



**Volume 5 No: 5 (2020)**

**A Review of Youth Employment Initiatives in  
Ghana: Policy Perspective**

**Ampadu-Ameyaw R, Jumpah ET., Owusu-Arthur J, Boadu P and  
Fatumbi AO**

**March, 2020**



## Citation

Ampadu-Ameyaw R, Jumpah ET and Owusu-Arthur J, Boadu P and Fatunbi O. A (2020). A review of youth employment initiatives in Ghana: policy perspective. FARA Research Report 5 (5): PP41

## Corresponding Author

Ampadu- Amyewu R ([r.ampadu@csir-stepri.org](mailto:r.ampadu@csir-stepri.org))

FARA encourages fair use of this material. Proper citation is requested

## Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)

12 Anmeda Street, Roman Ridge PMB CT 173, Accra, Ghana Tel: +233 302 772823 / 302 779421 Fax: +233 302 773676 Email: [info@faraafrica.org](mailto:info@faraafrica.org) Website: [www.faraafrica.org](http://www.faraafrica.org)

## Editorials

Mr. Benjamin Abugri ([babugri@faraafrica.org](mailto:babugri@faraafrica.org))

## ISSN: 2550-3359

### About FARA

The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) is the apex continental organisation responsible for coordinating and advocating for agricultural research-for-development. (AR4D). It serves as the entry point for agricultural research initiatives designed to have a continental reach or a sub-continental reach spanning more than one sub-region.

FARA serves as the technical arm of the African Union Commission (AUC) on matters concerning agricultural science, technology and innovation. FARA has provided a continental forum for stakeholders in AR4D to shape the vision and agenda for the sub-sector and to mobilise themselves to respond to key continent-wide development frameworks, notably the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

**FARA's vision is;** "Reduced poverty in Africa as a result of sustainable broad-based agricultural growth and improved livelihoods, particularly of smallholder and pastoral enterprises" **its mission is the** "Creation of broad-based improvements in agricultural productivity, competitiveness and markets by strengthening the capacity for agricultural innovation at the continental-level"; **its Value Proposition is the** "Strengthening Africa's capacity for innovation and transformation by visioning its strategic direction, integrating its capacities for change and creating an enabling policy environment for implementation". FARA's strategic direction is derived from and aligned to the Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa (S3A), which is in turn designed to support the realization of the CAADP vision.

### About FARA Research Result (FRR)

FARA Research Report (FRR) is an online organ of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA). It aims to promote access to information generated from research activities, commissioned studies or other intellectual inquiry that are not structured to yield journal articles. The outputs could be preliminary in most cases and in other instances final. The papers are only published after FARA secretariat internal review and adjudgment as suitable for the intellectual community consumption.

### Disclaimer

*"The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the opinions or views of FARA or its members. The designations employed in this publication and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FARA concerning the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers".*

## **Acknowledgement**

This report was done by the CSIR- Science and Technology Policy Research Institute (STEPRI) under the auspices of the Program of Accompanying Research for Agricultural Innovation (PARI), and in collaboration with the PARI project (<https://research4agrinnovation.org/> ) coordinated at the global level by the Center for Development Studies (ZEF), University of Bonn in Germany and the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) which coordinates the PARI project in Africa. The funding for this work was provided by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The authors wish to acknowledge the contributions of the different individuals in ZEF and FARA for their immense contribution towards the writing of this report. The contributions of Dr. Fatunbi Oluwole and its team in FARA, as well as Dr. Heike Baumüller and her team at ZEF are well acknowledged and cannot be overlooked. The authors further wish to acknowledge the contributions of all the institutions and individuals across the country who we spoke to and provided the information for writing the empirical evidence of this report. The authors would like to thank all the facilitators of the participatory and validation workshops as well as the focus groups that were also used to gather data for this report. We also acknowledge the contributions of all the participants at these workshops as that enabled us to get much insight the story of youth and Agriculture employment in Ghana. the authors also express our profound appreciation to all the researchers at CSIR-STEPRI who in various ways made concrete contributions to the writing of this report. We are also grateful to Master Abdallah Mahama for his contribution during the data collation, entry and analysis.

## Executive Summary

The last two decades have witnessed youth population growth in Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa at large. Several factors have been attributed to this phenomenon. Some of which are improved health care systems, education and general population growth. The increasing youth population, though, offers opportunities for economic development by supplying labour for work, it also poses a challenge to the national government as the youth do not have access to employment opportunities to earn a decent living. The rising youth population with its associated unemployment is attributed to the growing instability in parts of the world, especially in the Middle East and North Africa. To avert similar trajectory in Ghana, the state has been implementing major youth development programmes in recent years. The current study reviewed and examined some of the major interventions implemented by the Government of Ghana to curb youth unemployment and/or under employment since 2000 and opportunities for employment creation in rural areas.

The study reviewed relevant project documents, reports and research papers. Key informant interviews were also conducted with programme managers to get an overview of the selected projects. Considering the large number of unemployed youths in Ghana, the study considered programmes that have provided at least 50,000 jobs in the programmes' life. Because of this criterion, most of the programmes considered are state sponsored or state in collaboration with the private sector.

The study, among others, found that the youth constitute a significant section of Ghana's population and are more energetic but yet they are more exposed to unemployment. Ghana has a National Youth Policy, but it has not been reviewed for almost a decade. Considering the advancement in technology and the rapidly challenging needs of the youth, such policy needs to have been reviewed a long time ago. The needs of young people a decade ago could not be the needs of today's youth. Acquisition of data or public evaluation of youth employment initiatives is extremely difficult to obtain. Where they are even available, such data are in pieces or for some particular period of time.

The study found that there were similarities among programmes which appeared to be duplicated. These programmes are located in different Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). For instance, the National **Youth Employment Agency (YEA)**, **Rural Enterprise Support Programme (REP)** and the Council for Technical and Vocational Training (COTVET) have skills development, training and apprenticeship programmes. All these are programmes target the youth, but are implemented by Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Trade and Industry and Ministry of Education, respectively.

Estimates from the World Bank in 2016 showed that about 48% of the youth in Ghana were unemployed translating to about 5 million young people and each year there are about 300,000 new entrants into the labour market. Considering the high numbers of unemployed youths, the study established that the current programmes cannot resolve youth unemployment if more resources are not invested and programmes expanded to absorb more people.

The study hardly found solely private sector initiatives that were able to generate more than 50,000 employment opportunities to be considered for the study. This was a reflection of a weak and poorly regulated private sector, which lacked the necessary legal and policy support to contribute significantly to job creation despite years of advocacy of support for the private sector.

It was observed that the state alone could not provide employment opportunities for all young people. It was therefore crucial for the state to collaborate with the private sector to create jobs. The state needed to provide the enabling environment for businesses to thrive and enhance the private sector contribution to job creation.

## **Introduction**

Employment creation for the youth is one of the critical issues plaguing most countries, particularly countries in the developing regions of the world. This is as a result of the growing youth population who are unemployed and the threat that the situation poses to societies. The youth, are acknowledged to be critical human resource for the development of countries; make meaningful contributions to nation building (MYS, 2010), and therefore their inclusion in national discourse and economic development cannot be ignored. In view of this, it has been suggested that the youth must be given the necessary attention and be engaged in the national development agenda by governments all over the world (MYS, 2010). While it is gratifying to note that the youth are indispensable in nation building, it is also important to understand that this great potential of nations can be masked if chances are not taken to nurture these future leaders in view of the challenges confronting our societies. While efforts are being marshalled from everywhere to ensure that such potentials are not allowed to be wasted, but developed and nurtured in a way that makes them useful, it has been realised that the development of the youth cannot take place in isolation because the challenges of the youth are interlinked with other developmental problems, especially employment issues in developing countries (MYS, 2010).

The problem of the youth starts with the definition of who a youth is. Globally, there is no one accepted definition of this social category. Literature suggests that this category of people have been variously defined to suit the purposes of a country, region or organization. While the United Nations and its allied institutions (UNESCO, World Bank and IMF) prefer to define youth as young people from age 15 to 24 years. In Ghana, the definition of youth adopted as employed in the National Youth Policy (NYP) covers individuals from the age 15 to 35 years (MYS, 2010). This age margin is a little higher than some African countries like Ethiopia, which has defined its youth as those from 15 and 24 years and a little lower than other countries like Benin which classify young people from age 15 to 40 years as a youth.

## **The Demographics of Youth and Unemployment in Ghana**

In Ghana, statistics showed that the youth (MYS, 2010), constituted a little over 34% of the total population of the country. On regional a basis, the Ashanti Region had the highest youth population (6.8%) followed by Greater Accra Region (6.2%), whereas Upper East Region had the least (1.0%) followed by the Upper West Region (1.4%) (Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2014). The Ashanti and Greater Accra regions have predominantly urban communities while the Upper East and West regions have large rural communities. As a result of the differentiated economic endowments among these regions, there has been a large public discourse on population drift, particularly, a movement of the youth from rural areas to urban centres in search of economic opportunities. In view of this, it was observed that the unemployment rate is relatively higher in urban (13.4%) than rural areas (10.2%) irrespective of gender. The Unemployment rate was higher in urban areas than rural in seven of the ten regions of Ghana. Only Greater Accra, Ashanti and Upper East Regions had higher rural unemployment rates higher than urban (GSS, 2016).

The Ghana Living Standard Survey Round 6 (GLSS-6) Labour Force report found that about 55.5% of the youth were from age 15 to 24 years whilst the remaining 44.5% were from age 25 to 35 years. This implied that the majority of Ghana's youth fall within the active age group of 15 to 24 years. Within this age group majority were males (57.8%) compared to their female counterparts who constituted about 42.2% (GSS, 2016). The reverse of the above statistic was observed in age category of 25 to 35 years, where there were more females than males. In terms of location, 54.0% of the youth resides in urban areas whilst 46.0% reside in rural areas. It was also pointed out that more females than males reside in urban areas. Females may have more chance of residing with their partners or loved ones in urban areas and may have better economic opportunities than males. Without doubt, the differences in the geographical location of residents, as against the slow rate of employment at the places of residence, have a key role in creating unemployment.

