

**THE CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY  
UNEMPLOYED YOUTH GRADUATES IN  
BOTSWANA: AN ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS  
PERSPECTIVE**

**By**

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## DECLARATION

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

April 2022

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## ABSTRACT

Education has always been recognised as the means to achieve change, create new ideas, initiate new practices and move towards increasing prosperity. Thus, in many developing countries, tertiary education is increasingly important in facilitating a move into employment as part of an effort to increase prosperity. In Botswana, however, recent evidence suggests that graduates from the country's tertiary institutions find it difficult to penetrate the labour market. Youth unemployment, especially graduate unemployment, has become a national concern in Botswana. It is normal for young graduates to expect to have a thriving career, yet, when these expectations are not met, unemployed graduates may face challenges in adapting to their situation.

To deal with unemployment of youth graduates, the Botswana government established numerous youth intervention initiatives and programmes. However, past and current youth intervention programmes have been unable to mitigate unemployment, resulting in many youth graduates not being employed, some for as long as 10 years. Being unemployed has given rise to Botswana youth graduates having to face many challenges as their unemployed status has influenced their lives in various ways. It was established that, in Botswana, there was no general research or research from a social work perspective on the challenges that unemployed youth graduates were experiencing, which highlighted the possibility of a lack of appropriate services available to unemployed youth graduates. The ecological systems perspective was utilised to illustrate how various factors were interacting on the different systems of the ecological systems theory, as well as how these factors were affecting unemployed youth graduates. The ecological systems perspective was applied as it indicates how people encounter different environments throughout their lives that may influence their behaviour in different ways.

A qualitative research approach together with exploratory and descriptive research designs were used to explore the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates in Botswana from an ecological systems perspective. Data was gathered through purposive and snowball sampling from the Unemployment Movement of Botswana and programme officers within the Ministry of Youth Empowerment Sport and Culture Development (MYESCD). Individual face-to-face, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were executed as data collection instruments. The research project took place in two phases. The first phase involved

twenty unemployed youth graduates and the second phase entailed having two focus group discussions with eight programme officers from the MYESCD who had been working with unemployed youth graduates in the second phase. In total 28 participants took part in the study. Seven themes were then extracted from the participant interviews by way of thematic analysis. These themes were then further divided into subthemes and categories.

It was found that unemployed youth graduates were experiencing challenges on the micro-, meso- and macro-levels of the ecological perspective. These challenges included psychological issues, for example, loss of self-esteem, sleeping disorders, depression and harbouring thoughts of suicide, physical challenges such as heart problems, headaches, and high blood pressure, as well as financial challenges such as not being able to provide for their loved ones, and being dependent on extended families. It was found that social work services were needed for unemployed youth graduates in order to promote their human dignity and rights.

It is recommended that the Botswana government evaluate existing youth intervention government initiatives and programmes to determine the effectiveness thereof. It is also recommended that the government of Botswana should review the National Youth Policy of 2010 in order to adapt it to include and address current challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates. Finally, it is recommended that needs assessment should be done to come up with programmes that are relevant and applicable to unemployed youth graduates of Botswana and that are not implemented one-size-fits all programmes.

## OPSOMMING

Opleiding word beskou as die manier om verandering te bewerkstellig, nuwe idees te ontwikkel, nuwe praktyke te begin, en welvaart te skep. Dus, in menige ontwikkelende lande is tersiêre onderwys uiters belangrik ten einde indiensneming te fasiliteer as deel van die poging om welvaart te ontwikkel. Tóg, is daar onlangs in Botswana aangedui dat gegradueerdes van tersiêre instellings, dit moeilik vind om die arbeidsmark te betree. Die werkloosheid van die jeug, en spesifiek gegradueerdes, het 'n nasionale probleem vir Botswana geraak. Vir jong gegradueerdes is dit normaal om na 'n vooruitstrewende loopbaan te streef, maar as sodanige verwagtinge nie realiseer nie, gaan die situasie vir werklose gegradueerde jongmense met baie uitdagings gepaard.

Om die werkloosheid van jong gegradueerdes aan te spreek, het die regering van Botswana verskeie intervensieprogramme en -inisiatiewe van stapel gestuur. Desnieteenstaande, het vorige en hedendaagse intervensieprogramme nie daarin geslaag om die werkloosheid onder jong gegradueerdes te bekamp nie, met die gevolg dat heelwat jong gegradueerdes steeds werkloos is, sommige reeds 'n dekade lank. Om werkloos te wees het veroorsaak dat jong gegradueerdes menige uitdagings moes hanteer, aangesien hulle werkloosheidstatus hul lewens op verskeie wyses beïnvloed het. Daar is vasgestel dat geen algemene navorsing of navorsing vanuit 'n maatskaplike werksbenadering oor die uitdagings wat werklose jong gegradueerdes moet hanteer in Botswana bestaan nie. Hierdie tekort aan navorsing het aandag daarop gevestig dat daar moontlik ook 'n tekort aan toepaslike beskikbare dienste vir jong werklose gegradueerdes is. Die ekologiese sisteemteorie is aangewend om aan te dui watter interaksie daar is tussen die verskillende faktore en verskillende sisteme van die ekologiese sisteemteorie, asook hoe hierdie faktore werklose jong gegradueerdes raak. Die ekologiese sisteemteorie is toegepas omdat dit aandui hoe mense verskillende omgewings in hulle leeftyd teëkom en hoe hierdie omgewings hulle gedrag op verskillende maniere beïnvloed.

'n Kwalitatiewe navorsingsbenadering tesame met 'n verkennende en beskrywende navorsingsontwerp is toegepas om die uitdagings wat werklose jong gegradueerdes in Botswana ervaar vanuit 'n ekologiese sisteemperspektief te verken. Data is ingesamel deur middel van doelgerigte en sneeubalsteekproefneming vanaf die "Unemployment Movement" van Botswana en programbeamptes werksaam by die Ministry of Youth Empowerment Sport and Culture Development (MYESCD). Individuele in-persoon semi-gestruktureerde

onderhoude en fokusgroepbesprekings het as instrumente van data-insameling gedien. Die navorsingsprojek het in twee fases plaasgevind. Twintig werklose jong gegradueerdes was by die eerste fase van die navorsing betrokke, en twee fokusgroepbesprekings is met agt programbeamptes van die MYESCD wat met werklose jong gegradueerders gewerk het, in die tweede fase gehou. In totaal was daar 28 persone wat aan die studie deelgeneem het. Die deelnemers se onderhoude is deur middel van tematiese analise ontleed en sewe temas is aangedui. Hierdie temas is daarna in subtemas en kategorieë verdeel.

Daar is vasgestel dat jong gegradueerdes uitdagings op die mikro-, meso-, en makrovlakke van die ekologiese perspektief ervaar. Hierdie uitdagings sluit enigiets in van sielkundige kwessies, byvoorbeeld, selfbeeldprobleme, slaaploosheid, depressie en gedagtes oor selfdood, fisiese uitdagings, soos hartprobleme, hoofpyne, en hoë bloeddruk, tot finansiële uitdagings soos om nie in staat te wees om vir jou geliefdes te sorg nie en om van uitgebreide gesinne afhanklik te wees. Daar is gevind dat maatskaplike werk dienste wel vir werklose jong gegradueerders benodig word ten einde hulle menslike waardighede en regte te bevorder.

Dit word aanbeveel dat die regering van Botswana die bestaande jeug intervensieprogramme en regeringsinisiatiewe evalueer ten einde die sukses daarvan vas te stel. Dit word ook aanbeveel dat die regering van Botswana die Nasionale Jeugbeleid van 2010 hersien, ten einde dit aan te pas sodat die uitdagings wat die werklose jong gegradueerders moet ervaar, aangespreek word. Ten slotte, word dit aanbeveel dat 'n behoeftebepaling gedoen word sodat daar met programme vorendag gekom kan word wat relevant en toepaslik is vir die werklose jong gegradueerdes van Botswana en wat nie net algemeen van aard is nie.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BIDPA	Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis
BGCSE	Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education
BMTHS	Botswana Multi-Topic Household Survey
BNIP	Botswana National Internship Programme
BOSASNet	Botswana Substance Abuse Support Network
CEDA	Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency
CSWE	Council on Social Work Education
DESC	Departmental Ethics Screening Committee
EU	European Union
GVS	Graduate Volunteer Scheme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRDC	Human Resource Development Council
IASSW	International Association of Schools of Social Work
IFSW	International Federation of Social Work
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ILO	International Labour Organization
LMO	Labour Market Observatory
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MYESCD	Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development
NASW	National Association of Social Workers
PAYE	Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment
PHC	Population Housing Census
REC	Research Ethics Committee
RNYP	Revised National Youth Policy

S&CD	Social and Community Development
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organisation
WPAY	World Programme of Action on Youth
YDF	Youth Development Fund
YFF	Young Farmers' Fund

## **CHAPTER 1:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1. RATIONALE FOR STUDY**

As part of the preliminary study and rational the focus of this study will be on youth unemployment in Botswana, as well as the response of the Botswana government to unemployed youth graduates.

#### **1.1 GLOBAL YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT**

Youth unemployment is currently a global phenomenon with unemployment rates that have been increasing for more than a decade. In the largest one-year increase on record, youth unemployment increased from 11.8 to 12.7% between 2008 and 2009. In the previous 10 years, from 1998 to 2008, global youth unemployment increased by a total of 0.2% or about 100 000 persons per year, but from 2008 to 2009 it increased by 5.3%, or 4.5 million persons, in a single year. The global rate of youth unemployment was at 13% in 2016 up from 12.9% in 2015 and remained at that level through to 2017. But, by the end of 2020 it increased to 13.6% with an estimated 68 million young people being unemployed (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2020; 2017; United Nations, 2012; Breen, 2005; International Labour Organization, 2012a). The current COVID-19 pandemic has made the future of unemployed youth graduates even bleaker as it plunged the world of work into a crisis with less and less jobs available in the labour market. COVID-19 also worsened the situation as unemployed graduates are now also competing with job seekers who were previously employed but may have lost their jobs during the pandemic.

In addition to an increasing number of unemployed youth graduates, the number of young people in the general population of many developing countries continues to grow significantly, further putting pressure on youth labour markets whilst exacerbating already high youth unemployment rates (ILO, 2015; UNDESA, 2018; United Nations, 2002). In African developing countries, such as South Africa, the unemployment rate of young people rose from 32.1% in 2008 to 37.5 % in the second quarter of 2016 (Statistics South Africa, 2016). As in other African countries, South Africa is concerned with its unemployment statistics because

people who have the potential to contribute their skills and output to the economy of the country, are excluded from employment opportunities (Magagula, 2017).

### **1.1.1 Youth unemployment in Botswana**

Across Botswana unemployment rates are higher for young people than for the rest of the population. Slightly over a decade ago, unemployment in Botswana was largely structural in nature. Those who possessed tertiary education qualifications had better chances of being employed in the formal sector (Siphambe, Kolobe & Oageng, 2018). However, during the last two decades, the country has been challenged with growing numbers of unemployed university graduates (Siphambe, 2007; Bosupeng, 2015).

Youth refers to a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood that leads to self-discovery and positioning of oneself within society. Youth in Botswana is defined as young women and men who fall within the age bracket of 15 to 35 years. Botswana's youth accounts for 43% of the population and this group has unique developmental challenges which require unique approaches and interventions (Government of Botswana, 2010b).

In the most recent Botswana Multi-topic Household Survey (BMTHS 2015/16) unemployment was simply defined as individuals who were not doing any work in the seven days prior to commencement of data collection (Statistics Botswana, 2018). However, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO) unemployment refers to the share of the labour force that is without work but available for and seeking employment. This description covers people who are out of work, want a job, have actively sought work in the previous four weeks and are available to start work within the next fortnight, or those out of work but who have accepted a job that they are waiting to start in the next fortnight (ILO, 2016). This definition is similar to how unemployment is defined in South Africa (Du Toit, De Witte, Rothmann & Van den Broeck, 2018; Statistics South Africa, 2019). For the purposes of this study, the definition of the ILO (2016) will be accepted as it provides a more comprehensive description of unemployment than that of the BMTHS in Botswana.

Botswana faces challenges of high youth unemployment rates, particularly amongst the university graduates. The unemployment rates of graduates have been on the rise and were estimated at 16.6% in 2016 (Statistics Botswana, 2018). As in South Africa, the Botswana government defines graduates as individuals who have received diplomas, degrees or technical qualifications on completing a course of study (Pauw, Oosthuizen & Van der Westhuizen,

2008; Statistics Botswana, 2016). The definition in this study will deviate from the above and not include diploma and technical qualifications as the focus of this research is on university graduates who are unemployed. Therefore, unemployed educated youth for the purpose of this study will be young persons between the age of 25 and 35 years with a university degree, who have been without work, are actively looking for work, and are capable of working. These are people who have the potential to contribute skills and output in the economy of the country and are excluded from employment opportunities.

One of the major reasons for the high number of unemployed youth in Botswana is the limited capacity of the country's economy to generate enough positions for employment to absorb the growing number of youth with employable skills. Resulting out of this growing unemployment rate, is the phenomenon of poverty, because as the youth migrate from the rural to urban areas in anticipation of jobs and better lives, the majority of them end up unemployed and being subjected to poor living conditions. This in turn has caused the dynamics of poverty in the country to change, showing an increase in poverty in urban areas. (Gaetsewe, 2019; Statistics Botswana, 2013).

### **1.1.2 Response of Botswana government to unemployed youth graduates**

In response to the problem of unemployed youth, the Botswana government developed the National Youth Policy (Republic of Botswana, 2010b) with the aim to guide the government and ensure coordination of programmes and activities that would directly or indirectly benefit the youth and the country. The government then developed empowerment programmes such as the Youth Development Fund (YDF) with the aim to promote active participation of the youth in the socio-economic development of the country through venturing into sustainable and viable income generating projects. The YDF is a viable income-generating programme that was initially designed for the uneducated youth, however, because the problem with unemployed educated youth was escalating, the Botswana government started including the educated youth in this programme.

Another programme is the Botswana National Internship Programme (BNIP) in terms whereof unemployed graduates are eligible to be employed as interns for placement in the government and/or private sector for a maximum period of two years. The main aim of this programme is to facilitate the transfer of youth employability and to aid with a smooth integration of graduates into the economy (Diraditsile, 2017; Republic of Botswana, 2008b). In terms of the

BNIP each participant receives an allowance of P1400.00 per month (120 USD). This programme has been able to provide some relief to the problem of unemployment as it has given some youth graduates the opportunity to be absorbed into the economy, however, there are issues concerning the little allowances paid and that the majority of interns return to become unemployed again after completion of their two-year tenure (Baatweng, 2015).

In April 2015, the Botswana government introduced another programme called the Graduate Volunteer Scheme (GVS); a scheme that targets unemployed graduate youth who have not been taken up in the BNIP. According to the Botswana government the intention of this programme was to facilitate skills development and transfer thereof to young graduates, to contribute to community development, to promote the spirit of volunteerism, to improve resilience of the graduate youth, and to reduce idle time. The GVS was introduced to contribute to community projects as well as to improve the graduates' employment readiness through providing on-the-job training and experience (Republic of Botswana, 2015b). In terms of this programme, each participant receives a meal allowance of P600.00 (53 USD) per month. Although the GVS has good intentions, there are issues, such as the insufficient allowances and the notion that the Botswana government is exploiting the unemployed educated youth in the name of volunteerism (Diraditsile, 2017; Republic of Botswana, 2015b).

The Botswana National Internship Programme (BNIP) and the Graduate Volunteer Scheme (GVS) are somehow similar in terms of what they want to achieve and also in terms of not providing sufficient allowances. However, none of these programmes focus on providing long-term solutions to the problem of graduate unemployment. Instead, there is a sentiment that the government implemented these temporary unemployment relief programmes to be exploitative and only to provide relief in the short term (Baatweng, 2015).

In 2005 the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency's (CEDA) Young Farmers Fund was created to assist aspiring youth to venture into commercial agriculture in both livestock and pastoral farming. In addition to offering subsidised loans, the Young Farmers Fund (YFF) includes a component of training to ensure that youth beneficiaries have skills to manage their enterprises. All enterprises financed by CEDA must be secured to the Agency's satisfaction and must have up to 100% security cover depending on the viability of the business or enterprise and the amount of risk that the Agency is prepared to take. However, in order to get a loan from CEDA the applicant must have acceptable collateral such as tangible assets and real estate, and all assets financed must form part of the security (CEDA Guidelines, 2008).

These conditions are problematic to young people as most of them cannot meet the requirements and, due to the lack of required security, cannot access this programme.

### **1.1.3 Challenges of unemployed youth graduates**

Unemployed youth graduates may experience many challenges. One of the challenges of youth unemployment is the individual's inability to be independent due to them not being able to take care of their own needs and those of their family members or loved ones. The effects of unemployment on the individual's well-being have been documented and include physical and psychological effects (De Witte, Pienaar & De Cuyper, 2016; Creed & Watson, 2003; McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg & Kinicki, 2005). Physical effects include an increase in headaches, sleep problems, lack of energy, hypertension and heart and kidney disease. Psychological effects include increased hostility, depression, anxiety, stress, anger and personal identity issues. Moreover, studies have found that youth unemployment is associated with an increase in drug and alcohol use, as well as a bigger chance of becoming involved in criminal activities such as selling illicit drugs or engaging in extortionist activities, vandalism, burglary and theft (Bridging Europe, 2014).

The challenges associated with unemployment have a negative effect, not only on the future employability of young people, their self-esteem and their role in society, but also as it can cause a serious economic burden on state finances. Being young and unemployed can further lead to an increase in the risk of poverty, deskilling, social exclusion, and mental health problems. Unemployment also leads to a decrease in motivation. Being employed is important for young people in order to feel accepted in society, thus, not having a job can cause economic, cultural and social isolation. Another challenge that unemployed graduates face is that of frustration or worthlessness as graduates may interpret the fact that they are not able to find a job as a sign of personal inadequacy, and this self-blame may affect their self-esteem, especially when graduates were made to believe that education would pave the way to increased job opportunities (Van der Meer & Wielers, 2016; Paledi, 2000).

Being an unemployed youth graduate within a family has different challenges for the youth as well as the family, as the unemployed youth graduate often attach themselves to families, relatives or loved ones who are able to take care of their basic needs to survive (Maitoza, 2019; Witte, Rothmann & Jackson, 2012; Lucas, Clark, Georgellis & Diener, 2004). Unemployed youth are more likely to become dependent on family rather than risk becoming poor and being

marginalised from mainstream society (Nordenmark, 2017; Rouksar-Dussoyea, Ming-Kand, Rajeswari & Yin-Fah, 2017; Matsumoto & Elder, 2010; Jacob, 2008). Food security is one of the needs of unemployed educated youth who, due to them not earning any money and being poor, are unable to provide or contribute sufficient or good quality food for their family. The families of unemployed educated youth often have to live in overcrowded homes which could contribute to family violence. Being an unemployed educated youth within a family could create challenges, such as an increase in spousal abuse, marital friction, spousal depression, family conflict and child abuse, as well as a decrease in family cohesion and the well-being of children. When there are children in the family, they could go hungry or become malnourished since the family lives in poverty (Klasen & Woolard, 2009). This in turn places a strain on the family resources, not only financially, but also affecting how the family copes with the situation (Nordenmark, 2017; Klasen & Woolard, 2009). Finally, the unemployed educated youth could perceive themselves as a burden to their families as they are not contributing to the family income.

In a community or society, the challenges of high youth unemployment represent lost potential for national economic transformation. Being young, educated but unemployed, coupled with social inequalities, could lead to economically frustrated youth that may contribute to, or cause, social instability (International Labour Organization, 2012a). Social instabilities have been observed in South Africa and Botswana where youth unemployment often result in economic alienation as well as alienation from the political mainstream (Neethling, 2016). When becoming economically alienated whilst dealing with social inequalities, unemployed youth end up frequently participating in disruptive and sometimes violent street protests (Neethling, 2016). These street protests or political instability particularly occurs in countries where youth unemployment as well as social inequalities are high. Basically, economic conditions are the most critical determinants triggering political instability in developing countries (Azeng & Yogo, 2013). It is clear from the above discussion that unemployment could have psychological, economic and social effects on the unemployed youth and that youth unemployment has consequences on every level of society.

Ecological theory indicates that we encounter different environments throughout our lifespan that may influence our behaviour in different ways, therefore the effects of unemployment are related to all levels of the ecological perspective. The origin of the ecological perspective can be traced back to biological theories that explain how organisms adapt to their environments.

The term ecology refers to an organism and its interdependence with a natural environment. The conventional description of the ecology concept focuses on the interdisciplinary and scientific study of the living conditions of organisms in interaction with each other and their organic and inorganic surroundings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The focus of the ecological perspective is therefore on interrelated transactions between systems in terms whereof all existing elements within an ecosystem play an equal role in maintaining the balance of the whole. To gain an understanding of the interrelated transactions between unemployed graduates and their environment, the ecological perspective can be a suitable point of departure.

Having established that the unemployed educated youth and their families must deal with many effects and challenges of unemployment, it is clear that these challenges could indicate a serious need for social work services to support the youth and their families in order to manage and address the above-mentioned issues. By providing such services, social workers could also assist unemployed graduates in developing coping mechanisms to deal with their unemployment while searching for jobs (Heed, 2012).

According to Ishmuhametov and Palma (2017), government policies are supposed to focus on fulfilling the needs of citizens. To do so, government must first establish what these needs are, not only to develop services but to determine if certain policies are applicable to the situation their citizens are in. However, to determine if the response of the government towards unemployment is adequate, it is first necessary to consider the challenges that the unemployed graduates are experiencing on different levels of society. Furthermore, it should be established what, and if, any social work services are delivered to the unemployed youth. Literature, however, concludes that little to no research has been done about specifically social work services being rendered to unemployed graduate youth (Levin & Sefati, 2018; Kroll & Blomberg, 2010; Hollertz, 2010). It is thus clear that the Botswana government should not only focus on entrepreneurial programmes, but that they should also focus on determining the challenges of unemployed graduates to ascertain appropriate service delivery that should include social work services.

#### **1.1.4 Social work services to unemployed graduate youth in Botswana**

Social work services aimed at the Botswana youth fall under the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development (MYESCD). This Ministry was formed in the early 2000s, and one of its departments, the Department of Youth, originally recruited many

social workers as youth and/or programme officers to create an enabling environment for young people to participate in the development of the country and to empower these young people to become self-reliant (Jongman, 2010). These youth and/or programme officers in the MYESCD are tasked to advise young people on the businesses they want to venture into and assist the youth in businesses in remote areas. These programme officers must also try to empower the youth in sustaining their businesses (Jongman, 2010). The Ministry's point of departure was that all unemployed graduates are interested to become involved in entrepreneurial ventures, therefore there is a strong focus on entrepreneurial activities in the programmes that the Ministry presents. Although many of these programme/youth officers are social workers, there are also officers from other disciplines who are working as youth officers, as it is the Ministry's mandate to deliver entrepreneurial programmes rather than social work services, and to ensure that these programmes are implemented (Jongman, 2020).

Despite the Ministry's efforts to address the unemployment situation in Botswana, the rate of unemployment has been increasing with many graduated youth living in poverty, facing the challenges linked to poverty as indicated earlier in this chapter. The role of the MYESCD is to create an enabling environment for youth empowerment, sport development and preservation of culture and heritage in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to enhance unity and pride of the people of Botswana. It can thus be deduced that the role of social workers in the MYESCD is limited to empowering youth to start their own businesses or to utilise some of the other programmes discussed earlier in this chapter. The focus of these services is mainly on the employment of youth graduates and does not take into account that, in the absence of having a job, graduates face other challenges.

It could be concluded that existing government programmes could perhaps not address the specific challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates and that social work responses are not tailored to the needs of this target group. If the Ministry does not render social work services to unemployed graduates, where do they go for such services? In general social workers and social work services focus on enhancing people's well-being, on alleviating poverty, oppression and other forms of injustice. Social workers also try to enhance the social functioning of individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities by involving them in accomplishing goals, developing resources, and preventing and alleviating distress. These outcomes are often reached by pursuing policies, services and resources through advocacy and social or political action that promote social and economic justice (IFSW, 2014; CSWE, 2002).

However, there is a lack of literature on social work services being delivered to unemployed youth in Botswana as well as the international social work community (Liang, Ng, Tsui, Yan & Lam, 2017; Roets, Roose, Claes, Vanderkinderen, Van Hove & Vanderplasschen, 2012). The little available literature discusses the missing but emergent role of social work with unemployed young people. Youth unemployment receives relatively little attention, even among social workers. Literature suggests that social workers should advocate for suitable employment policies, should conduct assessments on the needs of unemployed people, and should provide social work services to assist unemployed people in job searches (Levin & Sefati, 2018; Liang et al., 2017). Furthermore, there seems to be a lack of focus on the challenges that the unemployed youth experience as well as the social work services that are required to address these challenges. More than a decade ago, Lambert (2008) indicated that much of the literature on the role of social workers when rendering services to the unemployed focused on getting the individual into employment. However, as the youth unemployment is so excessive on the African continent, it is clear that resources should be channelled to include support services, such as social work service delivery to ameliorate the challenges that unemployed graduate youth experience.

Moreover, because of the various types of challenges that youth graduates experience, such as family, community and poverty issues, there should be social work services to support them in terms of individual and family problems that could be caused by them being unemployed. As mentioned earlier, unemployed youth graduates could also be facing other challenges like drug and alcohol abuse, suffering from depression and low self-esteem, having relationship problems, and being the cause of, or subjected to, family violence; all issues that require broader social work services than just trying to find employment for the graduated youth. If the MYESCD programme officers are finding it difficult to get graduated youth into businesses and employment, then the Botswana government should consider that because graduate youth unemployment creates many other social problems, the social workers in the MYESCD should also focus on helping those unemployed graduates to cope with and manage their social problems. Yet, despite the large number of unemployed youth graduates in Botswana, to this date, no study has been done on the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates from ecological systems perspective resulting in a lack of information about the plight of this particular group in the Botswana context. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the challenges experienced by unemployed graduates and the possible need for social work services to improve the current response to this social issue, in terms of policy, legislation and services.

Although studies had been done in Botswana on youth unemployment, most of these studies focused on gaining a general understanding of youth unemployment in Botswana (Sipambe, 2003; Malema, 2014) without addressing specific targeted groups as in this study, where the target group is youth graduates who are unemployed. None of the above-mentioned studies focused on the challenges of unemployed youth graduates in Botswana from an ecological perspective within a social work context. This means that there are uncertainties about the challenges the youth are experiencing on the different levels of the ecological perspective and that the focus could not only be on getting them employed as is suggested in international literature. Furthermore, if the focus of service delivery is shifted to also be on social work programmes and services it could not be implemented without a thorough needs assessment, which is currently not available in Botswana. It is thus evident that a study to investigate and analyse the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates is critical; not only to determine the challenges experienced by unemployed graduates, but also to determine their needs, so that the response of government and the social work profession could be tailored to the lived experiences of this target group in the Botswana context, as well as to stimulate awareness of their plight.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Youth unemployment has been identified as a challenge in need of a solution. Many graduates in Botswana are frustrated as they are on the lookout for employment opportunities which are not available to them. Socially, it is expected of graduates to have a thriving career once they received their qualifications (Mok, Han, Jiang & Zhang, 2018; Hlahla, 2008; Crawford, 2005). That is why research has shown that when educated youth fail to meet society's expectations, they may find themselves isolated from social systems in their environments which should have been their sources of support during a time of unemployment (Liao & Liu, 2019; Goldsmith, Veum & Darity, 1997).

Programmes in the MYESCD in Botswana have been developed with a focus of stimulating entrepreneurial ventures without a proper needs assessment of the challenges faced by this target group. Without knowledge about the challenges experienced by unemployed graduates, service delivery cannot be tailored to the needs of unemployed graduates. As no study is available on the challenges that unemployed youth are experiencing from an ecological systems perspective, there is uncertainty about the type of services needed to support this vulnerable group within the Botswana context. In the light hereof a need was identified to study

the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates from an ecological perspective, as well as their need to social work services within the Botswana context.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Research questions serve as indicators pointing to and explaining or informing the goal of the research study, as well as being a guide for the research study (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the researcher asked the following research questions:

- What are the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates in Botswana on the different levels of the ecological perspective?
- What are the views of unemployed graduates about the social work services needed?
- What are the social work services that should be rendered to meet the needs of unemployed youth graduates?

### **1.4 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The goal of this study was to gain an understanding of the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates from an ecological systems perspective to determine the need for social work services.

This goal was achieved by means of the following objectives in line with the ecological perspective:

- To contextualise unemployment of youth graduates from a global, regional and local perspective within the Botswana context.
- To analyse the possible challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates from an ecological systems perspective.
- To identify the social work services applicable to unemployed youth graduates.
- To investigate the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates in Botswana from an ecological systems perspective, as well as their need for social work services.
- To make recommendations in terms of policy, legislation and service rendering about the challenges experienced by unemployed graduates from an ecological perspective.

## 1.5 THEORETICAL POINTS OF DEPARTURE

A theoretical overview, through which the challenges experienced by unemployed educated youth, could be reflected on, served as a point of departure. The ecological systems perspective by Bronfenbrenner (1979) was utilised as a theoretical framework in the context of this study. The ecological systems theory also enhanced the understanding of labour market barriers to disadvantaged groups, such as educated youth, within a larger social network comprising of four elements, namely the micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). In line with the ecological perspective the researcher's objective was to look at the relationship between the individual (micro-level), the family (meso-level) and society (macro-level), as well as societal issues that were impacting the individual and family and vice versa.

One of the weaknesses of the ecological systems theory is that it proposes that all factors must be considered in terms of systems thinking, meaning that even the smallest factor of influence must be understood as part of a multifaceted system of influence (Watts, 2013). All factors then become mutually and systematically influential, even the smallest factor, which makes Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory very difficult to implement in practice (Taylor, 2016).

However, the ecological systems perspective provides strategies that allow the social worker to move from a micro-level of intervention to a macro-level of social treatment (Bronfenbrenner, 2005.) This perspective was applicable to the study because it utilises the primary methods of social work and ranges from individual case work (micro-practice) to group work (meso-practice) to community work (macro-practice), which is in line with the generalist approach to social work service delivery followed in Botswana. The focus of the discussion is on the experience of the challenges of educated youth within the different systems of the ecological systems perspective.

The microsystem focuses on the relationship between the person and the environment wherein the person is embedded, such as interpersonal relationships with others within a social structure which is the primary setting where youths spend most of the time, i.e., family and peers. Interventions dealing with unemployment that focus on the individual level provide psychological and financial support, and training in capacity building. At the micro-level, the youth may need to develop coping mechanisms that will assist them in finding jobs (Heed, 2012).

The mesosystem focuses on the relationship between two or more microsystems where an individual actively participates, for example, home, school and work. It is at this level that unemployed educated youth may have to rely on their support networks to assist them to identify work opportunities, and also to ensure that there is a free flow of information they may require to find employment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Focus should be on interventions dealing with the problem of unemployment by enhancing the social network of people who are unemployed, in order to provide a support system that can lead to increased access to job opportunities. Social support can be in a form of informal groups, community centres and strong relationships with friends and family members.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) the exosystem in the ecological model contains social structures, including employment opportunities, public services, the neighbourhood, social service providers, mass media, and health services that influence and may determine a person's settings. However, for the purpose of this study, the exosystem will be included in the macrosystem.

The macrosystem includes the blue print of society and how society is perceived. At a national level there are elements deemed to be correct by society that should be followed. These elements are captured as government acts, policies, and regulations as well as the norm and culture of society (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The economic and cultural belief structures are examples of structures that influence graduate unemployment as they make decisions regarding policies or form opinions regarding the unemployed. The macrosystem in this study refers to the possible challenges of unemployed graduates at national level because of the impact of existing laws, policies, and programmes on this target group in Botswana. Within this macrosystem of the ecological model, the many ways in which policy interventions can contribute to help solve the problem of unemployment will also be highlighted as policies enhance and provide support to all other interventions that are tasked to solve the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates at other levels. Therefore, the ecological system perspective was appropriate to use as theoretical underpinning in order to understand the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates in Botswana.

## **1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This section briefly details the research approach, research design, population, sampling, research method, data collection, data analysis and limitations followed by ethical considerations. An in-depth discussion is presented in Chapter 5.

### **1.6.1 Research approach**

This study made use of the qualitative approach. The advantage of qualitative research is the extent to which it can identify meanings that accurately represent participants' perspectives on the research topic (Grove & Gray, 2019). The qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014). This approach was useful in this study because the researcher wanted to investigate challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates in order to come up with recommendations for the rendering of social work services (Creswell, 2013).

The qualitative approach appeared to be the appropriate choice for this study, because it allowed the researcher to focus on obtaining rich data that was descriptive and gave meaning to the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates in Botswana (Greeff, 2005; Babbie & Mouton, 2007). Conducting face-to-face semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions furthermore provided the researcher with an opportunity to gain rich data for analysis.

### **1.6.2 Research design**

The purpose of the study was to identify the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates, and to explore their need for social work service delivery in Botswana. In order to achieve the goal of the study, an exploratory and descriptive research design was employed.

Exploratory research is conducted in cases where the researcher hopes to develop insight into a situation, phenomenon, community, or individual. The need for such research arises out of the lack of information on a certain topic or area of interest (Roestenburg, Strydom & Fouché 2021; Grove & Gray, 2019; De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, 2011). Therefore, the exploratory research design fits well within the goal of the study because no research has been done on the challenges experienced by unemployed graduates in Botswana from the viewpoint of the ecological systems perspective.

Descriptive research presents a picture of the specific details of a situation, the social setting thereof, as well as the relationships therein. The descriptive research furthermore focuses on the how and why questions (Roestenburg, Strydom & Fouché 2021; Grove & Gray, 2019; De Vos et al., 2011). Therefore, the use of this design in the study allowed for a more intensive examination and deeper understudy of the phenomena, thereby leading to a thicker description of the needs and challenges of unemployed youth graduates. The use of this design, together with the exploratory research, are appropriate when a subject being studied is relatively new, such as the challenges (which are currently unknown) experienced by unemployed youth graduates in Botswana within an ecological systems perspective.

### **1.6.3 Population and sampling**

The study population refers to the entire set from which the study participants are drawn (Roestenburg, Strydom & Fouché, 2021; Neuman, 2006; Greeff, 2005). The population in this study was unemployed youth graduates, as well as programme officers working at the MYESCD. The research project was done in two phases with two groups of participants. The first group consisted of twenty unemployed youth graduates, while the second included eight programme officers who had experience working with unemployed youth graduates.

Sampling is defined as a subset of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study. The planned method of sampling entailed both purposive sampling, where a clear definition of the population and intended sample is crucial (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Maree, 2016), and snowball sampling, where the researcher had limited access to appropriate participants and in which research participants were asked to assist the researcher in identifying other potential participants (Maree, 2016; Bryman, 2015), as was the case with the unemployed youth graduates.

A letter was written to the Unemployment Movement of Botswana, and approval was granted for the researcher to collect data. The Movement is based in Gaborone which is the largest city in Botswana with a population of 278 712 people and with an unemployed rate of 15.5% (Botswana Statistics, 2019). After receiving approval from the Unemployment Movement of Botswana, the researcher contacted the leadership of the Movement and requested to go with them to their meetings. He then asked for a time to speak to the youth at these meetings and explained the research study and gave his particulars to them to contact him. The researcher attended one meeting and explained the study. After the meeting, the researcher was available

to discuss some issues with interested youth and got their contact numbers and organised interviews. The researcher started with five participants from the Movement and utilised snowball sampling by asking every participant to provide him with contacts of graduates that they knew who might be interested in taking part in the study. The researcher then used phone calls to set up appointments with these graduates. Accordingly, the criteria for inclusion for the first phase were that the participants had to be:

- graduates between the ages of 25 and 35 who were citizens of Botswana with a degree from tertiary institutions and good command of English language and have never had a job; and
- geographically staying in Gaborone and surrounding areas as that is where the researcher lives with access to the participants, and as Gaborone is the capital of Botswana with the highest number of unemployed graduates in the country as graduates move to Gaborone in search of employment opportunities. The unemployment definition as indicated earlier in the chapter would apply to the inclusion/exclusion criteria.

After the completion of the first phase of the research, the second phase focused on data collection from the Ministry of Empowerment, Youth, Sport and Culture (MYESCD). Two focus group discussions were conducted by the researcher with programme officers from the MYESCD to determine their views on the programmes implemented to address the unemployment situation in the country, as well as the types of services they were rendering to unemployed educated youth. Focus groups discussions are group interviews that capitalise on communication between research participants to generate data, thus explicitly using group interaction as part of the data collection method (Roestenburg, Strydom & Fouché 2021; Greeff, 2005).

The researcher wrote a letter to the MYESCD asking for approval for having the focus group discussions with programme officers for purposes of research, and consent was granted. After approval to conduct the research was granted, the researcher contacted the leadership of MYESCD who made the names and contact details of the participants available. The researcher then used phone calls to set up appointments with the identified programme officers.

For programme officers to be included in the sample of the focus group, officers had to:

- be programme officers who were working at the MYESCD for a minimum of two years and who had exposure to unemployed youth graduates;
- have a good command of the English language; and
- be working geographically in Gaborone, the south-east region of Botswana.

#### **1.6.4 Research site**

The research about unemployed youth graduates was conducted in Gaborone (urban area). The research for programme officers working at the MYESCD was conducted in Gaborone and Tlokweng (a peri-urban area) for programme officers. Both areas are situated in the south-east region of Botswana. The researcher chose these areas because they were close to where the researcher was situated in Gaborone allowing easy access to these areas and also because Gaborone is the capital city of Botswana to where most graduates migrates from rural areas in search of employment opportunities.

#### **1.6.5 Research instruments**

Qualitative interviews are generally minimally structured, audio-recorded and transcribed. The data collection for this qualitative study was done by means of a semi-structured interview schedule, which is mainly used to grant lengthy, valuable explanations from participants to gain knowledge of the research topic (Roestenburg, Strydom & Fouché 2021; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Maree, 2016; Wasserman, Clair & Wilson, 2013). The researcher used face-to-face, semi-structured interviews to gain in-depth information regarding the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates from an ecological systems perspective. Interview schedules for both unemployed youth graduates and programme officers, containing open-ended questions, were used as research instruments to collect qualitative data (see Appendix C & D).

The questions for the semi-structured interview schedules were developed based on the literature studied in order to guide the research interview and to stimulate the individual responses of the research participants. After consent from participants was obtained, this study made use of a voice recorder to audiotape the interviews. These interviews were then transcribed (Maree, 2016).

A pilot study was conducted to test the semi-structured interview schedule. The pilot study used only two participants who were part of the leadership of the Unemployed Movement and

it was done before attending the meeting to recruit participants. A pilot study is valuable because it enables the researcher to establish the suitability of the interview schedule and make necessary adjustments before interviewing the participants. The pilot study did not suggest that the interview schedule be amended, furthermore the participants from the pilot study were not added into the data analysis because their role was just to help in focusing the study and to determine if the data collection instrument is applicable.

### 1.6.6 Data analysis

After the data had been gathered, it had to be analysed and interpreted (Roestenburg, Strydom & Fouché 2021; Greeff, 2005; Patton, 2002). Structure and meaning were then brought to the data by a process of critical reflection, making linkages, seeking explanations and contemplating reasons for actions and behaviours. Common themes and trends from the transcribed interviews and focus group were organised into meaningful themes and subthemes, following a seven-step process of the constant comparative analytic template (Roestenburg, Strydom & Fouché 2021; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Bezeley, 2007). The researcher used the Atlas ti software package to assist in this process. This allowed for the systematic presentation of the findings, which were compared to the literature presented in the literature review chapters. Inductive conclusions were then formulated about the population from which the sample was drawn (Siepert, McMurty & McClelland, 2005).

## 1.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The researcher improved trustworthiness by applying the following principles: **Credibility** was maintained by the interviewer using an accurate reflection of the information provided by the participants (Roestenburg, Strydom & Fouché 2021; De Vos et al., 2011; Cho & Trent, 2006). Credibility was further ensured by utilising the service of an independent coder to conclude the data process. **Confirmability** refers to the point at which findings of the study can be validated by other people, this was done by asking two participants to read the transcripts to verify whether an honest reflection of the interviews was recorded (Roestenburg, Strydom & Fouché 2021; De Vos et al., 2011). **Reflexivity** emphasises the importance of self-awareness, political or cultural consciousness, and ownership of one's perspective. It involves a critical self-reflection of the researcher's potential biases, predispositions and modifications made in the methodology (Patton, 2002). The researcher will discuss these aspects and how the researcher utilised them in the research in more details in Chapter 5.

## **1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In the following section the ethical issues that were considered in the study are discussed.

### **1.8.1 Ethical clearance**

The nature of this study was such that it explored deeply personal experiences or challenges of unemployed youth graduates. This research was therefore considered to be medium risk in terms of ethical concerns. The research was conducted under guidance and supervision of the Department of Social Work at Stellenbosch University. The proposal was submitted to the Departmental Ethics Screening Committee (DESC) of Stellenbosch University for approval. Ethical clearance from the institutions where participants were drawn from was sought before the research could be conducted. The researcher followed the rules and procedures as indicated in the proposal in terms of assuring confidentiality for the information that were gathered. An empathetic, non-invasive approach was followed during the interviews. All the participants of this study were given the option to be referred for debriefing to an independent counsellor. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Research Ethics Committee suspended all face-to-face interviews. However, since the lockdown regulations were different in Botswana where face-to-face interviews were allowed, the researcher had to write to the ethical committee to explain the measures put in place for the safety of the researcher and participants before the researcher could proceed with the interviews. The researcher was asked to provide more information on the proposed protocol for physical contact during the research due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and ethical clearance was granted. These aspects will be discussed at length in Chapter 5.

### **1.8.2 Ethical issues**

In this section ethical issues that were considered in this research are discussed. These include avoidance of harm, voluntary participation, informed consent and confidentiality.

#### ***1.8.2.1 Avoidance of harm***

Since the researcher discussed the experience of being unemployed with the participants, they could become emotional with a consequential risk of harm. To ensure that participants were not physically, emotionally or psychologically harmed (Strydom, 2011), the researcher had access to the services of a psychologist, Dr. Sefapaano Gaborone (Cell number 71617747) to debrief the participants if it was required. Dr. Gaborone has been a private psychologist for the previous fifteen years and was the owner of a counselling clinic in Gaborone. However, none

of the participants in this study requested any debriefing, although it was made clear that they could utilise Dr Gaborone's service. (For an example of the agreement to debriefing, please refer to Appendix H).

### ***1.8.2.2 Voluntary participation***

Participation in the study was voluntary. To ensure that no one felt that they were forced to partake, the researcher informed the participants that it was their choice entirely to participate in the study and that they could withdraw from the study at any time if they felt uncomfortable (Strydom, 2011). Participants were recruited through the Unemployment Movement for unemployed graduates and through the MYESCD for programme officers. No participant withdrew from the study.

### ***1.8.2.3 Informed consent***

Acquiring informed consent implies that all information regarding the aim of the research, the processes to be followed, as well as the benefits and disadvantages of engaging in the research had to be disclosed to the participants of the study (Roestenburg, Strydom & Fouché 2021). Participants were thus informed of exactly what the study entailed, as well as what was required of them as explained in the information sheet of the research. After explaining the possible effects of taking part in the study to the participants, they were presented with a consent form (See Appendix A & B) to sign if they agreed to participate (Marlow, 2010).

### ***1.8.2.4 Confidentiality***

Confidentiality means that only the researcher should be aware of the identity of the participants. Any information that was obtained in connection with the study that could be applied to identify participants, remained confidential and would be disclosed only with the participants' permission as required by law (Babbie, 2001; Strydom, 2011). Participants were informed that identifying particulars, including signed consent forms, would be stored separately from the research data itself. The research data is identified only by a code number or pseudonym (Maree, 2016).

The following research-related records were kept in a safe and Microsoft cloud: the Research Ethics Committee-approved research proposal and all amendments, all informed consent documents, continuing review reports, recordings, notes, and all correspondence from the Research Ethics Committee (REC).

### **1.8.2.5 Compensation**

No compensation in any form was offered or given to participants.

## **1.9 IMPACT**

The high and continuously escalating level of graduate unemployment in Botswana is a cause for concern. University institutions are producing graduates with no corresponding jobs to absorb them. The government has introduced various programmes that graduates are encouraged to partake in, however, in spite of this the unemployment rate of the educated youth is still very high. The unemployment of graduates goes hand in hand with other social ills, such as poverty, family tensions or breakdown, crime, alcohol and substance abuse, erosion of confidence, self-esteem and mental health; that all point to a need for the rendering of social work services. This study investigated the challenges experiences by unemployed youth graduates in Botswana from an ecological systems perspective. The findings of the study may assist in identifying and providing social work services that will help mitigate youth unemployment.

### **Chapter layout**

The layout of the study is as follows:

Chapter 1 contains the introduction and rationale for the study, including the theoretical framework, problem statement, goal and objectives, overview of the research methodology and ethical obligations.

Chapter 2 provides the first objective of the study, namely a discussion of global, regional and local educated youth unemployment as well as policy and legislation regarding unemployment of youth graduates.

Chapter 3 provides a discussion of challenges experienced by unemployed graduates from an ecological systems perspective which is the second objective of the study.

Chapter 4 presents the third objective of the study, which provides a discussion on the possible social work services that should be rendered to unemployed youth graduates.

Chapter 5 presents the research methodology.

Chapter 6 presents the empirical findings of this study and the literature control.

Chapter 7 is the final chapter of this study and presents conclusions and recommendations regarding the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates from an ecological systems perspective.

## **CHAPTER 2:**

### **UNEMPLOYED YOUTH GRADUATES: A GLOBAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Unemployment is a state where an individual is willing and able to work but cannot find employment. Often the individual will have completed school and tertiary education, or have gone through training to make themselves employable, yet due to circumstances the individual remains unemployed. Recently, the world has experienced increasing unemployment rates, especially among the youth, whose unemployment has reached crisis proportions. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has noted that globally an estimated 68 million or 13.6% of the youth labour force was unemployed in 2019. To be considered unemployed and part of the labour force, a person should both be looking for employment and be available to start work immediately. The number of unemployed youth could even be higher, as many young people stay enrolled in education programmes at universities to delay having to search for employment (International Labour Organization, 2019).

In Africa, according to UN World Population Prospect (2019) as of 1 July 2020, the population was projected to be close to 1.34 billion; around 17% of the world's population. Of these, 59% or 764 million people were 15 years or older (i.e., the working-age population). Over 63% of the total working-age population partakes in the labour market; 68% in Sub-Saharan Africa and 46% of the population in Northern Africa. Globally, Northern Africa is the sub-region where unemployment is rife and where there is specifically a high unemployment rate among people between the ages of 15 and 24. In 2019 the youth unemployment rate in Africa has exceeded 30% with young people 3.5 times more likely to be unemployed than older adults. Furthermore, in 2018, the unemployment rate for women stood at 20.7%, more than twice that of men (9% unemployed) in Africa (International Monetary Fund, 2018). For 2019, the unemployment rates were projected to range from 1.8% in Ethiopia, 6% in Nigeria, 18.2% in Botswana to 27.3% in South Africa (IMF, 2018a). For 2020 the number of unemployed persons in Africa was expected to grow by nearly 1.9 million due to the COVID-19 pandemic (African Development Bank, 2020).

In this chapter the focus will be on the first objective of this study that is to contextualise educated youth unemployment from a global, regional, and local perspective. Unemployment will be defined from a global perspective with reference to international policies and legislation. The focus will then move to the African region and its youth unemployment, followed by an in-depth study of youth unemployment on a local level by looking at existing policies and legislation of Botswana and by providing a description of the programmes addressing youth unemployment.

## **2.2 DEFINITION OF UNEMPLOYMENT**

In 1982 the International Labour Organization (ILO) defined an unemployed person as a person of working age (15 or over) who meets three conditions, namely that the person should not be employed (i.e., not having worked for at least one hour during the reference week); that the person should be available to take up employment within two weeks; and that the person should have been actively looking for a job in the previous month or have found one starting within the next three months (ILO, 1982, ILO, 2020). This definition has been adopted by 80% of the countries in the world and is still utilised by the ILO based on the following criteria, namely (1) that the person must be without work, (2) that the person should currently be available for work, and (3) that the person should be seeking work (ILO, 2020; ILO, 2015; Kingdon & Knight, 2001). Authors explain that, according to the first criteria, the person must be without work and that it is recognised that a person is without work when that person has not been employed and remunerated in any form. For the second criteria to be applicable the person must be available for a paid job during the reference period. For the third criteria, it should be clear that the person has taken steps to find or has been actively looking for work through applying for positions (ILO, 2020; Fourie & Burger, 2010).

For purposes of comparison, other definitions of unemployment should also be mentioned such as that of South African authors Swanepoel and Van Zyl (1999), who defined unemployment as people having the desire to work, who can work, but who are struggling to find a job. Forstater (2004) from the United States of America states that, if a person is without a job and would agree to take any appropriate job, that person is regarded as unemployed. However, there are critiques about the unemployment definition of the ILO. Strobl and Byrne (2002), for example, state that the prerequisite that the unemployed must actively be searching for employment presents limitations to people living in developing countries. The limitations in searching for a job in developing countries can include a lack of financial resources and a lack

of labour market information as to where job openings are available, as well as what kind of skills are required of individuals. This statement of Strobl and Bryne (2002), who are from the United Kingdom and United States of America respectively, can be applied to some situations in Africa and specifically in Botswana where unemployed graduates who come from rural places and poor families, lack the financial resources to actively look for jobs. However, the definition of the ILO is still widely accepted.

In Botswana, unemployed persons are defined as those individuals who did not do any work in the period under review (usually 30 days), either for payment in cash or in kind, and who were not self-employed for profit or family gain. This definition includes two groups of unemployed persons, namely, (1) the unemployed who have not taken steps to actively look for employment in the last 30 days, and (2) those who were not only available for work but have taken steps to look for jobs in the reference period. The Botswana government uses this definition of unemployment for those actively seeking work (Sechele, 2016). It can thus be derived that the definition of unemployment in Botswana is similar to the one adopted by the ILO, as both definitions indicate that an unemployed person is a person aged 15 or older, who have taken steps to look for jobs in the reference period. The fact that Botswana is a member of the ILO and that the country is guided by the ILO's standards could also be contributing factors in the usage of this definition of unemployment. The different types of unemployment will be discussed in the next section.

### **2.2.1 Types of unemployment**

To further untangle the nature of unemployment it is necessary to differentiate between the various types of unemployment as this would help gain a more comprehensive understanding of the problem of unemployment (Msimanga, 2013). There are four types of unemployment, namely, seasonal, frictional, cyclical, and structural unemployment. These types of unemployment are discussed below.

#### ***2.2.2.1 Seasonal unemployment***

Seasonal unemployment can be explained at the hand of varying demand for employees, such as high demands for employees that exist in certain seasons, with little to no demand in other seasons. An example would be the agricultural sector, where people are normally hired during harvest time, but then not hired when it is not harvest time (Ong & Ward, 2020; Matandare, 2018; Swanepoel & Van Zyl, 1999). This type of unemployment is predictable as it happens

on a regular basis. In South Africa, some authors believe that seasonal unemployment does not explain unemployment entirely, because the unemployed individuals will be re-employed at the start of the next season (Statistics South Africa, 2019; Izaks, Avenant & Van Schalkwyk, 2017; Borjas, 2010; Barker, 2007).

In Botswana, seasonal unemployment is common in the tourism, agriculture, retail, and construction industries, where, during the off-peak season, many people are seasonally unemployed just to be employed again when the season peaks. However, when it comes to the graduated youth, seasonal unemployment is not as applicable, as seasonal workers usually consist of the less-educated youth who would mainly work as tour guides, agricultural workers and shop assistants.

### ***2.2.2.2 Frictional unemployment***

Frictional unemployment occurs when an employee voluntarily quits their job and can find another position within a short period of time. Frictional unemployment thus relates to the time it takes a person to search and find a new position. The search for a new position happens when the person feels unfulfilled in their current position and is looking for a new challenge in their career, or when they have been laid off (Dubina, 2017). This is the case when, for example, a graduate from university finds a job but then realises that the job did not match their skills and that it would be necessary to find a new job. Because frictional unemployment can be seen as a phase between jobs, it is not regarded as problematic for an economy (Dean, Elardo, Green, Wilson & Berger, 2020).

Frictional unemployment occurs in Botswana when people move from one position in search of another position for growth or personal development and/or change of scenery. However, given the high unemployment rate in the country, people tend to wait until they have a new position before they leave their current position.

