Challenges facing Adult Education and Training in the Local Government Sector, South Africa

FINAL EMPIRICAL RESEARCH REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Democracy, Governance and Service Delivery (DGSD) Research Programme of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) was commissioned by the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA) to conduct research on the challenges facing AET in the local government sector. The research adopted a mixed method research design. Data collection was conducted through a desktop review of literature, small group dialogues and key informant interviews with key stakeholders in the local government sector involved in Adult Education Training (AET) work including AET managers, Facilitators and learners.

After the democratisation of South Africa, the new government faced various challenges, amongst others, low levels of literacy, and high rates of unemployment and poverty. The South African government has formulated various policies and legislative frameworks that support Adult Basic Education and confirm its role in the process of social change and development. Amongst others, the Skills Development Act (1998) and the Skills Development Levy Act (1999) created institutions, programs, and funding policies for skills development while the Skills Development Act cater for the creation of Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), including the LGSETA.

The findings of this study show that there are several challenges which are faced in the provision of AET in municipalities. Some of the challenges pertain to learners' attitudes and personal circumstances, while others are structural and institutional or peculiar to a specific municipality.

Absenteeism and dropping-out

- Learners miss classes mostly because of personal social challenges that range from behavioural traits such as heavy drinking to personal matters such as health and marital problems.

- Some learners opt out of programmes and just as with absenteeism do not give reasons
- Dropping-out is also caused by learners feeling discouraged during the course and failing to cope with workload.
- Learners drop out if they find it too difficult.
- Also, they give up if the course content is "too easy" i.e. when the learners have been recommended to start from Level 1 and have to be subjected to numeracy tests which they findthem too obvious and boring.

Teacher/facilitator absenteeism & turnover

- When teachers/ facilitators are absent from class no replacement is sent resulting in cancellation of the class.
- Upon resignation teachers/facilitators are not replaced on time and classes can be postponed till a replacement is found.

Unsupportive Supervisors

- Supervisors do not give employees space and time to join the AET
- AET classes are conducted during the day usually from midday and in some cases this interrupts with work especially where emergencies arise

Transport

- Other learners also miss classes or dropout because of transport costs associated with attending classes at the training centres.

Lack of incentives

- Learners would rather attend learnerships which offer stipends or even food during class.

Work vs. Class (conflicting priorities)

- Among employees who qualify for overtime allowances, they would rather ensure that they make more money through standby allowances and stay in their job at the same levels than attend AET classes.
- Another attitude related matter is that some learners dodge work by pretending to be attending AET classes when in fact they will be somewhere else.
- Attending AET is delayed gratification, sometimes learners prefer opportunities which reward them immediately.
- Unemployed learners of AET have to juggle between working informally and attending classes.

LGSETA/ Municipality relationship

- LGSETA timeframes are sometimes too tight thus affecting both municipality and service providers to have all the logistics done timeously, including the necessary documentation.
- As a result municipalities have forfeited some of the LGSETA grants for AET
- Allocation of funding from LGSETA is in some instances inadequate for AET programmes to be conducted amongst employees in the municipality. In most instances, the municipality would provide additional funding for the provision of the training.

Facilities

- Conditions of facilities may regard the learning environment unbearable
- Venues can also change and learners are not informed on time.

Mixing of Intergenerational and different language learners

- AET classes sometimes combine learners from Levels 1 to 4 and learners were unhappy with this arrangement as they felt uncomfortable to ask questions in a class consisting also of higher level learners.

- **Mother tongue** learners struggle in classes consisting of learners of all levels since they need additional assistance from teachers which is time consuming

Quality Assurance

The municipalities, especially Skills Development Facilitators (SDF) have no control of any quality assurance for non-employee learners on the subject matters of the AET programme offerred.

Recommendations

a) Learners interviewed indicated that there is need for the municipalities to provide transport to learning centres so that learners are not incapacitated by transport problems.

b) It was suggested that there is need for the relevant Department of Higher Education and Training to rethink levels of AET to ensure that in the end the learners can progress to Grade 12.

c) Skills Development Facilitators recommended that they need a strategy to attract people such as incentives provided in learnerships where there is a stipend and this is what encourages people to enrol because there is a financial incentive.

d) Finaly, the interplay of governmental relations among LGSETA, municipality and the Department of Basic Education is critical and both parties must have quality assurance control of this AET programme.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Democracy, Governance and Service Delivery (DGSD) Research Programme of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) was commissioned by the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA) to conduct research on the challenges facing AET in the local government sector. The research was conducted through a desktop review of literature, small group dialogues and key informant interviews with key stakeholders in the local government sector involved in Adult Education Training (AET) work including AET managers, Facilitators and learners.

The scope of the commissioned work is based on the view that in order to attain Sustainable Developmental Goals, also known as the Global Goals, states have to commit to achieving "…inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning" as the fourth Global Goal.[1] In this context, the United Nations set specific targets to achieve this of which a number of targets relate to Adult Education and Training. In reference to Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning, targets which specifically relate to Adult Education and Training include but not limited to "by 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy".

A cursory glance of South Africa's literacy landscape demonstrates that challenges in achieving universal literacy and education for a culture of lifelong learning remain. For example, the General Household Survey (2015) found that whilst functional illiteracy declined from 27,3% to 15,4% between 2002 and 2015, improved access to schooling has led to a significant decline in the percentage of functionally illiterate individuals in the 20–39 age group. Between 2002 and 2015, the prevalence of functional illiteracy in the age group 20–39 years declined noticeably for both men (17,2% to 7,3%) and women (15,6% to 4,8%).

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[1] http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/

Nationally, the percentage of literate persons over the age of 20 years increased slightly from 91,9% in 2010 to 93,7% in 2015. The adult literacy rate, however, lagged behind this average in provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal (92,4%), Eastern Cape (90,7%), Mpumalanga (90,2%), North West (89,3%), Limpopo (89,2%) and in Northern Cape (88%) of the population were literate.

It is within this context, that the LGSETA invited proposals to assess current challenges to Adult Education and Training. The LGSETA notes that AET is not necessarily about basic literacy, but rather about skills capacity building through foundational training to facilitate development and growth and lay a foundation for an individual to sustain him- or herself. However, one cannot ignore that basic literacy is an essential skill for individual self-sustainability in modern societies. This includes ensuring the development of sufficient reading and numeracy skills to capacitate individuals to manage daily lives and employment tasks. Basic literacy also facilitates a culture of lifelong learning through parents being able to assist their children during the schooling years and facilitate a higher probability that children will complete their school training. Furthermore, through the integrated systems of learning pathways, AET forms part of a standardised educational structure which enables learners to pursue further studies after completing level 1 of the National Qualifications Framework. This is also indicative of facilitating a culture of lifelong learning and individual empowerment through education provision. These initiatives collectively lays a foundation for South Africa to meet its obligations in relations to the Global Goals adopted in 2015.

Furthermore, as a country with challenges in addressing structural poverty and issues of inequality, education can become a vehicle to facilitate upward social mobility, but also address structural inequality in the future. In order to facilitate this, however, one needs to address Adult Education and Literacy, especially in poor communities to empower individuals with basic skills for the employment market but also to support their children in their school career. The LGSETA notes that there is a large portion of learners who drop out from their programme. To this effect, the LGSETA commissioned the HSRC to assess the challenges which lead to high drop-out rates within the AET sector with the following scope;

1. To develop a concept document on the challenges facing the AET in the local government with emphasis on municipalities.

2. To provide a detailed analysis on the best methodological application of the AET.

3. To conduct a comparative analysis of the success rates between the Metropolitan Districts and Local Municipalities for the AET programme.

This report is striuctrured as follows. The first section focuses on the broad literature regarding AET at the local, national, regional and international levels as well as the international instruemnts supporting AET. The seond section discusses in detail, the methodology that was followed in conducting the field-work. The third section adopts a case study approach to the understanding of AET in the different sampled municipalities, namely, Cape Town, Emalahleni, Tshwane, Mangaung, Nelson Mandela, Sol Plaarjie and Waterberg. In the fourth section we discuss the various challenges that local government faces in providing AET.

2. Literature review

Adult Education and Training (AET) aims to promote lifelong learning and personal development to enable adults to adapt successfully to the changing economic, social and political climate in South Africa (SAQA, 2014). Matjeke (2004) quotes the Department of Education (DOE, 1997:8) which defines Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) as,

> ...the general conceptual foundation towards lifelong learning and development, comprising of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of contexts.

It was introduced and constitutionalised as a national vision in the Constitution of South Africa with the aim of providing adult education and training to a huge population that

lagged behind as a result of many years of apartheid discrimination. The Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Act No.52 of 2000, amended in 2010, included revision of the title to read Adult Education and Training Act (AET). The Act was promulgated to provide for inter alia, regulation of adult education and training; to provide for quality assurance and quality promotion in adult education and training and to provide for matters connected therewith. In the South African context, adult training and education includes programmes for adults (more than sixteen years) on "level 1 registered on the national qualifications framework contemplated in the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008)" (Adult Education and Training Act 52: 2000).

How AET is conceptualised

It has been noted that the concept of AET is uniquely South African in that South Africa added the *T*, for *Training,* in the policy initiatives of the early 1990s in order to capture the essence of integrating training with general literacy issues. However, as noted by the 1997 Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning; adult education generally refers to the

> "entire body of ongoing learning processes, formal or otherwise, whereby people regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, and improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction to meet their own needs and those of their society".

It takes different forms (formal, non-formal, informal) and can be provided in different places and setups, for instance community learning centres, folk high schools, on-the-job, evening classes.

The essence of adult education can be drawn from a number of theories. For example it can be viewed from the human capital theory. Human capital refers to knowledge, skills, attitudes and other acquired traits and developed economic production, i.e. productive capacities of human beings in the economy (Fleischhauer, 2007). Therefore, adult education and training can raise skills and knowledge acquisition by workers thereby potentially raising

workers' employability and subsequently, future productivity and earnings (Furia, Castagna, Mattoscio, Scamuffa, 2010).

Thus the significant view of the human capital theory is that there is a positive correlation between education or training and job opportunities. According to Van der Berg (2008:3), "Better educated people have a greater probability of being employed, are economically more productive and therefore earn higher incomes". Conversely, the human capital theory sees a correlation between poverty, unemployment and education. Those who acquire education are likely to be employed and more prosperous. In addition, effective adult education and training promotes confidence amongst the adult population and this elicits active engagement in the social, economic and political development of the country (Hussain 2013). However, the human capital theory is individualistic and focuses on the labour supply side. This can be contrasted with the labour market segmentation theory which is based on the labour demand side. In terms of this theory adult training needs are based on the extent of job demand and the nature of that employment (Mlasheni, 2012). Therefore, the skills demand in the market determines the training and education needs of potential employees. Adults need to acquire skills that are in demand in the job market.

French and Dale-Jones (2014:230) also argue that adult education is driven by "an activist spirit in the interest of human dignity" and is "closely linked to movements fighting for social justice". This comes as part of an international call for the right to education for all. It is in this context that adult learning in South Africa primarily serves "to enhance possibilities for people to survive the harsh conditions in which they live; to develop skills for people in the formal and informal sectors for economic purposes and for cultural and political education which encourages people to participate actively in society through cultural organisations, social movements, political parties and trade unions" (Walters, 2006:12).

Shift from ABET to AET in South Africa

The DHET adopted the Adult Education and Training (AET) in place of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) as proposed by the Ministerial Committee on Adult Education. The

Green Paper (2007) proposed a paradigm shift from adult education to adult learning in order to align adult education policy and practice with international trends which locate adult education within a lifelong learning framework.

> The Green Paper proposes a paradigm shift from "adult education" to "adult learning". This approach is in line with international trends and constitutes a lifelong learning framework, which is based on the fact that learning takes place throughout a person's life and in many forms. The shift signifies a move away from focusing only on the formal provision of education and training programmes to adults, to an approach that includes programmes, offering learning opportunities to adults, which are formal, informal and non-formal. In addition, the Green Paper recognises the dual mandate of adult learning to pursue both an economic and a social purpose. (DoE 2008: 9).

This shift signifies an orientation towards adult learning that recognises all forms of adult learning, be they *formal, informal or non-formal*. Whereas ABET focuses on *formal* education and training equivalent to Grade 9 (or 10 years of schooling), AET focuses on all forms of learning , an equivalent to Grade 12 (ETDP SETA 2013: 1).

However, there has been a rather slow adoption of the term AET in most studies and as such this report analysed mostly literature which discusses ABET provision in local government. The LGSETA itself in most of its reports still refers to ABET and not AET.

The status quo in the provision of ABET/AET in South Africa is summarised by the Ministerial Committee on Adult Education as follows;

- To a large extent the state, as well as business, industry and civil society organisations provide ABET.

- Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs) in the nine provincial departments of education (PDEs) are the key service providers whilst a number of other government departments also provide ABET programmes on a much smaller scale and mainly to their own employees.

- The NGO sectors which used to play a leading role in provision of ABET has decreased sharply since 1997, and it has been gradually replaced by private/commercial providers.

- PALCs, historically better-known as "night schools" provide learning opportunities to adults from basic literacy to matric, using the infrastructure of primary or secondary schools.

