

## <sup>1</sup> Youth Participation in Programmes Intended to Benefit Them: <sup>2</sup> The Case of Ghana's National Youth Employment Programme

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## 7 Abstract

8 The essence of governance and representative democracy is for elected leaders to formulate  
9 and implement appropriate policies on behalf of the people to deal with the quagmires of  
10 poverty and under-development among them. In doing this, sometimes it becomes necessary  
11 to consult the people, especially, the particular group that a policy is targeted at, to ensure  
12 that first-hand and adequate information is gathered to facilitate the design and  
13 implementation of appropriate policies to deal with that group's problems. In Ghana, since  
14 1992, development plans have been formulated and implemented with little or no participation  
15 of the youth even though they constitute the bulk of the nation's labour force and voting  
16 population. The youth were also marginalized in the formulation and implementation of the  
17 National Youth Employment Programme, a programme intended to benefit them and to deal  
18 with unemployment among them.

**Index terms**— Youth; Participation; Employment; Programme; and Task Force.

## 1 I. Introduction and Problem Statement

22 It has been estimated that youth unemployment has risen from 14.8% in 1992 to 16.4% in 2000 and came  
23 close to 29% in 2009 (ISSER, 2010). While several development policies have been formulated by the National  
24 Development Planning Commission, these have not yielded sufficient employment opportunities, a situation which  
25 has disproportionately affected the youth. Though about 250,000 young people enter the labour market annually,  
26 the formal sector is able to engage only 2% leaving 98% to strive to survive in the informal sector or remain  
27 unemployed (ibid:189). Indeed, the youth are about 3.5 times more likely to be Author : Department of Political  
28 Science University of Ghana Legon-Accra. E-mail : Vangyampo@yahoo.com sustainable youth employment  
29 programme, not only to help youth find meaningful work and a secure their future, but also to help avert the  
30 negative security implications youth joblessness could have on a country's peace, development and democratic  
31 dispensation (Amoo, 2011).

The essence of governance and representative democracy is for elected leaders to formulate and implement appropriate policies on behalf of the people to deal with the quagmires of poverty and underdevelopment among them. In doing this, sometimes it becomes necessary to consult the people, especially, the particular group that a policy is targeted at, to ensure that first-hand and adequate information is gathered to facilitate the design and implementation of appropriate policies to deal with that group's problems. In many developed countries, several programmes have been put in place to tackle the employment needs of their youth. In the USA for example youth employment programmes including Jobs for America's Graduates, Youth-Build USA, and Job Corps have been formulated and implemented to deal with unemployment among different segments of their youth (Collura, 2010). Similarly, in Ghana, the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP) is seen as a major programme initiated in 2006 by the administration of President J.A. Kufuor to deal with unemployment among the youth who according to the nation's 2000 Population and Housing Census constitute about 60% of the population of about 20 million. However, the programme has proven to be woefully inadequate in sustainably dealing with the

### 3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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44 huge problems of unemployment among Ghana's youth due to the serious setbacks it suffers. By the end of 2011,  
45 the NYEP had offered jobs to only about 108,000 Ghanaians (Attipoe-Fitz, 2010). But this can be described as  
46 a drop in an ocean considering the fact that this is statistically negligible and the programme does not address  
47 the specific interest of the youth to secure good and sustainable jobs for a sound future (Donkoh, 2010). Indeed,  
48 for the first time in the history of Ghana, the Unemployed Graduates Association of Ghana was launched in 2011  
49 to protest about the alarming rate of youth unemployment among all. How such important programmes like the  
50 NYEP are formulated is crucial in ensuring that they benefit those they were meant for. In this regard, it is  
51 significant to note that in formulating the youth employment programmes in the USA for instance, the youth  
52 were consulted and they actively participated in the process, particularly at the community level (Collura, 2010).  
53 Indeed, the 1991 and 2001 Reports of the US Department of Labour clearly documents how different youth groups  
54 participated in the formulation and implementation of employment programmes meant for them in a manner  
55 that made those programmes relevant in effectively dealing with their joblessness. On the contrary, the situation  
56 is different in Ghana. The NYEP, a programme intended to benefit the youth is an eliteprescribed programme  
57 and has no room for the youth even in its implementation. If the youth had been part of its formulation and  
58 implementation, they would have made input and ventilated their peculiar challenges relating to unemployment  
59 and how the programme could advance their long term interest.

