

**FOOD AND BEVERAGES MANUFACTURING SECTOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING
AUTHORITY RESEARCH CHAIR**

Impact Study (Unemployed learners)

FINAL DRAFT REPORT

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Prepared for the Food and Beverages Manufacturing SETA (FoodBev SETA)

by

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CONTENTS

ACRONYMS	7
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	8
1 Background and rationale	17
2 Project aim and objectives	20
2.1 Main research questions	21
3 Methodology	21
3.1 Approach.....	21
3.2 Overview of research population.....	23
3.3 Profile of the Learner Respondents.....	26
3.3.1 Chamber	26
3.3.2 Race	27
3.3.3 Gender.....	28
3.3.4 Age	29
3.3.5 Disability	29
3.3.6 Province of Residence Prior to Programme.....	29
3.3.7 Type of Location Prior to Programme	31
3.3.8 Highest Qualification Prior to Programme.....	31
3.4 Profile of the Employer and Training Provider Respondents.....	33
4 Context	34
5 Key Findings	36
5.1 Current status.....	36
5.1.1 Respondents who are currently employed.....	38
5.1.2 Respondents who are currently running a business	44
5.1.3 Respondents who are currently studying further.....	47

5.1.4	Respondents who are currently unemployed.....	47
5.2	Work seeking behaviour.....	51
5.3	What has changed for respondents since the programme?	51
5.3.1	Changes in highest qualification	51
5.3.2	Changes in household contributions.....	52
5.3.3	Changes in personal circumstances	53
5.3.4	Changes in province	54
5.3.5	Changes in location	55
5.4	Views on the Programmes	55
5.4.1	Reasons for participating in the programme	55
5.4.2	Benefits received during the programme	57
5.4.3	Journey into and through the programme	57
5.5	Views of Employers.....	67
5.6	Views of Training Providers	71
6	Discussion	76
6.1	General observations	76
6.2	Which factors contribute to successful outcomes?.....	78
6.3	How can the programmes be strengthened?	95
6.4	How can the training system and sector commitment be strengthened?	99
7	Conclusions and Recommendations.....	101
8.	References	105

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Total population and sample	23
Table 2: Call Results, CATI surveys.....	24
Table 3: Results of employer and training provider surveys.....	25
Table 4: Results of employer and training provider interviews	25
Table 5: Province of residence prior to programme	30
Table 6: Highest qualification prior to programme	32
Table 7: Programmes offered by employer respondents.....	33
Table 9: Breakdown of training provider survey respondents.....	33
Table 10: Current status.....	36
Table 11: Why do you think that you have been unable to find work? (by programme type, all unemployed)	50
Table 12: Changes in highest qualification levels since the programme	52
Table 13: % change in provincial local since participation in the programme.....	55
Table 14: Type of location post programme	55
Table 15: Why did you want to participate in the programme?.....	56
Table 16: Average ratings on value of the programme.....	60
Table 17: Average ratings on quality of the programme.....	61
Table 18: Average ratings on soft skills.....	62
Table 19: Average ratings on usefulness of the programme	63
Table 21: Reasons for non-receipt of certificate	65
Table 23: Types of information and guidance provided.....	66
Table 24: Programmes offered by employers who responded to survey.....	67
Table 25: Programmes offered by training providers	71
Table 26: Current status of respondents	76
Table 27: Respondents employed by work experience company	79
Table 28: Interviews during selection process linked to current employment.....	83
Table 29: Link between receipt of certificate and current employment.....	87
Table 30: Length of programme linked to current employment	88
Table 31: Link between on-the-job technical and soft skills training and current employment.....	90

Table 32: Link between mentorship and current employment	92
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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Respondents by Chamber and Programme Type	26
Figure 2: Total population - Race	27
Figure 3: Respondents - Race	27
Figure 4: Total population - Gender	28
Figure 5: Respondents - Gender	28
Figure 6: Respondents - Age	29
Figure 7: Province of residence prior to programme	30
Figure 8: Location prior to programme	31
Figure 9: Highest qualification prior to programme (%)	32
Figure 10: Current status.....	37
Figure 11: Ever been employed, currently employed and currently unemployed candidates.....	37
Figure 12: Is this your first job? (Employed respondents)	38
Figure 13: Was your first job in the Food Bev sector? (All respondents).....	38
Figure 14: Was the first job aligned to the programme you did?	39
Figure 16: How long did it take you to find your first job?	40
Figure 15: Why did you leave your first job?	40
Figure 17: Is your current job in the Food Bev Sector?	41
Figure 18: What type of contract do you have?	41
Figure 19: What is your current salary?.....	42
Figure 20: What benefits do you get?.....	43
Figure 21: Why did you start a business?	44
Figure 22: How many people do you employ in your business?	45
Figure 23: What is the monthly turnover of your business?.....	45
Figure 24: How has your business grown?	46
Figure 25: Why did you decide to study?	47
Figure 26: Time taken to find work, employed v employed respondents.....	48
Figure 27: Why do you think that you have been unable to find work?	49

Figure 28: How unemployed people are looking for work vs how employed people found work.....	51
Figure 29: Household contributions.....	53
Figure 30: Has anything changed for you since you did the programme?.....	53
Figure 31: What changes have you made?	54
Figure 32: Extent to which expectations were met (%).....	56
Figure 33: What benefits did you receive on the programme?	57
Figure 34: Where did you hear about the programme?	58
Figure 35: What did you do as part of the application process?	59
Figure 36: What was valuable about the programme? (average scores)	59
Figure 37: How was the quality of the programme? (average scores)	60
Figure 38: What soft skills did you develop during the programme?	62
Figure 39: How useful did you find the programme?	63
Figure 40: Support received on the programme	64
Figure 41: Certificate received on completion?	64
Figure 42: Information & guidance provided after the programme?	66
Figure 43: Participation of employers in selection process.....	67
Figure 44: Value of programme to learners.....	68
Figure 45: Value of programme to employers	68
Figure 46: Role of training provider	70
Figure 47: Role of the FoodBev SETA	70
Figure 48: Participation of training providers in selection process.....	72
Figure 49: Value of training programme to learners according to training providers	72
Figure 50: Areas of support provided to employers by training providers.....	73
Figure 51: Support by training providers to learners after completion	74
Figure 52: Support to learners by training providers after completion of programme	74
Figure 53: Participation in selection process	82
Figure 54: Highest qualification pre and post programme for FET placements and skills programmes	85
Figure 55: Movement from rural locations post programme linked to employment	95
Figure 56: Link between access to information/guidance and current employment	96

ACRONYMS

CATI	Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI)
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FoodBev SETA	Food and Beverages Manufacturing Sector Education and Training Authority
HRDS-SA	Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTSF	Medium-Term Strategic Framework
NSDP	National Skills Development Plan
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
REAL Centre	Centre for Researching Education and Labour
SDL	Skills Development Levy
SETA	Sector Education & Training Authority
SSP	Sector Skills Plan
UIF	Unemployment Insurance Fund
Wits	University of Witwatersrand

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The FoodBev SETA commissioned a study to evaluate the impact of the skills development programmes on the unemployed learners who enrolled and graduated from these programmes to determine the pathways that they have navigated since completing the programme as well as their current status (employment and income) with a view to understanding the factors that contribute to improved employment outcomes and, based on this, to define the areas where the programmes could be strengthened. An impact evaluation investigates the changes brought about by an intervention i.e. the positive and negative, intended and unintended, direct and indirect, primary and secondary effects produced by an Intervention (Rogers, 2012).

The overarching purpose of this impact study is to understand the extent to which the FoodBev SETA has met its development and transformational imperatives and outcomes in the period under review, by collecting data on the impact of the various programmes on unemployed learners, and thus, assisting the SETA in understanding its contributions (factors within the programmes that are useful and influence the ability of learners to access employment, further studies as well as income generation opportunities) and successes (the extent to which learners have accessed employment or other income generating opportunities as well as further studying opportunities) as well as the gaps (challenges that inhibit the ability of learners to complete the programmes as well as factors that inhibit learners to access employment and other income generating opportunities including further studies upon completion) that may limit the desired results within the interventions for unemployed youth

Six programmes were evaluated namely, artisan programmes, bursaries, FET placements¹, internships, learnerships and skills programmes undertaken by learners during the period of 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021.

¹ It is noted that FET is now referred to as TVET and this programme will become known as the TVET placement programme. However FET placement was the name at the point of the evaluation and the programme is therefore referred to as FET and not TVET in this report.

A tracer study focused on learners that participated in FoodBev SETA programmes for the unemployed during the intervention periods of 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021. The tracer study covered learners' perceptions of the programmes in which they participated, the pathways that they have navigated since the programme, as well as their current status. This was complemented by electronic surveys and in-depth interviews with employers and training providers who offered these programmes and a desk review of various SETA documents related to the delivery of these learning programmes, including previous evaluations.

The impact study was conducted over the period of 6 months. A concept note was developed and finalised with the SETA M&E team in September 2023 and presented to the management, the board and chambers between October and November 2023. From the 10th of November to 12th December 2023, with additional interviews with employers and training providers

	TOTAL	% OF SAMPLE
Artisan	55	42%
Bursary	28	45%
FET Placement	276	98%
Internship	234	70%
Learnership	179	52%
Skills Programme	177	56%
TOTAL	949	65%

conducted in January and February 2024. Out of a population of 7,580 approved unemployed learners, a statistically significant sample of 1,463 was drawn. Ultimately 2,969 numbers were called, of which 949 were successfully interviewed, as shown:

The racial profile of the respondents was 94% African, 3% Coloured, 2% Indian and 1% White. 67% of the respondents were female and 3% reported have a disability. 80% of the learners across all programmes are below the age of 35, except for the artisan programme, where 48% of participants are between the ages of 35 and 55.

In addition to the learner survey, we distributed a total of 96 employer surveys. Despite sending several reminders, we only received 9 responses. Similarly, we contacted 78 training providers, yet only 9 completed the survey, also despite repeated reminders. The employer and provider survey process was supplemented by more in-depth qualitative

interviews with three employers and one training provider to understand the perceptions of the programme in a more nuanced manner.

We found that respondents – learners, employers and providers – all found the programmes valuable. We also found that the on-the-job technical and soft skills training they received was seen by the respondents across all the programmes to be relevant and useful in preparation for the workplace. It is however noted that only 44% of respondents reported receiving technical skills training and 39% soft skills training.

The study found that **54% of respondents overall are currently employed**. By far the group with the highest employment outcome is the artisan respondents with 84% employed, followed by internships (71%) and bursary (68%) respondents. There is a slightly lower level of employment found in the learnerships (57%) with the lowest employment outcomes found in skills programme (42%) and FET placement (38%).

The remainder of the respondents are studying, or have started a business, or are unemployed: 5% of all respondents are currently studying, 7% from the bursary and FET placement groups and none in the artisans group. 4% of all respondents are running a small business, with the highest number being recorded by the skills programme respondents at 10%. And 37% of all respondents are unemployed, with the highest levels of unemployment are found amongst the learnership (36%), skills programme (44%) and FET placement (52%) respondents.

Several factors were found to influence successful employment outcomes:

01. The emphasis on **work experience** in programmes is key to success. Workplace experience is an integral part of these learning programmes and learners, employers and providers highlighted the value of this workplace experience to building skills and accessing employment. 78% of respondents reported that their workplace experience was relevant and useful to the work that they are currently doing. Perhaps paradoxically we found that, 94% of all respondents were placed

in a workplace, and there were varying employment outcomes. This may however be explained by the finding that the ways in which the workplace experience component was implemented and the types of employers that hosted this experience varied greatly. This includes the size and nature of the employer, selection processes, the length of the workplace experience and the extent that there was access to mentorship during this workplace experience. The factors are discussed below and will require further interrogation with respect to the way that workplace experience was conducted for FET placements and skills programmes, given the relatively poor employment outcomes of these groups.

- The size and nature of the company in which the respondents were placed for work experience may influence whether they are absorbed and may be currently employed. Artisans were primarily placed in large employers for work experience. Of the 46 currently employed artisans, almost all were placed with large companies, including multi-nationals and listed entities. However, internship and learnership respondents were placed in a wide range of employers, including large companies – and in fact some were the same ones into which artisans were placed - but others were placed in small companies and public sector institutions. FET placement respondents were largely placed with public sector institutions, including provincial departments, schools, hospitals and TVET colleges. This group has the lowest level of current employment, reflecting the constraints on the public sector to absorb young people into employment.
- The length of programme is significant only for those respondents who reported participating in programmes that were longer than two years. 62% of artisans and 32% of bursary respondents reported participating in longer programmes. Of these groups, 84% of artisans and 68% of bursary respondents are now employed. On other programmes less than 10% of respondents participated in programmes with this duration. The majority of respondents (85%) participated in programmes of from 1 to 2 years in duration, with varied employment outcomes. 85% of internship respondents participated in programmes of one year in duration, with a 71% employment outcome, while

84% of learnership respondents participated in programmes of the same duration, with only 57% currently employed. Of concern is that 84% of FET placement respondents participated in slightly longer programmes of between 1 and 2 years, with only 38% currently employed. 68% of skills respondents attended a programme of one year, with 20% attending for less than one year, with an employment outcome of 42%.

02. The **nature of the employment contract** also emerged as an important factor in terms of whether the individual ultimately accesses sustainable employment. Ninety-six percent (96%) of currently employed artisans have such contracts, and 80% of internship respondents. FET placement, skills programme and bursary respondents are least likely to have permanent employment with 58% of currently employed respondents in each group reporting this.

03. An **effective selection process** improves the likelihood of candidates being a good fit within a company, and possibly leading to employment. 84% of respondents across all programmes went through a selection process. Artisan respondents at 96% have the highest levels of participation in a selection process and also the highest levels of employment with their work experience company (31%), indicating that the selection process made it possible for employers to ensure the suitability of candidates. A key finding pointing to the importance of this factor is that in the skills programmes we found that those respondents who were interviewed by the employer show a greater correlation to employment, than those not interviewed. The FET placement respondents reported a lower figure of 76%, suggesting that more rigorous selection within this programme may lead to improved employment outcomes.

04. **Mentorship** is a contributing factor to improved employment outcomes. 33% of respondents reported being mentored in the workplace, with the highest levels of mentorship reported by internship (43%) and learnership (37%) and artisan (33%) respondents. The bursary respondents aside, the lowest levels of mentorship

were received by FET placement (29%) and skills programme (23%) respondents. This highlights the extent that higher levels of mentorship correlates with higher levels of current employment and suggests the importance of this factor.

05. Enabling learners to **complete a higher qualification** – whether through a certificate, diploma or degree programme – can improve the likelihood of obtaining employment or improving their employment conditions. However, this appears to only be the case in certain programmes. For example, while learners upgrading their qualifications from an NSC to an industry related qualification better prepares them for employment, gaining a higher qualification such as a diploma by itself is not a guarantee of employment. Reflecting on the two sets of respondents with the lowest levels of employment – FET placements (38%) and skills programmes (42%) – an analysis of qualifications pre- and post the programmes reflects that the majority of respondents have obtained a higher qualification, but this has not necessarily resulted in employment. However, the majority of respondents reflected that they believed that obtaining a higher qualification would improve their chances of finding employment in the future. Further, some of these respondents are still waiting for their certificates to validate their achievement and the impact of the delays in this regard may also be affecting these results.

Respondents also reported several other changes since they had been on the programme:

01. We found that, across all programmes, there has been a general **increase in the highest qualification** reported by learners. There has been a 30% reduction in the percentage of respondents with an NSC, to 5%, and a 24% increase in the percentage of respondents with a diploma, from 17% to 41%.
02. 69% of respondents contribute money to the household in which they are currently living, and they know how the money is used, and 41% of these respondents said that this **contribution to household income** had changed since the programme.
03. Overall, 76% of respondents indicated that they have experienced some **changes in their personal circumstances** since they did the programme. The most

frequently mentioned (by all respondents who indicated a change) was moving out of the family home. Other changes mentioned by several respondents included opening their first saving accounts, improving their education, and paying for better childcare for their own child or other children in the family.

04. We found that respondents **have moved** since the programme, including from rural to urban or township locations. Urban areas show the greatest increase in the number of respondents now residing in them, up from 24% to 33%. Township areas also reflect an increase, from 43% to 45%. Rural areas show a decrease, from 33% to 22%. Whether learners moved because they found jobs outside of rural areas or didn't find jobs because they didn't move outside of rural areas would need to be probed further.

Learners, employers and training providers offered suggestions on how the programmes could be strengthened:

01. Across the programme, learners noted that **guidance post completion** is weak, even in instances where they were able to access employment, such as bursary and internship respondents, which is contrary to the views of employers and training providers who responded to the survey. In particular, 68% of FET placement and 62% of skills programme respondents did not receive guidance and were largely unsuccessful in finding employment – 38% and 42% respectively. Participants in specific learning programmes therefore require greater levels of support and guidance if they are going to be successful at work-seeking activities.
02. Learners also indicated that **work experience could be extended** to allow them to gain more experience and exposure, to acquire the technical skills that will build their employability. Employers similarly indicate that the programmes could be extended to ensure learners get more exposure and work on their soft skills which will make them more employable.

03. **Alignment of the theory and practical** was seen as critical as some respondents, specifically within the FET placement programme, reported that the practical were not always linked to the theory. Employers shared that they engage with training providers to ensure that this alignment is created however employers also suggest that this could be strengthened through ensuring that the curriculum and workplace skills are structured and standardised across the programmes.
04. **Not receiving a certificate** at the completion of a programme was cited by learners as a reason for not being able to access employment. The late issuing of certificates was also highlighted as a challenge by employers and training providers. In this regard all respondents strongly suggest that the SETA works on its administrative delays so certificates are issued on time and learners can continue their job seeking journeys with less burden.
05. Employers indicated that the **SETA needs to provide sufficient funding to cover full implementation of the programmes** as the cost of hosting learners is high as there are resources and workstations that are associated with individual learners and these costs need to be met.
06. **Value and payment of stipends** remains an issue for learners. Consistent feedback from learners across the programmes reflects that payment of stipends remains an issue, both with regards to amount paid and to paying them on time.
07. The SETA should **facilitate the involvement of more companies in running the programmes** so that learners can rotate across different companies and gain maximum exposure across different learning opportunities, especially in instances where companies are small or specialised.
08. **More companies need to be encouraged to participate** in training programmes and hosting learners. This requires more actively communicating with the sector on the value of the programmes and the possible benefits to employers.

Drawing on these views and the findings from the analysis we, as the evaluation team, are specifically making the following recommendations:

01. **Build on good practice** with regards to on-the-job technical and soft skills, to support better preparation of learners for the workplace. Learners, employers and training providers all reported on the value that training in the workplace has for learners.
02. **Provide more support and guidance** to learners after the programme, to prepare for work-seeking and to engage with employment opportunities in the market.
03. **Focus on entrepreneurial skills** to better equip learners to start businesses once they complete the programmes, as a means of addressing unemployment and contributing to the growth of the sector. This may be particularly important for skills programmes, where, even if it is by necessity, a larger percentage of respondents in this programme appear to pursue an entrepreneurial pathway.
04. **Support organisations providing workplace experience** to increase their capacity to absorb learners and to provide mentorship to these learners. This would require engaging with large and small private companies, public sector institutions and NPOs to better understand their specific support requirements and considering how they could be addressed.
05. **Encourage greater numbers of companies in the sector to host learners.** The SETA should consider possible ways to build participation and address the shortcomings identified by companies such as the administrative burden related to hosting learners. Ways in which to create stronger work placement networks within the levy paying companies should also be considered, as well as with sectors adjacent to its immediate membership.
06. **Improve mechanisms for ongoing tracking of learners** through the development of an alumni system and the use of social media, to enable the SETA to continuously update learner status.

1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The overarching mandate of the FoodBev Manufacturing SETA is to facilitate access to training and skills development for employees and new job applicants in the food and beverage manufacturing industry. To achieve this, the SETA conducts labour market research, identifies sector skills gaps, develops occupationally directed qualifications, accredits training providers, funds different types of skills development and training interventions, and provides career guidance.

There are several national policies and strategies that influence the implementation of the FoodBev SETA's mandate, and this also guide its strategic plan. The FoodBev SETA strategy is aligned with National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) 2030 which aspires to ensure that the country has "adequate, appropriate and high quality skills that contribute towards economic growth, employment creation and social development", the government's strategic priority of "a skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path" in the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) and the Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa (HRDS-SA 2010-2030) commitments that have impact on skills development, amongst others. The FoodBev SETA strategy is also aligned with the key developmental and transformational imperatives of race, gender, youth, disability, and geography (including rural development).

The work done on training new job applicants in the sector is the focus of this impact study: youth unemployment continues to be a pressing challenge in South Africa and the FoodBev SETA facilitates programmes that are aimed at addressing this challenge. Within this delivery of training programmes, the FoodBev SETA notes that it is important to track the progress of skills development interventions, and determine the relevance, credibility and value of these interventions. Specifically, the FoodBev SETA has indicated concerns about the lack of monitoring data on the various interventions, and also indicated that evaluations commissioned by the SETA, despite considerable resources, are not being effectively designed and as a result are not being effectively used. In relation to programmes for the unemployed, a gap has been identified in

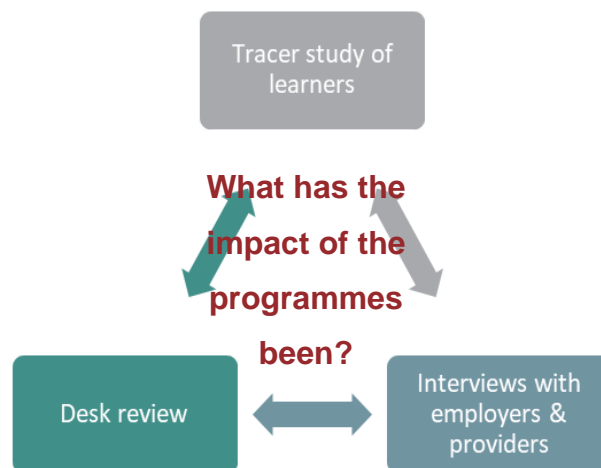
understanding how learners end the programmes (completion rates) and if learners have been able to access the labour market (absorption rate) since completion, and if not what the barriers are to accessing employment. Other challenges include inappropriate timing of evaluations, with results often being available too late to inform planning processes.

The overarching purpose of this impact study is to understand the extent to which the FoodBev SETA has met its development and transformational imperatives and outcomes in the period under review, by collecting data on the impact of the various programmes on unemployed learners, and thus, assisting the SETA in understanding its contributions (factors within the programmes that are useful and influence the ability of learners to access employment, further studies as well as income generation opportunities) and successes (the extent to which learners have accessed employment or other income generating opportunities as well as further studying opportunities) as well as the gaps (challenges that inhibit the ability of learners to complete the programmes as well as factors that inhibit learners to access employment and other income generating opportunities including further studies upon completion) that may limit the desired results within the interventions for unemployed youth.

