

# An Analysis of the extent of Training Needs Assessment by the Organizations offering Training to Youth Organizations in Kinango County, Kenya

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## Abstract

The mobilization of youth in Kenya and growth of youth group enterprise projects took centre stage in the last four years with the creation of Ministry of youth affairs and sports in the year 2005. The Department of Youth development was established in January 2007 with an aim of spearheading the general empowerment of the youths with key objectives being; promoting Youth-owned Small and Micro Enterprise (SME) projects, promoting thriftiness and self-reliance among the youth, promoting an entrepreneurial culture among the youth, and promoting marketing of Youth Products and Services. (The national youth policy 2007). The study aimed at broadening understanding about the factors that influence performance of various youth group income generating projects in Taita district. It also aims at giving remedial measures to the problems faced by youth group initiated projects so as to improve their performance and realize their goals. The groups were stratified according to their categories of projects/activity. From the targeted population a random sample of 60% will be taken from each category to give a total sample of 35 projects. Data for the study will consist of primary data collected by use of questionnaires and secondary data based on youth group performance reports submitted to the respective group coordinators to the Provincial director in the Ministry of youth affairs, department of Youth development. The data will be analyzed using statistical package of social sciences software and findings will be presented in form of tables, charts and figures.

**Keywords:** Training Needs Assessment, Small and Micro Enterprise's, Entrepreneurial Culture.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Training is an organized activity aimed at imparting information and instructions to improve the recipient's performance or to help him or her attain the required level of knowledge or skill. It is a learning process that involves the acquisition of knowledge, sharpening of skills or changing of attitudes and behaviour to enhance the performance of the recipient, Zemke and Thomas (1982).

Training is important because it enables people acquire new skills and knowledge, and maintaining existing skills. In addition, training can: increase people's confidence, confirm to them the value of what they are already doing, enable them to pass on new skills to colleagues in the workplace, raise general awareness, change people's attitudes, and improve morale. Whether training is part of an ongoing process of professional development or simply about learning a specific skill, it can improve people's skills and knowledge and help them carry out their job more effectively, Gent *et al*, (1989). Many organizations are making a strong commitment to develop their talent from within. Many employers recognize that most skills can be taught and that expertise can be developed on the job. These employers focus more on selecting the staff with the right attitudes and basic (generic) competencies like commitment and communication skills. The technical competencies are built on over a period of time.

Training and development of employees present a lot of value to the organizations which includes the following: optimizing the utilization of human resources which further helps employees to achieve organizational goals as well as their individual goals. Training also develops human resources by providing opportunities in the broader organizational structure which employees enjoy because of the expanded horizons of the human intellect. The productivity of employees is increased which helps the organization to achieve its long term goals. Training and development helps in inculcating the sense of team work, team spirit and inter-team collaborations within the

employees Wolfgang, (1998). Otieno (2010) observes that Kenya is experiencing a 'youth bulge' with the bigger chunk of the population, 24.5 million, aged below 25 years. According to Owino (2010), the increasing numbers of the youth show that education and employment will be critical as Kenya struggles to transform itself into a middle-income country. It has been argued that youth development is a major way of spearheading the general empowerment of the youth in order to reduce risk factors and promote positive activities. One way identified of empowering the youth is facilitating the development of youth initiatives that empower the youth to participate positively in economic development governance and general improvement of their livelihood and that of other members of the society. (The National Youth Policy 2007).

Organizations including Government Ministries and Non-Governmental Organizations have been involved in supporting community-based organizations in Kinango district with the aim of improving livelihood of the residents in the region. The youth in the area have undergone training in a variety of areas; entrepreneurship, leadership, governance, environmental conservation, public health, and better farming methods among others, (Kinango District Development Plan, 2008-2012). To be effective in training, these institutions need to carry out training needs assessment in order to identify the gaps in skill, knowledge and attitude among the youth in the area. It has not been established if these organizations undertake formal training needs assessment and the methods that are used.

