Employmability Factors Contributing to Youth Unemployment in the EAC Countries *Data and Policy Analysis*

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**Authors’ contributions**

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author SHH designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author HAH managed the analyses of the study. Author HAH managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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**Abstract**

This policy research paper analyses employability factors and challenges contributing to youth unemployment and also provides working recommendations for further dialogue and engagement on youth employability in the East African community EAC Countries. The policy analysis is based on the theory of 4Es as propounded by International Labour Organization ILO and Youth Employment Network literature. The field research survey, focus group discussion, combined observational and consultations with key informants were major research methods used in collecting secondary and primary data and information. Data analysis uses non-parametric methods, mainly frequency and cross tabulations.

The paper found that costs of doing business among the youth in the formal and informal economies are significantly high. There are weak limited skills matching systems and provision of relevant curriculum that produce an updated knowledge base. The problem of rural-urban migration is related to inadequate rural infrastructures; lack of establishment of sustainable agro-processing industries, limited provision of rural vocation and training programmes to equip youth with skills for employability. The education and training systems do not comply with regional, international standards and technological changes in the world. There are weak career counselling and guidance centres for youth. There is a limited access to good quality education and thus decent jobs for youth with disability.

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As per 2017 youth employment problems continue to pervade in all EAC countries, with a disproportionate number of young women and men exposed to unemployment or else that are limited to precarious or short-term work in informal sectors [1]. Youth represent a significant portion of the total population in EAC countries accounting to more than 30% of the total population. Rwanda has the highest proportion of youth to total population in the region [2], NISR, 2010, [3]. In 2000, the proportion of youth from the total population was 39.3%, whereas in 2005, 2010 and 2015 the proportion stood at 39.5%, 39.6% and 39.7% respectively. Uganda has the second largest proportion of youth with 38.2%, 38.4%, 37.7% and 37.9% in 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015 respectively. Other EAC member states such as Tanzania, Kenya, Burundi and South Sudan have relatively lower youth proportion although they are still above 30% of the total population.

According to national population and labour force surveys of EAC member states, youth aged between 15 and 35 years old account to at least 60% of the total labour force; indicating that an effective participation of the youth in socio-economic activities can result to economic progress.

The rate of typical East African youth unemployment is higher than any group of population in the workforce [4,5]. With the adopted African Union Youth Charter’s definition of youth, unemployment rates among youth are estimated to be high. Table 1.1 suggests that Kenya has the highest rate of youth unemployment among the EAC member countries with 70% of the unemployed youth in 2014. This is attributed to an increasing number of youth moving to urban centres but are unable to find decent work, suggesting that this is due to lack of skills.

### Keywords
Youth; employment; employability conditions.

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

As per 2017 youth employment problems continue to pervade in all EAC countries, with a disproportionate number of young women and men exposed to unemployment or else that are limited to precarious or short-term work in informal sectors [1]. Youth represent a significant portion of the total population in EAC countries accounting to more than 30% of the total population. Rwanda has the highest proportion of youth to total population in the region [2], NISR, 2010, [3]. In 2000, the proportion of youth from the total population was 39.3%, whereas in 2005, 2010 and 2015 the proportion stood at 39.5%, 39.6% and 39.7% respectively. Uganda has the second largest proportion of youth with 38.2%, 38.4%, 37.7% and 37.9% in 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015 respectively. Other EAC member states such as Tanzania, Kenya, Burundi and South Sudan have relatively lower youth proportion although they are still above 30% of the total population.

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and working experience, but also the urban Kenyan economy is unable to absorb the whole potential work-force [6].

According to the Integrated Labour Force Survey of 2006 (ILFS) in Zanzibar, 78.3 percent of the total population aged over 15 years was economically active: 83.0 per cent of men and 73.8 percent of women. Both male and female labour force participation has decreased a little since the previous survey in 1992. Those who were economically active were either employed or unemployed.

### Table 1.1. Youth Unemployment Rates in EAC Countries

| Country   | Youth Age Group | Unemployment Rate in percent |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Kenya     | 15-35           | 70 (2014)                   |
| Tanzania  | 15-35           | 25 (2014)                   |
| Zanzibar  | (15-35)         | 14.3 (2014)                 |
| Uganda    | 15-35           | 31 (2013)                   |
| Rwanda    | 15-35           | 14.7 (2013)                 |
| Burundi   | 15-35           | 50 (2014)                   |
| South Sudan | 15-35        | 34 (2013)                   |

Source: World Bank, AfDB, ILFS and EAC Reports and Publications

Burundi ranks second with 50% of youth unemployment in 2014. South Sudan had 34% of the youth unemployment rate in 2013 while Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda had an unemployment rate of 31%, 25% and 14.7% respectively indicating that youth unemployment is high in EAC member states although it differs from one country to another. In Burundi, Rwanda and South Sudan, the recent decade of civil wars and conflicts saw a generation of young people losing education, experiencing trauma and loss of parents, and those things affected them regardless of whether they directly engaged in the conflict or not. This group represents a major portion of the population in these countries in which 30 - 35 per cent are falling within the Governments’ official definition ‘youth’, that is the individuals between 15 – 35 years old.

Reasons for the increase of youth unemployment in East African countries for the past ten years include lack of entrepreneurship skills, skills mismatch between the employer’s expectation and the youth, poor education curriculum which prepares most of the graduate for white collar jobs rather than imparting innovative skills and capacity building to employ themselves, slow economic growth and labour market [7,8,1]. Socially disadvantaged youth are particularly affected, thereby perpetuating a vicious circle of poverty, social exclusion and crime. In rural areas, where the majority of young people live and where very few can afford to be openly unemployed, the employment problem is more one of underemployment and low pay and low quality jobs in the typically large informal sectors. In general, studies suggest that unemployment in these countries is a complex function of lack of employability, employment creation, entrepreneurship and equal opportunities. However, major youth unemployment concerns have been on the youth employability David 2005, [9,10,11].