### ***2.2.2.3 Cyclical unemployment***

Cyclical unemployment is the type of unemployment that happens when there are more applicants for jobs than there are jobs available on the market, or when there is an imbalance between the number of jobs in the market and the number of people that are being considered for those jobs at a given period of time (Dubina, 2017; Lindbeck, 2015). When businesses are at their peak, cyclical unemployment tends to be low as total economic output is being

maximised, however, the opposite could also happen, namely where cyclical unemployment is high there is little economic output (Baker, 2007). For example, with a global economic recession, unemployment increases, just to decrease when there is economic prosperity and expansion (Dean et al., 2020). Thus, cyclical unemployment can be attributed to a global economic recession where the competition for jobs is aggressive because unemployed individuals not only compete with other unemployed persons, but also with employed work seekers who are looking for better jobs or higher earnings (Longhi & Taylor, 2013). Cyclical unemployment is also referred to as demand-deficiency unemployment, as it is about a situation where, due to a total drop in demand, businesses reduce their production and end up retrenching workers (Matandare, 2018; Longhi & Taylor, 2012).

During the 2008/2009 global recession, Botswana also experienced cyclical unemployment during which people lost their jobs due to companies retrenching their employees. Currently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a general lack of business and demand, Botswana is again subjected to cyclical unemployment as many companies have closed, resulting in many job losses.

#### ***2.2.2.4 Structural unemployment***

Structural unemployment is a form of unemployment caused by individuals who have no jobs, either because they lack the skills required by the particular labour market, or because they never learned any skills. This type of unemployment can be attributed to a mismatch between the skills that workers offer, and the skills that employers demand. This mismatch could be due to advances in technology, or to a demand that has shifted away from the skills the workers have, or because workers had not learned any skills because the jobs were outsourced (Dean et al., 2020; Dubina, 2017; Levine, 2013). However, differences in geographical locations, demographics and age, can also result in structural unemployment. Geographical imbalances occur when people looking for employment are not located where the employment opportunities are (Fourie & Burger, 2010; Swanepoel & Van Zyl, 1999).

Globally, structural unemployment is the most persistent type of unemployment and could lead to severe hardships being experienced by those who are structurally unemployed, including poverty, debt, financial adversities, family tensions, breakdowns, stigma, crime, deteriorating work skills, lack of experience, and ill health. The longer the period of unemployment, the more profound and pervasive its effects are to society and the less likely the unemployed

persons are to find employment (Gul et al., 2012; Statistics South Africa, 2015). Structural unemployment is long term in nature, and as a result, there are often arguments that it could be the most unpreventable type of unemployment (Dean et al., 2020; Borjas, 2010; Mirko, 2005).

Although all types of unemployment may be relevant for graduates, structural unemployment seems predominantly to affect graduates in Botswana as a result of the mismatch between existing vacancies and the qualifications of the unemployed population. Furthermore, it seems as if, in Botswana, most positions are available in the urban areas, whereas candidates located in the rural areas are mostly unemployed. This is also a contributing factor to rural-urban migration (Matandare, 2018) in the country and could contribute to geographical imbalances in employment opportunities as indicated by literature (Fourie & Burger, 2010; Swanepoel & Van Zyl, 1999).

### **2.3 YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

Youth unemployment is a global phenomenon and a social problem that has increased in many regions in the last decade. As mentioned earlier, globally the youth unemployment rate increased from 12.3% in 2006 to 13% in 2017. Since 2006 the rate of youth unemployment has risen, reflecting a relative decline in prospects for youth in most of the world's countries. Over the same period, the rate of global adult unemployment has seen less variation and averaged at 4.4% (ILO, 2018). In 2020 the world was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic which has forced countries to impose lockdown restrictions. These lockdown restrictions and the lingering COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated the ailing economy immeasurably, which implies that many more people will be unemployed (World Health Organization, 2020). This possible increase in unemployment is because the COVID-19 crisis has severely affected labour markets around the world, resulting in an economic and jobs crisis precipitated by the lockdown and other containment measures, hurting young people more than other age groups. Globally, youth unemployment increased by 8.7% in 2020 compared with 3.7% for adults (ILO, 2020a).

Youth unemployment is not a phenomenon that only affects developing countries. Regarding youth unemployment in Europe, the unemployment rate in countries like Spain and Greece doubled between 2007 and 2011 with the average duration of unemployment being between 9 and 18 months. In 2018 there were 46.4 million persons aged 15-24 in the European Union, of whom 2.8 million were unemployed. These numbers mean that 16.2% of youth were

unemployed in the European Union, with the rate exceeding 30% in Greece, Spain, and Italy (ILO, 2018; ILO, 2012a). In 2018, despite the fact that the global economic recession happened more than 10 years ago, youth unemployment remained a serious problem across the European region (ILO, 2018).

The global challenge of youth unemployment was exemplified in Spain in 2020 where about a million youths between 15 and 24 years were unemployed. In December 2020, Spain had the highest youth unemployment rate in Europe, at 39.4%, with Greece having the second-highest youth unemployment rate of 34%. Across the 27 member states of the European Union, the overall youth unemployment rate was 17.1%, with Germany having the lowest youth unemployment rate, at 5.5% (ILO, 2020a). Meanwhile, steady economic growth in the European Union member states from Eastern Europe and the Baltics (i.e., Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), has supported a significant improvement in the region's labour markets. The unemployment rate in most of these countries stood below the EU average. In Poland, for example, the unemployment rate of 6.5%, was at its lowest since 1990 (ILO, 2020; ILO, 2018).

In Asia, nearly 28 million youths, namely 10.4% of the youth labour force was unemployed in 2018. The youth unemployment rate was estimated at around 9.5% in South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific, 10.5% in Eastern Asia, and 10.8% in Southern Asia. Although these numbers are lower than in some European countries, young people remain nearly 4 times more likely to be unemployed than their adult counterparts, and as much as 5.4 times in South-Eastern Asia. These statistics point to a lack of decent jobs, the mismatch of skills, and other challenges experienced during the transition from school to work (ILO, 2018).

It is clear that youth unemployment is a global phenomenon that not only affects developing countries. Moreover, it often affects young people who had completed their training in the hope of getting employment thereafter. This situation, together with the fact that the unemployed educated persons may lose their employment skills, contribute to the necessity that policymakers must find ways to make sure that the unemployment is seen as a situation that needs attention. Efforts should be made for the unemployed to be gainfully employed to contribute to the growing economy of their respective countries. International policies and legislation have therefore been developed to address the escalating global youth unemployment phenomenon.

## 2.4 INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEGISLATION

International legislation refers to treaties and conventions which purport to lay down rules of law of general application if a country ratified those treaties and conventions (United Nations, 2017). Internationally, youth-related issues pertaining to youth employment have always been a priority for governments. The origin of some international legislation concerning unemployment and their purpose will be discussed. These legislation and policies were important for the study, because of their focus on the unemployment of young people.

### 2.4.1 Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention, 1988 (No. 168)

The Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention No. 168 was established by the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization at Geneva on its 75th session meeting on 1 June 1988. To this day, eight countries have ratified this convention. Ratification refers to the action of signing or giving formal consent to a treaty, contract, or agreement, making it officially valid. This Convention emphasised the importance of work and productive employment in any society, as employment creates resources for the community, and as it ensures an income to workers. The Convention furthermore emphasised the social role that productive employment confers and the feeling of self-esteem that workers derive from it.

The main **purpose** of Convention No. 168 is therefore twofold; firstly to protect unemployed persons through the provision of benefits in the form of periodical payments, and secondly to promote employment. Certain sections of this Convention are of importance for the countries that ratified it.

Section 8 promotes productive employment as it clearly states that each member shall aim to establish, subject to national law and practice, special programmes to promote additional job opportunities and employment assistance. Freely chosen and productive employment must be encouraged for identified categories of disadvantaged persons having or liable to have difficulties in finding lasting employment, such as women, young workers, disabled persons, older workers, the long-term unemployed, migrant workers lawfully resident in the country, and workers affected by structural change (ILO, 2012).

Additionally, sections 11 and 13 of the Convention provide protection to unemployed individuals and benefits in the form of wage subsidies. States are also called upon to adopt appropriate steps to coordinate their systems of protection against unemployment and their employment policies. The system of protection against unemployment should therefore be to encourage employers to offer productive employment (ILO, 2012), referring to the fact that the employees should be able to live above the poverty line in a specific country.

Certain sections of the Convention that addresses what members should do to address youth unemployment, are important for this study and will be discussed.

Section 2 clearly states that countries must take appropriate steps to co-ordinate its system of protection against unemployment and its employment policy. To this end, countries must seek to ensure that their systems of protection against unemployment, and their methods of providing unemployment benefits, contribute to the promotion of full, productive, and freely chosen employment, and must not discourage employers from offering and workers from seeking productive employment. The focus is thus on the fact that countries must take steps to have unemployment benefits and policies that address unemployment and these policies must encourage workers to search for productive employment.

Section 26 of the Convention also acknowledges that there are categories of persons seeking work who have never been seeking employment before and who have ceased to be recognised as unemployed, who should all be covered by schemes for the protection of the unemployed. These are normally discouraged workers who are of legal employment age but who are not actively seeking employment or who has not found employment after long-term unemployment, but who would prefer to be working. These people should also be covered in the unemployment benefits discussed in this Convention.

As mentioned, only a few countries have ratified this Convention. Although, Botswana has been a member of the ILO since 27 February 1978, it has not ratified Convention No. 168. Furthermore, although Botswana has ratified 15 other conventions, such as the Forced Labour Convention (1997) and the Labour Relation Convention (1997) related to employment, none of those conventions focus on youth unemployment and is thus not applicable to this study. In fact, the majority of African countries did not ratify Convention No. 168, this could possibly be because of a lack of funds to give social benefits to the unemployed.

## 2.4.2 The African Youth Charter (2006)

Regionally the African Youth Charter was developed as a framework to enable policymakers to include youth issues in all development policies and programmes of African states. The African Youth Charter is a political and legal framework that serves to provide a strategic framework and direction for youth empowerment and development activities. It provides a legal basis for ensuring youth presence and participation in government structures and forums at national, regional, and continental levels. The Charter was adopted during the Seventh Ordinary Session of the Conference of Heads of States and Government held on 2 July 2006 in Banjul, The Gambia (African Union Commission, 2006). It defines the youth as people between the ages of 15 and 35 years and was developed after research was conducted on the state of the African youth, commissioned by the African Union Commission. Out of 54 countries in Africa, 43 signed the Charter, and 39 ratified it. However, although Botswana was one of the first African countries to introduce a Youth Policy in 1996, the Botswana government has not signed or ratified the Youth Charter (AU, 2017), thus, ensuring that the country is not obliged to adhere to the Charter.

The African Youth Charter has four **aims**. The first aim is to provide governments, youth, civil societies, and international partners with a continental framework underlining the rights, duties, and freedoms of youth. This framework also paves the way for the development of national programmes and strategic plans for youth empowerment.

The second aim of the Youth Charter is to ensure the constructive involvement of the youth in the development agenda of Africa, and their effective participation in the debates and decision-making processes in the development of the continent. The Charter thus also sets a framework to enable policymakers to include youth issues in all development policies and programmes. Thirdly, the Youth Charter aims to provide important guidelines and responsibilities to the member states for the empowerment of the youth in key strategic areas such as employment, health, youth participation, education, national youth policy and skills development. Finally, the Youth Charter outlines the responsibilities of the youth in their own development and to their countries and continents.

As mentioned above, the African Youth Charter is a strategic framework that gives direction for youth empowerment on the African continent, as well as at regional and local levels. It is therefore an important document for African governments who ratified the Charter to uphold

the AU Youth Charter and engage with the youth in their role in good governance (African Union, 2017). However, since Botswana did not endorse the African Youth Charter (African Union Commission, 2006), the rights set out in the African Union Constitution are not applicable to Botswana's youth. It is also therefore not necessary for the Botswana government to have a strong focus on the inclusion of the youth in policy and legislation.

## **2.5 INTERNATIONAL POLICY**

Overviews of certain international policies on unemployment are the focus of the following discussion. The World Programme of Action on Youth (WPAY) and the Commonwealth Youth Charter were identified and will be discussed as both these policies focus on young people. These policies provide countries with a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people. These policies are applicable to countries that are member states to United Nations (UN) and the Commonwealth, as Botswana.

### **2.5.1 World Programme of Action for Youth (1995)**

The World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1995, provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people around the world. The WPAY aims to ensure the well-being of young women and men and their full and active participation in the societies where they live. The **purpose** of the WPAY is to provide measures to strengthen national capacities in the field of youth and to increase the quality and quantity of opportunities available to young people for their full, effective, and constructive participation in society (WPAY, 2010). The WPAY encourages governments to be responsive to the needs of young people.

The WPAY covers 15 youth priority areas and contains proposals for action in each of these areas. The 15 priority areas are education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, substance abuse, juvenile justice, leisure-time activities, girls and young women and the full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making, as well as globalisation, information and communication technologies, HIV/AIDS, armed conflict, and intergenerational issues. Important for this study is the priority of employment of the youth as the WPAY clearly states that the crisis of youth unemployment deprives young

people of the opportunity to secure independent housing or the accommodation necessary for the establishment of families and participation in society. It is mentioned that unemployment creates a wide range of social ills and that young people are particularly susceptible to its damaging effects, namely the lack of skills, low self-esteem, marginalisation, impoverishment, and the wasting of enormous human resources (WPAY, 2010). Therefore, if the youth of a country such as Botswana is unemployed, then those young people will experience a range of social ills as indicated in this policy.

### **2.5.2 Commonwealth Youth Charter (2005)**

The Commonwealth Youth Charter of 2005 provides guidelines for the development of national youth policies in all Commonwealth countries towards creating societies in which the youth are empowered to develop their creativity, skills, and potential as productive and dynamic members. The **purpose** of the Commonwealth Youth Charter is to advance the youth development agenda and to ensure a relevant, vibrant, effective, and prosperous Commonwealth in the twenty-first century and beyond (Rosenberg, 2019).

The focus of the Commonwealth Youth Charter is to provide parameters within which youth policies in the Commonwealth countries can be developed. The Charter focuses on creating societies where young women and men are empowered to develop their creativity, skills, and potential as productive and dynamic members of society. The Commonwealth Youth Charter posits the following principles and values for youth development: gender inclusivity, empowerment and social equity, human rights, and sustainability and integration or mainstreaming of youth issues across all levels in government (Commonwealth Youth Charter, 2005).

The Charter also highlights the importance of full participation of young women and men at every level of decision-making and development in society. In this way it is similar to the African Youth Charter (2006), as well as the WPAY (1995) as they all advocate for participation of young people in development of society and provide frameworks and strategic plans for youth empowerment.

Originating from the Commonwealth Youth Charter is the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE) 2007–2015. This Plan of Action proposes to empower young people by means of creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which they can act on their own behalf, and on their own terms, rather than at the direction of others

(Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment to the year 2005, 2005). This Commonwealth Plan of Action was born, and subsequently approved by the Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 1998. The PAYE 2000–2005 was revised at the first Commonwealth Youth Forum in 1998 and subsequently the PAYE 2007–2015 was approved as the Commonwealth's guiding strategy in 2006 to guide youth empowerment and participation in the coming years and is in keeping with the Commonwealth's commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Malta, 2005). The Plan of Action's purpose is to target three strategic programme areas for the youth that should be implemented by Commonwealth member states namely:

- **Youth Enterprise and Sustainable Livelihoods:** This programme focuses on an integrated package of business training, and business support targeted at young women and men with the potential for self-employment. This means the youth in member countries will be assisted with training and finances to start up their own businesses. Financial support is included in the package as the lack of credit is a constraint to the development of small-scale enterprises. Most young people lack access to lending institutions due to the lack of collateral or a credit track record.
- **Youth Work, Education and Training:** This programme is focused on the professionalising of youth work and building a body of specialist knowledge for youth development work; and
- **Governance, Development and Youth Networks:** This programme is aimed at promoting youth participation in policy-making (Commonwealth Youth Charter, 2005).

Botswana is part of the Commonwealth nations as the country used to be part of the British Empire. The Commonwealth was established when the British Empire began its process of decolonisation by creating independent states from former British colonies and a need arose for the re-organisation of the former colonies. In 1884, Lord Rosebery, a British politician, described the changing British Empire as a Commonwealth of Nations. Thus, in 1931, the British Commonwealth of Nations was founded under the Statute of Westminster with five initial members. The purpose of the Commonwealth is for international cooperation and to advance economics, social development, and human rights in member countries (Rosenberg, 2019).

As part of a global village and a member of the international community, Botswana is thus also influenced by international declarations, legislation, and instruments on youth development. However, Botswana did not ratify Convention 186, which is specific to youth unemployment. But, as a member of the Commonwealth nations, Botswana is a signatory to the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment and is thus obliged to provide parameters within which youth policies can be developed and should also implement the three strategic programmes as indicated in the Plan of Action.

## **2.6 YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN AFRICA**

The African continent is often referred to as the Dark Continent where most of its countries face substantial developmental challenges, including the problem of chronic unemployment (African Development Bank, 2020). Therefore, governments and policymakers in Africa are faced with a mammoth task of providing opportunities for the continent's more than 200 million young people for them to live satisfactory lives and to be able to contribute to the economic development of their countries. Adding to the challenge of the rapidly growing youth population, is that the youth are also getting better educated, hence there is an increase in youth graduates with less employment opportunities (Baah-Boateng, 2015). For the purpose of this study some factors that contribute to youth unemployment in Africa will be discussed, namely the growth performance of Africa and improved education of the youth in Africa.

### **2.6.1 Growth performance**

The growth performance of the African continent was severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Africa suffered its worst recession in more than 50 years in 2020 due to the pandemic, as its GDP declined by 2.1%, although it is expected to increase by 3.4% in 2021 if the pandemic is more under control. Southern Africa is the region that was hardest hit by the pandemic, with an economic contraction of 7.0% in 2020. It is projected to grow by 3.2% in 2021 and 2.4% in 2022 (African Development Bank, 2020; International Monetary Fund, 2020; International Labour Organization, 2020). The World Bank data for 15 African countries show that about one-third of working-age individuals in Africa stopped working during the COVID-19 pandemic (World Bank, 2020).

However, even before the COVID-19-pandemic, the lack of job opportunities was an issue because there were not sufficient positions to meet the increasing number of young people in

search of employment. There are about 10 to 12 million youth who enter the workforce in Africa each year, and only 3.1 million jobs are created, leaving vast numbers of youth unemployed (African Development Bank, 2020; 2016). Consequently, many young people on the continent find themselves unemployed or frequently in vulnerable or informal employment which is associated with low productivity and earnings (African Development Bank, 2020). Even though the youth employment challenge is seen as a global phenomenon as indicated previously in this chapter, the increase of the youth population in Africa makes the phenomenon more acute. Africa has a young population (Population Reference Bureau, 2013) with more than half of its population aged below 25 years. It is estimated that there will be an annual increase of half a million in the number of 15-year-olds joining the labour market year by year from 2015 to 2035 (World Bank, 2020; World Bank, 2014). It is clear that the African economy has to grow substantially to accommodate the large numbers of young people in the formal job market.

### **2.6.2 Improved youth education**

Alongside the rapid growth of Africa's youth population, is the fact that the youth education has improved and the youth is becoming better educated. It is estimated that the proportion of youth aged between 20 and 24 years with secondary education will reach about 59% in 2030, compared to the current figure of 42%. Thus, these growing numbers of educated youth constitute a potential resource for growth and development of the region, if the quality of education is improved to make them gainfully and productively employed (African Development Bank, 2020; African Development Bank, 2012). However, this reservoir of human capital could also be a source of civil conflict and social tension should the continent fail to create adequate economic opportunities to help educated young people obtain a decent living. Undoubtedly, large numbers of disaffected educated youth without prospects of a meaningful future could fuel future instability, migration, radicalisation, and violent conflict (Baah-Boateng, 2015). The World Development Indicators (WDI) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) findings indicated that youth unemployment rates are higher among the educated than the less educated or uneducated in Africa (Choudhry, Marelli & Signorelli, 2012). Higher youth unemployment rates are reported in African countries where the youth have secondary school education or better.

However, South Africa showed a marginally higher rate of unemployment among those with basic education (primary school education) compared to those with secondary or tertiary

education. Higher unemployment rates among secondary school leavers, were reported in five countries, namely Botswana, Egypt, Ethiopia, Senegal, and Tanzania, with five other countries Ghana, Mali, Malawi, Nigeria, and Uganda that presented higher youth unemployment rates among university graduates than all other levels (Mkombe, Tufa, Alene, Manda, Feleke, Abdoulaye & Manyong, 2020; Anyanwu, 2016; African Development Bank, 2012).

It seems as if most of the youth with secondary school education or higher find the informal employment sector unattractive, this, coupled with limited job opportunities in the formal sector results in unemployment. On the other hand, youth with basic or no education have the lowest unemployment rate because they seek refuge in the informal sector which does not require any education (African Development Bank, 2020; Anyanwu, 2016). According to literature (African Development Bank, 2020; ILO, 2020; World Fact Book, 2013), Botswana has a higher level of unemployed youth who completed their secondary school education and perhaps tertiary education and that there is a strong possibility that these young people are searching for a position in the formal sector.

Literature indicates that those with less education, who are supposed to find employment in the informal sector are struggling to find positions because young people with qualifications are often occupying those informal jobs, such as gardeners and waiters in restaurants. The situation in Botswana can be likened to that of Zimbabwe that is also faced with a worsening high unemployment rate, particularly among the educated youth. In 1980, the Zimbabwe Government introduced an Education for All Policy (1980) which allowed for the enrolment of many students in schools, colleges, and universities. This was further supported with scholarship programmes like the Presidential Scholar (1995). However, the effectiveness of the education sector coincided with the decline in economic performance causing high unemployment among Zimbabwe's educated youth, a situation that has been worsening every year (African Development Bank, 2020; Government of Zimbabwe, 2014).

The discrepancy between the educated or graduate youth and the unemployment of youth is not only a phenomenon in Sub-Saharan African countries. Tunisia is an African country with one of the best quality tertiary education systems in Africa, however, it is faced with the problem that only 30% of university graduates can find employment in the first year after graduation. In Tunisia, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth was forecasted to reach 3.2% in 2018, however, even such momentum has proved insufficient to improve the employment situation. In the third quarter of 2017, the unemployment rate stood at 15.3% and

although this number has declined from a peak of 18.9% in 2012, the rate remains well above the 12.5% recorded in 2006. The composition of the unemployed in Tunisia has also changed over the last decade. In 2006, the unemployment rate among those with a university education stood at 17%. This segment of the population was the most affected during the period of social unrest in 2012, when the graduate unemployment rate surged to 34.2%. In 2018 the Tunisian graduate unemployment rates remained above 30%, constituting a crucial socio-economic destabilising factor. High graduate unemployment is also a challenge in Morocco, where in the third quarter of 2017, the overall unemployment rate stood at 4.2%, while that of graduates stood at 18.2 % (ILO, 2018). Similarly, in Ghana and Nigeria, a large proportion of university graduates can only find jobs in the informal sector in urban areas (ILO, 2015; Gyimah-Brempong & Kimenyi, 2013).

Lately, in a new global competitiveness report, South Africa's unemployment rate has been ranked as the worst in the world. It is rated number nine of the world's 20 unemployed rated countries, with the unemployment rate for women at 29% and 24.8% for men. According to the ILO, South Africa ranks as the ninth worst country for employment in the world and is the lowest-ranked country with a mature and developed economy for employment (ILO, 2020). The average rate of unemployment in South Africa is 26.7%, with the Eastern Cape Province having the highest rate of 42.5% (Statistics South Africa, 2017). Meanwhile, the unemployment rate in South Africa has gradually risen over the last decade, from 23.2% in the first quarter of 2008 to 27.7% in the third quarter of 2017. However, in contrast with Morocco and Tunisia, the graduate unemployment rate remains low in South Africa, at 5.4%. Instead, unemployment is concentrated among those without a secondary school diploma, where the rate of joblessness stands at 32.7%. This situation is opposite to that of Nigeria, where the unemployment rate stood at 8.9% in the third quarter of 2017 where both the most and least educated struggle to find jobs, as 17.6% of those with post-secondary degrees and 10.8% of those with incomplete primary schooling were unable to find work (ILO, 2020).

In a study conducted to address graduate employability in Sub-Saharan Africa, the four countries included in the study had concerns about graduate employment. In Nigeria, the unemployment rate was as high as 23.1% for those with undergraduate degrees. Although the unemployment rate for university graduates was much lower in South Africa (5.9%), it was high for those with diplomas or certificate level qualifications. Unemployment figures for university graduates were not available in Ghana and Kenya. However, across the 25 to 29-

year-old groups (the range corresponding most closely with recent graduates) the unemployment rate was 14.6% in Ghana and 15.7% in Kenya. It has been estimated that, on average, it takes a university graduate five years to secure a job in Kenya (The Going Global, 2014). From the above discussion it can be concluded that improved youth education did not necessarily mean an improvement in the socio-economic circumstances of young people in Africa.

## **2.7 UNEMPLOYMENT IN BOTSWANA**

Like other African countries, Botswana has not been spared the problem of youth unemployment. Botswana's economy contracted by an estimated 8.9% in 2020, after growing by 3.0% in 2019, as the COVID-19 lockdown and other movement restrictions constrained economic activity. Growth prospects continue to be clouded by Botswana's relatively high poverty and unemployment rate among youth and female-led households, both likely to be disproportionately affected by the pandemic (African Development Bank, 2020; International Monetary Fund, 2020; International Labour Organization, 2020). It is important to note that the youth population (people between 15 and 35 years of age) in Botswana constitutes 40% (904 200) of the total population, which is around 2.2 million (Bakwena & Sebudubudu, 2016; Statistics Botswana, 2011). Although Botswana has earned the status of a middle-income country in terms of the World Bank classification, it is not immune to the challenge of unemployment, even though it has a small population (Bakwena & Sebudubudu, 2016). Despite the fact that Botswana has a high growth rate, sufficient job opportunities have not been created, mostly because the country is dependent on the mineral sector which does not employ sufficient young people. Thus, Botswana is facing the challenge of a high level of youth unemployment, mainly because it failed to create enough positions in the economy. Botswana's unemployment rate was found to average 18.2% between 2000 and 2016 (Matandare, 2018). Furthermore, the youth unemployment rate rose by 1.6% from 25.1% in 2015/16 to 26.7% in the third quarter of 2019 (Botswana Statistics, 2019).

Given the above statistics of youth unemployment in Botswana, the situation will be further unpacked by focusing on the country's education system, the prevalence of unemployment, and educated youth unemployment.

### 2.7.1 Education in Botswana

Since its independence, the government of Botswana has been spending a substantial amount of money on education, with the result that it has nearly doubled the Sub-Saharan African rate of primary and secondary school enrolments (Makwinja, 2017). This situation is the outcome of the Botswana Ministry of Education that has formulated policies to ensure that all qualified Botswana aged between 18 and 24 years would have access to a quality tertiary education that is responsive to the student's personal well-being, societal progress, and the country's economic development (Government of Botswana, 2015). There are 14 recognised higher-education institutions which are chartered, licensed, and/or accredited by the appropriate Botswana higher education-related organisation offering at least four-year undergraduate (bachelor) degrees or postgraduate (master or doctoral) degrees, 13 of these universities deliver courses predominantly in a traditional, face-to-face, non-distance education format and one university provides distance education as well as face-to-face education (Government of Botswana, 2015).

A total of 59 243 students enrolled in tertiary education institutions in 2017/18. The majority of these students (21 966) were enrolled in public universities namely, the University of Botswana (UB), Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (BUAN), and the Botswana Open University (BOU), followed by 11 299 students that enrolled in private universities (i.e., Botho, Ba Isago, and Limkokwing Universities). Of these students, 33 649 (56.8%) were female, and 25 594 (43.2%) were male (Tertiary Education Statistics, 2018).

The basic education system in Botswana comprises of primary education (seven years) and secondary education (five years). In Botswana the secondary education is comprised of three years of junior (lower) secondary education and two years of senior (upper) secondary education. This traditional structure of secondary education is a parallel bridge between primary (basic) education on one side, and tertiary education on the other. It thus serves primarily as an educational transition from basic to tertiary education. To qualify for transition to tertiary education in Botswana, students must first complete their senior secondary education and ultimately sit for the Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) examinations or other internationally recognised attainment levels. The BGCSE is the highest local examination level in the education model under basic education. The total number of students who sit for the BGCSE in a given year is therefore used as a proxy to estimate the

number of prospective tertiary first-time students who are expected to enter the tertiary education realm in the following year (Tertiary Education Statistics, 2018).

The BGCSE candidates reduced from 23 897 in 2009 to 21 240 in 2011, then steadily increased to 38 790 in 2015, then dropped by 8.6% to 35 462 in 2016 only to slightly increase again to 36 370 in 2017 (Botswana Examination Council, 2017). With more candidates at the BGCSE, more students will be admitted and sponsored by the government of Botswana to enter tertiary institutions.

The government of Botswana has, over the years, been committed to increase access to tertiary education through the provision of Government sponsorships. The number of tertiary education students sponsored by Government increased from 28 976 in 2009 to 48 703 in 2013. This constituted a 68.1% increase over the five-year period. Thereafter, the number of tertiary education students on a Government sponsorship decreased from 48 703 in 2013 continually until it reached 38 806 in 2016/17. Although there was a decline in the number of students on sponsorship from 2012/13 to 2016/17, it should be noted that the decline never went below the 2008/09 count of 28 876 students (Department of Tertiary Education Financing, 2018). The number of graduates increased from 6 431 in 2013 to 15 594 in 2014 and decreased again slightly to 13 621 in 2017. However, as the number of graduates from tertiary institutions increased over the last decade, a sobering fact came to the fore, namely that the job market was unable to keep up with the growing number of youth graduates, leading to high numbers of youth graduate unemployment. As indicated, the Botswana labour market is dependent on the mineral sector where the demand for graduate employment seems to be lower than needed to address graduate unemployment.

### **2.7.2 Prevalence of unemployment in Botswana in the last 20 years**

During the last Botswana Population Housing Census, which was in 2011, it was established that 159 469 (15.9%) of the population was unemployed. Of this number, 81 217 (50.9%) were females and 78 252 (49.1%) were males. At that time, unemployment was more prevalent among youths aged between 15 and 19 years and constituted 52% of the total unemployment population. Young people in this age group form only 4% of the labour force. The next group were persons aged between 20 and 24 years and constituted 40.2% of those being unemployed. Young people aged between 15 and 34 years accounted for 79.1% of the total number of unemployed people during the 2011 Population Housing Census (PHC, 2011). Of these 66 091

or 52.4% were women (Statistics Botswana, 2011). Naturally, youth unemployment is a major concern for officials and politicians in Botswana (Sechele, 2015).

In 2017 the unemployment rate in Botswana increased from 17.60% in 2016 to 18.10%. Up until 2017 the unemployment rate in Botswana averaged 19.23% from 1991, with an all-time high of 26.20% that was reached in 2008 after the global economic recession, and a record low of 13.90% in 1991. Currently this level of youth unemployment, including the graduate unemployment which accounts for over 60% of the total unemployed labour force, is posing a challenge to the government of Botswana (Bakwena & Sebudubudu, 2016; African Development Bank, 2012).

### **2.7.3 Educated youth unemployment**

It was estimated in 2007 that 37% of the unemployed youth in Botswana were college and university graduates (Nthomang, 2007). In 2018 statistics showed that there were 90 000 unemployed graduates in Botswana (World Bank, 2018). This phenomenon is often discussed in the press and in 2018 an article in the *Sunday Standard* mentioned that there were hundreds of unemployed graduates who were working as waiters or as garden boys, doing anything just to earn a living, while hundreds more were sitting at home waiting for an invitation for a job interview, which would hardly ever come. According to the press, it is ironic that the generation that is often referred to as the future, does not know how it feels to be secure in a job and to feel confident about the future (Sunday Standard, 2018).

Research done by Pheko and Molefe (2016) on employability challenges in Botswana showed that on average, graduates in Botswana make at least 13 contacts before getting their first job. Their study furthermore revealed that graduates had to wait a minimum of four to six months to some years before being employed for the first time. Nearly two-thirds of the unemployed in Botswana are under the age of 30, making Botswana's unemployment problem mostly a youth unemployment problem. The authors argue that the level of youth unemployment in the country indicates that education is not sufficiently preparing university graduates for the world of work in terms of skills, attitudes, and/or expectations, and for this reason educational providers are commonly blamed for creating unemployable graduates.

Another phenomenon that is part of the graduate unemployment problem in Botswana is that of the broken dreams of first-generation students. These first-generation students are the first in their families to attain a degree, and unlike students whose parents earned a degree, they see

universities as a way to bring honour to their families. It has emerged that 69% of first-generation students attended universities in order to help their families, compared to 39% of students' whose parents had degrees. The majority of these students migrate from small rural villages to larger urban centres to attend university with the hope of finding employment more easily after attaining a degree. In Botswana, many family units are highly dependent on the income of a first-generation university or college graduate, this economic dependence then often leads to disappointment when their graduated children have difficulties in finding employment (Pheko & Molefhe, 2016).

However, more than 10 years ago it was highlighted, that most of these students would graduate without certain employability skills and competencies required in the formal job market. It also seems that compared to second-, third-, and even fourth-generation university students, first-generation students are likely to lack professional mentors who can point them in the right direction with regards to accessing professional networks that could assist them in being placed in professional attachments and internships (Pheko & Molefhe, 2016). Having said that, the key responsibility of the tertiary education system of Botswana is to meet the needs of students who are essentially expected to perform in an increasingly, diversified, globalised, and knowledge-based labour market (Tertiary Education Statistics, 2018; Government of Botswana: Ministry of Education & Skills Development, 2008).

According to the ILO (2020), qualifications, knowledge, skills, personal attributes, as well as other tangible and intangible factors all play an important role in the employability of individuals. The same attributes also play a vital role in promoting employment, economic growth, and inclusive societies. In Botswana literature indicates an awareness of the graduate unemployment problem indicating that youth unemployment remains a critical policy issue, forcing policymakers to search for strategies that will ensure that diverse job creators are able to create the right quality and quantity of positions for the youth seeking employment (Mogomotsi & Madigele, 2017; Botswana Labour Market Observatory, 2013; The Work Foundation, 2012). However, in spite of the government of Botswana's efforts to find ways to increase employment opportunities for the youth, there has been little success (State of the Nation Address, 2015; National Development Plan 10 – 2009-2016). Nevertheless, the Botswana government has established certain policies and programmes in order to address the issues of youth unemployment.

## **2.7.4 Policy and legislation in Botswana to address issues of youth unemployment**

Employment legislation and policies such as the Employment Act of 1982 and the National Youth Policy will be discussed in the following section.

### ***2.7.4.1 The Employment Act 1982 and Employment Amendment Act 2010***

The conditions of employment in Botswana are regulated through national labour laws which include the Employment Act. The Employment Act 1982 (Act 29 of 1982), aims to provide basic guidelines for employment in Botswana. This act inter alia sets requirements for a minimum wage, length of the workweek, annual and maternity leave, and the hiring and termination of employees. Standards set by the Employment Act are consistent with international best practice as described by the International Labour Organization (ILO) model legislation and guidelines. It furthermore covers a range of aspects, such as contracts of employment, recruitment, prohibition of forced labour, protection of wages, rest periods, hours of work, holidays, and other conditions of work. The employment of children and young persons is also covered. Both a Minimum Wages Advisory Board and a Labour Advisory Board are established in terms of the Employment Act (Siphambe, Kolobe & Oageng, 2018; Botswana Federation of Trade Union, 2012).

In 2010, the Employment Act of 1982 was amended by the Employment (Amendment) Act 2010 (Act 10 of 2010). The amended act introduced changes to section 23 concerning restrictions of the grounds upon which an employer may terminate the employment contract by adding sexual orientation and health status (including HIV/AIDS status) as prohibited grounds of discrimination. It also introduced a new section 23(e), that provides more general protection against discrimination, such as discrimination against the employee's race, tribe, place of origin, social origin, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, colour, creed, health status, and disability. The Employment Amendment Act of 2010 was informed by the International Labour Organization to which Botswana has been a member since 1978. However, this act does not address the employment of youth (Siphambe, Kolobe & Oageng, 2018).

### ***2.7.4.2 National Youth Policy 1996 (Revised 2010)***

Due to the high incidence of youth unemployment, the Botswana Parliament passed the first National Youth Policy (NYP) in 1996 in order to deal with the risk that the unemployed youth

were posing. The main aim of this NYP was to mainstream and promote youth participation in community and civic affairs by ensuring that youth programmes engaged the youth and were youth-centred (Government of Botswana, 2010).

The purpose of the National Youth Policy is to guide and ensure coordination of programmes and activities that directly or indirectly benefit the youth and country. Since 1996, youth development in Botswana has been undertaken within the framework of the National Youth Policy. However, as the 1996 Youth Policy failed to address some of the issues confronting young people and therefore the National Youth Policy was reviewed in 2010. By reviewing the policy, the Botswana government acknowledged the important role its youth had to play in contributing to socio-economic development objectives (Government of Botswana, 2010b).

The Botswana 2010 Revised National Youth Policy advocates that the government make a rigorous effort to empower and assist youth to realise their individual potentials (MYESCD, 2017). The policy has largely been successful in the provision of funding for newly introduced youth economic empowerment programmes such as the youth development fund (YDF). However, the results from such programmes are yet to be fully realised (Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development, 2015).

The Revised National Youth Policy (RNYP) has a clear Plan of Action, namely the National Action Plan for Youth (2010) that defines all the necessary activities needed to operationalise of the RNYP. The National Action Plan for Youth is a framework for implementation of the Revised National Youth Policy, as such it complements national instruments for youth development. The purpose of the National Action Plan for Youth is to outline strategically the activities that need to be carried out and to identify lead agencies responsible for implementation, since youth issues are crosscutting (National Action Plan for Youth, 2010–2016). The National Action Plan for Youth is a major policy instrument that provides a guide on how to operationalise the various programmes and activities that need to be carried out, and timeframes of such actions, as well as the agencies that have to act upon these. It also provides guidelines on the linkages between various implementing agencies and stakeholders in the realisation of the needs of youth in Botswana. The plan is essential as it states strategies and priority areas of action. For example, one priority area is the need to involve youth at the initial stages of policy formulation, development and implementation; part of the action plan is for MYESCD to promote youth involvement in policy and programme formulation. Almost all the

activities in the Action Plan focus on development of interventions geared towards tackling youth unemployment, such as the economic empowerment programme.

The institutional arrangements for the RNYP (Government of Botswana, 2010b) and the National Action Plan for Youth (2010) are both managed by the Department of Youth in the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development (MYESCD). The youth are faced with several challenges and the high unemployment rate among the youth poses a key challenge. For the policy to achieve all its strategic objectives, there are policy instruments such as the National Action Plan for Youth (2010). According to the National Action Plan for Youth of 2010, the government of Botswana fully appreciates some of the underlying challenges facing young people. The most critical of these would be the inability of Botswana's youth to access employment, resulting in unemployment, underemployment, and poverty, often driving young people to commit crime, use drugs, and have a general state of hopelessness and despair.

The aim was that both the RNYP and National Action Plan for the Youth should be reviewed every five years to bring them in line with the changing national and international trends on youth issues (Government of Botswana, 2010b). However, more than a decade later neither the RNYP nor the National Action Plan for the Youth had been reviewed. It is thus not clear if the RNYP and National Action Plan for the Youth are still up to date to meet the needs of the youth as per their intended objectives. Furthermore, the RNYP has not been evaluated by government, causing a delay in adapting programmes addressing the needs of the youth.

There are, however, other youth programmes which are part of the aims that reinforce the RNYP and the National Action Plan for the Youth, and so manage to address and alleviate youth unemployment. These are the Youth Development Fund (YDF), the Botswana National Internship Programme (BNIP), the Graduate Volunteer Scheme (GVS) the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA), and the Young Farmer's Fund (YFF).

#### ***2.7.4.3 Youth Development Fund***

The Youth Development Fund (YDF) was introduced in 2005 to create sustainable employment opportunities for young people through the development of sustainable citizen youth enterprises (Government of Botswana, 2010b). The YDF is a programme that came from the national youth policy strategy that provides business loans to the youth to start their own businesses in order to address unemployment of youth. The YDF targets individual youths

aged between 18 and 35 years, irrespective of their socio-economic status, location, ethnicity, and gender. Young people are provided with funds amounting to P100 000 (9 120,74 US Dollars) per project on a 50% loan and 50% grant basis. This YDF programme is a revolving fund where young people who were funded in the past are expected to pay back their loans after a certain period, thus allowing other beneficiaries to borrow funds (Government of Botswana, 2017). However, this initiative is challenged due to a lack of monitoring and evaluation of the system (Government of Botswana, 2010b). It is however, in line with the Youth Enterprise and Sustainable Livelihoods strategic programme of the Commonwealth Youth Carter of 2005.

The YDF-funded projects have been experiencing a high failure rate which can be attributed to various reasons, including a lack of commitment by project owners, increased competition, high unsustainable rentals, the lack of suitable business premises, and limited business management and technical skills. These obstacles have a major impact on the promotion of entrepreneurial development and self-employment in Botswana. To address the shortcomings and avoid failure, it was suggested that beneficiaries be mentored in their business of choice for a certain period of time after they have been funded in order to acquire skills and experience. However, the only implementation data available is on the number of projects funded, total amount disbursed, and the number of youth that enrolled for the programme. No data could be found about the number of successful projects and the funds that were paid back, highlighting the issue of improper monitoring (Diraditsile, 2017).

#### ***2.7.4.4 Botswana National Internship Programme (BNIP)***

The Botswana National Internship Program (BNIP) was established in 2009, under the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture, to help citizens who graduated with a Bachelor's degree in gaining practical experience in government and private sectors for a period of two years (African Economic Outlook, 2012). This programme came from the national youth policy strategy that seeks to increase employment opportunities for youth. The main aim of this programme is to develop the skills and experience of young graduates on the job so as to increase their employability. According to the programme, the graduates are placed in different organisations for two years and are given a monthly allowance of P1 400,00 (US\$113), with the hope that they will be absorbed by the organisations they are attached to, or with the hope that when they exit the programme, they would have acquired the necessary experience to compete in the job market (Diraditsile, 2017).

However, this programme has certain issues according to Diraditsile (2017), who is of the view that the interns attending the programme emerge with few skills and competencies, let alone experience, because most of them were not performing tasks related to their qualifications. This could be because there are no legislative or policy guidelines forcing host organisations to devote time to systematic training or mentorship and job shadowing with a view to ensuring effective implementation. The BNIP is also seen as an initiative that tries to alleviate youth unemployment in Botswana. However, this programme only facilitates skills transfer and training; it does not ensure direct employment of participants, regardless of the influx of participants. Furthermore, there is a high number of graduates who are on a waiting list for internship, indicating that the programme can only offer placement for a limited number of graduates, and that not all graduates who meet the requirements, would be enrolled in the programme.

Available statistics reflect that, since 2008, a total of 21 284 graduates were registered for absorption into government programmes designed for graduate youth. Thus, only 30.29% of the applicants were absorbed by the public service and the parastatal sector (Baatweng, 2015). Apart from the above statistics, there is no data available about whether the graduates that were employed were matched with their skills. The programme furthermore has no specific target numbers of graduates to meet. Therefore, there is not enough evidence to suggest that the programme is serving its intended purpose. However, according to Bakwena and Sebudubudu (2016) some interns managed to secure permanent jobs within the 24 months duration of the programme. The lack of data about the success of the programme is an obstacle to knowing whether the programme meet the needs of those on the ground.

#### ***2.7.4.5 The Graduate Volunteer Scheme***

The government of Botswana also introduced the Graduate Volunteer Scheme (GVS) in 2014 as a way of promoting local volunteerism schemes that will utilise the pool of unemployed youth as stated in national youth policy strategies. This scheme targets unemployed graduates, who were not enrolled in the National Internship Programme or who have attended two years of internship and were willing to continue under the GVS as volunteers. The Graduate Volunteer Scheme was championed as a means to contribute to community projects and to improve the graduates' employment readiness through provision of on-the-job training and experience (Republic of Botswana, 2015). Participants of the GVS are typically placed in government and public institutions. As part of the Scheme each participant receives a meal

allowance of P600.00 (US\$52) per month. Unemployed young graduates who are not enrolled in other schemes, such as the National Internship, could join the GVS. Graduates who enrol in the GVS are given priority for placement in the National Internship Programme if they were on the waiting list for internship programmes (Diraditsile, 2017; Republic of Botswana, 2015).

However, the government of Botswana has been criticised for putting on hold, or freezing public sector employment, and instead filling existing vacancies on a temporary basis with volunteers. Unfortunately, there is no empirical studies that assessed the performance of this programme to gauge whether it is meeting its intended goal.

#### ***2.7.4.6 Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency***

The Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) was established in 2006 by the government of Botswana to provide financial and technical support for business development with a view to promote viable and sustainable citizen-owned businesses. This programme is different from the above-mentioned programmes as it was not born out of the national youth policy. CEDA provides subsidised loans for various sub-sectors within agribusinesses to enable citizen participation in sustainable agricultural activities (CEDA Guidelines, 2008). The Young Farmers Fund (YFF) under CEDA, was introduced in 2005 to encourage the youth to participate in the agricultural sectors. It provides loans at a lower interest rate and with extended payments periods for Botswana citizens aged between 18 and 40 years (National Economic & Social Council, 2015). Yet, even though agriculture is the most important sector to respond to economic diversification in Botswana, the unfavourable weather conditions (low rainfall, poor farming practices, and little adoption of technologies) have limited many young people to engage in the agricultural sector (Kgosikoma, Lekota, & Kgosikoma, 2018). Furthermore, this programme is not applicable to all graduates but only to those who have studied agriculture or are interested in farming. There is also a lack of information on the number of graduates who may have utilised this programme and therefore it is not clear how successful this programme is in creating employment opportunities for the youth.

Authors such as Nthomang and Diraditsile (2016) are critical about the initiatives of the Botswana government to address the graduate unemployment. Views are that the various youth programmes, for example, the BNIP, and the GVS, were introduced to facilitate skills development among unemployed young graduates. Ideally these programmes were meant to give the youth a platform from where to gain work experience, improve their skills, and ease

their transition into the labour market. However, in reality, both the government and the private sector have been engaged in a process of recycling interns without permanently employing them. Employers would rather recycle and keep interns in their offices because they are a cheap source of labour. For example, GVS participants are paid P600 per month (equivalent to approximately \$600 per annum) as a living allowance –which is not at all sufficient to sustain someone who is unemployed. Moreover, there is no legal framework that forces host organisations to provide participants with any financial benefits that equate to or are relative to the value of their contribution to the success of the organisation where they work as interns.

Given the unsatisfactory working conditions, such as being exploited and being paid minimal allowances, many young people quit these programmes that were meant to tackle youth unemployment. One of the main reasons for quitting that is often mentioned, is exploitation by the employer in a form of doing duties that do not form part of what they were supposed to be doing, for example, making tea and running errands for the permanently employed staff. Young people are frustrated because they feel there is no hope that they will ever be absorbed as permanent employees by their host organisations (Diraditsile, 2017). Thus, most of the policies and programmes seeking to provide solutions to the problems of youth empowerment and developments in Botswana are not based on research and are consequently not successful (Nthomang & Diraditsile, 2016).

These programmes are not evaluated regularly, data is not available about the uptake or success of these programmes. According to Nthomang and Diraditsile (2016), one of the reasons why the programmes (YDF, BNIP, GVS) implemented by government are not very successful is the lack of empirical research on issues surrounding unemployment and the youth.

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

Youth unemployment is a growing concern in the world, however, the rate of youth unemployment in Africa is concerning because Africa has the youngest population with the majority of its population under the age of 25. Many young people on the continent find themselves unemployed. There are certain policies and legislations such as the Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention, 1988 (No. 168), the African Youth Charter of 2006, the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) of 1995 and the Commonwealth Youth Charter (African Union Commission, 2006) that seeks to address the issue of youth unemployment. It can be concluded from the policies and legislation discussed

above that there has been global progress in legislations and policies concerning youth unemployment. Nevertheless, the implementation of these policies and legislation by relevant bodies tends to be doubtful.

Botswana is a middle-income country with remarkable economic growth and good governance. However, there is a substantial problem of youth graduate unemployment in Botswana and these issues are affecting most of the young people in the country. In order to address the problem of youth unemployment, including the unemployment of graduates, the government of Botswana has, over the years, developed the National Youth Policy. Programmes like the Youth Development Fund, Internship Programme and the Graduate Volunteer Scheme were designed to address the issue of youth unemployment. However, despite all the efforts and goodwill of the Botswana government, most, if not all of these initiatives have been unsuccessful in reducing the rates of graduate unemployment. Furthermore, there is a lack of sufficient data about these programmes whereby it could be established whether they are meeting the challenges experienced by youth graduates in the Botswana context. In the next chapter, the possible challenges that unemployed graduates could experience due to the lack of employment opportunities in the formal sector of the Botswana economy will be discussed from an ecological systems perspective.

## **CHAPTER 3:**

### **CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES FROM AN ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Unemployed youth graduates could experience negative effects that could include psychological, physical, social, and economic consequences (Du Toit et al., 2018; Paul & Batinic, 2010; Moleke, 2006). Being unemployed, furthermore, affects an individual's capacity to be independent as it takes away their ability to take care of their own needs and those of their family members or loved ones (Magagula, 2017). The influence of unemployment is thus not only damaging to the unemployed; it influences all levels of their existence, which encompass their family members. To gain an understanding of the challenges of unemployment on all levels of society, the ecological systems theory was utilised as a theoretical framework as this theory explains human behaviour from a personal to an environmental perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The development and assumptions of the ecological systems perspective, as well as an overview of the goals of the ecological perspective and the challenges experienced in the micro-, mezzo-, exo-, and macrosystem by unemployed graduates will be discussed in this chapter to reach the second objective of this study, namely, to analyse the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates from an ecological systems perspective.

#### **3.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE**

The origin of the ecological perspective can be traced back to biological theories that explain how organisms adapt to their environments. The term ecology refers to an organism and its interdependence with a natural environment. The conventional description of the ecology concept focuses on the interdisciplinary and scientific study of the living conditions of organisms in interaction with each other and their organic and inorganic surroundings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The focus of the ecological perspective is therefore on interrelated transactions between systems in terms whereof all existing elements within an ecosystem play an equal role in maintaining the balance of the whole. This perspective, developed by Urie

Bronfenbrenner, contributes to understanding why people behave differently in the presence of their family compared to their behaviour at school or work (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggests that human development cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration the social networks surrounding an individual. He further proposed that, in order to understand human development, the entire ecological system in which growth occurs, must be taken into account. The ecological systems perspective was developed by Bronfenbrenner to utilise in the education system, specifically to explain how social environments affect children's development, and later on it was adapted to apply to other settings, such as social work (Gitterman, 2009; Teater, 2014), which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Bronfenbrenner's perspective proposes that the individual's ecological environment is made up of four systems that support and guide human development where each system depends on the background of the person's life and offers an ever-growing diversity of options and growth. Bronfenbrenner categorised these systems as the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Jack, 2012). It can be concluded that the ecological environment or setting is an overlapping arrangement of systems, each directly or indirectly connected to the other by the direct and indirect social interactions of their participants (Neal & Neal, 2013). These four systems will be discussed below.

### **3.2.1 Microsystem**

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the microsystem consists of direct relationships between the individual and the immediate environment, such as family, peers, and local communities that directly affect the individual. The microsystem is concerned with the individual and includes attitudes, knowledge, values, self-esteem, self-concept, skills and behaviour (Miley & DuBois, 2016; Miley & DuBois, 2010). On a micro-level, the individuals are being dealt with as a client system. Bronfenbrenner (1979), Siegel and Walsh (2013) and Hepworth et al. (2017) stipulate that the microsystem includes relationships between the individual and the immediate environment that surrounds them, such as the workplace, school or home. These authors further elaborate that interventions on this level mainly focus on the family and the individual in question, for example, the unemployed graduate. The family in the microsystem includes spouses, very close friends or extended family members. This is where the most direct social interactions take place.

The microsystem furthermore includes intrapersonal factors, such as an individual's self-esteem, identity, and self-concept, as well as psychological coping processes that influence adjustment. The unemployed graduate could thus experience intrapersonal effects due to their inability to find a position. In this study, the microsystem will therefore be seen as that of the individual youth graduate, as well as the intrapersonal factors that could pose challenges to the unemployed graduates at individual level. These challenges will be analysed later in this chapter.

### **3.2.2 Mesosystem**

The mesosystem consists of networks that interact with the individual's life and provides the connection between the structures of the individual's microsystem. The mesosystem can be defined as a set of microsystems interlinked with one another. On a meso-level, support systems, such as family members, friends, school or work and social networks interact with one another (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; DuBois & Miley 2016; Miley & DuBois, 2010). A mesosystem comprises the interrelations among a person's individual setting and the relationships with family, friends and social service agencies. A particularly important feature or factor in the mesosystem is the concept of social support. Thus, the supporting interrelations that are available between the systems contribute to positive behaviour, whereas the links that are not available contribute to destructive behaviour, such as crime and violence (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The quality of the interrelationships between the unemployed graduates, families and friends will determine how the graduate's behaviour would be impacted, whether negatively or positively. In this study the mesosystem refers to challenges unemployed graduates may experience in their interactions with family and friends.