The ILO (2018), defines the unemployed as persons or group of individuals within the working age, who are ready and willing to work and had also made attempts to obtain one but cannot find within a specified time period. We applied this definition for this paper. The ILO (2018) data revealed that almost 68% of the youth population in Ghana were employed, with a 5.5% unemployment rate, and 26.7% being inactive in the labour market. Compared with statistics in Africa (6.8%), Ghana's youth unemployment rate is relatively lower inasmuch as more needs to be done to address youth unemployment. Proportionally, more males were in employment (70.3%) than females (65.8%). Those unemployed were almost evenly spread, 5.2% for males and 5.7% for females. A little over 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the youth were inactive. The inactive group were people who were not working but were not seeking for employment for one reason or the other. For example, housewives who were taking care of their children and home or students who were pursuing their academic career. In 2016, the World Bank estimated that 48% of Ghana's youth were unemployed, which was higher than 2018 (Ibid). An indication of some progress was being made, albeit slowly. Despite the progress, the youth unemployment rate figures remained higher compared with the population above the youth bracket (35+ years).

On education, the statistics showed that there were more youth who had completed school (57.1%) than those in school (29%) or had no formal education (13.9%). Granted that, all youth in school would graduate at the various levels, then Ghana may have about 86% or more of its youth having attained a certain level of formal education (UNESCO, 2015). As the data was disaggregated into males and females, it was observed that the ratio of females (57.7%) who completed school to total female population was more than that for males (56.2%). However, there were more males (33.9%) still in school than females (24.8%). Proportionally, there were less youth in rural areas completing school (50.1%) than in urban areas (62.9%) (GSS, 2014). The situation where young people are said to be facing some difficulties of gaining access to jobs, in spite of the high level of attainment in education is worrying. Such a phenomenon is threatening, as the youth are particularly vulnerable to getting caught up in social unrest and other forms of violence. This has been attributed to the fact that the majority of the youth, especially rural youth do not expect employment support from their family networks. Although in general, rural youth do not expect support from their

family networks, female rural youth expects and receives support from their male partners (Dwumah, Akuoko and Yeboah 2018).

Statistics on labour market indicators showed that there were 56.8% of the youth who were non-student workers. Proportionally males (56.0%) were a little less than female (57.4%) non-student workers. When the data was disaggregated by location, the report found that there were less non-student workers in urban areas (53.1%) than rural areas (61.1%). Nevertheless, there is much more non-student workers who are females (63.9%) than males (58.1%) in urban area. The opposite was the scenario for rural areas (GSS, 2014). Unemployment among the youth (persons between 15 and 24 years of age) remained much higher than among other allies of the labour force in most economies (ISSER, 2017). This situation was exacerbated by previous episodes of slow growth in the global economy, with youth unemployment usually more than twice the adult rate. For example, in 2017, the estimated rate of youth unemployment was 13.1%, compared with 13.0% in 2016 (ISSER, 2017).

The growing youth population of Ghana comes with its associated challenges, unemployment inclusive. To resolve the challenge of youth unemployment, various initiatives have been undertaken in the last two decades. The current study reviewed and analysed the major interventions to address youth unemployment by accessing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for policy recommendation for future reforms, programme design and implementation.

## **Determinants of Youth Employment and/or Unemployment**

Unemployment, particularly youth unemployment and related issues have been given prime attention in the media in recent years. The issue has become alarming that there is now an Unemployed Graduates Association in Ghana. The public discourse is still continuing on the way to find a sustainable solution to the problem. Several studies have been carried out to analyse the determinant of unemployment, using both time series and cross-sectional data. In analysing the determinants of unemployment, different theoretical models have been proposed and used. For example, Mortensen (1970), and Lippman and McCall (1976) used the job search model. This model showed that unemployment depended on “job offer and acceptance”. Job offer or the ability to secure a job was as function of labour skills, education, work experience and demand conditions in the job seeking environment. Other factors that influenced unemployment were inflexibility of wages, the influence of trade unions, and national labour laws (Acero, 1993). As found by Assaad et al. (2000) in Egypt, a combination of factors (education with gender) is critical to the employability or otherwise of a jobseeker. Their study found that educated females had a lower probability of entering the job market as Egypt economy transition to market-oriented economy. They emphasised that existing policies favoured males than females.

Using data sets from 220 youths in Umuahia in Abia state of South-Eastern Nigeria, Echebiri (2005) showed that youth unemployment was a function of education and job preference. In particular, he found that most of the unemployed youth were first time jobseekers who were unwilling to be self-employed but preferred to work for the government. Job security appears

to be the main reason the youth preferred to work for the state. In developing countries, the risks associated with entrepreneurship are very high for which reason many youths are unwilling to explore. Location (urban or rural) is also critical in determining employment opportunities as posited by Echebiri (2005).

Youth dislike residing in rural areas because of lack of job opportunities, poor physical and social infrastructures. Eita and Ashipala (2010) used time series macroeconomic data from 1971-2007 to estimate the factors that determined employment. The study found that inflation, and investment were negatively related to unemployment (Maqbool et al., 2013) but wage rate had a positive relationship with unemployment. In addition, Maqbool et al. (2013) found population growth to be negatively related to unemployment. Kyei and Gyekye (2011) analysed the factors that influenced unemployment in South Africa (Limpopo Province) and found out that gender was a key determinant of unemployment. Other studies such as Kalim (2003), Monastiriosis (2006) have also analysed the determinants of unemployment.

### **Unemployed vs. Underemployed in Ghana**

The underemployed comprise all persons in paid or self-employment, involuntarily working less than 35 hours per week, who were seeking or available for additional work during a particular time period (GSS, 2016). The statistics showed that underemployment rate is highest for the population 65 years and older (11.5%) and lowest for the 15-19 years old (6.1%). Generally, the 15-24-year age group recorded lower underemployment rates compared to the other age groups. It is observed that for all age groups, the underemployment rate in rural areas of Ghana is higher than that of urban areas with the exception of the 40-49-year age group, where the reverse is the case. It is also observed that female youth (45.5%) is more likely to be underemployed than their male counterparts (38.4%) (GSS, 2016). The statistics in urban areas show that 35.1% of the underemployed are service/sales workers while 24.1% are craft and related trades workers. In the rural areas, however, the underemployed are mainly skilled agriculture/fishery workers (64.5%) and craft and related trades workers (12.8%). Conversely, 4.2 % of the underemployed in urban areas compared to 2.5 % in rural areas is engaged in the Public Service. Furthermore, the unemployed residing in urban areas are willing to work for a wage of GH¢308.56 than those in rural areas who are willing to work for GH¢278.94 (GSS, 2016).

## **Methodology**

This paper is based on a desk review and a key informant interview of large-scale youth employment initiatives implemented in Ghana for the last two decades. The desk review is based on a narrative literature review of publicly available studies on youth employment and youth employment and workforce development programs in Ghana. Although the focus is on Ghana, the authors attempt to include other literature from other parts of Africa and the rest of the world to enrich the information and importantly for the report to draw lessons from similar interventions and studies across the globe. Data search from the literature focused mainly on youth employment programs or initiatives implemented in the country since 2000 to 2018. Generally, the focus of the review centered on thematic areas involving subjects such as youth employment, workforce development, youth entrepreneurship and self-employed or microenterprise development. In the main, the literature review was built from web searches (including journal articles), bibliography scanning and documentary evidences from other libraries. In view of the fact that most of the youth employment programs that have been pursued in the country focus on workforce and skills development, the majority of the studies reviewed were in that subject area. Traditionally, this happens to be the general trend followed by donors and national government implementers in developing the skills of youth. These are usually promoted as a non-formal education and/ or training.

The second part of the information search employed key informant interviews. In total, six key informant interviews were conducted with key personnel in the selected youth employment institutions. The staff interviewed by their leadership roles is classified as experts because of the wealth of knowledge they have about their institutional operations. In general, the interviews focused on the operations of the programs as well as their establishments, including the purposes for which they were implemented. These were processed and used to support the literature information gathered during the desk review. The rest of this paper is organized into seven sections. The next section presents a review of youth employment and development policies in Ghana.

### **Review of Youth Employment and Development Policies in Ghana**

In the last two decades the Government of Ghana has implemented policies and programmes to resolve the challenge of unemployment particularly of the youth. Despite some gains from implemented policies, the challenge of youth unemployment still remains. And of more significance is rising numbers of unemployed young graduates. Some economic and social analysts have posited the situation poses a threat to national security. Several factors have been attributed to this phenomenon. Mentioned, among others, are mismatch between skills acquired in school and the skills demand of the labour market, slow growth of the private sector and rapid population growth. It is estimated that about 300,000 graduates are turned out into the labour market each year from tertiary institutions in Ghana. However, the public sector has the capacity to absorb no more 80,000 leaving about 220,000 in search of economic opportunities in the private sector. However, the private sector has less capacity to absorb

these numbers because it is not well structured and confronted with many challenges. The private sector always complains of the lack of relevant business environment and policy support to thrive so it could provide the needed employment for the youth. A review of major employment policies and programmes aimed at addressing youth unemployment in recent years in Ghana is presented below.

### **National Employment Policy (NEP)**

As a measure to address the unemployment challenges in Ghana, in 2015, the nation designed and launched this unemployment policy. The draft of the policy instrument was spearheaded by the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations (MELR). The goal of the policy was to create decent work opportunities to reduce unemployment especially, among the youth and other vulnerable groups like women and persons with disabilities. The policy document identified some important issues that needed to be addressed by the state and other stakeholders in order to create sustainable employment opportunities. Key among them (which focus on youth) were the need to address rising youth unemployment despite years of economic growth, and reducing the prevalence of seasonal youth unemployment in rural communities. The government acknowledged that the challenges of the youth were multifaceted, therefore, to address them required a multi-sectoral approach.

The NEP was designed to provide guidelines for ‘accelerated decent job creation through sustainable growth in all sectors of the economy and provide strategic direction to reduce unemployment among the youth [graduates inclusive]’ (MELR, 2014). In practice, there appears to be a weak link between the educational system of the country and the productive sector of the economy. Also, there is a mismatch between skills acquired in school and the demand of the labour market. In addition, there is a lack of entrepreneurial skills among the youth to create self-employment. For these reasons the youth are unable to take advantage of the opportunities within the society to be gainfully employed.