In Zanzibar urban dwellers have higher unemployment rates and are easier to target services on than those in the rural areas. They are more likely than those in rural areas to rely on public services than on the traditional and local social protection. The urban drift tends to weaken traditional social protection systems over time and more formal replacements need to be introduced to help meet the needs of urban dwellers [12].

In the current economic transformation, the narrow concept of “employability” is embedded in the social, economic and political discourse, becoming a key factor to drive and promote employment [13], Almudena, 2013. From this perspective, employability is understood as a complex set of factors, essentially related to education, experiences, preferences, and other social human capital capacities which meet the needs of employers regarding the qualification of their potential workers. In general, this term is associated to the human capital which individuals contribute as workers to a company to generate value added and thereby meet the productivity demands of the labour market. This narrow concept is generally used to assess and analyze educational and career situations that have led to employment/unemployment.

The practice suggests that there are too many young people lacking the necessary education and relevant training for good, productive jobs and there are too many unproductive jobs with poor remuneration [9,11]. Education begins with literacy, and in spite of vast improvements, there is still a huge literacy gap. Like other
poor developing countries, training in the EA countries remains largely unrelated to changing labour market needs. Young people often lack access to the labour market services and support needed to help them secure decent and productive work (David, 2005; [14]).

The paper favors a broad framework for analyzing employability built around individual factors, personal circumstances and external factors, which acknowledges the importance of both supply- and demand-side factors [13]. Employability is the possession, by an individual, of the qualities and competencies required to meet the changing needs of employers and customers and thereby help to realize his or her aspirations and potential in work.

In practice, there are many complex specific constraints related to lack of employability (URT, 2007, [3,9,11]). These include preference of employing experienced workers; a stigma on the part of the employers; mismatching between schools and labor market; long term transition from school to labor market; personal factors such as satisfaction level and family dependence; job seekers looking for prominent jobs and better paid jobs; youth unemployment and the family dependency; the problems in transition from school to labor market; lack of work experience during school years; poor quality in the education system; inadequate preparation of the youth in career development and low level of information technology (David, 2005; [7,15]).

The unemployment rate using the International Labor Organization ILO definition is low at just over two per cent but this does not mean that there are no employment problems in Zanzibar. In Zanzibar urban dwellers have higher unemployment rates than those living in rural areas and women are more likely to be unemployed, especially those aged 40 and under. There is no unemployment benefit scheme in Zanzibar and this may be having an effect on the quality of life of those of working age who become unemployed, as well as potentially having a longer-term effect of increasing poverty in old age for those who have been in formal employment during most of their working lives. Zanzibar faces a major challenge of absorbing new entrants into the labour market given levels of education attainment and the availability of vocational training [12].

1.2 Objectives of the policy research paper

The objective of this policy research paper is to analyse employability factors and challenges contributing to youth unemployment in the EAC countries. The policy paper also provides working policy recommendations for further dialogue and engagement on youth employability in the EA countries. The policy analysis is based on the theory of 4-Es as propounded by International Labour Organization (ILO), and Youth Employment Network (YEN) literature, (David 2005; [10,12]).

1.3 Study approaches and methodologies

Based on the objective of the research paper and the 4-Es theory, four independent but complementary methodologies and procedures were used [1]. These included [1] desk-litterature reviews; [2] field research surveys in Arusha, Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, Kampala, Bujumbura, Nairobi and Kigali; [3] data and policy analysis; and [4] visits to the EAC head office in Arusha and ministries’ internal consultative meetings in those cities. The field research survey, focus group discussion, combined observation and consultations with key informants were major research methods used in collecting secondary and primary data and information.

The primary data and information were collected using questionnaires and interviewing the respondents based on the study objectives and questions. The target respondents included youth organizations; disabled organizations; religious institutions; political parties; government ministries, departments and agencies, individual youth and older people. The combined observational research technique involved the direct observations of phenomena in their natural setting. The aim was to observe the situation in order to allow the research team to qualitatively access the youth unemployment context and obtain useful meanings for framing the evaluation and making sense of the data collected using other methods. The paper employed 71 respondents. Thus the study used both Quantitative and Qualitative research design.

1.4 Structure of the Paper

The paper has four main sections. Section one in an introduction; section two presents the theoretical model of the Neo-Classical Employment Theories and the 4-Es Model; section three presents the main data findings and
analysis of employability factors and challenges contributing to youth unemployment in the EAC Countries, and section four is a conclusion that provides working policy recommendations for further dialogue and engagement with EAC governments on youth employability in the East African Countries.

2 Neo-Classical Employment Theories and the 4-E's Model

The neoclassical labor economics makes a distinction between structural, frictional, and cyclical unemployment. Structural unemployment is conceived as a product of the institutional systems, including policies, laws, regulations, private and government organizations, types of market arrangements and demography. In the literature, the importance of the institutional features for structural unemployment is particularly tied to their implications for demand and supply of labor, price and wage formation, and the efficacy of search and matching processes in the labor markets [10,16,3].

Frictional unemployment is regarded as a subset of structural unemployment mainly constituting temporary unemployment spells as the result of job mobility, search and matching difficulties in the connection with quits, new entries to the labor market, and job separation because of the employers’ dissatisfaction with individual workers.

Cyclical unemployment differs from structural and frictional unemployment by basically being tied to short-term economic fluctuations. An empirical illustration of the importance of structural unemployment as compared to cyclical is that variations in actually measured unemployment rates have turned out to be much larger between cycles than within cycles, presumably reflecting differences in structural unemployment.