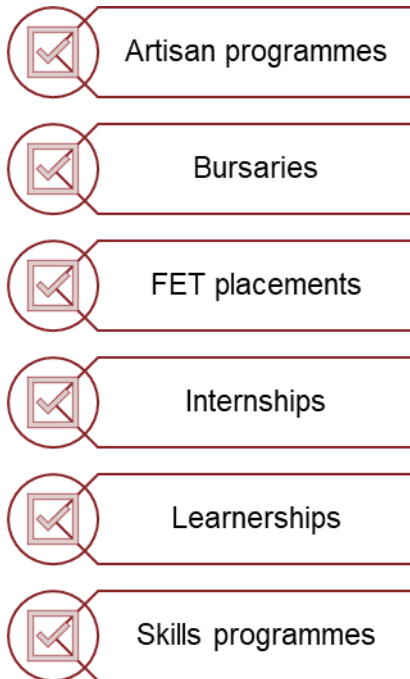
The impact the FoodBev SETA strives to achieve through its various interventions is to contribute *“towards a responsive, resourced and effectively functioning skills (eco) system, where learners benefit from diverse opportunities for skills development which (in turn) contributes towards a transformed, employable, skilled and capable workforce that is participating in the economy.”*

The impact study focuses on the component of the SETA’s Theory of Change that addresses unemployed learners and therefore seeks to test whether the assumptions hold regarding where learners get access to these programmes, whether they are able to get certified, whether they are more employable and whether they access and sustain employment.

A key component of the impact study was a tracer study focused on learners that participated in FoodBev SETA programmes for the unemployed during the intervention periods of 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021. The tracer study focused on the learners' perceptions of the programmes in which they participated, the pathways that they have navigated since the programme, as well as their current status (employment and income). This tracer study is complemented by interviews with employers and training providers who offered these programmes, as well as with a desk review of various SETA documents related to the delivery of these learning programmes, including previous evaluations. The data elicited during these research processes has then been distilled and analysed into this report, to enable the SETA to make evidence based strategic decisions.



2 PROJECT AIM AND OBJECTIVES



The aim of the impact study is to evaluate the impact of the FoodBev SETA skills development programmes on the unemployed learners who enrolled and graduated from these programmes, with a view to determining the pathways that they have navigated since completing the programme as well as their current status (employment and income). The impact of delivering the programmes on the sector more broadly is also considered. The study covers six core programmes (detailed in the diagram to the left) delivered to unemployed learners in the food and beverage manufacturing sector between 2019 to 2021.

The detailed project objectives are to:

- ▶ Understand the relevance of FoodBev SETA programmes in relation to the skills offered to access employment and create employability.
- ▶ Investigate the pathways that unemployed learners have navigated as well as their current status since participating in FoodBev SETA interventions (including absorption rates).
- ▶ Explore their expectations and perceptions of the interventions for unemployed learners.
- ▶ Provide a deeper understanding of the impact of interventions on unemployed learners, where there are gaps and how implementation could be improved.
- ▶ Understand from the perspective of employers whether these programmes enable them to secure the skills that they need.
- ▶ Make recommendations on how to enhance the targeted interventions by ensuring that activities are based on local knowledge and understanding of issues and are therefore relevant to local needs and context.

- ▶ Provide reliable and relevant information that can be fed back into decision-making allowing the FoodBev SETA to rapidly adapt and improve their interventions. and
- ▶ Involve the SETA M&E team in the impact study to enable them to conduct such studies in future.

2.1 Main research questions

The study focuses on participants' economic outcome/ status since participating in the FoodBev SETA programmes, with a focus on what 'contribution' participating in the programme had on this, and what could be done better. The study also considers beneficiary perceptions of the programmes, expectations, what programmes were offered, what was the selection process and the extent to which the programme prepared them to access employment opportunities. It probes how learners ended the programmes (completion rates), if learners completed within the set duration, if their expectations were met, the quality of the programme, support received and if learners have been able to access the labour market (absorption rate) since completion and if not then what barriers exist to accessing employment.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Approach

The study utilised both quantitative and qualitative research techniques. The main research activities included a review of data from reports completed as well as from previous evaluations, a tracer study with learners as well as electronic surveys and interviews with relevant stakeholders including skills development providers and employers.

The SETA team participated in the designing of tools, the sampling, the pilot, the data collection as well as the data analysis phase throughout the impact study with a view to building their capacity. Careful attention was given to designing research tools which

were easy to administer (such that the SETA can continue to use these tools where relevant) and not too cumbersome for the respondent.

The data gathering tools were tested through a pilot with actual respondents to understand the length of the telephonic interviews as well as the quality of data that was to be collected and if there should be any adjustments to the interview questions.

A stratified sampling approach was used to ensure representation of learners, employers and providers from across all provinces and programmes as relevant. The sampling ensures that a statistically significant sample has been reached and that the findings can be generalised. There are 7,580 approved unemployed learners over the period under study. The aim was to complete 1,500 successful calls across the learning programmes or interventions for unemployed. Additionally, there was an emphasis on those learners that participated in programmes that were not reviewed in the previous evaluations. A sample of employers (taking into consideration company size) as well as training providers was surveyed from the relevant programmes in order to triangulate the findings and to understand the key factors that have contributed to the results (whether positive or not) and in particular to explore the impact on the sector – These interviews were conducted by via email and telephonically.

The tracer study was undertaken by a team of researchers, using the Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) method, between 10th November and 12th December 2024. Data collected through the CATIs was quality assured throughout this phase.

Additionally, an electronic survey was sent out to all companies and training providers who participated in the programmes during the intervention periods. The surveys were sent out on 1st November 2023 and follow up reminders were sent on 8th November and 14th November as well as 2nd December 2023. The SETA also sent out the survey on 29th November 2023. In-depth interviews with employers and training providers were conducted between 30th January 2024 and 6th February 2024 with the intention of

soliciting further views regarding their perceptions of FoodBev programmes for the unemployed.

3.2 Overview of research population

We received records for 8,194 unemployed learners from the FoodBev SETA, which were cleaned, and duplicates removed, leaving a total population of 7,140 respondents. From this, a statistically significant sample was drawn of 1,463 respondents, which would have given us a confidence level of 95% and a 5% margin of error.

	Population (less duplicates)	Original sample and target	Actual complete	% complete of original sample
<i>Artisan</i>	198	132	55	42%
<i>Bursary</i>	70	60	27	45%
<i>FET placement</i>	1254	295	289	98%
<i>Internships</i>	1749	316	221	70%
<i>Learnerships</i>	3074	343	179	52%
<i>Skills programme</i>	1235	317	178	56%
<i>Total</i>	7580	1463	949	65%

Table 1: Total population and sample

Table 1 shows that we ultimately only reached 65% of the sample, despite all efforts. As the calls began, it became clear that the call lists were not very robust, which is not unusual as, particularly with young people who are not in employment, we find their numbers change a lot, with invalid numbers, calls going straight to voicemail, incorrect numbers etc. The project management team added cell phone numbers into the sample numerous times to try and increase our response rate. We ultimately called 2,969 numbers, of which 949 resulted in a completed survey, as shown in Table 2 below.

<i>End result</i>	Artisan programmes	Bursaries	FET Placements	Internships	Learnerships	Skills programmes	Total
Complete	55	27	289	221	179	178	949

<i>Did not complete programme</i>	Still in prog	0	0	4	2	1	0	7
	Dropped out	0	0	12	6	5	4	27
<i>Unsuccessful calls</i>	Partially complete	3	1	8	13	7	11	43
	Call back later	4	0	16	13	8	13	54
	Refused to participate	17	4	20	43	19	25	128
	Wrong number/ person	16	4	39	41	86	94	280
	Invalid number	26	6	34	70	103	73	312
	No answer	25	13	50	113	85	81	367
	Voicemail	45	15	161	169	249	163	802
Total		191	70	633	691	742	642	2,969

Table 2: Call Results, CATI surveys

Table 2 shows that 34 respondents told the researchers that they had not completed the programme. Of these 27 dropped out of the programme and 7 are still busy with the programme. Just over a quarter of the numbers we tried (27%) went continuously to voicemail, and there was no response to 12% of the numbers. In terms of voicemails and no response, the number was tried 3 times, on different days (including the weekend) and times (including after 5pm), before it was recorded as an unsuccessful call.

This table highlights that the full statistically significant sample was not reached due to the issues raised above. This is a concern for the research team as it can mean that the sample is skewed towards those who feel more positive about the programme. However, as the sample is never less than 40% of the anticipated sample and, based on the spread of the sample and the consistency of findings, including when we triangulate the survey

data with the in-depth interviews, we are able to assert the findings with a high level of confidence. This is evidenced further in Section 3.3.

We also received contact details of 96 employers and 78 training providers from the FoodBev SETA. An electronic survey was emailed to all. On the employer survey, 38 were opened, 33 were unopened and 25 emails bounced back. In terms of the training provider survey, 39 were opened, 26 were unopened and 12 emails bounced back. As shown below we had a very poor response as only 9 responses were received from the employers and 9 responses from training providers.

Employer surveys		Training provider surveys	
Total population	Responses received	Total population	Responses received
96	9	78	9

Table 3: Results of employer and training provider surveys

Furthermore, the team reached out to 12 employers frequently cited as workplace sites by learners in the tracer survey, along with 8 private and 5 public training providers mentioned by learners as institutions they attended during the intervention periods. As depicted in Table 4 below, we encountered challenges in reaching some of these employers and providers. This was due to difficulties in contacting the intended individuals via the provided phone numbers and emails. Additionally, changes in personnel at both employers and training providers posed obstacles for the new staff to participate in the impact study.

Employer interviews		Training provider interviews	
Target	Reach	Target	Reach
12	4	13	2

Table 4: Results of employer and training provider interviews

3.3 Profile of the Learner Respondents

3.3.1 Chamber

The FoodBev SETA has five chambers, representing the sub-sectors in the food and beverage manufacturing sector. The database provided by the SETA to the research team allocated some individuals to chambers based on the employer where they did their work experience. In discussion with the SETA during the instrument design, it was decided not to ask respondents which chamber they fell into, as they would be unlikely to know, so we retrospectively allocated respondents to chambers, based on the information from the SETA. As shown below, respondents were spread across chambers. Over half the respondents are located at employers linked to the Baking, Cereal, Confectionary and Snacks chambers (31%) and the Beverages Manufacturing (28%) Chamber. 15% of respondents, mainly from the Bursary and Skills Programmes groups, were not linked to any chamber (Unknown).

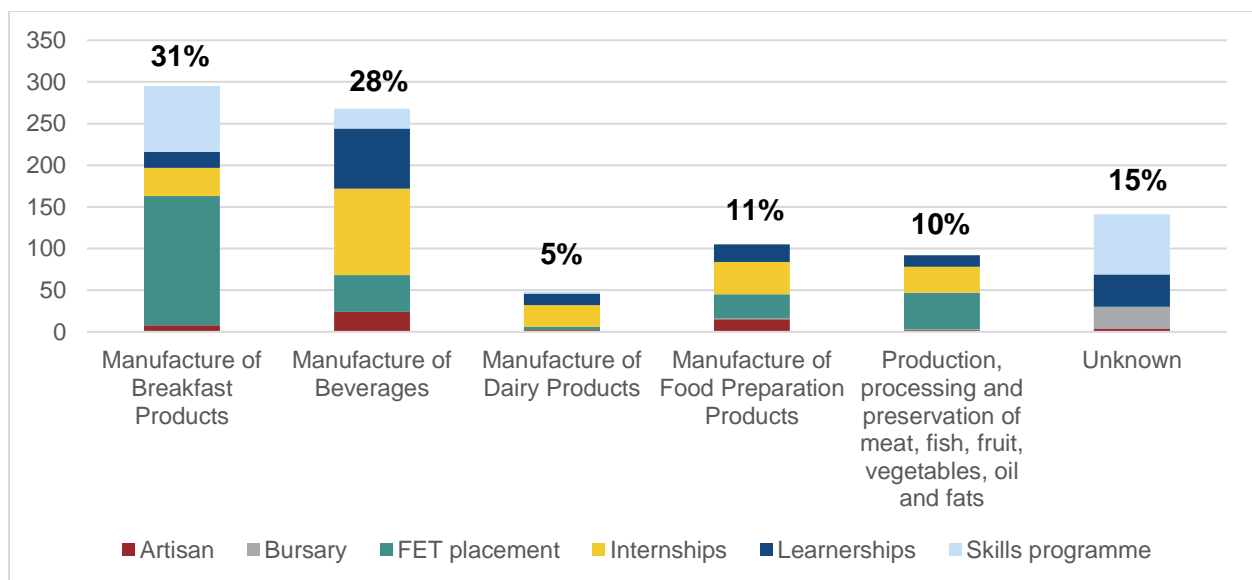


Figure 1: Respondents by Chamber and Programme Type

3.3.2 Race

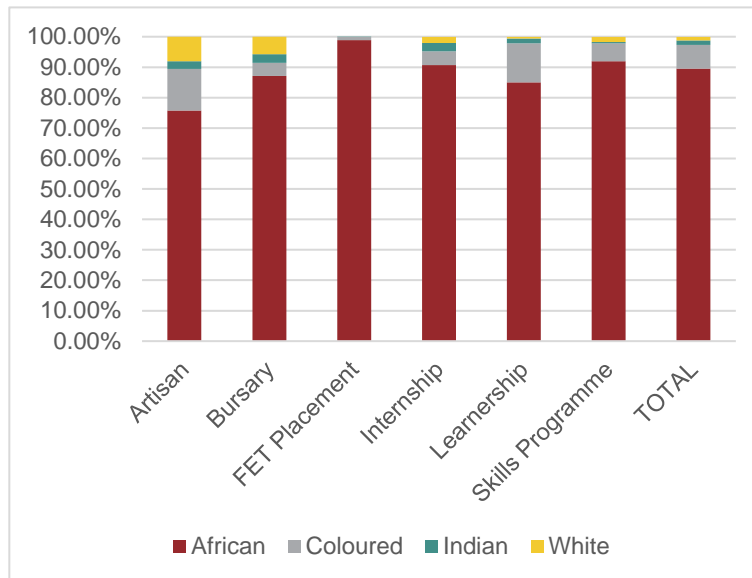


Figure 2: Total population - Race

The race profile of the total population enrolled in FoodBev SETA programmes is reflected below. Of the total group of 7,580 learners, 90% are African, 8% Coloured and 1% each Indian and White. There are variations across the six learning programmes, most notably in the artisan programme which is made up of 75,8% Africans, 13,6% Coloured, 2,5% Indian and 8%

White. The FET placement group is almost exclusively African with only 14 people out of a total of 1,240 not African.

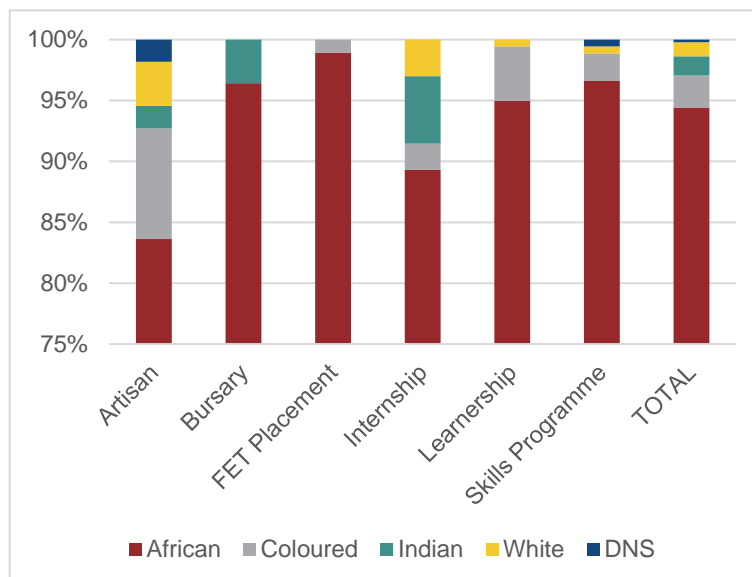


Figure 3: Respondents - Race

The respondent group reflects slight differences to the overall population. A higher proportion of Africans overall participated in the survey, with lower numbers of Coloureds and Indians. For example, on the bursary programme, all respondents except one were African. while on the FET placement programme 5% of respondents were not African.

3.3.3 Gender

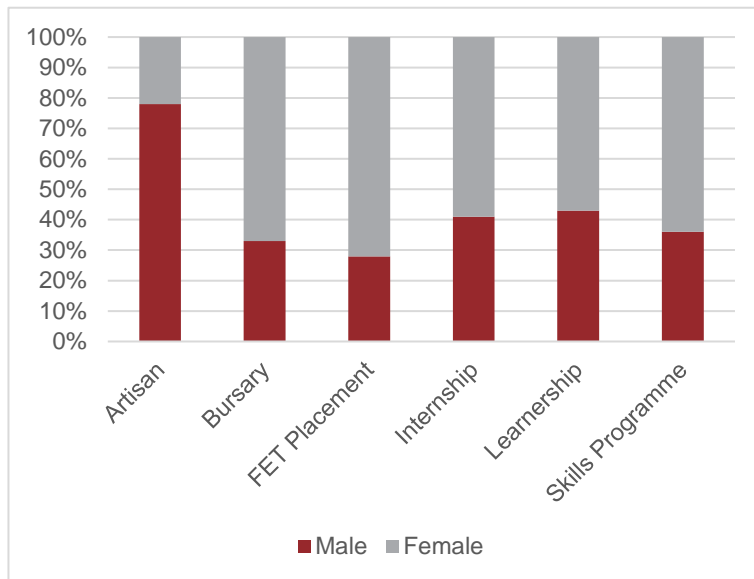


Figure 4: Total population - Gender

The target population is predominantly female, a total of 60% across all programmes. The artisan programme is the only one to have a majority of males (78%). FET placement and bursary programmes have the highest proportion of females, 72% and 67% respectively. Skills programmes (64%), learnerships (57%) and internships (59%) all have more females than males enrolled on them.²

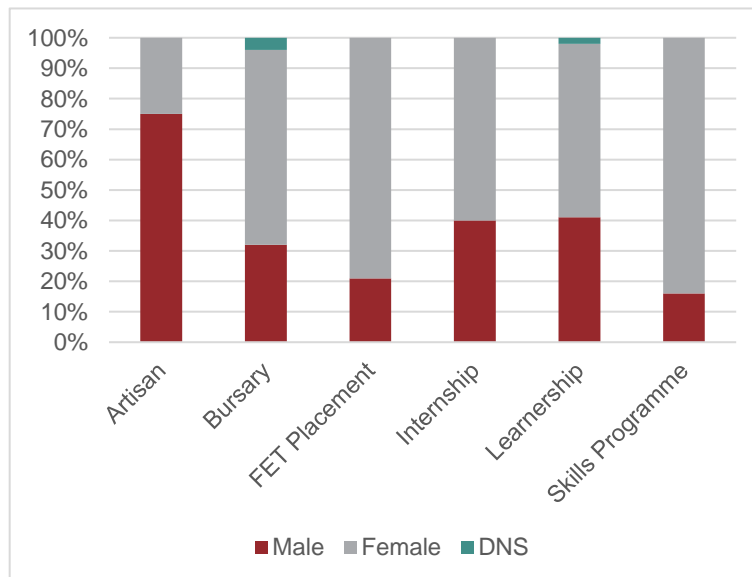


Figure 5: Respondents - Gender

The profile of the respondent group mostly aligns to that of the total population, with 67% of total respondents being female. The only programme where the respondent breakdown does not closely match that of the population is the skills programme. The total population is 64% female, compared to the respondent group of 84%.

² The tracer study conducted on learnership and artisan programmes in the period 2011-2016 found an overall gender split of 65:35 in favour of males and recommended that steps be taken to address the gender imbalance. This has been achieved for learnerships, with 57% of respondents being women, but not as yet for artisans, where 78% of respondents were males.

3.3.4 Age

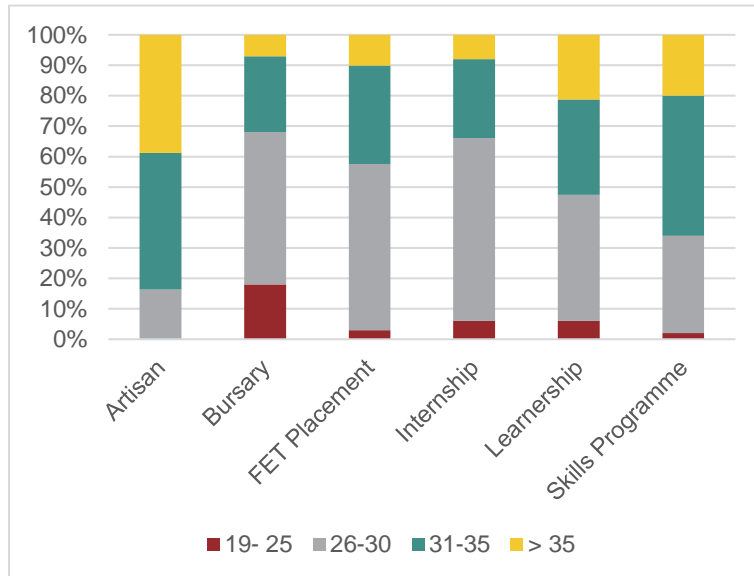


Figure 6: Respondents - Age

The age profile of the population reflects that 80% of the learners across all programmes are below the age of 35. With the exception of the artisan programme where 48% of participants are between the ages of 35 and 55, the majority of learners are below the age of 35, most notably in the bursary (91.4%) and internship (92.5%) programmes. The age profile of respondents reflects similar trends with regards to

age. No respondents were younger than 19. A total of 84% of respondents were in the age group 19-35.

3.3.5 Disability

Of the total respondents, 25 out of 949 reported that they have a disability. The artisan and learnership programmes reported the highest percentage of disabled respondents, at 5% each.

3.3.6 Province of Residence Prior to Programme

The 2011-2016 tracer study on learnership and artisan programmes for unemployed established that most of the unemployed learnership beneficiaries originated from the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Western Cape provinces and resided in Gauteng, Western Cape and Eastern Cape post the programme. On the other hand, most of the unemployed artisans originated from Gauteng, Western Cape, KZN and Limpopo provinces and resided in Gauteng and the Western Cape post the programme. This could imply that beneficiaries were closer to where most companies in the food and beverages

manufacturing sector are present. In this study the largest number of respondents resided in Gauteng (30%) and Limpopo (24%) prior to participating in the programmes. This is fairly consistent across all six programmes. Some notable differences are on the artisan programme, where, after Gauteng (38%), the majority of respondents were living in Kwazulu-Natal (18%), followed by Limpopo (13%). On the bursary programme, 29% of respondents were living in Gauteng, followed by Free State (18%) and Kwazulu-Natal (18%), with only 7% living in Limpopo. The skills programme is the only programme where the largest number of respondents did not reside in Gauteng (20%), but rather in Limpopo (30%).

