



**YOUNG PEOPLE
DEMOCRACY &
GOVERNANCE in KENYA**
WHAT THEY KNOW AND HOW
THEY ENGAGE

Formative Research and Draft Strategy
Well Told Story for The World Bank; May 2015



STUDY METHODS

WHAT, WHEN, HOW AND WHY

STUDY GOAL:

How might we improve the engagement and participation of Kenyan youth in the activities of devolved government?

STUDY OBJECTIVES:

- explore the experience of Kenyan youth with devolved government
- understand the different ways youth regard & engage with devolved government
- compare & contrast the knowledge, opinions & attitudes of young people, with those of devolved governments & officials

OUR METHODOLOGY:

GroundTruth Research: qualitative, contextualized, youth appropriate, iterative

- multiple, distributed interviews, focus groups, debates & engagements with & by young people, in natural, authentic conversations
- explores knowledge, attitudes, motivators & inhibitors around difficult issues
- triangulates youth data with their contextual reality by comparing youth accounts with those of gatekeepers and authority figures
- involves positive deviants & influencers

LOCATIONS: PURPOSEFUL SELECTION

Diverse youth & county officials sampled from three major cities plus neighboring non-city counties & outliers

CITIES

- Nairobi
- Kisumu
- Mombasa

NON-CITY

- Kilifi
- Kajiado
- Kericho
- Vihiga

OUTLIERS

- Laikipia
(marginalised)
- Machakos
(percieved high performer)

GROUND TRUTH TOOLS AND RESPONDENTS: on-site guided conversations and interviews

- **Youth** (boys and girls aged 15-24) engaged with county government in some way & those not engaged with county government
- **Country officers** in each county

- **Open Forum Discussions** with up to 15 young people x 9
- **Key informant interviews** with County Government officers x 13
- **Key informant interviews** with “Positive Deviant” youth x 40

- **Triangulation** of youth data with County Officers’ data

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: 4 MAIN TAKEAWAYS

There are distinct segments among Kenyan youth separated by their attitude, knowledge & their willingness to engage with government

1

Communications campaigns should consider the different information needs of the different youth segments

Most youth have already made up their minds based on past experience or misinformation & are dismissive of participation in government systems

2

Mass media can reboot public perceptions & engagement by catalyzing relevant, topical, informed conversation among youth about government systems

Youth & government often have mismatched priorities & values leading to mutual confusion & mutual distrust

3

Devolution values & priorities need to be aligned with youth needs through consultation & communications

Currently there are no obvious mechanisms for a fruitful mutual engagement with youth

4

A pilot mechanism to trial new youth engagement activities should be tested in selected counties

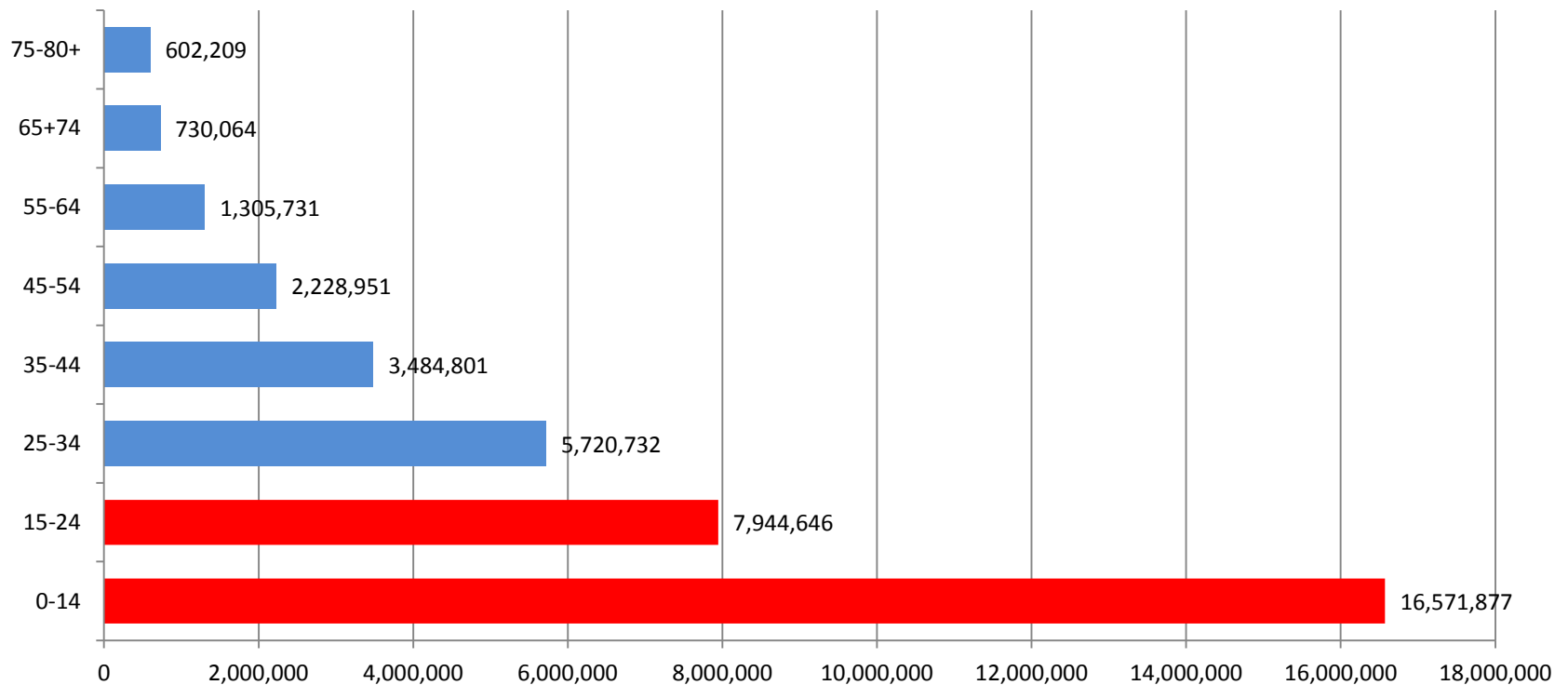
KENYAN YOUTH PROFILE

KENYAN YOUTH IN NUMBERS

Over 60% of Kenyans are aged under 25 years

5 years after the '09 census, almost 9m Kenyans are now between 15-24 yrs

(The total voter turn-out in the 2013 elections was 12.3m, in 2007 it was 9.8m)

