

Topic 1: “Empowering Kroo Bay’s Youth: A Comprehensive Analysis of Word Made Flesh’s Impact and Paths of Enhancement”



Photo Courtesy: (*UNICEF Sierra Leone, 2015*)

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DEDICATION

This research is a heartfelt tribute to my beloved and resilient mother, whose unwavering dedication has played an instrumental role in realizing my dreams. It is also a testament to the precious individuals—children, youth, staff, volunteers, and supporters—associated with Word Made Flesh, a Christian ministry committed to uplifting the impoverished community of Koo Bay. Their collective efforts and unwavering commitment have inspired and shaped the course of this research. Additionally, I extend my deepest gratitude to my beloved and beautiful wife, Afiewa Freeman, and my siblings whose boundless love and unwavering support have been constant pillars throughout my educational journey. This work stands as a recognition of the profound impact of these cherished individuals in shaping my academic pursuit and personal growth.

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Furthermore, my gratitude extends to all those who, in various capacities, have supported and contributed to the realization of my academic aspirations. The use of "supported me in diverse ways" acknowledges the multifaceted nature of assistance received, underlining the communal effort that has played a crucial role in turning my academic dreams into reality.

This statement not only expresses my gratitude but also paints a picture of interconnectedness, emphasizing the collaborative efforts of both the divine and human elements in shaping my academic journey.

ABSTRACT

Unemployment poses a significant challenge, especially in the developing world. This research delved into Word Made Flesh's mission in Sierra Leone's Kroo Bay slum community, with a specific focus on addressing youth unemployment and its underlying causes. The study explored theoretical frameworks, demographics, and the economic aftermath of the civil war, shedding light on factors such as poor education and corrupt leadership. Throughout, the research underscored the crucial role of the theoretical framework in comprehending youth unemployment.

Examining Sierra Leone's concept of poverty, the research incorporated cultural, financial, and biblical perspectives, making a clear distinction between generational and situational poverty. It aligned with Dr. Viv Grigg's Transformational Conversations concept, providing a robust foundation for meaningful discussions on youth employment and empowerment.

The narrative then narrowed its focus on Word Made Flesh's impact, revealing a prevalent issue of youth unemployment rooted in low education, lack of vocational skills, and rural-urban migration. The socio-economic consequences, including violence and social vices, position youth unemployment as a significant security concern. The conclusion advocated for strengthened education policies, sanctions, adequate funding, and collaborative efforts to combat youth unemployment.

Transitioning to recommendations, the research outlined a strategic plan for further investigation to enhance understanding of Word Made Flesh's impact on unemployed youth in Kroo Bay. The recommendations emphasized a holistic approach, taking into account cultural, social, and contextual factors. The incorporation of comparative analysis and participatory action research underscore a commitment to evidence-based improvements, highlighting Word Made Flesh's dedication to tailoring impactful interventions aligned with the specific needs and dynamics of the Kroo Bay community.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION OF THE PROBLEM

Background of the Study

Kroo Bay is a marginalized community in Freetown, Sierra Leone, plagued by poverty, inadequate access to education, and limited employment opportunities. Word Made Flesh, a non-profit organization, has been working tirelessly to empower the youth in Kroo Bay and provide them with tools and opportunities for personal growth, educational advancement, and skills development. By implementing various educational and vocational programs, Word Made Flesh has successfully provided the youth in Kroo Bay with a supportive and nurturing environment where they can develop their skills, pursue their dreams, and break the cycle of poverty. However, despite the positive impact, there are still areas that can be enhanced to further empower Kroo Bay's youth.

Founded over 20 years ago, Word Made Flesh is a worldwide ecumenical Christian community that seeks to serve the most vulnerable of the world's poor. There are twelve "communities" worldwide located around the globe in South America, Asia, Eastern Europe, North America, and West and Central Africa. Word Made Flesh is made up of communities of people committed to serving Jesus among those who find themselves in some of the most vulnerable, poverty-stricken, and oppressive situations in the world. We are focused on working with families, children, and youth. Currently, we work with children and youth who live and work on the streets, who were forced to fight in civil wars, and women, children, and youth who have been trafficked into the commercial sex industry. In all our work, we aim to infuse hope, empower others, and amplify the voices of those who are often not heard (Word Made Flesh, n.d.)

Word Made Flesh Sierra Leone seeks to love, serve, and accompany vulnerable children and families in the Kroo Bay slum community of Freetown. For the past twenty years, we have worked among youth living on the streets of Freetown and children of the Kroo Bay slum community. Lighthouse is one of the programs we run in our Word Made Flesh Sierra Leone community. It is a youth program for individuals aged 18-25 with fewer opportunities who don't have the strength to make it in life all by themselves. This program helps to support youths with life skills, send them to school, and make disciples to pattern their lives after that of Jesus Christ (Word Made Flesh, 2013)

In the sprawling urban landscape of Kroo Bay Slum, where socio-economic challenges weigh heavily on the shoulders of its residents, the organization Word Made Flesh has emerged as a beacon of hope. This research paper delves into a comprehensive evaluation of Word Made Flesh's initiatives and their impact on the unemployed youth within the confines of Kroo Bay Community. With an emphasis on empowerment, education, and community development, this study assessed the efficacy of Word Made Flesh's interventions and shed light on the tangible improvements witnessed in the lives of the youth. Furthermore, the research identifies potential areas for enhancement, exploring innovative strategies and recommendations to optimize the organization's efforts in addressing the unique challenges faced by the unemployed youth in Kroo Bay Slum. By critically examining the existing framework, this paper aspires

to contribute valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on community development, social empowerment, and sustainable change in marginalized urban environments.

Global unemployment presents a formidable challenge, affecting both advanced economies and, notably, exerting a more severe impact on developing nations, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa. Poku-Boansi and Afranie's (2011) findings underscore this disparity, revealing an alarming 34.2 percent unemployment rate across Africa, translating to one in every three members of the labor force being without work. Leahy's (2007) observation further accentuates the severity of the issue, indicating that a substantial proportion of the unemployed population in Africa is below 35 years old. This demographic insight highlights a critical concern: the youth in Africa, a vital demographic for the continent's future, are predominantly without meaningful employment, thereby hindering their contribution to the socio-economic advancement of their communities.

Zooming into Sierra Leone intensifies the concern, with the country grappling with one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the West African sub-region, reaching 45.8% of the total unemployment figure in 2008 (Ministry of Labor, 2008). However, this statistic merely scratches the surface of a complex predicament. Despite a cultural inclination towards education among Sierra Leone's youth, it falls short as a remedy for life's hardships in the country. The youth confront high rates of inactivity, and underemployment, and endure poor working conditions characterized by long hours and low pay, leaving a significant number aimlessly roaming without prospects of securing stable employment. The roots of this multifaceted problem are entrenched in various factors, including skills mismatch, an expanding labor supply unmet by collective demand, political instability, and challenging economic conditions.

Stakeholders universally acknowledged that addressing youth unemployment is pivotal for a nation's stability and enduring economic development (*UN Holds Forum to Find Ways to Tackle Problem of Youth Unemployment*, 2012). Insights derived from the impacts of youth unemployment, particularly in Sierra Leone, inform this understanding. Sierra Leone, despite its youthful demographic comprising 44% of the entire population and 60% of the total youth population within the employment age, grapples with a persistent challenge of accessing secure jobs. This dilemma mirrors the socio-economic and security factors entrenched in the country, consistently labeling Sierra Leone as one of the world's poorest nations according to the World Bank (World Population Review, n.d.).

The ramifications of youth unemployment extend beyond economic domains, exerting an irrevocable effect on the behavior of the youth—a global warning bell. The Kroo Bay slum community in Sierra Leone serves as a stark testament to the catastrophic extent of youth unemployment, where lofty aspirations persist amid limited resources and instability. Recognizing the paramount link between education and employment, particularly for Sierra Leone's youth, is crucial. Economic and developmental progress in this context typically commences around the age of 25, emphasizing the urgency for comprehensive and sustainable solutions to the intricate challenges posed by youth unemployment in Sierra Leone.

Presently, Sierra Leone occupies the 151st position out of 157 countries on the Human Capital Index (HCI), a comprehensive metric gauging the anticipated level of productivity a child born today can attain by the age of 18. This index, as reported by the Directorate of Science, Technology, and Innovation (DSTI) in 2019, pivots on crucial indicators, primarily revolving around health and education. In the Sierra Leone context, the expectation is for children to complete 9 years, encompassing both primary and junior secondary education. This HCI ranking

sheds light on the challenges faced by the nation in optimizing the human capital potential of its youth, emphasizing the critical intersections of health and education in shaping the prospects of the younger generation (DSTI, 2019).

Over time, Sierra Leone has endeavored to fortify its economy, striving for the betterment of its citizens. Despite these efforts, the nation finds itself ensnared in a disheartening labyrinth of social, economic, and environmental challenges, prominently marked by an alarming prevalence of unemployment, particularly among its vibrant youth demographic.

The repercussions of elevated youth unemployment reverberate across the socio-political and economic fabric of a nation, casting a shadow over its developmental trajectory. This research undertakes a nuanced exploration, honing in on Kroo Bay as a microcosm, seeking to unravel the intricate threads that connect local experiences to broader societal impacts. By delving into the root causes of unemployment, the study aims to unravel the intricacies of vulnerability among certain individuals to the far-reaching consequences of joblessness. Moreover, it endeavors to dissect the economic ramifications of this pervasive phenomenon.

At its core, this study aspires to provide qualitative insights, offering a narrative that illuminates the profound effects of youth unemployment on the social fabric of Sierra Leone, with a specific focus on the marginalized community of Kroo Bay. Through an examination of individual experiences, the research intends to unveil the hidden struggles and challenges faced by the youth in this context. Beyond mere documentation, the overarching purpose is to foster a heightened awareness of the intricacies surrounding youth unemployment, instigating a paradigm shift in the perception and behavior of the country's young population.

In essence, this research seeks not only to diagnose the malaise of youth unemployment but, more critically, to catalyze societal transformation. By shedding light on the plight of youth in Sierra Leone, it endeavors to spark conversations, inspire action, and contribute to a collective consciousness that empowers the youth to surmount the hurdles of unemployment and envision a more promising future for themselves and their nation.

Statement of the Problem

The unemployment crisis gripping the Kroo Bay slum municipality, particularly in its heart, the Kroo Bay slum area, stands as an alarming and complex challenge. A comprehensive sociological examination of this locale unveils staggering levels of unemployment, giving rise to profoundly concerning behaviors among its youth population. The repercussions are stark, with a surge in criminal activities that pose a significant threat to public peace and order. The litany of crimes includes drug abuse, theft, shoplifting, vandalism, alcohol offenses, disorderly conduct, assault-like bullying, child and parent physical disagreements, public drug consumption, possession of weapons, unauthorized use of motor vehicles, reckless endangerment, and burglary. These nefarious activities have not only captured public attention but also cast a looming shadow over the tranquility of the area. Law enforcement, represented by diligent police patrol teams, struggles incessantly to apprehend those responsible for such offenses, yet the challenges are formidable.

A poignant aspect of this predicament is the historical context woven into the fabric of the Kroo Bay slum community. The majority of its youth, presumed to be former child combatants transitioning into young adulthood, were, shockingly, coerced into armed conflicts during the brutal 1991-2002 civil

wars, some recruited as early as five years old for the rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). This research, driven by an imperative need for understanding, seeks to unravel the intricate ways in which unemployment catalyzes the behaviors exhibited by the youth in the Kroo Bay slum area.

The four cardinal geographic zones of the Kroo Bay slum, typically vibrant from dawn till dusk, witness a disconcerting predominance of illegal activities. This disheartening reality underscores the urgent need for focused attention and empathetic understanding. Instead of viewing the youth through a lens of condemnation, there exists an opportunity for intervention, rehabilitation, and empowerment. By delving into the nexus between unemployment and the array of criminal behaviors manifested, this research endeavors not only to diagnose the malaise but to propose avenues for sustainable change. With the right resources, attention, and understanding, the youth of the Kroo Bay slum area possess the latent potential to extricate themselves from the clutches of despair and transform their surroundings into a beacon of resilience, hope, and constructive community engagement.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

Aim of the Study

This research endeavors to meticulously evaluate the efficacy of Word Made Flesh programs within the complex context of the Kroo Bay area, specifically focusing on their impact on youth unemployment and the behavioral conduct of the young population residing in the Kroo Bay slum in Freetown. The central aim is to conduct a comprehensive analysis, shedding light on the tangible outcomes and effectiveness of Word Made Flesh initiatives in addressing the multifaceted challenges prevalent in this marginalized community.

By scrutinizing the programs implemented by Word Made Flesh, this study aims to discern the extent to which they contribute to alleviating youth unemployment issues in the Kroo Bay area. Additionally, it seeks to delve into the nuanced dynamics of how these programs influence the conduct and actions of the youth within the challenging context of the Kroo Bay slum. The research methodology encompasses a multifaceted approach, incorporating quantitative and qualitative measures to provide a nuanced understanding of the program's impact on unemployment rates and the social behaviors of the youth population.

This study goes beyond a mere assessment of quantitative metrics; it aspires to capture the voices and narratives of the youth, offering qualitative insights into their lived experiences and the perceptible changes resulting from the Word Made Flesh interventions. By elucidating the intricate interplay between the programs and the socio-economic landscape of Kroo Bay, the research seeks to not only gauge effectiveness but also to offer valuable recommendations for program enhancement and future community development initiatives.

In essence, this research is positioned as a vital tool for stakeholders, policymakers, and organizations involved in community development. It strives to contribute meaningful insights into the intricate web of challenges faced by the youth in Kroo Bay, evaluating how Word Made Flesh programs act as catalysts for positive change and sustainable solutions within the unique socio-economic milieu of the Kroo Bay slum in Freetown.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

This study is driven by a set of specific objectives designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted issue of youth unemployment in the Kroo Bay slum. Each objective aims to unravel distinct dimensions of the problem and assess the impact of Word Made Flesh (WMF) interventions, particularly the flagship program "Good News Club." The objectives are elaborated as follows:

1. Determine the Root Causes of Youth Unemployment

Identify and comprehend the underlying reasons contributing to the unemployment of young individuals in the Kroo Bay slum.

2. Investigate Socio-economic Repercussions

Analyze the socio-economic consequences stemming from youth unemployment in the Kroo Bay slum. This objective aims to uncover how the lack of employment opportunities impacts not only individual lives but also the overall well-being and dynamics of the community.

3. Assess the Effects of Youth Unemployment

Delve into the direct and indirect effects of youth unemployment on the Kroo Bay slum community. This objective strives to understand the broader implications, including shifts in social dynamics, mental health challenges, and potential pathways leading to negative behaviors among the youth.

4. Evaluate Perceptions of Youth Unemployment

Gauge the subjective perspectives and experiences of individuals within the Kroo Bay slum community regarding the effects of youth unemployment. This objective seeks to incorporate the voices and narratives of community members, offering qualitative insights into their lived realities.

5. Evaluate the Impact of the Word Made Flesh Activities

Scrutinize the overall impact of Word Made Flesh activities in the Kroo Bay slum. This objective aims to measure the effectiveness and reach of WMF interventions in addressing various challenges faced by the community, with a particular focus on youth empowerment and employment.

6. Evaluate the Impact of "Word Made Flesh Programs" on Unemployment

Specifically assess the influence and outcomes of Word Made Flesh's flagship programs, "Good News Club, Tutoring, Lighthouse, Women's and Men's Network" on mitigating unemployment issues among the youth in Kroo Bay. This objective aims to quantify and qualify the program's role in creating positive changes in the employment landscape of the community.

By aligning these objectives, this study aspires to provide a nuanced and holistic perspective on the complexities surrounding youth unemployment in the Kroo Bay slum while critically evaluating the

impact of Word Made Flesh initiatives, ultimately contributing to informed decision-making and the formulation of targeted interventions for sustainable community development.

Research Questions

This inquiry examines the causes, socio-economic consequences, and the local perceptions surrounding youth unemployment in Kroo Bay slum community. The study aims to elucidate potential solutions and initiatives for mitigation. The Research Questions is as follows:

1. What is the impact of youth unemployment in the Kroo Bay slum community, and what viable solutions exist to address this issue?

This research seeks to comprehensively explore the multifaceted impact of youth unemployment within the Kroo Bay slum community. By examining the socio-economic consequences and local perceptions surrounding this phenomenon, the study aims to unveil the nuanced challenges faced by unemployed youth. Furthermore, it endeavors to identify and evaluate viable solutions and initiatives that hold the potential to effectively address the issue of youth unemployment in Kroo Bay. The research intends to contribute valuable insights to inform strategic interventions and policy recommendations, fostering a holistic understanding of the problem and propelling actionable measures for positive socio-economic change within the community.

Significance of the Study

This research holds immense potential to offer invaluable support to educational departments, acting as a foundational pillar for future studies within this domain. It not only provides a groundwork for researchers and academics but also catalyzes further exploration and expansion of knowledge in the field. By shedding light on the intricacies of youth unemployment in the Kroo Bay slum community, this investigation becomes a critical resource for educational institutions, enabling a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by young individuals in marginalized settings.

Beyond its academic significance, this study seeks to recommend implications for government officials overseeing the welfare of the Kroo Bay slum community. The findings underscore the urgency of implementing policies that foster a sense of security and well-being among the unemployed youth population. By illuminating the intricate connections between unemployment, behavior, and societal well-being, this research becomes a driving force for informed policy decisions aimed at fostering positive change within the community.

One of the primary goals of this research is to raise awareness among target groups and governing bodies, urging them to take swift and effective action to mitigate the adverse effects of unemployment on the behavior of young individuals. The study recognizes unemployment not merely as a statistical figure but as a pervasive issue with far-reaching consequences, affecting individuals, families, and entire communities. By delving into the unique challenges faced by diverse demographics, from ethnic minority youth to experienced professionals, the research emphasizes the multifaceted nature of the issue and advocates for tailored interventions.

This study holds particular relevance for organizations like Word Made Flesh, offering foundational insights that inform future planning and implementation strategies for youth empowerment

and unemployment alleviation. It also serves as a valuable resource for local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with objectives centered on youth empowerment. By confronting current challenges head-on, NGOs can use the research as a springboard to introduce innovative employment strategies, providing a pathway for the rehabilitation of unemployed young individuals and demonstrating that positive change is achievable even in challenging circumstances.

Furthermore, the study's utility extends to the general public and concerned citizens, as a possible benchmark for related issues within the country. By offering a comprehensive understanding of the impact of youth unemployment, the research empowers individuals to engage in informed discussions and advocate for meaningful change. Additionally, the study may raise awareness among publishers, writers, and illustrators, encouraging them to incorporate these critical issues into their narratives and literature. This serves as a powerful mechanism for advocacy, fostering a collective call to action and inspiring positive change in societal perceptions and attitudes toward youth unemployment.

Limitations of the Study

This study adopts a descriptive and qualitative research approach, acknowledging that the findings are inherently subject to various interpretations. The qualitative nature of the study delves into the nuanced aspects of behaviors influenced by unemployment, emphasizing that the outcomes are not universally generalizable but specifically applicable to the context of the Kroo Bay slum neighborhood. The deliberate scope limitation centers the research on the unique challenges faced by this particular community.

The methodology of this research is grounded in an observational sociological lens, complemented by the technical expertise of the sociologist. Research was conducted randomly within the four major ghettos and two street wash car parks, locations where youths congregate, discuss their struggles, engage in transactions, and seek livelihood opportunities. However, it's essential to acknowledge that this focus on specific areas limits access to other potential settlements of unemployed youth, particularly those active during nighttime hours, which could have provided valuable supplementary insights.

A critical consideration is the temporal constraints imposed on the research. The study occurs during holidays, an election cycle, and a season of inflation, which may influence the perspectives of those interviewed. This temporal context adds layers of complexity to the findings, and the potential impacts of these external factors need to be carefully interpreted. The condensed timeline further affects the robustness of the study's methodologies, particularly in the development and implementation of questionnaires and sampling procedures.

Additionally, financial constraints serve as a limiting factor, influencing both the sample size and the geographical coverage of the study. The budgetary limitations impact the depth and breadth of data collection, potentially restricting the diversity of perspectives and experiences that could be captured. Despite these constraints, the study endeavors to maximize the available resources to glean meaningful insights into the behavioral dynamics of unemployed youth in the Kroo Bay slum.

In conclusion, while this research acknowledges its methodological and contextual limitations, it strives to offer a rich and contextually relevant exploration of the impact of unemployment on youth behaviors within the Kroo Bay slum neighborhood. The study's findings are expected to contribute

valuable qualitative insights, recognizing the specificities of the chosen setting and contextual factors that shape the experiences of unemployed youth in this community.

Definition of Key Terms

Unemployment

The concept of unemployment has been the subject of diverse interpretations among scholars. To ensure clarity and alignment in this research, we will anchor our understanding using the concepts and definitions provided by the International Labor Organization (ILO). The ILO, as a global authority on labor-related matters, offers a comprehensive framework that standardizes the definitions of employment and unemployment, providing a solid foundation for our investigation.

According to the ILO, employment encompasses individuals of working age engaged in paid employment or self-employment during a specified period. In contrast, the unemployed are individuals of working age who, during the reference period, lack employment, are actively available for work, and are diligently seeking employment opportunities (Ferreria, 2017). This definition incorporates both the state of joblessness and the active pursuit of work, emphasizing the dynamic nature of the labor market.

Furthermore, the ILO recognizes the importance of international comparability and standardization. The working-age population is generally defined as individuals aged 15 and older, although variations may exist based on national laws and practices. This acknowledgment of regional differences ensures a contextualized understanding of employment and unemployment that can be meaningfully compared across diverse global settings.

By adopting the ILO's definitions as our guide, we aim to establish a robust and internationally recognized framework for comprehending unemployment. This approach not only provides clarity within the scope of this research but also contributes to the broader discourse on labor-related issues, fostering a shared understanding that transcends regional variations and aligns with global standards.

The definition of employment, as articulated by the International Labor Organization (ILO), encompasses individuals of working age engaged in various categories during a specified, typically brief, period—such as one week or one day. These categories include a) paid employment, whether actively at work or holding a job but not actively working; and b) self-employment, involving work with an enterprise, whether currently engaged in the task or not. The unemployed, as per the ILO, constitute individuals of working age who, during the reference period, meet the following criteria: a) lack employment, i.e., not involved in paid employment or self-employment; b) are currently available for work, indicating readiness for paid employment or self-employment during the reference period; and c) are actively seeking work, signifying that specific steps have been taken in a recent specified period to secure paid employment or self-employment.

To ensure international comparability, the working-age population is commonly defined as individuals aged 15 and older. However, it is crucial to note that variations may exist based on national laws and practices, and some countries may apply an upper age limit. This nuanced definition, provided by the ILO Department of Statistics, serves as a globally recognized framework that not only clarifies the parameters of employment and unemployment but also

facilitates meaningful cross-country comparisons by acknowledging the diversity in age definitions across different regions ILO Department of Statistics. (n.d.)

From a psychological standpoint, unemployment is characterized by the condition in which an individual is not only available for work but is also actively engaged in seeking employment opportunities, all the while being without any current work engagements. This perspective underscores the emotional and mental dimensions of the experience, recognizing the impact that joblessness can have on an individual's psyche, identity, and overall well-being.

The unemployment rate, a pivotal metric in assessing labor market dynamics, is quantified as the percentage of individuals within the labor force who find themselves in a state of unemployment. This widely utilized measure provides insights into the prevalence and severity of unemployment within a given population, acting as a key indicator of economic health and workforce conditions.

In the context of this research, a specific focus is directed towards "youthful unemployment," targeting individuals within the age bracket of 18 to 35 years who are actively in pursuit of employment but are encountering challenges in securing work. This demographic distinction acknowledges the unique challenges and aspirations of young adults entering the workforce, emphasizing their specific struggles in navigating employment opportunities. It recognizes the importance of this age group in the labor force and highlights the specific vulnerabilities they face in their quest for meaningful and gainful employment.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter Review: Understanding Youth Unemployment

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework chosen for this study serves as the guiding structure that underpins the research. It provides a lens through which the causes, consequences, and effects of youth unemployment are analyzed. A comprehensive examination of the chosen theoretical framework helps to establish connections between key concepts and shapes the direction of the study.

Concepts of Youth and Unemployment

The understanding of the concepts of youth and unemployment forms the basis of this study. Youth is often defined within a specific age range, and unemployment is categorized based on the International Labor Organization's definitions, (Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013, n.d.). Establishing clear definitions ensures a consistent understanding of the target population and the phenomenon under investigation.

Causes of Youth Unemployment

An exploration of the causes of youth unemployment is crucial for contextualizing the study. This involves an in-depth analysis of factors such as educational attainment, vocational skills, rural-urban migration, and the role of social networks. A review of existing literature on these causes helps to identify patterns and trends within the context of the study area.

Consequences of Youth Unemployment

Understanding the consequences of youth unemployment delves into the socio-economic and psychological impacts on individuals and communities. The review likely covers areas such as increased crime rates, drug peddling, mental health issues, and challenges in meeting basic needs. This section lays the groundwork for assessing the broader implications of youth unemployment beyond mere joblessness.

Effects of Youth Unemployment

The effects of youth unemployment on the community, as well as the potential contribution of unemployed youth to social vices, political unrest, and economic stagnation, are explored. The literature review likely highlights the interconnectedness of youth unemployment with various aspects of community life and development.

Related Studies on Youth Unemployment

A comprehensive literature review includes an examination of studies that share similar themes or focus on youth unemployment in different contexts. Identifying related studies allows for comparative analysis, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the challenges and potential solutions.

Significance of the Chapter

This chapter serves as the intellectual foundation of the study, offering a comprehensive review of theoretical underpinnings, key concepts, and existing literature. It establishes a context for the subsequent analysis of data, helping to frame the research questions and hypotheses.

Implications for Data Analysis

The insights gained from the review of the theoretical framework and related studies will inform the interpretation of findings during data analysis. The connections between theoretical concepts and empirical observations will be crucial in drawing meaningful conclusions and providing actionable recommendations.

In summary, this chapter serves as a critical review of the intellectual landscape surrounding the study, providing a theoretical and conceptual framework that informs the subsequent stages of research and analysis.

Theoretical Framework

Unveiling Unemployment Theories: Keynesian and Marxist Perspectives in the Sierra Leonean Context

This section delves into a comprehensive exploration of two prominent theories of unemployment—Keynesian and Marxist perspectives—providing insights into their applicability in understanding the complex unemployment scenario in Sierra Leone. By juxtaposing these theories, we aim to unravel the intricate dynamics shaping unemployment in the context of Sierra Leone's socio-economic landscape.

Keynesian Theory of Unemployment

The Keynesian theory, pioneered by economist John Maynard Keynes, posits that unemployment is primarily a consequence of insufficient aggregate demand in the economy.

Keynes argued that inadequate overall demand could lead to prolonged periods of high unemployment. An economy's output of goods and services is the sum of four components: consumption, investment, government purchases, and net exports (the difference between what a country sells to and buys from foreign countries). Any increase in demand has to come from one of these four components (International Monetary Fund- IMF, 2023)

As IMF discusses, there are three principal tenets in the Keynesian description of how the economy works:

Aggregate demand is influenced by many economic decisions—public and private. Private sector decisions can sometimes lead to adverse macroeconomic outcomes, such as reduction in consumer spending during a recession. These market failures sometimes call for active policies by the government, such as a fiscal stimulus package (explained below). Therefore, Keynesian economics supports a mixed economy guided mainly by the private sector but partly operated by the government.

Prices, and especially wages, respond slowly to changes in supply and demand, resulting in periodic shortages and surpluses, especially of labor.

Changes in aggregate demand, whether anticipated or unanticipated, have their greatest short-run effect on real output and employment, not on prices. Keynesians believe that, because prices are somewhat rigid, fluctuations in any component of spending—consumption, investment, or government expenditures—cause output to change (imf.org, 2014)

In Sierra Leone, where economic fluctuations and downturns are not uncommon, the Keynesian lens becomes particularly relevant. High unemployment rates may stem from reduced consumer spending and business investment. Consequently, Keynesian solutions, such as government intervention through fiscal policies like increased public spending and strategic investments, become crucial to stimulate demand and revive economic activity.

This study, therefore presumes that Sierra Leone's economy has not been growing fast enough to absorb the teeming unemployed youth because the manufacturing sector is weak. The weakness of the manufacturing sector is a result of weak macroeconomic fundamentals including low aggregate demand.

Marxist Theory of Unemployment

Taking a Marxian perspective, unemployment in Sierra Leone can be examined through the lens of structural inequalities inherent in the capitalist system. Marxist theory contends that unemployment is an inherent feature of capitalism, arising from the exploitative relationship between labor and capital. In Sierra Leone, where disparities in wealth and access to resources are evident, unemployment can be seen as a manifestation of systemic inequalities. The pursuit of profit maximization by the capitalist class may lead to job insecurities and unemployment for the working class. Addressing unemployment, from a Marxist viewpoint, necessitates addressing the fundamental structural issues within the socio-economic system.

