

RESEARCH ARTICLE

POLICY OPTIONS FOR ENHANCED ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL LAND FOR MIGRATING YOUTH IN DENSELY POPULATED RURAL KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The participation of youths in agriculture in Kenya has been low leading to migration to urban areas where the youths expect to get better jobs in non-farm sector. They thus earn low incomes and experience increasing poverty, social and economic exclusion, and increased risk of political tensions. We carried out a study to identify the drivers of youth migration in densely populated areas of rural Kenya using panel data of 500 youths for the period 2007 to 2014 and an additional 115 sample cross sectional data of 2015 which was analyzed to describe the individual, household and community level variables using the probit model. The results established that 60 percent of youths migrated between 2007 and 2015 and about 40% of the migrants move out of the farms. The main drivers of migration from farming were gender, increasing age, population, production and village land rent. Migrating youths earned low incomes and had no incentives to rent land. Their production levels were low and had little asset based. To attract more youth to agriculture, requires a policy environment that promotes that development of land and labor markets in the rural areas, training on skills and increased investment for higher productivity. These will lead to increased access to land, education, gender, farm assets wages and productivity hampered migration. The study concluded that agriculture lack of an enabling investment environment drives the youths from agriculture. It is therefore recommended that, for farming to attract more youths and support the growth of the agricultural sector, policies should enable enhanced credit availability to catalyse access to production resources and increased productivity in the sector. These will stem out migration of youths from the rural areas address issues related to increased access to land, better education and increased returns on investment in the agriculture sector.

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INTRODUCTION

The population of youth in Kenya has been growing rapidly. They account for about 32% of the total population (KNBS, 2019). In terms of engagement, about 60% of the youth are part of the labour force and 64% are in the unemployed group (Afande, Maina and Maina, 2015; ROK, 2017). The youth drive national development agenda through their ability to leverage on education, skills, energy and creativity when provided with appropriate enabling environment. They are considered as a gem and valued as national resource upon which development can be based. Their engagement in gainful employment has however remained a major challenge in many developing countries (Odoh and Innocent, 2014). The socioeconomic environment in which the youth live determine their success in life. Youths form a cog that can drive national development and if not gainfully employed, they can be misused to destroy their societies.

A society that prepares the youth to for the sake of development usually secure their development agenda since the buy in of national development agenda is great at tender ages. The youth situation in the rural set up is complex one. Majority of youth live in rural areas where they derive their livelihood from agriculture. They engage in low skilled jobs that have low returns and even when they are employed, 84% of them are vulnerable (KNBS, 2003). Although these jobs have low skill requirements, they are insecure, seasonal, post low returns expose them to occupational health problems. Youth participation in agriculture however faces a number of challenges key among limited investment to support increased access to land. In addition, the living conditions in the farming sector have not improved with the self image of farmers dipping for worse. Furthermore, growing land scarcity due to increasing population in densely populated rural areas compounds the case.

These factors therefore determine whether millions of rural Africans will get gainful employment in the rural areas. The composite problem that youth encounter reduce their likelihood of progressive job creation leading increased poverty, social and economic exclusion, and increased risk of political tensions. These factors have prompted the youth to leave the agricultural sector and migrated to the urban areas where they are attracted to non-agricultural jobs (Ajaero, C.K. & Onokala, P.C., 2013; Bousquet 2008; UN Habitat). Migration is a household-based strategy that aims to diversify sources on livelihood for household members with the family support to cover the costs associated with migration. The migration decision process may or may not be directed by the larger family who have explicit knowledge of what the migrants ought to do to support their larger families (Adams, 2011; WB, 2011; Konseiga, 2005; Akhter and Bauer, 2014).

Das Haas (2010) stated that youth migration positively impacts on them through participating in higher education, accessing better and decent job, gaining professional experience, pursuing personal development, building self-confidence, and acquiring skills and competencies beneficial to themselves, their countries and communities of origin as well as destination. That notwithstanding, for some young people, especially young women and those in irregular situations, the migration process confers to them certain vulnerabilities (World Youth Report, 2016).

The vulnerabilities include discriminative in terms of gender, migration status, ethnicity or religion, working conditions, access health and social protection (das Haas, 2010; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), 2016). Migration therefore has both positive and migration may address the lack of employment opportunities for the youths. It can also expose the marginalized people in the society to increased violation of their rights (Massey, *et al*, 1993).