A few studies have been carried out on training needs assessment that are relevant to this study. Bungu (1994) studied training needs assessment in a survey of the current practices in commercial banks in Nairobi; Womae (2005) carried out a study on effects of training needs assessment on performance of women owned micro-enterprises; a case of women trained by Undugu society in Nairobi between 1981 and 1990; Mwangome 2009 undertook a study on training needs assessment; a key factor affecting training and performance of youth enterprises in Thika district. None of the studies has been undertaken on training needs assessment in youth organizations in Kinango district, Kwale County. This study aims at addressing the knowledge gap.

### *1.1 Youth Training Organisations in Kinango District*

Kinango District is situated in south coast, the Kwale County. The district is divided into 4 divisions and 16 locations. The major economic activity in the entire district is livestock rearing supported by commercial activities in urban centers (Kinango District Development Plan, 2008-2012). The National Youth Council Act, 2009 defines youth as persons aged between 18 and 35 years. This age group account for 32% of population and forms about 60% of the total active labour force and the largest source of human resource for development. The majority of them are form four school leavers and college graduate who though employable have no skills for the job market and therefore remain unemployed. Their contribution to future development, productivity and participation to national development can be enhanced through quality training (The National Youth Council Act, 2009). The youth in Kinango District consist of 26% of the total population. The youth provides the highest percentage of the work force and the highest human resource and being the most active, needs to be empowered to contribute positively in growth and development. The registered youth organizations include Kinango Youth Advocacy Forum, Environmental Conservation Initiative-Kinango, Nuru Agro-Business Organization, and Vijana Jitegemee Business Forum. These organizations are engaged in various income generating activities such as: Aloe Vera farming and processing, goat keeping, Livestock trading, tailoring and dressmaking, growing and selling horticultural produce (vegetables) from group owned farm plots, planting and selling seedlings from group owned tree nurseries, operating tailoring business, Carpentry, among others. They are also engaged in other activities such as: Sensitization on youth governance, prevention of HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns, Landscaping and Tree planting among others. However there is a need for more training to equip youth with adequate skills necessary to enable them realize the goals of their activities (Kinango District Development Plan, 2009-2010)

To fill the skills gap among the youth in Kinango district, both Government Ministries and Non-Governmental Organizations play a major role in training them so as to impart them with the necessary skills required to excel in their activities. Among the government ministries involved in training youth organizations in the district include: Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Kenya Forestry Services, Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Agriculture. Non-governmental organizations supporting youth organization activities through training include: World Vision, Plan International, Aga Khan Foundation, Red Cross, Aphia II, and Varkeert Foundation.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Training**

Training is a means of communicating new knowledge and skills and changing attitudes. It can raise awareness and provide people with the opportunity to explore their existing knowledge and skills, Healthlink , (2003). Training is the process of bringing a person to an agreed standard of skill by practice and instruction. It is directed towards agreed standards or objectives. These are sometimes called learning outcomes. But, to be effective, training should be based on the needs of the people who are being trained, (the participants). Training should not only meet the needs of people being trained, but should meet the needs of the organization or project they are working for, and contribute to better services or standards for service users.

Training involves the development or strengthening of three main aspects: knowledge, skills and attitudes. This needs to be addressed if a person is to develop himself to contribute effectively to a group or organization to which she or he belongs ,Healthlink Worldwide, (2003).

A training need is a need for human performance that can be met by training of some form of training. This need must be spelled out in clear, behaviorally – oriented terms. The training needs once identified should be written down for easy reference. Training need identification is the process required to detect and specify training needs at individual or organization levels. This stage involves information filtering designed to sort out needs from wants and then classify the needs that are actually training needs. Analysis of training needs is the process of examining training needs to determine how best they might be met, Robyn (1999). Training is often considered for new employees only but ongoing training for current employees helps them to adjust to rapidly changing job requirements. The quality of employees and their development through training are major factors in determining long term profitability of their organizations.

