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University of the Witwatersrand

Faculty of Humanities

Masters Research Report

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Discipline: Sociology (Global Labour University)

Title: Problematizing the relation between youth unemployment and skills development

Research Report Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts in the Faculty of Humanities, University of Witwatersrand
Johannesburg, March 2018

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ABSTRACT

This research report addresses a major problem in South African society: to-day of the 36 million people in the working age population, 27% are officially unemployed. Many of them ae young people which is catastrophic for the country. The report problematizes the relation between skills development and youth unemployment in contemporary South Africa. This relation is part of the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality in South Africa which are not new and have persisted over time. The main sources are an extensive literature review, semi-structured interviews with key informants that included the Student Representative Council (SRC) members as well as youth from the Molapo College a campus of the South West Gauteng College (SWGC) to illustrate the experiences of young, black people, participant observation and consultation with youth organisations and formations. Primary source of data, documentary sources include existing research statistics, labour data, journals, press reports and newspapers online.

The following key themes emerged:

1. Youth and unemployment
2. The education system
3. The nature of the South African labour market
4. Skills training
5. Social programmes to address the relation between youth unemployment and skills. Youth skills development programmes and policies

These themes are contextualised in the current debate on the causes of consequences of the high levels of inequality, poverty and unemployment in South Africa (Terreblanche, 2012; Bond, 2004; Marais, 2011; Habib, 2013).

In problematizing the relation between youth Unemployment and skills development the following findings emerged from this study:

1. The current focus on a shortage of skills is not the main cause of youth unemployment, the problem is the structure of the economy and continuing racialized inequality in the society.
2. While there is a strong need for skills, the labour market is not creating and absorbing young people for employment.
3. The official emphasis and programmes on skill creation such as Molapo College, is not succeeding in creating employment for the youth.

PRELIMINARIES

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Together, you all boosted my confidence and assured me it was all worth it!

"ISINA MUVA LIYABUKWA"

DECLARATION

I solemnly declare that this study is my own, and has never been submitted to any other academic institution for examination of any kind. All work done by other people has been appropriately acknowledged. I hereby submit this study for examination in partial fulfilment for the requirements of the Degree of Masters of Arts in the Faculty of Humanities, at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in accordance to the applicable rules.

_____October 2018, Johannesburg

Mpoza, Petunia

(773595)

ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS

ABET: Adult Basic Education and Training

CBPWP: Community-Based Public Works Programme

CPD: Continuous Professional Development

CSO: civil society organisation

CWP: Community Work Programme

CHE: Council on Higher Education

COLTS: Culture of Learning, Teaching and Service

DBE: Department of Basic Education

DHET: Department of Higher Education and Training

DoE: Department of Education

DoL: Department of Labour

DPRU: Development Policy Research Unit

DTI: Department of Trade and Industry

EDD: Economic Development Department

EDSU: Education Departments Support Unit

EMD: Education Management Development

EMGD: Education Management and Governance Development

EMIS: Education Management Information Systems

EE: Employment Equity

EEA: Employment Equity Act No 55 of 1998

ECD: Early Childhood Development

FETC: Further Education and Training Certificate

FET: Further Education and Training

GETC: General Education and Training Certificate

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GETC: General Education and Training Certificate

GHS: General Household Survey

HE: Higher Education

HEDCOM: Heads of Education Departments Committee

HEI: Higher Education Institution

HET: Higher Education and Training

HSRC: Human Sciences Research Council

IPET: Implementation Plan for Education and Training

ISCED: International Standard Classification of Education

ILO: International Labour Organisation

LFS: Labour Force Survey

LSM: Learning Support Materials

MTEF: Medium Term Expenditure Framework

M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation

MoE: Ministry of Education

NCV: National Certificate Vocational

NDP: National Development Plan

NEPA: National Education Policy Act

NEPI: National Education Policy Investigation

NQF: National Qualifications Framework

NEET: not in employment, education or training

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

NGP: New Growth Path

NPC: National Planning Commission

NPHE: National Plan for Higher Education

NPWP: National Public Works Programme

NQF: National Qualifications Framework

NSC: National Senior Certificate

NSDS: National Skills Development Strategy

NSF: National Skills Fund

NSFAS: National Student Financial Aid Scheme

NSC: National Senior Certificate

NYDA: National Youth Development Agency

NYP: National Youth Policy

NYS: National Youth Service

NYSP: National Youth Service Programme

OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

OFO: Organising Framework for Occupations

OHS: Ordinary Household Survey

PIVOTAL: Professional, Vocational, Technical and Academic Learning

PRF: Policy Reserve Fund

QCTO: Quality Council for Trades and Occupations

QLFS: Quarterly Labour Force Survey

RSA: Republic of South Africa

SACE: South African Council of Educators

SAQA: South African Qualifications Authority

SASA: South African Schools Act

SCE: Senior Certificate Examination

SDA: Skills Development Act 97 of 1998

SDL: Skills Development Levy

SDLA: Skills Development Levy Act 9 of 1999

SETA: Sector Education and Training Authority

SRN: School Register of Needs

SSP: Sector Skills Plan

StatsSA: Statistics South Africa

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

TVET: Technical Vocational Education and Training

UYF: Umsobomvu Youth Fund

VET: Vocational Education and Training

WIL: Work Integrated Learning

WSP: Workplace Skills Plan

Chapter 1:

Structure, Introduction and Methodology

1. Structure

1.1 Research Question and Goals

This is a tentative and exploratory study. The main research focuses on the relation between skills and youth unemployment.

This generates sub questions addressed through key informant interviews, participant observation and a survey of the existing literature.

The sub questions are:

(i) Most important, is the reason for youth unemployment the lack of skills
(ii) What is the extent of youth unemployment in SA?
(iii) What are the racial and gender characteristics of unemployed young people? Is it largely a problem affecting young black African men?
(iv) Is there a skills shortage among the unemployed youth?
(v) Is the current educational system providing young people with the requisite skills to find employment?
(vi) What are the characteristics of the current labour market that perpetuate this problem?
(vii) What are some of the programmes trying to address this deficit?

It is argued that youth unemployment in South Africa is a structural problem, rather than the result of the individual qualities of job seekers.

1.2 Chapter outline

Chapter one offers an introduction, laying out the basis of this research. It presents insights from the secondary literature on skills development, youth unemployment, vocational training, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and the structural challenges found in the labour market. The chapter also outlines the rationale, aims and objectives, literature review, methodology (qualitative approach) for the study,

discussing levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality in South Africa: Johannesburg and Soweto particularly.

Chapter two is a review of the relevant literature relating to the education system and the structure of the labour market.

Chapter three focuses on youth skills development programs and policies, criticising and adding to the current, flawed, dominant view that skills shortage is the core problem in explaining youth unemployment. On the contrary the problem is the structure of the economy that fails to produce enough jobs.

Chapter four is the main empirical chapter drawing on field work done with students of Molapo College in Soweto. It details the considerable challenges experienced in the process of gathering data. These challenges ranged from access to respondents (both registered students and graduates of the College). Data collection that was done through a qualitative approach, involving participant observation and semi-structured interviews, that are fundamental in gaining an "insider perspective" (Mouton, 2001: 162)

Chapter five is a brief and tentative conclusion of this research.

1.3 Introduction

This study problematized the popular narratives of the relation between youth unemployment and skills development in contemporary South Africa. The conventional understanding of skills development as the main solution to the problem of youth unemployment neglects structural constraints in the economy and deep racialized inequalitities in the wider society. It is demonstrated that "skill" is not an uncontested notion.

According to Allais (2013: 209) "The first problem with 'skills development' in South Africa is that 'skill' is seen as salvation for poor people, posited as a 'bridge' into a world of formal employment or an enabling factor for self-employment. The problem is that the world of formal employment is tiny, and where employment does exist it often does not lift people out of poverty. This is particularly so for self-employment."

Nor does vocational training seem to be attractive to all young people. It is paradoxical that while students battle for places at South Africa's 25 Universities and some of the "universities" are "universities of Technology", enrolment at the Technical and Vocational

Education and Training (TVET) colleges has not increased. There are a total of 50 major TVET colleges in South Africa with 246 subsidiary campuses, and according to one informant a total of 600,000 students have attended TVET colleges. In 2006, 361,186 students enrolled in the colleges. In 2014 538,000 students were estimated to have enrolled, a virtually flat growth rate over 8 years (Nkomo, Warchal and Tshikovhi, 2015: n.p). On the other hand, enrolment at universities was 741,383 in 2006 and estimated at more than one million in 2014. This is a strong contrast with the Seychelles, Botswana and Mauritius which all have far higher numbers of students enrolled in vocational training than those at university (Ibid).

As Allais acknowledges, some of the problems facing young people in the labour market, such as the small sphere of formal employment, job losses, increasing job insecurity and low wages. This mean that employment does not necessarily enable people to rise out of poverty. The study questioned whether the solution to the problem of youth unemployment lies only with skill development. It largely involved a review of the secondary literature in relation to the issue and a case study, where in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted in investigating the employment histories of a group of graduates who acquired skills at an education and training college focused on vocational subjects in Molapo campus, a campus of the South West Gauteng College in Soweto.

1.4 Background

Youth unemployment must be related not only to skills but to structural factors causing economic inequality and poverty levels in South Africa. Over half the population (53%) are officially defined as living in poverty (Statistics South Africa 2015). While the situation is marked by job losses, rising prices and inadequate social pensions, government continues to stress the issue of skills training. According to the Department of Basic Education (2011), training is the crucial means for people to gain skills in order to find employment, increasing their job prospects. Accordingly, vocational education “is still seen as salvation in terms of getting a job, and a job is seen as salvation in terms of being a citizen and an adult. Our economy’s woes are blamed on low levels of ‘skills’, and ‘skills development’ is in the policy spotlight and education is increasingly redefined as ‘human resource production’, the development of ‘human capital’, or ‘useful knowledge and skills” (Badroodien (2004: 40, cited by Allais).

A specific example of policy assuming that skills development is the total solution to youth unemployment is the 2014-2019 Draft National Youth Policy which explicitly defined "marginalisation" as motivation to substantiate "youth-targeted interventions that will enable young people's active participation and engagement in both the society and the economy" (2015: 3-5). Equally, the then Minister of Higher Education and Training Dr Nzimande, at the 2014 launch of the White Paper for Post-School and Training, spoke about the pragmatism of the White Paper, highlighting its strategic and central role in technical and vocational education for advanced transformation "and ensuring that it becomes a path to a brighter future for its students and for the country" (Nzimande, 2014).

Akoojee, Gewer and McGrath (2005: 99) maintain that in pursuing social and economic objectives, skills development continues to be a critical issue that government acknowledges as part of a national development vision, characterising a lack of skills as a multifaceted hindrance towards the provision of socio-economic development, participation in the global economy, and alleviating poverty and creating jobs.

Youth unemployment continues to be a major social problem in addition to an economic challenge (Centre for Development and Enterprise, 2008: 5). According to Statistics South Africa (Statistical release for 2014) report on quarter one of 2008 and quarter one of 2014 national and provincial labour market trends among the youth unemployment, show that youth aged between 15 to 34 were noticeably affected in the past six years, with an increase in unemployment from 32.7 percent in 2008, to 36.1 percent in 2014. In comparison to adults, the absorption rates of youth in the labour market reflected lower than that of adults by more than 20 percent each year over the period of 2008 to 2014, whereas 52 percent to 64 percent of the working population were young people and accounted for only 42 to 49 percent of the employed.

The majority of unemployed people are young, poor black Africans, with significant gender differences. Gender is part of the wider crisis of unemployment in the country. Figures presented by Statistics South Africa release for 2014 suggest that "regardless of age, female unemployment rates are higher than those of males by a large margin. Young women also face a more difficult situation in the labour market when compared with young men. However the gender gap in the unemployment rate among youth has narrowed from 9, 6 percent in 2008 to 6, 1 percent in 2014. Despite this improvement, young women

remain one of the most vulnerable groups in the labour market." This reflects the continued persistence of gender inequality in all aspects of South African society.

Trends in unemployment are due to increasing numbers of people seeking to enter the labour market, this includes young people as well as potential and actual employed people. According to Krugman and Wells (2009: 617), the basic definition of the labour force is "the sum of employment and unemployment that is, of the people who are currently working and people who are currently looking for work and the labour force participation rate, defined as the share of the working-age population that is in the labour force." Those new to the labour force, are likely to be less skilled than those already in the labour force. At the same time, trends in the labour market are that, labour supply is increasing, labour demand is stagnant, particularly for the low-skilled (Banerjee et al. 2008).

This explanatory emphasis on skills neglects the reality that while the youthful population is rising, the number of jobs available is decreasing. Allais (2011: 14) cites Mohamed (2010) in a paper presented at the Global Labour University Conference, where she highlighted that recent years have seen a process of deindustrialization and a manufacturing sector shrinking in size. In addition, Statistics South Africa (Quarter 4, of 2014) reported that "Job losses were recorded in the Utilities, Mining and Community and social services industries (15 000, 14 000 and 12 000 respectively)" and during the period, ending in December 2014, there were recorded job losses in the Professional (239 000), Technician (171 000) and Domestic work (69 000) occupations. Provincial statistics showed a greater job loss of 42 000 in the Eastern Cape and 12 000 in the Western Cape during this period. In addition, increasing processes of outsourcing and casualization have resulted in an increase in job insecurity (Marais, 2011). "In 2008 out of the entire workforce of 13 million, 2.7 million did not have employment contracts and 4.1 million did not have paid leave entitlements" (Allais, 2013: 210). Insecurity is growing even among employed citizens as wages and benefits are low while prices (especially those of food and other essentials) are rising. The average worker in South Africa earns R3, 000 or less per month (BusinessTech, 2016). This insecurity is a global trend which led Standing (2011: 1) to conceptualise a new social category of the "precariat" whose lives are characterised by increasing insecurity. Standing (2011: 10) further notes that, "to assert that the precariat consists of people who have no control over their labour or work would be too restrictive, since there is always ambivalence and implicit bargaining over effort, cooperation and application of skills…People with a relatively high level of formal education, who have to accept jobs that have a status or

income beneath what they believe accord with their qualifications, are likely to suffer from status frustration." This would suggest that youth unemployment is experienced by those who lack formal education, appropriate skills and experience.

According to a 2011 National Treasury discussion paper, high youth unemployment signifies the lack in acquiring the needed skills or experience to drive the South African economy forward. In addition, impacting on the country's economic development and it is a potential burden on the state to provide social assistance (National Treasury, 2011). Therefore, addressing structural problems in the economy is avoided by policy makers, labelling unemployment as an individual issue.

Allais (2013: 211) points out that in the current welfare system "able-bodied people capable of work are given nothing, although they cannot work because there are no jobs. A basic income grant, even at extremely low levels, has been rejected as encouraging a state of dependency." Young people are among those unemployed able-bodied, accounting for a great number of jobless people (Centre for Development and Enterprise, 2008: 5). Approximately four million young South Africans between the ages of 15 and 24 were part of the labour force in 2005, meaning these young people were available for a job, out of those, 65 per cent or 2, 6 million, were unemployed (Centre for Development and Enterprise, 2008: 5). "In 2014, close to two-thirds of young people were unemployed for a year or longer, while young people accounted for 90% of those who are unemployed and have never worked before" (Statistical release for 2014). Unemployment is defined as the total number of people presently not employed and actively looking for work (Krugman and Wells, 2009: 617). While looking, only a small number of young job-seekers become successful, and many do not pursue jobs for long before becoming disheartened (Centre for Development and Enterprise, 2008: 6). Yu (2013: 3) postulates additional factors in the lack of appropriate skills and opportunities such as: youths not having adequate systems to access information on available job opportunities, or financial resources as well as the flexibility to seek work, or even the will to move closer to where job opportunities may exist. There is also a problem of unrealistic expectations. Some young people, especially those coming from well-resourced families, have unfeasible expectations about their employment likelihood and reservation wage (Yu, 2013: 3). "The reservation wage is defined as the minimum acceptable wage for an individual to consider accepting a job" (Carolina and Pau, 2008: 3). High expectations mean taking a long time to "shop around" for "that" job, which meets their expectations (Yu, 2013: 3).

