Overview of Youth Development in Ghana

Commonwealth Secretariat

The Commonwealth

NATIONAL YOUTH AUTHORITY
GHANA
FACILITATING YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

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Commonwealth Secretariat

The Commonwealth

Commonwealth Secretariat
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Foreword by the Minister for Youth and Sports, Ghana

Government recognises the growing potential of Ghanaian youth in our nation-building efforts, especially as we strive to pursue H.E. President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo's vision of a Ghana Beyond Aid. However, in view of the challenges and the incipient issues, as well as the growing needs and aspirations of Ghanaian youth in a lower-middle-income economy, it has become imperative to understand the current needs and experiences of this group. This is essential if we are to be able to design appropriate and responsive evidence-based interventions to improve the conditions of our youth.

It is in this regard that the Ministry of Youth and Sports, through the National Youth Authority with funding and technical support from the Commonwealth Secretariat, has pioneered this first-ever comprehensive overview of youth development in Ghana. This report tracks the story of youth development in the country in greater detail, pointing to where progress is being made and the areas that require more attention and investment.

In addition, this report represents a response to the urgent need to understand the everyday lives of young people in Ghana. In line with key development frameworks like the African Union's Agenda 2063, it offers insights that can contribute to the transformation of Ghana's youth population and subsequently allow the country to harness the demographic dividend concomitant with successful population transitions through childhood to adulthood, and to achieve the global 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Ultimately, the report presents a baseline evaluation or situational analysis that can inform revisions of current policies or support the creation of new policies on priority issues for youth development. Specifically, I am glad to note that the content of this report informed in large part the situational analysis chapter of the Reviewed National Youth Policy of Ghana (2021–2031).

The Government of Ghana led by H.E. President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo is fully determined to ensure the comprehensive development of youth. This is being enabled through coordinated efforts to ensure that national development policies, programmes and projects across all sectors mainstream youth issues. This effort has been given special attention in the Government's Medium-Term Development Framework – namely, the Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies 2017–2024 as presented to Parliament and the Ghana Beyond Aid Charter. The aim is to ensure that the youth of the country are fully equipped with employable skills; to strengthen the link between education and the labour market; to build the capacity of youth to discover opportunities; and to bolster key national

structures to bring up competent and responsible young people who enjoy moral and physical health and who are capable of integrating into the international youth arena and participating in global economic, political and humanitarian development.

As the Ministry responsible for youth development, we have learnt through this report that social integration of young people with disabilities and other disadvantaged youth living in troubled families is still a very acute issue. The Ministry has recognised the importance of developing and effectively implementing policies aimed at improving the condition of these categories of young people. As such, a thematic area under the Reviewed National Youth Policy has been devoted to dealing with cross-cutting issues, with the appropriate policy objective and strategies to address youth needs.

In this respect, this *Overview of Youth Development in Ghana*, initiated by the National Youth Authority and the Commonwealth Secretariat, makes a vital contribution to youth development programming, clarifying targets and directions in finding solutions to the various challenges confronting youth. It is worth reiterating that the publication of this report is very timely in the measure that it has given great inspiration to the content of the Reviewed National Youth Policy, which is in its final stages.

The report contains a thorough analysis of the condition of Ghanaian youth based on statistical data and on the results of research. The Ministry of Youth and Sports agrees with the overall conclusions and recommendations of the report and considers them well founded and of undeniable practical interest to the work of Government.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, and also to the author of this report for preparing this very informative and up-to-date document on the state of Ghanaian youth.

Hon. Mustapha Ussif
Minister for Youth and Sports, Ghana

Statement by the Chief Executive Officer of the National Youth Authority, Ghana

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana has the vision of building a fair and equitable society where every citizen has the opportunity to live a long, productive and meaningful life. The Constitution is therefore set up to protect the fundamental rights of all citizens, irrespective of age, to enable them to take an active part in national development. This aspiration is the bedrock of the directives and principles of state policy.

Based on this vision, the Government has been pursuing socio-economic policies, programmes and projects in all sectors of the economy to advance the social, political and economic well-being of the people of Ghana. According to statistics, Ghana has made significant strides in terms of economic growth and improving the general living conditions of its citizens since the adoption of the Fourth Republican Constitution in 1992. There has been a significant reduction in poverty and employment, an improvement in school enrolment and progress with regard to infrastructure development, provision of utility services, health care delivery and social cohesion, among others.

In spite of these remarkable achievements, there are obvious indications of impediments preventing youth from exploring their potential and contributing actively to the national development process. Currently, national statistics show that the average youth unemployment rate is 8 per cent. Out of the total youth population of 9,698,576 (34.2 per cent of the national population), 63.5 per cent are economically active and 36.6 per cent are not in the labour market. The statistics also show that about 80 per cent of economically active youth are engaged in the informal economy, specifically in vulnerable employment. Many of these youth do not have access to health care, in particular mental and reproductive health services. The participation of youth in governance, decision-making and community development leaves much to be desired, as a result of cultural and structural barriers in this regard. This has culminated in lack of patriotism, low engagement, timidity and inexperience in governance and community development among youth. Young women and youth with disabilities are challenged by discrimination and inequities in the system, which leave them exposed to abuses, vulnerabilities and exclusion in the socio-economic development processes of the country.

These persisting challenges undoubtedly thwart efforts by Government and its partners to achieve the aspirations of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana for all citizens, including youth. The youth bulge in the national population is an advantage that should be harnessed for accelerated national development. This can occur when measures are put in place to create an environment for youth to develop healthy living

habits and to participate in economic development, governance and community development without any form of discrimination.

It is against this background that, the National Youth Authority, with technical support from the Commonwealth Secretariat, decided to produce this *Overview of Youth Development in Ghana*. The aim is to provide detailed information about the challenges facing youth, so as to enable policy-makers and development partners to take the necessary steps to bridge existing gaps.

It is my fervent hope that this document will serve as a baseline for state and non-state agencies to develop the policies, programmes and projects required to build capacities, generate a knowledge base, establish structures and create an environment for a more inclusive system for youth development.

Nelson Owusu-Ansah
Ag. Chief Executive Officer of the National Youth Authority, Ghana

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The Commonwealth Secretariat is grateful for contributions received during the process of developing this report. The Secretariat wishes to convey special thanks to the principal author of this report, Michael Boampong, an independent consultant. The support and technical advice of Sushil Ram, Programme Manager at the Commonwealth Secretariat, was also important in the report's preparation.

The Commonwealth Secretariat recognises the contributions of staff at the National Youth Authority and the Ministry of Youth and Sports who were directly involved in the process of developing this report.

The report benefited greatly from the perspectives of representatives of youth development organisations working for/with young people, as noted in Annex III. The Commonwealth Secretariat acknowledges the efforts of these organisations in contributing directly to the report or mobilising other young people for various activities related to this report. Isaac Osei Owusu, Yaw Yeboah, Andre Hessini, Heather Mcleod, Audrey Franchi and Daniel Assamah were resourceful in providing valuable support to and inputs into the report. Many other people and institutions were involved directly or indirectly in contributing to the development of this report; the Commonwealth Secretariat is grateful to these actors as well.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AITI-KACE	Advance Information Technology Institute Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT
ARDF	Anglican Relief and Development Fund
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
BMZ	Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
COTVET	Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
DCI	Defence for Children International
DFID	UK Department for International Development
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FCUBE	Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
FSHS	Free Senior High School
GDHS	Ghana Demographic and Health Survey
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GES	Ghana Education Service
GESI	Integrating Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in National Policies, Programmes and Commitments
GHS	Ghana Health Service
GIZ	German International Cooperation
GNCRC	Ghana NGO Coalition for the Rights of the Child
GoG	Government of Ghana
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GSDI	Ghana Skills Development Initiative

GSFP	Ghana School Feeding Programme
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICCES	Integrated Community Centres for Employable Skills
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IHME	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IT	Information Technology
ITN	Insecticide-Treated Net
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JHS	Junior High School
LEAP	Livelihoods Empowerment Against Poverty
LI	Legislative Instrument
LIPW	Labour-Intensive Public Works
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MELR	Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MLNR	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
MMDAs	Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MOGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOTAC	Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture
MOYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
MP	Member of Parliament
MSEs	Micro and Small Enterprises
NAP	National Apprenticeship Programme
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NEET	Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHIA	National Health Insurance Authority

NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
NMCP	National Malaria Control Programme
NPC	National Population Council
NVTI	National Vocational Training Institute
NYA	National Youth Authority
NYP	National Youth Policy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSAC	Overseas Security Advisory Council
PAYE	Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment
PPAG	Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana
PYD	Positive Youth Development
REP	Rural Enterprise Programme
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SHS	Senior High School
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SPW	Student Partnership Worldwide
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UCW	Understanding Children's Work
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
US	United States
USAID	US Agency for International Development

WDI	World Development Indicators
WHO	World Health Organization
WPAY	World Programme of Action for Youth
YDI	Youth Development Index
YES	Youth Empowerment Synergy

'*Any society that does not succeed in tapping into the energy and creativity of its youth will be left behind.*'

Kofi Annan, Former UN Secretary-General

Summary

Over the past two decades, Ghana, as a relatively stable democratic nation, has enjoyed positive economic trends that have encouraged both local and foreign investment. As such, it has been able to make great strides with respect to improving its social, economic and political structures, ensuring inclusive, free education for all and reducing inequalities across its population. Nevertheless, a variety of socio-economic issues continue to plague the people of the country, in particular the youth demographic. Central among these are underemployment, lack of access to quality education, poverty, crime, migration and low civic participation. As the majority of the population are under the age of 25, any actions that improve the well-being of this demographic have the potential to move Ghana forward towards building a more sustainable and resilient society.

This report touches on the developmental concerns surrounding critical issues affecting young people in Ghana and presents some pragmatic policy- and programme-related recommendations on how to move forward. It provides a baseline evaluation that can work to inform revisions of current policies as well as to support the creation of new policies on priority issues for youth development. For each critical issue, it offers recommendations to ensure future policy success in youth development. Proper monitoring and analysis as well as inclusion of youth voices in decision-making processes can enable policies, programmes and initiatives to have positive youth development outcomes.

Critical issues

A variety of factors drive and exacerbate the vulnerabilities facing Ghanaian youth today. Access to quality education and training, information and communication technology (ICT) and health care has a significant impact on the transitioning of youth into the workforce and their ability to contribute to society. Tackling the root causes of crime, understanding migration trends and considering cultural implications when drafting legislation can encourage unity and stimulate economic growth. Similarly, creating opportunities for young citizens to participate in governance can empower them to make decisions that will positively affect their future and the future of Ghanaian society as a whole. Outlined below are the primary critical issues affecting Ghanaian youth as well as recommendations for best practices to address them.

Education and skills training

As a result of colonial rule, corruption and poverty, inequalities in access to quality education have existed in Ghana for decades. Progressive and inclusive reform measures began in the late 1980s and 1990s but improvements are still necessary. To increase the quality of secondary education, work must be done to bridge the gender gap within schools, improve teaching resources, expand infrastructure in rural communities and promote lifelong learning as part of Ghanaian culture. Policies that subsidise school fees for impoverished families based on their socio-economic status can help lower student absentee rates.

Studies have shown that a considerable portion of government-allocated funds never make it to students or schools, owing to corruption and poor financial management. By employing strict financial accountability policies and anti-corruption measures and hiring local enforcement officials, schools can document, track and ensure delivery of any and all funds. Allocating funds to salaries, classroom equipment and teacher housing can help reduce staff absentee rates caused by low pay and poor infrastructure. Creating opportunities for impoverished students to receive additional funding for fees, books, uniforms, computers and transportation can help every child, regardless of their economic background, to succeed. The extractive sector can serve as a key funding source for these initiatives, alongside funding from international development partners, with the goal of creating a more stable revenue source for these programmes.

Training to address the inequalities facing students with disabilities can help give disadvantaged youth a better chance of receiving a quality education. Similarly, funding programmes that encourage young girls to explore male-dominated science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects, in addition to mentoring, can help reduce social stigmas and future employment inequalities. Research suggests that the skills taught in secondary schools do not always align with the reality of the labour market. The inclusion of industry case studies and opportunities for discussion with industry leaders, some of whom can mentor young people, especially girls and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, would help equip graduates with increasingly relevant skills and knowledge when entering the workforce.

Information and communication technology

Research shows that ICT can have a positive impact on youth development and employment. Increased support to the National Youth Policy and the discouragement of 'negative ICT use' are recommended but new policies must also be developed to combat deeper issues. These include in particular strategies for combating gender inequalities in ICT access. Flexibility and adaptability are key components in ICT policies that accommodate new technologies, and relevant skills development and programmes that promote awareness of privacy invasion, identity theft, online scams and exposure to offensive content should be supported.

Health and well-being

Poverty and hunger continue to exacerbate medical conditions and create on-going health issues. Increasing government funding by 15 per cent or using revenue from health service taxes would make universal health coverage in Ghana obtainable. Granting vulnerable youth free access to quality preventive care, well-equipped facilities and trained staff can help combat the spread of disease and increase the overall health and productivity of an entire generation. Increased awareness of sexual and reproductive rights, as well as family planning services, over recent years has helped maintain a steady decrease in teenage pregnancies. However, more must be done to protect the most vulnerable. Young people, including girls and teenage mothers, are often more susceptible to communicable diseases such as HIV. High rates of pregnancy within youth groups mean additional efforts must be made to target this demographic. Widespread dissemination of accurate medical information should also be improved, along with young people's rights, and campaigns that combat the stigmatism and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS need to be expanded to reach the youth demographic. Initiatives to reduce high-risk behaviours should also be scaled to reach more of the youth population.

Non-communicable diseases, including blood disorders, cancer, renal problems, cardiovascular issues, mental health disorders and substance abuse, have been progressively on the rise. Promoting healthier lifestyle choices and incorporating prevention, management and treatment options as part of new health policies may help counteract these increases. Similarly, expansion of policies that cover nutrition and food safety in schools can help create healthier learning environments. Improvements in policies that focus on infant nutrition deficiencies through increased education can also help prioritise the well-being of young children in Ghana. Finally, policies that focus on the eradication of child marriage should be expanded to support girls who are already married. Increasing accurate data collection in both rural and urban locations can help us better understand the trends in child marriage and find successful solutions.

Sports and recreation

Studies show that sports and recreational activities have a positive impact on the physical, physiological, emotional and intellectual health of children. Creating environments where these activities are allowed to flourish can help children engage with a healthy lifestyle. While football is considered the most popular sport in Ghana, rebranding and promoting traditional games may help revitalise lost practices and promote cultural unity. Bottom-up, grassroots approaches that encourage active community involvement and accountability through local programmes are invaluable approaches to ensuring success.

Mentoring should be recognised as an important tool for teaching life skills and supporting the autonomy of young athletes among the youth demographic. While initiatives such as the Youth Resource Centre Project are already in place, it is

imperative to pay more attention to gender equality and the provisioning of equal opportunities, as female athletes are still overlooked in comparison with their male counterparts.

Economic labour force participation and skills development

While an increasing number of youth are completing higher education, there are not enough jobs to support the rising numbers of qualified professionals entering the labour market. Integrating relevant skills into secondary education may better prepare young workers for the labour market. Local governments can reduce information asymmetry through the creation of databases for youth employment opportunities. Supporting youth entrepreneurism through academic and private sector events as well as issuing microfinance loans could contribute to addressing youth employment concerns.

Agriculture, forestry and fisheries continue to be the largest employers of young graduates. This is closely followed by the sales, craft and trade industries. However, reports suggest young Ghanaians are not particularly interested in careers in these industries; in particular, decreasing participation in agriculture is raising concerns related to food security. Developing incentive programmes for the private sector to invest in businesses with high employment potential – specifically ICT, sustainable agriculture and renewable energy – should be made a priority. Furthermore, increased attention must be paid to improving employment opportunities for graduates who have already transitioned into the labour force. Using and improving on successful policies by tapping into existing government and non-governmental initiatives can promote fairer labour market outcomes for youth within informal sectors, as well as a basic standard of pay. Incentivising youth leadership in private sector roles can help graduates feel confident in moving away from the more dominant informal markets, reducing the load placed on these industries. Focus on promoting job flexibility can create opportunities for young workers looking for non-traditional work environments. Finally, to contribute towards closing the gender wage gap, policies that incentivise gender movement across industries and mentoring can help young women access positions in male-dominated jobs.

Financial inclusion

A financially secure younger generation can lead to improved well-being and a stronger economy. Ghana is still struggling with the creation of a financially responsible population, in part because of a lack of trust in banking institutions and low levels of capital. With little financial literacy, young Ghanaians are unable to create and maintain positive financial habits. While certain programmes, such as the Youth Save Ghana Project, have had some success in improving youth financial literacy, it is necessary to increase the number of these training programmes. Furthermore, young women and girls are not always included in economic conversations, owing to gender and patriarchal norms that have resulted in an imbalance of financial security between men/boys and women/girls. Financial literacy programmes geared specifically towards adolescent girls and young women can help bridge this gender gap.

Accessibility is critical to promoting stable financial practices among younger generations, yet many youth still face limited opportunities, owing to technological limitations that stall advancements in digital banking and hinder accessibility to those in rural and impoverished areas. Similarly, access to finance for young entrepreneurs could easily help them acquire needed resources for their businesses or expanding initiatives. Furthermore, many young adults cannot open an account because they lack parental consent or approved identification documents. Adjusting banking requirements to allow these groups to gain access to their own accounts can promote financial responsibility at a younger age. Mobile network operators and microfinance institutions could provide products and services that cater specifically to customers with low and irregular incomes.

Active citizenship and participation in governance

Opportunities for youth participation in governance can be thwarted by socio-economic, cultural and financial circumstance, and ignorance of the diversity present across the youth demographic makes this worse. Ghana's cultural ethos has led to a *status quo* whereby youth voices are either unheard or ignored. Support for the expansion of initiatives such as youth parliaments and the creation of additional opportunities for inter-generational dialogue can foster better understanding of pressing Ghanaian youth development concerns. Grassroots organisations with strong connections to local communities are better able to engage rural youth and should be supported. With additional research, much can be done to ensure the formulation of efficient action plans to provide opportunities for those typically excluded from society, such as young females, rural youth and youth with disabilities.

Not all areas of Ghana have access to the internet or advanced technologies; ICT-based interventions and investments must be increased to help bridge this disconnect. One way to achieve this is by including development clubs in school curricula, at which students can engage in mock decision-making and gain a better understanding of governmental processes. When young citizens become politically aware and feel empowered to make positive changes to their communities – whether through elections, local development or social outreach – Ghana as a whole will benefit. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that younger generations are given a substantial voice in the development of their country.

Youth and crime

Criminal activity among youth is caused by a variety of economic and social factors. Understanding the root causes can help prevent further destructive actions as well as work to rehabilitate those already involved. When underprivileged youth are given an opportunity to develop their skills and have access to education and employment, instances of drug trafficking and armed robbery are likely to reduce. Similarly, second-chance opportunities and effective rehabilitation programmes that target ex-convicts by providing access to education, employment and medical services can help youth get back on their feet and move forward, reducing the likelihood of reoffending.

Access to legal representation remains a challenge in Ghana. Several initiatives are in place to improve access for youth regardless of their location, income or disabilities. Nevertheless, more can be done to protect the rights of those already incarcerated. By upholding the penal code and creating transparency within the judicial system, it will be possible to establish trust between youth groups and law enforcement agencies.

Youth conflict and peace-building

Ghana's regions in the north are experiencing high levels of conflict, with youth populations becoming increasingly likely to cause or fall victim to violence. Land access is often at the heart of these conflicts, and unemployed youths are typically used as pawns. Strengthening education and employment opportunities for these underserved regions would help defuse political vigilantism and create alternatives to land ownership. Likewise, during electoral periods, manipulation of youth often occurs, and youth are enlisted to carry out violent acts on behalf of conflicting political agendas. Spreading awareness of the current electoral system and educating young adults on the importance of peaceful elections can help mitigate conflict during these periods.

Providing youth with opportunities to hone their conflict resolution and leadership skills can also help prevent violent outbursts and promote mediation. As such, the Ministry of Education should take steps to promote conflict resolution in schools and provide better intervention measures for vulnerable youth, as well as to address the gender-based violence young females are facing. The Stop Violence Against Girls programme that was launched in 2013 has had a very positive influence on problematic family dynamics and communities. Continued support to the creation of girls' clubs will help promote confident and effective attitudes and practices in managing violence and gender inequalities.

Volunteerism

Volunteering can provide youth with a platform to effect change in addition to strengthening communities and enabling the exchange of ideas and opinions. In particular, volunteering can help generate empathic connections between communities and place young activists at the centre of policy. As such, more support must be given to building local volunteering programmes that are accessible by the diverse youth demographic. Creating long-term partnerships with existing volunteer programmes and developing new opportunities for collaboration can improve the prospects of both the volunteers involved and those whom each programme targets. Furthermore, incorporating volunteer programmes into school curricula would promote the development of opportunities at the national level and enable more youth to participate in national sustainable development goals.

Culture, religion, life skills and tourism

Ghana's great cultural diversity is evident in the numerous ethnic groups, languages and religions practised nationwide. The promotion of national cohesion through youth participation in the arts has been actively pursued. Thanks to these efforts,

there has been a continuous rise in religious tolerance and acceptance across the country. Efforts that capitalise on this momentum should be supported. Preparing teachers to work with youth from various economic and religious backgrounds can further promote a culture of tolerance, as can the incorporation of indigenous practices and history into the modern curriculum.

The positive promotion of Ghana's culture can both increase tourism and instil national pride among young people. Research shows that the youth population has great interest in historical and cultural attractions. Investing in the development, rebranding and advertisement of local attractions can increase tourism from within and outside the country. The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture should focus on evaluating the effectiveness and sustainability of existing youth initiatives in this sector.

Youth and environmental sustainability

As with most policy development, inviting youth to join the conversation around environmental initiatives can help empower them to take control of their future, as well as encouraging the development of policies that support sustainability. Mapping programmes to identify climate vulnerabilities and holding campaigns and workshops to raise awareness of critical climate issues are some ways to engage young people. For example, youth groups could conduct vulnerability assessments within the agriculture sector; this may also increase the number of graduates entering the sector after school. Youth involvement would also work to decrease illegal mining activities, as the next generation would monitor, utilise and protect more land.

Moreover, youth involvement in environmental programmes can help Ghana reach the Sustainable Development Goals. In particular, their involvement in the agriculture sector and the reduction of illegal mining and deforestation should be a focus of new policies, as these activities are causing a significant amount of water and land degradation. Stimulating growth within the green sector and creating new environmentally friendly employment opportunities for graduates can help achieve a more sustainable environmental future.

Youth and disability

In 2006, Ghana introduced the Persons with Disabilities Act to protect the rights of Ghanaians living with disabilities. Unfortunately, the Act fails to address accessibility issues in public buildings and transportation facilities. As a result, adequate housing, voting and employment opportunities are not available to those with disabilities. These issues must be addressed when rewriting existing policies and drafting new measures. Development of baseline infrastructure in medical industries must also be employed to ensure persons with disabilities are receiving an equal level of care across the country. An increase in family support networks and neighbourhood groups can help alleviate these concerns and unite communities.

Young women with disabilities face certain forms of discrimination across various fields based on their gender and disability. Increased support to educational campaigns and the expansion of programmes covered by the Inclusive Education Policy can help

eradicate discrimination. Teachers should be equipped with the skills and training to take on students with disabilities and provide effective educational programmes for all youth. As more research is conducted and relevant data is collected, policies and programmes can be designed to combat these issues with greater accuracy.

Youth migration and mobility

Increasingly, young people are migrating from rural to urban areas looking for employment and educational opportunities. Often settling in slums, they sacrifice quality of life for work opportunities. Prioritising the development of a sustainable agricultural industry and providing training programmes for rural workers may help curb the migration of skilled workers to urban areas and reduce the negative impacts for those left behind. This in turn may decrease the number of young adults in slums and their exposure to disease. However, more research is necessary to understand the migrant patterns of Ghanaian youth, including risks and motivations. Databases categorised by age, sex, education and occupation can help policy-makers target specific demographics more effectively. Only 1 per cent of the population – often educated – migrate outside of the country looking for work. Of these, younger migrants, especially women and those without proper documentation, are at greater risk of exploitation and slavery. Reintegration efforts for those who have suffered trauma or fallen victim to human rights abuses must be heightened. In addition, negotiating bilateral agreements with countries that support human rights may help workers transition into decent job markets and enhance safe mobility.

Developing strategies and policies to harness the development potential and contributions of young Ghanaians in the diaspora can also help promote socio-economic development and opportunities for return and reintegration. These efforts can be enhanced by focusing initiatives on second-generation diasporas and providing them with opportunities to prosper within the country.

Moving forward

As the world's economy becomes more integrated, and advancements in technology, agriculture and social structures influence policy, it is more important than ever to improve education and promote viable opportunities for the young people of Ghana. Developing the capabilities of the younger generation requires more than a simple investment; it demands that governing bodies recognise youth as a valuable asset and equal partners in Ghana's development. Youth must be given an opportunity to meaningfully participate in governance. In moving towards a sustainable future for Ghana, youth issues must be mainstreamed into all facets of government as well as local and national development strategies. Policies and programmes must take into account the diverse categories of the youth demographic and empower them to take the country in a direction that will benefit successive generations.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This report, commissioned by the National Youth Authority (NYA) with support from the Commonwealth Secretariat, serves to offer an overview of youth development in Ghana following a review of Ghana's National Youth Policy (NYP), enacted in 2010.

Drawing on evidence from interviews, an online survey and focus group discussions with key stakeholders and secondary data sources, the analysis highlights critical demographic and socio-economic issues affecting young people in Ghana today. Central among these are issues related to population dynamics, education, labour market participation, hunger and poverty, HIV and AIDS and other communicable diseases, substance abuse, youth crime and violence, and civic participation. The report also reviews contemporary development concerns, including environmental change, information and communication technologies (ICTs) and migration, so as to provide a broad picture of how various public policies and institutional programmatic interventions have targeted and addressed or overlooked the concerns, needs and aspirations of Ghanaian youth. Each chapter offers relevant recommendations that will be critical in guiding future interventions and policies pertaining to youth development.

1.1 Youth development and the evolving prioritisation of youth in policy and action

Globally, the world has the largest youth population in history. More specifically, 1.8 billion people, or 42 per cent of the world's population, are under 25 years of age. Close to 90 per cent of all young people live in developing countries, where they represent the majority of the population (Serajuddin et al., 2017). Projections for Africa predict that youth populations (comprising those aged 15–34 years) will represent 46 per cent of the increasing labour force from 2015 to 2063, averaging 12.1 million a year.

As 60 per cent of Africa's population is younger than 25 years, African Heads of State and Governments designated 2017 as the year of 'Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth'. This also contributed to implementation of the African Union's (AU's) Agenda 2063 and responded to the need to mobilise and invest in human capital. Across the continent, it has been recognised that equipping young people with the skills and tools to drive integration, peace and people-centred sustainable development will help individual countries reap demographic dividends.[1] This vision is underpinned by the principle of inclusive development and the goal of removing obstacles to female participation in society.

In this era of globalisation, there exists tremendous potential for youth populations with regard to self-development, in light of improved technology, increased

Box 1.1 Agenda 2063 and the First 10-Year Implementation Plan (2014–2023)

The Agenda 2063 Framework Document was developed and later adopted by African leaders at a 2015 Summit, to serve as the basis for Africa's long-term socio-economic and integrative transformation. The document mandated the African Union Commission (AUC) to prepare the First 10-Year Implementation Plan (2014–2023), the first in a series of five over the next fifty-year horizon, to offer a common basis for the preparation of medium-term development plans of member states of the AU, the Regional Economic Communities and the AU Organs. Embedding the Agenda in national youth policies and programmes will contribute to achievement of the overall continental goals.

Of the Seven Aspirations in the document, Aspiration 6 aims for: 'An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children: strengthening the role of Africa's women through ensuring gender equality and parity in all spheres of life (political, economic and social); eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls; creating opportunities for Africa's youth for self-realisation, access to health, education and jobs; and ensuring safety and security for Africa's children, and providing for early childhood development.'

Source: AUC (2015).

production and trade, access to knowledge and labour markets, and urbanisation. However, globalisation has also exposed vulnerable populations to hate speech, violence, conflict and insecurity, and environmental degradation, and many youth do not have access to basic social services such as health and education. This in turn affects their ability to enter the often-uncertain labour market. Similarly, many inequalities still exist among individuals and social groups, in terms of their ability to access opportunities, resulting from differences in sex, class, location, disability and ethnicity.

With the persistence of human development challenges and the unique vulnerabilities of young people, both the international community and UN member states have prioritised youth development issues as part of efforts aimed at achieving sustainable social and economic development. In 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This provides an overarching framework for global development until 2030 (see Box 1.2 for the SDGs most relevant to youth populations).

1.2 Youth leadership and engagement in development

At the regional and global level, youth-related issues have never been as high a priority as they are currently. The role of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth was created in 2013. In 2019, the AU appointed an AU Youth Envoy.

Box 1.2 SDG targets most relevant to young people

Given that nearly 50 per cent of the world's population is under the age of 30, young people are crucial to accountability under the 17 SDGs and their 169 targets. Moreover, young people play a vital role in national development and in implementing the new people-centred and people-led accountability mechanisms in realising the 2030 Agenda while 'leaving no one behind'.

Although the 17 SDGs do not specifically mention young people, some of the targets and indicators that underpin them address the needs and role of youth. The 2030 Agenda includes a commitment to 'the full realisation of [young people's] rights and capabilities, helping our countries to reap the demographic dividend'. The SDGs that explicitly refer to young people fall into two categories: those that refer to age disaggregation or age groups and those that specifically mention young people. Eight SDGs refer to age disaggregation or age groups in the Goal, targets or indicators: SDG 1 (poverty), SDG 3 (health), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work), SDG 10 (inequality), SDG 11 (sustainable cities), SDG 16 (peaceful, just and inclusive societies) and SDG 17 (partnership). There are explicit references to youth, young men and women, adolescents, girls and women aged 20–24 years in the targets or indicators of nine Goals: SDG 1 (poverty), SDG 2 (hunger), SDG 3 (health), SDG 4 (education), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 8 (decent work), SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 16 (peaceful, just and inclusive societies).

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (2016).

Since 2013, UN member states and other stakeholders have advanced a number of initiatives aimed at empowering young people. For instance, youth summits – such as the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Youth Forums, the Commonwealth Youth Forum and the World Youth Conference – have become influential platforms on the international stage. These efforts build on longstanding international youth policy frameworks such as the UN World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) and the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE).

Likewise, African leaders have put in place a number of youth-specific frameworks to improve the situation of young people, following the Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes and the Baku Commitment to Youth Policies. In particular, apart from the recently widely endorsed Agenda 2063, existing frameworks such as the Africa Youth Charter[2] underscore the need for, and provide guidance in the development of, national youth policies. They equally have the potential to encourage African leaders to transform education and skills development, human rights, health and well-being, and empowerment, as well as employment and entrepreneurship, which matter greatly in achieving sustainable development and peace.

Moreover, individual UN agencies have developed youth strategies to guide their work *with* young people. These include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Youth Strategy and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Strategy on Adolescents and Youth, and, most recently, Youth2030, the first ever UN strategy on working *with* young people (UN, 2018). This series of institutional youth strategies has prioritised youth development, covering economic empowerment, civic engagement and participation, resilience-building, and sexual and reproductive health, with a special focus on marginalised and disadvantaged youth, especially girls.

