

Doctoral Dissertation Summary

UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: A STUDY ON SOCIAL POLICY AND STRATEGIC RESPONSES FOR IMPROVING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOODS IN BOTSWANA.

Social Governance, Social Policy, Youth Development, Unemployment

社会経済的な能力発揮機会の提供が
青少年育成に役立つダイナミズムを理解する
ボツワナの若者の雇用と生活を改善する
ための社会政策と戦略的対応に関する研究

Waseda University
Graduate School of Social Sciences

カボ ディラディツィレ
Kabo, Diraditsile

This doctoral research was framed by many factors; inter alia, my professional work experience as a practitioner and trainee in Japan in 2014 under Japan International Cooperation Agency, as well as my lectureship experience on teaching social policy courses in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Botswana. Participating in research activities, seminars and making presentations in conferences on youth development and empowerment changed me in a fundamental way. I realized that youth unemployment and underemployment are prevalent in Botswana and the situation is exacerbated by the fact that, over the years there has never been any coordinated attempt to engage in critical analysis on why past and current youth intervention programmes have not improved the livelihoods of the young people as intended.

The main aim of this dissertation was to explore overall social governance towards solutions for addressing youth unemployment in Botswana. The specific objectives were: to examine thematic areas of the revised Botswana National Youth Policy that do not produce results in employment creation; to identify how youth intervention programmes can be modified and improved to address youth unemployment effectively; to enhance the capacity of the government and private sector in designing and implementation of policies and programmes for promoting youth employment, and to derive policy recommendations appropriate to the Botswana context based on the lessons from Japan. The study hypothesized that lack of evidence-based policy making lead to a high failure rate of youth intervention programmes meant to address youth unemployment in Botswana. Therefore, the study adopted both qualitative and quantitative methods commonly known as the mixed method approach, and was cross sectional in nature. Regarding the research design, the study adopted a triangulation approach. The rationale behind the triangulation research design was that the study sought to describe the effects of unemployment on the quality of the youth in Botswana, and to explain the contributing factors that lead to high unemployment rates and failure of youth intervention programmes.

The study was exploratory on the grounds that there is no previous research that has been conducted in Botswana on the impact assessment of youth intervention programmes in the country. The data was collected using in-depth semi-structured interviews as well as survey questionnaires. A total of 100 young people who benefited from one of the youth intervention programmes took part in the study. In addition, 20 Programmes Officers and 25 key informants drawn from the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Culture Development took part in the study as well. The participants were drawn through systematic sampling and purposive sampling. Data analysis used multiple facets and approaches, for instance, quantified data was analyzed with descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, percentages and charts. This was achieved by using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences, whereas for qualitative data, underlying meanings were summarized with the aim of identifying major themes. Thus, the collected data was arranged according to study groups and the verbatim accounts of participants. The raw data from the field was further transcribed, sorted and arranged to the different types of participants, coded, and the last step involved interpreting and drawing meanings out of the data.

I encountered several challenges during the data collection process. Since the data was collected in different locations, long distances were travelled in order to meet the participants resulting in very high costs. All the participants in the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Culture Development were overwhelmed with too much work as they were

preparing for the annual youth exposition which was held on the 7th of June 2019, and the International Youth Day (IYD) which was held on the 12th of August. Furthermore, it is worthy to note that the IYD began in 2000 and was organized by the United Nations to celebrate the contribution that young people make in education, employment, conflict resolution and social justice to name a few. Similarly, in Botswana, it is an initiative that celebrates the qualities of young people in the country and that recognizes the challenges that they face. Therefore, several trips were made to MYSC offices without success, resulting in a case where the interviews took place a month after the initial scheduled dates. As if this was not enough, administering survey questionnaires to the youth was also characterized with various challenges. For instance, sometimes the individuals would betray the promise to be available on the agreed times. However, I understood the importance of obtaining data to the overall study, and endeavoured despite the challenges faced.