Marx's theory of unemployment, delves into the dynamics of job creation within the capitalist framework. According to Marx, the capitalist system inherently involves employing a limited number of workers while leaving a surplus as a reserve army of unemployed individuals (Marx, 1867). In this theory, unemployment is seen as an integral aspect of an unequal capitalist structure, and occasional crises of mass unemployment are seen as predictable outcomes.

Marx contends that capitalism perpetuates and exacerbates unemployment artificially. He argues that the capitalist system promotes unemployment as a means of maintaining control over the labor force. The threat of unemployment, according to Marx, serves as a tool for disciplining workers. When workers

demand higher wages, capitalists may respond by cutting jobs, creating a sense of insecurity among the workforce.

From the Marxist perspective, preventing wage agitations within the capitalist system is crucial for job creation. Marx suggests that the structure of capitalism itself, with its profit-driven motives, leads to a reluctance to employ a larger workforce, especially when faced with demands for increased wages. This reluctance is driven by the capitalist imperative to maximize profits.

Applying this Marxist perspective to the Sierra Leonean economy, one might observe instances where wage negotiations are approached cautiously by professionals. This caution could be attributed to a fear of job loss, aligning with Marx's theory that the capitalist system, in its pursuit of profit, uses unemployment as a mechanism to suppress wage demands.

It's important to note that the application of economic theories to specific contexts, such as Sierra Leone, involves complex factors, and interpretations may vary. Additionally, a comprehensive analysis would require considering the broader economic and political landscape of Sierra Leone.

Synthesis of Theories in the Sierra Leonean Context

In the Sierra Leonean context, a synthesis of Keynesian and Marxist insights may offer a holistic understanding of unemployment. Economic downturns or recessions may exacerbate inequalities, leading to higher unemployment rates. Keynesian interventions, such as targeted public spending and social welfare programs, can address immediate demand-side issues. Simultaneously, adopting Marxist perspectives can guide policies that strive for a more equitable distribution of resources, aiming to mitigate the root causes of unemployment.

Implications for Sierra Leonean Policy Framework

For Sierra Leone's policymakers, a nuanced approach is warranted. Short-term measures aligned with Keynesian principles, including fiscal policies to boost demand, can be complemented by long-term strategies informed by Marxist critiques to tackle systemic issues. Investments in education, healthcare, and social infrastructure can bridge the gap between the working class and the capitalist elite, potentially reducing unemployment in the long run.

In conclusion, the juxtaposition of Keynesian and Marxist theories provides a comprehensive framework for understanding unemployment in Sierra Leone. By recognizing the interplay of demand-side factors and systemic inequalities, policymakers can tailor interventions that address both immediate challenges and the underlying structural issues, fostering a more inclusive and resilient economy.

Concepts of Youth and Unemployment

Defining the demographic group referred to as 'youth' poses a complex challenge, and the criteria for categorizing individuals as 'young people' vary across contexts. In Sierra Leone, the National Youth Policy and the National Youth Commission Act of 2009 offers a specific definition, considering youth as "all Sierra Leonean females and males between the ages of 15 and 35" (*NATLEX - Record Details*,

n.d.-b). This age group faces a myriad of challenges that necessitate comprehensive economic, political, and social support, given the dynamic landscape of issues prevalent in the country.

Sierra Leone, designated as a fragile and low-income country with a population of 7.4 million (UNESCO 2016), is grappling with youth-related challenges. National statistics reveal that 34 percent of the total population falls within the youth category, highlighting the significant demographic presence of young people. Additionally, 44 percent of the country's population is under the age of 15, indicating a substantial youthful population with potential implications for the nation's future. The specific breakdown of the adolescent category (15-19) constituting about 11 percent and those aged 20-24 accounting for 8 percent underscores the diverse composition within the youth demographic (NAYCOM, 2012).

The aftermath of the eleven-year civil war, which concluded in 2002, left a lasting impact on Sierra Leone. The conflict claimed the lives of approximately 50,000 Sierra Leoneans and caused extensive destruction to vital infrastructures, including schools, universities, health facilities, and roads, which were fundamental for the nation's well-being and development (NAYCOM, 2012). Although post-war recovery and development initiatives, supported by various partners, have sought to rebuild the nation's well-being, Sierra Leone continues to grapple with poverty and is positioned among the world's poorest countries.

The World Bank highlights key challenges facing Sierra Leone's economic development. Macroeconomic management is identified as weak, with intensifying fiscal pressures, a worsening debt burden, soaring inflation driven by global supply shocks and exchange rate depreciation, and a decline in the terms of trade. The rise in the cost of living, coupled with weak growth and deteriorating macroeconomic fundamentals, poses a threat to poverty levels within a context marked by insufficient social safety nets. (*Overview*, n.d.)

In essence, the youth of Sierra Leone, as defined within the age range of 15 to 35, represent a substantial portion of the population facing multifaceted challenges arising from historical conflict, economic constraints, and inadequate social support structures. Addressing the needs of this demographic group requires a comprehensive understanding of their diverse circumstances and the implementation of targeted strategies to foster sustainable development and improve their overall well-being.

Sierra Leone contends with the highest youth unemployment rates within the West African sub-region, painting a concerning picture of economic challenges for its young population. An alarming 60% of young Sierra Leoneans are classified as structurally unemployed, a figure that stands out as one of the highest in West Africa. Furthermore, within the regional context, the country faces the grim distinction of having the highest rate of underemployment among its youth, with a significant portion earning less than \$1 per day.

The depth of the issue becomes more pronounced as it is revealed that a substantial proportion of the employed youth still grapple with extreme poverty. Shockingly, over 80% of young Sierra Leoneans find themselves earning below the poverty line of \$2 per day. This dire economic situation can be traced back to the lingering impact of the 11-year civil war, which left a legacy of poverty and a weakened private sector. The aftermath of the conflict has resulted in a low level of coordination to create employment opportunities, exacerbating the unemployment crisis among the youth.

Compounding the issue is a significant skills mismatch between the evolving private sector and the outdated curriculum, contributing to the challenges faced by the youth in securing gainful

employment. The confluence of historical conflict, persistent poverty, and inadequacies in the private sector's development post-civil war has created a complex web of economic hurdles for the youth in Sierra Leone (UN, 2007, cited in NAYCOM, 2012).

In summary, the high youth unemployment rates, structural unemployment challenges, and the prevalence of underemployment in Sierra Leone are deeply rooted in the aftermath of the civil war, enduring poverty, and the struggle to align the education system with the evolving demands of the job market. Addressing these multifaceted issues requires comprehensive strategies that encompass economic revitalization, educational reform, and targeted interventions to create sustainable employment opportunities for the youth.

Youth unemployment in Sierra Leone manifests in a dual nature, with a distinction between those possessing employable skills and those lacking skills, the latter constituting the majority due to high illiteracy rates and limited trade knowledge. While the government's shortcomings in providing a conducive employment environment contribute to the issue, a significant portion of the youth lacks essential skills for gainful employment, hindering their ability to innovate and be entrepreneurial.

The problem of youth unemployment is a critical but often overlooked factor in the country's overall growth and national development. This oversight carries severe consequences, negatively impacting the economy, social cohesion, and national security. Failure to address this issue will perpetuate its adverse effects on the already struggling economic state of the country, posing threats to security and disrupting social harmony.

Unemployed and underemployed youth constitute a substantial proportion of the country's population, exerting immeasurable strain on economic and growth prospects. Simultaneously, this demographic is exposed to conflicts and vulnerable to engaging in illegal activities. The World Bank's Solution for Youth Employment (SYE4) report, underscores the significance of providing stable employment opportunities for Africa's youth. The report argues that:

Businesses risk losing a generation of consumers. Social costs are ever mounting as well. The Arab Spring and subsequent youth-led uprisings in many countries, along with the rise of economic insurgency and youth extremism, demand that we explore the links between economic participation, inequality, and community security, crime, and national fragility through a lens focused on youth. What we see is a generation in an economic crisis (*International Labour Organization*, n.d.)

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Job creation is not only crucial for poverty eradication and sustainable development but also integral to peace-building processes, particularly in post-conflict nations.

These findings align seamlessly with the current youth employment scenario in Sierra Leone. Recent developments, such as the involvement of youth in the Ministry's overseas employment program and their recruitment for service in Iraq, underscore the precarious situation of Sierra Leonean youth

concerning employment and job security. It highlights the urgent need for comprehensive policies and interventions to address the root causes of youth unemployment, promoting stability, sustainable development, and peace in the country.

Causes of Unemployment and its Consequences

The accounting factors for unemployment in Africa, particularly in Sierra Leone, are multifaceted. According to Baah-Boateng (2013), one of the fundamental causes of unemployment, as posited by the implicit contract theory, is the relative risk aversion of employees. This theory suggests that employees may be hesitant to take risks, and this risk aversion contributes to the overall unemployment scenario.

Several additional factors contribute significantly to the high unemployment rate in Sierra Leone. These factors can be categorized into sub-topics, each shedding light on different aspects of the issue:

Poor Education

Poor education serves as a significant contributing factor to the high rate of unemployment, particularly among adolescents, in many African nations. This issue is underscored by the fact that approximately half of the working-age population has only attained basic education. Basic education, in this context, imparts rudimentary reading and writing skills but lacks the depth required for securing formal employment in the labor market (Baah-Boateng, 2013).

Frimpong (2021) adds another layer to this problem by highlighting a crucial mismatch between the educational systems in Africa and the economic realities outside the school environment. The prevailing educational structure tends to provide a general and literary education that often lacks practical content. This deficiency in practical skills compounds the challenges faced by individuals seeking employment opportunities.

Specifically, in the case of Sierra Leone, the country grapples with significant challenges in its educational system. A substantial portion of the population faces barriers to accessing quality education. These barriers may include inadequate infrastructure, insufficient resources, and socio-economic factors that limit educational opportunities.

The consequence of these challenges is a mismatch between the skills acquired by the workforce and the actual demands of the job market. The education system, in its current state, may not be equipping individuals with the practical skills and knowledge needed by employers. This misalignment perpetuates a cycle of unemployment, particularly among adolescents and young adults who may find themselves ill-prepared to meet the demands of a competitive job market.

Addressing the issue of poor education as a driver of unemployment requires a multifaceted approach. It involves strategic interventions in the education sector to improve access, enhance the quality of education, and align curriculum content with the skills demanded by employers. Additionally, promoting vocational and technical education can play a crucial role in equipping the youth with practical skills that are directly applicable in the workforce. Such targeted efforts can contribute to breaking the cycle of unemployment associated with inadequate education.

Qualities of Markets

According to the U.S. Agency For International Development's Office of Economic Growth (2006), many impoverished nations exhibit dualistic labor markets characterized by a small segment of individuals holding steady formal sector employment, while the majority, especially women, find employment in the informal sector.

Ghai (2003) asserts that official unemployment rates, particularly in low-income countries, might present a misleading picture of employment opportunities. This is primarily because, unlike in affluent nations, unemployment rates tend to be low in most developing countries, driven by the economic reality that individuals in these countries cannot afford to remain unemployed.

The UN's Report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) introduces the concept that higher employment-to-population ratios in developing countries could indicate an abundance of low-quality employment. This perspective challenges the conventional understanding of unemployment rates and emphasizes the importance of assessing the quality and sustainability of jobs.

Ghai (2003) highlights a common phenomenon in many low-income countries where interest rates are high, yet unemployment rates remain low. This paradoxical situation suggests that despite people being formally employed, their earnings are often insufficient to support a basic standard of living. Ghai argues that focusing solely on unemployment rates may not provide an accurate picture of the economic well-being of the working population.

To better gauge employment opportunities, Ghai suggests looking at the proportion of the working population that earns incomes. This alternative perspective takes into account the quality of employment rather than just the quantity. In many low-income countries, the challenge lies not in the scarcity of jobs but in the inadequacy of the earnings associated with those jobs. The discrepancy between high interest rates and low earnings exacerbates the issue, perpetuating a cycle of economic struggle for the working populace.

This economic dynamic becomes particularly problematic for the youth population, as the existing economic structure fails to generate sufficient additional job opportunities. Consequently, these economies find themselves trapped in a cycle of low investment, low employment, and persistent economic challenges—a scenario all too common in many African economies. Breaking this cycle requires holistic economic reforms that address not only the quantity but also the quality of employment opportunities available to the working population.

Corrupt Leadership

Frimpong emphasizes a direct correlation between unemployment and the shortcomings of political leadership, particularly their proclivity for negligence and corrupt practices. In this context, the adoption of a culture centered around retaining power and embezzling public funds further exacerbates the challenges faced by the nation. Frimpong argues that when resources earmarked for sector development are siphoned off for personal gain, the result is stagnation and an inability to move forward, leading to a persistently high rate of unemployed youth (Frimpong, 2021).

The implication here is that the mismanagement of resources by political leaders not only hinders the overall development of sectors crucial for job creation but also perpetuates a cycle of

underdevelopment. The diverted funds, which could have been instrumental in implementing policies and initiatives to generate employment opportunities, are instead misused for personal enrichment. This not only impedes economic progress but also leaves a substantial portion of the youth unemployed.

Frimpong's (2021) perspective underscores the critical role that political leadership plays in shaping the employment landscape of a nation. Addressing youth unemployment requires not only structural and economic reforms but also a commitment to good governance, transparency, and accountability. Efforts to combat unemployment should include measures to curb corruption, promote responsible resource allocation, and foster an environment conducive to sustained economic development. By tackling these systemic issues, nations can create a more favorable environment for job creation and empower their youth to contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of the country.

Poverty

Sen (1973) posits that poverty is not only associated with inequality but is also intricately linked to employment. He illustrates this point by referring to the country reports of the International Labour Organization (ILO), where the classification of a person as unemployed is not solely contingent on joblessness but also considers the adequacy of remuneration. Sen emphasizes that an individual working long hours for low wages may still be categorized as unemployed, highlighting the nuanced nature of the relationship between employment and poverty

In Sen's (1973) work, the extension of unemployment to include poverty is a debated issue. Sen acknowledges the complexity but suggests that labeling individuals as "poor" or "unemployed" may not substantially alter estimates by researchers such as Dendeker and Rath. Their use of estimates remains robust, regardless of the specific labels assigned to individuals facing economic challenges.

This insight underscores the multidimensional nature of poverty; wherein mere employment does not guarantee escape from poverty if wages are insufficient to meet basic needs. Sen's perspective challenges conventional definitions of unemployment and poverty, urging a more comprehensive understanding that considers not only job status but also the quality of employment and remuneration. As policymakers address issues of poverty and unemployment, Sen's framework encourages a holistic approach that goes beyond traditional metrics to capture the nuanced dynamics of economic well-being.

Psychological Impacts and Effects of Well-being

Adolescents, having invested a minimum of two years in educational institutions, harbor dreams and aspirations. These aspirations revolve around the anticipation of securing fulfilling employment opportunities after years of academic struggle. These dreams extend beyond mere financial aspirations; they encompass meeting fundamental life necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, and healthcare. The overarching goal is to graduate into a life marked by comfort, pride, and eventually, the enjoyment of life's luxuries. However, the recurrent disappointment of witnessing these dreams shattered week after week inflicts profound psychological wounds, particularly at such a tender age.

The trauma resulting from the consistent thwarting of their aspirations can leave lasting mental scars that are exceptionally challenging to confront during youth. This emotional distress not only undermines an individual's self-esteem but can also escalate into clinical depression. Conversely, gaining

employment that aligns with one's aspirations not only addresses immediate financial needs but also contributes to a sense of well-being that is holistic and non-deficient.

Former President Bill Clinton aptly expressed the importance of work in organizing and structuring life. His statement, "I do not believe we can repair the basic fabric of society until people who are willing to work have work. Work organizes life. It gives structure and discipline to life" (Frimpong, 2021), encapsulates the transformative power of employment in providing not just financial stability but also a sense of purpose, structure, and discipline to an individual's life. It emphasizes the pivotal role that meaningful employment plays in shaping one's overall well-being and fostering a positive outlook toward the future.

Political Violence and Crime

Regions emerging from conflict, such as Sierra Leone, often grapple with the aftermath of political instability. The lingering effects of past conflicts may disrupt economic activities, making it challenging to generate employment opportunities.

At the point when joblessness develops in a group, disappointment with the occupant Government takes after. According to Iffat Idris (2016) comments, a US Agency for International Development (USAID) report on youth and conflict identified unemployment as a risk factor for young people, asserting that "Young people often participate in violence because membership in extremist organizations provides immediate economic benefits, because violence itself offers opportunities for economic gain through direct payment or looting, or because conflict promises to open up longer term economic options, for example, through patronage if "their" ethnic or religious group captures power" (2005: 4). Idris (2016) similarly indicates that few studies examine the link between unemployment and crime specifically among young people.

Nedeljkovic (2014) posited that the repercussions of youth unemployment in Europe extend beyond mere economic implications, encompassing profound social costs. The adverse effects on individual youth are multifaceted, ranging from social exclusion to a diminishing sense of motivation, and, in extreme cases, even adverse impacts on mental and physical health. This intricate web of consequences can subsequently perpetuate a vicious cycle, limiting career opportunities and heightening the risk of falling into the grips of poverty. The interconnected nature of these challenges underscores the urgency of implementing comprehensive strategies to mitigate the social and economic toll of youth unemployment in Europe.

Azeng and Yogo (2013) assert that the ramifications of elevated youth unemployment rates extend beyond economic concerns to encompass the political stability of a nation, particularly within the context of low developing countries (LDCs). The study underscores that a substantial prevalence of unemployment among the youth demographic can be a destabilizing force, posing challenges to the political landscape. This instability is often rooted in a range of socio-economic factors, including disparities in opportunities and access to resources, which may contribute to social unrest and political discontent. Therefore, addressing youth unemployment becomes not only an economic imperative but also a crucial aspect of ensuring sustained political stability in low developing countries.

Youths' Attitude Towards Work and Youth Unemployment

The issue of youth unemployment has been ascribed, in part, to attitudes held by the youth themselves. Ascone's (2015) exploratory study in Australia uncovered surprising findings. Despite a youth unemployment rate of 17.5% in Melbourne and over 20% in Sydney, North Tasmania, and Queensland, Ascone identified more than ten job vacancies in Melbourne within an hour, requiring little or no experience. The conclusion drawn from this study was that many youths were unemployed not due to a lack of job opportunities but because of perceived selectivity. This underscores the significance of attitudes shaping employment outcomes.

Viscusi (2009) introduces a different perspective, asserting that youth engage in criminal behavior as a rational choice, evaluating potential rewards from criminal activities against those from employment. This argument interweaves with the issue of attitude toward youth unemployment. According to Viscusi, a considerable number of youths remain unemployed because they opt for easier, albeit illicit, ways of making money.

O'Reilly et al. (2015) connects attitudes toward work with family legacies, suggesting that parental unemployment and poverty instill a sense of hopelessness and despair in youths. Consequently, youths from such backgrounds develop a negative attitude toward work, discouraging them from seeking employment. Tubadji's (2012) study in Greece highlights the rise of discouraged young job seekers, attributing this phenomenon to the perception of limited employment opportunities among the youth.

In Kenya, Mugambi et al. (2014) found that the prevalent negative attitude toward informal employment contributes to youth unemployment. Many Kenyan youths, influenced by societal expectations, aspire for white-collar jobs, creating a preference for formal employment over informal opportunities. Kamau and Ngumbu's (2013) study reveals low enrollment rates in technical and vocational training centers due to negative community attitudes toward these career paths, seen as last resorts.

Parents further contribute to this scenario by equating success with academic performance and formal employment, discouraging alternative routes such as entrepreneurship and farming (Afande et al., 2015). The fear of risk-taking is also prevalent among Kenyan youths, leading them to favor long-term employment with stable income streams over uncertain opportunities (Mutua et al., 2017).

However, not all is bleak. Studies by Awiti and Scott (2014) and Zollmann and Gubbins (2016) in Kenya found that a significant percentage of youths prefer entrepreneurship over traditional careers. This preference is driven by a desire for confidence, success, and pride, indicating a positive shift in attitudes. The studies also highlight the resilience of Kenyan youths, with aspirations of homeownership, caring for parents, securing good jobs, and achieving financial stability (Kabiru et al., 2013).

In summary, attitudes play a pivotal role in shaping the employment landscape for youths, influencing their choices between formal and informal employment, their risk tolerance, and their openness to entrepreneurship. Addressing negative attitudes and fostering a more positive outlook toward diverse employment opportunities could contribute significantly to mitigating youth unemployment.

Economic Shocks

Sierra Leone, akin to numerous African nations, is susceptible to a spectrum of economic shocks, encompassing both domestic and global dimensions. These shocks, arising from various factors, exert a profound impact on key sectors of the economy, consequently diminishing the availability of job opportunities.

Domestic economic shocks in Sierra Leone may emanate from factors such as political instability, policy uncertainties, or inadequate infrastructure. Political unrest or uncertainty can disrupt economic activities, deterring local and foreign investments essential for job creation. Similarly, insufficient infrastructure, including transportation and energy, can impede business operations, stifling employment growth.

On the global front, Sierra Leone is subject to the reverberations of fluctuations in the international economic landscape. Global economic crises, commodity price volatility, or disruptions in international trade can have a cascading effect on the country's economic stability. Such external shocks may directly impact sectors vital for job provision, leading to a contraction in employment opportunities.

In times of economic downturns, industries like mining, agriculture, and manufacturing, which are crucial for employment generation in Sierra Leone, often bear the brunt of these shocks. Reductions in production, scaling back of investments, or closures of businesses within these sectors can exacerbate the unemployment challenge.

Sierra Leone is confronted with considerable economic difficulties, exacerbated by various shocks such as the impact of Russia's conflict in Ukraine and lapses in policy. The nation has experienced a persistent increase in inflation, a sharp depreciation of its currency, and a heightened level of risks associated with debt. These challenges underscore the need for strategic economic measures and effective policies to navigate through the complexities arising from global events and internal factors. The situation necessitates a comprehensive approach to address inflationary pressures, stabilize the currency, and manage debt-related risks for the country's economic well-being (IMF, 2023)

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Additionally, strengthening social safety nets can provide a buffer for vulnerable populations during economic uncertainties. By undertaking such measures, Sierra Leone can enhance its capacity to weather economic shocks and, in turn, mitigate the adverse effects on employment.

Inadequate Infrastructure

The deficiency in robust infrastructure, spanning critical areas such as transportation, energy, and communication systems, poses a substantial impediment to both economic growth and the generation of employment opportunities.

In the realm of transportation, inadequate infrastructure translates to inefficient movement of goods and people. Poor road networks, insufficient public transportation, and limited connectivity between regions hamper the smooth flow of commodities and impede the mobility of the workforce. This not only inflates logistical costs for businesses but also constrains the accessibility of job opportunities for individuals residing in distant or poorly connected areas. As mentioned in the aforementioned world bank report,

With economic growth and jobs increasingly concentrated in urban areas, inadequate or unsafe transportation infrastructure further compromises rural youths' access to employment opportunities. This remains particularly challenging for young women... At the same time, the lack of roads or rail and poor transport or communications infrastructure can significantly constrain entrepreneurship or agripreneurship among rural youth, and thus further undermine income-generating activities (World Bank Overview, n.d.)

The energy sector plays a pivotal role in industrial activities, and a lack of reliable energy infrastructure can severely curtail productivity. Frequent power outages or an insufficient power supply disrupt manufacturing processes and discourage investments in energy-intensive industries. As a consequence, the dearth of energy infrastructure can stifle the growth of sectors that would otherwise contribute significantly to job creation.

Communication systems, encompassing internet connectivity and telecommunications, are indispensable for modern businesses and remote work. Inadequate infrastructure in this domain limits access to information, hinders online business operations, and curtails opportunities for remote employment. In a globally connected world, where digital communication is integral, the absence of robust communication infrastructure can isolate businesses and job seekers, hindering their participation in the broader economic landscape.

Addressing these infrastructural challenges demands concerted efforts in both policy formulation and implementation. Governments and relevant stakeholders need to invest strategically in building and upgrading transportation networks, ensuring energy reliability through diversified sources and improved distribution systems, and enhancing communication infrastructure for seamless connectivity. Public-private partnerships can play a pivotal role in mobilizing resources and expertise for these endeavors.

By bolstering infrastructure, a country can enhance its economic competitiveness, attract investments, and pave the way for the creation of a more robust job market. Moreover, improved infrastructure not only facilitates the smooth functioning of existing businesses but also lays the foundation for the emergence of new industries and entrepreneurial ventures, ultimately fostering sustainable economic development and job opportunities.

Weak Private Sector

The fragility of the private sector, often rooted in the aftermath of historical conflicts, poses a formidable constraint on its ability to generate an ample number of employment opportunities. A vibrant and robust private sector is indispensable for job creation and serves as a linchpin for overall economic development.

The legacy of historical conflicts can cast a long shadow on the private sector, manifesting in various ways. Emerging from the civil war that ended in 2002, private sector development was an explicit strategy to reduce fragility and accelerate human development in Sierra Leone. The government, for example, touted “mining for peace”; the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) argued that reforms enacted to attract foreign investors helped make “progress towards achieving peace and stability”; and the African Development Bank claimed to “spread the peace dividend” by “supporting private sector development and business enabling environment.” ... Much was made of the pre-Ebola boom in the extractives sector in which the country marked 22–25 percent GDP growth, making Sierra Leone the fastest growing economy in the world (Ganson & M’cleod, 2019)

A thriving private sector plays a pivotal role in job creation through the establishment and expansion of businesses. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs), in particular, are vital contributors to employment, providing opportunities for a diverse range of skills and expertise. These enterprises, when supported and nurtured, have the potential to become significant engines of job growth.

Unfortunately for Sierra Leone as discussed by Ganson and Mcleod (2019) Private-sector led economic growth from 2002 to 2014 did little to break Sierra Leone's cycle of fragility. Indeed... Physical infrastructure may have been damaged, disrupting business operations and deterring potential investors. Legal frameworks and institutions essential for fostering a conducive business environment may have been weakened, leading to uncertainty and hindrances in the establishment and growth of businesses. Moreover, the erosion of trust among stakeholders, coupled with the prevalence of corruption, can further impede the private sector's capacity to flourish... Contrary to the rhetoric of peace dividends and stability, the private sector remained one of the vectors for persistent poverty, increasing inequality, and growing instability (Ganson & M’cleod, 2019)

To address the challenges faced by the private sector, targeted interventions are necessary. Governments can implement policies aimed at rebuilding and fortifying the legal and institutional frameworks that underpin business operations. This includes initiatives to streamline regulations, enhance contract enforcement mechanisms, and combat corruption. Additionally, efforts to rehabilitate and upgrade physical infrastructure, such as transportation and energy systems, contribute to creating a more conducive environment for private sector activities

Encouraging entrepreneurship and supporting SMEs through access to finance, training, and mentorship programs are instrumental in fostering a dynamic private sector. Financial incentives, tax breaks, and other forms of support can stimulate investments, leading to business growth and, consequently, increased job opportunities.

International collaborations and partnerships can also play a crucial role in strengthening the private sector. Foreign direct investment, technical assistance, and knowledge transfer can contribute to revitalizing businesses and enhancing their competitiveness on a global scale.

In summary, recognizing and addressing the weaknesses in the private sector, particularly those stemming from historical conflicts, is paramount for unlocking its potential as a catalyst for job creation and economic development. By fostering an environment conducive to business growth and innovation, nations can harness the transformative power of the private sector to drive sustainable employment opportunities and overall economic prosperity.

Skills Mismatch

The existing mismatch between the skills held by the workforce and those sought by employers underscores a critical challenge contributing to structural unemployment. This misalignment, if unaddressed, can perpetuate a cycle of joblessness and hinder economic progress.

In a 2017 Country brief, The International Labour office partnered with Statistics Sierra Leone for a School to- Work Survey (SWTS) below: are some of their findings:

Human capital and mismatch... Most of the surveyed youth had attended school or a training programme at some point in their lives (80.6 per cent). Nearly half of the youth population (48 per cent) was enrolled in school in 2015 with the remaining having either completed school (4.4 per cent) or left school before graduation (28.2 percent). Still too many young people are excluded from the educational system. In 2015, 25.8 per cent of young women and 13.1 percent of young men had no schooling or training. – SWTS results showed a strong correlation between the levels of education and a young person's labour market transition: the higher the educational attainment, the more likely a young person was to complete his or her labour market transition to stable and/or satisfactory employment. – With relatively low levels of educational attainment, it is not surprising to find that a vast majority of employed youth in Sierra Leone were undereducated for the job they were doing (75 per cent in 2015). Rarely were the respondents classified as overqualified for their occupation (2.9 percent). Underutilization of the youth labour potential remains a top concern – The survey registered a high youth labour underutilization rate, particularly among young women: it was 72.8 per cent for young women and 59.9 per cent for young men. The share of underutilized labour potential consisted of 48.5 percent of the youth population in irregular employment (either in self-employment or paid employment with contract duration less than 12 months), 11.8 percent unemployed and 5.9 percent inactive non-students. – The most disadvantaged in finding work are those who finish their education at the secondary level: the unemployment rate of a young person with general secondary education was 17.4 per cent in 2015 compared to 7.9 per cent for a university graduate and 8.0 per cent for youth who finished school at the primary level. (ILO, 2017)

To effectively grapple with this multifaceted issue, a holistic and focused strategy is imperative, necessitating concerted actions from various quarters, including the government, private sector, and other stakeholders. Policymakers bear the responsibility of crafting nuanced strategies that delve into the root causes of unemployment, laying the foundation for an environment conducive to sustained economic growth and the generation of employment opportunities.

