

The Voice of the Learner

Detailed report of learnership surveys results

December 2014



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Executive Summary

Background and objective

This paper presents findings from data collected from learnership students as part of the FP&M SETA-funded Tracking and Tracing Research Project. The Tracking and Tracing project is an empirical study of the impact of the FP&M SETA's key skills development interventions: learnerships, bursaries and apprenticeships. This report provides a detailed analysis of the qualitative discussions with learners, as well as the quantitative learnership survey results. This is one report in a series of reports, each of which presents findings from the various components of the overall study.

A telephone survey was conducted with 303 learnership students and 81 apprentices. This report provides a detailed discussion of the research findings and a high level summary is provided in this section.

Main conclusion

Learnerships contribute positively to the lives of students. They create employment opportunities for the unemployed, and improve the career prospects of those employed. While not all have found employment yet, or in the industry they trained in, it does improve the employability in the long run, as they become multi-skilled, learn interpersonal skills and become confident and hopeful for the future.

Detailed Summary

Unemployment among those unemployed on entering the learnership program dropped from 72% to 44%. Directly after completion, 27% of the previously unemployed found employment, while the rest who are now employed, found work within a few months. Those still unemployed, remain positive and some are using their new skills in the informal entrepreneurial sector to create an income for themselves. Entrepreneurial activity does not appear to be reaching its full potential, and learnerships could possibly benefit from a stronger focus on ways of achieving self-employment on completion. Value extends beyond employment to improving self-esteem, communication skills and their relationships at home. Without the learnership, they would not have been able to find any other study opportunities, and now they even feel motivated to continue learning and studying.

Another benefit to learners is that their earnings potential has increased. On average, employed learners now earn R1 400 more per month after completing the learnership than before. The average salaries for trained learners differ across the different sectors, with some higher or lower than others. The salary of a trained learner is, however, always higher than the minimum wage. For example, in Forestry, the minimum wage is around R2 420 per month, and a trained learner earns nearly double this (on average about R4 000 per month). From other results, in the employer survey report, learners can expect to earn even more once they have some experience.

The learners are grateful for the learnership opportunity, yet they do face certain challenges during their training. New entrants in the workplace especially struggle with the long working hours required as part of the practical training. While employers see these hours as training hours, learners compare their outputs to those of permanent employees and some feel disgruntled at receiving a stipend instead of a salary. Both learners and employers, point to the possibility that some employers might be making misuse of learnerships to obtain cheap labour for a period, and this claim can be further investigated.

The stipend paid is another concern to students. It is considered to be too low and is often a reason for dropout, as it affects their transportation and subsistence negatively. Many learners feel that it either only covers transport and lunch, or for some, not even that. Additionally, companies might sometimes deduct from the stipend when a person is sick, and working overtime and weekends adds on additional transport burden.

The study has brought to light that many learners are not receiving their certificates owing, in part, to slow or no action taken by employers in updating the new FP&M MIS system with completion data. This, and other procedural issues identified, is now being addressed through pro-active interventions aimed at reducing the backlog as well as to avoid a repeat in future.

Methodology

The FP&M SETA commissioned a Tracking and Tracing study that would empirically examine the impact of Learnerships, Apprenticeships and Bursaries on learners and determine the extent to which these programmes are achieving their objectives. This project served to understand, explore and document key features, trends, challenges and the impact of these three skills interventions in the different FP&M sub-sectors. The Tracking and Tracing study was undertaken to assist in further developing a sustainable skills development strategy for the FP&M SETA.

To accomplish the objectives of the study, data has been collected from learners, employers and training providers, using a range of different qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This report presents the detailed findings from research conducted with learners who enrolled for a learnership and includes the results from both a quantitative telephone survey and two qualitative mini focus groups. The detailed findings from the data collected from other stakeholders, such as apprentices and employers are presented in the "Voice of the Employer" and "Voice of the Apprentice" reports. A summary and discussion of all main findings are presented in the overall report titled "A Tracking and Tracing study of the impact of learnerships, apprenticeships and bursaries funded by FP&M SETA".

Specific objectives that were addressed in the research with learnership students include:

1. Objectives

The key concerns of the survey were:

- What is the status of the learnership or apprenticeship - completed, currently registered or terminated?
- Why do the employed and the unemployed decide to pursue learnerships or apprenticeships?
- How long does it take learners to complete their studies and possible reasons for this?
- What are the reasons for discontinuing or terminating learnerships and apprenticeships?
- Have unemployed learners been absorbed into the market place after completing their studies, either directly through the learnership or later by finding other related employment?
- What is the impact that the learnership or apprenticeship has had on lives of the learners?
- What future changes do these learners anticipate as a result of the learnership?

The research design, sample, data collection instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis are described in detail in the holistic project report. For this report the focus is only of the Learnership survey. Quantitative and qualitative data collection was used and both methodologies supplement and complement one another, enabling a triangulation approach to finding insight.

2.1 Methodology for the qualitative survey

Population

The population for this study is defined as: “All learners who are listed on the MIS database as having entered a learnership during the period of 2011/2012 – 2013/2014”.

The MIS database contained **5005** number of learnership records for this period. A full description of the population is provided in the report “**A Tracking and Tracing study of the impact of learnerships, apprenticeships and bursaries funded by FP&M SETA**”. Some of the population statistics are repeated in this report as a comparison between sample data and population data, on variables that are the same, providing a sense of the reliability of the rest of the sample data. Therefore, if the sample reflects the population, then one has confidence that the rest of the findings also could be generalised to the broader population.

Sample frame, sample and response rate

The survey participants cover both employed and unemployed learners who have benefited from the FP&M SETA Learnership programme. For the purposes of the telephonic survey, the sample frame for the research was further defined as all learners with valid and updated contact details on the FP&M SETA MIS database in the period under study. This represented 24% of all records of the population. Contact details considered valid for the study could be a home telephone number, a cellphone number or a work phone number.

Effectively no sampling was carried out, as the entire sample frame was contacted and asked to participate in the study. Due to refusals, and out of date contact details, not all available learners took part, and a final response of 303 completed surveys was obtained. This represents a 25% response rate. This response rate is in line, or even slightly better than, the approximate 20% found in a similar study by the HSRC using the MERSETA database.

A sampling design that would have yielded an equal number of responses per sector would have ensured that comparisons between all sectors were possible. However, it was not possible to use a disproportionate sampling methodology with the number of telephone records available.

Data collection

The quantitative study used the following data collection method:

- Trained interviewers contacted learners telephonically and completed the survey with them over the phone.
- Fieldwork took place during October 2014.
- The survey took approximately 10 minutes per student to complete.

Data Analysis

The data from the questionnaires was captured into Excel, and then transferred into SPSS. SPSS was used to analyse the data, and this report presents the findings of the survey.

Validity and reliability

Although the sampling process for the quantitative survey could not be described as purely random, as all available numbers were contacted and no sampling therefore took place, the close correlation between the sample demographic profile and that of the population points to the validity of the data. Generalisations from the sample findings to the population can therefore be made with a greater degree of confidence.

2.2 Qualitative study

IQ Business conducted focus groups with the learners who completed learnership programmes funded by the FP&M seta between 2011 and 2014. The purpose of conducting the focus groups was to probe issues that would contribute to gaining an in-depth understanding on the impact of learnership interventions. The focus groups were also conducted prior to the telephone survey and therefore could assist in highlighting issues for inclusion in the quantitative survey.

The focus groups were held in Johannesburg in September 2014.

The issues explored during the focus groups covered areas such as: challenges faced by learners during the course of their learnership programme, employment opportunities and the benefits that learners obtained as a result of completing the learnership programme.

Non-probability convenience sampling was used for recruiting learners for focus groups, to ensure that they would be able to attend the groups. Each group was to consist of at least six participants, however, only two-to-three participants were able to attend.

1. Survey Findings

Who are the learners we spoke to?

A profile of learners in the sample is provided in terms of demographic variables, such as **race, gender, age and educational level**. The sample is also described in terms of study data, such as commencement and completion year and industry. Comparisons with the population data (all learners for 2011/12 – 2013/14) is provided to act as a measure of data reliability. If the sample reflects the population, then one has confidence that the rest of the findings could also be generalised to the broader population.

The sample consists predominantly of African learners (85%), followed by Coloured (14%) and White (1%) respondents. No Indian / Asian learners were represented in the sample.

Comparing these values to that of the total learnership population for 2011/12 – 2013/14, the distributions are fairly similar (population figures are 87% African, 11% Coloured, 2% Asian and 1% White).

The current age of respondents is shown in Figure 2. Most learnership respondents are aged between 20-25 (47%) or 26-30 (30%). The current age of respondents would be mostly one to two years older than the age at which they started the learnership.

At the time of completing the learnership, many would have been under the age of 20. This is why the sample data differs slightly from the population data (24% under the age of 20).

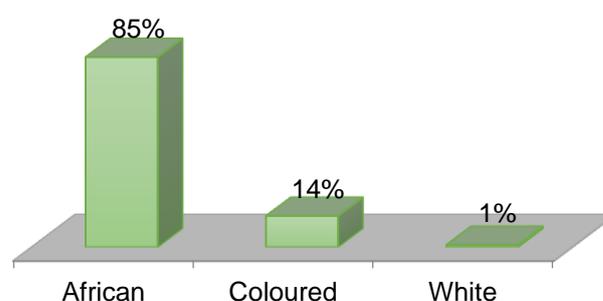


Figure 1: Race composition of learnership respondents

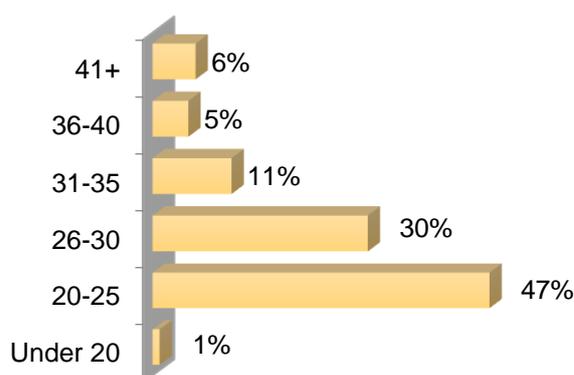


Figure 2: Age distribution of learnership respondents

Table 1 provides the highest qualification of respondents. Only 6% currently have a NQF level 1 or 2. The rest of the sample is relatively well-schooled, with most having at least a Grade 11, Matric or N3 (88%). A small percentage has a higher qualification (6%). The MIS database holds no corresponding data for comparison on this variable.

Table 1: Highest education level of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
NQF 1 (ABET 4 (Std 7 / Grade 9))	4	1%
NQF 2 (N1)	1	0%
NQF 2 (Std 8 / Gr 10)	12	4%
NQF 3 (N3)	1	0%
NQF 3 (Std 9 / Gr 11)	46	15%
NQF 4 (Matric)	206	69%
NQF 4 (N3)	12	4%
NQF 5 (Diploma / occupational certificate)	11	4%
NQF6 (First degree / Higher diplomas)	5	2%
NQF 7 (Honours / Masters)	1	0%

The figure below reflects the percentage split between sectors for the sample, as well as for the population.