Similarly, bilateral development agencies have also taken steps to prioritise youth. For example, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) have all developed and published youth strategies to inform their programming around the world.

In essence, it can be said that various institutions have recognised young people's role in development. This presents the Government of Ghana (GoG) with an opportunity to review these youth strategies and to uncover areas of convergence or priorities in achieving the common vision of harnessing the development potential of young people.

1.3 Rationale and purpose

Ghana's current NYP, as enacted in 2010, identifies 19 thematic areas for interventions and services geared towards *youth empowerment*. The Policy underscores the essence of youth engagement and meaningful participation in the process of working with and on youth development issues. Although the Policy notes that youth are a 'valuable resource', surprisingly little is known about the current state of affairs in youth development. Measuring progress on youth development continues to be a challenge, regardless of how widely its importance has been recognised.

Fortunately, the 2010 NYP provides space for a review at least once every five years. Nearly eight years from when it was launched, a comprehensive review of the state of youth development needs to be undertaken with a view to understanding how various initiatives, including policies and programmatic interventions, have responded to the needs of young people. Additionally, given the persisting challenges, emerging development issues and evolving needs and aspirations of youth in a middle-income economy, it has become critical to understand the current needs and experiences of young people so as to be able to design appropriate evidence-based interventions.

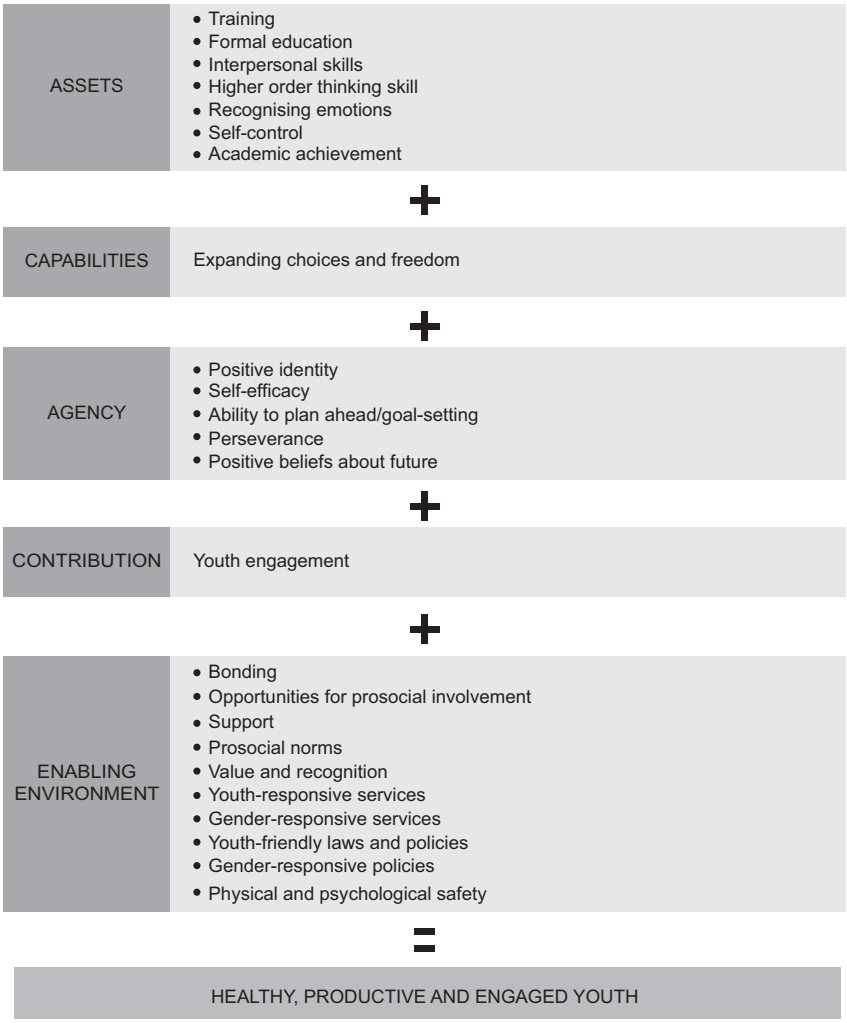
This report represents a response to the urgent necessity to understand the everyday lives of young people. In line with key development frameworks like the AU's Agenda 2063, it offers insights that can contribute to the transformation of Ghana's youth population and subsequently allow the country to reap the demographic dividend associated with successful population transitions through childhood to adulthood, and to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Ultimately, this report presents a baseline evaluation or situational analysis that can inform revisions of current policies or support the creation of new policies on priority issues for youth development.

1.4 Theoretical framework: Positive Youth Development and capabilities

The theoretical approach for this report is derived from the work of both Sen (1985) and Nussbaum (2000) on capabilities as well the concept of Positive Youth Development (PYD) (see Figure 1.1), which in recent times has underpinned a range of (youth) human development interventions.

The PYD framework, which in recent times has been championed by international development agencies including USAID and the International Research & Exchanges Board,[3] demonstrates that, to achieve the vision of healthy, productive and engaged

Figure 1.1 Positive Youth Development



Source: Author, adapted from https://www.youthpower.org/positive-youth-development-pyd-framework

youth, policy and programmatic interventions must work *with* youth to improve their:

- **Assets:** Youth are a valuable resource for every nation. However, they will need necessary resources and must be equipped with training and skills that will open up their competencies to achieve desired outcomes.
- **Capabilities:** This concept emphasises opportunities available to individuals as a result of the core capabilities to define quality of life. This includes, for instance, 'being able to have good health, adequate nutrition, adequate shelter, opportunities for sexual satisfaction and choice in reproduction, and mobility' (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2016, p. 9)

  The concept of capabilities offers effective prerequisites for youth development as well as policies that can contribute to the process of expanding young people's choices and freedoms that are critical to human development. Thus, beyond the implicit meaning of certain developmental terms, including 'poverty', which is often measured in terms of income, poverty will be seen in this report as going beyond income deprivation to mean capability deprivation, to understand how it can, for instance, limit a person's participation in education or civic and political life.
- **Agency:** A growing number of young people believe they have the ability to utilise their assets and aspirations to make a difference in their communities or influence decision-making that matters to their individual and collective lives. However, the wide range of challenges they confront undermines this potential. These challenges include lack of decent work opportunities, ineffective and undemocratic political participation structures, conflicts and violence, man-made and natural disasters, poor health services, and gender- and age-based discrimination.
- **Contribution:** Youth are seen as a source of social change and therefore opportunities are offered to them to contribute to development processes at various levels, including personal, family, community and national.
- **Enabling environment:** Youth development, and therefore the development of the capabilities of young people, happens within an ecosystem that strengthens their assets and agency; provides access to safe spaces, services and opportunities; and enhances their ability to avoid risks, to stay safe, secure and protected and to live without fear. An enabling environment allows young people to develop certain life-long skills such as public speaking, negotiation, teamwork, etc. The term 'environment' encompasses the social (e.g. relationships with peers and adults), the normative (e.g. attitudes, norms and beliefs), the structural (e.g. laws, policies, programmes, services and systems) and the physical (e.g. safe, supportive spaces).

Young people may suffer various forms of exclusion and discrimination and therefore, in using these concepts, an effort is made to explain the unique vulnerabilities and agential competences of young people. These may depend on, for instance, age- and other context-specific needs or factors such as economic status, education, sex, ethnic identity, disability and geography.

Thus, deliberate efforts may be needed for certain social groups that are often ignored or discriminated against, to ensure that age, sex, and social, cultural and environmental factors do not militate against the development of any young person and that no young Ghanaian is left behind. As this report notes, while social protection has been a key approach in addressing the needs of certain social groups, few programmatic and policy approaches have effectively and comprehensively addressed the needs of all youth, and these approaches rarely reach the most marginalised, those living in extreme poverty, teenage mothers and out-of-school youth, among others.

In essence, PYD requires a supportive political, legal and economic environment as well as responsive institutions that attend to the needs of young people and develop their capabilities and agency so they can participate in various aspects of society and life. Where young people are likely to be offered opportunities, they can develop; where they are constrained or lacking in second-chance opportunities, they may feel disempowered. This report uses the terms 'PYD' and 'youth development' interchangeably.

1.5 Approach to the report

1.5.1 Defining youth

According to Ghana's NYP (2010), youth is defined as those between 15 and 35 years. This definition is consistent with the AU's definition. For the purposes of this report also, youth are defined as persons between the ages of 15 and 35 years. While this definition is based on age, sociological research has revealed that being a youth is more of a social than a biological stage.

1.5.2 Gender and youth

There exist significant differences between the socio-economic realities that females experience in the course of their life and those that their male counterparts encounter. Female children and youth are more likely to be victims of poverty, discrimination and abuse. While gender norms are slowly shifting – especially in the growing middle-class, where families are adopting lifestyles that promote gender equality – this cannot be taken for granted. Consequently, all policies should pay particular attention to ensuring *equitable* rights for both males and females.

1.5.3 Methodology

Document and literature review

A thorough literature review was conducted to enable an understanding of the theoretical and conceptual approaches to working *with* youth as well as on youth development issues through national, regional and global youth development interventions (policies and programmes). Relevant documents were largely retrieved online from the websites of various ministries, departments and agencies. Other document sources, apart from Google search resources, included electronic journals from sources such as JSTOR, Children's Geographies, etc. The NYA supplied useful

documents regarding country-level instruments and documents related to youth development in Ghana. Additionally, a profile of youth was established using key demographic data from the Population and Housing Census from the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS).

Situational analysis of youth in Ghana

A situational analysis was generated to discuss key youth development indicators in relation to local, economic and social conditions, as well as development indicators such as the Commonwealth Youth Development Index (YDI), the UN SDGs and the AU's Agenda 2063.

Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions were conducted with young people and the members of the Technical Committee for the Review of the NYP to establish common views as well as clarify diverging perspectives among stakeholders by sector.[4] The relevant chapters of this report use selected quotes from the young participants[5] as part of an effort to promote direct *youth voices*.

One-on-one semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were designed based on the findings of the literature review. Various stakeholders were interviewed, including members of the youth demographic, youth workers and experts, donors, private sector employees and government officials, through in-depth one-on-one discussions on key issues to ensure representation of youth concerns. The total number of participants was 53 (see Annex 3 for details).

Validation workshop

On 4 June 2019, the NYA, under the auspices of the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) and with sponsorship from the Commonwealth Secretariat, organised a one-day Consultative Workshop to validate the findings of the draft *Overview of Youth Development in Ghana*, as well as to elicit further contributions from stakeholders working in the field of youth development. About 80 people, including representatives of various youth development institutions, public sector agencies, civil society (including youth-led or youth-focused organisations), private sector entities, and bilateral and multilateral agencies participated in the workshop. A deliberate effort was made to ensure balanced regional, age and gender representation of participants.

Limitations of the study

Despite the triangulated approach to data generation, identifying data on a broad range of youth development issues was a challenge, considering that research and knowledge around youth development is not easy to find. The GSS and the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) both made an effort to provide relevant baseline data. Aside from this, in most cases, documents reviewed failed to differentiate youth from the more general Ghanaian population. The Ghana

Youth Data Audit (Senanu, 2014) suggests that a number of the youth development priorities set forth in the current NYP lack any 'comprehensive youth data' (see Table 1.1); our researchers echoed this. Furthermore, there is inadequate differentiation by sex. This problem of age and sex differentiation is particularly glaring when it comes to district-level youth data. Consequently, until further investment and training takes place to enhance the capacity of institutions such as the NYA, the GSS and the NDPC, and other relevant government institutions and youth organisations, there will continue to be obvious gaps in the data. Ultimately, addressing this challenge is critical to evidence-based policy-making, as well as to the establishment of a Ghana Youth Development Index as recommended by the Commonwealth YDI, and thus efforts to measure progress towards achieving the SDGs.

In order to fill some of these data gaps, direct interviews were conducted, with the aim of enabling a further understanding the contemporary needs of Ghanaian youth. However, given the absence of data, the situational analysis in this document cannot be considered a full reflection of the experience of Ghanaian youth; rather, the findings should be considered indicative. Nonetheless, the analysis and the recommendations are valuable for moving forward with the youth development agenda and with a new youth policy that addresses some of the gaps identified.

1.6 Structure of the report

This report is divided into 17 chapters that focus on Ghanaian youth and the key issues of concern to their development. Each chapter contains a brief overview of the issue and its theoretical underpinnings, followed by a presentation of key trends and a brief summary of the chapter's findings, as well as strategic recommendations for

Table 1.1 Youth data availability

National policy priority areas...	
***Without* comprehensive youth data available**	***With* comprehensive youth data available**
Science, Research and Technology	Education and Skills Training
Information and Communication Technology	Youth and Employment
Entrepreneurial Development	Youth in Modern Agriculture
Gender Mainstreaming	Health, HIV and AIDS
Environment	
Networking and Partnerships	
Mentoring	
Art and Culture	
Governance, Democracy and Leadership	
Sports and Recreation	
Youth in Conflict	
Prevention and Peace-Building	
Youth Patriotism and Volunteerism	
Nationalism and Conscientisation of Youth	

Source: Senanu (2014).

future policies and initiatives. The report closes with a brief summary of findings and a discussion on the way forward on youth development in Ghana.

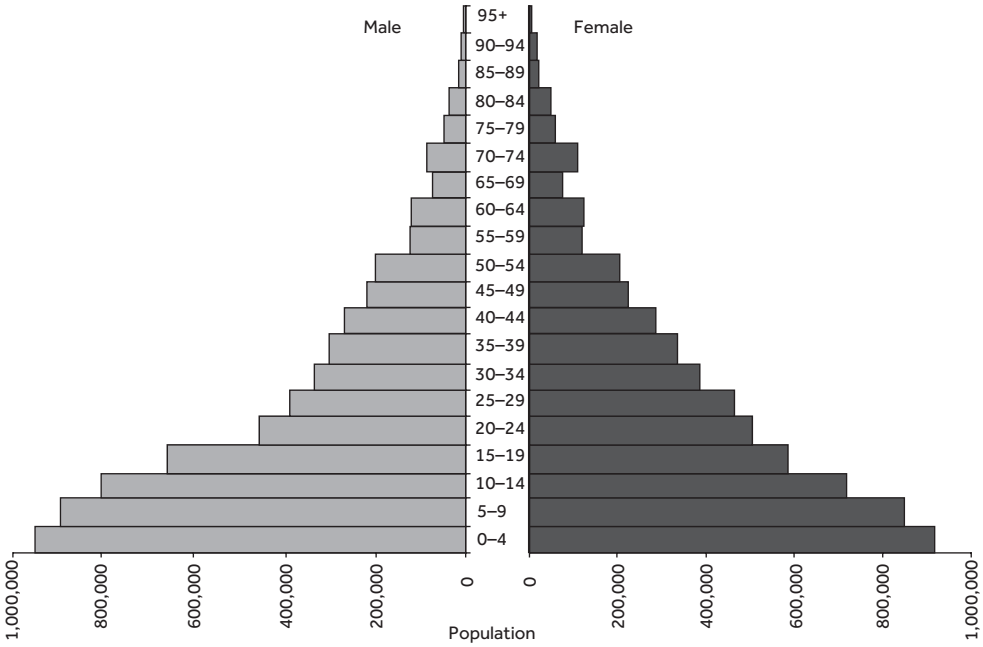
1.7 Ghanaian youth demographic profile

Understanding population dynamics is critical to understanding the status of population segments and the implications of this for the political, economic and human security of a nation. In particular, understanding a population's age trends is critical for investment in priority areas (e.g. education, health, employment and consumption). Likewise, age-to-sex considerations can reveal sex ratios and the implications for mortality, family formation and equitable access to social services among males in comparison with females. Young people may be considered a vulnerable social group, given the diverse risks they are likely to face in their life course. However, they are also recognised as the future of the country. It is therefore important to understand their population profile in order to be able to give them the attention they need.

1.7.1 Age and sex structure of Ghana

Ghana's population is youthful: 58 per cent of the total population (24,658,823) are aged under 25 years (GSS, 2013a). The population is characterised by a large share of children under 15 years and a small share of elderly persons (65 years and older), as reported by the 2010 Housing and Population Census (ibid.). A high fertility rate and a decreasing mortality rate are significant contributors to the population structure.

Figure 1.2 Population pyramid of Ghana, 2010



Source: GSS (2013a).

1.7.2 Spatial distribution of youth population

Demographic data suggests that, in all regions[6] of Ghana, the age group 20–24 years makes up less than 10 per cent of the population; the exception is Greater Accra, which has a record 11.4 per cent of its population in this age group (GSS, 2013b). Generally, data suggests that there are more females than males in each region (GSS, 2013a).

1.7.3 Youth mortality

Data suggests that males make up the higher proportion of all deaths. However, among youth aged 15–19 years, 60 per cent of deaths are of females and 40 per cent are of males (GSS, 2013b). It is likely that this higher female mortality rate is pregnancy-related, given that maternal deaths are common among young women (ibid.).

Similarly, among those aged over 20 years, females make up a higher proportion of deaths. Here, again, maternal mortality is deemed the major contributing factor (GSS, 2013b). For instance, 14 per cent and about 15 per cent, respectively, of deaths among those aged 20–24 and 25–34 years are maternal deaths (ibid.).

While pregnancy-related deaths are common among females, among young men and among young women who die for other reasons than those related to pregnancy and maternity, causes of death include accidents, violence, homicide and suicide (GSS, 2013b).

1.7.4 Recommendations

1. Ghana's youthful population suggests the need for the government to invest in priority human development issues such as education and health in order to ensure a healthy and productive population.
2. Youth do not represent a homogenous category, and young people have diverse experiences across geographical areas, age and gender. Thus, there is a need for critical analysis of the situation of young people beyond national or regional trends to understand their everyday life experiences.

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Notes

1 This is not the first time the AU has focused on youth (e.g. African Youth Decade 2009–2018).
2 The African Youth Charter 2006 entered into force on 8 August 2010. To date, 37 countries, including Ghana, have signed it, and 24 have also ratified it. The Charter highlights the rights, responsibilities and duties of youth in relation to various international agreements.
3 https://www.youthpower.org/positive-youth-development-pyd-framework
4 The NYA established this Technical Committee and organised consultations with young people and relevant stakeholders as part of on-going efforts to facilitate the review of the existing policy.
5 To protect the identity of interviewees, only their age and sex are revealed.
6 In this report, the administrative regions of Ghana refer to the 10 previous regions. Six new regions were created in 2019.

Chapter 2

Youth and Vulnerabilities

Over the past two decades, Ghana has made great strides in improving its social, economic and political structures, facilitating access to social services to reduce inequalities. Interventions aimed at mitigating the vulnerabilities facing Ghana's predominantly youthful population have had promising effects in enhancing the ability of this demographic to become active citizens and productive members of society today and in the near future. Nevertheless, there remain areas of vulnerability, with youth populations susceptible to a range of adversities and, as such, denied the fundamental freedom to make choices to enhance their lives without being compromised by deprivation or political-economic conditions (UNDP, 2014). These areas of vulnerability do not exist in isolation – that is, they are often intertwined and their impacts are compounded.

2.1 Social protection strategy

> '*Counselling should be part of our everyday life. But one problem is perception of Ghanaians. We have this perception that when you are going for counselling it is like you are really in need or you cannot actually use your [own] intellect to make good decisions*.' Female, 15–20 years

Ghana has made significant progress in relation to adopting social protection strategies aimed at reducing vulnerabilities among Ghanaians (including Ghanaian youth). Notably, a rationalisation study in 2013 that confirmed the need to develop a coordinated social protection sector gave rise to the National Social Protection Policy (2015). This policy, developed by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP), draws on Ghana's Shared Growth and Development Agenda 2014–2017 to produce a knowledgeable, skilled, productive and healthy population with the capacity to drive and sustain socio-economic transformation. It also builds on the Coordinated Programme for Economic and Social Development Policies 2014–2020 to reduce income disparities, enhance access to social security and develop social protection programmes for vulnerable groups such as children and youth. The Policy additionally aligns with Ghana's commitment to meet the SDGs through productive mechanisms that will empower and inform communities and work to protect youth from extreme poverty, social exclusion and inequality.

2.2 Key vulnerabilities

2.2.1 Poverty

Poverty remains one of the gravest threats to young people, as it is associated with a range of risks, such as malnutrition and health problems, exposure to hazardous environments, academic challenges (delayed enrolment, sporadic attendance, poor

Box 2.1 The SDGs and measures to reduce youth vulnerabilities

SDG 1. No Poverty

- Create income, jobs and decent work
- Increase social security and protection for the most vulnerable and disabled

SDG 2. Zero Hunger

- Facilitate school feeding programmes providing high-nutrient value food to pupils
- Modernise agriculture for increased local productivity and production
- Develop better land preservation and food waste practices to prevent food scarcity

SDG 3. Good Health and Well-Being

- Improve quality health care access, services and information
- Encourage youth-friendly, stigma-free and discrimination-free health services
- Raise awareness about the importance of healthy lifestyle practices

SDG 4. Quality Education

- Create well-educated citizens with skills to drive economy, science, technology and innovation through technical and vocational education and training programmes
- Ensure access to and equity of education to help youth and their communities in the future secure jobs and remain out of poverty
- Include reproductive health in the curriculum

SDG 5. Gender Equality

- Empower women and girls
- End violence and discrimination against women and girls
- Promote basic human rights, particularly around reproductive health in young women
- Ensure equity for women and men in access to education, work and equal pay, and participation in politics

SDG 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth

- Create sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the private sector
- Transform economies through diversification and resilience

- Improve working conditions and guarantee social benefits or health insurance
- Stop child and forced labour

SDG 10. Reduced Inequalities

- Grant equal land access to youth and women for income generation and food production through farming
- Ensure economic and social policies are applied fairly across all populations and regions
- Employ qualified youth without discrimination based on disability, gender, ethnicity or religion
- Engage marginalised youth in governance, policy and decision-making processes

grades, early drop-out), engagement in violence or conflict and difficulties developing skills suitable for employment (UNDP, 2014). The Ghana Poverty and Inequality Report (2016) found that, between 1992 and 2013, Ghana's national level of poverty fell by more than half, from 56.5 per cent to 24.2 per cent (Cooke et al., 2016). The report also shows that urban areas have a lower average rate of poverty compared with rural areas (10.6 per cent versus 37.9 per cent). Although no specific data on youth exists, it is estimated that about 3.65 million children (28.3 per cent) live in poverty, increasing their vulnerability to negative life-course outcomes (ibid.).

Addressing poverty

Many economic, political and social factors have contributed to the progress Ghana has made in addressing poverty. Included in these are Ghana's steady gross domestic product (GDP) growth; higher government budgetary allocations; debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative; an increase in foreign investment; and the introduction of social protection programmes aimed at targeting vulnerable populations. Initiatives include Livelihoods Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP), Labour-Intensive Public Works (LIPW) and, most recently, the Free Senior High School (FSHS) Policy.

The LEAP programme was initiated in 2007 with the goal of providing cash transfers and health insurance to poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged households across the country to alleviate short-term poverty and encourage long-term human capital development. Notably, this programme targets children, pregnant women and persons with disabilities as beneficiaries. Independent research found that LEAP had contributed to a 16 per cent increase in national health insurance enrolment among children and youth (Handa et al., 2013). It had also increased school enrolment among secondary school children by 7 per cent and reduced primary school absenteeism, particularly among girls, by 10 per cent. The number of beneficiary households has

gradually increased, from 1,654 in 21 districts in 2008 to 213,048 in 216 districts across the 10 regions of Ghana in 2016 (MOGCSP, 2018). Despite its wide success, though, LEAP currently faces problems related to management coordination and administration of payments (Handa et al., 2013).

The LIPW programme, under the Ghana Social Opportunities Project, started in 2011 to provide targeted rural poor households with access to employment and income-earning opportunities, particularly during the agricultural off-season from November to March/April and in response to external shocks. The Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research conducted an evaluation of the programme in 2012 in 11 districts and confirmed that it had had a positive impact (World Bank, 2016). In relation to youth, the level of indebtedness for households with youth aged 25–34 years had declined by 4 percent and the likelihood of having savings (either at home or at financial institutions) had increased by 6 percent (ibid.).

Introduced by GoG in 2017, the FSHS Policy was designed to provide free public secondary education, expand infrastructure, improve the quality and equity of education and enhance the development of employable skills through a diverse curriculum (MOE, 2018). Its establishment has been recognised as a GoG achievement but it remains too early to determine the educational outcomes and financial sustainability of the programme.

2.2.2 Inequality and social exclusion

> '*There is still not equal access to resources and other stuff. Yesterday in class, we selected course reps – a boy and a lady… The lecturer [dictated] that the boy should be assisted by the lady*.' Female, 15–20 years

Inequality and social exclusion can be explained as being the result of 'a cultural devaluation of groups and categories of people in a society by virtue of who they are, or rather, who they are perceived to be' (Kabeer, 2005). Social exclusion and inequality in youth populations are associated with gender, disability, socio-economic status and religion, and can result in differences in access to basic needs and services such as health care and education. Ghana's political, social and economic structures consistently privilege some while disadvantaging others, creating inequalities in income, assets and opportunities. For example, as a result of gender discrimination, females are often excluded from opportunities to secure jobs and earn decent wages based on the assumption that they should prioritise domestic work and early marriage rather than academic life (Jones and Chant, 2009). Likewise, youth in rural areas are often excluded from economic opportunities and social services as a result of their inaccessibility (Porter et al., 2011).

Addressing inequality and social exclusion

> *'We live in a community where people still perceive girls to be those who do house chores… After school you are supposed to be in the kitchen and your brother is supposed to probably go out there and play football.'* Female, 15–20 years

GoG and many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are playing a pivotal role in addressing the inequality gap across multiple indicators, through policy changes and initiatives designed to empower disadvantaged groups. For example, the project *Integrating Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in National Policies, Programmes and Commitments* (GESI), coordinated by STAR-Ghana, engages key stakeholders such as the Ghana Health Services, MOGCSP and civil society organisations to ensure national policies systematically integrate gender equality and social inclusion.

GESI has led to the creation of several programmes.[1] One example, *Youth Speak Out*, a project in collaboration with Youth Empowerment for Life, aims to develop inclusive governance and leadership through youth parliaments, by empowering and providing platforms for youth voice regarding issues and concerns with local authorities. To date, there has been an increased response from various authorities, leading to positive on-the-ground change in communities. Also, *Mission Ghana on TV* works with the media and civil society organisations to influence action by local authorities through public broadcasting on social exclusion issues facing the youth demographic. Already, there have been documented improvements in access to and delivery of health and educational services for youth populations. However, despite these and other efforts to narrow the inequality gap, there is still significant work to be done and further strategic action is required.

2.2.3 Unemployment

Ghana's remarkable economic growth over the past decade, including its transition into lower-middle-income country status, has not necessarily translated into more job opportunities for its rapidly expanding labour force. The World Bank has estimated that 48 per cent of Ghanaian youth aged 15–24 are unemployed (Honorati and Johansson de Silva, 2016). With the youth demographic consisting of more than half the country's population, current and future generations are at risk of not being able to maintain sustainable livelihoods, not overcoming delayed life transitions and/or not developing necessary capabilities regarding family, child-rearing, lifestyle and well-being, and further contributing to a cycle of poverty. According to the NYP 2010, youth face specific labour-related challenges, including inaccessibility of labour markets, a lack of experience and skills, and inability to secure better-paying jobs (MOYS, 2010). Unemployment rates appear to be higher among females than males, and among rural youth as compared with urban populations. Recent estimates suggest that, by age 20, 26 per cent of all females are unemployed with no education or training, compared with only 13 per cent of their male counterparts (GSS, 2014; Honorati and Johansson de Silva, 2016). Females, particularly in rural areas, are also more likely to leave school early, thereby reducing their level of access to the labour market, and are more likely to find employment in risky situations (GSS, 2014; Honorati and Johansson de Silva, 2016).

Addressing youth unemployment

Many programmes and initiatives have been developed to tackle the growing youth unemployment rates in Ghana. However, even after years of capital investment and

implementation, it is clear these are not adequate in supporting the youth demographic. The World Bank estimates that public and private programmes cover less than 4 per cent of the approximately 9 million youth in Ghana (Babongte Avura and Ulzen-Appiah, 2016). Some of the inadequacies of these programmes and initiatives can be attributed to the growing nature of the youth population and increased participation in higher education – which is leaving educated youth unemployed as a result of limited job opportunities.

GoG first introduced the *National Youth Employment Programme*, later known as the *Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency*, in 2006 as an initiative to address high youth unemployment and to empower youth to contribute to the socio-economic development of the nation. Its strategy consisted of offering essential services such as health and education, promoting good governance, providing employment and training youth in specific skills using a wide range of modules. Nevertheless, by the end of 2011, the programme had offered jobs to only about 108,000 Ghanaians, which was not much given the amount of capital investment involved (Attipoe-Fitz, 2010). Both the National Youth Employment Programme and the Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency collapsed as a result of major shortcomings in producing long-term jobs, corruption, increasing expenses and, most importantly, inability to address the specific interests of youth as a result of lack of consultation of key stakeholders in their creation and implementation (Donkoh, 2010).

Subsequently, in 2015, the Youth Employment Agency was established under the Youth Employment Act to facilitate employment by providing training and entrepreneurial skills to youth through the use of modules and internships. This programme has received international recognition, and yet it too has directly employed only 100,000 young people out of 1 million applicants per year (Babongte Avura and Ulzen-Appiah, 2016). This speaks to the on-going need for further evaluation and analysis to design more effective initiatives.

2.2.4 Early marriage and parenthood

Young people in Ghana experience many social transitions during adolescence that can have significant consequences for their growth and future capabilities. These transitions are typically influenced by social and cultural norms, which may include choices and responsibilities such as early marriage, teenage pregnancy and early parenthood. The Ghana Maternal Health Survey 2017 shows that 8 per cent women aged 25–49 were first married by age 15 and 26 per cent by age 18. Furthermore, 14 per cent of women aged 15–19 have begun child-bearing. Women in rural areas marry about three years earlier than urban women, which also makes them prone to earlier child-bearing. Moreover, the age of first marriage, first sexual intercourse and start of child-rearing increases proportionately in relation to wealth and education status (GSS and MOH, 2018). Evidence has shown that investing in females can have large economic and social benefits, as females who stay in school longer tend to marry and have children later, thus decreasing the risk of maternal and child mortality as well as that of lower educational and employment status (de Groot et al., 2018).

A study in the suburbs of Accra found that, out of 50 respondents, 82.8 per cent believed that pregnancy affected their academic performance through reduction of study hours, and 94 per cent believed there was no possibility of them returning to school after delivery (Gyan, 2013). Overall, 66 per cent agreed that teenage pregnancy could be caused by school drop-out and 67 per cent that it could lead to school drop-out (Gyan, 2013; Amponsem-Boateng et al., 2018). For females in school, pregnancy and motherhood pose additional issues, including discrimination and condemnation from family, educational institutions and government officials. There is no policy or law protecting adolescent mothers' rights to education and, as a result, many girls are left to face economic hardship, violence and challenges in obtaining decent jobs and developing their capabilities (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

Addressing early marriage and parenthood

Levels of early parenthood and child-bearing have decreased in Ghana as a result of multiple programmes aimed at raising awareness of sexual and reproductive health rights and services. One major example is the Ghana Adolescent Reproductive Health Programme. This programme, coordinated by the National Population Council and Ghana Health Service (GHS), works to improve reproductive health knowledge and behaviour for up to 350,000 adolescents and to strengthen family planning services in Brong Ahafo region. Brong Ahafo, known for its high teenage pregnancy rates, has since shown a significant drop in pregnancies compared with the national average (GHS, 2016). The programme has also implemented over 50 adolescent-friendly/youth corners to encourage youth to seek reproductive health and family planning services, and established nine health clubs in schools to promote peer education training and activities encouraging healthy sexual and reproductive behaviour. It is estimated that 200,000 adolescents had benefited from this programme as of 2016 (ibid.).