It is therefore not clear whether youth gain or lose after migration. Are the youths better off when they migrate or are better off remaining in agriculture? Can employment opportunities in agriculture be enhanced to create viable options for the youths and stem migration? Are youth in a position to access land and use their labor to make a decent livelihood and be able to feed themselves? The desire to answer these questions motivated this study to be carried out. This is because the agriculture sector has the potential to enhance youth employment furthermore if the government commits itself Maputo declaration of 1993 and supports agricultural development.

Objectives of the study

The youth presents an energetic and innovative group whose exclusion from farming may be the missing link required for growth in the agriculture sector, which continues to experience declining productivity and low profitability. The youth migration patterns and how they access land may provide a greater understanding of the realities of their current [un]employment, economic activities their needs and aspirations towards prosperity. This is the key driver that motivated this study.

This study had two major objectives

- To characterize the youth migration patterns from rural densely populated areas in Kenya
- To identify policy options that would make agriculture attractive to the youths. To achieve these objectives, this study was guided by the following research questions.
- What are the socioeconomic characteristics of youths migrating from the densely populated areas?
- What factors influence youth migration from densely populated areas?
- Are these households preparing their children to move from agriculture altogether in the future given that there are no possibilities of obtaining additional farm land?
- Are the households members migrating to urban centers for non-farm jobs being *pulled* [have the requisite skills needed in the job market] or being *pushed* [migrate due to lack of land to earn livelihoods from agriculture]?

Hypotheses: This study was developed on the premise that land scarcity and labor opportunities motivate youth migration and families often expect remittances and relatively quick returns on their investment (Massey, *et al*, 1993; Stark and Bloom, 1985). Based on this premise the study hypothesized that the decision to move is influenced by environmental and individual factors. In the environment, push and pull factors determine whether an individual will move or not depending on one's perception on the value associated with moving.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study selected households from a list of households in regions with a population density of above 500 persons per square kilometer using 2007, 2010 and 2014 data sets from Tegemeo Institute of Agricultural Policy and Developments. The individuals were followed up for interviews seeking information describing their migration status, educational and professional qualification before and after migration, their motivation to migrate, support during migration, intention to retire as an immigrant, remittances to their parents and land ownership status. Each household survey information included migration decision in relation to year, reason, support, education, and skills the youth had at the time of migration and after, land ownership status in terms of land size, number of parcels, location of land, mode of acquisition, land use practices, and reasons for use, retirement plans in terms of land ownership, plans for retirement, area owned and where it is owned and remittances were also covered in terms of work status, years at work, amount remitted and frequency of remittance. Youth migrants were identified through computer aided personal interview. Migrant youths were identified at their original households and their migration histories obtained through in-depth interviews for 500 youths between the ages of 10 and 35. Historical data was collected included gender, age, per-capita income, current activities [i.e., work, school] Remittances, retirement plan, and educational attainment. To allow maximum flexibility in describing the relationship between age and migration, we treated age as categorical, and to avoid issues of sparseness, then create seven equally spaced age groups [i.e., 10–15, 16–20, 21–25, 26–30, 31–35, 36–40, 41–45].

>40. According to projected age- 10–12 corresponds roughly with the end of primary school.

Most 10–12- year-olds would have their respective certificates available locally. Likewise, age 13–18 corresponds to lower secondary school, and age 19 and older corresponds to college-level study. Data was analyzed to describe the individual, household and community level variables. Thereafter, probit model, a normal cumulative distribution function was used for inferential analysis.

It is a form of regression analysis used to analyze the push pull variables. The variables were categorized into three as individual, household and Community level variables. They were analyzed based on unobservable utility index that determines whether an individual will migrate or not. The model calculated the proportion of youth who have ever migrated for education or labor reasons, and model the log-odds of being an education or labor migrant in any particular year using discrete-time event-history analysis.

Theoretical framework: This study employed a dichotomous binary choice model to investigate the drivers of youth migration out of agriculture. A probit model was developed to examine the relationship between individual, household and Community level variables and the youth migration from agriculture. Earlier studies carried out in Sub-Saharan Africa suggest that eventual behaviour is influenced by various individual characteristics (Adesina, 1996). Consequently, these factors are hypothesized to be important drivers of an individual's ability to change behaviour given the information available.

Model specification

Assume that for a sample data (x_i, y_i) where $i=1,2, \dots, n$, is observed. Where y_i is an outcome variable that can take only two values, either 1 or 0 (it is a Bernoulli random variable); x_i is a $1 \times k$ vector of inputs. The conditional probability that the outcome y_i is equal to 1, given the inputs x_i , is assumed to $P(y_i=1|x_i)=F(x_i\beta)$ where F_t is the cumulative distribution function of the standard normal distribution and β is a $1 \times k$ vector quantifying the responses of y_i to x_i . Moreover, if y_i is not equal to 1, then it is equal to 0 (no other values are possible), and the probabilities of the two values need to sum up to 1, so that $P(y_i=0|x_i)=1-P(y_i=1|x_i)=1-F(x_i\beta)$.