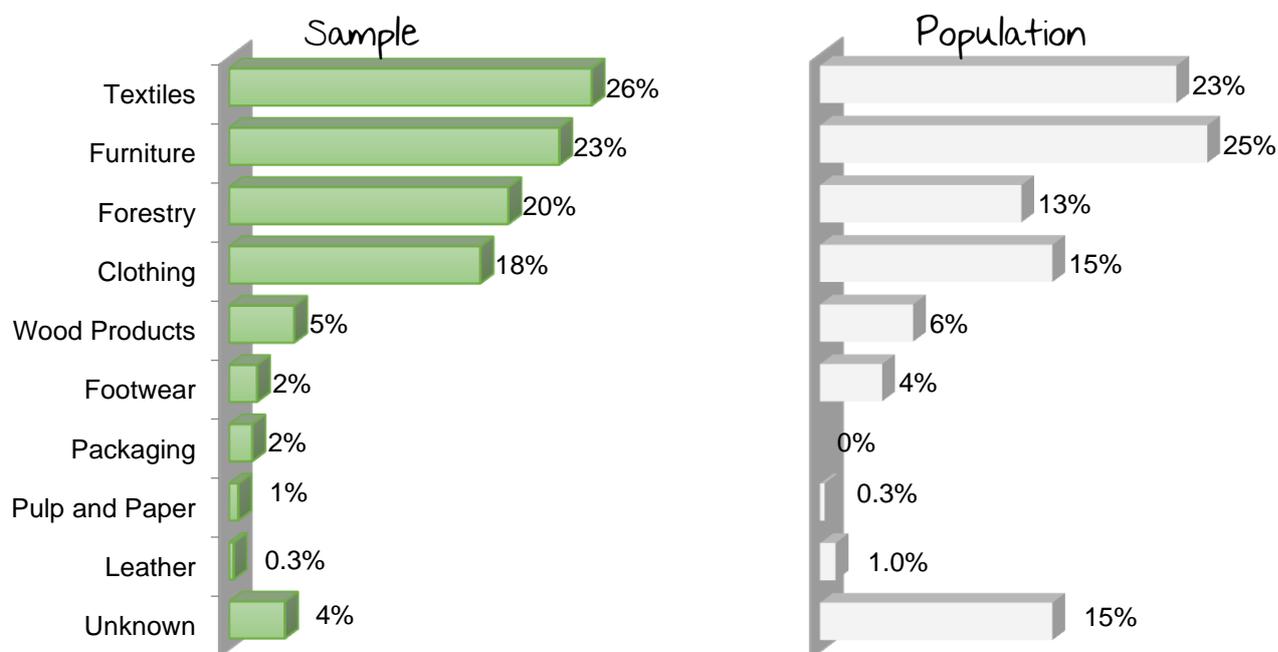


Figure 3: Industries in which learnerships were completed

The majority of respondents are from the Textiles, Furniture, Forestry and Clothing sectors. These are indeed the main sectors in which learnerships are offered. Wood Products, Footwear and Leather are also represented in fairly similar proportions in this sample, compared to total learnerships offered. Printing and Packaging are sectors in which apprenticeships dominate, rather than learnerships. The Publishing and Print Media sectors do not seem to have a specific need for learnerships (See Voice of the Employer report), and little-to-no courses are offered for these sectors. Therefore, the sample has no respondents in these sectors.

Due to sample size limitations, results are reported on the total, with comparisons possible only between the top five sectors: Clothing, Forestry, Furniture, Textiles and Wood Products. Wood Products have only 14 respondents and some caution might be needed in interpreting this result.

The sample split of males and females is skewed towards women (65% vs 35%). However, this is the same split as found in the population, which is 60% women and 40% males. Table 2 shows the gender distribution

per sector. In this sample, learnerships in the Clothing sector are predominately done by women. Forestry also shows a lean towards females. Furniture and Textiles are more evenly split.

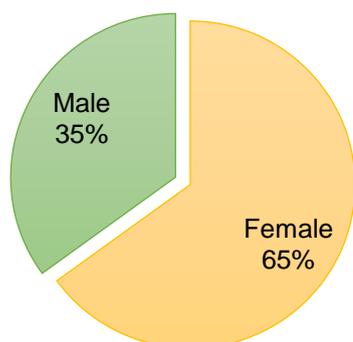


Figure 4: Gender composition of learnership respondents

Table 2: Gender per sector

	Gender	
	Male	Female
Clothing	7%	93%
Forestry	36%	64%
Furniture	47%	54%
Textiles	44%	56%
Wood Products	50%	50%

The provinces in which respondents completed the learnership are presented in Figure 5. Most of the learnerships took place in the Western Cape (25%), Gauteng (20%) and Limpopo (20%). Mpumalanga (17%) and KwaZulu-Natal (16%) are also well-represented. Learnerships from the Eastern Cape, Free State and Northern Cape are not represented in the sample. In the population, the Western Cape and Gauteng are also the main provinces for learnerships. However, the sample has a higher percentage for Limpopo and Mpumalanga than in the population data (3% and 7%). The provinces not represented in the data are all very small in the population data; around 1% or less.

Sectors are of course tied to province, for example the Clothing and Textile sectors are significant sources of employment in the Western Cape and this would account for the higher percentage of respondents in the Western Cape. Likewise, Mpumalanga is known for Forestry. Respondents tended to study in the same province in which they grew up, and it is only really Gauteng that drew a small percentage (4%) from other provinces.

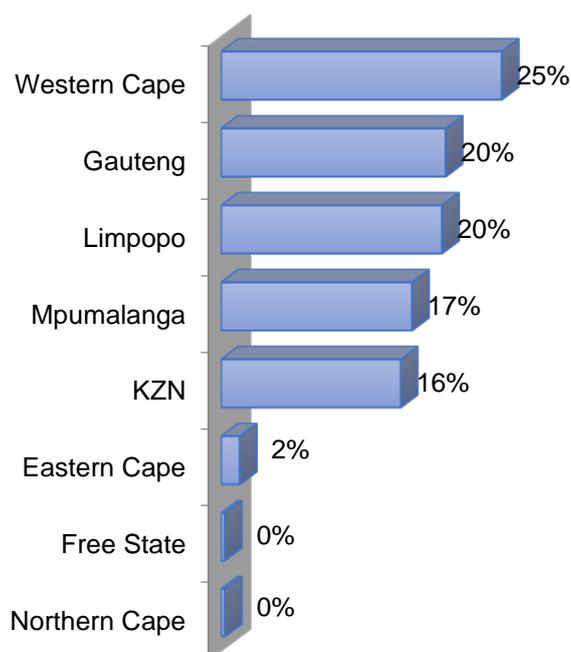


Figure 5: Province in which the learnership was completed

The sample is mainly from urban areas, with 20% from rural and 80% from urban areas. This data is also not compared to the population, as the MIS data is poorly populated in terms of this variable.

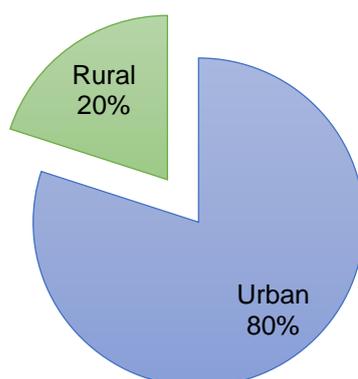


Figure 6: Rural and urban split

What is the completion status of the sample?

Among the 303 learnership respondents, the majority had completed their course (80%). Despite the lack of randomness in the survey design, the entire sample frame was contacted and the completion rate from the survey could be considered to be a fairly accurate reflection, although possibly erring on overstating the true rate by a few percentage points. Combining the survey data with the MIS and SQMR data would provide the most accurate estimate of true completion rates.

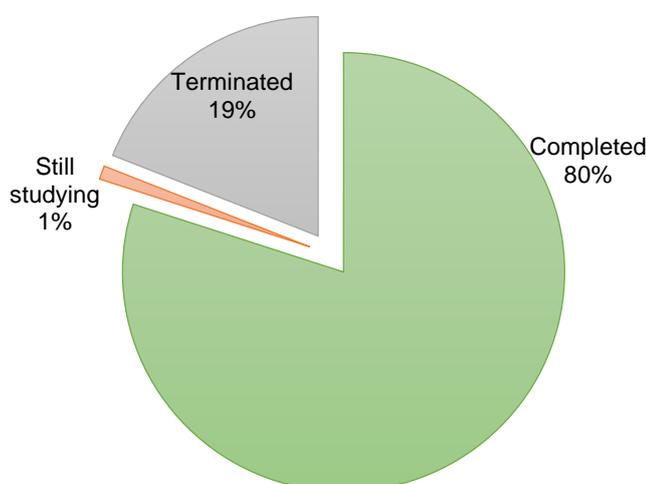


Figure 7: Learnership completion status

Table 3 below provides the completion rates from the survey for each of the sectors that have sufficient base sizes to allow for comparisons. Completion rates in the Furniture and Wood Product sectors are particularly high (90% and 93%). The Clothing sector is the lowest, at 69%.

Table 3: Completion status by sector

		Clothing	Forestry	Furniture	Textiles	Wood Products
Status	Completed	69%	75%	90%	86%	93%
	Still studying	0%	3%	1%	0%	0%
	Terminated	31%	22%	9%	14%	7%

The learnership respondents started their courses mostly in 2011 or 2012. In line with the fact that learnerships generally take one year to complete, most of the respondents who had completed their learnership, did so in 2012 or 2013.

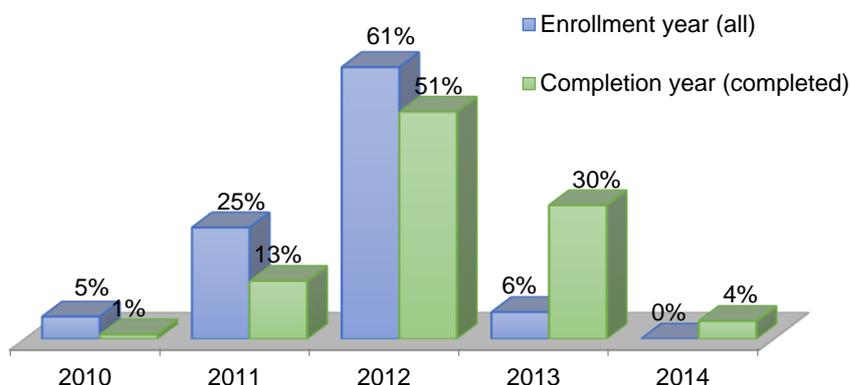


Figure 8: Year of entry and completion

The majority of learners completed their course in the same financial year that they started (53%), or in the next financial year (40%). Learners do not always start at the beginning of the year, and completion of a one-year course could therefore run over to the next year. 7% of learners took longer to complete the learnership, mostly completing it in two years instead of one. However, a few took even longer.

Among those who completed their learnerships, 46% have not yet received their certificates. While those who completed the learnership recently (in 2014), might still receive their certificates in the near future, those who completed them in 2012 show an especially high rate of non-receipt of certificates.

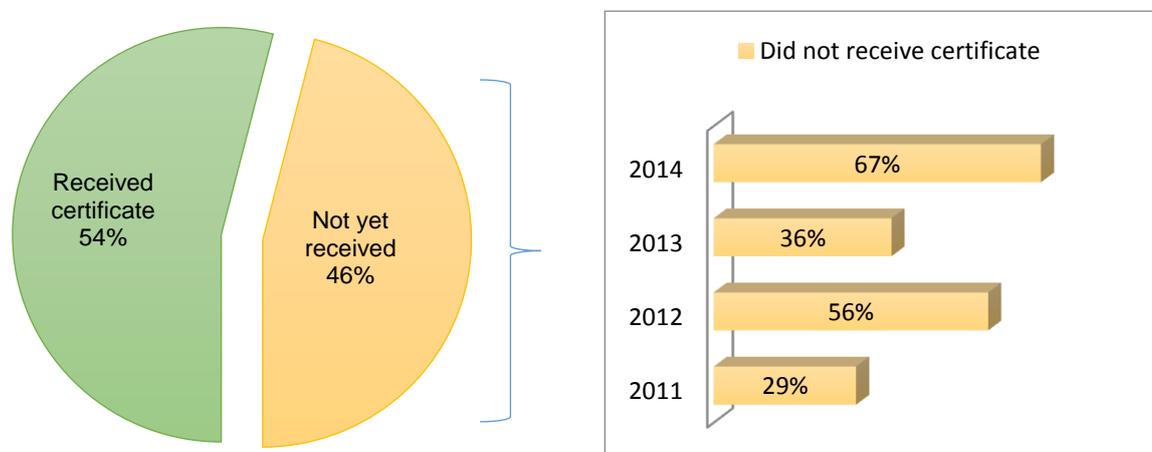


Figure 9: Receipt of certificates

Part of the issue of certificates not being received is linked to the new MIS data management system that the FP&M are migrating towards. Employers are required to update the completion status of a learner on this system, however it was found during the analysis of MIS data, for the purpose of another of the objectives of the Tracking and Tracing study, that the completion status of learners is not accurate and under reports successful completion. The non-receipt of certificates does seem to be linked to the employers / training providers offering learnerships. For example, in 2012 Nomasojabula Training Services trained 27 learners, of whom 24 claim to have not received certificates. Another example, although on a smaller scale, is Komatiland forests – Platorand, who trained five of the respondents in 2012, four of whom did not receive their certificates. This indicates that some employers are less likely than others to be updating the completion status of learners in this new system.

Verbatim comments from the survey suggest that without certificates, learners find it difficult to prove that they have completed the learnership and therefore feel that this contributes to their unemployment.