2.2.5 Sexual exploitation and abuse

> '*We had students sleeping with teachers for marks in our school. So, you could take a student's exam paper, read a whole essay he/she has written and then it does not make sense… but that person has a higher score than you do. When you report them to the school authorities, they do nothing about it*.' Female, 15–20 years

Sexual exploitation and abuse, growing concerns in Ghana, include prostitution, trafficking, sex tourism, pornography and early child marriage, among others. Ghanaian law, including the 1992 Constitution, the Criminal Code (amendment) Act of 1998, the Children's Act of 1998, the Human Trafficking Act of 2005 and the Domestic Violence Act of 2007, prohibits most types of sexual exploitation of children and contains detailed provisions on children's rights, processes and procedures (Department of Social Welfare and UNICEF, 2011). There is also the Ending Child Marriage Campaign by MOGCSP, which has developed a 10-year National Strategic Framework to provide an integrated vision and a clear direction to all stakeholders related to the campaign (MOGCSP, 2016).

Box 2.2 Agenda 2063 and measures to reduce youth vulnerabilities

Agenda 2063 calls for 'an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena'. To this extent, it presents a set of seven goals, a comprehensive analysis of progress made to date, key issues to be addressed and a working framework with strategies to approach and attain these goals in the next 50 years.

1. **A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development:** End poverty and inequality of income and opportunities, create more jobs, improve quality of life and access to basic services, improve infrastructure, provide social security and protection and transform Africa's economy through industrialisation, modernisation and sustainable use of natural resources
2. **An integrated continent, politically united, based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance:** Seek continental unity and integration through trade, exchange of goods and services, free movement of people and capital, expansion of ICT and development of transportation infrastructure to unite the continent
3. **An Africa of good governance, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law:** Practising good governance and democracy, compliance with human right laws and facilitating the emergence of development-oriented leaders to exercise justice and anti-corruption
4. **A peaceful and secure Africa:** Strengthen governance, accountability and transparency, practise peace prevention and conflict resolution/reconciliation and address any emerging threats to Africa's peace and security using self-financed means
5. **An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics:** Restoring and preserving Africa's cultural heritage, promoting creative arts and culture in Africa's transformation and instilling the spirit of Pan-Africanism among generations
6. **An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children:** Ensuring and practising gender equality in all aspects of life, eliminating discrimination and violence towards women and girls, encouraging safe and responsible livelihoods, creating opportunities and improving access to health, education and employment
7. **Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner:** Improving Africa's global governance and contributions by refocusing its partnerships and establishing its financial independence in priority areas for growth, transformation and development

Source: Adapted from AUC (2015).

Yet, despite legislative efforts, constraints related to funding, resource allocation, data, training of enforcement officials and regulation of child protection laws have resulted in an increase in the number of children exploited (UNICEF, 2009). A study on sexual exploitation in Ghana found that, in most areas, child prostitution was believed to be the most common form of exploitation, with victims mostly female between the ages of nine and sixteen, operating independently; poverty, poor access to social services, family separation, lack of support, peer influence, the media and perpetrator coercion were identified as reasons leading to exploitation and abuse (Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child and ECPAT, 2015). It is important to address these factors in order to be able to protect children and youth and ensure a healthy population. This can be done through restrictions on pornography, increased training for law enforcement officials, support services for children and the enforcement of legislation. Under the coordination of a National Secretariat, for example, the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Units – a nationwide network of 11 regional police units and 75 local police units – have been tasked with the responsibility of investigating, prosecuting and supporting all domestic violence and child abuse cases in Ghana (Alhassan, 2007; Training Resources Group and Play Therapy Africa, 2012).

2.3 Summary points

1. Key factors affecting youth in Ghana include poverty, inequality and social exclusion, unemployment and early parenthood.
2. The National Social Protection Policy 2015 was formulated to produce a knowledgeable, skilled, productive and healthy population with the capacity to drive and sustain socio-economic development, reduce income inequality and develop social protection programmes.
3. Poverty is associated with risks such as poor health and malnutrition, exposure to hazardous environments, problems in school, engagement in violence, difficulties finding employment and ineffective citizenship. To this end, programmes such as LEAP have been developed.
4. Ghana's political, social and economic policies consistently privilege some groups of people and disadvantage others, creating inequalities in income, assets and opportunities. To this end, initiatives such as GESI have been formed.
5. Youth face challenges in the labour market, including in accessing opportunities and networking, attaining experience and skills and securing better-paying jobs in the formal sector. The Youth Employment Agency has initiated various programmes to equip youth with skills to enter the labour force prepared.

2.4 Recommendations

1. Expand and improve coordination between social protection programmes to prevent overlap and enable equal distribution. This can be done by developing a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework to track performance and impact.

2. Develop policies designed to reduce youth vulnerability that address underlying structural inequalities, remove constraints for more disadvantaged youth people and enable the realisation of potential. To this end, economic policy and social policy must be integrated.

3. Most vulnerabilities facing young people are shaped by the circumstances in which they live. Poverty, inequality, social exclusion, hazardous environments, etc. can be addressed by improving living environments (e.g. expanding coverage of basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity, safe housing and rural roads), which will grant young people access to more services and social and employment opportunities.

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Note

1 http://www.star-ghana.org/index.php/our-work/gender-equality-and-social-inclusion

Chapter 3

Education and Skills Training

Ghana is known for its central government subsidisation of primary and senior high school education. However, to understand the foundations of this system, it is necessary to go back to look at the country's history under colonial rule.

3.1 A vision for Ghana's education growth

In 1995, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) partnered with GoG to establish Ghana Vision 2020. According to the IMF, 'the new development framework would foster stronger economic growth and better living standards for the people of Ghana' (Abukari et al., 2015, p. 3), with investment and reform in the education sector as key pillars. The first notable output of the partnership was the Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) Policy in 1995, promising universal education by 2005. This 'guaranteed 9 years of free basic education for all children of school-going age with emphasis on quality teaching and learning, efficient management and sustainability, increased access, and decentralization of education management' (ibid., p. 4).

3.2 Centralising and democratising education policy in the early 2000s

3.2.1 The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

With an agenda to move towards a more state-centric solution, GoG renewed FCUBE as part of other policy initiatives and labelled it the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS). GPRS I, in 2003, marked a more inclusive age in education policy. This increased the duration of basic education from nine to eleven years, comprising two years of kindergarten, six years of primary school and three years of junior high school (JHS). Within this education expansion, there was a focus on literacy, creative arts, numeracy and problem-solving skills. GoG also recognised the excessive prioritisation of traditional education, and increased investment in technical and vocational training. One key issue that the FCUBE Policy had failed to address was teacher absenteeism, so GPRS sought to upgrade teacher training colleges and offer incentives to teachers in rural areas, particularly in northern Ghana. Finally, GPRS I laid out the preliminary stages of a strategy to introduce ICT into the curriculum and provide special education needs at all levels.

GPRS II, covering 2006–2009, focused on reducing poverty through the use of debt relief funds from the HIPC Initiative 'to increase access to and participation in all level of education and training and to bridge the equity gap in access to quality health care and nutrition services' (Republic of Ghana, 2005, p. 27). However, GPRS II failed to sufficiently address challenges associated with gender equality, children from low-income families, children with disabilities and rural youth. This led to the emergence

of new programmes to fill the gap for rural, marginalised and impoverished populations. Two notable gap-addressing policies were the Capitation Grant and the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP).

3.2.2 The Capitation Grant

Although the FCUBE Policy was supposed to provide free basic education to all, students still had to pay multiple fees as well as for their own supplies. This often acted as a barrier to impoverished families. In fact, '25% of children between ages 6 and 17 dropped out of school in 2003 because of these ancillary costs' (Abukari et al., 2015, p. 5). As a response to this, the Capitation Grant was introduced in 2005, under GPRS I and GPRS II, to subsidise fees and ultimately reduce inequality of access. After implementation, net primary school enrolment increased from 59 per cent to 69 per cent in school districts where the programme was first piloted, with the largest increase among girls, and the country achieved the gross enrolment target at primary level in 2013 (MOE, 2013).

However, it is felt that this spurred increase in enrolment has not been met by an increase in school resources: 'due to inadequate teachers and insufficient school supplies, a fee-free education would be meaningless to a rural child who only sees a teacher once a week or in some instances once a month or not at all' (Abukari et al., 2015, p. 5). In 2014, the Ministry of Education (MOE) reported pupil–teacher ratios of 42:1 and 18:1 for primary and secondary schools, respectively, in rural areas of the country, against targets of 35:1 and 25:1. This shows a clear imbalance in teacher allocation by education level and region. Because of these resource shortages, many students in impoverished areas have failed to obtain basic competency in reading and mathematics, even after several school years. In terms of providing students with employable skills, the aid from the Capitation Grant has little to show.

One potential strategy to assist with student absenteeism is to provide subsidies to impoverished families for the cost of their child attending school instead of working at home – a payment that could be delivered in the form of an education grant – as it is highly likely that the cost of providing temporary funding to target families will be exceeded by the economic benefit of their children attending school. Furthermore, incentivising quality teachers to move to areas where they are most required would go far to reduce teacher shortages. Allocating additional funds for teacher salaries with the provision of classroom materials in certain regions will be necessary to further address inequalities in educational opportunities.

3.3 Current policies addressing educational access and quality in Ghana: The Education Strategic Plan

3.3.1 Education strategy: a review of the 2003–2008 period

In 2003, MOE released a number of initiatives under the first Education Strategic Plan (ESP), focusing on education access, quality of education, education management, science, technology, and technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Following the conclusion and revision of this programme, in 2010 MOE, in partnership with the Ghana Education Service (GES), released an updated

Table 3.1 SWOT analysis takeaways

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
• Increased access to basic education through improved public awareness and the use of capitation grants • Complementary education and other non-formal opportunities for out-of-school children and adults • Community–school partnerships	• Improved use of public resources in education through efficiency savings and value for money • Improved effectiveness through accountable decentralisation • The report card system
WEAKNESSES	**THREATS**
• Poor retention Of pupils in the basic cycle Of committed teachers, especially in deprived areas • Increasingly inequitable distribution of education benefits • Management capacity, particularly at district levels	• A lack of effective means of ensuring decent returns against rising costs, especially on salaries • Expansion of the tertiary sector with little regard for the national economy • Official and unofficial absences • Diminishing public perceptions of the value of education

Source: MOE (2012).

ESP, which is on-going to the end of 2020. To understand the goals and functionality of this plan, it is important to look first at the outcomes of the previous ESP – its accomplishments and failures. In 2008, the state conducted a Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats (SWOT) analysis of the initial ESP, to guide the 2010–2020 ESP. The analysis indicated a need for improvements in overall quality of education, increased investment in teacher training for kindergarten and primary schools, strategies for retaining JHS students and the reorientation of tertiary spending towards science, technology and vocational training (see Table 3.1).

3.3.2 The 2007 Education Reform and 2008 Education Act

In response to the government analysis of the first ESP, both the 2007 Education Reform and the 2008 Education Act were passed. Many specialised policies used today were implemented under these Acts, including the TVET Policy, designed to improve student employability and trainability; the ICT Policy, designed to provide equitable access to science and tech training to meet labour market demands; and the Inclusive Education and Special Educational Needs Policies (Boateng, 2018), which increase equitable access for, and sustain public awareness of, students with special needs.

3.3.3 The Inclusive Education Policy

Although Ghana has made numerous advances in the past few decades in its education system, little has been done to improve access to quality education for students with disabilities. Approximately 194,026 Ghanaian youth have a disability. Generally, 40 per cent of persons with disabilities in Ghana aged three years and older have no formal education (GSS, 2014). In 2013, the Inclusive Education Policy was created to redefine and recast the delivery and management of educational

Box 3.1 A rights-based approach to education

In 2001, the UN established a framework to use in viewing education policy goals. This sees access to quality education as a right, not a privilege. This rights-based approach can be broken into four interconnected categories: Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability and Adaptability. Each category is governed by the universal right to a high-quality education: the Right to Education, Rights in Education and Rights Through Education.

TOMAŠEVSKI'S CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO EDUCATION		
RIGHT TO EDUCATION	AVAILABILITY	• Fiscal allocations matching human rights obligations • Schools matching school-aged children (number, diversity) • Teachers (education and training, recruitment, labour rights, trade union freedoms)
	ACCESSIBILITY	• Elimination of legal and administrative barriers • Elimination of financial obstacles • Identification and elimination of discriminatory denials of access • Elimination of obstacles to compulsory schooling (frees, distance, schedule)
RIGHTS IN EDUCATION	ACCEPTABILITY	• Parental choice of education for their children (with human rights correctives) • Enforcement of minimal standards (quality, safety, environmental health) • Language of instruction • Freedom from censorship • Recognition of children as subjects of rights
	ADAPTABILITY	• Minority children • Indigenous children • Working children • Children with disabilities • Child migrants, travelers
RIGHT THROUGH EDUCATION	ADAPTABILITY	• Concordance of age-determined rights • Elimination of child marriage • Elimination of child labour • Prevention of child soldiering

Source: Tomaševski (2001). p. 12, box 1.

services to respond to the diverse needs of all learners through the establishment of an environment that enables students with diverse and special needs to realise their academic potential (MOE, 2013). Based on every child's right to quality education without discrimination, the Policy aims to create schools based on universal access to education with the goal of building a society that is inclusive of everyone.

The Inclusive Education Policy outlines four main policy objectives: improving and adapting the curriculum to accommodate those with special needs; promoting an inclusive school environment to enhance the quality of education for all learners; developing a human resource framework for the successful delivery of the Policy; and ensuring the long-term sustainability of implementation through collaboration with government institutions, including MOE officials.

In order to ensure schools are well-funded and inclusive institutions with the training and resources necessary to work with marginalised students, a number of strategies are currently being pursued. These include setting up existing special needs institutions as resource centres for other schools to ensure the latter are sufficiently equipped and their physical infrastructure has been modified to accommodate students with special needs; providing additional teacher training opportunities; ensuring access to relevant equipment and assistive devices; reviewing the school curriculum and assessment to ensure these align with the needs of marginalised students; promoting school health programmes; establishing consistent sources of funding to improve access for marginalised groups; and advocating for national standards on inclusive education in schools (MOE, 2013).

3.3.4 Education Strategic Plan framework 2010–2020

The current ESP framework builds on the guiding principles of education policies implemented in the early 2000s (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 Focal areas of the ESP 2010–2020

1 Basic Education	First cycle: kindergarten, primary, junior high
2 Second Cycle Education	Senior high (general and technical); technical and vocational institutes, apprenticeship, agriculture
3 Non-Formal Education	Complementary education, training, skills, literacy, adult education, informal apprenticeship
4 Inclusive and Special Education	Inclusion of excluded children within mainstream schools, special needs, special school and units
5 Tertiary Education	Third cycle: colleges of education, professional institutes, polytechnics, universities, open learning
6 Education Management	Planning, decision-making, accountability, finance, decentralisation, capacity-building

Source: MOE (2012).

The Ghana Secondary Education Improvement Project

In 2014, GoG began collaborating with the World Bank to initiate the Ghana Secondary Education Improvement Project, designed to increase access to senior secondary education in underserved districts as well as improve the quality of education in areas with low-performing senior high school (SHS).[1] The project components, based on outcomes of the education reforms of the early 2000s (most notably the ESP), included increasing access to SHS through the construction of new secondary schools in target areas; rehabilitation and expansion of low-performing schools; and provision of academic scholarships and grants for needy students.

There has been considerable progress since project implementation in 2014. In 2018, an independent report was released, marking the project's third full year (World Bank, 2018). This found substantial progress, with the creation of approximately 5,000 new spots in underserved districts; an increase in enrolment by about 3,000; and over 6,000 SHS students receiving scholarships in participating schools, with ICT-based instruction introduced in 95 per cent of these. Furthermore, the JHS to SHS transition rate has risen steadily, from 39 per cent in 2014 to 64 per cent in 2018 (ibid.), suggesting improvement in JHS completion rates.

West African Secondary School Certificate Exam results indicate an increased share of students meeting the requirements for tertiary education, from 10.7 per cent in 2014 to 15.2 per cent in 2018 (World Bank, 2018). There also appears to have been progress in addressing socio-economic gaps in educational attainment: in the Ghana Living Standard Survey, 'the two poorest quintiles of targeted districts have increased from a baseline of 14.3% in 2014 to 22.4% in 2016/17' (ibid., p. 2). Over 10,000 scholarships have been given to students from low-income families (60.5 per cent of them female) and 50 existing SHSs have been rehabilitated. Additionally, a school mapping portal has been created and developed for 231 schools, and an ICT-based mechanism (I-box and I-campus) has been introduced to deliver supplementary classroom materials in target areas (World Bank, 2018). That being said, there is still room for vocational infrastructure development, as only five vocational and technical facilities have been initiated across the country (ibid.).

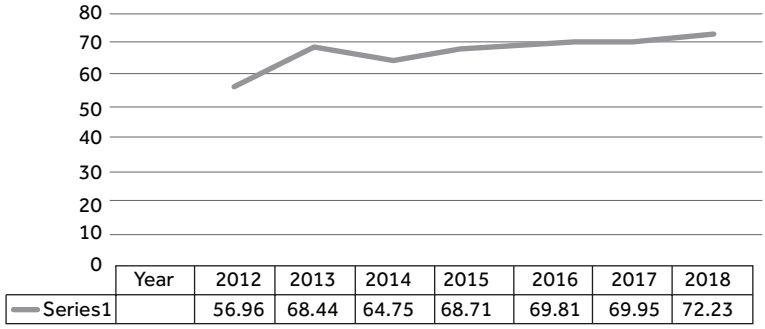
Increasing access: the Free Senior High School Programme

> '*I feel there is much more to quality education. We have to educate the people so they really understand… help us understand our nation better… [so] that in the near future we are able to still stand… based on the knowledge we acquired.*' Female, 15–20 years old

In 2017, with the goal of increasing enrolment through the elimination of SHS tuition fees for young Ghanaians, MOE presented the Free Senior High School Programme as a catalyst for the 2018–2030 ESP extension. It linked this directly with SDG 4 and GoG's Education 2030 Agenda, with the rationale that the long-term benefits would outweigh the short-term costs.

Data indicates that, since initiation in 2017, the programme has been having a positive effect on student enrolment. Registration for the SHS entrance exam (the Basic

Figure 3.1 Gross enrolment ratio, secondary, both sexes, 2012–2018 (%)



Source: UNESCO (n.d.).

Education Certificate Examination) increased by 11.5 per cent from 2017 to 2018 and enrolment for SHS increased by 30.7 per cent (Prempeh, 2018). Nevertheless, despite the apparent successes of the programme, GoG still faces wide criticism, including that poor regions still have access only to less established institutions that offer a lower-quality education and charge higher material costs as a result of lack of funding. Meanwhile, students in wealthier regions with more established institutions enjoy better-quality education at lower material costs.

> *'I think we are also learning too much theory. Because after the four years you can go to a company and they will say you are not fit for the job because you do not have the skills.'* Male, 15–20 years

Figure 3.1 shows enrolment in secondary school education since 2012 as a percentage of the 15–24 years age group. Two significant increases in enrolment were recorded in 2015 and 2018, suggesting that the Ghana Secondary Education Improvement partnership and the FSHS programme are both working to successfully increase student enrolment.

3.4 Looking forward to the Sustainable Development Goals (2020–2030)

Areas of focus in working towards the SDGs include inequalities in spending across the socio-economic hierarchy and a need to better understand why these inequalities exist. Across primary, secondary and tertiary levels, Ghana has one of the highest rates of inequality in education spending between the poorest and richest 20 per cent (Table 3.3). Government programmes should seek to address these external variables to ensure equity across both access and quality.

The measurement of academic success through enrolment rates and not learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2016) remains an inherent flaw. For example, even though enrolment rates are relatively constant across genders, youth aged 15–24 see a female–male literacy ratio of only 0.85 (ibid.). Enrolment rates are simply not the only indicator of academic success and therefore should not be used in isolation.

Table 3.3 Household spending on public education by income quintile, selected countries and years (%)

Country	Year(s)	Primary		Secondary		Tertiary		Total	
		Poorest	Richest	Poorest	Richest	Poorest	Richest	Poorest	Richest
Bangladesh	2010	27	13	13	23	2	55	20	20
Burundi	2006	23	13	12	27	4	59	15	29
Congo, Rep.	2011	21	16	18	18	1	62	–	–
Ghana	2007	19	13	13	20	4	65	12	34
Honduras	2004	31	6	5	20	1	67	–	–
Indonesia	2007	26	11	15	19	4	57	20	23
Pakistan	2007–08	25	11	16	23	9	55	17	28
Thailand	2011	25	14	–	–	1	73	20	26
Uaganda	2009–10	19	15	6	38	1	68	–	–
Zambia	2010	22	14	8	39	0	86	15	31

Source: World Bank (2017).

A number of obstacles for disadvantaged youth continue to exist. For young women, considerable social stigma remains around education attendance, along with the patriarchal values that lead to education exclusion. One common output of patriarchal societies is early marriage and pregnancy, which further diminish the ability of women to attend school. Similarly, drop-out and illiteracy rates are disproportionately high among students with disabilities (GSS, 2014), largely because of a lack of the physical, medical and academic infrastructure necessary to accommodate them.

During group discussions and interviews with young people, concerns were raised that the teaching methods in SHS are geared towards preparing students to pass specific exams and do not challenge students to think critically and develop entrepreneurial skills. With respect to the programme itself, there is apprehension that the funding, which is largely dependent on revenue from oil reserves, is volatile at best; it has been recommended that GoG provide more secure financing (Ibrahim, 2018).

Addressing the skills gap between what secondary students are trained in and what is demanded in labour markets is also critically important. Introducing industry case studies similar to those handled by entry-level employees into the curriculum would be beneficial in preparing students for employment. Finally, GoG must work to actively obtain secure funding sources for this programme. Expanding on Act 754 (Ghana Parliament, 2008), which takes revenue from Ghana's extractive sector (oil and gas, gold, etc.) and reallocates it to education and skills training programmes, is a start, but revenue-stable sources should be considered, such as investment by international development organisations or multinational corporations (Ibrahim, 2018). Enforcement mechanisms should exist all the way down to the local level, with appropriate measures in place to oversee implementation of the FSHS Programme and its provision of funds.

3.5 Summary points

1. A number of strategies and policies, including GPRS and the Capitation Grant, marked a more inclusive age in education policy, focusing on upgrading teacher training and providing free education.
2. Reviews indicate the need for improvements in the overall quality of education, increased investment in teacher training, strategies for retaining students and the reorientation of tertiary spending towards science, technology and vocational training.
3. The Inclusive Education Policy of 2013 was created to redefine and recast the delivery and management of education services to respond to the diverse needs of all learners through the creation of environments that enable students with diverse and special needs to realise their academic potential.
4. The Secondary Education Improvement Project 2014 was a government collaboration with the World Bank to increase access to senior secondary education in underserved districts as well as to improve the quality of education in areas with low-performing high schools.

5. The FSHS Programme 2017 had the goal of increasing enrolment through elimination of SHS tuition fees. Despite its successes, questions remain regarding the quality of education for students in impoverished areas and the high material costs they have to pay for supplies, as well as inequalities of access facing females and students with disabilities. Concerns have also been raised regarding the SHS curriculum, which is geared towards preparing students to pass specific exams without giving them skills to secure employment after graduation.
6. Looking forward, the primary objectives of SDG 4 include improving secondary education quality, bridging the gender gap, improving teacher resources, expanding infrastructure in rural communities and promoting lifelong learning.

3.6 Recommendations

1. *Marginalisation by gender and disability*: Inequalities in access to education exist for girls and youth with disabilities, particularly in impoverished and rural areas. Solutions include providing disability training to select teachers, funding programmes that get girls involved in traditionally male-dominated science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields and expanding education on social stigmas.
2. *Skills gap with the labour market*: There is a notable divide between what is taught in secondary schools and what skills are demanded in the labour market. Secondary schools should include industry case studies and activities, as well as inviting employers to come and talk with students about opportunities.
3. *Maintaining education quality*: Increased funding should be focused on SHS in impoverished communities, targeted at minimising external fees, including for books, uniforms, computers and transportation, for impoverished students.
4. To address these shortcomings of the FSHS Programme, MOE should consider increasing funding for areas with high populations of marginalised children and families to ensure equity in access to quality education. This funding could go towards additional teacher training in special education for students with disabilities, as well as interventions to increase female involvement in STEM fields and minimising the material costs for students in these areas. It is also recommended that the programme's scope include completion rates, and not simply enrolment.

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Note

1 http://projects.worldbank.org/P145741/?lang=en&tab=overview

Chapter 4

Information and Communication Technology

ICT has become an important aspect of everyday life for people worldwide, as an influential tool in providing access to information and communication, especially through technologies enabled by the internet.

Having access to ICT services is now considered a universal right (Borzekowski, 2006), and usage of ICT has been the topic of much discussion, especially with respect to youth development. ICT applications house opportunities for fostering youth development through the creation of income-generating activities (Halewood and Kenny, 2008). Additionally, ICT skills are increasingly becoming a requirement in today's job market (Garrido et al., 2010). ICT platforms like LinkedIn have been integral to the creation of digital employment identities, which in turn enable skills recognition and job acquirement on a wider scale. ICT usage also positively affects youth populations through enabling access to information, and is understood to increase civic participation among the youth demographic (Halewood and Kenny, 2008; AU, 2011). In essence, ICTs remains an influential tool that can enable positive youth development, through advancing opportunities in areas such as education, employment and civic engagement.

4.1 ICT and youth development in Ghana

4.1.1 ICT culture

ICT has become an important part of the Ghanaian way of life. Ghana was the second country in sub-Saharan Africa to have full internet connectivity by 1995 (Quarshie and Ami-Narh, 2012). By 2003, Ghana had over 750 internet cafes; by 2004, the number had increased to 500–1,000 in the capital city alone (Burrell, 2009; Quarshie and Ami-Narh, 2012), with the youth demographic representing the most prevalent users (Burrell, 2009). While data on how youth are using ICT is limited, evidence suggests that, in Ghana, 45.6 per cent of the working population who use the internet use it frequently for educational purpose, 33.75 per cent frequently use it for news and 6.35 per cent frequently use it for commerce (Quarshie and Ami- Narh, 2012). More specifically, Ghanaians are using a platform called Tonaton.com to buy and sell items and to acquire information on health matters (Borzekowski, 2006).

Six out of ten students in Ghanaian high schools own a mobile phone (Kaledzi, 2016). Through engagement in social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp, Ghanaian youth are able to maintain communication with family and friends and participate in public discussions – an opportunity that is especially important in a culture that assumes they are too young to have worthwhile opinions. Thus, ICTs have created an enabling space that facilitates youth participation in public dialogue.

Box 4.1 Convergence between ICT, youth, Agenda 2063 and the SDGs

Agenda 2063, a vision for African achievement by 2063, considers ICT an important development tool and plans to increase investments in technology (AUC, 2015). Both Agenda 2063 and the SDGs view ICT as a way of promoting youth development, and both frameworks envision youth as agents or drivers of change (AUC, 2015; ITU, 2018). Agenda 2063 and the SDGs plan to link ICT and youth development by focusing on promoting an 'education and science, technology and innovation driven skills revolution' (AU, n.d.). This will result in not only better quality of education for youth through an increase in access to technology but also a decrease in youth unemployment (AUC, 2015).

Ghanaian youth face several challenges in accessing the internet, including unreliable or unavailable connections outside of major cities and cost. At about $0.20/minute, access can be out of reach for many Ghanaian youth. For youth without access to a mobile device, internet cafés are the only choice, but this may mean travelling a far distance. As females are often thought to be too vulnerable to walk and stay in cafés alone, most internet cafés are male-dominated. Additionally, GES has initiated a campaign to ban the use of mobile phones in basic and high schools, arguing that they are a waste of money and a distraction from academic work (Kaledzi, 2016). Furthermore, increased access to ICT can also expose young people to 'negative uses of ICT', including cyber bullying, cybercrime and online extremism.

4.1.2 Current policy initiatives for youth development through ICT

As ICT has the potential to generate employment opportunities for the youth demographic, it has been suggested that it be widely promoted throughout Ghana (Braimah and King, 2006). GoG has also acknowledged the importance of ICT through the initiation of a plan to provide internet access to all secondary schools and training colleges in Ghana (ibid.).

The ICT for Accelerated Development Policy is widely recognised as one of the main policy initiatives. This is aimed at engineering ICT-led socio-economic development to transform Ghana into a middle-income, information-rich, knowledge-based and technology-driven economy (MOH, 2003). Although it focuses on the entire population, youth are included, especially with respect to improvements to the education system through the integration of ICT (ibid.).

The NYP 2010 is another important policy that speaks to ICT initiatives. The main focus is to ensure all Ghanaian youth have access to ICT resource centres equipped to provide them with opportunities to obtain ICT skills (MOYS, 2010), with the goal of achieving a more educated population that is better equipped to compete in the current job market.

Another current initiative is the Margins Youth Empowerment Initiative, created in 2017 to foster youth development and empowerment through ICT usage. The programme plans to promote ICT usage among youth populations in order to

Box 4.2 Artificial Intelligence and the future of education and work

As technological advancements continue, Ghana is increasingly able to exploit the potential gains of Artificial Intelligence (AI). In fact, Google recently opened its first Africa AI research centre in Accra. There are many interesting avenues to explore in AI related to education and employment opportunities. As Ghana continues to transition into the use of digital data, equipping young people with the skills to process big data using AI will be critical.

However, there are still concerns surrounding the use of AI and technology. For instance, it is capital-intensive, it has yet to solve privacy issues and it is becoming increasingly recognised that too much screen time is problematic.

Establishing partnerships with tech companies and educational institutions to explore how AI is changing the future of work as well as how educational institutions can prepare students while mitigating any associated risks will become increasingly important.

Sources: Asemota (2018); Adeoye (2019).

reduce unemployment, create additional jobs and achieve a positive socio-economic impact (Enablis, 2017). Under this initiative, learning spaces will be created for youth to receive information and training from chief executives, accountants and human resource managers. This initiative will also certify successful candidates on completion of the programme as well as fully finance the candidate who presents the best ICT business-oriented proposal.[1]

Furthermore, the minister of communications in Ghana recently announced GoG's aim to provide young people with critical ICT skills in order to equip them for the 'digitizing world of work' (GhanaWeb, 2019). Through technology and innovation

Box 4.3 Empowering young people with critical thinking skills and digital literacy to counter fake news and online extremism

In the current era of fake news and online extremism, it is not enough to ensure access to ICT tools; it is vital also to ensure that these tools are not abused to the point that they threaten democracy. In the complex online world of Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp, youth can be vulnerable to misinformation. Consequently, education and empowerment become critical to enabling competent online citizens. Educational institutions, technology companies and the information sector as a whole can collaborate in this effort through the development of a digital literacy toolkit that allows young people to gain digital literacy skills and think critically. While online extremism and hate speech has not been a major concern in Ghana, as ICT usage increases GoG should learn from other countries and put in place preventive measures.

hubs, mobile labs and other similar initiatives, GoG hopes to enable access to education and future employment.

