



Skills Development for Economic Growth

# IMPACT EVALUATION STUDY ON THE YOUTH FOCUS PROJECT



**FINAL REPORT**

**MARCH 2023**



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## Executive Summary

Urban-Econ Development Economists (Urban-Econ) in collaboration with Urban-Econ: NIKELA (Nikela) were appointed by the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&RSETA) to conduct an impact study on the Youth Focus Project (2018/20).

This study aims to consider the Youth Focus Project (2018/2020) implemented by W&RSETA in terms of the projects' impact on beneficiaries, efficiency, and effectiveness, as well as consider the key strengths and weaknesses of the project and provide recommendations for the future. Moreover, this study investigates the alignment of the project with strategic goals and objectives and considers the project's success herein. It is important to note that this study engages with the project retrospectively, which involves considering the programme as per its implementation in 2018, and thus, concerning the relevant policies, W&RSETA Strategic Objectives, goals and NSDS III targets of 2018.

This study was conducted with a mixed-methods approach, using both qualitative – in the form of interviews and focus groups – and quantitative – in the form of surveys – research methods. The data gathered from these research approaches has been triangulated to curate an analysis of the project, which outlines the study's investigative goals.

The Youth Focus Project (W&RSETA, 2019), was implemented in the Western Cape, with the initial duration of the project being 14 May 2018 to 31 March 2020 (The project was, however, extended to 30 December 2020) (W&RSETA, 2019). The Youth Focus Project was executed as an approach to the high failure rate in grades 9 and 10, which meant that many learners repeated multiple times or dropped out before a grade 9 qualification was achieved. Since grade 9 is a requirement for entrance into TVET Colleges, this high failure rate was a concern as it had the potential to prevent beneficiaries from gaining further qualifications, entering the job market, and actively participating in the economy and society (W&RSETA, 2019).

The project's goals focussed on the importance of vulnerable youth gaining an Adult Education and Training (AET) qualification, occupational qualifications and work experience, which would lead beneficiaries into employment opportunities in the future (W&RSETA, 2020). The General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Education and Training NQF Level 1 Qualification and the Wholesale and Retail NQF Level 2 Qualification facilitated by five TVET Colleges in the Western Cape, which were participating in the initiative (W&RSETA, 2019). Additional stakeholders in this project included W&RSETA, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) and the companies which provided the workplace component of the project (Schäfer, 2016), as well as the beneficiaries themselves.

## **Alignment of the Youth Focus Project with Strategic Goals and Objectives.**

Considering the success of the project, an analysis was done on the alignment of the Youth Focus Project with the goals and objectives of the NSDS III and W&RSETA. The project aligned with three NSDS III goals and strategic objectives:

- Increased access to occupational programmes.
- Growth of the public TVET system.
- Addressing numeracy and literacy levels.

Additionally, the Youth Focus Project aligned with five W&RSETA goals and strategic objectives, namely:

- Creating a culture of lifelong learning.
- Addressing historical imbalances in the wholesale and retail sector.
- Facilitating funding and accessibility to industry needs.
- Aligning with national development strategies to foster skills development in the wholesale and retail sectors.
- Achieve the AET L1, 18.2 targets.

## **Impact of the Youth Focus Project.**

The impact of the Youth Focus Project on the livelihoods of beneficiaries can be analysed regarding the qualifications achieved. Also, the employment and income of the beneficiaries and households before and after the project. The project enabled 402 beneficiaries to obtain an occupational qualification. Additionally, the number of employed beneficiaries increased from 9% - 29%. The project has provided increased income for several beneficiaries as 53% now earn between R3 201 – R6 400, and 13% earn between R6 401 – R12 800 monthly, before deductions. However, a negative impact of the Youth Focus Project was the lack of certification after the learnership.

With the skills training provided by the Youth Focus Project to the beneficiaries, many (90%) beneficiaries learnt more about the wholesale and retail sector through the learnership. Additionally, most of the beneficiaries have reported learning skills which are relevant and industry-specific and which aid them in their current work and endeavours. Overall, 91% of beneficiaries are satisfied with the learnership and the skills they learnt.

The beneficiaries also noted that the lack of certificates provided by W&RSETA was a challenge in their experience, as it made it difficult to seek and secure employment.

## **Effectiveness of the Youth Focus Project.**

The effectiveness of the Youth Focus Project has been outlined based on the skills provided by the project and the project's success in meeting the goals and objectives laid out initially. Overall, it can be noted that most of the beneficiaries feel that the project has provided an opportunity for upskilling and aided in seeking and securing

employment. In this capacity, 77% beneficiaries that the learnership equipped them to work in the wholesale and retail sector, and 82% felt it provided them with the necessary skills to seek employment.

Another primary goal of the project was improving the beneficiaries' self-esteem and confidence. This goal was achieved, as many beneficiaries reported learning several skills which positively impacted their self-esteem.

Lastly, the project's goal was to increase strategic relationships among stakeholders. The relationships between the stakeholders varied throughout the project. The relationship between the training providers (TVET Colleges) and W&RSETA was positive. However, the relationship between the training providers and the industry (namely host employers) was challenging throughout the project.

### **Efficiency of the Youth Focus Project.**

The efficiency of the Youth Focus Project has been examined based on the resources spent on the project against the outputs and benefits derived from these.

The total unit cost per learner in the project is R23 401 per learner. The unit cost per learner who completed the project was R34 228 (1: 0.68). Furthermore, the cost per learner employed as a result of the programme was R110 414 per learner (1: 0.21). This is calculated to the number of currently employed learners. Lastly, the unit cost per learner currently employed in the wholesale and retail sector was R137 943 (1: 0.17).

### **Strengths and weaknesses of the Youth Focus Project.**

The Youth Focus Project experienced many strengths and weaknesses throughout its implementation, facilitation and closure phases. These are important to note to fully understand the project and provide practical recommendations for the future.

#### ***The strengths and weaknesses of the Youth Focus Project***

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Positive relationships between the training providers and W&RSETA.	Lack of adequate administration staff at W&RSETA impacted time-periods and caused delays for both the W&RSETA and the training providers.
Adequate quality assurance provided by W&RSETA.	The administrative tasks were not adequately outlined by W&RSETA, which resulted in confusion and errors.
Open communication and monthly meetings initiated by W&RSETA.	Challenging relationships between training providers and host employers.
Adequate resources provided by W&RSETA for the training providers.	Lack of student support provided by Training providers at the TVET Colleges.

Strengths	Weaknesses
The positive relationship between the beneficiaries and the mentors/facilitators helped beneficiaries stay dedicated.	Beneficiaries experienced challenges with transport and the resources available to beneficiaries to work.
Beneficiaries received regular stipends (71% noted receiving regular and adequate stipends).	The abrupt shut-down of the project due to COVID-19 regulations was a challenge, a lack of communication amplified this by W&RSETA in this regard.
Mentorship in the host employer stores for beneficiaries helped make the experience beneficial and enjoyable.	Beneficiaries did not receive certificates.

## Recommendations

- W&RSETA is urged to keep **accurate, up-to-date and ongoing records** of beneficiaries.
- W&RSETA should **conduct tracer/impact studies closer to project completion**.
- W&RSETA should take more time to **train and brief the training providers** to ensure that all stakeholders know precisely what is required by W&RSETA.
- W&RSETA should ensure that the training providers are **entirely aware** of the kind of project the Youth Focus Project is and the challenges and requirements of a project of this nature. To ensure the college is well-equipped.
- W&RSETA is urged to **aid training providers in securing host employers** for beneficiaries.
- W&RSETA is urged to ensure that the training providers are provided with the **necessary funding for the project on time**, allowing the training providers to begin the training effectively.
- W&RSETA should provide **more administration staff at W&RSETA** on projects such as these.
- W&RSETA is to consider providing **additional levels in the Youth Focus Project**.
- W&RSETA is urged ensuring **certificates are issued** to beneficiaries promptly on completion of the project.
- W&RSETA should be sure to keep an **open line of communication** between themselves and the beneficiaries throughout the project to communicate any challenges or changes.
- W&RSETA is to consider **re-instating the Youth Focus Project**, considering its positive receptions and the beneficial impact it has brought.

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>AET</b>	Adult Education and Training
<b>APP</b>	Annual Performance Plan
<b>DHET</b>	Department of Higher Education and Training
<b>FET</b>	Further Education and Training
<b>GETC</b>	General Education and Training Certificate
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organisation
<b>NSDS III</b>	National Skills Development Strategy
<b>NSA</b>	National Skills Authority
<b>NSF</b>	National Skills Fund
<b>NDP</b>	National Development Plan
<b>NQF</b>	National Qualifications Framework
<b>SAQA</b>	South African Qualifications Authority
<b>SETA</b>	Sector Education and Training Authority
<b>SMME</b>	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
<b>SSP</b>	Sector Skills Plan
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>UMALUSI</b>	Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training
<b>WCED</b>	Western Cape Education Department
<b>W&amp;RSETA</b>	Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority
<b>YFP</b>	Youth Focus Project

## **Glossary of Terms**

### **Beneficiary**

An individual who took part in a Learning Programme.

### **Host Employer/Organisation**

The company or organisation where the beneficiary was permitted to conduct the workplace learning component of the Learning Programme. The beneficiary would have been employed through a contract at this company or organisation.

### **Credits**

A numerical representation of the hours required for achieving the learning outcomes necessary towards a qualification or a part qualification. One (1) credit represents ten (10) hours of learning.

### **Learning Programme**

A set of coordinated learning experiences which lead to a qualification or part-qualification.

### **Lifelong Learning**

Learning takes place in all contexts, both formal and informal and over one's lifetime. Lifelong learning involves gaining knowledge in all areas, such as learning behaviours, attitudes and abilities for personal growth and employability.

### **Recognition of Prior Learning**

The process by which an individual's prior learning and experience are recognised, considered and assessed to access further or alternative learning pathways or recognition and certification (SAQA, 2020).

### **Skills Programme**

An occupationally-based learning programme accredited by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) may contribute credits towards a qualification recognised by the National Qualifications Framework.

### **Workplace-based Learning**

Exposure to workplace skills through interaction and knowledge-application in a workplace environment.

## Section 1: Introduction

### 1.2. Background of the Study

W&RSETA is responsible, as per the National Skills Development Strategy (which was still active in 2018, at the time this project was implemented), conducting relevant research on their projects and programmes and reporting their findings (DHET, 2011). This relates specifically to the NSDS III Strategic Objective 4: an effective monitoring and evaluation framework which ensures accurate reporting (DHET, 2011).

The study at hand provides an opportunity for the W&RSETA to consider the impact that the Youth Focus Project (2018/20) has had on beneficiaries. Also, the effectiveness and efficiency of the project in creating a skilled and capable workforce in the Wholesale and Retail sector, and the strengths and weaknesses of the programme. Along with these investigations, this study also assessed the extent to which the projects aligned with the relevant policies, NSDS III goals and the W&RSETAs strategic objectives and provided recommendations for future projects to be rolled out based on the feedback received by various stakeholders.

### 1.3. Scope and Objectives of the Study and evaluation objectives

This impact evaluation study seeks to:

- Evaluate the impact of the Youth Focus Project (2018/20).
- Evaluate the projects' efficiency in reaching their goals, strategic mandates, and targets.
- Determine the alignment of the project to the relevant strategic mandates and set objectives laid out.
- Evaluate the projects' effectiveness in terms of skills development and set objectives.
- Identify challenges experienced in the project or areas of deficiency and recommend methods for improvement or potential policy alteration.
- Identify key strengths within the project and provide recommendations for enhancement or replication in other areas or projects.

To investigate the aims of the W&RSETA effectively and efficiently as they pertain to this study, six evaluation objectives have been formulated:

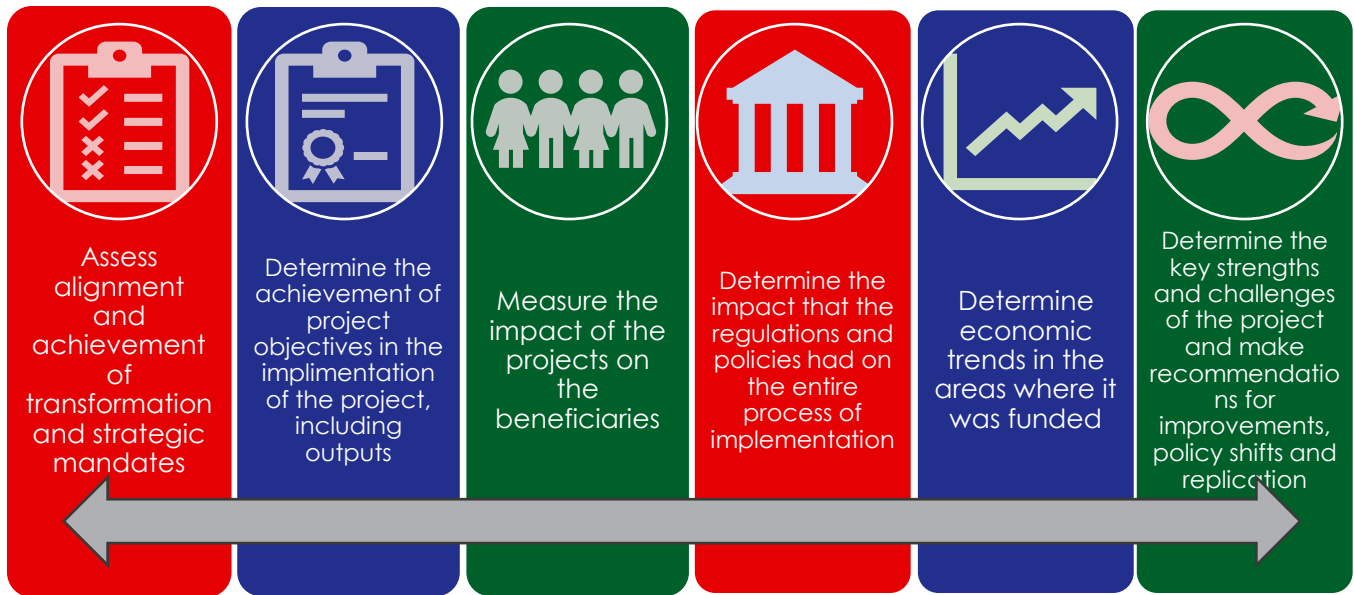


Figure 1: Evaluation objectives for the study.

## 1.4. Study Methods and Approach

This section unpacks the methods through which this study examined the Youth Focus Project:

### 1.4.1. Research Design

The research design is the central strategy for collecting, analysing and interpreting data for the study.

The data herein has been collected through a mixed methods design using both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. These include stakeholder interviews, focus groups and online and telephonic surveys, and desktop research.

A mixed-method approach allows various types of data sources to understand and analyse a question effectively. In this study, the use of each method has been vital to analysing the entire project. Online surveys have been used to understand the project's impact on multiple beneficiaries. In-depth interviews have also been used in order to understand the effectiveness and efficiency of the project, the project's impact on beneficiaries and the goals and targets of W&RSETA and the NSDP III. Lastly, the use of focus group discussions has been vital to understanding the different views of the project's impacts, effectiveness and efficiency. This highlights how this study has embraced both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to meet the evaluation objectives set out for the Youth Focus Project.

This study also embraces two types of triangulations for the evaluation of the project, method triangulation and data triangulation of, in this case, both primary and secondary data. Method triangulation involves using different methodologies for data analysis and collection. Data triangulation is the collecting of data such as both qualitative and quantitative data and analysing both, to enhance the validity and credibility of the findings

### 1.4.2. Literature Review

A literature review was undertaken as part of the desktop research component of this study, following the study objectives. This was done to provide a context through which the remaining steps of the study can be understood. The sources included herein are, among others;

- **Project reports and associated project documents**

Project documents such as the *project charter*, *project progress reports* and *closure reports* were reviewed to gain a sound understanding of the project's goals, implementation and conclusion. It also provided an opportunity to understand the challenges and strengths of the project insofar as they were recorded herein.

- **Policies and strategies**

A review of the NSDP III and W&RSETA's SSP was undertaken to understand the strategic objectives and goals of W&RSETA and provide a base of knowledge from which to analyse the alignment and responsiveness of the project to strategic mandates, transformation and set objectives.

A literature review report was produced as an interim deliverable for this study. Insights and inputs from this report are incorporated to address the objectives stated earlier.

#### 1.4.2.1. Primary Data

The primary data, which was generated and analysed within this study, was obtained in the following ways:

- **In-depth participant interviews with various stakeholders.** The project stakeholders were engaged with to understand the different role players (training providers, beneficiaries, facilitators and mentors, and W&RSETA) perspectives and feedback on the project overall.
- In-depth focus group discussions were also conducted with various stakeholder groups (beneficiaries and training providers) to gain insight and understanding of the project from the points of view of various role players.
  - These engagements considered the project's efficiency, in which budget, outputs, outcomes, and activities and value for money were highlighted. They also discussed the effectiveness of the project, concerning the skills training regarding its benefit, usefulness, and the strengths and weaknesses of the project. Finally, the impact of the project was analysed by discussing the growth of the beneficiaries.
- **Telephonic and online surveys.** These were conducted with beneficiaries to gain a perspective on the impact of the project herein, the status of the beneficiaries both before and after the project and their perceptions of the project.

Below is a breakdown of the different participants according to the key primary data collection methods:

#### 1.4.2.2. Key Data Collection Methods and Participants

##### • Telephonic and Online Surveys



###### **Telephonic and Online Surveys:**

- There was a total of **116** responses received from the survey.
- Of these, three beneficiaries did not consent to completing the survey.

Figure 2: Telephonic and online surveys

A stratified random sampling approach was employed for the telephonic and online surveys. This means the categories are formed based on shared attributes or characteristics such as location, programme type or relevant W&R sub-sector. For this case, the shared characteristics were participation in the Youth Focus Project between 2018 and 2020. A sample of approximately 250 was drawn from the Youth Project Beneficiaries pool (588). However, the sample size ultimately depended on the correctness and availability of the contact information of the beneficiaries and host employers supplied by W&RSETA.

##### • Key stakeholder Interviews



###### **Stakeholder Interviews:**

- A total of 9 interviews were held with key stakeholders of the project.
  - Three key members from W&RSETA.
  - Four project managers from TVET Colleges.
  - Two facilitators and mentors.

Figure 3: Stakeholder interviews

Interviews were used to speak to key informants involved in the Youth Focus Project, as well as internal W&RSETA staff involved in the administration and quality assurance of the project. The sample design for the interviews was purposive sampling, where respondents/subjects were located and chosen based on their ability to provide specific information. Participants were selected and contacted based on the correctness and available and current contact information supplied by W&RSETA.

• **Key Stakeholder Focus Group Discussions**



**Stakeholder Focus Group Discussions:**

- A total of 2 focus group discussions held with key stakeholders of the project.
  - Beneficiaries (2 participants)
  - Training Providers (2 participants)

Figure 4: Stakeholder focus group discussions

Participants were sampled using purposive sampling, where specific participants with knowledge about and experience with these programmes were invited to participate and share their feedback on the project.

### 1.5. Study limitations and mitigations

The terms of reference set out for this study provided the research parameters. This, along with some challenges experienced, culminated in the study's limitations. These limitations and mitigating measures are captured in the table below:

Table 1: Study limitations and mitigations

Limitations	Mitigations
Many of the beneficiaries' contact details as per the database provided by W&RSETA were outdated.	Efforts were made to contact a larger sample of stakeholders in all areas to gain as much detailed and accurate information as possible.
Many of the contact details no longer existed or belonged to the beneficiaries we attempted to contact for the telephonic or online survey.	<p>Efforts were made to reach all stakeholders and ask for updated beneficiary contact details to be provided. This included reaching out to the TVET Colleges involved in the training, Ward Councillors where the beneficiaries stayed, and other W&amp;RSETA staff involved in the programme's administration.</p> <p>Attempts were made to contact the beneficiaries on social media (specifically Facebook) to inform them about the survey and ask them to share their feedback.</p> <p>Attempts were made to contact beneficiaries on WhatsApp to inform them</p>

Limitations	Mitigations
	about the survey and ask them to participate.
The tracing of the study happened three years after the learnership ceased, this resulted in many stakeholders not remembering enough to participate.	Efforts were made to contact a larger sample of stakeholders in all areas to gain information.  Data triangulation was also used to ensure that the data was valid and plentiful.
Many stakeholders could not participate in focus group discussions due to scheduling conflicts.	Attempts were made to reschedule at a suitable time for each stakeholder.  Attempts were made to widen the scope of those we invited to participate in the hopes that more individuals would be available and willing.
Several stakeholders could not participate in interviews due to scheduling conflicts.	Attempts were made to reschedule at a suitable time for each stakeholder.  Attempts were made to widen the scope of those we invited to participate in the hopes that more individuals would be available and willing.

## Section 2: Programme description – Youth Focus Project

### 2.1. Background and Rationale

The Youth Focus Project (W&RSETA, 2019), was implemented in the Western Cape, with the initial duration of the project being 14 May 2018 to 31 March 2020 (The project was, however, extended to 30 December 2020 as the TVET Colleges were unable to compete for the project before the initial closure date (W&RSETA, 2019)). The Youth Focus Project was primarily executed to face the high failure rate in grades 9 and 10, which included many learners repeating multiple times or failing to complete a grade 9 qualification. The high failure and drop-out rates were a concern since grade 9 is a requirement for entrance into TVET Colleges. This can potentially prevent beneficiaries from gaining further qualifications, entering the job market, and actively participating in the economy and society (W&RSETA, 2019).

