TVET PLACEMENTS EVALUATION STUDY

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APP	Annual Performance Plan
ATR	Annual Training Report
CHE	Council for Higher Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
ETDP SETA	Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority
HEQC	South Africa's Higher Education Quality Council
ICT	Information Communication Technology
LRA	Labour Relations Act
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MER	Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting
NCV	National Certificate Vocational
NDP	National Development Plan
NSDP	National Skills Development Plan
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PIVOTAL	Professional Vocational Technical Academic Learning
PSIRA	Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
SASSETA	Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SSACI	The Swiss-South African Cooperation Initiative
SSP	Sector Skills Plan
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
WBL	Work Based Learning
WIL	Work Integrated Learning
WSP	Workplace Skills Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study evaluates the work placements of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college learners supported by the SASSETA between 2016 and 2021. Specifically, the study investigates the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the SASSETA-funded TVET placement interventions. In addition, there is an assessment of the effectiveness and adequacy of SASSETA's Due Diligence Template which is used to assess the employers' workplace readiness to host TVET graduate before allocating and placing learners.

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) refers to the time during which learners are placed in workplaces in order to learn how an occupation is executed in practice. The SASSETA-funded project is intended to facilitate the placement of N6 TVET college students in a workplace for at least 18 months after concluding their theoretical learning. WIL must be completed before a learner can graduate. SASSETA plays an important role by providing stipends to learners and encouraging employers in its sector to host these learners. The total enrolment in the SASSETA TVET placement programme over the 2016-2021 period was 3 221 learners. Enrolments were predominantly Black African females between the ages of 25 and 34 years from the KwaZulu-Natal Natal and Gauteng provinces.

The evidence for this evaluation is based on:

- A literature review covering both local and global experiences of WIL.
- Secondary data analysis of the SASSETA Workplace Skills/ Annual Training Report (WSP/ATR) data. The analysis was done to determine the number of enrolments, completions and demographics of learners on the TVET placement interventions.
- Robust consultations with stakeholders and participants involved in SASSETA-funded work placements. A total of 32 interviews were conducted with a sample of learners, employers and TVET colleges.
- A survey of learner participants in which a total of 251 responses were received (of 579 surveys distributed, a 43.4% response rate). The survey captured data on their experiences of work integrated learning and their employment status after completion of WIL.

In terms of the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, below are the key findings:

Relevance: The learning programmes that learners are enrolled in does not match the occupations on SASSETA's scarce skills list. It appears, therefore, that the TVET placement interventions are not relevant to the labour market. However, during interviews, employers

indicated that the occupations learners are being trained in are needed in the sector. In addition, the SASSETA TVET placement interventions are in line with key policies in the country, including the National Development Plan (NDP) and the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP), amongst others.

Effectiveness: The completion rate of the TVET placement interventions are much lower than enrolments. During the 2016-2021 period, only 1 211 learners completed their WIL programme compared to the 3 221 enrolments.

Efficiency: There is consensus among employers that the grant application and approval process of the SASSETA is transparent, works smoothly and is understood by those who were interviewed. Generally, interviews with colleges and employers indicate that they view the process as a compliance exercise.

In most cases, the SASSETA's due diligence process is conducted with the host employer, but there are a few examples in which it is only done with a lead employer (and not the host employer). In these cases, there have been questions raised around availability of workstations, of mentors, etc. The template is generic for all workplace approvals and may be difficult to use in cases where the lead employer becomes the host employer as well.

In terms of the payment of stipends, these are either paid directly to learners by SASSETA or through the college. Almost without exception, serious dissatisfaction has been expressed about the slow and late payments of stipends and the unresponsiveness of SASSETA staff dealing with the payments. Based on interviews conducted, it appears that where the TVET colleges take on the responsibility of paying the stipend to the learner, the process is smoother and more efficient.

Impact: In terms of the employment status of learners after they have completed the TVET placement interventions, 25% of respondents indicated that they are employed, with 11% indicating they are employed with the employer where they completed their WIL, 10% indicating that they are employed by another employer, and 4% indicated that they are self-employed. Nearly half of learners (48.10%) reported that they were unemployed after their work placement.

Sustainability: The TVET placement interventions have been managed and implemented by SASSETA since 2014. There is no reason why it cannot be replicated in the future, as it contributes to the reduction of unemployment in the sector. This research has shown that it

assists learners to complete their qualifications and become more ‘work-ready’ over the 18-month period.

Overall, it was found that the TVET placement interventions contribute to the work readiness of leaners.

Key recommendations are:

- **Appropriateness of workplace settings**
    - Commence with monitoring at the point where learners are placed with host employers to ensure placement is in line with the learner’s qualification.
- **Contribution to the improvement of knowledge and skills**
    - Where engineering learners are placed for WIL, ensure that employers are aware that the learners will need basic exposure to practical work before they can perform tasks in the workplace.
- **Challenges and measures that support TVET placements**
    - Develop a guideline document for mentors, to provide an overview of what mentorship entails, as well as what the Labour Relations Act (LRA) stipulates in terms of hosting a learner on a TVET placement intervention.
    - Conduct a second monitoring visit a month after the commencement of the programme, to ensure that mentors are in place and learners have received logbooks.
    - Establish WhatsApp groups, or utilise another platform, where SASSETA can communicate with learners, track and monitor their progress.
- **Contribution of interventions to complete qualifications**
    - Request feedback from employers and learners on the appropriateness of learner logbooks.
    - Contract TVET colleges to adjust the logbooks, with inputs from industry.
- **Sustainability**
    - Identify more learners for TVET placements who can be linked to scarce skills.
- **Due diligence**
    - Consider tailor-making a due diligence template for lead employers that are also host employers.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND

This chapter provides a background to the study, specifically looking at the mandate of the Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority (SASSETA) as well as describing the project being evaluated.

The SASSETA was established in terms of the Skills Development Act, No. 97 of 1998 with the mandate of promoting and facilitating skills development for the safety and security sector. The Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation relicensed the SETA for the period of 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2030, to operate within the framework articulated in the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) 2030. SASSETA's objectives, as captured in their Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan, are to support the NSDP outcomes as well as the SASSETA Sector Skills Plan (SSP) priorities. This includes a focus on supporting TVET Colleges, Community Education and Training Colleges and Public Universities.

The SETA also seeks to improve access to occupations in high demand and priority skills aligned to supporting economic growth, employment creation and social development. This is done through the provision of needs-based, job-oriented education and training programmes to assist individuals in obtaining employment opportunities.

The project being evaluated in this study is the assessment of the workplace settings for TVET Placements. The project provides for 18-months' Work Integrated Learning (WIL) opportunities for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college learners, predominantly enrolled in N6 qualifications. Learners are required to complete WIL after concluding their theoretical learning in TVET colleges in order to graduate. WIL affords students the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned at college in a real workplace and thereby improve both their technical competence and their employability. To help facilitate WIL, the SASSETA enters into a contract either with a lead employer, mostly a TVET college, or directly with host employers. Employers assign a mentor to learners who need to sign off in a logbook when aspects of WIL are completed. The SASSETA covers the cost of stipends for these learners.

The objectives of the study were to investigate the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of SASSETA-funded TVET placements for the adequate provision of needs-based job-oriented programmes to assist TVET students to obtain jobs, national diploma qualifications and employment opportunities.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the study. It states the purpose of the research as well as the research questions.

The purpose of this study was to assess the workplace settings for TVET graduate placement learners. The study aims to understand, explore, and document key features, trends, and challenges of learners who were funded from 2016 to 2021.

The study investigates the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the TVET placements. In addition, there is an assessment of the effectiveness and adequacy of SASSETA's Due Diligence Template which is used to assess the employers' workplace readiness to host TVET learners before allocating and placing learners.

The key research questions were:

1. Are the workplace settings of TVET placements appropriate?
2. To what extent do TVET graduate programme interventions improve knowledge and skills in a particular field?
3. What are the challenges that hinder and the measures that improve the implementation of the TVET placements?
4. Does Work Integrated Learning (WIL) assist learners to fulfil the requirements to complete their qualifications?
5. Can TVET graduate programme interventions be replicated in future projects?
6. Is the Due Diligence Template that is used by the SASSETA to allocate and place learners adequate?

Overall Aim: To measure the extent of the TVET graduate programme interventions in improving or refreshing knowledge and skills in a particular field and for the personal, social and professional development of learners

Objective: To gather quantitative and qualitative evidence for assessing the effectiveness of the work placement programme for TVET learners.

Sub-objectives:

i. Identify Challenges that hinder TVET placements and propose measures that can be used to improve implementation
ii. To explore if Work Integrated Learning assists learners to meet the requirements to complete their qualification

iii. To conduct a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the workplace settings of TVET placements within the sub-sector. This will include, but is not limited to:

- Conducting interviews with TVET graduate learners who have completed the programme between the 2016 and 2021 financial years.
- Assessing the performance outputs of the implemented TVET programme intervention.
- Investigating the alignment of the qualifications with workplace learning to fulfil the qualification requirements.
- Profiling the beneficiaries e.g. total employment, provincial distribution of learners, occupational distribution of learners, as well as employment according to population groups, gender, level of education, age and disability.

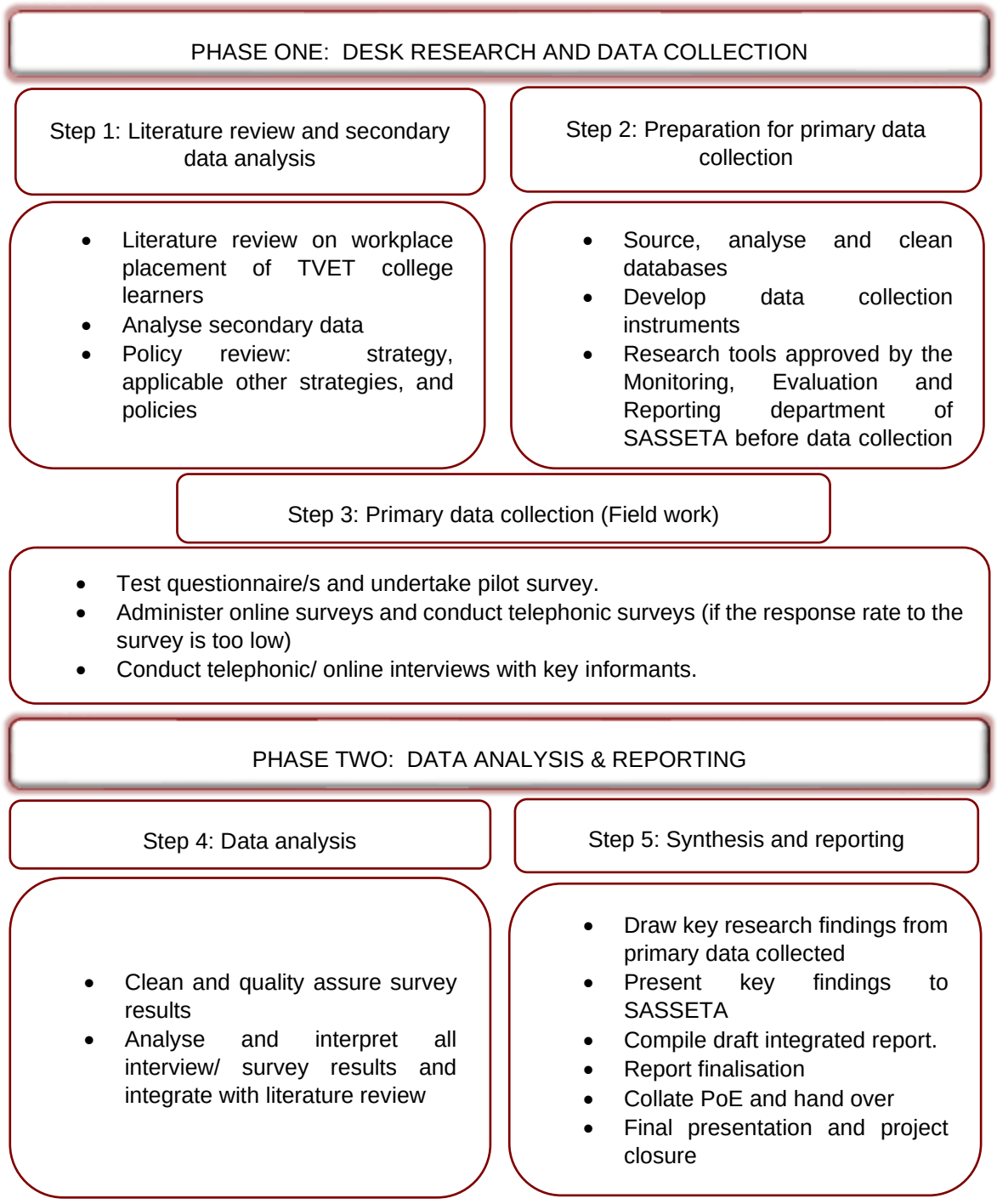
iv. To measure the extent of the TVET graduate programme interventions in improving or updating knowledge and skills in a particular field and for personal, social and professional development of learners.

v. To determine if the TVET graduate programme interventions could be replicated in future projects.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research methodology used in this study, which includes two phases and five steps. A mixed-method research methodology, using both quantitative and qualitative methods, was adopted for this study. After the inception phase, which resulted in an inception report, the research methodology below was adopted:



The above methodology is further elaborated on below:

3.1 Literature review and secondary data analyses

A literature review was conducted which confirmed the scope of the study. The review defined WIL and provided an overview of policies and legislation that governs WIL. The review also highlights challenges and opportunities pertaining to TVET work placements both internationally and nationally.

The literature review included a secondary data analysis. For this, information from SASSETA Annual Reports, as well as data provided by SASSETA assisted in the analysis of numbers of students supported, throughput rates, and information on the demographics of supported learners.

The purpose of the literature review was to use research to refine the evaluation framework and data collection instruments. The review also assisted in validating the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. Evaluation findings are more credible if they are in line with earlier research or contribute to a deeper understanding of previous research.

3.2 Preparation for primary data collection

After the literature review was conducted, data collection instruments were developed and approved. Semi-structured interviews were used to deepen the understanding of the effectiveness of workplace settings of TVET placements from the perspective of different role players. In addition to instruments for different stakeholder groupings (qualitative instruments), a quantitative data collection instrument was developed. This focussed on developing a reliable survey instrument that was administered to learners in the sector.

As part of this phase, relevant SASSETA TVET WIL databases were cleaned. These databases assisted with the interview and survey sampling. To build onto the learner contact details, additional learner contacts were sourced from TVET colleges and employers that were involved in the project. Contact details of 1763 learners were received, and after the databases were cleaned, 579 were useful. This was due to the repetition of cell numbers and email addresses or contact details that were incomplete.

Contact details of employers and TVET colleges that participated in the TVET placement interventions were available on the SASSETA database.

3.3 Primary data collection

3.3.1 Survey

An electronic survey (using Survey Monkey) was administered to gain a statistical base for the exploratory themes identified during the literature review. The survey was distributed to

beneficiaries of the TVET college placement project. The survey was sent to 579 learners (the total population of learners where contact details were available), and a total of 251 were received back – a response rate of 43.4%.

The TVET graduates were surveyed on whether the education they received at the college was relevant to the workplace; whether they were supported or mentored in the workplace; and whether they were employed after the workplace experience.

3.3.2 Interviews

Various employers and TVET colleges were contracted to facilitate the TVET placement interventions between the 2016 and 2021 financial years. The SASSETA provided a list with contact details of 13 employers and 12 TVET colleges.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with employers who had provided workplace experience to TVET learners, as well as TVET colleges and the learners themselves. Stakeholder consultations included eight host employers, nine TVET colleges, two SASSETA staff members and some SASSETA beneficiaries. The team set out to interview the full population but managed to interview a total of 32 individuals.

All qualitative interviews were recorded (or notes taken), summarised and analysed.

3.4 Data analysis

Data from the different phases was analysed to ensure adequate reporting and substantiation of research findings. Microsoft excel was used for the analysis of the data and graphical presentations. Interviews were coded and summarised.