In economic theory, structural and cyclical unemployment are usually regarded as social-economic disequilibrium phenomena in the sense that they reflect excess labor supply at existing wages and hence that the labor market is not clear. Then, individual employers informally ration jobs. Nevertheless, technically (analytically) structural unemployment is often analyzed in terms of the concept of equilibrium unemployment. This means that the aggregate-unemployment level is in a "state of rest": existing excess labor supply is assumed to last as long as certain characteristics (parameters) of the economy are unchanged. It is unfortunate that none of these equilibrium models in isolation provide satisfactory theoretical explanation and policy guidance on the unemployment situation in poor developing countries [10,11].

In view of these theoretical limitations, the study used an eclectic theory of 4-Es as propounded by International Labour Organization (ILO), and Youth Employment Network (YEN) literature, (David 2005; [9,11]). The 4 Es asserts that employment (E), is a complex function of Employability (E1), Employment Creation (E2), Entrepreneurship (E3) and Equal Opportunity (E4).

The 4-Es Model is the best approximation of Human Capital Theory, Effective Demand Theory of Unemployment, Harris-Todaro Model of Unemployment and Neo-Classical employment theories, [17], Lee Harvey 2001 and [13]. This Youth Employment Model (E) is now formalized as follows [1]:

\[ E = E1 + E2 + E3 + E4 \] (1)

Whereby we define:

**E1: Employability**

Employability (E1) variable is defined as “doing value creating work, getting paid for it (unless opting to do it voluntarily without pay) and learning at the same time, enhancing the ability to shape work in the future (Lee Harvey 2001 and [13]).

\[ E1 = E1.1 + E1.2 + \ldots + E1.10 \] (2)

We consider the main employability variables or attributes as Employer’s preference and Worker’s preference and Opportunity Cost E1.1; Family’s and Employer’s Expectations E1.2; Transition from Learning Institutions...
to Labour Market E1.3; Labour Market Information and Conditions E1.4; Cost of Doing Business E1.5; Skills Matching E1.6; Personal factors: Satisfaction level (Rural-Urban Migration) E1.7; Level of Information Technology E1.8; Transition from School to Labour Market E1.9; and Access to Education E1.10.

**E2: Employment Creation**

Employment creation variable (E2) is defined as the process by which the numbers of jobs in an economy are created and increased. Job creation often refers to government policies intended to reduce unemployment, and job creation programs may take a variety of forms (David, 2005).

\[
3 \quad E_2 = E_{2.1} + E_{2.2} +, \ldots, + E_{2.10}
\]

We consider the major employment creation attributes as E2.1 is for Fiscal Policy; E2.2 for Changes in Production Technology; E2.3 for Labour Market; E2.4 for Wage Rate or Salary; E2.5 for Sector Policy Linkages; E2.6 for Participation of Youth in Planning Process; E2.7 for Policy Implementation; E2.8 for Population; E2.9 for Reliance on Sector to Drive Economy; and E2.10 for Regional Integration and Globalization.

**E3: Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship variable (E3) has traditionally been defined as the process of designing, launching and running a new business, which typically begins as a small business, such as a start-up company, offering a product, process or service for sale or hire (Yetisen, et al., 2015).

\[
4 \quad E_3 = E_{3.1} + E_{3.2} +, \ldots, + E_{3.5}
\]

The main Entrepreneurship attributes are E3.1 for Innovative Skills; E3.2 for Expected Positive Opportunity Perception; E3.3 for Entrepreneurship Knowledge, Education and Training; E3.4 for Communication Barriers; and E3.5 for Informal Sector and Entrepreneurship barriers.

**E4. Equal Opportunities**

Equal opportunity variable (E4), is a stipulation that all people should be treated similarly, unhampered by artificial barriers, prejudices or preferences, except when particular distinctions can be explicitly justified. The aim, according to this complex and contested concept, is that important jobs should go to those “most qualified” – persons who are most likely to perform ably a given task – and not go to persons for arbitrary or irrelevant reasons, such as circumstances of birth, upbringing, having well-connected relatives or friends, religion, sex, ethnicity, race, caste, or involuntary personal attributes such as disability, age, gender, or sexual orientation (David, 2005).

\[
5 \quad E_4 = E_{4.1} + E_{4.2} +, \ldots, + E_{4.7}
\]

We consider the main equal opportunity attributes as E4.1 for Open Access Application; E4.2 for Fair judgment; E4.3 for Gender Issues; E4.4 for Social and Cultural Factors; E4.5 for Tribalism and Regionalism; E4.6 for Religions; and E4.7 for Corruption.

The 4-Es Model is determined according to mathematical modelling rules since we have five relations; namely, 1 - 5 to determine the values of five endogenous policy target variables, E1, E2, E3, E4 and E. This paper focuses on the broad employability factors. The traditional and narrow concepts consider employability as the propensity for graduates to secure a job and progress in their career. Employability is not just about getting a job. The broader concept treats employability as more than about developing attributes, techniques or experience just to enable a student to get a job, or to progress within a current career. It is about learning and the emphasis is less on ‘employ’ and more on ‘ability’. Employment is a by-product of this enabling process.
3 Major Data Findings and Analysis

Section three presents major data findings and analysis of employability factors and challenges contributing to youth unemployment in the EA countries. Data analysis uses non-parametric methods, mainly contingency tables (also known as a cross tabulation or crosstab) as types of tables in matrix formats that display the (multivariate) frequency distribution of the variables defined in Section 2.

Based on the above model, the research team collected, organized and made summaries of about 1000 observations or stakeholders from Tanzania and about 71 observations from the other EA countries; namely, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda [1].

Table 1.1a. Age Distribution of the Respondents in Tanzania

| Age       | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------|-----------|---------|
| 15-24     | 398       | 39.8    |
| 25-35     | 411       | 41.1    |
| 36-59     | 173       | 17.3    |
| 60 and above | 18    | 1.8     |
| Total     | 1000      | 100     |

Source: FCS, 2016

Tables 1.1a and 1.1b summarize general characteristics of the data set. We made the assumption that all capital cities of the EAC countries are "big villages" thus consisting of both urban and rural households and or at least these households represent views and perceptions of the EAC populations.

