

Contributions of the Non-profit Sector to the Creation of Dignified and Fulfilling Work for Young People in Ghana



Sylvester Senyo Horvey

Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment, Wits Business School, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa







In partnership with



ABSTRACT

Non-profit organisations (NPOs) have become essential change agents in a world where youth unemployment is on the rise and meaningful and sustainable employment is desperately needed, particularly in Ghana, where youth unemployment remains one of the highest in Africa. As a result, the purpose of this literature review is to provide insights into the role of NPOs in creating dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth in Ghana. To achieve this, a thorough analysis of the literature was conducted to identify the contributions of the non-profit sector in creating jobs for the youth. The search period spans from 1992 to 2023. Additionally, content analysis of international organisations, NPOs, and government reports were examined to provide further insight into the role of NPOs in job creation for the youth. In so doing, the review identifies the gaps in existing literature, which provides a basis for future research.

The literature suggests that NPOs have played a major role in empowering youth in Ghana through entrepreneurial, vocational, educational, agricultural and skill-development initiatives. These programmes provide job opportunities for the youth and also give them the skills and information needed to acquire dignified and fulfilling jobs. In addition, NPOs in Ghana collaborate with international development partners, local philanthropies, and government agencies to secure funding and support to implement youth-focused employment programmes. Despite these efforts, the review of existing literature shows that the impact of NPOs in creating dignified jobs for the youth has yet to be substantially recognised.

This literature review provides insights into pockets of opportunities for the non-profit sector to create dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth in Ghana. Also, it identifies emerging knowledge gaps in the literature that should be the focus of future research.

Keywords: Non-profit organisations, youth employment, dignified and fulfilling jobs, Ghana

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DISCLAIMER

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Contents

	ABSTRACT	2
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
	LIST OF TABLES	5
	LIST OF FIGURES	5
	LIST OF ACRONYMS	6
1	INTRODUCTION	7
2	METHODOLOGY	11
3	BRIEF OVERVIEW OF GHANA'S SOCIOECONOMIC LANDSCAPE	13
4	CONTRIBUTION OF NON-PROFIT SECTOR TO YOUTH EMPLOYMENT	17
5	CHALLENGES FACED BY NON-PROFIT SECTOR	33
6	FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS	36
7	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	39
	REFERENCES	41

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1:	Population employment per sector (age 15 to 64 years)						
TABLE 2:	Youth employment per sector (age 15 to 35 years)	20					

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: Unemployment in Ghana	14
FIGURE 2: Tertiary graduates in Ghana	15
FIGURE 3: Labour force participation rate	16
FIGURE 4: Registered NPOs in Ghana	19
FIGURE 5: Distribution of employment by the top three sectors	28

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AfDB	African Development Bank
CAMFED	Campaign for Female Education
CBOs	Community-Based Organisations
CORDAID	Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development Aid
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DFID	Department of International Development
GEEDA	Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency
GLSS	Ghana Living Standards Survey
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPOs	Non-profit Organisations
NSS	National Service Scheme
PASEWAY	Pathway for Sustainable Employment for Women and Youth in Ghana
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMMEs	Small-, Medium-, and Micro-Enterprises
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WACSI	West African Civil Society Institute
WDI	World Development Indicator
WVG	World Vision Ghana
YIEDIE	Youth Inclusive Entrepreneurial Development Initiative for Employment

INTRODUCTION

outh employment is a critical component for the development of Ghana, including achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The need to provide young people with opportunities for dignified and fulfilling jobs is growing in importance as the world's economy, especially in Africa that is experiencing a youth bulge. As a result, SDG 8 underscores the importance of bolstering youth employment, ensuring equal opportunities, promoting entrepreneurship, and creating dignified and fulfilling jobs.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), a decent job is productive labour performed by men and women in an environment of equality, freedom, security, and human dignity (ILO, 2008). Decent jobs include opportunities for both professional and personal growth, fair compensation, and a sense of purpose. These jobs provide opportunities for skill development, safe working conditions, and fair compensation, all of which complement an individual's values and ambitions. This definition is built on four main pillars: job creation (which refers to the quality and decency of employment and whether such employment is able to uplift workers out of poverty), social protection (which refers to the protection of workers in the informal and formal economy against unfair, hazardous, and unhealthy working conditions, sickness, unemployment, invalidity, loss of a provider or old age and provision of maternity benefits), rights at work (which refers to the fundamental, universal and indivisible rights) and social dialogue (which refers to any joint and collaborative relationships that include negotiations, consultations and exchanges of information between representatives of government, employers and workers on issues of common interests relating to economic and social policy). The definition resonates with the creation of a dignified and fulfilling job defined to be safe (employees can perform their task without fear of injury or exploitation), stable (employees receive fair, steady and predictable pay for work), inclusive (work is available to all employees from all walks of life), and

rewarding (employees have access to skills training and opportunities for growth) (Upaya Social Ventures, n.d.). This is rooted in the common goal of offering job possibilities that enhance a person's well-being while guaranteeing equity, development, and a sense of direction in the workplace. Achieving this goal requires the active involvement of the youth, who constitute the highest percentage of the workforce in most economies.

The African Union defines youth as individuals between the ages of 15 and 35 years (African Union, 2006). Young Africans are predicted to comprise 75 per cent of the continent's population under 35, and 42 per cent of the world's youth by 2030 (African Union, 2019). This describes the continent's growth potential and has significant social

Dignified and fulfilling jobs provide opportunities for skill development, safe working conditions, and fair compensation, all of which complement an individual's values and ambitions.

and economic development implications. Despite the growth potential, youth unemployment has emerged as a critical issue on the continent, which is described as the youngest continent in the world (Avura & Ulzen-Appiah, 2016). Hence, effective programmes on inclusive youth development and promoting dignified and fulfilling jobs are essential, and are programmatic areas for institutions like the Mastercard Foundation, governments, and scholars interested in Africa's development.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) in 2016 indicated that most African youths lack access to steady employment prospects. Of the approximately 420 million young people in Africa who are between the ages of 15 and 35 years, one-third are jobless and discouraged, another third work in vulnerable jobs, and just one in six are employed for wages. Again, the unemployment rate for youth is around twice that of adults; however, it varies significantly by nation (AfDB, 2016). As a result, the phrase 'youth unemployment crisis' has become topical in African public and policy discourses.

Given the potential of the social, economic, and political effects of y outh u nemployment on the continent, governments, the private sector, NPOs, and international development agencies are given greater attention to address the problem of unemployment among African youth. Towards this end, the concept of investing in youth is receiving greater attention, which has resulted in an increase of youth-focused interventions (Sumberg, Fox, Flynn, Mader, & Oosterom, 2021). However, these interventions can only have meaningful and sustainable impacts if the youth are given the necessary support. Hence, increased investment in education and creating conditions for them to transit to dignified and fulfilling jobs are essential. Some of the initiatives towards youth employment in Africa include rural enterprise support programmes, youth establishment of empowerment centres, public-private partnerships, and agricultural diversification support programs, among others (Boadu & Fatunbi, 2020).

The persistent youth unemployment calls for a diversified strategy that blends public programmes with those of NPOs. In fact, partnerships between these parties, as well as the private sector, are required to stem the tide of rising youth unemployment. While African governments have taken several measures to encourage job creation and reduce the level of youth unemployment, the involvement of NPOs remains critical in this situation. NPOs exist primarily to advance certain causes or promote public good or community rather than making a profit (Guo & Saxton, 2020). They generally depend on contributions, grants, and other financial aid from private individuals, foundations, and governmental agencies to advance their causes (Norris-Tirrell, 2014). They play a crucial role in youth employment. Some scholars have argued that NPOs are more effective than governments due to their proximity and understanding of the local communities (Kluve et al., 2019). For this reason, NPO services are needed, particularly in creating dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth in developing countries like Ghana.

In Ghana, youth unemployment has become a significant socioeconomic problem in recent times. This negatively influences social stability, economic development, and individual well-being. For a youth to be considered unemployed, according to the ILO, three requirements have to be met. First, that the youth is not employed in a given week. Second, the youth is available for work but is unable to secure one within two weeks. Third, they have been actively seeking a job in the last four weeks or less than three months, but are unable to secure employment (Benanav, 2019).

Youth underemployment refers to their underutilisation of potential for productivity, particularly that which results from an inadequate local or national economic system (Greenwood, 1999). In sub-Saharan Africa unemployment is about 12 per cent which is higher than the average unemployment rate in the region (Dadzie, Fumey, & Namara, 2020). This fact points to the fact that unemployment mostly affects the youth on the continent.

In Ghana, there are fewer jobs to meet the needs of the labour force. This is coupled with the fact that available jobs are of poor quality. These factors highlight the crises of unemployment and underemployment in the country. To address these problems requires increased investment in high value added economic activities. To achieve this, which will create dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth, requires the government to create an environment conducive to investment by both local and international investors. Some scholars have consequently argued the focus of the government should be to create dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth (Honorati & De Silva, 2016).

Given these challenges, there is growing interest among NPOs to contribute to the creation of dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth in the country, which will complement those of the government and the private sector (Dadzie et al., 2020). NPOs in Ghana present several opportunities for the youth due to their contribution to training, skills development, and the creation of dignified and fulfilling jobs. In spite of these, there is currently a dearth of research on their effectiveness in creating dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth. This literature reviews attempts to fill this gap.