The experience of sustained unemployment for young people is of concern to policy makers because sustained unemployment could make the youth hostile to the world of work, more receptive to drugs and crime, and a disruptive influence in society (Nattrass, 2002: 210). It is, of course, an open question as to whether young unskilled people actually pose more of a social threat to society than others (Nattrass, 2002: 210).

Nattrass (2002: 210) cautions that there is a danger of younger age cohorts being systematically excluded from the labour market in high unemployment situations and limited growth prospects. The labour market is described by the *Economic Times* (2015) as "the place where workers and employees interact with each other. In the labour market, employers compete to hire the best, and the workers compete for the best satisfying job." However, the nature of exclusion in the labour market, will vary across different categories of young people, to the extent that employment is increasingly a function of social networks: young people in different neighbourhoods and social classes experience discrepancies in accessing jobs, and those whose skills are in line with the market demand, giving them a stronger position than others, as is the case with the labour market in general, the youth labour market is highly segmented. Thus, policy interventions need to take cognisance of this (Nattrass, 2002: 210).

Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) "are defined, internationally, as young people aged between 15-24 years who are not employed and who are not in education or training" (Department of Higher Education and Training fact sheet on NEETs, 2017: 2).

1.5 Rationale

This research is relevant because unemployment in South Africa is a major problem and there are no easy solutions to the problem of youth unemployment in South Africa. Not all policy proposals and interventions have impacted positively. For example a recent study by Ranchhod and Finn (2015: 2, 8) found no evidence that the introduction of the employment tax incentive, a Government initiative launched in 2014, intended to address low youth employment by encouraging employers to hire young work seekers, thus reducing the cost of hiring young workers (Ebrahim, Leibbrandt and Ranchhod, 2017: 1) had any impact on the rate at which young people found jobs.

This research addresses issues associated with youth unemployment, contesting the dominant narratives that "skills" is the problem, but rather structural factors. Mlatsheni and Ranchhod (2017: 5) describe as "a major influence on youth employment, which is the

extent of job availability while another related influence is the nature of that employment. The structure of the labour market and the economic conditions have an important bearing on the probability of securing employment," since "entrepreneurship is not the first choice of most youth (they would rather find a job and be guaranteed wages)," (Ibid, 9). The debate on shortage of skills, rejects the reality that a skill can be taught or transferred and there are examples of such people, with no formal education and have successfully learned on the job.

A key aspect of South Africa's future is economic development, defined as a process that includes politics, in which a country develops to increase its economic capacity to meet its citizens' basic human needs and raise their standard of living (Kegley and Blanton, 2012-2013: 511). Hill (2015) explains economic development by breaking it down into three major categories:

- Governments working on big economic objectives such as creating jobs or growing an economy. These initiatives can be accomplished through written laws, industries' regulations, and tax incentives or collections.

- Programs that provide infrastructure and services such as bigger highways, community parks, new school programs and facilities, public libraries or swimming pools, new hospitals and crime prevention initiatives.

- Job creation and business retention through workforce development programs to help people get the needed skills and education they need. This also includes small business development programs that are geared to help entrepreneurs get financing or network with other small businesses.

As a result, economic development should be regarded as a set of consistent activities and changes in the structure of an economy and of late, in social institutions, with an added requirement of motivation for continued growth and poverty alleviation. The 2011 in (recalculated) Poverty Trends Report presented by Statistics South Africa in 2014, argued that people living below the food poverty line (FPL) since 2006 dropped to 20,2% of the population and by a further 45,5% in 2011 when applying the upper-bound poverty line (UBPL) that which measures an income people need for essential items (food basket), after

meeting their basic food needs (COSATU, 2015). According to this information, in 2011 there was an improvement in poverty levels despite the adverse impact of the financial crisis. “However, despite this success, large numbers of people (23 million) still live in deprivation with incomes lower than the line used in the analysis” (Paton, 2014), which means R620 per capita per month in 2011 prices and after recalculating the same figure for 2011 became R779 per person per month (pp/pm) and approximately R946 pp/pm in 2014 (COSATU, 2015). These rebased figures and increase in number of the people living below this level from 45.5% to 53.8% (that is more than half the population) (COSATU, 2015). Poverty continues to have serious implications for the current socio-economic debate around youth and employment into the future.

This research drew from the literature on the topic of youth unemployment and scholars who have investigated young people’s expectations when it comes to wages, and the reality of policy, skills and structural changes to the economy. The Department of Labour, conducted research in 2003, on “the State of Skills in South Africa”, looking at key features of the South African labour market, skills base and skills needs in the South African labour market. Another aspect, is brought forth by Rasool and Botha (2011) who make reference to the national education and training systems failure to supply the economy with much needed skills. Rasool and Botha (2011), contribute to the broader research needed towards identifying and responding to factors contributing to skills shortage. Allais and Nathan (2012), in their working paper, titled Jobs? ‘What Jobs? Skills? What Skills?’ examine relationships between education and training as well as labour markets.

A key economic challenge facing South Africa is high unemployment. Allais and Nathan (2012) also complements Maree’s (2006) paper titled “Skills Development for Productive Employment: Evaluation of the Education, Training and Economic Policies of South Africa,” prepared for the September 14th IIRA World Congress in Lima (Peru). This “critically examines the skills development and economic policies of South Africa’s post-apartheid government in its effort to provide sufficient skills and highly productive workers to grow the economy rapidly enough to reduce unemployment drastically” (Maree 2006). South Africa’s “‘Door Knockers’ Young people and unemployment in metropolitan South Africa” (2008: 5) by the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) examines young jobless people in 2005 between the ages of 15 and 24 and the responses to the challenges and support provided. Mummenthey’s (2010) Skills Development in South Africa: A Reader on the South African Skills Development Arena provides an overview of the Education and

Training System in South Africa with a focus on the background information, analytical aspects and reflects the developments of the past as well as the current reforms of skills development in further education and training (FET) currently known as Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVETs).

Nattrass (2002) poses the question, “Should Youth Unemployment be Targeted as Part of a Comprehensive Welfare Policy in South Africa?” She debunks training programmes as an answer to the unemployment problem:

> Training programmes should not be seen as an answer to the unemployment problem (although it may help address some labour market problems). Training programmes for the unemployed are often weakly connected with the skill requirements of employers and can easily lead to an over-supply of specific skills. Given the difficulties involved in targeting the relatively disadvantaged amongst the unemployed, one has to ask whether resources are better spent elsewhere.

At the same time she is aware of the value of training programs in the labour market, cautioning on how training programmes for unemployed youths are often weakly connected with the skills needed, and leading to an oversupply of certain skills.

Altman (2007), poses critical questions on whether the South African economy is creating low-skill jobs, if education helps labour market chances, and whether graduate unemployment is a problem with young people studying inappropriate subject areas, the skills or capabilities required for the service economy, and whether education should refocus on job specific skills or on general capabilities? Labour force statistics from the Statistics South Africa, identify gaps such as skills shortages as recommendations “for policy makers as they develop interventions that could assist to fight the triple challenges of unemployment, inequality and poverty in the country” (Department of Labour, 2012). It is apparent from the above, that many researchers, academics, institutions and organisations have grappled with the issue of young people, unemployment and skills development in South Africa. Striking features are poor economic participation among the youth. Young people are not acquiring the opportunities or the skills and work experience needed to assist in driving the economy forward. It is also difficult for the youth of South Africa to

secure opportunities to develop their own businesses (The Department of Trade and Industry: Youth Enterprise Development Strategy 2013-2030). There is a debate between those highlighting “supply-side” demonstrated in literature that presents education, the quality of education, levels of education towards skills development and those stressing “demand side”.(Kraak, 2004)

1.6 Aims and objectives

The main objective of the primary research was to assess an Education and Training College focused on vocational subjects in Soweto, in the context of youth unemployment in South Africa. By problematizing the relation between youth unemployment and skills development, the research attempted to: understand why young individuals who are qualified to work and willing to work cannot find employment.

1.7 Methodology

1.7.1 Key concepts

In exploring the relation between the emphasis on skills development and youth unemployment in South Africa, the research is eclectic and draws from a number of key concepts such as marginality, social exclusion, social inequality, class relations and economic development. It is an “intersectional analysis” (Crenshaw, 1988: n.p) which takes account of the multiple, interconnected sources of oppression involved in class, gender, and race relations. It also draws from Sen’s (2000: n.p) capabilities approach. “Capabilities denote a person’s opportunity and ability to generate valuable outcomes, taking into account relevant personal characteristics and external factors”. In other words it is an approach which emphasizes individual needs and aspirations in a specific social context. It means that achievement can be evaluated in terms of a person’s own values and goal. Sen (2000: n.p) emphasizes agency meaning a person’s role as a member of society and their ability to participate in economic, social and political action.

As the primary research site is Soweto, the research also drew on Auyero’s concept of “urban marginality.” He argues that this “new marginality” has distinctive features such as the structural character of joblessness, the concentration of unemployment among the least

skilled and least educated and the persistence of long-term unemployment (Auyero, 2001: n.p).

Young people continue to struggle in finding jobs, after completing their education and training. Hence, inequality as a central concept places emphasises on why finding routes to employment for the 15–34 age cohort is key, towards transforming South Africa's future employment and growth trajectory, if growing poverty and inequality are to be redressed.

"The growth-employment-poverty-inequality dynamic has not resulted in growth being inclusive, mainly because it has not been labour-absorbing. The lack of access to wage income is the main driver of poverty, and together with growing income differentials within and between racial groups, has driven up inequality. At least two aspects of exclusion from the labour market are evident: first, low participation rates, which are largely the consequence of poverty and spatial exclusion hampering job search; and, second, high unemployment rates, or exclusion from the formal labour market. The latter is concentrated among young people exiting their education and training with aspirations of entering the labour market" (Mayer et al, 2011: 8). Marginalisation within the formal economy begins in the labour market, due to high unemployment rates and low participation rates, while a very small section of the potentially economically active population is employed (Hausmann, 2008:3).

Analyses in developing countries has shown that initial inequalities in the distribution of physical capital such as land and human capital (e.g. education and health) characterise obstacles to economic growth, with doubled effects on the poor in comparison to the population as a whole (Pillay, 2006) and amongst those affected greatly are the African youth of whom 70% are unemployed.

1.7.2 Research methods

The research involved a review of the relevant secondary (published) literature of key skills development programmes, policy documents, material from Statistics South Africa and institutions such as the National Youth Development Agency and the Department of Higher Education and Training. Qualitative research focused on Molapo College a campus of the South West Gauteng College (SWGC) which also houses the (SWGC) head office, where administration happens and Management is located. This involved observation which came

with challenges as some students (currently enrolled) and staff were not willing to discuss or 'chat' about their experiences at the college, to explain some of the subjects as listed in the prospectus and the staff too, who could have clarified their role, and assisted in sharing information about the College, its history, number of enrolled students, trends of enrolment and course preferences, successes and challenges. Semi-structured interviews were conducted. The rationale for the research method and sampling strategy are addressed in Chapter four.

Qualitative research as a tradition was popularised since the 1960s, taking many forms of description including critical theory, interpretive social science, hermeneutics and naturalistic enquiry (Punch, 2005: 7-8). In this study, the qualitative approach serves to answer the "what", "how" and "why". However, qualitative research is said to lack in validity, compared to quantitative studies. Furthermore the research may be intrusive because it involves collecting personal data about subjects and some data could contain sensitive information, intimate and innermost matters in people's lives and ethical issues that encompass the entire process of research (Ibid). Qualitative research is set at exploring and understanding how reality appears to the participants and reporting their experiences and feelings (Greenstein et al 2003; Neuman 2000). Therefore, information was gathered about the College, respondents view on the current youth unemployment, the value of their qualification for those who graduated, and the plans for those who dropped out and suggested reasons.

1.7.3 The Molapo Campus in Soweto, a campus of the South West Gauteng College

Initially it was intended to provide an in-depth case study of this institution but access was extremely difficult and the depth of information required by a case study could not be obtained.

The research question asks whether the reason for youth unemployment is the conventional belief that the main cause is their lack of skills? It is an important question in light of the current high unemployment rate especially among black African youth. The question is illustrated by a discussion of Molapo Campus in Soweto that claims to provide young people with the requisite skills that enable them to find employment. This illustrates the flaws in the conventional emphasis on the causal relation between youth unemployment and lack of skills.

The research involved interviews with three key informants connected to the College includes Student representative Council (SRC) Members, who are elected by fellow students in representing student affairs that can range from academic to financial, personal and social, according to the SRC information page (http://www.swgc.co.za/student-council-representative-src/) the SRC representation is spread across all the South West Gauteng Colleges with each member entrusted with a portfolio including an Employability Officer, who chose not to participate in the interview. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 graduates, and non-structured interviews with the three SRC members who have not graduated. The Semi-structured interviews focused on their employment histories, educational background, the social networks in which they were located, their aspirations and attitudes towards vocational training and work.

The last aspect is important because it has been suggested that perceptions link vocational training to apartheid. “South Africa’s vocational education and training (VET) system and its performance are profoundly shaped by the history of South Africa’s colonisation by the British and the subsequent enshrinement of racism at the centre of social and economic policies under apartheid” (Akoojee, Gewer and McGrath, 2005: 99). South Africa’s socio-economic and political development framework have been designed by divisive policies that proved to be mutually advantageous for whites, economically and educationally at the expense of other population groups. “The attempt to build and maintain white power seriously distorted the economy, bringing about an excessive capital intensiveness in high-skill white enclaves alongside low-skill African labour, although the deliberate under skilling of Africans proved untenable over time. Education and training resources were heavily biased towards furthering white progress, and the logic of apartheid required the wasteful multiplication of educational administrations and institutions that were racially segmented” (Akoojee, Gewer and McGrath, 2005: 99). The consequences include an unjust and unbalanced economic legacy.

Chapter 2:

Literature Review

Obstacles to youth employment: the education system and the structure of the labour market

2.1 The education system

Regarding the main focus of the report, whether skills are the main cause of youth unemployment, this chapter draws on the data on the education system and labour market. There are many false claims made in this regard. In this respect matric "is painted as a guaranteed gateway to success. In fact, while there are real benefits to completing matric, the Class of 2016 will face a divided and unequal employment and education environment, where their post-school opportunities will be heavily shaped by the quality of their pass and access to funding. With a skills driven TVET college system, and a university sector that caters to the elite, black children from poor families are deeply disadvantaged. Both "quality of pass and access to funding are strongly linked to a matriculant's race, class, school attended, gender and geographic location" (Equal Education, 2017). Therefore, it is important, to understand the historical, class and racial connotation of having a matric (completing high school) or going to a TVET as a means to employment, in a competitive or non-absorbing labour market.

2.1.1 Matric results: deep inequalities of class, race and geographic location

Obstacles undermining reasonable access to the labour market include: literacy and numeracy skills, and problems in township schools, particularly at the primary level. Poor quality at primary school level has resulted in weak attendance and throughput at post primary levels. Quality education can be defined as gaining that which society considers valuable. "While it is difficult to get reliable information on whether learners are acquiring appropriate values at school, there is considerable information on the extent to which they are acquiring the knowledge and skills expressed in the curriculum" (Spaull, 2015: 34).

For many black children, the shift from home language to English is a major difficulty. This is emphasized by Hoadley (2012:2), citing the Threshold Project (MacDonald, 1990), as

one of the early noteworthy studies that examined “the nature of the language and learning difficulties that black Standard (Std.) 3 (today known as Grade 5) children experience when they change from their mother tongue of Sepedi to English as a medium of instruction and learning.” The study further revealed that learners had approximately 700 words as a maximum in English, yet the curriculums mandatory requirement was least 7000. Furthermore, the sudden switch “to English as a medium of instruction resulted in most learners resorting to rote learning content which they did not understand. MacDonald suggests that this means that students experienced a loss of meaning” which clearly affects motivation to learn (2012:3). The study concluded, that there was a connection in the pedagogical experience of learners and the very high rate of dropouts in Grade 4 at the time (2012: 3-4).