	EC	FS	GP	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	OTH	TOT
<i>Artisan</i>	5	2	21	10	7	1	3	1	5	0	55
<i>Bursary</i>	0	5	8	5	2	3	3	0	2	0	28
<i>FET Placement</i>	39	24	88	5	88	22	9	0	1	0	276
<i>Internship</i>	21	16	78	45	27	7	4	2	33	1	234
<i>Learnership</i>	20	8	51	21	53	5	2	2	17	0	179
<i>Skills Prog</i>	11	16	36	16	53	24	4	3	14	0	177
Total	96	71	282	102	230	62	25	8	72	1	949

Table 5: Province of residence prior to programme

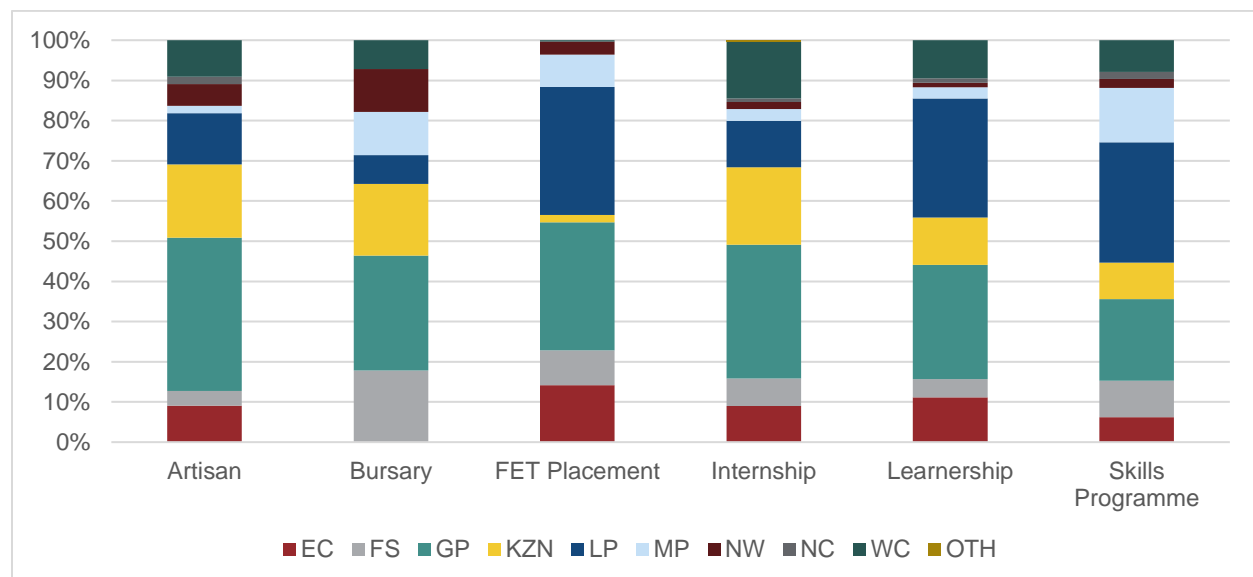


Figure 7: Province of residence prior to programme

3.3.7 Type of Location Prior to Programme

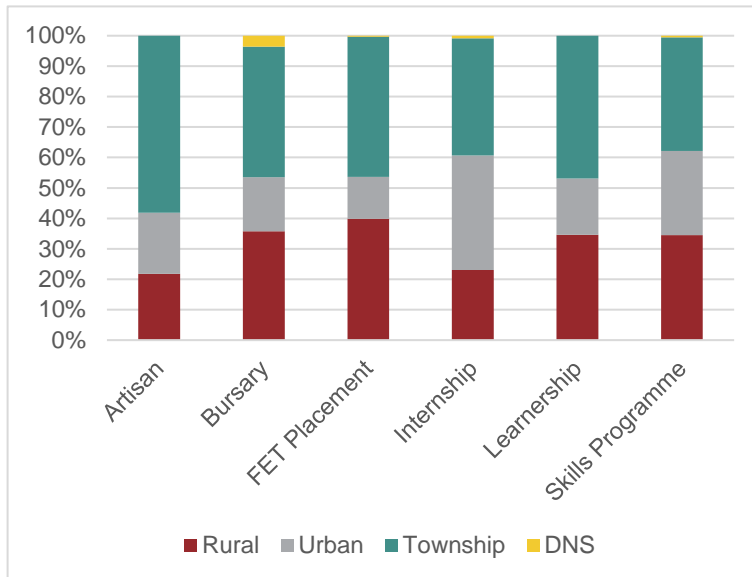


Figure 8: Location prior to programme

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they resided in a rural, urban or township location prior to the programme. A total of 43% of respondents reported that they resided in a township, followed by a rural area (33%) and an urban area (24%). One percent of respondents did not provide a response. The trend is fairly consistent across the programmes, with two notable exceptions. On the artisan programme, 58%

reported living in a township, followed by rural (22%) and urban (20%) areas. On the internship programme, equal amounts of respondents lived in township (38%) and urban (38%) areas, with 23% in rural areas.

3.3.8 Highest Qualification Prior to Programme

Prior to completing the programme, only 3% of respondents said that they did not have at least a Grade 12 NSC, or a NATED or higher qualification. A total of 17% of respondents had a diploma, 6% a bachelor degree and only 1% a postgraduate degree. There are differences across the programmes. The bursary programme has 46% of participants with either a diploma, a bachelor degree or a postgraduate degree, while the internship programmes has 66% of candidates with one of these qualifications. In contrast the learnership has 66% of candidates with an NSC or lower, including participants having only a grade 9 school-leaving qualification (1%) or less than this (1%). The skills programme is the only other programme with participants with less than an NSC, a total of 6%.

	Artisan	Bursary	FET Placement	Internship	Learnership	Skills Programme	Total
<i>Under Grade 9</i>	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
<i>Grade 9</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
<i>Grade 10</i>	0	0	0	0	1	5	6
<i>Grade 11</i>	0	0	1	0	11	5	17
<i>Grade 12 (NSC)</i>	12	11	90	60	104	55	332
<i>Higher Certificate</i>	0	0	8	1	4	10	23
<i>Nated- N1 - N4</i>	16	0	6	2	14	21	59
<i>Nated - N5 - N6</i>	21	2	147	3	17	25	215
<i>NCV 2-4</i>	0	0	8	0	3	17	28
<i>Diploma</i>	6	4	14	100	14	26	164
<i>Bachelor</i>	0	7	0	45	3	3	58
<i>PG Degree</i>	0	2	0	10	1	1	14
<i>Other</i>	0	2	1	13	4	9	29
<i>DNS</i>	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	55	28	276	234	179	177	949

Table 6: Highest qualification prior to programme

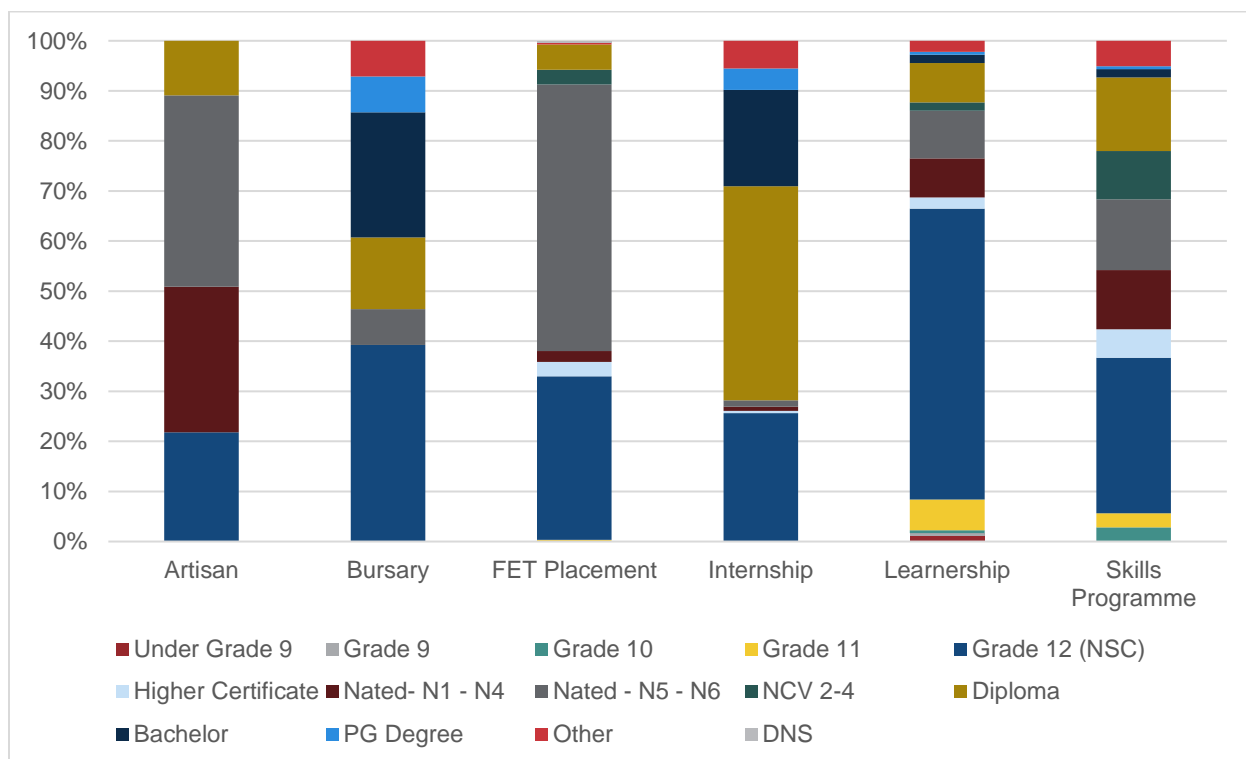


Figure 9: Highest qualification prior to programme (%)

3.4 Profile of the Employer and Training Provider Respondents

<i>Artisan</i>	7
<i>Bursary</i>	4
<i>FET Placement</i>	2
<i>Internship</i>	7
<i>Learnership</i>	8
<i>Skills Programme</i>	2

Table 7: Programmes offered by employer respondents

All nine employer respondents that completed the survey reported that they are large companies and indicated that they provide various programmes as shown. Of the nine employer survey respondents, three indicated that they are in the Manufacture of other Food Preparation Products Chamber, two each in

Manufacture of Breakfast Products and Manufacture of Dairy Products Chambers, one in Manufacture of Food Preparation Products Chamber and one in Production, Processing and Preservation of Meat, Fish, Fruit, Vegetables, Oils and Fats Chamber. One did not specify their Chamber.

Interviews were also held with three large and one medium size companies who served as employers during the programmes. These employers reported that they provided learnerships, internships and skills programmes for unemployed learners. In terms of the interview respondents, one respondent came from each of the following four Chambers: Manufacture of Breakfast Products; Manufacture of Dairy Products; Manufacture of Food Preparation Products; and Production, processing and preservation of meat, fish, fruit, vegetables, oil and fats.

<i>Artisan</i>	1
<i>Bursary</i>	1
<i>FET Placement</i>	2
<i>Internship</i>	3
<i>Learnership</i>	8
<i>Skills Programme</i>	4

Table 8: Breakdown of training provider survey respondents

On the training provider electronic surveys, six were from private providers, one was an NPO, one a public institution and one an in-house training provider. They offered all of the six programmes included in this analysis.

The two training providers who were interviewed indicated that they offer learnerships and skills programmes.

4 CONTEXT

The food and beverage manufacturing sector encompasses companies involved in food processing, which includes the physical and chemical transformation of raw materials (input) into food as well as the transformation of food (intermediary goods like sugar) into other forms. Food processing includes combining raw ingredients, yielding marketable food items that are easy to produce and provide to consumers. The supply chain for the sector includes primary producers, processing and logistics providers as well domestic retailers and exporters (FoodBev SETA, 2023).

The sector is a significant contributor to the overall manufacturing sector in South Africa. In 2022, the food and beverages manufacturing sector contributed R49bn out of a total of R203bn, or 24%. The sector has shown an increase in both exports and imports in the three-year period from 2020-2022. Exports have increased from R77.1bn in 2020, to R79.7bn in 2021, up to R92.1bn in 2022, an increase of 15.6% in the last year. On the other hand, imports have also increased from R72.5bn in 2020, to R77.2bn in 2021 and R88.5bn in 2022, an increase of 14.6% in the last year. The resultant trade surplus showed a decline from 2020 to 2021 (R4.6bn to R2.5bn) and an increase in 2022 to R3.6bn. These trends reflect the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent pressures on food supply changes from global dynamics such as the Russian/Ukraine war (FoodBev SETA, 2023).

The overall global growth trajectory in the sector is positive, due to exponential population growth and threats to food security arising from climate change. Citing the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the FoodBev SETA SSP reflects that the estimated growth in demand for food and beverages is likely to be between 30% and 65% between 2020 and 2050 (FoodBev SETA, 2023).

In South Africa, the sector is dominated by small companies, with companies which have less than 50 employees making up 87.3% of the sector. Medium companies comprise 7.2 % of the section, and large companies 5.5%. The data reflected in the SSP is

pertinent and is captured here to provide the context within which the participants in the learning programmes may find sustainable employment opportunities in the future. All companies with an annual payroll of R500 000 and above are required to pay the skills development levy (SDL). The SETA reports that out of 16,720 registered entities, only 4,188 entities paid the SDL to the SETA in 2022. The number of levy-paying companies reduced from 4,410 in 2021 to 4,188 in 2022. The reduction in employment decreases the levy contributions. The levy paying trend has been declining in the previous three years largely due to COVID-19 since 2020 and the current energy crisis in the country which has resulted in the closing of some companies (FoodBev SETA, 2023).

The success of the FoodBev SETA programmes is in part dependent on the ability of the sector to absorb learners who have completed the programmes. A decline in the number of levy-paying companies suggests that the capacity to absorb learners is constrained and will require the SETA to consider how best to support existing companies, grow new companies and work with employers in related sectors, to ensure that there are sufficient workplaces able to offer on-the-job training and ultimately employment.

5 KEY FINDINGS

5.1 Current status

Learner respondents were asked to provide feedback on what they are doing now. Fifty-four percent (54%) reported that they are employed. By far the group with the highest employment rating is the artisan respondents with 84% employed, followed by internships (71%) and bursary (68%) respondents. The lowest levels of employment are found in the learnerships (57%), skills programme (42%) and FET placement (38%).

The remainder of the respondents are studying or have started a business or are unemployed as follows: 5% of respondents overall are currently studying, 7% from the bursary and FET placement groups and none in the artisans group. With regards to running a business, overall, only 4% of the respondents reported doing so, with the highest number being recorded by the skills programme respondents at 10%. 37% of respondents are unemployed. As expected, the highest levels of unemployment are found amongst the learnership (36%), skills programme (44%) and FET placement (52%) respondents.

	I am currently employed	I am currently running a business	I am currently studying	I am currently unemployed	TOTAL
<i>Artisan</i>	46	1	0	8	55
<i>Bursary</i>	19	1	2	6	28
<i>FET Placement</i>	106	8	19	143	276
<i>Internship</i>	165	7	11	51	234
<i>Learnership</i>	102	6	6	65	179
<i>Skills Programme</i>	74	17	6	80	177
TOTAL	512	40	44	353	949

Table 9: Current status

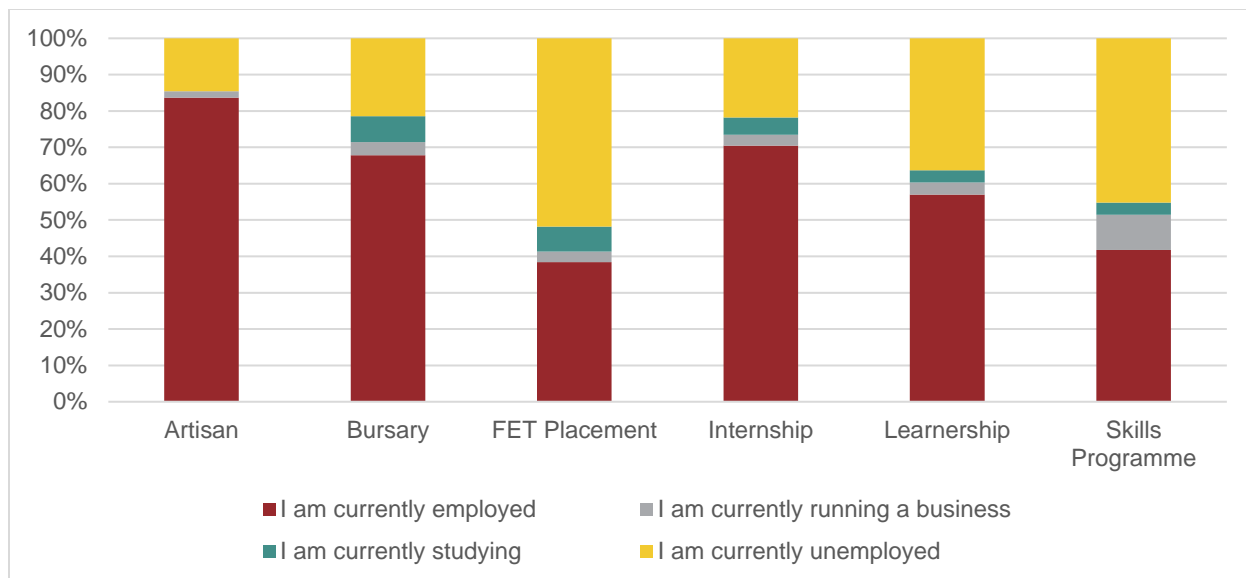


Figure 10: Current status

In addition to those that are currently employed, 78% currently unemployed respondents indicated that they had had at least one job after completing the programme. Combining the totals of those currently employed with those who had at least one job since the programme shows that 75% of all respondents indicated that they had some experience of employment since completing the programme. (Details on the employment journeys of unemployed learners is contained in Section 5.1.4 below.)

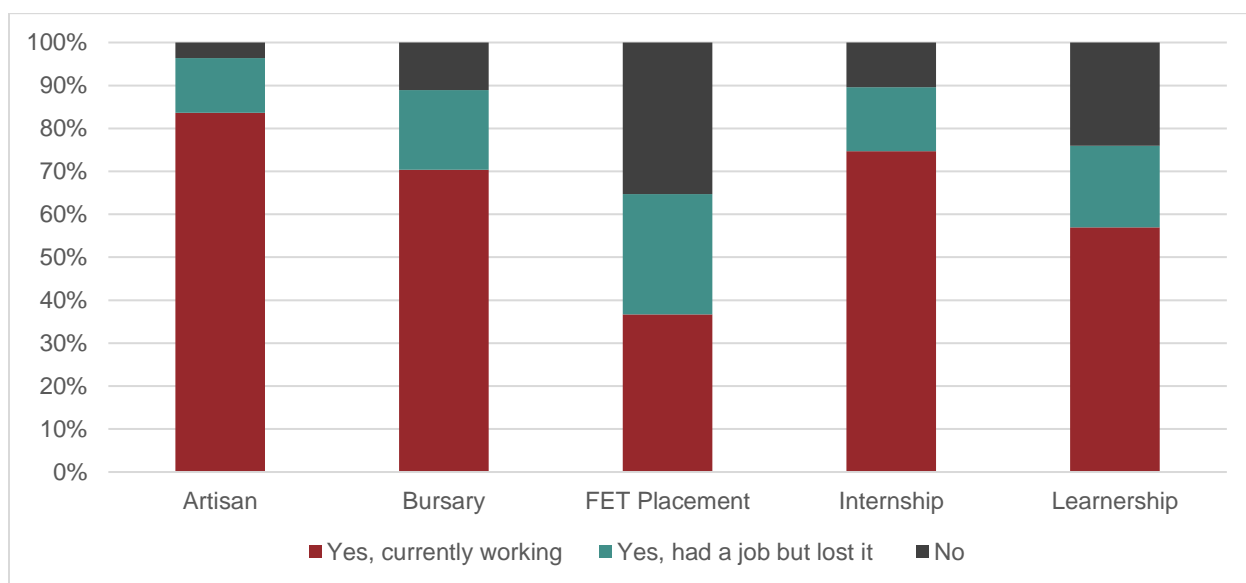


Figure 11: Ever been employed, currently employed and currently unemployed candidates.

5.1.1 Respondents who are currently employed

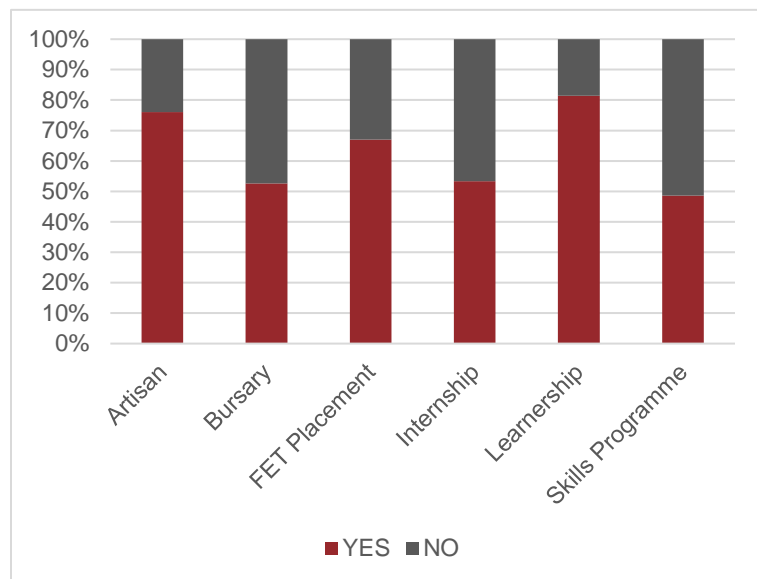


Figure 12: Is this your first job? (Employed respondents)

Employed respondents were asked to provide detailed feedback on their journeys to employment, as well as details on their current job. In response to whether this was their first job since completing the programme, 63% of all employed respondents said that they are still in their first job. As shown in Figure 18 to the left, 81% of employed respondents who had completed learnerships and 76% of

employed respondents who completed the artisan programme said that they are still in their first job, but only 49% of employed respondents who went through skills programmes selected this option. The reasons for greater levels of movement in this group are surfaced throughout this report.

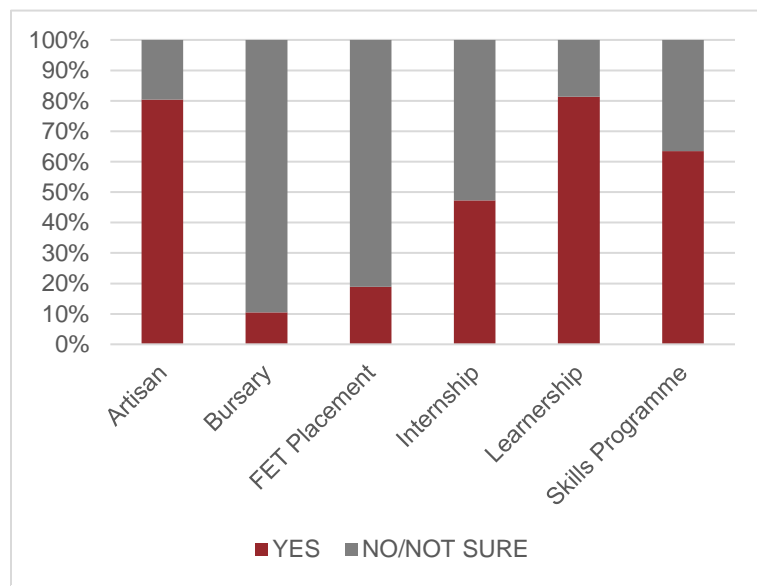


Figure 13: Was your first job in the Food Bev sector? (All respondents)

Employed respondents were asked whether their first job was in the FoodBev Sector. In total, just over half (52%) of all employed respondents said that their first job was in the sector. As shown to the left, 81% of respondents who had been through learnership programmes and 80% of respondents from artisan programmes found their

first jobs in the sector, in contrast to only 11% of bursary students and 19% of FET placement students.