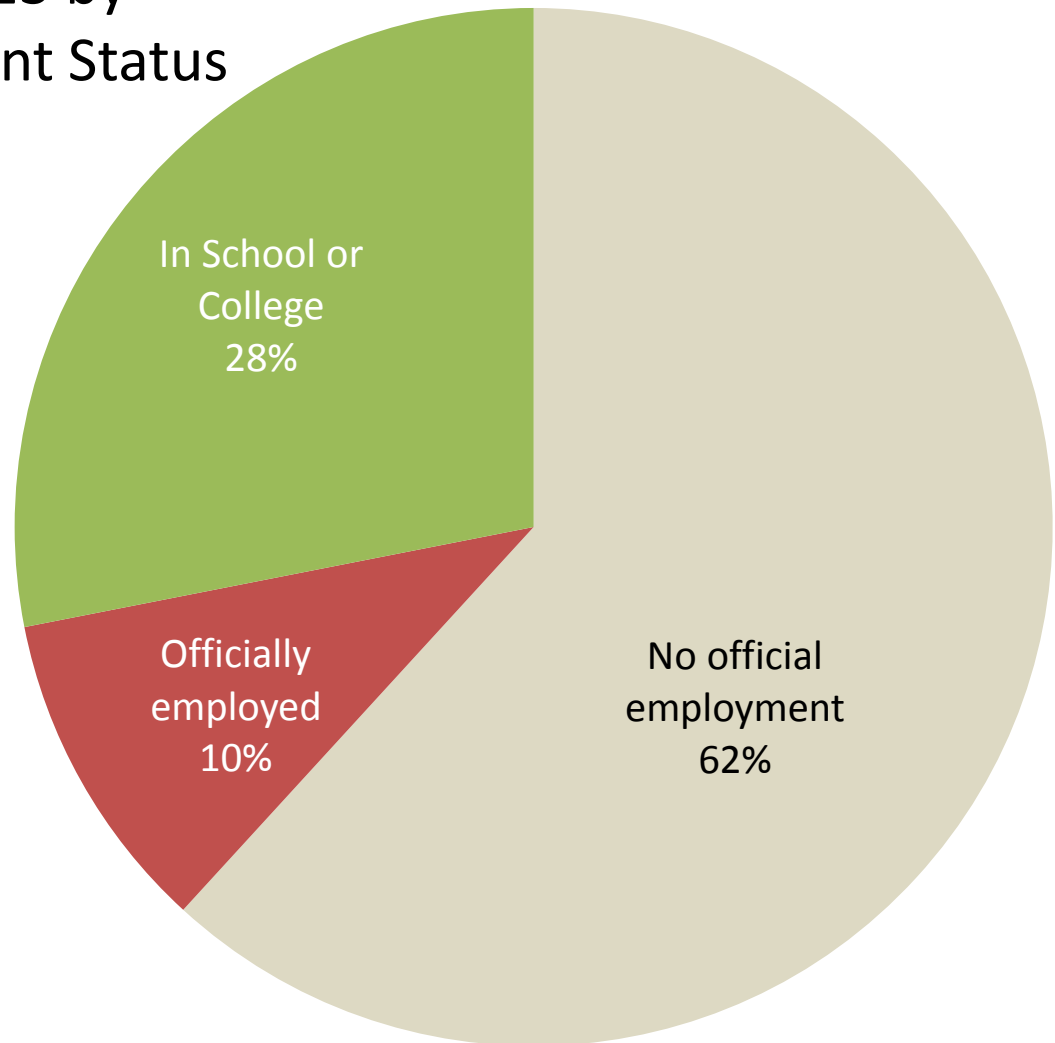


Sources: Kenya Census, 2009

ADEA 2014, Kenya Country Report, Ministerial Conference on Youth Employment

YOUTH IN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

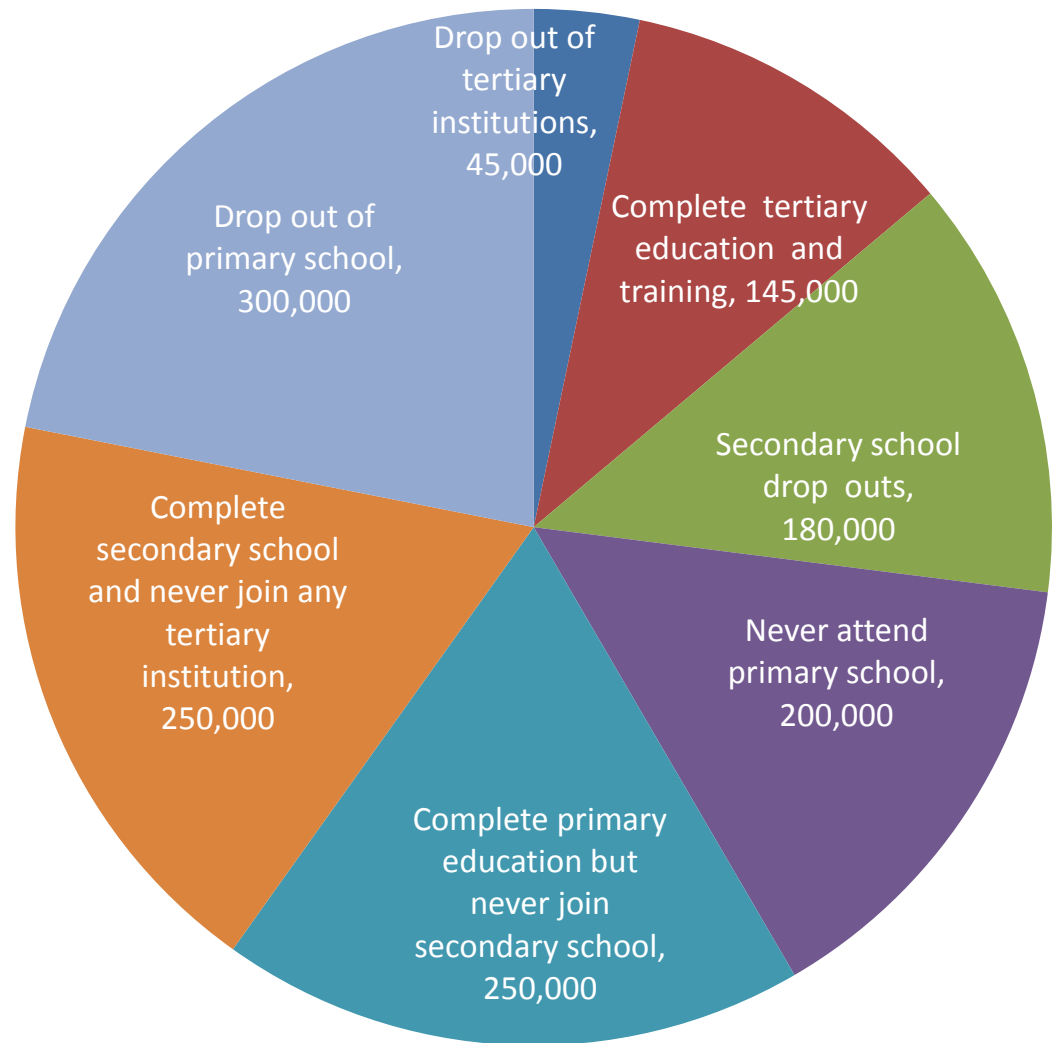
Kenyan youth aged 15-23 by
Education & Employment Status



YOUTH & LABOUR MARKET PARTICIPATION

Every year, 1,370,000 young people enter the Kenyan job market

1,225,000 (89%) have no professional qualification



Sources: Kenya Census, 2009

ADEA 2014, Kenya Country Report, Ministerial Conference on Youth Employment

ALL YOUTH ARE NOT THE SAME

How are young people engaging with government?

YOUTH SEGMENTATION

We identified 5 youth segments each with different information needs & different perceptions of devolved government



“Insiders”: the *chosen ones* favored by media, trusted by government authorities & looked up to by peers and juniors

1



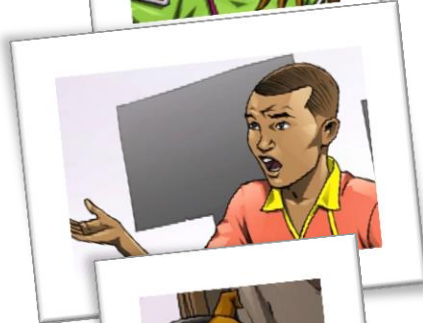
“Professionals”: the ones who blindly hang around politicians doing the underpaid part of *youths* tenders. Self-perpetuated sense of importance.

2