Baseline research done by the Khanyisa Education Support programme (Taylor and Moyane, 2004) on 24 rural primary schools in Limpopo province, provided interesting insights into classroom practices, largely endorsing many other research findings. The Khanyisa Education Support programme on successive days observed 39 teachers teaching three numeracy and literacy lessons as well as classroom interaction. They found that “low levels of cognitive demand, weak forms of assessment, slow pacing and the poor quantity and quality of reading and writing were aspects that were known but confirmed in this larger sample of classrooms, at the Grade 3 level” (2012:6).

Similarly, Equal Education’s Pre-Matric Results media statement (2017) claimed that, historically black schools continue to remain less functional and incapable of communicating reading, writing and calculating to learners at an appropriate level. Grade 3 children in the poorest 60% of schools are said to be three years of learning behind, in comparison to learners in affluent conditions, and by the time these very children reach Grade 9, they would be five years behind in learning. Learners who struggle to confidently read at the end of Grade 4 find it hard to meaningfully engage with the rest of the curriculum, because from Grades 1 to 3, the curriculum is set on *learning to read*, while in Grade 4 there is a *reading to learn* shift.

For Hoadley (2012:8) “the question of why, and by how much language, especially learning in an additional language, affects achievement remains open” whereas, Fleisch as cited by Hoadley (2012:8), adds an essential point, observing the likelihood of English as the language of instruction impacting differently across different groups of learners, particularly

in relation to social class and between those in rural and urban areas. In other words a consideration of the social context in which any language is being taught needs to be considered. A crucial argument in this debate is taken up by Murray (2002), who argues that divided opinions over the language of instruction issue have masked the issue of poor literacy teaching per se as is evidenced by low home language literacy levels amongst learners. Of concern is the evidence that learners do not have competence in literacy in any language. To a certain extent, in other words, “debates around language deflect attention from the quality of instruction, irrespective of the language of instruction” (Hoadley, 2012:8).

Hoadley’s (2008) findings in literacy practices, bring to attention the lack of “feedback on student response in working class classrooms.” Reciting and chorusing after a teacher were common strategies applied, simply described as a “strongly communalised pedagogy.” More findings by Pretorius and Machet (2004) which considered five disadvantaged schools in Kwa-Zulu Natal, analyses the teaching for reading in Grade 1 classrooms, using “sound-centred readers”, where the attention is on making sense of single words instead of reading for meaning. The research found that the teachers’ own practices from their own social context were important because many of them were from societies with rooted oral cultures and did not engaged in habitual reading. The absence of reading resources, such as libraries, was identified as a barrier (Hoadley, 2012:8). Arguably, with all these findings, there was a continued over-investment in high school and grade 12 in particular, when a major need was for investment is in the early school grades.

In December 2016, hundreds of thousands of pupils across the country learned their fate as the Matric results came out. Angie Motshekga, the Basic Education Minister released, the results of the “largest cohort in the history of basic education to sit for any National Senior Certificate (NSC) in South Africa” (Motshekga, 2017) .The Independent Examinations Board (IEB) released its results on the 29th of December. Angie Motshekga, shared how pleased she was with the results of the 2016 cohort. Due to the decrease in pass requirements there was an improved national pass rate in public schools of 72.5%, an increase from the 2015 pass rate which was 70.7%, up by +1.8 percent (BusinessTech, 2017). Equal Education described matric pass statistics as a smoke screen that presented a distorted reflection of public education quality (My broadband, 2017). Private schooling presents a marked contrast, The CEO of the IEB Anne Oberholzer, who reflected on the high pass rate of private schooling under the IEB adding that “With a commitment to hard work over 12 years of schooling, supported by a dedicated cohort of teachers and parents, these learners have

achieved the first major milestone in their learning careers. There is also a clear realisation among IEB learners, their parents and their teachers that having the knowledge and understanding that lies behind the results on the certificate is far more important and meaningful for success after one's schooling. To have a certificate with good results, but not the substance of learning required for success, simply means facing failure at the next step of your learning career," (IEB, 30 December 2016). Factors such as support structures, parental involvement and career guidance (mostly lacking in township schools) were behind a pass rate in private schools of 98.67% from 11021 pupils at 210 schools that wrote examinations, an improvement in comparison to 2015 pass rate of 98.30%.

"As many as 800 000 students wrote the 2016 NSC exam. In 2015, 799 306 learners wrote the exam. The number of candidates may have increased as a result of the department's progression policy, which allows learners who failed Grade 11 twice to be promoted to matric. At least 108 000 students who sat the examinations were progressed learners, which is more than the number of pupils who were progressed in 2015" (Mail and Guardian, 2017). This rise in pass rates "has sent alarm bells ringing among academics, who claim to have not seen any real improvement in the quality of South African education over time" (BusinessTech, 2017).

Matric results continue to expose class differences amongst private and government as well as rural and urban schools. For example, the worst performing schools came from the three impoverished, rural provinces: Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo, representing 54.5% of the total 2016 NSC national cohort who wrote the examinations (Motshekga, 2017). Urbanised provinces such as Gauteng and Western Cape continued to perform well. These provinces seem to have less teaching and resource challenges (Majola, 2016).

Viewing provincial outcomes in Figure 1, the Free State improved with a 6.6 percent from 2015, achieving an 88.2 percent pass rate in 2016. But there was great variation between provinces.

Figure1: Keynote Address by the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, MP, Delivered at the Release of NSC Examination Results for 2016

Province	2016	2015
Free State	88.2%	81.6%
Western Cape	85.9%	84.7%
Gauteng	85.1%	84.2%
North West	82.5%	81.5%
Northern Cape	78.7%	69.4%
Mpumalanga	77.1%	78.6%
KZN	66.4%	60.7%
Limpopo	62.5%	65.9%
Eastern Cape	59.3%	56.8%

Source: Minister Motshekga (2006).

Minister Motshekga said "Clearly we must continue to pay particular attention to the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo if we want to improve the overall NSC national picture. If we don't do this, our basic education outputs and outcomes may not improve to the extent necessary," (2016). But the overall pass rate increase due to lower pass requirements. In addition "65 671 progressed pupils (school children who fail but are passed through to the next class) who registered for the 2015 National Senior Certificate exams, of which 22 060 passed. This number signified the Department of Basic Education's intention to make allowances for schoolchildren who otherwise would have prematurely exited the system, a slight attempt by the Department of Basic Education in addressing the drop-out rate" (Majola, 2016).

2015 was the second year in which the matric syllabus was structured under the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). According to Motshekga CAPS, placed more cognitive demands on pupils, suggesting that the 2016 matric exams signified a move towards higher quality learning (Majola: 2016).

"Thus, from a developmental point of view, it is vital to balance CAPS's standards with the teachers' pedagogical competence in the GET/FET (General Education Training and Further Education Training) phases. Teachers in the CAPS framework ought to be appropriately skilled" (Majola, 2016). The quality of education and teacher training in the public sector is of great concern, highlighted in the World Economic Forum (WEF) The Global Competitiveness Report of 2015/2016, ranked South Africa last in terms of its quality

of math and science education, as well as faring poorly in the quality of the education system, ranking number 138th out of 140 countries. The Global Competitiveness Report presents the rankings of the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) (Mybroadband, 2015).

Klein (2017), making reference to a Stellenbosch University report, found that the number of unqualified teachers' was high; only 32% of grade 6 students had maths teachers with a necessary level of subject knowledge, comparable to Kenya (90%) and Zimbabwe (76%). In the 2016 matric exams, 717 371 learners wrote maths and only 33 511 students scored more than 60% and of those, only 1 700 were Black African.

Spaull (2016) of the University of Stellenbosch points out that unequal access to university is entrenched in "the unequal schooling system where access to high-quality schooling largely depends on a family's ability to pay school fees. If one looks at the cumulative matric average achievement by race one still finds enormous differentials. While 60% of White matric students achieved 60% or more in matric, only 5% of Black African matrics score at or above 60%. And this is only among the students that actually made it to matric which is only slightly more than half the cohort" (Spaull, 2016).

This pattern maintains the inequalities of the apartheid era. The challenges within the South African education system are both historical and structural, and lessons we should remember is that for decades, education in South Africa functioned under the Bantu Education Act of 1953. Effective five years subsequent to the National Party introduction of apartheid policies in South Africa, W. M. Eiselen and Dr. Hendrik F. Verwoerd played a leading role in executing this act, they began by designing a system to separate all races, creating an educational hierarchy with whites at the top, followed by 'Malay' or Asian peoples, 'coloureds,' and blacks, in descending order. Dr. Hendrik F. Verwoerd at some point rationalised the mentality behind this racial categorization; stating that blacks 'should be educated for their opportunities in life' (Rothstein, 2004). "This Bantu Education Act was to make sure that our children only learnt things that would make them good for what the government wanted: to work in the factories and so on; they must not learn properly at school like the white children. Our children were to go to school only three hours a day, two shifts of children every day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, so that more children could get a little bit of learning without government having to spend more money. Hawu! It was a terrible thing that act" (interview by Baard and Schreiner, 1986, online book).

The intense ethnic inferiority was reflected in the curriculum, resulting in a systematically different curriculum with an intent to prepare 'more inferior' races, such as blacks and 'coloured', for unskilled jobs (Rothstein, 2004:1), in order to protect the white minority from competing for jobs. "There were no jobs for blacks outside the low-wage sector" according to the Minister for Native Affairs, Schuster (2011: 41) citing Byrnes (1996: 3).

According to Sefoka and Odeku (2015: 469-470), citing Irogbe (1974) "the bantu educational system was passed in order to make African learners to be hewers of woods and drawers of water for the white society, despite the learners' ability and aspirations." At the same time, missionary schools that were not prepared to teach the Bantu education curriculum had their financial support withdrawn leading to most of the missionary schools closing down. These were schools, decades before and during apartheid that made it possible for black children to get an education, including former President Rolihlahla Nelson Mandela. The National Party (NP) favoured a Christian, nationalist school education for their children, that propagated an education policy that believed a person's responsibilities and opportunities were defined by their ethnic identity, which resulted in financial resources directed largely to white pupils (Schuster, 2011:41). "Towards the end of the 1960s, 16 times more was spent on school education for a white child than for a black child" (Ibid, 42) and education for black children was funded by a general poll tax on blacks and since the majority of black South Africans earned very little to nothing, tax revenue was just as low, therefore spending on education was equally very low. On the other hand, education for white children received state funding (Baard and Schreiner, 1986, online book) this meant quality education for the white minority, further perpetuating inequality, poverty and competition for employment amongst ethnic groupings.

2.1.2 The current post-apartheid educational system is focused on skill provision rather than on the real cause of youth unemployment, the structure of the economy.

The post-apartheid government determined to redress past injustices, launched an extensive reform of policies. Critical to the process was to reform education and training structures

> "In terms of the goals set for educational transformation since the change of government in 1994, the following were emphasized:

· *Equity*, because of the gross levels of inequality in education funding, something reflected in the visible disparities between former-white and black schools;
· *Efficiency*, because of the high levels of wastage expressed in terms of high dropout and repetition rates;
· *Quality*, because of the documented poor quality of teaching and learning in schools;
· *Effectiveness*, because of the poor response in educational performance to the high levels of funding to education; and
· *Democracy*, because of the legacy of authoritarian practices in education generally and the concomitant lack of parental participation in school governance "(Jansen and Taylor, 2003: 7).

South Africa's labour Market has been transformed sine 1994 with an emphasis on strategies that eliminate labour inequalities and improve general working conditions. Some of the proposed reforms were a start in redressing the historical imbalances in the racialised labour market created by and during the apartheid regime, which gave rise to what McGrath, Badroodien, Kraak and Unwin (2004) characterised as a "low skills regime" (Ngcwangu, 2014:151). The development of policies that would broadly deal with all apartheid's legacies and concurrently manage the incorporation of the South African economy into the global capitalist economic system was a fundamental task (Ngcwangu, 2014:151).

Ngcwangu (2014: 151) and scholars such as Motala, Vally and Spreen (2010: 241) have argued that "at the end of apartheid there was a real expectation of the death of a racist, fragmented, incoherent, yet planned education and training system together with its policies and practices, the manufactured bureaucracies spawned to give effects to the intentions of apartheid ideologues and political leaders and its deleterious outcomes, would be terminated once and for all."

According to Sefoka and Odeku (2015: 469-470), the South African Schools Act (SASA), Act No 84 of 1996, intended doing away with the apartheid educational system for equal and standardised high quality education. SASA also intended to empower schools and communities. It stipulated that under the "Act and any applicable provincial law, every parent must cause every learner for whom he or she is responsible to attend a school from

the first school day of the year in which such learner reaches the age of seven years until the last school day of the year in which such learner reaches the age of fifteen years or the ninth grade, whichever occurs first" (section 3 (1)). The Act further provides "that the State must fund public schools from public revenue on an equitable basis in order to ensure the proper exercise of the rights of learners to education and the redress of past inequalities in education provision" (section 34 (1)). national legislative frameworks, policies and supporting papers have the same intent of redressing past injustices and inequalities in the educational sector, and providing high quality education for all people, the realisation of the right to education, ending prejudice, contributing towards eradicating poverty, upholding the rights of learners, parents and educators, and encouraging the governance and funding of schools (Sefoka and Odeku, 2015: 468). Thus "the transformation process in education is concentrated on creating a more equitable and accessible system of public education. Education and training would address the persistent developmental challenges such as poverty, inequality and unemployment" (The Draft National Policy on Community Colleges: Draft for Comment, 2014, 3). Approximately 1 million young people exited the schooling system annually, with 65 percent exiting without attaining a Grade 12 certificate. Those who do exit the schooling system are a half of those who do so after Grade 11; the reasons include not enrolling for Grade 12 or failing Grade 11 and not returning to repeat (2015: 11). This means that this group of young people "are not easily accepted into institutions of higher learning, which affects the rate at which the country can produce the scarce skills required to achieve our very ambitious economic development and transformation plans" (Skills Summit, 2015).

In 2009, the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET), found post-school education and work environment as being as follows: "(1) a large annual outflow of students from schooling without meaningful further educational opportunities; (2) post- school institutional architecture that limits further educational opportunities for young people; (3) lack of integrated and systematic data about the "excluded youth"; and (4) a recapitalised FET (TVET) colleges sector that requires capacity building" (Cloete, Butler-Adam and Perold, 2012: 2). It added:

> In terms of access, the key target is to expand the sector substantially to around 1 million with 800 000 enrolled in courses funded by the Department of Education. Key

> arguments for rapid expansion are the high youth unemployment rate, low education participation rates of those in the age group 16 to 24 and the need to rebalance the relative enrolments in vocational further education versus higher education enrolments

Poor throughput in higher education affects the supply of high-level, skilled graduates. Access to post-school education and training is limited for school leavers, and those who do access these opportunities are often not sufficiently prepared for the workplace due to the quality of education and training provided. The challenge facing post-school education is to find ways to assist the vast majority of school-leavers, who do not qualify for direct entry into higher education or employment to gain skills (National Youth Policy, 2014: 24).

2.1.3 Understanding “Skill”

In much of this literature thee is an emphasis on ‘skills’ and the assumption of a direct relation between skills and employment. The meaning of “Skill” is actually difficult to define. The latest skill research has integrated broader cognitive skills such as problem-solving and decision-making, signifying the complexity in regarding such cognitive competences as knowledge rather than skill: (Winterton, Delamare - Le Deist and Stringfellow, 2006: 7).

> “Skill has been defined as: goal-directed, well-organised behaviour that is acquired through practice and performed with economy of effort. Competence is a term subject to such diverse use and interpretation that it is impossible to identify or impute a coherent theory or to arrive at a definition capable of accommodating and reconciling all the different ways the term is used. After exploring the different interpretations, the common position is that if intellectual capabilities are required to develop knowledge and operationalising knowledge is part of developing skills, all are prerequisites to developing competence and other social and attitudinal skills”

The National Strategic Skills Audit for England (2010) argued that “skills can be difficult to define and measure at an aggregate level. Skills are socially constructed, intangible and

unobservable. Research uses a number of different measures to assess the quantity, level and content of skills possessed and deployed in the workplace" (UKCES, 2010, page 9). Skills may be measured in terms of qualification(s) or occupation(s) (Reddy, Bhorat, et al. 2016: 16). This chapter considered education (both high-school and post high-school) as a "proxy for skill" (Reddy, Bhorat, et al. 2016: 16).

