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Enhancing Youth Employment Opportunities in Rural Economies of Ghana

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Executive Summary

One of the most pressing challenges of today's world, particularly in sub-Sahara Africa is unemployment. This growing global challenge, mainly among the youth, is frustrating and requires practical and immediate policies to resolve. The absence of policies and programmes to resolve rising youth unemployment could turn this potential human resources for development into agents of destruction and bring all development works to a standstill. The World Bank (2018) claims that this situation of unemployment in the regions (Africa and Middle East particularly) could results in risky behaviors including involvement in crime, youth uprising and unnecessary demonstrations and other social vices as has been witnessed in some North Africa and Middle East countries (World Bank, 2007), the effect of which may not be pleasant for the countries concerned.

The Bank and other bodies therefore suggest the need for more proactive efforts from governments and international organizations to resolve the issue immediately. This is because the situation negatively affects the welfare of young people and potentially the rest of the economy as this could lead to higher youth-to-adult unemployment rates because of the absence of opportunities to develop professionally. While youth employment could be ubiquitous, the rate or level varies from one country to another making one-size-fit all recommendation implausible. In addition, a couple of World Bank reports (World Bank, 2010; World Bank 2016) on youth employment programme suggest that there is little evidence of the impact on existing youth-targeted employment interventions in many labor-abundant, low-income countries with weak institutions, such as those found in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of South Asia. Information on youth as a beneficiary group of such programmes for further analysis, programming and policy decisions are often limited. For these and other important reasons, it has become more imperative to analyse the effects of existing youth employment initiatives to inform future policy decisions aimed at harnessing the potential of the youth for employment creation in Ghana and elsewhere. The current study, therefore, aims to access youth employment opportunities in rural economies of Ghana. The study used both primary and secondary data to analyse the effectiveness and efficiency of youth employment initiatives and the factors influencing youth employment. Questionnaires were administered to 662 respondents, and Key Informant Interviews were also carried out. The results showed that majority of the youth employment programme beneficiaries were women, yet this social group have high unequal access to education as compared to their male counterparts. Among the programmes considered for the study, REP was most effective and efficient programme providing skills training to create employment opportunities, mostly in Ghana's rural areas. . Unlike other programmes, REP has administrative offices in all the districts so they are able to bring their services to the doors of the youth. The study empirically estimated and analysed the factors that affect youth employment. The study found out that participation in youth employment programme, marital status, participation in youth entrepreneurial and development programme, educational level, and age were the statistically significant factors affecting youth employment. These factors were also positively related to youth employment. Untapped resources are normally found in the agricultural sector, however, lack of financial resources, inadequate technical knowledge, lack of ready market and low prices, and poor infrastructure have contributed to the neglect of these resources. Policies and programmes to promote female education should be reviewed since current policies appear not to be yielding the desired results. Government need to expand current youth employment programmes

because participation in such programmes increases the possibility of been employed. Also, the large number of young people who are churned out into the labour market each year should be taken into consideration. Efforts to make education accessible to the youth need to be encouraged and aggressively promoted since the higher the level of education of the youth, the higher the probability of securing employment. Youth entrepreneurial and development programmes also needs to be promoted since these increase the likelihood of obtaining employment.

Introduction

In Ghana, statistics indicates that in the last two and half decades the country's performance in terms of growth has been quite remarkable. It is estimated that between 2000 and 2014, Ghana recorded an average annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate of 6.4%, which accelerated after the rebasing of the economy in 2006 to a peak of 7.6%, an average recorded between 2007 and 2014. In spite of this level of growth performance, a direct translation into complementary job creation was not observed. This has become a major concern to policy makers, development practitioners and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) (Aryeetey and Baah-Boateng, 2015), both at local and international levels. This worrying situation has brought to the fore, interest in research and development on issues of unemployment, particularly among young people.

Although access to employment opportunities are becoming difficult, a few people have managed to secure jobs, albeit jobs which are not commensurate with the level of qualification and are poorly remunerated. This is in spite of the record that majority of the youth entering the labour market in Ghana in recent years are relatively highly educated (Baah-Boateng, 2018). The situation has been the same for both formal and informal employment sectors. Consequently, the nation seems to be wasting this potential resource for growth and development. The absence of jobs and employment among the youth is a serious threat to national sovereignty as posited by economic and security analysts. The absence of employment among the teeming youth population could trigger several forms of social tensions, demonstrations and instability, should the disaffected youth (without jobs or prospect of getting a meaningful future) join disgruntled groups.

The few jobs created in this way are mainly in the private and informal sector. This includes agriculture sector jobs, which employs majority of the teeming youth in developing countries, although the sector offers meagre income, and insecure employment which in its current form do not promise a better way out of poverty (Ambrosio-Albalá and Bastiaensen, 2010 cited in Rodríguez-Pose and Hardy, 2015). Confronted with less employment opportunities in the public sector due to the inability of the governments to create employment opportunities, the youth are left with no other option than to remain in the gloomy agriculture sector. Improvement of the lots of the youth will require implementation of policies, programmes and projects by the government and other private sector partners that can address youth unemployment.

Since the declaration of the International Year of Youth (2010-2011), member states have been called upon to take advantage of the declaration to advocate for youth development at all levels of decision making (national, regional, and international). Several countries and international development bodies have taken up the challenge to negotiate good deals on behalf of the youth, particularly the unemployed/underemployed youth. This is evident by the number of international and local meetings and conferences held in the last decade. These initiatives have the adoption and implementation of the African Youth Charter. In addition, some institutions and agencies have initiated programmes to encourage entrepreneurship and skills development among the youth but little is known about how young people are able to take up the challenge to become entrepreneurs or gain employment

into the formal sector and how they can best be supported to gain employment (Chigunta et al., 2016)

In spite of these efforts, the fact still remains that youth unemployment doubles or more than doubles national average unemployment rate in Ghana (ILO/WB, 2019). The situation raises a number of questions, which need to be understood and addressed. In recent times, some countries in the developing world, Ghana inclusive, have focused attention on inclusive growth, development and job creation through higher education training and provision of entrepreneurial trainings (Rajak and Dolan, 2016). The government of Ghana, for example, has initiated a number of workforce and entrepreneurial development trainings geared towards solving the unemployment (youth unemployment especially) challenge confronting the country and this has been countrywide in most cases. Despite this, improvement in employment statistics has not been encouraging. There seems to be mismatch between the education provided and job market requirement as many of the relatively highly educated young people cannot get jobs compared to those with little education. This may be the consequence of the mismatch between higher education and available jobs or labour market skills demand (Sengupta, 2017). Could it be that policy makers and researchers have failed to address the real situation of employment and hence the rising income gaps and therefore the inequality in contemporary societies.

Generating a better understanding of how young people access new programmes, projects and initiatives that provide job skills to prepare them for jobs in the future and what they make of such opportunities is critical for any policy that aims at expanding the frontiers of employment in the country. Although, evidence may be scattered or scarce, the burgeoning literature on youth employment and development suggest a growing interest in rigorous research on youth employment and entrepreneurship (Ayele et al., 2017). While this is important, the focus seems to have been shifted to effects of workforce development programmes for youth rather than evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of existing programmes to enable government to expand and make good the deficiencies of the existing programmes and initiatives. This study explores the deficiencies of youth employment initiatives implemented between 2000 and 2018 in Ghana as a way of building upon the existing ones in order to create more vibrant and active youth employment programmes that are able to provide the necessary foundation for the youth entering the labour markets and creating sustainable employment opportunities.

Employment Trends in Ghana

Global economic difficulties and its subsequent repercussions have increased unemployment and underemployment in several countries of the world, especially in transitioning economies, including Ghana. The consequences of this challenge have led the Ghanaian government and its development partners to explore innovative ways of fixing youth unemployment. .

As part of the strategy, the government of Ghana with the support of its development partners has initiated several skills and work force development programmes to help make the pool of unemployed youth employable. While new programmes are continuously been rolled out, particularly with the coming into office of every new government, the youth

unemployment gap continue to exist between the youth and those above the youth bracket as shown by the ILO/WB data. (World Bank, 2019). It is possible that the current approach to youth employment programmes have ignored the dynamic nature of the job market, the effectiveness of training and skills provided as well as the interest of the teeming youth in creating such opportunities.

According to the 2015 Ghana Labour Survey Report, Ghana's unemployment rate stood at 11.9% in 2015 (GSS, 2016). While unemployment is a challenge among all age groups, the case of the youth is high particularly for those between the ages 15 and 24 years. The statistics indicate that about 25.9% of the unemployed individuals fall within this age bracket. This group of young people usually find themselves in lowly paid jobs, which are often in the informal sector. This is because of their limited or no work experience, although they may be relatively highly educated. They are mostly fresh from school or may have been job-hunting for several years. Those between the age group of 15 and 35 years constitute about 34.1% of the total population of Ghana (GSS, 2014). The long periods of waiting in the labour market after school tends to increase their vulnerability which can make the youth susceptible to several social vices, and thereby lead to uprising, social conflicts and the likes.

