



CATHSSETA

**TRACK AND TRACER
REPORT FOR THE
2019/20 AND 2020/21
FINANCIAL YEARS**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a learning organisation guided by a well thought research agenda, the Culture, Art, Tourism, Hospitality, and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA) collaborates with independent service providers to undertake research or evaluation on its behalf. Given this background, this report presents the findings of a track and tracer study focusing on the 2019 – 2022 CATHSSETA-funded learning programmes.

This study sought to track and trace beneficiaries who took part in CATHSSETA-funded apprenticeship, bursary, internship, learnership, TVET WIL, and skills programmes between 2019/20 – 2020/21. The purpose of this study was to establish the outcomes of CATHSSETA's funded learning programmes on beneficiaries. Specific focus for this study was to establish employment status, career path, applicability of qualifications, income levels, and work-related experience of beneficiaries and employers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative method was used in the execution of the study. Computer Assisted Telephonic Interviews (CATI) were conducted with 517 beneficiaries of CATHSSETA learning programmes who completed their studies in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 financial years and nine (9) self-administered surveys were completed by employers who worked with CATHSSETA beneficiaries in the financial years indicated above. SurveyMonkey and SPSS platforms were jointly used to analyse, interpret and cross-tabulate the data.

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

LEARNER DEMOGRAPHICS

The racial profile included mostly Africans at 93% followed by 5% Coloured, 2% White and 0,58% Indian or Asian beneficiaries. Most participants were youth and under the age of 35. When it comes to gender there were more females (71%) than males 29%. Most participants were from Kwa Zulu Natal (20%); followed by Gauteng (16%); Eastern Cape and Limpopo (14%) respectively. The majority of respondents (48%) attended public schools classified as low cost while one cohort constituting 42% studied at Former Model C Schools. At the time of commencing with the programme most of the beneficiaries had at least a matric certificate. More than half (52%) of the participants pursued Hospitality studies, followed by Tourism and

Travel Services (18%); Sports, Recreation and Fitness (15%); Conservation (10%) while Arts, Culture and Heritage and Gaming and Lotteries had 1% respectively.

EMPLOYER DEMOGRAPHICS

Most participating employers were operating within the Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, and Western cape provinces. Of the nine employers who participated in the study, 40% were from the Arts, Culture and heritage sector and Hospitality sectors respectively while the remaining 20% were from the Sports, Recreation and Fitness (20%). Over half of the participants had over 10 years' experience with over 50% from private companies; 30% from NPO/PBO/NGO; 20% and 10% from Public companies.

PATHWAYS OF CATHSSETA'S BENEFICIARIES

A significant number of the candidates (62%) remained unemployed or did not find a job post the intervention. Only 38% secured jobs post the completion of the training. Of the 38% who had employment opportunities, 66% of these jobs were short term and only 33% of the jobs availed were classified as full time. Learnership and internship and bursary programmes had higher employment rates compared to other programmes. It is heartening to note that fewer graduates explored entrepreneurship as an alternative to traditional job hunting. It is also encouraging to observe that a limited number of those who got employment accessed jobs speedily. They found jobs either immediately; or within 3 months (15%) or in some case just a little bit above 12 months. A limited number of bursary holders furthered their studies after the intervention. Due to the lack of access to jobs, other participants opted to volunteer their time.

The findings indicated that despite the low employment rates, there is evidence that there are those acquiring employment upon completion of the programme. There was also a positive transition occurred whereby candidates moved from contract/casual to full time work while others received promotion or salary hikes. The summary pathways of the learners is as follows of the learners whom are unemployed (63%), 5% is studying, 2% is volunteering and 56% is Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET).

LEARNING PROGRAMMES RELEVANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS

The findings indicated that the employment offered after the training was in line with the qualifications acquired by the learners. A correlation was only established between interventions and graduates' access to the job market, indicating that employment acquisition can be linked to employment rates upon completion of the programme.

Overall, the study found that the interventions did build and transfer skills for its attendees. Learners agreed that they earned critical skills, which improved their work performance. Employers corroborated these views and mentioned that employees' improved competencies led to improved organisational efficiencies. Employers reported that the training providers did an exceptional work of delivering an impactful training intervention. On an equal footing, they also appreciated the leadership and support shown by CATHSSETA. It is critical to note the findings from the employers are not generalisable as only 14% of the employers participated on the study and other sectors, such as the Travel and Tourism Services and Sports Recreation and Fitness subsectors, did not participate in the study and therefore their views were not reflected.

BENEFICIARIES' PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROGRAMME

Beneficiaries indicated that upon completion of the learning programme their skills and organisational proficiencies improved. Beneficiaries were also satisfied with the following training elements: curriculum content, balance between theory and practice, facilitator attributes and mentorship and coaching. Learners corroborated this sentiment, stating that they improved their work immediately after completing the training. The beneficiaries however noted administrative concerns such as delayed stipends and funding which affects them adversely as they depend on the stipends to be able to continue with the programme.

EMPLOYER'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROGRAMME

A resounding 89% of employers confirmed that the LPs closed the skills gaps not only at an organisational but a broader sectoral scale. All participating employers (100%) acknowledged an improvement in proficiency of the beneficiaries at the end of the programme compared to their abilities when they started. Employers conceded that the interventions skilled or upskilled their employees with a combination of technical and soft skills competencies which empowered them and enhanced their job performance. Employers recognised that their

trainees acquired and applied their knowledge at work which, improved their personal and organisational performance. Employers conceded that there were progressive changes witnessed before and after the intervention. This means that their employees were better equipped - if not empowered - to execute their jobs

LEARNING PROGRAMME RECOMMENDATIONS

- Structural or programme design challenges - Only a limited number of candidates benefited by accessing jobs, self-employment, abilities to earn an income as well as studying further. Much as they were confirmed to transfer usable skills, the initiatives are yet to empower participants to transition from unemployment into employment. Much more effort to explore innovative ideas such as streamlining entrepreneurship as part of the programme offerings should be debated or explored;
- More attempts must be made to lobby the involvement of the industry (key role players) with the objective of increasing the number of hosting employers hoped to increase programme efficiencies and employability of learners.
- Strengthen the collaboration between the private, public and SETA subsectors to co-create solutions meted out to open up learning and sustainable employment opportunities.
- Continue with the adherence to the selection criteria ensuring the inclusion of individuals from marginalised groups defined by age group, gender and geographical location.
- Beyond transferring soft and technical skills, a consideration to empower candidates with additional skills such as system thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, and independence should be part of the curriculum content. These skills are purported to empower learners with the ability to innovate as well in being in tune with dealing complexities.
- Ensure that representatives of all subsectors partake in future studies.
- Identify and decrease the elements stalling the functionalities of the training programmes. CATHSSETA is urged to increase the frequency and improve the communication lines and simultaneously fast track payment of invoices.
- Implementation - Administrative or process related issues – a myriad of factors varying from double dipping of graduates; challenges with accessing certificates after programme completion; challenges with stipends which then inhibit students to travel between their homes and the training venues, and trainee drop out levels are among the root causes that hinder the effectiveness of the learning programmes.

- Ensure that the implementation of each and every learning intervention is underpinned by programme design or theory of change.

CONCLUSION

Through the programme, only a little over a third of the learners secured employment, with most learners finding employment upon completion of the programme. Thus, indicating the need to strengthen employment outcomes upon completion of the programme. The findings further indicates that the employment received was aligned with the employment acquired. The learners were satisfied with the interventions and the employers equally felt that the learners were proficient and could add value to their organisations subsequent to completing the CATHSSETA interventions. Findings in this study confirm that CATHSSETA interventions are aligned to the transformational imperatives promoting the ideals of equality.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACRONYM	DEFINATION
AAU	Association of African Universities
CATHSSETA	Culture, Arts, Travel, Hospitality and Sports Sector Education and Training Authority
CATI	Computer Administered Interviews
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CHEERS	Career after Higher Education European Research Study
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DOL	Department of Labour
ETDPSETA	Education Training and Development Practices and Sector Education and Training Authority
FASSETA	Financial and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HEMIS	Higher Education Management Information System
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
INSETA	Insurance Sector Education and Training Authority
ILO	International Labour Organization
LP	Learner Programmes
NAMB	National Artisan Moderation Body
NDP	National Development Plan
NEPED	Nagaland Environmental Protection and Economic Development
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
PSET	Post-School Education and Training
PDI	Previously Disadvantaged Individuals
QA	Quality Assurance
ROA	Return on Investment
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RSA	Republic of South Africa

STATSSA	Statistics South Africa
SAQA	South African Qualification Authority
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
STEP	Skills and Training Enhancement Project
STWT	School to Work Transitions
TETA	Transport Education and Training Authority
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
WIL	Work Integrated Learning
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

1. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 BACKGROUND

This study was conducted by Tiymele Consultants on behalf of the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA) to independently track and trace beneficiaries who took part in the CATHSSETA 2019-20 and 2020-21 financial years learning interventions. The study involved soliciting Learning Programme (LP) beneficiaries and employers' perceptions and experiences on the outcomes of the delivered interventions.

The Skills Development Act (SDA) No. 97 of 1998, as amended, makes provision for the establishment of Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) for each national economic sector and thereby aims to develop the skills of the South African workforce by increasing the investment in education and training in the labour market; and encouraging employers to play a meaningful role in developing employees, particularly the previously disadvantaged. CATHSSETA is among the 21 SETAs mandated to implement a myriad of sector-oriented skills development interventions aimed at building a cohort of capacitated individuals with abilities to contribute towards igniting economic growth.

To this effect CATHSSETA delivers and continues to deliver a wide range of targeted capacity-building initiatives. Through various skills development programs such as among others the Artisan, Bursary, Internship, Learnership, TVET and WILL skills programmes to close the skills development gap within its subsectors and contribute toward economic development. CATHSSETA further goes beyond funding and supporting the skills programme and focuses on the contribution and impact of its intervention in the lives of its beneficiaries. For this purpose, CATHSSETA aims to evaluate the outcomes of its interventions on an annual basis to ascertain the impact and outcomes thereof.

CATHSSETA is guided by the National Skills Development Plan 2030 (NSDP) which is similarly derived from the National Development Plan (NDP). The NDP aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030, whereas the NSDP as a sub-plan to the NDP focus on skills development and seeks to ensure that South Africa has adequate, appropriate, and high-quality skills that contribute toward economic growth, employment creation and social development by 2030. This then implies that CATHSSETA as a schedule 3(a) listed public entity in terms of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) No. 1 of 1999, as amended and, particularly as a skills development entity bears a broad responsibility of enabling the success of the NSDP, 2030 and subsequently that of the NDP, 2030.

The new landscape of the SETAs along with the NSDP were ushered in on 01 April 2020 by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). CATHSSETA has since been developing its Strategic Plan (SP) in line with the NSDP. This process is mainly guided by the framework for the development of the SP and Annual Performance Plans (APP) that is issued by the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME). This framework introduced a shift in the planning process, whereby Government institutions are now expected to focus on outputs and outcomes instead of outputs and activities. The CATHSSETA's outputs and outcomes, which are linked to those of the NSDP are outlined in its SP. The track and tracer study is critical as it endeavor's to evaluate the outcomes and impact of the CATHSSETA learning programmes.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the past decade, South Africa has witnessed a rapid increase in the overall unemployment rate. In the fourth quarter of 2022 the unemployment rate was standing at 32.7% (STATS SA, 2023). Youth aged between 18-24 are viewed the most vulnerable in the South African labour market as the unemployment rate for this age group is more than 20% higher than the national average. The South African population consists of more than 10 million young people aged between 18-24, of these 10 million young people approximately 6.3 million are unemployed (STATS SA 2023). According to Statistics South Africa (STATS SA), in the fourth quarter of 2022 youth aged between 15-24 years old recorded the highest unemployment rate of 61% (STAT SA, 2023). Due to the high rates of unemployment in South Africa, it is evident that Skills development initiatives and WBL Programmes should be prioritised in the country.

In contemporary society there exists increased perceptions that achieving educational qualifications is required in order to gain better employment prospects, therefore resulting in an increase in the number of individuals who invest in post matric qualifications (Belete, 2016). In the past decade South Africa, like many other African countries has experienced improvements in the absorption of youth into tertiary institutions, however improvements have not been made in the absorption of new graduates in the labour market. This has led to a lot of graduates remaining unemployed although they have the necessary skills and qualifications required in the workplace (Belete, 2016).

The government has however taken decisive steps towards the reduction of unemployment through the introduction of initiatives to respond to the gradual increase in the unemployment rate in the country (DHET, 2013). The government initiatives include skills development interventions by the SETAs and government departments and other initiatives such as the Youth Employment Strategy (YES), which aims to increase internship and Work Integrated Learning (WIL) opportunities for graduates. Partnerships have also been developed between higher education institutions and employers in order to identify learning requirements to improve the relevance of education and facilitating access to education and learning. The CATHSSETA, forms partnerships with employers and training providers where learners are placed through WBL Programmes in order to gain workplace experience and the necessary skills that will help them become employable.

CATHSSETA as one of 21 SETAs mandated to implement a myriad of sector-oriented skills development interventions aimed at building a cohort of capacitated individuals with abilities to contribute towards igniting economic growth. To this effect, CATHSSETA continues to embark on the delivery of learning programme and a wide range of targeted capacity-building initiatives. However, their direct contribution to building or enhancing the skills and competencies of its beneficiaries, as well as minimising the scourge of unemployment is not fully documented over time. As a result, the extent to which these training initiatives have facilitated employment opportunities professional pathways and the perceptions of the beneficiaries remain an open-ended question (Wildschut et al, 2017). Hence it is critical for tracer studies to be conducted on an annual basis to determine the contribution of CATHSSETA initiatives and the outcomes thereof.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the outcomes of the CATHSSETA skills development interventions and Work-based Integrated Learning (WIL) programmes such as the; Artisan, Bursary, Internship, Learnership, Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Higher Education and Training (HET) WIL and Skills programme. The study focused on the beneficiaries who completed the interventions in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 financial year.

1.4 STUDY OBJECTIVES

The study objectives were as follows:

- To determine the pathways of learners who have completed Learning Programme interventions.
- To determine the relevance of the Learning Programme interventions among beneficiaries.
- To determine the perception of beneficiaries who completed the CATHSSETA programme.
- To determine the programme's challenges and success thus far.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the outcomes of CATHSSETA beneficiaries upon completion of the learning programmes?
- What are the employers perceptions of the CATHSSETA programmes?

2. CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides literature review and context that will look into the interventions provided by CATHSSETA and the purposes thereof. Followed by a description of how the interventions are aligned to the CATHSSETA's mandate and strategic plan. The literature will then look into to the purpose and role of the track and tracer study as well as the learner pathways upon the completion of the interventions.

2.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE CATHSSETA LEARNING PROGRAMMES

The mandate of the CATHSSETA is “to facilitate skills development within its sub-sectors through the disbursement of grants for learning programmes and monitoring of education and training as outlined in the NSDP, 2030 (CATHSSETA SSP, 2022). Furthermore the NSDP, 2030 is aimed at increasing access to high quality and relevant education, training and skills development including workplace learning and experience. The following section provides a brief description of the learning interventions implemented by the SETA in order to achieve its mandate.

2.1.1 THE APPRENTICESHIPS PROGRAMME

Apprenticeship programmes are similar to learnership programmes and combine theory and practice in a single learning process. Apprenticeship programmes are most prevalent in trade occupations and result in a formal qualification once the trade test has been completed. According to the Skills Development Act (SDA) No. 97 of 1998 as amended, the “apprenticeship” means a learning programme in respect of a listed trade and includes a trade-test in respect of that trade. Apprenticeships are a combination of practical work, theory, and workplace experience in a trade field. In the case of a listed trade, it ends in a trade test and an artisan certificate of competence. Apprenticeships are in reality the contract that is signed between the apprentice and the pre-approved employer and lasts for the duration of the apprenticeship. Employment is generally guaranteed after completing an apprenticeship (SAQA, 2019).

The National Artisan Moderation Body (NAMB) oversees the apprenticeships in South Africa, on behalf of the QCTO. NAMB moderates trade tests, develops, and manages a national database of registered artisan trade assessors and moderators. NAMB also records artisan achievements and makes recommendations to the QCTO for the certification of artisans. “Artisan” means a person that has been certified as competent to perform a listed trade in accordance with the Skills Development Act (SDA) No. 97 Of 1998 as amended.

2.1.2 THE BURSARY PROGRAMME

Bursaries are offered to prospective learners through institutions of higher learning and employers to pursue their studies within the 6 CATHSSETA sub-sectors. Through the awarding of bursaries, the SETA aims to address skills shortages within the sector through ensuring a continuous and increased supply of a skilled workforce in the sector mainly focusing on scarce skills (W&R SETA, 2022). Bursaries are awarded to unemployed beneficiaries in order for them to gain a qualification and awarded to employed beneficiaries to enhance their skills.

2.1.3 THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

Internship programmes provide university or university of technology graduates an opportunity to build on their obtained qualifications by providing them with workplace exposure and specialised training (ETDP SETA, 2020). The CATHSSETA internship program is a 12-month workplace experience programme designed to equip unemployed graduates with the necessary practical experience to enable them to gain employment. An internship is intended to provide a candidate with the experiential learning required to operate and make a positive contribution with respect to the career path they are pursuing. With the internship, the individual gains a competitive advantage over the average career seeker with little or no experience at all. In addition, the candidate gains a better understanding of the nature of the working world and the challenges they will face throughout their career development process (SAQA, 2019)

2.1.4 THE LEARNERSHIP PROGRAMME

Learnership is a work-based experiential learning intervention that comprises both structured practical workplace and theoretical training which leads to a qualification that is registered under the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). Both unemployed learners and employed learners can participate in a learnership through an employer. "Learnerships aim to redress the unequal access to education, training and employment opportunities, as well as skills shortages in the labour market" (ETDP SETA, 2020).

2.1.5 THE SKILLS PROGRAMME

skills programme is a unit standard or combination of unit standards that lead to an employable skill and earns a credit towards a full qualification under the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (QCTO,2018). Skills programmes are performed at different NQF levels and learners receive credits based on the unit standards they have successfully completed. The main objective of skills programmes is for certified learners to be more employable. Figure 1 below provides an overview of the various WBL programmes available in South Africa.