"Low skill" refer to those who did not go to school (no schooling) and those qualified at pre-matriculation. "Intermediate skill" levels are those who went through the schooling system until grade 9, "high skills" refer to those who went through matric (or college after grade 9) and continued post school. "Skills" here is considered as "technical knowledge and pedagogical skills" (Kgobe and Baatjes, 2014: 3).

The conventional assumption is that education therefore plays a major role in enhancing skills and skills in turn affect who is employed, and the income they receive. As a result, school completion, tertiary education, and further education with skills training, give some young people entering the labour market an added advantage, as a result:

> "Skill" is widely regarded as a focus for analytical research and as a core object for policy interventions in the modern global high-technology era. A substantive body of evidence shows that different skill levels have large economic effects for individuals, employers, regions and whole national economies" Green (2011: 4).

Yet the quality of education in poor township schools impacts on the high drop-out and low school completion rates. For learners who do complete school, a small number are equipped with basic skills to survive the post-schooling education sector, such as reading and writing (interpreting text) as well as counting. In this way, inequality recurs and the discrepancies in incomes between the rich and the poor in South Africa are reinforced (Branson and Zuze, 2012: 69).

The 2015 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) found that, economic growth and social development are interrelated. The post-2015 development goal for education should be that all youth achieve at least basic skills as a basis for work and further learning as part of gaining access to schooling. Attaining such an objective would

lead to notable economic gains, given that broad participation for the benefit of development, social and civic participation, improves the standard of health, and propel gender equity and reduce poverty (OECD, 2015: 3).Additional findings presented by the (OECD, 2015: 9) show that the:

> "quality of schooling in a country is a powerful predictor of the wealth that countries will produce in the long run. Or, put the other way around, the economic output that is lost because of poor education policies and practices leaves many countries in what amounts to a permanent state of economic recession."

Poor quality education, unsuitable subject choices and dismal student performance are frequently raised by organisations as the main concerns about education in South Africa (Jordaan and Bezuidenhout, 2014: 6).Therefore, funding and policy interventions should be aimed at improving the public education system, such that it would raise youth employment prospects (Oosthuizen and Cassim 2014). One of the key outcome indicators for the research is whether participants are better able to access the labour market on completion of their courses and graduating from the TVET College. This will put the false emphasis on skills to the test.

2.2 Youth and unemployment

The desired outcome of the 2009-2014 National Youth Policy stated the policy goal that produce:

> Young people who are empowered, able to realise their full potential, and understand their roles and responsibilities in making meaningful contribution to the development of the country (2009:12).

Much of the literature about youth has "inherited assumptions from developmental psychology about universal stages of development, identity formation, normative behaviour and the relationship between social and physical maturation. Yet very little work has been done to clarify the theoretical basis of this categorisation based on age" (Wyn and White,

1997: 8). The United Nations defines “youth”, as those between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States. First pronounced in 1981 for statistical purposes by the secretary-General in his report to the General Assembly on International Youth Year (A/36/215, para.8 of the annex), further recognising that, apart from the statistical definition, the meaning of “youth” as a term varies in different societies around the world. In 1995 the General Assembly, by its 50/81 resolution, adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond, reiterating that the United Nations defined youth as the age cohort of 15-24 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs). The Department of Trade and Industry (the dti), defines “youth” broadly in young people under the age of 30, and employed youth to be in another category aged between 18 and 24 years (Youth Enterprise Development Strategy, 2013: 4). In this research, a Statistics South Africa definition comprehensively refers to young people as those falling within the age group of 15 to 34 years is used in line with the national definition, adults are aged 35–64 years (Statistical release: P0211.4.2, 2014), It must be stressed that “Young people aged 15–34 years are not a homogenous group, and their labour market situation often varies enormously when 5-year age categories are analysed” (Statistical release: P0211.4.2, 2014).

This comprehensive approach is not oblivious to both historical and present-day condition; significantly the National Youth Policy 2008-2013 supplements this age range by sectioning the youth populace in age cohorts and target groups, cognisant of differences that occur amongst these youth groupings, such as their conditions and needs. All these recognise the fact that young people as a group are not homogenous and thus an advanced approach should be implemented in dealing with them (National Youth Policy 2015-2020, 2015: 3). Furthermore, this chapter, concedes that the age range chosen, is by no means the absolute and is applied within the context of “race, age, gender, social class, and geographic location etc. of this age range”(National Youth Policy 2015-2020, 2015: 3).

Statistics show that the number of young people continues to grow in South Africa, a phenomenon popularly known as the "youth bulge". The youth constitutes as the highest percentage in comparison to other population groups which is suggestive of the seriousness and the need for focused attention in young people if South Africa seeks to benefit (National Youth Policy 2015-2020, 2015: 3). Different authors continue to reveal how young people are confronted with multifaceted challenges as they transition to

adulthood, as the gap between the assumed idea of adulthood and the socio-economic reality widen (Archambault, 2013; Weiss, 2002; Cole, 2004; Jeffrey, 2010; Hansen, 2005; Vigh, 2006; Mains, 2007). One view is that "youth 'embody' the sharpening contradictions of the contemporary world in especially acute form" and are at the frontline of understanding social change and how the future is constituted (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2005: 21).
Henze (2015: 5) similarly described youth as referred to by the South African National Youth Policy 2008-2013 and elaborates that, youth is a very broad definition, since it is an in-between childhood and adulthood phase in life, a time of finding one's self and identity, exploring and trying out roles, for many a process occurring in the absence of social norms, responsibilities and expectations, at the same time being gradually prepared as full members of the socio-economic collective.

It is in the course of this process of social integration, that young people discover or realise that they are in a social system that is challenging, made up of components such as 'tradition, history, social demands, hopes, and individual future prospects, all of which they have to incorporate into a coherent picture in order to build a proper foundation for their personal life' (Henze, 2015: 5).

2.2.1 The racial and gender characteristics of unemployed young people. Is it largely a problem affecting young African men?

The data indicates that African females are the worst affected by unemployment. This reflects the patriarchal nature of South African society where women are discriminated against in relation to income, authority, land ownership and subject to rape and domestic violence.

> In 2015 estimates of the mid-year population of South Africa were 54, 96 million. As per the race groups, the population for African was (44 228 000) 80, 5% and for Male was (21 653 500) 80, 6%, with African Female at (22 574 500) 80, 4%. Coloured ('mixed race') was at (4 832 900) 8, 8% with Male estimated at (2 334 800) 8, 7% and Female (2 498 100) 8, 9%. Indian/Asian at a total of (1 362 000) 2, 5% with Male estimated to be (688 100) 2, 6% and

Female at (673 900) 2, 4%. Whites estimated to be (4 534 000) 8, 3% with Males at (2 201 900) 8, 2% and Females at (2 332 200) 8, 3%, bringing a sum of 26 878 300 Males and 28 078 700 of females, adding up to 54 956 900 South Africans (Statistical release P0302: 2015: 7).

Table 10: Mid-year population estimates by population group, age and sex,

	Black African			Coloured			Indian/Asian			White		
Age	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
15–19	2 145 271	2 146 949	4 292 220	219 989	217 423	437 412	49 926	49 082	99 007	150 156	145 576	295 733
20–24	2 233 556	2 227 958	4 461 515	213 824	212 189	426 013	55 296	53 008	108 304	155 522	150 893	306 415
25–29	2 238 961	2 198 609	4 437 570	194 766	194 663	389 429	61 856	55 915	117 771	145 480	142 005	287 485
30–34	1 713 580	1 821 594	3 535 173	177 972	188 984	366 955	66 507	57 699	124 206	139 601	141 757	281 358

Source: Statistics South Africa, Statistical release (P0302: 2015: 9).

South Africa has a young population, hence the very high dependent youth population. In 2008, about 40% of the population lived in rural areas where levels of unemployment and poverty are higher. Since then, South Africa has been experiencing urbanisation at a fast pace, mostly by male workers in search of employment. Many of the migrants often have low levels of education and are unable to secure employment, even though South Africa has a large number of vacancies in skilled and semi-skilled occupations. In 2006, the South African government launched the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) to seek to address the skills shortages (Reviews of National Policies for Education: South Africa, 2008: Part 2; Chapter 1: 127).

The prospects of attaining post high school qualification for black African students are still very low due to the quality of the basic education systems implemented in previously disadvantaged schools. Hence the quality of results from these schools leads to students from these areas not being easily accepted into institutions of higher learning, subsequently affecting the countries rate in producing the scarce skills required in achieving

transformation and economic development. According to an independent education specialist Graeme Bloch (2015) there is a continued racial disparity in education, “where a white pupil has a 60 percent chance of going to university while a black African pupil has a 12 to15 percent chance. That’s not sustainable and that’s not fair in a democracy where we’re supposed to be equal.”

“The demographic data feed into a long-standing anxiety in South Africa about the ‘youth’, young men, especially poor and black African young men, have long been a source of anxiety not only for privileged elites but also for very many poor and black people themselves” (Seekings, 2013: 3). Citing other sources, Seekings (2013: 3) found that, large numbers of unemployed young men are, as suggested by the National Development Plan (NDP), a recipe for ‘social disorder, widespread political unrest and increased crime’ (South Africa, 2012b: 86). As trade union leader Zwelinzima Vavi said, that unemployed youth represent a ‘ticking time-bomb’ (see IJR report, 2012) which now appears to be really close to exploding. Understanding how and why unemployment is constructed as a “problem” not only for individuals but political stability warrants further attention. The “ticking time-bomb” metaphor is an alert to the magnitude of youth unemployment, not just in South Africa, but in the continent as a whole, with an estimate in 2013 of about 10 million to 12 million young people who join the labour market each year, Ighobor (2013: 3) citing Alexander Chikwanda, Zambia’s Finance Minister. Other examples include the Arab Spring in North Africa, showing that when prospects of employment are scarce, social cohesion and political stability can be threatened (Ighobor, 2013: 3, citing Ahmad Salkida from the African Development Bank (AfDB)) “This is an unacceptable reality on a continent with such an impressive pool of youth, talent and creativity,” emphasised, Mthuli Ncube who is a chief economist at the AfDB (Ighobor, 2013: 3).

Equally, with gender disparities having decreased, to some extent, female learners are still disadvantaged in comparison to males. The percentages of males without formal education was brought down by half between 1996 (17.1%) and 2007 (8.4%), the percentage of females without formal education declined only by 40% (to 12.1%) in the same period. In 2003, at primary level, boys outnumbered girls by around 106 to 100. Girls had lower completion rates than boys (boys’ completion rate at grade 6 [76%] was almost 5% higher than that of girls [71.2%]). In grade 9, completion rate for boys was 55% when compared to

49.7% of girls (Reviews of National Policies for Education: South Africa, 2008: Part 2; Chapter 1: 127).

In both the university and TVET statistics, female enrolments are higher than the male enrolments. Still the differences in qualification, support gender stereotypes in that males are expected to choose the supposed “masculine science, technology, and engineering based subjects, whereas females are focused on so-called feminine subjects, such as Health, Education, and Social Sciences” (Reddy, Bhorat, et al, 2016: 9). This fosters gender equality in the already problematic labour market.

Van der Westhuizen, Oosthuizen and Goga (2006) analysed the Household Surveys (OHS) 1995 and Labour Force Surveys (LFS) 2005 September data to study how each gender fares in the labour market. Females indicated an increase number in labour force and labour force participation rates in all age cohorts, in spite of the fact that these numbers and rates continued to be higher in males. Employment increased in all age cohorts in both genders between the two surveys, but the increase was most rapid in the 45-54 and 55-65 years cohorts. In addition, unemployment rates increased between the two surveys in all age cohorts for both genders, but the increase was more for females, especially those in the two young cohorts (15-24 years and 25-34 years). The econometric analyses on the females showed that both the labour force participation prospect and employment prospect were the lowest in the 15-24 years cohort, followed by the 25-34 years cohort.

Table 11: Female unemployment rate for youth (15–34 years) by province, 2008–2015

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Western Cape	28,6	30,3	28,1	35,2	30,9	34,7	32,6	32,4
Eastern Cape	38,1	44,7	43,4	35,5	42,1	40,8	42,4	42,8
Northern Cape	40,1	48,6	41,5	49,6	43,7	45,6	46,0	52,6
Free State	41,8	42,4	43,4	45,5	55,2	47,5	51,8	45,5
KwaZulu-Natal	36,0	35,8	28,4	34,1	33,5	32,6	34,1	36,8
North West	42,9	44,3	49,1	45,4	46,1	44,2	43,7	44,4
Gauteng	38,6	37,3	45,0	45,6	43,7	40,8	40,5	42,6
Mpumalanga	39,5	41,5	46,3	51,7	50,2	48,9	48,1	46,9
Limpopo	47,9	42,7	44,6	33,4	34,8	37,2	32,4	37,2
South Africa	**38,0**	**38,5**	**39,5**	**40,9**	**40,7**	**39,7**	**39,5**	**40,7**

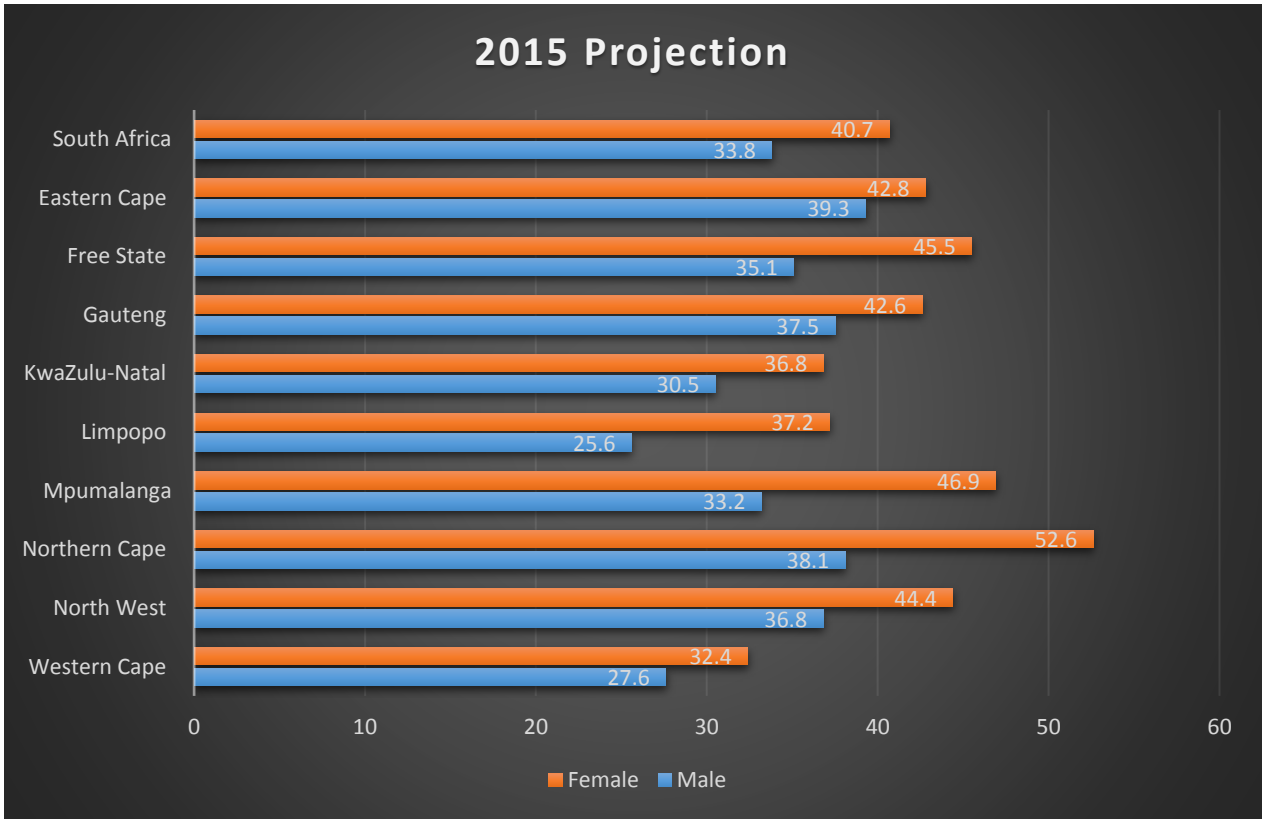
Source: Statistics South Africa (2015).

