The Experiences and Perceptions of unemployed people who participated in the Skills Development Programme: a case study of KwaCeza

By

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents MaMhlakoana and Simon Khumalo and all my elder sisters for the endless years of their support and encouragement that was always readily available to me. Thank you for always believing in my dreams although you are not educated as I am today.

My gratitude further goes to my husband Mandla Mhlongo for always being there and giving me time to do my academic work. Thank you Njomane kaMgabhi

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I would like to express my most sincere and deepest gratitude to the following persons

The Experiences and Perceptions of unemployed people who participated in the

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DECLARATION

I Thobile Qaphelisile Khumalo declare that this dissertation entitled' **The Experiences and Perceptions of unemployed people who participated in the Skills Development Programme: A case study of KwaCeza'** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. It is being submitted for the degree of the Masters of Arts in Community Development at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Howard college campus). It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.

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DATE

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ABSTRACT

South Africa is currently experiencing a paucity of skills in certain occupations and high rate of illiteracy. In order to address these challenges, the government promulgated legislations such as the Skill Development Act, 1998, Skills Development Levies Act,1999, South African Qualifications Act,(SAQA) and other policies aimed at reducing the rate of illiteracy through providing Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET).

These are progressive and commendable policies, as part of their implementation, many people (unemployed and employed) have received training in various trades using funds from the National Skills Fund (NSF). The study was therefore undertaken in order to learn about beneficiaries' experiences and perceptions they hold towards these programmes. This study was conducted at KwaCeza through the Masibumbane community development project. The members of the Masibumbane community development project received skills training which was funded by the Department of Labour (NSF) in 2005. The training was aimed at enhancing their chances of accessing income generating opportunities. They were trained in carpentry, bricklaying, sawing and poultry farming. The study sought to establish how these project members perceived the skills development programme and learn more about their experiences during and after receiving training.

The findings of the study revealed that the Skills Development Programme is perceived certainly as one of the effective programmes the government has ever introduced in South Africa. If well co-ordinated, it can play an important role in closing the skills gap that exists in the South African economy. However, the main challenge is that the majority of the people trained could not access job opportunities and have therefore lost hope. It became clear that the training they received was not demand led. The training was not linked to job opportunities available in the community, the people that were trained had no choice, but to take what was offered to them as they were desperate for income generating opportunities. The group that was trained in sewing and poultry farming had no

market for their produce. This therefore implies that the Department of Labour as the custodian of skills development cannot successfully create employment opportunities for the unemployed people without the participation of various state departments and private sector. Other stakeholders need to work hand in glove with the Department of Labour in order to ensure that people are equipped with relevant skills and are able to access income generating opportunities in the open labour market.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	**Adult Basic Education and Training**
DoL	**Department of Labour**
EPWP	**Expanded Public Works Programme**
HRD	**Human Resource Development Strategy**
IDP	**Integrated Development Plan**
NSF	**National Skills Fund**
NSDS	**National Skills Development Strategy**
NQF	**National Qualifications Framework**
RDP	**Reconstruction and Development Programme**
SDA	**Skills Development Act**
SDLA	**Skills Development Levies Act**
SAQA	**South African Qualifications Authority**
SETA	**Sector Education and Training Authority**
SDP	**Skills Development Programme**
VET	**Vocational Education and Training**

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

According to Mayer and Altman (2005:36) any account of South Africa's economic development trajectory would be incomplete without an analysis of the impact of apartheid policies that permeated every aspect of the economy, polity and society.

South Africa is currently faced with many social concerns that have been identified by both domestic and international investors. They include unemployment, poverty, shortage of skills and poor quality of education, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, wide-spread crime and violence. Many of these can be traced back to the policies of the apartheid government that discriminated against certain racial groups, especially the black population. Black people were restricted from participating in some of the development initiatives of the apartheid government. The education system at that time discriminated against blacks as there were trades that were specifically designed for white people.

The majority of the black population was therefore not afforded an opportunity of attending school; hence there is a high illiteracy rate of 24% among adults in black communities (Human Resource Development Strategy of South Africa, 2010-2030). There was a severe shortage of schools especially in areas that were allocated to black people, even the conditions in those areas made it difficult for black people to attend school. Even in work places skills were closely

tied to race, with whites dominating the managerial and technical positions while black Africans occupied mostly the unskilled positions.

May (2000:26) states that poverty traps set by apartheid remain an important explanation for the persistence of poverty in South Africa. May asserted that many distortions and dynamics introduced by apartheid continue to reproduce poverty and perpetuate inequality in South Africa. He further mentions that the impact of purposeful discrimination and oppression, the absence of information concerning rights, roles, and responsibilities, and the lack of accountability by all levels of government, resulted in the erosion of the asset base of individuals, households and communities.

Training in South Africa has undergone a great deal of change since the first democratic election in 1994, when South Africans voted a new government into office. After years of apartheid, when developmental opportunities were subject to classification and job reservation, it was necessary to change the face of labour legislation to provide people previously disadvantaged by the system with access to training and development. This resulted in a variety of interrelated laws designed to redress the discrimination of the past and to open doors for people who had been excluded under apartheid.

The government had enacted the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) and the Skills Development Act no. 97 of 1998, in order to address the problem of the high unemployment rate that was (24% in 1998) according to the Labour force survey (2010), address unequal distribution of income, inequality of opportunity based on the legacy of apartheid, poverty and low levels of investment in the South African labour market. The Skills Development Act requires that twenty percent of the Skills Development levy focuses on the

education and training needs of the marginalized groups including women, people with disabilities, rural and unemployed people (Mercorio, *et al,* 1999: 51). Through this Act (Skills Development Act), large amounts of money were invested in training unemployed people, who were economically vulnerable, throughout South Africa.

The project under study (Masibumbane) is one of the many that benefited from this initiative. This project is based at KwaCeza. A detailed historical evolution of the project is provided on page 10. KwaCeza is a rural community under the Zululand District Municipality, in northern KwaZulu-Natal. Zululand is primarily a rural district with a population of 957,700 people living in 866 dispersed settlements and six urban areas. The Zululand district municipality has five constituent Local Municipalities (eDumbe, uPhongolo, Abaqulusi, Ulundi and Nongoma. It has two major towns, Vryheid and Ulundi, both of which are located near the national road and rail networks. Vryheid is a commercial and business centre, while Ulundi is an administrative centre with the seat of the District municipality and a well equipped airport. Ceza falls under Ulundi Local Municipality.

According to the Zululand Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2008, the number of households is estimated at 168,018 with an average household size of 5.7. Most of the rural settlements are small, making service delivery costly. About half the area falls under the jurisdiction of Traditional Authorities, the remainder being privately owned commercial farms, protected areas, or privately owned land in towns. The District experiences high levels of poverty and has a high incidence of HIV/AIDS infection. Another prevailing problem is poor accessibility to basic facilities and services. At present, the estimated backlog for Reconstruction and

Development Programme (RDP) standard water is 112,866 and RDP sanitation 85,888.

Up to the early 1990s, Zululand's economic base depended heavily on coal mining, supported by agriculture, transport, trade and government services. Formal economic activity was strongly concentrated in the then Vryheid magisterial district, from which no less than 73% of GDP was generated. Administrative and government services were concentrated in Ulundi and Vryheid. A significant weakness was, and remains, the reliance on the primary sector (44, 4% of GDP), and the underdeveloped manufacturing sector, which contributed only 6, 4% of GDP.

By the late 1990s, Zululand had experienced an economic decline due to the effects of an open market policy on coal mining and agriculture. By 2000, all but one (Zululand Anthracite Colliery) of the large-scale mining operations had closed. Although tourism is starting to play a large role, this by no means fills the gap caused by the closing of the mines. The latter had a knockdown effect on all economic sectors and has been felt particularly in Vryheid and surrounding areas.

The informal sector (mainly petty commodity trading) has grown considerably over the last decade, but is constrained by the slump in primary and secondary sectors of the formal economy. Zululand's potential for economic growth lies in tourism and agriculture.

The current socio-economic reality of the Zululand District Municipality
The socio-economic reality in Zululand does not differ substantially from that found elsewhere in South Africa, however, in most instances the current reality

represents the extremes of general trends found elsewhere. Most significant in terms thereof are high HIV/AIDS infection rates, high levels of poverty and high levels of unemployment.

The Zululand District Municipality, due to its location in relation to transport routes and its distance from major centers, is relatively isolated from the national economy. Further to this, access to basic factors of production such as raw materials, skilled labour and infrastructure is generally limited. Raw materials available in the area relate to coal mining and agricultural activities including maize, beef, and timber and sugar production. Local beneficiation of raw materials is limited.

The area reflects the disparity in access to resources evident in all areas of KwaZulu–Natal where poverty stricken traditional authority areas border on well-established commercial farming areas.

1.2 Background and outline of the research problem
1.2.1. Present situation at Ceza

There are some major development changes that have taken place at Ceza since the arrival of the missionaries in 1922. According to the IDP for the Zululand District Municipality, there has been a significant increase in settlements in the area and infrastructure development such as clinics, hospitals, and roads although these are still gravel roads. The area is made up of eight settlements. Five settlements fall under the Ndebele Tribal Authority i.e. Chibini, Mkhulwane, Nende and Zembeni and Esidakeni. Three fall under Buthelezi Tribal authority i.e. Nende, Nhlonga and Dlakude. The members of the Masibumbane project come from these different settlements.

In terms of social activities, not much happens in the area. For young people who do not play soccer, there is very little available for them to occupy leisure time. There is a general paucity of sporting facilities locally, and at local municipal levels. Some members of the community have complained that because the youth have nothing to keep them occupied, they end up taking drugs and involving themselves in criminal activities. The social circumstances in the area are seen as the cause of loosing young educated people who emigrate to urban areas.

Economically, the area depends largely on the public sector. The hospital, police station, post office and school employ the majority of the local people. Some small businesses such as the supermarket, filling station and bottle store create a few employment opportunities with very low salaries. In addition there are a number of informal businesses that are operated from homes and community development projects which are not generating income but are survivalist in nature. These are initiatives predominantly run by women. Owing to poor management and lack of skills, these are not as productive as one would expect them to be.

Many years ago, the community depended solely on subsistence farming. People had extensive fields of maize and they kept livestock. Today very few people are able to practice both methods of farming concurrently because of poor soil conditions, fertilizers and irrigation systems which are not available. Agriculture has not proved to be a viable option, hence there is high rate of poverty, shortage of skills and unemployment especially among the youth. Unemployed people depend on their family members who work in urban areas. Recently there has been an increase in the number of families who solely depend on social grants in the form of pensions, disability allowances and child support.

1.2.2 The research problem

South Africa is currently faced with the problem of skills shortages and high rate of illiteracy. This could be attributed to the policies of the apartheid government which discriminated against some of the racial groups. The blacks were the most affected. Many people are living in poverty, and the rate of unemployment is high. In its latest quarterly Labour Force Survey, Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) reported that the total number of unemployed people stood at 4, 19-million in September 2009. According to StatsSA, 55% of the total population in South Africa is the South African Labour force. The unemployment rate in the Zululand District Municipality is 60.9% (Zululand District Municipality, 2009, spatial development framework)

Stats SA reported that the number of employed people fell by 484 000 to 12, 89-million. The rise in unemployment was exacerbated by a fall in employment, with 510 000 people either giving up looking for work or taking themselves out of the labour force completely, some opting to further their studies.

In order to address the problem of unemployment, the government of National unity passed legislations (Skills Development Act, 1998 and the Skills Development Levies Act, 1999) that were aimed at improving skills of both the employed and unemployed people. It was envisaged that skills acquisition will facilitate people's access to employment opportunities.

Through the Skills Development Act, no.97 1998, and the Skills Development Levies Act, 1999, the government established the National Skills Fund (NSF) in order to ensure that there is enough funding for improving skills of both the employed and unemployed South African citizens. South Africans have benefited from this initiative. Millions have been spent in training unemployed people in

order to increase their chances of accessing employment opportunities or of starting up income generating initiatives. The main problem is the fact that millions of tax payers' money has been spent in training the unemployed people through out the country, but evidence on whether such programmes do change lives of the poor for the better is difficult to find.

