



**UNIVERSITY OF <sup>TM</sup>  
KWAZULU-NATAL**  

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**INYUVESI  
YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

**ASSESSING SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR THE UNEMPLOYED YOUTH  
AS A STRATEGY TO REDUCE POVERTY AND INEQUALITY IN  
PIETERMARITZBURG, KWAZULU-NATAL.**

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## DECLARATION

I Xolile M. Magwenyana declares that:

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Signed .....

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## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	1
Abbreviations.....	2
Chapter one: Introduction and background .....	3
1.1    Introduction .....	3
1.2    Unemployment, poverty, and inequality in South Africa .....	4
1.3    Strategies to address the skills shortage and youth unemployment in South Africa.....	5
1.4    Problems with skills development and training programmes in South Africa .....	5
1.5    Rationale of the study.....	7
1.6    Motivation of the study .....	7
1.7    Problem statement .....	8
1.8    Aim and objectives.....	9
1.8.1    Aim .....	9
1.8.2    Objectives.....	9
1.9    Research questions .....	9
1.10    Scope of the study .....	10
1.11    Chapter outline .....	10
1.12    Conclusion.....	11
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	12
2.1    Introduction .....	12
2.2    Skills Development globally .....	14
2.3    History of poverty and inequality in South Africa.....	15
2.4    Skills development and training as a measure to combat youth unemployment, poverty, and inequality in SA .....	15
2.5    Theoretical Framework of skills development.....	17
2.5.1    Human Capital Theory .....	17
2.5.2    Strategic Human Capital Theory .....	17
2.5.3    Strategic Human Capital Theory / Resource-Based view.....	17
2.6    Strategies and plans implemented to address the skills shortage in South Africa.....	18
2.7    Misconceptions of skills development and training in South Africa.....	20
2.8    Challenges impeding on South Africa’s skills development and training .....	21
2.9    Recommendations and way forward .....	23
2.10    Conclusion.....	24
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	25
3.1    Introduction .....	25

3.2	Research design and approach .....	25
3.3	Population and Sampling .....	26
3.3.1	Instruments used .....	26
3.3.2	Sampling method .....	27
3.4	Data collection .....	27
3.5	Data analysis .....	28
3.6	Reliability, Trustworthiness, Rigour, and Validity .....	28
3.6.1	Credibility .....	28
3.6.2	Transferability .....	29
3.6.3	Dependability .....	29
3.6.4	Confirmability .....	29
3.7	Anticipated problems/limitations .....	29
3.8	Summary of the chapter .....	30
Chapter 4: Presentation and analysis of data .....		31
4.1	Introduction .....	31
4.2	Outlining of themes emerged out of the data collected .....	32
4.2.1	Table 1: themes and subthemes identified from data collected from interviews .....	33
4.3	Presentation and discussion of the themes .....	34
4.3.1	Happiness and Well-being .....	34
4.3.2	Achievements and quality of life .....	36
4.3.3	Attitudes and expectation .....	37
4.3.4	Challenges .....	37
4.3.5	Future projections and opportunities .....	41
4.4	Conclusion .....	43
Chapter 5: Discussion, recommendations, and conclusion .....		44
5.1	Introduction .....	44
5.2	Discussion .....	45
5.2.1	Happiness and well-being .....	45
5.2.2	Attitudes and expectations .....	47
5.2.3	Achievements and quality of life .....	47
5.2.4	Challenges .....	48
5.3.5	Future projections and opportunities .....	50
5.3	Limitations of the study .....	51
5.4	Recommendations .....	51
5.5	Conclusion .....	53
References .....		54

Annexures .....	59
Annexure A: Ethical Clearance .....	59
Annexure B: Gatekeepers letter .....	60
Annexure C: Consent Form .....	61
Annexure D: Interview schedule directed to Msunduzi Municipality .....	65
Annexure E: Interview questions directed to the trainees .....	68

# Abstract

With the high youth unemployment, poverty and inequality in South Africa, there has been a shift in focus towards skills development. The skills development framework was designed as a measure to reduce these issues, and this has led to the implementation of policies and strategies which guide skills development programmes. These skills training programmes have offered skills to the youth of South Africa and aim to combat unemployment. The study aims to assess how skills training programmes for the unemployed youth are performing as a strategy to reduce poverty and inequality in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. This was achieved by investigating the perceptions of the unemployed youth regarding skills training programmes implemented by Msunduzi Municipality and understanding the socio-economic impacts of the training programme on the youth.

The study adopted a qualitative research methodology where data was collected using ten interviews to get in-depth knowledge. The research was separated into three categories as follows: one ongoing programme, one successful programme, and one transitioned programme. In each of these programmes, three participants were sampled using purposeful and snowball sampling where participants were identified by other participants within the same category, and telephonically interviews were conducted. Etikan, Alkassim, and Abubakar (2016) define snowball sampling methods which can be implemented in hard to research populations. Due to covid and the limitations of training classes, this method was most relevant in achieving the research objectives. Lastly, One participant from the Msunduzi Municipality was also interviewed and responded to the programmes that were being researched.

Data collected was audio-recorded, transcribed, and thematically analysed to understand the trends. The study found the youth appreciate the initiative by the government, to offer them a skill. Skills training programmes positively affect the youth and gave them hope of getting employment in the future. It was also established that there are significant challenges that threatened the success of the programmes and the future of the youth. These problems include unpaid stipends and the lack of communication and on-the-job placements. It also found that the youth were starting to lose hope in completing their training and finding employment. It can be concluded that proper planning, monitoring, and evaluation of skills are required to ensure that they become a success. The research has recommended that government organisation, private companies, and NGO's form a partnership to resolve these challenges.

# Abbreviations

DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
FET	Further Education and Training
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRD-SA	Human Resources Development Strategy for South Africa
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
NDP	National Development Plan
NSF	National Skills Fund
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSA	National Skills Authority
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RBV	Resource-Based View
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SDA	Skills Development Act
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SETAs	Sector Education and Training Authorities
SSP	Sector Skills Plan
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations

# Chapter one: Introduction and background

## 1.1 Introduction

Structural segregations imposed during the apartheid era led to the marginalization of mainly Black South Africans (Seth, 2019). Unemployment, poverty, and inequality (regarded as the triple threat) continue to haunt South Africa and other developing countries (Seth, 2018). After 1994, the democratic government inherited many inequalities which required urgent attention to ensure growth and development of all citizens (Reddy, 2019). According to Masipa (2018), South Africa's economy has been strained since the birth of the democratic revolution in 1994. These include restricted skills development, increased poverty, and inequality, local industries that could not compete globally (Masipa, 2018). Implying that, post-democratic elections, South Africa required rapid economic growth to alleviate unemployment poverty, and inequality.

Unemployment in South Africa is exceptionally high (Marumo, and Sebolaaneng, 2019). In quarter 2:2020, Stats SA has reported an unemployment rate of 23.3 percent and a NEET rate of 33.9 percent, and this constitutes youth between the ages of 15-34 who are not in any form e of (employment, education, or training). (Stats SA, 2019). The Stats SA (2019) recognizes that there is a lack of intermediate skills such as artisans, especially amongst the youth, which affects the country's growth and development as universities are not producing enough human resources in these departments. The decline in the number of these skills may be linked to the lack of access to skills development programmes (Stats SA, 2019). Skills training takes into consideration that learners who have completed grade 12 do not have the necessary skills that will allow them to enter the job market (Stats SA, 2019).

The lack of education and skill in South Africa is one of the contributing factors perpetuating unemployment poverty and inequality (Ismail, 2018). Skills development is essential for the growth of the economy and empowering individuals (Fox and Kaul, 2015). Unemployment, poverty, and inequality directly impact the vulnerable who are often the youth who are unskilled and uneducated (Seth, 2019). The inequality of education is identified as a contributing factor hindering the transitions of South Africans to tertiary institutions to gain skills (Stats SA, 2017). The lack of skills in South Africa has encouraged the government to provide skills development and training programmes which aim to upskill the disadvantaged

youth and provide them with skills that will allow them to enter the job market (Leibbrandt, 2010). Skill development tries to close the gap between the skills required by industry and the skills available in the market (Lin et al., 2017). This chapter will outline the history and background of the development of skills development and training in South Africa in conjunction with unemployment poverty and inequality of the youth. It will briefly describe the link between skills development and sustainable development goals (SDGs). It will also discuss the rationale and motivation for the research, along with its aims and objectives. Lastly, it will introduce the preceding chapters of the research.

## **1.2 Unemployment, poverty, and inequality in South Africa**

It cannot be ignored that South African history has played an enormous role in the current economic trends of poverty and inequality (Govender et al., 2007). The apartheid era created spatial segregations which forced different race groups to certain areas. Black South Africans were forced to live in rural areas with minimum resources and opportunities for a better life, whilst coloureds and Indians were closer to the cities and whites being the most privileged (Sulla and Zikhali, 2018). These segregations to the unequal society, which still exists to date (Dollery, B.2003).

When South Africa became a democratic country, it became the government's priority to alleviate poverty and inequality through policies and programmes such as the National Development Plan (NDP) vision 2030 and the Reconstruction and Distribution Programmes (RDP) (times live, 2019). The NDP aimed at uniting all South Africans and creating a fair society through alleviating poverty and inequality in South Africa. The NDP focuses on raising living standards for South Africans by increasing employment, access to health care, education, and ensuring quality public service (Sulla & Zikhali, 2018). As a result, the RDP was implemented to ensure that the basic needs of all South Africans were met through the provision of shelter.

Most Black South Africans were regarded as being poor because they lived below the poverty line which has a negative impact on their well-being and it also affected the countries' productivity (Arndt., McKay, and Tarp, 2016). Arndt, et al., (2016) also states that poverty and inequality adversely affect the country's economy, focusing on improving the standard of living of lower-earning individuals will increase the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the

country. Which may improve the well-being of the citizens, and that is regarded as a powerful tool in fighting the triple threat in South Africa (Masipa, 2018). According to Marumo and Sebolaaneng (2019), youth unemployment has had an influence on the negative life choices by the youth. They continue to state that chronically unemployed youth have resorted to immoral actions such as crime and substance abuse. Chronic unemployment has also led to youth migrating to western countries, as they seek better opportunities (Marumo and Sebolaaneng, 2019). Masipa (2018) also argues that long-term unemployment is one of the causes of poverty and inequality in South Africa as it also harms the country's sustainability and stability. Masipa (2018) further states that the introduction of radical economic transformation in South Africa is one of the strategies recommended to ensure a quicker path to redress the triple threat and regain economic balance.

### **1.3 Strategies to address the skills shortage and youth unemployment in South Africa**

As a measure to redress the triple threat in South Africa, the National Skills Act (1998) was adopted, which focuses on education and skills to aid the previously disadvantaged South Africans to become employable in the job market (Stats SA, 2018). The Department of Education and the Department of Labour are the policy implementers and strategy developers of the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS), which is overarched by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). At the same time, the Human Resource Development Strategy is governed by the Department of Labour (DoL) (DHET, 2017). In addition, the sustainable development goals (SDGs) have been adopted as a measure to fight against the triple threat, which is embedded in the countries NDP (Stats SA, 2019). SDGs are a global strategy adopted by 183 countries in the United Nations (UN) conference, agenda 2030 which is a long-term strategy to ensure that all countries develop sustainably and also by creating inclusive and resilient societies (Lyons and Kass-Hanna, 2020).

### **1.4 Problems with skills development and training programmes in South Africa**

Reddy et al. (2018) identify skills development as a tool that allows individuals and groups to use their capabilities to fight poverty and inequality and to be able to adapt to the changing economic environment. Needham (2019) argues that skills training in South Africa still follows a colonial approach, and there are still divisions with regard to race and gender. Benjamin

(2020) suggests that post-apartheid poverty and inequality still thrives within society, although there has been an increase in skills training. Groener (2014) argues that skills training offered to Black South Africans is usually of low skills, hence creating further inequalities. These inequalities are evident between and within races (Needham, 2019). Groener (2014) further argues that such a systemic structural approach to skills development has recently created inequalities within race groups by creating further classifications, resulting in only a few Black South Africans falling into the middle-class category and many regarded as a low-class category.

The assumption is that when the youth partake in government skills training programmes, upon completion, they will become entrepreneurs or become employable in the job market (Powel, 2002). The lack of skills is often associated with remote areas where these training programmes are not commonly available. This problem is also outlined in HRDC (2013), where these programmes are available in these remote areas, the dropout rate is often high, these problems can be cited back to South African structural history and the socio-economic impact which can be linked back and implemented back into strategy.