3.5 Synthesis and reporting

This evaluation report is based on a synthesis of the findings of all the research streams. The aim was to ensure that the final report is useful and clear to all role players.

3.6 Limitations

Limitations to the evaluation study were the lack of accurate contact details, which would later inform data collection and analysis. The snowball sampling method, where researchers rely on initial participants to help identify additional study participants, was used to increase the sample size. Although this limitation caused delay, it did not impact on the credibility of the sample, or the participants in the study.

CHAPTER 4

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a discussion on the literature around WIL internationally and nationally. Specifically, it looks at how WIL is implemented, how WIL is defined as well as policies and legislation governing WIL.

4.1 POLICIES AND LEGISLATION GOVERNING WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING

According to Blom (2013:1) thus far, WIL practices in South Africa have been introduced within a policy vacuum. Whereas institutions, associations and networks have implemented WIL in accordance to their own contexts and policies, a national framework does not yet exist.

The Swiss-South African Cooperation Initiative (SSACI) developed a "Framework for providing Work Integrated Learning in Technical and Vocational Training Colleges", for DHET (30 November 2013).

The 2013 "White Paper on Building an Expanded, Effective and Integrated Post-School System" emphasises the centrality of WIL for all vocational and occupational education and training in colleges. It states that:

"Since the main purpose of the TVET colleges is to prepare students for the workplace, it is essential that they develop and maintain close working relationships with employers in their areas. Close partnerships between colleges and employers can assist the colleges in locating workplace opportunities for students who need practical experience."

WIL should be a central component of TVET college programmes. The extent to which students are able to get placements in the workplace are used by some colleges as an important indicator for assessing the performance of the management of institutions. The DHET places a high priority on colleges achieving regularly increasing levels of workplace placements for students and will expect colleges that have problems in this regard to seek assistance from both the Department and the SETAs. This will serve to ensure that Work Integrated Learning is taken very seriously."

The Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act 97 of 1998 as amended) provides that a learning programme "includes a learnership, an apprenticeship, a skills programme and any other prescribed learning programme which includes a structured work experience component" (s.1). The act requires a SETA, in accordance with any requirements that may be prescribed, to establish and promote learning programmes, assist in the conclusion of agreements for

learning programmes to the extent that is required and register agreements for learning programmes to the extent that is required. The SETAs Grant Regulations 2012, provide that "a key focus of SETAs must be to address scarce and critical skills through programmes that are designed to address such skills needs, and which includes work-based learning" (Regulation 6 (11).

The New Growth Path, the National Development Plan, the National Skills Accord, the NSDP and the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, all reflect a growing emphasis on workplace learning as a core and essential component of vocational and occupational education, and the role this type of education and training plays in economic development and job creation' (Swiss South African Cooperation Initiative, 2013:9). A key aspect of SA's National Development Plan (South Africa, 2011a) is the sustainable development of government, business and civil society initiatives to improve the lives of all South Africans. This, together with other recent skills development and human resource legislation promulgated, such as the National Skills Accord (South Africa, 2011b), the National Skills Development Strategy III (South Africa, 2011c), the Skills Development Amendment Bill (South Africa, 2011d) and the Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training (South Africa, 2012) gave impetus to the conceptualisation of workplace learning as core.

The National Skills Accord committed its signatories – government, organised business, organised labour and civil society – to greatly expand the numbers of apprenticeships, internships, workplace-based experience for college students and other opportunities for WIL within industry. This commitment is captured as the second of eight commitments as follows:

"Commitment Two: To make internship and placement opportunities available within workplaces. Companies will annually make 12 000 placements/internship spaces available for students who complete their certificates at FET (now TVET) Colleges, 5 000 internships for 3rd year students at Universities of Technology who need the work experience as part of their qualifications, and opportunities for training exposure in a work environment for at least 16 000 lecturers at FET Colleges. This will be phased in, with 20% of the target to be achieved in 2011, 50% in 2012 and 100% from 2013" (SSACI, 2013).

The provision of WIL is not only directly supported by government policy, its implementation forms part of the Minister of Higher Education and Training's delivery agreement. This is guided by Outcome 5, a skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path, of the government's outcome performance monitoring and evaluation framework. The Minister has committed to 5 outputs in his agreement and Output 3, access to occupationally directed programmes, is directly related to WIL at TVET colleges. The fourth indicator of this output

reads: “% placement rate of learnerships, apprenticeships, and NC(V) students into workplace experience: 70% by 2014.”

Although the policy intent is clear, the implementation of WIL is not regulated. Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) should be familiar with national frameworks in order to align their institutional policies to an agreed WIL national policy. However, SETAs are usually governed by their own policies.

SETAs are considered as one of the key stakeholders in the implementation of WIL, with their main role being to enable Workplace Integrated Learning. SETAs are also responsible for the following (SSACI, 2013):

1. Introducing policy that supports the efficient and effective delivery of WIL.
2. Advocating WIL to other government departments and agencies, and to organised business and labour.
3. Providing incentives to employers to support WIL.
4. Providing direction for the provision of WIL.
5. Funding the provision of WIL.
6. Providing the links between institutions and workplaces.

4.1.1 POLICIES AND LEGISLATION GOVERNING SASSETA WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING

SASSETA is governed by a myriad of policies and legislation that support their mandate, as illustrated in the previous sections.

As stated earlier, SASSETA was established in terms of the Skills Development Act, (No. 97 of 1998) with the mandate to promote and facilitate skills development for the safety and security sector. The SETA’s mandate is therefore to facilitate the skills development in the safety and security sector by making an active contribution towards the realisation of the National Skills Deployment Plan’s (NSDP) vision of ‘An Educated, Skilled and Capable Workforce for South Africa’.

SASSETA strives to improve access to occupations in high demand and priority skills aligned to supporting economic growth, employment creation, and social development while seeking to address systemic considerations. This is advanced through the provision of job-oriented programmes to assist individuals in obtaining employment opportunities.

SASSETA will implement the NSDP 2030 with effect from 01 April 2020 to 31 March 2030.

The NSDP is the key strategic guide to inform skills development interventions and sector skills planning to respond to skills development challenges in the country by making an active

contribution towards the realisation of 'An Educated, Skilled and Capable Workforce for South Africa'. SASSETA has directed themselves to respond to the following eight (8) outcomes of the NDSP: 2030 with outcomes one, two, three and four being the most relevant to this study.

- Outcome 1: Identify and increase production of occupations in high demand
- Outcome 2: Linking education and the workplace
- Outcome 3: Improving the level of skills in the South African workforce
- Outcome 4: Increasing access to occupationally directed programmes
- Outcome 5: Supporting the growth of the public college system
- Outcome 6: Skills development support for entrepreneurship and cooperative development
- Outcome 7: Encouraging and supporting worker-initiated training
- Outcome 8: Supporting career development services

4.2 International Implementation of Work Integrated Learning

WIL interventions are universally implemented because of its recognised benefits. Hardwick-Franco (2018), in his paper on flexible education in Australia, states that Work Based Learning (WBL) has an impact on students by enabling them to have a broader and more comprehensive view of a subject area. It allows them to improve their ability to make decisions, improve personal development, and improve their professional quality. Wall, Hindley, Hunt, Peach, Preston, Hartley, & Fairbank's (2018) research on the implementation of work-based education in vocational education in the United States, found that WBL provides a transformative impact that combines responsibility, ethics, cooperation, hard work, discipline, and mutual respect reflected in work. Additionally, Quartoro (2016) states that for many students, WIL creates a powerful bridge between the theoretical material in the classroom and the practical application of that knowledge. It accelerates the students' skill development and often increases students' interest in classes as well, as they understand the value of what they are learning and how they will draw on content from different courses in their work.

Sattler (2011) outlines a typology of WIL experiences in colleges and universities. There is systematic training, in which the workplace is "the central piece of the learning" (e.g. apprenticeship); the structured work experience, in which "students are familiarised with the world of work within a post-secondary education programme" (e.g. field experience, co-op, internship); and institutional partnerships, which refer to "post-secondary education activities [designed] to achieve industry or community goals" (e.g. service learning).

Furthermore, Stirling, Kerr, Banwell, MacPherson, Bandealy & Battaglia (2022) suggest that clear articulation of student learning outcomes, assessment and plans has the greatest impact on the educational quality of the structured work experience and is also used to assure educational quality of the other learning modes addressed. Kolb and Kolb (2005) note the importance of making space for different factors that foster learning in experiential education, including the development of expertise through repeated practice, active reflection, connecting experience to interests and emotions, allowing the student to take responsibility and direction over his/her own learning, and constructive communication. Ash and Clayton (2009) add that reflection assists students in thinking critically about their work experiences by contemplating the influence an experience has on their life.

It is important to remember that WIL requires many people to make the workplace learning experience effective and a success. According to Martin and Hughes (2010), the integration of learning and practice throughout the WIL experience is a shared responsibility between students, academic faculty/ staff and the workplace supervisors/ employers. Specific roles for integrating theory and practice, as outlined by Martin *et al*. (2010), include that:

1. Faculty/ staff should build the integration of knowledge into the structured work experience as a formal and explicit learning outcome and combine this with formal assessment tasks;

2. Students have the responsibility to integrate what they have learned in the workplace and relate it to or incorporate it into the next phase of academic learning; and

3. The workplace supervisor/ employer holds the responsibility of facilitating student learning through the selection, proper execution and feedback given on work-related activities in which students participate at the workplace.

In addition, Cornell (2003) states that mentors open the avenue for practical instruction after the student has received theoretical information from the instructors at the institution. Mentors have the ability to encourage teamwork, foster positive attitudes about the professional setting, facilitate reflection, encourage risk taking and support the transition from theory to practice (Lu, 2007).

Given that the post-secondary student population is increasingly diverse and the number of students with special learning needs is increasing, it is important to consider diverse learners in WIL experiences on a global scale (Severance & Starr, 2011). Case studies on how WIL is implemented in Germany and Indonesia are presented below, showcasing its success factors as well as its challenges.

Germany

Germany's approach to WIL is known as the Dual System, where vocational education and training takes place in parallel. These are fundamentally based on the integration of companies as training providers together with VET schools or other education/training institutes. In these programmes, learners spend a significant time on training in companies. In parallel, or in "alternating" periods, they acquire general and occupation-related knowledge and often complementary practical skills and key competences in VET schools or other education/training institutes. One in twenty staff is an apprentice in Germany, but the numbers are far lower in most other European countries.

Three days of vocational training at a company and two days of vocational education at a vocational college. Attending a vocational school is arranged via legal, compulsory education. Apprentices are considered as members of the company for the duration of their training, which is usually 3 years. Transition from school to work and training is carried out weekly. Gessler and Hower (2013) add that it is unsurprising that the transition from VET to a subsequent professional activity usually runs smoothly. The success of Germany's dual system is attributed to the fact that teaching and learning at vocational colleges is geared towards the reality of work and not towards the structure of academic disciplines or academically structured knowledge.

Haasler (2020:59) says the German vocational training system comprises more training routes, each of which corresponds to a specific labour market demand, training concept and logic of social inclusion. Apart from the dual system, school-based vocational training programmes constitute the second fully qualifying training sector in Germany. This training does not take place in a company, but only at a vocational school or a vocational college. Haasler and Gottschall (2015) further iterate that dual training and school-based programmes have a well-established tradition and have been gaining significance with the ongoing expansion of the services sector, as they mainly qualify people for jobs in personal social services.

However, Bibb (2019) mentions that while there are increasing problems with filling training positions, efforts made by the economy to increase the interest of young people in dual VET were successful among young males. A record high of 384,900 males applied, and a record low of 225,100 women applied for dual vocational education and training. Esser (2019) states that: "only once we succeed in further reducing matching problems on the training market and in bringing supply and demand closer together, shall we overcome the current demographic challenges and be able to ensure the supply of skilled workers needed in the economy".

Indonesia

Rahdiyanta et al (2019) note that factors affecting the implementation of Work Based Learning (WBL-II) in vocational education can be grouped into two: situational factors and learning factors. Situational factors include school culture, corporate culture, and institutional performance. In contrast, the learning process factors are affected by lecturers, students, curricula, and learning facilities. They suggest that the learning process will be better if it involves qualified educators and students (smart, highly motivated and well-behaved). It is also suggested that WBL-II should be supported by adequate learning resources and optimal learning facilities.

With the implementation of WBL-II in Indonesia, in line with the study of the industry internship programme conducted by Nurhadi et al (insert date), it was explained that the programme implemented had not been understood by students, and readiness for work skills had not been considered. In addition, Nurhadi et all indicated that there were differences in the understanding between the industry and education. Sutiman et al (2022) denoted that most companies were dissatisfied and that the dissatisfaction was attributed to: short internships duration, unsystematic monitoring, and low student readiness. The industry expects the organisers to equip their students with product knowledge, hard skills, and soft skills.

Ali et al (2020) stated that not many students were ready to understand the purpose of industrial practice(s). As a result, they do not understand the value and what will be done during industrial practice(s). Vocational Education has limited collaboration and is not proportional to the number of practitioners, which results in students having to look for industry placements independently.

Rahdiyenta et al (2019, 309) stated that for cooperation between industry and colleges to achieve the best outcomes, there must be MOUs and regulation from the government that reinforce the importance of cooperation between the campus and industry in order to produce superior and noble human resources. The problem of ineffectiveness and unsystematic implementation of WBL-II must be addressed. Moreover, the implementation of WBL-II should enable all actors to be equally involved and responsible for effective and systematic workplace training efforts. Sutiman et al (2022) suggest that the WBL-II programme must be integrated with the education curriculum to involve all stakeholders in shaping the character and culture of the industry. In addition to this, they state that implementation problems can be overcome by optimising the role of the ‘education’ side and its role in Work Based Learning.

4.3 Implementation of Work Integrated Learning in South Africa

4.3.1 How WIL is defined in South Africa

South Africa's Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) defines WIL as "the component of a learning programme that focuses on the application of learning in an authentic learning workplace context under the supervision and mentorship of a person/s representing the workplace" (HEQC, 2004). Patrick, Peach, Pocknee, Webb, Fletcher & Pretto (2008). *The WIL (Work Integrated Learning) report: A national scoping study*. Queensland University of Technology. (2008) list the following WIL-adjacent terms: practicum, professional practice, internship, workplace learning, industry-based learning, project-based learning, cooperative education, fieldwork education, service learning, real-world learning, university-engaged learning, placements, experiential learning, clinical placement, and professional placement, to mention but a few. According to the CHE's WIL Good Practice Guide (2011), Work Integrated Learning is used as an umbrella term to describe curricular, pedagogic, and assessment practices across a range of academic disciplines that integrate formal learning and workplace concerns. Govender and Taylor (2016) explain that the WIL model allows students to gain workplace knowledge, skills and experience while industry partners observe the newly emerging talent in the form of future-fit leaders entering the world of work.

The HEQC Work Integrated Learning: Good Practice Guide (CHE, 2011), outlines four main curricular modalities for programmes. The workplace models in South Africa that align workplace experience (practical) and academic interests (theory) are work-directed theoretical learning (WDTL); problem-based learning (PBL); project-based learning (PjBL); and workplace learning (WPL). The latter, WPL, is commonly referred to as WIL in the South African context.

4.3.2 implementation of WIL in South Africa

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act, which was passed in 1995, established SAQA to oversee the development and implementation of an integrated national framework of quality-assured learning. The focus areas for SAQA's mandate include facilitation of access; mobility and progression within education, training, and development; enhancing the quality of education and training; accelerating redress of educational and job opportunities; and advancing personal, social, and economic development (SAQA, 2002).

With the support of policy, Govender and Wait (2017) say that Higher Education also has to play its role in the process of preparing future-fit graduates to contribute to the growth of the economic sector. Matoti, Junqueira and Odora (2011) claim that while there are definite

academic, personal, career and work ethic benefits, WIL promotes partnerships with business, industry and government to improve economic growth for the country.

