

**Quantitative Analysis and Modelling
of Youth Not in Education, Employment
and Training (NEET 15 – 24 years old)**

Country Report | Namibia



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Country Report: Namibia



UN WOMEN: Quantitative Analysis and Modelling of Youth Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET 15 - 24 years old). Country Report: Malawi
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ALMP	Active labour market policies
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
GDP	Gross domestic product
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LMIC	Low to middle income country
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NIDS 2016	Namibian Inter-Censal Demographic Survey 2016
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPP	Purchasing power parity
SDG	Sustainable development goals
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN DESA	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UN Population Division	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UN Women ESA-RO	UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
UNW	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have led to job losses and increases in poverty. Schools and educational institutions have been closed for extended periods. Development initiatives, healthcare services and nutrition levels have all declined since 2020 (UN Women 2020a). Young adults whose place in the labour market is often informal, temporary, and tenuous at best have seen greater job and income losses than their parents. Increased numbers of young adults are likely to be lost to the education system. Young women are more vulnerable to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Interrupted education, economic and food insecurity, disruptions in services, unplanned pregnancy, all increase the risk of early marriage (UNICEF and UNFPA 2021). To ensure that recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic also impacts on reducing the number of youth NEET, especially young women, the UN Women Eastern and Southern African Regional Office has commissioned a quantitative research report on the status of youth NEET in twelve East and Southern African countries.

This report is structured to describe Namibia's economic and social development context, including the status of women. It then presents a descriptive and a statistical analysis of the data from the Namibian Inter-Censal Demographic Survey 2016 (NIDS 2016). The statistical analysis will look at the determinants of NEET by developing a logistical regression model that estimates the probability of being NEET. The last section of the report will reflect on the findings of the determinants of NEET in the light of country policy on gender equity and youth development as well as international literature on youth employment.

2

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

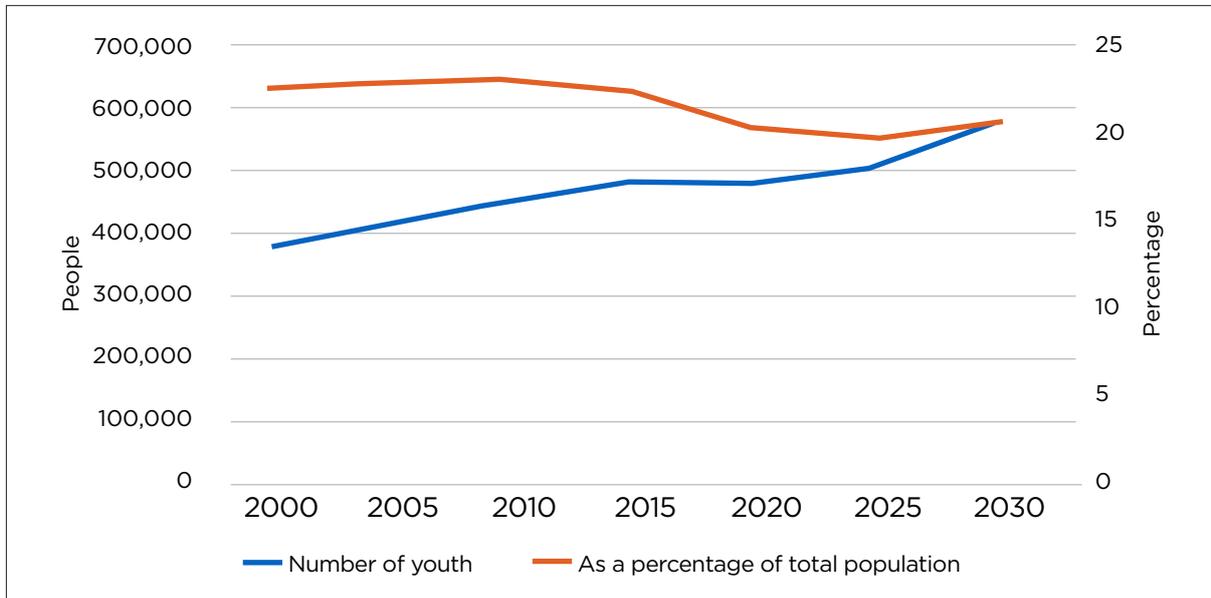
Namibia is an upper middle-income country that has been able to sustain economic growth since independence in 1989. Namibia has a relatively diverse economy with mineral wealth, fishing, agriculture, and tourism contributing to a relatively strong tertiary sector. Government has been able to make improvements in health, education and social security which has halved poverty since independence, but employment growth has been slow (World Bank 2020). With high levels of poverty (16.9% living on less than US\$ 1.90 per day) and inequality amongst the highest in the world, Namibia needs to ensure that continued economic growth is structured to create employment.

2.1 Demographic profile by sex and age

Intrinsic to wealth is population growth. This impacts at a macro level in per capita terms, on the labour absorption capacity and on the state's ability to provide services..... Those countries whose population growth rate have slowed down "are much better placed to achieve economic take-off and middle-income status."(Bryceson 2018)

Namibia has seen a decrease in the rate of growth of its population over the past two decades with the 15-24-year-old population decreasing as a percentage of the total population to 18% in 2020. The UN Population Division (2019) projects the youth population as a percentage of total population to decrease further to 16% in 2025 before increasing slightly to 2030.

Figure 1: Youth population and youth as a percentage of the total population from 2000 projected to 2030 by sex and age (15-24)



Source: UN Population Division (2019), author's calculations.

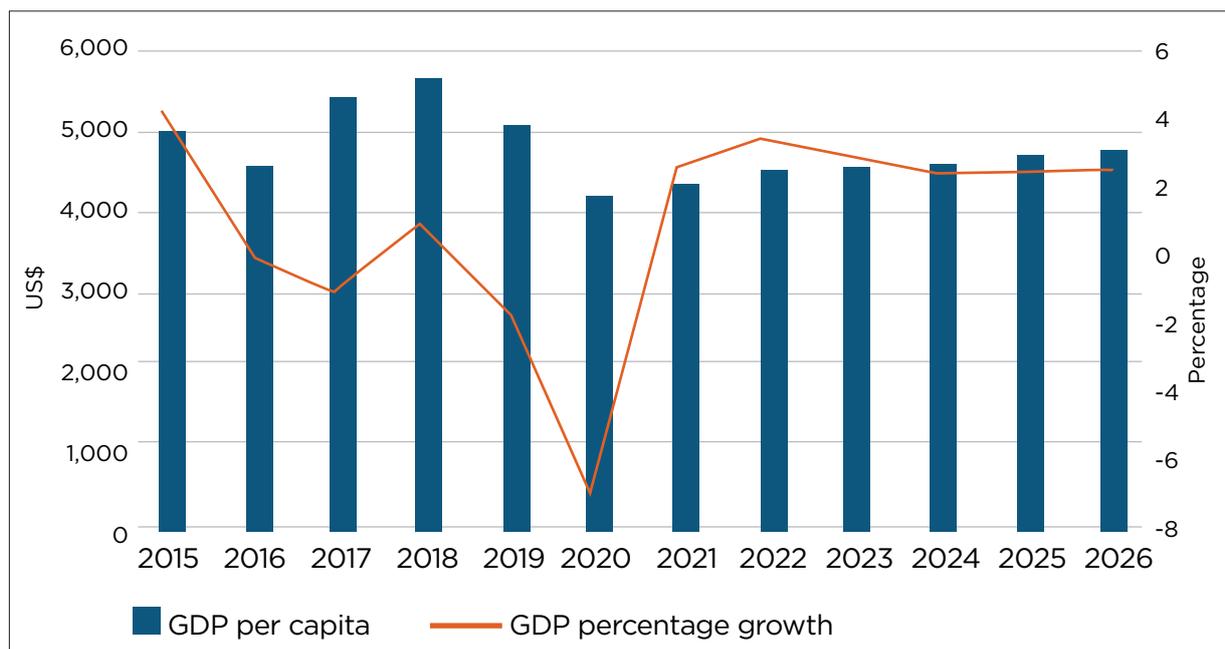
2.2 Economic growth and structure of the economy in Namibia