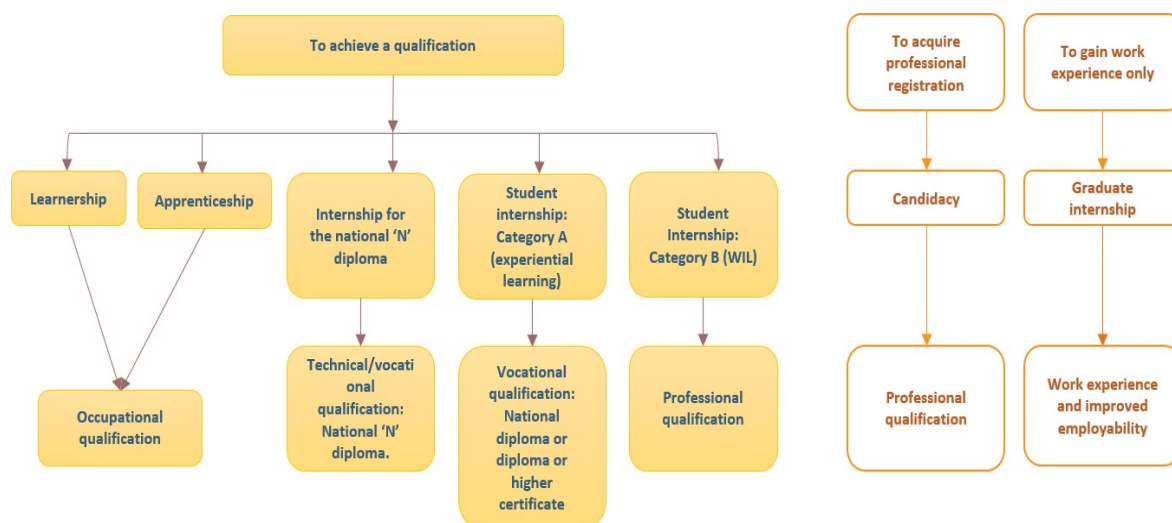
2.1.6 THE HET - WIL PROGRAMME

The HET- WIL programme supports a quality higher and vocational education sector and promote access to higher and vocational education and skills development training opportunities. The WIL Programme is aimed at placing the University of Technology (UOT) registered learners into a WIL programme to complete their training which requires a component of experiential or practical learning. Through participating in the WIL programme learners are educated and trained to work in a technical or vocational field (ETDP SETA, 2020). Work-Integrated Learning's mission is to promote and extend the learning process into the workplace through experiential learning. It enhances student vocational maturation and mutual benefit to employers and the institution (either College or University)

2.1.7 THE TVET - WIL PROGRAMME

WIL Programmes are aimed at placing Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) registered learners into an internship programme to complete their training with employers. Through participating in the WIL programme learners acquire technical or vocational experiential learning.

FIGURE 1: AN OVERVIEW OF THE VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF WORKPLACE-BASED LEARNING PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH AFRICA



2.2 CATHSSETA NSDP 2030 AND TRACER STUDIES

South Africa has implemented several policies focusing on equity seeking to provide redress to the previously disadvantaged groups as a result of post-apartheid effects and to further close a gap of skills deficiency (Kruss, *et.al.* 2012). This has sparked the need for Skills development and the provision of work-based learning opportunities to ensure that there is a

skilled workforce that can accommodate the demands of the labour market even among the previously disadvantaged. Moreover, funding for skills development has been identified as a key requirement for economic growth in South Africa, and the economic empowerment of the previously disadvantaged majority.

The SDA 97 of 1998 as amended provides a framework for the development of skills in the workplace. Amongst other things, the Act makes provision for skills development using a levy-grant scheme, and the establishment of sector-specific Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) to administer the scheme's funds and manage the skills development process. In essence, this Act provides that all organisations in South Africa with an annual wage bill of R500 000 or more must pay 1% of this bill as a levy (not to be deducted from the employees' wages), to be collected by South African Revenue Services (SARS), every month, together with Pay As you Earn (PAYE) and Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF). The revenue that CATHSSETA receives from the organisations is then used to facilitate funding skills development training within its sub-sectors.

2.3 CATHSSETA STRATEGIC PLAN

The CATHSSETA is committed to achieving and contributing to the NSDP outcomes as indicated in the table below. This contribution is through the CATHSSETA outputs with directly linked outcomes related to the broader NSDP outcomes. CATHSSETA must deduce the extent to which the outcomes are achieved from the invested output initiatives. The tracer study assists in determining the extent of the achievement of the outcomes.

TABLE 1: NSDP, 2030 OUTCOMES LINKED TO THE CATHSSETA OUTCOMES.

NSDP Outcomes	CATHSSETA Outcomes	CATHSSETA Outputs
1. Identify and increase production of occupations in demand 2. Linking education and workplace 3. Improving the level of skills in the South African workforce	Increased production of occupations in demand	Mandatory Grants approved Discretionary Grants Allocated
	Increase in work-ready graduates	Work-based learning programme opportunities for the unemployed
	Improved capacity within the CATHSSETA sub-sectors	Research Agenda Employees are trained and supported through skills development interventions
	Increased access to	Artisan produced Certification support services provided

4. Increase access to occupationally directed programmes	occupationally directed programmes within the sector	Qualifications developed in line with identified occupations in high demand
		External Integrated Summative Assessments Learnerships registered in line with occupations in high demand
5. Support the growth of the public college system	Effectiveness of the public college system	Partnership projects implemented with sector employers and employers in rural communities, TVET Colleges, Community Education and Training Colleges (CETs), and universities
		SETA offices were established and maintained in TVET Colleges
		Skills development programmes implemented with CETs TVET/Employer partnerships for workplace exposure for TVET Lecturers
6. Skills development support for entrepreneurship and cooperative development	Successful entrepreneurs and cooperative businesses within the CATHSSETA sub-sectors	Local SMMEs supported Cooperatives, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) are supported through skills training
7. Encourage and support worker-initiated training	Improved capacity within the CATHSSETA sub-sectors	Worker-initiated training (federations/trade unions) interventions supported through capacity building
8. Support career development services	Increased rural footprint	Career development services are accessible to all, especially in rural areas and targeted beneficiaries

2.4 LEARNER DESTINATION AFTER COMPLETING WBL PROGRAMMES.

With South Africa's unemployment rate soaring above 30% in 2020, addressing the overall skills needs of the country presents a complex and heavy burden for SETAs as key stakeholders of the skills development and its ecosystem. Foundationally, skills system begins and predominantly relies on the quality of primary and secondary education which is characterized by below average numeracy and literacy skills compared to international standards and low participation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

(STEM) subjects further driving the skills mismatch or gaps between the labour market demand and supply (DWYPD,2020).

According to STATSSA (2021), only 38.5% persons in the population ages 25 – 64 years have completed some secondary schooling (< grade 12) while 32.1% have completed secondary schooling (Grade 12 or equivalent) in 2020. Interestingly, these numbers begin to drop when assessing post school certificates, diploma, degree, and other forms as the highest level of educational attainment, each recording 3.4%, 6.0% and 0.8% respectively. Although there is a great improvement in comparison to where the country was approximately a decade ago, the data reveals that the majority of the population do not pursue post school education and training (PSET) opportunities, which contributes to high levels of unemployment.

To mitigate the large numbers of unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, interventions have focused on learning programmes aimed at providing both theoretical and practical skills exposing them to various work environments and providing them with financial means to survive during this period (DWYPD, 2020). In some instances, double funding has been reported where learners are engaged in two learning programmes at the same time which counters the anticipated impact/reach. Moreover, there has previously been a consensus that learnerships/learnership grants have not increased employment levels which authors Pauw and colleagues (2006) posit that it is attributed to reluctance for firms to invest in training.

The Department of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (DHET) reports that although there has been an improvement in enrolments between 2010 and 2014, there is low participation of almost half of the unemployed population in SETA supported programmes (Reddy et al., 2016). Even with increased access to PSET institutions over the past years, completion rates do not match the enrolment figures which presents a constraint to South Africa's education and training system.

In the past, the monitoring and evaluation of SETA learning programmes was questionable with researchers finding difficulty in assessing the impact that these learning programmes have on reducing unemployment and creating a skilled and capable workforce (Kruss et al., 2012). What seems to be a challenge in South Africa is that there is insufficient data on skills

development and vocational education to enable impact assessment of the PSET skills system. In recent times, DWYPD has been and succeeded to once again bring to the fore the institutionalisation of across the issues of youth, women and people with disabilities entire public system. To their credit, they have also managed to develop an M&E framework which monitors performance of various public owned institutions. As an example, one of their annual targets is to host a total of 12 consultative workshops with all relevant stakeholders. These steps are encouraging are hoped to lead to some improvements (DWYPD, 2021). What was fascinating about this organisation is that it provided technical support and handholding to provinces on how to systematise performance measures on its core mandate.

Therefore, it makes it difficult for SETAs to assess the extent which education, training, and skills development systems equip youth with the relevant skills required in the labour market. Arguably, there is a perception that the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) has made it easier for agencies to trace graduates compared to tracing learners who formed part of the LPs (Tsotsi, 2020). Although SETAs have made a great improvement over the years related to reducing data inconsistencies, Tsotsi (2020) argues that the lack of a centralized location for PSET data makes it less accessible and that available studies are either small and not nationally representative, or larger labour market surveys do not focus on the different workplace-based learning programmes.

2.5 EMPLOYMENT INTERVENTIONS

A meta review completed in 2016 by the National Skills Authority (NSA) elevated the significance of SETA learning programmes in curbing the high and stubborn unemployment rates disadvantaging the country. The evidence shows that post the completion of the SETA LP, 35% of the beneficiaries who were previously unemployed obtained jobs, while another cohort representing 2.3% were self-employed. Most encouraging, the cited review also established that new business start-ups were represented by a whopping 71%. About 7% of participants who dropped out from the LP were reported to have received job offers allowing them to participate in the mainstream economy. The review goes further to provide evidence assessing the joint impact from several SETAs. As an illustration, the review concluded that eight (8) out of twenty-one (21) SETAs, recorded that 59% of graduates gained employment after the completion of the various programmes. Only a minimum of graduates (37%) were unemployed post the completion of learning programmes. These findings demonstrate that enrolment and completion of the SETA LP increases access to job opportunities, more

particularly in the case of apprenticeship programme. Most importantly, these programmes seem to facilitate the spirit of entrepreneurship wherein graduates are propelled to initiate new businesses. Given the complexity of development combined with a limping economic setting, it is encouraging to see graduates exploring avenues for self-employment and innovative job creation alternatives fuelled through entrepreneurship.

However, Tsotsi, (2020) cautions that the overall employment per graduate remains low and thus undermines the ideals to widen access to employment opportunities. According to the National Skills Authority (NSA) report (2016), the preoccupation with outputs or chasing after numerical numbers at the expense of the NSDS imperatives is fundamental challenge. The scholar further opines that much as measuring improvements to access to jobs is key, widening access to the broader labour market or mainstream economy for graduates is primarily more important. Inherently, understanding the type and nature of employment obtained by the new entrants is a priority. Noting this narration elevates that the concept of employment is not linear but complicated. Such a view strengthens the argument that labour market transitions and multiple pathways including safeguarding permanent employment for graduates is not simplistic and thus demand continuum research initiatives in order to be better understood.

Upon conducting an impact assessment on apprenticeships and learnerships, authors Kruss et al (2012) report that section 13 apprentices were less likely to be employed and follow the normal pathway of going to school, enrolling in an apprenticeship programme, and getting a job. Kruss et al (2012), argued that employers were not offering trainees full time employment because very few Section 13 apprentices had passed the trade test. The cited team of researchers continue to argue that there is an element of social and economic exclusions including sectoral dynamics at play. As an example, it was found that out of the 24% of those who were unemployed post the completion of their apprenticeship, 21% of those who continued to feel the wrath of unemployed had three characteristics as depicted by Figure 1.

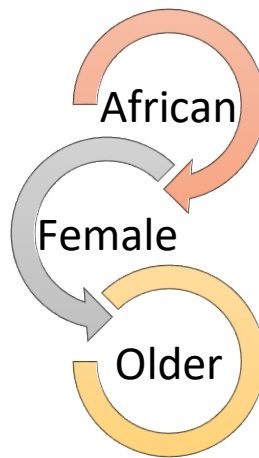


FIGURE 2: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNEMPLOYED

This group of people do not have equal labour market access. Positive employment outcomes are complex and most least likely for women; those with low socioeconomic status; African; those with low educational levels and those in low-status occupations and sectors. These constraints point to the importance of more nuanced and more strategically targeted interventions in specific sectors.

As explained by Wildschut and Mbatha (2017), the phenomenon of socioeconomic exclusion and its features are not imaginary and oftentimes lays bare the disparities between the urban versus rural geographical settings. In turn, apprenticeship qualification holders are compelled to migrate from less resourced provinces such as Limpopo and the Eastern Cape to urban provinces in order to be economically attuned namely: Gauteng, Western Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal. In the interim, this cohort of qualified graduates take advantage of casual/temporary work for economic survival. Unfortunately, these types of jobs are not necessarily in line with their acquired competencies and certification which were largely funded by respective SETAs. So, this begs the question on whether the skills programmes pathways and financial investments supporting its implementation is anticipated to produce skilled labour force for job opportunities in the lower end of the mainstream economy.

On a positive note, learnership graduates represented by 86% had higher probability of securing employment opportunities (Kruss et al., 2012). This author further mentions that the majority of this group of learners representing 90% transition from accessing jobs to securing permanent positions (*ibid.*). This is indicative of the fact that that the completion of learnership programmes in comparison with apprenticeship programmes provides job security. Aligning the reviewed literature with the study.

Having appreciated the various aspects or factors concerning learning programmes such as its objectives and characteristics; its location within the broader policy landscape as well as its well awaited contribution to addressing the scourge of unemployment, this section is categorised as follows:

- i) Definition of tracer study as a key concept
- ii) Benchmarking from international and continental experiences
- iii) Elucidating findings on (successes) and (challenges) from other SETAs
- iv) Determining perceptions of beneficiaries on the learning programmes
- v) Establishing the perception of employers on the learning programme

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in South Africa highlight the importance of exposure to work-based learning in the transition from higher education institutions to the workplace. Govender and Wait (2017) state that ‘employers strongly advice that higher education institutions provide a strong knowledge and skills base to their learners and ensure that this base is transferable into the workplace’. Pop and Barkhuizen (2010) further argue that higher education institutions are not doing much to prepare graduates for the workplace, resulting in a lot of graduates lacking practical skills which will make it easier for them to adapt in the workplace.

SETAs, therefore, invest in WBL Programmes and skills development interventions to develop the skills of learners and enable them to succeed in the transition from institutions of higher learning to the workplace. Most students use the training received through participating in Workplace Based Learning (WBL) Programmes as a stepping stone towards attaining the necessary skills and qualifications that they would use in the workplace (Govender & Wait, 2017). Some Students after completing their WBL programmes opt to start their own enteres and use the knowledge and skills they gained through taking part in the WBL Programme.

Placements into internships and WIL are regarded as effective modes to enhance graduate employability. However, graduates within the sector do not always get to experience the benefits of completing these programmes due to the low absorption rates by employers, which often leads to students using the skills and qualifications gained through participation in the WBL Programme in other sectors and areas not related to the qualifications that they obtained. This is often referred to as qualification mismatches.

2.6 WBL PROGRAMMES AND SKILLS MISMATCHES

Qualification mismatches refer to situations whereby an individual occupies a job that does not correspond with the level or type of education that they have completed (Cedefop, 2016). Qualification mismatches occur in different forms including mismatches by the level or type of education and skills mismatches. Mismatches by the type or level of education occur when the qualification received by the person in employment does not correspond with the type or level of education required for the job. Skills mismatches occur when an individual occupies a position whose skills requirements do not correspond with the skills they possess (Cedefop, 2016). As stated above, this occurs mainly because institutions of higher learning do not ensure that students are equipped with the essential skills that will enable them to succeed in the labour market.

According to Marsh (2011), 'mismatches between qualifications and occupation may occur as a result of both labour demand and supply factors'. Supply factors refer to the transferability of skills acquired in formal training in the field of study into the workplace. Certain factors including working conditions and job location impact the supply factors. Demand factors that drive mismatches between qualification and occupation refer to the availability of a job in a specific occupational group. Skills development interventions are extremely important in ensuring that graduates are equipped with the necessary skills that will help them succeed in the labour market. Sila and Hemings (2019) have identified the following skills that are essential in promoting the employability of graduates. These include functional skills, generic skills, and transferable skills for example, the ability to facilitate team work, good interpersonal communication, critical thinking and the ability to easily adapt to the workplace culture. Graduates often do not possess these skills as they are not included in curriculums at institutions of higher learning but can be acquired through participating in WBL Programmes.

3. CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

A step-by-step methodological process is depicted by Figure 3 below followed by a detailed explanation on each stage of the process followed. The report goes further to chronicle the study limitations encountered during the data collection phase. Followed by the mitigation strategies and quality assurance measures utilised in the study.

FIGURE 3: A SUMMARY OF THE METHODOLOGY APPLIED IN THE TRACK AND TRACER STUDY



3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

Quantitative research emphasizes the precise measurement of variables, numeric data etc and at times is used to test a hypothesis associated with causal inferences. Heeding to the descriptive definition provided by the scholars, this study probed to use the quantitative methodology. A census method was used to collect data, this involved contacting and including all the LP beneficiaries who had telephone numbers. The beneficiaries that could not be included in the study are those without contact details, incorrect contact details and could not be reached after 3 CATI attempts. The survey questionnaires were also sent to all employers and thus providing all the employers with an opportunity to participate in the study.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION PROCESSES

The units of analysis were the employer and beneficiaries of CATHSSETA learning programmes. For consistency purposes the previous beneficiary and employer questionnaire was utilised from the previous 2015/16 – 2018/19 track and trace study with minor changes as the aim was to keep the questionnaire standard across various financial years to allow for trend analysis over time. The questionnaire included both closed ended and open-ended questions, the questions pertained to learner pathways, LP relevance, beneficiary, and employer perceptions of the CATHSSETA LPs. The questionnaires were scripted through the survey monkey software, the beneficiaries were sent questionnaires via email. While the beneficiaries were contacted through the Computer Assisted Telephonic Interviews (CATI)

software. CATHSSETA provided the beneficiary database for the 2019-20 completions and later provided the 2020-21 database to increase the number of responses.