4.3.3 Defining WIL

SA's Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) defines WIL as: the component of a learning programme that focuses on the application of learning in an authentic learning workplace context under the supervision and mentorship of a person/s representing the workplace. Patrick *et al.* (2008) lists the following WIL-adjacent terms: practicum, professional practice, internship, workplace learning, industry-based learning, project-based learning, cooperative education, fieldwork education, service learning, real-world learning, university-engaged learning, placements, experiential learning, clinical placement, and professional placement, to mention but a few. According to the Council for Higher Education (CHE) WIL Good Practice Guide (2011), Work Integrated Learning is used as an umbrella term to describe curricular, pedagogic, and assessment practices across a range of academic disciplines that integrate formal learning and workplace concerns. Govender and Taylor (2016) explain that the WIL model allows students to gain workplace knowledge, skills and experience while industry partners observe the newly emerging talent in the form of future-fit leaders entering the world of work.

The HEQC publication, Work Integrated Learning: Good Practice Guide (CHE, 2011:16-21), outlines four main curricular modalities for programmes. The workplace models in South Africa that align workplace experience (practical) and academic interests (theory) are: work-directed theoretical learning (WDTL); problem-based learning (PBL); project-based learning (PjBL); and workplace learning (WPL). The latter, WPL, is commonly referred to as WIL in the South African context.

4.3.4 Implementing WIL

Schuller and Bergami (2012) emphasise the need for the implementation of WIL curriculum approaches to inform students about contemporary work practices, which enables graduates to be efficient when entering the workforce. The Higher Education Qualification Sub-Framework (HEQSF) makes it clear that workplace-based learning "must be properly structured, properly supervised and assessed" and that "it is the responsibility of the institutions that offer programmes requiring credits for such learning, to place students into appropriate workplaces" (HEQSF 2012:49). The "Policy on Professional Qualifications for TVET Lecturers" (Republic of South Africa, 2013b) also stipulates the duration of WIL in each programme and the industry-based WIL component across TVET lecturer qualifications need to be structured, supervised, and assessed in appropriate teaching and specialised workplace

settings. Yet, there are no specific guidelines on how to integrate WIL in technical and vocational education and in the vocational teacher education curriculum.

In a study by the Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA), workplace mentors and trade unions raised concerns around the placement of students. The general consensus was that the colleges did not do enough to assist students with work placements and that students were not provided with appropriate work experience that is relevant to their programmes of study in some instances. Taylor and Govender (2013) recommend that students complete a 'work-preparedness skills programme' prior to entering the workplace as "the workplaces made increasing calls for TVET Colleges to be more involved in the monitoring process of their students' workplace learning".

In most WIL projects, the educator controls all interaction between the organisation and the students, including student placements, site visits, ongoing monitoring of students' work and progress, and assessment of student learning and performance occurs during the placement. However, Govender and Taylor (2015) and Walmsley, Thomas and Jameson (2006) propose student self-placement, instead of educator, business or government placement of the student, for an effective and efficient WIL model implementation, as well as greater benefits for students' experiential learning. The emphasis is on self-placement as it benefits the student in that s/he must think about, plan, and confidently approach an organisation to request, secure, confirm and complete their WIL placement. Although it is a requirement by the institutions in South Africa, this concept fosters self-empowerment on the part of students who will later on in their lives have to find employment on their own.

In South Africa, the world of work does not only entail big corporations, but small and medium sized businesses as well. Kaburi et al (2012) suggested that, in resolving the issue of Work Integrated Learning, there should be an approach to solving entrepreneurial challenges in developing nations such as South Africa. They point out that poor or no knowledge in business management, the lack of role models, amongst others are major setback in entrepreneurial programmes. Meanwhile, Pienaar (2016) holds the view that the identified challenges of entrepreneurial programmes can be resolved through Work Integrated Learning programmes.

4.4 SASSETA implementation of WIL

SASSETA published a Discretionary Grant Policy (2021/22), which sets out the funding framework for learning programmes that are supported by the SETA. Eighty percent (80%) of the SASSETA discretionary grant fund, as regulated by the SETA Grant Regulations, are to be spent on PIVOTAL programmes – professional, internships, vocational, technical and academic learning. It provides criteria for employment equity among beneficiaries of grant

funding, disability and people from rural areas. A mentor-learner ratio of 1:5 is recommended for WIL.

N6 TVET students are required to do at least 18 months' workplace experience to acquire their qualification. SASSETA plays an important role by providing stipends to learners and encouraging employers in its sector to host these learners for these 18 months. In 2018/19, a total of 817 TVET students had been supported to obtain workplace experience, against a target of 800. During the 2019/20 FY, 1 003 TVET students were supported to obtain workplace experience, against a target of 1 000. In 2020/21, a total of 157 TVET students were supported to obtain workplace experience, against a target of 150. The SETA partnered with South-West TVET College, Sekhukhune TVET College and Mnambithi TVET College to ensure that students from rural areas obtained the relevant workplace exposure required (SASSETA Annual Reports).

Secondary data analysis was done using the databases of TVET college WIL learners. The graphs below illustrate what emerged from that analysis.

4.5 Workplace placements: challenge and opportunities

4.5.1 Opportunities

While the content of learning activities differs among industries and even among different categories of employees in a single organisation, there are many common themes that support the need for, and delivery of, workplace learning for employees. Stirling et al., (2016) identified workplace benefits: Work Integrated Learning enhances students' understanding of their own learning style as well as their own learning processes. Work Integrated Learning develops students' knowledge and skills of critical reflection which in turn makes them better able to direct thoughtful and insightful practices in their places of work with little or no supervision. It also equips students with the basic knowledge and skills that are required to structure formative and summative reflection assignments. It improves the ability of students to link theory and practice as well as testing and trying new concepts and ideas. It furthermore promotes individual and professional growth and enriches the higher education experiences of students.

With the support of policy, Govender and Wait (2017) assert that Higher Education has to play its role in the process of preparing future-fit graduates to contribute to the growth of the economy. Matoti *et al* (2011) claim that while there are definite academic, personal, career and work ethic benefits, WIL promotes partnerships with business, industry and government to improve economic growth for the country.

Sung and Choi (2014) add that investment in employee learning benefits organisations' innovative performance. McQuaid, Raeside, Canduela, Egdell and Lindsay (2012) found that for low-skilled workers motivating factors for pursuing training included getting a better job, personal improvement, being better at their work and improving their skills.

4.5.2 Challenges

The challenges that were mentioned by students include "the challenge of not being visited during the WIL period by the person from college", "not getting jobs", a lack of "money for paying fees" and "the diploma". The workplace mentors and/or supervisors also indicated that their challenge was to deal with students who were left on their own by their colleges. They did not know whom to contact when students encountered problems. The main challenge of the trade unions was their non-involvement in the placement and mentoring of students and lack of close working relationships between the colleges and workplaces (ETDP SETA, 2021). The ETDP SETA suggests that TVET students should be assisted to find placement opportunities and, if it is not the responsibility of TVET Colleges to manage workplace learning, a dedicated management structure should be in place to ensure that students are placed in appropriate workplace learning sites that are in line with their programmes of study (ETDP, 2021).

Smigiel & Harris (2007, n.p.) provide examples of typical comments regarding problems with work placements: "… (a) pressure to increase the number of graduates but struggle with limited number of practicum places available (b) non-clinical academic staff focus their efforts on research and do not acknowledge the importance of the practicum." Yoyo (2007: 7) reports that the University of Fort Hare experienced similar problems. He states that "Internally it was – and to a lesser extent still is – extremely difficult to convince academics to embrace co-operative education fully."

Maseko (2018) describes challenges to workplace learning in the mining industry that include student placement in the industry, further improvement of the WIL curriculum and programmes, improvement of pedagogical skills for university teachers in engineering, availability of suitable mentors, environments conducive for training and development in the industry, and effective partnerships to improve WIL. Mokasha, Aigbavboa and Oke Ayodeji, (2016), add that the challenge of mismatching skills can cause long delays in the availability of occupationally directed qualifications, lack of articulation and progress as well as limited range of training programmes being offered. Schnitzler (2020) argues that the roll-out of learnerships has been an enormous task from an operational point of view, as they are time-consuming and difficult to implement. Mthalane (2022) adds that workplaces do not always understand current practices with regard to education and training and assessment; and

workplaces are unclear on roles and responsibilities as a workplace hosting a learnership. Kiriri (2019) mentioned that employers have been accused of displaying a lack of commitment towards strategic objectives of skilling the nation and, consequently, impact directly on implementation and success of learnership programmes.

4.6 Conclusion

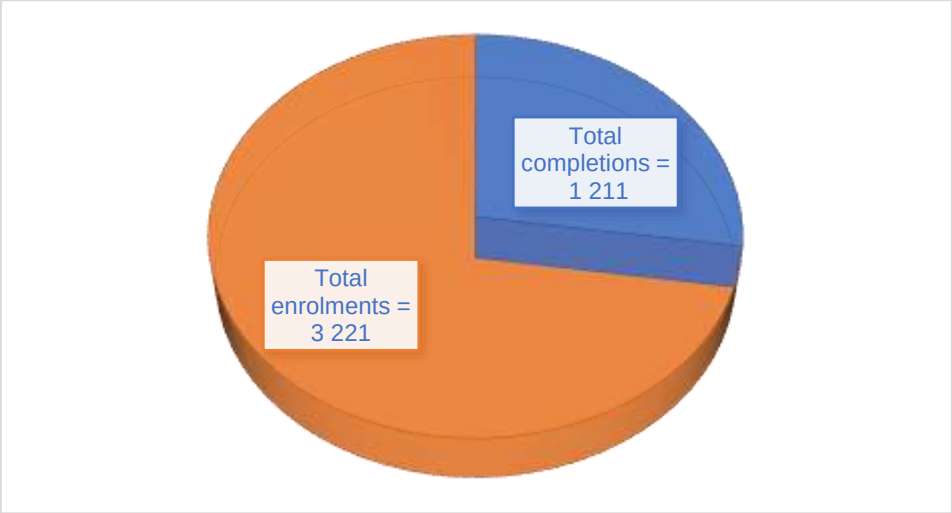
The literature review shows that although the policy intent of the provision of WIL for TVET college students is clear, there is no regulation that guides the implementation of WIL.

The benefit of WIL is evident. International and national experience shows that WIL creates a powerful bridge between the theoretical material in the classroom and the practical application of that knowledge. It assists students in thinking critically about their work experiences. It is also evident that WIL, if implemented effectively, is a shared responsibility between students, academic faculty/staff, and the workplace supervisors/employers/mentors.

4.7 SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

Between the 2016/17 and 2020/21 FYs SASSETA enrolled 3 221 learners into TVET Placement Programmes and 1 211 learners completed these programmes within the same time period (Figure 1).

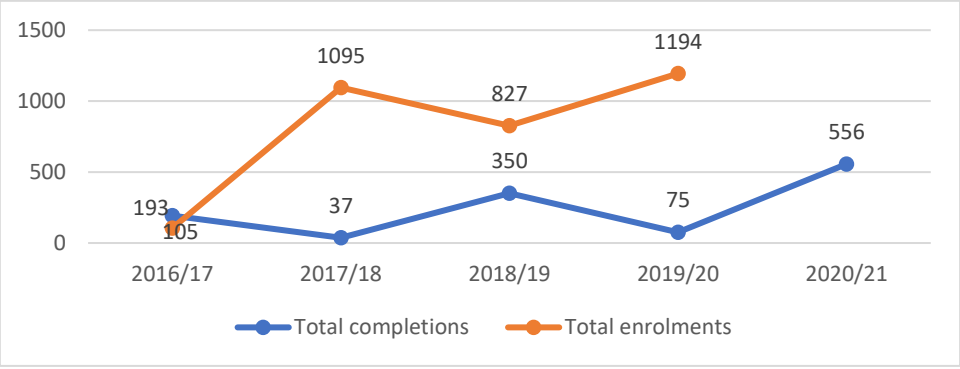
Figure 1: Total enrolments and completions, 2016/17-2020/21



Source: SASSETA Learner Database, 2022

Both enrolments and completions increased over the 5-year period, enrolments from 105 learners in 2016/17 to 1 194 learners in 2020/21, and completions increased from 193 learners in 2016/17 to 556 learners in 2020/21 (Figure 2)

Figure 2: Trends in enrolments and completions, 2016/17-2020/21[1]



[1] Enrolments is captured for 2019-2021 including both the 2019/20 period and the 2020/21 period.

Source: SASSETA Learner Database, 2022

In the FY 2017/18, enrolments increased significantly to 1 095 whilst completions declined to 37 learners, thereby widening the gap between enrolments and completions, with the increase in completions to 350 learners in 2018/19, the gap declined.

4.7.1 Demographics

In terms of gender, the majority of the learners who enrolled and completed the programme were female at 73% enrolments and 74% completions, over the 2016/17 and 2020/21 period.

Figure 4: Enrolments: Gender Breakdown

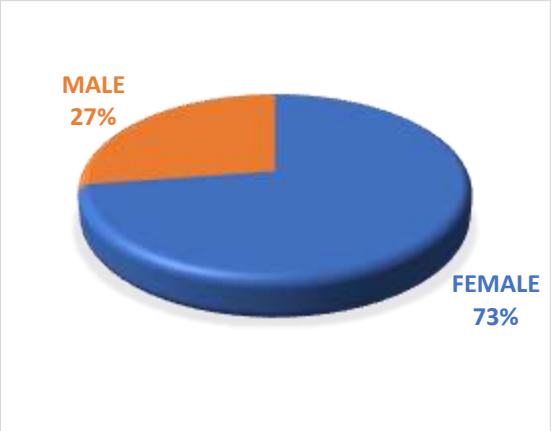
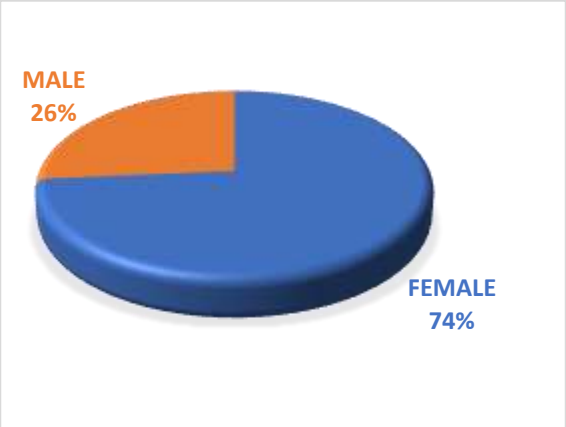


Figure 3: Completions: Gender Breakdown



Source: SASSETA Learner Database, 2022

In terms of race, the large majority of learners enrolling and completing the TVET placement programmes are African.