It is, however, difficult to ascertain whether this is a concern across the population, or if the problem is magnified in the sample due to the inclusion of certain employers who trained the sample learners. Although the problem might or might not be smaller in the population, it is an area into which the FP&M can look to assist learners.

Why do learners choose to study, or terminate?

All learnership respondents were asked to indicate why they chose to do a learnership. 51% indicated that they wanted to improve their skills (skills development), and 37% felt that it would help them get work experience. A further 19% felt that it would improve their chances of getting employment. Another reason mentioned by 9%, was the need to obtain a formal qualification.

Focusing on the 19% who terminated, Table 4 lists the main reasons why learners do not complete their learnerships. Often it is not by choice that they terminate their training, but rather are forced to do so by companies who close down, or new companies taking over.

Disillusionment with elements of the learnership can also result in termination. One respondent comments: *“What they told us was different from what happened. We ended up working very hard for very little.”* Others simply state that they feel that the qualification has no real value.

Table 4: Reasons for terminating learnerships

	Based on 47 people who terminated their studies
Employer-driven reasons	
Company closure / new company taking over	26%
Fired / retrenchment	9%
Company terminated learnership	2%
Disillusionment	
Qualification had no value	11%
Poor workplace training	9%
Was exploited / irregular practices	6%
Theory training poor	4%
Financial problems	
Transport problems	9%
Accommodation issues	6%
No stipend	4%
Found employment	
Found employment	11%
Personal reasons	
Pregnancy	13%
Lost interest	9%
Furthering studies	9%
Moved	6%
Family problems	4%

Those who terminated their studies were also asked to indicate how long they had studied before they terminated or before the learnership was terminated. Table 5 indicates that termination is likely at any stage during the learnership, even as far in as 12 months, which should theoretically have been a completed learnership.

However, many of those who indicated that their learnerships were terminated after 11 months or longer, terminated due to company closures or similar issues. It is therefore likely that the companies were not functioning optimally prior to closure, which could imply more ineffective learnership programmes.

Those who terminate out of personal reasons or due to disillusionment with the course, tend to do so by around six months, or sooner.

Table 5: Length of study before termination

Time studied	Percentage
2 years	9%
12 months	21%
11 months	6%
9 months	9%
7 months	6%
6 months	19%
5 months	4%
4 months	6%
3 months	15%
2 months	4%

How has the learnership affected employment?

a) Employment prior to starting the learnership

The majority of respondents were unemployed at the start of their learnerships (71%). While the unemployment rate for women is slightly higher than males (75% vs. 67%), this difference is not statistically significant.

One in four learners entered a learnership with no previous work experience, and a further 18% had less than one year work experience. The other half claim to have more than two years' work experience, yet this might not be relevant experience in the particular industry in which they receive training.

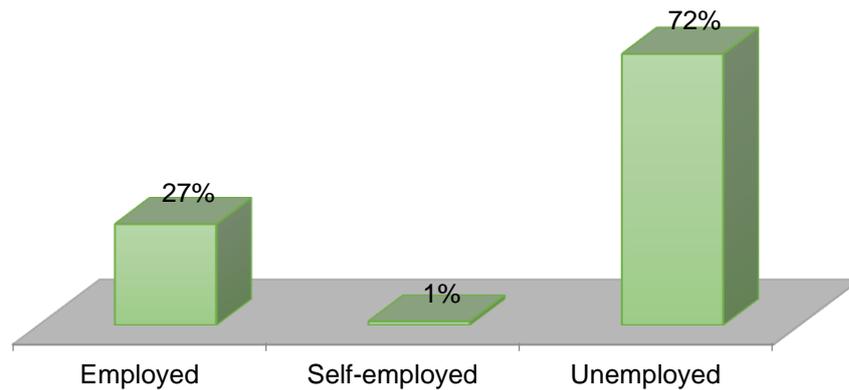


Figure 10: Employment status prior to learnership (total sample)

Those who were employed prior to starting the learnership:

- Mostly worked full-time for 35-40 or more hours a week (86%)
- Were employed in permanent positions (68%)
- Worked in large companies with 150 or more people (71%)
- Earned on average around R2 725 per month (5% trimmed mean)
- Were employed in Forestry (32%), Clothing (32%) and Textiles (18%)

Another way to view the employment figures is from the perspective of the sector in which learners trained. The Furniture and Wood Products sectors tended to train unemployed learners, while the other sectors also train employed individuals, most likely current employees of their companies, as well as unemployed learners.

Table 6: Employment at the start of a learnership per sector

	Clothing	Forestry	Furniture	Textiles	Wood Products
Yes, at employer	35%	42%	10%	37%	7%
Yes, self-employed	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Unemployed	65%	55%	90%	63%	93%

Those who were unemployed were mostly looking for work before joining the learnership (57%). Around one-third started a learnership directly after finishing school (15%) or some other studies (14%). Respondents could provide multiple answers to this question, so the percentages do not total 100.

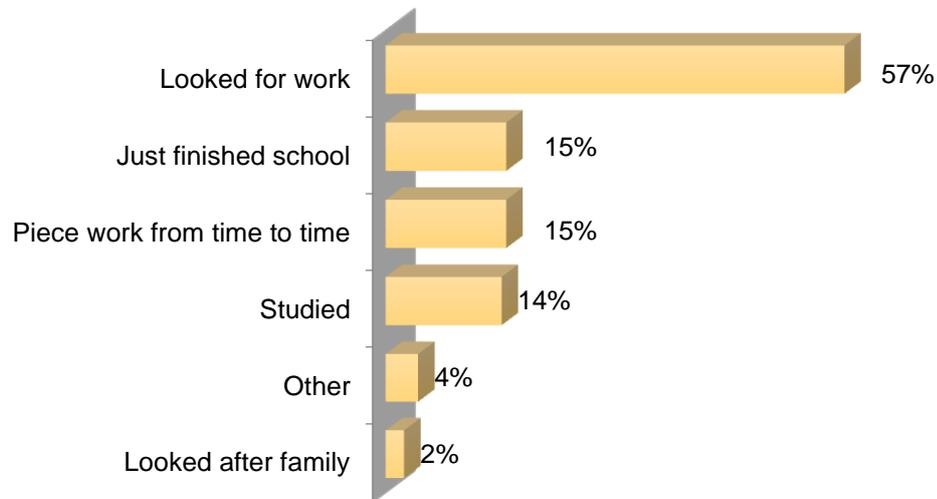


Figure 11: Activities of the unemployed prior to the learnership

While unemployed, learners were supported by family and friends (59%) or through grants payments (27%). Only 17% did piece jobs from time-to-time, to earn any money. The main form of grant payment is child support (20%), followed by pensions in the family (6%) and then disability grants (1%). Not surprisingly, males were more likely to engage in piece work than women, and women tend to rely more on child care grants.

b) Employment after the learnership

After completing the learnership, only 27% of the previously-unemployed were offered positions with the company that they trained with. In total, for all learners, this value is 42%. Eight in ten (8 in 10) learners indicated that the work they did on appointment was indeed related to their learnership.

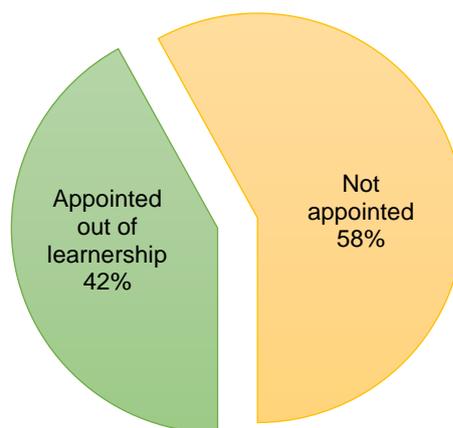


Figure 12: Employment offered directly after learnership

At the time of the survey, unemployment had dropped from 71% to 43%. Figure 13 illustrates the employment situation of the respondents at the time of the survey. The results are split for the total sample, which includes terminations, and those who completed their studies. Most of the employed individuals are permanently employed (56%), with around one-third doing contract work (33%) and a few employed as casual workers (11%).

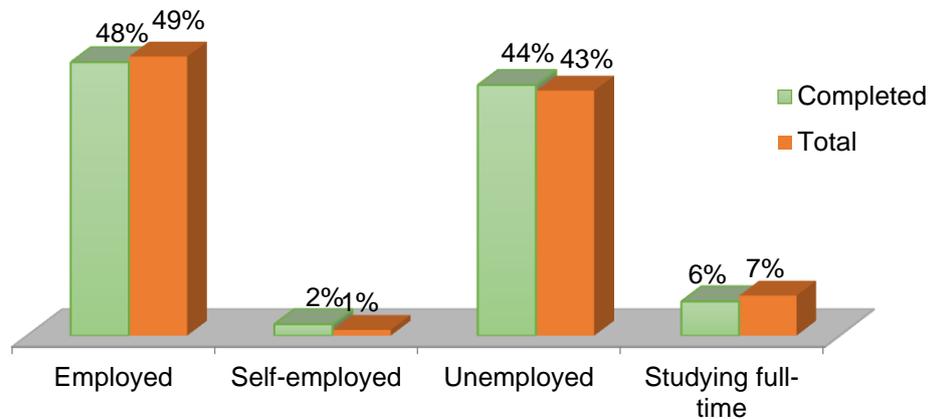


Figure 13: Current employment among those who completed the learnership

The change for the unemployed is summarised in the illustration below. The values are based on those who completed the learnership but were unemployed at the start (n = 173, 72%).



Figure 14: Employment for the unemployed

Figure 14 illustrates that unemployment dropped by around half for those who were previously unemployed. The number who were employed directly out of the learnership, is perhaps disappointing. The reasons for non-employment cited by respondents is simply that there were no positions (70%) or only limited positions (13%) available. Companies therefore tend to take on unemployed learners without necessarily having open positions, and therefore with no intention to employ them. Some learners are eventually absorbed into the market, as indicated by the rise from 27% to 39% employment after a few months. However, this absorption is not necessarily by the sectors in which they trained. While 80% of those who were employed directly out of the learnership programme indicated that their work was related to the learnerships, fewer of those currently employed can say the same (67%).

Some of those who needed to look for work after completing the learnership therefore found jobs in unrelated areas. The main reason for this appears to be that learners are desperate to find work quickly, while most have an intention of still searching for related work later.

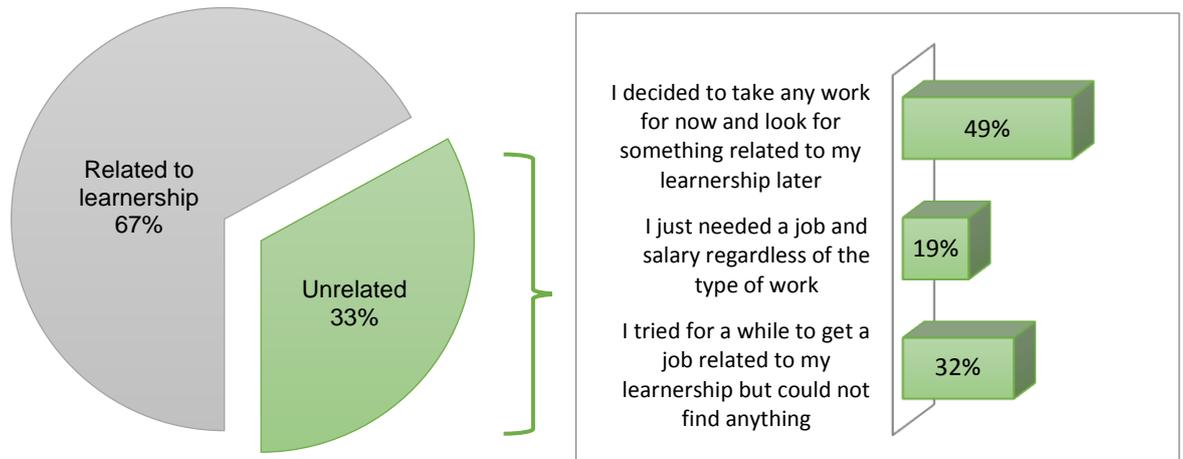


Figure 15: Employment related to learnership and reasons why not

The gender of the student does not influence employment figures. However, a view by sector highlights that the Clothing sector has been most successful in absorbing previously-unemployed students, followed by the Textiles and Wood Product sectors. The Furniture and Forestry sectors are less successful, with Forestry in particular showing a 2% net rise in employment.