“Disengaged”: those who feel excluded, although they want to be a part of the system. They had hopes in the devolution but have given up.

3



“Disgruntled”: the ‘angry’ youth, with skewed or no information, feeling excluded & voiceless.

4



“Disenfranchised”: a bulk of female youths, who ‘don’t even know if they care’ about politics.

5

YOUTH SEGMENTATION

1. *Insiders*



These are the Young People referenced in policy & government reports, they appear at events to “represent the youth”. However they are the *chosen ones* with contacts and access to the right channels of information. They are benefitting from devolution because they win contracts and tenders and have influence amongst their peers.

YOUTH SEGMENTATION



2. *Professionals*

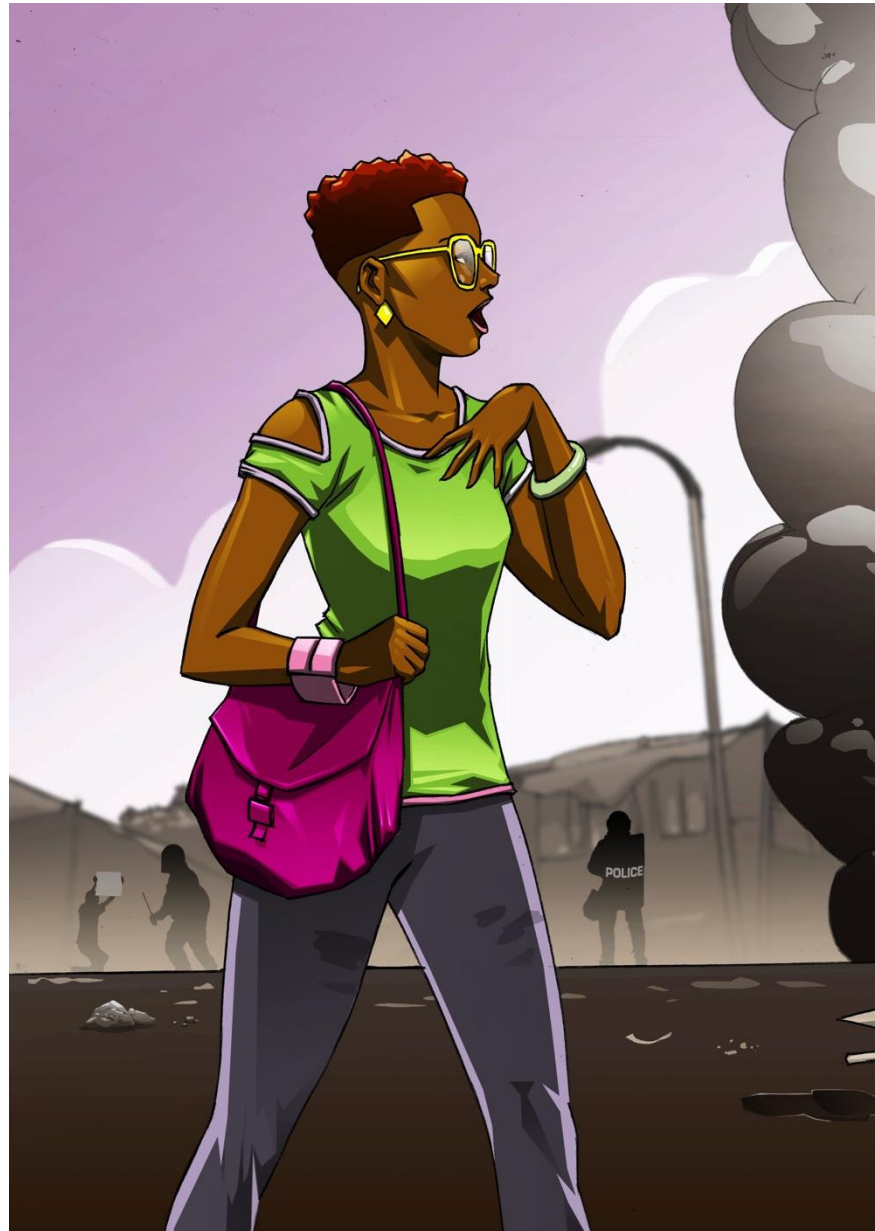
The Professionals blindly hang around politicians, serially attending rallies, workshops. They do the dirty underpaid work of those tenders that are given to young People and the “*Insiders*”. They are benefitting financially in a small way from devolution. They think they have influence, but they don’t.