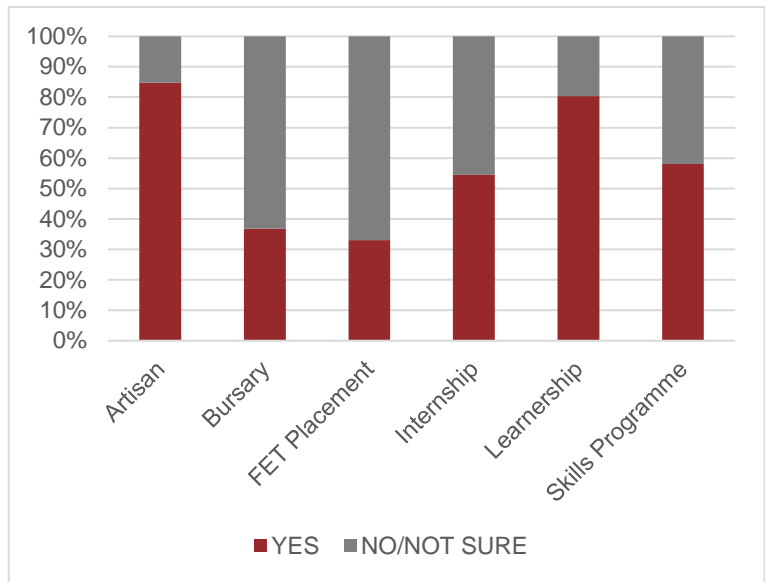


Figure 14: Was the first job aligned to the programme you did?

Employed respondents were also asked about the alignment of their first job to the content of the programme which they had completed. Overall, 58% of employed respondents said that they thought that this first job was aligned. Respondents who had completed artisan programmes (85%) and learnerships (80%) programmes showed greatest alignment, with the FET placement learners

(33%) and bursary students (37%) showing the least alignment.

In relation to the time taken to find their first job, 52% of all employed respondents who answered this question were able to find work within 3 months of completing the programme (38% within 1 month and 14% within 2 – 3 months). Again, respondents from artisan programmes and learnerships indicated that that had found work faster, and respondents from skills programmes had taken the longest time to find work, as shown in over the page.

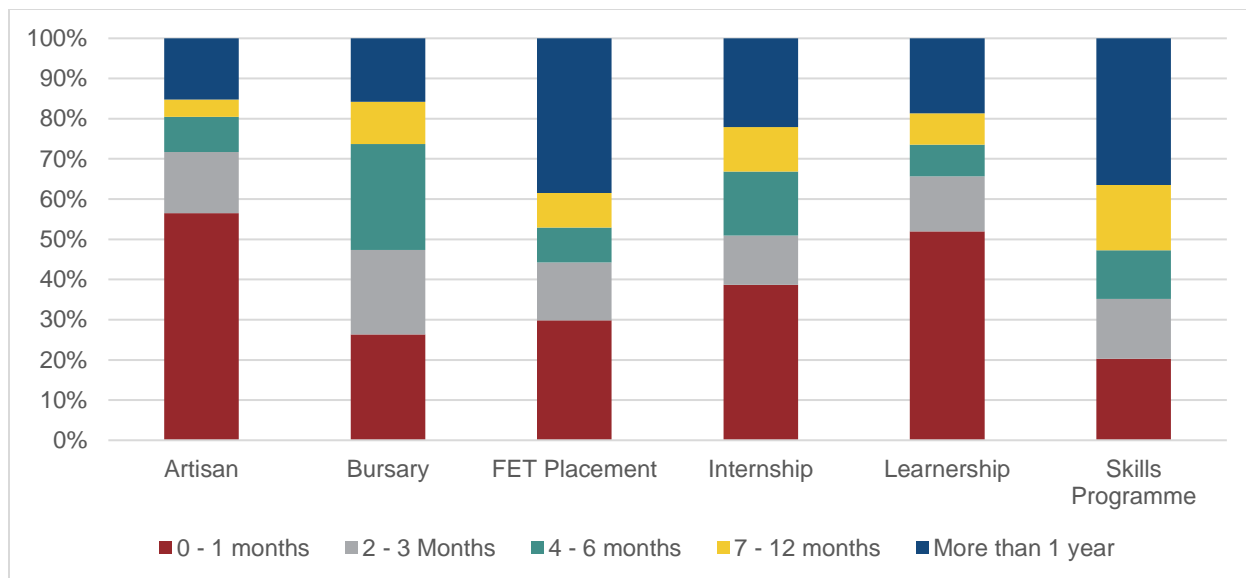


Figure 16: How long did it take you to find your first job?

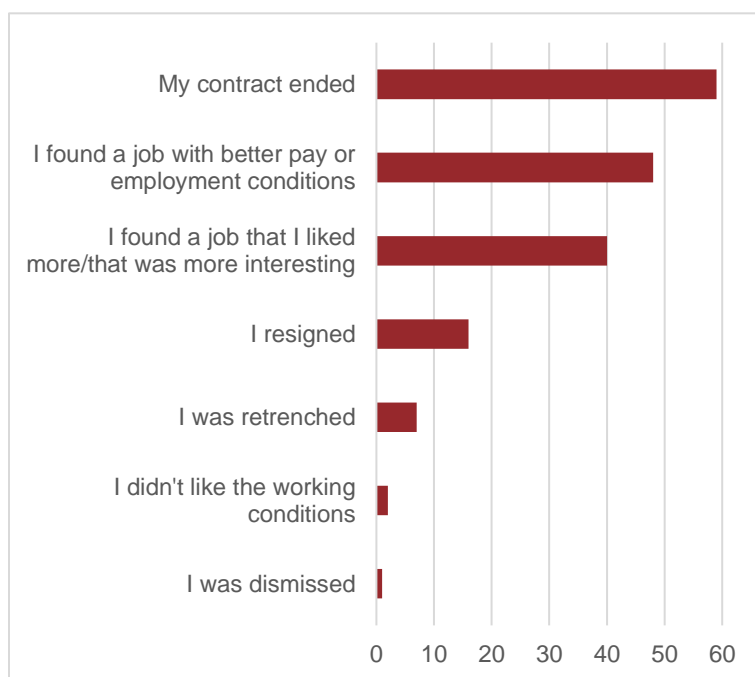


Figure 15: Why did you leave your first job?

As indicated, 37% of all employed respondents said that they had had a job prior to the one that they are currently in. When we asked these respondents why they had left their previous jobs, we found that most said that their contract ended. However, a significant number of respondents indicated that they left to pursue other, better opportunities.

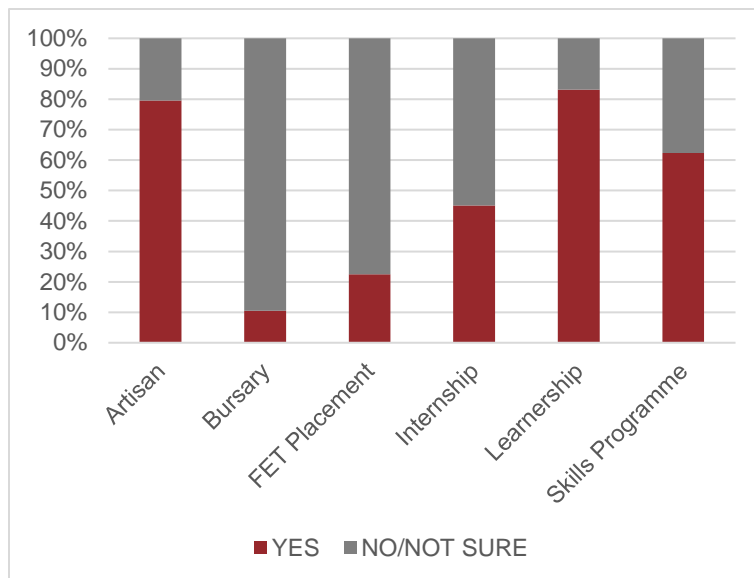


Figure 17: Is your current job in the Food Bev Sector?

Turning to their current job, 53% of employed respondents indicate that they are currently working in the FoodBev sector. This is most significant for artisan (80%) and learnership (83%) respondents, reasonably significant for skills programme respondents (62%) and very low for bursary (11%) and FET placement (22%) respondents.

There are similar trends in responses with regards to

whether the jobs relate to the content of the programme completed, with 60% of respondents reporting that their job is related. This is highest for artisan (86%) and learnership (78%) respondents and lowest for lowest for FET placement respondents (37%).

71% of employed respondents indicated that currently employed are on full-time open-ended contracts, with 96% of artisans and 80% of interns being employed in this manner.

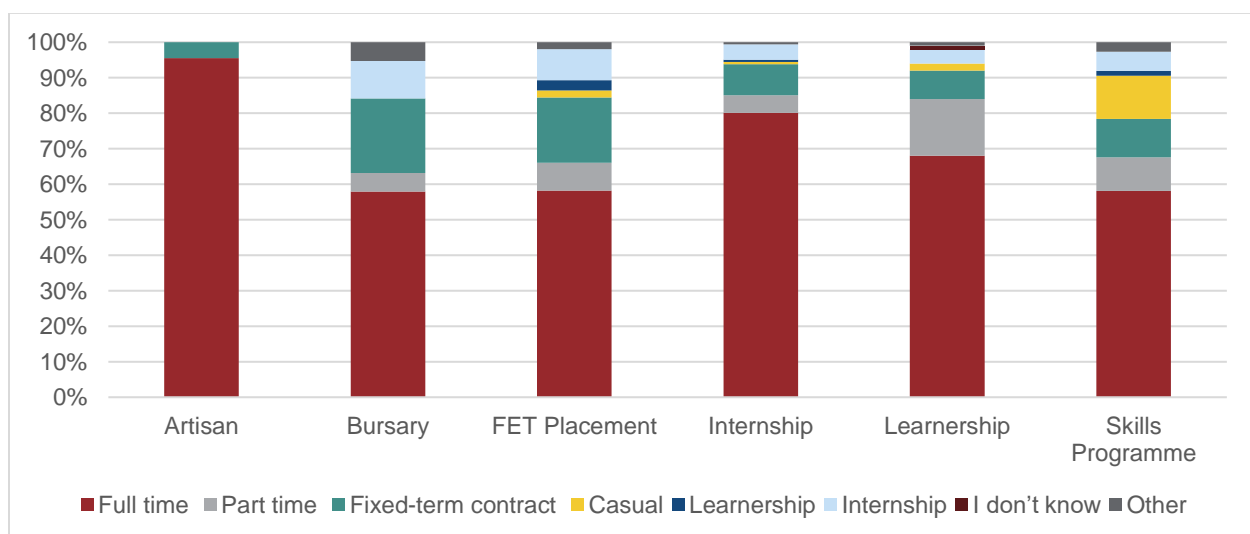


Figure 18: What type of contract do you have?

Only 20% of respondents said that their employment contracts changed since joining their employer, with most frequent change happening with artisan respondents (33%).

Employed respondents were asked to give feedback on their current monthly salary. Nearly a quarter (23%) declined to answer this question. 13% of respondents indicated that they are earning R5,000 or less, of which 30% are skills programme respondents. A total of 21% of respondents are earning between R5,001 and R10,000, with FET placement (29%), skills programme (27%) and learnership (24%) respondents showing higher numbers in this income bracket. 16% of respondents earn between R10,001 and R15,000, with skills programme (23%) and learnership (18%) respondents being slightly higher. Earnings between R15,001 and R30,000 were mainly reported by artisan (39%) and internship (29%) respondents against an average of 18%. Bursary respondents earn significantly better than other respondents with 37% earning more than R30,000, against an average of 9%. Artisan (20%) and internship (16%) respondents also feature in this income bracket, compared to FET placement (1%), learnership (1%) and skills programme (0%) respondents.

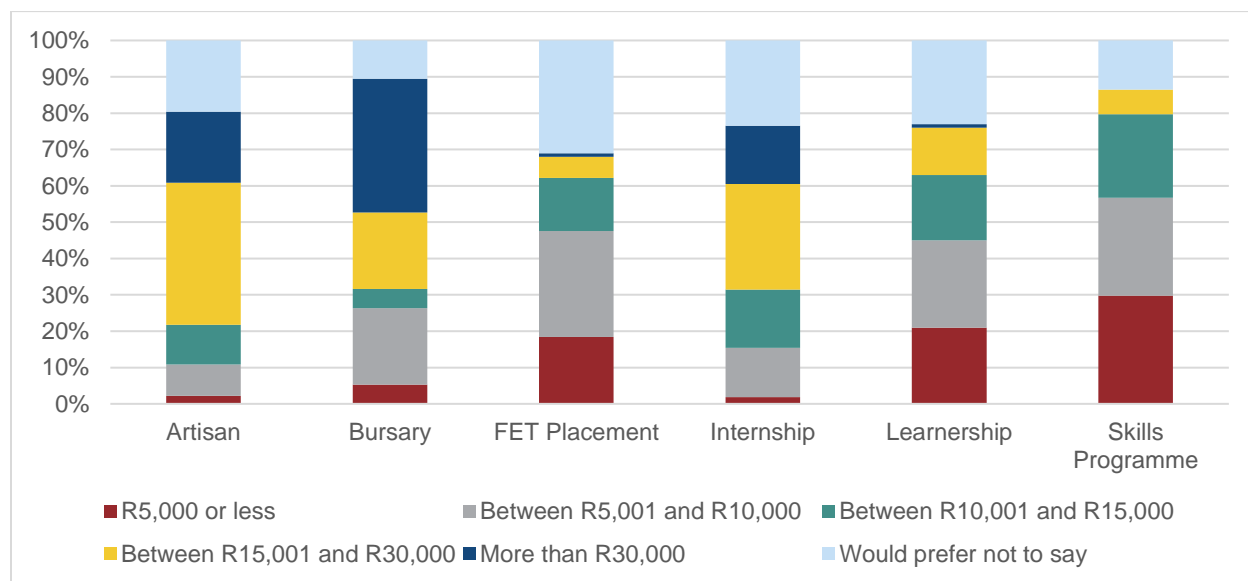


Figure 19: What is your current salary?

37% of respondents said that they had a salary increase since starting work at the company, with artisan (65%), bursary (47%) and learnership (40%) respondents being above the average.

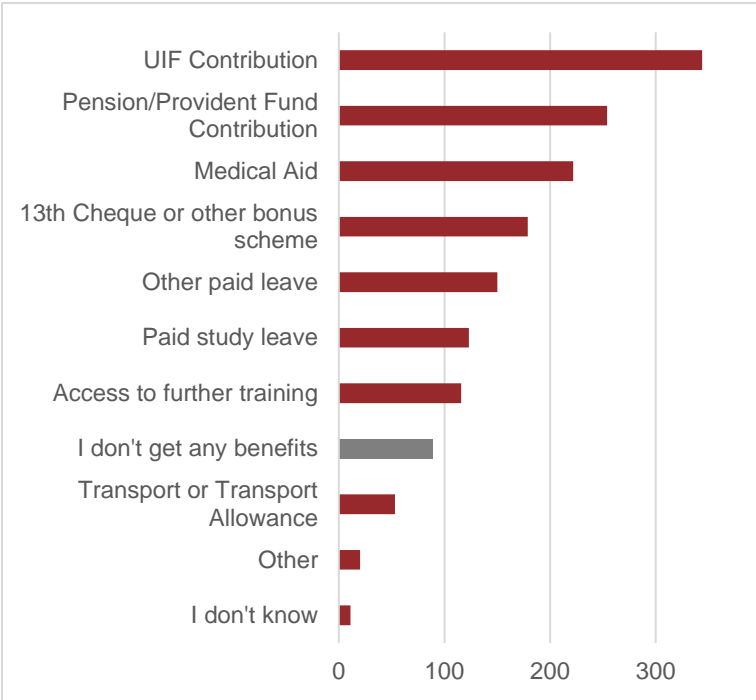


Figure 20: What benefits do you get?

83% of all employed respondents indicated that they received some benefits. 67% indicated that they received UIF contributions, 50% a pension or provident fund contribution and 43% a medical aid contribution. These benefits are generally received across all respondents from all of the programmes. 17% of respondents reported not receiving any benefits, with skills programme and FET placement respondents being disproportionately affected. A

change in benefits occurred for only 9% of respondents, with skills programme (4%), bursary (5%) and internship (7%) candidates least likely to experience changes in benefits.

When asked if they are doing anything else, the majority of respondents (84%) said that they are not doing anything else. 13% indicated that they are studying and 2% said that they were also running small businesses. 20% of artisan respondents and 18% of internship respondents said that they were studying, and 8% of FET placement said that they were running a business.

5.1.2 Respondents who are currently running a business

As indicated in Figure 10, 40 respondents, or 4% of all those that we spoke to, indicated that they are running their own business. Also noted in Section 5.1 above is that 10% of respondents who did skills programmes indicated that they are running their own business.

Respondents were asked why they started a business, and for just over half (53%), the reason was that they could not find employment and hence had to make a plan. 18% wanted to be their own boss, as shown below. When asked about the extent to which the programme contributed to starting a business 22% respondents indicated that the programme gave them the confidence to open a business.

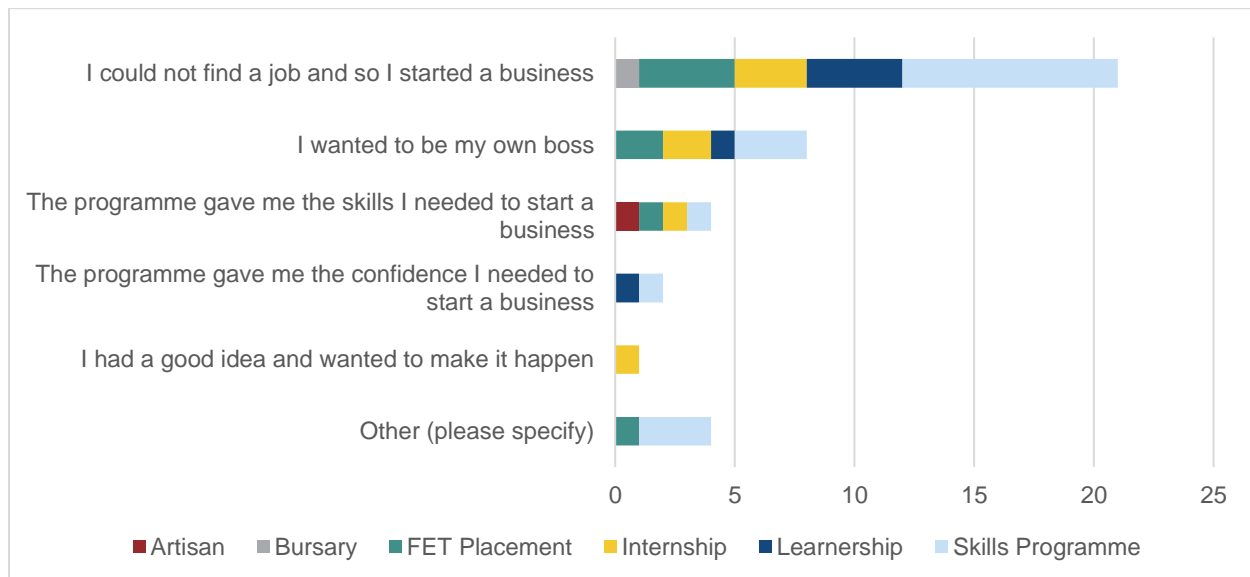


Figure 21: Why did you start a business?

The period required to start a business was relatively long, with 45% of respondents reporting that it took them more than one year, and 18% reporting a period of 7-12 months. However, 25% were able to start a business in one month. Half of the respondents running businesses indicated that they were linked to the content of the FoodBev SETA programme that they had gone through. The alignment to the

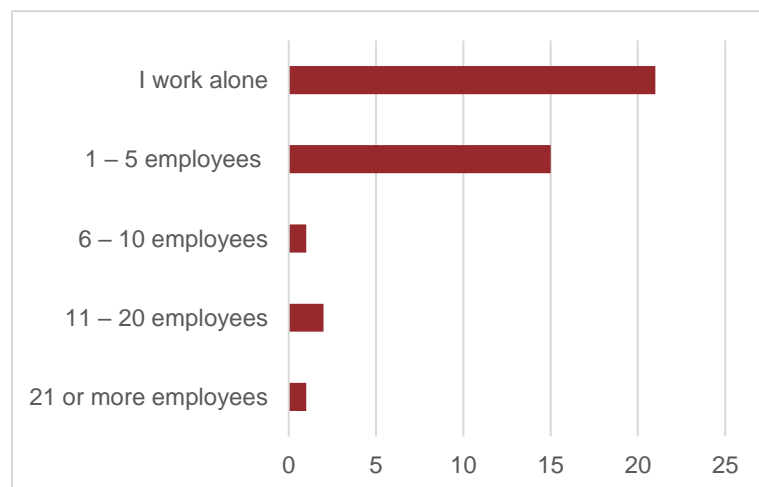


Figure 22: How many people do you employ in your business?

programme was strongest for skills programme (71%) and learnership (67%) respondents.

The businesses are largely micro enterprises, with 43% of respondents indicating that they work alone and 47% employing 1-5 people apart from themselves.

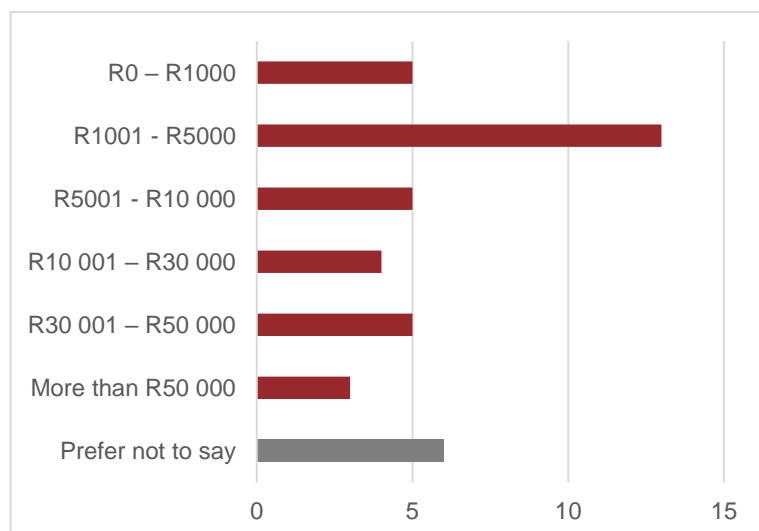


Figure 23: What is the monthly turnover of your business?

There are two respondent led businesses employing 11-12 employees, from the internship and skills programmes, and one business employing 21 or more employees, led by the FET placement respondent.

The monthly turnover of the business varies: 32% of these businesses are earning from R1,001 - R5,000. 12% of the

businesses earn only R0 - R1,000; while the remaining businesses are evenly spread over the revenue brackets R5,001-R10,000; R10,001-R30,000 and R30,001-R50,000. 7% of respondents run businesses that earn over R50,001 per month, which are

essentially three businesses run by respondents from the FET placement, internship and skills programme groups. 15% of the respondents declined to answer.