Table 7: Employment increase by sector (based on those who completed the learnership)

	Clothing	Forestry	Furniture	Textiles	Wood Products
Currently employed	70%	44%	26%	61%	31%
Employed at the start	35%	42%	10%	37%	7%
% employment increase	35%	2%	16%	24%	24%

A detailed analysis of the type of work done currently (after the learnership) shows that:

- Employees now work longer hours, 93% work full-time for 35-40+ hours a week (93%), 54% of whom work more than 40 hours a week.
- More learners work for medium-to-small companies (37% vs 26%) indicating that these enterprises were possibly more effective in absorbing learners
- 90% work in the private sector
- After completing the learnership, earn on average R4 133 per month (5% trimmed mean)

An analysis of the income potential of employees with a learnership was done by comparing the salaries of employed learners prior to the learnership with salaries after the learnership. Figure 16 shows the increase in income of employed qualified learners (employed before and after). 13% reported no increase in their income, while a further 17% only received an inflationary increase.

Verbatim comments at the end of the survey support the fact that some learners did not receive even an increase from their stipend payments: “I was employed by the company but my salary stayed the same”. However, at least 40% of learners report more reasonable increases of R1 000 or more.

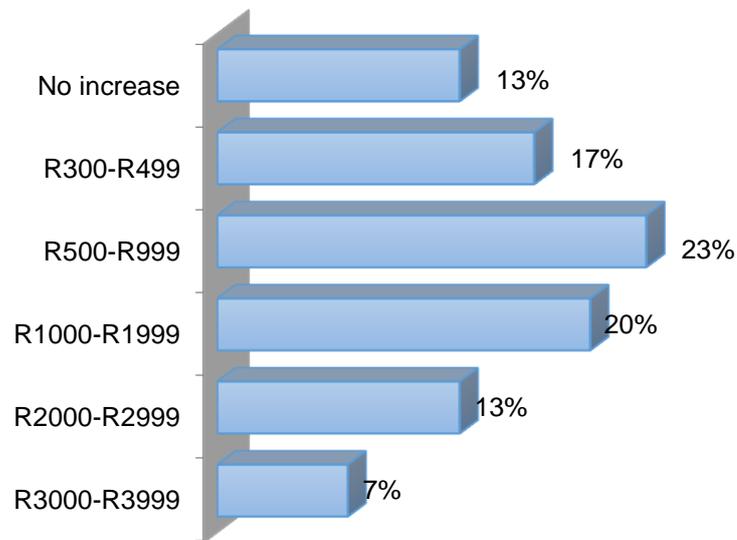


Figure 16: Increase in income from before to after completing the learnership

The average salary, as well as average increase in income, is presented in Table 8 below. The average salary is based on all those currently employed and who completed their training, and the average income is computed for those who were also employed before the learnership.

Table 8: Average salary and income by sector

	Average Salary	Average increase
Clothing	R4 594	R1 573
Forestry	R3 977	R1 061
Furniture	R3 671	R620
Textiles	R4 234	R1 822
Wood Products	R6 847*	-

*Based on only 3 learners, as employment in the Wood Product sector is low, working from an already low base of 14 people.

Employers from the Furniture and Forestry sectors not only do not employ many new (previously-unemployed) learners, they also pay relatively poorly.

Machinery operators and drivers earn on average R5 128 per month, and clerical and admin workers earn similarly at R5 275. Labourers earn less, with an average salary of R3 686.

Nearly all of those who are currently unemployed have tried to find work (90%). The main reason why they feel that have been unsuccessful, is a lack of work experience and training. Many are also discouraged by the lack of available positions (43%).

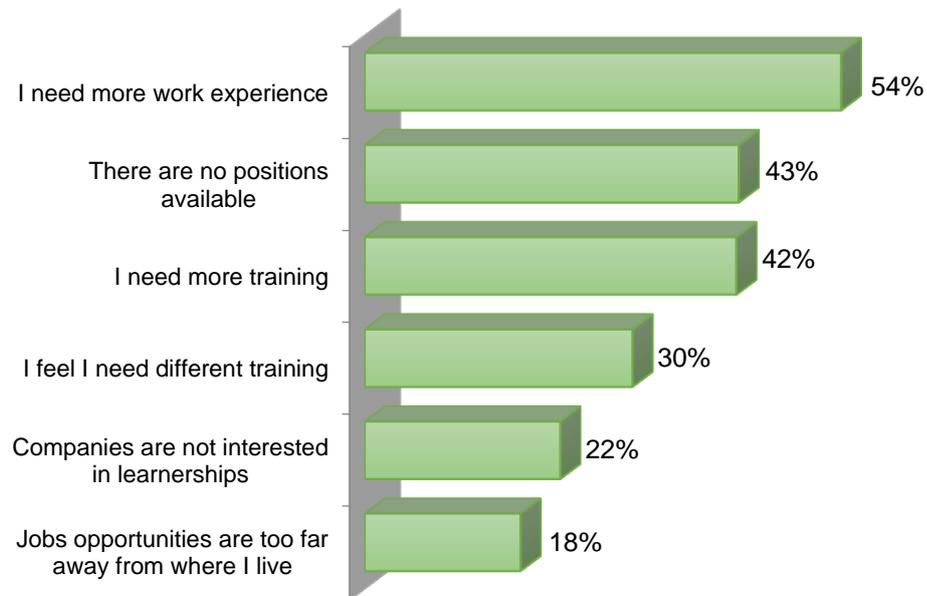


Figure 17: Perceived reasons for failure to find employment

Verbatim comments on this question suggest that another main reason why those seeking work struggle, is the lack of a formal certificate as proof of graduation. A few also mention a lack of information, implying that they are struggling, as they do not know where to look for positions.

22% of the unemployed had indicated that they feel that companies are not interested in learnerships. 20% of those who are employed agree, and claim that their employers do not value their new skills. A further 12% are unsure of the value that their employers place on their new skills.

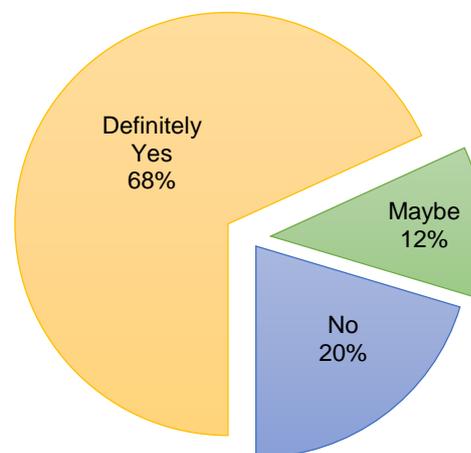


Figure 18: Does your employer value your new skills?

Despite struggling to find work, the unemployed learners plan to continue looking for work (85%), and/or to further their education (52%). 25% now consider working for themselves, and only 1% are discouraged (not planning on looking for work anymore).

What were the working conditions during the training?

This section focuses on a few questions relating to working conditions, including hours worked, the stipend received and the learners' perception of the administration process. The figure below illustrates that most learners worked for between 20-40 hours a week. Around one-third, however, was expected to work for more than 40 hours a week. While most feel that these working hours were at least mostly fair (79%), 10% indicated that it was not always fair, and a further 11% feel that it was definitely not fair (21% unfair). A verbatim comment highlights the long hours that some worked, for only the stipend payment: "We worked from 7h00 till 19h00 for 4 days with little pay."

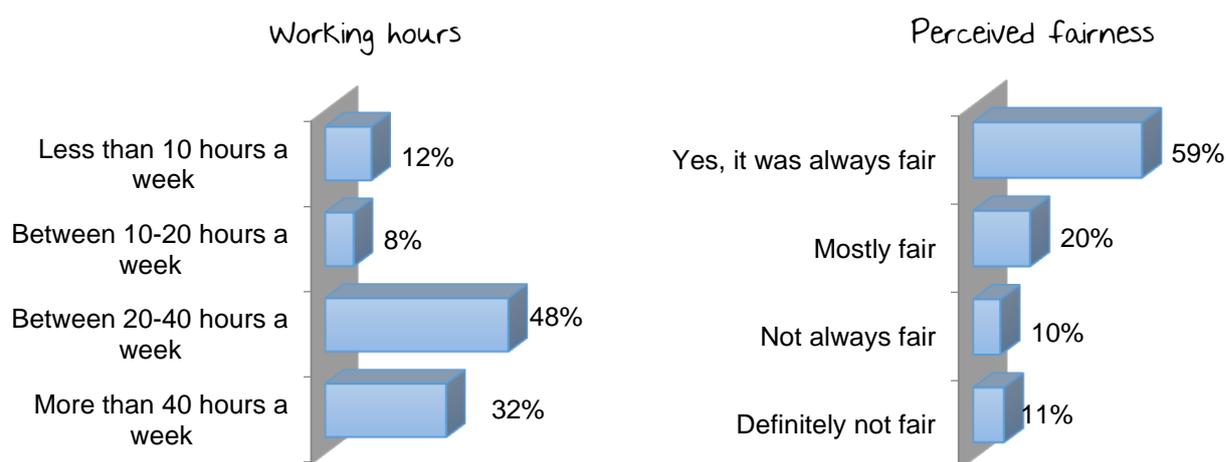


Figure 19: Working hours during learnership and perceived fairness

Table 9 below indicates the percentage of learners in each of the sectors who worked for more than 40 hours per week, as well as those who feel that the working hours were definitely not fair. Wood Products and Forestry stand out from other sectors in terms of the long hours worked, as well as the high perceived unfairness. The Textiles sector also scores relatively highly.

Table 9: Working hours during learnership and perceived fairness by sector

	Clothing	Forestry	Furniture	Textiles	Wood Products
Working more than 40 hours a week	14%	40%	7%	50%	62%
Perceived as definitely not fair	0%	18%	8%	12%	23%

Another working condition in the form of stipend, was addressed. Respondents were asked whether the stipend they received was enough, not sufficient or non-existent. 10% indicated that they did not receive a stipend. This is higher among individuals who were employed (14%), yet the employer survey (see the Voice of the Employer report) highlights that these learners might still be receiving a salary and are therefore not eligible for an additional stipend. 6% of the previously unemployed indicated that they did not receive a stipend.

Respondents were also asked to motivate why they feel that the stipend was not enough. Figure 20 presents the main comments made, the larger font size referring to comments most mentioned. The stipend was either only enough for transport and food / lunch or did not even cover this basic expense.

Many felt that they could not cover all of their expense or felt aggrieved at having to work as hard as permanent staff, working long or shift hours for very little pay relative to employed staff.

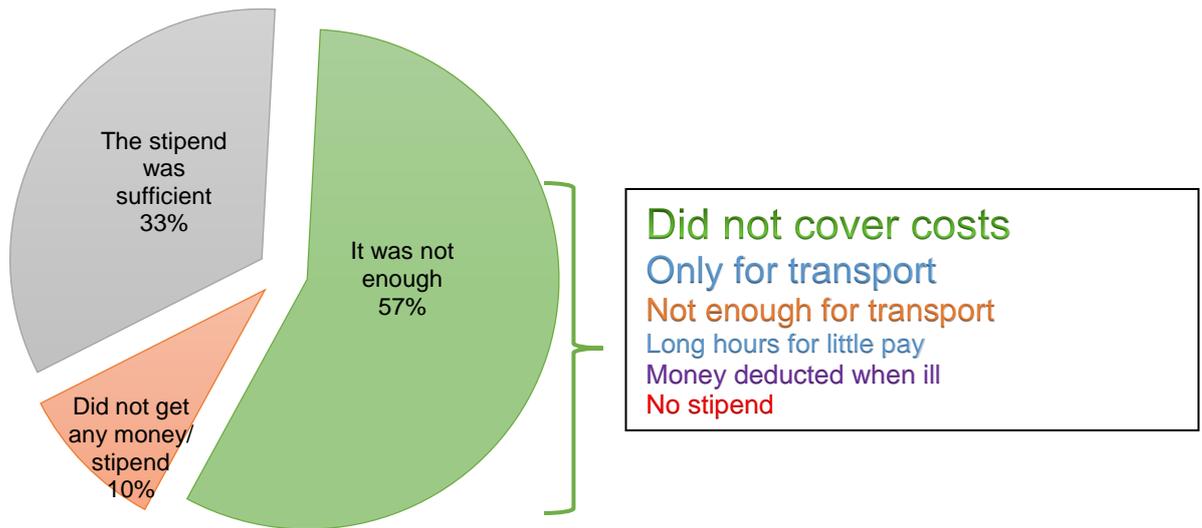


Figure 20: Stipend sufficiency

Table 10 splits the results from the stipend question by sector. Respondents in the Textiles sector were the most likely to claim that they had not received a stipend during the learnership.