YOUTH SEGMENTATION

3. *Disengaged*

A large group made up of those who feel excluded but still feel that it matters that they are not part of the system.

They had hopes in all the devolution promises but these hopes have gone and now they've given up, they are looking elsewhere for help & inspiration.



YOUTH SEGMENTATION



4. *Disgruntled*

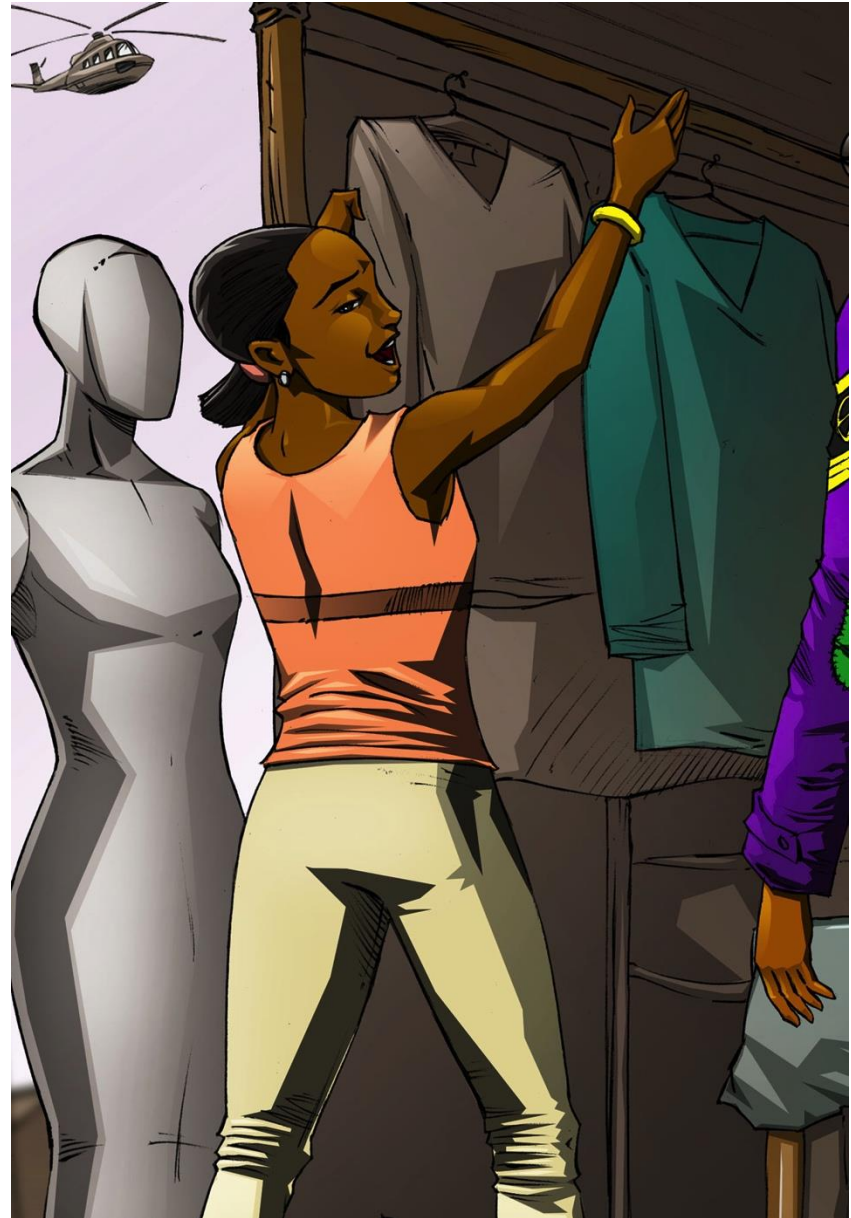
They represent *vijana wapotovu*, a smaller group of 'angry' youth, with skewed or no information, feeling excluded & voiceless. They feel their vote meant nothing and they've been let down by a government who cares nothing for them & just sold them lies.

This group may be tempted by any offers of structure and opportunity – Al Shabaab?

YOUTH SEGMENTATION

5. *Disenfranchised*

In politics 'youth' = 'male'. The majority of young women fall into this category of the Disenfranchised. As we heard in the field they 'don't even know if they care' about politics. They make no assumptions about their 'rights' in this space and get on with their lives with little thought of governance and certainly none of participation.