Finally, the Digital Jobs Africa Programme in Ghana is another initiative that focuses specifically on providing youth with digital employment opportunities, through education and training on digital topics such as business process outsourcing, freelance online jobs and digital entrepreneurship. Like the other initiatives, this programme hopes to influence positive development by equipping youth with the skills to acquire jobs as well as create sustainable livelihoods.[2]

4.2 Gender

There is a significant gender divide in relation to access to and use of ICTs, whereby females have less access and therefore more limited usage compared with their male peers (Hafkin, 2002). One reason for this gender divide could be cultural and social dynamics at play in Ghana – more specifically, negative attitudes towards females studying or using information technology (ibid.). The viewpoint that females are unable to cope with or understand technology is prevalent, with the idea that it is too 'mechanical' or 'technical' for them (ibid.). Consequently, women may experience barriers in exploring the full development benefits of ICT initiatives.

In Ghana, it has been suggested that it is mostly young males who are attracted to ICT jobs, and that not only do males have greater access to resources, training and leisure time in which to pursue these subjects, but also it is males who are at the very helm of ICT policy-making and institutions (Braimah and King, 2006; Steeves and Kwami, 2012). In rural regions of Ghana, ICT centres are often located in areas to which women are not comfortable going, providing yet again another barrier to female access. Furthermore, the cultural 'domestic' norm whereby women are saddled with

Box 4.4 Gender and ICTs – thinking beyond coding

Worldwide, there has been growing interest in teaching females to code, and Ghana is no exception. Soronko Solutions (a Ghanaian social enterprise) has set up workshops and initiatives that focus on teaching girls this skill. Given this widespread recognition of the benefits of engaging girls in coding initiatives, it has since been suggested that coding represents the extreme end of the spectrum in terms of digital skills and that it is also important to recognise that a large share of the female population are not even getting basic digital skills (Alleman and Chriscaden, 2019). Simply teaching girls to use a keyboard, write an email or fill out an online form can 'further open doors to digital banking and other business services' (ibid.). It is thus important to think of basic digital skills as an important tool for positive youth development, which can open many opportunities for youth, especially girls. While initiatives that provide females with coding skills are a good first step, they should not mask the continued inequity in ICT with regard to gendered rights.

domestic responsibilities in comparison with their male peers may serve as a barrier to female participation in ICT (Hafkin, 2002).

4.3 Summary points

1. ICT usage is understood as having a positive impact on youth development, especially with respect to employment, education and civil participation opportunities.
2. Internet usage has become an important part of everyday life for Ghanaian youth. It is used primarily for educational purposes, more specifically to acquire knowledge on health-related issues. Youth mostly access the internet through internet cafés and mobile devices.
3. Numerous policies and initiatives that target ICT and youth development in Ghana have been created – namely, the ICT for Accelerated Development Policy, the NYP, Margins Youth Empowerment Initiative and the Digital Jobs Africa Programme in Ghana, as well as other initiatives by the Ministry of Communications and GoG.
4. Cultural and stereotypical views on gender influence the way young women and men access and participate in ICTs. Males are in the favourable position, having more leisure time and access to ICTs.

4.4 Recommendations

1. ICT policies, especially youth development ICT policies, must have an in-depth focus on and strategy to combat the gender inequalities present in ICT. Deliberate interventions that target females and address stereotypes, gender biases and problematic cultural norms should be put in place to increase opportunities for female youth to access ICT resources and education.
2. Support for the NYP's plan to discourage the 'negative uses of ICT' should be fostered, with increased data collection on misuses (cyber bullying, cybercrime and online extremism) in order to inform policy frameworks designed to mitigate the impact of misuse.
3. While digital identities are often an integral part of the ICT world, education is critical in preventing youth populations from falling victim to privacy invasion, identity theft, online scams and exposure to offensive content and fake news. Programmes to increase awareness of these dangers and risks should be supported in order to make them widely accessible.
4. Policy-makers should remain cognisant of the dynamic and continuously evolving nature of the ICT world through the implementation of initiatives that teach digital skills as they become relevant. Flexibility and adaptability are key with respect to educational initiatives, to provide Ghanaian youth with up-to-date digital skills relevant to the job market.

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Notes

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Chapter 5

Health and Well-Being

Health and well-being are key factors in determining positive youth development, as they tend to have a significant influence on poverty, educational attainment, socio-economic growth and psychological well-being during the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Ghana's national health priorities are addressed in successive health service medium-term national development plans. With regard to youth, these priorities include achieving universal health coverage; improving access to and quality of health services; and reducing morbidity and mortality from communicable and non-communicable diseases. Ghana's key health indictors have improved significantly in the past decade as a result of public awareness campaigns and expansion of the health insurance scheme, yet challenges addressing health inequalities persist. These relate to unequal distribution of health care funding, limited numbers of skilled providers and shortages of medical supplies and facilities. This section reviews the status of key determinants in youth health.

5.1 HIV/AIDS

5.1.1 Prevalence

HIV/AIDS is one of the largest contributors to youth mortality in Ghana (IHME, 2018). Although prevalence across youth populations has remained below 2 per cent since 2010, with the most recent estimate being 1.8 per cent in 2014, it has not

Box 5.1 HIV/AIDS, reproductive health and rural communities

In 2009, Rondini and Krugu's study of the secondary school population of Bolgatanga in Upper East region of Ghana revealed a lack of knowledge of family planning methods and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Poor infrastructure and low accessibility in rural areas in northern Ghana may have led to the uneven distribution of reproductive health education programmes, indicating a need for increased interventions aimed at equipping youth in these high-risk groups to deal with the HIV/AIDS epidemic, STIs, unwanted pregnancies and unsafe illegal abortions. HIV/AIDS prevalence grew in Ghana from 2000, after a decline in the 1990s, with those aged 15–24 showing an increase from 2.3 per cent in 2000 to 3.6 per cent in 2003. In Bolgatanga, prevalence reached 3.8 per cent, with the highest rate among those aged 25–29, at 4.5 per cent. These populations have limited knowledge of sexual health but also on how to prevent HIV/AIDS, further contributing to the stigmatisation of people living with the disease.

Source: Rondini and Krugu (2009).

stabilised and is still in flux (from 3.6 per cent in 2007 to 1.3 per cent in 2013 and then up to 1.8 per cent in 2014) (MOH, 2016). From 2011 to 2014, prevalence rates among the 15–19 and 25–34 age groups decreased, while prevalence rates among those aged 20–24 increased. There was an estimated 5 per cent increase in HIV infections in this demographic between 2003 and 2017 (Ghana AIDS Commission, 2017).

Many risk factors have been identified as contributors to the increasing prevalence of HIV. The Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) 2014 points to limited knowledge of HIV (only 20 per cent of young females and 27 per cent of young males have comprehensive knowledge), persistent engagement in risky sexual behaviour among youth (44 per cent of females and 66 per cent of males aged 15–24 have had more than one sexual partner in the span of one year) and discriminatory attitudes towards people with HIV/AIDS, which may prevent people from testing or seeking treatment (only 8 per cent of females and 10 per cent of males aged 15–24 expressed accepting attitudes towards people living with HIV/AIDS) (GSS et al., 2015).

5.1.2 HIV/AIDS targets and initiatives

The Ghana National Healthcare Quality Strategy 2017–2021 (MOH, 2016) indicates that, to make further progress in combating HIV/AIDS, there is a need to address the unstable supply of antiretroviral medicines, risky sexual behaviour and stigmatisation of and discrimination against those living with tuberculosis and HIV. To this end, several initiatives in Ghana have attempted to promote awareness of health services and treatment options, providing counselling and testing services, endorsing safe sex practices, reducing mother-to-child HIV transmission and increasing the use of antiretroviral drug access and adherence.

More specifically, GES is working to increase comprehensive HIV/AIDS education with support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNFPA, UNESCO, Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG), the National Population Council (NPC) and DFID. It is currently revising the School Health Education Programme (GES, 2005) to expand comprehensive sexuality education and incorporate recommendations made in the Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy (NPC, 2015) to reduce new HIV infections among young people (Bekoe and Eshun, 2013; Quashigah et al., 2014; Panchaud et al., 2018).

Another initiative, led by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNDP and GHS, targeted stigmatisation and discrimination facing youth with HIV/AIDS by supporting national dialogues. This eventually led to the passing of the Ghana AIDS Commission Act 2015. This protects the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS by establishing safe spaces, creating support programmes and encouraging equal access to services.

UNAIDS, UNICEF and the Ministry of Health (MOH), with support from the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, developed a programme to eliminate mother-to-child transmission. This has trained over 300 services to incorporate prevention of mother-to-child transmission as part of maternal, newborn and child health services. Other initiatives, coordinated by the World Bank

(Treatment Acceleration Programme for Public–Private Partnership in HIV/AIDS Management), the World Health Organization (WHO) (3 by 5 Initiative to mobilise the use of antiretroviral therapy) and the Global Fund (Fight against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Project) have all have been crucial in implementing Ghana's National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS and the 90-90-90 roadmap, which has the goal of 90 per cent of people living with HIV being aware of their HIV status; 90 per cent of people who know their HIV status accessing treatment; and 90 per cent of people receiving treatment achieving viral suppression within 12 months.

Despite successes, targets including ensuring equal access to health services, reliable stocks of antiretroviral drugs, increased knowledge of risk factors for HIV/AIDS and reducing stigmatisation among youth populations are yet to be met.

5.2 Sexual and reproductive health

5.2.1 Child marriage, teenage pregnancy and early parenthood

Early marriage and parenthood are encouraged in Ghanaian culture, especially for females in their late 20s, those who have completed some form of higher education and the employed. However, in many cases, youth engagement in unprotected sex results in

Box 5.2 National Strategic Framework on Ending Child Marriage in Ghana 2017–2026

In Ghana, one in five girls will be married before their eighteenth birthday and one in twenty before their fifteenth birthday. In 2017, GoG, acknowledging the universal call to end child marriage, with the support of various development stakeholders including UNICEF, developed and launched the National Strategic Framework on Ending Child Marriage in Ghana 2017–2026 (MOGCSP and UNICEF, 2016). In line with this framework, several stakeholders, including academic institutions and international organisations, continue to work to address the challenge of child marriage through data collection and programmatic intervention (de Groot et al., 2018; Domfe and Oduro, 2018). For example, work by World Vision in this area has led to recognition of the need for a multifaceted approach, one that simultaneously addresses the causal factors with programmes deliberately designed to target young brides. Moreover, research has revealed that not only should policy focus on the eradication of child marriage but also interventions should be designed to assist girls who have already been married (University of Ghana and World Vision Ghana, 2017). Although surveys such as the GDHS and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) have been useful in understanding child marriage trends, many data gaps remain. Current data does not include information on women and children living outside households, such as those living in institutions, in informal settlements or on the streets. Widening the scope of data collection to include administrative records, qualitative studies and ad hoc surveys would help provide relevant information on a wider context.

teenage pregnancy. Unfortunately, this often means access to educational opportunities is over for pregnant teens and young mothers (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

In certain parts of Ghana, in particular the regions in the north and the Greater Accra, Bono and Ahafo regions, child marriage remains prevalent despite laws criminalising it, which set the legal age for marriage at 18 for both males and females. Child marriage varies greatly by wealth and geographical residence: data reveals higher incidence of child marriage in rural areas and among poorer families than in urban areas and among wealthier families. The most recent Maternal Health Survey, conducted in 2017, showed that 8 per cent of women were married by age 15 and 53 per cent by age 22 (GSS and MOH, 2018). Furthermore, 14 per cent of women aged 15–19 had already begun child-bearing. In general, marriage before the age of 18 has been decreasing (35 per cent in the 1990s to 25 per cent in 2008), yet recent national surveys from 2011 to 2014 indicate that, although it decreased in the south (20.9 per cent to 18.5 per cent and 19.2 per cent to 18.5 per cent, respectively), it increased in the three northern regions (26.4 per cent to 33.6 per cent), indicating greater disparities between the north and the rest of the country (GSS, 2012; GSS et al., 2015).

> '*As a child, if you ask for permission from your parents… [to go] to a particular programme for sex education, they will think that you are going to do something bad*.' Female, 15–20 years

5.2.2 Family planning and contraceptive use

The Maternal Health Survey in 2017 estimated that knowledge on family planning was highest among women aged 30–34 (90 per cent) and lowest among girls aged 15–19 (59 per cent) (GSS and MOH, 2018). Furthermore, while 99 per cent of women

Box 5.3 Adolescent Reproductive Health Policy – nearly 19 years on

Ghana's Adolescent Reproductive Health Policy was developed in 2000 under the auspices of NPC through a multi-stage participatory process that involved various government sectors, NGOs and individuals. Its overarching framework hopes to guide various sector ministries, departments, institutions, organisations and individuals involved in adolescent reproductive health programmes and activities by underscoring a number of important approaches and issues critical to enhancing adolescents' reproductive health. These issues include the right to information; the right to services; gender concerns, including the education of adolescent males and females on reproductive health and related socio-cultural responses; and meaningful youth participation in policy planning and implementation. A number of key stakeholders have responded with various interventions since adoption of the Policy in 2000. While it is important to examine the impacts of the Policy, it is perhaps more critical to create a revised gender-, age- and location (rural or urban)-sensitive policy that reflects the contemporary sexual and reproductive health needs of young people.

aged 15–49 are aware of modern contraceptive methods, only 20 per cent reported actually using them. The percentage of sexually active, unmarried girls aged 15–19 and 20–24 using modern contraceptive methods only ranges from 27 per cent to 39 per cent (ibid.).

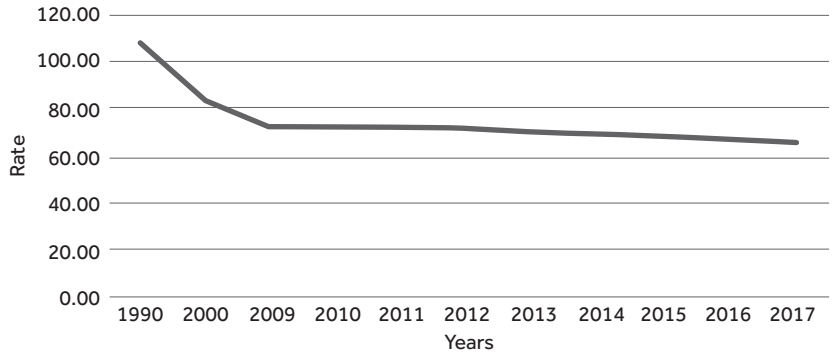
The increasing use of contraceptives among 30–34-year-old women can be attributed to the positive impact of HIV/AIDS prevention and family planning educational campaigns (MOH, 2016). However, these campaigns are not reaching Ghanaian youth: research indicates that youth do not use condoms because they question the efficiency, are unsure how to use them or are afraid of the social stigma that accompanies their use (Rondini and Krugu, 2009). Furthermore, adolescents are not using health care services offering contraceptives because of a lack of trust (MOH, 2016). Research shows that poverty and poor school attendance are also factors in lower contraceptive use, and that females with some form of secondary education are more than twice as likely to use contraception (Rondini and Krugu, 2009). Likewise, girls in urban areas are more likely to use contraceptives than those in rural areas (ibid.).

Although the adolescent fertility rate in Ghana has declined over the years as a result of reproductive health care initiatives implemented among youth, it noteworthy that it remains high, as Figure 5.1 shows.

5.2.3 Sexual and reproductive health rights and services

Early parenthood and child-bearing has decreased in Ghana as a result of multiple programmes aimed at raising awareness of sexual and reproductive health rights and services. The Ghana Adolescent Reproductive Health Programme coordinated by NPC and GHS works in Brong Ahafo region to improve reproductive health knowledge and behaviour for up to 350,000 adolescents and strengthen family planning services. This region, known for its high teenage pregnancy rates, has shown a significant drop in pregnancies compared with the national average (GHS, 2016a). The programme has also set up over 50 adolescent-friendly/youth corners to encourage the seeking of reproductive health and family planning services, and

Figure 5.1 Adolescent fertility rate, 1990–2017 (births per 1,000 women aged 15–19)



Source: World Bank WDI.

health clubs in schools to promote peer education and activities encouraging healthy sexual and reproductive behaviour.

A number of key stakeholders, including PPAG, have also identified numerous challenges and strategies regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights moving forwards (see GHS, 2016b). Many civil society organisations in Ghana have also advocated for Comprehensive Sexuality Education and related programmes. These entail more than the current form of sexuality education in schools, which do not embrace the majority of adolescents, particularly those out of school and/or in rural and remote locations (Owusu-Amoako, 2019).

5.2.4 Maternal mortality

Given that a significant proportion of young people start giving birth during their adolescent years, maternal mortality, or death resulting from the complications of pregnancy and/or childbirth, is very relevant for this age group. In Ghana, it is estimated that there are 310 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births – significantly higher than the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target of only 190 per 100,000 live births, and yet a significant improvement from 760 per 100,000 deaths

Box 5.4 Sexual and reproductive health and rights in Ghana – role of Parliament and policy

Since the early 1990s, Ghana has been proactive in developing and creating access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, by adopting and enforcing international and national human right laws and policies. For example, the Ghana Shared Growth Development Agenda (Volume I and Volume II) prioritises coverage, availability and accessibility of sexual and reproductive health and rights and family planning, particularly with respect to adolescents and youth, and sets goals in accordance with the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development's Programme of Action, the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa and the SDGs, among others.

Additionally, other important policies have been enacted to guarantee the rights of citizens (particularly women and youth) and promote sexual and reproductive health and rights, such as the Children's Act 1998, the Domestic Violence Act 2007, the Provisional National Defence Council Law 1985 and the Criminal Code (amendment) Act 2007. Despite progress in policy development, implementation and results have been mixed, suggesting there are still challenges in ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Parliament needs to ensure proper integration into educational curriculum and an increase in financial allocation towards programmes related to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Source: Boateng (2017).

Box 5.5 Agenda 2063 and the SDGs – implications for youth development

The vision of Agenda 2063 is for an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena (AUC, 2015). This aligns with the SDGs, adopted by 193 countries in 2016, including Ghana, and their aim to take action against the world's most pressing challenges, promote peace and prosperity for all by 2030, foster economic growth, ensure social inclusion and protect the environment.

The Agenda 2063's First and Sixth Aspirations converge with SDG 3 to envision an Africa with healthy and well-nourished citizens. Ghana recognises that ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for everyone is important to building prosperous societies, and is committed to prioritising access to and equity of quality health care for all. This has major implications for youth as it will reduce the burden of disease and disability, including HIV/AIDS, malaria, anaemia, child and maternal mortality, malnutrition and the prevalence of other non-communicable diseases, enabling a better future for Ghana's young people.

in 1990 (NDPC and UN Ghana, 2015). Among women, 12 per cent of all deaths owe to maternal causes such as pregnancy-related complications, haemorrhage, sepsis infections and unsafe abortions (UNFPA, 2013). Abortion contributes 15–30 per cent of maternal mortality in Ghana (Boah et al., 2019). It is also established that the percentage of pregnancies ending in induced abortion decreases with age (GSS, 2017), which suggests that more youth are involved in abortions. It is also important to note that teenage pregnancies increase the risk of neonatal mortality. In Ghana, it is estimated that neonatal mortality accounts for 42 deaths per 1,000 births among mothers who are less than 20 years old (GSS et al., 2015).

Several important initiatives have been launched to reduce maternal mortality among youth populations. Notable examples include the Making Pregnancy Safer Initiative, the Safe Motherhood Initiative, the Maternal and Neonatal Health Programme, the Campaign for Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa and the MDG 5 Acceleration Framework. Results of these have included 97 per cent of young women receiving ante-natal care from a skilled provider, 80 per cent of births attended by a skilled provider and 84 per cent of young women receiving a postnatal check-up within the first two days following delivery (GSS and MOH, 2018). Despite these positive trends, there remains significant inequity with respect to access to maternal care.

5.3 Mental health

In Ghana, recent studies indicate that about 20 per cent of adolescents suffer from moderate to severe psychological distress (Kleintjes et al., 2010; Sipsma et al., 2013). Multiple vulnerabilities faced by youth in Ghana, such as poverty, limited access to

education, teenage pregnancy and living with HIV/AIDS, can lead to poor mental health outcomes. As a result, youth are more susceptible to a lower quality of life, less access to opportunities, violence, child abuse, suicide, crime and physical illnesses. In 2012, Ghana passed the Mental Health Bill, with the goals of ensuring the rights of people with mental illnesses, promoting access to treatment and coordinating mental health services. Yet mental health in Ghana continues to pose a challenge, as there is little evidence of any implementation of existing policies. Evidence suggests complete unavailability of essential mental health medications, leaving 98 per cent of patients untreated (MOH, 2016). Other challenges include a shortage of trained professionals capable of treating mental illnesses, the stigmatisation youth with mental illnesses face, social exclusion and human rights violations as these illnesses remain largely misunderstood, and underfunded (Adu-Gyamfi, 2017). This can have negative impacts on the desire to create a healthy and productive youth who serve as an asset for the nation.

5.4 Substance use

Increased alcohol consumption has emerged as a particular risk factor for youth in Ghana. In a large study of homeless youth in Accra, researchers found that 81.3 per cent reported using alcoholic beverages and 72 per cent having smoked marijuana (Oppong et al., 2014). In light of these concerning trends, Ghana took action in 2017 by passing a National Alcohol Policy, with the purpose of regulating the production, distribution, sale, advertisement and safe consumption of alcohol. To date, however, no initiatives have been developed as part of this policy.

Besides alcohol, another increasingly concerning public health issue surging within Ghana's youth populations is the non-medical use of Tramadol, a prescription synthetic opioid used for pain relief, which also produces effects similar to the 'high' of heroin. It is often used by poorer, uneducated populations, who typically mix it with alcohol, increasing the risks of overdose and engagement in reckless behaviour. In fact, many incidences of armed robbery, youth vandalism and car accidents have been linked to Tramadol abuse (Akweley Okertchiri, 2018).

In 2018, Ghana's Food and Drug Authority put in place measures to restrict Tramadol access, yet international agencies such as WHO have not yet proposed sanctions on its illegal trade, use and access (WHO, 2017). Most medical practitioners in Ghana recognise the importance of Tramadol as a cost-effective alternative to other less accessible opioids, despite their concerns regarding potential abuse (Yorke et al., 2019). One study showed that, out of 300 respondents, 78 per cent of those aged 11–25 reported using Tramadol (Elliason et al., 2018). Most alarmingly, 55 per cent believed the main purpose of Tramadol was to boost energy, 30 per cent thought it was to enhance sexual activity and only 15 per cent believed it was to relieve pain (ibid.). Of these respondents, only 39 per cent had a basic education, which indicates that the people who are generally abusing Tramadol do not have adequate information on its effects (ibid.). Lack of regulation in the manufacturing and distributing of Tramadol has Ghana on the cusp of an opioid epidemic; stricter measures and international cooperation are needed to tackle this issue.

5.5 Other non-communicable diseases and disability

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) have been progressively on the rise and are projected to become the most common cause of death in sub-Saharan Africa by 2030 (Dalal et al., 2011). WHO (2014) estimates that NCDs alone account for 42 per cent of deaths in Ghana. A study examining autopsy reports found that 41 per cent of deaths among youth populations were attributable to NCDs, particularly blood disorders, cancers, cardiovascular problems and renal problems (Ohene et al., 2011). Education and awareness campaigns can increase understanding of NCDs and their associated risk factors among youth populations. For example, information about the risks of high blood pressure or hypertension, and how deaths in adulthood have been linked to behaviours initiated in adolescence such as smoking, drinking, lack of physical activity and unhealthy eating habits, could go a long way in promoting lifestyle change.

Furthermore, health complications and physical disabilities arising from NCDs or injuries can result in discrimination and disadvantages, such as being excluded from work or school, and ultimately a significant reduction in quality of life (WHO and World Bank, 2011). In 2012, Ghana established the National Policy for the Prevention and Control of Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases in Ghana, yet this does not highlight NCDs among youth as a national burden, and little has been done to implement initiatives or maintain data related to NCDs. Moving forward, Ghana needs to commit to the challenges of managing NCDs through early prevention, diagnosis, management and health care coverage that focus on youth population.

5.6 Nutrition

Malnutrition is also closely linked to future educational outcomes, as it seriously affects the immediate and future cognitive development of young people.

As with the economic situation, significant regional disparities exist in nutrition and food security in Ghana. The prevalence of stunting (chronic malnutrition or low height-for-age) is 19 per cent nationally but rises to 33 per cent in the Northern region (USAID, 2018). Teen youth living in rural areas are more likely to be underweight than those in urban areas, and those born to mothers with little or no education are substantially more likely to be underweight than children of more educated women (GSS et al., 2015).

Moreover, child-bearing begins early for some young people in Ghana. In 2014, 36.1 per cent of adolescents had begun child-bearing by age 19 (GSS et al., 2015). This has serious consequences because, relative to older mothers, adolescent girls are more likely to be malnourished and have low birth-weight babies, who are more likely to become malnourished and be at increased risk of illness and death than those born to older mothers.

The causes of malnutrition among children are interrelated and complex. The primary causes are insufficient access to food, inadequate maternal and child-caring practices (particularly poor breastfeeding practices), insufficient access to safe water

and sanitation, and poor health care (FAO, 2010). Although rates of anaemia have declined, from 78 per cent in 2008 to 66 per cent in 2014, the rate is still far above the 40 per cent WHO threshold for a severe public health concern (NDPC, 2016). As might be expected, anaemia is most prevalent among people living in rural areas, in families with less-educated mothers or younger mothers, and among people living in poorer households (UNICEF and Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, 2011).

5.7 Summary points

1. Youth health priorities include achieving universal health coverage, improving access to and quality of health services and reducing morbidity and mortality from HIV/AIDS, malaria and NCDs. Major challenges concerning youth health include addressing health inequalities, persistent discrimination and awareness of health rights.
2. HIV/AIDS is one of the largest contributors to youth mortality in Ghana. Several initiatives have halted the spread of HIV/AIDS by promoting awareness of treatment and testing services, endorsing safe sex practices, reducing mother-to-child HIV transmission and increasing the use of antiretroviral drugs.
3. Teenage mothers are often affected by malaria. However, the National Malaria Control Programme is addressing the burden of malaria by promoting the use of insecticide-treated nets and providing free preventive anti-malaria treatment as part of ante-natal care for pregnant women.
4. Early parenthood and child-bearing are prominent issues that pose many risks for young females. Increasing awareness of sexual and reproductive health rights and services and family planning have helped maintain a steady decrease in teenage pregnancies.
5. NCDs including blood disorders, cancer, renal problems, cardiovascular issues, mental health disorders and substance use have been progressively on the rise and can be reduced by promoting awareness on healthy lifestyle choices and incorporating prevention, management and treatment options as part of health policy initiatives.

5.8 Recommendations

1. In order to tackle HIV/AIDS, increase campaigning to combat stigmatisation and discrimination, as well as initiatives to reduce risky behaviour among youth and increased communication and collaboration between health facilities to ensure a stable supply of antiretroviral drugs.
2. Encourage research and development on NCDs to improve prevention, detection, treatment and control of common conditions, and to inform interventions with a primary and secondary prevention focus for youth.
3. Conduct education and awareness campaigns to increase understanding of NCDs and their associated risk factors among youth populations.

4. Improve adolescent and youth health communication strategies to enhance awareness and behaviour change.
5. In the area of early marriage, adopt a multifaceted approach that simultaneously addresses the causal factors and helps young brides. The focus should not be only on the eradication of teen marriage but also on assisting girls who are already married.
6. Improve youth data collection in both rural and urban locations through administrative data (e.g. national population census), DHS and MICS, to contribute to understanding young people's health and well-being trends.
7. Improve youth nutrition, followed by micronutrient deficiency and nutrition campaigns and education, and prioritise the nutritional well-being of youth to build a healthy and productive youth force for the present and future.

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Chapter 6

Sports and Recreation

Sport is considered an essential activity for individuals of all ages, and it plays an important role in all societies. The UN has touted sport as a cost-effective tool for meeting many development and peace challenges, and as a vehicle for achieving the SDGs – a sentiment reiterated by Ghana's minister of youth and sports (Abayateye, 2018). However, although sport is considered an important tool to enable sustainable development,[1] recent discussions at the Fourth Commonwealth Debate on Sport highlighted that 'intentional action' is needed to scale sport's impact on sustainable development (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2019).

Sport does not only promote physical activity, it teaches important life skills and lessons to youth (Danish et al., 2004). Engagement in sport programmes and initiatives provides youth with opportunities to be physically active – thereby improving their physical health – as well as contributing to youth psychosocial development by providing opportunities to learn important life skills such as cooperation, discipline, leadership and self-control. Furthermore, physical activity habits developed during childhood and adolescence are associated with physical activity habits in adulthood, meaning an active youth population can translate into a healthier adult population (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). All this combined make sports and recreational activities a favourable option for development actors and policy-makers to consider in fostering *positive* youth development.

6.1 Positive Youth Development and sports

PYD in connection to sports and recreation refers to the ways in which youth 'may accrue optimal developmental experiences through their involvement in organised activities' (Holt and Neely, 2011, p. 300). Sports and recreation can foster PYD in various ways. Scholars have found that various leisure activities have the ability to promote physical, psychological, emotional, social and intellectual development in youth populations (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). For instance, sports and recreation can combat obesity and related diseases, increase self-esteem and decrease stress, promote peer relations and leadership skills, and foster increased participation in academic endeavours (ibid.). It has been documented that sports participation not only reduces the tendency among youth to engage in negative social behaviours and is connected to lower rates of drug use, depression and incidence of suicidal behaviour, but also is linked to increased likelihood of attending tertiary education institutions, achieving independence and obtaining satisfactory employment (Zarrett et al., 2008). Today, a number of higher education institutions in Ghana offer courses and programmes in both the theory and the practice of sport, allowing young people to further pursue interest in sport as a career. In essence, sport provides opportunities

to foster PYD in many ways and should therefore be considered an important topic of focus in youth development policies.

6.2 Football

Football is widely acknowledged to be the most popular sport in Ghana. Former President Kwame Nkrumah recognised football's important mark on Ghanaian culture and believed the sport to be a 'rallying point for nation-building and pan-African unity' (Darby, 2013, p. 221). Ghana is home to many local ball teams, including youth teams like Kumasi Asante Kotoko and Accra Hearts of Oak.

6.2.1 Risks associated with international football leagues

There is growing interest in watching European football matches in lieu of attending local Ghanaian league matches, and betting on these matches is increasing among the youth populations.

The allure of fame and fortune, combined with the growing number of Ghanaian footballers in prestigious European, Asian and Middle Eastern football clubs, has made football an attractive career for Ghanaian youth (Esson, 2015). Lack of job opportunities for young graduates in the formal sector, growing economic uncertainty and poor returns on education investment are spurring youth to pursue careers in football clubs outside of Ghana with the idea that education is no longer the best route out of poverty – and that football is. Many skilled football players drop out of school to focus on the sport in the hope that a visiting agent will offer them a contract with a foreign club (ibid.). Unfortunately, tighter immigration regulations and the high level of international competition mean these dreams are not realised for the majority of these players. Furthermore, these aspiring young players are vulnerable to human traffickers posing as football recruiters (ibid.).

6.2.2 Inherent risks of increased use of electronic games

Ghanaian youth participate in numerous outdoor games during their leisure time. The most renowned traditional games are *pilolo*, *oware*, *chaskele* and *ampe*. Participation in outdoor activities such as these occurs most often during break time at school or outside the compound of houses when young people are home with their siblings or peers. Unfortunately, with the expanding use of video games, less and less time is spent engaging in outdoor activities; this is being replaced by a much more sedentary lifestyle (Boampong, 2019).