3.4 TARGET POPULATION

CATHSSETA provided a database of 3917 learners inclusive of learners who completed the LP programme between the 2019-20 and 2020-21 financial year and previously untracked before. The beneficiaries were called at least three times at different times and days prior to regarding the attempt unsuccessful. The data collection resulted in 18132 calls conducted as a result of an average of 4.6 CATI attempts per learner. The telephonic attempts resulted in 665 interviews. However, only 517 beneficiaries completed the entire questionnaire, therefore the analysis will be based on 517 beneficiaries.

The TVET- WIL (36%), HET WIL (24%) and Skills programme (22%) had the highest response rate in comparison to other LPs. Reasons pertaining to the low response rate are detailed in the limitation section. A census sampling was employed as the database consisted of only 64 industry employers, which resulted in a response rate of 14%. Research scholars indicate that sending many surveys generally does not result in a high response rate (Wu, Zhao & Fils-Aime, 2022), which the data collection process in this study confirmed.

TABLE 2: TOTAL SAMPLE PER POPULATION, COMPLETE AND INCOMPLETE INTERVIEWS

Programme	Sample population	Number of calls made	Frequency of calls	Completed interviews	Response rate
Learnership	1000	4500	4.5	132	13%
TVET WIL	702	3510	5.0	171	24%
Artisan and Bursary	672	2640	3.9	72	11%
Internship	616	3388	5.5	60	10%
Skills programme	528	1848	3.5	115	22%
HET- WIL	219	1314	6.0	79	36%
Employers	64	352	5.5	9	14%
Graduate	116	580	5.0	27	17%
Total	3917	18132	4.6	665 ¹	13%

3.5 STUDY LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATING STRATEGIES

As alluded earlier, tracer studies tend to attract lower response rates. Therefore, this study was not an exemption from this widely recognised phenomenon. Usually if this limitation is not carefully attended to, what follows is that the credibility and validity of the findings might be compromised. However, in the case of this study, the steering committees devised mitigating strategies to attenuate the identifiable risks. The table below presented each risk and equivalent mitigating strategy.

TABLE 3: RISKS VS MITIGATING STRATEGIES

Risk	Mitigating strategy
Missing or duplicated contact details	Guided by the research principles of credibility and rigour, sampling techniques were adapted and refined as in when it became necessary
Lower response rate	Responses were prioritised per each category. Where it was found that a particular category is left behind, efforts to close the gaps were fostered. Notably, the data collection phase was extended to weekends in order to close gaps
Non availability of participants due to a variety of personal, study or work commitments	Interviews were scheduled in accordance with the availability of the respondents' schedules. In some instances, surveys were administered over the weekends with the objective to cater for those who might not be reachable during the business/working hours
Unwillingness of host employers to participate in the study	Some of the representatives of host employers contacted were not readily available to participate in the survey. In actual fact they believed that they were not mandated to represent their respective organisations. So, a decision to make up to three follow ups attempts with employers was opted for

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The scope and objectives of the study were clearly explained to individuals who were invited and participated in this project. Each participant was required to provide a verbal consent prior to data collection. At the commencement data collection, respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. This included explaining their right to withdraw from the study at any given time.

3.7 DATA CAPTURING, CODING, AND SYNTHESIS

At the end of the data collection phase, Excel sheets containing programme participants and employer datasheets were downloaded in preparation for the analysis. A quality assurance activity covering both comprising of data cleaning process was commenced with. This activity was purposed to identify and eliminate errors such as duplications, incomplete information on the dataset, outliers etc.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The demographic data was analysed using descriptive statistics, while the survey question data was analysed using inferential statistics. It was determined early on that the most appropriate inferential statistical test is the chi-square test of independence. This is primarily because this is a non-parametric inferential test. A non-parametric test is a statistical analysis technique that does not need the data distribution to meet the assumptions of parametric tests, it is in fact distribution free test. This means that non-parametric tests do not make any assumptions about the distribution of the population or the data including it having a normal distribution.

To test for normal distribution, the researchers used the skewness and kurtosis tests. Skewness refers to lack of symmetry, it is a “measure of the asymmetry of a distribution” (IBM, 2022), while kurtosis refers to pointiness or “measure of the extent to which there are outliers” (IBM, 2022), both statistics must be between -1.96 and +1.96 when the p-value is < 0.05 to determine the normality of the data. While the skewness and kurtosis tests showed that the data did in fact have a normal distribution (skewness = .917; kurtosis = .580), however the chi-square test was viewed as the most suitable statistical test because most of the data was either nominal or ordinal. Nominal data is data that is classified into mutually exclusive categories e.g., previous learning programme. Ordinal data is classified into categories within a variable that have a natural rank order (Bhandari, 2022), such as the extent to which training assisted participant with completing work tasks: 1) not at all, 2) very little, 3) to some extent, and 4) to a very great extent.

This study ran the Pearson’s chi-square test in SPSS. This test is used to determine whether the data is significantly different from what was expected (null hypothesis) or whether two categorical variables are statistically related (alternative hypothesis). The chi-square test statistic is valid if the sample size is large (> 30 or 40 , according to Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). The chi-square test produces a p-value, which stands for “probability value”. The p-value shows the statistical significance of the result, meaning it shows the probability of a

finding that deviates from the null hypothesis, if the p- value is < 0.05 . Statistical significance simply means that whatever the result is, it was not due to chance or to an external factor. Statistical significance means that the finding can be generalised from the sample to the broader population, meaning that a researcher can have confidence that no matter how many samples are selected from that population, the finding will be the same (Gallo, 2016).

4. CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

This chapter provides an analysis of the findings of the CATHSSETA LP track and tracer study for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 financial years. The analysis will be presented in four sections as indicated below.

Section 1 – LP beneficiaries profile overview

Section 2 – Employer profile overview

Section 3 – Beneficiaries pathways upon completion of the LPs

Section 4 - LP relevance in equipping participants for the world of work

Section 5 – Chronicling the beneficiaries perceptions post the LP interventions.

Section 6 – Outlining the Employers perceptions of the LPs

4.1 LP BENEFICIARIES PROFILE OVERVIEW

This section outlines the demographics of the study participants made up of learners who were enrolled in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 learning programmes funded by CATHSSETA. The demographics will cover participants' racial profile, gender, type of programme, subsector, employment status before the intervention and geographical setting.

4.1.1 SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT'S DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Table 4 below shows that out of a total of 517 respondents, the largest proportion of the study participants according to race were African (484) which represented about 93%, followed by Coloured (24) which was about 5%, Indian or Asian (3, recorded at 1%) and lastly White (9) constituting almost 2%. In terms of gender, 371 females (71%) and 150 males (29%) participated in the study. In addition, the table shows that 65% of the respondents were between the ages of 25 and 35; 25% were 24 years old and younger, with only a small proportion between the ages of 36 and 45 years and older.

Furthermore, it was observed that none of the respondents indicated that they were living with disabilities. Moreover, the study established that the programmes enabled a section of the learners to receive stipends. The data shows that in the first tier (36%) of learners earned less than R 3200 whilst another group 35% received between R 3 201 – R 6 400. As seen, most of the learners who wages and salaries were in the referenced. In the middle tier, (14%) of the graduates earned between R 6401 – R 12800 followed by (6%) who received R12801 and above. 8% of the respondent opted not to reply to the question asking them to disclose their wages or salaries.

TABLE 4: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE	DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
RACE	Black	484	93%
	Coloured	24	5%
	Indian	3	0.5%
	White	9	2%
GENDER	Female	371	71%
	Male	150	29%
AGE GROUP	24 years old and younger	129	25%
	25 – 35 years old	335	65%
	36 – 45 years old	46	9%
	Older than 46 years old	10	2%
DISABILITY		0	0%
REPORTED INCOME	Less than R3200	33	12%
	R 3 201 – R 6 400	201	73%
	R 6401 – R 12800	99	36%
	R12801 and above	185	67%

4.1.2 EDUCATION STATUS PRIOR THE LP

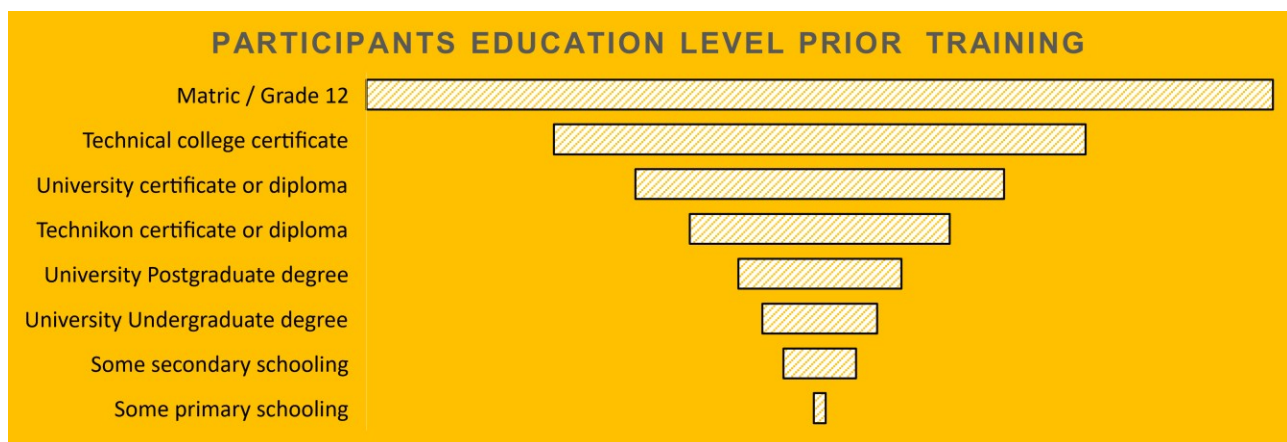
Table 4 below shows that 48% of the participants studied at a public owned schooling system and 42% at a Former Model C School. Only a limited number of the candidates' studied at Private – 6% Elite School or 2% Low-Cost School.

TABLE 4: TYPE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL ATTENDED

Type of school attended	Frequency	Percentage
Public school (non- former model C school- low-cost schools)	252	48%
Public school (Former model C school- elite schools)	219	42%
Private/ Independent school (elite)	31	6%
Other	15	3%

In addition to the type of school attended the participants were asked to indicate their highest level of education. Figure 4 illustrates the qualifications possessed by the trainees: Most Figure 4: High level of education possessed by learners (29%) had matric; 17% had a technical college certificate; 12% had a university. certificate or diploma; 8% a Technikon diploma and 4% a university undergraduate degree

FIGURE 5: PARTICIPANTS EDUCATIONAL LEVEL PRIOR TRAINING



4.1.3 TRAINING BY SUBSECTOR AND LPS

More than half (52%) of the participants were from the Hospitality sector. Followed by Tourism and Travel (18%); Sports, Recreation and Fitness (15%) Conservation (10%); Arts, Culture and Heritage (10%) and Gaming and Lotteries (1%).

FIGURE 6: TRAINING BY SUBSECTOR PRIOR TRAINING

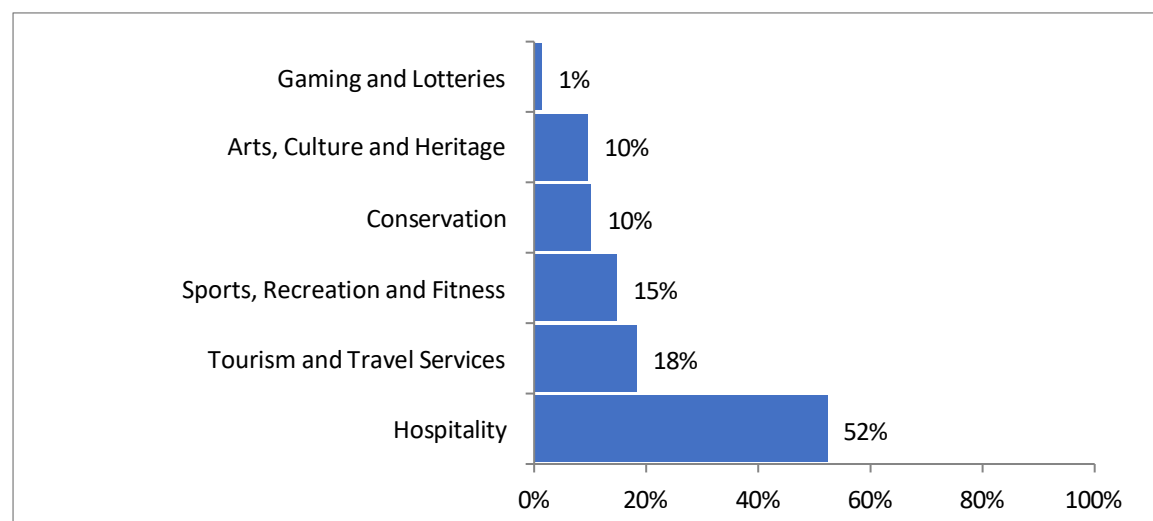
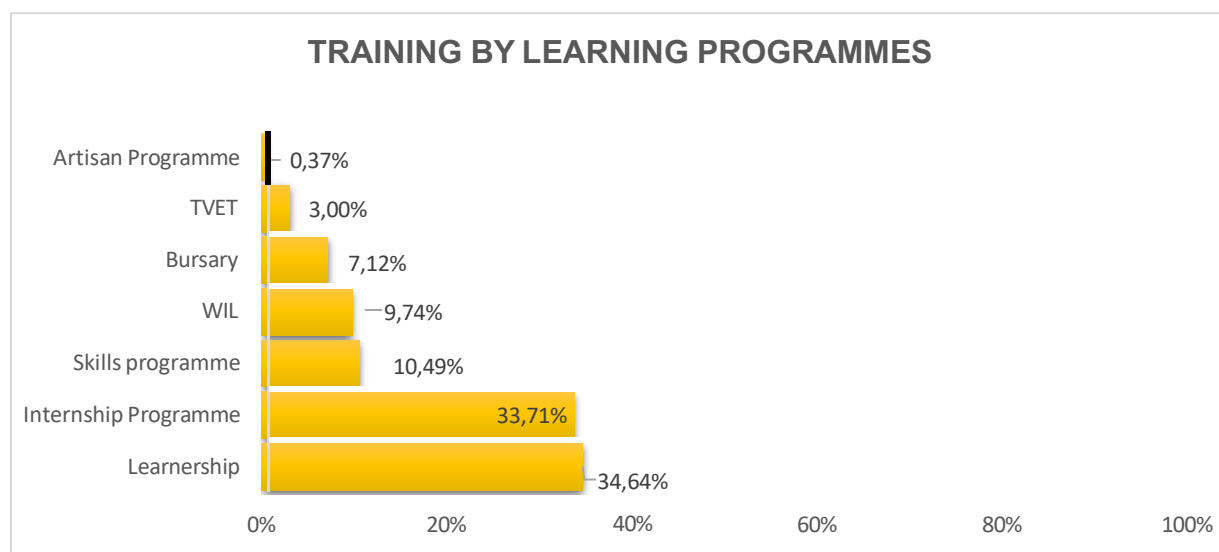


FIGURE 7: TRAINING BY LEARNING PROGRAMME

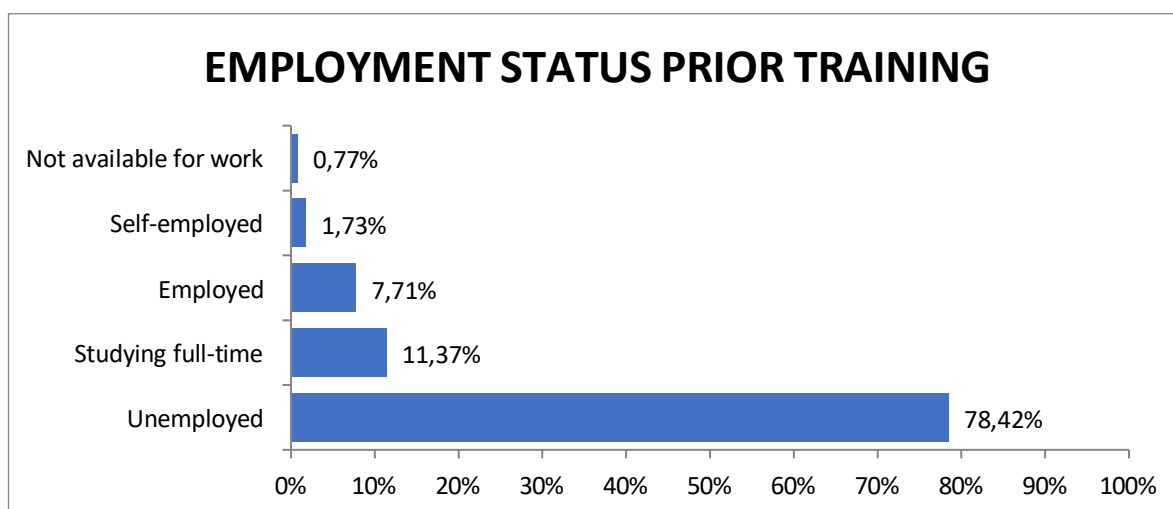


Furthermore, the data demonstrated that most of the learners were enrolled for the internship with about 33,71% and learnerships programme with about 34, 63%.