One pivotal aspect of this strategy involves recalibrating education and training programs to align with the evolving demands of the job market. Collaborative efforts between educational institutions and industries can facilitate the development of curricula that impart relevant, up-to-date skills, ensuring that the workforce is equipped with capabilities that resonate with contemporary employment needs. Additionally, fostering a culture of continuous learning and upskilling within the workforce is crucial in adapting to the ever-changing landscape of employment.

Furthermore, targeted interventions in sectors with high growth potential can catalyze job creation. Identifying industries that align with the nation's economic strengths and investing in their expansion can unlock employment opportunities. This strategic focus on key sectors can stimulate economic activity, leading to a cascading effect on job creation across various skill levels.

Incentivizing entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) also plays a pivotal role. Creating an enabling environment for the establishment and growth of businesses empowers individuals to become job creators. Support mechanisms such as access to finance, mentorship programs, and simplified regulatory frameworks can nurture a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem.

A comprehensive approach must also address social and economic disparities. Targeted interventions that consider the unique challenges faced by marginalized groups, including women and minorities, contribute to a more inclusive workforce. Policies that promote diversity and equal opportunities not only enhance social equity but also harness a broader talent pool for economic development.

In essence, tackling the intricate web of factors contributing to unemployment requires a collaborative, forward-thinking approach. By fostering synergy between education, industry, and policy, Sierra Leone can chart a course toward a resilient, inclusive, and thriving economy that befits the aspirations of its workforce.

Learned Helplessness

Another theory that may affect youth and the attitudes to work is the concept of “learned helplessness” posited by psychologist Martin E.P. Seligman (Peterson et al., 1993). This refers to a state that occurs after a person has experienced a stressful situation repeatedly. This theory suggests that there are negative psychological and sociological effects of prolonged joblessness. Although causation between unemployment and its psychological effects may not be as easy to quantify there is more awareness in modern times of the necessity to protect mental health and of the “discouraged worker effect” Discouraged worker effect refers to workers who get discouraged in their job search as their perception of getting employment decreases. As mentioned by Bjornstad since individual discouragement decreases with aggregate search effectiveness there are positive externalities attached to individual search intensity. This opens for multiple unemployment equilibria. At low levels of equilibrium unemployment aggregate search effectiveness is high. At high levels of unemployment many unemployed workers are discouraged and withdraw themselves from the search process. (Bjørnstad, 2006)

Effects of Unemployment

Social Effects of Youth Unemployment

The ramifications of youth unemployment extend far beyond the economic realm, permeating into the social fabric of individuals and communities. The study by Lorenzini and Giugni (2010) underscores the profound impact of joblessness on various facets of an individual's well-being, delving into the intricate connections between unemployment and social isolation.

At its core, youth unemployment can be a catalyst for social isolation, dismantling the intricate web of social contacts and collective participation that forms the tapestry of community life. The psychological toll of being unemployed often manifests in feelings of depression and loneliness, creating a fertile ground for negative coping mechanisms. The psychological distress inflicted by prolonged joblessness can even escalate to the point where individuals contemplate suicide or engage in detrimental activities that further exacerbate their plight.

A crucial aspect of this social unraveling is the erosion of self-esteem. Unemployment can cultivate a pervasive sense of inadequacy, where individuals view themselves as burdens to their families and society at large. This negative self-perception can spiral into a cycle of despair, impeding efforts to seek new opportunities and contribute meaningfully to the community.

The study by Gul et al. (2012) underscores the far-reaching social and private costs associated with youth unemployment. These costs extend beyond the financial realm and encompass issues such as homelessness, debt, poverty, and family tensions. The breakdown of family relationships and housing stress further compound the challenges faced by the unemployed youth, fostering an environment rife with stigma and alienation. The corrosive effects of unemployment also manifest in increased crime rates, reflecting the desperate measures individuals might resort to when faced with limited economic prospects.

Importantly, these adverse effects are not static; they intensify with prolonged periods of unemployment. The longer individuals grapple with joblessness, the deeper the scars on their mental, emotional, and social well-being. The study paints a stark picture of the cascading consequences that unfold when the social and psychological toll of unemployment is allowed to fester over time.

Addressing these profound social implications requires a multifaceted approach that goes beyond conventional economic interventions. Comprehensive mental health support, community engagement programs, and targeted social welfare initiatives can serve as pillars to mitigate the social fallout of youth unemployment. By recognizing the interconnectedness of economic hardship and social well-being, societies can foster resilience, restore self-esteem, and rebuild the social fabric that weaves individuals into the collective tapestry of community life.

Morin and Kochhar (2010) shed light on the profound impact of unemployment, transcending individual hardships to strain the very fabric of social connections. One of the poignant observations they make is the strain unemployment places on familial and friendship ties precisely when the unemployed individual is most in need of support. The rupture of these crucial social bonds further exacerbates the challenges faced by those grappling with joblessness.

A noteworthy finding highlighted by Morin and Kochhar is the corrosive effect of prolonged unemployment on one's outlook. Long-term unemployment engenders a pronounced sense of cynicism about the prospects of securing a job. This disillusionment can cast a long shadow, affecting not just the immediate job search but permeating into broader aspects of life, including mental well-being and overall resilience.

Llyas (2015) expands the canvas to illustrate how unemployment extends its tendrils beyond individual lives, casting a shadow on the entire economy. The ramifications of widespread unemployment reverberate through society, presenting multifaceted challenges. The deleterious impact on the economic landscape becomes a collective burden, with societal well-being at stake.

The assertion that unemployment, particularly among the youth, corrodes well-being and inflicts wounds on self-esteem aligns with broader understandings of the psychosocial toll of joblessness. Beyond the tangible economic struggles, unemployment can be a silent assailant on mental health, eroding self-worth and nurturing a sense of helplessness among the youth.

In navigating the complex web of consequences wrought by unemployment, the importance of holistic support mechanisms becomes apparent. Interventions should extend beyond traditional economic remedies to encompass robust social support structures. Initiatives that strengthen familial and community bonds, coupled with mental health services, can serve as vital components of a comprehensive strategy to mitigate the social and psychological fallout of unemployment. Recognizing the interconnectedness of individual struggles and societal well-being becomes paramount in crafting effective responses to the pervasive challenges posed by unemployment.

The Eurofound study from Mascherini et al. (2017) underscores the profound and enduring consequences of long term youth unemployment, highlighting what is referred to as "scarring effects." That early experience and scarring effect can have lifelong economic and social impact.

The amalgamation of poverty and joblessness can leave indelible marks on individuals, perpetually heightening economic, social and psychological distress. On a global scale, unemployment emerges as a symptom of deep-seated structural challenges, resonating with broader economic and social issues.

Sum et al. (2014) drawing from studies conducted in the United States of America emphasize the scarring effects faced by youth struggling to integrate into the labor market. This challenge is particularly pronounced for early entrants into the workforce, impacting their ability to navigate a competitive and dynamic employment landscape. The notion of scarring implies not just a transient setback but a lasting impairment to the individual's capacity and resilience in the face of future labor market demands.

Steinberg (2013) expands on the far-reaching consequences of youth unemployment in her work, "The High Costs of Youth Unemployment." The ramifications extend beyond the individual to encompass the entire country's economy. Prolonged unemployment during youth results in a dearth of skills and experiences crucial for professional development. This deficiency translates into diminished future earnings for individuals throughout their careers, perpetuating a cycle of low purchasing power that spans their entire lives.

The ripple effects on the national economy are significant, exacerbating youth unemployment and contributing to a broader reduction in economic growth. Ayres (2013) underscores the pivotal role of

addressing youth unemployment not only as a matter of individual well-being but as a strategic imperative for fostering sustained economic vitality. In this context, interventions aimed at alleviating youth unemployment acquire heightened importance, not merely as short-term solutions but as investments in the long-term resilience and prosperity of both individuals and the nation as a whole.

Mitchell (2012) articulates a compelling argument about the multifaceted impact of youth unemployment, emphasizing its far-reaching consequences across social, individual, and economic dimensions. The ramifications of this phenomenon extend well beyond the immediate challenges of joblessness, encompassing significant societal, psychological, and familial repercussions.

1. Social Exclusion

Youth unemployment contributes to social exclusion, wherein individuals are marginalized from mainstream societal activities. This exclusion can foster a sense of alienation and disconnection from broader community life.

2. Loss of Skills

Unemployment among the youth results in the loss or stagnation of skills. The lack of opportunities to apply and enhance skills diminishes their market relevance, hindering both personal and professional development.

3. Economic Impact

Beyond individual circumstances, the loss of current output due to youth unemployment has economic implications. A portion of the workforce remains untapped, leading to unrealized economic potential and productivity.

4. Psychological Problems and Increased Suicide Rates

Mitchell highlights the psychological toll of youth unemployment, manifesting in increased rates of suicide. The stress and despair associated with prolonged unemployment can have severe consequences on mental health.

5. Reduction in Life Expectancy

The adverse effects of unemployment can extend to physical health, contributing to a reduction in life expectancy. Chronic stress, limited access to healthcare, and the overall strain of unemployment can impact one's well-being.

6. Loss of Motivation

A lack of employment opportunities can lead to a loss of motivation among the youth. The absence of clear pathways to success and fulfillment can erode the drive to achieve personal and professional goals.

7. Undermining Family Life and Relationships

Unemployment often exerts strain on family life and relationships. Financial instability and the challenges of unemployment can lead to tensions within households, affecting the overall well-being of families.

8. Gender and Racial Inequality

Mitchell underscores how youth unemployment contributes to gender and racial inequality. Certain demographic groups may face disproportionate challenges in accessing employment opportunities, exacerbating existing social disparities.

9. Loss of Responsibility and Social Values

Unemployment can lead to a sense of disempowerment and a loss of social responsibility. Individuals may feel disconnected from societal values, contributing to a broader erosion of community cohesion.

10. Health

The stress and strain associated with unemployment can contribute to ill health. The inability to afford healthcare and meet basic needs exacerbates health disparities among the unemployed youth.

In summary, Mitchell's argument illuminates the pervasive and interconnected consequences of youth unemployment, urging a comprehensive approach to address not only the economic aspects but also the profound social and psychological challenges it engenders. Efforts to mitigate youth unemployment must consider its holistic impact on individuals and society at large.

The impact of youth unemployment extends beyond economic dimensions, significantly affecting the well-being of individuals and the broader societal fabric. Nedeljkovic (2014) highlights several dimensions of this impact:

1. Reduction in Happiness and Mental Health

Unemployment among the youth correlates with a decrease in happiness levels and an increase in mental depression. The inability to secure employment can lead to a sense of purposelessness and societal exclusion, contributing to mental health challenges among the youth.

2. Socio-economic, Political, and Cultural Isolation

Employment is not just an economic necessity; it serves as a social identifier, providing individuals with a sense of acceptance in the community. Youth unemployment, therefore, goes beyond economic consequences and can lead to socio-economic, political, and cultural isolation. This isolation has broader implications for social cohesion and community integration.

3. Stress, Unemployment Worries, and Health Issues

The stress associated with unemployment, coupled with worries about future employment prospects, can result in various health issues. Individuals facing unemployment may experience mental health challenges, resort to increased consumption of drugs and alcohol, and even engage in criminal activities as a coping mechanism.

4. Waste of Skilled Human Resources and Talent

Youth unemployment poses a risk of wasting valuable human resources and talent. Many young graduates, despite their skills and knowledge, may find it challenging to secure employment that allows them to contribute to production, innovation, and economic growth. This underutilization of skills represents a significant loss for both individuals and the economy.

5. Negative Consequences on Productivity and Economic Growth

A high youth unemployment rate has direct consequences on productivity and economic growth. The untapped potential of a large segment of the youth population hampers overall productivity. Skilled individuals who could contribute to economic development remain underutilized, impacting the nation's capacity for innovation and growth.

6. Increased Economic Costs

Youth unemployment results in increased economic costs for the country. Governments often bear the burden of providing social benefits to unemployed individuals. Simultaneously, the reduction in the workforce contributes to decreased tax revenue. This economic imbalance can strain national finances and hinder investments in critical areas.

Nedeljkovic's (2014) insights emphasize the interconnectedness of economic, social, and individual well-being. Addressing youth unemployment requires comprehensive strategies that go beyond mere job creation, including mental health support, community integration initiatives, and policies that facilitate the effective utilization of youth potential in the workforce.

Muiya's research on the nature, challenges, and consequences of urban youth unemployment, particularly in Nairobi's Mathare areas, exposed the multifaceted impact of unemployment on the youth population. One stark consequence is the upsurge in crime rates, notably driven by unemployed female youth turning to prostitution as a means of income. The erosion of self-esteem and the challenges associated with proper housing contribute to social issues like premarital sex, affecting teenage girls (2014). Balunzi (2001) emphasized the vulnerability of unemployed young people, who, when left without adequate support, may resort to activities like drug abuse, alcoholism, and crime. The transition from unemployment to engaging in petty activities poses both social and economic challenges, demanding integration into society.

The Commonwealth Youth Programs (2007-2015) added another layer to the consequences of youth unemployment, noting that it can extend the period during which young people stay with their parents, resulting in increased family tension and financial crises. Young girls and women, seeking to

contribute to their families' income, may drop out of school earlier, exacerbating the cycle of limited opportunities. The overall picture painted by these insights is one of a cascade of challenges, from economic losses and social disintegration to the individual struggles faced by young people in the absence of gainful employment. Addressing youth unemployment requires comprehensive strategies that not only create job opportunities but also provide support for social integration, mental health, and education.

Effects of Unemployment on Earnings/Income/Wages

Altonji et al (2009) conducted a comprehensive study modeling earnings dynamics using indirect inference to estimate a joint model of earnings. They discovered that short-term earnings losses from unemployment are reflected in both hours of work and long-term wages. Elements such as lost tenure, movement to a low-paying job, and a drop in autoregressive skill impact human capital accumulation, a source of wage growth over a career. Their findings highlight the intricate relationship between job terms, mobility, and their substantial effects on the variance of future earnings. Moreover, they emphasized the role of employment shocks, education, and gender in shaping an individual's future earnings.

Cameron and Muellbauer (2000) delved into the models of relative regional log earnings, analyzing full-time men's and women's relative earnings and unemployment rates in ten regions of Great Britain. They found a negative relationship between earnings and unemployment, indicating a long-term negative effect of prolonged unemployment on earnings, especially for men employed full-time.

Cooper (2013) employed a standard modified version of the Mincerian earnings function to explore the impact of unemployment duration on future earnings. His study revealed that overall job loss negatively affects workers' earnings, resulting in persistent poor income. Workers experiencing long-term unemployment spells suffered long-term negative income effects, consistent with the idea that unemployment leads to the loss of human capital and other scarring effects.

Ileanu et al. (2008) utilized simple linear regression models to investigate factors influencing earnings and found that education, experience, sex, and location were statistically significant variables. These variables were deemed important for inclusion in the earnings function and intellectual capital.

Eli (n.d.) an economist, used the OLS method to analyze the earnings gap between genders and other variables, revealing a significant difference in male and female incomes. Notably, even with the same average education level, women earned more for each additional level of schooling, particularly at the early stages of their careers. The study emphasized the impact of marital status on men's income, with single men experiencing changes in productivity and wage levels.

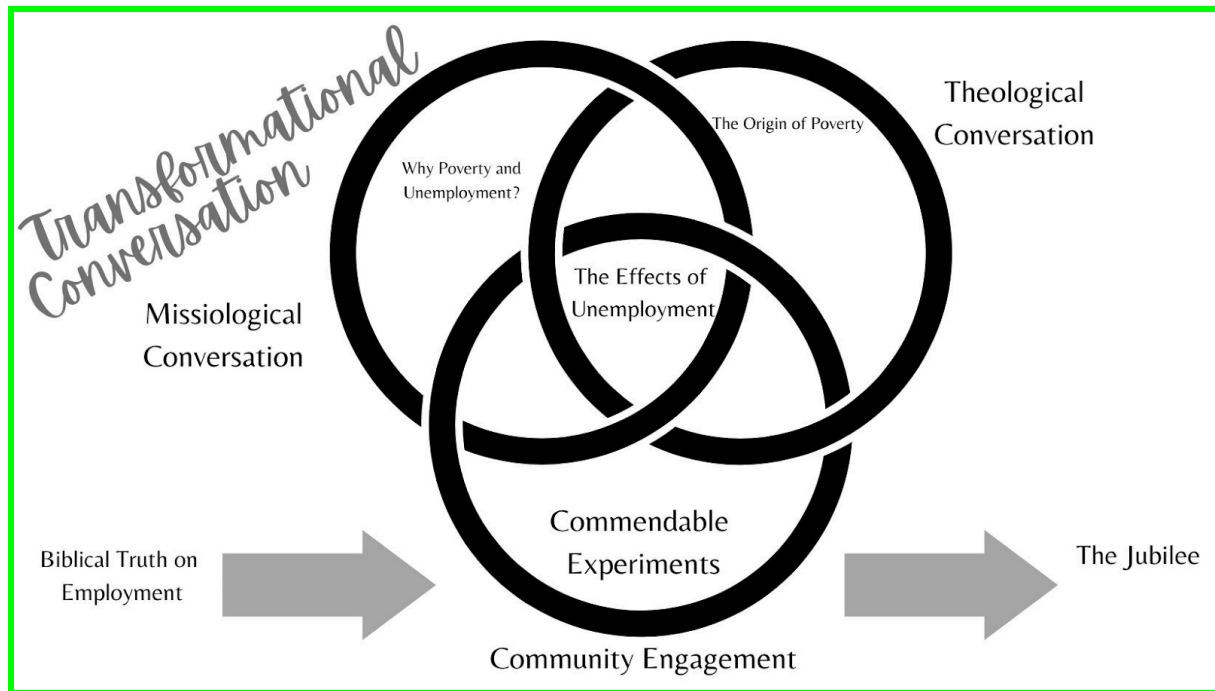
Bringing together these theoretical perspectives, the research aims to explore the impact of inadequate education, youth attitudes toward employment and self-empowerment, and Keynesian economic principles on the employment disposition of Sierra Leonean youth. The integration of theoretical frameworks, along with the theological framework discussed in Chapter 3, will form a robust foundation for the research process, providing insights into the complex interplay of economic, social, and individual factors shaping youth unemployment in Sierra Leone.

CHAPTER THREE

THEOLOGICAL AND MISSIOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 3.1

Transformational Conversation



Research Framework

The foundational framework of this research rests upon the concept of Transformational Conversation, which serves as the cornerstone for exploring the intricate dynamics of the Kroo Bay slum community. This Theological Conversation acts as a guiding lens, enabling a comprehensive examination of the root causes that contribute to the persistent challenges of unemployment and poverty within the community. By engaging in this transformative dialogue, we aim to unearth nuanced insights that transcend conventional analyses, providing a holistic understanding of the multifaceted issues at play.

The significance of this Theological Conversation lies in its ability to illuminate not only the surface-level manifestations of unemployment and poverty but also the deeper, systemic factors that underpin these challenges. This approach allows us to go beyond merely identifying problems; it empowers us to explore creative and contextually relevant solutions. The aim is not just to address the symptoms but to strategically tackle the structural issues that perpetuate unemployment and poverty, fostering a pathway for sustainable and transformative development.

Through the lens of Transformational Conversation, we aspire to foster a collaborative exploration of possibilities and interventions. This research seeks not only to diagnose the challenges

faced by the Kroo Bay slum community but to co-create solutions with the community members. By doing so, we strive to catalyze a positive and impactful change that resonates with the unique socio-cultural context of the community.

In essence, the utilization of a Transformational Conversation as the guiding theological framework positions this research as more than an academic endeavor—it becomes a catalyst for holistic transformation. It envisions a future where the Kroo Bay slum community transcends the constraints of unemployment and poverty, embracing sustainable development and improved well-being through collaborative, community-driven initiatives.

What Is Poverty?

The interpretation and cultural significance of poverty exhibit considerable variation across countries and individuals. While many individuals and organizations commonly associate poverty with financial constraints, as highlighted by the World Bank's characterization of poverty as a "pronounced deprivation in well-being," it is imperative to explore how this prevailing viewpoint aligns with the biblical understanding of the underprivileged.

Delving into the scriptural perspective, the Bible talks about poor people over a 100 times. Though exceptions exist depending on the actual term used, the biblical context predominantly refers to dispossession and lowliness when addressing poverty. Nuanced distinctions prompt a deeper examination of the multifaceted layers of poverty as portrayed in the Bible, transcending a purely financial lens. (*What Does the Bible Say About Poor People?*, n.d.)

Beyond the conventional monetary connotations, the Bible underscores a holistic view of poverty that encompasses various dimensions of well-being. It invites contemplation on the spiritual, emotional, and relational aspects of poverty, challenging a singular focus on material lack. This scriptural exploration prompts us to question whether our contemporary understanding of poverty fully encapsulates the intricate tapestry of human existence, as depicted in biblical teachings.

By juxtaposing the conventional economic lens with the biblical portrayal, this research seeks to bridge the gap between different perspectives on poverty. It aims to unravel the profound implications of poverty as delineated in the Bible, encouraging a more comprehensive and empathetic understanding. Through this exploration, the goal is not only to enrich academic discourse but also to inform practical approaches and interventions that address the diverse dimensions of poverty in a manner that aligns with biblical teachings and cultural sensitivities.

Sierra Leone's Concept of Poverty

In Sierra Leone, poverty manifests in multifaceted dimensions, extending beyond mere economic insufficiency. It encompasses the stark realities of inadequate food, makeshift shelter under leaky roofs or even on the streets, threadbare clothing, a dearth of employment opportunities, and limited access to essential healthcare facilities. For many adults, the harshness of poverty is epitomized by prolonged

dependency on parents or guardians, unable to secure a job and dim prospects of ever owning a car or home.

In the context of Sierra Leone, poverty also takes on spatial and environmental dimensions. It might mean dwelling in a mud or zinc home, constructed from corrugated iron, situated in a slum environment. Extreme forms of poverty extend to scavenging for sustenance and resorting to street begging, illustrating a state of abject destitution.

Understanding the socio-cultural landscape of Sierra Leone is crucial for grasping the complexities of poverty. Given the predominant religiosity of the population, notions of destiny and God's plan often intertwine with perceptions of poverty. This research seeks to unravel these intricate connections by observing how Christian beliefs shape attitudes toward poverty and unemployment. By delving into these cultural and religious nuances, the study aims to shed light on the intricate interplay between faith, societal perceptions, and the lived experiences of poverty in Sierra Leone. Through this exploration, the goal is to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding that goes beyond economic indicators, acknowledging the profound impact of cultural and religious perspectives on the perception and experience of poverty in this unique context.

The Origin of Poverty

In the Christian perspective, poverty transcends a mere lack of life's essentials or the "pronounced deprivation in well-being" as defined by worldly standards. It is seen as a condition rooted in the Adamic sin—the fall of humanity, which resulted in spiritual poverty (lacking salvation) and physical poverty (prone to ill health and mortality). The Genesis narrative highlights the initial instance of poverty when Adam and Eve, following their disobedience, became spiritually and physically naked, only to be clothed by God (Genesis 2:25, 3:7, 10, 11, and 21-24, New International Version).

Crucially, God's wealth and abundance were not withdrawn from creation despite the consequences of human disobedience. His wealth remains available to all, irrespective of nation or individual circumstances. The question then arises: Why is there a disparity between the rich and the poor? The answer lies not in God's partiality but in the human inclination towards selfishness in wealth distribution. This selfishness, contributing to the perpetuation of economic inequality, is a driving force behind the rich becoming richer and the poor becoming poorer.

Poverty is a deprivation of basic human needs to support life. The causes of poverty among different nations are multi-dimensional in that they include geographical, historical, cultural and political causes— in other words, whether or not a nation's people have equal access to water, education, medicine, the distribution of economic assets, geographical isolation, hazards, religious beliefs, gender biases, civil conflicts, greed and so on.

The World Bank defines levels of poverty: extreme poverty, which is experienced by 1 billion of the world's peoples who make less than \$1 per day; moderate poverty wherein people make \$2 per day and so meet their most basic survival needs, and relative poverty where individuals lack the things the middle class takes for granted. Statistics indicate that extreme poverty is deeply entrenched in Africa.

The good news is that solutions are available. They involve a global effort, a collective effort to stop the cycle of poverty experienced by individuals and entire countries. We are rich in resources for ending poverty and many individuals and organizations are involved in just this effort. We can change the statistic that 8 million people die each year because they don't have the financial means to survive, that 1 to 3 million African children succumb to malaria each year (Beckwith, 2022).

Understanding poverty from this comprehensive perspective allows for a nuanced exploration of its roots, acknowledging that solutions must address not only immediate needs but also the systemic and structural challenges that perpetuate inequality and impoverishment. This research aims to unravel these layers, offering insights that contribute to a more holistic understanding and, ultimately, effective strategies for combating poverty.

Writing on the root of poverty, Miller and Guthrie (2001) add poverty can be a mindset:

Except for catastrophic events such as war, drought, or flood, physical poverty doesn't "just happen." It is the logical result of the way people look at themselves and the world, the stories that they tell to make sense of their world... They say, or their actions say for them, "I am poor. I will always be poor, and there is nothing I can do about it." Or, as many say today, "I am poor because others made me poor. They are going to have to solve my problem. I cannot."

As with other false worldviews, this kind of thinking is rooted in man's [humanity] rebellion against his Creator; as the Creator made a world of abundance and blessing. Man's [humanity] alienation from God (and God's principles) produces a culture of poverty that further poisons the mind, spirit, and heart. This pauper mentality has consequences in the physical world, leaving people poor and hungry and unable to even imagine a way of escape. (p. 63)

To crown it all, we have seen poverty as a complicated issue that involves the whole man.

We've looked at poverty as deficits, as entanglement, as a lack of access to social power, as powerlessness, and as a lack of freedom to grow. All have added important elements to our picture. We can conclude that poverty is a complicated social issue involving all areas of life-physical, personal, social, cultural, and spiritual. At some level, however, we must also conclude that poverty is in the eye of the beholder. We see what our worldview, education, and training allow us to see. We need to be aware of this and work hard at seeing all there is to see. (Myers, 2008)

I believe that we can create a poverty-free world because poverty is not created by poor people. It has been created and sustained by the economic and social systems that we have designed for ourselves; the institutions and concepts that make up that system; the policies that we pursue. Yunus (n.d.) (The Nobel Peace Prize 2006, n.d.-b)

Pragmatism is imperative in any discussion on poverty. While we've acknowledged the historical roots of poverty in the Adamic sin, it's crucial to recognize that contemporary factors contribute significantly to the perpetuation of poverty. Present-day challenges, such as senseless wars, the impact of capitalist structures, widespread diseases and outbreaks, environmental crises like floods, famines, and droughts, pollution, the looming threat of global warming, natural disasters like mudslides and

hurricanes, and the repercussions of economic policies, all play pivotal roles in the persistence and exacerbation of poverty.

This multifaceted perspective emphasizes that poverty is not a static, isolated issue but a dynamic outcome of complex interactions between human actions, socio-political structures, and environmental conditions. Understanding poverty in this holistic context allows for a more nuanced and comprehensive approach to addressing its myriad causes and effects.

In light of these varied contributors to poverty, the pragmatic stance involves not only recognizing the theological roots but also engaging with the contemporary realities that amplify and perpetuate impoverishment. This research endeavors to navigate these intricate layers of causation, offering a pragmatic understanding that informs not only the theoretical discourse on poverty but also practical solutions and interventions to alleviate the diverse challenges faced by communities in their struggle against poverty.

Here are some scriptural references given for the causes associated with poverty in Proverbs:

Table 3.1

Scriptural References for Causes of Poverty

Scriptural References	Causes of Poverty
Pro. 13:23	Oppression, injustice
Pro. 23:21	Drunkenness
Pro. 12:24, 27, 13:24, 19:15,24	Laziness
Pro. 14:23	Idle chatter

Perpetual economic hardship for some individuals often stems from a lack of diligence in their approach to work. In our contemporary society, where financial stability is intricately linked to industrious efforts, a failure to engage in diligent work can result in enduring economic challenges. It is crucial to recognize that in the complex tapestry of our existence, diligent labor is a key component for navigating the demands of life and securing one's livelihood.

Moreover, it is imperative to reflect on the foundational principle that God Himself is the creator of work. The biblical narrative unfolds with the divine architect engaging in purposeful labor, laying the groundwork for the fundamental human activity of work. This divine example not only underscores the intrinsic value of labor but also establishes a theological framework that emphasizes the dignity and purpose embedded in our efforts to sustain ourselves and contribute to society.

