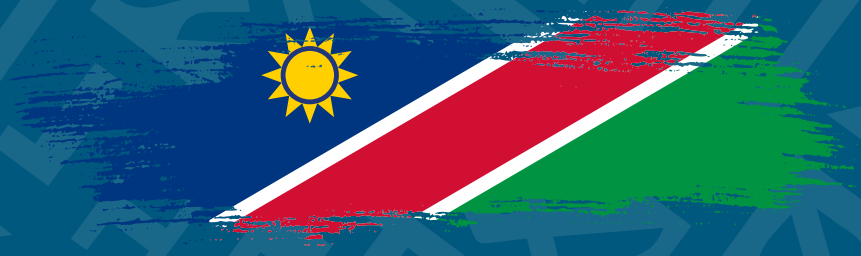

The Status of NEET in Namibia

A Quantitative Analysis of Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) (15 – 24 years old)

Country Report

UN WOMEN | WOMEN COUNT

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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
NSA	Namibia Statistics Agency
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

1 INTRODUCTION

Neither good quality education nor productive employment is universally available to the world's youth. The ILO, in their *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020* estimate that:

> *One-fifth of young people currently have NEET status, which means they are neither gaining experience in the labour market, nor receiving an income from work, nor enhancing their education and skills. Clearly, their full potential is not being realized, though many may be contributing to the economy through unpaid work, which is particularly true of young women.* (ILO 2020a)

The NEET indicator, which measures the percentage of young people who are not in employment, education or training, is an important concept that captures a broad array of vulnerabilities among youth. Touching on issues of early school leaving, unemployment and labour market discouragement, NEET status also highlights the issues of youth who are engaged in family labour, domestic and care work for own consumption and thus unpaid. The consequences of high NEET rates are twofold. Firstly, on an individual level, absence from both education and employment increase the risk of poverty and a permanent disengagement from the labour market. Secondly, on a country level, high NEET rates are a loss in terms of unused labour supply, lower productivity and lower GDP output.

UN GIS 2020

Young women in East and Southern Africa are disproportionally affected by NEET status. Leaving school early, marriage, assisting with subsistence farming, unpaid domestic work, taking care of family members and fewer opportunities to take up work which may be seen as inappropriate

or unsafe for young women, all play a role in the NEET status of young women. NEET status is also more likely to become a permanent state for young women. The NEET rate in many developing countries declines very little for young women between 15 and 24 years old when ten years later the cohort is between the ages of 25 and 34 years (ILO 2020a).

Namibia is an upper middle-income country that has had sustained economic growth since independence in 1989. 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 increasing access to secondary and higher education, the NEET rate amongst the 15- to 19-year-old age group has declined. The Namibian Inter-censal Demographic Survey (NIDS) 2016[1] analysed for this report gives the NEET rate for this group of 20%, with the women's NEET rate at 22% and the men's NEET rate at 17%. The NEET rate in the 20- to 24-year-old age group in the NIDS 2016 data is 48%, with the women's NEET rate at 55% and the men's NEET rate at 41%.[2]

While development efforts, declining poverty rates and shifts in gender norms over the past two decades were slowly improving the overall outlook for young women and men in the East and Southern African region, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to roll back these gains (UN Women 2020a). Given both the potential and the necessity to develop young adults' contribution to future economic and social development, world commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals have emphasised increased quality education, greater training opportunities and initiatives to increase youth employment.

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, and 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 nine 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 (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.

1 Unless otherwise cited, data in the paper is from the Namibian Inter-censal Demographic Survey 2016 (NIDS 2016), author's calculations.

2 The Namibian government defines youth as between 15 and 35. For the purposes of inter-country comparisons this paper refers to youth between 15 and 24. This definition is used throughout the paper unless otherwise specified.

The report is structured as follows:

It will first give an overview of the economic, demographic and gender context of Namibia. Growth prospects and employment opportunities will affect strategies to address the lack of access that young people have to paid work. However, these are affected by the projected size of the youth population and their current socioeconomic status. The interaction between poverty, access to social services and gender norms frequently lead to young women leaving school and into marriage and childbearing before accessing employment (UNICEF and UNFPA 2015 and 2021).

Using the country's survey data, the next section of the report gives a description of youth by status – NEET, employed or in education. This data is disaggregated by age group and sex. Methodological and definitional issues surrounding the calculation of the NEET rate and the definition of employment used in the surveys is discussed in this section.

The third section of the report presents analytical statistics and the determinants of youth NEET. Logistical regression models are used to calculate the probability of young women having NEET status depending on their circumstances. The variables tested for their effect on NEET status are age, marriage, highest level of education attained, time spent in unpaid family agriculture or enterprise, family structure, urban or rural residence.

The fourth section of the report is the conclusion and recommendations that arise from the data analysis. Most of these recommendations reinforce the country's current development agenda and the work done by committed stakeholders and development agencies.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE NAMIBIAN CONTEXT

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 relatively 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 (Bank of Namibia 2021).

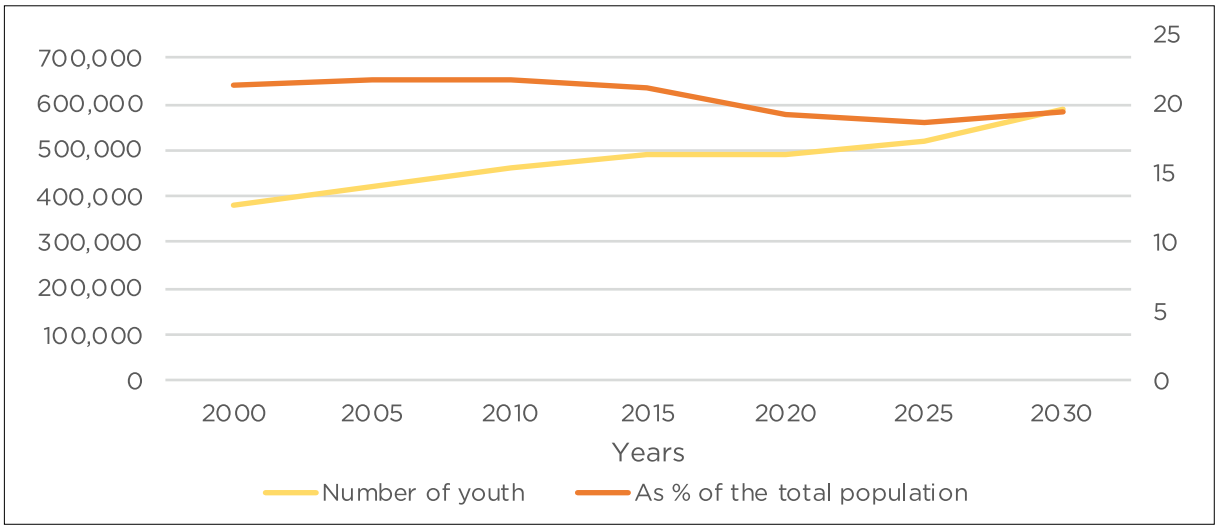
This section gives a description of Namibia's economic growth prospects in terms of GDP growth and GDP per capita; it presents the projected growth of the youth population; the impact of poverty on young women and the gender dimensions of development in Namibia. Issues related to education and employment are considered as central to the NEET analysis and are discussed in more detail in Section 3.