6.3 Current policy initiatives in sports and recreation

GoG currently recognises sport as a strategic tool for youth development, specifically for its ability to promote healthy lifestyles, decrease delinquent behaviour and increase opportunities for Ghanaian youth.[2] The value of sports in fostering youth development in the Ghanaian context can be seen in the various policies and programmes created by major actors such as MOYS, local institutions/companies and international

development players. For example, the NYP 2010 includes sports and recreation in its policy plan for youth development, indicating that sports and recreation 'enhances one's physical well-being, and self-esteem, while contributing to socio-economic development in the form of improved public health'. Because of this, the main policy objective is to increase participation in sports and recreation as well as to promote 'positive leisure activities' through the promotion of sports competitions. Another important objective of the Policy is to promote participation in sport by youth with disabilities. This is an important step for Ghanaian development in general, especially since persons with disabilities are often been overlooked and marginalised in policy development (Bourgeois, 2011). Active acknowledgement of their needs is critical to the development of equitable policies.

Since the creation of the NYP 2010, a number of initiatives have centred on youth sports development. Two of these are the Youth in Sports Programme and the Youth Resource Centre Project. The Youth in Sports Programme, a community improvement initiative, aims to help youth acquire sports-related employment. Specifically, it provides two-week training in sports-related courses like coaching and sports journalism. The overarching purpose is to use sports as a vehicle to provide the youth demographic with more employment opportunities, with the overall goal of training and helping 8,000 youth acquire sports-related jobs by the end of 2019 (Abayateye, 2018).

The Youth Resource Centre Project is a push to provide proper multi-purpose youth centres for Ghanaian youth in the original 10 regions of Ghana with the goal of better preparing youth athletes for major competitions (Aduonum, 2018; Tahiru, 2018). Each facility will be equipped with an eight-lane athletic track, a FIFA standard pitch, a career counselling centre, basketball and handball courts, a multi-purpose sports hall, a restaurant and an ICT centre (Tahiru 2018).

6.4 Gender and sports

Gender is an important topic with respect to sports and recreation development in Ghana. Traditionally, sports and leisure have been understood as male-centric activities. In Ghana, a 2008 study found low levels of female participation in sport, especially at the university level (Ampong, 2008). It has also been acknowledged that, although Ghana values football, women's football is not given the same attention as men's; women's football is described as 'forgotten and neglected', with minimal support from media outlets (Bamba, 2017).

In Ghana, physical education, an essential aspect of the school curriculum, is structured according to gender. Boys regularly play soccer and other local games such as *pilolo* (a hide-and-seek game) while girls are typically restricted to playing netball or *ampe* (a jump, clap and a foot-step forward play). Boys dominate the football field, and boys who do not play football are often referred to as *obaabema* (which literally means 'man-woman'). Basketball, volleyball, *ludo* and *oware* are non-gendered. In many of these sports, skilful teenagers are selected for district, regional and national competitions as part of the Inter Schools and Colleges Athletics Championships.

6.5 Summary points

1. Sports and recreation is understood to be positive for youth development on various levels (physically, physiologically, emotionally, socially and intellectually).
2. Ghanaian youth engage in many sporting activities; however, football remains the dominant sport.
3. Increasingly, Ghanaian youth are recognising football as a route out of poverty.
4. Sports betting in football has also become an increasing phenomenon among the youth demographic.
5. Numerous policies and initiatives target sports and youth development in Ghana, including the NYP, the Youth in Sports Programme and the Youth Resource Centre Project.
6. Although Ghana has made great strides in sports and youth development, the gender divide continues to be an on-going issue in sport; female athletes are often neglected and overlooked in comparison with their male counterparts.
7. Traditional games must be preserved and promoted in the wake of contemporary sporting or leisure activities.

6.6 Recommendations

1. Youth development interventions such as the Youth in Sports Programme and the Youth Resource Centre Project should be gender-sensitive. The importance of females in sport must be acknowledged and they must be given equitable opportunities.
2. Sports participation does not automatically result in PYD. The importance of positive youth–adult/coach relationships should be highlighted given the importance of the role of mentoring figures in designing teaching environments that facilitate the transmission of critical life skills and supporting the autonomy of young athletes.
3. The increasing popularity of sports betting among the youth demographic requires attention; betting companies have made it too easy for young people to engage in problematic gambling. Implementation of increased regulation is recommended.
4. Bottom-up strategies for the establishment of successful sports initiatives are required for local accountability and sustainability. This requires active involvement of youth representatives and comprehensive community assessment to ensure any and all initiatives are accepted, supported and sustained.
5. Traditional games must be rebranded, documented and promoted as competitive activities for young people to participate in.

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Notes

1 http://thecommonwealth.org/media/event/4th-commonwealth-debate-sport-and-sustainable-development

2 http://www.ghana.gov.gh/index.php/media-center/features/2576-growing-youth-employability-and-employment-through-sports

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

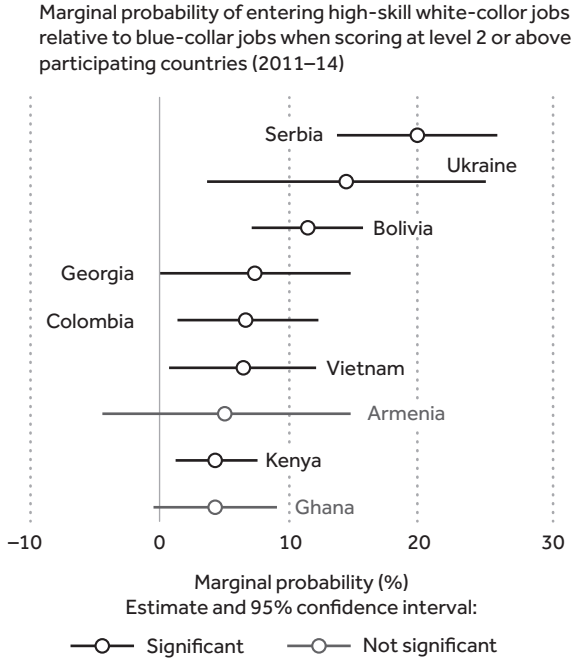
Source: GSS (2016).

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			15–35 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

Region	15–24 years			25–35 years			15–35 years		
	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

1 https://www.nvtighana.org/Home.aspx
2 https://iccesghana.wordpress.com/about/
3 http://mofa.gov.gh
4 https://rep.org.gh/
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7 https://www.mofad.gov.gh/agencies/fisheries-commission/fisheries-commission-at-a-glance/
8 https://www.aiti-kace.com.gh/
9 http://mofa.gov.gh

Chapter 8

Financial Inclusion

Youth in Ghana are affected by many challenges to their financial and economic success, including unemployment, limited access to education, loss of parents or guardians at a young age and lack of financial inclusion. Financial inclusion as it applies here is the accessibility of financial services such as bank accounts, savings plans and loans for all people and businesses. Fortunately, through financial literacy education, capitalising on the potential of mobile money and addressing systemic barriers to financial services, financial inclusion can be improved.

8.1 Importance of financial inclusion among youth

Today, more than a third of the sub-Saharan African population is between 10 and 24 years old and that number is only growing (Zou et al., 2015). Youth are the future of Ghana. However, many have pointed out that financial institutions may not be built with the needs of all youth in mind. Indeed, mainstream financial services cater primarily to a different generation and different socio-economic and cultural landscapes. For example, in-person banking can be inaccessible for rural communities, while digital banking can be out of reach for people without the modern conveniences of computers, smartphones and an internet connection. Likewise, in some families, it is exclusively adults who handle finances, even though a large number of youth are entering the workforce at a young age (ibid.).

Financial inclusion is critical to strengthen Ghana's economy, as it would help solve the structural problem of economic growth that does not produce jobs for the youth population, known as jobless growth (Amanor-Wilks and Aniston, 2018). Being able to save money is linked to greater incomes and assets, better reproductive and preventive health knowledge, improved physical and mental health, and improved academic achievement and performance (Zou et al., 2015).

8.2 Challenges to financial inclusion

8.2.1 Lack of funds

Youth are often deterred from opening a savings account by activation fees, minimum account balances and maintenance fees. Saving money is difficult for low-income individuals, as they must prioritise necessities such as food, school supplies and clothing. However, YouthSave, an experimental programme pioneered in Ghana and Kenya, offers accounts for low-income youth with no fees and only a US$5 minimum account balance, with the goal of meeting the needs of youth populations.

8.2.2 Service and network limitations

In a world increasingly reliant on technology, humans are finding new ways to use this for banking and financial transactions. In many ways, modern innovations in finances can be powerful tools for bridging gaps between socio-economic levels. For example, people living in rural areas may not have the time or means to travel to a bank to withdraw or deposit money. However, if that person has a mobile phone, they can make a withdrawal or deposit from their own home or work without having to go physically to their bank. Nevertheless, not everyone has access to such devices, and computers and smartphones are useful only if they can be charged consistently and connect to the internet. As a result, people without access to stable electricity, phone connections or the internet and those who live in areas not covered in data plans are restricted from reaping the benefits of digital banking. One report identifies service and network limitations as the biggest challenge for youth populations with respect to mobile banking services (Heitmann et al., 2018).

8.2.3 Lack of trust in traditional financial institutions

Access to and trust in financial institutions were concerns young people raised during research interviews as another barrier to the creation of a culture of saving and positive financial habits in Ghana (Chowa et al., 2015). The recent closure of certain banks in Ghana has affected young people's trust in where they save their money. Moreover, while many believe large mainstream banks to be the only answer to questions of financial inclusion, in rural areas alternative savings plans, loans and smaller local banks may be the way to reach those whom traditional banks leave behind (Zou et al., 2015).

8.2.4 Requirement challenges

In some cases, the requirement for parental permission can create a significant barrier to financial inclusion for adolescent and youth populations (Zou et al., 2015). Furthermore, some young people may lack the identification (e.g. passport or voter ID) and personal records that many financial institutions require when opening an account. While these requirements are well intentioned and important to safeguard banking customers from fraud and identity theft, they also make it significantly more difficult for youth, including rural youth, to access saving accounts (ibid.).

8.2.5 Gender discrimination

Women are less financially included than men in Ghana (World Bank, 2019). The patriarchal belief that men should handle finances while women remain in domestic areas is still prevalent in some areas, marginalising the latter. During research interviews, it was noted that, even if women are participating in the labour force, they are still more likely to remain in poverty for a variety of reasons, including undervaluing of their contribution and lower wages. As a result, female youth face unique challenges and struggles when it comes to accessing financial services.

8.3 Opportunities for financial inclusion

8.3.1 Digital banking and mobile money

Digital banking is an optimal solution for increasing financial inclusion for youth specifically because, although youth are significantly less likely than adults to have a traditional banking account, they are also more likely to have a mobile phone, are willing to try new things and are increasingly aware of the opportunities digital channels present (Heitmann et al., 2018). Mobile money has a powerful effect when it comes to levelling the playing field with regard to access to financial services between males and females and also among rural and urban youth. According to the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor, mobile money usage has only a 5 per cent inclusion gap, compared with an 11 per cent inclusion gap for traditional banking methods (Buruku, 2016) (see Figure 8.1). For this reason, mobile money is one way to address the impacts of lack of financial services for female youth.

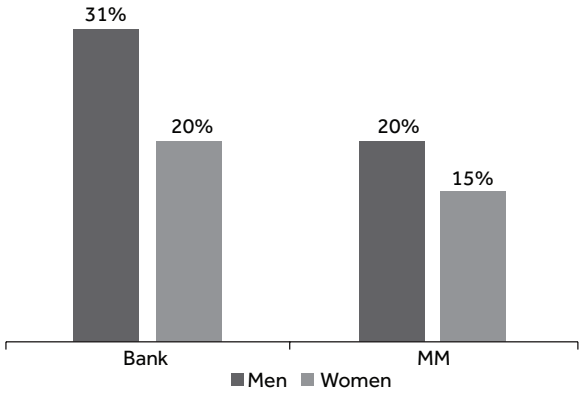
Already, mobile banking has made a considerable impact on Ghana, but it could be expanded to include insurance products, loans and savings, merchant solutions and energy solutions (UNCDF, 2016).

8.3.2 Financial literacy programmes

Education can be critical in teaching youth to make smart financial decisions. Mentorship and encouragement on financial topics, to teach youth how to bank, save and borrow responsibly, are important to provide youth with these skills before they transition into adulthood. In a study conducted by EcoBank and FHI360, 42 per cent of youth in Ghana expressed a need for education on how to manage spending and 27 per cent wanted education on saving practices (Rohatgi, 2018).

YouthSave is another valuable tool for increasing financial inclusion in Ghana. YouthSave is an experimental programme created in partnership between Save the

Figure 8.1 Gender inclusion gap in traditional bank accounts and mobile money



Source: Buruku (2016).

Children and the Mastercard Foundation with the purpose of piloting financial services that are designed to be more accessible to youth. After three years, research has shown that early savings can improve the quality of life for youth in Ghana through enhancing psychological well-being, education outcomes and future professional performance (Chowa et al., 2015).

There are currently a number of programmes in existence that are already providing models to fulfil this need of financial literacy. For example, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) YouthStart programme is working throughout sub-Saharan Africa and could also be implemented in Ghana. However, in order to maximise the potential of financial literacy education, programmes such as these would be best paired with a national development strategy for addressing youth financial literacy (UNCDF, 2019). This could be achieved through a core curriculum requirement for financial literacy lessons in Ghanaian schools.

8.4 Summary points

1. Gender can play a large role in financial inclusion, given lingering cultural perceptions regarding young women and girls' inclusion in financial decisions. Policies and programmes to make banking and saving more accessible need to be crafted with this in mind.
2. Other key challenges to financial inclusion include lack of trust in banking institutions, service and network limitations making it difficult to fully embrace the benefits of digital banking and gaps in requirements to open banking accounts.
3. However, there are many opportunities to improve financial inclusion, such as through financial literacy classes, digital banking and programmes such as YouthSave Ghana.

8.5 Recommendations

1. Continue and expand the YouthSave Ghana programme.
2. In order to reach females who are sometimes discouraged from handling finances, incorporate savings and financial literacy programmes aimed at girls.
3. Mobile network operators and microfinance institutions could work to provide products and services that better cater to customers with low and irregular incomes. This could include transparent and lower charges for young people.
4. Change the requirements to open an account to acknowledge that many youth aged under 18 years do not have parents to sign off on an account or do not have the proper identification (i.e. photo ID or birth certificate).
5. Address service and network limitations to increase accessibility of financial technology.
6. Emphasise the importance of savings and financial planning in schools and communities.

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Chapter 9

Active Citizenship and Participation in Democratic Governance

> *'No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts off from its youth severs its lifeline.'*
>
> Kofi Annan, Former UN Secretary-General

Ghana's population is more youthful today than ever before. While the country is constantly evolving, young people and adults alike are facing increasingly complex and unprecedented social, economic and cultural challenges that are affecting growth and stability. Creating an enabling environment of legal frameworks, policies and platforms for the youth demographic would help allow them to participate on the broad range of issues that affect them, providing them with a sense of active agency in national development processes.

Meaningful youth participation in governance and civic life has particularly strong resonance here because of the association between political or social disenfranchisement of young people and social unrest. Peace, stability and development in Ghana will depend not only on the choices young people make today and in the future but also on how society perceives them and addresses their needs as rights-holders. Within an appropriate enabling environment, youth will be increasingly likely to get involved in development issues affecting them, thereby allowing them to access existing opportunities and create new ones.

In Ghana, enhancing the autonomy as well as well as the financial capacity of the NYA (formally the National Youth Council) through parliamentary enactment of the National Youth Act 2016 represents a milestone. Moreover, significant effort has been made to bring GoG closer to the people through decentralisation of key government functions to local authorities. This process, which began in 1988, presents an important opportunity for citizens, including youth, to engage more effectively with local governance at council and sub-council levels. Likewise, more recently, structures and programmes that serve youth needs have been introduced, including the Youth Parliament programme.

Young Ghanaians are entitled to rights and privileges such as free basic and secondary education and voting. If they engage in the workforce, they are obligated to pay taxes. Many young people are required to undertake National Service. Some may choose to volunteer and hold public officials accountable. Youth actions – both social and political – can be seen as aspects of citizenship that require formal mechanisms and safe spaces where young people can engage positively with society without having to use violent means.

Government, public institutions and families are responsible for nurturing good citizens. Social participation does not guarantee active citizenship, nor does it always foster young people's participation in development. Thus, there is a need for deliberate interventions to involve youth, including inter-generational partnerships that foster engagement between young people and policy-makers.

9.1 Mechanisms, processes and structures for youth participation in governance

> '*Youth should be motivated and be able to come out, express themselves. More organisations… need to be set up to help youth come out and voice out their problems or things hindering them*.' Female, 15–20 years

In Ghana, there are a number of different routes and levels through which young people can engage either directly or indirectly in governance processes. That being said, the extent to which youth are able to take advantage of these opportunities in practice depends largely on the principles of participation and their capacity to proactively engage.

This section highlights case studies of youth involvement in a range of governance processes. This includes interventions in participatory governance: planning and budgeting, monitoring, research, youth parliaments and awareness campaigns. Moreover, it outlines the interventions and offers some lessons learnt from research interviews where possible.

9.1.1 Participatory research, planning and budgeting

A decentralised development and budgeting process can inform and shape national budgets. MMDAs are encouraged to engage various social groups in budget development. However, research interviewees suggested there are instances of exclusion during this process, owing to the absence of legal requirements to engage youth. Some young research participants argued that, though some opportunities to include young people exist, the assumption that they do not have the capacity to critically examine and contribute to budget planning is still widespread. Since 2010, a number of local and civil society organisations including Plan Ghana, YES and the Integrated Social Development Centre have initiated and implemented rights-based approaches to youth budget advocacy and planning. Capacity-building opportunities for youth have included week-long training camps to advocate for key development interventions, understanding the budget cycle and tracking, implications of budgets for vulnerable groups including girls and women and how to engage with the media and decision-makers. These participatory learning processes are useful in empowering young people to engage in local budgetary processes and hold governments accountable.

Similarly, following Ghana's NYP review, youth-focused organisations including YES, with support from the Commonwealth Foundation, implemented a capacity-building project to empower youth to participate effectively in the review process, with some key policy and programmatic considerations (Voices of Youth Coalition,

2017). Youth were equipped with research skills and then conducted research on youth development issues and policy review.[1]

9.1.2 Youth advisory panels

As most international organisations are recognising the agential role of young people with respect to development, youth are increasingly being viewed not only as *beneficiaries* of development interventions but also as *partners*, through the institutionalisation of youth leadership roles within organisations. For instance, UNFPA Ghana has established the Youth Leaders Fellowship Programme to include young people in its internal governance structures and strategies. These youth benefit from funding and training and participate in programme planning as well as key advocacy and campaign work. The approach has the potential to improve accountability regarding youth development outcomes.

9.1.3 Youth parliament

In 2019, the NYA initiated the Youth Parliament Model in MMDAs to empower and build capacity among youth with the goal of increasing active youth participation in decision-making processes, as well as to provide them with safe spaces to express their needs to leaders in local government structures. Thus far, the initiative has involved training youth drawn from the 15 MMDAs per region in regional workshops on the Youth Parliament Model. The goal is to enable youth to cultivate new leadership skills, to promote transparent decision-making and to empower youth to understand governance processes, demand accountability and serve as positive forces of change.

Similarly, ActionAid Ghana and the Northern Sector Action on Awareness Centre have established the Young Female Parliament in northern Ghana to provide space for training and dialogue among girls while building skills and confidence to engage in participatory governance. Initiatives that focus on engaging females are crucial, given that they constitute a significant proportion of Ghana's productive population yet in many cases remain marginalised. These safe spaces allow female youth to dialogue on issues that are important to them, such as violence, harassment and discrimination, cultural issues and the gender gap found in current leadership.

9.1.4 Electoral participation and civic life

Elections remain a key feature of Ghana's democratic governance. Youth aged 18 years and above have the constitutional right to vote in local and national elections as well as to stand for political leadership. At the age of 21 they are able to stand for parliamentary election and by 40 they can run for the presidency. As of June 2019, Ghana had about 10 MPs aged 35 years or below out of the 275 MPs. However, despite efforts by both international and civil society organisations, political empowerment of youth and particularly young women lags behind in Ghana. Additionally, data from recent surveys indicates that youth participation in political processes is still surpassed by the participation of elderly people (Lekalake and Gyimah-Boadi, 2016) – findings that can be attributed to low voter registration of young people, voting apathy and cynicism in politics.

9.1.5 Political voice through media and ICT-based initiatives

Not only has ICT become an essential tool for daily communication but also certain media tools and technology have become useful in enhancing young people's civic participation. Electronic media, especially the radio, TV and social media, are useful modes youth use to understand and participate in local, regional and national issues. Youth-led organisations such as Curious Minds and other stakeholders, like the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), use these media sources in a number of governance processes (e.g. to improve voter education) and areas of civic life (e.g. radio production to promote sexual and reproductive health rights, gender equality, etc.). By participating in these organisations, young people have cultivated skills in writing, production, verbal communication and presentation, all necessary for youth employability in certain sectors. Many of these young people have gone on to roles as activists and facilitators at key events such as the International Conference on Population and Development. Despite the success of these programmes, however, most media-based youth-focused or youth-led programmes extend mainly to youth in urban centres and not those in rural environments.

The U-Report (implemented by UNICEF Ghana) is a free mobile platform that runs weekly large-scale polls with young people on issues such as safety, access to education, inflation and early marriage in order to foster youth political participation. The data is then analysed by UNICEF and published. A detailed review of this programme by Berdou and Lopes (2017) found that, while it is a cost-effective approach to assessing what people think about certain issues, the U-Reporters tend to be more educated and tech-literate than other groups in the population. This may suggest that in Ghana it is important for stakeholders to deliberately ensure inclusion of certain populations not familiar with the technologies used.

Box 9.1 Why does meaningful participation of youth in governance processes matter?

Numerous international frameworks adopted at the national level have reiterated the importance of youth engagement in the issues that affect them. For instance, Article 11 of the African Youth Charter adopted in 2006 requires states to take action in improving youth participation in governance processes and in public discourse. This resulted in the NYP 2010 in Ghana. Subsequently, in 2014, the Youth Policy Action Plan was launched. Similarly, Ghana is widely known for being the first country to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and thus expectations remain high regarding Article 12: the right to participate in decision-making processes that may be relevant in their lives. In essence, participation of young people in matters that concern them is a right, rather than a privilege.

Globally, it is recognised that youth possess vital capabilities, valuable knowledge and viewpoints that are useful in governance processes and achievement of the SDGs. Consequently, the UN and its sister agencies have developed

strategies at global level to ensure youth participation in global governance issues such as climate change and migration. A key outcome of these is the appointment of young people as AU or UN Youth Envoys, suggesting that it is not enough for young people to be merely engaged in national development issues: their participation in global development issues at sub-regional or global levels of decision is vital. Young people are not just the future; they are also part of the present and have the ability to offer solutions to local and global challenges to development.

Evidence suggests political or social exclusion generates distrust and disengagement from institutions. The absence of participatory mechanisms and safe spaces for young people to have a voice and hold leaders accountable can thus result in social unrest. Conversely, active citizenship through mechanisms to empower youth can facilitate collective action towards addressing their needs and promote trust and inter-generational partnerships while offering youth useful life skills and a sense of purpose.

Despite global recognition, in many cases approaches to youth participation are donor-driven, adult-initiated and patronising, resulting in participation that is manipulative and tokenistic (Hart, 1992). Instead, working towards a continuum of youth engagement aimed at achieving the highest degrees of participation is thought to be a better strategy. Focusing on the quality of participation initiatives, which achievements are actually important and whether they actually result in change can help improve outcomes (Farrow, 2015). Furthermore, youth-led approaches, characterised by diverse youth (including young women) defined and led by their own development agendas, should not be dismissed and deserve to be recognised in their own right (SPW and DFID, 2010; UNDP, 2014).

9.2 Policies supporting youth civic engagement

9.2.1 National Youth Policy 2010

The NYP 2010 was the first of its kind in Ghana to give legitimacy to youth as a national development priority. It allows for review after five years – and is currently under a review process spearheaded by the NYA nearly nine years since it was enacted. Efforts are being made to ensure that in the future the NYP responds to young people's contemporary needs while at the same time aligning with regional and global commitments. It is currently still unclear how effective the current policy has been.

Additionally, during research interviews, youth participants noted that neither the NYP nor the National Youth Authority Act clarifies the mechanisms or methods through which active participation in governance, decision-making and democratic processes shall be achieved at various levels. Questions such as how district youth committees should interact with regional committees and local councils, ministries

or other decision-making bodies with respect to localised youth issues, development planning processes and accountability still need to be addressed.

One of the major critiques of the current policy relates to the limited involvement of youth stakeholders in its formulation and the implementation (Adu-Gyamfi, 2014) including in local and rural communities and at national level. It has also been suggested that the formulation process itself was highly politicised, with strong involvement of political party 'youth wings' (ibid.). Furthermore, interviewees noted that the four-year wait between the policy launch and development of an actual implementation strategy potentially had an impact on the effectiveness of the policy. Finally, the NYP supports the idea that active participation can be achieved through education on good governance and through private sector support of volunteerism but offers no clear-cut strategies, frameworks or methods of implementation.

9.2.2 National Decentralisation Policy, 2010

The National Decentralisation Policy, launched in 2010, widened and strengthened the scope of Ghana's Local Government Act (1993). It clearly establishes goals of decentralisation, including innovative new principles such as gender mainstreaming, capacity-building of councils and collaborating with a wider range of partners like those in the private sector and NGOs. It highlights the need to conduct youth situational analysis, assess the needs of youth organisations, review youth employment interventions and support the development of district youth strategies and programmes informed by the NYP. By embodying the principles of participatory democracy, the policy created space for youth and youth organisations to become meaningfully involved in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of development projects and local economic development. However, it does not specify the process through which it will be held accountable.

9.2.3 Further decentralisation

The Local Governance Act of 2016 empowers the 254 MMDAs with governing authority in areas such as education, sanitation, youth and sports. Following the 2016 presidential and parliamentary elections, further policy reforms allowed for more focused allocation of resources across regions in addition to addressing rural–urban socio-economic disparities. These reforms could in the long term increase development at the local level and equally offer the opportunity for local authorities to invest in youth mechanisms that facilitate youth participation in local governance processes. Although decentralisation is critical to local economic development and democratic governance, the extent to which it improves the level of engagement of youth in public policy issues is yet to be understood.

9.3 Youth participation in governance and challenges

Ghana is considered one of the stable countries in West Africa since the 1992 transition to multiparty democracy. Though support for democracy in the country is relatively high, at 81 per cent in 2016–2018 (Afrobarometer, 2019), youth engagement

in public policy issues and political processes remains low compared with that of adults and elderly populations (Lekalake and Gyimah-Boadi, 2016). According to an Afrobarometer survey from 2014/15, only 55 per cent of Ghanaian youth show an interest in public affairs; 34 per cent indicated that they never discussed political issues with friends or family members (ibid.). This lack of interest in politics and political institutions may owe to several factors, including a lack of trust in political life, limited knowledge on how to participate in political processes, the idea that their participation will never lead to change, and few opportunities or weak support to participate in various levels of political processes (ibid.).

Despite the possible opportunities linked to youth engagement, key challenges and barriers remain. During youth consultations for this report, most young people felt disillusioned with political leadership. Without access to youth development structures that are not politicised and that foster unbiased accountability, these youth are unlikely to participate in any government-led initiatives. Furthermore, certain barriers exist. For instance, although the range of legislation and policies in Ghana has worked to encourage local participation in development issues, often English is the language used in both meetings and official documents. This results in the exclusion of a certain portion of the youth population, especially among the less educated.

Other challenges that are working to prevent youth participation in governing processes include funding constraints and limited capacity of local authorities on how to meaningfully engage young people. This was noted during interviews with representatives of government ministries and agencies as well as young people. Moreover, as noted by youth representatives, registration costs or participation fees for initiatives serve as another barrier, given that most youth organisations lack strong financial base.

Additionally, structural barriers are evident in the ways in which local authorities or public institutions conduct their work. Interviews with various government institutions suggested lack of youth participation principles. Similarly, youth development workers themselves remain unclear about the modalities guiding how certain youth are selected for events or projects. Research suggests that, when youth structures are well supported through effective mechanisms of participation and funding, they tend to be better organised. When they remain under-resourced and underfunded, they become limited in their effectiveness and vulnerable to manipulation.

> '*We just hear gender equality, more women in parliament, etc. But the education is not really there. People are just advocating for it. They are not really understanding what gender equality is*.' Female, 15–20 years

The visibility of young women in governance processes and political discussions is still a challenge in Ghana: female participation lags behind that of young males, with a 12 per cent difference in both campaign attendance and civic participation between the sexes, and a 14 per cent difference with respect to contacting political leaders (Lekalake and Gyimah-Boadi, 2016). While female participation in Ghana is above

the average for African countries, women still remain underrepresented in political processes. This is in line with earlier data from 2005, indicating that gender disparities have not improved during the past decade (Coffe and Bolzendhal, 2011; Lekalake and Gyimah-Boadi, 2016). Traditional gender roles and other socio-cultural factors may be preventing females from taking on decisive roles in politics, even if they are active participants in local public life.

9.4 Summary points

1. Opportunities for youth participation in governance and participation in political and decision-making processes depend largely on the political, socio-economic and cultural contexts and existing frameworks at various levels (from local to global) of decision-making.
2. The promotion of an enabling environment (legal frameworks, policies and plans) increases young people's participation in a broad range of processes and areas (electoral and parliamentary processes, public administration and local governance, including in peace building environments) at local, sub-national and national levels.
3. There is a risk of seeing youth as a homogenous category, overlooking important power inequalities among them, especially based on gender and socio-economic status.
4. New media and ICT-based interventions can enable youth participation in both governance and civic life. However, it is important also to consider how to reach the digitally disconnected in rural areas, in particular to understand their needs.
5. Among donors there may be the tendency to focus on formal measures for youth participation, through institutions such as national youth parliament. However, it is important to understand their operational mechanisms and how they foster inclusion and engagement of marginalised youth (e.g. rural or uneducated youth) or informal youth community movements.
6. Inter-generational power dynamics may create divisions and distrust between young people and adults. There is thus a need to foster trusted inter-generational partnerships and safe spaces where young people can share their concerns with adults.
7. Contemporary youth development models have emphasised the need for genuine youth engagement. They recognise youth agency/leadership, and youth as key partners in development processes (from planning to monitoring and evaluation).
8. Promoting meaningful youth participation can be challenging, especially if the cultural ethos encourages youth to be 'seen and not heard'. Thus, it is important to institutionalise a culture of participation across ministries, agencies and departments with high-level political support.