The literature has considered several themes on NPOs in the last decades. For instance, studies such as Kaplan (2001) and Weerawardena, McDonald, & Mort (2010) enrich the understanding of the sustainability and performance of NPOs. Other scholars offer insight into the challenges and opportunities affecting NPOs (Choi & Yang, 2011; Johnson, Rauhaus, & Webb-Farley, 2021), managing stakeholder relationships in NPOs (Mato-Santiso, Rey-García, & Sanzo-Pérez, 2021), and the evaluation and practices of NPOs (Liket & Maas, 2015; Mitchell & Berlan, 2018). Some recent studies addressed the governance of NPOs (Blevins, Ragozzino, & Eckardt, 2022; Yoon, 2022), while other scholars have investigated the role of NGOs in poverty reduction (Fuseini, Sulemana, Abdulai, Ibrahim, & Azure, 2022), the determinants of their sustainability, including financial sustainability (Ebenezer, Musah, & Ahmed, 2020; Okorley & Nkrumah, 2012). In a similar vein Kumi (2017; 2019) has studied the role and response of NPOs to changing aid landscape in the country, and their orientation and performance (Abdulai Mahmoud & Yusif, 2012; Baba, 2015). Ahmed, Bahoo, & Ayub, (2019) focused on both the role of NPOs in promoting democracy in the country, as well as their accountability and governance structures. Despite this rich literature of NPOs in Ghana, as noted earlier, there is dearth of studies on their role in creating dignified and fulfilling jobs.

Cognisant of this, in recent years, some scholars have become increasingly interested in the role of NPOs in creating dignified jobs for the youth. It is argued in this paper that this interest can be attributed to a number of factors, namely whether or not the employment provided by NPOs for their staff can be classified as dignified and fulfilling jobs, and the role of these organisations in creating such jobs in the country.

Few studies examined the influence of the non-profit sector in employment creation (Becker, Antuar, & Everett, 2011; Friesenhahn, 2016; Kang, Huh, Cho, & Auh, 2015). The literature shows that the sector can play a significant role in job creation, especially through social and community services (Perotin, 2001). However, what is lacking is research that explicitly addresses the contribution of the non-profit sector in creating dignified and fulfilling jobs.

Though NPOs are acknowledged as being significant contributors in many areas of development, such as social and skills development, gender equity and healthcare (Kwao & Amoak, 2022; Lewis, Kanji, & Themudo, 2020), there is a knowledge gap regarding their particular strategies, challenges, and economic impacts on youth employment, particularly in developing countries like Ghana, which has a serious unemployment issue and young people are the most impacted (Avura & Ulzen-Appiah, 2016). Therefore, there is a strong need for a thorough literature review to synthesise the body of research, point out knowledge gaps, and offer insights into the potential benefits and constraints of NPOs in providing young people in Ghana with dignified and fulfilling jobs. In light of this, the review reviews the extant literature to understand and synthesise the role of NPOs towards youth employment in Ghana. This review is based on analysis of reports of government, international organisations, NPOs and research institutes, and scholarly work.

This review seeks to address the following questions:

- 1. What is the economic contribution of the non-profit sector to youth employment?
- 2. What is the economic contribution of the non-profit sector to creating dignified and fulfilling work for young people?
- 3. Within the non-profit sector, what are the sub-sectoral contributions to dignified and fulfilling work for various categories of young people?
- 4. What are the emerging knowledge gaps within the non-profit sector and its sub-sectors?
- 5. What is the state and nature of youth employment and/or youth engagement as work in these sub-sectors?
- 6. What are the possibilities and opportunities for increased employment in the sector?

In answering these questions, this review will make several contributions to knowledge of the subject matter that would be both scholarly and relevant to policy. First, it will provide an in-depth understanding of the critical role of NPOs in the creation of youth employment in Ghana. Second, the review will contribute to the existing body of knowledge and identify gaps that will serve as a basis for future research. Third, the review will provide practitioners, regulators, and policymakers with a better understanding. This will serve as a basis for evidence-based public policy. Fourth, this review will contribute to the global literature on the role of NPOs in creating dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth. Lastly, the review's findings might lead to more financing and better-coordinated efforts to provide meaningful employment opportunities for young people worldwide.

This literature review is structured as follows: The methodology adopted in this review is covered in section two, while the third section provides an overview of the socioeconomic landscape. Section four details the economic contribution of the non-profit sector, while the fifth section presents challenges faced by NPOs. Future research directions are suggested in section six, and the final section offers conclusions and recommendations.



10



02 METHODOLOGY

his review of the literature examines the performance and impact of the non-profit sector on youth employment in Ghana. Kitchenham (2004, p. 5) defined a systematic review as a "means of evaluating and interpreting all available research relevant to a particular research question, topic area, or phenomenon of interest". The literature review aims to determine any gaps in the existing body of knowledge by analysing what is known and what is unknown. The review appraises information on the nature of NPOs, their activities, and their role in creating dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth. The first step was to conduct a comprehensive literature search from scholarly journals for relevant peer-reviewed papers. The following databases were used: Google Scholar, Web of Science, and Scopus. These are the top three academic search engines and are well known for the wide coverage of scholarly articles (Jacso, 2015). To aid in identifying relevant studies, the paper introduces keyword searches, such as 'non-profit organisations', 'non-governmental organisations', and 'civil society organisations'. This is because these words are often used synonymously in the literature. Other keywords searched include 'youth employment' and 'Ghana'. This is to ensure the information retrieved is relevant for the review's context. The search period is 1992 to 2023. The baseline of this review was set in 1992 because Ghana's fourth republic and the 1992 constitution brought about many reforms which gave prominence to the non-profit sector, and created an environment conducive to their operation (Atingdui, Anheier, Sokolowski, & Laryea, 1998). More so, adequate information on NPOs in Ghana is lacking beyond the baseline period. The review was extended to 2023 to ensure that more recent studies are included in the review to highlight contemporary issues. The search generated a dataset of about 1 234 publications. This was reduced to 213 after reading the abstract and title to ensure it related to the review's purpose. Following this, the full manuscripts were carefully reviewed to ensure their relevance to the review, relating to the contribution of NPOs in creating dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth in Ghana. Several papers were discarded, which led to 48 manuscripts being used for the review.

Second, the review utilised databases of international, national, and local organisations and included policy and programme documents. The dataset of international organisations used include those of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), CIVICUS, Charity Aid Foundation, ILO, United Nations (UN), West African Civil Society Institute (WACSI), Plan International, World Bank, and the Lily Family School of Philanthropy and ActionAid. In Ghana, the review amassed information from the Department of Social Development, government reports, and websites of youth organisations that provide dignified jobs for the youth in Ghana. This approach broadens the scope of the review and provides a foundational insight into NPOs in Ghana and their recent developments, particularly towards youth employment. This is very important given that the literature on NPOs and job creation for the youth in Ghana is minimal in the scholarly articles. Therefore, major contributions of the review and enlightening review article.

The above process ensured that relevant papers and documents were then selected for analysis. Following this, a content and thematic analysis approach was adopted by synthesising and integrating insights from scholarly papers, government reports, and local and international organisations. The review sought to identify important developing issues to create a future research agenda.



O3 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF GHANA'S SOCIOECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

ccording to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, the population is 32 million. Out of this, 35 per cent are children (between ages of 0 and 14 years), and 38 per cent are young people or youth (between the ages of 15 and 35 years), according to the youth classification by the National Youth Authority Act No 939 of 2016 (Laws Ghana, n.d.). This indicates a very youthful population (GSS, 2023). This represents close to a 100 per cent increase in the youth population since 2000 (18.6 per cent). While this presents an opportunity for economic development, it also poses challenges, such as how to maximise the advantages that come with the youth bulge, including creating dignified and fulfilling jobs.

3.1 Youth population and employment

According to Sumbo (2021), unemployment in Ghana has become a significant issue, especially given the rising youth unemployment rate, including the educated and uneducated. According to the World Development Indicators (WDI), Ghana averaged a national unemployment rate of about 5.3 per cent between 2001 and 2022 (World Bank, 2023). According to the classification of youth in the National Youth Authority Act of 2016 (Laws Ghana, n.d.), Ghana had a less expansive age range of 15 to 25 years which it considers youth. Due to data availability issues, data for youth between 25 and 35 years could not be accessed, however, impressions from the pictorial analysis suggest that the number of unemployed youth is likely to increase when the age range is extended to people between 15 and 35 years. This is affirmed by Aryeetey, Baffour, and Turkson (2021), who estimated the youth (between 15 and 35 years) was 12.1 per cent in 2021. Even among those between the ages of 15 and 24 years, the youth unemployment rate is higher than the sub-Saharan African average of 10 per cent over the same period. This remains one of the highest in sub-Saharan Africa. Coupled with youth underemployment in Ghana, estimated at about 50 per cent (World Bank, 2020), the problem is that the Ghanaian economy is unable to absorb the 300 000 youth who enter the labour market each year (Dadzie et al., 2020).

Figure 1 shows that the unemployment rate in Ghana has been unstable over time, displaying high levels of volatility. It can also be seen that the unemployment rate among male youth is slightly higher than among females. This is unlike most African countries where the youth unemployment rate of females is higher than those of males. The high level of youth unemployment has significant social and economic implications on the economy. This calls for more strategic efforts to combat the issue of youth unemployment in Ghana.





Source: Adapted from World Bank (2023)

3.2 Education

Ghana has recorded significant achievements in the education sector, among others through adoption and implementation of "free senior high school education" in 2017. This has increased the country's literacy levels, boasting 93.24 per cent youth literacy in 2020 (UNESCO, 2020, p. 60). In terms of tertiary graduates, Figure 2 provides an overview of the number of graduates from public and private institutions from 2015 to 2021. It shows a significant number of graduate students over the period, with males being the dominant gender in tertiary education. With these notable advancements in educational support and tertiary graduates, there remains a significant disparity in educational quality and skills required by the labour market (Darko & Abrokwa, 2020). This raises the issue of the relevance of the education sector as it is unable to meet the needs of the labour market.