2.1 Demographic profile by sex and age

Intrinsic to wealth is population growth. It impacts at a macro level in per capita terms, in the labour absorption capacity and in the state's ability to provide services. At a family level without sufficient employment the number of dependents increases and the potential for a spiral of vulnerabilities also increases. Those countries whose population growth rate has 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. Figure 1 shows the 15 – to 24-year-old population which has decreased 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 (15 to 24) and youth as a percentage of the total population from 2000 projected to 2030 by sex



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

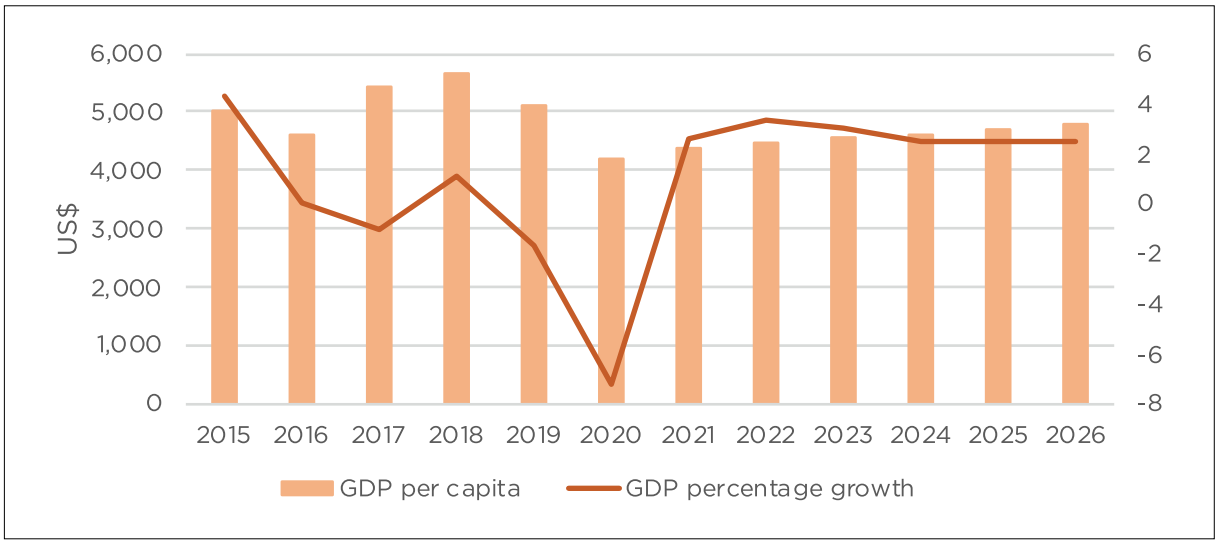
2.2 Economic growth and structure of the economy in Namibia

Namibia's economy is expected to recover throughout 2022 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 due to lower mining output than initially expected. A further expansion of 3.4% is projected in 2022 (Bank of Namibia 2021). Figure 2 shows the GDP per capita and the GDP growth rates to 2016 as projected by the World Bank (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 or women, youth, and children and in 2021 launched 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



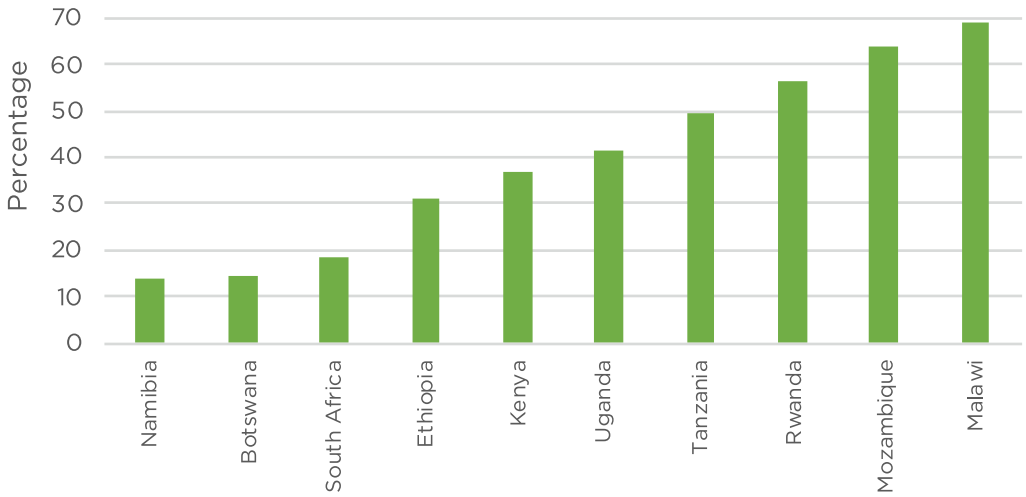
Source: IMF World Economic Outlook Database (2021).

2.3 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 have employment income as their primary source of income. Incomes in these lowest deciles generally come from family agriculture, social grants and drought relief (World Food Programme 2021). While Namibia has a well-established social protection system including childcare grants, a universal old age pension and both food and direct cash transfers at times of drought and low harvest, in 2020 there were still 14% of the population living below the extreme poverty line of less than US$ 1.90 per person per day. Figure 3 shows the percentage of the population living in extreme poverty in selected East and Southern African countries (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 and 61% of youth between 15 and 24 lived in the rural areas. Given that 41.6% of rural households depended on subsistence farming as their main source of livelihood, rural household's vulnerability to poverty, climatic shocks and loss of an income is far greater than urban households (NSA 2019).

Figure 3: Percentage of population living in extreme poverty in selected East and Southern African



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

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 whether women who are not employed or in education are available to work. Table 1 shows the percentage of all working age women and men who are available for employment and those who are not available for employment by main activity. 19% of those women are not available for work due to domestic and care work, 12% due to unpaid family agriculture and 5% due to other unpaid family work.