### **3.2.3 Exosystem**

The exosystem refers to the environment where an individual is not directly involved and that is external to their experience but that nonetheless affects them. The exosystem thus signifies one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but where events occur that affect or are affected by what happens in the setting containing the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) the exosystem in the ecological model contains social structures, including employment opportunities, social service providers, mass media, and health services that influence and may

determine a person's settings. Some of these aspects will be included in the discussion of the macrosystem.

### 3.2.4 Macrosystem

The macrosystem is concerned with the blueprint of society and how society is perceived. At a national level there are elements deemed to be correct by society that should be followed. These elements are in a form of government acts, policies, and regulations and form the culture and subculture of a society (McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter & McWhirter, 2013; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These macro-level elements influence the livelihood of individuals (Hutchinson, 2015).

The macrosystem in this study refers to the possible challenges of unemployed graduates at national level because of the impact of existing legislations, policies, and programmes. As the exo-level refers to social structures, such as employment opportunities, and services such as public services, social services and health services, that will have an impact on the individual that they have no control over, the exo-level for the purpose of this study, will be included in the macro-level. Macro-level aspects such as policy, legislation and available resources will be discussed at a later stage.

## 3.3 ASSUMPTIONS AND OUTCOMES OF THE ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

According to literature the following five assumptions can be made of the ecological perspective. It is important to look at these assumptions because the levels of the ecological perspective do not exist in isolation. Instead, elements across levels influence each other. The **first assumption** of the ecological systems perspective is that people and the systems in which they stay and function, are interconnected, which means that people and the surroundings they stay and function in are closely linked (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Aquirre, 2018). This close link has to do with the person-environment fit, which could be the favourable or unfavourable fit between the needs, capacities, behaviour styles and goals of people and the characteristics of the environment (Germain & Gitterman, 1996).

The **second assumption** is that the environment or system consists of various levels or systems (micro, meso, exo and macro) where dynamic interactions occur. The system represents a unique individual, with a unique personality and a unique way of dealing and interacting with

his or her different environments or systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This assumption plays an important role in exploring how supportive or unsupportive the interactions between the individual and the environment is.

The **third assumption** is that environments or systems can either develop or prevent opportunities and/or solutions to problems and the development of human potential. Individuals can only develop if environments offer circumstances that generate opportunities. The development of individuals is, however, hampered when the environment/system doesn't provide opportunities and resources for that development. The environment can therefore contribute to, or restrict the meeting of needs, problem solving, growth, and development of people (Tjihenuna, 2015; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Unemployed youth graduates, for example, can develop if they stay in a supportive community or environment which can provide them with opportunities and resources, whereas the opposite can happen in an unsupportive, hostile environment.

The **fourth assumption** is that human beings do not have to be passive towards their environments but can use, choose, protest to, redefine, change, and be creative in their environments. How human beings handle the characteristics of their environments will determine how well they adapt in their environments. The demands of adaptations activate human beings as well as their environments, as environments are forced (directly and indirectly) to supply sources that will provide in the needs of human beings. A person's conscious awareness, quality of life, and life satisfaction determine their adaptation to their environment. These adaptations require complex interactional and transactional processes in space and time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). An unemployed youth graduate may, for example, choose to form a support group for unemployed youth graduates and therefore creatively redefine an unsupportive environment to a more empathic environment.

Awareness of space that enables a person to be sensitive of realities is the **fifth assumption**. Awareness of space refers to a time dimension that includes the past-present-future-continuum of each person that gives space to experiences (past), actuality (present) and aspirations (future). (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). A youth graduate's past experiences will most probably affect their present and future functioning, especially if they must continue to deal with unemployment.

Maladaptation, which is the **sixth** and last assumption, happens as a result of unfavourable adverse environments, dysfunctional interactions and relations in the different environments or systems, stressful life changes, as well as problematic inter- and intrapersonal processes (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). An unemployed youth graduate could experience maladaptation as a result of an adverse environment, with no employment opportunities, where the interactions and transactions in their environment keep them in the trap of poverty. The stress of unemployment enhances the possibility of failing to adjust adequately or appropriately to their environment or situation.

The above-mentioned discussion illustrates that the assumptions of the ecological perspective are directed to the relations between people and their environments where environments can either be supportive or restricting in their development. The ecological systems perspective is suitable to utilise in the field of social work as it enables social workers to gain a better understanding of the supportive and restrictive environments in service delivery to individuals.

### **3.4 SOCIAL WORK AND ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE**

Bronfenbrenner (1979) developed the ecological systems perspective for education, but social workers adopted it in the early- to mid-twentieth century. The ecological systems theory contributed to the adoption of the family systems model to explain that family members are influenced by their environmental systems. Furthermore, the social work profession expanded this perspective to explain that an individual is always creating, restructuring, and adapting to the environment as the environment is affecting them. The social worker can thus get a holistic understanding of individuals by utilising this perspective of how systems and their interactions can influence an individual's behaviour (Hepworth et al., 2017; Ungar, 2012).

The application of the ecological systems perspective to human beings in social work practice settings comprises of a viewpoint that individuals interact with their physical, social, and cultural habitat (Liang, Ng, Tsui, Yan & Lam, 2017). The physical habitat comprise of the natural world, as well as the built world, which includes designed and manmade buildings and structures. Social habitat, on the other hand, comprise of the relations between friends and family, and interaction with social and community networks, and the societal structures that shape the way in which the habitat operates and instructs itself, through political, legal, and economic structures, such as policies and programmes. The cultural habitats are values, norms, beliefs, and languages that shape the individual's opinions, viewpoints, and expectations. The

utilisation of the ecological perspective in social work practice would involve seeing the relationship and connection between the individual, family, group, and/or community, and the physical, social, and cultural habitat and how each influences and shapes one another (Besthorn, 2013; Gitterman, 2011).

The purpose of adopting an ecological systems perspective in social work intervention is to analyse the quality of the dealings among the clients and their physical and social habitat that are consistent with social justice. Thus, the social worker's mission is to work with the individual and to improve their level of person-environment fit that could involve altering the individual's perceptions and behaviours or trying to improve the quality of altercation between the individual and their environment (Besthorn, 2013; Gitterman, 2011). Therefore, the ecological systems perspective helps social workers gain a better understanding of the interacting personal (micro- and mesosystem), environmental, and cultural factors (exo- and macrosystems) involved in complicated troubled situations. The use of the ecological systems perspective in social work service delivery increases the quality of help offered to clients to modify their situation (Ungar, 2012) as the focus is on improving the fit between the individual or family and the community, or all systems.

Since the beginning of the social work profession, social practice has been focused on the person and the environment. This psychosocial focus is significant as it is a unique feature of social work that has become its known purpose, to address the psychosocial background of which individuals, families, groups, and communities are constituents (Besthorn, 2013; Mattaini & Lowery, 2007). The client system may include individuals, families of diverse form, neighbourhoods, organisations, communities, and even nations. The ecological systems perspective has been universally accepted in social work because it provides a framework for thinking about and understanding transactional networks in their complexity.

Furthermore, the social work profession has a historical commitment to the person-in-environment fit. In social work intervention, social workers focus on both the person and the environment and on their mutual relationship. The ecological systems perspective enables the profession to legislate its purpose of helping people and promoting responsive environments that support human growth, health, and satisfaction in social functioning (Rogers, 2013). The ecological perspective is therefore a suitable theoretical framework to utilise in the analysis of the possible challenges that unemployed youth graduates may experience on the micro-,

meso-, and macro-level to improve understanding and service delivery of this vulnerable group.

### **3.5 CHALLENGES AND EFFECTS OF UNEMPLOYED YOUTH GRADUATES FROM AN ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE**

For social workers to have a better knowledge and understanding of challenges experienced by youth graduates, the ecological systems perspective can be utilised to illustrate how the various factors interact on the different systems of the ecological perspectives, as well as how they affect youth graduates. However, it was difficult to find literature that was related specifically to graduate unemployment, as the bulk of the literature was only referring to unemployment in general.

#### **3.5.1 Challenges and effects of unemployment of microsystem**

The microsystem is the most basic system of the ecological perspective, referring to an individual's most immediate environment, namely the effects of personality characteristics on other family members (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Youth graduates who are unemployed have been found to experience lower levels of psychological well-being due to various stressors they experience as a result of unemployment. Additionally, unemployed graduates have been found to experience greater psychological distress than employed graduates (Brooks, Webster, Smith, Woodland, Wessely, Greenberg & Rubin, 2020; Omoniyi & Osakinle, 2011). Therefore the focus of this section will be on the identification of the psychological effects of unemployment on youth graduates which could pose challenges.

##### ***3.5.1.1 Onset of depression***

Literature indicates that some life activities have the capacity to arouse the onset of depression in people, such as events that involve loss and disappointment. Unemployment can be categorised as such an event (American Psychiatric Association 2015; Dooley, Catalano & Wilson, 1994). People experiencing unemployment often experience despair, they ponder about their fate and they regularly question why they are unemployed. Their main concern is the lack of finances, which could cause them to have financial strain, which in turn may impact on their mental health. Therefore, people who are unemployed are prone to depression, especially if they have to borrow money to support their livelihood, thus indicating to others

that they are incapable of taking care of themselves (Mokona, Yohannes, & Ayano, 2020; Yamben & Asaah's 2020; Dalbert, 1997; World Health Organization, 2012).

Research studies have proven that unemployment decreases psychological well-being which in turn could lead to people becoming prone to depressive symptoms (Mokona, Yohannes, & Ayano, 2020; Brooks et al., 2020; McKee-Ryan, Song, Gallup, 2013; Wanberg & Kinicki, 2005). The research of Gallup (2013) in America should be mentioned where a large survey with 356 599 unemployed participants was executed. The findings established a clear link between depression and unemployment. In this study unemployed graduates did not only report depressive symptoms; it was also discovered that unemployed graduates experienced low self-esteem and low self-worth, which further contributed to depression. It was also established that there was a high rate of depression in people who have been unemployed for a long period of time. It could thus be concluded that the longer the person stays unemployed, the more the chances are of them becoming depressed (Gallup, 2013).

An onset of depression may also affect the job searching behaviour of unemployed people as their motivation to look for work could be lowered due to their psychological state of depression (Rafi, Mamun, Hsan, Hossain, & Gozal, 2019). Unemployed people could start comparing themselves to those who are working, this in turn may lead them to experience low self-esteem which would increase their vulnerability to depression (Yamben & Asaah, 2020; Sheeran, Abrams & Orbell, 1995). The fact that comparing themselves to people who are employed could increase vulnerability to depression is because there is a connection between social comparison and depression. Social comparison is when an individual determines their own social and personal worth based on how they stack up against others. It can take place in an individual category and in a social category. In an individual category, a person can compare where they are at the present stage, and where they would have liked to be at the same stage and if they experience a discrepancy between the two stages, it could lead them to experience depression (Mlatsheni & Ranchhod, 2017). In a social category a person can present an intense fear of social interactions which could lead to having low self-esteem or being hostile. As such, normally a young person who graduated from the university would have had dreams of entering the formal job market, earning a salary for themselves, and improving their livelihood. Based on the social comparison argument, unemployed graduates may compare themselves with others with similar characteristics to determine whether or not they have progressed to the same extent as their peers. If they then determine that they are not on the same level it could lead to

depression (Mlatsheni & Ranchhod, 2017). Therefore, social workers rendering services to unemployed graduates should be aware of the possibility that those graduates may have a tendency to develop depression.

### ***3.5.1.2 Lowering of self-esteem***

Self-esteem refers to the value that individuals place on themselves (Yamben & Asaah, 2020; Van der Meer & Wielers, 2016; Baumeister, 2013) and individuals with low self-esteem present negative characteristics and may experience a number of emotional reactions such as depression (Cameron, Stinson, Hoplock, Hole & Schellenberg, 2016; Mokona, Yohannes & Ayano, 2020). People who have high self-esteem are able to cope better with challenges, they have a better outlook of their future, and they are overall happier. How a person thinks they are perceived by others is at the core of their self-esteem. Low self-esteem is also believed to arise when an individual receives negative appraisal from important people in their lives such as friends and parents. This negative feedback is then internalised and taken as truth (Baumeister, 2013; Heatherton et al., 2003).

There is a link between graduate unemployment and low self-esteem as unemployment lessens the value of what the unemployed graduate have achieved throughout their studies. Unemployment could cause some graduates to have lessened their expectancies of their futures, which may then contribute to changes in their self-esteem and self-evaluation (Taris, Schaufeli & Verhoeven, 2005). This view is supported by MacDonald and Leary (2012) who indicated that a person's need to belong also influences their self-esteem and that this could adversely affect individual graduates who feel they do not fit into a particular environment, causing them to become isolated. Similarly an unemployed status may be perceived by unemployed individuals as a reflection of their abilities. Thus, low self-esteem could be linked to an increased likelihood of not being employed, as youth graduates may doubt their abilities to succeed in finding employment (Fischer, Greitemeyer & Frey, 2008; Guindon & Smith, 2002). If individuals remain unemployed for lengthy periods, they would be dependent on others for longer periods, further negatively affecting their self-esteem (Yamben & Asaah, 2020; Du Toit et al., 2018; Cameron, MacGregor & Kwang, 2013; Zeigler-Hill & Myers, 2011). From the above it is clear that low self-esteem is a challenge that may prevent graduates from finding employment because a low self-esteem influences the way people perceive themselves and their abilities and lowers their motivation to find work.

### ***3.5.1.3 Growing frustration***

Frustration is defined as a special form of dissatisfaction that keeps people from attaining their goals (Brooks et al., 2020; Battigalli, Dufwenberg & Smith, 2019; Oxford dictionary, 2018). Mulderig (2013) proposed that obstacles, such as unemployment, causes frustration in people and lead them to experience negative feelings which in turn may cause them to react aggressively. The greater the obstacle that stands in a person's way of achieving their desired goal, the greater their aggression might be. Unemployment may cause individuals to be frustrated as it reduces an individual's ability to be independent, which may result in them becoming more aggressive. Moreover, literature (Drosos et al., 2021; Yamben & Asaah's, 2020) stated that there is a socio-cultural frustration experienced by the youth caused by governments and markets because of the lack of provision of employment opportunities, which adds to the inability of the youth to achieve adulthood. As such, frustration with authority structures can be a cause or a result of the frustration youth graduates may feel in their failure to transition to adulthood.

### ***3.5.1.4 Growing hostility***

Hostility refers to any form of emotionally-charged anger or aggressive behaviour. Hostility is also defined by mistrust, cynicism, and negative attitudes and attributions towards others and can be a result of an individual's inability to reach their goals, or it can be regarded as a learned reaction to stressful events (Kriegbaum, Lund, Schmidt, Rod & Christensen, 2019; American Psychology Association, 2009). Hostility in individuals who are unemployed can be influenced by their environment and can be affected by their level of education, age, and financial strain they experience. Literature indicates that people who grow up in an environment characterised by low socio-economic status and poor familial relations could thus be more hostile when experiencing unemployment (Everson, Kauhanen, Kaplan, Goldberg, Julkunen, Tuomilehto, & Salone in Kriegbaum, 2019).

Individuals who are experiencing feelings of hostility are less likely to engage in social interaction, they also have lower ability to relate to and connect with others which may predict worse health outcomes, such as high blood pressure and heart problems when they are exposed to stressors, such as unemployment. Furthermore, hostility is known to increase the risk of heart disease, and while unemployed people usually have a lower socio-economic status, they will probably experience increasing hostile feelings toward others, making them more at risk

of having cardiovascular diseases (Kriegbaum et al., 2019; Kivim et al., 2003). Unemployed graduates may experience hostility as a result of being unemployed a long time.

### ***3.5.1.5 Feelings of loneliness***

Loneliness is defined as the distressing experience that happens when one's social relationships are perceived to be less in quantity, and especially in quality, than desired. However, being alone and experiencing loneliness is not the same thing. The experience of loneliness is related to mental health, as people can be alone without feeling lonely or can feel lonely even when they are with other people (Vijayalakshmi, 2020; Cacioppo, Hawkley & Berntson, 2003). People who experience loneliness are less happy, less satisfied, more pessimistic, and suffer more from depressive symptoms than people who are not lonely. Loneliness has been associated with many negative mental health outcomes, such as depression, suicidal thoughts, reduced positive emotions, poor sleep quality, and bad general health (Yamben & Asaah, 2020; Beutel, Klein, Brähler, Reiner, Jünger, Michal & Tibubos, 2017; Victor & Yang, 2012). However, being unemployed may bring with it a lack of social integration, which may accidentally increase social loneliness in unemployed young people (Ahmad & Khan, 2019), which could also be experienced by unemployed graduates.

### ***3.5.1.6 Increase in alcohol and substance abuse***

The abuse of alcohol and substances has always been associated with unemployment and poverty (Mukosa et al., 2020; Holmes, 2019; Parker, 2017). The World Health Organisation (2016) defines substance abuse as the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. Authors argue that due to the social and economic challenges associated with unemployment, many youths, and especially graduates, have turned to substance abuse to deal with their unemployed status. Alcohol and substance abuse have been furthermore credited with perpetuating a number of social ills, such as domestic violence, risky behaviour that could spread HIV, violence, and crime (Mbandlwa & Dorasamy 2020; Henkel, 2011). There are various reasons why alcohol induces criminal activities, for example, alcohol may impair one's judgement, cause violent actions, and increase one's need to obtain resources by force from people (Henkel, 2011; Rush et al., 2010). The induced criminal activities can be illustrated with the finding that close to 40% of all youth inmates in correctional facilities in America were under the influence of alcohol at the time they committed their offenses (Henkel, 2011).

Another study about youth and substance abuse in Tanzania showed a link between substance abuse and youth dysfunctional behaviour. Simon (2013) reported that 62% of unemployed youth engaged in alcohol abuse. The report further states that alcoholism among the youth of Tanzania has deteriorating effects on the user's personal and social life and leave the alcoholic unable to maintain effective interpersonal skills and relationships which are essential towards searching for employment. Kweswa (2017) also revealed that the unemployed educated youth is at risk of abusing substances and engaging in domestic violence.

Another form of substance abuse is the abuse of prescribed medication as a result of the association between unemployment and the psychological challenges of being unemployed, such as depression, which was found to be more prevalent amongst males than females. For example, depressed unemployed individuals who are given sedatives and antidepressants and have addictive tendencies may get hooked to those substances (Henkel, 2011). The association between being unemployed and using drugs amongst college graduates was determined in a study that looked at drug use patterns in young adulthood and post-college employment in the United States (Arria, Garnier-Dykstra, Cook, Calderira, Vincent, Baron & O'Grady, 2013). Using drugs, during and after college, is really harmful to graduates' employment aspirations and it was found that the majority of unemployed youth graduates became frustrated and ended up resorting to using substances, which then caused them to perpetuate a number of social ills which destroyed their lives. Consequently, Holmes (2019) concluded that with high unemployment rates, substance misuse could rise, meaning that services should be planned to address this issue. From the above discussion it is clear that unemployment is a contributing factor to youth abusing alcohol and drugs which could end up destroying their chances of employment.

It is also clear that unemployed youth graduates may experience different psychological challenges on the micro-level of the ecological perspective as a result of being unemployed. Thus, where the unemployment rates of graduates are high, social workers, and other helping professions, as well as governments should be aware of these psychological challenges and should plan for appropriate welfare service delivery to this target group.

### **3.5.2 Challenges and effects of unemployment of mesosystem**

The mesosystem consists of a network of interactions of the individual's microsystems. The mesosystem provides the connection between the structures of the individual's microsystem; it provides the availability of supporting interrelations between the systems and contributes to positive behaviour. When these links are absent, it could lead to destructive behaviour, for example, adolescents who experience bullying at school may benefit from the support they obtain from their parents in addressing the issue (Bronfenbrenner 1974; 1977, 1979; Neal & Neal, 2013). The interaction in these systems may influence the development of a person. In this study the mesosystem refers to the family and friends as a form of support of unemployed graduates. The challenges that the unemployed graduated youth could experience at meso-level will be analysed and outlined below.

#### ***3.5.2.1 Increased dependency on family***

Dependency is the tendency of an individual or individuals to rely on others for advice, guidance, and support (Oxford Dictionary, 2018). When young people switch to adulthood it entails taking responsibility for themselves, being able to make autonomous decisions and being financially independent. When this transition is disrupted it impedes on the development of young people's independence and may be demoralising because the youth now have the education but are nonetheless failing to transition to employment due to a lack of job opportunities. (Bäckman & Nilsson, 2016; Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). Thus, for graduates, it could be demoralising to have a tertiary education and yet fail to get employment due to the lack of employment opportunities.

As a result of being unemployed, young people may become more reliant on their families for longer than anticipated (Fallesen & Bernardi, 2018; Michaeli, Kalfon Hakhmigari, Scharf, & Shulman, 2018; Du Toit et al., 2018). This dependency may then lead to unemployed graduates being depressed, frustrated, and hostile as discussed previously. Furthermore, there is a high dependency rate of Botswana's youth on the government to provide them with jobs, compared to other countries. This dependency can be attributed to unemployment, limited skills, and a lack of resources and opportunities. This means that even though they have the necessary education they are still not better off because they are unemployed and must depend on the government (Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis, 2015). This dependency is further worsened by the fact that unemployed graduates are not only dependent on their

families for basic needs but are also dependent on them to assist them to search for work, such as having to provide them with money for internet job searches and for transportation to attend interviews (Altman, Mokomane, Wight & Boyce, 2012).

In most African countries social security benefits to the unemployed are often not available as is the case in countries such as England, where all unemployed people are entitled to an unemployment grant. In Botswana, there is no such social grant allocated to assist the unemployed, and in the absence thereof the unemployed youth continue to be dependent on their families to meet their basic needs. The Botswana government has not ratified the ILO's Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention No. 168 which advocate for benefits in the form of wage subsidies as discussed in Chapter 2. According to Sechele (2016) policy makers in Botswana should seriously consider the strategies towards creating decent employment for young people in line with ILO standards.

### ***3.5.2.2 Family and relationship problems and occurrence of family violence***

Relationship problems are the reasons why families break down, this could be due to violence and increased levels of family friction, tension, and arguments as a result of a family member that is unemployed (Chen, 2016). Unemployment puts a heavy strain on family relationships due to the stress and tension caused by the resultant financial constraints (Chen, 2016). Should the unemployed graduate revert to alcohol and substance abuse it could also result in the breakdown of family relationships as well as an increased possibility of domestic violence. Furthermore, desperate graduates, especially women, are likely to resort to commercial sex work as a means of survival which may increase the chances of contracting HIV and AIDS. On the other hand their male counterparts could engage in crime and theft, and when caught might end up in jail, further breaking apart their families (Mago, 2018; Cramer, 2015; Ali, 2014). Young people who lack the economic opportunities to raise themselves out of poverty are more vulnerable to participation in armed violence, crime, gangs, drug trafficking, and other illicit activities. These activities could often lead to relationship problems in families (Mago, 2018; Cramer, 2015; Ali, 2014).

There is a strong correlation between unemployment and all forms of family violence (Zhang, 2020; Singh, 2018; Basbug & Sharone, 2017). Literature indicates that in the case of intimate partner- or gender-based violence the main cause of the abuse is the individual's fear of being unemployed, rather than their actual employment status (Tur-Prats, 2021). Unemployment can

further lead to divorce, which in turn may lead to the abuse of children who are exposed to new partners of the parents and who may be prone to abusive behaviour. Similarly, could single parent households have fewer resources to provide for a child's basic needs, also resulting in child abuse (Brown & De Cao, 2017).

Moreover, according to Kunz (2013) it is the function of a family to ensure that its members have financial security, have a place and sense of belonging in society, are educated and socialised. Unemployment is regarded as one of the main causes of child abuse and neglect and there is a strong link between unemployment and the likelihood of child abuse and neglect by caregivers. It is clear that a lack of employment opportunities can cause family stress and frustration (Mathews & Benvenuti, 2014).

The fact that unemployment is a contributing factor to breakdown in family relationships and gender-based violence has been evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. The lockdown measures implemented by countries, together with the loss of employment, have made the unemployment rate extremely high, resulting in the loss of hope in the labour market. While the implementation of hard lockdowns was prudent to curb the rapid spread of COVID-19, the combination of family members being at home all day and the lack of economic insecurity lead to a surge of gender-based violence in the world (Magamela, Dzinamarira, & Hlongwa, 2021; Mittal & Singh, 2020). In Botswana, over 67% of women have experienced abuse, which is over double the global average (United Nations Population Fund, 2017).

### ***3.5.2.3 Lower status in society***

Status is a position in a social system occupied by designated actors. Status is ranked in terms of the related concepts of prestige, unequal distribution of relatively limited social resources and unequal opportunity for acquiring them, and lastly power, which is the ability to persuade others to fulfil one's goals (Anderson, Hildreth & Howland, 2015). Employment gives people status and social roles among their peers and the role a person plays provides them with a sense of self. This sense of self could be weakened when they are unemployed. Unemployment may bring with it a loss of friendships and social contacts; it may cause people to categorise themselves as somehow below those who are employed and thus lower in status. This feeling of lack of status or lower status may cause disgrace to an unemployed person as they may perceive themselves as failures. They may also become isolated based on their unemployment status (Anderson & Hildreth 2016; Schöb, 2012).

Hence, the loss of social status also has an influence on the employment opportunities of the unemployed person because many job opportunities are found through a person's social network (Neubert, Süßenbach, Rief, & Euteneuer, 2019; Ali, Fall & Hoffman, 2013), furthermore the kinds of opportunities and resources that are available for an individual are often influenced by their social status. For example, people from a low socio-economic environment may have less access to opportunities and resources based on their geographical location. Therefore, a limited social status has an effect on the dreams of the unemployed, as this would limit the exposure they have to employment opportunities and available resources (Du Toit et al., 2018; Enria, 2018; Ali et al., 2012). Geiger (2012) proposes that the type of support that an individual receives from others determines their individual social status. In addition, individuals who are able to keep their social status intact are able to deal better with being unemployed.

Labour market exclusion is seen to have implications for youth social status and this can ultimately keep them in exploitative patterns of dependence stigmatisation, labelling, and marginalisation. According to Bejaković and Mrnjavac (2018) employment is not only the most important determining factor of status and human well-being it is also vital for generating meaning to one's life, for social stability, and to secure participation in the community. From the above it is clear that unemployment could pose challenging, especially for first-generation graduates who assumed that by obtaining a degree they would have a higher status in their communities and could, due to their unemployed status, find it difficult to accept their inability to migrate out of their circumstances.

#### ***3.5.2.4 Social discontentment***

Discontentment means not being happy or peaceful, it is a feeling that you have been let down by others or by yourself. According to literature the social challenges of unemployment are social discontentment among the youth and extensive unhappiness, which is evidenced by the increase in suicide rates among the unemployed youth. A high rate of unemployment in a country could lead to social unrest which could lead to social protest. It can thus be said that the government's inefficiency in addressing socio-economic problems, such as unemployment, may be some of the issues that are at the core of discontentment among the youth (Magagula, 2017; Omoniyi & Osakinle, 2011).

### **3.5.3 Challenges and effects of unemployment at a macro-level**

The macrosystem comprises of the cultural environment in which the person lives and all other systems that affect them, for example, it could include the economy, cultural values, and political aspects. The macrosystem can have either a positive or a negative effect on a person's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In this study the macrosystem refers to the national and global impact of unemployment in Botswana. For instance, with a high graduate unemployment rate, graduates are likely to migrate to neighbouring countries or overseas. This shift of skilled educated persons might result in the collapse of the economy as the country will have a shortage of qualified people in both government and private sectors. In this section the challenges that the unemployed graduated youth could experience at macro-level will be identified and outlined.

#### ***3.5.3.1 Increase in poverty***

The UN has defined poverty as a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information (United Nations, 1998). Poverty is one of the greatest challenges faced by Africa and is mainly associated with a number of related challenges, including unemployment. While poverty on the African continent has always been rampant, the situation was worsened by the economic crisis of the last decade (Mupedziswa, 2018).

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a further economic crisis, as it is causing economic problems for those individuals whose livelihoods have been affected due to the lockdowns occurring in many countries around the world (Banna, 2020). It has caused unprecedented economic disruption and unemployment worldwide, threatening to become both a financial and a humanitarian crisis. Prolonged labour market recession and an acute rise of unemployment are expected. The United Nations (2020) has named COVID-19 a human crisis that is attacking societies at their core and stressed that the people who will suffer more from its ferocity are low-wage workers, women, youth, people with disabilities, and all the vulnerable groups already at risk before the pandemic began (United Nations, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the plight of unemployed graduates in Botswana as the efforts to reduce youth unemployment are further hampered by the pandemic. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated the world unemployment rate at 37.3% in 2020 (ILO, 2020). In the present economic climate, characterised by high unemployment,

unemployed graduates in Botswana and other countries face the prospect of persistence poverty due to their unemployment. Literature indicated that being poor can act as an inhibitor in terms of getting information about work opportunities, these graduates are then more likely to remain in the poverty circle due to a lack of networks that can connect them to employment opportunities (Mncayi, 2016; Verhaeghe, Van der Bracht & Van de Putte, 2015).

The problem of unemployment has been identified as the primary cause of poverty in Botswana, even though there are some other factors that are instrumental in the high poverty levels experienced in the country, albeit within a declining poverty trend. There is a strong correlation between unemployment and poverty (Kuhlmann, 2018a; Jefferis & Kelly 2007), unemployed graduates could thus fail to meet their basic physical and physiological needs.

### ***3.5.3.2 Increase in crime rates***

An increase in crime rates in communities is mostly a result of inequality, unemployment, and poverty. The unemployed youth may be drawn to crime in order to survive (Mazorodze, 2020; Gauteng Treasury, 2009), as the life of crime is a way of supporting themselves and their families (Nordin & Almén 2017; Mafela, Maundeni & Mookodi, 2011). Authors concluded that Youth unemployment can thus be a catalyst for violent crimes (Mazorodze, 2020; Gauteng Treasury, 2009) The result of youth unemployment is that young people would become criminals and as such would pose a threat to social security, economic productivity, and the general safety of other people (Nordin & Almén 2017; Mafela, Maundeni & Mookodi, 2011).

In a study to determine the link between crime and unemployment in two areas of the KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa, Tshabalala (2014) found that unemployed married men had the highest tendency to commit crime due to family obligations. This study also found that the most common crimes committed by the unemployed are fraud and theft. This tendency of unemployed men committing crime can also be seen in Botswana where unemployed youth graduates are often involved in criminal activities for survival (Sunday Standard, 2017). The increase in deviance and crime among the youth could partly be attributed to high levels of youth unemployment (Mupedziswa, 2018). Therefore, high levels of graduate unemployment could lead to youth engaging in criminal activities as a way of survival.

### ***3.5.3.3 Decrease in consumer spending***

Consumer spending is the total money spent on final goods and services by individuals and households for personal use and enjoyment in an economy (Evans, 2020; Kelly, 2020). A decrease in consumer spending influences the consumer's tendency to purchase and invest in the economy and has an impact on the course of the economy. The major influence on consumer spending is the consumer's confidence in their future finances. In this scenario, unemployment is a threat to the economy as it leads to decreased consumer spending because people will spend less on items that are not important to their lives and spend what money they have on necessary items like food and shelter (Ganong & Noel, 2019). Furthermore, to apply for credit without having an income or capital they can borrow money against would be extremely difficult and would limit the unemployed graduate's spending capacity greatly (Longe, 2017).

Due to their higher economic status, tertiary graduates have been found to contribute to consumer spending. This is because graduates are more likely than non-graduates to spend money on services and goods. Graduates also contribute to consumer spending through the financial assistance they provide to their families to take care of their day-to-day needs (Longe, 2017; Wall, 2010). This means that being unemployed these graduates do not have spending power and cannot contribute to the consumer spending as they would, were they employed.

### ***3.5.3.4 Dependence on government resources***

Government spending can be reduced by employing graduates, as graduates are likely to be less dependent on state resources and as they can contribute to government resources. For example, graduates have the potential to earn more than non-graduates and as such, are more likely to contribute to tax reserves, thus they would be contributing to government resources and becoming less reliant on government spending (Magagula, 2017; Baum & Payea, 2005). Moreover, tertiary graduates are likely to influence others to contribute to tax reserves, resulting in building a better society both in monetary and non-monetary ways (Magagula, 2017; Baum & Payea, 2005). However, due to a lack of employment opportunities for graduates it appears that the government of Botswana may have wasted resources in educating these young people who can now not contribute to the economy as they should with taxes and the repayment of government study loans.

### **3.5.3.5 Loss of skills**

A prolonged period of unemployment may result in the loss of skills by unemployed graduates. However, in order to survive, unemployed graduates may take on jobs that are not in line with their qualifications (Magagula, 2017; Grinevica & Rivza, 2017).

Singh (2019) agrees with the above statement and highlights that it has been found that tertiary graduates would take low-paying jobs in order to counter unemployment, but that this tendency contributes to them being underemployed and thus not using the skills they acquired. Additionally, in cases where graduates cannot find employment opportunities, they are likely to lose the skills they acquired through their studies, effectively lowering the value of their qualifications (Singh, 2019; Abel, Deitz & Su, 2014). Moreover, because graduates are taking longer to find employment after completing their qualifications the extended periods of unemployment could hinder their chances of being employed, as some employers may attribute their unemployment status to being inadequate workers. Extended periods of being unemployed also have negative effects on the future income of the unemployed (graduates or not) (Singh, 2019; Abel et al., 2014). Finally, it is possible that unemployed individuals may find it hard to find employment because prospective employers may be hesitant to hire someone who has not worked in a long time and who they must train first as they have lost some skills, which will increase the cost of hiring them.

In more developed countries, such as Italy, America and Germany, the loss of skill does not impede the unemployed individual's chances of finding employment as these countries provide opportunities for the unemployed to re-skill in a trade or to further their education and thus, making it easier for the unemployed to re-enter the job market. These governments also usually provide social security grants which would allow an unemployed person to survive and have the time to re-skill or further their education (Mogomotsi & Madigele, 2017; Brandt & Hank, 2010). This is not the case in Botswana and many other African countries where there are no social security grants available for the unemployed (Altman, Mokomane, Wright & Boyce, 2012).

In Botswana one of the factors that have been blamed for the country's unemployment challenges is the mismatch between the supply of and demand for labour. There are many graduates with qualifications that do not meet what the labour markets require, a fact that was lamented by the Minister of Finance and Development Planning of Botswana, Mr. Kenneth

Matambo (Mupedziswa, 2018; Republic of Botswana, 2010; Siphambe, 2007). This discrepancy might force graduates to migrate to other countries in search of careers, causing Botswana to lose skilled manpower.

### ***3.5.3.6 Increase in inequality***

Inequality is a state of not being equal, especially in status, rights and opportunities; it is a concept very much at the heart of social justice theories (Alkire et al., 2015). Botswana, like other African countries, is not immune to the concern of rising inequality as both income and consumption inequalities have been on the increase. According to the World Bank (2015) Income Gini Index estimates, Botswana ranks third of the world's highest unequal countries after South Africa and Seychelles. Botswana's national level income inequality declined marginally between 1985/86 and 1993/94 from 0.558 to 0.539 but increased between 1993/94 and 2002/2003 from 0.539 to 0.573, and decreased slightly from 0.645 in 2009/10, to 0.601 in 2015/16. On the other hand, consumption inequality was measured at 0.495 in 2009/10; and increased to 0.522 in 2015/16 (Mookodi, 2019; Statistics Botswana, 2015; 2017; World Bank, 2015).

The increase in inequality in a country may influence political and social instability in the form of riots and rising crime rates (Research Institute of Applied Economics, 2014). An increase in criminal activities, often committed by the unemployed, not only results in material losses (e.g., theft of motor vehicles and household goods) for the victims of these crimes, it also contributes to decreased social cohesion due to the fear of victimisation (Baldry, 2016; Hanson, Sawyer, Begle & Hubel, 2010). Unemployment further increases the income gap between the rich and the poor, and since unemployment is likely to increase this inequality, it should be expected that the negative impact of high unemployment rates on long-term growth will be more relevant when high and persistent unemployment is linked to increasing inequality (Mookodi, 2019; Castells-Quintana & Royuela, 2012).

Ehrhart (2009) proposes that there is a connection between inequality and high fertility rates, which in turn reduces investment into education resources, as the number of children per family increases. Ehrhart (2009) further argues that poor families tend to have more children in order to make up for the limited resources that they have to advance their children's education. Thus, it can be said that an increase in inequality goes hand in hand with an increase of unskilled labour, resulting in an economy that mainly consist of low paid, unskilled labourers (Research

Institute of Applied Economics, 2014). It follows then that there would be even less resources available for the advancement of children's education, which may contribute to the persistence of the poverty cycle in poor households and income inequality (National Development Plan, 2011).

Normally, graduates would be employed and would not only be able to provide for their families but would also be able to contribute to reduce inequalities by getting educated and getting an advantage with a better future earning potential that will possibly have excellent effects on their future social and economic mobility (Magagula, 2017; DiPrete & Buchmann, 2006). However, in Botswana inequality is on the rise as youth graduates do not have opportunities to be employed and to provide for their families due to a lack of job opportunities and the mismatch of skills.

### ***3.5.3.7 Ineffective policies and programmes***

Policies and legislation have an effect on unemployed youth graduates. As discussed in the first chapter, in response to the ever rising problem of youth unemployment in Botswana some policies (RNYP) and programmes (BNIP, GVS, and YDF) have been implemented to tackle the problem of youth unemployment. However, these programmes are ineffective as they do not address the issues of graduate unemployment. According to Nthomang and Diraditsile (2015) intervention programmes that does not improve the socio-economic conditions of its beneficiaries is a failure and should be reviewed with a view to improvement or discontinuation.

The Revised National Youth Policy is outdated as it was last revised eleven years ago in 2010, meaning that it might not be relevant now due to the fact that the current challenges that youth are experiencing now might not be same as the ones experienced by unemployed youth back in 2010. Furthermore, youth policies and programmes meant to tackle unemployment suffer from the absence of an inbuilt monitoring and evaluation framework, making it difficult for programme implementers to track their progress against set objectives, indicators and targets (Nthomang & Diraditsile, 2016).

### ***3.5.3.8 Increase in civil unrest***

The combination of an increase in poverty and inequality and lack of response from governments could lead to wide-spread discontentment amongst the youth and even to civil unrest. In Botswana feelings of discontentment have increased due to the perception that the government's actions to assist unemployed youth graduates have been ineffective as a result of corruption, the mismatch of skills and market demands, and a poor education system. The inadequacies of the Botswana government in addressing socio-economic problems, such as unemployment, are some of the issues that are at the core of discontentment among the country's youth. The high level of discontentment of graduates in Botswana has been the reason for the establishment of the Youth Unemployment Movement where graduates, donning their graduation robes, took to the streets of Gaborone to demonstrate their discontent about being unemployed, and to petition the then president and members of parliament. Though they were flogged by the police, with some being arrested, the demonstration illustrated the desperate measures that young people were willing to take to highlight their state of affairs (Sunday Standards, 2017).

This discontentment with government is not unique to the Botswana context. Similar demonstrations occurred in countries like Tunisia and Morocco where many of the youth were involved in protests and demonstrations as they believed their governments were not providing them with the opportunities they deserved. The unemployed youth furthermore believed their patriotism and nationalism have been betrayed and that their loyalty has not been rewarded. The unemployed youth further lacked any forum with which they could address these social and economic issues with the government, leaving them feeling politically excluded and ignored (Jahanbegloo, 2018; Mulderig, 2013). The same issues were raised in European countries, such as Spain, Germany, Italy, and Britain where jobless graduates and other disillusioned youth gathered to discuss their situation. They were angered and frustrated by the high rate of youth unemployment in their respective countries and began questioning the status quo (Flesher Fominaya, 2017; Gerbaudo, 2017; Myers, 2012; Marquand, 2011). Another example of civil unrest was experienced in South Africa in July 2021, what initially started as a protest against the jailing of former president Zuma mushroomed into grievances over unemployment, inequality and poverty that have rocked the country. Unemployment has grown to more than 32% in a society classified as one of the most unequal in the world, with more than half the population living in poverty (Bauer, 2021).

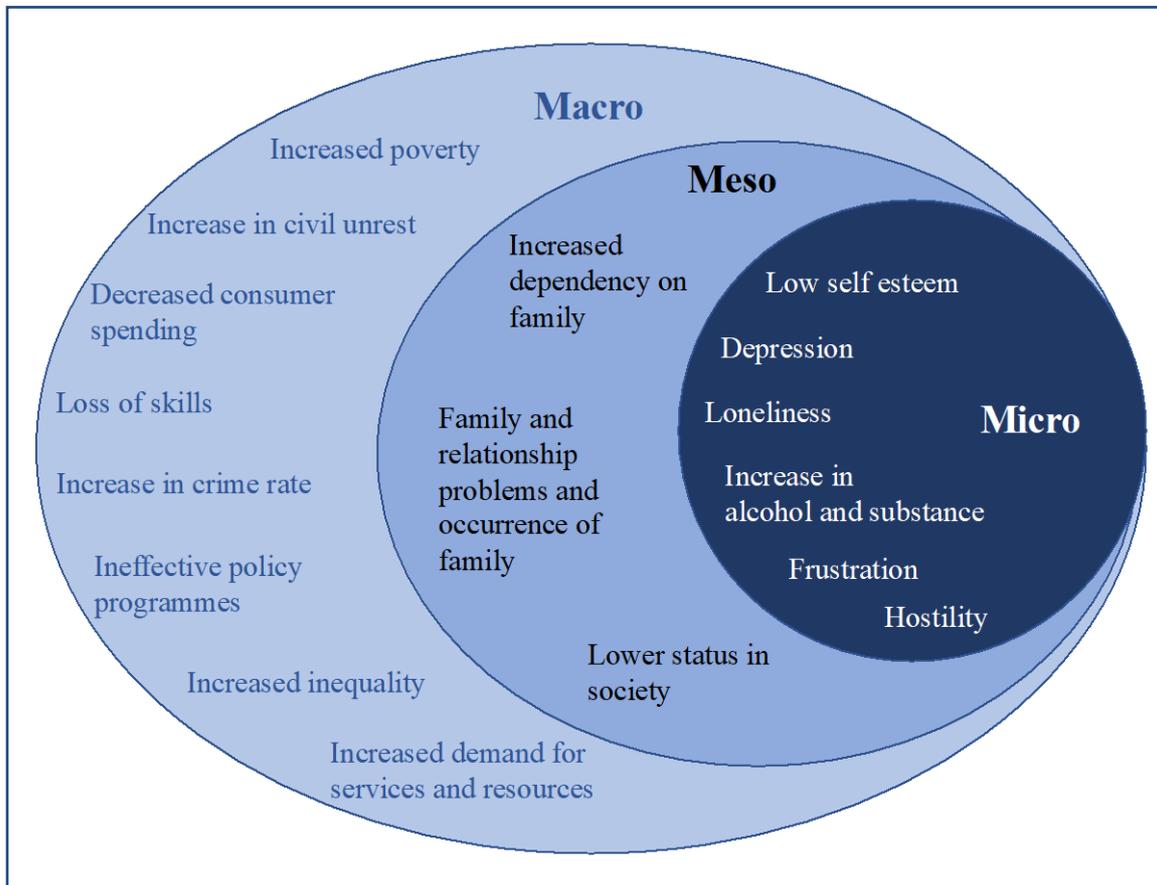
### ***3.5.3.9 Increase in demand for services and resources***

Bronfenbrenner (1977) indicates that the available resources and services in an environment influences the individual. As indicated earlier in this chapter the unemployed status of an individual can cause extensive psychological challenges, such as onset of depression (Mokona, Yohannes & Ayano, 202), low self-esteem (Van der Meer & Wielers, 2016), growing frustration (Brooks et al., 2020), growing hostility (Kriegbaum et al, 2019), feelings of loneliness (Ahmad & Khan, 2019, and lastly an increase in alcohol and substance abuse (Holmes, 2019; Parker, 2017).

Furthermore, unemployment could cause a breakdown in family relationships, especially due to increased dependency on family (Fallesen & Bernardi, 2018), family and relationship problems and occurrence of violence (Chen, 2016) and lower status in society (Hildreth, 2016; Du Toit et al., 2018). These challenges, combined with poverty, can indicate to a demand in social services and resources, as unemployed graduates could have a need for especially counselling services. Social work service delivery in Botswana is experiencing a shortage of manpower, which then leads to a lack of social work services to vulnerable populations (Maudeni, Ntshwarang & Mupedziswa, 2018), such as unemployed graduates.

The extent of youth unemployment in a country requires massive resources at national levels to resolve. Governments should therefore be aware of the fact that when the unemployment rates of a country is high, especially amongst graduates, the effect could be detrimental and that social services should be developed to assist these citizens in their adaptation to their unfortunate situations. Social workers can contribute to the improvement of the mental health of these individuals through provision of psycho-social counselling.

Based on the above analysis of challenges that could be experienced by unemployed graduates on the different levels of the ecological perspective the following depiction was developed.



**Figure 3.1: Challenges experienced by unemployed graduates on the different levels of the ecological systems perspective**

Figure 3.1 above illustrates how unemployment affects youth graduates at different levels of the ecological systems perspective. At micro-level unemployed graduates experience psychological challenges such as low self-esteem, depression, hostility, loneliness, frustration and an increase in alcohol and substance abuse due to their inability to find work. The challenges at micro-level will have an effect on their family and friends (meso-level) which could result in a family breakdown due to a breakdown in relationships, as well as the possibility of family violence, such as intimate partner violence and child abuse and neglect, due to the possible psychological challenges experienced on the micro-level. On macro-level, unemployed youth graduates experience challenges such as an increase in poverty, increase in civil unrest, a decrease in consumer spending, ineffective policies and programmes, an increase in demand for social services and resources, and an increase in crime rate, as well as a loss of skills.

### 3.6 CONCLUSION

The utilisation of the ecological systems perspective can serve as a tool to view the way in which unemployment affects graduates as it allows all the environments in which unemployed graduates exist to be assessed. The ecological systems perspective also serves as a way to determine how the different contexts surrounding the unemployed graduates, influence their ability to find work. In this chapter certain challenges that unemployed individuals can experience at micro-, meso- and macro-levels were identified that could be applicable to an unemployed graduate as well as on their environment. At micro-level, unemployed graduates could experience psychological challenges such as low self-esteem, depression, hostility, loneliness, and frustration due to their inability to find work. Due to their unemployed status, challenges could be experienced at the meso-level that could result in a breakdown in relationships, as well as the possibility of family violence. On macro-level, the prevalence of unemployment can result in an increase in poverty, crime and inequality, which could result in an increase in civil unrest. The existence of the combination of these aspects could indicate to an increase in the need for social services and resources, such as counselling services. An analysis of the possible challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates from an ecological systems perspective is necessary to determine the needs that unemployed graduates may have in terms of social work service delivery. The types of social work services that should be available for unemployed youth graduates will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **SOCIAL WORK SERVICES FOR UNEMPLOYED YOUTH GRADUATES**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Unemployment has negative effects on those who are unemployed. Apart from the negative financial effects, unemployment also socially affects the unemployed as being unemployed entails the risk of social exclusion and isolation. Being socially excluded and becoming isolated has negative effects on the personal well-being of unemployed people, especially when unemployment is long-term. Fergusson and Yeates (2021) use the concept of social ineligibility to label unemployment, as unemployment has a number of negative consequences to the personal life and happiness of unemployed people. Young people aspire to be educated in order to better their chances of being employed through education so that they can better their lives. Higher education has been long hailed as a weapon to transform civilizations, it has also been seen as a tool to provide skills, values, knowledge and viewpoints that will assist young people to improve their communities (Mok & Neubauer, 2016). Graduate unemployment is important because unemployment amongst graduates is potentially damaging to the economy. Governments should be aware of the negative consequences of unemployment and should plan for services to support unemployed youth graduates.

As a profession, the mandate of social work is to promote the welfare of individuals through the empowerment of their abilities and resources, as well as to improve the conditions that limit human rights and quality of life. Social workers strive to eliminate poverty, discrimination, and repression and respect of people's differences as main fundamentals (International Federation of Social Workers, 2014)

In this chapter, social work services appropriate for unemployed youth graduates will be discussed to reach the third objective of the study, namely, to identify the social work services appropriate for unemployed youth graduates in Botswana. This will be done by discussing the definition of social work and the role of social workers in dealing with youth unemployment,

as well as the identification of the possible social work services that should be available on the different levels of the ecological systems perspective for unemployed graduates

## **4.2 SOCIAL WORK AND YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT**

The fact that social work is a profession that promotes social change, development, empowerment and liberation of people, is a strong motivation for the involvement of social workers in youth unemployment. Social work as a profession adheres to a global definition. This definition is agreed upon and updated through constant and rigorous reflections and consultations by the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW). The most recent definition of social work, adopted by the IFSW and the IASSW in 2014 defines the profession as follows:

Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance well-being. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels (International Federation of Social Work, 2014).

This definition was agreed upon through numerous country consultations, with representation of over 110 country members. The definition touches on issues of social justice which is based on the concepts of human rights and equality and can be defined as the way in which human rights are manifested in the everyday lives of people at every level of society (IFSW, 2014). As indicated in the definition, social work as a profession should promote social change, problem solving in human relationships, as well as the enhancement of human well-being. These are all issues that should get attention when a person is unemployed. Therefore, social workers should be involved with unemployed youth to assist with the personal and social problems that they may experience so that they can adjust to any personal difficulties caused by their unemployment (Harrikari & Rauhala, 2016).

As discussed in the definition of social work above, it is the role of social workers to engage with people and structures to address life challenges such as youth unemployment and to enhance the well-being of the people involved. From the perspective of social workers, an

extreme economic inequality is primarily a violation of social justice, with devastating effects, particularly on the affected groups. Social workers provide a broad range of services to help people in need and as such the particular role a social worker plays depends on the work setting. Social workers offer various services, such as direct-care services, helping people cope with everyday problems, clinical services, as well as providing diagnosis and treatment of mental health issues (Goldberg, 2012). The ecological systems perspective enables social workers to determine where interventions are needed on the different levels.

The social work profession is therefore important in the field of youth unemployment, not only in terms of the stimulation of possible positive change to the economic crisis and mass unemployment, but also to provide the unemployed youth with services that will address the daily challenges that they face as a result of being unemployed which affect them and their families. However, it is important to take note of the state of social work services in Botswana as the study's third objective is to identify the social work services appropriate for unemployed youth graduates in the Botswana context.

No recent literature on social work and youth unemployment exists within the Botswana context. The available literature (Mogomotsi & Madigele, 2017; Pheko & Molefhe 2016; Diraditsile, 2017) focuses mainly on the unemployment of youth in general and does not include a social work perspective or address the role of social work in dealing with youth unemployment. Therefore, dated literature was utilised when referring to the Botswana context in this chapter. Jongman (2020) is of the view that whereas there is a long history of social workers working with unemployed people in Botswana, there is no specific focus of work with unemployed youth.

An analysis of the literature on the role of social work in services to the unemployed revealed that in the 1990s, with the arrival of the welfare-to-work programmes in the United Kingdom, social workers have been more involved in providing skills training and job placements. Welfare to work programmes are programmes with the objective to reduce unemployment by providing training, and to involve the unemployed in subsidised employment and voluntary work. These welfare-to-work programmes focus on the importance and responsibilities for all working-age people to support themselves through employment. The programmes were implemented in different countries, such as the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (USA), Hong Kong, and Australia, but in all cases the focus was on the identification of groups of unemployed people who may require assistance to find and sustain employment (Lambert,

2008). Despite a possibly important role for social workers in working with welfare recipients, Millar and Austin's (2006) review of the welfare-to-work policies in Australia, the UK, the USA, and Hong Kong, showed that the role of social workers in the UK and the USA was still limited, as such welfare programmes were more likely to be provided by career civil servants rather than qualified social workers. However, in Australia it was found that social workers were more involved in an advocacy role, working to improve service delivery, whereas in Hong Kong social workers were directly involved in working with the poor rather than helping them find employment. In the welfare agencies in Australia and Hong Kong social workers were in senior positions which seem to be the reason for a stronger presence of social work in the welfare-to-work programmes (Millar & Austin, 2006).

However, in Botswana, the role of social work in the current situation, where the youth unemployment and especially graduate unemployment is high, is not clear. Jongman's (2020) statement that social workers in Botswana should work to promote the social, emotional, spiritual and mental well-being of youth because when they lack these, the youth develop psychological challenges, are thus applicable to the unemployed graduates as these challenges were confirmed in the previous chapter. Social work in Botswana will be discussed in the next section.

### **4.3 SOCIAL WORK IN BOTSWANA**

The Botswana government adopted a generalist approach to social welfare. This approach stipulates that social workers deliver services to client systems at all levels (micro-, meso-, and macro-level) implementing casework, group work and community work methods. The generalist approach also stipulates that social workers connect clients to available resources, that they intervene with organisations to enhance the responsiveness of resources, and that they research all aspects of social work practice (Jongman, 2020; DuBois & Miley, 2019; Miley, O'Melia & DuBois, 2016; Maundeni, 2009).

In terms of welfare service delivery, the Department of Social and Community Development (S&CD) was established in April 1975 under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural development (National Development Plan, 1973-1981). This department is responsible for the social work service delivery in the local district councils through the implementation of all methods of social work (case work, group work and community work). Local district councils are institutions that are rendering services to the people in different districts in Botswana.

