

**The Role of the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and
Culture in reducing youth unemployment in Namibia with special
focus on the Urban Khomas Region**

A Research Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Masters of Public Policy and Administration of

THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

Faculty of Economics and Management Science
Department of Political and Administrative Studies

&

THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL STUDIES (ISS)

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April 2007

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Abstract

Finding decent work for young people to staunch the youth employment crisis is one of most significant challenges of our time. This research paper reports on the role of the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture in combating youth unemployment in Namibia focusing on urban Khomas region. In the introduction section a comparative approach displays the global and sub-Saharan Africa features of youth unemployment as compared to the Namibian situation. This reflects that the problem of youth unemployment cuts across countries the world over. The paper further discussed various government initiatives and programmes introduced to promote youth employment in the country. The commitment of the Namibian government to provide equal opportunities to the youth and to mainstream them into the economic life in order to realize their potential is here confirmed.

Lack of education and early school drop-out, lack of experience and lack of technical skills have been identified as significant factors that contribute to the high rate of youth unemployment in Namibia and in Khomas region in particular. Data collected reflected also the influence of sex, gender and culture in the employment circle of the Namibian youth.

The paper identified critical consequences of unemployment on the youth and these include among others, financial constraints, increased crime, suicides, theft, domestic violence, economic and social instability and frustration, to mention but a few.

The paper concludes that the Ministry of Youth has shown its commitment and political will to redress youth unemployment through its programmes and activities throughout the country and in Khomas region. However, concerted efforts are needed to keep a strong link between educational institutions and the employers to provide workers who are equipped with market-related skills and knowledge on one hand, and the market information on the other.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have existed had it not been for the support and encouragement of my lovely family, Joel and Mekondjo Kaapanda. Thank you Mekondjo for making me believe that I am not too old to do this course. I would also like to thank my mother, Martha Ndengu, for praying for me whenever I sat for exams.

I am very grateful for the supervision, assistance and helpful comments I received from Dr. Kurian and Professor Mufune.

I would also like to thank the various lecturers who taught on the MPPA programmes for imparting their knowledge and making the course not only a platform for learning but also socializing. My thanks also go to Ms Linda Lehman, the MPPA programmes coordinator, who was there for us at all times.

Finally, I would like to extend a special thank to Steve Hoveka at the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport, and Culture who provided me with a lot of useful information and made it possible for me to establish contact with relevant members of the Ministry.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family: my husband, Joel Kaapanda, and my daughter, Mekondjo Kaapanda, for their support and encouragement during my studies.

Declaration

I, Rauna N. Kaapanda, declare hereby that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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Date: 19 April 2007

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Abbreviations

CYCI/YED	Commonwealth Youth Credit initiative/ Youth Enterprise Development
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ILO	International Labour Organization
LaRRY	Labour resource and research institution
MOLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MYNSSC	Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture
NDC	National development Corporation
NEPRU	The Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NLFS	Namibia Labour Force Survey
UN	United Nations
YEN	Youth Employment Network
YCG	Youth Consultative Group

Chapter One: Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to discuss and evaluate the methods of interventions and strategies used by the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture (MYNSSC), to combat youth unemployment in Namibia. The Ministry has developed and utilizes a number of interventions and programmes, such as the National Youth Policy, the National Youth Council and the Multiple Purpose Youth Resource Centres, to promote youth employment and assist young people in improving their opportunities in the labour market. This paper will discuss the various strategies and interventions with a view to assess their success and limitations in terms of their impact on youth unemployment in Namibia in general and urban Khomas region in particular.

The introduction, which makes up chapter one of this paper, will be divided into six parts. The first part will briefly describe the problem of youth unemployment as a global problem which poses economic, social and moral problems for both developing and developed countries. It will also discuss the youth employment situation in sub-Saharan Africa and then define and outline the situation of youth unemployment in Namibia. Part two of the introduction defines the problem of the study while part three states the objectives. Parts four and five identify the research questions and research methodology respectively. Finally, part six discusses the importance of this study.

The rest of the paper contains three further chapters. Chapter two provides a literature review in which the terms “youth” and “unemployment” are defined. The chapter also reviews different

theories about the causes and consequences of youth unemployment and the possible mechanisms to combat it. Chapter three will discuss and examine the policy interventions and programmes adopted by the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture (MYNSSC) in working to minimize youth unemployment in the urban Khomas region. This chapter will make up the core element of this thesis. The last chapter, chapter four, contains the findings obtained from interviews with both Ministry of Youth officials and prospective job seekers. The purpose of the interviews was to ascertain, among other information, their views as to whether the Ministry is effective in its role of combating youth unemployment in the urban Khomas region. In conclusion the paper evaluates whether the Ministry of Youth has been able to fulfill its intended goal in combating youth unemployment and explores the reasons for both failures and successes. The paper then closes with a series of recommendations which are designed to assist the Ministry in increasing the effectiveness of its programmes and strategies.

1.1. Youth Unemployment: The Global Perspective

According to the International Labour Office (ILO), 88 million young people were unemployed in 2003 throughout the world, accounting for 47% of the 186 million people unemployed globally and representing an increase of almost 4% between 1993 (11.7%) and 2003 (14.4%)(UN 2005). In 2003, globally, young people (persons of 15 -30 years) were 3.5 times more likely to be unemployed than adults (ILO 2005). In terms of geographic distribution, young people in developing countries were 3.8 times more likely to be unemployed compared with older workers, whereas in the industrialized economies young people were 2.3 times more likely to be unemployed (ILO 2004). Global youth unemployment figures are particularly disturbing because young people only make up 25% of the working-age population (UN 2005). In addition to disproportionate levels of unemployment, young people also suffer disadvantages as the result of an increase in intermittent (temporary, part-time, casual) work and insecure arrangements which

have been observed in both developed and developing countries (ibid). The global picture that shows the discrepancies between youth and adult unemployment is shown in the table below:

Table 1. Youth unemployment rates and the ratios of youth-to-adult unemployment rate, 1993 and 2003

	Youth unemployment rate (%)		Change in youth unemployment rate (%)	Ratio of youth-to-adult unemployment rate		Change in the ratio of the youth-to-adult unemployment rate (%)
	1993	2003		1993	2003	
World	11.7	14.4	23.1	3.1	3.5	12.9
Industrialized Economies	15.4	13.4	-13.0	2.3	2.3	0.0
of which G8 countries	14.6	15.1	3.4	2.3	2.3	0.0
Transition Economies	14.9	18.6	24.8	2.9	2.4	-17.2
East Asia	4.8	7.0	45.8	3.1	2.9	-6.5
South-East Asia	8.8	16.4	86.4	3.9	4.8	23.1
South Asia	12.8	13.9	8.6	5.9	5.9	0.0
Latin America and the Caribbean	12.4	16.6	33.9	2.8	3.1	10.7
Middle East and North Africa	25.7	25.6	-0.4	3.4	3.3	-2.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	21.9	21.0	-4.1	3.6	3.5	-2.8

Source: International Labour Organization, March 2005

This table reflects that the youth unemployment rate in the Middle East and North Africa was the highest in the world in both 1993 and 2003 (25.7% and 25.6 % respectively). The table also shows

that Sub-Saharan Africa has the second highest youth unemployment as compared to the world figures in both years. It is shown in this table that East Asia had the lowest youth unemployment rates in the world, followed by South-East Asia. However, no reasons have been provided to support these figures.

The global concern with youth unemployment has been manifested by an increased commitment to addressing the problem by national governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and regional and international organizations. For example, Goal 8 of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which call for a global partnership for development, specifically refers to the creation of employment opportunities for young people. The United Nations, ILO and World Bank have also come together to form the Youth Employment Network (YEN), which brings together leaders in industry, youth and civil society and policymakers in an effort to respond to the challenge of youth unemployment (ILO 2004). YEN operates on the basis of four global priorities employability, entrepreneurship, employment creation and equal opportunity which also function as a framework for analysis and action (ibid). Since Namibia is one of the countries which has volunteered to be a 'champion country' for the purpose of showcasing successful youth employment practices, this study will also examine Namibia's record in view of the standards set and recommendations made by YEN and other relevant bodies and actors.

1.2. Youth Unemployment: The Sub-Saharan Africa Perspective

According to some observations, Africa's population is very young and accordingly young people make up more than 50 percent of the population of the countries in Africa (United Nations Economic commission for Africa (ECA 2002:1).