The WCED began this project to prevent youth from entering and participating in dangerous activities such as crime. This project provided these learners who were not finding their feet in the traditional school system with an alternative, fast-tracked route to skills development training by transferring these beneficiaries to TVET Colleges and AET Centres (W&RSETA, 2019). Beneficiaries were allowed to achieve one of two qualifications, which provided increased access to further education and training opportunities. This could result in employability and social and economic inclusion (W&RSETA, 2019).

### 2.2. Strategy

Youth Focus Project initially aimed to provide necessary **skills to 660 youth with the relevant Wholesale and Retail qualifications** by enabling 418 unemployed youth to both enrol in and obtain an NQF Level 1 qualification and 242 unemployed youth to enrol in and obtain an NQF Level 2 qualification, as contained in the project's Charter Report (W&RSETA, 2019)

During the project, the goals and objectives outlined were altered rather focussing on **300 vulnerable youth to obtain the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training Level 1 Qualification and for successful beneficiaries to enrol in the Wholesale and Retail Operations Level 2 Qualification** (W&RSETA, 2020). The goals of the project continued to focus on the importance of vulnerable youth gaining an Adult Education and Training (AET) qualification, occupational qualifications and work experience which would lead beneficiaries into employment opportunities in the future (W&RSETA, 2020).

The central goal of the Youth Focus Project was **to provide unemployed youth with an opportunity to obtain the necessary skills to achieve employment in the Wholesale and retail sector** (W&RSETA, 2020). To achieve this, the project objectives sought to actively support job creation and career opportunities amongst youth and in a wider context contribute to eradicating **poverty and crime linked to at-risk youth** (W&RSETA, 2019). Additional objectives of this project were to **create and maintain a strategic partnership between the relevant**

**stakeholders** of the project and to contribute towards the **training and upskilling of youth with skills necessary for the Wholesale and Retail industry** (W&RSETA, 2019). The overall strategy of education and skills training for the industry pipeline was kept in mind, in line with the promotion of employment opportunities within the sector (W&RSETA, 2019). Additional goals for this project were to **improve the beneficiary's confidence and self-esteem** and enable them to work hard to achieve a future through student support and skills training.

According to the project data, 402 beneficiaries who took part in the project completed the Youth Focus Project, completing either an NQF Level 1 qualification, an NQF Level 2 qualification, or both.

### **2.3. Structure**

The Youth Focus Project took the form of a learnership. It allowed beneficiaries to partake in either a General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Education and Training NQF Level 1 Qualification or the Wholesale and Retail NQF Level 2 Qualification. During the 2016/2017 period, there was a continuation of learners from the NQF Level 1 Qualification to the NQF Level 2 Qualification. However, this is not indicated as being the standard. This indicates two separate groups of beneficiaries taking part in separate qualifications as a part of the Youth Focus Project.

for The focus here, was centred upon addressing issues with numeracy and literacy, in line with NSDS III goals, and providing an introduction into the wholesale and retail sector (W&RSETA, 2019). According to the W&RSETA project charter (2019), beneficiaries also had the opportunity to complete a bridging programme for 12 months. This component of the project would culminate in a General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Education and Training Level 1 Qualification, with wholesale and retail as an occupational elective. Practical experience in this project component was provided through the exposure of beneficiaries to simulation stores and not physical workplace experience.

Beneficiaries also had the opportunity to enrol in a Wholesale and Retail Operations NQF Level 2 Learnership qualification (W&RSETA, 2019). This included a theoretical component which made up 30% of the learning and was facilitated by the TVET Colleges involved in the initiative. The project also included a practical/experiential component which comprised 70% of the training process. The beneficiary was also placed at a worksite to complete their learning and enhance workplace exposure (W&RSETA, 2020). This section of the learnership would culminate in an NQF Level 2 Wholesale and Retail Operations qualification (W&RSETA, 2020).

The structure of the project is illustrated in the diagram below:

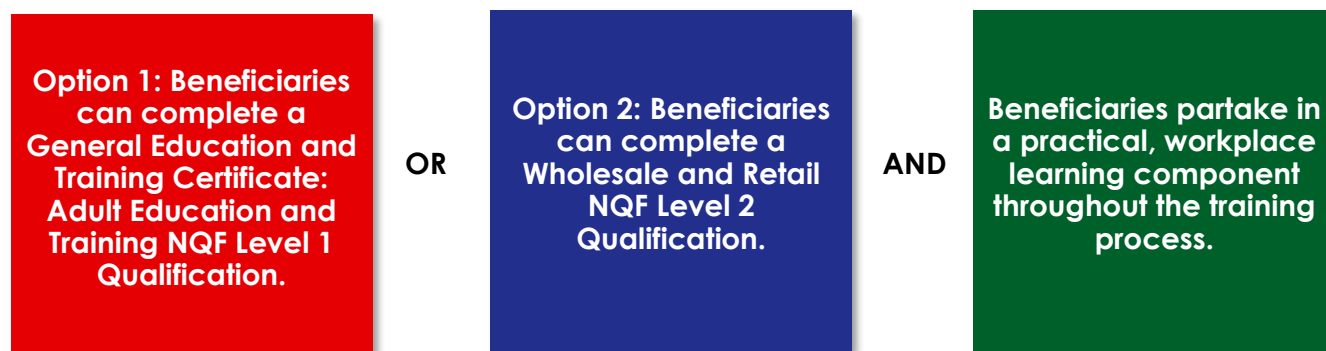


Figure 5: Youth Focus Project structure

## 2.4. Preliminary Impacts

Both the bridging programme and the technical and vocational training component of this project were facilitated by the TVET Colleges and AET Centres participating in the initiative (W&RSETA, 2019). Additional stakeholders in this project included W&RSETA, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) and the companies which provided the workplace component of the project (Schäfer, 2016).

The colleges which partook in this project as training providers were:

- South Cape College
- Boland College
- College of Cape Town
- False Bay College
- Northlink College

The project exhibited several positive impacts for various stakeholders:

Table 3: Positive aspects of the Youth Focus Project

Stakeholders	Positive Impact
<b>W&amp;RSETA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The opportunity to create a pathway for unemployed youth to participate in skills development and potentially gain employment in the Wholesale and Retail sector.</li> <li>✓ The ability to expand on the NSDS III goals for skills development.</li> </ul>
<b>Industry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Raising the industry profile as actively contributing to skills development among unemployed youth.</li> <li>✓ Developing future employees for the Wholesale and Retail sector.</li> </ul>
<b>Companies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Raising the company profile as actively contributing to skills development among unemployed youth through increased exposure and engagement.</li> <li>✓ Potentially gaining new employees by absorbing beneficiaries of the Youth Focus Project.</li> </ul>

Stakeholders	Positive Impact
WCED	✓ Increasing the number of skilled and employable youth.
TVET Colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the colleges and the industry.</li> <li>✓ The opportunity to contribute to skills development for unemployed youth.</li> </ul>
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The opportunity to obtain training and skills development.</li> <li>✓ The opportunity to access a nationally recognised qualification.</li> <li>✓ The opportunity to obtain potential employment and experience social and economic inclusion.</li> <li>✓ The W&amp;RSETA reported that the project had the effect of increasing beneficiaries' self-esteem and hope for the future (W&amp;RSETA, 2015).</li> </ul>

## 2.5. Alignment with objectives

As previously noted, one of the main objectives of the W&RSETA is to develop a skilled and well-trained workforce to transform the Wholesale and retail sector (W&RSETA, 2022). In the 2018 annual report, the W&RSETA laid out several goals to effectively achieve this mission. These include:

- Produce a well-trained and competent workforce in the Wholesale and retail sector.
- Effectively and efficiently uphold and seek to achieve the goals set out in the Strategic Plan.
- Participate in mutually beneficial partnerships with stakeholders.
- Produce capable and engaging training providers who can effectively accommodate the sector's needs.

The NSDS III directs W&RSETA in terms of the main framework for setting goals and strategic objectives to follow and meet. The NSDS III is concerned with skills development and career development, making a clear connection between skills training and sector needs and creating employment opportunities and opportunities for growth within employment (DHET, 2011).

The NSDS III has some goals which are relevant in ensuring the quality, longevity and significance of skills training provided in all the sectors; these include (DHET, 2011):

- Establishing a reliable and relevant mechanism for skills planning.
- Expanding access to occupational programmes for beneficiaries.
- Expanding the public FET college system, which is well-informed of the sector, local, regional, and national skills needs and requirements.
- To Training opportunities must be encouraged to address the low level of numeracy and literacy skills in youth and adults
- Encouraging improved workplace-based skills development.
- Growing career and vocational guidance.

The Youth Focus Project is aligned with several strategic goals and objectives. The three primary

NSDS III Target	NSDS III Outcome	Output
4.2: Increasing opportunities to access occupational programmes.	4.2.1: Middle-level skills requirements are recognised and addressed in all sectors.	4.2.1.1: SETAs recognise middle-level skills requirements and address them strategically through education and training facilities and with workplaces for practical exposure.
4.3: Expanding the public TVET system for needs requirements.	4.3.2: Industry needs are met through active partnerships between SETAs, DHET, employers and education and training institutions.	4.3.2.1: Relevant TVET colleges and courses are recognised, and partnerships are established to implement courses and experiences for learners.
4.4: Addressing low levels of literacy and numeracy for furthering training opportunities.	4.4.1: A national strategy is put in place to provide young people with an opportunity to engage in training to improve their skills and employability.	4.4.1.1.: A strategy led by the DHET is developed and supported by all stakeholders. 4.4.1.3: The DHET and stakeholders facilitate programmes that provide youth training and experience.

NSDS III targets with which this project aligns are:

*Figure 10: Youth Focus Project strategic objectives*

The Youth Focus Project also falls in line with several goals laid out by the W&RSETA for their work:

**Goal 1:** Creating a culture of lifelong learning and workplace learning.

**Goal 2:** Addressing historical imbalances in the wholesale and retail sectors.

**Goal 3:** Facilitating funding for training to industry pipeline.

**Goal 4:** Aligning with national development strategies to facilitate skills development.

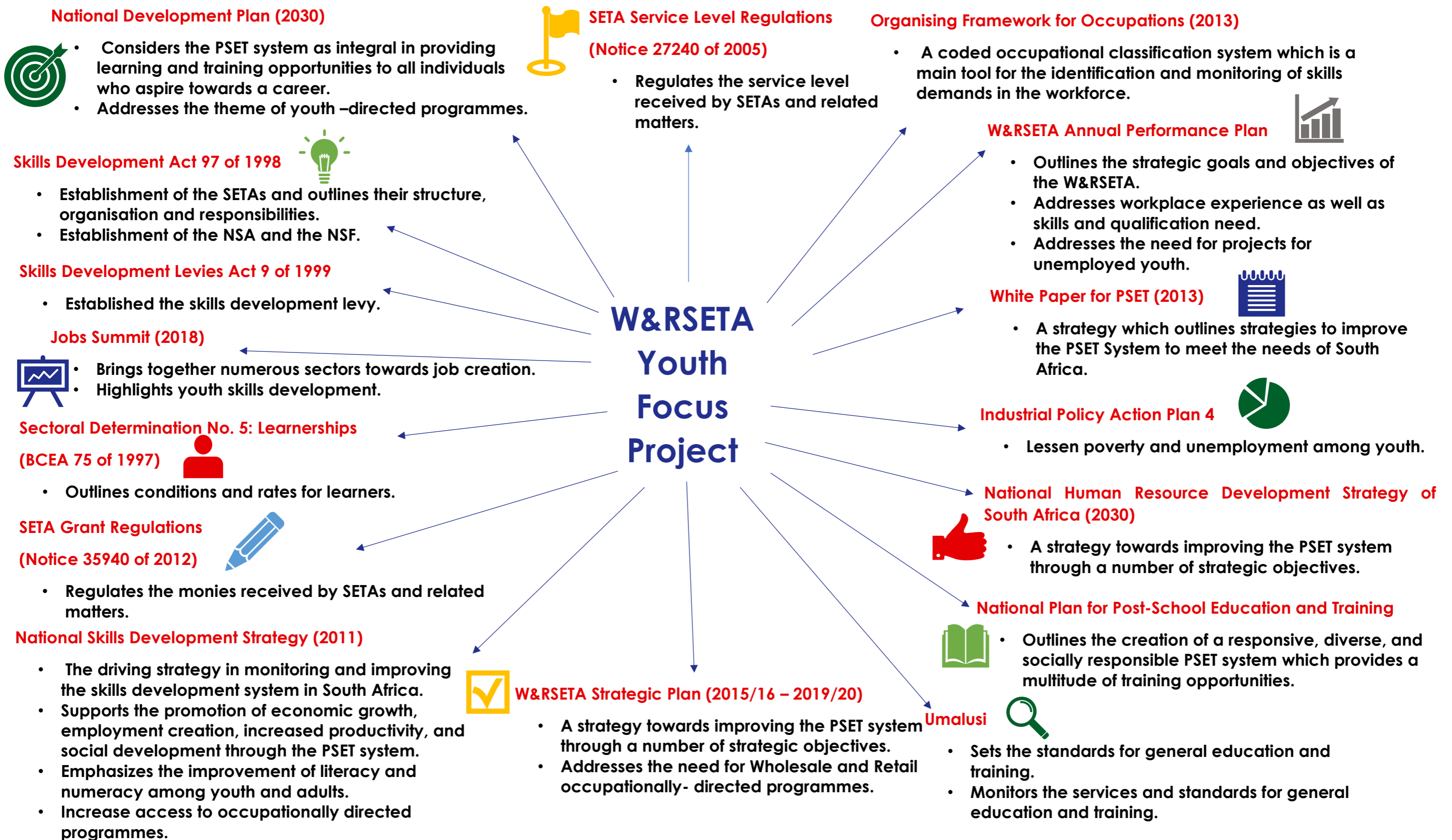


Figure 6: Policy Framework for the Youth Focus Project

## **2.6. Theory of change**

The Theory of Change is outlined in this section of the report. The Theory of Change can be understood as a guideline for understanding the journey to achieving the project's goal. This is achieved by outlining the steps between the initial problem statement and the goal.

A Theory of Change is a comprehensive explanation of how change happens within the context of a project. It fills in the missing steps between the beginning and end of a project. It considers the different aspects of the project in more in-depth detail, for example, the projects' activities and assumptions necessary for final change to occur. The theory of change does this by outlining the project's ultimate goal and working its way backwards understanding outcomes and activities of the project. It understands how these relate causally for change to occur.

The following diagram outlines the Theory of Change in the Youth Focus Project. It considers the steps between the problem statement and the goal of the project, respectively and considers the elements needed for change to occur

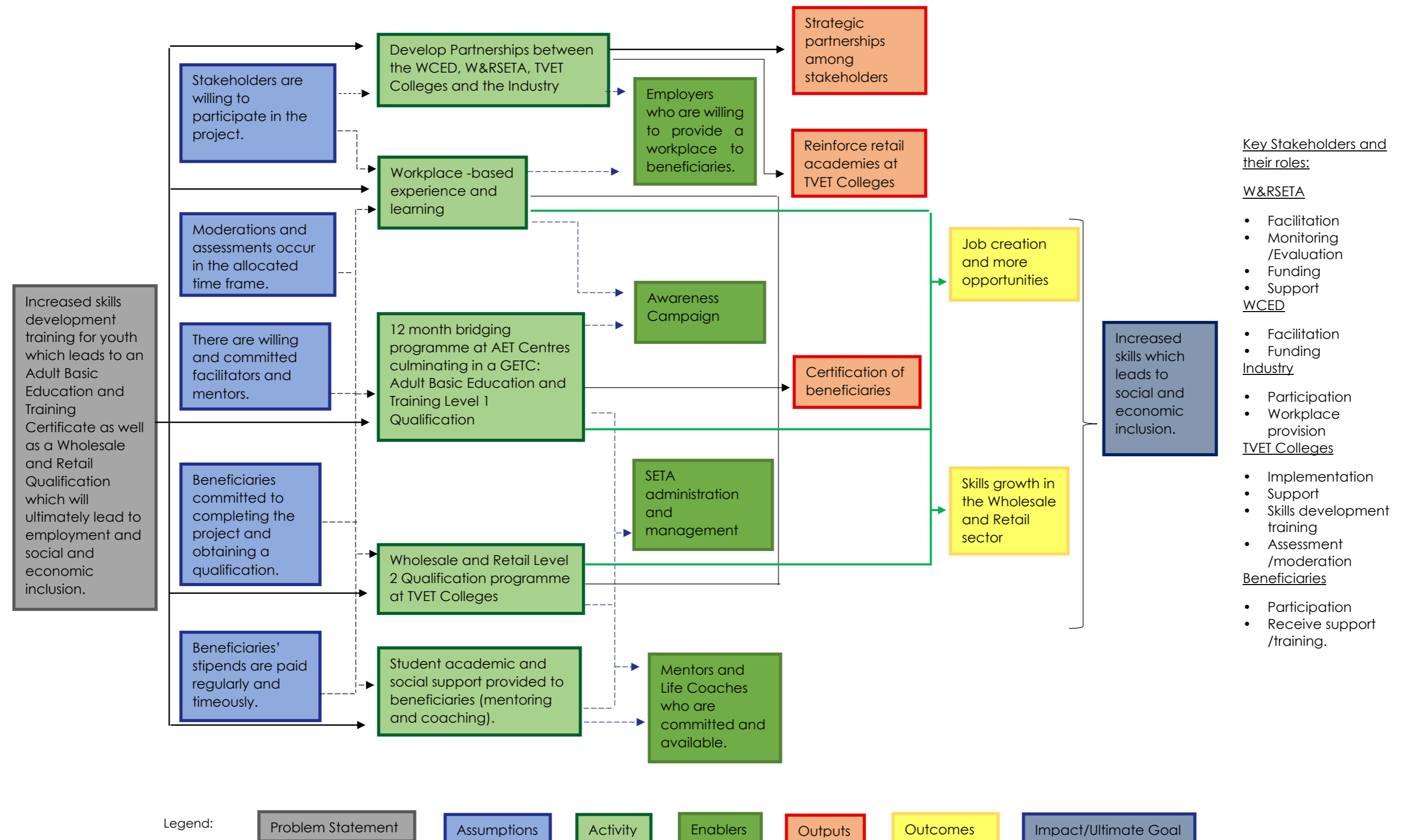


Figure 7: Theory of Change for the Youth Focus Project

## 2.7. Evaluation Framework

The evaluation framework of this study is paramount to providing the guidance through which the study is enacted and achieved. This includes the Theory of Change, which analyses the project; the Policy framework, with which the alignment of the project with strategic objectives and mandates is investigated, and the different key stakeholders within the project. The long, and short-term project objectives and goals are also analysed to provide a thorough and accurate evaluation of the project at hand, in this case, the Youth Focus Project.

The evaluation framework involves understanding the project context, which is central to providing an evaluation herein. The evaluation framework lays out the activities, long and short-term outcomes of the project, and the goal of the project. This enables an accurate evaluation as it is only with such understanding that the study can consider project goals and impact fully and completely.

The evaluation framework for this study is set out below:

Figure 8: Evaluation Framework of the Youth Focus Project

Category	Research question
<b>1. Problem Statement</b>	
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the context within which the programme was implemented?</li> <li>What are the goals/mandates/strategic objectives with which this programme aligns?</li> </ul> <p>What are the rationales of the goals/mandates/strategic objectives with which this programme aligns?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What approach does the W&amp;RSETA follow in identifying and understanding youth-related needs?</li> <li>What role does the W&amp;RSETA play in identifying and understanding youth skills needs?</li> </ul>
Approach	Who are the key stakeholders in the programme?
<b>2. Theory of Change</b>	
Intention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the immediate outcomes of the Project?</li> </ul>
Translation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What does the Youth Focus contribute towards or achieve?</li> <li>What outputs result from this programme?</li> <li>What activities form part of the programme?</li> <li>Did the programme produce the outputs, outcomes and ultimate goals intended upon their inception?</li> <li>Did the programme's outputs translate to the intended outcomes and, finally, the goal?</li> <li>Did the activities of the programme result in any foreseen benefits for beneficiaries?</li> <li>Did the activities in the programme result in any unforeseen negative results for the beneficiaries?</li> </ul>

Category	Research question
<b>3. Effectiveness of Interventions</b>	
Inputs, Activities and Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What activities were undertaken within the programme? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did they occur as intended?</li> <li>Was anything done differently?</li> <li>What caused this variation?</li> </ul> </li> <li>Which outputs were achieved as a result of the activities performed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did they occur as intended?</li> <li>Was anything done differently?</li> <li>What caused this variation?</li> </ul> </li> <li>What were the outcomes of the projects?</li> <li>What were the outcomes of the project concerning their intended outcomes?</li> <li>What did the programme achieve?</li> <li>What were the strengths of the programme?</li> <li>What were the weaknesses of the programme?</li> <li>Are there any opportunities to improve upon challenges experienced within the programme?</li> <li>Are there any strengths or 'best behaviours' to replicate in other programmes?</li> </ul>
Strengths and Weaknesses	How can the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme be improved upon?
<b>4. Efficiency of Interventions</b>	
Expenditure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What were the costs of implementing the programme?</li> </ul>
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did the programme exhibit value for money based on their outcomes and budgets?</li> </ul>
Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the overall social benefits of the programme?</li> <li>What are the overall economic benefits of the programme?</li> <li>What are the benefits of the programme on the interventions for beneficiaries? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In rural communities?</li> <li>For youth?</li> <li>For SMMEs</li> <li>In terms of income?</li> <li>In terms of employment?</li> </ul> </li> <li>In terms of the local economy? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What can be done to improve the programme? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In terms of efficiency?</li> <li>In terms of effectiveness?</li> <li>In terms of impact?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>In terms of the sustainability of the programmes?</li> </ul>
<b>5. Impact on beneficiaries</b>	
Demographics	

Category	Research question
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What were the characteristics of the beneficiaries before and after the programme?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Place of residence?</li><li>Personal income?</li><li>Employment status?</li></ul></li><li>Level of education?</li><li>What kind of programme took place?</li><li>What NQF Level did it offer?</li><li>What kind of skills were obtained?</li><li>Did beneficiaries complete the programme?</li><li>How long did this take?</li><li>Did beneficiaries enrol for further qualifications after the programme?</li><li>What were the programme's impacts on the socio-economic standing of the beneficiary's household?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Employment status following the programme?</li><li>Time period?</li><li>Career progression following the programme?</li><li>Income following the programme?</li></ul></li><li>When did these changes take place in relation to the programme?</li><li>Were the changes as a result of the programme (in line)?</li><li>Expand on the changes in income following the programme.</li><li>Did the abilities of the beneficiaries change following the programme?</li><li>What were the characteristics of the household before the programme?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Size of the household?</li><li>Number of working-age members?</li><li>Number of employed members.</li><li>Household income?</li><li>Main source of income?</li></ul></li><li>How has the livelihood of the beneficiaries changed following the programme?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>How has the financial situation changed following the programme?</li><li>How has the household income changed following the programme?</li></ul></li></ul>
Impact on beneficiary	
Impact on livelihood	
6. Perceptions of beneficiaries	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What are the perceptions of the beneficiaries on the programme?</li><li>Did the programme provide skills?</li><li>Did the programme provide opportunities?</li></ul>

## Section 3: Assessment of programme performance

This chapter assesses the project's performance concerning the following four parameters.