Figure 6 : Enrolments: Racial Breakdown

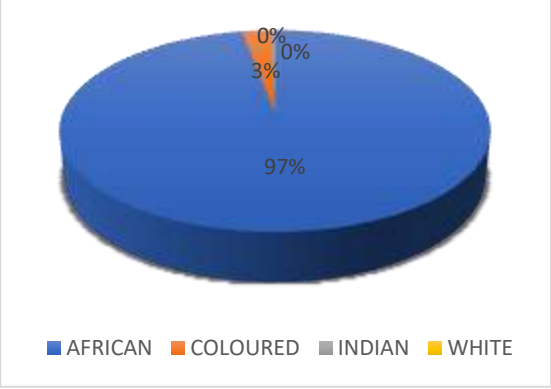
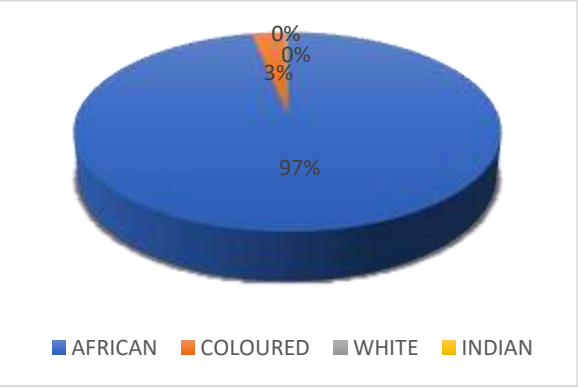


Figure 5 : Completions: Racial Breakdown



Source: SASSETA Learner Database, 2022

Figure 8: Enrolments: Age Breakdown

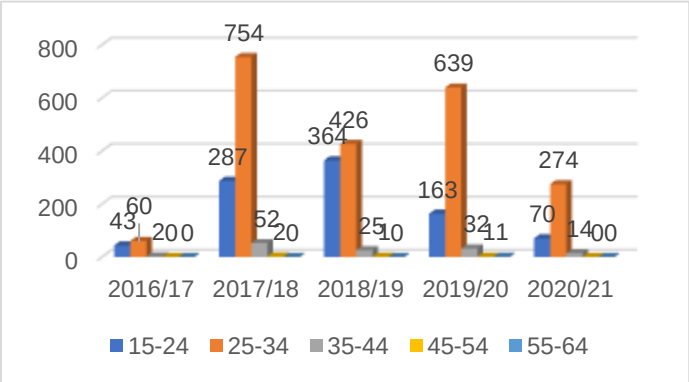
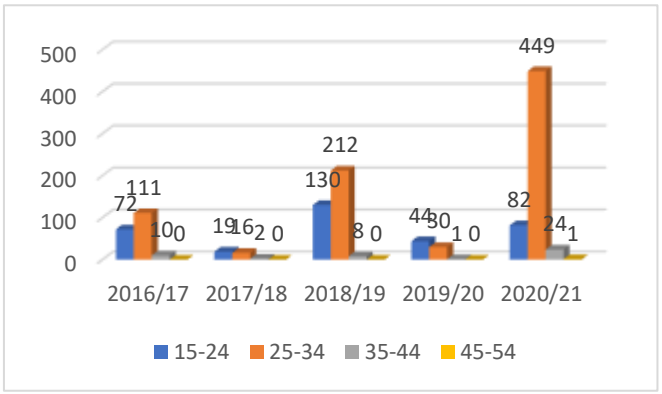


Figure 7: Completions: Age Breakdown



Source: SASSETA Learner Database, 2022

It is predominantly youth entering and completing the programmes, between the ages of 15 and 34, with the 25 - 34-year age group accounting for the biggest proportion of enrolments and completions.

4.7.2 Geographic Location

Learners from Mpumalanga (36%), Gauteng (23%) and Eastern Cape (10%) provinces enrolled in the programmes while a greater number of learners from KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Gauteng provinces completed the programmes.

Figure 10: Enrolments - Provinces where students live

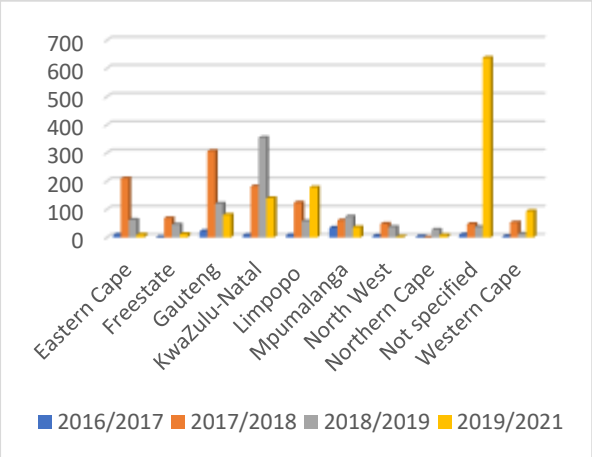
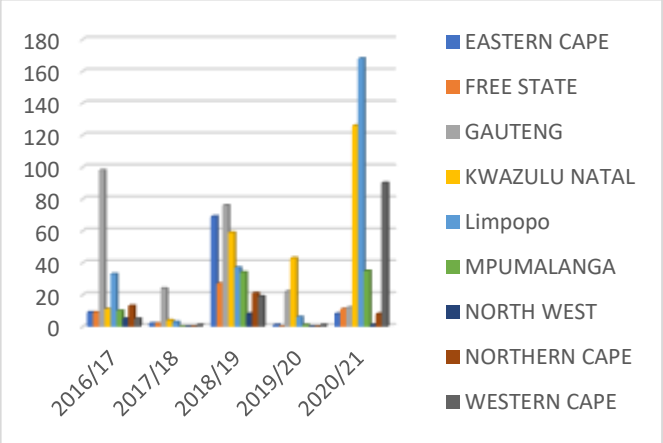


Figure 9: Completions - Provinces where students live



Source: SASSETA Learner Database, 2022

Learners enrolling and completing the programmes predominantly live in urban areas.

Figure 7: Enrolments – Rural/ urban classification

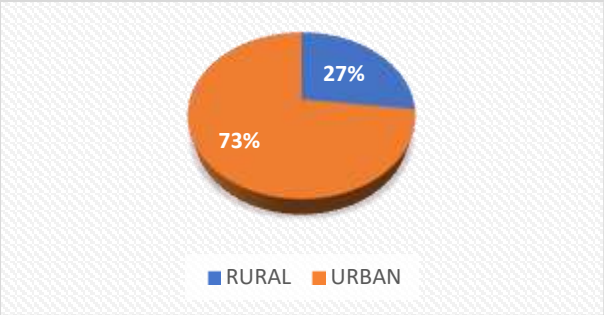
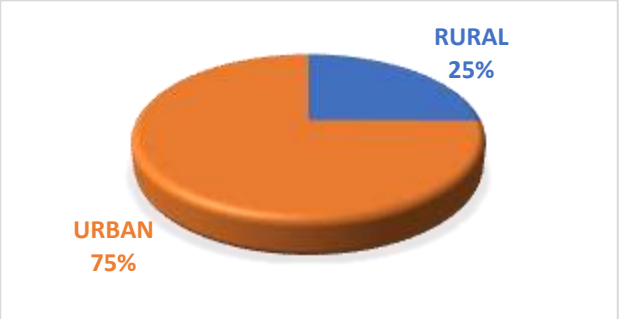


Figure 8: Completions – Rural/ urban classification



Source: SASSETA Learner Database, 2022

In summary, learners entering and completing the SASSETA TVET placement programmes are predominantly African female youth living in urban areas.

CHAPTER 5

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter discusses the implementation of SASSETA TVET placement interventions. It looks at enrolment trends including the demographics of learners enrolled in the TVET placement interventions.

5.1 SASSETA implementation of TVET placement interventions

SASSETA publishes a Discretionary Grant Policy annually. The policy sets out the funding framework for learning programmes that are supported by the SETA. 80% of the SASSETA discretionary grant fund, as regulated by the SETA Grant Regulations, are to be spent on PIVOTAL programmes, that is, on professional, internships, vocational, technical and academic learning programmes. The regulations provide criteria for employment equity among beneficiaries of grant funding, including disability and people from rural areas.

In terms of the implementation of TVET placement interventions, N6 TVET college students are required to acquire at least 18 months of workplace experience after concluding their theoretical learning to obtain their qualification. SASSETA plays an important role by providing stipends to these learners and encouraging employers in its sector to host these learners for the 18-month period. A logbook is provided to guide employers in terms of the practical aspects the learners must get exposed to. Learners gain work experience as prescribed in the logbook and at the end of the 18 months, the logbook acts as evidence of work completed and is used to determine if the learner can complete their qualification. For WIL, it is important that a mentor is assigned to leaners. A mentor-learner ratio of 1:5 is recommended for WIL.

The key role players in TVET placement interventions are SASSETA, the TVET college and the host employer. SASSETA, in most cases, enters into a contract with the host employer. In cases where there is a lead employer, which is the TVET college in most cases, the SETA enters into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). These contracts stipulate roles and responsibilities, as well as key deliverables.

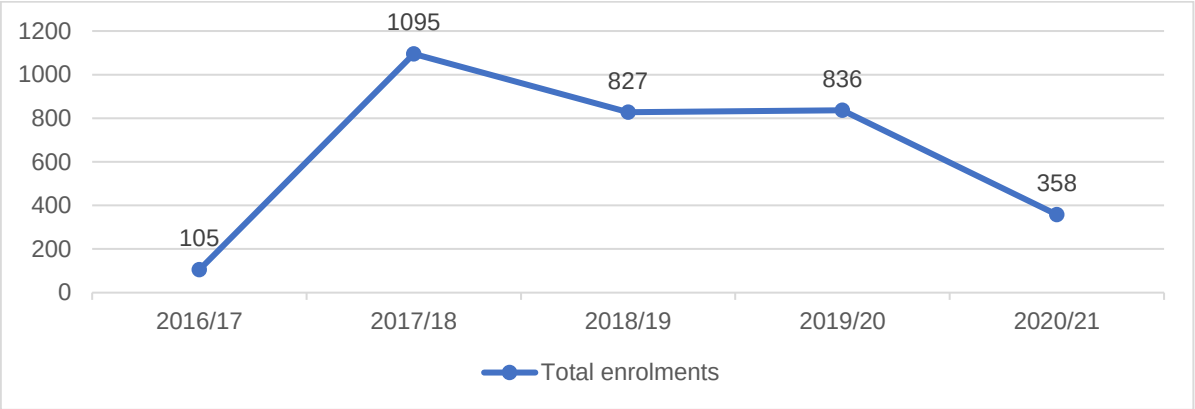
Another contract is signed between SASSETA and the learner, where the learner's responsibilities are outlined and requirements for the payment of stipends are stipulated.

5.2 Enrolment

The number of learners enrolling into the SASSETA TVET placement interventions increased between 2016/17 and 2019/20, however this increase was not consistent. Enrolments

increased from 105 learners in 2016/17 to 1 095 learners in 2017/18, before declining to 827 learners in 2018/19. This decline was followed by an increase to 836 learners in the 2019/20 period (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Total enrolment in TVET placement interventions, 2016-2021



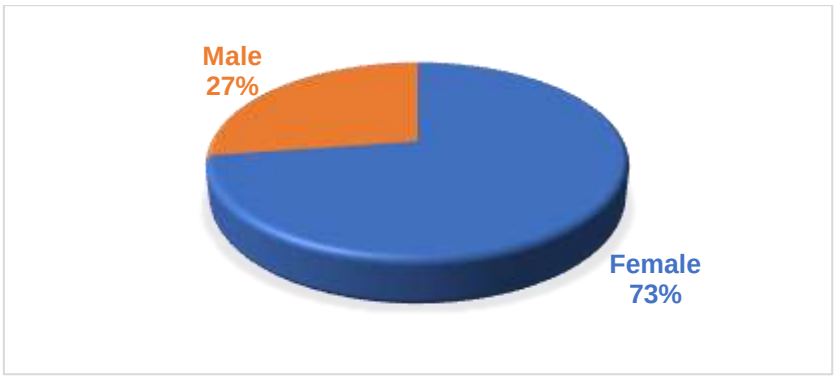
Source: SASSETA TVET Database, 2023

The number of learners enrolled in TVET placement interventions declined significantly in 2020/21. During the Covid-19 pandemic, training was one of the activities that were deemed non-essential and as a result, the programme experienced a dip in enrolments in 2020 at the height of the lockdown.

Total enrolment for the 5-year period (2016-2021) was 3 221 learners.

In terms of the demographics of learners who have enrolled into SASSETA TVET placement interventions, Figure 2 shows that 73% of learners who enrolled during the 2016 -2021 period were female whereas 27% were male.

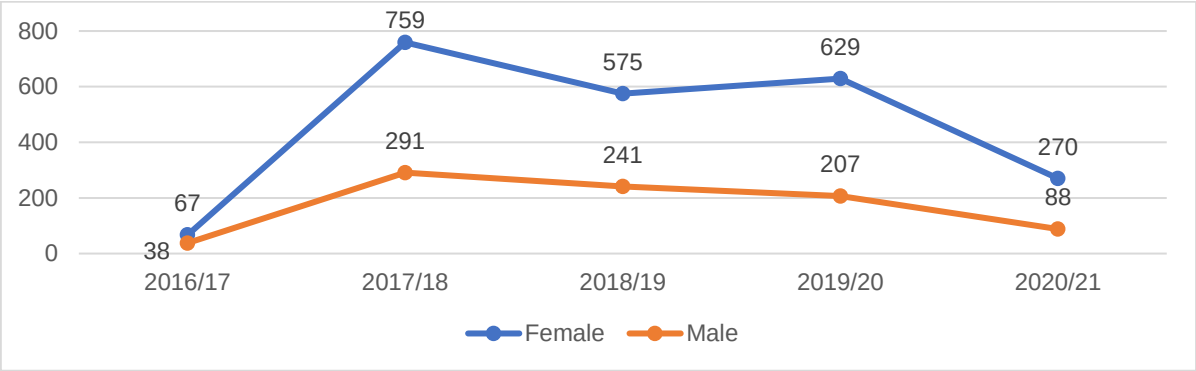
Figure 12: Gender breakdown of enrolment, 2016-2021



Source: SASSETA TVET Database, 2023

In looking at the trend analysis in Figure 13, female enrolment is consistently more than male enrolment over the 2016-2021 period, with male enrolment being on a declining trend and female enrolment being more erratic.

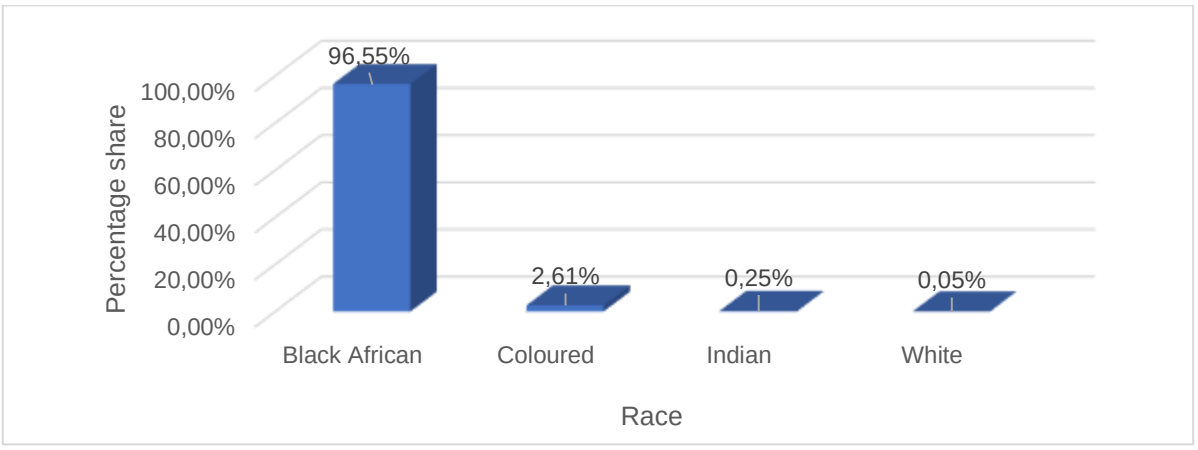
Figure 13: Gender breakdown of enrolments, trend 2016-2021



Source: SASSETA TVET Database, 2023

The Black African racial group dominates in terms of the racial profile of enrolled learners (97%) (Figure 14). 2.61% of enrolled learners are Coloured whereas 0.25% of enrolled learners are Indians and 0.05% are White.