- AET programmes are mainly offered on a part-time basis during the afternoons and early evenings from Mondays to Thursdays. Over the years, PDEs gradually introduced ABET programmes across all four levels focusing largely on language and numeracy until late 1990s when new learning areas were introduced.

- By the end of 2006, PALCs provided a variety of programmes across 12 subfields of learning. Be that as it may, language and numeracy are still predominantly subjects taken by majority of learners. (DoE 2008: 27).

The table below shows the relations between NQF levels and ABET levels.

Table 1: The structure of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in relation to ABET levels

NQF training band	School grades (phases)	ABET Levels
General Education and Training (GET)	Provision for children from 2-6 years old (Grades R-1)	Level 1
	Reception year for Foundation Phase (Grades 2-3)	Level 2
	Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6)	Level 3
	Senior Phase (Grades 7-9)	Level 4

Source: van Wyk and Frick (2014: 7)

Assumptions about adult education

Eduard Lindeman's publication of 'The Meaning of Adult Education" in 1926' marked the beginning of adult education as a field of study, and educators began to contemplate how adult learning differed from learning in childhood (Merriam 2001). Baumgartner, et al (2003), draw five key assumptions about adult education from Knowles' andragogical model. As drawn from this model, first, adult education learners move from being dependent personalities as often happens in the classroom toward being self-directed. As such, teachers of adult learners need to create a cooperative learning climate and to plan goals mutually. Secondly, it is assumed that adult learners enter education already processing both a greater volume and a different quality of experience from young learners. In that context, the curriculum has to be process-based rather than content-based to allow learners to develop content in accordance with their specific needs.

Third, as noted by Knowles (cited by Baumgartner, et al (2003), the timing of learning activities is related to developmental tasks rather than merely acquiring knowledge. Therefore it is always vital to diagnose the adult learners' needs, interests and to help them formulate learning objectives based on their needs. In that regard teachers of adult learners should plan activities that are relevant and are of interest to the learners. The fourth assumption is that adult learning is problem-centered rather than subject-centered. Therefore, instructors should help adult learners to formulate learning objectives based on their needs. Finally, adults are internally rather than externally motivated to learn.

Subsequently, Alkadhi (n.d) states that adult learners balance the rigours of their daily lives with learning in order to expand on their knowledge. They view learning as the solution to any shortcomings in their already established routine. As such there is emphasis on adult education training in South Africa and indeed around the world. In order to be successful, UNESCO (n.d) recommends six critical elements in its programme implementation, namely, that;

- Adult education and training should be an integral part of a country's national education system and should receive within the system the attention and economic resources which this status justifies.

- All national governments have the responsibility to create the conditions in which satisfactory adult education could be carried out.

- Governments should recognise the active participation of civil society in adult education and training.

- Governments should ensure that there is collaboration and coordination among all agencies/organizations in all levels providing adult education and training.

- Adult education and training should ostensibly address the needs of the marginalized sections of society including women and the physically challenged; and

- Adult education and training should be tailored to suit the needs of the learners and they should participate in all facets of their education and learning. In practice, French and Dale Jones (2014:230), analysing the Gauteng situation, conclude that political interference often leads to the curriculum being "determined entirely outside of the learner's own sense of need".

Various attempts have been made to classify types of adult learning. One such classification is by Myers, Conte and Rubenson (2014). They note that there are five broad types of adult education. Key distinguishing features of each type are:

- Foundational learning – This mainly carters for adults with skills levels below Grade 12.

- High learning - at this level learning leads to credentials issued by a recognised post-secondary educational institution.

- Workplace-related learning – Often supported by one's employer, work-related learning is based on the needs of one's current firm.

- Other labour market-related learning – This is learning which is done to improve one's labour market prospects but not related to one's current firm.

- Personal/social learning – Provided primarily for the purpose of personal/family, social, cultural, civic, and/or spiritual growth or enrichment.

Additionally, Myers, Conte and Rubenson (2014:10) state that there are different dimensions of adult education, namely;

- Form – Formal, non-formal, informal, incidental.
- Provider – The institution in which the adult learning activity occurs, or by whom the activity is directed, e.g secondary schools, colleges, universities, employers, unions, and community centres.
- Payer – The source(s) of financial assistance or in kind support e.g. individual learner, employer, government, union etc.
- Purpose – The reasons and objectives for participation. These normally include job or career reasons, educational reasons, or personal interest.
- Duration – Refers broadly to time-related factors, such as the length (e.g., the number of months or years that the program/ course spans), volume (e.g., the actual number of hours, days, or weeks spent participating in the activity) and intensity (e.g., hours per week/month, weeks per year) of the learning activity required for completion and/or actually taken before ending participation.
- Design – Includes learning goals, content and instructional materials.
- Delivery – refers to the methods of instruction (such as traditional in-class instruction, use of multimedia, correspondence, and teacher-directed or self-paced learning.

Rationale For Adult Education And Training In South Africa

According to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), the main aim of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) is to promote lifelong learning and personal development (SAQA, 2016). This allows adults to adapt successfully in the changing economic, social and political climate in South Africa (SAQA, 2016). Tuchten (2011:102) argues that "The most significant AET developments in terms of conceptualization, policy and planning took place during the 1990s" (Ibid) with the first steps in this regard having included the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), which was introduced to develop education policy options for the broad democratic movement, in effect the ANC and its allies . The NEPI

covered some key operational areas for future policy attention in the educational domain. These include early childhood education, adult education, teacher education, educational governance and finance.

Tuchten (2011:102) further points out that as early as the mid-1990s, the ANC-led government began to pursue the idea of a shift from the symbol of a national literacy campaign to national AET plans, and also a shift from emancipatory literacy to a more functional competency-based approach to AE. The Policy Framework for Education and Training developed by the ANC at this time lacked detail on AET. However, the launch of the National Multi-Year Implementation Plan for Adult Education and Training was the first detailed national programme for AET in South Africa, of any kind, which had previously been provided at the discretion of each province (Tuchten, 2011: 102). To ensure equality and equity in adult education, various policies and legislative frameworks have been set up.

 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 constitutionalized the right to basic education for all South Africans including adults basic education. Section 29 of the Bill of Rights in the 1996 Constitution establishes the right to: (a) a basic education, including ABE; and (b) further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible (section 29 [1]).

Subsequently, over the years, the South African government has formulated various policies and legislative frameworks that support AET and confirm its role in the process of social change and development. Amongst others, the National Skills Development Act (1998) and the Skills Development Levy Act (1999) created institutions, programs, and funding policies for skills development. The National Skills Development Act allows for the creation of Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), which would be the education and training custodians in respective sectors, for example, the banking, manufacturing and information technology sectors (Walters 2006). In 2000, the Adult Education and Training Act (Act No52 of 2000) was legislated to provide for the establishment of public and private adult learning

centres, funding for Adult Education, the governance of public centres, and quality assurance mechanisms for the sector.

The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) III was launched in 2011 with the initial National Skills Development Strategy launched in 2001. The NSDS is the overarching strategic guide for skills development and provides direction to sector skills planning and implementation in the SETAs. It provides a framework for the skills development levy resource utilisation of these institutions as well the NSF, and sets out the linkages with, and responsibilities of, other education and training stakeholders. (National Skills Development Strategy III).

In line with the stipulations of the Skills Development Act, 1998 the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA) was set up in 2000, two years after the Skills Development Act was promulgated by the South African Parliament. In 2000 the LGSETA undertook to focus on financial viability, community-based participation and planning, leadership and management, and adult based education and training (iEducation). LGSETA, as a local government sector education and training authority, creates and implements various innovative skills development interventions aimed at assisting local government employees, the unemployed and other people such as ward councillors and traditional leaders working within the structures of local government The LGSETA falls under the executive authority structure of the Department of Higher Education and Training, and cooperates with stakeholders, including the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, the South African Local Government Association, the Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union, and the South African Municipal Workers Union to enhance training and education.

It is also important to note that there have been a number of changes in South Africa with regards to education. One such change has been the division of the Ministry of Education into two ministries in 2009, namely the Ministry of Basic Education (DBE) and the Ministry of

Higher Education and Training Department (DHET).The DHET has become the custodian of AET (DHET, 2015). In line with this realignment, recent key developments have taken place in the AET sector in South Africa, which are documented in a report by the DHET on National Policy on Community Education and Training Colleges (DHET, 2015: 13) and include the following:

- The administration of the Adult Education and Training Act, 2000 (Act No.52 of 2000) and the Continuing Education and Training Act, 2006 (Act No. 16 of 2006) was transferred to the Minister of Higher Education and Training, through Proclamation No.44 of 2009 which was published in Government Gazette No.32367 of 1 July 2009.

- The legislative responsibility for the Adult Education and Training (AET) sector was transferred to the Minister of Higher Education and Training (DHET) through the Higher Education and Training Amendment Laws Act , 2010 (Act No.25 of 2010).

- The Continuing Education and Training Act, 2006 intends to establish Community Education and Training Colleges (CETCs) as another institutional type within the Post -School Education and Training system. The implications of the CET Act, 2006 are to repeal the Adult Basic Education and Training Act, 2000. This implies that the CET Act, 2006 will be the legislation governing CETCs and Community Learning Centres (CLCs).

- The National Policy on Community Education and Training Colleges serves as an initial process to establish the overarching institutional policy framework for the establishment of CETCs.The policy acts as a transitory policy framework for the migration of the function of AET sector from the Provincial Departments of Education (PEDs) to the DHET with effect from 01 April 2015. This migration would affect all learners and personnel and other resources in the sector (DHET, 2015: 13).

The Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority

The Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA) was established in terms of the Skills development Act, No. 97 of 1998 and set up in 2000, two years after the

Skills Development Act was promulgated by the South African Parliament, with the mandate to promote skills development for the local government sector. In 2000 the LGSETA undertook to focus on financial viability, community-based participation and planning, leadership and management, and adult based education and training (iEducation). The Minister of Higher Education and Training relicensed the LGSETA for the period of April 2011 to March 2016 and extended it by a further two-year period until 31 March 2018, to operate within the Skills Development Framework as expressed in the National Skills development Strategy III and other applicable policies and strategies (LGSETA 2016: 14).

In its Annual Report of 2015/16 (LGSETA 2016: 13) LGSETA defines its vision: "to be the lead SETA by facilitating skills development at municipal level across South Africa" while the mission is to "partner with strategic stakeholders to create a pool of local government skills, relevant for effective and efficient service delivery and economic prosperity of local communities across South Africa".

The objective of the LGSETA (nd.: 17) is defined as follows: "To establish the LGSETA as central to the success of enhanced skills development strategies and the development of local government, into efficient, frontline development agencies integrating the activities of all spheres of government for the overall social and economic upliftment of communities".

LGSETA, as a local government sector education and training authority, creates and implements various innovative skills development interventions aimed at assisting local government employees, the unemployed and other people such as ward councilors and traditional leaders working within the structures of local government. The LGSETA falls under the executive authority structure of DHET, is accountable to Parliament, and operates under the oversight of National Treasury in terms of performance management and financial administration. Municipalities are LGSETA's primary stakeholders with other stakeholders including the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, the South African Local Government Association, the Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union, and the South African Municipal Workers Union to enhance training and education (LGSETA 2016: 5,13).

The functions of the LGSETA under section 10 of the Skills Development Act include, amongst others:

- the development of a sector skills plan within the framework of the National Skills Development Strategy;

- the implementation of the sector skills plan by establishing learnerships, approving workplace skills plans, allocating grants to employers, education and training providers and workers, and monitoring sector education and training;

- the promotion of learnerships by identifying workplaces for practical work experience, supporting the development of learning material, improving the facilitation of learning, and assisting with learnership agreements;

- the registering of learnership agreements;

- the collection and disbursement of skills development levies;

- liaising with the National Skills Authority on the National Skills Development Policy and the National Skills Development Strategy, and on its sector skills plan; and

- liaising with the employment services of the Department of Labour and education bodies in South Africa to improve information on employment opportunities, and between education and training providers and the labour market (LGSETA 2007: 4,5).

In terms of the South African Qualifications Authority Act and the Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies Regulations (1998) the LGSETA has, amongst others, the following functions: 1) accredits constituent providers for specific standards or qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework; 2) promotes quality amongst constituent providers; 3) monitors provision by constituent providers; 4) evaluates assessment and facilitation of moderation among constituent providers; 5) registers constituent assessors for specified registered standards or qualifications in terms of specified criteria; 6) takes responsibility for the certification of constituent learners; 7) co-operates with the relevant bodies appointed to moderate education and training quality assurance bodies including, moderating the quality assurance on specified standards or qualifications for which one or more education and training quality assurance bodies are accredited; 8) recommends new standards or qualifications, or modifications to existing

standards or qualifications to national standards bodies for consideration; 9) maintains a database acceptable to the authority; and 10) submits reports to the authority in line with the requirements of the authority (LGSETA 2007: 6).