YOUTH SEGMENTATION & THE “REJECTION SCALE”

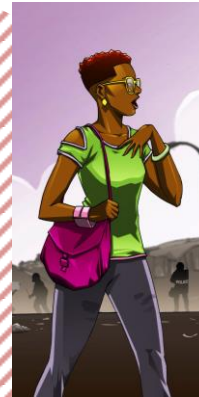
“Disenfranchised”
the largest group –
includes most young
women



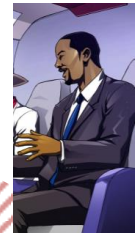
“Disgruntled”



“Disengaged”



“Professionals” & “Insiders”
the tiny minority



Given up hope
“I don’t even
know if I care”

100%

Negative about &
disillusioned with
devolution – some
are angry

0%

Positive about &
benefitting from
devolution

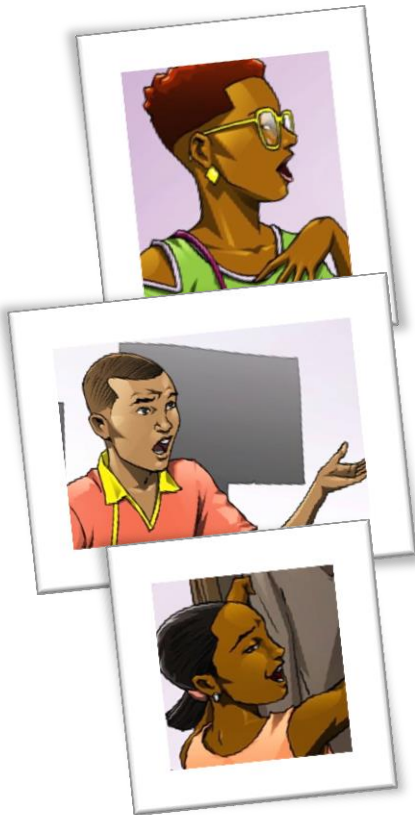
100%

YOUTH SEGMENTATION: RECOMMENDATION

There are distinct segments among Kenyan youth separated by their attitude, knowledge & their willingness to engage with government

1

Communications campaigns should consider the different information needs of the different youth segments



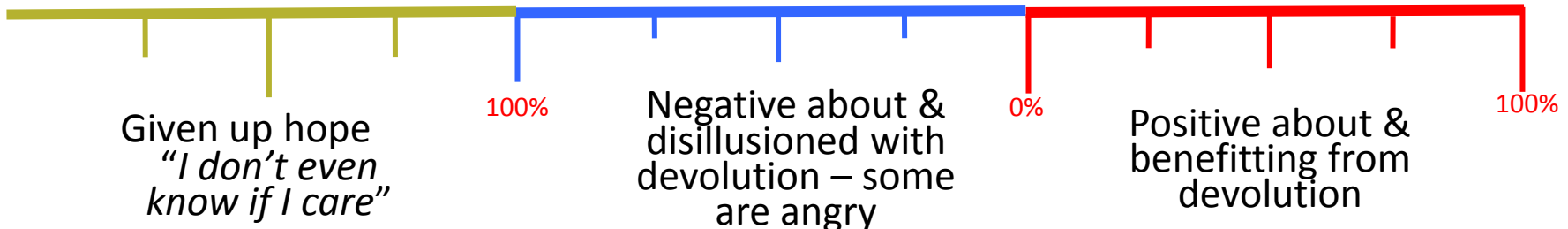
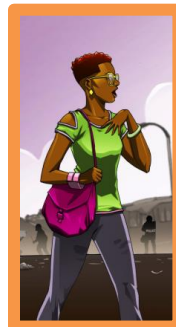
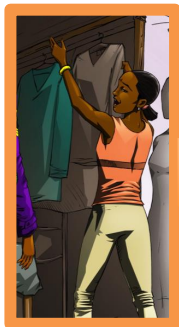
“Young people are not all equal in the face of government: there are ghetto youth, who are looked down upon – have no or little education, representation or employment and their rights are grossly violated (mostly by the police) & there are the “bang” who enjoy life at home & benefits of being connected”