The biblical account in Genesis 2:1-3 further illuminates this understanding, highlighting that God, after engaging in creative work, rested on the seventh day. This narrative not only emphasizes the sacred concept of rest but also establishes a rhythm between work and rest. Recognizing that God initiated this pattern encourages us to approach our work with a sense of purpose, recognizing it as a divine mandate that mirrors the creative order.

This research seeks to delve into the interplay between individual diligence, economic well-being, and the theological significance of work. By exploring these connections, the goal is to offer nuanced insights that navigate the complexities of economic poverty, drawing from both practical wisdom and a profound theological perspective on the divine nature of diligent labor. He's given us the responsibility to:

- Manage the earth
- Subdue it and
- Fulfill it

The notion of idleness and overwork as significant transgressions finds its roots in the belief that we dishonor God by being lazy and refusing to engage in meaningful work. Laziness, condemned as a sin, is highlighted in various biblical passages, emphasizing its association with poverty. Proverbs, in particular, underscores this connection, stating that laziness leads to destitution (Pro. 21:25, 10:4, 12:24). The New Testament further echoes this sentiment, declaring that anyone who refuses to work shall not partake in the sustenance of meals (2 Thessalonians 3:7-10; 1 Timothy 5:8).

However, it is crucial to strike a balance and recognize the importance of creating time for rest. This echoes the sentiment expressed by Parker Palmer that self-care is not a selfish act. The biblical emphasis on rest as seen in the divine act of resting on the seventh day encourages a holistic approach to well-being that encompasses both industrious labor and essential periods of rest.

Examining the distinctions between the diligent and the lazy, as delineated in the Book of Proverbs according to the NIV Life Application Study Bible, offers practical insights into the characteristics and consequences of these contrasting approaches to work.

Nonetheless, it is essential to acknowledge that while personal choices such as laziness and idleness contribute to individual unemployment and poverty, there are systemic factors beyond an individual's control. Oppression and generational poverty are examples of systemic challenges that transcend individual actions. This research aims to unravel the intricate interplay between individual responsibility and systemic influences, offering a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of unemployment and poverty. By exploring both personal and structural dimensions, the goal is to contribute to a nuanced discourse that informs strategies and interventions addressing these complex societal issues.

Now, let's delve into the contrasting traits between the diligent and the lazy, as articulated in the Book of Proverbs and elucidated in the NIV Life Application Study Bible. These verses offer practical insights into the distinctive characteristics and outcomes associated with these two approaches to work and life. In Proverbs, diligence is extolled for its virtues, emphasizing qualities such as industriousness, commitment, and a strong work ethic. The diligent are depicted as individuals who apply themselves wholeheartedly to their tasks, seek improvement, and demonstrate resilience in the face of challenges.

Conversely, the lazy, as depicted in Proverbs, is characterized by a lack of initiative, procrastination, and a tendency to avoid responsibilities. The consequences of laziness are portrayed as detrimental, leading to poverty, missed opportunities, and a general lack of success. The contrasting portraits painted in Proverbs provide a vivid picture of the profound impact of one's work ethic and approach to tasks on their overall well-being.

As we explore these distinctions, it is essential to recognize that the biblical wisdom in Proverbs does not merely serve as a moralistic judgment but offers practical guidance for navigating life. This research seeks to deepen our understanding of these biblical principles, considering their relevance in contemporary society. By examining these age-old teachings, the study aims to draw connections between biblical wisdom and practical applications in addressing the challenges of unemployment and poverty, fostering a holistic approach that blends timeless truths with contemporary insights.

Table 3.2

Scriptural References for Diligence and Laziness

Scriptural References	The Diligent	The Lazy
Pro. 10:4	Become rich	Are soon poor
Pro. 10:5, 26	Gather crops early	Sleep during harvest, they are an annoyance
Pro. 12:11	Have abundant food	Chase fantasies

It is crucial to recognize that while laziness and idleness can be individual contributors to the challenges of unemployment and poverty, a comprehensive understanding must acknowledge other factors beyond an individual's control. These factors often transcend personal choices and operate on a systemic level, influencing entire communities and generations. Two such systemic challenges that merit attention are Oppression and Generational Poverty.

What Is Oppression?

It is crucial to recognize that while laziness and idleness can be individual contributors to the challenges of unemployment and poverty, a comprehensive understanding must acknowledge other factors beyond an individual's control. These factors often transcend personal choices and operate on a systemic level, influencing entire communities and generations. Two such systemic challenges that merit attention are Oppression and Generational Poverty.

Oppression, as a systemic factor, refers to the pervasive and unjust exercise of power that limits opportunities and stifles the progress of certain groups within society. This can manifest in various forms such as discriminatory policies, unequal access to education and employment, and other institutional

barriers. Oppression becomes a formidable barrier for individuals striving to break free from the cycles of unemployment and poverty, highlighting the need for structural changes to foster equal opportunities.

Generational Poverty, another systemic challenge, encapsulates the cyclical nature of poverty that persists across generations within families. This phenomenon is often perpetuated by limited access to quality education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Breaking free from generational poverty requires interventions that address systemic inequalities and empower individuals with the tools and resources needed to create sustainable change.

This research endeavors to unravel the complex interplay between individual agency and systemic influences, recognizing that a holistic understanding of unemployment and poverty must encompass both dimensions. By shedding light on systemic factors such as oppression and generational poverty, the study aims to contribute to conversations surrounding policy changes and community initiatives that can pave the way for a more equitable and just society.

In his insightful work, "Basic Old Testament Vocabulary of Oppression," Hank Thomas delves into the nuanced understanding of oppression as depicted in the Old Testament. Thomas explores the multifaceted nature of oppression, drawing from the rich tapestry of biblical narratives to illuminate the various dimensions of this pervasive theme.

The Old Testament, being a repository of profound wisdom and ethical teachings, offers a comprehensive vocabulary to describe and analyze oppression. Thomas navigates through these linguistic nuances, examining the words and phrases employed in the ancient texts to convey the concept of oppression. This linguistic exploration not only enriches our understanding of the Old Testament's cultural and historical context but also provides a lens through which to interpret the enduring impact of oppression on human societies.

By scrutinizing the Old Testament's vocabulary of oppression, Thomas brings to light the intricate ways in which oppressive structures and behaviors were articulated and confronted in biblical times. This research, inspired by Thomas's work, aims to further this exploration, drawing connections between the Old Testament's insights and contemporary discussions on oppression. Through a thoughtful examination of the Old Testament's vocabulary, the study seeks to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of oppression and its implications for societal dynamics, human rights, and ethical considerations in the modern world.

During the time of the judges, Israel repeatedly fell under the yoke of foreign powers, until finally, it chose the monarchy. Even under Solomon Israel began to feel the weight of internal oppression, as Samuel had warned (1 Sam. 8). During the divided kingdom, both North and South repeatedly suffered oppression by national oligarchies that commonly collaborated with the dominant foreign Empires-Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, and, after the Exile, Persia, Greece, and Syria. (Vocabulary of Oppression, n.d.)

The New Testament, a literary product of a time when Israel found itself under the formidable rule of the Roman Empire, provides a unique lens through which to examine the dynamics of oppression. This historical context is crucial for understanding the narratives and teachings that emerged during a period when Israel, often a small and vulnerable nation, grappled with the dominance of powerful empires. It is a historical reality that Israel frequently contended with the influence of imperial powers, often in

collaboration with local oligarchies, perpetuating oppressive systems to maintain the prevailing "status quo."

Hank's (1984) insightful analysis delves into specific verses within the scriptures, unraveling the Bible's perspectives on oppression, the role of God in the face of such adversity, and the profound effects of oppression on individuals and communities. By scrutinizing these verses, Hank offers a nuanced interpretation that goes beyond a surface reading, revealing the intricate interplay between human agency, divine intervention, and the enduring consequences of oppressive structures.

This research endeavors to build upon Hank's analysis, exploring the New Testament's portrayal of oppression as a dynamic force that shaped the social, political, and religious landscape of its time. By unpacking the layers of meaning embedded in these biblical passages, the study seeks to illuminate how the New Testament grapples with the complexities of oppression and resilience. Ultimately, the goal is to draw connections between the ancient wisdom of the scriptures and contemporary discussions on justice, human rights, and the pursuit of a more equitable and compassionate society.

According to Thomas Hanks, a linguistic scholar, the essence of the experience of oppression in Hebrew finds its roots in the verb "ashaq," a term recurrently employed 37 times in the Bible. This linguistic anchor extends to the noun 'osheq.' The significance of "ashaq" is further illuminated when one considers its etymological connection to an Arabic counterpart denoting "harshness, roughness," or more pointedly, "injustice."

Hanks contends that the semantic depth of "ashaq" encapsulates a spectrum of devastating effects that oppression inflicts upon individuals and communities. It serves as a linguistic portal through which the multifaceted nature of oppression is revealed. As articulated by Hanks, oppression manifests in impoverishment, neglect, the infliction of pain, the ultimate act of killing, and the dehumanizing force of humiliation.

In delving into the intricacies of these Hebrew terms, one unravels a narrative of societal and individual suffering. "Ashaq" encapsulates not only the physical weight of injustice but also the emotional toll it exacts on the oppressed. The interconnectedness between the Hebrew and Arabic roots underscores the universality of the experience, emphasizing that oppression is a concept that transcends linguistic and cultural boundaries.

In essence, Hanks' exploration of these Hebrew words serves as a linguistic map guiding us through the terrain of human suffering under the weight of oppression. It prompts a reflection on the profound impact of injustice and reinforces the notion that understanding the language used to describe oppression is pivotal to comprehending the full scope of its consequences.

The interplay between poverty and oppression is intricate and deeply entrenched in societal dynamics. Oppression, characterized by unjust treatment and control, often manifests as a prolonged and intense force. Through the lens of societal perception, poverty itself is frequently viewed as a manifestation of oppression. This perspective arises from the understanding that poverty, in its various dimensions, acts as an agent of dehumanization, subjecting individuals to substandard living conditions and compelling them to endure less-than-ideal circumstances in their daily lives.

Beyond the economic constraints, poverty inflicts a profound loss of human dignity, entailing not only the struggle for basic needs but also compromising fundamental human rights. The erosion of rights

spans across multiple realms, encompassing civil, property, political, and legal domains. The impoverished find themselves grappling not only with material scarcity but also with a diminishing agency to exercise their inherent rights within society.

Examining history, particularly through the lens of the New Testament, offers a poignant illustration of the entrenched link between poverty and oppression. The backdrop of the Roman Empire's dominion over Israel during that era casts a shadow over the narrative. Throughout its historical trajectory, Israel often found itself as a small and vulnerable nation subjected to the dominance of mighty empires. This recurring theme paints a vivid picture of a society grappling with an oppressive status quo, further compounded by collaboration from local oligarchies invested in preserving the existing power structures.

In essence, the narrative of poverty and oppression becomes woven into the fabric of societal structures, where economic disparities intertwine with political and legal disenfranchisement. The historical context of Israel's subjugation serves as a poignant reminder that the ramifications of poverty extend far beyond material lack—they permeate the very foundations of human rights and dignity. Understanding this nexus is crucial for addressing not only the symptoms but also the systemic roots of oppression intertwined with poverty.

Generational Poverty Vs Situational Poverty

The misconception surrounding poverty, particularly the failure to distinguish between Generational Poverty and Situational Poverty, is a pervasive issue, especially in developed countries and metropolitan cities. Dr. Beegle (2003), in her work "Overcoming the Silence of Generational Poverty," underscores the critical role of education in transforming the lives of students entrenched in generational poverty. She bemoans the lack of clarity in distinguishing between various forms of poverty—working-class, temporary, situational, and generational—highlighting how this ambiguity perpetuates a profound lack of understanding about the harsh realities faced by those living in generational poverty.

Generational Poverty, often synonymous with extreme poverty, is characterized by families enduring poverty for at least two consecutive generations. The persistence of generational poverty is rooted in complex financial, social, and psychosocial factors, leaving families unable to make ends meet despite exhaustive efforts, including working long hours and multiple jobs. Choices between necessities like food and utilities become agonizingly commonplace, and every aspect of family life is marred by the constant threat of homelessness and hunger. Access to medical care, holiday celebrations, and other basic amenities becomes a distant luxury. The bleakness of this environment is compounded by a scarcity of knowledge and opportunities to transcend these circumstances. Generational Poverty is caused by a flawed system.

In contrast, Situational Poverty is a temporary setback resulting from life-changing events such as death, divorce, medical emergencies, job loss, or addiction. Success stories of individuals overcoming poverty through hard work often stem from situational poverty experiences, where individuals possess the knowledge and connections to access resources that can help them rise above their financial challenges. Unlike those in generational poverty, individuals facing situational poverty can navigate government agencies, fill out necessary forms, and seek assistance from a network of knowledgeable connections—be it family members, pastors, doctors, or other support systems.

The call to action is a reminder of our responsibility to care for the poor, echoing the biblical principle of compassion for the destitute. Over four hundred passages in the Bible emphasize the divine concern for the poor, underscoring the gravity of our obligation to love and care for those in need. While diligence in work is encouraged, it is crucial not to overlook or judge those whose poverty stems from physical conditions or unfortunate situations. The analogy of God caring for the poor as a hen cares for her chicks reinforces the profound depth of empathy and nurturing that should define our response to those facing the harsh realities of poverty. As we address poverty, it is imperative to recognize its nuanced forms, ensuring that solutions are tailored to the specific challenges faced by individuals and families entrenched in generational poverty.

In Systems Theory, which is the study of systems, you'll have a flawed system if it tolerates errors. It makes me wonder, is chronic poverty an error that we've learned to tolerate? Is our economic system flawed? Poverty itself can be characterized as a system; there's a cycle of poverty that traps Alabama families, actually entire communities, for generations. It goes like this: you start with no money, which leads to no education, which then leads to no jobs, which then leads to no money, and the cycle repeats itself. It's a self-reinforcing cycle; it causes a death spiral that's difficult to escape. What we know from Systems Theory about self-reinforcing cycles is that if you can reverse any element of the cycle, the entire cycle reverses direction. It starts to propel itself upward instead of downward. (TEDx Talks, 2015)

The Jubilee

The concept of the Jubilee, rooted in ancient traditions and later enshrined in various religious and cultural practices, represents a profound and transformative principle. Its origins can be traced back to ancient Israelite traditions outlined in the Hebrew Bible, specifically in the Book of Leviticus (New International Version). According to these teachings, a Jubilee was to be declared every 50 years (Lev. 25, 1-13)

The Jubilee held a distinctive role in societal and economic restructuring. It entailed the forgiveness of debts, the release of slaves, and the return of ancestral lands to their original owners. This was not merely an economic reset; it carried profound ethical and spiritual dimensions, emphasizing justice, mercy, and the restoration of balance within the community.

In the economic realm, the Jubilee was a mechanism to prevent the accumulation of wealth and power in the hands of a few, fostering a more equitable distribution of resources. Debt forgiveness and the liberation of slaves during the Jubilee served to prevent the perpetual enslavement and impoverishment of certain segments of society.

Beyond its economic implications, the Jubilee was a moral imperative. It reflected a commitment to compassion, recognizing that individuals and families could be ensnared in cycles of poverty and indebtedness due to circumstances beyond their control. The notion of release and restoration extended beyond financial matters to encompass the broader idea of societal renewal and healing.

The Jubilee principle echoes through various cultures and religions, adapting to the evolving needs of societies. In Christianity, the idea of forgiveness, mercy, and liberation is central to the teachings of Jesus. The concept of forgiveness of debts and the release of captives resonates in the Christian tradition as a means of embodying compassion and justice.

In contemporary discussions, the Jubilee principle continues to inspire conversations about economic justice, debt relief, and social equity. Advocates for debt cancellation and fair economic policies often draw upon the ethos of the Jubilee to highlight the moral imperative of addressing systemic inequalities and providing opportunities for a fresh start.

The Jubilee, in its essence, is a timeless and universal call for societal renewal, a reminder that compassion, justice, and the alleviation of human suffering should be integral to the structures that govern our communities. As we navigate the complexities of modern economies, the spirit of the Jubilee invites reflection on how we can embody these principles in our pursuit of a more just and compassionate world.

The provisions established during the year of the jubilee, as outlined in Lev. 25:8-17, were not only significant in the context of ancient Israel but also carried profound moral and ethical implications. Let's elaborate and improve on each provision:

1. Divine Ownership of the Land

In the year of jubilee, a profound acknowledgment was made that the ultimate ownership of the land rested with God. This recognition was not merely a legal formality but a spiritual and moral imperative, emphasizing the stewardship of the land by the people. It reinforced the idea that humans were caretakers of God's creation, promoting a sense of responsibility, humility, and gratitude.

2. Crop-Free Land

The directive for the land to lie fallow during the jubilee year served multiple purposes. It allowed the soil to rejuvenate, preventing overexploitation and promoting sustainable agricultural practices. Furthermore, it symbolized a dependence on God's provision, fostering trust in divine abundance rather than relentless human productivity. This provision transcended the economic realm, touching on ecological sustainability and spiritual reliance.

3. Debt Cancellation

The cancellation of all debts during the jubilee was a radical act of economic justice and compassion. It sought to prevent the entrenchment of poverty and the exploitation of vulnerable individuals. This provision recognized the inherent dignity of every person and aimed at preventing a cycle of perpetual indebtedness. It was a tangible expression of God's mercy and a call for the community to emulate that mercy in their dealings with one another.

4. Restoration of Land

The restoration of land to its original owners during the jubilee was a powerful corrective measure against social and economic inequalities that may have developed over the years. This provision aimed at rectifying injustices and ensuring that each family had a fair and sustainable means of livelihood. It demonstrated a commitment to social equity and the prevention of the concentration of wealth and resources in the hands of a few.

5. Liberation of Slaves

The liberation of slaves during the Jubilee was a declaration of freedom and human dignity. It went beyond mere legal emancipation; it symbolized the rejection of the dehumanizing practice of slavery. This provision was a tangible manifestation of the belief that every individual was created in the image of God, deserving of liberty and respect. It challenged the prevailing social norms and stood as a testament to the transformative power of divine principles on human relationships.

In conclusion, the provisions of the jubilee year were not just a set of legal statutes but a comprehensive framework promoting justice, equity, environmental stewardship, and the inherent worth of every individual. These principles resonated not only within the specific cultural and religious context of ancient Israel but continue to inspire reflections on ethical and moral dimensions in various societies throughout history.

The Mosaic legislation concerning the welfare of the poor intricately weaves a tapestry of social justice and compassion within the fabric of ancient Israelite society. Each provision is not just a legal statute but a moral imperative reflecting the divine concern for the dignity and well-being of every individual.

1. Right to Glean

The right to glean the fields was not merely a charitable act but a recognition of the inherent dignity of the poor. It allowed them to actively participate in the agricultural abundance of the land, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility, (Lev. 19:9, 10; Deut. 24:19, 21).

2. Sabbatical Year's Share

In the sabbatical year, the directive for the poor to have a share of the produce reflected a commitment to economic equality. It wasn't a temporary reprieve but a deliberate inclusion in the prosperity of the community, mitigating the impact of economic disparities, (Ex. 23:11; Lv. 25:6).

3. Jubilee and Property Restoration

The jubilee year's provision for the recovery of property was a transformative measure to prevent the accumulation of generational poverty. It symbolized a fresh start and a commitment to restoring the economic agency of every family, reinforcing the principle of equitable distribution, (Lv. 25:25-30).

4. Prohibition of Usury and Return of Pledged Raiment

The prohibition of usury and the requirement to return pledged raiment highlighted the ethical dimensions of economic transactions. These laws aimed at preventing the exploitation of the vulnerable, ensuring that financial dealings were rooted in fairness and compassion, (Ex. 22:25-27; Deut. 24:10-13).

5. Generosity of the Rich

The call for the rich to be generous to the poor was not just an act of benevolence but a recognition of their responsibility to maintain social harmony. It was a challenge to transcend individual wealth and actively participate in the welfare of the entire community, (Dt. 15:7-11).

6. Release of Bond-Servants

The release of bondservants during the sabbatical and jubilee years was a commitment to the principle of human freedom. It rejected the notion of perpetual servitude and affirmed the intrinsic value of every person, irrespective of their social status, (Dt. 15:12-15; Lv. 25:39-42, 47-54).

7. Portions from Tithes

Assigning certain portions from the tithes to the poor integrated the concept of charity into the very structure of religious practices. It emphasized that caring for the less fortunate was not just a societal obligation but a sacred duty, (Dt. 14:28, 29; 26:12, 13).

8. Sharing in Feasts

The inclusion of the poor in feasts went beyond the provision of basic needs. It recognized the importance of communal celebrations and the shared joy that should be accessible to every member of society, (Dt. 16:11, 14; Neh. 8:10).

9. Prompt Payment of Wages

Requiring wages to be paid at the close of each day was a preventative measure against exploitative labor practices. It ensured that workers, especially those reliant on daily wages, were treated justly and provided for their immediate needs, (Lv. 19:13).

These Mosaic laws were not static regulations but dynamic expressions of a compassionate and just society. They laid the foundation for a community where everyone, regardless of their economic standing, was valued, and the principles embedded in these laws continued to echo through the teachings of Jesus and the early Christian community, underscoring their enduring moral significance.

In the New Testament, a resounding call to compassion and generosity echoes through various passages, reinforcing a collective responsibility toward the well-being of the less fortunate. The injunctions concerning the poor are not isolated occurrences but are recurrent themes, emphasizing the Christian duty to address the needs of those in distress (Lk. 3:11; 14:13; Act. 6:1; Gal. 2:10; Jas 2:15, 16).

The early church, as depicted in Acts, exemplified these principles by fostering a sense of communal sharing and support among believers. Acts 2:44-46 vividly describes a community where believers shared everything they had, selling their possessions to meet the needs of others. Acts 4:32 reinforces this unity, emphasizing that believers regarded their possessions as collectively owned, fostering an ethos of selflessness and mutual care. Acts Chapter 5 further illustrates the seriousness of this communal commitment, revealing divine displeasure towards those who sought personal acclaim while withholding a portion of their resources.

Jesus, in his teachings and actions, emphasized the significance of caring for the impoverished. Luke. chapter 12:33 and Matthew 19:21 encapsulate his radical call to divest oneself of material wealth for the benefit of the poor. This sacrificial ethos is mirrored in the life of Jesus himself, who chose

voluntary poverty for the sake of his mission, relinquishing privileges and relying on God the Father for his sustenance.

As Christians seek to emulate these teachings, Acts 2:42-44 challenges believers to align their financial resources with the alleviation of poverty in their communities. The New Testament not only presents a moral imperative to share with the poor but also illustrates a vision of a Christian community characterized by sacrificial generosity and a profound commitment to social justice.

The profound theological statement by Hengel (1974) encapsulates a radical perspective on the imminence of the kingdom of God. It challenges the conventional norms regarding possessions, asserting that the impending arrival of the divine kingdom necessitates a paradigm shift in one's relationship with material wealth. The call to freedom over possessions suggests liberation from the entanglements of materialism and a recognition of the transient nature of earthly goods in light of the eternal realities promised by the kingdom of God.

Furthermore, the exhortation to renounce all care aligns with the biblical emphasis on trusting in God's providence. It implies a surrender of anxiety and a profound reliance on the benevolence and sustenance provided by the heavenly Father. This call to relinquish the burden of excessive concern for worldly possessions reflects a deep understanding of the spiritual priorities that should accompany the anticipation of the kingdom.

In essence, Hengel's statement underscores the transformative nature of the imminent kingdom, calling believers to a radical reorientation of their values and priorities. It challenges the prevailing ethos of accumulation and self-sufficiency, advocating for a lifestyle marked by freedom, renunciation of excessive care for material goods, and an unwavering trust in the providence of the divine. This theological perspective serves as a powerful reminder of the countercultural nature of the Christian faith and its inherent invitation to embrace a way of life that transcends the temporal in anticipation of the eternal.

The Sermon on the Mount, particularly the directive in Matt. 6:33 to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, serves as a foundational principle for understanding Jesus' attitude toward earthly goods. This profound teaching challenges believers to prioritize their allegiance to God's kingdom and righteousness above all temporal concerns. In emulating Jesus' approach to service to God, we find a transformative blueprint in Luke. 4:18-19, where Jesus outlines key aspects of his ministry:

1. Proclaim Good News to the Poor

Jesus' mission includes the proclamation of good news, particularly to those marginalized and economically disadvantaged. This extends beyond mere material provisions, encompassing the holistic well-being and liberation of the impoverished.

2. Bind Up the Brokenhearted

The compassionate ministry of Jesus involves tending to the emotional and spiritual wounds of the brokenhearted. This signifies a profound commitment to healing and restoration, addressing not only physical needs but also the internal struggles and hurts of individuals.

3. Proclaim Freedom for the Captives

Jesus' service extends to the proclamation of freedom for those held captive, signifying a liberation from various forms of bondage, including spiritual, emotional, and physical captivity. It reflects a commitment to justice, righteousness, and the breaking of chains that constrain individuals.

4. Release from Darkness for the Prisoners

The imagery of releasing prisoners from darkness underscores Jesus' role in bringing spiritual illumination and freedom to those ensnared by the shadows of sin and despair. It represents a profound spiritual emancipation, aligning with the transformative power of the gospel.

By aligning our service with the principles articulated in Luke. 4:18-19, we emulate Jesus in a holistic and transformative ministry. This entails not only addressing immediate material needs but also engaging in a comprehensive mission that seeks to bring healing, liberation, and spiritual enlightenment to those in need. In doing so, we embody the essence of seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness, following the example set by Jesus in his earthly ministry.

Grigg (2017) aptly captures the essence of Luke's portrayal of Jesus as an agent of change in the socio-economic fabric of his time. The narrative invites readers to reflect on the significance of Jesus' incarnation, prompting a reconsideration of societal values and priorities. Luke's Gospel, through its meticulous attention to detail and thematic emphasis, establishes Jesus not just as a spiritual leader but as a catalyst for economic and social transformation.

Luke, the esteemed physician and author of one of the four Gospels, skillfully crafts the portrait of Jesus as the "Man of the Poor," displaying an acute sensitivity to the marginalized, the overlooked, the women, and the physically afflicted. His meticulous research is evident in his narrative, where he unveils Jesus as the embodiment of a Servant-Man, dedicated to serving and uplifting the impoverished.

In Luke. 2:7, the image of Jesus born in a humble manger is a poignant illustration of his identification with the poor and marginalized. The offering of two pigeons by his parents, rather than a more affluent lamb and a pigeon, further underscores Jesus' connection with the economic struggles of the poor.

Throughout his Gospel, Luke paints a vivid contrast between the ungodly rich and the humble poor, as seen in Luke. 1:52-53. This stark juxtaposition is not merely a commentary on economic disparities but is presented as a form of "economic repentance," echoing the thematic emphasis on economic justice preached by John the Baptist in Luke 3:13.

The incarnation of Jesus, as expounded in Luke 2:6-7, is not just a theological event but a profound symbolic act with far-reaching implications. This act transcends the spiritual realm and permeates the economic, political, and historical dimensions of society. Jesus' birth signals the beginning of a radical shift in social ethics, challenging prevailing norms and ushering in a transformative paradigm.

The biblical narratives, such as the Good Samaritan (Luke. 10:25-37), the call for hospitality to the poor (Luke 14:13,14), and the widow's offering (Luke 21:1-2), serve as powerful exemplars, illustrating the imperative for compassion and care toward the impoverished. These stories underscore the centrality of the ministry to the poor, as explicitly stated in Luke. 4:18, with Jesus serving as the model who willingly immersed himself in poverty.

Jesus is the starving, the parched, the prisoner, the stranger, the naked, the sick, the dying. Jesus is the oppressed, the poor. To live with Jesus is to live with the poor. To live with the poor is to live with Jesus. Vanier, (n.d.)

The concept of apostolic poverty, elucidated in passages like Luke 9:1-3, 10:7, 9:58, 9:2, 10:7, and 12:32-34, emphasizes a dependence on both the poor and God. It encourages a humble reliance on the resources provided by those in need and a profound trust in God's providence.

Furthermore, the call to be responsible managers, as outlined in Luke. 16:1-15, 19:11-26, and 20:20-26, underscores the stewardship of resources and the ethical dimensions of wealth management. This scriptural foundation provides a framework for navigating societal issues with both a theological and practical lens.

The incorporation of the jubilee concept, as highlighted by Snyder (1985), amplifies the biblical call for justice. The jubilee not only restores the poor person's right to their inheritance but also fosters an environment for self-help and self-development. It aligns with biblical principles by providing a mechanism for economic justice and empowerment.

Building upon Dr. Viv Greg's concept of Transformational Conversations, the proposed research framework integrates theological discussions with practical conversations. This approach ensures that the study not only delves into theoretical concepts but also translates them into actionable strategies for societal transformation.

The envisioned collaboration with Word Made Flesh Sierra Leone (WMFSL) staff adds a real-world dimension to the research, making it a catalyst for paradigm shifts and lifestyle changes. The application of transformational conversation principles to WMFSL's small group programs and, eventually, to other initiatives demonstrates a commitment to translating research findings into tangible outcomes.