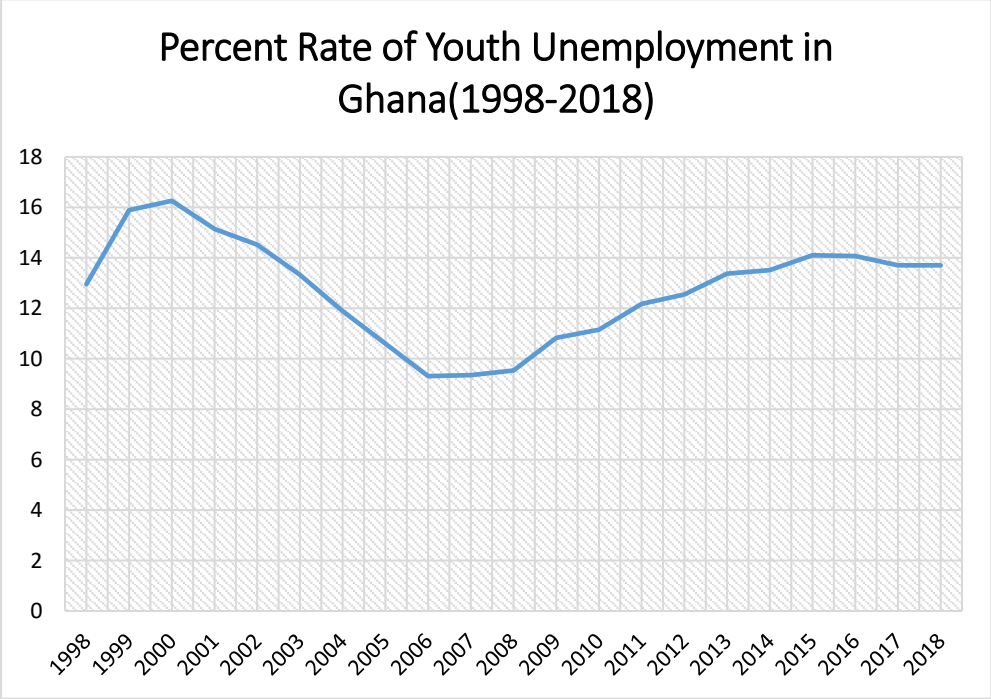


Figure 1: Youth unemployment trend in Ghana

Source: (ILO, 2019 cited in WB, 2019)

This seemingly desperate situation is usually one of drivers of youth migration, especially rural-urban, youth streetism and the upsurge of international migration. Underutilizing the skills and knowledge of these young ones does not only cause them to be socially excluded, the situation helps to perpetuate intergenerational poverty in many homes. The lack of experience of these young ones pose challenges in securing productive and well-paid jobs. This situation coupled with increasing number of those between 15-35 years explains the high youth unemployment in the country.

An intriguing aspect of Ghana's youth unemployment patterns is that youth unemployment appears higher among the educated and women suffer more than men in the quest of looking for jobs in the labour market. With regards to location unemployment, rural dwellers suffer more than urban dwellers (Baah-Boateng, 2019). This may explain the so-called shunning of rural agriculture in Ghana (White, 2012). According to White (2012), agriculture is not only the main income source in the developing world but also the sector that promises to provide jobs for many youth in the future and therefore there is the need to boost the sector's performance. The sector is expected to ensure that the teeming youth population will have a source of secured employment, providing income for many farm households. Yet, the slow agricultural productivity growth and difficulties of gaining access to land and credit constrained many youths, allowing only a few to work on small-scale farms, while the rest live in limbo.

Employment by Sector

Using the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) resolution to classify work, the Ghana Living Standards Survey 7 (GLSS7) presents four main forms of work in Ghana. According to the survey report, the four forms are employment work, own use production work (or self-employment), unpaid trainee work and voluntary work as well as no activity.

Table 1: Category of employment of population 15 years and older (both in and out of school) by sex, locality, and form of work performed

Sex/Locality/Region	Employment work	Own-use production work	Unpaid trainee work	Volunteer work	No activity	Total
Ghana	65.0	3.3	1.8	0.6	29.3	100.0
Sex						
Male	66.9	3.4	1.7	0.7	27.3	100.0
Female	63.3	3.1	1.9	0.5	31.1	100.0
Types of locality						
Urban	61.0	1.4	2.1	0.5	35.0	100.0
Rural	69.5	5.4	1.5	0.7	22.8	100.0

Source: GLSS7

The report also showed that majority of the workforce were in the employment work, with about a third of the population captured within the "no activity" category. The rest of the population interviewed were found in the other categories. The report again revealed that more males as opposed to their female counterparts were employed/self-employed. In terms of location those in employment working in rural settings were more than those in similar work group in urban areas (Table 1).

Table 2: Employment sector by age

Employment sector	15-24 years			25-35 years			15-35 years		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Private Sector	96.9	98.1	97.5	88.4	90.6	89.5	91.6	93.3	92.5
Government Sector	2.4	1.7	2.0	10.8	9.0	9.9	7.6	6.3	6.9
NGOs	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
International Organization	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
Parastatals	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1
Cooperatives	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2
Other	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: GLSS7

In terms of employment by sectors, the GLSS 7 report showed that majority of youth workers in Ghana were in the private sector and majority of these people were within the age bracket of 15-24 years old. This was almost the same for those in the 25-35 age groups but with a lesser number (Table 2). The report showed that government or the public sector employed less than 10 per cent (6.9%) of the youth labour force.

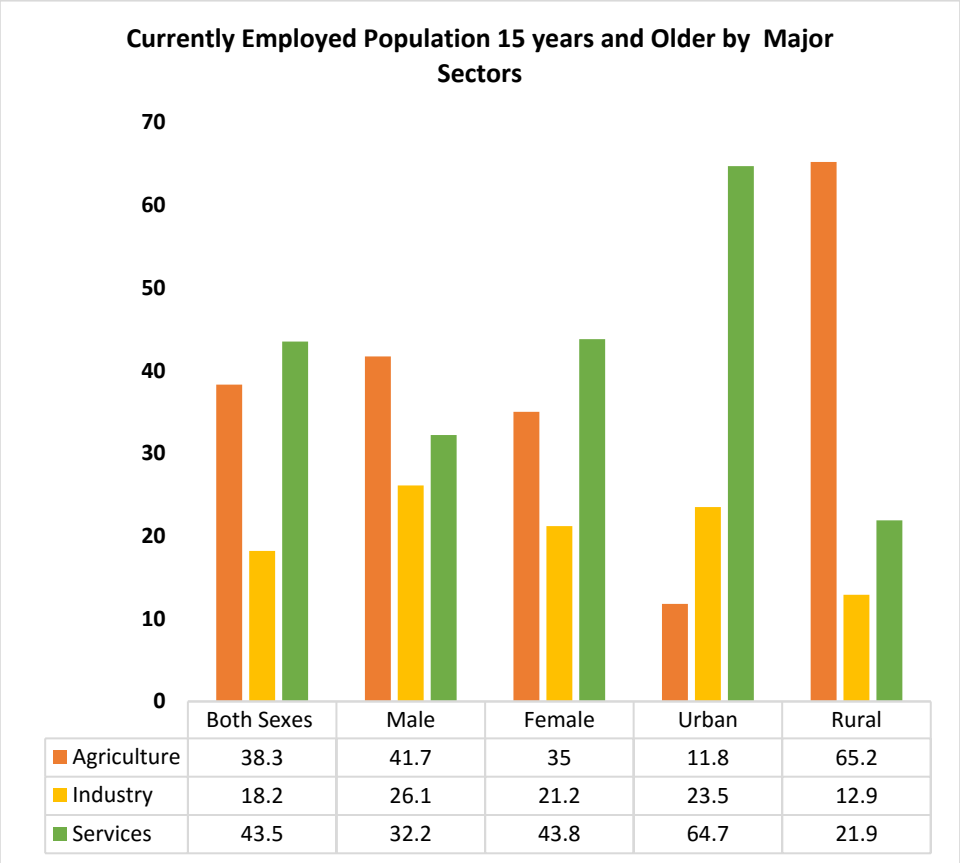
Table 3: Employment type by sex

Type of work	Male	Female	Total
Wage employment			
Paid employees	32.0	14.5	22.9
Other employees	1.0	0.2	0.6
Self-employed with employees			
Non-agricultural	3.6	3.2	3.4
Agricultural	1.1	0.4	0.7
Self-employed without employees			
Non-agricultural	13.7	38.0	26.3
Agricultural	28.7	17.7	23.0
Contributing family worker			
Non-agricultural	2.2	5.2	3.7
Agricultural	9.4	16.8	13.2
Casual worker	7.6	3	5.2
Unpaid apprentice	0.6	0.8	0.7
Domestic workers	0.1	0.2	0.2
Other	0.1	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: GLSS7

In general, the male population in each case (type of work) was more than the female. The implication of this is that males tend to have better employment opportunities or chances of securing a jobs either in the agricultural sector or non-agricultural sector than their female counterpart. The Ghana Statistical Services data (Table 3) showed that agriculture provided less self-employment with or without employees to young females than males. A similar scenario was observed for 'paid employees'. But, the reverse was observed for contribution to family labour, where about 9.4% of males and 16.8% females contributed to family labour.

In general, it was observed in the GLSS 7 that currently, the agricultural sector, which in the past led in terms of employment has been overtaken by the service sector as the leading sector employing majority of Ghanaian labour force. According to the GLSS 6 (GSS, 2014), until 2013, the agricultural, forestry and fishing sector employed 44.7% of Ghanaians, who were 15 years and older. However, recent capital investment in the service sector has led to a shift in the proportion of people employed in the sector. This decreased the sectors' percentage share of GDP (at base prices). According to the GLSS 7 report, 41.7% of males were working in the agricultural sector compared to 35% female. The reverse was observed for the service sector where more females (43.8%) were employed than males (32.2%). The report showed a high proportion of employment in both the service and agricultural sectors dominating in urban and rural employment, respectively (Figure 2).