Table 12: Male unemployment rate for youth (15–34 years) by province, 2008–2015

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Western Cape	23,6	24,8	27,2	29,5	32,2	31,9	29,6	27,6
Eastern Cape	37,2	34,4	37,4	38,4	34,5	39,1	39,4	39,3
Northern Cape	28,4	30,7	37,2	34,9	29,8	35,8	39,5	38,1
Free State	28,7	30,9	38,2	35,1	35,6	39,7	45,5	35,1
KwaZulu-Natal	26,1	29,1	26,0	25,9	26,9	28,8	27,7	30,5
North West	24,0	34,3	30,0	33,4	37,6	33,7	34,5	36,8
Gauteng	27,7	27,3	34,8	34,5	31,5	35,2	33,2	37,5
Mpumalanga	27,8	31,2	36,7	35,3	36,6	34,5	38,9	33,2
Limpopo	39,2	38,6	35,7	24,9	28,8	24,3	25,8	25,6
South Africa	**28,4**	**29,8**	**32,7**	**32,2**	**31,8**	**33,5**	**33,4**	**33,8**

Source: Statistics South Africa (2015).

Table13: Unemployment rate (excluding discouraged work-seekers) of youth aged 15 – 34 years, by province and gender



Source: Statistics South Africa (2015) *National and Provincial Labour Market: Youth Q1: 2008–Q1: 2015.* Statistical release P0211.4.2. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

Researchers such as Moore (2004, p. 101), Allais and Nathan (2012: 6) concede that complications that arise in literature around the broader subject is that there is no

> "given relationship between levels of educational outcome (and, crucially, the long-term educational career paths leading to them) and prospective positions in the system of social stratification (stratification by gender and ethnicity as well as by class and occupation). Consequently, it is difficult to maintain that differentiated educational paths in some way prepare pupils for given positions in the stratification system (whether in its economic or gender relations). What is significant is not so much the type of education that different groups receive (whether defined through formal content, the hidden curriculum or the social relations of education, but the relative differences between the amounts and status of education regardless of content or form" (Moore, 2004, p. 101).

Hence, efforts in explaining the different concepts in education or labour market relationships, and importantly testing their predictive validity, would contribute greatly towards literature, policy and implementation (Allais and Nathan, 2012: 6).

2.3 The Nature of the South African Labour Market

2.3.1 The extent of youth unemployment in SA?

The absence of skills is used as an excuse or as a way to divert blame onto unemployed youth instead of onto the government, or the structure of the economy. Yet, the objective for post-school education, in South Africa currently, is to find ways of assisting the majority of school leavers who do not meet the requirements for direct entry into higher education or employment (National Youth Policy, 2014: 24). The few who do access post-school education and training opportunities are often not equipped adequately for the workplace, due to inferior education and training. Scholars such as Allais and Nathan (2012: 3) argue that it is "the inability of the economy to grow in such a way that it creates jobs".

The situation of youth in the labour market across different regions of the world is multifaceted and its understanding is far from complete because data is not constantly available, and where evaluations are likely, generalising is not ideal given the different realities as well as the macro and micro context. A number of reports have been produced lately on the subject of unemployment either from a global perspective for the general population (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2013b) or focused more on the issue of youth unemployment directly (International Labor Organization [ILO], 2013a, and b).

In 2011 the South African labour force was made up of 0.5% of the global labour force, and accounted for 2% of the world's unemployment (National Treasury, 2011:13). The local labour-force participation rate is significantly lower at 56.5%, in comparison to other countries (National Planning Commission, 2011:13), and the labour inclusion rate in the formal economy has slowly declined since 1985 (Ligthelm, 2006:37).

The South African labour market is identified with high levels of unemployment compared to other emerging-market economies (National Planning Commission, 2011:12-13). Kingdon

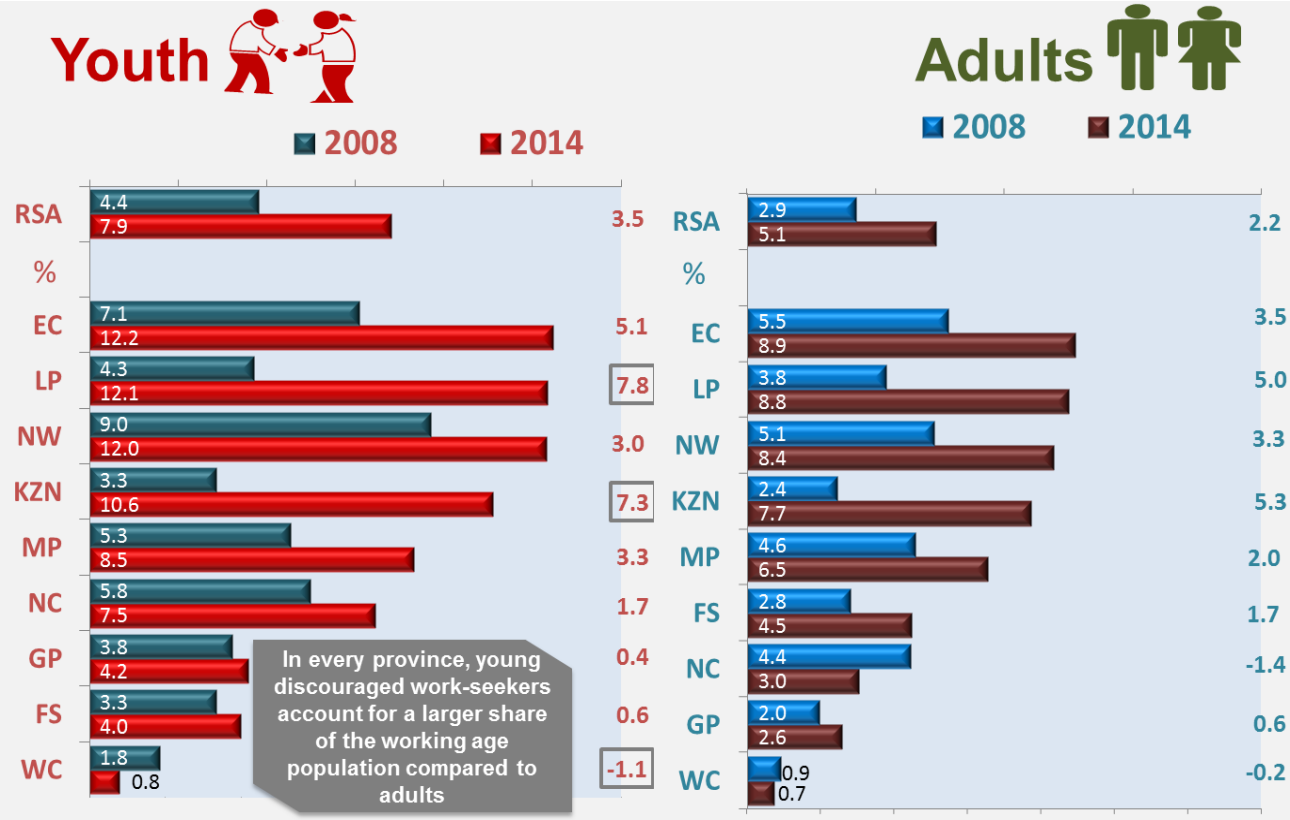
and Knight (2004), who focused on the broad definition of the labour force by means of comparing Household Surveys (OHS) of 1995 with Labour Force Surveys (LFS) of September 2000, discovered that unemployment rate as well as the increase of this rate between the two surveys was greater amongst 16-20 years and 21-25 years cohorts.

The 1995-1999 OHS and LFS of 2000-2001 data were used to get the unemployment rates in three age cohorts, in particular the 15-24, 25-44 and 45-65 years. Results were that unemployment rates increased in all three cohorts between 1995 and 2001 and although the rates remained the highest for those aged 15-24 years in all surveys under study (YU, 2013: 5).

> Hlekiso and Mahlo (2009) studied the demand and supply of skills in the labour market using all 2001-2007 September LFSs to analyse the work trends of the employed and the demographic characteristics of unemployed. The share of unemployed aged 15-24 years rose steadily from 32.4% in 2001 to 34.4% in 2007 and in all surveys the average salary of the employed in this age cohort was the least"(YU, 2013: 5).

The 2014 table below, illustrates discouraged work-seekers (percentage of working age) by Province between 2008 and 2014:

Discouraged work-seekers (percentage of working age) (2008-2014)



Source: Statistics South Africa Presentation (2014: Slide 39).

Difficulty in youth economic involvement is attributed to the quality of their education as demonstrated in literature, mismatch of skills that are required by employers and those seeking jobs and basic life skills of the job seeker (Western Cape Youth Commission, 2008:51-52).

Young women experience the highest levels of low to no education and skills, joblessness, infections such as HIV & Aids and are susceptible to gender-based violence and abuse. Youth in rural areas usually struggle with limited access to amenities and opportunities in addition to high numbers of youth that migrate to urban areas. Gauteng Province has the highest proportion of youth population:

Table 14: Provincial population estimates by age and sex

	Eastern Cape			Free State			Gauteng			KwaZulu-Natal		
Age	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
15–19	340 119	340 773	680 893	138 969	138 833	277 802	521 134	514 325	1 035 459	535 310	543 614	1 078 923
20–24	368 945	372 651	741 596	139 978	138 574	278 553	570 869	560 721	1 131 590	542 874	555 656	1 098 529
25–29	341 389	345 424	686 813	139 898	135 870	275 767	628 458	611 394	1 239 852	507 041	515 668	1 022 708
30–34	237 761	261 912	488 672	109 081	113 689	222 771	552 519	571 510	1 124 029	382 427	427 672	810 099

Source: Statistics South Africa, Statistical release (P0302: 2015: 15-16).

Table 15: Provincial population estimates by age and sex

	Limpopo			Mpumalanga			Northern Cape			North West		
Age	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
15–19	308 824	309 486	618 310	220 954	222 345	443 299	59 749	58 882	118 631	172 993	169 030	342 024
20–24	309 900	311 717	621 617	219 232	214 889	434 121	57 879	54 828	112 707	178 775	169 841	348 616
25–29	279 698	282 679	562 377	220 327	206 731	427 058	57 832	52 721	110 552	185 447	168 493	353 940
30–34	205 257	225 136	430 393	172 863	171 824	344 687	46 579	43 945	90 523	151 184	140 836	292 020

Source: Statistics South Africa, Statistical release (P0302: 2015: 15-16).

Table 16: Provincial population estimates by age and sex

	Western Cape			All provinces		
Age	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
15–19	267 290	261 742	529 032	2 565 342	2 559 030	5 124 373
20–24	269 746	265 171	534 917	2 658 198	2 644 049	5 302 246
25–29	280 974	272 212	553 186	2 641 062	2 591 192	5 232 254
30–34	239 988	253 509	493 497	2 097 659	2 210 034	4 307 693

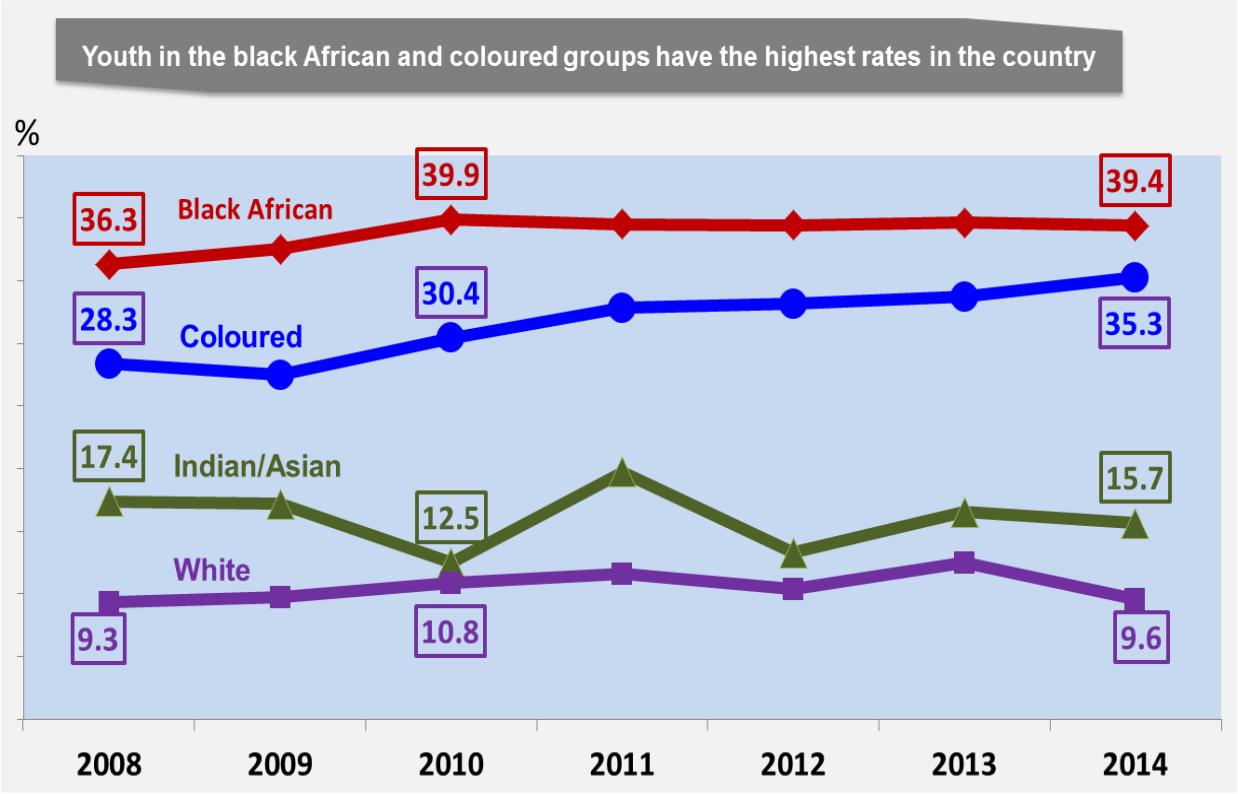
Source: Statistics South Africa, Statistical release (P0302: 2015: 15-16).

Compared to all other provinces, the Eastern Cape, Western Cape and Limpopo demonstrate a youth migration trend from deprived rural areas to better off provinces typically urban in nature (Statistics SA, Statistical release P0302: 2015: 15-16). Young

people will be attracted to possibilities that urban areas are able to offer. However if they are unskilled, most end up being destitute. (National Youth Policy 2008-2013, 2008:15).

The current economic climate offers insufficient jobs. Additional constrains relate to demographic factors such as race and area of residence; black African, Indian and Coloured young people have lower access to employment than White youth; and urban youth have a greater chance of employment compared to those living in rural areas (Western Cape Youth Commission, 2008:51-52).

Unemployment rate for the youth, by race (2008-2014)



Source: Statistics South Africa Presentation (2014: Slide 38).

These levels of exclusion demonstrate that the unemployment and employability of countless young people are associated with structural factors, including South Africa's economic growth rate and the quality of the education system (Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2012). Thus the issue surpass the realm of the individual. Individual agency has to be supported by strong institutional interventions (Booyens and Crause, 2012: 257).

Large cohorts of young people have already been impacted by weaknesses in the public education system (Oosthuizen and Cassim 2014). “About 60 percent of unemployed youth aged below 35 years have never worked” (National Youth Policy 2015-2020, 2015: 12) School-leavers who prematurely exit the schooling system, leaners who dropout in high school and unemployed diploma-holders, may lack expected professional and or technical skills. As a result, this group will require interventions that are essential to these challenges as proposed by the National Youth Policy 2015-2020 (2015: 12) to “strengthen basic education and reduce drop-out rates for current students, create viable pathways for school-leavers to access post-school learning opportunities, while directly addressing the lack of skills and work experience among out of school youth.” affording these young people an opportunity to participate in the economy.

“Education remains an important tool in the fight against poverty, while two-thirds (66, 0%) of adults with no formal education were found to be poor, this was true for only 5, 5% of those with a post-matric qualification” (Statistics South Africa, 2014: 36). Consequently some look towards other alternatives for survival.