The a priori expectation of the study is that personal factors in education and labor areas increase migration. It was also expected that, because of the investment in education, migration would be positively associated with living in better circumstances, as indicated by timely school enrollment and by having living parents, whereas youth labor migration would be positively associated with delayed school enrollment and loss of parents.

With regard to youth characteristics, education migration was expected to be associated with urban residence, wealthier households, and higher educational attainment. In contrast, labor migration was expected to be positively associated with living in an urban area, household wealth, labour participation and lower educational attainment.

RESULTS

Figure 1 shows that about 90% of youth migration from densely populated areas in Kenya was due to job related issues. Land constraint and starting a family were the reasons given for migration and they accounted for less than 10 percent.

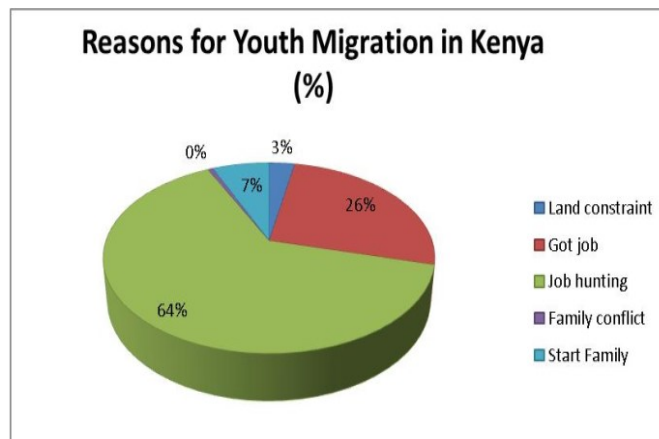


Figure 1. Reasons for Migration

Youths migration in search for better jobs take a risk looking for highly competitive jobs which require better education in sectors other than agriculture (Ginsburg *et al.*, 2014; Awumbila *et al.*, 2015). Better jobs would confer them economic freedom, dignity equity, security thus overcoming economic difficulties of their households (UNICEF, 2007). In some cases, youth seek short-term seasonal employment to supplement their income during the season when agricultural work is not available. In other cases, youth wish to move to urban areas for a longer period, attracted by the differences in expected returns and income (Harris and Todaro, 1970)

MIGRATION: Migrants are people whose place of enumeration during the census is other than his/her place of immediate last residence. Using the last place of residence, the distribution of migrants showed that Western and Rift Valley reported the highest and lowest number of migrants respectively.

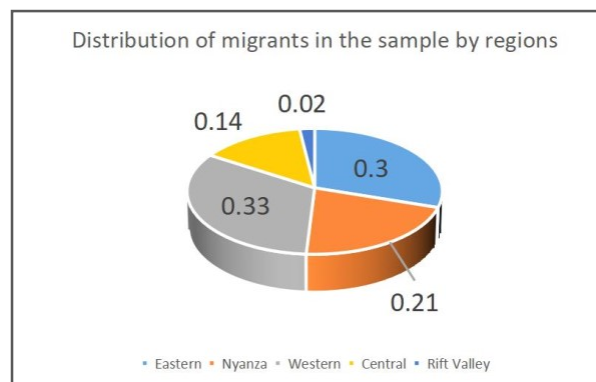


Figure 2. Distribution of Migrants by Regions

Figure 2. The main sources of migrants are Western and Eastern regions of Kenya which account for 33 percent and 30 percent respectively.

Nyanza had the highest number of migrants moving to the urban areas followed by Central. Rift Valley had the least number of migrants to the urban areas, Figure 3. Most migrants were destined to Nairobi, Machakos (Eastern), and Thika (Central). A significant number was also attracted to Mombasa.