	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Urban	Rural
Agriculture	38.3	41.7	35	11.8	65.2
Industry	18.2	26.1	21.2	23.5	12.9
Services	43.5	32.2	43.8	64.7	21.9

Figure 2: Major youth employment sectors in Ghana

Source: Authors compilation from GLSS7

A further analysis of the economic sectors into sub-sectors showed that the agricultural, forestry and fishing sub-sector employed the highest proportion of Ghanaians (38.3%) of age 15 years and above. This was followed by the wholesale and retail trade sub-sector with a proportion of 21.3% of the total workers aged 15 years and above in Ghana (Table 4)

Table 4: Ghanaian Industry in subsectors by gender

Industry	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes
All	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture, Forestry and fishing	41.7	35.1	38.3	14.6	9.2	11.8	68.7	61.9	65.2
Mining and quarrying	2.6	0.5	1.5	2.4	0.1	1.2	2.9	1.0	1.9
Manufacturing	7.4	16.1	11.9	10.5	20.7	15.8	4.4	11.3	7.9
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
Water supply, sewage, waste management	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1
Construction	8.9	0.2	4.4	12.5	0.1	6.0	5.3	0.3	2.7
Wholesale and retail trade	12.6	29.4	21.3	21.1	42.8	32.4	4.2	15.6	10.0
Transportation and Storage	7.1	0.3	3.6	9.4	0.3	4.7	4.8	0.2	2.4
Accommodation and food service activities	0.8	5.4	3.2	1.3	7.1	4.3	0.4	3.6	2.0
Information and communication	0.5	0.1	0.3	1.0	01	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.0
Financial and Insurance activities	1.4	0.8	1.1	2.6	1.2	1.9	0.3	0.4	0.4
Real estate activities	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.6	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Professional, scientific and technical activities	0.9	0.3	0.6	1.6	0.4	1.0	0.2	0.1	0.2
Administrative and support service activities	0.8	0.3	0.6	1.3	0.5	0.9	0.4	0.1	0.3
Public administration and defence	2.5	1.1	1.8	4.1	2.0	3.0	0.8	0.2	0.5
Education	5.8	4.4	5.1	7.0	6.7	6.8	4.6	2.1	3.3
Human health and social work activities	1.2	1.7	1.5	1.8	2.3	2.1	0.6	1.1	0.8
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1.3	0.2	0.7	2.1	0.3	1.1	0.5	0.0	0.3
Other service activities	3.2	3.2	3.2	5.1	4.8	4.9	1.5	1.6	1.5
Activities of households as employers	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.4	1.0	0.7	0.1	0.3	0.2
Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Source: GLSS 7

Role of agriculture in youth employment creation

The sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) region has a population of more than 950 million people, representing about 13% of the world's population. It is estimated that by 2050, SSA's share will rise to almost 22% of the world's population (estimated to reach 10 billion) or 2.1 billion people (FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2015). This increase in population as against the decline in land access, increased rural-urban migration, declining soil fertility and rising prices of agro-chemicals such as fertiliser and weedicides, suggest the need to find alternative means to improve food security. But, the slow progress towards food security in many countries in the region is a big hindrance and characteristics of low agricultural productivity in the region. Expanding the agricultural sector requires resources, including human resources and land for agricultural production. Considering the erratic rainfalls in SSA, irrigation facilities will be necessary (White, 2012), but the youth do not have the necessary resources and skills to invest and manage such systems. It will therefore require appropriate governance systems, institutional capacities, and taking on board the aspirations and interest of young people who have the energies to develop the agriculture sector. With these, countries within the SSA can work together to improve food security sustainably for a long time and provide employment opportunities for young people.

The significant role of agricultural development in contributing to employment creation, rural income and food security makes it an almost permanent agenda in the regions' growth prospect. It is for this same reason that the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) for example has been integrated in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The agriculture sector's contribution to total GDP is a reflection of why it is on the agenda of development in the region. Agriculture on the average contributes about 15% of total GDP on the continent, although it varies from about 2% in Botswana and South Africa to 44.9% in Chad (WB, 2018). Agriculture employs more than half of the total labour force (IMF, 2012) and within the rural population, provides a livelihood for multitudes of small-scale producers. Smallholder farms constitute approximately 80% of all farms in SSA and employ about 175 million people directly (Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, 2014), with women comprising about half of the labour force (FAO, 2015).

Although, some have argued that farming in Africa, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa is not profitable, other authors have argued that governments in the developing regions where agriculture forms the backbone of the economy, should find ways to make farming a lucrative and attractive venture for young people by making the necessary investments in the sector (White, 2012). While young people may be ready to take up farming as their career, the lack of resources for farming could be a deterrent for them to venture into farming. For reasons of resource constrained the youth will not be able to mobilise resources, including labour to work on the supposedly abundant land, even if they are provided with that option. (Peters, 2004). According to Peters (2004) the dislike for agriculture by the youth may not be against agriculture per se, but on their vulnerability in the context of the rural settings, especially to exploitation by local elites and gerontocrats (Peter,s 2004). The need to open up land for more intensive use by making it more readily accessible to young people, free from control by local gerontocratic order is critical (Curtain, 2001).

The Youth and Challenges of Youth Employment

Youth like any social concept has no definite universally accepted definition. Several variables including age, work experience and dependency on another, among others, are used to describe this social group (Curtain, 2001). According to Curtain (2001) youth is an economic and social concept that describes a separate stage in the lifecycle of human between childhood and adulthood. The definition of this social group varies from one place to another or from one institutions to another. While the United Nations (UN), for example, uses the age group of 15-24 as youth, the African Union (AU) also uses the age group definition but extends youth age range from 15 years to 35 years old. The Ghana Youth Policy defines the youth as those between the ages of 15 years and 35 years old. Available statistics shows that majority of the youth are within the age range of 15-24 years and this group of people often suffers the most in the labour market due to competition.

These young people face a number of challenges in making efforts to secure decent, well-paying jobs after school. The increasing incidence of street hawking and migrations to all sorts of places and the risks associated with these adventures are fallout from the difficulties youth encounter while searching for jobs. Globalization and the rapid development of technology have also contributed to increased mobility of labour, presenting both new forms of employment opportunities as well as uncertainties.

It has been observed that although, many of the young people entering the labour market have attained relatively higher education, they still may not have the requisite qualification and skills to take up the few jobs available. This is because of the mismatch between qualifications required and the quality of education acquired from school. In some cases, the jobs may be available but will require some level of entrepreneurial skills, which schools rarely provide within the framework of the school curricula. It is therefore incumbent on governments, private institutions and development partners to provide the needed skills and entrepreneurship development trainings (Langevang and Gough, 2012) to equip the youth for the contemporary labour market.

In the absence of formal wage jobs a number of young people have created for themselves some jobs to enable them earn a living. Unfortunately, these have been described as insufficient to help develop a sustainable income flow let alone be able to employ others. The lack of employment opportunities have compelled some youth to adopt various strategies, including furthering of education and or acquiring new skills in emerging sectors such as ICT and trade. While some have youth succeeded with these strategies, others do not and become disappointed.

According to the ILO (2012), the main factors creating sustained youth unemployment in Africa can be classified as: growing divergence between economic growth and employment generation; poor quality education, training, and skills development. Others include lack of comprehensive population policies targeted at the root causes of uncontrolled rapid population growth, which increases unemployment; low levels of savings and investments that are not conducive to the creation of more jobs; post-independence policies which favour cheap and unprocessed raw materials exports; and dependence on the agricultural sector.
Correcting the above anomaly will require a number of steps including but not limited to;

1) undertaking the creation of adequate productive and decent work for the youth,

2) ensuring the youth have access to practical training and education,

3) dealing with the challenges of the youth in the labour market in a way that ensure they are able to take full advantage of employment opportunities,

4) addressing the gender discrimination and disparity issues among the youth in the labour market,

5) harnessing the forces of globalization and exploiting new technologies to create new employment opportunities for the youth and

6) mitigating the negative impact of migration, which only represent opportunity for "brain drain". In the context of these, the study was set to address an important but less researched question in youth and development studies.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study was to use evidence-based approach to explore youth employment programmes initiated in Ghana (2000-2018) and make suggestions based on the research findings on how the youth employment challenges can be addressed while taking advantage of the existing opportunities. Specifically, the study

(i) evaluated the effectiveness and efficiency of youth employment programmes,
(ii) analyzed the determinants of youth employment and

identified untapped resource and the constraints associated with unleashing such potentials in creating youth employment and wealth generation

Methodology

Method of Data Collection

This research employed a sequential mixed methods approach. It began with literature review of youth employment and development programmes. Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) whose activities are directly related to youth and employment were visited to ascertain current scale of youth employment programmes that have existed from 2000-2018. The project initially identified about eight large scale initiatives (projects that have created at least 50,000 jobs for the youth since their inception). This consideration was given because of the large numbers of young people in Ghana without jobs and the rising youth populations. The initiatives were further reduced to four, taking into considerations programmes that are rural based, which also take advantage of agricultural sector opportunities, provide self-employment opportunities rather than 'work-for-pay' jobs.

