Chapter 7

Economic Labour Force Participation and Skills Development

7.1 The current state of Ghana's youth labour market

7.1.1 Background on youth unemployment indicators

With mounting emphasis on policies that increase youth enrolment in secondary and tertiary education comes increased pressure for access to high-quality jobs, as well as an improved quality of life. However, there is considerable data to suggest that Ghana's labour market is struggling to keep up with this increasing supply of more highly educated graduates. This has resulted in delays in school–work transitioning.

7.1.2 Laying the groundwork for youth unemployment

As of 2016, 67.2 per cent of Ghanaians aged 15–19 were not in the labour force (GSS, 2016). This low employment rate owes largely to rising education enrolment. The percentage of youth who are unemployed and not in education or training rose to 30.5 per cent in 2017 (World Bank, 2019). Of the 15–24 age group, 38.9 per cent are employed, leaving the unemployment rate at 13.6 per cent, while 47.4 per cent are not in the labour force (GSS, 2016). Logically, since youth aged 15–24 have a higher chance of accessing secondary or tertiary education, it follows that there are more youth engaged in educational pursuits, which thus decreases employment rates. The percentage of female youth not in the labour force is slightly higher, at 48.8 per cent, than that of male youth, which is at 45.7 per cent. Similarly, the female unemployment rate is at 13.8 per cent, while male unemployment is at 13.4 per cent. Youth employment in urban areas is at 33.8 per cent and unemployment at 15.4 per cent; in rural areas, employment is higher, at 44.6 per cent, and unemployment lower, at 11.7 per cent (ibid.).

Looking at levels of employment/unemployment across age groups, employment levels are by far the lowest for both sexes for the 15–19 age group; the highest unemployment rate is among the 20–24 and 25–29 age groups. As noted above, the primary driver of this discrepancy is education attendance and graduate transition, with the largest portion of 15–19 year-olds absent from the labour market for reasons relating to schooling and the largest portion of 20–24 year olds transitioning from the academic system to the labour force. The time spent in this transition has steadily increased over recent decades in Ghana, driving up post-graduate youth unemployment.

7.1.3 Key inputs to labour force employability

Key inputs that contribute to labour force employability of youth populations include school attendance, gender, literacy and educational level, socio-economic status and access to educational institutes.

Table 7.1 Current activity rate by type of locality, age group and sex

Age/ Locality	Labour Force								
	Employed			Unemployed			Not in labour force		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Ghana	**71.4**	**64.6**	**67.6**	**8.9**	**9.3**	**9.1**	**19.6**	**26.1**	**23.3**
15–19	25.7	24.3	24.9	8.4	7.4	7.9	65.8	68.3	67.2
20–24	55.5	49.1	51.9	18.2	19.5	18.9	26.3	31.4	29.1
25–29	75.2	67.1	70.4	14.5	13.0	13.6	10.4	20.0	16.0
30–34	85.9	74.9	79.6	9.2	8.7	8.9	4.9	16.4	11.5
35–39	91.3	81.9	85.9	5.8	8.4	7.3	2.8	9.7	6.8

Source: GSS (2016).

There exists considerable variability across localities and regions. Of the population of three years and above who have never attended school, 72.1 per cent are located in rural areas and 27.9 per cent in urban areas. This demonstrates a stark divide between education endowments across localities in Ghana. Within localities, gender divides exist as well. School attendance in urban environments is 20.8 per cent for males and 57.4 per cent for females. In rural areas, this relationship is flipped, with 79.2 per cent attendance by males and only 42.6 per cent by females. These discrepancies owe partially to different views of gender roles in urban versus rural environments, as well as the prevalence of traditionally male-dominated industries in urban environments and vice versa for rural. The Northern region has the highest shares of non-attendance, at 29.7 per cent for males and 22.1 per cent for females. Conversely, the Greater Accra region has some of the lowest shares of non-attendance, at 3.4 per cent for males and 6.0 per cent for females.

Similar locality and regional trends can be seen across other key inputs to youth labour force employability. With respect to literacy rates, 74.5 per cent of urban populations are literate versus only 50.1 per cent of rural populations. The same pattern exists across regions, with only 34.5 per cent of the Northern region's population literate against roughly 80.5 per cent of the population in Greater Accra (GSS, 2016).

Education level also appears to be a key indicator of labour market outcomes. Here also, there is considerable variation across localities. For rural populations, primary school is the highest level obtained by the largest portion of the population over three years of age, at 41.5 per cent, with 7.8 per cent having completed SHS and only 1.1 per cent holding a Bachelor's degree. For urban populations, primary is still the dominant level of educational attainment for those over three years of age, at 25.8 per cent, but 14.4 per cent have completed SHS and 4.7 per cent have obtained a Bachelor's degree (GSS, 2016). Favourable socio-economic opportunities and greater access to academic institutions have contributed to improving outcomes for urban youth.

The primary reason for students not attending school is that their family does not allow it. This is the case across both urban and rural localities, with 43 per cent of urban youth and 41.5 per cent of rural youth denied educational opportunities for 'family reasons' (GSS, 2016). This is tied in part to unfavourable socio-economic conditions, meaning families need to keep children home to work or take care of the family rather than go to school.

Table 7.2 shows the multiple reasons why youth are not in the labour force, including education or skills training, housework, pregnancy and disability, among others.

7.1.4 Youth labour market composition

The private sector is the dominant employer across all age groups, with public service work coming in a distant second (see Table 7.3).

Breaking down the private sector into primary occupations by sex and environment, skilled agriculture, forestry and fisheries prove to be the largest employers overall (see Table 7.4). Services and sales and then craft and trade are also prominent employers. Academic institutions targeting skills development in these industries by providing more technical and vocational training would better prepare youth to transition into the workforce directly.

Underemployment, defined as the share of the labour force that wants to work more or wants to change their work situation, is also a considerable problem across the

Table 7.2 Currently not in labour force, by reason for inactivity, locality and sex

Reason for inactivity	Total			Urban			Rural		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
In School/ Student/ education/ Traning	49.3	26.8	35.1	46.7	28.6	35.1	52.4	24.4	35.1
Household duties (home maker)	3.0	19.8	13.6	2.7	19.5	13.5	3.3	20.2	13.7
Too old/young	13.7	15.5	14.9	12.8	13.3	13.1	14.7	18.5	17.1
Disabled/unable to work/ handicapped	10.4	11.8	11.3	8.4	10.6	9.8	13	13.4	13.3
Pensioner/ retirement	7.2	1.9	3.9	11.2	2.5	5.6	2.5	1.1	1.6
Pregnancy	0.0	6.1	3.9	0	5.2	3.3	0	7.4	4.6
No desire to work	6.8	3.6	4.8	6.1	4.4	5.0	7.5	2.7	4.5
Legal restriction (convict or others res	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.3	0	0.1	0	0	0
Other	9.4	14.3	12.5		15.9	14.4	6.6	12.3	10.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: GSS (2016).