FIGURE 2: Tertiary graduates in Ghana

Source: Mohammed, Adom, Feehi, and Nkansah (2022, p. 18)



3.3 Labour Force

The labour force of the Ghanaian population averaged 71 per cent between 2001 and 2022 (Atitsogbui, Boakye-Yiadom, & Baffour, 2022). Concerning the youth (aged 15 to 24 years), reports from the World Bank (2023) show that about 46 per cent are in the labour force while the rest are not. Figure 3 provides a pictorial view of the trends in the labour force in Ghana. A disturbing trend is that in the face of increasing population there is a decline in labour force participation in the years. This also holds true for youth representation in the labour force, despite the population increase over the years. Again, this shows that most youth are struggling to find suitable jobs. As noted above, this highlights the imbalance between the skills of young job searchers and the skills required by employers. Scholars such as Avura and Ulzen-Appiah (2016) observed that the increasing youth unemployment is also attributable to a lack of prior job search experience to help with job acquisition through previous work experience, and challenges in learning more about available career possibilities.



FIGURE 3: Labour force participation rate

Source: Adapted from World Bank (2023)

04 CONTRIBUTION OF NON-PROFIT SECTOR TO YOUTH EMPLOYMENT he non-profit sector is a vibrant and major actor in the development of the country. These actors are also known as non-state organisations (Adjei, Annor-Frempong, & Bosompem, 2016). For the purposes of this paper, the term NPO will be used. NPOs are referred to as the "third sector" in Ghana's economy, since they are essential to the country's economic growth (Issa, 2005). According to the Ghana NPO secretariat, a NPO is a not-for-profit, non-governmental, legal person or association, or organisation voluntarily established, that primarily engages in mobilising and using resources for purposes such as charitable, religious, cultural, educational, social or communal purposes, or for carrying out other types of not for profit purposes and public good in the public interest (NPOs, n.d.).

In Ghana, the registered NPOs are categorised into community-based NPOs, national NPOs and international NPOs. These NPOs are further classified into faith-based (religious) organisations, civil society organisations (CSOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and philanthropic organisations, which engage in job creation and advocacy to combat poverty (Government of Ghana, 2020). This categorisation is conceptually flawed because NGOs are a sub-set of

CSOs.

The goal of CSOs in Ghana is to promote cooperative efforts, strategic alliances with stakeholders, and effective advocacy to realise their goals (USAID, 2022). Faith-based organisations are religious groups engaging in philanthropic activities due to their teachings and beliefs. These organisations include Christian Aid, Charitas Ghana, and Ghana Muslim Missions.

In Ghana, the nature and purpose of community-based organisations (CBOs) differ from NPOs. CBOs are a collection of enthusiasts who

NPOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) operate under the same guidelines and have the same goal: the welfare of the populace and society.

share a common objective in a particular field. These are membership organisations that are formed to pursue a common goal. Examples of CBOs are women's groups, credit unions, youth clubs, cooperatives, farmer associations, and community development associations. Nonetheless, NPOs and CBOs operate under the same guidelines and have the same goal: the welfare of the populace and society. Despite this segmentation, how their activities contribute to dignified job opportunities for the youth has yet to be established, and the exact number of jobs created by these sub-sectors is hard to quantify due to lack of data.

According to Okorley, Owusu, and Akuamoah-Boateng (2017), most NPOs in the country can work in any area of interest to them. They focus on education, agriculture, training, and development. A critical review of the literature show that they also focus on initiatives related to social and developmental challenges, defending citizens' rights, governance, poverty reduction, job creation, rural enterprise development for women, provision of access to healthcare (including HIV-AIDS intervention programmes), water and sanitation services provision (especially in underprivileged areas), and rural development (Fuseini et al., 2022; Kwao & Amoak, 2022). To further their cause, they could embark on public demonstrations. Ghana's constitution guarantees freedom of speech, and CSOs can participate in public discussions.



The precise number of NPOs is unknown, which according to Chanase (2021) is that most failed to register their organisations. However, the USAID report suggests that about 11 161 NPOs are registered with the NPO Secretariat in Ghana, of which 687 renewed their license or operating permit in December 2022 (USAID, 2023). This represents an exponential increase from 2009, when 4 463 NPOs were registered (USAID, 2010). The growing number of registered NPOs, as shown in Figure 4, points to several factors such as donor funds' availability, self-employment opportunities, personal benefits, and specific agendas (Yarrow, 2008; 2011). The growing number of NPOs further depicts an increasing commitment to tackling the nation's social and economic problems, including poverty, healthcare, education, and community development.



FIGURE 4: Registered NPOs in Ghana

Source: Adapted from USAID (2023)

NPOs were registered with the Department of Social Welfare, which in 2018 was renamed the Department of Social Development. In 2021 registration of NPOs was entrusted to the newly established NPO Secretariat (USAID, 2022). The establishment of the NPO Secretariat's creation in 2021 greatly facilitated the registration procedure. For example, NPOs can obtain registration forms on the secretariat's operational website, even though they cannot register online. Notwithstanding, many NPOs have failed to renew their operational license, which is a great challenge to the NPO Secretariat. This is because the decline is attributable to the initial rush for operating permits after the launch of the new NPO Policy in 2020. Since then, fewer organisations have renewed their operating permits (USAID, 2023). The NPO Secretariat generally acts as an intermediary between NPOs and the government and provides licenses to institutions to operate as NPOs. Permits for NPOs have to be renewed yearly. Registered NPOs are expected to submit records of their annual audits. About half of all NPOs in the country operate exclusively in northern Ghana, while two-thirds have some of their operations in the north (Kwao & Amoak, 2022).

A high percentage of NPOs in Ghana are donor funded from development agencies such as USAID, Danish International Development Agency, World Bank, United Nations (UN) Agencies, and German Agency for International Cooperation (USAID, 2022). Because of this dependence, most of the NPOs, especially those that are regionally based, operate on a project basis. As such, they close their operations upon completion of the funded projects, and in the absence of funds for new projects (Kwao & Amoak, 2022). The sector contributes significantly to the nation's development initiatives, which has increased NPOs influence and reach.

4.1 Creating Dignified and Fulfilling Jobs

Among the Ghanaian youth, the definition of a decent job, according to the ILO, resonates greatly. Youth in the country believe that a dignified and fulfilling job will provide a decent wage and better prospects for both social and economic advancement (Hassan, 2021). However, it is generally acknowledged that most jobs in the country, especially for the youth cannot be classified as dignified and fulfilling. In general, there is not only high unemployment in the country but the jobs in the labour market are undignified and unfulfilling. According to Hassan (2021), one reason for this is that most of the jobs are in the informal sector.

Formal jobs in the country include a contractual agreement between an individual and an incorporated company, while informal jobs are low-productive jobs and are often include self-employed jobs for individuals such as traders, artisans, farmers, food processors, and craft-workers and farmers (Osei-Boateng & Ampratwum, 2011). A report by the Ghana Statistical Service further explains informality as "persons who, in the reference period, were either employed in informal sector enterprises (informal sector employment) or employed in informal jobs (informal employment)" (GSS, 2019, p. 74). Baah-Boateng and Vanek (2020, p. 1) added that "informal employment is employment that is not covered, or is insufficiently covered, by formal arrangements through work – such as contributions to pensions and medical insurance or entitlement to paid sick leave or annual leave."

In Ghana, the level of informal jobs is very high. Baah-Boateng and Vanek (2020) indicated that more than 80 per cent of the labour force in Ghana has informal jobs, with the majority being women. About 92 per cent of the women employed belong to the informal sector, while 86 per cent of the men are engaged in the informal sector. Further evidence is provided by the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) report, presented in Table 1. It shows that the private sector (including formal and informal) is the largest employer in Ghana, representing about 56.3 per cent of employment according to the GLSS 7 report; of which the private informal sector (54.1 per cent) is the majority. The public sector contributed 6.8 per cent of jobs in Ghana, while NPOs contributed only 0.3 per cent of the total employment in Ghana, which suggests their minimal impact in creating formal jobs in Ghana (GSS, 2019, 2023).

Sector	GLSS 5 (2005/2006)	GLSS 6 (2012/2013)	GLSS 7 (2016/2017)
Public Sector	28.5%	5.9%	6.8%
Private (Formal)	18.9%	5.7%	2.2%
Private (Informal)	47.8%	41.9%	54.1%
NGOs	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%
Cooperatives	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%
International Organisations	0.9%	0.1%	0.1%
Agri-Business	2.4%	46.1%	35.8%
Others	0.8%	0.1%	0.0%

TABLE 1: Population employment per sector (age 15 to 64 years)

Source: Adapted from GSS (2014, 2019)

In terms of youth employment, the GLSS 7 report, as shown in Table 2, shows that 0.1 per cent of the youth (aged 15 to 35 years) employed were engaged by NGOs. The government sector engaged 6.9 per cent, while the private sector engaged 92.5 per cent of the youth. Some of the reasons for the large informal sector in Ghana are the economic conditions, lack of professional and specialised skills, and poverty (Aryeetey & Baah-Boateng, 2015).