The project under review, (the Masibumbane Community Development Project) is one of the many projects that received training through this government's initiative. Forty eight members of this project received skills training which was funded by the Department of Labour through the NSF from January to June 2005. Twelve Project members were trained in Carpentry, twelve in Bricklaying, twelve in Sewing and twelve Poultry farming. Each member had an opportunity of attending one course. In selecting beneficiaries for attending training, project leaders requested the local authorities (Amakhosi) to intervene in order to avoid conflict, households that did not have any form of income were given first preference.

The main purpose of the skills training was to bring about change in the lives of the unemployed people in order to help them get out of poverty. This could be achieved through either being able to access jobs in the open labour market or to start up their own businesses/ income generating projects.

 This study therefore seeks to investigate people's experiences during and after receiving training and the perceptions they hold about the programme. Through this study, one would be able to tell whether skills training do increase chances of earning an income for the unemployed people as this was the main intention for designing this programme. Studies of this nature advance the knowledge of the

effectiveness of skills development programmes in enhancing unemployed people's chances of accessing income generating opportunities.

Similar to the skill development programme under investigation, is the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) which was introduced in 2004 by the ANC government in order to address the problems of poverty and unemployment. Kraak (2008) states that the main objective of the EPWP was to provide up to 200,000 employment opportunities each year over an initial five year period, together with skills training and work experience to make possible for workers to access employment opportunities in the open labour market after graduation from EPWP employment. The design of the EPWP is more similar to that of the Skills Development Programme under study.

Kraak, and Press, (2008: 347) say that at the core of the EPWP strategy is the idea that skills and experience gained through programme participation will translate into improved labour market performance, with workers moving from the periphery to the centre of the labour market after graduation from the programme. This assumes that there is a direct reciprocal relationship between improved skills and improved labour market performance, and that some incremental labour market benefit will accrue in line with incremental skills acquisition.

GDS-NSDS (2009) report states that the government was able to meet its target of training 360 000 unemployed people between 2005 and 2008. Some investigation, even on a very small scale, becomes critical in order to assess the impact of such training on the vulnerable groupings; hence this investigation through the Masibumbane Community Development Project is conducted.
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Ceza was selected for the case study because it is one of the emerging rural nodes in the Ulundi Local Municipality; hence, part of it has been earmarked by the Local Municipality's IDP as a potential rural service centre. The locality of the area is also of interest because it comprises two Tribal Authorities, the Ndebele and Buthelezi Tribal authorities.

1.3 The historical evolution of the Masibumbane Project

The project under study was initiated by the unemployed people of KwaCeza in 2004. These people were grouped together by the officials from the Department of Social Development and the Department of Agriculture. They received sawing machines and poultry farming equipment for starting up the project. The purpose was to engage them in income-generating opportunities as they were unemployed.

As previously mentioned, in 2005 these people received training from the Department of Labour. Large amounts of money were invested in training these unemployed people with the hope that such training will eventually enhance their chances of generating income.

The twelve (12) unemployed people were trained in carpentry over 90 days, twelve were trained in bricklaying over 80 days, twelve were trained in sawing over 110 days and twelve were trained in poultry farming over sixty (60) days. All groups attended during the week with no breaks in between. Training commenced in January 2005 in all courses, but completion dates varied because of the length of the courses. The longest course (sawing 110 days) was completed in June 2005. The four groups were funded as follows:

TABLE 1

Funding break down of the project

Groups (12 members per group)	Value of material received	Income and expenditure
Carpentry	R50.000	The researcher could not access information on project's income and expenditure. The person that was responsible for keeping such information had left the group and it transpired that training on book keeping and financial management was not provided.
Sawing	R50.000	
Brick laying	50.000	
Poultry Farming	R60.000	
TOTAL	**R210.000.00**	

1.4 The following are the key questions asked:

1. What are the people's experiences and perceptions regarding skills development programmes?

   1.1 What are the benefits of participating in the skills programme?

   1.2 What are the challenges involved?

2. What activities do people engage in after receiving skills training? If none, why is it so?

This research therefore explores the experiences and perceptions the unemployed people (Masibumbane project members) hold with regards to the programme. Only those who completed the courses were considered as subjects in this research.

1.5 Objectives of the study

The following are the specific objectives of the study:

a) To ascertain the benefits and constraints experienced by the unemployed people in engaging in skills development activities and initiatives.

b) To determine whether skills development programmes do increase chances of getting employment upon completion of the programme.

c) To ascertain the perceptions of participants regarding the usefulness of skills acquired during training.

1.6 Research Methodology

This research uses a case study as it is one of the three major types of qualitative research methods. Merriam and Simpson (1995: 108) define a case study as 'an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as an individual, group, institution or community'. Its focus is on investigating many, if not all of the variables in a single unit. By concentrating upon a single phenomenon or entity ('the case'), this approach seeks to uncover the interplay of significant factors that is characteristic of the phenomenon (Merriam and Simpson, 1995: 108).

1.7 Sampling procedure

The total population where the study was conducted was thirty nine project members. The number had dropped from 48 since other people had left the project.

Sixteen members of the Masibumbane project served as subjects of the study. Seven were male and nine were female. The sixteen was made up of four respondents from the carpentry group (two male and two female), four from bricklaying (all male), four from poultry farming, (one male and three female) and

four respondents from the sawing group (all female). Subjects were selected from the group using a non-probability sampling procedure i.e. it depended on who was available at the time of the interview. For the purpose of this study, the researcher wanted a sample of sixteen project members from the total of forty eight. Sixteen was selected because this is a small research project and convenient for the study.

For data collection, a questionnaire (interview schedule) was compiled in both English and Zulu since all respondents were Zulu-speakers, and the interview was conducted in Zulu. Members were assured of confidentiality on all information shared during the interviews; it was properly explained to them that the conversation was recorded to ensure accurate capturing of data. Each interview lasted between one and half hours to two hours.

The questionnaire comprised the following: demographic details of each subject, nature of training attended, perceptions and experiences of subject regarding training received, employment status of subjects. Demographic details of each subject were explored in order to create a clear picture as to the background of the sample. This was also beneficial to the researcher in providing a more concrete contextual perspective regarding the participants' living conditions. The demographic details were categorised according to age, gender, marital status, education and employment status.

The questions from the latter section included the following:
- Subject's perceptions and experiences regarding training
- Nature of training received
- Benefits of attending training
- Challenges

- Employment status

The advantage of using an interview schedule is that it ensures that the same questions are used by all subjects to solicit similar responses. The disadvantage is that it takes too much time as some people enjoy relating stories, sometimes diverging from the questions asked.

1.6 Outline / description of the Dissertation

This dissertation is made up of five chapters. Chapter one entails the introduction to the study, the background and statement of the problem, the research problem and objectives of the study, and the methodology.

Chapter two reviews literature on issues pertaining skills development locally, nationally and internationally. Chapter three elaborates on the research design used when conducting the study. Chapter four presents the findings of the study and contains a detailed analysis of the research findings. Based on these findings, chapter five entails recommendations and conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter dissertates on the theoretical framework of Skills Development. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first part provides a conceptual framework upon which the study has been based, the second section gives an overview of the skills shortages in South Africa, the third part analyses legislation and policies as implemented by the democratic government of South Africa in order to address the problem of skills shortages in the country, the last section identifies international trends and debates around skills development.

According to Bennel (1999,9) there is an extraordinary absence of good quality, comprehensive data concerning the provision of training to the poor and the outputs and impacts of this training effort which in itself, amounts to an information crisis. Most attempts to review the global experience of training for the poor are characterized by sweeping, unsubstantiated observations, generalizations and recommendations, with most reports repeating the same examples of successful and unsuccessful interventions.

Despite the alleged superiority of NGO skills training interventions, there is no documented evidence to suggest that they are any better at monitoring and evaluating outputs and impacts. Given this paucity of information, it is not possible to draw any solid conclusions about recent trends in the provision of training to the target groups. However, a proper quantification of all types of training activities that directly and indirectly impact on the poor would almost

certainly reveal a far greater level of training provision than is commonly assumed. It is frequently stated that social and private returns to training for the poor are low, but there is little or no documented evidence to support these claims.

The problem regarding the paucity of information on skills training for the poor as cited by Benell is one of the reasons that motivated the study of this nature. People of Ceza have been receiving skills training from both the public and private sector (NGOs), but no evidence has been documented in as far as these trainings are concerned. It is not known whether there are any social or private returns that could be linked to such initiatives. No one has ever gone back to the people to talk about their experiences and perceptions regarding the training they received.

More emphasis has also been put on assisting small medium micro enterprises (SMMEs) with funding so that they can grow and be able to employ more people. Many people have received training on business management in order to ensure that they manage their businesses successfully. In the absence of jobs in the country, it is hoped that such businesses will create more employment opportunities. Webster and Van Holdt, (2005:361) confirm that the traditional workplace is being eroded and new forms of work are emerging. These are forms of work where there is no employer. In the absence of effective social protection for the unemployed, coupled with wage subsidies, many people are engaged in income generating activities (IGAs) of some kind as a survival strategy of last resort.

Webster *et al* (2005:373) cite challenges that are faced by these new forms of work. It is said that these activities often do not fit the profile of traditional

expectations of small business, but as long as they are selling a product or a service instead of selling their labour. People who make a living in this way are more exposed to the challenges faced by small business owners than those faced by organised labour. Thus, the strategies of labour are often only of indirect assistance to them. Webster *et al* state that a key hindrance on the income levels of participants is the capacity of the local market to absorb their products.

The cost of the distance is the only competitive advantage for local producers, but if their raw material inputs such as sewing material, or juice bottles are sourced from the core economy, this advantage is largely cancelled out. There are very few centralized market places where volume trade is possible, for example in rural towns and at pension points. However, few rural producers live in these towns, more often, they are village based. Marketing their goods in town involves high costs. And when people from villages come to town to buy, they usually do not want to buy village produced products, they prefer branded products.

Where opportunities do exist in local markets, they are usually for niche markets and small volumes which mean they can support very few people. Attempts to explore higher value markets beyond the local community have encountered a lot of challenges.

In the Khanya-aicdd, (2008) report, participants highlighted the following as some of the challenges that hindered smooth functioning of their income generating projects: poor management skills and mismanagement of resources; lack of money and necessary inputs (such as electricity, appropriate workspace); loss of markets; poor planning (including crop planning and marketing); inappropriate or difficult training; theft; and internal conflict.

Webster, *et al* (2005: 374) further maintains that it often happens that people are randomly grouped and told "you will do juice making, you will do bread baking, and you will do sewing". While there are contexts in which all of these are viable businesses, there are great deals more contexts in which they are not. While there may be a greater degree of consultation and participation than this, this business idea comes from the project implementers or its viability in a given context is not effectively interrogated. Prospective participants, with no prior business experience, learn from limited role models they have seen in their local economy.

In such groupings, project members often have high expectations of the income they will receive and the profits they will share. When these hopes are dashed, it usually leads to conflict and division. The collective group structure means that many rural projects struggle under the weight of a massive oversupply of labour relative to the capital they have available to invest in productive activity. Even where they have the seed capital to produce high volumes, the market is a key constraint. According to Webster, *et al (2005)* it is given that employment fulfills a range of social functions beyond remuneration, and that unemployment has a range of social and psychological effects, with a diminished sense of self –worth being the most obvious

There is a great extent to which both participation in training and participation in a project activity enhance people's sense of self-worth and their perception of how they are viewed in the community. Surprisingly, these effects seem to apply even when the project is dismally failing in relation to its supposed intention i.e. income generation. Continued participation generates returns of respect and recognition. (Webster, *et al,* 2005:375).

2.2 Theoretical framework of the study

The study sought to establish, through the experiences and perceptions of the project members under investigation, whether there is any link between training and employment creation as the South African Government has spent large amounts of money, training the unemployed people with the hope that they will be able to access job opportunities after receiving skills training.