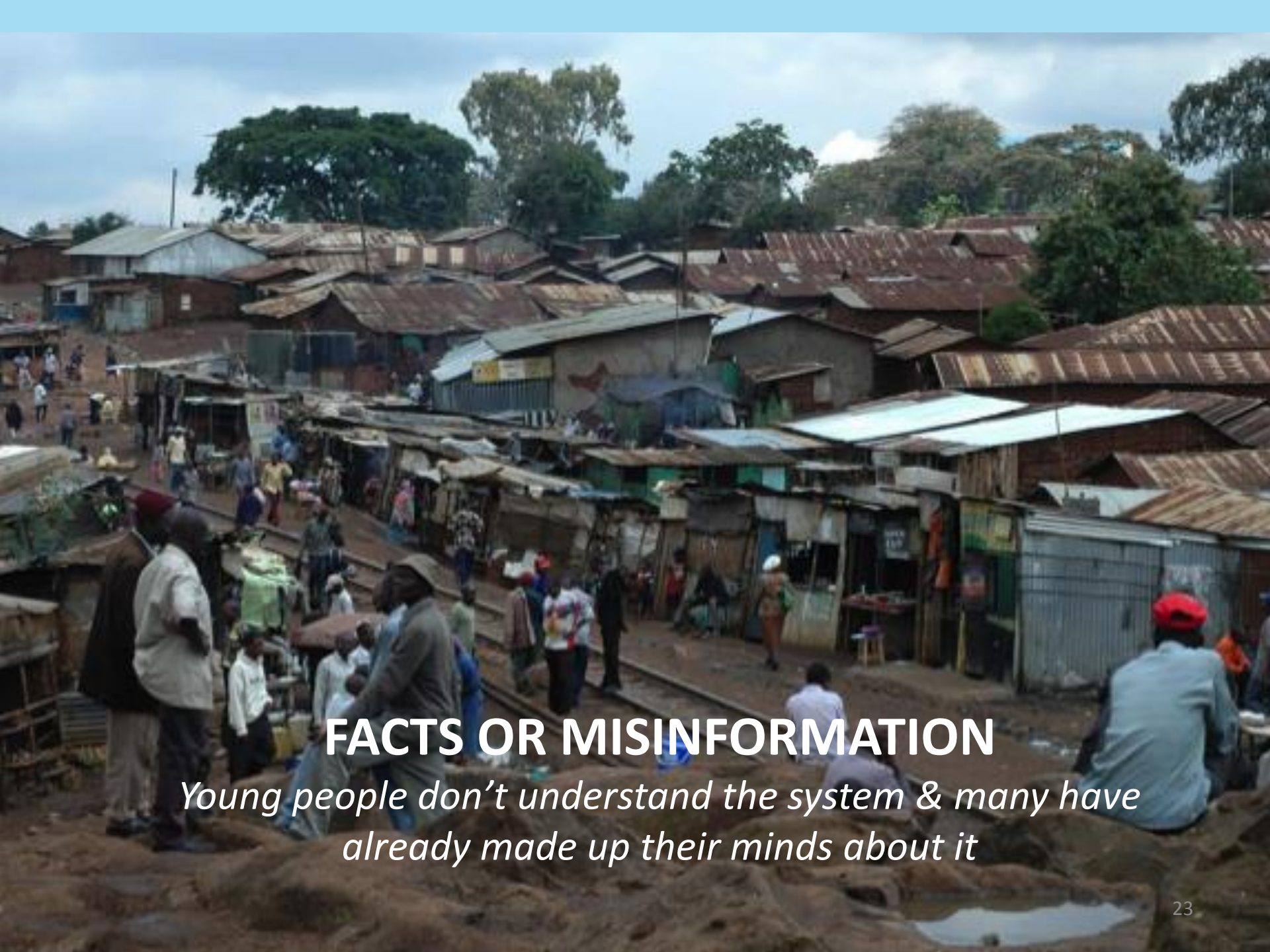


Nairobi youth

YOUTH SEGMENTATION: RECOMMENDATION

- ✓ *For the promise of devolution and democracy to be realised, relevant communications must target and reach different segments of despondent youth*
- ✓ *Each segment needs to be re-convinced that there is **genuine value for them** when youth participate in local government*
- ✓ *Not all individuals need to participate directly, but all segments need to understand better the processes and opportunities of devolved local government*

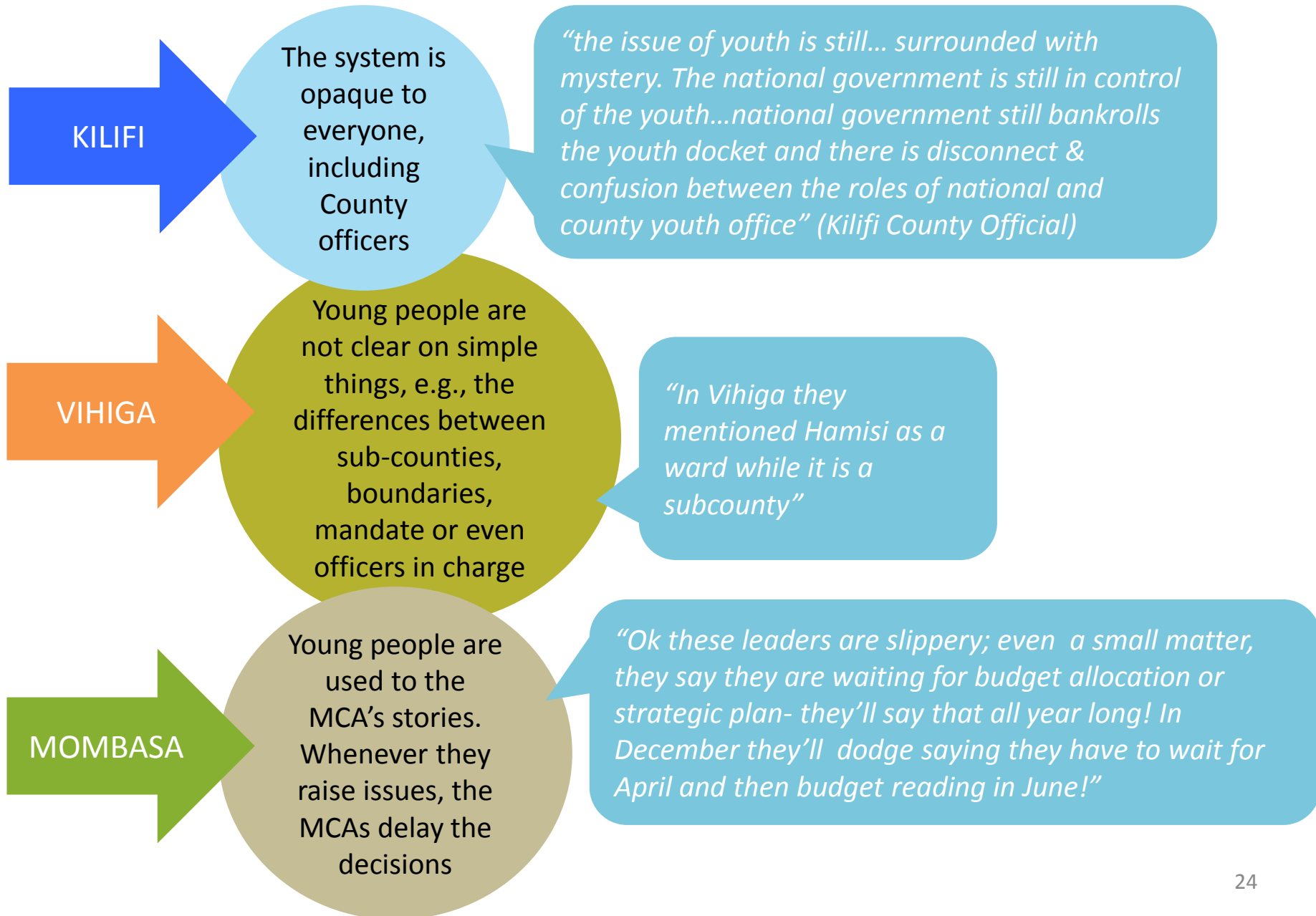




FACTS OR MISINFORMATION

Young people don't understand the system & many have already made up their minds about it

FACTS OR MISINFORMATION?



