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Youth Unemployment in Post-Democratic Malawi: A Policy Review

By

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in Fulfilment of the Award of a Doctoral Degree in Development Studies.**

Plagiarism Declaration

I declare that this thesis titled ‘**Youth Unemployment in Post-Democratic Malawi: A Policy Review**’ is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

This thesis has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree at any university.

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Abstract

Although in the immediate post-independence period in Malawi there was an exciting and relatively impactful policy programme devoted to youth development (skill training, entrepreneurship and job creation), guided by the Malawi Young Pioneers Act of 1963, this momentum and focus on youth has largely disappeared. This is a function of both structure and agency. With this in mind, the thesis aims to explicate why, specifically, in the post-democracy period (1994 - to date), various administrations have consistently neglected youth employment as a priority policy area. In attempt to answer this question the thesis gives a critical analysis/review of the current National Youth Policy of Malawi.

A multi-faceted and multi prolonged qualitative exploratory research exercise which used Triangulation was deployed. The technique facilitated validation of data through cross verification from multiple perspectives including literature review, Focus Group Discussions and individual face to face interviews with key stakeholders in youth development. Based on the research findings, the thesis concludes that three aspects in Malawi's youth development journey can be underlined. First, there is recognition that unlike many countries elsewhere in the world, the well-being of young people has always featured prominently in Malawi's legislative history. To this day and despite the obvious institutional flaws, Malawi boasts a department and Ministry devoted to youth affairs. In addition, there is a "Youth Parliament" and a "Youth Council". Second and the above notwithstanding, there are major chasms between policy intent and actual policy implementation. The thesis explored these gaps, omissions and silences in Malawi's current youth development policy trajectory. Finally, chapter seven sets out recommendations and an alternative policy pipe-line that could correct the inconsistencies and lack of impact. The conclusion shows that a policy with a solid implementation strategy, action points, evaluation framework etc. would go a long way in stimulating growth, job-creation, improved skills and training plans that are appropriate for Malawi's youth in the twenty first century.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the Youth of Malawi.

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List of Acronyms

4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
ACB	Malawi Anti-Corruption Bureau
ADMARC	Agricultural Development Marketing Cooperation
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
AU-SARO	African Union-Southern Africa Regional Office
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDSS	Community Day Secondary School
DEVPOLS	Development Policies
DD	Demographic Dividend
DFM	Drug Fight Malawi
€	Euro
ECAM	Employers Consultative Association of Malawi
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EU	European Union
FISP	Fertilizer Input Subsidy Programme
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
HIV	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus
HR	Human Resources
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IHS	Integrated Household Survey
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MASAF	Malawi Social Action Fund
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MFI	Micro Finance Institution
MHRYN	Malawi Human Rights Youth Network
MLFS	Malawi Labour Force Survey

MoLYMD	Ministry of Labour, Youth and Manpower Development
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate Examination
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MWK	Malawi Kwacha
MYP	Malawi Young Pioneers
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSO	National Statistical Office of Malawi
NSS	National Service Scheme
NYCOM	National Youth Council of Malawi
NYP	National Youth Policy
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OVC	Orphaned and Vulnerable Children
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SitAn	Adolescents and Youth Situation Analysis of Malawi
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TEVET	Technical, Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education Training
TEVETA	Technical, Entrepreneurial & Vocational Education Training Authority
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	United Nations AIDS Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UYF	Unemployment Youth Fund
USD	United States Dollar
VSL	Village Savings and Loans
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
WENELA	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association
WEF	World Economic Forum
WHO	World Health Organization
WPAY	World Program of Action for Youth

YBI	Youth Business International
YCF	Youth Consultative Forum
YDCS	Youth Development Credit Scheme
YEDEF	Youth Enterprise Development Fund
YJCI	Youth Job Creation Initiative
YPM	Youth Parliament of Malawi

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1. Introduction

Malawi's post-democracy period has been characterized by an inadequate response to the myriad socio-economic and political challenges confronting the youth in that country. Specifically, and despite the euphoria and expectations that came with democracy in 1994, twenty-five years down the line, the impact on the social economic well-being of young people in particular, has been negligible. Accordingly, the principal focus of this thesis is to explore and explicate the lack of fundamental change in the lives of the vast majority of Malawians and specifically, the youth. This is done through a rigorous analysis of the youth policy environment between 1994 and 2018 as well as soliciting views of key informants and focus group participants. It should come as no surprise why the focus is specifically on youth unemployment, as Nieto's 2017 statement (cited in Ortiz, 2017:1) makes the point succinctly:

The youth unemployment crisis, specifically – in the context of the global employment situation – is, along with climate change, the great challenge of our time.

To say that global youth unemployment is one of the most critical and complex economic and social issues in this time would not be an overstatement. Every year around the world, 40 million young people (400 million in a decade) join a labour market that is not growing enough. Around 70 million out of the 200 million people out of work are young people, and it is warned that, if the global economy does not prove capable of finding a solution, 'we are going to find ourselves with a lost generation' bringing with it a 'loss of human capital, social exclusion and dislocation' (Ortiz, 2017:1). The International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2016 estimated that, the global

youth unemployment rate would reach 13.1% in that year and remain at that level through to 2017 (up from 12.9% in 2015). In this regard, the global number of unemployed youth was estimated to rise by half a million to reach 73 million (the first such increase in 3 years). In recent months, the ILO's World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2019 Report indicated that, progress in reducing unemployment globally is not being matched by improvements in the quality of work. Deborah Greenfield, ILO's Deputy Director-General for Policy stated:

Today, over 40% of the world's youth are either unemployed or have a job but live in poverty... the alarming rise in youth unemployment and the equally disturbing high levels of young people who work but still live in poverty shows how difficult it will be to reach the global goal to end poverty by 2030 unless we redouble our efforts to achieve sustainable economic growth and decent work... (Greenfield, 2019 cited in ILO, 2019:1).

Similarly, Africa has the youngest population in the world with close to 200 million people aged between 15 and 24, and according to the World Bank (2016); this number is expected to double by 2045. Unfortunately, these young people are confronted by numerous challenges; they need to make long or short-term life changing choices influenced by prevailing socio-economic conditions such as poverty and unemployment (UNDP, 2016). The ILO's World Employment and Social Outlook 2016 Trends for Youth Report noted that, of greater concern is the share and number of young people, often in emerging and developing regions, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, who live in extreme or moderate poverty despite having a job. The 10.9% unemployment rate among Sub-Saharan Africa's youth aged 15-25 is lower than the global average (13.1%) and expected to continue decreasing, however, these young people continue to report the highest working poverty rates among the same cohort (70.0%), close to two times higher than the average for developing and emerging countries in 2016 (37.7%). It is estimated that more than one third of those working in developing economies live on not more than USD2 a day. Youth unemployment is therefore seen to be a challenge of both quantity and quality of jobs, with important nuances across regions (ILO, 2016:11).

Gabriel (2003) is of the view that, in Sub-Saharan Africa's population, young people are, and will probably remain a significant share for many years to come and a failure to provide resources, opportunity and second chances for this large group could mean huge political, economic, cultural and social consequences. Ligthelm (2006), in a similar manner, indicates that

unemployment is arguably the single most significant obstacle to poverty reduction in the region. Job creation for young people remains an uphill struggle as 2 out of 5 economically active youth in most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Malawi, are still unemployed. The ILO in the 2015 Global Employment Trends for Youth Report states further that in these countries, finding work, let alone full-time employment as a youth with no experience continues to be an uphill struggle.

Furthermore, the ILO (2015), also noted that in most low-income countries such as Malawi, at least 3 in 4 young workers fall in the category of what is deemed as irregular employment (temporary employment), while 9 in 10 young workers remain in informal employment. In Malawi, the 2013 Malawi Labour Force Survey (MLFS), indicated that the unemployment rate among the total economically active population, based on the ILO broad definition, is at 21%. The unemployment rate is higher among females, at 26%, than among males at 14%. In urban areas, the unemployment rate is 28% while the corresponding rate is 19% in rural areas. There are few differences in unemployment rates by level of education except for those with tertiary education. Among the youth aged 15-35 the unemployment rate is at 23% and it is slightly higher (27%) among the youth aged 15-24 years in the country (MLFS, 2013:6). However, with no recent research done, these figures could be higher in 2019 as for the past several decades, Malawi has seen a growing number of young migrants moving across borders in search of opportunities. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM, 2015), confirms that, the unemployment crisis in Malawi is behind the rise in migration of young people abroad in search of better education and employment opportunities. It is becoming clear that the new twenty first century challenges and the changing global environment and demands have overwhelmed the policy response to youth unemployment in Malawi. It is for this reason that, this thesis aims to offer a policy review which by doing so, will attempt to give an account on why there has been ineffective and inadequate policy response to youth unemployment in post-democratic Malawi.

1.2. Chapter Structure

Accordingly, the present chapter seeks to discuss the following nine sections: introduction to the research, statement of the problem, rationale and significance of the study, hypothesis of the study, the research questions, the research objectives, clarification of the key concepts to be used in the thesis, an outline of the structure of the thesis and lastly, a conclusion.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

When Malawi witnessed a proliferation of policies for specific sectors following the transition to democracy in May 1994, the expectation was that this would provide an opportunity to pay particular attention to the plight of youth in the overall development efforts. Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2017) write that, although there were no specific youth orientated policies during the one party era under the banner of the Statement of Development Policies (DEVPOLs), the welfare of the youth was taken care of through the establishment of the Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP) in 1963. The MYP initiative consequently ensured that Malawian youth were self-employed in agriculture, business, construction and carpentry after a three-year rigorous training programme (ibid).

Still, it was anticipated that the advent of democracy in 1994 would transform the government's response to the needs of young people in the country. The country was engulfed in a wave of optimism as the new democratic government set out to draft the country's first National Youth Policy (NYP) in 1996, which identified priority areas of youth development including job creation. The development of the youth policy was a remarkable achievement on paper. This however, was short-lived, as the policy did not contain any strategies, action plan or monitoring mechanisms for it to be effectively delivered and implemented. It did not even provide any quotas of young people's participation in the labour market (Youth Employment Summit, 2002).

Consequently, following huge pressure from a confederation of youth organisations through the Youth Consultative Forum (YCF) and the National Youth Council of Malawi (NYCOM), the 1996 NYP was revised in 2013, with strategies and an action plan formulated. This intervention notwithstanding, the impact on unemployment has been inadequate as several factors have hindered progress. Research and evaluation programmes, including a strategic plan of action

have been produced, but very little has been mentioned, let alone action undertaken, to address the question of creating youth employment or even simply creating opportunities for the young people to access business capital for sustainable livelihood production (Youth Employment Summit, 2002). As a result, the challenge is increasingly coming under the spotlight as an urgent socio-economic structural challenge. There are fears that Malawi will have a delinquent society if the problem is not urgently resolved. Close to half of young people in the country are either unemployed or working in low-wage jobs as shown by the Malawi Youth Status Report 2016: Adolescent and Youth Situation Analysis (SitAn, 2016). If the challenge persists, these young people will remain excluded and alienated, and will continue to face barriers to accessing resources related to finance, health and education that can improve their wellbeing. This would have major implications for future growth and sustainable development more broadly.

Despite the existence of a seemingly remarkable policy, youth unemployment continues to increase in Malawi. This is the problem the thesis seeks to resolve by giving a critical analysis/review of the current National Youth Policy. In so doing, the thesis will attempt to analyse the structural and agential factors for inadequate policy response to youth unemployment in the post-democratic Malawi. This problem is important to be explored as it is acknowledged globally that policies are important for determining young people's rights and responsibilities, and for setting out how services and support can be delivered in the most effective way (UNICEF, 2017).

1.4. Significance of the Study and Contribution to a Body of Knowledge

No doubt, there has been an appreciable number of scholarly works on the youth and unemployment challenge in Malawi (such as Chinsinga and Chasukwa 2017; Lipenga et al, 2016; Komwa 2019). However, what stands out about this intervention is that it is a first to rigorously and comprehensively critique and review the current National Youth Policy, identifying gaps, silences, omissions and contradictions. Crucially, the thesis pays focused attention on the tensions between the policy intent and the lack of implementation and implementation strategies. Above all, chapter seven goes well beyond just a critique of the document, it uses the critique to set out an alternative policy pipe-line that would be more impactful, responsive and adequate for the unique set of challenges that afflict Malawian youth

in the twenty first century. With a theoretical base, this thesis proves that Amartya Sen's notion of capabilities, structure/agency approach and theories of social exclusion should be a central anchor of understanding not only how policy processes are conceived, contested and implemented, but also how policy change happens or does not happen.

1.5. Hypothesis of the Study

Various post-independence administrations in Malawi have continually failed to place youth employment front and centre in their policy plans. The thesis dives beneath the headlines to systematically unpack the key structural and agential factors that explain the said policy inadequacies. To do this, the research focuses on specific questions highlighted in the next section.

Research Questions

The questions that drove the research and analysis are the following:

1.6. Main Research Question

What are the structural and agential factors for inadequate policy response to youth unemployment in post-democratic Malawi?

1.7. Specific Research Questions

The specific research questions of the study were the following:

1. What are the gaps and omissions of the current National Youth Policy?
2. **Does government recognise youth unemployment as a chronic problem in society?** And related, do government and other key actors recognise the potentially catalytic role of youth development in driving a sustainable development trajectory in Malawi?
3. **How is this recognition or non-recognition demonstrated?** In policy terms, government pronouncements, responses from youth organisations, opposition political parties, NGOs, CBOs

and the private sector and a critical evaluation of some of the key strategies adopted/implemented by government in addressing chronic youth unemployment since 1994.

4. Based on the above, what could constitute a basic programme/road-map for an effective youth development policy for Malawi?

Research Objectives

The main research objective and the specific research objectives pertaining to this study were the following:

1.8. Main Research Objective

The main research objective of this study was to conduct a critical review of the National Youth Policy and explicate the structural and agential factors for inadequate policy response to youth unemployment in post-democratic Malawi.

1.9. Specific Research Objectives

The specific research objectives of the study were the following:

1. To conduct a critical analysis/review of the National Youth Policy of Malawi.
2. To explore the views of government (and other key state and social actors) on youth unemployment and the potentially catalytic role of youth development in driving a sustainable development trajectory in Malawi.
3. To find out if the Malawi government has demonstrated recognition or non-recognition of youth unemployment since democracy in 1994, and related, to identify some of the strategies adopted by the Malawi government in addressing the problem of chronic youth unemployment since 1994.

4. To recommend a basic programme/road-map for an effective youth development policy for Malawi.

Clarification of Key Concepts

Defining terms is problematic in that terms are socially constructed in such a way that they are ascribed a range of meanings by different individuals or groups in various contexts (Pretorius et al, 2007). Nevertheless, for purposes of this research the key concepts in the context of the study are clarified below.

1.10. Youth

Although the 2013 NYP defines ‘youth’ as those between ages 10-35 years, the definition is quite flexible, bearing in mind the variety of parameters that could be used in categorising the youth. This classification is used regardless of their marital, education, economic and physical status. For the purposes of this thesis this definition will be used. ‘Youth (s)’, ‘young people’ and ‘young person(s)’ will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis.

1.11. Unemployment

The thesis will adopt the ILO’s (2016) definition of unemployment, which covers people who are: out of work, want a job, have actively sought work in the previous four weeks, and are available to start work within the next fortnight.

1.12. Socio-economic

The United Nations (2017), states that, socio-economic issues are factors that have influence on an individual’s economic activity. This is related to education, health, housing, settlement, water supply and sanitation, population, employment, mortality and mobility among others. These socio-economic factors may also apply at country, regional and even global level. This definition will be used in this thesis as it encompasses all the areas the researcher deems relevant to the study.

1.13. Political

According to this thesis ‘Politics’ is defined not only as a set of activities associated with the governance, but it also includes all activities of conflict (peaceful or not), negotiation and cooperation over the use and distribution of resources, within and beyond formal institutions (Leftwich, 2004:15).

1.14. Inadequate

Inadequate shall refer to ‘not good enough’ or ‘insufficient for a purpose’; in this case a policy not good enough to address youth unemployment.

1.15. Policy

Policy refers to aims and objectives of social action concerning needs as well as the structural patterns or arrangements through which needs are met (Mishra, 1980). When done effectively, a policy plan will have a set of action points (an implementation strategy), designed to guide decisions and to achieve rational ‘policy’ outcomes (ibid).

1.16. Policy Response

Policy response can be described as a dialogue between policy makers, who devise targets and programmes, and policy implementers, who respond by putting these plans into action (Bagley and Ward, 2013).

1.17. Post-Democratic Malawi

For purposes of this thesis, post-democratic Malawi will refer to the period from 1994 onwards.

1.18. A Qualitative Exploratory Study

This research is a qualitative exploratory study. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a qualitative exploratory study is a method whereby the researcher is able to collect data and explain phenomena more deeply and exhaustively than a quantitative study. It is meant to gain an understanding of the underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations (structural and agential). Chapter four gives a detailed account of the research design.

Thesis Structure

The thesis consists of eight chapters. These are as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction to the Research ~ the current chapter has introduced and given a brief background to the research as it relates to youth unemployment globally and in Malawi. The statement of the problem, the contribution to a body of knowledge and significance of conducting the study was also explained. The chapter further highlighted the hypothesis of the study, research questions, the objectives for carrying out the study, a clarification of key concepts that are used in the thesis, structure of the research report and a conclusion were laid out.

Chapter Two: Global Youth Unemployment ~ this chapter of the thesis presents the literature review, which is important for understanding the extent of the global challenge of youth unemployment. Very often the literature review chapter is poorly structured and lacking in flow; however, to avoid this, the chapter is structured thematically. The following themes are explored systematically: the structure and agency dialectic, Amartya Sen's Capability Approach and concepts of social exclusion are introduced in detail in this chapter, the definition of youth, trends of global youth unemployment, key causes of global youth unemployment, the impacts of global youth unemployment, international policies and legal instruments pertaining to youth unemployment, global strategies, the emerging concept of the Demographic Dividend and a conclusion.

Chapter Three: Youth Unemployment in Malawi ~ a continuation of literature review, this chapter of the thesis lays the foundation for the unemployment discourse in post-democratic Malawi by firstly looking at the historical context of Malawi's socio-economic and political situation. It then introduces the definition of 'youth' in the context of Malawi and analyses the current youth unemployment trends and the current situation of the Malawi labour market in relation to various sectors of the economy. Literature that relates to the causes and impacts of youth unemployment in Malawi is also discussed. The chapter further looks at how Malawi is preparing to harness the Demographic Dividend. Lastly, a section is dedicated to locating and

tracing Malawi's legal and policy context for young people. The overall aim of this chapter is through literature, to show the extent of youth unemployment in Malawi and identify some of the structural/systemic socio-economic and political challenges that have been inherited by the post-1994 administrations; the key players in the youth employment/labour market improvement drive; what has been the role of each of these players and the bottlenecks. The answers to these questions contribute to the overall research question of the structural and agential factors for inadequate policy response to youth unemployment since the dawn of democracy in Malawi.

Chapter Four: The Research Methodology ~ chapter Four of this thesis presents the methodology that was employed in conducting the study, the data collection approach, the sampling techniques, profile of the organizations that were part of the research, how data was analysed and verified, the limitations of the study, ethical considerations, directions for future research and a conclusion.

Chapter Five: The 2013 National Youth Policy: Key Features ~ this chapter is an introduction to the research findings, however foremost, it seeks to give a summary of the current NYP in Malawi especially as it relates to youth employment and development. It is important to understand that this chapter and the next two are crucial as they form the backbone and are a key subject of this thesis. All the findings of the research revolve around this Policy document. It is the analysis of this Policy that will determine if post-democratic Malawi has been successful or not in recognising and responding to the youth development agenda and, more specifically, in addressing areas of youth unemployment. The key characteristic policy features that have been identified for purposes of this thesis and are summarised thematically in this chapter are: youth participation and leadership; youth economic empowerment; national youth service programme; education and training for jobs; implementation strategy; institutional arrangements; and monitoring and evaluation. Chapter five is essential as it summarises and forms an introduction to the NYP in order to critically engage with it in the next chapter.

Chapter Six: A Critical Analysis of the National Youth Policy ~ having previously introduced the key themes of the current National Youth Policy, this chapter takes the discussion a step further. It does so by focusing attention on and critically engaging with each of the themes

as identified in the previous chapter, namely, youth participation and leadership, youth economic empowerment, national youth service programme, education and training for jobs, progress on strategy implementation, institutional arrangements and monitoring and evaluation of the policy. Objective one, two and three are addressed in this chapter. This thesis offers the first thorough and academic critique and review of the current NYP in Malawi.

Chapter Seven: ~ A Recommended Basic Policy Pipeline for Youth Development in Malawi

~ following the critique in the previous chapter, this chapter sets out the elements/success factors for any workable youth policy, one that will respond comprehensively to the most pressing challenges confronting young people in Malawi. This is essentially a chapter devoted to responding comprehensively to the shortcomings of the current NYP document. It does so by attending to the gaps, omissions, silences and contradictions identified in chapter six and analysing feedback from the key informants and Focus Group Discussions. The chapter concludes by noting that an alternative policy regime (with a solid implementation strategy, action points, evaluation framework etc.), would go a long way in stimulating growth, job-creation, improved skills and training plans that are appropriate for Malawi's youth in the twenty first century. This chapter attends to research objective number four.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions ~ this chapter summarises the key conclusions and recommendations of the project.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an introduction to the research, the statement of the problem, the rationale and significance of the study, the hypothesis of the study, the research questions and the research objectives. A clarification of the key concepts to be used in the study and an outline on the structure of the research report were also highlighted. The next chapter reviews literature related to global youth unemployment and highlights that the challenge is a global issue requiring urgent attention.

CHAPTER TWO

GLOBAL YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

2.1. Introduction

The first chapter sought to set out the central arguments and purview of this thesis. In this chapter, shifting further, the objective is to review critical literature on youth and global youth unemployment and development. In order to anchor the arguments on key developmental studies and social science theoretical and conceptual approaches, the chapter also explores the structure/agency dialectic, social exclusion and Amartya Sen's notion of 'capability'. In order to maintain focus and structure, this chapter is structured thematically as indicated hereunder.

2.2. Chapter Structure

The chapter is structured thematically. The following themes are explored systematically: approach to and theoretical concepts of youth unemployment, the definition of youth, global trends of youth unemployment, key causes of global youth unemployment, the impacts of global youth unemployment, international policies and legal instruments pertaining to youth development and global strategies addressing youth unemployment. First, the theoretical approaches that underpin the project.

2.3. Structure and Agency Dialectic

The object of the thesis is to generate knowledge which might lead to driving change and specifically a change in Malawi's youth policy, in ways that will radically impact the material conditions of young people in that country. However, to do this, there has to be recognition of the complexity of the change process especially in social, economic and political context. This is because the policy process is never natural. And neither are institutions and institutional

arrangements. Any change will advantage some and disadvantage others, it will affect the proximity of some players to power and resources positively or negatively (Moon, 2017). For this reason, a theoretical approach is called for that recognizes this dynamic. For this is the only way to understand why some social actors will push for certain changes while other actors will constantly resist seemingly obvious policy solutions (ibid). Herein lies the utility of the structure/agency approach. At the heart of this approach is the exploration of which variable is predominant in policy making and change-making – structural or agential factors and circumstances.

Hay (2002) argues that, in social sciences, there is a standing debate over the primacy of structure or agency in shaping human behaviour and conduct. Structure is seen as the social landscape or patterned arrangements that influence or limit the choices and opportunities available to any change process, while agency is the capacity of individuals to act autonomously and make their own free choices, regardless of structural constraints. In general, structure and agency is a question of whether an individual acts as a free agent or in a manner dictated by social structure. It is interplay between ‘free will’ and ‘social forces’. The approach therefore endeavours to deal with what is essentially an age-old problem confronting the social sciences. This is whether individual actors (or group of actors) act or can act in a ‘constraints-free and structure-less policy environment, or whether institutions and structures always influence, shape and determine the possibilities of such change.

Even though, Hay (2002) demonstrates that, explanations of socio-political phenomena have generally fallen into two groups, namely, those that appeal predominantly to structural factors, on the one hand, and those that appeal to agency (agential factors), on the other. Scholars such as Bohman (2005) are of the view that, there are three broadly discernible positions on the structure and agency issue. Some social theorists have suggested a vision of the world where powerful structures are dominant and responsible for orchestrating the conduct of human agency. Others have been eager to stress the primacy of individual judgments, decisions and actions-in, other words, emphasizing human agency in social life. A third discernible position is adopted by scholars who have attempted to reconcile both the perspectives mentioned above. More specifically, they have presented theoretical frameworks that recognise a dialectical

relationship between ‘structure’ and ‘agency’. In other words, both structures and human agency are important in the explanation of social life and organization (Bohman, 2005). As Giddens’ work on ‘structuralism’ has further elaborated that an individual’s autonomy is influenced by structure, structures are mostly maintained and adapted through the exercise of agency. He presents agents and structures as mutually constructive entities with ‘equal ontological status’ rather than dualistic entities (Giddens, 1979). This thesis stands on this third view and argues that youth unemployment both globally and in Malawi is a function of both structure and agency and that the two must be seen as complementary forces that, in reality, constantly shape and influence one another, in order to give rise to certain policy changes and not others. This is an extremely powerful explanatory conceptual approach, in understanding not only how policy processes are conceived, contested and implemented but also how policy change happens or does not happen. For this reason, structure/agency is a central theoretical anchor of the analysis deployed in this thesis.

For instance, Talpur (2016), makes the point that youth unemployment rates are higher than average for overall unemployment for all age groups for a number of reasons. In the first instance, young workers are least qualified with lowest levels of relevant skills and are therefore less employable. Secondly, some young workers leave university with degrees but find graduate jobs are in short supply. Thirdly, employers may perceive young workers as lazy, lacking the will to work, less reliable or inefficient, and those who are unemployed find it hard to break the cycle of ‘no job therefore no experience and therefore even harder to get a job’. Concurring with this, Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2017) state that, high youth unemployment in Malawi often comes as a result of lack of skills and experience, which works against young job seekers. While some might have the required levels of education these are not substitutes for the required skills. Only an approach that factors in the role of both structure and agency is able to navigate this layered and complex maze, with multiple variables that shape and influence each other.

The ILO (2016:1) further affirms that, the problem of youth unemployment is complex, with no single cause and no single solution. The global economic downturn and recession, informality, structural change, inadequate job creation and inefficient youth labour markets marked by an ill-prepared workforce all contribute to the complex nature of young people’s employment

dilemma. Nonetheless, unemployment not only brings personal struggles but having a large share of the young potential workforce unemployed could lead to reduced productivity and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or what others call a ‘Demographic Tax’ (UNICEF, 2017), defined as the gap between the GDP of a country given its demographic characteristics and the highest level it could reach if the effects of the demographic factors were fully efficient.

Notwithstanding, the significance of the structure/agency debate as a critical explanatory device, Sen’s Capability Approach and the theory of Social Exclusion also enriches an understanding of the workings and operations of policy change in the youth development space.

2.4. Amartya Sen’s Capability Approach

Amartya Sen (1999:3) advances the view that development should be seen as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. Sen states that people have the freedoms or valuable opportunities, known as capabilities, to lead the kind of lives they want to lead, to do what they want to do and be the persons they want to be, if they are given opportunities.

According to Sen (2000), there are five distinct freedoms which help to advance the general capability of a person which are: political freedom, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security. These freedoms are intertwined and failure to attain one individual freedom may affect others and, overall, affect development. And this is what Malawi and many African governments have failed to do with almost one third of youths having little or no facilities available to them (UNDP, 2018). These freedoms depend also on other determinants such as social and economic arrangements and structures, for example facilities for education, employment, and healthcare as well as political and civil rights. The capabilities help an individual to perform some basic activities that are necessary for survival and which help one to escape poverty (Sen, 1999), for example looking for employment.

The Capability Approach is a framework that may be used both in practice and normatively, to assess issues related to living standards, employment, quality of life, well-being, or agency of young people. It encompasses both the assessment of individual situations, trajectories and potentialities, and the efficiency and fairness of social structures and arrangements. The approach

proposes that individual assessment should be concerned with what the persons are actually capable of being and doing, i.e. their capability. Thus, according to Sen (2000), when assessing the well-being or agency of a person, capabilities should be the focal point. Overall, for Sen, freedom refers to increasing access and opportunities to the things people have reason to value. It is these freedoms such as education, skills development and employment that enable young people to develop to their full potential and enhance their capabilities (ibid). Therefore, according to the approach, policies in Malawi such as the National Youth Policy (NYP) should be evaluated according to their impact on expanding youth's capabilities (agency) as well as their freedoms (structure). Taken together with the structure/agency approach, Sen's approach essentially calls for a recognition and appreciation of the structural constraints that stand in the way of a realization of young people's potentialities and 'capabilities'.

Young people globally and Malawi in particular, must be able to choose and have substantive freedoms to lead the lives they have reason to value, and it suffices to compare various choices. Figure 2.1 below illustrates structure and agency and how it affects choices and capabilities. It reconciles and acknowledges that young people's choices are ultimately a result of their agency and the structured context in which they find themselves. The more structure and agency intersect, the more the choices for young people.

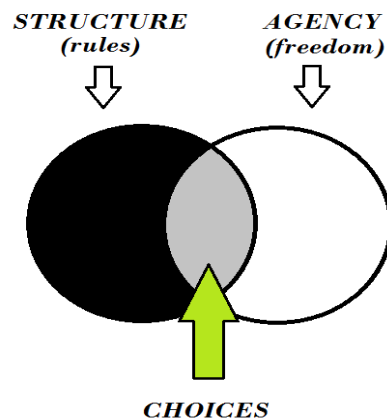


Figure 2.1: Structure and Agency Dialectics. Image Source: Wordpress.com, 2019

2.5. The Concept of Social Exclusion

Complementing Sen's Capability Approach (Sen, 1999), a UNDP (2006) document on 'Poverty, Unemployment and Social Exclusion' argues that, social exclusion should be understood first and foremost as exclusion from the labour market, as illustrated in Figure 2.2 below.

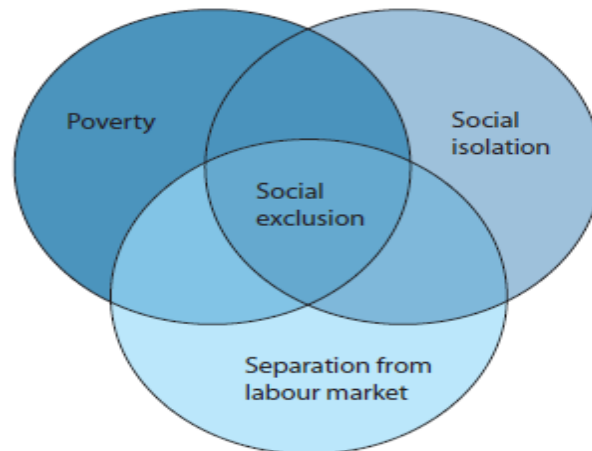


Figure 2.2: Social Exclusion Theory. Image Source: UNDP, 2006

The UNDP (2006) document further argues that, labour is not only the basis for economic independence; it also promotes certain moral values, such as self-respect and a desire (agency) for advancement (ibid). To take this argument to its logical conclusion, social exclusion is conceived of primarily as exclusion from the labour market, that is to say, if employment is a precondition for inclusion, then education and training is one of the key prerequisites for social inclusion. However, Orr (2005), argues that, the definition of the term 'social exclusion' which concentrates on the ability to participate actively in the labour market is correct in large measure, but is still too narrow. In most societies, there are individuals (albeit not many of them) who are rich enough and who do not want to participate in the labour market, but it cannot be said that they are either poor or socially excluded (ibid: 15).

Nonetheless, the UNDP Social Exclusion theory further illustrates how unemployment is linked to poverty and social isolation which leads to lack of capabilities and freedoms. Education on the other hand mitigates against unemployment, as shown in Figure 2.3 below.

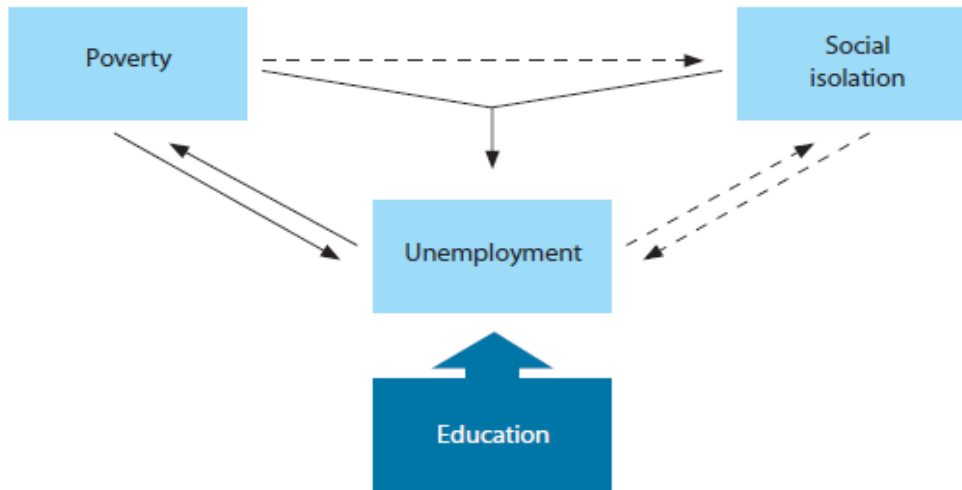


Figure 2.3: Unemployment and Social Exclusion Theory. Image Source: UNDP, 2006

In this regard, UNDP (2006) maintains that education influences social inclusion through educational achievement, lifelong learning, and easier access to paid work. Individuals who are educated are more mobile and adapt more easily to sudden changes in the labour market. Social exclusion and educational failure are very often regarded as causally related. The socially excluded often face the problem of a lack of knowledge and skills. Education contributes not only to the acquisition of knowledge and skills but also influences the socialisation, inclusion and empowerment of individuals, which enhances capabilities. As Sen (1999) argues, education is, among other things, a means to personal fulfilment and freedoms. Sen shows that, people have the freedoms or capabilities to lead the kind of lives they want to lead, to do what they want to do and be the person they want to be, if they are given opportunities such as education.

Nonetheless, the problem of social exclusion cannot be solved simply by reforming the educational system and by encouraging greater educational aspiration. Better education will not automatically remove social exclusion as is the case in Malawi where there are so many factors that lead to the exclusion of the youths, for example, harmful cultural practices, corruption and poor governance. The UNDP (2006) indicates that, social exclusion, and education itself, are affected by institutional arrangements, income inequality, class and/or ethnic divisions in society, physical separation, globalisation, the division of power, the stratified nature of the education market, among others. Changes in education and educational aspirations, on their own, are not

enough to compensate for the lack of jobs or the highly competitive modern (global) labour market.

What is called for, instead, is a recognition and removal of structural constraints to youth advancement in Malawian society. This will include designing an education and training system that is customized and responsive to the unique socio-economic and political circumstances of that country. A future oriented policy pipe-line that intelligently negotiates the structural and agential obstacles that lead to the social exclusion of young people from being front and centre of Malawi's socio-economic development will be recommended in chapter seven. The analytical approach of the thesis is therefore informed by and anchored around these theoretical approaches (structure/agency, capability approach and social exclusion theory).

2.6. Conceptual Framework for Youth Unemployment

Figure 2.4 is diagrammatic exposition of the conceptual framework, as discussed above.

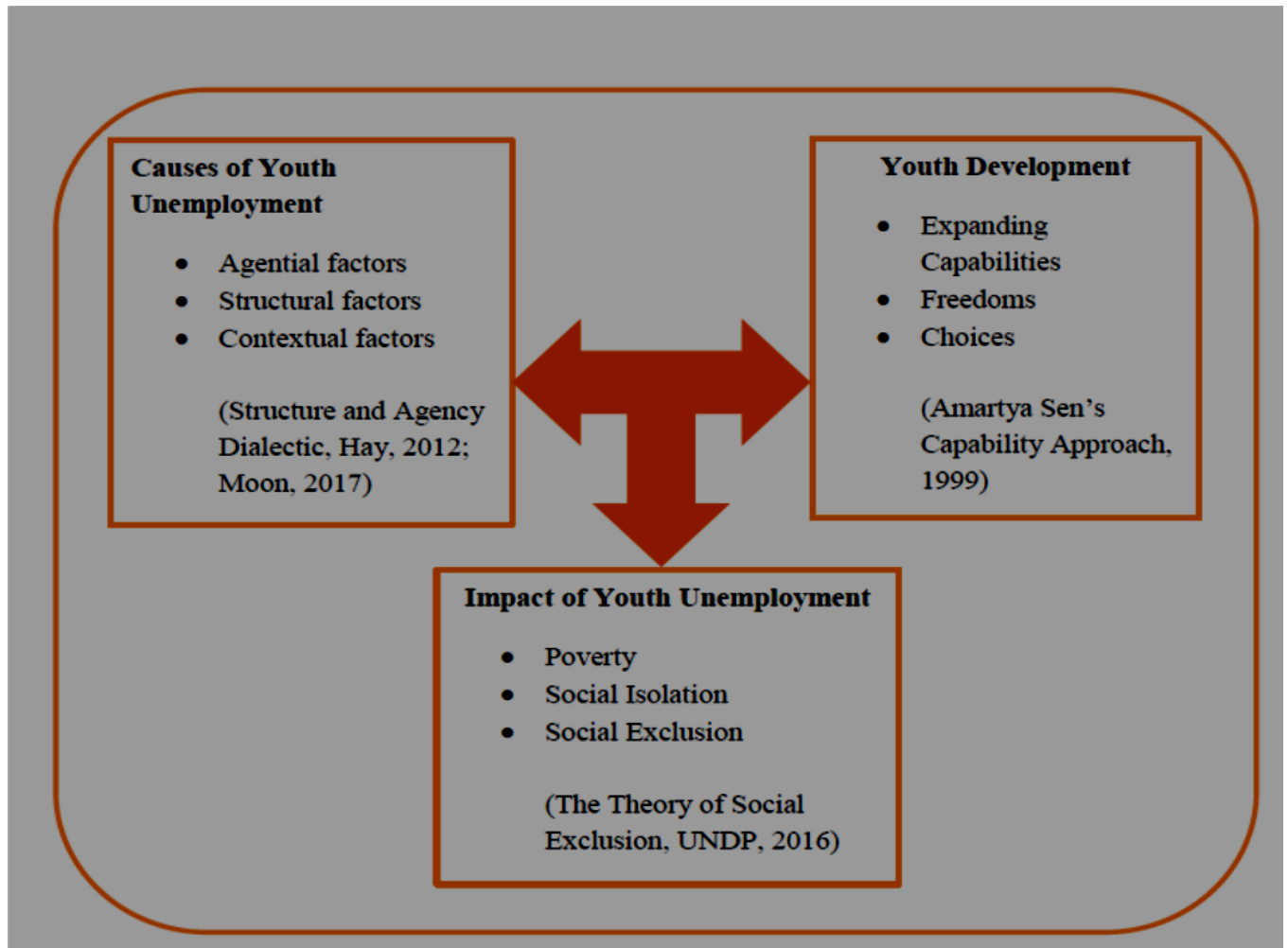


Figure 2.4: An Integration of Theoretical Frameworks of Youth Unemployment, Shawa, 2019

The diagram shows that youth unemployment is caused by structural and agential factors. The impact of the challenge is social exclusion and social isolation; and that meaningful youth development should be about expanding young people's capabilities and freedoms. Complementing the theoretical approaches discussed in the previous sections, the object of the next quarter hereunder is to review critical literature on youth and youth unemployment and development.

2.7. Definition of Youth

Gwija (2014) argues that, youth groups may vary across regions and within countries. For instance, in the African Union Charter (2006), youth are young people who are between the ages of 15 and 35 years. The United Nations' definition of youth includes young people who are between the ages of 15 and 24 (UNOWA, 2005:5; ILO, 2006:2), while the UNDP (2017), in the Malawi report on 'Nationwide Youth Consultations' acknowledged that other studies on the Demographic Dividend, and the 2016 Situational Analysis of Adolescents and Youth in Malawi (SitAn) had previously set the cut-off age at 29 years.

Nonetheless, UNESCO (2017:1), debates that, 'youth' should be best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence and awareness of the interdependence as members of a community. Therefore, youth should be regarded more as a fluid category than a fixed age group. At the same time, UNESCO recognises that, age is the easiest way to define this group, particularly in relation to education and employment. Therefore, a 'youth' is often indicated as a person between the age where he/she may leave compulsory education and the age at which he/she finds his/her first employment. Though, this latter age limit has been increasing as higher levels of unemployment and the cost of setting up an independent household puts many young people into a prolonged period of dependency (UNESCO, 2017).

Even so, for activities at international or at regional level, the United Nations' universal definition, and for statistical consistency across regions, defines 'youth' as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by member states. It is therefore important to keep in mind that all UN statistics on youth are based on this definition (UNOWA, 2005:5).

Accordingly, the above clearly shows that defining 'youth' itself is inconsistent and therefore problematic. The definition of the age of the youth varies from policy to policy, something which has demonstrated a lack of cohesiveness in policy response for the past decades. This perhaps has had implications for formulating strategic frameworks and has affected how services and support should be delivered in the most effective way. This is particularly true for Malawi, as

some youth may find themselves disadvantaged and unable to access services due to gaps in classification. For instance, the Youth Well-being Policy Review of Malawi (OECD, 2018:83), reported that, an out-of-school youth aged 16 can access health centre services because the policy specifically allows it; in another sector they may be barred access because of the minimum age requirement of 18. Lack of alignment across sectors can restrict youth access to important services and undermine full participation in development programmes. Be that as it may, as earlier indicated, the 2007 World Development Report by the World Bank (2007) emphasises that, youth is a period characterised by transitions, and these can be threatened by unemployment. The success of other transitions depends on this transition from the world of education to the world of work. As clarified in chapter one, for purposes of this thesis, the youth definition of the NYP of Malawi will be adopted, that is from 15 to 35 years. So, what are the global trends of youth unemployment?

Global Trends of Youth Unemployment

According to the UNDP (2017), young people face numerous challenges affecting their development and well-being. Among the greatest of these challenges are unemployment and the lack of decent work for youth, which many countries have struggled unsuccessfully to address. This section will look at the global trends of youth unemployment.

2.8. Global Youth Unemployment Rates

Persistent jobless growth has reached crisis proportions, especially among the world's young people (UNDP, 2006). The numbers are stark. In 2012, 6 out of 10 workers aged 15-29 lacked stable employment and earned below-average wages, according to the ILO (2016). The global youth employment rate has reached 13.1% - almost three times that of adults (ILO, 2017). In high-income economies, young people's prospects have plummeted, and there are significant concerns for their position in the labour market and the future of their financial security. The situation is worse for young people in low-income countries such as Malawi, where many workers are involved in informal employment, something the ILO describes as sporadic, poorly paid and falling outside the protection of the law (Gwija, 2014).

Robinson (2012) states that, after the financial crisis of 2008, the global youth unemployment rate saw its largest annual increase on record. According to the ILO (2012), the jobless rate amongst 15 to 24 year olds rose from 11.8% to 12.7 % between 2008 and 2009. This reversed the pre-crisis trend of declining youth unemployment rates since 2002. The graph below illustrates the figures of youth unemployment as of 2009. While Sub-Sahara does not have the highest rates, they are nevertheless still high at 12% in 2009.

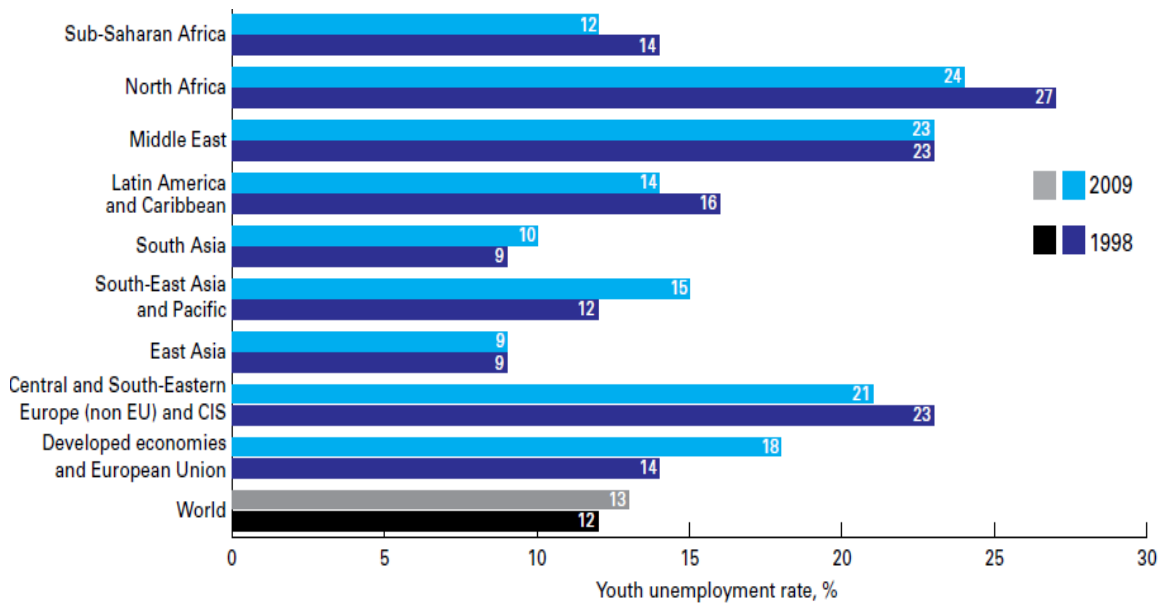


Figure 2.5: Global Youth Unemployment Trends. Image Source: ILO, 2010

2.9. Youth Unemployment Rates in Africa

The ILO (2017) indicated that Africa, the world’s youngest region, continues to be confronted with high levels of youth unemployment, vulnerable employment and working poverty with little sign of potential recovery as of 2017. In the previous year in 2016, the ILO indicated that, just in South Africa, more than half of all active youth were expected to remain unemployed in that year, representing the highest youth unemployment rate in the region. The youth unemployment rate in South Africa has reached crisis proportions and is the third highest in the world, after Greece and Spain. In 2019, Stats SA reported that young people between the ages of 15 to 24 remain vulnerable in the labour market with an unemployment rate of close to 58%, an increase

of 11.4% from 2018, with a labour absorption rate of only 12%. Among the unemployed in this category altogether 32.2% are not in employment, education or training, translating to approximately 3.3 million young people between 15 to 24 years of age being idle (Stats SA, 2019:1). The South African Reserve Bank Governor Lesetja Kganyago informed parliament during a briefing in 2017 that South Africa will not be able to create jobs at an economic growth rate of below 3%. He noted that more people are entering the job market than the number of jobs being created:

If the economy grows at 3%, it means employment is created for every percentage of growth of up to 0.6%. It is, therefore, possible to have jobless growth, but you can never create employment in a contracting economy. For jobs growth the economy needs to grow (Kganyago, 2017 cited in Peyper, 2017:1).

Similarly, with a youth population that is expected to double to over 830 million, the incidence of unemployment among youth in Northern Africa also remained elevated at 29.3% in 2016, representing the second highest rate across all regions (ILO, 2016). Nonetheless, the World Youth Report (UNDESA, 2018) indicated that, some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are experiencing extraordinarily high rates of youth unemployment. For instance, youth unemployment rates for Lesotho, Mozambique and Namibia are estimated at 38.5%, 42.7% and 45.5% respectively.

2.10. Working Poverty Rates among Youth in Africa

Figure 2.6 below shows that working poverty rates among youth in Sub-Saharan Africa was nearly 70% in 2016, translating to 64.4 million working youth in that region living in extreme or moderate poverty (less than USD3.10 per day). The region continues to report the highest youth working poverty rates globally. The number of poor working youth is said to have increased by as much as 80% over the past 25 years. This has been coupled with the fact that young workers in the region have one of the highest probabilities of living in poverty in comparison to adults in the region (ILO, 2016). Regionally, Sub-Saharan Africa also has the highest prevalence of child labour at 27% of children (SitAn, 2016), a situation not different particularly for Malawi as the next chapters will elaborate.

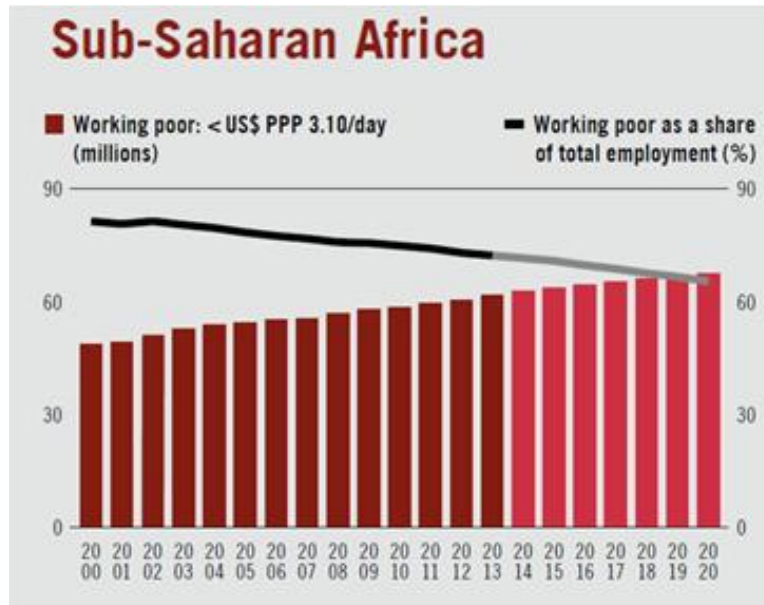


Figure 2.6: Working Poverty Trends in Sub-Sahara Africa. Image Source: ILO, 2016

Similar to the above, it is also projected that in Northern Africa 1 in 4 working youth is estimated to be living in extreme or moderate poverty. However, this represents a significant improvement since 1991 when almost half of all employed youth were living in extreme or moderate poverty as Figure 2.7 below illustrates this.

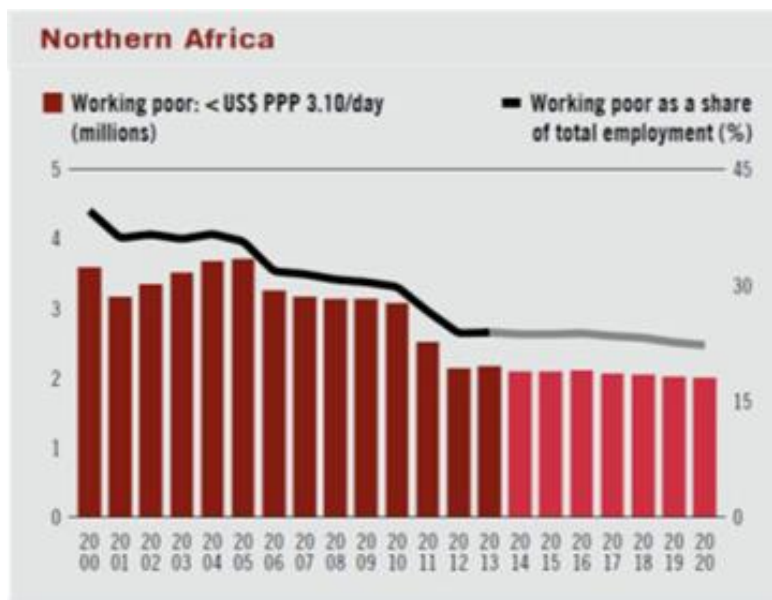


Figure 2.7: Working Poverty Trends in Northern Africa. Image Source: ILO, Geneva, 2016

In 2016, the ILO indicated, not so optimistically, that since 2012 there has been virtually no signs of a reduction in these rates and that the gap between youth and adult working poverty remains relatively significant. A review of youth unemployment in Sub-Saharan Africa found that unemployed young people are disproportionately more likely to commit crimes when a number of other factors, such as support networks, are also not present. Few countries including Malawi have created a policy environment to encourage entrepreneurship amongst the youth, and so many lack the business and financial skills necessary to convert ideas into valuable business (UNDP, 2016).

Those who disagree, such as Robinson (2012), are of the view that, at times, numbers can be misleading. He shows that it is crucial to understand that the official unemployment rate for youths is influenced by the high numbers in education. When it is said that the youth unemployment rate is 18%, for example, it does not mean that 18% of people 16-25 are unemployed, but that 18% of those 16-25 year olds who are looking for work are actually unemployed. Nonetheless, there is consensus that youth unemployment in certain periods, if not at all times, is higher than the general unemployment rate and this has had negative impacts on the global economy. The next section therefore, discusses some of the key causes of global youth unemployment.

Causes of Global Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment has been documented as one of the problems that could grow into global proportions in future, causing social and economic crises. This section is a discourse of some of the key causes of global youth unemployment.

2.11. Skills Mismatch and Lack of Labour Related Skills

Most scholars (Robinson, 2012; Chinsinga and Chasukwa, 2018) and labour organisations such as the ILO (2012) agree that youth unemployment is unacceptably high. However, there is a growing debate over why so many young people cannot find employment. While youth unemployment rates remain stubbornly high, some politicians and economists such as Woodard (2016), now point to jobs that are going unfilled because employers cannot find workers with the

right skills for their economics and labour markets. The implication is that there is a growing mismatch between what the education system teaches students and what skills are actually needed by employers.

However, according to Robinson (2012), there are several things wrong with this line of thinking. Firstly, he claims that, across the world today there is the most educated and skilled youth cohort in history. Secondly, Robinson argues that the fact that there are jobs that go unfilled at any given moment should not come as a terrible shock to anyone, let alone economists. Labour markets are dynamic. Jobs are routinely being created as some employers expand and new businesses take root. At the same time, other firms are eliminating jobs as they scale back or go out of business. The difference between these gains and losses over a given period is what either raises or lowers overall employment growth (ibid).