Though youth unemployment is of great concern to the Government, more pressing is graduate unemployment. The educational system is producing more graduates with very limited job openings to absorb them. This could create a potential threat to national security. The NEP, therefore, recognised the need to transform the educational system to respond to the needs of the job market. It acknowledged the need for a transition period in which graduates were linked to industry to ease the process of entering the job market.

According to the Ghana Educational Services (GES) (Cited, MELR, 2014) about 13% of pupils who enters Junior High School (JHS) do not graduate, leaving them into the job market with no skills. A small fraction, 40% of those who complete proceeds to Senior High School (SHS). Hence, more than 200,000 unskilled and under-skilled labour are turned out into the labour market every year. This has resulted in the huge unemployment year on year. Going forward the strategies in NEP were to;

Increase skills training in Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) particularly for junior and secondary school leavers

Improving facilities for TVET at secondary and tertiary levels

Promote demand-driven tertiary education programmes

Collaborate with academia and industry to design curriculums that meet the needs of industry

The essence is to link the educational system to the productive sectors of the economy and expose students to the opportunities and challenges in the world of work.

### **National Youth Policy (NYP)**

Ghana has had several policies and programmes dating back to the early years of independence to create job opportunities and developments for the youth. The likes of Workers Brigade, Operation Feed Yourself (OFY) and more recently National Youth Employment Programme are all programmes developed by the state at different points in Ghana's development to help solve the issue of youth unemployment. As outlined in the National Youth Policy (NYP) document, the vision of the state concerning youth is to empower them to contribute effectively to nation building. To achieve this vision, the objectives considered include:

empowering the youth to be actively involved in productive ventures in all facets of society; encouraging the youth to develop their own potential and self-worth; institutionalizing youth engagement and participation in the decision-making processes at every level of the democratic governance.

Through national, regional and international networks the youth are expected to be empowered to acquire the relevant know-how, and expertise and to share experiences among peers.

The youth policy has nineteen (19) priority areas that are interlinked. Considering the complex nature of the challenges facing the youth (MYS, 2010), it is worthwhile to analyse this case by case. For the purposes of this work, emphases are placed on youth and agricultural development, youth employment and opportunities, entrepreneurial development, education and skills acquisition, ICT, gender mainstreaming, and science, technology and innovation (STI). The Government of Ghana has recognised the importance of application of STI in addressing youth challenges, hence the development of national STI policy.

### **National STI policy (Science, Research, and Technology)**

The National Science Technology and Innovation (STI) is a policy document (2017-2020) which provides directions and guidelines on how to harness the benefits of STI and integrate STI into the economy and the youth development agenda of Ghana. Specific interventions are to be made to address the challenges of the youth through the application of science, technology, and innovation. These interventions include: "promoting innovation at all levels of the educational system; encouraging activities that draw on the STI capabilities of the youth; promoting STI competition among the youth; establishing award schemes that reward innovation among the youth; providing scholarships for promising science students; establishing mechanisms for encouraging young people to study the sciences; initiating

mechanisms for early identification of talented young scientists; and establishing mentoring programmes in STI for the youth” (MESTI, 2017).

### **Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I & II)**

The GPRS I was launched in 2003 as one of several policies to improve the economy of Ghana and improve the standard of living of its citizens. This was done after formal consultations with the youth and other key stakeholders. The goal was to ensure ‘sustainable, equitable growth, accelerated poverty reduction and the protection of the vulnerable and excluded within a decentralized democratic environment’ (NDPC, 2003). In relation to agriculture and the youth, GPRS I identified the use of old age tools, technologies and farming practices as disincentives for the youth to participate in agriculture. To address this challenge, specific emphasis was placed on developing technologies and providing support services (credit supply, tractor services) to attract the youth to agriculture. With collaboration and support from research institutions, improved crop varieties and animal breeds were provided to the youth. Aside crop production, there were interventions in aquaculture to create youth employment. Legislations were introduced to make access to land by the youth easier, and establishment of MFIs to improve access to credit by the youth (Microfinance and Small Loan Centre (MASLOC) was established thereafter). Besides agriculture, there were interventions to support TVET to improve skills training/development. This resulted in increased numbers of TVET institutions in the country over years.

The completion of GPRS I in 2005 was followed by the introduction of GPRS II in 2006 as a way of sustaining and improving the gains of GPRS I while addressing the limitations of GPRS I. The goal was to generate decent job opportunities for the citizens, particularly the youth and other vulnerable groups. In connection with the agriculture sector and youth employment, the strategy continued with the modernisation of agriculture and rural infrastructure improvement.

A number of important issues that were to be addressed to ensure a competitive private sector agriculture under this policy included: reforms on land acquisition and land right, provision of irrigation facilities, promoting selective crop development, modernising livestock production, and improving access to mechanised agriculture, among others. The interventions under GPRS II in agriculture and youth employment may have achieved some modest gains, but the empirical evidence to support this are not found in the literature.

### **Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA I & II)**

The GSGDA was launched in 2010 after consultations with various stakeholders including the youth. The objectives, among others, was to increase food production, nutrition and security, and create sustainable job opportunities. To ensure these objectives are achieved, the Government was to increase agricultural financing through the establishment of the Agricultural Development Fund. To address youth challenges specifically, a number of guiding principles and actions were to be undertaken. They included coordinating inter-sectoral approaches to youth challenges; trade and investment activities; training/skills development;

education and appropriate labour laws. Emphasis was placed on Youth in Agricultural Programme (YiAP) and Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) as vehicles to propel youth participation in the agricultural sector. While the YiAP had achieved some modest gains, SADA encountered administrative challenges. There were no holistic and robust empirical estimations of the impact of SADA, though there were pockets of individual researches to ascertain the impact of some of the interventions under SADA.

### **Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP II)**

FASDEP was developed as the main policy document for the agricultural sector between 2007 – 2012 with the aim of improving the economy of Ghana through agriculture. Improvement in the agricultural sector was expected to provide decent work opportunities especially for the youth. The policy provided guidelines to address the myriad of challenges confronting agriculture sector so as to boost productivity and incomes of those working in the sector thereby attracting the youth.

Inasmuch as the mention of the word ‘youth’ in the policy document could not mean the provision of the necessary guidelines and programmes to address youth employment within the agricultural sector. It was interesting to observe that the word ‘youth’ was mentioned only 5 times in the 77 main policy documents. The document, however, recognised the aging population of Ghanaian farmers as a challenge, but with the exception of Youth in Agricultural Programme (YiAP), it placed little emphasis on programmes or strategies to comprehensively address youth unemployment through the agricultural sector. The Government was expected to channel financial and material resources (mechanised services, technologies and land) to the youth through the YiAP for the production of high value crops.

### **Medium Term Agricultural Sector Investment Plan (METASIP I and II)**

The youth constitute the largest working segment of Ghana’s population. It is therefore crucial to pay critical attention to youth issues when designing policies, programmes/plans, and projects for national development. The agricultural sector has huge potential to employ more if the right investment, policies and programmes are initiated. The METASIP (II) was the blue print for investment in agricultural sector in Ghana. It was therefore important that such document will pay critical attention to youth interventions. It was interesting to observe that METASIP II, a 74-page document had the word ‘youth’ written only once, while in FASDEP the word appeared only 5 times in the main document. This suggested that little emphasis had been placed on youth specific interventions. Even in METASIP I it was observed that the main youth initiative was improving institutional coordination of agriculture training institutions and promoting off-farm activities targeting the youth. This did not demonstrate well enough intention to address youth unemployment through the agricultural sector.

### **Brief Overview of Current Youth Employment Interventions**

Within the broad policies summarised above, a number of initiatives had been implemented to address the youth employment challenge in Ghana. This section reviewed, examined and analysed major youth employment initiatives that had been undertaken since 2000, taking

into considerations the characteristics, purpose and outcomes of these interventions relative to the number of work or jobs generated among others.

### **Rural Enterprise Support Programme (REP)**

**REP I:** Rural Enterprise Support Project (REP) (Now Programme) operated in 1995-2003 (Phase I). The focus of the programme was the transfer of technologies to rural Ghana so that people in rural communities could take advantage of it to improve their living conditions. It was intended to establish rural technology transfer centres (GRATIS) to provide skills training to the unemployed in rural Ghana. There was also allowance and start-up capital support to motivate beneficiaries to establish their own businesses after training. Rural infrastructure development component was added to the programme as a way of curbing rural-urban migration due to lack of social amenities in rural areas. Other components of the programme were apprenticeship training and business development services (which mainly focused on women). The REP was a nationwide project, but for lack of funds it focused only on some Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs). The REP I established 3 Rural Technology Facilities (RTFs), covered 13 districts and was funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development/Government of Ghana (IFAD/GOG). Some challenges encountered in the implementation of REP I were:

Lack of coordination among stakeholder ministries and agencies

Beneficiaries could not pay their share of cost of training

Land ownership challenges for the youth

Lack of linkages with financial institutions

Political interference

Although the programme Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officers agreed that there were successes, figures were not readily available to back the claims.

**REP II:** The REP II was introduced after implementation and review of REP I in 2003. The REP I&II did not specifically have youth targeted programmes which was observed to be a weakness. The REP II was generally an expansion of REP I but the allowance and start-up capital were eliminated (seen as a drain on the project because they were not motivating enough). Its objective was to develop a competitive rural MSE sector; supported by relevant good quality, easily accessible and sustainable services through apprenticeship training and business development services (as was in Phase I). Skills training services were organised in collaborations with the private sector (companies and individuals who provided these trainings were paid for their services). The project covered 66 districts, established 21 RTFs and supported some 146,583 (62% women) entities and individuals which exceeded the target. The total cost was 29,696,000.00 million dollars and was financed by IFAD/AfDB/GOG. Most trainings and projects funded were agribusiness related. Phase II of REP ended in 2012.