Table 1.1b. Age Distribution of the Respondents for other EAC Countries

| Age       | Burundi | Uganda | Rwanda | Kenya | Total | Percentage |
|-----------|---------|--------|--------|-------|-------|------------|
| 15-24     | 5       | 0      | 10     | 6     | 21    | 30         |
| 25-35     | 9       | 10     | 10     | 10    | 39    | 55         |
| 36-59     | 2       | 16     | 0      | 3     | 21    | 30         |
| 60 and above | 0    | 0      | 0      | 0     | 0     | 0          |
| Total     | 16      | 16     | 20     | 19    | 71    | 100        |

Source: FCS, 2016

We also assumed that modern youth are aware and tell more stories about their problems than adults. Table 1.1 shows that respondents aged from 15 years to 35 years were the majority, which is about 81% in Tanzania and 85% from other EA countries of the total research sample indicating that the majority of the respondents interviewed were youth. The policy research targeted the youth as a major endogenous policy variable.

3.1 Employability as a major factor affecting youth employment in the EAC

Table summarizes main study findings on perceived views on the employability factors and attributes of performance in the EAC member states. Many people, i.e., about 58 percent had the opinion that employability is a major factor affecting youth employment in the EAC countries. Drawing on secondary data and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, Munishi [18] suggested that lack of job competencies among graduates fundamentally emanates from poor training at primary and secondary levels resulting from incompetent teachers and inadequate facilities. The problem is further fuelled by ineffective curriculum, incompetent lecturers, less emphasis on general knowledge and skills as well as lack of career guidance at higher training levels [7,8]. Furthermore, these weaknesses have been constantly fertilized by ineffective development as well as unfavourable educational policies and reforms. Table confirms that the main employability attributes are cost of doing business, skills mismatch, labour migration, career planning and quality of education/access to education [1]. These are briefly explained as follows:
3.2 Cost of doing business on youth unemployment

Cost of doing business includes all costs incurred in establishment, development, marketing and operations of the business, trade, project and social economic activities. In the case of youth seeking, getting and engaging in formal employment, this may include high living costs and expenditures; travelling costs and long distances to work; living in a rural area decreases mobility options and thus increases opportunity costs and having a situation that does not allow young people to leave home. Table 2.1 shows that many respondents had the view that high cost of doing business has the highest influence on limiting youth employability in all EA countries [19,8].

The typical high cost of doing business that result to limiting employability is due to various complex factors and challenges such as complicated and expensive licensing requirements, poor infrastructure and inadequate support services frustrating many self-employment initiatives among the youth, lack of financial capital and business mentorship and advice to start innovative enterprises; poor credit rating after long-term benefit receipt; disinterest/discrimination on the part of banks; lack of accessible information on sources of grants and loans [1].

These factors limit self-employment initiatives among the youth thus creating youth unemployment and slow economic growth [20], Kitching, 2014.

Majority of Kenyans perceived that the high cost of doing business was a significant factor in causing youth employability in the country [8]. The major reasons for the high cost of doing business are the existence of a number of complications which hinder young people from starting their businesses. These include complicated and expensive licensing requirements, poor infrastructure and inadequate support services frustrating many self-employment initiatives among the youth. Consistent with that, youth in most cases lack initial financial capital and business mentorship and advice to start their own businesses [9]. Majority in Rwanda viewed the high cost of doing business as a key influence of employability for both youth with and without disability. It was found, however, that it takes very less time to register business in Rwanda than in any other EA country [1]. There is online and physical registration of business undertakings in the country.

Therefore, high cost of doing business in Rwanda is not associated with registration but rather with other factors such few incentives for self-employment opportunities for youth such as subsidies and tax holiday by the government, lack of financial capital among youth, lack of business mentorship and advice to start innovative enterprises; inadequate access to finance due to lack of collateral; lack of accessible information on sources of grants and loans; and weak supporting infrastructures for business ventures especially for youth with disabilities. These factors drive up the cost of doing business and hence intensify the youth unemployment problem and weaken development progress among youth in Rwanda (Mundial, 2013; Kitching, 2014).

3.3 Labour migration

Labour migration is a movement of people from either countryside to the city or from one country to another country. This causes several things to happen; the most important is the labour growth in towns, cities and recipient countries are expanding, covering a greater area of land and urbanisation: - an increasing proportion of people living in towns and cities. Thus, increasing rural-urban migration leads to urban youth unemployment (Melamed, et al., 2011). Table 2.1 suggests that many people in Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda perceive labour migration as an important factor causing urban youth unemployment.

The major causes of labour migration include search for better wages, education, political and social stability, better technologies, employment and business opportunities [16]. Others are poverty, unemployment, crop failures and famine, inadequate social amenities and facilities in the rural areas such as pipe water, electricity, good roads, hospitals, schools, vocational centres and poor agricultural productivity (Gimba and Kumshe 2012; Mats, 2003). As more and more people arrive in urban centres, there will be insufficient jobs for them and the unemployment rate will increase because there will be more workers chasing those few jobs.
Table 2.1. Employability Factors and Attributes Performance in the EAC Countries