4.1.4 EMPLOYMENT STATUS BEFORE TRAINING

FIGURE 8: EMPLOYMENT STATUS BEFORE TRAINING

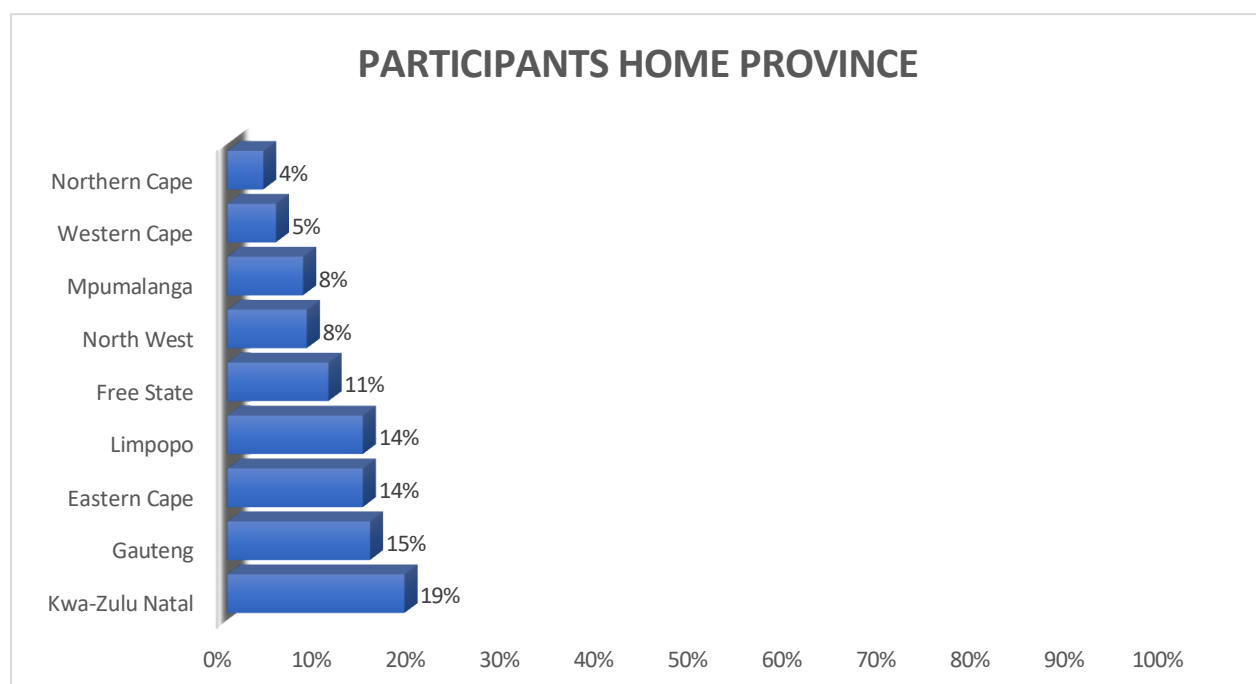
Most of the learners were unemployed prior to receiving training. Figure 8 illustrates that 78% of the graduates were unemployed, while a cohort of 11% were furthering their studies. Approximately 8% of were already employed before commencing with the training, 2% were self-employed and only 1% indicated not being available for work.



4.1.5 LOCATION BEFORE TRAINING - HOME PROVINCE

Figure 8 presents the home provinces of the learners. A closer look shows that most learners originate from provinces sequenced as follows KwaZulu-Natal (20%); Gauteng (16%); the Eastern Cape (14%); and Limpopo (14%). The three provinces with lower participation numbers are the Free State (11%); Mpumalanga (8%) and North West (8%). The Western Cape (5%) and Northern Cape (4%) recorded the least number of participants.

FIGURE 9: PARTICIPANTS HOME PROVINCE

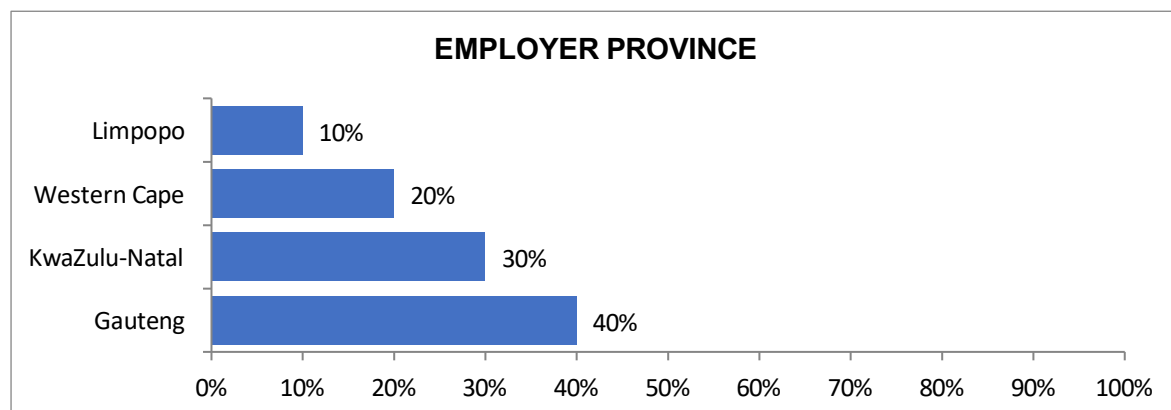


4.2 EMPLOYER PROFILE OVERVIEW

This presentation will include the overview of employer's profile such as the type of programme the employer participated in, years of experience, subsector, and geographical location.

Most participating employers were operating within the Gauteng (40%), 30% in KwaZulu-Natal, 20% in the Western Cape and 10% in Limpopo. The participating employers were from the Arts, Culture and Heritage (40%); Hospitality (40%) and Sports, Recreation and Fitness (20%) subsectors.

FIGURE 10: EMPLOYER PROVINCE



The employers experience ranged between 1- 21 years. Most of the participants (about 40%) had between 1-5 years' experience while another 40% had about 21 years of experience. The remaining two groups (made up of 10% each) had about between 6-10 years and 11-15 years of experience. Most organisations (50%) were privately owned; (20%) (NPO/PBO/NGO); (20%); Public company and (10%) Government funded. There was no participation of sole propriety companies and partnerships.

4.3 BENEFICIARIES PATHWAYS UPON COMPLETION OF THE LPS

4.3.1 OVERALL EMPLOYMENT

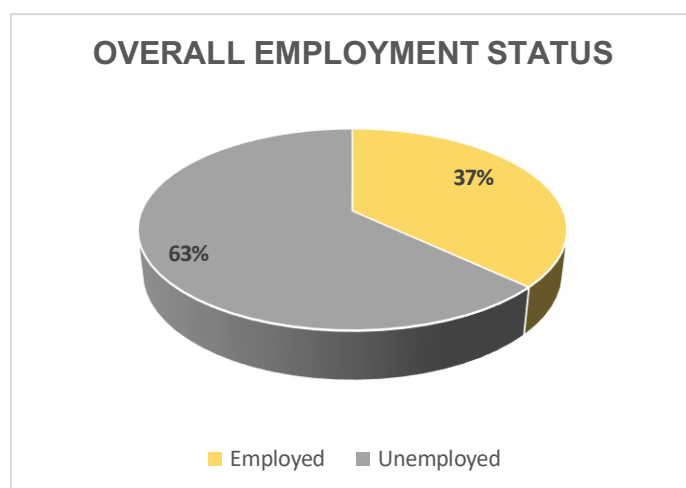


FIGURE 11: OVERALL EMPLOYMENT STATUS

The results indicated that 37% of the participants acquired employment post the intervention while 63% remained unemployed. Employment status in the study was defined by involvement in work that results in some form of remuneration upon completion of the programme.

The employment status was further broken down into activities associated with the participants employment status. The data indicated that of the 36% participants that were employed, 33% secured employment upon completion of the CATHSSETA interventions, 3% explored self-employment while 1% went back to their previous employment while and 1% changed jobs and started working at a different organisation respect. Moreover, on the cohort of working without any remuneration 1.9% of the learners indicated that they were volunteering with the aim of acquiring experience and enhancing the likelihood of securing employment. The results further illustrated that of the 63% that could not secure employment could not secure employment after participating in a training programme, 5% continues to study further and 56% remained unemployment, not in education nor training.

TABLE 5: PARTICIPANTS STATUS QUO POST THE INTERVENTION

Description	Item	Frequency	Percentage
Working with some form of income (in terms of a wage or salary)	Employed	171	32,9
	Changed jobs - started working at different place to where you worked before training	4	0,8
	Return/continue with the job you already held	4	0,8
	Self-employed	16	3,1
Working with no remuneration	Volunteered	10	1,9
Unemployed	Remain unemployed/Did not find a job	290	55,9
	Decided to study/train full-time	24	4,6

The data also shows that in limited cases where employment is secured, it is mainly unsustainable. In cases where employment was secured, a limited number of respondents mentioned that their contracts were mostly either casual or fixed term contracts. Another insignificant number of respondents said that they were employed on a full time. Judging by the high level of those confronted with joblessness is a cause for concern. This might mean that lessons on what works should be drawn and applied to effect the necessary programme design or implementation changes.

The candidates who secured employment reported the following income remuneration upon completing CATHSSETA learning programmes. Earlier on, the probability assessment testing the interventions' role in increasing candidates abilities to earn an income was positive. Using

the Table below, (36%) of graduates in the lower tier less than R3200, followed by 35% of those who earned between R 3 201 – R 6 400. A different cohort 14% received between R 6401 – R 12800 including another (6%) who earned wages and salaries from R12801. Lastly, 8% of the sampled population did not provide their response to this question.

TABLE 6: PARTICIPANTS INCOME ACROSS PROGRAMMES

Income groups	Percentage
Less than R3200	36%
R 3 201 – R 6 400	35%
R 6401 – R 12800	14%
R12801 and above	6%
Refused to answer	8%

4.3.2 LEARNER EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

As shown by Table 6, most of the participants who obtained employment were involved in the Internship programme (37.1%), learnership programme (34.7%) and skills programme. This shows that Internship, Learnership and Skills programmes are three best performing programmes when it comes to employment. It should be remembered that earlier on a relationship between the training and access to the world of work was ascertained.

TABLE 7: DETAILED LP EMPLOYMENT STATUS BREAKDOWN

Learning programme	Employed	Self-employed	Remain unemployed	Changed jobs	Continued with job held	Studied full-time	Volunteered	Total
Internship	37,1% (62)	25,0% (4)	32,8% (94)	50,0% (2)	25,0% (1)	25,0% (6)	20,0% (2)	(171)
Learnership	34,7% (58)	31,25% (5)	37,3% (107)	25,0% (1)	50,0% (2)	12,5% (3)	50,0% (5)	(181)
Skills programme	11,4% (19)	31,25% (5)	10,5% (30)	0,0% (0)	0,0% (0)	4,2% (1)	10,0% (1)	(56)
WIL	7,2% (12)	12,5% (2)	10,1% (29)	0,0% (0)	25,0% (1)	20,8% (5)	10,0% (1)	(50)
Bursary	6,6% (11)	0,0% (0)	5,6% (16)	25,0% (1)	0,0% (0)	29,2% (7)	10,0% (1)	(36)
TVET	2,4% (4)	0,0% (0)	3,8% (11)	0,0% (0)	0,0% (0)	4,2% (1)	0,0% (0)	(16)
Artisan Programme	0,6% (1)	0,0% (0)	0,0% (0)	0,0% (0)	0,0% (0)	4,2% (1)	0,0% (0)	(2)
Total	100% (167)	100% (16)	100% (287)	100% (4)	100% (4)	100% (24)	100% (10)	(512)

The Bursary, TVET-WIL, and Artisan programmes were the three least performing interventions when it comes to participants acquiring employment after completing the learning programme. The consolidated information exposes that not all programmes are performing at an equal rate. In other words, only three out of seven (minimum) training solutions delivered by CATHSSETA are somewhat contributing towards the high unemployment rate.

A comparison between employment and unemployment was also drawn from the data. Some of the representatives shared that they remained unemployed after attending and completing training. Table 6 confirms that 70,1% constituted by (37,3%) learnership and (32,8%) internship learners remained unemployed post their acquiring their qualifications. The following is observed with the other remaining programmes: skills programme - 11% (average), WIL - 10%; bursary - 6% and TVET college - 4% (average). It is impossible to deny that a larger number of respondents who participated in this study are still faced with unemployment post the intervention.

The tabulation also illustrates that some of the graduates who completed skills programmes (31.5%); learnership programmes (31.5%) and Internship (25%) became self-employed. This trend is followed by (12.5%) of candidates attached to the WIL programmes. An interpretation of these numbers is indicative of the interventions role in nudging respondents to pursue or explore self-employment as viable employment option. It did so through enabling participants to entertain entrepreneurship as an alternative to traditional job hunting avenues. Once again, the available information proves that LPs not only

4.3.3 EMPLOYMENT PROGRESSION AND FURTHERING STUDIES

Notwithstanding the fact that fewer replies were solicited, the reality is that only eight (8) participants who four (4) changed/ four (4) continued with jobs held following their completion of the CATHSSETA-funded programmes. These included internship (50%), Learnership (25%) and bursary recipients (25%). What was also noticed is that most recipients who were part of the Learnership programme (50%) continued in the job they already held. This most likely means that their learnership hosting organisation extended or absorbed them after the programme. Participants from the WIL and internship initiatives each contributed (25%) participants abilities to change jobs. Although not representative of the population, but this information points out an insignificant relationship between the programme and job transitions by graduates.

As per the table, many of the participants who received bursaries (29.2%) opted to further their studies on a full-time basis. Internship programme (25%), WIL (20.8%), Learnership (12.5) and (4.7%) of participants from the Artisan programme also decided to study further.

4.3.4 LPS VOLUNTEERISM AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Volunteerism was also opted for as a coping mechanism against unemployment. The sentiment was affirmed by Learnership (50%), internship programme (20%), and (10%) of the bursary programme holders who volunteered their time and newly acquired skills.

Although minimal in number, a total of sixteen (16) respondents provided reasons for pursuing entrepreneurship. As per table 8, the majority (58,82%) of the individuals mentioned that they were pushed by the unemployment statuses. They indicated that they were still looking for a job/could not find formal jobs/struggled to find a job in the field of their study. On the other hand, 35,29% of those who happily considered entrepreneurship explained that it was because they have enterprising attributes. This might mean that some of the graduates ventured in business to cope with joblessness.

TABLE 8: REASONS GIVEN FOR PURSUING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Item	Percentage	Frequency
Still looking for a job/ Could not find formal job/ Could not find employment in my field of study	58,82	10
Entrepreneur attributes/ Gives me flexibility	35,29	6

4.3.5 FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH EMPLOYMENT

Primarily, the research questions attempted to establish the learner's professional trajectories or pathways subsequent to completing CATHSSETA funded skills programmes. To start with, there is a correlation between the interventions and the noticeable or unnoticeable changes/improvements in the end users' socioeconomic conditions. In other words, did these interventions pave the way for individual to transition from joblessness to accessing employment opportunities. Table 6 presents a summary of the relationship between employment factors and the interventions under review.

A discussion on the correlation between interventions and learner pathing precedes a section aimed at establishing the influence of the learning programmes on the graduates professional trajectories. In doing so, the relationship between an independent variable (i.e., the cause or a factor that brings about change in another factor) and dependent variable (i.e., the effect or a factor that changes when affected by other factors) is first established.

In simple terms, if $p < 0.05$, then it is possible to say that there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables, and the opposite also applies. This .05 significance level (5%) or p-value is the probability that this relationship could have occurred by chance; therefore, if the p-value is higher than .05 then it is more likely that the relationship occurred by chance.

TABLE 9: A SUMMARY OF FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH EMPLOYMENT

Variable (s)	Correlation (Yes/No)	Independent/ Dependent
Intervention vs access to employment	Yes	Independent
Intervention vs waiting period before securing job	No	Independent
Intervention vs type of job	No	Independent
Intervention vs those faced with unemployment	No	Independent

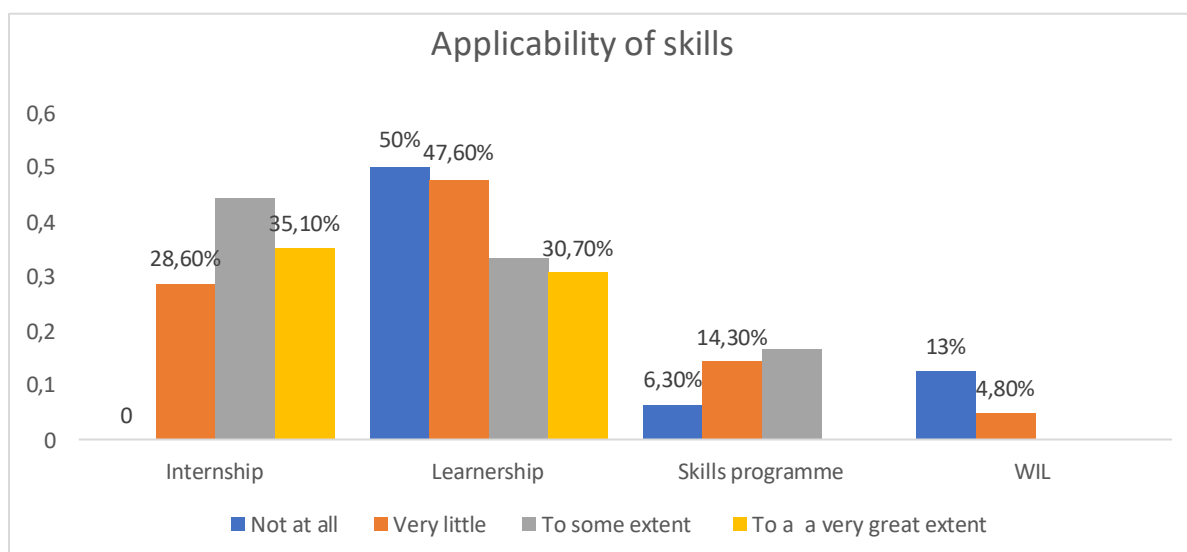
Table 8 illustrates that correlation was only established in relation to the interventions abilities to facilitate graduates access to the job market. The data indicated that the only factor associated with employment was the type of intervention funded. Although, a relationship between training and change in employment statuses of candidates was established, what can be drawn from the analysis is that interventions are yet to provide an economic buffer against unemployment.

4.4 THE RELEVANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNING PROGRAMMES

4.4.1. THE USABILITY OF SKILLS FROM CATHSSETAS LPS

After confirming the acquisition of skills, the next question pays attention to the extent to which the acquired skills were fit for purpose. A summarised version of the findings per each programme category is tabulated below (see Figure 12). As an example, to a great extent internship and learnership jointly (65,8%) skilled or upskilled them. This coincides with the concession made by employers who confirmed that they noticed improvements from their staff members.