Employment sector	15-24 years			25-35 years			15-35 years		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Government Sector	2.4	1.7	2.0	10.8	9.0	9.9	7.6	6.3	6.9
Parastatals	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	2.0	0.0	0.1
NGOs (Local & International)	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
Cooperatives	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2
International Organization/Diplomat	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
Private Sector	96.9	98.1	97.5	88.4	90.6	89.5	91.6	93.3	92.5
Other	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

TABLE 2: Youth employment per sector (age 15 to 35 years)

Source: GSS (2019, p. 100)

The inability of the economy to provide dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth in the country has pushed most of them into the informal sector. Considering the number of jobs offered by NPOs, there is a need for more effort to increase dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth in the private sector to aid in their transition from the informal to the formal sector. Besides the inability of the established private sector to create dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth, the lack of regulation in the informal sector reduces the number of dignified and fulfilling job opportunities (Hassan, 2021). As a result, it is suggested that policy interventions and regulations are made in the informal sector to increase dignified and fulfilling jobs. This will not address the fundamental problems of the dominance of the informal sector in the economy, resulting in undignified and unfulfilling jobs. To address this problem, a structural

transformation of the economy that will result in high-value-added activities through, among others, industrialisation and high-valueadded services is required. The fourth industrial revolution, coupled with the promotion of the manufacturing sector, as well as promotion of mechanised farming, offers Ghana, like the rest of the African continent, opportunities to create dignified and fulfilling jobs.

To aid the transition of the youth from informal to formal jobs, the NPOs in Ghana have implemented some measures, as discussed in the previous section. This includes education, entrepreneurship, vocational and technical training, among others. However, there is still insufficient data to determine the exact contribution of NPOs in facilitating the transition from informal to formal jobs, particularly for the disabled, prisoners, and rural segments. To address this challenge, Considering the number of jobs offered by NPOs, there is a need for more effort to increase dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth in the private sector to aid in their transition from the informal to the formal sector.

the Ghana Statistical Service needs to incorporate this information in its GLSS report. Also, the NPO Secretariat needs to engage with the various registered companies to highlight their specific contributions towards formalised jobs for the youth. This can be done by ensuring the provision of annual reports which highlight these areas. Research is also needed to provide in-depth information from individual NPOs. To address the contribution of the NPOs towards formalised jobs, NPOs must adopt strategies that address skill deficiencies, job opportunities, and entrepreneurship (Aryeetey & Baah-Boateng, 2015).

4.2 Youth Volunteerism

It is important to note that youth play an important role in creating NPOs in Ghana. The active participation of Ghana's youth, including tertiary students, greatly benefits the non-profit sector. One of the key contributions of the Ghanaian youth to the non-profit sector is volunteerism. This is essential given the inadequately trained health workers, teachers, and other skilled personnel, particularly in rural areas (Afari-Asiedu et al., 2018).



One of the largest issues facing NGOs in developing countries like Ghana has been their inability to raise enough money and employ sufficient personnel for effective operations. To manage projects and pay adequate wages, most NPOs source funding from development agencies; mostly international development partners (Okorley et al., 2017). To address inadequacies, NPOs are increasingly relying on volunteers to implement their programmes. A study by Compion et al. (2021) indicated that most youths in Ghana participate in one form of volunteering or the other. This is very important to the NPOs, due to staff retention issues. As a result, some NPOs sought out volunteers and interns to help with their staffing shortfall (WACSI, 2015). Also, due to financial resource constraints, NPOs use youth volunteers to offer services (Okorley et al., 2017). One of these is the Social Education Development Volunteer

Program, a non-profit organisation that engages the youth through volunteering to offer support to rural communities. Some of their volunteering activities include youth empowerment, education and skills training, orphanage work, community development, fundraising, healthcare, and health education among others (Ankomah. Fusheini, & Derrett, 2024; Biney, 2023; Compion et al., 2021).

Volunteering by youth in NPOs' activities is seen as beneficial as it provides them with career-related benefits such as on-the-job training, knowledge, experience, and networks necessary for dignified and fulfilling jobs in the future (Compion et al., 2021). Specifically, youth volunteering promotes leadership, skill development, community engagement, and entrepreneurial prospects for a better future. Volunteering gives individuals a competitive edge in the labour Volunteering gives individuals a competitive edge in the labour market because it improves their resumes and expands their networks, which raises the likelihood of finding a job (Okorley et al., 2017).

market because it improves their resumes and expands their networks, which raises the likelihood of finding a job (Okorley et al., 2017). Undergraduate university students are quite keen to volunteer for NPO work primarily because of their knowledge about people and their context, beliefs, and professional advancement. Students are more likely to participate in peer education, counselling, and environmental protection NPO activities than in relief, advocacy, and administrative work.

Other reasons, as suggested by Afari-Asiedu et al. (2018), include personal interests, allowance, non-monetary incentives such as T-shirts, food during training, recognition and selection for leadership positions. Other youths also see it as a call of duty and an opportunity to link their clinical and community learning experiences (Quarshie et al., 2018). As a result, organisations and NPOs are encouraged to leverage the significant contribution of volunteers to complement their efforts (Ankomah et al., 2024). In light of these, some scholars call on universities in the country to incorporate volunteering into their curriculum (Okorley et al., 2017).

Despite these roles, there is a need for in-depth case study research to examine other significant roles played by the youth in the non-profit sector. This will improve the understanding of the specific roles of the youth in creating NPOs in Ghana. Also, a cross-sectional survey, including descriptive analysis, would be needed to examine the motivation of the youth in volunteering and the impact of obtaining dignified and fulfilling jobs on their lives. In addition, scholars can employ qualitative data to explore how NPO programmes have benefited the youth in shaping their careers, employment status, and job satisfaction. There is also a need for a comparative analysis to explore the employment outcomes of young people who have been involved in NPO programmes with those who have not. What is the economic contribution of the non-profit sector to dignified and fulfilling work for young people in Ghana?



4.3 Interventions by NPOs

In spite of the challenges facing the non-profit sector, it contributes significantly to youth employment through activities such as skills training, promotion of entrepreneurship, job placement services, and advocating for legislation that creates an enabling environment for youth employment. Some of these interventions by NPOs to provide job opportunities are discussed below.

4.3.1 Government collaboration

NPOs have effectively engaged the government on a range of public policy (Government of Ghana, 2020), and support government on youth employment promotion initiatives and programmes, such as the National Service Scheme (NSS) and the National Youth Employment Programme launched in 2006 to address youth unemployment, underemployment and food insecurity. This was then restructured into the Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency (GEEDA) in 2012. This was renamed the Youth Empowerment Agency (YEA) in 2015 following the enactment of Act 887. It aimed to "to empower young people to contribute meaningfully to the socio-economic and sustainable development of the nation. Its objective is to support the youth between the ages of 15 to 35 years through skills training and internship modules to transit from a situation of unemployment to that of employment" (YEA, n.d., p. 1)

Similarly, the NSS helps combat youth unemployment by giving graduates exposure to various economic sectors, real-world job experience, and skill development opportunities (Segbenya, Oppong, Nyarko, & Baafi-Frimpong, 2023). It is anticipated that recent graduates will work for a year in both public and private sector organisations. This hands-on learning experience makes service personnel more employable by allowing them to gain knowledge and skills related to their academic areas. NPOs support for the NSS is significant because they offer the youth mentorship and internship programmes, which enables the youth to gain professional experience and skills that enhance their employability (Dadzie et al., 2020).

The youth employment programmes of the government have been implemented in partnership with both the private sector and NPOs. In 2016, the World Bank identified 40 major youth employment programmes that the government implemented with the private sector and NPOs (Dadzie et al., 2020; Jumpah, Owusu-Arthur, & Ampadu-Ameyaw, 2022). These programmes focused on skills development, entrepreneurship training and apprenticeship. As a result, the NPOs' contributions provided training opportunities for 41 227 applicants (Avura & Ulzen-Appiah, 2016).

In 2022, World Vision Ghana (WVG), an international NPO, trained 4 792 youths (3 355 females and 1 437 males), through GEEDA, on financial literacy to assist recipients to engage in profitable trade (WVG, 2022). In the same year, they engaged several partners, including the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, to provide livelihood training for 1 072 adult and youth recipients (751 men and 321 women). The training provided beneficiaries with the necessary skills and knowledge about additional/alternative livelihood possibilities, such as beekeeping and shea butter processing. Additionally, 60 farmers were given 108 beehives and accessories, and after a period of monitoring, it was discovered that 79 (or 74 per cent) of the 108 hives were colonised and actively producing honey (WVG, 2022).



4.3.2 Capacity building and skills training

NPOs contribute immensely to youth employment through capacity building and skills training. Notably, they organise entrepreneurship training programmes to encourage entrepreneurship and help young people launch their own businesses, create jobs for others, and eventually become job creators themselves. Research has shown that entrepreneurship is essential for solving youth unemployment globally, especially for young people who are not likely to pursue 'job-for-life' opportunities (Kluve et al., 2019). Entrepreneurship provides young people with work opportunities. Youth entrepreneurship has been acknowledged as a significant driver of economic growth in national development (Avura & Ulzen-Appiah, 2016).

In Ghana, the non-profit sector, including CSOs, has introduced several programmes to create sustainable jobs for the youth. For instance in 2013, Technoserve Ghana, launched the 'Enhancing Growth in New Enterprises' project (Dadzie et al., 2020). The aim was to support 1 000 small and growing businesses over 4.5 years. Through business plan competitions and company development services, the initiative sought to improve the revenue of

500 high-potential entrepreneurs by an average of 400 per cent, create 1 770 new jobs, and provide access to adequate finance to 300 start-ups. In its second year, the 268 youth entrepreneurs who benefited from the programme created over 250 new positions and connected 28 businesses owned by youth to financial products (TechnoServe, 2024).