The following programmes were selected based on the criteria above:

(i) Rural Enterprise Support Programme (REP),
(ii) Youth in Agricultural Programme (YAP),
(iii) National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (NEIP) and
(iv) Council for Technical and Vocational Training (COTVET) skills development programmes.

Before the selection, a validation workshop was organized where representatives of all stakeholders involved in youth employment initiatives and development were invited to deliberate on the subject matter. The four selected initiatives were the key outcomes of the workshop. They therefore became the focus for field survey and detailed assessments. . Before going to the field to administer the questionnaires emails and phone calls were sent to programme coordinators at the district level so that they could help to obtain the list of beneficiaries and their locations in the respective intervention communities. Appointments were made to conduct key informant interviews with district programme coordinators. Follow up emails and calls were sent and made, respectively to ensure that the arrangements for the field did not inconvenience the coordinators and the respondents.

Survey questionnaire was designed and administered to youth in various selected districts in Ghana. Youths who benefited and those who did not benefit from those selected government initiated youth employment programmes were included in the survey. A team of researchers were despatched to the various selected districts of Ghana to carry out the survey.

The survey covered almost all of the regions of Ghana including the newly created regions. In each region, two districts were selected for the survey, making a total of 28 districts. In each of the districts, 25 respondents on the average were interviewed using the questionnaire. The 25 respondents made up of 16 beneficiaries and 9 non beneficiaries. This resulted in a total number of about 700 respondents. Due to data loss, data from 662 respondents were used. A snowball technique was used in gathering data from some of the respondents since it was difficult locating all the beneficiaries. In some communities due to the remoteness of the places where the people reside, an announcement was sent round to enable all eligible people especially the beneficiaries to gather at the district assembly offices for a random selection to be carried out.

The separation of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries was done to ensure that both controlled group and a treatment group were selected to ensure that gains or losses were due to chance. In addition to the survey, key informant interviews were conducted with programme coordinators at the district assemblies to look into the untapped potentials of the areas and programme implementation challenges

Methods to analyse data collected

Both descriptive and inferential analysis methods were employed to analyse the data received during the study. This was because of the different types of data collected. Interviews with key officers at the assemblies were recorded and transcription was done later in the office. Transcriptions and analysis were forwarded to the coordinators to ensure that the meaning and interpretations drawn were true reflections and intentions of the responses given by the programme coordinators.

Descriptive statistics were generated about the initiatives, outputs and the youth. The results were presented using tables and/or graphs. The logistic empirical estimation model was estimated for the determinants of youth employment. Interpretation of the results were done to understand/explain the factors which influenced employment status and their policy implications. There were comparisons of findings with related literature and emerging knowledge from the study were highlighted.

Empirical Estimation Procedure

To estimate the parameters of the factors that could influence employability of the youth, the study adopted the logistic regression model. This was because the dependent variable was binary (either the youth was employed or unemployed). The youth specific characteristics were chosen based on theory, information from literature and knowledge of the communities from which data was gathered. Youth employment status, the regressand was therefore a function of the selected youth specific characteristics (selected regressors). The youth specific characteristics selected for the study and their apriori expectations on the regressand are indicated on Table 5. For estimation reasons the specification of the logistic regression is as given in equation 1. Stata was used to analyse the data

$$In(P/1-P) = \varphi_1 + \varphi_2 BYP + \varphi_3 YTC + \varphi_4 GEN + \varphi_5 MRS + \varphi_6 APT + \varphi_7 YEP + \varphi_8 HHN + \varphi_9 EDU + \varphi_{10} AGE + \varepsilon_i \quad \ldots\ldots (1)$$

$In(P/1-P)$ (Regressand)

φ_1 (Constant)

φ_2 to φ_{10} (Marginal Values of the Independent Variables)

BYP, YTC, GEN, MRS, APT, YEP, HHN, EDU, AGE (Independent Variables)

ε_i (Error term) (Pindyck and Rubinfeld, 1998; Greene, 2003; Gujarati and Porter, 2009).

Table 5: Variables and apriori expectation

Variable	Symbol	Measurement	Aprior expectation
Beneficiary of youth employment programme	BYP	Dummy (1=beneficiary; 0=otherwise)	
Presence of youth training center	YTC	Dummy (1=presence of youth training centre; 0=otherwise)	+
Gender	GEN	Dummy (1=Female; 0=otherwise	+/-
Marital status	MRS	Dummy (1=married; 0=otherwise	+
Apprenticeship training	APT	Dummy (1=has been apprentice; 0=otherwise	+
Youth entrepreneur programme	YEP	Dummy (1=attended youth entrepreneurial programme; 0=otherwise	+
Household number	HHN	Number people in household	+/-
Level of education	EDU	Number of years in school	+
Age	AGE	Years	+/-

Results

This section presents the analyses of the results that was obtained from the field for the 2019 PARI Survey. The section is generally structured into sociodemographic characteristics of respondents, determinants of youth employment/unemployment, analysis of which intervention worked better in generating permanent job (placement/creating) for the youth, effect of participating in youth engagement programmes on job acquisition/creation, assessment of untapped opportunities, assessment of the use of social ICT/media for information and job acquisition/employment purposes etc.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The sociodemographic characteristics that have been discussed for both beneficiary and non-beneficiary groups are gender, age, marital status, educational level and literacy (both foreign and local languages) and religious affiliation. The discussions were done taking gender dimensions into consideration. The result indicated that among the beneficiaries there were more females (73.85%), than males (26.15%). The reverse was observed for non beneficiaries, where there were more males (64.39%) than females (35.61%).

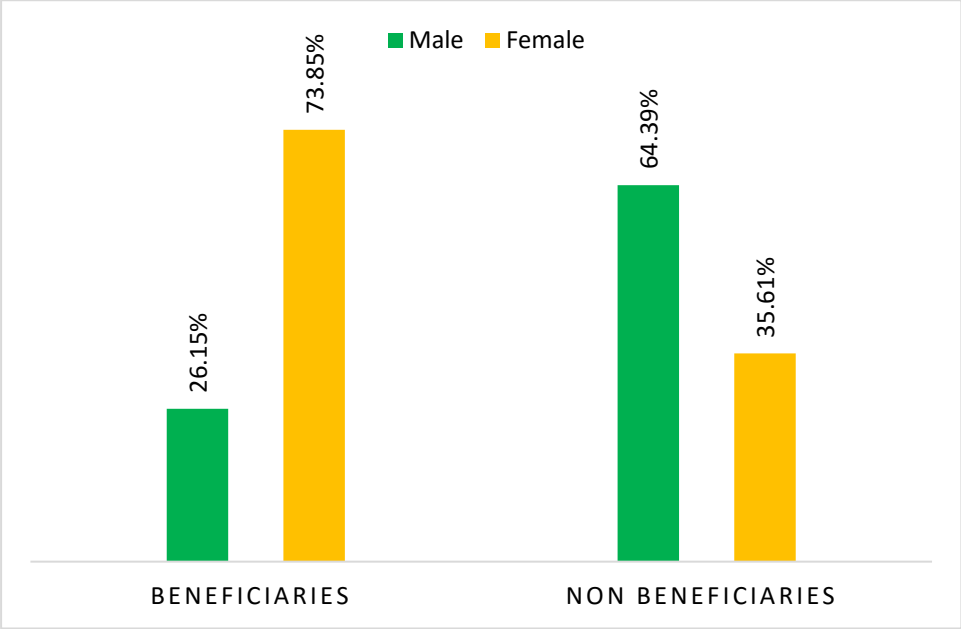


Fig 3. Proportion of respondents by gender

The age distribution of the survey obtained for both beneficiary and non-beneficiary groups showed that majority of the respondents (70.39%) were from the ages of 25 to 35 years. Disaggregated into gender, the data showed that more (74.18%) of the respondents were males as compared to females who were 66.46% and fell within the age category 25 to 35 years (Table 6).

However, more females (23.38%) were found within the age category of 15 years to 24 years. Only 8.61% of beneficiaries fell outside the youth bracket (from 15 years to 35 years, as defined by Ghana's National Youth Policy) (Table 6). The fact that there were a few people

whose ages fell outside the youth bracket was a reflection of a situation of young people who had benefitted from youth employment initiatives (whose age now surpasses 35 years) prior to the study and so were captured. But in general, the study showed that most of the youth were within the upper youth bracket (25-35 years).

Table 6: Age distribution of respondents by gender

Age (years)	Gender of respondent		
	Male	**Female**	**Total**
15-24	63(18.69)	76(23.38)	139(21.00)
25-35	250(74.18)	216(66.46)	466(70.39)
>35	24(7.12)	33(10.15)	57(8.61)
Total	337(100.00)	325(100.00)	662(100.00)

% in parenthesis

Source: Field survey, 2019.

The finding was contrary to the results of the GLSS 6 report which indicated that most of Ghana's youth were found within the lower youth bracket. The study results may be so because most young people at the lower youth bracket might be attending school and as such would not be looking for job/work. Policies and programmes to address youth challenges though must be broad to cover all age groups within the youth bracket, special attention needs to be paid this category since they form the majority of people within the youth bracket.

Marital status of respondents is presented in Table 7 and it shows that about 61.33% of the respondents were married compared to 36.40% and 2.27% who were single and widower/widow, respectively. There were more singles among the males (43.03%) than there were among females (29.54%). The reverse was the case for married respondents, where there were more married individuals among the females (66.15%) than there were among the males (56.68%).