Between 2002 and 2003 Sub-Saharan Africa youth unemployment stood at 21 percent, compared to the world average of 14.4 percent (ECA 2005: 168). This phenomenon resulted in the fact that youth unemployment in Africa ranked the second highest in the world following the Middle East and North Africa where the youth unemployment rate was recorded at 25.6 percent during the same period (ECA 2005:168). Because of the high proportion of young people in countries such as Benin, Niger and Zambia, where persons under the age of 18 make up to 55% of the population, the problem of youth unemployment is even more pronounced in Africa. In addition, according to the ILO, Mauritius' youth unemployment rate was recorded at 23.8 percent in 1995 with a share of youth unemployed compared to the population at 12 percent. In 2000 in South Africa, 55.8 percent of the youth were unemployed of whom 57.9 percent were between 15 and 24 years old. It is also argued that each year there are about 8.7 million new entrants into the labour market in Africa, for whom jobs should be found (Economic Commission for Africa 2002: 2).

The ILO has realized that youth unemployment in Africa is characterized by interrelated factors which may not necessarily be unique to Africa but which exhibit themselves to a different degree. According to the ILO, the reasons for a high youth- unemployment rate in Africa has been related to the following factors:

- a) lack of employment opportunities due to the under-development of economies;
- b) high rates of population growth;
- c) sluggish or stagnant economies;
- d) low literacy and numeracy rates;
- e) poor quality education and an education sector that increasingly equips young people with limited industrial skills and which fails to align the curricula with the needs of the labour market (Economic Commission for Africa 2002:2). Other factors that ILO has observed include globalization, armed conflict and population growth (Economic Commission for Africa 2005:167).

The seriousness of the consequences of youth unemployment for African society have been highlighted in a recent UN report which referred to youth unemployment in West Africa as a ticking bomb capable of destroying political and social structures and threatening the quest for peace, security and development in that region (United Nations Office of West Africa, 2005:1). In an effort to address the problem at continental level, African governments have signed up to the 2006 African Union Action Plan in Burkina Faso, which has the creation of employment opportunities for young people, women and other vulnerable groups as one of its key priority areas.

1.3. Youth Unemployment: The Namibian Perspective

Namibia's fledgling economy has been shaped by a colonial history of glaring inequality and a harsh desert physical environment, which does not provide many opportunities for mass industrialization and employment (Odada, Nhuleipo & Mumangeni 2000:5). The socio-economic structure inherited at independence in 1990 was characterized by (a) an underdeveloped economy with a small modern sector, dominated by mining, a small manufacturing sector, a very underdeveloped agricultural and informal sector, and a low GDP growth rate; (b) low levels of education and skills among the majority of the black population; and (c) racial inequity in the distribution of employment opportunity, income, wealth and social services (Ministry of Labour 1997: i). Namibian unemployment figures continue to reflect this complex history and legacy of inequalities even after independence.

On a par with international statistical standards, the Namibian government defines unemployment in both a "broad" and a "strict" sense (Namibia Labour Force Survey Final Report 2001). Following the "strict" definition, an unemployed person is someone who has been (a) without work, (b) available for work, and (c) actively seeking work. The strict definition, also referred to as the 'narrow' or 'restrictive' definition, excludes individuals who satisfy the first two criteria but are not actively seeking work and has been criticized as being of limited use in describing labour markets which are characterized by mass unemployment, where some individuals may have stopped looking for work, not because they do not wish to work but because they have given up

hope and become demoralized (LaRRI 2004:12). The “broad “or “expanded” definition regards as unemployed all people who are without work, but are available for work and are in the labour force, even if they have made no attempt to look for work, as (NLFS Final Report of Analysis 2002:62).

According to the year 2000 Namibian Labour Force Survey (NLFS), the national unemployment rate, broadly defined, stands at 33.8 percent (compared to 34.4 percent in 1997) and falls to 20.2 percent if the narrow definition is applied (NLFS Report 2001). The NLFS (using the broad definition) also indicated that unemployment is highest among the youth, with 67 percent of young people between the ages of 15-19 and 59 percent of those between the ages of 20-24 being unemployed (ibid:13). The 2000 levels of youth unemployment represent a decline in the participation of young people in the labour market, with the rates for the 20-24 year age group producing the greatest decrease (from 68.50 percent in 1997 to 49.80 percent in 2000) (Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture 2006:4)

According to the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture, the causes of youth unemployment in Namibia include an education system that has failed to provide young people with the skills they need and a labour market that has failed to provide real economic opportunity (MYNSSC). The effects of youth unemployment include crime, alcoholism, feelings of personal humiliation and family disintegration.

Lack of income among the young people is not the only attribute that characterizes unemployment in Namibia. There are other factors. For example, unemployment is gendered-related in that it is higher among women (39 percent) than among men (28 per cent). It is important to note that this remains the case, irrespective of the definition of employment used (LaRRI 2004). Youth unemployment also tends to be of a long-term nature with 32 percent of the unemployed having been jobless for two years or longer, 12.6 percent having been unemployed for 1-2 years and only 4.8 percent having been without work for less than 3 months (LaRRI 2004).

2. Statement of the Problem

This study is concerned with the problem of youth unemployment in Namibia, particularly in the urban Khomas region. In order to address this problem, the recently created (April 2005) Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture and its predecessor, the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation, have over the years adopted a series of measures. In fact, there seems to be an overabundance of policies and programmes designed to lower youth unemployment.

One of the earliest measures was the establishment of a National Youth Policy in 1993 designed to “provide an operational framework with a set of realistic guidelines from which action programs and services can be developed to facilitate [the] meaningful involvement of youth in international development efforts and to respond to their various needs” (Ministry of Higher Education, Training

and Employment Creation, 2006). This was followed by the establishment of the National Youth Council in 1994, an advisory forum operating within the framework of four key areas: employment creation and environmental awareness, youth and welfare, networking, youth exchange and international relations and information technology and media. Other initiatives include the creation of a National Youth Service, Multi-Purpose Youth Resource Centre, a Commonwealth Youth Credit Initiative/Youth Enterprise Development (CYCI/YED), a Regional Computer Program, and career guidance offered by the Division of Training and Employment Creation of the Directorate of Youth Development (ibid).

More recent measures include the creation of a Technical Committee on Employment Creation in 2003 in order to, amongst other things, draft an Employment Creation Policy document for the Cabinet and look into the possibility of drafting a bill establishing a Commission on Employment Creation. In October 2004, a series of Working Groups on Youth Employment Network (YEN), were created by the MYNSSC, including the Working Group on Employability, the Working Group on Equity, the Working Group on Entrepreneurship and the Working Group on Environmental Sustainability. To fulfill its political commitment as a lead country in YEN, Namibia, through the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture, launched a Youth Employment Network Plan of Action in January 2006, whose aims included the sharing of information between many policies, programmes, initiatives and activities that already exist, the development of an integrated approach, the mainstreaming of youth employment issues into

economic and social policies and encouraging the participation of the young men and women (ibid).

This study seeks to examine the impact of the various aforementioned initiatives on youth unemployment. Specifically, it seeks to see how youth employment projects or programmes and the activities and policies that the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture has embarked upon have worked to reduce youth unemployment. Given the fact that the focus of this study is on the Khomas region, it examines in particular the attempts of the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture to reduce youth unemployment in urban Khomas region.

The selection of the urban Khomas region as a focal point for this study is governed by the following considerations. Youth unemployment in the Khomas region has increased from 40.9 percent in 2000 to 41.5 percent in 2004 when using the strict definition (with females accounting for 21.3 percent, as compared to 19.6 for males in the year 2000) (NLFS 2000 & 2004). Although this figure is lower than the national average (43.1 percent in 2000 and 43.2 percent in 2004 (NLFS 2000 & 2004), it may yet increase as more young people move from other regions seeking work, a better life, better goods and service delivery in the capital city every year. By and large, the presence of young Namibians queuing up at the Ministries, and the great number of casual job-seekers at the junctions of main streets in Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia, some of whom sell newspapers, magazines or other items on the street, are evidence of the suffering of these people at the hands of unemployment.

3. Objectives

3.1 General Objective:

The broad objective of this study is to examine the effectiveness of the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture in combating youth unemployment in Namibia, particularly the Khomas region.