Table 1: Unpaid domestic, care and family agricultural work by sex, working age population 15 to 64

	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Ratio of women to men
Available to work	65	73	1.3
Family 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.

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 weighted sample.

> *"Youth NEET are a highly diverse group and reasons for being NEET vary. There are many reasons why a young person may leave school and not actively be seeking a job. They may face particular obstacles; have other demands on their time such as assisting in family own use farm or enterprise production; they may be disabled, and/or there may simply be (or perceived to be) no suitable jobs available"* (ILO 2020b).

The relative number of youth NEET in a country is affected by how many 15-24 year-olds are able to access education or employment. To understand the drivers of NEET, it is also important to look at the prospects for youth in both of these areas. This section gives the definition of NEET and employment as well as an explanation of the difference in the NEET rates that might arise depending on the definition of employment that is used. The section has an overview of youth NEET, in education, by highest education level, employed by type of employment and engaged in unpaid family farming.

3.1 Definition of NEET and employment

Across East and Southern Africa the NEET rates are affected by the precise definition of employment captured in the various household survey instruments – which may differ slightly by survey and by country. Many countries are still in the process of updating household and labour force surveys to reflect the definition of employment as revised at the ILO 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 2013 (ILO 2013).

The major revision in the definition of employment in the 19th ICLS is that it *excludes* "own use production work comprising production of goods and services for *own final use*" (ILO 2013). In East and Southern Africa NEET rates using the definition of employment from the 19th ICLS standards are substantially higher than the NEET rates using the 13th ICLS (1982) definition of employment (ILO 2013). The removal of "production of goods and services for *own final use*" from the definition of employment effectively increases the numbers of NEET youth – especially in largely subsistence agricultural countries where young people assist with family agricultural production for own final use. There may also

be more youth currently engaged in family production for own use that now become defined as unemployed – hence also potentially raising the youth unemployment rate.

The process of updating household and labour force surveys to reflect the 19th ICLS standards takes time and care needs to be taken with the design of the survey questionnaires so they reflect the standards as defined. Measuring the differences in work for pay or profit (and therefore employed) versus work for production of goods and services for own final use (and therefore not employed) can be particularly sensitive to questionnaire design – especially amongst groups in less formal employment such as youth and women. In a review by the ILO and the World Bank in Sri Lanka more detailed and carefully structured survey questions find differences in the numbers and hours of paid employment – including increased numbers of women engaged in small enterprise activities. They also find greater hours worked than previously reported in unpaid family work. (Discenza 2021).

A detailed review of employment data in household surveys by the World Bank finds that household and labour force surveys that do not have questions designed to elicit the revised definition of employment tend to collect data that overstates employment in both youth and women (Desiere and Costa 2019). Klasen (2018) points out that there is likely to be a discontinuity in comparisons of NEET before and after countries implement changes to the 2013 19th ICLS standards. In addition, countries are likely to have different time-scales for the implementation of the new standards. Care should be taken with both inter-country and in-country comparisons over time.

Definition of NEET

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 work seeker category as well as those who are outside the labour force and not in education or training (ILO 2013).

The NEET rate is calculated as follows*:

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

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.

**Education* is formal or non-formal education (institutionalised, intentional and planned by an education provider).

Employment is defined as all persons of working age who, during a short reference period (one week), were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit. This specifically excludes work in family agriculture or family enterprises for own consumption and it excludes unpaid domestic and care work.

Training is a non-academic learning activity through which a person acquires specific skills intended for vocational or technical jobs. (UN DESA 2021)

Implications of the 19th ICLS definition of the labour force for NEET rate calculations

This report uses the NIDS 2016 survey data for analysis of youth NEET. The report published by the Namibian Statistics Agency (2017) on the NIDS 2016 does not explicitly state whether it follows the 19th ICLS protocol and in any event does not publish data on employment. However, the Namibian Labour Force Survey of 2018 uses the 19th ICLS standards in the definition of employment (NSA 2019). It should be noted that the age-range of "youth" in Namibian statistical documentation is 15 to 34. For the purpose of inter-country comparisons youth data in this report is from 15 to 24 years of age.

Using the 19th ICLS standards, this report shows a NEET rate of 38% for women and 29% for men between 15 and 24 years old. The ILO *Modelled Estimates* in the ILO Data Explorer which use the 13th ICLS standards show a 33% NEET rate for women and a 29% NEET rate for men (https://ilostat.ilo.org/).

NIDS 2016 data processing on work and employment according to the 19th ICLS standards

Detail on how the NIDS 2016 data on work and employment was processed so that it meets the 19th ICLS definition of employment is given in Table 2. As with many of the other ESA countries' surveys, there is ambiguity in the definition of employment if the respondent is a subsistence farmer or an unpaid family worker – since the survey does not ask if the proceeds of this work are for own consumption or for sale. The 19th ICLS states that if the proceeds of family production are mainly or only for sale the respondent is considered employed even if they are an "unpaid family worker".

However, the NIDS 2016 survey asks the respondents if they worked for "at least one hour at an activity including collecting or making goods for sale…" Many survey respondents who state that they are "subsistence farmers" or "unpaid family workers" respond "yes" to this question and are therefore assumed (by this analysis) to be employed . In the absence of other information in the survey, those subsistence farmers or unpaid family workers who do not respond in the affirmative are considered not employed. It should be noted that this assumption does not capture the precise definition of employment in the 19th ICLS and may overstate the number of subsistence farmers whose production is "mainly or only for sale".

Table 2: NIDS 2016 data processing on work and employment according to the 19th ICLS standards

19th ICLS standards used in survey	Implication for calculated NEET rates in this report
ICLS standards used: Not stated but the NIDS 2016 report does not publish employment data (Namibia Statistics Agency 2017) Survey asks if respondent if they: 1) worked for pay; 2) did business; and/or 3) worked for "at least an hour at an activity, for example as a trader, selling in the market, collecting wood or dung to sell, making handicrafts for sale, etc." This latter category determines the distinction between whether work in family agriculture or enterprise is for own use or for sale. Further questions in the survey on agricultural work on the household farm/plot or if the respondent is an unpaid family worker are cross tabulated with point 3. The survey has the following employment status categories: employee; subsistence farmer (with and without paid employees); other own account worker; unpaid family worker. **Agriculture:** The survey has a separate question on work in family agriculture. Whether the family agriculture is for sale or for own use is determined by reply 3) above. **Other unpaid work related questions:** The survey asks why the respondent is not available for employment. "Homemaker" is one of the responses but there are no other questions on unpaid care or domestic work.	**Employed, if in the past 7 days:** 1) worked for pay; 2) did business; and/or 3) worked for "at least an hour at an activity, for example as a trader, selling in the market, collecting wood or dung to sell, making handicrafts for sale, etc." 4) was temporarily absent from above **Not employed if**: Answer to all the above is "No". In the absence of a question on the product of "subsistence farmer" or "unpaid family worker" being for sale or own consumption it is assumed that unless the response to 3) is "yes", the person is not employed.