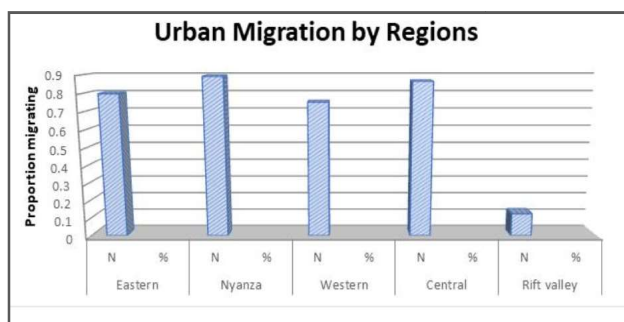


Figure 3 Urban Migration

Age and gender: Migration is a selective process which involves some population sub-groups more than the other. Age and sex are some of drivers of migration (Zaiceva, 2020). However, age may cause in and out migration though in most cases, the younger generation move out. Women on the other hand migrate due to work related issues, gender based violence and opportunity to improve their livelihoods through better education (UN Women, 2020). Most of the migrating women were either in the young or in the working age group category. They are agents of change and carry with them diverse talent, expertise, and send financial remittances to their families and communities thus allowing economies to grow. In rural areas, young women and men do not have sufficient access to quality education and decent livelihood opportunities. In contrast, the expanding urban informal sector becomes attractive to a large number of rural youth (Deshingkar and Grimm, 2005). Figure 4 shows gender factor distribution during migration. The percentage of women migrating is much higher than men.

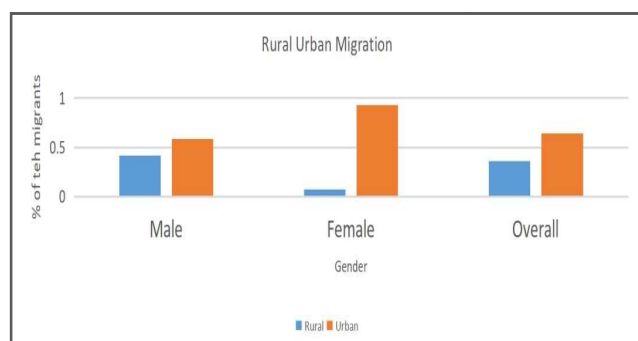


Figure 4. Rural Urban Migration by Gender

Figure 5 shows the age distribution of the migration of youths. About 87% of the migrants are aged above 25 years. Migration among the youths increased with age up to 30 years and then it dampens to 40 years. As age advances, most people have already settled in alternative lands away from their parents. Table 1 shows that migration peaks at age group 25-30 years and thereafter it declines. This age group contributes that largest percentage of migrants (Deotti and Estruch, 2016). Further, it was observed that 60% of the youths migrated between 2007 and 2015, Table 1.

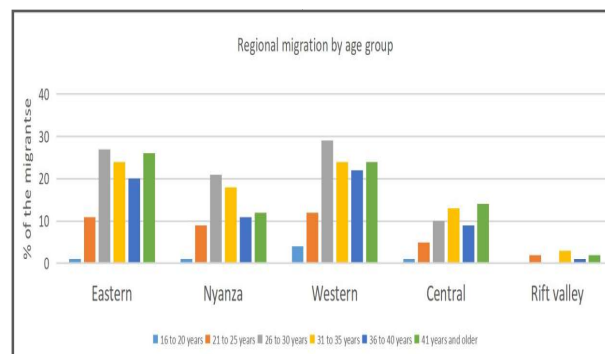


Figure 5. Regional Migration by Age Group

Most youths were reported to be dependant and were still in school or transitioning to gainful employment. Dependent youth in the age bracket 16 -25 years were either in school or had just completed, and while those above 30 years old and had experienced delayed schooling were also transitioning to gainful employment. Most of the migrant youth were in the age groups 26-30 and 31-35 years. The migration by age group 36-40 years was lower than the mobile age groups of 26 -30, 31-35 and >41 years. Migration intensity is more in the larger Western and Eastern and least in Rift Valley provinces of Kenya where most migrants are in the age group 31-35 years. Majority of the migrants from central Kenya were youths.

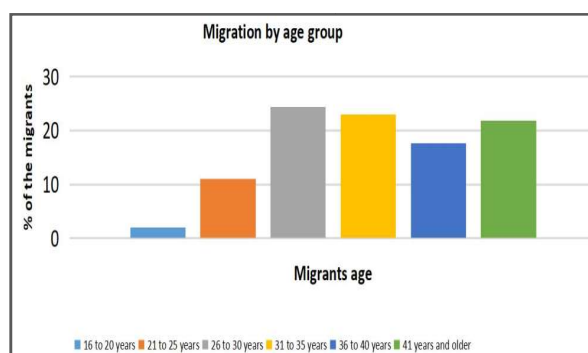


Figure 6. Migration by Age Group

Table 1. Age distribution by regions

Age group	Eastern	Nyanza	Western	Central	Rift valley	Overall	
	N	N	N	N	N	N	%
16 to 20 years	1	1	4	1	0	7	2
21 to 25 years	11	9	12	5	2	39	11
26 to 30 years	27	21	29	10	0	87	24.4
31 to 35 years	24	18	24	13	3	82	23
36 to 40 years	20	11	22	9	1	63	17.7
41 years and older	26	12	24	14	2	78	21.9

The average migration rate was 13% with a range of 11%-14%. The rift valley was omitted due to the small number of migrants. In terms of numbers, Western had more migrants followed by Eastern and Nyanza Figure 7. The small number of migrants from Rift valley was attributed to the availability of large tracts of land unlike the densely populated Eastern and Nyanza. Mlolongo and Nairobi are the main towns attracting migrants from Eastern.