Robinson (2012) is of the view that, as long as there is this flux and churning in the labour market there will always be job vacancies unfilled at any point in time. As such, to call this a mismatch or a skills shortage is absurd. He continues to argue strongly that, there is a problem arising if policymakers accept the skills mismatch argument. By seeing youth unemployment as a structural issue rather than what it is - a failure of the economy to create enough decent jobs (lack of political will) - governments risk being unable to develop an effective youth jobs strategy. The focus therefore, according to Robinson (2012), should be on the government stimulating aggregate demand and expanding education and training opportunities and creating more job opportunities. This situation is particularly true for Malawi, while insufficient jobs creation and structural transformation partly explain the situation, lack of cognitive and technical skills also reduce young peoples' prospects in the labour market (OECD, 2018).

Conversely, Woodard (2016) maintains that, over-qualified students are now populating jobs that, traditionally, had been taken up by school leavers, such as banking and real estate, to name just a few. This global trend highlights the effects of a skills mismatch between graduates and businesses, and businesses and universities. According to new research by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), the peak body representing Human Resource professionals in the United Kingdom (UK), nearly 60% of graduates are in non-graduate jobs.

This is coupled with another report released in 2017, which found that 30% of UK graduates regretted their choice of degree (ibid: 1). Woodard (2016), adamantly argues that, the phenomenon is not confined to the UK alone, as in Australia, it is estimated that more than 30% of graduates were unable to find work in 2014, with many opting to stay on at university for further study. This is the highest the figure has been since Graduate Careers Australia began measuring in 1982. Woodard (2016) notes that, when you factor in the high cost of a university education that leaves graduates saddled with debt, this raises the question of whether degrees offer a good return on investment, or if there is a skills mismatch. Business leaders have argued for a number of years that alternative training, such as high-quality apprenticeships that match skills to shortages, would be a better option not only for individuals but also for the economy.

Concurring with Woodard (2016), in a survey by the African Economic Outlook, 54% of labour market experts identified the skills mismatch as a key obstacle among youth trying to enter the workforce. Similarly, McKinsey recently released a report on ‘education to employment’ in Europe, finding that 74% of education providers believed their graduates were prepared for work, but only 38% of youth and 35% of employers agreed (African Economic Outlook, 2015 cited in Woodard, 2016). As such, it is argued that, practical work experience needs to happen long before young people commit themselves to a course or career path. This would mean young people would get real insight into what a job entails and can decide whether it is the right choice for them.

Coincidentally, the problem cited by some experts such as Mohapi (2017:1), is that universities and colleges are too slow to react to the rapidly changing developments occurring in business and the labour market. This means that by the time a graduate is ready for work his or her skills and knowledge are already out of date ‘what you end up with is a large highly-skilled young workforce that, nevertheless, lacks the requisite skills to do the job’ for example, the world is experiencing the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) yet very few countries in Africa are embracing this digital era. Mohapi (2017) further writes that, while the continent is still battling with first, second and third industrial revolution related matters, the 4IR is already here and, as was the case with the previous industrial revolutions, Africa (even though not homogenous) is, in general, lagging behind. This in the end leads to lack of competitive skills in the global labour

market. Malawi faces similar challenges as findings from the study will reveal in the next chapters.

Deitz, Su (2014) as cited in Gontkovičová et al (2014), also underlines that, since the onset of the Great Recession and the sluggish labour market recovery which ensued, there have been widespread reports of newly minted college graduates who are unsuccessful at finding jobs suited to their level of education, with every fifth young man in the labour market unable to find a job. However, it must be emphasised that writers such as Robinson (2016), perceive that the responsibility of training young people should not be solely left to universities or tertiary institutions. Organisations hiring also have a responsibility for training new graduates with needed relevant skills, and as such to blame the education institutions and learners solely would be absurd.

Nevertheless, to emphasise, the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) acknowledges that, skills mismatch has indeed become a global problem. In India, for example, among some disciplines the skills gap appears to be staggering; 75% of information technology graduates, 55% in manufacturing, 55% in healthcare and 50% in banking and insurance, are deemed ‘unemployable’. Research by the NCVER in 2015 suggested that, reforming training qualifications could provide workers with stronger capabilities, helping them to better adapt to a changing labour market and reducing the rising skills mismatch. Narrowly focused qualifications could lead to a skills mismatch as graduates move into the workforce, the report indicated (NCVER, 2015 cited in Woodard 2016:1).

There is an indisputable need to develop qualifications that prepare students for ‘vocational streams, based on occupations with shared practices, knowledge, skills and attributes’. This would provide graduates with more transferrable skills, helping them adapt to a changing labour market (NCVER, 2015 cited in Woodard 2016:1). However, Sam (2016) as cited in Woodard (2017), just like Robinson (2016), pointed out that education institutions should not be entirely blamed, as there is also the problem of referral-based recruitment which can translate to skills mismatch. For example, someone already known to someone is recruited to save time and effort and to accommodate colleagues and friends, and as a result unsuitable people are recruited in

irrelevant sectors for skills they do not have. This is particularly true for Malawi, where the labour market is characterized by corruption and nepotism. There is a need to devise effective selection tools to provide opportunity to the vast majority of eligible candidates.

Woodard (2017), Mohapi (2017), Robinson (2012) and NCVER (2015) all agree that, urgent engagement among key labour market players including employers, industry bodies, government policy makers and educational and training providers, is of the utmost desirability to address the skills mismatch challenge, otherwise the chronic unemployment affecting young people, will persist into the future. Education and training systems are, according to the ILO (2013), key determinants of youth employment outcomes, as they can provide young people with the right skills and attitudes to increase their agency to prepare them for the world of work and, therefore, facilitate the school-to-work transition. However, there is also a need for young people to have the will to enhance their capabilities, look for work and adapt to new labour market skills requirements. The labour market in the twenty first century is extremely dynamic and constantly changing, so skills adaptability is called for. This emphasises one of the main assertions of the Social Exclusion theory that if social exclusion is conceived of primarily as exclusion from the labour market, in other words, if employment is a precondition for inclusion, then education is one of the key mechanisms of social inclusion (UNDP, 2016). In this regard, it must be commended that Malawi has included skills development as a priority in its strategic development plan, invested in training opportunities, and developed a governance framework, notably through the creation of the TEVET Authority (TEVETA). Chapter six will show, however, that the TEVET system faces critical challenges in terms of governance, access, quality and relevance (OECD, 2018). Another factor that drives youth unemployment is limited entrepreneurship, the subject of the next section.

2.12. Socio-Economic and Political Factors that Inhibit Entrepreneurship

According to the 2015 report by the World Economic Forum (WEF), as many as 60% of 18 to 34-year-olds in Africa who took part in a joint study by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) and Youth Business International (YBI), had the agency and were optimistic about the availability of good business opportunities, and believed they had the skills and knowledge to start a business. This was reported in comparison to just over 17% of young people in the EU,

17% in Asia Pacific and South Asia, and around 30% in North America. The region that came closest to Africa's optimism was Latin America and the Caribbean, where 40% of the youth believed they had the opportunities, skills and knowledge to start a small business, according to the January 2015 report titled 'Understanding the Entrepreneurial Attitudes, Aspirations and Activities of Young People' (WEF, 2015).

Bonicci (2015) argued that, these figures are for potential entrepreneurs, whose agency, desire or interest in starting a business has yet to be translated into action. Pettinger (2017) noted that, in some of the countries the social and cultural outlook and context of the societies may not encourage initiatives, entrepreneurship, and this increases unemployment. Most societies expect the youth to obtain education that enables them to get a job and earn a salary to support their families. Economic compulsions, too, can push the families to encourage young people to look for jobs and not look at entrepreneurship opportunities. Kishindo (1995) confirms by stating that in Malawi, family and community play a very important role in directing and guiding young people in pursuing their future. Normally, communities and societies that have had to struggle or have been striving for economic sustenance are seen to promote a view that the youth should take up a job and start contributing to the family's income and help with the expenses - what others call 'black tax'.

Pettinger (2017) notes, perhaps unfairly that, most of the third world countries mostly in Africa and the rural youth population face the above reality. The social and cultural background of the families and community either support or inhibit enterprising culture and behaviour. He further indicates that a community that is sensitive to the development of aspirations of the youth nurtures the same and creates a trend for self-employment. This is different in developed countries; he gives an example that in recent history, American society has promoted a culture of youth entrepreneurship resulting in hundreds of them pursuing entrepreneurship in the Silicon Valley as well as other areas (ibid). However, it is instructive to mention that in 2018, Rwanda started the construction of Africa's Silicon Valley in Kigali as part of the country's Vision 2020 and National Strategy for Transformation 2017-2024. This shows that third world countries have begun to realize the significance of entrepreneurship, and countries like Malawi must follow suit.

Scholars such as Hofstede (1991), further articulate that, the dynamic aspect of culture arises from socialisation and occupational choice. Perception of entrepreneurial risk is largely influenced by family background, as children from entrepreneurial backgrounds are more likely to be better informed about such activities. In a similar manner, wage-earning parents having developed skills in their line of work and some aversion to risk may endow their children with human capital that predisposes them towards low risk activities. This within-family cultural transmission according to him creates inertia, that is children tend to follow in the footsteps of their parents, and a society with less entrepreneurship today is likely to remain so in the future. What allows the inertia to be overturned are ‘positive disruptors’ such as social influence that occasionally matters more than family upbringing, and occupational choice through which people may decide to go into a different line of work than what they have been socialised into (ibid).

Hofstede (1991) shows that this does not mean culture is destiny as he illustrates that, in Asian countries that have successfully transitioned, industrial policy has long considered the nature of the country’s entrepreneurs and their relation to the state. In Singapore and South Korea, the entrepreneurial base was judged to be lacking initially. Consequently, industrial policy was first oriented towards complementing or creating the domestic entrepreneurial base, through facilitating the entry of foreign entrepreneurship and providing financial support, to allow entrepreneurs to take on more risk in imitating and adopting foreign technology or by forcing firms to enter new industries. In addition, the role of the Meiji Restoration in Japan’s cultural transformation and subsequent economic success is by now well accepted among scholars. As a result, Japan’s youth unemployment rate stands at only 3.8% (ibid).

To add, Pettinger (2017) notes that, youth unemployment is often highest amongst deprived areas where there is pessimism over job prospects. Youth unemployment is often higher among people who have a history of broken families, drug use or criminal record. Youth unemployment is also higher amongst ethnic minority groups. In 2016 in the UK, the unemployment rate for young Bangladeshi and Pakistani young people aged 16-24 was 28%, compared to youth unemployment rates of 12% for the white ethnic group (the lowest) and 25% for people from a Black ethnic background (the second highest) (Pettinger, 2017:1)

According to the ILO's World Employment and Social Outlook (2016), it is also imperative to point out that, in general, economies which are not growing are facing huge chronic unemployment problems and this is affecting the young people to a larger extent. When the economy is down, and businesses are not doing well, there will be no opportunities for small entrepreneurs to provide services to support the economy and business. However, Management Study Guide (MSG) Experts (2017) point out that, national political will to focus on youth in a country and to create a positive environment that encourages young people to dream and work towards realising their dream is very necessary in any society. It is the political will that can spearhead the youth revolution, for example through an enabling policy environment on entrepreneurship, for which in Malawi is inadequate.

Talpur (2016) cited in Woodard (2017), concurs and articulates that, government policy and framework in a particular country helps identify and build the base for youth entrepreneurship. The policies need to encourage and provide opportunities as well as assistance and an environment to give impetus to youth entrepreneurship and have got to be implemented at national, regional and local levels. Policy formulation would need to engage the business, banking, educational and other sectors to be able to deliver definitive steps to encouraging and aiding youth entrepreneurship. According to Management Study Guide (MSG) Experts (2017), lack of such a policy framework can hinder growth and initiative in the youth. In addition, absence of stability in the political situation of the country and the political parties' outlook towards this area can also make or break the youth entrepreneurship growth. The SitAn (2016) report pointed out that, Malawi has not created the policy environment to encourage entrepreneurship amongst young people, and so they lack the business and financial skills necessary to convert ideas into a viable business.

Furthermore, Pettinger (2017) expresses his concern by indicating that, in general, every nation seems to be caught up in chasing current priorities and not giving sufficient attention to the development of youth which is going to be the 'future' if not 'current' human capital. If the youth have to be developed as a resourceful and innovative future generation, the effort has to be put in by all, including family, society, community, schools, and colleges as well as industry and government as each of these has a significant role to play in contributing to the creation of youth

entrepreneurship. Another factor that drives youth unemployment is lack of industry support and patronage, the subject of the next segment.

2.13. Lack of Industry Support and Patronage

Pettinger (2017) contends that, industry can also create a very strong platform to help develop the youth and give them the support and guidance as well as opportunities. In a society where the industry enterprise is not very significant or not very active, there can be no encouragement for youth entrepreneurship.

Sam (2016) cited in Woodard (2017), asserts that, most times those young people who attempt to start any enterprise do so by borrowing from family and friends and dipping into their savings. After a while the business starts to suffer due to lack of funds and they end up in a debt trap. As such, banking and financial assistance should be made available easily and this can happen only with the active support of and engagement of the government. Of late, venture capitalists are funding new enterprises. However, Kishindo (1995) argues that in Malawi, this is only available to very few and not to the larger sections of the youth. The WEF (2015) confirms that there is wide agreement among scholars and researchers that lack of access to finance and markets, low levels of education, poor business skills and an absence of suitable mentors are among the biggest obstacles that entrepreneurs generally face. Youth entrepreneurs often have to contend with further barriers. Even age and being young can be a disadvantage if prospective funders and other sources of support have preconceptions and stereotypes about the inexperience of youth.

2.14. Summary of Global Trends of Youth Unemployment

Overall, the problem tree in Figure 2.8 below summarises the root causes of global youth unemployment as discussed above. The figure shows that skills mismatch and lack of labour-related skills and socio-economic and political factors that inhibit entrepreneurship are some of the key causes of global youth unemployment. The effects and impacts of youth unemployment include low economic growth, working poverty, social and economic exclusion and social unrest. Some of the salient impacts of global youth unemployment will be discussed in the next section.

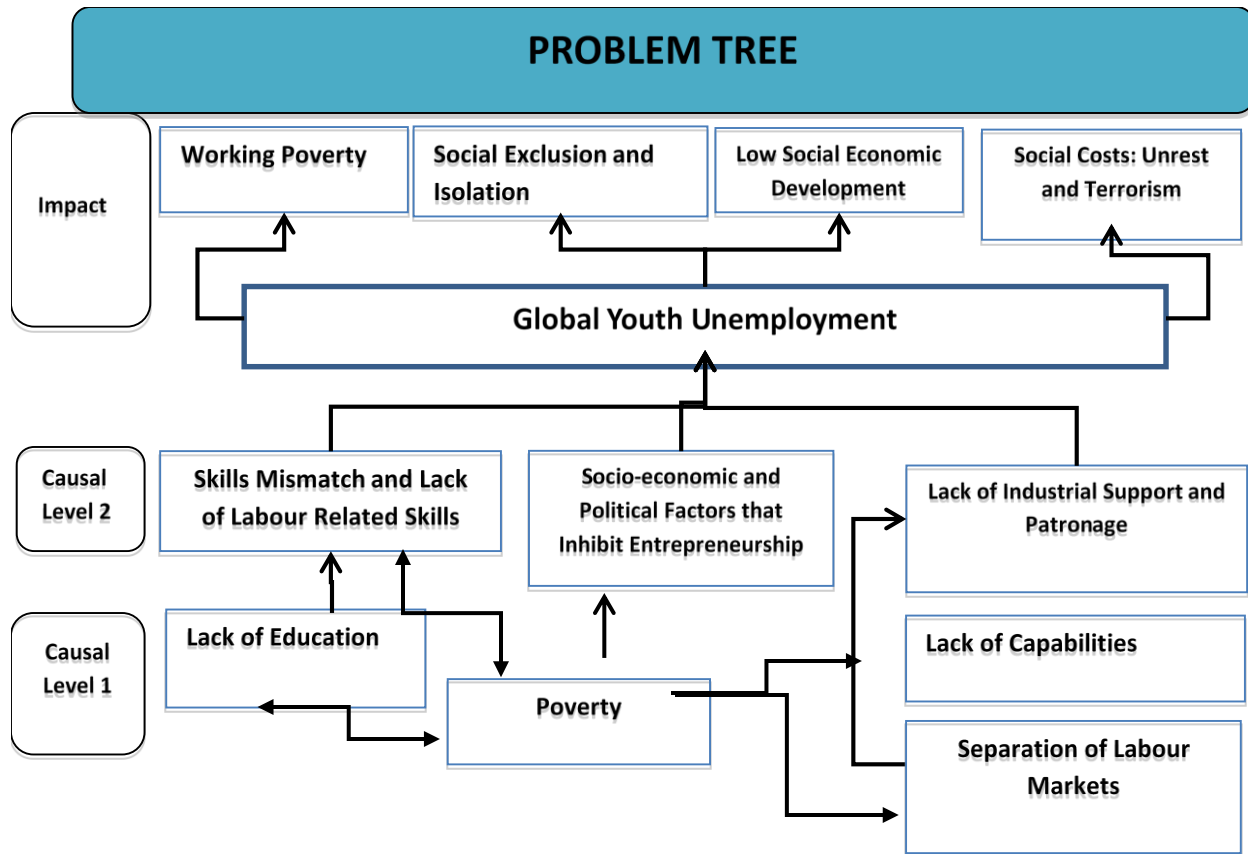


Figure 2.8: Global Youth Unemployment Problem Tree. Image Source: Shawa, 2019

Impacts of Global Youth Unemployment

The previous section discussed the causes of global youth unemployment and this section continues the conversation by looking at some of the impacts of this global challenge. For purposes of this thesis, only migration, underemployment, burden to government and social costs will be discussed in brief as the key impacts.

2.15. Migration

There are multiple reasons pertaining to migration but, among the many reasons to migrate, an elevated unemployment rate, increased susceptibility to working poverty and a lack of good quality job opportunities are said to be key factors shaping young people's decision to migrate abroad permanently. Youth in Africa tend to demonstrate higher willingness to move

permanently to another country: 38% in Sub-Saharan Africa and 35% in Northern Africa in 2015, (globally the figure stands at 20%). For instance, among Sub-Saharan African countries, the percentage of youth willing to migrate ranges from 77% in Sierra Leone to 11% in Madagascar (OIM, 2016). During the Youth Parliament of Malawi session held from 2 January - 6 January 2018 where youth issues including unemployment, child labour and migration were being debated; it was acknowledged that most Malawian youths are flocking to South Africa, Europe and the Gulf States in search of work opportunities. In the book 'Migration from Malawi to South Africa: A Historical and Cultural Novel' Banda (2017) argues that, the numbers of migrants to South Africa increased in the post-1994 period partly as a result of mal-administration by successive democratically-elected governments in Malawi. This development weakened the country's otherwise promising economy and impoverished the rural masses. Chapter seven through findings from this research will show some of the challenges pertaining to migration for Malawi's youth.

2.16. Underemployment

According to the OIM (2016), the fundamental challenge in emerging and developing countries remains to improve the quality of work available for the majority of youths who are already working but are underemployed or engaged in informal employment. Jobless youth experience vulnerability to future or long-term unemployment, foregone earnings and wage scarring, skills stagnation, wasted capacity and short and long-term detriment to physical or emotional health. In lower income countries, and those with less developed safety nets, young people are often underemployed or end up in the informal or shadow economy where work may be irregular and insecure, low wage, hazardous, in poor conditions or even illicit (ibid).

The Youth Well-being Policy Review (OECD, 2018:14) indicated that, in Malawi, the large flows of young people entering the labour market with scarce opportunities results in poor employment conditions for youth in the country. Not to mention, the minimum wage is far below cost of basic life. The Malawi labour market is characterized by low job satisfaction, high underemployment and multiple concurrent jobs, this overall suggests the decision to enter entrepreneurship is most times likely driven by necessity than choice. Despite relatively low unemployment rate among youth, job quality remains an important challenge. Most working

youth are indeed engaged in low-quality employment, either because they work in the informal sector (84%), face underemployment (25%) or are not adequately qualified for their current job. Another impact of youth unemployment is burden on the governments, which the next section will further discuss.

2.17. Burden on the Governments

Governments face monetary losses from foregone tax revenue and payouts of benefits (ILO, 2016). Economic growth is undermined by lost productivity of its working age population. A Young Invincibles Report, released in January 2014, estimated that youth unemployment in the United States is costing federal and state governments roughly USD9 billion per year. The European Commission has estimated that youth joblessness costs the EU about €153 billion in unemployment benefit, lost productivity and lost tax revenue (ibid). These losses constitute potential revenue that could be invested in more effective and responsive youth development policies.

Over a decade ago, World Bank studies in the Caribbean showed that lowering youth idleness could raise GDP as much as 3% in recaptured earnings (UNDP, 2016). As such, there is a need for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia with young populations to take advantage of the demographic window currently before them as the WEF (2016) research shows that, every 1% gain in global youth employment yields approximately USD72 billion in additional worldwide economic consumption annually. The last impact of youth unemployment to be discussed in the next section is social costs.

2.18. Social Costs

There are also the social costs - where unemployment, exclusion and aspiration gaps fuel crime, unrest, and radicalism or terrorism. Davids et al (2009), indicate that youths who are depressed can sometimes be susceptible to being marketed by extremist group such as al-Qaeda or those that caused political unrest in countries like Libya, Congo and Somalia. This is because unemployed youth often feel a lack of belonging and identity to a particular community that leads to feeling of a lack of meaningful life, which could cause alienation and marginalisation. Sen (1999), writing on the Capability Approach, illuminates that when youths are excluded, they

are being deprived from their capability to function in society and hence have a lack of freedom to live the kind of life in which they find value. Exclusion means denial of a wide range of social, economic and political rights.

Silver (n.d) as cited in Shawa (2012), writing on the theory of Social Exclusion, mentions that youth will go into a waithood period which is a stage during which they simply wait for their lives to begin, most notably for long periods of unemployment during which they live with parents or guardians and are financially not able to pursue marriage or home ownership. Eventually this leads to depression and social isolation. In Malawi, according to the Youth Well-being Policy Review, the risk of labour market and social exclusion seems contained for rural youth (OECD, 2018).

2.19. Summary of Impacts of Youth Unemployment

Overall, youth unemployment is a rapidly growing global issue. The high rates have a long negative impact on economic growth and productivity that must not be ignored. The effects have economic burden and social costs to society. In Malawi, there is a risk of loss of talent and skills, since a great number of graduates are unable to find a job and put their knowledge and capabilities into producing innovation and contributing to economic growth. This has worsened as a significant number of young people are migrating to neighbouring countries such as South Africa as well as to Europe and the Gulf States to look for economic opportunities. Nonetheless, there are a number of international policies and legal instruments that have been put in place to promote youth development broadly and youth employment. The next section looks at these.

International Policies and Legal Instruments Promoting Youth Development

The 2008 global financial and economic crisis has impacted young people and their position in the labour market around the world. Since slow recovery which began in 2010, many young people have been trying to find jobs and are now threatened by risk of prolonged periods of joblessness and exclusion. According to Scarpetta (2012) as cited in Gontkovičová et al (2014:1), investing in youth to give them a fair chance in the world of work should be more than

ever a key policy priority in all countries including Malawi. This section is dedicated to looking at some of the key international policies and legal instruments promoting youth development and job creation. Malawi is a signatory to all the instruments discussed below.

2.20. United Nations Post-2015 Development Agenda: Young People as Agents of Change

It is becoming widely accepted that young people are capable of bringing fresh perspectives, and often have direct knowledge of and insights into issues that are not accessible to adults. Youth best understand the problems they face and can offer new ideas and alternative solutions. Part of being young involves making sense of personal experiences and asking questions about the world around you. Youth have the capacity to identify and challenge existing power structures and barriers to change, and to expose contradictions and biases. Furthermore, young people have the power to act and mobilise others. Youth activism is on the rise, bolstered by broader connectivity and access to social media (UNDP, 2016).

In this regard, there has been a call for governments to actively seek out and support the meaningful participation of young people in decision-making and implementation of the post-2015 agenda. The post-2015 outcome document recognises that ‘children and young people are critical agents of change.’ Unlike the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were not fully achieved, if countries are to succeed in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), leaving no one behind along the way, governments must seek out the active and substantive engagement of young women and men from diverse backgrounds in national-level planning, implementation, and monitoring. There is an understanding globally that, the overall success of the SDGs depends on youth engagement because young people are critical thinkers, and can be innovators, change-makers and leaders (Plan International, 2017). The former UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, on Youth Day in 2016 stated:

The SDGs are a universal agenda for ‘transforming our world.’ To achieve this transformation, we must rethink the approaches of the MDG era that left youth out of the process. Governments that recognize the value of collaborating with young people as partners and establish clear and explicit pathways for their meaningful participation from the outset will be much better positioned to achieve the 17 SDGs and related targets (Ban Ki-Moon, 2016 cited in UNDP, 2016:1).

The SDGs or Global Goals established that young people are a driving force for development - but only if they are provided with the skills and opportunities needed to reach their full potential, support development and contribute to peace and security. One way of doing this would be by implementing an Economic Citizenship Strategy for children and youth. It would help national policy-makers and leading youth-serving organisations achieve many of the SDGs and sub-targets in the drive to create a viable economic and social system for the future (UNDP, 2016). In this regard, Ashoka, the global association of the world’s leading social entrepreneurs, defines Economic Citizenship as existing in ‘an environment where every citizen has the opportunity and the capacity to exercise his or her economic, social and cultural rights’. According to Ashoka, Economic Citizenship consists of four components: financial education, social and livelihoods education and financial inclusion, as Figure 2.9 below illustrates (ibid).

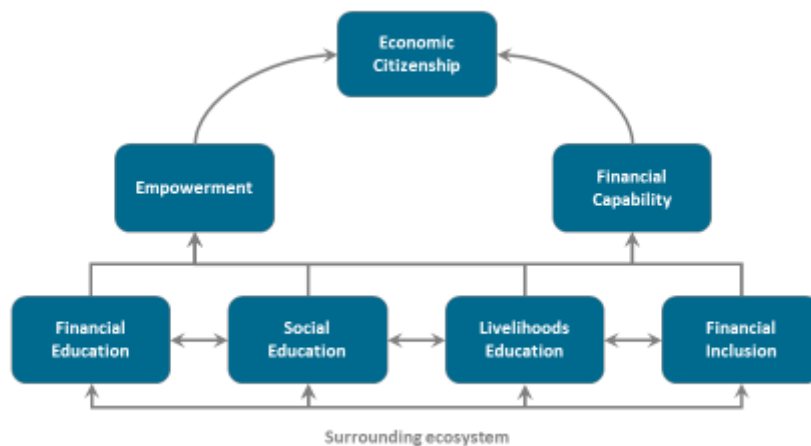


Figure 2.9: Ashoka Economic Citizenship Model. Image Source: UNDP, 2016

There is an obvious link between the SDGs and Economic Citizenship. For instance, SDG 4: Inclusive and equitable quality education; financial and livelihoods education can increase the number of youth who have relevant skills, including technical and soft skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. Social and financial education can help ensure all young people, both male and female, achieve literacy and numeracy.

Similarly, SDG 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; in order to create safe, resilient and sustainable settlements and cities, it is essential to include children and youth in urban development strategies. Engaging youth through financial inclusion, financial education and livelihood education makes the goal of creating sustainable and safe cities more achievable (UNDP, 2016).

All the same, it must be emphasized that achieving the 2030 agenda relies not only on setting goals, but also on implementing a responsive approach to the voice and needs of youth. By equipping young people with skills, knowledge and confidence in their abilities, there is a real chance that global leaders can harness the potential of young people to reach the SDGs over the next 10 years.

2.21. World Programme of Action for Youth (2000 and Beyond)

The United Nations (UN) also supports youth development with a range of programmes and activities, of which one is the United Nations Youth Agenda, which is guided by the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY, 2000). WPAY is a blueprint of the UN aimed at ensuring the well-being of young women and men and their full and active participation in the society in which they live. It provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of the youth globally and to increase opportunities and create an enabling environment for their participation in their communities and societies (Kampala, 2010). WPAY recommends actions to give priority to improving the level of basic education, skill training, literacy and access to employment opportunities equal to their abilities among all youth, including young women and youth in distressed circumstances such as those with disabilities, orphans and refugees, and to promote human rights education, including among migrant and indigenous youth (WPAY, 2000).

2.22. Commonwealth Youth Charter (2005)

The Charter provides guidelines for the development of national youth policies in all Commonwealth countries including Malawi, towards creating societies in which the youth are empowered to develop their creativity, skills and potential as productive and dynamic members. It promotes the full participation of young individuals at every level of decision-making and development, both individually and collectively (Kampala, 2010:29-30).

2.23. African Union's Agenda 2063: 'The Africa we want by 2063'

Adopted by African states and governments in 2013, Agenda 2063 is billed as 'a strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over the next 50 years'. It is a vision and an action plan which effectively covers key focus areas, in which education and youth development are a critical part. According to the African Union (AU), Agenda 2063 aims at creating a better world for the next generation by addressing challenges and opportunities critical to their future. The strategy aims at harnessing the Demographic Dividend through investments in young people, stressing that today's investments in youth will contribute to a peaceful and prosperous Africa in the future. Agenda 2063 states:

Aspiration 6: Putting Africans first: prioritizing development of skills and training for citizens, especially the youth and women

- **An Africa where Development is People-Driven, Unleashing the Potential of its Women and Youth.**
- Youth unemployment will be eliminated, and Africa's youth guaranteed full access to education, training, skills and technology, to health services, jobs and economic opportunities, recreational and cultural activities as well as to financial means to allow them to realize their full potential.
- Young African men and women will be the path breakers of the African knowledge society and will contribute significantly to innovation and entrepreneurship. The creativity, energy and innovation of African youth will be the driving force behind the continent's political, social, cultural and economic transformation.

To add, Agenda 2063 is a call for African countries including Malawi to invest in education, health, and science, technology and innovation to strengthen Africa's human capital. Recognising the gender disparities in the labour market, the Agenda stresses the importance of

addressing gender-specific challenges to youth employment and entrepreneurship, with a focus on empowering young girls and the need to ensuring:

1. young women's access to the labour market and financial assets and services;
2. strength the access of women and girls to education and health services, including Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services; and,
3. ensure the fulfilment of the rights of women and girls.

However, critics of the AU such as Muzenda (2017:1), argue perhaps ruthlessly that:

As an organization, the African Union (AU) has immense potential, however, it is bogged down by endless talk and empty promises, and failing to serve its people when they needed it the most. If the AU truly wants Africa to be taken seriously as a global force, then it needs fewer action plans and more action.

Nonetheless, former Chairperson of the AU Commission, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma spoke at length on the African Union's Agenda 2063, and the need for Africa to develop, modernize and to equip Africa's young population with the relevant skills and resources necessary for success as quoted below.

Africa is on the march towards a more prosperous future in which all its citizens, young, old, male, female, rural, urban, of all creeds and backgrounds are empowered to realize their full potential, live with satisfaction and pride about their continent. A future with healthy, well educated people living in robust and developed economies. Indeed, this is a progressive march towards the 'Africa we want' as envisioned in Agenda 2063. Whilst many-sided and simultaneous steps are needed to achieve this bold vision, there are some very clear and obvious steps that must be taken without delay...Africa requires an empowered generation of youth; a well-developed continent depends on the education and skills of Africans, especially the youth ...The extent to which African governments are able to transform education and skills development, health and wellbeing, empowerment as well as employment and entrepreneurship would lie at the heart of this march towards progress, sustainable peace and development...Key investments in the youth of Africa today is critical to Agenda 2063 and to elevating Africa to be a strong and influential global player (Dlamini-Zuma, 2017 cited in AU, 2017: iii)

Even so, in a similar manner realizing the goals of the Agenda is dependent on the successful implementation of the strategy.

2.24. African Youth Charter (2005)

The African Youth Charter is also guided by the vision, hopes and aspirations of the AU, inclusive of Africa's integration, and the inherent dignity and inalienable rights afforded to all members of the human family as set out in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). The Charter came into being when member states of the AU including Malawi were convinced that Africa's greatest resource is its youthful population and that through their active and full participation, Africans can surmount the difficulties that lie ahead (African Youth Charter, 2006:1).

Full participation which is central to the Charter must be commended as Sen's Capability Approach demonstrates that participation is a human right, and human rights should be seen as entitlements to capabilities; they should be best seen as rights to certain specific freedoms - freedoms to make well informed choices which will make the youth live the kind of life they want to live (Robeyns, 2005). To add, the Charter spells out some rights that each and every African youth is entitled to, including the right to education, employment, freedom of movement, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion, protection of the family, development and participation (African Youth Charter, 2006; Kampala, 2010).

2.25. Southern African Development Community (SADC): The 2008 Kliptown Declaration

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Youth Union Steering Committee signed the Kliptown Declaration when they met in Kliptown, Soweto, South Africa in 2008. The declaration committed the SADC to dealing with youth poverty by encouraging the establishment of schemes to fund youth entrepreneurship projects and activities, as well as initiatives to promote the establishment of cooperatives and joint venture businesses by youth and the need for development programmes to consider gender balance to ensure equal participation of young men and women (Kliptown Declaration, 2008).

2.26. Summary of International Policies and Legal Instruments

The above section identified some of the international policies and legal instruments promoting youth development. These include the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, the

World Programme of Action for Youth, the Commonwealth Youth Charter, the African Youth Charter and Agenda 2063 as well as the SADC 2008 Kliptown Declaration. Overall, all the instruments emphasise and call upon governments to recognise that youths are resources and change agents of sustainable development and that employment is critical for youth development. However, achieving the objectives of these policies calls for effective implementation plans and political will across the globe. Malawi as a case study of this project is a signatory to all these policies and legal instruments.

Global Strategies Addressing Youth Unemployment

Young people today face considerable challenges in creating a bright future for themselves. Rush (2017) argues that, while substantive policies and interventions such as Agenda 2063 and the UN Global Goals are necessary to tackle a problem of such massive proportions, there is no silver bullet solution. Rush is of the view that a toxic mix of factors has contributed to the crisis, from mushrooming youth populations in developing regions to a growing mismatch between the skills people have and those that employers need. Addressing the world's youth unemployment challenge requires a multipronged, long-term effort involving multiple stakeholders, such as governments, employers, educational institutions and civil society organisations – as well as families, communities and peer groups.

Muzenda (2017) agrees that, any approach to promoting youth employment or workforce development should be a long-term, contextually-appropriate, integrative, and sustainable one. Meaningful youth engagement and collaboration has to be critical to policy and programmatic effectiveness and progress.

Rush (2017) identified five basic strategies that could be pursued globally in order to address youth unemployment and these are:

1. Boosting job creation and labour demand
2. Better preparing young people for the job market
3. Illuminating pathways to productive work

4. Improving financial well-being, both current and long-term
5. Fostering entrepreneurship

According to Rush (2017), governments should develop national action plans targeting youth employment. They should establish enterprise incubation programmes and infrastructure projects that hire and train young people. They should also incentivise education institutions and private operators to do the same. Employers can create entry-level job opportunities, implement school-to-work apprenticeships and on-the-job training programmes, as well as support young entrepreneurs through mentoring. Educational institutions can incorporate entrepreneurship into the curriculum and work with employers to ensure they offer students appropriate and relevant training.

For instance, the ITS TYME (Immersion Training Strategy: Targeting Young Marginalized Entrepreneurs) initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa, works with corporations, government agencies, local and international NGOs, and individual philanthropists. The programme takes entrepreneurship training out of the classroom and into African marketplaces, motor parks, slums and other centres of youth activity. It is focused on equipping underprivileged young people with the practical, strategic and tactical tools they need to become financially self-sufficient and contribute to the social, economic and political life of their communities (Rush, 2017).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, another noteworthy programme, called Women for Development, was co-developed with the Citi Foundation. It links entrepreneurship education and access to finance through local microfinance institutions, helping participants to improve their financial lives and, in turn, strengthen their communities. Since 2011, more than 5,000 young women have benefited (JA Africa, 2019:1).

We want to bring attention to both the supply and demand constraints and consider how technology is impacting the landscape of education, training and opportunity. We need to find and share solutions to the challenges we face in terms of trying to ensure the world's young people are prepared and equipped to succeed in the 21st century workplace...training is relevant to local and global employer needs including that young people have the 'life skills' in addition to knowledge and technical skills to succeed in the

workplace. For example, apprenticeships in Germany, alternative learning systems in the Philippines, or implementing a national skills policy in India (JA Africa, 2019:1).

These examples are just demonstrations of the holistic approaches that must be taken to address youth unemployment and encourage innovation and entrepreneurship among the youth globally and particularly in Malawi. In the same view, the next chapter looks at how Africa can harness the Demographic Dividend.

Demographic Dividend and Generation 2030 Africa

2.27. Demographic Dividend and Africa

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2017:3) argues that, nowhere in the world are children more central to a continent's future than in Africa, where they account for almost half (47%) of all inhabitants. The African Union (2017) acknowledges that, today's rapidly increasing child and youth populations will soon constitute Africa's working age population. Therefore, the opportunity for Africa lies in the vast potential of its current and future generations of children and youth. Between 1970 and 2010 Africa's working-age population grew from 92 million to almost 575 million and will continue growing over the next 40 years. As youth grow older between now and 2050, the size of the working-age population relative to the younger dependent-age population (under age 15) is projected to increase significantly, helping to set the stage for a Demographic Dividend. The Demographic Dividend can be defined as the benefit that can arise when a country has a relatively large proportion of working-age population due to declining fertility, and effectively invests in their health, empowerment, education and employment through public action and private sector involvement (ibid).

According to Basu (2015), over time, many African countries can become poised to move towards a window of opportunity for a dividend, but their labour and capital markets must also be ready for this change in the population's age structure. Failure to absorb the large working-age population into productive, formal-sector employment could have an opposite effect on African economies, inevitably leading to contracting markets and stagnant growth (Basu, 2015).

As such, UNICEF (2017) stated that, while most economic development plans in Africa help guide policy they are not a substitute for a more specific job creation strategy. Nevertheless, the extent to which many African countries, such as Malawi, will be able to benefit from their young population and reap the rewards of the Demographic Dividend depends heavily on reshaping socio-economic structures and a favourable policy environment. East Asian countries like Malaysia, South Korea and Thailand show that a quarter to a third of the economic growth that these countries experienced between the 1960s and the 2000s is attributable to the Demographic Dividend (UNICEF, 2017).

2.28. Investing in Children and Youth to Reap the Demographic Dividend

Accordingly, the African Union Southern Africa Regional Office (2017) cited in the Daily Times (2017), also indicated that, today's rapidly increasing child and youth populations will soon constitute Africa's working age population. As such, investing in their health, protection and education holds the promise for reaping a Demographic Dividend in the twenty first century that could lift hundreds of millions out of extreme poverty and contribute to enhanced prosperity, stability and peace on the continent. The continent's per capita income could quadruple by 2050 if such investments in human capital were complemented by policies that foster job creation, empower and protect women and girls, and expand access to culturally sensitive reproductive health education and services. However, failure to prioritise these investments will lead to a far bleaker scenario and a missed opportunity, as the opportunity to reap a Demographic Dividend is time-sensitive and influenced by structural factors. In this regard, the years between now and 2030 are critical for building Africa's human capital (ibid). UNICEF (2017) in the report on 'Prioritizing Investments in Children to Reap the Demographic Dividend' identified skills enhancement as a key policy action:

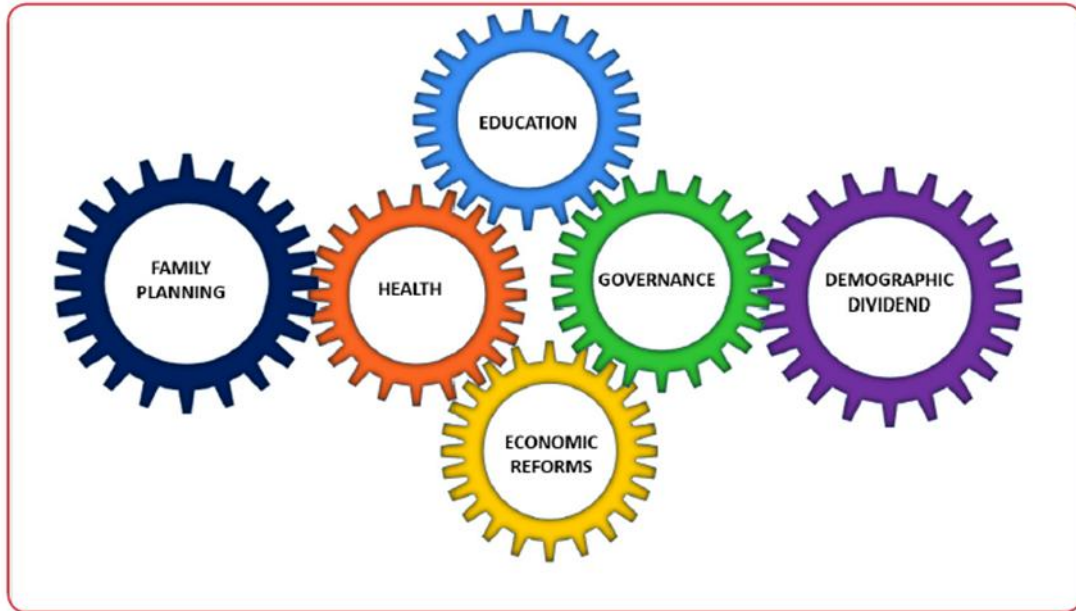
Transform Africa's educational, skills and vocational learning systems through systems-strengthening, curriculum reform and access to technology, to enhance learning outcomes and connectivity and to match the skills of Africa's children and youth to current and future labour market needs (ibid).

More importantly, to reap a Demographic Dividend, Africa will need a blend of political will (agency), sound strategies, enhanced implementation capacity and adequate financing.

Employment opportunities will have to address the global rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation and embrace the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). Basu (2015) argues that, despite some challenges, attaining a Demographic Dividend is possible. Asian countries such as South Korea, China, and Singapore have already benefited enormously, and their starting points were almost similar to those currently experienced by the majority of African countries.

Accordingly, the African Union Southern Africa Regional Office (2017) as cited in the Daily Times (2017), through the '100 Young in Real Business Every Year Initiative' encourages each SADC member state, Malawi included, to invest in and promote at least 100 youths in sustainable business activities through the initiative. This would be done by making available budget lines, finance, a clear process and specific policies in order to develop and expand the private sector and make the environment favourable. It is believed that the real development and expansion of the private sector by the youth themselves could be the best solution for the youth, the government and society at large. In order to ensure that young people have jobs and a future, the number of enterprises in the private sector must be increased. It is therefore necessary to encourage, promote and push through affirmative policies to allow the young people to enter into the private sector by creating or developing real sustainable businesses (ibid).

Concisely, Figure 2.10 below summarises the five policy wheels that have been identified for harnessing the Demographic Dividend in Africa, with investment in education being a top priority, the other wheels being family planning, health, governance and economic reforms.



Source: Adapted from African Union Commission and Economic Commission for Africa (AUC & ECA), 2013

Figure 2.10: Policy Wheels for Creating and Earning Demographic Dividend. Image source: AUC & ECA 2013 (cited in UNICEF, 2017)

2.29. Summary on the Demographic Dividend

The Demographic Dividend is defined as the benefit that can arise when a country has a relatively large proportion of working-age population for it is able to effectively invest in their health, empowerment, education and employment through public action and private sector involvement. This benefit can accelerate economic growth through the increased productivity of a relatively larger labour force if there are adequate decent jobs for them. As such, there is a need for countries including Malawi to take advantage of this window of opportunity by investing in children and youth now. The next chapter will discuss closely on how Malawi can attain the dividend.

Conclusion

This chapter is first and foremost, a broad scan of the key literature on issues of youth and youth development. In large measure, the chapter shows that the issue of youth unemployment is not unique to Malawi. In almost all countries, young people feature disproportionately higher in the unemployment rates. The difference appears to lie in the magnitude of the numbers (of unemployment) from country to country and region to region. The picture for young people is overall bleak. Inadequate progress has been made in young people entering into quality jobs despite the global economic recovery in the past years. High youth unemployment has had a negative impact on economic growth and productivity that cannot be ignored. However, Africa, with its demographics has an opportunity to reap a Demographic Dividend, but there needs to be a blend of political will, sound strategies and policy changes, enhanced implementation capacity and adequate financing. In the Malawi context, there is a need for a new way of thinking and new perspectives on how youth unemployment should be approached and how to make a youth policy more effective in order to eliminate the challenge in all its forms.

In conclusion, the chapter introduced a comprehensive theoretical approach anchored around the structure and agency problem, Sen's Capability Approach and the theory of Social Exclusion. With this in mind, a number of thematic areas and variables were discussed in order to demonstrate the complexity of the literature on this subject. At the same time, the chapter sought to introduce key themes and variables that will feature prominently in explicating the problem to be explored in later chapters. Moving the discussion and literature review further, the next chapter lays the foundation for the unemployment discussion in post-democratic Malawi.

CHAPTER THREE

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN MALAWI

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter sought to anchor the thesis conceptually, by exploring some of the key concepts, arguments and approaches deployed by various authors in the wider youth development discourse. Moreover, although the thesis is Malawi-focused, the point was also to show that the conceptual and policy issues that are the subject of this project, go way beyond Malawi. Instead, they exercise the minds of policy-makers, state actors and social scientists the world over. The central purpose of this chapter, on the other hand, is to underline the extent of youth unemployment in Malawi and identify some of the structural/systemic socio-economic challenges that have been inherited by the post-1994 administrations. At the same time, the chapter delves into some of the key players in the youth employment/labour market improvement drive and seeks to analyse the role and impact of each of these players in advancing or undermining progress in youth development. The significance of this chapter resides in the fact that it draws focused attention on the socio-economic and political factors and circumstances that plague Malawi. Only from this fundamental grasp of the real issues confronting the country's youth development and employment challenges, can a critique of current policies and alternatives be explored (the subject of later chapters).

3.2. Chapter Structure

The chapter is structured around eight sections. The first is concerned with providing a historical context of Malawi's socio-economic situation; the second introduces a working definition of 'youth' in the context of Malawi. The third section analyses the current youth unemployment trends together with Malawi's labour market in relation to various sectors of the economy. Fourth is a discussion of, the causes of youth unemployment in Malawi, while the fifth looks at

the impacts of youth unemployment in Malawi, and the sixth section discusses how Malawi is preparing to harness the so-called Demographic Dividend. A section is also dedicated to locating and tracing Malawi's legal and policy context for young people and then, lastly, a conclusion is drawn.

Historical Context of Malawi's Socio-economic Situation

3.3. Demographics of Malawi

The Republic of Malawi is located along the great rift valley of Africa and is bordered by Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania. Malawi's population increased from about 4 million in 1966 to about 13 million in 2008. The population is further projected to reach about 41.2 million by 2050, according to estimates from the UNFPA (2017). Recently, the National Statistical Office of Malawi (NSO) reported that, in 2019, the country had a population of 17.5 million people, of which 51% live below the poverty line. Crucially for this, the report also shows that at least 60% of the total population are people below the age of 30 (NSO, 2019). Starting with the youth theme, the report shows that out of the total Malawian population, 46% are young people aged 15 years and below. The rate of literacy amongst the young people aged 15-24 is estimated at 78%, with slightly more males (81%) compared to females (74%) being literate (ibid), confirming that gender not only matters but features prominently in literacy dynamics. Furthermore, 82% of the youth (15-29 years) are neither employed nor actively seeking work. It is further reported that, poverty and unemployment are still widespread, and the economy remains undiversified and vulnerable to external shocks (ibid). This theme (of the content of the education and training system) and how it speaks or fails to speak to the labour market and broader economic needs of Malawi is dealt with in some detail in chapters six and seven hereunder.

3.4. Malawi's Economic Growth

According to the World Development Indicators Report (2015), Malawi is one of the growing African countries that have at least achieved sustained economic growth over the past decade. It is estimated that the economy grew at an average rate of 6.5% per year between 2003 and 2014 and GDP increased from about USD 7.3 billion in 2003 to USD 13.1 billion in 2014.

Nevertheless, the Department for Economic Planning and Development (2017) reported that the country is still categorised as a low-income nation with an estimated GDP per capita of USD 397 in 2014. Persistent poverty, unemployment and income inequality are three of the many development challenges facing Malawi. These variables are obviously structural in nature and call for significant changes in the country's growth and development trajectory.

This is demonstrated by the fact that despite the country's steady growth numbers over the past decades, Malawi has not seen concomitant improvements in the material conditions of existence of the vast majority of her citizens and especially the youth. Underemployment (about 27%) is a major problem in Malawi's labour market. This refers to casual, non-frequent job opportunities that do not meet the most basic needs of those so employed. In addition, the productivity of Malawi's labour force is undermined by morbidity, premature mortality and poor economic skills, which stem from low levels of education and insufficient opportunities for skills development amongst the youth. The argument is that, a key reason for not achieving inclusive, pro-poor and job-enhancing growth is the country's narrow economic base (Department for Economic Planning and Development, 2017).

Booth et al (2006) argues that, Malawi's development can be categorized into three phases, from 1964 to 2004. The first from 1964 to around 1993 was characterised by relatively rapid economic growth but was based on a highly dualistic development policy that was, in the long run, unsustainable. The second, from 1993 to 1999 was a phase of economic liberalisation that was no more successful in addressing underlying structural problems and did not avert a decline in per capita incomes. The third, corresponding to 1999-2004, produced an even worse performance, frequent economic and political crises and a steep decline in most development indicators. At the end of this period in 2004, Malawi was on the edge of an abyss. Apart from the deterioration in the macro-economy, the density of the rural population, patterns of land-use, environmental degradation, the absence of productivity-enhancing measures in smallholder agriculture, teenage pregnancy, and mostly youth unemployment, remained issues of concern (Booth, 2006:vii). None of the policy responses (all three phases) have overturned the decades old structural problems afflicting Malawi. The post-1994 administrations inherited these

structural/systemic socio-economic challenges (ibid). For this reason, a new socio-economic policy response is called for.

In like manner, Mwanatakwe and Bhatia (2017) argue that, Malawi's economy continued to face challenges emanating from adverse weather conditions as the country's economy revolves around agriculture (the share of GDP of which was estimated at 37% in 2013). Maize is grown as the staple food for home consumption. However, tobacco, tea, cotton, coffee and sugar are also important for foreign exchange. Average annual headline inflation in 2016 stood at 22.6%, slightly higher than the 2015 figure of 21.0%, with rising food inflation as the main driver. In that year, drought reduced output of maize, the main staple crop, by 14%, necessitating maize imports to meet the supply gap, at significant cost. Furthermore, the drought also had a negative impact on power supply, constraining economic activities in sectors such as manufacturing, which experienced low capacity utilisation. The economic challenges were made worse by poor tobacco earnings, a rapidly depreciating kwacha, high inflation and high interest rates dampening consumer and business confidence. Yet still, despite fiscal policy tightening, net domestic borrowing increased beyond the budget by 1% of GDP due to the need to respond to the food crisis through additional financing (ibid:2). It is this economic decline that has had a tremendous effect on youth employment as the demand for labour became low, since decreased economic activity in a country often means firms will employ fewer people (ibid).

Mwanatakwe and Bhatia (2017), also show that even though there have been social assistance programmes in the country targeting young people, these are mainly driven and funded by foreign donors and have not been sustainable. The programmes have not positively impacted the social and economic experiences of Malawi's youth, with an unemployment rate of 23%. The gender divide is, as ever, making its mark with more females (28.3%) than males (16.9%) affected by unemployment. By 2016, youth unemployment had increased by 12% in urban areas as compared to rural areas, constrained by low skills, inadequate education and lack of job opportunities. It has come to the fore that various empowerment initiatives, as well as the 2013 NYP, have not been effective due to fragmentation and the failure to link entrepreneurship training with business advisory services and access to finance. This has emphasised an urgent need for a coherent policy response (ibid).

3.5. Donor Dependency

Since the establishment of a multi-party democratic system in 1994, Malawi struggled to set its largely agricultural economy on a path of development, even with the assistance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other key donors. In 2013, international support stopped after it was discovered that several politicians and public bureaucrats had plundered large amounts of cash from public finances, a scandal that became known as ‘cashgate’. The country’s dependence on foreign aid (which accounted for up to 40% of the government’s budget) was curtailed. It has been argued that this freeze of donor funding forced the Malawi government to embark on a challenging programme of cuts to public expenditure (Mtika, 2017). This without question has had effects on service delivery and job creation strategies.

Mtika (2017) also shows that, four years after Malawi’s donors closed the ‘aid tap’ following the so called ‘cashgate’ scandal, the country has been struggling to balance its books and effectively deliver services to its citizens. Consequently, this has raised the country’s domestic borrowing (rate) and put a huge strain on the economy to address the national budget deficit. The scandal alone is said to have involved the disappearance of more than MWK35 billion (USD48 million) during former President Joyce Banda’s two-year rule and another MWK156 billion (USD214 million) that went missing earlier during the eight-year reign of former president Bingu wa Mutharika. As such, the current administration is said to have inherited local debt-payment arrears amounting to MWK154 billion (USD212 million) when it assumed office in May 2014. Overall, for the past 10 years, Malawi’s debt has more than doubled and stands at 54.3% of GDP while in 2007 it was 26.7% (Mtika, 2017:1). It could thus be argued that the resources lost to ‘cashgate’ could potentially have created many job opportunities for young people in desperate need of such opportunities.