Table 7: Marital Status of the respondents

Marital status	Gender of respondent		Total
	Male	**Female**	
Single	145 (43.03)	96 (29.54)	241 (36.40)
Married	191 (56.68)	191 (66.15)	406 (61.33)

Widow/Widower	1 (0.30)	14 (4.31)	15 (2.27)
Total	337 (100.00)	325 (100.00)	662 (100.00)

% in parenthesis

Source: Field survey, 2019.

There were more males who were not married as compared to the females. In general, there were more married youth (61.33%) compared to those who were single (36.40%) and widowed (2.27%). The high number of married youth is a reflection of the sociocultural value Ghanaians place on marriage. The perception was that married people are highly respected and more responsible. And this may account for this result.

From the data gathered, as shown on Table 8, 124 (18.73%) of the respondents had no formal education, 48 and 174 of the respondents, representing 7.25% and 26.28%, respectively had basic education (Primary and Junior Secondary, respectively) and 162 respondents, representing 24.47% had secondary school education. There were 70 (10.57%) respondents who had university education while a little over eleven percent (11.03%) had other forms of tertiary level of education such as polytechnic, teacher and agricultural training diplomas. Majority (26.28%) of the respondents had education up to Junior High level and the least being University education (10.57%). It was not surprising to observe that more males (32.93%) had access to university/other tertiary education than females (9.84%).

The high disparity in access to tertiary education may be the result of premium families place on young adult males as future bread winners for which reason families would educate their male children up to tertiary level to the detriment of the females. Also, as much as five times more females (31.69%) had no formal education than males (6.23%). In spite of years of public education and investment to reduce disparity in access to education by both male and female, the result showed that the situation had not changed significantly.

Table 8: The educational characteristics

Educational Level	**Gender of Respondent**		
	Male	**Female**	**Total**
None	21 (6.23)	103 (31.69)	124 18.73
Primary	16 (4.75)	32 (9.85)	48 (7.25)
Secondary	70 (20.77)	92 (28.31)	162 (24.47)
Junior Secondary	115 (34.12)	59 (18.15)	174 (26.28)
University	54 (16.02)	16 (4.92)	70 (10.57)

Other Tertiary	57 (16.91)	16 (4.92)	73 (11.03)
Others	4 (1.19)	7 (2.15)	11 (1.66)
Total	337 (100.00)	325 (100.00)	662 (100.00)

% in parenthesis
Source: Field survey, 2019.

The literacy rates of the respondent are presented in Table 9. The result suggested that the literacy rate of respondents who could read/write a phrase/sentence in English or French was 69.34%, which was higher than respondents who could not read/write a phrase/sentence in English or French (30.66%). Disaggregated into gender, more males could read/write a phrase in English or French (84.87%) than females (53.23%). Unsurprisingly, the results of the survey indicates that more males could read/write a phrase in English or French (84.87%) than for the entire sample/respondents (69.34%) and the reverse was observed for illiteracy/those could not read or write a phrase in English or French (Table 9).

Table 9: The literacy level of the respondent: English or French

Literacy status (English or French)	**Gender of respondent**		
	Male	**Female**	**Total**
Yes	286 (84.87)	173 (53.23)	459 (69.34)
No	51 (15.13)	152 (46.77)	203 (30.66)
Total	337 (100.00)	325 (100.00)	662 (100.00)

Source: Field survey, 2019. % in parenthesis

The result was similar to the level of education in which more males had access to education than females.

Ability to read and write is a critical feature in the performance of work and therefore in the informal sector it could be a good factor of productivity and or profitability. According to the results (Table 10) respondents who could read or write a phrase or sentence in any of the local language (Ghanaian languages) was higher (52.42%) than the respondents who could not read and write the local language (47.58 %). The results showed that even though in percentage terms the gap between those who could read and those who could not read/write a phrase in a local language was not that huge, those who could read or write

formed the majority. Again, more males could read/write a local language (69.44%) than females (34.77%) and the reverse was witnessed for those who could not read or write a phrase in a local language.

Table 10: The literacy level of the respondent: Local language

Literacy in local language	Gender of respondent		
	Male	Female	Total
Yes	234 (69.44)	113 (34.77)	347 (52.42)
No	103 (30.56)	212 (65.23)	315 (47.58)
Total	337 (100.00)	325 (100.00)	662 (100.00)

% in parenthesis

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Employment Status, and Training of Respondents

The number of respondents who were employed at the time of the study (Table 11) showed that respondents who benefited from the interventions were engaged in some kind of employment activity during the study period. A considerable number of the respondents, about 371 (81.18%) who benefited from youth employment programmes were employed and 86 (18.82%) who had training or benefited from youth employment programme were not working or employed in any gainful venture.

Table 11: Number of respondents employed

Status/Category of respondent	Employed		
	Yes	No	Total
Recipient/beneficiary	371	86	457
	(81.18)	(18.82)	(100.00)
	76.02	49.43	69.03
Non-Recipient/beneficiary	117	88	205
	(57.07)	(42.93)	(100.00)
	23.98	50.57	30.97
Total	488	174	662
	(73.72)	(26.28)	(100.00)
	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2019. **% in parenthesis**

On the other hands just a little over fifty-seven percent (57.07%) of programmes' non beneficiaries were gainfully employed as at the time of the study. Although, the beneficiaries may have graduated from the various training programmes, many were employed in some sort of jobs as compared to non beneficiaries. The implication was that participation in youth employment or training programmes may be beneficial in providing employment for the youth. The tested empirical result of this would would be seen later in this report.

Table 12: Average monthly income

	Amount (GH¢)	< 109	110-500	501- 1000	>1000	Total
Self-Employment	Beneficiary	56 (22.40)	141 (56.40)	31 (12.40)	22 (8.80)	250 (100)
	Non-Beneficiary	16 (23.88)	38 (56.72)	10 (14.93)	3 (4.48)	67 (100)
Paid-Employment	Beneficiary	4 (5.26)	32 (42.11)	22 (28.95)	18 (23.68)	76 (100.00)
	Non-Beneficiary	2 (6.45)	12 (38.71)	12 (38.71)	5 (16.13)	31 (100.00)

Source: Field survey, 2019. % in parenthesis

Monthly income earned by respondents (both beneficiary and non-beneficiary) who were self-employed (Table 12) showed that majority of the beneficiaries (56.40%) earned monthly income from GH¢110 - GH¢500. Those who earned below GH¢109, GH¢ 501 - GH¢1000 and above GH¢ 1000 were 22.40%, 12.40% and 8.80%, respectively. Non-beneficiaries who earned monthly income from GH¢110 - GH¢500 constituted about 56.72 %. Beneficiaries who earned GH¢1000 and above were twice (8.80%) as much as non beneficiaries (4.48%) who also earned as much. This suggested that programmes beneficiaries tend to earn more income than non-beneficiaries and this could be the results of participating in youth employment interventions. In the case of paid employment, fewer people earned less than GH¢109.00 among both beneficiaries and non beneficiaries as compared to self employment. The reverse was the case when income was above GH¢1000.00 (Table 12). Since these are the extremes, emphasis was placed on income range in which there were more beneficiaries (GH¢110-GH¢500). It was observed that under self employment about 56.40% and 56.72% of beneficiaries and non beneficiaries, respectively earned income from GH¢110-GH¢500. However, under paid employment, 42.11% and 38.71% of beneficiaries and non beneficiaries, respectively, earned income from GH¢110-GH¢500. These figures showed that self-employment appeared to offer income prospect to more youth than paid employment.

Table 13: Employment status and training programmes

Training organisation	Employment status in 30 days	
	Yes	No
REP	130 (84.97)	130 (86.10)
MoFA	10 (6.53)	2 (1.32)
NGOs/CSOs	12 (7.84)	17 (11.26)
Others	1 (0.65)	2 (1.32)
Total	153 (100)	151 (100)

Source: Field survey, 2019. % in parenthesis

The results of the survey showed that several institutions were involved in the training of the beneficiaries. This was an indication that there were several institutions and organizations ready to provide training of various forms to entrepreneurs and youth groups in the communities. However, Table 13 shows that the Rural Enterprise Programme provided more training opportunities in different skills and trade for the respondents. Some of the institutions and NGOs included World Vision, Baking School, Bee for Development Ghana, Empowerment for Life, NVTI, National Youth Authority, Nestle Ghana, Savanah Fruit Company, Back Energy Consult, and the British Council.

Table 14: Training for work scholarship

Name of training institution	Employment over the last 30 days			Employment over the last 12 months		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Rural Enterprise Programme	5 (41.67)	7 (58.33)	12 (100)	7 (58.33)	5 (41.67)	12 (100)
World Youth Cultural Camp	0 (0)	1(100)	1(100)	1 (100)	0 (0)	1 (100)
Youth Employment Agency	0 (0)	2 (100)	2 (100)	0 (0)	2 (100)	2 (100)
Total	5 (33.33)	10 (67.67)	15 (100)	8 (53.33%)	7 (46.67)	15(100)

Source: Field survey, 2019. % in parenthesis

The research showed that, a third of respondents (33.33%) who were trained for work scholarship were likely to obtain work or perform some work to earn a living within thirty days. Majority of the training (80%) were done by the Rural Enterprise Programme with just 20% organised by the other institutions. In all, only 15 (2.27%) respondents were offered "training for work scholarship" training (Table 14). This showed that youth employment programmes may not be interested or may not have components in their programmes geared towards training for work scholarship. It appeared the training for work scholarships offered by the various institutions were largely ineffective in offering employment opportunities as only 33.33% of respondents secured employment (thirty days after training) as observed in

Table 14. It is important to note that the research considered only thirty days prior to the research but the effect of the training may occur later.