Table 7.3 Employment sector of currently employed population 15 years and older, by sex, locality and region

Sex/Locality/ Region	Total	Civil Service	Public Service	Parastatals	NGOs (Local & International)	Inter. Organ. / Diplomatic Mission	Private Sector	Other
Ghana	**9,270,937**	**124.817**	**565,835**	**9,874**	**34.070**	**9,517**	**8,507,488**	**19,336**
Male	4,284,334	56,092	316,300	4,252	20,187	4,606	3,873,792	9,105
Female	4,986,603	68,725	249,535	5,622	13,883	4,911	4,633,696	10,231
Urban	4,722,102	97,839	425,005	9,016	21,574	5,436	4,158,387	4,845
Rural	4,548,835	26,979	140,830	858	12,495	4,080	4,349,103	14,490

Source: GSS (2016).

Table 7.4 Main occupation of currently employed population 15 years and older, by locality and sex

Main Occupation	Total			Urban			Rural		
	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female
Total	**9,270,939**	**4,284,335**	**4,986,604**	**4,722,101**	**2,105,789**	**2,616,312**	**4,548,838**	**2,178,546**	**2,370,292**
Managers	120,854	70,349	50,505	101,055	55,866	45,189	19,798	14,483	5,315
Professionals	724,004	390,948	333,056	523,304	281,827	241,477	200,701	109,122	91,579
Technicians and associate professionals	197,034	150,632	46,402	163,312	122,274	41,038	33,723	28,358	5,365
Clerical support workers	169,593	96,114	73,479	147,973	81,477	66,496	21,620	14,637	6,983
Service and sales workers	2,474,269	563,303	1,910,966	1,792,906	426,551	1,366,355	681,363	136,752	544,611
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	2,949,805	1,644,404	1,305,401	412,337	247,022	165,315	2,537,466	1,397,381	1,140,085
Craft and related trades workers	1,711,755	717.818	993,937	1,074,371	506,104	568,267	637,384	211,714	425,670
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	361,554	341,644	19,910	245,425	233,614	11,811	116,130	108,030	8,100
Elementary occupations	556,280	303,332	252,948	255,627	145,263	110,364	300,653	158,069	142,584
Other occupation	5,791	5,791	0	5,791	5,791	0	0	0	0

Source: GSS (2016).

diverse localities and regions of Ghana. The highest prevalence of underemployment is typically among people in the later phase of their youth (ages 25–34) (see Table 7.5).

Underemployment has increased considerably in this age group, partially because of higher educational attainment and an unresponsive labour market, leading to employment dissatisfaction. As financial security is one of the largest drivers of underemployment for youth, initiatives to address this problem should prioritise those who are in the most impoverished and precarious economic positions. Otherwise, youth who are financially insecure are pushed into temporary, seasonal or part-time work to meet their basic needs (UCW, 2016), creating a poverty trap, as contract work inhibits them from obtaining the skills they need to advance socio-economically.

Analysis of unemployment by region for youth age groups with opportunity illustrates that the Upper East region has the highest unemployment rate across both sexes for those aged 25–35 (see Table 7.6).

As Table 7.7 shows, over half of the rural population in the country has no education. Only 15.8 per cent have completed secondary education and 2.3 per cent have completed tertiary (GSS, 2016). Males in rural localities stand out in particular. However, there are signs of progress, with youth 15–24 years of age having better educational attainment than those in the 25–35 bracket, implying that access to basic education in rural areas is improving.

7.2 Expanding on the determinants of employability: Literacy, location and gender

Illiteracy considerably limits the ability of youth to obtain stable employment. The largest literacy gap exists for youth in the 25–35 age range (see Table 7.8). GoG still classifies these individuals as 'youth', and they are critical to the country's economic growth. The fact that only 58.4 per cent of males and 38.2 per cent of females in this age group are literate leads to an obvious deficit. Literacy rates for 15–24 year-olds in the Western, Ashanti and Greater Accra regions have all improved, leaving the Northern region lagging behind, particularly among females in the 25–35 age group (GSS, 2016). Literacy programmes should thus continue to target the Northern region.

However, literacy is by no means the sole qualifier for highly skilled work. As Figure 7.1 indicates, even for those in Ghana who possess level 2 literacy, the probability of obtaining highly skilled white-collar work is only roughly 5 per cent.

The private sector is responsible for roughly 90 per cent of employment of youth in the country (see Table 7.9). Although efforts are being made to make more employment opportunities available in the public sector, the supply of jobs simply cannot keep up with the number of qualified students.

Labour force participation across Ghana indicates that the Eastern region has the lowest percentages across all youth age groupings (see Table 7.10). However, bearing in mind the way educational enrolment skews the data, it appears that Brong Ahafo region has

Table 7.5 Time-related underemployed population estimates of persons 15 years and older, by age, locality and sex

Age	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
15–19	3,108	5,857	8,964	8,393	14,354	22,747	11,501	20,211	31,712
20–24	17,078	17,478	34,556	25,004	18,610	43,614	42,082	36,088	78,170
25–29	29,033	41,976	71,009	35,820	39,324	75,144	64,852	81,300	146,153
30–34	22,408	40,268	62,676	40,605	41,845	82,450	63,013	82,113	145,126
35–39	14,121	38,522	52,643	58,455	29,887	88,342	72,577	68,409	140,985
40–44	27,522	29,451	56,972	21,950	28,275	50,226	49,472	57.726	107,198
45–49	22,879	12,742	35,621	15,501	20,870	36,370	38,380	33,612	71,992
50–54	5,746	9,961	15,707	12,044	25,112	47,156	27,790	35,073	62,863
55–59	18,468	11,447	29,914	17,144	17,374	34,518	35,612	28,821	64,432
60–64	7,532	3,413	10,945	13,608	14,273	27,881	21,139	17,686	38,825
65+	11,548	6,006	17,554	34,897	15,622	50,519	46,444	21,629	68,073
Total	179,441	217,121	396,562	293,421	265,546	558,967	472,862	482,666	955,529

Source: GSS (2016).

