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# **Enhancing active labour market programmes for improved youth livelihoods: A study of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana**

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of DPhil (Sociology)

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## Abstract

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This thesis is based on a doctoral study that aimed to explore the livelihood challenges and strategies of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana and the extent to which current active labour market programmes in the country take these challenges into consideration. The study's focus was informed by a wide body of existing research showing high levels of graduate youth unemployment rates in the country's heavy investment in various types of youth-focused active labour market programmes. The main research question was: *What are the livelihood challenges of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana, and to what extent do ALMPs adequately address the challenges?* It specifically aimed:

1. To explore the livelihood assets that unemployed graduate youth possess in Botswana.
2. To explore the unemployment experiences of unemployed graduate youth.
3. To explore the subjective meaning the unemployed graduate youth attach to their unemployment experiences.
4. To illuminate the main livelihood challenges and strategies employed by unemployed graduate youth.
5. To explore the perceived effectiveness of current youth-oriented ALMPs in addressing graduate youth's livelihood challenges and in improving the livelihood strategies that the young unemployed graduates adopt.
6. To make recommendations for improved livelihood and employment outcomes of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana.

To achieve its objectives, the study adopted a qualitative research design. It drew data from the following three main sources: (i) A *document review* that entailed an in-depth review of policy and operational documents of government and other national institutions tasked with enhancing youth employment and overall youth development and empowerment in Botswana; (ii) *key informant interviews* with public sector stakeholders working in the broad areas of youth employment and development; and (ii) *focus group discussions* with unemployed and employed young people aged 20–29 years, the age bracket shown to be the most affected by unemployment among youth in the country. The focus group discussions were conducted in three geographical settings, namely an urban area (Gaborone, the capital of Botswana), an urban village (Kanye) and a peri-urban area (Oodi/Modipane).

Theoretically, the study was guided by the Sustainable Livelihood Framework, which posits that there are different material, social, tangible, and intangible assets that poor and vulnerable individuals and households possess and serve as a potential capital base for various production streams to create livelihoods. The framework is used throughout the thesis and the analytical and presentation framework.

The **key findings** of the study are as follows:

- ✓ By virtue of being graduates, unemployed graduate youth are in possession of some form of human capital, with the lowest educational qualification being a post-secondary certificate. These young people are, however, constrained in terms of social, financial, natural, and physical capital. This, among other things, hampers the potential to venture into self-employment or entrepreneurship in cases where they face challenges with getting formal sector employment.
- ✓ Young graduate youth's experiences of being unemployed can be broadly expressed in terms of economic, social, and psychological points of view. In terms of the sustainable livelihood capitals, it can be concluded that most of the experiences are propelled by the young people's limited financial and social capital.
- ✓ The subjective meaning that young unemployed graduates attach to their unemployment status implicitly revolves around their limited financial capital assets and is seen as negatively straining social capital assets.
- ✓ In terms of livelihood strategies, the findings suggest that while some extremes, such as involvement in transactional and often intergenerational sexual relations, were noted, unemployed graduate youth in Botswana are generally resilient and draw on their agency as well as on their human and social capital, albeit limited, to cope. Reliance on family members and members of faith-based organizations is the main social capital drawn on, while hustling, which includes engagement in low-cost, informal sector activities, is the main human capital drawn on.
- ✓ The overall view among graduate youth and key informant interviews is that the country's current active labour market programmes are not adequately effective. In the view of the young unemployed graduates, while some ALMPs enhance human capital skills, some are characterised by "unreasonable" requirements, such as possessing some capital that the young people do not necessarily have, specifically financial, natural and physical capital.

Other findings that were not necessarily related to the objectives but are nonetheless noteworthy are as follows:

- ✓ There is limited data for facilitating a robust analysis of graduate youth unemployment.
- ✓ There are no subsidised employment programmes to curb youth unemployment. The study discovered that Botswana does not have subsidised employment programmes, which is one of the four types of ALMPs. The available ALMPs only offer (i) entrepreneurship promotion, (ii) employment services and (iii) training and skills development programmes.
- ✓ There is a general failure to incorporate and include youth during decision-making to design and implement policies meant to develop and empower them. The study revealed that unemployed young people are excluded from participating in policymaking.

- ✓ There is limited consultation and partnership between the government and the private sector in alleviating graduate youth unemployment. The government often excludes the private sector from policies and programmes designed and implemented to curb youth unemployment.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the study's key findings, a number of recommendations for policy practice and future research are made and summarised as follows:

### ***Recommendations for policy and practice***

- ✓ Improve the quality and quantity of data available to drive national decision-making and resource allocation.
- ✓ Consider developing and implementing a subsidised employment programme to curb graduate youth unemployment. Such type of ALMPs has been shown to be effective and reduce unemployment in some countries.
- ✓ Make youth participation a central part of the design and implementation of ALMPs.
- ✓ Policymakers should involve the private sector as stakeholders and implementing partners in addressing graduate youth unemployment.

### ***Recommendations for further research***

- ✓ A national study on corruption as an inhibiting factor for graduates to transition from school to work.
- ✓ A national study on the extent of transactional sexual relations in the graduate youth unemployment arena.
- ✓ A broader and national mixed-method study on the sociological aspects of graduate youth unemployment.

**Keywords:** Graduate Youth Unemployment; Sustainable Livelihood Framework; Livelihood Strategies, Active Labour Market Programmes; Botswana

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## **Dedication**

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I dedicate this research study to my parents, Mr Osene Setambule and Mrs Julia Setambule. I especially dedicate it to my mother, who was denied a chance to study as she had to herd my grandparent's livestock. She is currently doing her first year of primary education through the Adult Basic Education Programme. Amid the challenges I encountered during my DPhil journey, this has made me push harder so that I would not disappoint her and would give her the courage to continue studying without giving up. Overall, my parents have been the proverbial pillars of strength throughout my life and inspired me to be the best I can be. I will always cherish their selfless sacrifices.

## Declaration

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I declare that this thesis is my own original work. Where secondary material is used, this has been carefully acknowledged and referenced in accordance with university requirements.

I understand what plagiarism is and am aware of university policy and implications in this regard

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SIGNATURE

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DATE

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## List of abbreviations and acronyms

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ALMP	Active Labour Market Programmes
AU	African Union
BNIP	Botswana National Internship Programme
BNSP	Botswana National Service Programme
BNYC	Botswana National Youth Council
CEDA	Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency
DfID	Department for International Development
DPSM	Directorate of Public Service Management
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GVS	Graduate Volunteer Scheme
HRDC	Human Resource Development Council
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IT	Information Technology
MYSC	Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Culture Development
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NGO	Non-governmental Organisations
SL	Sustainable Livelihoods
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UB	University of Botswana
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
US	United States
YDF	Youth Development Fund
YFF	Young Farmers Fund

# CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

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## 1.1 Introduction

This thesis explores the livelihood strategies of unemployed youth in Botswana, with a particular focus on graduate youth aged 20-29 years. A ‘graduate’ conventionally refers to a holder of a bachelor’s or higher degree from a university and other institutions of higher education in acknowledgement of the significant differences in labour market outcomes for people with different kinds of tertiary qualifications (Altbeker and Storme, 2013). For the purpose of this thesis, however, ‘graduates’ include degree holders, as described above, as well as those holding post-secondary school diplomas and certificates. As in countries like South Africa, post-secondary certificates are entry-level higher education qualifications primarily vocational or industry-oriented and “serve to provide students with the basic introductory knowledge, cognitive and conceptual tools and practical techniques for further higher education studies in their chosen field of study. The knowledge emphasises general principles and application” (Republic of South Africa, 2007:19). A diploma, on the other hand, is primarily professional, vocational or industry-specific and typically emphasises general principles and application. By contrast, degrees are typically specific and limited to broad and generic areas of study (Republic of South Africa, 2007:23). It has been argued (see, for example, Altbeker & Storme, 2013) that defining ‘graduates’ as those holding certificates, diplomas and degrees can lead to an exaggeration of graduate unemployment levels and/or obscure the trends in unemployment rates for individuals with degrees and postgraduate qualifications. In this study, however, the broad conceptualisation of graduates as those having any post-secondary school qualification is used to be consistent with previous studies on graduate unemployment in Botswana (e.g. Gaetsewe, 2019; Yilma, 2016; Pheko and Molefhe, 2017). In addition, with the country having only three public universities, many young people attain their post-secondary qualifications from private and public institutions that mainly offer certificate and diploma-level qualifications (Mupimpila and Narayana, 2009; World Bank, 2014).

Previous studies have identified graduate unemployment, as described above, as one of the major socio-economic challenges in Botswana. The overall observation is that unlike two decades ago, when unemployment in the country was largely structural, and most of the unemployed had “less education and/or no useful skills”, and those who possessed tertiary education qualifications had higher chances of being employed in the formal sector (Siphambe, 2003, p. 484). However, graduate unemployment in the country now accounts for nearly two-thirds of the overall youth unemployment (Motlaleng and Narayana, 2014; Baatweng, 2015; Mogomotsi and Madigela, 2017). Indeed, recent data from the Botswana Multiple Topic Survey routinely conducted by Statistics Botswana, the country’s statutory statistical agency,

shows that while holders of secondary school qualifications are the most affected by unemployment in 2020 (at 69.9 percent of the total unemployed youth) graduates from universities and Colleges of Education are the second and third most affected at 13.0 and 6.8 percent respectively (Statistics Botswana, 2021, 63). This pattern has been consistent throughout all the Botswana Multiple Topic Surveys conducted in 2015/16, 2019, and 2020 (Statistics Botswana, 2016; 2019; 2020). In the same vein, a recent newspaper article (Mpuang, 2019) quoted a Chief Executive Officer of one of the major banks in the country saying the following during a recent graduation ceremony of a local tertiary institution:

Statistics further suggest that tertiary institutions in the country graduate over 20 000 students on an annual basis. Out of this, only about 2 000 are absorbed by the formal sector. It is estimated that there are currently over 80 000 unemployed graduates in Botswana.

It is against the foregoing evidence that this thesis focuses on *graduate* youth rather than general youth. It is noteworthy, however, that although the official definition of ‘youth’ in Botswana is any young person between the ages of 15 and 35 years (MYSC, 2010), in this study, a “graduate youth” is conceptualised as a graduate (as described above) aged between 20–29 years. Given that the 20-29 years bracket is part of the broader 15-35 years age bracket, ‘graduate youth’ will, for the purpose of this thesis, be used interchangeably with “youth”.

There are two main reasons for focusing on the 20–29-year age bracket. The first is that the Labour Organisation (ILO) has, through its School-to-Work Transition Surveys, recommended that studies on youth unemployment and/or transition from school to work should focus on young people aged 15-29 years so as to “cover countries where entry into the labour market occurs at a later stage” (Mehran, 2016). According to Mehran, these definitions should exclude children below the age of 15 who may be working or seeking work in permissible light work or conditions considered child labour (Mehran, 2016: 1).

The second reason is that 20-29 years is the age bracket that has been consistently shown to have relatively higher unemployment levels among young people aged 15-35 years in Botswana. For example, in the most recent Quarterly Multi-Topic Survey (Quarter 4 of 2021), age groups 20-24 and 25-29 were shown to be the most affected as they recorded an unemployment rate of 45.1 and 30.0 percent, respectively, for those who are unemployed in the country (Statistics Botswana, 2021, p.51). In 2015/2016, these age brackets accounted for 38.1 percent and 23.3 percent (highest percentages), respectively, of the population aged 18 years and above who were unemployed (Statistics Botswana, 2018, p.12). The corresponding figures in 2019 were 17.1 percent and 22 percent (Statistics Botswana 2019, p.76), while in 2020, they were 31.8 percent and 32.1 percent, respectively (Statistics Botswana, 2020, p.62). Notwithstanding possible variations in the definition and measurement of unemployment and

when disregarding the 15-19 year age group, Appendix A shows results from various national surveys undertaken over the years affirming that the 20-29 year age group is the youth group most affected by unemployment in Botswana.

## **1.2 Justification of the study**

The persistently high level of unemployment among graduates in Botswana is noteworthy given the significant investments that the Government of Botswana has been making into higher education since inheriting a largely illiterate population at independence in 1966 (Molutsi, 2009). The post-independence government prioritised and invested heavily in education and training to develop human capital and increase skilled labour to address the critical workforce shortages that forced the country to rely on relatively expensive expatriates (UNFPA Botswana, 2018). As a result, since independence, education and training in Botswana have received an average of 25 percent of both development and recurrent budgets. This has been hailed as one of the highest educational budgets by international comparison (Molutsi, 2009; UNFPA Botswana, 2018). Other education, training and skills development interventions over the years include, in no particular order, the following:

- The establishment of a national university, the University of Botswana (UB), in 1982 after years of a joint venture with the University of Lesotho and the University of Swaziland. Initially established in the capital Gaborone with the bulk of its programmes directed towards the humanities, education and social sciences, UB has since expanded and now has campuses in Francistown (the country's second-largest city located in the northern part of Botswana) and Maun, a town in the northeast part of the country. The programmes on offer have expanded and are now offered in six faculties: Business, Education, Engineering, Humanities, Science and Social Sciences and School of Health Sciences. With a student population of over 13 000, UB is the largest tertiary institution in the country (University of Botswana, 2018).
- The establishment of the country's second public university, the Botswana International University of Science and Technology, in 2005, even though it only became operational in 2012 to offer specialised training in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Over the years, the university has admitted an annual average of about 2 000 students, with the majority doing undergraduate programmes and the others enrolled in postgraduate studies.
- The establishment of the third public university in 2013, the Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (BUAN), formerly known as Botswana College of Agriculture. BUAN offers specialised training in agriculture and natural resources at the undergraduate level.
- The establishment of several semi-tertiary institutions to train, at certificate and diploma levels, various professionals such as primary and secondary school teachers, agricultural



demonstrators, nurses and paramedics, artisans and technicians, police, army and prison officers, and wildlife game wardens (Molutsi, 2009).

- For almost four decades after independence, the provision of government scholarships to a significant number of citizens to undertake (mainly) science-oriented undergraduate as well as various postgraduate studies abroad in countries such as the UK, USA, Canada, Germany, Russia, Australia, South Africa, India and Malaysia. As a result, Botswana has a significant number of externally trained professionals. Over the years, however, this strategy proved extremely expensive and unsustainable, and, as a result, the number of candidates sent abroad for studies has drastically reduced. This is also partly because of the introduction of new programmes previously not offered at local institutions, the expansion of UB, and the establishment of more tertiary education institutions in the country.
- The provision of licences for private tertiary institutions that offer a range of tertiary education and/or training courses. Students enrolled in most of these institutions receive government sponsorships. These institutions include Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, Ba Isago University, ABM University College, Botho University, Botswana Accountancy College, Gaborone Institute of Professional Studies, and Gaborone University College of Law and Professional Studies.
- The development of the National Policy on Vocational Educational and Training of 1997 aims to realise the full potential of Botswana's human resources in order to meet the current and future needs of the individual, the economy and the society by providing a national vocational education and training system (Ministry of Education, 1997).

In addition to the foregoing, the Government of Botswana has, over the years, developed and implemented a range of youth-focused active labour market programmes (ALMPs). ALMPs are government-initiated programmes that intervene in the labour market to provide integration measures to the unemployed, the underemployed, and sometimes the employed who are looking for better jobs (Strietska-Ilina, Hofmann, Haro, & Jeon, 2011). Youth-oriented ALMPs are usually grouped into four main categories– vocational training, assistance in the job search process, wage subsidies or public works programmes, and support to micro-entrepreneurs or independent workers (Rosas, 2015; Kluge, 2016; Yeyati et al., 2019). The literature review chapter (Chapter 2) provides a detailed discussion of these programmes. Nevertheless, for now, it suffices to state that youth-oriented ALPMs have been noted for their potential to redress education and labour market failures while promoting efficient allocation of labour and social justice as well as for preventing labour market detachment and preparing youth to take jobs after various types of shocks (Rosas, 2015).

Notwithstanding the government of Botswana's heavy investment in education, training and ALPMs, various scholars in the country (e.g. Moseki, Lowani and Sinkamba, 2016; Nthomang and Diraditsile, 2016; Lesetedi, 2018; Mogomotsi and Madigela, 2016) have noted and commented on the apparent failure of this investment in reducing youth unemployment. The

following statement succinctly summarises the scholars' overall observations by Nthomang & Diraditsile (2016, p. 45):

Policy and programmes in response to youth unemployment in Botswana have ... not produced the desired results despite sustained political support reflected by massive government spending on youth development programmes, number of programmes initiated, and youth enrolled.

For graduate youth, in particular, previous studies have attributed their persistently high unemployment rates to a number of factors, such as inadequate work experience (Mogomotsi & Madigela, 2017) and the failure of the country's education system to equip graduates with relevant skills for the labour market (Pheko & Molefhe, 2017) which translates, in turn to widespread skills mismatch in the labour market (Nthomang & Diraditsile, 2016; Kemiso & Kolawole, 2017); skills mismatch increases as the labour supplied by the education system offers the skills not demanded by the labour market (Nthomang & Diraditsile, 2016; Government of Botswana, 2016; Mogomotsi & Madigela, 2017). Furthermore, graduate youth unemployment in Botswana has also been attributed to young people's lack of training in entrepreneurship development skills to create jobs for themselves and others (Mutoko, 2014; Kemiso & Kolawole, 2017). Mannathoko (2011), for example, noted that most young entrepreneurs who receive funding through ALMPs in Botswana fail to sustain their funded initiatives or projects and many collapses in less than five years because most youth do not have the required business skills to run their funded projects. This has been affirmed by other recent studies, such as Jarabane (2019), whose study on youth businesses funded through the Youth Development Fund, an ALMP in the country, in the village of Molepolole, showed that the young entrepreneurs often face challenges such as lack of managerial skills, stiff competition and marketing constraints and these often lead to the failure of their businesses. In addition, Botswana's economy's poor diversification to non-mining sectors has been identified as another key factor that hampers graduates' transition into the labour market (World Bank 2022; Nthomang & Diraditsile, 2016).

For other scholars such as Lesetedi (2018) and Nthomang & Diraditsile (2016), the paucity of policy-oriented empirical research aimed at understanding the challenges leading to youth unemployment and how they can best be addressed has resulted in poorly designed and implemented ALMPs intended to alleviate youth unemployment in the country. Others (e.g. Diraditsile, 2017; Gaetsewe, 2019; Lesetedi, 2018; Mogomotsi and Madigela, 2017) have argued that in addition to limited research, the inability to sustain ALPMs, lack of consultation with youth, and poor monitoring and evaluation are other factors that underlie the ineffectiveness of the AMPLs in addressing youth unemployment in Botswana including specifically graduate youth unemployment. It has also been argued (see, for example, Gaetsewe, 2019) that much of the extant research on both graduate youth unemployment and

youth-oriented ALMPs in Botswana tend to rely heavily on desktop reviews of already existing literature, thus leaving the needs of graduate youth unaddressed. As Nthomang and Diraditsile (2016, p. 52) posit, such methodological limitations can inhibit the design, monitoring and evaluation, as well as the improvement of relevant and context-specific graduate youth ALMPs. To this end, Nthomang and Diraditsile posit that it is critical that interventions to reduce any form of youth unemployment should not be informed by subjective analysis or political expediency but should rely on rigorous empirical data that can “provide communities and decision-makers with useful recommendations and possible solutions to address issues related to the intervention strategies” (Lesetedi, 2018, p. 128).

Against this foregoing background, this thesis empirically explores a somehow overlooked aspect of graduate youth unemployment research and literature in Botswana: the livelihood challenges of unemployed graduate youth. The thesis’ focus in this regard is in line with increasing global calls to pay attention to overall youth livelihood challenges, needs and strategies as these impact future societal livelihoods prospects (Ansell, 2016; Kouakou & Koba, 2015; Van Blerk, Ansell, Robson, Hadju, & Chipeta, 2008). These calls hinge on a vast body of evidence showing that improving young people's livelihoods can empower them to harness their socioeconomic potential to increase self-employment opportunities and levels of income (Kluve et al., 2017). Improved youth livelihoods can also foster the social inclusion of unemployed young people and can also contribute to overall sustainable human development (Kluve et al., 2017; Mwesigwa & Mubangizi, 2019). Conversely, disempowered youth are more likely to be disgruntled and cause social instability as they fight to claim a share of economic resources or opportunities (Hlungwani et al., 2021). The xenophobic violence that regularly engulfs South Africa (Mamabolo, 2015) as well as the Arab Springs in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region in the early 2000s (Lin, 2012; Drine, 2012; Honwana, 2013; Sayre and Yousef, 2016; Rennick, 2020), are some examples of social unrests and political turmoil that were fuelled by youth unemployment rates and comprised youth livelihoods.

The thesis further explores the extent to which the apparent failure of youth-oriented ALMPs in Botswana meant to effectively address graduate unemployment in the country can be attributed to inadequate attention paid to young people’s livelihood challenges. Given that youth unemployment studies in Botswana have, for the most part, focused on quantitative and/or economic dimensions of unemployment, such as the levels and trends, causes, and labour market impact of unemployment (Gaetsewe, 2019; Malema, 2014, 2015; Malepa & Komane, 2014; Siphambe, 2000, 2003, 2007), this component of the thesis provides a sociological and phenomenological understanding of the lived experiences of unemployed graduate youth as well as their views on the major strengths and weakness, and potential of the current youth-oriented ALMPs in the country to address youth unemployment. In doing this, the study contributes to closing the research gap discussed above, namely the paucity of

empirical research, by providing an in-depth and qualitative understanding of the factors that hamper the ALMPs intended to alleviate graduate and general youth unemployment in the country.

### 1.3 Research questions

The thesis' main research question is: What are the livelihood challenges of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana, and to what extent do ALMPs adequately address the challenges?

The **specific** research questions are:

1. What are the livelihood assets that unemployed graduate youth possess in Botswana?
2. What are the unemployment experiences of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana?
3. What subjective meaning do the unemployed graduate youth attach to their unemployment experiences?
4. What are the main livelihood challenges and strategies employed by unemployed graduate youth in Botswana?
5. How effective are current youth-oriented ALMPs perceived to be in addressing graduate youth's livelihood challenges and in improving the livelihood strategies that these young people adopt?

### 1.4 Objectives of the study

The **broad objective** of this thesis is to explore the main livelihood challenges and strategies of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana and to make recommendations for policy, practice and improved programming. The following are the **specific objectives**:

1. To explore the livelihood assets of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana.
2. To explore the unemployment experiences of unemployed graduate youth.
3. To explore the subjective meaning the unemployed graduate youth attach to their unemployment experiences.
4. To illuminate the main livelihood challenges and strategies employed by unemployed graduate youth.
5. To explore the perceived effectiveness of current youth-oriented ALMPs in addressing graduate youth's livelihood challenges and in improving the livelihood strategies that the young unemployed graduates adopt.
6. To make recommendations for improved livelihood and employment outcomes of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana.

### 1.5 Significance of the study

This thesis has important policy and theoretical significance. With regards to the former, the study aims are in alignment with the ideals of Botswana's current long-term vision, Vision 2036. According to Pino and Confalonieri (2014:132), long-term national visions describe

“what a country wishes to become, the national priorities and the objectives to be reached”. Recognising that “youth have much potential to contribute to the overall development of Botswana and making it globally competitive” (Government of Botswana, 2016:21), Vision 2036 states that Botswana will make relevant, targeted investment that includes, among others, the creation of employment opportunities for its youth population as a way of ensuring that the country reaps the demographic dividend (Government of Botswana, 2016). Defined as the “economic benefit that can arise from a significant increase in the ratio of working-age adults relative to young dependents that result from fertility decline” (UN Population Fund Botswana, 2018, p. xiii), the demographic dividend is typically supported by sustained investments in education and skills development, health, job creation, and good governance (Gribble & Bremner, 2012). Such a dividend can, however, only be realised when an economy with a growing population of young people can provide an education matching the labour market demands and create employment opportunities for its working-age population, especially the youth, whose numbers surpass adults worldwide (Lin, 2012). Furthermore, by focusing on unemployed graduate youth, the study is also relevant for Vision 2036’s ideals of improving Botswana’s human capital, education and skills development, and social inclusion and equality through, among others, the provision of social protection (which ALMPs are part of) to vulnerable members of society, a definition that also describes unemployed graduate youth.

Consistent with the foregoing ideals of Vision 2036, the current Botswana National Development Plan<sup>1</sup> for the 2017-2023 period (NDP 11) recognises “the growing rate of unemployment of the youth, specifically graduates” and, as a response, underscores “the critical need for improving the coordination, planning, quality, as well as management of human resource development” in the country. It aims, in this regard, to put in place initiatives such as those aimed at promoting youth entrepreneurial and economic empowerment and employment creation opportunities (Government of Botswana, 2017:120). Therefore, this thesis’s findings will be valuable, highlighting plausible interventions in this regard. In addition, another relevant policy that will benefit from the findings of this thesis is the Revised National Youth Policy adopted in 2010, with the creation of “youth employment to attain sustainable economic livelihoods” among its key objectives (MYSC, 2010, p. 15). Indeed, the policy lists the promotion of youth employment as the first of 12 strategic areas deserving special attention in the country (MYSC, 2010).

The thesis is also relevant and valuable for informing Botswana’s efforts to achieve some of its international and regional commitments. For example, as a signatory to the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the country needs to strive to attain Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.5, which calls for the achievement of “full and productive

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<sup>1</sup> National Development Plans (NDPs) guide the overall development of the country. They outline government strategies planned to be undertaken over the Plan period.

employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value” by 2030 (UN, 2018, p. 29). Another relevant one is SDG Target 8.6, which urges member states to “substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training” by 2030 (UN, 2018, p. 29). Furthermore, Botswana as a signatory of the African Union’s African Youth Charter (2006) and Social Policy Framework for Africa (2009), is bound by these instruments’ commitment to improving youth well-being through, among their things, employment opportunities.

Theoretically, the importance of studying the well-being of youth in contemporary society lies mainly in the demographic significance of this age cohort: today’s generation of young people is the largest cohort of youth the world has ever seen (Hanna, 2014). Using its standard definition of youth or young people (15–24 years), the UN (2019b) reported that there were 1.2 billion young people globally in 2019; this translates to 16 percent of the global population. This population is further projected to reach 1.3 billion by 2030 (UN, 2015). In developing regions, the number of youths aged 15–24 was 207 million in 2019 and is expected to rise to 336 million in 2050 (UN, 2020). Africa has the youngest population in the developing world, accounting for 19 percent of the global youth population aged 15–24 years in 2015, and is expected to make up 42 percent of the world’s youth by 2030 (UN, 2015). To this end, the empowerment of young people is a recurring theme in various commitments to sustainable socio-economic development. For example, five of the eight Millennium Development Goals spoke directly to improving the situation of young people through universal access to primary education; gender equity in access to education; maternal health; HIV and AIDS and other diseases; and employment creation (AU, 2011).

Youth development remains a central element in the United Nations Agenda 2030, with more than a third of the Sustainable Development Goal targets explicitly or implicitly referring to young people by focusing on empowerment, participation and/or well-being (UNDP, 2017). These include 20 youth-specific targets spread over six Sustainable Development Goals, namely Goal 2 (hunger), Goal 4 (education), Goal 5 (gender equality), Goal 8 (decent work), Goal 10 (inequality) and Goal 13 (climate change).

All in all, in developing regions where young people constitute a relatively higher proportion of the population, their unemployment and livelihood challenges warrant scholarly attention because if economies do not prove capable of finding a solution to youth unemployment, “we are going to find ourselves with a lost generation bringing with it a loss of human capital, social exclusion and dislocation” (Ortiz, 2017)<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, as alluded to earlier in relation to the Arab Springs and xenophobic attacks, in South Africa, without a stake in the economic system,

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.equaltimes.org/the-global-youth-unemployment#.Xr1E72gzbIV>

young people often become alienated and tend to engage in anti-social behaviour (Freedman, 2005:4). The individual consequences of youth unemployment also make studies such as this worthy. In essence, a wide body of research evidence (see, for example, Brand, 2015; Drydakis, 2015; Banks, 2016; Casal, Rivera and Currais, 2020; Kidwai & Sarwar, 2015; Pohlan, 2019; Liu, Heinzl, Haucke and Heinz, 2021) shows that unemployment among young people, in particular, can lead to emotional instability, low self-esteem, depression, dejection or hopelessness, heightened feelings of social exclusion, and overall low subjective and mental wellbeing. Other social ills associated with youth unemployment include increased levels of crime and substance abuse (Henkel, 2011; Mazorodze and Nsiah, 2020; Onwuka, Ugwu and Chukwuma, 2020).

## **1.6 Conceptual framework**

To contextualise the rest of the thesis, it is important to clarify some concepts that are core to this study, specifically ‘unemployment’, ‘youth’, ‘unemployed graduate youth’, ‘employed graduate youth’, ‘livelihood’, and ‘effectiveness’.

### *Unemployment*

According to the ILO (2013), “unemployment comprises all persons of working age who meet the following three criteria simultaneously: First, they must be without work, paid or self-employment, during the reference period; secondly, they must be available for work, either paid employment or self-employment, during the reference period; and thirdly, they must be seeking work, meaning that they must have taken specific steps in a specified recent period to seek paid employment or self-employment” (ILO, 2013, p. 10). This study adopted this ILO conceptualisation of unemployment and disregarded other common classifications of unemployment, which include persons who are currently not looking for work but are in the process of being equipped with skills for future work and hence have a future labour market stake. Another classification is people in re-training or skill training schemes within employment promotion programmes who are not in employment, not currently available and are not seeking employment because they have a job offer to start after these training schemes come to an end (Arkoh, 2019).

### *Youth*

As stated earlier, in Botswana, ‘youth’ officially refers to any young person between the ages of 15 and 35 years (MYSC, 2010). This evidently differs from the definitions used by international organisations such as the United Nations and the World Bank, where youth are defined as those aged 15–24 years for statistical comparisons. It also differs from the African Union's definition of youth as people aged 15–34 years (AU, 2006) and from the definitions of other African States, such as South Africa, who define youth as those aged 14–35 years (National Youth Development Agency, 2015). Furthermore, in Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Namibia, youth are defined as those aged 16–35 years, while in Nigeria and

Ghana, they are those aged 18–35 years (Government of Namibia, 2009; Government of Nigeria, 2009; Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2010; Ministry of Youth Development, 2013; Government of Mozambique, 2012; Republic of Zambia, 2015). These variations in definitions have been attributed to socio-economic inequalities across nations, the cultural diversity that governs and defines these life phases, as well as varying legal definitions related to issues such as the minimum age for voting (Panday & Richter, 2005).

#### *Unemployed and employed graduate youth*

In line with the foregoing and as already stated, for purposes of this study, ‘unemployed graduate youth’ refer to individuals aged between 20 and 29 years who meet the following basic criteria:

- ✓ Have a post-secondary qualification (certificate, diploma, degree or higher, as described earlier in the chapter)
- ✓ Have been unemployed (as defined above) for at least two years. The two-year timeframe was meant to ensure that the young people had adequate unemployment experience and perceptions to share.

By the same token, an ‘employed graduate youth’ (who were interviewed in this study to provide some comparative perspectives) refers to individuals aged between 20–29 years who meet the following basic criteria:

- ✓ Have a post-secondary qualification (certificate, diploma, degree or higher, as described earlier in the chapter)
- ✓ Have been employed for at least two years. The two-year timeframe was meant to ensure that the young people had adequate employment experience and perceptions to share.

#### *Livelihood*

Livelihood can be described as the methods and means of making a living, such as capabilities, assets (both material and non-material) and activities that revolve around resources such as land or property, crops, food, knowledge, finances, social relationships, and their interrelated connection with the political, economic, and sociocultural characteristics of an individual or community (Sen, 1984).

#### *Effectiveness*

‘Effectiveness’ is widely defined as the extent to which a programme or intervention has achieved its objectives under normal conditions in a real-life setting (Sundqvist, Backlund, & Chronér, 2014). For the purpose of this study, the effectiveness of youth-oriented ALMPs was assessed using young people’s qualitative perspectives and views on the extent to which the



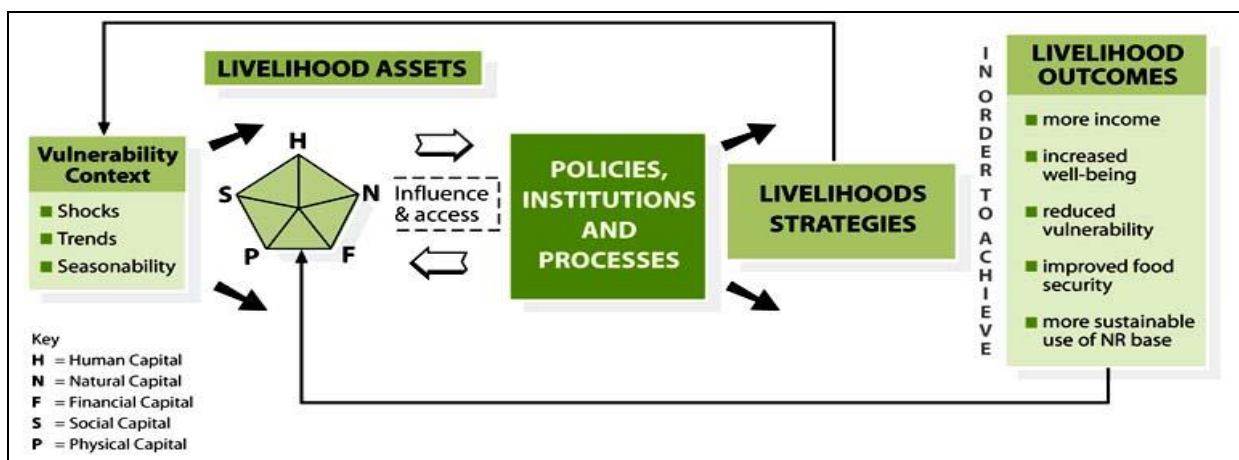
programmes achieved their objectives of addressing the broad issues of youth unemployment in Botswana.