Namibia's economy is expected to recover throughout 2021 and grow at 1.4%. While recovery in both the mining sector and most tertiary industries is expected, this growth rate is lower than projected by the World Bank in early 2021 (Figure 2) due to lower mining output than initially expected. A further expansion of 3.4% is projected in 2022 (Bank of Namibia 2021)

Growth in agriculture, forestry and fishing is expected to be moderate into 2022 with uncertainty in agricultural growth due to the lingering drought, the persistent outbreak of the Foot and Mouth Disease and swarms of locusts in some parts of the country. (Government of Namibia 2021). Mining is expected to increase due to expansion of diamond and uranium mining. Other metal ore mining will recover as well as tertiary industries. However, tourism's recovery depends on the progress of the COVID-19 pandemic (Bank of Namibia 2021).

Namibia has had numerous development plans that have explicitly included the wellbeing of women, youth, and children and before the end of the 2021 will launch the Harambee Prosperity Plan II encompassing the Economic Recovery Plan and the Post-Pandemic Economic Growth Strategy for the medium term. The announcement of this in the Minister of Finance's budget presentation included the strategic areas that are targeted for structural economic transformation and employment creation. Increasing private sector ownership in government owned enterprises as well as promoting sectors such as agriculture, agro-processing, energy, tourism and other diversification objectives (Republic of Namibia 2021a).

Figure 2: GDP per capita and GDP growth rates projected to 2026



Source: IMF World Economic Outlook Database (2021).

2.3 Employment profile

Despite steady economic growth over the past decade, employment growth has been slow. In 2018, 45% of women were employed as a percentage of the working age population and 50% of men were. The unemployment rate of women was 34% and of men was 32.5%. However, employment growth for women has been higher than for men and between 2016 and 2018 the number of women employed increased by 14%. Four in five new women’s jobs were in the rural areas (Namibia Statistics Agency 2019).

In terms of youth employment rates, fewer women in the 20-24-year-old age group are employed than men, with 29 820 (25%) women employed and 44 439 (39%) men employed (NIDS 2016). While the NSA (2019) Labour Force Report does not give youth data disaggregated by gender, youth employment overall fell in that time period.

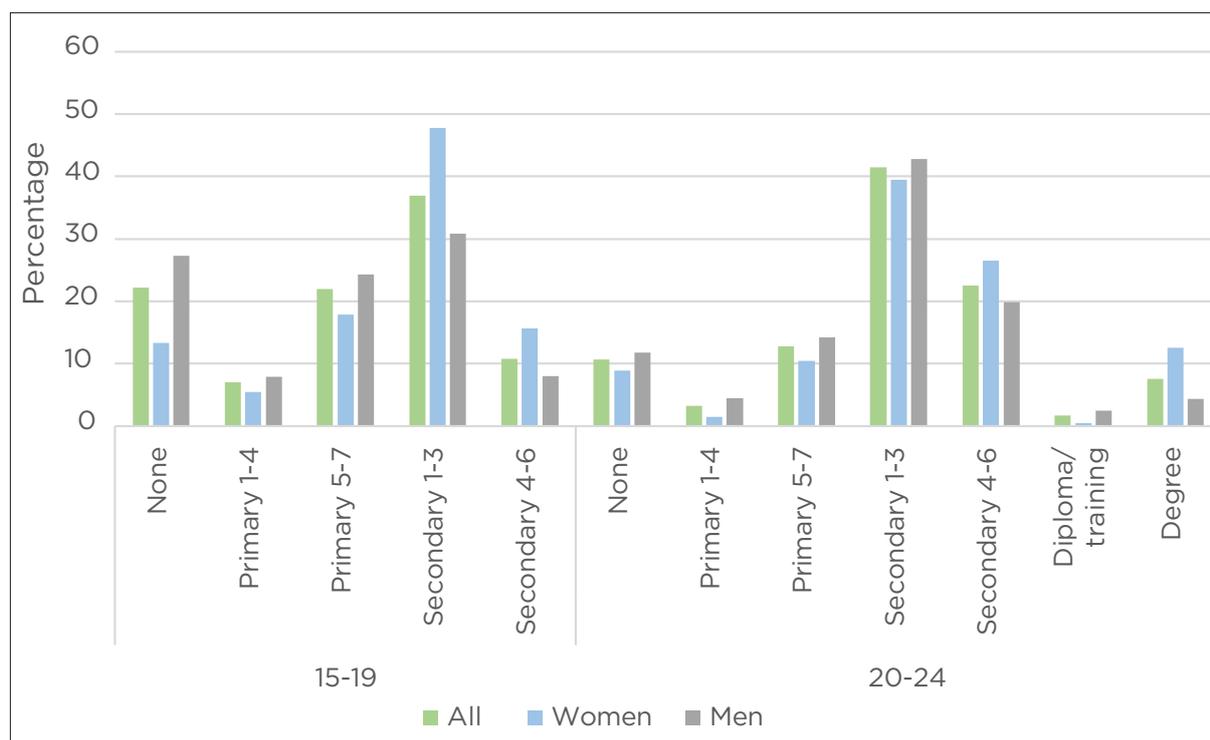
Table 1: Percentage of youth employed by sex and age (15-24)

	Women	Men	Ratio of women to men
15-19 years	4%	8%	0.6
20-24 years	25%	39%	0.7

Source: NIDS 2016, author’s calculations.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of employed youth by their highest level of education. The largest percentage employed have lower secondary education as their highest level of education. Of the men employed in the 20-24-year-old age group a higher percentage have lower secondary qualifications or less. Employed women are more likely to have an upper secondary or tertiary qualification than men.

Figure 3: Percentage of employed youth by highest level of education, sex and age (15-24)



Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

2.4 Unpaid domestic, care and family agricultural work

Women's unpaid work in the family often keeps them out of the workforce, especially where unpaid family agriculture is essential to household survival and leaves them vulnerable to poverty. In 2018, 41.6% of rural households depended on subsistence farming as their main source of livelihood, 27.8% on a salary or wage and 14.8% on government grants - pension, childcare, disability, and drought relief (NSA 2019).