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

Table 3 and Figure 4 show 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 to 24, 119 363 are women and 114 806 are men. 242 818 young adults are between 15 and 19 years old and 122 485 are between 20 and 24 years old. It appears that there may be some coverage bias in the survey whereby fewer men in this age group are living in households. The gender ratio for 15- to 19-year-olds is 1.02 and for 20- to 24-year-olds is 1.04 (Table 4).

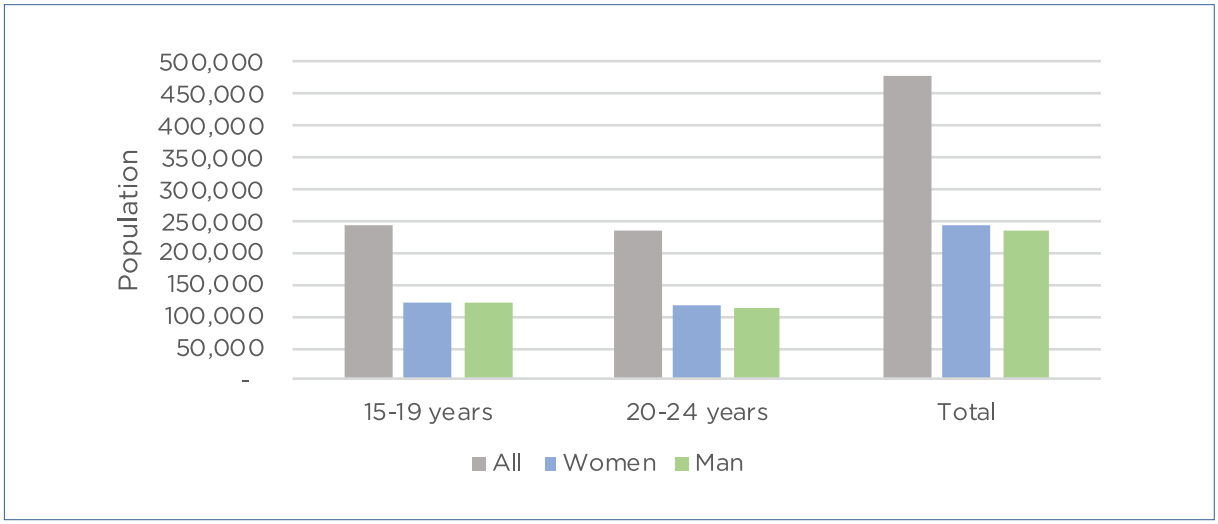
This coverage bias of young men is typical of many of the surveys analysed for this study. The difference between the two is likely to be due to the greater number of young men who leave the household for education, employment or seeking employment and are living in hostels, at their places of work or sleeping rough and therefore not included in the household count.

Table 3: Total number of youth (15 to 24) included in the survey by sex and age group

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

Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

Figure 4: Population of youth (15 to 24) by sex and age group



Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

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

	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Ratio of women to men
15 to 19 years	50.4	49.6	1.02
20 to 24 years	51.0	49.0	1.04
Total	50.7	49.3	1.03

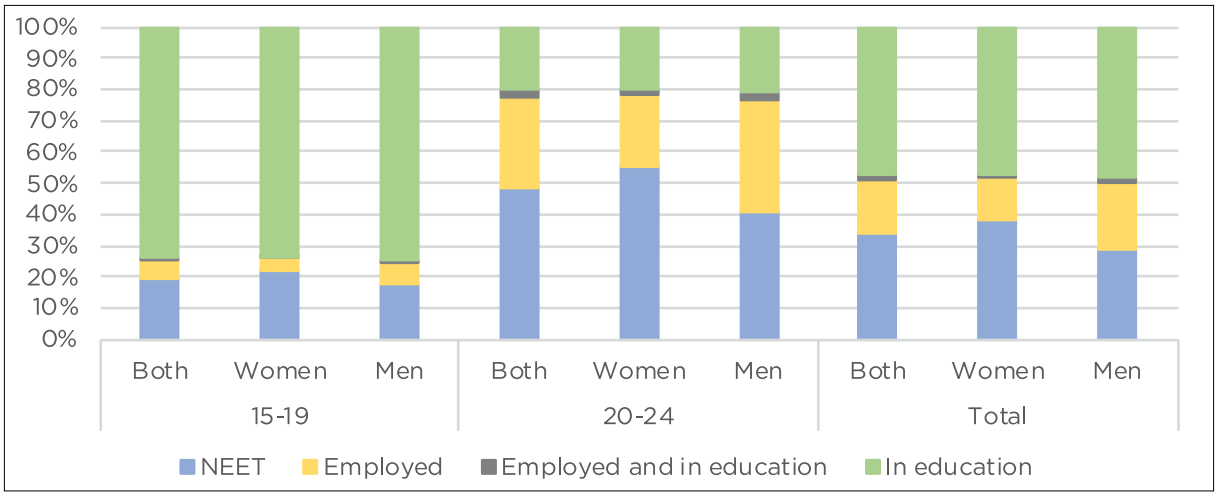
Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

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 to 19 age group. These relatively low numbers of NEET in this age group are due to the high percentage (75%) of 15- to 19-year-old enrolled in education. 55% of women and 41% of men are NEET in the 20- to 24-year-old age group.