A study by BIRD (2012) indicated that out of 340 project clients sampled for the field survey, 280 (92%) reported improved income as a result of participation in REP II projects. Before participation, clients' average income was GH¢455.00. After enrolling onto REP II, clients' incomes increased to GH¢755.00, representing about 40% increase in their previous monthly income. Respondents (86%) also reported improved access to quality and nutritious food (sources). Some challenges identified in REP II were:

Inadequate Rural Technology Facilities (RTFs) (Hostels in particular)

Cost sharing of training

Long distances to RTFs

Inadequate coordination and collaborations from implementing agencies and ministries

Lack of legal backing for programme

Procurement challenges because of donor requirements

Lack of investment capital by beneficiaries after training

Political interference

**REP III:** The REP III started in 2012 and still ongoing. It was an extension and expansion of Phase II. However, REP III had considerations for youth focussed projects. It was focussed on literate youth out of school. It was projected to train some 6,500 youth and entities in agribusiness related ventures in 2019 in identified institutions such as Adidome and Wenchi training centres. The REP III covered 161 of the 254 MMDAs in Ghana. It had trained 55 units of start-ups in agribusiness and had increased RTFs to 36 with 5 hostels but it must be emphasised that this was still inadequate considering the fact that there are 254 MMDAs. Funding was from IFAD/AfDB/GOG. Lack of expertise in the partner institutions to implement approved projects was a challenge in the ongoing programme. The report from the programme managers indicated that the program was not age restrictive, however, the programme tended to benefit mostly the youth and female in particular.

### **National Youth Employment Agency (YEA)**

The Ghana Youth and Entrepreneurial Development Agency (now National Youth Employment Authority) has been in existence since 2006 to serve as a means of creating job opportunities for the youth in Ghana through job placement in the public sector and/or training. The programme aimed to place the youth in job opportunities in a manner that enabled them to acquire the necessary employable skills. By 2012, about 620,000 youths were employed and/or trained to be self-employed by the programme (YEA, 2019). However, in 2015 the programme faced some administrative lapses which led to huge loss of investment through the programme. Through an Act of parliament (Act 887) the YEA was established to give legal backing to the programme and provide guidelines to forestall any administrative lapses in the future. The programme provided an opportunity for the youth to learn a trade of choice and be assisted for two years and exit thereafter. From time to time modules were developed and implemented depending on the needs of a particular period. Some of these

modules were Youth in Agriculture, Youth in Sanitation and Coastal Assistant, Youth in Trades and Vocations, Youth in Entrepreneurship, Youth in Apparel and Textiles, and Youth in Information Communication Technology. There were periodic reviews of the modules to ensure they met the needs of a particular time and the financial resources available to run them. The President of Ghana, Nana Akufo-Addo delivering the 2019 state of the nation address revealed that a total of 107,115 youths was engaged in 2018 and 125,000 set to be engaged in 2019 under the various modules in YEA (Akufo-Addo, 2018; Armah, 2018). In addition, Government facilitated the placement of 16,238 unemployed who registered with the Public Employment Centres and Private Employment Agencies within the same year (Armah, 2018). These young persons were trained with vocational and technical skills, small scale agribusiness enterprises and ICT, among others. Government envisaged an increase in these numbers for 2019 as the economy expanded and new modules that met the needs of the time were introduced. Funding for the programme was from the Government of Ghana (GOG) through taxes and levies (Armah, 2018; YEA, 2018). The National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP) through YEA provided skills development and training, employment placement services, employment, apprenticeship and other forms of support to beneficiaries.

### **National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (NEIP) (Entrepreneurial development)**

National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (NEIP), formally Youth Enterprise Support (YES) was established in 2016 to provide financial support or expert business advisory services for young entrepreneurs to start or expand existing SMEs. It was started with an initial capital fund of GHC 10,000,000.00. In 2017, the programme was expanded and rebranded to provide broader services to young entrepreneurs or would-be entrepreneurs (NEIP, 2018). A total of GHC 47,000,000.00 was allocated in the 2019 budget to this programme (Armah, 2018; GOG, 2018).

It was estimated that only 2% of SHS students wanted to venture into the world of entrepreneurship to create and own businesses. Most young people have the notion that after school they must proceed to a tertiary institution to acquire the necessary knowledge to be employed later by someone, particularly, the Government (Awal, 2019). Unfortunately, not all students can and are able to proceed to the tertiary level, leaving large numbers jobless after SHS. The state is also limited in the number of people it can employ and so has opted to create conducive environment for would-be entrepreneurs to take advantage of the current system.

It is in light of this that the Government of Ghana in 2017, established the Student Entrepreneur Initiative (SEI) to support individuals or groups of individuals, particularly SHS leavers with brilliant and feasible business proposals to establish their own businesses. It is a 4-years project, which projected to last till 2021 Subject to the success of awardees the programme may be extended beyond 2021. It supports entrepreneurs with GHC 10,000.00- GHC 100,000.00. Unlike capital market loans the interest rate charged beneficiaries are very low (10%) and repayment is between 2-4 years. This is to prevent usage of business expansion

funds in loan repayment. Beneficiaries are mostly entrepreneurs in the agribusiness sector. In 2018, it supported 1,300 beneficiaries who had lately established and employed additional youths in their businesses. It was expected to extend support to 3,000 beneficiaries in 2019 (Awal, 2018; GOG, 2018). According to the Director of Business Support, NEIP monitoring results showed that after a year of implementation, beneficiaries had employed 3 to 7 additional workers. This was more than expected (to employ 2 additional workers). In 2019, the programme had provided support to about 50,000 youths in its various forms of entrepreneurial skills development, trainings and financial support.

### **Nation Builders Corp (NABCO) and National Service**

The rising youth unemployment, especially graduate unemployment became a grave concern to policymakers and Government. Consequently, the government in 2018 introduced the programme to mop up the large numbers of graduate unemployed by establishing the NABCO in 2017. It is estimated that about 100,000 graduate youths had been employed under the programme in the fields of agriculture, education, ICT, health and community development. As a show of commitment, the Government allocated GHC 850,000,000.00 to the programme (Armah, 2018; GOG, 2018). The objective was to, among others, provide temporary employment (which could make permanent later) for graduates in the public service, improve skills and employability. Similar to this programme was the national service which has been in existence for almost half a century. The national service serves as the link between the world of work and tertiary education in Ghana. Students in tertiary institutions normally acquire the necessary knowledge with little emphasis on practical application of the knowledge gained in school to the world of work. The NABCO and national service period provides an opportunity to graduates to acquire the necessary practical skills to be able to fit into the world of work. Though it is a period of 1 year or 2, it provides an opportunity for graduate youths to serve their country in diverse ways while still earning some income.

### **Ghana Social Opportunity Projects (GSOP)-Agricultural Labour Employment Services**

One noticeable programme embarked upon after year 2000 to address youth unemployment (seasonal unemployment in particular) in rural areas of Ghana was GSOP. The Government of Ghana with the support of the World Bank initiated GSOP in 2010 to take advantage of surplus labour in rural communities by creating job avenues for the youth and most vulnerable families. Different projects had been designed and implemented under GSOP for the benefit of the youth in rural communities. An example was the Labour-Intensive Public Work (LIPW), under which the youth were employed in dam constructions for dry seasoning farming; and mango plantation development. Bi-monthly wages were paid to work done by beneficiaries. This was to create employment opportunities nationwide with particular attention to northern Ghana to reduce North-South migrations during dry seasons. Studies have reported different numbers of beneficiaries at different times. For instance, Cirillo (2016) reported 30,042 and 7,814 beneficiaries for 2014 and 2015, respectively. The programme has been concluded.

### **Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJs) (Agricultural Labour Employment Services)**

The programme, which was nationwide, began in 2017 with the objective to ensure food security in selected foods crops in Ghana. This was to be achieved through improved productivity and intensification to create job opportunities for the unemployed youth in the agriculture and allied sectors (MoFA, 2017). Under Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJs), inputs for agricultural production such as fertilizers, seeds, herbicides, marketing and technical services were provided to the youth to venture into agricultural production. Others were also engaged in afforestation projects to plant trees to protect the environment. The government maintained that it created direct employment of 3,230 for the youth under the PFJs (Armah, 2018), and 745,000 jobs in 2017 (GOG, 2018). The jobs created included input distribution, production, post-harvest, marketing and e-agriculture and extension services (MoFA, 2017). This was an indication that should the right business opportunities be identified; agriculture could create more employment opportunities for the teeming youth who hitherto were unemployed or underemployed. Table 1 provides the statistics of the breakdown of jobs created under PFJs.

**Table 1: Jobs Created Under PFJs**

<b>Value Chain Activities</b>	<b>No. of Jobs Created</b>
Input distribution/Supply services	13,093
Production	715,000
Post-harvest processes and services	8,589
Marketing services	5,400
E-Agric & Extension services	2,918
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>745,000</b>

Source: MoFA (2017)

However, these figures are yet to be confirmed by an independent body. The programme was initially solely funded by GOG until donor support (e.g. Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Government of Indi (GOI)) started in 2018. The programme had GHC 380,000,000 budgetary allocation in 2019 (GOG, 2018). To sustain or improve the nation's development progress, knowledgeable, physically and mentally healthy youth were needed. For this reason, programmes and projects were initiated in allied institutions to boost the outcomes in the agricultural sector. It was crucial to have youth with formal education to make it easier to adopt modern technologies and methods of farming. The free Senior High School (SHS) is an opportunity for the youth to upgrade their level of knowledge in various aspects of life. The state has thus allocated GHC 1,982,641,924.00 for Free SHS for 2019 (Armah, 2018). The nation had witnessed a significant increase in agricultural output, but it was yet to be empirically established if this were the direct result of PFJs.