## 1.7 Theoretical framework

The study is theoretically grounded in the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF), which “helps to organise the factors that constrain or enhance livelihood opportunities and shows how they relate to one another” (Serrat, 2017). A central notion of this framework is that there are different material, social, tangible and intangible assets that poor and vulnerable individuals and households possess and serve as a potential capital base for various production streams to create livelihoods. The poor and vulnerable can often make trade-offs and choices about these assets (Scoones, 2009; Serrat, 2017).

As depicted in Figure 1.1, the SLF posits that the starting point for all livelihoods is the Vulnerability Context which refers to unpredictable events that can undermine livelihoods and over which vulnerable people have limited or no control. These include covariate *shocks* such as floods, storms, civil conflict, etc., that can directly destroy assets and force people to dispose of assets prematurely as part of coping strategies. Conversely, trends include changes in population, resources, conflict, national and international economic situations, governance and politics and technology. They have a particularly important influence on rates of return to chosen livelihood strategies. Finally, seasonal shifts in production, prices, employment opportunities, health, and food availability are one of the greatest and most enduring sources of hardship for poor and vulnerable people in developing countries (DFID, 1999). Therefore, the vulnerability context is “characterised as insecurity in the well-being of individuals, households, and communities in the face of changes in their external environment” (Serrat, 2017:23).

**Figure 1.1: Sustainable Livelihood Framework**



United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (no Date). <https://www.fao.org/3/y5083e/y5083e02.htm>

The SLF posits that to overcome the challenges experienced in the vulnerability context, people require a range of assets to achieve positive livelihood outcomes. Five core asset categories or types of capital upon which livelihoods are built have been identified in this regard. These are:

- *Human capital*: This includes the skills, knowledge, experience, education, and health of an individual (their capacity to work). All of these are important to successfully pursue a desired livelihood (Chambers & Conway, 1992). Education, for example, is a necessary investment for human capital since it is the key to literacy in many cases. The ability to read and write, in turn, can enhance employment chances, acquiring skills through training and eventually achieving desired livelihoods. In addition, informal education, through which people gain knowledge and skills through experience and other means is also a form of human capital.
- *Social capital*: This comprises social resources such as networks and connections (patronage, neighbourhoods, kinship), social relations of trust and mutual understanding and support, affiliations to formal and informal groups, and clubs and associations that people can draw from to pursue various livelihoods strategies requiring partnerships or networks. Among other things, this asset can promote sharing of knowledge, including job and market opportunities (Krantz, 2001a, 2001b; Zhang, Wu, & Sanders, 2007).
- *Financial capital*: This is a capital base such as cash, remittances, credit and debt (formal, informal), pensions, wages, and savings, including other economic assets. All of these are essential to pursuing any livelihood strategy (Krantz, 2001b). In addition, financial capital can be used to acquire other assets and invest in other activities, including skills enhancement, that will bring more income to people, leading to the diversification of livelihoods.
- *Physical capital*: This is secure infrastructure (transport, roads, vehicles, secure shelter and buildings, water supply and sanitation, energy, communications), machinery (tools and equipment for production, seed, fertiliser, pesticides, traditional technology) that people can use to make livelihoods (Ellis, 2000).
- *Natural capital*: This is natural resources or stocks, such as land and produces, water and aquatic resources, trees and forest products, wildlife, domestic animals, wild foods and fibres, biodiversity, and environmental service, that can be used to achieve the desired livelihood through the flow of resources and services (Ellis, 2000). Land, for example, can be used for agriculture, building homes and business infrastructure for the operation of both small-scale and large-scale businesses in the pursuit of livelihoods (Chambers & Conway, 1992).

DFID (1999) underscores that no single category of assets on its own is sufficient to yield all the many and varied livelihood outcomes that people seek. Rather,

It is important to note that a single... asset can generate multiple benefits. For example, if someone has secure access to land (natural capital), they may also be well-endowed with financial capital, as they are able to use the land not only for direct productive activities but also as collateral for loans. Similarly, livestock may generate social capital (prestige and connectedness to the community) for owners while at the same time being used as productive physical capital (think of animal traction) and remaining, in itself, as natural capital. In order to develop an understanding of these complex relationships, it is necessary to look beyond the assets themselves, to think about prevailing cultural practices and the types of structures and processes that ‘transform’ assets into livelihood outcomes (DFID, 1999:5).

Access to foregoing livelihood assets is somehow dependent on the policies, institutions and processes that exist in various spaces (geographical). Thus, the level or extent of access people have to assets for their livelihood mainly depends on the political or institutional arrangements and structures in the public and private sectors in a given place (Sakdapolrak, 2014; Scoones, 2009; Serrat, 2017). These processes embrace the laws, regulations, policies, operational arrangements, agreements, societal norms, and practices that, in turn, determine the way in which structures and other functions that affect livelihoods operate.

Livelihood strategies are productive activities that persons engage in to achieve a livelihood (Serrat, 2017). They entail the synergising of a number and a combination of activities, assets, and choices within a set of institutional contexts to reach productive ends or outcomes (DfID, 1999). Therefore, potential livelihood outcomes can include increased income security, enhanced well-being, less vulnerability, enhanced food security, sustainable use of natural resources, and recovered human dignity (DfID, 1999; Serrat, 2017).

The importance that the SLF attributes to cultural practices and the types of structures and processes that ‘transform’ assets into livelihood outcomes are the key points that rendered the framework the most appropriate for this study. In essence, the SLF is deemed more holistic and recognises the critical role that socioeconomic and cultural policies, institutions and processes play in shaping livelihood strategies and outcomes. The latter refers to what vulnerable individuals achieve through their livelihood strategies. In this way, given the multiple factors that have been used to explain the high levels of graduate unemployment in Botswana, the SLF was deemed more appropriate than other commonly used theories in youth unemployment studies. These include the human capital theory, which emphasises that education and training are *the* investments that make individuals genuinely more productive (Carneiro et al., 2010). Other examples are Maslow’s Humanistic Theory which is premised on the point of view that individuals have the capacity to take action that will direct the course of their lives and enable them to cope with challenges such as unemployment; the Positive Youth Development Theory

(see Burkhard et al., 2020) which puts more emphasis on young people's capabilities and developmental potentials, and somehow neglect their deficiencies (in this case would be their unemployed status); and the Holistic Employability Approach (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2006) which examine factors underlying graduate youth unemployment largely according to supply-side and demand-side factors.

In this study, the SLF is used to frame part of the literature review and explore the livelihood assets of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana (specific objective 1) and to present the livelihood challenges of and strategies employed by unemployed graduate youth (specific objective 4). Moreover, the SLF was adopted to explore the extent to which current ALMPs address the unemployed graduate youth and livelihood challenges (specific objective 5) and to contribute to recommendations for improved livelihood and employment outcomes of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana (specific objective 6).

The adoption of the SLF as a guiding theoretical framework for this study was made, taking into consideration the various criticisms of the framework. These include:

- They were underestimating the possibility that enhancing the livelihoods of one group can undermine those of another (Serrat, 2017). For example, in trying to ensure that the groups or individuals at risk of either poverty or unemployment are able to access some of the capitals vital for them to make livelihoods, some groups that may have been benefiting from the fact that others are unable to access capitals become disadvantaged in the process as their funding may be reduced.
- Ignoring power inequalities contributes to most individuals or households' inability to access some capital or assets needed to enhance their livelihoods (Serrat, 2017). Power here refers to exercising influence, control or force through various means, and the lack of it can impact people's circumstances and, therefore, their access to capitals.
- Assuming that the poor make rational choices when constructing their livelihoods, which is not always the case based on factors such as power inequalities in different communities determining who has access to what and when (Mdee, 2002).
- Assuming that access to assets by vulnerable individuals or households is the solution to livelihood challenges such as unemployment and poverty (Sakdapolrak, 2014). Vast evidence has, however, shown that having access to an asset does not automatically translate into a sustainable livelihood. For example, some vulnerable households or individuals could have land (natural capital) but lack money (financial capital) to purchase livestock or farming equipment and crop inputs to be profitable and have a source of livelihood. To this end, Sakdapolrak (2014) asserted that assets are depicted as more materialistic and economical, making it difficult to assess those that are non-materialistic and non-economic.

- Ignoring time and space and, in this way, failing to acknowledge how the interactions taking place in local-global space can affect the outcome of spatial dynamics and economic circumstances of a certain place, which in turn influences the livelihood conditions in that particular area. To this end, the livelihoods framework has been criticised for emphasising how well-prepared people are for shocks and vulnerabilities while ignoring historical factors and that social change is dynamic (Sakdapolrak, 2014).

## **1.8 Research Methods**

Chapter 3 outlines and discusses the study's methodology in more detail. At this point, it suffices to highlight that the thesis adopted a qualitative research design and drew data from three qualitative sources: a review of relevant policy and ALPMS operational documents, focus group discussions with graduate youth and key informant interviews from relevant government entities.

Data was collected between January and July 2019 in three localities in Botswana: Gaborone (an urban area), Kanye (an urban village) and Oodi/Modipane (conceptualised for the purpose of this study as a rural area; see more discussion on this in Section 1.9 below). The purpose of studying the three localities was to explore the similarities and differences in youth unemployment experiences and perspectives across different contexts and local economies. Various forms of purposive sampling were used to reach the study participants. Two main methods of data collection were used. For graduate youth, focus group discussions were convened in each of the three localities, while key informants were interviewed using semi-structured interview guides during in-depth interviews. Policy and operational documents reviewed were sourced through internet searches as well as from key government entities, such as Statistics Botswana and the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Culture (MYSC). At the end of the data collection phase of the study, all focus group discussions and key informant interviews were transcribed verbatim and, where necessary, translated into English. Interpretative phenomenological analysis, a qualitative research approach that aims to offer insights into the personal lived experiences of research participants in the context of a given phenomenon (Smith & Osborn, 2015), was adopted in the analysis of the focus group discussions while thematic analysis was employed in the analysis of the key informant interviews and content analysis in relation to the document review. Thereafter, the constant comparative analysis method was used to triangulate the findings from the three sources. The thesis' structure is designed to present the study findings with the specific objectives as the presentation framework. All aspects of the thesis, from the proposal to the writing and submission of this thesis, were done in strict adherence to the basic principles of social science research.

## **1.9 Limitations of the study**

The study's first specific objective (the exploration of the socio-economic portrait of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana) is deemed an important phase as it sets the stage for understanding the livelihood assets of unemployed graduate youth. Such an exploration should ideally be based on robust quantitative data analysis, even if it is secondary data. However, efforts to do this were hampered by the paucity of disaggregated data on graduate youth in Botswana. Statistics Botswana is the leading organisation in the collection of national demographic data through population censuses (held every ten years) and regular national surveys. Surveys relevant to this study include the Quarterly Labour Force, The Botswana Demographic and Health Survey, and the Multiple Topic Survey, inter alia.

A researcher can potentially obtain permission to access the above datasets and analyse them. However, with no background in quantitative research, my skills in this regard are rudimentary, hence this option was not feasible. Upon request, however, Statistics Botswana did avail some required tabulations, but these were limited to basic demographic characteristics such as age, gender, educational attainment and, to some extent, limited skills possession. Thus, much of the available information could only enable a limited analysis of human capital attributes, while others (financial, national, physical and social) could not be assessed. In the same vein, none of the publications in which the results of the various censuses and national surveys are documented provided adequately disaggregated data that could facilitate the exploration of unemployed graduate youth using the SLF as an analysis framework. To this end, the main limitation of this study is that a robust, quantitative analysis of the portrait or profile of the study's main target population could not be undertaken. This limited the extent to which the young graduates' characteristics could be taken into consideration in the interpretation of the various results that emerged from the study. Notwithstanding this limitation, the qualitative data from the focus group discussions with the young graduates provides a broad-brush analysis that is sufficient for this purpose.

Another limitation is that Oodi/Modipane and Kanye are all within 100 kilometres radius of Gaborone. Thus, while the characteristics of the localities fit the official definitions of the urban village and rural area, there could be a notable urban (Gaborone) influence in the two localities, making them somehow more peri-urban than strictly rural or urban-rural. Indeed, anecdotal evidence suggests that many of the working-age population in these localities commute daily to Gaborone for work. However, financial and other logistical constraints hampered the collection of data in more remote or 'typical' rural areas. The data collected from these localities have nonetheless turned out to be sufficient for the intended purposes.

## **1.10 Outline of the thesis**

The thesis consists of and is organised into seven chapters, as described below.

**Chapter 1** introduced the study by outlining its background, statement of the problem, justification, research questions and objectives. The study's conceptual and theoretical framework are also discussed, and a brief overview of the methodology and the study's limitations.

**Chapter 2** reviews recent global, regional and national (Botswana) literature on the livelihood challenges of unemployed graduate youth and how active labour market programmes (ALMPs) can alleviate or mitigate the challenges. In so doing, the chapter uses the Sustainable Livelihood Framework, the study's guiding theory, as the presentation framework. Finally, Section 2.4 reviews Botswana literature to illuminate the major strengths, weaknesses, achievements, shortfalls and gaps in the programming and implementation of current youth-oriented ALPMs in Botswana is also reviewed.

**Chapter 3** presents an overview of the methodology used to achieve the study's objectives. It starts with a discussion of the research design followed by a description of the study's two main data sources: document review and primary qualitative data. Regarding the latter, the study areas and data collection methods are described in detail. Data management and analysis processes and efforts adopted to ensure the validity and reliability of the study findings are then discussed. Ethical considerations that were adhered to are discussed before the chapter is concluded with a summary section.

**Chapter 4** provides contextual background information for the finding's chapters by drawing from the focus group discussions to give an overview of the socio-economic profile of unemployed graduate youth, using the sustainable livelihood framework capitals as the presentation framework. In a few instances, insights from key informant interviews are also used to complement the data from the youth focus group discussions (FGDs). All in all, the chapter aims to achieve the study's first specific objective (an exploration of the socio-economic portrait of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana).

**Chapter 5** draws on data from the FGDs with unemployed graduate youth to explore the lived experiences of these young people with a focus on their livelihood challenges and coping strategies. In this way, the chapter aims to achieve the study's second and fourth specific objectives (exploring the unemployment experiences and illuminating the main livelihood challenges and strategies employed by unemployed graduate youth). In so doing, the subjective meaning that the unemployed graduate youth attach to their unemployment experiences is also highlighted, thus addressing the study's third specific objective.

**Chapter 6** explores the perceived effectiveness of the main ALMPs in addressing graduate youth's livelihood challenges and in improving the livelihood strategies that unemployed graduates adopt, thus fulfilling the study's fifth specific objective.

**Chapter 7** concludes the thesis with a summary of the findings, the overall conclusion and recommendations for practice, policy and further research.



# **CHAPTER 2: ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET PROGRAMMES FOR IMPROVED GRADUATE YOUTH LIVELIHOODS: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

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## **2.1 Introduction**

To ensure that the thesis is grounded on the existing academic work and contributes to closing gaps in such, this chapter reviews recent global, regional and national (Botswana) literature on the livelihood challenges of unemployed graduate youth and the extent to which active labour market programmes (ALMPs) can alleviate or mitigate the challenges. To the extent that most studies on youth unemployment focus on youth in general, the chapter will, as does the rest of the thesis (see Chapter 1), use “graduate youth” and “youth” interchangeably. For current purposes, this is deemed relevant as “graduate youth” is, in a way, a subset of the broader “youth”. The chapter is structured as follows: Section 2.2 uses the five assets in the Sustainable Livelihood Framework, the study’s guiding theory, as the presentation framework of the literature on how the possession, or lack thereof, of the various livelihood assets can alleviate or exacerbate livelihood challenges among unemployed youth. Section 2.3 then reviews the literature on the potential of ALMPs in alleviating or mitigating the livelihood challenges experienced by unemployed graduate youth. Finally, Section 2.4 reviews Botswana literature to illuminate the major strengths, weaknesses, achievements, and shortfalls, as well as the gaps in the programming and implementation of current youth-oriented ALPMs in the country. Overall, this literature review is important for contextualising and interpreting the study results that will be presented in the findings chapters and will also be critical in developing recommendations from the key study findings.

## **2.2 Livelihood assets of graduate youth: Implications for enhanced livelihoods and employment**

The main thesis of the Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) is that there are different material, social, tangible and intangible assets that poor and vulnerable individuals and households possess that serve as a potential capital base for various production streams to create livelihoods and that the poor and vulnerable often make trade-offs and choices about (Scoones, 2009; Serrat, 2017). These assets, which are grouped into five categories – human capital, social capital, natural capital, physical capital and financial capital – can therefore constrain or enhance livelihood opportunities and play a major role in determining livelihood strategies. The latter are productive activities that persons engage in to achieve a livelihood (Serrat, 2017). Therefore, it includes synergising a number and a combination of activities, assets, and choices within a set of institutional contexts to reach productive ends or outcomes (DfID, 1999).

Unemployment in general, and among youth in particular, can be situated within the SLF because it generally puts young people in a vulnerable situation. In navigating this vulnerable situation, young people in developing countries where social security benefits (such as unemployment benefits) are either absent or extremely inadequate are forced to use whatever resources are available to them. Therefore, the extent and depth of capital or assets that a young person has access to will most likely influence their abilities, capabilities, and strategies for seeking employment and productivity.

Using a similar approach to Arkoh (2019) in his study of unemployment and livelihoods among urban Ghanaian youth, the subsections below use current literature to highlight the extent to which the livelihood situation and access to capital of unemployed youth can influence their employability.

### ***2.2.1 Human capital***

As discussed in Chapter 1, human capital refers to assets such as skills, knowledge, ability to work and good health that enable people to access various livelihood strategies (Morse et al., 2009). This type of capital can also be defined as including an individual's education, knowledge, experience, skills and ability, and expectancy in the labour market (Wuttaphan, 2017). It is considered a vital asset for its ability to influence how individuals attain their livelihood objectives or increase their state of employability as well as engagement in productive and income-generating activities (DFID, 1999; Kilimani, 2017).

Available evidence shows that young people who possess human capital are more likely to be employed than those without (Cairo and Cajner, 2016) and/or to attract relatively higher wages (DfID, 1999; Blair, 2011). Overall, as the 2019 World Youth Report (UN, 2019:57) asserts,

A growing body of evidence-based research indicates that education and training, when supported at the macro level, are important means of enhancing youth employability. Young people need relevant skills, knowledge, competencies and aptitudes to help them obtain jobs and establish career paths.

Conversely, young people with low educational attainment typically fail to be integrated into the labour market (ILO, 2014). Indeed, as Bell and Blanchflower (2011) assert, global youth unemployment, particularly in developing countries, can be attributed to limited or lack of human capital (education).

Employability skills are a form of human capital that has become increasingly important in the globalised world, but many unemployed graduates are said to be lacking them (Cheng, Adekola, Albia and Cai, 2021; Brewer, 2013). Another human capital asset that has been shown to enhance employability among graduate youth is good health (Bleakley, 2010; Bloom and

Canning, 2003). Kroll and Lampert (2011) assert that the relationship between health and unemployment is reciprocal as they share that health and health-related behaviour, to some extent, causes unemployment among young people. Conversely, being unhealthy lowers the ability to work productively and/or the ability and incentives to invest in human capital. To this end, organisations often look for healthy graduates who can regularly be available for work and improve productivity levels (Bleakley, 2010).

In most cases, the primary components of human capital (skills, education, experience and good health) improve mutually with sustainable livelihood outcomes. Moreover, the development in the value of human capital results in the increased likelihood of improving sustainable livelihood outcomes. Thus, for instance, a more educated, better-trained person is capable of supplying a larger amount of useful, productive effort than one with less education and training (McConnell and Brue, 2017). Higher education and skill sets are often rewarded with higher income, which is often reinvested in education (DfID, 1999). The health status of individuals is often related to their income and food security because healthy individuals can offer productive services, and their earned income guarantees food security and health insurance (DfID, 1999).

Education is at the core of human capital because it equips people with the necessary skills for modern-day wage employment. It provides people with the capability to change employment patterns and is generally associated with increased productivity and earnings (Filmer and Fox, 2014; Ullah, 2014). To further show the importance of human capital, Cairo and Cajner (2016) state that in the United States of America, high school graduates are two times more likely to be unemployed than college graduates.

Overall, people with more education tend to have higher wages and better job security (Blair, 2011). This further highlights the influential role that education can play in determining an individual's employability or employment outcomes in the labour market. Another way in which human capital equips people for employment is through skills training. Individuals learn technical or vocational skills to earn employment (CEDEFOP, 2018). Skills training in sub-Saharan Africa, orchestrated by private and public institutions, includes apprenticeship training, on-the-job training, formal TVET, informal TVET, and stand-alone programmes (Filmer and Fox, 2014). Skills training is intended to offer easy and direct employment opportunities, although it is not always guaranteed because of unforeseen reasons in the labour market, such as failure by economies to create jobs and saturation in the labour market. There are a few challenges at the policy and institutional level; however, skills training helps employ apprentices in household enterprises and graduate TVETs in wage work (Filmer & Fox, 2014). Furthermore, the skills market could help to further reduce unemployment if the skills taught suit efforts to promote new economic activities at a given place (Kilimani, 2017). This shows

how essential education is in combatting unemployment and equipping people with the human capital necessary for job acquisition.

Globally, an increase in the labour force participants with degrees has not been matched with a similar increase in the number of high-skilled jobs worldwide, hence high graduate youth unemployment (ILO, 2020). Unemployment, particularly for long periods, has a significant impact on human capital. It is generally stated that early work experience forms the stock of an individual's human capital. Thus, being unemployed, particularly for long periods, has negative implications as it deteriorates one's human capital (Bell and Blanchflower, 2011). Similarly, prolonged periods of unemployment lead to difficulties for graduates to integrate into the labour force due to the depreciation of their human capital (World Bank, 2016), as skills change almost daily.

For most young people, being unemployed for long periods or engaging in jobs that do not provide the platform to build on acquired education can harm their future productivity (Bell and Blanchflower, 2011). In addition, unemployment for long periods demotivates people from seeking opportunities they have been trained for because it sidelines them from the labour market (CEDEFOP, 2018). In Kenya, for instance, there is an increasing trend for educated youth to venture into farming as an alternative livelihood strategy in the face of the uncertainty surrounding formal employment (Mwaura, 2017). Although it is good that the unemployed have identified a means to make a living, the disadvantage is that the skills and time invested in education remain unused and untapped. Furthermore, these skills could get archaic or forgotten because they do not have opportunities to develop them. For the unemployed youth, this becomes a disadvantage as the economy's labour market keeps evolving. Ultimately, this situation leads to a decrease in the value of the human capital of long-term unemployed persons.

Research evidence suggests that unemployment for very long periods can affect people's physical and mental health, mainly through stress and depression (Farré, Fasani and Mueller, 2018; Norström, Waenerlund, Lindholm, Nygren, Sahlén, and Brydsten, 2019; Pohlman, 2019). Furthermore, associated unemployment-related problems, such as destabilising relationships with friends and family, can be a source of emotional stress (Norström et al., 2019). Long-term unemployment is also associated with low self-esteem, increased use of alcohol and illicit drugs and the general adoption of risky lifestyles (Azagba, Shan, Qeadan, and Wolfson, 2021). Thus, in most developing regions, growing unemployment rates are likely to decrease people's standard of living. Uddin and Uddin (2013) argued that this ultimately culminates in the reduction in the life span and economic productivity of individuals.

Human capital is crucial because it is essential for the optimum use of other capitals, and this raises further concerns about people's propensity to engage in undesirable and risky activities to sustain their livelihoods if they are unemployed. For example, Kakwagh and Ikwuba (2010) argued that a culture of crime is cultivated among unemployed youth in Nigeria; they spend

their idle time on the streets, where they gather to share their problems. As a result, the high crime rates in Nigeria include armed robberies, kidnappings and prostitution (Kakwagh and Ikwuba, 2010).

Similarly, in some parts of South Africa, sex work is popularly referred to as survival sex. Some young women adopt it as a coping strategy to survive the lack of employment opportunities and prevent them from reaching extreme poverty (Zembe, Townsend, Thorson, and Ekström, 2013). In Tanzania, there is a similar situation where the lack of employment opportunities and poverty force many young women into 'transactional sex' to make money for their livelihoods (Stark, 2013). Likewise, young men in Uganda engage in gambling, such as card playing and sports betting, to generate income amid unemployment (Namuggala, 2017). However, this tends to be a perilous endeavour, and most often, the young men end up losing the valuable financial resources they are trying to accumulate (Namuggala, 2017). Examples from the various studies (Kheswa, 2017; Stark, 2013; Kakwagh and Ikwuba, 2010) show how common it is for individuals to engage in risky activities to make money. However, such lifestyles can result in sickness, imprisonment, and possibly death.

This discussion showed that education and skillsets might influence the employment process and repel adverse outcomes. However, this thesis acknowledges that having human capital may not be enough or guarantee employment, hence the need to have access to other capitals, as shall be seen throughout the thesis. The study focuses on graduate youth unemployment, which is on the rise showing that human capital alone does not always guarantee employment or other means of livelihood, which is also why the SLF was adopted. For instance, graduates in the Middle East and Northern Africa, which is also the case in some parts of Sub-Saharan African countries, are failing to get jobs compared to those with less educational attainment. For example, the School to Work Transition Survey (STWS) country brief for Egypt revealed that unemployment increases with the level of educational attainment (ILO, 2016). Unemployment of graduates (38.4 per cent) is almost five times more than that of young people with secondary general education (7.8 per cent) in Egypt (ILO, 2016, p. 2). Similarly, Nepal's SWTS country brief showed no significant correlation between the level of education attained and the youth's labour market transition. The results further highlight that it takes about seven months for both young people with tertiary and general secondary education qualifications (ILO, 2016).

In contrast, the same SWTS country brief for Peru, Samoa, and VietNam showed a strong correlation between the levels of education and a young graduate's labour market transition (ILO, 2016). For example, in Samoa and Peru, young graduates with tertiary or university qualifications are transitioning from school to work within two to three months compared to their counterparts with only secondary school education, who take about nine months or longer (Samoa) and up to a year plus (Peru) concurrently (ILO, 2016). Similarly, even though the young university graduates in VietNam take long compared to Samoa and Peru to transition,

they get their first stable and satisfactory jobs after about seven months (7.3 months) of graduation in contrast to those with secondary school education certificates who can take up to a year and six months (17.8 months) to land their first jobs (ILO, 2016). The subsequent section is on social capital and shows how it correlates to human capital, as some unemployed graduates need access to it (in terms of social networks) to get jobs aligning with their qualifications.

### **2.2.2 Social capital**

As discussed in Chapter 1, social capital refers to social resources such as networks, affiliations and associations that individuals or households can draw from to make livelihoods. It can also be broadly defined as “a collective asset in the form of shared norms, values, beliefs, trust, networks, social relations, and institutions that facilitate cooperation and collective action for mutual benefits” (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009, p. 480).

The role of social capital in improving employability, especially among young people, is widely documented (UNDESA, 2018; Batistic and Tymon, 2017; Gush et al., 2015; Yan and Mao, 2015; Filmer and Fox, 2014; Caliendo et al., 2011). It has been shown, for example, that families can significantly improve graduate youth employment choices by allowing them to access family networks, forgo less attractive job offers, and mitigate information asymmetries that might discourage firms from hiring them (Yan and Mao, 2015); UNDESA, 2018. Indeed, Filmer and Fox (2014) assert that friends and family account for about 60 per cent of how employers fill vacant positions in sub-Saharan African countries.

All in all, unemployed young people with large social networks typically do not use formal job-seeking approaches such as newspaper or internet advertisements but, instead, opt for the informal routes of relying on job leads through friends and relatives (Caliendo et al., 2011). This is so mainly because some employers prefer known graduate youth with favourable personalities and assurance that they will perform their duties to their best abilities, which benefits their organisations. The situation is similar in North Africa and the Middle East (Filmer & Fox, 2014), where it is reported that social networks provide access to more jobs than public recruitment agencies. For example, Lassassi and Alhawarin (2018) state that around 50 per cent of individuals in Algeria, Egypt and Jordan obtain jobs or information on job opportunities through friends and relatives. Apart from friends and families, social media is another effective source of information about job opportunities that has also been shown to play a major role in helping unemployed young people secure jobs (Lassassi and Alhawarin, 2018; Mageto, 2017; Matenda, Naidoo and Rugbeer, 2020).

In a different vein, people’s knowledge of the people in their social network helps them decide which jobs are best suited for a friend or family member in need of a job (Gush, Scott, & Laurie, 2015). Furthermore, job seekers can decipher the suitability and authenticity of job

opportunities presented to them by their social network through their thorough knowledge of these friends and family and their reputation (Gush et al., 2015). Furthermore, social networks augment the abilities of individuals in the workplace. Barbieri (2003) asserted that the richness in diversity, quality, and abilities within one's social network positively reflects the physical and psychological quality of one's work. Evidence suggests that very skilled professionals seem to have a deeper social network than their counterparts. This positively affects their work more than their counterparts with lower skill sets (Barbieri, 2003).

In addition, apart from one's social capital having the potential to create a link to employment, social capital is a source of financial and other resources for unemployed persons looking to get back on their feet (Gush et al., 2015). For instance, almost all household enterprises in Africa report starting their businesses with personal savings or loans from friends and family (Filmer & Fox, 2014). In addition, there are instances where households use their assets as collateral for bank loans for the unemployed and situations where friends or family with salaries stand as security for bank loans for unemployed persons (Filmer & Fox, 2014). This can be seen in migrant communities in big urban areas in Ghana, where migrants who find themselves unemployed or working in precarious jobs in informal urban economies usually rely on financial support from social networks (Arkoh, 2019). Usually, older migrants who are more economically grounded navigate the socio-economic difficulties in urban settings (Yeboah, 2017). These forms of financial support give unemployed persons the time and space to put things together to produce a start-up or wait until a job is available.

Mentoring graduate youth in entrepreneurship is another important way in which social networks can influence employment. Mentorship is important because entrepreneurship can be challenging, and guidance can only go so far in helping people reach their desired goals. Shittu (2017) stated that mentorship allows young entrepreneurs in African countries to develop the right skills to successfully navigate relevant issues regarding access to information, credit facilities, markets, and relevant institutions. However, this suggests high possibilities of failure if young graduate people do not get good mentoring before starting their businesses. Unemployed graduate young people's access to mentoring depends mainly on their social network; hence, their network can influence their entrepreneurship success.

Furthermore, entrepreneurs need extensive social networks to compete in markets where most commodities are homogeneous. For example, studies conducted in Ilorin and Aba, two cities in Nigeria, suggested that increases in the number of producers at various clusters for weaving, shoes, and garments demanded extensive social networks for businesses to succeed. On the other hand, no social network means reduced business deals, reduced income, and, worse, cases, going out of business (Meagher, 2011, cited in Filmer & Fox, 2014).

### ***Effects and influences of social capital on unemployment***

Social networks do not always provide solace for the unemployed and could turn out to be a negative influence or exploit an unemployed individual. Furthermore, the exclusion of young people from certain influential social networks could deprive them of certain opportunities.

When unemployment is seen as a form of social or economic exclusion of a section of young people, there is a tendency for the affected individuals to congregate into social groups through which they can address the social structures inhibiting their progress. For example, in Tunisia, unemployed graduate youth that were faced with economic hardships were responsible for the series of protests and demonstrations that culminated in the national uprising in 2010 and 2011, where Ben Ali, a dictator who was in power for many years, was ousted (Weipert-Fenner & Wolff, 2016). Similarly, in Argentina, economic hardships from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s resulted in the country's highest unemployment rates (Weipert-Fenner & Wolff, 2016). Unemployed youth who felt excluded congregated into social groups that became known as the 'piquetero' (picketer) movement. These groups engaged in systematically organised protests and demonstrations that ultimately led to the ousting of President De la Rúa in 2001 (Weipert-Fenner & Wolff, 2016). In Northern Kenya, there was a similar situation where young people in unfavourable socio-economic situations formed formidable social groups to fight for their interests. Here, their lands and source of livelihood were being taken over by entities with political and economic power. Thus, these young people formed groups to collectively oppose external interests (Jørgensen, 2017). The paralegals from these groups eventually warded off politically motivated external interests through negotiations and legal processes to maintain their land rights. Thus, it is important to maintain the livelihood strategies of the local population (Jørgensen, 2017).

Unemployed graduate young people who feel excluded from society and pursue social attachments could end up in social groups where they are exploited or influenced to engage in illegal activities. Yeboah (2017) pointed out that young migrants who move to urban areas often find themselves in economic hardships and tend to rely on their social networks for survival. In some instances, however, migrants end up in somewhat exploitative networks that further deprive them of their already scarce resources. This was seen in Accra in the reports of such exploitation among migrant groups where a trusted member defrauded individuals in their social network (Yeboah, 2017). There are also situations where the lack of employment opportunities pushes young people into social groups involved in crime, violence and other illegal activities. For instance, there is a tendency for young people who are perceived to be excluded, lack job opportunities and face poverty to congregate in gangs or join existing gangs to illegally acquire social justice for themselves (Filmer & Fox, 2014). A study in Ecuador revealed that young people usually turn to gangs to recompense their 'non-entity' status in society (Filmer & Fox, 2014). Most gang members decide to join gangs when their families and society do not support them or give them a sense of inclusion (Filmer & Fox, 2014). In



Port Harcourt Metropolis of Nigeria, evidence showed that the youth are known to succumb to the pressures of joining gangs engaged in crimes because of a lack of avenues to gainful employment (Adishi & Kpae, 2017).