3.2 Specific Objectives:

In addition to the general objective stated in the paragraph above, this study also has more specific objectives. These are:

1. To discuss the National Youth Employment Policy and other programmes initiated by the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture and programs on youth unemployment in urban Khomas region.
2. To examine the quality of education of young job-seekers particularly, those registered with the Ministry of Youth in Khomas region;
3. To investigate the views and perceptions of youth on the value of the National Youth Policy and youth employment projects earmarked to reduce youth unemployment.
4. To make recommendations for possible change in youth employment policy and employment creation policy.

4. Research Questions

The research questions this study intends to answer include, amongst others, the following:

1. What role does the Ministry of Youth, National Services Sport and Culture play in reducing youth unemployment in urban the Khomas region?
2. What causes youth unemployment in the Khomas region?
3. How does education affect youth employment?
4. How do the youth perceive or respect the MYNSSC programmes?
5. How do the youth benefit from these programmes?

5. Research Methodology:

Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies and approaches were employed in collecting data.

5.1 Quantitative data:

Quantitative methods are research methods dealing with numbers and anything that is measurable, whereby counting and measuring are common forms. Series of numbers are thus presented in tables, graphs or other forms of statistics. In employing this methodology the distribution of youth

employment is shown in terms of tables. The specific target population in the quantitative data is made up of job seekers registered with MYNSSC. A structured questionnaire seeks to collect information from the jobseekers that have registered with the MYNSSC, paying attention to the following variables:

1. Demographic characteristics
2. Perceptions about the value of the National Youth Policy and
3. What needs to be done to improve the Youth Employment Policy?

In terms of quantitative data, this data was collected from the Labour Force Surveys conducted in Namibia in 1997, 2000 and 2004 respectively and other literature.

5.2 Qualitative Research Methodology

Qualitative research involves the use of textual records that are not amenable to statistical interpretation. They are used to study conditions and processes that are hard to measure with numbers. In this case interviews, documents, texts, participants' observation data or fieldwork were used to understand and explain social phenomena (ibid). By using these techniques for data collection, the researcher collected empirical data/materials by means of interviews and written data sources ranging from archive research including both published and unpublished documents, annual reports, memos, newspapers, Namibia Labour Force Surveys of 1997-2004 and articles related to youth unemployment. The researcher conducted three (3) separate in-depth interviews as part of the qualitative data collection. The first interview sought to gather information from the

Deputy Director of the Department of Youth who is in charge of the office programmes and initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Youth relating to youth employment. It was also of utmost value to collect information from the two officials responsible for registering unemployed youth within the Ministry of Youth. These officials have acquired knowledge of the demographic profile or other characteristics regarding job-seekers. Finally, it was imperative to do qualitative interviews with job-seekers themselves in order to obtain primary information.

5.3 Sampling Method

5.3.1 Sampling Framework

Records of the Ministry under review constituted the sampling frame for the quantitative data. A small subgroup of fifty young people was randomly selected for the purpose of the study. The group of people eligible to be drawn for the sample in this regard included young men and women in the age group of 15 to 30 years and who are registered within, or available through, the Ministry. The criteria for selection focused on youth age limits; however the study paid attention to issues of sex and gender, education and other variables that may influence youth employability and recruitment. These young people answered the structured questionnaire from which the quantitative data was in part derived. The accessibility of such respondents depended highly on the Ministry records through registrations of job-seekers which include respondents' addresses as well as contact telephone numbers. Therefore a simple stratified random sample strategy was used to select these respondents.

5.3.2 Purposive Sampling

This is a non-probability sampling strategy that was employed in this study in selecting the respondents. The power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth analysis related to the central issues being studied. The choice of the Deputy Director and the two officials in the MYNSSC is in this sense purposive. They are people that are working directly with unemployed youth and they are heavily involved in the formulation of policies and programmes that target youth unemployment.

6. The Relevance of the Study

The focus on urban Khomas region youth unemployment is the first of its kind. Most researchers and academics have written basically on youth unemployment at the national level. Therefore, this study considers it imperative to know the status of youth employment in each region in order to determine whether the regions benefit equally from the National Youth Policy and programmes geared to reduce poverty among the youth population. More importantly, the outcomes of the interviews or the data that were collected throughout this study can help planners, policy makers, statisticians, employers, employees, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders to make informed decisions and to take appropriate measures to ensure that youth unemployment is dealt with effectively.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

7.1 The Concept of Youth

There are conflicting interpretations of the definition of the term 'youth' with factors like culture, politics and institutions all being relevant considerations. (O'Higgins1997:1). The standard UN definition, for example, considers youth to comprise the age-group between fifteen and twenty four. In industrialized countries, the lower age limit of the term 'youth' tends to correspond to the statutory minimum school-leaving age, while the upper limit tends to vary more widely. Britain's Youth Employment Policy, for example, is targeted at individuals between the ages of 16-18, whilst in Italy the term is used to describe policies for individuals aged 14 to 29 in the northern part of the county and 14 to 32 in the southern part (O'Higgins 1997: 1). In many countries, the definition of youth depends on who is included as well as on which dimension of youth takes precedence. These dimensions can be demographic (i.e. age), cultural (i.e. the notion of adulthood), biological (i.e. the attainment of puberty), social (i.e. the attainment of maturity or marriage-ability) or economic (i.e. the ability to sustain oneself) (Kanyenze et al 2000). In Kenya, for example, the term 'youth' is used differently by different ethnic communities and is based not only on age but on other considerations such as circumcision (Muai 1999).

The broad nature of the designation 'youth' should also be noted. While there may be common characteristics that delineate the group 'youth', the most significant ones referring to the transition

from childhood and dependence to adulthood and independence and the assumption of a more active and responsible role in society, the term 'youth' does not refer to a homogeneous group (Kirby et al 1997). Indeed, the category is made up of young people of diverse socio-cultural and economic backgrounds, from countries or regions at different stages of development. Other differentiating factors include race, gender, ethnicity, religion, caste, and disability (Kirby et al 1997:19).

In Namibia the term youth is used to describe young people between 15 and 30 years, although the legal working age is 16 years (The Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit 2005: 3). It is this definition that has been used throughout this paper.

7.2 The Concept of Unemployment

It is important to clarify what we mean by unemployment. Although the term tends to be straightforward different people understand it differently. For instance, according to the Cambridge International Dictionary of English unemployment refers to the number of people who do not have a job which provides them with money (Cambridge International Dictionary of English 2002). Some people use the "broad" or "expanded definition" and others the "strict" or "narrow" definition. According to international statistical standards an unemployed person is a person who has been without work, is available for work and is seeking work (Namibia Labour Force Survey 1997). This is the strict definition of unemployment. On the contrary, the broad definition

considers as unemployed all those without a job and who are available for work despite the fact that they may have made no attempt to look for work (Namibia Labour Force Survey 1997). It is argued that the broad definition in general terms yields higher rates of unemployment rather than the strict definition (Namibia Labour Force Survey 1997).

The requirement that a person must look for work has been controversial because it ignores work-seekers who may want to work but have given up because they have become discouraged and given up as they perceive the chance of getting work as very slim. This type of unemployment is called hidden unemployment, a phenomenon which is usually associated with developing countries where mass unemployment creates the very conditions in which persons feel discouraged from actively seeking work (Standing et al, 1996). Standing et al express reservations about the use of a broad measure of unemployment, arguing that it may exaggerate the measure of potential labour supply (ibid: 104).

According to the ILO definition, the unemployed are those who have not worked more than one hour during the short reference period but who are available for and actively seeking work (O'Higgins 1997). However, the one hour rule was found inappropriate as some national authorities would prefer to use a longer working period. For instance, the Netherlands have been implementing a twelve-hour per week rule; therefore a person is considered to be unemployed if he or she has worked less than twelve hours in the reference week.

Some theories about youth unemployment doubt the status of the students. While most countries exclude students from the labour force, others, for instance Norway, included them provided they are actively seeking work (O'Higgins 1997).