The focus on youth employment within this research framework acknowledges the transformative potential of empowering underprivileged youth. Through a dialectical process, these individuals can gain agency and contribute to shaping their destinies. This approach not only aligns with principles of justice but also affirms the inherent worth and dignity of every person in the eyes of God, as reflected in biblical teachings. Ultimately, the research seeks to empower and affirm the capacity for self-improvement, promoting lasting change in individuals and communities.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used in the research focusing on the various processes and procedures used in conducting the research. The chapter discusses the research design, study area, population, sampling procedures, data collection methods, approaches for data analysis, and ethical considerations for the study.

Research Design

The study used mixed methods of research. This research was premised on an assumption that a combination of quantitative and qualitative research approaches provides a better understanding of research problems rather than using only one of the two. This study utilized a questionnaire format with both open-ended and direct questions to gain a better insight into the research problem.

In consideration of the choice of both the qualitative and quantitative methodology, the quantitative research placed the researcher in the position to focus on the main concerns of the research, whereas qualitative research positioned the researcher to focus on the respondent's perspective. According to Burns and Grove (2003), descriptive research "is designed to provide a picture of a situation as it naturally happens". For this study, descriptive research was used to obtain a picture of youths' opinions of the effects of youth unemployment in the Kroo Bay slum community to suggest strategies to tackle the effects of youth unemployment in Sierra Leone.

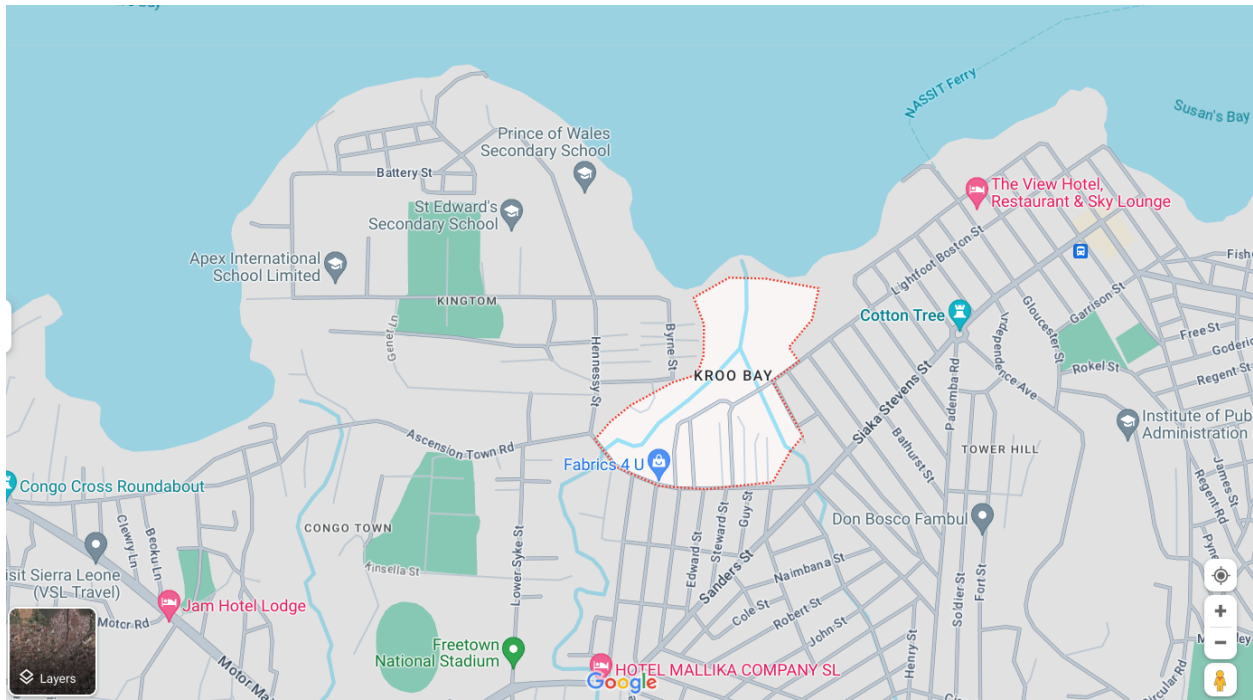
The study embraced this approach due to the fact that the limitations inherent in both quantitative and qualitative methods yield robust results (Creswell, 2003).

Sullivan & Brockington (2004) explained that qualitative data is data collected in the form of words, pictures, descriptions, or narratives. On the other hand, the quantitative approach involves quantifying data or assigning measures to statistically test their relationship. Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2011) confirmed that the study based on qualitative data is unstructured, primarily exploratory, and focuses on breaking fresh ground and giving insights. Quantitative data research employs techniques that quantify data and typically subject them to statistical analysis. Therefore, the researcher believed a combination of the two approaches would yield a better outcome.

Study Area

Figure 4.1

Map of Kroo Bay



Map of Kroo Bay (Redirection, n.d.)

This study was conducted in the Kroo Bay slum community, located in the western part of Freetown, the capital city of Sierra Leone.

Kroo Bay, named after a historic stream, is a large community with approximately 37,000 residents. Severely damaged during the civil war (1991-2002), it still bears marks of that traumatic period, especially in some of the houses. Post-war, many rehabilitated child combatants settled in the area, contributing to a population with limited education and proper rehabilitation, resulting in high youth unemployment and increased crime rates.

Originally established as a wharf in the 1920s, Kroo Bay attracted fishermen from the Kroo tribe in Liberia and later became a trading hub. Over time, temporary shacks turned into permanent dwellings as people from various parts of Freetown sought affordable housing. Today, Kroo Bay is overcrowded, lacks access to clean water and utilities, and is classified as the largest slum in Freetown, housing around 37,000 people out of the 500,000 residing in slum areas. (Slum Dwellers International (SDI), 2023)

Facing crises on multiple fronts, Kroo Bay is situated on flat land by the ocean and is used as a downhill dumpsite for rubbish and plastic waste, causing annual flooding during the rainy season. The community experienced a devastating fire incident in 2021, resulting in the destruction of over 50 homes. Despite promises from successive governments, little action has been taken to address the root causes of the issues, leaving residents in a constant state of vulnerability.

The Kroo Bay slum community represents nearly all seventeen ethnic or tribal groups of Sierra Leone. It holds significance as an accessible location for essential social institutions like schools, banks, hospitals, and markets. These institutions provide crucial socialization structures and contribute to Freetown's economic, financial, cultural, and administrative functions. Additionally, Kroo Bay plays a role in supporting Freetown as a prominent economic and cultural center and the seat of the National Government.

Population of Study

Burns and Grove (2003:213) describe the population as all the elements that meet the criteria for inclusion in a study. The target population for the study is the youth of the Kroo Bay slum community, in Freetown. The study adopted the definition of the unemployed youth age (18) as stated in the conceptual framework. Sierra Leone's Statistics Institution "Statistics Sierra Leone" pegs the highest youth age at 35 years. Therefore, all people within the age bracket from 18 to 35 years were potential respondents for the study. The actual population of this study comprised respondents within the age bracket of 18 to 35+ years living or working in the different sections of the Kroo Bay slum community.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size was selected to represent the whole population. Mouton (1996) defines a sample as elements selected to out something about the total population from which they are taken. A sample indicates a fraction of people, institutions, objects, and materials selected from a given population to get a set of participants that will fully participate in research work.

The sample size comprised 30 respondents who were chosen from the Staff and Participants of Word Made Flesh Sierra Leone (WMFSL) and who were familiar with the work of WMFSL in Kroo Bay and Freetown and population of the kroo bay area

Eligibility criteria, as defined by Burns and Grove (2003), are essential characteristics for inclusion in the target population. Sample collection methods include probabilistic (random sampling, where respondents have an equal chance of selection) and non-probabilistic (purposive sampling, without specific criteria for respondent selection). This research employs a non-probability sample approach, emphasizing purposive selection without predetermined respondent criteria.

Research Instruments

The researcher used a questionnaire deemed necessary to facilitate sufficient data collection. The questionnaires were provided to a mixed demographic of thirty (30) WMF program participants and staff. The questionnaire asked both closed and open-ended questions to find out a) the respondents' awareness of WMF goals and programs (b) their likes and dislikes about WMF programs specifically "Lighthouse" (c) receive feedback on what respondents saw as the successes of the programs (d) and how involvement with Word Made flesh has assisted youth in career preparation or getting employment. The Researchers also wanted feedback on the causes and effects of youth unemployment as observed by the respondents.

Questionnaires

The questionnaire (see Appendix) was the main instrument used in collecting quantitative and qualitative data for the study. Questionnaires tend to provide researchers with a quick reliable method of data collection as more people are familiar with questionnaires.

The questionnaire used both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Age questions are made open to capture age variations across the respondents. Some of the closed-ended questions use Likert 5 Rating Scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4= Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree).

Questions covering all aspects of the topic investigated in this study were designed and distributed to respondents. The thirty questionnaires were distributed to the respondents associated with Word Made Flesh. The questionnaires were used to collect information from those respondents who can read and write English so that they can properly supply adequate responses to the questions covering all aspects of the topic investigated.

Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)

A focus group was another tool considered necessary for the researcher to collect adequate information for this study. It provided opportunities for the researcher and the targeted respondents to discuss issues relating to the problems affecting them in their homes and communities. Thirty (30) made up of 2 groups of 15 were selected to include a diverse representation of the community.

The researcher made arrangements with target groups affected by youth unemployment for a lengthy discussion on the issues that related to the problems affecting youth in their communities. . A similar set of questions to those outlined in the questionnaire was used for the FGDs. However, it served more as a guideline and emphasis was put on more open-ended questions to enhance discussion (see Appendix) The medium of communication was Krio.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Polit and Hungler (1993) refer to reliability as the degree of consistency with which an instrument measures the attribute it is designed to measure.

The questionnaires that were answered showed consistency in responses. Reliability was ensured by minimizing sources of measurement error like data collector bias. Data collector bias was minimized by the researcher being the only one to hand out the questionnaires, and standardizing conditions such as exhibiting similar personal attributes to all respondents, e.g., friendliness and support. The physical and psychological environment where data is collected was made comfortable to ensure privacy, confidentiality, and general physical comfort.

Validity

The validity of an instrument is the degree to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Polit and Hungler, 1993).

Content validity refers to the extent to which an instrument represents the factors under study. To achieve content validity, questionnaires include a variety of questions on youth unemployment. Questions were based on information gathered during the literature review to ensure that they were representative of what respondents should know about the effects of unemployment on youths in Sierra Leone. Content validity is further ensured by consistency in administering the questionnaires. All questionnaires were

distributed to subjects by the researcher. The questions were formulated in simple language for clarity and ease of understanding. Clear instructions were given to the subjects.

All subjects were advised to complete the questions by themselves in an environment conducive to answering questions comfortably and truthfully.

This was done to prevent subjects from giving questions to other people to complete on their behalf. For validation, the questions were submitted to a WCIU supervising researcher to ensure clarity and higher representativeness.

Questions were added or rephrased and more appropriate alternative response choices were added if needed to provide for meaningful data analysis (Burns and Grove, 1993).

Recruiting willing participants for a study can pose challenges, particularly when extensive time or other investments are required. If the number of individuals approached for participation diminishes, justifying the generalization of findings to the entire population becomes challenging. This study was strategically designed to minimize the demands on participants, thus enhancing participation rates. Notably, there were zero refusals among those approached for participation, a crucial detail for assessing potential threats to external validity. As the percentage of refusals rises, external validity tends to decrease, as emphasized by Burns and Grove (1993).

Data Analysis

Data is analyzed using descriptive statistics. The open-ended questions were analyzed through quantitative content analysis by the researcher to quantify emerging characteristics and concepts. The data collected during this study was analyzed using quantitative and qualitative analysis. Data from the questionnaire. The responses were collected and classified based on respondents' expressions of their views or opinions. The opinions of stakeholders were assessed to determine the pattern of the ideas qualitatively analyzed. In the case of the qualitative data, the researcher organized the data into themes and assigned symbols to designate categories; like-responses on particular topics were grouped. Data was examined to see if the research question was answered and if the hypothesis was proven. The researcher looked for overlap in opinions, perceptions, trends and suggestions as related to the research question. Then the Researcher organized the survey data by demographic characteristics, age, gender, marital status, educational background, and religious affiliation among others.

Ethical Consideration

The main ethical issues involved in this study were respondents' rights to self-determination, anonymity, and confidentiality. For this reason, respondents were given full information on the nature of the study and process. The names of the respondents were not recorded. The researcher provided questionnaires to the respondents who could choose to fill out the questionnaire anonymously or with their names. The researcher sought written consent from the respondents individually to participate in the study. Once permission was granted, he briefed the respondents individually and separately as to what the study was about to get the needed attention, support, and cooperation from participants.

Summary

This chapter described the research design, the study area, population and sampling procedures, data collection instruments, data analysis, and ethical considerations. It also discusses the data analysis and findings of the study, serving as a vital bridge to the next chapter, which delves into the detailed description and analysis of the uncovered insights.

CHAPTER FIVE

DESCRIPTION OF THE FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

In this pivotal chapter, the research embarks on a comprehensive journey of data analysis, navigating through the intricacies of data presentation and interpretation. The valuable data, a product of questionnaires thoughtfully distributed among 30 staff and program participants of the Word Made Flesh community in the heart of the Kroo Bay slum community within the Freetown municipality, becomes the focal point of exploration. Through meticulous examination, this chapter unfolds the layers of meaning embedded in the gathered information, providing a nuanced understanding of the research findings.

The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To determine the reasons behind the unemployment of young people in the Kroo Bay slum.
2. To investigate the socio-economic repercussions this unemployment has on the community
3. To assess the effects of youth unemployment in the Kroo Bay slum community
4. To evaluate the perceptions of the effects of youth unemployment in the Kroo Bay slum community.
5. Evaluate the impact of Word Made Flesh activities in Kroo Bay and its impact on Youth.
6. Evaluate the Impact of WMF's flagship Program in Kroo Bay "Good News Club" on unemployment.

A remarkable 100% return rate, where all 30 questionnaires were diligently completed, underscores the efficacy of the researcher's strong rapport with the respondents and a meticulous follow-up process. This chapter serves as the crucible where the gathered information is meticulously analyzed and discussed in alignment with the study's objectives and research questions. Its narrative unfolds in a structured manner, commencing with an exploration of the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Subsequently, it delves into discussions on the multifaceted aspects of youth unemployment, including its root causes, socio-economic repercussions, and the perceptual impact on the broader community's development.

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

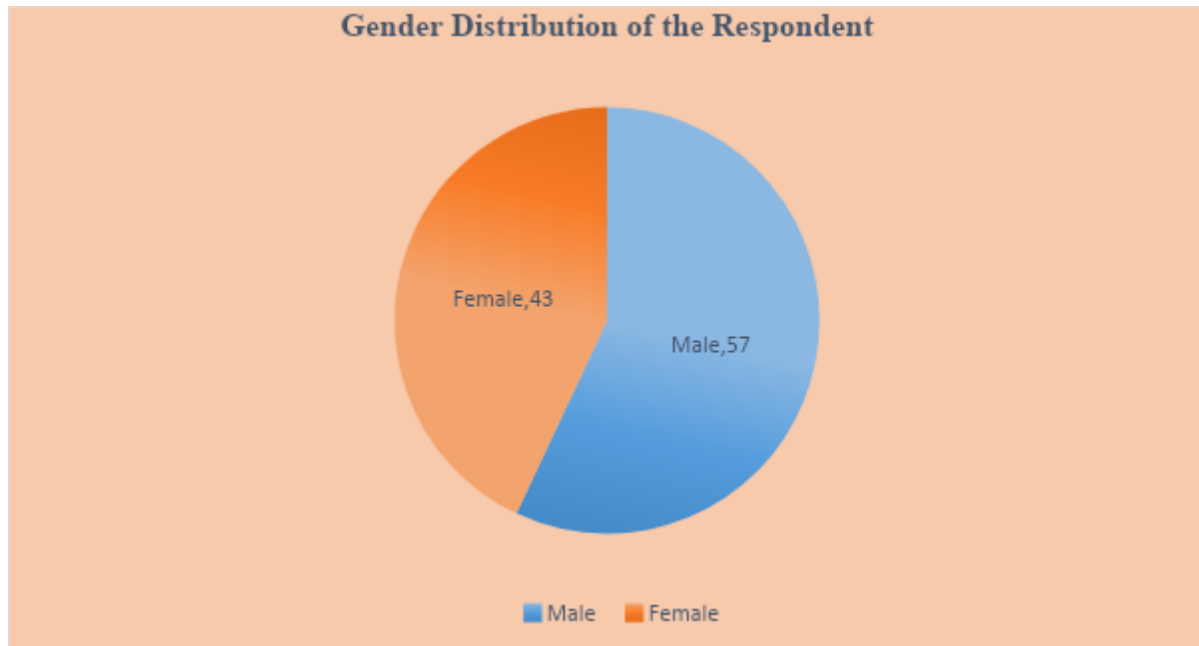
Gender of the Respondents

Gender, a pivotal characteristic shaping individual experiences, held a significant role in this study. Mindful of its impact, the sampling technique conscientiously sought equilibrium in gender representation among the respondents. The ensuing data, detailed in Table 5.1, discloses a notable 74 percent representation of men among the respondents. This stands in contrast to the 2015 population and housing census, which marginally favored women. The discrepancy warrants thoughtful consideration, urging a deeper exploration into the dynamics that might underlie this observed variance from demographic norms.

Table 5.5***Gender Distribution of the Respondent***

Gender of the Respondents	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Male	17	57
Female	13	43
Total	30	100

Source: Field work, August, 2023

Figure 5.1***Gender of the Respondents***

Source: Field work, August, 2023

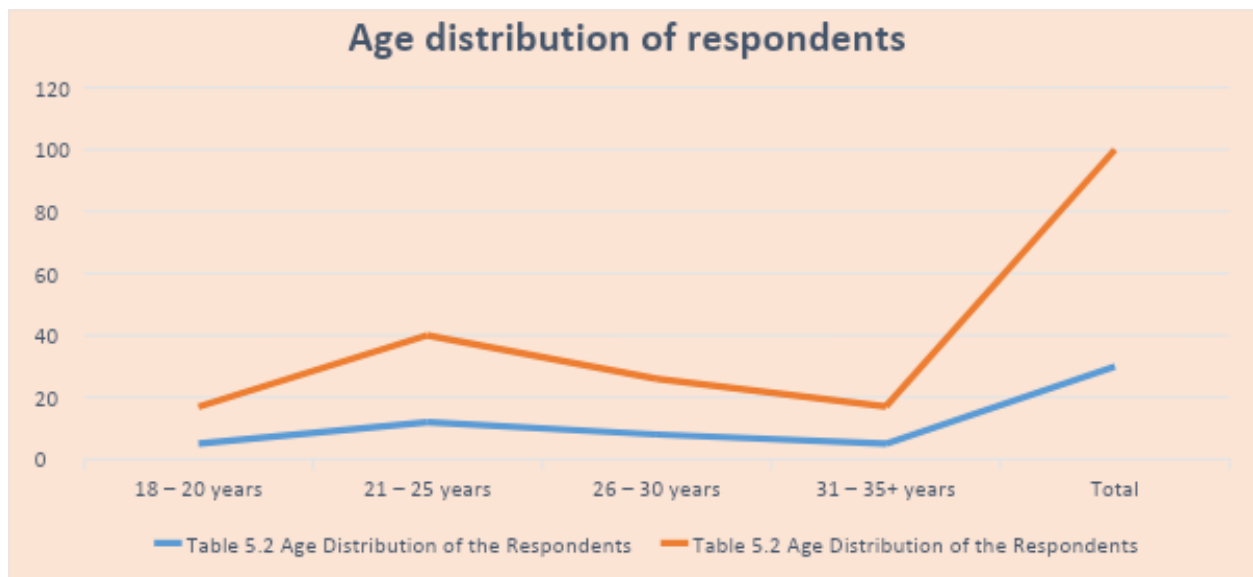
Age Distribution of the Respondents

The selection of respondents was meticulously carried out, stratifying them into four distinct age brackets: 18 to 20 years, 21 to 25 years, 26 to 30 years, and 31 to 35+ years. This thoughtful categorization aligns with the definitions set forth by Statistics Sierra Leone and the African Union (AU) in 2014, ensuring conformity to established parameters for youth. The distribution of respondents across these defined age categories is presented in Table 5.2, providing a clear snapshot of the age dynamics within the study cohort.

Table 5.2***Age Distribution of the Respondents***

Age Distribution of Respondents	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
18 – 20 years	5	17
21 – 25 years	12	40
26 – 30 years	8	26
31 – 35+ years	5	17
Total	30	100

Source: Field work, August, 2023

Figure 5.2***Age Distribution of the Respondents***

Source: Field work, August, 2023

In Table 5.2, a comprehensive breakdown of respondents across different age brackets is presented, revealing a demographic spectrum aligned with the African Union's definition of youth, spanning from 15 to 35 years. This distribution underscores the inherent youthfulness of the unemployed individuals within the Kroo Bay slum community, highlighting their alignment with the established age parameters for youth as defined by the African Union.

Marital Status of the Respondents

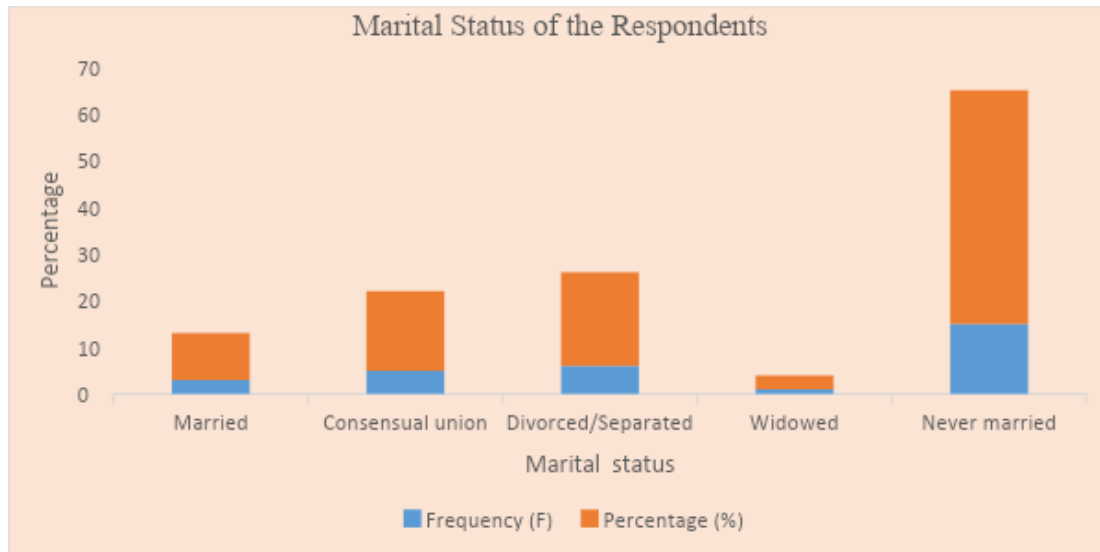
The data provides insights into the marital status of the respondents, with a total sample size of 30 individuals. The majority of respondents have never been married, constituting 50% of the sample. This indicates a significant proportion of the population has not entered into formal marriages or consensual unions. Consensual unions account for 17% of the respondents, reflecting individuals in committed relationships without formal marriage. Married individuals make up 10% of the sample, highlighting a smaller proportion within the surveyed population. Additionally, divorced/separated respondents represent 20%, suggesting a notable portion has experienced the dissolution of formal marriages. Finally, the widowed category comprises 3%, indicating a relatively lower occurrence of spousal loss in the sample.

Table 5.3

Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital Status of the Respondents	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Married	3	10
Consensual union	5	17
Divorced/Separated	6	20
Widowed	1	3
Never married	15	50
Total	30	100

Source: Field work, August, 2023

Table 5.3***Marital Status of the Respondents***

Source: Field work, August, 2023

In the contemporary landscape of the 21st century, the decision to enter into marriage is profoundly influenced by one's financial standing. Given the prevailing high unemployment rate among the respondents, a significant portion faces financial constraints hindering them from embarking on the journey of matrimony. Table 5.3 provides insight into the marital status of the respondents, unveiling a stark reality. The data explicitly demonstrates that only 10% of the respondents were married, while a substantial majority, comprising 67%, had never entered into matrimony. This substantial contrast can be attributed to the economic challenges posed by high unemployment rates, underscoring a significant barrier to pursuing marital commitments due to financial constraints.

Educational Status of the Respondents

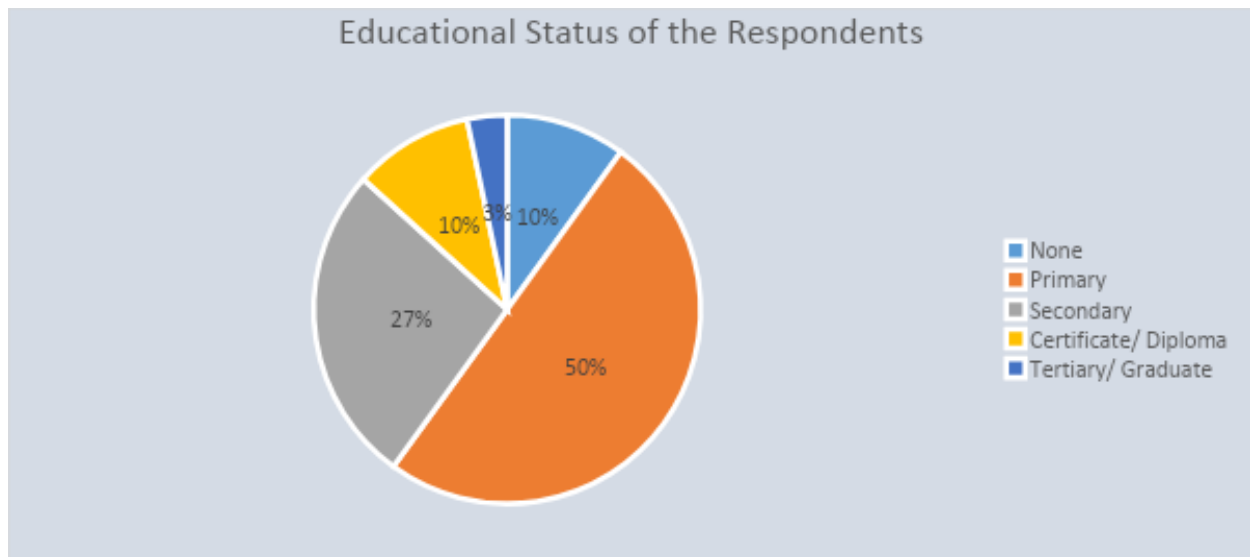
Table 5.4 provides insights into the highest level of education attained by the respondents. The findings on the educational status of the respondents reveal a varied distribution among different educational levels. A significant portion of the respondents, constituting 50%, have completed primary education, while 27% have attained a secondary education level. Furthermore, 10% have pursued Certificate/Diploma courses, and a smaller percentage of 3% have achieved tertiary or graduate education. Notably, 10% of respondents have reported having no formal education. These educational disparities among the respondents reflect the diverse academic backgrounds within the surveyed population.

This educational distribution implies a concentration of individuals with similar educational backgrounds, predominantly at the secondary school level. According to Baah-Boateng (2013), this clustering might limit job opportunities to sectors such as petty trading and farming, which require less specialized skills. Consequently, those without any educational background find themselves in a situation similar to those with junior high school (JHS) certificates, potentially contributing to the heightened youth unemployment observed in the Kroo Bay slum community.

Table 5.4***Educational Status of the Respondents***

Educational status	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
None	3	10
Primary	15	50
Secondary	8	27
Certificate/ Diploma	3	10
Tertiary/ Graduate	1	3
Total	30	100

Source: Field work, August, 2023

Figure 5.4***Educational Status of the Respondents***

Source: Field work, August, 2023

Religious Affiliation

The findings on religious affiliation among the respondents align with the national statistics reported in 2015, illustrating the diverse religious landscape of the Kroo Bay slum community. Islam stands out as the predominant religion, with 73% of respondents identifying as Muslims. In contrast, Christianity represents 27% of the religious affiliations within the community. Notably, no respondents

identified with traditional beliefs or other religions. These results highlight the prevalence of Islam in the community, underscoring the significance of religious diversity in understanding the social fabric of Kroo Bay.