3.6. Summary of Malawi’s Socio-Economic Context

It follows from the above that the socio-economic challenges facing Malawi are deep-seated, structural and manifold. The youth and in particular young women have been at the sharpest end of these deprivations. Crucially, in order to change the lived experiences of young people in Malawi, a fundamental overhaul of the current structural arrangements and policy architecture is called for (Booth et al 2006; Mwanatakwe and Bhatia 2017; Mtika 2017).

Defining ‘Youth’ in Malawi

Definition shapes interpretation and approach. For this reason, it is critically important that the thesis declares at the outset, what is meant by ‘youth’ in the Malawi context. Also, as discussed in the previous chapter, various global agencies and governments adopt and are influenced by a variety of definitions, hence the need for definitional clarity.

The ‘youth’ or ‘young people’ are defined by the current NYP as those ranging from the ages of 15 to 35 years, regardless of their marital, education, economic and physical status. The Policy recognizes that youth is a definitive social entity that has its own specific problems, concerns, needs, and aspirations (NYP, 2013:2); it is this definition that will be adopted in this thesis. The Malawi definition of youth is very important in that, with some definitions such as UNESCO’s, stating that youth should be seen as a period of transition, many are the times when young people in Malawi have been excluded because of their marital status (if they are married or divorced), or when they are economically independent (Strategic Plan for the Youth Development and Sports Sector, 2009-2014, 2009). As such, the NYP points out that as long as they fall in the defined age bracket, then they should be included in all youth decisions and interventions.

As the previous chapter demonstrated, defining the age range of ‘youth’ itself is problematic and complex, with different organisations and institutions using the term to refer to different age ranges. In Malawi for instance, definitions vary. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II puts it at 10-29 years, and many strategies and policies focus on the 15-24 years group (SitAn, 2016). The UNDP (2017), in their Malawi report on ‘Nationwide Youth Consultations’ pointed out, with concern that studies on the Demographic Dividend and Situational Analysis of Adolescents and Youth in Malawi (SitAn, 2016), had previously cut the age of youth at 29. Just like the global context, in Malawi, the varying definitions of the concept clearly indicate the complexity and lack of coherence in policy formulation, which has for the past decades affected planning and responses to youth challenges. This therefore calls for harmonisation of the definition of youth as well as coherence in policy formulation and implementation strategies. The statement below further reveals:

The heterogeneity of young people makes policy gaps inevitable. The major challenge is variation in ages as the age groups for programmes differ across sectors. While the NYP has a broad categorisation of youth, each sector has its own according to its mandate. These demarcations are driven by the differences in needs of young people according to their age, and even sometimes preferred by young people themselves for better targeting. Yet, an important risk is to exclude key youth groups from participating... Related is the problem of age verification among youth without identification. Youth of appropriate age but appearing young may be denied certain opportunities. This is particularly significant in rural areas, where increased vigilance about birth registration by health sectors has not made much progress. For youth programmes to thrive in Malawi, they require a whole-of-government approach involving all sectors and overseen by a central ministry (OECD, 2018:82-83).

It must also be noted that, access to data that properly considers the different sub-groups of young people is also limited, both globally and within Malawi. In Malawi, there is extremely limited data available about the 10-14 years age band, considerably more data is available related to the 15-19 age band (particularly adolescent girls and their HIV and Sexual Reproductive Health [SRH] access), and some data related to 20-24 year olds, though again mainly related to HIV and young women. Data from the 25-35 age band is not recorded as 25-49 is treated as one age band, 'adulthood' (SitAn, 2016). The lack of age-specific data makes it hard to explore issues of inclusion or participation as it is not possible to identify which adolescents and youth are accessing which services or what barriers they face (ibid).

Nonetheless, putting aside the various age definitions, it should be pointed out that the years between 10 and 24 is a critical period in a person's life, as rapid changes occur in a person more especially in the earlier years from 10-17. Whilst the exact age at which these changes occur varies according to an individual boy or girl, all these changes happen within a very short period of time, as Figure 3.1 below illustrates.

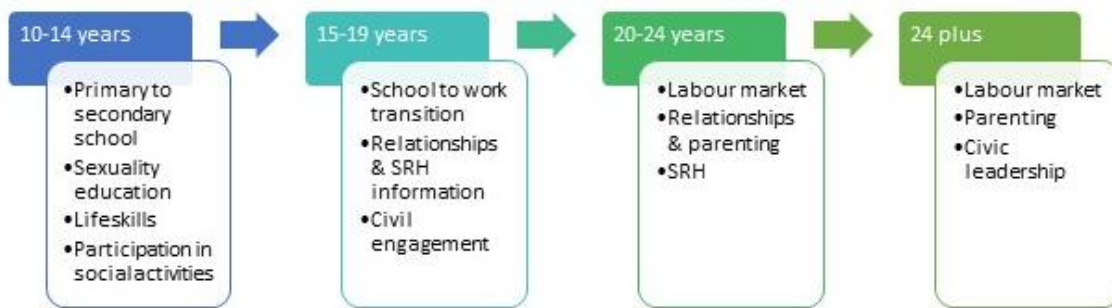


Figure 3.1: Key Transition Point in Adolescence and Youth. Image Source: SitAn, 2016

From the figure above, one of the most significant changes is how the person is expected to move into the labour market and become financially independent. Employment is one of the symbols of young people transitioning into adulthood, though the type of employment is critical in determining this. In Malawi, formal employment, with job security and a regular salary, is only one form of employment. Other forms of employment for the youth include seasonal work (ganyu), self-employment with limited job security, and employment in family concerns such as subsistence agriculture. Migration for work is also more common amongst adolescents and young men than other age and gender groups in the country. Labour force services include: apprenticeship schemes, work experience, internships, micro-credit and training for adolescents and youth self-employment initiatives, Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA), mentoring youth and enforcement of labour laws (Commonwealth Secretariat Youth Development Index, 2013 cited in SitAn, 2016:18). All the same, the type of employment a youth has is critical in determining the transitioning of his/her life into adulthood. All these are areas to be considered in formulation and implementation of the NYP. An important critique of the trends set out above, however, is that it is silent and has yet to recognize the absolute significance of Early Childhood Development (ECD) and cognitive stimulation. There is now increasing evidence that early cognitive stimulation (the first 1,000 days), is a critical determinant of success or failure in primary school, secondary school, tertiary and indeed into the labour market (WHO, 2019). Future youth development policy interventions will have to take cognizance of this vital insight, moving forward. Indeed, chapter seven below deals with this issue in more detail.

The Current Labour Market Trends of Youth Unemployment in Malawi

3.7. The Malawi Labour Force Survey

The NSO (2013) states that, the first comprehensive stand-alone Malawi Labour Force Survey (MLFS) was done in 1983, though the survey results were not published. For that reason, Earnings Surveys, Informal Sector Surveys, Household and Income Surveys, and labour market statistics have largely come from censuses and household-based surveys including Employment, Agricultural Sample Surveys and Business Economic Surveys. However, these data sources have not provided adequate information on the labour market trajectories of young people in Malawi. In order to satisfy the demand for detailed labour market statistics, the NSO together with Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Industry and Trade conducted a stand-alone Labour Force Survey in 2013.

The survey revealed that, despite the fact that young people comprise a considerable proportion of the population in Malawi, they lack basic opportunities that would enable them to develop to their full potential - what Amartya Sen refers to as 'capabilities'. This has been influenced by the existence of a range of unfavourable conditions that impinge on the youth, the most vicious being unemployment which also leads to poverty (NSO, 2013). Young people in the country continue to face challenges in the labour market despite them constituting over 60% of the country's population, hence the need for joint efforts by government and other stakeholders to address them (Kaude, 2017). A top government official in the MoLYMD, Joseph Mwandidya states it thus:

Youth unemployment is at 23% compared to the national unemployment rate of 21%. A deeper analysis of the labour market will reveal that, most of the employment and work is in the informal sector which faces serious work deficits. The youth find themselves in this sector because they have no alternative means of livelihood. In other words, they are in this sector not by choice but rather for survival (Mwandidya, 2017 cited in Kaude, 2017:1).

In 2015, ILO stated that, young people aspire to productive, formal employment opportunities that provide them with a decent wage, relative security and good conditions of work. Unfortunately, in Malawi, far too few youths are able to match their aspirations with reality. As a reminder, in Malawi, among the youth aged 15-34, the unemployment rate was still reported at 23% in 2013. The unemployment rate is slightly higher among the youth age 20-24 years (ILO, 2016) 25.6%. Figure 3.2 below illustrates this in more details, based on age band for both sexes and disaggregated for males and females.

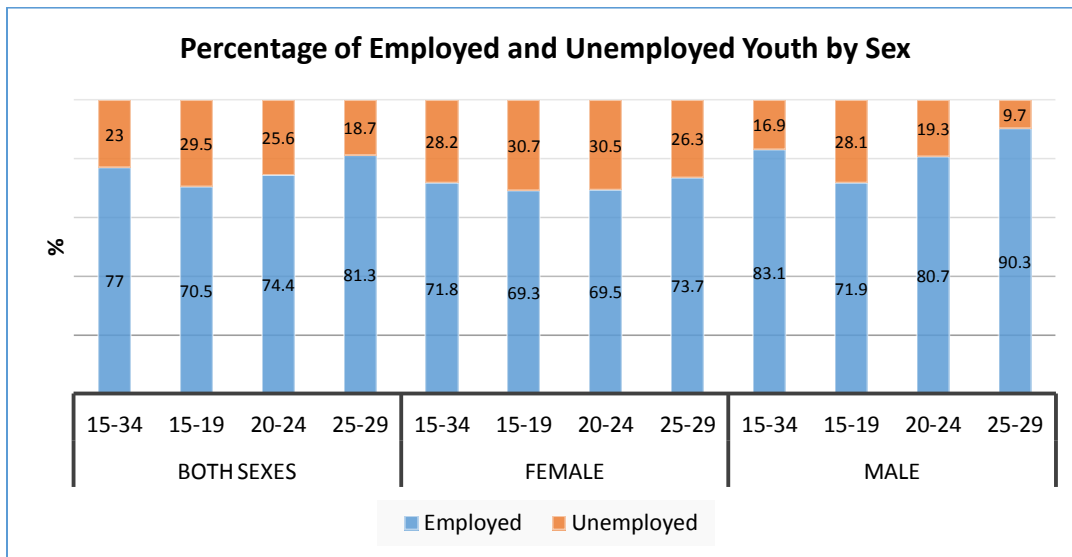


Figure 3.2: Youth employment and unemployment rates. Image Source: Shawa, 2019 (adapted from MLFS, 2013)

Table 3.1 below on youth unemployment situations also confirms that the youth unemployment rate in age group 15-24 years was 27.5 % while for those in the age group 15-34 years in vulnerable employment was 25.8% as of 2013, with no doubt these figures could be higher if a new MLFS was conducted. Youth underemployment on the other hand was reported at 12.2%.

No.	Indicator	Description	Total	Male	Female
1.	Youth Unemployment rate (broad definition) - (a) Youth age 15 – 24 years - (b) Youth age 15 – 34 years	Youth unemployment rate is the percentage of youth in age group 15 – 24 years and 15 – 34 years who, during the reference period of one week were unemployed (without work and available to work)	27.5 23.0	23.8 16.9	30.6 28.3
2.	Youth in vulnerable employment - (a) Youth age 15 – 24 years - (b) Youth age 15 – 34 years	Percentage of the youth in age group 15-24 years and 15-34 years who, during the reference period of one week were working as contributing family workers and own-account workers in total youth employment	12.3 25.8	11.1 24.9	13.2 26.6
3.	Youth underemployment (time related) rate - (a) Youth age 15 – 24 years - (b) Youth age 15 – 34 years	Percentage of youth in age group 15 – 24 years and 15 – 34 years who, were employed but they were willing to work more hours than they were currently working in their present jobs.	5.5 12.2	5.6 12.7	5.5 11.7

Table 3.1: Malawi Youth Unemployment Rates. Image Source: Shawa, 2019 (adapted from MLFS, 2013:11)

3.8. Statistics on Youth Unemployment

However, it is also important to point out that data from Malawi on productive employment is generally only measured from the age of 15 upwards, with the exception of the MLFS 2013 that provides data on the age group of 14-23years. In addition, it is also not known what work opportunities can be taken up by young people with disabilities, although it is reasonable to assume that access to training and employment is lower than for their able-bodied peers (SitAn, 2016:24). Without such information, the full extent of youth unemployment cannot be fully projected, and this can have implications for policy formulation and implementation.

Statistics related to youth employment/unemployment are also at times contradictory. For example, according to the MLFS 2013, 77.0% of young Malawians were in some form of employment, 71.8% for females and 83.1% for males for ages 15-34 years (refer to Figure 3.2 above). However, an NSO report using 2008 census data, articulates different figures, showing that only 60% of Malawians were in some form of labour, with men less likely to participate than women at 57.1% and 63.5% respectively. Young people in the urban areas are more likely to participate in the labour force than their rural counterparts. The mismatch of data is symptomatic of the lack of quality research on youth employment and unemployment trends in the country, making it a challenge to analyse the situation of sub-groups of young people (the Government of Malawi, 2016). According to SitAn (2016:29), with regards to protection, child labour and employment, data sets are also particularly problematic, treating child labour variously as an issue on its own rather than as a coping mechanism within poorer or more vulnerable households, as a necessity for many school-going young people, or related to the transition from informal to more formal employment. Furthermore, existing data on child labour is outdated as the last Malawi Child Labour Survey was carried out in 2002.

All the same, at the heart of all the numbers discussed above is one very uncomfortable and inescapable reality in Malawi, that not enough jobs are being created to absorb new entrants into the labour market. Invariably, it is young people who are at the receiving end of poor job-creation opportunities, across economic sectors, sub-sectors and industries in Malawi.

3.9. Youth Labour Force Participation Rate

In developing countries, the youth bulge poses a complex employment challenge and puts tremendous pressure on labour markets. Nonetheless, the OECD (2018:49), indicates that in Malawi, a large share of youth participate in the labour market and work. Between 2012 and 2014, the youth labour force participation rate increased from 72% to 75%, high by international standards and relatively high in Sub-Saharan Africa (53% in Zambia, 48% in Tanzania and 66% in Uganda in 2012). While this partly reflects the large share leaving school before completion in Malawi, working students contribute significantly to the labour force, amounting to 28% of the youth workforce in 2012. Noticeably, most young people participating in the labour market are also studying. Only 4.2% of young people aged 15-29 were unemployed in 2014, according to

the strict definition (not accounting for inactive youth not looking for a job but ready to work if offered employment), down from 5.6% in 2012 (ibid:49). However, of greater concern than unemployment is the lack of quality jobs for these young people. Although labour force participation is high, the vast majority of young Malawian workers experience poor working conditions. The vast majority of working youth is engaged in self-employment or unpaid family work (ibid: 51). Figure 3.3 below gives figures on distribution of youth labour participation in Malawi by gender in 2012 and 2014.

Youth labour force participation	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014
Employed	66.5	70.9	73.2	75.7	60.3	66.3
Unemployed	5.6	4.2	4.3	3.7	6.8	4.7
Inactive	27.9	24.9	22.4	20.6	32.9	29.0
Youth labour participation rate	72.1	75.1	77.6	79.4	67.1	71.0
Unemployment rate (strict definition)	7.8	5.6	5.6	4.6	10.1	6.7

Figure 3.3: Youth Labour Participation by gender. Image Source: ILO, 2014 (cited in OECD, 2018)

3.10. Occupation by Industrial Sector

Even though there is no specific information on youth employment by industrial sectors, as of 2013, the MLFS indicated that the main occupations in Malawi were skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery (40%), elementary (22%) and service and sales workers (19%) and wholesale, retail and repair of motor vehicles (16%). Only 3% of employed persons were in managerial professional technician and associated professional occupations (NSO, 2016). Figure 3.4 below illustrates.

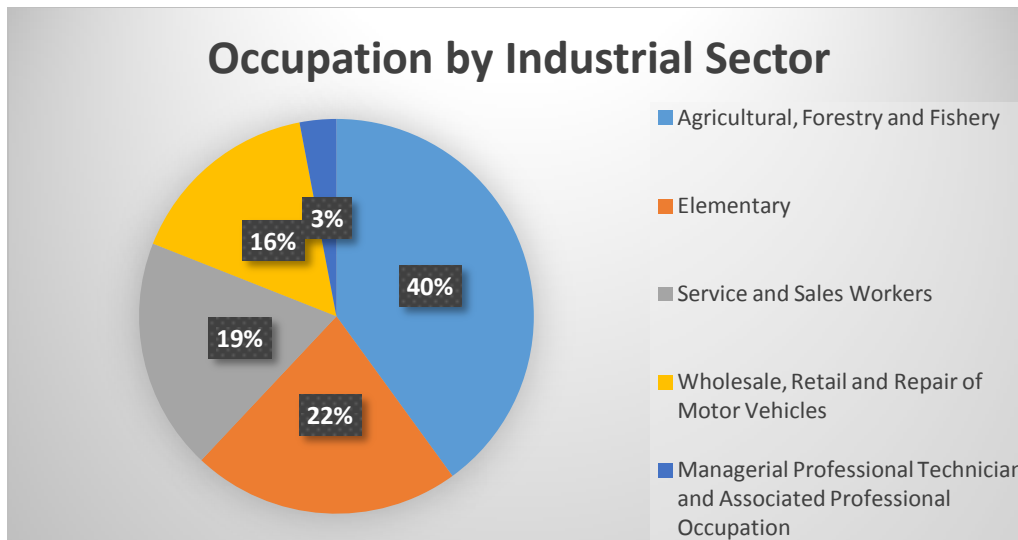


Figure 3.4: Malawi Occupation by Industrial Sector. Image Source: Shawa, 2019 (data from NSO, 2016)

Mwanatakwe and Bhatia (2017:13) illustrate further that, in 2017 manufacturing constituted a much smaller proportion of the economy, contributing approximately 9% to the GDP. Agroprocessing contributed approximately 50% of value added in the manufacturing sector. The share of manufacturing peaked in 1992 at 20% but has been in a downward spiral since then owing to a complex mix of macroeconomic and other factors that have hindered diversification and led to greater import dependence. The industrial structure is constituted by a handful large companies at one end and micro and small enterprises at the other. A small number of micro-and small size enterprises graduate or develop into medium-size enterprises. In Malawi, the informal economy is predominant as 89% of the working population works in informal occupations, with 91% of informal occupation in rural areas (ibid). What hampers industrialization is the limited investment in physical infrastructure and human capital development, which in turn has hindered the country's competitiveness and growth. Other challenges to further industrialisation include paucity of necessary skills; lack of innovation and technology; limited access to finance and markets; high costs of doing business; low investment in strategic sectors, such as agro-processing; weak institutions and low implementation capacity; and barriers to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) participation in manufacturing. For example, MSME products are generally of low quality as there is no knowledge of product and quality standards. Further, high

levels of corruption, a weak infrastructure impede entrepreneurship and private sector growth (ibid: 13). All the above with no doubt has had tremendous effect on youth employment and Malawi's economy at large.

3.11. The Formal versus Informal Sector

According to the Welfare Monitoring Survey (2005) cited in the Strategic Plan for the Youth Development and Sports Sector, 2009-2014 (2009), the national unemployment rate in the formal sector amongst youth aged 15-24 years in 2005 was estimated at 19%, with more young females (10%) than young males (8%) being unemployed. Concurring with the survey, the NSO (2013) indicated that, only 11.3% of the working population was in formal employment. A large part of the youth population is left to fend for themselves, with over 54% being self-employed. This is an obvious clue that the formal sector is failing to absorb all the employable youth; hence there is a need to create other avenues through the non-formal sector to complement the formal sector.

A large majority of young workers experience either informal employment (93%), irregular employment (86%) (including workers with contract duration of less than 12 months, own-account workers and contributing family workers), qualification mismatch (84%) or underemployment (73%), in contrast to the subjective judgement of 67% of young workers who declare themselves satisfied with their jobs. Overall, the prevalence of informal employment and low coverage of social protection and employment insurance in Malawi is such that most young workers face one or more of these job quality drawbacks (OECD, 2018).

3.12. Rural versus Urban Entrepreneurship

The Government of Malawi, through the MoLYMD (2016:23), indicated that, in general, job growth prospects are skewed towards low-wage and insecure jobs, with the strongest expected demand being domestic workers (48.2%) followed by food preparation assistants (11.7%) and personal service workers (8.1%). The lack of choice conflicts with the aspirations of adolescents and young people, expectedly they aspire to move into work that is more productive and fulfilling. With the trends discussed above, entrepreneurship is encouraged as employment

options are relatively limited, with an overall low level of economic activity in the country. Mwandidya (2017) cited in Kaude, (2017:1) notes:

The future of each and every nation is in the youth and entrepreneurship is the best way to go. Young Malawian entrepreneurs should be empowered and supported as they are providing solutions for the country.

Mwanakatwe and Bahatia's 2017 work concurs with Mwandidya and further authenticates that coherent national policy efforts to promote and nurture entrepreneurship are critical to create enabling conditions for industrialisation. This would entail multipronged efforts to improve the business environment, build up skills, and strengthen provision of business development services to Micro, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (MSMEs) and particularly the young people.

If favourable conditions are in place, entrepreneurship can be a pathway to decent work and have tremendous impacts on the economy. However, youth face disproportionate barriers to succeed in entrepreneurship. While tapping into the underexploited potential of youth entrepreneurship holds great promise, it is certainly not a panacea, as it cannot address the overall youth unemployment challenge on its own. This is especially true in rural areas, where young people are much more disadvantaged. Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a youthful population that mostly resides in rural areas and works in agriculture. This raises questions about how rural youth fare in entrepreneurship, a matter of great concern that has been insufficiently treated in the literature so far (OECD, 2018: 119).

In this connection, according to the Malawi Small-to-Medium Enterprise Survey (2012) cited in OECD (2018), while youth entrepreneurship is overwhelmingly dominated by women in urban centres (71.0%), it is made up of more of men in rural areas (57.5%), indicating a clear divide in entrepreneurial activities across places of residence (explored further below). Rural youth entrepreneurship appears primarily necessity-driven: unemployment, together with the inability to find a job, is the most frequent reason reported by rural young entrepreneurs for opting to start a business (38%). By contrast, the main reason given by urban youth is perceiving an opportunity (36%). This analysis needs to be nuanced, however. Opportunity-driven entrepreneurship stands at 35% among rural youth. In addition, 6% started a business simply

because they wanted to, 6% because they were interested in a particular product or service, and 4% because they wanted to be their own boss (ibid: 124). These statistics are further illustrated in Figure 3.5 below.

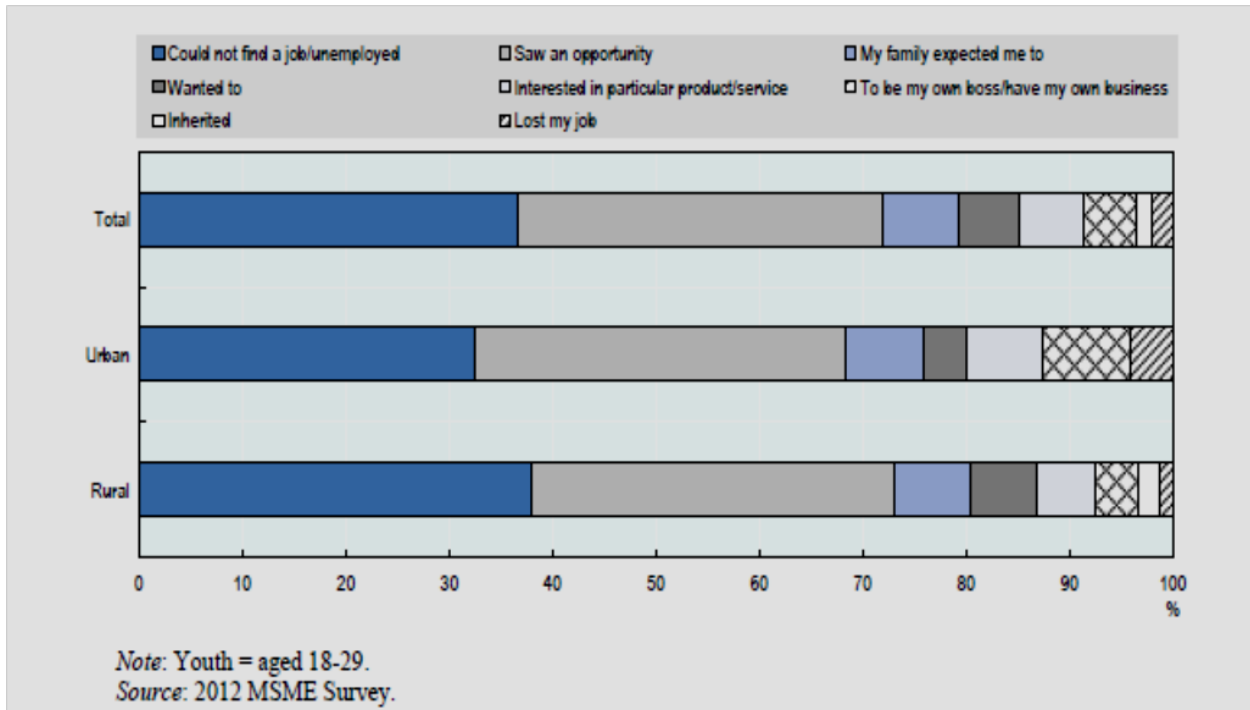


Figure 3.5: Motivation of Malawian Youth to start a Business by Area. Image Source: MSME Survey 2012 (cited in OECD, 2018)

3.13. Child Labour

Chinsinga (2017) has lamented the grim reality that the Malawian economy is way too dependent on agriculture, thereby making it vulnerable to the elements. For instance, a bad-weather year or other natural disaster could mean a significant hit on earnings and badly damage the entire economy as evidenced in 2016 (Mwanatakwe and Bhatia, 2017). Nevertheless, what remains an even higher issue of concern is that large tobacco buyers exploit small-scale producers, paying them a poor price for their crop. This has led to some farmers relying on the use of child labour. An estimated 80,000 children and young people work to harvest the tobacco crop in the country. Without protective clothing, they are exposed to the nicotine in tobacco leaves. This causes green

tobacco sickness (or nicotine poisoning), which causes headaches, stomach pain, coughing and breathlessness. As a result, children miss important school time and risk failing their examinations. Most of them have to curtail their education before high school to help tend the fields or care for younger siblings. In addition, the young people employed in this sector are paid very low wages, which barely improves their wellbeing (Tenthani, 2013).

Concurring with Tenthani (2013), the SitAn (2016:10) stated that, Malawi's Employment Act of 2000 sets a minimum age for work of 14 years, as long as it does not interfere with education, and a minimum age for hazardous work of 18 years. However, child labour remains a central coping mechanism of poor families to meet their livelihood needs. More than half of children aged 5-17 years in rural areas (53.5%) are engaged in child labour in agriculture. It is precisely these types of anomalies and gaps that a comprehensive policy pipe-line for youth development would attend to (from the first 1000 days through the schooling and training phase, up to the work place/labour market).

3.14. Labour Migration

A report on the Youth Employment Summit (2000) states that the concern is, just like in the 1940s and 1950s, the unemployment crisis in Malawi is behind the rise in migration of young people abroad in search of better education and employment opportunities. With no clear strategies for decades on how to address the unemployment challenge, the country has historically grown to be a labour-migrant country, sending people mainly to work in South Africa.

Since the 1900s the migrant labour system, through which many Malawians were lured to South Africa's mining industry in the past, has contributed to a mindset among Malawians that South Africa offers a solution to their financial woes (IOM, 2015). The IOM, writing on 'Migration in Malawi: A country profile 2014', noted that, most of those leaving the country are young and in their productive years and therefore likely to be looking for work and economic opportunities outside the country. Unfortunately, still without appropriate policy structures, the country has not managed in a coherent manner to reap maximum benefits from migrant remittances. This is in spite of a growing consensus emerging that remittance could constitute a significant source of

external financing, and whose availability, if managed through appropriate policies, could prove particularly valuable for capital-scarce developing countries (ibid). These recent labour migration trends have become a clear indicator that young people's economic needs have not been adequately addressed in Malawi. The next section will advance the discussion by looking at literature that speaks to the causes of youth unemployment in Malawi.

Causes of Youth Unemployment in Malawi

Chapter two has shown that skills mismatch and lack of labour related skills; socio-economic and political factors that inhibit entrepreneurship; and lack of industry support and patronage are the key causes of global youth unemployment. All of these also apply in the Malawian context and much more besides.

3.15. Mismatch of Skills

Thipa (2015) is of the view that, the emphasis by employers to find candidates with the right skills or experience to fill job vacancies, with themselves not offering enough training to match the job requirements, has aggravated skills match in countries like Malawi. The result is that an increasing number of young people in the country are taking up employment for which they are overqualified, thereby defeating efforts to achieve sustainable development as there is a loss of valuable skills for the young person and the country also forfeits higher economic productivity.

The OECD (2018:53) shows that, many young Malawians occupy jobs for which they are not qualified. A normative measurement of qualification mismatch, based on the classification of occupation according to the level of education required, showed 81% of young workers were underqualified for their positions in 2014, 2% were overeducated, and only 17% were adequately trained. Under-qualification is particularly widespread among technicians and associate professionals, and skilled agricultural and fishery workers, both of which require at least a tertiary degree and some secondary technical education. Young workers' subjective perspectives are more optimistic: 30% consider themselves underqualified and 18% overqualified. Youth who consider themselves adequately trained in Malawi are 53%, which is higher than in Tanzania at 43% or Madagascar at 47% but lower than in Zambia at 57% or Uganda at 60%. While

qualification mismatch is detrimental to young people's well-being, over qualification appears more negatively associated with job satisfaction than under qualification (ibid: 53-54). Thipa (2015) further states that, in Sub-Saharan Africa alone, youth who completed tertiary education are between two times and three times more likely to be underemployed than youth with primary education. Additionally, there are other times when high education is said to bring with it an income bias that industry is not willing to meet. This is particularly true for South Africa where employers are more willing to hire unskilled foreigners in an attempt to avoid high salaries. Employers are not ready to meet income requirements for youth with tertiary qualification even though they have a duty to train new employees, including new graduates, in order to equip them with relevant skills. Closely linked to skills mismatch is lack of labour related skills.

3.16. Lack of Labour Related Skills

Nakagaki (2013) indicated that, in low income economies, the under- education of young workers still remains a significant concern and a significant hindrance to transformative growth. Over 60% do not have the level of education expected to make them productive on the job. As such, Nakagaki (2013) is of the view that, quality and relevant education and vocational training must remain a priority on the national development and policy agenda. The sentiment is particularly true for Malawi where the National Youth Manifesto (2019), has shown that youth lack skills that can help them develop livelihoods and contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. There is a significant shortage of skilled workers and technicians in Malawi, which indicates that the vocational training system is not producing enough graduates to meet current and future labour market demands. The minimum qualification of Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) to enrol in technical colleges excludes many young people, especially in the rural areas, who have the potential to contribute to development (National Youth Manifesto, 2019).

The above also concurs with what the Strategic Plan for Youth Development and Sports Sector 2009-2014 (2009) illustrated, namely, that Malawi's unemployment (both formal and informal) rate is high due to two main factors, poor economic performance and lack of basic skills that young people can acquire in school. Up to 12 years of basic education does not necessarily equip a young Malawian with skills that can assist him/her to generate income for livelihood. Skills

imparting strategies must be developed with greater youth participation. There are also no opportunities for young people running their organisations to either advance their skills or upgrade youth work into wage earning employment. This has led to many young capable youth leaders to abandon volunteerism for wage employment. The Employers Consultative Association of Malawi (ECAM) in 2017 further adds:

As ECAM we are very concerned with high youth unemployment in the country, one of the problems is that there is skills mismatch between the industry needs and what the training institutions are providing...but more important, young people lack labour related skills, from the employers side there is always a challenge, we have a lot of youth out there coming to us looking for internship but they have no formal training and their papers are obtained from bodies that are not certified in Malawi. This is causing a lot of problems because many institutions of higher learning have come up and they are offering papers to students, but we don't know if the papers are even credible (ECAM, 2017 cited in Ngwata, 2017:1).

The ILO (2014) recommended formulating and implementing policies which match education and training with employer needs if young people are to be given a fair chance at a decent job. The National Youth Manifesto (2019) also advocates the need to introduce skills training in technical colleges relevant to the job market for instance sanitation entrepreneurship, landscaping, value addition to primary products, and irrigation technology by the year 2024.

3.17. Lack of Entrepreneurial Support

Many young people in Malawi are economically dependent or live in poverty and do not make significant contributions to the economy despite their educational qualifications and healthy bodies. While many would like to venture into sustainable businesses they are confounded by a lack of entrepreneurial skills and business knowledge as the education curricula is biased towards preparing future employees rather than entrepreneurs. Young people who venture into business are unable to survive or grow due to inadequate policy and programmatic support for start-ups, in a hostile macroeconomic environment characterised by high interest rates which make access to business finance and capital almost impossible for young people (National Youth Manifesto, 2019:9).

Furthermore, the formal business sector, especially in commerce and trade, is dominated by non-indigenous Malawians who have privileged access to formal and informal systems of support. The National Youth Manifesto warns that, this situation has the potential of generating class animosity and xenophobic tensions among poor and less privileged young Malawians. While there have been initiatives to support youth entrepreneurship before, such as the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDEF), the initiatives have always been captured by partisan interests, resulting in such efforts benefiting only a selected few who are politically connected. These initiatives have proved unsustainable as political, rather than business logic determines the modus operandi. Overall, there is a need for a bigger programme of entrepreneurship which could create a bigger domestic market so that when the youth produce they can also sell, and a need to provide start-up business loans and equipment for technical college graduates (ibid:9). The other cause of youth unemployment to be discussed in the next section is school dropout and harmful cultural practices.

3.18. School Dropout and Harmful Cultural Practices

Malawi is currently implementing universal-free primary education as prescribed by the Millennium Development Summit in the year 2000. Masina (2016) discusses that, while most of the infrastructure has been provided under the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) and the President's office, it has been noted that the dropout rate in many schools is as high as before, when primary education was not free. This signifies that the challenges to completing primary school are many and complex. Schools, particularly in rural areas, are often significantly overcrowded with class sizes of 70+ students being common. The number of fully trained teachers working in the classroom has increased but does not yet correlate with the government target of reducing classroom size and teacher/pupil ratio (SitAn, 2016).

It is estimated that about 500,000 young people drop out of school or fail their examinations (SitAn, 2016) every year. Culture provides important social and economic benefits. Identifying with a particular culture gives young people a sense of belonging, heritage and ancestral identity. (National Youth Manifesto, 2019:43). However, on the other hand, negative cultural practices have had a devastating impact on education. According to Masina (2016), high school dropout rates are partly because of cultural beliefs in the country where young men and women get

married at a tender age so that they can start having children and raising their own families. It has been reported that, Malawi has one of the highest rates of child marriages in the world. Confirming this, Table 3.2 below points out the estimated percentage of boys and girls married by age 15 and 18 in Malawi.

Administrative Level	Proportion of boys and girls married by age 15		Proportion of boys and girls married by age 18	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
National	10.3	1.5	49.9	9.1
Northern Region	9.2	0.5	51.8	3.9
Central Region	6.2	0.8	43.6	7.8
Southern Region	13.9	2.4	54.8	11.5

Table 3.2: Proportion of Boys and Girls married by age 15 and 18 in Malawi. Image Source: MDGS 2014 (cited in SitAn, 2016)

Perhaps the most common reason for early marriages is that initiation ceremonies are done during school terms so that parents, mostly in rural areas force young people to leave school and attend. As a result, when these young people go to the ceremonies they are told that being a man/woman is when you have children. With that, they leave school so that they can practice their manhood/womanhood. All this impinges on their prospects of getting an education and later on getting employed (Youth Employment Summit, 2002). The quotation below underlines the point.

Madam Speaker, allow me to talk about harmful cultural practices. In my district, Nkhotakota, there are so many harmful cultural practices that hinder the lives of the youth more especially girls. Some of these cultural practices are kusasa fumbi and lowola. Kusasa fumbi, this is when a girl has come of age, elders invite a man to sleep with the girl because they believe that they are cleansing the girl which leads to contraction of STIs...Madam Speaker, some parents withdraw the child from school because they want her to get married to a man they do not know but just because of wealth...I would like the government to make it a law that parents who force their children more especially girls into marriage, must be arrested and if the law is in place, it should be enforced (Hon. Mercy Mhango, Nkhotakota North-East, cited in the Verbatim Report of the First Meeting of the Second Cohort of Youth Parliament, 2017).

However, it has to be applauded that Malawi, in February 2017, made a historic amendment to its constitution to fully outlaw child marriage following a year-long intensive campaign, interestingly, led mainly by youth groups. There is, however, a need for political will to ensure parents abide by these laws. The SitAn (2016:23) reports:

The National Girls' Education Strategy Analysis is supportive of the establishment of by-laws with local leaders and Chiefs' Councils as a means to ensure that all eligible children attend school regularly through fining of parents or guardians who do not abide by the by-laws. This is clearly a positive initiative, and 'reduces absenteeism, child labour, early and forced marriages and pregnancies ... the ceremonies have eliminated elements that promote early indulgence into sex.

However, evidence does not fully back this up. Teenage pregnancy, whether in marriage or out of marriage, is reported to have risen by 6% in 2017 and this has led to many NGO's and government programmes to shift their attention to SRH programmes (National Youth Manifesto, 2019). Concurring with this, the 2017 Malawi Integrated Household Survey 4 (IHS4) report indicated that, money and marriage are the two highest school dropout reasons. The dropout rate in primary schools in Malawi is estimated at 11.4% (World Bank, 2013). Almost the same proportion was portrayed in dropout rates in both females and males. Slightly more than half (51%) of the pupils who dropped out of school cited lack of money as the reason for dropping out while 27% of the pupils dropped out because of not having an interest in school. On the other hand, the IHS4 report estimated that in 2017, the dropout rate in secondary schools in Malawi was at 10%. The Southern Region of the country had the highest percentage of pupils (11%) dropping out of school, followed by the Central (9%) and Northern Region (6%). Interestingly, 72% of males indicated that they dropped out of school due to lack of money while 28% of the females dropped out because they got married (IHS4, 2017: 27).

3.19. Lack of Access to Quality Education

A limited number of schools coupled with lack of education and training in the long run prevent many youths from finding formal or informal employment in Malawi. Furthermore, there are not enough qualified teachers in Malawi. As many as 60% of young people rarely complete their high school education in the country. It has been estimated that, globally, there are between 130 million and 150 million young people out of school, mostly in rural Sub-Saharan Africa. There

are either no schools to go to, or only a few schools provided in the communities, or they simply drop out for one reason or another. Though it is impossible to come up with a single prescription that can be effective in addressing the woes that are affecting the implementation of access and delivery of quality education, poverty eradication amongst the poor households surely stands out as a starting point in achieving it (Youth Employment Summit, 2002). This echoes what the National Youth Manifesto (2019) revealed:

The introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 1994 has resulted in a trade-off between increased access to education and low quality of education. This is because FPE policy has not been matched with corresponding investment in infrastructure and number of qualified teachers. For instance, between 2004 and 2013, enrolment increased by 45% yet the number of classrooms rose only by 12%. Thus, many pupils learn in temporary, make-shift structures or under trees, making teaching impossible during rainy season. The gains of increased primary school access also get eroded with the high Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) which averages 71:1 against a national intermediate target of 60:1. In early grades, the ratio averages 130:1. There is shortage of qualified teachers to meet the recommended PTR, thereby affecting the quality of teaching and learners' outcomes. As of 2017, there were 71,161 primary school teachers. To reach the recommended PTR of 60:1, it implies government needs to employ an additional 13,500 teachers, all things being equal (National Youth Manifesto, 2019:14).

What should be an issue of particular concern is that, according to IHS4 (2017: 27-28), at the national level, the results of the survey show that 70% of the population over 15 years of age did not have any academic qualification, even a primary school certificate. By place of residence, 78% of the population aged 15 years and above in rural areas had no qualification, compared to 40% in urban areas (IHS4, 2017). Figure 3.6 below illustrates highest qualification attained by sex of a person.

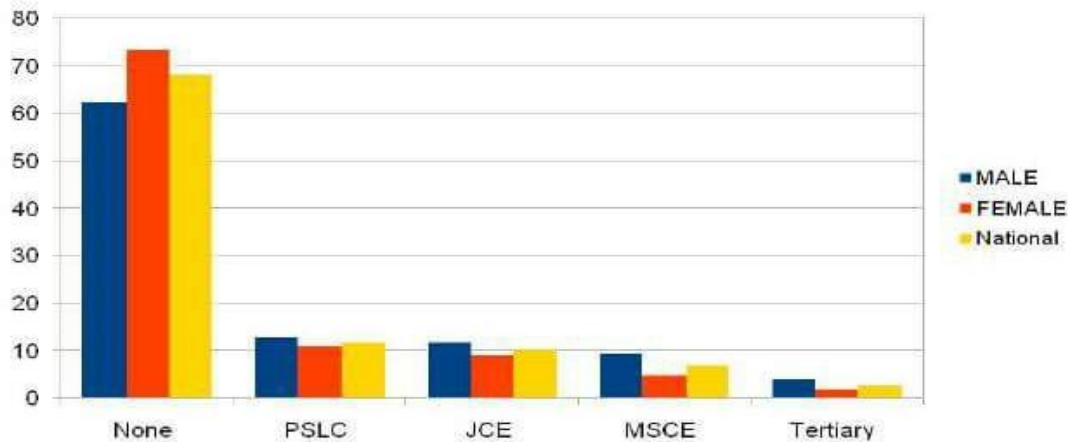


Figure 3.6: Highest Qualification Attained by Sex of a Person in Malawi. Image Source: IHS4, 2017

The Global Unemployment Trends for Youth 2013: A Generation at Risk (2013) report tells that, with just over 66% of the demographic completing secondary education, young people are unable to make a successful transition to stable or decent employment. From Figure 3.6 above, the picture for Malawi is even grimmer as less than 10% of young people actually attain a secondary school education. Even for those who are educated in the country it is estimated that 5 out of 10 young Malawian workers are under-educated or over-educated for the work they do and that 6 out of 10 receive below average wages (Global Unemployment Trends for Youth, 2013). Closely linked to lack of quality basic education is poor access to tertiary education that is discussed in the next section below. Additionally, Figure 3.6 also shows the differences between boys and girls in attaining education qualifications, some of whose causes will be discussed under section 3.21 below.

3.20. Poor Access to Tertiary Education

Access to tertiary education also remains a challenge in Malawi. To this end, the National Youth Manifesto (2019:16) has shown that the demand for university education is increasing but the capacity of public and private universities is very low. Access to public universities is at only 9% of those students who qualify. The district-based quota system that government applies when selecting students for public universities is discriminatory and assaults the principle of academic merit that should be the core consideration in selecting students for universities. In practice, the system also favours students from conventional schools (43%) and private schools (33%) who

have access to better infrastructure, learning and teaching materials as well as qualified teachers. In turn, the system has been shown to be biased against (14%) of students from Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS), that are mostly under-resourced, and yet the majority of students access secondary education through these schools (ibid). The majority of rural and poor youth cannot afford the exorbitant fees in the available private universities. There have been a number of reports highlighting the plight of needy students who fail to enrol in public universities or find themselves unable to continue with their education due to lack of fees and upkeep resources (ibid:16). The Hansard quotation below is instructive in this regard:

...on the other hand, I would like to talk on the selection to university. You will find that most of us we have very good points, but we are just staying idle forcing other people, those who are behind us to think that education is useless in Malawi. But, they need to consider the youths from rural areas. We are behind but for the development of any country, we need to look into rural areas. We cannot talk of development that a country is developing when we only look at Lilongwe (Hon. Menyani - Opposition - Dedza North West, cited in Daily Debates, Hansard, 2012).

The situation illustrated above is, however, not unique to Malawi. In South Africa too, the Department of Social Development calculated that there are over 1.9 million individuals aged between 15 and 34 years, representing nearly 40% of the entire population. Of these, 30.8% are unemployed and only 41.3% of those aged 20 -34 years have a Matric Qualification (Miller, 2010). What is more, as of May 2019, the youth unemployment rate in the country was estimated at 55.2% for those aged 15-24. Among graduates in this age group, the unemployment rate was 31% (Stats SA, 2019:1).

Nevertheless, the move from education into employment is a crucial phase in the lives of young people, with long-term implications for both their individual well-being and the socio-economic prospects of the country as a whole. Policies and strategies are increasingly making linkages between the social, economic and cultural factors that expose young adolescents to harm and poor educational outcomes. On the other hand, the SitAn (2016:23) argued that, the evidence for how this affects different adolescents, boy or girl, disabled or able-bodied, orphan or non-orphan is limited. It would be crucial to learn more about some of the key linkages in order to understand better the situation of youth in Malawi and their access to quality education. Yet another variable that impact youth employment prospects in Malawi is gender.

3.21. Gender Roles

Gabriel (2003) points out that, underemployment and unemployment among the youth is a problem everywhere, but it is more severe in developing countries, due to lack of skills and high illiteracy rates, particularly among women. A young girl in Malawi, for example, living in absolute poverty cannot attend school because she is required to fetch water for her family at a borehole a long way from her home. This will mean that, in future, she will be less likely to find a job because she does not have the competitive skills to compete with an urban girl who draws water from a tap in the house, or a boy that has no such obligatory home chores. Gabriel (2003) further argues that school dropout, which leads to unemployment, varies between rural and urban and also with gender, as girls are expected to do household chores while boys attend school. It is unfortunate that gender still represents a major obstacle to development in the twenty first century. In this regard, Masina (2016) noted that, Rwanda, Burundi and South Africa are the only three countries in Africa that are reducing the gender gap in the formal employment sector. Rwanda, for example, is said to be the only country in Africa with more women than men in parliament. This is to be commended.

The Government of Malawi (2016), through the Department of Youth, also noted that paid employment opportunities significantly favour young men. Young women tend to have more restricted mobility and fewer social connections, which are essential for starting to generate income through informal employment. It is also widely recognised that young women also have much greater domestic care burdens than young men, especially those young women who are married and are already mothers. In general, girls also have fewer qualifications than their male peers. This restricts their entry into the formal employment sector. As such, it is obvious that improving access to formal training and apprenticeships, without addressing some of the cultural and social gender norms that reduce girls' and women's entry into employment opportunities, may not reduce the gender disparities in the labour market (ibid).

According to SitAn (2016), youth-related gender-responsive policies have not received much attention. Gender equity and its deleterious impact on the prospects of the girl child and young women are well documented. What is not as clearly defined, however, are coherent policy alternatives to effectively and comprehensively respond to these policy gaps. A comprehensive

response would cover all aspects and spaces of youth development, including the HIV and AIDS space.

3.22. HIV and AIDS

The fact that the pandemic has had tremendous effects on the youth, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, is undeniable and Malawi is no exception. In 2019, the UNDP reported that adolescents and young people aged between 10 and 24 made up an estimated 33% of the population in Eastern and Southern Africa. Whilst Malawi has achieved a drop in overall HIV rates (from 12% to 10.6%), HIV prevalence in adolescent girls and boys aged 15-19 years has actually continued to rise. In 2014, more than one third of all new infections were amongst adolescent girls and young women aged 15-24 years (SitAn, 2016:11). Figure 3.7 below illustrates the youth HIV prevalence in Malawi as of 2015 and validates a 10.6 % rate of infections for those aged 15-49 years.

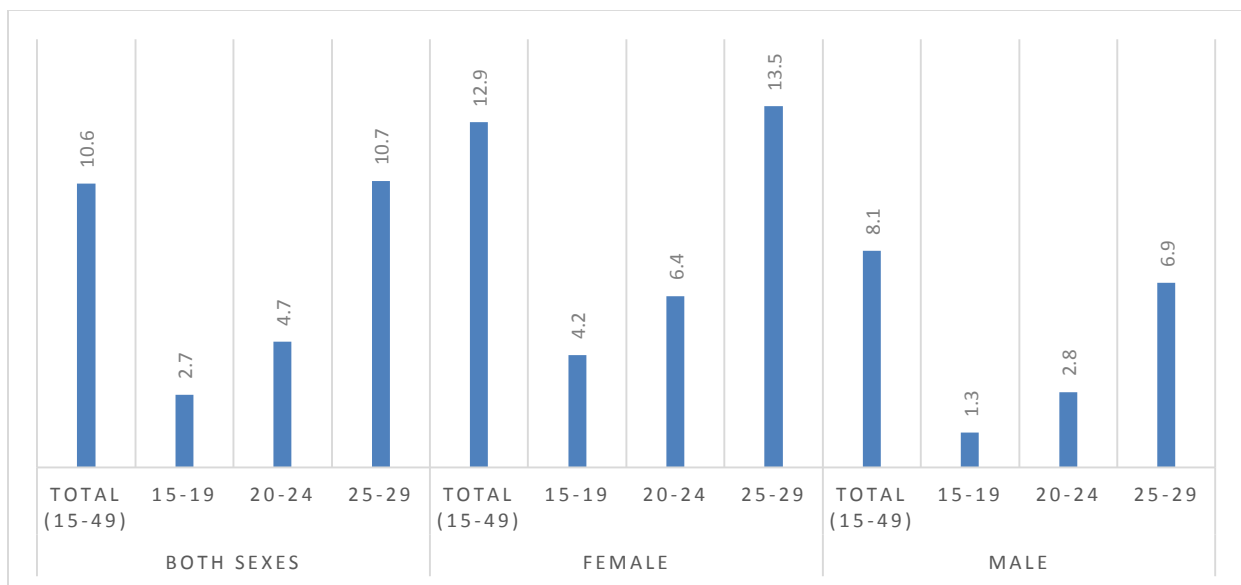


Figure 3.7: HIV Prevalence in Malawi in 2015. Image Source: SitAn, 2016

Emanating from the Youth Employment Summit (2002), it was reported that the youth HIV and AIDS prevalence rate in 2002 in Malawi was 17%, while UNAIDS estimates that young men’s HIV prevalence rate was between 5.08%-7.68%, which is significantly lower than young

women's prevalence estimates of 11.91%-17.87%. This was linked to cultural and social norms and beliefs, mostly in rural areas, where women do not have the power to negotiate when it comes to sexual decisions. This includes condom usage. Rural youth also lack access to health services where they can learn about HIV and AIDS and other diseases and illnesses related to reproductive health as a result, they become unproductive for the labour market due to sicknesses (Youth Employment Summit, 2002).

UNFPA (2017) underscores the need to enhance interventions to address diseases that undermine the productivity of workers, including HIV and AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, and accidents/injuries. In addition, there is a need for the country to enhance health education to sensitise Malawians on prevention of emerging communicable diseases and to strengthen the capacity of the Health Care System to manage these diseases. UNFPA (2017) holds that, it is because of the adverse impact of the HIV and AIDS pandemic that countries for the past decades have shifted their attention to SRH. However, it must be mentioned that this shift has also had major implications for the youth demographic as other challenges such as unemployment have not been given much needed attention. For this and other reasons besides, unemployment has remained a chronic challenge for the past decades. Nonetheless, one can argue that a healthy society means a healthy and productive workforce.

3.23. Corruption and Poor Governance

In Africa in general, employment prospects for many young people across the continent are hampered by corruption and greed at the political top. In South Africa, for example, a Corruption Watch Online Survey (2015) revealed that, youth identified corruption as one of the limiting factors that negatively affect their employment opportunities and access to basic services. Out of over 6,000 respondents between the ages of 14 and 34 who participated in the survey, 7 in 10 admitted to having been affected by corruption in some way or another. The WEF Global Risks Report (2019) confirmed these findings, revealing that South Africa has the third highest unemployment rate among young people in the world. Malawi is no exception to corruption. As Mwanza's work (2014) has shown, bribery, nepotism and irregularities in the appointment of candidates to government positions as the most common forms of employment-related corruption in the country.

In post-democratic Malawi, very little action has been undertaken to address the question of creating youth employment or even just opportunities for the young people to access business capital for sustainable livelihood production. The Youth Employment Summit (2002) verified that, the lack of prioritisation of resources and programmes (for youth development) has led to government's expenditure to include visits to lower-cost youth projects, whilst spending more on travel and upkeep expenses. Kasuka (2013) argues that, since President Kamuzu Banda's era (1964-1994), a weak industrial base has been compounded by the International Monetary Fund Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), which led to sharp devaluation of the Malawian kwacha, and consequently, deepening poverty and inequality in the country. As a result, the devastating consequences of sustained youth unemployment have worsened and not improved in the intervening period.

To emphasise, as the National Youth Manifesto (2019:19) demonstrates, corruption and lack of accountability affects the youth development agenda mainly through opportunity costs. Resources for present investment in education, healthcare, long term economic growth and other public services are diverted to fund current lifestyles of individuals at the expense of a sustainable socio-economic future for the country. Corruption harms poor people more than others because they rely on public schools, public health facilities, etc., where the quality and quantity of services are sub-optimal as resources are siphoned away through corrupt deals among government bureaucrats, politicians and some real or pseudo private sector entities. The resources are wasted and benefit the few greedy people and leaders at the expense of the young generation. The Anti Corruption Bureau of Malawi established anti-corruption clubs across the country with the purpose of involving citizens, including the youth in the fight against corruption, but the impact of these clubs has not been significant (ibid:19).

3.24. Political Interference

The current administration did set up the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDEF) and Youth Development Credit Scheme (YDCS) specifically to provide financial support to youth interested in setting up businesses. Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2017:2), gives a critical analysis and shows that both YDCS and YEDEF have not been very successful. The dismal performance of these initiatives is attributed mainly to the fact that they were characterised by excessive

political interference. Even though they were championed as youth initiatives, the primary targeted youths were basically those aligned to the parties in power at a particular moment. Both initiatives have failed to pass the sustainability test because they have been heavily politicised.

Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2017) further claim that, politicians put pressure on programme administrators to disburse loans to groups or individuals of their choice regardless of the laid-out procedures. With particular reference to YEDEF, this became more or less the official policy when President Bingu wamu Mutharika publicly declared that priority in disbursing the loans should be given to the DPP youth cadres. In addition, both YDCS and YEDEF were not explicitly linked to agriculture, which remains Malawi's economic backbone. The popular perception about the loans was that they were a token of appreciation to all party supporters in the 2009 presidential and parliamentary elections. Concurring with Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2017) national director for Young Politicians Union, Clement Makuwa, noted with disappointment that political parties forgo the use of existing structures to run youth affairs, which makes the programmes unsustainable. He cited the sidelining of NYCOM in such programmes which makes them flop even the more.

If the ruling parties could have followed the national agenda, let's say the Vision 2020, and let the National Youth Council take care of issues about the youths, we couldn't have been saying that the said programmes are a flop, but just because of too much political interference, the youths are not helped and nothing will change (Makuwa, 2017 cited in Mzungu, 2017).

UNFPA (2017) writing on recommendations for harnessing the Demographic Dividend in Malawi, emphasised the need to enhance governance and accountability in the use of public resources and efficiency in service delivery, reinforcing anti-corruption institutions and systems, and empowering citizens, civil society, the private sector and the media to fight corruption (2017:xxiii).

3.25. High Population Growth

Population growth has played a significant role in increasing rates of youth unemployment, though one can argue that a high rate of population growth is inevitable and what is rather needed is good long-term planning. Such good planning and coupled with effective policy

interventions and implementation, would obviate the worst effects of population growth. Nonetheless, the latest Malawi Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) Report released on 13 March 2017 indicates that, Malawi is said to be sitting on a ticking time bomb as the population is booming. The country's population is growing at a rate of 3.32% per annum while the GDP growth rate was at 2.9% as of 2016. The population is projected to be at 41.2 million by 2050 (ibid). The high population has exerted a lot of pressure on the economy. The survey shows that more girls aged between 15 -19 are bearing children and that 29% of teenagers had given birth. This figure is 6% points higher than what was recorded in the last DHS in 2010 (ibid). In addition, the vicious cycle generated by the high dependency burden associated with a young age-structure leads to low savings and investments, which in turn leads to slow economic growth and a low standard of living. More importantly, due to overpopulation, the nation's labour supply is not matched by labour demand or job opportunities. An imbalance between the supply of labour and the demand for it has given rise to unemployment and underemployment. However, as demonstrated throughout this project, this is largely a function of poor policy planning, as high growth economies (education and training, entrepreneurship, diversification) can and do effectively absorb and obviate the negative effects associated with high population growth levels.

Impact of Youth Unemployment in Malawi

So far, the focus has been on some of the key drivers of youth unemployment and the lack of an effective and responsive set of policy alternatives, to deal with the conundrum of youth development in Malawi. In this section, by contrast, the spotlight falls on the key socio-economic and political impact of these maladies in Malawian society.

3.26. Drug and Substance Abuse

Close to 70% of Malawi's population live in the rural areas (NSO, 2013). Mwanza (2014) confirms that, this translates to the fact that many rural youths are experiencing troubling situations and conditions. This is worsened by very few opportunities for jobs that exist for the rural youth. There are whole sets of circumstances placing unemployed youth at high risk in rural areas, again exacerbated by the extreme poverty situation that exists in the areas. The risks and

impacts they face include alcohol and drug abuse as alternative recreation, violence, discrimination, crime, broken families, prostitution and early pregnancies amongst adolescent girls. Once thought to be a concern of the cities, these problems are causing widespread harm to millions of young people living in the rural areas of Malawi (Mwanza, 2014). As a result, countless down-and-out young jobseekers, particularly these rural dwellers, drift from town to town scouring for work as labourers or 'ganyu' as the unemployment crisis knocks them further into a downward spiral of destitution.

Drug Fight Malawi (DFM), an organisation that offers substance abuse counselling, indicated that rising numbers of dejected youth are visiting the organisation (Chamley, 2013). The easy accessibility of drugs and cheap alcohol makes many unemployed youths want to escape the reality of their daily lives because they cannot cope with it (ibid). According to the SitAn (2016) report, whilst national policies such as the NYP draw attention to the concerns about drugs and alcohol, the limited data available does show a relatively low proportion of youth are engaged in harmful drug use. Either the data is incomplete or there is a mismatch between community perceptions about youth behaviour and their actual use. All these are issues that must be explored further as the quote below confirms the issue.

In my constituency, there is no vocational training college, but they are so many youth who are just roaming around and this makes them indulge in prostitution, drug and substance abuse. Therefore, it is my plea to government to construct at least two vocational centres (Hon. Hastings Chafewa, Dedza Central East - Government, cited in the Verbatim Report of the First Meeting of the Second Cohort of Youth Parliament, 2017).

According to the Malawi Government reports, more than 50% of the drug and alcohol related cases that come before the courts involve young people. In 2010, hospital records at Zomba Mental Hospital show that of the 1890 admissions received, 269 cases were a result of cannabis and alcohol and involved young people. This is an outcry for a policy with a comprehensive programme that will raise awareness, make access to drugs difficult and prevent drug and substance abuse among the youth (National Youth Manifesto, 2019:34).

3.27. Unlicensed Street Vendors

Young unlicensed street vendors have become one of the most visible signs of the chronic jobs shortage in Malawian city streets (Kainja, 2016). The street hawker community has swelled dramatically, as thousands of poverty-stricken young job-seekers are increasingly pushed into the informal sector in a desperate bid to survive in a tough economic climate. The scale of desperate young workers trapped in street vending and other precarious livelihoods is highlighted in the ILO's Global Employment Trends for youth (2015). Its outcome shows that over 70% of young Malawians aged between 15 and 29 are employed in the informal sector. Malawi has one of the highest rates of working poverty, which stands at around 60%, on USD2 per day. Hastily adapting to the rules of entrepreneurship, young street vendors hawk everything from Coca-Cola to used farming tools. This situation only serves to increase informality and a poorly regulated 'informal sector', leading to potential loss of revenue for the state. Above all, however, young people in their prime get lost and sucked into informality and operating on the edges of an economy that they should be driving.

3.28. Political Abuse

The high levels of unemployment have led to politicians using vulnerable young people for their own advantage. Not unlike the time of the Banda regime, Kapito (2016) cited in the Nyasa Times (2016) has argued that once again, vulnerable unemployed young people are being used for the achievement of opportunistic political ends, that have very little to do with national interests. A case in point is the ruling party's youth wing, also known as the 'Democratic Progressive Party's cadets'. These young people are said to be behind a spate of acts of violence and harassment of opponents of the ruling party (ibid). This too is one of the negative impacts occasioned by poor youth development policies and prioritization of youth, as catalyst to a re-imagined Malawian growth trajectory.

3.29. Social Exclusion

Unabated unemployment among Malawi's young is leading to poverty and desperation. Young people who are failing to find work early could be condemned to a lifetime of exclusion from the main currents of social and economic life, especially formal sector employment, for most if not all of their lives. Unemployment is a principal driver of inequality and the social malaise stoked

by exclusion is a deep and growing threat to the country's economic growth. With more than 90% of the youth in the country without professional nor vocational training and isolated from effectively participating in the mainstream economy, the future of the so-called leaders of tomorrow looks cloudy if the status quo is maintained (Mwachande, 2017:1).

To emphasise an earlier point, the previous section showed that employment options are relatively limited for the youth of Malawi, with job growth prospects skewed towards low-wage and insecure jobs. This lack of choice conflicts with the aspirations of adolescents, who are looking to move into more productive work. More boys tend to participate in formal sector employment compared to girls, who tend to face hazards of low pay and insecurity in farming (often related to early marriage) and informal trading or domestic work.

3.30. Summary of Causes and Impacts of Youth Unemployment in Malawi

The literature review in this chapter has shown that, Malawi faces severe structural impediments to sustainable development and is highly vulnerable to economic shocks. Overall, economic growth has not benefitted all people, as evidenced by high poverty, worsening inequality and unemployment for a large number of Malawians especially the youth. Understanding the situation, choices and aspirations of youth is key to Malawi realising a Demographic Dividend. The problem tree below shows the causes of youth unemployment in Malawi which include illiteracy and lack of labour related skills, school dropout, and poverty. The impacts of the challenge are drug and substance abuse, social exclusion, political abuse and the growing rates of unlicensed street vendors.

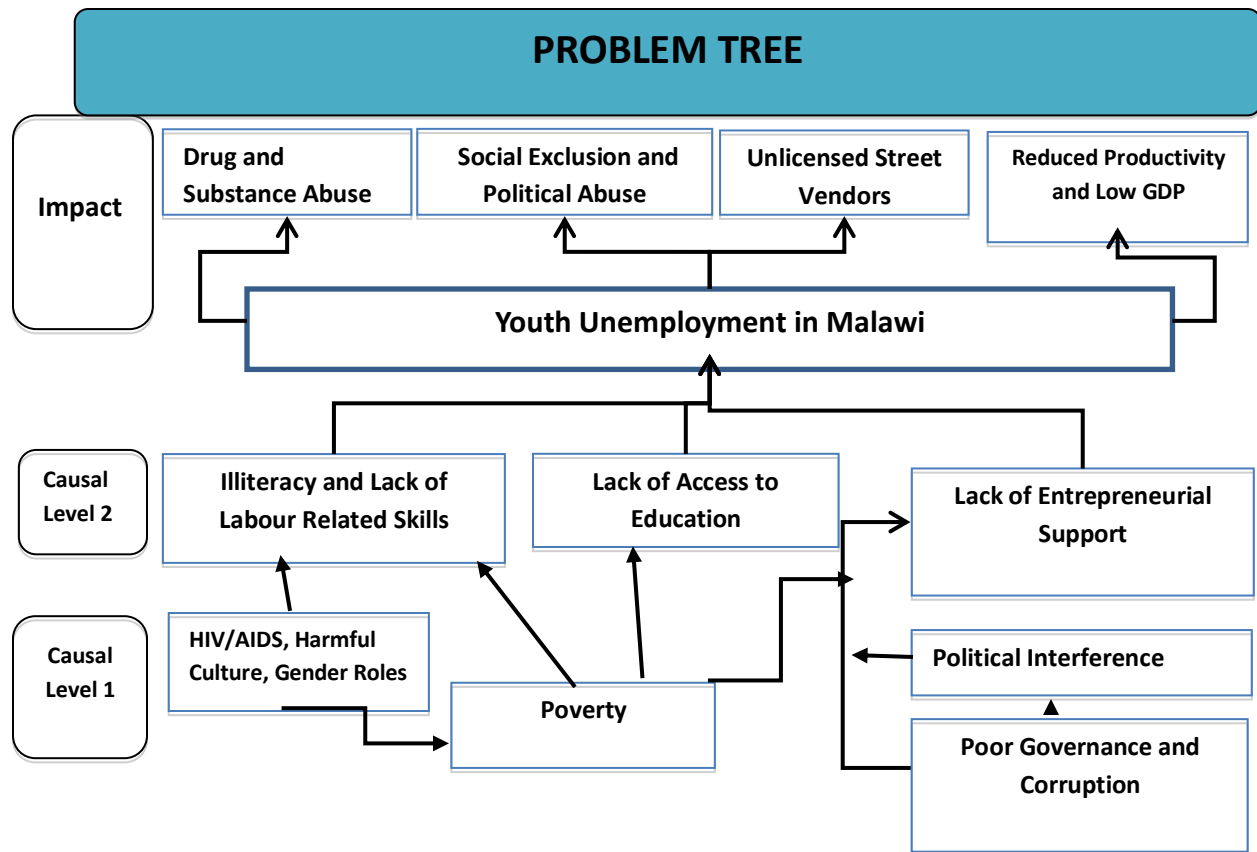


Figure 3.8: Causes and Impacts of Youth Unemployment in Malawi, Shawa, 2019

All these causes and impacts point to the adversity of the growing challenge of youth unemployment. However, it is also important to discuss how Malawi is set to harness the so called Demographic Dividend.

Malawi and Harnessing the Demographic Dividend

Malawi is a signatory to the 2013 Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development in Africa Beyond 2014, under the theme, ‘Harnessing the Demographic Dividend: The Future We Want for Africa’. The declaration acknowledges the role of population dynamics in socio-economic transformation and seeks to unleash the full potential of the youth to boost national development. In this regard, Malawi commissioned a study, the main objective of which was to review demographic and economic opportunities and challenges and assess their implications for the attainment of the country’s development aspirations (UNFPA, 2017).

The outcomes of the report revealed that Malawi's unemployment rate, which includes people who want a job and are available for work but they are not seeking a job because they have given up hope of finding one (discouraged workers), is estimated at about 20% of the population aged between 15-64 years. The employment gap, defined as the difference between the number of people aged 15 years and above and the actual number of those in employment will rise from the 2014 level of 2.5 million to about 13.4 million by 2054 (UNFPA: xix). These results show that the government and private sector will need to put more effort into creating jobs for the country's growing working age population, even under the combined scenario (UNICEF, 2017; UNFPA, 2017).

However, the UNFPA (2017), emphasises that, the magnitude of the Demographic Dividend that a country can earn can be enhanced if the change in the age structure is accompanied by structural changes which include sustained investments and improvements in education, skills development, public health, economic growth and job creation, and governance. Nevertheless, Malawi's aspirations to transform into a technologically driven upper middle-income country can massively benefit from the Demographic Dividend, which is not guaranteed and is time bound. As a result, the country must act quickly. The UNFPA (2017) cautions that, it is critical to underscore that the Demographic Dividend is neither automatic nor guaranteed; Malawi must earn it by implementing policies and strategies that will ensure that the surplus labour force is well educated, skilled, healthy and economically engaged. The UNFPA recommended investments in quality education, technical education, growth of the private sector and agriculture as key, these will be discussed below.

3.31. Quality Education

The UNFPA (2017) mentions that, the key policy options that the country should consider are enhancing education and skill development to nurture a productive labour force; enhancing economic growth and creating mass quality jobs for the rapidly growing working age population and sustaining a healthy working age population to improve economic productivity. In low income economies, the under education of young workers still remains a significant concern and an important hindrance to transformative growth. Over 60% do not have the level of education expected to make them productive on the job. Quality education must remain a priority on the

development agenda. As a way to harness the Demographic Dividend the study identified that there is a need to increase the number of schools and provide high quality teaching materials and trained teachers to improve the quality of education and progression from primary to secondary and tertiary institutions. This could include decentralising the education sector to enhance ownership and oversight by communities. In addition, there is an urgent need to reform the curriculum and teaching methods to incorporate technical, innovation, problem solving, and entrepreneurship skills in the formal curriculum, including revitalisation and scale-up of technical model primary schools (Nakagaki, 2013).

3.32. Technical Education

The negative impacts of youth unemployment are also traceable to a poorly conceived vocational education and training framework. True, there are a number of technical education, vocational and entrepreneurship training institutions (TEVET) and Community Technical Colleges in Malawi. These, however, do not seem to be doing a good job of absorbing the thousands of young people who are not at work, not in education and not in training. In other words, these institutions are failing miserably to do what they were designed to do: provide the youth of Malawi with more choice, options and possibilities to build and invest in their lives for a better future for themselves in the first instance, their families and crucially, for the well-being of the country and its growth and development prospects (OECD, 2018). So, these policy gaps, omissions and silences (in youth policy development) do contribute significantly in blighting the socio-economic prospects of the whole country. As such, in order to harness the Demographic Dividend, the UNFPA (2017) recommended the need to increase the number of facilities, outreach and quality of technical education, vocational and entrepreneurship training (TEVET) institutions to enhance entrepreneurship skills and the productivity of youth who are not in school, and also to accelerate scale-up of the Community Technical Colleges' programme by forging stronger ties with the private sector in its design and implementation, and by extending it to develop skills of youth in agricultural production and value-addition activities (ibid).

In 2012, TEVETA reported inadequate technical and vocational training centres for young people in Malawi, it was estimated that out of the 300,000 applications for training it receives every year, it is only able to process 3000. Malawi also has the lowest university enrolment of

any African country at 51 students per 100,000 inhabitants (IHS2, 2005; IHS3, 2011 cited in NYP, 2013). This is a clear indication that tertiary institutions are unable to absorb all the applicants looking for skills development.

3.33. Growth of the Private Sector

On growth of the private sector, UNFPA recommends that there should be an emphasis on creating an enabling environment for the growth of the sector as the engine for job creation, including the promotion of small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) by enhancing their management capacities and access to financial services, improving key economic infrastructure to ensure reliable energy, transportation, and communications services, and expand investments in other potential areas of comparative advantage such as tourism, fish production, mining, and the ICT- based service industry (UNFPA, 2017).

3.34. Agriculture

The UNFPA (2017) recommends the need to reform the agricultural sector to enhance its productivity and profitability. Key reforms could include diversifying and modernising agricultural activities, promoting value addition and agro-industries, reforming produce marketing systems and pricing policies, and building resilient agricultural systems to minimise climate change effects. Even though there is a cultural value to agriculture, on the other hand, there appears to be a common stereotype among youth for example, that, agriculture is something that should be done by poor people with a low level of education. There is a perception that those who pursue careers in the sector are minimally educated and are destined to be poor due to the difficulty in generating sustained incomes. Nonetheless, Babbie (2016) reported that, the youth and agriculture problem runs deeper than the ‘youth are not interested’ narrative. The attitudes and agency of the youth are shaped primarily by the significant barriers they face in accessing the capital needed to develop agriculture-based enterprises, all these conditions must be in youth policy debates.

Malawi's Legal and Policy Context for Young People

The last section showed some of the policy recommendations from the UNFPA on how Malawi can harness the Demographic Dividend. This section introduces and traces the development and history of existing youth policies in Malawi. This section is significant as it lays the policy background of the National Youth Policy which will be engaged within the next chapters.

3.35. Historical Background of Youth Development Policies in Malawi

Kasuka (2013) noted that, during the first half of the twentieth century, Nyasaland barely prospered. With work in short supply for the population, many young people had to move to neighbouring countries in search of employment. Consequently, the rates of migration began to escalate at this time. The view developed in government circles then, that, Nyasaland's economy could only thrive in some form of closer union with its two colonial neighbours. Thus in 1953, the protectorate was joined in a federation with Northern Rhodesia (present day Zambia) and Southern Rhodesia (present day Zimbabwe). The advantage is that this made young people's migration easier and less complex.

One notable recruitment agency for migrant workers was the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, more usually known by its initials WNLA or more popularly known as 'WENELA'. Kalinga (1998) wrote that, the agency was set up by the gold mines in South Africa and it eventually comprised a large organisation, with its own depots, buses and aeroplanes, spread over the whole of Southern Africa. Its mission was to find and recruit unskilled labour from any source at almost any price to bring the gold mines of the Witwatersrand back to production after they were mothballed during the Anglo - Boer War. In Malawi, the agency made agreements with the government and many depots were opened in the country with its main bus station located in Blantyre known by same name – 'WENELA bus depot'. Hundreds of Malawian youths and active men were recruited by this agency to work in these South African mines (Kalinga, 1998). However, after an aircraft crash in 1974 with the loss of 74 Malawian miners and the aircraft crew, President Kamuzu Banda immediately banned further engagement of Malawians in the mines. Kalinga (1998) and Chanock (1998) both approximated that over 129 000 young active men were affected, including their families. Although recruitment resumed in

1977, numbers employed totalled a much lower figure of about 16 000 men. These changes of policy had major economic and political consequences, with unemployed men and their families becoming virtually destitute (ibid).

3.36. The Malawi Young Pioneers

It is believed that in 1917 Hastings Kamuzu Banda left at the age of 14 for employment in Johannesburg. It was whilst working in the mines in South Africa that he eagerly educated himself and through church connections obtained education in America and United Kingdom. Whilst Banda was in the United Kingdom, in 1953, the protectorate was joined for ten years in a federation with Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia (now Zambia and Zimbabwe) called the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. However, that federation was opposed by nationalists who advocated political freedom from British rule. After the federation's dissolution in 1963, Nyasaland achieved internal self-government, with Banda returning from abroad as the first prime minister. The protectorate gained independence in 1964 under its new name, Malawi. It was declared a republic in 1966, and Prime Minister Banda was elected president by the National Assembly (Kasuka, 2013).

As a result of Banda's own personal experiences, after independence in 1964, he adopted a macroeconomic policy aimed at accelerating economic development. At this time, young people (both from rural and urban areas) mostly served in the Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP) which was founded by Banda. The MYP was originally functioning as a National Youth Service Programme with a development agenda guided by the Malawi Young Pioneers Act of 1963. MYP instructors were placed in every secondary school in the country to provide basic training and various skills to pupils. By 1989, MYP training bases were opened in all of the 24 districts of the country (Kasuka, 2013). Chinsinga (2007) points out that, because of their development-oriented agenda, the MYP were initially supported by the international community, including the Israeli government. Under the programme, youths had three years of rigorous training. They received a multi-faceted curriculum including carpentry and other vocational skills to improve their livelihoods, political education, physical education, rural development and generally improved methods of agriculture, which complemented the national development policy as Malawi was an agricultural based economy under Kamuzu Banda. When they completed the

training, students were equipped to enter the public or private sector. In time, the MYP branched off into business, enabling young entrepreneurs to pursue their dreams. They were given the tools they needed to set up their own business in vocations like carpentry, bricklaying and welding. Most times, once trained, they were deployed to different parts of the country to work on rural development schemes funded by the government. It is estimated that by the 80s 60,000+ young people and their families were impacted by the programme (Kasuka, 2013).

Not the above withstanding, over time, after 1973's oil crisis, as the Malawian economy went into tailspin, MYP strayed away from the development agenda. With the amendment of the Young Pioneers Act in 1978, Banda turned these young people into instruments of political terror. They became a paramilitary wing of his Malawi Congress Party (MCP) with himself appointed as their commander-in-chief. They became his political spies and they enforced the laws of one party government and dictatorship and helped build a culture of fear in the country. Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2017) claim that, the MYP initiative turned out to be a double edged sword. Mwanza (2014) noted that, it is perhaps because of this that the political element saw Malawians developing a negative attitude towards youth participation in any sector.

By 1979-80, with the collapse of the Cold War, the World Bank and IMF arrived, and imposed a series of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) from 1987. Donors told Banda that he had to implement reforms aimed at making his government transparent and accountable to the people and the international community as a condition for further aid. As such, by October 1992, this mounting pressure from within and from the international community forced Banda to concede to holding a referendum, in which the majority of Malawians voted in favour of democracy. The MYP was disbanded and the training centres were closed, coupled with a change in labour migration policies, leaving thousands of young people with no alternative solutions for their employment (Booth, 2006).

3.37. Post-Democracy Policy and Youth Development in Malawi

In 1994, Bakili Muluzi was democratically elected as president of Malawi (1994-2004). The new government drafted the country's first ever National Youth Policy (NYP), which identified priority areas of youth development. The legal document was seen as a first step in a process of

demonstrating the dedication of young women and men in Malawi to providing a different, more dynamic and more open-minded leadership. The dream was short-lived. Radical youth demonstrations of dissenting views on youth development programmes were either systematically pushed out of the system or scandalised to pave the way for individual interests in implementation of the policy. The many non-governmental youth organisations who were policy advocates were left with no practical sustainable measures after donor pull-out. The absence of an attachment (Action Plan) to the 1996 Policy with clear implementation strategies also led to a number of new policies such as the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), the National HIV/AIDS Strategic plan overtaking the initial recognition of the NYP as a basis of empowering and achieving youth participation (Youth Unemployment Summit, 2002).

As part of the NYP, the National Youth Council of Malawi (NYCOM) was enacted under the Parliament Act of 1996, however, the resource base was narrow. Close to 80% of the total budget was spent between the secretariat and the board of directors' operations (ibid). No real investments were made to generate extra income for the Council. Chinsinga (2007) notes that, the ineffectiveness of the Policy was further worsened by the absence of a legal system that could have provided for a quota of youth participation or involvement in policy development, decision-making and the implementation and monitoring process. As a result, young people never identified themselves with the document let alone know about it (ibid). By 2000, it was clear that the youth of Malawi had no clear strategies pertaining to their development. In what seemed as part of constant efforts to promote youth welfare, in 2013, the government revised the 1996 NYP. The 2013 NYP currently is standing as an essential guiding tool for youth development in Malawi. It is the objective of this thesis to review this policy document in the next chapters.

However, since 2014, Malawi has developed and implemented the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) as a successor to the PRSPs. The MGDS is the overarching social and economic development strategy for Malawi. Education and Skills Development is articulated as a key area in MGDS III, while Youth Development (together with Gender, Persons with Disability and Social Welfare) has been included as other development areas. But whether youth development targets have been treated as priority concerns is an issue of discussion.

3.38. Other Laws and Policies that are Central to Malawi Youth

Malawi has enacted a number of laws featuring youth. Central among them is the National Youth Council Act (1996), which includes provisions for the ‘promotion, coordination and implementation of youth development programmes in Malawi; the establishment of the National Youth Council of Malawi (NYCOM); and to further provide for matters incidental thereto or connected there within’ (OECD, 2018: 69). Pertaining to youth unemployment, the SitAn (2016:38) indicated that, the main legal framework for youth employment is Malawi’s Employment Act of 2000. The Act sets a minimum age for work of 14 years, as long as it does not interfere with education, and a minimum age for hazardous work of 18 years. The Employment (Prohibition of Hazardous Work for Children) Order, 2012, specifies which occupations are hazardous to children and forced labour is prohibited as stipulated in the Employment Act 2013, the Child Care, Protection, and Justice Act No. 22 of 2010. Child trafficking is prohibited under the penal code and the Child Care, Protection, and Justice Act. The Defence Force Act sets out the minimum age of 18 for voluntary military service. Other laws supporting implementation of matters relevant to youth in the sectors of education, employment, health and civic participation include the Vocational, Entrepreneurial and Technical Training Act (1999); Gender Equality Act (2013); Penal Code Act and Amendment to the Penal Code Act (2011); and Voting Laws (Government of Malawi, 2016).

The tables below (cited in SitAn 2016:13-14) summarises the relevant laws and policies that are central or include a focus on young people in Malawi and are guided by international policies and conventions.

Laws that are central to young people in Malawi

Law	Focus on adolescents and youth
Child Care, Protection and Justice Act (2010)	Defines age of criminal responsibility; sets of alternative care guidelines; prohibits forced marriage; criminalises the abduction of girls under 16; and prohibits discrimination against women and girls.
Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, 2006	Prohibits violence against women and girls
Marriage Act	Recently raised age of marriage to 18 years in attempt to combat child marriage.
Penal Code	Criminalises assault, rape and attempted rape but does not criminalise marital rape or recognise forced anal sex of males or females.
Education Bill, 2013	Education is universally free at primary school level
Voting laws	Youth are eligible to vote from age 18 years; gender equal.
Employment Act, No. 6, 2000	Specifies minimum age for work and specifies responsibilities relating to child labour.
The Vocational, Entrepreneurial and Technical Training Act (TEVET) Act, 1999	To promote and coordinate technical, entrepreneurial & vocational education and training; establish TEVET Authority and an employer contribution training fund.
Trafficking in Person Act	Forthcoming.
Gender Equality Act, 2013:	Promotes gender equality in the areas of education and reproductive health.
Amendment to Penal Code Act, 2011	Raises the age of sexual consent from 13 to 16 years.

Policies that include a focus on young people in Malawi

Policy	Key features
Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II (MGDS II)	Child Development, Youth Development and Empowerment is a priority within the nine overarching priorities, and includes: increasing the absorption of skills, technology and innovations by youth; increasing youth participation in decision-making processes; improving the coordination of youth programmes.
National Youth Policy	Provides a national definition of youth; commitment to youth empowerment, limited focus on gender-specific or disability issues e.g. lack of inclusion of Ministry of Disability as partner.
Education readmission policy	Allows pregnant girls to continue education.
National Policy for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children (2005)	Implicitly includes adolescents up to age 17, although no mention of adolescents.
Sexual Reproductive Health Policy (2009)	Focus on adolescent SRH issues; limited link with broader health issues affecting adolescents and youth
National TEVET Policy	Sets out rationale for and mechanisms for investing in technical, entrepreneurial and vocational educational training; relevant for male and female; core target is post-secondary education.
National HIV and AIDS Policy (2003)	Strong focus on prevention for adolescents and youth.

Table 3.3: Laws and Policies Central to Youth Development. Image Source: SitAn 2016

3.39. Challenges related to Youth Laws and Policies

Even though from the above it can be mistakenly assumed that youth are reflected strongly in Malawi's national documents, and overall there is a positive legal and policy environment, what remains a concern is the gap between policy and implementation. Furthermore, the development of plans, policies and laws also need to be viewed through a 'young people's lens. Equally, the concern is that job creation, an urgent need, has been inadequately addressed as a priority policy area, as this thesis argues.

As a reminder, it must also be noted that, according to the SitAn (2016), at a broader policy level, there is less clarity on young people. For instance, the MGDS II feeds into Malawi's Vision 2020, Malawi's national long-term development perspective, which does not identify youth or children as a factor in underlying development challenges. Youth are referenced in the context of civic engagement, national unity and social cohesion such as 'strengthening patriotism through civic awareness and youth training programmes', but, are not mentioned in the chapter on economics. Furthermore, in the policy setting, although adolescents and youth are assumed to be included, their unique needs and perspectives are rarely identified as distinct from other age groups. For example, employment policy legislates against child labour, and exploitative child labour is clearly defined, but is not fully aligned with the realities of young people needing to study and work at the same time (UNFPA, 2017).

In addition, the Joint Sector Strategic Plan (for Gender, Children, & Youth) 2011-16, operationalises the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) II themes of Gender and of Child Development, and Youth Development and Empowerment. One of the important gaps, for instance, is that while the proportion of women and youth in waged employment in the non-agricultural sector is used as an indicator to judge the success of increasing opportunities for women, no mention is made of young people. Also, although there are targets on core youth training around basic literacy (15-24 years), vocational skills, entrepreneurship and life skills, access to viable markets and micro finance, there is limited focus on micro finance which is a major challenge for Malawi youth (SitAn, 2016:23) as later chapters will demonstrate.

3.40. Youth Parliament of Malawi

There is a target for participation in parliament and local councils for youth, but there is no baseline. Even though it must be pointed out that Malawi is one of the few countries that has a Youth Parliament. The Youth Parliament of Malawi (YPM) launched in August 2012 was established in alignment with and as part of the National Assembly's Reform Programme under the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan and also as a mandate stated in the NYP. The aim of the YPM is to give young people a platform on which they can voice their views and opinions on critical issues affecting their lives, hopes and aspirations. As a reminder, the researcher attended the Second Meeting of the Second Youth Parliament of Malawi held from 2nd January - 5th January 2018,

at the National Assembly buildings in Lilongwe. Some of the research findings reflect the debates held at the meeting as these youth parliamentarians represent all the 193 constituencies in Malawi. In addition, two Focus Group Discussions were held with these young parliamentarians as they are mandated to represent Malawi's youth in the national assembly debates on youth related policies and programmes. But whether their concerns have been treated as priority concerns is an issue of debate. Chapter six will discuss some of the challenges in relation to the selection of the youth parliament.

3.41. The National Youth Manifesto

The newly launched National Youth Manifesto for the period 2019 to 2024 was generated through a consultative and participatory process that was run by the Youth Decide Campaign, championed by a consortium of civil society and youth NGOs in Malawi. Through the manifesto, the youth of Malawi express their aspirations and demands in various policy and programmatic domains including: education; youth employment and vocational training; youth living with disabilities; youth leadership in politics and civic life; business entrepreneurship; and corruption. The Manifesto, therefore, thrives on the conviction that the 2019 electoral cycle provides a golden opportunity for the Malawian youth to come together to reflect on the country's current state of underdevelopment and drive their aspirations through organised engagement. Even though the Manifesto has been developed by civil society organisations, it is an 'entry point' for youth to meaningfully express their aspirations and take subsequent citizen action to ensure responsive, accountable and inclusive governance and service delivery (National Youth Manifesto, 2019:2-3). The Malawi government has yet to adopt the views of the manifesto.

3.42. Summary on Legal and Policy Context for Young People in Malawi

The advent of democracy could have transformed the government's policy response to the needs of young people, but to date, Kachipande (2013) is of the view that, Malawi has never had any distinct national youth programme that the country's youth can identify with. There has never been a comparable comprehensive national youth employment programme in terms of scope, size, funding, pragmatism or robustness compared to the Malawi Young Pioneers. Even though Malawi has a positive policy environment, what remains a concern is that job creation strategies for young people have been sidelined from the agenda. Nevertheless, the newly launched

National Youth Manifesto is an ‘entry point’ for youth to meaningfully express their aspirations and take subsequent citizen action to ensure responsive, accountable and inclusive governance and service delivery.

Conclusion

This chapter through a literature review has shown Malawi’s historical socio-economic situation, the inconsistencies with the definition of ‘youth’, analysed the current youth unemployment trends and the current state of the Malawi labour market, the causes and impacts of youth unemployment in Malawi and how the country is preparing to harness the Demographic Dividend. A section was also dedicated to locating and tracing the development of youth policies in Malawi. Overall, the chapter laid the foundation for the unemployment discussion in post-democratic Malawi and showed that, over the past decades, the country has not been able to formulate adequate job creation strategies. Additionally, the chapter shows that none of the strategies and policies after democracy have overturned the inherited structural/systemic socio-economic challenges affecting Malawi’s youth. For this reason, a new policy response is called for. Building on this, the findings and analysis chapters will be dedicated to give a summary and analysis/review of the National Youth Policy. Nevertheless, by contrast, the next chapter looks at how the study was conducted by recounting the research methodology.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

The last two chapters reviewed literature on youth and youth unemployment and development globally and specifically in Malawi. However, this current chapter describes the methodology that was employed in conducting the study. It outlines the research design, information on criteria used to identify the research participants, data collection procedures and tools used to transform collected data into information (data analysis) and how that data was verified to ensure credibility of the research. The chapter also discusses steps taken to ensure that ethical considerations were adhered to throughout the study.

4.2. Chapter Structure

Accordingly, the present chapter seeks to discuss the following sections thematically: the research design, gaining entry/permission, piloting the study, sampling techniques, profile of the research participants, the data collection approach, the data collection tool for the interviews, data collection apparatus for the interviews, data analysis, data verification, limitations of the study, ethical considerations, directions for future research and a conclusion to the chapter.

The Research Design

4.3. Research Design

Babbie and Mouton (2001), describe a research design as a plan or blueprint of how one intends to conduct a particular study. This study is a qualitative exploratory research exercise which used Triangulation. Triangulation was used in order to verify the quality of the raw data and allow for

rigorous analysis. To emphasise, this method was used as it is a technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from two or more sources or multiple perspectives, in this case:

- i. Political Analysis:** the researcher reviewed Hansards, policy documents, annual reports, legal frameworks and instruments, and newspapers;
- ii. Face to Face Individual Interviews:** these were conducted with representatives from NGOs, CBOs, private sector, government departments and members of the opposition political parties;
- iii. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** these were held with the Youth Parliament of Malawi;
- iv. Literature Review:** this included a review of case studies, previous research, journals and academic books related to the topic; and
- v. Attendance at Forums:** the World Youth Forum was attended in 2018 and 2019.

The researcher deemed the triangulation approach appropriate for this qualitative exploratory research study as Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) indicate that unlike a quantitative study, a qualitative exploratory design involves understanding the worldview, experiences and perceptions of participants. It explores the opinions, beliefs and attitudes, behaviours and motivations of the participants. In addition, a qualitative design helps in exploring the context and environment in which certain behaviours are acted out. This research design was therefore critical for this study in order to explore the opinions, beliefs and views of the government and other key actors towards youth unemployment and youth development in Malawi.

4.4. Gaining Entry/Permission

As this study involved the youth, the focal point of entry was through the National Youth Council of Malawi (NYCOM). NYCOM has the mandate to coordinate all youth development initiatives in Malawi. A request was made, and approval was granted from the Council to access their database and identify various key stakeholders in youth development in the country. Emails and telephone calls were made to the relevant people and organisations identified, requesting an appointment for interviews.

In order to access policy documents and Hansards, the researcher had to approach the Parliament of Malawi through office of the Clerk of Parliament, requesting for permission to use the parliament library, of which access was granted. The office also granted approval to hold Focus Group Discussions with members of the Youth Parliament who were better placed to provide information related to the objectives of the study due to their role in policy making and implementation.

At the beginning of every interview each participant signed a consent form (see appendices) to give the researcher permission to carry out the investigation. Various dates and times were allocated, and interviews were duly conducted. The research was extensively conducted over a period of three months, however, follow ups were made several times after this period.

4.5. Piloting the Study

Terreblanche et al (2002) as cited in Sanders and Thornhill (2003:45), identifies a pilot study as a preliminary study on a small sample that helps to identify potential problems with the design, particularly the research tool/instrument. A pilot study was conducted on 3 participants who were not part of the 41study sample indicated above. This pilot study was done in order to improve the in-depth and the semi-structured interview guide questions. In the end some sensitive and unclear questions were removed or re-phrased.

Sampling Technique

4.6. Sampling Method

The research adopted the use of non-probability, purposive sampling. A purposive sample is based on the judgment of the researcher, in that a sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristics, representative or typical attributes of the population (De Vos, 2002:202). Those participants who could provide information to the research questions were identified with assistance from NYCOM and were later interviewed. The study had two groups of research participants, Key Informants (various youth development stakeholders in Malawi) and FGDs participants (members of the Youth Parliament of Malawi).

Key Informants

The NYCOM was purposively chosen as an entry point for this study as mentioned above due to the fact that it has the responsibility of promoting, coordinating youth development and empowering young people to participate effectively in their personal, community and national development. In addition, NYCOM also exist as an implementing arm on behalf of the government. As such, as previously indicated, permission was granted from the Council to access their database for purposes of this study. From the database the researcher pulled out a list of possible research participants of which the Council assisted in selecting 31 Key Informants that are active in the youth development sector. The list of the identified Key Informants included NGOs, CBOs, private sector, opposition political parties and government departments. Contacts were obtained from the database which allowed the researcher to make telephone calls and send emails requesting interviews from the relevant individuals. Upon agreement, consent was obtained from each stakeholder who was willing to participate in the study. The researcher had one on one, face to face interviews with all the Key Informants. The interviews were intended to achieve research objective two, three and four as articulated in Section 1.9 above.

Focus Group Participants

The study purposively chose the Youth Parliament of Malawi (YPM) which was established in alignment and as part of the National Assembly's Reform Program under the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan, and also as a mandate stated in the NYP. The objective of the YPM is to provide the youth of Malawi a platform to participate in policy and legislative decision making through voicing their views and concerns on critical issues affecting their lives with the assurance that government and concerned organizations would be alerted on the challenges they face and address them. As mentioned in the previous sections, permission was obtained from the office of the Clerk of the Malawi Parliament to randomly select and hold two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with the youth parliamentarians. Each group comprised of 5 members (selected randomly) who were 18years old and above, who were also given consent forms to sign before conducting the discussions. This sample was selected as they have been mandated by the Malawi government to represent their fellow youth in their communities in the National Assembly. The researcher deemed the youth parliamentarians to be the best representative of the youth population as they have relevant information related to the topic under investigation. The FGDs

with the youth parliamentarians were intended to achieve research objective one, two and four as articulated in Section 1.9 above.

Accordingly, in total the sample size of this research was 41 research participants, who comprised of 31 Key Informants and 10 focus group participants. Overall, 26 organizations in various sectors of youth development took part in the research. The choice of all the participants that took part in the study was therefore informed by one or more of the following reasons:

- **Involvement in Youth Development:** All the organizations that took part in this research are active in youth development in Malawi.
- **Members of the Youth Parliament of Malawi:** All FGDs participants are members of the YPM.
- **Convenience:** Those organisations and participants recommended by NYCOM were prioritized.
- **Acceptance and Cooperation:** Research participants that were available and willing to be part of the research were included in the sample.
- **Feasibility and Proximity:** Participants were selected from organizations that showed a keen interest in the study as well as those participants that could easily be accessed and reached by the researcher.

Profile of the Research Participants

The table below provides a profile of all the organizations and institutions that were part of the study and their roles in youth development in Malawi. It is important to clarify that due to the Data Collection Act (1998), individual names are not used for all the participants of this study as is ethically required. It is hoped that the table below will reflect and justify on the diversity of the research sample.

Participant	Name of Organization	Role of the Organization in Youth Development in Malawi
Participant A.	Technical, Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education and Training Authority of Malawi (TEVETA)	TEVETA Malawi facilitates the provision of technical, entrepreneurial, and vocational education and training for young people in Malawi.
Participant B.	National Council for Higher Education (NCHE)	NCHE was established by Act of Parliament No.15 of 2011, with a purpose of promoting and coordinating education provided by universities and colleges in Malawi. One of its aim is to harmonize student selection into public higher education institutions in the country.
Participant C.	Department of Youth	The Department of Youth exists to develop the full potential of the youth of Malawi and actively promote their participation in personal, community and national development.
Participant D.	Department of Labour	The Department of Labour is mandated to provide policy direction and guidance on all labour administration and vocational training matters. The department is also mandated to protect and develop the labour force in order to contribute to the socio-economic development of Malawi.
Participant E.	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology	The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is the custodian of the Malawi's Education Sector as well as all matters relating to Science and Technology. The Ministry is the Government's arm that is responsible for providing policy guidance and direction on all education, science and technology issues.

Participant F.	National Youth Council of Malawi (NYCOM)	<p>The National Youth Council of Malawi is a Statutory Corporation of the Republic of Malawi established through an Act of Parliament, The National Youth Council of Malawi Act No. 22 of 1996.</p> <p>The Council is an autonomous, independent, and non-partisan statutory corporation whose main mandate is to promote youth participation to allow youth to realize their full potential in all endeavours. The Council works to register youth affiliate organizations across the country and to assist the organizations in resource mobilization and project implementation. The Council also works with development partners and donors to carry out programs in youth participation, economic empowerment and sexual/reproductive health.</p>
Participant G.	Youth representative from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)	The Democratic Progressive Party is the current ruling political party in the country.
Participant H.	Youth representatives from two opposition parties in Malawi:	The Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and the Peoples Party (PP) are two of the main opposition political parties in the country.
Participant I.	<p>The Malawi Congress Party (MCP)</p> <p>Peoples Party (PP)</p>	
Participant J.	Network for Youth Development (NfYD)	NfYD is a local youth organization that is working towards creating an environment of self-reliant young people, who contribute and participate in developmental issues that affect them in their communities.

		NfYD recruits and works with young people through clubs that have been established in different communities and schools in Malawi and are carrying out different activities towards development.
Participant K.	National Youth Network of Malawi	National Youth Network of Malawi is an organization that promotes interactions and meetings with stakeholders that are working with young people in Malawi with the aim of promoting collaboration, networking and meaningful engagement with the youth.
Participant L.	United Nations Development Program (UNDP)	<p>UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone.</p> <p>In Malawi, UNDP is supporting the Government to use development resources effectively and accountably to achieve the objectives of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy and to attain the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).</p>
Participant M.	United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)	UNICEF Malawi aims to support national efforts to progressively realise the rights of children and women through improved child survival, development, protection and participation.
Participant N.	African Union (AU) Regional Office	The African Union is partnering with the Malawi government, to create over 1,000 decent jobs for the youth as part of AU’s Agenda 2063.
Participant O.	African Development Bank (ADB)	The Government of Malawi received financial assistance from the African Development Fund to finance the ‘Jobs

		<p>for Youth Project’ and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan to payments for goods, works and services to be procured under the project.</p> <p>The Malawi Jobs for Youth Project seeks to economically empower young women and men for improved employability in decent work and sustainable entrepreneurship in Malawi. Specifically, the project is designed to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of entrepreneurship mind-set as well as the weaknesses in technical and business skills; • lack of access to markets and information; • lack of access to finance; • weaknesses at the policy and regulatory level for the promotion of youth owned Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs); and • low level of employment of youth by the existing private sector.
Participant P.	MHub	MHub is Malawi’s first technology hub for young people which acts as an incubator for technology innovators that aspire to grow into profitable ventures and develop applications relevant to the industry requirements.
Participant Q.	Facilitators of Community Transformation (FACT)	Facilitators of Community Transformation (FACT) exists to promote sustainable national development in all sectors of the public in Malawi, by ensuring that people, especially the youth, are accorded the right to equitable economic, health and education opportunities through research, social mobilization, capacity building, networking and advocacy.
Participant R.	Students Driven Solutions Malawi	Student Driven Solutions has developed a comprehensive training program called ‘Girls Empowered’ that focuses on financial literacy, business, social justice, and poverty alleviation. The Girls Empowered program enrolls women

		aged 15 to 25 from rural or peri-urban villages in Malawi. The training curriculum covers topics such as budgeting, saving for emergencies, banking, and investing in your future. Before graduating, every class designs and implements a service project to raise awareness of a community problem they have identified.
Participant S.	Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) - Malawi	The Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) is a signature effort to invest in the next generation of African leaders.
Participant T.	ACADES Malawi	ACADES was established with the aim of promoting youth growth and development in agribusiness through skills development, empowerment, capacity building, resource mobilization, networking and policy advocacy. ACADES is a membership-based network of youth in agribusiness.
Participant U.	World University Services of Canada (WUSC)	The World University Services of Canada (WUSC) is a Canadian non-profit organization dedicated to providing education, employment and empowerment opportunities to women and youth around the world. In Malawi, WUSC supports farmers in tea, legumes and dairy sectors through the Uniterra program.
Participant V.	Girl Effect	Started by the Nike Foundation, they are experts in media, technology, branding and international development: a unique mix of skills that are used to solve global problems in a different way. Girl Effect are a creative, non-profit organization that empowers girls to change their lives.
Participant W.	First Capital Bank (FCB)	One of the leading commercial banks in Malawi that provides financial assistance to people including the youth through cooperate social responsibility.
Participant X.	Malawi Confederation of Chambers of	MCCC acts as the unified voice of the private sector in the country. MCCCCI is a partnership of enterprises and associations representing all corporate sector of the

	Commerce and Industry (MCCCI)	economy of Malawi including youth development.
Focus Group A	Youth Parliament of Malawi (YPM)	Youth Parliament is a forum at which both children and youth express their thoughts on policy formulation and legal processes.
Focus Group B	Youth Parliament of Malawi (YPM)	Youth Parliament is a forum at which both children and youth express their thoughts on policy formulation and legal processes.
	Total number of research participants: 41 Total number of organisations/ institutions: 26	

Table 4.1: Profile of the Research Participants, Shawa, 2020

The Data Collection Approach

This section discusses the data collection strategies that were employed during the study.

4.7. The Data Collection Methods

The study employed four data collection methods as illustrated below.

Face to Face Individual Interviews

Face to face interviews are a personal encounter where a rapport can be built. To obtain accurate information, the researcher needs to obtain maximum co-operation from the participants (De Vos, 2002). In this study, this approach was used to facilitate interaction and enable the researcher to gain a detailed picture of the participants' beliefs, perceptions and accounts of the topic under investigation. This method was also selected as it made it easier for the participants to clarify their answers or to ask for clarity on the questions being asked.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Data was also collected through Focus Group Discussions. To clarify, this is a method that involves bringing together research participants from similar backgrounds and experiences (in this case from the Youth Parliament of Malawi) to discuss a specific topic (De Vos, 2002). Questions were asked to the group and participants were required to give their perceptions, beliefs, opinions and ideas. The advantage of using this method was that it provided a broader range of information and views. In addition, FGDs are also time and cost effective compared to the individual interviews.

Document and Comparative Analysis

Data from various literature and documents related to the topic was collected for the study. Documents were reviewed to assess an appraisal theme. Hansards, newspapers, online journals, yearly reports of key organisations, handbooks and policy documents were used to obtain information related to this study. Furthermore, a comparative analysis was conducted using these documents in order to understand youth unemployment pre and post democracy. The researcher also compared the information gathered with global trends of youth unemployment. This approach was used as it provided a broader wealth of information that complemented and supplemented information gathered from key informants and FGDs. Document analysis also helped in cross-examination and verification of the data obtained from interviews and group discussions.

Forums

Additionally, the researcher also attended the youth parliament session held from 2 January - 6 January 2018 where youth issues including unemployment, child labour and migration were being debated. In addition, a youth forum which was hosted by the Malawi National Youth Networks for Development was also attended in order to gain more insights into the subject. The researcher also had an opportunity to attend the Ministry of Labour, Youth and Manpower Development (MoLYMD)'s Youth Inclusion Project Training Course on 'Monitoring and Evaluation of Youth Programs'. The objective of the course was to support the design and implementation of youth programmes, particularly employment and education. It also incorporated rigorous monitoring and evaluation plans, with a particular emphasis on gender issues and vulnerable youth, all of which contributed to an understanding of various dynamics regarding youth policies in Malawi. The researcher also attended the World Youth Forum in 2018 and 2019. All these sessions and forums were attended to enrich the researcher's understanding of the subject, for a comprehensive and rigorous review of the National Youth Policy and for a comprehensive recommendation in chapter seven.

4.8. The Data Collection Tool for the Interviews and FGDs

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), a researcher needs to develop instruments with which to collect the necessary information. With regards to this research, an in-depth interview schedule was adopted to facilitate the key informant interviews; while a semi-structured schedule was used for the Focus Group Discussions (see appendices). Both these schedules had a set of questions that the researcher used as a guide. These questions reflected the objectives of the study. The researcher, however, did not always stick rigidly to the schedule, as the participants were offering interesting and relevant insights that the researcher may have overlooked in developing the interview schedule.

4.9. Data Collection Apparatus for the Interviews and FGDs

The study used a telephone recorder to record the interviews and Focus Group Discussions as it allowed the researcher to concentrate on exploring the topic while also noting the non-verbal cues. The telephone recorder was used with prior consent from the participants and thus it is important to clarify that respondents were not forced, and if they refused note taking was to be

done. All the participants in this study allowed the researcher to record the interviews. The recorder allowed for verbatim recording, thus facilitating more accurate data analysis (Saunders and Thornhill, 2003).

4.10. Data Analysis

The sections below will discuss how data for this study was analysed.

Data Analysis for Interviews and FGDs

Data analysis should be understood as the process whereby data obtained from the field in raw form is interpreted from a position of empathetic understanding to make sense and to draw meaningful conclusions. It can also simply be identified as the breakdown of data collected using a qualitative analysis approach (Babbie and Mouton (2001). In order to analyse data gathered through the key informant interviews and Focus Group Discussions, the researcher transcribed the data from the telephone recorder and made notes. Data was then analysed in accordance with the 10 steps conceptualised by Tesch (1990:142-145). These steps are as follows:

1. The researcher ensured that she read all the interview transcripts and got a sense of the overall responses.
2. The researcher made sure to pick each interview, go through it, and gain an understanding of the results in relation to the aims and objectives of the study.
3. Notes were written in the margin next to the text that explain, describe or raise questions.
4. After reading all the transcripts a list of prevalent topics were made.
5. Similar topics were grouped together by using a colour scheme.
6. Labels were clustered into themes, bearing the research objectives and aims in mind.
7. The schema created with themes and labels were used to create a framework for the data analysis.
8. The findings and results from the interviews were written up in relation to the framework.
9. In this thesis, the discussion used the actual interview quotes to relate to the framework.
10. In this thesis, the data collected is grouped with similar findings from the literature review.
(It will be refined and be congruous with literature review and findings from an analysis of

Hansards, policy documents, annual reports, legal frameworks and instruments that were relevant for this study).

Document and Comparative Analysis

In a similar manner, documents were dissected and the contents coded into related topics which were grouped together using a colour scheme. The labels were clustered into themes. The developed themes were analysed and compared to those obtained from interviews and FGDs analysis. In the end, the selected themes were used for this thesis write-up. The same method was used for data that was collected from forums.

Data Verification

While the results of a study may appear accurate, it must be recognised that every study contains errors and biases which can result in misinformation. The process of recognising and managing those errors and biases consistently with accuracy is what is known as data verification. Apart from the use of Triangulation, the researcher verified the collected data using Lincoln and Guba's approach. This approach was used as it ensures accountability to ward off biases and errors in the results of a qualitative analysis. Central to this approach are four constructs: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 290-296 cited in De Vos, 2001).

4.11. Credibility

Credibility refers to demonstrating that the study was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the phenomenon was accurately described. Babbie and Mouton (2001:277) use the term to refer to whether there is compatibility between the constructed realities that exist in the minds of the respondents and those that are attributed to them. According to Saunders and Thornhill (2003), credibility is achieved through the following procedures: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, referential adequacy, peer debriefing and member checks. In terms of this research, to ensure credibility in relation to these procedures, the researcher had lengthy in-depth, face to face sessions of not less than an hour long, to try to ensure that all

important information was collected so that a sound data analysis could be conducted. The researcher was able to gather in-depth, rich data from several perspectives, including literature, interviews with government officials, FGDs, the private sector, NYCOM, CBOs, NGOs, youth parliamentarians and other stakeholders.

4.12. Transferability

Transferability, according to De Vos (2001), is the burden of demonstrating the applicability of one set of findings to another context. The qualitative researcher is not primarily interested in making generalisations as all observations are defined by the context in which they occur. In this study, the researcher, therefore, does not maintain, or claim that knowledge gained from one context will necessarily have relevance for other contexts or for the same context in another timeframe. The findings, analysis and conclusions of this study are true to the Malawi context and therefore cannot be generalised to other contexts and to different timeframes. Besides, a thick description of how study participants were selected and the context with which the study was done and can be applied to was done as a way to increase transferability judgment.