60 Studies of existing youth employment programmes show that they make less of a short-term impact but a few,  
61 particularly in the developed world have much more impact over the long term ?? Although youth in job training  
62 and employment programmes benefits from the immediacy of a paycheck, the long term benefits of excellent  
63 programmes can secure better jobs with higher salaries, benefits, and opportunities for advancement (Collura,  
64 2010). This is the direct interest and aspiration of every young person that can effectively be championed by the  
65 youth themselves when they are made part of the process of formulating and implementing programmes meant  
66 for them (ibid).

67 This paper therefore takes an overview of the NYEP. It highlights how it was formulated and is being  
68 implemented with particular emphasis on the role of the youth, if any, in the processes. It explains the reasons  
69 for the particular role of the youth in the NYEP process and discusses the achievements and challenges of the  
70 programme. The paper concludes on the note that youth participation in the "NYEP process" could have  
71 strengthened the programme in effectively dealing with youth unemployment and averted the current situation  
72 where its challenges far out-weighs its gains and threatens its viability and sustainability.

## 73 2 II.

### 74 3 Conceptual Framework

75 The concept of participation underpins this study. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948)  
76 emphasized participation by all segments of society in decision making as a matter of right. Scuff (1975) defines  
77 participation from two distinct angles. Briefly, one angle emphasizes the idea of sharing in common life and  
78 acting on the basis of reciprocity in order to promote the "public good". The other angle looks at participation  
79 as an act of exchange, as an instrumental means for gaining power in order to increase the probability of  
80 realizing private benefits (ibid:449). Drah (2003) however emphasizes 'participatory development', as being  
81 the engagement of the greatest number of citizens in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation  
82 of development programmes and projects in order to uplift their standards. Such programmes and projects are  
83 desirably community based.

84 According to the Karol Wojtyla's theory of participation, 'the term participation points to the ability of the  
85 person to exist and act together with others without losing oneself as he moves towards his selffulfillment. As  
86 the antithesis of alienation, participation allows the person to fully experience himself as well as to experience  
87 the humanity of other persons. Participation is not simply the fact of being physically present to one another  
88 in a group activity. It is possible that people exist as a group yet pursue their goals individually or in isolation.  
89 Participation is not something which simply happens but is a result of a person's conscious striving for fulfillment?'  
90 (Mejos, 2007).

91 There are two levels of participation, 'pseudo' and 'genuine' participation. Participation is 'pseudo' when its  
92 purposes are to inform citizens about decisions, placate their complaints and manipulate their opinions. 'Genuine'  
93 participation which is encouraged by leaders who are willing to be accountable for their actions occurs only when  
94 the public is involved in administrative decision making and citizens are the owners of government and the  
95 co-producers of public goods ??Wang, 2001:323). In 'genuine' participation, citizens are dominant discussants,  
96 decision makers and implementers and government's supplementary role is to set goals, provide incentives, monitor  
97 processes and provide information (ibid). Participation in decision making is seen as evidence of "genuine" or  
98 meaningful participation because it allows 'public beliefs and values' to be realized ??Bryant and White, 1982:  
99 208). According to ??ohen and Uphoff, (1978:11), genuine participation has a notable counter insurgency quality  
100 about it and serves as an alternative to revolutionary movements. In the view of Dryzek (1996), participation  
101 in the polity is more crucial than participation in the state. Participation in the state is merely co-optation of a  
102 group's leadership into the state in a manner that weakens the group's ability to effectively advocate its interest  
103 (ibid: 478). On the other hand, participation in the polity on the other hand refers to the exercise of rights  
104 by oppositional civil society groups as citizens without any hindrance. This takes the form of lobbying, strikes,

105 demonstrations in order to champion their own interest and to keep governments on their toes (ibid: 480). Bryant  
106 and White (1982) have identified several factors that may encourage or block participation. Notable among them  
107 include the fact that people's income level could either boost or weaken their participation in a process. People  
108 may also participate when their contribution is more apt to be noticed and make a difference. Moreover, the  
109 composite elements of social environment including education, training and mentorship programmes may also  
110 influence participation negatively or positively.