In 2021, ActionAid Ghana through the National Vocational Training Institute provided entrepreneurship training to 665 youths in the Northern Region, Greater Accra, Upper East, Bono, and Volta regions. Beneficiaries were trained in the following areas: pastry, auto mechanics, bead making, basket weaving, sandal work, soap making, phone repairs and tiring. ActionAid further supported them with soft skills for business management and social digital marketing In 2021, ActionAid Ghana through the National Vocational Training Institute provided entrepreneurship training to 665 youths in the Northern Region, Greater Accra, Upper East, Bono, and Volta region.

to grow their business and customer base. In addition, Plan International Ghana and Plan International Germany collaborated on the Pathway for Sustainable Employment for Women and Youth in Ghana, a project aimed at empowering young people aged 15 to 35 years in the construction and hospitality sectors (B&FT online, 2024) The project received a grant of \leq 3.4 million between 2019 and 2022, resulting in increased employment and training in the hotel and construction industries. Over 2 400 men and 1 800 women were in soft and technical skills. Youth Opportunity and Transformation in Africa contributed significantly to the project and was responsible for mobilising 1 200 young men and women to benefit from the project in the twelve districts in the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (YOTA, 2024).

Another international NPO, World Education Ghana, launched the Strategic Approaches to Girls' Education. This provided an alternative curriculum to out-of-school girls (between the ages of 15 and 19 years). The beneficiaries had access to a nine-month, accelerated learning programme, with master crafts people-led vocational training, as well as literacy, numeracy, and life skills training. The non-formal pathway provided young women with job acquisition and financial independent skills. This approach offered entrepreneurship training and start-up funding to female entrepreneurs in addition to vocational training. About 10 221 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 years signed up for the master crafts people-led vocational training and accelerated learning programme. Ninety-three per cent of this cohort graduated after nine months and began earning money in more than twenty different trades. Six per cent of the females went to acquire more skills to enhance their employability and entrepreneurial skills (Ghana News Agency, 2023).



4.3.3 Apprenticeship programmes

Since the National Vocational Training Institute was established forty years ago, apprenticeship in Ghana has changed. Apprenticeship was listed as a track for post-basic education in the government's white paper on educational reform (Ghana Ministry of Education, 2004). Through exposure to on-the-job learning of career-relevant skills, apprenticeships prepare young people for self-employment or potential wage employment if a master craftsperson hires them. In Ghana, apprenticeships are common and mostly aimed at recent junior and senior high school graduates who do not have opportunities to further their studies. According to Mbiti et al. (2019), youth can gain skills from apprenticeship programmes and may transit to self-employment. One such programme is the Youth Inclusive Entrepreneurial Development Initiative for Employment, popularly known as YIEDIE, implemented by Global Communities, a non-profit organisation in Ghana that is funded by the Mastercard Foundation. This was a five-year programme (2015 to 2020) for young people between the ages of 15 and 24 years. The programme aims to provide young people the opportunity to participate in economic activity, and contribute to the country's development. The YIEDIE programme combined technical expertise and entrepreneurship to equip youth with the ability to secure and maintain employment or to create their own jobs (Sumbo, 2021). The projects have five key components, namely:

- 1. To develop employability and entrepreneurship skills;
- 2. To facilitate the development and use of youth-friendly financial services;
- 3. To offer an apprenticeship-based skills training model;
- 4. To provide start-up funds, business development services, job creation, and mentorship; and
- 5. To support the coordination and enabling environment for youth employment in construction.

The project targeted the five largest cities in Ghana: Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, Ashaiman, and Tema. It focused on the youth who have dropped out of school and are living on less than \$2 a day. Throughout its existence, YIEDIE trained 25 479 youth. Of these, 16 020 received training to be plumbers, carpenters, masons, interior decorators, electrical technicians, survey technical assistants, among others and 9 459 to be entrepreneurs (Global Communities, 2021). Follow-up surveys revealed that 78 per cent of young people successfully transitioned to employment, self-employment, or further education and training one year after completion, and 71 per cent said they were happy with their occupations (Global Communities, 2021).

Youth Opportunity and Transformation in Africa (YOTA. 2024) engages in skill development programs to ensure the youth acquire the basic soft skills to make them employable. Additionally, it implemented the Adwumapa project, funded by the United States' Department of Labour, and in collaboration with Child Rights International, Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, and Olam. It aimed to reduce the incidence of child labour, forced labour, and other labour violations against 5 000 women and girls involved in Ghana's cocoa value chain. Over the last five years, the initiative has engaged at least 1 600 women from 80 towns, four districts, and three regions. A significant portion of these women have received life skills and vocational training. Similarly, Youth Harvest Foundation, Ghana, implemented the Seamstresses Training Enterprise initiative to empower young seamstresses to take charge of their own lives and to reduce poverty. Each year, a group of young women is chosen to work and get instruction at the sales store and training facility. This enables beneficiaries to acquire skills in sales and marketing.





4.3.4 Education and scholarship

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. - Nelson Mandela

Education is one of the most important tools to reducing youth poverty, illiteracy and unemployment, and to live a dignified life. However, since independence, there has been a mismatch between Ghana's development needs and the outputs of the education sector (Dadzie et al., 2020). The government's capacity to meet the educational needs of increasing population has been constrained by lack of or limited resources (Sadick, Li, Musah, Akeji, & Khan, 2019), and limited access to education in Ghana, especially for young girls (Ametepee & Anastasiou, 2015). A report by UNESCO (2018) indicated that less than one-quarter of females are represented in tertiary education in Ghana, particularly in science, engineering, technology, and mathematics. NPOs can play a critical role in addressing this situation, which ultimately will ensure that females have dignified and fulfilling jobs.

Several NPOs, such as WVG, School for Life, and Girls Education Units have supported the government in the sector to increase access, improve quality, and promote both excellence and innovation. Their support includes infrastructural development, providing teaching and learning resources, and offer scholarships to students (Okine, 2022). For instance in 1998, an international NPO, the Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED), launched a

project to address problems of girl-child education. This organisation currently operates in 38 districts in Ghana. Since its inception in Ghana, CAMFED has supported about 110 973 females in secondary schools. CAMFED provides comprehensive support to beneficiaries, which include school and examination fees, books, pencils, bicycles, clothes, sanitary products, boarding expenses, and disability aids (CAMFED, 2024).

Again, in 2022, WVG funded the training of 82 district teacher support teams of the Ghana Education Service in eight area programmes to strengthen the understanding of lower primary teachers in literacy instructional approaches (WVG, 2022). The support teams offered coaching services to help 360 early childhood development teachers and 964 early grade teachers (Primary 1 to 3) to adopt and use The activities of NPOs have contributed significantly to an increase in education of girl-children in the country, especially those from Ghana's Northern Regions

teaching strategies in the Unlock Literacy and Learning Roots models. It is important to highlight that most teachers trained were young people between the ages of 15 and 35 years. Following the explosion tragedy that happened in January 2022, 500 youths in the Appiatse community received educational resources (500 school bags, 2 500 pieces of exercise equipment, and 500 sets of school uniform) from WVG. In addition, three-unit classroom blocks were constructed and opened. Through these programmes, young people received the instruction and training required to find jobs (Tagoe & Oheneba-Sakyi, 2015).

Furthermore, NPOs have assisted the Ministry of Education with policy directions, funds and human resource capacity (Robinson et al., 2018). The activities of NPOs have contributed significantly to an increase in education of girl-children in the country, especially those from Ghana's Northern Regions, by covering examination expenses for pupils, giving school supplies like backpacks and bicycles, and providing the required textbooks (UNESCO, 2018). In terms of capacity building, World Education Ghana has empowered about 3 000 educators in Ghana between 2019 and 2024. This enhanced their ability to provide effective literacy and numeracy training, thereby improving the calibre and volume of teaching. Ultimately, these have contributed to youth acquiring the knowledge and skills required in the labour market.

It is also important to note that faith-based NPOs have contributed immensely to young people's education. This includes the Pentecost Education Scholarship Scheme launched by the Church of Pentecost. In 2019, through this scheme, 392 young men and women received full scholarships to pursue tertiary education at Pentecost University. In the same year, they supported students in other tertiary institutions to the amount of GHC2.7 million (Pentecost University, 2020). In 2020, the church further sponsored 248 tertiary students on a full scholarship amounting to GHC10 million (PeaceFM Online, 2022). The chairman of the church announced that 107 educational institutions, including 103 basic schools, two senior high schools, and two vocational training institutes, had been established in Ghana by the church's social services arm, Pentecost Social Services (TCOP, 2023). This has led to the employment of 2 184 academics and administrative staff, the majority of whom were youth. Other churches in Ghana offer similar services. Some of these include the Assemblies of God Relief and Services, and the Evangelical Presbyterian Development and Relief Agency.

4.3.5 Micro finance and grants

To further guarantee that women and youth had more access to credit, technology, and market information, WVG collaborated with VisionFund Ghana to provide loans to project recipients so they could improve their companies. In 2020, about 6 316 community members accessed loans amounting to over GHC 3 4 million (USD 690 442), which benefitted 20 860 children and youth (WVG, 2021). Similarly, Plan International Ghana has, over the years, sponsored about 500 micro-enterprises to develop their skills, acquire certification and register their businesses, preparing them for the future (Plan International, 2024). The Fran Mueller and Virginia Lageschulte Young Adult Training Center was established by Self-Help International's Ghana office to provide mothers, children, and farmers with education and training (Global Giving, 2024). To help young people in rural areas find work, the centre expanded its programmes by launching multiple new agro- enterprises in its second year of operation. Trainees can study anything from producing poultry to bees to raising grass cutters at this centre. More than 65 beneficiaries finished the training courses. To help them launch their businesses, Toase Roman Catholic Junior High School and four individual graduates were provided with microloans and continuous technical training as part of this programme.