The study is therefore built upon two theories i.e. Human Capital Theory and the Livelihood Dimensions and Sustainable livelihoods Approach. The human capital theory suggests that training plays an important role in increasing productivity in the work place and the sustainable livelihoods approach maintains that people utilise resources at their disposal to sustain livelihood. In this instance, the provision of training can be regarded as the resource that was made available to people in order to improve their skills so that they can sustain their livelihood.

Human Capital Theory

Human capital refers to the skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health that enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood objectives. People regard ill-health or lack of quality education as core dimensions of poverty and therefore overcoming these conditions may be one of their primary livelihood objectives. (Department for International Development Report-DFID, 2009)

Marshall *et al* (1980:263) maintain that when the quality of education and training is improved it leads to increased productivity and when the productivity is increased there will be higher earnings.

Marshal *et al* (1980:263) explain the relationship between education and training by using theory illustrated by paths A and B as follows:

Human capital theory

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+------------------------------------------------------------------+
|                           A                        B             |
|                           Increased                Higher        |
|                                                                  |
|  EDUCATION AND TRAINING                                          |
|                                         ↗                        |
|                                  ↘     ╱              ↓           |
|                           Productivity            Earnings       |
|                                                                  |
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Livelihood Dimensions and Sustainable livelihoods Approach

According to Chambers, (1995: 23), livelihood refers to "the activities which make up a living". A livelihood gives support for the enhancement and exercise of capabilities, and capabilities enable a livelihood to be gained. Sustainability in livelihoods is realized when there is a long term prospect of sustenance and when it copes with shocks and stresses. The sustainable livelihood approach explains how households utilise resources available to them to construct livelihood strategies at the local level.

In this approach, success is measured through any potential or actual change in the livelihoods of people. At the heart of the skills development programme is the idea that people will be able to earn an income after receiving training, the study therefore seeks to investigate whether such training was able to change people's lives for the better as per the programme objective.

According to the Department for International Development,2009,9) "the objective of sustainable livelihoods is to improve access to high-quality education, information, technologies, and training and better nutrition and health. These can be achieved through the following:

- Direct support to asset accumulation: to health/education/training infrastructure, to the development of relevant knowledge and skills(these should be developed with and made readily available to the poor)
- Indirect support (through Transforming Structures and Processes): Reform of health/education/training policies, changes in local institutions that limit access to education/training/health
- Feedback from achievement of livelihood outcomes(virtuous circles) : Higher income is often reinvested in education, health status is directly related to income/food security (with relevant knowledge)".

2.3. Skills shortages in South Africa

Recently there has been a complaint from both the public and private sectors regarding the shortage of skills in South Africa. Many have associated this problem with the high rate of unemployment that is severely affecting a large number of South African citizens.

Apartheid left a highly deficient skills system in South Africa. "It has been characterized as an example of low skills equilibrium, a weak institutional environment based on voluntarism, and the continuation of a racially defined education labour market regime". (Kraak and Young, 2005: 518).

According to Daniels (2007:1) 'Skills shortages' is an obscure concept that embodies many specific components, but the main idea is that the demand for

certain skills exceeds supply. It is noted that there is traditionally a difference in the way that economists think of skills shortages and the manner in which the state has defined it. For economists, the most important aspect of any debate around skills is its relationship to productivity in the firm.

Daniels continues to say that, Government has defined skills shortages without taking this relationship into account. Shortages are defined in both absolute and relative terms, but neither of these concepts is related to productivity. This therefore results in disagreements between Government departments (e.g. Department of Labour and Department of Home affairs) over the precise number of occupational skills shortages. Given this definition of skills shortages, it is important to clarify the components of the problem as presented in the Government literature. Firstly skills are understood to refer to both qualifications and experience. Scarce skills, in the language of the Department of Labour and the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), is defined to refer to "occupations in which there is 'scarcity of qualified and experienced people, currently or anticipated in the future, either because such skilled people are not available, b) because they are available but do not meet employment criteria" (Food and beverage SETA, 2005: 42).

Critical skills refer to "specific skills within an occupation". In the South African concept there are two groups of critical skills: (1) generic skills, including problem solving and learning to learn, language, literacy or numeric skills, and working in teams for example; particular occupational skills required for permanence within that occupation.

Kraak A, *et al* (2008:360) state that the high skills such as computer science and data processing, engineering, mathematical science, pharmaceutical science,

biological sciences, chemistry and physics are the most demanded in the country, but it is not easy to put an exact figure to skills needs and shortages. The limited availability of such skills is widely considered to be a major constraint on growth in South Africa, the number of people who possess specific skills has so far eluded analysts and policy planners. This makes it difficult to invest in training interventions. In addition to the problem of skills shortages is the fact that skills are not an independent input to production processes. Human capital interacts with other productive inputs and they jointly determine the efficiency at which firms operate.

The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) and the Department of Labour (DOL) compiled different lists on what they regard as scarce in South Africa. While the principle of importing skills is a sound one, the precise occupations identified by the DHA is perhaps more debatable, even more so when one questions how they arrived at the specific numbers. When compared with the DOL's list, it has occupations that include machine operators and managers, whereas the DHA's list does not.

It is interesting to note that some of the skills e.g. carpentry and bricklaying that were provided to the people of Ceza form part of the skills that are in the scarce skills lists because these people are qualified artisans, but matching them with job opportunities remains a challenge as there are no job opportunities in their respective community.

In order to address the shortage of skills in South Africa, Joint Initiative on Priority Skills (JiPSA) as part of the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsGISA) was launched in 2006. JIPSA seeks to equip people with skills so that they can participate in accelerated growth.

According to Kraak and Press (2008: 347), the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa identified shortages of professional skills as a major constraint on both public infrastructure and private investment programmes .It mandated the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition to urgently identify skills needed. The motivation behind Government's Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) is the view that a shortage of skills is constraining GDP growth. Lest there be any doubts as to current thinking on the importance of skills to the broader economy's benefit, consider the words of the former Deputy President of South Africa, Ms Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka (2006) at the launch of JIPSA.

> "…Yet both unemployment and poverty are still at unacceptably high levels, which mean our growth is not fairly shared. The most fatal constraint to shared growth is skills, and it should be noted that skills are not just one of the constraints facing South Africa, but a potentially fatal constraint. That fact should be admitted with emphasis. We have to overcome the shortage of suitable skilled labour if our dreams for this economy are to be realized, the task is huge…"

Skills and Employment Creation

McGrath,(2005:1) states that there is documented proof internationally and in South Africa that those with more education and training are more likely to be successful in accessing income generating opportunities. However, three important cautions should be considered. First, this finding may reflect the likelihood that those with higher levels of education and training will enter directly into the higher reaches of the economy. Second, this is related to the evidence that there appears to be greater returns for large amounts of education than for smaller amounts. McGrath continues to say that, evidence across Africa suggests that there is a greater rate of return for secondary education than for primary. Third, although skills and knowledge are important factors in creating

employment opportunities, there are a number of other factors that are also often important. Those factors are as follows:

Capital: inadequate capital (and poor access to credit) is the first constraint mentioned by informal business owners when interviewed.

Markets: shortage of capital is often related to complaints about inadequate markets. Much of the informal sector internationally faces crisis of oversupply and under-demand.

Location: tenure and infrastructure: there appears to be a relationship between informal business location and its performance in South Africa. Home based and street based enterprises seem to perform worse than those in their own premises. City and town –based enterprises tend to perform better than those located in rural areas, townships and informal settlements. An important element in these location differentials is infrastructure.Townships and informal settlements are in need of the electrical, telephonic and transport infrastructures. When operating in such an environment, successful production, trade and networking are all undermined.

McGrath further states that it is however difficult to determine how far issues of location, tenure and infrastructure are at the root of constraints faced by South African informal SMMEs. Operating from home, the street, a rural area or a township is also heavily determined by many of the other factors affecting enterprise performance, such as race, gender, capital, education, and employment history (McGrath, 2005:21)

2.4 Skills Development as implemented in South Africa

May (2000: 92) mentions that South Africa has been rated as having one of the poorest human resource development indices in the world in terms of both the degree of skills in the workforce and the amount of resources invested in industry training. This challenge has been caused by the poor quality of basic education and the systematic exclusion of black South Africans from apartheid training institutions.

Kraak (2005:10) says that South Africa's skills formation system resembles the UK's bipolar 'high skills/ low skills' regime with increasing bifurcation within its social structure. As with the UK approach since the election of a New Labour government in 1997, the South African government is committed to improving the acute conditions of poverty among the poor through increased social and development infrastructural expenditure. This includes investing on 'low skills' training programmes to enhance employability among the unemployed. In addition, the South African economy is reliant on ongoing intermediate skills development, a further element ignored in the high skills thesis of UK.

Kraak continues to say that on the other hand, this cohabits with much larger intermediate and low skills strands. It therefore makes sense to characterise South Africa's approach to skills formation as one that consists of a differentiated basket of high, intermediate, and low skills training programmes, combined with each other in a single, relatively integrated national skills development framework.

Undoubtedly, many aspects (for example, Gross National Product (GNP), stage of development, size of rural economy) of the UK and South Africa are very different. On the other hand, their approaches to skills development have more in

common than other developed economies. It remains a question whether what appears to be a remarkably similar approach to skills development is appropriate to two countries which face such different challenges.

It then becomes critical to investigate people's experiences and perceptions of the skills programmes implemented under the approach in question.

The following is the legislation and policies that guide the implementation of skills development in South Africa.

a) **South African Qualifications Act no 58 of 1995**
This act is concerned with the quality of training provided by the training providers/institutions in the country. It creates the structures and framework for the skills development strategy**.**

Objective 3 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) puts more emphasis on enhancing the quality of education and training hence accredited training is more encouraged (SAQA Act, 1995). Interestingly, the study revealed that not all people trained in the project under study were fortunate enough to receive accredited training.

b) The Skills Development Act
The skills Development Act no.97 of 1998 was promulgated to address the problem of high unemployment, unequal distribution of income, inequality of opportunity based on the legacy of apartheid, poverty and low levels of investment in South African labour market. Skills Development Act requires that twenty percent of the Skills Development levy focuses on the education and training needs of the marginalized groups including women, people with

disabilities, rural and unemployed people (Mercorio, *et al* 1999: 51). Training of the people in the projects under study is as a result of this requirement by the Act.

Kraak (2004) notes that the Skills Development Act (SDA,1998) was successful in establishing a single national regulatory framework consisting of a National Skills Authority (NSA) and Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). These in effect create a linkage in the training programmes at the national level with those at the sectoral level.

The act has five objectives, which are:

- "To provide an institutional framework to devise and implement national, sectoral and workplace strategies to develop and improve the skills of the South African workforce

- To integrate those strategies within the national Qualifications Framework (NQF) contemplated in the South African Qualifications Authority Act of 1995

- To provide for the financing of skills development by means of financing scheme and National Skills Fund (NSF)

- To provide for Learnerships that recognize occupational qualifications

- To provide for and regulate employment services" (Mercorio et al, 1999,50)"

The SDA creates a policy and strategy for the benefit of all role players within the world of work including workers, employers, self-employed people and public private education and training providers.

c) Skills Development Levies Act, no 9 of 1999

This is a levy financing system of the skills development. Employers are required to pay 1% of payroll towards training of their employees. All levies collected are

then forwarded to the National Skills fund (NSF). South African Revenue Services (SARS) is the collecting agent for such levies.

d) The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS)

South Africa's new framework for skills development, known as the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) was officially launched in the year 2001. The NSDS has a dual purpose: it seeks to respond to current skills requirements as well as to shape education and training provision for future needs (DoL, 2001). With regard to the first mandate, the NSDS aims to introduce a model of enterprise training that is better coordinated and planned nationally and sectorally than in the past, better aligned with formal education system structures and qualifications, and driven more by current employer demand than by existing outdated supply-side provision.