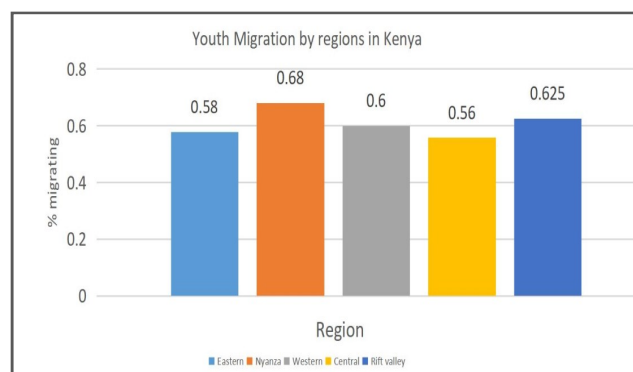


Figure 7. Percentage Migration by Regions

A comparative assessment of migration showed that men were more likely to migrate compared to women. The proportion of male and female migrants was 84% and 16 % respectively. This is well aligned to the global trend where more men migrate from their home areas. The lower migration rates for women were attributed to their reproductive and care responsibilities, financial and decision making constraints (Deotti and Estruch, 2016). The migration pattern showed movement to urban areas accounted for about 64% while rural migration accounts for 36%. There was a notable variation in the proportion of male and female migrants moving to urban and rural areas. Men were more likely to move to urban and rural areas than women. Majority of women moved to urban centers. Chances of one being a male and migrating to an urban or rural area was 49 percent and 35 percent respectively compared with female whose likelihood of migrating to the same areas are 15% and 1% respectively. Most female migrants with primary and secondary level education levels moved to Nairobi and Mombasa.

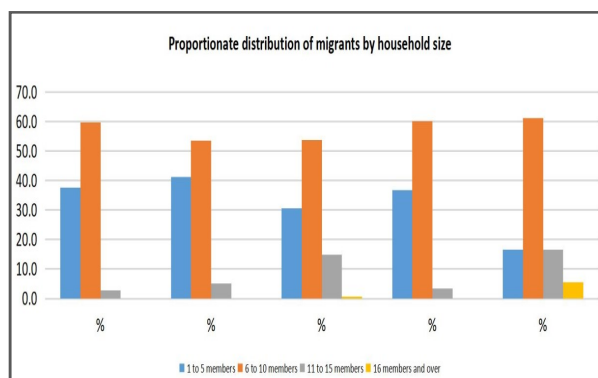


Figure 8. % Proportionate Distribution of Migrants by Household Size

HOUSEHOLD SIZE: Migration by household size showed that households with 6-10 members contribute the highest number of migrants followed by households of size 1-5 members. Large household with 16 or more members contributed the smallest number of migrants. This reflected the expected norm that migration is a characteristic of large households.

The average household size in Kenya was 4 persons and this ranges from 3 persons per household to 7 persons per household in Mandera (Statistica, 2023). It was also observed that larger households were in polygamous settings.

Where the average land size was large, family members did not migrate. Studies have shown that where the number of children is high, families tend to encourage younger members to migrate since they have a high potential to earn and lead a better life. The remaining members were expected to take over and offer the required farm labour.

This scenario may not necessarily hold in rural areas where poverty is high and members of the family are seeking better life. Nyanza had the highest number of migrants in household's category having 1-5 members followed by Eastern with 41.2% and 37.7% respectively. Most of these migrants move to urban areas where there are better job prospects. Rift valley had the least number of households i.e 16.7% in that category. In the category of households with 11-15 members and above 16, Rift Valley leads with 16.7% followed by western 15.7%. In the large household category Easter, Central and Nyanza had 2.7%, 3% and 5.2% respectively.