### **2.2 Process of Developing and Implementing Training Programs**

In developing a training program the program content must be developed comprehensively and methods of conducting the training exercise clearly explained. Training methods used could fall under two broad categories. On- the job training which is delivered to employees while they perform their regular jobs and Of- the-job techniques which include lectures, small group discussions, case-studies, role playing, simulations, brainstorming, guided discussions, programmed instructions and other training methods. Training should be based on a clearly defined strategy and set of objectives that drive all the decisions made in the organization Meir (2009). According to Shaun (2000), training is about enabling people to gain knowledge, to practice their skills and to shape their attitudes. Shaun (2000), observed that, designing training and development program involves a sequence of steps that can be grouped into six phases: needs assessment, instructional objectives, instructional design, validation, implementation, evaluation and follow up.

#### **2.2.1 Training Needs Assessment**

To be effective and efficient, all training programs must start with a needs assessment. The assessment begins with a "need". A need is not a want or a desire. It is a gap between "what is" and "what ought to be" or "should be" within a particular context, leading to strategies aimed at eliminating the gap between what is and should or could be, Miller,( 2002) . The process of training needs assessment involves all activities and skills necessary to identifying and analysing training needs accurately. Needs assessment is used for identifying gaps and to provide information for a decision on whether the gaps could be addressed through training. The assessment is part of a process focusing on identifying and solving performance problems. These performance problems may be related to knowledge, skills and attitudes. Program-based needs assessment is a systematic inquiry for the purposes of identifying priorities and making decisions, and it also deals with allocating finite resources in a manner consistent with identified program goals and objectives. Needs assessment includes identifying and analyzing expressed and unexpressed needs, and a plan to develop strategies that address such need. According to Bill (2005), training needs assessment is related to organizational and individual performance. The training needs assessment is a critical activity for the training and development function. A needs assessment means that the individual assessed has a defined job performance or that an organization has defined objectives and goals. The root of the training need assessment is the gap analysis. This is an assessment of the gap between the knowledge,

skills and attitudes that the people in the organization currently possess and the knowledge, skills and attitudes that they require to meet the organization's objectives.

The primary purpose of the training needs assessment is to ensure that there is a need for training and to identify the training programme content. Training needs assessment provides information for developing a training plan that is based on the learning needs of the participants. It increases the relevance of the training and the commitment of the learners, as they are involved in the preparation of the training design that reflects their expressed needs. Thus, it helps to foster a rapport between the facilitators and the participants. The facilitators can acquire basic knowledge of the strengths and limitations of the participants and the learners can become partners in analyzing their own learning needs, Dessler (2004).

Training needs assessment is conducted before training solutions are budgeted, designed and delivered. The output of the needs analysis is a document that provides answers these questions: Why do people need the training? What skills need imparting? Who needs the training? When will they need the new skills? Where the training may be conducted? And how may the new skills be imparted? Conducting training need assessment is important because it helps to determine what training is relevant, what training will improve performance, and if training will make a difference. It also helps to distinguish training needs from organizational problems, and to link improved task/activity performance with the organization goals. According to Jean, (2006) training needs assessment covers a three phase process, that is, to collect information, analyze it and create a training programmes. The training should be conducted to tie the performance deficiency to a business need. The benefits of conducting training must be greater than the problems being caused by the performance deficiency. Training should involve appropriate parties to solve the deficiency. A target population analysis should be conducted to learn as much as possible about those involved in a deficiency and how to customize a training programme to capture their interest. The performance deficiency can be corrected through training or any other remedies if training is not appropriate.

After a training assessment is completed instructional objectives should be laid down. Producing clear objectives is important to the design and provision of training. Sound objectives should specify what the trainees should be able to demonstrate by the end of training. The result of the needs assessment allows the training organization to set the training objectives by answering two very basic questions: who, if anyone, needs training and what training is needed. Sometimes training is not the solution (Shaun, 2000). Some performance gaps can be reduced or eliminated through other management solutions such as communicating expectations, providing a supportive work.