## **COTVET-Training and Skills Development**

Council for Technical and Vocational Training (COTVET) was established by an act of the Parliament of Ghana (ACT, 718) in 2006 as one of many frameworks to address youth unemployment in Ghana. The council was mandated to 'co-ordinate and oversee' technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in both private and public institutions in the country and to provide for related matters (GOG, 2012). Under COTVET, vocational and technical education and training were provided to individuals in technical institutions of higher learning or those who could not take advantage of the normal schooling system. It also coordinates training and skills development of individuals in a variety of artisanal works such as carpentry, masonry, and electrical and electronics. Also, in collaboration with schools (Junior High School (JHS), Senior High Technical School (SHTS), and polytechnic/technical universities), students were educated and trained on skills acquisitions to be employed or self-employed. Though statistics on the kinds of jobs created and in the sectors in which they were created as a result of the intervention of COTVET were hard to obtain. It was generally agreed that the programme had created thousands of employment opportunities for previously unemployed youth who had acquired skills to be gainfully self-employed and earn income to support themselves and their dependants. Major partners in support of COTVET initiatives were GOG, JICA, DANIDA, and GIZ

## **Youth in Afforestation Programme (YAfP)**

This programme aimed to reclaim lands that had been degraded due to small-scale illegal mining and deforestation. Under the programme, the youth are engaged in tree planting to cover lost vegetation. The GOG's budget statement for 2019 indicated that 3,447 ha of trees were planted; and 2,942 trees plantations were established in collaboration with the private sector in 2018. Aside from the newly developed plantations, the youth were also employed to maintain existing plantations. A total of 18,972 ha plantations had been maintained and 1,841 ha of degraded lands had been restored through the programme with about 233,000 seedlings planted. About 60,000 and 2,590 youth were employed under the programme by the state and private plantation developers (with support from the government), respectively. It was expected in 2019 that in collaboration with the private sector, a total of 25,000 ha and 40,288 ha of forest plantation will be established and maintained, respectively. This was expected to increase the number of beneficiaries and job opportunities under the programme (GOG, 2018).

## **Youth in Agriculture Programme (YiAP)**

The agriculture sector generates more employment to the people of Ghana, and as indicated earlier, it contributes more employment opportunities to the youth than the service or industrial/manufacturing sector. The nation also has comparative advantage in terms of agriculture with vast unused agricultural lands and natural resources. Rising unemployment, particularly, youth unemployment necessitated the introduction of the Youth in Agricultural

Programme (YiAP) in 2009. This was part of several interventions aimed at encouraging the youth to take up agricultural production since most of the people working in the sector were the aged. In fact, the average age of a Ghanaian farmer was about 55 years, which does not augur well for the nation if the country was to sustain food production to meet the nutritional needs of her growing population (MoFA, 2019). The YiAP, among other objectives, was to entice the youth to take up agricultural production as a commercial and profitable enterprise; to motivate the youth to stay in rural areas; and to generate appreciable income for rural people. To achieve the objectives, the programme provided the youth with material and technical support that was needed for agricultural production. Under YiAP, the youth were assisted to acquire blocked farms, provided with subsidised inputs (fertilizers and seeds, extension, and marketing services). Various authors, including Gyampo (2012) indicated that despite the challenges faced by the programme, it had provided thousands of jobs for the youth directly and indirectly. According to Avura and Ulzen Appiah (2016) each year about 50,000 young people were rolled onto the programme.

### **Microfinance and Small Loans Centre (MASLOC)**

Micro and Small Loans Centre (MASLOC) was an initiative of the Government of Ghana established in 2006 to support entrepreneurs to start or expand their businesses. Its goal was to create employment opportunities, wealth, and reduce poverty. This was consistent with the original intent of Mohammed Yunus (founder of modern-day microfinance concept), which was to make small loan services available to entrepreneurs who had been ignored by the traditional financial sector for investment in income generating activities thereby reducing poverty among the most vulnerable households (Ganle et al., 2015). Like Yunus, MASLOC targeted entrepreneurs who were involved in SMEs but had been overlooked by the conventional financial service provider. MASLOC pursued the strategic goal of reducing poverty, creating employment and wealth across the country. This was done through: (i) reaching out to clients who were in the informal sector and were perceived to be high risk borrowers for which reason had been ignored by the traditional financial sector; and (ii) putting in place feasible, well-structured entities to ensure efficient disbursement, utilization and recovery of microfinance services (Odoro-Ofori, 2014). The objectives of MASLOC was to “provide, manage and regulate on fiduciary basis, approved funds for microfinance and small-scale credit schemes and programmes, and also serve as the apex body of the microfinance subsector” (MASLOC, 2019). To achieve its’ objectives, MASLOC, among others, was engaged in the provision of microcredit to SMEs, promoting expansion and decentralisation of microfinance services, cooperating and collaborating with other MFIs, mobilising savings and deposits, supporting the training and provision of entrepreneurial skills to SMEs (ibid).

In summary, there were more than 35 youth employment interventions since 2000 (World Bank, 2016). These programmes were wholly state-sponsored, public-private partnership (PPP), private initiatives, or donor-support aimed at addressing the challenges of youth employment. Key among them were NABCO, YEA, YAfP, YiAP, COTVET/TVET, MASLOC, PFBs, GSOP, and NEIP. These were large scale programmes aimed at creating employment

opportunities for the youth in Ghana. Inasmuch as there were many youth intervention programmes aimed at youth development in Ghana, “the number of young people who cannot find jobs in Ghana is staggering” (Akufo-Addo, 2018). This may be due to a multiplicity of reasons; interventions may not be large enough to cover all unemployed youth; interventions may not be attractive enough; interventions were unsustainable. It was anticipated that aside from these interventions, initiatives such as One Village, One Dam (small- and medium-scale irrigation schemes), One District, One Factory, which were in the process of taking place should expand employment opportunities for the youth particularly those in rural areas of Ghana (ISSER, 2017).

### Youth Employment Interventions Since 2000

Name of Programme	Period	Objectives	Characteristics	Specific Districts	Number of Beneficiaries/years	Cost	Sponsors /Funding	Key Implementation Challenges	Implementing Organisations /Agencies
YEA	2006-date	To coordinate various youth employment initiatives and create job opportunities for the youth.	Nationwide	All MMDAs	>100,000	GHC 709m (2016)	GOG/WB/DP	Inefficient monitoring and evaluation to prevent misappropriation of funds	MOELR/YEA/NYA
NEIP	2018-date	To provide financial and technical support start-ups and existing SMEs	Nationwide	All MMDAs	>5,300	>\$155m	GOG		MBD/MOTI/MOFA
NABCO	2018-date	To create job opportunity for unemployed graduates	Nationwide	All MMDAs	100,000 (2018)		GOG	Issues of payment of allowance and Frauds in recruitment system	MOTI/MOFA/AGI/COTVET
GSOP (LIPW)	2010-2018	To make use of excess rural labour particularly in the dry season	Nationwide	Focus on Northern Ghana	>37,000	>\$89m	WB/GOG	Limited number of technical training institutions and material	MLGRD
PFJs	2017-date		Nationwide	All MMDAs	745,000		GOG/DP	Diversion and smuggling of inputs	MOFA/NYA
COTVET	2006-date	To co-ordinate and oversee all aspects of technical and vocational education and training in the country	Nationwide	All MMDAs	>100,000		GOG/DP		MOE/MOTI/NBSSI
YiAFP	2018-date	To regenerate depleted forest and lands and creating employment for the youth	Nationwide	All MMDAs	>50,000		GOG/DP	Challenges with payment of beneficiaries	MLFR/FC
YiAP	2010-date	To encourage the youth to take agricultural production as a commercial business thereby creating jobs	Nationwide	All MMDAs	>80,000	GHC42m (2018)	GOG/DP	Inadequate supply of inputs and land acquisition challenges by the youth.	MOFA
MASLOC	2006-date	MASLOC provides micro and small loans for start-ups and small businesses with fast, easy and accessible microcredit and small loans to grow and expand their businesses as well as to enhance job and wealth creation.	Nationwide	All MMDAs	-	-	GOG/DP	Non repayment of funds and misappropriation of funds	MOTI/MOF

**Table 2: Classification of Initiatives**

<b>Employment Category</b>	<b>Initiatives</b>
Employment services	YEA
Skills development	COTVET, REP, NEIP
Employment creation	NABCo, NEIP, YAP, YAfP, MASLOC, PFBS, GSOP
Integrated programme	YEA, MASLOC, NEIP

Classification based on ILO criteria

Note: The initiatives are not static in their categorisation. They vary from period to period as the need may arise. The current classification is for 2019. In general, the initiatives are a combination of the various categorisation.

## SWOT Analysis of the Identified Major Interventions

**Table 3: SWOT Analysis of National Youth Employment Agency (YEA)**

Strength	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willingness of youth to work</li> <li>• Fair employment opportunities</li> <li>• Work experience</li> <li>• Possibility to be permanently employed in the public service</li> <li>• Nationally recognised certificates</li> <li>• No formal fees required to be engaged</li> <li>• Opportunity of learning a trade</li> <li>• Wide program modules to choose from</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand for white collar jobs</li> <li>• Lack of effective monitoring and evaluation systems</li> <li>• Demand for higher wages</li> <li>• Short training time to master some crafts/trades</li> <li>• Lack of guidance and counselling</li> <li>• Insufficient soft and entrepreneurial skills</li> <li>• Insufficient theoretical background</li> <li>• Limited resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patriotisms-public demand of “Made in Ghana” goods</li> <li>• Donor support</li> <li>• Increasing youth population</li> <li>• Renewed interest in youth employment initiatives by government and development partners</li> <li>• Link with international bodies</li> <li>• Permanent employment with civil service or private sector</li> <li>• Renewed interest in self-employment</li> <li>• Many out of school wanting to be trained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unreliable Internal and external funding</li> <li>• High wage demand by employees</li> <li>• Increasing youth population</li> <li>• Increased prices of services supplied by third party</li> <li>• Improper monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>• Political interference</li> <li>• Favouritisms in placements</li> </ul>

**Table 4: SWOT Analysis of NEIP (Entrepreneurial development)**

Strength	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth willing to work</li> <li>• Low interest rates</li> <li>• Flexible repayment plan</li> <li>• Fair employment opportunities</li> <li>• Fine opportunity of owning a business</li> <li>• Follow ups on trainees progress</li> <li>• Focussed on entrepreneurship development</li> <li>• Provides financial support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand for white collar jobs</li> <li>• No purposive discrimination to help rural area</li> <li>• Dislike for agribusiness</li> <li>• Inadequate business advisory service</li> <li>• Insufficient attention to entrepreneurial skills</li> <li>• Support few youth</li> <li>• Limited resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patriotisms-public demand of “Made in Ghana” goods</li> <li>• Government continues support</li> <li>• Business expansions leading to multiple employment</li> <li>• External stakeholders monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unreliable Internal and external funding</li> <li>• High level of loan default among beneficiaries</li> <li>• Poor demand for made in Ghana products and services</li> <li>• Absence of regulations and protections for youth engaged by the programme</li> <li>• Fear of discontinuation in case of change of government</li> </ul>