Table 2. Migration of Household Members by Region

Household size	Eastern	Nyanza	Western	Central	Rift valley
	%	%	%	%	%
1 to 5 members	37.7	41.2	30.6	36.7	16.7
6 to 10 members	59.6	53.6	53.7	60.0	61.1
11 to 15 members	2.7	5.2	15.0	3.3	16.7
16 members and over	0.0	0.0	.7	0.0	5.6

Education: The study established that about 60% of household heads did not have post secondary school level education. Low education levels was reported in two regions, Central and Rift Valley. They had 3.2% and 6.2% of their migrant population educated to above secondary school level. Eastern had the highest number of migrants having post-secondary school education followed by Nyanza and Western at 8.4 % and 6.6% respectively. Low level of education is thus one of the factors that alienated the youth from agriculture due to limited knowledge.

They had rural life skills but lacked the requisite experience that might drive them to farming activities. It is important to note that that agriculture was mainly taught at high school level. While the curricula content was not reviewed in this study, FAO *et al*, (2014) reported that it was are not relevant to rural needs and children are not encouraged to consider agriculture as a future career.

INCOME: The desire to earn better incomes is one of the drivers of youth migration from agriculture. This is due to poverty and the lack of opportunities in most rural areas in different parts of Africa. The income levels of about 90% of the households were less than KES 40,000. In Rift valley, about 99% of the people earn less than KES 40,000 compared to about 81% in Eastern. Household in Nyanza, Western and Central earning this amount were 93%, 95% and 92% respectively. Central region has the highest number of households earning over KES 60,000 followed by Eastern with 8.6%. While Nyanza has 3.2% of households earning over KES 60,000, Rift Valley has none.

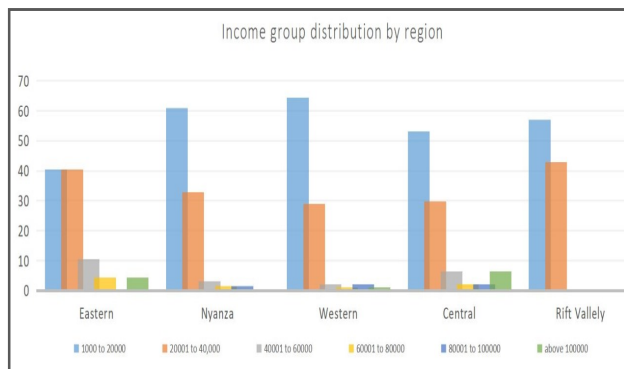


Figure 9. Income Distribution by Region

Migrants were remitting a small part of their incomes to their homes of origin. The money was mostly used to meet current expenditures with little devoted to agricultural investment. The remittances sent by young migrants make a difference to their source family in a small but significant way (UNICEF, 2014). All the remittances for Nyanza and Rift Valley are less than KES 100,000. Remittances over KES 100,000 to households in Central, Eastern and Western regions are about 13%, 7% and 6% respectively.

Table 3. Comparative Percentage Annual Remittances [KSh]

	Eastern	Nyanza	Western	Central	Rift valley
	%	%	%	%	%
Ksh 50000	73.86	86.44	82.80	68.42	60.00
50001 to 100000	19.32	13.56	10.75	18.42	40.00
100001 to 150000	3.41	0.00	2.15	5.26	0.00
> 150000	3.41	0.00	4.30	7.89	0.00
<Ksh 100,000	93.18	100.00	93.55	86.84	100.00
>Ksh 100,000	6.82	0.00	6.45	13.16	0.00

It can be observed that regions receiving large number of migrants have higher income levels compared with others. The amount remitted also depend on the number of young people who migrate from rural homestead and their gender. Women tend to send smaller amounts more frequently (WB,2015; Petrozziello, 2013; Cortina *et al.*, 2014).

Table 4. Youth Migration and livelihood Change

	Farming	Non farming	Others
Farming	0.607143	0.021341	0.046296
Non farming	0.375	0.969512	0.72222
Others	0.017857	0.009146	0.231487
Total	1.00	1.00	1.00

Youth migration and activity shifts: Table 4 and Figure 10 show the pattern of youth migration and activity changes between 1997 through to 2014. In Table 4, the diagonal shows the number of youths remaining after migration and the off diagonals shows the shifting category. Overall, Non-farm activities had a net gain from youth movement while farming and those not engaged experienced net losses.

The study revealed that the farm sector retained about 61% of its initial population and lost about 38% of the youths to non-farm activities and about 2% became idle. The non-farm sector on the other hand retained 97% of its initial population and lost about 3% to farming and 1% became idle. About 72% of those not engaged in any activity moved to non-farm activities and 5% moved to farming. Only 23 % were retained.