FIGURE 12: USABILITY OF SKILLS TO IMPROVE JOB PERFORMANCE



Some of the participants were uncertain/unconvinced on whether skills transfer did occur. The less impressed candidate's representation were as follows: 50% - Learnership, 6.3% - skills programme and WIL at 13%. Given the number of candidates who were enrolled in the learnership and internship programmes, the evidence indicates that these programmes had a lion share in terms of transfer or no transfer of skills.

4.4.2 THE RELEVANCE OF LEARNING PROGRAMMES

Participants indicated that the training initiatives enhanced how they performed their duties and responsibilities. Participants skills were not only improved but were further applied in a real work setting. Most notably, the provided training enabled respondents to complete their professional qualifications. What is more pleasant is that both employers and employees corroborated the finding on the usage of the acquired skills to improve organisational efficiencies. As per Figure 26, 100% of the surveyed employers (75% - very satisfied and 25% - satisfied) believed that the LPs improved the abilities of their employees to better perform their day-to-day jobs.

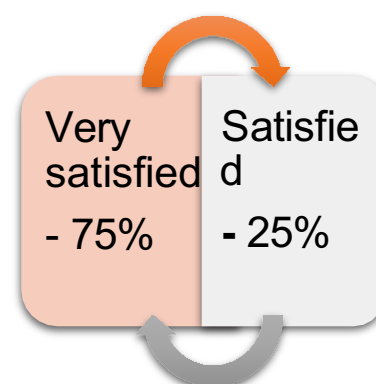
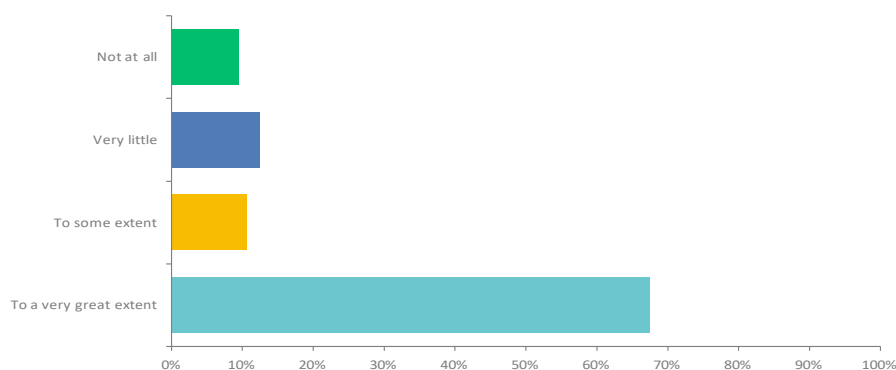


FIGURE 13: SKILLS ACQUISITION FROM THE TRAINING PROVIDED



Survey Item description	Survey findings
Alignment of knowledge bases and skillsets of the learners to the needs of employers and the industry (Q43)	Here 88.89% said they were very satisfied with the 11,11% saying they were satisfied.

4.4.3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNING PROGRAMMES

Employers and learners jointly recognised the effectiveness of learning interventions. Industry players whom these skills are produced for perceived the varied programmes to have produced competent and industry relevant employees. Their admission was in relation to the role of training in closing trainees' skills gaps and most importantly improving their organisational efficiencies. This study is not intending to generalise this finding. But, it notes that few employer representatives were convicted about the LPs role in decreasing the skills shortages for the graduates. Significantly, they mentioned that improvements were not only at a practitioner but were also noticed at an organisational level. Importantly, employers agreed with the perceptions of the learners. Industry leaders mentioned that they also witnessed changes and improvements from their employees just after completing training.

To a very limited degree, training influenced learners' income earning brackets. In other words, the interventions formalised the employment of the graduates who gained entry to the job market. Added to this, the solutions contributed to closing the skills gaps between urban and rural areas. In essence, those from the rural settings believed that the programmes gave them the competitive edge.

There a fairer critique problematising the programme's effective to limited cases where participants are absorbed in the job market. With a glance through the data, it does appear that the learning programmes mix falls short of guaranteeing job retentions or assisting

learners to transition from one employment to another. As it can be seen, the training initiatives has the capacity to transfer usable skills fitted to produce a cadre of competent professionals for the various subsectors. Being more bolder, it can be argued that not only do they stir individual and professional growth, but they further lead to the wider organisational improvements.

What seem to be lacking with these interventions is their inability to unlock access to jobs or support more and more graduates with entrepreneurial features. This challenge might not be limited to the interventions but should also be understood within the context of a depressed global and limping South African economy. Borrowing from the Asian and European continents, addressing the crisis of unemployment calls for a systematised as opposed to silo approach. In the case of Swiss experience, an intergovernmental partnership consisting of the private, public and implementing agencies is purported to be one of the key ingredients for its success.

The below table presents a summary of the learner perspectives concerning the contribution of the programme in improving their skills and competencies.

TABLE 10: RELEVANCE OF LP INTERVENTION

Survey Item description	Survey findings
Instilling the hard/technical and soft skills (Q45 and 46)	100%: said that the learning programme also instilled all the hard/technical skills required to perform the job that they were employed to do during the WBL programme including soft skills such as professionalism, work ethic, efficiency etc
Closing of the skills gaps in the organisational and sectoral level (Q47)	88.89% affirmed that the learning programme closed the skills gaps in their organisational and at the sectoral level; while 11.11% negated this aspect.

In summary, some of the positive elements of the learning programmes are as follows:

- i) **The interventions were relevant in the provision, acquisition and usability of skills** - this meant that the participants were capacitated with relevant and much needed skills sets

- ii) On the opposite end the **programmes were limited in dictating the learner pathways**– this is because only a few of the participants got jobs, self-employed or pursued further studies. This led to high levels of unemployment post the programme reach.

Associations were found between intervention and skills transfer; ability to earn an income and a balance between rural and urban areas when it comes to programme relevance. This indicating that the programmes were found to contribute toward skills development, ability to create income opportunities and also being visible in both rural and urban areas.

TABLE 11: SUMMARY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN VARIABLES

Variable (s)	Correlation (Yes/No)	Independent/Dependent
Intervention vs narrowing skills gaps	No	Independent
Intervention vs usability of skills	Yes	Dependent
Intervention vs ability to earn an income	Yes	Dependent
Intervention - Rural vs urban landscape	Yes	Dependent

Having noted the relevance of the programmes in advancing the necessary changes, the following section accounts on the abilities of the interventions to contribute towards the following components:

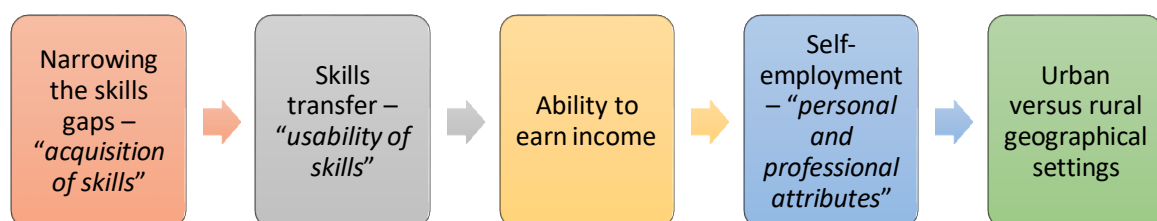


FIGURE 14: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNING PROGRAMMES AND THEIR RELEVANCE

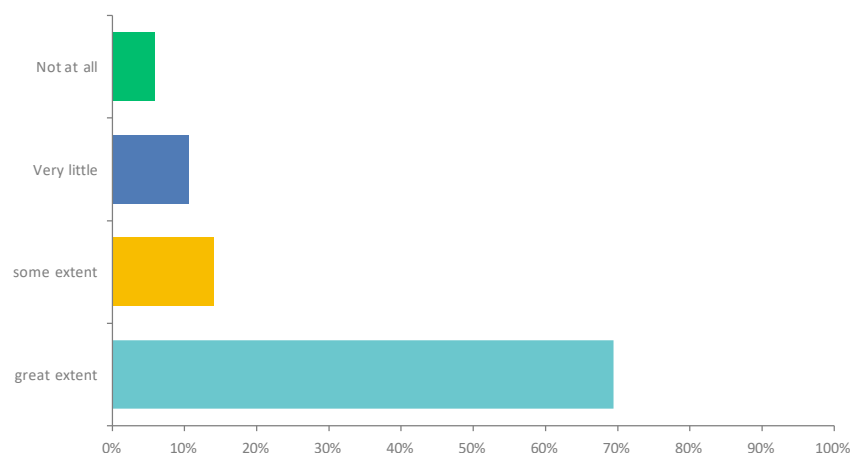
4.5 OUTLINING THE EMPLOYERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE LPS

Employers (90%) who participated in the study stated that the programme was handful in skilling their employees and equipped them with both soft and technical skills. Undoubtedly,

learning programmes enriched individuals with transferable skills and competencies. The acquired skills were then employed to access jobs/secure/retain existing jobs. Most fascinatingly, a limited number of employers who managed to participate in this study agreed that the interventions assisted empowered their employees ready for work skills. But, when all is said and done, the data casts doubt on whether CATHSSETA training facilitated access to jobs and job securities for the programme end users. Only fewer candidates managed to transition from one job to another. In corroborating this sentiment, another small number continued with their existing jobs. This occurs in a context at which learners as confirmed by employers did garner the necessary skills and competencies. Although this point is not as thrilling to note, but, evidence emanating from this study is that LPs relevance in advancing job entries and careers pathing of the learners is very thin.

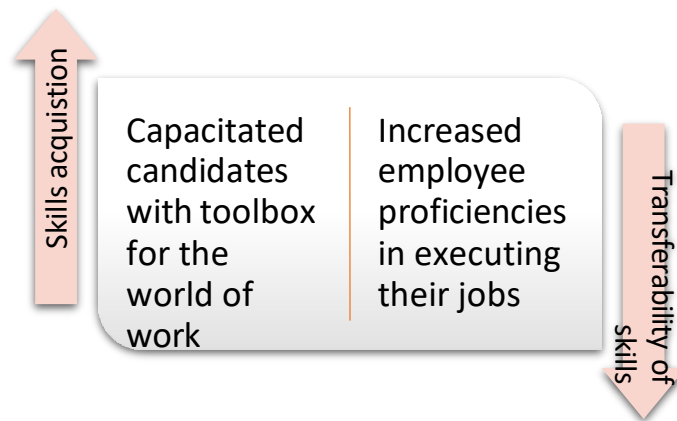
All nine (9) interviewed employers were (88,89%) very satisfied or (11,11%) satisfied with the effects of the programme in building and transferring skills. This could mean that the curriculum content delivered through these programmes meet their organisational and sectoral training needs. This is a very important perspective because in any case the interventions are purported to be tailored as a response to the skills needs of the market or industry. This is a substantive perception simply because capacity building initiatives are usually anticipated to produce or bolster market related or demanded competencies.

FIGURE 15: APPLICATION OF SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE WORKPLACE



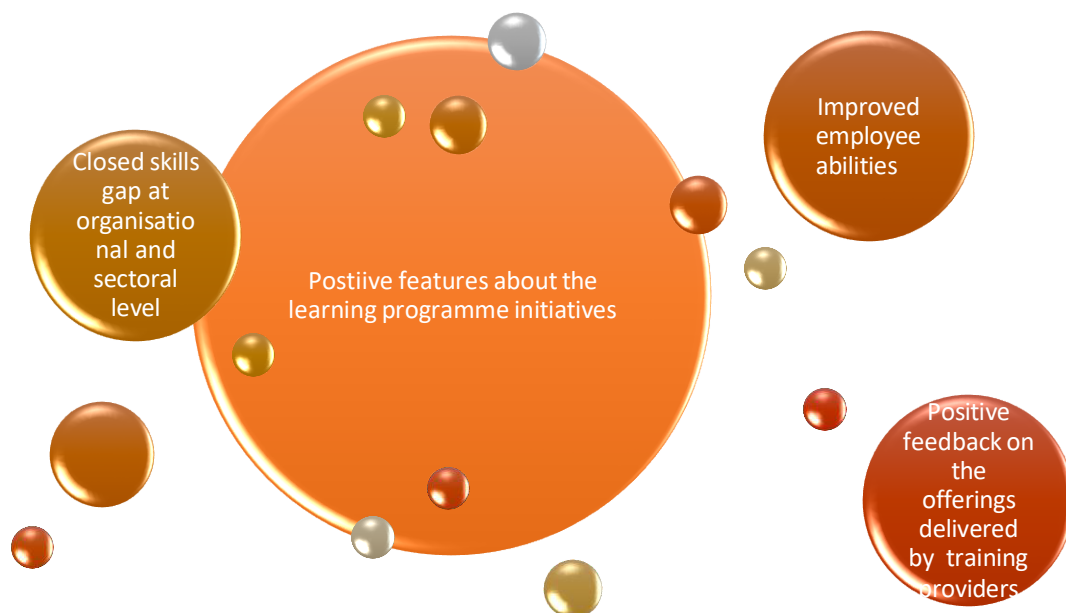
Employers further indicated that there was increase in the proficiency of the learners post the intervention. As it can be seen with the above Figure 15, 100% of the interviewed employers conceded that they were progressive changes witnessed before and after the intervention. This means that their employees were better abled if not empowered to execute their jobs.

FIGURE 16: LEARNERS PROFICIENCIES UPON COMPLETING CATHSSETAS INTERVENTIONS



Employers perceived the current programmes to be in sync with their work environments. This was confirmed by the confessions made by 89% of employers who accorded the LPs to have closed the skills gaps not only at an organisational but a broader sectoral scale. In concretising this point, employers and employees admitted having witnessed some improvements in how they performed their jobs. In actual fact, all participating employers (100%) acknowledged seeing an improvement in proficiency of the beneficiaries at the end of the programme, compared to their abilities when they started.

FIGURE 17: SOME OF THE POSITIVE FEATURES ABOUT THE LEARNING PROGRAMME INITIATIVES



All respondents were satisfied with skills training provider(s) regarding the programmes they were involved in. Of this percentage 88.89% were Very satisfied and 11.11% expressed to be satisfied. They (100%) further expressed to be very satisfied with the knowledge and skills imparted by the skills training providers to the learners on the programmes offered.

TABLE 12: A SUMMARY OF THE OVERALL BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAMMES

Benefits	Percentage
Increased productivity/more hands-on-deck	70.0%
Contributing to youth development and employment	80.0%
Contributing to work experience to ensure learners are ready for the real world of work	100%
Making learners/employees aware of health and safety issues (before entering the occupation)	70.0%
Learners bring a positive energy to the workplace	80.0%
Learners bring innovations/solutions to the workplace	70.0%
Employees gain more knowledge/expertise/skills (capacitation of workforce)	60.0%

Table 12 presents a summary of the overall programme benefits. The next section focuses on the feedback provided as part of assessing the performance of training providers.

All employers highly ranked the performance of the training providers in delivering the varied programme mix. As tabulation enclosed in Table 13 confirms that employers were impressed with the capabilities of training providers who are CATHSSETA's implementing agents.

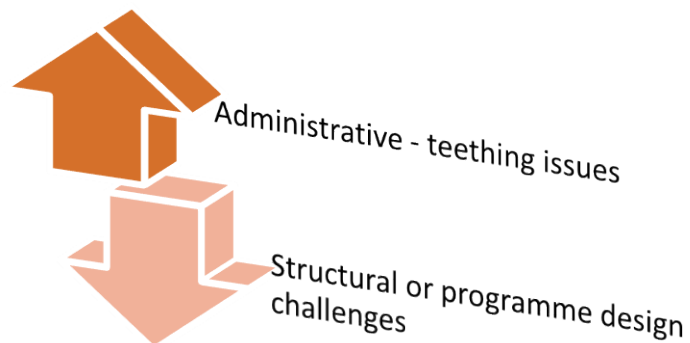
TABLE 13: FEEDBACK ASSESSING THE PERFORMANCE OF TRAINING PROVIDERS

Survey Question	Response
Q39: Level of Satisfaction on interactions with skills training provider(s)	All respondents were satisfied with skills training provider(s) regarding the programmes they were involved in. Of this percentage 88.89% were Very satisfied and 11.11% expressed to be satisfied. They (100%) further expressed to be very satisfied with the knowledge and skills imparted by the skills training providers to the learners on the programmes offered.

4.6 CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS OF LPS

This section presents some bottlenecks which hamper the effectiveness of the interventions. The analysis will therefore cover design and implementation areas which are:

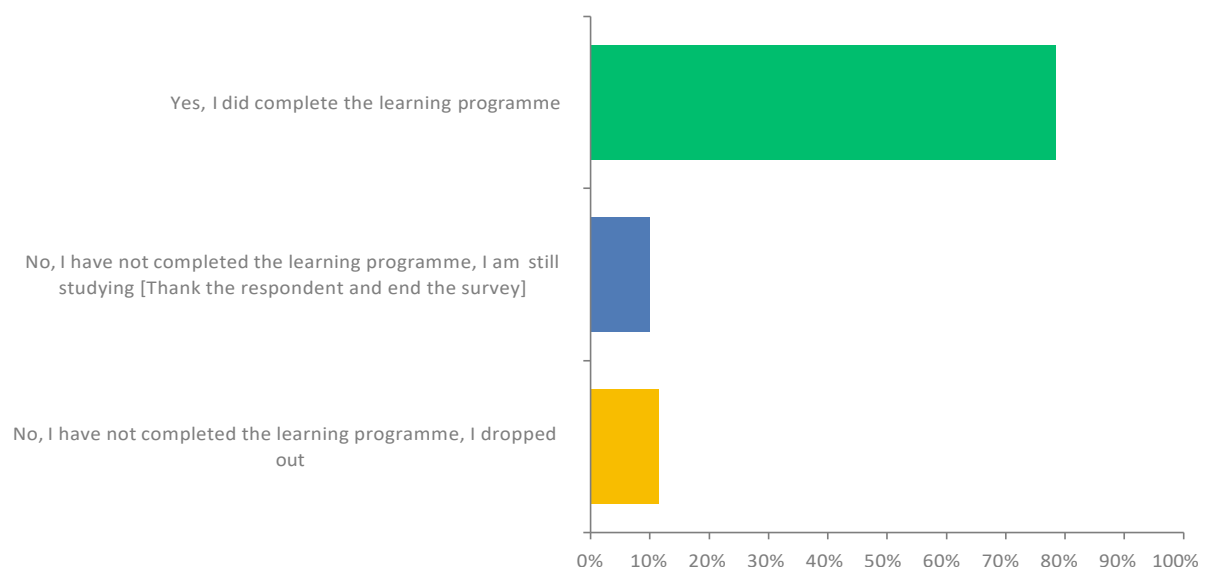
FIGURE 18: ISSUES SUFFOCATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERVENTIONS



4.6.1. IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHALLENGES

key teething issues in relation to the administration process followed in rolling out the programmes. Firstly, as seen through Figure 19, some of the candidates discontinued their enrolments. Information shows that 10% of potential cohort of potential graduates dropped out.

