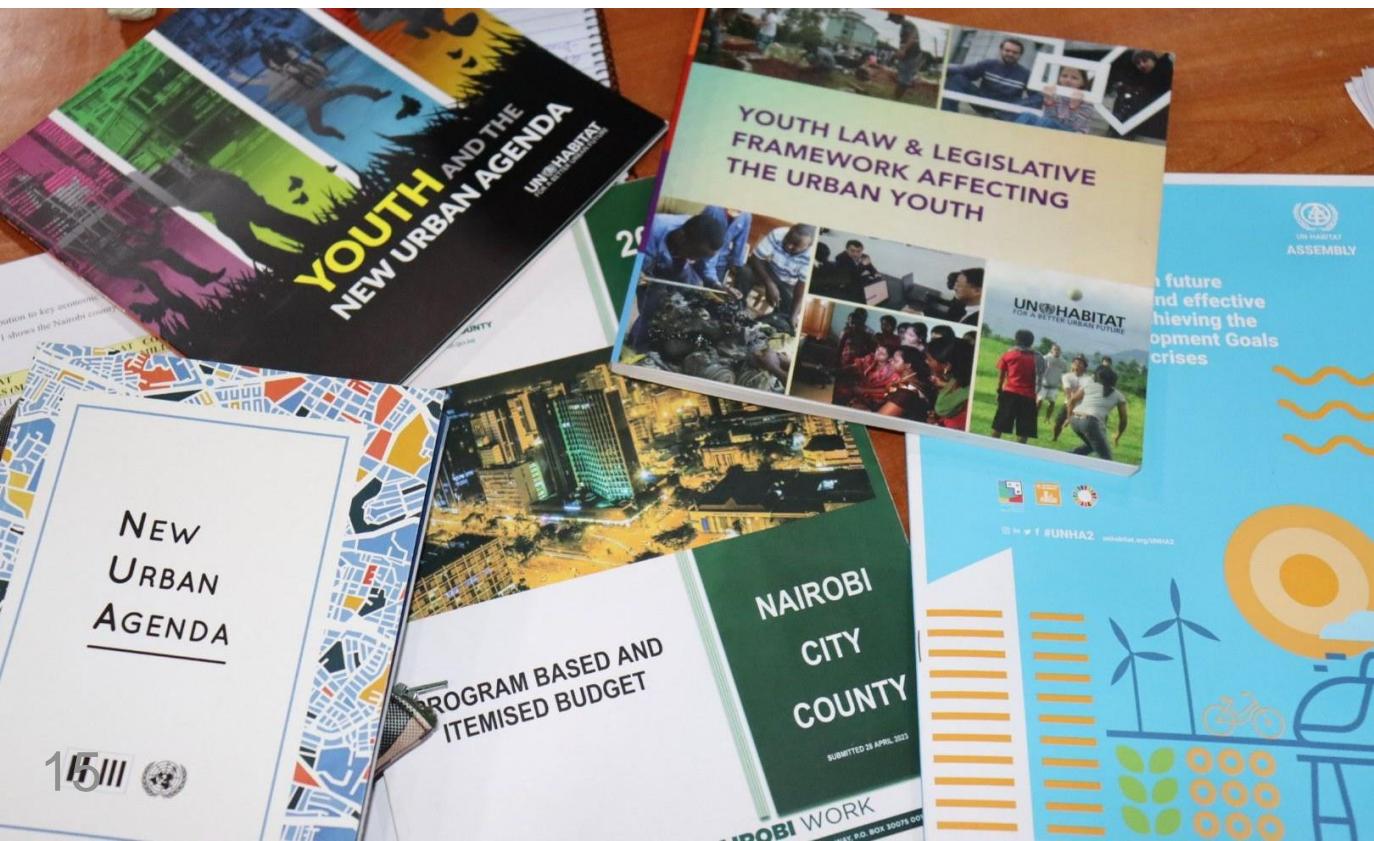
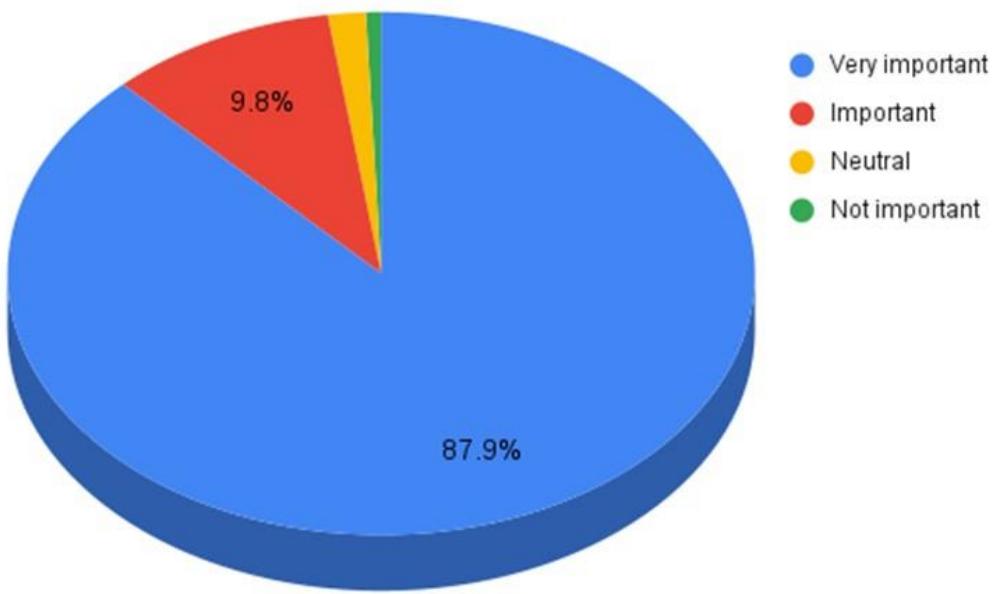


Do you think the County of Nairobi should prioritize the establishment YRCs?