In Namibia, the NIDS 2016 doesn't collect the amount of time women spend on unpaid family work but there is data on what women who are not employed are doing. Table 2 shows the percentage of all women and men who are not employed, who are available for employment and those who are not available for employment by main activity. In this case available for employment constitutes broad unemployment and many of these women and men would be engaged in unpaid family work whilst unemployed. While the percentage of unemployed (broad) women available for work is lower than men, numerically 1.3 times as many women are available for work. 19% of all unemployed (broad) women are not available for paid employment due to domestic and care work, 12% due to unpaid family agriculture and 5% due to other unpaid family work.

Table 2: Unpaid domestic, care and family agricultural work by sex

	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Ratio of women to men
Available to work	65	73	1.3
Domestic and care work	19	11	2.5
Unpaid family agriculture	12	11	1.6
Unpaid family work	5	5	1.5

Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

2.5 Poverty profile by sex and age

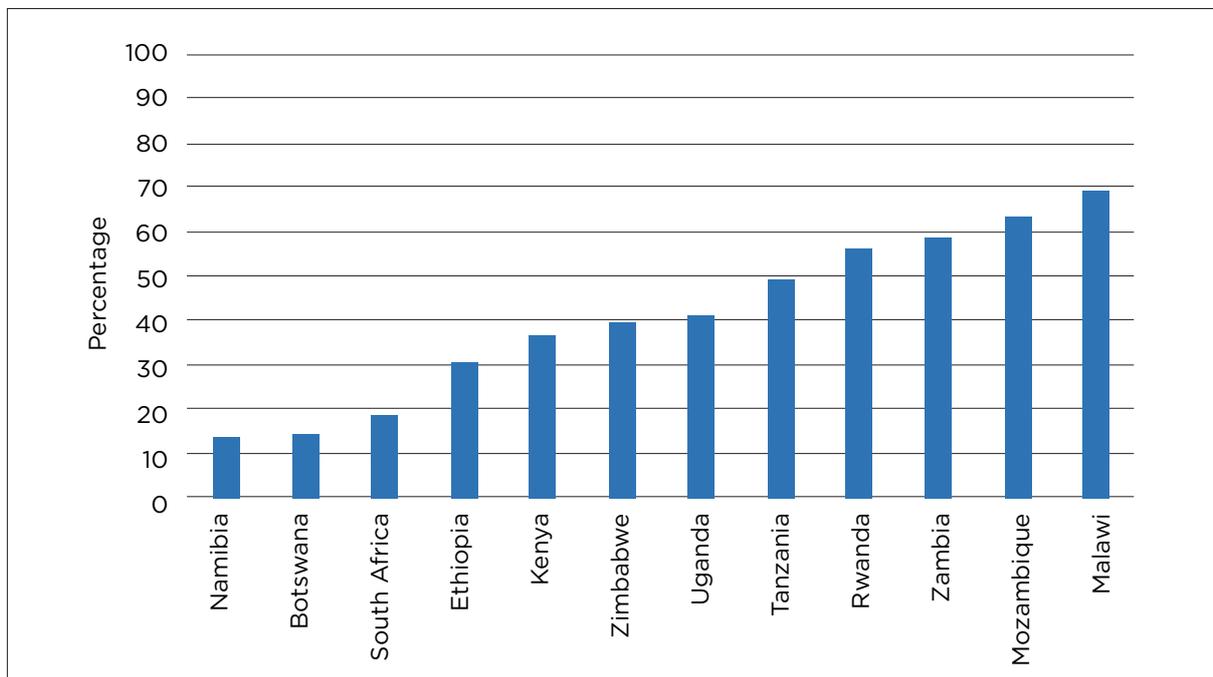
Namibia has one of the highest income inequalities in the world and only 30% of households in the bottom four income deciles depend on employment income as their primary source of income. Incomes in these lowest deciles generally comes from family agriculture, social grants and drought relief. In 2016 the percentage of people living in extreme poverty in Namibia was 16.7% and would have been 22.2% if government grants and subsidies were not available (Namibia Statistics Agency and World Bank 2017).

While poverty has halved since independence in 1989, it has to a large extent been due to government grants and subsidies for the most vulnerable. Namibia has a well-established social protection system including childcare grants, the universal old age pension and both food and direct cash transfers at times of drought and low harvest. (World Food Programme 2021).

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 an additional 200 000 people dropped below the poverty line of US\$ 5.50 per person per day (2011 PPP). Figure 1 shows the estimated percentage of Namibians living in extreme poverty of less than US\$ 1.90 per person per day in comparison to the other East and Southern African countries in the study (World Bank 2021).

Poverty levels in the rural areas are exacerbated by the distribution of age and gender where more children, youth and older women live in rural areas. In 2018, 57% of children under 15, 61% of youth between 15 and 24 lived in the rural areas. Of women between the age of 25 and 44, 34% lived in the rural areas; women between 45 and 54, 48% lived in the rural areas and women 55 and over 64% lived in rural areas. Given that 41.6% of rural households depended on subsistence farming as their main source of livelihood, 27.8% on a salary or wage and 14.8% on government grants, rural household's vulnerability to poverty, climatic shocks and loss of an income is far greater than urban (NSA 2019).

Figure 4: Percentage of population living in extreme poverty at less than US\$ 1.90 per day in East and Southern African



Source: World Bank PovcalNET data. Accessed on 17/07/2021

3

ANALYSIS OF THE NAMIBIA INTER-CENSAL DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY 2016: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The Namibian government's Inter-Censal Demographic Survey 2016 (NIDS 2016) covers a sample of 12 239 households and 47 345 individuals. This data was used to look at the profile of youth between the ages of 15 and 24 with a focus on youth not in employment, education and training. For the purposes of this description the number of youth and the percentages were calculated from the sum of the weighted total.

3.1 Definition of NEET

The literature review contained in the ESA regional report of this series has a more detailed definition of NEET and employment as well as a discussion on several of the statistical considerations surrounding the calculation of the NEET rate. This will not be repeated in this report, rather a brief definition of NEET and the calculation of the NEET rate is presented.

Youth not in employment, education or training is the indicator of the Sustainable Development Goal 8, Target 6: "By 2020 substantially reduce the proportion of youth aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training". According to UN DESA (2021) the youth NEET rate differs from the youth unemployment rate as it includes the discouraged worker category as well as those who are outside the labour force due to disability or engagement in household chores (ILO 2013).

The NEET rate is calculated as follows:

$$NEET\ rate\ (\%) = \frac{\text{total number of youth 15-24} - (\text{number of youth 15-24 in employment} + \text{number of youth 15-24 in education or training})}{\text{total number of youth 15-24}} \times 100$$

It is important to note that the indicator is composed of two different sub-groups - unemployed youth (actively seeking work) not in education or training as well as youth outside the labour force (not actively seeking work) not in education or training. Unemployed youth who are in education and training who should not be counted as NEET.

Implications of the new international definition of the labour force for NEET rate calculations

Implications of the new international definition of the labour force for NEET rate calculations

Increasingly country level household and labour force surveys are being updated to include questions that return data on employment according to the new international definition established in 2013 by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS). This means that there is not necessarily synergy between country data based on surveys using the new definition of employment and the ILO modelled estimates.

This particularly affects countries where large percentages of the population depend on agricultural, fishing or manufacturing for household consumption only. While this remains defined as “work” according the 2013 definition, it is no longer defined as “employment”. As such there is, in some countries, a substantial drop in the proportion of the population employed and an increase in the percentage of NEET – by between 10 and 30 percentage points. This difference is especially apparent for women who are the predominant producers of subsistence agriculture. This paper will be using the new definition of employment for it’s NEET calculations.