Table 10: Stipend fairness by sector

	Clothing	Forestry	Furniture	Textiles	Wood Products
The stipend was sufficient	35%	29%	34%	33%	23%
It was not enough	62%	58%	63%	46%	77%
Did not get any money / stipend	3%	13%	3%	21%	0%

In Figure 21 below, 52% of learners agree that the learnership can open up a person for exploitation, and 61% felt that the learnership could be managed more effectively. As the focus of the study was on impact and not customer satisfaction, these issues are only touched upon and could possibly be explored in more detail in a future study.

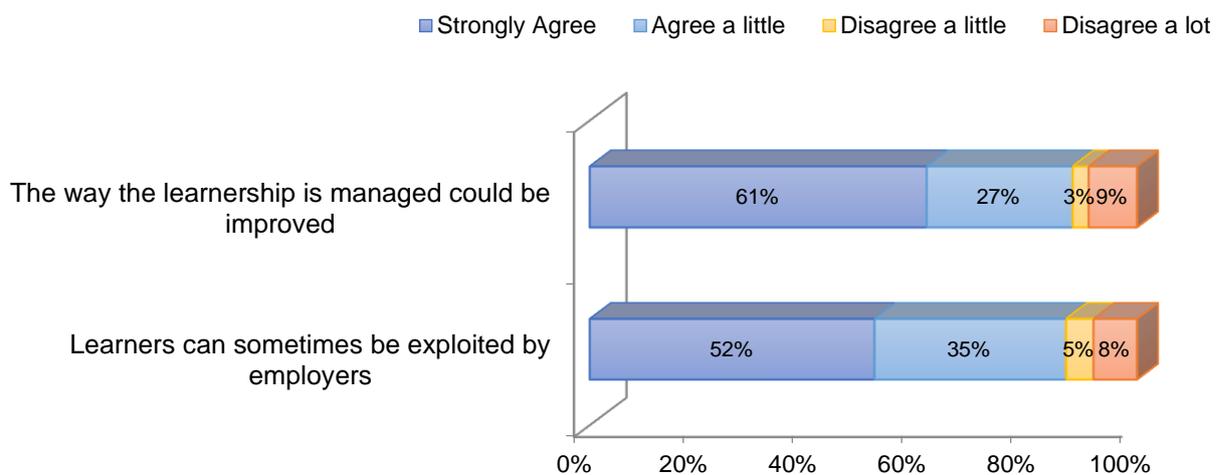


Figure 21: Perception on management of Learnership

What is the value that learners perceive?

Learners were questioned on the perceived value that they receive from the learnership. These questions focused on other value areas, besides employment. The issues of increased earnings potential and improved future promotion expectations are akin to employment. Figure 22 presents the views of respondents on these potential benefits. Around one in two learners strongly agree that they can earn more with a learnership than without one, and will be more likely to be promoted. Indeed, 30% of those employed already, report having received a promotion or career advancement due to the learnership.

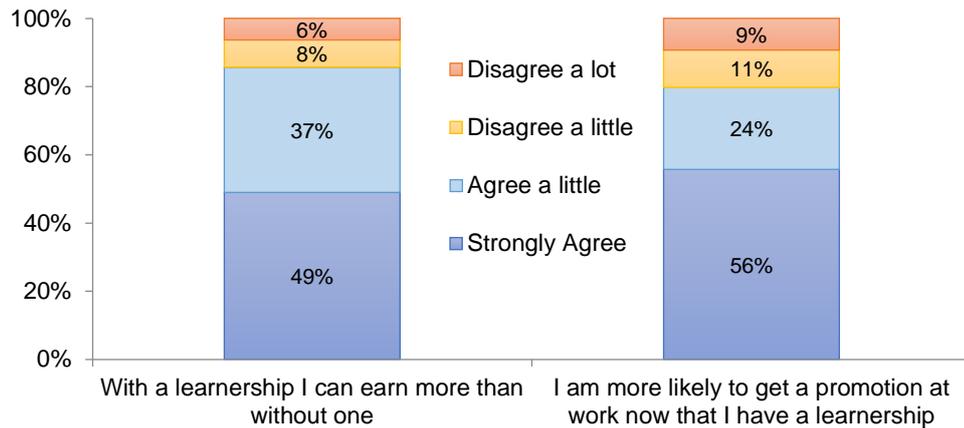


Figure 22: The impact of learnership on perceived future earnings and promotions

Figure 23 presents learners' attitudes towards future study. The learnership has motivated the majority of learners to consider studying further / additionally (79% strongly agree). The majority of learners would be inspired to do short skills courses (43%) or certificates / diplomas (20%).

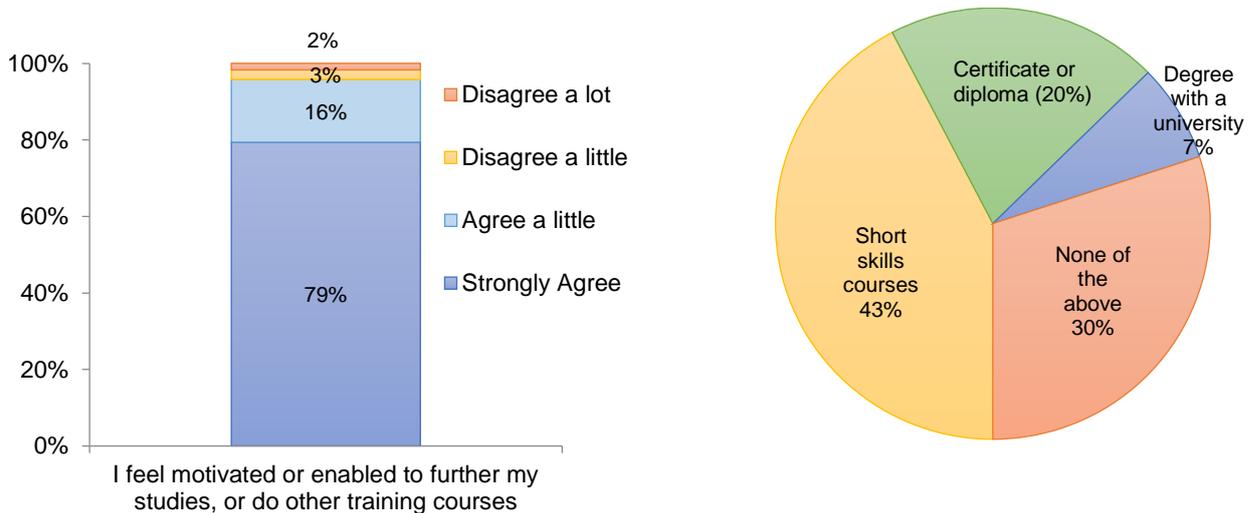


Figure 23: Impact of learnership on the motivation to study further

The learnership has also had an impact on personal development, such as communication skills, self-esteem and self-confidence. Nearly all respondents agreed that the learnership has improved these skills.

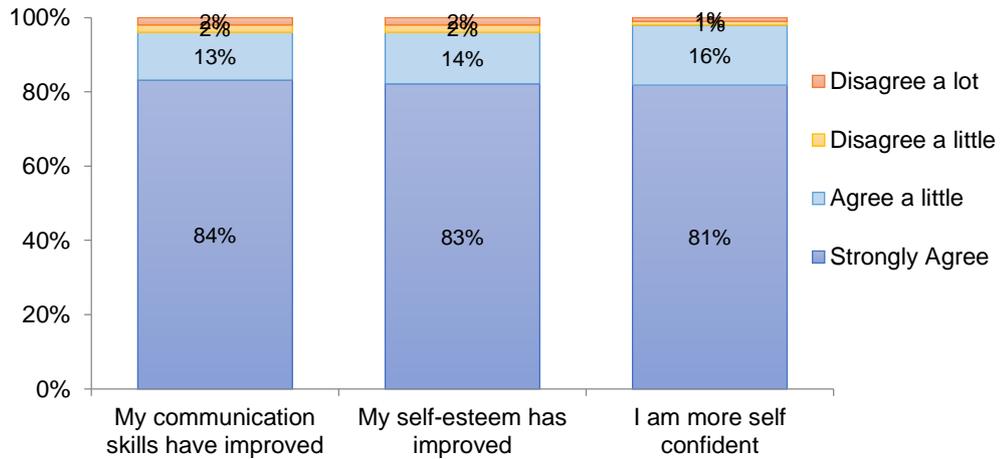


Figure 24: Impact of learnership on personal development

The final “soft” benefit addressed, was that of increased respect in their family / community. Again the results show a large percentage of learners benefitting (87% agree).

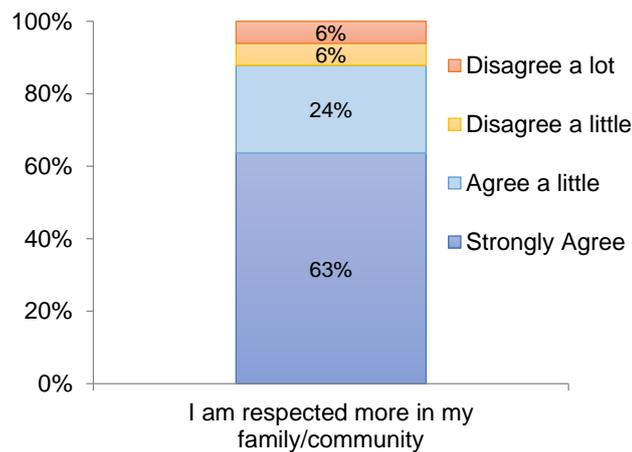


Figure 25: Impact of learnership on relationships

The final issue addressed in the survey, is the extent to which a respondent would recommend a learnership to someone else. At least nine in ten learners would recommend the learnership to a friend and only 7% would not recommend it.

Those who would not recommend the learnership are mostly from Forestry and Wood Products.

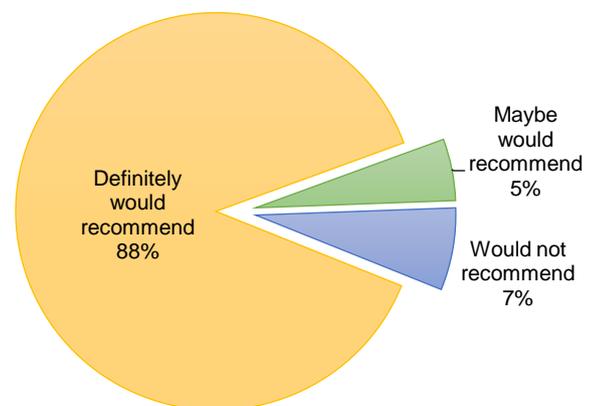


Figure 26: Likelihood to recommend the learnership to family/friends

When asked to provide any last comments or suggestion, most learners commented that it was a good experience and that it benefited them in various ways. Some commented on the lack of employment and certificates.

Give us certificates

Gained skills and experience
Creates opportunities
The SETA and companies must work together
Improved communication skills
 They mistreated and threatened us
Improve training
Good Experience

Give us jobs

It helped us, we gained experience and got a certificate

The training is good and we gained a lot of experience.

It was not good, they mistreated and threatened us

They must be honest and not change the schedule

I would not recommend it to anyone because we got no certificate

We need more learnerships, with more levels and jobs

2. Focus Group Findings

Who are the learners we spoke to?

The participants are aged between the ages 18 to 26 and they all reside in the South Western Townships (SOWETO). Participants completed their learnership programme in the Clothing, Textile, Leather and Footwear industries between 2011 and 2013.

Two mixed gender focus groups were conducted. The first focus group consisted of three unemployed learners, of which two were male and one was female. The second group consisted of two employed learners, one male and one female.



The participants entered the learnership programme to gain working experience, improve skills for their current job and to engage in some form of activity as opposed to staying at home while looking for employment.

What are the challenges, opportunities and benefits for the unemployed?

The discussion with learners centred around challenges, benefits and opportunities. Two learners experienced challenges, while all three could identify benefits. However only one learner identified a possible employment opportunity. The results are elaborated on below.



Challenges

When probed about their learnership experience, the participants told us about the challenges they faced during their learnership programme.