Forty-four percent (44%) of the businesses are registered at the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC). A further 44% of the businesses are registered

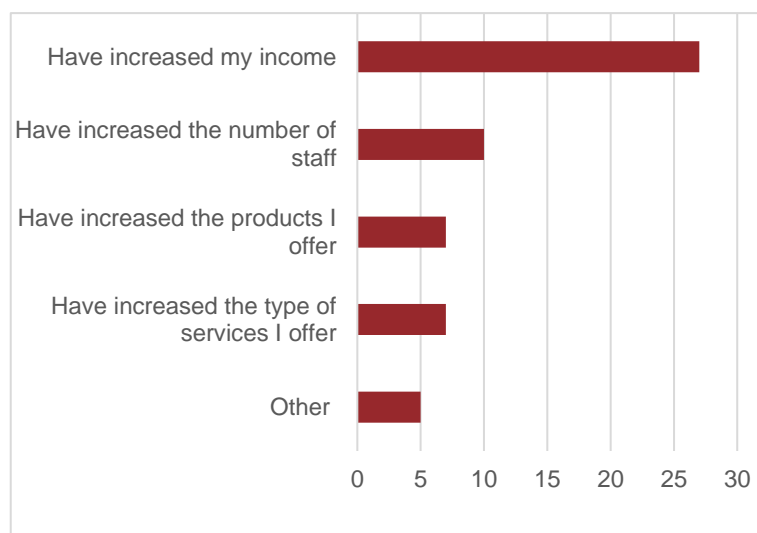


Figure 24: How has your business grown?

with the South African Revenue Service (SARS). Sixty-three percent (62.5%) of respondents who are running businesses keep financial books for the company, while 25% do not and 12.5% preferred not to say.

78% of respondents said that they thought that overall, their businesses had grown since they were started. The growth is

primarily evident in an increase in revenue (48%) followed by an increase in the number of staff (18%), an increase in services offered (13%) and an increase in products offered.

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of respondents running businesses noted that they are not doing anything else, with 8% reporting that they are studying and 5% are involved in other activities. On further investigation the 'other activities' largely involve studying. Some reasons provided for further study included wanting to learn more in an area outside of the FoodBev SETA programme, wanting to gain a higher qualification in order to get the job they wanted and because they couldn't get a job.

5.1.3 Respondents who are currently studying further

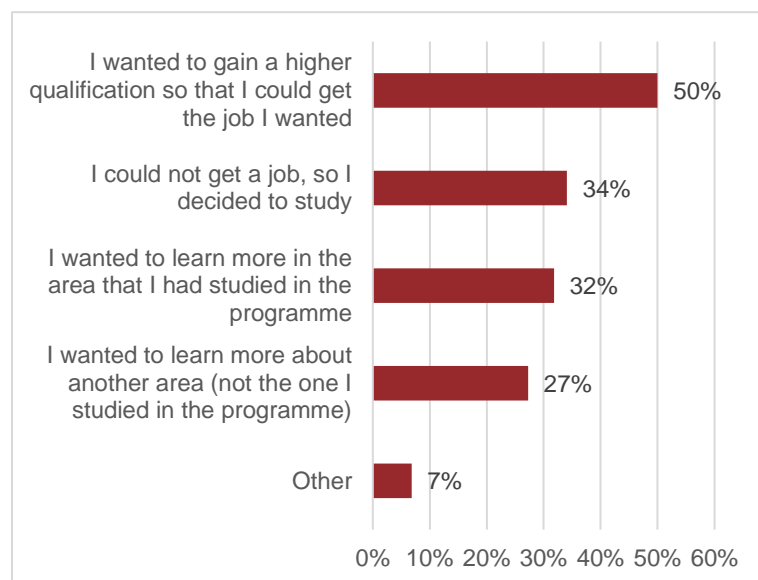


Figure 25: Why did you decide to study?

Figure 16 shows 44 respondents, or 5% of all respondents, are currently studying. Of these, 50% indicated that they decided to study so that they could gain a higher qualification to get the job they wanted. 34% of respondents decided to study as they could not find a job and 32% wanted to extend what they had studied in the programme. Most respondents indicated that they

are currently studying at a higher education institution (university). Once they have completed their studies, 85% of respondents who are currently studying said that they aim to get a job and 15% intend to carry on with further studies. None of the respondents indicated that they would start a small business.

5.1.4 Respondents who are currently unemployed

353 respondents, or 37% of all respondents indicated that they are currently unemployed, as shown in Figure 16. However, as shown in Figure 17, 78% of these unemployed respondents indicated that they had had at least one job since completing the programme.

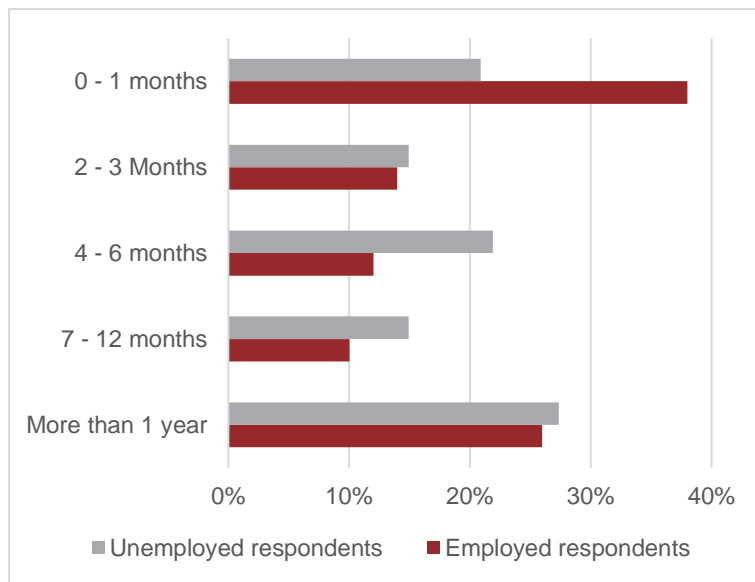


Figure 26: Time taken to find work, employed v unemployed respondents

Of those unemployed respondents who had previously had a job, 36% said that it had taken three months or less to find a job, compared to 52% of employed respondents. In relation to why they left this job, 72% of respondents indicated it was because their contract ended. 15 respondents indicated that they had resigned, and nine attributed the loss of work to the COVID 19 pandemic.

78% of all currently unemployed respondents are actively looking for work. Only 11 respondents provided reasons as to why they are not currently looking for work, including from them being sick, looking after a child or a family member, are now retired, or have found ways to sustain themselves outside of formal employment.

When asked why they thought that they hadn't found work, half of the unemployed respondents indicated that they thought that this was because there were simply no jobs. Other frequently mentioned reasons are that they don't have the right connections or enough information about available jobs. Generally, respondents did not feel that they were unable to find a job due to their race, gender, age or disability or because they did not have sufficient money to make calls, print a CV or take transport to an interview, as shown in Figure 33 below:

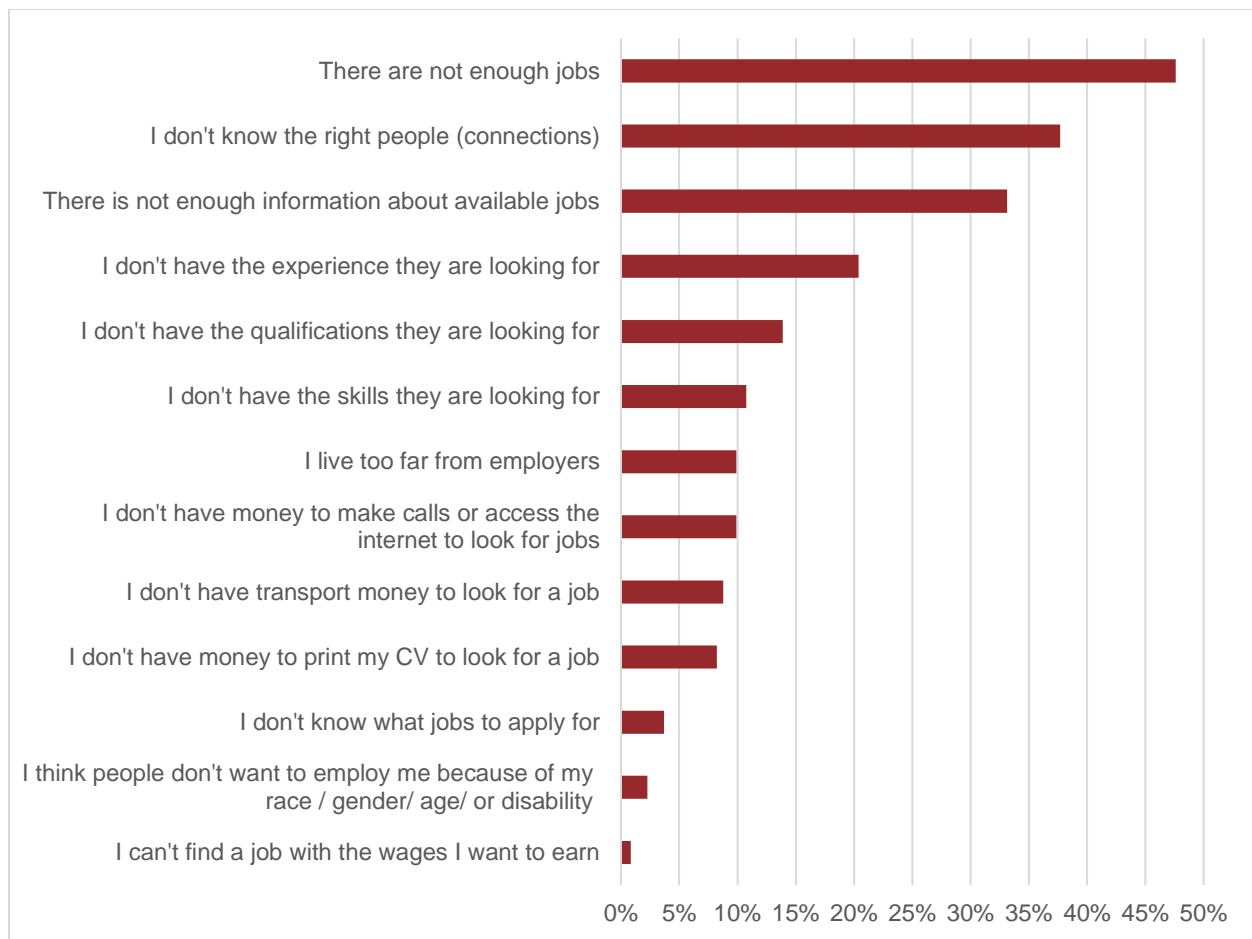


Figure 27: Why do you think that you have been unable to find work?

Within this, there are however some interesting differences across type of programme. Table 10 shows that 50% of Artisans think that they have not been able to find work because they don't have the experience that employers are looking for. In contrast, 67% of bursary students indicated that they don't have enough information about available jobs, and 48% of FET placement learners think that they don't have the right connections.

	Artisan	Bursary	FET Placement	Internship	Learnership	Skills Programme
There are not enough jobs	13%	33%	52%	43%	45%	50%
I don't know the right people (connections)	13%	50%	48%	20%	29%	39%
There is not enough information about available jobs	13%	67%	40%	20%	29%	33%
I don't have the experience they are looking for	50%	33%	26%	18%	14%	14%
I don't have the qualifications they are looking for	0%	17%	15%	12%	11%	16%
I don't have the skills they are looking for	13%	17%	11%	6%	11%	13%
I don't have money to make calls or access the internet to look for jobs	0%	0%	16%	4%	6%	8%
I live too far from employers	0%	17%	10%	2%	15%	10%
I don't have transport money to look for a job	0%	0%	14%	2%	3%	10%
I don't have money to print my CV to look for a job	0%	0%	12%	0%	11%	6%
I don't know what jobs to apply for	0%	17%	2%	0%	5%	8%
I think people don't want to employ me because of my race / gender/ age/ or disability	0%	0%	1%	4%	3%	3%
I can't find a job with the wages I want to earn	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%

Table 10: Why do you think that you have been unable to find work? (by programme type, all unemployed)

21 of the unemployed respondents noted that they do not know why they cannot find work. Despite having applied for jobs and, in some cases, attended interviews, they did not receive any feedback on why they were not successful.

The employers surveyed noted that in order to improve employment outcomes the shorter programmes should be extended to at least 15 months to allow sufficient time for practical exposure in the workplace and better work readiness preparation.

5.2 Work seeking behaviour

Figure 28 below shows that how unemployed respondents are looking for work is fairly consistent with how employed respondents found work, although for employed respondents the employer that they did their work experience with is very significant. This statement is made as it is noted that 27% of employed respondents indicated that they are still with the employer where they did their work experience/ learnership etc. However, 32% of employed respondents indicated that they found their job through sending out CVs, which 92% of unemployed respondents indicated that they are doing. And 30% of employed respondents got their job by searching on the internet and applying for work, which 77% of unemployed respondents are doing.



Figure 28: How unemployed people are looking for work vs how employed people found work

5.3 What has changed for respondents since the programme?

5.3.1 Changes in highest qualification

As shown in Section 3.3.8 above, prior to the programme, 35% of respondents had a Grade 12 (NSC) and 17% had a Diploma. When looking at qualifications post the programme, across all programmes there has been a general increase in the highest qualification. There has been a 30% reduction in the percentage of respondents with an NSC, to 5%, and a 24% increase in the percentage of respondents with a diploma, from

17% to 41%. There is an increase in respondents with bachelor (from 6% to 9%) and post-graduate degrees (1% to 5%).

	Grade 11 and under	Grade 12 (NSC)	Higher Certificate	Nated- N1 - N4	Nated - N5 - N6	NCV 2-4	Diploma	Bachelor	PG Degree	Other
Artisan	0%	-22%	0%	-7%	-2%	4%	13%	4%	0%	11%
Bursary	0%	-39%	4%	0%	-4%	0%	7%	-4%	18%	18%
FET Placement	0%	-32%	0%	-2%	-31%	-1%	64%	2%	0%	0%
Internship	0%	-25%	0%	-1%	-1%	0%	4%	6%	12%	6%
Learnership	-4%	-44%	7%	4%	1%	23%	6%	2%	0%	4%
Skills Programme	-4%	-20%	1%	-2%	1%	8%	11%	1%	1%	2%
TOTAL	-2%	-30%	2%	-1%	-9%	6%	24%	3%	4%	4%

Table 11: Changes in highest qualification levels since the programme

5.3.2 Changes in household contributions

Sixty-nine percent (69%) of respondents contribute money to the household in which they are currently living, and they know how the money is used. The artisan respondents have the highest proportion of contributors, at 82% and the FET placement respondents, the lowest at 54%. Two percent of respondents contribute money to the household but don't know how it is used, while 27% of respondents do not contribute. The group who is least able to contribute to the household are the FET placement respondents (41%), while artisan and bursary respondents reflect the greatest ability to contribute, with only 11% of respondents in each group not contributing.

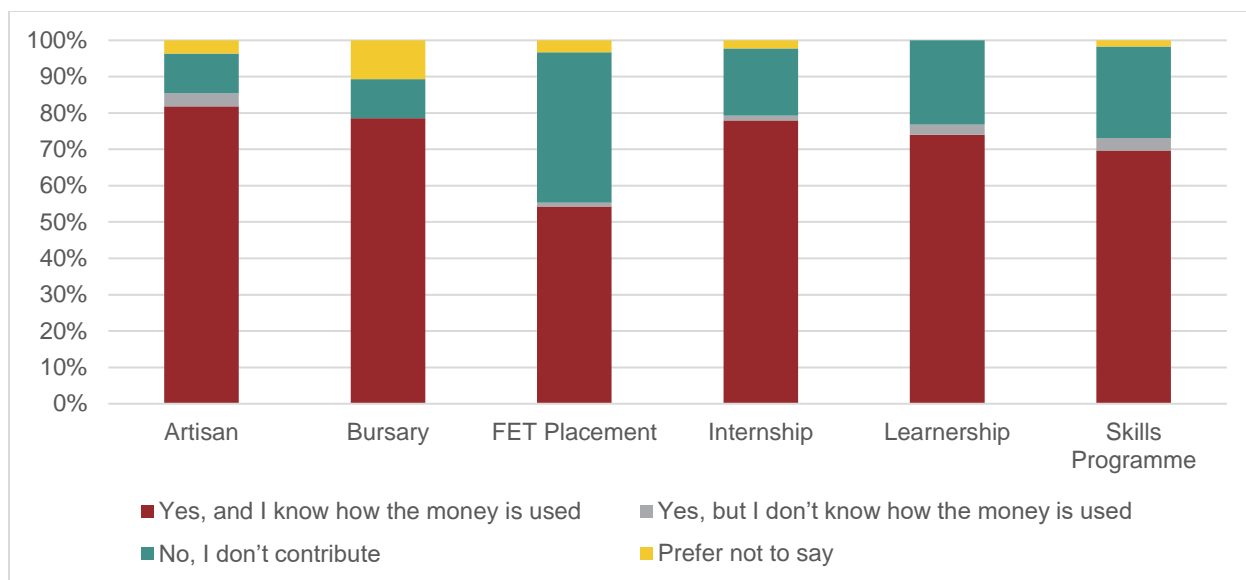


Figure 29: Household contributions

Those who do contribute were asked whether the financial contribution has changed since completing the FoodBev SETA programme: 41% of respondents indicated that it had and 59% indicated that it hadn't.

5.3.3 Changes in personal circumstances

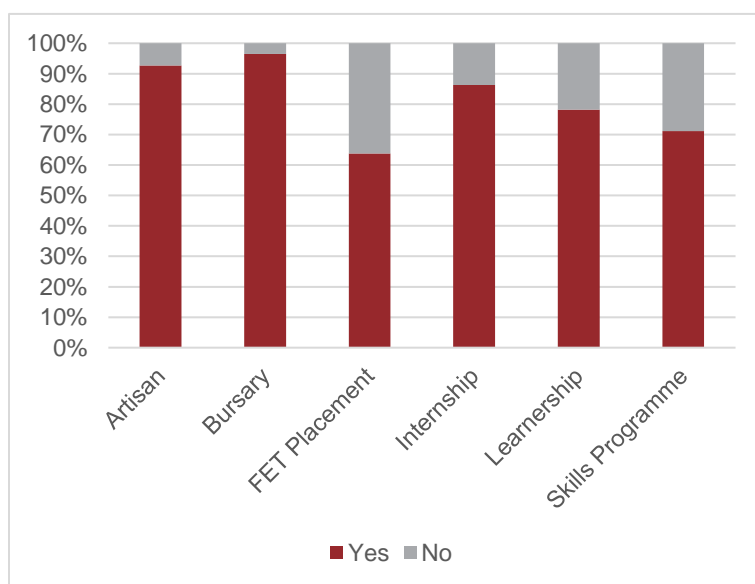


Figure 30: Has anything changed for you since you did the programme?

Overall, 76% of respondents indicated that they have experienced some changes in their personal circumstances since they did the programme. Nearly all Artisan and bursary students said that they had experienced some change, against just over 60% of FET placement students. The most frequently mentioned (by all respondents who indicated a change) was moving out of the

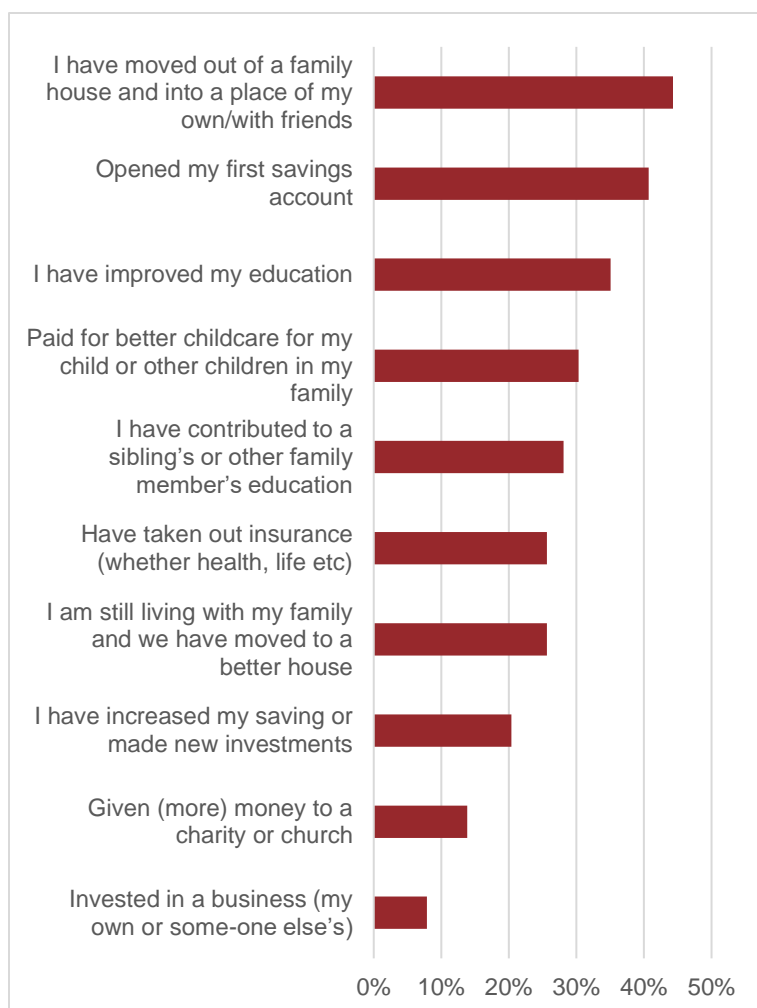


Figure 31: What changes have you made?

family home. Other changes mentioned by a number of respondents included opening their first saving accounts, improving their education, and paying for better childcare for their own child or other children in the family.

These findings are spread almost equally across respondents from all programmes, without any stark differences between the respondents from different programmes.

5.3.4 Changes in province

Details on which provinces respondents lived at the time of doing the programme are reflected in Section 3.3.6 above. In the

survey, we also asked respondents where they live now, to determine if any changes had taken place since undertaking the programme. Gauteng reflects the greatest increase in respondents reflecting that it is now their province of residence, showing a 7% increase from 30% to 37%. Limpopo reflects the greatest decrease in the percentage of respondents residing in the province (5% from 24%-19%). The remaining provinces reflect minor changes, with the Western Cape showing a minor increase, and the Eastern Cape, Kwazulu-Natal and North-West showing decreases.

	EC	FS	GP	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	OTH
Artisan	-4%	4%	11%	-4%	-5%	2%	-4%	0%	0%	0%
Bursary	0%	-11%	18%	-14%	4%	0%	-4%	0%	4%	4%
FET Placement	-2%	0%	9%	0%	-7%	1%	-3%	0%	0%	1%
Internship	2%	-1%	6%	-4%	-4%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Learnership	-3%	0%	6%	0%	-7%	-1%	-1%	1%	4%	0%
Skills Programme	-1%	-1%	4%	1%	-5%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%
TOTAL	-1%	-1%	7%	-2%	-5%	0%	-1%	0%	1%	1%

Table 12: % change in provincial local since participation in the programme

5.3.5 Changes in location

Urban areas show the greatest increase in number of respondents now residing in them, up 9% from 24% to 33%. Township areas also reflect an increase, up 2% from 43% to 45%. Rural areas show a decrease, down 11% from 33% to 22%.

	Rural	Urban	Township	DNS
Artisan	-18%	25%	-7%	0%
Bursary	-21%	36%	-11%	-4%
FET Placement	-12%	4%	8%	0%
Internship	-10%	15%	-4%	-1%
Learnership	-10%	7%	3%	0%
Skills Programme	-6%	3%	4%	-1%
TOTAL	-11%	9%	2%	0%

Table 13: Type of location post programme

Notable changes are in the bursary programme, where only 18% of respondents originally resided in urban areas, now up to 54%.

5.4 Views on the Programmes

5.4.1 Reasons for participating in the programme

When asked why they chose to participate in the programme, learner respondents provided a range of reasons. The most frequently cited reason was 'I wanted to acquire more knowledge, skills and practical work-related exposure to do my job better' (43% of all respondents). There were some differences across respondents from the various programmes, as shown in Table 14 over the page. 46% of bursary participants noted that they participated to gain a further qualification to work in the sector, compared to the group average of 33%.