111 In measuring participation this study employs four major indices namely: representation; meaningful  
112 contribution to planning process; influencing planning process; and ownership of plans. Representation according  
113 to Pitkin (1967) denotes trusteeship and means acting in the best interest of the represented, in a manner  
114 responsive to them. There is substantive representative when leaders act independently and exercise discretion  
115 as well as judgment. Those who are being represented must have a say in the appointment of their leaders and  
116 their removal if such leaders fail to advance the cause of their constituents (ibid: 112). She argues further that  
117 if superior wisdom and ability resides in the representative, he must not subordinate them to the opinions of  
118 his ignorant and inferior constituents. Conversely, to the extent that a representative and his constituents are  
119 relatively equal in wisdom, and in capacity, he would be required to consult his constituents (ibid:142). According  
120 to her, the more people identify and get attached to their interests; and the more decisions to be taken are likely  
121 to affect local interests, the more likely representatives would be required to consult the constituents and act in  
122 response to what they require. When consulted, citizens should be deeply involved and must be able to contribute  
123 meaningfully to the decision making process. Such contributions should be able to influence the decision making  
124 process in a manner that satisfies their interests ??Rosener, 1978: 459).

125 Influence is the ability to convince a decision maker to reach a certain decision (Adler and Bobrow, 1956).  
126 Finally, citizens must own the final policy outcomes that are made. Ownership is the feeling of an exclusive  
127 right conferred by a lawful claim and subject to certain restrictions to possess, enjoy, protect and defend an item  
128 of property (Mackin, 1996). The extent to which people own or attach a sense of ownership to programmes  
129 determines the level of their participation. According to Rosener, (1978), having a say in the selection of leaders  
130 and formulation of policies breeds ownership.

### 131 **4 III.**

## 132 **5 Clarifying Other Concepts**

133 The term "youth" refers to those young men and women between the ages of 15-35 years as defined by Ghana's  
134 2010 National Youth Policy and the African Youth Charter. However, given that the NYEP employs Ghanaian  
135 youth between the ages of 18-35 years who are literate, illiterate, able and or disabled, the term is also used  
136 in accordance with the age bracket at which one could be employed under the NYEP. The term may be used  
137 interchangeably with "young people". The term "NYEP process" is used in this paper to refer to how the  
138 programme was formulated and is currently being implemented.

139 IV.

## 140 **6 Overview of the NYEP**

141 From 2001, several attempts were made in Ghana to address the problem of youth unemployment and  
142 underemployment. The government first registered about, 950,000 young people from different educational,  
143 trades and professional backgrounds who needed employment. Other initiatives that followed include the Skills  
144 Training and Employment Placement (STEP) Programme, an attempt to establish a National Youth Fund (NYF)  
145 as well as various micro-credit schemes to support small-scale enterprises (NYEP Guidelines, 2006:1). While the  
146 government's efforts were largely acknowledged as being a step in the right direction, the problem of youth  
147 employment persisted and the unemployment rate among the youth rose to 25.6 percent in 2005 (NYEP Review  
148 Report, 2009:5).

149 The National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP), also called the National Youth Job Corps Programme,  
150 was a special policy initiated by the NPP government in 2006 based on a presidential directive to ensure that the  
151 youth including Junior High School (JHS) and Senior High School (SHS), Technical/Vocational School graduates  
152 as well as school dropouts and illiterate youth, would be actively engaged in some productive employment  
153 (Attipoe-Fittz, 2010). The objective of the programme was to help reduce unemployment, under-employment,  
154 satisfy national needs such as food security and equip the youth with some work experience for permanent  
155 employment (ibid). This programme was not backed by an act of parliament; it was designed to help achieve  
156 the Millennium Development Goal of reducing poverty ??Donkoh, 2009). Young people recruited under the  
157 programme were to exit after two years to search for permanent jobs in other sectors of the economy or proceed  
158 for further education (NYEP, 2006:3). The programme was intended to cover a wide spectrum of economic  
159 ventures and social service activities in local communities.