FACTS OR MISINFORMATION?

KERICHO

Though some are still hopeful, young people expressed their fears about devolution. They know it can work, but only where county management is good

“if they devolve everything to the counties, some counties will prosper and others lag behind. The counties that will grow are those with better management, for example we hear that Machakos county is trying – recently they opened a stadium with 15000 seater capacity. Us here in Kericho, we have a lot of money and resources but...”

KERICHO

Youths described the MCA as the citizen’s representative *wa mashinani* (at the ground) that they elected. When they do not reach the MCA, they can only talk to village elder or chief or the assistant, but often they’re not the right people to act

“When there was an outbreak of East Coast Fever, the government announced vaccination that would protect cows for 5 years. However some animals got the disease and were dying. We raised the matter with the local assistant chief, but there was no action, we got frustrated.”

FACTS OR MISINFORMATION: RECOMMENDATION

Most youth have already made up their minds based on past experience or misinformation & are dismissive of participation in government systems

2

Mass media can reboot public perceptions & engagement by catalyzing relevant, topical, informed conversation among youth about government systems

- The Devolution promise is still strong and hopeful, but...
- Young Kenyans have little and/or incorrect information on devolved government, &...
- The functions, practice and structures are all unclear: sometimes youth are County Citizens (Health), sometimes they are Youth (National Funds)
- Many youth go to the wrong place /office for help and quickly get frustrated
- The majority of young people do not access local government & when they do, they do not trust county government officials & official information sources

- ✓ *Mass media specifically targeting disillusioned youth can restart an informed conversation about devolved government operations, functions, processes & structures.*
- ✓ *Sharing the real life stories of successful role models (Positive Deviants) can help demonstrate and share true experiences, successes, frustrations, confusion and hopes*
- ✓ *Not EVERY youth needs to act – some should be participating at the County, the majority needs simply to understand & trust the system*

FACTS OR MISINFORMATION: RECOMMENDATION

Most youth have already made up their minds based on past experience or misinformation & are dismissive of government participation

2

Mass media can reboot public perceptions & engagement by catalyzing relevant, topical, informed conversation among youth about government

Strategy 1:

Initiate peer to peer conversations on devolved government

Capitalize on the rich and creative comical language used to reference government and government officials

Strategy 2:

Share information on devolved government structures, functions, plans & activities in youth friendly & accessible channels & formats

Capitalize on the wide reaching and youth trusted Shujaz & other media as platforms for information sharing



MISMATCHED PRIORITIES

MISMATCHED PRIORITIES

Despite the size of the youth population, their importance to the economy and the democratic process, young people across Kenya feel they are not consulted, or are over-ruled, by local government which “knows best”

Comparing the accounts of young people with those of county officials has revealed a frequent & serious mis-match in their priorities, and a widespread failure to engage young people directly in local social and development planning or activities



MISMATCHED PRIORITIES ON SECURITY

Both government and youth care deeply about security – but their expectations are different

GOVERNMENT SAYS

Security is: safe streets... in which groups of idle young people are a potential security risk; so the strategy is “Jaza Jaza” (police swoops that target youth ‘hanging around idly’)

YOUTH SAY

Security is: well-intentioned young people who feel safe & secure to meet in groups to talk about and solve their problems; not every youth (or those not carrying National ID cards) is a bad person plotting crime

“When known criminals enter the slum, people look up, but then resume what they are doing. When cops enter the slums – we run”

Nairobi youth

MISMATCHED PRIORITIES ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

GOVERNMENT SAYS

Sports, talent identification & development are top of the county youth development agenda in Kisumu, Vihiga, Laikipia & Mombasa. In 2014 Vihiga spent Ksh 55M on a sports & talent show

YOUTH SAY

“the government sees us young people as fit for sports & dancing only. Is that how we will become tomorrow’s leaders?” young person in Vihiga

MISMATCHED PRIORITIES ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOVERNMENT SAYS

Youth need an “umbrella funding solution” within devolved funds by National & now County Governments to support enterprise development

Kajiado County says youth need formal employability skills from polytechnics (to give qualifications)

YOUTH SAY

Youth in Kericho are managing resources & ideas to invest money from Boda Boda, agriculture & dairy farming; they are not interested in government loans because their parents took agricultural development loans that have ‘enslaved’ them for years servicing repayments

Should employability in informal sector depend only on qualifications? – surely motivation, willingness to learn and experience based learning are just as valid.

MISMATCHED PRIORITIES

ON COMMUNICATION FLOW AND CHANNELS

GOVERNMENT SAYS

Kisumu County official says, youth lack technical information on tendering, procurement & how government operates; Dependency on handouts from politicians & NGOs renders youth lazy

Tenders, Contracts and jobs are advertised in County notice boards, websites and national newspapers

YOUTH SAY

“County information is jealously guarded” and what youth get is that information sneaked from county staff, friends who happen to have heard from others” a young person in Kisumu

Urban youth want modern & exciting channels like face book, road shows, TV & FMs specifically during music shows. Rural Youth want information via FM Radios, social gatherings, Chief’s barazas & village elders

MISMATCHED PRIORITIES

ON COMMUNICATION CONTENT AND MOTIVATION

GOVERNMENT SAYS

“Youth need information on training opportunities, tendering and procurement, project ideas like how to do proposals and also on how to implement projects”

Youth in the Coastal region are drowning in drugs... and do not seem to be keen on what is happening in the county

YOUTH SAY

“ Youth cannot thrive on tenders and Uwezo Fund. We want information on agricultural extension services, seeds availability, cereal depots and markets for farm produce like milk, vegetables, sugarcane etc.” a young person in Kericho

“Information is power. Most leaders do not want to empower youth because of the desire to use them for re-election. An empowered youth could be too risky for politicians who never perform.” a young person in Kilifi Youth

MISMATCHED PRIORITIES ON ATTITUDE & ON AGENDA

GOVERNMENT SAYS

Youth also misrepresent themselves, needs and pretend to be able to do things they are not capable of doing. They often lack capacity to supply tenders besides lacking the technical qualifications.