**Table 5: SWOT Analysis of NABCO) and National Service (Expanded Public Works Programme)**

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readiness of youth to work</li> <li>• An array of program modules to select from</li> <li>• No formal fees required</li> <li>• Fair employment opportunities</li> <li>• Possibility of permanent employment in civil service</li> <li>• Work experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand for white collar jobs</li> <li>• Demand for higher wages</li> <li>• Favouritism in allocation to modules</li> <li>• No attention to entrepreneurial skills</li> <li>• Preference to some modules to the neglect of other critical areas-agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent employment</li> <li>• Experience for employment in other sectors</li> <li>• National and international connections and career building</li> <li>• Renewed interest in volunteerism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unreliable Internal and external funding</li> <li>• Political interference</li> <li>• Nepotism and favouritisms in the placements in modules</li> <li>• Increased demand for wages</li> <li>• Decline in patriotism</li> <li>• Lack of means of self-employment after exit from programme</li> </ul>

**Table 6: SWOT Analysis of GSOP (Agricultural Labour Employment Services)**

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willingness of youth to work</li> <li>• Possibility to learn a new trade</li> <li>• Resolved dry season unemployment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand for white collar jobs</li> <li>• Programme largely area focussed</li> <li>• Projects for communities determined by policymakers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patriotisms-willingness to provide public services</li> <li>• Connection with industry</li> <li>• Network to local and international partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unreliable Internal and external funding</li> <li>• Lack of means to start own business</li> <li>• Donor fatigue</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fair employment opportunity</li> <li>• Flexible work schedules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No opportunity to further education or permanent employment</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Few opportunities for skills development</li> <li>• No means to ensure sustainability</li> </ul>
--	---	--	---

**Table 7: SWOT Analysis of PFJs (Agricultural labour)**

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth available for work</li> <li>• Fair employment opportunity</li> <li>• Possibility to own business</li> <li>• Access to farm inputs</li> <li>• Hands on practical knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand for white collar jobs</li> <li>• Disproportionate distribution of inputs</li> <li>• Inadequate monitory and evaluation</li> <li>• Inadequate data to capture the specific needs of beneficiaries</li> <li>• Insufficient skills development of beneficiaries</li> <li>• Limited resources</li> <li>• Much attention on production with little emphasis on the value chain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patriotisms-public demand of produced in Ghana products</li> <li>• Foreign exchange from export of surplus food</li> <li>• Renewed interest by government and DP to support agriculture</li> <li>• Financing from private sector to support government</li> <li>• External stakeholders monitoring and evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unreliable Internal and external funding</li> <li>• Political interference</li> <li>• Nepotism and favouritisms in the allocation of inputs</li> <li>• Lack of legal backing</li> <li>• Economy moving from agro-based to service-based industry</li> <li>• Lack of means to start own trade/business</li> </ul>

**Table 8: SWOT Analysis of COTVET (Training and Skills Development)**

Strength	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readiness of youth to work</li> <li>• Hands on practical knowledge</li> <li>• Nationally recognised certificates</li> <li>• Wide range courses to choose from</li> <li>• Possibility of starting own business or trade</li> <li>• Fair employment opportunity</li> <li>• Learning by practicing</li> <li>• Learner chooses of trade or skills</li> <li>• Accessible with little or no fees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand for white collar jobs</li> <li>• Rigid curriculum</li> <li>• Inadequate trained and motivated staff</li> <li>• Low self-esteem of trainees</li> <li>• Insufficient of guidance and counselling</li> <li>• Limited resources</li> <li>• Very poor facilities for practical training</li> <li>• Inadequate attention to entrepreneurship and soft skills</li> <li>• Dislike for agricultural and related programmes</li> <li>• Traditional TVET courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renewed interest by government and DP to prioritise TVET</li> <li>• Internship leads to job acquisition</li> <li>• Increased demand for skills training and development</li> <li>• Possibility to progress in the academic ladder</li> <li>• Increased government and donor funds</li> <li>• Self-employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unreliable Internal and external funding</li> <li>• Low pay for instructors</li> <li>• Perceptions of programmes offered are below average performing students</li> <li>• Increasing cost of training</li> <li>• Poor public perception on TVET</li> <li>• Slow job creations</li> <li>• Low level of innovations</li> </ul>

**Table 9: SWOT Analysis of YAfP**

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Willingness of youth to work  Fair employment opportunity  Possibility of acquiring technical knowledge	Demand for white collar jobs  No exit strategy for participants  No attention to entrepreneurial skills development  Improper coordination with allied institutions	Patriotisms-public demand of “Made in Ghana” products  Foreign exchange from export of surplus food  Renewed interest by government and DP to support agriculture  Financing from private sector to support government  External stakeholders monitoring and evaluation	Unreliable Internal and external funding  Political interference  Nepotism and favouritisms in the allocation of inputs  Lack of legal backing  Economy moving from agro-based to service-based industry  Lack of means to start own trade/business

**Table 10: SWOT Analysis of YiAP (Youth in Agriculture Programme)**

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of youth for work</li> <li>• Fair employment opportunity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand for white collar jobs</li> <li>• Improper coordination with allied institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patriotisms-public demand of “Made in Ghana” goods</li> <li>• Foreign exchange from export of surplus food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unreliable Internal and external funding</li> <li>• Political interference</li> <li>• Nepotism and favouritisms in the allocation of inputs</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility acquiring technical knowledge</li> <li>• Possibility of own business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient exit strategies for beneficiaries</li> <li>• Lack of follow ups after exit</li> <li>• Limited resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renewed interest by government and DP to support agriculture</li> <li>• Financing from private sector to support government</li> <li>• External stakeholders monitoring and evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of legal backing</li> <li>• Economy moving from agro-based to service-based industry</li> <li>• Lack of means to start own trade/business</li> </ul>
--	--	--	--

**Table 11: MASLOC (Entrepreneurship)**

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparedness of youth to work</li> <li>• Low interest rate</li> <li>• Flexible repayment plan</li> <li>• Opportunity to own business</li> <li>• Own business type and plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand for white collar jobs</li> <li>• Inadequate monitoring of beneficiaries</li> <li>• Inadequate measures to hold loan defaulters to repay</li> <li>• Focus on existing businesses</li> <li>• Inadequate training to develop the entrepreneurial skills of beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased donor and government support</li> <li>• Increased PPP</li> <li>• Improved and formalised economy</li> <li>• Increased interest of private sector investment</li> <li>• Increased number of individuals in the formalised private economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unreliable Internal and external funding</li> <li>• Political interference</li> <li>• Favouritisms and nepotism in the award of loans</li> <li>• Non repayment of loans</li> <li>• Competition from traditional financial institutions</li> <li>• Misapplication of loans</li> </ul>

## Ranks, Characteristics and Effective Youth Initiatives

The rank of the initiatives (Table 13) was based on three criteria which were an outcome of the programme or a number of beneficiaries employed, Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of the programme and Key Informant Interviews (KII) with programme managers. A pairwise ranking was done by comparing the outcome (number of beneficiaries) with each programme and a score was obtained. Based on the scores, programmes which were effective in providing job opportunities were determined

**Table 12: Rank of Initiatives**

	NEIP	NABCO	YEA	GSOP	COTVET	YAP	REP	YAfP	MASLOC
Outcome/ No of jobs created	0	4	7	3	5	1	6	2	5
SWOT	7	4	6	0	5	2	6	1	3
KII	7	4	6	0	5	2	6	1	3
Total of score	14	12	19	3	15	5	18	4	11
Rank	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>

Weights were assigned based on the SWOT analysis and KII for the various programmes. Analysis of the programmes showed that each programme had different outcomes based on the number of years the programme had existed and the commitment of the state to invest financial resources in the programme. It was difficult to do a fair comparison of the different programmes because of the variations in the periods of existence. This notwithstanding, the YEA had produced more outcomes in terms of job creations than any of the programmes considered in this study. This was because the programme had been in existence for 13 years and had gone through several reforms. Also, the programme had a legal backing, which made it impossible to discontinue it after a change of government, which was a fate associated with similar other programmes. The legal backing also made it possible for the state to mandatorily allocate resources for its implementation. Also, it had the capacity to negotiate partnership with other organisations both internal and external for mutual benefits

The COTVET, like YEA had a legal backing which ensured its continuous existence in the last 13 years. The COTVET provided an array of trainings and skills development programmes for the youth, most of which were in the vocational and technical fields. The trainings and skills development under COTVET enabled the youth to be sustainably self-employed rather than relying on public sector waged employment. Most of the beneficiaries, after the trainings and skills acquisition were able to undertake various forms of artisanal works, from which incomes were earned to support the livelihood of families and communities. In terms of outcomes, it was next to YEA in providing sustainable work opportunities for the youth.

The NEIP was the least in providing employment opportunities, but overall it was the third most effective programme because it offered sustainable self-employment opportunities to would-be or existing young entrepreneurs who were able not only to create employment

opportunities for themselves but for others also. It was distinct in the sense that the programme focussed on entrepreneurial development as a means of creating employment opportunities.

The NABCO significantly offered more employment opportunities for the youth. However, the programme was designed for graduates only and the jobs were temporary (3 years) on public sector wage. This made it unsustainable despite the large numbers of youth the programme employed as at the time of this report. This notwithstanding, the programme offered opportunities for young people to be permanently enrolled onto the public sector and other parastatals.

The REP mainly focussed on rural communities, making it possible to provide employable skills to youths in rural areas. While it was difficult to locate programmes such as NEIP in rural communities, REP over the years had successfully implemented projects in rural communities.

The study observed that programmes that had legal backing, skewed towards entrepreneurial skills development tended to provide better and sustainable employment opportunities for the youth. Though funding was a challenge because the wages of beneficiaries were paid through the public budget. The NABCO and YEA modules offered opportunities for the youth to be employed permanently in the public sector and also acquire working experience which aided young people's search for work either in the public or the private sector.