As shown on Table 15, more than half (53.3%) of the respondents who were trained for work scholarship had created income generating activities or found a job within 12 months. Of the eight respondents who were trained for work scholarship and were employed or created income generating activity, 87.5% were trained by the Rural Enterprise Programme. While the remaining were trained by World Youth Cultural Camp and Youth Employment Programme (YEA).

On the issue of effectiveness of the individual training programmes, it was observed that those who were trained and later got employed were about 66.7%. This include participants who were trained by the Rural Enterprise Programme were employed (i.e. formed or created an income generating activity or found a job in the past 12 months before the interview). This happens to be the largest number of participants who had training and were later employed by other ventures or created their businesses.

Table 15: Education and scholarship

Name of institution/organizing/ structure that provided the training	Employment over the past 30 days			Employment over the past 12 months		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Rural Enterprise Programme	0 (0)	2 (100)	2 (100)	2 (100)	0 (0)	2 (100)
Navrongo Senior High School	0 (0)	1 (100)	1 (100)	0 (100)	1 (100)	1 (100)
Regentropfen College of Applied Science	1 (100)	0 (0)	1 (100)	1 (100)	0 (0)	1 (100)
SDA Church	1 (100)	0 (0)	1 (100)	1 (100)	0 (0)	1 (100)
Total	2 (40)	3 (60)	5 (100)	4 (80)	1 (20)	5 (100)

Source: Field survey, 2019. % in parenthesis

However, for education and scholarship programmes organised by the SDA Church and Regentropfen College of Applied Science, two (40%) of the five respondents trained had been employed (had work for pay, profit, family gain, or had produce anything) for the last 30 days. A similar situation is witnessed for employment status in the last 12 months (Table 15).

Most beneficiaries had training in skills and livelihood intervention programmes. A total of thirty (30) institutions or agencies participated in the skills and livelihood training of the respondents. Many of the institutions trained only one respondent in skills and livelihood programme. About 75% of such institutions which trained only one respondent had their trainees gaining employment (had work for pay, profit, family gain, or had produce anything for the past 30 days). For institutions or programmes which trained less than ten (10) respondents in skills and livelihood, 76% of such respondents were more likely to have been

employed (had work for pay, profit, family gain, or had produced something) in the last 30 days.

Table 16: Skills livelihood training interventions on employment

Training organisation	Employment status in 30 days		Total
	Yes	No	
REP	188 (71.21)	74 (18.79)	264 (100)
MoFA	10 (90.91)	1 (9.09)	11 (100)
NGOs/CSOs	12 (66.67)	6 (33.33)	18 (100)
Others	1 (20)	4 (80)	5 (100)
Total	219 (72.03)	85 (17.97)	304 (100)

Source: Field survey, 2019. % in parenthesis

The Rural Enterprise Programme trained the highest number of respondents, 264 (86.8%) in skills and livelihood trainings to generate employment opportunities. As at the time of interview, 71.21%, a high proportion of skills and livelihood trainees by the Rural Enterprise programmes had been employed (had work for pay, profit, family gain, or had produced something for the past 30 days (Table 16). Aside from REP, other institutions and organisations found to have trained respondents in skills and livelihood interventions for employment creation were World Youth Cultural Camp, USAID, Petra Training Programme, Viyada, EMMACO Training Centre, World Vision, Baking School, Bee for Development Ghana, Empowerment for Life, NVTI, National Youth Authority, Nestle Ghana, Savanah Fruit Company, Back Energy Consult and the British Council.

Table 17: Youth employment programmes

Institution/Organizing structure which provided training programme	Employment over the last 30 days			Employment over the last 12 months		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Libya Construction Company	1 (100)	0 (0)	1 (100)	1 (100)	0 (0)	1 (100)
MoFA	0 (0)	1 (100)	1 (100)	0 (100)	1 (100)	1 (100)
NABCO	3 (42.86)	4 (57.14)	7 (100)	4 (57.14)	3 (42.86)	7 (100)
Palugu Public Safety Training School	1 (100)	0 (0)	1 (100)	1 (100)	0 (0)	1 (100)
Police Agency	1 (25)	3 (75)	4 (100)	2 (50)	2 (50)	4 (100)
Rural Enterprise Programme	5 (62.5)	3 (37.5)	8 (100)	6 (60)	4 (40)	10 (100)
SARI	1 (100)	0 (0)	1 (100)	1 (100)	0 (0)	1 (100)
Techiman Beacon Mushroom Production Company	0 (0)	1 (100)	1 (100)	1 (100)	0 (0)	1 (100)
Wenchi Farms Institute	0 (0)	1 (100)	1 (100)	0 (0)	1 (100)	1 (100)
Youth Employment Agency	8 (80)	2 (20)	10 (100)	8 (80)	2 (20)	10 (100)
Total	20 (57.14)	15 (42.86)	35 (100)	24 (68.57	11 (31.43)	35 (100)

Source: Field survey, 2019. % in parenthesis

More than half (57.14%) of respondents who underwent the youth employment training programmes were more likely to have been employed (had work for pay, profit, family gain or had produced something in the last 30 days before the interview). The Youth Employment Agency trained most of the respondents (28.8%) in youth employment programmes, followed by Rural Enterprise Programme (14.3%). While institutions like MoFA, SARI, Libya Construction Company, Palugu Public Safety Training School, Techiman Beacon Mushroom Production Company and Wenchi Farms Institute trained the least number (2.9% each) of respondents. Youth Employment Agency, REP, and NABCO had more youth who gained employment within the following 30 days after training in youth employment programme. Youth Employment Agency, REP and NABCO appeared to be more effective because 80%, 76.25% and 42.86%, respectively of their trainees got employed (had work for pay, profit, family gain or had produced something in the last 30 days before the interview). The YEA and NABCO provided direct employment opportunities, mostly 'work-for-pay' and this could account for the reasons why more of their trainees gained employment. A similar situation is observed for employment in the last 12 months (Table 17).

Assessment of Untapped opportunities and Constraints

In the course of the study, respondents identified several untapped/under-tapped resources and opportunities in their communities. These under-tapped resources were mainly in found the agricultural sector. Notable among the untapped opportunities listed are discussed below.

Available of agricultural land: Respondents revealed that there are vast fertile arable lands for cultivating crops and rearing of animals to earn income for the youth. The lands had remained unused because commodity prices were very low and there was also lack of ready market for the harvested produce. The situation left the few youths who were involved in agriculture to the mercy of middlemen and women who exploited them because they had no alternative market outlet to sell off their farm produce. This served as a disincentive for the youth to venture into agricultural production. The situation did not make agricultural production profitable for which reason the lands were mostly left uncultivated. Also, sociocultural practices that vested the lands in the hands of the elderly or chiefs did not promote agricultural production because these community leaders tended to abuse the trust vested on them by renting the lands out to foreigners and the youth cannot compete with foreigners who had the financial capital to pay any amount as may be requested by the community elders.

Availability of shear trees: Respondents indicated that shear tree is very common and abundant especially in the wild in northern Ghana. It can be used in a variety of product such as detergents, body cream, cooking oil, etc. Shear butter extraction is a major source of income for rural women in northern Ghana. The shear industry holds a potential to alleviate poverty in northern Ghana, where poverty is more endemic as compared to southern Ghana. The youth provided the full potential of the shear trees to the benefit of the youth. Unfortunately this has remained underutilised because of lack of investment in the commodity.

***Cassava*:** Cassava has high economic value and it is used for the production of a variety of things. It is one crop that cut across the southern belt which its full potential is yet to be

realised. It was observed that despite the fact that it can be used in different products to obtain maximum economic benefit, it is mainly consumed in the form of food. For instance, ethanol and High-Quality Cassava Flour (HQCF) are some of the products that can be obtained from cassava. These products are highly demanded on the international market, and have the potential of earning foreign exchange for the rural poor farmers. Other agricultural products identified by the study whose potentials are yet to be fully realised are oil palm tree, smock production and cashew.

Reasons for Untapped Resources

Several factors accounted for the reasons why some resources in the study areas remained untapped (Table 18). As indicated, most of the untapped resources were in the agricultural sector. The most pressing challenge to the exploitation of agricultural resources as found by the study was financial capital (53.62%). The youth may have access to land, however, the unavailability of investment capital to venture in crop or animal production hindered them. The second most important reason why resources remained untapped was inadequate technical knowledge (12.50%) or skills in the production and management of agricultural commodities. For instance, animal production requires technical knowledge and without which one is likely produce at a loss because of diseases or ineffective cost management in terms of feeding and other husbandry practices. Absence of ready market and low prices (7.89%), and lack of infrastructure (6.58%) were the third and fourth most important challenges confronting utilisation of agricultural resources. Agricultural commodity prices are highly unstable in rural areas of Ghana. In the raining season prices become so low such that farmers end up making losses because of bumper harvest and during the dry season prices shoot up and lack of irrigation facilities virtually make it impossible to produce crops during the dry season. Lack of storage facilities and processing of raw agricultural products into finished goods is the consequence of the low prices offered farmers during the raining season. Other contributing factors observed are listed in Table 18.