- 01 Empowerment and skill development-YRCs provide accessible spaces for youth to express themselves, build their capacity, and acquire skills and knowledge. Prioritizing the Establishment of YRCs in Nairobi County
- 02 Job opportunities and competitiveness-YRCs can enhance competitiveness in the job market and reduce unemployment by imparting valuable skills and knowledge
- 03 Crime reduction and mentorship-YRCs can reduce crime rates and provide mentorship, nurturing talents, and a safe space for youth to grow and learn.
- 04 Access to information and resources-YRCs bridge the information gap and provide opportunities for talent development, education, and job placements.
- 05
14 Youth representation and future prospects-Investing in youth, providing them with resources and empowerment through YRCs leads to a more productive, responsible, and successful society.

The Key Ask: Resource Allocation

How important do you think it is for the government to allocate resources towards establishing more youth resource centers across Nairobi County?



An overwhelming 98% of Nairobi's Youth believe allocating resources towards YRCs is important



Status of Existing YRCs

There is only one county youth resource center in Nairobi located at the CBD called One Stop Resource Center. Unfortunately, it's not enough to serve all Nairobi's young people. Other YRCs in Nairobi are either run by the National Government, private entities, or NGOs. While they may offer some services, they're not always easy to find or access.

Challenges Hindering Youth-Friendly Spaces

- Capacity Limitations: YRCs currently struggle to meet the diverse needs of youth due to limited resources, inadequate facilities, and staff shortages.
- Political Interference: YRCs are often subject to political interference and lack clear management structures and youth inclusion, hindering their effectiveness.
- Accessibility Issues: YRCs do not accommodate the needs of PWDs and are difficult to navigate, hindering accessibility for all youth.
- Unwelcoming Atmosphere: Some YRCs are unwelcoming to young people due to the presence of police officers and local administration, which can create a tense environment.
- Sustainability Concerns: YRCs lack clear and elaborate plans to sustain services offered and maintain self-sufficiency in the long term.





Summary of Key Findings

The survey conveyed various findings related to YRCs and youth services.

- Awareness: Over half of the surveyed youth were not aware of public YRCs.
- Visitation: Over 55 % of respondents had not visited any public YRC in their sub-county/Nairobi County.
- Relevance: 41.6% found YRC services highly relevant, but 26.9% were uncertain about their relevance.
- Resources: Respondents prioritized education, career development, mental health and well-being, recreational activities, entrepreneurship, and access to resources and opportunities.
- Access to Services: Online platforms and community-based organizations were mentioned as primary access points for youth services.
- Importance of YRCs: 99 % of the respondents believe the County of Nairobi should prioritize establishing more YRCs.
- Government Resource Allocation: 98 % considered it very important for the ~~government~~ to allocate resources towards establishing more YRCs.
- Existing YRCs: The only county YRC in Nairobi is located in the CBD, and other YRCs are run by different entities but are not easily accessible.
- Hurdles Hindering Youth-Friendly Spaces: Capacity limitations, political interference, accessibility issues, unwelcoming atmospheres, and sustainability concerns were identified as challenges.



Recommendations



- In collaboration with national gov't, youth, the private sector and local communities, the Nairobi County gov't should launch comprehensive awareness campaigns involving national government, youth, private sector, and local communities to inform Nairobi's youth about YRCs through various communication channels.
- The county government should prioritize resource allocation for the establishment of functional YRCs within the next 5 years as per the CIDP and engage young people in every step, from planning and management to monitoring and assessment processes.
- Nairobi county gov't in partnership with National gov't and NGOs should facilitate regular assessments and improve resources, capacity, and management structures to enhance the relevance of existing and future YRCs.
- Ensuring accessibility and inclusivity in existing and future YRCs and accommodating the needs of all youth, including persons with disabilities.
- Strengthening partnerships and collaboration between national and county government, youth, private sector, civil society organizations, and community-based organizations to support YRC establishment and operationalization.
- Development of clear sustainability plans for existing and future YRCs, incorporating financial literacy and entrepreneurship programs for self-reliance.
- Integration of technology within present and future YRCs, establishing online platforms, virtual trainings, and mentorship opportunities.
- Implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess YRCs impact, gather further feedback from youth and all stakeholders, and address emerging challenges.
- The county government should adopt a strategic approach to repurpose existing resources i.e., community centers and social halls, into youth-friendly spaces as an interim measure to provide young individuals with accessible and inclusive environments where they can engage in various activities and access necessary support services.