160 The programme was initially developed as a Ten-Module Youth Employment Programme to form the first  
161 phase of a two-phased programme. The first phase focused on short term activities that would create jobs for  
162 the youth, while the second phase would take a long term view of employment issues within the context of  
163 the GPRS (II). The first phase of the programme covered all the ten modules; namely, Youth-in-Agri-Business;  
164 Youthin-Trades and Vocations; Youth-in-ICT ?? V.

## 165 7 NYEP-Policy Initiation

166 At a cabinet meeting on March 2005, the National Security Coordinator in the NPP administration, Dr. Sam G.  
167 Amoo presented a paper discussing the high incidence of youth unemployment in Ghana and its threat to national  
168 security, peace and stability. President J.A. Kufuor directed the National Security Coordinator to urgently put  
169 in place a team to identify the appropriate mechanisms and practical means to deal with the problem (Amoo,  
170 2011). This directive marked the beginning of the processes towards the formulation of the NYEP, a quick a  
171 solution to youth unemployment in Ghana. 1

## 172 8 VI.

173 Formulating the NYEP Initially, the National Security Coordinator put together a ten-member committee to  
174 brainstorm and formulate the programme. The committee comprised the National Security Co-ordinator and  
175 five senior members from the National Security Advisory Team and three senior officials of the NYC. The members  
176 were: 1. Dr. Sam Amoo-National Security Coordinator/Chairman of Committee; 1 In an interview with Dr.  
177 Sam G. Amoo, former National Security Coordinator in the Kufuor regime in Accra on 26 th January 2010, he  
178 showed me a Memorandum dated the 28 th of March 2005 and signed by Mr. Frank Mpare, Secretary to Cabinet  
179 requesting him to constitute a team to design a well-coordinated and integrated national programme which will  
180 provide a quick solution to youth unemployment in a concerted and much focused manner. The programme to be  
181 designed was also to empower the youth to be able to contribute more productively towards the socio-economic  
182 and sustainable development of the nation. The tenth member of the committee, Mr. Kweku Adu Mensah, was  
183 recruited as a consultant by the National Security Coordinator to assist with policy formulation.

## 184 9 2

185 The meetings of the committee lasted six months during which a wide spectrum of economic and social service  
186 activities that could be pursued by the youth as employment were identified (NYEP Committee Report, 2005:10).  
187 However to ensure a cross sectoral planning and in view of the fact that issues relating to employment cuts  
188 across all sectors of the economy, the membership of the committee was later enhanced to include the ministers  
189 of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, Local Government and Rural Development, and Trade and Industry and  
190 constituted into a Planning Team.

191 Membership of the committee was dominated by National Security in view of the security implications of youth  
192 unemployment and the need to find an immediate solution to it (Amoo, 2011). "It was also important to bring the  
193 top echelon of the NYC on board so that they could share their experience in youth development issues with the  
194 committee" (ibid). The Consultant was recruited to assist the committee because of his long standing experience  
195 in agricultural production and export. His knowledge and experience about the various sectors of agriculture that  
196 could provide employment to the youth and promote food sufficiency as well as national development was crucial  
197 (ibid). The main objective of the committee was to identify projects with economic potential that can generate  
198 immediate employment for as many young people as possible in order to check their idleness and drift from the  
199 rural to urban communities in search of non-existent jobs (NYEP Guidelines, 2006:2). In a letter to Mr. Kweku  
200 Adu-Mensah, the then director of the Ghana Export Promotion Council and an expert in agricultural production  
201 and export, dated on 15 th April 2005 and signed by the National Security Coordinator he was invited to serve  
202 as a consultant to the committee to formulate a well-coordinated and integrated national programme which will  
203 address youth unemployment in Ghana.

204 The 3 In a report of the first six months proceedings of the meetings of the ten-member committee put in  
205 place by the then National Security Coordinator, dated the 18th October, 2005, a decision was taken to enhance  
206 the membership of the committee to ensure a cross sectoral planning about how to tackle youth unemployment  
207 in the country. The specific ministries that were selected to be part of the planning team were the ministries of  
208 agriculture, fisheries, forestry, local government Implementing the NYEP to commence recruitment and placement  
209 across the country (Adu-Mensah, 2011). As indicated earlier, the NDC government added four more modules to  
210 the programme (Attipoe-Fitz, 2010).