Table 7.6 Unemployment rate of population 15–35 years, by region, type of locality and sex

Region/Type of locality	15–24 years			25–35 years			15–35 years		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Total	24.7	27.0	25.9	12.2	13.0	12.6	16.4	17.4	16.9
Western	23.4	21.0	22.0	9.0	11.0	10.1	14.2	15.0	14.6
Central	22.9	30.3	26.3	18.1	9.0	12.6	20.4	16.8	18.4
Greater Accra	33.2	26.5	30.0	16.0	14.1	14.9	21.2	17.2	19.1
Volta	23.5	37.5	30.9	4.9	10.5	8.1	11.2	18.5	15.3
Eastern	23.3	32.7	27.9	7.7	10.9	9.6	13.2	17.0	15.3
Ashanti	34.3	28.8	31.1	14.0	18.2	16.2	18.9	21.2	20.2
Brong Ahafo	8.4	14.1	11.5	15.1	6.9	10.9	12.8	9.6	11.1
Northern	13.6	26.9	21.1	5.9	10.3	8.4	8.6	16.0	12.7
Upper East	42.7	37.9	39.9	16.0	20.1	18.2	24.1	26.2	25.2
Upper West	15.8	22.4	19.4	9.1	18.7	15.3	12.4	20.1	17.0

Source: GSS (2016).

Table 7.7 Distribution of population 15–35 years, by educational qualification attained and locality

Educational qualification attained	15–24 years			25–35 years			15–35 years		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Total									
No education	41.4	28.9	34.7	45.6	43.2	44.2	34.7	44.2	40.1
MSLC/BECE	29.7	29.6	29.7	29.3	30.7	30.1	29.7	30.1	29.9
Secondary	26 2	21.2	23.5	22.7	14.7	l8.2	23.5	l8.2	20.4
Post-Secondary	1.7	11.2	6.8	1.7	7.3	4.9	6.8	4.9	5.7
Tertiary	1.0	9.2	5.4	0.7	4.1	2.6	5.4	2.6	3.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	1000	100.0	100.0	100.0
Urban									
No education	25.5	16.8	20.5	32.6	29.2	30.6	20.5	30.6	26.3
MSLC/BECE	34.4	31.5	32.7	32.8	34.7	33.9	32.7	33.9	33.4
Secondary	35.9	25.3	29.8	30.6	21.4	25.2	29.8	25.2	27.2
Post-Secondary	2.4	13.7	8.8	2.9	9.2	6.6	8.8	6.6	7.6
Tertiary	1.9	12.8	8.1	1.1	5.5	3.7	8.1	3.7	5.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Rural									
No education	57.7	44.9	51.3	60.5	62.3	61.5	51.3	61.5	57.0
MSLC/BECE	25.0	27.4	26.2	25.1	25.2	25.2	26.2	25.2	25.6
Secondanry	16.1	15.5	15.8	14.0	5.3	9.2	15.8	9.2	12.1
Post - Secondary	1.0	7.8	4.4	0.2	5.0	2.8	4.4	2.8	3.5
Tertiary	0.2	4.4	2.3	0.2	2.2	1.3	2.3	1.3	1.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

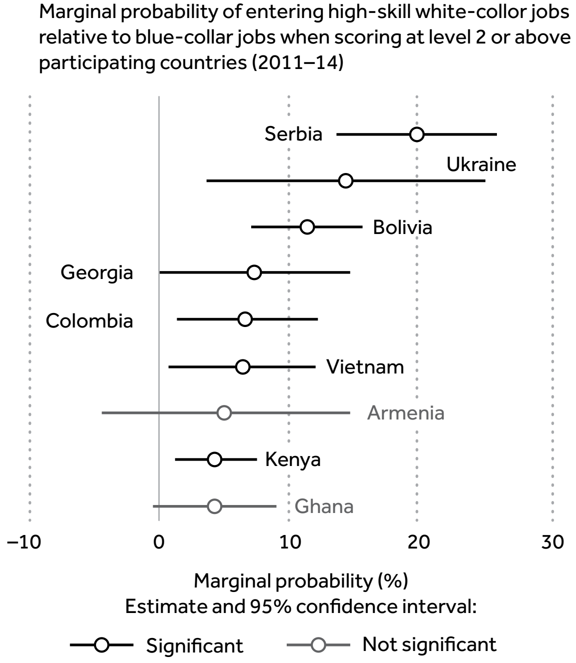
Source: GSS (2016).

Table 7.8 Literacy rate of population 15–35 years, by locality, region and sex

Region/ Locality	15–24			25–35			15–35		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Locality									
Urban	88.8	83.7	85.9	84.6	70.8	76.5	86.4	76.1	80.4
Rural	76.4	64.5	70.0	58.4	38.2	46.6	67.3	50.2	57.7
Region									
Western	92.6	79.0	84.6	78.2	65.5	70.7	85.5	72.3	77.7
Central	82.2	74.3	78.1	77.6	54.8	62.8	80.1	64.3	71.0
Greater Accra	85.3	86.7	86.1	91.1	74.3	81.5	88.9	79.0	83.3
Volta	81.0	72.3	76.4	77.2	50.5	60.9	79.1	59.8	68.0
Eastern	80.9	77.3	79.1	75.2	62.1	67.2	78.3	68.5	72.9
Ashanti	91.5	77.6	83.2	78.7	65.2	71.1	83.5	70.1	75.8
Brong Ahafo	82.0	70.8	75.8	58.4	46.5	51.9	68.4	56.9	62.1
Northern	64.9	51.7	57.9	40.4	17.8	27.4	51.6	31.9	40.7
Upper East	67.7	59.9	63.4	44.6	32.4	37.7	55.8	45.2	49.9
Upper West	72.0	66.7	69.1	46.7	27.2	33.9	61.7	45.8	52.2
Total	**82.7**	**74.8**	**78.4**	**73.6**	**57.2**	**64.0**	**77.8**	**64.7**	**70.3**

Source: GSS (2016).

Figure 7.1 Workers with higher literacy proficiency are more likely to enter white-collar jobs



Source: World Bank (2018).