Once the needs assessment is completed and training objectives are clearly identified, the design phase of the training and development process is initiated. Designing a training programme involves the following steps: Selecting the internal or external person or resource to design and develop the training; Selecting and designing the program content.; Select the techniques used to facilitate learning, Selecting the appropriate setting, Selecting the materials to be used in delivering the training and Identifying and training instructors (Zemke, 1985). During validation, where the bugs are worked out in the training programme by presenting it to a small representative audience. This is a pretest of training design which precedes the actual implementation. A successful validation will ensure the training programme developed is appropriate.

After completing the validation phase, the training is ready for implementation. Implementation involves; Scheduling classes, facilities and participants; scheduling instructors to teach; preparing materials and delivering them to scheduled locations; and conducting the training. The final phase in the training and development program is evaluation of the program to determine whether the training objectives were met. The evaluation process includes determining participant reaction to the training program, how much participants learned and how well the participants transfer the training back on the job. The information gathered from the training evaluation is then included in the next cycle of training needs assessment.

### **2.3 Training Needs Assessment Methods**

Gent *et al.*, (1989), observes that a key to any successful Training needs assessment is the gathering of complete and accurate data and information regarding the target group. There are seven basic assessment methods that can be used to gather data and information. There are many methods to determining individual training needs. These

include: Analysis of available data, interactive teamwork through performance or test for training need assessment, interviews/oral surveys, focus groups, questionnaires, observation and self- assessment. These methods are further explained below:

Existing data refers to existing information in the form of reports, work samples, historical data, planning and budget reports, organizational structure charts, evaluations and career development reports that can be reviewed and analyzed. Data can be analyzed using statistical tools such as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) among others (Mugenda 1999).

A test is an exam that assesses knowledge or skill level in performing a particular task. It is based on the knowledge content of the task or activity performed (Mutoro 1997). Testing the target group gives a good idea of the knowledge gaps that exist. The training needs assessment test is developed using representative assessment test items that correspond to each knowledge item that has been identified in the Job Analysis. The resulting training needs assessment test is then administered to relevant target group. The tests are then graded and the results analyzed to define those areas in which training is needed.

Interviews refer to one or more series of active interchanges between two or more people. They can be conducted either face to face or via technology. Using this method, the target group assess their own training needs by evaluating their own competencies. Oral surveys are an interview where closed questions are used in order to elicit "yes" or "no" answers to a set of preselected questions. A list of questions from a survey form is read to the participants and the answers filled as given by the participants, Mugenda, (1999).

A focus group is an interactive exchange between an interviewer or facilitator and a group of people. Group discussions enable participants to share comments and observations about what is happening in their workplaces or activity areas and what skills they feel they may need. Typically the discussions are guided by the facilitator according to a preplanned set of questions.

Questionnaires are a survey instrument through which individuals respond to printed questions. The survey questionnaires may be provided to either a represented sample of participant in the specific group or to each individual in the organization. The questionnaires are completed on an individual basis. Questions need to be clear, specific and simple. Closed questions need to be avoided as these identify what people think they know rather than what they actually know. Questions should be geared towards finding out whether people have the skills and knowledge required or needed to do the task or activity effectively. The results of the survey, consists of the numerical data noted by the participant on the individual survey questionnaires. This data can be analyzed using a computer analysis program that determines which items are critical to task performance and therefore are a training need or by merely reviewing the results subjectively Mugenda, (1999).

Observation is a method of data collection based on watching a process or skill and systematically recording the events as they occur. The facilitator observes the participant as they execute the tasks based on their knowledge and skills and systematically records their performance or events as they occur. These methods help trainers to assess what people already know and what knowledge and skills they may need to acquire to work effectively (Donald, 2003).

This involves asking participants to list the things they think they are good at and what subjects they think they need training on. This helps the trainer to exactly know the critical areas to be given more emphasis when designing and implementing the training programme.