### **Under-/Untapped Youth Employment Opportunities in the Rural Areas**

The single biggest source of employment in the developing world, is small scale agriculture. It could offer sustainable and productive alternative to expansion of large-scale, capital-intensive, labour-displacing corporate farming, if given the necessary support (White, 2012). In view of this, there was the need for governments and other developing partners to ensure that the sector was allowed to grow to express its full potential in terms of growing more food, feed and fibres as well as fuel, and providing decent livelihoods for many more youth. Notwithstanding this potential, agriculture in its present state appears to be unattractive to young people such that considerable number of them seems to be turning away from agricultural or rural futures (ibid).

This phenomenon had also been revealed by research which explained that there were movement away from farming, culminating in limited youth participation in agriculture (Naamwintome and Bagson, 2013). This is explained by the reality of limited control of resources or products by the farming youth populations. It is acclaimed on the basis of this that an enabling environment be created, such that capital and land and other products from farming should be controlled by the youth since this will motivate and attract them to the profit thereof (Naamwintome and Bagson, 2013).

Studies have shown that there were a number of youth employment opportunities in Ghana's rural areas, yet these have remained un(under)tapped due to some challenges (MOTI/CSIR-STEPRI, 2014). Addressing some of these challenges may not only provide the potential to secure food supplies, but also create viable value chains, which could provide the youth with

decent jobs (ISSER, 2017). A review of studies conducted by the CSIR-Science and Technology Policy Research Institute (STEPRI) and sponsored by AfDB through the Ministry of Trade and Industry's (MOTI/CSIR-STEPRI, 2014) for Rural Enterprises Programme (REP) on Business Opportunity Identification revealed that there were several business opportunities in many of the rural communities surveyed which were yet to be tapped and made real. This was evident by the number of natural resources identified in the districts which were yet to be fully exploited. It is essential to design policies and programmes that will help to fully exploit these resources. In so doing Medium and Small-Scale Enterprises (MSEs) would be opened to provide employment opportunities for the rural youth.

Among the natural resources identified by the study included fertile agricultural lands, minerals (including gold, diamonds, manages, rocks, among others), several water bodies for transportation, tourism and fishing, forest and forest products, as well as wetlands. Others, such as bamboos (which could be used as alternative employment for youth interested in the wood and carving enterprises, including furniture and building materials), clay, granitic rocks and other tourist sites. The majority of these resources are yet to be tapped and developed into business opportunities to bring about economic development in rural communities of Ghana. Some districts such as Bodi, Afigya Kwabre, Amansie Central, Birim Centra, and Agona East in the southern part of Ghana mainly harbour or accommodate these resources and largely harbour huge deposits of quarry rocks which could be tapped to generate economic activities in these areas. Building a value chain around these resources could provide a number of jobs and employment opportunities for the youth, many of whom have no jobs presently.

The study report indicated quarry, mine and tourist sites exist in almost all the regions of Ghana including the Upper West, Upper East and Northern regions which are regarded as less endowed. Unfortunately, lack of investment capital in these regions had rendered the area underexploited, compelling many of the youth in these areas to migrate down south in search of jobs to support their families. It is hoped that when these quarries and rocks are fully exploited. They could support the construction and other industries in the area which could provide employment opportunities, especially for the youth living within these geographical areas. For example, the Upper West and Upper East regions have unique tourist site, such as the slave tombs, crocodile ponds that have not been fully exploited. The lack of tourism-supporting infrastructure such as good roads, hotels and water in these communities have contributed to the under exploitation of the potential of the tourist sites and hence the high level of unemployment in these areas.

Agricultural production in Ghana is disappointedly performing below expectation. This has been attributed to several factors. The single rainfall maxima, the rain-fed nature of agriculture and the inadequate water supply throughout the year in northern Ghana are part of the reasons for the joblessness in that part of the country. The few water bodies that could be used for irrigation farming in these areas remained largely unused because of lack of investment in agriculture and general rural development (MOTI/CSIR-STEPRI, 2014). As population continues to grow (youth population, particularly), it is incumbent on government and other stakeholders to make the necessary investment in rural infrastructure to let the

youth take advantage of employment opportunities in rural Ghana. Table 14 presents some of the under tapped natural resources in rural Ghana which could be relied upon to address some of the economic challenges among rural youth as analysed from the MOTI/CSIR-STEPRI (2014) report.

**Table 13: Resources and potential business opportunity for youth employment in the regions**

<b>Regions</b>	<b>Resources/Potential Business Opportunities</b>
Northern	Shear trees, vast grasslands for animal production (large and small ruminants, poultry-guinea fowl), water bodies for fish production, value addition to agricultural output, cotton for smock production
Upper West	Shear trees, 'pito' brewing, available irrigated land, rice processing, smock production
Upper East	Shear trees, 'pito' brewing, available irrigated land, rice processing, smock production
Brong –Ahafo	Mango processing, cassava processing, cashew processing, rice processing, fish processing
Eastern	Mango processing, oil palm processing, cassava processing, citrus processing, bead making, Rice processing, Pottery, Fish processing
Ashanti	Cane, rattan, and bamboo processing, cassava processing, aquaculture, oil palm processing, quarry, vegetable production, meat processing
Volta	Cassava, oil palm, fish, yam, rice, and meat processing, garment production
Greater Accra	Mushroom, batik tie and dye making, rabbit production
Central	Cassava, pineapple, rice, vegetable, fish, sweet pepper, oil palm processing, production and processing pig production, soap making
Western	Cassava, oil palm, vegetable production and processing, soap making, pig production, bee keeping, rabbit, and fish production and processing, batik tie and dye making

Source: MOTI/CSIR-STEPRI (2014)

With the signing of the CAADP compacts, as the framework for developing agriculture to improve food and nutrition security, create employment, reduce poverty, and achieve resilience for vulnerable communities and ecosystems. Ghana had religiously pursued, since the year 2000, the tenets of the framework ensure that Ghana benefited from the agriculture and agribusiness sectors. According to FAO (2017), the agribusiness sector, which comprises the business activities performed from production to consumption, is a major generator of employment and income worldwide and contributes to food security and nutrition. It covers the entire value chain, including the supply of agricultural inputs, the production and transformation of agricultural products, and their distribution to final consumers. Agricultural value chains are becoming more urbanized and consumer driven, with a premium on quality and food safety. These dynamics are creating many new growth opportunities within Africa's food system. Output and employment in agriculture continue to grow, and a great deal of value addition and employment is being created along value chains in the form of agricultural trade, farm servicing, agro-processing, urban retailing and food services (AGRA, 2017). In

addition, about 40–70% of the food costs to urban Africans are incurred in the post-farm gate segments of the supply chain, creating a huge opportunity for youth employment (ibid).

### **Some of the Factors inhibiting Utilisation of Resources or Potentials**

This subsection presents an assessment of some key factors that inhibit utilisation of resources for job creation. The key factors include:

**Laws/Regulations:** Some existing laws and regulations have impeded rather than aided the exploitation of discovered community resources. For example, the Mineral and Mining Law (PNDCL 153, 1986) vested authority into the state to possess and use such discovered resource on behalf of the people. When individuals or communities discover a given resource it is illegal under the law to extract/use it without the approval of the state. In many instances the state placed an embargo on the exploitation of the resource with the intension to develop it for the greater good of the larger society, which, in many instances are yet to be done or if they were, the benefits have ended up in the hands of foreigners or affluent to the neglect of the poor or the communities.

**Human Resource/Education/Technology:** Underutilisation of Africa's resources is also partly attributed to the lack of the requisite human resources and technologies to take advantage of the resources. The developed countries of America, Asia and Europe had over the years made use of advances in science and technology to leapfrog many of their citizens out of poverty. As the MOTI/CSIR-STEPRI (2014) report showed, there are many resources in Ghana, even within the most poverty-stricken communities, but lack of technologies to tap these resources have rendered them unexploited. Bamboo can be used for a variety of products, but this natural resource has remained largely unexploited because of lack of technologies and skills to transform them into finished products. China, India, Vietnam and other Asian countries have commercialised the bamboo industry by applying technologies. Unlike Africa, Asian countries have transitioned from the only domestic usage of bamboo to commercial and economic use (FAO, 2005).

**Infrastructure:** Where there are resources that can be exploited to create job opportunities for the youth to reduce unemployment, there are no or inadequate infrastructure to assist in exploiting these potentials. For example, Northern Ghana (one of the most deprived areas of Ghana) has huge tourism potentials. However, there are no or inadequate supporting infrastructures such as roads to link tourists to those places. Also, there is inadequate hotel accommodation for tourist to use. Even if these infrastructure, or facilities are available, they are in bad states that they do not facilitate tourist visits. Infrastructure is very critical if the youth are to take full advantage of opportunities that are available to them in rural areas. The lack of equitable social amenities in the rural areas has promoted migration to urban areas where these social services could be accessed.

**Funding/Lack of investment capital:** Africa's resources underutilisation or under-exploitation are due to several reasons, one of which is the lack of investment capital at national levels which has led to the exploitation of the resources by external parties. Foreign investors

repatriate their profits to their funding countries with little investment in the resource endowed countries. According to Frimpong-Boateng (2012) about 80% of Africa's agricultural, health and education inputs are imported from the developed world because Sub-Saharan African countries do not have the financial resources to produce these inputs despite the availability of natural resources required. Taking the mining sector in Ghana for example, the mines are owned and operated by foreign investors while citizens within the mining communities are engaged in small scale illegal mining because they do not have the financial resources needed to invest in mining. Again, legislations and policies that guide how these natural resources should be exploited appears unfavourable to local people. As the case of the mining sector is, legislation do not permit artisanal mining.

Gender disparity: Females constitute more than half of the total population of Ghana but they are more marginalised in terms of resource allocation. Rarely are consideration given to gender needs in the design of technologies for production that will foster economic development. To fully take advantage of or fully utilise resources at community level, there is the need to bridge the disparity between both sexes in access to resources. This could be done through legislations to protect the right of females by abolishing retrogressive cultural practices. Improving access to skills development and trainings is one of the ways of reducing this gender gap and empowering women to contribute meaningfully to societal development. As the MOTI/CSIR-STEPRI (2014) report revealed the majority of women are involved in processing or value addition to agricultural products. These activities require technical know-how but most policies and practices over the years have largely neglected the needs of women in this regard. Access to education by women is also sometimes hampered by sociocultural practices that give up females to early marriage (NCCE, 2004; Delprato et al., 2015).