In response to this dual challenge (being reactive to current employer demand and proactive in creating new future growth areas in the economy), the government has introduced an entirely new institutional regime aimed at managing these multiple skill objectives. New institutions, new qualifications, and a new funding regime have been introduced, all operating on the assumption that new institutional pressures will' force' individual employers to significantly increase their investments in coordination of skills training. The primary objective is a massive expansion of enrollment of employed and unemployed in enterprise training (particularly those excluded by apartheid).

The NSDS 2001-2005 has five objectives:

1. "Developing a culture of high quality lifelong learning
2. Fostering skills development in the formal economy for productivity and employment growth

3. Stimulating and supporting skills development in small businesses

4. Promoting skills development for employability and sustainable livelihoods through social development initiatives

5. Assisting new entrants into employment."

The project under investigation was trained in line with objective four of the NSDS 2001-2005. This objective had two success indicators:

1. "By March 2003, 100 percent of National Skills Fund apportionment to social development is spent on viable development projects

2. By March 2005, the impact of the National Skills Fund is measured by project type and duration, including details of placement rates, which shall be at least 70 per cent."

The implementation report for the said period (2001-2005), states that all targets were exceeded. The Minister of Labour, in his 2005 budget speech, noted the following achievements, among others, "since the launch of South Africa's NSDS in 2001 : 5 552174 workers have participated in structured learning programmes, 37% of new and existing registered small businesses were supported and benefited from skills development initiatives under SETA discretionary grants and the NSF, against our target of 20%..., 74% of the total NSF Strategic Projects R1 billion allocation over three and a half years was already spent by the end of December 2004 and benefiting 44 838 ABET learners, 35 943 unemployed people who completed structured learning programmes and a further 9 332 who participated in the various learnership programmes".(DoL,2001)

2.5 International trends and debates around Skills Development

In the context of acute poverty in most developing countries, the critical role of training in providing badly needed skills to improve productivity, incomes and equitable access to employment opportunities seems particularly obvious and

straightforward. Pronouncements on the fundamental importance of skills and capacity building in the building process, especially in the fight against poverty. Knowledge, skills and competencies of all men and women have become the foundation of personal growth and employability   (ILO, 1997:5).

However, a striking feature of most government and donor poverty reduction strategies in developing countries is that the role of vocational educational and training (VET) in its wide variety of forms does not exist. Apart from the ILO, the invisibility of training for the poor as a priority issue is equally visible in most other high profile reviews of poverty alleviation and human resource development which have been introduced by both bilateral and multilateral donors (World Bank, 1995).

This neglect is puzzling not only because of the extent of absolute poverty in most countries, but also because it is widely accepted that training is a critical instrument of public policy, especially for the most vulnerable groupings in the society. The standard definition of 'basic education for all' which came out of the Jomtien Conference in 1990 does cover 'all the skills and knowledge that people need if they are to lead a decent life'. These '' basic learning needs" include early childhood education, primary schooling, and non formal literacy and other programmes for youth and adults including vocational training that helps to provide basic life and employment skills (UNESCO,1991).

For many, it is solely because the potential of training has not yet been realized that the role VET has been undermined in most poverty reduction strategies. We are confronted, therefore, by what looks like a major contradiction: just as governments and donors have begun to give due recognition to the need for

concerted efforts to build the human assets/ capabilities of poor, training is being accorded less.

Some would argue that VET is in danger of becoming a Cinderella sector as donors and governments focus their efforts on basic education and other forms of intervention, mostly microfinance.

Bass, (1995:7) makes some reference regarding implementation of skills development in Germany. He says that the German system of vocational education and training is believed to have contributed to Germany's success in human resource development and economic growth. According to Bass, in Germany, apprenticeship in private enterprises and other work places is the back bone of Vocational Educational and training. There is a combined effort from both private employers and government (Bass, 1995: 7).

Germany's education and training system is more similar to the South African system which is now placing more emphasis on the implementation of Learnerships, but the main challenge facing South Africa is the employers' willingness to participate so that they can provide work place learning to the learners.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed skills development as implemented in South Africa, citing critical skills challenges the country is currently faced with. The international trends and challenges discussed in this chapter, clearly show that the challenges with regard to the provision of skills training especially to the poor, is not only a South African problem, but it is experienced globally. Even where such trainings

have taken place, there is no documented evidence on how it impacted on the economically vulnerable groupings.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

As mentioned in previous chapters, the objective of this dissertation was to investigate experiences and perceptions of the unemployed people regarding the skills training they received, especially people from rural areas, through the Masibumbane community development project. This chapter describes the population and sample of the area of the study, the research design applied, the instruments used in collecting the data, data analysis and ethical issues.

3.2 Profile of the study area

KwaCeza was chosen as the research site for this study. KwaCeza is the rural community under the Zululand District Municipality. The Zululand District municipality is located on the Northern regions of the KwaZulu-Natal Province. The area is under the jurisdiction of traditional authorities. It falls under the areas that were identified by the government as nodal zones for development. The government mandated all government departments to have projects running in these areas because of the high levels of poverty.

The study area is made up of settlements that fall within the Ndebele and Buthelezi Tribal Authority territories as mentioned in Chapter One. The following tables depict some of the settlements and their population sizes (Zululand District Municipality IDP, 2008/2009).

TABLE 2

Ndebele Tribal Authority

NO	Settlement Name	Population
1	Chibini	2500
2	Mkhulwane	2845
3	Nende	2500
4	Zembeni	2100
5	Sidakeni	3900
	TOTAL	**13845**

TABLE 3

Buthelezi Tribal Authority

NO	Settlement Name	Population
1	Nende	1746
2	Nhlonga	2196
3	Dlakude	1500
	TOTAL	**5442**

Information on the breakdown in terms of gender, age, race, literacy, and income per household could not be found.

3.3. Research design

This study makes use of a qualitative research design. Morgan, (1998:12) states that the merits of qualitative research methods are that they "…excel at interpretation giving an understanding of why things are the way they are and

how they got to be that way". Other strengths of qualitative research are that it asks the questions: why, how, and explores the circumstances under which things occur and provides a greater depth of understanding a phenomenon. Similarly, qualitative research is flexible, emergent, and iterative.

This means that the study design is not fixed; there is constant interaction between design and discovery. New findings continue to emerge. The investigator is always involved with the research process, observing how participants respond to the topic and investigating data for new insights that might lead to changing a technique, revising questions, or changing direction to follow new leads (Ulin *et al*, 2002:111). Social phenomenons are viewed holistically in qualitative research. Qualitative research can sometimes empower the participants of the research in that they can become an active partner rather than assuming the role of subjects. The investigator serves as a kind of an instrument in the research process (Ulin *et al,* 2002: 111).

According to Babbie and Mouton,(2001: 270), the chief goal of research under this method is to depict and comprehend instead of explaining human behaviour.

In attaining research themes, the researcher applied Patton's question typology of using open-ended questions that are based on experience questions, opinion or value questions, feeling questions, knowledge and background questions (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:9).

Qualitative research design was chosen because it enables the researcher to (a) gain new insights about a particular phenomenon, (b) develop new concepts or theoretical perspectives about the phenomenon, and / or (c) discover the problems that exist within the phenomenon.

This research adopted a case study as it is one of the three major types of qualitative research methods. Merriam and Simpson (1995: 108) define a case study as 'an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as an individual, group, institution or community'. Its focus is on investigating many, if not all of the variables in a single unit. By concentrating upon a single phenomenon or entity ('the case'), this approach seeks to uncover the interplay of significant factors that is characteristic of the phenomenon (Merriam and Simpson, 1995: 108).

In a case study, a particular individual, program, or event is studied in depth for a defined period of time. The researcher spent five working days in the field to ensure that enough data was collected. A case study may be specifically suitable for learning more about a little known or poorly understood situation. It may also be useful for investigating how an individual or program changes overtime, perhaps as the result of certain circumstances or interventions. In a case study, the researcher collects extensive data on the individual(s), program(s), or event(s) on which the investigation is focused. These data often include observations, interviews, documents, etc. The researcher also records details about the context surrounding the case, including information about the physical environmental and any historical, economic, and social factors that have bearing on the situation (Leedy P.D and Ormrod J.E, 2005: 133).

The researcher chose a case study because she was interested in learning more about the experiences and perceptions of people who were trained through a Department of Labour programme. The KwaCeza Masibumbane project was chosen as a case study because it is in a rural area where the researcher's interest lies

The research study was based on a single group of people who received skills training funded by the Department of Labour at KwaCeza under Masibumbane project.

3.4 Data collection

3.4.1 Population and sample

The researcher's units of study were the people who were trained by the Department of Labour at KwaCeza. These people came together and initiated a project called Masibumbane. The Amakhosi were intensively involved in the selection, the main target being households that had no income at all. They were a total of forty eighty (48), made up of 19 males and 29 females. Twelve people were trained in carpentry over 90 days, twelve were trained in bricklaying over 80 days, twelve were trained in sawing over 110 days and twelve were trained in poultry farming over 60 days. All groups attended during the week with no breaks in between. Training commenced in January in all courses, but completion dates varied because of the length of courses.

The period covered by the training was from January 2005 to June 2005 as the longest course (sewing) was run over six months. Only (16) respondents were used for the study purposes. Four respondents were selected from each of the four courses attended. The researcher focused on the 16 trainees because there was a possibility that some of the then trainees might not be reached. Either because they had relocated for a variety of reasons or they had passed away. This study was conducted in 2009, most of the people could still clearly remember what had happened during the training and most of the questions were about their personal experiences with regards to the training received.

3.4.2 Sampling Design

The researcher used a non-probability sampling procedure. According to Bless, (1995:94) non-probability sampling is the method in which the probability of selection of population elements is not known.

This was a convenient method for this particular research study because there was a possibility that some people might be difficult to trace. Therefore, whoever was available was requested to participate. The respondents were approached individually by the researcher and asked if they were willing to participate in the study. Even though the names of the respondents were written in the consent forms, they were all assured that the information they would give during interviews would be kept confidential.

3.4.3. Research instrument / data collection techniques
Structured interview schedule

Bless (1995:95) states that the structured interview, sometimes called a standardized interview, uses a common interview schedule that contains specific questions, or items. Its rationale is to offer all interviewees the same set of questions so that each person's responses can be compared with one another. (see Appendix A)

The following were the key research questions:

1. What are the people's experiences and perceptions regarding skills development programmes?
    1.1.1   What are the benefits of participating in the skills programme?
    1.1.2   What are the challenges involved?
2. What activities do people engage in after receiving skills training? If none, why is it so?

The tool utilised to gather data (interview schedule) was very useful. It allowed one-on-one interaction: the researcher was able to control the interview sessions through ensuring that all questions were answered, and respondents were asked similar questions. The researcher was also able to clarify some of the issues during the interview which would have been impossible if people were to complete questionnaires.

Training participants Interviews

The researcher used the structured interview schedule to collect data. She used the interview schedule because she wanted to elicit responses from different trainees using similar questions as outlined in the interview schedule. One-on-one interviews were conducted to ensure that the respondents were able to express themselves freely without any influence from other participants. The interviews were conducted in IsiZulu as all the participants are Zulu speaking. A tape recorder was also utilized to ensure that all responses were accurately captured.

In cases where the researcher discovered that some people were already working somewhere nearby, she further applied the observation method, as she observed them performing their duties. Through observation, the researcher wanted to establish whether people are able and confident enough to apply what they had learned during the training.

All participants responded to open-ended questions which were designed to allow the interviewees to put forward any ideas and guide them to discuss issues of interest in detail. One of the main advantages of open-ended questions is that the interviewee is in a position to determine the nature of the answer because the

research does not suggest the responses. Open–ended questions were designed in such a way that they suited the needs of the respondent's particular situation. Maykut and Morehouse,(1994:88) state that open–ended questions have a further advantage because they are a conversation with a purpose. See Appendix A for the interview schedule.

Focus group interviews

After the interviews with the sixteen selected training participants, a focus group was used to clarify questions that arose from the interviews. The focus group was made up of five respondents. The five respondents were randomly selected from the four groups that were trained; the fifth was the project leader. The respondents were asked if they had a specific topic in particular they wanted to be discussed, but it appeared that they had no specific topic .They wanted to elaborate and give more clarity on issues that came up during the one on one interview sessions.