4.13. Dependability

Lincoln and Guba (1984) cited in De Vos (2001), explain dependability as any attempt to account for reliability of the study. Qualitative researchers need to assure their audiences that if the study was to be repeated in the same or similar context it would reveal similar results. Guba's approach to data verification indicates that there can be no credibility without dependability. As a result in this research, the techniques used to demonstrate credibility were also used to demonstrate dependability. This involved critically examining all the different information, methods and techniques used within the study. Keeping a record or trail of the research journey was used as the foremost method of enhancing dependability of the study.

4.14. Confirmability

Lastly, confirmability focuses on whether the results of the study could be confirmed by another. It is the last criterion of Trustworthiness that a qualitative researcher must establish. This criterion has to do with the level of confidence that the research study's findings are based on the participants' narratives and words rather than potential researcher biases (Saunders and Thornhill,

2003; De Vos, 2002). The researcher was guided by an academic supervisor in checking for the ‘trustworthiness’ of the collected data. The transcriptions were also submitted to the supervisor. On these transcriptions the researcher made notes with regard to how interpretations, conclusions and recommendations came up. Shifting the discussion further, the next section will look at some of the limitations of the study.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation is any aspect of the research that may influence the results negatively but over which the researcher has no control (De Vos, 2002). Below are highlighted some of the limitations that were encountered during the study in relation to the research design, the data collection method, the data collection tool and apparatus, the data analysis and data verification.

1. The key limitation with regards to the research design is that, a qualitative research design is highly subjective and usually the sampling technique that is used is non-probability sampling, which is generally small and cannot be generalised to a larger population. However, triangulation was used to mitigate this limitation, and data was validated from multiple sources in addition to Lincoln and Guba’s Approach to Data Verification.
2. As the study used a telephone recorder to capture data, it is possible that some participants may have been reluctant to give sensitive information as they knew they were being recorded. Some participants may have been suspicious of its use or felt apprehensive of it. However, the telephone recorder was used for interviews where consent was given; a verbatim recording allows for all the verbal details to be captured and analysed.
3. The researcher used an adaptation of Tesch’s (1990) steps to data analysis for the interviews and Focus Group Discussions, which required identifying themes and categories. This procedure allows the data to be analysed in a subjective manner, but it may also be wrongly interpreted and biased, as some categories may be overlooked and others over-emphasised. As a result, this can affect the accuracy of study findings. Nonetheless, the approach was

used as it allows data to be analysed using empathetic understanding to make sense and to draw meaningful conclusions. Also, careful attention was paid to reduce bias and not to overlook key themes coming out the study. In addition, triangulation and Lincoln and Guba's approach was used to verify data.

The above sections discussed the limitations of the study. The segment below looks at the ethical considerations that were adopted during the study.

Ethical Considerations

This section discusses the ethical considerations that were agreed during the study to address the question of ethical decision-making.

4.15. Voluntary Participation

The researcher made sure that all participants were asked to voluntarily participate in the study. If participants felt uncomfortable or not interested, they were not coerced to participate. According to Rubin and Babbie (2005:71) as cited in De Vos (2009), the researcher has an obligation to make sure that participation should at all times be voluntary and no one should be forced to participate in a project. All the research participants of the study were told the purpose and objectives as well as the potential benefits of such a research without raising any unrealistic expectations. Consent forms were signed before conducting interviews and group discussions.

4.16. No Harm to Subjects

The researcher made sure that no physical harm should occur by conducting the interviews in safe spaces and tried at all times to avoid any emotional harm which could have been inadvertently aroused due to probing around questions.

4.17. Informed Consent

According to De Vos (2009), participants in a study should be fully aware of all aspects of the study in order to make informed decisions to participate or not. The researcher made sure that all

participants were told prior to the study what would be required of them during the research. Obtaining informed consent was necessary because it meant that all possible or adequate information on the goal of the investigation, the expected duration of the participants' involvement, the procedures which were to be followed during the investigation, and the possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which participants may be exposed, as well as the credibility of the researcher was rendered beforehand to potential subjects and their legal representatives.

4.18. Debriefing of Participants

All the participants were debriefed before the interviews and after the interviews. Moreover, all the participants were informed of the findings of the study and an abstract was forwarded to all participants who requested for it.

4.19. Competence and Actions of the Researcher

The researcher completed a Masters level research course and project in 2012. The researcher also has more than eight years' experience in social research. More importantly, guidance from the supervisor was always available.

4.20. Non-Deception of Subjects

Struwig and Stead (2001:69) as cited in De Vos (2009), refer to deception as the misleading of participants, deliberately misinterpreting facts, or withholding information from participants. All information relating to the study was clearly communicated to the participants without any deception. Verbal/written instructions were given to the participants in a clear and unambiguous manner. The supervisor's contact information was also given to participants for verification.

4.21. Non-Violation of Privacy

De Vos (2009) defines privacy as, keeping to oneself that which the participant does not wish to be passed on. The researcher made sure that if participants were not willing to respond to some questions they were not forced to do so. Participants were also given the opportunity to switch off the recorder or stop the interview if they wished. In addition, unnecessary probing of details

not central to the study was avoided. All interviews were also conducted in a private space, as requested by the participants. All data was stored in a secured encrypted location.

4.22. Confidentiality and Anonymity

The researcher also made sure that confidentiality of information and the anonymity of the participants were emphasised at all times, as is ethically required. All participants in the Focus Group Discussions were informed that the information discussed cannot be shared with other members outside of the group. It is also important to note that aliases are used in this thesis in order to protect the identity of the Key Informants.

4.23. Reflexivity

De Vos (2007:363) refers to reflexivity as, the ability to formulate an integrated understanding of one's own cognitive world, especially understanding one's influence or role in a set of human relations. It is a quality of meta-cognition, thinking about one's perceptions and ideas. Being a Malawian 'youth' herself and aware of the needs of the young people in the country, the researcher was conscious of her own biases and used supervision to deal with her subjective 'inside' perspective.

Directions for Future Research

The thesis makes the following four suggestions for future research.

Research Design and its Limitations: The previous section acknowledged that a qualitative research design is highly subjective and usually the sampling technique that is used is non-probability sampling, which is generally small and maynot be generalised to a larger population. Addressing limitations of this research, it would be suggested that future research would adopt a mixed methodology which could help in including a bigger sample size. More young people that are directly affected by the youth unemployment challenge in Malawi could be part of the sample in order to get their views and perceptions as they have first-hand information regarding the challenge.

Different Context: The thesis acknowledges that the study findings, analysis and conclusions are true to the Malawi context and therefore cannot be generalised to other contexts and to different timeframes. However, to get a broader understanding of the youth unemployment challenge, it would be necessary to construct the same research in a new context, location or culture. Such diverse comparisons and knowledge would be needed to inform global and regional policies and job creation strategies.

Research Findings: Building upon findings of the research, it is suggested that further investigations be conducted to find out if there is indeed a obstructive competition between the Ministry of Labour, Youth and Manpower Development (MoLYMD) and the National Youth Council of Malawi (NYCOM). Further research would also help in clarifying if this has indeed made it difficult for the two institutions to work together in championing the cause of the youth in effective and impactful ways. Such a research is needed as institutions are critical for policy implementation. Moreover, findings from the research show that the Technical, Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education Training (TEVET) system through the TEVET Act enjoins upon every employer to pay 1% of basic pay roll into the TEVET Fund. However, whether the fund is used appropriately and effectively calls for further study and research.

Theoretical Approach: There is a need to re-assess and expand Sen's approach on Capabilities. This thesis agrees with critics such as Kuhumab (2018:134), who have slammed Sen's notion of capability by arguing against its individualistic position. Findings from this research do affirm that the individual finds a meaning in the community in which he/she lives and is able to develop his/her capabilities in mutual cooperation with other members constituting the society. This mutual cooperation in society does at times hinder individual capabilities. The social and cultural outlook and context of Malawi does not adequately encourage initiatives and entrepreneurship, and this has contributed to an increase in youth unemployment.

Regarding structure and agency as causations of youth unemployment, there is a need for further research to examine if indeed young people are lazy and lack the agency or will to look for employment in Malawi. Such data can only be found by conducting interviews with the youth

that have been directly affected by unemployment; this study in part did not comprehensively obtain such critical information. Such a study would be critical to reconcile further the mutual causation of structure and agency.

4.24. Conclusion

The chapter has presented the research methodology that was adopted in conducting the study, data collection approach, the sampling techniques, profile of the organizations and institutions that were part of the research, how data from the interviews, FGDs, forums, literature and other sources was analysed and verified. The limitations of the study, ethical considerations, directions for future research and a conclusion were also highlighted. The next chapters will be dedicated to presenting an analysis of the research findings. Yet first, chapter five presents a summary of the National Youth Policy and its key features.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY: KEY FEATURES

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapters show that over the past decade, Malawi has not been able to generate sufficient decent jobs and that none of the policy responses post-democracy have been effective in overturning the decade's old structural problems afflicting young people of that country. In order to anchor the arguments, the objective of this chapter is to give a summary of the key features of the current National Youth Policy 2013 - 2018 (NYP). By doing this, the chapter lays the foundation for a critical discussion of the NYP in chapter six. In this regard, this chapter and the next two are crucial as they form the backbone and are a key subject of this thesis as all the findings (shortcomings, limitations and gaps) of the study centre on this Policy document. It is the NYP and its implementation thereof that will determine if post-democratic Malawi has been successful or not in responding to youth unemployment specifically and youth development issues more broadly.

5.2. Chapter Structure

The following themes are explored systematically and divided into five sections: the first deals with the background to the National Youth Policy while the second looks at why there is a need for a National Youth Policy in Malawi. The third section outlines the objectives of the National Youth Policy and the fourth discusses the key features of the National Youth Policy. The key features that have been identified for purposes of this thesis are: youth participation and leadership, youth economic empowerment, National Youth Service Programme, education and

training for jobs, implementation strategy, institutional arrangements, and monitoring and evaluation. The fifth and last section is the conclusion of the chapter.

Background to the National Youth Policy

5.3. Before Democracy

Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2017) have shown that Malawi witnessed a proliferation of policies for specific sectors following the transition to democracy in 1994. The expectation at that time was that the new dispensation would come as an opportunity to pay particular attention to the plight of youth in the overall development efforts. Even though there were no specific youth orientated policies during the one party era (1963 -1993) the welfare of the youth was taken care of through the establishment of the Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP) in 1963 by the then president, Hastings Kamuzu Banda.

5.4. The Transition to Democracy

The anticipation was that, the advent of democracy in May 1994 would transform the government's response to the needs of young people in Malawi. The country was immersed in a wave of optimism as the new democratic regime set out to draft the country's first National Youth Policy (NYP) in 1996, of which some of the priority areas for youth development, included employment and job creation. In the long run as mentioned in chapter one and three, the optimism was, however short-lived as the policy did not contain any strategies or monitoring mechanisms for it to be effectively delivered and implemented. It did not even provide any action plan, monitoring and evaluation plan, nor any quotas of young people's participation in the labor market (Youth Employment Summit, 2002).

5.5. The 2013 (Current) National Youth Policy

After failure to implement the 1996 NYP, it was not surprising that there was huge pressure to revise the policy from a confederation of youth organisations through the Youth Consultative Forum (YCF) and the National Youth Council of Malawi (NYCOM). As a result, the 1996 NYP was revised in 2013. This revised policy was said to be a result of broad consultation involving government agencies, non-governmental organisations - all those concerned with the youth and

their development and indeed the youth themselves (NYP, 2013). It is this 2013 Policy that this chapter and the next, seeks to discuss and critically analyse. The chapter does so by extracting (from the document itself), some of the key themes of the policy. But first, why the need for a youth policy and why is it significant to Malawi? This is the subject of the next section.

Why the Need for a National Youth Policy in Malawi

5.6. Why a Youth Policy

Malawi is one of the countries in Africa that has a youth policy aimed at creating an enabling environment for all young people to develop to their full potential in order to contribute significantly to personal and sustainable national development. The understanding is that the youth of Malawi represent a significant and growing human resource, with the potential to contribute to sustainable economic development. Historically marginalised from active participation, their force for change must for that reason begin to be given space in policy debates.

It is recognised that youth in Malawi are a very important part of society yet over the past decades they have seemed to be forgotten. Nevertheless, this previously marginalised group has been brought back to the fore of the development agenda with the realisation of the contribution they make and also regarding the various social, economic and political problems they face. In 2013, the promulgation of the youth policy was therefore meant to be a symbol of commitment by the Malawi government to the importance of youth development in the overall national development agenda. The understanding is that youth represent a vast human resource which can contribute positively to their own personal and national development of the country. For such reasons, as part of constant efforts to promote youth welfare, in 2013, the government led the revision of the 1996 NYP. Grounded in valuing the rights and responsibilities of the country's younger citizens, the Policy defines youth as aged between 10 to 35 years old regardless of their sex, race, education, culture, religion, economic, marital and physical status (P. 2).

5.7. Issues that Impinge on the Youths' Contribution to National Development

The Government of Malawi through the NYP does recognise that a number of issues impinge on the youths' contribution to national development. Notably, a high illiteracy rate, unemployment, under-employment, a high population growth rate, exploitation by adults, poverty, and the HIV and AIDS pandemic are some of such issues affecting the youth that this Policy proposes to address. In this regard, the pinnacle of the NYP is empowerment of the youth of Malawi. It therefore follows that youth cannot expect government to diligently undertake programmes to empower them when they are busy doing the opposite - for instance abusing themselves through alcohol and drugs and engaging in other risky behaviours such as petty crime and having unprotected sex. Therefore, in order to get maximum benefits from the implementation of this youth policy, it is expected that youth, as important stakeholders in the implementation of this Policy would also develop and promote an appropriate mindset and the necessary self-discipline that goes with it. Specifically, the NYP, then, aims at empowering the youth to deal with the social, cultural, economic and political challenges they meet in their everyday lives (P. v).

5.8. The Rationale

The underlying principle is that the NYP should stand as an essential guiding tool for youth development in Malawi. The Policy aims at ensuring that the design and implementation of youth programmes are in line with this current policy direction of government. The Policy document indicates that the design and implementation of appropriate youth development and empowerment programmes is meant to facilitate the creation of an enabling environment where the youth are able to contribute effectively to national development (P.12). Whether or not this should be seen as an unparalleled opportunity for youth development in the country is a point of discussion in chapter six of the thesis.

5.9. Summary on NYP's Rationale

To sum up, the current NYP aims to create an enabling environment for all young people in Malawi to develop to their full potential in order to contribute significantly to personal and sustainable national development. So, what are the objectives of the NYP?

The Objectives of the National Youth Policy

5.10. The Specific Objectives

The Malawi National Youth Policy seeks to fulfil the following objectives:

- a. Guide policy makers on issues relating to young people;
- b. Mainstream youth development agenda in all national development programmes;
- c. Provide guidance on minimum standards for the design of programmes for youth;
- d. Guide the adequate allocation and prudent use of resources (financial, human, and material) to youth programmes;
- e. Provide guidance for the protection of young people;
- f. Promote the active participation of young people in the formulation of legislation and policies affecting the youth at all levels;
- g. Mainstream gender equity and equality in all youth programmes;
- h. Provide guidelines for monitoring and evaluation of youth programmes and ensuring youth are included as active participants; and
- i. Provide for the establishment of a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary institutional framework for coordination and implementation of youth programmes (NYP, 2013).

5.11. Summary of Policy Objectives

In brief, the overall objective of the policy is stated as, to provide a framework that guides youth development and implementation of all youth programmes that contribute to the improvement in the welfare of the young people in Malawi. Nonetheless, with evidence from the study, chapter six will look into more details to determine whether the above objectives have been achieved or not.

Key Characteristic Features of the National Youth Policy

5.12. Linkages with Other Relevant Policies and Legal Instruments

The youth are energetic, adventurous, industrious, strong, healthy, and willing to learn. They are therefore an important human resource, but their full potential is under-realised, under-utilised, and sometimes misdirected. It is now widely accepted globally that the well-being and contributions of young women and men are a major determinant of the current and future development of any nation. As such, it is stated that care was taken to ensure that the themes in the Policy provide for the pursuance of international commitments which were discussed in chapter two, to which Malawi is signatory. Some examples of these international commitments are the African Youth Charter, the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE), the African Youth Decade Plan of Action (DPoA, 2009-2218), and the SADC Youth Protocols (P.1).

5.13. Priority Areas for Action in the Policy

While also recognising the wide range of issues of concern to the youth in Malawi, several areas have been identified as priority areas for action in the Policy. For purposes of this thesis, seven key features are identified within this policy document, and it is these that will be briefly discussed thematically in the next sections to give a background but more critically analysed/reviewed and engaged with in chapter six. The seven key features are: youth participation and leadership, youth economic empowerment, the National Youth Service Programme, education and training for jobs, implementation strategy, institutional arrangements, and monitoring and evaluation.

Youth Participation and Leadership

5.14. Participation and Leadership of Youth at Community and National Level

To ensure that issues affecting the youths and other target groups are adequately addressed, it is imperative that the youth themselves not only actively participate in the key decision-making processes but that they are also given leadership roles. This would ensure that the decisions made

and programmes designed are ultimately reflective of the needs of the youth as seen from the perspective of the youth themselves. Empirical evidence shows that youth are not often included in important decision making bodies and processes. Marginalisation and discrimination therefore become one of the many issues affecting youth development. Traditionally, youth are expected to be passive recipients of services from adults and institutions or are at various times stereotypically portrayed as angry, restless, victims, vulnerable, impressionable, troubled, deviant, violent and incapable of making good and informed decisions on their own. As a result, they have not been actively and meaningfully involved in decision-making and interventions about issues which affect them as a target group and the nation as a whole. In this regard, the youth have been unable to visibly and effectively contribute to national development. As such, the goal of the NYP under this theme is said to be, to raise the status of youth and visibility of their contribution to the growth and development of the country and to increase participation of youth in development initiatives at community and national level (P.10).

5.15. Establishment of Youth Structures

The above-mentioned goal under this theme of the Policy, could be achieved, amongst other things, by ensuring that an enabling environment is created for the establishment of youth structures such as youth clubs, youth organisations, youth networks, youth centres and youth parliament to facilitate meaningful youth participation and leadership. The Policy also aims to ensure that, capacity is built through training, and technical and material support to youth structures to ensure their functionality and sustainability.

5.16. Youth Political Participation

The NYP makes provision for at least 30% representation of youth in decision-making bodies at all levels such as Village Development Committees, Area Development Committees, District Councils as well as in the National Parliament, and that the creation and strengthening of platforms for youth participation in decision-making at local, national, regional, and continental levels of governance is provided for. It is a goal yet to be realised. The next chapter will discuss some of the hindrances to youth political participation in Malawi.

5.17. Equal Participation

The Policy ensures the need for equal access to young men and young women to participate in decision-making and in fulfilling civic duties; and an award scheme for recognising outstanding contributions to national development by the youth as groups or as individuals is set up and promoted.

5.18. Summary on Participation and Leadership

In summary, under the priority area of youth participation and leadership, the NYP aims to raise the status of youth and visibility of their contribution to the growth and development of the country and to increase participation of youth in development initiatives at community and national level.

Youth Economic Empowerment

5.19. Youth Unemployment and its Causes

By 2013, studies had shown that the formal employment sector was unable to absorb all employable young people. According to the Welfare Monitoring Survey (2011), the national labour participation rate among youth aged 15-24 years was 15.8 %, with more females (17.4%) than males (13.3 %). Adversely, according to the MGDS III, unemployment among the youth has worsened over the last 20 years (P. 20).

The NYP acknowledges that, increasingly, the youth are completing their education with very little prospect of securing a job, or engaging in entrepreneurial activities, in particular in rural areas where under-employment and poverty are more prominent. Due to youth's lack of experience, very few employers are willing to recruit and train them on the job. The main contributing factor to the issues of unemployment and poverty among the youth is lack of employable skills resulting from very few skills training centres being available in the country. Although there are no recent precise unemployment figures on the youth, there can be no denying that the ever-growing number of jobless youth and the accompanying desperation makes youth unemployment a political, security, and socio-economic issue. Untrained and jobless youth can be easily recruited as political mercenaries ready to eliminate their sponsor's opponents on

the flimsiest excuse. The Policy therefore calls for the need to create more economic empowerment avenues for the youth, namely: creating more employment opportunities, first and foremost in the formal sector; improving the environment in the informal sector to promote growth and graduation of informal sector enterprises into the formal sector; and promoting youth entrepreneurship for self-employment (P. 20).

5.20. Training Facilities

It is stated in the Policy that the objective is to create more and decent employment for the youth both in the formal and informal sectors and in urban and rural areas. Amongst other things, the Policy is meant to ensure that: (1) Technical, Vocational and Entrepreneurship training facilities for the youth are promoted and supported; (2) The establishment of community-based skills training programmes for the youths including village polytechnics, business incubation and youth multi-purpose skills training centres is promoted; (3) Special self-employment training programmes for young people with disabilities are provided; (4) Youth-friendly rules and regulations are in place for the informal sector to create more employment opportunities for young people; (5) An enabling environment for Public Private Partnership for youth development, including the provision of technical training to youth is created; (6) Incentive schemes for employers to invest in the skills development and on the job training for employed and unemployed youth are instituted. Moreover, support for the scale-up of the national internship and mentorship programmes to facilitate youth to enter the labour market in rural and urban areas is promoted and, lastly, (7) measures to regulate and provide a conducive business environment in the informal economy to prevent unfair labour practices is developed (P. 12-13).

5.21. Establishment of a Youth Development Fund

The Policy states the need for the establishment of a Youth Development Fund to foster a dynamic climate for youth entrepreneurs to access credit and capital. Evidence in chapter five will demonstrate some of the critical challenges related to this goal.

5.22. Linkages between the Labour Market and the Education and Training System

The Policy emphasises on greater linkages between the labour market and the education and training system to ensure that curricula are aligned to the needs of the labour market and that

youth are being trained in fields where employment opportunities are available or are growing. Findings from this study will demonstrate in chapter five that the above goal is yet to be realised.

5.23. Young Women

The NYP states the need for equal access to young men and young women to participate in decision-making, fulfil civic duties, and have equal access to economic opportunities including employment. In addition, there is an emphasis on the need for macroeconomic policies that focus on job creation particularly for young women.

5.24. Agriculture

In relation to agriculture, the Policy acknowledges that there is a need to ensure that: (1) The youth are mobilised and motivated to take part in agricultural activities by providing incentives to attract young people to go for agricultural training at all levels of the education system; primary, secondary, tertiary and vocational schools; (2) Modernisation of agriculture through the incorporation of ICT and other modern technologies and tools to make agriculture attractive to the youth is deliberately encouraged; (3) Access to productive agricultural land in adequate proportion and other factors of production for the youth who fail to access these resources due to culture, gender and/or other socio-economic factors is facilitated (P. 12-13). Chapter six will present further discussion on agriculture and youth.

5.25. Other Economic Sectors

Lastly, the NYP states that it will ensure that strategies that ensure youth involvement in public works and major infrastructure development programmes are promoted. The NYP is however silent on the issues related to migration and remittances. Chapter six will discuss these in more detail.

5.26. Summary on Youth Economic Empowerment

In summary, under the theme of youth economic empowerment, the NYP aims at improving the socio-economic status of youths through increased incomes and creating more and decent employment for the youth both in the formal and informal sectors and in urban and rural areas.

The National Youth Service Programme

The NYP provides for the establishment of a National Youth Service Programme that would provide a medium for the participation of all categories of youth in the social and economic life of the nation. The Policy points out that the National Youth Service Programme would above all be intended to bring excluded youth back into the social and economic mainstream. Skills development, character building and agriculture would form the core of activities under the programme. As such, implementation of the programme would therefore, among other things, focus on accredited learning and skills development, community development and exit opportunities, voluntary service by professionals in support of young people, and periodic volunteering by youth who would offer their talent and time to address the needs of their communities.

Education and Training for Jobs (Labour Market)

5.27. Challenges Related to Education

The Policy acknowledges that education is a major priority in the development of young men and women, not simply because young people are often connected to the education system, but because it is through education that young women and men can be better prepared for life. The personal development of the individual young person, along with the development of local communities and the country as a whole is inextricably linked to the provision of a quality, relevant and well-managed education system.

As such, the Republican Constitution of Malawi provides for the right to education for all its citizens. However, despite having the supportive instrument, evidence continues to show that a lot of challenges still remain and militate against the promotion and attainment of universal education as well as pupil/student retention in school. For instance, the ratio of females to males in the lower primary school grades (1 to 3) is nearly 50:50. However, from grades 4 to 8 the ratio begins to drop so much so that in secondary school the male: female ratio is estimated at 72:28, while in university it is estimated to be 74:26 (P. 15-16). There is, therefore, a need to address

the gender disparities and lobby for a law that provides for mandatory attendance at primary and secondary school education in order to equip young people with skills and prepare them for the labour market.

5.28. Human Resource Development

Another important ingredient of economic growth and development that would help in poverty reduction is human resource development. Thus, it cannot be over-emphasised that any nation ignoring this and failing to invest in the education of its young persons cannot be serious about national development and poverty reduction. The policy goal related to education is to increase levels of literacy and numeracy among the youth for effective participation in national development. However, evidence shows that Malawi has been ranked as one of the lowest performing nations for literacy in Sub-Saharan Africa, which leaves many questions as to whether adequate attention has been dedicated to achieving the goal of human resource development. A critical analysis of this will be given in the next chapter.

In order to contribute towards improvement of education and employment in Malawi, the NYP states the need to ensure that: (1) Greater linkages between the labour market and the education and training system to ensure that curricula are aligned to the needs of the labour market and that youth are being trained in fields where employment opportunities are available or are growing are fostered; (2) Incentive schemes for employers to invest in the skills development and on the job training for employed and unemployed youth are instituted; (3) Adequate and appropriate human, financial and material resources to improve quality of education in Malawi are allocated; (4) Mentoring of youth to facilitate attainment of higher education levels and entering the labour market is promoted; (5) Teaching of career subjects that promote good citizenship, values, duties and responsibilities is promoted; (6) School feeding programmes in all primary schools are encouraged (P. 16 -17).

5.29. Periodic Review of Education Curricula

The NYP emphasises the need for: (1) Periodic review of education curricula for both the formal and non-formal sector is undertaken to meet the changing needs of youth in a rapidly changing world and labour market demands in urban and rural areas; (2) Guidance and counselling to be

mainstreamed in school curricula; (3) The provision of these as a service in all schools and in other out-of-school learning structures; and (4) Government enforcement of adherence to minimum standards in both publicly and privately-owned schools to ensure quality of education (P. 16).

5.30. Numeracy Programme for out of School Youth

The Policy document states that there is a need for the establishment of a literacy and numeracy programme for out of school youth to meet literacy and numeracy needs among the youth that have never been to school or dropped out of school and cannot return to the formal education system. In addition, a programme targeting school drop outs to go back to school must be put in place.

5.31. Bursary Scheme

The NYP advocates for the need to establish an independent board to administer and manage an organised bursary scheme for deserving youth. However, no evidence in this research shows that this has been achieved.

5.32. Girls Education

Related to girls' education, the NYP states that, compulsory free primary education, especially for girls and Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), and access to secondary education must be promoted; and maintenance and expansion programme for educational facilities to accommodate the needs of an increasing number of school-going youth including purpose- built girls boarding facilities, more especially in rural areas, must be established. It must be commended that there is indeed free primary education though chapter three demonstrated how this has had an impact on access to quality education.

5.33. Entrepreneurial Skills

According to the Policy, compulsory teaching of technical, vocational and entrepreneurial skills from primary school must be established in the country for young people.

5.34. Summary on Education and Skills Training

In brief, the goal under this theme is to increase levels of literacy and numeracy among the youth for effective participation in national development and to improve both formal and non-formal education and training for young people in the country.

Implementation Strategy

5.35. Capacity

The Policy clearly states that, for effective implementation, the Department of Youth, NYCOM as well as relevant district level structures will need to be capacitated to operationalise the outlined Policy statements and objectives. As such, capacity in human, financial, material and technical, as well as infrastructure needs to be enhanced. In order to ensure quality and efficacy in youth programming the Policy would facilitate the establishment of short and long-term youth training programmes for all those working with youth or implementing youth-related programmes.

The Policy strongly advocates for human resource development - training of professional youth workers and youth participation structures and policy-makers in the youth sector; inter-agency coordination; monitoring and evaluation; and resource mobilisation.

Institutional Arrangements

5.36. Coordination

When it comes to institutional arrangements, it is indicated that the Policy shall be implemented by various stakeholders who have different interests in youth development. Whilst these diverse interests can be a source of strength in that various needs of the youth could easily be addressed in this manner, the Policy acknowledges that the same diversity could be a source of weakness in that it may lead to confusion, conflict of interests, and marginalisation of other youth groups (P. 24).

5.37. Interests of Different Stakeholders in Youth Development

In order to ensure that all stakeholders aspire towards the same goal, share the same vision and are accountable in the provision of youth services, there is a call for proper inter-agency coordination at all levels. The coordination would also guarantee adherence to set standards and quality control. In this regard the Ministry of Youth and Sports would be responsible for coordination of all youth policy implementation activities. The coordination of implementation of the national youth policy, planning, and monitoring would happen at all levels – national, regional and district (P. 24).

5.38. Existing Coordination Structures

Existing coordination structures would also be used, and new structures would only be created where there is a demonstrated need for doing so. The figure below explains the institutional framework of the NYP. The Ministry, as shown in Figure 5.1 below is responsible for providing oversight, coordination and monitoring and evaluation of the Policy.

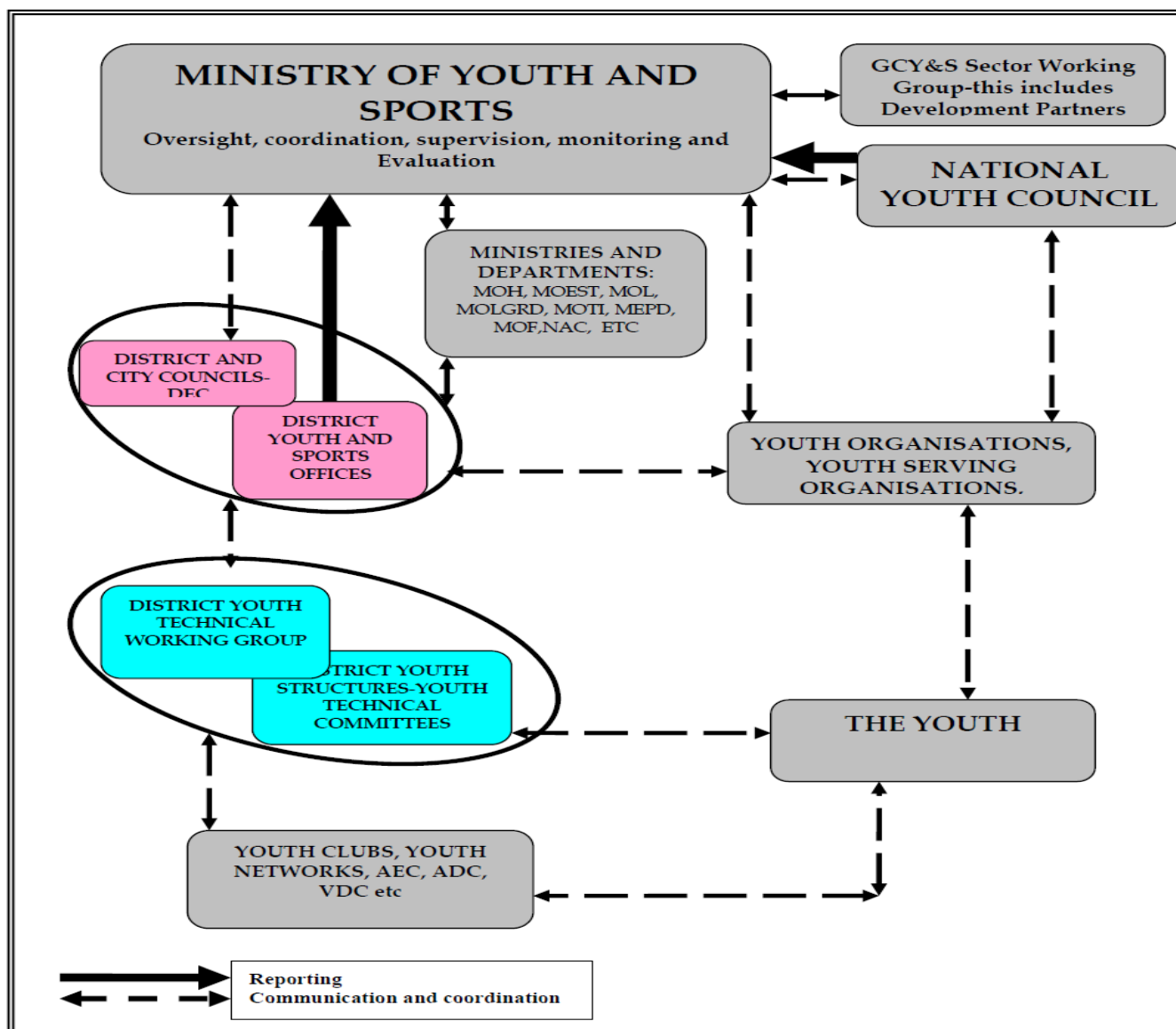


Figure 5.1: Institutional Framework of the National Youth Policy. Image Source: NYP, 2013

Monitoring and Evaluation

A national youth policy is a practical demonstration that youth are a priority in a country, a declaration for youth development, a vision statement, a framework for political action, and a blueprint of the status, rights, responsibilities and roles of youth. As Edudzie (2017) wrote, when

well done, a national youth policy can empower, enable and encourage youth, and maximise youth participation. Besides, such a policy can also provide realistic guidelines, timeline and framework for government, the private sector and other stakeholders to work together to support youth and ensure stronger coordination among youth-serving organisations and enhance service delivery. In this regard, it is stated that the execution of the NYP requires a comprehensive and effective monitoring and evaluation system with appropriate and efficient feedback mechanisms. This would require undertaking monitoring and evaluation functions at all levels, including gathering information at macro, sectoral, district and grassroots level. In this respect, the Policy provides for putting in place mechanisms to carry out internal self-monitoring and evaluation of youth programmes over a determined period. The process of policy evaluation could be done by external or independent evaluators and this would be a five-yearly activity or earlier, depending on the magnitude of emerging issues that may require fresh policy directions (P. 29). With this in mind, the current NYP is clearly outdated.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that through the NYP, the Malawi government recognises the potentially catalytic role of youth development in driving a sustainable development trajectory, which is undermined by unemployment. As such, the aim of the policy is to empower its youth and encourage their participation in development processes, as well as to reach their potential. It sets out specific policy targets, timeframes and responsibilities. For purposes of this thesis seven key features of the Policy were identified and summarised: youth participation and leadership, youth economic empowerment, the National Youth Service Programme, education and training for jobs, implementation strategy, institutional arrangements, and monitoring and evaluation. Lastly, the Policy is coordinated, implemented and monitored by the Ministry of Youth and Sports which has recently been renamed the Ministry of Labour, Youth, Sports and Manpower Development. So, has the NYP through implementation achieved its intended goals? The next chapter will give a critical analysis of the design and achievements of the NYP.

CHAPTER SIX

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter was devoted to providing a summary of Malawi's National Youth Policy. The focus was specifically on underlining the key moments and themes of that document. It is to those same themes that the current chapter returns, only this time, the intention is to critically engage with each theme by identifying not only policy weaknesses but also silences, omissions and implementation shortcomings of the substantive or core elements of the said policy. The significance of this critical exercise resides in the fact that it is the first truly comprehensive analysis of Malawi's National Youth Policy document. In chapter seven, the thesis goes further than mere criticism, but seeks, moreover, to set out a set of policy alternatives for a much more responsive and impactful youth development intervention. The structure/agency, social exclusion and capability approach are the analytical instruments that guide this analysis. The chapter aims to address objective one, two and three of the study.

Various mechanisms will be deployed to achieve the objective of this chapter and they include the following:

1. Comparative analysis of similar youth policies from other countries.
2. Feedback from face to face interviews with representatives from NGOs, CBOs, private sector, government departments, members of the opposition political parties, and responses from Focus Group Discussions (FDGs) with the Youth Parliament of Malawi.

3. Identification of lack of alignment, contradictions and inconsistencies with other state policies and legal frameworks.
4. Analysis of poor or incongruent institutional arrangements (are these posited or structured to fulfill the overall objectives set out in the NYP?).
5. Crucially, however, focused attention is paid to the presence and effectiveness of any implementation strategy, including a robust monitoring and evaluation framework.

6.2. Chapter Structure

The chapter is divided into twelve sections which will be explored systematically, these are: youth participation and leadership; youth economic empowerment; agential causes of chronic youth unemployment in post-democratic Malawi; structural causes of chronic youth unemployment in post-democratic Malawi; young women and the NYP; agriculture; migration and remittances; National Youth Service Programme; education and training for jobs; progress on implementation strategy; institutional arrangements; monitoring and evaluation of the policy; and lastly, a conclusion will be discussed. The next sections will give a comprehensive analysis/review of the key shortcomings and weaknesses of the NYP by theme and mechanisms mentioned above.

Youth Participation and Leadership

6.3. Increased Participation of Youth at Community and National Level

The NYP states that, to ensure that issues affecting the youths and other target groups are adequately addressed, the youth themselves must actively participate in the key decision-making processes, which would ensure that the decisions made and programmes designed are, in the final analysis, reflective of the needs of the youth as seen from their perspective (NYP, 2013:18). However, on the ground, evidence from the SitAn (2016) demonstrates that, in reality, this has not been the case. From the initiation of the youth policy, there is evidence that of the 60% plus youth population, no more than 1% were even involved in the development of the NYP. Findings from the study reveal that, the policy development process was only limited to inviting small groups of adolescents to take part in once-off meetings or events or telling them to fill in questionnaires and surveys. It would seem, from the above, that there are pertinent questions to

be posed about the representativeness of samples deployed. This has important implications for the legitimacy and credibility of the consultation process that informed the design of the policy to begin with. And, at any rate, statistical theory indicates that, a biased sample is where all individuals on the true population were not equally likely to have been selected, if this is not accounted for, results can be erroneous. This can lead to a systematic over or under estimation of the corresponding population parameters (Reinert, 2009). This has been evidenced in that, Malawi for the past decades has lacked meaningful youth participation in most of its programs and in most cases the policies only cater to individuals living in urban areas that are easily reachable. It has also been noted that the development or evaluation of plans, policies and laws are not reviewed through a ‘young people’s lens’ as most people mandated to do this are adults who are out of touch with the needs of the youths and in the event that the youths are involved, a proper sample is not selected (SitAn, 2016). This is a complete contradiction of the NYP mandate.

Not only is the above a contradiction of the NYP mandate but also of the global trends as chapter two of the thesis has shown that, worldwide, it is becoming widely accepted that young people are capable of bringing fresh perspectives, and often have direct knowledge of and insights into issues that are not accessible to adults. Youth best understand the problems they face and can offer new ideas and alternative solutions. After all, part of being young involves making sense of personal experiences and asking questions about the world around you (UNDP, 2016). Youth have the capacity to identify and challenge existing power structures and barriers to change, and to expose contradictions and biases, all of which are critical for formulation and implementation of any youth development policy in Malawi.

6.4. Establishment of Youth Structures

In regards, to youth participation, the NYP also emphasises the need to ensure that an enabling environment is created for the establishment of youth structures such as youth clubs, youth centres and a youth parliament to facilitate meaningful youth participation (NYP, 2013: 11). Findings from the study shows that Malawi is indeed one of the few countries that has a youth parliament in Africa. The Youth Parliament of Malawi (YPM) aims to provide a platform for the youth to articulate issues affecting their lives socially, politically and economically and to give

youths an opportunity to actively take part in the policy formulation and legislative process of the country. Members of the youth parliament are selected from all 193 constituencies of Malawi through a process that includes the involvement of district councils (UNICEF, 2012). In spite of this objective, there is increasing evidence of a chasm between policy intent and what really transpires in the selection criteria for participation in the YPM. The views of some of those working within the YPM is instructive:

...i would have loved if the Malawi Youth Parliament should have included some sort of special interests youth. I have in mind ...for instance a representative of the child headed households...a representative of child labourers, children that have been exposed to child labour tobacco estates and other related fields...youths that are in vending, representatives of students unions, considering that in most universities we have youths and these people should have come directly, relay the problems that such youths in these conspicuous groups are facing other than just formulate sort of a replica of this National Assembly (Hon. Menyani - Opposition - Dedza North West, cited in Daily Debates, Hansard, 2012).

Another official involved in overseeing the YPM also confirms the challenges with the selection criteria:

The problem I think is because we use schools to do the advertisement and school teachers help us in the selection process. I heard normally they select their children or relatives which is an unfortunate thing to do (Interview with Participant M, 2019).

Furthermore, despite developing the NYP, research evidence on implementation shows that Malawi does not have enough youth training centres, the only centres in existence are the ones that were created in the 80s under the MYP and nothing further has been developed, maintenance of these centres is also non-existent. The current youth clubs and organisations that have cropped up are not government backed; they are mostly backed by international organizations like UNICEF, UNDP, World Bank, international NGOs and others. Findings from the study suggested the following:

The same youth centres available are still those that were built under Kamuzu Banda, I don't know why the government can't just renovate and we can use them, must we always wait for UNDP and World Bank? (Interview with Focus Group B, 2019).

The above evidence stands against the very core of the NYP regarding creating an enabling environment for the establishment of youth structures to enable meaningful participation. Duffy (1995) defines Social Exclusion as the inability to participate in economic, social, political and cultural life, alienation and distance from mainstream society (1995:90). This definition helps in understanding that the focus of the theory deals with systems and structures in place that promote inequality, isolation, segregation and marginalisation. In the Malawian context, empirical evidence continues to show that youth are not often included in important decision-making bodies (Focus Group; Interviews, 2019; SitAn, 2016). The few structures in place, such as the youth parliament have been questioned on their representation of vulnerable youth groups, challenging the very opportunity for all youth to voice out issues affecting their lives socially, politically and economically and, as a result, limiting their ability to actively take part in the policy formulation and legislative process of the country (ibid).

6.5. Role of the Youth in Political Participation since Independence

The NYP clearly states that there is an ever-growing number of jobless youth in Malawi and that the accompanying desperation makes youth unemployment a political, security and socio-economic issue. The Policy also states that untrained and jobless youth can be easily recruited as political thugs ready to eliminate their sponsor's opponents on the flimsiest excuse (NYP, 2013: 12). Evidence in this study shows that, despite the above, different administrations have still tended to use these unemployed youths for perverse political agendas, wrongly branding it as 'youth political participation'. This can be traced back to the times of the one-party rule of Kamuzu Banda to post-democracy, the situation remains the same with each political party in power creating a youth wing that terrorises opposing views, as some group participants in the study also noted:

Mostly, they paint themselves in political colours and sing for the leaders just because they are given money by the leaders. One wonders whether this is what it means by youth employment and empowerment. Every regime that comes in talks about we are doing this and that for the youth but on the ground they don't. They just don't care about young people that's what I think. (Interview with Focus Group A, 2019).

Concurring with the views emanating from the Focus Group Discussions, the Malawi Human Rights Youth Network (MHRYN) pointed out:

Money is the drive, as the youth mostly lack income-generating activities to keep them off petty politics. There is need for Malawi to come up with many ways of empowering youths economically. Empowering the youth with education and help them become entrepreneurs or artisans when they fail to make it in other forms of employment. Unemployment will be reduced and no youth will be willing to paint his or her body just to get little money from political leaders (Kwapata, 2015 cited in Gunya and Mthawanji (2015:1).

In a similar manner, Gunya and Mthawanji (2015:1) trace the history of youth political participation in Malawi and confirm:

When Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda and his Malawi Congress Party (MCP) took power in 1964, the role of the youth in politics became evident: They became his ‘eyes and ears’, quashing all of his real and imagined enemies. The youth became instruments of fear. Through the Malawi Youth League, also known as chiswe (termites) for their red uniforms and the Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP), the first Malawi leader instituted a reign of terror to silence his political opponents. Even classes were disturbed whenever the President went out of the Sanjika Palace to tour crops, receive international guests and perform other engagements. The learners were forced to line up the streets and clap hands and sing praise songs for him. During preparations for Independence Day and the Kamuzu Day celebrations, some learners were taken off classes to participate in his propaganda youth rallies.

In 1994, with the coming of Bakili Muluzi and his United Democratic Front (UDF), the hope was things would change. That, however, was not to be as his Young Democrats (YDs) were engaged in beating up political opponents. At some points, some lost their lives. As a matter of fact, some YDs such as Charles Waya, who was involved in the torching of then opposition leader in Parliament Gwanda Chakuamba’s official vehicle died mysteriously when it was discovered he was double-crossing the two parties. His body was not found in his purported unmarked grave near Stella Maris in Blantyre during an inquiry by the Ombudsman. The story remained the same when Bingu wa Mutharika took over the reins of power in 2004. His Youth Cadets continued from where the UDF youth cohorts stopped. A day before the July 20 2012 demonstrations against the Mutharika regime, the cadets were seen in DPP vehicles, brandishing panga knives to keep Malawians off the streets. Although Joyce Banda’s youth tried to change the face of youth participation in politics, they, too, were involved in their own violent acts. A case in point was when Peter Mutharika’s aide Ben Phiri and DPP stalwart Nicholas Dausi were roughed up at Sunbird Mount Soche in Blantyre. Some of the youth were used to add flare, like the DPP youth, by painting their faces and bodies in party colours. Over a year in power, Peter Mutharika’s DPP youth have carried on the painting of faces and bodies to symbolize their loyalty to the party. The more things change, the more they remain the same (Gunya and Mthawanji, 2015:1).

What Focus Group Discussion participants, Kwapata (2015) and Gunya and Mthawanji (2015) illustrate above is that, these trends unfortunately blur what real political participation and leadership should be for the youth. These tendencies question the political will of Malawi towards youth development. Nonetheless, one community organization, Chigonjetso Community Development Centre, is running initiatives to bail out the youth from political abuse. The Centre supports youths who were once instruments of political violence by equipping them with labour-related technical skills to be self-reliant (Mbeta, 2016). Knowing the country's political history, programmes such as this should have been central in the NYP to address the issue of youth political abuse in Malawi. There is a need for political education, which has been omitted in the NYP, and a necessity to create deliberate spaces, quotas and opportunities for meaningful youth participation in politics. Mbeta (2016) points out the need to provide support to youth to enable them to fulfil their political ambitions.

These youths are very hard working. They have a fighting spirit for their country. Unfortunately, they have not been fully supported when politicians fulfil their political goals. Everyone, be it the president, Members of Parliament, councillors, must support these youths and put them in good positions. They should not be forgotten and be used to entertain people at their rallies when they win (Mbeta, 2016:1).

It follows from the above that the NYP is vague on what political participation is; as such it has not fulfilled its mandate to guide how youths should participate effectively, for example. Given the history of Malawi, the Policy has also not been successful in underlining the need for the creating structures that can bail young people out of political manipulation. In this connection, the next section looks at some of the hindrances to youth political participation.

6.6. Hindrances to Political Participation in Malawi

Lack of emphasis on the meaningful role of youth in political participation in the NYP, means that it is turning a blind eye to Sen's 'capability approach' which demonstrates that, political participation can advance the general capability of individuals (Sen, 1999). The UN in 2012 conducted a survey in which 13,000 respondents from 186 countries selected and noted that limited opportunities and exposure were the main challenges for young people's active and meaningful participation in decision-making processes (The United Nations Youth Strategy, 2018). Malawi suffers from the same malaise. Political parties and stakeholders should re-

imagine the role of the youth rather than engage them in touchline politics, this can be done by creating spaces and quotas for youths (Gunya and Mthawanji, 2015). Thus, Sen (2000) mentions that, human development as an expansion of individual substantive freedoms occurs with the improving of institutional frameworks such as public services, the judiciary systems, political parties, mass and public discussions.

To put it into context, evidence on the ground shows that, there was a controversial debate in Malawi where many argued that President Peter Mutharika, at 78 years of age, would be too old to carry on as president as he would be 84 at the time of leaving office in 2024, if re-elected in 2019, which he was. The view was that the then Vice President, Saulosi Chilima, 46 years old, would be better placed to lead the elections. The then country's finance minister, Mr Goodall Gondwe responded to this call on April 13, 2018 as follows:

Arthur Peter Mutharika is not old. I know that youths do well in other things, but concerning affairs of government, it is the old who do well. Government is not for 'babies', and now you say you want to replace Mutharika with a 'baby'? That is not right? (Gondwe, 2018 cited in Ntata, 2018).

The above, as argued by Kampondeni (2018), could mean three staggering claims: 1. that the president at the age of 78 is 'not old'; 2. that the presidency is better handled by senior citizens than young people who are better at 'other things' than the serious business of running state affairs; and 3. that it is unreasonable for people to be lobbying to replace the president or to have other choices. All these assertions bring to the fore some of the reasons that hinder young people from meaningful participation in politics. Consequently, it was not surprising that there was an uproar as most of the youths castigated the minister's remarks, considering the fact that at least 60% of the people in Malawi are aged between 17 and 35 (UNICEF, 2017).

To start with, Section 80 of Malawi's Constitution, stipulates that 35 is the minimum age for anyone to hold the office of the president of Malawi and 18 for a member of parliament (The Republic of Malawi Constitution Act, 1998: 38). This could translate to, the vice-president or anyone above that age is a legitimate candidate, if endorsed by their respective political parties. Secondly, this was also a clear contradiction to what Malawi's own president, the NYP and the continent at large, through the African Youth Charter and AU's Agenda 2063: Aspiration 6, have

been preaching about youth's political participation and leadership in democratic processes. Such opinions from leaders like Malawi's then finance minister stand against youth empowerment, participation and leadership highlighted in these legal instruments. Such sentiments also fuel discrimination and should not find space in modern day democratic societies, if the country is to achieve the intended aspirations of these frameworks (Agenda 2063, African Youth Charter), particularly the NYP. Sen (2000:56) has shown that, the freedom that individuals enjoy is inescapably qualified and constrained by the social, political, and economic opportunities that are valuable to them. When, as in the Malawian case, such critical spaces and opportunities are closed off to young people, the whole enterprise of youth development is severely undermined.

6.7. Youth Stereotypes as a Hindrance to Participation and Leadership

The place of young people in socio-political and economic processes has historically been contested in Africa (Kanengoni, 2017). Stereotypically, youth have tended to be portrayed as angry, restless, victims, voiceless, vulnerable, impressionable, troubled, deviant, and violent. Young people are traditionally construed and perceived as, being incapable of making good and informed decisions on their own. As such, they cannot take part in any decision making process in the community (ibid). This has led to a situation of under-representation of youth in decision-making processes, which today can be viewed as a real threat to the future of participatory and inclusive development in Malawi and the world at large (Shawa, 2018). Despite the fact that human and political rights are guaranteed to all citizens, not just to some, evidence shows that young people in Malawi still face real obstacles to fully exercise their rights in formal government structures. Unconventional platforms like social media and other creative spaces are the ones that have opened up opportunities for young people to challenge these stereotypes and paint a different picture about their capacities, capabilities and role in global and local development spaces (ibid).

Quite often, adults comment about youths in a negative manner. Consequently, this has had a negative impact on young people's agency regarding development. Young people hear these negative stereotypes constantly, leading to negative impacts on their views of themselves and others around them. Growing up is hard enough but feeling like nobody sees anything good about them can be debilitating for young people (Shawa, 2018). This is evident in Malawi in that

many youths who were part of this study are not interested in NYP and very few know that it exists at all, and as such, the status quo remains. The narrative has to change. There is a need for Malawi to provide support and empower young people if it aims to achieve meaningful socio-political and economic participation. This reinforces that youth participation is also a construct of structure and agency. The government needs to develop a strong presence in enabling youth agendas and providing platforms for youth development. As things stand, there is a discernible gap between the NYP's policy intent and the lived reality of the vast majority of young Malawians.

It must be commended that in Africa, the newly drafted NYP in South Africa echoed the need for:

All spheres of government need to work alongside the youth to involve them in planning and decision making; build connections between the youth, national priorities and local communities; challenge stereotypes depicting youth as a “social problem”; channel the energy, leadership and fresh perspectives of the population into social, economic, cultural and environmental renewal; and promote young people as active citizens who are able to tackle social problems and act on opportunities (Draft NYP 2020-2030, 2020:33).

Socio-cultural, political and economic norms continue to side-line young people, treating political and economic participation as the prerogative of older people, hence a continued need for policies and implementation frameworks that pay deliberate attention to youth concerns (ibid:5).

6.8. Social Exclusion and Participation

The hindrances discussed in the previous sections contradict the NYP priority area of youth participation and leadership and this is what scholars such as Duffy (1995) and the UNDP (2006) deem to be social exclusion, the inability to participate in mainstream society. The SitAn (2016) consistently pointed out that, the facilitation of young people's participation has largely been limited and has contributed little impact in driving the youth policy development trajectory in Malawi. This could be the reason why participants in the study also pointed out that the country has taken several steps backwards in youth participation in politics since attainment of multi-party democracy in 1994. As one of the participants interviewed for this study lamented:

It was the youth who shouted, ‘we want change’ and dictated the direction of this country in the early 1990s. Today, they are no longer actively involved in politics with the same dynamism and passion because their efforts are not being adequately appreciated (Interview with Participant H, 2019).

This is easy to point out, but one can argue that; ‘how can a person who has no job, food, income, education, political voice and access to any development platform be active in society?’ The answer is very obvious; such an individual due to lack of empowerment would never be productive in any societal change. This problem has been specifically established in Malawi by the different administrations since post-democracy. The youths have been left behind through a crippling and inadequate education system, poor social protection practice and empowerment programs. Self-dependent youths are very few (OECD, 2018). The youth can only be included when youth focused programs and structures are properly funded, developed and income generation is stabilised. True change can only happen once the youth have bread on their table and their tastes, preferences and needs are met. Economic theory tells that, change only occurs when income is guaranteed, and people’s wants become sophisticated (Widerquist and Lewis, 2005). Currently the youths are not active in political matters because they have no perceived real stake in the present and future of Malawi.