Masipa (2018) also outlined that some training programmes in South Africa often fail and leave the youth destitute. The second problem is that participating in skills programmes requires dedication and financial support, that is where the stipend offered in these learnerships assist. These stipends offer short-term financial stability, glitches in the programmes that lead to the non-payment of stipends have a tremendous impact on the participants who depend on them (Cheema, 2019). The lack of employment post-training or if programme collapses is causing most youth to go from programme to programme to maintain the same financial status (Graham and De Lannoy, 2016). The structure of the training programme aims to offer learning through employment (on-the-job training) (Stats SA, 2018). This will require the cooperation of relevant employment entities to provide the necessary training, the problem is also identified by HRDC (2013), some trainees do not get placed. This problem causes an enormous impact on the participants' quality of life (QoL) and how they perceive their future. These issues need to be addressed and implemented back into strategy, with the realization that skills development is more than an economic gain for both the individual and the country, but it affects participants, socially and emotionally. These issues need to be redressed for South Africa to be able to build youth with a healthy mindset, future, and opportunities.

## **1.5 Rationale of the study**

Many skills development programmes have been launched throughout different levels of government (Kraak, 2008). Some have been successful, while some have failed. Skills development programmes have been designed in a way that is conducive to the country's economic affairs and is consequently focused on the development of the youth, which is economically centered (Needham, 2019). This notion is also evident in the NSDS, and funding has been directed to companies to assist with training youth to make them economically active (Stats SA, 2019). To increase South Africa's economy and provide the much-needed skills to keep South Africa globally competitive with the caliber of labour available (Groener, 2014). Skills development research in past literature has also focussed on reducing income inequality. Placing focus on how the youth perceive these empowerment skills training programmes affects the youth, in different stages their quality of life, before, during, and post engagement.

Skills training programmes targeting the youth aim to provide the youth with skills that will increase their employment opportunities (Needham, 2019). South Africa is, therefore, training to match the jobs available to the skills required by industry (Pave, 2020). The most critical factor in the development of skills, reducing unemployment, poverty and inequality lack the most critical factor in the equation, the linkage of the participant's well-being, before, during, and after training. The youth may be engaged in these training programmes for different reasons, and these reasons are vital for achieving the goal for each training programme.

## **1.6 Motivation of the study**

Unemployment, poverty, and inequality are one of the biggest challenges in South Africa (Seth, 2019). One of this biggest challenge which has been identified is the lack of skills training amongst poor South Africans, and this has been attributed to the inequality of opportunity to education bridging to tertiary education (Stats SA, 2018). This research is fundamental in linking the trainees, skills development, and the economy as these interlink and need to be nurtured to ensure that the goal is achieved. This research is vital for understanding the individual's perspective on training programmes, and it will assist in identifying the correct candidate for some of the training programmes while aligning it to the needs of each trainee and the needs of the job market. To identify trainees who need career guidance and counselling when they join a skills training programme. Mental health and the focus of the youths are vital

when working on empowering them. This research aims to understand the impact such training has on the youth and how they perceive it.

Often in research, there is a lack of how it affects the well-being of the participant Hansson and Polk (2018) indicate that participatory research yes yielded positive results which is beneficial to society's well-being by providing outcomes that are used to them. It promotes a better understanding of society's needs and capabilities, including their values and cultures (Marumo, and Sebolaaneng, 2019). It has been evident that participants can assess and evaluate their current status and can recommend a better way forward, which will be mutually beneficial to all parties. This study aims to identify a way forward for skills training programmes for government and other training stakeholders. It aims to centralize the youth (individuals) who are participants in these training programmes and how they perceive the training. It will pay particular attention to how these training programmes make them feel and source a way forward from them. It aims to give a voice to the youth and consolidates it with their views of government officials. This study may be used to inform policies and procedures within government skills training strategies and the NDP for upcoming training programmes. The government needs to evaluate the effects of skills training to establish its progress not only in achieving its mandate but also in how it affects the well-being of its recipients.

The structure of the training programme aims to offer learning through employment (on-the-job training) (Stats SA, 2018). The cooperation of relevant employment entities to provide the necessary training is important; the problem which is also identified by HRDC (2013), some trainees do not get placed. The problem is in South Africa, despite many attempts to train and develop the youth, unemployment is rapidly increasing (Stats SA, 2018). The introduction of skills training programmes was intended to capacitate the youth with the skills which will allow them to enter the job market (Seth, 2019).

## **1.7 Problem statement**

The problem is that skills training programmes have been ignoring the voice of the youth (van der Veen and Datzberger, 2020). This problem articulates the gap between skills training programmes which are offered by the government and the youth. These programmes raise the expectation of the youth them getting employment post-training, which is seldomly met (van der Veen and Datzberger, 2020). This problem impacted negatively on the well-being of the participants and how they perceive their future. This research gives the youth a voice to inform

strategies and plans for future government skills development programmes and closing this communication gap.

This research will attempt to align and gaining perspective from youth to ensure that they maintain a healthy mindset by giving them a voice and making them part of the solution, which is beneficial to the youth, government, training provider, and other relevant stakeholders. This way public and private on-the-placement sites will also be more prone to receiving training who are motivated and willing to work and increased productivity which is linked to increases in GDP (Arndt., McKay, and Tarp, 2016). This research will give government context on how some of the youth feel about the skills training programmes, and this will assist in future strategies and policy development.

## **1.8 Aim and objectives**

### **1.8.1 Aim**

The study aims to assess how skills training programmes for the unemployed youth are performing as a strategy to reduce poverty and inequality in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal.

### **1.8.2 Objectives**

1. To explore the perceptions of the unemployed youth regarding skills training programmes implemented by Msunduzi Municipality.
2. To understand how skills training programmes can reduce poverty and inequality of participants.
3. To explore the measures to ensure that youth skills training programmes become sustainable to reduce poverty and inequality
4. To understand the socio-economic impacts of the training programme on the participants.

## **1.9 Research questions**

1. What are the perceptions of the unemployed youth regarding skills training programmes implemented by Msunduzi Municipality?
2. How can skills training programmes improve the well-being of participants?
3. What measures could be implemented to ensure that the government youth skills training programmes become sustainable?

4. What are the socio-economic impacts of youth training programmes impact the participants?

## **1.10 Scope of the study**

Msunduzi Municipality is located in Pietermaritzburg, which is the second-largest city in KwaZulu-Natal (Stats SA, 2019). According to Stat SA, census 2011, the population within the boundaries of the municipality is 618,536, with a post-secondary school education rate of 18.6 per cent. According to Stats SA (2020), the youth unemployment rate in the area is observed at 43.1 per cent; this highlights the importance of ensuring youth empowerment skills development and training remains sustainable as a measure to reduce poverty and inequality by giving the youth more skills to acquire employment or become entrepreneurs.

The Municipality is also mandated under the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) to increase youth employability through the implementation of skills training programmes and career development. It also has programmes that aim to reduce unemployment through skills training, which is in line with these research objectives.

### **Key terms**

Skills, Youth, Training, Empowerment, Inequality, Poverty, Unemployment, Employment, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), National Skills Development Plan (NSDF), Well-being, Quality of Life (QOL)

## **1.11 Chapter outline**

Chapter 1 will cover the introduction, background, rationale, motivation, and problem statement of the study. It will also cover the research aims, objectives, and research questions.

Chapter 2 will cover the global view and history of unemployment, poverty, and inequality. It will critically assess how skills development is used to fight against the triple threat, especially pertaining to the youth. It will further discuss different strategies employed by the South African government strategies to enhance skills amongst the youth and reduce youth unemployment.

Chapter 3: will cover the methodology and tools in which data will be collected, analysed, and reported. This will include the tools and measures in which the data will be stored. It will also

outline any outliers which may have been experienced in the field to ensure that the data is reliable and credible.

Chapter 4: Will present and analyze the data data collected the findings of the data collected.

Chapter 5: Will discuss the findings which will be inferred to the literature and align the research to the theory and then make recommendations and conclude.

## **1.12 Conclusion**

Skills development programmes often ignore the voice of the youth in decision-making and strategy (van der Veen and Datzberger, 2020). With high youth employment, poverty, and inequality in South Africa, it is important to ensure that youth empowerment and skills development programmes become sustainable (van der Veen, and Datzberger, 2020). These skills training programmes give hope of a better future for the youth by promising stable employment and better QOL post-training, but this seldom happens (McGrath et al, 2018). Youth empowerment skills training programmes have been criticized for having been unable to offer the correct skills required by the market which leads to further unemployment of the youth after they have completed their training (van der Veen and Datzberger, 2020). This chapter has outlined the background and history of youth empowerment skills development in South Africa. It has discussed the need for skills development as a measure to redress the apartheid ills, which negatively affected South Africa's development. It has outlined the importance of the study and the problem statement by focusing and drawing on more attention to the youth as part of the solution to youth development problems and giving them a voice. It has outlined the research aims, objectives, and developed research questions. Assessing skills training programmes for the unemployed youth as a strategy to reduce poverty and inequality in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal.

# Chapter 2: Literature Review

## 2.1 Introduction

Skills development and training literature in South Africa follow a structuralist approach; Needham (2019) states that the impact apartheid era has had a considerable impact on the developmental issues surrounding South Africa. Skills development aims to align the skills required by the industry to the skills available in the market (Lin et al., 2017). The imbalance caused the deprivation of education and training to Black South Africans, and this has constituted poverty and inequality (Groener, 2014). These inequalities have seen the Black majority being deprived of education, employment, and skills which have caused poverty in South Africa (Seth, 2019). Moeketsi, (2004) highlights three reasons which led to what he calls a dysfunctional skills development system. Firstly, skills development was racialised and alienated women. Secondly, its skills development was neglected by the apartheid government; it was not seen as a critical path for development. Thirdly, the apartheid government polarised skills development and neglected and underdeveloped intermediate skills which are essential for industrialisation and globalisation.

Skills development and training have been identified as one of the measures which can be used to combat poverty and inequality in developing countries (Ismail, 2018 & Pave et al., 2019). Leibbrandt, (2010) also argues that skills development is an essential tool to reduce unemployment, alleviate poverty and inequality in South Africa. However, this can only be achieved through focusing on structural reform which has been built on capitalism.

Groener (2014) argues that South Africa has not transitioned from the apartheid era. However, it has been further colonised through imperial neoliberal policies which hinder national growth and development, which have created the new Black elite. This makes it difficult for skills obtained to apply them in the industry (Mc Grath, 2012). Stat SA (2019) states that Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVETs) have been identified as important structures that provide skills training and as a response to the skills shortage in developing countries. Skills training programmes which include learnerships and apprenticeships for previously disadvantaged youth in South Africans was established to close the inequality gap by increasing youth employability (Needham, 2019). Government has introduced Sector Education and

Training (SETA's) to provide training which often requires placement of the trainees to deem the trainee competent (Moeketsi, 2004).

There has been a gap in linking training programmes to social upliftment. Many of the youth become empowered when they venture into these training programmes. The short-term benefits are important to them as they can provide for their families whilst receiving an education that secures their futures. Some of these programmes are canceled, leaving youth participants and employees in destitution (DE Lannoy, 2015). This impact contributes to the youth losing hope. The challenge of the high unemployment rate in South Africa is associated with the oversupply of human resources with low skills training and education and the weak schooling system; while developing countries are in need of skilled workers (Bhorat et al., 2016).

Unemployment poverty and inequality continue to haunt South Africa and other developing countries (Seth, 2019). The lack of education and skill in South Africa is one of the contributing factors perpetuating poverty and inequality (Ismail, 2018). Skills development is important for the growth of the economy and empowering individuals (Fox and Kaul, 2015). Unemployment, poverty, and inequality directly impact the vulnerable who are often unskilled and uneducated (Seth, 2019). The lack of skills in South Africa has encouraged the government to provide skills development and training programmes that aim to upskill the disadvantaged youth and provide them with skills that will allow them to enter the job market (Leibbrandt, 2010).

Youth empowerment and skills development programmes need to be regulated by relevant bodies to ensure that they are implemented lawfully (Mc Grath, 2007). Stat SA (2019) Education report, states that Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVETs) colleges have been identified as essential structures that provide skills training and as a response to the skills shortage in developing countries. To increase youth participation and resolving development needs that negatively affect the economy (Kulve, 2017).