211 The youth were expected to play crucial role in implementing the NYEP even though they did not participate  
212 in its formulation. However, even though the NYEP is expected to benefit the youth, they do not get the  
213 opportunity to directly participate in the implementation structures of the programme. A critical analysis of the  
214 implementation process of the NYEP shows that the participation of the youth in implementing the programme  
215 exists only in theory. First, an implementation task force on which youth groups in Ghana are represented was to  
216 be established to implement the NYEP. Indeed, the Youth Employment Implementation Guidelines ??2006) The  
217 functions of the NYETF include providing guidelines for the formulation of Short and Medium Term Strategic  
218 Plans for the NYEP; including: designing and rural development, and trade and industry. The ministers in  
219 charge of these ministries were accordingly invited to serve on the planning team.

220 guidelines for implementing the NYEP; approving programmes and projects; sourcing and allocation of  
221 funds and other resources; sensitizing and training of programme managers at all levels; monitoring and  
222 evaluating the programmes' activities; and setting targets and signing performance contracts with Metropoli-  
223 tan/Municipal/District Employment Task Forces (MMDETF); developing policy recommendations for govern-  
224 ment's consideration through the Ministry responsible for employment to strengthen employment programmes;

225 and undertaking any other functions assigned it by the Ministry of MMYE to ensure the success of the programme  
226 (ibid:13).

227 The implementation of the NYEP at the district level is to be monitored at the regional level by a Regional  
228 Monitoring Team (RMT). This Team has the responsibility only to monitor, evaluate and report on the  
229 implementation and progress of the programme (NYEP Implementation Guidelines 2006:14). It is chaired by  
230 the Regional Minister or in his absence, his Deputy. A Regional Liaison Officer was to serve as Secretary to  
231 the Team (ibid). The RMT comprises: the Regional Minister or the Deputy Regional Minister; the Regional  
232 Coordinator for the NYC; the Regional Labour Officer; the Regional Cooperatives Officer; the Regional Director  
233 of Agriculture; the Regional Director of Education; the Regional Director of Health; and the Regional Liaison  
234 Officer (ibid).

235 At the metropolitan, municipal and district level, MMDETF chaired by the MMDCE is to assist in the  
236 successful implementation of the programme. This district body is entrusted with the responsibility of identifying,  
237 mobilizing and sensitizing the unemployed youth to participate in the programme; identifying potential economic  
238 and social activities in the districts for sponsorship; seeing to the timely disbursement of funds to the beneficiary  
239 groups and be accountable for the recovery of such funds; submitting monthly, quarterly and annual reports  
240 to the National Employment Task Force with copies to the RMT by the 10 th day of the following month;  
241 and undertaking costing of programmes and projects (ibid:15). The MMDETF Municipal / District Director of  
242 Agriculture ; the Metropolitan/ Municipal /District Director of Health; the Metropolitan / Municipal / District  
243 Director of Education; two other members appointed by the MMYE; and two representatives each from youth  
244 groups at the district, one of whom must be a female (ibid:14).

## 245 **10 VIII.**

246 Analyzing and Critiquing Youth Participation in the NYEP Process

## 247 **11 a) Formulation**

248 The analysis of youth participation in formulating the NYEP is based on the indices of participation as already  
249 discussed. The Committee that initiated the processes towards the formulation of the NYEP was dominated by  
250 national security officials. These were not experts on issues related to youth unemployment; yet they made no  
251 serious effort to seek the views of the youth on the problem. 5 Ironically, the 2008 NYP which was initiated  
252 by the same NPP government received direct input from virtually all the youth groups in the country through  
253 the nation-wide workshops and symposia that were organized (Donkoh, 2010). 6 Given that no one can claim  
254 mastery and understanding of youth problems better than the youth themselves, it would have been appropriate  
255 to have consulted them in formulating the NYEP. Youth ownership of the 2008 youth policy was not in question.