These dynamics collectively may be further perpetuated by limited to no connection between graduates and related places of employment, young people therefore have to rely on personal contacts such as family and search through newspaper advertisements to find jobs (Gewer, 2010).The reality is that, none of these guarantee any form of employment (Allais and Nathan, 2012: 3)

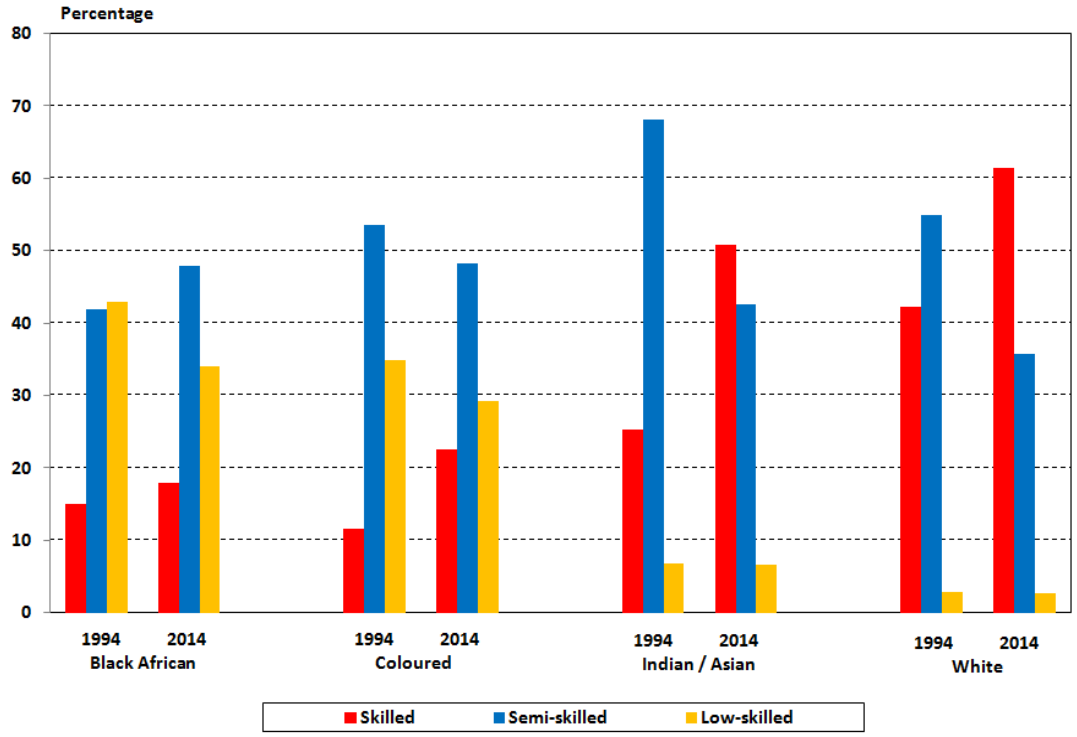
2.3.2 Types of unemployment

Meirotti (2015:9-10) found that causes of unemployment will differ in different contexts. This is exactly what is being debated, the most prevalent form of unemployment in Africa is commonly referred to as “structural unemployment”, which refers to individuals who are excluded from the labour market and possibly permanently so, because of a “mismatch between the number of people looking for jobs and the number of jobs available” (The Economist 2014). It is different from frictional and cyclical unemployment, which “refer(s) to people moving between jobs and those temporarily laid-off during a downturn,” to which economies in Africa are susceptible (The Economist 2014). Economies where young graduates entering the market in numbers are unable to be absorbed, are ones where youth are most likely to be in a situation where they are underemployed, meaning “working

in the formal sector in positions not suited to their qualifications, or shifting into the informal economy. The informal economy exists outside of the state licensing and regulation framework and is characterised by its small scale and a low level of organisation with low levels of productivity" (Meirotti, 2015:9-10, citing the World Bank Group). Cartmel and Furlong (2000:2) look as far as 1985, when Dench (1985) noted that the challenge for rural youth, of embarking on a sustainable career in labour markets that are often highly seasonal. "Seasonal areas where jobs in a significant sector of the local economy such as agriculture or tourism tend to be available mainly on a seasonal basis" (Cartmel and Furlong, 2000:2). Seasonal unemployment is attributed to changes in economic activity during the course of a single year, for example, people would work during peak periods and unemployed in off-peak periods. This type of unemployment happens and goes on a regular and thus anticipated (Mkhwanazi, 2001:21-22).

The graphs below, by Statistics South Africa of 2014 (2-7), indicates the changing patterns between skills and demographics, such as race and age over a period of 20 years. Figure 2 revealed the varying mix of skills within each population group. Broken down further by age group in Figures 3a to 3d.

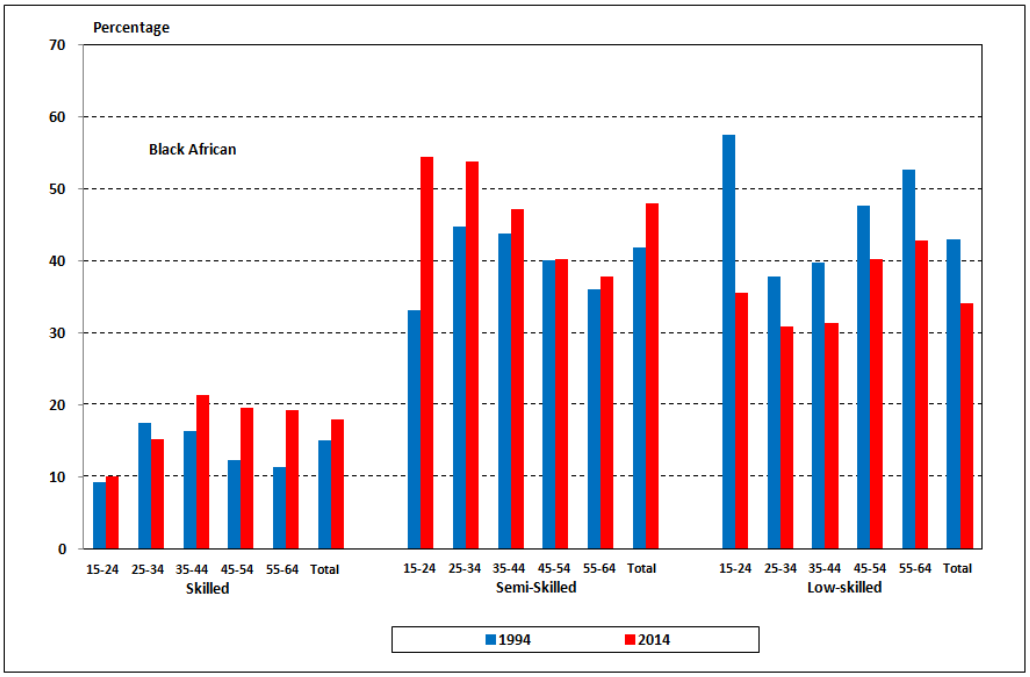
Figure 2: Employment structure of population groups by skills group



Source: Statistics South Africa Presentation (2014: 2-3).

In the situation of the black African population group in Figure 3a, there is no rise in the percentage of skilled employment in the 25–34 age group, the percentage of skilled employment in this group fell between 1994 and 2014 (compare the red bars with the blue bars in the skilled group).

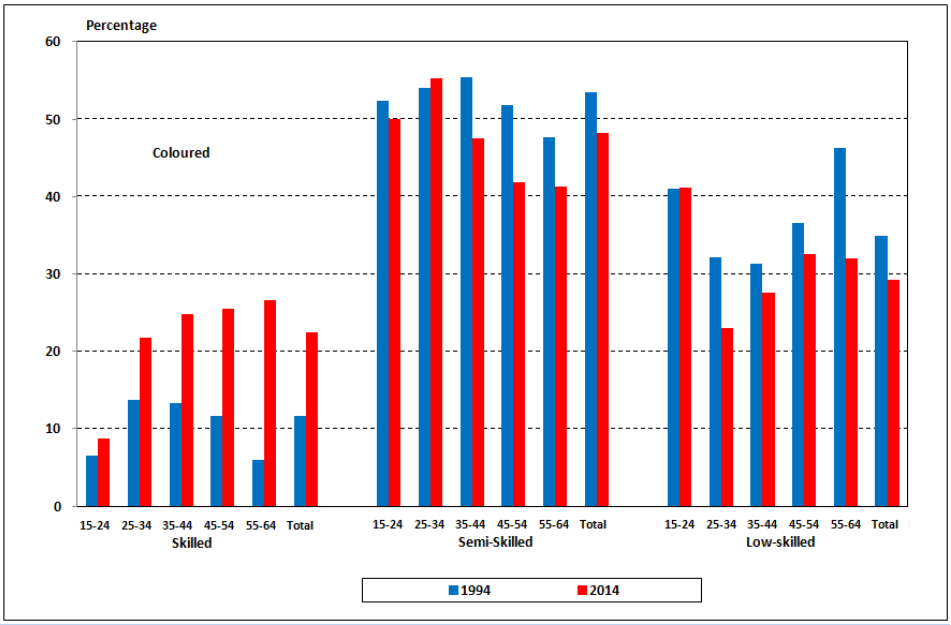
Figure 3a: Employment structure within each skills level by age group: black African population group



Source: Statistics South Africa Presentation (2014: 2-3).

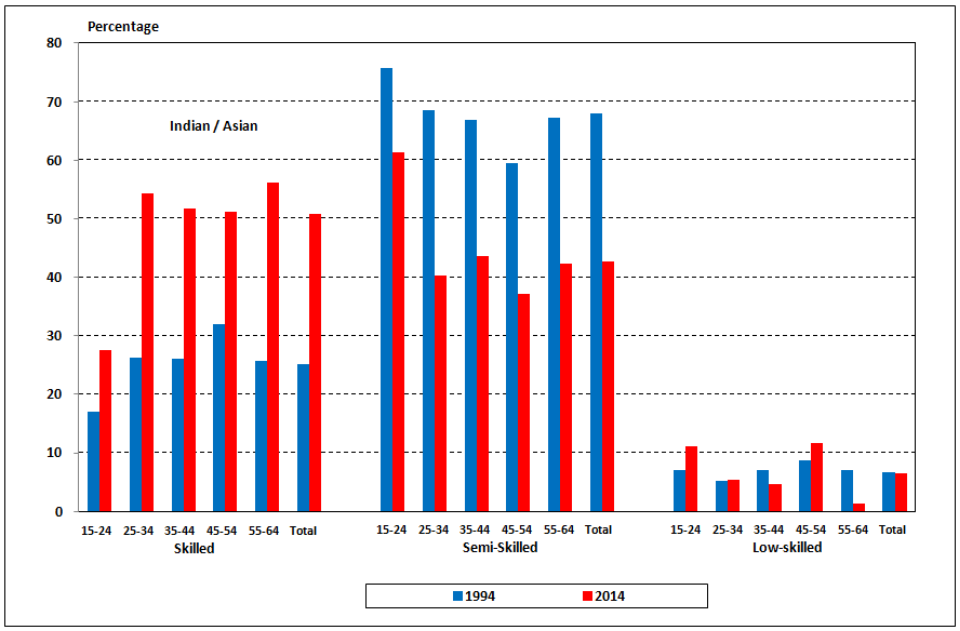
The rise in the coloured, Indian / Asian and white populations of skilled employment is noticeable in Figures 3b to 3d and seen across all age groups within the same population groups.

Figure 3b: Employment structure within each skills level by age group: coloured population group



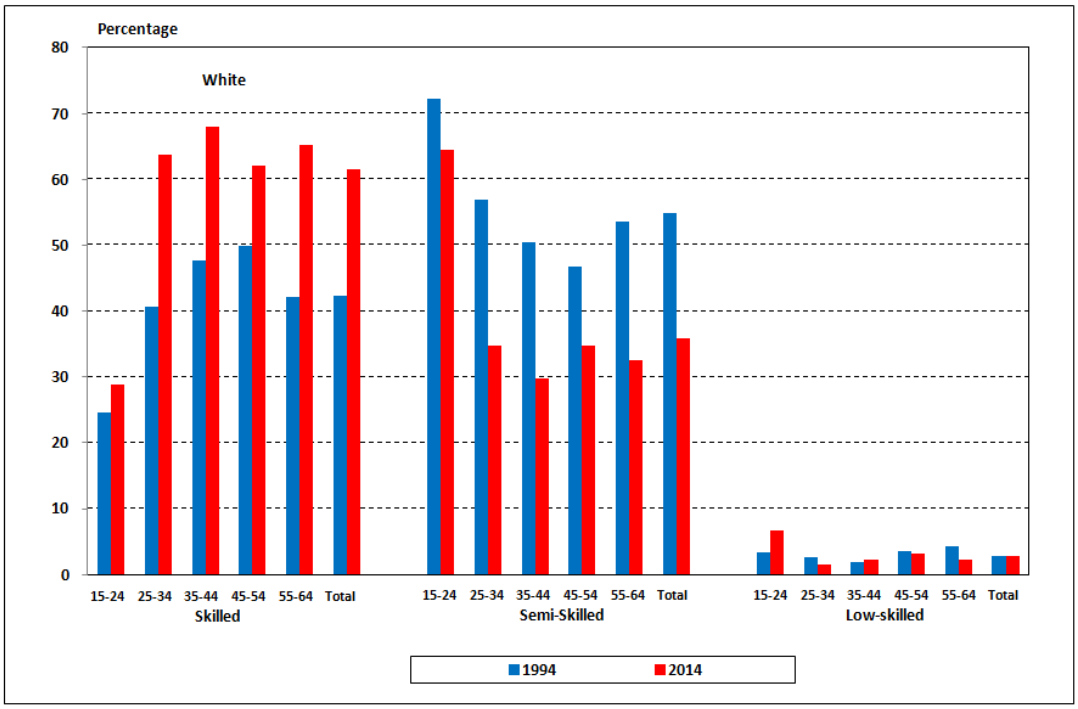
Source: Statistics South Africa Presentation (2014: 2-3).

Figure 3c: Employment structure within each skills level by age group: Indian / Asian population group



Source: Statistics South Africa Presentation (2014: 3-4).

Figure 3d: Employment structure within each skills level by age group: white population group



Source: Statistics South Africa Presentation (2014: 3-4).

Success in the labour market has become dependent on previous experience, both in actually working and also in work-seeking. Little is there to set apart youth, because they are likely to have very similar background(s). Their "work-readiness" is an added advantage to their ability to acquire their first job. Since a lot of the youth, black in particular, grow up in households where there is no wage earner, adds to the disadvantage of networks or how young people obtain potential information regarding labour market opportunities and work exposure (Altman, 2007:12). Such socio-economic factors act as constrains to job searching and job creation, as noted with the widening gap between production and entry-level work for young people.

2.3.3 Characteristics of the current labour market that perpetuate this problem

Unemployed youth in South Africa are largely low-skilled and have little experience of employment, with two thirds of young people having never worked (National Treasury, 2011:5). Youth unemployment is a predominant issue due to the country experiencing a

youth bulge (National Planning Commission, 2012:98), which may present opportunities for growth, when young people are meaningfully employed (McKinsey Global Institute, 2010:3), and likely to also be a cause for serious social instability if they are not (National Planning Commission, 2012:106). “The large working-age population might be a ‘major asset’, but only if ‘the challenge’ of ‘putting this working-age population to work’ is tackled successfully” (South Africa, 2012b: 78). Issues underlying youth unemployment include school-leavers that exit the system with no requisite skills needed by the labour market (National Youth Policy, 2014: 25).

One economist maintains that “the South African economy is marked by a structural demand deficit and the lack of domestic demand breeds mass unemployment (Forslung, 2016: 96). Others maintain that, causes of South African Youth unemployment is due to a mix of insufficient demand for labour, due to the increasingly skills-intensive economy of South Africa, and below par supply, caused by the emergence of risk low-skilled youth (National Treasury, 2011:20, 42).