Open-ended questions were then asked. Preliminary questions were asked on general topics of discussion, the past experiences of participants, etc. Thereafter, some transitional questions were included, with the intention of leading participants to high priority issues. Then key questions that formed the core of discussion were asked. Finally, some concluding questions reflected back on the discussion that had taken place.

The researcher was able to get more information from the focus group and was in a better position to clarify some of the issues that were not raised during the individual interviews.

3.5. Data Analysis

The central purpose of analysis in qualitative studies is to sift, sort and organize the masses of information acquired during data collection in such a way that the themes and interpretation emerge from the process address the original research problem(s) that has been identified. The strength of the conclusions drawn from the study ultimately rests with the plan for data analysis (Atkinson, 1996: 90).

In order to be able to analyse data, all interviews were transcribed and then translated into English as they were conducted in IsiZulu. In analyzing and interpreting the narrative data, thematic analysis was used. As Hayes (2000) states"…it is a useful way of exploring the richness of qualitative study" (Hayes, 2000:171). The common feature of thematic analysis of a qualitative study is to identify the common themes that occur in a particular study. Essentially, themes here are recurrent topics that become apparent in the material analysed, and which appear a number of times in the material being analysed.

The establishment of the same theme can be explained using different words, arising in different circumstances or brought up by different people. As a result, in thematic analysis the researcher has to go through the data carefully and try and identify these emergent patterns of themes (Hayes, 2000:17). The data was therefore read, reread and the notes from the field were carefully reviewed. The rereading of the notes was aimed at identifying the themes that emerged with the intention of attaching categories or codes to the texts representing these themes.

The identifiable themes and patterns from each interview were then discussed in the findings chapter. The themes are the ideas that came up many times in the data and were raised by different respondents (Hayes, 2000: 17). The themes

and the codes were then used to explain the findings. (See page 50 for the details of each theme).

3.6. Ethical Issues

The reason for an informed consent is that the participants must understand "the possible risks and benefits, voluntary participation, assurances of confidentiality, the purpose of the study, how they were chosen to participate, data collection procedures (and lastly) who to contact with concerns and questions" (Ulin et al, 2002: 61). As Rubin and Rubin (1995) state, "when you encourage people to talk to you openly, you incur serious ethical obligations to them" (Ulin et al, 2002:61).

In this study, ethical issues surrounded the fact that parts of the study dealt with (a) the quality of training they received, and (b) usefulness of the training in terms of opening income generating opportunities. The researcher anticipated that the participants may fear that they may be victimized by the training provider in some way, and they may be excluded in opportunities that may come up in the near future by other government departments. The researcher therefore pointed out from the onset that the participants will remain anonymous and information provided will remain confidential. The researcher was obliged to inform the participants what the research was all about, not necessarily the topic for discussion. The researcher had designed consent forms that firstly briefed the participants about the nature of the study and started the interviews by giving participants informed consent forms. The identity of the participants was protected by the use of pseudonyms. There was no ethical issue raised throughout the interviews as people were well briefed on ethical issues before signing the ethical consent forms.

The instrument used was valid since it was able to produce an accurate reflection of what it intended to find out.

3.7. Limitations of the study

The limitation of the study is the fact that the findings and discussions of the study cannot be generalized to broader areas as it was only limited to Ceza area.

3.8. Concluding Remarks

According to Jansen and Vithal (1997:23) **validity** is an attempt to check out" whether a particular measure is an accurate reflection of what the researcher intend to find out. The methods used were, to a large extent, able to tease out the information required for this work, because they afforded an opportunity to explain and clarify certain issues which were unfamiliar to the respondents. The researcher was able get the information she intended to receive from her respondents.

The use of the questionnaire method would have been disastrous in this instance because, generally, such methods do not allow for a direct interaction between the researcher and respondents.

Jansen *at al* (2008:23) define **reliability** as being about the consistency of a measure, score or rating. The measure that was used in this research study was reliable. Similar responses were received from the focus group when some of the questions which were asked during interviews were repeated during focus group interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study gathered information that provided insight into the way people perceive the Skills Development Programme funded by the Department of Labour. It further investigated their experiences during and after receiving training.

In the project under study, twelve (12) unemployed people were trained in carpentry over 90 days, twelve were trained in bricklaying over 80 days, twelve were trained in sawing over 110 days and twelve were trained in poultry farming over sixty (60) days. All groups attended during the week with no breaks in between. Training commenced in January 2005 in all courses, but completion dates varied because of the length of the courses. The longest course (sawing 110 days) was completed in June 2005.

This chapter presents and discusses the findings in terms of the study themes and makes some links to the literature on Skills Development as discussed in chapter two.
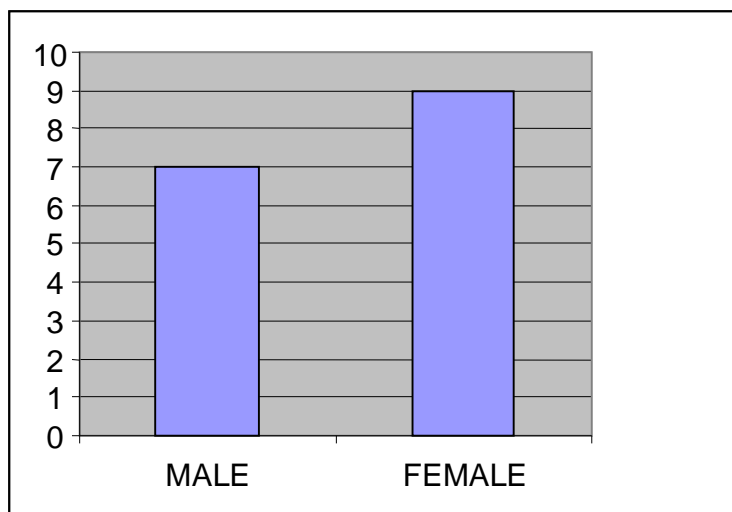
4.2 Demographic profile of the sample

This study focused on sixteen people who were trained by the Department of Labour under the Skills Development Act, 1997, in 2005 who were members of the Masibumbane Community Development project.

Four respondents were from Chibini settlement, three from Mkhulwane, three from Nende, three from Zembeni, and three from Sidakeni. Gender, age, marital status, and education are shown in the tables and figures below:
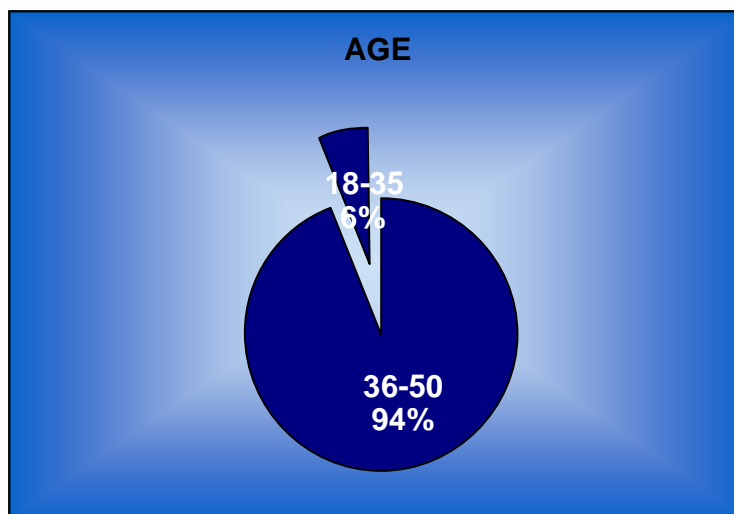
FIGURE 1

1.1 GENDER

Seven were male and nine were female. The sixteen was made up as follows: four respondents from the carpentry group (two male and two female), four from bricklaying (All male), four from poultry farming, (one male and three female) and four respondents from the sewing group (all female).

The gender of the respondents has an important meaning in the study particularly since the majority of the participants are women. Webster (2005) believes that poverty, because of unemployment, causes women to form or join projects that will develop their skills so as to generate income. The findings correspond with the NSDS target groups. The NSDS targets 85% **Black,** 54% **women**, and 4% **people with disabilities** (DoL NSDS, 2001). These targets

were put in place in order to address the imbalances created by the apartheid government as the above target groups were the most affected.
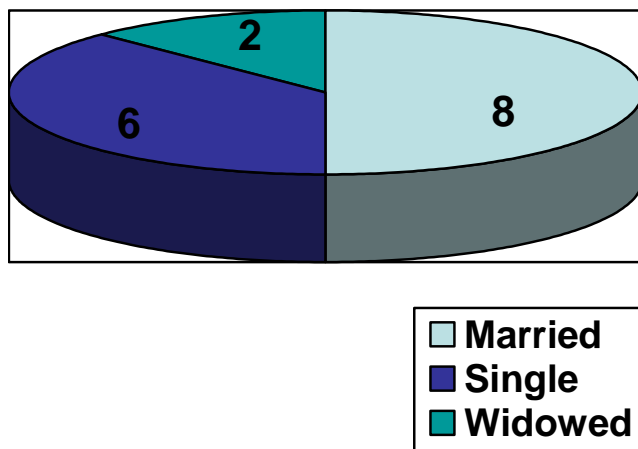
FIGURE 2
1.2 AGE

The respondents' ages ranged between twenty three to forty five years. The majority of the respondents had passed the youth age (35). The age of the respondents had an important meaning in this study. The findings reveal that the middle aged people are the most vulnerable hence many participated in income generating initiatives. There are no senior citizens in the study due to the fact that the majority of them in rural areas are illiterate, the skills training required people that were literate as experiential training was combined with classroom learning. The majority of the respondents are heading households, they therefore find themselves compelled to jump into any income generating opportunity presented to them. Their children look to them for support. Terreblanche (2002:35) says that members of the poorest half of the population are still relatively uneducated,

unskilled, without formal jobs, and deprived of information about their rights and opportunities. The findings confirm the above statement by Terreblanche; hence majority of the respondents had passed the youthful age.

FIGURE 3

1.2 MARITAL STATUS

Out of the sixteen respondents, eight were married, two widowed, and six were single. The findings reveal that the majority of the respondents had families to support.

TABLE 4

1. EDUCATION

Highest education	Frequency	Percentage
High school	2	10
Secondary school	1	5
Primary school	5	35
No education	8	50

It is very helpful to know the education background of the respondents for one to get a clearer picture of the skills level that individuals possess. Education can be regarded as one of the factors that play an important role in facilitating people's access to job opportunities in the open labour market. Table 4 shows that ten percent of the respondents had a high school education, five percent had secondary school education, thirty five percent had primary education and the majority (fifty percent) had no education.

This table therefore shows that a majority of the respondents do not have sufficient education that can enable them to qualify for future employment opportunities. This further reveals that people in rural areas need to uplift their economic and social status, as the literature reveals that the majority of Africans enter the world of employment with low levels education. This was largely caused by the apartheid regime, which permitted whites to enjoy many privileges at the expense of the African, Indian and Coloured population. The Black population was set aside to do low skilled jobs. (Terreblanche, 2002: 387)

4.3 RESEARCH THEMES
The following are the four themes that were identified when analysing data as presented by the respondents:

1. Socio-economic background of the respondents
2. Perceptions of the skills development programme
3. Challenges experienced during and after training
4. Confidence of the respondents in applying what they learned during training

Themes that emerged from the literature and later came up during interviews

1. Choice of attending training

2. Effectiveness of skills development legislations

3. Exit strategy/ mentoring, infrastructure and financial support provided to trainees at the end of training

4. Immediate application of skills acquired

5. The relationship between skills training and attitude change

6. High expectations of income after receiving training

4.3.1 Socio-economic background of the respondents

This theme looks at the socio-economic background of the respondents. During the interviews it transpired that ten (sixty percent) of the respondents had never worked in their life time. Out of the sixteen people interviewed, only six had worked before. Four of those are males who used to work in the coal mines around Vryheid. They were then retrenched when the mines closed down. Two were women who used to do domestic work (babysitting) for the nurses and teachers who worked in the area.