256 According to some youth leaders, its implementation would have been smooth and successful had it not been  
257 jettisoned by the NDC government in 2009.

## 258 **12 7**

259 Again, as argued by Pitkin (1967), the NYEP, which is a programme developed for the youth is Because the  
260 youth were not consulted in formulating the NYEP, they could not influence the process. Youth ownership of  
261 the programme is therefore problematic. ”?Most of them see the NYEP not as their own programme. They have  
262 no feeling that it belongs to them and must be protected and sustained. Their lackadaisical attitude to work  
263 and misuse and abuse of office equipment at the various NYEP offices is an ample testimony of their lack of  
264 ownership of the programme?” (Attipoe-Fittz, 2010).

## 265 **13 5**

266 In an interview with Dr. Sam G. Amoo, former National Security Coordinator in the Kufuor administration in  
267 Accra on 26 th January 2010, he admitted that he and his team who formulated the NYEP were not experts on  
268 issues related to youth unemployment and may have glossed over crucial issues that could have made the NYEP  
269 more effective in solving the problem of youth unemployment during its formulation process. He explained that  
270 the need to urgently tackle the problem of youth unemployment without delay was paramount and superseded  
271 ”the luxury of consulting the youth themselves for their input”. This, according to him would have been a time  
272 consuming exercise. 6 The initiative to consult and solicit direct youth contribution and influence in the drafting  
273 of the 2008 national youth policy was in tandem with the view of Pitkin (1967) who argued that representatives  
274 must consult their constituents in areas where the constituents and representatives are relatively equal in wisdom  
275 and capacity. 7 The three NUGS Presidents who made contributions to the formulation of the Ghana Vision  
276 2020 (Haruna Iddrisu) and the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy I (William Yamoah) &Growth and Poverty  
277 Reduction Strategy II (Ken Abotsi) made this point when I interviewed them separately between 14 th and 20  
278 th October, 2010 in Accra.

279 reality the programme is bedeviled with several challenges that render it ineffective and weak in promoting the  
280 interest of the youth and dealing with the issue of unemployment among them. First of all, it is to be conceded  
281 that by the end of December 2011, the programme had provided employment opportunities to about 108,000  
282 young people in Ghana. However in practice, this amounts to less than two percent of the youth in Ghana

283 (ISSER, 2010) and therefore cannot be seen as a serious effort to advance the interest of the youth in the area of  
284 employment. The World Bank's 2011 country statistics for youth unemployment in Ghana states that 65 percent  
285 of Ghanaian youth are unemployed. Indeed, according to the Ghana Trades Union Congress (2011) every year,  
286 youth unemployment in Ghana increases by 250,000.

287 In the view of Obeng (2011) "even though the NYEP provides some employment for the youth, especially  
288 those with little or no education, its contribution to the fight against unemployment is seen as a drop in the  
289 ocean because only a few of the youth are employed under the scheme." Secondly, since 2006, funding for the  
290 programme has always been delayed besides being woefully inadequate. For example, by September 2010, the  
291 NYEP Secretariat had not received funding for that year. This had resulted in delays in the payment of employee  
292 allowances (Attipoe-Fitz, 2010). Table ?? In 2006 the government promised to pay an amount of GH¢ 100  
293 billion as subvention for the programme every year. However, this has never been fulfilled. As table 8 depicts,  
294 a small fraction of this amount is paid annually while the cost of running the programme since 2006 has always  
295 exceeded the funds received from the government. Furthermore, the monthly stipend paid to employees under  
296 the programme is inadequate. For example, by July 2010, those with no formal education received GH¢ 50.00;  
297 SHS graduates received GH¢ 80.00; diploma holders were paid GH¢100.00; and those with first degrees were  
298 paid GH¢150.00. Such poor stipend has further dampened the morale of the youth and forced some of them  
299 to quit their jobs in search of alternatives (Attipoe-Fitz, 2010). Moreover, the programme does not provide  
300 sustained employment opportunity for the youth, contrary to their aspirations to secure permanent jobs after  
301 school (Donkoh, 2010). They are employed under the programme for a maximum period of 2 years. If they fail to  
302 secure jobs elsewhere by the end of this period, they revert to their unemployed situation. For example, between  
303 2009 and 2010, over 90 percent of those who exited from the programme could not secure alternative jobs and  
304 had no means to further their education (Attipoe-Fitz, 2010).