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

Figure 5: Percentage of youth (aged 15 to 24) by activity status – NEET; employed; employed and in education; and in education only, by sex and age group



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 to 24

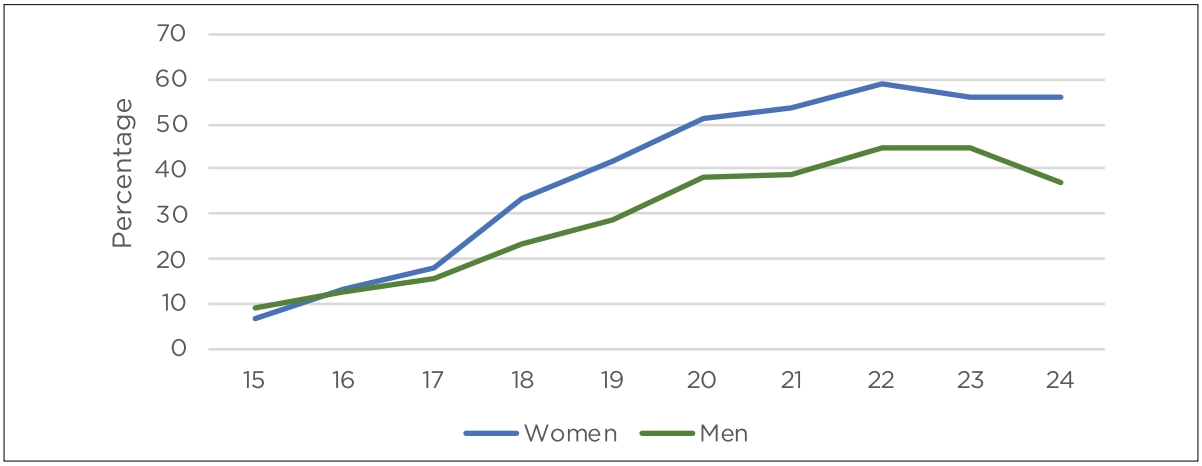
	Age Group	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Ratio of women to men
NEET	15 to 19	22	17	1.29
	20 to 24	55	41	1.27
	Total	38	29	1.41
Employed	15 to 19	4	7	1.36
	20 to 24	23	36	1.37
	Total	13	21	1.34
Employed and in education	15 to 19	0	1	0.58
	20 to 24	2	3	0.57
	Total	1	2	0.65
In education	15 to 19	74	75	0.63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

Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

3.4 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 6: Percentage NEET youth by sex and age in single years (15 to 24)

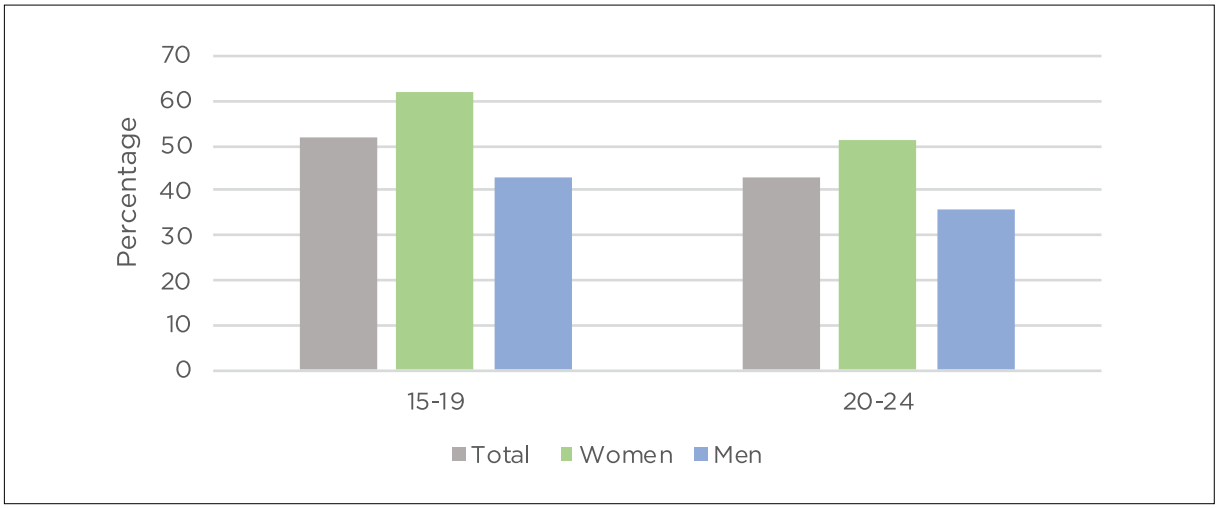


Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

Figure 7 shows the percentage of unemployed youth by sex and age group. 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- to 19-year-old age group at 62% women and 45% men, the total number of unemployed youth is relatively small.

In the 20- to 24-year-old age group women's unemployment rate is 51% and men's unemployment is 36%. The unemployment rate is higher than most other East and Southern African countries and similar to South Africa and Namibia. This reflects both the active labour market programmes implemented by the government to assist youth in finding work and that a greater number of youth that 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 7: Unemployed youth (15-19) as a percentage of economically active youth by sex and age group



Source: Namibia Inter-censal Demographic Survey 2016 (NIDS 2016), author's calculations.

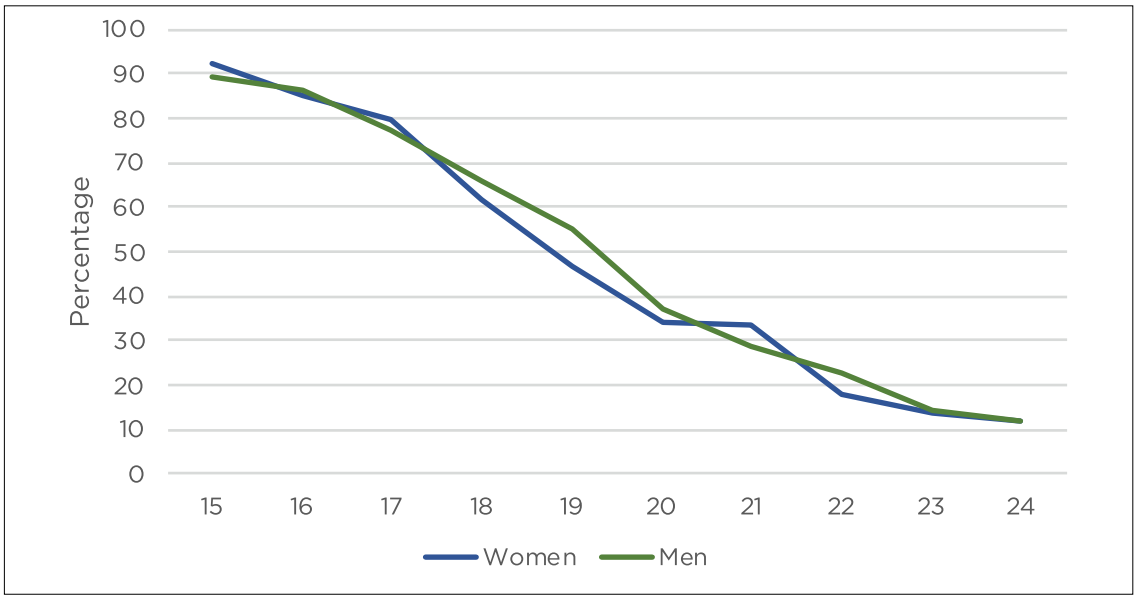
3.5 Education profile of youth

Education enrolment in both age groups is high with 74% of women and 75% of men 15- to 19-year-olds enrolled in education and 20% of women and 21% of men 20- to 24-year-olds enrolled. Figure 8 shows the percentage of each age enrolled in school.