Fisher (2016) pointed out that being employed goes beyond finding a job and often involves social constructs and individual perceptions of prestige and status. Pohlen (2019) assessed that being employed positively reflects on individuals in social contexts and attaches to them a status that unemployed persons ordinarily do not get. In some societies, the type of job or skill set one has determines their social status. For example, studies in Ethiopia suggested that urban youth males emphasised the value attached to their job by society and therefore prefer to be unemployed or go abroad if the job does not significantly change their social pedigree or level (Ains, 2016). In such a context, jobs play a role in determining social classes. Individuals may perceive their jobs as more than just a means of making a livelihood, and it may affect their perception of self-worth, which is shaped by the work they do.

Amid social and economic vulnerabilities associated with unemployment, graduate youth become easily susceptible to political influences and voluntarily or involuntarily do the bidding of political influencers. For example, Gyampo, Graham, and Asare (2017) suggested that in Ghana, the conception of political vigilantism is usually characterised by unemployed youth being influenced by political entities to take active roles in political campaigns. However, after elections, members of such groups tend to take the law into their own hands and obtain supposed benefits from the work they did for the electoral victory by seizing public property and intimidating or physically assaulting members of the previous government administration (Gyampo et al., 2017).

Another case can be made of Zimbabwe's National Youth Service, created when Zimbabwe was in deep socio-economic turmoil, being used as a political tool by the ruling party to perpetrate violence and intimidate the opposition (Mhike, 2017). At face value, it seemed as though this youth, with the support from the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (the ZANU PF party), were exercising their rights to political participation in an often over-exuberant and sometimes unlawful manner. However, it could also be argued that these youth were being manipulated or coerced into taking these roles by people in power due to their socio-economic hardships and joblessness they faced (Mhike, 2017).

In hindsight, politicians' influence and the susceptibility of unemployed youth to such influences when they are in a vulnerable unemployment situation cannot be overemphasised, particularly in developing country contexts where for some, survival is all that matters at the end of the day. Bayart (1993) sensationally described this situation as "the politics of the belly". This discussion showed that social capital influences employability, even though this influence is typically indirect. Graduate youth tend to rely on their immediate social network (their

families) to invest in their education, preparation and search for work. However, other social capital plays various roles that indirectly influence employment outcomes. These include friends and associations with whom people affiliate. Friends play various roles in the job search process. These roles include emotional and financial support, providing information on vacancies and recommending unemployed persons to potential employers. Such support help get unemployed persons a comfortable transition to employment. It was also seen that affiliations to specific associations, such as political ones, potentially yield employment outcomes for unemployed persons. The literature further revealed that in the face of economic difficulties, unemployment could propel young graduates to associate with exploitative social networks or be involved in social groups that may potentially influence them to commit crimes.

### ***2.2.3 Financial capital***

Financial capital is the available financial or monetary resources used to attain livelihood objectives, such as cash or an equivalent. The capital stock of money can be regarded as financial capital if it can be used to bring higher returns to its use (DfID, 1999). Therefore, financial capital could also be considered the foundation capital necessary for pursuing a livelihood strategy. Such a capital base can be cash, credit, savings, and other economic assets, such as basic infrastructure, production equipment, and technologies (Scoones, 1998).

Meikle, Ramasut, and Walker (2001) asserted that people earn financial capital by exchanging their time and skill set as labour for a fee or an income; otherwise, people have to depend on access to credit to acquire financial capital. For urban dwellers, particularly in developing countries, financial assets play a major role in livelihoods as living in cities and urban places are highly ‘commoditised’, and as such, access to monetary resources, often obtained by an exchange of labour for income, becomes important to make a living (Farrington, Ramasut, & Walker, 2002). In contrast, people in rural areas may have access to other resources to make a living, such as agricultural land for subsistence farming, hunting grounds or fishing (Farrington et al., 2002).

The DFID (1999) suggested that financial capital is the least accessible to the poor, making the poor dependent on other capital forms. However, one of the financial capital’s most crucial attributes is its versatility, making it stand out as an important livelihood asset (DFID, 1999). It is the only livelihood capital that can easily be changed to other types of capital using structures and procedures; for example, investing in education or skills training using financial capital can get human capital, and similar investments in infrastructure get physical capital. Financial capital can also be used to attain livelihood objectives when it is used to purchase things to fulfil basic needs, like food, clothing and shelter.

It must be noted, however, that, despite this versatility, financial capital cannot solve all issues of poverty or always have the desired impact. Therefore, DFID (1999) mentioned the need to

adopt the right knowledge (such as gaining entrepreneurship skills, including financial management) when using financial capital to produce the expected output. Furthermore, the absence of proper structures, like a vibrant developed market, and the presence of an inhibiting environment for microenterprise developments could squash the positive impacts expected from financial investment (DFID, 1999). Therefore, it is paramount that financial capital is used in a financially viable environment with the right entrepreneurship skills to attain the best outcome or impact.

### ***Influences of financial capital on employability***

As discussed previously, a job providing financial capital goes a long way to determining one's standard of living and the type of investments one can make. Financial capital is versatile, suggesting that it is an essential means by which some of the other capitals (human, physical or natural) can be obtained (DFID, 1999). Having access to work opportunities often requires certain skills, and in most developing countries, such education comes at a financial cost. An important form of financial capital is credit. It typically serves as an important means to generate capital for investments, entrepreneurial activities and business expansions and helps sustain the economic growth of economies. Kerr and Nanda (2011) suggested that credit facilities' importance for economic growth and their potential to bring economic vibrancy to a country make it an important policy subject for policymakers globally.

Access to credit has been known to be a good source for start-ups and business expansion. However, in most developing countries, challenges within this sector mean that access to such credit facilities is difficult and successfully using it for livelihood and sustainable economic activities is risky (Kerr & Nanda, 2011). In South Africa, research showed that when more people had access to microcredit facilities, the unemployment rates were reduced, and vice versa (Ncanywa & Getye, 2016). Most of the time, such credit facilities are required and used by small-scale enterprises. Since small and medium enterprises contribute up to 40 per cent of the GDP and employ 50 per cent of the working population in South Africa, access to credit facilities is very important in dealing with unemployment (Mahadea & Kaseeram, 2018). This implies that the increase in access to microcredit facilities for small and medium enterprises is a proven way through which financial capital can be used to address unemployment in some contexts.

Mahadea and Kaseeram (2018) argued that there are two main reasons why access to credit for entrepreneurship and development of small and medium enterprises must be enhanced. Firstly, there are high unemployment rates because economic growth is not equivalent to population growth, and secondly, there is a low capacity for saving due to low-paying jobs. Thus, credit facilities could be the only external means by which individuals can access financial capital for investments.

Although it must be acknowledged that financial capital is not the only required resource necessary for success in business ventures, it remains an important asset. For example, studies in Tanzania and Peru showed that human capital is more responsible for success and business expansion than capital infusion; however, without financial capital, most of these businesses would not have started (Berge, Bjorvatn, & Tungodden, 2012). This suggests that credit as a form of financial capital is an influential asset for self-employment ventures.

Grants are another important form of economic capital that can be an important factor in changing people's livelihoods. International agencies, governments, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can provide funds through certain policies and programmes that can serve as financial capital for unemployed individuals. As a social intervention, grants can serve as an important building block for unemployed persons. In Sri Lanka, major livelihood changes were recorded for many individuals who became beneficiaries of the Gemi-Diriya programme. This social intervention programme offered one-time financial grants to individuals as start-ups for their businesses in order to prevent the risks associated with a loan (Filmer & Fox, 2014). In Namibia, the introduction of the Basic Income Grant (BIG), a grant scheme that was geared towards poverty reduction and employment generation, helped in significant reductions of not only unemployment but crime as well (Jauch, 2015). The Kenyan government set up the Youth Enterprise Development Fund to give loans through intermediary bodies, which then regulated and channelled these funds to the running of youth enterprises (Sikenyi, 2017). The Alliance for Green Revolution introduced a programme in Kenya, Mozambique, and Tanzania where they provided partial guarantees on loans so that there are lower interest rates on these loans; this encouraged people, particularly in agricultural business, to obtain loans to push their businesses (Filmer & Fox, 2014).

There have been cases of grant schemes being combined with skills training schemes to equip individuals with the skills and funds before they venture into starting their businesses. For example, in Northern Uganda, skills training and cash grants to self-created youth groups allowed many individuals to become self-employed (Filmer & Fox, 2014). In addition, the International Fund for Agricultural Development through the Rural Enterprise Project in Ghana and the Promotion of Rural Entrepreneurship Project in Senegal provided skills and funds for unemployed persons who enrolled in the programmes (Filmer & Fox, 2014). During its period of operations, the Promotion of Rural Entrepreneurship was able to help produce about 240 enterprises and 3750 jobs in Senegal.

### ***The effect, influences of unemployment on financial capital***

DFID (1999) indicated that generally, the main purpose of employment is to earn income by selling or exchanging their skill set, time and labour. For those who live in developing and poor regions, employment often serves as the only means of making an income and earning financial capital (Lee & Hsieh, 2013). However, for young people, a lack of access to financial capital

(finances) and natural capital (land) increases their poor employment prospects by depressing their entrepreneurship potential (World Bank, 2016). While prevalent for all entrepreneurs, such barriers are often particular to youth or more severe for youth than adults. For example, youth tend to have lower savings, a shorter credit history, and a lack of business performance history and collateral. These factors make it more difficult for youth than adults to obtain financing. As a result, insufficient financial resources deter most young people worldwide from starting their businesses which is a source of livelihood for themselves and others as they can employ their peers. This is the case in some countries like Serbia, Montenegro and Serbia in South-East Europe (World Bank, 2016).

In certain instances, the interest rates for accessing credit facilities for entrepreneurial and business expansion exclude those who need them most. This is because the rates are high and can realistically be serviced by only financially-grounded companies or individuals, not the poor. This is evident in Nigeria, where a study conducted between 1992 to 2014 showed that credit obtained for start-ups did not attain the expected impacts due to the high-interest rates on credit; this inadvertently caused start-ups to collapse from servicing their debts (Abdullahi, Noor, Said, & Baharumshah, 2016). In this context, it could be suggested that a person is better off raising capital through means other than credit facilities, which does not seem to be a viable option. This further puts unemployed persons in a dire situation if they need capital for any kind of investment. Collateral also serves as an inhibiting factor for poor credit. Filmer and Fox (2014) posited that collateral as a prerequisite for accessing credit could cause further challenges in acquiring financial capital. For rural households and the unemployed in particular, the inability to provide collateral serves as a major setback in the quest to attain credit facilities.

These issues indicate that economic capital plays a major role in influencing employability. The discussions showed that personal funds, savings, credit and grants from the government or institutions are important for investments. Funds, either from oneself or the family, are important for education and, in some cases, as capital for self-employment. Access to credit is also important for investments in oneself when there are inadequate personal funds. Credit facilities and grants also proved to be an important source of start-up capital for the self-employed. The literature further showed that employment is the main source of livelihood income and economic capital for most people. Therefore, unemployment is an inhibiting factor that greatly affects one's economic capital. Furthermore, unemployed persons have limited opportunities to get credit because they do not have an income that can serve as a guarantee that they can service their debts. In some places, the high-interest rates on credit further reduce the ease of access to economic capital by unemployed persons as it seems more viable to raise capital through work than through credit.

#### **2.2.4 Natural capital**

Natural capital relates to natural resources or stocks such as land, animals, and fish that can be used to achieve the desired livelihood through the flow of resources and services (Ellis, 2000). These resources are vital for enhanced livelihoods because they can be used for agriculture, building homes and business infrastructure for the operation of both small-scale and large-scale businesses (Chambers and Conway, 1991). Land, for example, can be an essential asset for unemployed graduates who want to venture into entrepreneurship, particularly within the agricultural sector. However, a wide body of evidence has shown that youth's access to land is extremely restricted in most developing countries such as the Philippines, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mexico, Egypt and Uganda (FAO, 2014), South Sudan (Thiong'o and Baba, 2019) Zambia and Vietnam (Mulema et al., 2021) as well as in South Africa (Mmbengwa et al., 2021). This could be attributed to developing countries' typically slow land allocation processes and/or strict inheritance and ownership laws. For example, in some parts of Latin America and the Pacific, due to tradition, the land can only be owned by those with families, and since most unemployed young graduates are still single, automatically, it means they do not have access to land in these countries.

The land is also usually required to serve as security and collateral for accessing credit, hindering unemployed graduate youth from accessing start-up capital for their proposed businesses (Mmbengwa et al., 2021; Mulema et al., 2021; Thiong'o and Baba, 2019; FAO, 2014). Financial institutions such as banks consider young people risky lenders, hence the requirement for security so that when they fail to pay back the loans, the bank can sell the land to get its money back (Mulema et al., 2021). Since accessing land is a challenge for unemployed graduate youth, they cannot buy it either because they do not have the financial capital to do so, apart from land being so expensive in most countries (FAO, 2014). Mmbengwa et al. (2021) and Mulema et al. (2021) believe that agricultural entrepreneurship can potentially lessen graduate youth unemployment in Sub-Saharan Africa, but factors such as lack of access to land and financial capital hinder that. For example, unemployed graduate youth who have access to land and financial capital in Kenya ventured into agriculture to make livelihoods while waiting for the jobs they were trained for at higher institutions (Mwaura, 2017), and if each young person had the same opportunity, their unemployment rate could be low.

### **2.2.5 Physical capital**

Physical capital is an asset that helps to turn raw materials into finished products or services (Ellis, 2000), and it involves basic infrastructure (such as secure buildings and shelter, energy, communication, and water) and tools and technology (such as farm equipment and washing machine for laundry business) that people can utilise to make livelihoods. To this end, limited or lack of access to physical capital can hinder their entrepreneurship plans (Revuelto and Simón, 2015; Kerr and Nanda, 2011). This is particularly the case for young unemployed graduates who typically do not have the financial capital to purchase or hire the requisite physical capital (Revuelto and Simón, 2014). For example, where a property is required as

collateral to get start-up capital in the form of a loan from financial institutions, this might be an impossibility for most young people except those whose families own property and are willing to use them for this purpose (Revuelto and Simón, 2015; Krafft and Rizk, 2018).

### **2.3 Active labour market programmes and enhanced youth livelihoods**

Among the plausible interventions to address the livelihood challenges of unemployed youth, including those who are graduates, are active labour market programmes (ALMPs) which are a form of social protection mechanisms aimed at assisting the unemployed and the most vulnerable who are fit to work to gain skills, to find employment or to be self-employed (Kluve et al., 2016). While social protection is generally viewed as the set of public and private policies and programmes aimed at preventing, reducing and eliminating economic and social vulnerabilities to poverty and deprivation (UNICEF, 2016), ALMPs as a subset of social protection has been defined as:

All social expenditure (other than education) which is aimed at the improvement of the beneficiaries' prospect of finding gainful employment or to otherwise increase their earnings capacity. This category includes spending on public employment services and administration, labour market training, special programmes for youth when in transition from school to work, labour market programmes to provide or promote employment for unemployed and other persons (excluding young and disabled persons) and special programmes for the disabled (OECD, 2013 in Kluve, et al., 2016:24).

At their core, ALMPs are *government-initiated* programmes that intervene in the labour market to enhance livelihoods through integration measures and interventions that promote life skills and “actively increase the employment probability of jobseekers and hence decrease aggregate unemployment” ( Strietska-Ilina et al., 2011; Kluve and Rani, 2016) and increase self-reliance of participants (Auer et al., 2008; Betcherman et al., 2004). A key requirement of ALMPs is that individual participants must actively participate in the programmes to enhance labour market integration. This requirement differentiates ALMPs from other labour market and social protection policies, such as unemployment insurance schemes and non-conditional transfers, which do not require active participation (Kluve et al., 2016).

Despite their apparent focus on economics and the labour market, ALMPs have been proven to have elements of social and political significance (Betcherman et al., 2004) that ensure the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups while acknowledging the government's intervention to engage with the labour market (Kluve et al., 2016). The programmes, for example, benefit human capital enhancement by upgrading the skills of the unemployed (Assaad and Levison, 2013; Brown and Koetti, 2015). They are also viewed as a veritable strategy to facilitate the exclusion of participants from antisocial behaviour by keeping them engaged (Ullah, 2014;

Mosca, 2014; O' Higgins, 2001). These programmes have further been noted for their potential to address some of the key challenges of youth unemployment, which “lies in simultaneously creating jobs for the bulging youth population and addressing related concerns such as the skills mismatch, working poverty, and the suboptimal school-to-work transition situation, especially in the developing world” (UN, 2018: p.54). Youth-focused or youth-oriented ALMPs are typically grouped into those with a supply-side emphasis and those oriented towards the demand side of the labour market (Meager, 2009). The former includes training and skills development, job search assistance, and entrepreneurial promotion. Demand-side policies include wage subsidies and job creation schemes. By definition, therefore, ALMPs have the potential to enhance the livelihoods of unemployed youth by positively impacting their various capitals.

Furthermore, Bardak (2014) attest that as a solution to the long transition from school to work, ALMPs have been adopted by most countries in the world. This is evident because the literature shows that skills acquired in the education systems are not always matched to labour market requirements hence the need for ALMPs to correct the mismatch (Quintini, Martin, & Martin, 2007; P. Vogel, 2015). In agreement with Quintin et al., the OECD (2015) report further laments that many employed young people do not use the skills they acquired during schooling but those they gained after school. Therefore, ALMPs such as internships are examples of programmes that help ease the transition to the labour market as they involve the accumulation of labour market skills. Moreover, for ALMPs to be effective, they should be tailored to individual needs and skills (Mosca, 2014; OECD, 2015).

As a way to smoothen the school-to-work transition and reduce high unemployment rates, European Union countries implemented diversified sets of ALMPs, including job search assistance, short-term training courses and subsidised work (Mascherini, Salvatore, Meierkord, & Jungblut, 2012). Likewise, Latin American countries, due to the realisation that they have high youth unemployment rates, implemented skills enhancement programmes to help transition from school to work, including school dropouts. These youth skills-enhancing programmes include classroom training, workplace training and job search services. For example, there are Jovenes con más y mejor trabajo in Argentina, ProJovem in Brazil, Jovenes en Acción in Colombia and ProJoven in Peru, which are said to be showing positive results on youth employability and earnings (ILO, 2016) cited in (OECD et al., 2016:11). These programmes are showing positive results in Latin American countries because most young graduates are easily absorbed into the labour market upon completion of their training. This is because job placement centres work alongside those responsible for training and skills to ensure that graduate youth are placed in the labour market when they complete their training (OECD, 2016, P.176-177). The following subsections draw on current literature to highlight some of the major pathways.



### **2.3.1 Training and skills development programmes**

These are typically programmes aimed at enhancing young people's vocational and/or general skills, with the general thesis being that such skills will improve their employability and chances of finding a job (Meager, 2009). In general, such programmes are short-term and entail placing young people in training or internship positions in various organisations to accumulate the skills and experience needed in the labour market. The programmes sometimes have theoretical, practical and on-the-job training components. Apprenticeships are a common model of this type of ALMP. The model entails employers investing in the education and training (mainly by providing financial support such as bursaries) of students they want to employ after graduation (Hanna, 2014). The main strengths of apprenticeship programmes are their practical orientation and their flexibility to accommodate those who do not have formal qualifications or training. However, this type of training is often long, has low pay, and lacks certification, which is some of the factors that discourage young people from participating in apprenticeships (Mugadzaweta, 2017).

Overall, most employers prefer to employ people with skills, practical knowledge and/or workplace experience (Anjum, 2020); therefore, training and skills development programmes are the most common ALMPs worldwide. For example, following the global financial crisis of 2007–2008, the World Bank and its client governments across the world invested nearly US\$ 1 billion per year between 2002 and 2012 in skills training programmes to mitigate the impact of the global youth unemployment crisis that emerged (Blattman & Ralston, 2015; McKenzie & Robalino, 2010). This is largely because these programmes were found to be the most effective in increasing employment opportunities for young people (Kluve et al., 2017).

Despite ALMPs focus on economic relevance, they have been proven to have elements of social and political significance (Betcherman et al., 2004). By assuring the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups while acknowledging the government's intervention to engage with the labour market (Kluve et al., 2016), ALMPs benefit human capital enhancement by upgrading the skills of the unemployed (Assaad & Levison, 2013). Similarly, Brown and Koettl (2015) state that skills training ALMPs provide youth with experience, as one of the contributing factors to youth unemployment is a lack of work experience. Likewise, ALMPs are viewed as a veritable strategy to facilitate the exclusion of participants from antisocial behaviour by keeping them engaged (Mosca, 2014; O'higgins, 2001; Ullah, 2014).

### **2.3.2 Job search assistance programmes**

Also known as employment services, these programmes are meant to help the unemployed penetrate the labour market by connecting them to organisations that require their qualifications or skills (Cassim & Oosthuizen, 2014). Job assistance programmes include information and

job-broking activities as well as information, advice and guidance to job-seekers. According to Meager (2008), the former can be systems to register vacancies on, provide vacancy information to job-seekers and provide employers with information on job seekers. On the other hand, information, advice and guidance to job-seekers “involve more proactive engagement by the public employment service with job-seekers, providing support and advice on job search, often along with motivational activities” (Meager, 2009, p. 8). These programmes can also include job placement and technical and financial assistance. Ethiopia, for example, has a transport subsidy programme designed to reduce job search costs for young unemployed job seekers, and it has been found to have positive effects on employment outcomes (Abebe et al., 2020).

### **2.3.3 Entrepreneurship promotion**

Entrepreneurship promotion interventions are meant to address the individual and external constraints youth encounter in starting or growing their businesses by providing entrepreneurial skills training and access to capital needed for self-employment. This includes physical, financial and social capital (Kluve et al., 2017). Like training and skills development, entrepreneurial promotion programmes have been found to positively affect the employment outcomes of beneficiaries in many developing countries (McKenzie, 2017).

### **2.3.4 Subsidised employment**

Subsidised employment by the government, including wage subsidies and labour-intensive public employment, aimed at encouraging employers to absorb more youth into the labour market. Wage subsidies entail subsidising payrolls or giving tax rebates to employers or organisations that hire unemployed job-seekers, typically from particular target groups such as youth, women, and people with disabilities (Mtembu & Govender, 2015). Thus, wage subsidies are, to a large extent, designed to meet the challenges that a specific group of people face in getting jobs.

The results on the effectiveness of wage subsidies are mixed. For example, an evaluation of ALMPs in developing countries conducted by the World Bank found that wage subsidies in countries such as Argentina, South Africa, and Jordan did not yield positive results in the long run after the subsidies ceased (McKenzie, 2017). In essence, the subsidy wage was only effective while the funding was active; hence, the subsidies are seen as only suitable for temporary employment creation. Once its period elapsed, some beneficiaries either lost their jobs or quit. Conversely, wage subsidies reportedly increased the employment rate during the global financial crisis in 2008/2009 and continued afterwards (McKenzie, 2017). For instance, Morocco managed to reduce its unemployment rates through the ‘Idmaj’, their wage subsidy programme (Chatri, Hadeif, & Samoudi, 2021), and Chile offers subsidies to companies employing young people (Cecchini & Martínez, 2012). To some extent, the USA also reported

positive results from subsidised employment in curbing unemployment (Dutta-Gupta, Grant, Eckel, & Edelman, 2016)

### **2.3.5 Employment services**

These traditional ‘make work’ schemes (Meager, 2009), most commonly known as public works programmes, can be described as “the provision of state-sponsored employment for the working-age poor who are unable to support themselves due to under productivity, seasonality of rural and urban livelihoods, or the inadequacy of market-based employment opportunities” (Carter, 2019, p. 28). These programmes generally help vulnerable people, and their households cope with economic, environmental, or humanitarian shocks by paying them a wage (in cash or food) in return for labour that produces a physical, social or community asset (McCord, 2018; Carter, 2019).

## **2.4 Youth-oriented active labour market programmes in Botswana**

As stated in Chapter 1, Botswana has, over the years, developed and implemented a number of youth-oriented ALMPs to curb the high levels of youth unemployment through entrepreneurship in various sectors of the economy. Available literature shows that programmes in the country fall under three of the most common categories of youth-oriented ALMPs: training and skills development (four programmes), entrepreneurship development (three programmes), and employment services (one programme). There is no subsidised employment programme offered to young people. The following subsections discuss the details of the currently offered programmes per category.

### **Training and skills development programmes**

The four youth training and skills development programmes currently offered in the country are the Botswana National Internship Programme (BNIP), Botswana National Service Programme (BNSP), Graduate Volunteer Scheme (GVS), and the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) discussed below.

#### ***Botswana National Internship Programme (BNIP)***

The BNIP was established in 2008 and aimed at facilitating training and skills acquisition among graduates from tertiary institutions aged 18-35 years and has a maximum term of two years (DNSI, 2016). Upon completion of their studies, graduates can apply for placement in the programme through the Department of National Service and Internship in the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development (MYSC). When there are openings, they are placed in various government departments, the private sector, and parastatal organisations to gain relevant work experience and skills to improve their employability and marketability (Powell and Short, 2013). In addition, these graduates receive a monthly allowance of about P1300 (equivalent to US\$ 115) during their tenure.

The main aim of the programme is to prepare young graduates for the world of work or self-employment in industries relating to their field of work (Diraditsile, 2011). Diraditsile points out that, however, the extent to which this has been achieved has been difficult to determine due to a lack of an in-built monitoring and evaluation framework. Previous studies (e.g. Bakwena and Sebudubudu, 2016; Powell and Short, 2013; Diraditsile, 2017), however, have suggested that most of the young graduates participating in the BNIP are not gaining sufficient professional training and skills due to a lack of or weak mentoring and job shadowing arrangements. Indeed, some studies have suggested that some host organisations exploit young graduates by using them as qualified cheap labour (Diraditsile, 2017; Mogomotsi and Madigela, 2017; Sechele, 2016). To this end, anecdotal evidence suggests that many young people enrolled in this programme are frustrated by the lack of skills acquisition and poor working conditions they often have to endure, and, as a result, some quit before their tenure expires.

#### ***Botswana National Service Programme (BNSP)***

The BNSP was implemented in 2014 to facilitate knowledge and skills acquisition required in the labour market by attaching participants to various government departments, parastatal organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations expressing interest in hosting these young people over the country. The programme is intended for youth aged between 20 and 30 years who possess low educational qualifications - at least a Junior Secondary Certificate (equivalent to 10 years of basic education) up to a diploma (DNSI, 2016). During their tenure, young people in the programme are expected to gain relevant work experience and skills through employment in different community programmes such as agricultural extension, health education, community policing, road maintenance, environmental education campaigns etc. (Diraditsile, 2021). Participants are given a monthly allowance of about P500 (equivalent to US\$ 40). The programme emphasises placing more participants in rural districts where there is more need for community service.

#### ***Government Volunteer Scheme (GVS)***

GVS was established in 2014 as a skills development programme through which unemployed graduate youth are attached to organisations that have volunteer opportunities. The intention is “to facilitate skills development on young graduates, contribute to community development, promote the spirit of volunteerism, improve the resilience of the graduate youth and reduce idle time” (MYSC, 2015 cited in Diraditsile 2231, p. 163). GVS participants are given a monthly stipend of about P600 (equivalent to about US\$50). The GVS programme also accepts those who completed their two-year tenure under the BNIP and wish to volunteer their services.

#### ***Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES)***

YES, was established in 2012, with the main aim being to help unemployed youth gain the life skills necessary to start their businesses and accumulate work-related experience required in

the labour market based on their level of education. Youth aged 18–35 years who applied for the programme are placed in various government ministries and departments, parastatals, NGOs and private institutions. The placement occurs after participants go through a boot camp facilitated by the MYSC for six weeks (Diraditsile, 2021; Nthomang & Diraditsile, 2016). However, the YES program has challenges, with difficulty placing participants in the work experience component of the program (Powell and Short, 2013), which might be due to competition with other training and skills development programmes discussed above. In addition, this programme has not been evaluated since its inception to establish its effectiveness and shortfalls (Diraditsile, 2017; Nthomang and Diraditsile, 2016; Bakwena and Sebudubudu, 2016; Powell and Short, 2013). Nevertheless, despite it being difficult to determine its success and failures due to lack of evaluation, Nthomang and Diraditsile (2016, p.51) state that in 2015, about 3299 participants had attended YES Boot Camp. Among them, 1893 graduates were attached to various Government departments and private entities (Nthomang and Diraditsile, 2016, p.51).

### **Entrepreneurship promotion programme**

The literature suggests that the first youth-oriented programme in this category was the Out-of-School Youth Programme, introduced in 2001 to provide 100 per cent grants to out-of-school youth and those, not in employment, education and training (Diraditsile, 2021). The programme's main aim was to promote entrepreneurship and self-employment among young people in the country. However, due to “no accountability on the part of beneficiaries leading to little or no return to investment of the government” (Diraditsile, 2021:161), the programme was replaced by the current *Youth Development Fund* (YDF), which was established in the 2009/2010 financial year. The fund, which is also an entrepreneurship promotion programme, targets young people aged 18-35 years “who are not in school or employed, underemployed and have no academic background. Qualifying youth are provided with once-off funding that comprises a 50 percent interest-free loan and a 50 percent grant. Although one of the key factors that led to the establishment of the fund was the realisation that young people have limited financial capital and ability to access credit to support entrepreneurship activities (Diraditsile and Maphula, 2018), beneficiaries are expected, on graduation, to utilise other financial intermediaries to expand and to grow their establishments as well as to repay their interest-free loan. Notwithstanding this, the programmes as been lauded (see, for example, Nthomang et al., 2016; Diraditsile, 2021) as a clear example of the government's political will to address youth unemployment and also a guarantee direct employment if the beneficiary succeeds in their entrepreneurship activities.

Other current government-initiated and youth-oriented ALMPs aimed at youth entrepreneurship promotion programmes in the country are the *Young Farmers Fund* (YFF) and the *Botswana E-innovation Youth Empowerment Programme*. The latter was established

in 2014. With its target being young people and graduates aged between 18 and 29 years old and business proposals in the Information Communication Technology and Science and Technology sectors, the programme has a substantial focus on “the creativity, innovation, social responsibility and sustainability” of new innovative digital enterprises that are undertaken in collaborative environments (Diraditsile, 2021, p.162).

The YFF, on the other hand, was established in 2008 and is managed by the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA), a statutory agency that provides financial and technical support for business development intending to promote viable and sustainable citizen-owned business enterprises (Bakwena and Sebudubudu, 2016). The YFF aims to provide young graduates aged between 18 and 40 years with funds to start self-employment projects in the agricultural sector (CEDA, 2012). The eligibility criteria include being a holder of a certificate, diploma or degree with a demonstration of relevant training in what an applicant wishes to undertake and submitting a business proposal which relevant officers then adjudicate in charge of the programme (Diraditsile, 2011: 161). A review of some of the pre-screening criteria for application to access when dealing with funding for some activities that are popular among the youth, such as horticulture, cattle breeding, small stock, piggery, and layers and broilers (CEDA, 2012, p.3) shows that this criterion often requires the applicant to demonstrate possession of some form of natural or physical capital. For example, a business proposal must be accompanied by documents such as a copy of the title deed or lease of the land to be used for agricultural projects, a provisional land allocation offer, or proof of availability of adequate and suitable water. Other requirements indirectly require the applicant to have adequate financial capital. These include the requirement to submit proof of (often pricey) soil and water tests for horticulture and dryland farming, a valuation report if a farm property is pledged as security and a lease agreement that covers the loan repayment period (in case of leased property). Overall, as Sechele (2016, p. 39) states, in terms of CEDA guidelines, “it is imperative that proposed businesses for funding have a license of operation, registration certificates, land or premises, and applicants must provide security”.

### **Employment services programmes**

As stated earlier, Botswana has only one employment service programme, the Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM). Within DPSM, there is a *graduate placement database* which is essentially a youth-oriented ALMP aimed at employment services. The database was founded in 2008 upon realising that there is an increase in graduate youth unemployment in the country (DPSM, 2018). It is aimed at offering employment services in the form of job placement through the voluntary registration of graduates on the system; they are hired whenever there are entry-level vacancies in the government. This placement programme is mainly implemented for degree holders and those who hold diplomas with scarce skills.

Unlike typical youth-oriented employment services, the database does not offer any counselling, financial or job search services to the unemployed. Rather, interested graduates are required to register and create a profile on their database. The profile should include certificates and result transcripts. The DPSM use the database when they have vacancies to search for qualified persons and give their files to potential employers. However, to the extent that the system works on a ‘first-come, first-served policy, it can take years for graduates to be placed.

Available evidence shows that while, by definition, most ALMPs in Botswana have been government-initiated and funded, the private sector has also been involved to some extent. For example, as part of its corporate social responsibility programme, Kgalagadi Breweries, the country’s leading brewer of soft and alcoholic beverages, initiated the Kick Start Programme in 2004. The programme provides, through a competitive application process, young people aged between 18 and 35 years with 100 per cent start-up capital to procure fixed assets as well as “skills training and mentorship, as well as assistance during the implementation of the business idea” (Diraditsile, 2021, p.81). According to Diraditsile, the programme also supports young people in expanding their existing businesses.

## **2.5 Discussion and conclusion**

This chapter reviewed the literature on the livelihood challenges of unemployed graduate youth and the extent to which active labour market programmes (ALMPs) can alleviate or mitigate the challenges. It emerged from the literature that the main graduate youth livelihood asset is human capital, as education attainment worldwide has increased, leading to limited employment opportunities for skilled labour (ILO, 2020). However, young unemployed graduates mainly lack financial and social capital, which are vital for securing livelihoods. As indicated in the literature review, unemployed graduates require financial capital to venture into entrepreneurship, whereas social capital, in the same vein, helps to gain employment and access to the market for business owners. In terms of ALMPs, research evidence has shown that training and skills development programmes are the most effective and used worldwide (Kluge, 2016; OECD, 2016), which to some extent, based on the scanty data, is the case with Botswana (Bakwena and Sebudubudu, 2016; Powell and Short, 2013).