Table 5.5

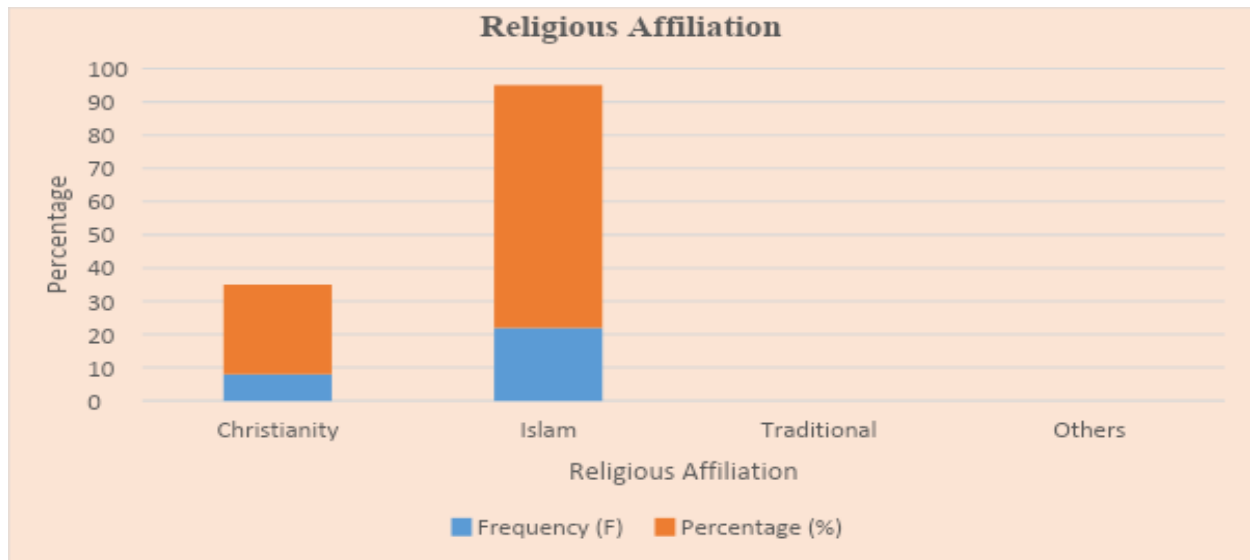
Religious Affiliation

Religious Affiliation	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Christianity	8	27
Islam	22	73
Traditional	0	0
Others	0	0
Total	30	100

Source: Field work, August, 2023

Figure 5.5

Religious Affiliation



Source: Field work, August, 2023

Causes of Youth Unemployment in the Kroo Bay Community (Objective One)

The study adheres to the International Labor Organization's (ILO) criteria for defining youth unemployment, wherein a youth is considered unemployed if, during the interview, they were without work, prepared and available to work given an opportunity. Employing this classification, Table 5.6

illustrates that a substantial 50 percent of the respondents fall into the category of unemployment, underscoring the pronounced prevalence of youth unemployment in the community. Additionally, the table delineates that 10 percent are self-employed, 13 percent are either students or engaged in learning a trade, and 20% percent hold regular employment, and 7 percent are either dealing with health issues or incapacitated. This breakdown offers a comprehensive snapshot of the diverse occupational statuses among the respondents, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of employment challenges faced by the youth in the Kroo Bay slum community.

Table 5.6

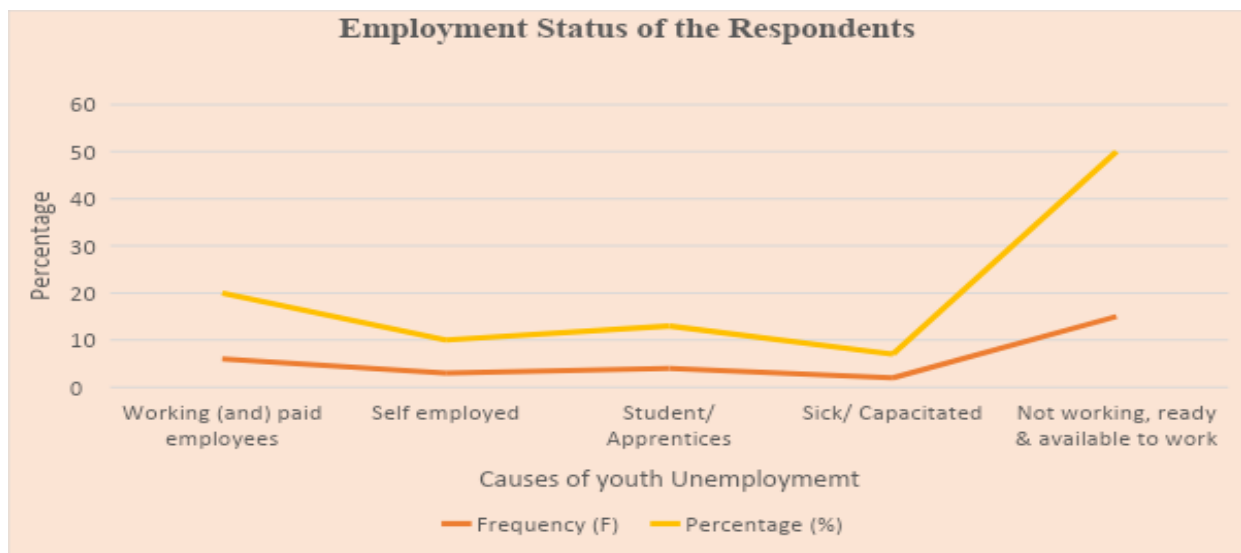
Employment Status of the Respondents

Employment Status of the Respondents	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Working (and) paid employees	6	20
Self employed	3	10
Student/ Apprentices	4	13
Sick/ Capacitated	2	7
Not working, ready & available to work	15	50
Total	30	100

Source: Field work, August, 2023

Figure 5.6

Employment Status of the Respondents



Source: Field work, August, 2023

The survey explored the diverse reasons for youth unemployment in the Kroo Bay community. Notably, 50% of respondents reported not working but being ready and available for employment. Additionally, 20% were already employed in paid positions, 13% were students or apprentices, 10% were self-employed, and 7% were incapacitated due to sickness. These findings provide valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of youth unemployment, highlighting the various circumstances that contribute to this complex issue in the community.

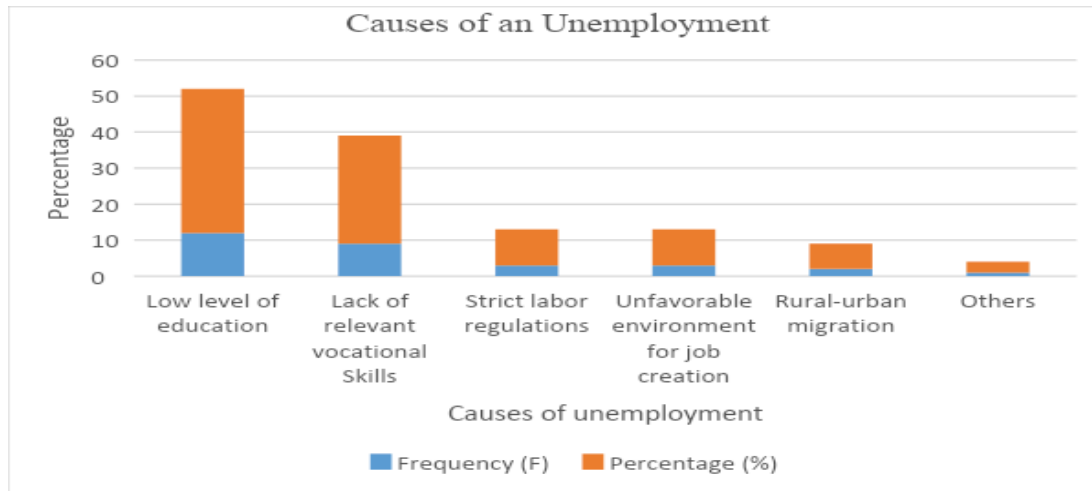
The objective of the study aimed to uncover the primary factors contributing to youth unemployment in the community, seeking respondents' perspectives on the underlying causes. Despite youth expressing aspirations for employment across diverse sectors of the economy, the anticipated job opportunities remain elusive, compounded by a lack of necessary capital for entrepreneurial ventures. As illustrated in Table 5.7 and Figure 5.1, the inquiry into the reasons behind youth unemployment revealed that relatively low levels of educational attainment emerge as the predominant factor, with 40 percent of respondents identifying it as the primary cause in the Kroo Bay slum community. This aligns with the findings of a study conducted by the World Economic Forum in 2013, further substantiating the critical role of education in shaping employment opportunities for the youth.

Table 5.7

Causes of Youth Unemployment

Causes of youth unemployment	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Low level of education	12	40
Lack of relevant vocational Skills	9	30
Strict labor regulations	3	10
Unfavorable environment for job creation	3	10
Rural-urban migration	2	7
Others	1	3
<i>Total</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: Field work, August, 2023

Figure 5.7***Causes of Youth Unemployment***

Source: Field work, August, 2023

The researcher also applied the same questionnaire to 2 Focus Discussion Groups held in August 2023. There were 15 participants in each group. Below are some findings from those discussions. As mentioned in chapter on research methodology more emphasis was given to open ended questions so that participants can freely discuss research questions.

With Regards to Causes of Youth unemployment, in the FGD one participant articulated a perspective, emphasizing: A significant number of youth are ready and eager to engage in work, but the absence of employment opportunities is glaring. This issue is intricately linked to the educational landscape. In contemporary times, securing employment is increasingly contingent upon possessing educational certificates. The absence of these credentials often becomes a barrier to accessing employment opportunities. This sentiment underscores the prevailing importance of educational qualifications in the current job market dynamics, rendering the prospects challenging for those without formal certificates. (FGD, August 2023)

Beyond the educational constraints faced by youth in the community, another critical factor influencing youth unemployment, as perceived by 30 percent of the respondents, is the absence of pertinent vocational skills. This observation underscores the pivotal role that practical and job-specific competencies play in shaping employment prospects. The sentiment expressed by this significant portion of respondents emphasizes the need for targeted vocational training programs to enhance the skill sets of youth, aligning them more closely with the demands of the job market. The acknowledgment of this challenge emerged prominently in the respondents' perspectives, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of the issues contributing to youth unemployment in the Kroo Bay slum community. During the focus group discussions, another participant shared insightful perspectives on the dynamics of vocational skills acquisition and its relationship to the prevalent youth unemployment issue:

I am a seamstress and I had to learn this job for six good years. I have a big shop with so many apprentices. I can say I am getting so much from my work. I even make more money than my husband who is a graduate and Government employee. Today, the youth want ‘quick money’ and therefore they have no time to acquire relevant vocational skills to make a living in the future. Many people come to me to learn a trade but at the end of the day, few get to stay (FGD, August 2023)

My brother, there is work just that the youth do not want to work. They are just not ready to learn a trade. They want to do what will readily put money on the table. This to me is the reason why they are not working. (FGD, August, 2023)

The participants in the aforementioned FGD shed light on the complex factors influencing youth unemployment, suggesting a mix of indetermination and other underlying causes. Notably, 7 percent of respondents highlighted rural-urban migration as a significant contributor to the issue in the Kroo Bay slum community.

The youth in Sierra Leone's rural areas often embark on a journey to urban centers like Freetown in pursuit of job opportunities that may not exist. This migration, fueled by aspirations for a better economic future, is a common phenomenon. However, the participants emphasized the critical role of social networks in obtaining relevant information about job opportunities. Lamentably, the youth face challenges in accessing accurate information, leading to misguided pursuits in their quest for employment.

Moreover, these migratory patterns are hindered by a lack of essential experience and skills needed for employment at their desired level. As they transition to urban settings, the fear of societal judgment intensifies, compelling them to persist in the pursuit of non-existent jobs. This insight underscores the importance of addressing not only the economic challenges but also the informational and skill-related barriers that impede the successful integration of youth into the workforce. A participant's statement in the FGD provides valuable insight into the dynamics of youth unemployment in the Kroo Bay slum community:

In the Kroo Bay slum community, a significant number of youths find themselves grappling with unemployment. This predicament is often traced back to their migration from rural villages to Freetown in search of employment opportunities. The participant emphasized that the affordability of accommodation in Kroo Bay has attracted a concentration of these job-seekers to the community. The affordability factor highlights the economic constraints faced by these individuals, shaping their choices and ultimately contributing to the localized challenge of unemployment. This underscores the need for comprehensive strategies that address both the push factors in rural areas and the pull factors in urban centers to create more sustainable solutions for youth employment. (FGD, August 2023)

The participant's perspective sheds light on the challenges associated with youth unemployment, particularly regarding labor regulations:

Among the respondents, 10 percent expressed concerns about unfavorable labor regulations contributing to youth unemployment. A graduate, reflecting on his personal experience, highlighted the conundrum faced by many young job seekers. He narrated his post-graduate journey, characterized by submitting numerous job applications without tangible results:

I completed my undergraduate degree three years ago and have since been writing applications. Anytime I go for interviews, I am told that even though I am good I do not have the relevant working experience. I get confused here! How do I get the relevant working experience? At least if I am employed and even given something lower than expected, I will still be okay. At least, that will be the beginning of my experience. I believe the labor market is not too fair. (FGD, August, 2023)

The notion of involuntary experience, as elucidated by Baah-Boateng (2013), becomes evident in the respondent's predicament. Involuntary experience refers to the challenge faced by individuals who, despite possessing qualifications, struggle to secure employment due to the paradoxical requirement of prior experience.

This situation presents a conundrum where employers seek experienced candidates, creating a scenario of inefficient wage dynamics. The employee, in anticipation of increased productivity, receives an efficient wage from the employer. However, this approach is fraught with challenges, as it perpetuates a cycle of unemployment for individuals lacking the initial opportunity to gain the requisite experience.

Furthermore, the reference to adverse selection in job applicants emphasizes the need for a reevaluation of hiring practices. The respondent's experience highlights the inefficiencies in the current employment landscape, where rigid criteria may inadvertently exclude qualified candidates. Addressing these issues is crucial for fostering a more inclusive job market that recognizes potential and provides avenues for skill development and experience accumulation, breaking the cycle of involuntary experience.

Socio-Economic Consequences of Unemployment on the Youth (Objective Two)

The notion of involuntary experience, as elucidated by Baah-Boateng (2013), becomes evident in the respondent's predicament. Involuntary experience refers to the challenge faced by individuals who, despite possessing qualifications, struggle to secure employment due to the paradoxical requirement of prior experience.

This situation presents a conundrum where employers seek experienced candidates, creating a scenario of inefficient wage dynamics. The employee, in anticipation of increased productivity, receives an efficient wage from the employer. However, this approach is fraught with challenges, as it perpetuates a cycle of unemployment for individuals lacking the initial opportunity to gain the requisite experience.

Furthermore, the reference to adverse selection in job applicants emphasizes the need for a reevaluation of hiring practices. The respondent's experience highlights the inefficiencies in the current employment landscape, where rigid criteria may inadvertently exclude qualified candidates. Addressing these issues is crucial for fostering a more inclusive job market that recognizes potential and provides avenues for skill development and experience accumulation, breaking the cycle of involuntary experience. A male participant in the FGD shared a concerning perspective:

Frequently, the youth in this area find themselves entangled in acts of violence. Many are recruited as land guards, paid to carry out acts of aggression! Just last year, a wealthy individual arrived to purchase land, and with the assistance of the youth, he successfully acquired the property and erected that impressive building over there. When these acts unfold, even their

parents are compelled to flee! The pervasive fear of their actions has gripped the entire community (FGD, August 2023).

This firsthand account vividly illustrates the complex dynamics of youth involvement in violence, often driven by economic desperation and external influences. It underscores the urgent need for interventions that address not only the economic aspects of unemployment but also the social ramifications that contribute to the perpetuation of violence within the community.

The repercussions of violence and crime align with the conclusions drawn from a study conducted by the World Economic Forum (2013). In the absence of gainful employment, the youth experience restlessness, pushing them towards activities that promise economic rewards. Regrettably, some may resort to engaging in criminal endeavors, potentially leading them down the path of becoming involved in activities such as armed robbery. This underscores the critical link between unemployment and the rise in criminal behavior within the community. Addressing youth unemployment becomes not just an economic imperative but a crucial factor in maintaining social order and safety. The poignant testimony from a female participant in the FGD underscores the unsettling reality that youth unemployment can breed an environment conducive to criminal activities, such as armed robbery. Her assertion echoes the proverbial wisdom that an idle hand becomes the devil's workshop:

Youth unemployment contributes to a rise in armed robbery incidents. The saying, "the devil finds work for idle hands," holds true. Our household has experienced armed robbery incidents involving young boys. These individuals have the capability to engage in productive activities like farming to generate income. Those who can plan and execute criminal activities can apply their skills intelligently to agricultural pursuits. (FGD, August 2023)

Baah-Boateng's insight sheds light on the nuanced relationship between education levels and unemployment, particularly emphasizing that those with basic education often resort to informal and non-technical jobs due to limited formal employment opportunities. This aligns with the study's findings (refer to Table 5.8 and Figure 5.2), where 17% percent of respondents are reported to engage in the illicit drug trade. This perilous pathway, fueled by the scarcity of viable employment options, not only perpetuates the cycle of substance abuse but also exacerbates the manifestation of antisocial behaviors among the youth. It underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions that not only address unemployment but also the associated risk factors contributing to detrimental outcomes in the community.

Table 5.8

Socio-Economic Consequences of Unemployment on the Youth

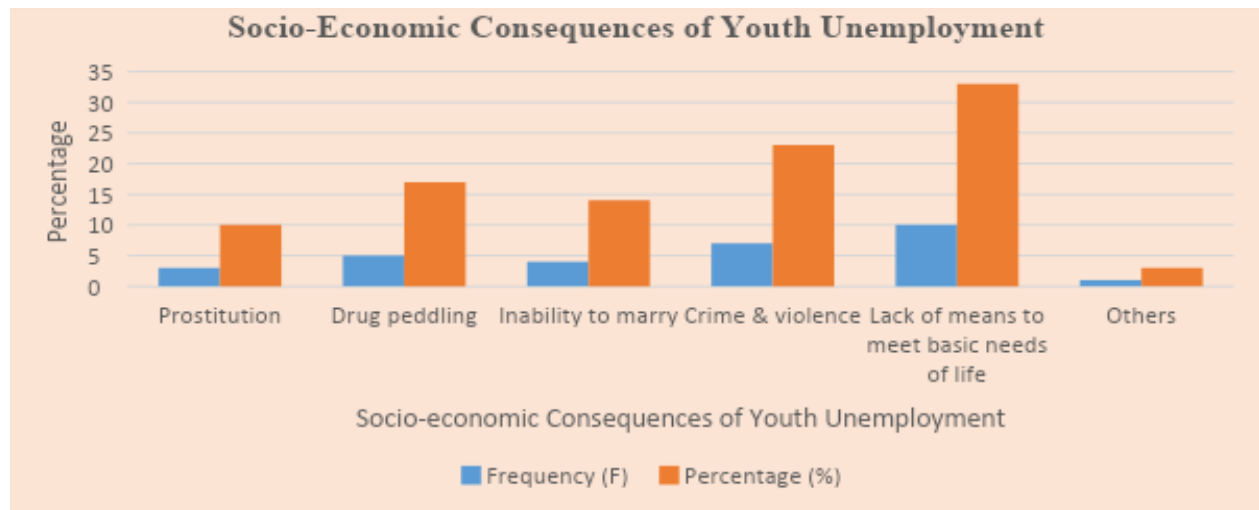
Socio-economic consequences of youth unemployment	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Prostitution	3	10
Drug peddling	5	17
Inability to marry	4	14

Crime & violence	7	23
Lack of means to meet basic needs of life	10	33
Others	1	3
Total	30	100

Source: Field work, August, 2023

Figure 5.8

Socio-Economic Consequences of Youth Unemployment



Source: Field work, August, 2023

As indicated in the table, 33% of respondents identify robbery and drug peddling as key economic consequences of youth unemployment. Beyond the tangible economic impacts, the psychological toll is substantial. Crime and violence, whether experienced directly or indirectly, have profound effects on individuals and communities. Whittaker-Augustine (2013) highlights that exposure to crime, be it through personal involvement, familial ties, or media coverage, triggers a range of psychological reactions. Stress, anxiety, fear, and shock are natural responses, accompanied by a pervasive sense of insecurity, vulnerability, and powerlessness. The shattered sense of safety engenders feelings of anger and outrage, collectively shaping the psychological landscape of individuals within the affected community.

Exposure to crime and violence can induce a spectrum of psychological reactions that linger long after the traumatic incident. As outlined by Whittaker-Augustine (2013), individuals may grapple with nightmares, flashbacks, and recurrent reliving of the distressing experience. Sleep disturbances, heightened tension, emotional numbness, and hyper-vigilance become part of the psychological aftermath. Additional manifestations include memory blocks, disinterest in usual activities, avoidance of reminders, and outbursts of anger.

Children, while sharing similar reactions to adults, may exhibit extreme responses like bedwetting, speech regression, or heightened attachment. Older children might wrestle with thoughts of

revenge or guilt. According to Whittaker (2013), these reactions are normal in the immediate aftermath. However, persistent stress and fear long after the danger has passed may indicate the development of Post-Traumatic Stress symptoms. If these symptoms persist for more than a month, they could evolve into Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD can emerge when an individual is a victim of or witness to murder, physical harm, or the threat thereof.

This poignant account shared during the FGD encapsulates the devastating impact of prolonged unemployment on individuals within the community. The participant's son, grappling with the frustration of joblessness, succumbed to the perilous path of peddling marijuana. He lamented:

My son became frustrated after many years of no job. I later got to know that he was peddling marijuana. Not too long after, he became mad. The rest has been history! (FGD, August, 2023)

The poignant testimony of one participant in the FGD encapsulates the multifaceted repercussions of unemployment. His statement poignantly illustrates that the adverse consequences of joblessness extend far beyond the realms of financial hardship. The deprivation of adequate income leads to a compromised ability to afford nutritious food, secure decent housing, and even access essential healthcare. This stark reality serves as a stark reminder of the interconnectedness between employment, health, and overall well-being. It reinforces the urgent need for holistic interventions that address not only economic aspects but also the broader spectrum of challenges faced by the unemployed, particularly in terms of their physical and mental health. He said:

Unemployment has many adverse consequences. If you are unemployed, you are always sick because there is no money to buy good food, rent better accommodation and even buy drugs (FGD, August, 2023).

The intricacies of marriage intertwine with the socio-economic challenges of unemployment, creating a complex social dynamic. The escalating costs associated with marriage in Sierra Leone emerge as a formidable barrier for the unemployed youth, limiting their ability to navigate this significant life milestone. The financial strain extends beyond the expenses of the ceremony itself to the broader challenges of sustaining a family. In this context, unemployment becomes a dual impediment—curtailing both the capacity to afford marriage and the attractiveness as potential partners, particularly for male individuals. This sheds light on the multifaceted repercussions of unemployment, reaching into the realms of social relationships and personal aspirations.

The apprehensions surrounding marriage are vividly articulated by a young girl who, observing the unemployed men seeking marital unions, expresses genuine concern about their financial preparedness for family responsibilities. Her questioning stance underscores the belief that financial stability is a prerequisite for embarking on the journey of marriage and parenthood. In this context, the discourse extends beyond personal aspirations to encompass societal expectations and the intricate interplay between economic circumstances and the prospect of building a family. She shared her thoughts on this:

I get worried when I see the men who are not working approaching women for their hands in marriage. I sometimes ask them how they would cater to their children. I think a man must be sure he is financially sound before thinking of marriage. (FGD, August, 2023)

A poignant revelation emerges from the study, as 10% of respondents assert that prostitution unfolds as a poignant consequence of youth unemployment within the Kroo Bay slum community. This stark reality reflects the vulnerability of female individuals who, grappling with unemployment, may find themselves compelled to enter the sex trade as a means of survival. The acknowledgment of such challenges underscores the urgency for comprehensive interventions that address the multifaceted implications of youth unemployment on the socio-economic fabric of the community.

A poignant testimony emerges from a female graduate who, grappling with prolonged unemployment, shares the unsettling narrative of a friend teetering on the edge of desperation. The friend, unaware of the precipice she hovers upon, has resorted to what she terms a "coping strategy," a thin veil concealing the harsh reality of dependency on men to meet basic needs. This stark revelation unveils the harrowing choices individuals may be forced to make in the face of prolonged joblessness, underscoring the imperative for targeted interventions and support systems to navigate the precarious landscape of unemployment. She shared her views:

I had a friend who had almost become a prostitute. She is not aware of it though! We have struggled for about three years now chasing jobs. I live with my parents and she lives alone. She now depends on men to pay her rent, buy food and other basic things. She calls it a coping strategy but it looks more like prostitution (FGD, 23th August 2023)

Effects of Youth Unemployment on the Community Development (Objective Three)

Objective three of the study extends its exploration to unravel the repercussions of youth unemployment on the community. Through the lens of the respondents, Table 5.10 unravels a multifaceted tapestry of consequences that cascade through the fabric of the Kroo Bay community. Strikingly, a disconcerting one-third of respondents perceive unemployed youth as unwitting pawns, wielded as instruments to orchestrate social discord within their communities. This insidious role manifests in activities such as robbery, fostering an atmosphere of insecurity that casts a shadow over communal progress. These findings resonantly echo the observations of the World Economic Forum (2013), underlining the far-reaching societal ramifications borne out of youth unemployment.

An articulate opinion leader illuminated his insights during the FGDs, shedding light on the escalating menace of robbery within the community. He underscored a disconcerting trend where a significant portion of those apprehended for such crimes happened to be school leavers. Expressing a sense of urgency, he implored the necessity of policy interventions aimed at generating employment opportunities for these energetic youth. This poignant account emphasizes the imperative need for strategic policies to curb the rising tide of criminal activities associated with youth unemployment.

He said: In our community, robbery has become too rampant. Most of those arrested however happened to be school leavers. This cannot continue! We need policies to create jobs for these energetic youth (FGD, August 2023)

The data presented in Table 5.9 and Figure 5.3 sheds light on a distressing reality—33% of the respondents expressed a lack of basic needs for sustenance due to youth unemployment. This poignant revelation underscores the profound impact of joblessness on the fundamental aspects of daily life. For those without alternative sources of income, the inability to meet basic needs becomes a pressing concern, amplifying the challenges faced by unemployed youth, particularly those from economically

disadvantaged backgrounds. This finding emphasizes the urgency of comprehensive social support systems to address the immediate needs of vulnerable individuals grappling with the harsh consequences of unemployment.

Table 5.9

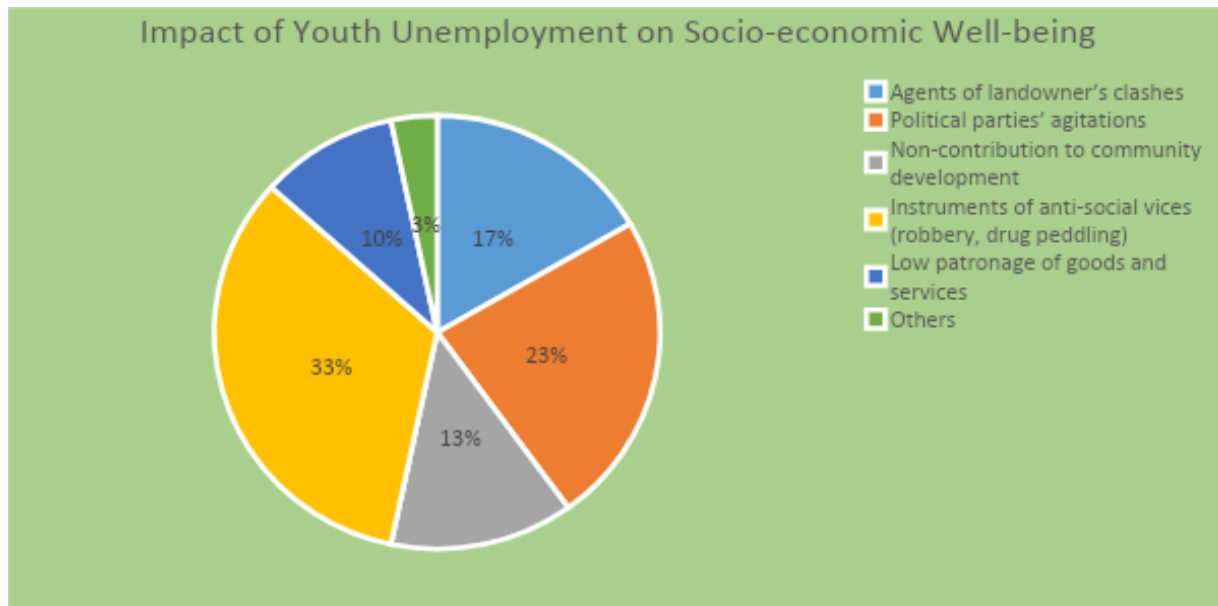
Impact of Youth Unemployment on Socio-economic Well-being

Impacts of Youth Unemployment on Socio-economic Well-being	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Agents of landowner's clashes	5	17
Political parties' agitations	7	23
Non-contribution to community development	4	13
Instruments of anti-social vices (robbery, drug peddling)	10	34
Low patronage of goods and services	3	10
Others	1	3
Total	30	100

Source: Field work, August, 2023

Figure 5.9

Impact of Youth Unemployment on Socio-economic Well-being



Source: Field work, August, 2023

A substantial 17% of respondents, reflecting on the socio-economic consequences of youth unemployment, posit that it catalyzes conflicts among affluent landowners. Within the study area, disputes over land ownership are rampant, and some affluent individuals and landowners enlist the services of unemployed youth to assert their claims forcefully. Disturbingly, these youth, at times, disregard legal rulings, actively assisting unscrupulous landowners in wrongfully acquiring land that does not rightfully belong to them. This unsettling dynamic not only hampers investments but also deters individuals from participating in productive activities within the affected communities, painting a vivid picture of the far-reaching repercussions of youth unemployment.