Table 7.9 Distribution of employed population 15–35 years, by employment sector and sex

Employment sector	15–24 years			25–35 years			l5–35 years		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Civil Service	0.5	0.4	0.5	1.9	1.6	1.8	1.5	1.3	1.4
Public Service	1.2	2.5	1.9	11.2	7.4	9.1	8.2	6.0	7.0
Parastatals	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
NOOs (Local & International)	0.7	0.3	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.6
Cooperatives	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.3
Inter. Organ. / Diplomatic Mission	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Private	96.9	96.0	96.4	85.3	89.9	87.8	88.8	91.6	90.3
Other	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: GSS (2016).

the lowest participation rate for the 25–35 age group (much less likely to be skewed by education attendance) and this is perhaps one of the areas that needs the most attention.

The largest employer of females in Ghana is the service and sales industry; males are employed in the skilled agriculture and fishing industries (Table 7.11).

With regard to distribution by industry, youth aged 15–24 are dominant within industries such as agriculture, forestry and fishery, with manufacturing also notable

Table 7.10 Labour force participation rate of population 15–35 years, by region and sex

	15–24 years			25–35 years			15–35 years		
Region	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Ghana	54.3	51.2	52.6	92.8	82.7	86.9	75.1	69.2	71.7
Locality									
Urban	52.9	46.2	49.2	91.0	82.3	85.9	74.7	67.6	70.6
Rural	55.7	56.9	56.3	95.4	83.3	88.3	75.5	71.3	73.2
Regions									
Western	51.8	56.1	54.4	96.5	86.3	90.5	73.8	71.1	72.2
Central	60.0	47.9	53.7	96.5	79.8	85.7	73.8	64.2	68.3
Greater Accra	66.1	46.7	55.1	91.5	84.0	87.3	81.8	69.8	75.0
Volta	49.5	48.9	49.2	98.8	86.5	91.3	73.9	70.5	71.9
Eastern	41.0	41.3	41.2	90.4	78.4	83.1	63.4	62.8	63.1
Ashanti	49.9	46.9	48.1	91.2	79.1	84.3	75.9	66.3	70.4
Brong Ahafo	61.1	61.3	61.2	87.9	77.1	82.0	76.6	70.3	73.1
Northern	59.3	67.6	63.7	95.8	92.4	93.9	79.1	82.0	80.7
Upper East	44.5	51.0	48.1	95.4	84.7	89.3	70.8	69.0	69.8
Upper West	61.6	61.8	61.7	93.4	90.1	91.3	74.6	76.7	75.9

Source: GSS (2016).

Table 7.11 Distribution of employed population 15–35 years, by occupation and sex

	15–24 years			25–35 years			15–35 years		
Occupation	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Legislators/ managers	0.9	0.6	0.7	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1
Professionals	5.2	7.2	6.3	15.5	10.2	12.5	12.4	9.3	10.7
Technicians and associate professionals	2.7	1.1	1.9	3.9	1.4	2.5	3.5	1.3	2.3
Clerical support workers	2.1	1.7	1.9	3.3	2.1	2.6	3.0	2.0	2.4
Service/sales workers	15.4	34.9	25.7	13.3	40.6	28.4	13.9	39.0	27.6
Skilled agric/ fishery workers	37.9	27.3	32.3	26.8	19.4	22.7	30.1	21.6	25.5
Craft and related trades workers	17.9	18.8	18.4	18.7	20.1	19.5	18.5	19.8	19.2
Plant machine operators and assemblers	7.0	0.0	3.3	10.5	0.6	5.1	9.5	0.5	4.6
Elementary occupations	10.9	8.3	9.5	6.4	4.4	5.3	7.7	5.5	6.5
Other Occupations	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: GSS (2016).

for employing young women. However, for older young women (25–35 years of age), wholesale and retail trade becomes dominant (Table 7.12).

Knowledge of the distribution of current employment opportunities across industries is potentially valuable information for academic institutions, as it can enable them to offer aligned courses and skills training. Ghana lags behind many developing countries in integrating relevant skills training into the secondary school curriculum. Strategies could ultimately help lower unemployment rates for post-graduates, as they will graduate with the necessary skills to meet the demands of the labour market. However, as noted, such policies should be careful not to reinforce industry gender norms, instead basing training for both sexes on overall demand in the labour market.

Unemployment rates for those with little to no education are only moderately higher than for those graduating with higher levels of education (Table 7.13). Although there are some positive impacts of a tertiary education with respect to unemployment

Table 7.12 Distribution of employed population 15–35 years, by industry and sex

Industry	15–24 years			25–35 years			15–35 years		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	44.4	30.9	37.3	30.3	21.9	25.6	34.5	24.4	29.0
Mining and quarrying	1.1	0.0	0.5	2.7	0.3	1.4	2.2	0.2	1.1
Manufacturing	8.5	20.0	14.5	8.8	17.9	13.8	8.7	18.5	14.0
Electricity, gas, stream and air condition	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.2
Water supply, sewerage, waste management	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Construction	8.3	1.2	4.5	8.3	0.2	3.8	8.3	0.5	4.0
Wholesale and retail trade	12.6	22.2	17.7	12.5	29.4	21.9	12.6	27.4	20.6
Transportation and storage	6.5	0.4	3.2	7.0	0.4	3.4	6.9	0.4	3.3
Accommodation and food service activities	2.7	7.2	5.1	0.8	7.0	4.2	1.3	7.0	4.4
Information and communication	0.5	0.6	0.5	2.0	0.1	0.9	1.5	0.2	0.8
Financial and insurance activities	1.9	0.2	1.0	1.7	0.9	1.2	1.7	0.7	1.2
Real estate activities	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1
Professional, scientific and technical a	0.5	1.1	0.9	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.1	1.1
Administrative and support service activities	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.4
Public administration and defence	0.9	1.4	1.2	3.9	1.9	2.8	3.0	1.8	2.3
Education	3.6	6.6	5.2	10.4	5.7	7.8	8.4	6.0	7.1
Human health and social work activities	0.9	0.8	0.8	3.8	5.6	4.8	2.9	4.3	3.6
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1.8	1.0	1.4	1.7	0.1	0.8	1.8	0.4	1.0
Other service activities	4.4	4.4	4.4	2.6	6.1	4.5	3.1	5.6	4.5
Activities of households as employers	1.1	2.0	1.6	0.4	0.8	0.6	0.6	1.1	0.9
Activities of extraterritorial organization	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: GSS (2016).

