



**FIRESIDE**chat

**DIGITAL  
SKILLS  
GAP**



**JOB CREATION  
IN KENYA**

**Fri, June 28, 2019**

## BACKGROUND

The Kenyan youth need to know how best they can poise themselves as they enter the wealth creation market in the economy whether through jobs, enterprises or talent utilisation. We will share the deliberations of diverse views and present a working paper that we can use in subsequent discussions as Youth Agenda sort a sustainable way to improve the youth economic empowerment programs. Noteworthy is the willingness of youth legislators (Members of Parliament and Senate) to pick up critical action points that can be passed in policy and present it to Parliament. The Presidency has also stated its express commitment to ensuring the youth have an enabling environment to sustain themselves through business, talent and jobs. World Economic forum future of jobs report 2018 states that there are complex feedback loops between new technology, jobs and skills. New technologies can drive business growth, job creation and demand for specialist skill, but they can also displace entire roles when certain tasks become obsolete or automated. Are Kenyan youths prepared for the future of work in a digital era and in the age of automation? How do we fill the digital skills gap to sort out unemployment for the youth? What strategies do we need to prepare the youth work force for the fourth industrial revolution?

## OBJECTIVES



Establish the role of the Government of Kenya in the youth to unemployment issue (jobs) and access to wealth creation opportunities. Should Government be the provider of jobs or what is their role in job creation?



Examine how Kenya's private sector is spearheading the 4th Industrial revolution towards increasing employment opportunities and increased income levels among the youth?



Determine the Role of Civil society in advocacy for digital skills among the youth, and their economic empowerment programmes that are aimed towards curbing the skills gap and job creation.



Examine the Skills Gap among the Kenyan Youth – both from the academic institutions and the ones out there in the job market.



Explore the specific strategies that all Economic actors (Government, Private sector & Civil Society) need to adopt in order to prepare the youth at the workplace for the 4th Industrial revolution.

## GROUP DISCUSSION: DIGITAL SKILLS

The first session was centered on Digital Skills and what Youth need to understand about the digital space, its impact on work opportunities and what capacity building is needed for them to cut a niche in the job sector given the digital shift. The panel leading this conversation comprised of different leaders in the market, namely; **Eric Thimba Co-founder and CEO Mookh**, a social-e-commerce platform that allows sellers to quickly and easily set up online stores with installed payment integration, **Rachel Muthoga, she is the Deputy CEO at Kenya Private Sector Alliance**, **Huston Malande, CEO Skyline Design Ltd** and **Stella Nderitu; a communicator, youth trainer and speaker from Emerging Leaders Foundation** who is passionate about Young Women's Participation in Governance. Huston Malande started the discussion stating that the average time it takes for a graduate to get a job in the current market is 5 years after graduation. He highlighted on average a million people are born in the same year, 800K sit for KCPE, 400K sit for KCSE and only 100K graduate from University. The job market still has to accommodate the total population when it comes to looking for jobs.

*Figure 1 Panelists Eric Thimba, Rachel Muthoga, Huston Malande and Stella Nderitu*





Rachel Muthoga challenged government seeking to know what exactly it is doing to create a shift in how it goes about employment and employment opportunities across the board. She also noted the delay in payments by government especially to SME's greatly affects business continuity for those who are trying to create employment.

Eric Thimba highlighted how Kenya as a nation deals digitally, citing growth in online transactions and mobile money transactions. The growth in digital connections has opened up opportunities and platforms for job creation and employment.



## **GROUP DISCUSSION: WHAT GOVERNMENT IS DOING TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES?**

Hon. Caleb Amisi, elected Member of Parliament for Saboti constituency, stated the government has a big role in job creation stating the main responsibility is to create a conducive environment for work. He also mentioned legislature should pass policy enabling this conducive working environment. He added that government should address the evolution of technology vis a vis the job market stating it should educate people from the lowest educational level on how ICT can be integrated as a skill necessary for job creation.

Walter Mong'are, deputy director in youth programs presidency and cabinet affairs, stated the government has a duty to protect its citizens and should also empathise with citizens. It must also be accountable to its citizens in job creation.

*Figure 2 Hon. Caleb Amisi and Walter Mong'are present at the YAA Fireside chat*

## **QUESTION: WHAT SKILLS DO WE NEED?**

Stella Nderitu summarized this in two words, knowledge economy. Basically; what do you know? What information can you share? Huston Malande stated in the digital space, they look for specific digital skills relevant to the context of work available. He also emphasised on being a culture fit. It basically means having skills that are people centric, not only being able to work but also people being able to

work with you.

Eric Thimba emphasised on coding. Coding is essential knowledge for just about everyone in this digital age. He also mentioned the use of digital platforms and networks to make money/ work. He further said we should utilise the digital space as the time for digital use and growth is right now. Herbert Thuo mentioned we now live in a global village and the most successful companies revolve around a platform and not the regular 8-5 working hours. He told people to learn the distinction between work and a job. Focus on work.

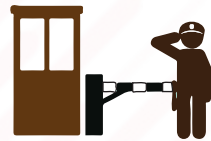


Figure 3 Mookh CEO/CO Founder Eric Thimba Addressing attendants at the YAA Fireside Chat

## EMERGING ISSUES



Are we digitally connected?



Does the government truly protect us?



Are legislators prioritizing job creation for young people?



Is the government enabling us?



Is intellectual property safe guarded?



Innovation in government service and digital platforms.