The other consequence of the change in the definition of employment is that time series analysis and tracking of trends with country survey data is problematic and will not be attempted in this paper. It should also be noted that the household surveys in the ILO Stat database do not necessarily contain NEET rates according to the 2013 definition and caution should be exercised when observing changes in the NEET rates over time.

3.2 Population of youth by sex and age (15-24)

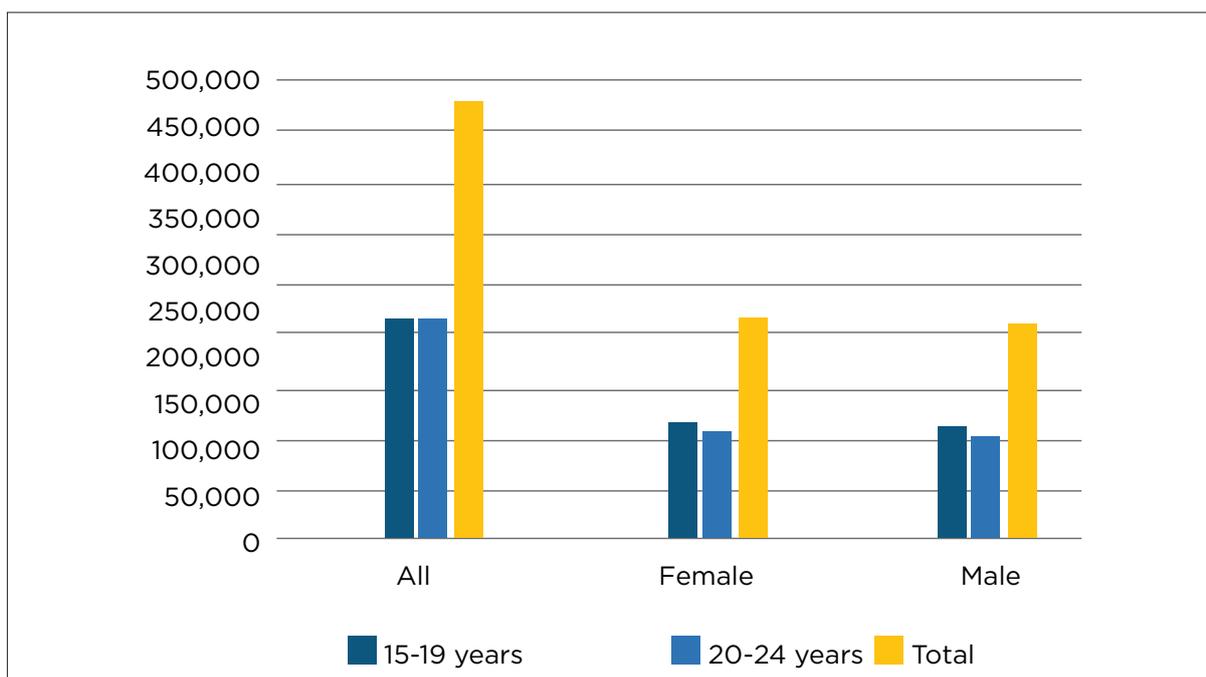
Table 3 and Figure 5 shows the number of young people in the NIDS 2016 who were living in the household at the time of the survey. The sample, when weighted, gives a total of 476 987 youth between the ages of 15-24, 119 363 being women and 114 806 being men. 242 818 young adults are between 15 and 19 years old and 122 485 are between 20 and 24 years old. The gender ratio for 15-19-year-olds is 1.02 and for 20-24-year-olds is 1.04 (Table 4).

Table 3: Total number of youths included in the survey by sex and age (15-24)

	Total	Women	Men
15-19 years	242,818	122,485	120,333
20-24 years	234,169	119,363	114,806
Total	476,987	241,848	235,139

Source: NIDS 2016, author’s calculations.

Figure 5: Population by sex and age (15-24)



Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

Table 4: Percentage of women and men in the survey by age (15-24)

	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Ratio of women to men
15-19 years	50	50	1.02
20-24 years	51	49	1.04
Total	51	49	1.03

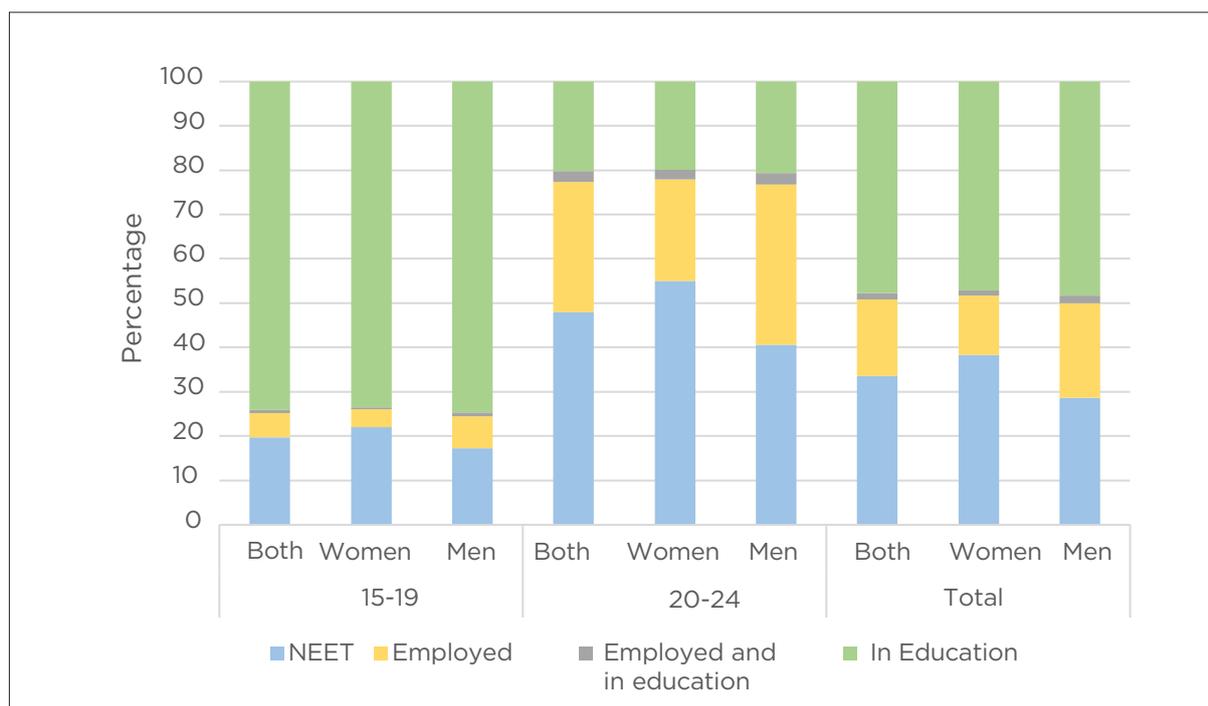
Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

3.3 Overview of youth by activity status

Namibia has a total of 160,233 youth NEET which is 34% of the youth population. 17% of young adults are employed and 48% are in education (1% employed and in education). The gap between women and men NEET is substantial and there are more women NEET in both age groups. In total 38% of women and 29% of young men are NEET. However, when disaggregated by age group, 22% of women and 17% men are NEET in the 15-19 age group. These relatively low numbers of NEET in this age group are due to the high percentage (75%) of 15-19-year-olds being enrolled in education. 55% of women and 41% of men are NEET in the 20-24-year-old age group.