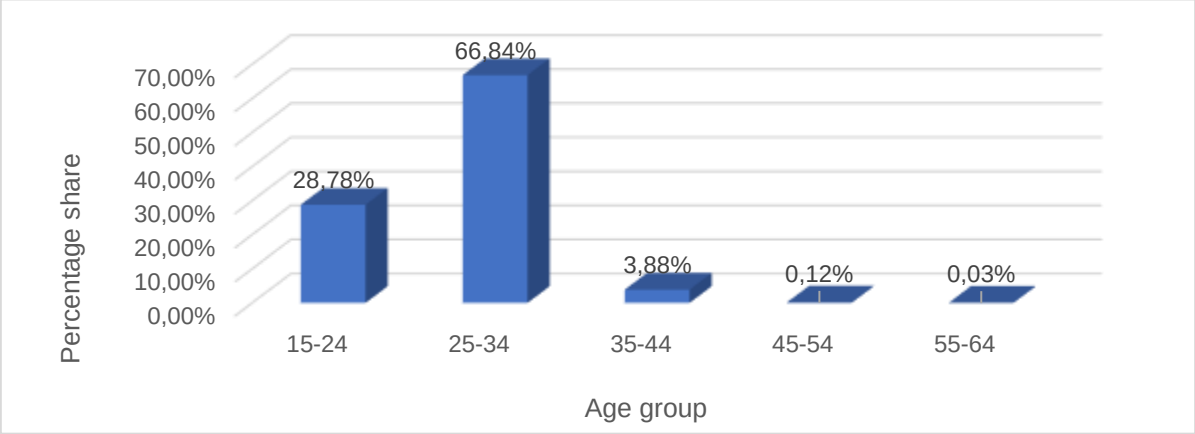
Figure 14 : Racial breakdown of enrolments, 2016-2021



Source: SASSETA TVET Database, 2023

Over the 5-year period, the age group capturing the highest proportion of enrolments was the 25 - 34 years age category (67%). This is followed by the 15 - 24 age category (29%). The 35 - 64 age category capture less than 5% of the enrolled TVET placement learner population (Figure 15).

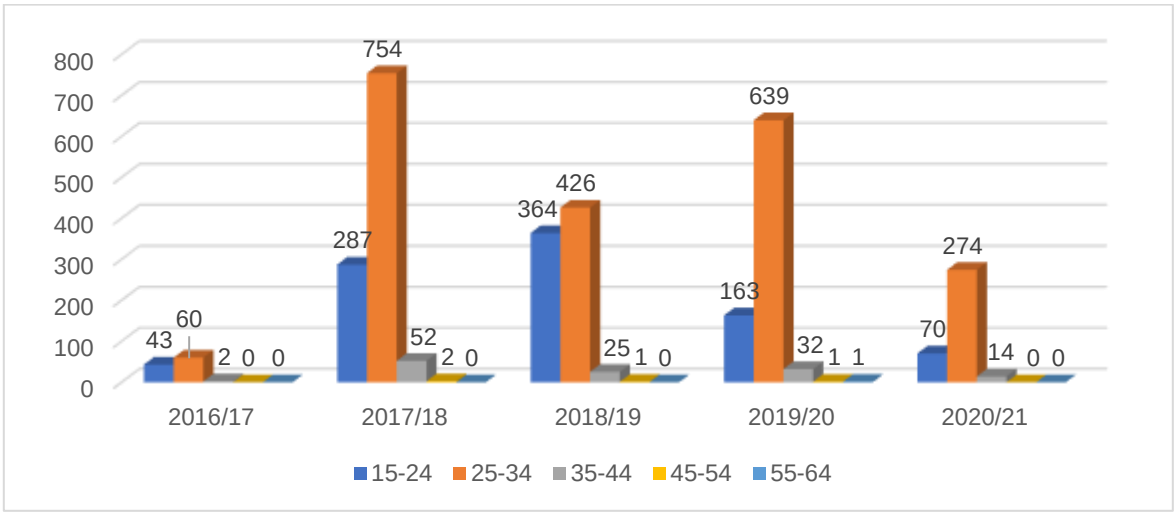
Figure 15: Age breakdown of enrolments, 2016-2021



Source: SASSETA TVET Database, 2023

Figure 16 shows that the 25 - 34 age group was consistently the highest over the 5-year period. This was followed by the 15 - 24 age group over the same period.

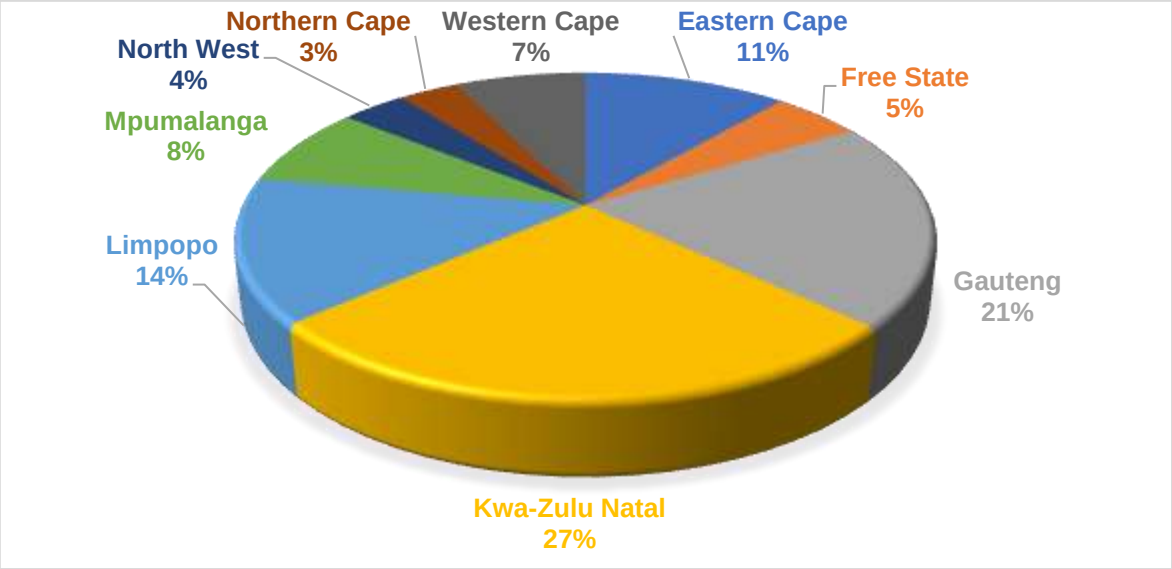
Figure 16: Age breakdown of enrolments, trend 2016-2021



Source: SASSETA TVET Database, 2023

In terms of the provincial spread of enrolled learners, KwaZulu-Natal (27%), Gauteng (21%) and Limpopo (14%) account for the largest share of enrolments (

Figure 17: Provincial spread of enrolled learners, 2016-021



Source: SASSETA TVET Database, 2023

In summary, it was predominantly Black African females between the ages of 25 and 34 years from the KwaZulu-Natal or Gauteng provinces who enrolled in the SASSETA TVET placement interventions between 2016-2021.

What follows is a discussion on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the SASSETA TVET placement interventions.

CHAPTER 6

EVALUATION FINDINGS AND EVALUATION

In this chapter, the evaluation and findings are presented in detail. The chapter includes a discussion on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the SASSETA TVET placement interventions.

6.1 Relevance

Relevance determines the extent to which an intervention's objectives and design respond to the beneficiaries', institutional, national and global needs, policies and priorities.

Relevance has been assessed against:

- The programme's responsiveness to labour market needs and addressing the scarce skills identified by the SASSETA.
- Relevance in relation to policy
- The relevance of the theory learned in the TVET college in assisting learners in the workplace.
- The appropriateness of TVET placements, which should contribute to the learner completing the qualification and becoming work ready.
- The extent to which the Work Integrated Learning assisted the learner in meeting the requirements to complete their qualification.

6.1.1 Responsiveness to labour market needs

SASSETA annually develops a Sector Skills Plan (SSP) which identifies scarce skills or "occupations in high demand". When discretionary grants are being made available, the expectation is that the focus of the SETA should be on developing scarce skills.

Table 1 lists the SASSETA's top 10 occupations that were in high demand in 2022. The table shows that occupations such as Alarms, Security and Surveillance Monitors as well as Detectives and Attorneys were key.

Table 1: Ten Priority Occupations identified by SASSETA, 2022

Occupations in High Demand in the Sector	Interventions to address occupations in High Demand	Quantity Needed	Quantity to be supported by the SETA
Associate legal professional	Bursary	73	20

Occupations in High Demand in the Sector	Interventions to address occupations in High Demand	Quantity Needed	Quantity to be supported by the SETA
ICT Security Specialist	Bursary	400	10
Safety, Health, Environment and Quality (SHEQ) Practitioner	Skills Programme	66	100
Training and Development Professional	Skills Programme	75	50
Security Services Manager	Bursary	20	20
Alarms, Security or Surveillance Monitor	Learnership	2562	200
Community Development Manager	Learnership	110	20
Attorney	Bursary	870	50
Detective	Skills Programme	1200	100
Computer Network and Systems Engineer	Bursary	168	10

Source: SASSETA SSP, 2022/23

When looking at the top occupations learners enrolled in for the TVET placement interventions (Table 2), they are not directly in line with the occupations on the SASSETA's Top 10 list (Table 1). Safety in Society could be linked with a few of the occupations on the Top 10 list including Security Services Manager; Alarms, Security and Surveillance Monitors as well as Detectives. Similarly, Security Officer could be linked to the same occupations on the top 10 list, however, there is generally, no direct link.

Table 2: Enrolment by occupation, 2016-2021

Occupation	Number enrolled	Occupation2	Number enrolled
Financial Management	394	**Senior Police Officer**	5
Safety in Society	326	**Electrical**	4
Human Resource Management	305	**Electrical Engineer**	4
Human Resources Clerk	223	**General Manager Public Service**	4
Office Administration	198	**Office Management**	4
Public Management	186	**Computer Network Technician**	3
Management Assistant	179	**Hospitality**	3
Management	149	**Information Technology**	3
Financial Accountant	133	**Mechanical Engineer**	3

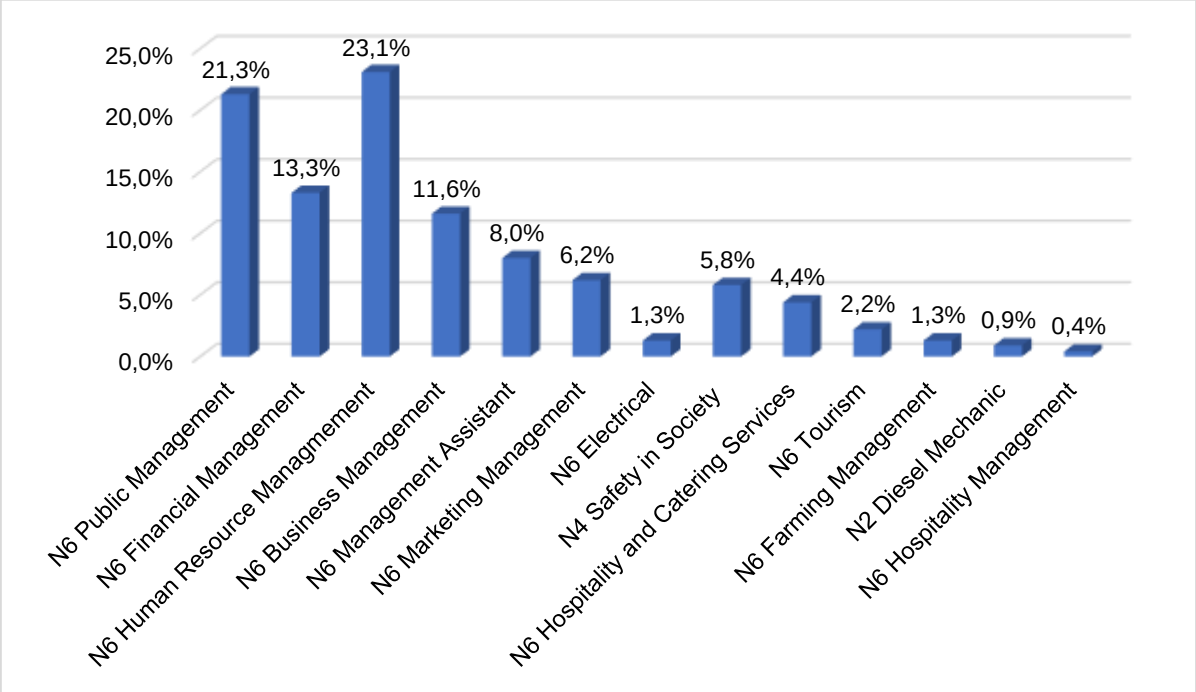
Occupation	Number enrolled	Occupation2	Number enrolled
Business Management	109	**Program or Project Administrators**	3
Non - commissioned Police Official	106	**Supply Chain Management**	3
Management Consultant	95	**Accounting Officer**	2
Business Administration	91	**Civil Engineer**	2
Personal Assistant	48	**Civil Engineering Technician**	2
Security Officer	30	**Clothing, Textile and Footwear Manufacturing Process Control Technician**	2
Marketing Practitioner	28	**Computer practice**	2
Engineering	19	**Interior Designer**	2
Financial Markets Practitioner	18	**Law**	2
Finance Broker	17	**Public Administration**	2
Cook	15	**Safety Inspector**	2
Human Resource Advisor	15	**Safety, Health, Environment and Quality (SHE&Q) Practitioner**	2
Marketing Coordinator	15	**Small Business Manager**	2
Correctional Services	12	**Academic Administrative Officer**	1
Farming Management	12	**Automotive Engine Mechanic**	1
Legal Secretary	12	**Biomedical Engineer**	1
Marketing Management	12	**Chef**	1
Bookkeeper	10	**Chemical Engineer**	1
Public Relations	10	**Computer Operator**	1
Accounts Clerk	8	**Financial Investment Advisor**	1
Electrical Engineering Technician	7	**Health and Safety Manager**	1
Account Clerk (Public Relations / Communication)	6	**Maintenance**	1
Catering Production Manager	6	**Management Accountant**	1
Public Speaker	6	**Market Campaign Analyst**	1
Tourism	6	**Paralegal**	1
Accounting	5	**Skills Development Administrator**	1
Market Research Analyst	5	**Grand Total**	**3221**

Source: SASSETA TVET database, 2023

It should be noted that the SSP is updated annually and accordingly, the occupations in high demand are also updated each year. In the 2021/22 SSP, the occupations which were most in demand included Traffic Officer, Safety, Health, Environment Quality Practitioner, ICT Security Specialist, Paralegal and an Advanced K53 Security Driver. Again, these are not directly linked to the qualifications that learners are enrolled for in the TVET placement interventions.

Figure 18 shows the survey responses on the fields of study of learners in TVET placement interventions. Again, if this is compared to the list above in the 2022/23 SSP, none of the fields of study in the figure below will directly develop a person for entry into an occupation in high demand, as identified by the SASSETA.

Figure 18: Qualifications learners were enrolled in



Source: Learner survey (N = 229), 2023

It should however be noted that even though the qualifications represented in the TVET placements are not directly linked to the SETA's Top 10 list, these are key qualifications to assist in gaining entry into a wide range of occupations. If the aim is to decrease unemployment and assist graduates in becoming work ready, gaining one of the above qualifications could be beneficial. This is echoed by respondents during interviews. A host employer stated that soft skills are important in the world of work and the Human Resource

qualification assists learners in gaining the required skills to work with others. A student who enrolled in Human Resource Management stated that their work experience helped them to "work with people, to be coordinated and to cooperate".

In addition, even though an occupation did not make the Top 10 list, this does not mean that it is not needed in the sector. An employer referred to technical skills, especially electrical, as a scarce skill within the sector, stating that "the technical field is growing and more training in the technical field is required".