However, the main responsibilities of the local district councils are to deliver effective local governance, which are guided by statutes and policy from the parliament. The Department of Social and Community Development (S&CD) was for the longest time the sole employer of social workers in Botswana.

The Ministry of Local government and Rural Development oversee 16 local district councils where each of these local district councils has Departments of S&CDs that employ social workers. Social workers who are employed in the Department of S&CD mostly intervene on three levels, namely individual, family and group level. The main focus of service delivery is on programmes to deal with destitute persons, family welfare (vulnerable children; child protection), home-based care for patients, and orphan care, as well as community development projects related to the above mentioned programmes. Social workers in the Department of S&CD also coordinate disaster management, emergency assessment, and relief work (Mwansa, Ntshwarang & Malinga-Musamba, 2015). Although the focus should be on the implementation of all methods of social work in service rendering, Jongman indicated that the types of interventions at the Department of S&CD are mostly focused on case work (Jongman, 2020). Although the Department of S&CD is the major employer of the graduates of social work in villages and districts throughout the country, their mandate is to the above-mentioned programmes. Youth unemployment and specifically graduate unemployment is thus not mentioned as an area of services in the Department of S&CD and therefore not a focus in service delivery.

Social workers are also employed in the hospitals managed under the Ministry of Health and Wellness as clinical social workers providing emotional support or counselling to patients and their families. Furthermore, social workers are employed in the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Cultural Development (MYESCD) as programme officers who deal with youth empowerment programmes such as the Youth Development Fund. The MYESCD department of youth renders services in 16 districts which are different from local district council and it employs social workers that are involved mostly in programme implementation. This ministry is tasked with the mandate of youth empowerment and it is this ministry that must provide social work services to the youth (Jongman, 2010) and therefore also to the unemployed graduates.

It can be concluded that Botswana does not have a Ministry for Welfare, but that different ministries with separate departments are dealing with social welfare, where social workers are

employed. According to Jongman (2020), there are an estimated number of around 1500 social workers in the 16 local district councils. There are around 120 social workers in hospitals and around 500 in the MYESCD countrywide. It means that it can be estimated that a large number of social workers in the country (500) are dealing with youth empowerment in the MYESCD, as the estimated 1500 social workers employed in the Department of S&CD have to focus on four programmes (destitution, home-based care, family welfare and orphan care) and some of them are also involved in disaster management and relief work. The social workers employed at MYESD have to focus only on the well-being of the youth.

In Botswana, not only professionals with a social work degree are employed as social workers, psychologists, adult educators, and sociologists are also employed as social workers and the title of social welfare officer is used. The fact that people without a degree in social work are allowed to act in a social work capacity may be due to the lack of a regulatory body for social work practice in Botswana on the one hand, but on the other hand, it could simply be because there is not enough social workers to employ (Jongman, 2015). In the following section a short description will be given of the development of social work services in the three Ministries.

#### **4.3.1 Social work and child protection**

According to Lucas (2014) the introduction of the Children's Act of 1981 changed the landscape of social work in Botswana as it laid the foundation for social work practice in the delivery of justice for children in the country and thus in the field of child protection. Moreover, it was the first piece of legislation to prescribe the role of a social worker in child protection cases, and even though it was limited, it was an improvement as prior to the policy, the steps taken to protect children was at the discretion of the social worker (Lucas, 2014).

As the first piece of legislation where the role of the social worker was explained, the 1981 Children's Act served children well. However, as the socio-economic and political status of the country progressed, the Children's Act of 1981 was found to be insufficient and too narrow and restrictive in scope, and not based on children's rights (United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 2010). In addition, the USAID (2010) found that the implementation and enforcement of this law was lacking, even though Botswana had ratified both the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (14 March 1995) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (17 July 1986). Due to the already mentioned deficiencies, the Children's Act of 1981 was reviewed and replaced by the new

Children's Act of 2009. This act greatly improved the roles of social workers and is regarded as the only legislation that clearly spells out the mandate of social workers in Botswana (Lucas & Jongman, 2017).

Under the Children's Act of 2009, social workers are assigned roles and responsibilities, such as supporting parents and caregivers in the community, advising the traditional leadership, investigating cases of abuse and neglect, investigating the conduct and home environment of children accused of crime, appearing before children's courts, and applying for and executing protection orders (Republic of Botswana, 2009a; USAID, 2010). This field of social work is the dominant area of service delivery in the country (Lucas & Jongman, 2017), as two of the four programmes in the Department of Social and Community Development is focussed on family welfare and orphan care.

#### **4.3.2 Social work in hospitals**

Social work practice in hospitals has been a feature of the social work profession in many other parts of the world, usually in hospital settings, as clinical social workers form part of a multi-disciplinary team that must assist patients to adapt, adjust, and interact with their internal and external environments (Lucas, 2017). Clinical social workers in Botswana deal with various aspects, such as in-patient mental health issues, substance abuse, sexual assault, rape, abortion, HIV and AIDS, as well as facilitating adjustment to illness, adherence to treatment, management of interpersonal relationships, discharge, and planning and counselling in general (Jongman, 2015; Lucas, 2017). Health care service providers have now come to appreciate the role of clinical social workers delivering services in hospitals as social, emotional, and psychological factors cannot be ruled out for the purposes of assessment treatment, and prevention of illness. Accordingly, there is a high demand for social workers in hospital settings in Botswana (Department of Social Services, 2006; Jongman, 2015).

#### **4.3.3 Social work and youth development**

The Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development was formed in the early 2000 in Botswana, with the aim to create an enabling environment for youth empowerment, sport development and the preservation of culture and heritage in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to enhance the unity and pride of the people of Botswana. Thereafter the Department of Youth, within this ministry, started to recruit more social workers who are responsible for social work services. Their mandate is to create an empowering environment

for young people to partake in the development of the country and enable them to be independent.

Although youth work has always been part of social work services in Botswana it seems as if the literature pertaining to social work and youth development has never been well documented and that it has always been overshadowed by the needs of other population groups, especially that of children and destitute persons (Jongman, 2020). However, to deliver social work services for the development of the youth is crucial, as young people are seen to be in a transition stage from childhood to adulthood. Being the most active of all the groups of people in society, they are constantly searching for positive change in their own lives, that of their families, communities, and countries (Kaarineva, 2000; Jongman, 2020).

It is clear that the social work profession in Botswana has grown tremendously since the 1970s, however, in spite of this, the future of social work in Botswana still looks bleak, mostly because the people of Botswana does not recognise social work as a profession. This situation could be because there is no national welfare guiding principle, no standards, and no council of social work to see that the ethics and principles of social work are adhered to (Jongman, 2010; Jongman, 2020).

In Botswana, the bulk of social workers' duties are centred on providing remedial services to individuals and families in crisis and the administering of social safety nets, such as orphan care programmes. The emphasis is on residual and relief work, such as destitute programmes at the expense of a developmental thrust. Activities of this nature (some of which have bordered on clerical work) have tended to dominate the time schedules of social workers (Mupedziswa & Kubanga, 2020). Moreover, social workers in Botswana put a strong emphasis on casework as their focus is mainly on assessing and capturing of service provision, such as how many orphans or needy children have been supported through the medium of the social work profession in a particular month and in a particular area.

Literature indicated that in Botswana, where resources are scarce, social workers or programme officers may not obtain satisfaction through their work, owing to limited resources such as office space, transport, and counselling rooms. These limited resources may compromise the quality of counselling services to clients. For example, when resources are inadequate the counsellor's ability to help youth graduates in gaining a better understanding of the situation can be negatively affected, which may be bring harm to the client (Ntshwarang & Malinga-

Musamba, 2015). Social work service delivery to unemployed youth graduates will be discussed in the next section.

#### **4.4 SOCIAL WORK SERVICES TO UNEMPLOYED YOUTH GRADUATES**

The focus will be on social work services from a generalist point of departure with a focus on casework, group work and community work as this is the basis of social work training in the Botswana context. Having a mastery of all the methods to intervene with individuals, families, groups and communities, is seen as the foundational level of learning social work, which is referred to as generalist social work practice (Forenza & Eckert, 2018; Miley, O'Melia & DuBois, 2016). In the next section social work services at the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro-level will be discussed as the social work and ecological systems perspective's purpose is to improve the quality of interactions among individuals and their physical and social environments.

##### **4.4.1 Social work services at micro-level**

Social work services on the micro-level is the most common kind of social work service delivery and happens directly with the individual, client, or family. On the micro-level of Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective, the social worker engages with individuals or families to solve problems. The essence of micro-level intervention is to engage directly, deeply, and extensively, for the purpose of facilitating changes in individual behaviour or relationships. (Forenza & Eckert, 2018; Miley & DuBois, 2010).

Facilitating change could, for example, include helping individuals discover themselves, overcoming addictions, learning desirable behaviours, adopting acceptable adjustments to a new environment, overcoming emotional trauma, securing protective services for the abused, providing mental health counselling, and finding appropriate housing. Although micro-level interventions create changes in individual, familial, and interpersonal functioning, social workers do not necessarily direct all their efforts at changing individuals themselves. Frequently, social workers target changes in other systems, including changes in the social and a physical environment of their clients in order to facilitate improvement in an individual's or family's social functioning (Ebue, Uche & Agha, 2017). Social functioning defines an individual's interactions with their environment and the ability to fulfil their role within environments such as work, social activities, and relationships with their partners and family.

Social functioning tells the social worker something about the situation of the client and it is therefore important to consider this aspect when a client is assessed (Forenza & Eckert, 2018; Roeling, 2010).

Therefore, to intervene on the micro-level with clients, social workers need to have knowledge about individual, interpersonal, family, and group dynamics, as well as human development, social psychology and the effects of environmental influences on individuals, family members, and small groups. To work effectively at this level, social workers would have to acquire sufficient counselling skills such as, questioning or probing, listening, as well as skills in crisis intervention (Miley & DuBois, 2016). As a counsellor, social workers should contribute to address the social and emotional problems of the affected individuals and groups through counselling and ongoing psycho-social support (Molla Taye, 2019). Social work services that should be available to unemployed youth graduates is discussed in the next section.

#### ***4.4.1.1 Individual counselling***

Individual counselling is an interactive exchange process between a social worker and their client to help the client confidentially explore their problems and enhance their capacity to solve their own problems. The aim of this type of counselling is to help clients take control of their lives by aiding them to develop the ability to make wise and realistic decisions and also to assist them to alter their own behaviour to produce desirable results (Ntshwarang & Malinga-Musamba, 2015). With individual counselling, social workers should focus on the specific needs, issues and circumstances of each individual client. Interventions should be interactive and collaborative and should empower clients to develop autonomy and to take responsibility for themselves (Ntshwarang & Malinga-Musamba, 2015).

As determined in the previous chapter, being unemployed affect individuals and their behaviour to a certain extent. Furthermore, recent literature indicates that the connection between joblessness and the increased risk and severity of depression or ill mental health has been given little attention in the research on youth unemployment (Mlatsheni & Ranchhod, 2017). Social workers should thus be available to offer services to unemployed youth graduates to enable them to effectively manage their social, emotional, and/or health-related struggles brought on by their unemployment. This would mean that the social worker should make a thorough assessment of the needs and stressors experienced by youth graduates. Services

would then typically focus on a social worker empowering a graduate to deal with the challenges they face (Ntshwarang & Malinga-Musamba, 2015).

In Chapter 3, the challenges that unemployed youth graduates could experience on a micro-level as possible outcomes of unemployment, were identified. These possible outcomes of unemployment could be depression, low self-esteem, growing frustration and hostility, feelings of loneliness, and the possibility of substance abuse. Individual counselling should be available to unemployed youth graduates to address these psychological challenges of their unemployed status.

#### ***4.4.1.2 Family counselling***

Family counselling is a type of intervention that works with families and couples in intimate relationships to nurture change and develop the relationship in the family and between family members (Chandrasekara, 2019). Family counselling is furthermore important as it is utilised in counselling where there are relationship problems between family members. Literature (Maundeni, Ntshwarang & Mupedziswa, 2018) indicates that unemployment can lead to family breakdowns in the form of divorce, as well as to relationship problems between family members. For example, as graduates struggle to make ends meet, the resulting instability can strain relationships with their spouses, partners or other family members and harm their overall well-being. Therefore, the goal of family counselling is to help family members improve their communication, solve their family problems, and understand and handle special family situations. The advantage of family counselling is that all family members can be harnessed to tackle the problem at hand and with this collective investment everyone can identify with a positive outcome. There is an increased recognition of marriage and family counsellors in Botswana as it is becoming more common for people to seek help for their marital and family problems than it was in the past.

In Botswana, different professionals are responsible for counselling families, such as psychologists, religious ministers, police officers, and health personnel. However, professionally trained social workers are mostly responsible for family counselling, yet, because of a lack of staff, it is often not possible for them to render this service. Being understaffed, family counselling is usually not emphasised, which then leads to social workers not addressing family issues through this type of intervention (Maundeni, Ntshwarang & Mupedziswa, 2018).

However, the utilisation of counselling by youth graduates in Botswana seems to be scarce. Literature of more than 10 years ago, indicate that youth graduates do not utilise the services of counselling professionals as counselling is not as widely sought out as it should be. This is due to the fact that the focus of the majority of social work services rendered by the Department of S&CD in districts, emphasise residual and relief work such as food rationing and assessing poverty stricken families at the expense of counselling. The activities of social workers, some of which have bordered on clerical work, dominate the time schedules of social workers, thus not leaving sufficient time to offer counselling services (Mmonadibe, 2009). Furthermore, private counsellors are expensive, and are not being utilised by unemployed youth graduates because they lack the funds to utilise such services. The absence of family counselling could lead to unemployed graduates not addressing their relationship problems which could result in the breakdown of relationships and family violence (Chen, 2016). They would furthermore lose the social support that they need to adapt to their situation.

#### ***4.4.1.3 Substance abuse counselling***

A challenge that youth graduates often experience at the micro-level as discussed in the previous chapter is substance and alcohol abuse. Alcohol and illicit drug use has been recognised as a growing problem among youth in Botswana. In 2018 alcohol and substance abuse was estimated at 42.1% among the youth of Botswana (Riva, Allen-Taylor, Mphele, Moshashane, Lowenthal & Schupmann, 2018). Literature furthermore identified the possibility of alcohol and drug misuse amongst unemployed youth graduates (Diraditsile & Mabote, 2017).

In 2008 the Botswana Substance Abuse Support Network (BOSASNet) was formally registered as a non-governmental organisation with the mission to provide substance abuse education, prevention, and rehabilitation services. BOSANet operates an outpatient counselling rehabilitation centre that provides specialised counselling to individuals and families dealing with issues related to substance abuse and dependency. It furthermore creates public awareness through mass and social media as well as outreach workshops and presentations. The organisation is currently the only substance abuse organisation operating in Gaborone, Botswana, and is thus unable to fulfil in the need for their services. Furthermore, as BOSANet is not well known, the organisation is regarded as being ineffective for servicing unemployed graduates as it is understaffed and cannot deal with the number of graduates who are in need of their services. It is however, clear that there is a need for social workers to work

at youth centres to assist the unemployed with numerous societal problems that they develop due to being unemployed (Muchado, 2018).

Literature in Botswana confirms that the availability of substance abuse counselling services amongst the unemployed youth has become extremely important, and social workers should have knowledge about drug and alcohol intervention to deliver appropriate services. These counselling services should be provided to improve the social functioning and ultimately enhance the well-being of the youth. (Diraditsile & Mabote, 2017). If services are not available to the unemployed youth to address substance misuse, the impact of addiction will be experienced in families, as well as the larger community as literature (Mbandlwa & Dorasamy, 2020) indicates that there is a strong correlation between substance abuse and an increase in crime in communities.

#### ***4.4.1.4 Increase social support networks***

In terms of the social support network or resources, the ecological theory assumes that the more extensive a person's network is, the better it will be able to provide them with diverse resources (Guerette & Smedema, 2011; Catalano, Hansen & Hartig, 1999). As such, in the case of unemployed graduates, it would be essential for them to have extensive network resources in the form of employed family members, and access to information resources that would assist them to find work (for example, newspapers adverts, and access to internet job search sites). Therefore, unemployed graduates may have to align themselves to their network support resources in order to obtain their desired outcomes for employment (Heed, 2012).

Social support has been found to be essential in buffering the effects of stressful life events such as unemployment (Lorenzini & Giugni, 2012; Taylor, Budescu, Gebre & Hodzic, 2014). A social support network is defined as an exchange of resources between two individuals perceived by the provider or the recipient to be intended to enhance the well-being of the recipient and is vital in coping with unemployment (Kieselbach, 2003). This definition is supported by Ashberg, Bowers, Renk and McKinney (2008) who defined social support as (a) the actual structure of the individual's support networks; (b) the degree to which individuals perceive relationships to provide adequate emotional and instrumental support; and (c) an interpersonal transaction that involves the actual receipt of support, including emotional concern, instrumental aid, information, and/or appraisal assistance. Literature differentiates between received support and perceived support. Received support is the external support

provided in the form of helping behaviours, whereas perceived social support refers to the belief that family and friends would provide support if and when needed. Research has however indicated, that perceived social support improves physical and mental health. Perceived support also known as family support, is crucial in the lives of any young unemployed individual. It creates an enabling environment and a sense of comfort, love, happiness, hope, and positive energy at a time that the expectations and inability to meet needs could result in self-guilt and pessimism, and even suicidal ideation of the unemployed youth (Vungkhanching, Tonsing & Tonsing, 2017; Lakey & Croney, 2008).

It is therefore, important that social workers should encourage youth graduates during individual counselling to develop the relationships in their support networks to ensure that the support offered is beneficial to them. This view is supported by Yang et al. (2014) who reported that connectedness to family and significant others decreased the odds of substance abuse and violent behaviour. Social support from a network outside of the family can also provide the unemployed with information regarding the job market and job acquisitions.

Given the fact that perceived, or family support is seen as a buffer against negative mental health outcome for unemployed youth, it is extremely important that unemployed graduates should have access to family counselling as the focus in this type of counselling is on the improvement of the relationships between family members. Literature confirms that support from family members is important as it will encourage the unemployed youth not to give up on their dreams or become discouraged, but to rather pursue the kinds of work opportunities they desire (Crowe & Butterworth 2016; Pauw, Oosthuizen & Van der Westhuizen, 2008).

In terms of graduate unemployment in Botswana, social support can assist graduates to have better outcomes, personally, and in terms of their personal career outlooks, depending on the type of support they receive from those around them, the resources that their supportive environments have to offer, and their perception of the support that they receive from others (Crowe & Butterworth 2016). It is accordingly clear that the increase of networks to improve social support can serve as a buffer against the effect of unemployment by assisting individuals to view their situation in a more optimistic manner. Social work service delivery to unemployed graduates should therefore focus not only on increasing their networks, but also on improving relationships, where necessary, in existing networks to sustain perceived and received social support.

#### **4.4.2 Social work services at meso-level**

Meso-level social work takes place on an intermediate scale, involving neighbourhoods, institutions or more diverse and larger groups (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017; Forenza & Eckert, 2018). The target of social work services at meso-level is to enable people to function effectively in groups and derive maximum satisfaction from group participation (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017). In Chapter 3, it was established that unemployed youth graduates often have feelings of discontentment, experience increased dependency on others, have a poorer status in society, and experience family breakdown and domestic violence on the meso-level of the ecological perspective. In the next section the services that should be available to unemployed youth graduates at this level will be discussed.

##### **4.4.2.1 Group work**

Generally, the meso-level (midlevel) of social work intervention represents working with formal groups, such as teams, interdisciplinary task forces, task-oriented groups, community service clubs, and self-help groups, as well as social service agencies, health care organisations, educational systems, and correctional facilities. Group work is a method of social work which helps individuals to enhance their social functioning through purposeful group experiences, and to cope more effectively with their personal problems. Factors, such as group functions, structures, roles, patterns of decision-making, and styles of interaction, influence the process of change (Coholic, Dano, Sindori & Eys, 2019; Forenza & Eckert, 2018; Miley & DuBois, 2016).

Therefore, working at this level necessitates that the social worker should have an understanding of the dynamics of formal groups, and knowing how to facilitate meso-level change is crucial for developing quality programmes and services. Effective meso-level work requires skills in organisational planning, decision-making, and conflict resolution (Coholic, Dano, Sindori & Eys, 2019; Miley & DuBois, 2016). Literature indicates that the types of groups that should be available to the unemployed youth are therapy groups and self-help or peer groups, as they emphasise the development, growth, and maturity of the members of a group, and where necessary, the possibilities for social adjustments (Coholic et al., 2019; Ezech, Ezech & Aniche, 2000). Group work could also extend the networks of the unemployed youth, as they will meet people with similar challenges that might provide emotional and social support. The types of groups that could work for the unemployed youth will now be discussed.

- **Therapy groups**

Therapy groups consist of individuals who do not share a household or have any kind of relationship with one another outside of the group setting. They are people seeking individual assistance. Interaction among group members is solely for therapy of individual members, thus the group has no purpose outside of its therapeutic objectives. A good example is the alcoholic anonymous group which can help unemployed youth graduates deal with the challenge of increased alcohol and substance abuse as discussed in Chapter 3. However, as indicated in the previous section, substance and alcohol abuse counselling is not readily available in Botswana, which could impact on the rendering of these services to unemployed graduates.

- **Self-help or peer groups**

Self-help or peer groups consist of people who have similar problems or interests and believe that working and interacting together will provide opportunities for all the group members to grow and change, such as a group of young people coming together to advocate for the creation of employment opportunities. Literature indicates that self-help groups could be beneficial to unemployed youth graduates. With the help of a social worker, the members of these groups will be able to motivate each other so that they do not succumb to the pressures of the feelings of discontentment and loneliness and work towards creating opportunities for themselves to be employed or self-employed (Spadafora, Schiralli & Al-Jbouri, 2019; Ebue et al., 2011). Social workers need to maximise the use of support groups to support unemployed graduates with challenges, such as the breakdown of families, their feelings of discontentment, and those experiencing violence to stimulate self-help amongst the group members and extend the networks available to offer social support.

In Botswana, the above-mentioned types of group work are rarely used by government social workers due to the lack of people power. Authors are of the view that should the staffing of social work counsellors be increased, the utilisation of group work is likely to become more feasible (Maundeni, Ntshwarang & Mupedziswa, 2018). An important aspect to remember is that with group work more clients can be seen as they are being put together in a group, which enables social workers to reach more people in a situation where human resources is scarce. The establishing of group work, such as self-help groups would provide social workers with the opportunity to empower the youth to express and show their potentiality (Yadav, 2014).

Different types of groups should thus be offered through social work service delivery to unemployed graduates.

#### **4.4.3 Social work services at macro-level**

Macro-level social work generally addresses issues experienced in meso or micro social work practice, as well as social work research and could empower client systems by involving them in systemic change (Forenza & Eckert, 2018; Netting, 2013). According to the Encyclopaedia of Social Work (2015), macro-level intervention, or the community work method, includes those activities performed in organisational, community, and policy arenas. For the most part, welfare concerns of people are determined at these levels. Therefore, social workers are trained to influence and formulate policies, rules, and regulations that would represent the welfare concerns of society. Social work skills, such as advocacy, dialogue, mediation, and lobbying, are needed at the macro-level to inspire, drive, and facilitate potential programmes and policies that will free youth graduates from the shackles of unemployment.

Macro-level interventions target communities, local and national governments, as well as all their ministries, departments and agencies with the aim to ensure well-being for society as a whole (Forenza & Eckert, 2018; National Association of Social Workers, 2018). It is an effort to help clients by intervening in large systems (Forenza & Eckert, 2018; National Association of Social Workers, 2018). Consequently, social workers' intervention at macro-level could help resolve tensions and community problems by initiating options for resolution, social actions, and social change through community organising, legislative action, dialogue, and policy formulation (Forenza & Eckert, 2018; National Association of Social Workers, 2018). Examples include lobbying to change employment law, organising a state-wide activist group, or advocating for policy changes (Forenza & Eckert, 2018; Netting, 2013). The types of programmes that could be developed for the unemployed youth will now be discussed.

##### ***4.4.3.1 Youth development programmes***

Youth development is defined as a process of human growth whereby adolescents move from being taken care of to taking care of themselves and others, a process where policy, funding, and programming are applied to provide support to young people as they build their abilities and strengths to meet their personal and social needs. The role of social work in youth development programmes is to provide opportunity to the youth to express and show their potentiality (Jongman, 2020). An example of a youth development programme in Botswana is

the Youth Development Fund (YDF) which is an entrepreneurial programme that aim at encouraging unemployed youth to venture into business.

Lucas (2017) indicates that social work has always been involved with youth development in Botswana since the 1940s. Youth development programmes in Botswana are the Youth Development Fund (YDF), Young Farmers Fund (YFF), Botswana National Internship Programme (BNIP) and Graduate Volunteer Scheme (GVS). However, literature refers to the possibility that there could be aspects that need to be considered in the existing youth development programmes in Botswana. Youth development should be more preventative to avoid the youth falling into the traps of poverty, unemployment, and inequality (Lucas, 2017). Therefore, according to Jongman (2020) youth development in Botswana must adopt a developmental paradigm. The focus of a developmental paradigm is on working with people in their local context while also engaging in the broader spiritual, social, economic and political context (Hawkins, Pattanayak, Martin & Hess, 2016; Mittelman, 2010). In term of the role of social work in youth development programmes is it mentioned that the youth are not often involved in opportunities to participate in politics, planning, and policy development (Yadav, 2014, Jongman, 2020). Therefore social workers could initiate and implement programmes and activities to pressurise governments and leaders to provide opportunities for the youth to participate in all parts of government as it is imperative for the youth to participate in decision-making processes that will affect their futures (Lucas, 2017). Jongman (2020) is of the view that social workers should conduct research and surveys to ascertain the needs of the youth and the necessities for youth development to ensure the development of appropriate and relevant youth development programmes. The content of these programmes should therefore be focused on social work interventions that address the needs of unemployed graduates.

In the Botswana context there is also a need for youth development programmes where unemployed graduates are not only more involved in policy development, but also in social work-based developmental programmes where the focus is on the prevention of the consequences of unemployment (Jongman, 2020). It is clear that there is a possibility that the existing youth development programmes in Botswana, such as the Youth Development Fund (YDF), the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA), and the Young Farmers Fund, are not sufficient in term of a focus on social work service delivery. As mentioned above there is a need for a stronger social work input in programmes to prevent the consequences of unemployment.

#### ***4.4.3.2 Programmes for the development of employment opportunities***

In Botswana, the government has over the years initiated numerous programmes in response to the challenges of youth unemployment in order to help people with employment (Nthomang & Diraditsile, 2016). As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Botswana government developed the National Youth Policy in 2010 with the purpose to guide the government and ensure coordination of macro-level programmes and activities that would directly or indirectly benefit the youth and the country, such as the creation of employment opportunities. These programmes can be divided into two groups. In the first group the focus is on entrepreneurial empowerment programmes. Both the Youth Development Fund (YDF) and the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) fall within this group and aim to promote active participation of the youth in the socio-economic development of the country through venturing into sustainable and viable income generating projects.

The Youth Development Fund (YDF), for example, was developed to promote the active participation of youth in the socio-economic development of the country, to encourage the out-of-school, marginalised and unemployed youth to venture into sustainable and viable income-generating projects and to promote the development of sustainable citizen-owned youth enterprises. Through these endeavours the aim was furthermore to reduce rural-urban migration by making it attractive to start enterprises in rural areas, and to create sustainable employment opportunities for young people through the development of these projects.

Another programme is the CEDA Young Farmers Fund (YFF). The YFF was introduced to improve youth participation in agriculture and to address youth unemployment. The YFF, which supports citizens aged from 18 to 40 years, issues loans at lower interest rates and longer repayment periods than the regular CEDA programme. However, these programmes do not focus strongly on unemployed graduates.

In the second group of programmes the focus is on absorbing the youth into the formal job market, through the creation of internship opportunities, a programme that was more focused on the unemployed graduates. The National Internship Programme was implemented to promote internships for unemployed graduates in government and/or private sector positions for a maximum period of two years. The main aim of this programme is to facilitate the transfer of youth employability and to aid a smooth integration of graduates into the economy (Diraditsile, 2017; Republic of Botswana, 2008b). Another programme is the Graduate

Volunteer Scheme (GVS) which was designed as a means to contribute to community projects and to improve the graduates' employment readiness through provision of on-the-job training and experience (Republic of Botswana, 2015b).

These programmes demonstrate the country's well-intended efforts to solve the challenge of youth unemployment and to empower its youth. However, according to a study conducted by Mupedziswa (2017) on "Youth Employment and Skills Development in Africa: Lessons from Botswana's Experience" both the National Internship Programme and Youth Development Fund have had problems. Some critics have referred to the internship programme as a failed initiative on the basis that it was politically motivated and hence, was doomed from the beginning. This programme has also been accused of allowing temporary exploitative employment for very few young people who would eventually not gain sufficient professional training and skills due to weak monitoring and job shadowing arrangements. On the other hand, the study highlights that such arguments and criticisms fail to appreciate the bigger picture and the positives of the programme, whereby many young people have benefitted by being absorbed into long-term sustainable employment through their placements.

Mupedziswa's study further analyses the challenges faced by the YDF, including accusations of intellectual property violations, with complaints by potential youth grantees alleging that ideas that they had submitted have ended up in the wrong hands, while the red tape involved in funds disbursements resulted in important implementation delays. Sechele (2015) indicated that other challenges include lack of ownership for projects, meaning that beneficiaries lacking interest in their projects resulted in failure and an inability to repay the loans (same challenges are faced by CEDA). In spite of these issues the programme has also documented numerous success stories.

Yet even though there are empowerment programmes aimed to assist young unemployed people, the challenges they face are not being addressed sufficiently. This is due to the fact that most of the programmes cater for young people who want to become entrepreneurs. However, every young person does not necessarily want to become an entrepreneur, leaving some of the young unemployed graduates with unresolved challenges. Therefore it is important that the needs of unemployed graduates should be determined to ensure that programmes are directed at fulfilling researched employment and personal needs. It is also clear that the existing programmes should be evaluated to determine their effectiveness in the current growing unemployment numbers of graduates. From a macro social work point of departure, social

workers or programme officers in the Ministry should focus on determining the needs of unemployed graduates in terms of employment opportunities and subsequently advise government about the effectiveness of the programmes that are currently offered, as well as advocate for changes in programme offering, if necessary.

#### ***4.4.4.3 Wage or unemployment subsidy or benefits***

Unemployment subsidies or benefits are government funds that are regularly paid to unemployed people. For example, in the United States an unemployment subsidy is a joint state federal programme that provides cash benefits to eligible workers who are unemployed. Although each state administers a separate unemployment subsidy programme, all states follow the same guidelines established by federal law (Bradbury, 2014). According to Mtembu and Govender (2015), many countries have opted for similar strategies of wage subsidies, by either subsidising payrolls of employers who employ groups of people targeted by the subsidy, or by giving tax rebates to such employers as a way of encouraging them to employ more people in order to reduce unemployment. Such wage or employment subsidies are used in both developed and developing countries to raise employment levels and lessen the economic hardship of the unemployed.

In a developing country, where labour market failure is typically characterised by unemployment, a subsidy offered to companies is often more appropriate (Burns, Edwards & Pauw, 2013). For example, in January 2014, the South African government introduced a law of wage subsidy among youth between the ages of 18 and 29 years in order to reduce unemployment. According to this legislation, a subsidy is allocated to South African organisations that provides the youth with the opportunity to be exposed to the workplace and the development of skills that, once mastered, will position them to qualify for better job opportunities through hard work and commitment (Messigah, 2019). Another advantage is that wage subsidies lower the cost of labour to an employer while raising the wage a worker receives (Nevondwe & Odeku, 2014).

Developed countries on the other hand, is well-known for helping their youth find jobs and providing wage subsidies when people with no or little work experience might not be able to access jobs to expand their skills with (Almeida, Orr & Robalino, 2014). These types of subsidies can be in the form of deductible taxes administered by the tax authorities (Kasongo, 2013). For example, in Finland, wage subsidies paid to the employers are implemented through

a simple reduction in the payroll tax for the companies that participates in the programme, and the revenues are mainly used for funding the employees' pension and health insurance (Huttunen, Pirttilä & Uusitalo, 2013).

It has also been observed that wage subsidies have the potential to raise youth employment in a given economy by an estimated 20 to 30% (Nevondwe & Odeku, 2014). This type of programme provides incentives, especially to the private sector, to accelerate job creation and raise employment figures. The wage subsidy further has the potential to increase labour productivity as employers could use the subsidy to promote training and education opportunities for young workers to enhance their productivity levels (Kasongo, 2013).

Thus, to achieve social justice, social workers in Botswana should advocate on behalf of unemployed youth graduates for appropriate macro-level programmes such as wage subsidy legislation. Such a subsidy scheme will reduce the cost of employment and encourage companies to hire more young workers. Unemployment subsidies will assist unemployed youth graduates to cope with the challenges brought on by the persistent issue of unemployment as discussed in the previous chapter.

#### ***4.4.4.4 Labour markets opportunities and access to labour markets***

Labour market opportunities, such as job search assistance programmes, explain to job-seekers how to look for jobs effectively (e.g., how to write resumes) and can recommend jobs that the participant should apply for. Most of these programmes include a blend of job search assistance and job search monitoring. By participating in a job search assistance programme, the unemployed typically reveal information about their job search efforts, for example, they may mention where they applied and why they think the application was unsuccessful. Participating in job search assistance programmes often helps decrease the duration of unemployment (Behaghel, Crepon & Gurgand, 2014)

The labour force of Botswana's challenges are aggravated by the current trends in the labour market, a market described as increasingly global, complex, and highly competitive. Globalisation and access to information, fast-tracked by platforms such as e-learning, Facebook, Twitter, and many other information communication technologies simultaneously produce other unprecedented changes such as access to information and different views of how work ought to be done (Pheko & Molefhe, 2016; Tarique & Schuler, 2010).

Consequently, the government of Botswana has decided to enhance the registration of job seekers by developing a Job Seeker Module in the Labour Market Observatory (LMO) housed at the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC). This programme is designed to improve the online registration and administration of job seekers' data at a centralised platform for efficiency and for convenience of customers. Job seekers will also be able to discover employment opportunities through the labour market observatory website where they will be able to view available vacancies as posted by employers. They can react by posting resumes and applying for the positions online. The HRDC has been developing the Labour Market Information Systems (LMIS) which seeks to collect, manage, and disseminate all information on the labour market in Botswana. This initiative facilitates the monitoring of labour trends for purposes of providing, among others, career guidance, the available skills in the economy, and policy advice (Human Resources Development Council, 2020).

In terms of social work service delivery, Smith (2007) highlights that social workers should come up with interventions that will help unemployed youth graduates to access the labour markets. One intervention that they should lobby for is the job search assistance programmes, which is one of the most common forms of active labour market policies. Hence, social workers at the Ministry Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development should provide job search assistance and counselling to job-seekers on a regular basis. However, the efficacy of the job search programme is to provide information about job opportunities in combination with some monitoring of the job search process for job seekers. If this service is available, it will furthermore enable social workers to identify possible psychological challenges that unemployed graduates may experience and they would be able to offer counselling services.

#### **4.5 CONCLUSION**

The aim of social work service delivery is to promote social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. The definition of social work states that social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance their well-being. Social workers should therefore be involved in service delivery to unemployed youth to empower them to deal with the challenges that they experience because of their unemployed status.

The focus of these services should include micro-level, meso-level and macro-level interventions to ensure that unemployed graduates have support and to assist them in their

interactions between these systems. Counselling services, such as individual and family counselling should be available on the micro-level to prevent the effects of unemployment, such as loss of self-esteem, depression and a breakdown in family relationships. Group work should be utilised to further enhance the networks of unemployed graduates as social support derived from these contacts, may provide unemployed graduates with a sense of confidence in their abilities so that they can create opportunities for themselves in whichever form or avenue. Furthermore, macro-level programmes, such as youth development and the development of employment opportunities, should be available. It seems as if the introduction of wage subsidies could improve the plight of unemployed graduates and also be beneficial to companies, as these subsidies could reduce the cost of employment and encourage companies to hire more young workers. Wage subsidies will specifically assist unemployed youth graduates to cope with the challenges brought on by the persistent issue of being unemployed. Social workers should therefore also advocate on the macro-level for programmes that address the needs of unemployed graduates on every level of the ecological systems perspective. The research methodology utilised to investigate the challenges experienced by unemployed graduates in Botswana will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 5:**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter the research methodology used to conduct the research study is discussed. Research methodology provides a way for social scientists to view the world (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Wahyuni (2012) describes research methodology as a model through which research may be undertaken in a specific domain. It can be understood as a road map for carrying out research. Research methodology contains various sets of beliefs that guide a researcher in the type of methods that they ought to use in their research (Wahyuni, 2012). Moreover, research methodology that is used in a study depends on the type of paradigm from which the researcher is approaching the research, their knowledge and experience. The most common classification of research methodology is either qualitative or quantitative research methodology (Terre Blanche, Durrhein & Painter, 2006). This research study is a qualitative, interpretative phenomenological study. Phenomenological studies aim to gather an in-depth understanding of the experiences of people of phenomena (Roostenburg, Strydom & Fouché, 2021).

In this chapter the chosen research paradigm will be described, followed by a description of qualitative research. Thereafter the research design and methods to ensure validity and reliability as well as the ethical considerations are discussed. Through this discussion the fourth objective of the study will be reached, namely to investigate the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates in Botswana from an ecological systems perspective, as well as their need for social work services.

#### **5.2 RESEARCH DIMENSIONS**

Before discussing the methodological frameworks, models and design of this research, it is imperative to understand the bigger picture of the scientific research process, in terms of the philosophical, ontological, sociological, epistemological and methodological dimensions through which the research is devised and understood and the phenomenon ultimately explored.

### 5.2.1 Philosophical dimensions

Uddin and Hamiduzzaman (2009) say that the effectiveness and efficiency of social science research depends on philosophical justification and on philosophical assumptions about truth and knowledge. Uddin and Hamiduzzaman (2009) argue that at the start of the research process, there is a consideration of the central question, *why research?* Burrell and Morgan (1979) believe the answer to this question lies in research concerning the nature of society and science. Nueman (2014) describes the purpose of a social science research as exploratory, descriptive, explanatory and explaining social phenomena involving human behaviour.

If researchers understand and comprehend the above-mentioned concepts, the concepts will have a direct impact on what the researchers choose to research, and on the ontological, epistemological, sociological and methodological dimensions for the overall research design and process. This study, therefore, has explored in depth, these interacting dimensions and has cumulatively formulated an overall philosophical approach. The concepts of ontology, sociology and methodology will be explored in the following sections to see how these concepts impacted on the study.

### 5.2.2 Ontological dimension

Nueman (2014) defines ontology as the concerns about the issue of what exists, or the fundamental nature of reality. When we do a study, we make assumptions about what we will study and its place in the world. Adding to what Neuman (2014) says, Blaikie's (2010a) formulation is that ontology is the science or study of being. Al-Saadi (2014) defines ontology as being concerned with 'what is', in other words, the nature of existence and structure of reality; what it is possible to know about the world.

The focus of the study was to explore, understand and interpret the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates from an ecological systems perspective. The research gap that has been identified is that no research existed with a focus on the specific challenges that unemployed youth experienced within the Botswana context from a social work point of departure. This situation implies that the existing programmes and social work services in Botswana have been developed without a proper needs assessment. The assumption is that the current policy, programmes and social work services were possibly not tailored to the needs of unemployed graduates. In order to ascertain the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates, this study tried to gain an understanding of the challenges experienced by

unemployed youth graduates, as well as the views of social workers and programme officers employed at the MYESCD who are responsible for the development of programmes and services, including social work services to unemployed youth graduates.

In this study an ontology that is essentially of a social world of meanings was used. In this world, researchers have to assume that the world they investigate is a world populated by human beings who have their own thoughts, interpretations and meanings. This infers that the data consolidated is interpretivist and humanistic in nature. These researchers' investigation of this world is clearly manifested in their use of different research methods and techniques of the interpretive design, such as interviews, in order to interpret unemployed youth graduates' experiences. Interpretivism requires researchers to interpret phenomena in society and to integrate human interest into a study (Crotty, 1998; Williams, 2000). Accordingly, interpretive researchers assume that access to reality (given, or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meanings. It is believed that an interpretivist point of departure, which has to do with the nature of reality, socially constructedness, and subjectivity, may change. This research was implemented within a framework that reflects on qualitative data, the exploration of a phenomenon that is open to interpretation, and that is humanistic in its approach.

### **5.2.3 Epistemological dimension**

Several authors, such as Richards (2003), Snape and Spencer (2003), and Crotty (1998) define epistemology as the assumption that we make about the nature of knowledge or how it is possible to find out about the world. It involves knowledge, and it embodies a certain understanding of what that knowledge entails. De Gialdino (2009) explains that epistemology raises questions that includes how reality can be known, the relationship between the knower and what is known, the characteristics, the principles, and the assumptions that guide the process of knowing and the achievement of findings, as well as the possibility of that process being shared and repeated by others, in order to assess the quality of the research and the reliability of findings.

Within an interpretivist framework, the epistemological approach of this study is one which recognises that the limits of inquiry are perceived knowledge, and the relationship between reality and the research process is developed through an understanding of the specific context of the phenomenon being explored. The exploration of the truth in the sense of this research

process was to understand the patterns of symbolic discourse by reflecting on the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates and how this truth informs and could inform current policy, programmes and service delivery to the unemployed graduates within the Botswana context.

### **5.3 RESEARCH APPROACH**

This study is qualitative in approach. As mentioned in Chapter 1, qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014). This kind of research observes aspects such as meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things, and does not count or measure these aspects (Roestenburg, Strydom & Fouché, 2021; De Vos et al., 2013). The qualitative approach was thus used to explore and describe the experiences of unemployed youth graduates from an ecological systems perspective, as well as the possible social work services that this target group need. The views of programme officers about the available programmes and social work services for the unemployed graduates and the barriers encountered in services delivery to unemployed youth graduates, and how these barriers affect the unemployed youth graduates were explored and described.

The researcher followed a qualitative approach because such an approach considers the explanation of participants in their natural setting. The aim of qualitative research is furthermore to gather as many possible ideas from participants by putting broad and general questions to the participants so that their perceptions could be constructed (Grove & Gray, 2019). Furthermore according to the Council on Social Work Education (2012), qualitative research is less intrusive, it provides greater empathy than other methods such as surveys or structured interviews and it also allows the social work profession to learn from those they serve. As the qualitative research was done with a vulnerable group (unemployed youth graduates) empathy was key and, as indicated, the researcher learned from the participants about the challenges they faced as unemployed youth graduates.

### **5.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Before doing any type of research, it is important to be clear about the role and purpose of a research design. It is important to understand what a research design is and it is vital to know where a research design fits into the entire research process, from framing a question to finally

analysing and reporting data. Babbie (2001) indicates that, in social science research there are fundamental questions that are asked, namely

1. What is going on (descriptive research)?
2. Why is it going on (exploratory research)?

Therefore, this study has combined an explorative and descriptive research design, as to ask questions related to “what” (descriptive) and “how” (exploratory). These two aspects will be further discussed.

### **5.4.1 Exploratory design**

Exploratory studies are carried out for three reasons: (1) to satisfy the curiosity of the researcher and their desire for better understanding, (2) to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study, and (3) to develop the methods to be employed in any subsequent study (Babbie, 2016). In terms of the first reason, namely, to satisfy the curiosity of the researcher and their desire for a better understanding, literature indicates that social science research is conducted to explore a topic or to start to familiarise the researcher with that topic. This process typically occurs when the researcher examines a new interest or when the subject of study itself is relatively new (Roestenburg, Strydom, & Fouché, 2021; Babbie, 2016; Fouche & De Vos, 2011). The researcher was interested in the topic because there are many graduates in Botswana who are roaming the streets and he knew that it was becoming difficult to find employment, which could imply that these graduates would have to face many challenges. In terms of the second reason, namely, to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study, as indicated the researcher determined that there was no research studies executed in the Botswana context about the challenges experienced by unemployed graduates and no studies on this topic with a focus on social work. In terms of the third reason, namely to develop the methods to be employed the researcher decided to use an exploratory design to explore these challenges on the different levels of the ecological system perspective, as no other studies were obtainable. The exploratory design is used by the researcher to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or individuals (Roestenburg, Strydom, & Fouché, 2021; Blaikie, 2010b) and is an appropriate design exactly where there is little existing knowledge related to the research topic available (De Vos et al., 2011). There was no information about the lived experiences of unemployed youth graduates at the different levels of ecological systems perspective in Botswana available. Therefore, this design fits well within the goal of the study

to gain an understanding of the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates from an ecological systems perspective to determine the need for social work services.

#### **5.4.2 Descriptive design**

A descriptive design aims at describing situations and events. In this kind of study, the researcher observes and then describes what has been observed (Babbie, 2016). Furthermore, supporting this point is De Vos et al. (2011) who stated that descriptive research presents a picture of the specific details of a situation, social setting or relationship and focuses on the how and why question. In this study the researcher applied descriptive research by describing the lived challenges experienced by unemployed graduates in Botswana and the findings are represented in Chapter 6. As discussed in Chapter 1 the use of this design together with the exploratory design are appropriate when a subject being studied is relatively new, such as the challenges (which are currently unknown in the Botswana context) experienced by unemployed youth graduates within an ecological systems perspective, thus a focus on social work. No studies on this topic were available in the Botswana context.

### **5.5 RESEARCH METHOD**

This study adopted a qualitative research method. A qualitative research method was preferred, because the researcher took into consideration that there were no studies done on the research topic and the focus was on gaining an understanding of the lived experiences of unemployed graduates in Botswana which was not previously explored. Furthermore, the method has been chosen because of its unique way of teasing out the subjectivity and the ‘voice’ of participants which is applicable to this study as the researcher was interested in the challenges (“lived in experiences) experienced by unemployed graduates. The method emphasizes the interest and authenticity of human experience as a strong feature. (Roostenburg, Strydom, & Fouché, 2021; De Vos et al., 2011). According to Silverman (2013) the qualitative method is a naturalist model, the naturalistic researcher’s first stage of their study is to review the context from which the research questions, means of investigation, and likely hypotheses will emerge; as an exploratory and descriptive research method was used, no hypothesis was pre-formed, but exploration was based on several research questions. This was achieved through the use of inductive theorizing. Within this study, an inductive research method was implemented through the development of a literature study, the execution of sampling, as well as the

implementation of different data collection methods related to the study design. The specifics of these are explored in greater detail below.

The research process will be described in terms of selecting a research topic, the literature review.

### **5.5.1 Selecting a researchable topic**

The first step in the research process is the selection of a topic (Whittaker, 2009). A topic serves as a form of foundation which suggests the idea of the study, both to the researcher personally and others who may read the study (Cresswell, 2014). This topic may develop through observation of concerns in practice and the reviewing of literature which is of interest to the researcher (Roestenburg, Strydom, & Fouché, 2021). It may also originate from reasons which may be personal, academic and social in nature (Blaikie, 2010a). Related to this, the research problem can be described as the need for a topic to be studied (Roestenburg, Strydom, & Fouché, 2021; Fouché & De Vos, 2005). There are four key rules of importance in deciding on a topic, namely that the topic should be: relevant to the researcher's own career, intellectually stimulating, researchable, interesting and worthwhile (Mouton, 2011).

The researcher is a social work graduate from University of Botswana and University of Western Cape and is a citizen of Botswana, living in Gaborone. It has become clear that unemployment of youth graduates in Botswana was a serious social issue and there was a need for research on this issue as the researcher is involved with youth development making it relevant to researcher's career. The research topic is interesting and worthwhile because there are several studies done on unemployment graduates in Botswana in other disciplines, but none has been done that addresses the challenges of unemployed youth graduates from an ecological system perspective in the field of social work. As a social worker with both personal and professional experience in the field of youth development, the researcher became aware that the existing programmes offered by programme officers at the MYSECD are perhaps not sufficient in addressing the issue. After a brief literature review, it was clear that no studies existed on the challenges experienced by this group, which meant that existing programmes could perhaps not address these challenges. From a social work perspective, it meant that there is a possibility that appropriate services were also not available. The topic was therefore also intellectually stimulating to the researcher as indicated by Mouton (2011).

### **5.5.2 Literature review**

A literature review serves to gain an understanding of the concerned issue, identifying similarities and differences between previous and current issues and identifying gaps or weaknesses in previous studies (Roestenburg, Strydom & Fouché, 2021; Creswell, 2014). The literature review in this research study took place over three chapters that are aligned with the first three objectives of the study. During the literature review, similar studies were explored and discussed. However, globally there is a lack of literature on social work service delivery to the unemployed, as well as limited work on challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates from an ecological systems' perspective in Botswana. There were no studies available with the exact researchable variables explored in this study and the researcher often had to utilise old literature sources, especially in the chapter about social work services to unemployed youth graduates, hence the need to conduct this research. In this study, the researcher made use of both local and international research, online databases, such as EBSCO host, ResearchGate, Google Trends, library research and peer-reviewed articles. The literature review thus served to establish relevant background in terms of related studies, while also indicating how this study would add to research on the challenges of unemployment youth graduates.

### **5.5.3 Population and sampling**

The subjects of research make up what is called a population. In social science a research population refers to a specific group. Before this population can be measured, it has to be precisely defined. By defining the population, those individuals that are of no interest to the study are excluded. The population in this study was the unemployed youth graduates in Botswana and programme officers working at the MYESCD. The majority of programme officers at the MYESCD are social workers, however, there are also people from other disciplines, as people from other disciplines such as sociology and psychology are also employed in social work positions, thus the reference to programme officers.

Sampling is defined as a subset of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study. Purposive sampling was used in this study (Roestenburg, Strydom & Fouché, 2021). As indicated by Rubin and Rubin (2012) it is sometimes common for a study research design to require a purposive sample, where the researcher makes the decision about the organisation which will be the focus of the study and the individual participants who would most likely

contribute to appropriate data, both in terms of relevance and depth. These authors further stated that, in a purposive sample, the researcher relies on an existing social or psychological understanding of the problem as a basis for choosing the population elements in the sample. Strydom and Delport (2013) explain that in a purposive sampling method, a sample is formatted in such a way that it contains most characteristics or typical attributes of the population that best serves the study.

The researcher purposively selected participants most directly linked to the research area. When this was done, a sample was formatted that contained the most characteristics or typical attributes of the population that best served the purpose of the study (De Vos et al., 2011). Within this sample parameter, 28 individual participants were chosen, with differing sample groups, comprising of a purposive selection of unemployed youth graduates and programme officers who were mostly social workers from the Ministry of Youth Empowerment Sport and Culture Development (MYESCD). The researcher decided to make use of unemployed youth graduates residing in Gaborone and the city's surrounding areas (Tlokweng) and also programme officers who were residing in the same areas as the unemployed youth graduates to gain a deeper understanding of the broader unemployed youth graduates' experiences and the types of services rendered to them within the Botswana context. In this study, the Unemployment Movement of Botswana and the Ministry of Youth Empowerment Sport and Culture Development were both used as study representatives and the researcher was granted permission to conduct interviews with persons of these organisations in the study (Appendix E). The planned method of sampling entailed both purposive sampling, where a clear definition of the population and intended sample is crucial (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Maree, 2016), and snowball sampling, where there is limited access to appropriate participants (Maree, 2016; Bryman, 2015), as was the case with the unemployed youth graduates.

Approval of the proposal and ethics clearance by the Departmental Ethics Screening Committee of the Department of Social Work, Stellenbosch University, was granted. After approval was granted a letter was written to the Unemployment Movement to interview unemployed youth graduates about the challenges they were experiencing in this first phase of the study. Approval was granted with the request that the results of the study would be made available to the Unemployment Movement. The Unemployment Movement is based in Gaborone which is the largest city in Botswana with a population of 278 712 people and with an unemployed rate of 15.5% (Statistics Botswana, 2019). Gaborone is the researcher's choice

because this is where the researcher was living and could get easy access to the participants. It is also the capital city of Botswana and it has the highest number of unemployed graduates in the country as graduates move to Gaborone in search of employment opportunities.

After the approval the researcher contacted the leadership of the Unemployment Movement and requested to go with them to their monthly meetings. The leaders of the Movement are also unemployed graduates faced with the challenges of unemployment. The Unemployment Movement was established to advocate for the needs of unemployed graduates. The aim of their monthly meeting is to discuss the challenges they faced as unemployed graduates and how they could come up with strategies to address these challenges. The researcher attended one meeting with the leadership of the Movement that was attended by thirty individuals. At this meeting the researcher asked for a time to speak to the youth in order to explain the research study and to give particulars to the attendants for them to contact the researcher. The researcher also stayed there after the meeting so that those attendants who were interested could make personal contact and provide their contact details and arrange for individual interviews to take place. Only five participants were obtained from the meeting.