Table 18: Reasons for under/untapped resources

Reasons for under/un- tapped resources	Frequency	Percent
Financial constraints	163	53.62
Inadequate/Lack of technical knowledge/skills	38	12.50
All the youth want to go school or have no interest	13	4.28
Inadequate government support	13	4.28
Absence of ready market and low prices	24	7.89
Inadequate access to farm machinery and inputs	9	2.96
Lack of Infrastructure	20	6.58
Lack of initiatives	8	2.63
Lack of technology	6	1.97
Negative sociocultural practices and perceptions	5	1.64
Inadequate extension officers	5	1.64
Total	304	100

Source: Field survey, 2019.

The study results showed that respondents, listed among others, the most prevailing reasons for untapped resources in the local communities as financial constraints (lack of initial capital necessary to start up farms), and inadequate education or technical knowledge in the most sustainable, effective and efficient method of crops and animal production or even making use of the available natural resources. Others included inadequate government support and infrastructure, the cultural perceptions about engaging in farming and other related activities among other reasons. Thus to promote efficient utilisation of local resources, government and other stakeholders may have to intervene through financial assistance, education/trainings and provision of adequate state support in terms of infrastructure such as roads, irrigation and market development

Determinants of Youth employment and unemployment

The study also analyzed the determinants of youth employment. The variables included in the model significantly explained the dependent variable (youth employment) at one percent level. The result (Table 19) shows that participation in youth employment programme increased the chance of being employed by about 15.8%. This is statistically significant at one percent. This may be so because beneficiaries of youth employment programmes were given the opportunity to be employed on permanent or temporary bases unlike non beneficiaries.

The parameter estimate of marital status met the expected impact by having a positive relationship with youth employment. It is statistically significant at five percent with a marginal value of 0.153, meaning that given a youth was married the probability of getting employed increased by 15.3%. This may be so because couples had families to take care of, and so they were much more desperate to get jobs in order to earn income to provide for the needs of their families. Participation in youth entrepreneurial training programme as expected related positively to youth employment. It is statistically significant at five percent with marginal value of 0.241, meaning given a youth had participated in a youth entrepreneurial training and development programme, such youth had 24.1% chances of been employed.

Table 19: Determinants of youth employment

Marginal effects after logit
y = Pr (Employed) (predict)
= .66205461

MD variance	0.640	SD dependent variance	0.481
Pseudo r-squared	0.104	Number of obs	400
Chi-square	54.370	Prob > chi2	0.000
Akaike critical.	488.364	Bayesian critical	528.279

Variable	Coefficient (dy/dx)	Z	P>z
BYP	0.158***	2.780	0.006
YTC	0.030	0.560	0.574
GEN	-0.067	-1.270	0.205
MRS	0.153**	2.540	0.011
APT	-0.020	-0.360	0.715
YEP	0.241**	3.350	0.001
NHH	0.005	0.970	0.332
EDU	0.019**	2.100	0.036
AGE	0.010*	1.750	0.080

(*) ME (Marginal value) is for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1

*** $p<.01$, ** $p<.05$, * $p<.1$

Participation in youth entrepreneurial training and development programme provided the youth with skills and ideas on how to start, own and operate a business and the benefit in entrepreneurship. Such programmes also offered the youth the opportunity to network with successful entrepreneurs and also be exposed to some of the business opportunities within their environment which hitherto had been overlooked. Attending such programmes can motivate the youth to start and own a business thereby creating employment for themselves and others. These, among other reasons, may be the reason why participation in youth entrepreneurial programme was positively related to youth employment.

Education, also, as expected had a positive and statistically significant relationship with youth employment status. It had a marginal value 0.019, meaning a year increase in the educational level of the youth increased the probability of being employed by about 2%. It was expected that education opened the mind of people and educated people were able to recognize opportunities within their environment and took advantage of them. Educated youth may also had access to information and assimilated it better and may have had networks which they relied on to get a job. Age was expected to either have a positive or negative relationship with youth employment because it is a trend variable. Age may either favour or be a disadvantage to someone in getting a job. Thus, the probability of getting a job may increase as one grows and will begin to decline at a given point. For instance, the probability of getting a job may increase from 15 years through 35 to 60 years and begins to decline thereafter. The study result showed a positive relationship because the respondents were young people whose likelihood of obtaining job will increase as they grew older but this may decline a point. Age was statistically significant at ten percent with a marginal value of 0.01, implying a year increase in the age of the youth increased the likelihood of being employed by 1%.

Table 20: Training and state of employment

Primary occupation	Subject of most recent training							
	Clerical	Computer	Marketing	Leadership	Accountancy	Trade/ Skills	Other	Total
Crop farming	0(0)	0(0)	1(1.10)	0(0)	1(1.10)	78(85.71)	11(12.09)	91(100)
Livestock farming	0(0)	0(0)	1(4.17)	0(0)	1(4.17)	17(70.83)	5(20.83)	24(100)
Agro-forestry	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4(100)	0(0)	4(100)
Trading	1(2.70)	0(0)	0(0)	1(2.70)	0(0)	32(86.49)	3(8.1)	37(100)
Artisan	0(0)	0(0)	1(4.76)	0(0)	0(0)	20(95.24)	0(0)	21(100)
Public sector worker	0(0)	2(6.67)	2(6.67)	1(3.33)	0(0)	19(66.33)	6(20)	30(100)
Private sector worker	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	14(73.68)	5(26.32)	19(100)
Other(specify)	1(1.47)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	2(2.94)	43(63.24)	22(32.35)	68(100)
Total	2(0.68)	2(0.68)	5(1.70)	2(0.68)	4(1.36)	227(77.21)	52(17.69	294(100)

Source: Field survey, 2019 % in parenthesis

Respondents were interviewed on the subject of their recent training. The results showed that of the 294 respondents who answered, the highest proportion (77.21%) had participated in trade/skills training while 18.7% of the 294 respondents partook in other training programmes. The remaining 4.09% participated in clerical, computer, marketing, leadership and accountancy training programme. The study also showed that the highest number of participants were crop farmers in the organized trade/skills programmes. Furthermore, the study showed that, more than two-thirds (69.05%) of the trained respondents across the different subjects or work area created income generating activity or secured a job in the past 1 year. In addition, the result also showed that the highest proportion (73.89%) of respondents who found or created an income generating activity or secured a job in the past 1 year were trained in trade/skills (Table 20).

Table 21: Training provided and state of employment

Subject of training	Employed		
	Yes	No	Total
Clerical	2(100)	0(0)	2(100)
Computer	1(50)	1(50)	2(100)
Marketing	5(100)	0(0)	5(100)
Leadership	2(100)	0(0)	2(100)
Accountancy	2(50)	2(0)	4(100)
Trade/Skills	150(66.10)	77(33.90)	227(100)
Other	41(78.85)	11(21.15)	52(100)
Total	203(69.05)	91(30.95)	294(100)

Source: Field survey 2019. % in parenthesis

The study attempted finding the relationship between the status of employment of the respondents and the subject in which they received training prior to getting employment. As shown on Table 21, all respondents whose main subject of recent training were in clerical,

marketing and leadership programmes were employed in one type of work or another, and about 50% of the respondents who were trained in computer and accountancy programmes had employment. As shown on Table 21 almost eighty percent (78.88%) of the respondents who were trained in other subjects during the training programmes, had employment (created an income generating activity or found a job in the past 1 year).

Use of Social ICT/Media for Information and Job

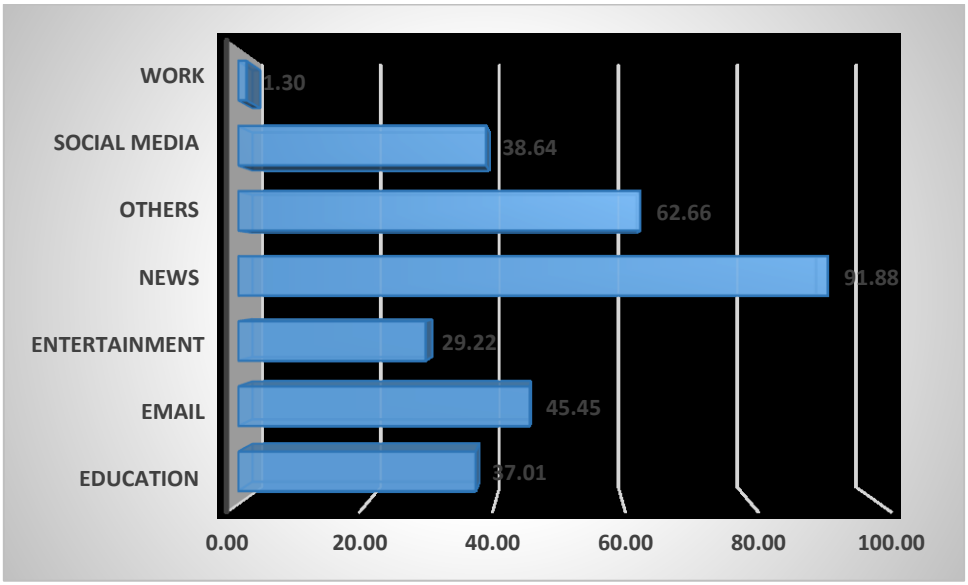


Figure 4: Use of Internet by Respondents

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The result (Figure 3) of the study indicated that 308 of the respondents (91.88%) who answered the question on what they use the internet for, indicated they used the internet mainly to do social media activities. About two third (62.66%) of respondents were more likely to use the internet for other activities unrelated to education, email, entertainment, news, social media and work. A little over a third were likely to use the internet for education (37.01%) and social media (36.64%). The use of the internet for work related information, emails and entertainment accounted for 1.30%, 45.45% and 29.22%, respectively. It was surprising to observe that despite the fact that a lot of the youth were jobless they did not use the internet to search for work. It may be that they were not aware that they could use the internet to search job. This is why it is important to educate the youth on beneficial use of the internet. The most important use of the internet as found by the study was for obtaining new information. This seemed to be applicable to respondents who had some level of education and who were resident of rural communities and had limited access to information from other parts of the world through traditional means of communication such as radio and television.