The challenges ranged from a lack of facilities required for the technical part of the learnership, to working longer hours than those agreed upon when the learnership started. In addition, learners indicated that the stipend paid out on a monthly basis was insufficient for covering their transport fare and to pay for using facilities, such as the internet. Learners were required to pay from their pockets, as these were not available, though they felt that these should have been covered on the learnership programme. A sense of exploitation was implicitly expressed by one of the learners, as there was an idea that the learners worked longer hours than the permanent staff.

Only one learner reported that she did not perceive the long working hours as a challenge or an issue, as she worked the same hours at the job she had prior to entering the learnership programme. The participant also did not mention any other challenges experienced during the learnership programme, as she felt it was a good experience.

Respondent 1: "I experienced a lot of challenges as there was no internet or facilities to do our practicals, I would end up having to go to pay for the internet from my pocket because I would end up at an internet cafe"

Respondent 2 "The transport fee they gave us was too little, it wouldn't last the whole month but still they forced us to come to work on Saturdays."

Employment opportunities

Although more ambitious and optimistic about the future, the learners have been struggling to get permanent employment. A sense of disappointment was expressed on the issue of not getting an opportunity for a permanent position in the company that offered the learnership, despite the hard work and long hours that the learners had put in.

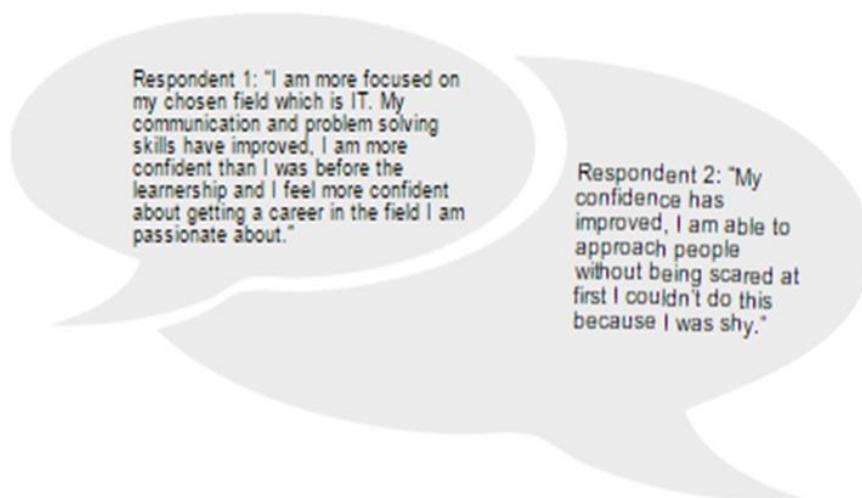
The challenge in finding work has been attributed to issues such as nepotism, insufficient knowledge about the sector, far away job opportunities and a lack of job opportunities in the learners' chosen career path. Despite the challenges of getting a job, the learners have resorted to taking part-time jobs and exploring self-employment options using the knowledge and skills they obtained through the learnership.

Respondent 1: I think there's too much nepotism, I have been struggling to find work for a very long time even though I have a diploma and learnership in IT."

Respondent 3: "I will be sewing some matric dresses soon as the matric dance season gets closer."

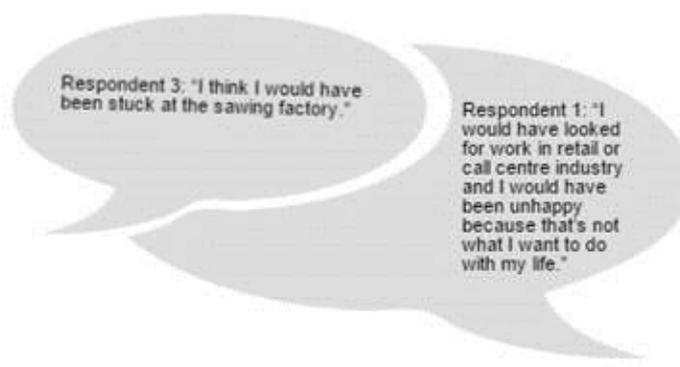
Benefits

The learnership has played a huge role in improving some personal areas in the learners' lives, and these could contribute to helping them to secure a job in future, as the learners felt that these positive changes will last a life time.



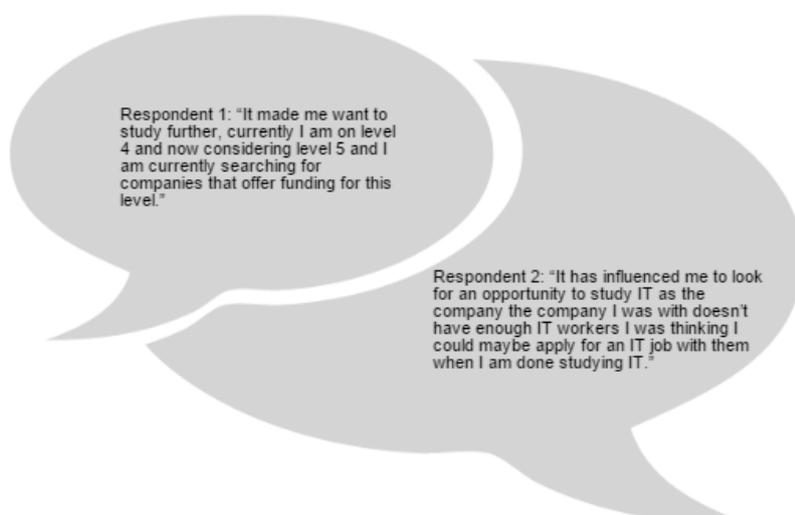
Although they did not get employment through the learnership, the learners strongly felt that they have somehow benefited from the learnership experience. They indicated that their achievements are evident in their improved soft skills, confidence and self-esteem, as well as financial skills. The learnership has also led to more of a focus on careers and planning for the future.

Participants were also asked the question "*What would have happened if you did not do the learnership?*" The participants indicated that if they had not taken the opportunity, they would not have achieved their personal goals and would have perhaps still been looking for work that is not related to a particular career or still stuck in an underpaying job.

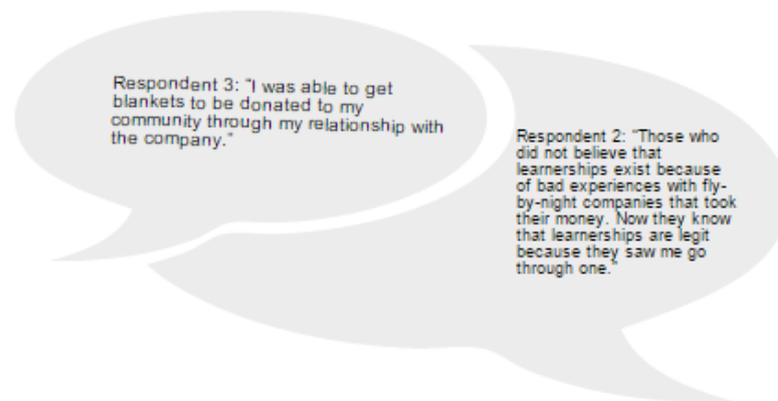


There was unanimous agreement among participants that completing the learnership helps learners to realise their goals, and also creates awareness about the availability of funding for those who wish to further their studies.

The learners also seem more ambitious than they were prior to engaging in the learnership. Some of the participants told us they have been able to further their studies, while others were eager to pursue a career in a field they are passionate about.



According to our participants, the learnership programme has not only impacted the learners, it has also benefited the communities that the learners come from. The learners have been able to use the skills they have gained to service members of their communities and also spread the word about learnership opportunities.



Participants were asked if they would recommend a learnership and who they would recommend it to, if they could. There was consensus among the unemployed participants that matriculants who are interested in furthering their studies but do not have funding, and university graduates who are struggling to find employment, can benefit from a learnership programme, as it would help them get closer to where they want to be in their careers.

Disadvantaged young people who live in informal settlements were also mentioned on the list of people who should be involved in learnerships. Participants believe that the learnership will help them to improve their lives and also minimise engaging in negative behaviour, such as unprotected sex and substance abuse.

What are the challenges, benefits and opportunities for the employed?

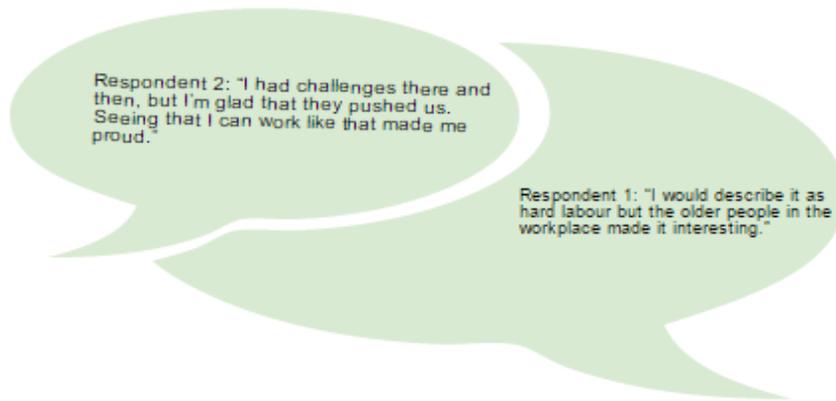
The two employed focus group participants were also probed about the challenges they experienced during their learnership programme.

Both the man and woman interviewed commented on all aspects.

Challenges

Similar to the unemployed participants, the two employed participants also described their learnership as a challenging, labour-intensive experience, with a lot of pressure. However, they seemed more grateful for the challenge compared to the unemployed group.

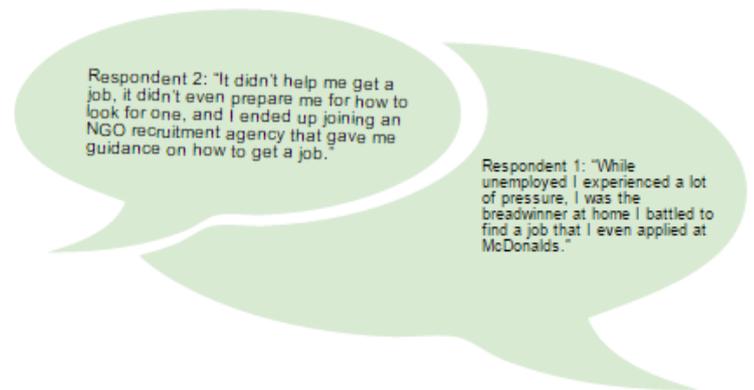




Employment opportunities

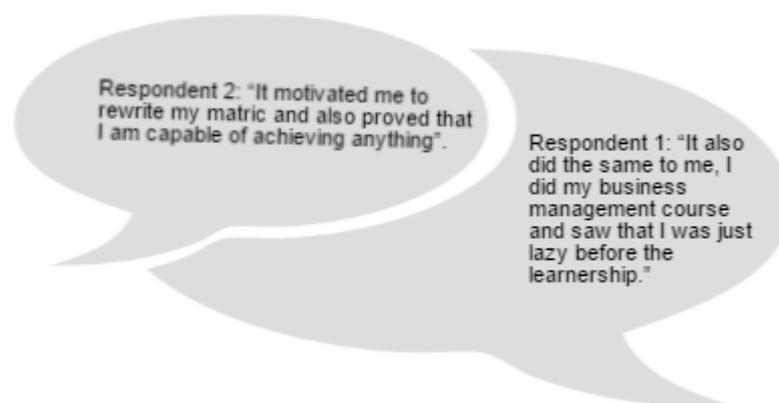
Although the learners were able to get a job with the company that offered them the learnership, one of the learners felt that the learnership did not prepare them enough for finding work on their own. This was realised after the company retrenched and closed down.

Despite the challenges that the learners experienced in finding a job after the company closed down, they were able to find another job, although it took time to find employment. Only one participant managed to find a job in the safety shoe industry, the second participant is now employed in the food industry, where she feels her experience is not as relevant as it would be if she was in the safety clothing manufacturing industry.

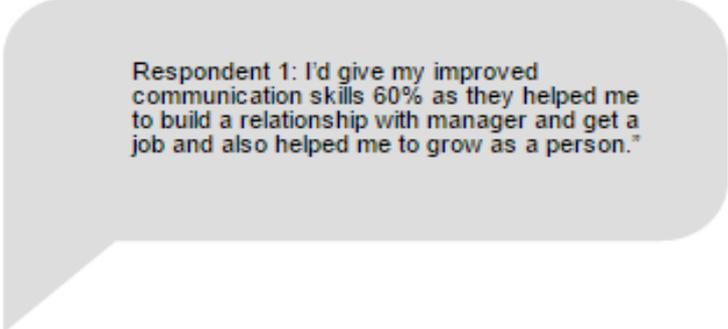


Benefits

The learnership seems to have had a positive impact on the learners, as it enabled them to rethink their future and improve their education.