Political party agitations emerged as a significant consequence, constituting 23% of the responses, showcasing the impact of youth unemployment. The unemployed youth often find themselves manipulated by politicians to intimidate their rivals; a phenomenon that becomes particularly pronounced during election years. The lack of employment opportunities renders these young individuals vulnerable to exploitation, turning political events into arenas where their frustrations find expression, further complicating the political landscape.

Approximately 13% of the respondents believe that unemployed youth often refrain from contributing to the development of the community. This reluctance is exemplified by their non-payment of community levies and their abstention from communal labor when required. Such disengagement poses a challenge to the collective progress and well-being of the community, hindering initiatives that rely on shared responsibilities and resources.

In line with these psychological complications, 10% of respondents noted a decline in patronage of goods and services, while 3% cited unspecified reasons, further underscoring the multifaceted impacts of youth unemployment on both the economic and psychological fabric of the community.

A participant in the FGDs sheds light on this issue, emphasizing the audacity of the youth in the community. Their fearlessness towards law enforcement, particularly the police, has led to the harassment of potential investors. The desperation arising from unemployment compels them to engage in any activity for monetary gain. This brazen behavior not only reflects the lack of fear of legal consequences but also highlights the profound impact of unemployment on the community's overall security and potential for economic growth. He explained this better:

The youth in this community are too untouchable. They are not afraid of the Police and have been harassing prospective investors in our community. Because they are not employed, they would do anything just for money (FGD, August 2023)

A respondent vividly expressed the reality of political agitations within the community: "All political agitations in this area come from the youth. Because they avail themselves, the politicians tend to use them. The result is total insecurity in the community" (FGD, August 2023). This testimony underscores the symbiotic relationship between unemployed youth and political manipulation, leading to heightened tensions and jeopardized community security.

A participant expressed her perspective:

The unemployed youth resist paying development levies. When approached for contributions to community projects, they assert their unemployment status as a reason for non-participation. This

lack of financial contribution impedes the community's development initiatives (FGD, August 2023).

Furthermore, traders among the respondents have voiced concerns about reduced patronage from unemployed youth. The financial constraints resulting from unemployment diminish their purchasing power, affecting local businesses and trade within the community.

The impact of unemployment on local businesses is evident in the words of a trader who expressed concern during an FGD:

The decline in patronage of our goods is directly linked to unemployment. Years ago, during the construction of the Calaba Town Masiaka highway, business here was flourishing. Everyone, including the youth, was actively purchasing. Business was thriving, and we fondly remember those prosperous times (FGD, August, 2023).

The repercussions of high youth unemployment extend beyond economic consequences, with profound impacts on talent, skills, and the overall well-being of society. A considerable risk lies in the potential loss of talent and skills, particularly among university graduates who struggle to find employment, thereby hindering innovation and impeding contributions to economic growth. The unutilized capabilities of a significant portion of the young workforce not only diminish productivity and gross domestic product (GDP) but also escalate economic costs. The financial burden increases as more resources are diverted toward the activities of security agencies to curb rising crime and violence, compounded by a reduction in tax revenue (Durant and Powell, 2015).

Discussions on Word Made Flesh Evaluation

Furthermore, the identification of a lack of vocational skills as a contributor to youth unemployment underscores the importance of practical training. Acquiring vocational skills emerges as a potential solution, empowering youth to establish their enterprises and reduce dependence on formal employment. The study advocates for initiatives promoting vocational education to mitigate the impact of unemployment.

The study also sheds light on the phenomenon of rural-urban migration as a driving force behind escalating youth unemployment. As more youth migrate to urban areas in pursuit of elusive job opportunities, the study emphasizes the urgent need for policies addressing the root causes of rural-urban migration and facilitating economic opportunities in rural settings.

The correlation between youth unemployment and engagement in violence-related activities resonates with a logical understanding of the situation. The idle time resulting from unemployment creates fertile ground for involvement in criminal and violent behaviors, often motivated by monetary incentives. Consequently, the study emphasizes the potential of youth unemployment as a catalyst for crime-related violence in the Kroo Bay community, urging comprehensive strategies for social and economic empowerment.

The study also underscores the role of unemployed youth in political party agitations, highlighting the vulnerability of individuals without familial support who are willing to accept any job that offers financial remuneration. The potential security risks associated with the anti-social activities of

unemployed youth necessitate urgent attention and intervention. In essence, the study concludes that the multifaceted consequences of youth unemployment extend beyond economic concerns to encompass broader social and security implications.

Table 5.9.1

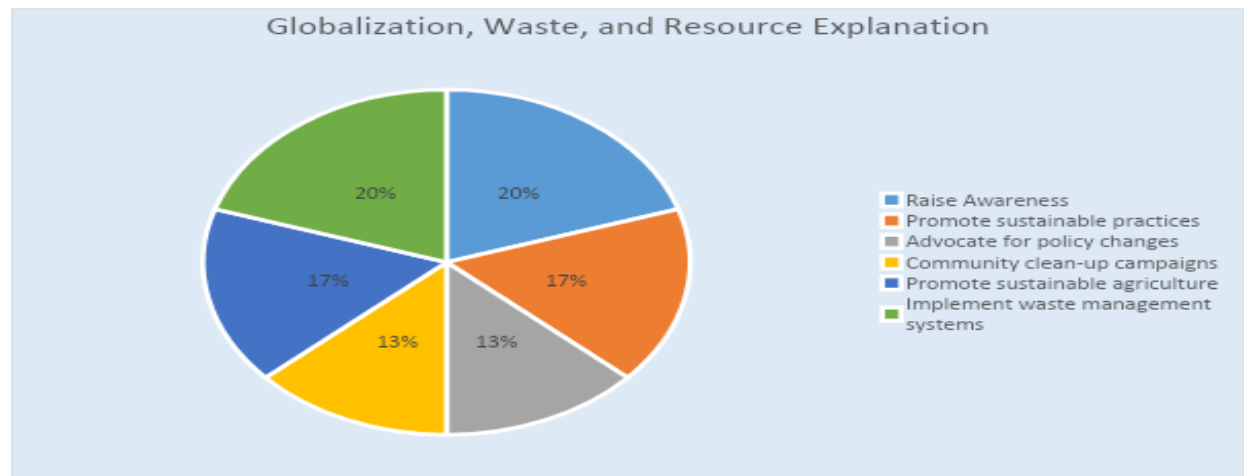
Globalization, Waste, and Resource Explanation

The Concept of Jubilee and Youth Empowerment	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Raise Awareness	6	20
Promote sustainable practices	5	17
Advocate for policy changes	4	13
Community clean-up campaigns	4	13
Promote sustainable agriculture	5	17
Implement waste management systems	6	20
Total	30	100

Source: Field work, August, 2023

Figure 5.9.1

Globalization, Waste, and Resource Explanation



Source: Field work, August, 2023

The findings from the survey presentation on the concept of Jubilee and youth empowerment indicate the following:

20% of respondents expressed the importance of raising awareness as a positive and practical step towards confronting issues related to globalization, waste, and resource exploitation. 16.7% emphasized the need to promote sustainable living practices, encouraging individuals and communities to adopt eco-friendly behaviors. 13% of respondents recognized the significance of advocating for policy changes to address environmental and social issues effectively. 13.3% highlighted the importance of organizing community clean-up campaigns to address waste-related challenges and foster a sense of responsibility. 17% of respondents suggested promoting sustainable agricultural practices as a positive

step toward mitigating the negative effects of resource exploitation. 20% of respondents acknowledged the need to establish effective waste management systems, including recycling programs and proper waste disposal methods.

These findings reflect a diversified set of perspectives on practical steps to confront challenges, indicating that a combination of awareness-raising, policy advocacy, community engagement, and sustainable practices is considered essential for addressing issues related to globalization, waste, and resource exploitation in Sierra Leone.

Respondents also gave their views of Word Made Flesh programs and their perceived effectiveness in preparing youth for employment as outlined below:

Table 5.9.2

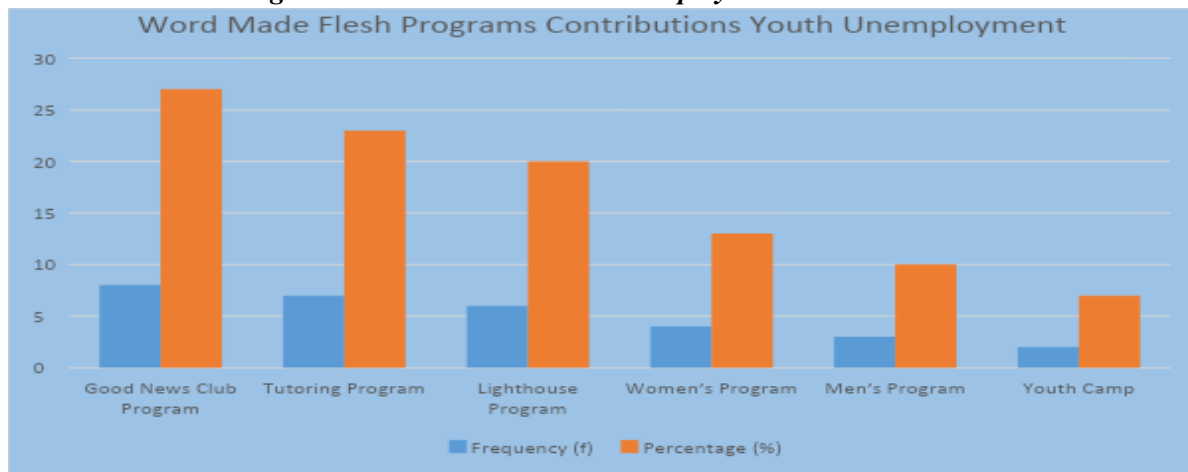
Word Made Flesh Programs Contributions Youth Unemployment

Word Made Flesh Programs Contributions Youth Unemployment	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Good News Club Program	8	27
Tutoring Program	7	23
Lighthouse Program	6	20
Women’s Program	4	13
Men’s Program	3	10
Youth Camp	2	7
Total	30	100

Source: Field work, August, 2023

Figure 5.9.2

Word Made Flesh Programs Contributions Youth Unemployment



Source: Field work, August, 2023

The findings from the survey presentation on the effectiveness of Word Made Flesh programs in preparing youth for employment are as follows:

The respondents attribute the effectiveness of the Good News Club Program (27%) in preparing youth for employment to its holistic approach. The program engages children from the Kroo Bay community every Saturday afternoon, immersing them in Bible stories, Scripture memorization, games, and songs. This not only provides spiritual nourishment but imparts valuable life skills. The program goes beyond the intellectual and spiritual realm by actively feeding the children both spiritually and physically, symbolized by the distribution of hard-boiled eggs and other food items during sessions. A notable highlight is the December Christmas party, creating a joyful atmosphere for celebration, organized by WMF staff. The program brings immense joy to the children, fostering happiness, camaraderie, and spiritual development. This comprehensive approach makes the Good News Club a standout and impactful initiative, preparing the youth in the Kroo Bay community for a seamless transition to other Word Made Flesh programs.

23% of respondents believe the Tutoring Program is highly effective in youth employment preparation due to its significant impact on educational access in the Kroo Bay community. Recognizing the challenges faced by many children, including limited school attendance and insufficient support, WMF staff, alongside volunteers, organize weekly tutoring sessions. These sessions, conducted for three hours on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, aim to introduce and support children in their educational journeys. The program focuses on teaching fundamental subjects such as Maths, English, General Knowledge, and Moral Education, providing a safe space for creativity, critical thinking, relationship building, and enjoyment. The Tutoring program ensures that children who may not attend school regularly have the opportunity to learn and thrive. The positive learning environment, coupled with the provision of hot meals and fruit snacks, contributes to high attendance rates, demonstrating the program's effectiveness in promoting education and holistic development among the youth in the Kroo Bay community.

20% of respondents identify the Lighthouse Program as the 3rd most effective in preparing youth for employment due to its foundational role in encouraging, accompanying, and disciplining older youth from the Kroo Bay community. Established as the first program by WMF Sierra Leone, the Lighthouse program operates with the primary goal of fostering the holistic development of young individuals.

The program engages older youth through large group gatherings every Thursday, featuring weekly small groups led by WMF staff members. Additionally, an annual youth camp in neighboring provinces provides a unique setting for immersive experiences. The program's structure involves Thursday gatherings starting with a meal, followed by varied activities like teaching, games, or movies, designed to instruct and engage the youth.

A key milestone for Lighthouse participants is taking the entrance exam for university, marking their graduation from the program. The program's success is measured not only by academic achievements but also by its impact on the participants' spiritual and personal growth. The Lighthouse program serves as a foundational stepping stone for the participants, equipping them with essential skills, mentorship, and support. The program's structured guidance and regular follow-up sessions contribute to

the success of these individuals as they transition into the graduate program and pursue higher education. Here's how the Lighthouse program aids the graduates in excelling academically and gaining meaningful employment:

1. **Skill Development:** Lighthouse imparts valuable life skills, fostering personal development and resilience, crucial for academic success and future employment.
2. **Mentorship and Support:** Ongoing contact and follow-up sessions ensure graduates receive continuous mentorship and support, addressing any challenges encountered during their academic journey.
3. **Transition to University:** The program serves as a bridge for participants to transition from the community setting to a university environment. The guidance provided helps navigate the academic landscape successfully.
4. **Holistic Progress Tracking:** Regular follow-ups allow for a comprehensive understanding of the graduates' progress, not just academically but also in various aspects of their lives, ensuring comprehensive support.
5. **University Enrollment:** The successful enrollment of approximately 20 participants in universities is a tangible outcome of the Lighthouse program's effectiveness in preparing and empowering individuals for higher education.
6. **Expressing Gratitude:** The acknowledgment of divine guidance reflects the program's values and the belief in a higher purpose, instilling a sense of gratitude and humility in the graduates as they advance in their academic and personal journeys.

In summary, the Lighthouse program's combination of skill development, mentorship, and ongoing support plays a pivotal role in helping graduates excel academically, enroll in universities, and progress towards gaining meaningful employment in society. The overarching goal is for youth to deepen their understanding of Christ while receiving support in their education and home environments. The program also emphasizes collaboration with parents to address any challenges the youth may be facing at home, creating a comprehensive and supportive approach to youth development.

13% of the participants recognize the effectiveness of the Women's Program in youth employment preparation due to its impactful role in discipleship and community building. The Women's and Men's Ministries at WMF focus on discipling individuals committed to learning, engaging, and following Jesus Christ. Participants attend weekly Thursday meetings, where Scripture is discussed, life is processed together, and prayer is shared. The Women's Ministry organizes an annual "Princess Day" celebration, emphasizing the value of women through teachings, games, matching outfits, and a special beach retreat, with girls from the Lighthouse program also participating. Both men and women in these ministries undergo six months of discipleship classes before joining specific ministry programs.

The Women's Program stands out for its community-oriented approach, aiming to uplift women from challenging situations, such as engaging in activities for financial survival. The program seeks to teach women about the value of their bodies and God's love for them. By investing in women, the Women's Ministry recognizes that this investment extends to their family members. The program acts as a community hub, fostering a supportive environment and contributing to the holistic development of women, making it a valuable initiative within the Kroo Bay community.

The tailoring program plays a crucial role in empowering young women from Kroo Bay by providing them with the skills and training to become self-sufficient tailors. The program focuses on building a strong foundation in tailoring basics, such as measuring, stitching, and operating sewing machines, during the initial months. In the later years, participants have the opportunity to expand their skills and explore different design aspects.

Upon graduation, the women receive their own sewing machines and a small financial gift, enabling them to establish independent businesses. This not only promotes economic self-sufficiency but also contributes to the overall economic development of the community. By taking women off the streets and investing in their future, the tailoring program aims to break dependency on men and empower participants to use their skills effectively. The ultimate goal is to create capable and independent businesswomen who can positively impact their families and the community.

10% of respondents recognize the Men's Program as highly effective in youth employment preparation due to its impactful role in discipleship and community building. Through the Men's and Women's Ministries at WMF, staff members aim to disciple individuals committed to learning, engaging, and following Jesus Christ. Participants attend weekly Thursday meetings, engaging in Scripture discussions, life processing, and shared prayer. The Men's Program, as part of this ministry, plays a crucial role in providing a supportive and transformative environment for young men.

Participants in the Men's Program undergo six months of discipleship classes before joining specific ministry programs. The program focuses on building relationships, fostering camaraderie, and instilling positive values in the lives of young men. It serves as a community hub, pulling individuals away from challenging circumstances and providing a space for personal growth and development. By investing in the holistic well-being of men, the Men's Program contributes to the overall upliftment of the Kroo Bay community. The recognition of its effectiveness in youth employment preparation is a testament to the program's commitment to nurturing responsible, engaged, and spiritually grounded young men.

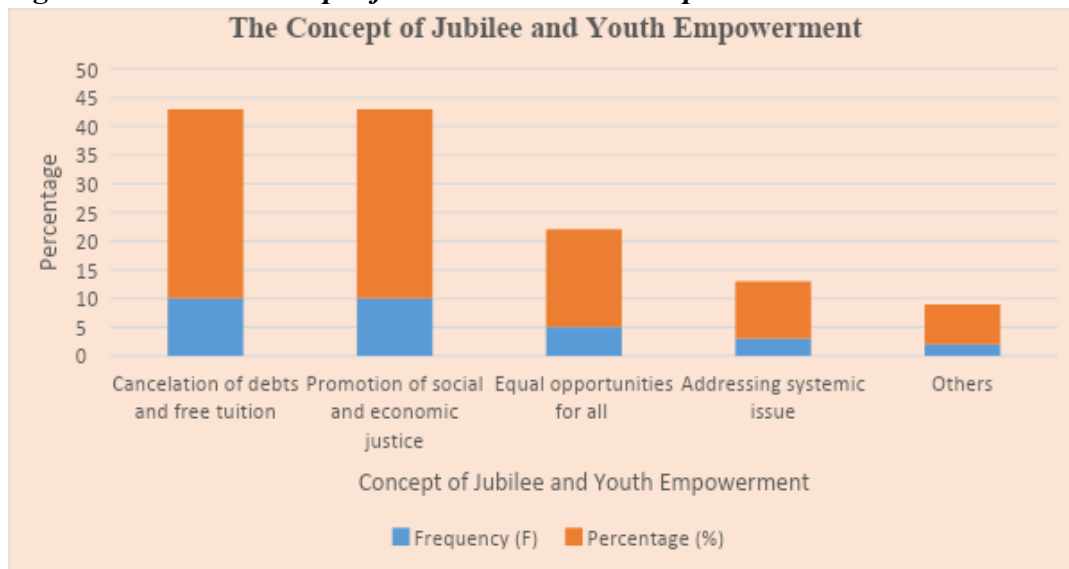
No specific information is provided regarding the least effective programs or how they have been perceived by respondents. It appears that the survey did not gather detailed insights into the programs considered least effective.

These findings indicate a positive perception of Word Made Flesh programs, with a notable emphasis on the Good News Club Program, the Tutoring Program, the Lighthouse Program and Tailoring Program as impactful in preparing youth for employment.

The survey presentation's findings on the impact of programs and activities by charities like Word Made Flesh on the professional development of youth reveal a substantial acknowledgment of Word Made Flesh's pivotal role in youth empowerment, with 45% of respondents recognizing its impact. Furthermore, initiatives aimed at youth employment in Kroo Bay.

Table 5.9.3***The Concept of Jubilee and Youth Empowerment***

The Concept of Jubilee and Youth Empowerment	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Cancellation of debts and free tuition	10	33
Promotion of social and economic justice	10	33
Equal opportunities for all	5	17
Addressing systemic issue	3	10
Others	2	7
Total	30	100

Figure 5.9.3 *The Concept of Jubilee and Youth Empowerment*

Source: Field work, August, 2023

These results indicate that there is a significant emphasis on addressing financial burdens through debt cancellation and free tuition, promoting social and economic justice, ensuring equal opportunities, and recognizing the importance of addressing systemic issues for effective youth empowerment.

Table 5.9.4***Initiatives (categories) Word Made Flesh can take for Youth Empowerment***

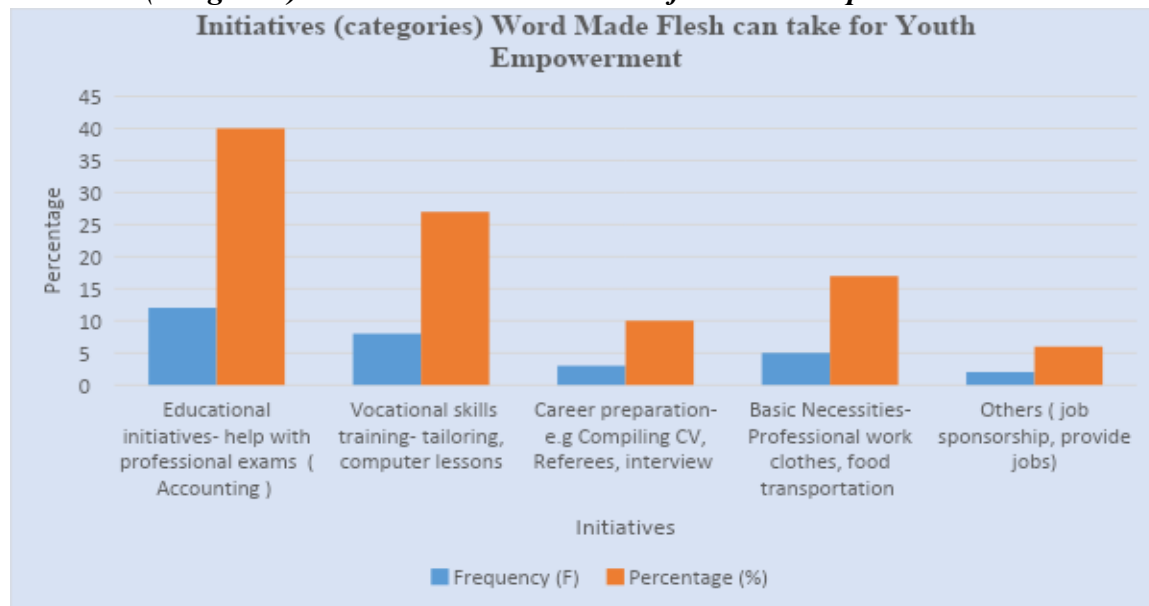
Initiatives (categories) Word Made Flesh can take for Youth Empowerment	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Educational initiatives- help with professional exams (Accounting)	12	40
Vocational skills training- tailoring, computer lessons	8	27

Career preparation- e.g. Compiling CV, Referees, interview	3	10
Basic Necessities- Professional work clothes, food transportation	5	17
Others (job sponsorship, provide jobs)	2	6
Total	30	100

Source: Field work, August, 2023

Figure 5.9.4

Initiatives (categories) Word Made Flesh can take for Youth Empowerment



Source: Field work, August, 2023

The findings from the survey presentation suggest that respondents recognize various initiatives that Word Made Flesh can take for youth empowerment. The majority (40%) highlight the importance of educational initiatives, particularly assistance with professional exams in fields like accounting. Vocational skills training, including tailoring and computer lessons, is acknowledged by 27% of respondents. Career preparation activities, such as compiling CVs and interview preparation, are mentioned by 10% of respondents. Basic necessities like professional work clothes, food, and transportation are also considered essential by 17% of respondents. The "Others" category, which includes job sponsorship and job provision, represents 6% of responses. Overall, the findings indicate a diverse set of suggestions for Word Made Flesh to empower youth in various aspects.

Table 5.9.5

Career Preparation Initiatives by Word Made Flesh

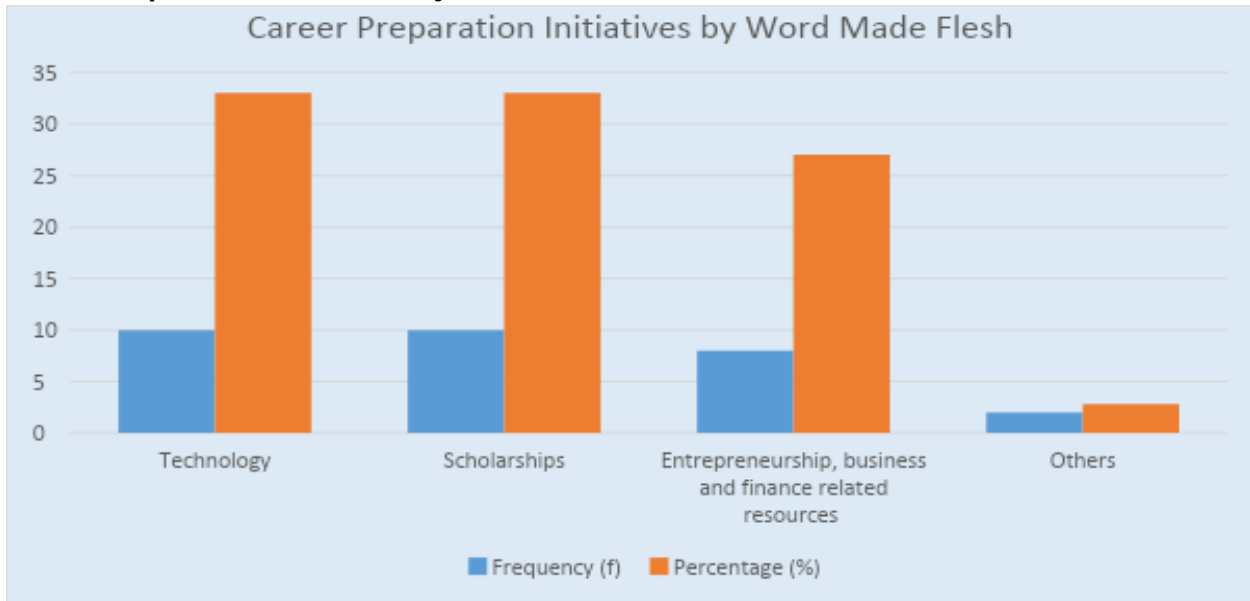
Career Preparation by Word Made Flesh	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Technology	10	33

Scholarships	10	33
Entrepreneurship, business and finance related resources	8	27
Others	2	7
Total	30	100

Source: Field work, August, 2023

Figure 5.9.5

Career Preparation Initiatives by Word Made Flesh



Source: Field work, August, 2023

The findings from the survey presentation on the question of the type of career preparation that respondents think Word Made Flesh can provide to the youth of Kroo Bay are as follows:

33% of respondents, equivalent to 10 participants, believe that Word Made Flesh can offer career preparation in the field of technology. 33% of respondents, representing 10 participants, think that scholarships could be a significant aspect of career preparation provided by Word Made Flesh. Another 27% of respondents, totaling 8 participants, expressed the view that Word Made Flesh could contribute to career preparation by offering resources related to entrepreneurship, business, and finance. 7% of respondents, equivalent to 2 participants, had diverse opinions or suggestions beyond the specified categories.

This indicates a varied perspective on the potential avenues for career preparation offered by Word Made Flesh, highlighting the importance of a diverse range of programs and resources in catering to the needs and aspirations of the youth in Kroo Bay.

There is a recognition of differences in youth among communities (10%), and a small percentage (5%) falls under the "Others" category. Overall, the results highlight a positive perception of Word Made Flesh's contributions to youth development, particularly in the context of Kroo Bay.

As anticipated, the responses to the question of why poor people are in poverty were diverse. One participant attributed it to the lack of inheritance from elders. To further explore this perspective, the researcher conducted a quick poll, revealing that 10 out of 30 participants believed poverty resulted from factors beyond the individual's control. Another 20% attributed poverty to "bad luck," while 5% associated it with laziness or other ailments preventing impoverished individuals from working.

Approximately 40% of respondents affirmed that the youth population in Sierra Leone lacks support for their professional development. When asked to elaborate on the reasons and the type of support needed, one respondent expressed concern, highlighting a grim reality where the youth in the area faced limited opportunities, often resulting in their involvement in activities like prostitution ("raray girls") and engaging in drugs and violence ("raray boys").

Regarding the support needed, the FGD participants presented a spectrum of opinions. While 25% believed that providing decent jobs, even if small in scale, would be beneficial, another 30% disagreed. This subgroup suggested that alongside job opportunities, a mindset preparation program was necessary to equip youth for employment. A smaller contingent, comprising 10%, expressed uncertainty about the specific actions required but emphasized the urgent need for more comprehensive efforts. Interestingly, 35% advocated for encouraging youth involvement in agriculture, aligning with the current vision of the government.

The respondents offered varied perspectives on community perceptions of youth unemployment in the Kroo Bay community. A small percentage, approximately 8% or 2 participants, attributed youth unemployment to an attitude of laziness. Another quarter of the respondents, constituting 25%, believed that it was influenced by political figures and former child soldiers who offer quick, often questionable, ways to generate income. The majority of participants, however, expressed a prevalent concern that youth unemployment is exacerbating the pervasive issue of Kush, a widely used drug considered an epidemic in Sierra Leone.