9.5 Recommendations

1. Encourage active dialogue between political leaders and young people in order to improve understanding of youth civic rights and the benefits of political participation and civic engagement at local, district and national levels.
2. Involve young people with diverse backgrounds in all stages of policy and programme development, implementation and evaluation, without regard for political affiliation.
3. Conduct local research to improve understanding of factors that encourage or hinder diverse youth (e.g. girls and rural youth) participation in development processes.
4. Create policies/programmes, training and funding for marginalised youth to foster an enabling environment for young people from all walks of life.
5. Invest in youth organisations, grassroots movements and skills development to foster the professionalisation of youth work.
6. Promote meaningful participation of grassroots organisations to encourage them in addressing local development needs.
7. Promote civic education and sensitisation programmes, including adapting the school curriculum and creating school-based development clubs that allow young people to participate in development issues affecting them.
8. Review the legislative framework for youth representation in leadership (e.g. use quotas) and strengthen the technical capacity of MMDAs to meaningfully engage youth.
9. Promote research and knowledge-sharing of youth development interventions, lessons learnt and best practices.
10. Mainstream youth development for government ministries, departments and agencies to ensure they can work with young people as partners in development.
11. Promote joint programming to foster coordination and effectiveness in addressing youth development issues.
12. Establish a multi-donor trust fund to ensure adequate funding to support youth development interventions at all levels.
13. Encourage youth organisations to register, coordinate and offer training to enhance the professionalism and effectiveness of youth work.

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Note

1 https://commonwealthfoundation.com/project/improving-youth-participation-public-policymaking-ghana/

Chapter 10

Youth and Crime

Youth are among the most vulnerable members of society; in part because of their tendency to get involved in high-risk behaviours and their susceptibility to committing criminal offences. Those who are separated from their parents are clearly among the most vulnerable of this group. Extreme poverty, chronic illness of self or parents and lack of social support and education also leave youth vulnerable to violence (Arora et al., 2015). Adolescents in detrimental environments may feel more vulnerable to violence from peers at school or gangs in their neighbourhood and hopeless about their lives and their odds of surviving to adulthood. Ultimately, their exposure to violence may lead them to become violent themselves (Fagan and Wilkinson, 1998).

10.1 Defining youth crime

Youth crime, also called juvenile crime and delinquency, is a serious social problem. Its intensity and gravity depend mostly on the social, economic and cultural conditions of youth populations. In many cases, youth offenders are "street children" who have been exposed to violence in their immediate social environment, either as observers or as victims. Their basic education, when they have it, is poor; their primary socialisation from the family is too often inadequate; and their socio-economic environment is shaped by poverty and destitution. Rather than relying solely on the criminal justice system, approaches to the prevention of violence and crime should thus include measures to support equality and justice, combat poverty and reduce hopelessness among youth.

Youth who have few options often turn to crime (World Bank, 2007) and their engagement in crime can affect various sectors and development including, investment climate. Crime and the fear of crime and violence are widely seen to depress private investment among both households and firms (World Bank, 2007). Addressing the root causes of youth crime through approaches that encourage the provision of opportunities for youth populations and allow them to cultivate new skills and build on their abilities will aid them to become productive citizens and assets for their communities and the nation as a whole.

10.2 Juvenile justice legislation in Ghana

10.2.1 Juvenile Justice Act 2003

The Criminal Code references criminal offenders generally, with no specific focus on juveniles. As a result, in 2003 the Juvenile Justice Act was created, to better reflect the situations and circumstances of young offenders. This outlines the aspects of the juvenile justice system in Ghana and establishes junior and senior correctional centres. However, without comprehensive national data on youth in the justice system, it is

difficult for the Act to address the full nature and scope of the problem, and many gaps remain. Additionally, there are certain areas that the court and police officers generally ignore. For example, the Act mandates that juveniles can stay at the police station for a maximum of 48 hours. After this, they must be charged and brought to court. Police outside of urban centres often do not follow this rule, bringing the juvenile to court and to the remand home several days after their arrest, and in some cases as long as a month after. Sometimes juveniles are held in the same cell or in the same area as adult offenders. Even where police officers are aware of the stipulations in the Juvenile Justice Act, they simply do not have the necessary accommodations in place (Hoffmann and Baerg, 2011). Furthermore, juveniles may not have access to a lawyer and/or their guardian. Lawyers are only called by social workers once the juvenile arrives at the remand home; and a young person may be questioned without either a guardian or a lawyer present.

10.2.2 Criminal Offences Act 1960

This Act was introduced to consolidate and amend the law in Ghana relating to criminal offences, affording protection for children with respect to certain offences, such as sexual exploitation, abduction, and harm to a child at birth or defilement of child under 16 years of age. There is no one definition of the child in terms of age in Ghana. It is understood that the Law Reform Commission has been asked to solicit views concerning the age of majority. The 1992 Constitution defines a child as a person under 18 years old.

10.3 Factors influencing youth crime

The juvenile justice field has spent much time and energy attempting to understand the root causes of delinquency. Researchers have concluded that there is no single path to delinquency and note that the presence of several risk factors often increases a youth's chance of offending. A risk assessment may aid in determining the type of intervention that will best suit the offending youth's needs and decrease his or her risk of offending. Although much of the research on risk factors that youth face has focused on predicting serious and violent offences, risk factors are relevant to all levels of delinquency.

10.3.1 Individual-level factors

Several psychological, behavioural and mental characteristics have been linked to delinquency, including hyperactivity or attention problems, impulsivity and risk-taking, and low verbal intelligence, with aggression being the best predictor of later violent behaviour and delinquency (Hawkins et al., 1998; Tremblay and LeMarquand, 2001).

10.3.2 Social factors

- Family characteristics such as poor parenting skills, family size, child maltreatment, and anti-social parents are risk factors linked to juvenile delinquency.

- Youth involvement with a delinquent behaviour may be linked to the peer group they associate with (Lipsey and Derzon, 1998).
- Poverty and unemployment plays an influential role in shaping many social problems, including juvenile delinquency, as it often jeopardises the parent-child relationship by compelling some youth to enter into criminal activities.

10.3.3 Community factors

- The impact of school policies concerning suspension and expulsion, disproportionately affects youth and has negative consequences for at-risk youth (McCord, 2001). Youth with low academic performance, low commitment to school and low educational aspirations during middle school are at higher risk of delinquency (Herrenkohl et al., 2001).
- Access to basic services, including primary schooling and basic health care, as well as to enriched child care and early childhood development programmes, increases the likelihood of an individual graduating from high school and attending college – reducing the probability that they will become involved in criminal behaviour (World Bank, 2007).

Preventing delinquency represents a complex problem with no simple solutions. Risk factor analysis offers a way to determine which youth are most likely to become delinquent, as well as providing data to tailor prevention programmes to meet the unique needs of diverse youth populations and their communities.

10.4 Access to legal representation

According to the Juvenile Justice Act, the juvenile has the right to access legal advice. However, there is currently no structure in place under the Department of Social Welfare or any other government body to ensure legal representation for juveniles in conflict with the law. Most juveniles are not aware of their legal rights. In Accra, as part of the Juvenile Justice Project, two lawyers have been providing free legal representation for juveniles since 2008, with UNICEF paying their filing fees. One of the main goals of this project is to reduce the amount of time juveniles spend on remand. Before 2008, juveniles would often spend between one and three years waiting for their case to be heard. Since the project began, however, this amount of time has shortened significantly, and the entire process often does not exceed six months.

Although most districts and all 10 regions have juvenile courts with translators, a lack of trained judges and unavailability of the court mean many cases are adjourned (Hoffmann and Baerg, 2011). Juveniles under the age of 16 receive a maximum sentence of 3 months; those aged 16–17 years receive a maximum of 6 months; and other young people age 18 years and above can receive 24 months. If the offence is considered serious, the offender may receive three years, or may be sentenced to serve time at a senior correctional centre, even if they are seventeen years of age or younger. Serious offences include murder, rape, defilement, indecent assault, involvement in unlawful harm, robbery with aggravated circumstance, drug offences and offences related to firearms.

Box 10.1 SDG 16 – Paralegals for increased access to legal aid services in Ghana

SDG 16 seeks to promote the rule of law at both national and international levels to ensure equal access to justice for all. In the Ghanaian context, the technical nature of the law, with regard to both content and procedure, means those who are not versed in the law require technical assistance to guarantee reasonable access to and equality before the law. This assistance comes at great cost. Despite an increase in the numbers of qualified lawyers in the country, the ratio of lawyers to clients remains inadequate. Moreover, the practices of lawyers are confined to the urban and suburban parts of the country.

The use of paralegals and legal assistants has been identified as one means by which access to justice can be brought to the doorstep of people with little or no access to the justice delivery system. However, in order to improve the recognition and regulation of paralegals in Ghana's justice delivery system, it is recommended that further research be conducted on the Legal Aid Bill and that efforts be channelled towards detailing the nature of paralegal programmes Ghana needs, taking into consideration the role of private paralegals. Furthermore, there is a need to investigate ways to incorporate civil society, as well as how university faculties can help develop relevant industry-driven paralegal training programmes and engage those who have finished their LLB and are waiting to do a professional law course.

Source: Legal Aid Scheme, Ghana (2017)

Lack of access to legal representation puts youth offenders, especially those from poor families, at an unfair disadvantage. In 2015, Legal Aid in conjunction with UNICEF organised workshops aimed at enhancing staff knowledge in child rights and responsibilities, juvenile offending, procedures in juvenile courts and pre/post-trial issues. It also held a workshop to raise awareness on access to legal aid for vulnerable persons.

10.5 Robbery

Robbery is a social problem throughout the country, and particularly problematic in large cities. Pickpocketing and purse-snatching are the most common forms of crime, but burglary and armed robbery are increasingly occurring in parts of Accra, especially in congested urban areas (Kingsley Eyiah, 2018). Often, it is unemployed youth living on the streets who are the perpetrators. The vast majority of armed robbery is conducted by street youth, of whom 95 per cent are homeless (Kingsley Eyiah, 2018).

In order to combat this problem, the Anglican Church in Accra has been conducting outreach initiatives, including providing job training, Bible-based mentoring, counselling and leadership development (ARDF, 2018). Without meaningful

employment or skills development opportunities that enhance employability, youth populations often turn to gangs, with females at particular risk of involvement in prostitution. As such, the Diocese of Accra plans to build a youth development centre, where vocational and spiritual training will provide young people aged 17–25 with opportunities to take part in adult education and develop job skills such as technical and computer skills. The centre will also offer recreational facilities, a community library and a youth savings and credit cooperative (ARDF, 2018).

10.6 Criminal justice process

According to the Juvenile Justice Act, bail should generally be granted. However, in many cases it is not, because of the risk the juvenile poses to him or herself or to society as well as the likelihood that the juvenile will abscond after bail is granted (typically those without a guardian to vouch for them). If bail is not approved, the juvenile is sent to the nearest remand home or, if possible, to a responsible guardian. For instance, in the Greater Accra region, the remand home is located in Osu for both female and male juveniles. Males and females are separated but the two remand homes are located in the same compound along with the Girl's Correctional Centre and the Shelter for Abused Children. Juveniles frequently stay at the remand home for longer than the maximum stay of three months for most offences and six months for serious offences (Hoffmann and Baerg, 2011). Both remand homes provide juveniles with basic education during their stay. However, adequate space to house the juveniles is lacking; moreover, staff are insufficient and security inadequate, owing to a lack of funding (Hoffmann and Baerg, 2011). As such, compounds are forced to rely on support from organisations like UNICEF and other NGOs, in order to function.

10.7 Life for juveniles after prison

Judges are often forced to either commit the juvenile to probation or to a correctional centre as few alternative sentences, such as community service or restorative justice options, are available in Ghana as noted during research interviews with experts. Without a robust monitoring system, there are often issues with youth absconding. However, criminal punishment does not deter future criminal behaviour (World Bank, 2007). In fact, premature or excessive punishment, including incarceration and social stigma, can drive young people to continue to participate in criminal activities (World Bank, 2007).

10.8 Summary points

1. The Criminal Code, the Juvenile Justice Act, the Children's Act and the Criminal Offences Act determine juvenile justice legislation in Ghana.
2. Addressing the root causes of youth crime through approaches that encourage the provision of opportunities for youth populations and that allow them to cultivate new skills and build on their abilities will aid youth in becoming productive citizens and assets.

3. Access to legal representation is a challenge in Ghana. Several initiatives are in place to grant access to the largest number of people regardless of location (urban settlements or remote areas), income and abilities or disabilities. Legal aid is provided through various programmes.
4. Robbery is a major type of crime involving youth.
5. Probation is often the only option for youth after prison as no alternative sentences are available.
6. Punishing youth for crimes they have committed often results in a continued life of crime. Thus it is important to invest in youth development initiatives and alternatives to detention.

10.9 Recommendations

1. Priority should be given to developing preventive measures to fight juvenile delinquency and youth criminality. This means rural areas need adequate socio-economic opportunities for youth populations. It also requires enabling access to educational, employment and leisure programmes for youth from poor urban settings. Social programmes aimed at building self-esteem and confidence should be targeted at youth who have dropped out of school or come from broken families.
2. GoG and other relevant agencies, particularly youth organisations, should consider organising information campaigns and educational and training programmes to sensitise youth to the personally and socially detrimental effects of violence in the family, community and society, to teach them how to communicate without violence and to promote training so they can protect themselves and others against violence. A supportive social policy and legal framework should help foster the development of social organisation, particularly through youth organisations and community involvement.
3. Rehabilitation services and programmes should be employed to help marginalised young people, such as those living in destitution and in poor living conditions who face inadequate access to education, malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment and lack of leisure time, in order to address the root causes of criminality through prevention. These programmes should also be made available to those who already have a criminal record.
4. Focus should be given to the treatment of youth who are incarcerated, in order to ensure their rights are protected and the principles of the penal code are upheld.
5. Further exploration of policies and programmes that allow second chances in the form of reintegration, treatment and restoration through education and skills development or community service is necessary. These are likely to enhance capabilities and improve the likelihood that youth populations will find their way out of criminal activities and violence.

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Chapter 11

Youth, Conflict and Peace-Building

Ghana is the highest-ranking sub-Saharan country on the inaugural Global Youth Wellbeing Index (Goldin et al., 2014) and yet it still faces major challenges with respect to youth and conflict. Factors such as youth unemployment contribute to youth involvement in crime. Youth may be involved in conflict either as offenders or as victims. In areas rife with conflict, youth populations are either viewed as vulnerable, powerless and in need of protection or feared as dangerous, violent and threats to security.

11.1 Conflict in Ghana

It is universally recognised that the factors that spark conflict include poverty and its attendant struggle for and misuse of resources, ethnic rivalries, religious intolerance, bad governance and arbitrary national boundaries. Many of these factors are at play in Ghana and are often interconnected (UNDP, 2018). For example, ethnic rivalries are often combined with competition over resources and land use, as is the case in the north of Ghana (ibid.).

Even among groups of similar ethnicity, conflicts are occurring as a result of tensions over landownership, land use and access to resources. Moreover, long-standing chieftaincy conflicts tend to exacerbate any resource-based conflicts (UNDP, 2018). During research interviews, youth expressed concern about the proliferation of vigilante groups, with most members likely to be youth. Land conflicts result in lack of land for youth populations, which in turn means youth have little opportunity to engage in agricultural pursuits, leading to increased unemployment in this demographic. Unemployed youth are all too often used as pawns in traditional chieftaincy, political and land use conflicts, lured by the promise of wealth (ibid.).

Through initiatives to increase employment opportunities for youth, Ghana has been able to accelerate its economic growth by 8.5 per cent.[1] This indicates that efforts have been made to provide meaningful pursuits for youth, thereby reducing potential conflict and increasing safety and community security, while improving youth well-being.

11.2 Defining youth violence

WHO (2002) defines youth violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, by youth, against themselves, another person or a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, abnormal development or deprivation.

Physical fighting is the most frequently perpetuated form of violence, followed by robbery, stealing, threatening, bullying, hitting and obscene gestures. Other forms of violent behaviour include swearing, yelling, sexual abuse and embarrassment. Violence occurs among youth populations on a weekly basis, with most youth targeting their peers (Barnie et al., 2017). Moreover, a study among youth in Ghana showed that respondents were relatively accepting of violence towards women (Glover, 2003).

11.2.1 Youth as victims

Conflicts have the ability to destabilise communities to the extent that young people have limited access to resources, information and education and hold little to no control over their own lives. Living in these conditions makes youth populations vulnerable to various forms of abuse, exploitation, harassment and neglect. Exposure to violence can cause lifelong damage to psychological health and well-being. Youth vulnerability to violence is even more pronounced in rural households and among low-income or underemployed youth populations, youth with disabilities and youth with psychosocial problems (Arora et al., 2015). To address this trend, the NYP 2010 advocates for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and fortified protection against sexual harassment, physical violence and abuse and labour exploitation, as well as other negative attitudes and cultural practices.

11.2.2 Females as particularly vulnerable to violence

'*Most youth, guys, feel girls are their property*.' Male, 15–20 years

In Ghana, girls and young women are particularly vulnerable to violence, owing to their secondary social roles and the expectation that they should be submissive and supportive of the male elements in the family. Research has also highlighted a disturbing trend of sexual violence, including indecent assault, defilement, rape and incest (GNCRC et al., 2017), with one in four women reporting having been coerced into sexual situations and one in three adolescent females reporting their first sexual experience as forced. Recovery support for women who have experienced violence is limited in Ghana (OSAC, 2018). Whether the support required is psychologically based or physical, the recovery programmes that do exist simply do not have enough of a presence to make a sizable impact (ibid.). During research interviews, it was also noted that victims might be left to figure out life after assault on their own as culturally sexual violence typically renders them societal outcasts.

11.2.3 Youth as perpetrators

Youth inability to find gainful employment can lead to increased crime, violence and conflict. Unemployed youth desperate to obtain some form of livelihood can all too easily be swayed by small monetary incentives in return for conducting violent acts. Young people may be involved in a wide range of violence and conflicts, including armed robbery and by-election struggles (NCCE, 2011).

11.3 Sites of violence

11.3.1 Home and family

Exposure to violence at an early age often leads to the manifestation of violent behaviours among youth (Warner and Fowler, 2003; Brown et al., 2009). Absence of social support systems, coupled with weak family and attachment structures, exacerbates the problem, increasing the likelihood of these behaviours (Hirschi and Stark, 1969). Family risk factors that have been associated with physical violence include food insecurity as well as parental alcohol and tobacco use. Likewise, studies have shown that corporal punishment and its acceptance increase the risk of further violence and adverse socio-economic outcomes (UNICEF, 2014).

11.3.2 Violence in schools

In Ghana, violence in schools often takes the form of bullying, violent victimisation and corporal punishment (caning) (UNICEF, 2014). According to a report by Ghana's Department of Children and Children and Youth in Broadcasting, more than 80 per cent of children have experienced caning in school (ibid.). To prevent violence from occurring in schools, GES has taken steps to abolish corporal punishment, such as revising the teachers' handbook and making teachers aware of the consequences of harming pupils (ibid.). The Stop Violence Against Girls programme, launched in 2013, has also specifically targeted violence against girls in schools.

During research group discussions, it became evident that bullying is also prevalent in boarding schools: seniors may bully juniors as a way of expressing their authority. This may result in depression, loneliness and other emotional challenges after school or in adulthood.

11.3.3 Violence in urban settlements

Violence by young people is one of the most visible forms of social disorder in urban settlements. More than half of the youth population involved in one study admitted to engaging in violence within the time span of one year (Barnie et al., 2017). Youth violence in urban settlements principally manifests itself in noise-making, murder, stealing, drug addiction, obscene gestures, robbery, sexual abuse and embarrassment (ibid.). Peer pressure and street survival coping mechanisms are reported to be the pivotal factors in sparking youth violence (ibid.). To address the occurrence of youth violence in urban settlements, the NYP 2010 has begun providing opportunities for rehabilitation of youth perpetrators of violence. Several national action plans exist to address different types of child violence, as well as social and educational policies regarding child maltreatment, interpersonal violence and sexual violence. However, there is no national action plan concerning youth violence (WHO, 2014). One programme, Gender-Based Education, Advocacy and Research: Unleashing Potential for Adolescents in Ghana, seeks first to conduct formative research to understand underlying cultural and social norms about adolescent habits to improve gender-equitable attitudes and support adolescents and their communities to live healthy lives free from violence.

11.4 Factors contributing to youth involvement in conflict

11.4.1 Youth unemployment challenge

Youth unemployment and joblessness remain a major socio-economic and political challenge in Ghana. Ghana has enjoyed significant economic growth, registering annual GDP increases between 4 and 14 per cent. And yet large percentages of the youth demographic remain unable to find work, with those who are highly educated the most affected. Job production in Ghana is falling critically short, year after year (Baah-Boateng, 2016). One critical reason for this relates to which sectors actually create growth in the country. Mining, oil and financial markets are the sectors creating the greatest growth in Ghana but generally produce very few employment opportunities. Finally, violence may be perpetuated as a coping or survival strategy for unemployed or out-of-school youth (UNDP, 2018). Absence of economic opportunities also encourages large numbers of youth to migrate to the south in the hopes of finding employment (ibid.).

11.4.2 Political and electoral corruption

Elections have become a conduit for already existing tensions, although political violence between parties and their supporters predates independence and has been part of the political scene since the colonial struggle (Tsikata and Seini, 2004). Parallels have been drawn between election timing and spikes in violence activity (ibid.). Some youth may verbally or physically abuse others during elections processes. Intimidation, threats and application of force by 'party thugs' are also common forms of by-election conflict (Fisher, 2016).

11.4.3 Helplessness and lack of options

The idea of helplessness creating resistance and ultimately violence has been used to argue that the very community youth live in becomes in itself a catalyst for youth violence (Barnie et al., 2017). Loss of self-power and self-direction promotes anger and frustration, ultimately prompting youth to act out in order to regain some semblance of control. Research interviews for this report revealed that, in Ghana, the expectation that youth will never achieve full adulthood without gainful employment can contribute to violence as an immediate means to rewrite the social rules and norms. This can be compounded by alcohol and drug abuse.

Furthermore, limited safe spaces for inter-generational dialogue and engagement around issues related to the inadequacy of governing bodies have led to violent protests at two universities.

11.5 The cost of violence

The adverse impacts of violence on the development of young people are particularly acute, where violent behaviours can lead to destruction of public facilities, migration or refusal of public sector workers (e.g. teachers) to accept postings to areas with ongoing conflict. This affects development by decreasing the level of education,

leading to declines in business and other livelihood activities such as farming (UNDP, 2018).

11.6 The role of youth in peace-building

Young people can play a very positive role in peace-building and aiding societies in recovering from conflict, by addressing the root causes of conflict; helping prevent and mitigate all forms of violence; and working towards healing and reconciliation (Ozerdem, 2016). Most commonly, youth participate by leading dialogue as well as engaging in social, educational and advocacy activities. Recognising the role youth can play as agents of peace can help transform the negative discourse that represent youth as 'troublemakers' to agents of development (ibid.).

Although youth populations can create positive impacts with minimal resources, providing them with tools and resources will enable them to become more effective change-makers (Ozerdem, 2016). Promoting and supporting peace-building should begin early, preventing youth from engaging in violence in the first place.

In recent years, the role of young people in peace-building has evolved rapidly, culminating globally in 2015 with the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. This acknowledges that young people can be strong and active players in creating peaceful societies, free from violence and conflict, and have the potential to be 'valuable innovators of change'. Young people are increasingly emerging as vocal and effective actors within the peace-building movement at the global level.

11.7 Summary points

1. Youth are often either the victims or the perpetrators of conflict.
2. Struggles over land rights and land access are a large source of conflict in Ghana. Without access to land, youth populations often have little means to make a livelihood.
3. Unemployed youth are often used as pawns in traditional chieftaincy, political and land use conflicts.
4. Youth violence happens at home, within the family, in schools and in deprived neighbourhoods. Displays of masculinity and gender violence are two other main forms of violence among youth.
5. Unemployment, lack of parental support and limited safe spaces for youth and adult engagement can be seen as contributing to youth involvement in conflicts.
6. Although the NYP 2010 was supposed to create and strengthen mechanisms for peace-building as well as institutionalising a culture of peaceful co-existence, the need to create safe spaces for youth voices remains critical.
7. Young people can play a very positive role in peace-building and aiding societies in recovering after conflict.

11.8 Recommendations

1. Focusing on education to spread awareness of electoral laws as well as to promote peaceful elections, thereby enabling youth to organise in support of peaceful elections, can help spread change and mitigate attempts to manipulate youth populations into carrying out violent or destructive acts.
2. MOE should take steps to promote a culture of recognition and prevention of violence and victimisation in schools and associated negative health behaviours. Further investment in teacher training in peace-building, conflict resolution and positive forms of discipline is necessary.
3. The creation of girls clubs will have positive effects on knowledge, confidence, attitudes and practices in relation to managing gender-based violence and inequality.
4. Focus should be placed on creating more safe spaces for meaningful and inclusive engagement of young people. These efforts could leverage decentralisation efforts already championed by GoG and district assemblies to engage in bottom-up development.
5. Providing youth with access to teachers, facilitators, educational programmes and networks that can hone their conflict resolution and leadership skills would be an effective preventive measure in combating youth involvement in violence. Moreover, rather than working with youth in isolation, peace-building projects seeking the engagement of youth should also include parents and elders.
6. Strengthen youth education and employment opportunities in underserved regions to decrease the need to join political vigilantism groups and to engage in land and chieftaincy conflicts.

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Note

1 https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ghana/overview

Chapter 12

Youth Volunteerism

At its most basic level, volunteerism can be thought of as an expression of solidarity and societal cohesion, typically derived from long-established traditions of sharing and reciprocal exchange (UN Volunteers, 2016). More formally, the UN has defined it as unpaid, non-compulsory work done outside of the household for the general public good (UNESCAP, 2018). Volunteering, or the idea of providing service, has deep historical and cultural roots, whereby societies built on ideas of mutual communal support or labour, kinship and cultural practices encouraged collective responsibility, solidarity, and reciprocity (Patel, 2007). Unfortunately, the service ethos or the practice of volunteerism is disappearing gradually (ibid.).

12.1 Volunteerism in the context of sustainable development

Volunteering has gained increasing traction in the context of globalisation and the SDGs. Volunteerism enables youth to engage and participate in their own sustainable development and peace-keeping by strengthening social cohesion and trust through the promotion of individual and collective action (UN Volunteers, 2016). Furthermore, volunteer organisations can play an active role in working with youth towards achieving the SDGs through progress monitoring, raising awareness and facilitating knowledge-sharing by leveraging local expertise, modelling behaviours and complementing essential basic services (UNESCAP, 2018). By connecting initiatives at the institutional or policy level with volunteer action at the community level, organisations can strengthen youth civic engagement, social inclusion, solidarity and ownership and increase the reach, scale and inclusiveness of action from the local to national level, as well as work to mitigate conflicts at all stages and foster reconciliation in post-conflict situations (Caprara et al., 2016). Not only does volunteerism let individuals and communities build capacity and ownership but also it can provide avenues for young women and other minorities to engage in spaces outside traditional norms; and to hold authorities accountable and ensure responsiveness to their needs and those of their communities. In this way, it works to reduce social exclusion as a result of poverty, marginalisation and other forms of inequality (ibid.).

12.2 Volunteerism among Ghanaian youth

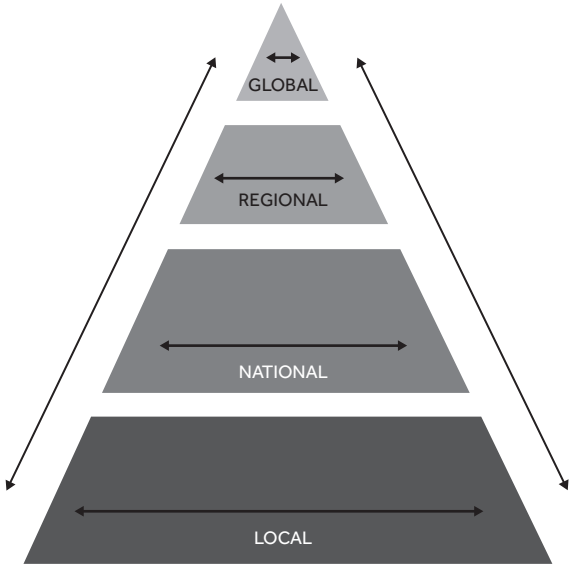
The Ghana National Service Scheme, an initiative established in 1973, requires that all Ghanaians graduating from tertiary educational institutions must participate in a mandatory service year. This initiative enables youth to participate in critical

development initiatives, such as rural health and education, while giving them skills that could advance their personal and professional development. In this context, volunteering in Ghana can be seen as a post-graduation mandatory requirement (Caprara et al., 2016). This equally raises the question of what avenues exist for young people to continue volunteering beyond national service.

> '*[My motivation for volunteering was that]… I will get a lot of access. Like how I am with you right now and you are trying to educate me on certain things…*' Female, 15–20 years

Renewed support at the government level would encourage Ghanaian youth to take the opportunities well-facilitated volunteerism provides and directly engage in their own development to have an impact locally, nationally and globally (UN Volunteers, 2016) (Figure 12.1). Expanding the participation of youth in volunteerism is critical to the long-term sustainability of development initiatives. It would also strengthen the social integration and sense of belonging of youth while at the same time enhancing the skills and capacities necessary for personal development and employability (Caprara et al., 2016; UN Volunteers, 2016). Government can build on the idea that volunteerism can align education, training and learning with real-world needs, facilitate access to quality information and strengthen inter-generational connectedness by providing youth and adults opportunities to learn from one another and enhance their mutual understanding. In this way, support to cross-sectoral collaborations and policy frameworks that allow for expanding volunteerism would further work towards the goals of peace, social cohesion and sustained development (Patel, 2007; Caprara et al., 2016).

Figure 12.1 Youth participation at local, national, regional and global levels



Source: Author.

12.3 Summary points

1. Promoting volunteerism provides opportunities to align education, training and learning with real-world needs.
2. Volunteerism can strengthen youth–adult relationships.
3. Volunteering can facilitate social inclusion of youth while contributing to national development.

12.4 Recommendations

1. Scale up local volunteering and national service to enable youth to consider volunteering as a life-time opportunity to serve.
2. Contribute to increasing the prevalence and effectiveness of in-country programmes that can support long-term partnerships and produce far greater returns in terms of peace, social cohesion and sustained development.
3. Encourage cross-sectoral collaboration around policy frameworks to ensure opportunities for expanding voluntary service, with a particular focus on inter-generational programmes that can improve the prospects of youth as active citizens.
4. Incorporate volunteering and volunteerism into school curricula at all levels.

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Chapter 13

Culture, Religion, Life Skills and Tourism

As a country of diverse ethnic and cultural groups, Ghana is home to many different beliefs, traditions, languages and religions. This diversity is equally reflected in the youth demographic. Generally, there exists diversity in religion – the majority self-identify as Christian (71.2 per cent), followed by those who identify with Islam (17.6 per cent), leaving only a small minority adhering to traditional religions (5.2 per cent) (GSS, 2013). The northern population of the country generally identifies as Muslim, while the centre and south populations are predominantly Christian. Both culture and religion have been identified as two fundamental aspects of youth identity and serve to shape the relations between groups of different ethnicities and their belief systems.

Interviews with stakeholders suggest that the focus in Ghana for many years has been on rediscovering the intrinsic values and aspirations of the nation in order to form a post-colonial national identity. However, there has not been adequate investigation into what impact government initiatives have had in furthering the overarching goal of breaking away from the oppressive colonial heritage inherent in much of Ghanaian society and promoting indigenous values and beliefs.

In 2010, the NYP formally acknowledged the importance of religion, arts and culture as fundamental to the successful development of Ghanaian youth. The NYP describes arts and culture as important vehicles for appreciating and understanding the heritage of the Ghanaian people. It recognises these as media through which youth can learn and transfer progressive skills and techniques related to social relations and survival, and as representing a sense of identity and self-respect. The NYP also commits to the promotion of youth participation in arts and culture through a number of activities to achieve national cohesion and integration. Furthermore, it acknowledges that youth development is tied to cultural context.