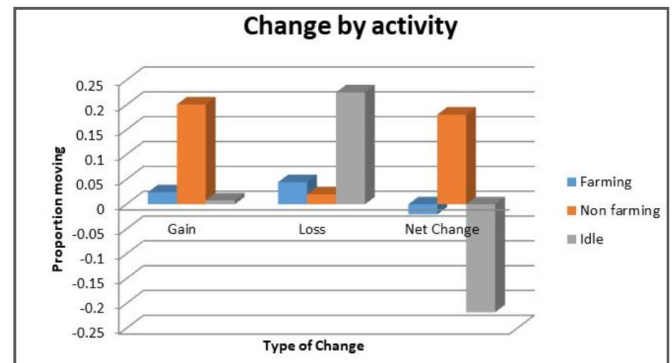


Figure 10. Activity Change due to Migration.

Considering a migrating population of 115, agriculture lost 19%, while it gained 9%. The non-farm sector gained 86% of the migrant population and lost only 9 %. About 97% of those not engaged in any activity moved to the non-farm sector. This showed that youths have low preference for agriculture as a job seeking destination. Overall, the study showed that migration reduces the number of youths who participate in farming while increasing the number of those involved in non-farming activities. Though agriculture has been the main employer in the rural areas, it had lost its attractiveness and was losing the most energetic group to non-farm sectors. What could be pushing or pulling the youths to and from agriculture in the context of youth migration?.Table 6 shows a probit analysis reveals more about the push pull factors that drive youth migration.

Table 6. Probit Regression Results of Determinants of Youth Migration

	Coef.	P>z
Member attributes		
Land access (owned or controlled) (ha)	-0.086	0
Age (years)	0.041	0
Gender (1=male)	0.122	0
Education attainment (years)	-0.007	0
Household and household head attributes		
Household members aged 15-55 years	0.049	0.05
Gender of hh head (1=male)	-0.053	0.02
Physical assets and livestock (million KSh)	0.216	0
Community level variables		
Value of farm production 'million KSh/ha planted	-0.09	0.01
Population density ('000 persons/km2)	0.214	0.02
Net primary production (NPP) '000	0.08	0.01
Village wage rate ('00 KSh/day)	-0.075	0
Village land rent ('000 KSh/ha)	0.019	0

To determine the drivers of migration, a probit regression was carried out and the results with the drivers of migration were categorized as member attributes, household and household head attributes, and community level variables (Thorat *et al.*, 2011). It was observed that at member level, the barriers to migration were availability of land and education.

At household level, households with male heads are less likely to migrate compared with those that are female headed. At community level, high returns on farm investments are the main pull factors. These households improved their access to land through inheritance, opening up new lands for cultivation, agricultural intensification and arid and semi arid land reclamation through irrigation (Frisvold & Ingram, 1995; Lerman & Sedik, 2009; Wubishet, & Bahiru, n.d.). The significant variables recorded in Table 6 provide a basis for the formulation of key intervention areas for policy actions. As noted in Figure 10, an increasing number of the youth are reluctant to consider farming as an employment option and their aspirations are dominated by formal sector employment and modern urban lifestyles (Leavy and Hossain, 2014). This could be related to its inherent limitations among them low returns (Levy and Smith, 2010; FAO, 2014; UNICEF, 2014).

These options at the individual, household and community levels have been the main source of growth in agricultural production as well as employment over time (FAO, 2016). Studies have shown that there is limited scope for continued agricultural extensification to enhance production growth due to land scarcity in the rural areas and population growth. In this study, it was established that about 5% of youths could accessed land through 5% renting while the rest used family land. These numbers are however too small to have an impact (Sangina, 2015). Kenya adopted a devolved system of governance after the promulgation of constitution 2010. Subsequent periods of devolution have been associated with low investment in agricultural extension services. It is important to note that the government of Kenya allocate a paltry 2.8% of its budget to agriculture and this does not portend well for youth seeking employment considering their main asset if their energy (Frisvold & Ingram, 1995). This coupled with changing land allocation priorities has an effect on the rate of migration from farming to non-farm employment and from rural to urban areas (Kosec *et al*, 2018; FAOSTAT 2016 and FAO 2010). In fact, political stability and social cohesion in Kenya will depend on the potential of profitable family farming and the shrinking number of disillusioned and unemployed youth which has continued to rise steadily (Sangina, 2015).