The objective of this paper is to establish different measures taken by the South African government to implement demand-led youth unemployment programmes that aim to decrease unemployment and alleviate poverty and inequality; it will do so by reviewing the causes of poverty and inequality. Groener (2014) argues that these racial and political debates are usually ignored.

This chapter will also review the theoretical framework of skills development and government strategies and measures employed by the South African government in order to combat unemployment, poverty, and inequality sometimes referred to as the triple challenges. It will discuss the importance of achieving inclusive growth, policies, and strategies such as the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the National Development Plan (NDP) vision 2030 (Leibbrandt et al., 2010). Furthermore, it will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of training programmes in combating poverty and inequality. Lastly, it will review misconceptions and recommendations of demand-led skills training programmes outlined in literature and the importance of multi-sectoral partnership.

## **2.2 Skills Development globally**

Research in European countries has shown that there is a mismatch of skills between industry requirements to the skills available in the market (Floraeni, 2014). This misalignment has had a negative impact on employment (Cimatti, 2016). Floraeni, (2014) further states that when the youth continue training for skills that are not demanded by industry, it becomes difficult for them to find the desired employment; hence they end up working in lower skills employment. Research carried out in Pakistan also shows that there in order to reduce unemployment; skills development should be aligned to the industry requirement (Cheema et al., 2019). Cheema et al. (2019) further state that further development of entrepreneurial skills is also essential in reducing unemployment.

According to Kluve et al. (2017) programme evaluations found that the probability of employment increased by 5% in Jóvenes in Latin America for a training programme that combined classroom and on-the-job training. Glick et al. (2015) found that the training skills positively impacted earnings and is, therefore, the preferred and practical approach to alleviating the triple threat. Research shows that skills training associated with on-the-job training yielded positive results in Kenya (Kumar, 2017).

Research conducted on skills development and training programmes shows that the employability of individuals who had participated in training programmes improved and, this has resulted in higher salaries (Ismail, 2018). Research conducted in Kenya has revealed that combining skills training and workplace training increases the employability of trainees, giving them the tools to alleviate poverty and inequality (Ismail, 2018). Skills development has been

identified as an essential component for alleviating the triple threat; these have been outlined in the national skills development strategy (NSDS) and the green paper (2014). Leibbrandt (2010) also argues that skills development is an essential tool to reduce unemployment, alleviate poverty and inequality in South Africa.

### **2.3 History of poverty and inequality in South Africa**

According to Schneider (2018), the current developmental problems experienced by South Africa have been a result of the apartheid structure. The apartheid regime implemented exclusionary laws which were imposed on Black South Africans resulting in high levels of unemployment, poverty, and inequality. Wieczorek (2018) also argues that western countries assume that development is homogenous and is wanted and necessary for all developing countries, whilst ignoring the root causes of the issues underlying previously colonial countries.

In the effort to combat unemployment, poverty, and inequality, the South African government introduced demand-led transformation programmes aimed at creating opportunities and addressing equity issues and skills shortage (Groener, 2014). This has been done through the introduction of vocational training offered by both government and the private sector (McGrath, 2012). However, this can only be achieved by focusing on structural reformation, which focuses on human capital and economic growth. Groener (2014) argues that the key is in transitioning and redressed socio-political issues through transitioning from apartheid structural barriers to post-apartheid national liberalisation.

Groener (2014) also argues that South Africa has not transitioned from the apartheid era. However, it has been further colonised through imperial neoliberal policies which hinder national growth and development, which have created the new Black elite. This makes it difficult for skills obtained to be better used for growth and development in the country (Yates, 2017).

### **2.4 Skills development and training as a measure to combat youth unemployment, poverty, and inequality in SA**

Attaining skills and training is regarded as important for increasing employment opportunities and alleviating poverty and inequality in South Africa (Mc Grath, 2012). Skills training and development in South Africa aims to combat the triple threat, which consists of unemployment,

poverty, and inequality (Stats SA, 2019). The lack of access to opportunities has been cited as one of the major causes of poverty and inequality, subsequently causing unskilled and low-skilled Black South African (Masipa, 2018). Furthermore, improper allocation of resources has contributed to poverty and inequality, where such inequalities include inequality of opportunities, income inequality, and gender inequality (Chibba & Luiz, 2011).

Due to high youth unemployment in South Africa, the government has shifted to skills development as a measure to produce skills necessary in the job market (De Lannoy, 2015). These skills development initiatives are implemented by the government and NGOs and aim to capacitate the disadvantaged South African youth (Masipa, 2018). Youth empowerment and skills training programmes are designed to train the youth and equip them with skills that will increase their employability (Fox and Kaul, 2017). The focus on youth skills development and training has been strategically implemented to target areas of vulnerability, especially the previously disadvantaged groups which include Black South Africans who live in rural and peri-urban areas (HRD Council, 2002). This strategy has also been aligned with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs), which are implemented through the National Development Plan vision 2030 (Stats SA, 2019).

The Stats SA (2019) recognizes that there is a lack of intermediate skills such as artisans and this affects the country's growth and development as universities are not producing enough human resources in these departments. The decline in the number of these skills may be linked to the lack of access to skills development programmes (Manuro and Seboolaneng, 2019). Skills training takes into consideration that learners who have completed grade 12 do not have the necessary skills that will allow them to enter the job market; as a result, South Africa is facing a high unemployment rate (Stats SA, 2019). The skills development approach has been implemented as one of the strategies that the government is focusing on to alleviate youth unemployment, poverty, and inequality (David, 2006). The percentage of unemployed South Africans who have never been formally employed is 39; whilst the youth unemployment rate is 29 per cent, these numbers have prompted an urgent response from the government (Stats SA, 2019).

## **2.5 Theoretical Framework of skills development**

### **2.5.1 Human Capital Theory**

It was in 1776 when Adam Smith first came up with the concept of human capital theory in his work *The Wealth of Nations*. Smith 1776, in Goldin (2014) argues that the capital in a person is the acquisition of talents during education that has a cost, and those talents are part of that person's fortune and to the society. The human capital theory was founded by Adam Smith in 1776. The theory argues that people have a capital value which is the ability to acquire skills when they become educated at a cost and those skills derive monetary value which benefits the individual and the economy (Wright, and Moliterno, 2014). Skills training and development is based on the human development theory, which promotes economic productivity through investing or enhancing individuals to increase their productivity (Lin et al., 2017). These investments and enhancements are made through education and skills training, where individuals need to be educated to make it easier for them to find employment and become economically active and increase productivity (Floreani, 2014)

### **2.5.2 Strategic Human Capital Theory**

Skills development often follows the Human Capital theory which is based on productivity; this theory is an investment in the youth to develop themselves and gain skills/an education (their human capital) with the aim to obtain higher wages (Yates, 2017). This theory focuses on aligning individuals to becoming economically active. Lin et al. (2017), argue that this theory tends to place the burden on the youth as it does not consider other structural issues which may hinder individuals from accessing education.

### **2.5.3 Strategic Human Capital Theory / Resource-Based view.**

The strategic human capital theory suggests that human capital is viewed as a strategic resource that can be valuable and unique (Nemeth, 2017). This Resource-Based View (RBV) aims to align human capital to the needs of industries, which will help them achieve a competitive advantage (Boon et al., 2018). This view aims to strategically place individuals into areas within the industry based on their skills to ensure that they perform at their optimal level (Pasban and Nojededh, 2016).

The Resource-Based View (RBV) is relevant to South Africa with the high levels of unemployment in, the government aims to increase job opportunities, by developing the skills required by industry (Wright, Coff, and Moliterno, 2014). South Africa has been challenged by not having enough skills required by industry and this has affected has negatively affected the economy (Reddy et al., 2018). The RBV has been used to match the skills attainment to the needs of the industry as skills development seeks corporates skills training and on-the-job placement to ensure that the youth gain the necessary skills from the industries (Silva et al., 2020). The increase in skills has been shown to have a positive impact on employment. Floreani (2014) has also noted that there seems to be a mismatch between skills available and the skills required by industry. The RBV attempts to implement measures to aligns these while strategically developing people and enabling them to become economically empowered (Boon et al., 2018)

## **2.6 Strategies and plans implemented to address the skills shortage in South Africa**

Skills development and training form part of the SDG's as a strategy to decrease unemployment, poverty, and inequality as depicted in McGrath, Alla-Mensah, and Langthaler (2018) as follows :

1. Goal 4.4: "By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship."

Goal 8.5: "By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value."

Goal 8.6: "By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training."

Goal 8b: "By 2020, develop and operationalise a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organisation."

Goal 13.3: "Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate.change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning."

The implementation of these goals is regarded as a suitable measure to ensure that the development is inclusive and progressive which is administered through Vocational Education and Training (VET) (McGrath, Alla-Mensah and Langthaler, 2018).

In South Africa, the skills market is regulated under the National Skills Act (1998) where the department of education operates on the demand side, and the department of labour operates on the supply side (Needham, 2019). The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) is built around the following elements (Stats SA, 2019): Aim to provide a financial framework for institutions such as (a) National Skills Authority (NSA); which aims to support the strategic coordination of the NSDS. (b) Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) assists industries and enterprises to compose and implement training plans and for those plans to be linked to available funds. (c) The National Skills Fund (NSF) is formed from 20% skills development levies to provide SETAs with the required budget. (d) The South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) is responsible for the transfer of qualifications. These institutions are assisted and are enabled in order for them to improve the delivery and coordination at a sectoral and national level (Powel, 2012).

The NSDS ensures that there is excellent and effective funding for skills partnership between government and the private sector (Stats SA, 2019), which is a national levy grant that was created to give incentives to employers for training costs incurred during on-the-job training which seeks to provide systems to work experience in a structured approach leading to registration within NQF (Needham, 2019). It also aims to incentivise companies so that they are enabled to take in trainees for on-the-job training. Cheema (2020) further states that on-the-job training is an essential link for trainees to the job market. Focusing on the strategic planning of skills development is essential and ensuring that there are proper monitoring and evaluation tools in place (Graham and De Lannoy, 2016). Cheema et al. (2019) that it is vital for skills training programmes to be able to provide placement and employment services to service through matching workers to relative jobs, giving advice and support, assisting with social plans to help deal with job losses, and assisting designated groups to find employment. Cheema et al. (2019) also confirm that there are other socio-economic factors affecting skills training programmes and their success that need to be included in the planning process. The NDS also aims to provide high-quality training through the enhancement of the education funding system, which is cost-effective and trustworthy (Needham, 2019).

Globalisation has increased the demand for skills and human capital to ensure that the economy thrives. Skills development in South Africa is outlined in the NSDS, which is two-pronged; firstly, it aims to deal with globalisation and competitiveness. Secondly, it aims to alleviate poverty and inequality (Ahmad, 2020). Investing in human resources is regarded as adapting to the changing economy is important in sustainable employment, limiting future job losses. The OECD (2019) suggests that skills and training must be aligned with technological change preferred to ensure that the country remains competitive globally. Mc Grath and Akoojee (2001) argue the importance for the public and the private sector to work together to address the redistribution failure of the labour market. This includes working together in compiling a curriculum, which is in line with the skills demanded by the labour market (World Bank, 2014).

The NSF was established to fund skills development and training programmes and ensuring that the main objectives are met (Stats SA, 2019). This fund is aimed at funding projects which are in the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) and all other mandated programmes under the DHET (Bhorat et al. 2016). In the 2018/2019 financial year, the NSF grant allocated to skills development was R2.28 billion towards education and training programmes (Stats SA, 2019). There has been an increase in the number of government departments submitting their workplace skills plan with a relative increase in spending on training and development (Kraak, 2008). The NSF has benefitted 59 000 trainees, where 59% of the trainees are from rural areas, and 57% of them are perusing critical and scarce skills (Stats SA, 2019).

## **2.7 Misconceptions of skills development and training in South Africa**

Groener (2014) states that a neoclassical view on skills development in South Africa wants to assume that the markets will automatically make jobs available for the skills. According to Ismail (2018), the supply-led skills development and training programme approach assumes that there are jobs available to the youth, but there are skills shortages, and this imbalance creates youth unemployment. Fox and Kaul (2017) argue that demand-led skills development programmes should be implemented as this approach assumes that there are insufficient jobs available to the youth and this increases the demand for the jobs and will trigger the supply of jobs that will combat unemployment, poverty, and inequality.