Very few 15-19-year-olds are employed with 4% women and 7% men. Employment in the age group 20-24 years old is 29% in total, with fewer women (23%) than men (36%) men in employment.

Figure 6: Percentage of youth by activity status - NEET; employed; employed and in education; and in education only, by sex 15-24



Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

Table 5: Percentage of youth by activity status - NEET; employed; employed and in education; and in education only, by sex 15-24

	Age Group	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Ratio of women to men
NEET	15-19	22	17	1.29
	20-24	55	41	1.27
	Total	38	29	1.41
Employed	15-19	4	7	1.36
	20-24	23	36	1.37
	Total	13	21	1.34
Employed and in education	15-19	0	1	0.58
	20-24	2	3	0.57
	Total	1	2	0.65
In education	15-19	74	75	0.63
	20-24	20	21	0.64
	Total	47	48	0.62

Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

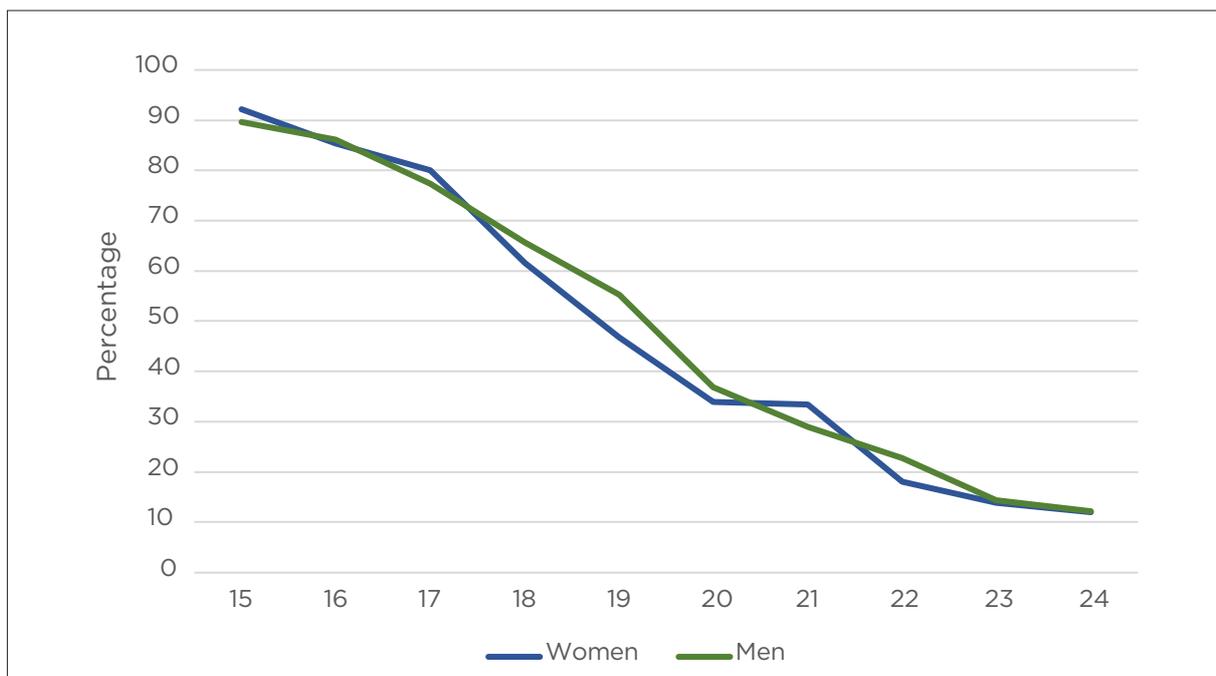
3.4 Education profile of youth

Education enrolment in both age groups is high with 74% of women and 75% of men 15–19-year-olds enrolled in education and 20% of women and 21% of men 20–24-year-olds enrolled. Figure 7 shows the percentage of each age enrolled in school.

Education attainment in Namibia is relatively high with 50% of youth reaching secondary school level by the time they are in the 15–19-year-old age group. Figure 8 shows the percentage of youth by highest grade of education attained. The 40% still attending or only having reached primary school would be due to repetition of grades or intermittent attendance both of which suggest several factors at the school and the household level may be affecting the quality of education received.

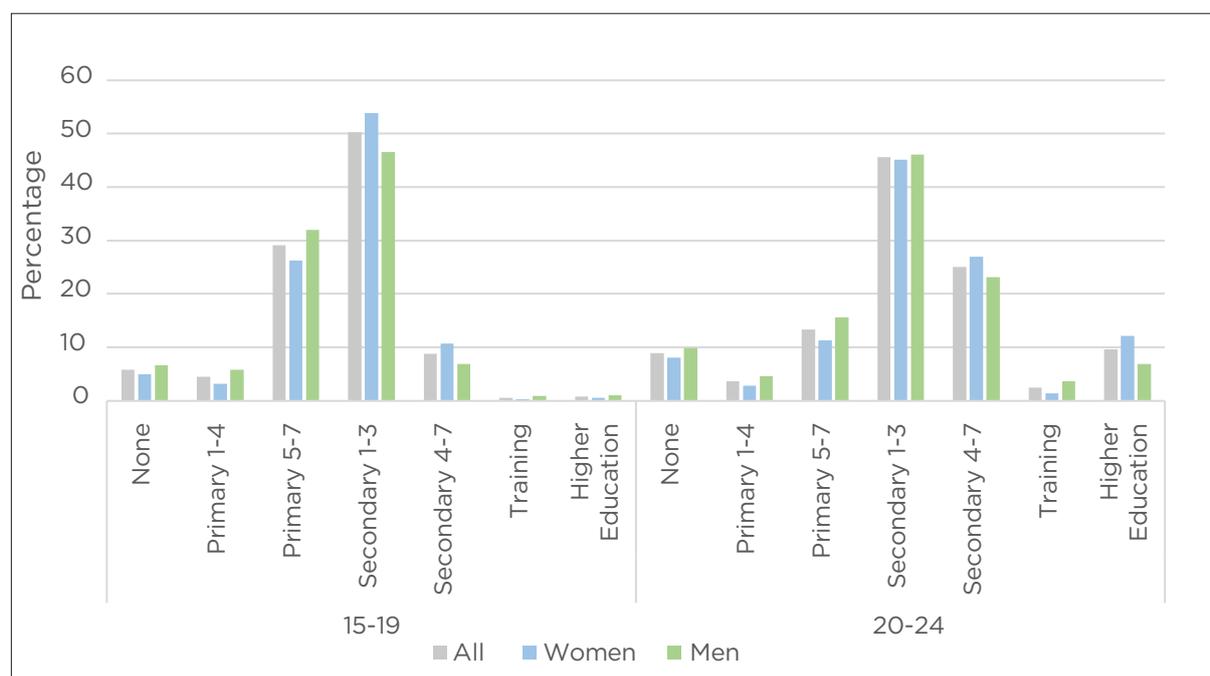
Gender parity favours young women by a significant margin with 65% of women in this age group reaching secondary school and 54% of men. Gender parity in highest level of education attained in the age group 20–24 also favours women with 27% reaching upper secondary and 12% reaching higher education. Men in the age group 20–24 have 23% reaching upper secondary and 7% in higher education.