It is important to note that most youths move to seek employment in the informal sector despite their low level education and skills. This is likely to slow down growth of the informal sector as well. There is thus need to offer better intervention in agribusiness if much is to be expected from the youth. Investing in practical oriented education such as TVET, enhancing access to productivity enhancing inputs and assets and supporting institutions that will enhance agricultural productivity. Based on Probit data analysis, it was established that increased access to land stems migration from the densely populated (Sangina, 2015). Policies targeting enhanced access to arable land needs government support if the youth are to be gainfully engaged in agriculture. This was supported by the relatively low out migration among the youth from Rift Valley where there are large tracts of land. With increasing population, it becomes increasingly difficult for youths to access land. This is revealed by the descriptive data that showed that about 71% of the youth's inherited land while a small proportion, 29% were able to buy. The migrants with no access to land are driven away since they could not use their

labour, the ability to work to generate some income (Kwameh *et al*, 2019). Community level attributes showed that high returns are a key factor in attracting youths to farming. Low wages and low productivity did not attract them. Migrating youths did not earn higher incomes sufficient to rent land and remit some to their relatives. The average incomes per person were below the international poverty line of US\$ 1.95. The study found that about 30% of the youths were able to buy land. The most common size was 2 acres and is small to produce sufficient food for a family of 4 if they have to build on it. About 80% of the youth's farm on land not more than 2 acres and 95% of these lands are found in the same county as their home areas (Massey *et al*, 1993). The distribution showed 54% operated land not more than 1 acre, 80% operated farms not more than 2 acres and 16% operated land whose size was between 2-3 acres. Those operating over 5 acres were only 2.6%. Land was therefore a limiting resource and access could be a problem. Through renting 48% of youths were able to access to land. It is important to note that access to land was enhanced through inheritance. However, with increasing life expectancy among the older generation, the youths have to wait longer to own land. Proper planning is thus required to incentivise land leases from the older generations and increase the number of youths accessing land.

It was also noted that the number of youths not involved in agriculture was almost double those engaged in it and only 5% found agriculture as an activity that could improve their livelihood. Their remittances were however low. This could be a clear indication that migration may after all not be a panacea to the problems of low returns and productivity in agriculture. Agriculture could provide better option and attract the youths if policy can address issues of low productivity, lack of access to better skills and low ages. In summary, there is unequal land access across generations with the youths being disadvantaged. There is need to promote viable arable land markets with good incentives to attract youths to agriculture considering the small farm sizes they own. The farms are generally too small to generate sizeable incomes. This exacerbates the poor deplorable conditions that exist in the rural areas driving the youths to urban areas where they hope to live better lives away from the vicious cycle of poverty. However, we find most youths employed in the informal sector where their incomes are low could not remit enough money to their families and get them out of poverty.

CONCLUSION

Agriculture is a promising sector that contributes greatly to economic growth. It requires investment and restructuring for it to support transformation of the lives of the rural folks who depend on it. The sector can employ a high number of young people who constitute the majority of those leaving their home countries in search of a better life elsewhere. Youth migration from farming is driven by the desire to get a better livelihood. The migrants are mainly the energetic group of the rural residents to urban and rural areas where there are better because job opportunities, social amenities and infrastructures unlike their original place of residence. The findings of the study indicated that all the migrants were males and females aged 18 years and above. The study established that males were more likely to migrate compared to females.

Most migrants were in the age group 25-30. This is the group that had just completed schools and was out to seek better life than be dependents'. Despite migration, the migrants had low remittances that could not lift the households out of poverty. The non-farm sector was had a net gain of the migrants as it better prospects compared with farming which did not give them an opportunities to access land. The rural youth relocated to urban and rural where they could earn better incomes and remit some back home to support improvement of their family welfare were not doing compared with those who were left on the farms because their incomes were low.

The main drivers of migration were age, gender, ownership of assets and land rent. The youths earned low incomes and had no incentives to rent land. Their production levels from small pieces of land demotivated them from investing on their farms. Those moving to non-farm activity were many and their earnings were low and could not lift them and their families out of poverty. This shows that while non-farm sector still remains the most important sector for youth employment, it was not remunerating them well. In fact, expecting the 'youths to be the farmers and agripreneurs of tomorrow' will be insufficient at best and disastrous at worst if farm level activity is not incentivized for them (Kwameh, *et al*, 2019). Therefore, agriculture sector policies that give the youths viable options in agriculture and not just keeping them in farming, may be the magic bullet that would contribute to agricultural transformation in Kenya. These may include enhanced credit to promote land leasing and farm level investment and education and training. Increased credit will promote farm investment, productivity, higher wage rates. We therefore recommend that the formulation of effective and efficient policies that support functional agricultural institutions at the both the national and county levels, invest in youth education through appropriate and relevant training, knowledge sharing and guidance to help young people prepare for opportunities in agriculture and agribusiness: and improve access to productivity enhancing inputs facilitating access to credit, land and markets as some of the necessary enablers for young entrepreneurs to consider agriculture as a viable profession.

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