The review of literature on ALMPs in Botswana shows the government’s political will to address the graduate youth unemployment in the country. Virtually all programmes (except the Botswana National Service Programme) target graduate youth. It also emerged that the training and skills development programmes—which are the most common in the country, are typically aimed at enhancing young graduates’ employability skills and work experience. In so doing, it can be argued that the programmes are adequately targeting some of the major gaps in young graduates’ human capital assets, as discussed in Chapter 4. Conversely, the other common type of youth-oriented ALMPs offered in the country (entrepreneurship development) seems to be

off-target in terms of not focusing on the young graduates' capital assets. For example, YFF requires young applicants to provide proof of ownership of natural or physical assets and, to some extent, to also have some form of financial and social capital, which, as shown in Chapter 4, most young unemployed graduates in Botswana do not have. On the other hand, the E-innovation Youth Empowerment programme requires human capital that most graduate youth do not possess, i.e. technological skills. As shown in Chapter 4, most unemployed youth in Botswana hold qualifications in Social Sciences and the Humanities.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, and as demonstrated in the case of the YDF, the government's political will and commitment is evidenced by the provision of partial or full grants to young people. A major gap, however, has been limited monitoring and evaluation of these programmes, limited policy-oriented empirical research and lack of consultation with young people. As a result, what remains unexplored in the extant literature regarding the limitations of these programmes is the views of young people regarding the programmes' effectiveness.



## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

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### 3.1 Introduction

This study aims to explore the main livelihood challenges and strategies of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana and to make recommendations for policy, practice and theory of change. Specifically, the study aims to explore the unemployed graduate youth: the socio-economic portrait; unemployment experiences; the subjective meaning of the unemployment experiences, main livelihood challenges and strategies; and the perceived effectiveness of current youth-oriented ALMPs aimed at addressing graduate youth's livelihood challenges and high unemployment in Botswana. This chapter presents an overview of the methodology used to achieve the study's objectives. Defined by Leedy & Ormrod (2001, p.14) as "the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project", a research methodology details and justifies the specific procedures used to identify, select, process, and analyse information about a topic. The ethical principles adhered to throughout the study and research process are also discussed.

The chapter is structured as follows. The next section (Section 3.2) discusses the research design. This is followed by a description of the study's two main data sources: document review and primary qualitative data. With regard to the latter, the study areas and methods of data collection are described in detail. Data management and analysis processes, as well as efforts adopted to ensure the validity and reliability of the study findings, are then discussed. This is followed by a discussion of the ethical considerations that were adhered to before the chapter concludes with a summary section.

### 3.2 Research design

Research design refers to the overall management plan or strategy for directing the research's structure, processes and procedures in relation to certain philosophically or theoretically-based perspectives, paradigms or assumptions (Burrell & Morgan, 2017). This study adopted a qualitative research design to answer its research questions and achieve its stated objectives. Such a research design is interactive and subjective in nature and emphasises participants' perspectives of the subject under study (Alase, 2017). In essence, participants in qualitative research construct reality as forms of lived experiences and this reality is understood when participants communicate their different perspectives in their own words, language, knowledge, and understanding (Daher, 2017). Qualitative designs thus enable researchers to study selected issues in-depth through dialogues or conversations between the researcher and the sampled participants (Durrheim, 2006; Kafle, 2011). To the extent that the achievement of the study's objectives hinges on the experiences and views of unemployed, and to a limited

extent employed, graduate youth, a qualitative research design was deemed the most appropriate for the study.

### **3.3 Sources of data**

This section discusses the sources of data used in the collection phase of the study. Data collection is the systematic search, gathering, review, and analysis of relevant sources of information pertinent to the study's objectives in the quest to resolve the identified problem or understand the particularities of the phenomenon or phenomena being studied (DePoy & Gitlin, 2015). This study drew from two main data sources: a document review and primary qualitative data derived from focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The following sub-sections discuss these data sources in detail.

#### **3.3.1 Primary qualitative data**

To achieve the study's first five specific objectives and to contribute to its sixth specific objective (proposing a theory of change to improve livelihood and employment outcomes of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana), qualitative data was obtained largely from unemployed graduate youth and to a limited extent, employed graduate youth as well as a number of key informants from selected government entities tasked with addressing youth unemployment and/or working on the design, delivery and implementation of various ALMPs. The sub-sections below describe the different aspects related to the collection of primary qualitative data.

#### **3.3.2 Document review**

A document review is fundamentally premised on the systematic procedure of reviewing documents, such as policy, legislative, and/or operational documents, to obtain a detailed understanding of specific issues concerning an investigated phenomenon (De Vos, Delpont, Fouche, & Strydom, 2011). In this study, the document review entailed an assessment of the operational documents of the main youth-oriented ALMPs in Botswana. The main aim of this review was to obtain an understanding of the programmes' mandates as well as their frameworks for implementation. Through this, the document review provided a context to the achievement of the study's specific objective 5: the exploration of graduate youth's perceived effectiveness of current youth-oriented ALMPs in addressing graduate youth's livelihood challenges and in improving the livelihood strategies that the young people adopt. Accordingly, the following documents, sourced through internet searches as well as from the key government in relevant entities such as Statistics Botswana and the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Culture (MYSC), were reviewed:

- Guidelines for Youth Voluntary Programmes in Botswana (MYSC, 2016), which outlines the objectives and other operational guidelines related to three of the

Government of Botswana's youth-focused ALMPs, namely the Botswana National Service Programme (BNSP), the National Internship Programme and the Graduate Volunteer Scheme (GVS).

- The Youth Development Fund (YDF) Guidelines (MYSC, n.d.) outline the objectives of the YDF, a youth entrepreneurial support programme.
- The Agribusiness Finance Checklist (CEDA, 2012) outlines the key tenets and requirements of the Young Farmers Fund (YFF), a youth entrepreneurial support programme administered by the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA), a parastatal established to provide financial and technical support for business development with a view to promoting viable and sustainable citizen-owned business enterprises.

### *Study areas*

The primary qualitative data were collected between January and July 2019 in three localities in Botswana, namely Gaborone (urban area), Kanye (urban village), and Oodi/Modipane (rural areas). The purpose of collecting data in these three localities was to examine the similarities and differences in youth unemployment experiences and perspectives across different contexts and local economies. The localities are briefly described below.

- *Gaborone* is the capital city and the economic hub of the country. The main economic activities in Gaborone are non-agricultural in the formal and informal sectors. At the time of the 2011 population census, the city's population of 231 592 (11.4 per cent of the country's population) was the highest in the country (Statistics Botswana, 2015a). The recent (2022) census results indicate that this remains the case: the city population currently is 289,703 (12.3 per cent of the country's population). According to Statistics Botswana (2018a), Gaborone is home to 13.7 per cent of the country's young people aged 15–35. Due to the high influx of migrants, Gaborone is experiencing high levels of unemployment (Thutlwe, 2015). For instance, the youth unemployment for Gaborone in 2020 was 17.4 percent, while that of Francistown, the second-largest city in the country, was 17.2 percent (Statistics Botswana, 2020).
- *Kanye*. Located approximately 80 kilometres south of Gaborone, Kanye is an urban village in the country's Ngwaketse sub-district located in the Southern part of the country. Urban villages in the context of Botswana refer to settlements that experience in-situ urbanisation, meaning that while they display the influence of the global economy (such as multinational chain retail shops and commercial banks), they also display strong cultural traits such as the centrality of the traditional leadership and related institutions, such as a kinship-based ward or neighbourhood system (Ministry of Lands and Housing, 2014). At the time of the last population census in 2011, Kanye had a total population of 47,007 and young people aged 18–35 years comprised 27.7

percent of this population. Results from the 2022 census reveal the total population has increased to 48,030.

- *Oodi/Modipane*. The two rural villages, Oodi and Modipane, are considered, for the purpose of this study, the ‘rural area’. Rural villages in Botswana are defined as localities where at least 75 percent of inhabitants rely on agriculture for their livelihoods (Ministry of Lands and Housing, 2014). The villages are situated less than ten kilometres from each other in the Kgatleng district, about 35 kilometres from Gaborone. Based on the 2011 population census, the combined population of the two villages was 8884 (Statistics Botswana, 2014b). In the 2022 census, this has increased to 17971. At the time of the 2011 population census, the proportion of young people aged 18–35 years in rural areas was 31.8 percent, and the unemployment rate among these young people was 12.4 percent (Statistics Botswana, 2015b).

### ***Selection of study participants***

The focus group participants were selected using non-probability purposive sampling, specifically snowballing. Snowballing entails the interviewee sharing at least one or more potential interviewees (Kirchherr and Charles, 2018). Those interviewees provide more names for potential interviewees, leading to the sample growing until it reaches its proposed number of participants. However, it should be noted that snowballing does not have a sampling frame. Thus, unlike in random sampling, where individuals of interest have the same probability of being part of the final sample, the opposite applies in snowballing. Hence, findings from a snowball sample cannot be generalised to the entire population of those affected by a certain phenomenon being investigated (Babbie, 2010; Kirchherr and Charles, 2018).

Personal networks were used in all the study areas to identify the first few initial potential respondents for this study. They met the inclusion criteria outlined in Section 1.4. Arrangements were then made to meet the identified participants and inform and brief them about the details of the study. Those who showed interest and participated in the study were then asked to identify more potential respondents. This process continued until the appropriate number of willing participants was attained, as shown in Table 3.1.

With the consent of all participants, the FGDs were audio-recorded and conducted in a mixture of Setswana, the vernacular, and English, based on the participants’ preferences.

### ***Methods of data collection***

As stated above, primary qualitative data were collected using two methods of data collection: focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews.

### *Focus group discussions*

FGDs serve to solicit study participants' attitudes and perceptions, knowledge and experiences, and practices shared in the course of interaction in a group with other people with shared experiences, knowledge or interest in the research subject (Van Eeuwijk & Angehrn, 2017). In this study, focus group discussions having between eight and ten participants were held with:

- i) *Unemployed graduate youth aged 20-29 years*. The main objective of these group discussions was to provide a forum for unemployed young people to provide information that would facilitate the achievement of virtually all of the study's specific objectives. Appendix B shows the interview guide used to collect information for this category of study participants.
- ii) *Employed graduate youth aged 20-29 years*. As shown in Appendix C (semi-structured interview guide used for this group), the objective of these group discussions was to solicit information that would largely contribute to achieving the study's first objective on the livelihood assets that unemployed graduate youth possess in Botswana. Moreover, the employed graduate youth were used to explore the fifth specific objective (graduate youth's perceived effectiveness of current youth-oriented ALMPs in addressing graduate youth's livelihood challenges and in improving the livelihood strategies that the young people adopt).

The two categories of respondents were selected as they were deemed to be uniquely situated in the phenomenon under study, either as unemployed or employed graduate youth. Overall, these young people were seen as having the lived experience to better articulate the experience of being unemployed as a graduate youth, give their views on the strength and weaknesses of current youth-oriented ALMPs and recommend plausible solutions to the plight of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana.

To ensure that the different experiences of graduate youth were taken into consideration, the focus groups were categorised by employment status (unemployed and employed) as well as by gender. A total of eight focus group discussions in Gaborone, five in Kanye and two in Oodi/Modipane were conducted. The variation in the number of groups is largely due to the different population sizes of the three localities. It is noteworthy that there were no focus group discussions with employed youth in Kanye or in Oodi/Modipane. This can be partly attributed to the employment landscape in the two localities. That is, given the somehow rudimentary economies of the localities, it proved difficult to reach a sufficient number of employed *graduate* youth in the timeframes allocated for data collection. It emerged that many either lived in urban areas or commuted between Kanye and Oodi/Modipane and urban areas for work. Thus, given that data collection was done during working hours and weekdays, it was difficult to reach this category of young people in these areas. As data Table 3.1 below shows the broad characteristics of the focus groups.

**Table 3.1 Basic characteristics of the graduate youth in focus groups discussions**

Locality and group	Number in group	Average age (years)	Majority qualification in group
<b>GABORONE</b>			
<i>Unemployed graduate youth</i>			
1. Young men	6	25	Diploma
2. Young men	5	20	Certificate
3. Young women	7	27	Certificate
4. Young women	7	23	Diploma
<i>Employed graduate youth</i>			
5. Young men	6	24	Degree
6. Young men	6	22	Certificate
7. Young women	7	28	Degree
8. Young women	7	23	Diploma
<b>KANYE</b>			
1. Unemployed graduate young men	6	28	Diploma
2. Unemployed graduate young men	7	27	Degree
3. Unemployed graduate young men	6	26	Diploma
4. Unemployed graduate young women	7	24	Degree
5. Unemployed graduate young women	6	24	Certificate
<b>OODI/MODIPANE</b>			
1. Unemployed graduate young men	6	25	Diploma
2. Unemployed graduate young women	6	28	Certificate

#### *Key informant interviews*

Key informants can be described as people who have in-depth knowledge and understanding and can provide insights into the operations of the broader system (UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, 2012). In this study, a total of five key informants from the following three government entities were interviewed:

- *The Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development (MYSC)*. Established in 2007 with the mandate to create an enabling environment for youth empowerment, sports development and preservation of culture and heritage in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to enhance the unity and pride of the people of Botswana. The key informant interviewed from this Ministry was a senior official in the unit responsible for implementing the GVS, the BNSP, and the Botswana National Internship Programme (BNIP).
- *The Botswana National Youth Council (BNYC)*: Established in 1974 through a Presidential directive. The Council's mandate is to coordinate the activities of NGOs in Botswana

dealing with youth matters. In so doing, it lobbies and advocates for development policies and programmes affecting the youth and advises the government concerning youth development matters (BNYC, n.d.). One senior official in the unit responsible for overseeing all the projects implemented for unemployed youth by BNYC was interviewed.

- *Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM)*: The DPSM is the human resources recruitment agency of the Government of Botswana and assists government ministries and departments with human resource policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation (DPSM, n.d.). Three senior officials directly involved in placing graduates when vacancies open in the public service were interviewed.

The interviews aimed to solicit the key informants' views and perspectives on key strengths and weaknesses of programming and implementation of ALMs in the country. Recommendations for future action to address critical gaps in the current programming and policies were also sought from the key informants. Data from the key informant interviews thus played a major role in achieving the study's fifth and sixth specific objectives: an exploration of the perceived effectiveness of current youth-oriented ALMPs to improve livelihood and employment outcomes of unemployed graduates' youth in Botswana. The key informant interviews took the form of in-depth interviews, defined as a qualitative research approach used to conduct detailed interviews with a small number of participants (Rutledge and Hogg, 2020). In contrast to other forms of qualitative research, the in-depth interview approach entails investing a significant amount of time with each participant engaging in a conversational format. Questions for in-depth interviews are mainly open-ended and lead to a discovery-oriented approach (Rutledge and Hogg, 2020). Appendix D shows the semi-structured interview guide used to conduct the key informant interviews.

The key informants were all selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique in which study participants are selected based on their specific characteristics and the objective of the study (Crossman, 2020). In this study, the key informants were selected based on their official positions in the government entities relevant to this study. All the key informant interviews were audio-recorded with their consent. These interviews were conducted in a mixture of Setswana and English, both Botswana's official languages, based on each key informant's preference.

### **3.4 Data management**

The University of Pretoria's Research Data Management Policy of 2017 emphasises the need to ensure that there is proper maintenance, storage and preservation of data on which research publications, theses, reports, patents and other forms of published materials are based (University of Pretoria, 2017), was strictly adhered to during the study that led to this thesis. The study essentially adopted the policy of managing its data. For example, during the data collection phase, my personal laptop was used to digitally secure all focus group and key

informant's data as soon as it was gathered (De Vos et al., 2011); all the data were anonymised data and transferred from the audio recorder to the computer almost immediately after each FGD and interview. The audio-recorded data is stored for security and safekeeping, accessibility and shareability, making the research outputs more visible at the University of Pretoria's Department of Sociology and will be stored there for at least ten years or more as per the Policy (University of Pretoria, 2017). As shown in the information sheets in Appendices G and H, all study participants were duly informed that the research findings were solely meant for academic purposes and how the information they provided would be kept confidential (Kendall & Halliday, 2014).

### **3.5 Data analysis**

Data analysis is the process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming, and modelling data to highlight useful information that suggests conclusions and supports decision-making (Babbie, 2010). Data from the document review component of the study was analysed using content analysis, which is an analytical method that explores relationship aspects and involves an interpretation of the underlying meaning of the text (Bowen, 2009). This analysis particularly focused on the objectives and implementation frameworks of each ALPM. The planned strategic actions to achieving the objectives were also explored.

Data analysis for the FGDs and the key informant interviews started with the verbatim transcription of all the interviews and discussions. Where necessary, this was followed by a translation from Setswana to English. Thereafter the transcripts were sorted and arranged according to the different types of respondents (employed youth, unemployed youth and key informants). The next step, which Neuman (2007) referred to as familiarisation, involved reading and re-reading the transcripts to become familiar with the data, to get a sense of the respondents' words, and to compare them. This was followed by coding, which combined the data into themes and categories. Coding made it easy to locate the data to compare and identify response patterns. Finally, as recommended by Creswell and Creswell (2017) and Lewis and Ritchie (2003), the themes were identified from the study objectives. For data from the FDGs, this entailed an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), which emphasises experiential, lived aspects of a particular construct (Alase, 2017; Nelson, 2011). In essence, as Kawulich and Holland (2012: p.239) posit, "the goal of IPA is to look at the precipitants' lived experiences in detail and determine how they make sense of that personal experience. IPA also addresses how you, as the researcher, makes sense of that personal experience". Thematic analysis, defined as a qualitative method of identifying, analysing and reporting themes within the data (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018), was used to analyse data from the key informant interviews. It comprises reading through a data set of open-ended questions from transcripts of focus group discussions or in-depth interviews and identifying patterns in meaning across the data to derive themes (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018). IPA is an experiential approach more so that it is used to capture participants' lived experiences, while thematic analysis is critical as it



is used to analyse language as constitutive and to explore patterns in the data (Clarke and Braun, 2014); hence they were adopted to analyse focus group discussions and key informants concurrently.

The last step of the data analysis entailed triangulating the three data sources using the constant comparative analysis method (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016), which, as the name suggests, entails the constant comparison of interview and group discussion transcripts with findings from the document review to establish similarities and differences. The observed discrepancies and similarities were then synthesised, triangulated and presented in this thesis using the study's main research question and objectives as the broad analytical and presentation framework.

### **3.6 Trustworthiness of research**

In research, trustworthiness refers to how accurately a method measures what it intends to measure. In quantitative research, validity depends largely on the way the data was collected, and in qualitative research, where the issues are naturalistic (Zullig, et al., 2014), it depends on the use of different methods, the steps taken to collect data, as well as the data analysis. In this study, the development of an explicit conceptual framework (Section 1.4), the questions asked in the FGDs and the key informant interviews, and the analysis and interpretation of all the data sources enhanced the trustworthiness. In addition, the consistent use of explicit concepts also ensured trustworthiness, which refers to the consistency of measures in a study.

### **3.7 Ethical considerations**

The study adhered to the vital principles of ethical, and social research. These principles include informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, benevolence, and the right to recourse for its participant-focused ethical considerations. Therefore, the study proposal, focus group guides, information sheets and consent forms were submitted to the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria. The REC granted ethical clearance in August 2018 (see Appendix E). Accordingly, permission to undertake the study in Botswana was granted by the Ministry of Sports, Youth and Culture (Appendix F). Below are brief overviews of how the various ethical principles were adhered to in the study.

#### **3.7.1 Informed consent**

Informed consent pertains to the formal process by which participants' permission is obtained for their involvement in the study before the data collection stage (Wiles, 2012). In this study, the informed consent process offered detailed information and full disclosure on which basis participants could decide whether or not to participate in the research. For this purpose, information sheets and consent forms outlining the purpose of the research and the rights of the participants were provided to all participants before data collection (see Appendices G and

H). In addition, consent was also sought from the participants to use audio recording instruments, confirmed by their signatures on the forms and sheets.

### **3.7.2 Voluntary participation**

Voluntary participation is the participants' indication of uncoerced and willing participation in the study regarding their familiarity with the informed consent form and its concomitant full disclosure in the information sheet (De Vos et al., 2011). To this end, all the study participants were informed of their right to freely participate and withdraw from the FGDs or key informant interviews at any stage, notwithstanding their earlier signed informed consent. Participants were further made aware that there would be no financial and/or non-financial benefit or inducement from their participation. In conjunction with their informed consent form, the right to voluntary participation was also read to the participants ahead of the primary data collection.

### **3.7.3 Confidentiality**

The right to confidentiality entails that the participants' identities and the nature or level of their participation should not be publicly known, especially to individuals who are not directly linked to the study and its processes (Walliman, 2015). Compliance with this was ensured by using pseudonyms during the data analysis and write-up of the study results.

### **3.7.4 Benevolence**

The ethical principle of benevolence proposes that no harm of any form (physical, emotional, or psychological) should befall any of the participants for the duration of the research process (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010). Therefore, in this study, the primary data collection was conducted in venues that posed no immediate danger to the overall health and well-being of the participants and were identified by the participants as being convenient and preferable to them. In addition, arrangements were made with the UB Careers and Counselling Centre to provide free counselling and/or debriefing services to all participants who would need it or who would show signs of distress during or after the interviews (Appendix I). Such a proactive measure was necessary considering the potential emotional and psychological effects the study could have, especially on the unemployed participants. Although all participants were informed at the beginning of each interview or FGD about the availability of free counselling or debriefing, none took up the offer or indicated the need for such a service.

### **3.7.5 The right to legal recourse**

The principle of recourse proposes participants' right to a remedial course of action in the event that any of their human and legal rights are violated (Given, 2015). The participants were made aware of this right, but the researcher's professional conduct throughout the research process ensured the need for recourse was obviated.

### 3.8 Positionality

Positionality explains a researcher's worldview and the position they assume during a research task, and it is shaped by their experiences in the social and political context (Holmes, 2020). Thus, positionality is a reflection by the researcher on where and how they feel they might have influenced their research so that the reader can completely understand the truth based on that (source). In line with this, I reflect in this section on how my age, perceived social status, age, and shared language may have influenced the data collection process for this study.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state that a researcher's age can impact getting access and developing trust with the study participants. For example, young people tend to be freer around each other than when with older people. I conducted fieldwork between January and July 2019 when I was 29 years old and in the same age group as the study participants. In a way, being this age helped me easily build rapport and gain my young study participants' trust, as young people have been shown to feel free to express their experiences with peers, whom they feel might understand them better than adults (Thurnell-Read, 2016). For example, my youthful dress code, which is typically casual (sneakers, jeans, T-shirts and caps), meant that most of the young people I interviewed could relate comfortably with me. At no point did I feel the wrath of trying to be formal in the field.

I also shared some unemployment experiences with many of the unemployed graduate youth. I graduated with a Master of Arts (Development Studies) from the University of Botswana in 2015 at the age of 25 years. Following my graduation, I found it difficult to find a job and spent much of the period (before coming to enrol for my PhD in South Africa). Thus, having been an unemployed graduate youth, I could relate to many of the experiences and livelihood challenges shared by most unemployed study participants. Furthermore, as a trained peer counsellor, my skills in this regard came in handy as I was able to show empathy and provide some encouragement, leading to plausible professional services as these young unemployed graduates shared their challenges.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, my perceived social status, essentially my driving a car, did not sit well with some potential participants. For example, one Wednesday, I had an interview appointment with a key informant at the DPSM. The key informant, however, had to cancel the appointment at the last minute in the morning due to an urgent official commitment. I then decided to use the time to recruit more potential study participants who had come to the DPSM offices hoping to get job opportunities or find out the status of their job applications. As I had planned an interview with an official, I was wearing a formal dress, jacket and high-heeled shoes. As I parked my car outside the offices, unemployed young people started flocking towards me, assuming that I was an employee of DPSM. I greeted them in the vernacular (Setswana), and they all responded politely and kept quiet to listen because they saw a potential employer. However, when I told them that I was a student studying the livelihoods of

unemployed youth and would appreciate their participation in the study, many started hurling insults at me. The likes of, *‘Do you think we are here to play?’*; *‘How dare you come here with your fancy clothes and car as if you are here to help us only for you to waste our time’*; *‘You rich people take us for granted, ‘Get out of here before we destroy that precious car of yours’*; *‘You are here to make fun of us because we are poor’* etc. Hurtful as some of the statements were, I realised that they were, in a way, also a reflection of the young people’s deep frustration of being unemployed. This experience was also an eye-opener for me and for my future research endeavours. I essentially learned that going forward, a researcher needs to be sensitive to their potential participants’ circumstances and not to “rub in the salt”, so to say, into difficult situations. As Lisiak (2015, p.1) asserts, as researchers,

We are watched and judged by our respondents based on how we look, what we say, and how we say it. Our appearance in the field may increase or decrease our chances of creating rapport, it may encourage respondents to talk to us or discourage them entirely from participating in our research. Whereas we have no absolute control over all the factors determining how we present ourselves in the field, we have some power over our dress.

### **3.9 Summary and conclusions**

The chapter outlined the methodology used to achieve the study’s research questions and objectives. The chapter discussed the following aspects: research design, data sources, data management, data analysis, validity and reliability, and ethical considerations. Overall, the chapter reports that the study adopted a qualitative research approach and derived data from three main qualitative methods of data collection: document review, focus group discussions with young graduates in three localities in Botswana (an urban area, an urban village and a rural area) as well as in-depth interviews with key informants. The interpretive phenomenological analysis approach was used as the main method for analysing data from the focus groups, and the constant comparative analysis method was used to triangulate the data from all three data sources. In addition to processes followed to ensure validity and reliability, the vital principles of ethical and social research, precisely informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, benevolence, and right to recourse for its participant-focused, were discussed. A positionality statement is also presented to give the researcher’s self-reflection on the study process, specifically during the data collection phase.

# CHAPTER 4: LIVELIHOOD ASSETS OF UNEMPLOYED GRADUATE YOUTH

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## 4.1 Introduction

To provide contextual background information for the findings chapters, this chapter gives an overview of the socio-economic profile of unemployed graduate youth, using the sustainable livelihood capitals as the presentation framework. In so doing, the chapter aims to achieve the study's first specific objective (an exploration of the livelihood assets of unemployed graduate youth). As discussed in Section 1.9 (Chapter 1), this profile should ideally be derived through a robust analysis of either primary or secondary quantitative data. Given the data limitation discussed in Section 1.9, the chapter draws from the focus group discussions (FGDs) with unemployed graduate youth. To a limited extent, and where possible and/or deemed necessary, some comparative analysis with employed graduate youth is undertaken. In a few instances, insights from key informant interviews are also used to support the data from the youth FGDs. Despite the stated data limitations, the presented qualitative data presents a sufficient broad-brush overview of the livelihood assets of young unemployed graduates, which further shows why they do not have access to various livelihood strategies. The chapter is structured in this way: it discusses the human, social, financial, physical and natural capitals of unemployed graduate youth in this order before it concludes with a summary and discussion section.

## 4.2 Human capital attributes

Human capital attributes are inclusive of but not limited to skills, qualifications, education, knowledge, work experience, and good health (Serrat, 2017; Kluve, 2016). Driven largely by the availability of data from the FGDs with young graduates (both employed and unemployed), this section discusses the human capital of these young people in terms of educational attainment, type of qualification, employability skills, and work experience.

### 4.2.1 Educational attainment

Consistent with previous literature showing that increased education improves employees' skills, expertise and chances of finding a job (McConnell and Brue, 2017; Kilimani, 2017; Malema & Keetile, 2016), it emerged from the FGDs that the majority of the unemployed graduates had a certificate and diploma-level qualifications as also shown in Table 3.1 (Chapter 3). In essence, of the four unemployed youth FGDs in Gaborone, none were made up of degree holders; the participants were only certificate and diploma holders. Conversely, two of the four employed youth FGDs were made up of degree holders. By the same token, of the five unemployed youth FGDs in Kanye, only two were made up of degree holders, and in Oodi/Modipane, there were no degree holders among the FGD participants.

Conversely, ILO (2020) states that it is not always the case that higher qualifications lead to a faster transition to employment. It is further reported that in low-income countries, highly educated persons may find it more difficult to find a suitable job since skilled jobs are scarce, but once they do, the chances are that it will be a quality job. For example, as indicated in Chapter 2, this is the case in Peru, Samoa and Viet Nam where young graduates take longer to get jobs than those with lower qualifications (ILO, 2016). Similarly, overqualification, also termed overeducation, is another factor affecting some graduates in Australia, as fewer jobs are available for skilled labour (Carroll and Tani, 2015).

#### 4.2.2 Type of qualification

Young graduates' employment prospects are dependent on the specific qualification rather than merely on the achievement of a tertiary qualification (Mncayi and Dunga, 2016). Moreover, it should be noted that these also differ according to different economies and countries. For example, in South Africa, graduates with specialised qualifications and those from fields such as engineering, actuarial science, and accounting tend to transition from higher education institutions to the labour market with limited challenges. Conversely, those from the humanities and social sciences (Mncayi and Dunga, 2016). This is so because the supply of the latter graduates tends to surpass the demand in the labour market hence taking a long time to get jobs. Consistent with this literature, Table 4.1 below shows that most of the unemployed graduate youth who partook in the study had the humanities and social sciences qualifications compared to the employed, who mainly graduated with qualifications in fields such as accounting, finance and computer studies).

**Table 4.1: Type of qualifications of unemployed graduate youth in focus group discussions convened**

Locality and Group	Number in Group	Average age (years)	Tertiary Qualification levels	Range of disciplines
<b>Gaborone</b>				
1. Unemployed young men	6	25	Diploma	<b>Humanities</b> (Media studies, English, broadcasting and journalism)
2. Unemployed young women	7	27	Certificate	<b>Health</b> (health care administration, occupational health and safety)
3. Unemployed young men	5	20	Certificate	<b>Social Sciences</b> (Sociology, social work, development studies)
4. Unemployed young women	7	23	Diploma	<b>Humanities</b> (fine art, media studies)
<b>Kanye</b>				
5. Unemployed young men	6	28	Diploma	<b>Social Sciences</b> (statistics, public administration, population studies)
6. Unemployed young women	7	24	Degree	<b>Humanities</b> (theology, English, media studies)
7. Unemployed young men	7	27	Degree	<b>Humanities</b> (French, media studies, journalism and broadcasting)
8. Unemployed young women	6	24	Certificate	<b>Social Sciences</b> (community development, social work)
9. Unemployed men	6	26	Diploma	<b>Business</b> (business administration, tourism)
<b>Oodi/Modipane</b>				
10. Unemployed young men	6	25	Diploma	Computer Studies
11. Unemployed young women	6	28	Certificate	<b>Education</b> (adult education, counselling, early childhood)

**Table 4.2: Type of qualifications of the employed who partook in graduate youth focus group discussions convened**

Locality Group	and	Number in Group	Average age (years)	Tertiary Qualification levels	Range of disciplines
<i>Gaborone</i>					
1.	Employed young men	6	24	Degree	<b>Science</b> (BSC Environmental Science, Civil Engineering and Geology)
2.	Employed young women	7	28	Degree	<b>Business</b> (Accounting and Finance)
3.	Employed young men	6	22	Certificate	Computer Studies
4.	Employed young women	7	23	Diploma	Humanities (African languages, French)

The patterns in Tables 4. and 4.2 can be attributed to a number of factors, including the perceived quality of the institutions offering such qualifications. In essence, in Botswana, most of the graduates with these lower-level qualifications attain them from the private higher education institutions that offer non-accredited courses and/or are perceived to offer low-quality education, and hence, they are not recognised by most employers (Makambe, 2012). Conversely, degrees acquired from the country’s three national universities or abroad, where the government sends some students for postgraduate studies, are recognised by employers. Thus, similar to Van de Rheede’s (2012) findings in South Africa, unemployed youth graduates with diplomas or certificates from institutions that employers perceive negatively are more likely to be unemployed than graduates from recognised institutions.