Groener (2014) argues that training programmes are introduced to unemployed youth as a lifeline to allow individuals to pull themselves out of poverty and inequality. This undermines

the impact of the apartheid structure on the quality of life of previously disadvantaged South Africans (Paver, et al., 2019). McGuinness et al., (2014) skills development aims to increase youth to middle-class status, and this assumes that development is homogenous for everyone. Enns et al. (2014) argue that there may be a lack of youth participation in demand-led programmes because of differences in views; such as that youth who come from traditional families may subscribe to their elder's view of regarding community and culture as importance rather than skills development and training. This may further reduce the number of youth who participate in youth development and training programmes offered; as a result, they then become legible to enter the job market (McGuinness et al., 2014)

## **2.8 Challenges impeding on South Africa's skills development and training**

Skills training and learnerships offered through skills development and training programmes were of low NQF subsequently producing low skills attainment rather than intermediate training (Groener, 2014). This is problematic as the economy is unable to create jobs, the available jobs require higher skills causing a mismatch between what the training entities produced and what is required by the job market, and this further advances structural unemployment (Staff writer, 2020). As a result, there has been a further increase in income inequalities as higher-skilled jobs were occupied by Whites and did not necessarily solve racial and income inequality (Benjamin, 2020). Skills training is linked to the global demand of the market as there is a shift from mineral resources to industrialisation (Paver et al., 2020). Instead of creating employment opportunities to ensure the reduction of unemployment, poverty, and inequality alleviation, it is left to the economy to absorb these skills (McGrath, 2012) automatically.

Needham (2019) argues that skills training in South Africa still follows a colonial approach, and there are still divisions with regard to race and gender. Benjamin (2020) suggests that post-apartheid poverty and inequality still thrives within society, although there has been an increase in skills training. Groener (2014) argues that skills training offered to Black South Africans is usually of low skills, hence creating further inequalities. These inequalities are evident between and within races (Needham, 2019). Groener (2014) further argues that such a systemic structural approach to skills development has recently created inequalities within race groups by creating further classifications, resulting in only a few Black South Africans falling into the middle-class category and many regarded as a low-class category. Furthermore, Ismail (2018)

states that there is no evidence that skills training programmes increase the number of women employed or has any impact on their quality of life.

The initial concern of the Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) has been criticised to have been rather focused on the education aspect and had disregarded the integration into the workplace (Ismail, 2018). There is a discrepancy between the Further Education and Training (FET) formal sector and the labour market, this left many trainees unable to join the labour market after completing their training (Mc Grath et al., 2005). The NSDS also aims to increase the number of firms that participate in work placement and training, in doing so large firms needed to comply with the Skills Development Act 1998 which requires large firms to spend at least 1% of its payroll on skills development (Kraak, 2008). Large and medium firms were already training beyond the required 1%; as a result, many SETA trained learners struggled to acquire on-the-job training.

Aligning the required skills and number of trainees required by the labour market was also one of the issues in the NSDS (Kraak, 2008). The credibility of quantitative data provided by some of the SETA's could not be verified and causing skewed results (Kraak, 2008). Baatjies (2008) also argues that the structure of the learnerships is flawed in that it takes longer to complete one NQF level training because of the number of subfields which trainees are required to complete. The credibility of government administrative data regarding the number of trainees who have successfully completed learnerships is also problematic, thereby weakening the quality control training structure of learnership programmes offered by the government in FET institutions (Kraak, 2008). The challenge of the high unemployment rate in South Africa is associated with the oversupply of human resources with low skills training and education and the weak schooling system; whilst developing countries are in need for skilled workers (Bhorat et al., 2016). There has been a shift of focus from private service providers to public TVET colleges which had been previously marginalised from workplace education and training (Needham, 2019).

The NSDS has been critiqued for failing to transition from the apartheid supply-led to the demand-led, letting the industries determine what skills are required (Needham, 2019). Kraak (2008) observes that employers prefer to train lower skills learnership as a result of the push from the government for them to train a large number of people at a short period of time, in order to account for a large number of the youth who have been trained. The other reason could be that employers may be training individuals with low skills for them to have cheap labour

(Yates, 2017). The low levels of skills imply that employers will not have to pay trainees a lot, should they want to employ them (Kraak, 2008).

Kraak (2008) argues that TVET colleges develop learnerships internally as a better option to allow for newly formed curriculum activities to be integrated into the curriculum as they occur. Learnerships were considered as policy aimed at reversing the triple threat, which should be in line with the requirements of industry and the economy. Kraak (2008) highlights that learnerships are difficult to roll out, and they are time-consuming. Many learnerships have been registered; however, about 50% of them are being implemented by stakeholders who do not have the required curriculum and material (Kraak, 2008). Lower-end skills learnerships have been prioritised as Groener (2014) has stated that this produces a large number of trainees with low skills and as a result, the job market is unable to absorb all of them. There has been a low number of trainees who complete their skills training (Groener, 2014).

## **2.9 Recommendations and way forward**

Fox and Kaul (2017) suggest that youth employment interventions need to consider structural conditions in the economy which establish applicable strategies and plans. Pave et al. 2020 and Groener (2014) suggest that the structure of the training programme is one of the problems relating to the completion rate within the provided training. This could be overcome by changing the delivery systems of the leadership, such as changing the time, date, and so on to allow for all participants to plan according to their availability (Silva, et al., 2020). This way, all those that are enrolled in the skills training will be able to attend the required classes, and the completion rate related to absenteeism will be increased (Groener, 2014). Fox and Kaul (2017) discussed that the private sector and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) were more effective in the delivery of these training programmes. Glick et al. (2015) suggest that the government should invest in the private sector in order to increase wage employment in developing nations (Ismail, 2018).

Skills development is a strategy that is useful in decreasing poverty, unemployment, and inequality in South Africa (Groener, 2014). Pave (2019) argues that the implementation of these demand-led empowerment programmes requires a holistic approach that includes civil society, the private, and the public sector. World Bank (2019) states that the inclusion of all the critical sectors especially during the development of the curriculum for skills training will ensure that TVET and learnership training are in line with the labour market requirements for skills. Literature shows that structural issues emanating from the apartheid regime need to be

addressed in order for South Africa to find solutions to unemployment, poverty, and inequality. Groener (2014) argues that South Africa needs to transition from the apartheid capitalist structure to the democratic structure along with transitioning the labour market and opening up opportunities for higher-income jobs to Black South Africans

## **2.10 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the different regulations and structures implemented by the South African government to decrease youth unemployment, poverty, and inequality. It has discussed literature about the history of South Africa, which has led to the triple threat and is currently decreasing South Africa's economy. Literature reveals that there have been assumptions about the implementation of skills development programmes, and this has caused misconceptions. This chapter also discussed skills development theories and gave reasons why the Resource-Based View (RBV) is relevant for skills development. This chapter is also portrayed as a tool given to the youth and the previously disadvantaged groups to alleviate poverty as this undermines the structural impact of the apartheid. Lastly, this chapter has also discussed the advantages, disadvantages, and recommendations of skills development and training programme in South Africa.

The next chapter will outline the methodology which will be used to carry out the research. This includes the research approach and design, population and sampling, data collection, and analysis, reliability, trustworthiness, rigour, and validity, along with the limitations.

# Chapter 3: Methodology

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the methodology by outlining the research approach, the instruments used, sampling methods, data collection and analysis, and lastly the limitations of the study. The 'research's main objective was to assess how skills training programmes for the unemployed youth are performing as a strategy to reduce poverty and inequality in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. Primary data was used to expand the understanding of the participant's perceptions of the skills training programme in line with the specific questions of the research (Sherif, 2018). The Municipality and the youth who had participated in skills training programmes were targeted for data sampling.

The research was conducted in the Msunduzi Municipality where three training programmes which were implemented by or with Msunduzi Municipality were analysed in the following manner: one ongoing programme, one successful programme (a project that has been successfully completed and closed off). One transitioned programme (Programme that could not complete all its components before its closure and trainees were transitioned to an available programme). Ten individuals were interviewed in total in the following distribution: three trainees from each of these programmes and one municipal representative for all the three programmes.

## 3.2 Research design and approach

A qualitative, phenomenological approach of data collection was employed, following the objective of the study. According to Neubauer (2019), qualitative research with a phenomenological approach allows for in-depth data collection and understanding of 'people's perspectives of a phenomenon. However, Morton & Marais (1990) argue that often the 'researchers' views and ideas are likely to influence the research, of which they suggest that the researcher discloses how their research interest has been influenced their beliefs, values, and interests.

### **3.3 Population and Sampling**

A purposeful/criterion sampling and snowball sampling were used to source the data. Suri 2011 states that purposeful criterion sampling is where the researcher used the set criterion to choose a research sample, specifying inclusion and exclusion criteria. The criteria for selection were that the participants need to have participated in one of the following programmes: ongoing, successful, or transitioned. The programme only focussed on those criteria, which excluded programmes out of these criteria. The researcher identified the other trainees with the help of other trainees applying a snowball sampling method. Ten participants were interviewed in total, three trainees were interviewed in each programme category, and a municipal official who represented all the programmes identified. All nine trainees were interviewed telephonically and, one municipal representative with the knowledge of all the programmes was interviewed face-to-face while adhering to the COVID-19 regulations. Telephonic interviews allow the research to be carried out even when limiting factors preventing face-to-face interviews (Farooq and De Villiers, 2017).

The study used semi-structured interviews to collect rich data; according to Kallio (2016), semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to collect in-depth responses by allowing the researcher to follow up and request the researcher to collect in-depth responses by allowing the researcher to follow up and request clarity. Due to COVID-19 regulations, the youth/trainees were interviewed telephonically the municipal representative was interviewed face-to-face, adhering to the COVID-19 regulations.

#### **3.3.1 Instruments used**

Interviews are regarded as one of the best methods applied to understand people's perspectives (Oltmann, 2016). Data was collected using semi-structured interviews, which were carefully constructed in a non-biased interview schedule developed using the set objectives. Kallio (2016) states that semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to collect in-depth responses by following up and requesting clarity.

The interview guide consisted of twenty open-ended semi-structured interview questions, which allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions, seek clarity and expand on critical points to obtain in-depth responses (Mouton and Marias, 1990).

### **3.3.2 Sampling method**

Purposeful sampling allows the researcher to use the set criteria to choose a research sample; this involved specifying inclusion and exclusion criteria (Suri, 2011). The researcher identified the Municipality as the entity that implements or facilitates the implementation of skills programmes (Msunduzi IDP, 2020). The identified trainees were interviewed along with the municipal workers who are working as implementers of the programmes. The Municipality was requested to identify and contact the relevant trainees based on the research's set objectives; however, they only identified one participant. Other trainees assisted the researcher to identify the other eight (8) participants interviewed according to the other two categories and method employed the snowball sampling. These trainees were also identified by other trainees but also based on the above-set criteria.

### **3.4 Data collection**

A total of ten (10) semi-structured interviews were conducted, consisting of nine (9) telephonic interviews with the trainees and one (1) face-to-face interview with the Msunduzi Municipality youth manager. Due to the coronavirus regulations, which required social distancing to be maintained; as a result, the trainee interviews were conducted telephonically. The relaxation of the regulations to level one allowed for a face-to-face interview with the Municipality. Each participant was contacted and requested a suitable date and time to be interviewed. The interview took 20 to 40 minutes per participant to ensure that all questions are answered thoroughly and give the interviewees time to respond comfortably. Since the research aimed to address youth unemployment, poverty, and inequality issues, it was essential to gather more information from the youth to understand their struggles and obtain suggestions from them, which can pave a way forward. It is for this reason that there are more trainees than officials that will be interviewed.

The interview guide consists of 19 to 20 open-ended questions, which allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions, seek clarity and expand on critical points to obtain in-depth responses (Mouton and Marias, 1990). These questions were formulated using the research questions formulated from the objectives of the research.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

The interviews were recorded using an audio-recorder on the 'researcher's phone, and the telephonic interviews were recorded on a call-recording application downloaded on the 'researchers' phone. These interviews were then transcribed to ensure that all the relevant information was captured correctly. According to Cope (2016), transcriptions are important in ensuring that the researcher currently captures the interview and takes note of different gestures that are important for the findings, such as giggling, sighing, and so on.

These transcriptions were edited and checked to ensure that they were recorded correctly, and they were thematically analysed using Nvivo data analysis software. This method allowed the researcher to identify common phrases and perceptions to draw up a conclusion. According to Nowell (2017), thematic data analysis is suitable for analysing and highlighting 'participants' similarities and differences to find unanticipated insights.