Figure 9 shows the percentage of youth by highest grade of education attained. While attendance rates of 15 to 19 year olds is relatively high, the flow through the education system is slow. Approximately 40% of 15 to 19 year olds are still attending primary school and less than 10% have reached senior secondary school. This is likely due to repetition of grades or intermittent attendance both of which suggest several factors at the school and the household level are affecting the quality of education received.

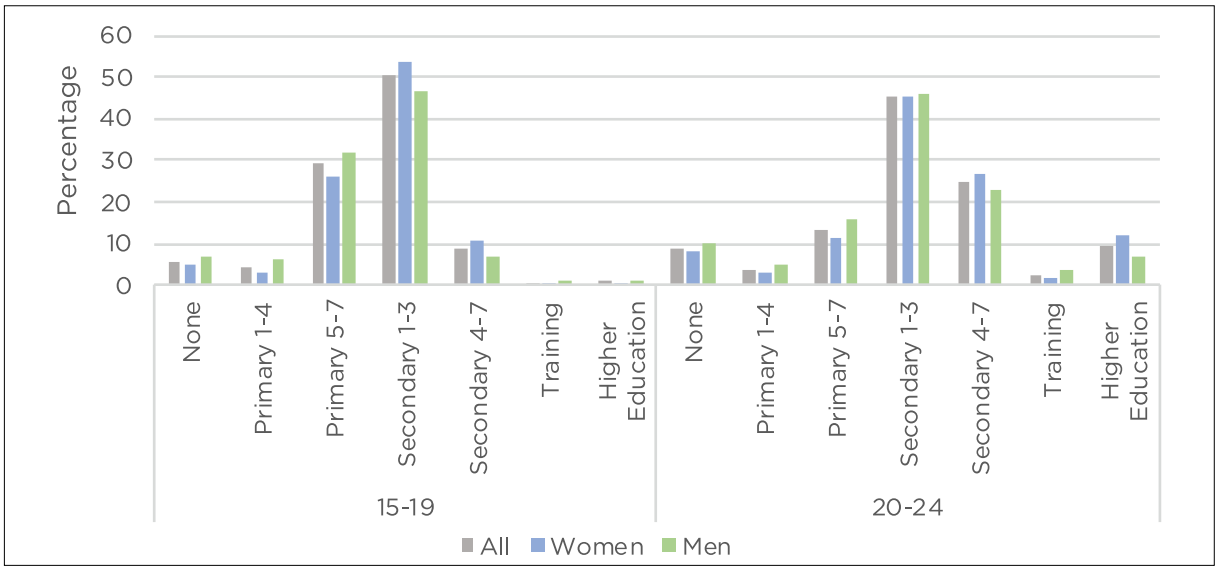
Gender parity favours young women by a significant margin with 65% of women in this age group reaching secondary school compared to 54% of men. Gender parity in the highest level of education attained in the age group 20 to 24 also favours women with 27% reaching upper secondary and 12% reaching higher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

Figure 8: Percentage of youth (15 to 24) currently enrolled in education by sex and age in single years



Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

Figure 9: Percentage of youth (15 to 24) by highest level of education attained, sex and age group



Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

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

		Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Ratio of women to men
15 to 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 to 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.

3.6 Employment profile

Despite steady economic growth over the past decade, employment growth has been slow. In 2018, 45% of women (15-65) and 50% of men were employed. The unemployment rate of all working age women was 34% and of men was 32.5%. Four in five new women's jobs were in the rural areas (Namibia Statistics Agency 2019). Youth employment rates are comparatively much lower for women than men. Table 7 gives the youth employment rates – fewer women in the 20- to 24-year-old age group are employed than men, with 25% of women employed and 39% of men employed (NIDS 2016).

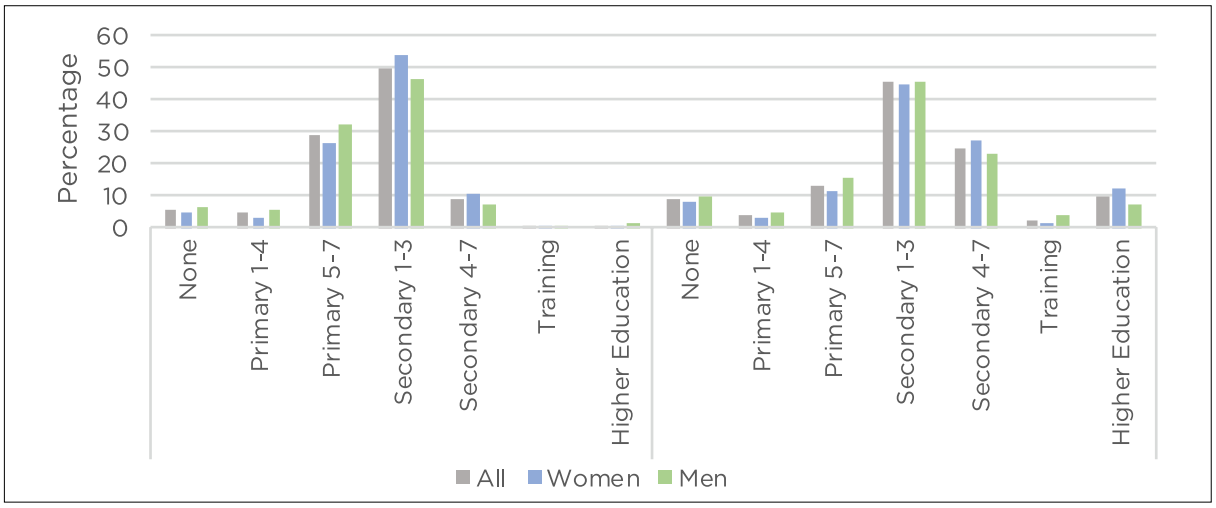
Table 7: Percentage of youth (15 to 24) employed by sex and age group