- The project's relevance is in line with the objectives set out for the programme.
- Impact of the programme on beneficiaries
- Effectiveness of the programme in achieving the objectives of the programme
- Efficiency of the programme in terms of funding and implementation aspects

The project's performance is assessed to thoroughly analyse the Youth Focus Project as it relates to the study objectives. This is necessary to fully understand the project's impact, effectiveness, and efficiency, as well as the strengths and weaknesses, to provide appropriate and applicable recommendations for future projects.

### 3.1. Relevance of the Youth Focus Project.

This sub-section displays the degree of alignment with programme rationale against the actual performance. This section will consider the profile of the beneficiaries following the project objectives to analyse the impact of the Youth Focus Project on beneficiaries' livelihoods and the communities within which the beneficiaries reside and the local economies herein.

#### 3.1.4. Profile of the Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries involved in this project between 2018-2020 were youth based in the Western Cape. The graph below indicates the five different TVET Colleges which provided the skills training.

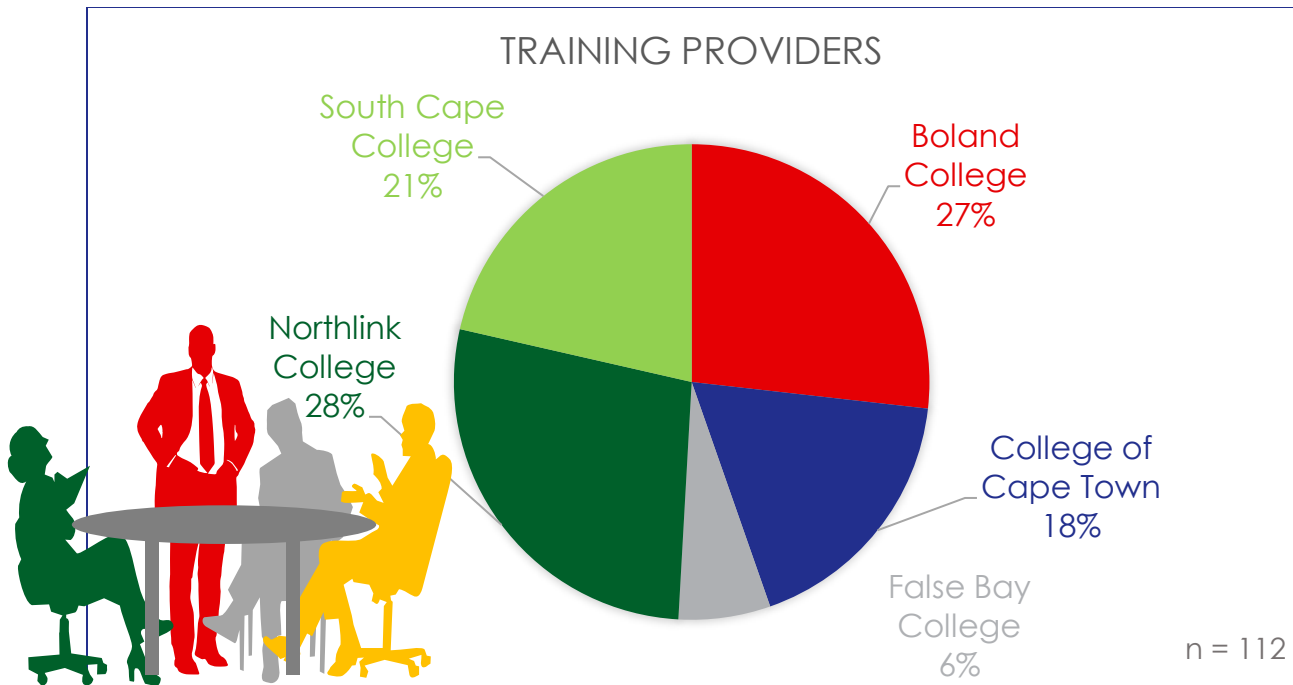


Figure 9: Training Providers for the Youth Focus Project

Under the rationale of the project and the stated objectives, the project was aimed at, among other objectives, assisting youth in achieving the minimum requirements to enrol in TVET Colleges to further their education. The fact that this course is offered through public TVET Colleges speaks to the relevance of the project and **collaboration and cooperation** among public entities (SETA funding the programme, which public TVET Colleges implemented and endorsed by the WCED). This has encouraged the surge of 588 students to attend TVET Colleges in the Western Cape, thereby increasing the scope and reach of these institutions.

The highest level of education of the beneficiaries before the Youth Focus Project has been detailed in the bar graph below.

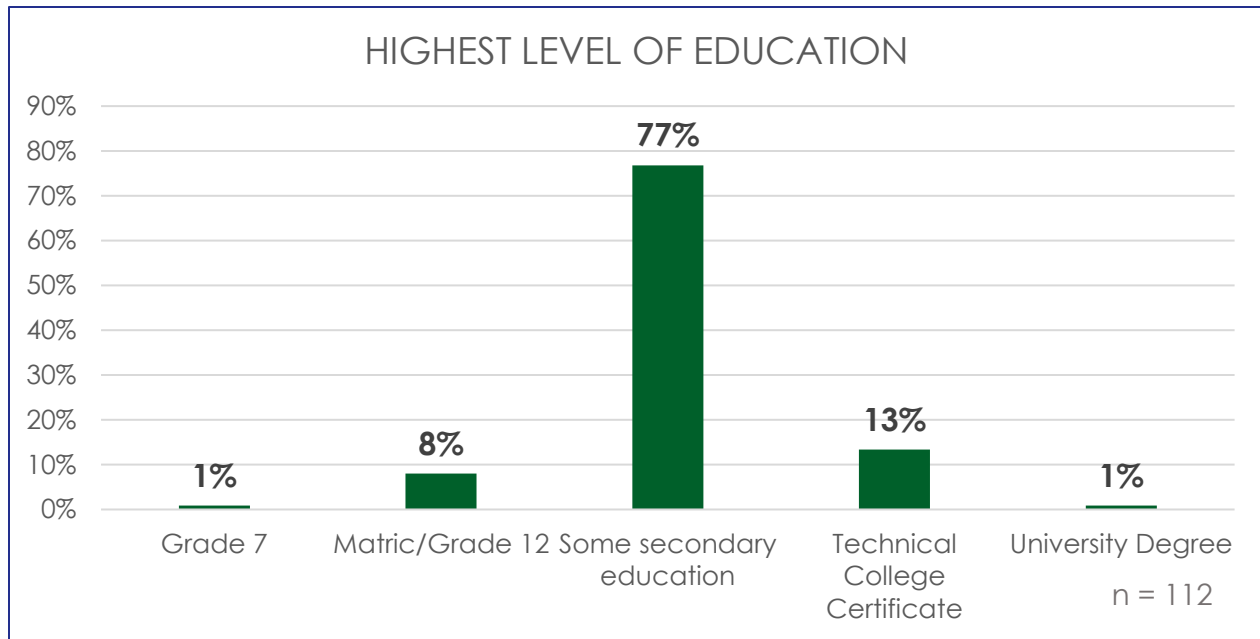


Figure 10: Highest level of education of the beneficiaries

The highest level of education held by the beneficiaries was **some secondary education**, at **77%**. Since this project provided an avenue to employment for beneficiaries who were struggling in grades 9 and 10, it becomes apparent why this is the case. In this case, the beneficiaries given an alternative pathway to obtain a qualification due to struggling in grades 9 and 10. Many of the beneficiaries had been struggling in the in secondary education phase of their education before reportedly being led to this opportunity. According to evidence gained from interviews and survey data, many of the beneficiaries who participated in this project become became aware of the opportunity through their school, teachers, peers or career support options; 50% of beneficiaries came to learn about the Youth Focus Project from school resources.

Additional demographic signifiers of the beneficiaries have also been outlined in the study. The **median age** of the beneficiaries who took part in the Youth Focus Project is **22** years old. Notably, although the Youth Focus Project was aimed at youth who were struggling in grades 9 and 10 and had dropped out of school recently, the oldest reported beneficiary is 42 years old as of 2022. This indicates that the beneficiary was approximately 39 at the time of the project. This clashes slightly with the definition of 'youth' as "those between the ages of 14 and 35 .

The race profile of the beneficiaries who participated in the Youth Focus Project is depicted in the following graph: the race profile of the beneficiaries, 59% Coloured and 39% Black African, is significant when considering the history of South Africa and the historical imbalances in capacity. Additionally, the project has also been targeted towards vulnerable and at-risk youth. These two cannot go un-noted when considering a significant goal of the project, which aligns with one of the strategic goals of the W&RSETA "fixing historic imbalances within the wholesale and retail sector". The Youth

Focus Project, aims to consider such imbalances and open opportunities for vulnerable individuals to benefit from the sector in terms of skills and employment.

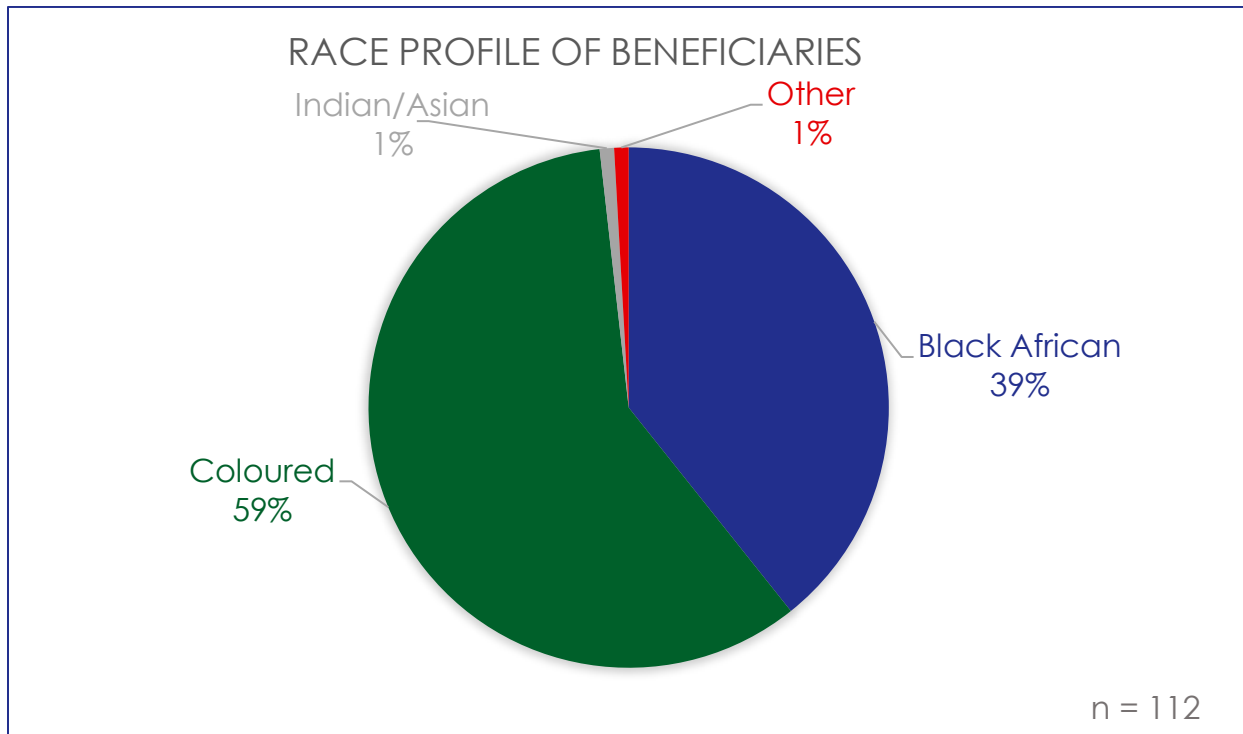


Figure 11: The Race profile of beneficiaries.

### 3.2. Impact of the Youth Focus Project on beneficiaries.

This project was born from the beneficiaries' need for an alternative path to employment and social and economic inclusion. This was pursued with challenges experienced in following the route of basic education towards qualification and employment. The Youth Focus Project, therefore, creates a fast-tracked route towards qualification and economic and social inclusion. This involves providing beneficiaries with the necessary skills to find stable employment or create employment opportunities for themselves through self-employment and actively partake socially and economically within society.

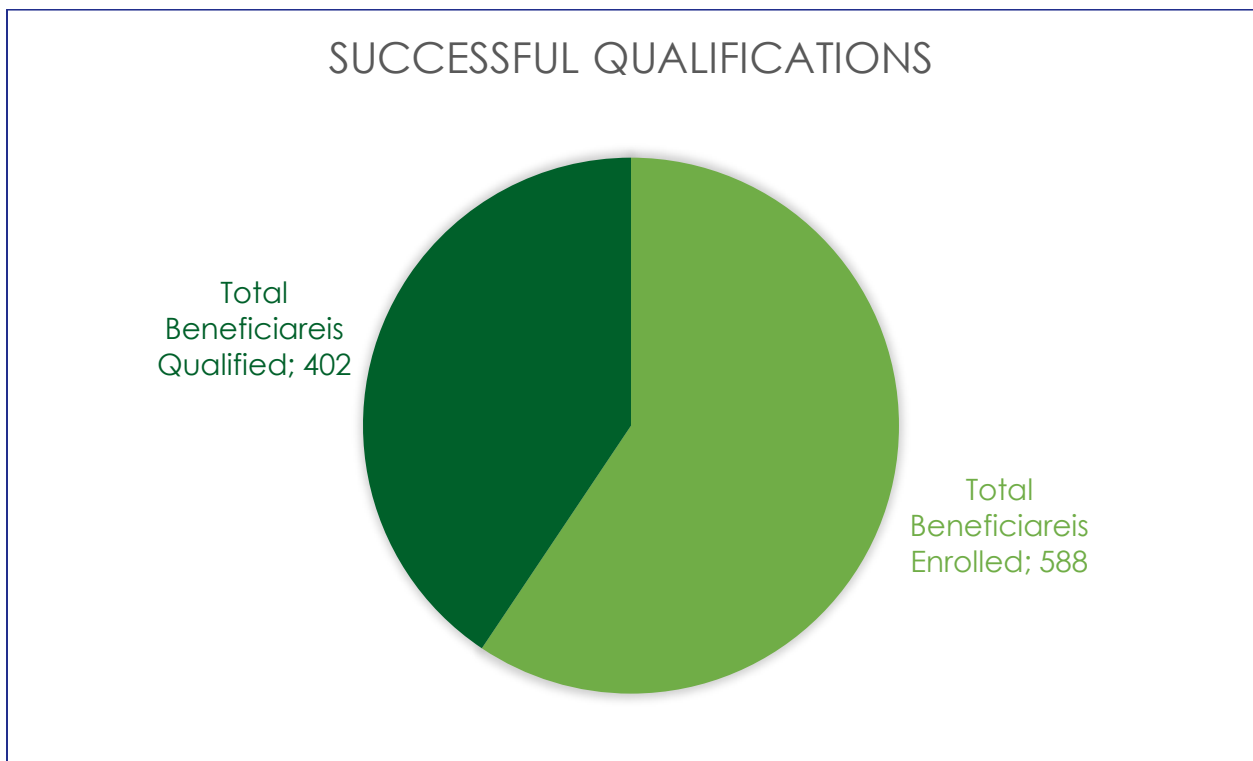
Regarding the impact of the project, the study considers the livelihood of the beneficiaries before and after the Youth Focus Project. This has been achieved through telephonic and online surveys, as well as focus group discussions with beneficiaries of the Youth Focus Project. In-depth interviews were also conducted with training providers and mentors/facilitators of the project. The goal of 250 beneficiaries was set to be contacted through the online and telephonic survey; of this goal, a total number of **116 beneficiaries were contacted based on the database provided by W&RSETA** at the outset of the project. Additional contacts were acquired from different stakeholders and social media.

The impact of the Youth Focus Project on beneficiaries is informed by the profile of the beneficiaries in several areas. The profile included: the beneficiaries' household (employment and income), the location (province and municipality), the project (before

and after) and other parameters. This allows the study to investigate whether the beneficiaries have had the opportunity to move outwards, gain skills and secure employment, and ultimately participate more in the economy and society. Herein, inferences can be drawn between the current livelihood of the beneficiaries based on an analysis of their livelihood both before and after the completion of the project.

Firstly, an analysis of the overall enrolments of the project and the subsequent number of beneficiaries who successfully achieved the qualification. The total number of beneficiaries enrolled in the project, as per the databases provided by W&RSETA, is 588. The project culminated in **402 beneficiaries completing the training programme**. This indicates a **68% achievement rate** from the project. It is indicative of a positive impact on

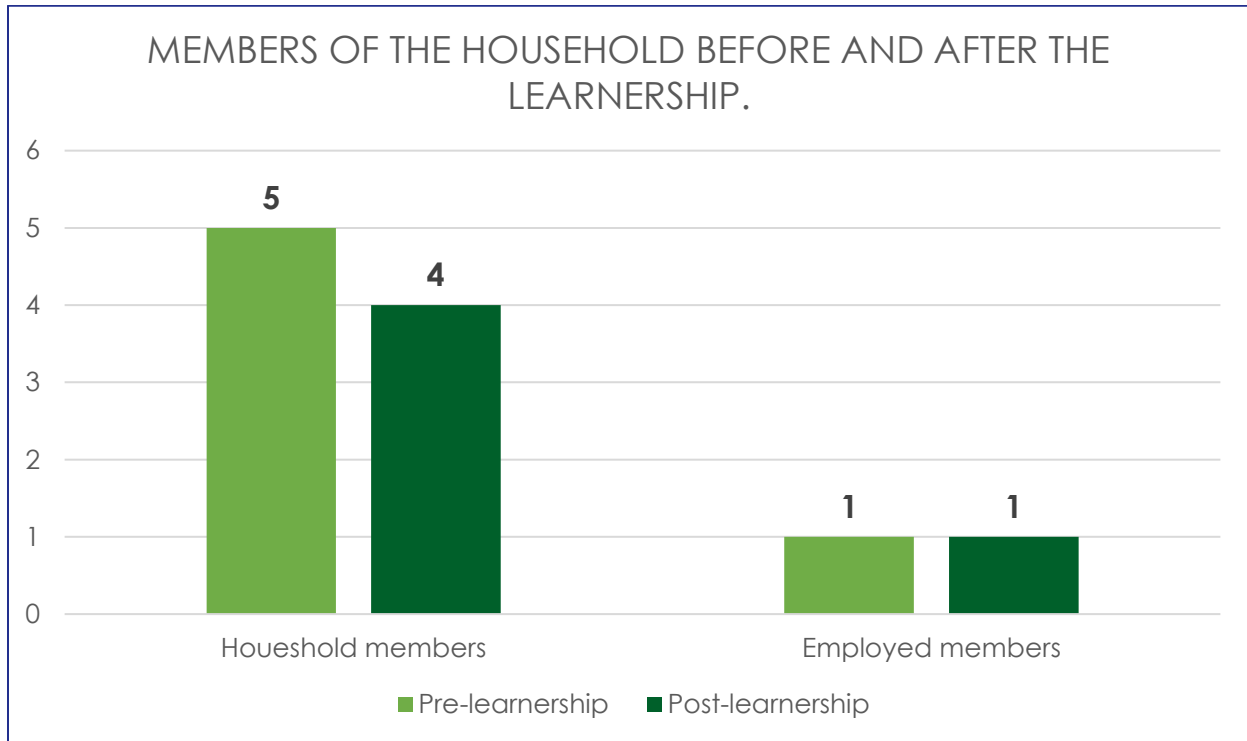
the beneficiaries, as the project has provided 402 beneficiaries with an NQF Level 1 or NQF Level 2 Qualification.



*Figure 12: Qualifications obtained in the Youth Focus Project*

To fully consider the potential growth of the beneficiaries socially and economically, some aspects of livelihood were analysed. The median size of the household before the Youth Focus Project was **5 members** compared with **4 members** post-learnership. However, the median number of employed members remained the same before and after the learnership, at **one member per household**. This indicates a positive impact for the beneficiaries as the drop in median members of the household implies a movement away from their parents' homes and a move towards their economic stability on the part of beneficiaries. This is further indicated in the lessening of dependants' beneficiaries as

well. The fact that the median number of employed members per household has not changed implies that those residing in their parents' homes may not have found employment yet.