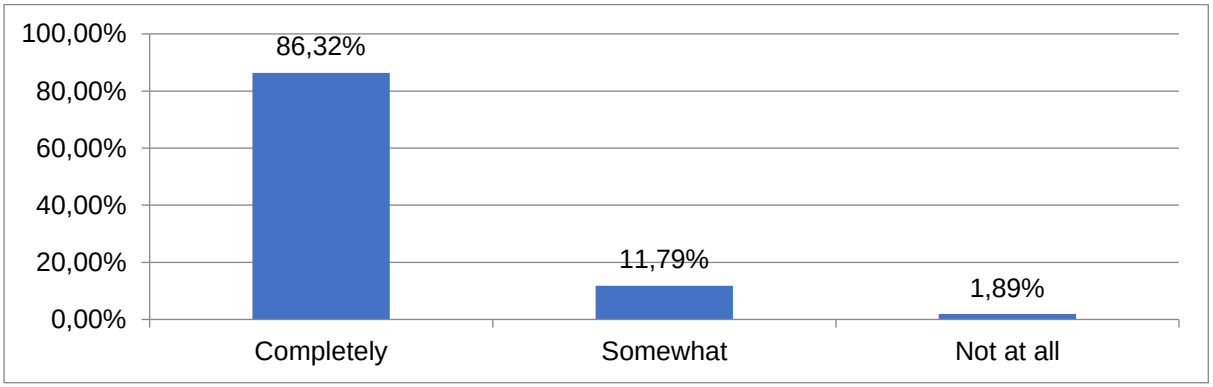
6.1.2 Relevance in relation to legislation

The concept of WIL is enshrined in policy discussions. The New Growth Path, the NDP, the National Skills Accord, the NSDP and the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, all reflect a growing emphasis on workplace learning as a core and essential component of vocational and occupational education, and the important role this type of education and training plays in economic development and job creation. As such, the SASSETA plays a key role in supporting these policies by implementing WIL interventions with the aim of increasing employment in the sector.

6.1.3 Relevance of the theoretical learning

The survey responses show that learners view the theoretical content received at the college as relevant to their workplace training, with 86% indicating that the theory is relevant (Figure 9).

Figure 19: Relevance of theory



Source: Learner survey (N =212), 2023

Interview responses indicate that most learners look forward to learning the theory throughout their qualification.

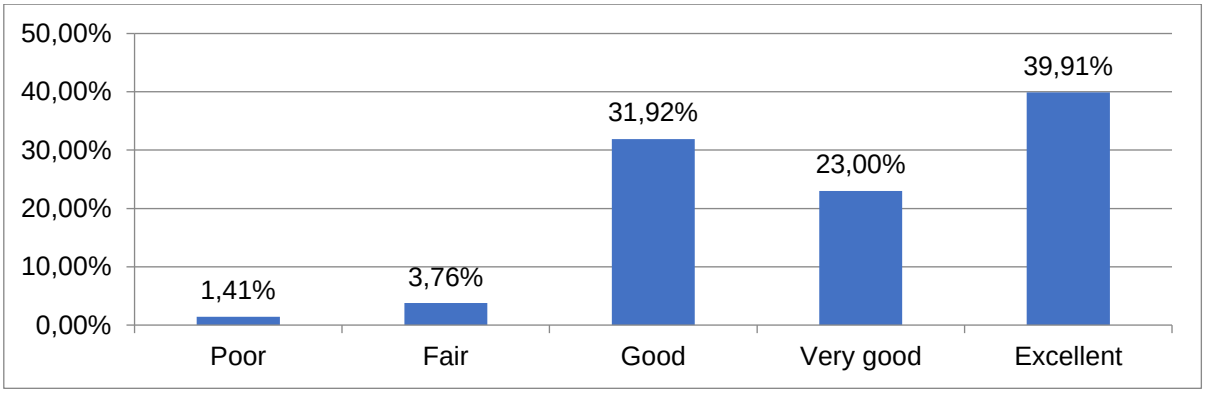
In respect of practical training at the colleges, however, some employers are of the view that it is non-existent but needed. With Engineering, a college representative explained that

"students who just completed their matric, they come to the college to do their N4 and then they complete their N6, but they do not do practicals, they do not go to workshops". He added that "they know the theory, but they do not know what they are talking about. They do not know the tools. They do not know how to hold or use those tools. So, when they get to the workplace, we just have issues because now the employee is frustrated". The importance of practical training in a workshop in addition to theoretical content becomes evident, especially in a technical field like engineering. This is evident when a student described their work experience as being "good" because they "learned the practical side of theory" at the workplace rather than partially at the college.

6.1.4 Appropriateness of placements

In terms of whether the placements were suitable for learners in TVET placement interventions, 95% of learners indicated that it was either "good" (32%), "very good" (23%) or "excellent" (40%) (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Learner perception of the appropriateness of placements



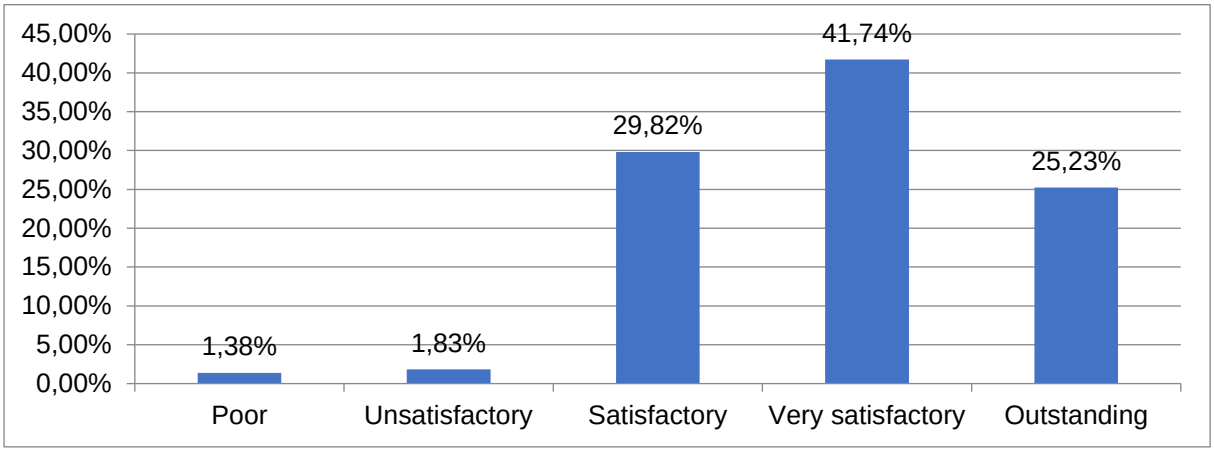
Source: Learner survey (N=213), 2023

During interviews, learners attributed their good experiences to good mentors and good exposure. Below are some of the quotes from interviews:

> "Perfect work experience. Did non-routine work on rotation for 3 months e.g., Finance, HR, supply chain. After 18 months knew how to operate." (Public Management Graduate)
>
> "Good work experience. Employer noticed that learners had difficulty with computers and purchased new ones". (Management assistant graduate)
>
> "Great mentor". (Electrical Engineering graduate)

In terms of the workplace experience of learners, 97% of respondents indicated that their experiences were either satisfactory (30%), very satisfactory (42%) or outstanding (25%) (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Experience of workplace exposure



Source: Learner survey 2022 (N= 218), 2023

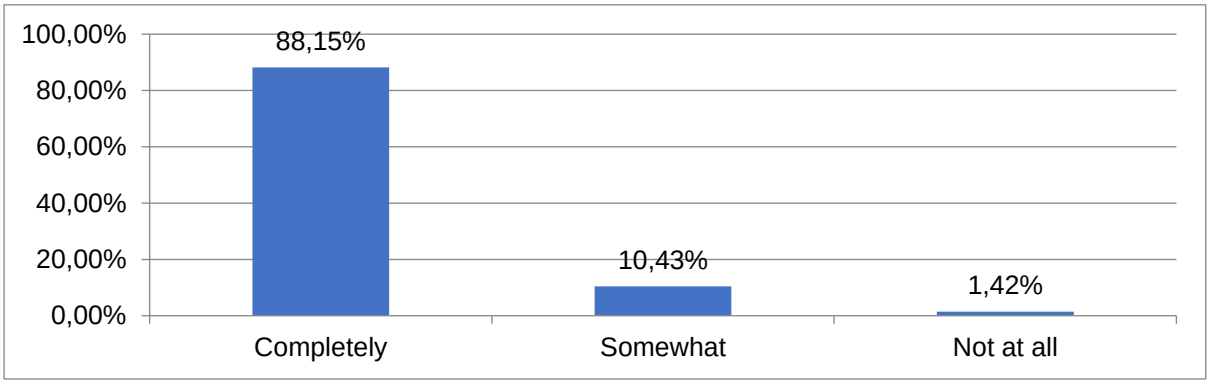
A Business Management graduate stated during an interview that the WIL "helped with financial accounting, communication, showed how things were done in finance and computer literacy".

However, some TVET colleges expressed concern about the relevance of exposure that learners get in the workplace, indicating that they are not utilised in accordance with the requirements of the logbook.

6.1.5 Extent to which the WIL assisted learners in meeting the requirements to complete the qualification

Most of the respondents (88%) indicated that completing their 18 months of WIL contributed to acquiring their N diplomas (Figure 22).

Figure 22: WIL contribution to meeting the requirements of the qualification



Source: Learner Survey (N = 211), 2023

A placement officer in a TVET college indicated that the work integrated learning assists with learners completing their qualfications, as long as their work experinece gained is related to their studies. They have to submit an application for the N diploma, together with a letter from the employer confirming what they have been doing. The QCTO checks for alignment between what is required and what has been done in the workplace. If everything was done properly, the completion of the qualification should be automatic.

> "Got to know more about my field. Saw things theory explained. Got to qualify for a trade test and diploma." (Engineering Graduate)

However, a college representative made a comment on the relevance of the logbook provided by DHET stating that: "What we realised is that all of them are poorly designed because you would see that they just took a syllabus from N4 to N6 and they just put those topics there. For example, with Business Management students, they talk about accessing the finances of a company and no company will allow an intern student to access their finances".

6.2 Effectiveness

Effectiveness refers to the extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results.

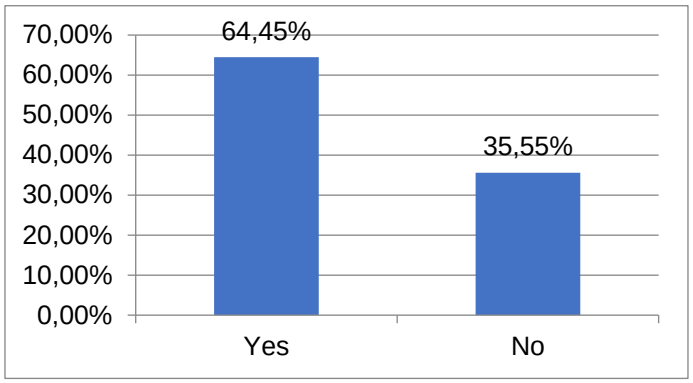
This section of the report looks at the effectiveness of the WIL as well as the completion rate of the programmes.

6.2.1 Effectiveness of WIL

Colleges indicate that the WIL is structured. However, when learners were asked about whether the WIL was structured, 36% responded negatively with 65% responding positively (

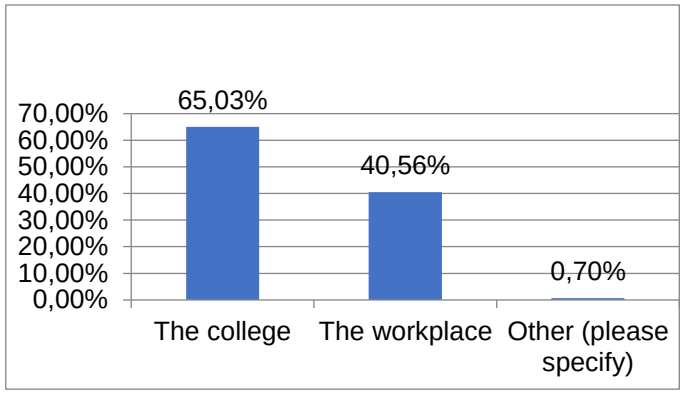
Figure 23). Of those who responded positively, 65% indicated that the college was responsible for structuring the WIL component with 41% indicating that the workplaces structured WIL (Figure 24).

Figure 23: Is the work experience component structured?



Source: Learner survey (N = 211), 2023

Figure 24: If yes, who structures the WIL



Source: Learner survey (N = 143), 2023

In interviews, learners mentioned inadequacies about the structuring of the logbook and stated that “the logbook asks the same question in different ways”. A N6 Engineering student also mentioned that “based on the logbook, there were different types of PLCs that were not there”.

It is commonly accepted that mentorship is key in WIL programmes. In the SASSETA TVET placement interventions, most of the learners indicated that they were linked to a workplace mentor with 99% of respondents indicating that they were assigned a mentor who guided them in gaining relevant workplace experience (Figure 26). Of the 99% who were assigned mentors, 97% of respondents indicated that the quality of the mentorship was either satisfactory (31%), very satisfactory (35%) or outstanding (31%) (Figure 25).

Figure 26: Mentor assignment

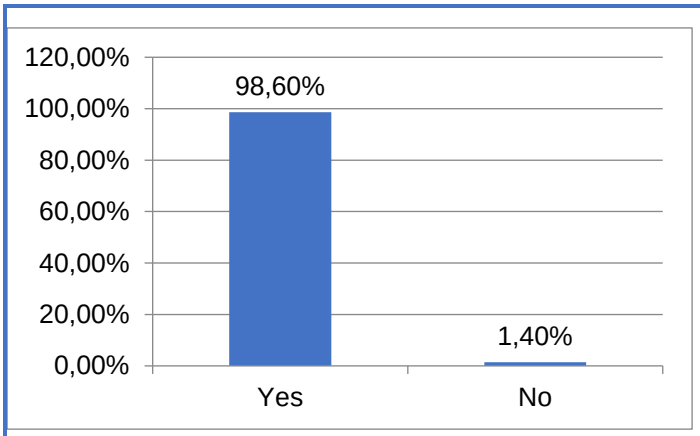
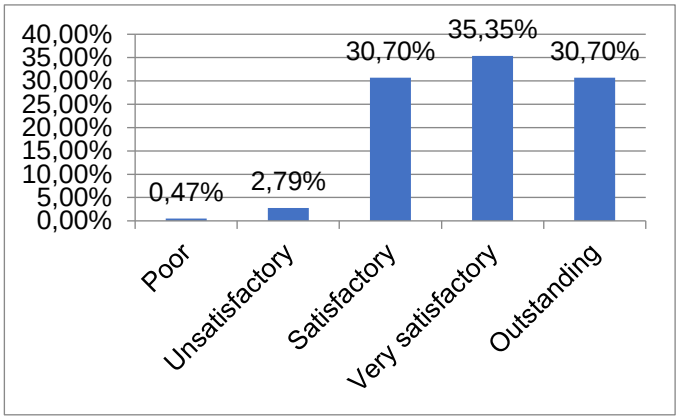


Figure 25: Quality of mentorship



Source: Learner survey (N = 215), 2023

More than half of the learners surveyed (58%) also indicated that they report their workplace issues/concerns to their mentor.

> Good mentor, very understanding. Always found ways to help.
>
> - Management Assistant graduate

The mentorship component in the placement of students is, in many cases, contributing to experiential learning success. Mentors are providing monthly learner reports to SASSETA. In addition to this, an employer explained that they "insist on their own mentors to familiarise themselves with the logbook so that they can make sure that at the end of the internship, the maximum for most training has been done". A learner stated that she "always received feedback from the mentor, we worked together and did not do work without supervision".

The positive feedback in terms of the quality of mentors was not shared by other stakeholders. The importance of a qualified mentor was a contentious topic amongst colleges and employers. A TVET college representative stated that there is a "lack of suitable mentors in the workplace who have suitable qualifications to meet the criteria to be a mentor". An employer recommended that "SASSETA draft a mentorship guide in consultation that all the host employers should abide by".