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

Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

Figure 10 shows the percentage of employed youth by their highest level of education. The greatest percentage of youth employed have lower secondary education as their highest level of education. Of men employed in the 20- to 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 10: Percentage of employed youth (15 to 24) by highest level of education, sex and age group



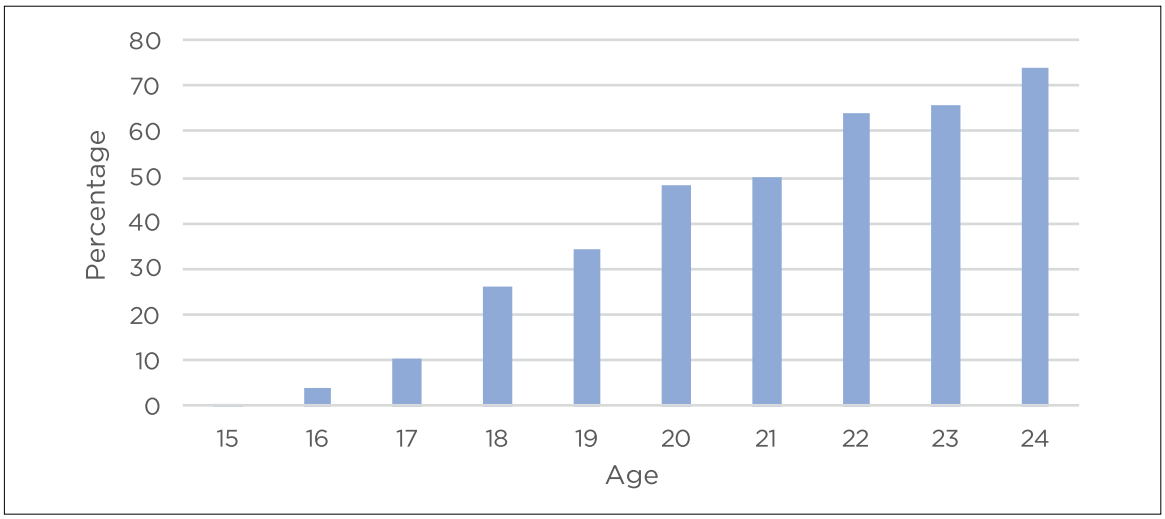
Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

3.7 Marriage and childbirth

In Namibia the number of young women who are married or cohabiting is extremely low with 3% of 15 to 19 year olds and 14% of 20 to 24 year olds married or cohabiting. The number of young women who have had children is substantially higher than the number married. Figure 1 gives the percentage of women 15 to 24 who have at least one child. The percentage of women below the age of 18 remains relatively low with 0.4%, 4% and 10% of 15, 16 and 17 year olds respectively having had a child. 26% of 18 year olds and 34% of 19 year olds have had a child, increasing to 74% of 24 year olds who have at least one child.

While the NIDS 2016 collects data on the number of children a woman has given birth to it does not collect data on current pregnancies. In terms of adolescent birth and pregnancy rates collated for several ESA countries by Kasa et. al. (2018) Namibia, at 19%, has similar adolescent fertility as Kenya (18%) and South Africa (19%). While contraception is widely available, a number of gender norms and conservative constructs prevent young women from accessing information or teenage friendly health services (Legal Assistance Centre 2017).

Figure 11: Percentage of women (15 to 24) who have had at least one child by age



Source: NIDS 2016, author's calculations.

4 DETERMINANTS OF YOUTH NEET

With increasing access to secondary and higher education, the NEET rate amongst the 15- to 19-year-old age group is 20%, with the women's NEET rate at 22% and the men's NEET rate at 17%. The NEET rate in the 20- to 24-year-old age group in the NIDS 2016 data is 48%, with women's NEET rate at 55% and the men's NEET rate at 41%. A large percentage of the youth NEET are attempting to find work and the unemployment rate for both women and men between 19 and 24 is high at 43% of the economically active population. It is important to try and understand what identifiable factors in the Namibian context might determine NEET status and whether they differ between women and men.

In other research on the individual and household factors associated with the number of years of education attained it has been fairly widely ascertained that socioeconomic status, education levels of parents, availability of learning resources such as books and electricity, time spent on household chores, distance from school and nutritional status are amongst the most important (Bashir et. al. 2018, Karamperidou et. al. 2020 and Lewin 2011). Similar factors are associated with the probability of youth and women's employment (Klasen 2018 and O'Higgins 2017). For young women in particular, early marriage, childbirth and gender norms around the cost benefits of further years of education as well as gender norms around household roles and the suitability of certain employment for women, impacts on both education levels attained and employment (Comblon 2017 and Nieuwenhuis 2018).

In order to ascertain whether there is an association between these factors and the probability of being NEET a multivariate logistic regression model was constructed with NEET status as the dependent variable. Independent variables were tested based on research as mentioned above and the descriptive analysis of the data from the Namibia NIDS 2016 which shows possible correlations between NEET and sex, age group, marriage, highest level of education attained, urban or rural residence and whether the women has a child or not.

This section of the report is structured as follows: The first section gives the structure of the model and the method used in coding the variables for analysis is given. In the second section the findings of the model are presented and the associations between NEET and background characteristics such as sex, age, gender, marital status, family composition and gender are analysed. Lastly, some limitations of the model are explained.

4.1 Structure of the logistic regression model

A multivariate logistic regression is a widely used statistical method appropriate to the categorical nature of survey data. As well as the dependant variable (NEET status) being categorical, many of the independent variables in the survey data are categorical such as sex, married, highest level of education, urban/rural.

The logistic model is:

$$\log(\pi/(1-\pi))=\beta 0 + \beta 1X1 + \beta 2X2 + \beta 3X3 \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots$$

where $Pr(Y=1)=\pi$

$\beta 1, \beta 2, \beta 3\ldots\ldots$ are the Odds Ratios of X1, X2, X3 respectively

The model was run in *Stata* as a weighted sample of the survey set.

Individual level data for all 15 to 24 year olds was compiled from the NIDS 2016 for the regression analysis. The following data from the survey was used: Individual demographic information; individual education data; and individual employment and household composition data. Data was coded as noted in Table 8 which lists the variables used in the model.