Apart from general policies and legislation discussed earlier, the LGSETA has to operate under several other policies and legislation. For example, the LGSETA is a public entity that falls under Schedule 3A of the Public Finance Management Act, No.1 of 1999.[2] LGSETA is also regarded as a public body for purposes of the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 and has to comply with its obligations as a public body under the Act. This Act gives effect to the constitutional right of access to information as contemplated in section 32 of the Constitution and impacts on skills development in the municipalities as they are required to publish manuals or handbooks that will assist persons requesting access to records in the possession or under the control of the LGSETA (LGSETA 2007:3).

In addition, the LGSETA must take into account in its objectives the provisions of the White Paper on Post-School Education and Training (2013) and the White Paper on Local Government (1998) and the National Skills Accord (2011). The White Paper on Post-School Education and Training (2013) aims to provide a vision for the kind of post-school education and training system that the Department of Higher Education and Training wants to obtain by 2030. The White Paper on Local Government (1998) indicates that local government has to promote social development and economic growth by coordinating development activities through community participation, and also to provide leadership that will support the building of social capital, learning and information-sharing (LGSETA 2016:14).

For its Strategic Plan 2011-2016 the LGSETA has taken into account some national government policies and priorities, amongst others, the National Development Plan; Vision 2030, Medium-Term Strategic Framework for Skills Development and Local Government Outcome, National Skills development Strategy III, as well as the 2013 White Paper for Post-School Education and Training. In accordance with its Strategic Plan, the LGSETA has defined eight strategic outcome-oriented goals for the period of 2011 to 2016, namely:

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[2] See RSA. 1999a. Public Finance Management Act, Act No. 1 of 1999.

- A credible skills planning and implementation system for the local government sector;

- Increasing access to occupationally-directed programmes within the local government sector;

- Promoting the growth of a public FET college system that is responsive to sector, local, regional and national skills needs and priorities;

- Addressing the low level of youth and adult language and numeracy skills to broaden access to further training, resulting in sustainable work opportunities;

- Encouraging better use of workplace-based skills development;

- Encouraging and supporting cooperatives, worker-initiated small enterprises, NGOs and community-training initiatives;

- Building/Capacitating career and vocational guidance; and

- Positioning and capacitating the method of operation and quality of service for the LGSETA (LGSETA 2016: 21-28).

Adult Education and Training: Policy And Legal Frameworks

Legislation and policy documents governing skills development in the local government sector may be divided in broad categories, i.e. Constitutional provisions relating to local government; national legislation applicable to local government; skills development legislation; and other applicable national legislation and instruments, for example, the Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa (LGSETA nd.: 11).

Constitution

Chapter 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996) (Statutes of the Republic of South Africa-Constitutional Law, 1996) provides for issues pertaining to local government, amongst others that local government is vested in municipalities. It thus defines the nature, structure, composition and areas of competence of municipalities. In addition, the Constitution also specifies various rights, amongst others, the right to "fair labour practices" which may also include fair treatment regarding the

provision of training. This is contained in section 186 (2) (a) of the Labour Relations Act (LGSETA nd. :11).

National legislation pertaining to local government

Local government legislation impacting in one way or the other on skills development in local government includes the Municipal Structures Act of 1998 as amended; the Municipal Systems Act of 2000; and the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act 53 of 2004.

The Municipal Structures Act impacts on skills development in municipalities as it takes place within the structures defines by the Act while the Municipal Systems Act impacts on skills development in municipalities by providing for Integrated Development Planning (IDPs) that includes workplace skills planning; for performance management in municipalities that will identify skills development needs; for human resource development in municipalities, including skills development; and for service delivery mechanisms which may generate skills development needs. The Municipal Finance Management Act may require personnel training in its provisions and implementation (LGSETA nd. :12).

Skills development legislation and policies

Over the years, the South African government has formulated various policies and legislative frameworks that support Adult Basic Education and confirm its role in the process of social change and development. Amongst others, the South African Qualifications Authority Act (No 58 of 1995) was promulgated to provide for the development and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF); to establish the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) for this purpose; and to provide for matters connected with the implementation of the NQF and the establishment of SAQA (LGESTA nd.: 41). The South African Qualifications Authority Act (1995) was repealed by the National Qualifications Framework Act (No 67 of 2008) and specified the functions of SAQA in Section 13 of the Act

(RSA, 2009: 8-12). The functions of SAQA are summarized in a LGSETA skills development handbook (nd: 41) as follows:

- overseeing the development of the NQF;
- formulating and publishing policies and criteria for the founding of National Standards Bodies, Standard Generating Bodies and Education and Training Quality Assurers;
- overseeing the implementation of the NQF; and
- advising the Minister of Education on issues affecting the registration of standards and qualifications.

SAQA thus established the National Qualifications Framework (McKay 2007: 293) that provided the framework for a national learning system integrating education and training at all levels and across all sectors (Walters 2006: 13). McKay (2007: 293) describes the function of the NQF as "to accredit unit standards, which culminate in qualifications for even basic-level learners. It permits portability, accessibility, and transferability of skills, knowledge, and abilities across qualification levels and across the education and training divide".

Due to the South African government's commitment to human resource development, education reform, and skills development in the economy, the Skills Development Act (97 of 1998) (as amended in 2003) and the Skills Development Levy Act (1999)[3] were promulgated by Parliament. Through these Acts new institutions, programs, and funding policies for skills development were created (McKay 2012).

The Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998) and its amendment in 2011 allow for the creation of Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) which, with the National Skills Fund (NSF)[4], would be the education and training custodians in respective sectors. Under the Skills Development Act, an initial 25 SETAs were established in 2000, but due to mergers of

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[3] This Act provides for levy payments to fund skills development and increase employer investment in skills development. Under this act municipalities have to pay 1% of monthly remuneration as a levy, but may claim back a percentage of this amount as a grant (LESETA nd.:,12).

[4] The NSF, created under the Skills Development Act, 1998, initiates and responds to national skills priorities and receives 20% of grants paid by employers and disburses money to employers via SETAs for training on national skills priorities (RSA 1998; LESETA nd.: 16).

some SETAs in 2005, 23 SETAs were operating in the South African economy towards the end of 2010 (Goga and van der Westhuizen 2012: 10). The SETAs, whose members include employers, trade unions, government, interested professional bodies and bargaining councils, have to disburse training levies payable by all employers and must develop and implement appropriate skills development plans for their respective sectors (Turner, et al. 2013: 2).

SETAs have the following main objectives, namely 1) to develop sector skills plans that provide information about the availability of skills in specific sectors and also identify any future skills needs of those sectors; 2) to identify, design and market learnership programmes; 3) to register as Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies with SAQA, and quality assure unit standards, qualifications and the provision of training in general in the sector; 4) to disburse national skills development levy funds; and 5) to distribute information about the sector to employment agencies (LGSETA, nd.: 17). Importantly, SETAs have been mainly responsible for implementing the National Skills Development Strategy with the assistance of the National Skills Fund (Goga & van der Westhuizen 2012:10).

The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) III was launched in 2011 to transform education and training in South Africa through improving the quality and quantity of training in the country.

The NSDS III (DHET 2011: 8) "is the overarching strategic guide for skills development and provides direction to sector skills planning and implementation in the SETAs. It provides a framework for the skills development levy resource utilisation of these institutions as well the NSF, and sets out the linkages with, and responsibilities of, other education and training stakeholders".

The NSDS III, a sub-component of the Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa II (HRDSSA II), will run simultaneously with the first five-year term of the HRDSSA II. The HRDSSA represents an essential intervention for promoting the country's development agenda and was initially launched in 2001, and updated in 2009 (DHET 2009).
The HRDSSA (DHET 2009: 18) aims to contribute to the following national goals:

- To substantively reduce poverty and unemployment in South Africa;

- To promote justice and social cohesion through improved equity in the provision and outcomes of education and skills development programmes; and

- To fundamentally improve national economic growth and development through improved competitiveness of the South African economy.

The HRDSSA II, including the NSDS III, links closely to the National Development Plan, 2030 (2011) aiming "to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030" (National Planning Commission 2011: 14). The National Development Plan (NDP) highlights inequality in South Africa with high levels of unemployment and poverty as well as poor quality of school education for the majority of learners. Hence, "to accelerate progress, deepen democracy and build a more inclusive society, South Africa must translate political emancipation into economic wellbeing for all" accompanied by a fast growing economy (National Planning Commission 2011: 14). Thus, by 2030 all South Africa should have access to quality education and training that enhance the outcomes of all learning in the country while simultaneously cater for different needs of learners resulting in highly skilled people who can fulfill in the needs of the economy and society. In addition, the research and development agenda should be expanded to provide equal opportunities for all in South Africa, especially the previously disadvantaged people (LGSETA 2016: 20).

Various commitments have been made by the HRDSSA II which will have to be reflected in the strategic plans of the SETAs. The commitments include (DHET 2009: 20-22)[5]:

- "the overcoming of shortages of priority skilled people needed for the implementation of strategies to achieve accelerated economic growth;

- increasing the number of appropriate skilled people to meet the demands of the country's economic and social development priorities;

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[5] See also National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) III, p. 10.
http://led.co.za/documents/national-skills-development-strategy-nsds-iii

- improving universal access to quality basic education and schooling (up to Grade 12) that is focused on achieving significant improvement in education outcomes for the poor and the pursuit of post-school vocational education and training for employment;

- implementing skills development programmes aiming at equipping recipients with the necessary skills to curb poverty and unemployment;

- ensuring that young people have access to education and training that will enhance their chances for successful further vocational training and sustainable employment;

- improving the technological and innovation capability and outcomes within the public and private sectors to enhance the country's global economic competitiveness and to meet South Africa's human development priorities;

- ensuring that the public sector has the capability to meet the strategic priorities of the South African Developmental State; and

- establishing effective and efficient planning competencies in departments and entities for the successful implementation of the Strategy".

3. METHODOLOGY

A recap of the main objectives of this research project are; (i) To develop a concept document on the challenges facing the AET in the local government with emphasis on municipalities; (ii) To provide a detailed analysis on the best methodological application of the AET and lastly; (iii) To conduct a comparative analysis of the success rates between the Metropolitan Districts and Local Municipalities for the AET programme. Owing to their wide breadth and variation, these objectives were attained through an inclusive methodological design such as a mixed method design.

A mixed method design is one that advances the systematic integration, or "mixing," of quantitative and qualitative data within a single investigation or sustained program of inquiry. The basic premise of this methodology is that such integration permits a more complete and synergistic utilization of data than do separate quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. Specifically the design helps researchers to apply quantitative methods where they are needed and qualitative likewise. The techniques which were applied in this study include quantitative secondary data analysis, primary document analysis, key informant interviews and active dialogues over a period of *six months*.

Secondary document analysis

Thus the researchers conducted an assessment of the relevant literature on AET, identifying gaps especially in the local government space in South Africa. the literature review showed that there are gaps in empirical studies which explore the challenges associated with AET in the local government space. The review also included an international comparison with AET practise and lessons learned in Brazil and India as countries that face similar challenges of poverty and inequality to South Africa.

In-depth and group interviews with AET stakeholders

The literature review was supplemented by empirical methods. Important among these are key stakeholder interviews and engagement with relevant municipalities, educational experts and academics, facilitators, AET service providers, and learners within the programme and those who had dropped out.

The interviews were semi-structured and were shaped by themes and questions that emerged from the literature review, questions on the demographic profile, and key challenges to AET education provision. Below is a breakdown of the number of interviews and the different categories of respondents and their municipalities.

Name of municipality	Province/ Location	Number of interviews	Municipal officials	AET Learners	Service providers	Educators
Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality	Eastern Cape	3	1		1	3 (group interview)
City of Cape Town	Western Cape	3	1	2 (individual interviews)		
Waterberg District Municipality	Limpopo	1	1			
Mangaung Metro	Free State	2	1	3 (group interview)		
Tshwane Metro	Gauteng	1	2 (group interview)			
Emalahleni Local Municipality	Eastern Cape	1	1			
Sol Plaatje Local Municipality	Northern Cape	3	4 (group interview)	2 individual interviews)		
Total		**14**	**11**	**7**	**1**	**3**

The milestone of the activities entails a comprehensive report on the challenges within AET provision. This will include a concise presentation on relevant literature, key findings, and overall contribution. The report will also present the findings of key stakeholders and make recommendations for initiatives to curb high dropout rates of adult learners within AET programmes.

A total of *31 in-depth Interviews* were conducted with seven municipalities.

Quality assurance

Two experts worked as **Reference Group** advisors for the project to provide intellectual oversight in order to ensure the project maintains its scope and engages critically with the objectives we plan to achieve. Professors Mogege Mosimege from Education Skills Development (ESD) Research Programme of the HSRC and Mncedisi Maphalala of the University of Zululand will act in this capacity.

4. FINDINGS: THE STATE AND CHALLENGES OF AET IN THE SELECTED MUNICIPALITIES

4.1. City of Cape Town

Municipality profile (municipality type/demographics/)

The City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality is a port city on South Africa's southwest coast, on a peninsula beneath the imposing Table Mountain. It is a Category A municipality and has a coastline of 294km. It stretches from Gordon's Bay to Atlantis. The City is South Africa's second-largest economic centre and second most populous city after Johannesburg. It is the provincial capital and primate city of the Western Cape, as well as the legislative capital of South Africa, where the National Parliament and many government offices are located. The City is famous for its harbour, as well as its natural setting in the Cape Floral Kingdom, including such well-known landmarks as Table Mountain and Cape Point. It is hailed as one of the most beautiful cities in the world as officially recognised by Forbes. It is also Africa's most popular tourist destination. Being the oldest city in South Africa, it is affectionately known as 'The Mother City'.