Nevertheless, evidence through comparative analysis shows that the above situation is not unique to Malawi. Countries like Kenya also face similar challenges. Maina (2010) is of the view that, Kenya’s government has failed to involve the youth in political processes, despite pre-election promises to do so. He portrays a system in Kenya where youth participation is dependent on wealth and connections. These youths are then merely used as political pawns, corrupted by politicians even before they enter politics at a national level. He stresses that such youth do not represent the young people of Kenya accurately (ibid).

Sen (1999) has shown that there are five distinct freedoms which help to advance the general capability of a person, and these are: political freedom, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security. It is important to emphasise that these freedoms are intertwined and failure to attain one freedom may affect others and, overall, affect development. Thus, human development is defined as the removal of major hindrances to

freedom. By this, Sen's model shades a reminder of the key issues in which individuals are excluded from enjoying economic entitlements and benefits simply because of socio-economic, market and political conditions (ibid: 2000:14). These are what Malawi and many African government have failed to do with almost 90% of youths having little to no facilities available to them.

6.9. Summary of Youth Participation and Leadership

Though it has been ratified in the African Youth Charter (2006) and Agenda 2063, of which Malawi is a signatory, to ensure that all citizens are fully involved in all spheres of society, evidence shows that very few of these resolutions find expression in reality. It is, therefore, regrettable and obvious for the young people of Malawi that their government has made inadequate efforts to push their agenda in terms of driving the development trajectory through participation and leadership. These are missed opportunities. There is, thus, a pressing need for a fundamental or paradigm shift and an overhaul of the National Youth Policy in Malawi, as far as youth participation and leadership are concerned. Meaningful participation for the youth must include influencing policies, reviewing of existing legislature, adhering to principles of good governance and holding government accountable.

Youth Economic Empowerment

6.10. Youth Unemployment

According to the NYP (2013: 12), the main objective under this theme, is to improve the socio-economic status of youths through increased incomes. But why is youth unemployment in Malawi such a seemingly intractable problem? This has been linked to lack of opportunities available to the youth. The OECD (2018) indicate that in Malawi, gaps in initial education for example, poor school blocks, no toilet facilities, high student ratios to teacher numbers, unavailable study materials and many more challenges are forcing too many young people to leave education at early ages (ibid). These lead to young people with limited work and life skills. Youth joblessness, vulnerability and unemployment are widespread. Young people are four times likely to be unemployed compared to adults. Moreover, not all youths have equal opportunities for mobility, education, health, accommodation and too many remain excluded in

decision-making processes that affect their lives (ibid). Altogether, just like the South African Youth Policy 2015 -2020 (2015) advocates, there is a need for collective action to draw young people into the mainstream economy in Malawi. Timely interventions directed at the youths are likely to yield greater return for sustainable development than attempts to fix these problems later in life. Sen (2000) argues that, human development must be defined as the removal of major hindrances to freedoms. Some of these hindrances are poverty, tyranny, poor economic opportunities and others. In this context, the expansion of freedoms is viewed both as a primary end and the principal means for development (2000:14).

Nevertheless, the findings from the study have proven that the problem is complex and multifaceted. The causes of low youth economic empowerment and unemployment identified from the study have been grouped into agential and structural factors and will be discussed in the sections to follow.

Agential Causes of Chronic Youth Unemployment in Post-Democratic Malawi

6.11. Lack of Individual Agency

As Giddens (1979), Hay (2012) and Moon (2017) have demonstrated, agency is the capacity of individuals to act independently/autonomously and to make their own free choices. It may either be classified as unconscious, involuntary behaviour, or purposeful and goal-directed activity (intentional action). Similarly, Sen's capability approach advances the importance of an agency-based approach to freedom. The person is seen primarily as an agent and doer, pursuing various goals and accomplishing various objectives and obligations. The agency aspect is situated in relation to self-determination, authentic self-direction and personal autonomy. Therefore, a responsible agent can decide what he/she should achieve. This implies that agency is a person's ability to act on behalf of what he/she values and has reason to value (Sen, 2000). In this regard, a particularly disturbing trend is that more and more young people have given up looking for work, thus diminished agency. For instance, between 2008 and 2015, the number of youth in South Africa who had become discouraged, increased by 8% (Stats SA, 2019). Similarly, for

Malawi, what is concerning is the fact that, the National Statistics Office of Malawi (NSO) in 2013 estimated that, 82% of the youth (15-29 years) were neither employed nor actively looking for / seeking work.

Could the stereotype that young people are lazy to work hold true? These trends to some extent directly indicate two reasons. On one hand, it could support the notion that the challenge could be a result of youth's laziness, lack of motivation and will to find employment. For example, according to the latest 2018 data from the Business Council of Australia, in June 2016 there were 282,900 apprentices and trainees in training, down to 45% from 515,000 in June 2012. Opponents of this idea, however, argue that the report signifies perhaps what they have called a common misconception used to explain these plummeting training rates, namely, that young people are too lazy to undertake the physically demanding work that often comes with being a tradesperson. Nevertheless, if the stereotypes hold true, the Council warns that: 'we're looking at a generation of apprentices who show up late, spend the day on their telephone and run off the job site as soon as it's time to knock off' (Business Council of Australia, 2018:1).

Conversely, this thesis argues that, it could be the case that many young people have been trying to find jobs and are now threatened by risk of prolonged periods of joblessness and exclusion. As such, because of this 'forcibly prolonged period' youth have lost confidence and given up on looking for work. A lack of job or full-time job prospects and endless rejections might have left young people feeling bleak about their futures in Malawi, as evidence from the study shows:

It is not that we are lazy to look for work, but how do we compete when the system does not provide trainee jobs after we finish our training and the jobs being advertised require one to have at least 5 years work experience. How then as graduates do we compete with that? (Interview with Focus Group B, 2019).

Below is also what came out from another Focus Group Discussion with youth:

Honestly it makes you feel unwanted and that you're not really worth much even after all your hard work at school, most companies are looking for already qualified people, they just have to give us a chance to prove ourselves. But, also nepotism has become common in most government departments which is where most of us look for work to gain

experience, as such why even bother looking for work spending borrowed money sending out so many valueless CVs (Interview with Focus Group A, 2019).

The findings from the FGDs correspond with what the UNDP (2015) pointed out, that young people in Malawi feel discouraged to apply for jobs, as they know they will not be considered for government posts. Mwanza (2014) indicated that, bribery, nepotism and irregularities in the appointment of candidates for positions are the most common forms of employment-related corruption in the country. Buist (2014) is also of the view that it is because of this joblessness that young people feel shuttered, often times with a low self-esteem and a declining agency. The thesis argues that the current NYP seem to have a poor grasp of the “agential” challenges and “structural” constraints confronting young people in the daily grind to improve their lot. The Social Exclusion theory explains that labour is not only the basis for economic independence but also promotes certain moral values, such as self-respect and a desire for advancement. As such, it is not surprising that the UNDP (2015) advocates that, social exclusion should be understood first and foremost as exclusion from the labour market. Here, too, the NYP would appear not only blind and deaf to every day youth experiences, but also guilty of a poor reading of the mood and reality on the ground.

However, it must be pointed out that young people’s declining agency as seen from the above paragraphs could be an effect of unemployment rather than a cause. As such there is a need for further research to examine if indeed young people are lazy and lack the agency or will to look for employment in Malawi. Such a study would be able to reconcile further the mutual causation of structure and agency. Willis’ 1995 work further elaborates in the next section.

6.12. Youths’ Dependency Syndrome

Scholars such as Willis (1995) bring back the structure and agency dialectic by arguing that addressing the problem of increasingly limited job opportunities cannot be adequately solved by focusing on the individual’s agency and their skills and employability. For example, an individual might be accused of laziness or lacking in skills because they cannot find employment, when such jobs might not exist in the first place (1995:85). This is a common occurrence in Malawi for two reasons. First, the country has a very limited economic base (and therefore, poor growth and prospects for diversification). Outside the agricultural sector and

minor related industries and sub-sectors, the private sector has limited job-creation capacity. Second, government, which is the largest employer, has not been offering enough paid internships and other on-the job interventions for young people since 2014. The argument was that government has no money, this translated to close to 30,000 youths in the intervening 5 year period, with no job prospects (OECD, 2018). Buist (2014) validates the above argument thus:

Telling a young person to 'Just get a job' is not tough love. It's like going to the Sahara and yelling 'Just rain! Where will they get jobs? Today's youth has spent years chasing qualifications no one ever asks us about. The notion that algebra would ever be useful seemed fishy, but the grownups insisted: education, no matter how apparently arbitrary, leads to jobs. But the minute we graduated, something switched in employers' heads. The same generation who had us sit Sats and the 11-plus and the 12-plus and Sats again and mock GCSEs and real GCSEs and AS-levels and A-levels and BAs and MAs and MScs and PhDs decided education is an afterthought. Experience is what's really important. We were told that education was a ticket to employment and jobs, when really it's more like vague directions to the station and guess what, there are no jobs even if we wanted a job (Buist, 2014:1).

The point of the above is to underline that while there may be merit in calls for more agency and agential action on the part of young people, such agency does not happen on a 'structure-less' plane. Instead, young people, as shown above, have to constantly negotiate seemingly intractable structural and systemic challenges in their journey to self-actualisation (Hay, 2012; Moon, 2017). This emphasises Giddens' work on 'structuralism' who elaborated that an individual's autonomy is influenced by structure; structures are mostly maintained and adapted through the exercise of agency. He presents agents and structures as mutually constructive entities with 'equal ontological status' (Giddens, 1979). Pinpointing the stand of this thesis that structure and agency must be seen as complementary forces that, in reality, constantly shape and influence one another.

Nonetheless, this situation too is also not unique to Malawi. Maliki (2013) reported that, in Nigeria, the unemployment rate in the country has been blamed on youth's over-dependence on government jobs. Experts suggest that the inability of youth to harness their entrepreneurial skills has played a major role in the rising number of unemployed youth. It is a fact that government alone cannot employ everybody (ibid). Economies around the world today are private sector-driven. As such, there is an urgent need for the mindset of the youth to be geared toward self-

reliance. It is agreed that one of the greatest ways of solving unemployment is preparing the youths to become self-reliant. There is a need for the youths to make deliberate efforts and embrace skills acquisition programmes to enable them to learn vocational skills of their choice, establish a small and medium scale enterprise, and be masters of their own destiny. As in Malawi, the role of the state (creation of an enabling policy environment for youth development, including overhauling the education and training system in ways that gear it for the work place), is an essential prerequisite. Similarly, the private sector (no matter how small), needs to take a keener interest in the skills acquisition and training process in the country. It needs to help in informing and shaping the curriculum, so that it reflects what is required by the economy. So, there is an intimate relationship and tension between young people's agential challenges and the structural constraints that frustrate such agency. In any case, an effective policy response would have to factor in these dynamics and reflect the real world young people are experiencing every day.

6.13. Technology and Youth's Agency

Through a comparative analysis, according to the Business Council of Australia (2018:1), the real issue rather is how to get young people interested in work and how employers can attract and hire high quality candidates from the current generation. The Council recommends that, in the twenty first century, it is important to incorporate technology into the everyday work environment. It is estimated that 53% of Millennials say they are more likely to take a job with an employer who uses the same technology as they do (ibid). If these estimates are true, this could pose as a big challenge for Africa, as Mohapi (2017) writes that, Africa is, in general, lagging behind in embracing the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). In Malawi, the government has not really done much in technological advancement of the country. Only one in ten youths know how to use the computer and the internet, as such most of them are not even marketable (OECD, 2018). This presents a big challenge for youth employment and advancement.

Yet, again, the above demonstrates the centrality of an appropriate and enabling environment in unleashing the agency of young people.

6.14. Skills Mismatch and the Labour Market

The NYP calls for greater linkages between the labour market and the education and training system to ensure that curricula are aligned to the needs of the labour market and that youth are being trained in fields where employment opportunities are available (NYP, 2013:13). Evidence from this study shows that a substantial share of workers appears to be underqualified in Malawi. According to a normative definition of qualification mismatch, which assigns necessary education level to occupations, around 81% of young Malawian workers were underqualified, 17% had matching qualifications and 2% were overqualified in 2014 (OECD, 2018:53). Young workers without at least primary education are underqualified for any occupation, and similarly, holders of a primary education certificate are underqualified except for elementary occupations only. Interestingly, while close to 75% of secondary general graduates are adequately qualified, only 61% of secondary vocational graduates have mismatching qualifications. The difference stems exclusively from a higher share of overqualified secondary vocational young workers. In general, those with post-secondary vocational and those with tertiary education are adequately qualified and also a relatively large segment may be overqualified. See the table below on normative qualification mismatch among the youth in Malawi, providing results from the school-to-work transition survey (ibid).

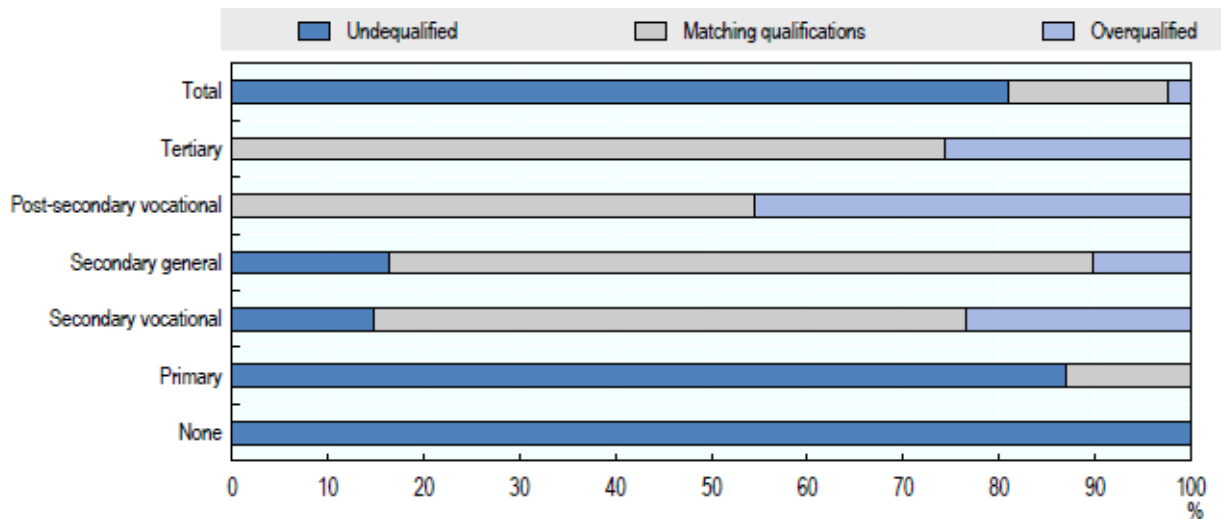


Figure 6.1: Normative Qualification Mismatch among the Youth in Malawi. Image source: ILO, 2014 cited in OECD, 2018

From the above figure, while there is some skills mismatch among those with a tertiary education, a lot of youths with primary education, who are the majority of youths, are actually under qualified. This appears to have become a central challenge for Malawi, probably affecting all layers of society, from the productivity and efficiency of businesses, the current and prospective welfare of young people in the country, aligning with the growing global debate over why so many young people cannot find employment. This also confirms what the Employers Consultative Association of Malawi (ECAM) in 2017 illustrated:

As ECAM we are very concerned with high youth unemployment in the country, one of the problems is that there is skills mismatch between the industry needs and what the training institutions are providing...from the employers' side there is always a challenge, we have a lot of youth out there coming to us looking for work (ECAM, 2017 cited in Ngwata, 2017).

A finding from the study further indicates:

You see the main challenge is that our education system gives us theoretical knowledge. You will see a child from standard one to form four all they learn is theoretical knowledge, physics and chemistry that cannot be applied in real life, and then they don't have skills they can use to get employed or bring them money. Unlike in the past where in secondary schools they would train in technical education, arts and a little bit of carpentry so that when you graduate even if you don't continue to university you would still get a job...you see teachers must attend to 500 students, so you see right now these guys may graduate with a degree but you will see that they haven't accumulated the knowledge they were supposed to get as such they don't compare well on the global market because of their inadequate skills. Inadequate academia-industry linkages are also not equipping them with enough practical experience to easily negotiate through the first years of their working life (Interview with Participant D, 2019).

The above finding could be true for many African countries as the newly drafted South African National Youth Policy 2020-2030 (2020) also does acknowledge that, the rapid pace of technological advancement has had a negative impact on employment and job creation, particularly in the productive sectors of the South African economy owing to mechanisation and automation. The current wave of the 4IR present an opportunity and a challenge as it has the potential to disrupt almost every industry through large-scale automation, requiring adjustments to labour market structures. The current education system has not enabled many youth to have skills that match the structure of labour market that has become more technology driven and high

skills dependent. As such the policy recommends the need to build 4IR capabilities within youths in line with the ‘Industrial Internet of Things’ to harness the benefits of the fourth industrial revolution (Draft NYP 2020-2030, 2020: 9). Malawi must move in the same policy direction as chapter three demonstrated that, up to 12 years of basic education does not necessarily equip a young Malawian with skills that can assist him/her to generate income for livelihood. Youth lack skills that can help them develop livelihoods and contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. Skills imparting strategies must be developed with greater youth participation (National Youth Manifesto, 2019).

In line with the above, a participant of this study also had this to say:

There is visible evidence that foundation for employability skills can be laid early at the elementary schooling stage. Children will need to understand the world around them by asking questions, experimenting and drawing inferences rather than repeating what is there on the textbook like it has been done for decades. They should be given the opportunity to “make and break” things that solve real-world problems. Giving children the freedom to express their own thoughts and feelings without fear is critical too. When children learn how to understand, apply and communicate early in life, they also gain the confidence to take on new and difficult problems in the workplace when they grow up (Interview with Participant M, 2019).

Even though the participant indicated that investing in the elementary schooling stage is critical, there is a growing debate that the first 1,000 days of life, the time spanning roughly between conception and one’s second birthday, is a unique period of opportunity when the foundations of optimum health, growth, and neurodevelopment across the lifespan are established. Yet, too frequently in developing countries, poverty and its attendant condition, malnutrition, weaken this foundation, leading to earlier mortality and substantial loss of neurodevelopment potential (WHO, 2019). Chapter seven will elaborate on how interventions based on the knowledge of these critical windows has the potential to exert a profound global impact. For now, however, it suffices to underscore that the role of the state and the private sector matters in reshaping and reframing the education and training system, to one that responds unequivocally to the socio-economic needs of an ever-changing labour market and economy.

6.15. Lack of National Agency and Misplaced National Priorities

Even though post-democratic Malawi inherited a country characterized by poverty and unemployment, as per evidence from this research, it appears that different administrations have lacked the political will to resolve the raging rates of youth unemployment. The UNDP (2015), reporting on the Nationwide Youth Consultations, found that despite the fact that the youth are the majority in Malawi there is inadequate funding to the ministry responsible for the youth. This has affected the capacity of the ministry to adequately address some of the pressing challenges, including unemployment, and defeats some of the objectives of the NYP. This inadequate funding questions government's eagerness to address youth-related challenges. A participant confirms:

No, they have just made their priorities to other things, but with those priorities, the focus has been on the areas where they know they will benefit politically. The truth is, if they know they will get political mileage out of it then they will prioritize on that for example in terms of agriculture subsidy, it would look more valuable for them to give fertilizer to 1000 people that for that same money to use on creating job opportunities. Creating jobs is not tangible, people are not going to touch those jobs and it will not even be them many times creating the jobs it will be private companies, they will just create a conducive environment. So that will not give them credit, but if they give people fertilizer people will praise them perhaps even vote for them. Their priorities are for winning votes (Interview with Participant F, 2019).

The above is a clear indication of one of the reasons why there has been inadequate policy response to youth unemployment in post-democratic Malawi. Sen (2000) shows that, on an individual level, a responsible agent can decide what he/she should achieve. The same can be applied to the national context. Even though the cost of unemployment is too high to ignore, the above evidence denotes that the priorities and decisions of Malawi are misplaced and misguided.

6.16. Summary of Agential Causes of Youth Unemployment

In summary, even though the pronouncements in the NYP point to improving the socio-economic status of youths through increased incomes and creating more and decent employment for the youth, the Policy has failed to recognize the need to develop a conducive environment that would contribute to nurturing young people's agency to look for employment. The education system is also not geared to encourage young people to be innovative and entrepreneurial. In

addition, there is a skills mismatch as over 80% of young Malawian workers are underqualified. Structure, agency, social exclusion and capability approaches are critical lenses through which to view the deficiencies of Malawi's NYP.

Structural Causes of Chronic Youth Unemployment in Post-Democratic Malawi

The next section looks at the social landscapes that have triggered protracted youth unemployment in post-democratic Malawi.

6.17. Inadequate Support Systems and Structures

Contrary to what the NYP says, there is overwhelming evidence from this study indicating that young people in Malawi lack conducive structural, financial and educational support systems for their employment and participation in the labour market. Malawian youth face well-being deprivations in various dimensions: low educational attainment, limited formal work opportunities and poor working conditions. Adolescent, female and rural youth are particularly at risk of multiple deprivations (OECD, 2018). Evidence from the study confirms this as shown in the quotes below.

Even if somebody wants to start something, it's also an issue of culture, culture of appreciating is not so good. No family support, even the people around you, let's say I am in a community, my immediate friends, family they will be discouraging you, no you can't do it, you can't do it! And by the end you are demotivated. If you think out of the box they will tell you no and no one will support you. And by the end you are demotivated. So yes there is that issue if you are doing your PhD for example you are expected to find work and stay in town not start a business. If you think out of the box, they will tell you no and none will support you (Interview with Participant F, 2019).

Graduates expect too much. That's the line – often stated as if it came out of the blue. Young people are told 'You can do anything!' from their upbringings, now apologies if it takes them a while to recover from the disappointment of realising it was all, well, a dream it's not arrogance, it's the embers of optimism. But no one is there to support them, not parents not government they just have to learn to deal with such challenges. Do you

think snobbery comes easily to someone who's rejected for a cleaning job for 'not having enough experience and support' (Buist, 2014).

The above quotes from research findings, illustrates that sometimes lack of support systems ranges from families, friends, and social networks to the government and the private sector. To facilitate this support system and create an enabling environment, the state can and should provide social security that enables citizens to create their own economic security (WEF, 2017). South Africa, for example, has the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) which was set up by the government to provide interim relief to workers who are between jobs. Such a fund could also be replicated in Malawi to provide social security to young people who have lost their jobs. South Africa also has a system that allows business to contribute to skills development, through Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA). This process is facilitated via a Skills Fund, a skills tax that is levied from all businesses. This is all in recognition of the critical role business has in driving skills production in the country (South Africa Skills Development Act, 1998c) of course, this intervention is not a silver bullet in responding to youth unemployment, but it does go some distance in providing training and employment opportunities for the youth. The UIF is an area that should be explored in the NYP in addressing unemployment, though it must be commended that the TEVET system through the TEVET Act enjoins upon every employer to pay 1% of basic pay roll into the TEVET Fund. However, whether the fund is used appropriately and effectively calls for further study and research.

6.18. Lack of Access to Microfinance

Access to microfinance remains a big challenge for the young people in Malawi. Youth fail to secure loans because most lending institutions insist on collateral, which youth in their predicament of multiple vulnerable factors cannot provide (UNDP, 2015). A participant in this study from a banking institution confirmed this:

Let me be honest, it's very hard for a young person to be given a loan at our bank. Maybe those that are in their thirties because they have a steady income and have collateral. But imagine giving a loan to a 21-year old? We ask for many things, remember the bank is a profit making organisation, so we have to make profits and make a return on our investments. We cannot risk it by giving to someone who has no collateral. Unless if their parents get the loans on their behalf (Interview with Participant W, 2019).

Another participant also validates:

A young person who has dropped out of school, there are no proper mechanisms to cope. Someone from the rural area, for example if you look at the issue of loans, they will need collateral which is so difficult for a young person. Even if you look at just opening a bank account, it takes a long time and it's not easy for them. So, they don't have a platform or a support system where they can discuss these issues (Interview with Participant F, 2019).

Apart from obtaining loans from banks or microfinance institutions, it is important to mention that the NYP does mention the need to establish and facilitate a Youth Development Fund, to foster a dynamic climate for youth entrepreneurs to access credit. Evidence on the ground shows that the challenges have been compounded by the fact that the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDEF), has not tended to benefit the intended audience of young people in Malawi; because of lack of transparency in the administration of the facilities/initiatives. As such, it has become a double blow; youths cannot access a bank or microfinance loan and cannot access a government development loan. Moreover, because of the economic outlook of the country, there are prohibitively high interest rates for most of the loan schemes, which puts them out of reach for most young people. Even if they manage to secure the loans, the devaluation and high inflation of the Malawi currency has not been stable, making it hard to repay the loans, with dire consequences of forfeiture. Unfortunately, no structures or support systems have been put in place to help young people in these predicaments (UNDP, 2015), this underlines the contradictions of the NYP's policy intent and actual implementation (and impact) of said policies.

6.19. Lack of a Conducive Environment for Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship and productivity of the youth in the country lacks innovation and resources to engage in gainful employment. Young people do not have information, for example to access tenders floated by government/companies, not to mention that taxes are generally high, which tends to erode the little that may be generated. Most policies favour international investors, especially large multinational firms rather than young locals. Consequently, space for real youth empowerment, growth and entrepreneurial success are stifled (UNDP, 2015). If favourable conditions were in place, entrepreneurship can be a pathway to decent work and have positive impacts on the economy. As is to be expected, youth face disproportionate barriers to succeed in

entrepreneurship in Malawi. While tapping into the underexploited potential of youth entrepreneurship holds great promise, it is certainly not a panacea, as it cannot address the overall youth employment challenge on its own. This is especially true in rural areas, where young people are much more disadvantaged, vulnerable and mostly work in subsistence agriculture. This raises questions of how rural youth fare in entrepreneurship, a matter of great concern that has been insufficiently treated in the literature and the NYP so far. With few entrepreneurial opportunities, it is not surprising that drug abuse, once thought to be a concern of the cities, is causing extensive harm to millions of young people living in the rural areas of Malawi - a cost too much to ignore (Mwanza, 2014). Chapter three further showed that there are also no opportunities for young people running their organisations to either advance their skills or upgrade youth work into wage earning employment. This has led to many young capable youth leaders to abandon volunteerism for wage employment. Here too, the NYP falls conspicuously short in exploring tried and tested policy options that have proven to ameliorate the youth unemployment challenge. Culture is another hindrance to entrepreneurship, the subject of the next section.

6.20. Cultural Aspects

As shown in chapter two and three, culture provides important social and economic benefits. Identifying with a particular culture gives young people a sense of belonging, heritage and ancestral identity. Through culture, the youth can have access to social networks which provide support and shared values and aspirations (National Youth Manifesto, 2019:43).

Scholars such as Hofstede (1991), have been increasingly looking at culture to explain the divergent economic fortunes of nations. In chapter two Pettinger (2017) has shown that, in some of the developing countries, the social and cultural outlook and context of the societies may not encourage initiatives and entrepreneurship, and this increases unemployment. Most societies and economic obligations expect the youth to obtain some measure of education that enables them to get a job and earn a salary to support their families. In this regard, critics such as Kuhumab (2018:134), have criticized Sen's notion of capability by arguing against its individualistic position. While Hollenbach (2002) emphasizes that 'to be a person is to be-in-relation-to-other persons'. Here, it is realized that the individual finds a meaning in the community in which

he/she lives and is able to develop his/her capabilities in mutual cooperation with other members constituting the society (2002:131). This mutual cooperation in society may at times hinder individual capabilities. All the same, the NSO (2008) estimated that, in Malawi, only 18% of the youth were self-employed, which is taken as a proxy indicator for the extent of youth involvement in both entrepreneurship and the informal economy. A participant in this study verifies this:

Lest we forget, our parents and teachers asked what we wanted to be when we grew up, then demanded a ransom of education, good grades, outstanding grades, experience and a charming interview manner. We've done what you asked, society and still no jobs! How much have we invested in our education, it has been a challenge with the education system, now we can see that. They have not pushed young people to be entrepreneurs nor innovators and also our culture we have been trained to get a job. Our thoughts are centered in finding jobs (Interview with Participant Q, 2019).

The above quote agrees with what the National Youth Manifesto (2019:9) highlighted that, while many would like to venture into sustainable businesses they are confounded by a lack of entrepreneurial skills and business knowledge as the education curricula is biased towards preparing future employees rather than entrepreneurs. Young people who venture into business are unable to survive or grow due to cultural hindrances, inadequate policy and programmatic support for start-ups, in a hostile macroeconomic environment characterised by high interest rates which make access to business finance and capital almost impossible for young people.

Even so, as a reminder, Hofstede (1991) acknowledges that, this does not mean culture is destiny, for instance, Asian countries have successfully transitioned from this state. He gives an example of Japan, Singapore and South Korea, where the entrepreneurial base was judged to be lacking initially. Industrial policy was first oriented towards complementing or creating the domestic entrepreneurial base, through facilitating the entry of foreign entrepreneurship and providing financial support to allow entrepreneurs to take on more risk in imitating and adopting foreign technology or by forcing firms to enter new industries. In this regard, the WEF (2015) argues that, there is a role for government policy to shift culture towards risk-taking and innovation, which ultimately signifies that culture is subordinate to robust and effective institutions. The South African Government through the newly drafted NYP does propose that

the Department of Basic Education should introduce entrepreneurship and employability education as part of South Africa's school curriculum (Draft NYP 2020-2030, 2020:8).

Even though the NYP does acknowledge the need to encourage young people to take up entrepreneurship, the Policy has remained silent on how Malawi intends to address the issue of culture and entrepreneurship, for instance in circumstances where parents force youth to look for work rather than start a business. How then does one expect a change in perception of the youth? This silence has thus proven detrimental to the youth venturing into self-employment or independence. This is a major policy weakness on the part of the NYP, one that has had devastating consequence on young people's prospects in entering, relatively unhindered, the entrepreneur space. Family and community must play a significant role in directing and guiding the young people in pursuing their future. Entrepreneurship and innovation must be encouraged at all levels. The government, through various policy instruments, has a critical role to play in driving and encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation. The National Youth Manifesto (2019:9) recommended the need for a bigger programme of entrepreneurship which could create a bigger domestic market so that when the youth produce they can also sell, and a need to provide start-up business loans and equipment for technical college graduates. All this requires agency and transformational leadership from the government.

6.21. Political Interference

Chapter three of the thesis did show that the government did set up the Youth Development Credit Scheme (YDCS) and the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDEF), specifically to provide financial support to young people interested in setting up businesses. However, as Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2017), have demonstrated, perhaps harshly, both the YDCS and the YEDEF have not been very effective or efficient. Though they were both championed as youth initiatives, the primary targeted youths were basically those affiliated to the parties in power. As a result, both initiatives have failed to pass the sustainability test (ibid). It is unfortunate that over half of the participants indicated that in Malawi political interference has become the norm and a hindrance to young people's economic opportunities, innovation and creativity. Providing financial assistance to young people must be commended, but there is a need for far more efficient structural mechanisms that would ensure that potential for success and meritocracy and

not political connection is the overriding criteria. For now this is not the case as a participant ratifies:

It is painful to learn that YEDEF implementation was not critically monitored by government despite numerous alleged malpractices rocking the fund's disbursement exercise. Most of those loans are politically motivated such that access is limited to or only for those with ties or links to some influential people thereby making them at the core of corruption and lack of transparency. We already know if a political party starts an initiative, it means only members of that party are eligible to access. If I belonged to an opposition party I wouldn't receive the loan (Interview with Participant S, 2019).

The above strongly supports the notion that youth initiatives have always been captured by partisan interests, resulting in such efforts benefiting only a selected few who are politically connected. These initiatives have proved unsustainable as political, rather than business logic determines the modus operandi (National Youth Manifesto, 2009:9). Yet another omission and shortcoming on the part of the NYP, this, too, is crying out for policy attention.

6.22. Challenges with the Education System

According to the UNDP (2015), education plays a critical role in a person's wellbeing and welfare. Through investing in education, young people, have better employment opportunities. Not only raising the education levels but also drawing on innovations in science and technology would increase Malawi's competitiveness in the global economy. De Lannoy (2017) demonstrates that, life's chances are determined by the quality of education, just like the concept of social exclusion, shows how education is key to employment. Similarly, the NYP states that, education is a major priority in the development of young men and women, as it is through education that they can be better prepared for life. The personal development of the individual young person, along with the development of local communities and the country as a whole is said to be inextricably linked to the provision of a quality, relevant and well-managed education system (NYP, 2013:15). To be effective however, the education and training system must be customized and geared to current and future labour market and economic needs of the country. This is, yet again, the province of a dynamic, responsive and well planned state policy. A test the current NYP is falling short on.

Nevertheless, Makwakwa's (2017) work shows that young graduates find it notorious to become part of the active economic population in Malawi. Their uneducated peers tease and make fun of them for remaining at the same economic level as them, even after having studied and graduated from colleges and universities. In Malawi, it appears, there is a very thin line between an unemployed graduate and someone who is not a graduate, as they are all economically broke and unemployed (ibid). However, NSO (2013) affirms that, Malawi's labour market absorption rate, just like most countries, depends largely on a person's level of education. The WEF (2016) also indicates that, education is not contributing significantly to employability. It is said that just like South Africa, most companies in their distrust of the quality of the education and training system received by young people in Malawi, have raised the bar for entry into low-level jobs ever higher. Unfortunately, by escalating the educational requirements for entry-level jobs, employers are effectively shutting out a large pool of potentially good young employees.

Standards have dropped although enrolment has increased, which is also critically important for improving average education attainment. The key solution is to renew our efforts through labour market programmes and the education system, vocational education is an engine room for equity. The current schooling system focuses more on memorizing facts such as historical dates, scientific definitions and mathematical formulas. Consequently, young people leave schools with grades and certificates but are lacking in practical skills and confidence (Interview with Participant O, 2019).

Unsurprisingly, opposing the above is an official from the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) in Malawi who maintains that:

If you check and follow the news you will find out that we have a list of universities and tertiary institutions that we have accredited. Some that were there last year are not even there this year meaning as the standards go down we keep a check (Interview with Participant B, 2019).

In this regard, Mohapi (2017) has shown that, universities and colleges are too slow to react to the rapidly changing developments occurring in business and the labour market. This means that by the time a graduate is ready for work his or her skills and knowledge have become superfluous, given the dynamic and ever-changing skills requirements of the work place. For instance, Mohapi (2017) pointed out that the world is experiencing the 4IR yet very few countries in Africa are embracing this digital era. As a consequence, there is a large, highly-

skilled young workforce that, nevertheless, lack the requisite twenty first century skills to do the job (ibid). There is a need for regular curriculum review as stated in the NYP while keeping in mind that, today, young people are feeling out of their depth in workplaces revolutionised by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation. Development of skills to solve real-life problems, communicate and collaborate with others are critical to succeed in twenty first century workplaces (Banerjee, 2017). This could be the reason indeed why the South African Government recommends the need to build 4IR capabilities within youths in line with the ‘Industrial Internet of Things’ to harness the benefits of the fourth industrial revolution (Draft NYP 2020-2030, 2020: 9). Even so, the only way to get around this is through the active participation of employers in the development and constant innovation of the curriculum. After all, it is the employers that will eventually have to employ these graduates. This critical insight is sorely missing in much of the NYP’s policy assumptions.

6.23. Interests of Different Stakeholders

The NYP clearly states that, in order to ensure that all stakeholders aspire towards the same goal, share the same vision and are accountable in the provision of youth services, there is a call for proper inter-agency coordination at all levels. Crucially, involve the private sector and other employer bodies in the work and planning of such agencies. Unfortunately, Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2017:5) are of the view that, in terms of structural constraints, there is destructive competition between the MoLYMD and the NYCOM. This is attributed to lack of clarity regarding their mandates. This has resulted in fierce contests and turf wars between the two, centering around who is best positioned to champion the youth agenda. The persistent conflictual relationship between the MoLYMD and the NYCOM (coupled with the absence of employer bodies and the private sector) has made it difficult for the two institutions to work together in championing the cause of the youth in effective and impactful ways. There is a need for further investigation into this.

6.24. Informal Sector Challenges

According to the MLFS (2013), when growth in paid employment in an economy does not match the increase in the labour force, self-employment becomes an alternative to a majority of job seekers as a source of livelihood. Overall, 55% of persons in employment are self-employed

(MLFS, 2013:4). The prevalence rate of self-employment is higher among females than males, higher in rural areas than urban areas, higher among young people than adults and higher among persons with fewer skills and less education than among persons with more education (ibid: 4). The extent to which the informal sector in Malawi can absorb the large pool of unemployed youth requires further investigation.

However, just like in other African countries such as South Africa, the most prevalent form of youth employment in Malawi is through insecure and informal employment in the formal sector through sub-contracting, with the absence of formal employment contracts, employment benefits and social protection, as well as temporary employment, under-employment and the resultant underpayment. All these labour market trends have intensified the precarious position of young people in the labour market. Evidence on the ground shows that, often times, young people work most in the informal sector, but not out of choice but because of a lack of opportunities in the formal economy and in the absence of other means of livelihood (ILO, 2015). Some participants had this to say:

The informal businesses lack the potential for growth, trapping employees in menial jobs indefinitely. So, you see youth would not enter in this space by choice. Given a choice we all would like to see our children in the formal sector with white collar jobs (Interview with Participant B, 2019).

Most times you need to clarify when you ask a young person if they are employed or not, when you dig deeper you will see almost every young person is involved in a business or entrepreneurship or they work in informal sector, they are not completely idle. But what you should be concerned about is they don't do this out of choice, it's just a survival mechanism (Interview with Participant D, 2019).

These trends do not support Sen who states, that development should be seen as expansion of freedoms and choices, which can be achieved by removing restrictive and limiting structures that inhibit a person's capabilities (Sen, 1999). He not only illustrates the importance of freedom but also argues about considering its intrinsic worth, which should not be ignored while evaluating its role in economic assessment. Young people must be able to choose and have substantive freedoms to lead the lives they have reason to value, choice is essential in this regard. It must be noted that Sen's argument was based on an economy that also was free, which freedom is a

function of a dynamic and growing economy. This, too, is a function of a number of factors and circumstances, not excluding a responsive and robust economic growth and development policy environment directed, primarily to improving the plight of young people (ibid).

6.25. Tax Incentives in the Informal Sector

Even if young people in Malawi were engaged in the informal sector out of choice, the challenge would still persist, as the Malawi government is contemplating extending the obligation to pay tax to include this sector, as one way of mitigating the effects of the donor- funding freeze. It is said that the move is intended as a blueprint for future budgetary sustainability. A 2014 FinScope Survey revealed that the micro, small and medium-enterprise sector, in which some 91% of businesses operate informally with no registration, generates at least MWK73 trillion (USD1 billion) in annual turnover, and employs more people than the formal sector (Mtika, 2017). Even so, a June 2017 research paper published by the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change suggests that Malawi's aim of incorporating informal businesses into its tax base may amount to wishful thinking. According to this paper, Malawi, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone have struggled to transform and generate growth that is inclusive for all their citizens despite having great economic potential. As such, it is suggested that governments, supported by their development partners, should focus on developing sectors that have strong economic potential for competitiveness and creating jobs (Tony Blair Institute, 2017).

Still, those who are of the opposing view such as Kaluluma (2017) indicate that, Malawi government's plan to rope the informal sector into the tax system is 'feasible', but it would require the government to embark on a massive taxpayer education programme. Nevertheless, what is called for is clearer policy integration, one geared to set outcomes, in the case of Malawi, youth development. The NYP is lenient on this.

6.26. Unregulated Informal Sector

There is also a need to understand that the informal sector most times, if not at all times, is unregulated, meaning there are no employee/employer contracts to uphold, no proper wages and employee protection, there is no consumer or environmental safety regulation, and there is no federal aid in times of recession in the industry, meaning the entire sector is prone to business

cycle fluctuations (ILO, 2015). For a young person, all this is a cost too high to bear and contributes to the precarious conditions of young people in this sector. As a result, propelled by other factors, they fail to adapt. There is a gap therefore in NYP and government policies to set up proper structures to protect these youths in the sector. Unfortunately, nothing has been drafted in the pipelines, which proves worrisome. Having an NYP policy alone is not enough, proper structures and functioning programs is required.

6.27. Family's Economic Survival

Estrada et al (2011: 102 - 131), writing in the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, note that the participation of adolescents in the informal economy is a contentious issue, due to the restrictions and laws in place for youth to have work. For example, the main dilemmas that arise when children engage in work is that privileged adults and a growing number of activists denounce children participation as forced labour. Due to the participants being young, the adults are viewed as 'bad' parents because first, they cannot provide for their children, second they are stripping the child of a 'normal' childhood, and third, child labour is frowned upon (ibid). Evidence however shows that, the reality for most families is that the children are not being forced to work, rather they choose to help sustain their family's income. Young people become forced by their circumstances, meaning that because of their conditions, they do not have much of a choice. Youth have the capability to acknowledge their family's financial limitations and many feel that it is their moral obligation to contribute to the family income. Thus, they end up working accepting any allowance or wage, because they recognise that their parents cannot bring home enough income alone, thus their contribution is necessary, and their involvement becomes instrumental for their family's economic survival (Estrada et al, 2011). The above circumstances have been overlooked in the outdated NYP and there is a failure to mention the need for structures that protect children from being exploited, or perhaps creating jobs that are suitable for youth. However, it should be stressed that this thesis in no way condones that children and youth should be involved in hazardous work.

6.28. Existence of Other Bigger Challenges

A notable number of participants in the study indicated that the reason why the Malawi government has not given much attention and recognition to youth unemployment is because

there are other bigger challenges that exist pertaining to young people such as HIV, teenage pregnancy and early marriages. As such, some participants from notable organisations felt it was only expected that government had to give urgent attention to those other ‘bigger’ challenges. The above notion, to some extent, could indeed be true as the figure below shows that teenage pregnancy and motherhood (% of women ages 15-19 who have had children or are currently pregnant) in Malawi was reported at 43.6 % in 2016, according to the World Bank collection of development indicators (World Bank, 2016) figure 5.2 below illustrates.

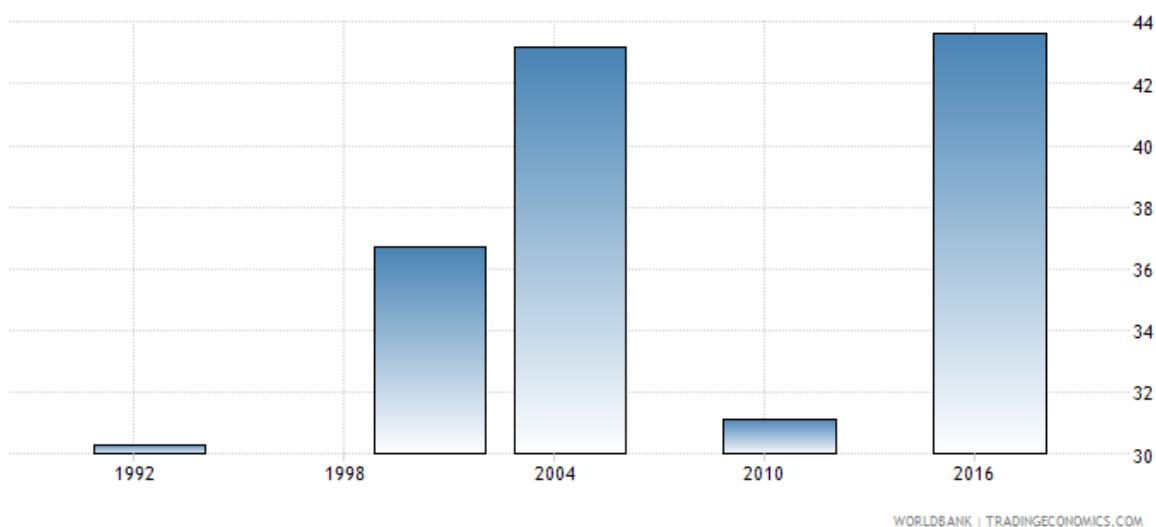


Figure 6.2: Teenage Pregnancy and Motherhood. Image Source: World Bank, 2016

Nonetheless, this thesis emphasizes that the world of work is a crucial phase in the lives of young people, with long-term implications for both their individual well-being, society and that of the nation as a whole. The World Bank (2007), stresses that, youth is a period characterised by transitions, and these can be threatened by unemployment. Success of other transitions depends on this transition from the world of education to the world of work. Similarly, Marindo et al (2008), argue strongly that, unemployment not only bring personals struggles but having a large share of the young workforce unemployed could lead to reduced productivity and reduced Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

I think most of the attention has been put towards reproductive health, which is good and important if we are to control the population. But, then you know every year in Malawi we have close to 300,000 new job entrants while we only have about 30,000 new jobs being created per year, so as such we have too many people graduating from schools. The demand for people to get employed is increasing and at the same time unemployment is increasing and this calls for a new way of thinking to create jobs of these young people (Interview with Participant S, 2019).

Moreover, it is important to mention that there is mounting evidence that acknowledges that teenage pregnancy is often times associated with low education, family disruption and female unemployment (SitAn, 2016). As such, SRH and addressing teenage pregnancy, as important as they are, cannot be addressed in a manner isolated from economic empowerment. As Sen (1999) clearly attests, freedoms are intertwined and a failure to attain one individual freedom may affect others and overall affect capabilities and human development.

6.29. Summary of Structural Causes of Youth Unemployment

In summary, evidence from this study confirms that young people in Malawi lack a conducive structural support system for employment and participation in the labour market. It is clear that lack of access to microfinance, lack of a conducive environment for entrepreneurship, cultural aspects, political interferences, challenges in the education system, diverse interests of different stakeholders, an unregulated informal sector, the existence of other bigger challenges and poor institutional arrangements are some of the structural reasons for chronic youth unemployment in post-democratic Malawi. These are all areas that have to be critically addressed in a future youth policy.

Overall, the reasons for the persistence of youth unemployment in post-democratic Malawi discussed in the two previous sections illustrate and emphasise the interplay between structure, agency, desire and capacity, as figure 6.3 below illustrates.

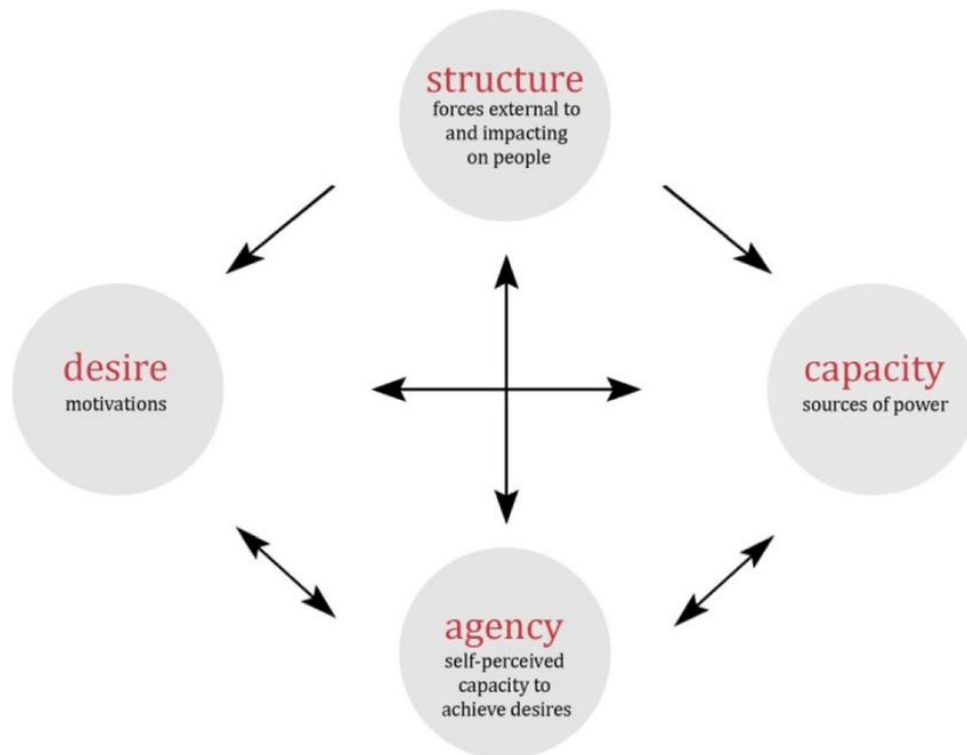


Figure 6.3: Interplay between Structure, Agency, Desire and Capacity. Image Source: Van Houte, 2014

On the one hand, youth unemployment can be ascribed to inadequate structural support, gradually shaped by government decisions (and indecision) and welfare policies since 1994 (structuralism) while on the other hand, the challenge could be a result of youth’s lack of motivation, will or skills to find employment and lack of political will from the government (intentionalism or agency). As such, recognising this means that the influence of government interventions on youth development will therefore depend on whether the policy encompasses both in responding to unemployment as the thesis reconciles the mutual causation of structure and agency. All these factors seem to condense around the need for an effective set of policy interventions that brings together youth formations, employer bodies and the state.

Young Women and the National Youth Policy

6.30. Gender and Access to Education

In chapter three Gabriel (2003) points out that, underemployment and unemployment among the youth is a problem everywhere, but it is more severe in developing countries, due to lack of skills and high illiteracy rates, particularly among women. The NYP states the need for equal access for young men and young women to participate in decision-making and in fulfilling civic duties. Evidence however shows that, in Malawi, gender biases are seen in sectors such as education, which in the end has a negative influence on women's participation, decision-making and leadership roles. For instance, even though the NYP and the Republican Constitution of Malawi provide for the right to education for all citizens, the SitAn (2016) on the review of the TEVET system shows that it enrolls few learners and that 'access is biased against girls.' The research also confirms, as noted hereunder:

At TEVET or community colleges most of the things they teach are plumbing, carpentry, gardening so you see all these are not regarded as a girl's work so chances are low that you would get in as a girl (Interview with Focus Group B, 2019).

Although there also seems to be perceived bias by NGOs and government to favour girls and young women over their male counter parts, as noted below:

Indeed, there is favouritism, NGO's and government favour girls yet there is a 50-50 campaign. Therefore, it is my prayer to NGO's and government to balance up beneficiaries in secondary schools. I understand that some well-wishers and organisations are supporting, but it seems it's only girls who are benefitting much. I would like government to have a look at that so that there is gender equality (Hon. Hastings Chafewa, Dedza Central East - Government, cited in the Verbatim Report of the First Meeting of the Second Cohort of Youth Parliament, 2017).

This is, nevertheless, a preponderance of evidence showing that these efforts have yet to translate into gender equity in opportunities both in the work place and society more broadly. Research continues to show that, Malawi also has the fifth highest incidence of sexual violence in Sub-Saharan Africa and gender inequality, particularly in secondary education, is also high as there

are only 4 women to every 10 men with secondary school education (Mwanatakwe and Bhatia, 2017:15)

6.31. Gender Gaps in the Labour Market

Sustainable Development Goal number 5 (gender equality and women's empowerment) emphasises the achievement of gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls (UNDP, 2018). Mwanatakwe and Bhatia (2017) articulate that, this is an issue of particular concern for Malawi, which did not achieve its gender-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Despite representing a higher share of the labour force, the employment rate for women at 74.3% is less than that for men at 85.7%. Women in unpaid work constitute 93% as compared to 79% of men. Moreover, the gender wage gap at 39% is also high. Further, only 3% of women are registered owners of commercial land and 14% of firms have women in top management positions. Likewise, women represent only 17% of parliament, a figure far below the 50% African Union (AU) target (ibid: 12).

It is stated in the NYP that there is a need to develop macroeconomic policies that focus on job creation particularly for young women (NYP, 2013). This, the policy does not do in any convincing way. Comparative research continues to show that only six countries in Europe enshrine gender equality in laws affecting work. Rwanda, Burundi and South Africa are the only three countries in Africa reducing gender gaps in the formal employment sector. Rwanda being the only country in Africa with more women than men in parliament (Masina, 2016). Accordingly, there is a gaping policy hole in Malawi's youth policy arsenal, geared to radically improving the lot of girls and young women. In a way, what is called for is comprehensive framework designed to challenge Malawi's deeply entrenched patriarchal socio-economic and political structure.

Agriculture

6.32. Child Labour in Malawi

Though the 2012 Employment (Prohibition of Hazardous Work for Children) Order specifies which occupations are hazardous for children, and forced labour is prohibited for youths under 18, the NYP overall turned a blind eye to issues of child labour in the agriculture sector. Even though, existing data on child labour is outdated, as the last Malawi Child Labour Survey was carried out in 2002, high levels of poverty in the country have resulted in high dropout rates in schools. Young people thereafter turn to the labour market, taking up low paying and potentially harmful jobs in agricultural estates. Children employed in this sector are exploited and paid very low wages, which barely improves their wellbeing. Most children in Malawi have to end their education before high school, to help tend farms or care for younger siblings (Chinsinga and Chasukwa, 2017). This points to what the UNFPA (2017) argued, namely, that employment policy legislates against child labour, and exploitative child labour is clearly defined, but is not fully aligned with the realities of young people needing to study and work at the same time. Children under these circumstances have not been included as priority groups in the NYP.

6.33. Capacity of the Local District Councils

The significance of Local District Councils resides in the fact that these local state entities are closest to the daily experiences of people. They are at the cold face of policy and the regulatory space. Local district councils must be capacitated with adequate resources and measures in place to monitor agricultural estates and other places of work, to ensure that no children are being forced to work under hazardous conditions. Not only is this critically important as local state agency's absence in action, but also the NYP ascribes no policy role for these structures in shielding young people from the harmful effects of child labour and exploitation in the agriculture sector.