| Employability Factors and attributes | Tanzania | Burundi | Kenya | Rwanda | Uganda |
|--------------------------------------|----------|---------|-------|--------|--------|
|                                     | Youth without Disability | Youth with Disability | Youth without Disability | Youth with Disability | Youth without Disability | Youth with Disability | Youth without Disability | Youth with Disability |
| 1 Employer preference                | 59.2     | 56.7    | 62.5  | 68.8   | 36.8   | 42.1   | 20    | 20    | 63     | 25     |
| 2 Workers Preference and opportunity cost | 41.5    | 40.6    | 37.5  | 100    | 15.8   | 42.1   | 20    | 10    | -      | -      |
| 3 Attitude on the part of the employers on local employee/family and Employer expectations | 45.0    | 45.6    | 68.8  | 81.3   | 36.9   | 57.3   | 20    | 15    | -      | 62.5   |
| 4 Transition from learning institution to labour market | 44.8    | 47.8    | 75    | 75     | 52.6   | 47.4   | 20    | 20    | -      | -      |
| 5 Labour Market and information conditions | 46.6    | 46.0    | 93.8  | 87.6   | 36.9   | 42.2   | 25    | 20    | 20     | 18.8   |
| 6 cost of doing business            | 64       | 62.3    | 87.5  | 50     | 100    | 89.5   | 100   | 80    | 80     | 87.6   | 56.3   |
| 7 skills mismatch                    | 53.5     | 53.9    | 99.9  | 81.3   | 73.7   | 94.7   | 79    | 70    | 81.3   | 87.5   |
| 8 Rural Urban Migration              | 63.2     | 58.9    | 56.3  | 50     | 10.5   | 42.1   | 85    | 70    | 81.3   | 56.3   |
| 9 Level of information Technology   | 49.9     | 47.8    | 56.3  | 93.8   | 26.4   | 63.1   | 25    | 30    | 25     | 50.1   | 43.8   |
| 10 Experience during school years   | 47.0     | 47.2    | 99.8  | 93.8   | 94.7   | 79     | 25    | 25    | 50.1   | 43.8   |
| 11 Career Planning                  | 51.9     | 51.0    | 81.3  | 81.3   | 89.4   | 94.8   | 90    | 45    | 87.3   | 43.8   |
| 12 Quality of Education/Access to Education | 51.1    | 56.4    | 87.5  | 68.8   | 100    | 94.7   | 65    | 70    | 87.5   | 100    |
| **Average**                         | **51.4** | **51.2** | **75.5** | **81.8** | **55.3** | **66** | **45.4** | **40.4** | **68.7** | **51.9** |

*Source: Author construction (2021)*
Like other East African, Tanzania recognizes the role of foreign workers in filling skill gaps that are not easily available particularly in rare professions as well as the need for transferring of scarce skills and technology. However, compliance to these laws has not been forthcoming as many investors tend to employ foreigners in jobs that could be easily performed by Tanzanians. Additionally, portability of social security benefits stands as a block towards free movement of workers. On the other hand, Tanzanians in foreign countries fail to secure decent jobs as a result of low skills and quality of education. Moreover, it should be noted that internal labor migration which takes the form of rural to urban and mostly for the youth is a serious issue of policy concern in all EAC countries [20].

In EAC countries, rural–urban migration is reported to be the highest in Burundi followed by Rwanda [21]. Rwandan youth in villages and in Kigali primarily viewed rural–urban migration as an escape from humiliation and failure in rural areas rather than a way out of impoverishment. For them, the push–pull dichotomy, common in urban migration studies, is virtually a bereft of any kind of pull.

For Burundian youth, especially male youth, urban migration was a risky but nonetheless desirable option. Whereas the Burundian male youth, including disabled youth, urban migration is a desirable option—risky and difficult for sure, but is associated with the potential for success. Meanwhile, Rwandan youth mainly viewed rural–urban migration as an escape from humiliation in rural areas [21]. In this way, the views of Burundian youth are much more related to the youth in other nations, where modernity is highly valued and cities widely considered as the homeland of urban culture. These offer youth with disabilities an array of possibilities [22].

### 3.4 Skill mismatch on youth unemployment

Skills match demands job seekers to possess technical and soft skills required by employers in the labour market; and these are very crucial for employability of the job applicants including youth. The employability of job seekers is determined by the skills they possess and those required by potential employers. Table 2.1 shows that the skills mismatch is a major factor affecting employability in EAC Countries for both youth with and without disability. Majority of the respondents revealed that skills mismatch causes both female and male youth unemployment in the EAC [1]. This skills mismatch may be in terms of having skills that the labour market doesn’t need; having skills that everybody has; having unrecognized skills (non- or informally learned); not getting back into school (for school dropouts) and being over-qualified.

There are different factors that cause mismatch in skills. These include; under-funded educational and professional training systems, irrelevant curricula which produce obsolete knowledge base, lack of scientific, technical and vocational training (TVET) and competences that diminish the employability of young job seekers (Akulo, 2013). Moreover, discrimination, inability to afford or decision not to pursue further education or job training; decision not to relocate in order to stay with a spouse, family or friend, and technological obsolescence which makes a specific expertise useless. Over-education or under-education is argued to be another important factor for skills mismatch although in developing countries under-education is the cause of disabled youth unemployment [23,20].

Majority in Kenya ranked skills mismatch as a factor that causes youth unemployment. One of the factors for skills mismatch in Kenya is the increasing cost of training of some specialized courses which are relevant to the job market. This allows more youth to be enrolled in any course of study based on affordability rather than marketability of the profession in question. In one way or the other this is associated with under-funded educational and professional training systems. Other causes of skills mismatch are irrelevant curricula which produce obsolete knowledge base and lack of scientific, technical and vocational training and competences which diminish the employability of young job seekers.