In 2011, the population of Cape Town consisted of 3 740 026 citizens (City of Cape Town IDP Strategic Plan 2012-2017). According to the SALGA (n.d), Cape Town is home to two-thirds (66%) of the Western Cape's population, generates 74% of the region's gross value add (GVA) (2009), and contributes 11% to national gross domestic product (GDP) (R175 billion), making the city an important driver of regional, provincial and national development. With a current annual turnover estimated at between R2,5 billion and R3,3 billion (approximately 20% of the national industry), Cape Town and the Western Cape's BPO&O industry is fast becoming a major driver of the local economy.

Official views on AET

The AET in Cape Town is under the Human Resources' Training and Development. The AET program focuses on uplifting numeracy and literacy skills of employees. The focus is mainly on those who did not complete their schooling (grade 1-9). Consequently the programme runs from level 1-4 to cover them these grades. As a result the program is mainly academic. A Facilitator in the City of Cape Town noted that the focus is "academic because the majority of them (learners) come because they want to learn how to read and right, some want to further their studies to matric after level 4 and some it's just a matter of being able to read their payslips, bibles and some such similar things and therefore you have people coming to study for different reasons".

Skills that are preferred by adult learners

A student interviewee also noted that learners prefer basic numeracy and literacy skills. In order to achieve this, learners utilise AET provided by the CoCT. Noting the essence of the training, he stated that "some people cannot write or read English or Afrikaans. But some are also looking at gaining computer skills. Basic computer literacy to be able to write emails for example".

AET training methods

The facilitation is primarily a lecture method where the Facilitators lead. However because these are adult learners who have to go to work and have other family commitments, they come to class once a week. This approach seeks to ensure that they are not under pressure on their academic activities and have much less workload.

The municipality's successes in AET provision

One of the interviewees noted that as CoCT they have done well in providing basic literacy and numeracy through the AET program. Many learners have completed different levels and some have even gone on to matric level. However she noted that are experienced mainly around absenteeism though the majority do completes. Those who do not complete mainly do so for personal reasons. Some do not complete because there have come a time to retire before they completed the appropriate level.

Role-players/ Stakeholders of AET in the municipality

The key role-player in the provision of AET in Cape Town is the Human Resources' Training and Development unit. Interviewees noted that the Department of Education is an important partner in the provision of AET. For example an interviewee noted that "We are working in partnership with the Department of education, so we are following the curriculum that they use. So we get support from the Department of Education and attend training workshops". These training workshops mainly focus on how to support adult learners as well as the flow of the curriculum.

Challenges (learners)

Learners just as the facilitators noted, face some problems around absenteeism though this is not acute. This is also linked to cases of dropping out which are also minimal. Interviewees noted that learners sometimes absent themselves or drop out because of social challenges that range from as minor as getting drunk to health problems. Some learners do not give reasons but just state that they are unable to attend or continue. Often the solution is for the facilitators to keep encouraging the learners to consider attending class or re-joining the program.

However some learners claim that they absent themselves or dropout of the program because their supervisors do not give them space and time to join the AET. Even if they join, they work they get is such that they have to abscond or dropout in order to do the work.

Other learners also miss classes or dropout because of transport costs associated with attending classes at the training centres. Given that they are low income learners, they are unable to budget for additional transport. They buy monthly train tickets but these may not be on the same route with the location of the training centres.

Referring to personal abilities, one interviewee argued that "Some people absent themselves because work is too much in class and can't cope with doing assignments or homework and they end up not attending. Some are just shy to be seen by colleagues that they are failing to grasp issues so they stay away from school"

In response to these challenges, facilitators often follow up or write to work supervisors of the learners. Furthermore, among themselves, learners try to help and encourage each other.

Learners interviewed also indicated that there is need for the CoCT to provide transport to learning centres so that learners are not incapacitated by transport problems.

Conclusion

AET training in the City of Cape Town mainly focuses on developing numeracy and literacy skills of learns between level 1 and 4 as well as basic computer skills. It is led by the Human Resources Department under Training and Development. In order to succeed in the training

program, the CoCT works in collaboration with the Department of Education which offers the curriculum and further training for facilitators. The training program is generally successful though there are cases of absenteeism and dropping out by learners.

4.2. Emalahleni Local Municipality

Municipality profile (municipality type/demographics/)

Emalahleni Local Municipality is a category B municipality situated within the Chris Hani District Municipality of the Eastern Cape Province. Its name is derived from the Xhosa word "*emalahleni*" which means coal. The local municipality comprises 17 wards which service its main towns, namely Lady Frere (head office), Indwe and Dordrecht. The region is largely rural consisting of a mix of villages in the outskirts of Lady Frere, as well as farms around Indwe and Dodretch. Such areas have a deep history of economic marginalisation and till to this day experience high levels of poverty and slow economic growth.

Based on Census 2011 data, Emalahleni's population stands at approximately 116,000 people or 30,000 households, of which it is characterised by a preponderance of youth (almost 60% of the population is below the age of 20) and an overall gender ratio of 51% females to 49% males (Emalahleni Integrated Development Plan 2016: 193). Unemployment appears to be as high as 50% within the economically active age group. Skills levels are generally low amongst the population, with only just over 12% of the adult population having matric or higher qualifications (Ibid). The municipality's IDP takes heed of these deficiencies and advocates for multiple strategies to improve literacy among its citizens.

Official views on AET

The municipality recognises the need for AET provision among its employees and the wider community that it serves. As already highlighted the levels of literacy are low among the population so the municipality caters for AET provision. Through its recently approved Human Resources Development Strategy, Emalahleni has allocated time and resources to three aspects of training, namely learnerships, recognition of prior learning (RPL) and bursaries for staff to further their education.

When it comes to AET one official acknowledged the important role it plays in addressing the literacy needs of previously disadvantaged populations who had never been granted formal schooling. Most of them work in very low ranking positions in the municipality mostly general workers and they cannot write or sign for themselves. Although AET has positive outcomes for learners, the general feeling was that it created certain expectations from learners that upon completion they would be employable as they would have reached the equivalent of matric. Yet on the latter point Skills Development Facilitators often have to convince learners that after completing Level 4 AET this would be equal to Grade 9 so the learners need to proceed to vocational training to acquire specialised skills. The discussion that ensues will explain how these conflicting issues are handled by the officials responsible for AET and skills training in general in the municipality.

How they identify training needs

A number of processes are involved in identifying skills needs in Emalahleni. Some of these include a municipality wide consultative process of auditing skills among staff as part of drawing up the Human Resources Development Strategy. This exercise enables the municipality to gain a clearer understanding of skills that staff possesses and those that they need to execute their job requirements. These audits are not restricted to technical or competency skills only but to also gauge if employees may need training in soft skills as well. Each supervisor and/ or line director for a given section conducts such exercises with their subordinates to identify what skills they require more training. It is through such

consultative processes that management can recommend that a staff member go through AET first if they do not have basic education qualifications as a bridge to enrolling in vocational training programmes in future.

Skills that are preferred by adult learners

When it comes to recruiting AET learners from the community the municipality has several channels. During its Integrated Development Planning (IDP) outreaches or roadshows in the different municipal wards, skills development facilitators (SDFs) make presentations on skills development opportunities which they offer. Usually these include bursaries for Grade 12 learners, learnerships, in-service trainings, internships and AET. A quick assessment of the response rate for certain learnerships can indicate to the SDFs that a low response from community members can be because very few people in the community have matric. Thus he explained;

> After hearing my presentation they fill in forms with their councillors to indicate their training needs. That information shows me they need AET then I must develop a learnership that talks to them at NQF level which they need say NQF2 which talks to them because that's what they needs and then they can enrol. That learnership makes it possible to then choose the critical skills they want to enrol like plumbing, electrical engineering, building you name it. Conducting such learnerships leads them to the NQF level they need to acquire a trade test so that they will be qualified technicians/artisans at that level. So that's what we push to achieve.

In such a case then the officials have to rethink the requirements of the learnerships and lower requirements or advise prospective learners to enrol for AET.

AET training methods

Emalahleni conducts training through service providers. However when it comes to AET both their employees and the community attend public adult training centres. At the time of the study there was no AET within Lady Frere because none of the staff members in that municipality office required it. AET was thus being offered at the municipality's Dordrecht branch where a number of general workers showed keen interest and were being taught by Department of Higher Education appointed facilitators.

The only demerits of conducting AET training through the government facilities is that the municipality cannot easily monitor and evaluate the impact of the training on their staff. Challenges such as high dropout rates can be difficult to address in such an arrangement.

The municipality's successes with AET provision

Like many local municipalities which grapple with limited human and financial resources, addressing skills shortages rests with the commitment and dedication of officials assigned that role. Upon realising that AET learners easily feel discouraged by having to take a long route to acquiring vocations skills, one SDF mentioned that he incentivises learners by enrolling them in a skill which requires basic literacy for example driving, once they have completed a certain AET level. His main targets are municipal workers who are at general workers' level possessing low literacy levels. By enrolling them in AET and then paying for part of their driving lessons the learners begin to see the tangible benefits of enrolling in the programme.

Role-players/ Stakeholders of AET in the municipality

The municipality has a training Committee Consultative Forum that sits on a quarterly basis to monitor implementation of the WSP. The Municipal Manager, Chief Financial Officers and other directors, members of the workers' union (IMATU/SAMWU), and elected councillors sit on this Committee.

Apart from LGSETA the Municipality also works closely with other SETAs in providing skills training in specific areas trades and services.

Achievements of targets

The municipality's rural setting and levels of education are probably reason to expect that there would be more appreciation for AET especially among youth who did not complete basic schooling. This is actually the case as was highlighted by a municipal official that the dropout rate among municipal employees enrolled in AET is fairly low. An example cited was that of a class in the previous year 2016 in which 9 out of 12 learners completed successfully the level they were enrolled in. The three who did not complete are men and they placed the blame on their supervisors for not always permitting them to attend class, something which SDFs dismissed as a typical excuse they usually hear. In general the adult learners who attend these classes are fairly young younger than 35 years of age) and that could explain why they complete their classes with relative ease. These are learners who could have dropped out of school a few years back and have now realised the need to catch up and improve their economic wellbeing.

Challenges (institutional)

Although the stigma attached to attending AET classes has a bearing on learner motivations it also reduces the enthusiasm of municipal officials in marketing it to employees and the

wider community. When officials consistently hear negative responses from potential learners it makes them reducing their recruitment campaigns. Learners often lament that they are ridiculed for attending school during work hours and this demotivates them.

Related to the issue of stigma is the question of managing learners' expectations with regards to furthering their careers after AET Level 4. An official lamented, "It becomes uncomfortable to us when we have to answer learners who would have completed level four and ask you if they will be able to register for a degree when you know they still have a long way to go." It was suggested that there is need for the relevant Department to rethink levels of AET to ensure that in the end the learners can progress to Grade 12.

AET classes are conducted during the day usually from midday and in some cases this interrupts with work especially where emergencies arise. Supervisors become a stumbling block as they refuse their subordinates to leave work and attend class.

Challenges (learners)

Although the current cohorts of learners have registered lower dropout rates, there remain aspects which stumble learners from proceeding to other levels. It is interesting to note that there are gender differences in attitudes towards learning. Findings reveal that there were no female drop outs in the cohort of 2016 yet one would imagine the responsibilities that they carry at work and at home as caregivers. Their male counterparts are the ones who actually faced learning difficulties not related to their learning abilities but attitudes. Take for instance the issue of time management which is usually derailed by heavy drinking especially when they have received their pay. Another attitude related matter is that some learners dodge work by pretending to be attending AET classes when in fact they will be somewhere else.

In some cases it is the content of AET classes that makes some learners to drop out. If they find it too difficult they give up. Even more complex is when the learners have been recommended to start from Level 1 and have to be subjected to numeracy tests which they find too easy. An example is that of situations where learners begin to mock their curriculum by saying in Xhosa "sibala ama apulo" referring to the fact that they are being taught to count (apples) something that they are capable of. It is not uncommon to hear a learner complain, "I have 50 cows I know how to count…they must not teach me what I already know." Instances such as this can be avoided by conducting assessments rigorously which will determine accurately what levels to place learners.

When asked to recommend what can be done to ease some off the challenges the officials stated the following two issues; (i) that AET should reach Grade 12, "LGSETA is encouraging us as SDFs to enrol people in AET but I think most SDFs are not into it anymore because of the challenges of AET… we have hope that it will be improved and furthered to Grade 12" and (ii) We need a strategy to attract people...like a learnership where there is a stipend and this is what encourages people to enrol because there is a financial incentive.