In addition to helping the learners realise their goals, participants expressed their gratitude for the improved soft skills, financial skills, attitude towards life, confidence and self-esteem that they saw upon completing their learnership. Participants believe that it is these changes that enabled them to stand a better chance at getting another job, especially their improved self-esteem, confidence and communication skills.

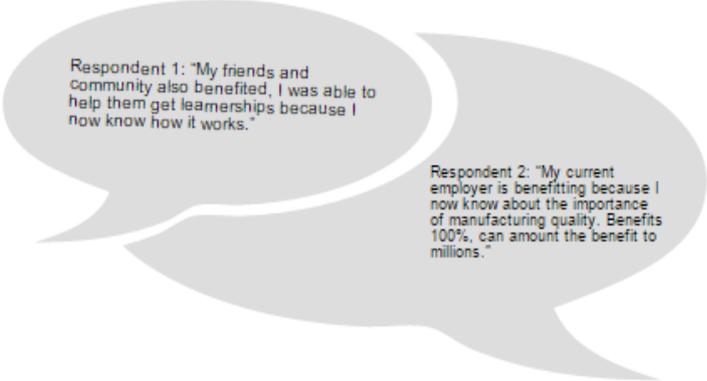


Respondent 1: I'd give my improved communication skills 60% as they helped me to build a relationship with manager and get a job and also helped me to grow as a person."

There was general agreement that the participants' involvement in the learnership has also benefited the learners' families and friends. They also believe that their community has benefited, as the members of the community are now aware of learnership programmes.

Participants indicated that their families and current employers have also benefited. They indicated that the learnership enhanced their knowledge about producing quality products. The learnership has also improved their employment opportunities, and working has also enabled them to provide financial support to their families.

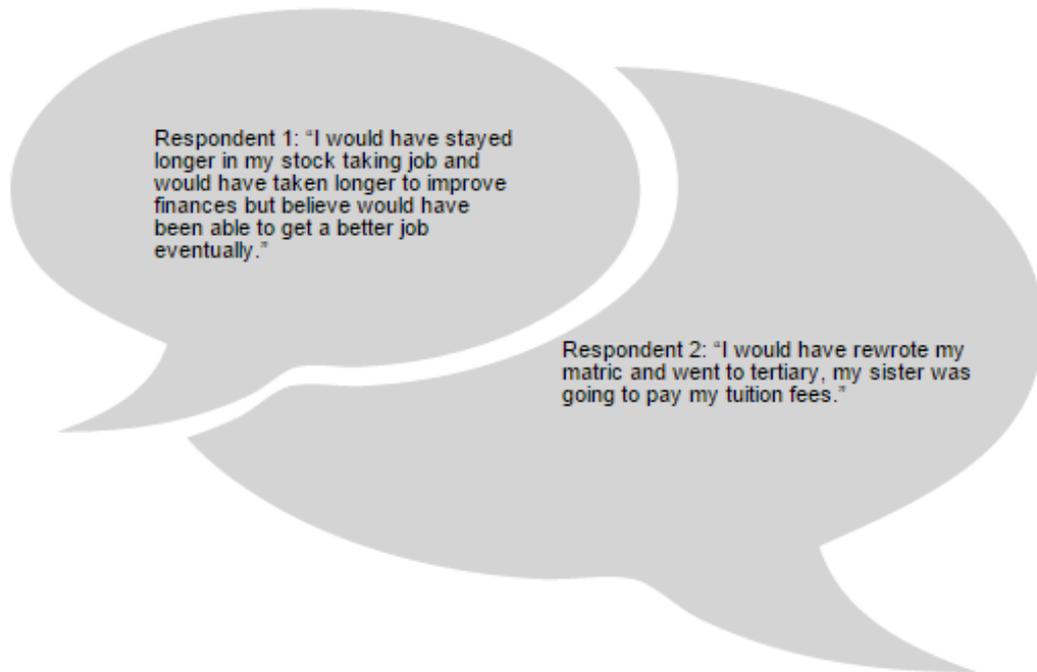
The participants held different views on how their lives would have turned out if they had not done the learnership. One participant believed it would have taken long before they could see improvement in the area of finance, while the other believed that he would have rewritten his matric and enrolled for tertiary education with financial assistance from his sister. The learner also stated that although he still wishes to enrol for tertiary education, it is challenging to do so, as he works long hours at his current job.



Respondent 1: "My friends and community also benefited, I was able to help them get learnerships because I now know how it works."

Respondent 2: "My current employer is benefitting because I now know about the importance of manufacturing quality. Benefits 100%, can amount the benefit to millions."

The general consensus among participants is that the learnership had a positive impact on their lives, and both believe that the young people who do not have enough money to further their education after matriculating should pursue a learnership. They also stated that young people are faced with challenges, such as teenage pregnancy and drugs, because they lack motivation and vision.



While some learners coped and managed to overcome the challenges experienced during the course of their learnership programme, some opted for termination. The learners indicated that the majority of their peers completed their learnership, and for those who terminated, finding a job, inability to handle pressure, substance abuse and ill-treatment from employers were cited as the top reasons for drop-outs.



Conclusion

The participants from both the unemployed and employed groups agreed that they have benefited from the learnership. They view learnerships as a stepping stone that could benefit those who do not have the means to further their studies, as well as those who are struggling to find employment because of inadequate working experience in the field in which they completed their qualifications. The unemployed group agreed that although they have not been able to find work, they still feel the positive impact that the learnership has had in their lives, regardless of the challenges they have faced.

3. Appendix

Learnership Survey Questionnaire



LEARNERSHIP TELEPHONE SURVEY



Good day, my name is...and I was given your number by the FP&M SETA as someone who has registered to do a learnership, or is still doing a learnership at the moment. Am I speaking to xxx?

[Instruction: if not the right person, ask if they have a number for the person you are looking for]

First name _____ Cell number _____
 Middle name _____ Appointment time and date _____
 Surname _____ ID Number _____
 Male Female

When speaking to the right person say: I work for a company called IQ Business and we have been asked by the FP&M SETA to study learnerships and what they mean to people. Would you be prepared to answer some questions about the learnership that you did, or are still doing?

Please understand that your participation is voluntary and all the answers are confidential. It will take about 10 - 15 minutes of your time

1 Yes - Continue
 2 No - Close

I just want to confirm that you registered and started a learnership in the last few years? Even if you did not complete the learnership

1 Yes
 2 No

If no, confirm ID number that is on the phoning sheet and check application - then close

Did you ever apply for one, but never started? 1 Yes 2 No

Learnership History

Firstly tell me a bit more about the learnership that you have completed or that you have registered for but did not complete
[Interviewer populate from phoning sheet, if incorrect record response in second box]

We have you recorded as doing a ...
 [if incorrect record here]

(E.g. 2011)
 Q1 When did you start this learnership? Year _____
 Q2 Did you finish the learnership? 1 Yes 2 No → What year did you finish?
 Q3. If N Are you still studying or did you terminate your studies? 1 Yes 2 No *Record year*
 Q4. IF Did you receive a certificate? 1 Yes 2 No

Q5 Have you registered for any other learnerships? 1 Yes 2 No

	Learnership title	Start year	Status		
			1 Finished	2 Enrolled	3 Terminated
1					
2					

Town _____ Province _____
 Q6 In which town/place and province did you grow up?
 Q7 In which town/place and province did you do the learnership?
 Q8 In which town/place and province did do you live now?

Q9 What is your highest level of qualification?
Only read out if they are unsure

1 Less	6 NQF 2 (N1)	11 NQF 4 (N3)
2 NQF 0 (ABET 1 (Std 1/ Grade 3)	7 NQF 2 (Std 8/Gr 10)	12 NQF 6 (First degree/Higher diplomas)
3 NQF 0 (ABET 2 (Std 3/ Grade 5)	8 NQF 3 (N3)	13 NQF 7 (Honours/Masters)
4 NQF 0 (ABET 3 (Std 5/ Grade 7)	9 NQF 3 (Std 9/Gr 11)	14 NQF 8 (Doctorate)
5 NQF 1 (ABET 4 (Std 7/ Grade 9)	10 NQF 4 (Matric)	15 NQF 5 (Diploma/occupational certificate)

Q10 Why did you decide to do a learnership? DO NOT READ OUT BUT CODE FROM VERBATIM

1 Improve chances of getting employed	6 Improve skills	11 Access free studies
2 Improve career prospects/ Promotion	7 Gain work experience	12 OTHER
3 To gain a formal qualification	8 Needed a series of qualifications	
4 Mobility (move to a different location)	9 Identified a scarce skill	
5 Needed a challenge	10 Earn stipend/ allowance	

THOSE TERMINATING LEARNERSHIP BEFORE COMPLETE

Q11 How long, in months, did you study the learnership before you terminated it?

I am going to read out a list of reasons and please tell me which were the the reasons that you terminated your learnership? Of all the reasons you listed, which ONE is the biggest reason

Q12a Q12b

ALL	Most (single mention)		All	Most (Single mention)	
1	1	Theory/ Classroom training poor	8	8	Started another learnership - for a better stipend
2	2	Workplace based training poor	9	9	Pregnancy
3	3	Resistance from your employer	10	10	Family problems
4	4	You found other employment	11	11	Transport problems
5	5	Qualification had no value	12	12	Accommodation problems
6	6	Not interested in the subject matter	13	13	Other <input type="text"/>
7	7	Started another learnership - for better for career			

ASK ALL

Q13 Were you employed at the time when you started the learnership?
emphasise "at the time you started"

1	Yes at employer
2	Yes self-employed
3	No

Q14 How many years work experience did you have when you started your learnership?

1	None	2	Less than a year	3	2-5 years	4	More than 5 years
---	------	---	------------------	---	-----------	---	-------------------

EMPLOYMENT AT TIME OF START

Q15 Please tell us more about your employment AT THE TIME WHEN YOU STARTED your learnership

1	Did you work full time, that is 40 hours or more per week	Q16. Was this...?	1	Contract work
2	Or part time, less than 40 hours per week		2	Permanent work
			3	Casual (day labour?)

Q17 Was it a large company?

1	With 150 or more people
2	A medium sized 50-150 people
3	Small company, 11-49 employees
4	Micro company - 1-10 employees

Q18 In which sector did this company operate?

1	Forestry	7	Clothing
2	Paper and Pulp	8	Textiles
3	Printing	9	Footwear
4	Print media	10	Packaging
5	Publishing	11	Wood products
6	Leather	12	Furniture
		13	Other (record) <input type="text"/>

Q19 How many years work experience did you have at the point when you started the learnership?

1	Less than one year	2	1-3 years	3	3-5 years	4	More than 5 years
---	--------------------	---	-----------	---	-----------	---	-------------------

Q20 If you don't mind telling us, how much did you earn at the time you started your learnership?

R	<input type="text"/>	REFUSED
		99

Q21 Did you do your practical work component at the company where you were employed at the time of starting your learnership?

1	Yes, same company	2	No, I did this at a different company
---	-------------------	---	---------------------------------------

Q22 What type of position did you have?

1	Labourer	7	Professional
2	Machinery operator and driver	8	Manager
3	Sales worker		
4	Clerical and admin worker		
5	Technician and trades worker		

UNEMPLOYMENT AT TIME OF START

Q23 What did you do just before you started your learnership. READ OUT

Multi-mention

1	Looked for work
2	Studied
3	Looked after family
4	Just finished school
5	Piece work from time to time
6	Other

IF 6, Piece Jobs

Roughly how much did you earn per day for piece jobs?

R	<input type="text"/>
---	----------------------

Q24 What were your sources of support or sources of income for survival? DO NOT READ OUT

Multi-mention

1	Child support grant	5	Disability grant
2	Foster care grant	6	Occasional entrepreneurial activity (like what?) <input type="text"/>
3	Pension in the family	7	Piece jobs
4	Cash/food/ clothing from family or friends	8	Other

ASK ONLY THOSE WHO COMPLETED LEARNERSHIP - NOT STILL BUSY OR TERMINATED

Q25 **After completing your learnership, were you employed or remained employed by the company where you did your practical work experience?**

1 Yes 2 No

If No

Q26 **I am going to read out a list of reasons. Please tell me if any of these are the reason, or reasons you think you were not employed**

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | No positions available |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Limited positions available |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | You found a better jobs somewhere else |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | You did not want to work for this company |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | Qualification was not valuable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | Other _____ |

If Yes

Q27 **Was the job that you got from the company related to the learnership you did? Did you do what you were trained to do in the learnership?**

1 Yes 2 No

ASK ALL

Q28 **Lets talk about your current situation**

At this moment are you employed, self-employed or unemployed?