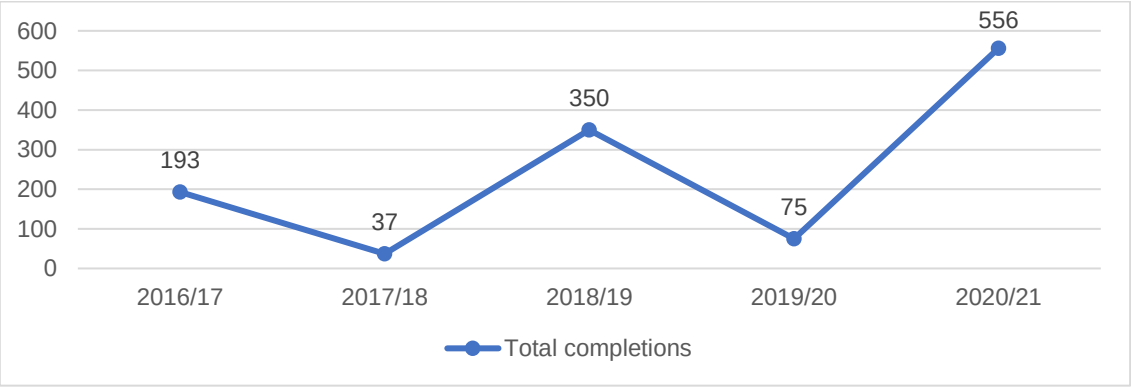
> We must do better in preparing learners and mentors. Will find that mentors don't give enough to learners.
>
> - College representative

A SASSETA official added that "mentors are not well equipped. They do not know how to guide learners. They should help learners see the connection between what is learned and how these tasks are executed".

6.2.2 Completion rates

Figure 27 shows that completions in TVET placement interventions increased between 2016/17 and 2020/21. This increase, however, was not consistent. Completions declined from 193 in 2016/17 to 37 in 2017/18, before increasing to 350 in 2018/19 and declining again to 75 learners in 2019/20. 556 learners completed the programmes in 2020/21.

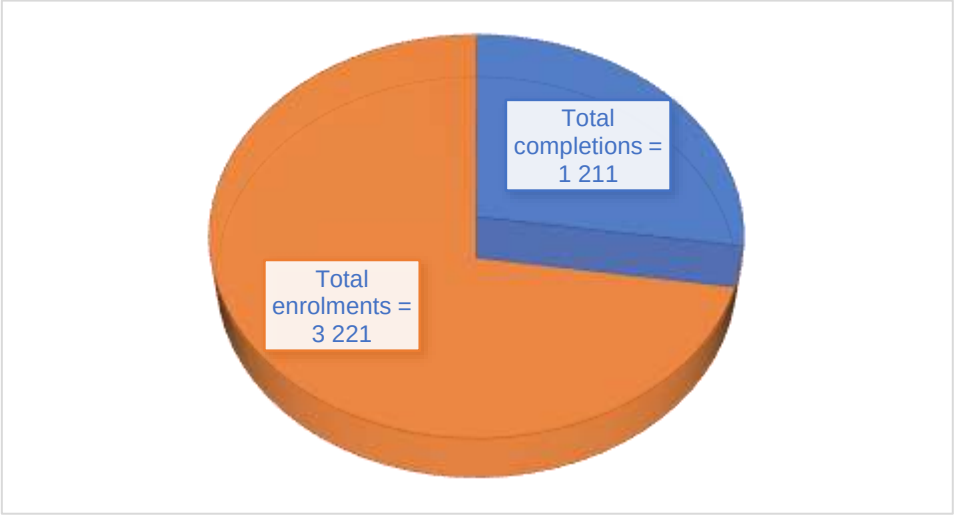
Figure 27: Total completions in TVET placement interventions, 2016-2021



Source: SASSETA TVET database, 2023

In comparing Figure 11 and 18, completions are much lower than enrolments.

Figure 28: Enrolments in TVET placement interventions vs completions, 2016-2021



Source: SASSETA TVET database, 2023

This is confirmed in Figure 28 where it is shown that during the 2016-2021 period, 3 221 learners enrolled in TVET placement interventions whereas 1 211 learners completed the programmes during the same time period.

6.3 Efficiency

Efficiency refers to the extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely manner. The aim is to respond to the question of whether "value for money" was achieved. It centres around appropriate and optimal use of resources.

This study evaluates efficiency in terms of:

- The grant application process
- Learner selection
- Due diligence
- Securing workplaces
- Monitoring
- Payment of stipends

6.3.1 Grant applications and approvals

There is consensus amongst employers that the grant application and approval process of the SASSETA is transparent, works smoothly and is understood by those that were interviewed.

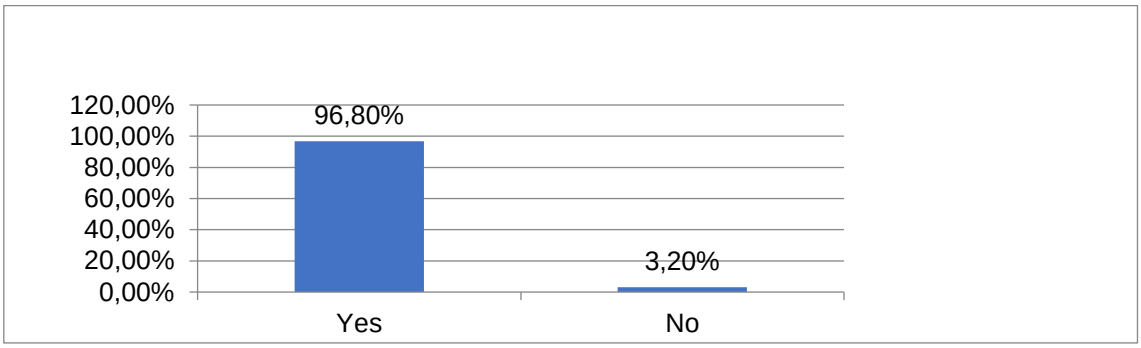
In terms of contracting, the key role players in TVET placement interventions are SASSETA, the TVET college and the host employer. In cases where there is a lead employer, the SETA enters into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and in most cases, this is with the TVET college. The SETA, in the majority of cases, enters into a contract with the host employer. These contracts stipulate the roles and responsibilities, as well as key deliverables.

Another contract is between SASSETA and the learner, where the learner's responsibilities and the requirements for the payment of stipends are stipulated.

6.3.2 Learner selection

In some instances, the host employers interviewed the learners before accepting them for Work Integrated Learning. But in most instances, they just accepted the learners as given to them by the college. Learners were inducted by the College (lead employer), and often SASSETA staff were also present. Explanations were given to learners as to what could be expected in the workplace as well as what the learner rights and responsibilities are. This was confirmed by responses from the learner survey where 97% of respondents indicated that the content of the programmes was explained to them (Figure 29).

Figure 29: Answers as to whether the content of the programmes was explained to learners



Source: Learner Survey (N = 214), 2023

Most of the employers indicated that their objective with hosting learners was to contribute to alleviating unemployment and assist the learners to get “work-ready”. However, none had the intention of absorbing all of the learners into their employment.

6.3.3 Due diligence

The SASSETA due diligence process is done with the host employer in most cases. There are cases in which it is done with lead employers, as opposed to host employers.

Interviews with colleges and employers indicate that they view the process as a compliance exercise, and they had no negative experiences with regards to the due diligence process.

Although there was no negative response to this process, an employer mentioned that she “does not know whether it is effective or not as she has not received any feedback”. An employer also suggested that he “would have preferred that there be an initial due diligence and a mid-term due diligence. And then before the close of the project, you do the final due diligence, just to check on the consistency and the state of the programme”.

A SASSETA employee stated that “due diligence is a function carried out by the learning programme office before the programme starts to determine if the project is worth doing, and monitoring is done when the project is near completion in order to understand the life of the project “. There appears to be a common understanding of the objectives of the due diligence process between these stakeholders.

In cases where due diligence was done with lead employers, the criticism was that if the due diligence is done with the lead employer and not with the host employer, questions around availability of workstations, of mentors, etc. are not investigated. Also, the template is generic for all workplace approvals and may be difficult to use in cases where the lead employer becomes the host employer as well.

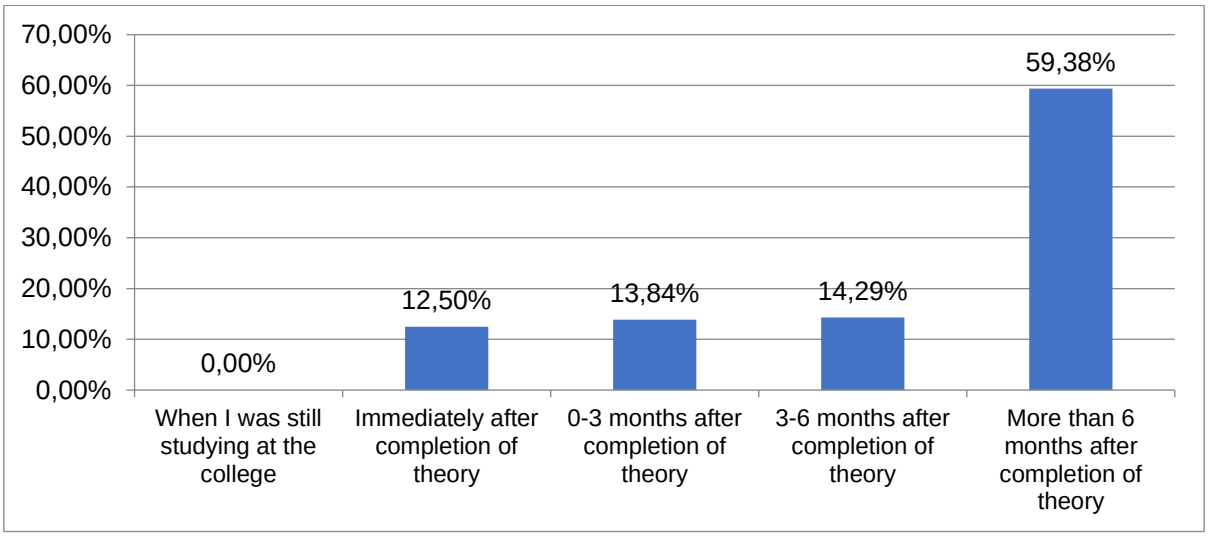
6.3.4 Securing workplaces

The lead employer has the responsibility of finding workplaces for the learners, which may include groups of up to 400 learners. Colleges do induction and explain the roles and responsibilities of the host employers. Some colleges reported that finding employers is challenging, but they succeed in securing workplaces, even if the college must act as host employer. Host employers include companies such as restaurants, furniture stores such as Lewis Stores, Crazy Stores, Russels, Bradlows, grocery stores such as Jimmy, SuperSpar, hotels and hospitals.

The challenge of securing workplaces is reflected in Figure 30 below, where nearly 60% only found workplace placements more than 6 months after the completion of the theory. The

SASSETA's learning programme officer also stated that "employers will delay with the recruitment of learners". This then also spirals into the delay of the TVET college's submission of initial documents such as learnership agreements, contracts, monthly registers and eventually stipend payments.

Figure 30: Time between theory completion and work placement



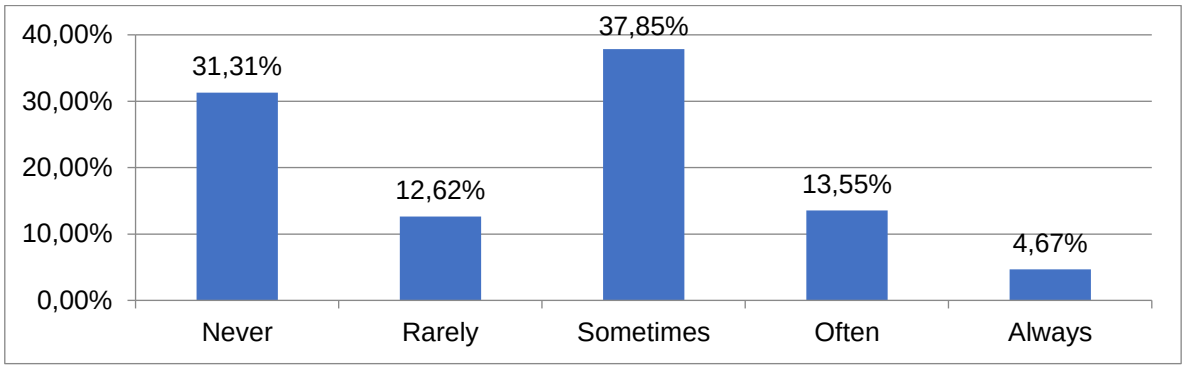
Source: Learner Survey (N = 224), 2023

6.3.5 Monitoring

When asked about the frequency of college representatives visiting them at the workplace, the majority (82%) indicated that the colleges do not visit them regularly, and 31% indicated that they are never visited by a college representative (

Figure 31). An employer also observed this and added that there are “no follow-up visits from colleges. Interns would like to be reminded on a regular basis as to what is expected of them, and what is the outcome and expected outcome of the programme. With familiar faces, they would probably look at the programme differently”. A college representative stated during an interview that “we also do monitor when they are placed until they finish”. An issue here may be whether the colleges have the capacity to visit all employers.

Figure 31: Frequency of college visits



Source: Learner Survey (N= 214), 2023

Colleges mentioned the capacity issue in regard to monitoring workplaces: “we are looking into getting more human resources to assist us because we want to make sure that almost every quarter, we must visit the students but, we are not only confining ourselves to face-to-face monitoring. We also do virtual monitoring for students who live far, and we also do telephonic monitoring to show that we are supporting our students”.

In terms of the SASSETA, a representative enunciated that “considering the resources, the projects need to be monitored by going physically at least once in the life of the project and the rest can be done telephonically”. This is done by the SETA on a sample basis, which is also attributed to human resource constraints. However, a SASSETA representative stated that there would be an addition of 2 practitioners, and an evaluation specialist to the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit at the SETA.

SASSETA follows a rigorous monitoring and evaluation approach from the learning programme office, which manages learning programmes including the TVET placement interventions. An official explained a step-by-step process in which the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit executes their tasks. These are to:

- Be provided a list of projects that they (M&E practitioners) will develop schedules for.
- Monitor projects.
- Prepare reports which have to be signed by a practitioner, MER unit and the learning programmes office.

If there are any problems during the monitoring of programmes, practitioners must understand the type of problems and respond to the problems in their reports. All findings that arise during the life of the project are recorded in the Findings Register.

A learner expressed concern about workplace monitoring by stating that: “Honestly, you're just on your own when you go [to employer]. You just work there for experience. But those people,

they never cared about what we do. They never asked anything. I know students who are there are struggling". The value of monitoring and evaluation is an important element of WIL. As previously mentioned by the employer, the successful implementation of monitoring learners and their workplaces will enable a holistic approach to the learning experience.

Further to capacity problems, another aspect that makes monitoring difficult is that commonly the host employers are not levy payers to the SASSETA. This may make monitoring at the workplace difficult for SASSETA.

6.3.6 Payment of stipends

Two processes for the payment of stipends are used by SASSETA. In the one situation, the learners submit timesheets, leave forms and other required documentation to the TVET colleges, which then submits it to SASSETA for processing and the payment of the stipend to the learner. In other words, SASSETA pays the learner directly, on a monthly basis.

In the second scenario, the TVET college gathers the timesheets and other compliance documents from the learners, verifies the completeness and accuracy of the documents, and submits these to SASSETA. SASSETA then pays the stipends over to the college, which in turn, pays the stipend over to the learners. A SASSETA official explained that "with some colleges, they prefer to be paid quarterly. SASSETA will reconcile all the submitted paperwork... It depends on the college but with most of the colleges we are paying learners directly into their account every month".

> Stipends are an issue. There is no day that you attend to emails where there is no query of stipends and some of the SASSETA staff unfortunately, do not work well with us in terms of informing or keeping our candidates happy.
>
> - Host employer

Almost without exception, serious dissatisfaction has been expressed about the slow and late payments of stipends and the unresponsiveness of SASSETA staff dealing with the payments. The effect of late payments is a serious issue, a learner explained that "students want experience, and they move from another province or move from one district to another, and we do not have funds. We have to fund ourselves and we do not have food and all those things and then they always say that your first payment can determine how you are going to sustain yourself for the rest of the 18 months".