4.3. Mangaung Metro

Profile of the municipality

Situated in the Free State Province, the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality (MMM), is a Category A metropolitan municipality with a total population of 806 942 people according to the 2016 Community Survey. In 2016 there were 264 316 households in Mangaung. The municipality covers an area of 6 863 km² including three urban centres, namely Bloemfontein, Botshabelo, and Thaba Nchu and an extensive rural area. More than half of

the population is concentrated in the Bloemfontein area (52%), followed by Botshabelo (28%) with the lowest number of people living in rural areas (MMM 2016: 69 – 71).

The MMM strives to reduce illiteracy and increasingly empower its citizens to be able to read and write. The number of residents with no schooling thus declined from 10, 1 per cent in 1996 to 4, 6 per cent in 2011 (MMM 2016: 72), but has, however, increased to 5.2 per cent in 2016 (The Local government handbook). During the period 1996 to 2016 there was also an increase in people obtaining matric and post matric qualifications (MMM 2016: 72; Local government handbook, nd.).

During the 2014/15 financial year the MMM had a total number of 3898 employees in its service. However, during the same period the municipality had a total of 7803 employee positions, but with just more than a 50 per cent vacancy rate (The Local government handbook, nd).

Official views on AET

The Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality perceives AET as an important tool on local government level to provide training to its employees, some with many years of experience, however, without any basic education. In Mangaung skills development programmes are mainly aimed towards municipal employees.

The municipality also facilitates an induction programme for municipal councilors. Apart from an overview of the roles of the three spheres of government, the training programme mainly focusses on the responsibilities of the municipality towards its citizens and more specifically on the roles of municipal councilors. The content of the training programme for councilors is legislated and serves its purpose of training councilors.

In addition, the municipality also has internship programmes for unemployed graduates to assist them to gain job related experience in local government. The municipality assigns a mentor to individuals for the duration of their internships and they are paid a salary of R3500 per month for the duration of the internship. Furthermore, the municipality also

assists students from Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges, who are required to obtain certain hours of working experience to complete their studies, to gain the required experience by working in the municipality.

The Mangaung Municipality gives preference to accredited skills programs, learner ships and apprentice ships, particularly where assessments are done and certificates of competency are issued.

Identification of training needs

During October/November and January/February of every year the Mangaung Municipality conducts a skills needs analysis of all employees. During this process the Human Resources Department (HRD) assesses whether the skills profiles of workers meet the requirements of specific posts and targeted individuals to attend related courses to enhance their performance. However, with AET training all employees who are interested may apply for the course mainly because the majority of the MMM workers have no or few years of schooling.

A former AET learner explained the process as follows: "HRD staff came to visit various plants in the municipality and told us about the course and about the process to enroll for the course. So it was up to us to decide if we wanted to participate; it was open for all of us. Nobody was nominated to attend the course" (Interview with former AET learners, Mangaung, 16 March 2017).

On community level the Local Economic Development Strategy Planning Department of the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality identifies the training needs and skills shortages of the community. After compiling the training needs the department approaches HRD to assist with securing an appropriate service provider which will be paid by the municipality. In some instances, stakeholders such as Absa and the Services Seta have also sponsored and provided training for community members.

Skills that are preferred by adult learners

In the Mangaung Municipality employees mainly required technical skills, for example plumbing, skills for water and waste water treatment processes, and diesel mechanics. Adult learners are also interested to improve their academic qualifications. The municipality assists such employees to further their schooling and obtain Grade 12 by providing, for example bursaries for studies at accredited institutions.

There is a need in the Mangaung Municipality for basic literacy and numeracy skills amongst adult municipal workers with limited or no formal education. For a former AET learner it was important to obtain numeracy and literacy skills so that he could assist his children in lower grades with their school work while another interviewee indicated that she was keen to learn English as an additional language. Furthermore, the interviewees also wanted to study further after completion of Level 4 of the AET training course to obtain their matric certificates (Interview with former AET learners, Mangaung, 16 March 2017). Bearing in mind that some AET learners' educational goal is to obtain a matric qualification the municipal official noted that the curriculum of the current AET program should be supplemented by additional subjects to support learners to obtain Grade 12 qualifications.

AET training methods

After completion of the municipal Work Skills Plan in April of every year, the training of the various courses starts during May and continues throughout the financial year. The duration of the courses vary from course to course. Generally, the modes of skills transfer in the municipality is though a normal classroom format, on the job training, workshops to enhance workers' knowledge, learner ships, skills programs, apprentice ships, and bursaries for formal studies.

In Mangaung all AET courses (Levels 1-4) are conducted over a period of eight months in a class room format. During that period classes are offered every second week for the entire week. AET training courses are provided by external service providers who are accredited with the Department of Higher Education. The preferred service provider allocates a teacher to teach the AET courses at the municipality.

Classes for AET learners, from Level 1 to 4 and mother tongue learners, are taught simultaneously in one class by one teacher. An interviewee explained that Level 1 and 2 learners are generally "not happy" about this arrangement as they "do not want to ask questions in class as they may appear stupid in front of Level 3 and 4 learners" (Interview with former AET learners, Mangaung, 16 March 2017). Stationary and handbooks are provided to the learners, but they have to pay for lunches and transport to the venue.

Technical skills training of municipal employees is in line with the NSD strategy III and also the need to serve the community. A training centre in Mangaung assists with the technical training of blue collar workers.

The municipality's successes and failures of AET provision
The municipality has generally done well in providing skills development training on all levels, but according to a municipal official, "more can still be done since the need for training is a dynamic process which changes all the time". Furthermore, the demand for training is guided by questions such as "what does the sector needs and what scarce skills are needed?" (Interview, Mangaung, 16 March 2017).

AET training was, however, not offered during 2016 since the MMM did not meet the deadlines for procedures and processes set by LGSETA to obtain funding for AET. The municipal official was, nevertheless, hopeful that the AET programme "will start soon as the application has been approved by the Municipal Manager and service providers have been appointed". Although the AET programme should already have started in February 2017, the municipality still waits for confirmation of the date on which training may commence (Interview, Mangaung, 16 March 2017). Former AET learners expressed their frustration that they were not able to continue with Levels 3 and 4 after successfully completed Level 1 and 2 of the AET programme in 2015. They felt that they could benefit more from the programme if they could continue with the other levels immediately after the initial training. Since more than a year has passed after the initial training they fear that they may struggle with Levels 3 and 4.

From the interviews with former AET learners it seemed that the human resources officials of the municipality did not properly explained what AET entails when introducing the programme to potential AET learners in the various municipal departments. For example, no information was provided on the content of the AET programme and it only became clear upon completion of the registration forms.

The AET learners interviewed deemed the programme as successful. Learners appreciated the opportunity to attend the AET programme and emphasized that they greatly benefitted from the programme. For example, interviewees commented as follows: "It improved my interpersonal communication – how to speak to workers on my level and how to speak to my community. Due to classes on numeracy, I can now understand other people". Another interviewee explained that he greatly benefitted in the workplace from participating in the AET programme, since after completion of the programme he was appointed as a representative of health and safety due to his ability to read safety rules and instructions that are printed in English. An important outcome of the basic AET courses may thus be that learners felt empowered and motivated to further their educational qualifications.

During the duration of the training all the interviewees were granted absence from work while being fully paid. Some supervisors encouraged the learners participating in the course to a great extent, e.g. by granting study leave, and phoning during weekends to motivate them to keep on studying for the examination. In addition, they were delighted when the learners passed the course. The positive attitude of some supervisors towards AET thus also contributes to the success of AET provision in the municipality.

Roleplayers/ Stakeholders of AET in the municipality

In the Mangaung Municipality various role players are involved in the roll out of AET in the Municipality, including the Skills Development Facilitator (Manager), the Chief Financial Official, the Municipal Manager, and the labour union. The various sub-directorates of the municipality are involved in identifying the skills needs of the municipality. Particularly, the Local Labour Forum (LLF) training sub-committee, consisting of the employer and union

representatives, deals with the training and development needs in the municipality, as well as assessing the progress that is being made with training, including AET training.

The procedure for the implementation of AET in Mangaung is as follows: After the skills needs of all the sub-directorates, including the LLF training sub-committee have been compiled by the Skills Development manager, the submission is forwarded to the HOD of Corporate Services who will support/not support and recommend the submission; then it is forwarded to the CFO who will consider and approve/not approve the submission after which it is finally forwarded to the Municipal Manager who has the final authority to approve or disapprove all submissions for training, including AET training.

On community level the Local Economic Development Strategy Planning Department of the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality identifies the training needs and skills shortages of the community. In some instances, stakeholders such as Absa (assisted with SMME development) and the Services Seta (involved in new ventures creations) have also sponsored and provided training for community members.

Achievements of targets

The Mangaung Municipality did not reach its targets on the AET programme in the 2016-2017 financial year and no AET courses were offered in 2016. Amongst others, this was due to the tight LGSETA time frames that the municipality could not meet and which resulted in the forfeiture of the LGSETA grant for AET. The municipal official (Interview in Mangaung, 16 March 2017) noted regarding the AET programme that "there are still lots to do". However, with support from the political leadership as well as the new city manager who is "very passionate about AET", the interviewee felt confident that the targets regarding AET will be reached in the new financial year.

Challenges (institutional)

"Human resource development is at the core of Mangaung Municipality's mission and vision, but is not always prioritized in the municipality and people stagnate in their jobs"

according to a municipal interviewee. In addition, there are also limited financial resources for human resource development. To address this challenge the interviewee suggested that the employer should assign strategic people with decision-making powers to serve on the LLF sub-committee on training. In addition, the members of the LLF sub-committee would have to come from a training background (Interview with municipal official, Mangaung, 16 March 2017).

Although the LGSETA supports AET, their timeframes are sometimes perceived to be too tight thus affecting both the Mangaung Municipality and the service providers to have all the logistics done timeously, including the necessary documentation. For example, some service providers have to travel from remote rural areas to Mangaung to have contracts signed. Thus, due to the tight LGSETA time frames that the municipality could not meet, the Mangaung Municipality has in the past forfeited some of the LGSETA grants for AET.

The allocation of funding from LGSETA is in some instances inadequate for AET programmes to be conducted amongst employees in the municipality. In most instances, the municipality would provide additional funding for the provision of the training.

Institutional challenges regarding AET also include, amongst others, 1) the unwillingness from supervisors to release workers for training; 2) the training room was in most instances not conducive to training since it was, for example, too cold and thus negatively impacting on the functioning of the learners; 3) some facilitators were more theoretical in providing the training which impacted negatively on the adult learners. The trainers thus need to have a more practical approach when training AET learners. 5) Finally, support from management to provide basic refreshments such as drinks and eats are crucial for a successful training course. Although coffee and tea were provided, learners had to pay for their lunches. In addition, the municipality does not pay stipends to employees attending courses, including the AET programme.

Challenges (learners)

From the learners' perspective various challenges were identified in connection with the provision of AET as well as general perceptions about AET. An important challenge was that teachers fluctuated during the AET programme. For example, the AET classes started with a particular teacher whose methods were well understood by the learners. However, after a while the teacher was replaced by another teacher. The AET learners then had to adapt to a different way of teaching which was sometimes, for them as adult learners, a challenge. In addition, at times when the teacher was absent from class no replacement was send resulting in cancellation of the class. Furthermore, the training venue changed on several occasions during the training course as venues were sometimes double booked resulting in AET classes being moved to other venues. The learners perceived this as unsettling for them since they would only discover that the venue has changed once they arrived at the training venue.

As indicated earlier the AET programme was not offered in 2016. Some learners felt that they would benefit more from the AET programme if they could immediately continue with the next levels and fear that they may struggle with the next levels due to the extensive interruption in training. They also indicated that some learners were demoralized by the temporary stoppage in AET education and thus perceive AET training "as a waste of time and will not enroll for level 3 once it started".

Some people did not enroll for AET, because they were ashamed to participate in the AET programme, because by attending the training it would indicate that they did not have any education. Furthermore, learners from Levels 1 to 4 and mother tongue learners are all in the one class with only one teacher. An interviewee explained that learners were unhappy with this arrangement as they felt uncomfortable to ask questions in a class consisting also of higher level learners.

Mother tongue learners struggle in classes consisting of learners of all levels since they need additional assistance from teachers which is time consuming. Learners who never had the

opportunity to attend school during their life time could take mother tongue as an additional subject. However, numeracy and communication are taught in English.

Seemingly, human resources officials of the municipality did not properly explained what AET entails when introducing the programme to potential AET learners in the various municipal departments. For example, no information was provided on the content of the AET programme during such events.

The HRD manager and his personnel regularly visited the various departments in the metro to promote courses. However, the interviewees noted that HRD did not visit the various plants during 2015 and 2016 to introduce AET to new workers or to learners who wanted to pursue Levels 3 and 4. This poses a problem to general workers who do not have access to any of the metro's electronic systems. A former AET learner commented in this regard: "Some of the supervisors just wanted workers to work and work. They sometimes have information about training, but do not want to share it with the general workers. They do not want us to be better trained than they are".

Various reasons for learners dropping out from the AET programme were highlighted. For example, some learners do not have money for transport to the training venue; the leaners experienced numeracy as too difficult; although workers receive their normal salary when attending AET, they will apparently lose any overtime payment for the day if they are not at work; and some workers fear that they may lose their jobs since other people were doing their jobs while they were attending AET classes.