Following the meeting the researcher had interviews with five participants from the Movement and thereafter utilised snowball sampling by asking every participant to provide him with contacts of graduates they knew who may have been interested in taking part in the study. Snowball sampling was used from the first interview because the researcher could at that stage not identify enough participants from the meeting. In snowball sampling the researcher would collect data on a few members who would then refer the researcher to other members (Maree, 2016). Fifteen more participants were identified by using the snowball sampling method. The researcher then used phone calls to set up appointments with these fifteen unemployed graduates. In total the researcher interviewed twenty unemployed youth graduates. The criteria for inclusion in this first phase were that graduates had to:

- have a degree from tertiary institutions, be between 25 and 35 years old, be citizens of Botswana, have a good command of English, and never have had a job. They must have been unemployed for 12 months or more. There were no specifications about gender in the study. The researcher was furthermore not aware of the gender of the participants who were referred through snowball sampling.
- have been staying in Gaborone or in the area south-east of the city, namely Tlokweng.

This was a requirement as Gaborone is the capital of Botswana with the highest number of unemployed graduates in the country. Gaborone is also where the researcher was living, ensuring he had easy access to the potential participants for face-to-face interviews.

After the completion of the first phase of the research, the second phase focused on data collection from the programme officers of the Ministry of Empowerment, Youth, Sport and Culture (MYESCD). The data from the interviews with the unemployed graduates were analysed, so that the researcher had knowledge about the challenges experienced by the participants, before conducting the focus group discussions with the programme officers. This way of working was necessary because there were no previous studies available on this topic. It was therefore necessary for the researcher to first gain an understanding of the topic, before exploring the views of the programme officers on the topic.

Two focus group discussions with four participants in each group were conducted with programme officers from the MYESCD to determine their views on the programmes implemented to address the unemployment situation in the country, as well as the types of services that they were rendering to unemployed educated youth. Focus group discussions are group interviews that capitalise on communication between research participants to generate data; thus the researcher explicitly used group interaction as part of the data collection method (Roestenburg, Strydom & Fouché, 2021). The advantages of focus group discussions are that it is comparatively easier to drive or conduct and it allows the researcher to explore topics. The disadvantages are that the researcher has less control over the data that are generated and it takes effort to assemble the groups (De Vos et al., 2011). The researcher chose the focus group discussions with programme officers because they were knowledgeable about the existing programmes and because the focus groups would stimulate discussion between the group members.

A letter was written to the MYESCD asking for permission to conduct research with programme officers in the Ministry. Approval was granted with the request that the results of the study would be made available to Ministry. Once approval was granted the researcher attended two of the MYESCD weekly meetings (one in Gaborone and one in Tlokweng) to explain the study. After the meetings, programme officers who were interested in partaking in the study gave the researcher their contact details to organise the focus group discussions. The researcher then phoned and set up appointments with programme officers who indicated their

willingness to take part in the research. For programme officers to partake in the sample of the focus groups they had to:

- have been programme officers under the Ministry of Empowerment, Youth, Sport and Culture for a minimum of two years with exposure to unemployed youth graduates;
- have a good command of English; and
- be working in Gaborone or south-east of Gaborone in Tlokweng.

There were eight participants who had discussions in two groups with four participants in each group. Although gender was not part of the inclusion criteria there were four male and four female participants.

#### **5.5.4 Target population**

The research was conducted with two different groups of participants, utilising the same research instrument, namely a semi-structured interview schedule, based on the literature study to collect the required data. The first group of participants was the unemployed graduates who were interviewed face-to-face in order to explore the challenges they experienced; the second group of participants was the programme officers who took part in focus group discussions in order to explore the views on the existing programmes available to unemployed graduates, as well as the social work services rendered. In total there were twenty-eight participants from Gaborone and Tlokweng.

#### **5.5.6 Research site**

As stated in Chapter 1, the research was conducted in Gaborone and the area south-east of the city, namely Tlokweng. These areas consist of an urban area (Gaborone) and peri-urban area (Tlokweng). Tlokweng is a village located directly adjacent to Gaborone, in the South-East District and can be considered part of the conurbation of Gaborone. In 2019 (Statistics Botswana, 2019) Tlokweng had a population of 35 982 people. The study had two focus group discussions one was programme officers from MYESCD Gaborone and another one was programme officers from MYESCD Tlokweng.

### **5.5.7 Methods of data gathering**

A pilot study ensures that the data collection instrument is effective and that the questions were understood and were possible to be answered effectively (Creswell, 2014). For this study, a pilot study with two participants who were unemployed youth graduates was done. The pilot study used only two participants who are part of the leadership of the Unemployed Movement and it was done before attending the meeting to recruit participants. The pilot study was valuable because it enabled the researcher to establish the suitability of the semi-structured interview schedule and allowed for making the necessary adjustments before interviewing the participants. The data of the pilot study participants was not included in the analysis of this study because their role was just to help in focusing the study and to see if it was possible to do the study. The pilot study assisted in establishing the feasibility of the semi-structured interview schedule. The pilot study guided the researcher with the conducting of the interviews as the researcher learned to make use of silent pauses and to probe. The pilot study also enabled the researcher to determine that the questions asked were indeed providing the answers that would eventually lead to an understanding of the challenges experienced by the participants.

The researcher made logistical arrangements to gather data through face-to-face interviews with the available research participants. As a social worker the researcher is trained in conducting interviews and gathering information for assessments. Having identified potential participants and sites of the study, the next step was to physically make contact with participants and to gain their cooperation. Having found potential research participants, the researcher had to negotiate consent before starting with the interviews (Appendix A & B). In order to collect data, the researcher considered it best to conduct in-depth face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with both groups of participants.

In this study the primary research instrument was a semi-structured interview schedule, this was developed from the literature study and allowed for the collection and exploration of narrative and constructed meaning (Creswell & Poth, 2018) (Appendix C & D Open-ended Interview Schedules). The semi-structured interview was made up of themes, which were identified in literature as the primary tenets of the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates from an ecological systems' perspective within the Botswana context. The researcher started to explore the macro-level challenges (theme) with questions about where the focus was on government programmes and ended with micro-level challenges, where the focus was on personal experiences, such as their mental health and relationships within their families.

This way of working was utilised to enable the researcher to put the participants at ease and to build a relationship, so that the participants could build up some trust in the researcher and would feel comfortable to share their more personal experiences at the end of the interviews. Literature indicates that it is important not to start the interview with difficult and sensitive questions (Terre Blanche, Durrhein & Painter, 2006) in order to put the participants at ease.

The researcher also probed for more information from the participants. As explained above, interviews were conducted in English as all participants were graduates who had good command of the English language. Advantages of face-to-face interviews are that notes can be used to capture nonverbal elements of the interview. Nonverbal language and cues can be very rich, including dress, body language and mannerisms. The research specifically listened to the tone of participant's voice during interviews to determine whether participants were comfortable with the questions. Disadvantages of face-to-face interviewing is that face-to-face interviews can take substantial time and could be costly, due to the need to travel to participants, as the universal advice is to make the participants comfortable by conducting the interview in a location of their choosing (Oltmann, 2016) which was done in this study.

Conducting semi-structured interviews according to certain themes that have been identified with unemployed youth graduates allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth description and understanding of the participants' challenges in Botswana. These interviews are described as conversations organised around particular areas of interest, while allowing considerable flexibility, scope and depth for exploration. (Roestenburg, Strydom & Fouché, 2021; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

According to De Vos et al. (2011) and Roestenburg, Strydom and Fouché (2021) the appropriate climate-setting techniques should be implemented in order to ensure that participants are comfortable and able to share their information freely. Climate setting techniques that were utilised in the interview were building rapport and establishing comfortable interactions. The researcher was not familiar with the participants prior to the meeting and it was necessary to first establish mutual trust. Therefore the researcher engaged participants in an informal manner, such as talking about matters pertaining to the weather in order to build a rapport with participants. Establishing comfortable interactions was achieved because the researcher listened more than talked and followed up on what participants said. The researcher would ask questions when the input of the participant was not quite clear, and asked to hear more about the subject, or explore and probe even further. The researcher asked

open-ended questions that did not anticipate a particular response, the researcher also followed up but did not interrupt, or keep participants focused and asked for concrete details. The participants could rephrase or reconstruct what they had said. The researcher did not reinforce the participant's response, tolerated silence and allowed the interviewees to be thoughtful.

Data was captured by means of audio-recordings, and the discourse was transcribed by the researcher after each interview. This allowed for the capturing of in-depth qualitative data. The recording and transcribing of the interviews were done after obtaining consent from the interviewees.

All recordings were removed from the original devices and stored on a password-protected online system on Microsoft cloud. At the end of each interview, the researcher asked the participant if there were anything they wanted to add. The researcher then properly thanked each participant for their time and valuable contribution.

Interviews were conducted over a period of ten weeks, from October 2020 through to December 2020, depending on participants' availability. The average length of each interview was between 45 and 60 minutes. The time it took for an interview varied according to the time participants had to offer, as well as the depth of the narratives and discussions when exploring the interview themes. The researcher observed that participants were willing to provide information and did not have problems sharing their experiences. The researcher had a good rapport with the participants as this was crucial in making them feel comfortable to share their experiences. Data-saturation was reached at interview number 15 of the interviews with unemployed youth graduates, but the researcher did another five interviews to ensure that no new information was coming to the fore.

### **5.5.8 COVID-19 Regulations and influence on interviews**

The COVID-19 Regulations in Botswana were flexible at the time of the empirical study because there were not that many active COVID-19 cases, therefore it was possible to conduct face-to-face interviews. The process of data collection was however, slightly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic as the researcher had to conduct temperature checks and sanitize the hands of the participants before the interviews could be commencement with. Furthermore, the social distancing regulations were adhered to and masks had to be worn. Due to social distancing of 1,5 meters, and the wearing of masks, the participants and researcher were required to speak loud for everything to be captured on the tape recorder.

However, some ethical challenges were brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic which led to a delay of about six months. When COVID-19 struck, the researcher was about to start with data collection. At this time he had to revert to the ethical committee of Stellenbosch University because Stellenbosch University had postponed all face-to-face research activities, apart from research that could be conducted remotely or via online methods where no human contact were required. The delay was caused by the researcher having to write to the Research Ethics Committee to give reasons and notify them of his intentions to go ahead with face-to-face interviews. The main reason for wanting to go ahead with face-to-face interviews was since the researcher and area of research was in Botswana and as the lockdown regulations were different from that applicable in South Africa, the researcher found it was possible to continue with the face-to-face interviews with all the participants. At that stage in Botswana there were very few COVID-19 cases and the country was divided into COVID-19 zones with unlimited movement as well as human contact that were allowed within the zones, provided everybody adhered to COVID-19 Regulations. The researcher was required by the Research Ethics Committee to prepare and submit a safety protocol for face-to-face research during the pandemic. This protocol was detailed and described each measure and precaution that was taken, the protocol was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee. The protocol was as follows:

1. A person in a public place had to wear a face mask or home-made item or appropriate item that covered the person's nose and mouth. This meant the researcher and the participants were wearing face masks at all times during the interviews.
2. Alcohol-based sanitiser was used to sanitise the hands of the researcher and participants.
3. Social distancing of about two meters was observed between the researcher and the participants.
4. For the purposes of contact tracing, a register containing the personal details and contact details of all persons being interviewed had to be maintained.
5. All the participants' body temperatures were checked and if a person's temperature was 37.4°C and above, such person was not allowed to participate in the interviews and was referred to the Director Health Services.

Taking into consideration the principle of *primum non nocere* or “first do no harm”, the researcher followed the Regulations of the Botswana government and that of the Research Ethics Committee of Stellenbosch University (REC:SBE) to ensure that the risks of transmission of COVID-19 were minimised and controlled.

## 5.6 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

The following section addresses the data management and analysis of the research data. The data was collected as qualitative data and was recorded for more clarity in order to analyse the data. The tape recorder was meant to help the researcher so that the researcher did not miss important information from the participants.

After all data had been collected, the next stage in the research process was to analyse and interpret the data. Structure and meaning were then brought to the data by a process of critical reflection, making linkages, seeking explanations and contemplating reasons for actions and behaviours (Roostenburg, Strydom & Fouché, 2021; De Vos et al., 2012). When data is analysed, according to Babbie (2010) various patterns, themes, subthemes and categories are identified in order for the analysis to be based on deductive logic. Atlas.ti software was used in this process. The benefits of Atlas.ti is that the data was easily broken down and then reorganised and regrouped according to themes, categories and areas of interest resulting in maintaining consistency in data handling. Apart from Atlas.ti that allowed for several research materials to be explored at the same time, it reduced time spent on the data and the number of mistakes that could be made, because Atlas.ti allows for consistency and transparency during the analysis process.

The researcher uploaded the transcribed scripts in the software, then assigned preliminary codes (e.g. Participant 1) to the data in order to describe the content, search for patterns or themes in the codes across the different interviews, review themes and finally produce a report. Data was coded by identifying words, sentences or meaning. Some of these codes were organised to create subthemes. The relationships among these subthemes were further refined and reduced in number by grouping them together, eventually producing the final subthemes. The Atlas.ti software package that was used assisted in this process and allowed for the systematic presentation of the findings, which was compared to the literature presented in the literature review. Inductive conclusions were formulated about the population from which the sample was drawn (Siepert, McMurty & McClelland, 2005). An independent coder with over

15 years' experience in external coding was used during this research in order to get rich data and contribute to the credibility and dependability of the research. The independent coder used the same steps indicated in the section above. During the analysis and at the end of the process the independent coder has given feedback to the researcher and this information was included in the final analysis (Appendix F: Letter from Independent Coder).

### **5.6.1 Denaturalisation**

The researcher also manually transcribed the audio recordings of the semi-structured interviews with the participants and the focus groups. This allowed for a more rigorous exploration of the patterns, themes and dialogue interpretation. In the process of transcribing, the method of denaturalisation was employed and grammar was corrected. Oliver, Serovich and Mason (2005) say that denaturalisation allows for the correction of grammar, where deemed necessary, so as not to hinder or obstruct understanding of the respondents' narratives.

### **5.6.2 Method of data verification**

The following section will be focusing on data verification methods. The method of data verification entailed establishing explicit data criteria and ensuring the credibility, validity, and reliability of the research study (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, & Delpont, 2011). In this research study, the **credibility** was achieved by accurately identifying and describing empirical data within a theoretical framework. Roestenburg, Strydom and Fouché (2021) view credibility as the strength of a qualitative study and that it can be considered as an alternative for validity within the study. Moreover, credibility was achieved by providing clear parameters of the population, namely that the population referred to unemployed youth graduates and programme officers both directly and indirectly (Delpont & Roestenburg, 2011). According to Creswell (2014), tactics to help ensure honest sharing of information by participants further added to the credibility of the study. Member checking was done by discussing the themes, subthemes and results of the individual interviews and the focus group interviews with one participant in each group. Credibility was further ensured by utilising the service of an independent coder (Appendix F) to conclude the data process.

The **validity** (Roestenburg, Strydom & Fouché, 2021) of the research study was strengthened by utilising a research instrument, the semi-structured interview schedule that was adequate to collect data that was truly reflective of the research problem. Babbie (2007) describes validity as the extent to which an empirical measuring instrument adequately reflects the true meaning

of the concept which is being applied. In order to make sure that the semi-structured interview schedule measured accurately, the researcher conducted a pilot with two unemployed youth graduates who did not form part of this study. The researcher also made use of an independent coder with 15 years of coding. This independent coder read through the researcher's transcriptions and empirical chapter to confirm the themes, subthemes and categories.

**Reliability** was ensured by providing a detailed explanation of the data collection process and by accurately transcribing the interviews with participants. Babbie (2011) defines reliability as the quality of measurement method that suggests that the same data would have been collected each time in repeated observations of the same phenomenon. Furthermore, reliability occurs when a selected instrument measures the same construct more than once and comes up with the same results (Roestenburg, Strydom, & Fouché, 2021; Delpont & Roestenburg, 2013). Reflexivity will be discussed below under ethical guidelines for research.

## 5.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This section will discuss ethical issues that were considered in this research. The researcher is a practicing social worker in Botswana. He ascribes to the professional code of conduct of the social work profession. Permission was obtained from the Departmental of Ethics Screening Committee of the Department of Social Work at Stellenbosch University (Appendix G) before the study commenced. This research can be classified as medium risk, because it was probable that the participants would experience discomfort, emotional distress, or a range of negative emotions while participating in the research activity. The research dealt with people above the age of 18, who could make independent decisions and who were part of the target group. The study also utilised both service providers and beneficiaries. Participants were anonymous in the study and the data collected is protected in a password-protected computer, as well as in Microsoft cloud where no unauthorised person will have access to it.

The informed consent form to participate in the study (Appendix A & B) was discussed with and explained to all participants and both the unemployed youth graduates and programme officers signed the consent forms and were given copies thereof (Appendix A & B). All the participants were comfortable with the topic and handled it well. A debriefing service (Appendix H) was available to the participants in case they needed such service, however nobody utilised it. The participants were able to answer the questions in a knowledgeable way, without being emotional, which assisted the researcher in achieving the objectives of the study.

## **5.8 ETHICAL GUIDELINES IN RESEARCH**

Generally, ethical guidelines for the research process include voluntary participation, prevention of harm to respondents, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. The study had been able to conform to these guidelines.

### **5.8.1 Voluntary participation**

Roostenburg, Strydom and Fouché (2021), describe that participation within research must always be voluntary and no one should feel obligated to participate in an investigation. When doing research, researchers must obtain participants' consent and should refrain from being too vague in aligning the research process. Possible participants can only decide to participate in a research project after they were fully informed of what will be required of them, as well as of any possible risks that may be involved in the research process (Anastas, 2013). All unemployed youth graduates and programme officers volunteered to participate in the research and nobody was coerced to participate in the study. The researcher approached the Unemployment Movement and MYESCD and asked people to voluntarily participate in the study. Permission was received from the Unemployment Movement and the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development to allow participants who wanted to participate to do so of their own accord.

### **5.8.2 Prevention of harm**

In social science, prevention of harm is the active practice of ensuring that no harm is brought upon the participants during their voluntary participation in the study (Strydom, 2011). As mentioned earlier, the study was classified as medium risk, because it was probable that the participants would experience discomfort, emotional distress, or a range of negative emotions during the interviews. Therefore an experienced psychologist (Appendix H) was made available because there was a possibility that talking about their challenges could have evoked emotional responses in the participants. However, no referrals were required for debriefing in this study, although it was offered to the participants. The lack of necessity for referrals emphasised that the study did not cause any emotional or psychological harm to the participants. In addition, the researcher ensured that no harm was done to the participants by using various climate-setting techniques during the interview process, as discussed earlier in this chapter, thus ensuring the participants were at ease. It was also clearly indicated to

participants, by means of the voluntary consent, that the participants could stop the interview process at any point if they were uncomfortable.

### **5.8.3 Informed consent**

According to (Roestenburg, Strydom & Fouché, 2021; Creswell, 2014) informed consent means that participants must at all times be allowed the opportunity to choose what must happen to them. An informed consent form (Appendix A & B) was developed which was discussed with the participants prior to the interviews. In this informed consent form a clear outline of this study and its goals and objectives were provided to the participants in order for them to make informed decisions about their participation in the study. Besides being informed that they could withdraw from the study at any point, participants were also informed that the interviews would be audio recorded (Appendix A & B). The interviews were conducted in English and participants participated voluntarily, with no one being forced to form part of the study. Following an explanation, a copy of the informed consent form was given to the individual participants and those in the focus groups for their record; original forms were stored in a safe and locked place, should they be required.

### **5.8.4 Anonymity**

According to Maree (2016) anonymity is one form of confidentiality that keeps participants' identities secret. The anonymity of both the unemployed youth graduates and programme officers in the MYESCD was ensured throughout the study. All the information was privy to the researcher and it was stored in a secure place (Microsoft Cloud). The individual interviews and focus group interviews, although audio-recorded, did not give an indication of the participant's name, or any other personal details, as the interviews were numbered as 1, 2 etc. The identity of the participants remained anonymous in line with an ethical commitment of the researcher to the study participants.

### **5.8.5 Confidentiality**

Confidentiality can be defined as keeping something private (Oxford Dictionary, 2017). Anonymity goes hand in hand with confidentiality. In this study, the information provided by the respondents was kept confidential. The information that was divulged, especially personal and private information of the participants or of the organisation, was kept confidential in order to protect the organisation and the participants. Participants were informed that identifying

particulars, including signed consent forms and lists linking names to research codes, would be stored separately from the research data itself, which in turn would be identified only by a code number or pseudonym (Maree, 2016). Confidentiality and anonymity were further executed by referring to the participants in the empirical study as participant 1, 2, etc. It would therefore not be possible to identify participants in the research report.

#### **5.8.6 Reflexivity: research bias**

Reflexivity emphasises the importance of self-awareness, political or cultural consciousness, and ownership of perspectives. It involves a critical self-reflection of the researcher's potential biases, predispositions and modifications made in the methodology (Maree, 2016; Patton, 2002). Through reflexivity, the researcher constantly reflected on his values and interests. The researcher was continuously conscious of his own perceptions, values and cultural orientations regarding challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates during the research and have written it in a journal. As a social worker, the researcher realised there were no policies or legislation that addressed the needs and challenges of unemployed youth graduates. He also realised that the many programmes designed by the Botswana government were not addressing these challenges either and came to the conclusion that social work services were not addressing the challenges that educated youth graduates were experiencing. However, this realisation did not hinder the research process from being objective because the research was done within an interpretative and subjective ontological approach, from a scientific and personal sphere. The research process was furthermore guided by a methodological dimension. The researcher recognised his personal bias early on during the research and made sure that it did not interfere with the process of the overall study. In terms of the empirical study, the researcher was objective and kept to the interview schedule and did not bring his personal experiences to the interview process. When addressing questions, the researcher did not lead the participants, but would only ask follow-up questions, in order for participants to clarify their points so as not to influence them in giving their responses.

### **5.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

As far as possible, it was attempted throughout this study to act in a scientific and professional manner. However, certain limitations of this study were identified, namely:

- The study was done in only one district or region of Botswana, namely the South-East

Region of Botswana.

- This study was done with only 28 participants, which means that the sample was a small representation of the research universe and it cannot be generalised.
- The shortage of literature on the research topic inhibited the ability in some sections to relate to previous research and compare findings.

Some sources were outdated, but the inclusion of more recent sources where possible compensated for the dated sources. In order to compensate for the last limitation, great effort was made to explore as much recent literature of the phenomenon of unemployed graduates as possible. According to Roestenburg, Strydom and Fouché (2021), limitations in research studies are important elements, which the researcher must be aware of, recognise, acknowledge, and present clearly.

## **5.10 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the research methodology that was used for the research was explained; from the planned research approach and design, the literature review, to the sampling method of data collection. The ethical considerations and limitations of the study were also addressed. This study was implemented within the subjective and interpretivist approach that particularly focuses on the value of dialogue and the meaning it constructs in an attempt to understand a broader phenomenon. The researcher interviewed 28 participants in total of which 20 were unemployed youth graduates and 8 were programme officers at the Ministry of Youth Empowerment Sport and Culture Development. In the next chapter, the data that was collected in the field will be presented, categorised and analysed.

## **CHAPTER 6:**

### **EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION INTO CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY UNEMPLOYED YOUTH GRADUATES**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter builds on the previous chapters and relates to the fourth objective of this study as it presents the investigation into the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates in Botswana from an ecological systems perspective. The empirical data was collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Twenty unemployed youth graduates were interviewed and two focus group discussions with eight programme officers who have experience in delivering services to unemployed youth graduates were executed. The findings of this study are presented and analysed by means of different themes, subthemes and categories typical of qualitative research.

The biographical details of the sample were presented and discussed, which was followed by a discussion of the results of the study. The themes that were subdivided into subthemes which were all divided into relevant categories are illustrated with narratives of the participants. A summary of significant statements about challenges was compiled, the meaning of these statements were conceptualised and then categorised according to common themes. A conclusion regarding the full picture of the essence of the experiences was made. Finally a literature control was presented for each theme, subtheme and category.

#### **6.2 BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS**

The biographical profile of the participants will be discussed, whereafter the profile of the focus group participants will be discussed.

##### **6.2.1 Biographical profile of participants (graduates)**

The biographical data of the 20 participants who were involved in the first phase of the study were given numbers in order to protect their anonymity. In Table 6.1 the personal details of the

participants are presented, such as their gender, age range, marital status and number of children.

**Table 6.1: Personal information of participants (Unemployed youth graduates)**

Participant	Gender	Age Range in years	Marital Status	Number of children
1	Female	25-30	Single	0
2	Female	31-35	Married	3
3	Male	25-30	Single	8
4	Female	25-30	Single	0
5	Female	31-35	Single	0
6	Female	31-35	Single	0
7	Male	25-30	Single	0
8	Female	25-30	Single	1
9	Female	31-35	Married	2
10	Female	31-35	Single	1
11	Female	25-30	Single	0
12	Female	25-30	Single	0
13	Female	25-30	Single	0
14	Female	25-30	Single	0
15	Female	25-30	Single	0
16	Female	25-30	Single	1
17	Female	31-35	Single	3
18	Female	25-30	Married	1
19	Female	25-30	Single	1
20	Female	25-30	Single	0

The demographic details of the participants will be discussed in the next section.

### **6.2.1.1 Gender**

Despite the gender of participants not being a critical inclusion criterion for the research study, it is clear from the information in Table 6.1 that the majority of participants were females (18=90%) as there were only 2 (10%) males interviewed. This phenomenon is consistent with literature that indicates that the ratio of unemployed women to men is much higher, which suggests that women are more affected by unemployment than men (Bjorklund et al., 2015; United Nations, 2017). This is further collaborated in Botswana and South African literature which indicate that unemployment is highest among female graduates. Statistics also indicate

a higher unemployment rate among females in general (Mncayi & Dunga, 2016; Cape Higher Education Consortium, 2013; Statistics Botswana, 2011).

### **6.2.2 Age of participants**

Most participants in the study 14 (70%) were between the age of 25-30 years old. The next age range included unemployed youth graduates of whom 6 (30%) were between 31 and 35 years of age. According to literature there is a significant association between age and employment with unemployment highest among younger graduates (Cape Higher Education Consortium, 2013; Oluwajodu, Blaauw, Greyling & Kleynhans, 2015; Carnevale, Cheah & Strohl, 2012; Pauw et al., 2008). This finding corresponds with unemployment trends in general and may be because younger graduates lack work experience and could therefore find it more difficult to obtain a position.

### **6.2.3 Marital status**

Of the 20 participants 17 (85%) were single and 3 participants were married (15%). However, it must be pointed out that unemployment could influence participants to postpone getting married due to lack of finances (Choudhury & Broman, 2016; MacInnes & Broman, 2012).

### **6.2.4 Number of dependants**

For the purposes of this study, dependants are the children of the participants. The data indicates that slightly more than half of the participants (11=55%) had no dependants and that slightly less than half of the participants (9=45%) had dependants. Of the participants, 5 had 1 dependant, 1 participant had 2 dependants, 2 participants had 3 dependants and 1 participant had 8 dependants. Participants would, due to their unemployed status, not be able to care for these children and will be dependent on other sources, such as immediate family to assist them in this regard.

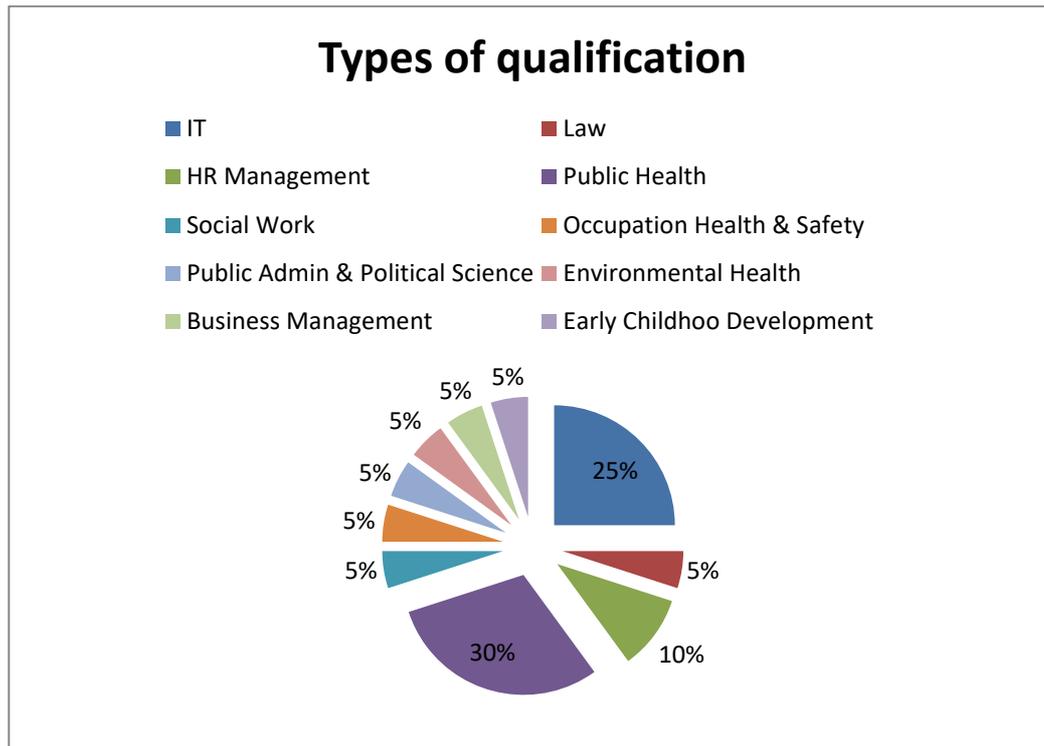
In Table 6.2 participants' type of degree, year of graduation, length of unemployment, number of positions applied for, and frequency of job application are presented.

**Table 6.2: Type of education and unemployment situation of participants**

Type of degree	Year graduated	Length of unemployment	Number of positions applied for	Frequency of job application
Degree in Information Technology (IT)	2019	17 Months	60	Daily
Degree in IT	2010	10 years	100+	Daily
Degree in IT	2015	5 years	Over 50	Every Week
Degree in Law	2015	5 years	Over 50	Daily
Degree in IT	2012	8 years	Over 100	Daily
Degree in Business management	2016	4 years	Over 50	Twice a month
Degree in IT	2019	1 year	Over 10	Once a month
Degree in HR Management	2014	6 years	Over 30	Every week
Degree in Early Childhood	2019	18 months	Over 50	Every week
Degree in HR Management	2012	8 years	Over 100	Almost everyday
Degree in Social Work	2019	1 year	10 plus	Monthly
Degree in Public Health	2018	2 years	50 plus	Almost daily
Degree in Environmental Health	2019	1 year	15 plus	Weekly
Degree in Public Health	2019	1 year	Over 20	Weekly
Degree in Public Health	2018	2 years	50	Everyday
Degree in Public Admin & Political Science	2018	2 years	50	Weekly
Degree in Public Health	2017	3 years	40	Weekly
Degree in Occupational Health & Safety	2018	2 years	Over 40	Weekly
Degree in Public Health	2019	1 year	10	Weekly
Degree in Public Health	2019	1 year	20	Monthly

#### 6.2.4.1 Type of qualifications

In terms of qualifications, participants were trained in different disciplines. The different disciplines are depicted in the Figure 6.1 below.

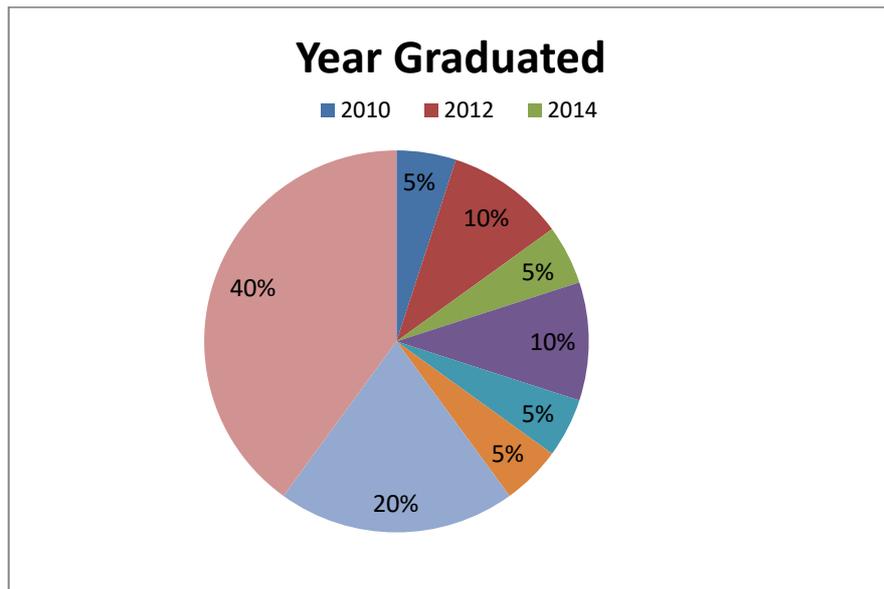


**Figure 6.1: Qualifications of participants**

The majority of participants (5) in the study had a degree in Information Technology (Degree in IT) and (6) in Public Health (Degree in Public Health), with the rest spread between different disciplines, such as social work, business management, and occupational health and safety. Literature (Mncayi & Dunga, 2016; Van Broekhuizen, 2016; Moleke, 2010) states that specific majors held by graduates not only influence employment status but also the time it takes to find employment as with some disciplines it takes longer for someone to find employment due to market saturation, such as information technology in Botswana. Furthermore, the field of study also plays a role in how long it takes graduates to find employment after graduation. Those who graduated in fields with a specialised focus, such as medicine or engineering seems to find employment in a shorter time. It seems as if in this study group majors in Information Technology and Public Health disciplines influenced the employment status of the participants.

#### 6.2.4.2 *Year graduated*

The years participants graduated is depicted in the Figure 6.2 below.



**Figure 6.2: Year graduated**

The statistics for years since the participants had graduated vary. The data indicates that 50% of the participants graduated between 2 and 9 years before this research study and 50% graduated between 1 and 2 years before the research study. Six (30%) have been unemployed for between 5 and 10 years; 6 (30%) have been unemployed for between 2 and 4 years, and 8 (40%) between 1 year and 18 months. The spread of years since the participants graduated, comply with the inclusion criterion indicated for participation in the study, namely that participants should have been unemployed for 12 months upwards.

#### 6.2.4.3 *Length of unemployment*

The length of time that the participants were unemployed ranged from 1 to 10 years. The data indicates that, at the time of the study the majority of the participants (12=60%) had been unemployed for between 2 and 10 years. The rest of the participants (8=40%) had been unemployed for between a year and 18 months. The data indicates that some participants had been unemployed for a lengthy time which can have a negative impact on their employability. The variations in length of unemployment gave the opportunity for rich data collection as the range was between 1 and 10 years. This meant that the participants could have made use of governmental programmes offered to unemployed youth and could have provided good insight

about their experience and efforts to find employment. Literature supports the notion that the longer someone is unemployed the harder it gets for that person to find employment. Gul et al. (2012) indicate that the longer the period of unemployment, the more profound and pervasive the effects are to the graduates and the less likely the unemployed persons would find employment.

#### ***6.2.4.4 Number of positions applied***

The data indicates ranges between 10 and 100 applications with the majority of the participants 12 (60%) who had applied for between 40 to 100 positions. The number of applications indicates that participants were constantly applying for jobs. According to the definition of unemployment by the ILO, an unemployed person is a person of working age who meets three conditions simultaneously, namely, being without employment and having not worked for at least one hour during the reference week; being available to take up employment within two weeks; having actively looked for a job in the previous month or having found one starting within the next three months (ILO, 2005; ILO, 1982) This definition was accepted for this study, with the exception that the participant had to be a university graduate. The definition of unemployment in Botswana is similar to the one adopted by the ILO, as both definitions indicated that an unemployed person is a person aged 15 or over who have taken steps to look for jobs in the reference period. The participants in this study met these requirements of the definition and could thus all be regarded as unemployed.

#### ***6.2.4.5 Frequency of job application***

The frequency that participants applied for jobs was as follows: 7 (37%) respondents reported that they applied for jobs daily, 9 (47%) respondents applied weekly, 3 (11%) respondents applied once a month and 1 (5%) applied twice a month. Most of the participants were actively seeking employment on a daily and weekly basis. This serves as proof that the type of unemployment they were facing was that of structural unemployment. As indicated in literature (Levine, 2013; Kirk, 2011; Mirko, 2005; Baker, 2007) structural unemployment is a form of unemployment caused by a mismatch between the skills that workers in the economy can offer, and the skills that employers demand of workers. When a person has the wrong skills, it would be difficult for them to find employment. Structural unemployment is the most persistent type of unemployment faced by graduates in Botswana due to a mismatch between the vacancies and the qualifications of the unemployed population as indicated by their frequency

of job applications (Levine, 2013) which is again confirmed with this study group. Furthermore, the finding that the participants were actively seeking for positions indicates that participants were in a position to be able to share their experiences about the challenges they were facing as unemployed youth graduates.

### 6.3 BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

The demographic details of the selected focus group participants in this study are depicted in Table 6.3. It is clear from the data that 4 (50%) of the participants were female and 4 (50%) were male.

**Table 6.3: Demographic details of focus group participants (2 groups)**

Participant no	Gender	Age range in years	Work experience	Level of education
1	Female	30-39	7 years	Bachelor of Arts in Psychology
2	Female	30-39	10 years	Bachelor of Social Work
3	Male	30-39	8 years	Bachelor of Arts in Sociology
4	Female	30-39	13 years	Bachelor of Social Work
1	Male	30-39	12 years	Bachelor of Social Work
2	Female	30-39	9 years	Bachelor of Social Work
3	Male	40-49	11 years	Bachelor of Social Work
4	Male	30-39	11 years	Bachelor of Social Work

#### 6.3.1 Age

The study involved 7 (90%) participants who were between the ages of 30 and 39 years old. The next age range included 1 (10%) participant who was between 40 and 49 years of age.

#### 6.3.2 Qualifications

In terms of qualifications, 6 of the participants (80%) held a degree in Social Work, 1 (10%) held a degree in Psychology, and 1 (10%) held a degree in Sociology. Thus, the majority of participants had degrees in Social Work and had knowledge of what social work services should entail.

### **6.3.3 Years of experience as programme officer rendering services to unemployed youth**

The years of experience for programme officers ranged from 7 to 13 years. This indicates that participants were properly qualified and well experienced to be able to share their experiences about the programmes offered, as well as the social work services rendered to unemployed youth graduates. Furthermore the years of experience complied with the inclusion criteria indicated for this study, namely that participants must have had a minimum of two years working as a programme officer or social worker with unemployed youth graduates.

## **6.4 FINDINGS REGARDING THE CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY UNEMPLOYED YOUTH GRADUATES**

In this section the findings regarding the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates are presented. The data obtained from the investigation are presented as typical of qualitative analysis by using themes, subthemes, and categories, where relevant. With the ecological systems perspective of Bronfenbrenner serving as the theoretical framework for this research study, the challenges experienced in the different systems of the ecological perspective were the point of departure in the development of the themes, subthemes and categories.

In total, 7 themes emerged that could be grouped into 24 subthemes and 57 categories. In presenting the data, the researcher used narratives of the participants, followed by a literature control. The themes, subthemes and categories that emerged from the data analysis, is presented in Table 6.4 below.

**Table 6.4: Themes, subthemes and categories derived from data analysis**

<b>THEME</b>	<b>SUBTHEMES</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>
<b>MICRO-LEVEL OF ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE</b>		
<b>Theme 1: Effect of unemployment on individual</b>	1. Difficult to fulfil aspirations and expectations in life	(a) Lack of security of employment and independence (b) Unable to pursue dreams
	2. Experience a range of feelings about unemployed status	(a) Anger (b) Demoralised (c) Disappointment (d) Discontentment (e) Frustration (f) Hostility (g) Loneliness
<b>Theme 2: Personal challenges experienced because of unemployment status</b>	1. Mental health challenges	(a) Loss of self-esteem (b) Increase in stress (c) Onset of depression
	2. Psychological challenges	(a) Suicidal thoughts
	3. Health challenges	(a) Headaches, heart problems, sleep problems, blood pressure
	4. Financial challenges	
	5. Reactions of community to unemployed status	(a) Community is critical of unemployed status (b) Unaware of community reaction
<b>MESO-LEVEL OF ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE</b>		
<b>Theme 3: Effects of unemployment on family</b>	1. Intimate partner relationships challenges	(a) Conflict because of financial instability (b) Relationships did not survive (c) Fear of gender-based violence (d) Partner is supportive relationship not affected
	2. Family relations are stressful and challenging	(a) Blamed for career choices and deliberately staying unemployed (b) Conflict and quarrels due to lack of income (c) Graduation did not bring financial gain to family
	3. Inability to contribute financially to family	(a) Family expects financial contribution despite unemployed status (b) Burden on family (c) Family is supportive
<b>MACRO-LEVEL OF ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE</b>		
<b>Theme 4: Experience of Government</b>	1. Knowledge about government initiatives	(a) Aware of national internship programme and graduate volunteer scheme

THEME	SUBTHEMES	CATEGORY
<b>initiatives to address graduate unemployment</b>		(b) Aware of entrepreneurial programmes (c) Challenges to utilise programmes
	2. Government initiatives not effective	(a) Existing government initiatives do not provide solutions (b) Host institutions exploiting graduates (c) Corruption as a challenge to unemployment
	3. Discrepancy between demand in labour market and graduates seeking employment	(a) Labour market cannot absorb graduates (b) Large number of tertiary institutions contribute to graduate unemployment (c) Certain tertiary institutions not credible
	4. Macro-level solutions to unemployment	(a) Government should provide employment (b) Develop own Business/Entrepreneurship Ventures (c) Government should implement certain strategies
<b>Theme 5: Policy, legislation and programmes to address graduate unemployment</b>	1. Limited policy to address youth unemployment	(a) National youth policy
	2. Types of programmes available	(a) Internship and graduate volunteer scheme (b) Empowerment programme (YDF)
	3. Contribution of programmes to creation of employment opportunities	(a) Programmes provide some form of employment opportunities (b) Programmes do not provide employment opportunities
	4. Need for alternative policies	
<b>Theme 6: Utilisation and need for social work services</b>	1. Social work services not offered	
	2. Need for a range of social work services	(a) Individual counselling (b) Group counselling (c) Family counselling (d) Substance abuse counselling
<b>Theme7: Availability of social work services to support unemployed youth graduate</b>	1. Social work services not core mandate of MYSECD	(a) Establish social work youth unemployment units in every youth district
	2. Challenges faced in implementing social work services	a) Lack of knowledge about social work profession b) Regulation of social work services c) Lack of human resources as well as infrastructure

THEME	SUBTHEMES	CATEGORY
		d) Lack of understanding of different needs of unemployed graduates because of different professions rendering services
	3. Types of social work services that should be rendered	a) Counselling services b) Initiation of new counselling unit in MYESCD
	4. Recommendations for improved social work delivery	a) Monitoring and evaluation, research and statistics should improve b) Evaluation of National Youth Policy and existing Programmes c) Unemployment benefits/subsidy for youth

The results as depicted in Table 6.4 are discussed below. As discussed in Chapter 5, participants were coded to protect their privacy, with their narratives being represented with a capital “P”, referring to Participant and “FGD” referring to Focus Group Discussions. For instance, Participant 1 FGD 2 will refer to Participant 1 from the focus group discussion 2.

#### 6.4.1 Microsystem or micro-level of ecological perspective

As discussed in Chapter 3, the micro-level or microsystem of the ecological perspective is concerned with the individual, and includes attitudes, knowledge, self-esteem, self-concept, skills and behaviour (Miley & DuBois, 2014). In Chapter 3, it was indicated that unemployed graduates could experience psychological challenges and these possible challenges were explored in the face-to-face interviews. Two themes were identified, namely the effect of unemployment on the individual and the personal challenges experienced. These themes, subthemes and categories will be discussed below.

#### 6.4.2 Theme 1: Effects of unemployment on individual

The first theme that was identified was the effect of unemployment on individuals as a result of their unemployment status. Literature (Taris et al., 2005) indicates that unemployed graduates have lost their dreams because of their inability to find employment. The participants were asked to share their aspirations and expectations of life. Two subthemes were identified under this theme, namely that it is difficult to fulfil high aspirations in life and that a range of feelings are experienced about unemployed status. These subthemes and their respective categories are discussed below.

#### **6.4.2.1 Theme 1 Subtheme 1: Difficult to fulfil aspirations and expectations in life**

The first subtheme that came to the fore was that it was difficult to fulfil high aspirations in life when unemployed. Two categories were derived in this subtheme, namely lack of security of employment and independence and being unable to pursue dreams. In the first category, namely lack of security of employment and independence, most participants in the study stated that they had hoped to be employed in their respective professions earning money and taking care of themselves and their loved ones.

##### **a) Category: Lack of security of employment and independence**

In this category many participants linked the instability of being unemployed to being able to fulfil their aspirations in life, such as having a family, being independent and being able to provide for their family. The participants indicated that they had aspired to have good jobs and be financially independent after graduation. Participants stated:

*... My aspirations in life are to be a good lawyer someday and be able to help all humans regardless of where they are and who they are. My expectations before graduating was that by the time I graduate I will be having a job being paid for my qualification and also being able to afford my life and life standards ... (Participant 4)*

*... my dreams was to be working now having my own place and been stable in life financially. I had expected that at this age, you know am 33 years of age I would be working providing for myself, having a family and enjoying my life but at the moment it is impossible ... (Participant 5)*

Participants indicated that their expectations were to be employed full time and being able to provide for a family. These participants indicated:

*... I was expecting to find employment I wanted to see myself in an office. When I was growing up I wanted to be a teacher ... (Participant 6)*

*I expected to get employed I never thought I was going to stay unemployed. I expected to be providing for myself and my family ... (Participant 19)*

The finding that participants' aspirations and expectations in life was shattered due to the lack of full-time employment and that this situation affected their independence is confirmed in literature (Taris et al., 2005) where it is indicated that unemployment may lead some graduates

to have lessened their expectancy regarding their futures, which may contribute to changes in self-esteem and self-evaluation. Furthermore, Mulderig (2013) states that unemployment may cause individuals to be frustrated as it reduces an individual's ability to be independent which could result, as indicated by Du Toit (2003), in unemployed graduates becoming more dependent on their families for longer than they anticipated.

***(b) Category: Unable to pursue certain dreams***

Another category that was identified was that the participants had specific dreams they wanted to pursue after graduation and that they were unable to do so. Some participants mentioned they had aspirations to start their own business or that having employment would have helped them to save funds for their dreams, as indicated in the narratives below.

*My dream was to find employment and save money so that I can open an orphan care centre, this is really what I wish to do. I had hoped to have started work immediately and already started building my orphan care centre by now ... (Participant 10)*

*Growing up I aspired to be a business women owning a cleaning company. I expected to be working by now ... (Participant 12)*

*Before going to tertiary school I had wished that after 4 years I could have secured a job then I would establish a business or something to generate more income. I am one person who has a soft spot for kids; I had hope that by now I should have started with a counselling centre for kids so that they can come to this centre for different types of assistance ... (Participant 13)*

*Growing up, I had wished to have my own business having my own home living a very good life ... (Participant 17)*

In addition, another participant mentioned that he had aspired to further his studies so that he could achieve his dream of working for the United Nations and build his community. This participant indicated:

*I had dreams; my wish was to do my masters. I had wished to work for international organisations like the United Nations. And I wanted to do something for my community ... (Participant 16)*

Furthermore, another participant mentioned that it was impossible to pursue these dreams because of a lack of employment. This participant said:

*Personally, youth unemployment has affected me as I had dreams and visions which I had wanted to have achieved by now but because of the unemployment it is still not possible ... (Participant 4)*

The finding that participants found they were unable to pursue certain dreams they had, is confirmed in the literature (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Mlatsheni & Ranchhod, 2017) which indicates that young people who graduated from the university had hopes of entering the formal job market, earning salaries for themselves and improving their livelihood. Based on the social comparison argument, unemployed graduates may compare themselves with others with similar characteristics in order to determine whether or not they have progressed to the same extent as their peers. If they then determine that they are not on the same level it could lead to mental health illnesses.

#### **6.4.2.2 Theme 1 Subtheme 2: Range of feelings about unemployed status**

As youth unemployment causes emotional turmoil (ILO, 2018) the participants were asked to narrate their feelings of being unemployed. Most participants indicated they had experienced different feelings caused by their unemployment status. Seven categories emerged under this subtheme namely anger, being demoralised, disappointment, discontentment, frustration, hostility and loneliness which are discussed below.

##### **a) Category: Anger**

The first category derived from the data was feelings of anger. According to Yadav, Yadav and Sapkota (2017) anger is an emotion characterised by antagonism toward someone or something you feel has deliberately done you wrong. This definition further states that excessive anger can cause problems, such as increased blood pressure and other physical changes associated with anger, making it difficult to think straight and causing harm to your physical and mental health. As deduced from the definition, anger could be detrimental to an unemployed person's mental and physical health.

A few participants mentioned that their unemployment made them feel angry, bitter and frustrated. The participants indicated:

... *being unemployed has made me very frustrated, bitter and angry ... (Participant 3)*

... *my unemployment status really makes me feel angry and bitter ... (Participant 5)*

The participants elaborated on their feelings of anger and different explanations came to the fore. One participant mentioned that the feeling of anger was related to the fact that people they knew who did not do well in school, were employed, while they (participant) were at home. This participant mentioned:

*I sometimes feel angry because at time you find even people who did not do well at school are working and you are stuck at home ... (Participant 6)*

Another participant indicated that since money mattered, the lack of money she had due to being unemployed made her feel angry.

*I easily get angry because life is money, everything is money ... (Participant 20)*

Another participant mentioned that he was facing different emotions on different days and that he experienced the feeling of anger on certain days.

... *will come in different days the next angry at everyone ... (Participant 15)*

The finding that participants were experiencing feelings of anger because they were comparing themselves to people who were less successful in school or because they did not have access to money, is confirmed in literature that states that prolonged periods of joblessness render the young cynical and angry (Peterie, Ramia, Marston & Patulny, 2019). This anger could even lead to the unemployed youth becoming easy targets for religious or political groups such as the Boko Haram and ISIS in West Asia and the Taliban in Afghanistan as the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2018) has warned. There have also been incidents of angry protest by unemployed youth graduates demanding governments to provide them with employment in countries like Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia and Iran (Karimi Malh & Garshasbi, 2020; Emperador Badimon & Bogeart, 2014).

#### ***b) Category: Demoralised***

The second category that was identified was that the participants indicated that they were experiencing feelings of demoralisation, because they felt that they have been wasting their time and resources by obtaining a degree. Participants felt demoralised due to the fact that they

went to school, worked hard and earned degrees, but were still unemployed. These participants were questioning why they could not find employment or were even invited to interviews they had applied for. Participants indicated:

*... Having a qualification that I can't even use to bring food on my table feels like a waste of time, money resources and everything. This is so because it is just a title that does not bring or give me anything ... (Participant 1)*

*... We go to school with intentions or plans to pass so as to better our lives and the lives of people around us. But now after sweating for good marks or results still you stay home and actually doing nothing ... (Participant 4)*

*... when I wake I question why is it that I can't find employment I make job applications and I do not get even an opportunity to be interviewed while others it's easy for them to get jobs ... (Participant 6)*

Some participants stated that they were demoralised by the fact that it was difficult to make use of the possible resources in Botswana, such as CEDA's young farmers fund, as most economic programmes required start-up capital or assets to be used as collateral to start businesses so that they can employ themselves. This can be seen from the following narratives.

*CEDA's Young Farmers Fund they require you to have assets as security; so where are you going to get those assets from as a recent graduate? (Participant 11)*

*I am not working I don't have start-up capital for business and I don't know who I can meet with who can finance my project ..." (Participant 10)*

Another aspect related to the feelings of demoralisation is that there are graduates who have graduated more than 10 years ago, but who are still unemployed. In this study group, there are 6 participants who have been unemployed for a period of between 5 and 10 years. The fact that the government, through the Department of Public Services Management, was still in the process of hiring graduates who graduated in 2008, makes those who recently graduated feel hopeless (Diraditsile, 2017) as seen from the following narratives.

*...There are graduates who have graduated more than 10 years ago and they are still unemployed ... (Participant 13)*

*...If you look at the graduate's data base, the government is hiring graduates who graduated in 2008 so I wonder for us who graduated in 2019 when we are going to be employed?... (Participant 14)*

From the above narratives it is clear that unemployment were creating feelings of demoralisation. According to literature (Fronek & Briggs 2021; Briggs & Fronek, 2019), demoralisation is an important concept as it relates to the loss of hope, helplessness and an inability to see a viable future. Young people are made vulnerable to demoralisation by unemployment. Unemployment and a loss of hope for future job prospects are known factors that can lead to demoralisation. It is important to note that feelings of being demoralised could be linked to the fact that resources available in Botswana, such as the economic programmes, require start-up finance and that the Government's placement programme was almost nine years behind, as graduates from 2008 were still being employed. It could be concluded that the available resources may not be meeting the needs of unemployed graduates.