## 305 14 b) Implementation

306 In implementing the NYEP too, the composition of the NYETF of the NYEP can be described as lopsided and  
307 ambiguous as far as youth participation is concerned. Given that almost 4000 registered youth groups exists in  
308 Ghana, two representatives from the youth groups in Ghana on the Task force is inadequate. Moreover, there is  
309 no clarity regarding which of the youth groups to be selected to represent the youth on the NYETF. This has  
310 the tendency to allow politicians to co-opt or hand-pick their favorite youth groups to serve as members. These  
311 co-opted youth groups may work to champion partisan and not necessarily youth interest.

312 On the average, there are about 180 registered youth groups in every region of the country (Etsibah, 2010).  
313 However no youth group is represented on the RMT. Even though this situation poses a challenge to youth  
314 participation, Attipoe-Fitz (2010) has argued that "the role of the RMT is not to implement but merely monitor  
315 the implementation of the NYEP at the districts where the chunk of the beneficiaries are located." Perhaps, this  
316 explains why the Regional Co-ordinator for the NYC is made a member of the RMT and not the youth groups  
317 themselves.

318 At the district level, selecting two representatives from each youth group to represent young people on the  
319 MMDETFD would have brought views of the youth to bear on the implementation of the programme. In reality  
320 however, none of the Task Forces to be established at the national, regional and district level has been set up  
321 and made operational. It is the national secretariat of the NYEP that co-ordinates all activities relating to the  
322 implementation of the programme. Selasi Attipoe-Fitz, Deputy National Coordinator of the NYEP observed  
323 that "the Employment Task Force at the National, Regional and District Level have not been established and  
324 Regional offices of the NYEP merely exist in name. Everything about the NYEP and its implementation is done  
325 at the national secretariat" (Attipoe-Fitz, 2010). In effect, the youth are not only sidelined in formulating the  
326 programme. Their stated role and representation in the implementation process of the programme, as per the  
327 NYEP Implementation Guidelines (2006) is also not performed by them. Instead other institutions including the  
328 national secretariat of the NYEP play the role expected to be played by the youth themselves.

## 329 15 IX.

330 Explaining the Marginalized Role of the Youth in the NYEP Process Elected leaders directly or indirectly  
331 through their appointees are expected to formulate policies for all segments of the population without necessarily  
332 consulting them (Pitkin, 1967). In this regard, the appointed officials who formulated the NYEP were not  
333 expected to consult the youth even though the programme was to deal with the problem of youth unemployment.  
334 Therefore in formulating the NYEP, the decision making structure was dominated by appointed officials whose  
335 role was to formulate the programme and the youth were to assist in implementing it. Again, the youth were not  
336 involved in the process because apart from the fact that they were inexperienced, the problem of unemployment  
337 among them was seen as a serious national security problem that required immediate solution (Amoo, 2011).  
338 "Involving them in the NYEP formulation process could have dragged the programme and wasted much time"  
339 (ibid).

340 The reason for the failure of the national, regional and district Task Forces to take off is, according to Attipoe-  
341 Fitz (2010), financial. The cost of running the programme has never been met since its inception in 2006. In  
342 2006, the expected amount for running the programme was GH¢93,055,075.67. However only GH¢ 9,048,532.57

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343 was received. Again, in 2008, the programme received GH¢ 61, 123,629.31 from the government; its expenditure  
344 for the same year amounted to GH¢ 69,851,762.68; and by September 2010, the programme had not received any  
345 financial allocation from the government for that year (Attipoe-Fitz, 2010). The establishment of the National  
346 and District Employment Task Forces under the NYEP would require money to remunerate members and pay  
347 for their sitting allowances. However, as stated above, governments have not paid the annual subventions to the  
348 NYEP in full since 2006. Indeed, raising funds to run the programme has been difficult and this has triggered  
349 several criticisms, protests, withdrawal of services, and other forms of civil disobedience by the youth who have  
350 been employed under the programme (Donkoh, 2010). "Given government's inability and lack of commitment  
351 to increase its allocation of funds to the programme one may risk compounding the situation and even grinding  
352 it to a halt by attempting to divert the little resources into setting up the Employment Task Forces" (Attipoe-  
353 Fitz, 2010). The lopsidedness of the Task Forces to be established, particularly at the national level, coupled  
354 with the enormity of financial challenges facing the NYEP has severely undermined the efforts to promote youth  
355 participation in the implementation of a programme meant for them.