Suggestions by former AET learners on ways in which AET training can be improved

- Separate classes for the various levels: The interviewees explained that learners from Level 1 to 4 and mother tongue learners are all in the one class with only one teacher. Lower level learners are unhappy about this arrangement as they feel uncomfortable to ask questions in class also consisting of higher leve learners.
- Additional subjects: more subjects are to be taught in Level 1 and 2 since 6 subjects are needed to obtain Grade 12.

- Mother tongue to be introduced as subject for all learners: an interviewee explained that their mother tongue should also be included as a subject to enable them to assist their children with mother tongue at school.

- One teacher should be available to teach the class throughout the course.

- Stable venue: Venues changed on several occasions during the training course as venues were sometimes double booked resulting in AET classes being moved to other venues.

- Location of venue: the venue should be in town as it is within reach of all learners. Initially, HRD planned for venues to be in a township, but according to the learners that is not cost effective and impractical since they would then have to travel into town from various townships and also to the venue thus using two taxis to get to the venue.

- No time lapse between various levels: generally interviewees are frustrated about the timeframe in which they could complete all the AET levels. Ideally they should be able to complete one level after the other without any lapses in time. This is important for learners as some wanted to pursue other educational opportunities after completion of the AET programme.

4.4. Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality

Municipality profile (municipality type/demographics/)

The Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan (NMBM) is one of eight category A municipalities in South Africa situated on the south- eastern coast of Africa in the Eastern Cape (Stats SA, 2016). In 2001, the NMBM was formed as an administrative area covering Port Elizabeth, the neighbouring towns of Uitenhage and Despatch, and the surrounding agricultural areas and is a major seaport and automotive manufacturing centre (Stats SA, 2016).According to Statistics SA census of 2011 the NMBM has the following demographics:

- Population – 1,152,115 of which 60,13% are Black African, 23,56% are Coloured , 14,36% are White, 1,11% is Indian or Asian and 0,84% represents other.

- Households (formal): – 276 850

- Area covered – 1 950 km²

- Unemployment rate – 36,6 %

Official views on AET

The general feeling on AET from the NMBM officials was that it is looking at trying to redress the imbalances of previous government. They pointed out that the government is trying to redress literacy in the country, where it has been observed that they are quite a large number of people who are illiterate. People who are not able to speak, write other languages and so on and also in terms of improvements in the country people take time to cope with technology, for example. So people who have not been at school will not be able to cope with developments that are happening in the country. So hence, it was understand that it was the obligation of the new government that it should redress these imbalances and make sure everybody is on board even if they cannot reach a particular level, so NMBM as a municipality is part of this drive to redress the situation.

How they identify training needs

In NMBM the officials spoken to pointed out that AET caters for blue collar people, people who work with hands only and age wise above 21 and up to whatever age. It is for both people who are at work, as well as those unemployed. As a municipality they identified those needs that are related to life skills, where people have to use your ATM's, computers etc.

Skills that are preferred by adult learners

The NMBM officials pointed out that based on experience and what they got during recruiting, is that with regards to those who are unemployed most will have no formal schooling or very little formal schooling. The NMBM thus focused on life skills, helping learners or capacitating them to deal with life challenges every day. In this regard the fundamentals where communication and numeracy which were seen as a base from which learners could start. The NMBM pointed out that when they do their briefings and presentations they explain this to the learners. So learners that cannot totally read or write they first had to go through a mother tongue phase, where they teach learners to read and write in their own language first. i.e. Xhosa, Afrikaans etc. They called this the pre-ABET phase as you cannot do anything else without been able to count, read or write. If learners have succeeded in the pre-ABET phase they would move onto ABET levels 1-4 .They pointed out that ABET level 4 is equivalent to NQF 1 which is an entry level qualification to most colleges and tertiary education.

AET training methods

The NMBM pointed out that training comes after a recruitment and assessment process to determine which level learners should proceed with. The learners go through an assessment phase, then placement is done based on the assessment results. The NMBM gives the learner's feedback, one on one explaining to them how they got to that level, discussing their placement with them and also guiding them forward, which levels they will go into and reasons why. The Facilitator for each class, ratio 1 is 20, and the methodologies used are

- Group Work
- Pair work
- One on One
- Each one teach one

The NMBM pointed out that different methodologies are used based on needs of learners, especially on numeracy aspect there is more teaching than facilitating was one of the remarks , "because if you left school before standard 10 you only know so much so teaching is required rather than facilitation".

The municipality's successes and failures AET provision

Some of the key successes at NMB included the following:

- Having very good facilitators for the ABET programme who are well trained and able to cope with all sorts of challenges especially having emotional intelligence.
- Trying to reach out to as many wards as possible, shows commitment by the NMBM to make sure ABET succeeds.

Role players/ Stakeholders of AET in the municipality

The main key players are the funders (LGSETA), then the service provider Siyaphambili that facilitates everything, then the NMBM   municipality co-ordinates   all processes   i.e everything in terms of finding venues etc , then they access funds from LGSETA , find the facilitators and finally they go and recruit learners although they pointed out that this was a challenge.

Within the NMBM they have 60 wards that they try as much as possible to balance. Out of the 60 wards they   make sure they touch base in each and every ward. The technique they used, was to visit ward councillors or councillors, put posters, put on intranet if it's internal but outside/external us placards, through councillors etc. Sometimes where the municipality is required, the skills development manager has to hold one on one discussions with people.

Achievements of targets

This was difficult due to high dropout rate, red tape and a lack of funding.

Challenges (institutional)

- Problems with continuity
- Registration process full of red tape   and time consuming
- Lack of finance form funders
- Still stigma attached to ABET

Challenges (learners)

- Poor attendance in classes due to learners been late
- No provision of stipends and catering
- Caring of small kids
- Post ABET , a lack of employment opportunities
- Clash with Union meetings at times
- Some supervisors not releasing learners due to work commitments

4.5. Sol Plaatje Local Municipality

Municipality profile (municipality type/demographics/)

Sol Plaatje Local Municipality (SPM) is a Category B municipality located in the Frances Baard District Municipality (comprising Sol Plaatje, Phokwane, Dikgatlong, Magareng and Diamondfields) in the Northern Cape Province. The unemployment rate is 31.9% (youth

unemployment 41.7%). Only 10% of SPM's population has a higher education than matric. More than half (55%) of SPM's population also has an income of R3000 or less per month (Sol Plaatje Municipality 2015: 17).

Skills are a critical issue in SPM's long term planning. The 2015/2016 IDP Review proposes a Human Resources Strategy which aims to align human resources with Municipal requirements "by acquiring, developing and retaining the right staff with competencies that support SPMs IDP objectives and creating a Human Resource framework that promotes efficiency and productivity" (Ibid: 28). The same strategy proposes key changes in the management of Human Resources at SPM such as, (i) a revised and consolidated organisation and staff establishment that reconciles with the payroll; (ii) a properly structured skills development plan, clearly indicating where the most critical skills gaps are and how they will be addressed; and (iii) a Succession Management Plan needs to be put in place (specifically taking the age profile of key staff and managers into account) (Ibid).

Official views on AET

Officials are conscious of the need for redress through provision of programmes such as AET among their staff who require it and also the surrounding community. In more recent times the SPM has been improving in terms of literacy levels among low skill workers, especially the younger generation of employees who have been recruited in recent years, but there is recognition of the need to continuously provide AET to all staff who may require it. One official retorted;

> Skills have always been a challenge for our people in this country and so there's been need for up skilling people. We are sitting with lots of people in the municipality who are sitting in the same positions because they have no form of formal education. We have been grappling with not leaving those who are illiterate behind. We wanted to focus on those who have not been to school

Another reason why AET is regarded important is that it plays a key role in skills acquisition among employees who find themselves unable to pass Recognition of Prior Learning. Once they can read and learn as a result of attending AET classes then it becomes easier for them to be recognised through RPL.

One of the learners commended AET in as far as it affords them an opportunity to read and write and what he referred to as "life skills. Real life situations such as being able to read a terms and conditions of a contract before one committed to purchasing on credit. He also gave examples of situations in the workplace which can be averted if all workers had basic literacy they would know right from wrong when it comes to company policies instead of them calling on the Union all the times to help them when the transgress.

How they identify training needs

A training needs-analysis is conducted annually by the Organisational Development unit which then informs the Municipality's WSP. The Skills Development Facilitator (SDF) sends out forms to different directorates and workers sit with their supervisors or line managers to identify which skills they need for them to grow. Through that an assessment is then conduct to list the different skills which employees need to be trained whether it is vocational courses or AET.

Skills that are preferred by adult learners

Most of the learners take up classes in English or vernacular languages, literacy and communication. They also take up mathematical literacy in place of mathematics. Other subjects include natural science, life skills or orientation, arts and culture, social science as well as economics. However, this focus of AET on basic education is not always in line with aspirations of learners who in most cases hold aspirations of attaining specialised skills in trades and other qualifications which equip them for

the workplace. One learner explained, "I am an ABET scholar and what we want is dress making, catering, computers, financial planning, secretarial…skills like that".

AET training methods

SPM does not conduct AET classes in-house. Learners are sent to local adult learning centres closes to their places of residence. The Municipality's SDF identifies employees who wish to be enrolled in AET classes and then arranges for them to attend class at the centre nearest to them. This approach to training was lamented by an official;

> Nine years ago ABET was an in-house programme it was conducted inside the organisation and it was productive then. But now we have given it away to Department of Education so all we do is identify individuals and enrol them at the various centres. My concern is why outside because if it is done internally we have mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the programmes.

Learners attend classes five days from Monday to Friday and they work till 12pm then go to classes.

Role-players/ Stakeholders of AET in the municipality

Training and skills development functions are the prerogative of Human Resources Department's Organisational Development Unit which falls under the Corporate Services Directorate. Their internal stakeholders include directorates such as Finance, Community and Social Development Services, Municipal Manager's office and Economic Development.

Decisions regarding skills planning and budgets are made by the Corporate Services standing committee on the Council.

Achievements of targets

SPM has been experiencing a drop in enrolments in AET classes among staff. This could be attributed to improvements in literacy over the years as younger generations of employees possessing a minimum of matric have been employed. In addition among the staff who have been employed for relatively long periods of time in the Municipality, most of who are nearing pension do not want to learn anymore. In the 2016/2017 financial year only five are active on this programme. This is a small figure considering that total staff complement of the municipality stands at approximately 2100. Despite the efforts of municipal officials to hold campaigns and approach employees and community members at different forums the response rate is low. In other trainings where employees can gain skills such as computers, project management, plumbing etc. the interest is very high but with AET there has been a drop. Stigma attached to the perceived inferiority of AET also contributes to reasons why fewer students enrol every year.

In terms of provision of AET to the surrounding communities in Sol Plaatje the municipality has been played a facilitation role. In the previous financial year funding from the LGSETA was secured and training was provided by a Non-Governmental Organisation which specialises in skills development. The municipality only played the role of linking the organisation to the unemployed learners from the local communities. The only challenges with that arrangement is that the people who went there are unemployed so they went in and came back with a few skills but now they just sit at home again with level 3 hoping there will be training in the near future to progress to Level 4.

Another challenge is that because AET classes are conducted at the local PALCs the Municipality does not get reports or attendance registers sand other valuable information

to enable it to evaluate its impact. So if you can conduct AET training internally we can't do much planning to improve it. This is the reason why in-service training is being advocated by the municipal officials.

Challenges (institutional)

One of the key challenges especially with attracting learners to AET programmes is the limited funding which is allocated to these programmes. In comparison with learnerships and other forms of training where stipends are provided learners receive food during sessions. The officials lamented that such additional costs as stipends and food provision would make the programme very expensive considering that the Skills Development Levy is not adequate for such expenditures.

There are also competing priorities that employees have to juggle which make AET a less attractive option. Among employees who qualify for overtime allowances they would rather ensure that they make more money through standby allowances and stay in their job at the same levels than attend AET classes. One learner put it nicely that, "…there are more people fighting for survival than going to class."

At institutional level there is a possibility that low enrolments in AET are associated with the ways in which departments in the municipality work in silos and fail to communicate on issues relating to skills needs. The assumption is that with better coordination and cooperation between other municipal departments and the organisational learning department there will be effective ways of identifying training needs.

In some cases lower attendance rates are due to lack of support to employees who from their supervisors. Learners have to attend classes at 2pm must leave at 1pm but the

challenge among some supervisors arises when they begin complaining that if a person leaves his responsibility who will cover for him?

Challenges (learners)

The fact that some employees dropped out of certain levels it is now difficult to ask them to enrol again in AET and complete their studies. Because of discouragement some have adopted negative attitudes. A skills facilitator recalled encounters where he conducted road shows in some departments of the municipality and he was told "…don't come here to talk about AET I don't want anything to do with it." This made him feel like some people do not respect his work in the municipality.

Due to social problems learners end up dropping out of classes and failing to complete. In the cohort of the previous year a male learner cited marital problems as a reason for dropping out . Municipal officials concurred during the group interview that there was a gap in the Municipality for employee wellness programmes where staff with social problems can talk with trained professionals in confidence. One official thus argued;

> The programme itself (AET) is not a problem considering that people need all sorts of skills but their social conditions distract them. At general workers' level employees have so many social problems that they carry with them to work and so there's need for internal people who help them to cope with pressures.