7.3 Causes and Types of Unemployment

This section tries to give a brief account of the main and popular theories on the causes and nature of unemployment, generally, and, youth unemployment specifically. Unemployment can occur for numerous reasons. The available literature distinguishes between many types of theories on unemployment such as frictional, structural, technological, Keynesian (cyclical or demand deficiency unemployment), classical, voluntary and involuntary. Frictional unemployment, for example, is said to be usually caused by individuals making the deliberate decision not to work while they are in the process of seeking better- paid employment and more suitable jobs. It can be also an end result of unavoidable delays between jobs especially when a worker has to move to a new location (Hodson et al 1995). Hodson suggests that frictional unemployment can only be reduced by introducing programs that are designed to match job openings with qualified candidates. This suggestion has been supported by Todaro (1989).

According to Hodson and Todaro, structural unemployment occurs when there is a chronic discrepancy between the demand for labour with certain skills and the supply of workers having those required skills. Or, simply, there is a gap between the number of the jobs the economy

provides and the number of people seeking work. Short-term downturns in the economy, Hodson argues, can also cause structural unemployment. By contrast, cyclical unemployment refers to unemployment created by the shortage of job opportunities. This usually takes place during periods of economic recession when demand for labour is low. The assumption behind the cyclical theory is that the recession is temporary and once the economy recovers, the unemployed will once more be integrated into the wage economy.

Very often unemployment occurs as a result of layoffs that may include quitting a job, being fired, becoming disabled, moving to be with either spouse or family members (Hodson et al 1995). Hodson points out that layoffs have devastating consequences for employees. He describes these consequences in terms of loss of income and fringe benefits like health insurances which, he said, lead to a rapid deterioration of people's life styles. He further asserts that layoffs result in loss of homes, delays in educational plans, reduced medical care, as well as reductions in food and recreation budgets (ibid). Some consequences, Hudson argued, include deaths, suicides and homicides resulting from financial and emotional hardship (Hodson et al 1995).

In almost all countries the youth are a vulnerable category within the labour force and in many of these countries the problem of youth unemployment is so serious that it presents a major policy challenge (Kirby et al 1997:53). However, while youth unemployment is a feature of all countries, the causes of youth unemployment vary from country to country. Some may be related to structural characteristics and trends such as the growth of the economy and labour productivity, affecting the

demand of labour and the labour force supply. Some causes may be related to specific policy measures ranging from the qualitative aspects of macro economic management to education and training which can bring demand and supply into closer balance and influence demand more dynamically through their effect on enterprises and innovation (ibid). The point here is that unemployment may occur at any given wage level whenever these factors result in the supply of labour exceeding the demand for labour. Kirby et al draw attention to the influence of economic growth on labour demand and therefore assert that economic growth can be used as a proxy for labour demand. Consequently, economic growth, they argue, should be expanded in order to curb unemployment from rising (Kirby et al 1997: 60).

In most cases the supply of labour exceeds the demand for labour. The scenario may differ from country to country. In Namibia for instance, the supply of labour exceeds the demand for labour, as both public and private spheres have failed to provide sufficient jobs. Also, unemployment can be a product of lack of effective demand, frictional unemployment and a host of other factors, as will be reflected in this study.

Some explanations have been provided as to why the demand for the service of the youth is usually less than for labour generally. Some studies have indicated a causal relationship between the lack of experience of paid work, which is characteristic of most youth, and in some instances their lack of employable skills as well as the rate of unemployment. Correlations have also been established or shown between the variations in the level of youth unemployment and the differences in national

education, particularly when it comes to apprenticeships (Kirby et al 1997:63). Kirby et al ascribed the low rate of youth unemployment in Germany to the country's strong apprenticeship system and associated the high rate of unemployment in Italy with its ill-developed system of vocational training institutions (ibid). This analysis can be borrowed to assess and perhaps remedy the problem of youth unemployment in Namibia.

It has been a general view in Namibia that educational attainment is an obstacle to finding employment. For example, most of the jobseekers who have registered with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW) for employment opportunities have low qualifications ranging from grade 1 to grade 12; only 2.4 percent of those who have registered have tertiary education (Kirby et al 1997: 20). This means that many of them will not meet the labour market requirements.

Another factor worth mentioning when discussing the causes of unemployment is the duration of the education received by the jobseekers. The ILO has observed that prolonging the period of education of the youth delays their entry into the labour market and consequently generally reduces the number of the youth in the labour force (ILO 2004: 3). According to the ILO, limited employment opportunities prolong youth dependency on their families and make them more vulnerable to various risks, such as having to leave school prematurely (ILO 2004: 4). By and large, the ILO has noticed that staying within the family household longer than the family can afford has the effect of extending the financial burden on such a household, which in turn reduces

the family's chance of getting out of the poverty trap. The chances for young children to attend school are limited in a similar way, which thus affects future generations (ILO 2004: 7).

The effect of insufficient supply of skills in respect of young people has been addressed by Keep and Mayhew (1995) who argue convincingly that the skills levels determine the type of equilibrium (low-skills/ low wages, or high skills/high wage) that is reached, rather than the aggregate level of youth (O'Higgins 2001:40). O'Higgins further argues that the skills level of an individual affects that person's employment prospects. This argument is based on the fact that skills not only determine the quality of work but have also impacts on wages.

Some studies reflect the complexity of the relationship between unemployment and work experience. For instance, Kirby asserts that jobholders have inherent advantages over those joining the labour market for the first time. He further argues that lack of work experience is a disadvantage for young people competing with those who have accumulated knowledge, experience of work discipline and varying degrees of job security. New entrants become disadvantaged especially when work is skilled. (Kirby et al 1997: 7)

The differences between urban and rural unemployment is a prominent theme in the literature on (youth) unemployment in Africa. According to Fadayomi (1992), the usually higher rate of urban unemployment is higher because of the inability of countries to develop and utilize manpower resources effectively, particularly in the rural sectors, resulting in high rates of urbanization and

increased migration of young people to urban areas. Young people's aversion to the poor socio-economic conditions in the rural areas (which manifest themselves in terms of inadequate basic social and physical infrastructure, poverty, low life expectancy, low net returns to labour and capital) also increase migration to urban centres (Adepoyu 1986), leading to an increase of unemployment there. Finally, high urban unemployment may also be the result of the closure of companies and public establishments, staff retrenchment as well as poor work attitudes among the youth (Manning and Junkar 1998).

The available literature also focuses on the consequences of unemployment on the young. Morrell et al, for example, review evidence of an association between unemployment and psychological and physical ill-health, revealing an association between youth unemployment and youth suicide. Youth unemployment is also associated with depression, loss of confidence and raised blood pressure (Morrell et al 1998). A recently published United Nations (UN) report on youth unemployment in West Africa suggests that youth unemployment is capable of destroying political and social structures and threatening the quest for peace, security and development in that region. This warning may be of particular relevance to countries like Namibia, which continue to struggle with deep divisions within their societies.

Some observers have blamed government policies for causing or contributing towards the problem of youth unemployment. According to these commentators, young people's faulty attitudes and expectations in regard to work have been influenced by government policies which promote an

education and training system that is too academic or biased in favour of urban and modern sector values (Livingstone 1989:390). Furthermore, the high formal sector wages and inappropriate earning structures encourage rural-urban migration, especially by young men with little formal education, and thus add to urban youth unemployment instead of promoting employment in the rural areas (ibid). This particular perspective on the causes of youth unemployment differs from other perspectives because it focuses on the idea of a “mismatch”. The mismatch theory states that unemployment is caused because young people are seeking wrong types of jobs rather than merely by a situation where there is a shortage of jobs or lack of employment opportunities.

Age and sex have been recorded as relevant factors when discussing youth unemployment. For example, according to the Namibia Labour Force Survey (NLFS 2004), unemployment in Namibia does not affect all age groups the same way. The rate of unemployment falls consistently with age, affecting mostly the age group between 15 and 19 years (NLFS 2004). This trend is reflected in the table below:

Table 2: Labour Force Participation Rate and Unemployment Rate, population aged 15 years and above by age and sex, Khomas, 2001 Census

Age group	Total labour force participation %	Total unemployment rate (%)	Female labour force participation Rate %	Female unemployment rate %	Male Labour force participation Rate %	Male unemployment rate (%)
15-19	25.3	67.2	23.3	71.8	27.6	62.6
20-24	76.0	49.4	73.1	54.3	78.9	44.8
25-29	88.7	34.6	85.1	40.7	92.1	29.3
30-34	90.6	24.9	86.2	29.8	94.8	20.9
35-39	91.6	18.8	87.6	22.0	95.2	16.2
40-44	90.6	15.8	85.9	18.9	94.9	13.2
45-49	89.3	15.2	82.7	18.5	94.7	12.8
50-54	83.5	13.5	72.9	18.1	91.8	10.6
55-59	73.9	15.7	60.3	22.2	85.2	11.8
60-64	48.2	18.0	34.9	25.9	61.3	13.6
65+	28.0	30.2	19.6	43.6	37.9	22.0
Not stated	69.0	28.3	54.9	30.5	75.5	27.7
Total	76.2	29.9	70.6	35.3	81.5	25.4

Source: 2001 Population and Housing Census: Khomas Region: 2005

This table indicates that the unemployment rates for youth between 15 and 34 years is higher than those of the rest of the groups. It also shows a high rate of youth labour force participation especially from the age group of 20 to 39 years. Both unemployment and labour force participation reduce with increase in age. It is also observed in this table that the unemployment rate for females is higher (71.8 percent) than that of their male counterparts (62.6 percent) with the total of 35.3 and 25.4 percent respectively.