	Artisan	Bursary	FET Placement	Internship	Leamership	Skills Programme
I wanted to acquire more knowledge, skills and practical work-related exposure to do my job better.	49%	36%	44%	43%	40%	44%
I wanted to get any job.	15%	4%	27%	27%	60%	46%
I wanted to gain a further qualification to enable me to work in this sector.	35%	46%	41%	26%	34%	28%
I am interested in the sector and wanted to work in the sector.	44%	11%	30%	25%	37%	44%
I wanted to get a job in my field of study.	33%	21%	39%	32%	13%	28%
I heard good things about the programme.	7%	4%	12%	4%	17%	6%
I thought the programme would help me start a business.	2%	4%	1%	2%	6%	8%

Table 14: Why did you want to participate in the programme?

Additional reasons for selecting to participate in the programme included being required to do so to obtain their diploma, particularly with regards to completing work experience.

The expectations of participants were generally met to a high degree. Overall, 81% of respondents rated the programme a 5 – exceeded their expectations (51%) or a 4 (24%), This is consistent across all programmes with only skills programme scoring less than 80% for 4 and 5 scores, as shown below.

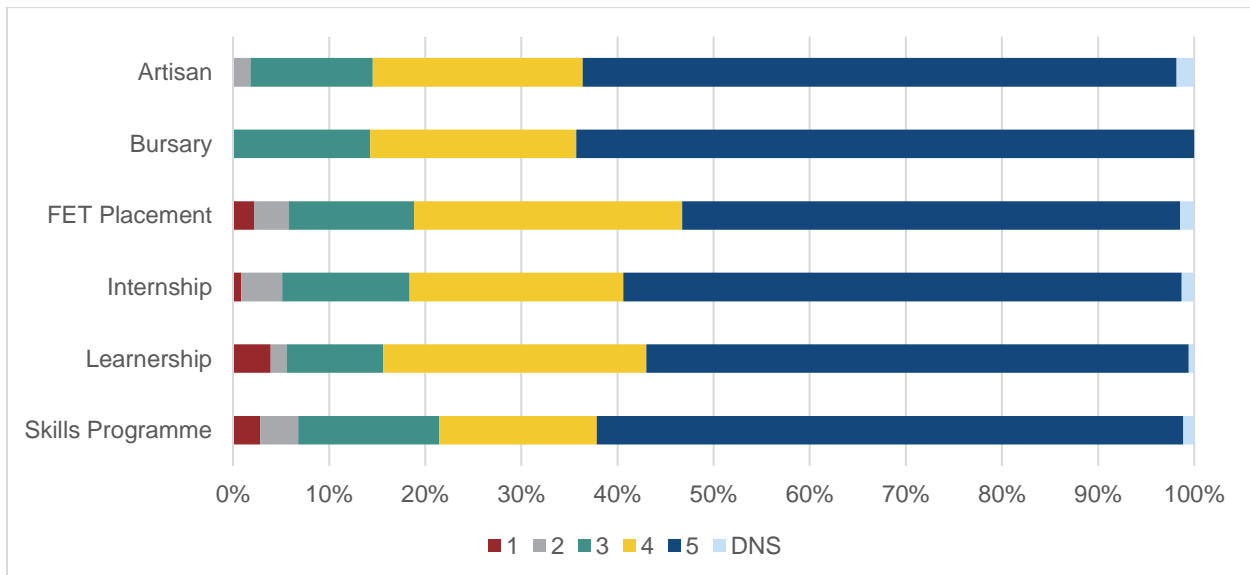


Figure 32: Extent to which expectations were met (%)

5.4.2 Benefits received during the programme

Respondents were asked what benefits they received in the programme. Almost all respondents (95%) indicated that they received a monthly salary or stipend, although only 32% of bursary respondents said that they received this. The next most frequently mentioned benefit was on the job skills training, with 44% of respondents indicating this. Very few respondents received company benefits (5%), the highest being artisans (25%). 70% of bursary participants received some form of financial support for studies, against the overall average of 4%.

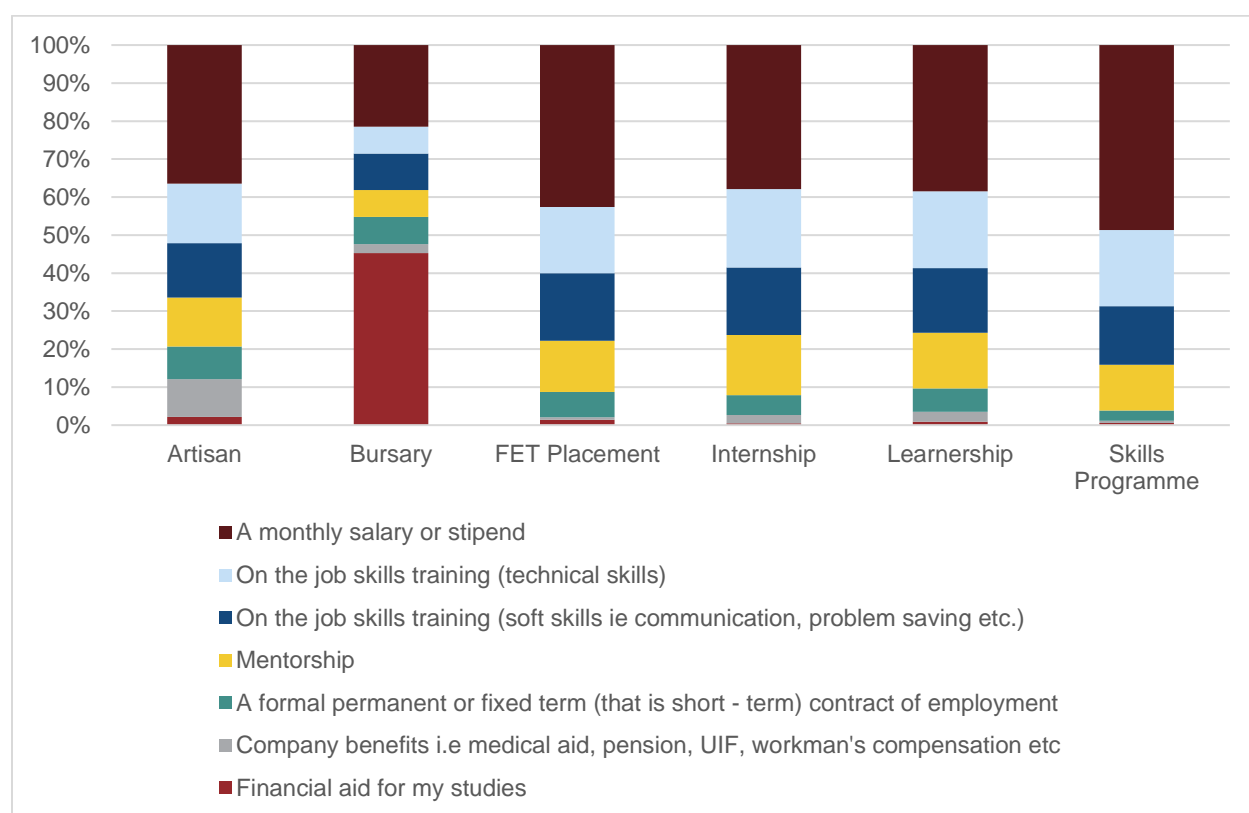


Figure 33: What benefits did you receive on the programme?

5.4.3 Journey into and through the programme

Respondents heard about the programme from a variety of sources. 46% of all respondents heard about the opportunity from a provider or learning institution, with 83% of FET placement and 51% of internship respondents citing this option as their source of

information. The next most frequently mentioned source was the internet, with a high percentage of respondents from bursary programmes, learnerships and artisan programmes indicating this as a source. Artisans also indicated that they had heard about the programme from an employer.

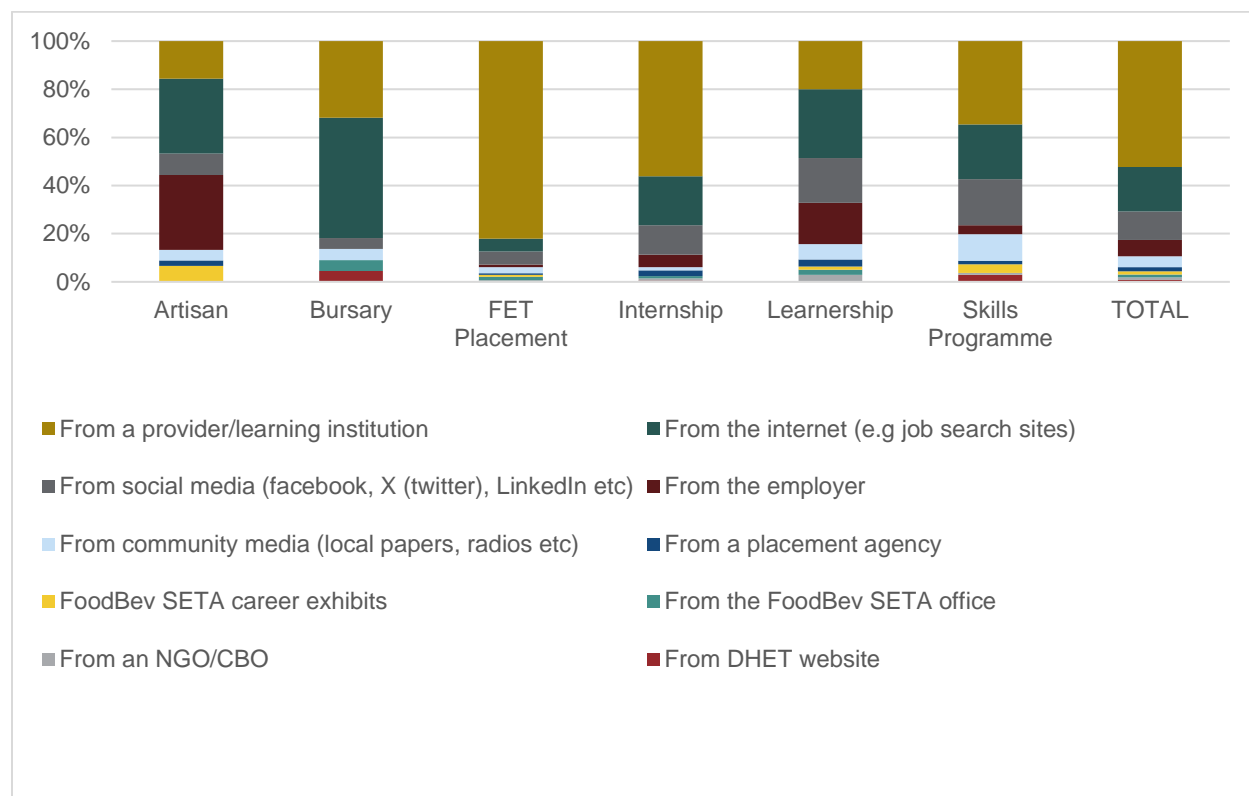


Figure 34: Where did you hear about the programme?

84% of all respondents indicated that they had gone through a selection process. 96% of respondents from artisan programmes and 94% of respondents from learnership programmes indicated that they had been through a selection process, against 54% of bursary programme respondents.

Those who had been through an application process were asked to detail this process 69% of all respondents who had been through an application process said that they had submitted a CV. The next most frequently mentioned by all respondents was being interviewed by the employer – it is noted that 60% of artisans and 74% of internship candidates said that they had been interviewed.

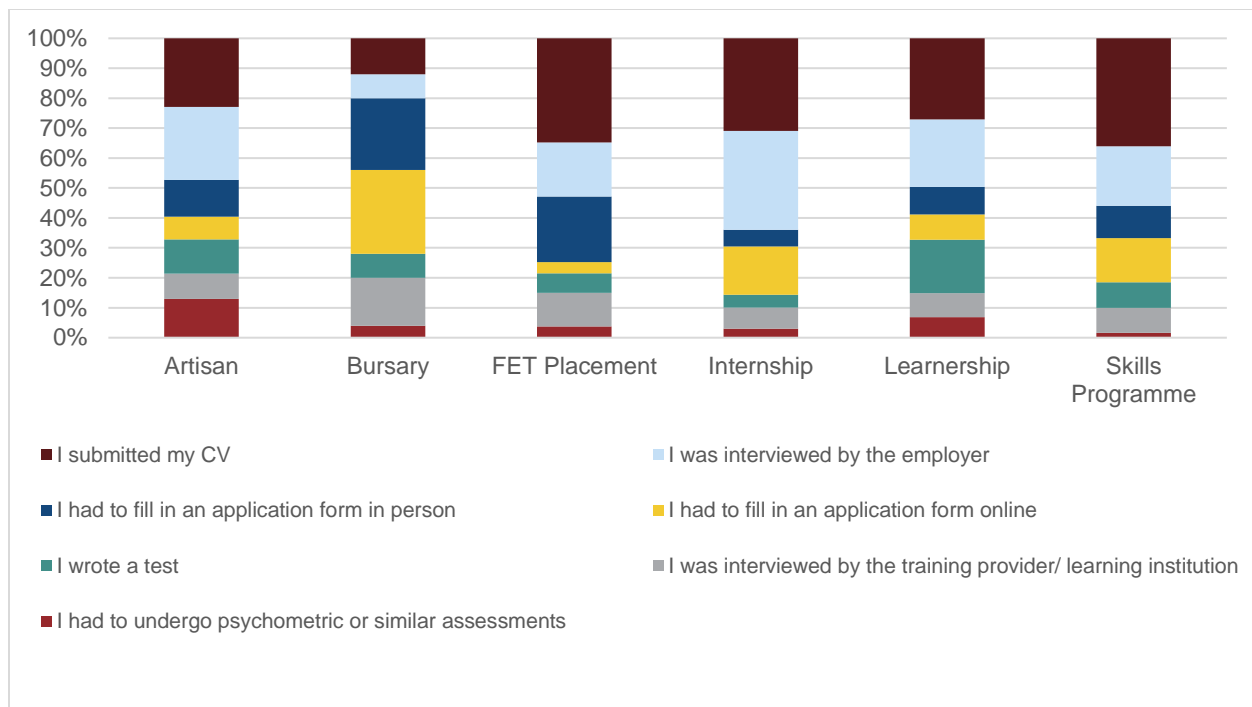


Figure 35: What did you do as part of the application process?

In terms of the programme itself, respondents were asked a series of questions on the perceptions of the value and quality of the programme, The scale used is 1 is not useful at all and 5 extremely useful.

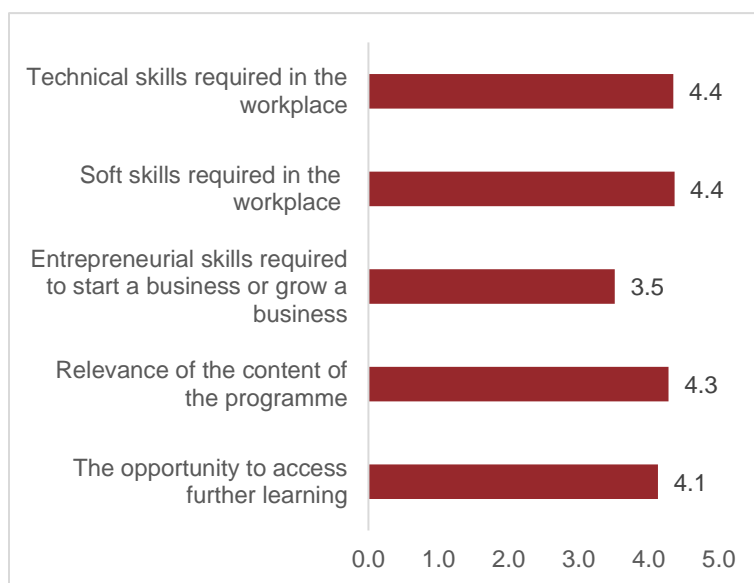


Figure 36: What was valuable about the programme? (average scores)

Overall, the respondents across all the programmes found the skills developed to be relevant and useful, with technical (4.4) and soft skills (4.4) rated higher than entrepreneurial skills (3.5). The table over the page shows bursary programme respondents provided relatively low ratings for skills developed, but rated the relevance of the programme to what they are doing (4.3) and the

opportunity to access further learning (4.5) higher. Overall, artisan respondents rated skills acquisition and the opportunity to study further higher than other respondents, averaging 4.4 compared to 4.0-4.2 by respondents from other programmes.

	Artisan	Bursary	FET Placement	Internship	Learnership	Skills Programme
Technical skills required in the workplace	4.7	3.9	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3
Soft skills required in the workplace	4.5	4	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.4
Entrepreneurial skills required to start a business or grow a business	4	3.1	3.5	3.2	3.6	3.7
Relevance of the content of the programme	4.5	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.2
The opportunity to access further learning	4.1	4.5	4.3	3.9	4	4

Table 15: Average ratings on value of the programme



Figure 37: How was the quality of the programme? (average scores)

With regards to the overall quality of the programme, respondents across all programmes rated most elements highly, with scores of 4.3 or 4.4. The only category in which there was a lower rating across all programmes was for the guidance received at the end of the programme, an average rating of 3.4 (This is discussed below). As seen in the table over the page, respondents on the learnership and skills programmes rated the access to the internet for studies lower than those on other programmes.

Artisan respondents rated the quality of the facilitator relatively lower (3.4) compared to the average of 4.3.

	Artisan	Bursary	FET Placement	Internship	Learnership	Skills Programme
The support I received with my academics (tutoring etc.)	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.3
The support (supervision) I received at the workplace	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.3
The quality of the facilitator (e.g. were the facilitators knowledgeable and supportive)	3.4	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.6	4.5
The quality of buildings and infrastructure	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.4
The quality of real-life examples in the course	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.4
Discussions with fellow students	4.6	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.6	4.5
The relevance of practical training I received	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.4
The quality of practical training I received at the employer	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.3
The quality of practical equipment	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.3
The quality of learning materials (textbooks and other handouts)	4.6	4.7	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.4
Access to internet when needed for studies	4	4.7	4.3	4.4	3.9	3.7
Guidance I received at the end of the programme	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.2	3.4	3.5

Table 16: Average ratings on quality of the programme



All respondents reported that they had developed soft skills and competencies through the programme, with an average rating of 4.6.

Figure 38: What soft skills did you develop during the programme?

	Artisan	Bursary	FET Placement	Internship	Learnership	Skills Programme
I can find and organise the information that I need	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.3
I can write a report	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.3	4.2
I understand that I have to always be on time for work, and manage my time	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.7	4.8	4.5
I know how to raise something with my supervisor/manager	4.6	4.4	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.5
I understand that workplaces have rules and regulations that I need to follow	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.6
I understand that it is important to respect others in the workplace, even if they are different to me	4.8	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.8	4.6
I can work effectively with others in a team to accomplish a task	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.5
I am comfortable asking for advice when making an important decision	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.5
I can organize myself better so that I can complete tasks I set for myself (whether in studies or at home or at the workplace)	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.6

Table 17: Average ratings on soft skills

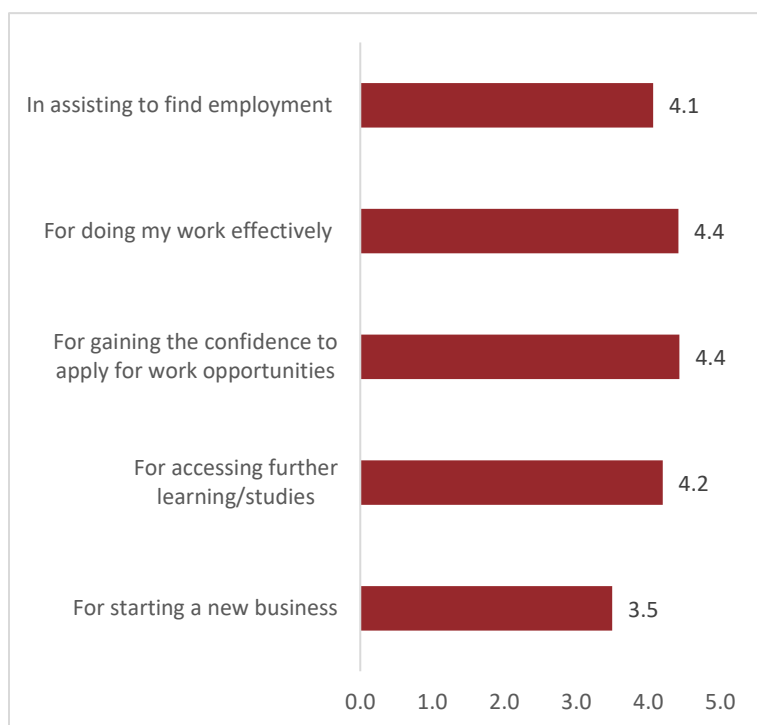


Figure 39: How useful did you find the programme?

When reflecting on how useful they found the programme, the respondents generally found it to be very useful, with an overall rating of 4.1, with skills programme respondents providing a slightly lower rating of 3.9. The most useful aspect across all programmes was enabling respondents to do their work more effectively. Bursary respondents provided the highest rating on this criteria (4.3), with skills programme respondents (3.8) and artisan respondents

(3.9) providing the lowest rating. Bursary respondents (4.6) also rated the programme highly for gaining confidence to apply for work opportunities, with all other respondents providing consistently high ratings of an average of 4.4. All respondents found their programme to be relatively less useful for starting a new business, with an average rating of 3.5.

	Artisan	Bursary	FET Placement	Internship	Leavership	Skills Programme
In assisting to find employment (even if you are currently unemployed, do you think participating in the programme will improve your chances of finding employment)	3.9	4.3	4.1	4.2	4.1	3.8
For doing my work effectively (even if you are currently unemployed, do you think it will help you to do your work effectively)	4.4	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.2
For gaining the confidence to apply for work opportunities	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.2
For accessing further learning/studies	4.2	4.5	4.3	4.2	4.1	3.9
For starting a new business	3.8	3.3	3.5	3.2	3.6	3.6

Table 18: Average ratings on usefulness of the programme

Respondents received support during the programme, with academic support rated highest at 38%. Less academic support was provided on the internship programme (27%), with bursary (49%) and skills programme (45%) respondents receiving the most support.