There appears to be a misunderstanding(s) on the process of submission for the release of stipend payments between TVET colleges, employers and the SASSETA learning programmes office. A learner expressed that "even after submitting timesheets, it would take

time to receive stipends". A host employer also expressed their concern by stating that: "It was an issue long before my time and it will always be an issue even if I leave. There is always different rules and regulations that apply as soon as you hand in timesheets for stipends". Another employer added "there is no formal communication as to why it is late or a warning ahead of time so that we also inform our learners in time as to just be aware that there might be a delay in payments".

> Colleges can be late for submission, and we must remind them per follow-up about the due date for documents for the quarterly payments to be made on time.
>
> - SASSETA official

SASSETA is aware of the late stipend payment issue. An official explained that "we used to have the issue of late stipend payments, but sometimes it can be maybe the college submitted the document late or they submitted the wrong document. As SASSETA, we need 10 days to prepare and plan, that is why we do inductions just to explain everything to them, but you know a learner is a learner. Sometimes they will submit the register without the report. If you give the college a submission date of the 15th of every month and they submit on the 20th surely there will be a delay. So, if they submit all the correct documents on time, with all the supporting documents surely learners will get their stipends on time…We explain how we are going to pay them, what they must do each and every month before we can release their stipend". All parties involved in the TVET learners' placement programme seem to be affected by the late stipend payment issue, with the root of the problem appearing to be poor communication.

Based on interviews conducted, it seems that where the TVET colleges take on the responsibility of paying the stipend to the learner, the process is smoother and more efficient.

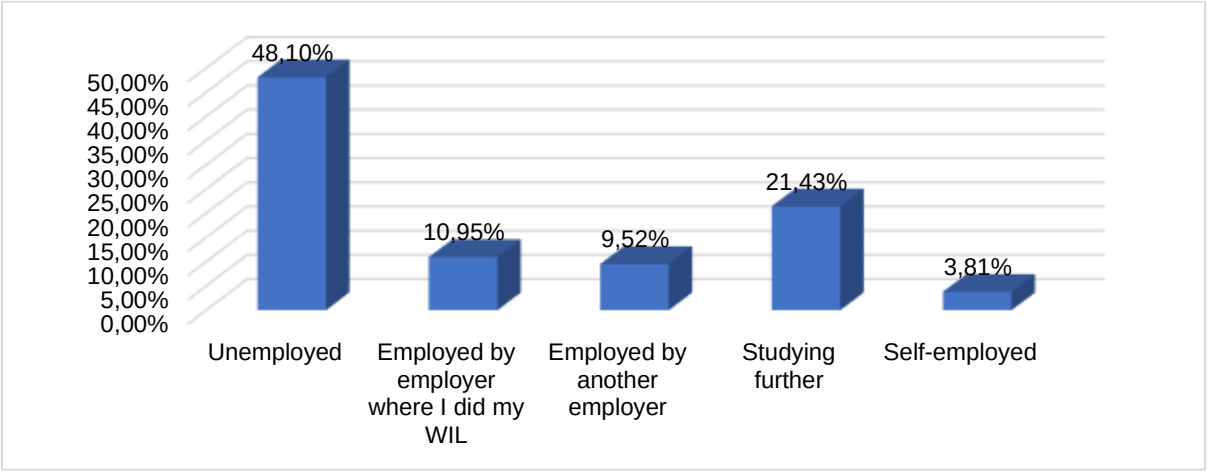
6.4 Impact

Impact refers to the extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

In terms of the employment status of learners after they have completed the TVET placement interventions, 25% of respondents indicated that they were employed, with 11% indicating they were employed with the employer where they completed their WIL, 10% indicating that they were employed by another employer, and 4% indicated that they were self-employed (

Figure 32).

Figure 32: Employment status after completion of programme



Source: Learner survey (N = 210), 2023

Nearly half of learners (48.10%) reported that they were unemployed after their work placement. This is somewhat lower than a tracer study done on learnership graduates for the period 2014/15 – 2015/16, where 61% remained unemployed after completion of the programmes. The sample size for that study was however much smaller than in this study (77 versus more than 220). This implies that the absorption rate of graduates on TVET placement interventions, after completion of their qualification, is higher than that of graduates of learnership programmes.

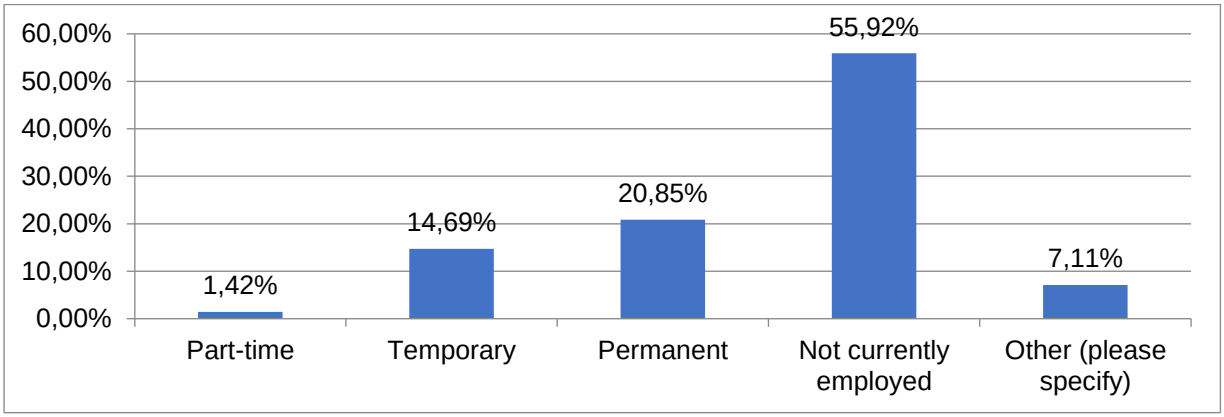
Some learners assumed that they would have been absorbed and given permanent employment after completing TVET placement interventions. One learner suggested that SASSETA should ensure there is job security after learners are placed. However, this is outside the control of the SETA. As stated by an employer "we do not employ everyone, but we employ at least 80% of learners. We train them to a point and, if there is a position, we absorb them."

> Experience helped to get me a job. I have applied in-service training skills to current job. (Engineering graduate)

A college representative understood that the SASSETA's objective "is to improve access to occupations in high demand and priority skills aligned to supporting economic growth, employment creation and social development whilst seeking to address systemic considerations". He stated that "SASSETA wants the maximum amount of learners to get diplomas and to be adequately placed. They oversee the quality of the placement. SASSETA encourages employers to absorb learners and hopes learners are permanently absorbed".

In terms of the type of employment, only 21% of those who found employment were permanently employed (Figure 33). Others were in temporary (15%) or part-time (1%) work.

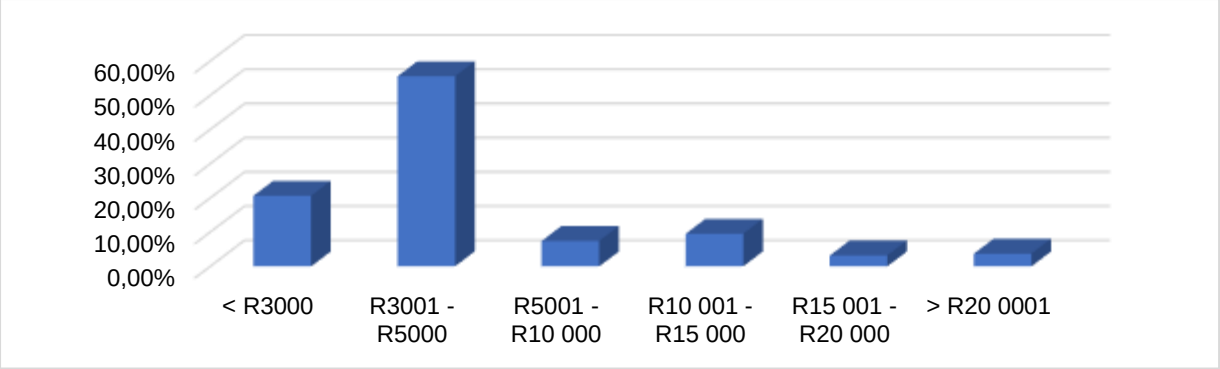
Figure 33: Type of employment



Source: Learner Survey (N = 211), 2023

Figure 34 shows that 76% of employed learners earn below R5 000, with 21% earning below R3 000.

Figure 34: Salary range of employed



Source: Learner Survey (N = 189), 2023

The figure further shows that 17% earn between R5 001 and R15 000 and 7% earn between R15 001 and over R20 001.

6.5 Sustainability

Sustainability is the ability of an organisation to continue implementing a project or programme in the future. A project is sustainable when defects can be corrected, it is able to meet new requirements, future maintenance is easier, and it can cope with the changing environment.

The TVET placement interventions have been managed and implemented by SASSETA since 2014. There is no reason why it cannot be replicated in future, as it contributes to the reduction of unemployment in the sector, and this research has shown that it assists learners in completing their qualifications and becoming more ‘work-ready’ over the 18-month period.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter analysed data that was found during the evaluation process. These findings were separated into different sections e.g. relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

There is no direct link between TVET student WIL placements and SASSETA's Top 10 List of scarce skills. There is strong support for policy discussions around TVET learner placements. Both theory and work placements are viewed as relevant by learners. The placement programme assists learners to complete their qualifications.

The structuring of the TVET placements are not always optimal, as logbooks do not always contain all the relevant work that the learner needs to be exposed to. Learners are generally satisfied with the mentorship they receive, but some colleges feel that there is room for improvement.

There are challenges in securing workplaces for all the learners, and the due diligence is only done with the lead employer, not the host employers. Monitoring can be improved, especially from the side of the TVET college.

The payment of stipends is problematic in the it is often late for various reasons.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter is to provide key reflections on this evaluation study.

The SASSETA TVET placement interventions are 18-month WIL opportunities to TVET college learners who are predominantly enrolled on N6 qualifications. The SASSETA either enters into a contract with a lead employer, who then takes responsibility for securing workplaces for the students with host employers or enters into contracts directly with host employers.

Generally, interviewees stated that the grant application and approval process are viewed positively by stakeholders. Contracting with lead employers and host employers is understood and the contract specifies what the roles and responsibilities of the various role players are.

Part of contracting is the due diligence of workplaces. Stakeholders reported that they are familiar with the due diligence process, and satisfied with how it is being implemented. The one critique was that there are cases where due diligence was conducted with lead employers and not host employers, and in these cases, it was difficult to confirm the appropriateness of the workplace and whether the learner could be exposed to all aspects of the logbook. There was an example of a human resource learner being placed in supply chain. Also, the due diligence template is generic which may be difficult to use in cases where the lead employer takes on the role of a host employer. Generally, interviews with colleges and employers indicate that they view the process as a compliance exercise, but they mostly had no negative experiences with it.

With regards to the implementation of the interventions, the large majority of learner respondents indicated that they received induction into the WIL programme. However, both colleges and employers felt that the preparation of learners for the workplace could be improved. Nevertheless, learners stated that the theoretical component learned at the TVET colleges was reinforced with WIL at the workplaces. Learners stated that they were able to use the theory to help with their practical learning. They also stated that having the theoretical knowledge assisted them in better understanding what they were required to do in terms of practical application. There was a critique in the case of the engineering programme in particular, where employers raised the importance of some practical training at a college before being placed at the workplace for WIL. Not having exposure to a college workshop makes it challenging for the learners to adjust in the engineering environment.

There were some concerns raised in regard to the logbook being repetitive or covering aspects that were not do-able. There was a case of a finance intern needing to work with company finances and companies generally not being willing to allow an intern to review their finances.

Furthermore, in implementing the interventions, it is a requirement for learners to be linked to a mentor. Mentorship in the interventions is viewed in a positive light. However, there are instances where the colleges and employers state that mentors are not trained and are not always clear on what their role should be, causing some dissatisfaction amongst a portion of learners. Survey responses did indicate that most learners were happy with their mentors.

In terms of programme monitoring, learners did report that the colleges do not conduct monitoring visits at the workplace. The SETA, however, conducts monitoring on a sampling basis. Both the colleges and SETA reported staff shortages that hinder their monitoring ability. Also, the learners are often placed with employers which are not levy-payers to SASSETA. This poses some challenges for monitoring.

The biggest challenge reported is the dissatisfaction with the process for the payment of learner stipends. The findings show that where the stipend is paid over to the college, rather than to the learners directly, it seems to cause less dissatisfaction.

With regards to programme results, in most cases, WIL assisted learners in completing their qualifications. The exceptions are when a learner has not been provided with a logbook, or where the employer did not sign off that the learner has met the requirements of the placement programme. In these cases, they could not complete their qualifications.

It should be noted that for many learners there is a time lag between completing the theoretical component and getting a work placement; in many cases student wait for 6 months or longer to be placed in a WIL programme. This impacts the time it takes for them to complete their qualifications.

Overall, the SASSETA TVET placement interventions are viewed positively. It contributes to the reduction of unemployment in the sector, and it assists learners in completing their qualifications and becoming more ‘work-ready” over the 18-month period. Even though only a relatively small percentage of learners were employed on completion of the WIL period, a significant proportion was still furthering their studies.

CHAPTER 8

LESSONS LEARNED

This chapter discusses the key lessons learned in the evaluation study.

At the strategic level, SASSETA is producing qualified graduates for entry into the labour market. The learners are however not always trained to address the Top 10 identified scarce skills in the sector. Nevertheless, employer interviews indicated that the skills gained were still relevant to the sector.

The SASSETA policies are supportive for implementing the placement interventions, for example, the application process was working well and the employer contracting process was providing a framework for implementation. There were however issues reported in relation to the payment of stipends.

The TVET placement interventions were managed relatively well, but there was room for improvement. In some cases, the due diligence process was only conducted with lead employers which impacts the ability to ensure that learners were placed at appropriate workplaces. However, it did appear that there was a problem with appropriate placements. The bigger problem was the time it took to place learners.

Overall, the TVET placement interventions contributed to the work readiness of learners.

CHAPTER 9

RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter discusses both the general and project specific recommendations.

Below is a matrix of recommendations based on the evaluation findings and conclusions, for consideration by SASSETA:

Table 3: Recommendations

Research area	Recommendations	Proposed implementers
General recommendations		
Sustainability	Identify more learners for TVET placements who can be linked to scarce skills	Learning programmes department
Challenges and measures that support TVET placements	Conduct further research into the reasons for non-completion of programmes	Learning programmes department
Programme specific recommendations		
Appropriateness of workplace settings	Commence with monitoring at the point where learners are placed with host employers to ensure that placement is in line with the learner qualification (telephonic, or physically during learner induction sessions) (to be done with all the learners, not on a sample basis)	Learner programmes department

Research area	Recommendations	Proposed implementers
Contribution to the improvement of knowledge and skills	Where engineering learners are placed for WIL, ensure employers are aware that the learners will need basic exposure to practical work before they can perform tasks in the workplace.	Learning programmes department
Challenges and measures that support TVET placements	Develop a guideline document for mentors, to give them an overview of what mentorship entails, as well as what the Labour Relations Act (LRA) stipulates in terms of hosting a learner on a TVET placement intervention.	Learning programmes department
	Do a second monitoring visit a month into the implementation of the programme, to ensure that mentors are in place and learners have received logbooks. This could be done through email communication with each of the learners (important that email addresses and cell-phone numbers of learners be kept by SASSETA for M&E purposes)	MER department
	Establish WhatsApp groups, or another platform, where SASSETA can communicate with learners and track and monitor their progress	Learning programmes department
Contribution of interventions to complete qualifications	Request feedback from employers and from learners on the appropriateness of learner logbooks	Learning programmes department, MER department, or outsourced if internal resources are not adequate
	Contract TVET colleges to adjust the logbooks, with inputs from industry	Learning programmes department
Due diligence	Consider tailor-making a due diligence template for lead employers which are also host employers.	Learning programmes department

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