According to the 2001 Population and Housing Census, the unemployment rate is the proportion of the unemployed persons in the labour force for a given sex or age population group. That is the number of the unemployed persons divided by the number of all persons in the labour force in the same sex or age population group.

Chapter 3: Policy interventions and programmes adopted by the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture in combating youth unemployment in Khomas region

The objective of this chapter is to examine various programmes and activities initiated by the Namibian Government through the Ministry of Youth to respond to the youth unemployment challenge and maximize the potential of young people in Namibia and the Khomas region in particular. The various programmes geared to promote youth employment and to support the youth in improving their status in the labour market are discussed. The chapter also seeks to ascertain whether the programmes under discussion have achieved their intended objectives or not. As will be explained later, most of the supportive activities and programmes developed by the Ministry of Youth are either training-driven programmes or direct employment creation programmes. Areas of interventions range from the development of small businesses, business advisory services, the mentoring and imparting of various skills, including life skills, provision of credit for small businesses, and promotion of informal sector associations. It is important to note that some of these programmes are imported while some are initiated or developed by Namibia itself. For example, the global concern about the increasing rates of youth unemployment led to the establishment of organs such as the Youth Employment Network (YEN) whose values have been imported and

implemented in Namibia by the ILO and its partners such as the United Nations and the World Bank.

In this chapter, the analysis of the Ministry of Youth initiatives and programmes is aided by a series of interviews conducted with officials from the Ministry of Youth and job= seekers. The questionnaires aim at unearthing relevant information pertaining youth unemployment in Namibia as well as in Khomas region. The questions posed to the officials include: (a) How do they see unemployment among young people in Namibia? b) What do they think are the causes of unemployment in Namibia, and in Khomas?, (c) What role does the Ministry of Youth play in reducing youth unemployment at national and Khomas region level? (d) What are the strong-points and weaknesses of the National Youth Policy, (e) To what extent does the National Youth Service contribute to a reduction in youth unemployment? and other related questions. The findings of the interviews help to explain and assess the real situation regarding the impact of the Ministry's programmes in terms of the findings obtained. It also aids in assessing whether the interventions of the Ministry have been successful.

The chapter will be structured into several sections, which will discuss various initiatives of the Ministry of Youth such as the National Youth Policy, the National Youth Council, the National Youth Service, Multi-Purpose Youth Resource Centres and the Youth employment Network.

3.1 The National Youth Policy

Multifarious barriers have been associated with youth unemployment in Namibia. In order to address these barriers, the government of Namibia developed a National Youth Policy in 1993 in order to promote multiculturalism, mutual understanding, unity in diversity, peaceful coexistence and tolerance, and a sense of belonging and pride among the youth of Namibia. The policy also seeks to promote positive and dignified values, tolerance and great respect for ethics in all aspect of life (National Youth Policy). The government also required an operational framework which provides guidelines and from which action programmes and services can be developed to address youth employment problems.

The National Youth Policy seeks to achieve three main goals. It seeks to empower the youth and foster proper upbringing of the youth so that they can become responsible citizens. The policy seeks also to create a situation that enables young men and women to initiate actions that promote their own development or that of their communities and society at large (ibid). Other objectives that this policy seeks to accomplish include the following:

- To recognize and develop a sense of self-esteem, potential, and aspirations of all young women and men in Namibia
- To provide special services and support to the disadvantaged youth as a result of family situations, gender, disability and poor representation

- To provide guiding principles for all governmental and non-governmental agencies consistent with the above stated values
- To mobilize the Namibian youth in urgent tasks of national reconstruction and development
- To expand and improve youth access to education and training opportunities in all fields for the Namibian youth at all levels, and
- To provide opportunities for youth to develop relevant life and work skills which will help them to become responsible and self-reliant members of the community (ibid).

In its attempts to achieve the aforementioned goals and objectives, the National Youth Policy has recognized that education and training are essential in the youth's lives. It therefore, emphasizes the relevance and need for quality education and well-managed training to make all young people socially useful and economically productive towards the national development. It also calls for the equitable distribution of educational services and resources (ibid). Equally important, the policy recognized the extent of youth vulnerability to various health risks and substance abuse as well as issues of reproductive health. Against this background, education and training as well as youth health turned out to be crucial key strategic areas of the policy (ibid).

Other key strategic areas emphasized by this policy include the participation of youth in agro-economic activities for self-empowerment and food security. Moreover, the policy is cognizant of the fact that both formal and informal sectors play a vital role in the Namibian economy by way of

providing not only employment opportunities to many Namibian young men and women but also improving the livelihood of the young people through active participation.

According to this policy, government, as well as the private and most of the formal sectors, has failed to provide employment to young people in Namibia. Henceforth, the youth should find solutions by way of using their own creativity through arts and cultural heritages (ibid P:8).

The Ministry of Youth is entrusted with the overall responsibility of coordinating the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review of the policy. The effectiveness of the Ministry is here analyzed as to how the implementation of this policy impacted on youth employment in the Khomas region. Looking at the goals and objectives of the National Youth Policy, inquiries can be made as to what changes this policy has brought in the said region. Of profound importance is to examine institutional mechanisms for the implementation of this policy such as the National Youth Council.

3.2 National Youth Council

The National Youth Council was established in 1994 in order to address the challenges, opportunities and obstacles facing young people in Namibia (National Youth Council 1994). It is considered to be a major implementing, supervisory and facilitating agency for the youth development programmes (National Youth Policy).

Most of the National Youth Council's functions are liaison in nature. For example, it liaises with the Ministry of Youth on development issues and advises the Ministry on issues pertaining to youth. The council operates within the framework of key areas of which employment creation, environmental awareness, youth health and welfare, networking, youth exchange and international relations and information technology and media are all important. All of these key areas play a vital role in promoting youth employment and poverty reduction in the country (Namibian YEN Plan of Action).

Because it is an employment promotion desk, the National Youth Council provides training, technical and financial support or funds for the youth to start own projects. The financial support usually provided to youth groups or youth organizations is facilitated through Grant Schemes in terms of grants that are given in small amounts or in terms of micro credit (small loans between N\$ 700 and N\$ 2 500). These activities are normally carried out in conjunction with Development Banks in the country (National Youth Council respondent). The beneficiaries have to return the amount of money they received with a small interest rate in the course of six months. However, one employee at the National Youth Council made the observation that that very few Khomas region youth made use of these grant schemes (ibid). Another employee noted that the situation was different countrywide, as many young people throughout Namibia had made use of the micro credit loans in order to start and sustain their small businesses, especially tailoring and hair salons.

3.3 The National Youth Service

The National Youth Service is undertaken by the Ministry of Youth in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence to absorb school leavers and integrate them into different institutions after undergoing certain training. This developmental programme was established in 1995 as an integrated experimental learning, training and employment creation initiative aimed at creating a platform for unity, cultural exchange, nationhood, patriotism, harmony and discipline. Participants in this scheme are mainly trained in construction, mechanical, agricultural and other skills. The programme's outcome was first realized in 1999 when young men and women were recruited for skills training. By 2003 about 1 270 had participated in the program since its inception, 753 of whom had managed to secure permanent jobs or further studies at different institutions of higher learning (Namibia YEN Plan of Action).

To some extent this scheme, being a labour-based programme, tries to minimize and substitute capital labour and tries to ensure national support for the youth through employment creation.