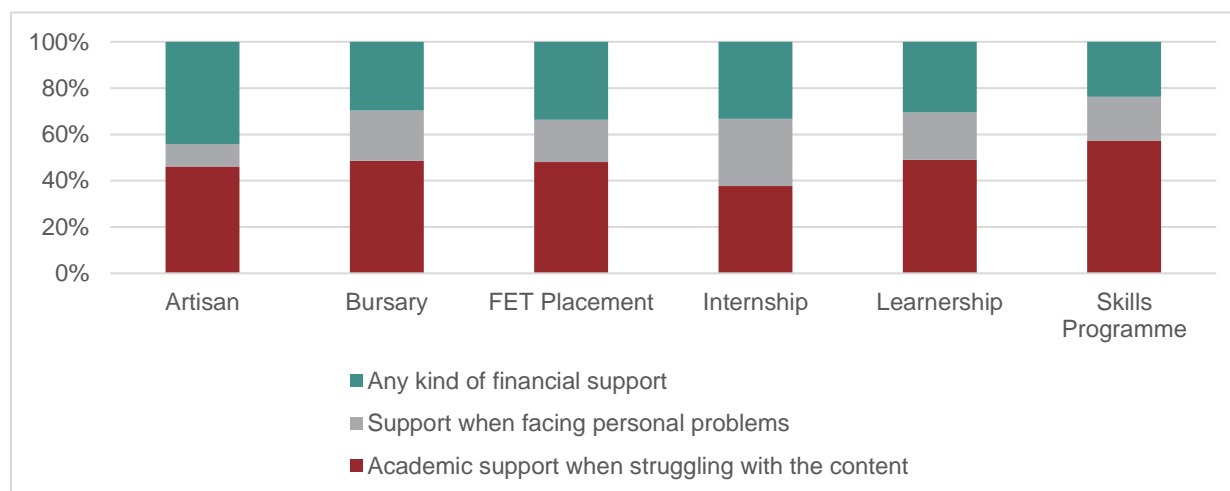


Figure 40: Support received on the programme

Twenty five percent (25%) of respondents reported receiving financial support, mostly significantly on the artisan programme (35%), with the least financial support provided to skills programme respondents (19%). Support for personal problems was less highly rated, with 16% of respondents reporting that they received counselling or similar support. Nine percent (9%) of all respondents reported not receiving any support whatsoever,

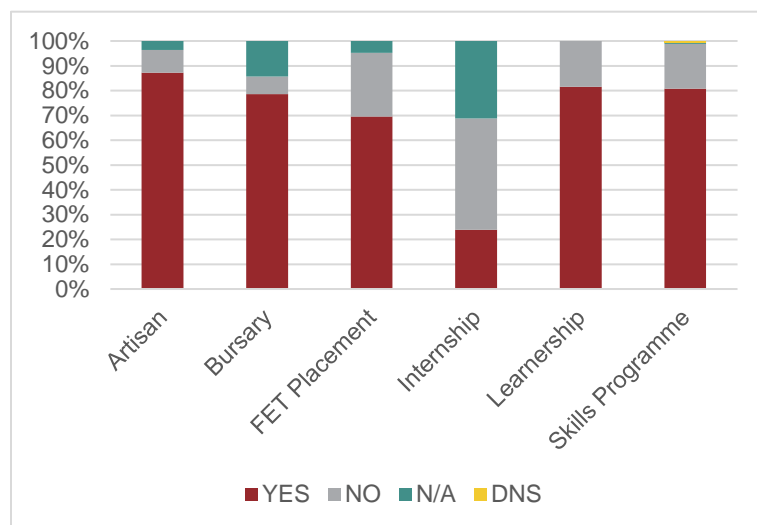


Figure 41: Certificate received on completion?

except for a stipend in some cases.

All the respondents reported that they had completed their programme. Not all candidates received a certificate on completion, however. A total of 26% of respondents did not receive a certificate while 10%

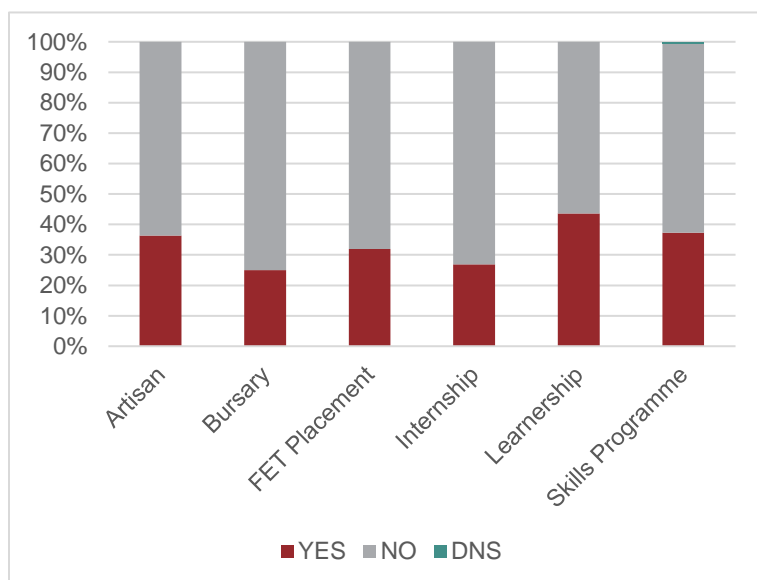
reported that it was not applicable to their programme. Of these N/A respondents, 31% were undertaking internships.

Reasons provided for not receiving a certificate varied, with 40% of the respondents who provided reasons indicating that the programme was not meant to provide a certificate on completion. This reason was provided primarily by internship (72%) and FET placement (35%) respondents. Twenty six percent (26%) of respondents did not know why they hadn't received their certificate. Some of the additional reasons provided for not receiving it included poor communication from the institutions/workplaces meant to provide the certificate, COVID lockdowns, a provider not meeting higher education standards³, inaccurate certificates provided by the workplace, incorrect logbook, loss of certificates during the period of looting in 2021. Two respondents noted that they received only black and white copies of the certificate and not the original colour version.

	Not a certificate programme	Did not collect it	Was not delivered	Changed contact details	Changed locations	I don't know	Other	TOTAL
<i>Artisan</i>	2	1	1	0	1	1	2	8
<i>Bursary</i>	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
<i>FET Placement</i>	28	2	4	1	1	22	22	80
<i>Internship</i>	74	0	0	0	0	23	6	103
<i>Learnership</i>	0	8	5	1	1	14	11	40
<i>Skills Programme</i>	5	3	7	0	0	12	12	39
TOTAL	110	14	17	2	4	72	53	272

Table 19: Reasons for non-receipt of certificate

³ The respondent indicated that the SA Supplier Diversity Council did not meet the required standards and hence could not issue a diploma.



Respondents reported generally receiving limited information or guidance at the end of the programme, with an average of 66% not receiving any support. The programmes providing the least information and guidance were bursary (75%), FET placement (68%) and internship (73%).

Figure 42: Information & guidance provided after the programme?

Only 23% of respondents received career information and guidance, and 17% received information about available jobs. Ten percent (10%) of respondents were equipped with job searching and CV writing skills and only 9% with interview skills.

	ART	BUR	FET	INT	LEARN	SKILL	TOTAL	% of group
<i>Career information and guidance</i>	15	5	63	45	55	38	221	23%
<i>Information about available jobs</i>	14	4	45	32	44	27	166	17%
<i>Interview skills</i>	2	1	26	14	19	22	84	9%
<i>Information about studying opportunities</i>	3	0	29	5	9	7	53	6%
<i>Job searching skills</i>	4	3	40	16	16	18	97	10%
<i>CV writing skills</i>	2	1	34	12	18	26	93	10%
<i>Information on starting a business</i>	1	0	7	3	8	19	38	4%
<i>None of the above</i>	0	1	0	1	2	7	11	1%
<i>Other (please specify)</i>	1	1	5	12	3	2	24	3%
TOTAL	42	16	249	140	174	166	787	

Table 20: Types of information and guidance provided

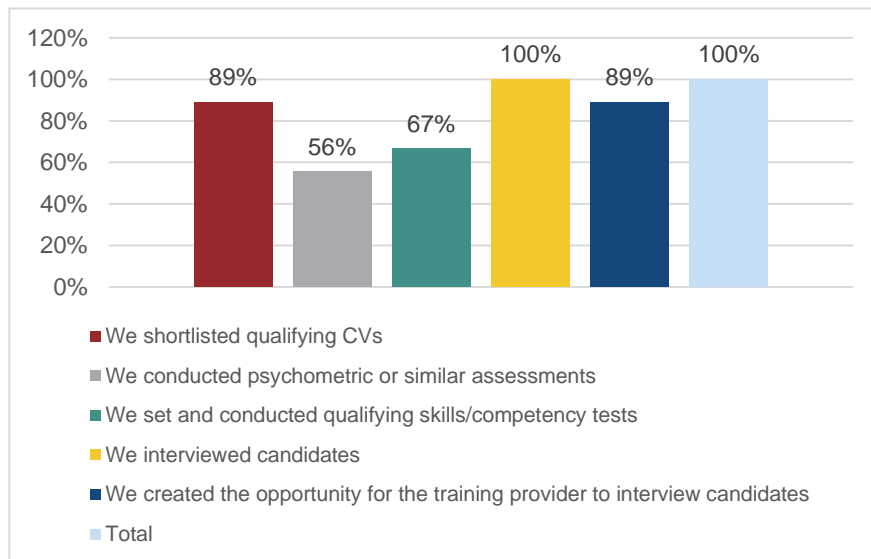
5.5 Views of Employers

	No. of programmes
<i>Artisan</i>	7
<i>Bursary</i>	4
<i>FET Placement</i>	2
<i>Internship</i>	7
<i>Learnership</i>	8
<i>Skills Programme</i>	2
TOTAL	30

The nine employers who responded to the survey indicated that collectively they had offered 30 programmes across all six of the programme areas covered in this evaluation, as indicated in the table to the left.

Table 21: Programmes offered by employers who responded to survey

All employers that completed surveys participated in the selection process, with all



respondents noting that they interviewed learners. Formal testing was used less frequently, with 67% noting that they conducted skills and competency tests, and 56% reporting that they used psychometric or similar assessments.

Figure 43: Participation of employers in selection process

When asked about the value of the programme for learners, employers noted that they believed learners benefitted from learning on the programme, particularly with regards to technical and soft skills. 81% of respondents noted that they either agreed or strongly agreed that learners had benefitted from technical skills training, and 67% from soft skills training. The value of entrepreneurial skills training (53%) and preparing learners for future learning (58%) scored lower on average.

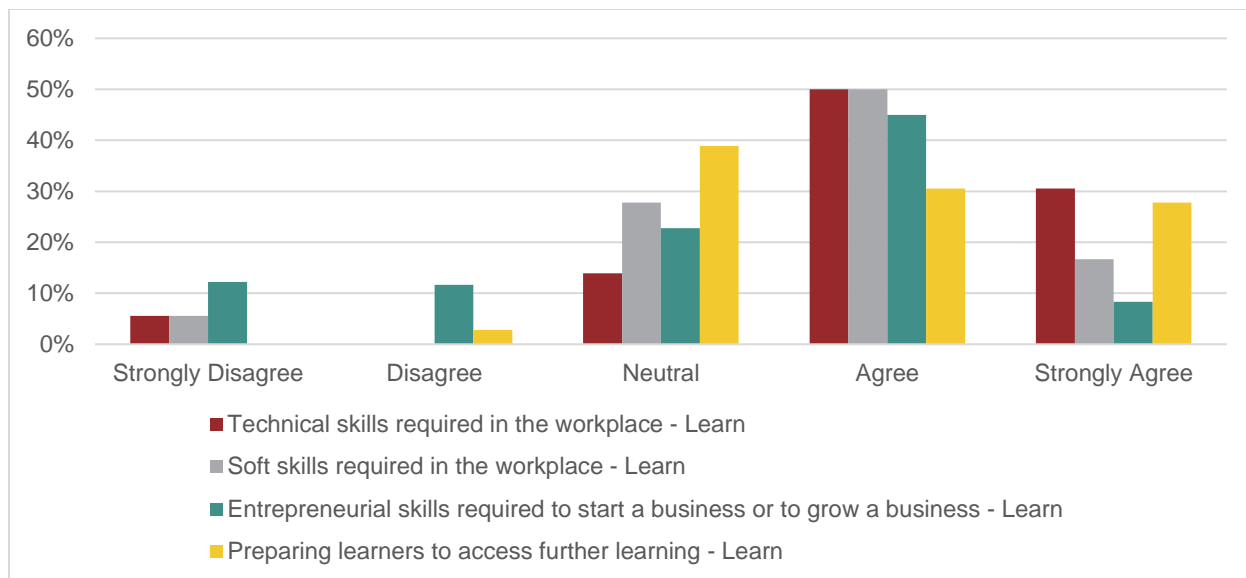


Figure 44: Value of programme to learners

By comparison, employers overall see less benefits to themselves as a result of the training received. None of the employers strongly agreed with the value they derived from the training received by the learners. The lowest rating was for the preparation of learners for future learning, with the lowest scores being noted primarily on the internship (25%) and learnership (20%) programmes.

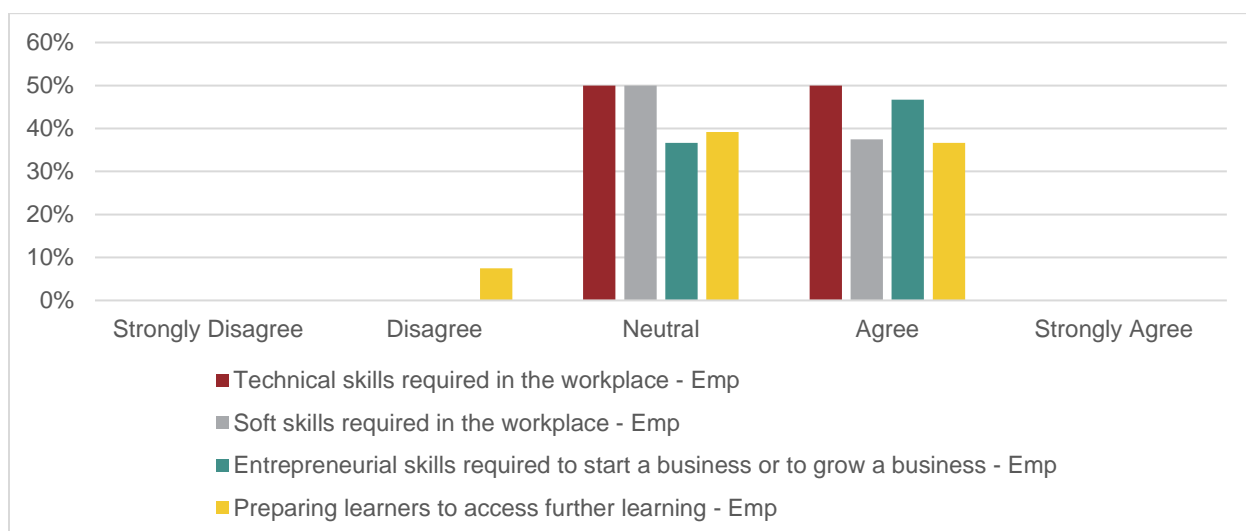


Figure 45: Value of programme to employers

All the employers surveyed confirmed that they offered work experience and overall reflected that they believed it was of value to learners, with 83% reporting that they strongly agree with its importance. All employers agreed or strongly agreed that workplace experience enables learners to practically apply what they had learned and it gives them a good idea of what it means to be in the workplace. 83% of employers strongly agreed that they were well prepared for the arrival of learners and were welcoming to them. However, they felt that learners were generally less well prepared for the workplace, with 50% agreeing learners were ready, 33% disagreeing that they were ready and 17% feeling neutral.

67% of employers reported engaging with supervisors in the areas where learners would be working as well as briefing other employees either verbally (56%) or in writing (33%) about the arrival of learners. Only 22% of employers made changes to their procedures prior to the start of work experience.

Five out of nine employers (56%) offered an induction to learners. 33% received support from training providers, 22% did not receive support and 44% did not respond to the question. The support received was in the form of being briefed prior to the programme, the training checking in on both the company and learners during work experience and then conducting a debrief with both parties after completion.

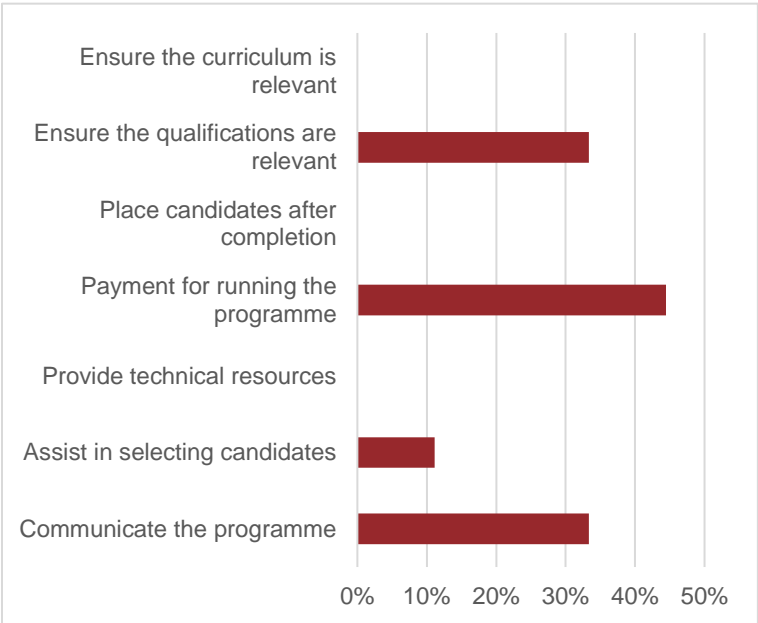
Five out of nine employers (56%) offered support to learners after work experience. All who responded wrote recommendation letters and most provided guidance on further learning opportunities. 60% assisted with preparing learners CVs and helping them prepare for interviews. Only 40% of those who provided support, and 22% of all respondents to the survey offered assistance with accessing the labour market or possible employers.

Learners were employed by five of the companies, with one company employing up to 25% of the learners, and four companies employing between 26 and 50% of their learners.

Course design involvement was reported by five companies. The role of the training provider focused primarily on assisting companies to select candidates (67%) and tailoring the training programme to suit the context of the company (67%).



Figure 46: Role of training provider



33% of employers engaged with the FoodBev SETA during the training programme, while 22% did not and 44% did not respond to the question. The role focused primarily on making payment for running the programme (44%), communicating the programme (33%) and ensuring the qualifications are relevant (33%).

Figure 47: Role of the FoodBev SETA

Only 3 of the 9 employers noted specific challenges they had experienced. For all three the main challenge was ensuring workplace demands do not disrupt the time scheduled for other components of the learning programme. Two noted challenges with regards to creating alignment between both the employer's needs and the learner's needs and the content/level of the programme. A further two challenges noted were motivating employees to complete the programmes and increasing the completion rates of courses.

In terms of areas of improvement two employers recommended not restricting the qualification requirements in application process but rather focus on their skills and experience. One employer further noted that the expectations of learners should be managed and that employers should do a detailed onboarding related to the code of conduct, and what is expected of learners in the workplace, and then continuously monitoring them and checking-in with them. A third employer noted that work readiness should always be practical and drive an entrepreneurial mindset. It should prepare learners for the industry as a whole should opportunities not exist within the company organisation. Finally, it was recommended that an integrated approach should be adopted by all stakeholders, with everyone clearly understanding their role in the ecosystem.

5.6 Views of Training Providers

	No. of programmes
<i>Artisan</i>	1
<i>Bursary</i>	1
<i>FET Placement</i>	2
<i>Internship</i>	3
<i>Learnership</i>	8
<i>Skills Programme</i>	4
TOTAL	19

Nine training providers responded to the survey, six private providers, one inhouse training provider, one NPO and one public Institution of higher learning. Collectively they indicated that the offered 19 programmes, as shown. following programmes.

Table 22: Programmes offered by training providers

Seven providers said that they were involved in selecting candidates for all of their programmes, one for some programmes and one reported that they had never been

involved in selection. 78% of the providers were involved in interviews, 76% in shortlisting CVs and 44% in setting and conducting qualifying skills/competency tests.

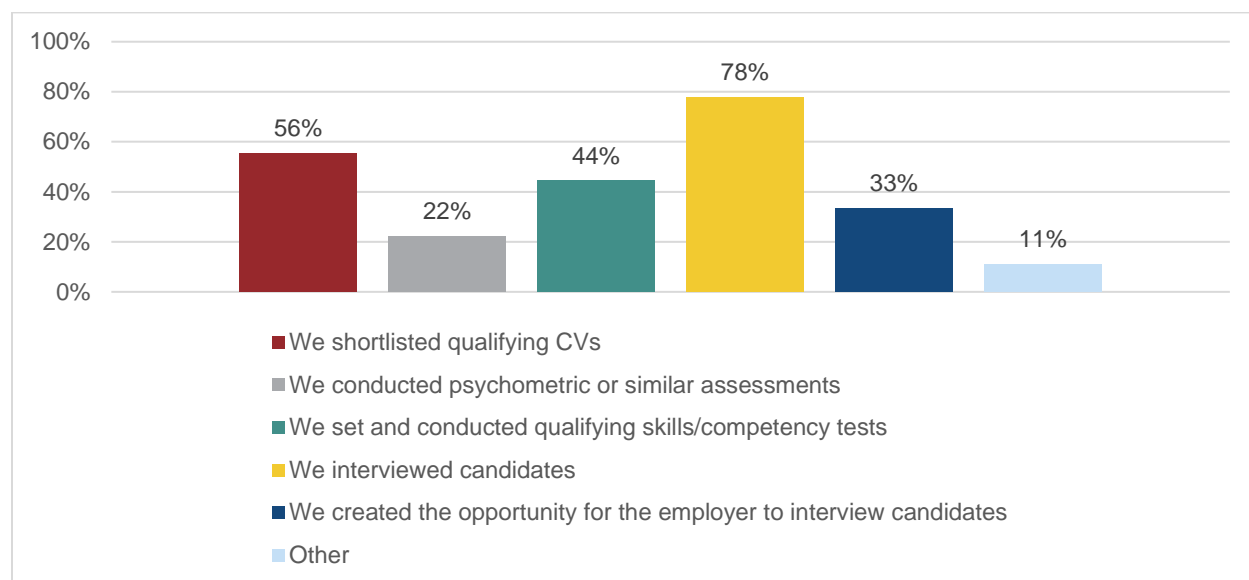


Figure 48: Participation of training providers in selection process

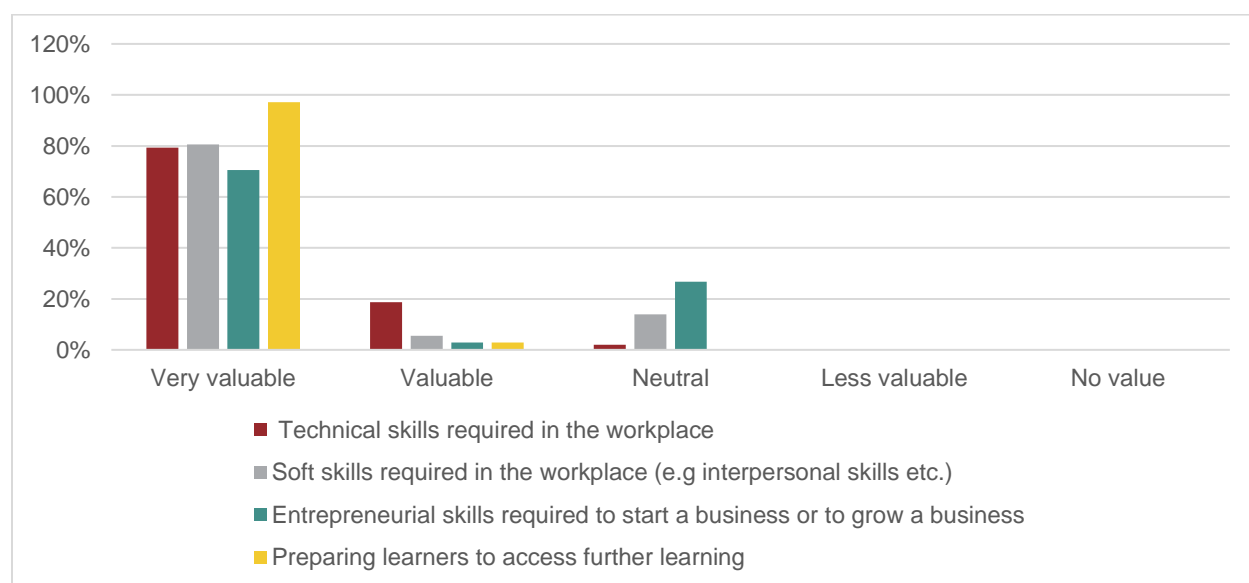


Figure 49: Value of training programme to learners according to training providers

With few exceptions, training providers reported that they believe the training programmes are very valuable to learners, particularly with regards to preparing learners to access further learning, with 97% of training providers noting this. The only factor that

was rated slightly lower was entrepreneurial skills, but 70% of employers still see this as very valuable and 3% as valuable.