Table 7.13 Unemployment rate of population 15–35 years, by educational attainment and sex

Educational attainment	15–24 years			25–35 years			15–35 years		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
No education	17.1	23.5	20.9	6.9	12.9	10.8	10.8	16.4	14.3
MSLC/BECE	30.8	30.9	30.9	11.8	9.8	10.7	18.0	15.6	16.7
Secondary	28.2	30.5	29.3	19.2	21.5	20.3	23.2	25.7	24.4
Post Secondary	12.6	2.1	6.1	13.5	13.7	13.6	13.4	12.6	13.0
Tertiary	29.2	57.5	38.7	13.5	7.4	11.2	14.5	10.3	13.0
Total	24.7	27.0	25.9	12.2	13.0	12.6	16.4	17.4	16.9

Source: GSS (2016).

rates for post-graduates (25–35 years old), these are not ideal. The limited supply of positions that demand high skill levels in the country mean such post-graduates remain unable to find suitable employment.

7.3 Youth employment instability

The 2015 Labour Force Report indicates that, although youth are better educated today than ever before, high youth unemployment remains a challenge and, additionally, employed youth are facing increasing job instability (GSS, 2016). The amount of time it takes youth to transition into the labour force contributes to this job instability, as they often end up in temporary or unsatisfactory jobs while searching for stable, satisfactory opportunities (Table 7.14).

Looking into transition stages by educational attainment more directly, opportunity lies with post-secondary and tertiary graduates aged 25–35 years (Table 7.15). The figures for other levels of educational attainment for this age group are considerably lower. GoG and NGOs could go about addressing this issue a few ways. A couple

Table 7.14 Stages of transition of population 15–35 years, by sex

Age groups	Transited			In transition			Transition not started		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
15-24	27.5	28.3	27.9	20.0	22.1	21.1	52.4	49.6	51.0
25-35	78.2	78.6	78.4	18.0	19.3	18.7	3.8	2.0	2.9
15-35	55.6	56.7	56.2	18.9	20.5	19.7	25.5	22.8	24.1
Urban									
15-24	28.0	27.9	27.9	24.3	21.3	22.8	47.7	50.8	49.3
25-35	77.2	76.4	76.8	18.3	21.3	19.9	4.5	2.3	3.3
15-35	57.0	57.1	57.0	20.8	21.3	21.0	22.2	21.6	21.9
Rural									
15-24	27.0	28.8	27.9	14.8	23.2	18.9	58.2	48.0	53.2
25-35	80.0	83.5	81.7	17.4	15.1	16.3	2.6	1.4	2.0
15-35	53.6	56.0	54.8	16.1	19.2	17.6	30.3	24.8	27.7

Source: GSS (2016).

Table 7.15 Stages of transition of population 15–35 years, by educational level attained

Education attainment	15–24			25–35			15–35		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Transited									
No education	48.6	35.6	41.1	90.2	78.6	82.8	79.3	69.4	73.1
Primary	30.9	32.6	31.8	82.7	78.2	79.8	55.5	58.7	57.4
Secondary	27.1	28.4	27.8	80.6	80.6	80.6	52.9	54.2	53.6
Post-Secondary	23.5	20.5	22.1	69.5	72.6	71.0	59.4	62.0	60.7
Tertiary	25.5	10.5	18.1	73.5	77.3	74.9	67.4	64.3	66.2
In transition									
No education	0.0	33.3	19.1	9.8	19.7	16.1	7.3	22.6	16.8
Primary	5.0	29.1	18.4	15.7	21.8	19.7	10.1	25.0	19.1
Secondary	22.4	22.0	22.2	18.3	19.1	18.7	20.4	20.6	20.5
Post-Secondary	22.1	5.6	14.3	23.0	21.9	22.4	22.8	18.6	20.7
Tertiary	13.9	14.1	14.0	12.7	10.1	11.7	12.9	10.9	12.1
Transition not started									
No education	51.4	31.2	39.8	0.0	1.7	1.1	13.4	8.0	10.1
Primary	64.1	38.3	49.8	1.6	0.0	0.5	34.4	16.4	23.5
Secondary	50.5	49.5	50.0	1.2	0.3	0.7	26.7	25.2	26.0
Post-Secondary	54.4	73.9	63.6	7.5	5.6	6.5	17.8	19.4	18.6
Tertiary	60.7	75.4	67.9	13.8	12.6	13.3	19.8	24.8	21.7

Source: GSS (2016).

of options would be to invest in higher-skill, capital-intensive industries, as well as incentivising enrolment in technical and vocational programmes over Bachelor's degrees. This latter option would put graduates more in line with the demands of the labour market and would be more accessible for those with lower socio-economic means. The other opportunity here lies with those with little or no educational attainment. Lack of training means this group often finds it difficult to enter the labour market to begin with.

7.4 Review of Ghana's existing labour market

Opportunities for youth employment are concentrated, with 72.3 per cent of youth employment in the services sector, 27.6 per cent in sales, 25.5 per cent in agriculture or fisheries and 19.2 per cent in craft and trade-related jobs. Similarly, most underemployed people are in the skilled agriculture/fisheries (42.2 per cent), service/sales (20.4 per cent) and craft and related trades (19.3 per cent) categories. The highest proportions of underemployed people are in the 25–29 (15.3 per cent) and 30–34 (15.2 per cent) age groups (GSS, 2016). Although youth in Ghana have achieved increased levels of education over the past decades, post-graduate unemployment and underemployment have actually increased. As a result of the public sector's inability to bring in increasingly skilled talent, more and more graduates have been flowing to the informal private sector. Now, over half of Ghana's young labour force works in the informal sector.

7.5 Employment and the informal sector

In Ghana, roughly 69.7 per cent of the economy is part of the informal sector (Mintah and Darkwah, 2017). As youth enter the labour market, they may become dependent on the informal sector to gain employment or skills.

Informal economies often arise where there is insufficient infrastructure and stable investment to support registered corporations, and they bring with them a number of issues. One obvious challenge relates to the provision of work benefits. Since workers in the informal sector are not entitled to any benefits, they are at risk of exposure to volatile conditions. Thus it is important for government to target young people in this sector with social protection measures.

7.5.1 The gig economy

Over the past decade, Ghana has begun to experience the influences of the globalised gig economy, which is increasingly contributing to labour casualisation. The gig economy can be broadly defined as labour market activities that are coordinated via digital platforms (Hunt and Samman, 2019). Through digitised systems, companies act as intermediaries between producers and consumers. Given the short-term nature of gig work, companies are viewed more as short-term contractors than as employers, setting the precedent for lower standards of accountability.