4.3.6 Social enterprise / investment

Social enterprises are businesses run by NPOs that have a social aim. These businesses address particular social and environmental challenges. They invest in agriculture, energy, and health while making money and creating jobs (Osei & Alagidede, 2023). In Ghana, impact investments are increasing, thus creating employment for the youth (Kumi, 2019). Some of whom invest in organisations that seek to address unemployment and poverty, such as:

- Mirepa Capital SME Fund: Based in Ghana, the fund is managed by Mirepa Capital to give financial support to small-, medium-, and micro-enterprises (SMMEs) in Africa (IDRC, 2022). This fund supports the growth of SMMEs. It has provided an estimated \$5 billion annually to SMEs in the country. Since its establishment in 2016, Mirepa Capital "has designed, developed and executed enterprise development programs for key partners specifically around early-stage business development, enterprise growth, and scaling, as well as gender inclusion in the business landscape" (Mirepa Capital, 2024, para 2). Over 200 SMMEs have been coached and trained through the support provided by the Fund (Mirepa Capital, 2024). Mirepa Capital provides portfolio management and some value addition to the Fidelity Young Entrepreneurs Fund (FYEF), which provides financial and non-financial resources to help both startup and established businesses run by young entrepreneurs to maximize the potential for social impact, develop capacity, and assist youth-related enterprise Opportunities in Ghana. By establishing green jobs and promoting green enterprise development in their target regions, including departure, transit, and return, the program aimed to address the underlying reasons for irregular migration. The initiative focused on women, youth, and different SMMEs in the green industry. This led to the creation of about 1 000 jobs in 50 Ghanaian communities.
- GroFin Ghana: A division of the private development finance company, GroFin has focused on funding and assisting young and local SMEs in Ghana since 2010. GroFin has invested about \$30 million in 66 SMMEs in the country. These companies could maintain 3 224 employment opportunities and add 411 new direct jobs as a result of the investment.

While these interventions have contributed greatly to youth employment in Ghana, it is still challenging to quantify their overall impact on youth employment created by NPOs. Also, it is unclear whether the jobs created by these interventions are dignified and fulfilling. This is a serious gap which offers an opportunity for future research. This calls for the need for further investigation of the NPOs in Ghana through interviews and surveys to determine the size and quantity of dignified and fulfilling jobs they create for the youth. This technique will also help identify the non-profit sector's role in reaching and providing opportunities to the marginalised (such as the disabled and young mothers). Currently, this information remains incipient. Also, the NPO Secretariat in Ghana should encourage the sharing of annual reports by NPOs. This will ensure the creation of a database which will provide in-depth information on the potential impact of NPOs on youth employment; especially to ascertain whether these are dignified and fulfilling jobs.



4.4 Economic Sub-sectoral Contributions

The growth of the economy is driven largely by three major sectors, namely: the service, agriculture, and manufacturing sectors (Adu, 2021). The service sector includes governmental, transportation, professional, financial, and personal services such as real estate, healthcare, and education. In 2022, the service sector contributed about 44 per cent to the country's gross domestic product, followed by agriculture (18.8 per cent), and manufacturing (10.2 per cent) (World Bank, 2023). These three sectors accounted for approximately 73 per cent of the country's employment.

As seen in Figure 5, in 2011, agriculture was the main contributor to employment (48.4 per cent) and by 2021, it became the second largest contributor to employment (39 per cent), overtaken by the service sector, which contributed 41 per cent. The manufacturing contribution to employment increased from 15 per cent in 2011 to 19 per cent in 2021.



FIGURE 5: Distribution of employment by the top three sectors

Source: Statista (2022, graph 1)

The structural nature of the economy, where the service and agricultural sectors are the main contributors to employment, account for the fact that the majority of jobs in Ghana are in the informal sector, and are mostly undignified and unfulfilling. That the NPO's contribution to dignified and fulfilling jobs is minimal is also explained by this factor. Most NPOs in the country operate in the agricultural and service sectors (Dadzie et al., 2020). A report by Krakah and Kombat (2015) showed that NPOs created about 184 960 skilled jobs in Ghana as of 2014. This comprises 183 383 in the service sector, 584 in agriculture, and 993 in manufacturing.

As already defined, NPOs play a crucial role in providing young people with dignified and fulfilling job opportunities. However, despite the various interventions employed by NPOs in Ghana, there are still avenues for creating dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth. This review suggests that NPOs must scale up existing interventions while accessing new avenues to improve youth employment in Ghana. The following are pockets of opportunities for NPOs to increase their contributions to dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth.

4.4.1 Entrepreneurship

While young people are eager to start their own businesses, they face many challenges. These include the lack of expertise, experience, savings, and loan collateral (Dadzie et al., 2020). Through carefully considered mixes of mentorship, coaching, skill development, enterprise development, financial literacy, and access to financial services, the youth in Ghana could drive innovation, establish start-ups and secure dignified and fulfilling jobs. This requires collaboration between government, the private sector, the third sector, and academic institutions. This will require NPOs to collaborate with institutions that have set up these incubation hubs, such as the University of Ghana Business School incubation hub, Meltwater incubation hub, and Ghana tech hub, among others, to ensure that the youth acquire practical skills that will enable them to develop job-creation abilities.

4.4.2 Agriculture/agribusiness

Close to half of the workforce in Ghana is employed in the agriculture sector, which also offers an opportunity for young people to find work. Research indicates that the sector is a major entry point for employment and will eventually become the sector of lifetime employment for many people (Dadzie et al., 2020). As a result, NPOs should scale up their activities to cover more areas in Ghana and provide agricultural services in different ways (such as fisheries, handicrafts, animal farming, and crop farming, among others). Further training and support on transforming agricultural products into finished goods should be of great interest to NPOs since most of Ghana's agricultural activities are centred on raw materials (Aryeetey et al., 2021). NPOs can partner with the government to establish agricultural incubation centres across different education system levels to enhance the youth's skills in acquiring dignified and fulfilling jobs. More importantly, working with other stakeholders for agriculture to transit from subsistence to mechanised farming will constitute the most significant contribution of NPOs to create fulfilling and dignified jobs for youth in the country. This is an area that requires future research.

4.4.3 Agro-processing and tourism

Aryeetey et al. (2021) pointed to the skill deficit in the agro-processing and tourism sectors. As a consequence, the country in general and youth in particular have not been able to maximise the advantages of the sector, including creating dignified and fulfilling jobs. To overcome the aforementioned challenge, NPOs could work with the government and the private sector to invest in skills development for youth to meet the needs of the sector. In addition, NPOs may help aspiring entrepreneurs in the tourism and agro-processing sectors by providing networks and resources, training, and mentorship. This will increase the number of start-ups in the two sectors. Furthermore, NPOs in partnership with academic higher education institutions (universities, TVET) should create curricula and training programmes for youth to acquire knowledge and skills needed in these sectors.

4.4.4 Green jobs

Bozkurt and Stowell (2016) explained that most countries view the 'greening' of the economy as providing substantial chances for upskilling and job creation. Ghana has developed a green job programme from 2021 to 2025 to promote a green economy. This has the potential for dignified and fulfilling job creation, skill development, and improved livelihood (Seidu, 2020). NPOs could partner with both government and the private sector to enable young people to acquire skills required by the green economy. In addition such collaboration should promote youth to establish green growth enterprises (Bozkurt & Stowell, 2016). Towards this end, NPOs assist young entrepreneurs with business development plans, networking in the green industry, guidance on funding possibilities, and organising green-skills training programmes. NPOs could advocate for laws that encourage the development of green industries and give young people more opportunities to work in these fields. They can work on projects that encourage environmentally friendly companies.



4.4.5 Marginalised youth

The non-profit sector's role in creating dignified and fulfilling job opportunities to the marginalised (disabled, young women, rural communities, and youth with criminal records) can be achieved as follows:

Disabled youth:

Youth living with disabilities continue to face several challenges in the labour market in Ghana, like other countries on the African continent. This is primarily due to unfavourable stereotypes held not only by employers but society at large. Most employers see youth living with disabilities as a burden and frequently believe that employees with disabilities cannot be a source of value to the growth of their businesses. Without any empirical evidence, those living with disabilities are seen to perform poorly at their jobs compared to those without disabilities (Aichner, 2021). Because of this misconception, according to Dadzie et al. (2020), individuals with disabilities are mostly excluded from the youth employment programmes in Ghana, and are discriminated against by companies. This is coupled with the fact that most companies lack disability-friendly facilities in the workplace.

To address this issue, NPOs can tailor programmes that effectively address the unique requirements of youth with disabilities. It is imperative to provide customised vocational training, job placement assistance, and mentorship (Buettgen & Klassen, 2020) for youth living with disabilities to secure dignified and fulfilling jobs. It is essential to collaborate with the private sector, government agencies, and disability-focused organisations to develop policies that ensure an increase in the scope and potency of initiatives meant to generate employment for youth living with disabilities. The non-profit sector is well suited to advocate for policies and legislation that will promote diversify and inclusion in the workplace.

Young women:

There is a gender gap in Ghana's youth employment. It is particularly challenging for young women, especially in rural areas, to convert their efforts into dignified and fulfilling jobs and transition from unstable to stable employment. Also, early marriages of young girls, patriarchal traditions, lack of finance, and discriminatory property rights (such as land ownership and inheritance) are major impediments for young girls to secure dignified and fulfilling jobs in Ghana, like most of the African continent (Dadzie et al., 2020). Addressing these challenges requires NPOs to play a major role in helping young girls secure dignified and fulfilling employment. One such role is advocating for change to discriminatory practices against young girls in the workplace and society at large. The non-profit sector should work collaboratively with the private sector, government, and traditional rulers to promote entrepreneurship among young women. Furthermore, social impact investors must prioritise women's access to microfinance to aid them in starting and growing their businesses. Prioritising young womens' education and skills development should constitute important strategies that stakeholders, including NPOs, should embark upon to help young women secure dignified and fulfilling jobs and become key players in the labour market. These call for NPOs to forge strong partnerships with international development agencies.