### **3.6 Reliability, Trustworthiness, Rigour, and Validity**

The researcher ensured the 'study's validity through authentic data collection and analysis and ensured that steps taken to complete the research were outlined such that another researcher can carry out similar research (Nowell, 2017). Analytical triangulation was used to ensure the credibility of the research; participants reviewed responses to ensure that they have been captured correctly throughout the interview. This was completed to confirm that the researcher understood what the participant was articulating to the researcher. This method improved the researchers, fairness, accuracy, and validity (Patton, 1999). Kuper (2008) states that transferability can be improved through relating discussions to the literature.

#### **3.6.1 Credibility**

According to Nowell (2017), the researcher can ensure the validity of the study through authentic data collection and analysis and ensure that steps taken to complete the research are outlined such that another researcher can carry out similar research. Analytical triangulation will be used to confirm the credibility of the research; participants reviewed findings to warrant that they have been captured correctly. Analytical triangulation allows data to be reviewed by participants to analyse the credibility of findings; this method improves researchers, fairness, accuracy, and validity (Patton, 1999).

### **3.6.2 Transferability**

Kuper (2008) states that transferability can be improved through relating discussions to the literature. The discussion of findings was related to the literature reviewed to ensure that there is no generalisation of results and that discussions are based on literature.

### **3.6.3 Dependability**

Describing all processes involved in the research and implementing an audit trail improves the dependability of the research Pandey & Patnaik, (2014). The research methodology is outlined to allow each step of the research to be followed and applied in other research.

### **3.6.4 Confirmability**

According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), confirmability of qualitative research can be achieved through research trials where an independent analyst can analyse the data to ensure the research is not biased. McKenna (2004) argues that in qualitative research, it cannot be confirmed that even if the same data set is used when the research is repeated, that it can yield the same results as qualitative research is influenced by external factors, such as participants state of mind at the time, the setting and the influence of the researcher, to name a few. In this research, it will be ensured that research is based on data collection and literature. It will also be ensured that methodological steps are outlined to ensure that another researcher can repeat the same research regardless of the outcome.

## **3.7 Anticipated problems/limitations**

One of the significant issues in this research was the COVID-19 pandemic, which required the researcher to adhere to the regulations. The researcher had to adhere to the social distancing regulation, resulting in nine of the ten interviews being conducted telephonically. Although this method minimized traveling costs and time; some participants were initially hesitant to proceed with the interview. This issue could have emanated from the absence of a physical meeting, which is often reassuring to the participant. Although the researcher was introduced to one participant by the Msunduzi Municipality, because the interview took place telephonically, some participants were skeptical about participating in the research as they were not sure if they were talking to the correct person.

The researcher reassured the participant and explained that they could confirm the study with the municipal managers' office at the Msunduzi Municipality; some of the participants ended up participating except for one, which then required the researcher to seek a relevant replacement.

During some of the interviews, there were network connectivity problems that affected voice clarity; on occasions, the researcher had to hang-up and recalled when there was better connectivity. These limitations were communicated to the participants before the interview. Some participants were in a noisy environment or encountered distractions from other people while conducting the interview. The participants were able to move away from those distractions and continue with the interview.

### **3.8 Summary of the chapter**

This chapter has explained the methodology, which was used to collect the data. It included the use of the purposeful sampling method, as it was considered the most suitable method in line with the research output. It has discussed the appropriateness of the sampling methods and the instruments which were employed during the research. This chapter has further discussed measures that the researcher has taken to ensure that the findings are reliable, valid, and accurate. It has also described the data analysis and tools which were be employed to analyse the data collected. It has also outlined the limitations encountered during data collection; these include network problems, disruption, and so on. It has further discussed how these limitations were overcome to ensure that data collection was completed.

The next chapter will report on the findings of the research that have been drawn from the interviews. These findings will be extracted thematically using Nvivo data analysis software.

# Chapter 4: Presentation and analysis of data

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses data collected through interviews and summarizes it according to the research objectives. Data was captured through recordings and notes taken during the interviews; the recordings were then transcribed to ensure that information was correctly captured. This chapter will also show how the data aligns RBV which is a theory that demonstrates that productivity in the job market is essential, the country needs to align skills available to the needs of the industry (Pasban and Nojehdeh, 2016). This process allowed for a rigorous data analysis process as the researcher was able to analyse and see trends in the data (Cope,2016). Data analysis was thematically analysed using NVivo software which extracts common themes within the data while highlighting the differences in responses. Nvivo software allowed for quicker and reliable sorting, matching, and linking data to the analysis data (Bazeley et al., 2013). Thematic analysis is used to report patterns within the data by identifying, analysing and, reporting common patterns found in the data in qualitative research (Sivakumar, 2020).

The study aims to assess how skills training programmes for the unemployed youth are performing as a strategy to reduce poverty and inequality in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. This study focuses on the youth as they are the future of the country; it is, therefore, important to ensure they are protected from the poverty and inequality trap (Marumo and Sebolaaneng, 2019). The aim of this study was to understand the perceptions of the youth who participate in these programmes within the Msunduzi Municipality to understand if the programmes indeed contributed to their quality of life of the youth and potentially decrease poverty and inequality.

The researcher had initially understood that the municipality would have had an unsuccessful programme. However, upon meeting with the municipality, it was stated that the municipality had not had any cancelled programme, but it has had only one programme that encountered challenges. The trainee could not be placed for on-the-job training as it was initially planned; the municipality then decided to transfer those trainees to another programme so that the trainees would acquire more skills and an opportunity to be placed. The initially termed

unsuccessful programme will be termed the transitioned programme. A one-on-one interview was conducted with the municipality youth manager (regarded as participant 10 below) to understand their view with regards to these skills training programmes. Participants were chosen using a combination of purposeful criterion sampling and snowball sampling, which allowed the researcher to identify participants (trainees) who were willing to participate in the research based on the skills training they have received. Participants were then represented as P1 to P10 in the following manner; firstly; P1, P2, and P3 represented the youth sampled from the ongoing programme. Secondly; P4, P5, P6 represented youth who were from the successful programme. Thirdly; P7, P8, and P9 represented the youth who were part of the transitioned programme, and lastly; P10 represented the municipal official from Msunduzi municipality.

## **4.2 Outlining of themes emerged out of the data collected**

Data collected were categorized into themes and sub-themes, which emerged when the researcher was listening to the interview recording and during transcription. Nvivo software was then used analyze the transcribed data using the identified codes. Five themes were identified with 26 sub-themes varying between three 3 to 6 sub-themes in each theme depending on the complexity of the theme. These themes are captured below on table one.

**4.2.1 Table 1: themes and subthemes identified from data collected from interviews**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>
<b>Happiness and Well-being</b>	Enthusiasm to start training General happiness Coping with training Meeting new people
<b>Attitudes and expectations</b>	Must fulfill promises Must be implemented correctly Accountability Must take youth that wants to learn
<b>Achievements and Quality of Life</b>	Skills / Qualifications gained: free training Opportunity to learn new things Interpersonal skills Communication skills On-the-job training exposure Being able to contribute at home
<b>Challenges</b>	Unpaid stipends Placement: Not being accepted by the municipality Unemployment Inconsistency of training Poor home background / unemployment Financially and emotionally, asking for money at home
<b>Future projections and opportunities</b>	Hope for the future Starting a business – entrepreneurship Hindered by lack of placement

## 4.3 Presentation and discussion of the themes

### 4.3.1 Happiness and Well-being

The themes and sub-themes were derived from the trends identified when the researcher was listening and transcribing the interviews. The researcher recorded the interviews and transcribed them to capture information correctly. The presentation of this data is outlined below and is divided into five categories based on the themes tabulated in table one above. This method allowed for a systematic data presentation, analysis, and consolidated at the end.

The presentation of the responses signifies the importance of training centers to the youth. Overall, the youth appreciated the skills training programmes, and they have stated that it allows them to learn a new skill.

"Hmmm [enthusiastically and passionate] I felt so excited because it was another chance for me to grow as a person ...I was going to get exposure in the electrical field, it also gave me some time to grow as a person, to meet other people, sharing ideas and also to gain qualification." (P1)

"I was very happy, I was very happy, because I was going to learn things, and I was going to get to a stipend that was going to help me do things...I am more happier now since I've joined the programme. I'm happy my life is gonna change in a different way" (P2).

The level of happiness of the participant seemed to have deteriorated during their training as compared to when they started training in the relevant programmes, however they remained hopeful. Their well-being and happiness were negatively affected by unpaid stipends and the lack of placement. These challenges have brought distress to the participants and their families.

"at first when I found out that I was accepted into this programme, I was very happy, like I have said, to... being chosen to be one of the people who will make a change in the, in our country. Err but then when time went on the programme became suffering financially, from that it put a lot of stress, I really wasn't happy that much...I was happy how many youths will have jobs as there is employment problems in South Africa, I would say that's the most positive ...At this point, I am not happy, they haven't resolved their financial problems, everything is not going smoothly as it was at first , ya that's that's why I'm not happy." (P3)

Magidi and Mahiya (2020) and Floreani (2014) believe that skills training programmes help the youth build their confidence, in developing and builds their interpersonal skills, communication, and self-esteem. This is in line with the RBV, which aims to capacitate individuals to make them productive in the job market (Wright, Coff, and Moliterno, 2014). Participant 10 on behalf of the municipality also mentioned that they too tray and ensure that

the trainees/youth are happy in their training. They believe that trainees become happier when they partake in skills development which is in line with their personalities. They believe that the mindsets of the youth change.

“I ask the trainees how everything is going... to check that they are learning well... the facilitators are passionate, and we are blessed at the youth centre, the facilitators go beyond.”

Trainees need to align their personality to the skills training... when this happen, they succeed...enrolling in such training programmes, changes their mindset, they have something to focus on and have something to do and plan their daily lives and beyond.”(P10)

Most trainee participants in the study have stated that they come from disadvantaged backgrounds and were unable to further their study. The impact of the apartheid regime created poverty and inequality, which have seen the Black majority being deprived of education, employment, and skills which have caused poverty in South Africa (Seth, 2019). Skills training programmes aim to change this narrative and giving hope to the South African youth (Ismail, 2018). All participants stated that they had joined the programme because they saw an opportunity to grow and obtain a skill that will enable them to get employment. The South African labour market favours skilled labour, the higher the skill. The greater the chances of employment (Graham and De Lannoy, 2016). The trainee participants have the same view as they believe that venturing into skills training gives them more opportunity to find employment. ,

"I was very happy because... I was going to definitely get the skills that I need." and participant 9 stated "I was very happy because I understood that this opportunity would change my life.

Participants were happy to be part of the programme and it gave them a sense of friendship. They also appreciated that they could plan their future with their peers with whom they share common goals with which positively affected their well-being.

“I was happy that I was accepted because, I thought, oh okay, I won't be sitting at home doing nothing, I have something to do for a period of time...I was happy... There were people I communicated with... I am an introvert so I finally got people I could talk to about the programme we are in, talk about stuff, about employment, and the future.” (P7)

This seems to be the trend for most of the youth, they viewed interacting with new people and having a sense of connection as one of the important things in their lives. Participant 3 felt to be less happy due to problems that they have faced in the programme, the participant sites that the programme has stressed them; which include unpaid stipends and lack of placement which are further explained in the theme of the challenge. Participant 10 feels that skills training

programmes contribute to the trainee's well-being as the youth are also trained in mental toughness. Participant 10 stated that these training programmes change the well-being and opportunities available to the youth,

"I would also say that, lets us not take skills trained for granted because they will help a lot going forward."

### **4.3.2 Achievements and quality of life**

Skills acquisition is significant to the youth because when they acquire additional skills and development it increases the probability of the youth obtaining employment (De Lannoy, 2016). Participants believed that once they gain a skill, they will obtain more employment opportunities which will improve their quality of life. Cheema et al. (2019) also states that the youth participate in a skills training programme to gain more knowledge to increase their capacity of becoming financially stable—the youth venture into something progressive which could open economic freedom for them and their homes.

"This programme was giving us skills and training... because we also able to do trade test...It was good when we were doing our practical's. It was good to learn because everything was new to me... You have to learn to work with people, you have to learn to work even if you are angry at that time, but you mustn't show that...I haven't progressed yet, but I did get piece job and find some money..." (P4)

Some of the participants stated that they used their stipends to help in their homes and minimise the burden of providing financial support from their parents (Silva et al. 2020). Participant 1 and 2 had stated that they are breadwinners at home and, the stipend has helped them contribute at home.