Such a service can help them so it was suggested that this would be an important facility in the municipality.

How have you addressed these challenges?

Suggestions for addressing some of the challenges include;

- This current programme of AET takes learners to Grade 9 but then some of the courses they want to study require them to have matric. If they can get to Grade 12 then we are working on the path to skills development. They also fail RPL tests in most courses. In the words of an official; "If LGSETA can afford to help people to get matric then I can say now we are starting with skills development. At the moment Grade 9 does not help them with anything. Then now they can go study further or do whatever… So tell LGSETA that the AET programme is well on its way but it's just not taking the people where they want to be."

- If SPM takes the responsibility to educate people through AET away from an external institution then it will be possible to attract learners.

- Intergenerational dynamics which disadvantage older learners will be eradicated if in-service training is reintroduced in the municipality. Because it is AET the older generation of adults are shy to sit amongst younger adults unlike if it is internal the issues of intergenerational dynamics will be easier to settle and for them to interact.

- An assessment needs to be done because things have changed lately as the municipality is now employing people with some form of literacy and numeracy and matric. An assessment will help the municipality determine what percentage of staff still need AET considering their age and that labour demographics are changing as a more youthful staff complement is dominating the workplace.

4.6. Tshwane Metro

Municipality profile (municipality type/demographics/)

Situated in the Gauteng province, the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality is category A municipality and the largest municipality in South Africa. In line with the Gauteng Global City Region Strategy's recommendation to reduce Gauteng municipalities, the City of Tshwane merged with Metsweding District in 2010. It has a land area of 6 368km² out of Gauteng's total size of 19055 km² and accommodates an estimate of 2, 9 million people (StatsSA). Tshwane is the administrative capital of South Africa and has a vision to become "Africa's leading capital city of excellence" (StatsSA). The 2055 vision of the City of Tshwane

is a city that is "liveable, resilient and inclusive and its citizens enjoy a high quality of life, have access to social, economic and enhanced political freedoms and are partners in the development of the African capital city of excellence" (Tshwane 2016/21 IDP:25). The 2016-2021 integrated development plans are strategically in line with vision 2055 and underscores a developmental agenda that goes beyond outcomes but considers the impact that development programmes have on the targeted populations (Tshwane 2016/21 IDP).

One of the key challenges faced by Tshwane municipality is improving access to opportunities such as education, health, employment to previously disadvantaged groups. As a way of improving access to education, the municipality through the Tshwane Leadership and Management Academy (TLMA) has taken various education and training initiatives including adult education and training (AET). AET learners are people who are employed within the municipality within the A-Level rank. A-Level rank are low skilled employees such as messengers, refuse collectors, office cleaners etc. It is mostly people who do not have standard 8 and the aim of AET is to enable such employees to acquire NQF 1 (a school leaving certificate). Below is a presentation of the state of adult education and training in the city of Tshwane, as well as the opportunities and challenges the municipality is facing. The presentation is a result of a conversation with two (2) municipal officials.

Official views on AET

The municipal officials acknowledge that the broad role of AET in South Africa is empowering the previously disadvantaged groups those who didn't have opportunities in the past; so that they can obtain necessary literacy skills and numeracy skills to enable them to participate in further training and to enhance their future job opportunities. Basically, the role is to groom South Africans who can do things on their own.

Skills that are preferred by adult learners

The syllabus of AET from Levels 1 to 4 consists of different subjects. In Level 1 and 2 mathematices, life skills and English are taught. In Levels 3 and 4 three additional subjects are included in the syllabusStudents prefer business and accounting which are applicable in future to themThe main aim of the municipality is for the learners to obtain a school leaving certificate (Abet level 4, NQF 1) in order for them to continue to other levels.

AET training methods

The Tshwane municipality mainly targeted municipal employees for AET training in order for them to be more effective in service provision and to participate in further training programmes. The municipality has contracted a private service provider, the Adult Basic Education School, which operates under the Department of Basic Education, for a period of three years to train municipal employees.

The Tshwane municipality is not involved in the training of community members, including community leaders. Private role players such as the Adult Basic Education Schoolis involved in community training. In Tshwane this company thus provides training both to the municipal employees and the community. The municipality regularly conduct a skills ananlysis of its employees and recommends workers for potential training. However, The municipal interviewee mentioned that although the workers' enrolment or participation in AET training are voluntary " it's for their own good, specifically, for the job and in general-in terms of their knowledge".

The municipality's successes and failures AET provision

A shortcoming in the provision of AET training in Tshwane may be the lack of proper communicaton. For example, in 2016 some workers that were booked with HR to attend the

AET course did not attend the training. Upon investigation the no show of AET learners by the Tshwane Leadership and Management Academy (TLMA) they discovered "a gap of information sharing". Although TLMA has communicated the necessary AET training details to the relevant municipal department, the department did not communicate the information to their pre-booked students/ employees. It is, however, unclear what caused the lack in information sharing between the training academy and the specific municipal department. According to the interviewee it may possibly be due to staff turnover, or employees scheduled to attened the training that have resigned from the municipality..

The municipal interviewee also noted that some departments do not take any responsibilitiy for training of employees since they perceive it as the role of the training academy. The departments also expect the training academy to train all their employees. However due to the training academy's limited budget they cannot accommodate all workersin one specific year as "there is a lot of demand for training".

The lack of access to electronic media, such as email communication, is also a challenge in AET provision since the AET target group does not have any computer access to electronic mediawhich is used as the communication medium for training programmes. Normaly the training academy will communicate all training information to the FSDFs of a particular department who then have to inform the supervisorwho then have to inform the general workers. According to the municipal interviewee " the FSDFs could be stretched beyond capacity. It can even take them months to get the information to everyone within the whole department". For example, the electricity department has depots widely spread throughout different parts of Tshwane (Centurion, Soshanguve, Central Business District, Cullinan, and Hammanskraal.) which makes it very difficult to inform the targeted employees timeously to attend the AET training.

"Therefore, it can take weeks or months for the information to get to the targeted employees" which could be due to various reasons such as people that are on leave or

personal problems. In addition, the FSDFs sometimes attend training and are thus out of the office. Another problem is lack of coordination between the FSDFs, the supervisors and the team leaders who is sometimes not informed about the details of the training. Furthermore, a FSDF may be replaced without the knowledge of the training academy who then does not know who are the new person in charge.

The municipal interviewee perceive the AET programmes as very useful. "It's a matter of applying yourself, if you want to get something you get it, it's an internal thing. There is a saying that you can take a horse to the river but you cannot force it to drink! We take these guys to the river BUT it's up to them whether they will drink or not". However, motivation is affected by other factors such as being a family man, and circumstances at work or at school.

Roleplayers/ Stakeholders of AETin the municipality

Player	Role
Council	Pass the budget
Top Management	Approves the training
TLMA and staff	Implementation of AET
Skills Development Facilitators	Responsible for all training within the municipality (not only AET)
Members of the Mayoral Committee	The Members of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) are more significant than the CFO as they are responsible for the work skills plan development. The MMC deliberate on the work skills plan and give the stamp of approval. The Corporate planning committee signs the work skills plan.
Service provider (public schools)	Works with teachers and students- the two also role players since they participate in the programmes
Departments	Provision of training venues

Achievements of targets

The The municipality has introduced the opportunity for learners to study for Matric during office hours. Previously a pilot course was done accommodating 20 learners, but currently it is expanded to include 80 learners per annum.. These learners have to complete 6 subjects in 2 years which proves to be quite difficult. Amongst others, the learners have family responsibilities which make it difficult for them to participate fully in the programmes. Unfortunately the first pilot was not successful which is a concern since the council spent a large amount of money without "the investment yielding results". The municiplaity, however, continues to fund the second year of the programme.. People who participated in training is not automatically promoted; they still have to apply for vacant positions and compete with both internal and external applicants. . Nevertheless, some people who completed the AET programme were promoted as deputy directors at the metro police while others were promoted as inspectors, within the waste management department..

How they identify training needs

The Tswane Leadership and Management Acadamy (TLMA) perceives itself as the custodian of not only AET all other training programmes for Tshwane. There are 21 'client' departments which are serviced by the TLMA. Each department has its own Functional Skills Development Facilitator (FSDF). FSDF's are tasked too coordinate all training in their respective departments.

The TLMA compiles a work place skills plan annualy as is required by law and the SETA. The FSDFs and their departments nominate staff who need to participate in training programmes for a particular year. Nominated individuals are pre-booked them a on SAP data capturing system which include the work skills plan. At the end of every April, beginning of May, a new work place skills plan is submitted to the LGSETA. At the beginning

of July (start of the new financial year) based on the resources available or budgeted for the training is implemented as per pre-bookings on SAP.

Generally, specialised training is not offered. Departments with special needs need to come up with a appropriate solution. For example, one electrical department sent their employees for training. The staff did not did not comprehend the training and had to do ABET Level 4 before they were able to understand the requirements of the prescribed course.

The reasons for failure of staff to complete courses can be attributed to age and multiplicity of duties. Staff are also grown-ups and have different problems of their own. The syllabus may also be difficult to complete.

Classes are presented by qualified teachers during council time. The classes are on different days and run from 8am-3:30pm. A day is dedicated for each level, for example, Monday would be Level 1, Tuesday another level etc. They do all the subjects for that level on that day. The system seems to be working well although problems such as the late supply of course books may occasionally happen. The learners are effectively paid to study.

Tshwane has been implementing this particular system for many years and is supported by different partners such as senior management. The Level 1-3 success rate is good because learners do fewer subjects and go through internal assessments by the teachers who work closely with them.

Challenges (institutional)

Funding and human resources are generally not a problem for Tshwane but training have in some instances be deferred to another year. The required human and financial resources for training are available but witin limits. The participation of staff is out of free choice, but if the skill is required for your job then you have do not have much of a choice. For example, if you are a secretary then you will need to know how to type documents. The prioritisation of training programmes is driven by council needs. A distinction can be made between council, departmental and corporate needs. Corporate needs will typically include literacy skills for low learned people, computer skills and financial management skills that affect all departments. Specific needs of department differs due to particular functions and requirements.

Challenges for different roleplayers may be the difficulty to comply with deadlines for supply chain management and procurement for example. People therefore need constant reminders to meet deadlines. Service provider and other parties may also fail to disseminate information which lead to empty spaces in class because people haven't been told yet. When it comes to monitoring and evaluation, Tshwane do assist service provider with monitoring and evaluation activities.

Challenges (learners)

Since the training programme is voluntary, participants are free to stop participating when they feel they don't want to continue. Some particpants will lose interest whereas others for example, may cite reasons such as family problems and responsibilities or cite health related reasons such as eye sight problems. Some learners can not cope with the intensity of the programme. Generally the drop out rate is not high but some learners come without knowing what is in store for them. They may not have been properly informed or were not part of the programme from the very beginning and may drop out when a course becomes too taxing. There are nevertheless willing students who do attend lessons regularly.

Teaching methods are perceived as good since no real problems have been experienced in the past. Good teaching methods also speaks to the success achieved by qualified teachers who are well experienced.

Communication problems are more due to logistics and not not communication as such. The fact that whole council is not in one building complicates matters since there is a heavy reliance on emails communication.

4.7. Waterberg District Municipality

Municipality profile (municipality type/demographics/)

The Waterberg District Municipality is located in the south western part of Limpopo Province and consists of six local municipalities which include the areas of Bela-Bela, Lehalale, Mogalakwena, Mookgophong, Modimole and Thabazimbi. The seat of Waterberg District Municipality is in Modimolle. The area is 44913.39 km² in size and has a population of 679 336 people (Stats SA, 2011).

Official Views on AET

AET is perceived by Waterberg District Municipality staff as a measure to provide and impart skills of numeracy and literacy on municipal officials and councilors. In short this is to "get them to know how to read and how to write" (Waterberg Interview, March 2017). The example was provided of staff who are employed as general workers and who are unable to do basic tasks such as writing their names or signing consent on. AET is also a measure to improve the skills of staff members who did not complete their schooling career and can assist them in their pursuit to obtain a grade 12 or matric qualification. AET therefore assist them to learn, finish or improve their basic education.

How they identify training needs

The Waterberg District Municipality conducts an annual skills audit to map possible gaps in skills required by staff. The process entails a formal request being sent to all supervisors and managers to provide input on what they believe the skills gaps are among staff which they supervise. Individual staff members are approached for information in instances where supervisors and managers are not forthcoming with information on staff needs. Report back to the skills development office is often in the form of a "wish list" of courses that staff would like to attend. A limited skills budget is a significant impediment in trying to meet these needs.

Skills that are preferred by adult learners

Under AET, literacy and numeracy are the skills most in demand by adult learners since these skills assist them as a stepping stone to all other skills development avenues. However, external courses are also in high demand and are mostly offered in large metro areas such as Johannesburg. Not all staff has the required numeracy and reading skills to be able to attend these courses successfully. A certain level of competence and education are required before they can attend advanced courses in particular. Not having mastered basic literacy skills may therefore be a barrier to further development of some staff members.