The study found that youth participants, programmes officers and key informants identified limited job opportunities to be the main contributing factors to youth unemployment. On this note, several participants shared the same sentiments that the government is the major employer, and when it freezes positions, the youth are the first group to be hit hard. The economy has a grave dependence on diamonds, but with minimal in-country value addition. Therefore, the sector has failed to provide the sufficient employment creation with only a few people employed in the mining sector. Lastly, it is also hard for graduates to secure employment immediately after completing their studies because employers demand a certain level of work experience that most youth do not possess. Interestingly, the study found that, the people responsible for implementing youth policies are not aware of the instruments that are guiding them. Rather, they are only aware of the programmes that are available in the Ministry. Therefore, it can be deduced from the results that, perhaps that is the main reason as to why the ministry is not able to deal with the realities facing young people on the ground.

Most of the study participants were of the view that entrepreneurship development is an area that needs to be developed if youth unemployment is to be addressed. The key informants also shared similar sentiments with the programmes officers that direct job creation is the way forward for tackling youth unemployment and improving youth livelihoods. Similarly, a lower number of participants reported that the various youth programmes under their current structure cannot offer solutions for addressing youth unemployment in Botswana. In addition, the findings also shed light on the interface between the government and the private sector when it comes to addressing youth unemployment. It became apparent that youth interventions aiming at addressing youth unemployment by the government and private sector are not bearing results on the basis that these institutions are highly individualized and there is little investment in the joint information. The study pointed to a range of challenges that youth intervention programmes are fraught with operational difficulties, inter alia; fragmentation, disjointed, lack of focus, and are scattered throughout different government ministries and departments, local authorities, the private sector and NGOs.

The main conclusion that can be drawn from this dissertation is that, in addressing youth unemployment, youth development and empowerment, there can be no uniform solution hence there must be country specific programmes. Most importantly, young people must be active participants in all programmes, and this participation should recognise existing rural urban as well as gender disparities and inequalities. Productive employment and decent work for young people cannot be achieved through fragmented and isolated interventions. Instead,

there must be sustained, determined, and concerted actions by a wide range of actors. The consensus is that, youth employment is a cross-cutting and a high priority issue that needs to be addressed within the framework of an interdisciplinary, multi-sectoral, and multi-stakeholder approach. Based on the findings and lessons learnt regarding the implementation of the Youth Development Fund and other youth intervention programmes, it is the contention of this study that there is a need for repositioning the Youth Development Fund programme for it to achieve its objectives. Currently, the programme targets only youth not in employment, education or training (NEET). Therefore, the researcher proposes that the programme should be open to any youth on condition that they leave their job when approved for funding.

Furthermore, this dissertation argues that the government on its own cannot address the complex and multifaceted youth unemployment challenge which precipitates poverty. Henceforth, there is a need for the structure of the fund to be overhauled on the grounds that, if it is operated by the government, political interference will continue to compromise the quality of the programme. It is about time the State considers that the programme be operated by the private sector and/or public-private partnership agreements with relevant stakeholders. This is suggested on the basis that having effective and efficient public-private partnerships (PPPs) will be critical for youth employment creation. Perhaps, the PPP could include young people themselves to conceptualize, design, implement, monitor and evaluate the programme. This dissertation proposes that the Youth Development Fund programme should be split into two. The split will enable the transformation of the fund into a fund that supports youth ventures in production value chains and light manufacturing. As per the findings, there should be two components that address the social aspects and the purely entrepreneurial aspects. The latter aspect should strictly fund the youth with a clear demonstration of superior business knowledge and aptitude through robust and/or rigorous screening. For instance, value addition should be taken into consideration where arts, culture and tourism industries will bring innovation that will create jobs for graduates. Moreover, projects that utilize technology and help Botswana into light manufacturing and food processing. Accordingly, funded enterprises must have the potential to transform into mass employment generating agencies aimed at producing to export. With this arrangement, there should be mandatory training and exchanges prior to fund disbursement as well as monitoring, coaching, mentorship and exchange to support enterprise growth.

Based on the limitations of this study, future research should draw insights from a combination of multiple models in order to extend knowledge on the subject and influence policy changes. The study recommends that future studies in other parts of Botswana should be conducted, to explore a better understanding of their special needs. Furthermore, the nation's government customized plans, policies, strategies and intervention mechanisms could be purposely based on unique characteristics of each city or town. Similarly, future research can investigate the different attributes of youth-owned enterprises in the country.