Table 8: List of variables used in the logistic regression model and method used for compiling the coding

Variable	Type of variable and code used	Method used to compile codes
Dependent variable		
NEET status	Dummy variable 0 = not NEET 1 = NEET	Labour and time use data was used to establish employed or not; Education data used to establish in education or not.
Independent variables		
Sex	Dummy variable Male = 0 Female = 1	Data on individual respondent.
Age group	Dummy variable 15 to 19 = 0 20 to 24 = 1	Data on individual respondent. Age in years coded as age group
Married	Dummy variable No = 0 Yes = 1	Data on individual respondent.
Sex of head of household	Dummy variable Male = 0 Female = 1	Data from individual roster
Urban/rural (Rural)	Dummy variable Rural = 0 Urban = 1	Data from individual roster
Relationship to head of household	Dummy variable Head = 0 Spouse = 1 Child = 2 Grandchild = 3 Other adult = 4	Data on individual respondent.

Variable	Type of variable and code used	Method used to compile codes
Highest level of education	Dummy variable with 7 categories None = 0 Prim 1-3 = 1 Prim 4-5 = 2 Sec 1-3 = 3 Sec 4-6 = 4 Training = 5 Higher Ed = 6	Data on the highest grade attained was coded into none; lower and senior primary; lower and senior secondary; training; higher education; and adult literacy.

There were substantial differences observed in the descriptive data between the age groups and between women and men. This includes the number who are NEET, in education, employed, married and type of household they may live in. In order to establish whether the various factors impact differently on the NEET rate depending on age group and gender two separate models were run as follows:

- All 15- to 24-year-olds;
- Women 15- to 24-years-old.

Note: The models were run separately and the effective sample is different for each demographic group and shows the results ***while controlling for all other variables*** in that model (unless the data is not available in which case it is denoted by n.d.). The ***odds ratios*** of each variable in each model is shown in a combined table only for convenience of discussing the impact on NEET on the different groups.

4.2 Findings of the model

The odds ratios of the independent variables are presented in Table 9. The odds ratios measure the strength of the association between a variable with the probability of being NEET. An odds ratio greater than 1 indicates that the variable is associated with an increased probability of being NEET. The strength of the association will be the odds ratio times 1. For example, if a variable has an odds ratio of 2 it will be associated with twice the probability of being NEET. If the odds ratio is less than 1 it means that there is a decreased probability of being NEET. The associated value of the odds ratio is again times 1. For example, if the odds ratio is 0.4, the associated probability of being NEET is multiplied by 0.4 or, in other words, has a 60% lower probability of being NEET. An odds ratio of 1 (or close to 1) means that there is little to no association between the variable and the probability of being NEET.

Individual characteristics

The results of the logistic regressions are in Table 9 which show the variables associated with 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 to 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 to 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- to 19-year-old age group. Together the probability of being NEET if married is 2.67 times that of not being married. 20- to 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- to 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- to 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- to 24-year-old women only. Attaining post school higher education reduces the probability of being NEET by over 94% for 20- to 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 NEET 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.

The number of children a young woman has impacts on NEET status. 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 to 24.

Household characteristics

As seen with many of the other country studies, living in urban areas is associated with an increase in the probability of being NEET. It is likely, as seen in the descriptive data, that youth start to move to urban centres in search of work. Women in the 20- to 24-year age group are less likely to be NEET if they live in urban areas.

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 – it would not be possible to know if this is due to multi-generational households having greater resources without further research.

Table 9: Results of logistic regressions for youth NEET status

		15 to 24		20 to 24	
		All	Women Only	Women and men	Women only
Category (omitted variable in parenthesis)	Variable	Odds ratios			
Sex (Men)	Women	1.47***		1.67***	
	20 to 24	2.39***	2.31***		
Married (No)	Yes	1.69***	2.67***	1.25***	1.76***
Highest level of education	Primary grade 4-7	0.58***	0.51***	0.51***	0.32***
(Primary grade 1-3)	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- to 24-year-old age group where parents living or not was not statistically significant.

4.3 Limitations of the model

One of the key limitations of the model is not being able to easily test the association between NEET and socioeconomic status. While a consumption aggregate is calculated from data in the ESS 2018/19 by the Ethiopian Central Statistical Agency and the World Bank (2021), this is not available for public use to determine socioeconomic status. While other indices could be constructed to use as a proxy for income or relative poverty this was not done for several reasons. Firstly, the time required for the construction of such an index was not included in the research brief which originally intended the reports to be orientated more towards a policy audience. Secondly, a relative poverty index was constructed from house type, water availability and frequency of food deprivation for three of the countries in the study – Malawi, Botswana and Uganda. Not only was there no impact on NEET status of this relative poverty index (nor any of the individual components) but it's inclusion in the model created collinearity to the extent that it weakened both the impact and the statistical significance of nearly *all* the other variables – but most especially highest education level attained. While there are certainly various statistical methods to correct for this – most notably by creating interaction terms, it was felt that the complexity of interpreting the interaction terms would be too complex for the policy reader. (See O'Higgins 2017 pp 179 to 197). In any case, while there is research that shows

a relationship between number of years of school attained and socioeconomic status (Bashir et. al. 2018, Karamperidou et. al. 2020 and Tiruneh et. al. 2021), there is less direct evidence of a relationship between women's employment prospects and socioeconomic status (Klasen 2018). In conclusion, an index of socioeconomic status was not included in any of the country studies without necessarily first testing each country's data. This work will have to be the topic of further research.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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 or 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 and having children. However, while being married in the 15- to 19-year-old age group has the largest single effect on NEET status, there are only 3% of this age group married. The number of adolescent childbirth and pregnancy rates is decreasing due to the efforts of various agencies – most especially health and education. As an example, the National Policy on School Health in 2010 established mobile health clinics visiting schools 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).

However, while contraception is widely available and efforts such as the mobile health clinics are in place, there are still a number of gender norms and conservative constructs that prevent young women from accessing information or teenage friendly health services (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- to 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 (NSA 2019). These gains may have been revered during the COVID-19 pandemic and 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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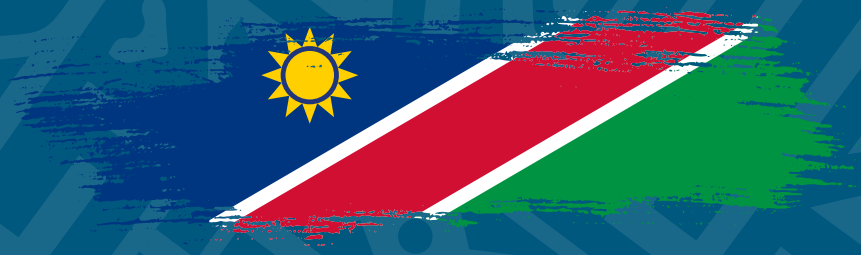

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