FIGURE 19: PROGRAMME COMPLETION STATUS



Fortunately, the potential students as depicted by Figure 19 provided reasons responsible for their drop out. At least few group members mentioned that they prioritised a job opportunity above competing a training programme. The rest of the participants listed issues about challenges with stipends which made it impossible for them to travel between their homes and the training venues.



FIGURE 20: REASONS PROVIDED FOR DROPPING OUT

According to their observation, some companies fraudulently register candidates with the objective to collect stipends on their behalf. Other indicated that COVID-19; lack of access to funding and health issues were responsible for discounting their participation.

Another challenges encountered was receiving certificates late, half of the graduates (50%) struggled with possessing the confirmation of their training certification upon completion. This might somewhat explain why so many of these graduate's struggle with accessing job opportunities as illustrated earlier on.

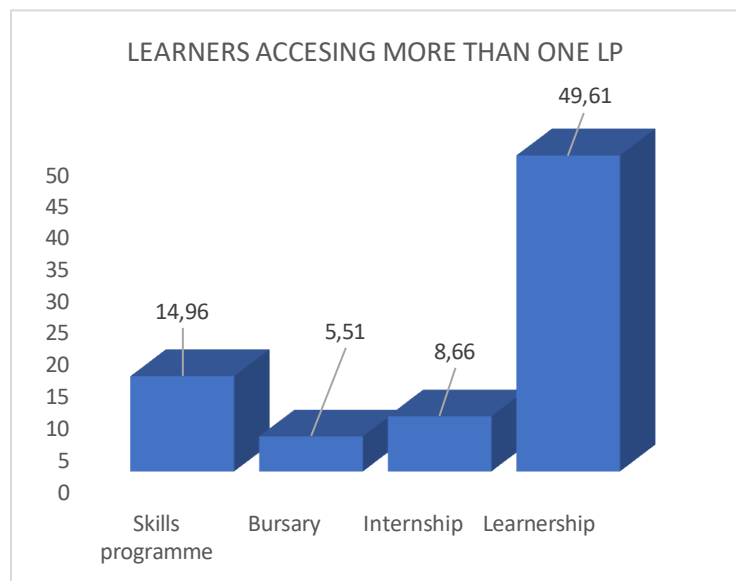


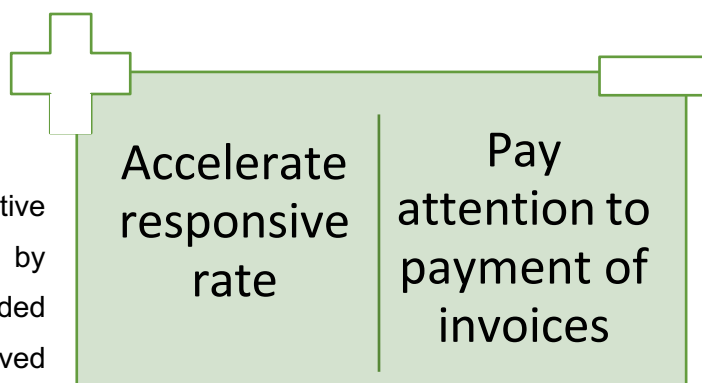
FIGURE 21: CANDIDATES ENROLLED FOR MORE THAN ONE LP

The third administration challenge was found to be double dipping of graduates. Whereby candidates indicated that they enrolled for more than one LP intervention. As seen through Figure 40, most of them (50%) are learnership; followed by 15% skills programme and 9% internship programme

repeaters. This observation raises the risk of double counting (duplication) the numbers concerning the impact of the programmes in creating jobs. Although not promoted, this telling information about double dipping might be one of the coping mechanisms used by candidates to keep active in pursuit of skills development and employment.

**FIGURE 22: AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT
FOR THE ATTENTION OF
CATHSSETA**

Much as employers had a receptive reaction to the role played by CATHSSETA, they further provided suggestion on what needs to be improved in relation to the administration aspects of



these solution. As illustrated by Figure 22, two suggestions were proposed. One being, a faster response rate relating to administration and payment queries represented by 78%. This administrative issue represented a chunk of the views meaning it is critical for CATHSSETA to explore ways to improve the issue. Two, concerned a suggestion to open and regular communication between CATHSSETA and the industry players. Having discussed process issues, the next segment discusses the structural challenges which compromise the effectiveness of these interventions.

4.6.2. STRUCTURAL OR PROGRAMME DESIGN CHALLENGES

This study provided unquestionable evidence attesting to the relevance of the training initiatives in empowering candidates with useful work-related skills. Equally so, there is information which lays bare (raises) some of the core challenges. If not speedily addressed, these challenges will continue to suffocate the effectiveness the interventions under review. Only a limited number of candidates benefited through accessing jobs, self-employment, abilities to earn an income as well as studying further. This implies that as much as access to training was availed, much more learners are economically side-lined even after their involvement in these interventions. This is a worrisome phenomenon and, in a way, problematises the effects of these learning programmes.

As highlighted in the above section focusing on the administrative challenges, there was a suggestion that some of the candidates might be using access to intervention to cope with the crisis of joblessness. These cohort is not as different from those who opt for self-employment as way to dilute the consequences of joblessness. In this case, learners were found to be moving from one training initiative to another. An inference from this finding is that a duplication in recording employment figures might have been collated. This is a worrying trend because it literally means that the employment figures might be skewed and not as accurate. Should

this be the case, this would mean that the lower employment creation statistics associated with these trainings are lesser than as reported.

The above narrative elevates the importance of tightening the recruitment processes (vetting) which empowers the SETA sector to pick up these duplications caused by double dipping. This also coincides in the findings about stipends and some training recruiting learners with the sole objective of nothing else than self-enrichment. It does look like there is a need to tighten or put a stop to the abuse of the system by either learners or training providers. The interventions to some extent serve as pedestal responsible for launching out and advancing participants career pathing. To a noticeable but limited extent, through the implementation of these training programmes, several avenues are opened and become accessible to candidates. These range from the availability of new jobs; retention of existing jobs; self-employment; formalising their earning and lastly possibility to further studies.

These are far reaching milestones that should not be taken for granted. There was positive perception about the role played by stakeholders such as training providers and the employers. The training interventions were purported to be in sync with the skills demands of the various industry. All in all it does look like the interventions performed exceptionally well only in cases where candidates acquired jobs. It should be remembered that most of the participants possessed either contract or casual jobs. Despite this partially positive emerging narrative, the numbers or percentages are significantly on the lower side. The lower recorded percentages might be underlined by poor performing economy but there are design and implementation factors compromising the poor performance.

The above picture is not as different from the Asian experience. What was helpful in the Asian setting was that entrepreneurship was invoked and in a structured manner prioritised as a strategic solution to address their then limping economy. This study therefore calls for the refinement of the current programme mix to include self-employment as part of its offering. This could be piloted first in preparation of its replication in the very near future.

As already alluded to, there are several design and implementation factors undermining the effects of these programmes. These factors could literally be responsible for the minimal performance of the trainings under review. Structurally, the inefficiencies witnessed in the implementation of the LPs are largely to do with the programme design. It does seem like conceptually the programme are planned to produce job seekers than creators. However, this is not necessarily CATHSSETA problem but the broader education system challenge.

Heeding to the Swiss example, the intersections between the different layers of the education system are yet to feed into each other. Unlike in Switzerland, our system is yet to identify and support learners' pathways from basic education to either vocational or academic route. So, this means that students career trajectories might be skewed. A learner with less interest or capabilities to pursue the academic route might be accidentally found to be involved in such a system. At a societal level, and opposite to our context, the Swiss system had demystified the myth that a university degree is the only qualification required to unblock the limited economic opportunities. Therefore a nationwide campaign to conscientize the population about the different education pathways including training interventions offered by CATHSSETA should be considered to be rolled out.

Until and unless there is a coordinated approach to the design and implementation of the suites of programmes, we remain at the risk of not realising return on investments (ROI). This radical, urgent but long term view intention to problem solve our unemployment will not be possible without the collaboration between intergovernmental partnerships, employers, and CATHSSETA particularly the entire SETA sector. It is no longer feasible to churn out job seekers, so, integrating entrepreneurship as part of the curriculum is no longer a nice to have but a necessity.

5. CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1. PARTICIPANTS DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES



PARTICIPANTS DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES

Prior participating in the 2019/22 CATHSSETA funded learning programmes, trainees were based in rural areas; attended public funded high schools and armed with a matric certificate. Not ignoring the 8% of those who were already working before being part of the interventions under review, a recognisable number of these individuals were not working with no ability to earn an income. Statistical analysis is presented below:

- Most 90% participants were youth under the age of 35 years²
- Women were in the majority 71%, followed by men at 29%
- Some (48%) originated from rural provinces
- Others (48%) studied in publicly funded schools
- A certain group (29%) possessed matric as their highest qualification
- Most (78%) of the graduates were unemployed before participating in the learning programmes

Apart from a minimal number 8% of those who were already working, the fact that 78% of those who were unemployed had a slim chance of earning an income is somewhat The redress policy framework outlines the intention to mainstreaming the participation of the PDIs groups into the structures of the economy (Letseka, 2004). CATHSSETA aims to ensure that their learning programmes are in line with the transformational imperatives. According to its current strategic plan dated 2020/21 – 2024/25, the SETA targets to make certain that 85% of programme candidates are from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. Findings of this study confirms that the racial profile of the participants is in line with the demographics of the country. This is because Africans and Coloured candidates where in the majority while White and Indian or Asian respondents followed suit. Data on candidate's racial profile shows that

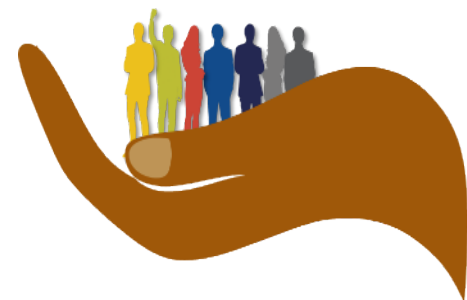
² This report recognizes that some of the personal characteristics (age, gender, etcetera) will not change pre or post the programme

the programmes enrolment is in line with CATHSSETA five year target sitting at 85%. This is because Africans constituted most of the programme users who received support from the CATHSSETA offerings. Much as the study investigated the past two years, evidence of racial profiles augers well for CATHSSETA. Importantly, the information affirms that the organisation is on track towards achieving its target to facilitate the skilling or upskilling of those from previously disadvantaged backgrounds (PDBs).



None of the respondents indicated that they were living with disabilities. This gap was identified, and it is hoped that CATHSSETA will intensify efforts to ensure that their programme intake caters to those who form part of the marginalised groups, particularly those with disabilities. At a policy level, the work led by DWYPD of championing issues of people with disabilities offers the much needed consolation. In recent time the said department developed and published a rigorous M&E framework with well-designed indicators aimed at achieving systematic changes. Their annual report reports that they provided technical support and handholding their agencies to streamline performance measurement including monitoring and reporting tools. This a gap that was identified and it is hoped that CATHSSETA will intensify efforts to ensure that their programme intake caters for those who are forms part of the marginalised groups, particularly people with disabilities. This might elevate a need to refine the recruitment strategy aimed at ensuring its disability equity targets are met.

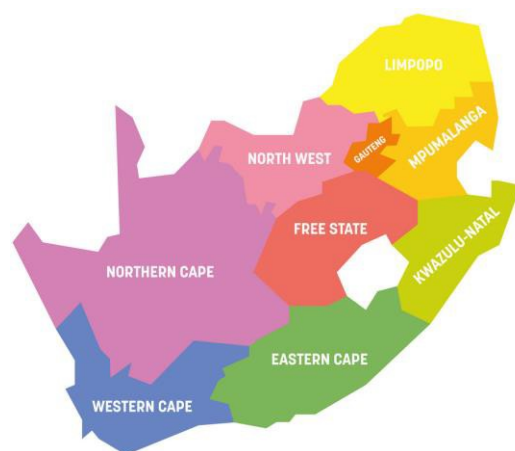
The interventions facilitated the enrolment of female candidates. According to the data, females represented 71% whilst their male counterparts recorded 29%. Enrolling female candidates is undoubtedly an enforcement of how the gender lens could be applied in the implementation of skills initiatives. This document should be read together with read together with the NSDP 2030. Although the current track and trace study does not account for CATHSSETA five-year performance cycle, but, In the short term the available evidence points to a positive results. If this trend is continued, then the SETA will not be deterred from achieving its target on gender equity.





over half of CATHSSETA learners (55%) reported earning on average R 60 000 annual income upon completing the interventions. Kruss et al (2012) projected that graduates are oftentimes stand a better chance of earning an income after completing training. This means that should they secure employment after graduating, graduates stand a good chance of earn beyond the prescribed minimum wage.

CATHSSETA strategic plan targets interventions aimed at funding 45% of its learning programmes participants from rural or informal settlements. According to the findings of the study, participants' origins were fairly distributed across the urban and rural provinces. The province were represented as follows: KwaZulu-Natal (20%); Gauteng (16%); Eastern Cape (14%) and Limpopo (14%). Free State (10%); Mpumalanga (8%) and Northwest (8%). Following behind at 5% was the Western Cape and Northern Cape. This affirms that 48% of the learners originate from rural while 42% are from urban provinces. A narrow view of this findings shows that CATHSSETA recorded 3% (a little above) its 45% five-year target.



EMPLOYER PROFILE AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

Most participating employers had headquartered in: Gauteng (40%); KwaZulu-Natal (30%); Western Cape (20%) and Limpopo (10%). As an example; employers were from: (40%) in Arts, Culture; 40% in Hospitality; (20%) Sports, Recreation and Fitness views did represent their subsectors.

Learner pathways after completing LP'S

Employment – It is granted that relationship between training and change in employment statuses of candidates was established. At least 33%. (171 individuals) of the graduates got employed post the programmes. In not so intense manner, the interventions further ensured that a number of 33% secured employment contracts (full time). But, interventions are yet to provide an economic buffer against unemployment. For instance, 70,1% constituted by (37,3%) learnership and (32,8%) internship learners remained unemployed post their acquiring their qualifications. The following is observed with the other remaining programmes: skills programme - 11% (average), WIL - 10%; bursary - 6% and TVET college - 4% (average). It is impossible to deny that a larger number of respondents who participated in this study are still faced with the wrath of unemployment post the intervention.



As previously argued, some of these limitations are as a result of the broader or factors outside the control of the 2programme such as economic uncertainties confronting our country. This calls for efficient, innovative and urgent solutions meted to scale up what works with the interdependent relationship between interventions and the world of work should be instituted.

Self-employment – What is consoling is that a number of qualification holders represented by s (31.5%); learnership programmes (31.5%) and Internship (25%) became self-employed. This trend is followed by (12.5%) of candidates attached to the WIL programmes. Despite the fact that the relationship between the intervention and type of jobs was determined, but this analysis is proves that the programmes nudged respondents to pursue or explore self-employment as viable employment option. It did so through enabling participants to entertain entrepreneurship as an alternative to traditional job hunting avenues.

However, the above narrative should be taken with a pinch of salt because give that only fewer (16) respondents provided reasons for pursuing entrepreneurship. The data shows that the majority (58,82%) of these individuals were merely trying to avoid the wrath of unemployment. They indicated that they were either still looking for a job/could not find formal jobs/struggled to find a job in the field of their study. On the other hand, 35,29% of those who happily considered entrepreneurship explained that it was because they have enterprising attributes. This might mean that some of the graduates ventured in business to cope with joblessness. Only four candidates pursued self-employment. But this was not rather a coping an unemployment coping mechanism and essentially resulting from the delivery of the intervention.



Income earnings – As presented earlier, 33% of the learners were fortunate to secure employment opportunities post the programme. According to the data, the programmes made it possible for most (73%) respondents to earn between R 3201 – R 6400. This was followed by other groups – (12%) less than R3200.

Furthering of studies/volunteerism – To its credit, the interventions enabled 5% of the graduates to further their studies. Their statistics were as follows bursaries (29.2%); Internship (25%), WIL (20.8%), Learnership (12.5) and (4.7%) Artisan programmes furthered their studies. Others who were not furthering their studies opted to volunteer their time and skills. Their representation was as follows: Learnership (50%), internship (20%), and (10%) bursary programme holders were volunteers.

Self-employment and volunteerism – Most graduates were compelled to make use of self-employment and volunteerism as coping mechanisms against the challenges of unemployment. The study further noticed that some of the learners have been enrolled in more than one intervention.

Partnering to narrow gaps between the demand and supply of skills

Given the magnitude of the employment crisis facing South Africa, this is one of the challenges requiring immediate attention. Therefore, efficient, innovative, and urgent solutions meted to scale up what works with the interdependent relationship between interventions and the world of work should be instituted. Defeating the high level of unemployment which is one of causes for underdevelopment is not feasible without functional partnerships. Skills programme initiatives are long awaited to produce and supply ready for work graduates to the different CATHSSETA subsectors. Not that it is a new discovery, but the current study notices the unevenness between the between the number of graduates produced and the available job opportunities. Another observation made was that only few employers were available to participate in this study. These anomalies thrive because our economic is stagnant and find difficulty to register any form of growth. This explains the spiralling unemployment rate.