### ***c) Category: Disappointment***

The third category that was identified by some of the participants in the study was that they were experiencing feelings of disappointment. These participants indicated that they had dreams they wanted to achieve but because of their unemployment status, their dreams remain unfulfilled. In the discussion the participants alluded to the reasons for their disappointment. Some participants mentioned that they were disappointed due to the fact that they have spent two years as interns in some of the Government's internship programmes at various organisations, but that they were let go after the internship period had lapsed. They felt disappointed as they were hoping to be adsorbed by these organisations. Participants mentioned:

*... to my dismay I was let go at the end of two years. I was left disappointed as I had hoped that the internship programmes will open doors to permanent employment ... (Participant 4)*

*The disappointing thing is that they put you on an internship programme for two years and after two years you are back in the streets ... (Participant 17)*

Another participant stated that the disappointment stemmed from the fact that he regretted his choice of degree and saw it as time he had wasted on studying since the jobs they were promised were non-existing in the market.

*I am regretting the choice that I made as there are no jobs as we were promised and sometimes feel I have wasted my time studying because my qualification is not opening doors for me ... (Participant 6)*

Yet another participant mentioned disappointment in the lack of political leadership who could advocate for them. This participant believed that during campaigns, politicians would make promises of jobs, but once elected to office, they forget about their promises and would focus on themselves and their families.

*I think we don't have people who advocate for us, people are just serving the interests, especially politicians they campaign about our unemployment status but when they get elected they forget about their promises and focus on themselves and their family ... (Participant 10)*

The finding that unemployment created feelings of disappointment is partly related to the fact that the government's internship programme was not absorbing graduates into the system and because of a belief that politicians were not focused on finding solutions to the unemployment problem in the country. These feelings of disappointment in unemployed graduates are supported by literature which indicates that the period when participants transition from university to being unemployed is marked by feelings of disappointment. Dlamini, Hlope and Mohammed (2019) and Pauw et al. (2008) confirm that if graduates end up being unemployed for long after graduation, they will eventually become disappointed with their situation. Regarding the situation in Botswana around existing initiatives from the Government, such as the internship programme, Diraditsile (2017) is of the opinion that there is little hope that graduates in the internship programme will ever be absorbed into permanent employment by their host organisations. This means that the internship programme is not successful in creating permanent positions for graduates and could even have a detrimental effect on the well-being of graduates who had been part of the programme and who would, after a two-year period end up without any employment, which could turn out to become a period of long-term unemployment.

**d) Category: Discontentment**

The fourth category that was identified was the feeling of discontentment. Some participants stated that they were discontent due to their unemployment situation. Discontentment as a result of the social challenges of unemployment among the youth, is evidenced by the increase in suicide rates and social disruption among the unemployed youth (Omoniyi & Osakinle, 2011).

*... I am discontent ... (Participant 14)*

*This situation has made me feel discontent as I do not know what else to do to find employment ... (Participant 19)*

Although the minority of the participants indicated discontentment, the finding that unemployment created feelings of discontentment is important. Feelings of discontentment, together with anger, could be the reason for the protests that took place in Gaborone in Botswana in 2016. These protests were organised by an unemployment movement and involved graduates that took to the streets with their graduation robes to petition the then president and members of parliament about their discontentment at being unemployed. Although some of the protesters were flocked by the police and some arrested, their conduct shows the desperate measures that young people would take to highlight the state of affairs (Sunday Standards, 2017). Similar discontentment due to being unemployed could be noticed among the youth in other cities such as London, New York, Rome and Oakland where the unemployed youth also took to the streets, often clashing with police (Belakhdar, 2019; ILO, 2013). It is thus clear that feelings of discontentment on the micro-level of the ecological perspective could result in organised discontentment on the meso-level, as was discussed in the literature study.

**e) Category: Frustration**

The fifth category that was identified was that some participants indicated that being unemployed left them extremely frustrated. Their frustrations were mostly due to them not being able to help their families, to achieve their goals, or not having money to start any projects. They noted the following:

*Yes, I am very frustrated because I cannot help my family ... (Participant 3)*

*... my unemployment situation has left me frustrated as I cannot achieve my goals ... (Participant 6)*

*I have a plot if only I was working I would have money to start my project this really frustrates me, unemployment has really affected me ... (Participant 10)*

Another reason for the feeling of frustration was that participants had been spending time looking for jobs with no success, and that they were sometimes thinking about it all the time, causing them to become frustrated. These participants mentioned:

*... it frustrates to search for employment and not get anything ... (Participant 14)*

*I sometimes feel very frustrated because I spend most of my time thinking about my situation ... (Participant 20)*

From the above narratives it is evident that being unemployed created feelings of frustration, because of various reasons, such as the lack of finances to reach the intended goal and not being able to be independent. Recent literature confirms this finding, namely that unemployment leads to young graduates to experience negative feelings which may cause them to become frustrated, as De Lannoy, Graham, Patel and Leibbrandt (2018) put it, the greater the obstacle that stands in a person's way of achieving their desired goal, the greater their frustration will be. Mulderig (2013) adds that being unemployed may cause individuals to be frustrated as their situation reduces their ability to be independent, which could result in them being angry or aggressive as discussed in the first category.

#### ***f) Category: Hostility***

The sixth category that was identified was hostility. Kriegbaum, Lund, Schmidt, Rod and Christensen (2019) define hostility as mistrust, cynicism, and negative beliefs and attributions concerning others and can be a result of an individual's inability to reach a goal that they have set or because of the way they react to stressful events. Some participants indicated that their unemployment status made them hostile to other people.

*I sometimes become very hostile to everybody and I think it is caused by my unemployment situation ... (Participant 4)*

*I experience various emotions; one minute I am stressed and frustrated; the next one I am lonely; the next one I am hostile ... (Participant 15)*

As seen from the above narratives, the participants did not elaborate on the reasons for their feelings, however, the finding that unemployment created feelings of hostility is supported by Kriegbaum et al. (2019) and Hakulinen (2013) who mention that hostility in individuals who are unemployed can be influenced by the environment in which they exist, and can be affected by their gender, education, age, and financial strain. Therefore, people who grow up in an environment characterised by low socio-economic status and poor familial relations would be more hostile when experiencing unemployment. In the case of Botswana, most university students are first-generation students, meaning that they are often coming from a lower socio-economic status.

***g) Category: Loneliness***

The last category that was identified in this subtheme about the feelings experienced by the participants about their unemployed status, was that of loneliness. Participants indicated that their unemployment status has left them feeling lonely and that their loneliness was caused by the fact that they were spending most of their time doing nothing. Participants indicated:

*My unemployment status has made me lose my self-esteem and has made me lonely ...*  
(Participant 6)

*I spend most of my time at home doing nothing and that contributes to my loneliness ...*  
(Participant 15)

The finding that unemployment created feelings of loneliness is supported in literature. Ahmad and Khan (2019) indicated that unemployment may bring with it a lack of social integration, which may accidentally increase social loneliness in unemployed young people. They continue that lonely people are less happy, less satisfied, more pessimistic, and suffer from more depressive symptoms than people who were not lonely. Furthermore, loneliness has been associated with many negative mental health outcomes such as depression, suicidal thoughts, reduced positive emotions, poor sleeping habits, poor general health, as well as physiological issues.

### 6.4.3 Theme 2: Personal challenges experienced because of unemployment status

Youth unemployment creates challenges for the individual (Magagula, 2017). Therefore the participants were asked to share their views on the challenges they were experiencing. Aspects that were specifically probed were mental health. In this second theme, six subthemes emerged, which will be discussed below.

#### 6.4.3.1 Theme 2 Subtheme 1: Mental health challenges

The first subtheme of theme 2 was the impact on mental health. Most participants stated that being unemployed affected the mental health of graduates as they were spending a lot of time thinking about their unemployment status. The participants indicated:

*Youth unemployment definitely affects the mental health of graduates ... (Participant 2)*

*One has a lot to think about and being unemployed on its own causes mental breakdown ... (Participant 4)*

Another participant stated that they had already started with counselling sessions at a certain hospital to address mental health issues brought on by their unemployment, as is evident from the narrative below:

*I attend few counselling sessions at a hospital, I meet with a social worker who managed to assist me with my mental health issues ... (Participant 8)*

A participant stated that most people who were in mental hospitals were youth graduates who were struggling to cope with their unemployment situations.

*If you go to mental hospital most of the people in rehabilitation are youth graduates who struggle to cope with the situation of unemployment ... (Participant 12)*

The finding that unemployment could lead to mental health problems is supported by literature which states that unemployment exerted a negative impact on mental health. For example, unemployment in young people has been reported to cause depression, alcohol abuse, and drug use and has been associated with lower self-esteem and lower levels of satisfaction with life. Young job seekers who are unemployed following graduation are more likely to adopt a passive attitude in social interaction. Moreover, until they achieved their goal of employment

they could become socially isolated, which could exacerbate mental health problems (Lim et al., 2018; Shin, Chang & Lee, 2008).

Although the participants mostly felt that unemployment has an impact on mental health, the specific impact was explored. The analysis of this data resulted in the identification of three categories, namely loss of self-esteem, an increase in stress, and the onset of depression, which will be discussed next.

***a) Category: Loss of self-esteem***

The first category that was identified was loss of self-esteem. Half of the participants in this study group indicated that their self-esteem lowered significantly due to unemployment. The fact that there is a link between unemployment and a loss of self-esteem is supported in literature. Van der Meer and Wielers (2016) and Taris et al. (2005) indicate that there is a link between graduate unemployment and low self-esteem, mainly because unemployment lessens the value of what individuals have achieved throughout their studies. Therefore, unemployment may lead some graduates to start expecting less from their futures, which may contribute to changes in self-esteem and self-evaluation, as is evident in the narratives below. Participants indicated that their unemployment status made them feel as if they were nobody and worthless.

*My unemployment status has made me lose my self-esteem and has made me lonely and I felt like nobody ... (Participant 6)*

*I feel like am worth nothing, totally worthless ... (Participant 3)*

Another participant alluded to the fact that the loss of self-esteem influenced their personality and made them change from being an outgoing person, to a person who is reluctant to leave the house. The narrative is:

*Personally I used to be an outgoing person but these days I just stay home, I have lost my self-esteem ... (Participant 13)*

Participants indicated different reasons for the loss of self-esteem. One participant indicated that he has lost his self-esteem, because his parents were treating him like a child, as he was still dependent on them despite his degree, this participant mentioned:

*I am no longer confident as I once was so my self-esteem I feel it is very low. I feel my parents look down upon me and still treat me like a child because I depend on them ... (Participant 16)*

Other participants stated that the lack of money and their financial situation caused by unemployment has made them feel worthless, indicating that their self-esteem was negatively influenced by being unemployed. These participants indicated:

*... if you don't have money you became worthless or useless ... (Participant 19)*

*... without employment and money you are worthless ... (Participant 4)*

From the above discussion it is clear that being unemployed affected the participants' self-esteem and made them feel worthless. The reasons participants provided for their low self-esteem varied, such as that they had lost their confidence, that their parents were treating them like children, and that their personalities had changed. The finding that low self-esteem is the outcome of prolonged unemployment, is confirmed by various authors, who indicate that individual graduates who felt that they did not fit into a particular environment may also become isolated as a person's need to belong, also influences their self-esteem. Furthermore, an unemployment status may be perceived by unemployed individuals as a reflection of their own abilities. As such a low self-esteem could be linked to the situation where unemployed youth could find it increasingly difficult to find employment as they may increasingly doubt their abilities to succeed in finding employment (Van der Meer & Wielers, 2016; Huysse-Gaytandjieva, Groot, Pavlova & Joling, 2015; Ayllón, 2013; Macdonald, 2006; Fischer, Greitemeyer & Frey, 2008).

#### ***b) Category: Increase in stress***

The next category that was identified was that most participants were experiencing an increase in stress. Some participants experienced stress due to the fact that they felt that they had graduated with good results and were still unemployed. As a result thinking about whether they will find employment and how long they were going to stay without employment, as well as their inability to provide for their family whilst being unemployed, caused the graduates to stress, as is evident in the following narratives.

*... graduates go to tertiary with the plans to achieve better grades so as to be able to survive in the world. Unfortunately, many times it turns out to be just a waste of time. This brings about stress and any other health issues ... (Participant 1)*

*It is stressful to have a tertiary qualification and become unemployed ... (Participant 2)*

*This situation really stresses me, this stress comes as a result of thinking that I went to school, studied hard and yet I am unemployed and cannot provide for my family ... (Participant 10)*

Another participant indicated that the stress was so heavy and consistent, that alcohol and drugs were used as relief, however, the release of stress would only last for a short period of time, which would cause them to drink and smoke every day in order to escape the misery of being unemployed.

*... drinking alcohol and smoking drugs to try and relieve their stress which is temporary and the next morning when you wake up stress is back and you again smoke and drink ... (Participant 7)*

The effect of the stress could also lead to a mental breakdown as this participant noted:

*One has a lot to think about and being unemployed on its own bring stress and mental breakdown ... (Participant 4)*

Other participants indicated that they were stressed by the internship programme which firstly did not address the unemployment problems of youth graduates, and secondly were used to exploit them by not providing them with permanent employment after having worked within the programme for a fixed period.

*I feel the internship programme does not address the problem of unemployment rather it is causing stress ... (Participant 16)*

*The internship programme is causing stress as it does not provide us with permanent employment rather they exploit us in this programme ... (Participant 18)*

From the above narratives it is clear that most participants went to university with the hope that after graduation they would find employment opportunities so that they could provide for themselves and their loved ones. However, not finding employment caused them to stress and, as indicated by some participants, to end up using substances as a way of relieving their stress.

The finding that unemployment causes stress is confirmed in literature. Lim, Lee, Jeon, Yoo and Jung (2018) point out that unemployment is considered a direct cause of stress, therefore unemployed people tend to believe that all their problems will be alleviated once they were able to secure employment. The fact that unemployment causes stress is furthermore collaborated by Osei-Hwedie (2003) who states that the notion comes as no surprise because the unemployed status means that one is unable to generate income. Without any other source of income, one is therefore expected to experience some financial strain at some point in their lives which eventually causes them to be stressed.

***c) Category: Onset of depression***

The last category that was identified in the subtheme of impact on mental health, was that of the onset of depression. Most participants indicated that they had been struggling with depression due to their unemployment status. According to literature, some life activities like unemployment have the capacity to cause depression (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Participants indicated that they were constantly thinking about their unemployment status and about the fact that they could not provide for their kids. They have studied hard and graduated with degrees in various fields, yet they remained unemployed. They felt they had wasted their time and this caused them to be depressed. Participants mentioned:

*... it is very depressing; I sometimes get depressed because it is emotionally draining and it is a very heavy burden that I am carrying ...” (Participant 4)*

*To be honest with you I am depressed because I spend most of my time thinking why I am in this mess and it really pains you not been able to provide for your kids. This is really depressing because I was told to study hard so that I can have a better future and I did all that, but no employment; it is like you have wasted your time ... (Participant 8)*

*My unemployment status has made me depressed because I am always thinking of my situation and most of us unemployed graduates are depressed because we have no way to go ... (Participant P9)*

Participants further indicated certain characteristics related to depression, such as that they were experiencing suicidal thoughts, as well as sleeping problems and that they were questioning whether it was worth living. Narratives are:

*I feel depressed and I sometimes feel suicidal and wish not to wake up from my sleep so that I can escape this misery ... (Participant 5)*

*I sometimes spend days without sleep thinking about my situation even when I force myself to sleep it does not happen ... (Participant 10)*

The reaction of people who knew they were unemployed, added to their feelings of depression, according to some of the participants. They indicated that people were always asking about their unemployment status since they had known they went to university. If they found out that they were unemployed they would start mocking them and making fun of them, as is indicated by the narratives below. Participants mentioned:

*I am slowly getting depressed because every time you meet people they would want to know if you are working or not ... (Participant 16)*

*... they mock us saying we have failed, that is why we are unemployed. So it adds to the depression that we are facing ... (Participant 19)*

It is evident that participants were experiencing feelings of depression which had manifested into sleeping disorders and suicidal thoughts, and that the reaction of people enquiring after their unemployed status, as well as mocking them about it, added to their depression. It is clear that depression was experienced by a large number of the participants in this study group. This result was confirmed in literature (Dlamini, Hlope & Mohammed, 2019; WHO, 2012; Gallup, 2013; Mckee-Ryan et al., 2005) that states there is a connection between being unemployed and suffering from depression mostly because unemployment decreases psychological well-being, which in turn often caused the unemployed to be prone to depressive symptoms. In his research in America, Gallup (2013) found that the longer the person stayed unemployed the more the chances were of them becoming depressed. Furthermore, the WHO (2012) indicated that the risk for depression increased if the unemployed persons did not have money to support themselves, indicating to others that they were incapable of taking care of themselves.

#### **6.4.3.2 Theme 2: Subtheme 2: Psychological challenges**

Another subtheme that was identified is that psychological challenges are experienced as a result of being unemployed. Participants indicated that they went through various emotions which affected their lives terribly. Some participants mentioned that:

*Personally, like I said, unemployment has affected me emotionally and I am no different from someone who is dead ... (Participant 9)*

*... we still waiting to find a job emotionally we are suffering (Participant 16)*

Another participant stated that they felt purposeless and had lost the will to live due to their unemployment status, they felt as if they were crazy and wanted to be admitted to a mental institution.

*I feel I don't have a purpose even if I die nobody will miss me. I sometimes feel like I am suffocating and sometimes feel like going to Sabrana Hospital (Mental Institution/hospital) ... (Participant 5)*

The finding that unemployment created psychological challenges, such as difficulty in sleeping and feeling worthless, are supported in literature. Omoniyi and Osakinle (2011) mention that it was found that youth graduates who were unemployed experienced lower levels of psychological well-being due to various stressors they would experience as a result of unemployment. Additionally, unemployed graduates had been found to experience greater psychological distress than employed graduates, as discussed in Chapter 3. According to Griep, Kinnunen, Nätti, De Cuyper, Mauno, Mäkikangas and De Witte (2016) and De Witte et al. (2012), these psychological effects may include being hostile, angry, stressed, lonely, frustrated, suffering from sleeping disorders, being demoralised, disappointed and depressed, having suicidal thoughts, and experiencing a decrease in life satisfaction, self-esteem, status and confidence. The participants indicated that they were experiencing the majority of these feelings as discussed earlier in this chapter.

#### ***a) Category: Suicidal thoughts***

Suicidal thoughts emerged as a category after several participants pointed out that their unemployment status had caused them to question their existence. They furthermore acknowledged that they have had suicidal thoughts. These suicidal thoughts can be caused by various emotions and challenges that unemployed youth graduates experience in their daily lives and that were discussed earlier in this chapter. These feelings are indicated in the following narratives:

*I wonder sometimes why am still alive why can't God take me. I wish not to wake up from my sleep so that I can escape this misery. I feel I don't have a purpose even if I kill myself nobody will miss me ... (Participant 5)*

*I feel a dead person is better than me who is alive, sometimes I wish I was dead ... (Participant 6)*

*Sometimes the situation is unbearable and I wish I was dead ... (Participant 9)*

*... sometimes you don't see the reasons for being alive and I sometimes have suicidal thoughts ... (Participant 12)*

*Some instance it so bad to a point where I had thought of committing suicide ... (Participant 16)*

The finding that unemployment was the reason for some participants to have had suicidal thoughts was confirmed in research conducted by Lim, Lee, Jeon, Yoo and Jung (2018) who identified a correlation between suicide and unemployment. The research claimed that suicides have become a serious social problem and depression caused by unemployment is generally considered one of the strongest risk factors for committing suicide. Blakely (2003) mentioned that the association between suicide and unemployment is fundamental as socio-economically deprived individuals are likely to commit suicide. It is important to note that the majority of participants of this study group identified characteristics of depression, such as feelings of worthlessness and having suicidal thoughts. Although a large number of participants indicated that they have entertained suicidal thoughts, the participants did not take up the offer to talk to the psychologist who was available for psychological support for the full duration of the study at no cost (Appendix L). It was explained to the participants that the psychologist was available but they did not utilise his services.

#### **6.4.3.3 Theme 2 Subtheme 3: Health challenges**

Another subtheme that came to the fore was that participants indicated they were experiencing health challenges as a result of their unemployment. Unemployment has been linked to poorer self-rated health (Tøge & Blekesaune, 2015). In this subtheme, one category was identified, namely that participants were suffering from headaches, heart and sleep problems, as well as high blood pressure.

**a) Category: Headaches, heart problems, sleep problems, high blood pressure**

Some participants listed health conditions such as headaches, high blood pressure and heart problems which they developed as a result of their unemployment status. Participants indicated:

*I overthink about my situation; it has even affected my health. I go for heart check-ups annually ... (Participant 1) ...*

*... due to my thinking all the time about my unemployment situation I have develop high blood pressure and I am on medications ... (Participant 5)*

*I get terrible headaches ... (Participant 20)*

The finding that participants were experiencing health challenges, such as high blood pressure and headaches have been identified in literature as issues that could surface when unemployed. De Witte et al. (2016 & 2012) found that psychological consequences of unemployment in South Africa had physical effects that included headaches, sleep deprivation, heart disease, lack of energy, and hypertension. When graduates find themselves being unemployed, poor physical health and well-being may thus follow (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Wilkinson et al., 2017).

**6.4.3.4 Theme 2 Subtheme 4: Financial challenges**

A financial challenge is another subtheme that was identified as a challenge experienced by the participants. No categories were identified, as the majority of the participants indicated that they were struggling financially. Except for the fact that their own needs were not met, they mostly indicated that the lack of financial means impacted heavily on their families. Participants indicated:

*Personally my needs are not met and I am struggling financially ... (Participant 2)*

*Financially it is very difficult to provide for my family and my child I don't have money to buy clothes for my kid ... (Participant 10)*

Another participant mentioned that she had a new-born baby but that she could not provide for her baby's basic needs as she was struggling financially. The participant indicated:

*I have a new-born baby who needs a lot of things, I am struggling financially...*  
(Participant 19)

The finding that participants experienced financial challenges was a consistent challenge for this study group and had major economic implications. Literature concludes that from an economic perspective the loss of output to the economy and the loss of income to the families of the unemployed are some of the most important issues at stake, so is the duration of them being unemployed. Unemployment is considered to be one of the most stressful life events a person can experience, because of the loss of substantial material and psychological resources that unemployment causes (Jianu, 2020; Westman, Etzion & Horovitz, 2004).

#### **6.4.3.5 Theme 2 Subtheme 5: Different reactions of community to unemployed status**

Another subtheme that came to the fore was the reaction of the community to the unemployed status of graduates. Two categories were derived from the data, namely that the community is critical towards their unemployed status and that the participants experience a lack of interaction with the community. These categories will now be discussed.

##### **a) Category 1: Community is critical of unemployed status**

The first category refers to the comments of the participants that the community was critical of their unemployed status. Most of the participants indicated that some community members were making fun of the fact that they were graduates and yet they were unemployed such as community members who did not graduate, some community members were even saying nasty things to the participants. Participants indicate:

*They make fun and jokes of graduates who did not get jobs. They label them and even go to an extent of refusing to help them with anything ...* (Participant 1)

*... some were mistreating and disrespectful to me. They start making fun of me and telling me that I have wasted my time studying as I am no different to them because I am struggling to find job just like them ...* (Participant 3)

*Some community members say nasty thing about us, when they see you pass they will say nasty things like we are the same whether educated or not educated we both roaming the streets ...* (Participant 9)

One participant stated that the community thought they were not doing enough to look for employment and labelled the participant as not seriously looking for employment.

*Some think that we are not doing enough to find employment and they talk carelessly that we are not serious about looking for jobs ... (Participant 6)*

Other participants mentioned that community members fabricated stories that the unemployed youth had failed to graduate and have thus wasted government money; that is why they were home when others were working.

*... they have already made up stories that I have failed my courses and they are spreading rumours that I failed my course and I have wasted government money ... (Participant 8)*

*I think the community has this tendency of looking at unemployed graduates with this eye that you have failed or something they have a way of belittling you ... (Participant 11)*

It is clear from the above narratives that community members are disagreeable and even malicious towards unemployed graduates as community members are of the opinion that the graduates had failed and wasted government money. The finding that community members were critical of unemployed youth graduates is confirmed in literature which indicates that employment is not only the most important determining factor of status and human well-being; it is also vital for generating meaning to one's life, and for social stability and to secure participation in the community (Bejaković & Mrnjavac, 2018; Jahoda, 1982).

#### ***b) Category 2: Unaware of community reaction***

The second category was that some participants indicated there was a lack of interaction with the community. Other participants mentioned that they did not interact much with the community and did therefore not know what the reaction was to their unemployment status.

*... I don't know their reaction ... (Participant 10)*

*... I don't normally interact with them because I am always home so I don't know their reaction to my unemployment status ... (Participant 13)*

Another participant indicated that they avoided mingling with the community because some community members were destructive.

*... regarding the community I don't like to mingle with them because I just stay home I try to avoid the people in the community as much as I can because I know they can be toxic ... (Participant 16)*

However, one participant stated that some community members were very understanding of the situation and encouraging towards finding employment and keeping hopeful.

*... Some community members understand and encourage me to keep trying and remain hopeful, and encourage you to keep on trying to find work ... (Participant 5)*

It is evident that the community was not always supportive of unemployed graduates, that they would ridicule them and brand them as failures. Some participants avoided interaction with community members altogether. These challenges that unemployed youth graduates face in the community could all add to their mental health challenges, such as their loss of self-esteem.

#### **6.4.4 Meso system/level of ecological perspective**

According to literature the meso-level of Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective is connected to the functioning of the family (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Connor, 2011) and in the case of this study, related to the interplay between unemployment and the effect on the family. Literature mentioned that graduate unemployment not only impacted upon graduates, but also their families, as the youth must attach themselves to their families or relatives to take care of their basic needs (Magagula, 2017). Therefore, the effects of unemployment on participants' intimate partner relations and extended families were explored.

##### **6.4.4.1 Theme 3: Effects of unemployment on family**

The first theme that was identified related to the mesosystem and was the effects that unemployment had on the family. Literature indicates that although graduates represent hope for uplifting the standards of living for their families and communities, if upon graduation the graduate is unable to secure employment in the labour market their families and communities would feel a sense of lost hope and a continuance of the vicious circle of poverty that these families were hoping to escape (Hull, 2016; Lehohla, 2017). Unemployed youth has been called a lost generation because of the long-term direct and indirect impact unemployment has on young people and their families (Morsy & Hanan, 2012). The subthemes and categories derived from the data are discussed below. Participants were asked to share how their unemployment influenced their relationship with their family members.

#### **6.4.4.1.1 Theme 3 Subtheme 1: Intimate partner relationships are challenging**

In this theme of challenges experienced by families because of the unemployment status of the participants, the subtheme derived was that intimate partner relationships were challenging. Most participants stated that unemployment affected their intimate relationships because they would argue about money most of the time. However, not all participants were in a relationship so some of them provided their viewpoints about the possible impact of unemployment on relationships. Four categories emerged under this subtheme namely, conflict because of financial instability, termination of relationship, fear of gender-based violence, and no effect on intimate partner relationship.

##### **a) Category: Conflict because of financial instability**

The first category that was identified was that unemployment caused conflict in intimate partner relationships due to financial instability. It is a well-known fact that unemployment and financial strain put pressure on relationships (Black et al., 2015). Participants indicated that they were experiencing conflict, because of the stress caused by a lack of money, as well as the fact that their partners were left to take full financial responsibility of the family. This conflict would often be a result of participants having to ask for money from their partners. The following narratives from participants confirm that unemployment causes conflict in relationships.

*... me and my husband argue half of the time, because of stress caused by financial instability since we are both not working ... (Participant 2)*

*My lack of employment is causing conflict in my relationship because I am always asking for money from partner ... (Participant 12)*

*Money issues create conflict in my relationship as my boyfriend is the only one who is working ... (Participant 19)*

The finding that unemployment causes conflict in relationships is also evident in literature as losing employment constitutes a significant shock to household income and financial instability, which could trigger renegotiation of the allocation of a budget and stress in dealing with it (Black et al., 2015). Studies have demonstrated that unemployment is associated with psychological stress and conflict (Black et al., 2015, Schaller & Stevens, 2015). Furthermore,

it seems as if people who are unemployed are on average significantly less happy with their relationships than those who are employed (Schaller & Stevens 2015).

***b) Category: Relationships did not survive***

The second category that came to the fore was that relationships were difficult to sustain if you are unemployed. Some participants stated their relationships with their partners were affected as they were dependent on them financially and as it was difficult to focus on and sustain the relationship, because their thoughts were occupied with their unemployed status. Participants indicated:

*I am not in a relationship however, in the past relationship it did affect the relationship as I depended on him for everything which was very stressful for him as he had other commitments ... (Participant 6)*

*... very much so that is why I am no longer in a relationship. We used to have unnecessary tensions caused by my mood swings which were a result of my thinking a lot about my unemployment status ... (Participant 11)*

Another participant indicated that his unemployment status had made him stop dating as culturally it was his responsibility as a man to be able to provide, so only once he was financially stable would he start dating again.

*I want to start dating when I am financially stable. It is my responsibility as a man to provide so if there is nothing to provide I stay as far away as I possibly can from dating ... (Participant 7)*

Another participant mentioned that she had never met her boyfriend since completing her studies because they were living far from each other and as she had no funds as a result of being unemployed she could not visit her partner, they only communicated by phone.

*... yes, ever since completing my studies I have not met with my boyfriend because of the distance so we only talk on the phone and he is the one buying me airtime. Due to lack of money I cannot go to him - I used to visit him ... (Participant 13)*

The finding that unemployment makes it difficult to sustain relationships was highlighted by some participants who stated that because they were financially dependent on their partners, their dependency affected their relationship, they furthermore indicated that they were too

occupied by their thoughts about being unemployed and could thus not focus on their relationships, as well as that it was difficult to sustain long-distance relationships due to a lack of money, causing one participant not to have seen her partner in a long time. These narratives are in agreement with existing literature (Nikolova & Ayhan, 2019; Haisken-DeNew, 2009; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005) which states that the impact of unemployment on the individual also affects the family as a whole and could lead to marriages or relationships ending, as was indicated by the participants. Furthermore, Nikolova and Ayhan (2018) state that having a good relationship is associated with better mental and physical health and is important for any children a couple may have. It also means that divorce or separation is less likely.

**c) Category: *Fear of gender-based violence***

The third category that came to the fore was the fear of gender-based violence. Participants, particularly those who were married, stated that they depended on their spouse for everything which in turn became a burden that could contribute to gender-based violence. They indicate:

*It is not easy like I am staying with my husband and our child and my husband is the only one who is working so we depend on him for everything. Unemployment is major contributing factor to gender-based violence ... (Participant 18)*

*I am always demanding this and that from my partner and I am afraid that this might make him to abuse me as I have no way to go (Participant 17)*

The finding that participants feared the onset of intimate partner violence due to their inability to contribute to the household is echoed in other studies. Literature (Tur-Prats, 2021) confirms that there is a strong correlation between unemployment and domestic violence. Domestic violence, which includes intimate-partner violence, is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as any type of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse by an intimate partner (World Health Organisation, 2021). However, despite the general perception that domestic violence is likely to increase with economic recessions, the evidence is inconclusive. Some studies found near-zero effects of total unemployment on domestic violence (Kotsadam & Villanger 2020; Henke & Hsu, 2020; Aizer 2010; Iyengar, 2009), while other studies (Buller, Peterman, Ranganathan, Bleile, Hidrobo & Heise, 2018; Van der Berg & Tertilt, 2012) found a positive effect. However, the study by Van Dolen and Weinberg (2013) has shown that the possibility of serious abuse of women increases with a decreasing income and in families where men are unemployed. Furthermore, Magamela, Dzinamarira and Hlongwa (2021) state that

unemployment as a contributing factor to breakdown in family relationships and gender based violence has been evident during the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa. Botswana has a high incidence of gender-based violence as over 67% of women have experienced abuse, which is more than double of the global percentage (United Nations Population Fund, 2017).

***d) Category: Partner is supportive: relationship not affected***

The fourth category indicated that some participants felt that their unemployment status did not affect their intimate partner relationship as their partners were supportive and encouraged them to keep applying for positions. Some of these participants indicated:

*This issue has not affected my intimate partner relationships because my husband is an understanding person, he understands that the situation will pass and he is very supportive ... (Participant 9)*

*... it has not affected my relationship because my partner is very understanding and encourages me to keep on applying; I should not give up ... (Participant 10)*

*... he has been very supportive ... (Participant 14)*

One participant stated that, although the situation did not affect her intimate relationship at the time of the interview, she did not have an idea what would happen in future if the situation was to stay the same with her being unemployed.

*I don't think the situation has affected my relationship for now but I don't know what will happen in the future ... (Participant 12)*

It is evident from the narratives above that some participants were of the opinion that their unemployment status did not affect their intimate partner relationship as their partners were very understanding and supportive of their situation. This finding, that unemployment did not affect participants' intimate partner relationships, was confirmed in the literature of Lorenzini and Giugni (2012) who state that social support has been found to be essential in buffering the effects of stressful life events such as unemployment. Vungkhanching, Tonsing and Tonsing (2017) indicate that social support creates an enabling environment and a sense of comfort, love, happiness, hope, and positive energy at a time that the expectations and inability to meet needs could result in self-guilt and pessimism. In this study group it is clear that some participants received social support from their partners that had a positive effect on their relationships.

#### **6.4.4.1.2 Theme 3: Subtheme 2: Family relationships are stressful**

The second subtheme that was identified was that family relationships were stressful due to the unemployed status of the participants. Research has found that the social effects, such as stress, were larger for men's unemployment than women's unemployment, for example, married men with responsibilities as breadwinners reported more stress from being unemployed than married women, for whom marriage seems to act as a buffer (Tur-Prats, 2021; Van der Meer, 2014). However, in this study group the majority of participants were females and it is the researcher's belief that the social effects for women who are unemployed are equal to that of men because of the expectations of families of first-generation graduates in Botswana that the financial situation of the family would improve with the employment of the first-generation graduate. According to Nichols, Mitchell, and Lindner (2013) long-term unemployment has been associated with poor socio-economic outcome for young people. Different categories emerged from the data analysis, such as blame for career choices, conflict and quarrels due to a lack of funds and no financial gain for the family. These categories are discussed below.

##### ***a) Category: Blame for career choices and deliberately staying unemployed***

The first category derived was that participants were blamed for their choice of career. Most participants stated that their unemployment status had affected their relationships with their families as their families blamed them about the career choices they made and believed that some participants deliberately chose to stay unemployed. Participants indicated that:

*They sometimes blame us for choosing the career path we chose. This therefore leading to them giving us a very bad treatment and sometimes going to an extend of thinking being unemployed is an option we chose. Most of the time family members blame us, the graduates, for not having jobs ... (Participant 1)*

*Many times I am blamed for the career path that I have chosen and blamed that I chose to be unemployed ... (Participant 4)*

The finding that family members were blaming participants for not finding employment after graduation is confirmed by literature which indicates that in a developing country like Botswana, many family units are highly dependent on the income of a first-generation university or college graduate. This would often result in the family blaming the graduates

when they fail to find employment upon graduation (Pheko, Monteiro, Tlhabano & Mphele, 2014).

Literature indicates that graduates who were unemployed had good reason to feel that their families were blaming them because they were caught in the growing mismatch between job opportunities and their own education, as they were repeatedly told they should have studied programmes that would prepare them for the available positions. By blaming young people for being unemployed, the perception is raised that by “fixing” young people, the issue of unemployment could be solved. In addition many governments have been good at creating a narrative suggesting that young people were unemployed because they were not trying hard enough to find employment however, it is obvious that the problem is rather that of a mismatch of demand and supply (Kinga, 2005).

The employability of graduates in a country like Botswana is thus important because parents expect that institutions of higher learning should ensure that what is learnt at school is aligned with what is required by the economy. For graduates, gaining employability skills and attributes is important because the perception exists that this will guarantee them jobs. However, while many employers in Botswana are prepared to fund training to help employees develop more sophisticated job-related skills, not all employers are prepared to do this, resulting in graduates struggling to be appointed in the challenging formal market (Pheko & Molefhe, 2016; Martin, Villeneuve-Smith, Marshall & McKenzie, 2008).

The process of finding a job is also very challenging for graduates as most of them will not even be invited to the first round of interviews due to them having little to no experience (Pheko & Molefhe, 2016). Furthermore, literature indicates that the level of youth unemployment in Botswana indicates that the existing education does not sufficiently prepare graduates for the world of work whether in terms of skills, attitudes, and/or expectations. Botswana has to address these challenges because the high levels of youth unemployment have wider social and psychological effects as became evident through the narratives above (Pheko & Molefhe, 2016; The Work Foundation, 2012)

***b) Category: Conflict and quarrels due to lack of income***

Another category was that the lack of income of the unemployed graduate caused conflicts and quarrels in the family, a fact that is confirmed in literature as it clearly states that unemployment may lead to family conflict and marital instability (Landers-Potts, Wickrama, Simons, Cutrona,

Gibbons & Conger, 2015; Hansen, 2005). Participants mentioned that they were unable to contribute to the household and that in some instances this resulted in them being absent at important family gatherings. Their inability to contribute to the household has led to tension and fights within the family, as is indicated in the following narratives.

*I miss important family events because I cannot afford to contribute let alone go to attend; this sometimes causes tension and unnecessary fights with my family ...*  
(Participant 3)

*My status is causing conflicts and quarrels. We sometimes fight over things getting finished in the house since I don't have the money to buy or replace them ...* (Participant 7)

These narratives indicate that families often quarrel as a result of the inability of the participants to contribute to the household. The finding that unemployment was causing conflict in the family is supported by literature which indicates that both unemployment and financial hardship affect the unemployed individual and impact other family members and the family dynamics and that there is a link between the stress of unemployment and an increase in family conflict and arguments. It is clear that conflict ensues within familial relationships as financial hardship increases (Maitoza, 2019; McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg & Kinicki, 2005; Broman, Hamilton, Conger & Conger 2002).

**c) Category: Graduation did not bring financial gain to family**

The fact that the graduation of the unemployed graduates did not bring any financial gain to the family which influenced family relationships, was another category that came to the fore. While unemployment affects loss of income, it could also lead to a loss of social status or the non-approval of the family's social status (Van der Meer, 2014). The nature of unemployment has consequences, such as long lasting earning losses and financial strains which all contribute to increased family stress (MacInnes & Broman, 2012). Some participants stated that unemployment has really affected their relationship with their family, because although they graduated from university, the qualification did not bring any financial gain to their families.

*My unemployment status has badly affected my family; they are so frustrated to see me not working for over 10 years now. Unemployment has influenced my relationship with*

*my family members in many ways. Others look down on me because I am unemployed ...*  
(Participant 2)

*... This has really affected my family and it is bad because for them to eat I have to struggle and this has affected me emotionally ...* (Participant 9)

Another participant indicated that in her homestead there were many graduates who were unemployed and were without hope for improving their lives. This is evident in the narrative below.

*... You know, my family is affected seriously because we are many who graduated and all of us are unemployed, we are stuck in one place there is no improvement in our lives and we live by God's grace ...* (Participant 8)

Furthermore, one participant indicated that, as a single mother, her unemployment affected her family as she had to provide for her children and a widowed mother.

*... It is really bad because I am a single mother and I was raised by a widow so it is a mess and very painful. We also don't qualify for the welfare programmes at the social worker's office and yet we are poor, so it's a mess. My mother is looking up to me to provide for them ...* (Participant 10)

Another participant mentioned that her unemployment status made her the laughing stock of the family and as she had a new-born baby she was even more financially dependent on her parents as is evident in the narrative below.

*... I have become the laughing stock of the family, I cannot contribute anything financially I depend on my parents and I have a new-born baby who need a lot of things. I depend on my parents to assist me financially ...* (Participant 19)

From the above narratives, it is clear that the graduation of the participants did not change their or their families' socio-economic circumstances which affected their family relationships, because their graduation brought no improvement to their lives. The finding that youth unemployment affects the family has been confirmed in literature. Young people may become more reliant on their families for longer than anticipated due to unemployment (Vieira, Matias, Lopez & Matos, 2018; Du Toit, De Witte, Rothmann & Van den Broeck, 2018; Du Toit, 2003).

This dependency on their families may cause unemployed graduates to become depressed, frustrated, and hostile as was discussed in subtheme two of the psychological effects.

#### **6.4.4.1.3 Theme 3: Subtheme 3: Inability to contribute financially to family**

Another subtheme that was identified in the theme of effects of unemployment on the family was the inability of the participants to contribute financially to the family. Three categories were derived from the data, namely that the family expected a financial contribution, that their unemployment was a burden to the family, and that some families were supportive of the participants. These categories will now be discussed.

##### **a) Category: Family expects financial contribution despite unemployed status**

The first category of this subtheme was that the family expected a financial contribution from the graduates. Some participants stated that their unemployment has led to financial complications and issues within the family. Their unemployment has had a negative impact on their families because they could not provide them with financial assistance and could not help them buy essential goods that were required at their homes. Most of the participants conveyed that their families had high expectations that they would support the family after they completed their studies and that these families were disappointed when the participants could not find employment. Despite the fact that participants were unemployed, their families often still expected them to contribute financially.

Some participants mentioned that they could not fulfil the expectations of their family to contribute to the household and that they had made the financial situation worse, because the family had to take care of them. Narratives are:

*My unemployment status has influenced my relationship with my family members as practically anything that I want to do I have to ask for financial assistance from someone. Yes my family expects financial assistance from me ... (Participant 1)*

*My family is financially challenged. Like I mentioned above, we struggling to pay rent, buy our monthly groceries and other necessities. This also causes stress as some extended family members always expect some financial help from me ... (Participant 2)*

Participants also mentioned that their families needed certain daily essentials, but due to them being unemployed they could not ease the burden by making any contributions to their families. They indicated as follows:

*This has affected my family in the sense that I cannot provide for my family's basic needs meaning I cannot buy them essential things like food, clothing that they need on daily basis for their survival. It is a very painful thing to fail to provide for your family. Sometimes we do not afford some basic needs like food and toiletries and the family car can break down and take long to fix because there will be no money to fix it and this really frustrates me cause I cannot help my family (Participant 3)*

*Financially it is very difficult to provide for my family and my child I don't have money to buy clothes for my kid ... (Participant 10)*

*Financially I cannot contribute at all and it is very painful because I cannot help my husband in building our family ... (Participant 18)*

According to the above participants, unemployment economically affected their families as the participants were unable to provide for their loved ones. However, the expectation from family members was that graduates should be able to contribute to the household. It was therefore found that families expected of the participants to contribute to the household, despite their unemployed status and that this expectation created stress and feelings of guilt.

Employment provides a sense of purpose, a sense that one does something of worth and is compensated accordingly. The link between self-worth and employment may be particularly strong for men. Many men, particularly those in families, find their sense of worth tied up in their ability to provide for their family. With unemployment comes not only a loss of income, but a loss of their identity and value (Warner, 2019; Townsend, 2002). In this study group, where the majority of the participants were female, it was found, namely that being unemployed had the same effect on women who graduated, where they described their inability to contribute financially to the family as frustrating, painful and stressful and that they were adding to the financial difficulties of the family because they could not provide any assistance.

#### ***b) Category: Burden to family***

The second category in this subtheme is that the unemployed graduates were a burden to their families. Most participants indicated that they felt like as if they were a burden to their families

because they were dependent on them for everything, including groceries and money for job applications, sometimes because other family members were also unemployed.

Some participants said that they felt like they were burdening their families with their situation because they understood their families had their own issues, and the participants did not want to burden them any further. Narratives are:

*Others have distanced themselves from me because they feel I am a burden to them, by always asking for financial favours from them ... (Participant 2)*

*I feel like I am a burden to my mother because she is the one that is buying groceries and she is the one giving money for job applications and over and above that, she is also not working and it's really sad ... (Participant 6)*

*I am still dependent on my family to provide for me, which is not a good thing because they have helped me to be where I am and I am the one who is supposed to be easing the burden on them but I am still a burden on them ... (Participant 7)*

*I feel like a burden because I cannot assist financially and it really pains me. When I was doing temporary work I use to give them some money and you could see that they were happy that my daughter is helping out ... (Participant 11)*

The finding that some participants in the study felt as if they were burdening their families because of their dependence on the family, could be related thereto that on a broader or structural level, family researchers have long noted the significance of interrelationships between the economy and the family. Unemployment is often the reason for financial hardship experienced in families (Maitoza, 2019; McKeever & Wolfinger, 2012; MacInnes & Broman, 2012).

Another important aspect is that, especially in the African culture, it is expected that someone must be a breadwinner to support the family, irrespective of the gender of the family member, and that families have higher expectations of the family member that is a graduate (Dlamini et al., 2019; Klasen & Woolard, 2009). The participants in this study showed a desire to support their families financially and to secure their children's future, in line with their cultural expectations, but were experiencing stress because of their inability to live up to these expectations.

**c) Category: Family is supportive**

The last category identified in this subtheme of the family's reaction to their unemployed status, is that some participants mentioned that their family was supportive. A few participants in the study stated that, although they were unemployed, their families were very supportive of their situation. Support from family came up as a significant source of social support for most of the participants. Participants indicated:

*... close family members are so supportive ... (Participant 2)*

*... they are sympathetic and supportive to my situation ... (Participant 3)*

*I am blessed with two loving parents so they are really supportive ... (Participant 11)*

Another participant mentioned that, not only was her family supportive, but they would also go the extra mile to lift her spirits, especially after receiving bad news from rejection letters or if she did not do well in her interviews.

*At times they can be very supportive as they try to help me look for jobs and sometimes try to bring my mood up when low from either rejection letters or failed interviews ... (Participant 4)*

Another participant indicated that her family members encouraged her not to lose hope as her family understood that there were no jobs in the market and that unemployment was a serious challenge in Botswana.

*I consider myself fortunate because my family understands that Botswana is having a serious challenge of unemployment so they are very supportive and encourages me keep on making job application ... (Participant 7)*

The narratives indicated that some of the participants experienced strong support from their families. The finding that families were supportive towards the unemployed status of the participants are positive as such family support created an enabling environment with a sense of comfort, love, happiness, hope, and positive energy (Vungkhanching, Tonsing & Tonsing, 2017; Lakey & Croney, 2008). Family support has been found to be essential in buffering the effects of stressful life events such as unemployment (Lorenzini & Giugni, 2012). However, a study showed that youth unemployment in combination with parental financial support could

also lead to low levels of youth self-efficacy and depletion in personal psychological well-being and low self-worth (Mortimer, Kim, Staff & Vuolo, 2016).

#### **6.4.5 Macrosystem/level of the ecological perspective**

Bronfenbrenner (1979) states that the macrosystem comprises of the cultural environment in which the individual lives, as well as all the other systems that could affect them and that they have no control over. As the exo-level refers to social structures, such as employment opportunities, and services, that will have an impact on the individual that they have no control over, the exo-level for the purpose of this study is included in the macrosystem, where the focus also falls on government policy and legislation that will influence the individual. Therefore, the challenges that the participants experienced specifically with government initiatives were explored. In this section the views of the focus group participants employed at the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Cultural Development (MYESCD) will also be highlighted.

##### ***6.4.5.1 Theme 4: Experience of government initiatives to address graduate unemployment***

Literature states that the macro-level is impacted by elements such as government policies. These macro-level elements influence the livelihood of individuals (Hutchinson, 2015). Therefore, it was important to determine the challenges experienced by the participants on this level of the ecological perspective. The participants were asked to reflect on government initiatives and the resources available to unemployed graduates. Three subthemes with different categories were identified from the data and are discussed below.

###### ***6.4.5.1.1 Theme 4: Subtheme 1: Knowledge about government initiatives***

The participants were asked to reflect on government initiatives they were familiar with that addressed graduate unemployment. Three categories emerged from this subtheme and are analysed below.

###### ***a) Category: Aware of national internship programme and graduate volunteer scheme***

The first category identified was awareness of the national internship programme and the graduate volunteer scheme. The majority of participants indicated that they were familiar with these programmes. Participants mentioned:

*Ahm! The national internship programme and graduate volunteer scheme ... (Participant 1)*

*The only initiatives that I am familiar with that addresses graduates unemployment is the internship programme and GVS ... (Participant 2)*

*I know of graduates volunteer scheme and internship, yes I know about this two programmes ... (Participant 20)*

It is evident from the narratives that participants were aware of the youth programmes that were meant to address youth unemployment, such as the national internship programme. The finding is thus, that the participants were aware of possible macro-level government initiatives to address graduate unemployment. These programmes are focussed on the graduated youth and the aim of the internship programme is to facilitate the integration of participants into the economy by providing work experience placements for graduates in all sectors of the economy (i.e., public sector, private sector, parastatals as well as non-governmental organisations) for a period of 24 months. Yet, it was found that this programme achieved little results in terms of enabling graduate interns to find permanent employment after they completed the programme (Lemmenyane, 2015).

The graduate voluntary scheme (GVS) is a programme which is for graduate youths who were unemployed, and who had not been taking part in the internship programme. The objectives of the GVS includes coordinating placement of young graduates in organisations that have opportunities for volunteer work, facilitating skills development, and transfer thereof to young graduates, providing a platform for contribution to community development, improving resilience of the graduate youth, and reducing idle time (Republic of Botswana, 2015).

#### ***b) Category: Aware of entrepreneurial programmes***

The awareness of entrepreneurial programmes was another category that was identified. It appears that unemployed young graduates were aware of funding opportunities or entrepreneurial programmes. Some participants mentioned programmes such as the Youth Development Fund (YDF) and the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA), both that are mainly entrepreneurial programmes. Participants indicated:

*I think there are Youth Development Fund (YDF), CEDA's Young farmers fund and also Internship Programme ... (Participant 8)*

*I know of CEDA's Young Farmers Fund ... (Participant 11)*

*The government programme that addresses graduates' unemployment is the Youth development Fund (YDF) though this one was initially designed for uneducated youth ... (Participant 4)*

It is evident from the above narratives that the participants were aware of the entrepreneurial programmes initiated by the government and implemented by the MYESCD to address youth unemployment. According to the government of Botswana, they acknowledge the plight of the youth and fully appreciate the opportunities entrepreneurship creates in terms of employment generation and contributions to economic development. As a result, the government has come up with programmes to facilitate young people to participate in self-employment such as the Youth Development Fund, Young Farmers Fund and the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (Okurut & Ama, 2013). These programmes provide funding on a subsidised basis for young people who wish to venture into self-employment. The Youth Development Fund's (YDF) aim is to promote active participation of youth in the socio-economic development of the country by assisting aspiring youth to venture into various economic enterprises funded at 50% loan and 50% grant (Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development, 2015). The aim of CEDA and the Young Farmers Fund (YFF) is to foster youth enterprises in agriculture through the effective pursuit of opportunities in the agricultural sector for the youth (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2015).

However, because youth graduates cannot always depend on the public and private sector to provide them with job opportunities, entrepreneurship tends to be the alternative solution for unemployment (Ibe & Aniagbaoso, 2012). It is believed that even though entrepreneurship does not present an absolute remedy for youth unemployment, it could reduce unemployment in Botswana by half (Diraditsile & Maphula, 2018; Salami, 2013).

Literature further states that given the youth labour market situation in Africa, where formal jobs are no longer guaranteed, attention is being paid to the promotion of self-employment among the youth as a complementary employment strategy. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is in support of entrepreneurship and self-employment as a way of tackling the problem of unemployment. The ILO recognises that self-employment is a relatively new development and that research has only been conducted on adults, with little attention given to youth. The ILO therefore has called for further research in this area (Dvouletý & Lukeš, 2016; Schoof, 2006). According to scholars (Dvouletý, Mühlböck, Warmuth & Kittel, 2018;

Chigunta, 2002), entrepreneurship and self-employment programmes have a number of benefits in that they serve as a way of creating employment for those who start projects and employ other youth who might be marginalised in society, they also boost the local economy by way of providing needed goods, and they create linkages between formal and informal economies, encourage innovation among young people while seeking to promote young people's self-worth in society.

***c) Category: Challenges to utilise programmes***

The last category in this subtheme was challenges in utilising programmes (Internship, GVS, and YDF) experienced by the participants. Most participants mentioned that although they were familiar with the above-mentioned programmes they have not utilised them to their benefit, because of different reasons. Participants indicated that they have not utilised the internship and GVS programmes, because they were still on the waiting list. Narratives are:

*... although I have not utilised this programme as I am the waiting list of internship ... (Participant 7)*

*I have not utilised this programme but I have applied for it and I am on the waiting list to be placed ... Participant 15)*

Another participant mentioned that she did not utilise these programmes because she was unaware of how to apply for such initiatives and was never taught how the process worked, as is evident below.

*I have not utilised thus far because currently I am not sure about the process of application. I need to understand how it works first then apply because nobody has ever explained the programme to me ... (Participant 13)*

Another participant indicated that she applied for YDF but was rejected on the basis that the place she wanted to operate at was deemed not suitable for her project. Therefore, she did not make use of this option again.