Hmmmm yes, yes it has helped me, since ke mina, I am a breadwinner at home home So nje, everything that I've done, I have done with my stipend I've even managed to improve my standard of living. like buying a furniture at home. Yeah. So, it has helped me." (P1)

"It helped me to buy things at home, we didn't have to ask for anything" (2)

Participant 3 stated that their quality of life has been deteriorating because there are training challenges that were hindering them from completing. They also stated that they are getting older and there are responsibilities at home, but because they have not completed their training and they are back home doing nothing

"So, my future, I didn't see it being this way. I thought I was going to be well-off by this stage, as I am not getting any younger."

The participant further stated that the programme became stressful. Participant 4 stated that they have not progressed and that it is not going anywhere.

“I have not achieved anything in life because I didn’t do practical’s, I don’t think I will be able to get a job, my life is at a halt.”

The above responses shows that happiness and wellbeing affect the youth with their training, which may also be detrimental to their future (Masipa, 2018).

### **4.3.3 Attitudes and expectation**

Data shows that participants view skills training programmes as a path that was going to increase their chances of a brighter future by allowing them to obtain employment. This is in line with the Resource-Based View, which aims to organise people’s skills to become more productive in the industry (Nemeth, 2017).

“Skills training programmes are affecting the youth in a positive way, because they get chances to learn and not stay at home, and just have better plans for the future to become better people. And to plan for their future and have a bright future.” (P3)

Bansal and Tripathi, (2017) also state that it is essential that the trainee aligns their personalities with the skills they want to venture in so that they can avoid dropping out, which will result in decline productivity. According to Nemeth (2017), the RBV aims to avoid such problems by aligning the individual to their most productive skill.

In line with the RBV in Wright, Coff, and Moliterno, (2014), all the participants were obtaining a skill to become economically active and find employment in the job market, as stated by participant 10, some training has been absorbed by companies.

“There are some trainees that are diligent hard workers, they are have trained and they were placed... they work hard and now they have been absorbed by the company.”

### **4.3.4 Challenges**

Although stipends are good motivation for trainees to participate in the skills training programme, most participants participate in skills programme because they are eager to learn a new skill (Silva, et.al, 2020). There is a consensus amongst all participants that they have encountered challenges in their skills training programmes. Some participants reported that there was no communication when stipends were not paid. The unpaid stipends exacerbated other socio-economic issues such s those cited by the participant. Based on the RBV, such

challenges hinder industries' productivity when participants are unable to perform at their optimal. (Lin et al., 2017).

“Shooo. hhheee [giggle agitatedly] the problem phase two commence in time... And the other thing was the delay of stipends. When never really knew what was the pay date, and then during the program as also put on hold The, or they cut my stipend and then they, they wanted me to verify that I'm still on the program. I verified the numerous times.” (P1)

““It has really affected me financially because nobody was working at home , so... I was depended on the stipend, very dependent, so when we had problems, we didn't get the stipend I had to ask money from home. And I know my background, so it wasn't just affecting me, but it was affecting a lot of people back home, who were trying to get me money to pay rent, go to school, bus fare and everything, so it really affected me financially.” (P3)

Suggesting that what at times, unpaid stipends affect the whole family. Some of the participants also used the stipend to contribute to the household, as stated by the participant. This further explains the greater impact of unpaid stipends beyond just the trainees. Participant 10 outlined the importance of a trainee's stipend, explaining that it removes the burden of trainees having to make means of going to training whilst they are unemployed.

Participant 1 had stated that their stipend was withheld for nine months; within those nine months, the participant could not contribute at home as the participant stated that they are the breadwinner at home. Participant 6 and 7 stated that when stipends are not paid, some of the trainees cannot get to the training centre as that do not have other means to do so. This affects their training as they need to catch up, which may result in inadequate skills transfer (Cheema, 2019).

“Some stipends were delayed, and that caused other trainees to be absent.” (P6)

“There was a time when we didn't receive the stipend... without the stipend, we cannot attend, because even our parents do not have money to give us.” (P7)

On-the-job training allows participants to gain the necessary skills which will allow them to become employable after training (Graham and Mlatsheni, 2016). All the participants mentioned placement for on-the-job training as one of their significant problems. These issues also hinder the productivity of a country and having skills in the market because they are not being used (Boon et al., 2018). The lack of placements has led to some participants losing hope in finding employment; participant 5 stated that:

“I have not achieved anything in life because I didn't do practical's, I don't think I will be able to get a job, my life is at a halt.”

Participant 2 also stated that they do not think it will be easy to get employment because they have not been placed and the municipality does not want to accept them for on-the-job training.

“They don’t want to accept us to do the training in the municipality, yes we haven’t found placement, ya...I think if we got the opportunities to be placed, we was going to be easy to get employment, but now that we didn’t get the opportunities, I don’t think it will be easy to get employment, but I don’t know, but that’s my point of view.”

Participant 10, on behalf of the municipality, stated that they have issues with placing students from on-the-job training for the transitioned programme. De Jongh (2017) states that when on-the-job training skills are absent become outdated, and it becomes more difficult to find employment. Participant 10 further states that some of the trainees have opened their businesses.

“We try to make sure that the youth understand that they need to be able to stand on their own, that they use the skills that they have gained to be able to start something of their own...”

There is already some of them who have opened up business and are self employed, some are working for other companies and that’s because they understand why they trained.”

“There is a trainee who comes from the transitioned programme, who now is self employed and is known in their area that she does work, so when there is work the community calls her... it’s very empowering for a black woman in the sector to be grabbing these opportunities.” (P10)

Based on the RBV theory, companies aim to maximise productivity, which may have led to the issue which participant 4 has outlined (Pasban and Nojede, 2016)

“While I was doing my in-service training, eh in the other place, we had a conflict with the supervisor.”  
“We fight about the work because we were supposed to work from 8 am - 4:30 pm, but on that day we worked from 8 am to 12 am in the morning without telling our parents we are not coming back early.”  
(P4)

Participant 10 also stated that the transitioned project was a long process that involved many stakeholders which lead to more complications to the programme.

The lack of certificates also hinders the youth from finding employment, the programmes must be implemented correctly monitoring, and evaluation must be done correctly (Cimatti, B, 2016). Participants 8 and 9 stated that they were devastated when the transitioned programme came to an end as they had not been placed and they had not received their certification. They further stated that the training that they had undergone was not sufficient for them to be self-employed at the time.

“They promised that at the end of the programme they will take use to the placement site...didn’t happen, they said they will give use the toolbox and the graduation and all those things happen...They didn’t achieve what they wanted, because they wanted to up-skill us and then hire us... but that didn’t happen... they told us they might hire but they also told us that we must look for employment with the qualification they are going to give us...Programmes in the middle of their implementation... they start having problems and complications... when you start you have hope and you give it your time and attention... and they promise thing... and most of the programmes.. they don’t keep their promise and as the youth we feel abused..When the programme ended, I felt bad because I didn’t know from here, what I will do... I lost hope... you just using you as the youth for the things they want... there are lot of things they get by implementing these programmes” (P8)

“We had a fear because we didn’t know how long the programme was going to last. It was my first time in such a programme and I had uncertainties.” “When the training ended it was very painful, I didn’t know when I would get such an opportunity.... I had financial issues and there was not income anymore... I had to go back and ask my mother for things...” (P9)

Other challenges reported were the lack of training materials and tools which include Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). These caused a straining in the training process and hindered trainees from completing tasks in time.

“They promised us tool boxes, but they didn’t arrive, so we had to buy our own tool... We also didn’t get PPE’s in time, we were not allowed in the workshop.”(P1)

“the other problem is that there was a late arrival and low standard training equipment.” (P6)

Participant 7 stated that there was a challenge with the TVET college, the facilitators they had then seemed to have limited knowledge about the skills were facilitating.

“Most of us don’t have N2 which is a requirement for us to get a trade test in the new programme, but we are not get it. And some of us don’t have maths and science so we need the N2.”

“I thought by now I would be a certified plumber, but it didn’t work out that way due to problems we faced.” (P8)

Moreover, participant 9 outlined that having colleagues who are not interested in the skills, tend to disturb them during training.

“I am very grateful for such opportunities, I would like to plead to the implementers to ensure that they recruit trainees that are really eager to learn, because when we start training the ones that are not serious about training (those that are there for the stipend not the skill) also affect and disturb our training. (P9).

Participant 7 stated that they are finding it difficult to finding placement because of her gender, Cheema et al. (2019) so confirm that there is still resistance resilience for women participating in skills training.

“It give me skills, but plumbing is male dominated skill, so as a woman , you need to fight to be recognized. Maybe if I fought enough maybe I would have gotten employment... maybe I didn’t fight enough.”

“Women are not given an opportunity to try out certain jobs, they don’t see me holding a wrench, they don’t see me holding a grinder, they see us as softies... Its tiring having to fight even after I have trained.”  
(P7)

The participant requested that when trainees are chosen to participate in skills training programmes; it must be ensured that the chosen people want to learn the skill. The inability of the training programme being unable to provide the necessary equipment for training to commence is detrimental to the programme life cycle (Floreni, 2014). The RBV theory advocates for the proper allocation of resources and processes that will ensure optimal productivity (Boon et al., 2018).

#### **4.3.5 Future projections and opportunities**

In line with the RBV, which aims to educate people in order for them to become more productive, Participants feel that when they complete their training, they will have better opportunities to be employed (Boon, 2018). Participant 10 stated that on the municipality’s side, they recruit trainees and coordinate the training programmes. They also motivate trainees to continue with their training and become self-employed and to grab every opportunity they get.

“The future of the trainees also depends on how they think and how so much they work, if they get into the training and they are not serious they will not do well.”

“ They need to grab all opportunities and work hard... I always tell them that when they are out there, they represent the municipality, and they need to take those opportunities seriously.”

“as a municipality we had identified a need, looking at what the municipality a certain skill to eradicate a certain problem, we worked with different stakeholder based on the skill were needed, and we saw that we needed.”

All the participants aimed to complete their studies and wanted to take their career to the next level. Participant 3 still wants to continue studying so that he can complete his studies, that felt

that he had not learnt enough skills at that time to enable him to find employment. The RBV has to be applied to the monitoring of these skills training programme to ensure that they produce the caliber of skills that allows for optimum workplace productivity (Pasbon, 2017).

Most participants were worried about their future, and they were uncertain whether they would be able to get employment. Participant 3 was disappointed with the status of the programme they had joined.

“And I had other opportunities, and other training, to go to other schools, but I chose this programmes, thinking that my future will be secured, but then, ya it didn’t, it didn’t go as planned. Even now I have to start rebuilding my future...More companies are short on artisans, my programme was teaching me to be an artisan, so I learnt that there is a shortage of artisans in our country. So I really believe that if I can carry on and get my qualification, I would get employment, soon, very soon cause, artisans are wanted.” (P3)

Participants 2 and 5 were very unsure about their possibility to get employment because they had not been placed, and they too were unsure about their future. According to Floreani (2014), it is essential to ensure that the youth positively perceive their future, to enable them to learn more.

The RBV asserts self-efficiency and skill into production, with the belief that people with the right attitude can produce more and therefore, participants with high productivity are most likely to be employed (Boon et al. 2018). Participant 6 has already planned their next step in life where they have research potential employment companies.

“My future is going to be amazing; I now have a plan to learn more on certain aspects of skills training that I have gone through. I have been researching more and finding more information about companies who are working within my skills as I am passionate about them.”

Participant 6 also mentioned that when they were training, they realised that most trainees did not have the basic skill which was required for the training. Cimatti (2016) also stated that there are individual skills that are required by the youth to ensure that they can participate in the planned training without any hindrances. The RBV theory also advocates this phenomenon and believes that all necessary tool needs to be implemented and taught to people so that they perform.

## **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter presented and discussed the finding which had been obtained through the interviews conducted with Msunduzi municipality. It has tabulated the responses and inserted them into themes using the Nvivo software. Each theme was then tabulated with the significant responses from each participant to understand the trend of the participant's views based on the theme. The data received was also discusses based on the tabled themes. It was found that all trainee participants had been unemployed before they joined the relative training programme; they wanted to further their studies and obtain a skill so that they can have a brighter future. Participant 10 had also stated that on the side of the municipality; they too had faced challenges, especially with regards to placements. The next chapter will discuss the findings, make recommendations, and conclude the research done at Msunduzi municipality.