However, lessons from elsewhere (Switzerland) provide us ways to address these mishaps. For example, the Swiss model ensures that the training offerings are informed and thus responsive to the needs of the industry. So this therefore implies that there is an outcome based partnership between the industry players and the skills development implementors.

Earlier on Pauw et al (2006) raised that some of the companies are non-committal and thus do not make financial investments in human capital. In corroborating this sentiment, this study discovered that some of the private companies not fully keen to open doors to host learning programmes. To this end, this study proposes that strides to ensure that more and more companies are lobbied (urged) to invest in human capital including opening up their workspaces to implement learning programmes are intensified by CATHSSETA. Where possible, government or its agencies such as the Department of Trade and Industry together with the SETA fraternity could explore investigate avenues to provide/refine/upscale innovate skills programmes incentive schemes to the private companies.

According to Kruss et al.(2012) most graduates who complete programmes such as learnerships stand a higher chance of getting jobs. In a bold manner, these authors further note that graduates easily transition from accessing jobs to securing permanent positions. Kruss and team's (2012) observations are to a limited extent contradicting the evidence solicited from this review. As an example, fewer respondents managed to acquire jobs post the training. But what is true about Kruss and company's (2012) views in relation to this study is that a few of those who got employed did have some form of salary progression. Added to this, they managed to transition from contract/casual to full time work. Others got promoted while another group received salary increase.



Urban vs Rural province

Wildschut and Mbatha (2017) raised the point about qualification holders being compelled to migrate from rural provinces such as Limpopo and Eastern Cape to urban ones such as Gauteng, Western Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal. As the interim financial measure, this cohort of qualified graduates take up casual/temporary available in the so called economically developed provinces. Bolstering the self-belief or confidence of candidates from rural provinces is one of the highlights of this review. This is because those from the underdeveloped areas believed that they have an equal competitive edge with their peers from the so called developed provinces holding the same qualifications. To concretise their positive self-image, trainees took up job opportunities from the Eastern Cape and Free State which are classified as rural provinces. The only common thread between the

contribution made by Wildschut and Mbatha (2017) and this study is that most graduates employment contracts were either casual/part time or fixed term.

Collaboration between public and private sectors

Working in silos decreases opportunities to win war against a thriving unemployment rate. In reference to the current study, collaboration efforts between public and private sector were found to be poorly coordinated. This study borrows from examples offered by the Asian and European continents. The two continents proved that addressing the crisis of unemployment calls for a systematised as opposed to piecemeal or siloed approach/mentality. CATHSSETA and its subsectors are urged to strive to lobby the participation of the industry, particularly key role players should be fostered. The collaboration could ensure that industry players participate in different strategic activities. The said activities might include giving their inputs into the refinement of the curriculum content, training modalities to narrow the gap between the employer expectations and the content delivered to the learners). Another initiative might be to partner to lobby employers to open their working environment to host more learners. This might include exploring ways to offer simulation on the work integrated learning skills programmes.

A combination of these initiatives together with a well-oiled intergovernmental partnership will ensure that more participants from marginalised groups are competent not only to perform their work duties but also sustainable jobs allowing them to move away from earning lower wages.

Embedding self-employment into the skills development discourse

The study makes few targeted propositions for CATHSSETA's consideration. A phase in approach entailing three major steps are proposed. **Step 1** seeks to address the minimal economic participation by SMMEs. CATHSSETA is therefore nudged to consider tapping into the existing public procurement framework to set aside projects to deliberately support their alumni's or learners. Step up support for enterprising candidates. From here, a phase in approach can be considered to financially support a number of businesses owned by these sets of graduates.

Step 2 – aims to promote intergovernmental partnerships to optimise their mandate to ignite economic activities. CATHSSETA urged to consider



partner or scale up strategic partnership activities with other public owned agencies such as NYDA and incubation hubs to co-deliver entrepreneurial content.

Step 3 seeks to address the deficiencies of the traditional curriculum offerings delivered as part of the learning programmes which was found to embed job seeking as opposed to enterprising skills and competencies. This study therefore suggest that a process to refine the current curriculum content to include entrepreneurship aimed at ensuring that those are already in possession of companies coupled with self-efficacy, zeal and commitment as characteristics for enterprising are cultivated should be embarked on

Relevance – skills acquisition, applicability, and organisation performance

This section establishes whether or not the interventions advanced acquisition and usability of skills at an individual or organisational level. Unlike in the analysis of the relationship between interventions and learner pathways, data on the relevance established several correlations. The correlation included intervention versus usability of skills; intervention against ability to earn an income and intervention versus rural or informal settlement. the

The 2020 ETDP SETA study has similarities to the findings of this study. In that study, similarly to the current study, most of the participants, who were classified as youth, conceded that the interventions not only empowered them with apt skills, but they found the skills to be in sync with their respective work settings. Furthermore, they opted to further their studies influenced by their practical knowledge acquired from WIL together with the theory presented during the oral classes. On the contrary, a study conducted by Wildschut and Mbatha (2017) found that the types of jobs availed to learners are not aligned with their qualifications.

Transferability of skills - a bridge between theory and practice

According to Dubs (2006), a scholar who recorded the perceptions of the Swiss based apprentices, that the vocational school lessons are too theoretical with little on-the-job practical elements. It was also found that the trainees perceived the curriculum of the vocational schooling system to be much better than traditional schooling system. Another Swiss focus study conducted by McDonalds and Korber revealed that employers, a study preferred vocational over mainstream/traditional education system. This is because vocational was deemed to be more pragmatic and well placed to bridge the gap between theory and practise.



Producing job seekers with limited or no enterprising skills

The curriculum design content used in the delivery of the current skills programmes is limiting and falls short of breeding practitioners and organisation fitted to fully function in the 21st century. At a philosophical or ideological level, the current learning programmes are mainly wired to produce labourers or job seekers. Unfortunatley, these intervention regimes and their employed tactics are not well poised to undermine the increasing crisis of unemployment facing our country.

Output instead of outcome-based targets and indicators

Noting that CATHSSETA strategic plan and its mandate has a mid to long term view (5 years cycle) are long term in nature, it is critical that the tangible results are accounted for. This study observed that CATHSSETA sector targets and indicators are generally output based. This study therefore implores DHET to refine the current M&E framework to refrain from output (numerical numbers) but employs outcome based performance measures. Apart from measuring training contribution against variables such as race, gender, rural vs urban, this study further argues that data on the extent to which training resulted in skills acquisition; skills transfer; applicability of skills and its effects on the broader organisation should also be integrated and reported on an ongoing basis. Given the number of financial investments dedicated to support the implementation of skills programmes, it is no longer feasible to ignore that training should at a bare minimum record the following milestones:

- (i) Empower or enhance trainees with skills and competencies to attract employment
- (ii) Increase possibilities to be employable and secure decent jobs
- (iii) Capacitate participants with abilities to innovate towards their individual and collective societal sustainability (enterprising abilities)

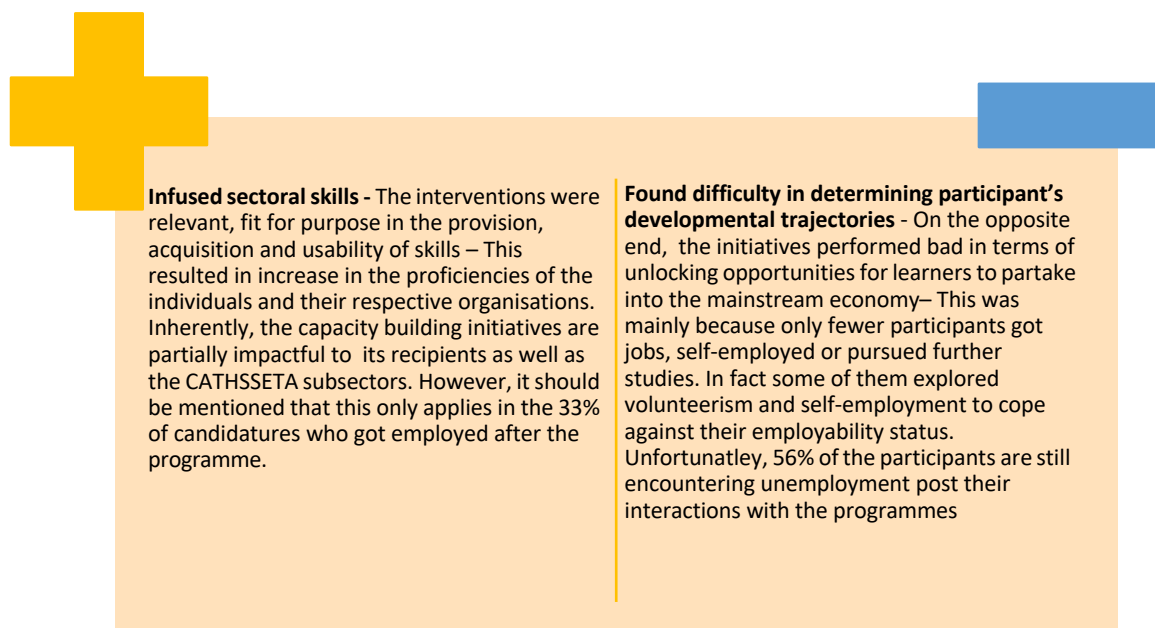


Chronicling participant's perception about the interventions

Participants' perceptions had a mixed bag of responses indicating some tensions or frictions highlighting the efficiencies and deficiencies linked to these interventions. Two main findings were elucidated from the respondents. In a nutshell, their perceptions did not

bring new discoveries but summated or brought forward the following narrative:

FIGURE 23: PARTICIPANTS PERCEPTION ABOUT THE PROGRAMMES



In the context of the current study, employers recognised that their trainees acquired and applied their knowledge at work. This infers that employer enabled the employees to experiment with their newly acquired knowledge sets. As already mentioned, this resulted in improving personal and organisational performances. On the other hand the learners were not only satisfied with the training but went further to mention the elements that impressed them about the training. These were curriculum content, balance between theory and practice, facilitator attributes and mentorship and coaching. This might explain the positive feedback indicating that the trainees were even prepared to assist companies to deal with the new changes caused by nascent developments such use of technology and uninvited COVID-19 crisis with implications on the work environment. Although a little different to our setting, the European and Asian contexts offer a template on how to resolve some of the identified programme weakness. For instance, the reviewed literature focusing on the Swiss approach argues that it is systematic in nature and also a market instead of supply driven educational system. The system embraces a tripartite and symbiotic relationship between government, implementing agencies and the industry (private sector). At a broader scale, the model has managed to provide pathways from basic to tertiary education including accommodating those

who are not academically gifted. It has managed to shift away from over prioritising one part (tertiary) of the system at the expense of another (TVET colleges). This is an important discovery because the WIL programme is one of the least performing interventions.

Practically, the training curriculum and the training offered by the Swiss training suppliers are intentionally as opposed to coincidentally responsive to the skills needs of the varied industries. The Swiss lessons raises more questions than answers for the South African SETA sector, not forgetting CATHSSETA. Given our limping economic setting, are the current programme offerings readying graduates to think outside the box. So, are the LPs fit for purpose or merely designed to produce job seekers. Another related point is to what extent are the key industries such as universities, broader SETA sector, industry players, and policy makers including intergovernmental partnerships collaborating towards a systematic approach to addressing unemployment.

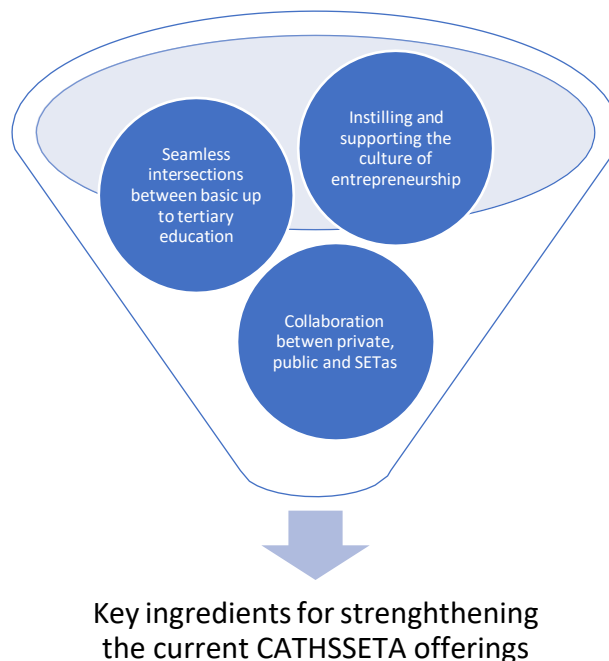


FIGURE 24: BEST PRACTICES FROM EUROPEAN AND ASIAN COUNTRIES

Entrepreneurship was and continues to be one of the key components of economic growth witnessed by Asian countries. Part of embracing the enterprise route include interweaving entrepreneurship culture as part of the broader education system. In that part of the world, learner's personal attributes beyond the classroom are nurtured and implored to start small, micro and medium enterprises (SMMEs). Almost on an ongoing basis and not far apart from our context, financial and non-financial SMME-oriented interventions are launched and

speedily replicated, These programmes facilitated the pathways “*from infancy to maturity*” of the entrepreneurs whom soon or later create job opportunities as part of their growth trajectory.

Perhaps, a consideration to refine or factor in entrepreneurship as part of the SETA offerings or even the broader education system should be considered. This suggestion which is raving across the home and office corridors takes note of the fact that a small percentage of study participants possessed the required attributes and the personal drive (commitment)

Accounting for what works and does not with the LPs

The majority of factors responsible for suffocating the effectiveness -- or impactfulness -- of these interventions are recorded in this section. A summary of what works is presented. Following from this, challenges identified at the design and implementation level are contained and explained by Figure 44.

What works with the interventions?

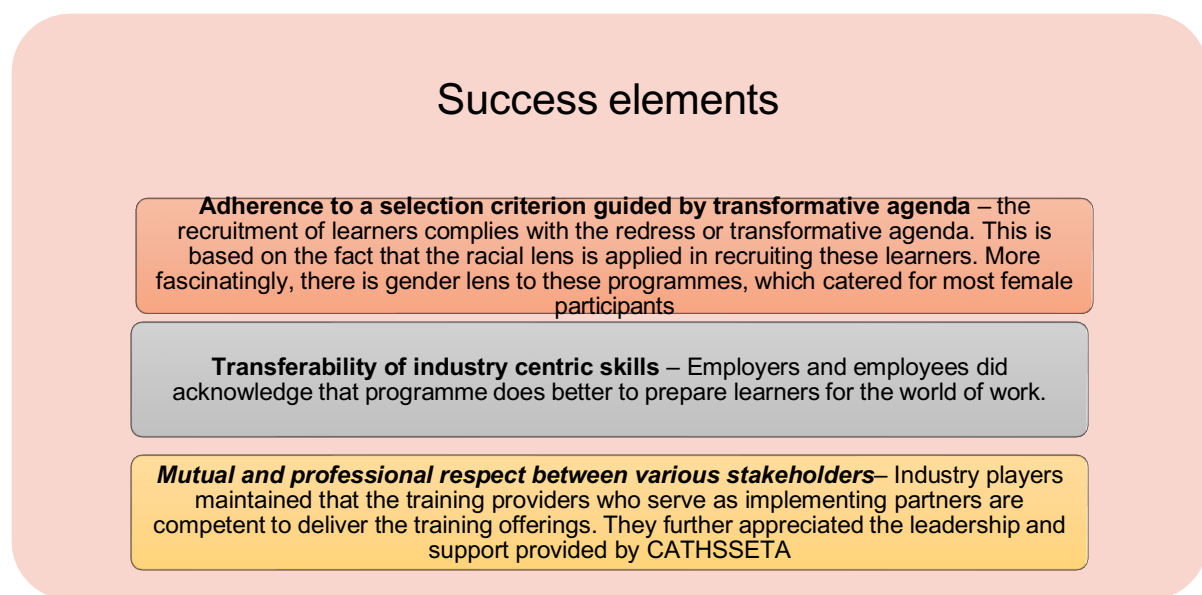


FIGURE 25: ELEMENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUCCESS OF TRAINING

Professional pathing and adherence to a strict learner recruitment processes

As much as our economic structures are different from Switzerland, their recruitment ensures young lower or secondary school leavers have the freedom to make decisions about their career pathing. Their pathing will be supported by training throughout their different stages of

development. Findings in this study confirm that eligible candidates and a gender lens were used in the recruitment of learners. These are responsive to the South African context, particularly around promoting the ideals for equality using the transformation equity. This would include catering for marginalised groups particularly people with disabilities.

An interface between theoretical, soft, and technical skills

The UNESCO study conducted in India raised the importance of producing ready for work graduates. This assertion was observed in the case of this study. Employers commended the training platforms in preparing trainees as well as improving their proficiencies. However, the UNESCO study emphasised that is not enough to have industry related and soft skills, additional skills such as system thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, and independence are as important. These skills are purported to empower learners with the ability to innovate.

On the opposite side, the UNESCO completed research on the Indian context concluded that there was a lack of consensus what works and does not work with the curriculum content, training modalities and competency framework used in the delivery of training interventions from the key stakeholders. On the contrary, participants of the current study seem to agree on the contribution of the different stakeholders. As an example, employers admitted that the training providers did an exceptional job in delivering an impactful training. But this finding should be accepted with a pinch of salt because some of the employers with a large number of candidates (such as Travel and Tourism Services and Sports Recreation and Fitness subsectors) did not participate in the study and therefore their views are missing.

Not neglecting the challenges associated with the implementation of these interventions, the employers alluded to mutual and professional respect between themselves, training providers and CATHSSETA. This, together with the partial optimism shown by the intended users are some of the ingredients awaited to be replicated for the wider success of the learning programmes. As already presented earlier, collaboration of key stakeholders is in part a determinant of whether capacity building initiatives work or do not work.