The women, who were employed in domestic work or babysitting, were earning between R200 to R300 per month. The men who worked in the mines were earning between R2000 to R2500 per month. The following were the comments made by some of the respondents:

> *I used to work in the coal mines, earning about R2000.00 per month. I was able to support my family through this salary. We were retrenched in 2003 and was forced to take any opportunity that was presented as my wife and children are solely dependent on me for survival (in-depth interview, Ceza, 10/03/2009)*

I used to sit at home, sometimes collect firewood for my neighbours. I was paid by being given food to eat. I would eat and spare some for my children back home. Sometimes I asked my neighbour for food (in-depth interview, Ceza, 11/03/09)

Life has been very difficult especially if one is not educated. My parents were not educated, so to them, education was not important. I used to look after my father's cattle while my peers were attending school. My father was a farmer; he never worked for other people. He wanted me to take after him (in-depth interview, Ceza,12/03/09)

Growing up in a rural community can sometimes be a disadvantage. I have never had a decent job in my entire life. Getting a job is even more difficult when one does not have a trade. There were no schools in my local community when I grew up. We were required to walk long distances for attending school, so this was impossible as we had other house chores we were supposed to perform everyday as women c(in-depth interview, Ceza,11/03/2009)
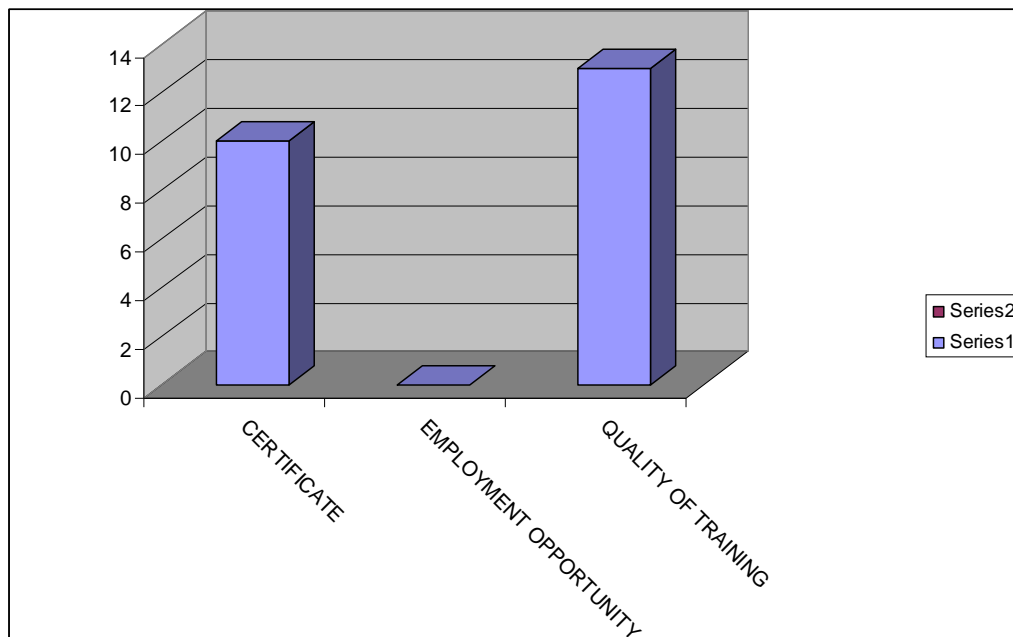
The findings correspond with literature on the repercussions of the apartheid regime. Among other things the apartheid policies of restrictive access to markets, infrastructure and education created and deepened poverty amongst the black population. (Adato and Haddad, 2002:5). The restriction on education access is one of the major reasons why most of the respondents are not educated and lack valuable skills that can enable them to get better jobs.

Given their educational background, the majority of black South Africans occupy the bottom lowest paid jobs. This is attributed to the apartheid policies. From this study it appears that low level of education is associated with low wages. This hinders their development. For this reason, Terreblanche (2002:383) argues that there is a close relationship between educational achievement of an individual and poverty (Terreblanche, 2002:383). This is important as the level of education attained can correspond with future employment status.

4.3.2 Perceptions of the Skills Development Programme

The study sought to explore how satisfied respondents were about the skills development programme, and whether it facilitated their development. The respondents were asked about the benefits of participating in the skills development programme. The following graph shows how the respondents perceived the programme in terms of the quality of training received, certificates awarded at the end of training, and access to employment opportunities after attending training.

FIGURE 3: LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

4.3.2.1. Certificates

The response from the majority (ten of the sixteen) of the respondents was positive, but only on certain aspects of the programme. Forty eight percent (six of the sixteen) of the respondents were not satisfied with the programme. Ten of the respondents said that they think they benefited from the programme because they were awarded with **certificates** at the end of the training. The certificates received boosted their confidence and raised hope for the future as they believe that it will be easy for them to get employed should job opportunities prevail, but all the respondents were **not satisfied** with the programme in terms of its ability to facilitate access to **income generating opportunities**.

The following were the comments made by some of the respondents:

I received a certificate in sewing. I am very happy because this was the first certificate I have ever received in my entire life. At least my children are now proud of their mother. (In-depth interview, Ceza, 12/03/09)

I used to build mud houses for my neighbors and charge them smaller amounts because I was not confident enough about my work, but now that I have a certificate and I am able to charge any amount I like because people know that I was trained for what I do (in-depth interview, Ceza,13/03/09)

After attending training and receiving a certificate, I feel more confident about my sewing skill. I used to sew, even before attending the training, but I was not happy with the quality of my work, so I sew clothes for my children only .Although I am not yet employed, or generating income out of the skill I have acquired, I am glad that I now have a certificate, and will have something to produce when an opportunity comes. (In-depth interview, Ceza, 09/03/09)

This finding confirms Webster's notion as he states that "it is well established that employment fulfills a range of social functions beyond remuneration, and that unemployment has a range of social and psychological effects, with a diminished sense of self-worth being the most obvious. He further says that there is a great

extent to which both participation in training and participation in project activity enhances people's sense of self-worth and their perception of how they are viewed in the community" (Webster, et al, 2005:362).

4.3.2.2. Access to employment opportunities

A question was asked with regard to the availability of employment opportunities. The majority of the responses were negative. It transpired that out of the sixteen people trained since 2005, only six (forty percent) got temporary employment in 2008. Those were four bricklayers and two carpenters. These people were absorbed by the contractor (Ross Ltd) which was awarded a tender by the Department of Public Works to build a in the community.

The following were some of the responses from these six people when interviewed.

> *It is real difficult to get employment in this area. We were trained in 2005, but only last year (2008) we got this temporary job and the project is coming to an end in June 2009, we really do not know how we are going to survive(in-depth interview, Ceza,14/03/09)*

> *I am happy that as the result of the training I received in 2005 I was able to get employed in this project, but I am worried because this project will be completed in June 2009, we have been promised that low cost houses will be built in the area, but we have long been waiting, we do not know whether there will be another project coming (in-depth interview, Ceza, 14/03/09)*

PICTURE PORTRAYING CEZA POLICE STATION WHERE SOME LEARNERS WERE TEMPORARILY EMPLOYED WHEN IT WAS BUILT IN 2008

Other interviews were held with people who were still in the Masibumbane community development project. When the question on the availability of employment opportunities in the community was asked, it transpired that none of them was happy with the project's progress in terms of generating income. The respondents from the **sewing** group mentioned that since they were trained in 2005, they have never received contracts either from government or the private sector. They solely depend on private jobs e.g. they saw uniforms for the local schools and churches, but this is seasonal because the school uniforms are in demand only at the beginning of the year, and the people are not compelled to purchase from them. Some decided to go to cities to buy from the Indian shops because they find it cheaper to do so.

The respondents from the **poultry** group indicated that training was very helpful because they were taught how to raise chickens. They were assisted by the Department of Social Department with the startup capital of R10.000.00 in 2006. They were able to purchase the equipment and feed stuff for the chickens. However, they experienced some challenges. It was expensive to keep the business running because they had to travel to the nearby town (Vryheid) which is 100 km away from the community to buy food for the chickens. This therefore forced them to increase prices which eventually crippled the business as they were no longer able to compete with the farmers who used to come and sell in the community. People ended up buying from those farmers.

They further mentioned that some of the chickens died because of weather conditions, and they felt it was beyond their control although they were taught how to raise chickens. It also transpired that even when the business was still in operation there was a cash flow problem as some people would buy on credit and never pay them back.

From these responses it transpired that the project was no longer operational, but people do meet casually, because the Department of Agriculture promised to give them more funding to help them revive the project.

These findings of the study confirm McGrath's views when he says that there is documented proof internationally and in South Africa that those with more education and training are more likely to be successful in accessing income generating opportunities. However, three important cautions should be considered. First, this finding may reflect the likelihood that those with higher levels of education and training will enter directly into the higher reaches of the

economy. Second, this is related to the evidence that there appears to be greater returns for large amounts of education than for smaller amounts. McGrath continues to say that, evidence across Africa suggests that there is a greater rate of return for secondary education than for primary. Third, although skills and knowledge are important factors in creating employment opportunities, there are a number of other factors that are also often important. Those factors are as follows:

Capital: inadequate capital (and poor access to credit) is the first constraint mentioned by informal business owners when interviewed.

Markets: shortage of capital is often related to complaints about inadequate markets. Much of the informal sector internationally faces crisis of oversupply and under-demand. This is the main challenge facing the project under investigation as previously mentioned. People prefer to go to the nearest towns other than buying the project's products.

Location: tenure and infrastructure: there appears to be a relationship between informal business location and its performance in South Africa. Home based and street based enterprises seem to perform worse than those in their own premises. City and town –based enterprises tend to perform better than those located in rural areas, townships and informal settlements. An important element in these location differentials is infrastructure. Townships and informal settlements are in need of the electrical, telephonic and transport infrastructures. When operating in such an environment, successful production, trade and networking are all undermined. This project is based in a remote rural area, which on its own make it difficult for the members to get material for their products at reasonable costs.

McGrath further states that it is however difficult to determine how far issues of location, tenure and infrastructure are at the root of constraints faced by South African informal SMMEs. Operating from home, the street, a rural area or a township is also heavily determined by many of the other factors affecting enterprise performance, such as race, gender, capital, education, and employment history (McGrath, 2005:21)

The responses from the **carpentry** group were also negative. The respondents indicated that their survival is dependent on the private jobs from the community. Some of them stated that they once worked as labourers when the hospital project commenced in 2007, but then they were retrenched when their service was no longer required at the end of 2007. It is difficult to go to towns because they cannot afford the cost of living in such areas. What makes things even more difficult is the fact that even with temporary jobs; they rarely get employment relevant to the training they received because the majority of the bricklayers are able to perform all duties for the completion of the house.

Mixed responses from the **bricklayers** were received. The majority was more concerned with the fact that they were not generating stable income. The findings revealed that bricklayers were much better than other groups in terms of accessing employment opportunities. The respondents indicated they were getting temporary jobs from the neighbours, but they were not satisfied because people do not want to pay. They were hoping that after receiving training, they would eventually be able to generate a stable income, but it is difficult as there is not much economic activity taking place in the area.

With regards to the income they were generating, the findings generally revealed that the respondents were dissatisfied, but those who were temporarily employed appreciated the little that they were getting although sometimes they felt that they were underpaid.

The general challenge was that they all felt it was sometimes difficult to remember what they had learned when they happen to get jobs because of the time they spend not applying the skills they acquired.

The following were some of the responses received:

> *It is difficult to secure income generating opportunities in this community. I was trained, but I have never been able to generate income out of the skills I possess. My hope for the brighter future is slowly disappearing (in-depth interview, Ceza, 09/03/09)*

> *The training I received was useful because I am now able to access income generating opportunities when available in the community, but the only problem is the fact that these are always not permanent and the money I get is not what I expected since I now have a certificate(in-depth interview, Ceza,09/03/09*

> *Generating income is quite difficult in this area. Sometimes I work very hard, but people end up not paying the little rates I charge. Even if I get a temporal job I do not get excited because I know the money I would eventually get would not cover all my family basic needs (in-depth interview, Ceza, 12/03/09)*

The findings of the study negate the notion that skills development on its own can increase employment opportunities for the unemployed people and eventually contribute in alleviating poverty in the country.