# Chapter 5: Discussion, recommendations, and conclusion

## 5.1 Introduction

This research aimed to assess how skills training programmes for the unemployed youth are performing as a strategy to reduce poverty and inequality in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. Concerning the aims and objectives, the study used a qualitative, phenomenological approach data collection method. Neubauer (2019) states that qualitative research with a phenomenological approach allows for in-depth data collection and understanding people's perspectives of a phenomenon. However, Morton & Marais (1990) argue that often the researcher's views and ideas are likely to influence the research, of which they suggest that the researcher discloses how their research interest has been influenced their beliefs, values, and interests. This chapter links skills development to the Resource-Based View (RBV), which believes that when individuals are skilled and placed in suitable areas within the industry, they have the potential to perform at their optimal level (Lin et al., 2017). This chapter encompasses the discussion of significant findings using the identified themes and relating them to literature. This chapter also includes a discussion of the limitations of the study, a summary, and make recommendations based on the findings.

The research aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of the unemployed youth regarding skills training programmes implemented by Msunduzi Municipality?
2. How can skills training programmes improve the well-being of participants?
3. What measures could be implemented to ensure that the government youth skills training programmes become sustainable?
4. What are the socio-economic impacts of youth training programmes to the participants?

Responses derived from the interviews were categorised in the following themes: a) happiness and well-being; b) attitudes and expectations; c) achievements and quality of life, d) challenges, and e) future projections and opportunities. Data were collected at the Msunduzi municipality using semi-structured interviews. Kallio (2016) suggests that semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to collect in-depth responses by allowing the researcher to follow up

and request for clarity. Nine telephonic interviews were conducted with trainees who had participated in skills training programmes implemented by or with Msunduzi municipality and a one-on-one interview was conducted with the municipality, youth centre in the following categories; one ongoing programme, one successfully programme, and one transitioned programme.

Initially, the researcher had thought that the municipality would have had a programme that had been unsuccessful; however, upon meeting with the municipality, it was discussed that the municipality has never had an unsuccessful skills training programme, but a programme that transitioned from one programme to the next to facilitate further training of the youth. All interviews were recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy. Data analysis was completed using NVivo software which extracts common themes within the data while highlighting the differences in responses. Nvivo software allowed for quicker and reliable sorting, matching, and linking data to the analysis data (Bazeley et al., 2013)

## **5.2 Discussion**

The research is necessary because it links the youth, skills development and training, and the economy. This research is vital to understand the perspective of the youth on training programmes, and it will assist in identifying the correct candidate for some of the training programmes while aligning them to the needs of each trainee and the needs of the job market. To identify trainees who need career guidance and counselling when they join a skills training programme. Mental health and focus are vital when working on empowering them. Often in research, there is a lack of how it affects the well-being of the participant (Cheema, 2019). Hansson and Polk (2018) indicate that participatory research yielded positive results which are beneficial to society's well-being by providing outcomes that are practical for them. It promotes a better understanding of society's needs and capabilities, including their values and cultures (Marumo, and Sebolaaneng, 2019).

### **5.2.1 Happiness and well-being**

The research found that the trainee participants were eager to start their training and to learn a new skill. There is evidence in the research which shows that the youth were happy to enroll in the skills training programme with the prospects of finding employment. Graham and De Lannoy (2016) share the same views and state that the South African labour market favours skilled labour, the higher the skill, the greater the chances of employment. Participants were

thrilled when they enrolled in the programme—moreover, they associated skills training with becoming financially stable. The RBV also aims to increase productivity in the workplace by providing; skills that will enable individuals to perform at their best, it favours higher-skilled human capital (Nemeth, 2017).

Van Wart et al. (2020) states that when the youth participate in hands-on training, their self-efficacy increases and they perform better. Magidi and Mahiya (2020) and Floreani (2014) also concur with these views and outlines that training helps the youth build their confidence, in developing their other soft skills such as interpersonal skills, communication, and self-esteem. In this research, there is evidence from the youth from the transitioned programme, that there is a need for these soft skills training before they venture into the primary training. The RBV also advocates this view because of socio-economic and self-efficacy factors in individuals, it is important that employees and attain self skills that will enable them to perform more (Lin et al., 2017). The research also found that the best thing about the skills training programmes was that they did not have to pay for the training.

There is evidence that the youth thrive in the sense of belonging and companion; most of the participants were happy that they participated in the relative programmes because they also met new people with whom they share a common goal. De Jongh (2017) also noted that making use of friends and relatives to find employment was effective. One participant in the study stated that they were approached by one of their peers to collaborate with them and start a company. The research also revealed that the municipality plans to assist the youth to become self-sustainable and start their own business. It also found that the youth is moving towards becoming entrepreneurs when they complete their training as they do not believe they can find employment with such a high unemployment rate in South Africa.

The latter aligns with De Lannoy (2016) stating that skills training programmes should provide the youth with entrepreneurial skills which will enable the youth to open businesses. Jakubczak (2015) also agrees with this and states that facilitating entrepreneurship amongst the youth opens opportunities for the country's economic development potential. The narrative of entrepreneurship just at the RBV also advocates for high productivity, of which these skills are attained through education and enhance human capital (Boon et al., 20118). De Jong (2017) Fostering a climate of entrepreneurship, in particular for young people, provides a country with the opportunity to extend its economic development and competitiveness (Jakubczak, 2015). Jana (2020) also agrees with this notion and further explains that it becomes increasingly

beneficial. Wach et al. (2020) outline that there is a positive link between entrepreneurship and the individual's social well-being, such as self-empowerment.

Paver et al. 2020 and Groener (2014) suggest that the structure of the training programme is one of the problems relating to the completion rate within the provided training. This research found that participants became happier when their training centres were closer to their homes. When the training centers were further away, it raised challenges for them. Greoner (2014) suggests changing the delivery systems of the skills training programmes; for example, changing the time, date, and venue for all participants to plan according to their availability and proximity. This way, all those that are enrolled in the skills training will be able to attend the required classes and, the completion rate related to absenteeism will increase. Facilitation of proper training will result in higher skills attained and increased activities (Nemeth, 2017)

### **5.2.2 Attitudes and expectations**

The study found that the youth expected that their training would be a success from start to finish. Some of the youth had other options for furthering their studies, but they believed in government programmes; hence they chose their current skills training. Nickerson et al. (2019) outlined the importance of trainees having positive expectations towards training because it makes skills acquisition and transitioning from theoretical training to on-the-job training. The research found that participants expected the government to fulfill their part of the contractual agreements to continue with their training without any difficulties.

Evidence in the research shows that communication about skills training programmes is not disseminating accordingly. The municipality aims to disseminate information through ward councillors to the communities, youth centre, and skills development centre. Hecker, (2019) illustrates that maintaining public participation is essential for ensuring that there is democracy. The study also showed that the youth believe in government training programmes and expect accountability if their operational problems encountered in the skills training programmes to be held accountable (Apgar al et. 217). There is evidence that the role of the government is essential for these programmes to become sustainable.

### **5.2.3 Achievements and quality of life**

This research found that the youth recognise obtaining a skill as their most significant achievement. Aligning to Silva et al., (2020) this is contrary to the belief that most youths participate in skills training programmes because of the other benefits, such as receiving a

stipend. This is in line with the RBV people who have the correct skills that are needed by the economy are more likely to attain employment than those who do not have any skills (Pesban and Nojede, 2017).

This research showed that the youth want to pursue their career and become financially stable; there is evidence that training programmes capacitate the youth with other skills such as communication and interpersonal skills. Cimatti (2016) also illustrates that these skills are important as a measure to help support the youth. For those that were fortunate enough to acquire on-the-job placement, it was regarded as one of the most significant achievements. The youth believed that it would be easier for them to acquire employment; others to start their businesses because they believe in acquiring enough skills, especially with their practical training. Those that did not acquire on-the-job training had lost hope of becoming employed.

The research was targeted at the youth who were coming from a poor background; it also established that participating in the skills training was an achievement on its own for the youth. All the participants had been unemployed before they started their training. This also aligns with De Lannoy (2015) affirming that the high levels of unemployment cause uncertainties amongst the youth. They were able to venture into something progressive which could open economic freedom for them and their home. The study showed that some of the youth used their stipends to help out at home. Moreover, this increased their quality of life during the training and the potential to continue doing so post-training. Cheema et al. (2019) also show that the youth participate in a skills training programme to gain more knowledge to increase their capacity of becoming financially stable.

#### **5.2.4 Challenges**

The research found that there are various challenges affecting skills training programmes that are implemented within Msunduzi municipality. These challenges have caused stress and anxiety amongst the youth. Including affecting attendance, happiness, and their quality of life, especially with regards to their poor background, it has become daunting and stressful to them and their families where they had to ask their parents who are also unemployed for rent, and busfare money. All these challenges have the potential to harm productivity in the industry which may result in low productivity performing against the RBV (Lin et al., 2017). Skills training programmes need to ensure that the trainees are not disadvantaged by implementation issues (Floreni, 2014).

#### **5.2.4.1 Training centres that are not in central areas**

This research also showed evidence that there is a challenge for the youth having to go for training in areas which are further away for central points. Manuel, Van der Linden, and Popov (2017) suggests that skills training should be adapted to the needs of the community to see how education and skills training can be adapted back to the communities. Which Cheema et al. (2019) also confirm that there are other socio-economic factors affecting skills training programmes and their success that need to be included in the planning process.

#### **5.2.4.2 Unpaid/delayed stipends**

The research also found that although stipends are good motivation for trainees to participate in the skills training programme, most of the youth participate in a skills programme because they are eager to learn a new skill. Silva et al. (2020) also found this to be true in their research. The general view gathered from the youth is that only a few of their colleagues had shown disinterest in training. The study also found that the municipality was also aware the youth was determined to succeed and wanted to participate in the skills programmes in order to gain a skill.

The unpaid stipend was also found to be one of the major concerns of the skills training programmes, along with the lack of communication with regards to stipend repayment. The unpaid stipends exacerbated other socio-economic problems, which resulted in stress and anxiety. Cheema et al. also state that stipends counter offers the opportunity cost of staying at home then attending the training. Especially with the lack of knowledge of the importance of skills training programmes within remote and township areas (Graham and De Lannoy, 2016) The unpaid stipends began to affect other people in the household when they had to assist the youth with bus fare, rent, and food. It was also established that most of the participants could not afford these expenditures, which lead to increased stress for both themselves and their families. It was also found that some used their stipend to help out at home, and once there was a delay or unpaid stipend, it affected the whole family and their training.

#### **5.2.4.3 On the job Training**

On-the-job training allows participants to gain the necessary skills which prepare them to become employable after training (Graham and Mlatsheni, 2016). It was found that the majority of the participants had not been placed to complete their training. This contributed to the youth losing hope in finding employment. The study found that due to the nature of their training, the

youth value placement and feel helpless if they have not been placed. Some of them had lost hope because the municipality did not take them for on-the-job training. It led to them not believing that they could be employed. They seem uncertain about funding employment, although they had completed their training.

De Lannoy et al. (2016) concurs with this and outlines it to the challenges with skills training in South Africa. Some believe that they need to continue with training or find other institution which will allow them to continue with their training, whilst some have opted to start businesses. Even with those that have opted to start their businesses, they feel they have not gained all the skills necessary because they lack the practical training skill. It established that the municipality is also struggling to find placement for the trainees. De Jongh (2017) outlines that if on-the-job training skills are absent, their skills become outdated, and it becomes more difficult to find employment. The research also found that the municipality performs better with short-term programmes rather than long-term programmes which required multiple stakeholders. The research shows evidence when the coordinators/managers are changed in the middle of the programme, it negatively affects the programme processes. The municipality believes that it is best to have instead the same person coordinating and managing the programme from inception to closure.

### **5.3.5 Future projections and opportunities**

There is evidence in the research that skills training programmes affected the youth positively. They had a positive outlook of their future; although there were problems that they had encountered. Most of the youth wanted to start their businesses. This way of thinking is also aligned to the RBV which advocates for becoming productive and optimising human capital (Nemeth, 2017). The study found that the municipality invested in entrepreneur skills training, and it was also offered to the youth who had trained for other skills.