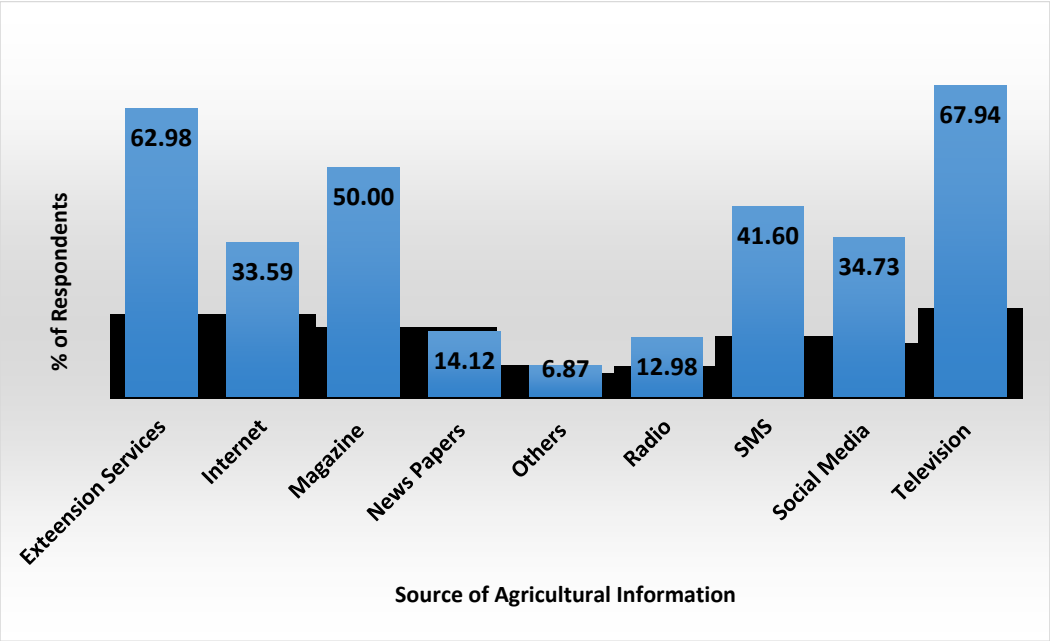


Figure 5: Sources of agricultural information

Source: Field survey, 2019.

The result (Figure 4) indicated that apart from using other sources to gain access to information for their agricultural activities, over 60% get agricultural information from extension service directorate of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA). Other sources (6.87%) such as friends and family members were the least subscribed source of agricultural information. It was surprising to observe that about 50% of respondents sourced agricultural information from magazine as compared 12.98% who got information through radio given that most of the communities involved in the research were rural communities where access to magazine may be more difficult than radio. Other sources of information for respondents were SMS, internet, social media etc. (Figure 5).

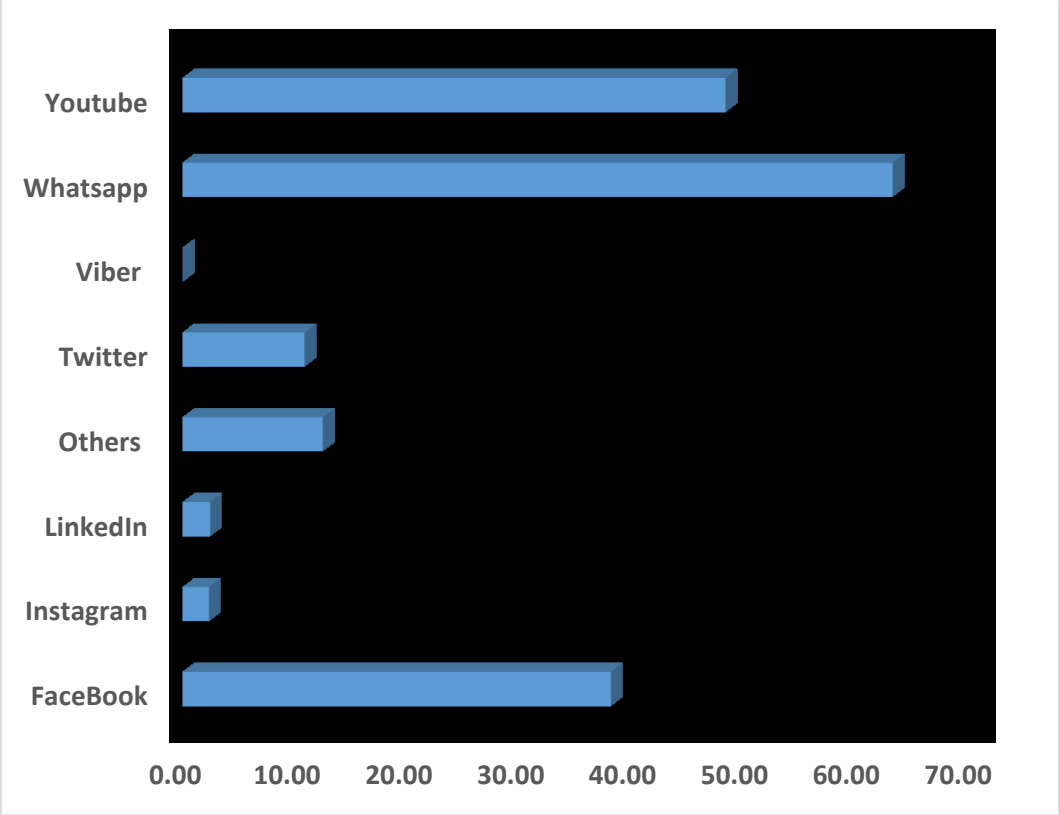


Figure 6: Social media tool used for agricultural information

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Regarding the use of social media tools to search for agricultural information, the result showed that no one used Viber. Except Viber, each of the social media platforms had a respondents who indicated that they had used it before to search for agricultural information. WhatsApp was the main social media tool used to receive agricultural information (63.39%) and YouTube (48.5 %) and Facebook came second and third (38.2 %), respectively. The youth rarely used Instagram and LinkedIn in gathering or searching for agricultural information as shown on Figure 6.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Conclusion

Increasing youth population coupled with national and global economic challenges is making creation of employment opportunities for the youth by national governments becoming more challenging than ever. Security analysts and economists have posited that the problem of youth unemployment if left unresolved could pose threat to national sovereignty. To avert any unforeseen mishap, governments in Africa and Ghana specifically have been implementing policies and programmes to address youth unemployment but the assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of these interventions for future policy reforms and decision making are largely lacking. The current study, therefore, analysed youth-targeted interventions in Ghana which were aimed at creating employment for young people. The study used data from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was obtained through face-to-face interview of 662 respondents who were both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in selected programmes in Ghana. Based on the findings, the study concluded that there were youth employment programmes in Ghana, however, these programmes were not large scale enough to provide employment opportunities to about five million unemployed and about three hundred thousand youth who enter the labour market each year. As study (Baah-Boateng, 2018) suggested, female youth were more vulnerable than males. The most important and statistically significant factors that influenced employability of the youth in rural economy of Ghana were participation in a youth employment programme, marital status, entrepreneurial skills training programme, number of years in school and age.

Among the programmes considered for the study, REP appeared to have provided more, better and sustainable employment opportunities in Ghana especially in rural areas because the programme had administrative offices in all the districts in Ghana. This made it possible for its service to be accessed by a large number of young people. The other programmes were mainly urban centred with no administrative officers at the local levels. Unlike other programme, models of skills development and acquisition under REP reflected the needs of the time. Also, the programme was largely apolitical. The most important effect of participation in skill development programme was it promotion of creation of sustainable employment opportunities for self and others as it was observed under REP. Other programmes considered for the study such as NEIP and NABCO appeared to be mainly urban centred and were rarely found in rural areas of Ghana. The main untapped resources to create employment for the youth were mostly found in the agricultural sector.

Recommendations

The age group 25 to 35 years remained the most dominant sub-group, therefore policies and programmes to resolve youth challenges must take into consideration youth within this bracket. While females had access to employment opportunities, they did not have equitable access to education so policy should focus on supporting females with programmes that promote their integration into the academic system. The REP appeared to be the most effective and efficient programme that provided more sustainable self-employment

opportunities. The programme can be expanded to provide entrepreneurial skills training for the youth. Participation in youth employment programmes, and entrepreneurial skills development are critical in the determination of youth employability. Expansion of youth employment programmes and entrepreneurial skills development needed to be aggressively promoted through policies and programmes. Untapped resources were mostly in the agricultural sector. There is, therefore, the need to make the right investment in the sector to tap these unexploited resources to create employment for the youth.

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