Figure 7: Percentage of youth currently enrolled in education by sex and age in single years (15–24)



Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

Figure 8: Percentage of youth by highest level of education attained, sex and age (15-24)



Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

Table 6: Percentage of youth by highest level of education attained, sex and age (15-24)

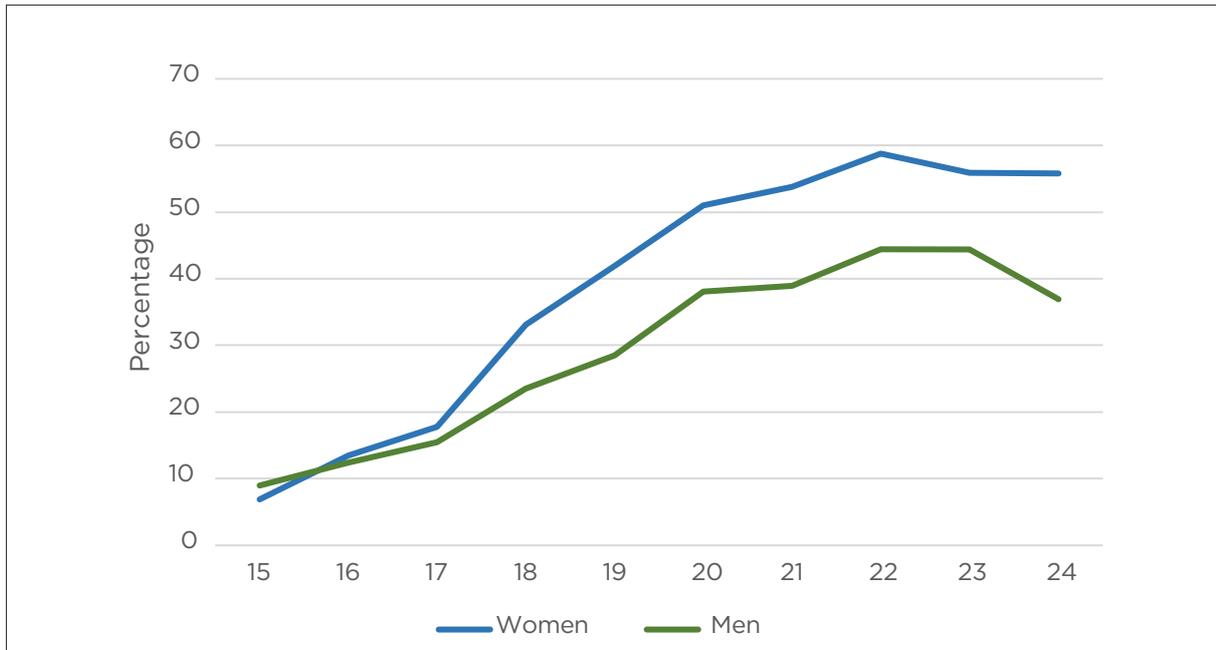
	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Ratio of women to men	
15-19	None	43	57	0.75
	Primary 1-4	36	64	0.57
	Primary 5-7	46	54	0.84
	Secondary 1-3	54	46	1.18
	Secondary 4-5	61	39	1.59
	Training college	24	76	0.32
	Higher education	35	65	0.54
20-24	None	47	53	0.88
	Primary 1-4	40	60	0.66
	Primary 5-7	43	57	0.77
	Secondary 1-3	51	49	1.04
	Secondary 4-5	55	45	1.24
	Training college	30	70	0.42
	Higher education	65	35	1.87

Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

3.5 Profile of youth NEET

NEET rates are below 10% at 15 years of age and don't increase substantially until 17 years of age. From 17 years old onwards NEET rates for women increase steadily until 22 years old and then level off at 55% to 24 years old. Young men's NEET rate increases to 45% at 22 years old, levels off and then decreases at 24 years old to 37%.

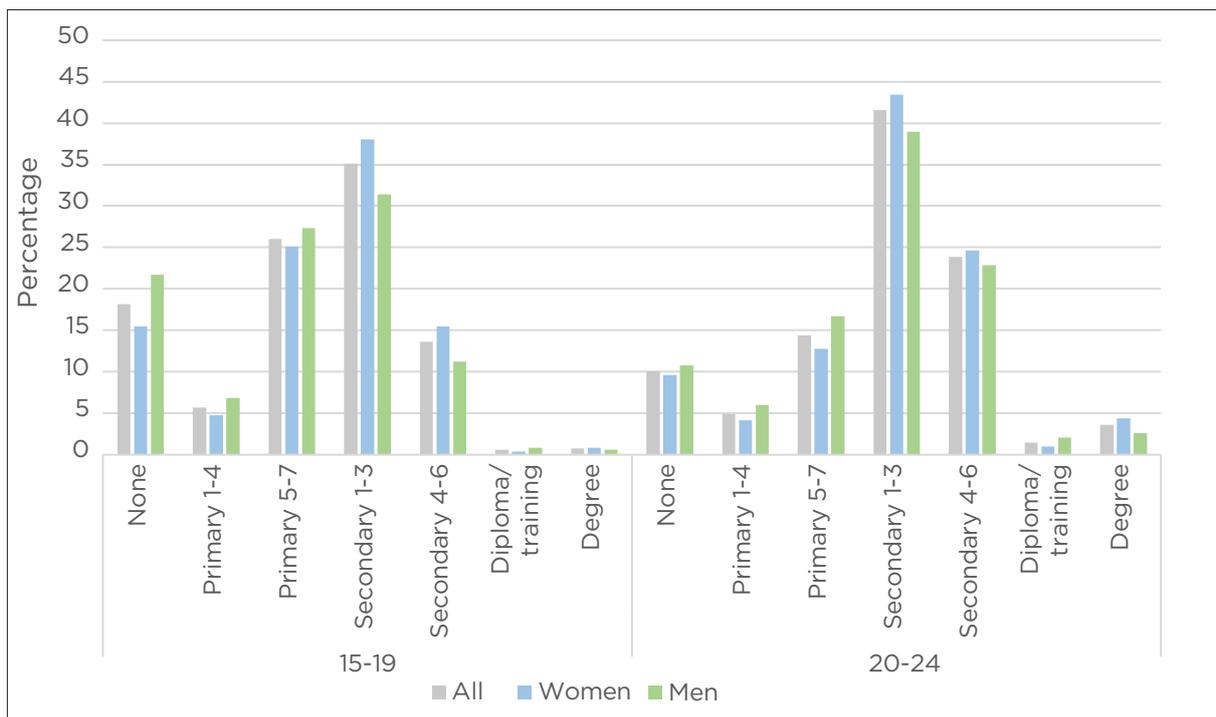
Figure 9: Percentage NEET youth by sex and age in single years (15-24)



Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

In terms of the percentage of NEET by highest level of education, Figure 10 shows a higher percentage of NEET youth 15-19 with no schooling than 20-24-year-olds. This should not be given too much consideration as the total number of 15-19-year-olds is lower than the number of 20-24-year-olds with no schooling. It is more instructive to look at the profile of 20-24-year-old NEET in relation to education levels. The NEET education profile follows roughly the same education profile as the general 20-24-year-old population – at least until post school education and training. This suggests that returns to education do not specifically favour higher levels of education until post school qualifications.