It has been found that there is skill mismatch among youth with and without disability making it one of the key causes of youth unemployment in Rwanda. It has been noted that the core causes of skills mismatch are centered towards education curricula and its system whereby absence of proper linkages between the theoretical knowledge and the reality in the society cause the skills mismatch in Rwanda [24]. Other causes include lack of professional trainings to cutter for the needs of today’s labor market and inadequate supporting infrastructures specifically for youth with disability, inadequate scientific, technical and vocational training (TVET), and lack of career guidance and planning [2], NISR, 2010; [7]).
3.5 Career planning

Career planning refers to an ongoing process that can assist in the management of learning and development for youth. Finding a job can be a problem for youth. They must determine what careers are available, what are their interests and capacities, and what skills they have or need to develop. Table 2.1 shows that many respondents perceived that lack of career planning significantly causes youth unemployment in all EA countries. Majority in Kenya perceived that poor career planning significantly causes youth unemployment. In Kenya, students are enrolled in Universities and colleges at a very young age due to the school system. This requires a close mentorship on career since most students become unable to identify what exactly they have to go for, which can fit their interests and develop them. Once they lack professional advice and practical experiences to learn more about their careers they end up studying things which are not of their interest and thus perform poorly or do not work in an efficient manner. This reduces the employability of such graduates.

Most of the respondents in Rwanda perceived that lack of career planning causes unemployment for youth without disability. It is observed that career planning among youth without disability is a constraint and requires immediate intervention (Uwezo in Kigali, 2015). Lack of career planning may also be associated with various factors such as lack of internship programmes both paid and unpaid, low practical experiences to learn about careers, lack of networks, and work experience. Other factors include, lack of experienced workers to youth, lack of professionals who are experienced, type of educational system, and lack of youth training programmes. Inadequate youth career planning may lead to poor professional preparations, and consequently leading to making wrong choices and thus finally being less competent in the labour market. Poor professional preparations have always been a case for many youths whereby youth fail to acquire possible opportunities and consequently they become unemployable.

3.6 Access to quality of education

A good quality education is one that provides learners with relevant capabilities they require to become economically productive and develop sustainable livelihoods, and enhance individual well-being [1]. Table 2.1 suggests that limited access to quality education has a high negative influence on employment among the youth with and without disability in all EAC countries. Majority of respondents revealed that limited access to education among the youth with disability results to increasing unemployment in EA countries. Limited access to quality education among youth with disability is associated with various factors such as negative cultural beliefs, family backgrounds, inadequate infrastructure designated for youth with disability, poverty, inadequate of training equipment for people with special needs, and inadequate human resources especially teachers/trainers for disabled resulting to lack or low access to education among disabled youth [23], Mitra, et al, 2013).

High quality education that young people receive is an essential pillar in the economic transformation process, along with the importance that needs to be given to increasing the compatibility between the type of technologies, productive structures and labour market needs (Aceleanu, 2012). The quality and relevance of education is often considered as the first root cause of youth unemployment, yet high education does not guarantee a decent job. Low quality of education is associated with other factors such as poor or week education that is based on theory rather than skills, lack of professionals who are experienced, the type of syllabus used by the country, type of educational system and old education curricula. This may result into inability for young people to find jobs and employers’ inability to hire them based on skills needed. Lacking the industrial skills required in the labour market make them unattractive to employers who prefer skilled and experienced workers [25].

There are variations in EAC countries in the qualities of education as there are some countries with comparable high quality of education although not satisfactory when compared to developed countries. The Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) 2013-2014 ranks Kenya 44th in terms of enrolment and quality of education out of 148 countries, Rwanda ranks 51st, Uganda 82nd, Tanzania 100th, and Burundi 143rd (GCI Report, 2014) indicating that enrolment and quality of education in learning institutions in Tanzania, Burundi and Uganda is not pleasing and calls for immediate intervention. On average, it was found that low level of information technology; inadequate labour market information and conditions; long transition period from learning institutions to labour market; transition from school to labour markets, employer preference, worker’s preference, and opportunity cost have little role on influencing youth unemployment in EA countries [26,23].
Quality of education is a very sensitive issue discussed in Burundi. With particular reference to Burundi’s poor quality education is associated with outdated education curriculum which do not articulate needs of current labour market, profit prioritization by private sector, minimal supervision of the government especially on private college and universities (Ness, and Lin, 2015). All these factors have contributed largely on provision of poor education which have generated youth graduates who are unable to integrate with current labour market challenges in Burundi [22].

3.7 Employers’ preferences

Employers’ preference describes the tendency of the employers to choose/ select the job applicants based on origin, age and experience. The older and the more experienced is the job applicant, the more the probability of being employed. This means that when a less experienced and younger job applicant competes with the older and experienced job applicant, the former has lesser chances of being employed (Kuhn, et al. 2009). Preference for older and experienced workers delays employment of youth. Table 2.1 indicates that many of the respondents in Tanzania revealed that employer preferences for older and experienced workers significantly caused unemployment among youth with and without disability. Moreover, the studies by Semboja [4] and Manda et al. [27] indicate that employers’ preference for experienced and older workers in the EAC countries results to unemployment for indigenous youth including youth with disability. If these employers’ preferences for older and experienced workers persist will exacerbate the problem of unemployment for the youth with disability and increase their dependency on family members and will plunge them into poverty. Moreover, there are fears and social exclusion feelings among the youth with disability (Bell and Heitmueller, 2009)

Consequences of having specified job preferences have resulted into being employed in informal sector for there are limited employment systems and opportunities in the formal jobs. Another effect of the workers’ preference and opportunity cost is the increasing unemployment rate among youth with disability as the selection of jobs by youth with disability may in some cases be hindered by the type and severity of the disability. Similar to Tanzania, workers’ preferences and opportunity cost among youth have resulted to unemployment in Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda. Youth have been selective and see agricultural sector and informal sectors as lower class employment activities. They rather prefer to work in industrial sector and in high paying jobs where they can find jobs because job opportunities are limited (ICLR, 2014). It is observed that youth with disability despite having the preference of doing certain jobs depending on the type and extent of the disability, they do not get any employment even in low paying jobs such as gardening (Magelah and Ntambirweki, 2014; Semboja, 2017).