Chapter 3:

Youth skills: development programmes and policies

3.1 Youth skills development

This report argues that the shortage of skills is not the main problem in explaining youth unemployment. The main problem is the structure of the economy which fails to produce enough jobs.

3.1.1 Skills planning

The South African attitude to skills and planning has changed over time. For the period of apartheid, the government of the day implemented “manpower planning models” for skills planning and post-1994, this was replaced by a more flexible outlook on skills planning, (Reddy, Bhorat, et al, 2016: 15). According to Reddy, Bhorat, et al, (2016: 15) the current thinking behind a reliable skills planning in South Africa is that the state, instead of the market, takes “a role in directing economic development, facilitating employment, and determining the type of skills that people require in order to obtain decent and productive employment. This developmental approach is a departure from the reliance only on the market, and attempts are now being made by the state to track skills changes and demands in the labour market as well as the society, and respond accordingly with changes in supply” (Reddy, Bhorat, et al, 2016: 15). Additionally, the state will assist in making sure that coordination happens, between “the government’s trade and investment strategies and economic growth initiatives, and those for education and training. Adopting such an approach will put the government in the driving seat, helping to ensure a more strategic approach to developing the country’s human resources” (Reddy, Bhorat, et al, 2016: 15).

3.1.2 Skills training

The 2008–2010 financial crisis triggered job-losses estimated to be around 900 000 for 2009 in South Africa. The unemployment rate for the first quarter of 2010 was at 25.2% (narrow definition), increasing from the fourth quarter of 2009, with the formal sector and the informal sector shedding 140 000 and 100 000 jobs respectively (Statistics South Africa

First Quarter LFS 2010). From an education or skills development perspective, the DHET sees this mission as: to generate skills development or training opportunities to youth that maximise their employability either in the formal or the informal sector (Development Bank of Southern Africa, 2010:21-22). Much will be influenced by initiatives implemented from across government departments. For now, consequences of the crisis towards economic growth prospects and labour market absorption continue to be volatile (Development Bank of Southern Africa, 2010:21-22).

> Findings from City & Guilds Group's first Skills Confidence Report, an international study of 8 000 employees in South Africa, the UK, the US and India. The study measured, among other topics, the impact of skills gaps on the workplace and economy, how confident people feel about their skills and jobs, as well as other factors impacting future economic prospects. Two-thirds (66%) of respondents agree that reducing the skills gap in South Africa is achievable if businesses open up more opportunities for young people to experience what it is like to work at a company, and almost half (46%) believe that creating apprenticeships and traineeships is the way to reduce the gap. Skills gaps can significantly impact businesses' productivity and bottom lines. As a result of skills gaps 46% of respondents say their organisations waste time, 42% say they waste money, and 46% say it makes their organisation less productive (Skills jobs, 2016: n.p).

The widely held responses across the board from the respondents is the concern about high youth unemployment. Even the remodelling of the education system and lots of plans, less than a third of respondents remain confident that the government is undertaking action in dealing with the skills gaps. Whereas, at a macro-economic level the skills mismatch and skills gaps affect the people's confidence regarding future economic projections. A large number of respondents are not assured of matric preparing individuals for work, and less than half are firm that the qualification is important to employers as a requirement. More than half the respondents are not convinced the skills gaps are narrowing (Skills Jobs 2016: n.p).

Kekeletso Khena (2012), a Director of the Skills Development Summit, suggested instilling skills development programs in both the private and public sector. “Employment creation and poverty eradication are both dependent on the skills levels in South Africa. In order for the economy and business to grow and develop, the public and private sector need to work together to assist with skills development.” Similarly, Chris Jones (2016), Chief executive of the City & Guilds Group, adds that their experience has demonstrated that, by aligning education with workplace needs, people and organisations are empowered to develop their skills for personal and economic growth (Skills jobs 2016: n.p).

3.1.3 Is there a skills shortage among the unemployed youth?

Oosthuizen and Cassim (2014: n.p) found that unemployed youth are described by a lack of employability caused by a range of socio-economic factors. The unemployed youth often have low numeracy and communication skills needed in the labour market, low levels of education and have dropped out of school.

Furthermore, they also have little to no work experience, which is a challenge for employers. The absence of strong networks or social capital that allows them to source job opportunities is another constraint. They tend not to have sufficient financial means to enable them to move around to areas where there is an opportunity for labour and skills development. Amongst those who do have means, be it family support or network(s), they often have unrealistically high wage expectations (Mlatsheni, 2007; Von Fintel and Black, 2007; Rankin and Roberts, 2011; Roberts, 2011).

3.1.4 Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET):

A substantial number of youth are not in education, employment, or training (NEETs) which is another point of significance in understanding the status of young people. Instances to highlight the seriousness faced by this cohort is that, globally Youth unemployment has resulted in a looming generational crisis in which young people struggle to locate themselves in something “meaningful” or socially acceptable, resulting in NEETs.

The effect of not having a career or finding sustainable work has ripple effects that not only affect young people but also their families and over-all society (Gough, Langevang, &

Owusu, 2013: 1). Negative effects of being unemployed impact on health, security and general well-being, with far more impact(s) for those from poorer backgrounds.

It is an intensified and complex combination of factors for those from poor backgrounds, a group more likely to endure further difficult transitions from education into employment (Furlong, 2009: 6), such difficulties may result in low confidence levels and trust in government entities and in turn add to the lack of direct and practical support that should be made available to young people, their families and communities (Yates, Harris, et, al 2011: 40). Some experts claim that youth unemployment has a “scarring” effect, meaning long standing consequences for their well-being further intensifying the possibility of future unemployment (Scarpetta, Sonnet & Manfred, 2010: 4).

Since 2009, the working age population of young people increased in number from 18,5 million to 19,8 million in 2015,and the number of unemployed youth at 371 000 and discouraged youth also rising to 470 000. A decline of youth employed in the formal sector from 72,0% in 2009 to 70,3% in 2015. Household numbers also projected disparities of those employed from private households decreasing from 6,4% to 5,3% and those in informal settlement households increasing from 16,4% to 17,9% (Statistics South Africa, 2016). National Statistics showed that Gauteng had the highest percentage of unemployed youth with no work experience at 56,5%, whereas Northern Cape had the lowest at 35,4% and overall 50,9% of unemployed youth had no previous work experience nationally (Statistics South Africa, 2016).

A short period between 2013 and 2015 saw a number of youth aged 15–24 years Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) increase only in Indian/Asian youth to 5,9%, on the other hand Coloured youth at 32,0% and black African at 31,7% continued to be the highest. In 2015 the NEET rate in the Northern Cape at 36,5% was the highest while Limpopo with 27,3% the lowest. A large drop was observed in North West with a 5,1 % (Statistics South Africa, 2016).

The 25-34 year old youths are captured as the highest NEET in comparison to other age groups in 2016 at 46.0% (Department of Higher Education and Training Fact Sheet on “NEETs”, 2017: 4). In the first quarter of 2017, 32,4% youth aged between 15–24 years were NEET, compared to the same quarter in 2016, with female youth in this age group more likely to NEET than the males in the same age group (Statistics South Africa P0211, 2017: 11).

According to Carcillo, S.et al. (2015) in The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) working paper, the state of NEETs in a country points towards a lack of progress or deterioration in human capital, because it affects young people who already have lower education to none or little and to no particular work experience. Another challenge is the lack of financial support or backing such as personal savings or beneficial privileges to alleviate the hardships of low earnings or unemployment.

The very high number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) is a call for concern nationally and internationally. The NEETs are seen as separated from both work and education. For that reason, making research and statistics about NEETs are of national importance for many countries and leaders and possibly beneficial, since effects or research finding may possibly have a bearing on future labour market opportunities and policies. To date, gathered information around the NEETs is used by a lot of countries to observe both “the labour market and social dynamics of young people” (Department of Higher Education and Training fact sheet on NEETs, 2017: 2).

However, according to the 2015 Skills Summit press release: “18 years and the prospect of getting into a higher learning institution for black students are still very low because of the quality of the basic education systems implemented in schools located in previously disadvantaged areas.” The National Youth Policy 2015-2020 sees poor-quality results in primary school as a contributor to weak participation in other school levels. Large numbers of learners are said to be dropping out of secondary schools short of getting a NSC (Grade 12), a TVET (FET) or adult basic education and training qualification. The drop-out rate of learners leaving the school system early and without school-leaving qualifications is high; enrolment and attendance indicate a great decline after primary school. Majola (2016), asks, “shouldn’t such pupils have enough flexibility to pursue subject choices that perhaps resonate with their capabilities” outside the academic route?

3.1.5 Policies:

The Young Communist League of South Africa (YCLSA) in their discussion document (2016: 1) found that, “a demographic dividend arises from the economic benefits that a country may accrue as a result of having a larger working age that is a productive

population relative to the non-productive dependent population" and from the same discussion document, questions arise:

> 'Are we in a position to benefit from having a larger working age population which by extension raises questions around the quality and quantity of our education? Are we pursuing policies and programmes that promote employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for young people? Can the current capitalist accumulation path produce opportunities for all young people entering its labour market? Can the health system and its programmes support a healthy and productive young nation?' (YCLSA, 2016:1).

At the moment many young people in South Africa live in poverty, which is synonymous 'low levels of education, few marketable skills, low productivity and generally poor health. Many young people are trapped into a culture of entitlement and dependency turning to alcohol and drugs or a life of crime as an easy way out. On the other extreme are those who are at the forefront of transformation, taking the opportunities that come with freedom and democracy' (YCLSA, 2016:1).

3.1.6 Policies to Deal with Youth Unemployment

In the 2013/14 fiscal year, National Treasury's budget towards education spending was increased to 232.5 billion rand, with the aim of targeting and improving infrastructure and services that would alleviate the bottleneck in numeracy and literacy skills (Oosthuizen and Cassim, 2014: n.p). With that, came a number of skills and training programs and publicly funded technical and vocational education and training (TVET) or further education and training colleges (FET). These institutions to date, have been unable to keep up with the standards and expectations, from capacity to the varieties of training requirements so needed by the economy (Oosthuizen and Cassim, 2014: n.p).

The National Development Plan of 2012 identified TVET colleges as an important part of addressing skills shortages in the country. It expressed the goal of training more than 30,000 artisans per year in 2020 to improve the economy. Certainly the country needs skilled mechanics, electricians, carpenters and welders, to cite some examples. However it

has been claimed that “the current architecture of the TVET system poses a confusing mix of overlapping and competing programmes and qualifications and inadequately defined programmes.” Also that “current TVET programmes are insufficiently responsive to current labour markets” and that “workplace learning should be compulsory for vocational programmes”. Another recommendation is to strengthen the professional preparation of the lecturers with attention to balance between pedagogic skills and workplace experience” (Field, 2014).

Oosthuizen and Cassim (2014: n.p), provide a summary of a failing institutionalised intervention where:

> TVET institutions primarily provide vocational education programs, but these do not necessarily meet the skills, such as completing a school qualification or training in a particular non-vocational skill demanded by youth. TVET institutions are also not always easily accessible in terms of location or financing, as there seems to be less financial support than is available for tertiary education. Furthermore, partnerships between TVET institutions (and other educational institutions) and employers are weak, demonstrated by the falling number of apprenticeships, offered in recent years after graduation.

From the time the new democratic government took office in 1994, it embarked on strategic and large-scale initiatives intended to increase labour absorption capacity for young people, examples of such initiatives over time started with and included: Learnerships, The National Youth Service programme (NYS), Expanded Public Works Programme and Youth Advisory Centres (The Youth Development Network, 2004: n.p). Vital recommendations by The Youth Development Network (2004: n.p) show that lessons were learned from the above national government interventions, with the following factors derived or noted from the partnership(s) approach as well as coalitions to:

- Involve the community and its stakeholders;
- Tap into and make use of existing municipal provincial resources (asset-based approach);
- Involve young people in the planning and implementation phase of projects;
- Make sure suitable training and skills development (accreditation) happens;

- Ensure quality standards (quality assurance) are met through recognised process and institutions;
- Critical is to strive for a sustainable impact;

In an economy with structural unemployment and high numbers of youth in NEETs, it should serve as a cautionary measure that, skills training alone will not be an active substitute for a shortage of job opportunities, in the absence of identifying key and in demand skills. It is such reasons that should prompt significant government departments like the Department of Trade and Industry (Dti), Treasury, Economic Development and Social Development to organise meaningful programmes that would generate employment thus creating economic and social safety nets.

3.1.7 Reactions to Youth Employment

The South African government structure has three ranks starting at the top with National, followed by Provincial then Local. Of the three, local government is the least developed, from resources to capacity. Attention directed locally with new municipal demarcations happening in order to manage resources and capacity with “emphasis of local government as a key nodal point of service delivery. Despite this recent emphasis on local government, a youth policy framework does not exist at the local or municipal level. Given this lack of policy, municipal initiatives around youth employment have largely tended to be ad hoc, unstructured and short term” (The Youth Development Network, 2004: n.p).

Chapter 4

Molapo Campus in Soweto, a campus of the South West Gauteng College



Google pictures: 2018

The discussion of the Molapo Campus which is a campus of the South West Gauteng College, addressed the question whether the lack of skills is the reason that, so many young people are unemployed, or whether it is the structure of the labour market and the unavailability of jobs. This research report argues that the lack of skills is a misleading notion and the fundamental reason is structural and lies in the labour market. But, there is a general belief that the skills shortage is the cause and not the structure of the economy.

The Molapo campus, which prides itself as 'Education of Distinction' 'is located in Soweto, in a township called Molapo. Centrally positioned and with a capacity of taking on more students and offers more study options, which is why this campus out of the three Soweto based campus, Molapo was chosen as the research site as it provided better access and opportunity for more data. According to one source some 600,000 students in total have studied there. The academy caters for predominately black people, young and old and the young is between the ages of 16 and 35 and the old from 36 onwards. There is a gender

difference, seeing that there has been an interest in female applicants, breaking the stereotypes that vocational subjects are male inclined. Interested people, are often directed to the Molapo Campus by the locals, word of mouth and currently Student Representatives Council (SRC) led by the South African Students Congress (SASCO), social media, and other Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centres. Normal application processes apply, including online registration, where students complete application forms and provide certified copies of school results. Students are offered a space on the basis of a successful grade 9 or higher, such as grade 10, 11 and 12. An NQF Level 1 Qualification, ABET Level 4 and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessment to meet the basic requirement for access to NQF Level 2. Applicants must be able to read and write and interested in working in the industry.

According to the South West Gauteng Technical and Vocational Education and Training College Prospectus 2018/2019, 'The Vocational programmes are of high skills, high quality and high knowledge programmes introduced at the college. They are intended to directly respond to the priority skills demands of the modern economy.' The first cohort of NC (V) graduates successfully completed in 2009. However students at TVET colleges complain about outdated equipment, unskilled lecturers and having to wait for years after completing their studies for their certificates.

The (FET) TVET colleges have been offering the new three year TVET curriculum since 2017, awarding the National Certificate (Vocational) [NC (V)] to students. This qualification is expected to open doors for successful students, since their education has a vocational incline, the students completing the NC (V) Level 4 qualification are able to enter the job market.

The Level 4 NC (V) affords graduates an opportunity to proceed to further Higher Education to continue with post-NQF Level 4 education at universities or universities of Technology, subject to results obtained in Level 4. Benefits for those deciding on this path, include 'a very strong technical foundation, which they have obtained from their three years at the College' (South West Gauteng Technical and Vocational Education and Training College website Prospectus 2018/2019).

The Molapo Campus is located in Soweto a township that came to be, as a result of 'black' Africans "drawn to work in the gold mines that sprang up after 1886. The increasing eviction

of black Africans, following a reported outbreak of bubonic plague led to the formation of Soweto. **So**uth **We**st **To**wnships of Johannesburg were formed, starting with Pimville in 1934 which was part of Klipspruit and then Orlando in 1935…in 1954 Tladi, Zondi, Dhlamini, Chiawela, Senaoane and Molapo were formed" (Show me Soweto website: History of Soweto2008/9).



Source: Google Maps (2018).