Figure 10: Percentage of total NEET by highest level of education

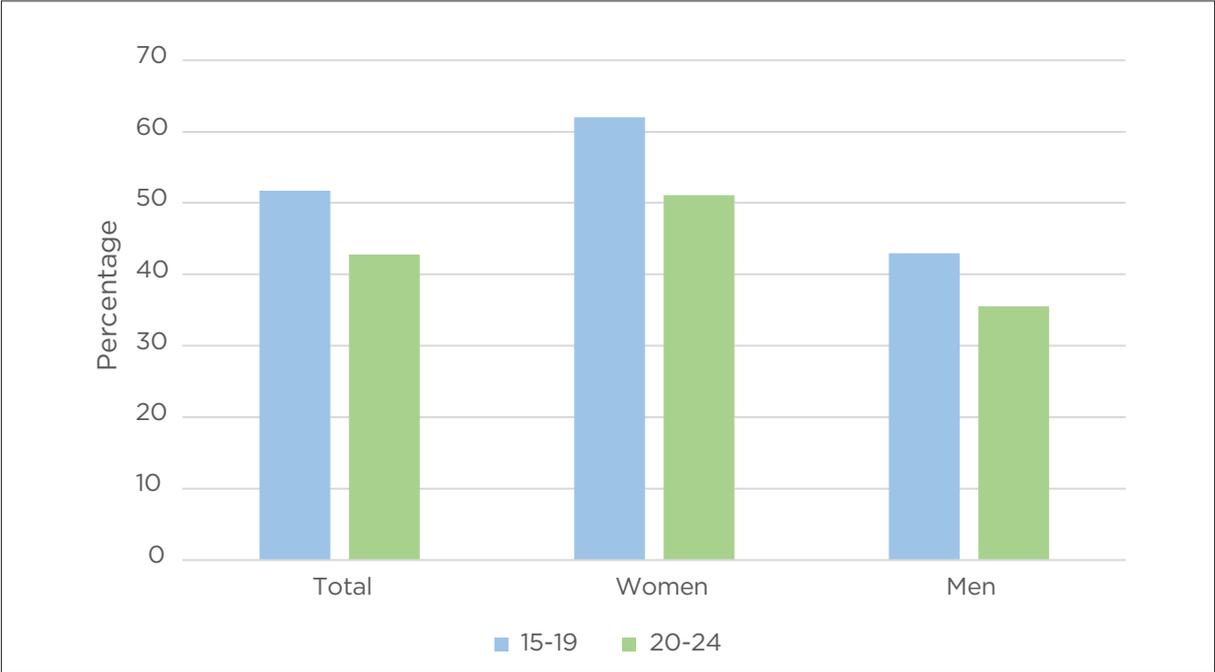


Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

Figure 11 shows the percentage of unemployed youth. The unemployment rate is calculated as those youth who are not employed, have been searching for a job and are available to take up employment. While unemployment rates are higher in the 15–19-year-old age group at 62% women and 45% men, the total number of unemployed youth is relatively small in comparison to their total age group.

Women's unemployment is at 51% and men unemployment is at 36% in the 20–24-year-old age group. The unemployment rate is higher than most other East and Southern African countries (as is the case with South Africa and Botswana). This reflects both the active labour market programmes implemented by the government to assist youth in finding work and that a greater number of youths have the resources to be actively seeking work. This is not the case in low-income countries where “open unemployment is usually low... because it is both futile and unaffordable. Most households have limited savings to finance a job search, and there are few wage jobs to be found” (Fox and Ghandi 2021).

Figure 11: Unemployed youth as a percentage of economically active youth by age group and sex



Source: Namibia Intercensal Demographic Survey 2016 (NIDS 2016), author's calculations.

4

DETERMINANTS OF YOUTH NEET

To develop policy to mitigate the likelihood of youth becoming NEET and remaining outside of the labour market permanently, it is important to try and understand what factors in the Namibian context might determine NEET status. Given that women are more likely to be NEET than young men it would also be important to see whether there are factors determining NEET in young women that differ to men.

4.1 Structure of the model

This section looks at the determinants of youth NEET by applying a binomial logistic regression with NEET status as the dependent variable. Numerous independent variables from the survey data set were coded and tested in the logistic regression for both their strength and statistical significance. Variable choice was guided by previous research as outlined in the literature review, the data collected in the survey and the methodology appropriate to the categorical nature of survey data.

Variables used in the final model are:

Dependent variable: NEET or not NEET

Independent variables: sex, age group, married, highest level of education, rural/urban, whether the head of household is a woman or not, relationship to head of household, parents living and number of children.

The model is:

$$\log(\pi/(1-\pi)) = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 \dots\dots\dots$$

$$\text{where } \Pr(Y=1) = \pi$$

Due to the heterogeneity of NEET observed in the descriptive data both in terms of age group and sex, four separate models were run as follows:

- All 15–24-year-olds.
- Women only 15–24-year-olds.
- All 20–24-year-olds.
- Women 20–24-year-olds.

The NIDS 2016 data, while having a household questionnaire and an individual questionnaire, has been anonymised and does not allow for individuals to be linked to specific households. It is therefore not possible to analyse NEET in terms of household factors such as type of house, services, ownership of possessions, total number of household members or dependants.

4.2 Findings of the model

Individual characteristics

The results of the logistic regressions are in Table 7 which show the probability of being NEET. Most of the coefficients were statistically significant at $p < 0.01$. Several coefficients are retained in the table that have p values greater than 0.1 due to their relative impact on the probability of being NEET.

The descriptive data in Section 3 showed a greater number of NEET women – especially in the 20-24 age group. This result is confirmed by the logistic regressions where being a woman increases the probability of being NEET in both age groups by 1.47 times and in the 20-24 age group by 1.67 times.

Marriage or cohabiting has the expected impact of increasing the probability of being NEET especially when both age groups are combined –due to the higher probability of being NEET in the married 15-19-year-old age group. Together the probability of being NEET if married is 2.67 times that of not being married. 20-24-year-old women have a 1.76 times greater probability of being NEET as those who aren't married.

In terms of age, being in the 20-24-year-old age group more than doubles the chance of being NEET. By the age of 20 only 35% of women are still in education and by 24 only 11% of women are in education.

Higher levels of education attainment reduce the probability of being NEET for both sexes but by a greater amount for women than men. The regression on 20-24-year-olds shows that merely having attained upper primary gives a 49% decrease in the probability of being NEET for both sexes and a 68% reduction in the probability of being NEET as shown in the regression run on 20-24-year-old women only. Attaining post school higher education reduces the probability of being NEET by over 94% for 20-24-year-old women.