3.8 Other employability factors

Table 2.1 suggests that there are other employability attributes. These include workers preference and opportunity cost, attitude on the part of the employers on local employees/ family and employer expectations, transition from learning institution to labour market labour market information and conditions, level of information technology and experience during school years. This suggests that employability is about developing a range of attributes and abilities, not just job-getting skills. Employability is not something distinct from learning and pedagogy but grows out of good learning. What employers are looking for are flexible graduates who can add value when necessary but can also help transform the organisation in the face of change

3.8.1 Workers preference and opportunity

Table 2.1 suggests that workers preference and opportunity costs are not very important factors determining youth employment in the EAC countries. In these cases, the reservation wages for unemployed youths are very low. The reservation wage is the lowest wage rate at which a worker would be willing to accept a particular type of job at a particular point in time and place. Youth may set a higher reservation wage when considering an offer of an unpleasant or undesirable job than when considering a type of job the individual likes. That means, workers have limited job choices or preferences. Workers preference describe the tendencies of the workers or job applicants to have job selectivity where they tend to prefer formal jobs and likely in urban areas. Moreover, selectivity and workers preference among youth with disability by depend on the type and extent of disability. Youth with disability may themselves perceive they don’t suit in certain job but suit in another job due to the type and extent of the disability (Naughton, 2008). But the expected jobs by youth are limited and require specific skills which new entrants may not have acquired when there are employment opportunities.
3.8.2 Attitude on the part of the employers on local employees

Table 2.1 suggests that few respondents perceived attitude on the part of the employers on local employees having high probability of causing youth unemployment in EAC countries. An attitude of the employers on local employees represents the preference of the employers towards local employees as compared to the foreign employees. Employers, especially in private organizations and international organizations, seem to prefer outside experts than the local youth graduates [1]. It is argued that preference of foreign workers and negative attitude on local workers causes unemployment to domestic workers including youth (Mohamed, et al., 2012). Local youth employees are considered to be incompetent, inexperienced, lack work culture and are sometimes lazy and inefficient. This may lead to structural unemployment of the potential educated youth forcing them to youth underemployment

3.8.3 Transition from learning institutions to labour market

Transition from learning institutions to labour market describes the times taken by youth to move into labour market after graduating from learning institutions. Very few get their jobs within 6-9 months of graduation, and many are in long term absence of jobs for few years. Few respondents perceived that long transition time causes youth unemployment. The long term transition may be due to long time used for searching for decent jobs, inadequate and timely labour market information, ineffective and inefficient institutional arrangement between learning institutions and labour market, and low quality of the education and training provided in learning institutions Raffe, 2011; [20]. Other factors include lack of institutional capacities and poor coordination. The length of the school-to-work transition varies across countries. Garcia and Fares (2008) indicate that there is a variation among countries with respect to the duration taken by the disabled and non-disabled youth to get employed after schools or just getting job for youth who didn’t attend at all. They further noted that the length of the transition in Kenya is 5.3 years, while in Uganda the length of the transition period is 3.3 years. On the other hand, transition period is 1.9 years in Burundi. This implies that it takes more time (years) for a youth in Kenya to get employed than in Uganda and Burundi.

3.8.4 Labour market information and conditions

Labour market information can be broadly defined as the information needed by individuals and organizations to make informed decisions about the labour market. Few respondents perceived that lack of labour market information and conditions is a limiting factor for youth employment in the EAC countries. Lack of labour market information and connections are influenced by poor accessibility to information about the skills needed by workers/ works, cost of advertising vacancies, low awareness about platforms, spaces for youths to participate in the employment policy dialogue or express their needs and interests in the labour, remoteness of the area and lack of dissemination agencies. Lack of labour market information and conditions have effects on the employment and career choice of the youth. These make the potential job applicants fail to find the employers while on the other hand, lack of labour market information causes prospective employers fail to find the suitable job applicants (IZA, 2013).

3.8.5 Level of information technology

Level of information technology (IT) is the extent to which a person has the knowledge on the application of computers and internet to store, study, retrieve, transmit, and manipulate data, or information, often in the context of a business or other enterprises. Table 2.1 suggests that few respondents perceived low level of information technology as being highly responsible for youth unemployment in the EA countries. Low level of information technology among youth is due to low levels of human capital and weak institutions that slow the adoption and creation of new technologies, low education, poor infrastructure and high costs of connections and equipment acquisitions, and lack of financial resources (Labelle, 1995). Low level of information technology results to poor education and training among youth. Information technology improves education, impart the youth with skills needed for employment in a knowledge-based economy and provide career opportunities in the Information Technology sector itself (OECD, 2010).

3.8.6 Work experience during school years

Youth may choose to work while they are enrolled in school for a variety of reasons. They may want to earn income to support their family, pay for personal expenses (for example, a car), working will teach them
responsibility and punctuality and thus obtain job experience that will assist them in their subsequent transition from school to work (Rothstein, 2001). Table 2.1 suggests that few respondents viewed that lack of work experience during school years has a high probability of causing youth unemployment in the EAC. Studies have found that gender, race, ethnicity, family income, family structure, and maternal employment are predictors of the likelihood of a person’s working while young. For instance, maternal employment and family structure may affect the likelihood of youth’s employment. Families in which the mother is employed may place a stronger emphasis on work among all household members. The studies by Rischewski and others in Rwanda, (2008) and Loeb and others in Malawi (2004) indicate that lack of work experience among youth reduces employability for disabled youth.

4 Conclusion

Section four is a conclusion that provides working policy recommendations on the youth employability in the EA countries. The paper found that employability means the social economic development of human capital and adaptable workforces in which all those capable of working are encouraged to develop the skills, knowledge, technology and adaptability to enable them to enter and remain in employment throughout their working years. Employability skills are searched, created, developed, utilized, and refined in youth through the development of cognitive, communication and behavioural aptitude. Employability skills are transferrable across time, jobs, employers, industries, and are applicable to life outside work. Youth will grow and develop these skills throughout their career, using them to find and keep jobs and continue to progress along their career journey.