These findings however, confirm the livelihood dimensions approach which states that families employ different strategies in order to reduce their

vulnerability and increase their income by diversifying into more complex livelihood strategies, both of which improve their standard of living. Under the capability dimension, this theory claims that family members acquire different skills, which help them to adapt to difficult situations, and on the person and activity dimension, it states that people embark on various responsibilities and access food and income in many different ways.

However, the study revealed that the skills that were acquired by the people under study did not help the unemployed people in changing their lives for the better. They remained trapped in poverty. They could not generate income as there were no job opportunities in their local community. Due to the paucity of the resources in the local community, they could not sustain themselves although they had acquired skills.

4.2.3.3. Quality of training received

A question on the quality of training received was asked in order to establish whether the respondents were satisfied with the quality of training they received. The findings revealed that all respondents were happy with the quality of training they received. They believed that everything they were taught was relevant to the trades they were trained on.

The following were some of the comments made by the respondents:

> *I am happy with the quality of training we received. Even the facilitator was good, she was able to explain things properly, and he was very thorough when it comes to individual tasks we were supposed to do during experiential learning (in-depth interview, Ceza, 12/03/09)*

> *The training we received covered almost everything the bricklayer should know when it comes to the laying of bricks. Although the learning material*

was written in English, the facilitator was able to translate to our vernacular language, and most of the learning was experiential. Everything we learned prepared us for any bricklaying job we may be required to perform as bricklayers (in-depth interview, Ceza, 13/03/09)

Themes that emerged from the literature and later came up during interviews

1. Choice of attending training

2. Effectiveness of skills development legislations

3. Exit strategy/ mentoring, infrastructure and financial support provided to trainees at the end of training

4. Immediate application of skills acquired

5. The relationship between skills training and attitude change

6. High expectations of income after receiving training

4.3.3 Challenges experienced during and after training

The respondents were asked about the challenges they experienced during training and after receiving training. A majority of the respondents (ninety percent) indicated that there were many challenges they experienced during and after training. During training, the main challenge was the availability of the training material to be used for experiential learning and the language used in the learning material. They mentioned that the training provider did not bring the learning material on time. They had to proceed with other tasks while waiting for the learning material to arrive and that was problematic because sometimes they found it difficult to remember what they had learned on previous tasks. The following are some of the responses from the respondents:

I enjoyed the training, but the problem was with the delivery of the training material on time. Sometimes we had to wait a couple of days before it arrives. The facilitators used to give us other tasks while waiting for the delivery which sometimes made it difficult for us to remember what we had learned on the previous tasks when the material eventually arrives. (In-depth interview, Ceza, 13 /03/09)

The availability of the learning material at all times was a problem. We used to report to Department of Labour officials who used to visit us on sites, but there was no improvement (in-depth interview, Ceza, 10/03/09.

Some respondents had a problem with understanding the language used in the learning materials as they were all written in English, but they were able to cope because they were required to spend at least seventy percent of their time in experiential learning and the facilitators were very supportive. Some of the responses were:

Yes, I was happy that I was getting trained but it was difficult to understand the content of the learning material as it was written in English. Our facilitators were very supportive, and used to explain in Zulu. I was able to cope because most of the time was spent on practical exercises (in-depth interview, Ceza, 10/03/09).

The importance of doing proper recruitment to ensure that all trainees meet the entry requirements for a particular skills training cannot be over emphasis. If proper screening of the learners was done when the respondents were recruited, this challenge would have been avoided. The training material utilised should always be within the learners' level of understanding to ensure that all learners understand the contents of the learning programme.

When asked about challenges they experienced after the training, all respondents mentioned that the main challenge was to secure job opportunities. Those who had worked on temporary basis stated that they were not satisfied

with the salaries they were getting. They felt that they were paid too little although they had certificates for the job they were doing.

The findings further confirm the fact that there are no job opportunities in rural communities. Webster (2005) argues that in the absence of effective social protection for the unemployed, coupled with the decline in traditional sources of support from wage remittances, large numbers of people are engaged in income generating activities of some kind as a survival strategy of last resort. (Webster and Holdt, 2005:361), hence projects like the one under investigation came into existence. Some responses were:

> *I am really struggling to secure an income generating opportunity. There are no opportunities in this area. Even in the nearby towns there are no jobs (in-depth interview, Ceza, 09/03/09)*
>
> *It is difficult to get a job because employers are sometimes hesitant to employ us if they see our certificates because they want cheap labour. (In-depth interview, Ceza, 13/03/09)*
>
> *I am happy that I do get temporary jobs, but the amount of money I earn is still too little although I have a certificate (in-depth interview, Ceza, 12/03/09)*

The other challenge the respondents experienced after training was to secure a market for their products, especially the sewing group. They mentioned that local people preferred to go to the nearest towns to buy clothes and school uniform. They said it was cheaper to buy from the established businesses and they were happy with the quality of their clothes. It was then difficult for the group to compete will well established businesses as they were forced to raise their prices because of the traveling costs and the material they had to buy. The following is one of the comments made during interviews:

Business is not doing well locally. People prefer to go to towns to buy clothes and school uniforms. They claim that they find things cheaper there compared to our prices. There is nothing we can do because we have to pay for transport and the material we buy is not cheap. (In-depth interview, Ceza, 11/03/09)

The above responses support claims made by Webster *et al,* (2005: 373) stating that a key constraint on the income levels of participants is the ability of the local market to absorb the products. Many rural people live in acute poverty. They spend their money on a relatively small range of goods, most of which are mass produced in the core economy.

The only competitive advantage for local producers is the cost of distance, but if their raw material inputs such as sewing material or juice bottles are sourced from the core economy, this advantage becomes worthless. There are a limited range of centralized market places where volume trade is possible, for example in rural towns and at pension points. However, few rural producers live in these towns, more often, they live in villages, and marketing their goods in town entails high costs. And when people from villages come to town to buy, they usually do not want to buy village produced products, they want branded products.

Where opportunities do exist in local markets, they are usually for niche markets and small volumes which mean they can support few people. Attempts to explore higher value markets beyond the local community have encountered a different set of challenges.

Webster *et al,* (2005:374) further maintains that it often happens that people are grouped randomly and told "you will do juice making, you will do bread baking, and you will do sewing". While there are context in which all of these are viable businesses, there are a great deal more contexts in which they are not. While

there may be a greater degree of consultation and participation than this, this business idea often comes from the programme implementers or its viability in a given context is not effectively interrogated. Prospective participants, with no prior business experience, learn from limited role models they have seen in their local economy.

The findings of the study confirm the above claims by Webster. The unemployed people were grouped and then trained on particular trades. It transpired that these people were not given an opportunity do decide on what they thought would be economic viable in their community, but were advised to choose from what was already prepared for them. This therefore defeated the main purpose of the Skills Development Programme, as they ended up struggling to make an income out of the skills they had acquired. The economic opportunities in the local area were not allowing.

4.3.4 Confidence of the respondents in applying what they learned during training

The respondents were asked a question as to whether they were confident enough to apply what they had learned when given an opportunity. The majority (eighty percent) stated that they have confidence in what they were taught. This feeling was mostly shared by those who had been lucky enough to secure some temporary jobs. Those that had never worked indicated that they were not sure, but they just hope that they would be able to perform should they be given an opportunity although they had been out of work for a long time.

The following were some of the comments made by the respondents:

The training I received was wonderful despite the many challenges we experienced. I am confident with the skill I possess; I am just hoping that I am going to get the job soon (in-depth interview, Ceza, 09/03/09)

When we finished training I was sure of my capability, but now that I have been out of work for such a long time, I do not know whether I will be able to perform my duty properly (in-depth interview,Ceza,09/03/09)

I am very confident of my capabilities. As I am currently employed on temporary basis, I am always the first one to complete my tasks, and my employer is quite satisfied with the quality of my work. He even gives me more work than other colleagues (in-depth interview, Ceza, 10/03/09)

The last response confirms the Marshal's Human Capital theory which explains the relationship between education and training. Marshall *et al, (*1980:263) maintains that when the quality of education and training is improved, it leads to increased productivity and when the productivity is increased, there will be higher earnings. The findings revealed that the respondents are able to earn more than their counterparts because they are given more tasks since they always complete their task faster.

The theory contemplates that skills training enhances unemployed people's chances of getting employment because employers believe that by hiring the skilled individual, their productivity will also increase. These findings further confirm Marshal's theory as people with skills were given more tasks by employers and eventually earn more, but this theory is somehow negated by the findings as other respondents especial those who never worked felt that employers were reluctant to employ them because of the certificates they have. They preferred the unskilled as they were paying them lower rates.

Recommendations made by the respondents for future similar programmes

During interviews, a question as to what the respondents think should be done in order to ensure that the challenges they experienced are avoided in future programmes was asked. The majority of the responses suggested that training provided should always be linked to job opportunities available in the local community. The respondents felt that although the training was meaningful, but it becomes useless if one is not able to generate an income out of the skill acquired.

Other respondents felt that there should be improvement in terms of the monitoring mechanisms to ensure that all learning material is readily available and written in the language understandable to the targeted audience. The following were some of the responses received:

> *Yes, I am happy that I was trained, but this training would have been more useful if the programme implementers had taken cognizance of the economic activities taking place in our community so that the training they provide is linked to such economic activities. That would have ensured that the majority of us have easy access to employment opportunities (in-depth interview, Ceza, 11/0309)*

> *In future, the programme implementers should ensure that the learning material used is written in the vermicular language of the recipients. Although our facilitator was able to help us understand the content during training, but it is so unfortunate that we can no longer use it as a reference to remind ourselves of what we learned during training.*

4.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study indicates that there are a lot of factors that need to be considered when planning to implement a Skills Development Programme, especially for people who live in rural areas. The findings revealed that skills training provided to the Masibumbane community development project members did not help much in improving the lives of the majority of the people trained.

People's self worth was only boosted in terms of being given certificates, and sometimes being able to get temporary employment when opportunities come up, but none of them felt that they fully benefited from the programme as they were not generating a stable income out of the skills acquired.

According to the findings of this study, the skills training received by the respondents did not succeed in enhancing unemployed people's chances of accessing employment opportunities. People have negative perceptions about the skills programme. They feel that it did not help them because they are still unemployed. There are no employment opportunities in their community. However, the training did boost their self esteem as they were proud of the fact they were able to complete the courses and would be able to present their certificates should an opportunity comes. It became clear that the certificate is worthless if it is unable to help an individual to earn an income

People had high expectations when the programme was introduced to them, but all they have been experiencing are difficulties in finding employment. In future they will only attend such skills training because they have no choice, but to take what is available as there is nothing that keeps them busy. This therefore relates to one of the themes that emerged during data collection which highlights that people are forced by the conditions under which they live to grasp any opportunity that comes.

What people experienced during and after training signify lack of proper monitoring on the part of programme implementers to ensure that legislation and policies implemented become a success. Shortage of learning material during training had a detrimental impact on the programme**.**

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This study was carried out in the rural area of KwaCeza and investigated the experiences and perceptions of the unemployed people who participated in the Skills Development Programme funded by the Department of Labour in 2005.

Through the findings of the study it transpired that the majority of the respondents had negative perceptions towards the skills development programme. This was due to the fact that there were many challenges experienced by the respondents during and after attending the Skills Development Programme.