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|----------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Employed | → Is this ...? | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Contract work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Self employed | | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Permanent work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Unemployed | | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Casual (day labour?) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | Studying full-time/ still doing a learnership | | | |

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

Q30 **In which sector do you work now?**

READ OUT IF THEY DON'T KNOW

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Forestry | <input type="checkbox"/> 7 | Clothing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Paper and Pulp | <input type="checkbox"/> 8 | Textiles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Printing | <input type="checkbox"/> 9 | Footwear |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | Print media | <input type="checkbox"/> 10 | Packaging |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | Publishing | <input type="checkbox"/> 11 | Wood products |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | Leather | <input type="checkbox"/> 12 | Furniture |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> 13 | Other (record) _____ |

Q31 **Is it a large company?**

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | With 150 or more people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | A medium sized 50-150 people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Small company, 11-49 employees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | Micro company - 1-10 employees |

Q32 **Do you work in the**

1 Private sector 2 For Government 3 Parastatal

Q33 **How many hours do you work per week?**

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | More than 40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | 35 - 40 hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Less than 40 hours per week |

Q34 **Is your job related to the learnership you did?**

1 Yes 2 No

If no

Q35 **Which of these statements best describe you?**

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | I tried for a while to get a job related to my learnership but could not find anything |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | I just needed a job and salary regardless of the type of work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | I decided to take any work for now and look for something related to my learnership later |

Q36 **If 1, ask. Why do you think you struggled to find work in the area that you studied? READ OUT**

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | There is no related work in this area/ for these skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | The qualification is not recognised or well received |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | I did not have enough work experience in this area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | Other |

ASK ALL EMPLOYED

Q37 **If you don't mind telling us, how much did you earn now that you completed your leart *Monthly salary before deductions***

R REFUSED
 99

Q38 **Have you gotten a promotion or career advancement yet because of the learnership that you have done?**

1 Yes 2

Think about your situation at work now. Do you feel that ...

- | | Definitely Yes | Maybe | No |
|------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Q38A | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |
| Q38B | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |
| Q38C | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |

...your employer values your new skills

...you are more productive, and can do more now that you have the learnership

...you deliver higher quality work to your employer now that you have the learnership

CURRENT UNEMPLOYMENT

Q39 Have you tried to find a job yet? 1 Yes 2 No, not yet

If tried to find a job

Why do you think you have not found a job. READ OUT REASON

Yes No

Q39A	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Companies are not interested in learnerships
Q39B	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	There are no positions available
Q39C	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	I need more training
Q39D	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	I feel I need different training
Q39E	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	I need more work experience
Q39F	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	I don't have transport money to go to interviews
Q39G	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Jobs opportunities are too far away from where I live

Q40 Are there any other reasons?

Q41 What are you going to do in the next few months? Yes No

Q41A	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Keep looking for a job
Q41B	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Give up looking for a job
Q41C	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Consider self-employment/own business
Q41D	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Enroll for further education or training

CURRENTLY SELF-EMPLOYED

You indicated that you are self-employed or earn money from having your own business

Q42 Please tell us more about what you do?

Q43 Do you employ any other people/create other job opportunities? 1 Yes 2 No

Q44 Has the learnership helped you in any way to make your own business more successful or has it not really played a role?

Q45

<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Yes it has helped - ASK HOW?
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	No not really

ASK ALL

Q46 Has doing the learnership/ enrolling in the learnership inspired you to do any more training or studies

<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Short skills courses
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Certificate or diploma with a private college
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Certificate or diploma at university
<input type="checkbox"/> 4	Degree with a university

THANK AND CLOSE FOR THOSE WHO DID NOT COMPLETE LEARNERSHIP and THOSE STILL STUDYING

ASK ALL WHO COMPLETED LEARNERSHIP - IMPACT

I have a few statements about the value that the learnership has created in your life. Please tell me for each that I read out if you agree strongly, agree a little, disagree a little, or disagree a lot

	Strongly Agree	Agree a little	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot	
Q47A	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	With a learnership I can earn more than without one
Q47B	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	My communication skills has improved
Q47C	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	My self-esteem has improved
Q47D	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	I am more likely to get a promotion at work now that I have a learnership
Q47E	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	I am respected more in my family/community
Q47F	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	I am more self confident
Q47G	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	I feel motivated or enabled to further my studies, or do other training courses

What is your opinion on these general issues

	Strongly Agree	Agree a little	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	

Learners can sometimes be exploited by employers

the way the learnership is managed could be improved

Do you feel that you have a good knowledge of the sector that you did your training in. Do you understand how the sector operates and who the companies are that you can apply to for work?

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | Understand it well |
| 2 | Understand a little |
| 3 | Do not understand it well |

Q49 How many hours a week did you work during your practical training section of the learnership?

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1 | Less than 10 hours a week |
| 2 | Between 10-20 hours a week |
| 3 | Between 20-40 hours a week |
| 4 | More than 40 hours a week |

Q50 Do you feel that the hours you worked was fair and inline with your expectations

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1 | Yes, it was always fair |
| 2 | Mostly fair |
| 3 | Not always fair |
| 4 | Definitely not fair |

Q51 How do you feel about the stipend that was paid to you during the training?

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 | The stipend was sufficient |
| 2 | It was not enough |
| 3 | I did not get any money/stipend |

Q52

What problems were caused by the low amount for the stipend?

Q53 Finally, would you recommend this learnership to another learner who do not have access to funds to further their education?

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1 | Definitely would recommend |
| 2 | Maybe would recommend |
| 3 | Would not recommend |

Discussion Guide for Focus Group

Employed Moderator Guide – 1.5 hour Focus Group September 2014

RECRUITMENT CRITERIA

Individuals who attended a training course/intervention funded by the FP&M Seta in 2011, 2012 or 2013.

Gender and age composition will be mixed.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The overall objective is to assess the impact of the skills development and training provided by the FP&M SETA through interventions such as learnerships, apprenticeships and bursaries.

- Value created through training, and possible financial implications
- Learners' training experience and challenges
- Employment status and experience
- Challenges faced by learners in the workplace
- Alignment of skills to the role the learner plays in the workplace

INTRODUCTION AND WARMUP

The intro will be a quick welcome. But also serve to get an understanding of what learners are doing now/current employment – for later use

Moderator Introduction:

- Introduce self, welcome respondents and thank them for their time
- Explain why research is being conducted:
 - “ ...to establish the impact of the learning interventions provided by FP&M SETA
- Explain the viewing, recording, and confidentiality. Explain that there are no right or wrong answers. Ask participant to please switch off their phones
- “As you would have been made aware when you were recruited to these groups, we are discussing the training courses that you did, such as [read list, to be provided once recruitment finished]”
- “Please introduce yourself and tell us what you studied and what they are now doing”

[take note of any self-employed respondents]

Time Elapsed: 10

Section 1: Training experience

- What influenced you to apply for the course that you chose or studied? Why did you decide to participate in this course specifically? I am quickly going to read out your name and the course we are talking about. (moderator will have a list)
- How did you hear about this course?
- How would you describe your training experience? [Prompt: was it easy, not what you expected?]
- What challenges did you face during the training?
- Did most of your friends or other learners on the course complete the course? From your point of view, what leads other learners to drop out of the training at this stage?
- Did the completion of the qualification spur you on to further studying or other courses/self-improvements?

Time Elapsed: 20

Section 2: Employment

“Let’s talk about your employment. In the introduction you already mentioned what you do now. Now we are going to talk a bit more about this.”

- What did you do before you started your training (Prompt for employed, unemployed, self-employed)
- *Those unemployed at the time of training,*
 - Were you self-employed or unemployed when starting the training?
 - Unemployed**
 - How did the training help you in getting a job?
 - How long did it take you to get a job after completing the training?
 - Self-employed**
 - Are you still in the same business since completing the training?
- *For those employed at the time of training:*
 - Are they still employed with the same company where they did the training or started shortly after the training?
 - If any are not at the same company any more, ask where they moved from and to and why?
- Think back to when you started working after your training. How much of what you learned during your training did you apply in your day-to-day job? Were you actually doing what they trained you for?
- What about now?
- Do you feel the training prepared you for your job?
- Has the training in any way helped you to achieve better career opportunities or opportunities for promotion?
- What does your employer or other people in the company think about the qualification that you studied?

Time Elapsed: 30

Section 3: Value created through training

Now I'd like to talk about how this course that you studied or training that you attended changed your life.

- How has your life changed since doing the course/training? Prompt: What has improved?
 - How have you personally changed? In yourself? (probe, improved confidence?)
(E.g. Promotion, getting a better job, better self-esteem, more respect, more studies)
- Has there been any negative impact on your life? Any unintended consequences?
[exercise for moderator: write the things that improved on paper board]
- How long do you think these changes will last into the future?
 - Who else has been impacted by this change? Anyone in your community/family/fellow employees?

[exercise for moderator: write the things that improved on paper board]

- Now looking at these things that have changed, these improvements. Is it possible to put a financial value to them. [Go through each and obtain some sort of sense of whether it can be valued financially. E.g. better job = R50 000 a year more.] [use another colour pen to write value on the paper]
- What would you have done if you did not attend this course/training? What would have happened if these learnerships did not exist?
- Who would you recommend this programme to?

Time Elapsed: 20

Section 4: Awareness of FP&M Seta

- Do you know who funded the training you attended?
- If FP&M Seta is mentioned, prompt for knowledge among other members of the group.
- How much do they know about the Seta and their role in the industry?
- If FP&M not mentioned ask: Who knows the FP&M Seta? Any ideas about what they do and their role in your training?

Time Elapsed: 10

Unemployed Moderator Guide – 1.5 hour Focus Group September 2014

RECRUITMENT CRITERIA

Individuals who attended a training course/intervention funded by the FP&M Seta in 2011, 2012 or 2013.

Gender and age composition will be mixed.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The overall objective is to assess the *impact* of the skills development and training provided by the FP&M SETA through interventions such as learnerships, apprenticeships and bursaries.

- Value created through training, and possible financial implications
- Learners' training experience and challenges
- Employment status and experience
- Challenges faced by learners in the workplace
- Alignment of skills to the role the learner plays in the workplace

INTRODUCTION AND WARMUP

The intro will be a quick welcome. But also serve to get an understanding of what they are doing now/current employment – for later use

Moderator Introduction:

- Introduce self, welcome respondents and thank them for their time
- Explain why research is being conducted:
“to establish the impact of the learnership you studied”
- Explain the viewing, recording, and confidentiality. Explain that there are no right or wrong answers. Ask participants to please switch off their phones
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[take note of any self-employed respondents]

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- Did most of your friends or other learners on the course complete the course? From your point of view, what leads other learners to drop out of the training at this stage?
- Did the completion of the qualification spur you on to further studying or other courses/self-improvements?

Time Elapsed: 20

Section 2: Employment

Please tell me more about your employment situation. Are you all unemployed at the moment?

- Have you been unemployed since doing the training or have you had jobs in-between. Perhaps they have been self-employed. Probe: if any had a job, ask for more information on what and how long they had the job
- How have you been trying to get jobs? What type of jobs have you been trying to apply for?
- What is the reaction in the workplace towards your training course?
- Why do you think you have not been successful in finding a job?

Time Elapsed: 20

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- How has your life changed since doing the course/training? Prompt: What has improved?
 - How have you personally changed? In yourself? (Probe: improved confidence?) (E.g. Promotion, getting a better job, better self-esteem, more respect, more studies)
- Has there been any negative impact on your life? Any unintended consequences? [exercise for moderator: write the things that improved on paper board]
- If any changes: How long do you think these changes will last into the future?
 - Who else have been impacted by this change? Anyone in your community/family/fellow employees? [exercise for moderator: write the things that improved on paper board]
- If any changes: Now looking at these things that have changed, these improvements, is it possible to put a financial value to them. [Go through each and obtain some sort of sense if it can be valued financially, E.g. better job = R50 000 a year more.] [use another colour pen to write value on the paper]
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