One of the strategic moves is the regional integration of labour market, with the overall policy goal of facilitating free movement of factors of production. The vision is for national states to pursue open door labour market. It is the mission of these national states to put an enabling environment for increasing youth employability in rural and urban areas and thus the general policy objective is enhancing employability conditions. The following are the main youth employment policy strategies.

4.1 Reduce cost of doing business

In order to reduce the cost of doing business for the youth in EAC, the governments need to improve socio-economic infrastructures, ease the business registration and licensing procedures, provision of subsidies and incentives to youth so as to encourage them to participate in business. There is a need of cooperation between state and non-state actors so as to provide loans and grants to its citizens to enable them to conduct business. Also there is a need to improve productivity and quality of labour, raw materials, and goods to address supply side deficiencies. Provision of viable markets for locally produced goods to enhance pro-economic growth is instrumental for limiting the cost of doing business among the youth.

4.2 Efficient system to manage labor migration

These governments should also solve problems in rural-urban migration by improving rural infrastructures; establishment of agro-processing industries coupled with ensuring adequate and reliable electricity in the rural areas, provision of rural vocational and training programmes to equip youth with technical and entrepreneurial skills for empowerment and employability. Moreover, provision of capital and machinery to youth groups undertaking economic activities in rural areas and provision of loans.

Also, these EAC member states should strengthen cross border placement services to facilitate employment of citizens abroad; enhance rare and specialized skills for its citizens; develop national guidance for transfer of skills from foreign citizen/experts; integrate global and regional commitments, bilateral and multilateral agreements on labor migrations in national development frameworks; strengthen rural farm, off-farm and non-farm income generating activities and facilitate portability of social security assets, [28].

4.3 Enhance skills matching

EAC governments have to enhance skills matching which include; provision of relevant curriculum that produces updated knowledge base; provision of scientific, technical, and vocational training; and involvement of
the private sector and other stakeholders in the provision of education in each EA countries in order to supplement and complement the governments’ efforts of ensuring accessibility of quality education to all citizens [29]. There should be a linkage between learning institutions and potential employers. The linkage is necessary in order to ensure youth get internships and attachments while at learning institutions and therefore enhancing the youth employability (ILO, 2014).

4.4 Implement good career planning

Establish a close mentorship advice systems on career to enable students to identify what exactly they have to go for, which can fit their interests and develop them; and put in place professional advice frameworks for youth and practical experiences to learn more about their careers. Design and implement internship programmes both for paid and unpaid. Also there is a need to improve practical experiences to learn about careers, establishment of formal networks, and experience the workplace; and put in place adequate youth career planning systems that may lead to good professional preparations, and consequently helping them to make right choices and thus being more competent in the labour market. There must be good professional preparations for youths whereby during interview youths can pass and grab the opportunities.

Governments should facilitate the establishment of career counselling and guidance centres in the ministries responsible with youth; learning institutions should have departments or directories responsible for career guidance and counselling to ensure youth have sufficient career guidance. Moreover, there should be formal arrangements between learning institutions and potential employers on organizing career fairs in order to inform youth the available employment opportunities and the qualifications therein.

4.5 Improve access to quality education

Modernize education systems and curriculum which articulate needs of the labour market. There is a need for strong competitive education system based on relevant theories and relevant skills. Countries have to increase a number of professionals who are experienced. All countries need to ensure that educational system caters for the modern industrial and other skills required in the labour market.

Governments should increase access to school for youth with disability. To attain the objective, the EA governments should hire more professional teachers with disabilities to reduce marginalization of children in classrooms. Schools should be physically accessible for children with disabilities, and there should be proper monitoring of children with disabilities by assessing the best ways to help them; and teachers need support to reach children with special needs by having an inclusive curriculum that can help break barriers that children with disabilities have been facing in classrooms. Moreover, schools and training centres for youth with disability should have adequate facilities to facilitate learning process. Appropriate measures are required to ensure that local educated youth with disability who possess relevant qualifications are employed in various positions depending on their qualifications and not their physical impairments or any other discriminatory system. Furthermore, there should be deliberate measures by EA governments to ensure education systems and training systems comply with international standards and technological changes in the world.

There is a need of equipping the workforce with vital skills and attitude for increased productivity needed for growth of private sector. To ensure that youth are equipped with required work experiences and skills EA governments and non-state actors have taken various measures to increase employability of youth with disability. These measures include establishment and implementation of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs and facilitate development of training modules. Other measures are such as arrangement of apprenticeships and job placements geared towards ensuring youth acquire practical experience (ILO, 2014).

4.6 Meet employers’ preferences

Governments should prepare youth to meet employers’ preferences by implementing following strategies: improve youth subject knowledge and competence through specialization and professional development; ensure effective communication by improving ability to express ideas clearly and confidently in writing and in speech; encourage the spirit of team work; intensify general knowledge and skills; create commercial awareness by
understanding the commercial realities affecting the organisation. Moreover, there is a need to improve analytical skills by gathering information systematically to establish facts and principles; enhance initiative/self-motivation and ability to act on initiative, identify opportunities & proactive in putting forward ideas and solutions. Youth need to have self determination to get things done. They have to learn to make things happen and constantly look for better ways of doing things. They have to be organized, flexible and manage time effectively, prioritizing tasks and able to meet deadlines.

4.7 Enhance provision of different information regarding employment opportunities

EA governments in collaboration with the non-state actors should set a clear and transparent structure for the provision of different information regarding employment opportunities. The recruitment process should also be fair and open so as to include all people at all different levels [28]. The EA governments should set an employment policy that is transparent and accountable towards labour information. Moreover, there should be establishment of special labour market information dissemination centres for youth with disabilities.

Competing Interests

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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