3.4 Multi-Purpose Youth Resource Centres

According to NEPRU (2005), Youth Resource Centers in Namibia are an outcome of the National Development Plan (NDP1) and were introduced to provide developmental activities through structured and youth-driven programmes. According to one female interviewee who is employed as a program coordinator at the Khomas region's youth resource center, the beneficiaries are mostly

school drop-outs (out-of-school youth) and unemployed youth who are offered training in various disciplines such as music, tailoring, gymnasium, computer literacy, leadership, library and life skills programmes. Quoting from this coordinator “the Khomas region youth resource center has been productive. The youth that were trained in music have shown love and passion for music. Participants formed up bands that are often used to entertain official functions and parties or other people when invited. Participants have big chances to do business, as those who participated in these bands are free to set up their own bands as business ventures.”

She further stated: “Although computer and gymnasium training were offered at the same level as other disciplines, the centre has great success in tailoring, hairdressing, food-catering and life skills programs. For instance, one female trainee, after completing a course in hair beauty at the Khomas centre, set up a hair salon in Katutura called Pewa Beauty House and Training Centre. Having started as a small entity, this salon has grown strong and turned into a training centre for beauty services consisting of three salons while manufacturing cosmetics from natural oils and fruits. Currently, this business employs 14 full-time employees. This effort is highly recognized by the National Youth Council, therefore the owner was sent together with other young entrepreneurs to China from 15 and 21 August 2006 for more business exposure,” the interviewee remarked.

The same success has been experienced with tailoring trainees in Khomas region. One female employee at Khomas Resource Centre indicated: “the centre had been working very effectively in this area and the assistance has been provided to the participants in tailoring by the Ministry of

Youth which subsidizes the project. While the Ministry provided everything necessary for tailoring, from material, machines to needles, after completing the course every participant can sell his or her products to generate capital that enables them to start own businesses. Most participants benefited from this project to a large extent,” the interviewee expressed.

In terms of computer training, about 338 young people were trained and completed computer literacy during the pilot phase in 2003 (Namibian YEN Plan of Action). The other strong point of the multi-purpose centre in Khomas region is manifested by the interest shown in food catering by both female and male youth. For example, the Rent-A-Waiter Enterprise, founded in 2003 by a young man, has grown bigger in its capacity and now employs 28 part-time staff. According to the same interviewee, this catering business gained momentum by providing on-site catering, house-keeping and waiter services for private functions, cocktail parties and special occasions such as weddings and anniversaries. From these examples, it can be concluded that the Multi-Purpose Resource Centre in Khomas region has achieved some of the objectives of the National Youth Policy, namely empowering the youth as well as promoting creativeness and pro-activeness among them.

The promotion of respect for ethics in all aspects of life has been expressed as one of the goals of the National Youth Policy in Namibia. Multi-Purpose Resource Centre works towards the realization of this goal by offering life skills programmes since 2002. These programmes are designed to assist in the rehabilitation of children under the age of 18 years who have committed

minor offences. According to the interviewee at this centre, this program consists of ten rehabilitation sessions annually and endeavors to redirect these youth towards a good life. It also seeks to integrate them into a society in which they could face discrimination as a result of their criminal offences. About 54 young offenders were trained or rehabilitated at the Khomas centre in 2005. This number has doubled to 105 in 2006 according to the information collected from the centre. Due to these positive achievements, the next intake is scheduled to start in January 2007.

Internationally, these types of resource centers have been created for the coordination of demand and supply in the labour market whereby private sector enterprises advertise vacancies. This saves the time and money of jobseekers, who do not have to go from one enterprise to another in order to search for employment. However, for resource centers to work effectively requires a close contact with the private sector to assess skills demands. Each job center also needs to advise young people on marketable skills and maintain a close relationship with training institutions. Most importantly, such centers must provide information on different professions, facilitate decision-making on what to study and promote internships. In publicizing vacancies and providing data the private sector reduces the transaction cost of searching for adequate skilled staff (Economic Report on Africa, 2005). Job centers are thus essential tools that encourage youth to seek employment (Economic Report on Africa, 2005).

In Namibia, one of the employees at Khomas resource center explains, the resource centers do not advertise vacancies but provide assistance to job seekers in terms of the preparation of business

plans and of curriculum vitae. The job seekers are helped to prepare for interviews. Therefore, these centers are there to impart knowledge which helps the youth to find their own ways of solving their problems related to unemployment.

3.5 Youth Employment Network (YEN) and Employment Creation

Developing a global partnership for development became another option for solving youth unemployment introduced by the International Labour Organization (ILO). Established in 2001, the Youth Employment Network (YEN) began its life as a resolution passed by the ILO, the United Nations (UN), and the World Bank in 2000 which called upon all countries to develop and implement strategies that give young people opportunities to find decent and productive work (ILO 2004). The initiative was set up in the framework of the Millennium Declaration which calls for a global partnership in combating poverty and youth unemployment (ILO 2004). To this end, policy makers, employers and workers, young people, civil society and other stakeholders are called upon to pool their skills, experience and knowledge in order to find new but durable policy and programme solutions to the youth employment challenge (ILO 2004). The most important component of the partnership is the fact that these partners have to find solutions to the challenge of youth unemployment in poor countries (ILO 2004). Consequently, four global priorities have been identified and these include employment creation, employability, equal opportunities and entrepreneurship and are widely known as “four E’s” (ILO 2004).

According to the ILO, employment creation has been placed at the center of macroeconomic policy. Moreover, to make the youth employable, governments need to invest in education and vocational training for young people. The Youth Employment Network calls for equal opportunities in employment in order to grant young women the same opportunities as young men (ILO).

The Youth Employment Network therefore supports and promotes the development of national employment strategies targeting youth employment. It provides technical and financial assistance to member countries to draw up national youth action plans based on extensive consultation with youth, employers, civil society and trade unions.

Consultation with young people is instrumental in the operations of YEN, therefore it must be an integral part of any national youth employment strategy. According to YEN, young people are assets and catalysts for development and should not be passive beneficiaries for whom employment must be found. Consequently, a YEN Youth Consultative Group (YCG) was established comprising of representatives from large international and regional youth organizations to provide advice and guidance to the work on youth employment (ILO 2004).

Namibia is one of the twenty-two countries (of which seven are from Africa) that have volunteered to be lead countries for the Youth Employment Network and have exhibited a will to work for the preparation and elaboration of National Action Plans on youth employment (ibid).

To facilitate the YEN, lead countries are not to work in isolation but should share experiences and modalities of implementation with other countries (Namibia Youth Employment Network Plan of Action). In Namibia, the Plan of Action has the primary goal of reversing the current trend of pervasive and persistent poverty, unemployment and under-employment. It also seeks to make tangible improvements in the living standards of the people and their families at the national and community levels. Other objectives include:

- To identify the key issues and challenges faced by young men and women in their transition from education to the workplace
- To acknowledge that many policies, programmes and activities already exist and to provide a platform for the sharing of information and knowledge at the local, regional and national levels, that will enrich various initiatives already being undertaken
- To set priorities for action by policymakers and other stakeholders involved in youth development
- To demonstrate the need for and benefits of, an integrated approach to address the employment challenge
- To provide a set of policy recommendations for quality jobs, thereby reducing unemployment, under-employment and the number of young people living and working in poverty

- To stimulate action by individuals and groups of stakeholders to involve themselves in processes and programmes that directly and indirectly contribute to the generation of more and better jobs for the youth
- To urge local and regional government representatives to mainstream youth employment issues into economic and social policies, to strategize and to introduce programmes at the local and regional levels, and finally
- To encourage young men and women to participate in dialogue and collective action as a necessary pre-requisite for an accurate and effective response.

It is crucial that this study examines the extent of the execution of this action plan by the Ministry of Youth, National Services, Sport and Culture by way of achieving the above-mentioned objectives. The Plan of Action demonstrates the sound promises that Namibia has made towards the uplifting of Namibian young men and women.

3.6 Working Groups on Employability, Equity, Entrepreneurship and Environmental Sustainability

The functions of these groups are self-explanatory. While the employability group is responsible for ensuring that all youth have access to education and training and that they get adequate support during the transition to work (Namibia Youth Employment Network Plan of Action), the working group on equity ensures that equal opportunities are accorded to all youth and that their full potential can fully be realized and that the youth have got access to fundamental rights such as education, health and nutrition (Namibia Youth Employment Network Plan of Action). According to this group, special attention should be paid to marginalized members of the society who have been suffering from discriminatory barriers such as disabled people, rural people, and young women, in terms of education or of their entrance to the labour market for the first time (Namibia Youth Employment Network Plan of Action).