Soweto lies to the south and west of major economic activity areas in the Gauteng Province, with a significant growth trend occurring mainly in the north. "From a statistical point of view, the population of Soweto is estimated to be about 1 250 310 people and takes up a land area of about 153 square kilometres. This makes Soweto an important region within the City since it comprises more than 40% of the entire City population. In simple terms, Soweto is the most populous urban residential area in the country" (City of Joburg, 2013: 9).

Although Soweto is considered the largest urban residential area in the country, its contribution to Johannesburg's gross domestic product (GDP) is very small, due to little economic activity. It is estimated that the gross value added (GVA), which measures the value of goods produced in an area, industry, or sector of an economy stands at R6.4 billion of the region which is about 4% of the city's total economic activity. Such results are attributed to the historical and political factors within which the country was immersed in

over time (City of Joburg, 2013: 9-10). Development in Soweto is noticeable and so is the population, rising numbers of young people, skills gap and limited employment opportunities existing within this space, where 'real' jobs are still believed to be outside of Soweto. Inequalities, poverty, race, class and gender patterns are rapidly reproduced as the majority of unemployed young people are black with significant gender differences. Since 1994, poverty levels in have not been greatly reduced.

Currently "Soweto is a symbol of the New South Africa, caught between old squatter misery and new prosperity, squalor and an upbeat lifestyle, it's a vibrant city which still openly bears the scars of the Apartheid past and yet shows what's possible in the New South Africa"(Soweto tour). In this context "education and training must address the enormous developmental challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment. The call for a developmental state in South Africa requires the development of the necessary skills and capabilities for this to be possible" (The Draft National Policy on Community Colleges: Draft for Comment, 2014, 3).

Molapo College specialises in three year courses in civil engineering and building construction. According to the SWGC website, Molapo Campus is a subsidiary of the South West Gauteng College (SWGC), a public TVET, formerly a FET college, operating under the umbrella of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in terms of the Continuing Education Act (Act No.16 of 2006), as amended. Campuses are spread across Gauteng: Soweto with 3, Roodepoort 2 and Randburg 1, including the "LAND IS WEALTH FARM" in Sterkfontein. The College is popular for its training and practical skills offering, is claimed to be a win for communities and beyond. Accredited by Umalusi Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training and several Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA's) to offer education and training, mostly in the FET band (NQF Level 2 to 4), meaning matric equivalent qualifications. Further study programmes are offered in the Higher Education band such as the N4 to N6 levels which are equivalent to a diploma. Molapo Campus is also the head office of the SWGC (http://www.swgc.co.za/college-profile/: 2018).

4.1 Research Findings

This chapter details the research findings including student's educational background, employment histories, the social networks in which they are located, their aspirations and

attitudes towards vocational training and work. Some of the names are kept and the rest of the names of those who asked to remain anonymous, are replaced with pseudo names*.

4.2. The sample Features

I was only able to interview 10 graduates and 3 Student Representatives Council (SRC) representatives for 2017/2018 from the Molapo College. All studied through the NSFAS funding with many having achieved NC (V) Level 4 qualification, equivalent to a certificate and with that, they can choose to proceed with studies or go seek work. The majority of the informants, 90% after failing to secure a job, have applied again for NSFAS funding to study towards a diploma.

I used a semi-structured interview schedule that directed the questions and engaged in further insights from participant observation at the Molapo College. All the 10 and 3 SRC Graduates freely agreed to an audio recording. The graduates are all from Soweto and there was a class and gender mix with varying age groups, still within the youth bracket.

Gender:

Males: 4	Females:6

While the majority of the interviewed were female at 60% and males at 40% the stereotypes of Vocational subjects and skills being mainly masculine and therefore would attract males, was dispelled by the number reflective of the growing interest of young females applying and studying in a so called technical course. One of the SRC representative, a male at the college shared:

> *"More females are registering, and due to socio-economic reasons both male and females drop out, and those that do stay and graduate are proof that roles are changing and that helps in changing the public perception around technical colleges."(Interview, Martin Somo 6th February 2018).*

The ages of the graduates in the sample ranged between 23 and 26. In percentage, the largest age-group is 24 year old's at 50%, then 25 and 26 year old's both at 20%, less was 23 year old's at 10%. Such age groups, are typically a working age, which could mean there was a delay in making a move from high school to college or the 3 year certificate could have taken longer than the 3 years.

Ages:

Males:	Females:
24	24
26	24
23	24
24	25
	25
	26

The highest passed grade and in majority were grade 11, followed by grade 12 and the least was grade 10.

Grades:

Highest passed grade 10:	2
Highest passed grade 11:	5
Highest passed grade 12:	3

In the entire 10, only one 1 did maths literacy and the rest of the 9 did the higher level of pure maths. Three informants where 1 is female and 2 males chose and took technical subjects more inclined to engineering, 2 both being males did subjects that did not feature any engineering or technical subjects and only 5 who had science. Therefore, out of the 10 graduates, 30% did technical subjects, the rest did non-technical subjects such as geography and biology at high school level. Banele a female graduate who had physics and pure maths in grade 12 and no further technical subjects enrolled for civil engineering and building construction NC(V) in 2014, freely expressed that:

"I chose the Molapo College, because of the opportunity to study further and that meant a NSFAS funding in the school of engineering, and I took it' (Interview, Banele Mbhele 8th March 2018).

4.4 The Molapo College

Most of the informants attended the college because their schooling results meant they did not qualify for university entry. The analysis of their high school subjects led to feedback, on why they chose the college, 80% were drawn to the college because of the course offering, the skills and proximity. Further attraction was the NSFAS funding that also covered books, transport or accommodation for those living further away from Molapo. Most of them felt the college was a last resort. An informant who is privy to the statistics, shared figures of drop-out rates from 2012-2014, a rate, that could suggest a lot of reasons ranging from personal to socio-economic. The following table shows the extent of drop-outs from 2012-2014:

2012:	**2013:**	**2014:**
70%	60%	60%
60%		60%
		50%
		60%
		70%
		75%

Different respondents provided varying estimates of the dropout for three years and also their reasons for not dropping-out:

"After one semester I realised this is not for me. There is a mismatch between the course offering and prospective jobs or career paths, so I changed courses."

"I was interested in carpentry but ended up in a building and construction trade course, because the carpentry course was full."

"I wanted to study music but had to go into an engineering course."

"Three years was just too long too study, and there was pressure to earn money."

Two of the graduates reported that they left the college after falling pregnant in their first year and returned to complete their studies and graduated.

4.5 Employment histories

The informants said they had been looking for jobs, and had applied in various industries, after failing to secure employment aligned to their NC (V) certificate. The majority at 70% are currently unemployed, even though the college claimed it would link graduates up with potential employers. Potential employers included youth Non-profit-organisations (NPOs) such as the National Youth Services (NYS), the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and Harambee known for youth employment acceleration.

All of those who have applied for jobs have not had any feedback from potential employers since submitting CV's. CVs were considered an important part of skills development and the College through the Life Orientation (L.O) and English classes facilitate the drafting of CV's and usage of computer programs such as office and outlook. The 30% of the graduates who have managed to obtain employment are working in industries unrelated to their qualification. One informant confidently responded that he had started on a Learnership in Human Resource (HR) which is a year-long course. Another graduate had a contract which ended in February 2018, where he worked at a cellphone shop. The last graduate is employed at a betting hop, tasked with taking and capturing bets, not related to his qualification and got the job by personally applying directly and did not need to have any experience or background in the betting space.

> *"I don't want to have a qualification and be home, so I will keep applying until I get something, anything to keep me busy will do, I mean I even went to an interview where I will be teaching English to foreigners on line" (Interview, Lerato* 4th March 2018).*

4.6 The social networks in which they are located

All the informants reported having strong social networks which provided support and information. They all hoped that these networks of social relations would provide assistance in getting jobs. Members of these social networks ranged from family to friends, lecturers and neighbors'. Each carried its own value and meaning in the lives of the participants.

None of the informants seemed to be socially isolated or despondent about the future. Even though many have not succeeded in getting jobs in the field of study through networks or the college, the idea of having networks that may share information keeps them hopeful for the future and future jobs. The majority 90% have decided to return to the college to study further towards a diploma (N6). The major attraction is that there is further funding through the NSFAS.

One graduate has already enrolled,

> *"If I had other options to study further, I would choose to go for a diploma, in fact I am already enrolled. The diploma will boost the qualification, since level 4 is not taken seriously, and I realized this after graduation, because I thought I would get a job with my certificate but have not" (Interview, Akhona Mathuntuta 5th March 2018).*

4.7 aspirations and attitudes towards vocational training and work

The participants' aspirations and attitudes has included obstacles they experienced in getting their qualification at Molapo, an Education and Training College focused on Vocational Subjects. Both genders had different experiences of working on sites such as building and construction, as well as road construction projects. Some females who had the opportunity to be on site, expressed disappointment in how they were treated, as they were not allowed to carry heavy material, and most of the time, told to stand on the side-lines. For males who had an opportunity to be on site, they too were often told to remain on the sides as they did not possess enough skill or knowledge, creating doubt about the value of the certificate.

Many informants felt vocational education and training was a great opportunity with lots of work or job prospects. They felt that they gained valuable skills that they could practically apply. Some cited examples of personal stories where graduates even tried to open businesses in communities using their skills, after identifying the need to apply what they knew in making lives of others better and making money from it as well. However, this positive outlook is not equal to the reality that graduates struggle to enter the labour market, because they lack the required qualifications and or skills demanded by the labour market. Clearly Molapo College is striving to equip their graduates with what the labour market required, while the labour market is unable to absorb graduates.

Chapter 5:

Conclusion

The economic crisis and the problem of youth unemployment has worsened since the completion of this research report. There is widespread concern with job losses and the unemployment of young people specifically. The 2018 Presidential Job Summit reported that all 4 social partners had agreed to address the economic crisis and create 275,000 jobs a year. There is scepticism about this figure. The reality is that the South African economy is contracting, shedding jobs and the jobs crisis represents a major political challenge. Furthermore political instability and levels of discontent about the distribution of power and opportunity is increasing, particularly among young people. Meth writes, “if this regime continues to lock out the youth it will only fuel more of the energetic protest we have seen in recent times by the country’s burgeoning young population”. (Oliver Meth writing in *The Daily Maverick)*. The crisis is both economic and social.

The millions of young black people who are not in employment or in education or training constitutes a social crisis. Almost 55% of our population is made up of young people, and addressing their needs should be a priority. Extremely high levels of unemployment (said by some to be the worse in the world) are frequently attributed to our poor educational system and to the weakness of our skills development system. The many institutions established and training authorities (SETAs) as well as the National Skills Fund (NSF) are failing dismally. The case of the Molapo graduates illustrates this pattern of failure. But this report argues that the cause of youth unemployment, and accompanying alienation and discontent, lies deep in the structure of the economy and the continuation of racialized inequality in the society.

This failure needs to be contextualised in continuing levels of poverty (65% of the population) and inequality. The solution to the youth unemployment crisis involves massive transformative change towards both job creation, quality public education and the redistribution of power and resources to create both a just and sustainable society.

Progress has been made since 1994. Existing research has shown progression in the enrolment and participation since 1994 especially amongst black Africans. Yet, inequalities between the different population groups remains huge. There has been a decline in the transition from Grade 12 to tertiary education in recent years for both black Africans and coloureds. The Transition from Grade 3 to Grade 9 for black Africans continues to be below that of the other population groups (Statistics South Africa, 2016).The governing party has increased primary and secondary school attendance rates, providing free school meals, low cost housing and social grants. But more needs to be done.

There is sense in which blaming the young people for personal qualities such as 'laziness' or 'a lack of responsibility' is blaming the victim. Government needs to priorities youth unemployment. In addition employers need to be more explicit and forceful about their needs; links between employers and educators should be strengthened and public education improved in qualitative terms.

There are no certain prospects that our high unemployment rate and youth bulge will drop in the near future. In the case of Soweto, the problematized relation between youth unemployment and skills development, education and training colleges such as the Molapo Campus, focused on vocational subjects, strives to be the solution. The key finding of this research report is that youth unemployment must be related to economic and social factors, particularly the structure of the labour market, forms of racialized and gendered inequality and poverty levels in South Africa. The numbers of millions of young, black people unable to find decent productive employment is the most telling symbol of the failure of the post-apartheid government. The issues of economic and job creation are highly contested and controversial, but there is a general view that the solution lies in a simple relation between skills development and young people.t In challenging this and problematizing the relation between skills and unemployment this report has contributed to a crucial debate.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethical clearance certificate

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Mpoza

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H15/11/18**
PROJECT TITLE	Problematizing the relation between youth unemployment and skills development: A case study of a training centre focused on construction and plumbing in Soweto
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Ms P Mpoza
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Sociology/
DATE CONSIDERED	20 November 2015
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
EXPIRY DATE	04 February 2019

DATE 05 February 2016 **CHAIRPERSON** J. Knight

(Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Professor J Cock

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10005, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

_____ _____/_____/_____

Signature **Date**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix B: Participant information letter for an interview



University of the Witwatersrand

Johannesburg Private Bag 3, Wits 2050

Participant Information Sheet for Face to Face Interviews

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am Petunia Mpoza, a Masters student enrolled for the Labour Policy and Globalization at the University of Witwatersrand. As part of my degree, I am conducting research around young people, unemployment and skills development. I am interested in the relation between youth unemployment and skills development and training centres in Soweto.

I request you, to take part in a face to face interview and answering questions about your employment history, educational background, the social networks in which you are found, your goals and attitudes towards vocational training and employment.

Your participation is voluntary, which means there are no rewards for participation, and if you choose to not continue during the process for any reason given at the time, you may.

The discussions will be recorded and later typed. In writing up this information, I will use made-up names to protect your identity, your responses shall be kept safe.

I wish to thank you for agreeing to participate and be a part of my research. In confirming your participation, please sign the attached form.

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact me on: petunia.mpoza@gmail.com and 0822965826. My Supervisor, Professor Jacklyn Cock at the Sociology Department, University of Witwatersrand: Jacklyn.cock@wits.ac.za and 0832665832

Kind Regards,

Petunia Mpoza

1



University of the Witwatersrand

Johannesburg Private Bag 3, Wits 2050

Participation Consent Form for Individual Interviews

Research Title: ***Problematizing the relation between youth unemployment and skills development: a case study of an Education and Training College focused on Vocational Subjects in Molapo Soweto.***

I..... ..... hereby agree to participate in the above mentioned research project and agree to be recorded (video, audio and photography).

I have been informed and clearly understand the research and my participation in the interview. I understand the purpose of this research and processes have been described to me.

It has been explained to me, that I am to free stop the interview at any time and for any reason. I have been made aware that my participation in this interview is voluntary. I shall not expect any rewards for my participation.

I agree that the interview may be recorded (video, audio and photography) and typed out and that the information gathered in this study is treated as confidential, respecting and protecting my identity.

I know that the findings of the study are strictly for academic purposes and will be kept safe.

I am allowed to ask any questions and are welcome to contact the student researcher or her supervisor.

I have been offered a copy of this consent form that I may keep for my own reference.

I agree to participate in this study.

Participants signature: .....

Interviewers signature: .....

Date:.....signed at:.....

Appendix C: semi-structured interview schedule

Title: Problematizing the relation between youth unemployment and skills development: a case study of an Education and Training College focused on Vocational Subjects in Molapo Soweto.

1. Are you Male or Female?
2. How old are you?
3. What is your highest passed grade (High school)?
4. What subjects did you take?
5. Are you from Soweto, if not from where?
6. How did you hear about the College?
7. Why did you choose Molapo College?

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8. When did you enrol and in which course?

9. How long did the course last and what subjects did it cover?

10. Are you employed at present?

11. If so, where are you employed?

12. How long have you worked there?

13. What does your daily job entail?

14. Is this the job that you studied at the Molapo College for?

15. How did you get this job?

16. Are you unemployed at present?

17. Have you tried to find employment? For example:

18. How long have you been unemployed?

19. If you had other options to study further what would you choose?

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20. How many were you in the class and what year?

21. How many from your group, successfully graduated and are also employed?

22. How many dropped out during your studies?

23. Did you gain valuable skills?

24. Such as?

25. Did the courses or the College assist you in getting a job?

26. Why do you think so many young black people are unemployed in South Africa today?

27. What should be done to address this problem?

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