As can be seen in the graph below, **32%** of the beneficiaries said that after the learnership, they resided in a **peri-urban areas**, in this case the percentage of beneficiaries who resided in **peri-urban areas was 5% higher** than prior to the learnership. Additionally, 31% of beneficiaries said that after the learnership, they resided in a **rural area**, and **37%** said that after the learnership they lived in an **urban area**. Both groups **decreased in percentage by 4% and 2% respectively**. This shows the potential of beneficiaries to move to more urban areas in search of employment because of the qualifications achieved from the Youth Focus Project.

According to the database provided by W&RSETA, it is apparent that before the project, 100% of the beneficiaries who participated in the Youth Focus Project resided in the Western Cape. It has been deduced from the survey data that after the project's completion, approximately **93% of the beneficiaries continued to reside in the Western Cape**, and **7% moved elsewhere**, namely: The Eastern Cape and Gauteng. According to the survey data, 16 out of the 112 beneficiaries who completed the survey were unsure of their municipality. Notably, the positive impact of the learnership is seen in that 31 of the total 32 employed beneficiaries still reside in the Western Cape. This shows that the

learnership has enabled beneficiaries to secure employment and contribute to the local economy.

The area description of the areas where the beneficiaries reside was also noted in the study, to analyse any movement post learnership.

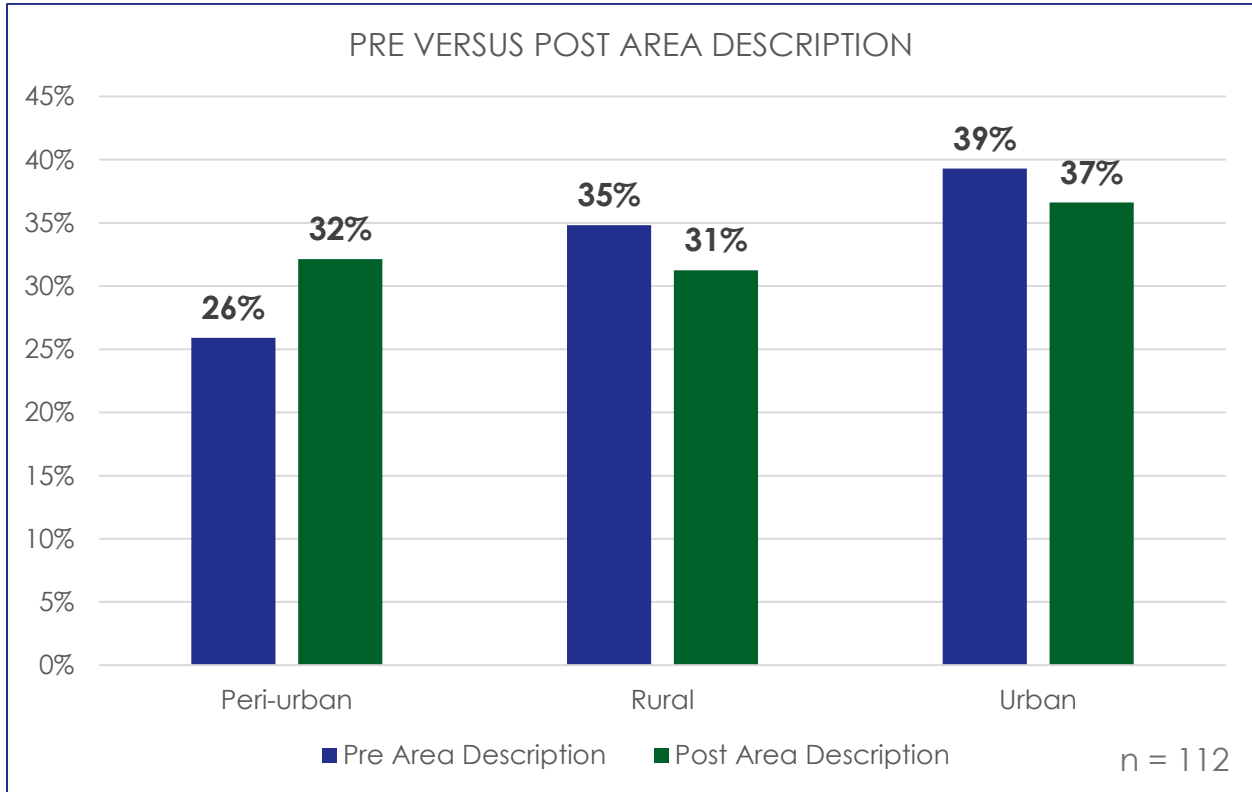


Figure 13: Pre versus Post area description of beneficiaries

A comparison of the beneficiary's role in the household (no dependents, sole breadwinner, co-breadwinner, dependent) was also analysed to consider economic growth among the beneficiaries. The survey data indicate the number of beneficiaries who were the **sole breadwinner of their household remained 12%**, and the number of beneficiaries who were the **co-breadwinner of their household decreased by 12%**. Interestingly, **28% of beneficiaries reported now being 'unemployed' post-learnership**.

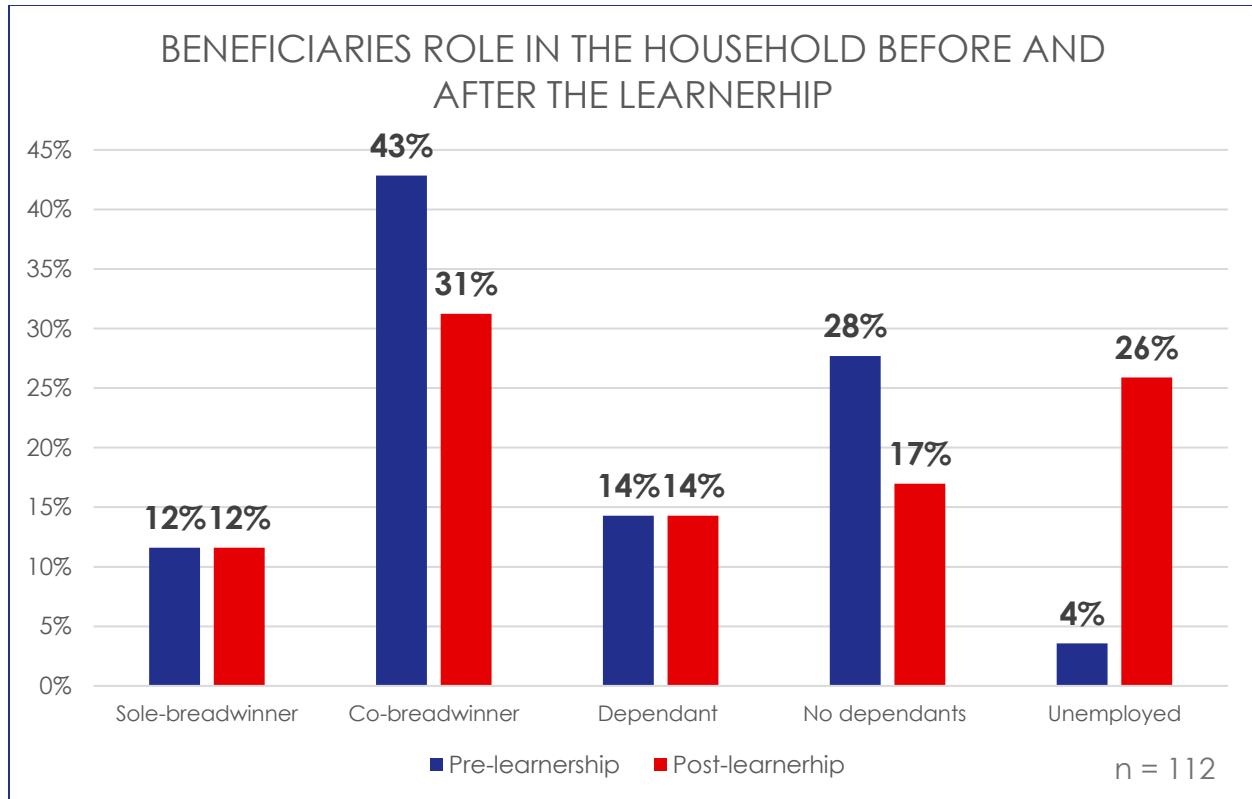


Figure 14: the role of beneficiaries in the household

A major reason given by beneficiaries for not being employed in the Wholesale and Retail sector is lack of opportunities within the sector (77%).

Along with this, the employment status of the beneficiaries was investigated to understand whether the Youth Focus Project can be attributed to helping beneficiaries search for and secure employment. Before the commencement of the learnership, the survey data notes that **40% of beneficiaries had been unemployed** for more than two years at the time of application. However, 44% of beneficiaries said,

they had worked before per pay or salary. At the time of application for the programme, **58% of beneficiaries were reportedly unemployed**. After the learnership, this number **increased to 64%** of beneficiaries reportedly not working. However, **19%** (21 beneficiaries) -currently work full-time, and 10% (11 beneficiaries) are employed **part-time**. Of those beneficiaries, **59% are employed in the wholesale and retail sectors**.

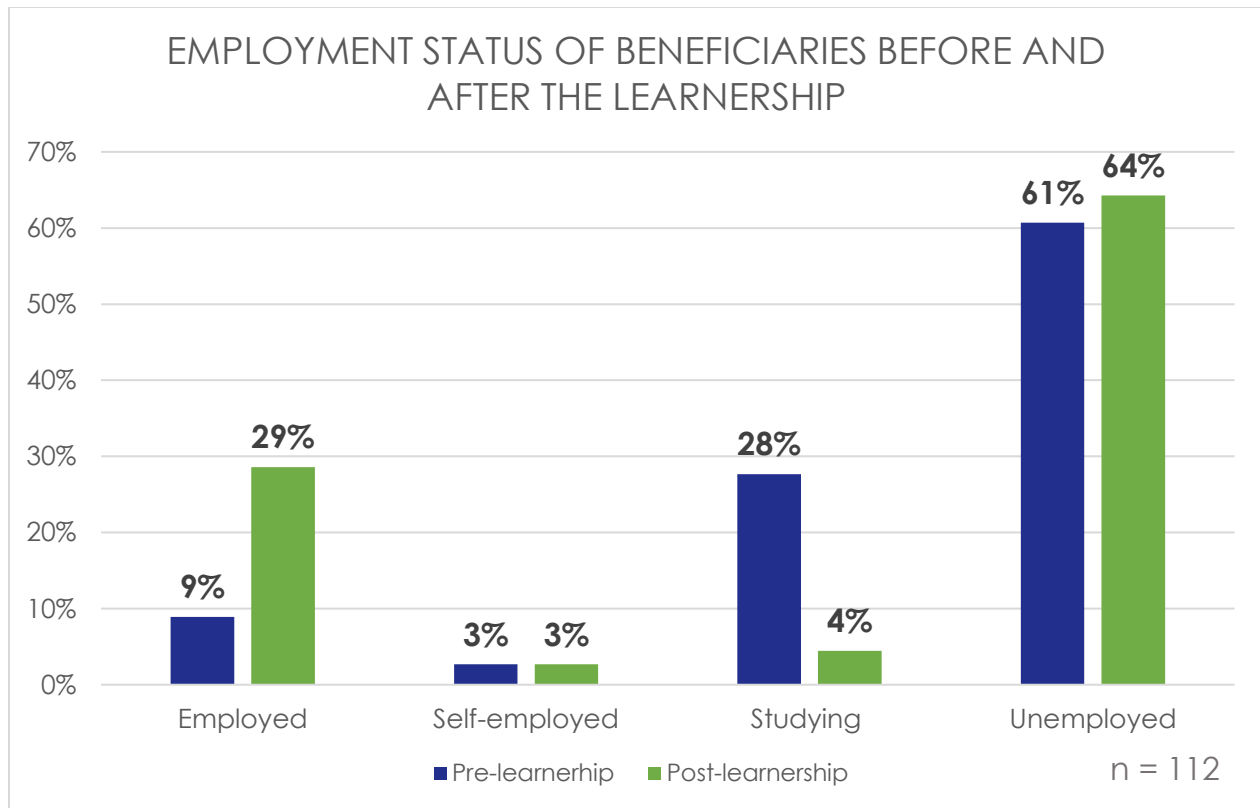


Figure 15: Employment status of beneficiaries before and after the learnership

A goal of the Youth Focus Project was to help beneficiaries who were struggling in grades 9 and 10 onto an alternative path towards employment. The project resulted in several beneficiaries exiting with a qualification and the ability to search for and thrive in a job. This indicates a positive impact on beneficiaries in terms of employment.

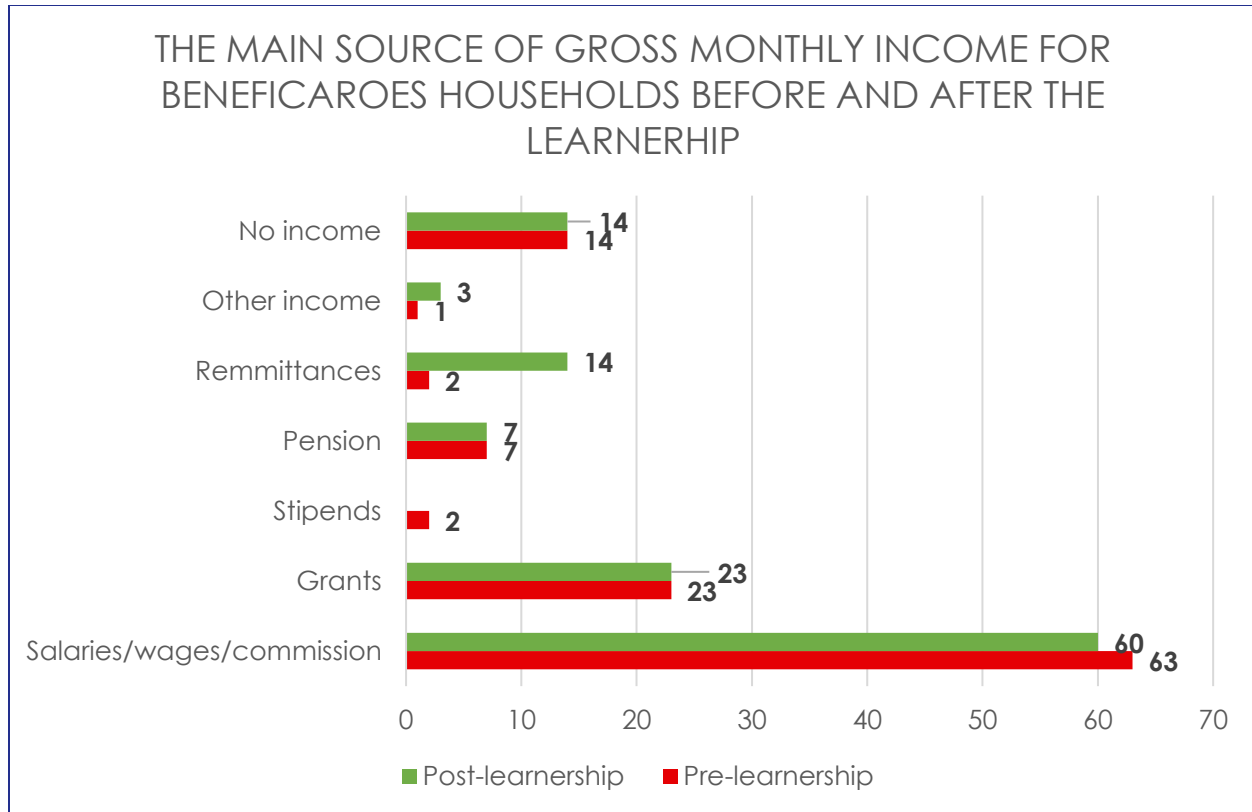
Also worth noting is that of those currently working, 66% of beneficiaries waited more than a year before finding employment. Only **16% of beneficiaries found employment immediately**. This can be attributed to the host employers of the programme hiring beneficiaries working at their stores. Through interview and focus group discussion evidence, provided by the beneficiaries who experienced this themselves, and training providers, facilitators and mentors from the relevant TVET Colleges, several beneficiaries were hired, either on a fixed-term contract or permanently by their host employers. This inference cannot be made for all beneficiaries; however, we can be confident that this was the case for a small number of beneficiaries. This indicates a positive impact from the project for the beneficiaries, the host employers, and the local economy/community herein. It is evident through the fact that the host employer stores were able to attain new employees through the Youth Focus Project, which is beneficial to them, along with the beneficiaries themselves. It can be inferred from this evidence that the project had a positive impact on the industry and the local economies of the local municipalities within the Western Cape where the programme was offered.

Vital information gained from the various engagements with the stakeholders was the positivity of the income gained from and by the project. This was in terms of stipends and employment income, such as wages/salaries and commissions. These positively impacted local economy and community of what was described as “small, rural areas” in the Western Cape.

In the survey, four main reasons for part-time employment emerged; the most common being the inability to find full time work, this was followed closely by being hired on a fixed-term contract. The remaining two reasons were being on probation at a workplace and awaiting results from a learnership.

The income of the household pre and post learnership was also considered. Herein, the household's gross monthly income was analysed, and it is noted that the **most common income range per household was between R801-R6400 (specifically, R1601 – R3200) at 62%**. This number **changed post-learnership with more households earning between R801 – R6400** (specifically R801 – R1600 and R3201 – R6400) at 68% of households. The beneficiaries' median gross monthly household income of R885 per month **did not change** after the project. This shows that although the Youth Focus Project positively impacted many, it did not help raise the median income overall.

Prior to the Youth Focus Project, the main source of gross monthly income was salaries, wages and commission. This remained the same for the most part, dropping just two percentage points to 54% after the completion of the learnership.



Lastly, to ascertain the broader impact of the Youth Focus Project on the communities of the beneficiaries and the surrounding economy, the beneficiaries were asked whether they sent **remittances** to family and friends. Of the total, **29%** of beneficiaries noted that they sent remittances, and the **median amount therein was R650**. This indicates a positive impact for the wider community based on the opportunities provided by the Youth Focus Project.

The Youth Focus Project's goals also focussed on building the **confidence and self-esteem of the beneficiaries**. This had a significant impact on beneficiaries as it was noted through various interviews with training providers and mentors/facilitators alike that the beneficiaries grew significantly in these areas. The beneficiaries reinforced this through the survey, who noted that they had learned interpersonal, communication and professional conduct skills through the project. **14% of beneficiaries said that they had learnt interpersonal skills** through the learnership, and **22% said that their communication skills** and ability to work with others grew substantially.

Regarding skills training, the Youth Focus Project also provided many new skills and opportunities to the beneficiaries; **82% of beneficiaries noted that the learnership helped them develop the necessary skills to seek employment**. Along with this, **74% of beneficiaries agreed that they could apply for jobs** once they had completed the learnership.

n = 112

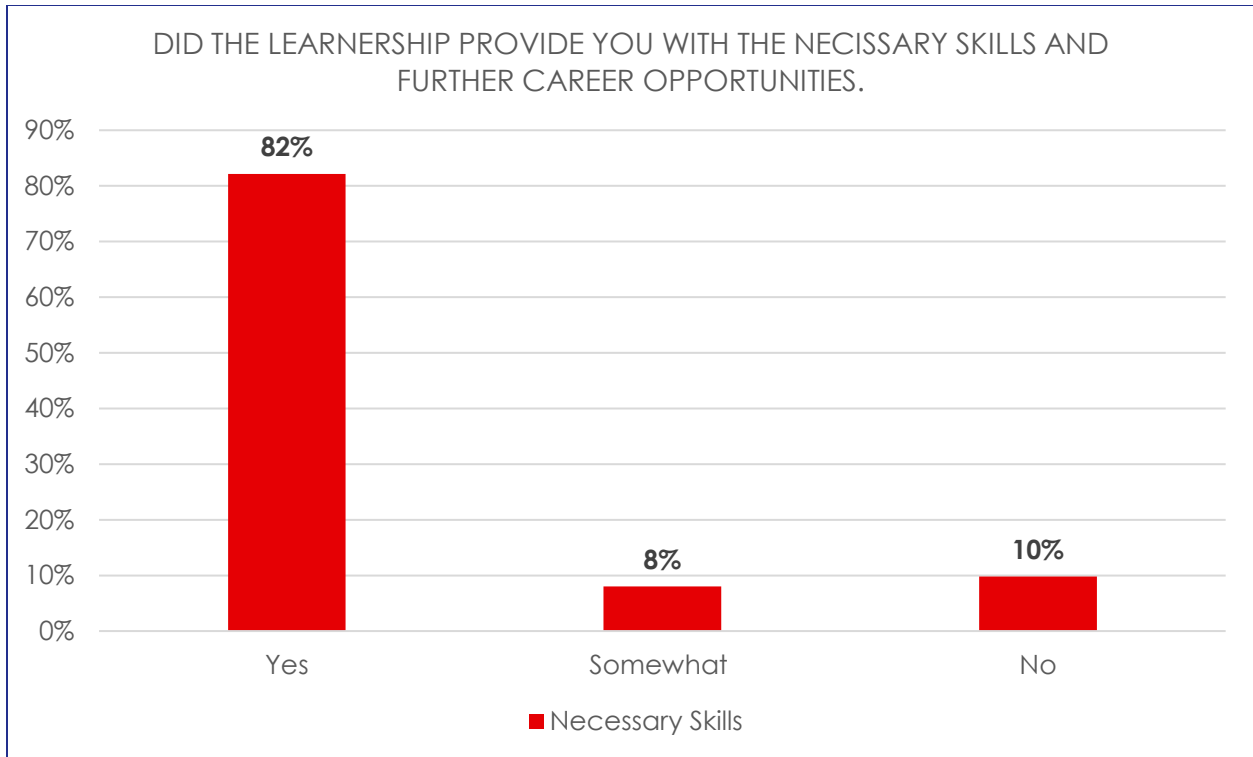


Figure 16: Necessary skills to find employment.