Staff is also required to submit a written portfolio of evidence (POE) when attending courses. This becomes problematic should Municipal Councilors for example not have the required literacy and numeracy skills to attend courses by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA). Councilors with an AET level 1 qualification are not accepted at SALGA courses which typically require a level 4 qualification. Councilors who cannot read or write may require assistance when they attend a course. This is neither practical nor affordable.

AET training methods

The curriculum development of AET programmes are dealt with by external service providers when appointed by the district municipality. It was not possible for the municipality representatives to comment on the performance of the AET programme since there was no current programme in place. However, when such programmes do take place, the municipality will monitor the attendance and progress of learners. Monitoring is also done externally by the Local Government SETA (LGSETA). Monitoring activities are noted in skill reports and potential problems such as transport and non-attendance are then taken up by the skills development officer for resolving.

The municipality's successes and failures AET provision

The municipality has attempted to support such training but the learners have not been committed to the training. The reasons may be that staff is sent to training in the afternoons and evenings. Learners may attend training more diligently which is for shorter periods of time and when catering is provided. However, potential learners need to be convinced of their own training needs which should be formally supported.

Current AET training is an "every day thing" and like a "child going to school" (Waterberg respondent, April 2017). This routine is difficult for employed adult learners to maintain outside of working hours. The failure of learners to complete AET programmes are therefore not due to the municipality that did not provide support but rather related to learners who experienced difficulties in attending training programmes after hours. It has also been difficult to convince Waterberg staff to attend, particularly those who have been identified as possible recipients at the abattoir owned by the municipality. Staff at the abattoir work long hours and are physically tired after work. The work load at the facility has also made it difficult for supervisors to give learners time off for their studies during working hours. For

example, arrangements for a health and hygiene course for abattoir staff members over a three day period has not materialised due to a lack of replacement staff to continue with work at the abattoir.

Roleplayers/ Stakeholders of AET in the municipality

Internal role players of AET at the municipality include supervisors and managers as well as the skills development facilitator. The Chief Financial Officer also attends meetings of the skills development office for budgetary purposes. Externally, skills needs are submitted to LGSETA, Salga and Cogta. These three roleplayers occasionally offer courses to municipal workers. The district municipality compares courses offered by external partners with in-house offerings to ensure that efforts and courses are not duplicated.

The Waterberg skills facilitation officer plays an important role in the process of enrolling municipal staff for AET classes. It was reported that this is a particularly challenging task. Older members of staff are mostly difficult to enroll due to their general lack of interest. The municipal training committee comprising members of management, councilors, representatives from each municipal department, and someone who deals with employment equity are important stakeholders in kick starting the whole AET process. The municipal manager and CFO also play a vital role in the activities of the committee on securing resources and implementing training plans. The committee meets on a bi-monthly basis or when there are urgent matters to discuss.

Staff members identified as possible recipients of AET is sent to training by external partners. The Department of Education appoints a service provider who offers free AET training afterhours and in the evenings. Some of the staff members who enrolled in the past have completed the training but others were less successful and dropped out.

Achievements of targets

Skills development and training targets are set annually and usually in relation to what is offered by LGSETA. Achieving these targets has been problematic in the past due to the way funds are disbursed by LGSETA. The times to undertake such an initiative often leads to some staff losing interest or even retire from work before starting with their classes. In addition, the heavy reliance on external parties for funding makes these targets very difficult to achieve.

Since there is no current AET Programme in place at Waterberg, it was considered difficult to provide an opinion on the performance of such a programme. However, when such a programme takes place, the municipality will usually monitor the attendance of learners and to what extent they are making progress with their training. Monitoring of the programme is also done externally by LGSETA but is subjected to funding constraints. AET activities are monitored and noted in reports. The detection of problems such as transportation and non-attendance are taken up in person by the skills facilitation officer to be resolved.

Challenges (institutional)

AET supports the skills development of the two lowest levels of staff employed by the municipality. People in these levels are mostly employed as general workers. Councilors with inadequate training and education can also benefit from the programme. However, most municipal officials have Grade 12 certificates so their scope of training needs go beyond what AET can offer. The municipality doesn't have a budget to train community members at all and need to apply to LGSETA for a discretionary grant. The district municipality is granted a limited amount equal to 1% of the skills levy to use for the funding of training. This amount is also used to cater for the training needs of 181 councilors across

the district municipality. A Limited budget often impacts negatively on training opportunities for new councilors.

Training initiatives need to be coordinated between the six smaller municipalities that are part of the Waterberg district. In practice, the support of all six municipalities is required to successfully implement training initiatives since the district municipality lacks the capacity to do it on its own. The planning of training initiatives for the six municipalities often takes much time and funding is not guaranteed. Expectations are created among interested community members and councilors but initiatives then do not happen because of the timorously funding problem.

It is the perception of Waterberg officials that the payment of service providers by LGSET often takes "forever" which impacts negatively on the sustainability of classes. Facilitators may withhold their services which cause learners to be "stuck since they are without a facilitator" and cannot continue. This may contribute to higher than normal dropout rates.

The local Union has also not supported the participation of it members in AET initiatives. The Union was of the opinion that AET initiatives needed to offer the same benefits to attendees as for example a course in Johannesburg where transport, accommodation and food are provided for.

Other obstacles would be that some departments will not have a budget for training. Workload was also provided as a reason why employees would not receive time off for attending training which could be viewed as a 'benefit'. This was perceived as unfair since all staff are entitled to training.

Challenges (learners)

Transport, getting time off from work and the level of difficulty of subjects such as math were highlighted as some of the major stumbling blocks for learners to successfully complete their AET courses. Learners also have an attitude of "remember I don't want to fail as an adult learner so why would I want to go there" and "you cannot give us this, we are here to work". Abattoir workers would for example say that they do not need papers to slaughter a cow when trying to convince them to attend AET. Staff doing more specialized jobs will also sometimes be called out of a class because they are the only ones that know how to do a particular job and there is no replacement person for that function

The skills facilitation office at the municipality was of the opinion that an alternative approach such as allowing for group work and the building of a Portfolio of Evidence (POE) instead of conducting tests and exams may encourage continued attendance among learner. AET homework also doesn't encourage the attendance of adults learners due to their work and domestic responsibilities. Skills development programmes and learnerships which complement work at the municipalities may be easier to do and more acceptable than the current AET offering in developing skills of staff members.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study show that there are several challenges which are faced in the provision of AET in municipalities. Some of the challenges pertain to learners' attitudes and personal circumstances, while others are structural and institutional or peculiar to a specific municipality. This discussion will in certain cases compare the findings with those of other empirical studies on challenges of AET in municipalities in South Africa.

Absenteeism and dropping-out

Learners miss classes mostly because of personal social challenges that range from behavioural traits such as heavy drinking to personal matters such as health and marital problems. Some learners opt out of programmes and just as with absenteeism do not give reasons. Dropping-out is also caused by learners feeling discouragement during the course and failing to cope with workload. Learners drop out if they find it too difficult they give up and if the course content is "too easy" i.e. when the learners have been recommended to start from Level 1 and have to be subjected to numeracy tests which they find too easy.

These findings are in line with other qualitative studies which have revealed that social and psychological aspects in learners' histories posed barriers to their learning. Take for instance learners who had grown up in poor communities that experienced violence from gangsterism; early pregnancy; loss of family; unsupportive managers; and disability (Harris 2008: 55). In terms of psychological barriers, some municipal workers viewed informal learning on the job as more important than enrolling formally at an AET class, as well as "personal problems; anxiety and fear due to an inability to cope with the workload of formal assessments; a dislike of writing; and a mistrust of those in authority" (Ibid: 55).

Teacher/facilitator absenteeism & turnover

Situations arise where teachers or facilitators of AET fail to show up to class or resign from their jobs and leave learners stranded. In cases like this where they are absent from class no replacement is sent resulting in cancellation of the class. Upon resignation teachers/ facilitators are not replaced on time and classes can be postponed till a replacement is found.

Unsupportive Supervisors

It was mentioned in the interviews with municipalities that supervisors do not give employees space and time to join the AET. In most cases AET classes are conducted during

the day usually from midday and in some cases this interrupts with work especially where emergencies arise. This finding is in line with findings from a study by Harris (2008: 18) on factors which motivated the City of Cape Town's (CCT) employees in the electricity department to enrol for ABET/AET programmes. Historically there had been structural problems emanating from the attitudes and practices of line managers in the Department which hindered any form of training or ABET enrolments by their subordinates. The situation was only resolved with the implementation of CCT's Education, Training and Development Policy Framework (2001) and later in March 2003 when the City implemented their 'Employment Equity Plan' (EEP) policy aimed at rectifying the aforementioned problems encountered by workers/learners.

In some cases supervisors may be aware of the fact that some learners dodge work by pretending to be attending AET classes when in fact they will be somewhere else. This was also the case for a study on AET in the City of Johannesburg where it was found that sometimes learners used class as an escape from daily responsibilities at the workplace (Andrews 2007: 87).

Transport

Due to varying circumstances in municipalities, AET classes may be conducted at locations which require learners to travel. Some learners miss classes or dropout because of transport costs associated with attending classes at the training centres if their municipality does not bear such costs. This situation was cited in the case study of Waterberg District Municipality. Interestingly the City of Cape Town in this study also highlighted transport problems considering that earlier studies found transport problems to be a barrier to class attendance for learners (Harris 2008: 56). However, in a different case of City Power the learners were found to take learning seriously if they were enrolled at AET centres off the company premises, so commuting was a motivating factor (Andrews 2007).

Lack of incentives

Learners would rather attend learnerships which offer stipends or even food during class. Particularly for unemployed AET learners the issue of stipends is critical because they are aware of other learnerships which offer such allowances to learners. In the end they withdraw from AET classes because of lack of financial incentives. Municipalities are not in a position to provide such incentives because they are not provided for in the funding that they receive from LGSETA.

Work vs. Class (conflicting priorities)

Among employees who qualify for overtime allowances they would rather ensure that they make more money through standby allowances and stay in their job at the same levels than attend AET classes. One of the challenges that Skills Development Facilitators face in recruiting AET learners is to convince them that the benefits of attending classes are long term and not immediate. As such considering that attending AET is delayed gratification, sometimes learners prefer opportunities which reward them immediately. At the core of attendance among unemployed learners of AET is that they have no incomes but regard it crucial to attend classes. As a result they consistently have to juggle between working informally and attending classes of which the latter usually suffers.

LGSETA/ Municipality relationship

Municipal officials mentioned that LGSETA timeframes are sometimes too tight thus affecting both municipality and service providers to have all the logistics done timeously, including the necessary documentation. As a result municipalities have forfeited some of the LGSETA grants for AET.

In some cases funding is deemed inadequate. The allocation of funding from LGSETA is in some instances inadequate for AET programmes to be conducted amongst employees in the municipality. In most instances, the municipality would provide additional funding for the provision of the training.

Facilities

Conditions of facilities may regard the learning environment unbearable. One such scenario is cited in Mangaung where a venue was too cold for learners to the learners' discomfort. In some cases venues can also change and learners are not informed on time.

In the literature it was stated that a lack of adequate resources was also cited as a barrier to participation. In the case of City Power it was training materials, whilst Cape Town had shortages of facilitators for certain skills. A report compiled by the ABET programme at City Power did reveal that learning materials take time to arrive. Learners do not find relevant books in the library for their projects and that the books in the library are not at the learners' level and are more technical (Andrews 2007: 91). In the Cape Town study it was discovered that the electricity training centre had a shortage of internal facilitators to start or continue with the Hand Skills Level 1 training programme which meant the training centre had to hire external service providers for some of their courses. This was financially straining as funding was very low. Learners had to wait until the problem of employing facilitators was dealt with. More than half of the learners lost interest in enrolling or continuing with the training during that period (Harris 2008: 57).

Mixing of Intergenerational and different language learners

Sometimes learners are mixed because there are too few to be separated into classes according to their levels but this has its challenges. AET classes sometimes combine learners

from Levels 1 to 4 and learners were unhappy with this arrangement as they felt uncomfortable to ask questions in a class consisting also of higher level learners. Younger adults would unknowingly shame the older ones for asking what they thought to be silly questions.

Mother tongue learners struggle in classes consisting of learners of all levels since they need additional assistance from teachers which is time consuming. In the literature some studies have shown that learners cited language as a barrier since English is the medium of instruction at Johannesburg City Power learning centres. English is used as medium of instruction because learners are from different racial groups, something which disadvantages those who cannot speak and understand English well (Andrews 2007: 60).

6. CONCLUSION

Learners interviewed indicated that there is need for the municipalities to provide transport to learning centres so that learners are not incapacitated by transport problems. It was suggested that there is need for the relevant Department of Higher Educatuion and Training to rethink levels of AET to ensure that in the end the learners can progress to Grade 12. Skills Development Facilitators recommended that they need a strategy to attract people such as incentives provided in learnerships where there is a stipend and this is what encourages people to enrol because there is a financial incentive. Finaly, the interplay of governmental relations among LGSETA, municipality and the Department of Basic Education need to be enhanced to agree on quality assurance measures for AET learners. Both institutional parties must have quality assurance control of this AET programme.

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