Rural communities:

NPOs have much to offer in providing employment opportunities for young people in Ghana's rural areas. Securing employment prospects in remote communities requires advocating for better infrastructure, such as roads, electricity, and internet connectivity, all major challenges in Ghana. NPOs can partner with government and international organisations to address this issue. To maximise resources and coordinate their activities with local development plans, NPOs should work with local government agencies.



Youth with criminal records:

An area that has been totally ignored is the rehabilitation of youths with criminal records. Though crime is at a moderate level in Ghana, with a crime index of 44.5 in 2023, most of the criminals are youth (Oteng-Ababio, 2016). NPOs should target this segment of youth in their efforts to contribute to creation of dignified and fulfilling jobs for youth, regardless of their criminal record. First, NPOs should invest in rehabilitation centres, placing a high premium on addressing the root causes of criminal behaviour, such as drug addiction, mental health disorders, and unstable housing. Second, the non-profit sector should undertake programmes such as job placement support, mentorship, and skills development, to give youth who have served their prison terms a second chance so that not only can they be absorbed into the labour market, but also be effectively reintegrated into society. Third, advocacy work by NPOs will be critical to achieve these goals.

4.4.6 Other areas

As the Ghanaian economy grows, several sectors (renewable energy / solar, construction, and sports, among others) will offer chances for job creation. The extractive sectors (gold and oil) currently account for a large share of the country's growth despite the exceptionally low employment rates in these highly specialised fields. Hence, there is a strong need for diversification of the economy to sectors that will create dignified and fulfilling jobs, especially for the youth (Dadzie et al., 2020). Research on the unique potential in these fields is necessary to inform the design of any upcoming youth training initiatives that are necessary for dignified and fulfilling jobs.

4.5 Technological Interventions

Ghana has made significant strides in digital transformation, with the share of the population with an online presence increasing from eight per cent in 2010 to 69 per cent in 2021 (Begazo, Blimpo, & Dutz, 2023). Further WDIs indicated information and communication technology (ICT) access (96 per cent), ICT usage (35 per cent) and ICT skills (75.31 per cent) as of 2021 (World Bank. 2023). These efforts resulted in the digital transformation of numerous industries, including government, finance, and agriculture, and Google opened its first artificial intelligence (AI) research centre in Africa in Accra in 2019. Some of the interventions by the government include the establishment of the digital transformation centre in 2020 to provide technical skills for women and the youth, internet access, and individual development in the digital space. To improve public services, the Ghanaian government adopted digitalisation for tax filing, business registrations, and a wide range of other online services.

The digital revolution in Ghana has influenced NPOs. Some NPOs use digital platforms such as the Global Giving platforms to solicit funds. Examples of these organisations include Self Help International Ghana, and Global Vision International charitable programs; in addition, Alliance African Women Initiative/Social networking platforms are used by NPOs in Ghana for a variety of objectives, such as building relationships with stakeholders, fundraising, and standing up for the weaker members of society (Adjei et al., 2016). Also, NPOs with headquarters in rural areas have been able to increase their awareness on a regional, national, and worldwide scale thanks to ICTs. ICTs, especially email, are widely used by rural NGOs to build networks, plan events, coordinate actions, and communicate with individuals and international organisations (Boateng, 2012).



Despite these efforts, the impact and usage of technology by NPOs in creating dignified and fulfilling jobs is very minimal. This can be attributed to several factors, such as limited access to technological infrastructure, lack of digital skills, and financial constraints (Kombian, 2021; Okine, 2022). For example, a report by Ghana Digital

Statistics indicates that more than 30 per cent of the population lacks access to services, with the majority being in the rural areas where NPOs primarily operate (Yazi, 2023). This situation poses a great challenge to the NPOs in leveraging technology for their activities.

This review proposes that NPOs should integrate technology into youth employment strategies, and to reach new areas. They can leverage technology to scale up training and education for the youth to harness the huge potential related to digital transformation. For instance, NPOs can create ICT centres for the training and capacitybuilding of the youth to acquire digital skills to obtain formalised jobs For instance, NPOs can create ICT centres for the training and capacity-building of the youth to acquire digital skills to obtain formalised jobs (Kumi, 2022)

(Kumi, 2022), and by supporting social enterprises which offer ICT skills and employment for the youth, including the disabled. NPOs can employ technology-led techniques by utilising ICT and mass media, including radio, video, and cell phones. These approaches have been proven to be effective and affordable, and they have a big influence on farmers' decisions to adopt agricultural technology (Azumah, Donkoh, & Awuni, 2018).

Through technology, NPOs can enhance their capacity to reach and serve more people due to increased labour efficiency, which can also enable them to expand services to individuals outside their localities. Through technology, NPOs can contribute to ICT-enabled youth employment by creating online jobs and E-entrepreneurship.

In light of the above, this review recommends further studies through the use of questionnaires to find out from the Ghanaian youth their perception of NPOs in creating dignified and fulfilling jobs. Although technology can help increase wages, create jobs, and expand employment prospects, adopting new technologies has traditionally lagged in Ghana and other developing nations (Dadzie et al., 2020). Digital tools like social media and technological devices have drastically changed the nature of employment. By 2024, the number of employment opportunities requiring digital skills is expected to increase by 12 per cent (Robinson et al. 2018), although there are huge gaps between demand for digital skills and the youth's digital skills in Ghana. This calls for young people in the country to constantly adapt by acquiring digital skills in response to the changing demands of the job market. In the wake of the fourth industrial revolution, the non-profit sector's efforts to provide young people in Ghana rewarding and stable careers will be heavily reliant on new technology.

The following are some areas where NPOs can use technology to major effect in Ghana:

- Digital skills training involving coding, data analysis, and digital marketing offer the non-profit sector opportunities to have significant impact in creating dignified and fulfilling jobs for youth in Ghana. Not only will adoption and utilisation enable NPOs to scale up their activities but it will also enable them to scale up their programmes with positive multiplier effects on youth employment, especially in securing dignified and fulfilling jobs (Robinson et al., 2018). Technology makes remote work and e-learning possible. NPOs can help young people have access to remote work opportunities and online courses. One way to achieve this is for NPOs to sponsor or create ICT hubs for the training and development of the youth. In addition, they could incorporate digital and soft skills into their training programs to open up opportunities for quality jobs.
- To link companies and young job seekers, non-profits could create or collaborate with online job market places to ensure accessibility of youth to the job market (Robinson et al., 2018). Also, NPOs could leverage technology to encourage entrepreneurship among the youth. This includes online mentorship and access to start-up resources.
- Technology, such as mobile apps and sensors, can be deployed in rural areas by NGOs to improve agricultural practices. This will attract the youth to the agricultural sector.



05 CHALLENGES FACED BY NON-PROFIT SECTOR Most NPOs face major challenges that hinder their operations, five such challenges are briefly discussed below.

5.1 Lack of Public Trust

Despite the considerable presence of NPOs in Ghana, their impact is limited not only because of the structure of the economy but also lack of public trust in the sector. Although they are generally seen to be accountable to the public, they are not seen to be transparent in their operations (Sarpong, 2022). Hence, some stakeholders, including local communities, are reluctant to give or support the activities of NPOs (Mwakideu, 2016).

5.2 Financial Issues

Another challenge is inadequate funding. Most are dependent on donor funding, which adversely affects their financial sustainability. As noted previously, some NPOs operate on a project-by-project basis. Consequently, such NPOs close down at the end of the funding cycle for such projects. Due to the funding crisis, the organisational capability of some NPOs has marginally declined (USAID, 2022). A report by ActionAid Ghana (2021) shows that the funds of NPOs keep reducing due to the continuous withdrawal of sponsors. Kluve et al. (2019) supported this argument, stating that NGOs lack the administrative and financial means to expand their programmes, which means that even when they execute modest pilot projects with outside research assistance, they frequently do not succeed. This has made it difficult to invest in labour-intensive businesses to accelerate transformation and increase youth employment (Fox & Kaul, 2018).

5.3 Staff Retention

Further, most NPOs in Ghana are faced with the problem of staff retention. NPOs struggle to retain highly qualified employees partly due to the nation's poor volunteering culture and insufficient, inconsistent funding (WACSI, 2015). This is affirmed by Okorley et al. (2017), who asserted that one of the biggest problems facing NPOs in Ghana is their inability to retain staff. Hence, some NPOs turned to interns and youth volunteers to address their staffing shortage. Most of the volunteers lack the skills and expertise to carry out projects that could lead to the creation of dignified and fulfilling jobs in particular and broad development impact in general. If funds are not available for new projects, especially for rural groups, an organisation's ability to pay personnel salaries may be in jeopardy.

For highly qualified professionals, the appeal of NPOs as a career option has been considerably diminished by the lack of financing (USAID, 2022). Due to staffing problems, NPOs frequently lack the managerial capacity to scale up their initiatives (Kluve et al., 2019). This problem has unintended consequences: it leads to poor governance and coordination. This has affected the empirical data which needs to be reported, such as the number of jobs created by NPOs. As a result, WACSI (2015) proposed that NPOs should prioritise good financial management techniques, human resource systems and frameworks, and fundamental governance structures. These systems improve recognition, validity, credibility, and trustworthiness, all of which are vital in the ever-evolving funding channels, and ultimately the sustainability of NPOs.



5.4 Lack of Government Support

A further challenge facing NPOs in the country is the lack of government support. In Ghana, there is no government funding for NGOs (USAID, 2015). It is a given that availability of funds to initiate and implement programmes is a major factor that determine their success. In the absence of government dedicated funds to support NPOs, they rely on grants and donations from other sources, especially grants from international development partners. Whenever the agenda of the donor community changes, NPOs experience adverse implications. The Department of International Development (DFID) and the Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development Aid (CORDAID) have reduced their funding due to Ghana's classification as a lower-middle-income country rather than a lower-income country (Fuseini et al., 2022; Kumi, 2022). Local NPOs supported by these international partners suffered as a result.