Regarding career growth as a goal of the project, **71%** of beneficiaries answered 'yes' when asked if the Youth Focus Project had provided **more career opportunities for them**.

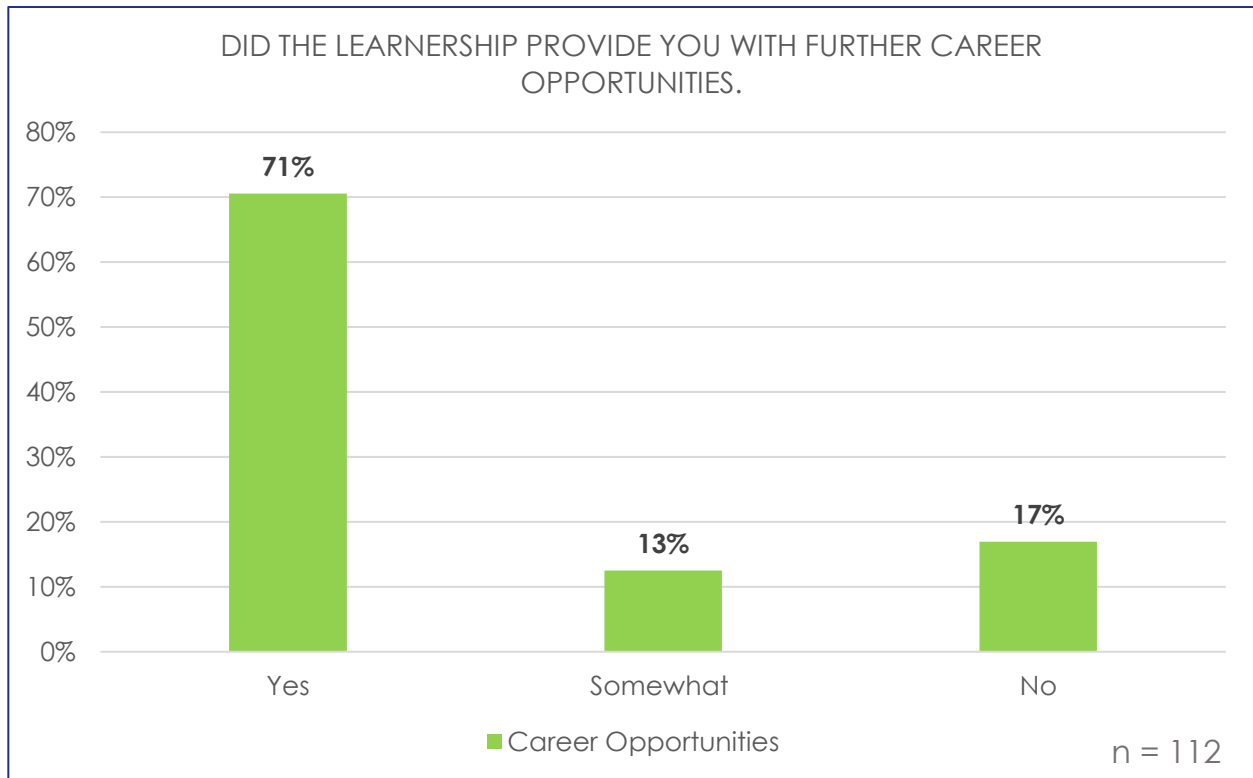


Figure 17: Further career opportunities

The Youth Focus Project impacted beneficiaries positively in that it provided an opportunity to learn about the wholesale and retail sector (**90%** of beneficiaries said that it did). It prepared them for work therein by allowing learners to work at host employers or in a simulated work environment as part of the workplace-based learning component of the project. This opportunity allowed learners to experience different aspects of the workplace and adapt to different situations. The graphs below (Figures 22, 23 and 24) show the number of beneficiaries participating in simulated workplace learning and attending host employers. They also indicate that **62% benefited from moving around their workplace-based learning context and learning different skills**. This aided the beneficiaries in **adapting to different work situations**, of which **89%** noted that the learnership helped them.

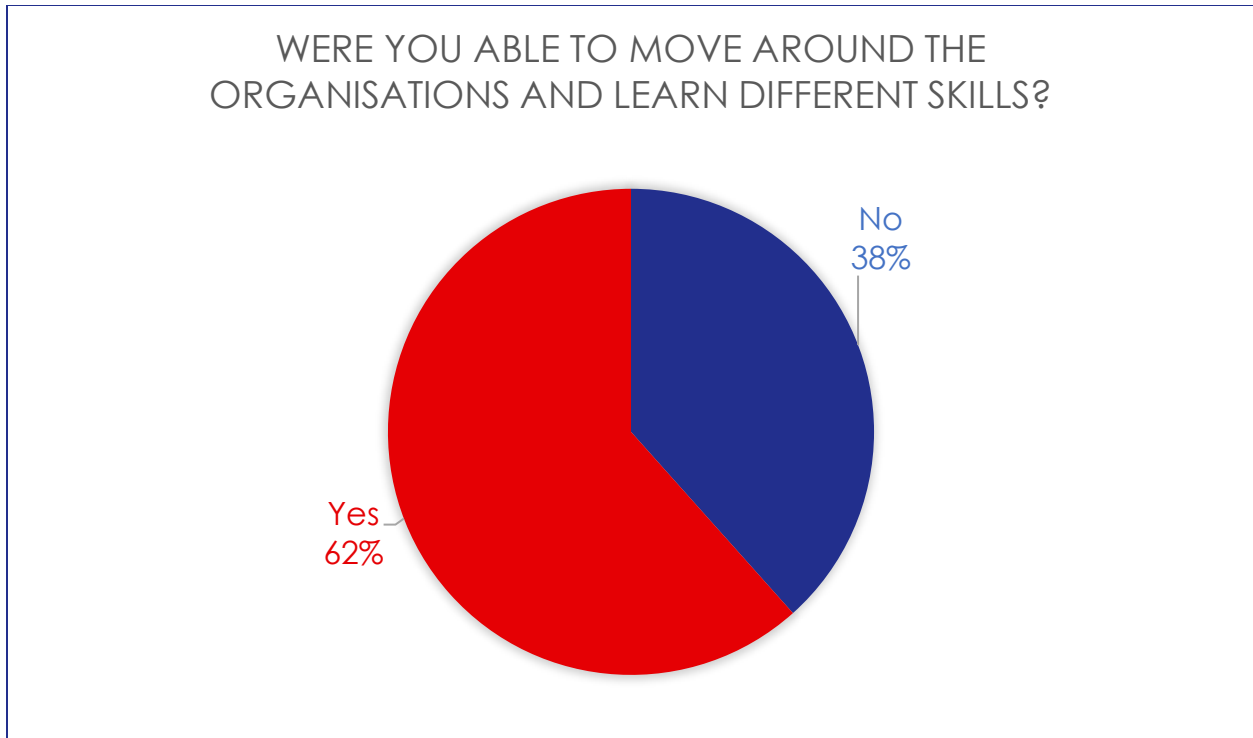


Figure 18: Learning various skills at the workplace.

Many beneficiaries were exposed to a simulated workplace experience as opposed to a host employer-based workplace experience. This is significant as it can be indicated that the host-employer workplace experience positively impacted the beneficiaries in terms of their skills training, personal growth, and inter-communication skills. Many beneficiaries noted customer service interactions as a significant example of what brought them knowledge throughout their time at host-employer stores. This was slightly different in the case of simulated work experience. Many respondents noted that the simulated workplace experience was lacking in providing the necessary skills to beneficiaries in terms of interpersonal interaction. It was mentioned by training providers and mentors/facilitators mainly that, although it was a reasonable means to practice, it should not replace the host-employer experience portion of the project or projects to come, especially in a sector such as the wholesale and retail sector in which these skills are vital.

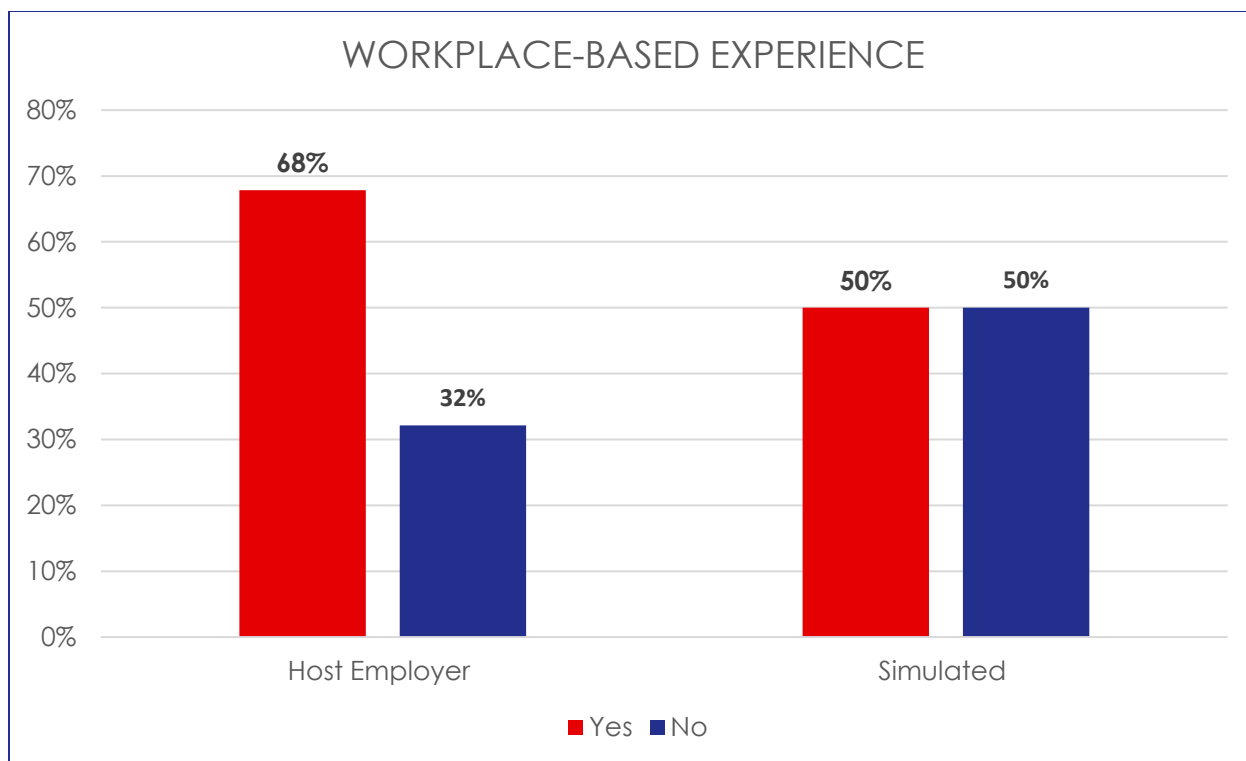


Figure 19: Workplace-based learning for beneficiaries

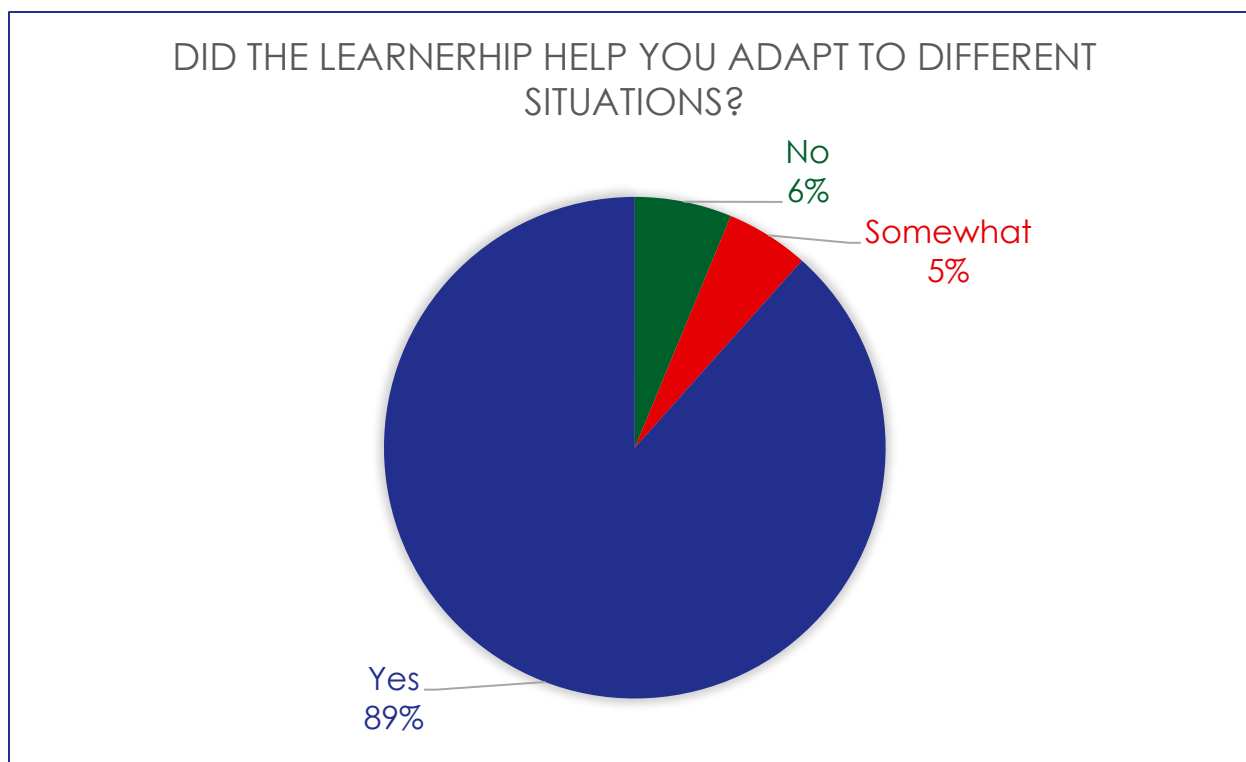


Figure 20: Adapt to different situations at the workplace.

Overall, it was noted through the beneficiary survey that **91% of beneficiaries were satisfied with the Youth Focus Project**. This indicates a positive impact on the beneficiaries therein. The main reason noted for the beneficiaries' satisfaction are that **"the skills taught are up-to-date, relevant and in line with the skills necessary in the work that they do or will do" (56%)** and that **"the training providers are knowledgeable and qualified to teach" (52%)**.

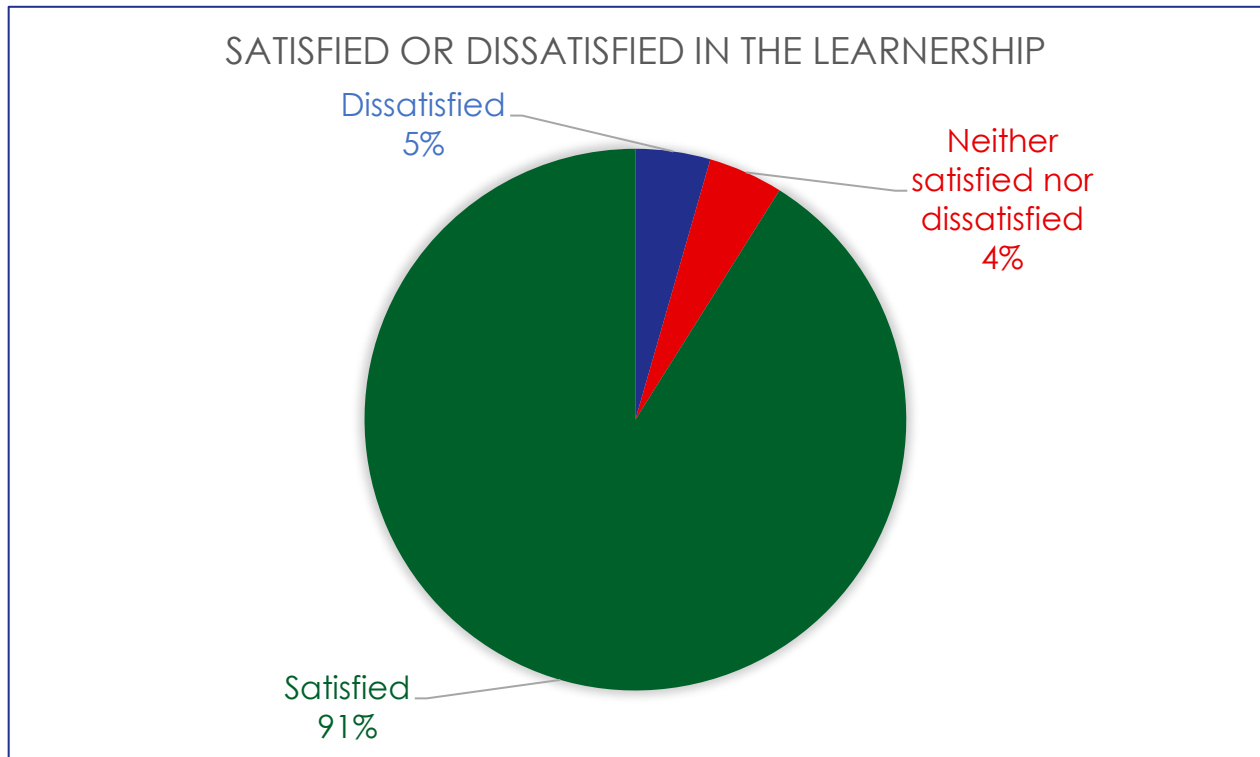


Figure 21: Were beneficiaries satisfied or dissatisfied with the learnership.

Notably, there were also a few negative impacts on beneficiaries on the Youth Focus Project. **69% of beneficiaries have not received certificates yet**. Additionally, **76% of beneficiaries noted receiving little to no communication regarding their certificates**. According to the beneficiaries, makes it difficult to secure employment, as they cannot provide proof of qualification and experience.

76%

76% of beneficiaries reported **RECEIVING NO COMMUNICATION** with regards to receiving their certificates.

24%

24% of beneficiaries reported not receiving their certificates due to **COVID19 REGULATIONS**.

### 3.3. Effectiveness of the Youth Focus Project

The effectiveness of the Youth Focus Project can be understood in terms of the project's outputs, outcomes, and key achievements. In order to achieve this, an understanding of the goals of the project must be ensured. Herein the study analyses the extent to which the project achieved the goals and strategic objectives laid out by the W&RSETA SSP, the NSDS III and the project goals outlined on the outset of the project.

#### 3.1.4. Qualifications achieved through the Youth Focus Project.

The main goals laid out in the project's charter outline; an aim to **provide the necessary skills to 660 youth within the Wholesale and Retail sector by enabling 418 unemployed youth to both enrol in and obtain an NQF Level 1 qualification, and 242 unemployed youth to enrol in and obtain an NQF Level 2 qualification**, as contained in the project's Charter Report (W&RSETA, 2019). Herein the project reports and the beneficiary database provided by W&RSETA outline 588 beneficiaries having taken part in this project, of which **402 (68%) beneficiaries completed** by achieving the required credits (120). It is evident through the data that the number of beneficiaries in this period was slightly less than initially prescribed. However, it is to note that the total number of beneficiaries who participated in the project makes up **61% of the initial goal**.

#### 3.1.5. Strategic partnerships within the Youth Focus Project

Another goal for the Youth Focus Project was to **create and maintain a strategic partnership between the project's relevant stakeholders**: the training providers, industry and W&RSETA. Through anecdotal evidence provided in interviews and focus group discussions, this goal was one with a certain level of contention. In many cases, it was stated that the Youth Focus Project paved the way for effective and positive relations between the TVET Colleges (training providers) and W&RSETA. It was noted in many engagements that the training providers felt supported by W&RSETA throughout the project. Thus, it can be surmised that the stakeholder relationship herein is positive and reciprocal. However, training providers also noted that the relationship between the TVET Colleges and industry (host employers) was not as optimistic. A challenge experienced

by training providers was locating and securing host employers for beneficiaries participating in the NQF Level 2 qualification, as the industry was not particularly open to welcoming beneficiaries. They noted that help from W&RSETA in this regard would be appreciated, as through W&RSETA's reputation and influence, perhaps more host employers would be willing to participate in such projects.

### 3.1.6. Upliftment of beneficiaries through skills training opportunities

The project also aimed to **uplift the beneficiaries regarding self-confidence and self-esteem**. The goal of the project herein was to help the beneficiaries grow by learning skills pertaining not only to practical retail knowledge but also in terms of interpersonal, communication and professional conduct. It has also been reported in interviews with training providers, mentors, facilitators, and beneficiaries alike that the Youth Focus Project has positively affected the beneficiaries in ways aside from simply employment and skills growth. The stakeholders who were in contact with the beneficiaries throughout the programme noted the growth of the beneficiaries regarding self-esteem, confidence, and professional conduct from the commencement of the project to its closure. This was also confirmed through the survey, by the beneficiaries wherein they noted the skills they learnt. A significant portion of the beneficiaries highlighted skills outside retail-based knowledge, such as communication skills. The beneficiaries also noted aspects of personal growth and conduct, such as respect for themselves and others, time management and understanding the importance of staying dedicated to a task or goal.