Interestingly, as shown in the descriptive data, there is not much reduction in the probability of being NEET between attaining lower secondary and higher secondary grades – especially not for the regression model run on all age groups and both sexes. In fact, attaining upper secondary education reduces the probability of being need by less than attaining lower secondary. Further analysis would need to be done into why the returns to increased years of education attained are not consistent.

Number of children that a young person had impacted on NEET status but for both women and men. The impact on NEET was higher women for all age groups together with an increase of 1.43 times for every one child and 1.22 times for women aged 20-24.

Household characteristics

As seen with many of the other country studies, living in urban areas increases the chance of being NEET. While only statistically significant for all ages and both sexes together it is likely, as seen in the descriptive data, that youth start to move to urban centres in search of work. There seems to be slightly less change of women in the 20-24-year age group being less likely to be NEET in urban areas which may be consistent with them only moving to urban areas once they have secured work.

In relation to family structure having a women head of household impacts very little on the probability of being NEET being a spouse of a household head increases the probability of being NEET by more than the other relationships. Being a grandchild of the head of household has a lower probability of being NEET than being a child of the head of the household – possibly due to this meaning that there is a parent away from the household and in employment.

This suggestion is supported by having parents alive being an important factor in reducing the probability of being NEET but more so if the mother is alive than the father. This factor appears to apply to 15–19-year-olds more than the 20–24-year-olds as the regression run on the 20–24-year-olds drops this variable due to lack of statistical significance.

Table 7: Results of logistic regressions for youth NEET status – only 15–24-year-olds, all 20–24-year-olds and women only 20–24-year-olds

		15-24		20-24	
		All	Women Only	All	Women only
Category (omitted variable in parenthesis) Sex (Men)	Variable	Coefficients			
	Women	1.47***		1.67***	
	20-24	2.39***	2.31***		
Married (No)	Yes	1.69***	2.67***	1.25***	1.76***
Highest level of education	Primary grade 5-7	0.58***	0.51***	0.51***	0.32***
(Primary grade 1-7)	Secondary grade 1-3	0.38***	0.36***	0.34***	0.23***
	Secondary grade 4-5	0.51***	0.43*	0.37***	0.22***
	Training college	0.24***	0.27	0.17***	0.16***
	Higher education	0.11***	0.10	0.09***	0.06***
Place (Rural)	Urban	1.17***	1.04	1.04	0.88
Women head	Yes	1.00	0.90	1.09	0.90
Relationship to head of household (Head)	Spouse	2.67***	1.78*	2.87***	2.14**
	Child	2.00***	1.61***	2.63***	2.20***
	Grandchild	1.63***	1.34	2.31***	2.02***
	Other adult	1.54***	1.46**	1.71***	1.78***
Mother alive	Yes	0.42***	0.40***		
Father alive	Yes	0.75***	0.71***		
Number of biological children		1.52	1.43***	1.30***	1.22**

Note: Statistical significance indicated as follows: * = $p < .10$; ** = $p < .05$; *** = $p < .01$. Some coefficients with statistical significance of up to $p < 0.3$ where retained – these have no asterisk. No variables were discarded except in the 20–24-year-old age group where parents living or not was not statistically significant.

5

NEET POLICY AND PROGRAMMES

Namibia has gender equality enshrined in its constitution as well as several policy documents and national strategies that are explicitly aimed at addressing the economic inequality and social discrimination that prevents women and their families from realising their full potential. Namibia launched its first National Gender Policy (NGP) in 1997. The most recent NGP (2010-2022) provides the necessary normative framework for gender mainstreaming across sectors in government and in line with National Development Plans (NDPs). It identifies entities that are tasked with implementation and entities that will be accountable for gender equality results.

Namibia's development plans explicitly include the wellbeing of women, youth and children as well as improving agricultural output and increasing employment in the rural areas. Reductions in the number of youth NEET will be a combination of addressing the social norms that restrict women's participation in paid employment and in finding ways in which women are able to access employment opportunities without necessarily migrating to urban centres.

The sections below raise some of the issues that emerge for policy consideration from the analysis of the NIDS 2016 data.

5.1 Early marriage and children

Two of the factors that have the greatest impact on increased NEET status are marriage (especially being married to the head of the household) and having children. Being married in the 15-19-year-old age group has the largest single effect on NEET status - even more so than having a child. The number of marriages in this age-group have been decreasing due to the efforts of various agencies - most especially health and education. As an example, the National Policy on School Health from 2010 established mobile health clinics visiting schools and aimed at protecting and supporting young women from the effects of gender-based violence, early pregnancy and increased risks of sexually transmitted disease have been integrated into the school systems (Legal Assistance Centre 2017).

5.2 Improving the quality of schooling and increasing places at higher education institutions and TVET

The analysis shows that increased years of education reduce the probability of youth NEET especially attainment of post school education and training. The National Youth Policy also identifies increasing the capacity of higher education and TVET institutions as a priority. However, it should be noted that the more research would need to be done into why there is little differentiation in the impact on NEET at the lower levels of education – upper primary, lower secondary and secondary. The quality of schooling received differs widely across the country and the inequality in school output between poorer (possibly rural) regions and wealthier (possibly urban) regions could account for the lack of differentiation in NEET status.

5.3 Transition from school to work and increasing labour demand

By the age of 20, 35% of women are in education and by 24, 11% of women are in education and the percentage of women employed in the 20–24-year-old age group is 23%. Young men in that age group don't fare much better with 36% being employed. Leaving school without employment opportunities is demoralising, can make young women more vulnerable to early marriage and runs the risk of becoming a permanent state of NEET.

One of the positive developments that will hopefully begin to impact on younger women is the increase in employment of women, including rural women, between 2016 and 2018. Analysis would need to be done into which sectors may be increasing the number of employment opportunities and what strategies have been successful in increasing employment for women.

More broadly Namibia's development plans include the strategic areas that are targeted for structural economic transformation and employment creation. Increasing private sector ownership in government owned enterprises as well as promoting sectors such as agriculture, agro-processing, energy, tourism and other diversification objectives (Republic of Namibia 2021a).

Specific mention of increasing interventions that promote youth employment and youth entrepreneurs involve scaled up funding for SMEs, increased financing instruments at the Development Bank of Namibia and local preferential procurement of youth SMEs. Challenges that youth face such as lack of experience, ineffective job searching techniques and a lack of career guidance in schools need to continue to be addressed (Republic of Namibia 2021a).

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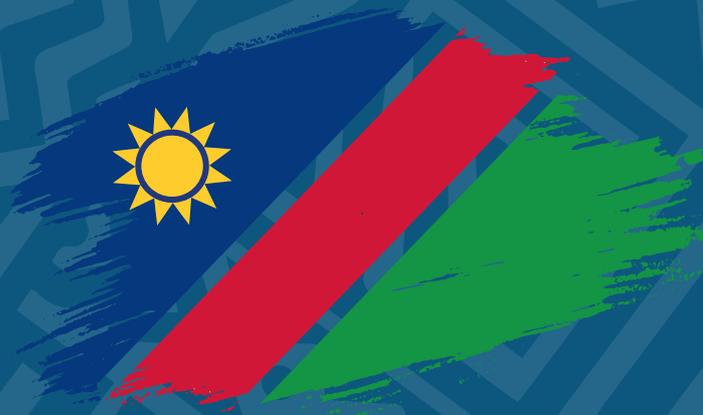
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