5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

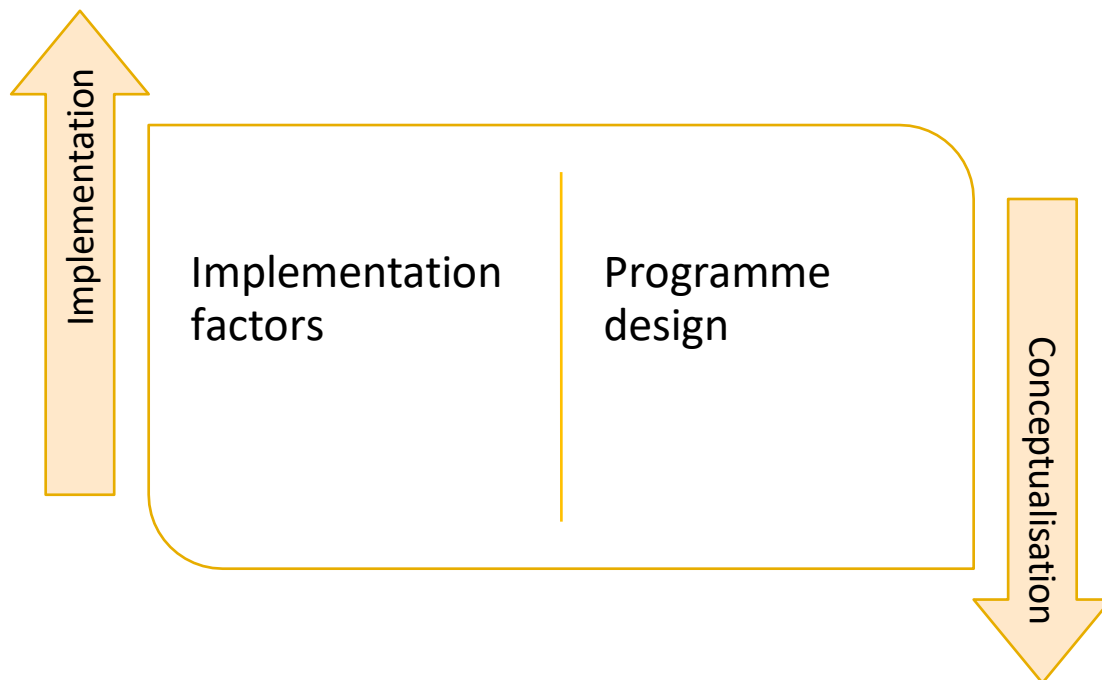
Apply recruitment criteria promoting transformation agenda including meeting the disability targets - In order to continue driving the transformation agenda in compliance with its targets, this study recommends that CATHSSETA should continue to adhere to improve the that its recruitment criterion fosters inclusion of individuals from the marginalised groups categorised by race, age group, gender and geographical locations and consequently used as proxies to measure its performance. This study puts forward that CATHSSETA considers the development or refinement of a recruitment strategy aimed at ensuring its disability equity targets are met. It is proposed that the refinement process or initiative is done in conjunction with organisations representing people with disabilities.

Comprehensive professional pathing catering for learner learning abilities - Similar to the skills programme praxis witnessed from elsewhere, there is a need for our education system to provide a seamless training programmes meted to address the academically and technically gifted learners. This study therefore argues that efforts to foster an education system that gives freedom and access to lower or secondary school leavers to make decisions about their career pathing should be heightened. In other words, the envisaged system should cater for learners with non-academic and academic abilities. The professional pathing should be supported by a lifelong learning training model ensuring their growth throughout the different stages of their development.

Infusing skills of the future in the skill programme offerings - As previously mentioned, organisations and employees operating in the 21st century are expected to cope with the skills demands in an ever changing world. Apart from bridging the gap between soft and technical skills, a consideration to empower candidates with additional innovate and rapidly demanded skills such as system thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, and independence should be part of the curriculum content. These skills are purported to empower learners with the ability to innovate as well in being in tune with dealing complexities. So, CATHSSETA is propelled to consider conducting an assessment to measure the extent to which the innovate skills are embedded in the various training offerings.

There are two main constraints undermining the full effectiveness of these interventions. These are implementation and programme design factors.

FIGURE 26:FACTORS INHIBITING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TRAINING INTERVENTIONS



IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES FACTORS

Double dipping by candidates

The process/administrative issues were found to have compromised the efficacy of the training interventions. These include double dipping where learners are able to enrol for more than one programme across the SETA sector. Much as the recruitment processes were complimented for attracting eligible target groups, data shows that at entry point the selection criterion is unable to identify candidates who were previously funded by CATHSSETA. Thus, some of the candidates were able to enrol for more than one learning programme at a given time. This could be purported to undermine the organisation's abilities to employ effective financial mechanism in a context of a decreasing government purse.

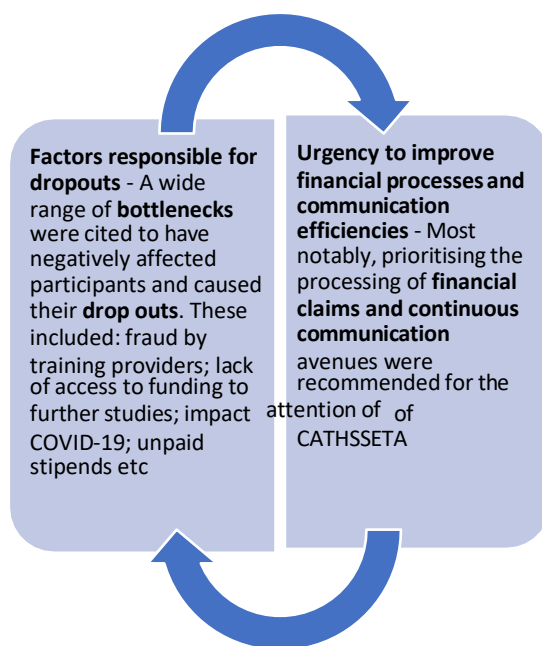


FIGURE 27: TEETHING ISSUES UNDERMINING THE EFFICIENCIES OF THE PROGRAMMES

Low throughput rate

The disjuncture between enrolment versus the completion rate is one of the constraints hampering the effectiveness of CATHSSETA training solutions. Earlier, the reviewed literature exposed the rise of this challenge within the broader education system. The point about this countrywide and entrenched challenge was sponsored by Reddy and colleagues (2016) who identified the mismatch between the increase in enrolment numbers and the output rate. An ETDP SETA 2020 tracer study found that 1% of the learners dropped out of the learning programmes.

Factors responsible for learner dropouts (poor stipend administration system, lack of access to world of work and COVID-19 pandemic)

There are process issues fuelling the dropouts which in this study was quantified at 10%. Apart from dual enrolment explained above, issues of fraudulent relating to the administration of stipends were raised. Some of the learners confessed that some of the training providers register bogus candidates with the sole objective to claim their stipends. In some instances, stipends for eligibly registered candidates are not paid on time and thus inhibiting them to have full participation in the learning programme. For example, they have difficulty to travel between their homes and the training venues. Access to the world of work during training was mentioned as another obstacle. Unsurprisingly, the COVID-

19 pandemic was enlisted among issues that were enlisted as some of the issues responsible for the drop out. Apart from the unpredicted health crisis which is now under control, the issue of the lack of access to the world of work by candidates and enrolment of bogus candidates remain challenges confronting CATHSSETA and its subsectors.

Weak data process flow and management system

During the data collection phase, the research team observed that the quality of the data provided by CATHSSETA was not as impressive. What was more concerning was that some of the contacted participants who were allegedly completed the programme few years ago mentioned that they were either the wrong person or they have never completed the programme they are enlisted under. This begs the question about the quality or efficiency of the data management processing system used by client to quality assure the flow of information. It also questions the accuracy of information provided by external parties such as employers and training providers.

Addressing the challenge of double dipping

The practice of double dipping whereat candidates are funded to enrol for more than one programme needs requires immediate attention. This study therefore recommends that CATHSSETA revisits or tightens their recruitment procedures to automate the capacity of the current system to monitor duplication of funded candidates at an entry point of the training programmes.

Mitigating against low throughput rate

At a macro level, lessons drawn from European and Asian continents emphasised a systematised approach to education. This calls for an education system that seamlessly tailored to cater for the skills needs of the academic and non-academic learners. Added to this, a synergy between theory and practice was indicated to increase learners abilities to absorb information. Strides to investigate the agility (balance between theory and practice) of the curriculum in used during the delivery of training should be undertaken. This might also mean that at strategic level, candidates' recruitment should be informed by their abilities to process information. In other words, candidates should be assessed before being enrolled. This will ensure that they are paired in accordance with their preferred professional pathing or theoretical/technical/vocational/academic inherent abilities. At an operational level, CATHSSETA is therefore encouraged to mainstream programme (theory of change) in the implementation of all their projects or programmes supported by measurement tools (indicators).

Addressing factors causing learner drop out - Lack of effective and fairer processes, uncoordinated access to the world of work as well registration of bogus learners must be addressed. For example, a flawless process) advancing a feedback loop between intervention end users, training providers and the public at large should be institutionalise and where possible automated. This would empower stakeholders to anonymously raise issues or concerns regarding poor administration of stipends or abuse of the system. If such a system is in place, it might imply that the intended users are not aware of it and therefore an awareness (marketing) drive should be escalated to reach the target audience. With regard to the lack of access to job opportunities by trainees, the study put forward that the collaboration between CATHSSETA and its relevant stakeholders (employers, government institutions etc) to foster initiatives such as simulation of workplace integrated learning skills programme will go a long way reversing this weakness. Related to this, the proposed SMME support will also assist in bridging the gaps between theory and practice more especially in undermining unemployment of graduates. On a different note, CATHSSETA is persuaded to invoke consequence management (harsher) principles in cases where there is violation of laws of the country by stakeholders ranging from trainees, implementing agents and public officials.

Improving quality of the data process flow and management system

Gaps with the quality of the information provided were noticeable. As an example, some of the participants who were enlisted to have participated in the CATHSSETA learning programmes did not know anything to do with such initiatives. This somewhat confirms the allegation about bogus registration made earlier. To curb this phenomenon, we propose that an end to end electronic system linked to Home Affairs database with limited human interference is investigated. Should this be feasible, a strategy to cater for training providers with limited access to use of technology should also be put in place. A phase is approach to introduce and administer the implementation of learning programmes through the electronic platform should be embraced.

This newness will also go a long way to smoothen if not expedite communication lines between CATHSSETA and its stakeholders. Challenges such as late payment of invoices as raised by training providers and delay in issuing of certificates experiences by graduates post completion of their learning programmes will be a thing of the past. More so, inaccuracies with enrolment of programme participants will be uprooted. This therefore means that future research/evaluation led by CATHSSETA will be in a much better position to produce evidence for informed decision-making processes.

Structural or programme design or challenges

Programme design – At a broader scale it does look like the learning programmes are designed to be linear and consequently produce only job seekers. Noting that this study was not scoped to review the curriculum, thus far the evidence shows that little attention is paid to infusing entrepreneurship as an alternative pathway. Unlike other countries, such as Switzerland, our education system is flexible in a sense that vocational school leavers can also enter traditional tertiary schooling at a university which is known as the function of qualification of the Swiss model (Dubs, 2006). The author continues to state that their education is continuous and has various pathways including catch-up function of the model which allows students to study at their own pace.

In the Asian context, over enrolment in programmes detached from the skills needs of the economy was raised as one the concerns. However, in this study graduates were well equipped with the demanded skills. Perhaps what might be useful for the South African context are the lessons offered by the Indian experience. In that country, capacity building offerings explored non-traditional modalities such as hosting a series of training workshops, exposure visits, study tours, exchange visits, including the provision of scholarships as part of their training programmes.

What works with the learning programme delivered by CATHSSETA?

There are five or six main elements that are responsible for the success of these interventions. These range from the below;”

- Adherence to the recruitment policy guided by transformative agenda
- Consensus by employers and employees on the benefits of the programme
- Positive feedback in assessing the training providers
- Mixed feedback on the support provided by CATHSSETA

3.1.1.1 Adherence to recruitment policy in line within sync the targeted groups

Earlier on in describing the demographics, it was found that most learners were female (72%) than males (29%). It was further found that most of them came were African followed by; Coloured (4.62%); Indian or Asian (0.58%) and White. These interventions can be classified as progressive and they feature as part of the public policy reforms. These reforms are largely awaited to mainstream the participation of the previously disadvantaged individuals (PDIs) with mostly with poorer backgrounds into the strategic sectors of the economy.

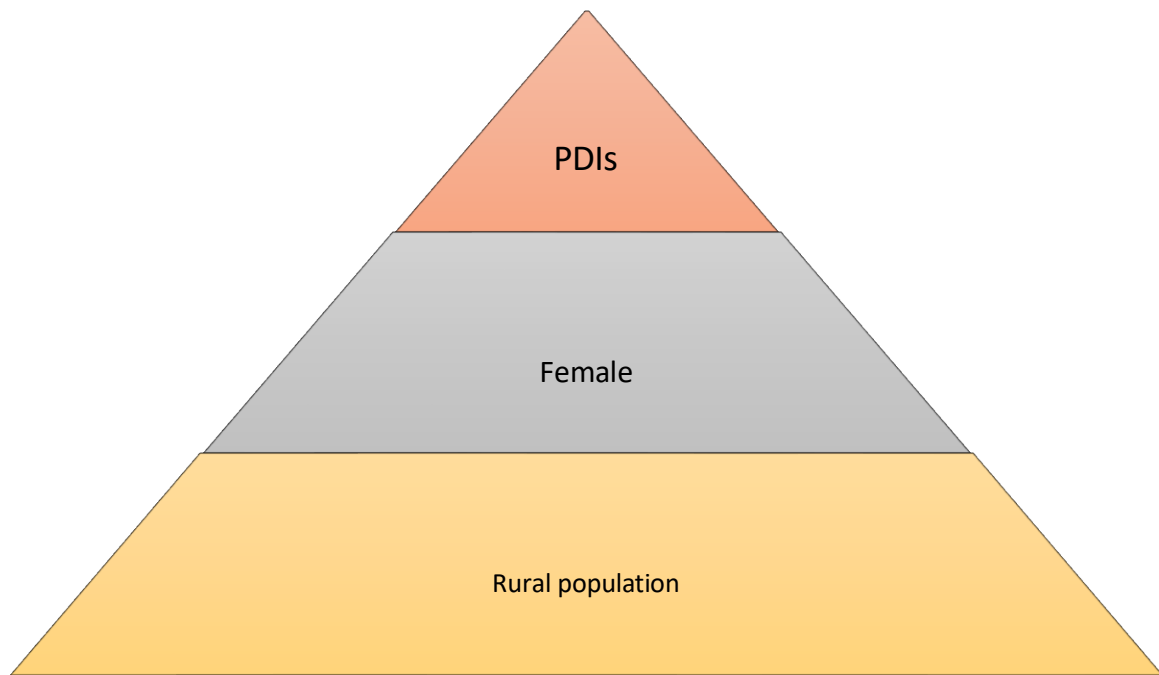


FIGURE 28: RECRUITMENT CRITERION TARGETING THE APPROPRIATE CANDIDATES.

The unquestionable high levels of enrolment numbers targeting female candidates is one of the most progressive and welcomed programmes attributes. Given the history of patriarchy exacerbated by the apartheid regime, this milestone brings us much closer to achieving the ideals of the redress agenda. It is undoubtedly underlined by the ideals to harmonise gender disparities through undermining gender inequalities. Not only are the reviewed programmes contributing to infusing the gender lens, but another noticeable interventions trademark is also that they inherently champion the economic inclusion of those located in the rural side of the population. In sum, enrolling the majority of individuals with the following characteristics: PDIs, female and situated in underdeveloped areas is part and parcel of the transformative or redress agenda. Indeed, this is a very progressive achievement that should be noted and celebrated.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

CATHSSETA's learning programmes are yet to operate at their optimal levels. Although they were proven to have transferred skills and optimised individual and organisational performance and adhered to a progressive selection criterion, they were found to struggle with paving learner's professional pathways.

The South African socioeconomic challenges are well known and thus the learning programmes are not exempted from them. Their dire effects were mostly felt and witnessed by those from PDI backgrounds. Unfortunately, these groups form the majority of the population, and it is in their eyes that the wrath of poverty, economic exclusion and inequalities are expressed. These are worsened by the consistent bleeding and job shedding economy ongoing in the past few years. This background gives credence to the fact that skills development initiatives do not occur in a vacuum or in isolation. However, they are expected to be part of a plan to resolve the bleak picture painted about our socioeconomic conditions.

It is no longer possible to deliver capacity building initiatives that are not aptly fitted to ignite economic activities. So, increasing efficiencies of public institutions mandated to drive development is at the core. Much more work dedicated to enhance the capacity of CATHSSETA funded interventions to meet the high demand for jobs must be forged. As a start, a paradigm shift to improve implementation factors and programme design must be urgently fostered. This might elevate the need for an end to end electronic system synchronised with the Department of Home Affairs database as well as mainstreaming programme theory (theory of change) coupled with measurement tools (indicators) across all CATHSSETA projects and programmes.

At an programme design level, newness to the conceptualisation of the skills programme interventions is required. To start with, it is time to explore a dual responsibility of producing job seekers at an equal pace with entrepreneurs. This dual production might require a pilot or a feasibility study. This study therefore recommends that a phase in approach (involving three steps as explained in the recommendation) should be applied in introducing these much needed and compelling changes. The minimal participation of employers necessitates a fast-paced intervention geared to increase the participation of the key industry players. Noting that employers might be fatigued with data collection processes, the literature raised concerns about the lack of some employers to support building or strengthening capacities. As part of the programme design, more effort should be focused on increasing the partnership beyond compliance to paying of levies. Where possible, CATHSSETA could employ the services of a service provider with stakeholder management credentials. This is because the participation of the industry is an integral part of loosening some of the bottlenecks such the lack of access to job opportunities witnessed by most trainees. Lastly, partnerships between intergovernmental partners is also crucial. For an example, CATHSSETA could partner with the NYDA to roll out the proposed entrepreneurship initiatives.

At an implementation level, and similarly to how the gender lens was achieved, CATHSSETA should consider enforcing the disability target in its programme mix. Additionally, there is also a need to put mechanical systems in place. This is meant to tighten loose ends such as the dual enrolments by trainees, decrease dropout rates, particularly those who are caused by the poor management of stipends. It will reduce the possibilities for fraud to occur..

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