Gap between urban and rural youth in digital exposure.





## RECOMMENDATIONS

Herbert Thuo, CEO and cofounder Mediac, encouraged people to be innovative and give investors a reason to invest in you/your work/business.

Hon. Caleb Amisi stated failure in government systems have caused a huge strain in economic growth thus straining opportunities, however, a lot can still be done. He stated people should not focus solely on formal employment, but should rather build on skill-based careers as well.

Huston categorized the audience as the 1% privileged to receive information. He encouraged people to create opportunities for others. Do not think only about yourself but also what opportunities you can create for others.

Walter Mong'are made a commitment to restore the dignity of young people through job creation from his position of influence. He also emphasised on the need to give people access to information that will enrich their lives.



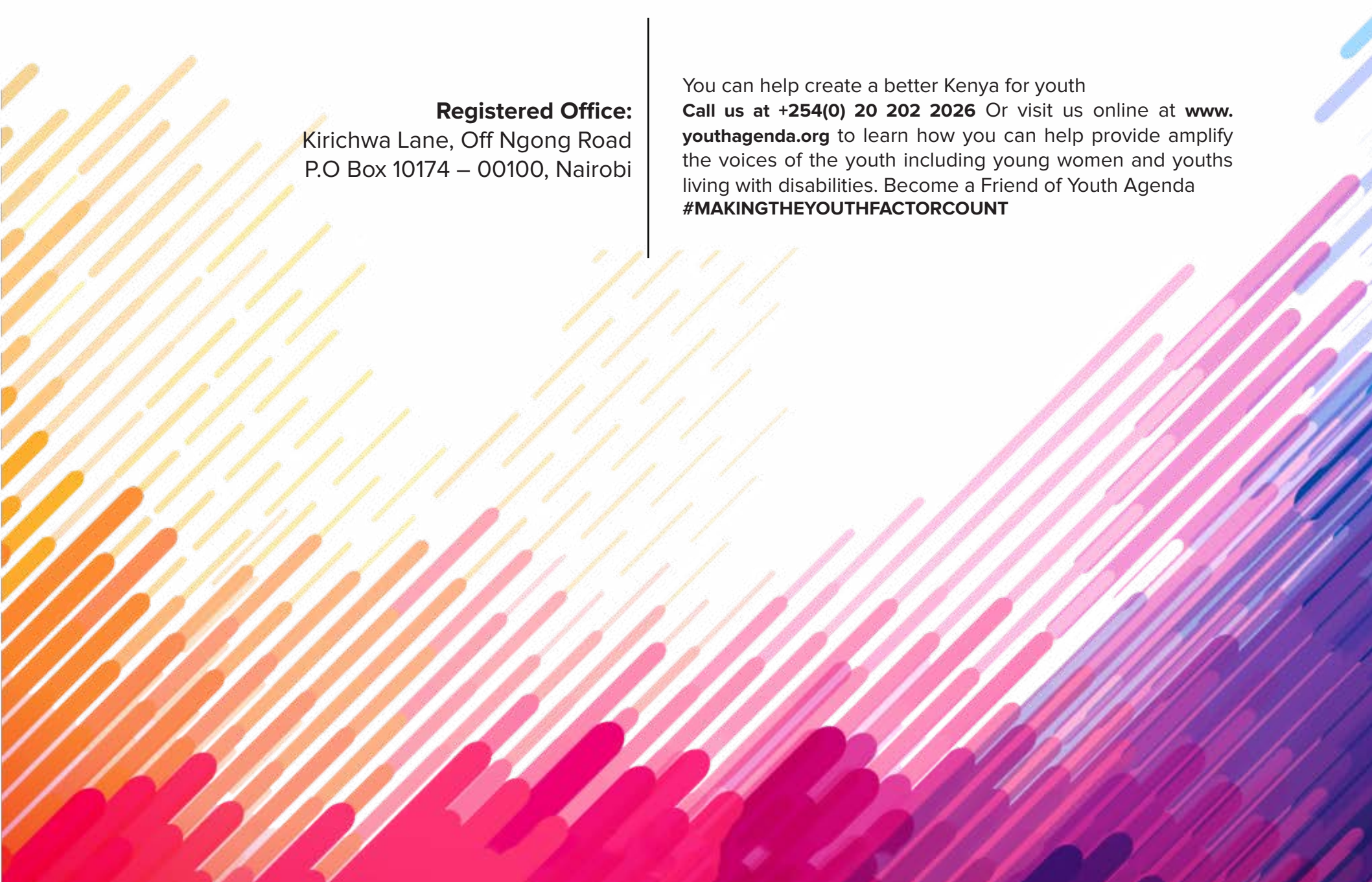
*Figure 4 CEO/CO Founder Mediac Herbert Thuo weighing in on issues at YAA Fireside Chat*

## MOVING FORWARD

There is need for a policy to ensure the ICT sector equips people with skills from the earliest education level as it will most likely become the biggest skill based contributor to employment. There is a challenge in getting employment to drive policies in the National Assembly. This is something in need of more advocacy and acting upon by government to safe guard the future of millions of young people in a job market that will essentially require digital skills from everyone.

Hon. Caleb Amisi pledged to present a bill to parliament that addresses digital skills enhancement among the Youths in the training institutions to help curb the unemployment crisis in the Country.





**Registered Office:**  
Kirichwa Lane, Off Ngong Road  
P.O Box 10174 – 00100, Nairobi

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