6.34. Agriculture and Youth Unemployment

Babbie (2016) shows that, at a macro level, agriculture is the 'backbone' of many Sub-Saharan countries including Malawi, where it accounts for 37% of GDP. Similarly, a comparative analysis shows that, agriculture accounts for about 70% of the total labour force and 30% of

GDP in Kenya. Secondly, at the household level, rural households in Kenya rely heavily on subsistence agriculture for food consumption. Thirdly, the country's labour market lacks the ability to meet the demand of young job seekers as a result they engage in the sector (ibid: 12). What is true for Kenya, is also by and large true for Malawi.

Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2017), writing in a policy brief titled 'Agriculture and Youth Unemployment in Malawi', states that, in Malawi, the youth should be key in the agriculture sector which is not only the backbone of the country's economy but also an essential part of the social fabric. This is, however, not the case. The youth are not actively involved in the agricultural sector, apart from the harmful and exploitative participation as child labourers and in insecure work opportunities. One of the reasons could be that the policy environment is not favourable for young people (Chinsinga and Chasukwa, 2017). Although agriculture is officially described as an engine of economic growth and is the largest employer in the country, efforts to comprehensively address the question of persistent youth unemployment have been few and far in between. The main problem is that the growth of this sector is largely on autopilot and not a consequence of any strategic government inputs in driving such growth. For instance, there is no information or systematic investment, the road network and infrastructure is poor, and so too, the creation of markets and commodity sales, low commodity prices, unfavourable trading laws and minimal government assistance in the agricultural sector more generally, are all prevalent challenges. One of the important gaps, for instance, is that while the proportion of women and youth in waged employment in the non-agricultural sector is used as an indicator to judge the success of increasing opportunities for women, no specific mention is made of young people (ibid: 2017). As such, there is a call to create a conducive policy environment for the youth in Agriculture and the NYP should be the central point of reference for these policy changes.

6.35. Agricultural Sector as the Engine of Economic Growth

Most policies including NYP and programmes in Malawi do not pay explicit attention to the agricultural sector even though its central theme is the promotion of youth empowerment. Agricultural policies and programmes offer the youth minimal opportunities in any agriculture-related trade. According to Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2017), the problem of youth unemployment in the country can be successfully dealt with when serious attention is paid to

forward and backward linkages between youth policies and the agricultural sector, in ways that cover the entire value chain of possibilities in this critically important sector. Since the disbanding of the MYP some initiatives targeting the youth have been implemented but they have not been very well linked to the agricultural sector which is the lifeblood of the country's economy at the moment. It is also the one sector that could potentially lay the foundation for high growth, diversification and expansion to other sectors, sub-sectors and industries. This is exactly how the high-growth economies such as South Korea, Taiwan and Malaysia were initiated (Moon, 2017). Furthermore:

The apparent neglect of agriculture as a potential source of employment for the youth could mainly be due to the political imperatives associated with a democratic political dispensation in a neo-patrimonial setting whereby the state functions largely as a transfer pump of resources to the favoured sections of the community. Political elites are often preoccupied with devising strategies that can maintain them in power in the five-year electoral cycles. In this scheme of things, the youth are often prioritized except for being captured as instruments of terror by the politicians (Chinsinga and Chasukwa, 2017:2).

The Fertiliser Subsidy Programme (FISP) for example, with the potential of increasing food security among smallholder farmers excludes the youth as its beneficiaries. The main reason for their exclusion is that the youth do not own land and are energetic enough to work elsewhere to generate income to purchase agricultural inputs on their own from the market. Yet the obsession of politicians with FISP as a vote-spinning machine has made it impossible to shape its implementation dynamics in a way that it would make the agricultural sector in general more productive and attractive to young people (ibid:3). The South African Government in the draft NYP recommended that schools in rural areas should be able to use local farming land for practical or experiential learning in agriculture. Furthermore, local farmers can mentor learners (Draft National Youth Policy 2020-2030, 2020:19). This recommendation could be considered keeping in mind that the Malawi's economy revolves around agriculture (Mwanatakwe and Bhatia, 2017).

6.36. The Youth Job Creation Initiative

Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2017), writing further on 'Agriculture and Youth Unemployment in Malawi' acknowledge that the discontinued Youth Job Creation Initiative (YJCI) launched by

President Joyce Banda on 15 March 2013 appeared poised to bring back agriculture to the centre of youth development. The YJCI was launched as a strategy for dealing with the problem of chronic youth unemployment by exporting unskilled, skilled and semi-skilled labour to countries where they could acquire skills and knowledge that would in turn be put to productive use upon their return. The target countries for youth labour export were South Korea, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates. The programme had huge potential to contribute to the development and subsequent transformation of the agricultural sector. The agricultural sector in Malawi is deemed to be relatively backward and the exposure of a good number of the youth to South Korea's advanced agricultural system could have, perhaps, contributed to the drive to modernising the country's agricultural sector (ibid). There is a need to rethink the role and place of agriculture, as a driver of job-creation and general youth development in the NYP.

6.37. Youth Development Fund and Village Savings and Loans

As it has already been demonstrated, both the YDCS and YEDEF have not been very successful, in part, as argued in this thesis, because these were not centred on agriculture. Village savings and Loans (VSL) are a type of village bank through which members make voluntary savings and thorough which they can access small loans.

Some youths engage in Village Savings and Loans (VSL) initiatives as a means of accessing loans since most microfinance institutions are not youth-friendly, nor willing to offer loans to the vast majority of young people in Malawi. Youth form groups through youth clubs or join other groups that allow them. The UNDP (2015) pointed out that access to VSL is a challenge to some youth, for example those with disabilities are usually restricted from joining VSL groups, as they are considered to be inactive and a high risk. As such, the NYP should have pointed out that, special consideration of credit should be extended to disabled youths; after all they have been identified as priority target groups in the Policy.

Some young people with disability just do not have money to save because they come from poor families and others are seen to be likely defaulters and, as such, a risk. I would like to speak on lack of access to loans and credit facilities. This is also a challenge to the youth because they are always denied access to loans in different micro-financial companies due to the fact that they do not qualify as they do not have collateral. This challenge makes the youth not to have capital, labour and land for production that will

make youth not venture into entrepreneurship and to go further with their education (Hon. Enelesi Namame, Thyolo Central - Government, cited in the Verbatim Report of the First Meeting of the Second Cohort of Youth Parliament, 2017).

Migration and Remittances

6.38. Youth Unemployment and Migration

In chapter two literature unveiled that there are multiple reasons pertaining to migration but, among the many reasons to migrate, an elevated unemployment rate, increased susceptibility to working poverty and a lack of good quality job opportunities are said to be key factors shaping young people's decision to migrate abroad permanently. That chapter further showed that, youth in Africa tend to demonstrate higher willingness to move permanently to another country: 38% in Sub-Saharan Africa and 35% in Northern Africa in 2015, (globally the figure stands at 20%). For instance, among Sub-Saharan African countries, the percentage of youth willing to migrate ranges from 77% in Sierra Leone to 11% in Madagascar (OIM, 2016).

Findings from the study collaborates with the above and shows that just as in the 1940s and 1950s, the unemployment crisis in Malawi is behind the rise in migration of young people abroad in search of better education and employment opportunities in neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe, Botswana and especially, South Africa. It is estimated that, weekly, there are about 50 Malawians who access Zimbabwe either by boarder jumping, smuggling or human trafficking (Mkumba, 2016). Focus Group Discussion provided with the following evidence on labour migration:

You know in December that's when you can actually feel it, young people come from South Africa with their "GP" car number plates and everyone knows they are making money. They bring so many groceries and goods for their communities. Young people here as a result all wish they could go to South Africa even if it means just coming back with a smart phone, you will get the respect. Someone from South Africa bought kabaza (bicycle) and even I to come here I used the same so you can see the difference when you go to South Africa. Most of these young people are not in this country because they do not have jobs. They migrate to other countries. The government must put proper changes to job creation strategies to minimize migration. Some go to Mozambique to work in tobacco farms even if it means just buying a bicycle. In the farms they are forced into

agriculture and get exploited, girls are sexually abused... the salaries we set in this country are not enough to satisfy the needs of young people. So, me as a young person I would rather go to South Africa and get money that can satisfy my needs (Interview with Focus Group A, 2019).

An official from the Department of Labour also acknowledged that youth are migrating to neighbouring countries:

...we get shocked every time especially when we give young people in Mzimba loans, the next time you follow up you will hear they used the loan to go to South Africa (Interview with Participant C, 2019).

The above evidence indeed reconciles what Banda (2017) in the book 'Migration from Malawi to South Africa: A Historical and Cultural Novel' Banda (2017) revealed that, the numbers of migrants to South Africa increased in the post-1994 period partly as a result of mal-administration by successive democratically-elected governments in Malawi. This development weakened the country's otherwise promising economy and impoverished the rural masses.

Unless things are done differently regarding young people's economic opportunities in Malawi, many youth will always migrate to neighbouring countries in search of better economic opportunities. The IOM (2016) does acknowledge that migration represents an opportunity for youth to provide a better life for themselves and their families, pursue educational aspirations, improve their professional skills prospects, or satisfy a desire for personal development. Unfortunately, many young migrants frequently get trapped in exploitative and abusive jobs, including forced labour (ibid). The NYP is lenient in addressing migration related challenges facing youths. The section below further elaborates on lack of documentation.

6.39. Lack of Documentation

One of the participants in the study had this to say on lack of documentation of migrants:

Malawians are flocking to South Africa every day and the numbers are growing, most of them say they want to find jobs, yet they lack proper documentation. The situation is very worrisome (Interview with Participant Q, 2019).

The South African television programme *Carte Blanche* that airs on M-Net investigated the fraught journey to South Africa many young Malawians experience. It was found that for some youth trying to get to South Africa without travel documents the journey ends in robbery, sexual assault or even death (SA Migration International, 2017). The 2011 census estimated that 86,606 people who were born in Malawi lived in South Africa alone (Stats SA, 2011). This number, however, could be higher because, given South Africa's recent history of xenophobic related attacks, foreign-born migrants are increasingly cautious of revealing their origins (NSO, 2019). All this signifies the lengths that Malawian youth are willing to go to in pursuit of better economic opportunities. Unfortunately, none of these issues have been addressed in the NYP, which questions government's agency and urgency in addressing Malawian youth's pressing challenges.

6.40. Remittances

The IOM (2016) points out that, in Africa (especially in countries like Lesotho and Madagascar) remittances make up a significant source of revenue and disposal income, supporting families and driving investment. This calls for appropriate policy responses so that Malawi can take advantage and reap maximum benefits from migrant remittances. Nonetheless, Malawi should not take migration as a substitute for job creation strategies. Migration often times, as indicated above, comes with so many precarious living conditions. This is particularly true for young people. The NYP is silent on the critical role of remittances in economic growth; this is despite Malawi's long history of labour migration.

The National Youth Service Programme

It is commendable that the NYP mentions the need for the establishment of a National Youth Service Programme similar to the MYP, which would provide a medium for participation of all categories of youth in the social and economic life of the nation (NYP, 2013:22). This thesis (as will be shown in the next chapter) favours a similar programme to the MYP, as a critical building block to what should be a comprehensive policy response. Apart from the call quoted above, there is no evidence in the NYP how the policy dots will or should be connected, in order to give rise to policy pipe-line called for. In this regard, Kachipande (2013:1) shares these thoughts:

The basic development-focused tenets of the MYP programme should be reviewed and revived with adaptation where necessary. It should also be depoliticized and not have any party affiliation – recruitment should be transparent and non-partisan. The MYP programme had the effect of teaching youth the values of hard work, self-reliance and self-determination. It taught them leadership skills and moulded students into responsible citizens who took responsibility for the country. Youth coming out of the programme had a sense of purpose and self-worth. At national level, MYP contributed towards food security and state security (Kachipande, 2013:1).

One good example of a well-functioning National Youth Service Programme is the National Service Scheme (NSS) in Ghana, where the goal of the programme is to provide hands-on training to youth while furthering the country's social agenda. The NSS fosters young people's route into paid employment, sustainable livelihoods and entrepreneurship. Malawi can learn from this NSS of Ghana.

Education and Training for Jobs (Labour Market)

Malawi's ill-conceived youth development policy has had a devastating impact on educational performance, development outcomes and more broadly, socio-economic impact. For one thing, the current education and training policy package has yet to take a comprehensive approach (from the first 1,000 days to the labour market. Second, the policy package has yet to include a diversified secondary schooling system that allows for technical, vocational and so-called vocational streams. This, in order to allow learners choice and flexibility much earlier in their schooling journey, that is, to choose learning streams that correspond with their interests, strengths and future job prospects. Additionally, the education and training package simply does not seem to be guided or driven by any skills (including scarce and critical skills) consideration. This has all contributed to large swathes of skills and scarce skills areas and academic endeavours being side-lined in favour of an academic certificate, more precisely any certificate. Consequently, large numbers of young people have been discouraged from pursuing any educational endeavour. It does not help that the numbers of degreed and unemployed young people are growing by the year. Indeed, many of them seem to swell the ranks of the unemployed or the informal economy sector.

Therefore, some of the key policy options that a country should consider (as part of a comprehensive youth development package) are enhancing education and skill development to nurture a productive labour force to enhance economic growth. This will, in turn, help in the creation of mass quality jobs for the rapidly growing working age population and sustaining a healthy working age population to improve economic productivity. What is more, under-education of young workers still remains a significant concern and an important hindrance to transformative growth. Over 60% do not have the level of education expected to make them productive on the job (SitAn 2016; UNFPA 2017; OECD 2018). Related to these limitations is the inadequate financing of the education sector, the subject of the next section.

6.41. Financing the Education Sector

A comparative policy analysis shows that, one focus of most African youth policies is education. ‘Education and skills training’ articulates the Ghana’s youth policy document, ‘are critical to the development of a young person’s productive and responsible life’ (National Youth Policy of Ghana, 2010). Kenya’s Youth Development Policy (2018) is emblematic, pledging 19 distinct strategies, including curriculum reform, bursaries, upgrading facilities, linking training institutions’ offering to market needs and encouraging partnerships outside government. In a similar manner, Mauritius’ Youth Policy 2010), adds the distinct goal of capitalising on informal, lifelong learning, encouraging young people to improve themselves. All these policies emphasise that education is crucial for the sustainable development of any country.

In Malawi, the government encourages communities to introduce preschools into their societies but does not support these facilities financially. Therefore, most preschools are run on a voluntary basis and remain unregistered. 44% of preschoolers face undernourishment in Malawi and the majority of caretakers work for free and they lack the necessary resources to effectively teach the young children. Without proper preschool opportunities, children in Malawi are missing the opportunities that create a strong foundation for their future learning. With around 4.6 million students enrolled in schools throughout Malawi, only 8% of them complete secondary school (OECD, 2018). It must be commended though that over the past five years, the Malawi government has committed to allocate 18% of the national budget toward the education sector (ibid). With this commitment, Malawi will have one of the highest education expenditures

in Africa. However, when comparing the educational quality with other countries such as Egypt, it can be noted that Malawi does not allocate its funds efficiently as most of it disappears in administrative pockets (ibid). The NYP inadequately offers solutions to these challenges.

6.42. Access to Education for Youths with Disabilities

It must be stated that young people with disabilities have the right to special care and the right to equal and effective access to education, training, health care services, economic empowerment, sports, cultural and recreational activities. The Malawi Disability Act (2012) demands and ensures inclusive education at all levels of education. The National Statistics Office (NSO) of Malawi, estimates a prevalence of childhood (<18years) disability of 2.4 %. By these estimates, the most common type of disability was listed as hearing impairment (23%), followed by visual impairment (16.9 %), reduced mobility (15.8 %) and speaking difficulties (9.3 %). The Malawi constitution enshrines the principle of non-discrimination while the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) focuses on the right of children and youth with disabilities to education. Despite all the legislation and instruments, youth with disabilities face numerous forms of discrimination, violence and social exclusion (National Youth Manifesto, 2019: 27).

Most schools in Malawi still do not have disability-friendly learning structures - not to mention that very few schools, whether public or private, have special needs teachers. This translates to pupils with disabilities lacking the required attention they deserve, thus proving a hindrance to their learning (UNDP, 2015). It is significant to mention that evidence from this study shows that access to technical colleges also remains a challenge particularly for young people with disabilities, as some who apply are turned down because of various challenges related to their disabilities. Findings from this study confirm the challenges that youth with disabilities face:

Madam Speaker, on facilities for disabled students, for instance visually impaired students. Most schools do not have braille which the visually impaired students use. This could be better if government provided braille in schools (Hon. Violet Imaan, Mulanje-South East – Government side, cited in the Verbatim Report of the First Meeting of the Second Cohort of Youth Parliament, 2017).

I want to emphasise on the facilities for the disabled. Most of the disabled people are discriminated in the way that most of the government or private schools, use steps on

their doors to get into various classrooms so it is difficult for those with disabilities who use wheelchairs to enter classrooms. Government should consider constructing slabs so that those with disabilities should be able to enter various classrooms (Hon. Kondwani Mphoka –Lilongwe City South East -Opposition, cited in the Verbatim Report of the First Meeting of the Second Cohort of Youth Parliament, 2017).

The situation above is so regardless of the fact that youth with disabilities are indicated as a priority group in the NYP. This also contradicts the third Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS III) which places persons with disabilities as priority group in social and economic development. This puts in question the credibility and effectiveness of the Policies and national strategies. Human development would really mean making the person more capable through investing in social sectors and public infrastructures and in the long term these goals will improve the health, education and social capabilities of people (Alexander 2007:10; Sen 2000). There is a need to promote meaningful inclusion by helping to overcome barriers associated with ethnicity, class, gender, disability and other factors of exclusion. This aligns with both the Disability Act (2012) and the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 4 which aims at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all (National Youth Manifesto, 2019:28).

6.43. Transparency in Bursary Programmes

On the issue of education bursaries, findings in the study revealed that government bursary programmes are also not administered in an open and transparent manner. Most would-be needy students fail to access the bursaries and instead those coming from influential families, political connections, privileged backgrounds and ‘the right ethnic groups’ access the funds. It is recommended that government should ensure that the officials tasked with the responsibility of approving bursaries are of high integrity and moral uprightness, more audits of the programmes should be in place and clear selection guidelines must be set so as to reduce cases of corruption within the programmes. Unless these issues are addressed, the current programmes are not effective and well deserving youths are denied of access to bursaries and ultimately to education. The NYP has not focused on these dynamics and the need for meritocracy.

6.44. Training for Jobs and Vocational Skills

Many young people with capacity to train in vocational skills do not have access to relevant training institutions because they are few and as such can only enrol a limited number as one youth parliamentarian pointed out.

Not all students have the opportunity to be selected to universities of Malawi. This does not mean they are failures; they can have something to do which is by being enrolled in technical colleges. Madam speaker, in Mulanje there is no technical college where the youth can be enrolled. This has led to increased crime rate and drug abuse in Mulanje (Hon. Violet Imaan, Mulanje South East- Government, cited in the Verbatim Report of the First Meeting of the Second Cohort of Youth Parliament, 2017).

There is therefore an urgent need to establish more vocational skills training institutions in Malawi.

Progress on Strategy Implementation

This section focuses on the relationship between policy intent, implementation and implementability. In particular, the concern is to show that in large measure, the NYP is not a rigorous policy response to the wide-ranging, multi-pronged and complex socio-economic problems confronting young people in Malawi. The document is weak on implementation strategy, monitoring and evaluation but it is also extremely weak as a catalyst for change. The study revealed:

Government's noisy rhetoric on its initiatives aimed at bettering the lives of the youth is like popular deep house beats with no lyrics. They adopt policies after policies with no clear implementation strategy and no evidence showing whether the so-called initiatives are bearing fruits in the lives of the youth. No, no more, enough of policies and documents, we have enough let's look at implementation and what the policies address. Enough of theoretical terms we need to go out there, I would rather have two policies that can work. Honestly, we already know the problems and perhaps even solutions on top of our heads but now the problem is to go out there (Interview with Focus Group B, 2019).

Evidence from the study suggests there is minimal implementation of the NYP that has now expired with very marginal implementation of what government had committed to undertake in

the 5-year period. Some of the reasons for poor policy implementation include poor implementation strategy, inadequate capacity of MoLYMD and NYCOM, lack of ownership by the youth and lack of policy integration.

6.45. Poor Implementation Strategy

Any strategic plan must be focused and include manageable numbers of goals, objectives and programs. Fewer focuses could be better than numerous. In addition, assigning adequate resources to accomplish those goals and objectives is key to success. The NYP appears to have many objectives, making it difficult to monitor progress. Furthermore, Komwa's (2019) work shows that, in Malawi, the mechanism employed to measure the success of the youth policy and programs has been affected by improper coordination and political motives. Since most youth programs are politically motivated, there is less or no follow up on their implementation since parties do not want their pioneer programs to appear as failure programs. This has greatly hindered impact.

6.46. Capacity of the MoLYMD and NYCOM

For effective implementation of the Policy, the NYP states that the Department of Youth, NYCOM as well as relevant district level structures would need to be capacitated to implement the outlined policy statements (NYP, 2013: 23). On the ground, Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2017), noted that, the promotion of youth visibility in a coherent fashion in policy circles is undermined by structural constraints and limited funding for the sector. The youth sector is not amongst priority ones in terms of funding and expenditure. This is unfortunate considering the fact that young people constitute a majority of the total population (ibid).

The youth constitute the largest proportion of the population yet funding for the sector has been quite negligible as a matter of routine. In the 2010/11-financial year, for instance, only MK 826.69 million was allocated which is hardly adequate to empower the MoLYMD and NYCOM to implement their activities on notable scale and in a transformational manner. In 2015/16 budget, even though the MoLYMD was allocated 5.9 billion, 900 million was for operations as MK 5 billion was a loan from China meant for construction of Bingu National Stadium and Mzuzu Youth Centre (Chinsinga and Chasukwa, 2017:3).

It must be pointed out that a lack of sufficient allocation of finances to the Department of Youth and NYCOM is a clear indication that the Malawi government does not really recognise the crucial role of young people in driving a sustainable development trajectory as is claimed in the NYP. Further evidence confirms this:

You see the Council itself is underfunded. Then there is also a misunderstanding of youth development, I remember when we were lobbying for more funding, one of the questions they were asking was ‘we have the department of education, we have the ministry of health, we have the ministry of agriculture in all these ministries we have a percentage that goes to young people for example in hospitals if a person gets sick they get services for free and so on...so what do you mean we are not giving enough to young people as we are giving through other ministries’ so that is the governments biggest argument in terms of funding for youth development. You see the Council itself is underfunded (Interview with Participant F, 2019).

In this regard, in chapter three Mwanatakwe and Bhatia (2017) stipulate that, even though there have been social assistance programmes in the country targeting young people, these are mainly driven and funded by donors, and have not been sustainable. Empirical evidence also points to the same.

Most of activities we have done as government have been pushed or are supported by donors, there has been less that we have done from within with our own resources or commitments. I will give you an example, the funding from UNICEF, the National Youth Council received the least, so you begin to wonder what development we are talking about, in 2013 we had funding of 25 million for the whole year from the government, we could get a few monies from donors but that year we had challenges. The political economy of youth development must be looked at (Interview with Participant F, 2019).

The financial sustainability of youth related activities remains a major constraint. Not to prioritise funding for the youth sector and for youth services is failing future generations.

6.47. Youths and Ownership of the NYP

Even though the NYP mentions that youth are important stakeholders in the implementation of the Policy, just like the 1996 NYP, during the study it was observed that the youth do not see it as their own, let alone have sufficient knowledge of it. Youth use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), such as radios, television, newspapers and social networks on the internet to gain knowledge. Unfortunately, the government has ignored these technologies

which form the media, by not using them as tools for disseminating information. Media literacy is crucial for youth to learn how to critically analyse policy and not simply take it at face value, as well as for reaching the youth to inform, inspire and locate opportunities available. This could be the reason why one participant said:

You see we have a problem of inclusion in terms of information, if the youth policy is meant for young people why is it presented and launched at political rallies or podiums or even in these fancy hotels, how many young people would actually go there and submit their needs? The majority, maybe 82% don't have access, only maybe 10% do. Listen, the government should open up. Before democracy people were disconnected and am afraid that mentality is still there, post- democracy, things must change, youth must know, the government must open up and do civic education (Interview with Participant K, 2019).

Most policies are disseminated at the national level and, in most cases, only to stakeholders involved in the particular sector. Very few institutions outside the sector are included, which in itself limits multi-sectoral engagement. At the district level, few service providers are included in the dissemination and beneficiaries are almost absent (OECD, 2018:77). The NYP is silent on information dissemination; as a result there is weak ownership of the Policy by the youth.

6.48. Lack of Policy Integration

Even though it must be indicated in this thesis that the NYP is part of the MGDS III, too often, national youth policies stand alone and are not integrated into overall national development plans or sectoral policies. With regards to this Policy, there is a lack of horizontal and vertical co-operation and co-ordination among sectoral actors which has often times distorted policy outcomes and create inefficiencies, such as overlapping or counteracting policies. Improving youth well-being thus requires assessing the broader youth environment and determining how policies and social norms may enable or disable youth's development potential (OECD, 2018). This lack of policy integration is exactly the phenomenon experienced in Malawi. Keeping in mind that Malawi has a population of more than 60% of youth, then it is only reasonable that the NYP should be the central point of reference for all national policies.

6.49. Summary of Strategy Implementation

The government has a responsibility to make sure that intentions are turned into results and that the policy process, and specifically the implementation phase has been strengthened and supported. A long-standing problem widely recognized is that, too frequently there is an underestimation of the time, costs, risks to delivery and the overestimation of the envisaged benefits and results. Any youth policy's strategic plan must discuss the complexity of the delivery challenges, have an evidence base, accurate and timely information on costs, timelines, benefits and results, and risks and assumptions. As of now, Malawi lacks mechanisms in place to ensure a more robust policy design. For an effective youth policy, there must be proportionate primary and secondary targets along with agreed timelines and realistic expectations of what constitutes 'success'. Costs and benefits must be distributed equitably for all young people (a Human Rights Based Approach), with adequate political backing. The above sections have shown that, implementation of the NYP has remained a challenge. Some of the limitations include, poor policy implementation, weak capacity of MoLYMD and NYCOM and limited resource allocation to these key institutions, as well as lack of ownership by the youth and lack of policy integration. This has overall affected the NYP's effectiveness and impact.

Institutional Arrangements

6.50. Inter-agency Coordination

According to the OECD (2018:75), youth institutions play a key role in the youth development agenda. Given that youth issues cut across sectors, it is important to understand the organisation of policy co-ordination and its resulting challenges. Developing and empowering young people can be accelerated meaningfully if all key stakeholders contribute specific roles and responsibilities. An in-depth analysis of these institutions is required to understand how policies and programmes are co-ordinated and translate into outcomes. As such the aim of this section is to spot the main challenges of the key youth institutions in facilitating smooth implementation of the NYP.

The NYP identifies numerous institutions responsible for broad objectives without specifying the precise role of each institution. Policies related to youth are presented in the NYP more as a cross-cutting piece for all sectors (OECD, 2018:82). As a result, there is no document providing exhaustive information and directions to the main institutions in charge of youth policies. This may also contribute to a decentralised implementation of youth programmes, by various stakeholders including NGOs and development partners, which itself hampers national reach and adequate M&E. In a country where 70% of the general population are under 30, the institutions in charge of coordinating youth policies (the MoLYMD and NYCOM) should be able to precisely track and provide orientation on youth policies across ministries, and benefit from the required resources and access to information to do so (ibid: 82). Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2017:5) attest to the above by demonstrating that, there is vicious competition between the MoLYMD and NYCOM. They attribute this to lack of clarity regarding their mandates. They further note that this has resulted in fierce contests between the two, involving around who is best placed to champion the youth agenda.

It is unfortunate that the NYP has provided weak inter-agency coordination strategies for implementation of the Policy. Sen (2000:56) writes that, institutions and societal arrangements are of much importance for promoting the freedoms of individuals, in this case youths. Thus, human development as an expansion of individual substantive freedoms occurs with the improving of institutional frameworks such as markets, public services, the judiciary systems, political parties, mass media, and public discussions.

Furthermore, Corrigan (2017:1) is of the view that, perhaps more important, is the management and administration of youth policy. Much is made in published analyses of the need for an institution to coordinate and champion youth policy, yet, where high-level political support is missing, it may have to fight impossible battles against far more powerful interests. By contrast, as in Nigeria, the body responsible for youth policy may monopolise the implementation of efforts, steering resources into chosen initiatives and failing to build the social partnerships that could increase policy innovation and impact. In yet other cases, such as South Africa's National Youth Development Agency, allegations of capture by political interests have damaged their reputation and ability to pilot a youth agenda (ibid). These are all issues to be taken into account

in developing, implementing and ensuring effective interagency coordination of any youth policy.

6.51. Summary on Institutional Arrangements

There is an increasing awareness that policies do not succeed or fail on their own merits. The analysis has shown that, in Malawi, there is a weakness of collaborative policy making and a failure to establish a common ground for public problem-solving and clear mandates of implementing institutions. Evidence shows that institutional arrangements in Malawi have not been posed to implement the goals of the NYP. It appears that in terms of structural constraints, there is rivalry between the MoLYMD and NYCOM which has been attributed to lack of clarity in the Policy regarding their mandates. The non-delivery on the part of government departments and youth institutions on their directive with regard to youth programmes is a lost opportunity and represents a failure to fully comprehend the role youth play in society.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Policy

6.52. Minimum Standards

It is clearly stated that the execution of the NYP requires a comprehensive and effective monitoring and evaluation system with appropriate and efficient feedback mechanisms. When designing policies, it is of benefit to provide specifically tailored outcomes for suggested objectives and also include various inputs and outputs that will allow knowing what the minimum standard of attaining such objectives are in relation to the policy priority areas. Taylor (2011) suggests that minimum standards need to be set in order to meet objectives of policies and outcomes of the government's action. In this context, the NYP fails to pinpoint the minimum standards of ensuring positive welfare of young people in Malawi, as such monitoring the policy objective is problematic and young people are not optimistic about it as one Focus Group Discussions with the youth showed.

You know every government that comes in, comes in with a lot of policies, there is yes a national youth policy but honestly I haven't read or gone through it because I know it's just another theory on the paper. Its substance only on paper. Tell me ever since it was launched, how many things have been implemented? It is just there on paper it is

basically used as a political weapon to enhance party's agenda not really to do something for the youth. So how can I spend time looking at the document instead of me making money (Interview with Focus Group Discussion A, 2019).

6.53. Review of the NYP

The NYP states that the process of policy evaluation should be done by external or independent evaluators and this would be a five-yearly activity or earlier depending on the magnitude of emerging issues that may require fresh policy directions (NYP, 2013:22). It is unfortunate that the Policy is outdated and was due for review in 2018, but this review may not materialize any time soon.

Conclusion

The principal objective of the chapter was to give a critical assessment of the current National Youth Policy in Malawi. Looking at the Policy, key shortfalls, omissions and gaps were identified. The analysis shows that political interferences, misplaced national priorities, lack of capacity and unfavourable institutional arrangements have all contributed to inadequate policy response to youth unemployment in post-democratic Malawi. To be sure, structural and agential factors largely explain the particular direction taken by the country. As such, for a youth policy to be effective and dynamic in the twenty first century, it needs to be embedded by a reconciliation of structure and agency, that is, individual and national political will and conducive social landscapes. In addition, it is imperative that capabilities are enhanced, and that attention must squarely be given to social exclusion dynamics to ensure no youth is left behind. The next chapter goes deeper in outlining and recommending key elements that could constitute a possible youth policy-pipeline for Malawi.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A RECOMMENDED POLICY PIPELINE FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN MALAWI

7.1. Introduction

Through a critical analysis of the National Youth Policy, it was demonstrated in the previous chapter that, despite some laudable elements, that policy was in large measure, not sufficiently poised to address the manifold and deep-seated problems affecting the youth of Malawi. Crucially, that chapter sought to distil specific failings and weaknesses exhibited by the NYP. The limitations are of both a structural and agential nature. As such, as Malawi revises the NYP, there is a real opportunity to re-imagine the state's approach to youth development. As was the case in 1994, this moment requires careful reflection and analysis. Following on the comprehensive critique set out in the preceding chapter, the current chapter is basically a proposition of an alternative policy pipe-line that will more accurately respond to the youth development challenges confronting Malawi in the current conjuncture. This chapter aims to accomplish research objective number four.

7.2. Chapter Structure

The chapter focuses on the following themes that should be at the heart of any new NYP interaction, viz: structure and agency dialectics in policy making and implementation; capabilities and freedoms in policy making and implementation; Human Rights based approach to policy; social inclusion, youth participation and leadership; youth economic empowerment; National Youth Service Programme; education and training for jobs; implementation strategy; institutional arrangements for policy; monitoring and evaluation; and, recognising areas of opportunity. These are deemed to be the basics that ought to be included in any effective youth

development policy in Malawi. The recommendations based on these key themes are provided in the following sections of this chapter.

Structure and Agency Dialectics in Policy Making and Implementation

As demonstrated in the foregoing pages, youth unemployment is both an agential and a structural issue requiring adequate resourcing, carefully crafted and well considered policy interventions. Above all, for any policy proposals to succeed, these need to be accompanied by effective implementation strategies (all underpinned by a robust monitoring and evaluation instrument). The NYP has placed much emphasis on trying to address the structural causes of youth unemployment while neglecting agential factors which pin point to the fact that decision makers/government and young people themselves must have the will to address the challenge. As such, designing agential and structural responses to the challenge would provide conceptual tools for understanding when and how the aspects of social structure influence individual action and interaction and how that, in turn, reinforces or alters rules, roles, and relationships in various systems. That is, they provide a way to uncover the micro processes by which social structure influences action, and how action in turn, influences institutionalisation (Coburn, 2016).

This thesis argues that policy is a set of rules, often supported by resources, that attempts to constrain or channel behaviour in particular directions (and not others) through regulative, normative, or cognitive means. However, policy implementation largely depends on the ability of the aspect of social structure to shape individual and collective action to bring about desired goals. Thus, the question of policy implementation should fundamentally be about the relationship between social structure and agency (Coburn, 2016). Any youth policy should create conditions for youth to rethink who they are and how it is appropriate to act in particular circumstances. In this regard, any formulation and implementation of a youth development policy can be measured by the degree to which the policy alters the rules, roles, and patterns of interaction in a social setting and how that, in turn, influences valued outcomes (in this case, eliminating unemployment) (Coburn, 2016). Accordingly, for it to be effective, any future version of the NYP needs to be underpinned by a firm understanding of structure and agency –

and how these conspire together to drive policy success or failure. This means that a critical departure point is a comprehensive feasibility study that is rooted in an understanding of the workings and operations of the dialectical relationship between structural and agential factors, in the policy arena.

Capabilities and Freedoms in Policy Making and Implementation

Sen's Capability Approach (1999) can be used to evaluate several aspects of young people's wellbeing, such as unemployment, inequality and poverty. Sen's work has demonstrated that there are five distinct freedoms which help to advance the general capability of a person, and these are: political freedom, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security. These freedoms are closely intertwined and failure to attain one freedom may affect others and, overall, affect development. Thus, these freedoms must be at the heart of any youth development policy in Malawi. In this regard, the NYP must stimulate possibilities to ensure that young people in Malawi have choices and opportunities to enhance their capabilities through economic opportunities (such as employment) to have the lives they want to lead. Human development requires the removal of all forms of exclusions that prevent young people from living the kind of life they wish to live (ibid: 2000). Where the youth fail to participate in the labour market and to access other socio-economic services, then they are robbed of their capabilities. As such, the capabilities of human beings should not be permitted to fall below a certain threshold. Thus, a well-considered and well thought out youth policy intervention will be preceded by a feasibility study underpinned by the key capabilities set out in this section.

Human Rights-Based Approach to Policy

Social justice assigns rights and duties in the institutions of society, which enables people, including the youth, to receive basic benefits. There is a need for fair and proper administration of laws conforming to the natural law that all persons, irrespective of age, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender, possessions, race and religion are to be treated equally and without prejudice (Rawls, 1999). The government, through a youth development policy, has a role to play and has a responsibility to sustain an environment of safety, freedom, order and peace and to guarantee

equitable social justice, including basic human rights, for all young people in Malawi. Thus, a Human Rights-Based Approach to policy is recommended. Evidence from the research herein shows that youth with disabilities still lack access to proper education and training due to the absence of disability-friendly learning structures and an inclusive education policy in Malawi. Furthermore, political participation and access to credit facilities also remains a challenge for young people including youth with disabilities, which in the end impacts on the inequality gap and social justice. Findings from the research suggest:

I know someone who was removed from attending training after they had already qualified because he has a disability. But after some intervention they called him back. Even sometimes when looking for a job comments are made by members of the interview panel, questioning the ability of the disabled youth just by looking at them. Even the special needs teachers abuse the learners by calling them names and often label them as 'being difficult'. So what is really needed is sensitization so that people know every person has a right to education, it's an issue of human rights here! (Youth in Mchinji cited in UNDP (2015:7).

This gives implications that the courses offered at the technical colleges are not disability friendly, but is that really the case and if it is why don't they introduce courses that we can manage (Young People with Disability Chitipa cited in UNDP, 2015:15).

The same is true for girls and young women and youth located in the rural outskirts of Malawi. A participant recommended:

More needs to be done to help girls obtain school scholarships, bursaries or education loans so they don't need 'blessers' for them to go to school. Poverty and inequality remains a big problem as families with money can afford to send their children to school and not make them work the same cannot be said about poor families who are in majority in the country (Interview with Participant E, 2019).

All the above confirms that a Human Rights-Based Approach is a fundamental prerequisite for policy impact and success, this approach should be the foundation of all aspects of policy formulation for youth development.

Social Inclusion in Policy

Uneven progress in the achievement of the NYP targets should call for a reassessment of youth development. Chapter six has shown that economic inequality leads to unequal outcomes and threatens the achievement of human development goals. The NYP and its current redistribution mechanisms appear insufficient to counter this trend in Malawi. Inequality is strongly associated with the exclusion of vulnerable groups, women, and youth in rural or remote areas or living with disabilities. These youth who are affected by social exclusion - defined as ‘structural vulnerable’ (UNDP, 2014) often face additional barriers to overcoming adverse conditions. For instance, the thesis has shown that, those with disabilities often lack easy access to public transportation, government offices and public spaces such as hospitals and schools. Three-quarters of Malawi’s youth live in rural areas, where agricultural workers suffer the highest prevalence of poverty; as such they are caught in intractable cycles of low productivity, seasonal unemployment and low wages and are particularly vulnerable to changing weather patterns. For that reason and more, inclusive and sustainable economic growth is crucial to long-term poverty reduction. This calls for the government to encourage inclusive growth, characterized by people’s ability to participate in and benefit from wealth and job creation. The promotion of decent work covering job creation, guarantee of rights to work, social protection and dialogue is vital as the next sections will demonstrate.

Government must have an understanding of social exclusion and its causes and enhance the capacities of relevant stakeholders in civil society to better design and implement youth policies that apply a ‘social inclusion’ lens or which specifically target the inclusion of all defined excluded groups (EU, 2019). Thus, the policy framework advocated here is both rights based and socially inclusive – both are critical success factors for a progressive youth development policy. The Adolescents and Youth Situation Analysis report recommended:

Inclusion means the steps taken to ensure that everyone has equal opportunities – ‘that everyone, regardless of their background, can achieve their full potential in life’. This means recognizing, valuing and responding to diversity amongst young people, increasing their participation but also taking steps to ensure that approaches, structures and strategies all recognize diversity and give all an equal chance (SitAn, 2016: 14).

Youth Participation and Leadership

Any youth policy should recognize youth participation as the active, informed and voluntary involvement of young people in decision making and local and global community life. This implies reaching out to youth, even when they are not forthcoming (Drury, 2010). The government has the primary responsibility to ensure that the youth are engaged at all times. There are a variety of mechanisms available to government to encourage active youth participation, while cultivating ownership of and leadership over all aspects of youth development. The next sections will look at the recommendations from the study on various mechanisms that government can employ to promote youth participation.

7.3. Policy and Programme Design

The study findings have shown that it is critical that the youth be engaged in policy and programme design at all levels to ensure policies and programmes are best fit for young people. Even though the current NYP does emphasise this, the approach to it was unsatisfactory. Young people being invited to participate in consultations and respond to questionnaires, surveys and evaluations are commendable but rather insufficient. In most cases, such involvement is passive, and young people are often side-lined in the most crucial aspects of the policy cycle (OECD, 2018). Ultimately, the policies and programmes implemented do not reflect youth's aspirations and therefore have little or no lasting impact. Meaningful participation for the youth must include influencing policies, reviewing of existing legislation, adhering to principles of good governance and holding government accountable. This must be done at all levels using an all-round, bottom-up approach. The process must involve many youths and ensure participation of youth with disabilities, girls and young women and youth from both rural and urban settings and of all age groups.

I would recommend and call for greater engagement by government with the wide number of youth clubs across Malawi and call for all development structures and committees to include representatives of young people. Youth must be at the centre of the present and future development of Malawi. In the short term for achieving agenda 2030 and in the long term achieving agenda 2063 and sustainable development of the continent (Interview with Participant L, 2019).

7.4. Addressing Negative Stereotypes

Findings in chapter six show that adult attitudes and perceptions are a major hindrance to youth participation and leadership. Many adults prefer top-down decision making as many times adults feel that they know best and young people lack experience to effectively shape the policy trajectory. These attitudes lead to young people feeling under-valued and discouraged from contributing to development. On that account, any youth policy must create deliberate spaces for young people to voice out their concerns. The Youth Parliament is one such initiative. Only if its value and accessibility had not been sullied by party political considerations. To encourage broad-based youth participation, the Youth Parliament must be overhauled, access and participation must, in future be determined by meritocracy and representativity. In addition, the establishment and resourcing of district level youth parliaments, more youth clubs, youth networks and forums as well as youth centres will ensure participation of more youth and deepen awareness and interest, while at the same time, cultivating social activism among the youth. A District Youth Officer advised further on the matter:

My personal experience has been that a lot of clubs that were focused were those from age 20 and above. As such the adolescents have been suffering for long time. The gap needs to be more reduced by focusing more on the 10-19 if we are to build a better 20 and above generation (Interview with a District Youth Officer cited in SitAn, 2016:14).

7.5. Political and Civic Literacy

In general, because of the negative stereotypes, Malawian youth are not interested in understanding national and local development issues, which in turn limits the extent to which they can meaningfully contribute to the development dialogue. Young people's low literacy levels and limited knowledge of many issues of national importance are further barriers to participation. Political literacy is a prerequisite to have an informed and engaged youth. Given Malawi's history, the education curricula must incorporate subjects that focus on politics and civic life in order for youth to understand their civic duties and responsibilities. As the National Youth Manifesto (2019:22) suggests, this thesis also recommends that:

The government should ensure that the content of political and civic education curricula balances rights and duties of citizens to instil a civic consciousness and dutiful patriotism so that young people grow into more active and responsible citizens of their country (National Youth Manifesto, 2019:22).

7.6. Political Quotas

Across the political divide, young people are not deliberately and consciously being groomed for political leadership at various levels thereby perpetuating a perception that political and civic life are preserves of older people and retirees (National Youth Manifesto, 2019). Focus group participants pointed out that:

The Constitution of Malawi and consequently political party manifestos should be amended to make it compulsory for political parties to have quotas and spaces for the youth (Interview with Focus Group A, 2019).

As the Youth Manifesto suggested, the Malawi government should also make sure all political parties adopt and implement measures that make the participation safe for all youths including those with disabilities, young women and those from rural backgrounds (Interview with Focus Group B, 2019).

In this regard, this thesis further suggests that political parties must be mandated to provide financial support and resources in order to avoid political abuse of vulnerable young people. The Malawi constitution should also be clear on the age of retirement for people in politics (presidential, parliamentary seats and councillors); it is unfortunate that as of now there is no specific age cut-off thus limiting space for youth.

Youth Economic Empowerment

7.7. Entrepreneurship

In order to get the policy pipe-line right, there is a need for focused attention to be paid to youth entrepreneurship training. This would require multipronged efforts to improve the business environment, develop skills, and strengthen provision of business development services to micro, small and medium scale enterprises (MSMEs). Mwanatakwe and Bhatia (2017) writing on the Malawi economic outlook detailed:

Entrepreneurship development needs more support in Malawi, given existing talent and Potential. The growth of micro-, small- and medium-size enterprises (MSMEs) could be enhanced through better business support services, improving access to finance and creating stronger linkages to markets. A coherent and co-ordinated approach to entrepreneurial development to spur industrialisation is needed (ibid: 2).

In connection to the youth they recommended:

Malawi needs a stronger culture of entrepreneurship. This could be addressed through appropriate curriculum in the education system and by supporting a business environment that encourages job creators (entrepreneurialism) rather than job seekers. There is also a need to promote mentorships and counselling and establishing business incubators and effective business development services. Particular attention will be paid to youth and women entrepreneurs. To remove the binding constraints to entrepreneurship, the government proposes to promote value chain development and encourage innovation by establishing enterprise challenge funds and supporting business-to-business linkages. An example is the Competitiveness and Job Creation Project, supported by the AfDB, which promotes business linkages for small-scale entrepreneurs. Another example is the UN Development Programme (UNDP), KfW Development Bank, the UK Department for International Development (DfID) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) supported Malawi Innovation Challenge Fund (MICF), which promotes innovation and inclusive business models. Another successful venture is Malawi's new technology hub, MHub, an incubator for technology start-ups focusing on youth entrepreneurs by imparting training, skills development and mentorship (ibid:13).

In addition, based on the findings from the study through interviews, FGDs and document analysis the following is recommended for young people:

- In order to encourage young people to start-up businesses, there is a need to lessen the administrative burden (red tape) and reduce registration costs to make formalization easier.
- As it has been demonstrated in this thesis, access to credit facilities, especially from formal financial institutions like banks and micro-finance institutions (MFIs), is a primary concern for a large number of young entrepreneurs. There is therefore a need to provide information on access to financing, and additionally youth-friendly financial products must be developed and made accessible to youth.
- Government must initiate and implement a mentorship programme on financial literacy and how to sustain start-ups. Evidence shows that most young people are financially illiterate

which affects their entrepreneurship (OECD, 2018). Youth financial literacy inclusion must also be incorporated in the primary and secondary school education curriculum. Any youth development loan programme must be accompanied by adequate financial literacy training.

- In connection, there is a need to address stereotypes that discourage young people from starting up businesses. The government must run campaigns and public awareness programmes to encourage entrepreneurship and break the stereotypes.
- For better integration, rural youth entrepreneurs need support in soft skills, such as information, advice, coaching and mentoring to overcome knowledge gaps. This is regardless of formal qualifications as youth are adept at quickly grasping technology. The potential of basic ICT must be harnessed to improve rural youth entrepreneurs' access to information, knowledge and means of communication (OECD, 2018).
- Government should also establish more youth centres that serve as innovation hubs where youth can experiment and innovate in their areas of interest.
- Initiatives must be promoted for young people with disabilities.

7.8. Youth Development Loans

As the research findings have demonstrated in the previous chapters that access to microfinance remains a big challenge for the youth, there is a need to review and redesign youth development funds such as the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDEF), Youth Development Credit Scheme (YDCS) and others. The funds must be administered by an independent youth organisation to ensure there is transparency, more efficiency and no political interference. As mentioned above, loan programmes must be accompanied by intensive training, coaching, mentoring and hand-holding by those that have been successful in similar enterprises.

7.9. Labour Market Activation Strategies

A comparative analysis shows that the National Youth Development Policy 2009-2014 (2009), in South Africa warns that unless urgent measures are implemented to increase economic participation and employment amongst the youth, the country will lose the opportunities from the 'youth bulge', which may then turn out negatively into what others call a 'demographic tax'. In a similar manner, given the current labour market dynamics in Malawi, the focus should be on overcoming obstacles and building strong incentive systems for employers. This would include:

mechanisms and incentives to assist the unemployed youths to access the labour market; incentives for employers and entrepreneurs to promote job creation; relevant training and skilling to enhance labour market mobility; and addressing information asymmetries through providing paid internships, attachments and job search assistance for the unemployed young people in the country.

The above is also in line with what the UNFPA (2017:27) recommended on how Malawi can harness the Demographic Dividend.

There should be an emphasis on creating an enabling environment for the growth of the sector as the engine for job creation, including the promotion of small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) by enhancing their management capacities and access to financial services, improving key economic infrastructure to ensure reliable energy, transportation, and communications services, and expand investments in other potential areas of comparative advantage such as tourism, fish production, mining, and the ICT- based service industry.

7.10. Decent Work and Decent Wages

Whether employment promotes inclusion or not depends on the quality of the job. Thus, making decent work and decent wages a central issue and a recommendation in any youth policy that aims to reduce unemployment in Malawi. Similarly, the National Youth Manifesto (2019:3) calls for:

The need to revise the minimum wage to MWK120, 000 by the year 2021; and create 500,000 jobs for youth per year translating into 2,500,000 jobs by 2024.

The next NYP could include as one of its targets to achieve a reasonable minimum wage.

7.11. Review of Labour Relations

The growing informalisation of employment in the formal economy through sub-contracting and casualisation has far-reaching policy implications for the system of labour relations in many countries, including Malawi (ILO, 2016). A basic policy for youth development in Malawi should be able to revisit and refine the regulatory framework to overcome the economic and social dualism which exists in the current labour markets. This again would include decent and

minimum wages that can compensate for the weak bargaining position of young people, who are often times the lowest-paid workers, and in the process promote greater equity.

7.12. Social Protection System for the Youth

Social security in Malawi is largely based on employer-employee contributions and is mostly only available for those with permanent employment contracts through the unemployment insurance fund, provision for illness and injury on duty, old-age and retirement funds, and paid maternity leave. Unfortunately, most young people do not have permanent job contracts in Malawi. Due to subcontracted work and the low wages paid in the sectors where most young people work, they are unable to generate sufficient savings to protect themselves against risks such as losing their job through redundancy or injury. These workers, who have some of the lowest wages and highest levels of job insecurity, are therefore more likely to suffer from the gaps in the social protection system (OECD, 2018). Findings from the study emphasise the urgent need for a social protection system that can compensate for the changing dynamics of the labour market and includes ensuring an effective package of social protection and quality public services to enable young people to respond to the ever-changing patterns of the labour market. With countries such as Mali, Tunisia and Tanzania looking into implementing a National Youth Fund, Malawi should be exploring this option too.

7.13. Revamping the Agriculture Sector

Agriculture remains the backbone of the Malawi economy. However, research continues to show that the dominant perception among youth is that the agricultural sector, sub-sectors (and related industries) create job occupations mostly for the illiterate. Neither do many youth, especially the educated, regard agricultural services as a business area worth investing time and energy in. Such narratives have to be reversed. This is mostly the case because every year they are saturated with stories of the dysfunctional agriculture markets that rip off farmers due to government's inability to enforce minimum produce prices (National Youth Manifesto, 2019). Government must introduce the provision of farm equipment, machinery and technology to attract the youth to take up agriculture as a business. A participant in the study suggested:

Furthermore, strategies must be implemented that aim to promote agribusinesses, access to finance for youth and other vulnerable groups in agriculture, in particular by linking them to financial services and agricultural credit. Youth cooperatives must be encouraged to enable youth sell produce at competitive prices as well as promotion of production of high value agricultural produce such as flowers. Vocational education and skills training focused on the possibilities available in agriculture is long overdue and so too, the need for the creation (and expansion) of value chains that can help to catapult the country from a narrow agri-based economy to a diversified, high-growth economy, with endless value chains (Interview with participant N, 2019).

Literature shows that, countries such as China and Israel have successfully reshaped agriculture by using technology which has attracted more youths to the sector. For instance, drone spraying has proved to be five times more efficient than tractor sprayers, let alone manual spraying which is done in Malawi. Large machinery and high-tech equipment has also helped Chinese farmers reduce grain losses in harvesting (Xu and Wam, 2017). Malawi can learn from and emulate such commendable advances that China and other countries have achieved in the agriculture sector.

National Youth Service Programme

There is a need to operationalise the National Youth Service as stipulated in the National Youth Policy (2013). But, the programme can only be effective if its central focus is young people, all young people, is non-partisan and has no political ties. A national youth service programme should be reintroduced in the country on a phased approach with clear timeframe for full roll-out. The MYP bases could be reopened and used as training centres for the programme. Ghana gives a good example of at least a well-functioning national youth service programmes called the National Service Scheme (NSS), where the goal of the programme is to provide hands-on training to youth while furthering the country's social agenda.

Education and Training for Jobs

7.14. Youth with Disability

Evidence from this study suggests that strategies must be formulated and implemented that ensure adequate specialized teaching staff and materials/facilities for persons with special needs in all schools. Youth policy must formulate strategies on how teachers must be trained in

methods for inclusive teaching and for working with children with different disabilities. Furthermore, there is a need to introduce skills development support programmes for youth with disabilities (both physical and mental). And perhaps the most critical is to enhance enforcement of infrastructure standards (including assistive devices) to ensure that they are disability friendly learning structures. An inclusive education policy for disability in Malawi must be formulated and implemented as evidence shows that there is currently none.

There is a need for urgent attention to disability within the education sector, through interventions such as affirmative action, investment in special needs education infrastructure and teachers at all levels (SitAn, 2016:40).

7.15. Education and Skills Training

The call is for the education and training system to be revised, in such a way that it is poised for jobs and growth. To achieve this, greater attention should be paid to resourcing and strengthen vocational education and training institutions (TEVET), as centres for innovation and the production of practical skills that the job market and the economy needs immediately. Efforts at youth employment and development will certainly benefit from the availability of a large army of youth armed not with any skills, but relevant and urgently needed skills and expertise, which will immediately stimulate growth and jobs.