#### **4.2.3 Work experience**

Limited or lack of work experience has been cited among the prime reasons why young graduates fail to get jobs, as employers often opt for relatively older people who have sufficient experience in the labour market and industry (Pastore, Quintano, & Rocca, 2020; Speckesser, Carreras, & Sala, 2019; Verd, Barranco, & Bolívar, 2019; Vogel, 2015). Overall, similar to an observation made by Statistics South Africa (2020) on the high youth unemployment in South Africa:

*Some of the young work-seekers... do not possess sufficient skills and previous work experience demanded by employers in the labour market. The economy demands skilled and experienced work-seekers, which makes it difficult and lessens the chances for young people to find employment, which ultimately results in some losing hope of ever finding a job (thereby becoming discouraged work-seekers).*

The following excerpts from the FGDs with unemployed young graduates suggest that this above situation also prevails in Botswana:

*Organisations out there are always looking for many years of experience, just like saying 15 years of experience, and then you wonder about those who just completed*

*their studies recently. Where do we get all these years of experience? Just look at the adverts, all these ridiculous many years of experience. We have just finished our studies, for crying out loud, and this clearly shows that the labour market does not cater for us anymore. [Unemployed young woman in Gaborone, FGD 2]*

*We are unable to make livelihoods due to the high demands of the labour market. How do you expect me to get a job when the companies, even the same government who sent us to study, is side-lining us by requiring many years of experience for every vacancy advertised? [Unemployed young woman in Gaborone]*

*If they are not looking for 10 years of experience, some of these vacancies want someone with a Master's or PhD. We only have our [Bachelor's] degrees and cannot afford to further our studies. [Unemployed young male in Gaborone]*

*Work experience is a problem for us who have never worked. [Unemployed young man, Oodi/Modipane]*

The role of work experience was further affirmed by some key informants from the Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM) (the government department is mandated to recruit graduates for entry-level jobs within the government departments), as the following statements illustrate:

*We do not require experience for entry-level jobs within the government because we have realised that the labour market usually expects graduates to have many years of experience, which they do not have, resulting in a high unemployment rate. [Key informant 1, DPSM]*

*Lack of experience, which is usually in many years required from our graduates by the employers out there, is the reason why we offer them programmes such as internship to gain work experience and skills before joining the labour market. [Key informant 2, DPSM]*

Data that emerged during FGDs with employed graduate youth further showed the role that limited work experience plays in facilitating access to employment opportunities that are relevant to one's field of study or qualification:

*I am working here [as a teller in one of the wholesales in Gaborone]. However, I have a diploma in Community Development because all the posts advertised daily require years of experience, which I do not have. Therefore, instead of staying home and doing nothing, I decided to keep myself busy and make toiletry money*



*here because it is better than nothing. [Employed young woman graduate; Gaborone]*

By the same token, a young man who held a science degree and was employed in Gaborone said:

*Our challenge as graduates is lack of work experience, which is not our fault because we just completed our studies. Take, for instance, a post in my field saying they want someone with 20 years of experience. It is clearly created for those already in the system, not for us.*

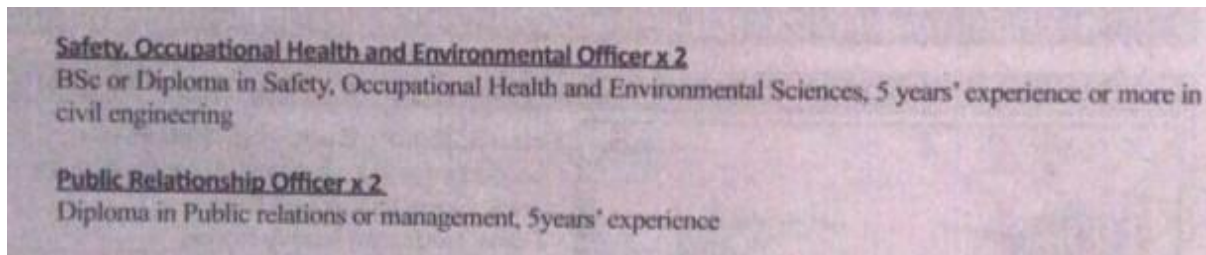
Limited work experience's role in young graduates' unemployment was also evident in some advertisements in popular newspapers and Facebook pages, such as *Mmegi* and *All Job Vacancies in Botswana*. These advertisements generally showed that most entry-level occupations required a minimum of at least three years of work experience. For example, the three years of work experience stated in Figure 4.1 would be an insurmountable feat for newly graduated youth who need entry-level employment opportunities.

**Figure 4.1 Job advert from Mmegi Newspaper, Vol. 37, No. 37, 16.10.2020**

ELECTRICIAN: TENABLE IN GABORONE (PERMANANT & PENSIONABLE) ...
Experience and qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Diploma in Electrical Engineering or NCC in Electrical services or relevant field.</li><li>•At least 3 years of work experience in an electrical services and system installation, maintenance and repair environment</li></ul>
Application Procedure: All applications accompanied by cover letter and curriculum vitae should be e-mailed to recruitment@bac.ac.bw (stating the position being applied for as the subject of the email) before close of business on Friday 20th September 2019.

Figures 4.2 and 4.3 display job advertisements requiring even more work experience (five years), which is not achievable for any youth who would have graduated recently. Even those who were placed in the government-sponsored internship and skills training programmes (an ALMP discussed in more detail in Chapter 6) would find it challenging to accomplish the five-year work experience as such programmes are generally of shorter duration.

**Figure 4.2 Job adverts from Mmegi Newspaper, Vol. 37, No. 37, 16.10.2020**



**Figure 4.3 Job advert from All Job Vacancies in Botswana (Facebook Page)**

VACANCY @ KGATLENG DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION  
REF: KG/D/1/19 05th February 2019  
Kgatleng District Development Foundation (KDDF) was established in 2006 to be run by members. The principal objective of the foundation is to promote Socio-economic Development and to foster Economic Empowerment Programmes for the vulnerable groups KDDF invites dynamic, self motivated and qualified individuals for the positions below. Preferences will be given to Botswana Citizens  
1. ADMINISTRATION OFFICER  
Requirements  
• 5 years experience  
• Diploma in Public or Business Administration

The excerpts and figures above confirm recent research findings that unemployed youth in Botswana often attribute their status to a lack of work experience and that many employers in the country are often reluctant to hire young graduates because they lack relevant work experience and require expensive on-the-job training (Gaetsewe, 2019; Mogomotsi & Madigela, 2017; Mokibelo & Seru, 2020; Nthomang & Diraditsile, 2016; Pheko & Molefhe, 2017; Sechele, 2016).

### **4.3 Social capital attributes**

Social capital can be social resources such as networks, social media, affiliations and associations that unemployed youth graduates can draw from to make livelihoods (Serrat, 2017). For example, an established body of research evidence continues to show that rather than formal channels like direct applications, employment agencies or responses to job advertisements, labour market searches can be effective through informal 'grapevine' channels and/or personal contacts with 'insider' information on available job opportunities (Zubovic, 2018). Indeed, as Altman, Mokomane, Wright, and Boyce (2012) found in South Africa, many employed young people reported that they found networking through friends and family to be the most effective way of seeking employment and, indeed, it was how they acquired their current jobs.

Consistent with the foregoing literature, the notion that it is not about 'what you know' in terms of skills and qualifications but 'whom you know' recurred in the FGDs with young graduates

in this study. Overall, it emerged that unemployed young graduates with limited social networks tend to have limited access to job opportunities. As the following statements suggest, there is a wide perception among many unemployed young graduates that their unemployment can be attributed to their limited social networks, such as not having family members or friends who could help connect them to the labour market:

*In the work industry, rules are bypassed, people hire their relatives. I know you; we grew up together, we are from the same village, you are my homeboy, or my homegirl [I can then make employment possible]. You won't get a job if you don't know anyone out there, and this [is] grow[ing]s daily. And by applying, you are just wasting your money and ink. [Unemployed male graduate in Gaborone]*

*It's not like you are hired because you have the qualifications. You are hired because I know we are from the same village, or I know you, we grew up together, like the application no longer works. [Unemployed male graduate in Kanye]*

The opposite seems to be true for those with wider social networks. For example, one young graduate woman employed in a private sector organisation said the following:

*My mum is friends with one lady who was in HR by then; apparently, they went to varsity together, and she is the one who connected me in the company upon completion of my degree at UB as jobs are very scarce. So ... and my degree worked to some extent because I wouldn't be here without one, of course. [Employed young graduate woman; Gaborone]*

*Upon hearing that my friend was working, I asked him to connect me with any job on the farm he worked at because it was getting tough on my side financially as I am the firstborn and head of the household at home and have to assist my younger siblings. It took him a month to convince his boss that I can assist him with record-keeping, which I am currently doing. [Employed young graduate man; Gaborone]*

The foregoing was, to some extent, also affirmed by some key informants. For example:

*Most of these government departments that want to bypass our system usually state that they prefer working with someone they know than getting a new person from our database who will have to be trained. If you recall, I told you that it's first come, first serve in our system for entrance positions (Senior officer, DPSM).*

Overall, as previously reported by Pheko and Molefhe (2017), it emerged that professional mentors and influential family members tend to enhance Botswana's young graduates'

employability through access to professional networks that can give them internships, attachments and jobs in their speciality areas. It has also often been argued that employers feel recruitment based on job referral networks gives them access to a bigger pool of applicants and tends to reduce screening costs while increasing economic returns. This is because the organisation spends less on advertisements and interviews with a pool of applicants for limited vacancies (Fernandez, Castilla, & Moore, 2000). Such assertions also emerged in this study (see Chapter 6), where some of the key informants lamented that some employers' were often suspicious of prospective employee's ability to perform the job simply because the employers either did not know the young graduate applicants personally or did not know anyone who could vouch for the applicant's ability to perform the job.

Another commonly used form of social network for employment opportunities is social media. The use of social media has greatly increased over the years in Botswana (Storm-Mathisen, 2019), and a number of platforms targeted at unemployed youth have emerged. The most popular are Facebook groups such as BW JOBS 4 GRADUATES, Botswana Jobs Network, BW Job Hunters, and All Job Vacancies in Botswana. Prospective employers, currently employed friends, former colleagues and relatives often alert young job seekers in their networks to vacancies advertised on these platforms. This study revealed that most young people use such platforms, especially Facebook and, to a lesser extent WhatsApp, to access information on job opportunities. The following comment is an example:

*I went through Facebook as usual and came across a vacancy looking for people with my qualifications and applied, and that's how I got my job. I am not saying it was that easy, though, because I stayed for about a year without working. Then, finally, when I wasn't even checking for any job advert because I was tired of disappointments, I found my job. [Employed young graduate woman; Gaborone]*

#### **4.4 Financial capital attributes**

Financial capital can be cash, credit, savings, and other economic assets, such as basic infrastructure, production equipment, and technologies (Scoones, 1998). However, unlike in many developed countries where unemployed young people are often provided with income assistance, even if conditional, to facilitate their entry into the labour market and/or improve their economic conditions (see, for example, Caliendo & Schmidl, 2016), youth in many African countries do not receive any social security benefits, and this severely constrains their financial capital (Altman et al., 2012; ILO, n.d.). This also emerged in this study, with the findings from the FGDs revealing that, like their counterparts in many African countries, young unemployed graduates in Botswana typically have no financial capital, and this hampers, among other things, their job search efforts and access to employment opportunities. This happens in a number of ways. For example, with entrepreneurship being one way of curbing

unemployment (Marshall & Samal, 2006), lack of or limited access to financial capital means that many young people lack essential collateral to start entrepreneurial activities. The following comments are an example:

*I do not have money to start a business. So, if I had money, I could be doing something and not going through this trauma [of being unemployed].*  
**[Unemployed young man, FGD 1, Gaborone]**

*I want to run a tuck shop to make ends meet but failing because I do not have start-up capital. With a tuckshop, I can venture into another business using its profits but money, my sister ... [it is a problem].*  
**[Unemployed young man, Kanye]**

The prevalence of the so-called ‘no money, no job’ practice was also revealed, and some of the young people stated that it was common for employers or human resources personnel to demand cash in exchange for jobs. Thus, with limited financial capital, many unemployed youths are disadvantaged by this practice, as these comments show:

*Aaah, what’s the point of applying because people are selling jobs out there? It’s rare to find legit people who would hire you based on your qualifications. Everybody is after money, and it’s every man for himself in this world, and for us, the poor, it’s worse. Look at all those who are working, the children of the tycoons [meaning rich people].*  
**[Unemployed young man, Gaborone]**

*People are selling jobs, making it hard for us to get them since we do not have the ‘moolah’ [money].*  
**[Unemployed young man, Gaborone]**

*Everything requires money these days. If it is not money for transport and printing our applications, it is money to pay for jobs. Isn’t it? They are for sale in our country.*  
**[Unemployed young graduate woman in Kanye]**

*It will take time to get jobs because we do not have the money to bribe employers.*  
**[Unemployed graduate young woman in Oodi/Modipane]**

*Another thing is that you have to ‘buy’ a job in Botswana. For you to work, you pay and get a job. If it’s a tender, we agree that we share the money if you give me a tender. You are in the office, and the other one is outside. I tell you that no, there is tender that will be advertised, so this means that you will give me this amount and take this amount then I sign for you that this thing of yours has been approved. So, you have to buy; it’s just like that in Botswana.*  
**[Unemployed young man, Gaborone]**

A number of African studies (Berge, Bjorvatn, & Tungodden, 2012; Sikenyi, 2017; Altman et al., 2012; De Lannoy, Graham, Patel, & Leibbrandt, 2018) have also found that unemployed youth often lack the financial resources to fulfil basic job application requirements, such as printing, scanning, copying and sending job applications, certificates and CVs as well as travelling to job interviews. This also emerged in this study, with the results showing that many unemployed graduate youth rely on internet cafés to type their CVs and cover letters and email their jobs applications. To the extent that these internet cafés provide for a fee (Samuel, Adjoa, & Manu, 2015), young graduates' limited financial capital hampers their job-seeking efforts and chances of securing employment opportunities, as the following excerpts illustrate:

*You will be looking for a job; it needs you to go to an internet café. We don't have money. Photocopying needs money, posting needs money, buying envelopes. This stationery is very expensive. Transport, emailing, creating an email address needs an internet café. We don't have those things. We don't have money, and we end up giving up and staying at home. [Unemployed young woman in Gaborone]*

*From here to Gaborone needs money for transport, where one can get something even if it is a piece job because it is a city with lots of opportunities unlike here in the village. Sometimes it is even hard to make a copy of Omang [ID document] for 1 Pula [equivalent to \$US 0.081]. [Unemployed young man, Kanye]*

These views were also expressed by employed graduate youth. For example:

*Getting a job is not easy, especially when you do not have money for things like copies and transport when searching for opportunities out there. I suffered during the hunting period and always resorted to asking council employees to assist me with copies to save the coins I have for transport going out and walk back because I did not have enough. [Employed young man in Gaborone]*

*Of course, money was a challenge to the point where I nearly gave up on searching due to fatigue caused by walking in the sun daily, but persevered till I got a job. Being unemployed is not easy because everything needs money. [Employed young woman Gaborone]*

Access to information and communications technology services seems to be more difficult for young graduates living in non-urban localities, thus aggravating their unemployment situation relative to their urban counterparts. Furthermore, it emerged that the situation is often compounded by employers who require the documents to be hand-delivered as this often entails transport costs for the young people. In such instances, unemployed youth in rural centres

and/or from low-income family backgrounds often miss prospective job opportunities because of their relatively higher likelihood of having limited financial capital. The following statements illustrate this:

*Staying in a village can be a disadvantage, more especially when you are looking for a job. Imagine being called for an interview in Gaborone, and you give up because of lack of transport from here. I have experienced that before with no one to help as everyone claimed to be broke, and talking about it reopens old wounds. [Unemployed young woman, Oodi/Modipane]*

*Truth be told at times, opportunities are there but lack of money to get to them is a limiting factor. For instance, imagine you hear of a freelance job in Gaborone and am here in Kanye. How will I get there? [unemployed young man, Kanye]*

#### **4.5 Physical capital attributes**

Physical capital refers to the basic infrastructure, tools and equipment required to make a living (Allison & Ellis, 2001). This includes transport and communication systems, shelter, water and sanitation systems, and energy. Acquiring physical capital is, to a large extent, reliant on access to financial capital. However, according to He and Ahmed (2020), physical capital positively influences agricultural livelihoods, ranging from farmhouses and feeding containers to a car for logistics. Similarly, Revuelto and Simón (2015) state that physical capital such as warehouses, offices, a car, computers and machinery are essential for entrepreneurs embarking on business ventures.

Against the foregoing, it can be argued that the financial constraints faced by unemployed graduate youth in Botswana, in turn, make it difficult to acquire physical capital that can be utilised in job searches or to venture into entrepreneurship activities, including those offered as part of ALPMs (this is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6). The following excerpts illustrate:

*They are asking for boreholes. No one in my family has one, even on our neighbouring farms, because it is expensive to dig and build one. I cannot afford that because I am not working. [Unemployed young man, Kanye]*

*To get the youth money [youth development fund], they ask if you have a house ...that can be used as security in case you fail to pay the loan. I am still under my parent's roof and cannot use theirs. [ Unemployed young woman, Gaborone]*

*If it's not the land, it's fenced farms and kraals. Where am I going to get the money to do those? I wanted the goats and failed because of the many things they wanted from me. [Unemployed young woman, Oodi/Modipane]*

#### **4.6 Natural capital attributes**

Natural capital refers to natural resources people can use for their livelihood, such as land, water, wild animals and birds (Allison & Ellis, 2001). Such capital can be a source of livelihood, especially for those in rural areas or into farming (He and Ahmed, 2022). In Kenya, for instance, there is an increasing trend for educated youth to venture into farming as an alternative livelihood strategy in the face of the uncertainty surrounding formal employment (Mwaura, 2017). These unemployed graduates venture into farming to make livelihoods because they have access to land. However, as with financial and physical capital, data from the FGDs with unemployed graduate youth revealed that these young people typically do not have access to natural capital. For example:

*I know about government programmes for us but it is hard to benefit because of requirements such as land, I don't have one here in the city, and they expect me to be having one in the village? [Unemployed young man, Gaborone]*

*I am too young [22-year-old] to be having my own land since you know that it takes years to be given a piece of land in this country...my parents do not own land either, where am I going to get it, we are using my grandparents farm shared among the extended family and this makes it hard for me to apply for young farmer's fund. [Unemployed young woman, Oodi/Modipane]*

*...the issue is the land they require when we want to apply for young farmers fund, we don't have it. [Unemployed young man, Kanye]*

Access to natural capital by youth in Botswana is complicated by, among other things, the fact that the land acquisition process in the country is a long process. Although Botswana citizens are entitled to be allocated free tribal land, it can take at least a decade for one to be allocated land, meaning that young graduates in the 20-29 years age group are often further down the list of those to be allocated land even if they apply soon after graduating. Furthermore, while one can also choose to buy land, this option is often feasible only for those who are employed and have some form of regular income to be considered by financial lending institutions for property loans (Guruwo, 2018). To this end, young graduates' access to natural capital in Botswana is further hindered by their limited access to financial capital, which aggravates their unemployment status.



## 4.7 Discussion and conclusion

This chapter explored the general socio-economic profile of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana in comparison, where possible, with those of their employed counterparts. Using sustainable livelihood capitals as the analysis framework, the chapter showed that by virtue of being graduates, all the study participants possessed some form of human capital, with the lowest educational qualification being a certificate. Most of the young unemployed graduates, however, tend to lack in terms of other important human capital assets, namely type of qualifications and work experience. Contrary to their employed counterparts, unemployed graduate youth had qualifications in the humanities and social sciences and limited work experience. This is somehow consistent with the standard narrative that youth unemployment in Botswana is partly attributable to young people's lack of employable skills in relation to the structure of the country's economy. Mupimpila and Narayana (2009, p. 10) described it as follows:

*The structural characteristics of the Botswana economy are such that employment creation is not easy. More obviously, the areas where the economy has a natural advantage in production, such as diamond mining and commercial livestock farming, are not by nature very labour-intensive. Moreover, in contrast with many other developing countries, arable agriculture, where labour-intensive techniques may still be an efficient method of production, continues to show little potential for significant further development.*

The findings in this chapter and the statement above also suggest that young people's situation is compounded by their lack of skills that hamper their absorption into formal wage employment, but that could also help them venture into self-employment and create jobs such as entrepreneurship, project management, research and development. Unfortunately, like many of its African counterparts, Botswana has low entrepreneurial development, which is concerned with cultivating entrepreneurial skills and knowledge, focused mainly on young people (Josiah & Themba, 2015; Makgosa, Iyanda, Phambuka-Nsimbi, & Themba, 2013). Indeed, the only course at the UB focused on entrepreneurship is the Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development module offered as part of the Bachelor of Business Administration course. In essence, therefore, this type of training is only available to students enrolled in this particular degree programme. Other institutions in Botswana offering entrepreneurship courses are the Universities of ABM and Ba Isago, the Botswana Accountancy College and the Gaborone Institute of Professional Studies. However, despite their availability, these institutions have low enrolment and graduation rates. For instance, in 2017, there were less than 200 Entrepreneurship graduates from all these institutions combined (HRDC, 2018).

In contrast, tertiary institutions in other African countries like South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria offer focused entrepreneurship courses. For example, South Africa offers these at the Universities of Johannesburg, Free State, Pretoria and Witwatersrand. The country also has the South Africa Institute of Entrepreneurship, which has campuses across the country and only focuses on imparting entrepreneurship skills. Furthermore, even though in-depth entrepreneurship training in Botswana can also be acquired through institutions charged with the development of entrepreneurial capacity, specifically the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) and the Local Enterprise Authority (Josiah & Themba, 2015), there are various access challenges for young people, as discussed in Chapter 6.

What clearly emerged from this chapter is that majority of the young unemployed graduates are constrained in terms of social, financial, natural and physical capital. Similar to the common finding in much of the African literature on youth unemployment is that young people often lack the financial resources to undertake effective job searches such as printing and/or sending applications, preparing and updating CVs and transport for travelling to job interviews (De Lannoy et al., 2018; Rogito, Makhanu, Mombinya, & Nyamota, 2020). Limited financial capital also clearly hampers many young graduate youth's potential to venture into self-employment or entrepreneurship, as does limited or lack of access to natural or physical capital. It can be assumed that those young people who manage to infiltrate the entrepreneurship sector without external funding mainly concentrate on businesses that require low capital. Limited social capital also clearly plays a role in the graduate youth unemployment landscape in Botswana. The overall finding in this regard is that those with limited social networks tend to take longer to transition to the labour market after completing their studies. In addition, social networks can help with accessing job information or getting a job. In the words of Trimble and Kmec (2011, p. 165), "It is not what you know, but whom you know", as discussed in Chapter 2.

Therefore, the chapter's overall conclusion is that unemployed graduate youth in Botswana have limited livelihood assets apart from selected human capital assets. With this conclusion, what are these young people's main livelihood challenges, and what strategies do they adopt to cope with these challenges? This is the focus of the next chapter.

# **CHAPTER 5: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF UNEMPLOYED GRADUATE YOUTH IN BOTSWANA: LIVELIHOOD CHALLENGES AND COPING STRATEGIES**

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## **5.1 Introduction**

The preceding Chapter 4 explored the socio-economic profile of unemployed young graduates in Botswana with a particular focus on their livelihood assets. The chapter revealed that overall and by virtue of being graduates, the young people studied had their educational attainment as their main form of human capital. At the same time, they lacked concerning qualifications, employability skills, and work experience. Unemployed graduate youth were also shown to have limited social capital relative to their employed counterparts, as well as limited financial, natural, and physical capital.

Building on the key findings from Chapter 4, this chapter draws on data from the focus group discussions (FGDs) with unemployed graduate youth to explore the lived experiences of these young people with a focus on their livelihoods challenges and coping strategies. In this way, the chapter aims to achieve the study's second and fourth specific objectives (exploring the lived experiences and illuminating the main livelihood challenges and strategies employed by unemployed graduate youth). In so doing, the subjective meaning that the unemployed graduate youth attach to their unemployment experiences is also highlighted, thus addressing the study's third specific objective. In terms of outline, the chapter begins by highlighting the young graduates' perceptions of the leading causes of unemployment in Botswana before exploring their experiences of being unemployed. Thereafter, the livelihood strategies adopted by these young people to mitigate the negative impacts of unemployment are discussed, together with the limitations of these strategies.

## **5.2 Unemployed graduate youth's perceptions of the causes of unemployment**

Studies on unemployment are mostly concerned with its impact on the economy and politics and much less on individuals' subjective involvement and experiences. However, understanding the nonmonetary and subjective dimensions of the unemployed is important given the range of economic, social, psychological, and health challenges it can cause. Dale (2014) asserted that unemployed youths' lived experiences can effectively capture the intrinsic values of having a paid job and the personal feelings it causes when not having a paid job. To this end, unemployed youth in this study were asked to share their subjective meaning of unemployment based on their lived experiences. Moreover, to set the stage for this discussion, the employed and unemployed youth were asked to share what they thought were the main reasons for youth unemployment in Botswana. Consistent with the literature, most of their

responses identified demand-side factors such as limited work experience, skills mismatch, inadequate labour market demand, stigma towards certain jobs, perceived low wages, nonchalance, social media overreliance and lack thereof of financial capital. These factors are discussed in the following subsections.

### **5.2.1 Inadequate labour market demand and/or saturation**

The view that ‘there are no jobs’ was a recurring theme in the FGDs with the young people in this study, reaffirming the issue of skills mismatch discussed in Chapter 1. The following are examples of comments concerning the belief that there are no jobs:

*People will go to school to study for degrees, and others and come sit home because there are no jobs. Even if you are educated, there are no jobs in Botswana; that’s why many people would go to countries like South Africa to look for jobs there. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]*

*The other problem is the saturation of the market. More people have graduated before us, and we came and joined them. More are still coming. They will join the group to increase the number of unemployed people while the job opportunities are not even enough for all the graduates. [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

*There are no jobs. Even if you apply, you will find that 200 people applied for that job, and it is something below your qualification. Now, what about the jobs for the degrees we did, nothing. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Kanye]*

These views were also held by young people who were employed at the time of the study, as the following comments show:

*Honestly speaking, there are no jobs out there because it took me [2½] years to get this job after graduating, which is not even what I wanted. [Employed young woman in Gaborone]*

*Our government and the private sector are failing to create jobs, hence the reason why most graduates spend years languishing home without any success of finding a job in line with their qualifications. [Employed young man in Gaborone]*

The above excerpts from both employed and unemployed graduate youth highlight that limited job opportunities contribute to a more extended transition from school to work in Botswana, a finding also consistent with previous literature (e.g. Lesetedi, 2018).

### 5.2.2 Stigma towards certain jobs

A general societal stigma is associated with some occupations, mainly blue-collar jobs (Biswas, 2018; Hossain et al., 2018). In essence, social stratification renders blue-collar jobs as the lowest in terms of prestigious occupations. Simultaneously, the media also often portrays these workers somewhat condescendingly (for example, uneducated and unarticulated), which presents such jobs as less attractive to young unemployed graduates (Lucas, 2011). Lucas (2011) further argued that low levels of agency and autonomy characterise blue-collar jobs because all the power and decisions are vested with the employers. For example, some employers terminate contracts because of the perception that there are many unskilled and semi-skilled unemployed persons looking for jobs. This situation dissuades most educated youth without jobs to take blue-collar jobs.

There is a general perception in Botswana that white-collar jobs are for the educated and blue-collar and/or elementary jobs are for ‘failures’ with little or no education. Influenced by such reasoning, it emerged that some young people only consider or apply for jobs that match their educational qualifications. The study established that at times unemployed youth considered some occupations to be below their assumed educational status or dignity. As such, they are reluctant to apply for such jobs because of the ‘what will people say’ syndrome, as the statements below illustrate:

*Yes, my sister, there are no jobs, but I will never work as a security guard. Imagine what people will say and the shame I will have to endure. A whole degree holder looking after buildings! I would rather endure the insults at home since they say that I am not serious about looking for a job. [Unemployed young graduate man in Oodi/Modipane]*

*As for me, my sister, no matter how hard life can get, I will never be a maid and clean for my age mates. My mother would disown me for dragging her name in the mud; a whole teacher’s daughter working as a maid. [Unemployed graduate young woman in Kanye]*

This thinking is propelled by the belief that the educated deserve only office jobs and those with lesser qualifications should only do elementary jobs. The following statements explain this notion:

*Most youth want to work in offices under the air conditioner, especially us with degrees ... as for me, anything that comes my way is okay because no money will be written that it’s from the office, drought relief programme, security money. Let’s stop this mentality of ‘what will people say’ because it will lead youth to stay for*

*decades unemployed, especially us from poor backgrounds without anyone to pull strings for us. [Employed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

*Sometimes youth, you know, tend to say 'Aah, me I can't be a petrol attendant'; 'Me I can't work in Choppies [an national retail shop founded in Botswana]'; 'Me, I can't work in a farm like that'. See they should have a room of disappointment. You know life is hard ... life does not play; it's not a child's game. That's the problem; it's like you feel you can't be a petrol attendant with a degree; so, you are going to stay home and suffer the consequences of you being picky with what you'll do with your time. There is some peer pressure from friends you know, and friends will be laughing, petrol attendant, you know. [Employed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

Consistent with previous literature (e.g. Yilma, 2016), the foregoing excerpts show that some unemployed graduate youth would rather remain unemployed than accept offers for blue-collar jobs that they believe are below their standard and shunned by society. Blue-collar jobs such as being a petrol attendant and security officer are, on the other hand, often associated with those who are not educated.

### **5.2.3 Perceived low wages**

Related to the previous point is a perception by some young people that they are being exploited by organisations that only pay the stipulated national minimum wage. As one unemployed young woman in Gaborone said, “*the minimum wage is meagre ... it is better to be home than work hard for nothing*”. To this end, some unemployed young people referred to the minimum wage as a factor promoting unemployment and hindering them from earning productive livelihoods. For the 2019/2020 financial year, the Ministry of Employment, Labour Productivity and Skills Development stipulated that the minimum wage for the lowest-paid person should be P6.01 (equivalent to about US\$ 0,54) per hour (Ramokoka, 2019). These unemployed young people preferred being home to earning P800 (about US\$72) at the end of the month, while the prices of all the basic necessities escalated with the increased cost of living. Their main contention was that P800 is not enough to pay for basic necessities such as rent, transport, food, water and electricity. Those who aspired to be entrepreneurs argued that they could not even save with such low earnings. The lamentations about the living wage are captured in the following statements:

*Also, I blame the government for the minimum wage; as old as I am, I cannot work at Choppies and earn 800 bucks for a month. What am I going to do with P800? You can't do fokol [slang for 'nothing']? Now you see that working is also a waste of time and energy because at the end of the day you can't even show people what you are working for. [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

*Again, you get to spend more than you get at the end of the month working for these companies adhering to the minimum wages because to them, it's a gain. You need lunch, money for transport, rent, clothes, toiletry, just to name a few, for you to be able to go to work, and then get a salary that is way less than what you spent; hence, the reason why we are home. [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

Perceived low wages and employment disincentives were also mentioned in some of the FGDs with employed youth. Some of these young people shared that they were not happy in their current jobs but only stayed as an alternative to being idle at home. The following statement illustrates this:

*No, I am not happy with this job because the wages are low, and I am still applying for my dream job that corresponds with my degree. [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

High inflation has been reported as an issue of concern for the government of Botswana over the years (Charumbira, 2021), and this is underscored in the foregoing sub-section, with some unemployed graduate youth basically lamenting that low wages offered by some jobs are way below inflation and hence the high costs of goods and services such as food, transport, accommodation render such jobs unworthy.

#### **5.2.4 Nonchalance and social media overreliance**

Flowing from tendencies, attitudes or practices engendered by selective job-seeking, the views expressed in the FGDs with both unemployed and employed youth suggested that various forms of nonchalance, also construed as laziness or indolence, were prevalent among unemployed job-seeking youth and could explain their status. This is in line with previous research (Dawson & Fouksman, 2020; Du Toit, De Witte, Rothmann, & Van den Broeck, 2018; ILO, 2012) that highlighted that unemployed persons are sometimes perceived as lazy and not really exerting themselves to find employment. Some of the young graduates in this study argued that some of their peers were so lazy that they expected social networks to apply for jobs on their behalf through social media. The following statement is an example:

*We are lazy, ma'am, myself included, because we no longer go out there to look for jobs and waste time on Facebook waiting for people to post job vacancies. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]*

Some young people are proactive and submit their resumes to social media groups as, discussed in Section 4.4, as part of their job-seeking strategies. It seems, however, that nonchalance sometimes creeps in when the job seekers start to simply submit their qualifications on social

media and do not explore other avenues. The statement below captures a young person's view on this:

*My sister, nowadays people are lazy. Do you have a Facebook account? Because if you do, you would know what I am talking about ... You know, I don't know if unemployment makes us lose some wires in our brains or what [giggles]. Just two days ago, no, it's a day; I saw about five posts, people that I know posting their qualifications and wrote that they would be following the comments. Why don't they take that time to go out there and drop their applications in the Chinese shops and Choppies ... you cannot get a job through posting on Facebook. I had to wake up and walk for kilometres looking for a job for a couple of months before getting this job. When people see you driving, they think you were born with a silver spoon, not knowing the suffering endured before. [Employed young graduate woman in Gaborone]*

### **5.2.5 'A thigh for a job.'**

It emerged in the FGDs with the young people that demands for sex in exchange for jobs ('A thigh for a job') was a prevalent practice and that men holding positions of power and authority expect young unemployed women to have sex with them in exchange for jobs. The following statements illustrate this:

*Ma'am, yoh! [exhaling] Being a woman is a curse in this era of unemployment because these men see us as their sex toys ... taking advantage of us. Wherever we go, they want us to sleep with them to get a job. There was a time I went to drop an application at one of the reputable parastatals in Gaborone, and the CEO told me to my face that I have to sleep with him in order for me to get a job because he has the power to give me a high paying job. I could not do it; hence I am still here, but at times I regret not taking his offer because I could be far in life. [Unemployed young woman in Gaborone]*

*It's either you sleep with these sex starved men or remain jobless like for a very long time, I tell you. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]*

Some of the young women in the study shared accounts of human resource personnel, managers and CEOs calling them after interviews. Believing they finally found a job, their short-lived thrill would be shattered by the caller demanding sex before being employed, or telling them to "continue staying home". Some participants also mentioned that they knew some employed friends who got jobs because they eventually succumbed to this unethical practice.