Youth must get out of their defeatist mode & seek to understand government and its operations, acquire technical competencies for proper tendering & procurement & other devolution opportunities

YOUTH SAY

“if you have dreadlocks and wear your fitting jeans trouser like me now, no government official will listen to you. They expect you to be dressed like them, in a suit, when visiting them”
young person in Nairobi, Embakasi

“ If government wants to seriously talk to us young people, let them come & look for youth in the Helicopters that they use during campaigns”
young person in Rongai, Kajiado

MISMATCHED PRIORITIES & COMMUNICATIONS: RECOMMENDATIONS

Collective
Discussion
leads to
Collective
Belief

- ✓ New norms of attitude and behaviour emerge from a discussion of mutual issues and ideas at scale
- ✓ This can be achieved with strategic use of the media raising informed conversation about preferred behaviours
- ✓ Government must be seen to take young people seriously, to listen & react to their needs



Phone enabled internet



Leader consultations with excluded youth



Youth friendly 2-way media events

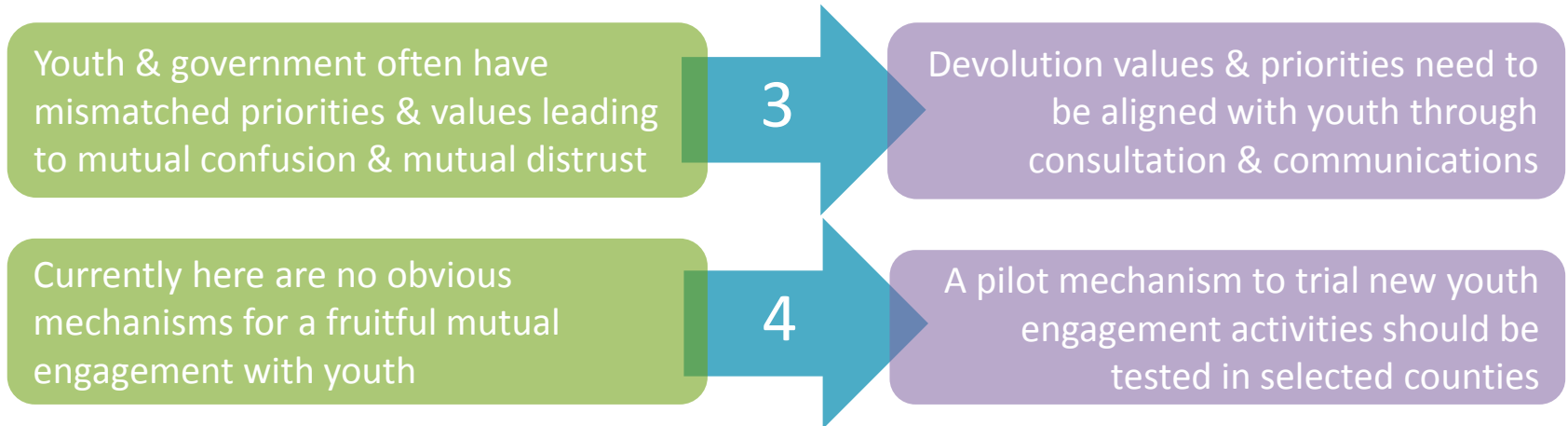


Accessible mass media & role models



Ongoing social media conversations

MISMATCHED PRIORITIES & COMMUNICATIONS: RECOMMENDATIONS



- ✓ *Government needs to take a lead to re-engage young people in a **mutual conversation** about the opportunities of devolution – at scale, in the media and on the ground*
- ✓ *Local Government must be seen to actively address youth concerns. Local consultative activities for young people should be piloted in select counties, with a commitment to implement the key recommendations that arise & follow-up research to measure resulting changes in youth perceptions & engagement*

OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH OTHER ACTORS

Young People

- Develop powerful campaigns across Shujaaz multi-media platforms using role-model characters and real-life case studies to generate a large-scale, national peer-to-peer conversation live & on social media
- Communicate to youth in groups in target counties
- Leverage youth popular technology (WhatsApp) to share information

Civil Society

- Leverage active civil society as an entry point for conversations about civic engagement
- Leverage civil society's organisational capacity to organise youth & exert pressure on duty bearers for action
- Provide space in Shujaaz media to publicise information necessary for youth organisation & action

Government

- Agrees on key problems to be addressed
- Demonstrates will to change
- Agrees on realistic plans & actualise promises
- Provides trial engagement platforms
- Provides information, to be presented in youth accessible formats

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

- ✓ For the democratic promise of devolution to be realised, urgent steps must be taken to re-boot the relationship of local government & youth
- ✓ Many Kenyan youth have “given up” on devolution already, it’s imperative that efforts are made to engage far more than the “usual suspects”
- ✓ Many young people are interested to engage with local government & sincere leaders, but almost everyone needs basic information to understand their potential roles in supporting the new systems
- ✓ The reach & popularity of interactive & mass youth media can be harnessed strategically to initiate a new positive conversation that will draw-in, inform & inspire disillusioned youth & connect them with opportunities
- ✓ However local governments must do more than just make gestures to prove that they take youth concerns seriously
- ✓ A round of new youth-focused consultative activities, piloted in selected counties can be used to trial & measure new mechanisms for youth engagement & participation



Nairobi, Kenya
May, 2015