7.16. Capacitating of Technical Colleges

To improve the quality of jobs in the low-skilled sector and to tackle low productivity rates it would also be important to focus on ensuring effective implementation of the national skills development frameworks such as the TEVET policy. The policies must be capacitated and backed by financial resources, at the same time implementation needs to be improved by accountability to ensure that these resources are used effectively and without any political affiliations or interferences. This would require co-operation from key social partners and various non-state stakeholders that have youth development at heart and are independent of the government. Moreover, some (National Youth Manifesto, 2019) have argued that the minimum qualification of the Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) to enrol in technical colleges excludes many young people, especially in the rural areas, who have the potential to contribute to development. Moreover, in line with Agenda 2063 the African Union

recommended that there must be a consideration to install ICT teaching and learning facilities in public universities and colleges to allow on-line tuition.

7.17. Technology in School

The skills that are needed for youth today in preparation for jobs for tomorrow will have to be digital skills, irrespective of people's chosen career paths. The 4IR cuts across all industries. Whether it is art, music, finance, or even sports industries, all are increasingly becoming dependent on digital technologies, not only for automation but also as a key part of how they function, thus making computer literacy and software programming education key for all sectors. Any youth policy must recognise these new trends of the labour market (WEF, 2017). The world of work is changing and careers and occupations that depend on physical work are disappearing in the twenty first century. It is said that, between automation, robotics and Artificial Intelligence, an increasing number of skills are being adopted and perfected by technology. Any job that has a formulaic or cognitively repetitive component risks being replaced. Young minds must be equipped with the capacity to create work, specifically those adept at skills that technology is making redundant (ibid). It is advised:

The periodic review of the education curricula for both formal and non-formal sectors must be undertaken to meet the changing needs of youth in a rapidly changing world and labour market demands. Above all, the exposure of young people to advance technology for example through innovation hubs (such as MHub and Mzuzu Ehub) needs to happen much earlier in the educational journey of young people (at school level). Exchange programmes where Malawian youth can learn from successful youth in other countries should be encouraged and supported (Interview with Participant G, 2019).

Implementation Strategy

7.18. Capacity for Implementation of the NYP

Evidence from the study has shown that the financial sustainability of youth related activities remains a major constraint. Despite the impact of decentralisation on youth participation a lot remains to be done for financial sustainability. Youth networks usually are formed to promote a particular issue, such as HIV/AIDS, climate change or governance, and are generally supported by development partners and other stakeholders, although led by youth. However, the

sustainability of these networks is often challenged if funding for meetings and support for outcomes becomes unavailable (OECD, 2018). It appears also that the NYCOM does not have the capacity to implement youth policy. In addition, literature points out that there seems to be competition rather than complementarities between NYCOM and MoLYMD. This needs to be resolved so that there is no wastage of resources due to the turf fights between the two institutions. This will ensure optimization of resource allocation for the implementation of the youth development agenda.

7.19. Information Dissemination

A research finding continues to show that a central hindrance has been the information gaps that characterise much of Africa's policy environment (OECD, 2018). Information dissemination processes must be at the heart of every NYP if young people's agency is to be unleashed and nurtured. The purpose of such information dissemination is to shape young people's behaviour and practices, so that they embrace, own and become active agents of the said youth development policies. These interventions need to be targeted, focused and directed at the appropriate audience – the youth. Young people mostly use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), such as radios, television, newspapers and social networks on the internet to gain knowledge. Youth centres must be equipped with internet so that youth can connect, interact and learn from other youth on a global level. Media literacy is crucial for youth to learn how to critically analyse policy and not simply take it at face value as well as for reaching the youth to inform, inspire and locate opportunities available. The NYP and other youth development initiatives in Malawi are most times launched at political rallies which raises many questions as to what could be the motive behind that. Focus group participants confirm:

I know there is a youth council that deals with youth issues. You know every government that comes in, comes in with a lot of policies, there is yes a National Youth Policy but honestly I haven't read or gone through it because I know it's just another theory on the paper. Its substance on paper tell me ever since it was launched how many things have been implemented. It just there on paper it is basically used as a political weapon to enhance parties' agenda not really to do something for the youth. So how can I spend time looking at the document instead of me making money. What is needed is that the government must be held accountable on the promises it makes in these policies we have (Interview with Focus Group B, 2019).

7.20. Language of the NYP

Language also plays a critical role in information dissemination. If it is agreed that, overall, Malawi is ranked as one of the lowest performing nations for literacy in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNDP, 2017) then to some extent it can be assumed that most youth would not be able to read a document that is in English. Should this not call for a translation in various Malawi local languages? The language itself in the NYP has to be in a youth user friendly manner, keeping in mind that some youths are below 18. In South Africa, government gazettes are translated into local languages to cater for a wide audience. As such the next NYP should at a minimum be translated into two or three local languages as a starting point.

Institutional Arrangements for Policy

7.21. A Need to Review Implementing Institutions and Arrangements

Policy making for fast-paced sectors requires a number of balances to ensure that the activities of different players are coordinated towards achieving definite ends. With conflicts between the MoLYMD and the NYCOM, the Youth Manifesto (2019:26) recommended the following:

Government must abolish the NYCOM and replace it with an independent National Youth Commission with a mandate to provide strategic direction and coordination of youth development activities. In addition, it can be seen that, the NYCOM operates directly under the Minister of Youth and is therefore vulnerable to political manipulation. Also, the NYCOM is a membership-based organisation and limits participation of ordinary/individual youth (National Youth Manifesto, 2019:18).

All these are areas to be carefully taken into account and considered when developing a new youth policy in Malawi. The thesis has shown that institutions and institutional arrangements are key for policy and policy implementation success, for youth development. Therefore, institutional integration, coordination and poise for implementation are some of the key gaps to be addressed for institutional innovation.

7.22. A need for Political will from the Government

Accountability and transparency, sharing of responsibilities, choosing the means to deliver the desired goals, enforcing compliance, and policy review by all of the various stakeholders are key

requirements for successful delivery of the youth policy. There is also a need for feasibility studies, piloting and stress-testing exercises. These could be useful in identifying implementation and institutional weaknesses.

The fact that the NYP has not been updated let alone reviewed, questions government's commitment and political will to the aspirations and objectives of the document. Limited, achievable ambitions, backed by adequate resources and overseen by competent, committed administrative and political leadership are imperative. This must be complemented by partnerships with development partners, civil society, businesses and, above all, the youth themselves.

Monitoring and Evaluation

7.23. Anti-Corruption Initiatives

Serious and organized white collar crime and corruption in Malawi are pervasive and pose a major threat to Malawi's development. These maladies are recognized as part of a social behaviour that started flourishing after the transition to multiparty democracy in 1994 (Youth Manifesto, 2019:15). Findings from the research indicate:

Cashgate has been a climax of corruption in Malawi, if people did not believe back then that the country is corrupt, well then now they have evidence. What is more concerning is that the people we know and see every day, who were involved, they walk freely and have not been arrested ...the way people have been stealing money in government, I doubt there is anything left to invest in job creation, so I would not be surprised if unemployment remains high for the next coming years (Interview with Focus Group B, 2019).

Like what the Youth Manifesto says we must engage and involve the youth in new and innovative ways of fighting corruption; by the year 2020 but also more important to review curricula of formal education at all levels to include topics on good citizenship, ethics and integrity to start changing attitudes and mind-sets about corruption at a tender age (Interview with Focus Group A, 2019).

The District Youth Organisation (DYO) had told us to organize ourselves in groups of ten to access start-up equipment for welding which we did, but instead of giving us as a group some individuals were given to use as individuals (Interview with Youth in Neno cited in UNDP, 2015:7).

With reference to the findings above, it is demanded that government should ensure that the officials tasked with the responsibility of approving bursaries and administering youth development funds such as YEDEF and YDCS, are of high integrity and moral rectitude. Additionally, independent, timely and regular audits of the programmes should be in place and clear selection guidelines must be set so as to reduce cases of corruption and political patronage within the programmes. Furthermore, youth must be engaged and involved in new and innovative ways of fighting corruption. Anti-corruption education must be considered in the school curriculum. At the same time, law enforcement agencies need to be adequately capacitated to be effective, especially against acts of corruption and impropriety within the government machinery.

7.24. Comprehensive Information System on Youth to Improve M&E

Developing, planning and implementing youth policies and programmes needs sound and comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data about young people's lives and situation, disaggregated by sex, age, income, geographic area, education level and other factors. Existing information systems in different sectors contribute to national statistics. In such processes, it is crucial to analyse the specific outcomes of young people compared to the total population (OECD, 2018: 30). There is need for accurate data on the challenges pertaining to youth in Malawi as this influences policy responses. As of now, data on child labour is lacking. The Malawi Labour Force Survey (2013) outcomes are outdated and there is limited information on young people aged 25 -35 as these are regarded as adults in spite of the NYP categorizing them as youths. Moreover, the definition of youth must be harmonized in all national policies and legislation. And crucially, the policy making process must, at all times, be guided and driven by reliable and updated data and statistical information. Findings from the study confirm.

Overall, data is insufficiently nuanced towards the different issues faced by young people, either related to their age, gender or disability and some sub-groups, adolescents using SRH services, for example, or LGBTI are not included in national data. This invisibility means their specific rights are not even known, let alone addressed. In particular, there is a dearth of information on disability (SitAn, 2016: xii).

The 2016 Adolescent and Youth Situation Analysis further elaborate:

Policy and programming tends to be driven by data. Where there are data gaps, there is a risk that the response is slow to catch up. The statistical data can present a one-dimensional perspective of issues faced by young people if quantitative data is not properly complemented by qualitative data, particularly data that is the unfiltered views of young people themselves (SitAn, 2016:xii).

All the above is an outcry for a comprehensive information system on youth to improve monitoring and evaluation of youth policies and programs.

Recognising Areas of Opportunity

This thesis recognizes that Early Childhood Development - investing in the first 1,000 days, migrant remittance, the Blue Economy, embracing the Fourth Industrial Revolution and young women, and inclusive business are areas that have to be considered in order to transform the labour market trajectory of Malawi. These interventions will not only help the country to keep abreast of global trends and be innovative in the overall efficacy of youth development policy, but will also contribute to stimulating growth throughout the economy of Malawi.

7.25. Early Childhood Development (ECD) - Investing in the First 1,000 Days of Children

The NYP in respect to youth health and nutrition, acknowledges that, healthy and happy youth are better equipped to contribute to the development of their communities and the nation. Malawi has to recognize the absolute significance of ECD and cognitive stimulation. Literature indicates there is now increasing evidence that early cognitive stimulation (the first 1,000 days), is a critical determinant of success or failure in primary school, secondary school, tertiary and indeed into the labour market (WHO, 2019).

According to the 1,000 Days Organisation (2018:1), research shows that the 1,000 days between a woman's pregnancy and her child's second birthday, offers a unique window of opportunity to build healthier and more prosperous futures. The right nutrition during this 1,000 day window has a profound impact on a child's ability to grow, learn and thrive and a lasting effect on a country's health and prosperity. Nutrition during pregnancy and in the first years of a child's life provides the essential building blocks for brain development, healthy growth and a strong immune system. It has been acknowledged that improving nutrition for mothers and children

during the 1,000 day window helps ensure that children get the best start in life and the opportunity to reach their full potential (ibid). Malawi needs to make commitments and investments in a comprehensive policy pipe-line for youth development that would attend to the first 1,000 days throughout the schooling and training phase, up to the work place/labour market. This would ensure a healthy and productive generation of young people in preparation for the world of work.

Development organisations such as the World Health Organisation, Save the Children and UNICEF, all agree that, improving nutrition during the critical 1,000 day window is one of the best investments that can be made for the nation's future prosperity. For all the above reasons, effective early childhood development drive must be seen as a critical prerequisite to an effective youth development policy. This early investment (first thousand days) is an imperative for real development of the nation.

7.26. Migrant Remittance Policy

There is growing consensus emerging that remittances could constitute a significant source of external financing, whose availability, if managed through appropriate policies, could prove particularly valuable for capital-scarce developing countries (IOM, 2015). This thesis has shown that in countries like Nigeria, Lesotho and Madagascar, remittances make up a significant source of financing on the continent, supporting families and driving investment. This is especially important because of the large number of young people who immigrate to other countries, for better opportunities. Given Malawi's migration history as discussed in chapter three of the thesis, appropriate policy structures must be put in place so that the country can reap maximum benefits from migrant remittances. Again, a progressive youth development policy needs to recognize migrant remittances (especially from young people), as a crucial element of the youth development trajectory.

7.27. Tapping into the Blue Economy

The Blue Economy is a relatively recent iteration of the Green Economy concept, even though there is no universally accepted definition of the concept. Nonetheless, the concept has been viewed as an alternative economic model for sustainable development that puts oceans and seas

at the centre of this approach. Blue Economy, through proper policies and frameworks, has the potential to create a million jobs in the world in the next ten years, thereby tackling unemployment (Pauli, 2010).

In this regard, Malawi has a total surface area of 118, 428 sq. km, one fifth of which is covered by rivers and lakes, with Lake Malawi and its island taking up almost 20% of the country. The Blue Economy could offer the much needed jobs for young people in the country if properly managed and utilised through proper strategies. The Malawi Parliament Leader of Opposition, Dr Lazarus Chakwera stated at the 2017 Transformation Alliance Conference:

...we also know that suffering in our country is not the result of lack of energy or man power, for we live in a nation whose population includes 14 million people under the age of 35...Malawi cannot use the excuse that our country is landlocked or deprived of the natural resources other nations boast of. All our best resources are either underutilized or exploited for the benefit of whoever is in power, leaving present and future generations impoverished by their own progenitors. We have the most beautiful fresh-water lake in the world, only to have government parse it apart for exploration through a licensing process that remains largely secretive and more advantageous to foreign interests than national ones (Chakwera, 2017 cited on Malawian Watchdog, 2017:1).

Acknowledging the above, the past youth policies have not recognized the potential opportunities that the youth could utilise from the country's available natural resources including its water bodies. Yet globally, it has become widely accepted that rivers, coasts and seas have the potential to deliver growth and jobs in the coming years. Just like in the Seychelles, education institutions could work with different marine organisations to provide paid internship and apprentice programmes in tourism, shipping, maritime transport, renewable energy, aquaculture, fisheries, and marine biotechnology to youths. In a similar direction, Operation Phakisa is the South African version of the Blue Economy which also aims at fast-tracking the delivery of priorities outlined in the country's National Development Plan that Malawi can learn from.

In Seychelles for instance, the Republic has been recognized as a global advocate of the Blue Economy, a strategy championed by its president, James Michel. The development of the Blue Economy in Seychelles, seeks to harness locally available marine, land and other resources in a responsible, sustainable and connected manner as a mainstay of long-term development. Blue

Economy has been embraced by the youth of Seychelles as a mechanism to realize sustainable economic development based around an ocean-based economy (UNEP, 2015). At the opening of the project youth of Seychelles expressed their optimism by stating:

Young people want the blue economy to be explored in its entirety to include fisheries, marine biodiversity, land reclamation and tourism to name a few so we are pleased to see that indeed all stakeholders are invited here today, including the youths... We, the youth, are prepared to give our time and energy to creating awareness about the blue economy and welcome training opportunities to become an empowered labour force and of course those of us who want to help on a voluntary basis... Let the future of the children and youth act as the conscience of your discussions. Every time it comes to mind to use all the resources today think of our tomorrow. Think of your children and your grandchildren enjoying the fruits of our ocean just as much as you do. Simple things like staring out at crystal waters, expecting to swim in clear blue seas and expecting it to provide food for our daily meals. Things we simply take for granted. We are happy that we have been invited as a stakeholder and partner to this consultation because young people automatically inherit the decisions made today. We want to be part of the discussions. We want to be a key partner in the way forward. We are already playing our part. young conservationists and researchers who have followed their passion for a career with the ocean and our young fishermen, divers and surfers who understand the ocean and marine biodiversity more than those who spend more time on land... Volunteers are taking time to inspire young people to take up the opportunities available, to conserve and most importantly sustainably develop (Seychelles Fishing Authority, 2017:1).

The above quotes reflect how participation has given the youth of Seychelles ownership. In connection, if Blue Economy is to be successful in Malawi, young people would need to be consulted in decision making processes. This would give them a sense of achievement, ownership and taking part in collective national development.

Furthermore, Marie (2017), stated that in Seychelles an initiative known as the ‘Prosperity & Environment: Promoting development opportunities for youth in the Blue Economy’ spearheaded and funded by British High Commission was launched in February 2017. The program was designed to enable youth in Seychelles between the ages of 16 and 24 to follow a two-week internship in one of the Blue Growth’s 14 organizations in the country. Aside from gaining first-hand work experience, the Blue Economy interns are able to better understand the diversity of work undertaken, as well as the career options available in the sector. In addition, Seychelles News Agency reported that students in Seychelles and overseas who are interested in learning more about the concept of the Blue Economy could pursue a distance learning course

through the University of Seychelles (UniSey). The course, which is a joint venture of the Commonwealth of Learning and the James Michel Research Institute at UniSey, is designated to attract beginners with an interest in the Blue Economy. It is free of charge as it aims at catering for many young unemployed youth in Africa (Marie, 2017). Countries like Malawi through its universities could benefit from such partnerships with Seychelles.

While Malawi may have an existing capacity for some key sectors of the Blue Economy (e.g. fisheries, tourism, aquaculture), there will be a need for an overarching roadmap or policy and strategic expertise required to make a transition effective if it is to be adopted. Even so, the figure below shows some of the sectors and opportunities that young people in Malawi could take advantage of if the government initiated Blue Economy initiatives.

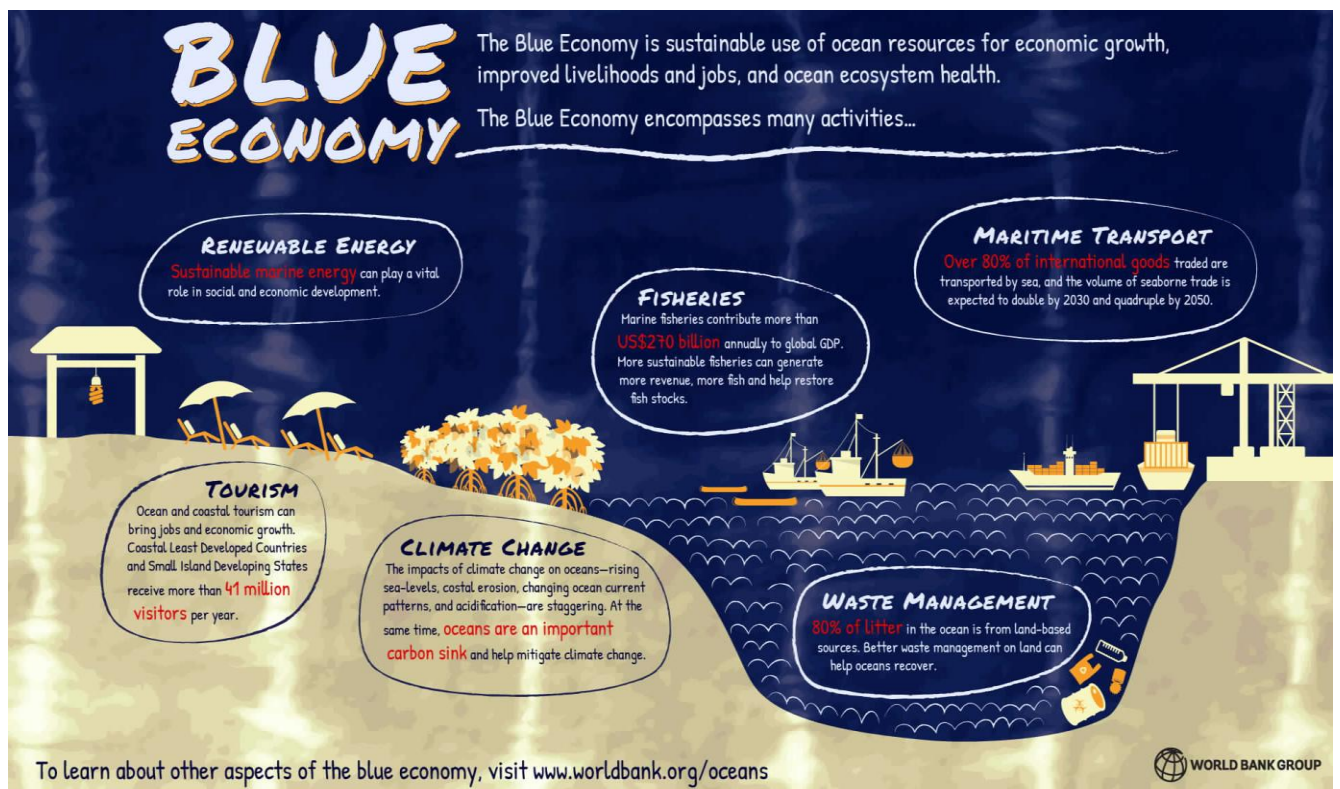


Figure 7.1: Blue Economy. Image Source: World Bank Group, 2017

7.28. The Fourth Industrial Revolution and Young Women

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is here and, in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063, ‘no one should be left behind’ in this revolution. As such, Africa has started to change the way it debates about technology and its impact on the continent. The 4IR, according to the World Economic Forum (2016), refers to an era where the development of new materials and breakthroughs in the field of genetic engineering and digital transformation are increasingly blurring the lines between the physical, biological and digital worlds. As was the case with the previous three revolutions, no woman or girl should be left behind in the 4IR. The 4IR offers opportunities for young women and girls to fully and actively take part.

With many industries embracing new technologies, those without the relevant skills for the future workplace are at a higher risk of losing out. As such, without appropriate and timely action, women are more likely to be negatively impacted. One of the key reasons being that they are relatively under-represented when it comes to jobs that are anticipated to have most growth in the next ten years in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) professions. Naadiya Moosajee, cofounder of WomEng pointing out at the World Economic Forum (2016) stated that, oftentimes, women tend to represent a very small percentage of managerial maintenance, software developers, or design personnel in operating systems. As such, the technological architecture of the future has for a long time been constructed with hardly any female input. These narratives have to change as studies show that if girls are educated in STEM at a young age and are adequately prepared to enter the workforce there is a potential to increase overall economic growth and development. It is therefore, crucial to update the cultural norms and provide good role models so that no female talent is lost (WEF, 2016).

Malawi should therefore expand its high-skilled talent pool by re-engineering the education system, developing future-ready curricula, with a large portion of it focusing on STEM education. Based on the evidence discussed in the previous chapters, school technology should be a first priority in order to prepare the young female generation for the 4IR and future jobs. There is a need to assist and supplement the teaching process of all subjects with technology in schools. Furthermore, students must be introduced to ICT through computer literacy or ‘coding’

(software programming) lessons. Rwanda, for example, recently opened a Coding Academy as part of their Digital Talent Policy, and the establishment of the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) is a progress in the right direction. There is a need to shift attitudes and approaches towards embracing the 4IR as a positive disruptor and an opportunity for young women (Shawa, 2018 cited in the Nation, 2018). All of the above needs to find expression in the youth policy of Malawi.

Digital technology is a powerful enabler as it could open up many opportunities since an investment in ICT is also an investment in economic growth, jobs, education, health, agriculture, and good governance as stated in Agenda 2063 Framework. Recommendations from the study include:

These days a youth policy must consider technology for example we can reduce tariffs on ICT equipment and internet connection. We can also introduce ICT lessons in all primary and secondary schools. But I think the most important is that every child of school going age should have access to computers (Interview with Participant C, 2019).

With ICT a girl in a remote village can get access to the same educational content as the one in the capital city, and that is where Malawi needs to be (World Bank, 2017:1).

Laura Kullenberg, World Bank Country Manager for Malawi further indicates:

Digital technology is absolutely essential to Malawi's socio-economic development. Malawi cannot afford to be left behind (Kullenberg, 2017 cited in World Bank, 2017:1).

7.29. Inclusive Business and the role of Businesses

Literature shows that, next to the state and civil society, the private sector has a key role to play in creating sustainable development. An inclusive business is a sustainable business that benefits low-income communities. It is a business initiative that, while keeping its for-profit nature, contributes to poverty reduction through inclusion of vulnerable groups in its value chain, be it as producers or consumers (The Partner Initiative, 2014). Findings reveal:

Business can play a key role in both new growth and in addressing youth unemployment in Malawi if they adapt to more inclusive models of currently underserved markets at the base of the pyramid (Interview with Participant W, 2019).

For example, several businesses in South Africa, have demonstrated that this paradigm shift could be possible and that it can also be both profitable and beneficial for a wide range of stakeholders. Case in point, Microsoft through the Microsoft 4Afrika programme, has created what it deems to be a sustainable solution to supporting young entrepreneurs and SMEs by offering a unique online community hub with affordable services, resources and opportunities to connect with one another online across the continent. Founded on the belief that technology is fundamental to growth in Africa, the project seeks to empower every young African wanting to make their mark across the continent and the world and who has a great business idea and help turn it into reality, providing jobs and building communities, countries and the continent as a whole (The Partner Initiative, 2014). Initiatives such as the MHub and EHub in Malawi have similar aspiration as the Microsoft model. More such initiatives should be supported by government. Thus, a forward-looking youth development policy needs to leverage on these possibilities and potentialities.

Conclusion

If unemployment is not addressed as a matter of urgency, the situation is expected to increase levels of frustration and impatience among the youth. This can eventually contribute to a cycle of chronic unemployment, crime, dysfunction and poverty as unemployed young people are very likely to become the parents of children who will then also grow up in a context of poverty. As figure 7.2 below illustrates, through findings from the study (interviews, FGDs, forums, literature) the chapter recommended that, to achieve positive and sustainable youth employment and development, the country needs to reinvent its youth policy so that it has all the prerequisite elements, that the social economic and political environment be conducive for policy implementation and that areas of opportunity are fully maximized and harnessed. This is achievable and desirable for the future of Malawi.

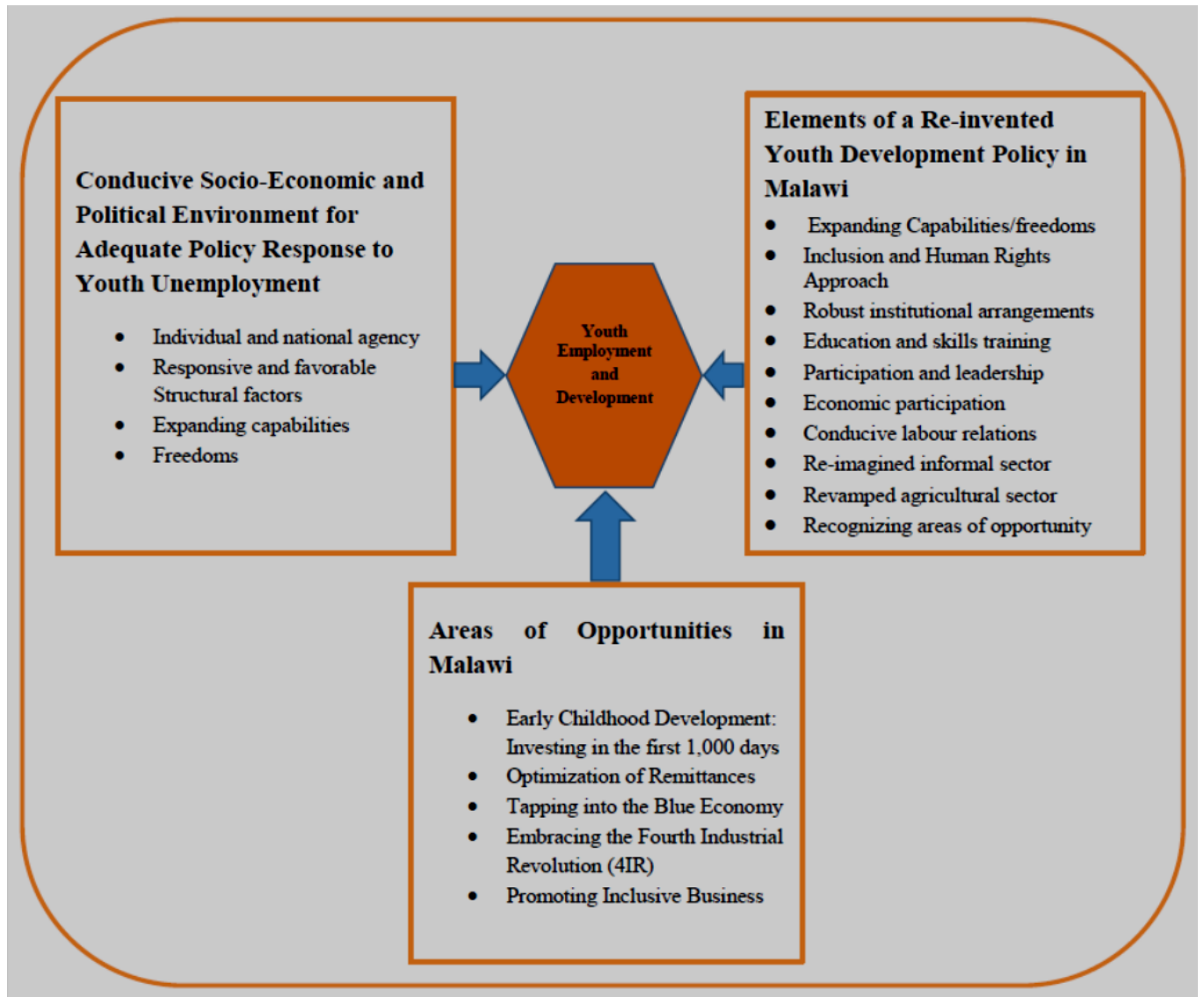


Figure 7.2: Basic Elements of a Forward-Looking Youth Development Policy in Malawi, Shawa, 2020

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS

8.1. Introduction

The principal objective of the thesis has been to distil and analyse the structural and agential factors and circumstances that account for the lack of adequate policy responses to youth unemployment and other challenges confronting young people in Malawi. Specifically, the concern has been to critically engage with the current National Youth Policy, in an endeavour to underline key omissions and gaps in that policy. Beyond academic curiosity, the critical object has been to use this critique as a basis for setting the scene for a fresh look into how youth development policy in Malawi must be re-imagined. It is for this reason that the previous chapter was devoted to laying out key elements and conditions for an alternative youth development trajectory. This analysis should contribute to informing future policy debates on youth development in Malawi. The focus of this final chapter, however, is to succinctly reaffirm some of the main conclusions and recommendations arising from this analysis, each in turn. These are: policy intent and implementation, institutions and institutional arrangements, structure/agency, capability and social exclusion, policy consistency, monitoring and evaluation and future policy directions.

8.2. Policy Intent and Implementation

The thesis goes to some length in showing that there are important weaknesses inherent in the NYP of Malawi. Crucially, however, the more progressive elements of the policy have remained largely unimplemented, this, it has been argued is a function of a weak implementation strategy. Which is in turn, a function of lack of feasibility (including stress-testing or piloting) of these policies on concrete Malawian conditions. Such feasibility studies, piloting and stress-testing exercises are useful in quickly identifying implementation weaknesses. At the same time, they

set the scene for the adoption of customized implementation strategies that will obviate obstacles and weaknesses that can only be identified through the deployment of such policy instruments.

Therefore, it may very well be true that some elements within the state genuinely harboured designs to improve the lot of young people in Malawi. What the analysis in the thesis demonstrates, however, is that such genuine policy intent has resulted in very little, in the absence of the requisite policy capacity (including critical policy instruments) that are at the heart of any successful implementation plan. Thus, there has been a chasm between these good policy intentions and the feasibility of such policies. Accordingly, it is proposed in the last chapter that a far more strategic and comprehensive approach is designed for youth development policy. One rooted not only on narrow managerial and technical expertise (tools and design), but one that includes socio-economic and strategic considerations (structural and institutional prerequisites) to effective policy making. Critically, the thesis argues that whilst intent is admirable, implantation tools and strategies are a crucial ingredient for success.

8.3. Institutions and Institutional Arrangements

Following on the argument set out in the section above, it is now apparent that feasibility studies will lead to the deployment of appropriate implementation designs, tools and strategies. At the same time, however, piloting and stress-testing interventions will also shine the spotlight at institutional weaknesses. The analysis has shown that Malawian efforts at evolving a responsive and effective youth development policy framework has been characterized by poor institutional arrangements and the design of ill-conceived institutions. The tensions between the National Youth Council of Malawi (NYCOM) and the Ministry of Youth, Labour and Manpower Development (MoYLMD) are a case in point. Poor division of labour and role clarification would seem to be at the centre of the confusion, which in turn, has had devastating consequences on the efficacy and efficiency of the entire youth development policy trajectory. Policy design requires continuous collaboration with a range of key stakeholders at multiple political, policy-making, managerial and administrative levels as well as engagement of young people themselves as key stakeholders. As such, a youth policy must be designed in a way that connects actors vertically and horizontally in a process of collaboration and deliberation. There must be a common ground, without which there will be ongoing discordance and divergence of purpose.

Key implementing institutions must be adequately equipped with requisite skills, competences, capacities and capabilities to address youth challenges and offer support tailored to the local context. Furthermore, there is a need to understand the roles of different stakeholders and a need to align different views and expectations. The central conclusion in this regard is that the right institutions and institutional arrangements must be in place for any youth policy to be effective.

8.4. Structure/Agency, Capability and Social Exclusion

The thesis has shown that while technical grasp of the policy process is an important prerequisite for success, it will fail spectacularly if not accompanied by a proper consideration of the deeply embedded socio-economic and political dynamics at play in the social setting. In this regard, structure/agency, capability and social inclusion/exclusion were underlined as critical strategic success factors, in the evolution of youth development policy. Indeed, the analysis of the current NYP showed a manifest absence of any consideration of these critical success factors in Malawi's youth development policy trajectory. Accordingly, the point is made that a careful reading and analysis of any policy environment (not excluding youth development in Malawi), will always draw attention to a need to focus on and factor in one or all of the strategic considerations in this section.

8.5. Policy Consistency

It is the reality of democratic politics that they operate and are often driven around five year electoral cycles. While this time honoured requirement of democratic systems is good for accountability and citizen participation in the definition of its country's future, it can and has often undermined policy consistency. It is common cause that a new administration or a new minister (even from the same political party) will do their best to introduce 'new' policies and discard the 'old' policies of their predecessors. In some instances, a different political party does not want to be associated with policies of the previous regime. This policy zig-zag has had devastating consequences on Malawi's youth development performance.

The way to get around this is broad stakeholder consultation and participation, so that the process is widely owned, not by government but stakeholders themselves. Any changes to long and medium term policies will be the function of the entire policy (stakeholder) community and not

one partner (political party). This disciplines government and protects the plans and strategies from unnecessary and ill-conceived interference by the government of the day, well beyond the five-year electoral cycle. While the Chinese political system has its weaknesses, it is nevertheless commended for its reputation for uninterrupted long-term planning. This, in large measure is because the ‘short-termism’ that comes with five-year electoral cycles does not come into play in the Chinese system.

8.6. Monitoring and Evaluation

In Malawi, the focus should be on the establishment of a well-structured central delivery unit to track progress of all policy implementation. It is the responsibility of all key policy stakeholders to track progress against key priorities through regular analyses of a constant stream of performance data. There is a need for a strong M&E Framework with clear indicators and implementing bodies must be capacitated. Additionally, assessment of progress and accompanying progress reports should be mandatory by supplying heads of government. Furthermore, this would require focusing on a limited number of key priorities that are realistic and achievable, allocating adequate resources to each sector, a functioning compliance mechanism, routine use of action research for formative and summative evaluations, understanding delivery systems and active stakeholder engagement and developing an effective communication strategy amongst other things. Of course, this is only feasible if the youth policy structure is located and conceived not as a state institution but a stakeholder structure (where the state is an important partner and participant).

8.7. Future Policy Implications

This thesis, the findings and the recommendations are expected to inform the next youth development agenda, draw specific attention to the importance of recognizing the potentially catalytic role of youth development in driving a sustainable development trajectory in Malawi. It is expected that the views of different stakeholders consolidated in this thesis will inform the next National Youth Policy of Malawi.

In conclusion, the thesis has identified major gaps, weaknesses and silences (both of a strategic and technical/managerial nature). Until and unless these are effectively factored into the youth

development policy trajectory, impact will remain patchy and inadequate. Shifts of both a qualitative and quantitative nature are called for, if efficiency and impact is to be achieved.

Malawi has an opportunity to re-imagine the state's approach to youth development and employment. A more participative, integrated approach and well-resourced policy will go a long way in contributing to youth employment and poverty reduction in post-democratic Malawi.

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Appendices

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (FGDs)

Key Questions that will Guide the Data Collection

((Focus Group Discussions with Parliamentarians (18-24years) of the Youth Parliament of Malawi (YPM))

1. Introduction to the research

The broad focal area of this research is, youth unemployment in Malawi, with a specific focus of surfacing new and a more workable policy pipe-line that will fundamentally overhaul the skills/labour market trajectory in Malawi. The objective of this interview is to ask for your insights in this subject and to explore the role of the Youth Parliament of Malawi in youth development in Malawi. To do this, I would like to kindly request if you could assist as a group, in responding to the following specific research questions.

2. Profile (Identity will not be disclosed)

- Can you please tell me a bit about the Youth Parliament of Malawi (YPM)? (the background and how you were selected to represent your constituency).
- What has been your experiences and role of YPM in youth development in Malawi?

3. Youth unemployment in Malawi

- a. As a youth parliament, what would you consider to be three significant challenges that confront young people's development in Malawi?
- b. Would you regard youth unemployment to be a major challenge in your constituencies?
- c. What would you consider to be the key challenges that youth face in finding employment in your constituencies and Malawi as a whole? How do you think they deal with such challenges?
- d. What do you think are the skills currently needed on the Malawi labour market?
- e. How do you think Malawi's youth would fare on the global labour market?
- f. Have you heard of the term "Demographic Dividend"? What does it mean for Malawi?

5. To find out if the Malawi government recognize youth unemployment as a chronic problem in society.

- a. Do you think for the past decades the government has recognized youth unemployment as a chronic problem to society? In connection, do you think the response has been adequate or inadequate?
- b. How would you describe this response pre and post democracy in 1994?
- c. What would you think are the social-economic and political reasons for this difference in response?

5. To identify how the Malawi government has demonstrated recognition of youth unemployment; and to identify some of the strategies adopted by the Malawi government in addressing the problem of chronic youth unemployment since 1994.

- a. Are you aware of any programs the government is implementing or has implemented to address youth unemployment in Malawi since 1994? Would you say the programs/ strategies have been sufficient?
- b. Who do you think should be responsible in assisting the youth to find employment?
- c. What is the role of YPM in policy formulation?
- d. Are you aware of the current National Youth Policy (NYP)? If so what is your take on the policy?
- e. Do you think it addresses the challenge of youth unemployment?
- f. What would you regard to be the strengths and weaknesses of the current NYP?

6. To identify what a basic programme/road-map for an effective youth development plan.

- a. What would you suggest to be other strategies policies, laws and rights that should be put to address issues of youth development?
- b. What would you suggest to be put in place to address the challenge of youth unemployment?
- c. How do you think young people in Malawi can be empowered?
- d. Would you like to add any comments or ask any questions?

Thank you so much for your participation in this focus group.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Key Questions that will Guide the Data Collection

(Stakeholders in Youth Development in Malawi. NGOs, CBOs, Private Sector, Government Departments, Members of the Opposition Political Parties)

1. Introduction to the research

The broad focal area of this research is, youth unemployment in Malawi, with a specific focus of surfacing new and a more workable policy pipe-line that will fundamentally overhaul the skills/labour market trajectory in Malawi. The objective of this interview is to ask for your insights in this subject and to explore the role of (XXX) in youth development in Malawi. To do this, I would like to kindly request if you could assist in responding to the following specific research questions:

2. Profile (Identity will not be disclosed)

- Can you please tell me a bit about yourself?
- What has been your experiences and role in youth development in Malawi?
- What is the role of your organization/ institution in youth development in Malawi?

3. Youth unemployment in Malawi

- a. What do you consider to be three significant challenges that confront young people's development in Malawi?
- b. Would you regard youth unemployment to be a major challenge in Malawi? Could you tell me why you say so?
- c. What would you consider to be the key challenges that youth face in finding employment globally and in Malawi?
- d. How do you think they deal with such challenges?
- e. What do you think are the skills currently needed on the Malawi labour market?
- f. How do you think Malawi's youth (15-35years) would fare on the global labour market?
- g. Have you heard of the term "Demographic Dividend"? if yes what does it mean to you in relation to unemployment in Malawi?
- h. Tell me what you know about the Fourth Industrial Revolution? How do you think Malawi can embrace this revolution and what does it mean for the labour market trajectory?

4. To find out if the Malawi government recognize youth unemployment as a chronic problem in society.

- a. Do you think for the past decades the government has recognized youth unemployment as a chronic problem to society? Why do you say so?
- b. Do you think the response has been adequate or inadequate?
- c. How would you describe this response pre and post democracy in 1994?
- d. What would you think are the social-economic and political reasons for this difference in response?

5. To identify how the Malawi government has demonstrated recognition of youth unemployment; and to identify some of the strategies adopted by the Malawi government in addressing the problem of chronic youth unemployment since 1994.

- a. Are you aware of any programs the government is implementing or has implemented to address youth unemployment in Malawi since 1994?
- b. Would you say the programs/ strategies have been sufficient?
- c. In your opinion who do you think should be responsible in assisting the youth in finding employment?
- d. Are you aware of the current National Youth Policy? If so what is your take on the policy?
- e. Do you think it addresses the challenge of youth unemployment?
- f. What would you regard to be the strengths and weaknesses of the current National Youth Policy?
- g. In your opinion do you think young people in Malawi are aware of policies and legislative frameworks that exist to deal with their wellbeing?

5. To identify what a basic programme/road-map for an effective youth development plan.

- a. What do you suggest could be a better way through which youth can access more information about policies and laws?
- b. What would you suggest to be other strategies policies, laws and rights that should be put in place to address issues of youth development?
- c. What would you suggest to be put in place to address the challenge of youth unemployment?
- d. How do you think young people in Malawi can be empowered?
- e. What would be your advice for young people seeking employment?
- f. Would you like to add any comments or ask any questions?

Thank you so much for your participation.

Focus Group Consent Form

(Focus Group Discussions with Parliamentarians (18-24years) of the Youth Parliament of Malawi (YPM)

Title of the Study

An Analysis on the Socio-Economic and Political Reasons for Inadequate Policy Response to Youth Unemployment in Post-Democratic Malawi.

Purpose of the Study

1. This qualitative exploratory study's broad focal area is, youth unemployment in Malawi, with a specific focus of surfacing new and a more workable policy pipe-line that will fundamentally overhaul the skills/labour market trajectory in the country.
 2. Ultimately, this research may be [published as part of a book on youth unemployment in Malawi, presented as a paper, etc.].
- You were selected as a possible participant because you are part of the Youth Parliament of Malawi (YPM) and are aware of the challenges and opportunities of youth development and policy in Malawi.
 - I ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the focus group.

As a participant, I agree to participate in this study and I understand the following:

- I understand that my participation will involve a group interview, which will require approximately 90 - 120 minutes of my time.
- I agree to participate in the Youth Parliament of Malawi Focus Group Discussion carried out by Ms. Elizabeth Shawa of the University of Pretoria, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, to aid with the research of the above-mentioned topic.
- I have read the information related to the above mentioned topic and understand the aims of the project.
- I am aware of the topics to be discussed in the Focus Group Discussions.
- I am fully aware that I will remain anonymous throughout data reported and that I have the right to leave the Focus Group Discussions at any point.

- By signing this consent form, I agree that all the information discussed during the research is confidential. In addition, I am aware that, what is said during the discussions cannot be repeated or disclosed to others outside of the Focus Group.
- I am fully aware that data will also be collected through an audio recorder/ Dictaphone and that the recorded video/audio will be stored securely, safely and in accordance with Data Collection Act (1998). I have been told that only the researcher and the assigned supervisor will have access to the research data. All data will be encrypted and stored for a maximum of 10 years.
- I agree to have the Focus Group Discussions recorded (video or Dictaphone), so it can be transcribed after the discussion is held. I am aware that I have the right to edit the transcript of the discussions once it has been completed.
- I am aware that the research requires a participant with high literacy level of English in order to understand policy debates that are usually conducted at a high level. This is also in accordance with the Constitution of Malawi, chapter four, under section 51, which states that all members of parliament must be able to read and speak the English language well enough to take an active part in the proceedings of parliament and policy debates.
- I acknowledge that I am aware that data will be reused for future research projects that are either an extension of the original project or that are in the same general area of research. Specific future uses will be communicated to me and will be limited to non-commercial use and anonymised data only.
- I am fully aware that I am not obliged to answer any question, but that I do so at my own free will.
- I am aware that I can make any reasonable changes to this consent form.
- If I have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, I understand that I can contact Ms. Elizabeth Hilda Luwani Shawa on +27730616730 or shawaelizabeth@yahoo.com at any time. I can also email her academic supervisor Dr. Sihle Moon at: sihle.moon@up.ac.za .

I understand my rights as a research participant and I voluntarily give my consent to participate in this Focus Group Discussion. I understand what the study is about and how and why it is being done. I have received a copy of this consent form.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. My signature below indicates that I have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that I have read and understood the information provided above.

Participant's signature and name _____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature and name _____ Date: _____

Informed Consent Form

(Stakeholders in Youth Development in Malawi. NGOs, CBOs, Private Sector, Government Departments, Members of the Opposition Political Parties)

Title of the Study

An Analysis on the Socio-Economic and Political Reasons for Inadequate Policy Response to Youth Unemployment in Post-Democratic Malawi.

Purpose of the Study

3. This qualitative exploratory study's broad focal area is, youth unemployment in Malawi, with a specific focus of surfacing new and a more workable policy pipe-line that will fundamentally overhaul the skills/labour market trajectory in the country.
 4. Ultimately, this research may be [published as part of a book on youth unemployment and development in Malawi, presented as a paper, etc.].
- You were selected as a possible participant because (insert name of organisation) is active in the youth development space in Malawi.
 - I ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

As a participant, I agree to participate in this study and I understand the following:

- **Procedure:** I understand that my participation will involve a personal interview, which will require approximately 60 - 90 minutes of my time.
- **Risk and Benefit:** I understand that there is no financial benefit for participating in this study and that there are no associated risks. I understand that my participation will help inform research on youth unemployment and potentially inform policy.
- **Participant's Rights:** My participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw my participation at any time, without fear of any consequences.
- **Confidentiality:** I understand that the interview will be recorded and that the recording will only be listened to by the researcher and my comments will remain confidential. Should I withdraw from the study, my interview will be deleted and no data from it will be used in accordance with

Data Collection Act (1998). I understand that my personal identity will not be identifiable from the completed questionnaire/interview, however, the name of the organization/institution/company I represent may be indicated in the final research report. The results from this study will be used in the researcher's Doctoral project and my identity will not be revealed in any publication resulting from this study. Aliases will be used in the research report in order to protect my identity as is ethically required.

- **Voluntary Participation:** I have been asked voluntarily to participate in the study. If I feel uncomfortable or not interested, I will not be coerced to participate.
- **No Harm to Subjects:** I understand there will be no physical or emotional harm that will occur or be inadvertently aroused due to probing around questions.
- **Informed Consent:** I acknowledge I have been told prior to the study what will be required of me during the research. I have adequate information on the goal of the investigation, the expected duration of my involvement, the procedures which will be followed during the investigation; and the possible advantages.
- **Audio and Video Recording:** I am aware that data will also be collected through an audio recorder/ Dictaphone and that the video/audio will be stored securely, safely and in accordance with Data Collection Act (1998). I have been told that only the researcher and the assigned supervisor will have access to the research data. All data will be encrypted and stored for a maximum of 10 years
- **Data Storage and Further Reuse of Data:** I acknowledge that I am aware that data will be reused for future research projects that are either an extension of the original project or that are in the same general area of research. Specific future uses will be communicated to me and will be limited to non-commercial use and anonymized data only.
- **Language and High Literacy in English:** I am aware that the research requires a participant with high literacy level of English in line with policy debates that are usually conducted at a high level. This is also in accordance with the Constitution of Malawi, chapter four, under section 51, which states that all various policy makers and members of parliament must be able to read and speak the English language well enough to take an active part in the proceedings of parliament and policy debates.
- **Debriefing of Participants:** I understand I will be debriefed after the interview. If I like, a summary of the results of the study will be sent to me.

- **Make Changes:** I am aware that I can make any reasonable changes to this consent form.
- **Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns:** If I have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, I understand that I can contact Ms. Elizabeth Hilda Luwani Shawa on +27730616730 or shawaelizabeth@yahoo.com at any time. I can also email her academic supervisor Dr. Sihle Moon at sihle.moon@up.ac.za.

I understand my rights as a research participant and I voluntarily give my consent to participate in this study. I understand what the study is about and how and why it is being done. I have received a copy of this consent form.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. My signature and name below indicates that I have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that I have read and understood the information provided above.

Participant's signature and name _____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature and name _____ Date: _____

NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF MALAWI

Corporate Box E16-E21
Bingu National Stadium
Area 49
Lilongwe, Malawi.
Website: www.malawiouthcouncil.org



Private Bag 389
Lilongwe 3, Malawi
Tel/Fax: (265) 761 184
Tel: (265) 761 184
E-mail: info@malawiouthcouncil.org

ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

15th August, 2018

Miss. Elizabeth H. L. Shawa
University of Pretoria

Dear Madam,

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY AND ACCESS TO NYCOM DATABASE

With reference to your letter regarding the captioned subject, we are pleased to give you permission and access to our database as requested.

This letter serves to confirm that Ms. Elizabeth Hilda Luwani Shawa, a second year Doctoral candidate (Student number: 17111472) from the University of Pretoria in the field of Development Studies, Department of Anthropology and Archeology, Faculty of Humanities, Hartfield Campus has been granted permission to conduct an academic research study and use the National Youth Council of Malawi's (NYCOM) Database and access information, which could contribute to a better understanding of her research area.

NYCOM acknowledges that this research is purely for academic purposes and that access to the database could contribute to a better understanding of Ms. Shawa's research/thesis area titled "*An Analysis on the Socio-Economic and Political Reasons for Inadequate Policy Response to Youth Unemployment in Post-Democratic Malawi*". It is also understood that the research/thesis may be [published as part of a book on youth unemployment in Malawi, presented as a paper, conference paper etc.] and appropriate referencing will be done.

Yours Faithfully,

Dingiswayo Jere

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



"UNITING YOUTH FOR DEVELOPMENT"

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PARLIAMENT OF MALAWI

Parliament Building, City Centre, Private Bag B362, Lilongwe 3

Telephone: 01773566/01773208/01773790

Fax: 01774196

E-mail: parliament@parliament.gov.mw

Ref. No. NA/PLEN/05

6th February, 2019

Faculty of Humanities,
Department of Anthropology and Archaeology,
Room 8-3- Humanities Building,
University of Pretoria, Private Bag X20,
Hatfield 008, South Africa.

Dear Ms. E. Shawa,

**RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FDG) WITH
THE YOUTH PARLIAMENT OF MALAWI**

I have the honour to acknowledge, with thanks, receipt of your letter dated, 22nd January, 2019 on the above captioned subject.

I wish to inform you that it has pleased the Right Honourable Speaker of the Parliament of Malawi to approve that you conduct a study and interviews to collect data for your PhD Thesis amongst the Youth Parliamentarians of Malawi. My office is very grateful and willing to render you support so that you accomplish your studies as per your request. I also wish to advise you that you are free to contact any of the Youth Parliamentarians and staff in order to get any form of assistance that you may require in your research. I hope your research findings will go a long way in improving the lives of many youths in this country to address the current challenges faced.

Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

H.H. Njolomole

For: CLERK OF PARLIAMENT

All correspondence to be addressed to the Clerk of Parliament

CONFIDENTIAL
CLERK OF PARLIAMENT

**MEMORANDUM TO THE RIGHT
HONOURABLE SPEAKER**

Ref. No. NA/COP/2/2

05/02/2018

**SUBJECT: REQUEST TO ACCESS THE
PARLIAMENT OF MALAWI
LIBRARY TO CONDUCT
AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH**

COP
Approved.

[Signature]

14/2/19

Dear (COP)

Jm
18th / 02 / 2019



Sir,

I have the honour to inform you, Sir, that we have received a request from Ms Elizabeth Hilda Luwani Shawa, a second year Doctorial student who is pursuing her studies at the University of Pretoria in South Africa, in the field of Development Studies, under the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, to access the Parliament of Malawi Library, to conduct an academic research.

2. Sir, Ms Shawa's thesis is titled "An Analysis on the Socio-Economic and Political Reasons for Inadequate Policy Response to

Youth Unemployment in the post-Democratic Malawi”.

3. Sir, Ms Shawa, has expressed that, her interest to access the Parliament of Malawi Library is to enable her consult the Hansards of 1996 and 2013, in which discussions on the National Youth Policy were captured as well as the debates of the first and second Youth Parliament, the Malawi Young Pioneers Act of Parliament and any other related publications that may assist her to have a better understanding on the subject.

4. It may please you, Sir, to note, that Ms Shawa, has made an assurance that her research/thesis is purely academic unless amended by the Parliament of Malawi in view of the fact that, once approved, it may be published to form part of a book to be titled “Youth Unemployment in Malawi”, or may be presented as a Conference Paper and otherwise.

5. This memorandum is submitted for your consideration and directions, Sir.



Fiona Kalemba (Mrs.)
CLERK OF PARLIAMENT