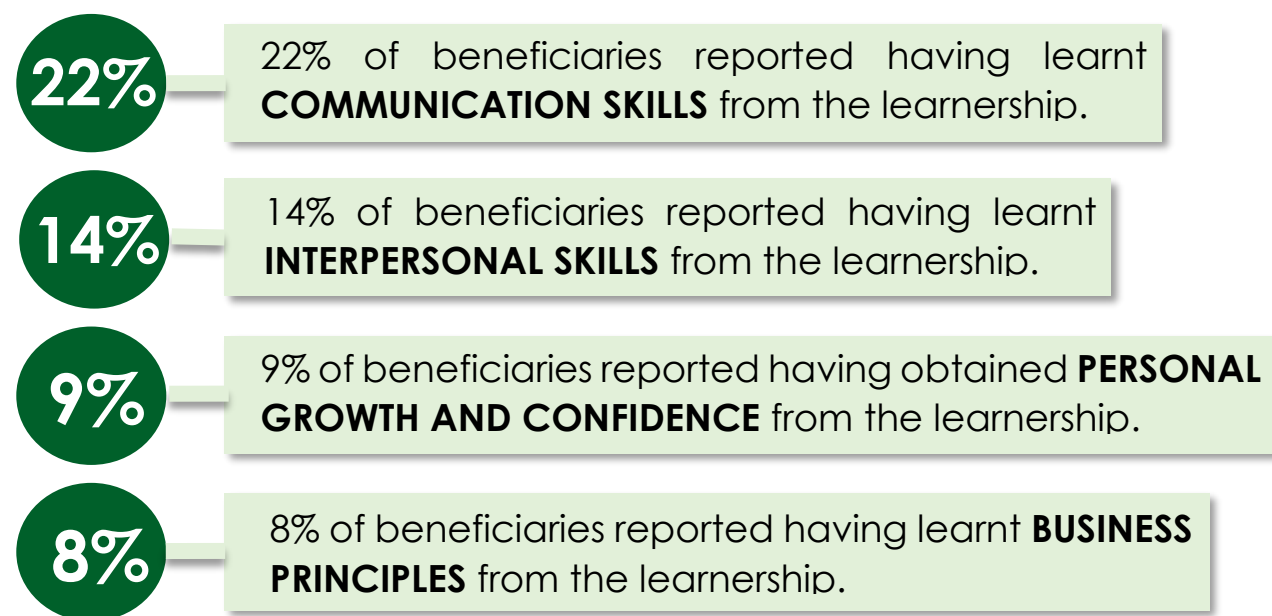


Figure 22: Skills learnt in the Youth Focus Project 1

### 3.1.7. Skills training and upskilling in the Youth Focus Project

A broader goal of the project was to **contribute towards the training and upskilling youth with skills necessary for the Wholesale and Retail industry** (W&RSETA, 2019). This goal is approached in two parts: skills development and **employment opportunities and securement**.

Regarding the education and skills development provided by the Youth Focus Project, the project goals herein are twofold; the improvement of literacy and numeracy skills among beneficiaries, and the delivery **of industry-related and industry-required skills to beneficiaries**. This is to provide the knowledge and means to search for, acquire and perform well within employment, with the ultimate goal of social and economic inclusion on the part of the beneficiaries.

In this regard, the beneficiaries were asked whether the project taught them about the Wholesale and Retail sector and whether they felt the skills they learnt had prepared them for the workplace. In terms of being prepared for the workplace and providing beneficiaries with the skills to perform well, the survey data notes that **89% of beneficiaries felt that the learnership had taught them how to adapt to different work situations**.

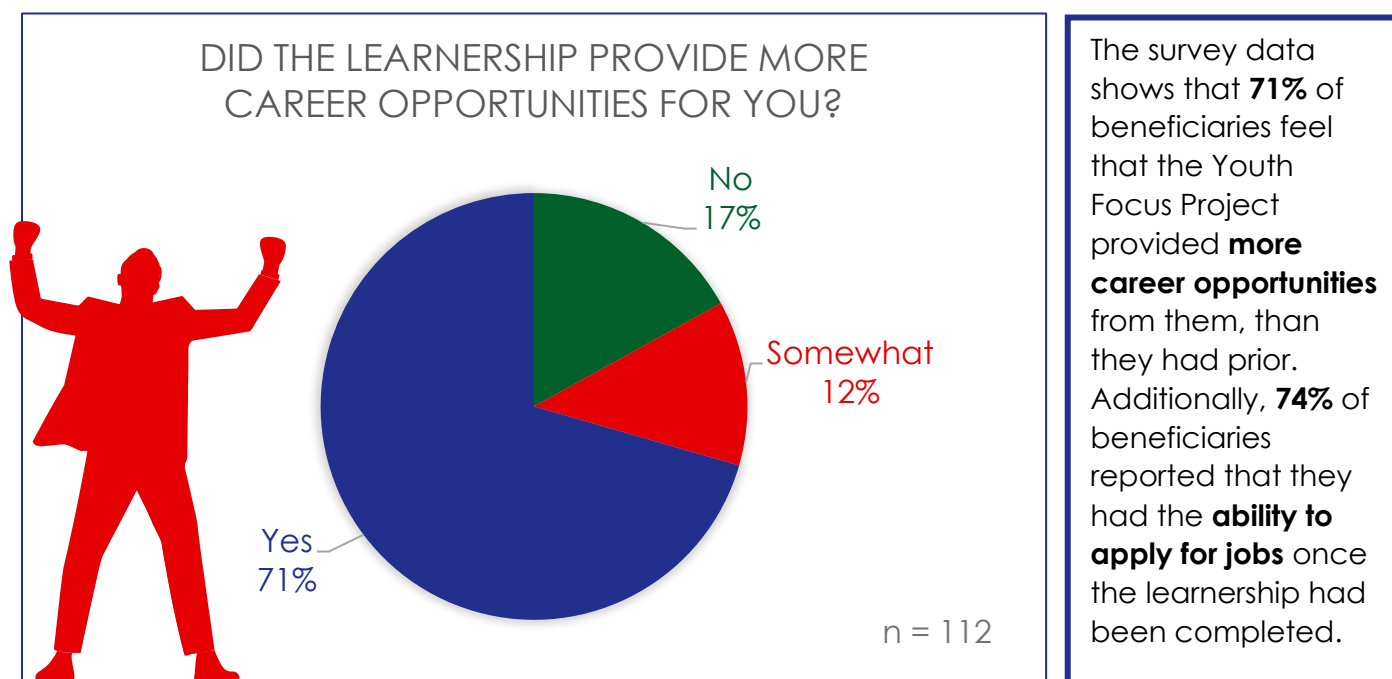
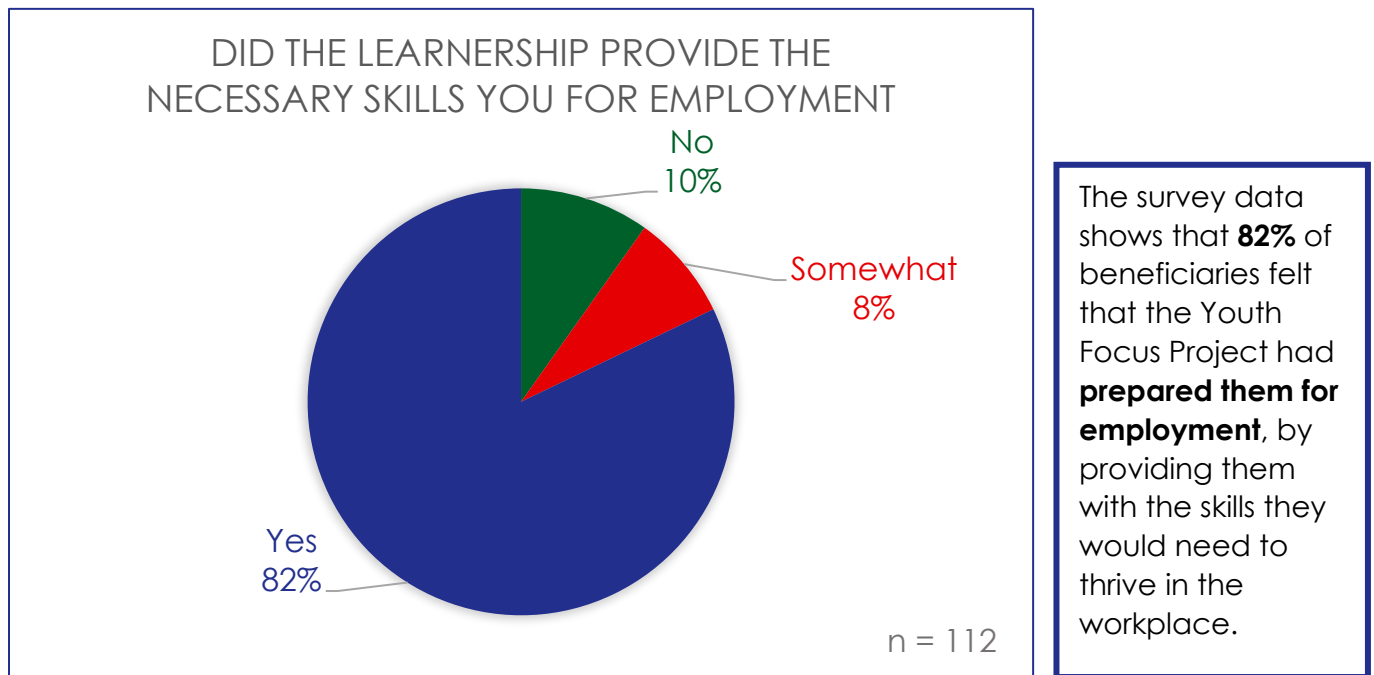


Figure 23: Career opportunities

Figure 24: Necessary skills for employment



The study has investigated the effectiveness of the Rural Areas Learnership based on the goals set out for the project upon its inception. The sub-section to follow will consider the effectiveness of the study based on the current status of beneficiaries. This will provide an understanding of how effective the project was in helping beneficiaries seek and secure employment by considering where they are on their current journey.

### 3.1.8. Employed

In considering the effectiveness of the Youth Focus Project, it is essential to understand project's effects on all the different groups of beneficiaries and the other stakeholders. As stated, the results and percentages being reported in this report are based on the tracer results. To begin, if we project the results of the tracer onto the wider population, 127 people found jobs (from a total of 44% of tracer results. Considering the margin of error laid out for this study (5.2%), anywhere between 120 and 133 individuals found jobs. In terms of work within the wholesale and retail sector, it can be noted that anywhere between 71 and 79 people are working there.

With employed beneficiaries, it is essential to note that out of the total number of beneficiaries who completed the survey, **32 are currently employed**. Of these 32, **21** beneficiaries are employed **full-time**, and **11** are employed **part-time**. As stated, most beneficiaries were unemployed for over a year before finding employment. The **primary way through which most beneficiaries found their current work was, as previously noted, through their learnership, at 22%**. This speaks to the effectiveness of the learnership regarding creating well-skilled individuals who have the potential to be hired by host

employers, and providing employment opportunities for beneficiaries. The project was also influential in providing income for beneficiaries.

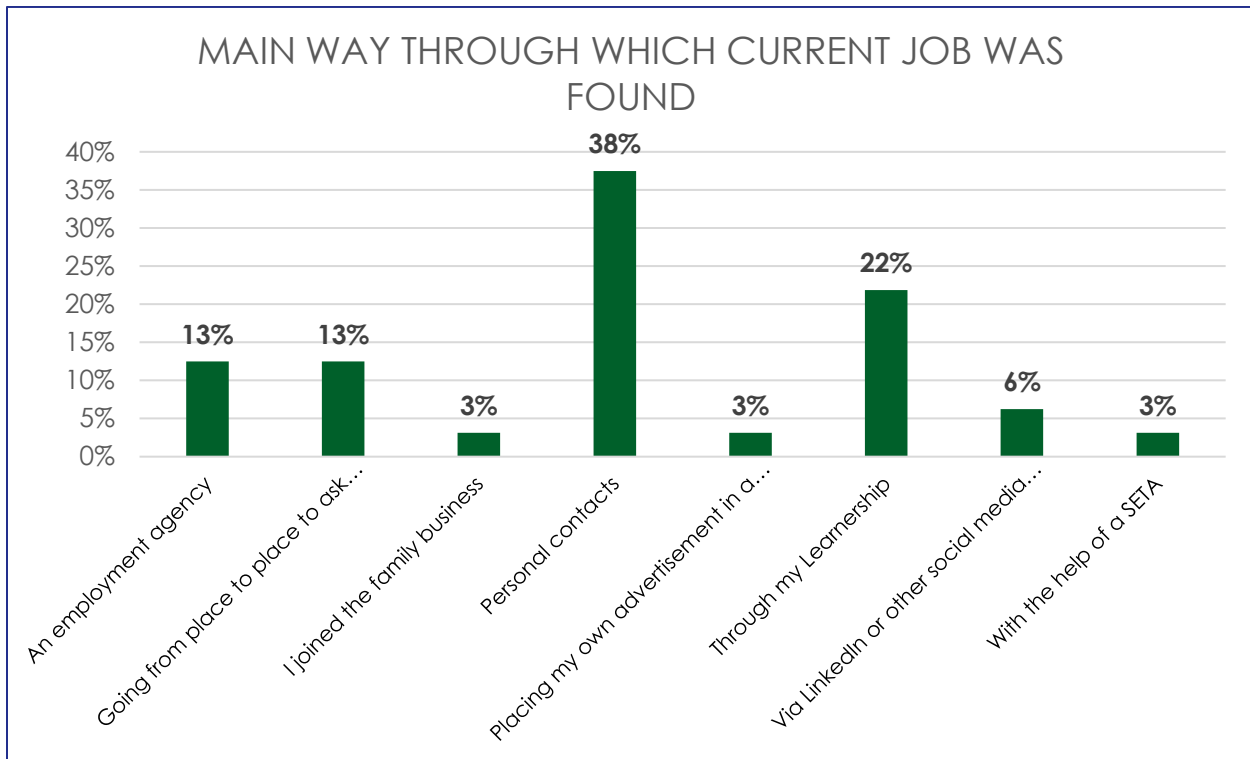


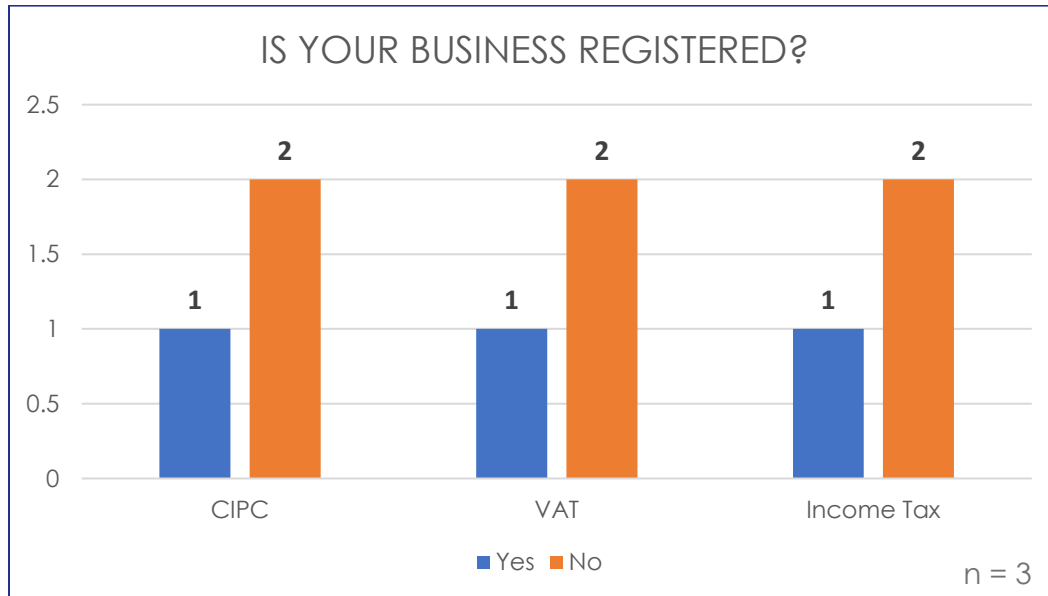
Figure 25: How beneficiaries found their current job

It is notable that **53% of the employed beneficiaries reported that the skills they learned in the learnership were related to their work**, and **67% of beneficiaries noted that they have been able to apply the skills they learnt** in the Youth Focus Project. This implies that the learnership taught the skills required to be productive and knowledgeable in the workplace and that the skills taught aligned with industry needs. This has been reiterated in interviews with different stakeholders, who said that the skills highlighted in the Youth Focus Project are curated and aligned with what is required in the industry. Being taught such skills as a beneficiary implies that one will be knowledgeable and well-equipped to enter the workforce.

### 3.1.9. Self-employed

From the survey data, it has been noted that **three beneficiaries** who completed the survey are currently self-employed. The main reasons for self-employment after the learnership can be mainly linked to **personal preference**, such as an entrepreneurial spirit, the desire for more flexible hours, and to work in an area of interest are the main reasons. Basic information was provided by the business owners regarding the businesses being run, namely the registration status of the businesses (CIPC, VAT and Income Tax), as seen in the graph below, which outlines that one business is registered with all three, and two are not. It also indicates the gross monthly income of the businesses, which **ranges between R1300 – R2000 per month**. This aids in understanding and analysis of the

businesses as entrepreneurial endeavours and the growth and economic inclusion of the beneficiaries of the Youth Focus Project. The fact that each business employs at least one additional employee indicates the broader positive social and economic impact of the Youth Focus Project.



The survey data indicates also that each business has been open for **one year or more**, and that one of the three businesses is in the Wholesale and Retail sector **each employs a minimum of two employees**.

Notably, all three beneficiaries (**100%**) feel that the Youth Focus Project has prepared them to **start and run their businesses** regarding skills, knowledge and confidence. However, none (0) of the beneficiaries said their career expectations had been met after the learnership.

n = 3

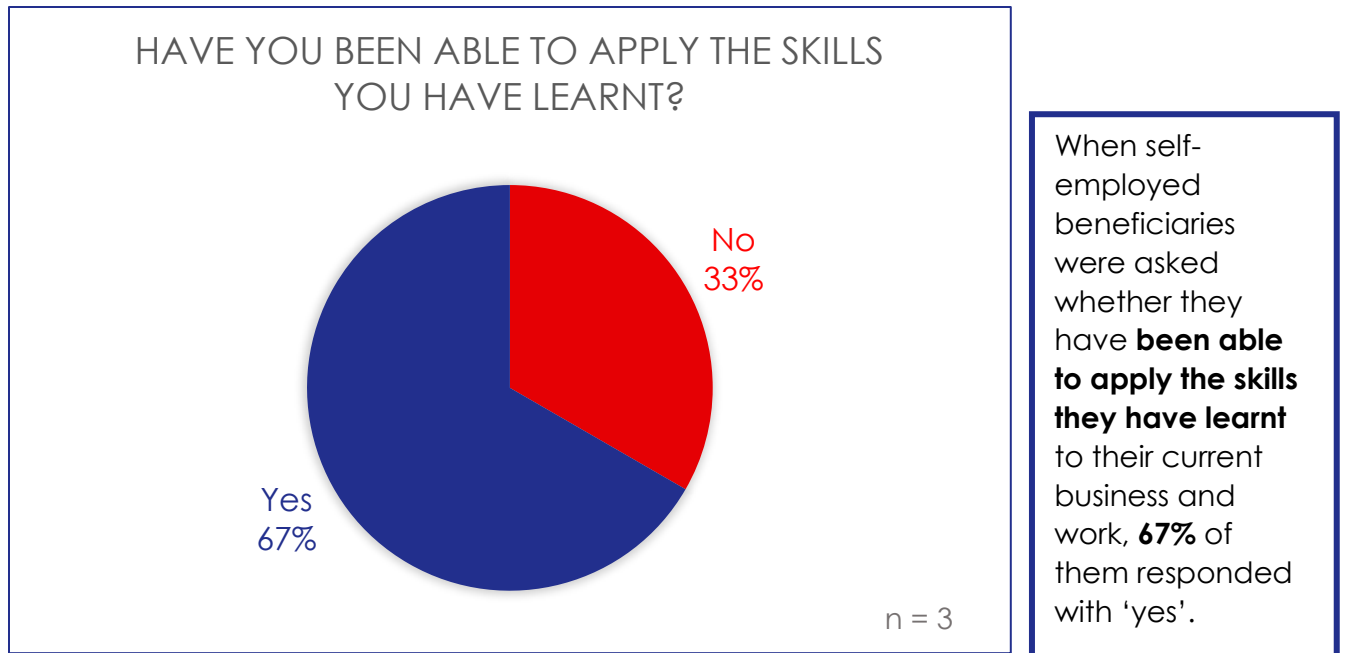


Figure 26: Application of skills learnt in the Youth Focus Project

### 3.1.10. Unemployed

Unfortunately, the largest group of beneficiaries regarding employment status are unemployed (**64%**). There are several reasons herein. The graph below indicates the three main reasons for this as being **a lack of employment opportunities (43%)**, not having a high enough qualification level (21%), and **not searching for work (8%)**.