There are two main types of gig work: crowdwork and on-demand work (Hunt and Samman, 2019). Crowdwork consists of tasks that are demanded and carried out virtually. Companies post 'gigs' on virtual platforms for people with suitable skills can apply. While youth-specific data is difficult to find, in Ghana, an estimated 3 per cent of the population is involved in crowdwork, with the larger share being female (ibid.). On-demand work consists of tasks that are carried out locally, where the contractor and worker are in close proximity. This work is typically organised via a mobile device, often on a specified mobile app.

Challenges in measuring gig work mean much of the existing data on the gig economy in Ghana comes from rudimentary surveys and company administrative data. Nevertheless, it is forecast to grow roughly 10 times faster than the rest of the economy from now until 2025 (Hunt and Samman, 2019). As the issue becomes increasingly relevant in Ghana, more concrete data should be collected in order to be able to formulate effective policies. More specifically, labour policies will need to be modified to accommodate more flexible work arrangements, and it will be necessary to take into account how the gig economy will develop with respect to the dominance of the informal sector in Ghana. Policies must also focus increasingly on youth workers left behind in the transition to the gig economy and address the gender employment and pay gaps and improve gender equality in access to digital infrastructure. If regulated, the gig economy has the potential to marginally improve labour market access, labour conditions and pay levels. However, if regulation remains insufficient, access to digital work could disproportionately hurt young women and other marginalised groups.

7.5.2 The potential of digital commerce

As the rise of the gig economy necessitates the establishment of a common platform on which it can operate, digital commerce becomes quite useful. As an economic platform, it still represents only 1 per cent of overall retail commerce in Ghana. However, it is growing quickly and policy regulation remains severely underdeveloped given the pace of this growth (BFA Global, 2019). By 2030, roughly 10 per cent of Ghana's economy is expected to consist of 'iworkers', or citizens who both consume and work entirely on digital platforms (ibid.). The primary contributors to this growth are increased internet connectivity and access to mobile devices, as digital market integration at a community level becomes easier.

International gig platforms such as TaskRabbit and Uber are already changing the way industries operate and could help formalise youth employment. It will be imperative for policy-makers to monitor and regulate these channels to facilitate sustainable engagement with digital commerce platforms.

Policy-makers should consider using a few core policy levers in assessing regulation for digital commerce. One would be to promote digital commerce in existing systems. This could include rolling out ICT infrastructure in schools and workplaces, tech training for youth and improving the online regulatory environment. Another approach could see the promotion of employment through demand- and supply-side measures between employers and training/educational institutions. Measures could include public works programmes, employer subsidies for training youth in ICT platforms, the certification of employers and supporting the creation of youth labour unions in digital industries. Another option is providing digital literacy training to youth and making digital commerce development as public as possible, so there is a general understanding of how to engage in profitable ventures. Conversely, there is 'test-and-learn', which would require a more reactive approach to regulation (BFA Global, 2019).

7.5.3 The decline of agriculture and the rise of oil

Over the past couple of decades, Ghana has been witnessing a decline in its agriculture. In 1998, the sector contributed 30.72 per cent to GDP; in 2015, this figure had dropped to 20.28 per cent (Ayele et al., 2018).

In contrast, since commercial oil production kicked off in Ghana in 2011, it has been generating positive economic growth, and expectations are high that investment in the industry will lead to more jobs, better infrastructure and improved living standards. It has been reported that roughly 81 per cent of youth have high or very high expectations for the potential that oil and gas holds for the future of Ghana's economy (FES, 2011). As a result, there is an opportunity to create policies that distribute the economic gains from oil wealth consistently across regions. It should be recognised that youth will be the ones to bear the cost of climate change and that perhaps economic gains should be weighed more heavily in their favour, with profits allocated towards education, ICT skills training, health care, affordable housing, agricultural innovation and investment in greener technologies.

7.6 Climate change and the green job market

The effects of climate change are projected to hit hot coastal countries such as Ghana particularly hard (Asante and Amuakwa-Mensah, 2015). The key is to understand how transitioning to renewable energy sources will affect the labour force and provide new jobs for youth. The involvement of schools and skills training organisations will be necessary to prepare youth for a greener labour market. Moreover, skills development on topics such as waste management and renewable energy are important in helping young workers transition into new roles. Within Ghana, there are multiple green economic initiatives, including the Green Economy Assessment to identify economic opportunities for transition to a greener economy, the Green Economy Fiscal Policy Study to determine financing solutions for greener policies, the Green Economy Action Plan to look at implementation of policies and the Partnership for Action on Green Economy, a collaborative platform between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and other international agencies to provide policy advice.The overarching goal of these is to put environmental sustainability at the heart of economic policy-making and the design of youth policies and programmes

7.7 Youth entrepreneurship and financial literacy

Investment in youth populations remains at the core of the labour market and industry changes Ghana is confronting. Ghanaian youth are facing high interest rates on small business loans, collateral requirements, a lack of financial literacy and limited access to relevant job opportunities.

> '*I think… most youth do not get access to capital to start [a business] they want to start*.' Male, 15–20 years

Investing in microfinance programmes is essential to provide youth with the necessary capital to start small businesses in emerging industries. Government entities could engage further by providing collateral-free loans to young entrepreneurs and restructuring financial system requirements that inhibit youth from accessing capital.

On the academic front, MOE should be working with industry leaders to incorporate relevant technical and business skills training in the final years of education, as well as non-cognitive skills, risk-taking and resilience. School-based financial literacy programmes have been proven to have positive impacts on youth, instilling an understanding of saving and basic accounting (Berry et al., 2017). In addition to increasing the practicality of traditional education, strengthening the capacity of TVET versus tertiary programmes should become more of a priority. Investments should be made at the industry level, as well through tech infrastructure and improving the opportunities for collaboration between students close to graduation and businesses with job openings. Additionally, establishing business incubators and accelerators that engage nearby schools and the regional labour force can further prepare youth. Encouraging volunteerism as a mechanism to provide youth with the skills they need to advance to full-time work in their desired field is another path to increasing youth employment levels.