It has been the endeavor of the Ministry of Youth to develop a sense of creativity in business among the youth in Namibia in order for them to generate livelihoods for themselves and for other people. It has been realized that a lack of vision has contributed to youth unemployment in Namibia (Namibia Youth Employment Network Plan of Action). Moreover, in creating employment, consideration has to be paid to the sustainability of the eco-system in the country (Namibia Youth Employment Network Plan of Action).

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter contains information-cum-findings collected from interviews. Firstly, it provides the views of the Ministry of Youth officials on the effectiveness of the programmes initiated by the Ministry in its endeavors to improve youth employment and thus to reduce poverty among them. Evidence provided is based on the responses to the questions in the questionnaire. Factors like sex, gender and culture that very often influence youth will be discussed. Secondly, it will discuss the youth perceptions about unemployment, about the role of the Ministry of Youth and about the relevance of the National Youth Policy to Khomas region youth population, and what, in their view, should be done to improve the National Youth Policy.

Primary data were generated by means of structured questionnaires directed to the officials as well as the young job-seekers registered with the Ministry of Youth. Data collected from the job-seekers include socio-economic characteristics of the respondents their unemployment and employment status, region of residence, educational attainments as well as perceptions about unemployment and their views of the youth policy and programmes.

Findings reveal that the jobseekers interviewed are not only from Khomas but from other regions like Omusati, Caprivi, Oshana, Erongo, Otjozondjupa and the like, who came to Windhoek for work. Most of them are in their twenties and very few in their thirties. Most have been unemployed for more than one year. Findings also reveal that 60 percent of the 50 respondents have been educated until secondary level only. This is probably due to the fact that registration at the Ministry is only available to job-seekers who have completed grade ten. Forty percent of the respondents have acquired tertiary education. Women make up 30 percent of those with tertiary level group.

One female respondent indicated that youth unemployment keeps rising each and every year, and nothing is really done about it. According to another female respondent the impact of the Ministry of Youth is visible or well implemented, but the Ministry should do more. These remarks, however, conflict with the claim made by the Ministry of Youth officials who hailed the success of the intervention programmes.

Comments provided by these interviewees stressed the impact of youth unemployment in terms of increasing theft, vandalism, prostitution, increasing crime, unwanted pregnancies, abuse of alcohol and drugs. Some interviewees mentioned suicide as a consequence of youth unemployment. A male job respondent indicated that some of the unemployed youth abuse alcohol “just to forget their problems, as unemployment is serious challenge”.

The prominent components that trigger youth unemployment in Khomas region according to one male official in the Ministry of Youth, can be explained in terms of lack of employment

opportunities in the labour market which he related to the failure of both the public and the private sector to provide jobs. Besides that, he cited lack of market-based education and vocational training to be the second impediment that he related to inadequate institutional facilities to provide both technical and educational skills to the needy youth. He pointed out that Namibia needs to increase the number of institutions if the goals of vision 2030 are to be realized.

According to the interview with this official, high population growth and subsequent poverty contributed to youth unemployment in Namibia and in Khomas at large. This view is reinforced or supported by the 2001 Population and Housing Census for Khomas region which recorded the population growth rate at 4 percent (Population and Housing Census 2001). He further cited a lack of incentives as to be one of the problems that prohibit the youth in Namibia including Khomas region, from becoming successful entrepreneurs. These incentives include: lack of youth friendly credit initiatives that encourage the youth to become entrepreneurs; lack of mentorship training programs to prepare potential and upcoming youth entrepreneurs, and finally, lack of trust in young people by the potential lenders, accompanied by pure discrimination against previously disadvantaged black youth.

Migration to cities has also been cited as one of the factors that contributed to rising unemployment in Khomas region. According to this respondent “every one wants to be in the city, for this reason there are more unemployed youth than the available vacancies”. Lack of market-related education has been marked as a major impediment to youth employment as well. According to the population

census and labour force surveys, unemployment in Namibia is most prevalent among the youth and among people with low educational qualifications. As mentioned before, youth experience high unemployment partly due to early school drop-out or leaving school too early with the hope of finding work, but because they lack the skills and experience required in the job market they fail to get employment. The table below indicates educational qualification levels for the unemployed in 1997 and 2000.

Table 3: Educational Qualification for the Unemployed

Educational status	1997 (%)	2000 (%)
No education	12.5	7.7
Primary education	44.2	38.4
Junior Secondary	30.1	35.5
Senior Secondary	11.8	16.5
Post Grade 12 Certificate	0.4	0.5
University	0.2	0.1
Post Graduate	0.1	0.1
Teacher training	0.1	0.0

Source: Ministry of Youth: Youth Profile, May 2006

According to this table, most of the unemployed have low levels of educational qualification. More than 80% of the unemployed have less than senior secondary education qualification while less than 1% have attained tertiary education (0.2) or teaching training (0.1). It is clear from this table

that the majority of the unemployed attained only primary education in both 1997 and 2000 (44.2 percent and 39.4 respectively) followed by those who attained junior secondary (30.1 percent and 35.5) (Ministry of Youth 2006). In both years 12.5 and 7.7 percent made up the group of youth with no education.

The results of the 2001 Population and Housing Census reflected that the population size of Khomas was 250 262 of which eight (8) percent of people in the age group of 15 and above had never attended school; twelve percent were at school while 76 percent had left school (2001 Population and Housing Census). This view however, contradicts recent trends of unemployment, especially in the Capital City of Windhoek, where unemployment affects people with higher educational qualifications as well (Odada, Nhuleipo& Mumangeni, 2000).

The discrimination trend within the unemployed youth population in Namibia as well as in Khomas region can be discussed by referring to the differences in unemployment rates based on age, sex and socio-economic background in Namibia. At national level more women suffer the fate of unemployment, with an overall unemployment of 43.4 per cent in 2004 against 30.3 per cent for their male counterparts.

In both urban and rural areas the unemployment rate of women is higher than that of men and is recorded at 53.0 per cent and 33.8 percent respectively (Namibia Labour Force Survey Draft report

of Analysis). The picture of youth unemployment (strict definition) as shown in the Namibian Labour Force Survey Draft Report of Analysis, indicates this discrimination in youth access to employment opportunities. The report reflects that the national unemployment rate of young women is 49.4 per cent while that of young men is 37.7 per cent (ibid). While the results from interviews related the discrimination trend to school drop-out that involves more young women than men, another scenario involves culture.

4.1 Culture and Unemployment

The increasing scarcity of employment opportunities for the youth in Namibia can also be related to cultural beliefs and mores. Historically, women tend to take up subjects that do not allow them to engage in male-dominated jobs. Subjects such as engineering according to the Deputy Director at MYNSSC, are not normally taken by female students, and this affects their opportunities for getting employment in areas related to engineering that is considered to be a field for males.

4.2 The Perceptions of the Khomas Youth on youth Unemployment

Most respondents in Khomas region expressed their views on the impact of youth unemployment in the region. Financial constraints, coupled with the inability to sustain life, are common problems the youth in Khomas region expressed.

Two thirds of the respondents indicated that, despite their qualification, most companies required them to have work experience, and this makes it very difficult for them to penetrate the labour market, both private and public. Some expressed frustration among the youth and when the number of the unemployed grows, it creates economic instability. Most importantly, according to these respondents, increased instances of crime, suicide, theft, domestic violence and other signs of social instability in Windhoek are related to unemployment. Some indicated a link between unemployment and social exclusion explained in terms of losing friends, vulnerability and lack of confidence and protection. One respondent commented: “I am frustrated. I have no money to buy even soap. My relatives say I am useless. I do not deserve any attention as I cannot find a job. I am always at home because there is no money to pay for taxis to go to town to look up for a job.”

The general view on the impact of the Ministry of Youth on youth unemployment is that the Ministry was able, at regional levels and at constituency levels, to organize youth forums that disseminate information pertaining to youth issues at the grass-roots level through networking. This not only facilitates the youth links between the regions, but helps also to facilitate business links within the youth themselves and internationally.