The findings therefore revealed that the Skills Development Programme did not succeed in creating employment opportunities as it was intended to. The main challenge was to secure an income generating opportunity upon completion of training. A small group of academic writers have written several comments on the poor performance of the new skills regime (Kraak A, 2005). These criticisms can be combined into the following three categories:

1. "Government's lack of political will to create conducive conditions for the success of the new integrated education and training policy framework as promoted in the early education policy documents of the early 1990's, and as promulgated in several government Acts in the mid to late 1990s

2. The development of governance problems that were unforeseen in the initial planning phases of the NSDS in the mid 1990s

3. Operational problems that have made various implementation steps of the NSDS extremely cumbersome, complex, slow and highly contested.

4. The demise of a demand-led model: the new system failed to transcend its historical genesis as a 'supply-side' training system. In the past, one of the main criticisms of the old training system was that it was 'provider driven' or 'supply led'."

The following are the suggestions made in order to ascertain that such challenges are avoided in future programmes.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS
5.1.1 Local Market analysis
In terms of the respondents' ability to sell the material they had produced after receiving training, the findings revealed that although they were assisted with the seed capital, securing the market for their products remained the biggest challenge. They found it difficult to compete with other entrepreneurs who were selling similar products in their community. Their products were expensive as they were compelled to raise their prices in order to cover traveling costs as they had to travel long kilometers to purchase the material for the products.

For future projects, this challenge could be addressed by implementing a recommendation made in the Khanya-icdd report (2008) which states that many DSD projects struggled to secure market outlets for their products, it then recommends that Marketing agents which could help organizations identify new market, assist with ideas for different products and work with projects on costing , pricing and packaging are required.

The importance of doing a market analysis prior implementing income generating projects remains critical. Therefore, In order to ensure that future programmes do not experience the same problems, Programme implementers should conduct a

market analysis so that projects are implemented in line with what is identified as being in demand in the local area, and people could then be trained in skills that are in line with the needs identified.

5.1.2 Liaison with other social partners

The findings revealed that the Skills Development Programme remains one of the best programmes introduced by the South African Government in order to address the issue of skills shortages and create employment opportunities in the country to alleviate poverty. However, it transpired that this task requires intervention from different stakeholders (Government departments) and private sector.

Khanya-aicdd report (2008) cited that integration and coordination of service delivery within government departments is very weak and recommends that policy making should always take into account the perspective of all levels of government.

The findings of the study confirm the existence of such a weakness, and it became clear that the Department of Labour cannot succeed in creating employment opportunities through implementing skills training unless other government departments actively play their roles. Funding that is made available for skills development should be linked to other poverty alleviation interventions which are implemented by other government departments. For instance, the Department of Social Development has funds for procuring material for people engaged in income generating opportunities. Linking skills training to such initiatives whereby the market for the produce is identified prior to project implementation could play a vital role in ensuring that people do not end up not

able to utilise the skills they acquired which eventually create negative perceptions about the skills programme.

The other challenge was with the identification of the market for the project's products, the programme implementers need to liaise with the local traders to ensure that they produce things that are in demand in the community.

5.1.3 Recruitment and selection of learners

Data gathered revealed that the learning material that was used during training was written in English whereas the majority of the learners did not have a secondary education, and could not understand English. This was problematic as the facilitator had to translate to Zulu at all times and the learners mentioned that they could not refer to their learning material to remind themselves of what they had learned after training as it was written in English.

In future programmes, the learning material should be written in the language understandable to the learners to ensure that all learners are able to grasp the content.

5.1.4 Monitoring of service providers

It transpired that the respondents had a problem with getting the learning materials on time; they had to wait for the delivery of the material for experiential learning at all times and that was very disturbing. They were sometimes compelled to start new tasks while awaiting the arrival of the material**.**

The availability of the learning material should be ensured so that training is not disturbed or delayed. The programme implementer should always ensure that service providers deliver as per the contract agreed upon.

In order to ensure that skills training bear fruits in similar programmes planned for the future, the ILO (2005) suggested the following key opportunities for implementing skills training. These key opportunities should serve as a guide to determine the appropriate time for implementing skills training:

- When interest in raising employability and generating job opportunities (in order to diversify the applicant pool with a variety of targeted skills).

- When the market requires upgraded or new skills, or where existing skills –training mechanisms are no longer working e.g. after a crisis involving loss of human resources and a loss of entrepreneurial and related skills.

- Training should start as early as possible after an emergency, whether it is a displacement or (re)integration situation. The skills learnt should be applicable both in asylum and return situations

- When it can be combined with income Generating activities, as it will substantially increase the success and impact of both skills training and income generating activities

- When it can be linked with other projects to support employment and labour absorption capacity (e.g. microfinance, business development services, labour –based works)

5.2 CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed that the majority of the participants hold a negative perception towards the Skills Development Programmes. They feel that the training they received did not benefit them, especially in terms of its ability to facilitate their access to employment opportunities. They value the certificate they were awarded with at the end of the training, but they sometimes they think it is worthless as they are still unemployed. This finding therefore shows that the training they received was not carefully chosen to ensure that it targets opportunities that are available in the labour market. It was therefore not

implemented to address any of the following problems as they are tabled as the main reasons for implementing skills training in the ILO report (2005)

- Crises can have a destructive effect on a national socioeconomic framework, dramatically reducing job opportunities and damaging the institutions usually involved in providing the necessary skills for generating a livelihood. Skills training is therefore crucial in reconstruction and economic rehabilitation.

- Displacement involves adjusting to new social economic environments. It can provide an opportunity for learning new skills and contributing to the economic development of the hosting district.

- If skills training is carefully targeted to address market opportunities, potential entrepreneurs and other individuals entering the job market have increased chances of success.

- Youth affected by conflict often have an interrupted education. Skills training allow them to learn skills that, if adjusted (or responding) to market demanded, can help youth to: generate income, avoid idleness and frustration, and avoid the risk of their enrolment in military or criminal activities.

- Women's roles are also affected by conflict. Conflict often produces a large number of women heads of households. Such women may engage in paid or self-employment for the first time, but lack the required skills.

- Skill training also has a clear development benefit if adapted current market needs broadening the range of skills available and increasing job possibilities. It is also likely to make these services and skills available to the poorest groups.

Challenges

The findings of the study further confirm the existence of the general challenges of skills training as outlined in the ILO report (ILO, 2005) which are:

- Training may create high expectations, disillusionment and aggravate relations between trainees/ communities and trainers/ agencies if finding a job, after completion of training, remains difficult. This is particularly important in crisis affected areas where jobs are scarce.

- Limited demand due to poverty, conflict and low purchasing power, may force trainees to seek other sources of income. Correlating training to market demand is crucial.

- Skills need to be put in practice immediately. The longer the time-lapse between gaining skills and putting them into practice, the greater the risk they will be lost or become obsolete (ILO,2005)

The above written challenges were also revealed by the study. In order to ensure that such challenges are avoided in future, proper planning, in terms of recruitment, market analysis, and entire scheduling of the programme should be done on time. If it were only the people who met the course entry requirements that were recruited, market analysis was conducted prior project implementation, and the programme was implemented in line with the stipulated time frames, the challenges experienced by the respondents during and after training could have been avoided.

The ILO report further suggests that Skills Training should not be implemented:

- When skills –training activities are not adapted to the local cultural context. If activities such as self-employment, micro enterprise or cooperatives are encouraged in an area where there is no previous tradition and /or similar organisations or groups, the initiative may not be successful.

When the number of people trained in a certain skills exceeds the existing or likely market opportunity/ capacity. Avoid saturating the market with a large number of individuals trained in any one specific craft.

The findings therefore emphasise the importance of analysing the labour market prior implementing any Skills Development Programme. Skills training should

always be linked to the employment opportunities available in the labour market. The programme implementers should always ensure that people get absorbed soon after completing training so that the skill acquired does not get lost.

The study revealed that skills training on its own neither creates employment opportunities nor alleviates poverty, but other poverty alleviation programmes as highlighted in the recommendations need to be taken into consideration. Programme implementers need to collaborate to ensure that maximum impact of their programmes is felt.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Thank you for participating in this interview. The questions will not take more than one hour of your time. This interview is intended to investigate the Experiences and Perceptions of unemployed people who participated in the Skills Development Programme funded by the Department of Labour.

NB: Participation in this interview is voluntary. All information gathered will be kept confidential. Respondents are free to withdraw their responses any time they feel like doing so.

SECTION A
Demographic Information

1. **Gender**

    ❑ Male
    ❑ Female

2. **Age Group**

    ❑ 20s
    ❑ 30s
    ❑ 40s
    ❑ 50s

3. **Marital status**

    ❑ Single
    ❑ Married
    ❑ Divorced

❑ Widowed

4. Level of education

❑ Primary School
❑ Secondary School
❑ Tertiary Education

SECTION B

Perceptions and Experiences of respondents

1. As you participated in the Skills Development Programme, tell me everything you can still remember about the training you received.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2.1 What course did you attend?

2.3 Who chose the course for you?

2.4 How long was the course?

2.5 Comment about the type of learning material you received, was it relevant to the course, was it enough, and was it easy to read?

2.6 Was the training venue conducive to training? If no, explain how it was.

_____

_____

_____

_____

2.7 Was the course conducted in the language you understood?

_____

_____

2.8 Did the facilitator know the subject matter? If no, why do you think so?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. What have you benefited from attending the course?

_____

_____

_____

3.1 Do you think the course was useful? Explain how

_____

_____

_____

_____

3.2 What activities are you currently engaged on?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3.3 Are you employed now? If yes, what type of employment, is it related to the course you attended? If no, what do you think are the reasons of not getting a job?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. What challenges were you faced with during and after completing the training?

_____

_____

_____

5. Were you able to communicate your frustrations to the authorities? Were your concerns addressed?
- ❏ Yes
- ❏ No

APPENDIX B

Consent Form

This information should be provided in the language the respondent can understand.

NAME

My name is Thobile Qaphelisile Khumalo. I am a Masters student in the Community Development Programme of the School of Social Work and Community Development at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

NATURE AND PURPOSE

I am conducting research for the Dissertation that would enable me to complete the Masters degree. The Topic of my research is: **The experiences and perceptions of unemployed people who participated in the Skills Development Programme:**
A case study of Kwa-Ceza
I would like to discuss some of the issues relating to the topic with you.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

I am obligated to let you know that your participation in this research is voluntary and that your responses will be treated confidentially.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your name and identity will not be divulged to anyone else, even my supervisor. The information you share with me will not be shared with anyone else, except my supervisor.

WITHDRAWAL

You are free to withdraw from the interview at any point, without suffering any penalties or consequences.

NOTES AND RECORDING

During the discussion, I will be taking notes to keep track of what has been covered, so that I do not forget to ask all the questions. However, so that I do not have to worry about getting every word down on paper, I will also be recording the discussion. The recording is only to help me remember what you said. As soon as the tape has been transcribed, what you said will be erased, so that no one will have access to the interview. Your name and any information which identifies you (e.g. your household and family) will not appear in my report.

The respondent should answer questions in this Form to verify that the information in it has been communicated to him/her. S/he can then sign the bottom of the document. **Have the following been explained to your satisfaction;**	YES	NO
The nature and purpose/s of the research	x	
The identity and institutional association of the researcher and supervisor/project leader and their contact details	x	
The fact that participation is voluntary	x	
That responses will be treated in a confidential manner	x	
Any limits on confidentiality which may apply	x	
That anonymity will be ensured where appropriate (e.g. coded/ disguised names of	x	

participants/ respondents/ institutions)		
The fact that participants are free to withdraw from the research at any time without any negative or undesirable consequences to themselves	x	
The nature and limits of any benefits participants may receive as a result of their participation in the research	x	

It will take between forty five minutes and one hour to answer the questions that I have.

If you need further information about this study you can contact Dr T. Xaba of the Community Development Programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal on this number: (031) 260 2340.

_____

I agree to participate in this study.

_____
NAME OF PARTICIPANT

_____   _____
DATE   SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

I Thobile Khumalo have explained the purpose, procedures, benefits and risks in the study to the participant in the language that s/he understands.

_____   _____
DATE   SIGNATURE OF INTERVIEWER

APPENDIX C
Ulundi on the Zululand District Municipality Map

APPENDIX D: CEZA ON ZULULAND DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY MAP