The lack of on-the-placement had negatively affected their hope for finding placement sites. However, some participants were already thinking about other alternatives, such as starting their businesses, continuing with their studies, and finding placement sites. The research also outlined that some female participants find it harder to find on-the-job training, and this has caused them to doubt obtaining employment. Cheema et al. (2019) has also outlined this problem and stated that it is still difficult for women to find employment. The research established that the youth who are female feel they have to fight to be recognised especially in male-dominated fields. This research found that skills training programmes offered within

Msunduzi Municipality to the youth were able to reduce poverty and inequality for some of the youth in the short-term, but it cannot be confirmed if it will indeed cascade these results in the long-run and to all the youth, due to lack of placement, employment, and other social issues.

### **5.3 Limitations of the study**

The research could not identify an unsuccessful programme as initially planned. However, there was a programme that could not perform an on-the-job placement which was a mandatory component for the training. The Msunduzi Municipality stated that this programme was transitioned into another available programme. Therefore the research was conducted on the transitioned programme instead of the unsuccessful programme.

Due to COVID-19 regulations, Interviews were conducted telephonically, and this resulted in unclear recordings in a particular part of the interview. There were also other disturbances in the surrounding environments. These disturbances are resolved by using sound online applications.

Some participants assumed that the term “affect/impact” only related to a negative connotation. The researcher had to explain the term and change it in the preceding interviews. For the initial interviews, this may have generated limited responses.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

On-the-job training is critical in skills development training; it cannot be excluded. Especially for apprenticeships, it forms part of the training which hinders trainees from completing their training (Groener, 2014). De Lannoy et al. (2015) identifies lack of placement as a significant problem. It, therefore, recommended that the municipality forms partnerships with different stakeholders for placement purposes and offers incentives to those stakeholders who place trainees. These incentives do not need to be financial.

It was suggested by the municipal youth manager that, they should thank the companies who have placed trainees to try and keep the relationship. The researcher agrees with this but believes that they must take it a step further and formalise their relationship with the companies that have placed trainees for on-the-job training, and especially those that have absorbed them. They can also put in writing on their website, and it may encourage other stakeholders to place trainees.

An on-the-job placement framework should be developed by the municipality with the stakeholders, outlining the processes for placement and potential absorption plans. This plan should involve stakeholders from the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of placement. Apgar, et al. (2017) advocates that monitoring and evaluation tools of the skills training programme are vital, along with accountability. There needs to be enough capacity within the municipality to be able to perform these essential tasks. There is a need for clear communication channels, and the identification of alternatives to avoid areas of failure.

To minimise the risk of youth being uninterested in particular skills because of the lack of knowledge for specific skills.

The municipality should find better marketing mechanisms to the public to ensure that the youth are all afforded the chance to participate in at least one skills training, rather than training the same people, whilst some do not even know about the service they offer.

Izimbizo and the dissemination of the information about skills programmes need to be re-evaluated and monitored to align them to the NDP and SDG' for skills training, unemployment, and poverty and inequality reduction.

In line with the recommendation made in Silva et al. (2020), skills training programmes require soft skills before the primary training. Before a skills training programme is implemented, the nature of the skill should be carefully assessed to see if it meets the objectives without extreme exclusionary connotation. The Msunduzi Municipality, in line with the NDP 2030 and the SDG's 2030, aims to reduce poverty and inequality whilst enhancing skills by targeting previously disadvantaged youth. Skills development aims to ensure that It should not exclude the youths who do not have particular skills, such as computer skills, for skills training programs that require a computer. In line with the RBV skills development also aim to ensure that the youth have the correct skills required by industry, it also encompasses work-placement to the training to ensure that the youth are able to perform at their optimum level. However, they should instead offer entry-level computer skills to prepare the youth for the more advanced the computer skill.

## 5.5 Conclusion

This research was able to meet all its objectives; a) the research was able to gain insight on how the unemployed youth perceived the training programmes which were implemented by or with the municipality. b) It was able to understand how these skills training programmes are designed to be able to reduce poverty and inequality; this included outlining the process and the challenges of these skills training programmes. c) It also offers an understanding through literature and recommendations of measures that can be implemented to ensure that these skills training programmes become sustainable. d) And it has also outlined the socio-economic impact of skill training programmes to the participants. This research has been successful in understanding how skills training programmes for the unemployed youth are performing as a strategy to reduce poverty and inequality in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, and how it links to the RBV theory.

The study concludes by highlighting that the youth appreciate participating in skills training programmes. They feel these programmes can lead to employment opportunities and an economically free future. The challenges in the implementation of skills training programmes can be detrimental to them. These challenges also threaten their happiness, well-being, quality of life and, prospects of their future. The study has found that challenges such as unpaid stipends distress the whole family. Challenges such as placement and unsustainable employment opportunities must be addressed with urgency for successful skills training programmes, through holistic planning, monitoring, and evaluation process.

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# **Annexures**

## **Annexure A: Ethical Clearance**

## **Annexure B: Gatekeepers letter**

## Annexure C: Consent Form

### UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

#### APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

For research with human participants

### 2.1 INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE

Note to researchers: Notwithstanding the need for scientific and legal accuracy, every effort should be made to produce a consent document that is as linguistically clear and simple as possible, without omitting important details as outlined below. Certified translated versions will be required once the original version is approved.

There are specific circumstances where witnessed verbal consent might be acceptable, and circumstances where individual informed consent may be waived by HSSREC.

### 2.1 Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date:

Hello,

My name is Xolile Magwenyana; I am registered for a master's in development studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College. My registration and contact details are outlined as follows:

Student Number	208520586
Discipline	Development Studies
Campus	Howard College
Email	<a href="mailto:208520586@stu.ukzn.ac.za">208520586@stu.ukzn.ac.za</a>
Contact number	0825004888

The research being carried out is for the partial fulfilment of this above-mentioned degree, under the supervision of Professor Mtapuri whose details are outlined below:

Position	Academic Leader: Research & Postgraduate Studies, Associate Professor
Discipline	Development Studies
Campus	Howard College

Email	<a href="mailto:mtapuri@ukzn.ac.za">mtapuri@ukzn.ac.za</a>
Contact number	0312601031
Office Address	A713 Shepstone building

The aim and purpose of this research is to assess how skills training programmes for the unemployed youth are performing as a way of reducing poverty and inequality in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. The study is expected to enroll 12 participants in total, of which nine are trainees and three are the municipal representatives. The participants will be three (3) from each programme; which is, three (3) from a successfully completed programme, three (3) from a programme which is still in progress and three (3) from a failed/cancelled programme. One (1) municipal representative in each programme will also be interviewed. It will involve the following procedures. Each interview will take no longer than 55 minutes.

The study will require recording and taking notes during the interview, this may be uncomfortable for you, you are assured that this will be done to ensure that the correct information and depth is recorded and reported correctly. As the interview will be telephonic, it poses a risk of distractions and signal interruption. The interview date and time will be chosen according to the suitability of the participant and within the needs of the study to ensure that distractions are limited. An alternative number from a different network will be requested from the participant to ensure that you can be reachable if a signal/network fault is experienced. We hope that the study will create the following benefits: achieving better understanding and solutions to some of the issues which may exist in the skills training programmes.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number: HSSREC/00002000/2020).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at:

Name: Xolile Magwenyana

Cell: +2782 500 4888

Email: 20852086@stu.ukzn.ac.za

or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

#### HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may choose to withdraw your participation at any point during the research. In the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation you will not incur penalty or loss of treatment. If you choose to withdraw from the study, please email the researcher on the information provided above.

The researcher will have search for another participant matching the criteria of the research as the structure and details of the research are guided by rules under higher degrees.

Your Participation in the study will not have any cost implications to you. Please also not that there will be no incentives or reimbursements for participation in the study.

All information taken from the study will be stored under a false name. No names or other identifying information will be used when discussing or reporting data. All data obtained including, audio recordings and any electronic or printed transcripts in encrypted files will be stored in a secure location during the five years of the publication of this research. After this, all files will be destroyed.

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#### CONSENT

I \_\_\_\_\_ have been informed about the study: **Assessing skills training programmes for the unemployed youth as a strategy to reduce poverty and inequality in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal; by Xolile Magwenyana.**

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at:

Cell: +2782 5004 888

Email: 208520586@stu.ukzn.ac.za

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

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Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion	YES / NO
Video-record my interview / focus group discussion	YES / NO
Use of my photographs for research purposes	YES / NO

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness  
(Where applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Translator  
(Where applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Annexure D: Interview schedule directed to Msunduzi Municipality**

General Questions:

**What measures could be implemented to ensure that the government youth skills training programmes become sustainable?**

1. How many youth skills training programmes is the municipality currently running?
2. How does the municipality ensure that the amount and scope of the programmes are sufficient to reach the municipalities goal of reducing youth unemployment?
3. How does the municipality ensure that the amount and scope of the programmes are sufficient to reach the municipalities goal of reducing poverty?
4. How does the municipality determine the type of skills training programmes which are rolled out to communities?
5. What measures could be implemented to ensure that these skills training programmes become sustainable?

**How can skills training programmes improve the well-being of participants?**

6. Explain how skills training programmes impact on the well-being of participants?
7. Describe the benefits of skills training programmes, especially to the youth of South Africa and the government?
8. What criteria does the municipality use to recruiting trainees for these skills training programmes.
9. Who delivers the skills training to the youth?
10. What is the structure of their training?
11. How does the municipality ensure that trainees obtain placement for the on the-job-training?

**What are the perceptions of the unemployed youth regarding skills training programmes implemented by Msunduzi Municipality?**

12. What are the terms and conditions of participating in these training programmes?
13. How are these skills training programmes affecting the youth?

**What are the socio-economic impacts of youth training programmes impact the participants?**

14. What economic impact do these programmes have on the youth in the short-term?
15. What economic impact do these programmes have on the youth in the long-term?

**Questions directed to the failed/cancelled programme:**

Name of the programme :

Duration :

Number of Participants:

1. How has the closure/failure of this programme impacted on the quality of life of participants?
2. What have been the contributing factors causing the closure of this programme?
3. After programme failure/ cancellation, what measures did the municipality take to ensure that the participant's well-being is taken care of?
4. What measures could be implemented to ensure that the youth skills training programmes become sustainable?
5. What is the impact of cancelled programmes on the municipality's deliverables?

**Questions directed to the programme which is still in-progress:**

Name of the programme :

Duration :

Number of Participants:

**What are the perceptions of the unemployed youth regarding skills training programmes implemented by Msunduzi Municipality?**

1. Describe how the communities have received this programme?
2. How has the youth received this programme?
3. What are the highlights of this programme?
4. What are the challenges of this programme?
5. In your view, how is the programme performing against the set project implementation plan?
6. How has this programme impacted on the participants quality of life to date?
7. What are the benefits of enrolling in this programme?

## **Questions for the successfully completed programme:**

Name of the programme :

Duration :

Number of Participants:

1. State some of the contributing factors to the success of this programme?
2. Describe the challenges experienced in this programme?
3. How were these challenges overcome?
4. How has the quality of life of trainees changed since they joined these programmes?
5. How do you describe the current quality of life of trainees who have participated in this programme?
6. What percentage of these trainees has been employed post-training?

## **Annexure E: Interview questions directed to the trainees**

### **What are the perceptions of the unemployed youth regarding skills training programmes implemented by Msunduzi Municipality?**

1. What was your highest level of education before joining the programme?
2. How did you hear about the training programme that you are joined in?
3. Explain why you chose to participate in this training programme?
4. How has taking part in this training impacted you?
5. Describe how you felt when you found out you were accepted into the programme?  
Why?
6. What were your expectations of the training when you started?

### **How can skills training programmes improve the well-being of participants?**

7. What positive things did/are you see through this training?
8. What problems have you faced in this training?
9. Describe your progress in life since you joined this programme?
10. How has joining this training programme impacted on your happiness?

### **What are the socio-economic impacts of youth training programmes impact the participants?**

11. Describe how you think the programme doing against what it is meant to do?
12. Describe how you view your future as compared to how you viewed it before you joined the programme?
13. How has joining this programme affected you financially?
14. What have you achieved since you joined the programme?
15. How has taking part in this training programme influenced your chances of employment after training?
16. Describe your plan to finding employment?

### **What measures could be implemented to ensure that the government youth skills training programmes become sustainable?**

17. How are these skills training programmes are affecting the youth?
18. Describe how you feel about a programme being cancelled?
19. Explain how you feel about the chances of being employed in the placement site?

You may add any further comments, thoughts, or suggestion