It is, however, important to note that NPOs are resorting to alternatives for sustainability. These include mobilising domestic resources, such as volunteer support, individual donations, commercial activities, and corporate philanthropy (Kumi, 2022), to carry out their programmes. Arhin, Kumi, and Adam, (2018) revealed six strategies employed by NPOs to address the funding challenge. There are eggs-in-multiple-baskets, cost-cutting, strength in numbers, security-under-partnership, credibility-building, and visibility-enhancing strategies.

These strategies are not without problems. According to Kumi (2019), the weak enabling environment, including the absence of a regulatory framework and fiscal incentives for domestic resource mobilisations, is a major constraint to local resource mobilisation. The point is that the enabling environment is not conducive to the institutionalisation and sustainability of local philanthropic institutions to support NPOs in carrying out their programs. Fuseini et al. (2022) further pointed out that inadequate networking, advocacy, accountability, community empowerment, and a lack of interaction between government leaders and NPOs are among the challenges facing NPOs operating in Ghana.

5.5 Innovation Challenges and Structural Issues

NPOs suffer from innovation challenges, making it difficult to align their projects with growing technological change to create jobs for the youth. Forkuor and Agyemang (2018) argued that NPOs in Ghana contend with the dilemma of donor control over financial allocation, which occasionally fails to align with the perceived requirements of the beneficiaries, including youth employment. The poor economic performance of the Ghanaian economy has affected the performance of NPOs. Hence, most NPOs are unable to secure funds from local donors to implement their programmes. Structural barriers, such as inadequate infrastructure, limited access to training and educational resources, and remote locations, can make it more difficult for young people to obtain employment, especially for marginalised youth and rural communities. To eliminate these structural barriers, coordinated efforts from all sectors of the economy and from all political levels are required.

06 FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

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onsidering the gaps in the thematic analysis, this section highlights several issues requiring further research. This will broaden knowledge of the role of the non-profit sector to create dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth in Ghana. The recommendations for future research are limited to the most significant portions of the literature reviewed.

6.1 Role of NPOs in Job Creation for the Youth

This review highlights some of the contributions of NPOs to Ghana's economic development and role in the labour market, especially their contributions to creating dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth in Ghana. NPOs contributed to creating jobs that give the youth a strong sense of significance and social influence. These were considered to be fulfilling work. However, the literature reviewed showed the need for more data to capture and quantify the overall impact of NPOs in contributing to the creation of dignified and fulfilling work for the youth in Ghana. Consequently, this review calls for further studies to explore how the non-profit sector contributes to the country's economy and employment creation for the youth, including dignified and fulfilling jobs for young people.

The review suggests the following methodological tools for data gathering: surveys, interviews, case studies, and collecting quantitative information from individual NPOs that are not publicly available. This will create a foundational dataset to help measure the impact of NPOs on youth job creation in Ghana quantitatively. Scholars could also disaggregate their impact according to specific sub-sectors of NPOs (such as agriculture, education, health, entrepreneurship, and ICT), geographical locations (such as urban and rural areas), and by the type of NPO. This is because this data is currently lacking. Furthermore, to help appreciate the extent of dignified and fulfilling jobs provided by NPOs, qualitative studies should consider the four main themes provided by ILO in defining dignified and fulfilling jobs, which include job creation, social protection, rights at work, and social dialogue.

6.2 NPOs and Inclusive Employment

The review shows that the economy of Ghana, in particular, and the society in general is highly exclusionary. Youth living with disabilities and young girls in rural areas are marginalised in the labour market. Existing studies failed to articulate the job contribution of NPOs to these marginalised groups. Considering this gap, this review proposes a qualitative approach to investigate how NPOs contribute to inclusive employment for marginalised youth. Scholars should engage NPOs for information and data on this important subject.

6.3 Program Effectiveness and Impact Assessment

While this review discusses the interventions of NPOs in creating dignified jobs for the youth, there is a need for an in-depth analysis to provide insight into the specific programmes and strategies employed to implement youth-focused employment initiatives. Additionally, it is important to analyse the impacts of these programmes on youth employment. Examining employment rates, income distribution, and skill enhancement to comprehend these programs' long-term impacts are issues that require further research. Additional research might examine how much organisational attributes such as governance, mission, programmes, and type of donors affect youth employment programs' implementation, success, and results.



6.4 Institutional Dimensions and Stakeholders Perspectives

Research on the institutional dimensions of the Ghanaian economy and its impact on NPO operations is yet to be explored. Hence, the review proposes that future research examines how economic performance and institutional factors, such as a platical stability computing control, and resculations.

factors, such as political stability, corruption control, and regulations, influence the effectiveness of NPOs.

Empirically, examining how the NPO youth job creation initiatives contribute to the country's national employment agenda and performance is important. There is also the need to examine the policy environment surrounding youth employment by the NPOs in Ghana. This review reveals a research gap in understanding stakeholders' viewpoints on the impact of youth employment initiatives. Stakeholders may include donors, non-profit employees, young participants, and the general public. This approach can be made qualitatively and This review reveals a research gap in understanding stakeholders' viewpoints on the impact of youth employment initiatives.

quantitatively. More so, the non-profit sector could engage the voices, views, and perspectives of the different youth categories, including women, youth living with disabilities, homeless, and refugees, among others, on issues related to advancing the creation of dignified and fulfilling jobs. This could be achieved by institutionalising social dialogues on youth employment. A survey technique could also be of great importance to this process.

6.5 Other Topical Areas of Research

In addition to the recommendations above, it would also be necessary to explore the role of NPOs in providing green jobs and technological opportunities for the youth to gain dignified and fulfilling jobs. This is due to the current digital transformation and climate issues in the world, which are influencing the types of jobs and skills needed to remain relevant in the work environment.



07 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS he non-profit sector has become an important player in addressing Ghana's socioeconomic challenges, including the youth's lack of dignified and fulfilling jobs. NPOs have intervened to offer employment solutions as the country struggles with high youth unemployment rates. Consequently, this review reviewed relevant literature to examine the non-profit sector's impact on youth employment in Ghana, including creating dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth. The review occurred in the context of the country's high youth unemployment rate, with more than 10 per cent of the youth population being unemployed. This is one of the highest rates in SSA, with over 50 per cent of the youth underemployed. To address the review's purpose, a systematic literature review was adopted to provide insight into the activities of NPOs in addressing youth employment in Ghana.

In addition, the review resorted to the datasets of international, national, and local organisations, as well as policy and programmes' documents. This approach broadens the scope of the review and provides foundational insights into NPOs in Ghana and their recent developments, particularly towards youth employment. This approach

is important given that little scholarly attention has been given to the role and impact of NPOs on youth employment, especially its contribution to creating dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth in Ghana. The review of existing studies shows an increasing trend in the number of registered NPOs in Ghana, which signals a growing commitment to tackling the nation's social and economic problems, including poverty, healthcare, education, community development, and youth employment.

The literature made it clear that NPOs are empowering the youth through entrepreneurial, educational, agricultural and skill-development initiatives. These programmes not only give the youth the skills and information they need to get dignified and fulfilling jobs but also In addition, NPOs relentlessly collaborate with international, philanthropic, and government agencies to secure funds and support for their youth-focused employment programmes.

give them a feeling of purpose and responsibility. In addition, NPOs relentlessly collaborate with international, philanthropic, and government agencies to secure funds and support for their youth-focused employment programmes. These have contributed to increasing youth participation in the labour market, including in securing jobs that are dignified and fulfilling, although the number of such jobs are unknown because of lack of data.

The review further revealed that NPOs use digital platforms for fundraising and advocacy. However, there is lack of in-depth information on the use of technology by NPOs in creating dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth. This is an area worth exploring in future research given that artificial intelligence is becoming widespread in the economy. There is less support for disabled youth, young women and other marginalised groups in terms of youth employment. This presents a great opportunity for NPOs to further develop their effort in these areas to ensure inclusive youth employment in Ghana while considering other potential areas.

The findings of this review have several implications. Given the limited financial resources of NPOs in Ghana, international organisations and donor agencies could provide more funds to cushion NPOs' efforts in creating dignified and fulfilling jobs for the country's youth. They also need help increasing their capacity. This includes training and securing resources to improve their capacity for programme design, monitoring and assessment, governance, and fundraising.

Also, NPOs in Ghana need a sustainable evaluation programme to monitor youth employment initiatives and their transition from insecure to dignified and fulfilling employment. In the same vein, the government should strengthen the regulation and operation of NPOs. The NPO secretariat of Ghana should encourage the submission of annual reports from NPOs to create a database to aid in assessing the overall impact of this sector, particularly in youth employment. Furthermore, the government should improve regulations and promote policies that will enable the youth to transition from the informal sector to the formal sector for a more decent and productive labour market. This might mean introducing legislation to promote collaboration between the public, private, and non-profit sectors. NPOs could also leverage the pockets of opportunities by providing digital skills training, green jobs, entrepreneurship, significant investment in agriculture and agribusiness, and other high-yielding areas.

Ultimately, however, creating dignified and fulfilling jobs requires the structural transformation of the economy of Ghana whereby the manufacturing sector, high-value-added services, and mechanised agriculture would be the main employers of labour, creating dignified and fulfilling jobs for the youth. NPOs should begin to advocate for this developmental approach if they want to make sustainable impacts on the economy and create decent jobs.

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44

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Contact:

Centre on African Philanthropy & Social Investment **(CAPSI)**

2 St David's Place, Parktown, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2193

P.O. Box 98, Wits, Johannesburg, South Africa

admin@capsi.co.za

www.capsi.co.za







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