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The study brought to light current policies and programmes aimed at addressing youth unemployment in Ghana. Also, it summarised some of the under tapped/untapped resources in rural communities of Ghana with potentials to create employment opportunities for the youth if developed and commercialised. Need to emphasise that the last two decades have witnessed youth population growth in Ghana and sub-Sahara Africa as a whole which comes with its accompanying challenges.

While there have been interventions in the last two decades to address youth unemployment and some gains have been made, comprehensive public evaluations of the programmes are difficult to obtain. However, there are packets of individual studies of the impact of some of these programmes. A review of the programmes revealed that each programme has different outcomes based on the numbers of years it had been in operation and also the commitment of the state to invest financial resources into the programme. The YEA has produced more outcomes in terms of number of jobs created than any of the programmes. This is because it has been in existence since 2006. Also, the programme has legal backing which makes it impossible to discontinue after a change in government as associated with other

programmes. This also made it possible for government to provide appropriate budgetary allocation. Again, the programme has the capacity to negotiate partnerships with other organisations both internal and external for mutual benefits. The COTVET, like YEA has a legal backing, LI2195, which has ensured continuation of its existence for the last 13 years. The COTVET provides technical and vocational trainings for an array of young people. Projects under COTVET provides trainings and skills development for the youth to be self-employed rather than relying on public sector waged employment. The YEA, COTVET and REP which were large scale youth focussed programmes have some similarities yet they were implemented by different MMDAs. Overall, programmes that had legal backing outstayed a political regime and continuation of such programmes lead to the creation of more employment opportunities for the youth.

Based on the findings, the following are the study's policy recommendations:

Large scale continuous public evaluation of these interventions is highly recommended to access progress being made by the programmes. This will give policymakers the opportunity to review the programme where necessary based on fact and evidence to enhance their impact.

Programmes and projects with similarities should be aligned for effective coordination, monitoring and evaluation. The current systems of programme arrangements have duplicated programmes across different MMDAs.

The National Youth Authority must be adequately empowered to coordinate and monitor all youth related intervention to provide the necessary data for policy formulation or reforms. In its current form, the NYA does not have the necessary human and material resources to successfully carry out its mandate.

Programmes to address youth unemployment should reflect the age groups within the youth bracket as the needs of those in the lower limit may not necessarily be the needs of those in the upper bracket. For instance, the job needs of young people from 15 years to 22 years may not be the same as those from 30 years to 34 years.

The informal sector should to be strengthened and regularised through laws and policies that promote growth of the sector so that more jobs are created to absorb the youth into the private sector since it may not be possible to employ all young people in the formal sector.

Considering the large numbers of young people who are turned out into the labour market each year, the state must heavily invest in youth employment programmes which are large scale enough to absorb the numbers.

Public Private Partnership arrangement must be aggressively promoted to develop untapped/underutilized resources to address youth unemployment.

## References

- Acerro, P. and Almudena, R. (1993). Analysis of the difference of unemployment in Spain I between different provinces *Cuadernos de Economia*, 21(60): 121-136
- Akufo-Addo A. D. (2018). State of the nation address, 2018. Available at <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2018/february-8th/full-text-akufo-addo-delivers-2nd-sona-full-of-achievements-commitments.php> (Assessed 27.02.2019)
- Armah, J. (2018). Proposed policy actions for youth development: 2019 and beyond. <https://www.myjoyonline.com/opinion/2018/November-20th/proposed-policy-actions-for-youth-development-2019-and-beyond.php>
- Assaad, R., Al-Hamidi F., and Ahmed, A. U. (2000). Determinants of employment status in Egypt. *FCND Discussion Paper No. 8*
- Avura, F. B. and Ulzen-Appiah, A. (2016). Ghana youth employment program inventory. Available at <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/983361485926523733/pdf/112351-WP-P132248-PUBLIC-GhanaYouthEmploymentInventoryReportFINALNov.pdf>
- Awal, I. (2019). TV3 News 360 (12.02.2019)
- Cirillo, C. (2016). Social protection in Africa: inventory of non-contributory programmes. Available at [http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/eng/Social\\_Protection\\_in\\_Africa.pdf](http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/eng/Social_Protection_in_Africa.pdf) (Assessed 27.02.2019)
- Delprato, M., Akyeampong, K., Sabates, R., Hernandez-Fernandez, J. (2015). On the impact of early marriage on schooling outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa and South West Asia. *International Journal of Educational Development* 44 (2015) 42–55
- Dwumah, P., Akuoko, O. K., and Yeboah, H. E. (2018). Family Networks' Support to Employment Paths of Rural Youth in a Ghanaian Community. *International Journal of Social Science Studies* Vol. 6, No.2
- Echebiri, R. N. (2005). Characteristics of determinants of urban youth unemployment in Umuahia, Nigeria: implication for rural development and alternative labour market variables. A paper presented at ISSER/Cornel/World Bank Conference on "Shared growth in Africa", Accra, Ghana.
- Eita, J. H. and Ashipala, J. M. (2010). Determinants of unemployment in Namibia. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 5(10): 92-104.
- Frimpong-Boateng (2012). Factors hindering Africa's development. <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/Factors-Hindering-Africa-s-Development-229892> (Assessed 05.03.2019)
- FAO (2005). Non-Wood Forest Products 18. World bamboo resources: a thematic study prepared in the framework of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005 <http://www.fao.org/3/a-a1243e.pdf> (Assessed 05.03.2019)

- Ganle, J. K., Afriyie, K., and Segbefia, A. Y. (2015). Microcredit: Empowerment and disempowerment of rural women in Ghana. *World Development*, 66, 335-345. doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2014.08.027
- GOG (2018). 745,000 jobs created under planting for food and jobs real- Dr Akoto. Available at <http://www.ghana.gov.gh/index.php/media-center/news/4356-745-000-jobs-created-under-planting-for-food-and-jobs-real-dr-akoto> (Assessed 27.02.2019)
- GOG (2018). Budget statement and economic policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2019 financial year. Available at [https://www.mofep.gov.gh/sites/default/files/budget-statements/2019-Budget-Statement-and-Economic-Policy\\_.pdf](https://www.mofep.gov.gh/sites/default/files/budget-statements/2019-Budget-Statement-and-Economic-Policy_.pdf) (Assessed 17.02.2019)
- GOG (2012). COTVET Legislative Instrument, LI 2195 of 2012. Accra, Government of Ghana.
- GSS (2016). 2015 Labour Force Report. Retrieved from Ghana Statistical Service <http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/gsspublications>.
- Gyampo, R. (2012). Youth participation in youth programmes: The case of Ghana's National Youth Employment Programme. *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 5 (5): 13-28. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/983361485926523733/Ghana-Youth-employment-program-inventory>.
- ILO (2018). Labour underutilization. [https://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/statistics-overview-and-topics/WCMS\\_470306/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/statistics-overview-and-topics/WCMS_470306/lang--en/index.htm)
- ISSER (2018). The State of the Ghanaian Economy in 2017. Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) College of Humanities University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana. Retrieved from <http://www.isser.edu.gh>
- Kalim, R. (2003). Population and unemployment: a dilemma to resolve. *Journal of Applied Economics*, 2(3): 7-15.
- Kyei, K. A., and Gyekye, K. B. (2011). Determinants of unemployment in Limpopo Province of South Africa: exploratory studies. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Economics and Management Sciences (JETEMS)*, 2(1): 54-61.
- Lippman, S. A., and McCall, J. (1976). The economics of job search: a survey. *Economic Inquiry*, 14 (2): 155-189.
- Maqbool, M. S., Mahmood, T., Sattar, A., and Bhalli, M. N. (2013). Determinants of unemployment: empirical evidence from Pakistan. *Pakistan Economic and Social Review*, 51 (2): 191-208.
- MASLOC (2019). <http://www.masloc.gov.gh/index.html>
- MESTI (2017). National science, technology, and innovation policy: 2017-2020. <http://mesti.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Draft-National-STI-Policy-Document-10-July-2017.pdf>

- MoFA (2019). Youth in agriculture. [http://mofa.gov.gh/site/?page\\_id=1173](http://mofa.gov.gh/site/?page_id=1173)
- MoFA (2017). Planting for food and jobs concept: A campaign to stimulate rapid growth of the Ghanaian agricultural sector. Draft Report, Accra
- MOTI (2014). Rural enterprise support programme. Business opportunity identification survey report. Accra
- Monastiriosis, V. (2006). Macro-determinants of UK regional unemployment and the role of employment flexibility. *EL Working Paper* No. 2006-01.
- Mortensen, D. T. (1970). Job search, the duration of unemployment, and the Philips' Curve. *America Economic Review*, 60 (5): 847-862.
- MYS (2010). Toward an empowered youth, impacting positively on national development. [http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Ghana\\_2010\\_National\\_Youth\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Ghana_2010_National_Youth_Policy.pdf)
- Naamwintome, A. B. and Bagson, E. (2013). Youth in agriculture: Prospects and challenges in the Sissala area of Ghana. *Net Journal of Agricultural Science* Vol. 1(2), pp. 60-68
- NCCE (2004). Cultural practices affecting women's rights in Ghana. Available at <http://www.nccegh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Research-on-Cultural-Practices-Affecting-Womens-Rights-in-Ghana-February-2004.pdf> (Assessed 04.04.2019)
- Odoro-Ofori, E. (2014). Microfinance and Small Loans Centre (MASLOC) as Model for Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in Ashaiman Municipality. *International Journal of Innovation and Sustainable Development*, 5(28): 53-65.
- PNDCL 1986 (153). <http://laws.ghanalegal.com/acts/id/535/minerals-and-mining-act>
- World Bank (2014). Ghana Social Opportunity Projects. <http://www.projects.worldbank.org/P146923?lang=en>
- World Bank (2016). Ghana - Youth employment program inventory.
- White, B. (2012). Agriculture and the Generation Problem: Rural Youth, Employment and the Future of Farming. *IDS Bulletin* Volume 43 Number 6