## 356 **16 Conclusion**

357 From the foregone analysis, one can aptly come to the conclusion that the NYEP has been deficient and mediocre  
358 in solving the problem of youth unemployment in Ghana in a manner that truly promotes the interest of young  
359 people. Admittedly, some young people may be inexperienced and immature and dealing with problems facing  
360 them may have to be swift, prompt and timeous enough to ensure that they do not revolt against society or  
361 allow themselves to be used as arsenals to foment conflict. However, no matter how urgent the need to deal  
362 with their challenges may be, no one can claim to better understand the challenges of the youth than the youth  
363 themselves (Collura, 2010). Their knowledge about the challenges confronting them puts them on the same  
364 pedestal with policy makers and hence ought to be consulted as argued by Pitkin (1967). This could help avoid  
365 costly programme design errors and ensure that the youth reap the real benefits of programmes meant for them.  
366 Most of the challenges of the NYEP that have rendered it deficient could have been dealt with from the beginning  
367 if the youth had been part of its formulation process as no young person would agree to a programme that cannot  
368 guarantee a sustainable employment for the youth (Donkoh, 2010). Youth participation in the implementation of  
369 the NYEP is also crucial in ensuring that sound feedback regarding successes and failures of the programme among  
370 them are adequately reported for redress. Concentrating all activities regarding the NYEP implementation at the  
371 national secretariat sacrifices the need for proper implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme  
372 in an attempt to fine-tune it and make it an effective tool for reducing unemployment among the Ghanaian youth.

373 As a matter of urgency, governments must show commitment and political will to dealing with the problem of  
374 youth unemployment by first of all giving a legal backing to the NYEP. As it stands now, the programme remains  
375 an ad hoc initiative that can be scrapped at any time. Secondly, government must show interest in boosting  
376 youth participation in the NYEP process by revitalizing and reactivating the implementation task forces of the  
377 programme and increasing the physical youth representation on them to relieve the national secretariat of its huge  
378 burden and give it ample time to deal only with administrative issues. Better late than never, a cross-section of the  
379 youth must be invited to the annual reviews of the programme, for their input about how to sustain and improve  
380 it to deal with youth unemployment. In formulating the 2008 Draft National Youth Policy, virtually all the youth  
381 groups in Ghana participated in the process and this made them own the policy. A similar approach could be  
382 adopted in the annual reviews of the NYEP. The prospects for the NYEP in dealing with youth unemployment  
383 may be bright if governments show commitment in tackling the challenges of the programme, particularly youth  
384 participation in its process. Anything short of this may compound the problem of youth unemployment and the  
385 nation may continue to sit on a time bomb until it explodes and destroy the peace, tranquility and democratic  
386 gains made since 1992. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>In a letter to Hon. Joseph Kofi Adda, the then minister for Manpower, Youth and Employment, dated 10th April 2006 and signed by the Chief of Staff, Mr. Kwadwo Mpiani, a directive was given for the NYEP Secretariat to be set up under the then Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment (MMYE).



Figure 1: Youth

Communication  
Protection System; Waste and Sanitation Management  
Corps; Rural Education Teachers Assistants; Paid  
Internships and Industrial Attachments; Vacation Jobs;  
and Volunteer Services (ibid:4).

Information,  
and Technology  
Community

Figure 2:

Table 1:

YEAR	EXPECTED FUNDS (GH¢)	TOTAL RECEIPTS (GH¢)
2006	93,055,075.67	9,048,532.57
2007	53,258,724.90	44,123,012.77
2008	63,065,502.60	61,123,629.31

(Source: NYEP Report to the Transitional Team in  
February 2009)

Figure 3:

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439

## 16 CONCLUSION

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