The Youth Expos normally coordinated by the National Youth Council are meant to bring together young people and young entrepreneurs in Namibia from 13 regions and the youth from Southern African Countries to participate and to display their products and services, to learn about business

development opportunities through networking and support. This exposure especially to the outside producers is very crucial as it allows them to learn from each other (National Youth Council of Namibia 2006).

In explaining the importance of these trade fairs, one female official at the National Youth Council asserted that young entrepreneurs, apart from interacting and sharing business ideas, expos are good platforms for exhibiting crafts, culture and agricultural products. Trade fairs provide the youth an opportunity to get in touch with their potential clients. According to this official, trade fairs provide an opportunity to participants to have access to information as well as to participate in the economic development of Namibia. The official further stated that the 2006 Expo experienced an increase in the number of cultural entrepreneurs (artists), increased from 93 in 2005 to 155 in 2006. Participants in the expos have been encouraged to compete among each other for the Youth Award given out annually in the amount of N\$ 20 000 (ibid).

The youth have been benefiting from these trade fairs. For instance, the registration fee for only N\$ 100.00 is payable by a group of youth or artists while an additional N\$50.00 per person is paid by people from outside Windhoek to cover accommodation and meals.

The role of the Ministry was also explained by making reference to the India Namibia Plastic Technology Centre in Ondangwa with which an agreement was made by the Ministry of Youth through National Development Corporation (NDC) to produce plastic items so that they could be

sold by the youth in the region for income generation. A number of the youth in the region benefited from the scheme. It contributes to employment creation and economic empowerment of the youth and poverty reduction among the participants in that particular region. The essence of the National Youth Policy is here observed in terms of developing self-esteem among the youth by mobilizing them to participate in national development. However, despite the foregoing achievements, some of the job-seekers interviewed do not even know anything about the National Youth Policy or the existence of the programmes aiming at helping the youth in getting jobs.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study reflected that youth unemployment is a global phenomenon that affects young people (more than mature people) and that it is a problem affecting youth in both developed and developing countries and communities in different ways. It has become thus a challenge to national governments, regional and international and non-governmental organizations throughout the world to find ways of solving this problem.

The study has realized that policies and programmes have been already put in place aiming at increasing employment opportunities for the youth and their employability in the country and at regional levels of which urban Khomas is not an exception. It is clear that the Ministry of Youth has tried in its way to reduce youth unemployment among the youth in Khomas region. However, the placement of the job-seekers remains minimal. This can be related to inadequate employment opportunities in both private and public sectors. Although the number of participants in the programmes is increasing, the possibility for setting up small businesses is still bleak due to lack of credit or access to loan facilities. This problem is reinforced by a lack of collateral. Henceforth, youth unemployment in Namibia as well as in Khomas remains a challenge that still needs to be addressed aggressively.

The success of the Ministry of Youth National Service, Sport and Culture is not debatable. However, this study has realised the duplication of functions of some programmes and working

groups. The working groups on employability and employment creation could have been merged. In addition, some of the objectives of the National Youth Policy resemble those of the National Employment Policy in which the alleviation of poverty is important. It is stipulated in the National Employment Policy that the labour force of any country is shaped by its education system (National Employment Policy and strategy 1996). It is now ten years since the introduction of the National Employment Policy. Shortage of skills in the labour force is still a problem in Namibia.

The point worth mentioning here is that it seems that the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture discussed and implemented the National Youth Policy in isolation, without mainstreaming it into the overall National Employment Policy. Youth poverty and thus youth unemployment cannot be solved without solving national poverty and national unemployment. It is only when these policies reinforce each other that success can be achieved. Therefore, concerted efforts need to be made to review the National Youth Policy and the programmes embarked upon by the Ministry of Youth.

In order to tackle the problem of youth unemployment successfully in each region in Namibia the study makes the following recommendations:

- Provision of data on youth employment, unemployment, education and technical skills for each region, rather than the aggregated data.
- Introduction of compulsory vocational training at grade ten level in terms of plumbing, carpentry, woodwork and the like

- Intensification of the link between educational institutions and the employing companies, the first to provide workers with required employable and labour related skills and the latter to provide for the existing vacancies and the require skills
- To tackle efficiently the aspect of work experience for the first time labour market entrants
- To create more awareness in aspects of credit and loans
- To encourage the youth to participate in combating crime for national stability
- To review the aspect of work experience by allowing the unemployed to attend in-service training in case of lack of relevant skills

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Appendix A

The Role of the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture in reducing youth unemployment in Namibia with special focus on the Khomas Region.

7. A. Interview Guide for the Ministry of Youth National Service, Sport and culture officials in the department of youth

These leading questions aim to unearth relevant information pertaining youth unemployment in Namibia and secondly in Khomas region.

1. Unemployment

Q. How do you see unemployment among young people in Namibia?

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2. Causes of Unemployment

Q. What do you think are the causes of unemployment in Namibia? And in Khomas?

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3. The role of MYNSC

Q. What role does the MYNSC play in reducing youth unemployment in Namibia in and in Khomas region in particular?

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4. Success and weakness of the National Youth Policy

Q What do you think is the strong point and weakness of the National Youth Policy?



1.Strongpoint

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2.Weakpoint

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.....

5. Registration of Jobseekers

Q.1.How many job seekers have been registered with your Ministry since its inception?

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Q2. How do you disseminate information to the youth about registration?

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.....

Q3. Do the youth really benefit from the exercise? If yes, how and to what extent do they benefit?

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Q 4: What is the total number of unemployed youth in Namibia? and in Khomas?

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Q5. What is the total number of the employed youth in Khomas? and in Namibia as a whole?

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Q7. Do you think there is a need to carry out youth unemployment Survey separate from Labour Force Surveys? Why and why not?

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6. Sex and gender

Q Are there any discriminatory barriers in youth employment against women? If yes what are they? How does the Ministry deal with such problems?

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7. Entrepreneurship

Q. Many a time unemployed youth is encouraged to start their own businesses. What problems prohibit the youth to become successful entrepreneurs?

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8. How successful is the Commonwealth Youth Credit Initiative/ Youth Enterprise Development (CYCI/YED) in Namibia?

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9 Does each region have a youth resource centre?

a) Yes

b) No

10. If no, which regions do not have resource centers? Why?

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11. What role does the National Youth Service play in reducing youth unemployment?

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12. What is the number of current recruits of the National Youth Service as from 2003 to 2006?

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13. Namibian YEN Action Plan has multiple objectives. What do you consider key issues and challenges young Namibians are facing in their transition from education to workplace?

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14. Do you think information regarding policies and programs have reached most of the youth in Khomas region? If not, why not? If yes, what strategies have been used to disseminate such information?

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Appendix B

B. MINISTRY OF YOUTH SOCIAL SERVICE, SPORT AND CULTURE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Confidentiality: The information that will be provided by the respondents will be kept confidential and no part of it will be divulged.

Structured Questionnaire for 50 young men and women in Khomas Region about the impact of the youth policy and other programs and initiatives of their Ministry

YOUTH'S QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Particulars

Provide your particulars in the columns provided below:

Name	Region	Age	Sex	Highest Qualification obtained	Type of Housing	Employment status: Employed /Unemployed
				a)No education b) Primary c)Secondary d)Tertiary		

2. How long have you been unemployed?

- a) less than one month
- b) more than one month
- c) less than one year
- d) more than one year

3. What is your perception about youth unemployment?

4. Are you aware of the programs offered by the Ministry of youth?

- a) yes
- b) No

5. If your answer is yes, what programs are aware of?

- a)
- b).....
- c).....

6. What would you say is the general impact of the Ministry of Youth National Service, Sport and Culture?

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.....
.....

7. What do you think is the major impediment to youth employment in Khomas Region?

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

8. Are you aware of the National Youth Policy?

- a) Yes
- b) No

9. If yes in 6, what do you think is the weakness of this policy?

- a).....
- b)
- c)

10. What should the Ministry of Youth do in order to improve youth unemployment in
Khomas Region?

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Appendix C

List of Proposed interviewees and the actual number of people interviewed:

Different Departments	Proposed interviewees	Actual interviewees	
		Males	Females
Directorate of Youth: Ministry of Youth	1	1	0
National Youth Council	1	0	1
Youth Resource Center	1	0	1
Job seekers at the Ministry of Labour	50	25	25

Note: The Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture collaborates with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in terms of registration of the job seekers. The Youth Council only registers youth organizations to be affiliated members of the Youth Council.