7.8 Laying the foundations for SDG 8

SDG 8 describes the promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (UN, 2018). Achieving this requires economic growth and market development through diversification, tech development and innovation. In Ghana, this will mean promoting youth entrepreneurship, increasing youth access to business financing and capital following graduation, and formalising the creation of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in emerging industries. Ghana also needs to look at human capital and access to employment opportunities for youth. To achieve this, MOE should prioritise incorporating industry-relevant skills training into the curriculum. Inviting regional employers into secondary and tertiary institutions to talk about job opportunities would help students understand job markets before graduation.

Social protection for marginalised youth, notably women, those with disabilities and migrants, will help equalise employment opportunities. Similarly, labour market regulation through direct enforcement of policies that combat exploitation by the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations (MELR), particularly in domestic work and agriculture, is essential.

Breaking down the barriers between the Ghanaian economy and that of the developed world; eliminating restrictions on labour mobility and corporate partnerships; addressing market failures; creating partnerships between MOE and MELR and UN agencies to ensure all youth can access skills training to enable them to be competitive in the global labour market; and focusing on SME-led job creation are all target priorities for Ghana. Finally, the value of lifelong learning and continual skills development must be acknowledged. National policies should be consistently promoting access to skills training for all age groups and backgrounds. Youth need to be a priority in employment policy, but the rest of the labour force should not be forgotten along the way.

7.9 A review of existing youth-related employment policies and programmes

7.9.1 Policy development in the 21st century

GoG has undertaken many initiatives to address the youth unemployment challenges facing the country. At the same time, many private sector organisations, for both private entities and non-profit efforts, have initiated training programmes to contribute to and improve the youth labour force in Ghana. The key focus of youth employment initiatives in the country is skills development and training, entrepreneurial training, apprenticeships, employment services and direct employment.

The NYP 2010 has the goal of empowering youth and creating a positive impact on national development. In it are guidelines for all stakeholders involved in the implementation of policies, programmes and projects for the development of youth. The NYP Implementation Plan 2014–2017 followed the NYP. In 2015, MELR launched the National Employment Policy to address the youth unemployment and the not in employment, education or training (NEET) variables, along with deficits in decent job provision. This focused on vulnerable groups, notably rural youth, women, and the disabled.

Policy efforts to expand employment outcomes among young people cut across the Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), including the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET), which was established by Act of Parliament in 2006 to coordinate and oversee all aspects of technical and vocational training in the formal and informal sectors. In 2012, Parliament passed Legislative Instrument (LI) 2195 to give legal backing to COTVET for the registration and accreditation of training providers in the public and private sectors. COTVET implemented the National Apprenticeship Programme (NAP) as well as the Ghana Skills Development Initiative (GSDI), in collaboration with the German International Cooperation (GIZ). Together, these policy initiatives seek to lay the groundwork for equitable access to dynamic and sustainable labour markets for youth across Ghana.

7.9.2 Existing youth employment organisations and programmes

The following is a reference list of public sector programmes and organisations in Ghana that work with youth development and employment. For stakeholders interested in youth development in Ghana, partnership with these organisations would be a good place to start.

Youth Employment Agency: Established under the Youth Employment Act of 2015 to empower young people to contribute meaningfully to the socio-economic development of the nation, the Youth Employment Agency is the largest youth employment programme in the country. Its objective is to provide skills training and apprenticeship modules to those aged 15–35 during their transition from unemployment to employment. The agency seeks to facilitate partnerships between public and private organisations and students to smooth job transition post-graduation and targets all categories of youth in most of the key sectors in Ghana, with special attention to disadvantaged youth when developing programmes (MELR, 2015).

National Vocational Training Institute: NVTI provides demand-driven employable skills and enhances the income-generating capacities of primary and secondary school students through competency-based apprenticeship, master craftsmanship, testing and certification, and career development. Established under Act 351 of 1970 and supported by Apprentice Regulations LI 1151 in 1978, Clerical and Secretarial Training Regulations LI 981 in 1974 and Trade Testing LI 715 in 1971, NVTI has 34 training centres across all 10 regions of Ghana, targeting junior and senior secondary school graduates (MELR, 2015). On-the-job training programmes are dominant, with industry professionals leading certification courses that carry weight in improving job prospects. Industry courses in construction and consumer electronics sectors are also common. Additionally, NVTI is conducting a continuous study on the nation's labour force to ensure its training programmes reflect the needs of emerging industries.[1]

Integrated Community Centres for Employable Skills: ICCES trains youth in demand-driven employable skills for self- or paid employment in their chosen trades through micro- and small enterprise (MSE) development to combat youth unemployment and help mitigate rural–urban migration. The centre seeks to empower those who have left school early as well as the most disenfranchised with opportunities to start their own business. ICCES has 60 training centres in remote communities across the 10 regions of Ghana. Unlike NVTI, its programmes target illiterate, semi-literate and literate youth in rural areas. ICCES focuses on providing TVET in the construction, automobiles, electronics, catering and beauty sectors.[2]

Youth in Agriculture: Youth in Agriculture is an agro-incubator with the objective of motivating youth to accept and appreciate farming and food production as commercial ventures. The demographic focus is predominantly rural youth from impoverished communities. This is the second largest youth employer in the country. Ghana is becoming increasingly reliant on food imports because of its ageing agriculture sector, and this has the potential to create economic volatility from exogenous shocks in commodity markets. Youth involvement in this sector is imperative to diversify Ghana's economy.[3] The programme provides young farmers with tractors and other necessary equipment at subsidised prices on interest-free credit. It also assists in developing industry labour standards and base pay. Skills training is provided in crop cultivation, livestock and poultry, fisheries and aquaculture, and agribusiness.

Youth in Cocoa: This programme seeks to protect the rights of rural youth in the cocoa sector while improving productivity. The core goal is to sustainably produce cocoa without the need for child labour. The rationale is to eliminate child labour and incentivise children to attend school. The beneficiaries are trained by cocoa extension agents and supported through the provision of cocoa seedlings, growth-enhancing fertilisers, tree seedlings and agrochemicals to maximise productivity (Löwe, 2017). The programme also seeks to minimise rural–urban migration to preserve the economic capacities of cocoa-producing communities, targeting youth between the ages of 20 and 40. Youth in Cocoa collaborates with other training and regulatory organisations under the Abidjan Declaration 2018 between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, creating a regional network. However, the effectiveness of this programme has been mixed in terms of child labour elimination and improved outcomes for youth. Financial commitments have been limited and there is speculation that political favouritism is involved in the distribution of funds.