13.1 Youth and religion

Presently, the youth demographic in Ghana gives more importance to religion than previous generations (Pew Research Centre, 2018). Nevertheless, inter-faith relations among the youth population are not uncommon and Ghana has a history of peaceful co-existence between religious groups (Wandusim, 2015).

Despite the generally positive religious climate in Ghana, there have been negative experiences. In 2015, a moment of tension ignited when officiators for the West African Examination Council forced Muslim students to remove their hijabs or veils before examinations (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2015). Corrective action was taken immediately but the International Religious Freedom Report of 2017 cites additional cases of religious intolerance in religiously affiliated schools (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2017).

13.2 Culture

The National Commission on Culture and MOE are working collaboratively to ensure the development of education in Ghanaian languages, including the use of literature and art from indigenous groups, as part of an overall effort to move away from the inherited colonial educational system (National Commission on Culture, 2004).

13.2.1 Indigenous arts and crafts in schools

In 2004, a study took place to analyse which indigenous art forms were being taught in Ghanaian schools. Unfortunately, researchers discovered that indigenous knowledge was conspicuously absent from the educational curriculum (Ross, 2004). Despite the National Commission on Culture's intentions 'to promote the cultural awareness of the youth through formal and non-formal education to ensure that they are prepared to play their role in the cultural life of their communities' (2004, p. 2), including indigenous education in the prevalent Western school system has proven easier said than done. As Edusei (1991) explains, indigenous and Western school education systems are very different – the former operating under a holistic, integrated approach and the latter based on competitiveness and separation of distinct fields of study. Trying to compartmentalise indigenous knowledge into the Western approach to education as initiated by the missionary school structure only serves to further devalue indigenous ways of knowing, marking them as tokenised 'cultural activities' that are not prioritised (Flolu, 2000; Ross, 2004). Additionally, if the curriculum does include indigenous art forms, the majority of this comes from the historically dominant ethnic group of the Asantes, ignoring the diversity of other ethnic groups (Ross, 2004).

In 2010, a study was conducted to investigate the importance of different identity aspects in the self-perception of students and the general population (Langer, 2010). The results showed that students, when compared with the general population, were less attached to their language, ethnicity and regional origin. This indicates that higher education reflects a detachment towards local and indigenous culture and a more modern global perspective.

13.2.2 Policy initiatives

In 2004, with the goal of developing a united, vibrant and prosperous national community with a distinctive African identity, the Cultural Policy of Ghana was initiated. With the overarching goal of preserving and conserving Ghanaian culture, this recognises the importance of youth in achieving success. As such, it commits to promoting cultural awareness in youth through formal and informal education opportunities. Additionally, it acknowledges the role of the arts as a medium for transferring traditional skills to the youth demographic.

From 26 to 30 January 2015, as part of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC) mandate to develop and promote Ghanaian culture and the creative arts, the Museum of Science and Technology extension was opened for a public exhibition. The event provided a platform for youth to exhibit their talents and

creativity. Additionally, the National Commission on Culture organised training programmes in traditional arts and crafts production for 3,000 Ghanaian youth (MOTAC, 2016). Furthermore, as part of the Tourism Research and Marketing Programme, MOTAC appointed 30 ambassadors to promote Ghanaian cultural products on their international and local platforms that could serve as business incubators for youth and the unemployed (MOTAC, 2018). Government expenditure on arts and culture continues to increase each year; as of 2018, GH₵41 million (54 per cent of the total MOTAC budget) was allocated to continue initiatives in this direction (Kwofi, 2018).

In the private sector, the Integrated Rural Art and Industry Programme at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology seeks to create links between the professional education world of the university and the reality of small rural indigenous villages. This programme allows knowledge to transfer both ways, providing the local craft industry with access to new ideas and technology and allowing university students to acquire experiential knowledge of indigenous crafts, enabling them to build on their skills in the marketing of these products (Druyeh, 2008).

13.3 Human rights violations and indigenous practices

Trokosi is a cultural rite still practised in Ghana, among the Ewes in Volta region, that many see as a form of sex slavery. Girls are 'selected by the gods' and sent to live in fetish priests' shrines in order to atone for crimes committed often by their older relatives (Nukunya, 2003). While in the shrine, girls serve the fetish priest by fetching water, sweeping the compound and having sex with him. These girls are denied the opportunity for education, often go hungry and lose their family ties.

GoG criminalised this practice in 1998 but some parents still believe it is a cultural heritage that should be respected. It was originally used as a method of searching for truth and knowledge, but in more recent times has been used to punish wrongdoers. Where previously crimes could be atoned for with offerings such as cattle, money and liquor, today atonement takes the form of sexual slavery of virgin girls. Many Ghanaians fear that enforcing the criminalisation of *Trokosi* will simply encourage it to become an underground practice.

13.4 Youth and tourism development

Ghana is home to numerous attractions, cultural, natural and historical in form, such as rock formations, animal sanctuaries, art and festivals. Although domestic tourism currently accounts for 65 per cent of all tourism activity (GSS, 2014), Ghana has not fully tapped into the multibillion-dollar potential embedded in youth tourism (Preko et al., 2017). Preko et al. studied the future of youth tourism in Ghana and found that youth were pulled by the desire to experience historical and cultural attractions and pushed by the ego-enhancement derived from visiting novel places that they could talk about. If tourism stakeholders recognise the potential benefits of rebranding to attract the youth demographic, they are likely to increase revenue by attracting this large share of the population.

In 2010, MOTAC inaugurated 25 Tourist Clubs in tertiary and basic schools as part of the promotion of student excursions and youth travel and exchange programmes as well as expanding tourism sector revenue generation (MOTAC, 2014).

13.5 Summary points

1. The 2010 NYP commits to promoting youth participation in arts and culture through a number of activities, with the overarching objective of promoting national cohesion and integration.
2. The positive trend of religious tolerance and acceptance is continuing despite episodes of tension.
3. Implementing mandatory teacher preparation to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills required to speak to the diversity of religions and cultures in Ghana would further governmental objectives of promoting a culture of tolerance.
4. Attempts to include indigenous ways of knowing into the Western system of education have been unsuccessful and serve only to further tokenise indigenous arts and culture.
5. Some youth in Ghana continue to be victims of negative religious-cultural practices such as *Trokosi*.
6. Rebranding tourism with an increased focus on youth populations could help diversify and increase revenues.

13.6 Recommendations

1. Proper teacher preparation is imperative to the promotion of a culture of tolerance with respect to religion.
2. Further work is needed in rewriting current curricula to reflect indigenous ways of knowing rather than the colonially imposed Western system of education.
3. Address negative religious-cultural practices that are violating the human rights of the youth demographic.
4. Given that youth have an interest in historical and cultural attractions, relevant stakeholders should focus on the development, branding and advertisement of tourist attractions to encourage youth tourism activities.

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Chapter 14

Youth and Environmental Sustainability in Ghana

Climate change has resulted in increasingly adverse impacts on livelihoods and even survival. As a result of limited adaptation strategies in the face of increasingly frequent natural disasters, developing countries are being left highly vulnerable (Ezekiel, 2015).

While Ghanaian policy objectives speak of youth involvement, more effort is desired in terms of discussion on youth involvement in addressing environmental degradation and climate change. There are several areas youth can contribute to, including the restoration of degraded natural resources; the building of frameworks for resource management; the maintenance of protected areas; policy advocacy and strengthening legal frameworks on protected areas; and enhancing community awareness and participation over environmental issues.

14.1 Mining and deforestation

Ghana is a resource-rich nation and the practice of gold mining is widespread. A number of companies operate legally, committed to continuous reporting and monitoring of mining areas for environmental impacts and practising sustainable mining techniques. While these companies are certainly contributing to environmental degradation in some degree, it is the illegal mining operations that are by and large doing the most damage, infringing on local communities and ignoring sustainable practices. Illegal gold mining in Ghana is problematic environmentally and economically, and has been linked to water pollution, which in turn threatens the health and well-being of the entire ecosystem (Longdon, n.d.). Illegal mining activities often interferes with the agriculture sector's activities. In 2017, GoG banned illegal gold mining, offering miners retraining and alternative livelihoods (GhanaWeb, 2017).

In addition to illegal mining activities, deforestation in Ghana is also a cause for concern. As of 2012, Ghana was gaining 0.12 per cent of forests per year, with the loss of quality forests attributed to the conversion of closed forests into open forests, typically for agricultural purposes (MLNR, 2012). In 2012, the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR) was active in protecting forested areas through the destruction of illegal farms and the control of illegal harvesting, timber practices, mining and forest fires (ibid.). Unfortunately, lack of transparent data means that not much more is known.

Critically engaging the youth demographic in environmental awareness initiatives is one strategy to mitigate the impact of illegal mining activities and deforestation. One example of this is the reclamation project in Juabo and Yakasa areas, where the

land has been degraded as a result of illegal small-scale mining activity. The project involved establishing 23,000 acres of oil palm plantations, creating economically viable and environmentally monitored land, protected from the effects of illegal mining. In addition, two nurseries were established to provide seedlings for planting seasons. This project led to the employment of approximately 23,000 people and, as a result of its success, a similar project has been established in Ayanfuri-Dunkwa area (MLNR, 2012). Youth involvement in these types of projects can provide them with meaningful opportunities linked to environmental sustainability while they obtain skills and employment.

14.2 Agriculture

As one of the highest contributors to Ghana's GDP, the agriculture sector provides the majority of employment opportunities for the country's population (MLNR, 2011). The NYP 2010 contains policy objectives to promote youth participation in the sector through the promotion of modern agriculture as a viable career opportunity, the provision of resources and the creation of equitable conditions for males and females in agriculture. In Ghana, women are responsible for 60–80 per cent of food production. As the effects of climate change combined with environmental degradation continue to make farming and access to resources (food, water and fuel) more difficult, these women have to travel further and further distances, leaving them at greater risk of experiencing violence (Ezekiel, 2015).

14.3 Oil

In 2007, marketable oil was found in Ghana. In the hopes of increasing economic growth, further exploration is being conducted. A survey conducted in 2011 found that 81 per cent of youth had high expectations regarding oil and gas exploration (FES, 2011). As is the case with illegal mining activities, oil extraction can be damaging to the natural environment. Therefore, in order to reduce dependence on economic growth linked to environmental degradation, devoting resources towards economic opportunities that support a blue and a green economy is ideal.

14.4 Green alternatives

In addition to working towards maintaining sustainable mining practices, further exploration and experimentation is needed in order to transition Ghana towards a green economy. Youth-led agriculture enterprises such as Farmerline, a green business initiative that partners with farm input companies, sustainable food brands, financial institutions and other development agencies to foster a resource-rich network of farmers, could potentially stimulate more green jobs.[1] There exist opportunities for government and other stakeholders to partner with start-ups like Farmerline, developing workshops on sustainable farming practices and, in turn, providing youth with employable skills in the green job sector.

Youth participation in green initiatives through digital industries has been suggested as another opportunity for Ghana to create more green jobs (Billingham, 2018). For

example, Ghana can develop youth initiatives in areas like vulnerability mapping to assess areas of climate concern (Ezekiel, 2015). Moreover, Ghanaian youth could focus their attention on educating local communities on the environmental impacts of illegal mining and deforestation activities. Developing cooperative relationships with youth in other countries could also facilitate knowledge-sharing and skills exchange.

14.5 Blue growth

Oceans play a critical role in climate regulation, and act as a food resource and a source of economic growth. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, inland capture fisheries are an important way to stimulate blue production and blue communities (FAO, 2018). These fisheries can provide employment for Ghanaian youth and act as nutritious food sources, improving food security and income for the population. Drawn from past collaborations, FAO has developed and introduced a nutritional fish powder derived from fish bones in Ghana as part of a school meal programme (ibid.).

14.6 Electronic waste

UNEP has highlighted the risks posed by electronic waste in Ghana to environmental health and well-being. In 2018, GoG constructed an electronic waste recycling facility in Agbogbloshie, creating 22,000 self-sustaining jobs for Ghanaian youth (UNEP, 2018). Through the development of workshops, training programmes and educational resources in association with non-profit organisations, youth are working to inform local communities on proper electronic waste disposal techniques and where electronic waste can be taken.

14.7 Policy gaps

Youth face multiple barriers in becoming involved in public policy-making. As Ghana moves forward towards establishing a green economy, integrating youth involvement in national policy-making is necessary to enable young people's engagement in environmentally sustainable solutions. Taking a cue from the National Youth Conference on Oil and Gas, hosted by the Voice of Youth Project in 2013, the development of an inter-ministerial youth group, which could then champion a youth engagement agenda at the local and national level, could be one solution to provide youth a platform (Ayamga, 2014). Introducing policy that speaks to the importance of vulnerability and risk assessments, as well as the need for increased data collection, would create further opportunities to generate links between youth populations and environmentally sustainable employment opportunities. Furthermore, collaboration, including between youth organisations and local communities, should be a priority.

14.8 Summary points

1. The NYP 2010 outlines goals for youth involvement in agriculture and environmental sustainability. Promoting youth participation in and youth-related

policies targeted towards the sector may be one solution to prevent illegal mining and deforestation as well as to stimulate growth in the green jobs sector.

2. Illegal mining and deforestation activities are significant causes of water and land degradation in Ghana.

3. There exist numerous possibilities for youth involvement, including engaging youth in environmental awareness initiatives to mitigate the impact of illegal mining, deforestation and electronic waste; data collection on forested and agricultural land; policy-making; mapping programmes to identify areas of climate vulnerability; and educational workshops.

14.9 Recommendations

1. Facilitate youth engagement opportunities that promote lifestyle changes through environmental awareness campaigns and initiatives.

2. Provide opportunities for youth engagement in public policy-making on the subject of prevention, rather than control, of illegal mining activities in forested areas.

3. Create opportunities for youth to conduct vulnerability assessments.

4. Promote youth participation in agriculture as well as youth-related policies targeted towards this sector to minimise the occurrence of illegal mining activities, as more land is monitored, utilised and protected by youth involvement.

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Note

1 https://farmerline.co/products/

Chapter 15

Youth and Disability

Nationally, GoG estimates that approximately 10 per cent of the population is living with a recognised disability, 39 per cent of whom are individuals living with multiple disabilities (UNSD, 2016). Persons with disabilities in Ghana are sometimes perceived as a burden to society. The stereotype that they are an economic drain, unproductive and troublesome, and require constant assistance, remains prevalent (Opoku et al., 2017). Family members may deny persons with disabilities adequate support and access to educational resources, owing to feelings of shame or the prohibitive expense. This perpetuates the lack of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities that are critical to their capabilities and asset development (ibid.).

15.1 Persons with Disabilities Act 2006

In 2006, the Persons with Disabilities Act was introduced to legally and constitutionally protect the rights of persons with disabilities with respect to health care, employment, education, transportation, social activities and accessibility of public spaces. Nevertheless, progress has been limited, and many facilities remain inaccessible. The Act has been widely criticised for its failure to protect the rights of persons with disabilities and it has been suggested that GoG re-evaluate and adapt its policies in accordance with the concerns of persons with disabilities (Asante and Sasu, 2015; Tchiakpe, 2018).

The Persons with Disabilities Act prohibits employers from discriminating against persons with disabilities. However, employment opportunities remain limited, as the majority of public and government buildings are inaccessible (Tchiakpe, 2018). Furthermore, as the Act fails to acknowledge the gendered experiences of persons with disabilities and the discrimination that accompanies age and gender disparities, young women with disabilities are not legally protected against gendered discrimination (Asante and Sasu, 2015). In order to improve the lives of persons with disabilities in Ghana, the Persons with Disabilities Act must be amended to encompass the rights of both young women and men, to ensure adequate protection against discrimination and to highlight the importance of a culture of tolerance.

15.2 Ghanaian youth and disability

Young people with disabilities often face an overwhelming amount of discrimination on the basis of age, gender and disability (Asante and Sasu, 2015). GoG must develop policies that specifically address the needs of youth living with disabilities, particularly those of young women. In light of these concerns, Ghana must develop policy to address youth-specific needs to target young people (particularly young women and those in rural areas) living with disability.

15.2.1 Visual impairment

In 2018, the experiences of visually impaired individuals with building accessibility were examined in the Ashanti region of Ghana. Results demonstrated that 100 per cent of visually impaired persons required both a white cane and a sighted guide to access public and government buildings, owing to the absence of accessibility features such as tactile ground surface indicators and audible aids (Tchiakpe, 2018).

However, the scope of the Persons with Disabilities Act 2006 does not cover those with visual impairment, even though elsewhere in the world visual impairment has been recognised as a disability. As such, the Act should be amended to include the rights of this group, with consideration also given to young people, especially girls/women.

15.2.2 Mental health

Ghana's Persons with Disability Act contains minimal focus on those living with mental health challenges. In 2009, MOH reported an increase in the number of people living with psychiatric illnesses, a trend that further indicates the pressing need for adequate support and attention on mental health challenges (WHO and World Bank, 2011). Going forward, improving the lives of young people with disabilities in Ghana will require the integration and implementation of strategies focusing on the de-stigmatisation of mental health issues, including psychiatric illnesses and intellectual disabilities (ibid.).

Furthermore, it is thought that current religious practices by certain groups may be promoting this culture of intolerance, through the perception that disabilities represent a curse. In 2017, 16 youth were discovered at Nyakumasi Prayer Camp in shackles because of perceived mental disabilities (Human Rights Watch, 2017). Practices of abuse and discrimination can result in religious groups ostracising persons with disabilities, who then become further isolated from the greater community. Many Ghanaian agencies are working to educate communities but the pervasive nature of these religious beliefs means the culture of intolerance remains widespread. Media partnerships with religious leaders could work to combat the stereotypes and prejudices the public hold (UN, 2006).

15.2.3 Inclusive education

The Inclusive Education Policy 2013 outlines strategies and goals for promoting more inclusive educational programmes, taking into consideration the integration of curricula content specifically made for children with special needs. MOE recommends training opportunities to equip teachers with the skills to instruct a diverse range of students, including adolescents and youth with disabilities, in order to ensure safe and inclusive environments. In addition, the Policy highlights the need for individualised support for youth with disabilities and accessible school infrastructure, and suggests the establishment of assessment centres across Ghana (urban and rural) and the transformation of special education centres to serve as

resource centres for youth with disabilities. Providing these supports to teachers and students will likely enhance the community participation of persons with disabilities while expanding their skills and capabilities.

15.3 Summary points

1. In 2006, Ghana introduced the Persons with Disabilities Act to protect the rights of Ghanaians living with disabilities.
2. The Act needs to address the implications of inaccessibility of public and government buildings, transportation, public facilities and services, and communication services and the intersectional dimensions of discrimination that result from limited access to housing, civic participation and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.
3. The definition of disability in the Act must be expanded to include visual impairment and mental health.
4. The Inclusive Education Policy outlines strategies and goals for promoting more inclusive educational programmes.

15.4 Recommendations

1. The Persons with Disability Act of 2006 must be amended to better ensure legal protection against direct and indirect discrimination as well as to expand the scope of the definition of disability to include those with visual impairments and mental health challenges.
2. Educational campaigns (including with the media) to combat the culture of intolerance towards young persons with disabilities could lead to significant change in communities for persons with disabilities, particularly in rural areas.
3. Development of baseline infrastructure for persons with disabilities is critical, including medical infrastructure at the community level, to ensure young persons with disabilities are receiving a base level of support in a consistent manner throughout Ghana.
4. Governing bodies should work to address the obvious gap in legal protection for young women with disabilities; recognition of the multiple forms of discrimination facing women and girls with disabilities is a priority.
5. Teachers should be equipped with the skills and strategies required to provide effective academic and social education to all students, including those with disabilities.

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Chapter 16

Youth Migration and Mobility

Historically, migration has been a critical survival strategy and a means of economic and social advancement for many Ghanaians. International migration trends as of 2010 indicate that only 1 per cent of the country's population lives abroad, with Europe the dominant direction of Ghanaian emigration (GSS, 2013). However, 48.6 per cent of the population has migrated internally, primarily from rural to urban areas, with females outnumbering males (GSS, 2014). The majority of these migrants are of working age and around a third of them belong to the youth demographic. Unfortunately, insufficient data exists to build a more comprehensive analysis on migration trends. With advancements in migration policy as well as trade and economic integration, principally within the continent of Africa, Ghanaian youth emigration particularly for employment is likely to increase. Similarly, youth from other countries within the continent are likely to immigrate to Ghana. As such, government must position itself to manage this human mobility not only at home but also in terms of a diaspora engagement.

16.1 Ghanaian migration policies

Ghana has a well-defined migration policy that addresses legal and regulatory aspects of migration. Recently, GoG adopted the first National Migration Policy (2016), which serves as the country's official migration strategy document, and validated the draft of the Labour Migration Policy (2018) prepared by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations (MELR) (IOM, 2019). Strategies have also been put in place to combat human trafficking. Additionally, as Ghana is part of the Economic Community of West African States,

Box 16.1 Migration in the SDGs

Migration is a key element of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which recognises for the first time the contribution of migration to sustainable development. The SDGs' central reference to migration is made in SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) – target 10.7: 'Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well- managed migration policies.'

However, migration is a cross-cutting issue, relevant to all the SDGs – for example SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goals) – with target 17.18 identifying the importance of disaggregated migration data.

it has several agreements in place with many countries concerning cooperation on labour migration (IOM, 2018a). Internationally, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes for the first time the importance of migration, and the UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration was adopted in 2018, as well as the UN Global Compact for Refugees, which Ghana has ratified. However, Ghana still has not signed the ILO Migration for Employment Convention 1949, the ILO Migrant Workers Convention 1975 or the Convention on Statelessness (ibid.). The legal framework of the National Migration Policy could be strengthened with bilateral agreements, especially with a focus on youth migrant workers, and with a view to establishing new youth labour mobility agreements with countries that uphold migrant rights/human rights laws (Boampong, 2018).

16.2 Youth migration

16.2.1 Internal migration

Internal migration, particularly rural–urban migration from northern to southern parts of Ghana, with the majority of internal migrants destined for Accra and Kumasi, is a significant migratory flow in Ghana (Hashim, 2005). Data from the Ghana Living Standards Survey 6 suggests that 48.6 per cent of the population, the majority of them youth, have migrated internally (GSS, 2014).

Youth internal migration is linked to inequalities in spatial development as well as to poor colonial era and post-independence economic restructuring policies, including Structural Adjustment Programme (SAPs) (Awumbila, 1997; Awumbila et al., 2014). In this regard, the literature suggests triggering factors for migration, especially in the most underdeveloped areas in northern Ghana. These including socio-economic disparities, lack of educational opportunities, desire to enjoy modern facilities, an upsurge in unemployment, environmental deterioration in agriculture, armed conflicts and violence, parental neglect and gradual breakdown of social support networks in rural areas (Edwin and Glover, 2018; Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019).

For youths moving to urban areas, migration represents not only an escape out of poverty and an opportunity to improve livelihoods but also a coping mechanism and a chance to feel a sense of pride and self-respect (Boampong, 2020). This is because it provides an avenue for improving social status, learning new skills and transitioning youth into adulthood (Min-Harris, 2009; Boampong, 2020). Studies also suggest rural–urban youth migration can be part of a collective household survival strategy, whereby migration is viewed as a collective strategy rather than an individual action (Edwin and Glover, 2018).

Most migrants above age 15 are engaged in services and sales (37.4 per cent) and agricultural, forestry and fisheries (32.7 per cent). The former are concentrated in urban areas and the latter in rural localities (GSS, 2018).

In general, youth migrating to urban areas work in unskilled positions (street vendor, minibus conductor, shop assistant, etc.), as the majority do not have higher education or professional skills (Boateng et al., 2018). Migration provides young migrants

Table 16.1 Employment sector of migrants 15 years and older by locality

	Locality of residence							
Employment Sector	**Accra**	**Urban Coastal**	**Urban Forest**	**Urban Savannah**	**Rural Coastal**	**Rural Forest**	**Rural Savannah**	**Total**
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Government sector	8.9	11.3	13.6	9.8	5.0	6.2	2.6	8.4
Parastatals	–	0.5	0.1	–	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.2
NGOs (Local & International)	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.5	–	0.2	0.2
Cooperatives	–	0.1	0.2	–	–	–	–	0.1
International Organization/ Diplomatic Mission	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.1	–	0.1
Private Sector	41.1	34.8	36.2	27.8	39.0	30.8	34.1	34.6
Self-employed	47.0	50.4	42.1	55.0	53.5	56.4	55.4	51.0
Other	2.6	2.4	7.3	6.9	1.4	6.2	7.7	5.4

Source: GSS (2018).

with the opportunity to earn a living while acquiring new skills and at the same time sending remittances and contributing to the well-being of their families (Teye et al., 2015).

Internal migration does not benefit all young migrants entirely. Many struggle with low-wage employment, underemployment and unemployment, and are vulnerable to drug abuse and crime (Teye et al., 2015). Additionally, young migrants, including *Kayayes* (head porters), are exposed to increased health risks, as the majority are forced to settle in slums without decent housing, schools, health facilities, sanitation and water systems, as noted by research interviewees.

Without management, the influx of youth into city centres will continue to place further stress on already overloaded infrastructure (Edwin and Glover, 2018). Investing in rural youth, through the prioritisation of sustainable agriculture to create meaningful employment opportunities and the provision of skills and abilities to increase rural incomes, would help diminish the current rate of rural–urban migration.

16.2.2 International migration

In Ghana, only 1 per cent of the country's population is thought to live abroad (GSS, 2013), although this number may be an underestimate, owing to lack of data. Moreover, it is not clear how many youth migrate internationally. Major international destinations outside of Africa include Europe, followed by North America (Quartey, 2009; Boampong, 2020). Youth international migration trends have been affiliated with historical, colonial-era, political and kinship ties, as well as advanced and cheap means of mobility (Anarfi et al., 2000; Mazzucato et al., 2005).

Most emigrants originate from Ashanti region (27.6 per cent) and Greater Accra (25.2 per cent), and most are young adults in their 30s, with a certain level of education, a lack of appropriate employment and enough savings to afford travel costs (GSS, 2013; Dako-Gyeke, 2015). Ashanti and Greater Accra are major administrative regions with high youth unemployment rates (Quartey, 2009) and established travel intermediaries (known as 'connection men') available to offer travel advice and facilitate visa acquisition (Coe, 2013; Boampong, 2020).

16.2.3 Risks of international migration

Young migrants are particularly vulnerable to risks associated with migration. This is of particular concern for those without the proper documentation, who are then forced to enter the informal economy, where they are even more vulnerable to exploitation. These young migrants, especially young women, face the risk of human trafficking, sexual exploitation and slavery.

In order to mitigate these risks, GoG introduced a ban on the recruitment of workers to the Gulf region in 2017, after hearing widespread reports of abuse and exploitation of Ghanaian migrant workers in the region (Boampong, 2018). Nevertheless, the ban does not address the underlying drivers of migration, such as unemployment. Strengthening information campaigns to educate the population on the realities of migration will better allow young Ghanaians to make informed decisions (ibid.). Additionally, improving the legal framework for migrant workers through bilateral agreements, including opportunities to establish new youth labour mobility agreements with countries that uphold human rights, would help mitigate the risks young Ghanaian migrants, especially females, face.

16.3 Main factors related to migration

Generally, young Ghanaians migrate for reasons including employment, education or training, marriage or family reunification, and political persecution (Anarfi et al., 2000; Coe 2013; Boampong, 2020). However, the majority are driven by a hope for better economic or social prospects, as a result of lack of employment and underemployment within the country.

16.3.1 Aspirations matter

It can be an oversimplification to classify young migrants as moving for purely economic reasons, and it is crucial to take into consideration young people's aspirations (the wish to change personal situation, economically or socially) in order to understand the drivers behind migration (Boateng et al., 2018; Boampong, 2020). Such aspirations are determined primarily by the context within which young people grow up, being influenced by their social network, including the network of relations abroad or returnees (ibid.).

16.3.2 Student mobility

In a globalised world, an increased number of young Ghanaians are migrating to study abroad after completing secondary education (Coe, 2012)

'*[I would want to travel outside Ghana for] education. I want to explore more and broaden my knowledge*.' Male, 15–20 years

For many young people, studying abroad is the first step in establishing permanent residence in the host country, as the migration regulations of the traditional countries of immigration (currently most of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries) have generally allowed foreign students permission to work for a period after they complete their studies and to adjust their status if they find long-term employment.

16.4 Immigration to Ghana

In recent times, the level of student immigration has increased significantly, as more young people recognise the opportunities for higher education present in Ghana. A total of 2,992 foreign students were granted resident permits in 2007, representing 8.5 per cent of all resident permits granted that year (Quartey, 2009). The share of foreign nationals studying at the University of Ghana rose from 1.5 per cent in 2001/02 to 3.8 per cent in 2006/07 (University of Ghana, 2008). In 2007/08, the University of Ghana admitted 1,142 foreign students from 42 countries (Table 16.2).

16.5 Impact of migration

The nature and extent of the impact of migration depends on who moves, how they fare abroad, their proclivity to stay connected and their intention to return (UNDP, 2009). Through the enabling of exchanges of information, ideas and knowledge as well as remittances, youth migration can have positive impacts for all countries involved (Boampong, 2020).

16.5.1 Financial remittances

The inflow of financial remittances, at the household and community level, contributes to economic growth and poverty reduction in the country of origin, as the primary use of these remittances is to buy basic necessities such as food, clothing

Table 16.2 Number of foreign students in the University of Ghana, 2007/08

Country	Students	%
Nigeria	527	46.1
United States	353	30.9
Botswana	28	2.5
Liberia	20	1.7
Togo	24	2.1
Benin	19	1.6
Other nationalities	171	14.9
Total	**1142**	**100**

Source: University of Ghana (2008).

and household goods, as well as to invest in education and health care (IOM, 2017; Boampong, 2019).

While estimates by the World Bank show that total remittances to Ghana in 2015 were US$2.008 billion, available figures from the Bank of Ghana indicate that migrant remittances to Ghana increased from $1.5 billion in 2005 to $2.1 billion in 2010 and then almost $5.0 billion in 2015 (Teye et al., 2017).

16.5.2 Social remittances

Social remittances refer to the transfer of knowledge, ideas and practices that migrants have acquired in their host countries (Boampong, 2020). Youth migrants can transmit them to communities and workplaces in Ghana through visits, communication, trade networks, transnational networks, forums and return to the country of origin, among others.

16.5.3 Brain drain and gain

One of the adverse effects of migration is human capital flight, or brain drain, which can deprive Ghana of the social and economic contributions of her most educated and highly skilled youth, thus affecting the quality of basic services such as education and health care. The migration of young health professionals and educators can be linked to lack of incentives, inadequate resources and limited administrative capacity.

Nevertheless, although migration can result in brain drain in the country of origin, if young Ghanaian migrants return home, this loss can be offset, as they return with enhanced skills, business networks and knowledge.

16.5.4 Urbanisation and reduced workforce in rural areas

Rural–urban migration has been very pronounced in the northern sector of Ghana, presenting a challenge to these rural areas, as it has drastically reduced the young workforce as well as the health and vitality of such communities (Edwin and Glover, 2018). Studies show that remittances can also be an important source of rural investment, however, improving the productivity of the agriculture sector. Another negative impact that internal migration has had relates to rapid urbanisation in some areas and the consequent pressure on urban amenities.