## **2.4 Organizations that offer Training Programs**

From the provincial planning office, a report on field activities (2009/2010) shows that a number of organization offer training to youth organizations in Kinango district with the aim of imparting them with the necessary skills required to excel in their activities. These organizations include:

### **2.4.1 Government Ministries and Departments**

Among the government ministries involved in training youth organizations in the district include: Ministry of youth affairs and sports, Kenya forestry services, Ministry of public health and Ministry of agriculture. Among

the areas they train on are: Entrepreneurship, Leadership, governance, ICT for marketing, Environmental conservation, adult literacy, Public health, better farming methods among others. (Kinango District Development Plan 2008 -2012):

#### 2.4.2 Non Governmental Organizations

Supplementing the government's role in supporting youth organization activities are the Non- Governmental organizations (NGOs). These include local and international Non- Governmental organizations namely World Vision, Plan International, Aga Khan Foundation, Aphia II, Varkeert Foundation, Unicef, USAID, Compassion, KOINs Foundation, and Choice Humanitarian. Most of the NGOs support youth organizations by offering training on areas like enterprise management skills, project management, modern farming methods, life skills, environmental conservation, live stock keeping, and Public health. They also offer financial support; provide material resources, assist them in marketing of their products among other activities (Kinango District Development Plan 2008 -2012).

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

The study will adopt survey design. Anthony *et al*, (2009) wrote that survey designs are important in increasing the researcher's familiarity with the problem, in gathering information about practical problems, in clarifying concepts, in formulating a problem for more precise investigation and in establishing priority for further research as it covers the total population. The adoption of this design is justified on the ground of its exhaustiveness and the personal touch between the researcher and the few organizations being studied.

#### 3.2 Population

The population of this study will consist of all the twelve organizations that conduct training and the four youth organizations in Kinango District as illustrated in the coast field report 2009\ 2010 (pg 10) from the Provincial planning officer.

#### 3.3 Data Collection

Primary data will be collected through personal interviews using an interview guide. The respondents to the interview will be the heads or deputies of the twelve training organizations and the four youth organizations in Kinango district.

#### 3.4 Data Analysis

The nature of data collection was purely qualitative. Data was analyzed qualitatively using content analysis. The researcher adopted content analysis for open-ended questions due to its suitability in objectively and systematically measuring the semantic content of the responses received. Nachmias and Nachmias (1996), concur that content analysis is a technique of making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specific characteristics of messages and then relating the themes.

### 4. FINDINGS

The purposes of training needs assessment is to determine whether there is a gap between what is required for effective performance and present levels of performance. Training needs assessment provides information for developing a training plan that is based on the learning needs of the participants. In kinango district, a number of training organization play a major role in training target youth organization or sponsoring them for training to help them acquire the skills required to perform their activities better. The study finding showed that training organisations were sparingly not behind when conducting training need assessment for youth organisations. About 80% of the organisations conduct training needs assessment before training target youth organization, and 20% offer training based on analysis of available data from government agencies at grass root. However, the study findings showed that not all training organization use the appropriate training needs assessment methods. The study showed that the two commonly used methods were group discussion and baseline survey resulting to apathy in training offered. Although most of the training offered was on leadership skills, advocacy, social audit, resource mobilization, business proposal writing, social budgetary process, youth organization felt that much needed to be done by diversifying training areas covered to take care of diversified needs of organization members.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### 5.1 Conclusions

Training needs assessment conducted by training organizations were inadequate in determining the gap between what was required for effective performance and present levels of performance of target youth organisation. This was as a result of using only limited methods of assessing needs which included group discussion and baseline survey.

### 5.2 Recommendations

It was noted that though training was offered to members of the different youth organisation, the training needs assessment were not well focused and standardized. Also, the training organisations were not adequate in disseminating the intended and required information and skills. To solve this problem there is need for harmonization of training needs assessment methods as well as training programmes based on realism that can be used by all training organization in kinango district as well as other parts of regions in Kenya.

### 5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

This research predominantly dwelt on training needs assessment by organization training youth in Kinango district. Despite the study's findings, more should be done on other related critical areas such as translation of strategy into practice and other areas that may spearhead the general empowerment of the youths in order to reduce risk factors and promote positive factors. In addition, to training needs assessment, other factors that may influence youth organization performance need to be researched on. Finally, effort is required to investigate how to prepare the general operational environment the undertakings in order to boost and motivate all kinds of entrepreneurs regardless of age differences within Kenya.

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