Although young men are typically not affected by this practice, they verified the allegations, stating that it meant it was easier for their female counterparts to transition from school to work. For example, one participant said the following:

*Girls are better because they can easily get jobs through thighs ... when you apply and see yourself with girls during the interview, just know that your chances of getting a job are slim. Girls just have to sleep with these big guys [employers] to get jobs that they don't [even] qualify for. [Unemployed young graduate man in Kanye]*

### **5.2.6 Financial constraints**

As discussed earlier, financial capital enhances employment by enabling individuals to fulfil basic job application processes, such as printing or sending applications, preparing and/or updating their CVs, travelling to job interviews, and generating entrepreneurship start-up capital. However, upon realising that their dreams of better job opportunities were not realisable, some unemployed graduate young people reported that they had dreams of embarking on various entrepreneurship ventures, but limited or lack of financial capital was often a barrier. The following excerpts highlight the views of unemployed graduates on financial constraints:

*I don't have money to start a business, so if I had money, I could be doing something and not going through this trauma [of being unemployed].*

**[Unemployed graduate young man in Gaborone]**

*I want to run a tuck shop to make ends meet but failing because I don't have start-up capital. With a tuckshop, I can venture into another business using its profits, but money my sister ... [is a problem]. [Unemployed graduate young man in Gaborone]*

*Registering a company requires money, and the same goes for applying for tenders. I have experience in construction and paving because I grew up around my father, who was a builder. So, without money, I cannot shift to construction since I am failing to get a job with my degree. [Unemployed graduate young man in Gaborone]*

Financial capital as a barrier to entrepreneurship was more prevalent among young men in the focus groups in Gaborone than in Kanye and Oodi/Modipane. This might be attributed to Gaborone being the economic hub with many business opportunities, which further influences these young people to develop an interest in this type of employment. Gómez-Araujo and Bayon (2017) agreed that the region and place where individuals reside are crucial factors that

explain the differences in entrepreneurship activity among individuals. They further highlighted that young people in urban areas are more likely to pursue entrepreneurship than their rural counterparts. This is because urban agglomeration is the preferred setting for conducting business. It also offers a more significant division of labour, better infrastructure, more accessible and cheaper access to markets and a higher density of customers (Gómez-Araujo & Bayon, 2017).

Furthermore, based on the FGDs with unemployed graduate youth and the excerpts above, men tend to be more interested in entrepreneurship than women. The gender gap in entrepreneurship could be due to women's structural disadvantages in acquiring resources for starting and owning a business, as culturally, men are said to be best in business, and women are homemakers (Thébaud, 2010). Additionally, women are said not to think of themselves as entrepreneurs and to hold themselves to a stricter standard of competence than similarly situated men (Thébaud, 2010). The gender difference in self-assessment further accounts for a significant portion of the gender gap in entrepreneurship after controlling resources (Thébaud, 2010).

Overall, this section's findings on the perceptions of unemployed and employed young graduates on the causes of unemployment in Botswana are somewhat consistent with the literature. Factors such as lack of job opportunities, stigma towards certain jobs, low wages and a thigh for a job emanated from the FGDs with the young graduates.

### **5.3 Unemployed graduate youth's lived experiences**

To explore young unemployed graduates' lived experiences and the subjective meaning they attach to being unemployed, the following question was posed during their FGDs: *What is your experience of being unemployed as a young graduate?* In response, the unemployed graduate youth expressed an array of issues that were largely negative and that include, in no particular order of priority, loss of self-esteem, psychosocial effects, and various forms of social exclusion.

#### **5.3.1 Loss of self-esteem**

*I am less of a human being; I have no dignity. [Unemployed young graduate male in Kanye]*

*I feel like nothing because my peers are out there working, and I am languishing in poverty with all the qualifications I have. [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

The above statements are examples of how some of the unemployed graduate youth responded when asked how they felt about being unemployed. Not only do these comments suggest a

widespread sense of weariness and pessimism among the young unemployed graduates, but they also reflect some loss of self-esteem. Some even question the reason for their existence. Some believed unemployment humiliated them by stripping them of their human dignity or whatever was left of it. For instance, some young women shared how they could not afford to buy bare essentials such as toiletries and often had to use toilet paper as sanitary pads during their menstrual periods. The following comments show what they experience:

*You know what ... I never thought I could use toilet paper in my life as a pad, but here am I using it due to lack of cash to buy pads. [Unemployed woman in Oodi/Modipane]*

*Where have you seen a man beg but now just because we are not working, we have to beg people to spare us coins to at least buy fat cakes as we can go for days without food, and like for me, my parents are at the village, and I came to Gaborone to look for a job. It has been two years now, and my hosts no longer want me to the point of telling me that I am useless. My age mates are working, and all I know is to waste time with friends all day long. Sister, by that time I would be walking around dropping applications even though I never get regrets nor interviews. [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

*As a man, you are the provider, not the other way round. I should be taking care of my parents and siblings since I am done schooling. And due to lack of jobs, I have to endure the shame of depending on them. [Unemployed young graduate man in Oodi/Modipane]*

The above suggests that much of the loss of self-esteem is linked to the financial constraints that come with being unemployed. However, data from the FGDs further suggested that it also affects young people's self-image; for example:

*How can we not be rejected during interviews when we can't even afford decent clothes, shoes and neat hair. [Unemployed young graduate woman, Gaborone]*

*At times when nobody remembered me, I can go for months without a roll nor a body spray and, at times worse, even the body lotion. And as you know, it is very hot in our country, leading to sweating excessively and body odour, which is embarrassing. The day I will never forget was when I approached a beautiful girl here in our village, and she told me to my face that 'Mr your smell is making me dizzy', and up to today I can't face her due to embarrassment. This could have never happened if I was working. [Unemployed young graduate man in Kanye]*

### 5.3.2 Psychological effects

Consistent with the literature (Ayhan, 2016; Bijlsma, Wilson, Tarkiainen, Myrskylä, & Martikainen, 2019; De Quidt & Haushofer, 2018), it emerged that some unemployed young people feel various forms of pressure and stress, leading some to suicidal thoughts. In addition, pessimism, fatalism, and nihilism (a psychological state in which individuals experience a loss of meaning and purpose in life) have also been found to be prevalent among the unemployed (Cloete, 2015). As one unemployed young graduate man in Oodi/Modipane said, “*I have thought of committing suicide many times because I am useless and tired of being a burden to other people*”.

Some stated that they inadvertently become jealous of their employed counterparts, who are glorified and respected in their families and communities, while they are seen as failures. For instance, an unemployed young woman in Gaborone said, “*Unemployment puts us under unnecessary pressure to the extent that we get emotional and develop hatred towards our friends and cousins [who are] working*”.

### 5.3.3 Social exclusion by families

Many young people expressed feelings of social exclusion, stigmatisation, condescension, and humiliation, as many of their families, friends, and communities saw them as lazy and worthless. They expressed this as follows:

*Unemployment makes you to be looked down upon by people, even a child, just because you are not working. You have nothing. A child can see you as not good for anything. You are looked down upon by everyone, even those ones who were not supposed to look down upon you to be honest based on our qualifications. You will be seen as something else, and some even stating that you are not serious and doing it on purpose and not really looking for a job. Do you know how much it hurts to hear those when you know that you are constantly dropping applications, doing it all? It's really not nice, ma'am. [Unemployed young graduate man in Kanye]*

*I am afraid of sleeping during the day. When a person comes here and asks where I am, they are told: “He is that side sleeping. He is always sleeping”. Even when I have a headache, I would instead sneak out and sleep under a tree because when they find me in bed during the day, they start saying that my job is to sleep and I don't want to work. [Unemployed young graduate man in Kanye]*

*Even if you find a plate of food on the table, you cannot start eating. You just have to walk around there until you are told to take it and eat because sometimes we are*

*not given food. We are seen as a burden to those who are working and paying the bills. [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

The above excerpts suggest that unemployment strips unemployed graduate youth of their free will and dignity, rendering them strangers in their homes who are also not serious about looking for jobs. This exacerbates the feeling of social exclusion and alienation by families. The following subsections discuss ways in which the apparent mistreatment manifest.

### ***Exclusion in decision-making***

Many young unemployed people felt that they are often denied their traditionally inherited decision-making status within their families because they are unemployed. The following statement attests to this: *We are not treated as humans in our families just because we are not working.* This was a common utterance made during the FGDs.

Deliberate exclusions from family meetings where important decisions are made were also often brought up. The general view was that only the employed were allowed to talk in these meetings, as shown in the following excerpts:

*You can't even say your opinions during meetings. When you try to say something, you are told that you are not working. They say that they are still talking. If Dineo is the one working, you are told to wait for her to speak, and you are pushed aside. If you are not working, you don't have a say. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Oodi/Modipane]*

*You don't get recognised during family meetings. You don't have a say, and you are not a person to them. Even children [reference to those younger than them] just because they are working, they are more respected than us and listened to. They make decisions on our behalf. This life is not fair when you have nothing, I tell you .... [Unemployed young graduate man in Oodi/Modipane]*

The above excerpts, which suggest that many young unemployed graduates are often excluded from decision-making in their families because they are not working., reflect similar findings made by Cloete (2015) and Honwana (2014) that in most African cultures working and being independent graduates' young people to adulthood. This might explain why those graduates who partook in the FGDs shared that those they consider to be children and are employed are involved in decision-making during family meetings by virtue of having a job.

### ***Unappreciated domestic work***

Despite the unpleasant experiences within their families, some of the unemployed youth recognised the need to be helpful by performing various domestic chores. However, most

complained about the apparent lack of appreciation for their efforts in this regard. With typically no words of support, gratitude or recognition, many of the young unemployed graduates felt that their domestic contributions were too inadequate to merit recognition. The following comments are examples:

*Just because you are home, they make you their unpaid maid. When you don't do their laundry, you are told that you spend the day home doing nothing and consuming what they are buying. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]*

*When you stay at home, it's like you are the maid of the house. Whenever those who are working come home from the city, it's as if you are their house helper. You will be jumping around cooking for them, cleaning their rooms, then wash the dishes. As for them, they are [like] queens [and kings], and I am the maid whole day because I am not working and eating their food. They buy electricity and everything. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Kanye]*

### ***Lack of family support***

Unemployment can cause a variety of health concerns, and the most notable are depression and stress-related psychosomatic disorders such as headaches, stomach ulcers, dermatitis, and heart diseases (Cloete, 2015). As such, job seekers and unemployed persons need supportive environments, especially from their families (Cloete, 2015). However, some of the FGD participants were not pleased with the lack of support from family members, even those with the 'right' networks. Some of these working family members were seen as jealous and having a fear of losing their monopoly on 'success' by helping and supporting the job-seeking initiatives of their younger kin. The following are comments on this topic:

*Ma'am, you can't be helped by family members. For a relative to help, it is very rare, I tell you. They will tell you that I also have children or things are tough for me when you can see that this man or woman does not have any challenges based on their spending and lifestyle. We hustle for ourselves, ma'am because they [family members] don't want to see another person progressing. They are happy when they see us begging them for coins. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]*

*You know what, we have those relatives who can help us get jobs, but they will never ever help us because of jealousy. There are no families these days; it's just competitors. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Oodi/Modipane]*

To some extent, the above claims came from those unemployed young graduates staying with their families, friends and relatives. Moreover, most unemployed graduate youths claim to have experienced the same treatment at some point in their lives whenever they are in contact with their families and friends, even though they are not staying together.

#### **5.3.4 Social exclusion by friends**

Some unemployed youth, especially young women, mentioned that they were often unable to participate in or help with important milestone events for their family and friends because of their financial constraints. The essential milestones include contributing for special occasions such as baby showers, bridal showers and birthday parties. They lamented that this often leads to strained or lost relationships and general feelings of isolation. For example, one unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone stated, *“If there is a ‘baby shower’ and I don’t contribute, I am a bad friend, I have to look for the P500 [equivalent to US\$ 45] or else the friendship ends”*. Another unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone also shared his view as follows:

*The friends we had at varsity ditched us because they are now working, and we don’t have anything in common as they discuss building houses, cars and we are here stuck at home broke. We are no longer in the same league as them, not that I blame them because I, for one, don’t want to be felt sorry for and make another person feel bad for their achievements just because of me.*

#### **5.3.5 Social exclusion by the community**

In many socio-economic and cultural contexts across the globe, individuals earn the community’s respect by being economically active, independent from family, and contributing financially to society through tax (Du Toit et al., 2018). However, with such community expectations, many young unemployed people claimed that their unemployment has led to social exclusion by the community, leading them to not be recognised as adults, name-calling, shaming, unfounded accusations, or being suspected of having sinister motives. The following subsections discuss this further.

##### ***Non-recognition as adults***

As in other cultural and traditional contexts, adulthood brings with it expectations and responsibilities (Strachan, 2015). In many African societies, adulthood has economic and financial demands that can only be fulfilled by the employed or economically independent. It determines other factors, such as status, respect, marriage, social recognition and inclusion in the family and/or society (Strachan, 2015). The high unemployment levels in Africa have led to terms such as ‘waithood’ to refer to a prolonged period of suspension between childhood and adulthood (Honwana, 2014). Despite the unemployed youth having outgrown childhood, they are socially not recognised as adults because they are neither financially independent nor socio-economically active. For instance, in West Africa, the term ‘youthman’ is used to refer

to individuals who have not achieved social adulthood despite their actual age (Honwana, 2014). In Botswana, the terms used instead for ‘youthman’ is ‘boys’ for men and ‘girls’ for women. It should be noted that age is secondary for social recognition and transition into adulthood, as demonstrated in the following comments by unemployed young persons:

*We are treated like children just because we are not working, and if you want to embarrass yourself, try to talk during family meetings as you will be told to keep quiet and listen to the elders. And by that time, by ‘elders’, they are referring to someone who is five years younger than you just because he is independent and contributing financially to family functions. [Unemployed young graduate man in Oodi/Modipane]*

*Have you ever been to a family gathering such as a funeral or wedding with the so-called working and independent ones who are married and you get allocated hard physical tasks that require manual labour and hear an old man saying those are the jobs for ‘boys’, men [married] have other important things to take care of. You would wish the ground could open up and swallow you instantly due to being shamed in front of your younger cousins and brothers. [Unemployed young graduate man in Kanye]*

Furthermore, the unemployed young people highlighted that they are not treated or regarded as men and women in society because they are not contributing economically. This leads to them being called lazy dependents who do not want to be responsible citizens. This leads to ostracisation as communities take pride in the employed. Conversely, their younger counterparts are apparently praised and respected consistently by elders in their communities. Whether employed or not, certain societal expectations apply to every adult in the community, such as participating in community ceremonies. Unemployed youth complained of failing to ‘fit in’ in terms of not being invited or honouring invitations such as baby showers and wedding celebrations where they are expected to buy a present or make a monetary contribution. It is the norm to buy presents when receiving invitations for ceremonies such as weddings. The ‘not fitting in’ sentiment was expressed thus:

*We struggle to fit in, in the society in terms of contributing to weddings and funerals, and we can’t even go out for entertainment to club or chill at social gatherings with our friends because we usually don’t have entrance fees nor money to buy drinks. And we don’t want to depend on our friends to constantly buy for us because they get tired as well. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]*

A young woman in Oodi/Modipane intimated that they are made to feel like children in their families because of their unemployed state, saying:



*You will hear an elder who understands very well that there are no jobs telling you that since you are like a child and cannot assist financially during family gatherings and ceremonies, your job is to serve your younger relatives because they are helpful as compared to you who cannot even buy a spoon. Do you know the pain of being told those words with pride by someone you respected?*

### **Unmitigated blame and wrongful accusations**

Unmitigated blame is situations when unemployed youth are held accountable for and/or accused of some of the misfortunes that befall their families or communities. In essence, unemployed youth, typically financially dependent on others, are often exposed to a range of criticisms and suspicious motives that translate into complete distrust. For instance, some unemployed young men mentioned they are often the first suspects when something is stolen in their homes; for example:

*I remember that fateful day as if it was yesterday when the bar in our area was broken into and robbed. The police came for me and my cousin with accusations of knowing what happened since we are always seated in a nearby tree next to it, waiting for people with piece jobs. Like that's a popular spot in the hood, man. Where else can we go? But because we are unemployed, they will always pin everything on us, and it's not grand, dude. [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

*Whenever o'lady [informal way of saying "mother"] and my sisters cannot locate their things, fingers point to me. Apparently, according to them, I would have sold them to buy cigarettes since I don't have any sources of income. The story of my life. [Unemployed young graduate man in Oodi/Modipane]*

They also shared that they are often suspected of planning criminal acts when they are found with a group of friends. Their 'crime' is that of being unemployed. This feeling is expressed in the following statements:

*Aah, not working is like you are not a human being. You don't have anything ... but when you are not working you are seen like ..., it's like you are a thief, somebody who is capable of mugging. You are treated as such by family members and out there [in the community] when people pass by us [him and his unemployed friends], they think that we are the ones robbing them when we are just chilling. [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

*You know, being a guy and not working, when you meet with others to chill, we are always suspected of planning crime ... we can't just chill as unemployed gents*

*according to society because it is in our nature to steal and break into houses. Society just has to learn to live with unemployed youth because not everyone goes straight to work after varsity. [Unemployed young graduate man in Kanye]*

Reminiscent of the general stigmatisation of unemployment, specific gender discrimination tendencies are observed when undignified aspersions are cast at some of the young unemployed women trying to take good care of themselves. They reported that they are suspected or accused of infidelity and dating married men by simply applying basic hygiene measures, such as bathing and wearing clean clothes. One young unemployed female participant in Oodi/Modipane described the situation as follows:

*Just because I take good care of myself, people are now talking that I am sleeping with married men, and they are the ones taking care of me. If they were taking care of me, do they think I would be waking up every morning to look for a job and suffering the way I do? At times I don't even have money for combi (public transport) to go and drop the applications, let alone for printing; then you hear older women talking about how you snatch people's husbands. This hurts my sister; they want to see us dirty for them to believe that we are suffering, which is wrong.*

In the context of this study, the extent of the stigmatisation attached to unemployed youth is a clear example of unmitigated blame. When a social problem, such as teenage pregnancy, occurs, the unemployed youth are not spared the wrath of society, as the following statement shows:

*All the bad things are attributed to us, even those young girls when they are pregnant; it's blamed on us because we are always home. [Unemployed young woman in Oodi]*

In line with the foregoing, unemployed young persons' sense of belongingness was effectively eroded. Many reported that they were often wrongfully accused with 'harsh' words and blamed for 'everything' that went missing in the house, including food and toiletries. As one unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone said, "everything that disappears in the house is blamed on us because we are not working". Therefore, many focus group participants suggested that they are constantly fearful of being found guilty of transgression in their house. This is why, for example, a hungry young person, as shown earlier, would not just take any food on the table until granted permission to do so. Another unemployed young woman in Gaborone made a similar comment:

*Heee!!! [laughter of denial] The other day, about a month ago, my sister accused me of eating her daughters' school lunch box. Apparently, my niece has been eating*

*extra food after school when no one was aware because I caught her one afternoon after thunders of insults from my sister. The latter did not want to believe me just because I am always home as I am not working. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]*

Overall, this sub-section suggests that being an unemployed graduate evokes more negative sentiments than positive ones. Furthermore, the subsections showed that these unemployed graduate young people are affected by their phenomenon of being jobless psychologically, are experiencing social exclusion, wrongful accusations, lack of respect by children as well as delayed adulthood.

## **5.4 Unemployed youth's livelihood strategies**

The young unemployed graduates were further asked to share their strategies for coping or surviving the livelihood challenges they articulated above. Their insights from the FGDs revealed that their strategies include seeking assistance from family members, engaging in transactional sexual practices, hustling, and surviving through perceived providence.

### **5.4.1 Family support**

Family support is one of the most robust informal indigenous social protection systems in place to care for those who cannot meet their basic needs because of various shocks (Greenblott, 2008; Tesliuc, Marques, Lekobane, Mookodi, & Bezhanyan, 2013). According to Mokomane (2013), in many sub-Saharan African societies, the extended family has for years been a source of social security and material support during times of need and crisis, such as when family members are unemployed. Notwithstanding the perceived ill-treatment by some families, as discussed in the previous section, the unemployed youth acknowledged that some family members, such as parents and siblings, were a great source of financial assistance that helped them to meet their basic needs. Nonetheless, views of being a burden persisted, as indicated below:

*Even if we say our parents help us, it's as if we are saying they can. No, we are a burden to them because they are not working, and some survive on a pension. [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

*My elder sister is the only one working and supporting the whole family, and it hurts to see her depriving happiness in order to make sure that our needs are met. She can't even move out to rent her own place for privacy because that means more expenses on the little she is earning, and it's not nice at all. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]*

*For me, I am lucky because I have a loving brother who is so supportive and understands the phase I am going through because he stayed for years before landing the job he has now. He is making sure that I have money to apply and for other things. I cannot complain [Unemployed young graduate woman in Kanye]*

#### **5.4.2 Engagement in transactional sexual practices**

Transactional sexual practices are usually associated with those with lower education (Stephenson, Winter and Elfstrom, 2013). However, some of the unemployed graduate young women who partook in the FGDs narrated that they engage in transactional practices in order to meet their daily basic needs. This included, but are not limited to, dating older men known as the ‘blessers’, boyfriends with benefits, and cohabiting. They do this not because they want to but because they need money to survive. Furthermore, they also mentioned that they indulge in sexual relationships with older married men in exchange for financial benefits, ranging from a monthly stipend, paying for their rent, food and toiletries, and money for other needs and wants. However, it was evident that engaging in these practices is rarely a choice for the unemployed graduate young women but due to difficult financial circumstances. The following statements capture engaging in these practices under duress:

*Being unemployed can make you do things that you grew up against. I never imagined myself staying with a man before marriage, but I now cohabit with my boyfriend mainly because I rely on him financially. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]*

*I decided to have a blesser because I had no other option, and he is the one meeting my basic needs every month. I am thinking of finding another one who will finance me to further my studies [she holds a degree], maybe after that, I will stand a better chance in the labour market. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]*

It is worth noting that these assertions are stark affirmations of the reasons for poor or inadequate family support and for a range of blameworthiness factors. For instance, how would a young unemployed female indulging in such transactional sexual practices defend herself against accusations of being a bad role model who promotes teenage pregnancy and immorality? The following comment also highlights the risks of such behaviour:

*Unemployment also leads to the increase of the new HIV infections, as our sisters are turning to prostitution to make money and the virus spreads. And then you find that the money that was supposed to be spent on unemployment programmes is being used to buy ARVs [antiretroviral drugs] for them. [Unemployed young graduate man in Kanye]*

Although anecdotal evidence and social media comments in the country often refer to the high prevalence of “sugar mummies” – older women woman, often the one who is married, who gives financial and material support to a typically younger lover in exchange for romantic or sexual pleasure (Kuate-Defo, 2004) – this did not emerge in the discussions with the young graduate men.

### **5.4.3 Hustling**

While it enables the young unemployed women and men to meet their basic needs through transactional sexual practices and selling drugs, hustling was among the dominant livelihood strategies mentioned by the unemployed youth who participated in the FGDs. Hustling is a term they used to refer to various informal sector businesses that they are involved in, such as selling sweets, and cigarettes, roadside car washes and hair plaiting, laundry services, and clearing people's yards (Honwana, 2012). Hustling has many meanings and connotations. The researcher's viewpoint is that hustling is a low-intensity high-impact strategy to alleviate poverty and the devastating effects of unemployment or a complete lack of income generation. Some hustling is illegal, for example, stealing, and some are not. For the purpose of this study, ‘hustling’ refers to being involved in the low-scale informal economic sector for income generation purposes. The following statements show the various forms of hustling in which the unemployed youth are involved to restore and retain a semblance of dignity and self-worth:

*For me, I hustle because I sell chickens. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Kanye]*

*As for me ... I wash cars, and it is much better than doing nothing while waiting for a job which I don't even know when it will be available. [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

*We wait by the roadside for people who are looking for labourers in construction, clearing weeds from their homes and any other piece jobs available from community members to make something for survival. [Unemployed young graduate man in Kanye]*

In this study, participants mention other (legal) hustling activities, such as selling sweets, gardening, laundry, and other manual jobs for which they are paid. However, as a low-scale enterprise, the participants' mention of hustling revealed to the researcher that most hustlers lacked the entrepreneurship skills to sustain their hustling businesses. For instance, those who used to sell clothes they bought in Johannesburg went out of business because they were not saving their profits, which was compounded further by clients who refused to pay. The following statement supports this assertion:

*Ma'am, I used to sell clothes, and my clients would get them on credit and pay later. I regret trusting some of them too much because they never paid and that on its own led to me making a loss and could not afford to go for stock anymore. Maybe I could be having my own boutique by now if I managed my business well.*  
**[Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]**

However, many of the unemployed youth explained that hustling is impacted by a lack of innovative skills and/or ideas. In essence, there was a widespread and perennial practice of emulating the entrepreneurial thoughts and practices of others; for example:

*When one person starts selling tomatoes by the side of the road today, next week, there will be hundreds of them selling the same thing as well. As youths, we lack innovation skills. We don't want to think for ourselves outside the box.*  
**[Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]**

*If you go around the fence of the University of Botswana right now, you will find many young people printing and making copies just because they saw one person doing that and their lack of new business ideas led them to copy the same thing. Hence, they are not making any profit due to the failure of meeting the demand. If only we can stop this mentality of copying others and being original, that's when we can be successful in business as young people of Botswana.*  
**[Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]**

Copying the business ideas of others affects those who are hustling because there are many selling the same items or commodities, resulting in more competition and the closing of some of these informal businesses. This is magnified by Botswana's small population, which means that markets for goods are limited and tend to get saturated rapidly (Diraditsile and Maphula, 2018), leading some businesses to stop operating. For instance, Modisane (2017) highlighted that the government is the major consumer of goods and services of most businesses in Botswana.

#### **5.4.4 Hopeful survival or ennui by the grace of God**

*Waiting for Godot* is a 1953 play by Irish writer Samuel Beckett. The phrase 'waiting for Godot' has since been used to refer to a situation in which individuals, due to their depressing, frustrating or hopeless situation, are continuously waiting for 'something' to happen to change their life circumstances (Lyons, 1983). However, since the 'something' being waited for is undefined, the waiting may be forever, and worthless as the 'something' does not materialise.

In the context of this study, ‘waiting for Godot’ connotes a state or condition of hopeful survival induced by long periods of unemployment during which the unemployed youth begin to feel depression, hopelessness, ennui and frustration because of a ‘system’ of life, education and employment that has perceivably rendered them useless. Some also declared suicidal tendencies, which is an expression of a nihilistic sense of existence. Some scholars even maintained that a perpetual state of unemployment could lead to a loss of hope and faith in God (Lyons, 1983), as the following comment demonstrates:

*Growing up, we were told God help those who help themselves, but here we are educated, which is how we have helped ourselves yet still languishing in unemployment. Where is God, my sister? [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

In spite of their state of hopelessness, ennui and nihilism, some of the participants have not lost hope and faith in God, as the following comments show:

*I am surviving by the grace of God. I never prayed like I do these days in my entire life and waiting patiently for his time as the bible says. [Unemployed young man in Kanye]*

*Aah, what can I say except that God provides because I am still here yet not working? How? I don't know, but He knows better. [Unemployed young graduate man in Oodi/Modipane]*

Overall, the section highlights that even though some coping strategies, such as engagement in transactional sexual relations, can be seen as negative, on the whole, the unemployed graduate youth adopt positive strategies that also reflect their resilience and use of the capital they have. As shown in Chapter 4, these unemployed young graduates have human capital and limited social capital, and the subsection shows that they combine the two capitals to come up with coping strategies to meet their needs.

## **5.5 Discussion and conclusion**

This chapter explored the lived experiences of the unemployed graduate youth with a focus on their livelihood challenges and coping strategies. In so doing, the subjective meaning that the unemployed graduate youth attach to their unemployment experiences were discussed. Thereafter, the young graduates’ perceptions of the leading causes of unemployment in Botswana before exploring their experiences of being unemployed. Subsequently, the livelihood strategies adopted by these young people to mitigate the negative impacts of unemployment were discussed with the limitations of these strategies.

It emerged that graduate youth unemployment in Botswana, to some extent, seems to be more of a supply factor than demand. This is so because of factors such as low wages, social media overreliance and stigma towards certain jobs.

In terms of the livelihood challenges, the overall findings from the chapter highlight that unemployed graduate youth generally lack financial capital that they can potentially use to venture into entrepreneurship and be self-employed. Insights from the FGDs with the unemployed youth also suggest that the challenges tend to be due to limited social capital. However, social capital, such as strong family support, can help lessen social exclusion and alienation among these unemployed graduate youth.

The chapter revealed that as a coping strategy, many of the young unemployed graduates draw on their various human and social capitals, as has been found in other countries across the world such as the USA (Vogel, 2006), Latin America and the Caribbean (ILO, 2015) and other sub-Saharan countries (Cloete, 2015; Pieters, 2015; Rankin, Roberts, & Schoer, 2012; Small & Obioha, 2014). For example, with regard to social capital, assistance from family members and the hope derived from membership in religious organisations such as churches was a major coping strategy, while hustling - in a way, reflects the young graduates' use of their human capital.

The findings from the chapter also underlined the notion that, in general, youth unemployment and graduate youth unemployment are not just economic issue but also has far-reaching social impacts on the unemployed young people and society at large (Cloete, 2015). For instance, sexual demands in exchange for jobs by some employers can also put the sexual and reproductive health at risk for these unemployed graduate youth through, for example, contracting sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, having unwanted pregnancies and can also heighten the risk of psychological conditions such as anxiety, depression that are often associated with unwanted sex (Bantebya, Ochen, Pereznieto, & Walker, 2014; Jefferis, Kinghorn, Siphambe, & Thurlow, 2008; Lule & Haacker, 2011).

Furthermore, the chapter re-affirmed the role that limited financial capital plays in aggravating the unemployment status of young graduates, as indicated in Chapters 2 and 4, albeit from a different perspective: Paying bribes to get jobs. While this has been shown to be a common phenomenon in some African countries such as South Africa (BusinessTech, 2018), Nigeria (UN, 2019a) and Zambia (Gough, Chigunta, & Langevang, 2016), it was somehow unexpected given Botswana's reputation as a corrupt-free country (Jones, 2017; Sebudubudu, 2003). At the same time, it is an important finding that is worthy of attention, given that corruptly acquired job positions, especially in the public sector, had costly service delivery ramifications. For example, a study by Van Antwerpen and Ferreira (2016) revealed that the local government



in South Africa's Gauteng Province suffers from poor service delivery due to employees who do not have the required skills and qualifications. This leads to citizens failing to access essential social services and/or the government suffering an excessive loss of funds that could be used to create job opportunities. In the same vein, nepotism and corruption have been found to be prevalent in some countries in the Balkans such as Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia, and Montenegro, and have been associated with these countries' poor service delivery in both the public and private sectors, the high unemployment rate, the slow economic growth and the high poverty rates (Bekesiene, Petrauskaite, & Kazlauskaite Markeliene, 2021; Gjinovci, 2016; Gjinovci & Gjinovci, 2017).

What was conspicuously notable from the chapter is that, despite the government of Botswana's investment in the development and implementation of youth-oriented active labour market programmes, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, there was no mention of reliance on these programmes by the young graduates. While the literature review in Chapter 2 might suggest some of the reasons for this, the factors underlying this gap, as articulated by the young unemployed graduates themselves, are the focus of the factors in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER 6: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET PROGRAMMES IN ADDRESSING GRADUATE YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

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## 6.1 Introduction

A notable finding in Chapter 5 is that despite the Government of Botswana's investment in the development and implementation of various youth-oriented active labour market programmes (ALMPs), the programmes were not identified by unemployed graduate youth as one of the strategies they adopted in response to their livelihood challenges. With available literature (e.g. Lesetedi, 2018; Mogomotsi and Madigela, 2017; Nthomang and Diraditsile, 2016; Sechele, 2015; Siphambe et al., 2020) suggests that the perceived ineffectiveness of the programmes may be a key factor in this finding, this chapter draws on the perceptions expressed by unemployed graduate youth and key informants regarding the effectiveness of the ALMPs that are currently implemented in the country. This chapter thus fulfils the study's fifth specific objective. In order to do this, the profile and capital assets of unemployed graduate youth, as illuminated in Chapter 4, as well as their key livelihood challenges, are taken into consideration. Therefore, the chapter begins with a presentation of the perceptions of young unemployed graduates on the effectiveness of the programmes, while the perception of key informants are presented in Section 6.3. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion and conclusion section (Section 6.4).

## 6.2 Perceived effectiveness of active labour market programmes

Chapter 2 showed that Botswana currently implements a number of ALMPs that fall into three of the four categories of such programmes: training and skills development, entrepreneurship promotion, and employment services. Subsidised employment is the only category of youth-oriented ALMPs that is not actively implemented in the country. Of those that are implemented, training and skills development are the most common, comprising four of the seven in the country. Entrepreneurship promotion comprises two programmes, while there is only one employment services programme.

To explore perceptions of unemployed graduate youth regarding the effectiveness of the available ALMPs in the country, the following question was posed to the young graduates: Are you aware of any programmes *designed specifically for unemployed youth*? On the whole, it emerged that most of the young people were aware and knew of the available programmes in the country. However, drawing on the evidence from the literature (see Chapter 2) showing that despite this awareness, there is generally a low uptake of these programmes by young people, follow-up questions in the unemployed graduate youth FGDs revolved around why these programmes were not seen as among the plausible survival strategies (Chapter 5) and

generally why young graduate did not seem to access them as a pathway to facilitating employment, self-employed and entrepreneurship. While previous studies (Lesetedi, 2018; Mogomotsi & Madigela, 2017; Nthomang & Diraditsile, 2016; Sechele, 2015; Siphambe et al., 2020) have attributed this low uptake to a lack of empirical research to guide and inform the design and implementation of the policies and programmes, thus making the programmes unappealing to their target group, the young unemployed graduates in this study pointed to factors such as corruption, preference for foreigners in the procurement processes, lack of social networks, mismatched priorities, skills transfer mismatch, and limited accessibility of ALMPs as the main reasons why they are not utilising them.

### **6.2.1 Corruption**

Corruption is defined as the abuse of public office for personal gain by those in power in private and public organisations (Murimi, 2018). In the view of many unemployed graduate youth, corruption in the form of various administrative malpractices is one of the major factors hampering access to ALMPs in Botswana. The following subsections discuss some of the apparent pathways through which corruption takes place in this regard.