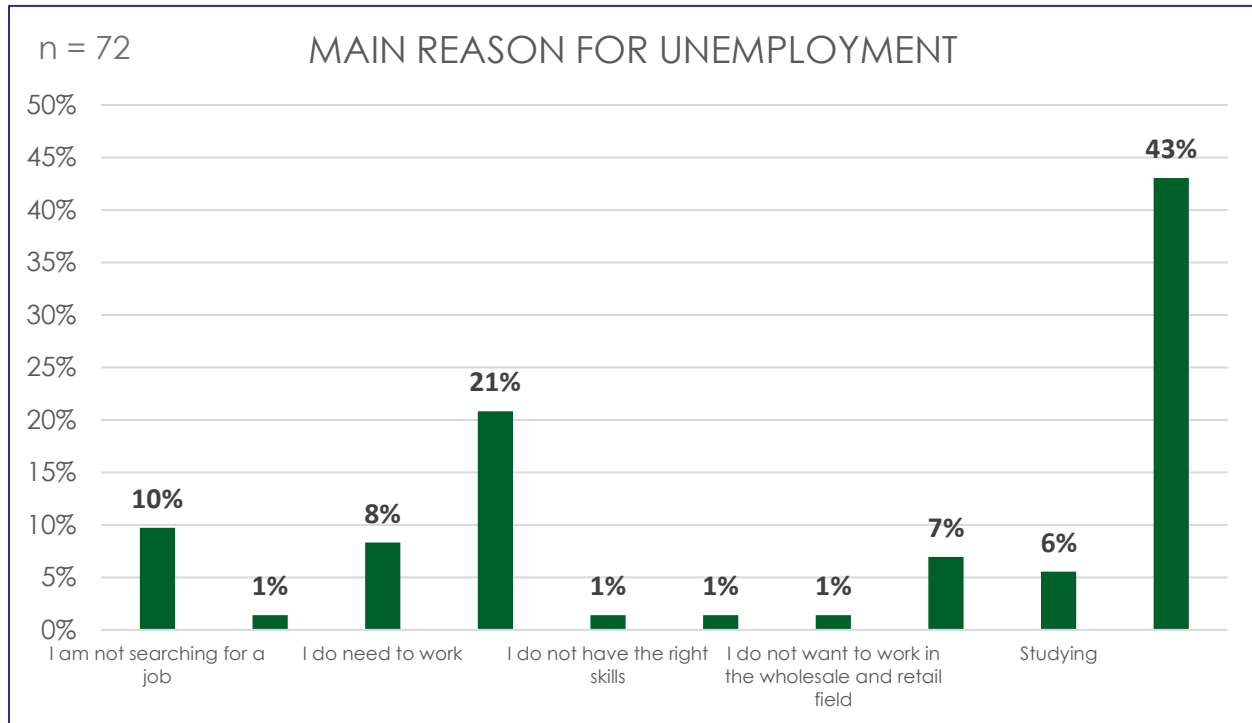


Figure 27: Main reason for current unemployment

However, Of the total (72) beneficiaries, **86% are actively seeking employment**. There are several ways in which the beneficiaries are approaching this. The most common is going from place to place and enquiring about work, followed by asking for help from personal contacts like friends and family.

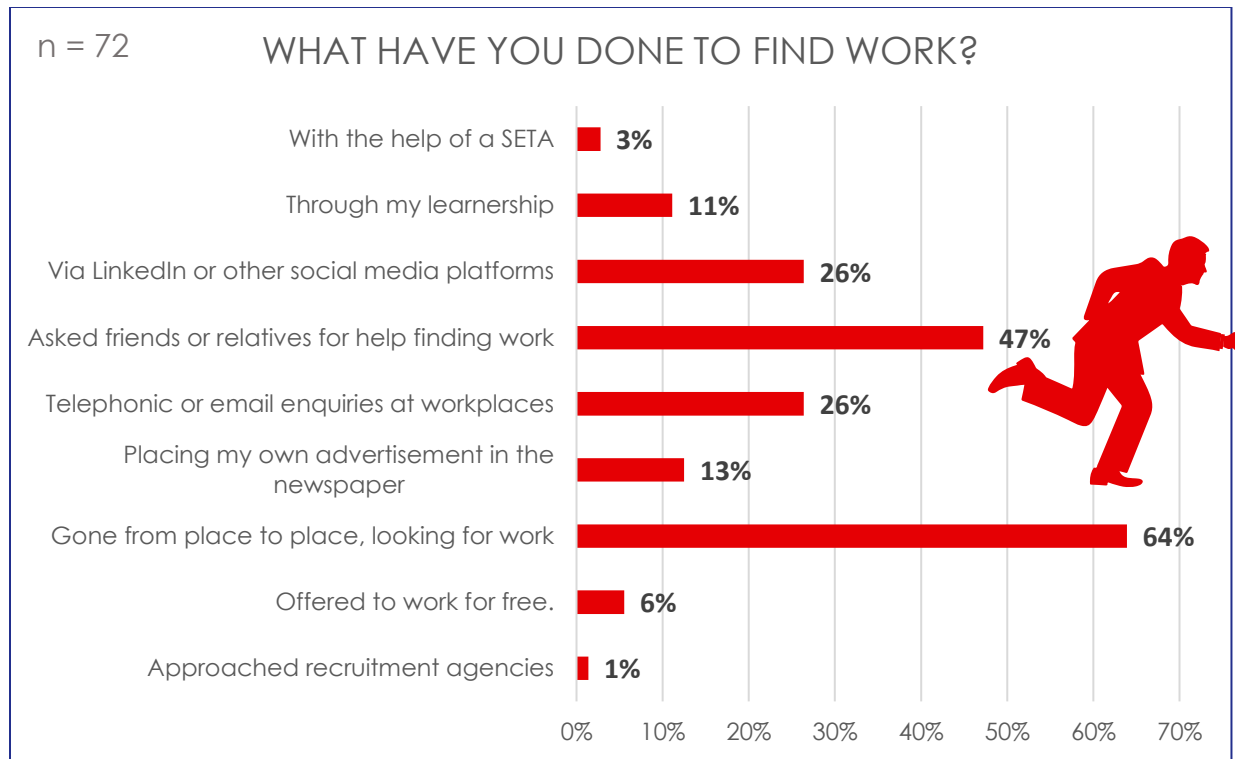


Figure 28: What have the beneficiaries done to find work?

### 3.1.11. Studying

There are a total of five beneficiaries herein, who completed the telephonic or online survey. Although based on the survey data, nine individuals completed another learnership after completing this learnership. Of the 5 beneficiaries currently completing a qualification, three studies full-time and two study part-time. The last group of beneficiaries, post-learnership are those who are currently pursuing further qualifications.

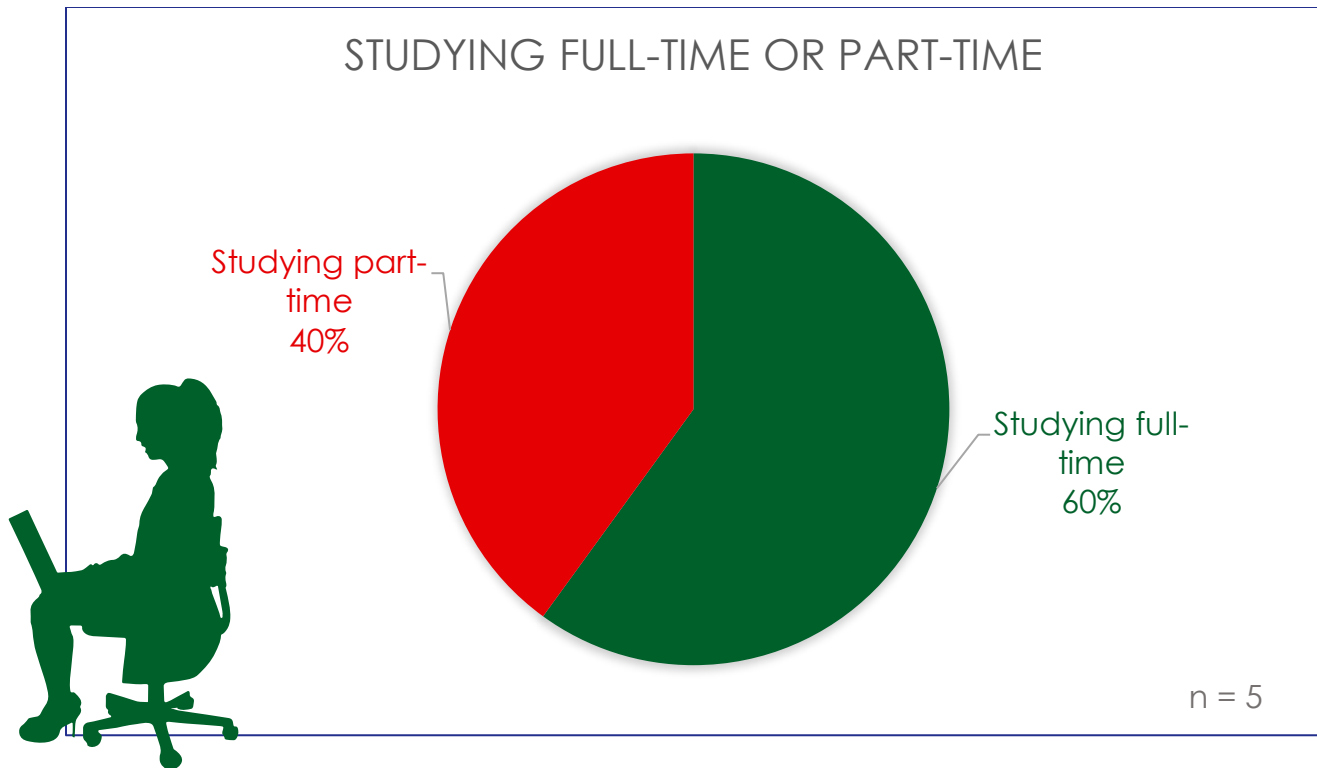


Figure 29: Beneficiaries studying part-time or full-time

Of the beneficiaries currently studying, the institutions they are studying are **TVET Colleges and AET Centres**. Of those, **one beneficiary is studying in the Wholesale and Retail field**. The top three reasons for studying, according to the survey, are:

1. achieve a higher qualification,
2. to increase chances of finding a job, and
3. to increase knowledge of the Wholesale and Retail sector.

This, and the number of beneficiaries who continued studying in some capacity indicates that the Youth Focus Project provided a means for beneficiaries to expand their knowledge base and grow. In the interviews conducted with training providers, it was noted that many of the beneficiaries thoroughly enjoyed learning and the work done in the Youth Focus Project, so much so that many beneficiaries continued studying, past the level 2 qualification and as far as Level 4. This was also noted in interviews with W&RSETA. Additionally, through the interviews, surveys and focus groups, it has come out that the beneficiaries are very much open to continuing this project, with further qualifications, if this were an option.

### 3.4. Efficiency

This chapter contains the assessment of the efficiency of the Youth Focus Project by examining the resources spent on a project against the outputs and benefits that have been derived from these.

#### 3.4.1. Funding instances, throughput, and achievements

Efficiency, according to the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria (Rogers, 2014, p. 7), is “a measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, equipment etc.) are converted into results” For this evaluation. In line with the TOC recreated for the Youth Focus Project, the primary inputs considered were the total expenditure per the Project Closure Form dated 9 March 2022.

The analysis of the efficiency of the Youth Focus Project was therefore conducted using the following data sources:

- **Input:** The input is the total expenditure for the project. The data were derived from the **Project Closure Form dated 9 March 2022**.
- **Activity:** The activity refers to funding the learning programmes the beneficiaries underwent. **The database informed of beneficiaries** provided by the W&RSETA.
- **Output:** The output refers to the beneficiaries who completed the learning programmes.
- **Outcomes:** The outcomes refer to the beneficiaries who found employment after the programme and those who found employment within the wholesale and retail sector.

The following table sets out the expenditure and unit cost as per the indicators set out above:

Table 2: Expenditure and unit cost

Indicator	Total
Actual expenditure (Input)	R13 759 793.89
Unit cost per learner (Activity)	R23 401
Unit cost per completed learning programme (output)	R34 228
Unit cost per employed beneficiary (outcome)	R110 414
Unit cost per employed beneficiary in W&R Sector (outcome)	R137 943

This table indicates the project's relative cost in terms of activities, inputs and outcomes. The total unit cost per learner is indicated as R23 401 per learner. This means that the total cost to put each learner through the project was R23 401. Analysing further, the unit cost per learner who successfully completed the project by achieving the relevant number of credits (120) was R34 228. This cost has increased due to learner drop-offs or

incompletions. Considering the cost per learner employed as a result of the programme, the unit cost came out to R110 414 per learner. This is calculated in relation to the number of currently employed learners, based on the information gathered. Lastly, the unit cost per learner currently employed in the wholesale and retail sector, was R137 943.

The table below shows the activity-to-output **ratio**, as well as the actual expenditure per activity:

Table 3: Output ratio and actual expenditure

Indicator	Total
<b>Activity achieved.</b> (Total number of learners enrolled)	588
<b>Output achieved.</b> (Number of learners that completed the programme)	402
<b>Activity to output ratio</b>	<b>1: 0.68</b>
<b>Outcome achieved.</b> (Number of learners who found employment post-programme)	125
<b>Activity to outcome ratio (employed)</b>	<b>1: 0.21</b>
<b>Outcome achieved.</b> (Number of learners who found employment in the W&R Sector, post-programme)	100
<b>Activity to outcome ratio (employed in W&amp;R Sector)</b>	<b>1: 0.17</b>

This table indicates the output ratio of the project to the overall expenditure, inputs and activities involved. The activity-to-output ratio is positive and indicates that for every person who was funded in the Youth Focus Project, 68% completed and received a qualification. Furthermore, the activity-to-outcome ratio indicates the number of currently employed beneficiaries. This ratio is less favourable and shows that for each beneficiary funded, only 21% are currently employed after the closure of the project. Lastly, the wholesale, and retail sector was considered. In this capacity, only 17% are employed within the wholesale and retail sector for every beneficiary who was funded. This is also not a very favourable ratio and indicates that the project's outputs were not as strong as initially desired.

### 3.4.2. Strengths of the Youth Focus Project

Various data collection sources reported several strengths and positive practices throughout the project. The table below provides a summary of the aspects listed by stakeholders that worked very well upon the inception of the project and throughout its facilitation. This is followed by a review of each of the stakeholders and the strengths regarding the programme, from their perspective'.

Table 4: Strengths of the Youth Focus Project

Stakeholder	Best Practice
Training providers	Stakeholder meetings Open communication Quality assurance W&RSETA engagement Adequate resources
Beneficiaries	Quality Assurance Positive relationships Regular stipends
W&RSETA	Stakeholder meetings Open communication
Mentors and facilitators.	Quality assurance Open communication

#### 3.4.2.1. W&RSETA and training providers

The various stakeholders indicated numerous practices involved in the project that impacted their roles and responsibilities. For example, as indicated in the table above, the training providers all said they had positive relationships between the TVET Colleges and W&RSETA. The interviews with training providers noted that the relationship between themselves and W&RSETA was characterised by open **communication and reciprocity**. The mentors and facilitators contacted confirmed this and brought up the adequate amount of **quality assurance** and **active engagement** by W&RSETA. It was indicated that the W&RSETA was very involved and available with the training at the TVET Colleges. Regular (monthly) stakeholder meetings outlined the current state of the programme, the best practices to be taken up or continued and any challenges, including how to approach them. This was met with great positivity from stakeholders involved in the project and outlined as a strength in the Youth Focus Project.

#### 3.4.2.2. Training providers

Another positive practice noted by the training providers, for the most part,, was that **adequate resources** were available to the TVET Colleges by W&RSETA. Although on occasion, some resources such as printing and textbooks were expensive, the budget they were allocated was mostly sufficient to cover the required apparatus and staff.

#### 3.4.2.3. Mentors and facilitators and beneficiaries

Regarding mentors and facilitators, the positive practices outlined in interviews centred upon the relationships between themselves and the beneficiaries. This is noted to have been a positive practice, as the care and attention paid to the beneficiaries by the mentors and facilitators helped limit the number of drop-offs in the programme. Many beneficiaries noted **positive relationships with lecturers** and **knowledgeable lecturers** as a positive aspect of the learnership. Due in large part to this, The beneficiaries mentioned they had learnt a great deal about the retail industry and that the skills training provided

by the Youth Focus Project taught them the skills necessary to thrive in the retail and wholesale environment.



Figure 30: Skills learnt from the Youth Focus Project 2

#### 3.4.2.4. Beneficiaries

A strength of the learnership for beneficiaries, as highlighted in the survey and interview data, is the regularity of the stipends received. The graph below shows that **71%** of beneficiaries said they regularly received their stipends, and **12% received them on occasion**. This is reiterated by the focus group data, which also indicated regular receiving of stipends.

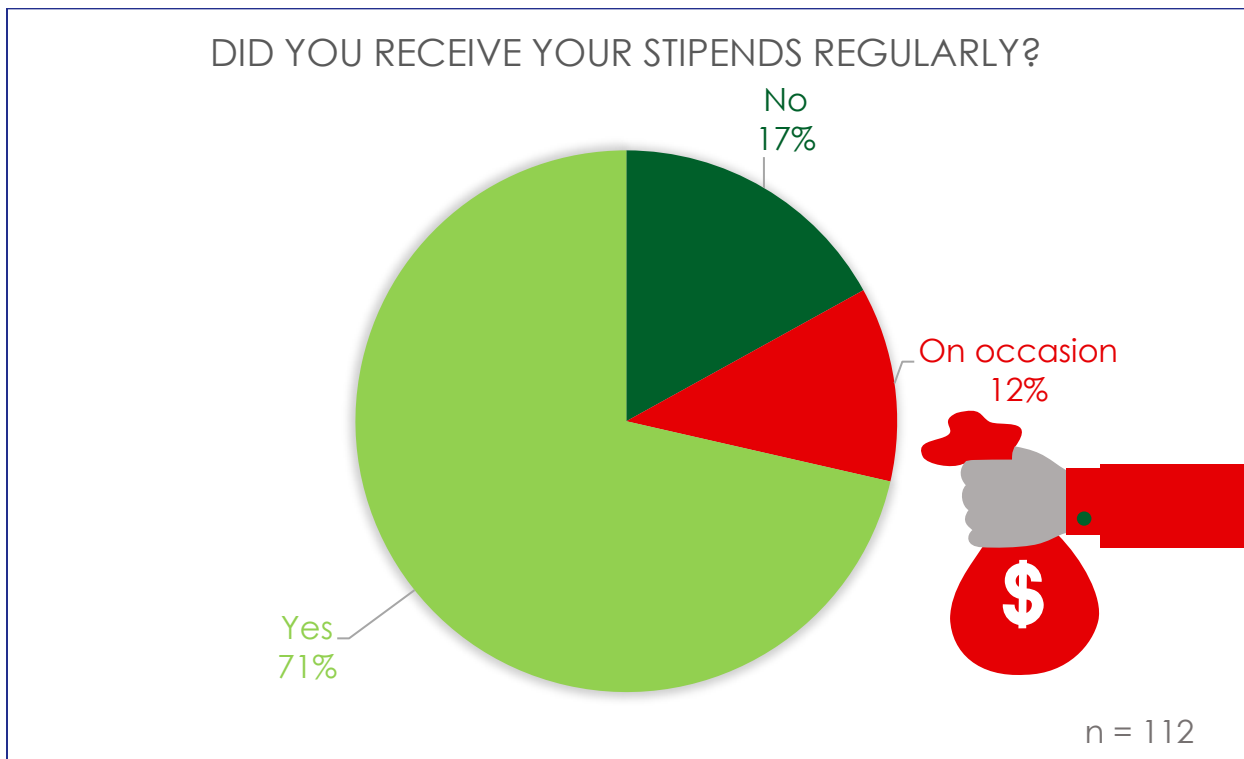


Figure 31: Stipends received by beneficiaries.

The beneficiaries noted the **mentorship they received at the host employer stores** where they worked to benefit the project for the most part. According to the survey data, **68%**

of beneficiaries had a mentor at the workplace, **80% of beneficiaries stipulated that their mentor was present as often as required**, whereas **13% stipulated that their mentor was not present as often as required**. This was reiterated in the survey when asked what the beneficiaries felt went well, as most of beneficiaries noted that mentorship and support was a positive aspect of their experience with the Youth Focus Project.

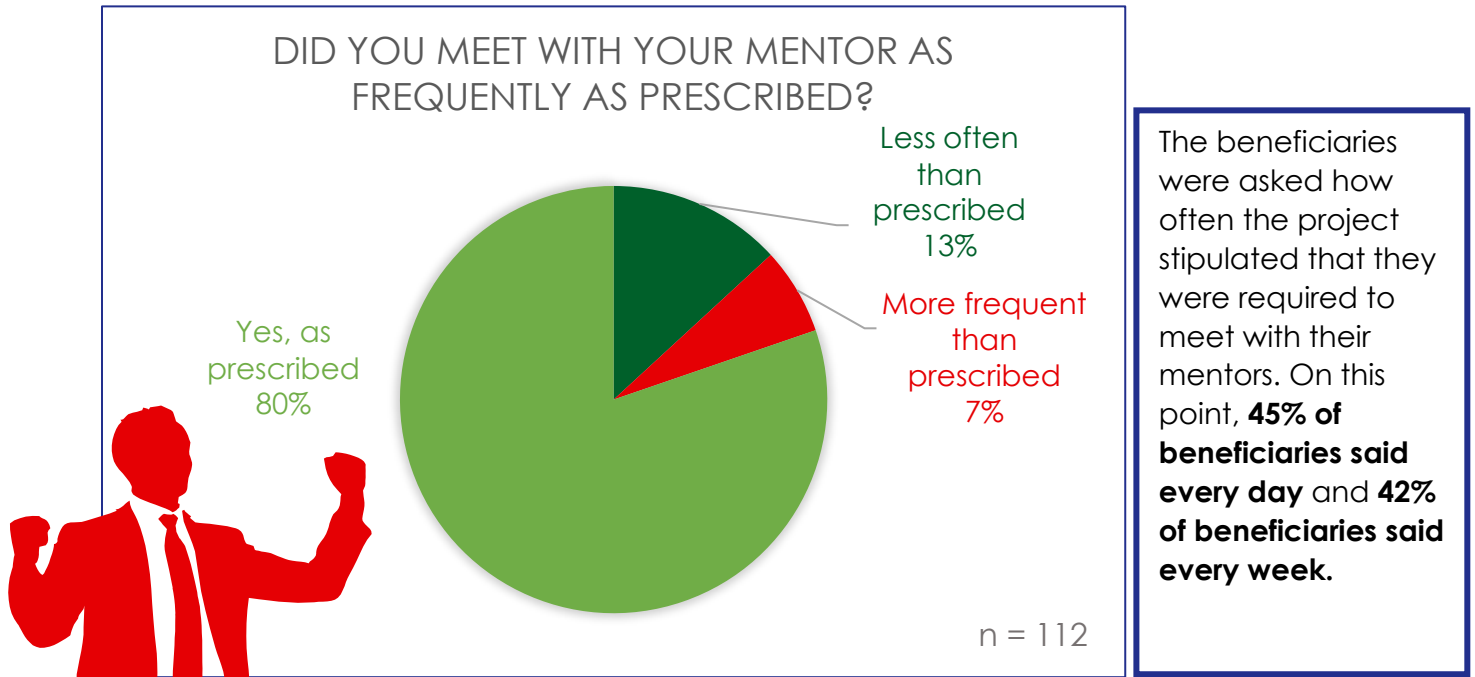


Figure 32: Mentorship of beneficiaries

### 3.4.3. Challenges of the Youth Focus Project

Various data collection sources had reported several challenges experienced throughout the project and the impacts they experienced as a result. Along with the best practices, a few challenges were experienced throughout the project. The table below provides a summary of the aspects listed by stakeholders that were obstacles both upon the project's inception and throughout its facilitation. This is followed by a review of each of the stakeholders and the challenges regarding the programme from their perspective'.