Rural Enterprise Programme: REP seeks to improve the livelihoods and incomes of impoverished rural entrepreneurs, while increasing the number of rural enterprises that generate profits, growth and employment opportunities. Training is provided to youth from impoverished farming communities in farm-based businesses such as fish farming, livestock, poultry, etc.; agro-processing in cassava, notably palm oil, ground nuts and grain; agro-industrial businesses such as detergents, baking and catering; traditional craft, including leatherworks, ceramics and basket-weaving; and harvest supplies, mostly agro-chemicals, tractor services, and milling and shelling equipment. Special interventions, such as the Youth in Agri-Business Programme, are being implemented under this programme in collaboration with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) with youth aged 18–35 years. This focuses on agro-processing in the development of local economies. The programme also seeks to address gender gaps in rural entrepreneurship.[4]

COTVET-NAP: NAP was established within the informal division of COTVET to ensure JHS graduates who could not access SHS education were given employable skills through modern apprenticeship. Beneficiaries work in the construction, automotive, electronics and beauty sectors. Branches of COTVET that NAP works with on related training initiatives include the Ghana Skills Development and Entrepreneurship Project, the Development of Skills for Industry Project, GSDI and the Skills Development Fund.

COTVET-GSDI: Funded by GIZ, in partnership with COTVET, GSDI aims at modernising traditional apprenticeships through an innovative approach to competency-based training and by strengthening trade associations and training institutions.[5] GSDI associates apprenticeship with competency-based training standards and a cooperative training model, combining workplace and school-based training. It targets JHS, SHS and semi-literate youth in the construction, consumer electronics, catering and beauty sectors.

Youth Empowerment Synergy: YES provides financial, technical and expert advisory services to young businesspeople. Concrete goals involve improving youth literacy, employability and civic engagement, particularly among disadvantaged populations. Financial support involves offering interest-free loans to qualified start-ups and existing businesses owned by youth; currently, YES offers a maximum loan amount of GH₵50,000 per beneficiary. Beneficiaries operate businesses in agriculture and agribusiness, manufacturing and cottage industries, and services. Recent projects YES has pursued include Adwuma Pa, a partnership with CARE international to protect vulnerable women and girls in the cocoa supply chain, and the Youth Inclusive Entrepreneurial Development Initiative for Employment, targeting urban youth to create industry-relevant training and facilitate enterprise start-up growth.[6]

Microfinance and Small Loans Centre: This apex body is responsible for implementing GoG's microfinance programmes targeted at reducing poverty and creating jobs and wealth. It provides loans in various sectors to support businesses, providing considerable opportunity for young entrepreneurs looking for subsidised loans post-graduation. Beneficiary MSEs have seen their working capital increase by 120.6 per cent, improved customer relations and increases in average earnings of 46.9 per cent (Oduro-ofori, 2014).

The Fisheries Commission: The Fisheries Commission has created agribusiness opportunities for youth through sustainable aquaculture systems and cassava value chains in West Africa by means of the exploration of initiatives that can spur growth and development. The programme targets youth in coastal areas through the fisheries sub-sector of the agriculture sector. The Commission itself seeks to ensure the vitality of the fishing industry in Ghana and the sustainability of fish farming and harvesting as a practice.[7]

Advance Information Technology Institute Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT: AITI-KACE's overall goal is to develop ICT capacities, infrastructure and training within communities in need through the provision of programming and tech courses, consultancy services for businesses and entrepreneurs, and industry research that can inform policy development. The institute targets employment opportunities for youth in the ICT sector through two diploma programmes. The Diploma in Business Computing trains youth in software engineering, database concepts, Oracle and other proprietary databases, and builds development skills.[8]

7.10 Youth and agriculture

The labour force in Ghana, in general, is ageing quickly (Mba, 2010). Specifically, there is a gross ageing labour force in agriculture, with the average age of a farmer being 55 years and their life expectancy 60 years.[9] This statistic essentially indicates that young Ghanaians are generally uninterested in agriculture. This by extension poses a threat to sustainable agriculture and food security in Ghana in the long run, through expected frailty and disability among farmers in the years to come (Deku, 2019).

As a means to decrease the average age of people in agriculture and address youth unemployment challenges, there have been efforts to encourage youth to take up farming as a vocation (Gough et al., 2013; Naamwintome and Bagson, 2013). The call for youth involvement in agriculture confronts the fact that youth are generally interested only in white-collar jobs, which are rare or non-existent (Raheem et al., 2014). Moreover, youth are understood to perceive farming as a job for the illiterate and hand labourers, and as yielding meagre income (Swarts and Aliber, 2013; Zakaria et al., 2013). Generally, even youth who are involved in rural agriculture seek to quit it in the long run (Dwumah, 2015).

7.11 Summary points

1. Ghana's labour market is struggling to keep up with the increasing supply of higher-educated graduates, resulting in delays in school–work transitioning and high rates of youth employment.
2. GoG, private organisations and non-profits have undertaken many initiatives to improve the youth labour force in Ghana.
3. School attendance, gender, literacy and education level, socio-economic status and access to educational institutes are key factors contributing to labour force employability.
4. Skilled agriculture, forestry and fisheries are the largest employers, followed by services and sales and craft and trade.
5. Underemployment is a considerable problem in Ghana, particularly among youth aged 25–34.

6. Young Ghanaians are generally uninterested in agriculture. This by extension poses a threat to sustainable agriculture and food security in Ghana in the long run.

7.12 Recommendations

1. Revise education and training curricula to develop knowledge, skills and competences that match changing labour demands. This should include increased subject focus on ICT, business development and vocational training.
2. Provide youth with more opportunities to learn about industries where there is high labour market concentration, such as skilled agriculture, and provide applied technical and vocational training in these industries through the curriculum.
3. Support youth entrepreneurial development through academic sector and private industry collaborations and specialised industry events and competitions, providing microfinance loans to impoverished graduates to ensure equity among post-graduates.
4. Create policies that incentivise gender movement across occupations and industries, and increase diversity in all sectors, de-stigmatising the ability of women to perform in any industry.
5. Modify labour policies to accommodate more flexible work arrangements across industries that come with labour casualisation and the gig economy. However, efforts should be made to protect the rights of workers in this area.
6. Address the gap between educational output and labour market demands. This will require increased collaboration between the public and private sectors, and between GoG and industry-leading corporations, on how best to empower Ghana's youth.

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Notes

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