In response to the open-ended question about building on the research to provide more information and opportunities for youth, participants conveyed diverse viewpoints. A significant majority, around 50%, expressed a desire for the research focus groups and investigations to extend beyond the current community, reaching out to other communities and youth populations. Another substantial portion, approximately 30%, emphasized the importance of government or leadership involvement, suggesting that authorities should actively engage with local communities to gain a clearer understanding of the people's needs.

Conclusion

The research underscores the correlation found in existing literature, indicating that the prevailing low level of education plays a crucial role in contributing to youth unemployment in Sierra Leone. The labor market's emphasis on the Certificate First criterion exacerbates this challenge, highlighting the need for a higher educational threshold for employability. Consequently, the study emphasizes that effective interventions to address youth unemployment must prioritize enhancing educational opportunities.

While Word Made Flesh programs have successfully instilled confidence in the youth they engage with, there remains a need for further initiatives aimed at equipping them with practical skills for employment.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter synthesizes key findings, offering a comprehensive view of the study's discoveries on youth unemployment in the Kroo Bay community. It unpacks critical factors such as low education levels, vocational skills, rural-urban migration, and the link between unemployment and social unrest. The conclusion weaves these insights, providing a nuanced understanding of youth unemployment's complexities, leading to practical recommendations. These recommendations are tailored to address specific challenges and opportunities identified in the research, aiming to guide stakeholders, policymakers, and the community toward informed and impactful interventions. In essence, this chapter serves as a strategic guide for positive transformation in the context of Word Made Flesh's engagement with unemployed youth in the Kroo Bay Slum.

This research delves into youth unemployment in the Word Made Flesh/Kroo Bay slum community, employing a dual-method approach to comprehensively address six major objectives. Through questionnaires and focus group discussions, the study illuminates the prevalence and dynamics of youth unemployment. The findings reveal a concerning link between low education, lack of vocational skills, and rural-urban migration contributing to unemployment. Beyond causation, the research unveils the socio-economic consequences, exposing a vulnerability to violence and engagement in illicit activities among idle youth. Community perceptions highlight the role of unemployed youth in community chaos and political unrest, emphasizing the broader impact of this issue. In summary, the study provides a nuanced understanding, paving the way for targeted interventions and recommendations.

Conclusion

The study's exploration of the relationship between youth unemployment and its multifaceted consequences unveils a narrative deeply intertwined with educational dynamics, vocational skills, rural-urban migration, and the unsettling manifestations of idle time.

1. Educational Dynamics

The identification of a low level of education as a key contributor to youth unemployment resonates with existing literature, especially in a context where the 'Certificate First' paradigm dominates the Sierra Leonean labor market. The study underscores the significance of educational qualifications in securing employment, emphasizing that a lack thereof becomes a potential reason for youth unemployment.

2. Vocational Skills Deficiency

The study delves into the importance of vocational skills as another pivotal factor in mitigating youth unemployment. The youth, armed with practical skills, could potentially establish their enterprises, offering a pathway to economic self-sufficiency. The conclusion advocates for interventions that promote vocational training, recognizing it as a valuable tool in reducing youth unemployment.

3. Rural-Urban Migration Dynamics

Rural-urban migration emerges as a substantial force in the escalation of youth unemployment. As the youth migrate to urban areas in pursuit of elusive job opportunities, the study foresees a continued increase in the number of unemployed youth. This highlights the need for strategic policies to address the challenges arising from migration and its impact on youth employment.

4. Idle Time and Violence

The logical connection between unemployment and engagement in violence-related activities during idle time forms a critical observation. The study suggests that the allure of monetary rewards could draw idle youth into criminal and violent pursuits. This underlines the imperative of addressing not only the economic aspects of unemployment but also its potential societal repercussions.

5. Political Agitations and Security Concerns

The study sheds light on the unsettling revelation that unemployed youth often become central figures in political agitations within their communities. This phenomenon is attributed to their vulnerability, lacking familial support and driven by the need for financial sustenance. The study deems such anti-social activities as a serious security concern, emphasizing the broader implications for community well-being.

In essence, the study crafts a comprehensive narrative, linking education, vocational skills, migration patterns, idle time, and socio-political involvement to the complex tapestry of youth unemployment. The conclusions draw attention to the nuanced interplay of these factors and advocate for strategic interventions that extend beyond mere economic considerations to address the multifaceted challenges posed by youth unemployment in the Kroo Bay community. John F Kennedy Kennedy in his inaugural address said:

To those people in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required--not because the communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right. If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich. (Inaugural Address, January 20, 1961 | JFK Library, n.d.)

Recommendations

Recommendations for Addressing Youth Unemployment in Kroo Bay

Empowering the Youth and Enabling them

1. Strengthening Educational Policies

Advocate for the strengthening of existing educational policies, particularly the Free Quality Education initiative, to ensure comprehensive access to education for all Sierra Leoneans.

Consider implementing sanctions for parents who refuse to enroll their children in schools to reinforce the importance of education.

2. Adequate Funding for Tertiary Institutions

Lobby for increased funding for tertiary institutions, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary resources and facilities to provide quality education.

Advocate for government and development partners' commitment to investing in technical and vocational institutions across the country.

3. Promoting Skill Acquisition

Encourage collaboration between Word Made Flesh, governmental bodies, and NGOs to provide scholarships and support for skill acquisition programs.

Emphasize the value of skills in fostering both public and self-employment, contributing to the reduction of youth unemployment.

Protecting the Youth and Creating an Environment for them to Flourish

4. Anti-Corruption Measures

Establish strong and independent anti-corruption bodies to curb corruption within the government.

Enforce strict penalties for government officials engaged in corrupt practices to preserve funds that can be redirected toward youth employment initiatives.

5. Addressing Rural Development

Reevaluate and enhance policies related to rural-urban migration, focusing on comprehensive rural development to create job opportunities in rural areas.

Collaborate with Word Made Flesh to initiate projects in Kroo Bay and transform the slum community, providing employment opportunities locally.

6. Equipping Law Enforcement

Invest in training and equipping the police force to effectively prevent and address youth-related crimes and violence.

Strengthen community policing initiatives to engage with and address the concerns of the youth at the local level.

7. Sanctions for Instigators

Advocate for severe sanctions against individuals, especially the rich and politicians, who exploit youth for violence and criminal activities.

Establish a deterrent to discourage others from engaging in such practices.

These recommendations aim to address youth unemployment comprehensively, encompassing educational access, skill development, anti-corruption measures, rural development, law enforcement

capabilities, and sanctions for those perpetuating violence. The collaborative efforts of Word Made Flesh, the government, NGOs, and the community are crucial in implementing these recommendations effectively.

Some Specific and Important Recommendation to Word Made Flesh

About their Programing

1. Tailor Programs to Educational Needs

- Work closely with local educational institutions to understand specific gaps in education.
- Design programs that address the educational deficiencies identified in the community.

2. Collaboration with Government and NGOs

- Forge partnerships with government agencies and other NGOs to amplify the impact of interventions.
- Join forces with existing community development initiatives for a holistic approach.

3. Integrate Vocational Training

- Incorporate vocational training into existing programs to equip youth with practical skills.
- Collaborate with local businesses to align vocational training with market needs.

4. Community-Based Information Campaigns

- Launch information campaigns to educate youth about the realities of rural-urban migration.
- Provide resources and guidance on making informed decisions about migration.

5. Community Engagement Initiatives

- Facilitate community dialogues to foster a sense of shared responsibility for youth development.
- Involve community leaders in endorsing and supporting WMF initiatives.

6. Social Support and Rehabilitation Programs

- Establish programs focused on preventing and rehabilitating individuals involved in crime and drug peddling.
- Collaborate with local health services for mental health support for affected individuals.

Some Optional and Important Recommendation to Word Made Flesh

About their Programing

7. Advocacy for Labor Market Reforms:

- Advocate for policies that recognize the challenges faced by youth in gaining relevant working experience
- Collaborate with stakeholders to influence positive changes in labor regulations.

8. Economic Empowerment Strategies:

- Develop initiatives that stimulate the local economy, such as supporting local businesses.
- Explore partnerships with microfinance institutions to facilitate entrepreneurship among youth.

9. Gender-Sensitive Programming:

- Tailor programs to address the unique challenges faced by unemployed young women.
- Promote gender equality in all aspects of program design and implementation.

10. Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the impact of programs.
- Regularly assess the relevance and effectiveness of interventions and make adjustments accordingly.

By incorporating these recommendations into their programming, Word Made Flesh can enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of their initiatives, fostering lasting positive change in the lives of unemployed youth in the Kroo Bay community.

Recommendation for Further Research

1. Longitudinal Study on Sustainable Impact:

- Conduct a longitudinal study to track the long-term impact of Word Made Flesh's interventions on the lives of unemployed youth in Kroo Bay.
- Investigate the sustained effects on education, employment, and overall well-being over an extended period.

2. Qualitative Analysis of Cultural Relevance:

- Undertake a qualitative analysis to delve deeper into the cultural relevance of Word Made Flesh's programs.
- Explore how cultural factors influence the effectiveness and acceptance of interventions among the Kroo Bay community.

3. In-Depth Community Dynamics Assessment:

- Conduct a comprehensive study on community dynamics, including norms and social networks.
- Explore how these dynamics either facilitate or hinder the success and sustainability of Word Made Flesh's initiatives.

4. Gender-Sensitive Impact Assessment:

- Undertake a gender-sensitive analysis to understand the unique challenges faced by unemployed young women.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of current programs in addressing gender-specific issues and propose targeted improvements.

5. Local Leadership and Ownership Investigation:

- Explore the role of local leaders and influencers in the success and continuation of Word Made Flesh's initiatives.
- Investigate the degree of local leadership and community ownership in driving lasting change.

6. Historical and Political Context Examination:

- Conduct a study on the historical and political context of Kroo Bay to understand its impact on the sustainability of development interventions.
- Explore how historical factors and the current political landscape influence the challenges and opportunities for sustained impact.

7. Comparative Analysis with Similar Organizations:

- Conduct a comparative analysis with other organizations working in similar contexts.
- Identify best practices and lessons learned from comparable initiatives that can inform improvements in Word Made Flesh's approach.

8. Participatory Action Research with Beneficiaries:

- Implement participatory action research methodologies involving beneficiaries in the evaluation process.
- Engage unemployed youth in co-designing and co-evaluating programs to ensure their perspectives and needs are central to improvements.

9. Exploration of Mental Health Implications

- Investigate the potential mental health implications of youth unemployment in Kroo Bay.
- Examine how mental health support can be integrated into interventions to address the holistic well-being of beneficiaries.

10. Analysis of Economic Empowerment Strategies:

- Evaluate the economic empowerment strategies employed by Word Made Flesh, focusing on their impact on local businesses and the overall economy.
- Identify opportunities for enhancing economic sustainability and entrepreneurship among the youth.

These recommendations aim to deepen the understanding of Word Made Flesh's impact, addressing specific aspects of cultural relevance, community dynamics, gender dynamics, and the broader contextual factors that influence the organization's effectiveness. The insights gained from further research can inform targeted improvements and contribute to the development of more nuanced and impactful interventions.

My Personal Reflection

Throughout this research journey, delving into the intricate landscape of empowering Kroo Bay's youth, I found myself immersed in a profound learning experience. The comprehensive analysis of Word Made Flesh's impact and potential enhancements not only broadened my understanding but also touched me on a personal level.

Witnessing the dedication of Word Made Flesh in empowering the youth of Kroo Bay stirred a profound sense of admiration. The longitudinal study revealed the organization's commitment to lasting change, tracking improvements in education, employment, and overall well-being over time. The cultural relevance analysis underscored the importance of understanding and respecting local dynamics, emphasizing the need for interventions that resonate with the community's unique context.

Exploring community dynamics highlighted the delicate balance between facilitators and hindrances to success. The gender-sensitive impact analysis shed light on the nuanced challenges faced by young women, prompting a realization of the need for targeted approaches. The investigation into local leadership and ownership illuminated the pivotal role of community stakeholders in driving sustainable change.

Unraveling the historical and political context of Kroo Bay deepened my awareness of the profound impact external factors can have on development initiatives. The comparative analysis with similar organizations provided valuable insights into best practices, fostering a spirit of collaboration and shared learning.

Engaging in participatory action research with beneficiaries was a transformative experience. Involving the youth in co-designing and co-evaluating programs emphasized the importance of their perspectives, ensuring that interventions are not only effective but also reflective of their needs and aspirations.

The exploration of mental health implications underscored the holistic nature of well-being, emphasizing the interconnectedness of mental health and socio-economic empowerment. Finally, the analysis of economic empowerment strategies revealed the potential for Word Made Flesh to not only impact individual lives but also contribute to the broader economic landscape of Kroo Bay.

As I conclude this study, the impact on me is profound. It goes beyond academic inquiry; it's a journey that has deepened my appreciation for the transformative power of community-focused interventions. Witnessing the dedication of Word Made Flesh and the resilience of Kroo Bay's youth has left an indelible mark, inspiring a commitment to contributing meaningfully to the ongoing narrative of empowerment and sustainable development.

In essence, this research has not only been a scholarly pursuit but a soul-stirring exploration of human resilience, community dynamics, and the potential for positive change. It is my sincere hope that the insights gleaned from this study will not only inform academic discourse but will also catalyze actionable steps toward a more empowered and vibrant Kroo Bay community.

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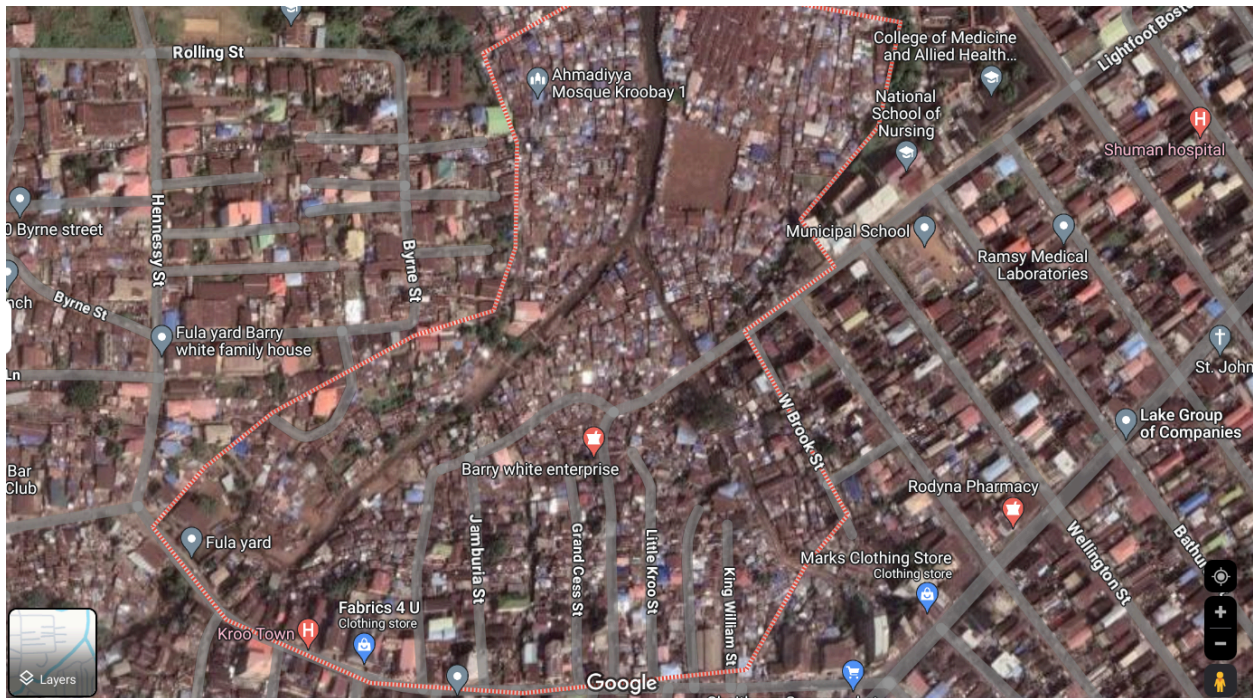
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Figure 6.1

Map of Kroo Bay



Map of Kroo Bay (Before You Continue to Google Maps, n.d.)

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

Researcher: Patrick Freeman

Research Topic: An Evaluation of Word Made Flesh and the Impact of their work on the Unemployed Youth in Kroo Bay Slum and How It Can Be Improved

Dear respondent,

I am a final-year student at William Carey International University, conducting research on the above topic. Your valuable input is crucial for the success of this study. Please be assured that all responses are confidential, and your participation is greatly appreciated.

Research Title: Evaluation of Word Made Flesh and the Impact of their Work on Unemployed Youth in Kroo Bay Slum, with a Focus on Improvement Opportunities

Research Question: How have the programs of Word Made Flesh Sierra Leone impacted youth unemployment in Kroo Bay, and what suggestions do you have for improving these programs?

*Please tick (✓) where appropriate.

Thank you for your participation.

Survey Questions on Youth Unemployment in Kroo Bay Slum Community:

Section A: Demographics

1. Age: a. 18-20 years b. 21-25 years c. 26-30 years d. 31-35+ years
2. Gender: a. Male b. Female
3. Area of residence: a. Kroo Bay b. Outside Kroo Bay c. Freetown Urban - West d. Freetown Urban - East
4. Marital status: a. Single b. Married c. Divorced/Separated/Widowed d. Consensual Union
5. Highest level of education: a. Primary b. Secondary c. Certificate/Diploma
d. Tertiary/Graduate e. None
6. Religion: a. Christianity b. Islam c. Traditional d. Others (specify).....
.....

Section B: Causes of Youth Unemployment in Kroo Bay Slum Community

7. Occupational status: a. Paid worker b. Self-employed c. Unemployed d. Others (specify)
.....
8. If unemployed (Q7c), reason for unemployment: a. Learning a trade b. In school
.....
c. Physically incapacitated d. No work available e. Others (specify)
.....
- f. Not applicable
9. Preferred jobs for Kroo Bay Youth
 - Example: Government Jobs, Private Sector Jobs, Entrepreneurship, etc.
10. Most important reason for youth unemployment in Sierra Leone: a. Low level of education

- b. Lack of relevant vocational skills
- c. Strict labor regulations
- d. Unfavorable environment for job creation
- e. Rural-Urban migration
- f. Others (specify)

11. Reasons behind youth unemployment in Kroo Bay slum:

(Open-ended Question for Participants to Provide their Perspectives)

These survey questions aim to gather demographic information and insights into the causes of youth unemployment in the Kroo Bay slum community, considering various factors such as education, vocational skills, labor regulations, environment, and migration.

Section C: Socio-economic Consequences of Unemployment on the Youth

The following statements relate to the social economic consequences of unemployment on the youth of Kroo Bay Slum Community. Please indicate so by marking an X or a check mark (√) in the column that appropriately fits your level of agreement.

Section C: Socio Economic Consequences of Unemployment

12. SA-Strongly Agree, A- Agree, UD- Undecided, D- Disagree, SD- Strongly Disagree

Statements-	SA	A	UD	D	SD
Inability to marry					
Drug peddling					
Crime and violence					
Lack access to basic needs in life					
Prostitution					

13. SA-Strongly Agree, A- Agree, UD- Undecided, D- Disagree, SD- Strongly Disagree

Statements	SA	A	UD	D	SD
Low patronage of goods and services					
Instrument of anti-social vices (robbery, drug peddling, etc.)					
Non-contribution to community development					
Political party agitations					
Agents of landowners clashes					

14. In addition to its economic impact, what other socio-economic repercussions does unemployment impose on the Kroo Bay community?

.....

Section D: Examining Perceptions of Youth Unemployment on Community Development

The statements below pertain to the perceptions of youth unemployment in the community. Kindly express your agreement level by marking an X or a check mark (√) in the column that best aligns with your perspective.

15. SA-Strongly Agree, A- Agree, UD- Undecided, D- Disagree, SD- Strongly Disagree

Statements	SA	A	UD	D	SD
Young people are not taking enough responsibility for their lives					
There is a skills mismatch inhibiting the youth from being employed in the private sector.					
There is cultural resistance to doing certain jobs, for example sales and vocational work.					
Public sector employment incentives render private sector employment unattractive.					
Labor regulations are too rigid for national employees.					
The business environment is non-conducive for entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).					
Low initiative to start one's own business and to stay in work.					
Youth aspire to get "white collar" (office) jobs hence do not value "blue collar" (manual labor) jobs.					

16. What positive and practical steps can individuals and communities take to address globalization, waste, and the exploitation of resources in Sierra Leone?

SECTION E: Word Made Flesh Programs and Youth Unemployment

17. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the lowest, 5 being neutral, and 10 being the highest, kindly rate the following Word Made Flesh Programs:

- Good News Club Program
- Lighthouse Youth Program
- Tutoring Program
- Youth Camp Program
- Women’s Program
- Men’s Program
- Miscellaneous Programs

18. Which programs do you believe have been MOST effective in preparing youth for employment? Please elaborate on how the program has been effective.

.....

19. Conversely, which programs do you think have been LEAST effective in preparing youth for employment? Please share your insights on how these programs have not been effective.

.....

20. Do the programs and activities of charities, such as Word Made Flesh, impact the overall professional development of the youth they serve?

21. How does the biblical concept of jubilee apply to youth unemployment and poverty? (The Jubilee is an economic, cultural, and community “reset” that occurs after every seventh Sabbath year, i.e., every 50 years. In the jubilee year, the land and people rest, and all those who are enslaved are freed to return to their community)

.....

22. What initiatives do you think Word Made Flesh can implement to advance youth employment in Kuro Bay?

.....

23. What type of career preparation do you believe Word Made Flesh can provide to the youth of Kuro Bay?

.....

a. Government-paid work b. Private Organization Employment c. Entrepreneurship

d. Family work/ Family Owned Business

e. Others (specify).....

24. In what ways do you think the youth of Kroo Bay differ from other youth in communities such as Moa Wharf slum and Congo Water?

.....

25. Why, in your opinion, are some people in poverty?

.....

26. Do you believe the youth population of Sierra Leone lacks support for their professional development? Why or why not? What type of support do you think is needed?

.....

27. What do you believe are community perceptions of youth unemployment in the Kroo Bay community?

.....

28. How can we build on this research to provide more information and opportunities for youth?

.....

29. What processes can organizations use to distinguish between those who genuinely seek employment and those who do not?

.....

30. Are there any government agencies or programs that you feel are effectively combating youth unemployment? Please provide examples.

.....

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FGD PARTICIPANTS ON YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

1. How do you think educational qualifications impact job opportunities for the youth in the community? Does the absence of educational certificates present a significant barrier to employment for youth in the Kroo Bay slum community?
2. What are your thoughts on the role of vocational skills in shaping employment prospects for the youth?
3. How can targeted vocational training programs address the challenges faced by youth in gaining relevant skills for the job market?
4. Does rural-urban migration contribute to youth unemployment in the Kroo Bay slum community?
5. In what ways do social networks influence the ability of youth to access accurate information about job opportunities?
6. From your perspective, how do labor regulations contribute to youth unemployment?
7. Can you share any personal experiences or observations related to the challenges faced by young job seekers in the context of labor regulations?

8. How does unemployment contribute to acts of violence within the community, as mentioned by participants?
9. In what ways do you think unemployment leads to criminal activities such as armed robbery?
10. What are your thoughts on the link between youth unemployment and social stigma related - enterprises such as prostitution?
11. How can targeted interventions and support systems address the challenges faced by individuals resorting to coping strategies due to prolonged joblessness?
12. How do unemployed youth contribute to social discord within the community, as mentioned in the findings?
13. Can you share insights on the role of unemployed youth in conflicts over land ownership and its impact on community investments?
14. In your opinion, how does youth unemployment contribute to political agitations within the community?
15. How can addressing unemployment reduce the vulnerability of youth to political manipulation?
16. How does unemployment affect the willingness of youth to contribute to community development initiatives, such as paying development levies and participating in communal labor?
17. What impact does reduced purchasing power of unemployed youth have on local businesses and trade within the community?
18. In your opinion, how does prolonged unemployment affect an individual within the community?
19. How does unemployment serve as a dual impediment, affecting both the capacity to afford marriage and the attractiveness as potential partners?
20. What strategies can be used to address youth unemployment and what can be implemented to mitigate the adverse consequences on individuals, especially in terms of mental health and overall well-being?

Research Questionnaire Guide

Here are the Quantitative Questions from the Questionnaire

Demographic Information (Quantitative)

1. Age

- a. 18-20 years
- b. 21-25 years
- c. 26-30 years
- d. 31-35+ years

2. Gender

- a. Male
- b. Female

3. Area of residence

- a. Kroo Bay
- b. Outside Kroo Bay
- c. Freetown Urban – West

- d. Freetown Urban - East

4. Marital status

- a. Single
- b. Married
- c. Divorced/Separated/Widowed
- d. Consensual Union

5. Highest level of education

- a. Primary
- b. Secondary
- c. Certificate/Diploma
- d. Tertiary/Graduate
- e. None

6. Religion

- a. Christianity
- b. Islam
- c. Traditional
- d. Others (specify)

Word Made Flesh Programs (Quantitative)

17. Rating on a scale of 1-10

- Good News Club Program
- Lighthouse Youth Program
- Tutoring Program
- Youth Camp Program
- Women's Program
- Men's Program
- Miscellaneous Programs

Here are the Qualitative Questions from the Questionnaire

Causes of Youth Unemployment (Qualitative)

7. Occupational status

- a. Paid worker
- b. Self-employed
- c. Unemployed
- d. Others (specify)

8. If Unemployed (Q7c), Reason for Unemployment

- a. Learning a trade
- b. In school
- c. Physically incapacitated
- d. No work available
- e. Others (specify)
- f. Not applicable

9. Preferred jobs for Kroo Bay Youth

- a. Example: Government Jobs, Private Sector Jobs, Entrepreneurship, etc.

10. Most important reason for youth unemployment in Sierra Leone

- a. Low level of education
- b. Lack of relevant vocational skills
- c. Strict labor regulations
- d. Unfavorable environment for job creation
- e. Rural-Urban migration
- f. Others (specify)

Socio-economic Consequences (Qualitative)

12. Statements

- Inability to marry
- Drug peddling
- Crime and violence
- Lack access to basic needs in life
- Prostitution

13. Statements

- Low patronage of goods and services
- Instrument of anti-social vices (robbery, drug peddling, etc.)
- Non-contribution to community development
- Political party agitations
- Agents of landowners clashes

Additional Socio-economic Repercussions of Unemployment

Open-ended Question for Participants to Provide their Perspectives

Examining Perceptions (Qualitative)

14. Statements

- a. Young people are not taking enough responsibility for their lives
- There is a skills mismatch inhibiting the youth from being employed in the private sector.
- There is cultural resistance to doing certain jobs, for example sales and vocational work.
- Public sector employment incentives render private sector employment unattractive.
- Labor regulations are too rigid for national employees.
- The business environment is non-conducive for entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- Low initiative to start one's own business and to stay in work.
- Youth aspire to get "white collar" (office) jobs hence do not value "blue collar" (manual labor) jobs.

15. Positive and practical steps for addressing globalization, waste, and resource exploitation in Sierra Leone.

Here are the Questions that are Both Qualitative and Quantitative in Nature

Examining Perceptions (Qualitative and Quantitative)

16. Statements

- Young people are not taking enough responsibility for their lives
- There is a skills mismatch inhibiting the youth from being employed in the private sector.
- There is cultural resistance to doing certain jobs, for example sales and vocational work.
- Public sector employment incentives render private sector employment unattractive.
- Labor regulations are too rigid for national employees.
- The business environment is non-conducive for entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- Low initiative to start one's own business and to stay in work.
- Youth aspire to get "white collar" (office) jobs hence do not value "blue collar" (manual labor) jobs.

17. SA-Strongly Agree, A- Agree, UD- Undecided, D- Disagree, SD- Strongly Disagree...

Positive and Practical Steps for Addressing Globalization, Waste, and Resource Exploitation in Sierra Leone.

Word Made Flesh Programs (Quantitative and Qualitative)

18. Rating on a scale of 1-10

- Good News Club Program
- Lighthouse Youth Program
- Tutoring Program
- Youth Camp Program
- Women's Program
- Men's Program
- Miscellaneous Programs

19. Most effective programs for preparing youth for employment

- a. Elaborate on how the program has been effective.

20. Least effective programs for preparing youth for employment

- Share insights on how these programs have not been effective.

21. Impact of programs and activities of charities, such as Word Made Flesh, on overall professional development of the youth they serve?

22. How does the biblical concept of jubilee apply to youth unemployment and poverty?

23. Initiatives Word Made Flesh can implement to advance youth employment in Kroo Bay.

24. Type of career preparation Word Made Flesh can provide to the youth of Kroo Bay

- a. Government-paid work
- b. Private Organization Employment
- c. Entrepreneurship
- d. Family work/ Family Owned Business
- e. Others (specify)...