Table 5: Challenges of the Youth Focus Project

Stakeholder	Challenges
Training providers	Host employers Abrupt closure Periods
Beneficiaries	Certificates Student support at the TVET Colleges
W&RSETA	Administration
Mentors and facilitators.	Time Frames

#### 3.4.3.1. W&RSETA

In terms of challenges experienced in the project, a significant difficulty experienced by W&RSETA was **administration**. Noted in interviews with W&RTSETA, there were not enough administration officers involved in the project, which made it difficult to ensure that everything ran efficiently and in the allocated time. These effects extended to the training providers, who also mentioned challenges with time frames. These challenges need to be overcome to ensure the project runs smoothly.

#### 3.4.4. Training Providers

The training providers facilitators and mentors have noted some challenges in terms of **time periods and administration time periods**. It was noted in the interviews held with the stakeholders that the rollover period between level one and two qualifications takes longer than would be ideal regarding their throughout measures and requirements. This is because longer waiting periods between the qualification levels can prevent beneficiaries from moving onwards to further qualifications promptly, as beneficiaries are not noted as having achieved the previous qualification until the administrative measures and processes have been achieved. This was reiterated too by the beneficiaries in the focus groups held herein, who noted the challenges they experienced with this. Training providers noted that a more precise explanation of **what is required by W&RSETA**, when and exactly how (in terms of format, for example) would be constructive, an obstacle which often had to be overcome.

A challenge experienced by the training providers, mentors, and facilitators is **host-employer relationships**. The training providers mentioned that it can be extremely challenging to find and secure host employer sites for the beneficiaries to complete their work placement portion of the learnership.

#### 3.4.3.1. Mentors, facilitators and beneficiaries

The aspect of the learnership highlighted by mentors, facilitators and beneficiaries was the **student support at the TVET Colleges as being vital and thus potentially to be improved**. It was noted in interviews that since the beneficiaries of the Youth Focus Project have struggled in the past, and have come from challenging contexts, student support is vital to ensure that all of the beneficiaries are dedicated to complete the qualification to which they are registered. It was reiterated by the beneficiaries in stakeholder discussions that the colleges did not offer adequate student support and

that the lecturers and facilitators are the same. Placing a lot of pressure on the facilitators to provide the training and the necessary amount of support to the beneficiaries.

#### 3.4.3.2. Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of the Youth Focus Project noted a few challenges they had experienced. These include challenges with **transport** with the college or training centres being far away from their areas of residence. Challenges with **lack of resources** such as computers or WIFI, to enable easier working and studying conditions and the **abrupt close-down of the project due to COVID19**, without the necessary **communication** after that. The beneficiaries noted that it was challenging to be unaware of their futures and the future of the project.



Figure 33: Challenges experienced by beneficiaries.

An additional challenge experienced by the project was that **certificates** have not yet been issued to several learners. As mentioned in focus groups and interviews it prevents beneficiaries from finding stable employment due to a lack of a legitimate and certified document of completion and qualification. Training providers have confirmed that this poses a challenge for them.



Figure 34: Certificated received by beneficiaries.

### 3.4.5. Success factors

Overall, it can be surmised through the data collected, and the discussions had with various stakeholders of the Youth Focus Project that the project was an overall success. The feelings and responses to the project have been overwhelmingly positive, with very few stakeholders reporting that it was not a beneficial experience. When asked whether the Youth Focus Project should be **provided to additional beneficiaries**, all the stakeholders (training providers, mentors and facilitators, W&RSETA stakeholders and beneficiaries) most agreed. Regarding the survey data, **97%** of the beneficiaries agreed. Additionally, when asked whether **the Youth Focus Project should be rolled out in other provinces**, most individuals agreed. ( **96%**)

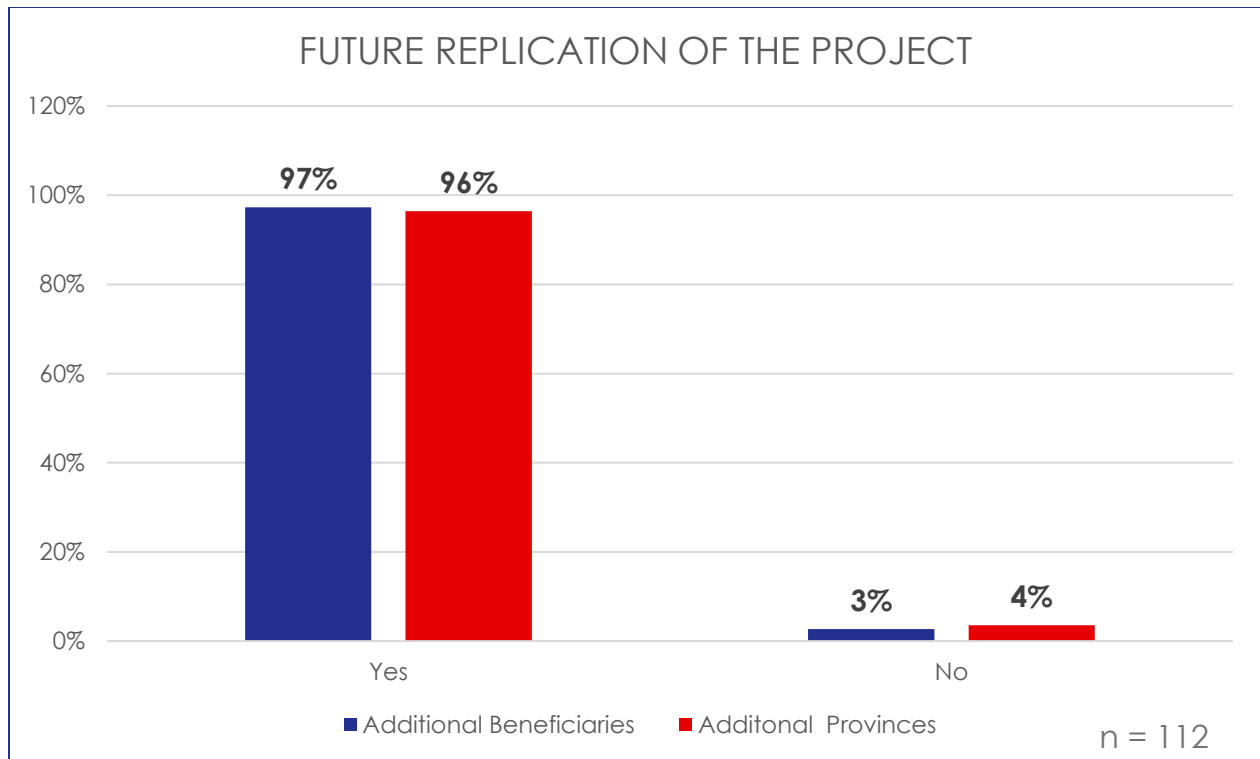


Figure 35: Replication of the Youth Focus Project

Overall; the Youth Focus Project has resulted in qualifications for 402 vulnerable youth. What is notable herein, is the positive reputation of the project from all stakeholders. The beneficiaries (71%) feel equipped with the necessary skills to seek and secure employment. Although some beneficiaries are currently unemployed, this is not necessarily due to a lack of skills. Additionally, several beneficiaries feel that the project helped them grow in other areas, such as self-esteem and confidence and are **grateful for the project** in this regard. They noted that they feel ready to embark professionally.

There was a resounding agreement that beneficiaries would further this qualification or complete a similar one again. The project has overall, succeeded in the goals laid out for it.

## Section 4: Key Research Findings and Recommendations

### 4.1. Key Research Findings

Through various methods of data collection with various stakeholders, this study has investigated the Youth Focus Project in terms of; its alignment with strategic goals and objectives, the effectiveness and efficiency of the study and the strengths and weaknesses stakeholders reported. This section will unpack the key findings relayed

through these study objectives to effectively assess the Youth Focus Project within these areas.

#### **4.1.1. The alignment and achievement of transformation and strategic mandates**

##### **NSDS III**

##### **1. Increased access to occupational programmes.**

The Youth Focus Project has provided 588 vulnerable youth with the opportunity to participate in an occupational programme or start the process of doing so. This project has also provided 144 vulnerable youth with an occupational qualification, the Wholesale and Retail NQF Level 2 Qualification.

##### **2. Growth of public TVET system.**

The Youth Focus Project has made use of TVET Colleges as the training providers for the skills training of the project; these colleges are Boland TVET College, College of Cape Town, False Bay TVET College, Northlink TVET College and South Cape TVET College. This has built strategic partnerships between W&RSETA and the 5 TVET Colleges included in the project. The project has also encouraged 588 students to attend TVET Colleges in the Western Cape.

##### **3. Addressing numeracy and literacy levels.**

As a part of the skills training for the Youth Focus Project, the project has offered vulnerable youth, who were struggling in grades 9 and 10, and who may have otherwise dropped out, not finishing school, an alternative means to literacy and numeracy education and further qualifications. The project has provided the opportunity to take part in a bridging course. This course, the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Education and Training NQF Level 1 Qualification, has increased students' numeracy and literacy levels by providing knowledge and skills to acquire a grade 9 equivalent and enter a TVET institution to gain further qualifications.

##### **W&RSETA**

##### **1. Creating a culture of lifelong learning.**

The Youth Focus Project has created an environment which facilitates lifelong learning. This is because beneficiaries have been encouraged to gain a qualification and learn about the wholesale and retail sector.

##### **2. Addressing historic imbalances within the W&R sector**

The Youth Focus Project has actively addressed the historic imbalances within the W&R sector by providing vulnerable youth with the opportunity to train, achieve skills in and become employed in the wholesale and retail sector. Herein, W&RSETA is creating and opening spaces for disadvantaged and vulnerable youth to partake in and benefit from the wholesale and retail sectors.

### **3. Facilitating funding and accessibility to industry needs.**

The Youth Focus Project has created an opportunity through which 402 beneficiaries can be upskilled directly in relation to industry needs. This is seen in that **75% of beneficiaries feel that the learnership adequately prepared them for the world of work.**

### **4. Aligning with national development strategies to foster skills development in the W&R sector.**

The Youth Focus Project has aligned with the NSDS III to create and facilitate opportunities for skills development within the wholesale and retail sector by providing the opportunity for 588 beneficiaries to partake herein and 402 beneficiaries to achieve a qualification. This has aligned with several strategies, such as:

- ➔ Creating jobs and livelihoods: The Youth Focus Project has **upskilled 402 beneficiaries**, resulting in 324% of said beneficiaries finding **employment**.
- ➔ Improving education and training: The Youth Focus Project provided high quality training to beneficiaries to prepare them for the world of work.

### **5. Achieve the AET L1, 18.2 targets.**

The Youth Focus Project has resulted in 365 unemployed beneficiaries to enrol in and registering for an NQF Level 1 AET Qualification. This has not reached the goal of 750 unemployed learners registered for the qualification, nor has the project resulted in 375 learners completing the NQF Level 1 qualification.

#### **4.1.2. Impact of the Youth Focus Project on beneficiaries**

The impact of the Youth Focus Project on beneficiaries can be understood in terms of the following:

- ➔ The learnership has positively impacted beneficiaries by providing 457 beneficiaries with either an NQF Level 1 or NQF Level 2 qualification.
- ➔ The project increased the ability of the beneficiaries to seek and acquire stable employment, as **71% of beneficiaries said they now have increased career opportunities.**
- ➔ The project has provided an opportunity for the beneficiaries to find employment, the number of employed beneficiaries has **increased from 9% to 29% since the end of the project.**
- ➔ The project has provided an increased income level for several beneficiaries as 53% now earn between R3 201 – R6 400 and 13% earn between R6 401 – R12 800 monthly, before deductions. These increased monthly incomes for beneficiaries indicate the value of the qualification and experience achieved through the project for employers.
- ➔ Furthermore, the beneficiaries' overall household income has increased to 6% of households earning between R 12 801 – R25 600 monthly before deductions. This indicates the broader positive impact the Youth Focus Project has had on beneficiaries, families and communities.

- The learnership has positively impacted beneficiaries in terms of skills development, as **91% of beneficiaries are satisfied with the project**. Most beneficiaries noted that the training is of a high standard. Beneficiaries also said that the skills taught are up-to-date and relevant to industry needs and standards. This indicates that a vast majority of the beneficiaries are satisfied with the skills taught in the project and complete project.
- Overall, the programme appears to have improved the skills and knowledge of beneficiaries in the sector, with **90% of the respondents indicating that they learned more about the industry through the learnership**.
- Most respondents stated they also found **personal value, growth and development** through the Youth Focus Project.
- Many beneficiaries indicated the **lack of certificates** from the programme to negatively affect their future, as they noted the challenge of securing employment without proof of qualification.

#### **4.1.3. The achievement of project objectives in the implementation of the project, including outputs**

The achievement of project objectives will be analysed by relating the outcomes and outputs of the project to the initial goals laid out.

One of the initial goals laid out upon the projects' inception was to provide necessary skills to 660 youth within the Wholesale and Retail sector enabling 418 unemployed youth to enrol in and obtain an NQF Level 1 qualification, and 242 unemployed youth to enrol in and obtain an NQF Level 2 qualification, as contained in the project's Charter Report (W&RSETA, 2019). This goal was not achieved, as the total number of beneficiaries participating in this project was 588. Moreover, the total number of beneficiaries qualifying from the project with either an NQF Level 1 or NQF Level 2 qualification was **402**. This indicates a **61% success rate in terms of providing qualifications**.

Another goal herein was to increase wholesale and retail skills for the beneficiaries. The data indicates that this goal was well achieved, with 91% of the beneficiaries participating in the online/telephonic survey stating that they are satisfied with the project. Regarding skills training, it was reported that **77% of beneficiaries felt that the learnership equipped them to work in the wholesale and retail sector**, and **82% felt it provided them with the necessary skills to seek employment**. This indicates that overall, the reception of the project has been positive, and it can be deduced that most of the beneficiaries felt that the project had upskilled them to secure employment.

Another goal herein was to aid beneficiaries in finding and securing employment, specifically within the wholesale and retail sectors. Although the number of **unemployed beneficiaries increased from 58% to 64%**, the project has shown a positive impact due to the number of **employed beneficiaries growing from 12% to 32%** (part-time, full-time or self-employed).

Increasing the beneficiaries' self-esteem, and confidence was another vital goal of the Youth Focus Project. This goal was achieved, as exhibited through the survey and

interview data. The beneficiaries of the project reported learning several skills which impacted their self-esteem, such as **communication skills (22%)**, which made it easier to connect with and work with their peers and colleagues than previously, and **grown personally and in confidence (9%)**. Note that the learnership taught them how to believe in themselves and work hard for their futures. These sentiments were shared by mentors, facilitators and training providers.

The last goal of the project was to increase strategic relationships among stakeholders. According to the project data, the relationships between the stakeholders varied. The relationship between the training providers (TVET Colleges) and W&RSETA was very positive. It was outlined as being a reciprocal and supportive relationship. However, the relationship between the training providers and industry (namely host employers) was not positive and was characterised by difficulties throughout the project.

#### 4.1.4. The key strengths and challenges of the project

##### 4.1.4.1. The key strengths of the Youth Focus Project

The different stakeholders involved in this project outlined the strengths and best practices, which made the project positive herein. The table below summarises the aspects listed by stakeholders that were positive throughout the project.

Table 6: The key challenges of the Youth Focus Project

Stakeholder	Strength of project
Training Providers	Positive relationships between the training providers and W&RSETA.
W&RSETA	W&RSETA provided adequate quality assurance to the project with numerous visits and open communication herein.
W&RSETA and Training Providers	W&RSETA offers adequate support to training providers.
W&RSETA and Training Providers	Open communication between stakeholders with monthly stakeholder meetings to keep up to date with the project and address challenges or best practices.
W&RSETA and Training Providers	The training providers provided adequate resources due to a reasonable budget.
Beneficiaries and Mentors/Facilitators	Positive relationships between the beneficiaries and the mentors/facilitators helped beneficiaries throughout the project and prevented drop-offs.
Beneficiaries	Regular stipends received by beneficiaries (71%).

Stakeholder	Strength of project
Beneficiaries and Host Employers	Mentorship provided by the host employers to beneficiaries (68%) helped the beneficiaries in the workplace and made the experience more beneficial.

The different stakeholders involved in this project outlined the challenges they experienced throughout the project. The table below summarises the aspects listed by stakeholders that were obstacles throughout the project's run.

*Table 7: Weaknesses of the Youth Focus Project*

Stakeholders	Challenges of the project
W&RSETA	Lack of adequate administration staff involved in the project made it difficult to manage and monitor the project in the allocated periods and caused delays.
W&RSETA and Training Providers	The required administrative tasks (in terms of how, and when they were required) were not expressed in adequate detail by W&RSETA to training providers. This caused confusion, errors and delays in these processes and deliverables.
Training Providers and Host Employers	Challenging relationships between training providers and host employers made it difficult to place beneficiaries at a workplace for the workplace-based learning component of the project.
Training Providers and Beneficiaries	Lack of student support provided to beneficiaries at the TVET Colleges, made it difficult for beneficiaries to navigate the project.
Beneficiaries	Transport difficulties as the Colleges were often far from the beneficiaries' residence. This incurred additional costs on the part of the beneficiaries.
Beneficiaries	Lack of resources to perform adequately by beneficiaries. Examples of this include not enough computers or lack of Wi-Fi/data provided.
Beneficiaries	The abrupt shut-down of the project due to COVID-19 regulations was a challenge, a lack of communication from W&RSETA towards the beneficiaries regarding the future of the project amplified this.

Beneficiaries	Lack of certificates provided to beneficiaries who had completed the project with either qualification (69%) and a lack of communication with beneficiaries in this regard. This made it difficult for beneficiaries to secure employment after completing the project.
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## 4.2. Recommendations

This study will additionally provide recommendations for the Youth Focus Project or future projects of a similar nature. These recommendations have been curated with the project in mind and spoken to the stakeholders involved regarding what went well and what could have been improved. These recommendations are as follows:



W&RSETA is urged to keep **accurate, up-to-date, and ongoing records** of beneficiaries. This ensures that future impact studies can be conducted effectively and efficiently. Suggestions for how to achieve this, include the use of a social media platform such as Facebook or WhatsApp. A group of beneficiaries can keep current with their contact details (contact numbers as well as email addresses) as well as providing a platform through which to contact the beneficiaries in the future, for future studies or with updates for employment opportunities.



W&RSETA should take more time to **train and brief the training providers**, to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of exactly what is required by W&RSETA. Training should be provided to ensure that training providers are aware of how to complete administrative tasks and deliverables for W&RSETA to avoid confusion and delay.



W&RSETA should ensure that the training providers are **completely aware** of the Youth Focus Project entails including the relevant challenges and requirements which come with a project of this nature. This is to ensure that the training providers are equipped with the adequate resources and the correct facilitators and mentors to support the students.



W&RSETA is urged to **aid training providers in terms of securing host employers** for beneficiaries. This is due to the fact that training providers have difficulty locating willing host employers, and perhaps the reputation and influence of W&RSETA would be beneficial to this process. Suggestions were made regarding the possibility of a host employer database through which training providers may contact willing host employers.



W&RSETA is urged to ensure that the training providers are provided with the **necessary funding for the project in a timely manner**, which allows the training providers to begin the training at an effective time.



The W&RSETA should provide **more administration staff at W&RSETA** on projects such as these. This is to ensure the project has adequate support, and that tasks are completed within the relevant time periods.



W&RSETA is urged to consider providing **additional levels in the Youth Focus Project**. Suggestions were made by beneficiaries and training providers alike to extend the project to provide up to an NQF Level 4 Qualification, so that beneficiaries are not limited to the level of qualification they may need or want to work towards.



W&RSETA is urged to ensure that **certificates are issued** to beneficiaries in a timely manner after the completion of the project. This is to ensure the beneficiaries find securing employment more accessible after the learnership.



W&RSETA should be sure to keep an **open line of communication** between themselves and the beneficiaries throughout the project. This is so as to communicate any challenges or changes in the project, and make sure beneficiaries are aware of everything that is happening herein.



W&RSETA is urged to consider **revisiting the Youth Focus Project** considering the positive receptions it has received and the beneficial impact it has brought. It has been requested by all stakeholders that the project is reinstated and rolled out across multiple provinces.

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