16.5.5 Impact of youth migration on country of destination

Migration has long been a controversial issue, with the common perception being that immigrants take jobs away from native-born workers. However, as noted earlier, migrants have a positive impact on destination countries like Ghana, if migration is well managed. In particular, with economic growth in Ghana and regional integration, Ghana is likely to become an immigrant destination for young people from other countries. For instance, highly skilled youth migrants may be engaged in skill-intensive sectors and can play an important role in fostering innovation, enabling entrepreneurship and stimulating job growth.

Box 16.2 African Continental Free Trade Area and implications for youth migration

The Agenda 2063 flagship initiative AfCFTA refers to a continental geographic zone where goods and services move among member states of the AU with no restrictions. AfCFTA aims to boost intra-African trade by providing a comprehensive and mutually beneficial trade agreement among member states, covering trade in goods and services, investment, intellectual property rights and competition policies.

The agreement has achieved its minimum threshold – 22 out of the 55 member states including Ghana – to go into effect. If the trade agreement is implemented, it will have huge implications for human mobility within Africa. This will include movement of skills to facilitate movement of goods and services. Consequently, it will be critical for governments to equip young people with the necessary skills and education to empower them to work in Ghana or in other parts of the African continent.

16.6 Diaspora

Diasporas are defined as populations of migrant origin that are scattered among two or more destinations, between which they develop multifarious links, involving flows and exchanges of people and resources – between the homeland and destination countries and among destination countries (Quartey, 2009). The Ghanaian diaspora youth plays a critical role in the development of Ghana, necessitating the creation of policies that aim to maximise their development contributions.

Ghana has an active diaspora, being historically committed to national development (Boateng et al., 2018). In this sense, even though private remittances by individuals constitute the most sizeable and tangible forms of diaspora contribution to development, there are also collective contributions of various kinds by home-town associations and students to their former schools (van Hear et al., 2014). Encouraging the transfer of expertise can have a much further-reaching positive effect on long-term development when compared with charity donations.

Second-generation young Ghanaian migrants also contribute to the development of Ghana. The Future of Ghana Report (Boateng et al., 2018) found that half of the second-generation British Ghanaians surveyed already contributed to some extent to the development of the country, with social remittances being the dominant form of engagement – although a significant proportion also remit financially. The report also found that identity was the most powerful determinant of how second-generation British Ghanaians engaged with Ghana, playing a key role in language fluency and the sense of cultural identity they hold. Additionally, an overwhelming majority of participants indicated they would consider relocating to Ghana at some point in the future. Generally, it is also necessary to bear in mind that diaspora youth are not

Box 16.3 Sustainable Development Goals and migration

Goal 17.3.2: Increase the volume of remittances as a percentage of GDP. Global trends suggest a considerable increase from 2017 to 2018, and remittances are expected to keep growing for 2019.

Goal 10.c.1: Reduce remittance costs. The global average cost of sending remittances in the first quarter of 2019 remained at about 7 per cent, significantly higher than the SDG target of 3 per cent.

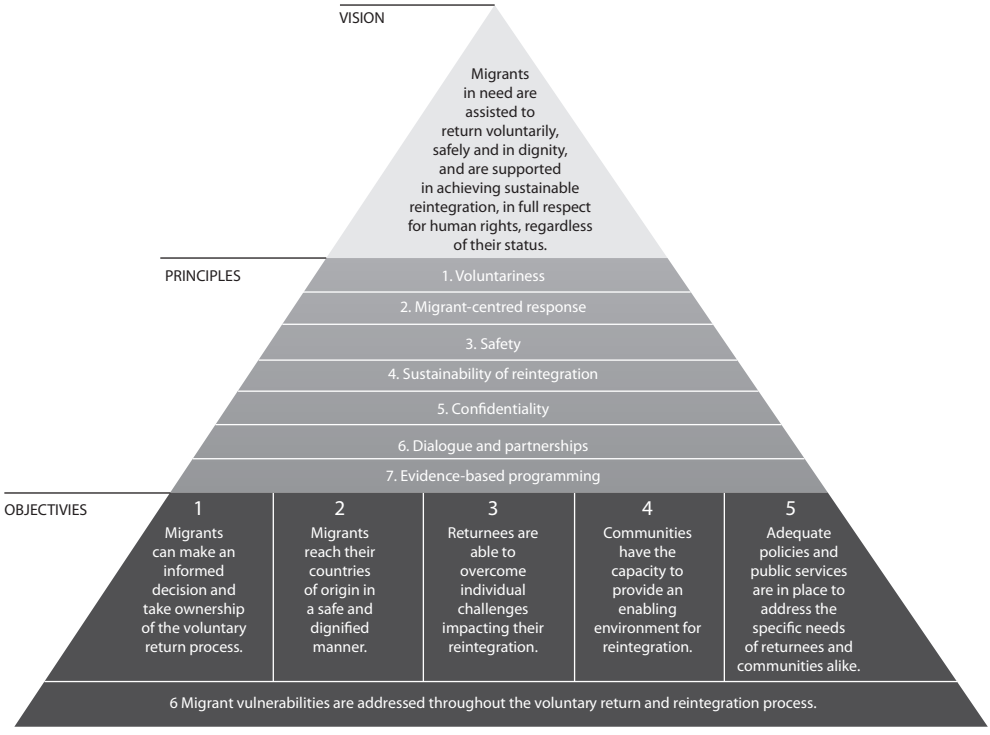
Goal 10.7.1: Reduce recruitment costs for migrant workers.

homogeneous social groups, and they may comprise different age, gender, religious, ethnic and linguistic capacity groupings.

16.7 Return migration

To understand the dynamics of return migration, it is important to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary migration. Voluntary return migration among young migrants tends to be linked to greater potential for development in Ghana.

Figure 16.1 IOM framework for assisted voluntary return and reintegration



Source: IOM (2018b).

Returnees may often be equipped with new skills, qualifications and economic resources that may generate long-term benefits for them, their families and the local community (Boampong, 2020). Even though voluntary returnees are generally at a relative advantage, they nonetheless require social support and reliable information on economic prospects to facilitate their reintegration.

On the other hand, young migrants subjected to involuntary migration frequently experience difficulties that increase their vulnerability and make their return and reintegration more challenging. Often, they have suffered from major trauma (such as human trafficking and sexual exploitation – especially women) and are trapped in a vulnerable position. In these cases, mechanisms to support their return and provide them with reintegration assistance are critical (IOM, 2018b). As such, in close cooperation with GoG, IOM is implementing an assisted voluntary return and reintegration programme, primarily for migrants in vulnerable situations (victims of trafficking, unaccompanied and separated children, migrants with health-related needs) but that also extends to migrants returning voluntarily (ibid.). In recent times, IOM together with GoG has supported the return and reintegration of irregular migrants from Libya and other countries to Ghana.

Updating data regarding return migration in Ghana would help facilitate the return, readmission and reintegration of Ghanaian migrants (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019).

16.8 Summary points

1. Almost 50 per cent of the population migrate internally (similar gender ratios), from rural to urban areas, in search of opportunities (mainly employment or education). Most of these are young migrants who work in unskilled positions and are exposed to health risks, as the majority settle in slums.
2. Most internal migrants above age 15 are engaged in services and sales (37.4 per cent) and agriculture, forestry and fisheries (32.7 per cent).
3. Most international migrants are young adults with a certain level of education and a lack of appropriate employment opportunities in Ghana.
4. Young migrants are particularly vulnerable to risks associated with migration, in particular those immigrating without the proper documentation and especially young women, who face the risk of human trafficking and slavery, among others.
5. Migration contributes to economic growth and poverty reduction through the inflow of remittances but it results in the loss of highly skilled workers and a young workforce from rural areas. It also has an impact on the children left behind, increasing their vulnerability.
6. The Bank of Ghana indicates that migrant remittances to Ghana increased from US$1.5 billion in 2005 to $2.1 billion in 2010 and then almost $5 billion in 2015.
7. Remittances (social and financial) from Ghanaian diaspora youth can contribute to the development of the country if the right policies are put in place.

8. It is necessary to create mechanisms to support migrants' return, readmission and reintegration, especially for those who have suffered major traumas.
9. It is difficult to analyse youth migration as data is scarce and is not typically aggregated by age.

16.9 Recommendations

1. Create a database on migration information categorised by age, sex, level of education, occupation, etc., in order to be able to understand youth migration trends and develop policies accordingly.
2. Invest in rural youth, prioritising sustainable agriculture to create meaningful jobs as well as training programmes to expand their skills and abilities in order to increase their rural income and reduce the migration flow.
3. Strengthen information campaigns about the realities and dangers of migration (especially irregular migration) to allow young migrants to make informed migration decisions.
4. Promote and facilitate the return and reintegration of skilled youth emigrants and the diaspora (second generation) to foster socio-economic development in Ghana through brain gain, knowledge-sharing, information sessions and remittances.
5. Promote the effective management of labour migration in the country, optimising the benefits of labour migration for development, and counter xenophobia, racism and discrimination against immigrants in Ghana.
6. Facilitate the return, readmission and reintegration of Ghanaian emigrants with a special focus on vulnerable migrants who have suffered major human rights violations.
7. Negotiate bilateral agreements to strengthen the legal framework for migrant workers with countries that uphold human rights laws.
8. Enhance and strengthen the capacity of diaspora youth organisations in order to effectively access funding, run sustainable programmes and initiatives and facilitate networks to improve diaspora engagement.

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Chapter 17

Moving Forward: Getting Youth Policy Right in Ghana

As the world drives forward towards integrated knowledge-based economies, it becomes more important than ever to focus on improving basic skills, increasing access to opportunities and building capacity across science and technology for the young people of Ghana. Developing human capital or the capabilities of youth requires more than a simple investment in a school building. It demands that youth be recognised as important assets for their country; that they are given a platform to speak and participate in governance processes at various levels of society; and that they are empowered with opportunities to utilise their skills to become active citizens.

For many developing countries like Ghana, policy priorities aimed at the youth demographic have often been centred solely on access to free education. Ghana has made great strides with respect to ensuring inclusive, free education for all, and primary school enrolment has increased significantly. However, numerous challenges remain, including related to the transition and retention of students in secondary education institutions and access to quality primary and higher education.

While education is critical for human development, the availability of up-to-date sexual and reproductive health information and training for young people must be given equal attention. Additionally, youth empowerment is rapidly gaining traction worldwide as a critical focus for policy initiatives; and it is time for youth development initiatives to reflect this new reality.

As a relatively stable, democratic nation, Ghana has enjoyed positive economic trends that have encouraged both foreign and local investment. However, skilled graduates are not meeting current labour market needs. Moreover, youth unemployment and underemployment deserve attention. In order to address these and other challenges, Ghana must recognise the need to mainstream youth issues, and to address them in a coordinated multi-sector effort, in order to move the country forward towards a more sustainable future.

17.1 Youth policies that fail young people

Youth development cannot be put into a single box. It is a multi-sectoral challenge that requires acknowledgement of and response to the dynamic needs present across a diverse youth demographic. While Ghana has initiated a number of measures for youth populations, in many respects these have failed because of issues related to unaccountability, lack of coherence, absence of consultation with all relevant stakeholders (especially youth) and inadequate monitoring and evaluation

measures. Without adequate analysis of the effectiveness of policy initiatives, proper consultation and inclusion of youth as stakeholders, there is little hope of avoiding the perpetuation of mistakes and, ultimately, success will remain limited.

17.2 Understanding youth policy priorities in relation to country context

This report has already focused on various policies and programmes and their outcomes in relation to the situation of young people in Ghana. All the issues, as well as the various policies, plans or programmes across various sectors, are critical to youth policy formulation.

While this concluding chapter does not revisit these policies, it is important is to reflect on and further discuss the key findings and recommendations presented in the previous chapters. It is also important to consult young people in defining the main priority issues they feel are important to their future or their present everyday life. Both online and offline consultations can be undertaken. In Ghana, the NYA undertook such consultations. Table 17.1 presents an indication of the survey trends.

For coherence with global indicators, we can categorise some of these issues under five broad areas linked to the Commonwealth Youth Development Index for further insights into specific issues that affect young people:

1. In terms of *education*, starting questions to ask in relation to how Ghana can enhance young people's skills and capabilities include: What are enrolment rates in secondary education? What is the literacy rate? What percentage of young people have experience using the internet? Are young people acquiring skills that will make them employable and ready for adulthood? Do they have opportunities to participate in the formulation of education/employment-related policies at the national or community level?

2. Regarding *health and well-being*, it is important to establish rates related to adolescent or youth mortality, fertility, mental health, alcohol and drug abuse and HIV/AIDS. These indicators or trends can help us understand how healthy young people are as they transition into adulthood as well as the consequential health risk young people are likely to face in the short and longer term.

3. In terms of *employment,* what is the NEET rate? What is the youth unemployment ratio?

4. *Political participation* is also an important domain, in particular whether there is youth-friendly voter education, as well as whether young people have the right to vote and to voice their views in official elections at various levels of decision-making.

5. On *civic participation*, questions that need to be answered include those related to how young people participate in volunteering or perceive volunteering. Additionally, questions need to understand experiences in helping strangers.

Table 17.1 Ghana youth development issues survey

Ghana Youth Development Issues Survey | 7,730 Respondents | Analysis as at 26 May 2019								
YD ISSUES	**SUM**	**AVG**	**W.AVG**	**RANK SUM**	**RANK AVG**	**W.AVG RANK**	**RANK OF IMP.**	**THEMATIC AREA**
Education and Skills Training	15404	3.57	1	1	1	20	1st	C. EDUCATION & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
Drug and Substance Abuse	11601	3.38	2	2	2	19	2nd	B. YOUTH HEALTH AND WELLBEING
Employment and Labour Relations	9261	3.37	3	3	3	18	3rd	A. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE
Entrepreneurship and Financial Inclusion	6847	3.11	5.5	7	4	16	4th	A. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE
Hunger and Poverty	7862	2.97	5.5	5	6	16	5th	A. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE
Peace and Security	8816	2.81	6.5	4	9	16	6th	B. YOUTH HEALTH AND WELLBEING
Climate and Environment	5245	3.11	7	10	4	13	7th	C. EDUCATION & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
Health and Wellbeing	7428	2.84	7	6	8	13	8th	B. YOUTH HEALTH AND WELLBEING
Disability	5183	2.99	8	11	5	12	9th	D. PARTICIPATION & GOVERNANCE
Information and Communication Technology	5413	2.81	9.5	9	10	11	l0th	C. EDUCATION & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
Culture and Life Skills	4182	2.84	10	13	7	10	11th	C. EDUCATION & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
Girls and Young Women	4248	2.76	11.5	12	11	9	12th	D. PARTICIPATION & GOVERNANCE
Sexual and Reproductive Health	6361	2.6	12	8	16	8	13th	B. YOUTH HEALTH AND WELLBEING
Globalisation and Migration	2386	2.71	14	16	12	6	14th	C. EDUCATION & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
Participation and Democratic Governance	2513	2.68	14	15	13	6	15th	D. PARTICIPATION & GOVERNANCE
Leadership Development and Accountability	4040	2.62	14.5	14	15	5	16th	D. PARTICIPATION & GOVERNANCE
Population and Demographic Dividend	1212	2.68	16.5	19	14	4	17th	E. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES
Juvenile Justice	1863	2.48	17.5	17	18	3	18th	E. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES
Inter-generational Relations	1067	2.59	18.5	20	17	1	19th	E. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES
Leisure and Recreation	1314	2.42	18.5	18	19	1	20th	B. YOUTH HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Source: Author.

Having considered some of the key domains and possible questions that could help in framing indicators for the NYP or a potential national YDI, it is also important to understand the economic well-being of young people and their social relations, such as family members, and whether they can finance investments in human capital. While governments often shoulder some of the cost of investment in human capital, in a number of cases families will have to finance some of their needs. Implementing paid or free public services also demands a focus on the needs of the most vulnerable, especially the poor, who may not be able to access certain social services even when they are readily available.

Additionally, it is important to know the stage in the demographic transition model at which Ghana finds itself, to be able to see the implications for policy and planning. Ghana is at Stage 2 of the demographic transition model (Henson, 2014), which is shaped mainly by experience of a high birth rate, a low death rate and slightly higher life expectancy. The population is expanding, though not rapidly. As noted earlier in terms of demographic trends, this means GoG will need to invest in quality and higher education as well as job creation for young people. If investments are pursued, Ghana is likely to reap huge gains in terms of the demographic dividend in the next decades. The opposite is true if the country fails to invest in young people.

17.3 Getting youth policy right

After acknowledging the weaknesses contained in the current NYP, it becomes clear that, in order to increase the potential for success, policy-makers must lead the difficult process of coordinating various stakeholders, developing a coherent policy with clear outcomes and beginning the process of mainstreaming youth policies into national development planning with youth as *partners*. Inclusive, meaningful youth participation will ensure the creation of policies that speak to the current youth demographic in a way that empowers them to participate and build their capacity as the future of the country.

17.3.1 Ensuring coordination

Given the multi-dimensionality of youth development, youth policy formulation and implementation is often plagued by fragmented efforts and poor coordination among different sectors at both national and local levels. This becomes increasingly problematic where jurisdictions overlap, such as in the case of initiatives hoping to address youth employment. In order to holistically and strategically guide efforts focused on youth development capable of addressing youth concerns and requirements, a clear national youth coordination framework is needed. This must ensure cooperation and communication across youth service providers and youth organisations as well as among and across different levels of government and their ministries, agencies and departments. This must be spearheaded by the NYA.

Through organising or 'bringing together' various stakeholders; developing an overarching strategy and cross-sector objectives to enable youth outcomes; and assigning clear roles and responsibilities, the framework can provide guidelines for cross-agency communication, monitoring, evaluation and analysis of policy

development. Working in coordination will foster coherence and support across sectors while at the same time ensuring efficiencies in budgetary requirements and reducing overlap. Coordination can also involve settings such as Friends of Youth, which brings together stakeholders from all levels of national development who have an interest in youth development. This platform can further be constituted into sub-working groups that deal with thematic issues regularly. It can further serve as a sounding board by ensuring all other indirect stakeholders and observers are informed of forum-related developments and can contribute to creating the agenda for youth development.[1]

17.3.2 Mainstreaming youth in development planning

Mainstreaming youth development issues into national development planning and strategies will work to ensure the success of any youth policy initiatives. In Ghana, youth policy sits within MOYS and the NYA. Integration of youth priorities and issues across national policy planning and implementation, including medium- and long-term local and national development strategies (e.g. the National Development Plan 2018–2057), will promote the overarching objective of youth development. Additionally, with respect to budgetary processes, mainstreaming youth development will ensure policy objectives have the specific budgetary allocations they require.

17.3.3 Listening to young people

Policy development processes must be participatory, with the inclusion of voices from all relevant stakeholders, including youth. Meaningful consultation provides a sense of individual and collective responsibility towards youth development outcomes, leading to improved ownership and accountability. Consultation should be considered an on-going process to be continued after policy implementation, throughout on-going monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, consultation must acknowledge the importance of inclusive participation and ensure equity in representation and engagement of minority groups and those who are traditionally excluded, such as females, rural youth and those with disabilities. Youth voices are important to include not only in youth-focused policies but also in the broader scope of development in Ghana. Consulting with young people on medium-and long-term national development planning strategies is equally important in mainstreaming youth development.

Having noted the significance of listening to young people, it is also important to reflect on the cultural ethos of Ghanaian youth life. Ghanaian culture sometimes teaches young people to be subservient as a way of showing respect (Twum-Danso, 2008; Boakye-Boateng, 2010). At the same time notions, such as 'A young person must be seen and not heard' can be characteristic of a culturally institutionalised power dynamic in various arenas (e.g. community, church or school) where young people find themselves. This practice can have negative consequences for young people's freedom of expression without fear. Thus, it is important that participatory mechanisms address this indirect barrier to encourage young people to *speak up* and ask questions on issues regarding youth development.

17.3.4 Capacity development

Meaningful youth participation in development issues and effective implementation of youth policies calls for improved capacities that will empower young people with the skills and tools for effective analysis, development, coordination, monitoring and evaluation, fundraising, advocacy and reporting on policy and programmatic issues affecting young people. In many developing countries, youth ministries are often charged with sport development as well. While sport can be an important element to enhancing the well-being of young people as well as society at large, in some cases the idea that sport development encompasses youth development remains prevalent, and youth policy and programme implementation does not receive the attention it requires. Deliberate effort must be enacted to ensure adequate financial and human resources are available to MOYS and the NYA at both headquarters and local levels, to ensure effective implementation of youth interventions. Facilitation and sponsorship of staff participation in youth development conferences and partnerships with academic institutions to develop mandatory training models for all staff members would help increase the capacity of both agencies to further support positive youth development.

Capacity-building can be a capital-intensive endeavour and, given recent donor fatigue and GoG's path towards a 'Ghana Beyond Aid' (GoG, 2019), new ways of forging partnerships and innovative fundraising approaches should be explored. Creating a dedicated unit or department in MOYS and the NYS would be an important step in raising funds for the ministry and its stakeholders. This unit can also train all NYA programme staff at the regional and district level on proposal-writing and fundraising to help with local office fundraising strategies. Equipped with new funding modalities whereby bilateral and multilateral donors can fund non-government entities, while encouraging civil society organisations to work closely with GoG, MOYS and the NYA can identify and work together with outside organisations to ensure effective youth development outcomes. These new funding modalities could include a 'youth donor trust fund', whereby various stakeholders interested in youth development can donate funding with clear disbursement and accountability mechanisms.

17.3.5 Monitoring and evaluation

Youth policy and implementation strategies are often limited in their effectiveness, owing to a lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the impacts and outcomes of policies and programmes. Data from monitoring and evaluation based on assessment of core youth development indicators can be useful in understanding what works and why. While there is no international agreement on youth development outcomes, frameworks such as the Commonwealth Secretariat's YDI, the Global Youth Wellbeing Index and the UNDP Human Development Index can be used to contextualise the findings. Developing indicators to serve as baseline measurements for monitoring the impact of new policies and initiatives across geographies, gender and age of youth populations can be effective in assessing their success. Baseline youth development indicators can be collected regularly or from national census data (see Annex 2). Evaluation of the data collected through monitoring processes is

critical to assessing the strengths and weaknesses of policy initiatives. Evaluation can be complex, intensive and expensive. Given the overlap between sectors, one cost-effective strategy would be to conduct joint evaluations on areas that are inter-related, such as health and education.

17.3.6 Research, knowledge management and policy advocacy

On-going research focused on youth can provide critical data for youth development policy-making and programme development. In some circumstances, even when research has been conducted, findings are not acknowledged, owing to problems related to inaccessibility. Knowledge management is a key step in conveying relevant research findings to youth development stakeholders, including policy-makers. One possible strategy to ensure relevant stakeholders have the evidence they need to make informed decisions is the creation of an online youth development knowledge hub, coordinated by the NYA, to bring together relevant research findings accessible to various stakeholders. A strategy such as this would ensure adequate evidence-driven policy advocacy and policy-making for youth development issues in Ghana.

17.3.7 Professionalising youth work

Youth work refers to 'all forms of rights-based youth engagement approaches that build personal awareness and support the social, political and economic empowerment of young people, delivered through non-formal learning within a matrix of care' (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2017). In Ghana, while there are several youth workers and youth-led and -focused organisations, no system exists that recognises the practice of youth work as a profession. Professional youth work is a key dimension in enabling, ensuring and empowering young people (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1992). Professional youth work in Ghana will mean the presence of a regulatory framework to direct the practice and check excesses, as well as accredited certificate courses to equip youth workers with the needed competencies to handle youth matters. A professionalised youth worker system will also be a major step in mainstreaming youth in development issues. It is therefore essential for Ghana as a state to put in place structures for the professionalisation of youth work. This could be implemented with academic institutions and international organisations. Having said this, it will be important to understand earlier experiences from certificate programmes organised previously by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the University of Ghana on youth development.

17.4 Conclusion

As Ghana advances towards a more sustainable future, youth development becomes more critical than ever before. The youth demographic represents not only the majority of the country's citizens but also the future. Policies and programmes focusing on youth development must take into account the diversity of the youth population and be based on lived experiences. Acknowledging youth *as partners* in development ensures their participation in the creation of policies that support their needs and wants and the challenges they face as they transition into adulthood.

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Note

1 Exemplified by https://gfmd.org/process/gfmd-structure/friend

Annex 1

UN Resolutions on Youth

Year	UN RESOLUTION FOCUSING ON YOUTH	
2017	General Assembly Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth	A/RES/72/146
2017	Commission for Social Development, 55th Session Resolution 55/1: Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth	E/CN.5/2017/L.4
2015	General Assembly Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth	A/RES/70/127
2015	Commission for Social Development, 53th Session Resolution 53/1: Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth	E/CN.5/2015/L.4
2014	General Assembly Resolution on World Youth Skills Day	A/RES/69/145
2013	General Assembly Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth	A/RES/68/130
2013	Commission for Social Development, 51st Session Resolution 51/1: Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth	E/CN.5/2013/L.4
2011	General Assembly Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth	A/RES/66/121
2011	Outcome Document of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding	A/RES/65/312
2011	General Assembly Resolution on the Organization of the High-Level Meeting on Youth	A/RES/65/267
2011	Commission for Social Development, 49th Session Resolution 49/1: Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth	E/CN.5/2011/L.4/Rev.1
2009	General Assembly Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth	A/RES/64/130
2009	General Assembly Resolution on Proclamation of 2010 as International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding	A/RES/64/134
2009	Commission for Social Development, 47th Session Resolution 47/1: Policies and Programmes Involving Youth, included in the Report on the 47th Session to the Economic and Social Council	E/2009/26 & E/CN.5/2009/9
2007	General Assembly Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth: Youth in the Global Economy – Promoting Youth Participation in Social and Economic Development (contains the Supplement to the World Programme of Action for Youth)	A/RES/62/126

Year	UN RESOLUTION FOCUSING ON YOUTH	
2007	Commission for Social Development, 45th Session Resolution 45/2 included in the Report on the 45th Session to the Economic and Social Council	E/2007/26 & E/ CN.5/2007/8
2006	Commission for Social Development, 44th Session, Resolution on Youth Employment 2006/15	Ref. E/2006/26
2005	General Assembly Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth	A/RES/60/2
2004	General Assembly Resolution on Tenth Anniversary of WPAY	A/RES/59/148
2003	General Assembly Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth	A/RES/58/133
2001	General Assembly Resolution on Promoting Youth Employment	A/RES/57/165
2001	General Assembly Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth	A/RES/56/117
1999	General Assembly Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth	A/RES/54/120
1997	General Assembly Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth	A/RES/52/83
1995	General Assembly Resolution on the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond	A/RES/50/81
1985	General Assembly Resolution on the International Youth Year	A/RES/40/14
1984	General Assembly Resolution on the International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace	A/RES/39/22

Source: https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/publications/youth-resolutions.html [accessed 17 October 2019].

Annex 2

Ghana Youth Development Scorecard: Adaptive Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation

Domain/thematic area	Indicators
1. Education	*School enrolment in secondary education by gender*
	School life expectancy (secondary education)
	Basic numeracy and functional skills needed to solve real-life problems
	Public spending on education
2. Economic Participation/ Opportunity	*Youth unemployment rates by age and gender*
	NEETs by age, gender and location
	Youth in entrepreneurial activity by age and gender
	Youths who depend partially or fully on the gig economy by age and gender
	Youth borrowing for business purposes/opening business accounts by age, gender and location
3. ICT	*Percentage of youth with access to the internet by age, gender and location.*
	Mobile phone subscriptions per 100 people
	Youth perceptions about Internet (luxury or necessity) by age, gender and location
4. Culture, Religion, Life Skills and Tourism	*Percentage of youths associated to a religion*
	Level of engagement and willingness to perform a religious activity
5. Youth Volunteerism	*Percentage of 15–29 year olds volunteering by age and gender*
6. Youth and Vulnerabilities	*Rural and urban poverty rates*
	Rate of single parenting
	Rate and type of disability by age, gender and location
7. Health and Well-Being	*Rate of substance use (alcohol, opioid, tobacco) by age and gender*
	Rate of nutritional risk
	HIV rate
	Adolescent fertility rate
	Maternal mortality rate
	Percentage of 15–25 year olds covered in the NHIS
8. Sports and Recreation	*Government annual spending on secondary school sports and recreational activities as a percentage of Ghana general spending*
	Ratio of male/female youth actively engaged in one sports activity or the other
	Number of schools equipped with basic sports and recreational amenities/facilities

Domain/thematic area	Indicators
9. Financial Inclusion	*Percentage of youths with at least a checking account and or a savings account*
	Percentage of youths who engage in mobile banking or have a banking app on their mobile phone
	Financial literacy taught in secondary schools
10. Youth and Disability	*Enrolment rate of youth with disabilities in Ghanaian secondary schools*
	Rate of school/work lost within a specified period
	Disability adjusted life year
11. Youth and Crime/ Violence	*Youth crime rate*
	Juvenile imprisoned rate
	Level of sexual assault among youths
	Rate of bullying by age, gender and location
12. Youth, Conflict and Peace-Building	*Intensity of organised internal conflict*
	Level of youth engagement in peace-building
	Ease of access to small arms and light weapons
	Impact of terrorism
13. Citizenship and Government Participation	*Proportion of youth who exercise their civil rights in voting*
	Percentage of youths who engage in free community service or
	Number of secondary schools that recognise students' community service in admission and scholarships
	Strategic systems implemented by government to engage youth governance
14. Youth Migration and Mobility	*Tertiary students as against international students trend by age and gender*
	International migrant stocks by age and gender
	Crude net migration rate
15. Youth Environmental Sustainability	*Adhered policy on climate change*
	Rate of illegal mining and deforestation
	Recognition and incentives for youth organisations that go green

Note: This recommendation is based on the thematic discussions in the chapters of this report.
Source: Author.

Annex 3

Institutions and Numbers of People Interviewed

Institution	Number of respondents	Sub-total	Total
Government ministries, departments and agencies		**18**	**53**
National Youth Authority	7		
Ministry of Youth and Sports	2		
Youth Employment Agency	1		
National Peace Council	3		
Head of State Awards scheme	1		
National Commission for Civic Education	3		
National Development Planning Commission	1		
Multilateral agencies		**11**	
United Nations Development Programme	3		
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	2		
United Nations Population Fund	2		
United Nations Capital Development Fund	2		
International Organization for Migration	1		
German Development Cooperation	1		
Professional associations		**2**	
Ghana Medical Association	1		
Ghana Employers Association	1		
Student organisation		**1**	
National Union of Ghana Students	1		
Civil society and private sector		**21**	
African Youth and Adolescents Network	1		
Youth Empowerment Synergy	3		
Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG)	2		
PPAG – Youth Action Movement	8		
Junior Chamber International Ghana	1		
Greener Impact International and African Youth Initiative on Climate Change	1		
Strategic Youth Network for Development	1		
Impact Hub Accra	1		
MeFiriGhana/Future of Ghana	1		
Orios Group	1		
Fidelity Bank, Accra	1		

The Commonwealth

Over the past two decades, Ghana has improved its social, economic and political structures and reduced inequalities across its population. Nevertheless, a variety of socio-economic issues still have a particular impact on the youth demographic, including underemployment, a lack of access to quality education, poverty, crime, migration and low civic participation. As the majority of Ghana's population is under the age of 25, improvements for this demographic have the potential to facilitate a more sustainable and resilient society long-term.

This book presents pragmatic policy- and programme-related recommendations for how Ghana can move forward, mainstreaming youth issues in its development strategies. For each socio-economic issue, it provides a baseline evaluation that can inform revisions of current policies as well as support the creation of new policies to ensure future success in youth development.

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