*I once tried my luck with YDF and I was not successful their reasons being the place that I wanted to operate from was deemed not suitable for the project as I wanted to do a processing project. I become demoralised and did not apply again ... (Participant 9)*

It is evident from the narratives above that most participants found it challenging to utilise these programmes due to the fact that they were still on waiting lists, were not absorbed into the job market through the programmes, were unsuccessful in their application, or that they had limited knowledge about the programmes. The finding that these government initiated programmes were not necessarily addressing their intended purposes is also confirmed in the literature (Diraditsile & Nthomang, 2016). Furthermore, as stated by Pansiri and Temtime (2010) entrepreneurial interventions or programmes such as the YDF that were supposed to yield employment creation so that young people could earn a living by creating work for themselves and possibly for others, seems not to be real or successful in Botswana.

#### **6.4.5.1.2 Theme 4: Subtheme 2: Government initiatives not effective**

The second subtheme of theme four was challenges and solutions of government initiatives. Participants were asked to discuss their view of the existing solutions that were offered by the government to unemployed graduates. As a result three categories emerged from this subtheme and they will be discussed below.

##### **a) Category: Existing government initiatives do not provide solutions**

The first category that came to the fore was that the existing government initiatives did not provide a solution to the graduate unemployment problem. As indicated in the previous subtheme most of the participants indicated their awareness and participation in especially the internship programmes, however, their view were that these programmes were not providing solutions to the issue of graduates' unemployment as graduates were not employed after they were accepted into some programmes, such as the internship programme, and furthermore that all unemployed graduates did not have access to these programmes. Participants indicated:

*I don't think they contribute to employment because most of the graduates who have been in these programme are back in the streets ... (Participant 18)*

*... these do not contribute to employment creations there are a temporary stop gap, graduates enrol in internship then after two years they become unemployed again ... (Participant 14)*

*I don't think these programme contribute towards addressing the problem of unemployment like it is not everyone who have access to these programmes ... (Participant 2)*

However, there was one participant who believed that since these programmes kept some of the graduates off the streets and gave them an allowance for two years, that the programmes contributed to the employment of youth graduates. This participant said:

*These initiatives help keep the graduates out of the streets as there is a certain amount or let's say allowance that they are given to keep up with life and sustain them ...*  
(Participant 1)

One other participant stated that some were adsorbed by organisations where they interned at. The narrative is:

*Yes, I believe that they provide employment opportunities because some graduates are absorbed by the organisations they are placed at ...* (Participant 20)

Another participant stated that since the cost of living was high in the cities the internship programme benefitted those who were in the villages where the cost of living was not as high.

*I would say internship works for those in the villages not those in the cities ...*  
(Participant 18)

The finding that the existing programmes did not provide solutions to the unemployment issue of youth graduates, because graduates were not absorbed into the formal sector, is confirmed by authors in Botswana. Sekwati, Narayana and Raboloko (2012) and Baatweng (2015) state that these programmes had been introduced in place of the creation of long-term employment opportunities, but that it provided only temporary relief and were not sustainable in the long term. A more recent view of Diraditsile (2017) is focused on a policy perspective, indicating that youth policies and programmes' research agendas had not been given sufficient attention except by the relatively underdeveloped and underutilised research institutions found in some government ministries. The suggestion is that the Botswana government should consider designing a robust social policy agenda for the youth that must provide some ideas and guidance on what to do to address the ever increasing social and economic problems and challenges in Botswana, including poverty, youth unemployment and underemployment.

In addition to the above, other participants stated that even the government entrepreneurial programmes such as the YDF were not providing solutions to youth unemployment. Participants indicated:

*I don't think these programmes contribute towards addressing the problem of unemployment because it is not everyone who has access to these programmes especially YDF who is funded. Somebody could have an idea but failing to present it in the manner it is required as a business proposal or plan and eventually they get demoralised and end up not doing ... (Participant 5)*

*I don't think they address unemployment problems because the people that I applied with to the YDF programme has never been funded ... (Participant 13)*

It is evident from the narratives above that most participants believed that the government initiatives mentioned above were not providing solutions to youth unemployment. The finding that entrepreneurial programmes did not provide solutions to the unemployment issue of youth graduates in Botswana is corroborated in literature which indicates that youth entrepreneurship development programmes such as the YDF and YFF receive applications throughout the year, indicating that people are continuously searching for employment. If interrogated, it can thus be said that, because there are youth graduates continuously applying to be allowed into these development programmes, they do not have employment and that the government's initiatives were not sufficient and adequate in tackling the issue of developing the graduate youth. Taking the YFF as example, Sekwati (2011) asserts that the number of loan applications received by the Citizen Entrepreneurship Development Agency (CEDA) far exceeded expectations. This also applies to the YDF, where the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development (MYESCD) continuously struggles with a backlog of applications from the previous financial years (Themba & Josiah, 2015).

Another problematic issue is that all youth entrepreneurship development programmes in Botswana are grappling with loan arrears from beneficiaries, thus these development programmes lack the funds to sponsor other development projects (Diraditsile & Maphula, 2018). It is thus clear, that programmes such as the Citizens Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) and the Young Farmers Fund and Youth Development Fund (YDF) that have been established to address the increase in youth unemployment, are not succeeding (Lesetedi, 2018). Added to this is the issue of self-employment which, according to Kenewendo (2012), is also a challenge because the youth lack entrepreneurial skills to create their own jobs.

***b) Category: Host institutions exploiting graduates***

The fact that host institutions were exploiting graduates was another category identified under this subtheme. Some participants indicated that programmes are a form of slavery or cheap labour as they felt they were being exploited by host organisations as is evident from the narratives below:

*... we are used as cheap labour because our allowance is paid by the government not by the companies that we are attached to ... (Participant 3)*

*... these programmes exploit the graduates and they pay them peanuts for doing the same job that others are paid salaries to do ... (Participant 6)*

*I feel they are using these programme as cheap labour and because we are desperate for money we cannot refuse this programme ... (Participant 15)*

Some participants mentioned the allowance given to interns as a sure sign of slavery as it did not equate to the work they were doing.

*... the allowance is very little, imagine working the whole month for P1400.00 (120 USD) it more like they are exploiting the youth ... (Participant 14)*

*... internship programme which I personally think it is a form of slavery because interns are given P1400.00 (120 USD) and doing a lot of work ... (Participant 19)*

The view of the participants, namely that the host organisations were exploiting interns, is confirmed by Mogomotsi and Madigele (2017), Nthomang and Diraditsile (2016) and Diraditsile (2015) who indicate that graduates who enrolled in these programmes felt that the government wanted to exploit them in the name of volunteerism. Furthermore, it must be noted, as indicated by the above narratives, that the allowance of P1400.00 (120 USD) per month was not sufficient to sustain someone who was unemployed. It was furthermore indicated by some participants that there was no legal framework to force host organisations to provide participants with any financial benefits that would equate to the value of the participants' contribution in these organisations. Given the unsatisfactory working conditions and low payment or wages, many young people were quitting the programmes, with exploitation by the employer that is often mentioned as one of the main reasons for their departure.

Diraditsile (2017) continues that young graduates are frustrated because they have no hope that they will ever be absorbed by their host organisations into permanent employment. The government of Botswana has been criticised for putting on hold or freezing public sector employment and instead filling existing vacancies temporarily with interns. Programmes like the BNIP and GVS were introduced to facilitate skills development among unemployed young graduates however, the reality is that both the Botswana government and the private sector were recycling interns without offering them permanent positions. It would appear, as indicated by the narratives above, that employers wanted to recycle interns in their offices because they were a cheap source of labour.

***c) Category: Corruption as a challenge to unemployment***

The last category that emerged under this subtheme was corruption as a challenge to unemployment. Corruption was indicated as a challenge in addressing the unemployment of graduates, especially in entrepreneurial programmes like the YDF where graduates had to apply for funding to start businesses. Corruption was highlighted by some participants in the study as a challenge that unemployed youth graduates in Botswana were facing in their quest to make something out of their lives.

As indicated above, some participants were familiar with this programme but could not utilise it due to corrupted practices, in their view you had to know somebody in the system for your application to be successful, as is evident from the narratives below.

*I feel there is too much corruption in YDF and it is the thing that is hindering us to be successful, programmes benefit those who have connections ... (Participant 10)*

*I think there is too much corruption particularly YDF to get funding depend mostly on who you are connected to. There is way too much corruption in these programmes ... (Participant 12)*

Furthermore, some participants indicated that even with job applications it would be those who had connections that were able to find employment. Participants indicated:

*... corruption, people hire their own people whom they know even when they are less educated than some of us they still get the jobs because they have connections ... (Participant 2)*

*There is also too much corruption where people hire those they know if you don't have anyone in higher places you stay unemployed for life ... (Participant 19)*

The finding that corruption is a challenge that hinders unemployed youth graduates, specifically due to the fact that some graduates who got accepted into the programmes had connections in the business or programme, is partly confirmed in literature. Šumah (2018) indicates that among the most common causes of corruption are the political and economic environments, professional ethics, morality and habits. It seems as if in this study group the belief is that there is corruption in the MYESCD, which is the governmental department responsible for the execution of these programmes.

#### **6.4.5.1.3 Theme 4: Subtheme 3: Discrepancy between demand in labour market and graduates seeking employment**

Participants were asked to share their views about the Botswana labour market, as on the macro-level this was the most important aspect influencing their ability to find employment. Three categories emerged from this subtheme and will be discussed below.

##### **a) Category: Labour market cannot absorb graduates**

The first category that came to the fore was that the existing labour market in Botswana could not absorb the number of graduates. Most participants stated that in Botswana the supply of graduates was high and demand and employment opportunities were very low. They indicated that the Botswana labour market did not absorb graduates as they could not create job opportunities. Participants indicated:

*... the demand for labour is way lower than the supply, but it should be the other way round ... (Participant 3)*

*The labour market does not really help graduates and as there are no job opportunities for thousands of graduates ... (Participant 4)*

*The supply of graduates is higher than the job market ... (Participant 6)*

*We have so many graduates and every year there are new graduates entering the labour market and yet there are no employment opportunities ... (Participant 18)*

Another participant indicated that the information technology (IT) demand in the market was no longer there because companies used people who were not trained to do IT duties.

*When it comes to IT the demand in the market is no longer there as it used to be. And nowadays in other companies even people who did not train on IT are doing IT jobs and this lead to companies not seeing the importance of having qualified IT personnel ...*  
(Participant 5)

It is evident from the above narratives that the participants were of the view that the labour market could not absorb graduates into employment due to challenges, such as that the supply of graduates was higher than the demands of the job market, and that there were no employment opportunities for graduates entering the labour market. This finding is collaborated by Pheko and Molefe (2016) who state that challenges of Botswana's labour force were aggravated by the mismatch in the current trends in the labour market.

Furthermore, it was also possible that there was a mismatch between supply and demand for labour in Botswana in terms of specific qualifications. There were lots of graduates with qualifications that did not meet the requirements of labour markets, a fact that was lamented by various scholars over the last two decades (Mupedziswa, 2018; Republic of Botswana, 2010; Siphambe, 2007).

***b) Category: Large number of tertiary institutions contribute to graduate unemployment***

Another category derived was that the many tertiary institutions in Botswana were contributing to the large number of unemployed graduates. Participants stated that there were many institutions all offering similar courses. Since the government continued sponsoring such courses, the number of unemployed youth graduates in Botswana are rising, as is seen by the narratives below.

*There are so many institutions in the country which are producing graduates every year. These institutions offer the same courses which lead to so many graduates ...* (Participant 8)

*One thing I noticed is the influx of tertiary institutions in the country offering the same thing ...* (Participants 11)

*I think there are no jobs in the market and one wonders why government continue sponsoring so many students to go to tertiary institutions yet there are no jobs in the market ...* (Participant 9)

A participant also indicated that where there was a chance to find a position in a certain area of expertise, large numbers of students would enrol for courses in that field. This participant mentioned:

*... and there is a tendency of graduates flocking to certain courses because graduates were told these courses were marketable and this made certain courses to have too many graduates ... (Participant 8)*

The finding that many tertiary institutions in the country were contributing to the large number of unemployed graduates, is confirmed by Tabulawa (2013) and Jotia and Sithole (2016) who state that there were many institutions offering courses culminating in a surplus of qualified graduates who all have to fiercely compete in the job market. Furthermore, the belief that a qualification would lead to the penetration of the job market in Botswana has been proven to be wrong, since the country has both undergraduates and graduate degree holders who were constantly in search for jobs. This was collaborated by Welch (2000) – nearly 21 years ago – who indicated that there was an apparent increasing mismatch between the huge numbers of educated young people and the available job opportunities in the labour market.

***c) Category: Certain tertiary institutions not credible***

Another category that emerged is that there were certain institutions that were not credible. Some participants mentioned that the degrees of certain tertiary institutions were either not recognised in the job market or were of low quality, making employment opportunities very slim for graduates from those institutions. These participants indicated:

*... it's mainly the institutions that do not have credibility. You find that you are sponsored by the government to enrol in an institution and after graduation when you try looking for jobs you are told that your qualification is not recognised as it is of low quality. This really contributes to graduates unemployment because it is like we are wasting our time studying at these institutions ... (Participant 14)*

*I realised that the institution I was attending was not credible in the job market so I knew that chances of me getting employment were very slim ... (Participant 19)*

Other participants stated that employment priority was given to credible institutions, hence graduates from credible institutions were hired immediately after graduating. The financial

input of the Botswana government into graduates that attended institutions with little credibility, was thus being wasted. Narratives are:

*I feel there are institutions which are given priority by employers but other institutions are not, why this is happening we don't know. Graduates who have done the same course as me from the Institute of Health Sciences immediately after graduation they are employed by the government whereas other institutions like ours that does not happen. I feel some institutions are waste of government money because their graduates are hardly employed ... (Participant 13)*

*Our qualification is not recognised those who are recognised are University of Botswana graduates ... (Participant 19)*

The finding that some tertiary institutions in Botswana were not regarded to be as credible and that this contributed to graduates from those institutions not being able to find jobs, is partly confirmed by literature, although the focus in this literature is more on the fact that such universities were not adequately preparing students for the formal sector. Diraditsile (2016) argues that the education system in Botswana does not adequately prepare graduates for the job market, resulting in a lack of education and training to fit into the labour market. Training institutions produced graduates who lacked basic skills to meet the requirements of the job market. There also seems to be an over-supply of training for white-collar jobs at the expense of vocational skills such as in agriculture and engineering in Botswana (HRDC, 2015).

#### **6.4.5.1.4 Theme 4: Subtheme 4: Macro-level solutions to unemployment**

The participants were asked to reflect on solutions for their unemployment situation. Three categories were identified under this subtheme, namely that the Botswana government should provide employment, that participants or the youth should develop their own business/entrepreneurship ventures, and that the Botswana government should implement certain strategies.

##### **a) Category: Government should provide employment**

The first category that came to the fore was that the Botswana government should provide employment opportunities. The majority of the participants indicated that the best solution for them was to find employment. Participants indicated:

*The solution is plain and simple the government should hire us period ... (Participant 1).*

*The only solution is for the government to give us with employment because it's the government that paid for our studies ... (Participant 14).*

*I am currently looking for any job and the government should provide us with employment opportunities so that I can be able to provide for my ... (Participant 19)*

Graduates were attending universities with the hope of getting employed once they had completed their degrees. However, many of the graduates would enter a stubbornly weak Botswana labour market that was characterised by high unemployment. These young graduates would then have to compete with a large number of graduates from more than a decade ago, many of whom were still struggling to find full-time employment. The finding that government should provide employment to participants is shared by other Botswana scholars, such as Pheko and Molefhe (2016), who recently stated that it is the government of Botswana's key responsibility to meet the needs of graduates who were essentially expected to perform in an increasingly, diversified, globalised, and knowledge-based labour market. However, to this day the Botswana government has not been able to adequately create sustainable employment opportunities for graduates.

***b) Category: Develop own business or entrepreneurship ventures***

The second subtheme that was identified was that participants indicated that they were in the process of developing their own businesses or entrepreneurships. Some participants indicated that they were considering venturing into various businesses as a way of making a living. Participants indicated:

*I have thought of consulting the government particularly Ministry of Agriculture for funding to start commercial small stock farming ... (Participant 2)*

*I registered a company, its work in progress. I want to try tendering for government tenders ... (Participant 3)*

*I thought of starting a business but I was discouraged by lack of capital which I currently don't have so I have given up. I also thought going back to school to further my studies again this require money which I don't have ... (Participant 6)*

*... for now I am designing wedding invitations, profiles and other designed as per individuals' specifications to survive ... (Participant 7)*

*I have started ordering clothes online and selling for survival ... (Participant 16)*

*I have a stall on the street I am selling sweets and snacks so that I can feed my family ... (Participant 17)*

Another participant indicated that although they did not like business they were forced into it by their unemployment status. However, they realised that every young person who was unemployed was doing the same, resulting in an oversupply of small businesses in a relatively small market. This participant indicated:

*This has led me to wanting to try something different like venturing into business though I don't know if it will make a difference as every graduate who is not working goes into business by default. So everyone wants to keep small stock, broilers in short everybody is going into agriculture and I don't know if we will get the market since we are a small population. This is not something I like my unemployment situation is forcing me to try other avenues hopefully something good will come out ... (Participant 5)*

The finding that that government should encourage business development and promote entrepreneurial ventures was confirmed by Diraditsile and Maphula (2018) who state that entrepreneurship is increasingly accepted as an important means and valuable additional strategy whereby jobs are created and livelihoods improved to assist in developing the economic independence of young people. The continued entrepreneurship development could address youth unemployment in the context of Botswana. Furthermore, authors Temtime and Pansiri (2004), Agbaeze (2007), Baumol (2010) and Assan (2012) have long considered entrepreneurship as a crucial mechanism of economic development and believe it could yield the best results for employment creation for youth.

### ***c) Category: Government should implement certain strategies***

The third category that came to the fore was that the government should implement certain strategies. One strategy that was mentioned was that the government should rule that retirement should start earlier. Some participants indicated that the Botswana government should consider ruling that retirement should start from the age of 55 or even 50. Participants indicate:

*I think retirement age should be reduced from 60 years of age to 50 or 55 years ... (Participant 2)*

*... the government should reduce retirement age from 60 years to 55 years to create employment opportunity for graduates ... (Participant 15)*

*... Reduce retirement years, why not make it at least 55 years since ... (Participant 20)*

Another participant indicated that government should temporarily stop certain courses for a while to allow graduates in the market to be absorbed before enrolling the next batch. The participant indicated:

*I was thinking maybe the government should stop certain courses temporarily or maybe for 5 years whereas he is working on creating employment for those who are already on the streets. And after 5 they can review to see if they can readmit students in those course or not ... (Participant 10)*

Another participant stated that research should be done to determine which courses were still marketable in the labour market. The participant indicated:

*... take for instance the course that I did Public Health, I think Ministry of Education should liaise with Ministry of Health & Wellness on how many vacancies they have then admit students based on the number of positions available in the market and giving each institution same number of students. We need to research our labour markets and see which courses are marketable ... (Participant 12)*

Sechele (2015) mentions that the time has perhaps arrived for the government of Botswana to consider retirement age to make it earlier than it currently was. He further indicated that early retirement would work in such a way that it would allow for the sharing of the seemingly rare employment opportunities with the elderly making way for the young. This is further collaborated by Eichhorst et al. (2014) who indicate that an old worker leaving the labour market makes room for a young worker who could perfectly substitute them in their previous positions assuming that there was perfect substitutability between the young and elderly workers. Furthermore, as indicated in the above narratives, there was a need for the temporary suspension of the intake of several courses for a period of five years, while working on creating employment for those who were already on the streets. At the same time research should be conducted in the labour market so as to determine which courses were in demand or marketable to avoid a situation whereby the young would enrol in courses that are saturated.

## 6.4.6 Theme 5: Policy, legislation and programmes to address graduate unemployment

Policies, legislation and programmes that were available on the macro-level of the ecological system will influence the experience of unemployed youth graduates if they were not as effective as discussed in Chapter 3. Therefore, the views of the focus group participants of the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development (MYESCD) who were responsible for the initiation and implementation of policies and programmes for the youth were explored. Focus group participants were asked to share their views about existing policies, programmes and legislation pertaining to the unemployment of graduates in Botswana. The data was analysed and four subthemes and categories emerged.

### 6.4.6.1 Theme 5 – Subtheme 1: Limited policies to address youth unemployment

The first subtheme that came to the fore was that policies to address youth unemployment were limited. Only one category was identified, namely the National Youth Policy.

#### a) Category: National Youth Policy

The first category that came to the fore in terms of the existence of limited policies to address youth unemployment, was the National Youth Policy as this is the only policy related to the unemployment of the youth in Botswana. All participants in the focus groups agreed that the only policy for youth unemployment is the National Youth Policy, as indicated by the narratives below.

*... we have the national youth policy ... (Participant 1, FGD 1)*

*... only policy is the youth policy ... (Participant 3, FGD 1)*

*... our main policy is the national youth policy of 2010 ... (Participant 3, FGD 2)*

Another participant went further to mention that there were thematic areas in this national policy that guided the programme officers with programmes that were geared towards addressing the challenges faced by the youth.

*Most of the issues concerning youth come from the National Youth Policy of 2010. In this policy we have thematic areas like youth and unemployment, youth and HIV/AIDS just to name a few ... (Participant 1 FGD 2)*

These findings, as depicted in the narratives above, provide evidence that the National Youth Policy was the only policy that focus group participants were aware of and that addressed some of the challenges faced by the youth. As discussed in Chapter 2, youth development in Botswana had been undertaken within the framework of the National Youth Policy and the National Action Plan for Youth, 2001-2010. According to the Revised National Youth Policy (Government of Botswana, 2010b) the main aim of this policy was to mainstream and promote youth participation in community and civic affairs, thus ensuring that youth programmes engaged the youth and were youth-centred. Furthermore, the National Youth Policy defined all the necessary activities required to operationalise the National Action Plan and achieve the objectives of the policy. Almost all the activities in the National Action Plan were focused on the development of interventions geared towards tackling youth unemployment. According to literature the policy has largely been successful in providing funds for newly introduced youth economic empowerment programmes. However, the success of these programmes must still be established (MYSC, 2015). The fact that there were limited policies addressing challenges faced by youth graduates in Botswana was a cause for concern, as well as the fact that the policy had not been revised in the last 11 years.

#### ***6.4.6.2 Theme 5 – Subtheme 2: Types of programmes available***

The second subtheme deals with the types of programmes offered to the unemployed that were derived from the policy. The participants were asked to discuss programmes that were implemented for graduates. Two categories were derived in this subtheme. The programmes identified by focus group participants were similar to the programmes identified by youth graduates, namely the internship and Graduate Volunteer Scheme and the empowerment programme of the Youth Development Fund. These programmes will be briefly discussed below.

##### ***a) Category: Internship and Graduate volunteer scheme***

The first category that came to the fore was that most focus group participants mentioned the internship programme and the graduates' volunteer programmes as the two programmes that had been implemented to address the problem of graduates' unemployment. Graduates were supposed to do their internship within a locality where they did not need to incur costs, such as transport and accommodation. Participants indicated:

*... we have volunteer programmes this includes internship programme and graduates volunteer programme. These programmes encourage graduates to find internship within their locality to cut costs such as accommodation, transport looking at the fact that it does not give salary but rather an allowance ... (Participant 3, FGD 1)*

*... we have programmes such as internship programmes, graduates volunteer scheme (GVS) ... (Participant1, FGD 2)*

Another participant mentioned that although the internship and graduate volunteer programmes where both created for unemployed youth graduates, they did not receive the same allowance as interns were paid, namely P1400.00 (120 USD) per month, instead the graduates on the volunteer programmes were paid P550.00 (50 USD) per month. The participant felt that although the money was not enough, at least they were engaged in government departments instead of loitering in the streets.

*For graduates there are two programmes; that is the internship programme and graduates volunteer scheme. The sad thing is they are not paid the same amount of allowance as the graduates enrolled in internship are given P1400.00 (120 USD) and those in GVS get P550.00 (50 USD), reason being though they are voluntary. GVS is considered to be volunteer programme so that graduates do not sit at home at least they should be meaningfully engaged in government departments ... (Participant 4, FGD 1)*

The finding that the government created programmes to address youth unemployment is confirmed in literature (MYSC, 2015; Republic of Botswana, 2008). The terms of these programmes are such that unemployed graduates are eligible for placement in government and/or private sectors for a maximum period of two years and are paid an allowance of P1400.00 (120 USD) per month. However, graduates in the study group indicated that they were unhappy with the intern allowances and that they regarded the programme as a form of slavery.

#### ***b) Category: Empowerment programme (Youth Development Fund)***

The second category that emerged from this subtheme was that of empowerment programmes. Some focus group participants mentioned the Youth Development Fund (YDF) which was also mentioned by youth graduates as a programme implemented for graduates. This programme was designed to give youth the opportunity to venture into business so that they could employ

themselves and other youth, however, most businesses were not doing well as was also mentioned in the literature study. Participants indicated:

*... YDF from inception was created so that youth in businesses are able to create employment opportunities for other youth. However, most of the youth businesses are not doing well it is only a few which are doing well and this means employment opportunities from these businesses is minimal. YDF for example, those who are funded were supposed to create employment for other youth but it is not happening like it was planned ... (Participant 2, FGD 1)*

*... we have come up with programmes like YDF to address the issues of youth unemployment ... (Participant 4, FGD 2)*

The finding that the government created empowerment programmes to address youth unemployment is confirmed in literature (MYSC, 2015; Lombard, 2014). However, participants were saying that the YDF was not successful as funded businesses were not doing well and were unable to create employment – the programme was thus not serving its intended purpose. The next subtheme will address whether the above-mentioned programmes are contributing to employment opportunities.

#### **6.4.6.3 Theme 5 – Subtheme 3: Contributions of programmes to employment opportunities**

The third subtheme of theme 5 that came to the fore is contributions of programmes to employment opportunities. The contribution of these programmes to the creation of employment opportunities were probed in the focus group discussions. Two categories emerged from this subtheme, namely that the programmes provided some form of employment opportunities and that the programmes were not providing any employment opportunities. These categories are discussed below.

##### **a) Category: Programmes provide some form of employment opportunities**

The first category was that some programmes provide some form of employment opportunities. Some of the focus group participants mentioned that in the early years of the internship programme, graduates were absorbed by host organisations. However, more recently this was not happening anymore. Participants indicated:

*... though I might not have the statistics I believe some end up being absorbed by the companies or departments which they are placed at ... (Participant 1 FGD 1)*

*... you see in the early years like in 2010 most of graduates who were doing internship at the time they were absorbed especially in our Ministry. In a nutshell I would say I have seen graduates who were employed permanently but in recent years that has ceased to happen ... (Participant 1, FGD 2)*

*This programmes use to work previously however, in recent times there is a lot of graduates who are not in employment ... (Participant 2, FGD 2)*

Another participant mentioned that the internship programme was created to help graduates gain the experience they required to be competitive in the labour market. The participant indicated:

*... the national internship programme which was created in 2009 to help graduates find employment. This was done to help youth graduates to gain experience so that they can compete in the labour market (Participant 3, FGD 1)*

From the above it is clear that the views of the focus group participants were that the internship programme was not creating employment opportunities, but that the aim of the programme was also to provide experience to graduates in order for them to find employment in the job market, after completion of their internship. According to the participants, this programme was not working because graduates were not being absorbed by the hosting companies, but that the graduates should focus on the fact that they were gaining experience. It was thus found that the internship programme creates some employment opportunities, and despite the programme not being able to absorb all the graduates, the programme still offers valuable work experience to the participating graduates. The creation of employment opportunities by the programme had been confirmed by Baatweng (2015) who noted that programmes, such as the internship programme, had provided some solutions to the unemployment problem and that, even though the majority of graduates have completed their two-year tenure and had to return to their unemployed status, a few youth graduates had been absorbed in the economy. However, the difference between the views of the unemployed participants, who were experiencing the effects of unemployment, and the focus group participants, were clear – with the participants who were adamant that the programmes did not create employment opportunities for the unemployed youth, whilst discarding the fact that work experience was gained.

***b) Category: Programmes do not provide employment opportunities***

The second category indicates that some participants in the focus groups discussion pointed out that these programmes did not provide employment opportunities to unemployed youth graduates. The following excerpts attest to that:

*I think these programmes are not creating enough employment opportunities for unemployed youth ... (Participant 1, FGD 1)*

*... the programmes are not addressing the challenges of unemployed graduates as they are not able to create enough employment opportunities ... Participant 2, FGD 2)*

Another participant mentioned that although some youth were funded through the YDF to create employment opportunities, not everyone who was financed wanted to be an entrepreneur but that they attended out of desperation, and due to them not being interested in business their businesses were failing.

*... it is not everyone who can become an entrepreneur, most businesses which are financed are not doing well because most youth do not have interest ... (Participant 4, FGD 1)*

The finding that some of the focus group participants were of the view that programmes were not creating employment opportunities is confirmed by Mupedziswa (2017) who indicates that internship programmes provided temporary exploitative employment for a very few young people who eventually did not gain sufficient professional training. Furthermore, literature indicates a lack of ownership for entrepreneurial projects often resulted in failure and an inability to repay loans (Sechele, 2015). It can thus be concluded that some of the participants in the focus group discussions and all of the face-to-face participants agreed that government programmes were not creating employment opportunities to the unemployed youth.

#### 6.4.6.4 Theme 5 – Subtheme 4: Need for alternative policies

The fourth subtheme of theme 5 deals with the need for alternative policies. Participants were asked to share their views about employment or unemployment legislation in Botswana. Most focus group participants in the study mentioned the importance of having unemployment legislation that will assist with programmes addressing youth unemployment.

*I think it is important to have unemployment legislation looking at the fact that the youth is the larger group in the population who are hard hit by issue of unemployment ... (Participant 2 FGD 1)*

*I think we need a piece of legislation that will address unemployment. I think we need unemployment legislation because it will help to come with programmes that will address unemployment in Botswana ... (Participant 3, FGD 1)*

*I think a stand-alone legislation can work and there should be a department that is driving this legislation for accountability purposes ... (Participant 3, FGD 2)*

Participants also mentioned that standalone unemployment legislation would assist the Botswana government in introducing unemployment benefits to cushion unemployed youth graduates, as is indicated by the narratives below.

*... if we can have a stand-alone instrument or legislation that solely look at addressing the unemployment of youth. I feel coming with a legislation to force the government to give unemployment benefits ... (Participant 2, FGD 2)*

*... I think it is high time the government introduces unemployment benefits to at least assist unemployed graduates to have money for basic needs ... (Participant 4, FGD 2)*

All participants in the focus group discussions indicated there was a need for alternatives, such as a separate piece of legislation on unemployment, as well as the initiation of unemployment benefits. It can thus be concluded that there is a need for an alternative policy or for legislation that will focus specifically on the issue of unemployed youth graduates, and that it should be driven by a specific department in government. It was furthermore concluded that the initiation of unemployment benefits should be investigated. Mtembu and Govender (2015) indicate that, due to desperation, many countries have opted for the strategy of unemployment benefits or subsidies as a way of reducing the effects of unemployment among the youth. An unemployment subsidy or benefit, as indicated by Bradbury (2014), is the money that the

government regularly pays to the unemployed. Such a benefit or subsidy could help the unemployed youth graduates to afford basic needs and also being able to pay for internet access and travel fees while looking for employment opportunities. However, the establishment of unemployment benefits should not be used by the government as a solution to keep the youth at bay. Instead active solutions should be sought to increase job opportunities in the Botswana labour market. The focus on legislation as the lack of legislation on a macro-level is influencing the individual on a micro-level. Legislation could also lead to a decrease in poverty, inequality, crime, dependency on government resources, and loss of skills. However, current policy and programmes are ineffective as they do not address the issues of graduate unemployment.

#### **6.4.7 Need for social work services**

Unemployment has detrimental effects on individuals. Unemployed graduates in Botswana must accept the reality that their aspirations to improve their circumstances by obtaining a tertiary degree would not bring them the benefits as they may believe. As graduates struggle to make ends meet, instability and depression can strain relationships within a family and harm the family's overall well-being. This could indicate a need for social work services. In order to understand the need for social work services and the possible role of social workers in dealing with unemployed youth graduates, the need for social work services were explored with the participants.

##### ***6.4.7.1 Theme 6: Utilisation and need for social work services***

The participants were asked to discuss the social work services available to them, as well as whether they were utilising social work services. The responses from participants were analysed into subthemes and categories which are indicated below.

##### ***6.4.7.1.1 Theme 6: Subtheme 1: Social work services not offered***

The first subtheme that came to the fore was that social work services were not offered to unemployed graduates; this was indicated by the majority of participants in the study. Participants indicated:

*... there are no social work services offered us ... (Participant 3)*

*... No, I have not utilised any social work services because we are not offered such services ... (Participant 7)*

*... There are no social work services offered to us and I have not utilised such services ... (Participant 10)*

*We are not offered any social work services; I have not heard anything along to that effect ... (Participant 11)*

Despite the bleak picture that has been painted by the majority of participants, one participant stated that services such as counselling were offered by social workers in local councils, however, the environment at the council offices was not conducive as there was a lack of confidentiality. The participant said:

*... services such as counselling are offered in local district councils however, if you seek counselling in the councils there are no counselling offices, while you are in the middle of counselling session somebody walks in looking for some files and find you there crying which is a bit embarrassing in a way ... (Participant 11)*

It was found that no social work services were offered to the unemployed graduates in the study group which made it impossible to utilise any social work service. According to literature, social workers should contribute to address the social and emotional problems of affected individuals and groups through counselling and by providing ongoing psycho-social support (Molla Taye, 2019). Given the range of challenges that this study group were experiencing, it seems as if there was a need for counselling services.

#### **6.4.7.1.2 Theme 6: Subtheme 2: Need for a range of social work services**

The second subtheme that came to the fore was the need for a range of social work services. Despite the fact that most participants said they had not been utilising social work services, most of the participants believed that social workers should provide counselling to graduates while they were still in the process of looking for employment. The participants had specific ideas on the type of social work services that should be available to improve the state of mind of unemployed youth graduates and to empower them to manage the challenges they were experiencing. The categories of services that the participants believed should be rendered or availed to unemployed youth graduates are set out below.

**a) Category: Individual counselling**

The first category that came to the fore was that most participants highlighted the importance of individual counselling and confirmed that they would utilise such services as it would provide them with the opportunity to talk to a counsellor about their feelings, which could help them deal with their situation, as is evident from the narratives below:

*... I would particularly like individual counselling though I have not utilised this service  
... (Participant 4)*

*... I think these services should be availed to unemployed graduates and I think I can utilise individual counselling because it will give me an opportunity to sit with a counsellor one on one and maybe he/she will help me deal with my situation. I have met people who told me that since they started counselling they feel much better but I always dismissed them so maybe somehow counselling helps. I think I might utilise it to help me with my depression ... (Participant 5)*

*... I feel individual counselling will be good for me and might play a very critical role in helping me with my issues ... (Participant 6)*

*... I think there should be someone who you can talk to that give you hope and take you through the process of dealing with emotions positively instead of trying to deal with things by yourself ... (Participant 12)*

Only one participant stated that they had utilised individual counselling and that it had helped them although they felt the sessions were not enough.

*... Though I felt my counselling sessions were not enough, individual counselling has helped me with my insomnia because talking to a professional helps a lot ... (Participant 8)*

Another participant stated that individual counselling can help graduates who are quiet, reserved and shy, to open up and talk about their experiences.

*... Individual counselling can help graduates who are introverted, who do not want to share their problems with others ... (Participant 14)*

Participant 17 mentioned that services, such as individual counselling, should be availed to unemployed graduates to help them with emotions they go through and that this type of service

must be provided at the time that they were unemployed in order to help them cope with the situation and improve their well-being.

*... Yes, it should be availed to unemployed graduates because unemployed graduates are in need of emotional counselling because we go through different emotions in our lives so a counsellor might be able to show us the light. It is important that while we still waiting for employment at least our emotional well-being should be taken care ...*  
(Participant 17)

It is clear from the above narratives that there is a need for individual counselling and that it is regarded as a way to improve the participants' situation. This finding is confirmed in literature that defines individual counselling is a one-on-one counselling between a client and a trained counsellor, in a safe, caring, and confidential environment where the client can express whatever comes to their mind. Literature further states that the aim of counselling is to help clients take control of their lives by developing their ability to make wise and realistic decisions and also to assist them in altering their own behaviour to produce desirable results (Ntshwarang & Malinga-Musamba, 2015).

#### ***b) Category: Group counselling or groupwork***

The second category that was identified was the need for group counselling or work which is a meso-level social work intervention. Most participants stated that group counselling or work was vital as it allows people with similar situations to share their experiences and as it might help group members to cope with their unemployment situation, and to inspire and give hope to other participants Narratives are:

*... also groups so that we can share our experiences with the help of a counsellor. Group counselling is very vital as we might share critical survival skills from our peers who are going through the same situation as us ...* (Participant 6)

*... group counselling might also help us as we might be able learn few things from each other on how to cope with stress ...* (Participant 10)

*... group counselling might give graduates an opportunity to share the experiences with the help of a counsellor on how they are managing their situations which inspire other graduates. Sometimes when you think you are alone in the situation but when you meet with other unemployed graduates it might give you hope somehow ...* (Participant 13)

*... we are many and we each go through different challenges and I think services such as group counselling where all degree holders who are not working are grouped to discuss and share their experiences ... (Participant 15)*

Some participants stated that group counselling could serve as a platform where people sharing a common goal could come together and brainstorm ideas in order to become self-sufficient and independent from the Botswana government. Group counselling are thus seen as a networking opportunity. These participants said:

*I believe if we had a platform were we met say group counselling we would be able to meet and discuss issues that can take our lives further. Services like that might not only help with counselling they can also help with bringing people together who share a common dream and maybe come together with ways they can do to get themselves out their situation instead of waiting for government to provide us with employment ... (Participant 7)*

*Even group counselling could benefit us and it could give us the platform to learn from each other how to deal with our unemployment status ... (Participant 8)*

One participant suggested boot camps as a way of bringing unemployed youth graduates together that could perhaps have the form of refresher courses.

*... and also Boot camps to help refresh their minds ... (Participant 2)*

It is clear that group counselling or group work could provide opportunities to unemployed graduates where they could discuss or share their experiences with their peers and as a result improve their situation. The types of groups that the participants alluded to are therapy groups and peer groups. The finding that there is a need for group work by unemployed youth graduates is confirmed in literature. According to Coholic et al. (2019) group work seeks to give unemployed youth graduates a safe and comfortable place in society where they can work out their problems and emotional concerns. Members of groups often gain insight into their own thoughts and behaviour and offer suggestions and support to others. Therefore, the types of groups that could work for the unemployed youth are therapy and self-help groups as these groups emphasise education, development, growth and maturity of the group members and the possibilities for development and social adjustments, where necessary. The positive outcome of group counselling is that it helps advance group members' well-being, independence,

decision-making skills and their regular personal interaction as is confirmed by Biscaye, True, Clark, Harris, Anderson and Gugerty (2014). Group work or counselling could furthermore enhance participants' social support network with the advantage that it allows individuals to develop self-awareness by listening to others with similar issues (Vungkhanching, Tonsing & Tonsing, 2017).

**c) Category: Family counselling**

Another category derived is family counselling. Family counselling is considered a meso-level intervention because it involves the family in fulfilling the needs of the clients. Some participants mentioned that family counselling is needed to address issues that unemployed youth graduates face in their families, including reducing high expectations families might have about graduates. Participants indicated:

*... our parents need to be counselled so that they are made to reduce their expectation from unemployed graduates and be encouraged to be a support system for the graduate ... (Participant 1)*

*Services such as family counselling will also help to address our family's expectations ... (Participant 12)*

Another participant stated that family counselling was needed to make families aware of the fact that there were no job opportunities in the market and that it was not graduates' fault that they were unemployed.

*... even those who live with us need serious counselling also so that they can understand that it is not our own fault if we are unemployed it is because there are no job opportunities ... (Participant 17)*

Furthermore, a participant indicated that family members would often put pressure on graduates to search for jobs, causing graduates to become depressed. The participant mentioned that family counselling was needed to assist family members not to pressurise graduates directly or indirectly.

*... family counselling so that our family treats us well they should not put us under unnecessary pressure because families are sometimes causes of our depression ... (Participant 19)*

It is evident from the narratives above that participants regarded family counselling services as crucial, in order to enable the family to adjust to the changes caused by the unemployment of graduates. Literature confirms that family counselling could improve relationships between family members by encouraging that issues between them are resolved through better conversation and communication. Family counselling is seen as an appropriate intervention option when dealing with challenges experienced by youth graduates, especially because unemployment can lead to family breakdowns, such as separation and divorce. Therefore, the goal of family counselling must be to help family members improve their communication, solve their family problems, and understand and handle special family situations (Maudeni, Ntshwarang & Mupedziswa, 2018; Chandrasekara, 2019).

#### ***d) Category: Substance abuse counselling***

Another category that emerged was that some participants required substance abuse counselling services to help address depressed graduates who were abusing alcohol and drugs in order to relieve their stress. Providing such counselling services might help participants refrain from using alcohol and drugs, as is evident from the narratives below.

*... these services could help because most of unemployed graduates are depressed, because they have no way to go, and eventually they start drinking alcohol and using drugs ... (Participant 9)*

*... no one is addressing our emotional needs; some engage in alcohol and drugs as way of releasing stress but if they get counselling they may not engage in these kinds of behaviours ... (Participant 11)*

Another participant stated that people were worried about him as he grew up not smoking and drinking however, due to frustrations caused by unemployment he started drinking and smoking marijuana excessively in order to cope with his situation.

*... people where even suggesting that I seek counselling. This was due to the fact growing up I did not drink or smoke and all of a sudden due to the frustration of unemployment I started drinking and smoking marijuana excessively ... (Participant 7)*

As is evident from the above narratives, participants engaged in alcohol and drugs as a way of dealing with stress or depression. Substance abuse counselling services have become extremely important to unemployed youth graduates and social workers should have knowledge about

drug and alcohol intervention in order to help those suffering from addictions to drugs or alcohol. This is confirmed by Diraditsile and Mabote (2017) who indicate that counselling as a social work service for those who abuse alcohol and substances should be provided to improve the social functioning and ultimately enhance the well-being of youth. Furthermore, literature indicates that alcohol and illicit drug use has been recognised as a growing problem among the unemployed youth of Botswana, hence the growing need for alcohol and substance abuse counselling services to be delivered to unemployed youth graduates (Riva, Allen-Taylor, Schupmann, Mphele, Moshashane, & Lowenthal, 2018). However, there is only one understaffed substance abuse counselling service in Botswana which is not able to cover all youth who are in need of such services.

#### **6.4.8 Theme 7: Availability of government social work services to support unemployed youth graduate**

Because the participants indicated a lack of availability of social work services, even though a need for a range of services was indicated, social work services rendered to unemployed graduates was followed up with the MYESCD group participants in the focus group discussions. The availability of these services was also explored with the focus group participants as their department (MYESCD) was responsible for their delivery. The data was analysed and five subthemes and categories emerged from this theme. These will be discussed below.

##### ***6.4.8.1 Theme 7: Subtheme 1: Social work services not a core mandate of MYESCD***

The first subtheme of theme 7 was that social work services was not the core mandate of the MYESCD. Focus group participants were asked to share social work services that were rendered to unemployed youth graduates in Botswana. Most focus group participants stated that, although social workers were appointed in the MYESCD, they did not offer much social work services to youth graduates, as they did not provide counselling to unemployed youth graduates. Participants indicated:

*... in our Ministry we are not much into social work services though we have hired people who did social work ... (Participant 1, FGD 1)*

*... initially when social workers were recruited in the Ministry it was to provide professional skills they acquired to help youth deal with the issues they face in their general life ... (Participant 4, FGD 2)*

*... social workers were recruited in the Ministry in order to provide social work services to help youth deal with the issues they face in their general life. However, the priority of the government is the number of youth who are funded not social work services rendered to them so social work services is not a priority in the Ministry ... (Participant 2, FGD 2)*

Other participants stated that social work services were not their core mandate. Their mandate was to facilitate, develop and manage programmes, especially the YDF. Delivering social work services was provided as a secondary service in the Ministry, which often resulted in social workers not being able to showcase their work skills causing them to end up losing their skills, as indicated in the narratives below.

*When we got to this Ministry we were not given the platform to showcase our social work skills. Our focus is programmes, mainly YDF. Slowly we are losing our social work skills ... (Participant 3, FGD 1)*

Social workers are employed as programme officers, tasked with promoting and providing support for youth entrepreneurship and they are not involved in social work service delivery. A participant mentioned:

*... we are doing so many programmes such as Out of School Programme (OSP), Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Youth Development Fund (YDF), Tirelo Sechaba (that is, the National Services Programme), National Internship Programme and Graduate Volunteer Scheme (GVS) we end up neglecting social work service. Social work services are not our main core mandate in our Ministry. When opportunities arise to chip in with social work services we do that but not to the fullest ... (Participant 2, FGD 1)*

Furthermore, a participant stated that although they were responsible for youth and have social workers in the Ministry, they referred graduates who require social work services to other local departments for assistance as they did not attend to them, themselves. Social workers in Botswana are employed in various Departments such as Social and Community Development (S&CD) in the local government, or in hospitals. However, the Ministry of Youth

Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development carries the mandate of working with the youth. Yet this department refers issues pertaining to the youth to other departments instead of dealing with them. This could be because programme officers in the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development are utilised to be implementers of programmes, thus they hardly provide social work services.

According to literature it is the MYESCD that is tasked with the youth mandate, and as confirmed in literature (Jongman, 2020; Republic of Botswana, 2013) the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development (MYESCD) does not clearly articulate the role and structure of the Department of Social Work within the Ministry. This lack of articulation is confirmed by a participant. The participant indicated:

*... most of the time programme officers would refer issues that require social work intervention mainly to local government and yet there are social workers in the Ministry and also the mandate of youth is in our Ministry ... (Participant 4, FGD 1)*

From the findings, it is clear that the focus group participants understand the role of social work in dealing with youth unemployment. All participants in the focus group discussions indicated that social work services should be provided to unemployed youth graduates. These statements were similar to the narratives of most youth graduates. As discussed, interventions for unemployed youth graduates should highlight the awareness of the needs of the unemployed youth, so that youth unemployment can be dealt with effectively. However, according to literature, the Botswana government initiated programmes in response to the challenges of youth unemployment, however, these programmes did not address the needs of unemployed youth graduates (Diraditsile & Nthomang, 2016) which has been confirmed in this study. Furthermore, as stated by Jongman (2015 & 2018) the purpose of social work in Botswana is to make every effort to enhance people's ability to solve their problems and develop a desire for personal growth. However, this is not happening at the MYESCD as most of the Ministry's programme officers were not doing social work as it was not their core mandate. Their main mandate was to implement programmes rather than to provide social work services. This is why some participants in the focus group indicated that they referred unemployed youth graduates to social work services delivered by local district councils, even though the council social workers did not focus on youth development.

**a) Category: Establish social work youth unemployment units in every district**

The only category that emerged from this subtheme was the need to establish social work units in every district because the focus group participants regarded this as the role of the MYESCD. Some participants stated that they were aware of the importance of social work services and suggested that there should be a unit with social workers in every district that were strictly assigned to deal with the psycho-social well-being of youth graduates and that they should assist them with challenges they faced on daily basis, as mentioned in the narratives below:

*We have discussed that every district should have a unit that addresses social work services to addresses this concern of unemployment of youth to help them deal with their challenges ... (Participant 1, FGD 2)*

*... we need to have social work officers who are assigned to deal with psycho-social well-being of youth graduates having their own offices where they can provide services to this group ... (Participant 3, FGD 2)*

*Counselling should be a priority in our Ministry and the working environment should be conducive for social work services to be provided to youth graduates ... (Participant 3, FGD 2)*

The above narratives from the focus group participants emphasise the need to have a unit or department in the Ministry that focused only on social work services so that they can serve unemployed graduates better. The fact that social work services are seen by the focus group participants as a role that their MYESCD should fulfil, is not supported by the MYESCD, as the latter regards their focus to be on delivering programmes. Yet, participants in the focus group were aware of the fact that social work services were required and were discussing the need to have a social work department within the MYESCD in order to deal with rendering social work services to unemployed youth graduates. The finding is that the focus group participants were aware of the need for counselling services to support the unemployed graduates, and that their solution would be to establish separate youth unemployment units in each district. Literature (Molla Taye, 2019) mentions that social workers should contribute to addressing the social and emotional problems of the affected individuals and groups through counselling and on-going psycho-social support.

#### **6.4.8.2 Theme 7: Subtheme 2: Challenges faced in implementing social work services**

The second subtheme of theme 7 that came to the fore was that of challenges faced when implementing social work services. Participants were asked to share challenges that social workers faced in implementing social work service delivery to unemployed youth graduates in Botswana. Most participants stated that they were frustrated as so many of the MYESCD's employees did not know what the social work profession was all about. This poses a challenge as it implies that people were not aware of how important the rendering of social work services could be in addressing youth unemployment. Despite having done youth work for a long period, the results of their hard work were not visible and they believed that if they were given the opportunity to perform social work roles, they could make a difference. Two categories emerged from this subtheme and are discussed below.

##### **a) Category: Lack of knowledge about social work profession**

The first category that emerged from subtheme two of this theme was the lack of knowledge in the MYESCD about the social work profession. Participants indicated:

*... people don't know what social work as a profession is all about hence it is not taken seriously in Botswana ... (Participant 3, FGD 1)*

*... though we are hired in MYESCD, I don't think the Ministry know what social work is all about ... (Participant 1, FGD 2)*

Another participant indicated that another challenge was that there were different professional disciplines in MYESCD, as a result there was no recognition of the social work principles and values, as mentioned in the narrative below.

*... we have different disciplines in our Ministry who do not understand the principals of social work. We cannot have improved social work service delivery when people who are driving intervention programmes do not know the core principals of the profession ... (Participant 4, FGD 1)*

The finding that there was lack of social work knowledge about the social work profession was confirmed by Jongman (2020) who states that the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development (MYESCD) employs people from different disciplines such as

sociology, environment science, and education hence they do not understand the principles of social work.

***b) Category: Regulation of social work services***

The second category that emerged from subtheme two was that there was no council regulating the social work profession in Botswana. Social workers practice without practising licenses and as a result the profession was not taken seriously. The lack of regulation for social work services could affect the unemployed youth because in the absence of a social work council to advocate for the provision of infrastructure, and human resources required to improve services delivery to the youth, the profession would not be taken seriously in Botswana. This is indicated in the narratives below.

*We really need to regulate the profession; that is we need to have a social work council which regulates all social workers, so that anyone who wants to practice social work should have a practicing license that bind them to adhere to ethics of the profession. Maybe our profession would be taken seriously and for us to have concrete interventions the profession should be recognised and the council will help in this regard ...*  
(Participant 2, FGD 2)

*I think for us to be taken seriously there should be a regulatory body that regulates the social work profession ...* (Participant 4, FGD 1)

The finding that there is no council that regulates the social work profession and that people can practice social work without a qualification was confirmed in literature which states that several scholars have indicated that in Botswana, social work as a profession was not regulated and practitioners were not registered as there was no council dealing with the profession (Lucas, 2018; Lucas & Jongman, 2017; Jongman, 2015; Osei-Hwedie & Rankopo, 2012). The lack of regulation for social work services could affect the services delivery to the clients as there are no regulations that practitioners adhere to in terms of professional conduct, which might harm clients. Social work requires an institutional structure to ensure the quality of the delivery of social services. In the absence of such a structure, social work in Botswana will continue to operate in various fields of practice without quality assurance protocols and baselines (Lucas, 2017).

**c) Category: Lack of human resources as well as infrastructure**

Another category that came to the fore from this subtheme was the lack of human resources as well as infrastructure to offer social work services to the youth. A participant mentioned:

*I think lack of human resources in the Ministry and lack of offices for social workers to provide services needed by unemployed youth are current gaps to social work services ... (Participant 3 FGD 2)*

*... we do not have the infrastructure or offices to offer other services to our clientele. We do not have the offices to provide counselling to our clients to help them with holistic approach to youth empowerment ... (Participant 1, FGD 2)*

In addition to the above, other participants stated that counselling was crucial because by counselling individuals they could come up with plans to mitigate the challenges they were facing in their lives. The participants believed that the lack of counselling rooms in the Ministry was an obstacle causing them not to execute their duties to the best of their abilities.

Another challenge identified was the fact that there was a time constraint to the delivery of counselling services and that the counselling is not in-depth. Participants indicated:

*... we are overwhelmed by the programmes that we are offering so we cannot provide psycho-social support to our clientele although it is needed ... (Participant 4, FGD 2)*

*We don't do individual counselling in our Ministry or rather we don't go deep into counselling we just touch basis ... (Participant 2, FGD 1)*

Due to a lack of infrastructure and offices in the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Cultural Development, focus group participants indicated that they were unable to provide social work services to their clients. Though they indicated that counselling was crucial they did not have a conducive environment to do counselling which is a hindrance on their profession as indicated by the above narratives. The finding that there is lack of human resources as well as infrastructure to offer social work services to the youth is confirmed in literature (Ntshwarang & Malinga-Musamba, 2015) which mentioned that in case resources were scarce, social workers may not obtain satisfaction through their work, owing to limited resources such as being understaffed, and having no or little office space and/or counselling rooms. These limited resources may compromise the quality of counselling services given to clients.