#### ***Stealing unemployed youths' innovative project ideas***

There is a widespread perception in Botswana that administrators of entrepreneurship development programmes often 'steal' innovative ideas submitted as proposals by young applicants and use these for themselves, friends or family. In line with this, previous studies (Malaakgosi, 2013; Sechele, 2016) reported that, as a result, young people are often reluctant to apply for funding for entrepreneurial initiatives because they fear the officers will steal their innovative ideas. The following comments confirm this:

*How can we trust government employees based on what we are witnessing daily? They are all the same in all the ministries. I would rather die with my idea than give it to these vultures who stole my cousin's idea. My cousin wrote a detailed proposal on designing cattle neck reflectors to reduce the number of accidents caused by roaming cows at night, and he was rejected. Not long after his rejection, a company apparently from South Africa presented the same idea. It was highly praised for my cousin's idea, which was rejected by Youth officers [Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Culture Development officers]. Nevertheless, they sold the idea to them. Just talking about it reopens the wound as I can recall how my cousin went into depression after that ... it [insult]. [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

*Those people ... hide behind helping us when all they are after is our ideas that we worked hard for, just to steal and sell them. [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

Apparently, this malpractice often takes place after these proposals are rejected without valid explanations, as this comment shows:

*When you develop an idea, maybe a new idea that is not there in the market, they reject you and say no, we can't fund you. And then they give it to their child, niece or nephew ..., who ends up failing and wasting the country's resources because they do not have any clue of what you wanted to do. [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

### **Widespread bribery**

The comments of some of the unemployed youth revealed the entrenchment of bribery as another dominant factor standing between them and successful ALMPs applications, for example:

*I know with YDF, and when they are advertising it, they tell you that it is a programme for all the unemployed youth in the country. You would be told to apply and find that 3 000 of you have applied only in one district. But in that district, the available funds cater for 15 people only. ... among the 15 is five from the previous financial year that were not funded but approved, 10 is for those who managed to bribe, and it is finished. What the government says on TV and the radio is not what he does on the ground. [Unemployed young graduate man in Kanye]*

Another form of bribery, according to the young people, is the common practice where government officials 'sell' approved proposals to youth desperate for funding. The young people are then expected to give a certain percentage of the project funds to government employees for their proposals to be approved and funded, for example:

*With regard to the corruption involved in the allocation of youth funds, indeed that is rampant ... I have evidence to support my claims that youth officers would distribute information on certain businesses to be funded by the government. After distributing such documents, youth are approached by government officers, informing them that if they need successful proposals, they should give them [officials] a certain amount of money. By so doing, it nullifies competition and an equal chance for every young person qualifying. So, do you see why we are not utilising these programmes, my sister? [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

Another participant exposed the corruption of government officials as follows:

*Government officials are so corrupt, my sister. You cannot be given a tender if you don't know anyone and don't have money. Tenders are bought out there. There is no way you can try it. How many times have we been applying only to see the same people getting the tenders from the same institutions? Supplies officers are so corrupt that the only way to get a tender is to promise them a cut. [Unemployed young graduate man in Kanye]*

From the foregoing, it can be argued that widespread perceptions about the prevalence of malpractices such as corruption and stealing business ideas mean that many unemployed graduate youth are reluctant to apply for the entrepreneurship promotion programmes offered in the country.

### **6.2.2 Perceived preference for foreigners in procurement processes**

Consistent with the findings of previous studies such as Mogomotsi and Madigela (2017), many young people believe that government procurement processes tend to prefer foreign business owners or companies and that this also extends to filling vacancies. As a result, Botswana youths who have the capacity and qualifications to perform the same jobs as foreigners are often overlooked in preference for the latter. The following statements illustrate this perspective:

*Just go to the departments of transport, roads, construction, and even a simple job like supplying t-shirts and printing for the government and councils are either done here by the so-called white people, Chinese and Indians. Therefore, to see that indeed government officials do not want to empower us as unemployed young people lavishing in poverty. You will see them ordering things that are available locally from South Africa, such as printed t-shirts and overalls. [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

*Look at the top positions and high paying professional jobs like engineers. Who are occupying them? Foreigners. But we have people with qualifications to fill them, but just because our government does not believe in its citizen, they are reserved for outsiders. For instance, go to the mines and tell me how many bosses there are Botswana? [Unemployed young graduate man in Kanye]*

*Man, you are right, there was a time my cousin and I applied for a tender only to find out that it was given to a company from South Africa, which charged the government millions for equipment that is bought for less than P200 000 (around US\$ 1 7000). We only wanted P300 000 (around US\$ 18 000). [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

According to some young people, this apparent preference for foreigners means that even those who get funding for entrepreneurial promotion face unfair competition and lack of support from the government. They explained that this often leads to the high failure rate of youth-run businesses, reducing the chances for more youth to be granted funds; for example:

*Even for a young person now, when they apply for Youth Development Fund, and they are funded with P100 000 (around US\$ 8 500) in a project, they are expected to pay back 50 percent of the funds. Now I will be making the towels, and the government doesn't buy from me and instead prefer imports from China. That means there is no youth benefiting from that, you see. The economy is going out, is going outside Botswana. [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

*Similar to farming, I will be working hard, breaking my back and then when it's time to harvest, there is no one to buy my products, and the same government will be buying from big shops for their departmental and ministerial ceremonies. We are not getting support from Batswana, and the government hence experiencing high failure rates in our businesses. [Unemployed young graduate man in Kanye]*

### **6.2.3 Limited social network or connections**

In addition to giving entrepreneurship funding only to those who can buy it, government officials were also accused of giving opportunities to those in their networks. In essence, the experiences the unemployed graduate youth shared suggested that it is not easy to benefit from some ALMPs, particularly entrepreneurship promotion interventions, without a compelling and effective social networking profile. Consistent with the role played by social networks in finding jobs (Chapter 5), the young people were adamant that it is critical to know someone in a relevant position or else it will take a long time for one to be considered for enrolment in ALMPs. The following statements illustrate this:

*Even to get an internship position, it's tough because they start with those they know, then us who are not known are placed on the endless waiting list. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]*

*I tried to apply for Tirelo Sechaba [National Service Programme] at the youth offices here ... and when I got there, they told me that it is closed, but someone who came after me is now attached in the hospital here. It's all about connections for one to benefit from these programmes. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Kanye]*

*Most of those who benefit from these funds are closely related to the youth officers and management, even the relatives to the politicians who have someone to put in*

*a word for them. Otherwise, if you need to be funded and you are a nobody, you need to pay. ... it's rough out there, and the officers have this popular saying, stating that they won't make you rich for nothing .... Altogether this has reduced the excitement of applying for government programmes because trusting the system is a myth. [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

#### **6.2.4 Requirements perceived as unreasonable**

A basic requirement for accessing most of the entrepreneurial ALMPs is proof of some form of financial or natural capital. For example, the CEDA requires collateral in the form of land; this is the security the agency can hold on to if the applicant fails to pay back at least 50 per cent of the granted loan. The YFF's main requirement is that the applicant must have proof that they have water rights. This is apparently to ensure that their agricultural projects will be successful. With such requirements, the majority of unemployed youth with a poor resource base often fail to access and use the available entrepreneurship programmes. Similarly, to access grants through the YDF, one is expected to provide proof of ownership of a legally registered business and a detailed business proposal, which is a challenge to those who do not have a business background, skills or qualifications. The following statements from FGDs participants reflect the difficulties that these requirements pose for most unemployed youth, given their limited financial, physical and natural capitals:

*When we say we apply for programmes, they want lots of things from us, like registered companies. Where are we going to get money to register a company? Where are you going to get money to type when you are not working? Like you know what, we are suffering already, they just want many things, then why all these things when you know that we are not working. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]*

*Especially with CEDA, they will ask for security; I am young, I don't have a plot, I have nothing, then they say security. They want lots of things. ... even land, which we don't have because apparently you cannot do a project without land. Even if it is there, we don't have money to pay for the land for our projects. [Unemployed young graduate man in Oodi/Modipane]*

*I tried Youth [Young Farmers Fund] and got rejected. ... they wanted water rights, and I had none. ... basically, checking where I am going to water the cattle, but since I don't have a borehole, I failed. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Kanye]*

*CEDA will tell you that you should have a borehole farm for you to qualify for the Young Farmers Fund apart from a residential house to be used as security if one*

*fails to pay. Where are we supposed to get all those when we have never worked? Let alone our ages. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Oodi/Modipane]*  
*When you go to young farmers from CEDA, they want security and land. [If] according to your[business] plan you don't have land, you see what we are talking about? How can they expect us to have land when our parents, who have long applied many years ago, are still waiting to be allocated farms? [Unemployed young graduate woman, Gaborone]*

In addition to providing security, other terms and conditions, such as working as a team or in groups, were seen as obstacles by these young people; for example:

*I tried to apply for the Gender funds [funds from the Department of Gender Affairs availed to all citizens interested in entrepreneurship] but was told that I have to bring four other people so that we can be funded. So who can I approach because I wrote my proposal alone, and only I know how it works? [Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]*

It should be noted that natural capital used for security can be in the form of residential and agricultural land (inclusive of land for cattle, small stock farming, and crop production. It is also vital to highlight that because of factors such as poor management of land records by Land Boards (institutions responsible for land administration in Botswana) (UN-HABITAT, 2010), allocation of both residential and agricultural land in Botswana can take decades after application (Sechele, 2015). According to UN-HABITAT (2010, p. 13), “the problem of inadequate land records has seriously undermined the Land Board’s efforts towards achieving an effective and efficient land administration”. Consequently, the application process is slow, and people who applied as long ago as the 1990s are still being allocated land (Adamson, 2020). For instance, during parliamentary proceedings in 2020, the current Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Land Management, Water and Sanitation Services highlighted that about 620 000 Batswana are on the waiting list for plot allocations, and 60 per cent of them were youth. She further stated that it could take 16–30 years to acquire both state and tribal land in Botswana (Adamson, 2020). This shows why some young people are failing to meet land and security requirements to access entrepreneurial promotion ALMPs.

Apart from the difficulties accessing land in Botswana by those who want to venture into entrepreneurship and use it as collateral for funding, about 75 per cent of the land in rural areas and some urban villages is under customary land rights (FAO, 2018). Thus, the land belongs to the state and cannot be used as collateral by those who may have access to it.

It also emerged that limited human capital and particular skills were often a barrier to accessing certain ALMPs. For example, many unemployed graduate youth complained about the



minimum requirement of at least a certificate in cattle or goat rearing as a condition to obtain funding for livestock farming from the YFF. Therefore, those who did not study animal husbandry are not considered qualified for agricultural programmes such as cattle rearing. The following comment illustrates this:

*To apply for the programmes, you should have a certificate [acknowledging that they were trained on how to take care of livestock]. Let's say you want small stock, you should have a certificate, knowing this and that. Where are you going to get that certificate? [Unemployed young graduate woman in Oodi/Modipane]*

### **6.2.5 Mismatched priorities**

As discussed in Chapter 2 (literature review), one of the reasons ALMPs in Botswana have not evidently been effective is due to a paucity of empirical research to provide the evidence base to address the livelihoods needs of unemployed youth. Consistent with this, some of the young unemployed graduates stated, in the FGDs, that what the programmes offered was very different from what they were interested in. As one unemployed young man in Oodi/Modipane said concerning the YFF:

*They only have goats, and we don't want them. Who said we want to do farming? We are not interested in farming at all. This is one of their schemes to throw us in the bushes and claim that the unemployment rate has gone down.*

Many attributed this to a lack of communication and consultation with the unemployed youth to determine which programmes were suitable for them; for example:

*No one came to consult us on what and how we want to be assisted and what projects we want to do as youth. Instead, they sat in their air-conditioned offices and decided which programmes would be suitable based on their fantasies. Therefore, it's high time our National Youth policies are amended by youth to get the necessary assistance we require. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]*

*Consultation is critical in every decision ... had they consulted us, do you think we could be here doing nothing. No, we could be self-employed doing what we like and created employment for our fellow youth. Now to them, it's like we do not want to utilise government initiatives meant to help us. No, it is not like that, but lack of passion and saving the government from making a loss, we are educated. [Unemployed young graduate woman with a Degree in Environmental Science in Oodi/Modipane]*

*We may be young but know what works in the streets, not these programmes they are forcing on us. We do not have an interest in them because it is all about passion. Would you please look at the list of programmes they want us to venture into to receive funding? Most of them are not youth-friendly. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Kanye]*

Furthermore, some unemployed graduate youth attributed the failure of the farming programmes, in particular, to the unfavourable climate conditions in the country, which make these programmes irrelevant to the Botswana context. Indeed the FAO (2018) also highlighted that Botswana's climatic conditions make it hard to practise agricultural activities. The following comment is from one of the young unemployed graduate people's opinions regarding this:

*Really, the truth is these programmes are not working because most of them are agriculturally based. Look at the weather, there are no rains, and when you try to till the land and rear livestock, there are no results due to the drought. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Kanye]*

The youth were also of the view that some of the government-provided skills training courses were not beneficial to them in the labour market; for example:

*They also have these useless courses. We cannot use them anywhere such as Time Management, Money Management and Business Management, where we were given certificates after training provided you get 80 percent after writing the exam. When you fail, you repeat because it is free of charge. I cannot use that certificate anywhere, and it's just useless. It was a week-long course. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Kanye]*

#### **6.2.6 Excluding the youth during the design and formulation of active labour market programmes**

In line with the mismatched priorities discussed above, during the FGDs, the unemployed graduate youth criticised the government for not giving them a platform to voice how they want to be assisted and which programmes they are interested in. The following comments illustrate some of these young graduates' opinions in this regard:

*Things like bars make money, alcohol consumption is high in our country, but we are not allowed to venture into such business. Instead, they want us to buy jumping castles, run saloons, rear livestock, things that are slow to make profits and cannot create employment for other unemployed youth. Let us be involved in the decision-*

*making. Then the government won't lose millions like they are now because they are forcing us to do what we don't want to do. [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

*Most of these programmes fail because they did not consult us on how we want to be assisted as unemployed young people. For example, look at the bars in Botswana. They make money, but such businesses are not funded, and they want us to do farming. What do I know about goat and cattle rearing? Nothing, and I will take the goats or cows, then they all die because I am clueless about farming and don't know how to take care of them. [Unemployed young graduate man in Gaborone]*

### **6.2.7 Skills transfer mismatch**

Over the years, concerns have been raised that the main reasons for youth's unemployability are that graduates lack soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and interpersonal skills (Gasennelwe, 2017; Mogomotsi & Madigela, 2017). Although ALMPs, such as the BNIP, GVS, and the BNSP, were implemented to empower unemployed youth with some skills, the experiences shared in the FGDs suggest that the intended beneficiaries were rarely placed where their post-secondary school knowledge could also be applied. In addition, while serving in these programmes, some highlighted that they were made to perform basic tasks such as making tea, buying lunch, and filling in for their supervisors, all of which could be considered *infra dig* at both the professional and personal levels. Overall, the ALMP skills transfer initiatives appear to be a continuation of the already existing schism between school and tertiary knowledge vis-à-vis job-compliant knowledge and skills.

Adding to the youth's discontent is the fact that this apparent disguised exploitation was perpetrated by the employees who were supposed to be their mentors during the skills transfer tenure. For instance, supervisors would expect interns to do the supervisors' work while the supervisors got the credit and attended to their personal businesses. The following comments show the young people's frustration:

*I was attached for two years with the expectation that I will be practising what I was taught at varsity, only to find myself making tea for my boss, attending meetings and taking minutes for her, being sent to shops to do her grocery during working hours. I cannot really tell nor show what I learned during my internship; it was a waste of my two whole years. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]*

*You are better, Neo [pseudonym]. I found that department in a mess because the old ladies had certificates and were technology illiterate, and I helped them get certificates for excellent service delivery. And I thought by so doing they will absorb me because I did all the work alone and had to train them on how to use the latest software's, only for them to throw me out after my two years. So they created this internship to take advantage of us, and it is working for them; hence, they don't want to create vacancies and use interns instead. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]*

*I am wondering what could be so hard for them to place us in the department specialising in what we did at school and give us tasks that will help us with the practical part of our degrees so that by the time they decide to go of us we are experts in our area of speciality. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Kanye]*

*Eish [exhaling], my sister, the likes of internship are not for us with certificates as they want those who have degrees. So those ones are not for everyone, and at the moment, I am even thinking of furthering my studies, hoping that I will be able to fit in, but money is also a challenge. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Oodi/Modipane]*

### **6.2.8 Accessibility of active labour market programmes**

All ALMPs are meant to be accessible to every young person – graduate or not –in the country. For example, a key informant at the Botswana National Youth stated how they ensure that youth have access to ALMPs regardless of where they are:

*Let me highlight that when it comes to issues of the youth who are in remote areas, whom we usually call the RADS [Remote Area Dwellers], we make sure that whatever we do, there is a certain percentage that we reserve for them. For example, when we run a workshop, we always insist that at least 20 percent of the participants be RADS and another 25 percent for the people living with disabilities. That is how we try to embrace everyone because we know that we might leave them out if we don't have quotas. [Senior Officer, BNYC]*

Despite the foregoing, there was a wide perception among the young unemployed graduates that those with limited access to information and communication technology were disadvantaged. Unemployed graduate youth in Kanye and Oodi/Modipane in particular complained about the lack of resources to register their companies as often required by ALMPs. To this end, it was stated that urban areas like Gaborone are the leading company registration centres and sources of associated services. This becomes a serious problem for those in other

parts of the country because accessibility is determined by geographical area, leaving those in urban villages and rural areas relatively disadvantaged.

Furthermore, accessibility was also said to be hampered by the use of complicated and complex English words and concepts in the application forms. To sufficiently complete the forms, many young people reported that they often had to engage the services of those with knowledge and a better understanding of how to complete those forms. This also presents a financial burden because of the consultation fee they have to pay, as the following comments show:

*When you get there, you are given documents with difficult English that we don't understand and have to come back to look for people who can help us. And that doesn't come free; you have to part with cash that we don't have. That's why some of us end up giving up. Let them write in simple English, understood by all. ... those officers will never ever help you; I have experienced their terrible service, especially for us who look poor even after bathing because we don't have nice clothes to wear. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]*

*Imagine for me to apply I have to go to Gaborone to collect the forms from the Ministry of Youth Offices and also find someone who can help me because when you get there, you are given documents with hard English that we don't understand and have to come back to the village to ask for help because those officers will never ever help you, I have been there. And for me to do all these things, I need money for a bus, fees for people who help and food; then people think that we are just seated when the government is doing everything to help us. They should come to our villages and administer as well as help us to fill the forms. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Kanye]*

Unemployed young persons also complained about long periods that they have to wait to receive a response from organisations responsible for implementing ALMPs. Two young aspiring chefs, for example, reported that they applied for cooking equipment the previous year but were yet to receive them. In the meantime, there was nothing they could do but wait, as attested to by the following statements:

*I applied last year in May [2018] for an internship, and up to now [April 2019], I haven't received any response from youth offices. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Gaborone]*

*Applying for these programmes requires patience because you are not told when you will be placed but wait for a call from them. I know someone who was placed*

*for an internship after a full year of waiting. [Unemployed young graduate man in Kanye]*

The study also revealed that some young unemployed graduates find the ALMPs inaccessible because of their geographical location, especially those in the urban village (Kanye) and the rural areas (Oodi/Modipane). This is so because they explained that they could not accept offers in other areas because of the higher prices of accommodations, food, and transport. Again, this goes back to the importance of financial capital to determine what one can and cannot do, as the following comments show:

*There is nowhere to be placed for GVS, BNIP and BNSP due to an absence of government offices here in the village, and the challenge with moving to the likes of Gaborone is expensive accommodation. The P1 400 from an internship cannot even cover that with transport, food and utilities. So it's best to just wait for something better than to suffer in the cities. [Unemployed young graduate woman in Oodi/Modipane]*

*Gaborone is too far, and one cannot commute from Kanye to Gaborone daily for an internship, which means renting. Where can you find a house reasonable in Gabs [Gaborone], and how will you survive with P1 400? [Unemployed young graduate man in Kanye]*

### **6.3 Perceptions of key informants**

Furthermore, to complement the perceptions of the unemployed graduate youth, the study solicited the views of key informants tasked with implementing ALMPs regarding the key challenges they encountered while trying to implement the programmes.

#### **6.3.1 Private sector exclusion**

The success of the ALMPs in many countries can be attributed to cooperation between the government and the private sector in the design and implementation of such programmes (Escudero, López Mourelo, & Pignatti, 2016). Interviews with key informants, however, showed that this aspect was missing in Botswana. Indeed, an evaluation of the BNIP found that the programme was failing to achieve its objectives largely because the private sector was no longer a major player (UNDP-Botswana, 2019b). The UNDP-Botswana (2019b) acknowledged that the withdrawal of the private sector from the internship programme resulted in the MYSC failing to reach its target of finding internship places for 6 000 graduates (72 per cent of the total graduate enrolments) annually in fields such as information technology, engineering, finance, and marketing. The situation also contributed to long waiting lists and periods in the skills transfer programmes. Key informants said the following about skills placements:

*Of course, like I said, we have many applicants here, but we cannot place some of them because there is no forum [place or organisations] where they can be placed. So, some participants will be on the waiting list for quite for a long time depending on the qualifications now that we are limited only to the government, NGOs and parastatals. So, as I indicated earlier, we have people with qualifications sitting at home, not benefiting much from the schemes. They have to queue for a long time and even those who have done courses such as marketing because the government doesn't really require a lot of marketing. They usually prefer the likes of human resources and so forth. So, you have all those people now having to wait for long because of the limitation of host organisations that can take them in. That is one of the biggest challenges we have. [Senior officer, Department of National Service and Internship]*

*Currently, we have, I think, on the waiting list, we have got a great number of engineers on the waiting list because there is nowhere, they can go; that's the problem. So, the impact is that now the scheme excludes other people or discriminates against other people based on their qualifications because they have nowhere to go. [Senior officer, Department of National Service and Internship]*

*Now as for the National Service programme, most people are really interested, they really want to enrol into the programme, but now the only constraint that is there in certain areas is that we do not have enough office space to accommodate them or the organisation did not have enough capacity to take them in. [Senior officer, Department of National Service and Internship]*

*I don't think this thing can succeed without the private sector, to be honest with you I think it can be far much better if there were participation of the private sector, you see, because the private sector is larger than government, and it offers a lot of, a variety of opportunities for graduates; variety in terms of, the diversity of the qualification that the private sector can actually absorb and train. [Senior officer, Department of National Service and Internship]*

On the other hand, as in some Latin American countries (Escudero et al., 2016), training programmes absorb many unemployed youths in Botswana compared to other ALMPs, despite the scant cooperation between the private sector and government. According to the key informants, the non-engagement of the private sector was a fundamentally flawed approach because some organisations in the private sector used to absorb interns permanently after serving in their organisations instead of releasing them after their two-year internship, as is the current government practice. It should be noted that the private sector played a significant role

in the fight against youth unemployment until the government prevented them from using interns.

Moreover, the key informants blamed the exclusion of the private sector on a lack of consultation and the decisions taken by those holding senior government positions. For example, some of the key informants reported that when the decision was taken to exempt the private sector from the implementation of ALMPs, the programme implementers were not duly informed:

*The main issue is that when this cancellation was made, the key stakeholders were not even informed. They were not even consulted, but yet they have been doing an excellent job. Probably now, even if the decision has to be rescinded, the relationship between us and the private sector is already strained because with some of them we had some memorandum of agreement where they were actually training the youth. They were training the youth and then of course after training them they were making them available to other organisations. So, it's, it was a huge loss, but of course, politicians have their way of thinking, which is entirely different from some of us. [Senior officer, Department of National Service and Internship]*

By the same token, another key informant said:

*I think the government just decided to exclude the private sector. I don't remember; I think that was 2016, 2015 or 16 ... not quite sure why the government just decided. I don't know what the reasons to exclude the private sector from participating and helping were. One of the reasons I understand was that there were complaints that some in the private sector were exploiting the interns. That's what I heard, but some ... But, of course, some of us, as implementers, we were not consulted about that. Maybe we could have given a different perspective, but we were never consulted.*

Moreover, with the exclusion of the private sector in the training and skills development programmes, there is little or no interaction with employers, which further limits the ability to develop skills needed in the labour market and renders these ALMPs ineffective. The same thing has been observed in South Africa's employability programmes (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015).

### **6.3.2 Insufficient funding**

Since the exclusion of the private sector, the Botswana government is the sole funder of ALMPs, which determines the number of beneficiaries per year and leads to a long waiting list. Consequently, there are limited funds or placement areas for these young people. Before the



private sector was excluded, the private sector used to pay interns through funds pooled together and deposited to the HRDC. The HRDC is a parastatal organisation responsible for planning and funding education and training and advising the Government of Botswana on all matters related to human capital development. As one key informant explained, “*the government paid for the allowance. The private sector’s contribution was indirect in that it was coming through from HRDC*”. However, with the termination of these contributions and the increasing number of potential participants, the BNIP had been struggling with funding to facilitate placement. Indeed, in 2015 the programme did not enrol new entrants because there were no funds to pay their P1400 (about US\$ 114) monthly allowances. One key informant, a senior officer at the Department of National Service and Internship, stated the following:

*Funding is a challenge, and I am saying so because, at times, there are spaces where we can slot the interns and volunteers but cannot as we would have reached the maximum on our finances.*

Another added by stating:

*As he said, lack of funds limits us because we could have enrolled many of these graduates on the waiting list, especially for BNSP, many in the waiting list due to its high supply.*

### **6.3.3 Lack of monitoring and evaluation**

Another view held by the key informants was that those responsible for implementing the ALMPs are not following up to assess how unemployed young people are coping with these programmes due to staff shortages. For example, key informants said the following concerning the efficacy of the skills training programmes:

*In short, I can say that for us to realise this objective [training and skills transfer], we need to improve on the monitoring aspect of it. Yes, if we can monitor and evaluate skills transfer, if we can have more people on the ground who will be responsible for monitoring and continuously engaging the supervisors on what is expected of them, then I think something can be achieved. [Senior officer, Department of National Service and Internship]*

*Monitoring is happening in isolated places, here and there. But like I said, now the supervisors need to be empowered to be able to do that, and that is the work of our office, and that’s where we are lacking because we are thin on the ground, we don’t have enough human resources to ensure that the supervisors themselves are empowered, and know what they are supposed to do. [Senior officer, Department of National Service and Internship]*

According to the key informants, this inadequate monitoring is one aspect that leads to young people's entrepreneurship initiatives failing. According to the UNDP-Botswana (2019a, p. 1), for example, "about 40 per cent of YDF funded projects survive the first 18 months of their operation", consistent with the literature as indicated in Chapter 1. In this regard, the key informants were of the view that many young beneficiaries of ALMPs became negligent after securing funding. For instance, some of the youth who applied for and were granted the YFF are reported to have abandoned the livestock at the farms to go back to urban areas, leading to the death of the livestock due to hunger and thirst. Others are said to apply for funding and then do something different with the funds than what they were approved for, such as buying cars and expensive clothes, for example:

*They come here crying with brilliant ideas, and after funding them, they spend the money buying useless things like expensive labels, this trending cars and partying, things that will never take them out of poverty. That's the challenge we have with our youth in Botswana. And I don't blame them. They get all these things easily without working for them. They are spoiled, and the government has to stop this. Let them work hard in order for them to be assisted. [Senior Officer, BNYC]*

Key informants complained about beneficiaries who were reluctant to honour their repayment agreements for their loans. Programmes such as the YFF and YDF require young people to pay back 50 per cent of the initial loan amount within a certain period of time. However, the key informants confirmed the contention by the UNDP-Botswana (2019a) that since the inception of the YDF, youth owe the government more than P360 million (about US\$ 29 million). Much of this is attributed to young people's lack of entrepreneurial and business management skills, for example:

*You will find that many youths believe that if you are not working, you should be given the money to run a business, and the challenge is that not everyone is a business person, yes. And we see a number of projects collapsing despite the help that we assist with because not all young people were meant to be entrepreneurs. [Senior Officer, BNYC]*

With regards to entrepreneurship, scholars such as Gaetsewe (2018, 2019) and Kemiso and Kolawole (2017) argued that Botswana youth have no entrepreneurial skills, leading to the difficulties in developing the sector in the country. Mutoko (2014) highlighted that Botswana's entrepreneurship development is generally not doing well, which they attribute to factors such as lack of access to markets because of the small population (just over 2 million) and lack of funding and management skills and training. Similarly, Mannathoko (2011) stated that about 80 per cent of businesses in Botswana do not last three years after their inception because they lack the skills needed to sustain them. This is despite the government's resources invested into

developing entrepreneurship in Botswana to lessen unemployment. This may explain why young people who undertake entrepreneurship often fail.

#### **6.3.4 Lack of long-term vision for some active labour market programmes**

The key informants also believed that there were no adequate provisions made to follow up with young people after they acquired the skills from their placement organisations. Currently, when their two-year terms expire, young people are released from the BNIP to go back to the saturated labour market to search for jobs. Thus, as one key informant asserted, one of the biggest weaknesses of the skills transfer programmes is the failure to think beyond facilitating skills transfer:

*Basically, the mandate of these programmes ends with just skills transfer. If you were to ask me, I would say we do not have any structured exit policy because our role ends with just empowering them with the skills with the hope that they will be able to use those skills to benefit them elsewhere.*

#### **6.3.5 Discontinuing external internship placements**

A number of key informants expressed their discontent with the discontinuation of the external internship placement programme. For example, one MYSC key informant lamented as follows:

*We also had this external placement in the past, and now everything here is dead. The private sector is gone, so everything is dead, err that's where the problem is. [Senior officer, Department of National Service and Internship]*

The study also found that MYSC used to place graduates in other countries within the private sector skills transfer programme. The companies even absorbed some after their internship period. The discontinuation of this programme was decried as follows by MYSC key informants:

*Alright, so, when we were still at labour and Home Affairs, we had an external placement. Yes, of course, that was done through collaboration with the private sector. We had some IT graduates placed in an IT hub in India and that we achieved through collaboration with err Botho college, yes. We also had, uhm some international, IT interns as wellbeing given exposure by RPC data, that is a company that is, of computers, now it's an international company they have got office all over the place. Time and again, they assemble their graduates from all over into one place where they share this experience because they are coming from different countries. So, they have got a training school in err, in Harare, so some of our interns err went there. One of them excelled so well that they actually hired the, the young girl. Now, they are saying they are a computer company, she is doing*

*everything for them now. [Senior officer, Department of National Service and Internship]*

*There are some countries that have err trained, academic training, trained their graduates especially engineering graduates but then because they did not have industries by then they, then attached these graduates in countries err which were well ahead of them, which were well developed so that the graduate can have practical skills and that's how they developed. [Senior officer, Department of National Service and Internship]*

## **6.4 Discussion and conclusion**

By drawing data from the focus group discussion with unemployed graduate youth and from the key informants' interviews, this chapter explored the perceived effectiveness of the youth-oriented ALMPs currently implemented in Botswana, thus fulfilling the study's fifth specific objective. The overall finding is that unemployed graduate youth do not view these programmes as adequately effective. While previous studies in Botswana drew similar conclusions, some of the underlying factors cited seem to differ. For example, according to scholars such as Nthomang and Diraditsile (2016), Diraditsile (2017), Mogomotsi and Madigela (2017) and Lesetedi (2018), limited research, lack of consultation with youth, and poor monitoring and evaluation are some of the major factors. These factors also emerged in this study. However, the unemployed graduate youth also implicitly highlighted that the implementation of these programmes is typically anchored on capital assets that the young people do not have. For example, there was a widespread perception that access to these programmes is driven by corrupt practices, typically the payment of bribes (which requires some form of financial capital). The possession of wide social networks was also seen as a major enabler of access to these programmes. As discussed in Chapter 2, this is one asset that most unemployed graduate youth in Botswana lack. "unreasonable" requirements for the possession of natural and some forms of human capital were also identified as barriers that make the programmes ineffective given the capital assets of young unemployed graduate youth in the country. Additionally, some of the unemployed graduate youth also highlighted that they are not necessarily placed in departments aligned to their qualifications during internship placements. Therefore, this defeats the purpose of this programme, which is to facilitate training and skills development (particularly work-related experience that the unemployed graduate young people do not have).

From the point of view of key informants, on the other hand, the perceived ineffectiveness of the programmes can be traced back to macro-level factors such as the lack of or limited involvement of the private sector as an implementing partner, limited funding, and limited monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Indeed, most of the ALMPs, if not all, have not been formally evaluated since their inception. Monitoring and evaluation are necessary to explore

whether interventions are working. For example, the skills transfer programmes are seen to fail because some of these young people are seen as messengers in organisations instead of being trained. This is an example of a factor that could be detected during monitoring and evaluation processes if they existed. In addition, the failure to actually train the young people means employers still complain that graduates lack soft skills such as teamwork, communication skills, social skills and work ethic, which they should have gained during their skills training programmes.

There was also no evidence of youth inclusion in the design and implementation of ALMPs. Indeed, some young people reported that they have not attempted to access the ALMPs because they feel they are not youth-oriented, especially the agricultural programmes. As Tjahjono (2006) observed, it is crucial to listen to the youth in order to create effective, lasting interventions because they understand their problems, frustrations, and aspirations. Tjahjono underscored the call of two United Nations Resolutions on youth employment: The GA resolution A/RES/58/133 and GA resolution A/RES/57/165. The latter urged member states to “prepare national reviews and action plans on youth employment and to involve youth organisations and young people in this process, taking into account, inter alia, the commitment made by the member states in this regard, in particular, those included in the World Programme of Action for Youth” (Tjahjono, 2006). The former recognised “the importance of the full and effective participation of young people and youth organisations at the local, national, regional and international levels in promoting and implementing the World Programme of Action” (Tjahjono, 2006). Diraditsile, Maphula, and Setambule (2019) shared the same sentiments by highlighting that excluding youth during the decision-making process on policies and programmes meant to alleviate unemployment can be the main reason why these initiatives are failing to achieve the development and empowerment of these young people because these programmes are imposed on them. The next and final chapter proposes ways ALMPs in Botswana can be designed and implemented with the involvement of their target youth populations, as well as considering the unemployed graduate youth’s livelihood capital assets.

## CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 7.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore enhancing active labour market programmes for improved youth livelihoods through a study of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana. It interrogated young people's perspectives in terms of their lived experiences, livelihood challenges, and perceptions of the available ALMPs set to curb unemployment by the Government of Botswana. The apparent ineffectiveness of ALMPs in addressing youth unemployment in Botswana has led to increasing calls for more in-depth research to understand the reasons underlying this situation. In response, there is emerging research on this topic (Diraditsile, 2017; Gaetsewe, 2019; Lesetedi, 2018; Mogomotsi & Madigela, 2017), which named factors such as lack of research, inability to sustain the programmes, lack of consultation with the youth, lack of monitoring and evaluation as underlying the ineffectiveness of the policies. These studies are, however, not without shortcomings.

According to Gaetsewe (2019), some of the main shortcomings of these studies are their heavy reliance on desktop reviews of already existing literature and focusing on the general issue of unemployment and not necessarily youth unemployment. Therefore, to close this gap, this study used primary data to broadly explore the perceptions of unemployed young persons on their livelihood struggles and the effectiveness of ALMPs. In addition, key informants responsible for implementing these programmes were interviewed to get their perceptions of the effectiveness of the ALMPs. Finally, the study also explored how employed youth managed to secure their jobs amid the unemployment crisis in the country. The decision to include the employed was influenced by the SL framework adopted by the study, which posits that individuals need one or more capitals to meet their livelihoods. Hence, the study wanted to explore the capitals possessed and used by those young people working and compare them with those of the unemployed.

In essence, the study aimed to explore why ALMPs in Botswana have been ineffective in addressing youth unemployment, unearth plausible means of tackling problems faced by the youth through the perceptions of young people, and contribute to the literature on this subject. In addition, this study also contributes to the research agenda by focusing on youth livelihood challenges. This issue has been left largely unexplored in Botswana's research and literature on youth unemployment. Furthermore, focusing on this issue is also in line with increasing calls (Ansell, 2016; Kouakou & Koba, 2015; Van Blerk et al., 2008) to pay attention to youth livelihood challenges, needs and strategies as these impact future livelihoods prospects.

The study had the following six specific objectives that it aimed to achieve using the Sustainable Livelihood Framework as the guiding theory:

1. To explore the livelihood assets of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana.
2. To explore the unemployment experiences of unemployed graduate youth.
3. To explore the subjective meaning the unemployed graduate youth attach to their unemployment experiences.
4. To illuminate the main livelihood challenges and strategies employed by unemployed graduate youth.
5. To explore the perceived effectiveness of current youth-oriented ALMPs in addressing graduate youth's livelihood challenges and in improving the livelihood strategies that the young unemployed graduates adopt.
6. To make recommendations for improved livelihood and employment outcomes of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana.

This final chapter summarises the main findings in relation to each of the specific objectives and draws on these findings to make recommendations for practice, policy and future research.

## **7.2 Summary of key findings**

### **Objective 1: To explore the livelihood assets of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana**

To provide context for the rest of the thesis, Chapter 4 presented a qualitative analysis of the general livelihood assets of unemployed graduate youth who partook in the study in comparison, where possible, with those of their employed counterparts and using the sustainable livelihood capitals as the analysis framework. The chapter showed that by virtue of being graduates, unemployed graduate youth are in possession of some form of human capital, with the lowest educational qualification being a post-secondary certificate. Most of the young unemployed graduates, however, tend to lack in terms of other important human capital assets, namely type of qualifications and work experience. Contrary to their employed counterparts, unemployed graduate youth had qualifications in the humanities and social sciences and limited work experience. This is somehow consistent with the standard narrative that graduate youth unemployment in Botswana is partly attributable to young people's lack of employable skills in relation to the structure of the country's economy. What also clearly emerged from Chapter 4 is that the majority of these young unemployed graduates are constrained in terms of social (social networks), financial (money for printing, transport, registering companies, start-up and others), natural (land), and physical capital (boreholes and fenced land). This, among other things, hampered young graduate youth's potential to venture into self-employment or entrepreneurship in cases where they face challenges with getting formal sector employment.

Although the results presented were sufficient to contextualise the rest of the thesis, it was highlighted that a more robust quantitative analysis of the profile of unemployed graduate youth and their employed counterparts was hampered by limited nationally representative data. This was noted as one of the main limitations of the study.

**Objective 2: To explore the unemployment experiences of unemployed graduate youth**

The statement “It is not easy to be young in the labour market today” in the 2013 International Labour Organisation report entitled *Global Employment Trend for Youth- a Generation at Risk* (ILO 2013:1) somehow summarises the sentiments of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana when asked to share their experiences of being unemployed. To the extent that they undertook post-secondary education, it can be assumed that these young people had high employment and career aspirations and expectations. Their experiences of being unemployed for at least two years varied but can be broadly expressed in terms of economic, social and psychological points of view. In terms of the sustainable livelihood capitals, it can be concluded that most of the experiences are propelled by the young people’s limited financial and social capitals.

**Objective 3: To explore the subjective meaning that unemployed graduate youth attach to their unemployment experiences.**

What subjective meaning do unemployed young graduates attach to their unemployment experiences? Focus group discussions with unemployed graduate youth suggests these young people feel that unemployment renders them “youthmen”, a term used widely in West Africa to refer to individuals who have not achieved social adulthood, despite their chronological age (Honwana, 2014). Overall, the findings (presented in Chapter 5) show that being unemployed places the unemployed graduate youth in various situations, as illustrated in Chapter 5, such as being excluded from decision-making in family and community, presumably because they do not contribute to these institutions financially. The young unemployed graduates also shared that they are often wrongfully accused when something goes wrong and feel that the unpaid domestic work they regularly do goes unappreciated. In essence, young people feel that being unemployed socially excludes them, leaving them financially, materially, socially deprived, and psychologically hurt. Similar to what Dale (2014:25) found among unemployed youth in Ethiopia, the unemployed graduate youth “believe that they don’t equally participate in the families and community affairs, and they are not important as long as they have nothing to contribute to their families and communities”. Implicitly, the subjective meaning the young unemployed graduates attach to their unemployed status revolves around their limited financial capital assets and is seen as negatively straining social capital assets.

**Objective 4: To illuminate the main livelihood challenges and strategies employed by unemployed graduate youth**



With limited livelihood capital assets, it is somehow expected that unemployed graduate youth will face some livelihood challenges. Therefore, in addition to exploring the study's third specific objective above, Chapter 5 also explored the young unemployed graduates' main livelihood challenges and the strategies they employ to address or cope with these challenges. It emerged that the challenges essentially mirror the factors that underscore the subjective meaning attached to being unemployed. As discussed above, these are largely related to young people's limited financial capital and notably affect their social capital.

In terms of livelihood strategies, the findings suggest that while some extremes, such as involvement in transactional and often intergenerational sexual relations, were noted, unemployed graduate youth in Botswana are generally resilient and draw on their agency as well as on their human and social capitals, albeit limited, to cope. Reliance on family members and membership in faith-based organisations were the main social capital drawn on while hustling, which included engagement in the low-cost, informal sector, which was the main human capital drawn on.

**Objective 5: To explore the perceived effectiveness of current youth-oriented ALMPs in addressing graduate youth's livelihood challenges and in improving the livelihood strategies that the young unemployed graduates adopt**

Drawing largely from this literature, unemployed graduate youth as well as key informants, were asked during focus group discussions to reflect on the effectiveness of the current youth-oriented ALMPs offered in the country. Consistent with previous literature, the overall view among unemployed graduate youth and key informant interviews is that the country's current active labour market programmes (ALPMPs) are not sufficiently effective. In the view of the young unemployed graduates, while some ALMPs do enhance human capital skills, some are characterised by "unreasonable" requirements specifically, financial, physical and natural capitals that the young people do not necessarily have. Furthermore, a widespread perception emerged that due to these limitations, access to the programmes tends to be through largely corrupt practices. Additionally, some of the unemployed graduate youth also highlighted that they are not necessarily placed in departments aligned to their qualifications during internship placements. Therefore, this defeats the purpose of training and skills development programmes, which are the most common in the country.

### **7.3 The overall contribution of the study**

From the study's overall findings, summarised in Section 7.2 above, it can be concluded that indeed, as per previous research, graduate youth unemployment is one of contemporary Botswana's major socio-economic challenges. The thesis makes an original contribution to the field of sociology of work, in particular, through a qualitative analysis of the challenges that unemployed graduate youth in Botswana experience and their livelihood strategies based on the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF).

Thus, this thesis's main contribution lies in the qualitative, sociological, and empirical illumination of the experiences and views of those directly affected by this phenomenon: the young unemployed graduates themselves. While many of the findings affirm those of previous studies, the use of the Sustainable Livelihood Framework as the theoretical lens added a new dimension to the extant literature on graduate youth unemployment. In essence, the thesis showed that the apparent neglect of the role of unemployed graduate youth's livelihood capital assets might be one of the 'missing pieces' in the puzzle to address this issue in Botswana and other parts of the world facing the same challenge.

All in all, laudable as the development and implementation of current ALMPs, it is clearly evident that their design does not take into consideration the livelihood challenges that young unemployed graduate youth go through and the livelihood capital assets that these young people have. To this end, the thesis' overall contribution lies in drawing attention to the need for policy and practice interventions in Botswana to recognise that: (i) while unemployed graduate youth in the country have sufficient human capital in terms of educational attainment, they continue to lack in the areas of employability skills and work experience. Moreover, (ii) unemployed graduate youth are notably limited in terms possession of social, natural physical and financial capital. To this end, ALMPs in the country need to amend their eligibility criteria in this regard if a notable improvement is to be seen in addressing graduate youth unemployment in the country. For example, less emphasis on capitals that young people do not possess or, at the very least, efforts to enhance these missing capitals should be a central element of the ALMPs. As much of the developing world aims to expand social protection and social security coverage (ILO, 2021), this finding is relevant in relation to the social security provision among unemployed young people in general and unemployed young graduates in particular.

In line with this, the following section presents some recommendations for policy, practice and research.

## **7.4 Recommendations for policy, practice and future research**

### **7.4.1 Recommendations for policy and practice**

#### **Gap 1: Limited data to facilitate robust analysis of graduate youth unemployment.**

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Improve the quality and quantity of data available to drive national decision-making and resource allocation*

There is an urgent need for investments into the collection of sufficient and adequately disaggregated national, district and local level data to enable a more in-depth and robust analysis of graduate youth unemployment in the country. In particular, and given the importance of youth livelihoods, there is a need for statistics that can facilitate the study of

graduate youth unemployment using the sustainable livelihood lens if appropriate, cost-effective and accurate investments are to be made in relation to youth-oriented ALMPs. Four specific considerations may be useful with regards to the current data situation:

Greater in-depth analysis of national administrative and other datasets to establish coverage of current ALMPs in relation to unemployed graduate youth.

- ✓ Development of the core livelihood indicators for which data needs to be collected and/or analysed at all levels regularly to ensure informed decision-making.
- ✓ In order to make the programming more efficient, implement mechanisms to ensure that data is well-disseminated and easily accessible to those who need it.
- ✓ Strengthening the monitoring and evaluation system to enable the country's efforts to address graduate youth unemployment and to ensure that it is evidence-based and ultimately more effective.

- **Gap 2: There are no subsidised employment programmes to curb youth unemployment.** The study discovered that Botswana does not have subsidised employment programmes, which is one of the four types of ALMPs. The available ALMPs only offer (i) entrepreneurship promotion, (ii) employment services and (iii) training and skills development programmes.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Consider developing and implementing a subsidised employment programme to curb graduate youth unemployment.* Such type of ALMP has been shown to be effective and to reduce unemployment in many countries, both developed and developing, including the USA, Chile, and Morocco (see, for example, Chatri, Hadeef and Samoudi, 2021; Dutta-Gupta, Grant, Eckel and Edelman, 2016; Cecchini and Martinez, 2012).

- **Gap 3: Failure to incorporate and include youth during decision-making to design and implement policies meant to develop and empower them.** The study revealed that unemployed young people are excluded from participating in policymaking.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Make youth participation a central part of the design and implementation of ALMPs.* Unemployed youth are better placed to know their livelihood and employment needs as well as the plausible interventions that will work for them and their contexts. Such participation will also instil a sense of ownership in the policies and programmes among the young people concerned.

- **Gap 4: Limited consultation and partnership between the government and the private sector in alleviating graduate youth unemployment.** The government often excludes the private sector from policies and programmes designed and implemented to curb youth unemployment.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Policymakers should involve the private sector as stakeholders and implementing partners in addressing graduate youth unemployment.* The private sector is vital for training, internships, and mentorship, especially for upcoming entrepreneurs and job creation. This can further be facilitated through subsidised employment, where the government provides tax breaks for organisations absorbing unemployed youth. In this way, the private sector can help bridge the gap between educational curricula and the needs of the labour market. Their partnership and cooperation are vital as the success of the ALMPs in many countries can be attributed to cooperation between the government and the private sector in the design and implementation of such programmes (Escudero et al., 2016).

**Gap 5: Failure to consider the livelihood challenges and capital assets that unemployed young graduates face and possess when designing, developing and implementing active labour market programmes (ALMPs).** The study revealed that unemployed graduate youth fail to access ALMPs because of a lack of livelihood assets, making these programmes ineffective.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Amend the eligibility criteria for ALMPs to effectively alleviate graduate youth unemployment in the country.* For example, less emphasis on capitals that young people do not possess, such as the natural, financial and the physical or at the very least, efforts to enhance these missing capitals should be a central element of the ALMPs for them to be able to address unemployed graduate youth's challenges.

#### 7.4.2 Recommendations for further research

1. *A national study on corruption as an inhibiting factor for graduates to transition from school to work.* This thesis found that Botswana is not as immune to corruption as the literature paints it (Section 6.3.1; Jones, 2017), making it harder for some graduates to enter the labour market after completing their studies. Furthermore, the young unemployed graduates accused some employers and those responsible for hiring and implementing government programmes (ALMPs) of corruption, especially bribery. Therefore, a study focusing on corruption as an inhibiting factor for graduates to transition from school to work is highly recommended to establish the veracity of the corruption allegations and the extent to which corruption contributes to unemployment in Botswana. In addition, such a study will also help in the efforts to bring the scourge of corruption to the government's attention.
2. *A national study on the extent of transactional sexual relations in the graduate youth unemployment arena.* During the exploration of the reasons for unemployed young

graduates failing to secure jobs, both men and women accused some employers of asking for sex in exchange for jobs. This prompts a recommendation for studies to focus solely on the phenomenon of sex for jobs and the extent to which it contributes to the unemployment rate. This phenomenon has already been explored in countries such as Rwanda (Bumwe, 2012) and Uganda (Namuggala, 2017), where to some extent, sex in exchange for jobs has been linked to high unemployment rates. However, there is limited literature on this topic in Botswana.

3. *A broader and national mixed-method study on the sociological aspects of graduate youth unemployment.* This study was predominantly qualitative in its design and methodological approach/orientation and focused on specific participant samples or stakeholders (employed and unemployed youth graduates and selected government officials). Further research is recommended to use a mixed-methods approach to further quantify youth unemployment and poverty to find evidence of the magnitude of these problems. A mixed-methods approach in a single study will also enhance the credibility, reliability and validity of the findings because it will be holistic rather than disintegrated findings from different studies on a common problem.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

With a focus on unemployed graduate youth in Botswana, this thesis explored plausible avenues of enhancing active labour market programmes for improved youth livelihoods. From the overall findings, the thesis is that one pathway for addressing the global youth unemployment crisis, which is likely to continue as the world finds ways of recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, is to draw on the Sustainable Livelihood Framework as a relevant conceptual compass to directly target young people's livelihood challenges and develop interventions that aim to limit these particular challenges.

## 8.0 References

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## Appendix A: Unemployment rates by age group, various national surveys, Botswana 2002–2013

Age group (years)	Botswana Household Income Survey, 2002/03	Botswana AIDS Impact Survey, 2004	Labour Force Survey, 2005/06	Botswana AIDS Impact Survey, 2008	Botswana Core Welfare Indicator Survey, 2009/10	Botswana AIDS Impact Survey, 2013
15–17	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	35.8
18–19	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	58.0
15–19	55.9	61.1	26.7	66.1	41.4	NA
20–24	49.4	45.6	34.9	45.2	34.0	38.6
25–29	27.9	27.7	23.0	29.6	22.4	26.1
30–34	17.5	18.0	14.7	24.4	17.2	18.8
35–39	13.2	13.2	13.0	18.0	12.9	12.8
40–44	9.7	11.5	11.9	13.5	10.3	10.8
45–49	7.3	11.0	10.0	15.2	9.9	13.7
50–54	5.5	7.7	8.7	10.3	9.6	6.8
55–59	3.4	8.1	6.1	11.7	6.8	5.7
60–64	3.4	4.5	5.6	7.4	5.7	3.8
65+	2.4	9.5	2.8	26.7	0.3	1.9

Source: (Statistics Botswana, 2016, p. 76–82)

Note: NA: Not disaggregated for this age group

## Appendix B: Focus group guide for unemployed youth

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### Topic 1 Background information of unemployed youth

- ❖ Age
- ❖ Courses completed
- ❖ Level of education
- ❖ Years unemployed
- ❖ Ever worked before (if yes, doing what, how long and where)
- ❖ Labour force participation (what are they doing? Are they active job seekers, discouraged)?
- ❖ Place of residence
- ❖ School background (private/government)
- ❖ Level of education of parents
- ❖ Current employment status of parents
- ❖ Family socio-economic status

### Topic 2 Experiences, perceptions on causes and subjective meaning of unemployment

2.1 What does being unemployed mean to you?

2.2 When you think about unemployment, what comes to mind?

2.3 How do you experience unemployment?

2.4 How do you feel about unemployment?

**Probe for:** What is the meaning of being unemployed to you?; How does being unemployed affect your confidence and self-esteem? How does it affect your relationship with your friends, family and the community?

2.5 What are your experiences of being unemployed?

**Probe for:** Treatment by the family and community; Challenges that come with being unemployed; Treatment by the society

2.6 Which method are you currently using to look for a job?

**Probe for:** Are you using the internet, and how do you access it?; Are you checking for vacancies in the newspapers, and where do you get them?

2.7 In your opinion, what do you think affects youth's access to employment?

**Probe for:** Main causes of youth unemployment in Botswana

2.8 What limits youth's access to employment?

**Probe for** Human capital: education, skills, health, education mismatch social capital: gender, class, lack of social network; financial capital: credit, income, remittances, lack of cash to pay bribery

### **Topic 3 Main constraints to improved livelihoods for unemployed youth**

3.1 What do you think are the limiting factors to your livelihoods?

**Probe for:** Human (lack of skills, education, health); Social (lack of networks, family to offer support); Financial (lack of capital to start-up small business, lack of access to loans)

### **Topic 4 The types of livelihood strategies unemployed youth are involved**

4.1 What adaptation strategies are you using to survive in the midst of unemployment?

**Probe for:** Remittances and help from friends and family; Entrepreneurship; Migration; Informal sector; Further studies; Youth initiatives

### **Topic 5 Effectiveness of the available government youth programmes for the unemployed youth in Botswana.**

5.1 Are you aware of any programmes that were designed specifically for the unemployed youth?

5.2 If yes can you please name and discuss them.

5.3.1 Have you ever participated?

**Probe for:** If yes, please tell me about your experience and the programme(s) you participated in.; If no, why have you not taken part?

5.4 In your own opinion what can you say about the effectiveness of the programmes/ livelihood strategies available to unemployed youth?

**Probe for:** Are they working?; Are they accessible to all?

Any other thing or comments that you would like to say in relation to what we have just discussed before we close the discussion.

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this focus group discussion.

## Appendix C: Focus group guide for employed youth

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### FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS FOR EMPLOYED YOUTH

#### Topic 1 Background information of unemployed youth

- ❖ Age
- ❖ Course
- ❖ Level of education
- ❖ Years employed
- ❖ Place of residence
- ❖ School background (private/government)
- ❖ Level of education of parents
- ❖ Employment status of parents
- ❖ Family socio-economic status (class)

#### Topic 2 Subjective meaning of being employed

2.1 What does being employed mean to you?

Probe for:

- 3 Treatment by the family and community
- 4 Treatment by the society

2.2 In your opinion, what do you think affects youth's access to employment?

Probe for:

- ❖ What do you think causes youth unemployment in Botswana?
- ❖ Which capital/asset limits youth's access to employment? Is it,
  - Human: education, skills, health
  - Social: gender, class, networks
  - Financial: credit, income, remittances

2.3 Which method did you use to get a job?

Probe for:

- 5 Were you using the internet, and how did you access it?
- 6 Were you checking for vacancies in the newspapers, and where do you get them?

2.4 How long did it take you to get a job after completing your studies?

#### Topic 3 Livelihoods assets used to get employment

3.1 Which livelihood assets did you use to get a job?

Probe for:

- ❖ Human capital (skills, experience, education)

- ❖ Social capital (social networks, class, gender)
- ❖ Financial capital (bribery)
- ❖ Other (government agencies like DPSM)

**Topic 4 The types of livelihood strategies employed youth are involved**

4.1 What other livelihood strategies are you using apart from your job?

Probe for:

- ❖ Remittances and help from friends and family
- ❖ Entrepreneurship
- ❖ Migration
- ❖ Informal sector
- ❖ Further studies
- ❖ Youth initiatives

**Topic 5 Effectiveness of the available government youth programmes for the unemployed youth in Botswana.**

5.1 Are you aware of any programmes that were designed specifically for the unemployed youth?

5.2 If yes can you please name and discuss them.

5.3 Have you ever participated?

Probe for:

- ❖ If yes, please tell me about your experience and the programme(s) you participated in.
- ❖ If no, why have you not taken part?

5.4 In your own opinion what can you say about the effectiveness of the programmes/ livelihood strategies available to unemployed youth?

Probe for:

- ❖ Are they working?
- ❖ Are they accessible to all?

Any other thing or comments that you would like to say in relation to what we have just discussed before we close the discussion.

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this focus group discussion.

## Appendix D: Interview guide for key informants

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### Topic 1 Organisational details

1.1 What is your designation in this organisation/department?

**Probe for:** How long have you been in this position?; What does your position entail?

1.2 Please tell me about the history of your organisation in supporting unemployed youth.

**Probe for:** Details of your organisation's operations; Types of support/services provided to unemployed youth; Geographical scope and spread (are you national or rural/urban based) of your support

1.3 What is the budgeting process in your organisation for unemployed youth intervention programmes?

**Probe for:** Source of funding; Factors influencing the size of funds made available; Who decides how much is spent on unemployed youth intervention programmes

1.4 Who are and have been key partners? What role do they play?

**Probe for:** Which government departments?; Which international and local NGOs?; Private sector?

1.5 What do you think of the coordination among key partners?

**Probe for:** Are they doing their best in ensuring that they provide relevant support and services to unemployed young people?

1.6 What are your organisations major challenges in relation to providing intervention programmes for unemployed youth?

**Probe for:** Resource constraints; Why do you think these are challenges?; How do you deal with them? What do you think are the possible solutions?

### Topic 2: Definition of youth

2.1 I understand that youth refers to anyone between the ages of 15 and 35 according to the revised National Youth Policy. Now my question is why in writing you refer to youth as someone between the ages of 12 and 35 and 12 to 29 as it is in your reports for 2011 census. (Statistics Botswana)

“Anyone between the ages of 15 and 24 for statistical consistency” For the United Nations

### Topic 3 Profile of Unemployed youth (DPSM and Statistics Botswana)

3.1 Which course (s) is highly affected by youth unemployment?

3.2 Which level of education is leading among the unemployed young people?

3.3 Which institutions are producing a high number of unemployed young persons?

#### **Topic 4 Assessment of unemployed youth intervention programmes**

4.1 Please tell me how well you think access to unemployed youth intervention programmes is working in Botswana?

**Probe for:** What helps youth to gain access?; What are the main barriers and or challenges undermining access?; Under what circumstances are youth likely not to receive support and services which they need?

4.2 What do you think about the implementation of government intervention programmes for unemployed youth in Botswana?

**Probe for:** Are they achieving what they intended to achieve?; Why do you say so?

4.3 What, in your view, are the primary strengths in government's policy to provide unemployed youth intervention programmes?

4.4 What are the major weaknesses in the government's policy to provide unemployed youth intervention programmes?

4.5 I wish to hear your views on how the government's provision of unemployed youth programmes can be improved.

**Probe for:** Services provided; Links to other benefits and services; Coordination among key partners; Mechanisms to feed into government data; monitoring and evaluation indicators; Service provider and partner training on unemployed youth intention programmes

4.6 Are there any 'best' practices emanating from your organisations/ departments on implementation or support of unemployed youth intervention programmes that you can share with me?

Any other things or comments you would like to say in relation to what we have just discussed before we close the discussion?

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this in-depth interview.

## Appendix E: Ethics approval



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities  
Research Ethics Committee

23 August 2018

Dear Ms Setambule

**Project:** An exploration of the livelihood strategies of unemployed youth in Botswana  
**Researcher:** T Setambule  
**Supervisor:** Prof Z Mokmane  
**Department:** Sociology  
**Reference number:** 17385352 (GW20180601HS)

Thank you for your response to the Committee's correspondence.

I have pleasure in informing you that the Research Ethics Committee formally **approved** the above study at an *ad hoc* meeting held on 23 August 2018. Data collection may therefore commence.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should your actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

**Prof Maxi Schoeman**  
**Deputy Dean: Postgraduate and Research Ethics**  
**Faculty of Humanities**  
**UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**  
**e-mail: PGHumanities@up.ac.za**

cc: Prof Z Mokomane (Supervisor)

Prof D Bonnin (HoD)

Research Ethics Committee Members: Prof MME Schoeman (Deputy Dean); Prof KL Harris; Mr A Bizos; Dr L Blokland; Dr K Booyens; Dr A-M de Beer; Ms A dos Santos; Dr R Fasselt; Ms KT Govinder Andrew; Dr E Johnson; Dr W Kelleher; Mr A Mohamed; Dr C Puttergill; Dr D Reyburn; Dr M Soer; Prof E Tajard; Prof V Thebe; Ms B Tsebe; Ms D Mokalapa

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# Appendix F: Permission to undertake research in Botswana

TEL: (+267) 3901186  
FAX: (+267) 3913473

MINISTRY OF SPORT YOUTH AND CULTURE  
PRIVATE BAG 00514  
GABORONE  
BOTSWANA



REF: MYSC 9/2/1 VIII (66)

23 July 2018

Ms Thato Setambule  
P. O BOX 11643  
Francistown, Botswana

## **RESEARCH PERMIT- THATO SETAMBULE**

This serves to acknowledge your application for a Research Permit on **“An exploration of livelihood strategies of unemployed youth in Botswana”**. The Permit is granted for a period of one (5) Months, commencing 23 July 2018 to the 31 December 2018 and is granted under the following conditions:

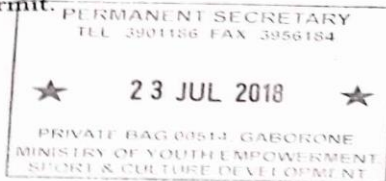
1. Copies of the final product of the study are to be directly deposited with the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development, National Library Services, National Archives and Records Services and Research and Development in the University of Botswana.
2. The Permit does not give you authority to enter premises, private establishment or protected areas. Permission for such areas should be negotiated with those concerned.
3. You conduct your study according to particulars furnished in the application you submitted taking into account the above conditions.
4. Failure to comply with any of the above conditions will result in the immediate cancellation of the Permit.

Thank you

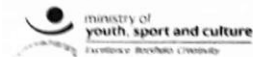
Yours Faithfully

Tsaone K Ramatlhale

For/Permanent Secretary



Cc: Director, National Archives and Records Services  
National Librarian, National Library Services  
Director, Research and Development, University of Botswana



## Appendix G: Information and consent sheet for youth focus group discussions

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UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

### INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

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My name is Thato Setambule, and I am a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Pretoria. I am conducting research on the livelihood strategies of unemployed youth. The research project is titled: *Enhancing active labour market programmes for improved youth livelihoods: A study of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana*. The study seeks to explore the main constraints to improved livelihoods for unemployed youth. It also seeks to investigate the types of livelihood strategies unemployed youth are involved in.

As part of the study, I am requesting your permission to incorporate you in a group discussion to assist me in gathering the information described above. The discussion should not be more than two hours long. I am additionally requesting your permission to audio record the discussion to maintain the accuracy of the information shared. Please note that your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw at any time during the discussion. If you feel uncomfortable with a question asked at any point in the interview, you are not forced to answer it and have an option to decline to respond to it.

All data collected in the discussions will be treated with strict confidentiality. The details of your identity will remain confidential throughout the study as all transcripts will be coded such that your identity can not be linked to the transcripts. There will be the use of pseudonyms to protect your identity in reports and publications on the research. All information collected from you will be stored at the Department of Sociology for a maximum of 15 years.

Your participation in this study will not lead to any direct benefits, but will add to the knowledge on understanding the livelihood strategies used by unemployed youth in Botswana. There are no anticipated risks attached to participating in this study. However, if you feel distressed in any way at any point during the discussions or after, please let me know and I will provide you with the details of counsellors at **the University of Botswana Careers and Counselling Centre** who will be on standby to offer your services free of charge.

It is of crucial importance that before you agree to participate in this study you fully comprehend what is involved and are satisfied with your participation within the study. If you agree to participate in the study, please sign the consent form available.

If you have questions or concerns before or after the study, please contact me on:

Cell number: 00 27 603 848 570 or by email: [u17385352@tuks.co.za](mailto:u17385352@tuks.co.za)

**Consent**

I hereby consent to participate in the research on livelihood strategies used by unemployed youth. I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any time should I not want to continue, and this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this is an academic research project.

I understand that my answers will remain confidential.

.....

**Signature of participant Date**

I am willing for the focus group to be audio recorded.

.....

Signature of participant Date

Interviewer's signature: .....

**Date:** .....

## Appendix H: Information and consent sheet for key informants

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UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

### INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

My name is Thato Setambule and I am a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Pretoria. I am conducting a research on livelihood strategies of unemployed youth. The research project is titled: *Enhancing active labour market programmes for improved youth livelihoods: A study of unemployed graduate youth in Botswana*. The study seeks to explore the main constraints to improved livelihoods for unemployed youth. It also seeks to investigate the types of livelihood strategies unemployed youth are involved in.

As part of the study, I am requesting your permission to conduct an interview to assist me in gathering the information described above. The interviews should be about an hour long and will be scheduled at a time and place suitable for you. I am additionally requesting your permission to audio record the interview to maintain accuracy of the information shared. Please note that your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may choose to withdraw at any time during the interview. If at any point in the interview you feel uncomfortable with a question asked, you are not forced to answer it and have an option to decline to respond to the question.

All data collected in the interviews will be treated with strict confidentiality. The details of your identity will remain confidential throughout the study as all transcripts will be coded such that your identity can not be linked to the transcripts. There will be use of pseudonyms to protect your identity in reports and publications on the research. All information collected from you will be stored at the Department of Sociology for a maximum of 15 years.

Your participation in this study will not lead to any direct benefits; but will add to the knowledge on understanding the effectiveness of the available government youth programmes for the unemployed youth. There are no anticipated risks attached to participating in this study. However, if you feel distressed in any way at any point during the discussions or after, please let me know and I will provide you with the details of counsellors at **the University of Botswana Careers and Counselling Centre** who will be on standby to offer your services free of charge.

It is of crucial importance that before you agree to participate in this study you fully comprehend what is involved and are satisfied with your participation within the study. If you agree to participate in the study, please sign the consent form available.

If you have questions or concerns before or after the study, please contact me on:

Cell number: 00 27 603 848 570 or by email: [u17385352@tuks.co.za](mailto:u17385352@tuks.co.za)

**Consent**

I hereby consent to participate in the research on livelihood strategies used by unemployed youth. I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any time should I not want to continue, and this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this is an academic research project.

I understand that my answers will remain confidential.

.....

**Signature of participant Date**

I am willing for the interview to be audio taped.

.....

Signature of participant Date

Interviewer's signature: .....

**Date:** .....

## Appendix I: Commitment to provide counselling services: University of Botswana Careers and Counselling Centre



Corner of Notwane and Molebo Road,  
Gaborone, Botswana  
Pvt Bag 0022  
Gaborone, Botswana  
Tel: [267] 355 2296  
Fax: [267] 395 6956  
E-mail: careers@uob.ac.bw

2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2018

Deputy Dean  
Faculty of Humanities  
University of Pretoria  
P/Bag X20  
Hatfield 0028

Dear Prof Maxi Schoeman

### **SUBJECT: COUNSELLING CONFORMATION NOTE – THATO SETAMBULE**

Reference is made to the above subject regarding the request for psychosocial support services for research participants during the data collection period. The Careers and Counselling Centre at the University of Botswana has a qualified staffing complement comprising of psychosocial counsellors, psychologists and employment or career counsellors.

Please note that the support will be dedicated to the current study only and is matched with the Botswana Government Study Permit which ends on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018.

I am hopeful that the letter will suffice to your requirements.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

Selebaleng Mmapatsi  
Deputy Director  
Careers and Counselling Centre



## Appendix J: Language editing certificate

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WORDPLAY EDITING  
Copy Editor and Proofreader  
Email: [karien.hurter@gmail.com](mailto:karien.hurter@gmail.com)  
Tel: 071 104 9484  
Website: <http://wordplayediting.net/>

5 December 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to confirm that *An Exploration of Livelihood Strategies of Unemployed Youth in Botswana* by Thato Setambule was edited by a professional language practitioner. It requires further work by the author in response to my suggested edits. I cannot be held responsible for what the author does from this point onward.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "KH", is written over a faint, illegible printed name.

Karien Hurter