***d) Category: Lack of understanding of different needs of unemployed graduates because of different professions rendering services***

The last category that emerged from this subtheme was the lack of agreement about service delivery between different professions. One participant from the focus group mentioned that, due to the fact that there were different professional disciplines within the MYESCD, it complicated service delivery, as the departments and different professions did not address the problem cohesively. This was indicated in the narrative below:

*... you find that certain services cannot be provided because other professions in the Ministry think it is not necessary, because we always talking different languages when discussing interventions for youth graduates ... (Participant 4, FGD 1)*

Another participant mentioned that in order to work together, organisations should put similar services together, as indicated by the narrative below.

*I think our approach should be that organisations that are offering similar services should come together instead of having silo organisations. That is social workers should have their own department that provide social work services and other disciplines same thing ... (Participant 2, FGD 2)*

The finding that there is a lack of understanding of the different needs of unemployed graduates is due to the fact that there are different disciplines within the Ministry and that not all programme officers were social workers. As indicated by the narratives above, the interventions implemented at the MYESCD were done without establishing what the needs of unemployed graduates are in order to develop programmes to address these needs (Jongman, 2020).

***6.4.8.3 Theme 7: Subtheme 3: Types of social work services that should be rendered***

The fourth subtheme of theme 7 that came to the fore was the types of social work services that should be rendered to graduates. Focus group participants were asked what their views were about the types of social work services that should be rendered to unemployed youth graduates. Two categories emerged from this subtheme, these will be discussed below.

**a) Category: Counselling services**

The first category that came to the fore was counselling services. Most focus group participants mentioned that counselling should be provided to help their clients deal with the psychological issues caused by unemployment. They further stated the need to strengthen counselling services in the Ministry. Participants indicated:

*I think counselling should be rendered to unemployed youth graduates ... (Participant 3, FGD 2)*

*... we could strengthen counselling services in the Ministry ... (Participant 2, FGD 2)*

*I think counselling should be provided to unemployed youth graduates ... (Participant 4, FGD 1)*

As mentioned above, counselling should be offered in the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Cultural Development and the working environment should be conducive for programme officers (social workers) to provide counselling services to unemployed youth graduates. The importance of counselling was also reiterated in the narratives by the unemployed participants when asked about the types of social work services that should be rendered to them. The finding that counselling should be provided to help the youth deal with the psychological issues caused by unemployment is confirmed in the literature of Drosos, Theodoroulakis, Antoniou and Rajter (2021) who indicate that providing counselling to graduates was needed more than ever due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic that has caused unprecedented worldwide economic disruption and unemployment, which in turn has led to a global financial crisis. The aforementioned financial crisis has caused a prolonged labour market recession and an acute rise in the unemployment of graduates. In the light of this, it is critical that counselling services should be offered to unemployed graduates in order to help them deal with the severe negative psychological effects of being unemployed in the midst of an economic crisis brought on by a worldwide pandemic (Brooks et al., 2020; Rajkumar, 2020).

**b) Category: Initiation of a new counselling unit in the MYESCD**

The second category that came to the fore was the initiation of a counselling unit in the MYESCD. Some focus group participants reiterated the need for a counselling unit within the Ministry to help provide counselling to participants who finished their internship and those

who have been funded, to address the different challenges faced by these groups of young people.

*... we should be having a unit or department that deals with assessment and counselling of youth to all youth with social problems whether funded or not ... (Participant 3, FGD 1)*

*... I think there should be a unit that is providing counselling to graduates to help them deal with psychological issues that are caused by unemployment. We focus mainly on the economical aspect without the psychological aspect and I think maybe this is where we make a mistake as a Ministry ... (Participant 4, FGD 2)*

Another participant mentioned that for counselling to be effective it should not be a one-off thing but that it should be continuous in order to achieve its intended purpose, as indicated in the narrative below.

*... I think counselling should be provided to unemployed youth graduates though I do not know how effective it will be. This counselling should not be a once off thing because counselling is a process, looking at the fact that the youth want quick fix ... (Participant 1, FGD 2)*

The need for counselling seems to be an important aspect that came out in this study, as the majority of the focus group participants believed it was the missing link in the work that the Ministry was doing. They believed if counselling was provided it would help with the well-being of the unemployed graduates. They also believed that such counselling should be mandated by the MYESCD. According to Jongman (2020) a person is made out of four components, which is the mind, body, emotions and spirit. If one were to concentrate only on the physical hunger while leaving out the emotions and the mind, the person will collapse. As indicated in the narratives above, most participants believed that social workers in the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development should provide counselling in counselling rooms separate from the open space where the youth are consulted. Jongman (2010; 2020) and the MYESCD (2015) stipulate that one of the Ministry's core functions is to improve the livelihood of the youth, yet, as indicated in the narratives above it is clear that the Ministry does not provide any counselling to unemployed youth graduates and that it also does not have the structures in place to provide such services.

#### **6.4.8.4 Theme 7: Subtheme 5: Recommendations for improved social work service delivery**

The last subtheme of theme 7 that came to the fore was recommendations for improved social work service delivery. Focus group participants were asked to come up with recommendations for improved social work delivery to unemployed youth. Three categories that emerged from this subtheme will be discussed below.

##### **a) Category: Monitoring and evaluation, research and statistics should improve**

The first category that came to the fore was to improve the monitoring and evaluation of programmes. The majority of focus group participants indicated that there were no monitoring and evaluation tools to gauge if the programmes that the government implemented were meeting its intended purposes. Moreover, there was also no monitoring of the allowances given to participants of the internships to inform policy makers whether such allowances were covering the basic needs of graduates, as indicated by narratives below.

*... there is no monitoring and evaluation of programmes to evaluate if they are meeting their intended purpose. Monitoring and evaluation will help to cut wastage and reduce things that are not necessary in implementing the programme ... (Participant 3, FGD 1)*

*... there is no monitoring of these programmes relevant to challenges that are faced by youth, however, it is the programmes that need to be reviewed particularly the internship programme. In this programme allowance is one of the issues that need to be reviewed ... (Participant 1, FGD 2)*

Monitoring and evaluation can also be linked to a need for research. A participant highlighted the need for research to be done on programmes that were offered to the youth. The participant indicated:

*... we need to do thorough research on the programmes that we are offering to the youth before we implement them to check if they are serving the intended purpose ... (Participant 1, FGD 1)*

In line with the focus on research to ensure that programmes are effective, the need for specific data about the unemployed youth was mentioned. Another participant stated that it was time to have needs assessments in order to establish the actual number of youth graduates that were

unemployed as this would assist policy makers in creating policies informed by true statistics. The participant stated:

*... we need to clean our data and statistics of the number of unemployed youth so that they can help policy makers to make policies that are on point. It is high time we have needs assessments so that we have the record of all youth graduates who are roaming the streets ... (Participant 2, FGD 1)*

One participant mentioned that they should introduce community-based programmes which will also provide statistics of graduates, as indicated in the narrative below:

*I think the Ministry should introduced the community based programmes which will have the statistics of how many graduates there are per community ... (Participant 2, FGD 1)*

The finding that there was no monitoring and evaluation of the current policies and programmes is confirmed in literature. Nthomang and Diraditsile (2016) and Nthomang (2007) indicate that many government policies in Botswana suffer because of the absence of built-in monitoring and evaluation systems. This means that programme implementers were not able to track progress against the set objectives, indicators and targets of the programmes, making it difficult to assess the success or failure of youth policies and intervention programmes. Diraditsile (2017) mentions that there is a gap between research and programmes activities in Botswana, and that youth policies and programmes are no exception. As such research data are not utilised in informing policy decisions. The focus group participants were aware of the advantages of the regular monitoring and evaluation of programmes, as well as the need for research and specific data to improve the current programmes as indicated in the narrative above.

#### ***b) Category: Evaluation of the National Youth Policy and existing programmes***

The second category that came to the fore was the evaluation of the Youth Policy and existing programmes. Focus group participants felt that there was a need for reviewing and evaluating programmes and the national youth policy which had last been reviewed eleven years ago, as indicated in the narratives below.

*I feel our national youth policy is long overdue for review it's been a while now and I am hopeful that this might happen any day now to help address current issues faced by youth. The last review was in 2010, as we review it, let us engage the relevant people so*

*that our policy should be strong. Programmes come from the policy so if the policy is weak the programme will also be weak ... (Participant 2, FGD 2)*

*... think the government systems need to be reviewed, our programmes needs to be reviewed. Most of the youth graduates we are talking most of them we don't know where they are. So they need to be identified ... (Participant 3, FGD 2)*

In addition to the above, a participant mentioned that the MYESCD stated that most of its programmes will be reviewed in 2021 in order to bring them up to date with current times. This was indicated by the narrative below.

*... the minister of MYESCD stated that all the programmes have to be reviewed this year (2021) so we are hopeful that maybe things will change for the better. We are hoping that allowance money and fund money should be increased; there is a lot to review it is no longer relevant the cost of living has gone up ... (Participant 4, FGD 2)*

Some participants recommended that there should be unemployment legislation to address the issue of youth unemployment. They furthermore suggested that there should be a department responsible for the legislation, as indicated in the narratives below.

*... we need unemployment legislation ... (Participant 1, FGD 2)*

*... there should be a department that is driving this legislation for accountability purposes. We will have to focus on initiatives that will come out of this legislation and the issue of accountability for those initiatives ... (Participant 4, FGD 1)*

The finding that the current youth policy and programmes needed to be evaluated is confirmed by Lesetedi (2018) who states that the National Youth Policy which is the anchor of all the programmes pertaining to youth issues and programmes targeting youth unemployment and that falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture was last reviewed in 2010. Therefore, there is a need for review or research in order for policy makers to be able to recognise the challenges that these programmes are faced with. Furthermore Diraditsile (2017) and Dukeshire and Thurlow (2002) mention that policies are guidelines or plans of action pointing the direction which governments can take in addressing issues. However, for them to be effective the policies and guidelines or plans of action should be based on research or empirical evidence and it is through research that problems preventing the effective implementation of policies and programmes can be identified. Letsetedi (2018) confirms that

for the review of a policy or a programme to be successful, it is important that the intended beneficiaries should become involved in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of those policies.

***c) Category: Unemployment benefits or subsidies for the youth***

The third category that came out of this subtheme was unemployment benefits or subsidies for the youth. Most of the focus group participants stated the need for the Botswana government to introduce an unemployment subsidy to cushion unemployed youth graduates financially. Participants indicated:

*... everything cost money, for example, printing of copies, internet, transportation to interviews and the unemployment benefit will assist in that regard ... (Participant 2, FGD1)*

*... it is high time the government introduce unemployment benefits to help graduates who are roaming the streets ... (Participant (4, FGD 1)*

The finding that there is a need to introduce an unemployment subsidy for unemployed youth graduates is confirmed by Mogomotsi and Madigele (2017) and Burns, Edwards and Pauw (2013), who indicate that wage or employment subsidies have been used in both developed and developing countries to raise employment levels. In a developing country, where labour market failure is typically characterised by unemployment, a subsidy offered to the firm is more appropriate. To achieve social justice in Botswana, social workers should advocate for the introduction of a wage subsidy law on behalf of unemployed youth graduates. Such a subsidy will reduce the cost of employment and encourage companies to hire more young workers as was discussed in Chapter 4.

## **6.5 CONCLUSION**

An empirical investigation into the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates was conducted and the empirical findings as gathered by means of semi-structured interviews were analysed. The second objective for this study, which was to describe the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates from an ecological systems perspective and the fourth objective, which was to investigate the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates in Botswana from an ecological systems perspective, have thus been achieved. It is clear that the participants were experiencing challenges on all the different levels of the

ecological perspective. Typical challenges that unemployed graduates face include psychological challenges at the micro-level like stress, depression, anger, and frustration, challenges at the meso-level like increased dependency on family, family and relationship problems and occurrence of family violence as well as challenges at the macro-level such as an increase in poverty, crime, ineffective policies and programmes. Challenges faced by programme officers include a lack of knowledge about the social work profession, of human resources, and of infrastructure which makes providing social work services to unemployed youth graduates impossible. It was established that programme officers were aware that social work services should be delivered but due to the above-mentioned reasons it was not possible. The conclusions and recommendations of this study will be discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 7:

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates from an ecological systems perspective. This chapter stems from the fifth objective of this research study, namely to make recommendations and conclusions about the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates in Botswana from an ecological perspective. This study made use of the discussions of a literature review, research methodology and empirical study findings. The first objective of this study was met in Chapter 2, in which contextualising educated youth unemployment from a global, regional and local (Botswana) context were discussed. The second objective of this study was addressed in Chapter 3, which identified challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates from an ecological systems perspective. Chapter 4 aimed to attain the third objective by identifying social work services appropriate for unemployed youth graduates in the Botswana context. Chapter 5 covered the exposition of the research methodology and research approaches utilised in the implementation of the empirical study. Finally, Chapter 6 presented the results of the empirical investigation on the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates in Botswana from an ecological systems perspective. These chapters paved the way for this chapter to provide concluding remarks and recommendations, not only to address the research topic, but also for future studies. In this chapter the focus is on conclusions and recommendations regarding youth graduates who are unemployed and social work service delivery to address these challenges. The following conclusions will be structured according to the themes of the empirical study.

##### 7.1.1 Profile of participants

The research project was done in two phases with two groups of participants. The first group consisted of twenty unemployed youth graduates. The criteria for inclusion in the first phase of this study expressed that participants had to be graduates between the ages of 25 and 35 who were citizens of Botswana with a degree from tertiary institutions, and who were all proficient in English language, but who have never been employed. Geographically these participants

should have been staying in Gaborone and the surrounding area of Tlokweng. Participants had different degrees, however, the majority had degrees in the fields of Information Technology and Public Health. Most of the participants were between the ages of 25 to 30 years and the rest between 31 to 35 years. The length that they were unemployed was between one to ten years. This meant they could provide insightful responses that added value to the study.

With the second phase of the study, data was collected from eight programme officers from the Ministry of Empowerment, Youth, Sport and Culture (MYESCD). This Ministry is responsible for services to the youth. Two focus group discussions were conducted by the researcher with these MYESCD programme officers who all had experience working with unemployed youth graduates. The criteria for inclusion in this phase of the study expressed that the participants had to be programme officers working at the MYESCD with a minimum of two years' experience and that they should all have been involved in programme implementation to unemployed youth graduates. These focus group participants had to be proficient in English and working geographically in Gaborone, the south-east region of Botswana. Most of the participants in the focus groups were between the ages of 30 to 39 years and the rest between 40 to 49 years. It was advantageous to the study that most of the participants were experienced programme officers with work experience of between 7 to 13 years. The majority of the focus group participants had Bachelor degrees in social work and had knowledge of what social work services involved. One participant had a Bachelor in Psychology and another a Bachelor in Sociology. Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of the participants had social work degrees, and that these participants could provide insightful responses on the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates as the second phase participants had all been dealing with issues pertaining to unemployment of youth graduates.

## **7.2 EFFECTS AND CHALLENGES ON MICRO-LEVEL OF ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE**

Conclusions and recommendations pertaining to the micro-level of the ecological systems perspective will be discussed.

### **7.2.1 Effect of unemployment on individuals**

The first theme that came to the fore in this study was the effects of unemployment on the participants. Within the microsystem of the ecological perspective as applied to this study, findings indicated that the effect of unemployment on the participants could be classified in two subthemes, namely how they had to adapt and come to terms with their difficulties in fulfilling their aspirations of being employed full time, and being independent and able to pursue their dreams.

In terms of the difficulty to fulfil aspirations and expectations in life, which served as the first subtheme, two categories were derived, namely a lack of security, employment and independence and being unable to pursue their dreams. Participants stated that they had hoped to be employed in their respective professions earning money and taking care of themselves and their loved ones. Another effect was that participants had specific dreams they wanted to pursue after graduation but which they were unable to do, because of their unemployment status. Participants found it difficult to come to terms with the fact that their dreams and aspirations were not being fulfilled due to them being unemployed.

The second subtheme was about participants who were experiencing a range of feelings about their unemployed status. Feelings, such as being angry, demoralised, disappointed, discontented, frustrated, hostile and lonely, were reported. Some agreed that they became angry as a result of their unemployment, even though they had worked hard and earned their degrees. They indicated that being unemployed was demoralising and disappointing. Other participants noted that they were discontented, frustrated, hostile and lonely due to the fact that they could not find employment.

It can be concluded that:

- Participants had to adapt to the fact that their dreams and aspirations about a better life after obtaining their degrees, were not being fulfilled due to their unemployment.
- Participants were experiencing a range of feelings, such as being angry, demoralised, disappointed, discontented, frustrated, hostile and lonely.

### **7.2.2 Recommendations**

The following recommendation is proposed:

- Counselling services should be made available to unemployed youth graduates to come to terms with their circumstances.

### ***7.2.2.1 Personal challenges experienced because of unemployment status***

In this theme, five subthemes emerged, the first subtheme reflected on mental health challenges of the participants, the second subtheme explored psychological challenges, the third subtheme looked at health challenges, the fourth subtheme reflected on financial challenges faced by participants and finally, the fifth subtheme explored communities' reactions to the unemployed status of the participants

Within the first subtheme, the findings of this study indicated that unemployed youth graduates experienced mental health challenges, as most participants stated that being unemployed affected their mental health. Effects on mental health included a loss of self-esteem due to being unemployed for lengthy periods, an increase in stress as a result of thinking about whether they will find employment and suffering from depression because of their struggle to find employment.

In terms of psychological challenges as a result of unemployment, the participants indicated that they were going through various emotions which have had a terrible effect on their lives. These psychological effects included experiencing hostility, stress, sleeping disorders, loneliness, frustration, anger, being demoralised, disappointed, depressed and having suicidal thoughts. A large number of participants indicated that they were experiencing suicidal thoughts as a result of daily challenges they were experiencing. It was reported that the psychological impact of unemployment was extremely detrimental to the well-being of unemployed youth graduates.

Within the third subtheme, some participants indicated that they were experiencing health challenges due to being unemployed and as they were overthinking their situation, which led to conditions, such as headaches, heart problems, and high blood pressure.

Within the fourth subtheme participants indicated that they were experiencing financial challenges as a result of their unemployment and this had severe economic implications, such as poverty and an increase in inequality.

In terms of the challenges concerning the community's reaction to their unemployed status, which is the fifth subtheme, most participants indicated that some community members were

critical of their unemployed status by making fun of them and ridiculing them, indicating that the participants had been wasting government resources since they were not working, whereas other youths, who did not attend university, had jobs. Few participants indicated that they were unaware of the reactions of their communities as they were not interacting with their community members. Withdrawing from their communities and being ridiculed, further repressed unemployed youth graduates from effectively finding employment and becoming independent.

It can be concluded that:

- Participants were experiencing mental health challenges, such as a loss of self-esteem, as well as psychological challenges, such as sleeping disorders and depression and harbouring thoughts of suicide. Physical health challenges that were identified were heart problems, headaches, and high blood pressure.
- Participants indicated that they were all experiencing financial challenges and that the outcome was always that of poverty and inequality.
- Participants indicated that their community members were very critical of their unemployment status and that they were ridiculed because they had a degree, but were unemployed.

#### ***7.2.2.2 Recommendations***

The following recommendations are proposed:

- Counselling services, such as social work services and psychology services, should be made available to participants to assist them in dealing with the impact of unemployment on their mental health and psychological issues that unemployed graduates were faced with on a daily basis.
- Support services (business counselling) should be made available for those who would like to engage in youth entrepreneurship. Training and mentorship programmes for unemployed graduates who were considering going into entrepreneurship, utilising existing programmes (YDF, CEDA), should be comprehensive and on-going.

### **7.3 EFFECTS AND CHALLENGES ON THE MESO LEVEL OF ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE**

The conclusions and recommendations pertaining to the effects and challenges experienced on the meso-level of the ecological systems perspective will be discussed.

#### **7.3.1 Effects of unemployment on the family**

This theme dealt with the effects unemployment had on the family on the meso-level of the ecological perspective. Subthemes that emerged were intimate partner relationships challenges, the fact that family relations were stressful and challenging, and the challenges created by the inability of the participants to financially contribute to their families.

The first subtheme, namely intimate partner relationship challenges, was strongly acknowledged by the participants. The participants indicated that unemployment had affected their intimate relationships and that they were facing conflict in their intimate partner relationships due to their financial instability, and that they argued about money most of the time. This made it difficult for them to maintain and sustain their relationships. Some participants indicated that they were afraid they might experience gender-based violence. However, a few participants indicated that their partners were supportive and their relationships were not negatively affected by their unemployed status.

The second subtheme reflected on how family relationships were stressful due to the unemployed status of the participants. Participants indicated that their families were blaming them for their career choices and that some family members believed the participants were deliberately staying unemployed. The lack of income of the unemployed youth graduates caused conflict and quarrels in the family, as, even though the participants obtained degrees, their degrees did not bring any financial gain to the families, as was expected. It was found that the expectations of families of first-generation graduates in Botswana were that these graduates would improve the financial situation of the families. Furthermore, as the graduates could not bring financial gain to the families because they were unemployed, these graduates could not change the socio-economic circumstances of themselves or their families. These shortcomings created conflict and affected family relationships.

The third subtheme explored the expectation of participants' families to still contribute to the family group, and the inability of the participants to do so. Most participants indicated that

their families expected them to contribute financially, despite them being unemployed. Culturally it is typical of men to find their sense of worth in their ability to provide for their family, however, the majority of the participants in this study group of the first phase of the study, were female, and it was found that their unemployment had the same effect on them. Some felt that them being unemployed was a burden to the family because they were financially dependent on them for everything, including groceries. However, a few participants indicated the opposite, and stated that, although they were unemployed, their families were very supportive of their situation and that a positive outcome.

It can be concluded that:

- Intimate partner relationships were difficult to sustain because being unemployed was putting financial pressure and stress on their relationships. Some participants were dependent on their spouses for everything, and they were afraid that the extra financial burden they had put on their relationships, could contribute to instances of gender-based violence.
- Relationships with the extended families were stressful, as these families would blame the graduates for being unemployed, believing that some participants had deliberately chosen to stay unemployed. These beliefs led to tension and fights in the families and the participants had to deal with feelings that they were a burden to their families.
- Families expected the participants to contribute to them financially, despite the participants' unemployed status. It was found that this was because the families had high expectations of the participants to support their families after they completed their studies. Although most of the participants were female, their families still expected them to assist financially, as they would have done from their male counterparts.

### **7.3.2 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are proposed:

- Family counselling should be made available to families to improve relationships and to enhance their understanding about what unemployed graduates were experiencing, because some of the stress factors the participants were experiencing were due to issues at home. Since unemployment causes instability, this instability could strain parents' and graduates' relationships and harm their overall well-being. To help stabilise

families, family counselling should be made available to unemployed youth graduates and their families.

- Couple counselling to address partner-relational problems such as couples fighting due to the stress of being unemployed and gender-based violence, should also be made available to unemployed youth graduates.

#### **7.4 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED ON MACRO-LEVEL OF THE ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE**

Conclusions and recommendations about the challenges experienced on the macro-level of the ecological systems perspective will be discussed.

##### **7.4.1 Existing Government initiatives and the Botswana labour market**

This theme deals with government initiatives that should address graduate unemployment on the macro-level of the ecological perspective. The exo-level was included in the macrosystem or macro-level, where the focus was on existing Government policy and legislation that could influence the individual. Four subthemes were derived, these were knowledge about government initiatives, the fact that government initiatives were not effective, the discrepancy between demand in the labour market and graduates seeking employment, and lastly macro-level solutions to unemployment.

The first subtheme derived, indicated that participants had knowledge about the government initiatives. Most participants indicated that they were aware of the national internship programme and the graduate volunteer scheme as programmes that addressed graduate unemployment through placing graduates at government and private companies in order for them to gain experience that was required in the labour market. It also appears that unemployed youth graduates were aware of entrepreneurial programmes such as the Youth Development Fund (YDF) and Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) that both address youth unemployment. However, the participants were not utilising these programmes. Most participants mentioned that, although they were familiar with the above-mentioned programmes, they have not utilised them to their benefit, because they were still on the waiting lists of the programmes, or because they were not eligible for specific programmes.

The second subtheme identified, was that government initiatives were not effective, as most participants were of the view that existing government initiatives did not provide a solution to

the graduate unemployment problem, as graduates were not being employed after they were accepted into some programmes, such as the Internship programme. Furthermore, some participants indicated that programmes, such as the national internship programme and graduates volunteer schemes, were both forms of slavery and cheap labour, where they were being exploited by the host organisations. They reported that existing government initiatives were not addressing the issue of graduates' unemployment and that the programmes were seen as a way to obtain cheap labour. Some participants indicated corruption as another challenge in addressing the unemployment of graduates, especially in entrepreneurial programmes like the YDF, where graduates had to apply for funding to start businesses.

The discrepancy between the demand of the labour market and the graduates seeking employment was another (third) subtheme. Most participants indicated that the labour market in Botswana could not absorb the number of graduates the tertiary institutions delivered as the Botswana government could not create sufficient job opportunities for them. There were also reports of a mismatch between supply and demand for labour in Botswana. The mushrooming of tertiary institutions in Botswana was directly contributing to the large number of unemployed graduates in the labour market. It was indicated that there were tertiary institutions which were not credible, as some participants mentioned the degrees they obtained from them were either not recognised in the job market, or were rated as low quality, making the chance of getting employed for graduates from those institutions, very slim. Thus, the challenge of the imbalance in the labour market between supply and demand was exacerbated by the increase in tertiary institutions and the lack of recognition of qualifications by the labour market of some of those tertiary institutions.

The fourth subtheme explored macro-level solutions to unemployment, as participants were asked to reflect on solutions for their unemployment situation. The majority of participants indicated that the best solution for them was for the government to provide them with employment, some participants indicated that they were considering venturing into various businesses as a way of making a living, and other participants indicated that the Botswana government should implement certain strategies, such as early retirement, to create employment opportunities for graduates.

It can be concluded that:

- Participants were aware of government initiatives for youth unemployment, such as the

internship programme, graduate volunteer scheme, and youth development fund, but they were not involved, because they were not eligible, or were still on waiting lists.

- Participants did not think that these programmes were providing any solutions to the unemployment situation as they viewed them as a form of slavery or cheap labour, as these programmes were offering small allowances.
- Participants concluded that there was a discrepancy between the demand in the labour market and graduates seeking employment. The participants were of the opinion that the mismatch between supply and demand of labour in Botswana was caused by too many institutions or universities producing too many graduates in professions that were not in demand. They also reported that some of these tertiary institutions were not credible and that those who obtained their qualifications from those institutions were not in demand and found it hard to get employment.
- Participants concluded that it would help if the Botswana government could consider implementing strategies such as early retirement for elderly people in order to create employment opportunities for youth graduates.

#### **7.4.2 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are proposed:

- The Botswana government should evaluate the existing government initiatives to determine their effectiveness.
- The Botswana government should make departments and organisations pay some allowance to interns for their services on top of what they are paid by the national internship programme, in order to make it financially viable for graduates. There should furthermore be a policy whereby host organisations or departments are encouraged to absorb those graduates who were interning at their organisations. This requirement would prevent the government taking financial responsibility for the internship programmes whilst lowering the number of unemployed graduates in the country.
- The Botswana government should, through the Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA), evaluate the courses of all training institutions or universities for credibility before they sponsored students to attend those institutions or universities.

- Unemployed youth graduates should be encouraged to utilise government programmes and partake in entrepreneurial programmes such as the YDF and CEDA where continuous mentorship should be a prerequisite.
- The Botswana government should adopt a retirement policy in order to reduce the current retirement age to create employment opportunities to unemployed graduates.
- Provision should be made for community structures or community-based organisations that can assist graduates in searching for employment and in learning skills they may need to find employment. Communities must be educated about the importance of their participation in such endeavours in terms of their well-being and that of others.

## **7.5 POLICY, LEGISLATION AND PROGRAMMES FOCUSSED ON YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT**

Policy, legislation and programmes available on the macro-level of the ecological perspective all influence the experience of unemployed youth graduates. Focus group participants from the Ministry of Youth Empowerment Sport and Cultural Development, shared their views about existing policy, programmes and legislation pertaining to the unemployment of graduates in Botswana. Four subthemes were identified.

The first subtheme was that limited policies were in place to address youth unemployment. All participants in the focus group indicated that the National Youth Policy of 2010 was the only policy related to the unemployment of youth, and that there was a lack in policies to address graduate unemployment. The second subtheme explored the types of programmes available to unemployed youth graduates, which were the same programmes identified above. The third subtheme reflected on whether the existing programmes contributed to the creation of employment opportunities, a few participants mentioned that in the early years of the internship programme, graduates were absorbed by host organisations however, in recent years the majority of participants indicated that this was not happening anymore as programmes were not providing enough employment opportunities to unemployed youth graduates. Thus, current programmes were less effective and did not create permanent employment opportunities.

The fourth subtheme explored the need for alternative policy and/or legislation. Most of the focus group participants mentioned the importance of having unemployment legislation that would assist with programmes addressing youth unemployment. Participants further

mentioned that standalone unemployment legislation would help the Botswana government in introducing unemployment benefits to cushion unemployed youth graduates.

It can be concluded that:

- Policy pertaining to the youth was limited in Botswana as the National Youth Policy of 2010 was the only policy addressing youth unemployment.
- Current government initiatives were less effective than previously and did not create permanent employment opportunities and were thus not a solution to the graduate youth unemployment phenomenon.
- There is a need for alternative policy and/or legislation to assist with programmes addressing youth unemployment.

### **7.5.1 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are proposed:

- There is an urgent need for the government of Botswana to review the National Youth Policy of 2010 and to adapt the policy to include and address the current challenges experienced by the youth of Botswana.
- Needs assessments should be done to come up with programmes that are relevant to the current generation of youth and not one size-fits-all programmes.
- There is a need for the government of Botswana to develop new unemployment legislation and policy to help address youth unemployment. These policies and/or legislation could grant graduate intake subsidies to companies or organisations that were willing to accommodate new graduates.
- Social work practitioners should be engaged in policy formulation because they were the professionals working directly with the youth in the Ministry of Youth Empowerment Sport, and Culture Development.

## **7.6 SOCIAL WORK SERVICE DELIVERY**

### **7.6.1 Utilisation and need for social work services**

In order to understand the need for social work services and the possible role of social workers in dealing with unemployed youth graduates, participants discussed the type of social work services they knew were available, as well as the utilisation of these services. Two subthemes were identified, namely the delivering of social work services that were not offered at the time of the research, and the need for a range of social work services.

The first subtheme indicated that social work services were not offered to the participants. Despite the fact that participants said that social work services were not offered, most of the participants believed that social workers should provide a much needed service of counselling to graduates while they were still in the process of looking for employment.

The second subtheme concluded that there was a need for a range of social work services to be offered in Botswana to improve the state of mind of the participants in this study group and to empower them to manage the challenges they were experiencing. Most participants mentioned services such as individual counselling, which was highlighted as the most important service that should be available. Another service that was mentioned was group counselling/work, as some participants mentioned that family counselling was needed to address issues that unemployed youth graduates were facing in their families. Group work could furthermore enhance participants' social support network. Finally, substance abuse counselling services was required to help address depressed graduates who were abusing alcohol and drugs and those who were using alcohol and drugs as ways to relieve stress.

It can be concluded that:

- Social work services were not readily available to the participants, although the need for these services was mentioned.
- There was a general lack of social work services available to unemployed youth graduates on a micro-, meso- and macro-level.
- Social work services that should be available, according to the participants, were individual counselling, group work services, as well as family counselling and substance abuse counselling.

## 7.6.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed:

- Social work services such as individual counselling, group, as well as family and substance abuse counselling should be accessible to unemployed youth graduates in all of the MYESCD offices, countrywide.
- Social workers should be aware of the social support that especially group work would offer to unemployed graduates, as their networks will be expanded through the meeting of people with similar concerns.
- The MYESCD should have a toll-free counselling number that provided counselling services to unemployed youth graduates. This should be a 24 hour, 7 days a week, telephone counselling service offered by trained social workers. This service should provide counselling and connect people to the care services they needed, it should also provide them with the tools they required to handle stress and other challenging issues better, whilst improving their emotional health.

## 7.7 AVAILABILITY OF SOCIAL WORK SERVICES TO SUPPORT UNEMPLOYED YOUTH GRADUATES

In this final theme, the availability of social work services to support unemployed youth graduates was identified. Four subthemes were identified, namely that social work services were not a core mandate of the MYSECD, that the focus group participants were facing challenges in the implementation of social work services, that certain types of social work services should be rendered, and that there were recommendations for improved social work delivery.

The first subtheme addressed the fact that social work services did not form part of the core mandate of MYSECD. All participants indicated that, although social workers were hired as programme officers at the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Cultural Development (MYESCD) the reality was that they did not offer much social work services to youth graduates, as delivering such services were not part of their core mandate even though they were working at the department supposed to deliver such services. Focus group participants indicated that programme officers at the MYESCD were appointed to implement programmes and facilitate Youth Development Fund grants. They were also tasked with placing the youth

in various programmes such as internship and graduate volunteer schemes, instead of providing social work services. However, some participants stated that they were aware of the importance of social work services. These participants suggested that there should be units with social workers who were specifically assigned to deal with the psycho-social wellbeing of youth graduates. If these services would become available it could assist in lessening the graduates' burdens of being unemployed.

The second subtheme reported the challenges faced by the participants in implementing social work services. The majority of the participants stated that they were frustrated because most people in the MYESCD lacked knowledge about the social work profession. This lack of knowledge has contributed thereto that the public was unaware of the important contributions social work services could make in addressing the challenges that unemployed graduated youths of Botswana were facing. The fact that Botswana has no council regulating the social work profession compounded the problem that the profession was not taken seriously. Furthermore, due to a lack of personnel and offices at the MYESCD, programme officers were hindered to provide individual social work counselling to unemployed youth graduates. There was also a lack of understanding of the different needs of unemployed graduates due to the fact that the programme officers working within the MYESCD, were from different professional disciplines making service delivery difficult because they were not speaking the same "language".

The third subtheme indicated the types of social work services that should be rendered to unemployed youth graduates. These included having individual counsellor and counselling units in the ministry to help clients deal with psychological issues caused by unemployment and to address the various challenges these young people faced.

The fourth subtheme looked at the recommendations for improved social work delivery by focus group participants. Most participants indicated that there was a need for evaluation, research and statistics to improve or gauge if the existing programmes that the government implemented were meeting its intended purposes. Some participants felt that there was a need for reviewing and evaluating programmes as well as the National Youth Policy which had last been reviewed in 2010. Finally, most of the focus group participants stated that there was a need for government to introduce an unemployment subsidy to cushion unemployed youth graduates financially and that would address the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates in Botswana from an ecological systems perspective.

It can be concluded that:

- Focus group participants were not rendering social work services as they were of the view that this was not the core mandate of the MYESCD, despite the fact that these services were indicated as their mandate.
- There was a lack of knowledge about the social work profession in the MYESCD and the fact that Botswana had no regulating council for the social work profession which compounded the problem that the profession was not taken seriously.
- There was no social work unit within the MYESCD which offered social work services to youth, including unemployed youth graduates.
- There was a need to research and evaluate current statistics about the success and results of the unemployment policies and programmes, in order to be able to improve these government policies and programmes.
- There was a need for the Botswana government to introduce an unemployment subsidy to cushion unemployed youth graduates financially.

### **7.7.1 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are proposed:

- The mandate for services that should be rendered by MYESCD to the youth should be investigated as there seems to be a belief that the focus should be on employment programmes and not on delivering counselling services to the youth. This status quo is seen as the reason that counselling services were not readily available to the youth, as the local councils were focusing on programmes that dealt with destitute persons, family welfare (vulnerable children; child protection), home-based care for patients, and orphan care.
- There should be a regulatory body for the social work profession that could regulate professional growth and development of the social work profession, and that could speak for the profession to be taken seriously in the country. The absence of a social work council could affect the services delivery to clients as there are no regulations that practitioners should adhere to in terms of professional conduct.

- There should be a social work unit in the Ministry of Youth Empowerment Sport and Cultural Development which could coordinate all social work services provided to the youth, as the current structure was not serving the unemployed youth graduates well and needed to be revisited. This will help bridge the gap in practice as all social workers, especially in the MYESCD, will fall under that unit. Services should focus on casework, group work and community work as indicated in generalist practice.
- More social workers should be employed in the MYESCD to render services to unemployed youth graduates, this includes the need to re-design and strengthen existing youth intervention programmes.
- Continuous research should be done to better address the different needs of unemployed youth graduates. It is crucial that all policies be informed and guided by empirical research.
- The infrastructure, especially for the social work unit, should be improved and should create a conducive environment where confidentiality will be paramount to safeguard the integrity and worth of the client, thus office space should be created where individual counselling can be implemented.
- The MYESCD should have an inbuilt monitoring and evaluation framework for youth policy and programmes interventions across the board. This would help assess the success or failure of youth policies and intervention programmes and would make it possible to adapt services to the needs of the client system.
- There is a need for the government of Botswana to investigate the possibility of the introduction of unemployment subsidy and/or benefits in order to cushion unemployed youth graduates financially.

## **7.8 FUTURE RESEARCH**

The researcher does not regard this study to be wholly exhaustive or complete and is of the opinion that further research will be forthcoming from the findings of this research study. It is recommended that additional research be done into the following areas:

- A national research study should investigate the current services available to unemployed graduates, as well as possible changes to the existing programmes as the

existing programmes are not addressing the escalating unemployment rate of youth graduates.

- A national research study should investigate the opportunities offered in the labour market in order to tailor the offering of universities to labour market needs.

## **7.9 CONCLUSION**

This study has found that unemployed youth graduates of Botswana were facing various challenges due to them being unemployed. It found that the rendering of social work services was important in addressing the challenges faced by unemployed youth graduates. Furthermore, the findings clearly indicated that if social work services were to be applied thoroughly, the challenges experienced by graduates might change for the better and improve the status of the youth. The participants faced various challenges in their pursuit of employment opportunities. It was found that graduates experienced emotions such as anger, frustration and disappointment and had to deal with high levels of stress during the period of their unemployment. The research has demonstrated that, even though unemployed graduates felt as though they were a burden to their families, they still required support from programme officers in the MYSECD, their families and friends, and that they would need this support until they could find employment.

In this concluding chapter the findings of the research had been summarised and recommendations have been made to address the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates to guide the government of Botswana, social workers, programme officers at the MYESCD, and other stakeholders in the field of youth development, in any future developments. Finally, recommendations were made for future research in the field. The research was successful in that it contributed to rich findings from challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates from an ecological perspective and because the recommendations could contribute to the improvement of rendering social work services to the benefit of the unemployed youth graduates of Botswana.

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## APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM FOR YOUTH GRADUATES



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**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY**

### **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

---

#### **The Challenges Experienced by Unemployed Youth Graduates in Botswana: An Ecological Systems Perspective**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Godfrey Sebidie, a PhD student from the Social Work Department at the University of Stellenbosch. The results of this study will become part of a research report. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are an unemployed youth graduate living in Gaborone.

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study is to investigate the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates in Botswana and to develop guidelines and make recommendations for the rendering of social services.

#### **2. PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we will ask you to do the following:

A semi-structured interview schedule will be utilised to gather information confidentially. You need not indicate your name or any particulars on the interview schedule. The schedule will be completed during the one-on-one interview conducted by the researcher.

#### **3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

Any uncertainties on any of the aspects of the schedule you may experience during the interview can be discussed and clarified at any time.

#### **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO THE SUBJECTS AND/OR SOCIETY**

The results of this study will inform policy makers on programmes that are suitable for unemployed educated youth and inform social workers on the services they could render to this target group. This information could be used by the Ministry of Empowerment, Youth,

Sport and Culture for further planning in service delivery with regards to the challenges experienced by unemployed educated youth.

## **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

No payment in any form will be received for participating in this study.

## **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with respondents will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with the permission of the respondents or as required by law. An informed consent form will be used to confirm consent from participants. Confidentiality will be maintained in that the researcher will use pseudo names to all participants and completed interview schedules will not be linked to any specific participants and no personal identifying information will be requested. The interview will be audio recorded and download for transcribing purposes. The transcript will be managed, analysed and processed by the researcher, and kept on the laptop secured by a password only known to the researcher. After the research report is completed, the audio recording will be kept in a locked cabinet for a period of a year and be deleted thereafter. Only the researcher, his supervisor and the participant will have access to these data while being kept in a safe place for the duration of the year. In addition, the findings and recommendations of this study will be shared with the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development and Unemployment Movement of Botswana. The role of the Ministry would be to suggest programmes that uplift the livelihood of the youth as they are the custodian of the Youth Policy and the findings and recommendation might help when the policy and programme are revised.

## **7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so, e.g., should you influence other participants in the completion of their interview. If a participant decides to withdraw from the study they can decide whether the already collected data can be used or not. Since the focus group discussions cover sensitive topics and can generate negative emotions, study participants can contact a private counsellor, Dr. Sefapaano Gaborone, at 71617747 for debriefing at no cost.

**8. IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENT-RESEARCHER**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Dr M Strydom (Supervisor), Department of Social Work, University of Stellenbosch, Tel. 021-808 2070, E-Mail: [mstrydom@sun.ac.za](mailto:mstrydom@sun.ac.za)

**9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [[mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE**

The information above was described to me the participant, by Godfrey Sebidie, in English and the participant is in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to him/her. The participant was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to his/her satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study.

.....

**Name of Participant**

.....

**Signature of Participant**

**Date**

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to .....  
[name of subject/participant]. [He/She] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was used.

.....

**Signature of Investigator**

**Date**

## APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM FOR PROGRAMME OFFICERS



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jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY**

### **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

---

#### **The Challenges Experienced by Unemployed Youth Graduates in Botswana: An Ecological Systems Perspective**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Godfrey Sebidie, a PHD student from the Social Work Department at the University of Stellenbosch. The results of this study will become part of a research report. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are social worker working in the Ministry of Empowerment, Youth, Sport and Culture working with youth who are affected by unemployment in Gaborone.

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study is to investigate the challenges experienced by unemployed youth graduates in Botswana and to make recommendations for social workers on services rendered to unemployed youth graduates.

#### **2. PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we will ask you to do the following:

A focus group will be conducted to collect data confidentially. You don't need to indicate your name or surname and or any on the focus group interview schedule. The schedule will be completed during the focus group conducted by the student researcher.

#### **3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

Any uncertainties on any of the aspects of the schedule you may experience during the interview can be discussed and clarified at any time.

#### **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO THE SUBJECTS AND/OR SOCIETY**

The results of this study will inform policy makers on programmes that are suitable for unemployed educated youth and inform social workers on the services they could render to

this target group. This information could be used by the Ministry of Empowerment, Youth, Sport and Culture for further planning in service delivery with regards to the needs of unemployed educated youth.

## **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

No payment in any form will be received for participating in this study.

## **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained relating to this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Though confidentiality will be encouraged, it cannot be unequivocally ensured due to the nature of this group setting. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of coding where each participant will be numbered on the focus group interview schedule. The focus group will be audio recorded and download for transcribing purposes. The transcript will be managed, analysed and processed by the researcher, and kept on the laptop-secured by a password only known to the researcher. After the research report is completed, the audio recording will be kept in a locked cabinet for a period of a year and be deleted thereafter. Only the researcher, his supervisor and the participant will have access to these data while being kept in a safe place for the duration of the year. In addition, the findings and recommendations of this study will be shared with the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development. The role of the Ministry would be to suggest programmes that uplift the livelihoods of the youth as the Ministry is the custodian of the Youth Policy and the findings and recommendation might help when the policy and programme are revised.

## **7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so, e.g., should you influence other participants in the completion of the focus group. If a participant decides to withdraw from the study he/she can decide whether the already collected data can be used or not. Since the focus group discussions cover sensitive topics and can generate negative emotions, study participants can contact a private counsellor Dr. Sefapaano Gaborone at 71617747 for debriefing no cost.

**8. IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENT-RESEARCHER**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Dr M Strydom (Supervisor), Department of Social Work, University of Stellenbosch, Tel. 021-808 2070, E-Mail: [mstrydom@sun.ac.za](mailto:mstrydom@sun.ac.za)

**9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [[mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE**

The information above was described to me the participant by Godfrey Sebidie in English and the participant is in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to him/her. The participant was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to his/her satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study.

.....

**Name of Participant**

.....

.....

**Signature of Participant**

**Date**

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to .....  
[name of subject/participant]. [He/She] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was used.

.....

.....

**Signature of Investigator**

**Date**

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE



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### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR YOUTH GRADUATES

**The Challenges Experienced by Unemployed Youth Graduates in  
Botswana: An Ecological Systems Perspective.  
Researcher: G. Sebidie**

#### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

- Gender:  MALE  FEMALE
- Age:  25-30  31-35
- Marital status: \_\_\_\_\_
- Number of dependants \_\_\_\_\_
- Level of education:
 

DIPLOMA	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEGREE	<input type="checkbox"/>
POSTGRADUATE	<input type="checkbox"/>
- When did you graduate? \_\_\_\_\_
- How long have you been unemployed? \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you worked before? \_\_\_\_\_
- How often do you apply for a job? \_\_\_\_\_
- To how many positions have you applied to? \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. Challenges experienced at micro-level

- 1.1. Share with me your aspirations and expectations of life.
- 1.2. Tell me how you feel about being unemployed.
- 1.3. Share with me the challenges you face as an unemployed youth graduate.
- 1.4. How does your community react to your unemployment status, taking into account that you are a graduate?

## **2. Challenges experienced at mezzo-level**

- 2.1. Share how youth unemployment has affected your intimate partner relationship.
- 2.2. Share how your unemployed status has affected your relationship with your family members?

## **3. Challenges experience at macro-level**

- 3.1. Which government initiatives/programmes are you familiar with that addresses graduate unemployment?
- 3.2. What solutions to unemployment are currently offered by the Botswana government to unemployed graduates?
- 3.3. What are your views about the Botswana labour market?

## **4. Utilisation of social work services**

- 4.1. Discuss the types of social work services available to unemployed youth graduates and if you have utilised any services?
- 4.2. What social work services in your view should be available to unemployed youth graduates and why?

## **5. Solutions to your unemployed status**

- 5.1. Do you have any solutions for your unemployment situation?

**APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

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**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY**  
**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**  
**FOR**  
**FOCUS GROUP PROGRAMME OFFICERS**  
**The Challenges Experienced by Unemployed Youth Graduates in**  
**Botswana: An Ecological Systems Perspective.**  
**Researcher G. Sebidie**

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:**

- **Gender:**  MALE  FEMALE
- **Age:**  20-29  30-39  40-49  50-60  60+
- **Work experience: Years:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Level of education:**

DIPLOMA	
DEGREE	
POSTGRADUATE	
- **Job title:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **How long have you been employed by your current employer?** \_\_\_\_\_

## QUESTIONS

### 1. Policy, legislation and programmes

- 1.1. Explain the policy in Botswana pertaining to unemployed graduates? (share with me the policy that addresses unemployment of graduates in Botswana)
- 1.2. Discuss the programmes implemented for graduates and how these programmes provide employment opportunities for graduates.
- 1.3. What are your views about youth policy and employment/unemployment legislation in Botswana?

### 2. Social work services to unemployed youth

- 2.1. What type of social work services are you rendering to unemployed youth graduates in Botswana?
- 2.2. What challenges do you face as social workers in implementing social work service delivery to unemployed graduates?
- 2.3. What types of social work services should be rendered to unemployed youth graduates?
- 2.4. What are your recommendations for improving social work service delivery to the unemployed youth in Gaborone/Botswana?

**APPENDIX E: NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR STUDY**

TEL: (+267) 3901186  
 FAX: (+267) 3913473

MINISTRY OF SPORT YOUTH AND CULTURE  
 PRIVATE BAG 00514  
 GABORONE  
 BOTSWANA



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

REF: MYSC 9/1/1 (28)

03 November 2020

Godfrey Sebidie  
 P. O. Box 82318  
 Gaborone, Botswana

**RESEARCH PERMIT- GODFREY SEBIDIE**

This serves to acknowledge your application to do research titled "**Challenges Experienced by Unemployed Youth Graduates in Botswana: An Ecological Systems Perspective**". The Permit is granted for a period of Five (5) months, commencing 03 November 2020 to the 31 March 2021 and is granted under the following conditions:

1. Copies of the final product of the study are to be directly deposited with the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development, National Library Services, National Archives and Records Services and Office of Research and Development Unit in the University of Botswana.
2. The Permit does not give you authority to enter premises, private establishment or protected areas. Permission for such areas should be negotiated with those concerned.
3. You conduct your study according to particulars furnished in the application you submitted taking into account the above conditions.
4. Failure to comply with any of the above conditions will result in the immediate cancellation of the Permit.

Thank you

Yours Faithfully

Tsaone K Ramatlhare

For/Permanent Secretary

Cc: Director, National Archives and Records Services  
 National Librarian, National Library Services  
 Director, Office of Research and Development, University of Botswana



## APPENDIX F: LETTER FROM EXTERNAL CODER

*DR. A. BEYTELL*

*EXTERNAL CODING*

***CONTACT DETAILS***

***E-MAIL: [ambeytell@gmail.com](mailto:ambeytell@gmail.com)***

***ADDRESS: 10 MOPANI CLOSE  
SOMERSET WEST  
7130***

---

I have done external coding for Mr. Sebidie for his PhD study as a measure to enhance credibility study through peer examination, as well as dependability with code-recode procedure. Mr. Sebidie and the external coder have analyzed the interview and focus group transcripts independently and met after that several times to discuss the themes, sub-themes, and categories. After agreement the themes, sub-themes and categories were used as findings of the research by Mr. Sebidie.

*A Beytell*

Dr. A. Beytell

## APPENDIX G: REC APPROVAL LETTER



8 October 2020

Project number: 8133

Project Title: The Challenges Experienced by Unemployed Youth Graduates in Botswana: An Ecological Systems Perspective

Dear Mr Godfrey Sebidie

Your REC: SBER - Amendment Form submitted on 7 October 2020 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Social, Behavior and Education Research (REC: SBE).

Please note below expiration date of this approved submission:

**Ethics approval period:**

Protocol approval date (Humanities)	Protocol expiration date (Humanities)
30 April 2020	29 April 2021

**INVESTIGATOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research at complying fully with these guidelines.

**If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: SBE, the researcher must notify these changes.**

Please use your SU project number (8133) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

**CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD**

You are required to submit a progress report to the REC: SBE before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethical approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

Once you have completed your research, you are required to submit a final report to the REC: SBE for review.

**Included Documents:**

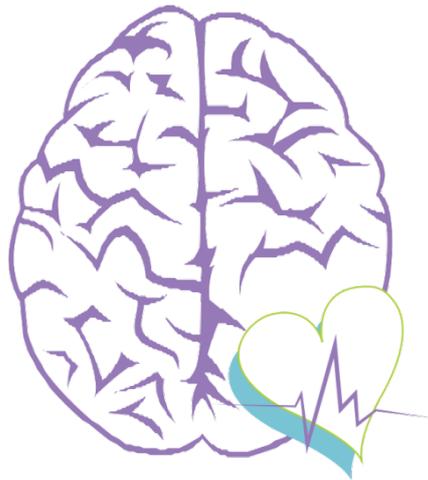
Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Default	Response Letter REC-2020-8133	19/08/2020	Version 1
Default	SAFETY PROTOCOL FOR FACE 1	19/08/2020	Version
Default	INTERVIEWS CONTACT REGISTER	19/08/2020	Version 1
Default	ExtraordinaryGazette04-05-2020_0	19/08/2020	Version 1
Default	Response Letter REC-2020-8133 (1)	07/10/2020	Version 2
Default	BUDGET FOR THE COVID-19 PROTOCOL ARRANGEMNT	07/10/2020	Version 1

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at [cgraham@sun.ac.za](mailto:cgraham@sun.ac.za).

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

## APPENDIX H: DEBRIEFING OF PARTICIPANTS



### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, Dr. Sefapaano Gaborone of MindPower Clinic, am aware of the nature of the study conducted by Godfrey Sebidie (22454195) and the period the study is to be done in. I am willing to provide participants with psychological support for the duration of the study at no cost. My contact details are +267 71617747 or email at [goborones@gmail.com](mailto:goborones@gmail.com).

Thanking you in advance.

Yours faithfully

Dr. S.S Gaborone

## APPENDIX I: MEMBER CHECKING FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS



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### PHASE 1 (Individual Interviews)

Participant Number 01

I hereby declare that I have read the themes, subthemes and categories done for this study:  
(Mark correct one with “x”)

Yes

No

I hereby declare that I agree with the content of the themes, subthemes and categories: (Mark correct one with “x”)

Yes

No

\*Signature Omitted to hide participant’s identity



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Participant Number: Participant 3 Focus Group 2

I hereby declare that I have read the themes, subthemes and categories done for this study:  
(Mark correct one with “x”

Yes

No

I hereby declare that I agree with the content of the themes, subthemes and categories: (Mark  
correct one with “x”

Yes

No

\*Signature Omitted to hide participant’s identity