The feedback on the value of the training programmes for employers was exceptionally positive. All training providers noted that the workplace experience was very valuable and an essential part of the training programme. All training providers also rated the fact that workplace experience provided an opportunity for learners to apply their learning in the workplace as very valuable,

Six out of nine training providers reported that they supported employers with workplace experience. Main areas of support were briefing employers prior to work experience (67%), checking in with employers and learners during work experience (67%), debriefing with employers after work experience (67%) and capturing learners on the SIM system (67%). Other areas of support included giving second and third chances to learners that failed and offering learners emotional support in form of access to auxiliary social workers.

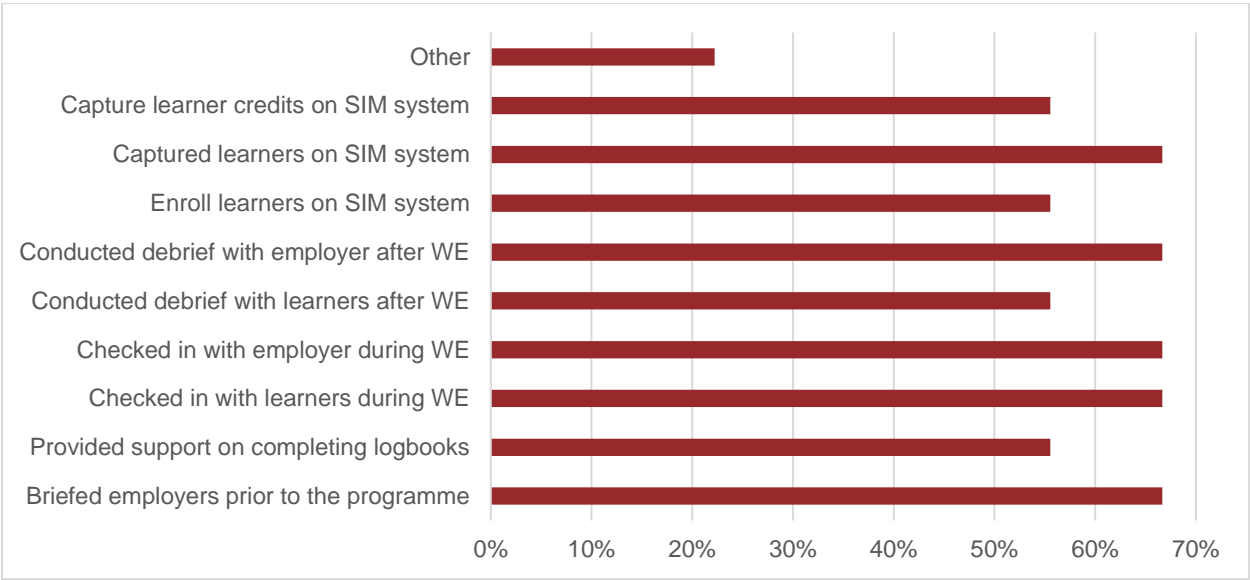


Figure 50: Areas of support provided to employers by training providers

Training providers supported learners primarily through assisting them with content. They also assisted them with personal problems and some financial support for necessities such as transport.

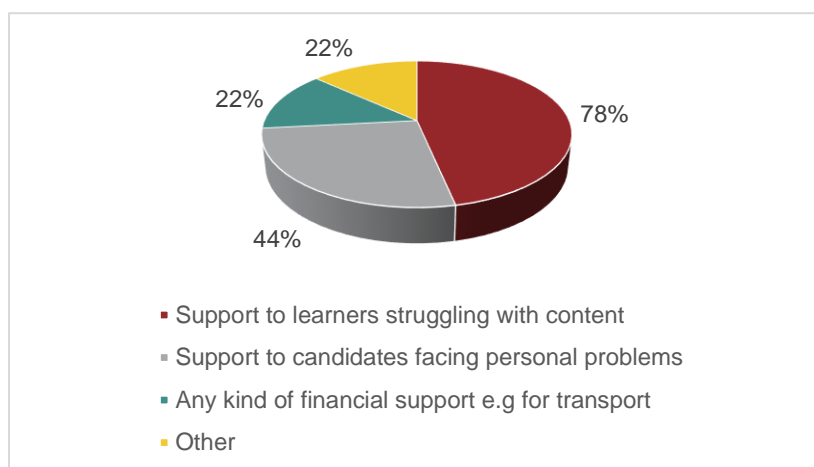


Figure 51: Support by training providers to learners after completion

Eight of the training providers noted that they provided support to learners after completion. Five out of nine training providers assisted learners with preparing their CVs and providing information and guidance on employment opportunities. Three training providers assisted with accessing

further workplace experience, preparing for interviews, writing recommendation letters and accessing opportunities in the labour market.

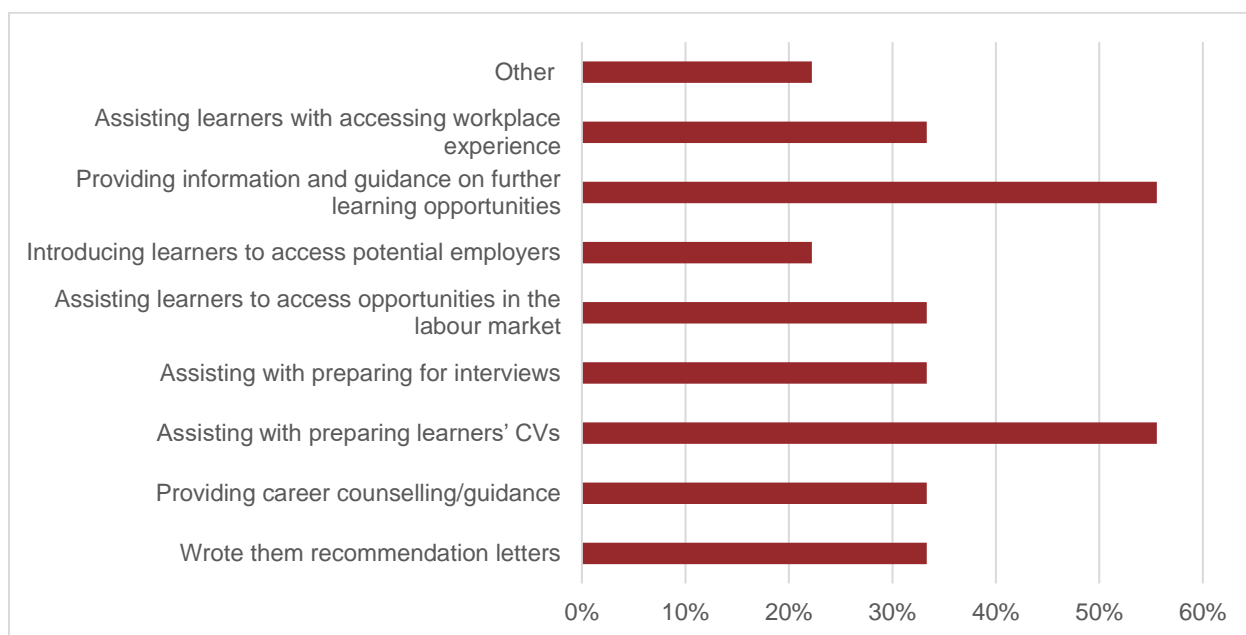


Figure 52: Support to learners by training providers after completion of programme

Six training providers noted that they are tracking whether learners have obtained employment. Three training providers noted that only 0-25% of their learners have found jobs, one provider noted that 51-75% found jobs and one provider noted that 76-100% found jobs.

Seven out of nine training providers engaged with employers on the delivery of the training programme. Of this, 3 reported that the employers communicated the learning opportunities that they provided through their channels; 2 reported that they involved employers in selecting candidates and received support with technical resources to run the programmes. One training provider each noted that employers pay them to run programmes, assist them with placing candidates after completion and ensure that the training is tailored to the realities of their companies.

In terms of ease of engagement with employers, 3 reported that it is easy and collegial with some employers, while 2 each reported that it is either easy and collegial with almost all employers, are only with one or two employers.

Six training providers had direct engagement with the FoodBev SETA, with 5 reporting that this was on either monitoring (moderation, certification) and/or accreditation of learning programmes. Four of the providers felt that it was easy to deal with the SETA most of the time, while 2 felt this only some of the time.

With regards to challenges on the programme, 4 providers reported that they had experienced challenges, including motivating learners to complete their programmes, and managing paperwork in the process. Other challenges reported were creating alignment between employers and learners needs and the content/level of the programme, increasing completion rates on programmes, improving the content of the programmes and managing Covid related restrictions.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 General observations

Artisan, bursary, internship and learnership programmes reflect the strongest outcomes in percentage terms with regards to learners being currently employed. While relatively smaller numbers a total of 84% of artisan respondents (46) are employed, 68% of bursary respondents (19) are employed, and – given the relatively large sample even more significantly - 71% of internship respondents are employed (165). In contrast to this 38% of FET placement (106) and 42% of skills programmes (74) show the weakest employment outcomes, with a greater percentage of respondents being unemployed. Learnership programmes which have the largest number of respondents reflect 57% current employment.

	I am currently employed	I am currently running a business	I am currently studying	I am currently unemployed
Artisan	84%	2%	0%	15%
Bursary	68%	4%	7%	21%
FET Placement	38%	3%	7%	52%
Internship	71%	3%	5%	22%
Learnership	57%	3%	3%	36%
Skills Programme	42%	10%	3%	45%
TOTAL	54%	4%	5%	37%

Table 23: Current status of respondents

The highest proportion of respondents that have started businesses are those that have completed skills programmes. More than half of these respondents (state that this is because they couldn't get jobs. The majority of respondents that have started businesses from other programmes also indicated that it was because they could not access employment – bursary (100%), learnership (63%), skills programme (53%) and FET placement (50%).

In contrast to this the reasons provided for studying further are related to wanting to learn more about an area different to the FoodBev SETA programme (39%) and wanting to get a higher qualification to get the job they wanted (27%). We did though find that as many

as 33% of bursary respondents chose to study because they couldn't get a job, as did 23% of FET placement and 25% of skills programme respondents. Comparisons in outcomes from previous tracer studies show that the results in this study are fairly consistent.

A tracer and impact assessment study of FoodBev SETA-funded learnership and artisan programmes for the period 2011 to 2016 shows that 88% of the people who were unemployed when they started the artisan programme found employment, compared to 84% in the current survey. 59% of the people who completed learnerships found employment, compared to 57% on the current survey. The tracer and impact study of the FoodBev funded internship programme of 70 learners that was completed in March 2019 shows that 69% of respondents were employed. This again aligns strongly with the finding of this study of 71% employment.

By comparison, the tracer and impact study on beneficiaries of the FoodBev SETA bursary programme (2012/13 - 2016/17) revealed that only 16% of the unemployed beneficiaries were employed in the previous tracer while 68% of the current group are employed. It is noted that the pool of respondents was much larger for this study, 115 as compared to 22 in the current study. This improvement may be because of the improved relevance of qualifications for the bursary programme: forty-six percent (46%) of respondents indicated that their employment was a result of the qualification that they were funded to complete while 31% believed their qualification is related to their employment.

Looking at where respondents accessed employment, we found that 80% of artisan (35) and 83% of learnership (84) found employment in the FoodBev sector. By comparison this very low for bursary (11%) and FET placement (22%) respondents. There is therefore strong alignment with regards to the artisan and learnership programmes serving the needs of both participants and the sector more broadly, while the bursary programme results in participants largely being employed outside of the sector.

Artisans as a group are more likely to have retained their first job after completing the programme, with 64% of respondents reporting that they are still in the same job. This suggests that the manner in which the artisan programme is structured meets the needs of employers. FET placement (26%) and skills programme (22%) respondents were least likely to have stayed in their first job and also have the highest levels of unemployment currently.

6.2 Which factors contribute to successful outcomes?

This section focuses on what factors lead to the employment of previously unemployed learners. Studying further or managing a business are not considered to be poor outcomes, although in some cases they are cited as the being the only options available to learners who would in fact prefer to be in employment.

The emphasis on work experience in programmes is key to success.

Workplace experience is an integral part of these learning programmes and learners, employers and providers highlighted the value of this workplace experience to building skills and accessing employment. 78% of respondents reported that their workplace experience was relevant and useful to the work that they are currently doing. Perhaps paradoxically we found that with the exception of the bursary programme, 94% of respondents were placed in a workplace, and there were varying employment outcomes. This may however be explained by the finding that the ways in which the workplace experience component was implemented and the types of employers that hosted this experience varied greatly. This includes the size and nature of the employer, selection processes, the length of the workplace experience and the extent that there was access to mentorship during this workplace experience. The factors are discussed below and will require further interrogation with respect to the manner in which workplace experience was conducted for FET placements and skills programmes given the relatively poor employment outcomes of these groups.

All employers interviewed as part of the study indicated that they had provided workplace experience and that it is an essential part of the learning programme. Two employers, and this was confirmed in an interview with a training provider, highlighted that when learners enter the workplace, they are moved across departments to maximise exposure of the business units and this has enabled learners to be more confident and familiar in both technical and administrative functions that can benefit them when they seek opportunities.

The employers agreed (33%) or strongly agreed (67%) that learners had enjoyed their workplace experience. They also agreed (50%) or strongly agreed (50%) that workplace experience provided an opportunity for learners to apply their learning in the workplace, and to better understand the workplace as a whole. In terms of learners: across the programmes, 78% of respondents reported that their workplace experience was relevant and useful to the work that they are currently doing. The largest proportion of responses – Artisan (31%), internship (30%) and learnership (24%) – confirmed that the factor that was most important for accessing employment is that of workplace experience.

We also found that *the chances of respondents being currently employed are greater if they were immediately offered employment by their work experience company as evidenced below where the programmes where the highest percentage of respondents that are employed (artisans and internships and to a lesser extent learnerships) were employed by the workplace experience company.* Note that as indicated previously this does not apply to the bursary respondents.

	Survey Respondents	Currently Employed	Employed by WE Company
Artisan	55	84%	31%
Bursary	234	71%	30%
FET Placement	179	57%	24%
Internship	28	68%	10%
Learnership	276	38%	9%
Skills Programme	177	42%	11%

Table 24: Respondents employed by work experience company

Employers explained why workplace experience is so important for access to employment indicating that they are always looking for ways of creating a pipeline and looking at opportunities to absorb learners. Employers agreed that where the learners had engaged positively with work experience and shown growth and dedication, they were more likely to be employed. One employer said that *“These programmes allow us to see what skills and what talent is out there, which sometimes you might not be seeing through HR”*.

However, learners could not always be employed into roles related to their programmes, due to availability of positions. One employer commented that they have employed learners in sales positions and some of them have become sales leaders and as a result the company witnessed an increase in sales. The training provider interviewed confirmed this and explained that where learners are good employees, the companies would rather offer them roles in other fields so as to retain them until the position in their area of study becomes available.

There are however some anomalies and some challenges.

One challenge that emerged Employers noted that learners were not always sufficiently well-prepared for workplace experience, with 50% noting that they were prepared, but 17% noting average and 33% poor preparation.

Some learners confirmed that they were not sufficiently prepared with one learner indicating, *“Practicals were a bit challenging as I was expected to keep up with the orders and demands I was expected to perform like an employee whilst I was only a learner, the work environment was so fast-paced and I was forced to adapt very quickly however I enjoyed working there.”*

Another learner noted, *“The only challenge that I experienced is that there were lot of changes at the workplace, the way they were doing things it was not the same every day.”*

The one employer focused on learnerships for disabled also noted that there has been a challenge in offering employment to those learners as the working environment is very much machinery orientated and the nature of their abilities has limited them to administrative positions where available.

Another challenge was that the work sites were very far from where these learners resided and the employer has since been supporting them with referral letters to seek opportunities in other companies that have better facilities and may be able to employ them.

The FET and Skills Programmes are not resulting in as high a level of take up into employment immediately after the workplace experience and these are the programmes with the poorest employment outcomes – the reasons for this need to be better understood but perhaps relates to the nature of the institution into which they were placed.

The size and nature of the company in which the respondents were placed for work experience may influence whether they are absorbed and may be currently employed. While the study did not specifically gather data on the number of employees and turnover of the companies, it is evident from the available data that different categories of employers were involved in different types of programmes.

Artisans were primarily placed in large employers for work experience. Of the 46 currently employed artisans, almost all were placed with large companies, including multi-nationals and listed entities. However, internship and learnership respondents were placed in a wide range of employers, including large companies including the same ones into which artisans were placed, but others were placed in small companies and public sector institutions. There is no obvious correlation between those that are currently employed and their work experience employer. 18 learnership respondents were placed with what is captured as 'W&R Seta company' which suggests an employer partner in the wholesale and retail sector. Respondents from other programmes were not placed with employers captured as such.

We found that skills programme respondents were placed in various employers, including a few large companies, some smaller companies and some were placed in not for profit organisations. Two employers stand out in this group - 46% of the total group was placed with one employer, of which 50% are currently employed. A further 7% of skills programme respondents were employed by a second employer, with a lower rate of current employment of 17%. It would be useful to understand what factors enable the first employer to host so many learners and equip them to find employment.

FET placement respondents were largely placed with public sector institutions, including provincial departments, schools, hospitals and TVET colleges. This group has the lowest level of current employment, reflecting the constraints on the public sector to absorb young people into employment.

The other factor that seems to impact on whether learners were absorbed into employment relates to the selection process. An effective selection process improves the likelihood of candidates being a good fit within a company, and possibly leading to employment. Eighty-four percent (84%) of respondents across all programmes went through a selection process (again the bursary programme is an anomaly and is therefore excluded from this discussion).

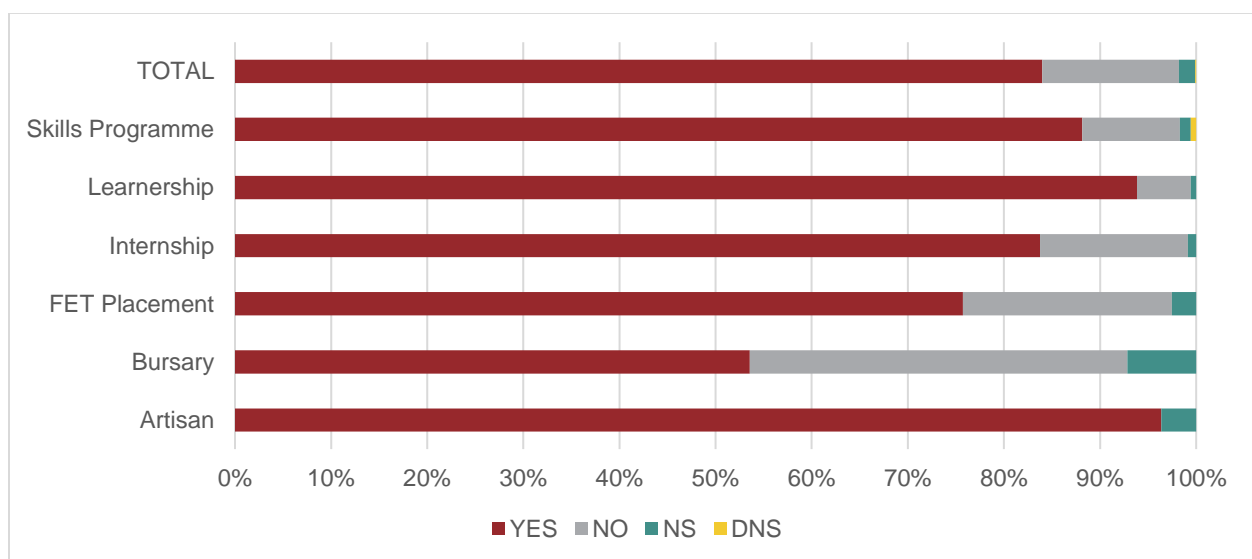


Figure 53: Participation in selection process

The diagram above shows that artisan respondents at 96% have the highest levels of participation in a selection process and also the highest levels of employment with their work experience company (31%), indicating that the selection process is a good measure for suitability of candidates.

The FET respondents reported a lower figure of 76%, suggesting that more rigorous selection amongst these candidates may lead to improved employment outcomes. However, Skills programme respondents (88%) did go through a selection process, but this did not facilitate better employment outcomes. This therefore required a closer look at the selection process.

We found that those respondents who were interviewed by the employer show a greater correlation to employment, than those not interviewed. Respondents were also in some cases interviewed by the training provider, but this reflects less impact on employment outcomes. The strongest linkage is evident on the internship programme where 66% of respondents were interviewed by the employer and 71% are now in employment. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of artisan respondents were interviewed and 84% are now employed. In the programmes with the weakest employment outcomes, only 27% of FET placement respondents were interviewed, and 35% of skills programme respondents.

	Survey Respondents	Interviewed by employer	Interviewed by training provider	Currently employed
<i>Artisan</i>	55	58%	20%	84%
<i>Bursary</i>	27	7%	15%	68%
<i>FET Placement</i>	289	27%	17%	38%
<i>Internship</i>	221	66%	14%	71%
<i>Learnership</i>	179	54%	19%	57%
<i>Skills Programme</i>	178	35%	15%	42%
TOTAL	949	44%	16%	60%

Table 25: Interviews during selection process linked to current employment

All employer respondents indicated that they had been involved in the selection of learners in some form. All nine employers interviewed candidates, and 8 shortlisted qualifying CVs. A further 8 employers enabled training providers to interview candidates.

Employers indicate that through reviewing CVs and interviewing candidates they are able to host learners that meet their requirements, are useful in day-to-day operations and may be more likely to be absorbed if positions are available. The training provider respondents indicated that they are involved in terms of doing pre-selection tests in communication skills and numeracy, but they are not involved in the final selection.

Enabling learners to complete a certificate, diploma or degree programme through participating in a FoodBev SETA programme can improve the likelihood of obtaining employment or improving their employment conditions. However, this appears to only be the case in certain programmes.

For example, while learners upgrading their qualifications from an NSC to an industry related qualification better prepares them for employment, gaining a higher qualification such as a diploma by itself is not a guarantee of employment. Reflecting on the two sets of respondents with the lowest levels of employment – FET placements (38%) and skills programmes (42%) – an analysis of qualifications pre- and post the programmes reflects that the majority of respondents have obtained a higher qualification, but this has not necessarily resulted in employment. Sixty nine (69%) of FET respondents now have a diploma, compared to 5% before the programme, yet they have the lowest employment levels. Skills programme respondents show improvements in qualifications in the obtaining of NCVs (10% pre-programme to 18% post-programme) and diplomas (15% pre-programme to 26% post-programme), but also reflect low levels of employment. It is interesting to note that because the skills programme does not include the obtaining of an NCV or diploma, these learners have been motivated at some point to study further in addition to participating in the programme.

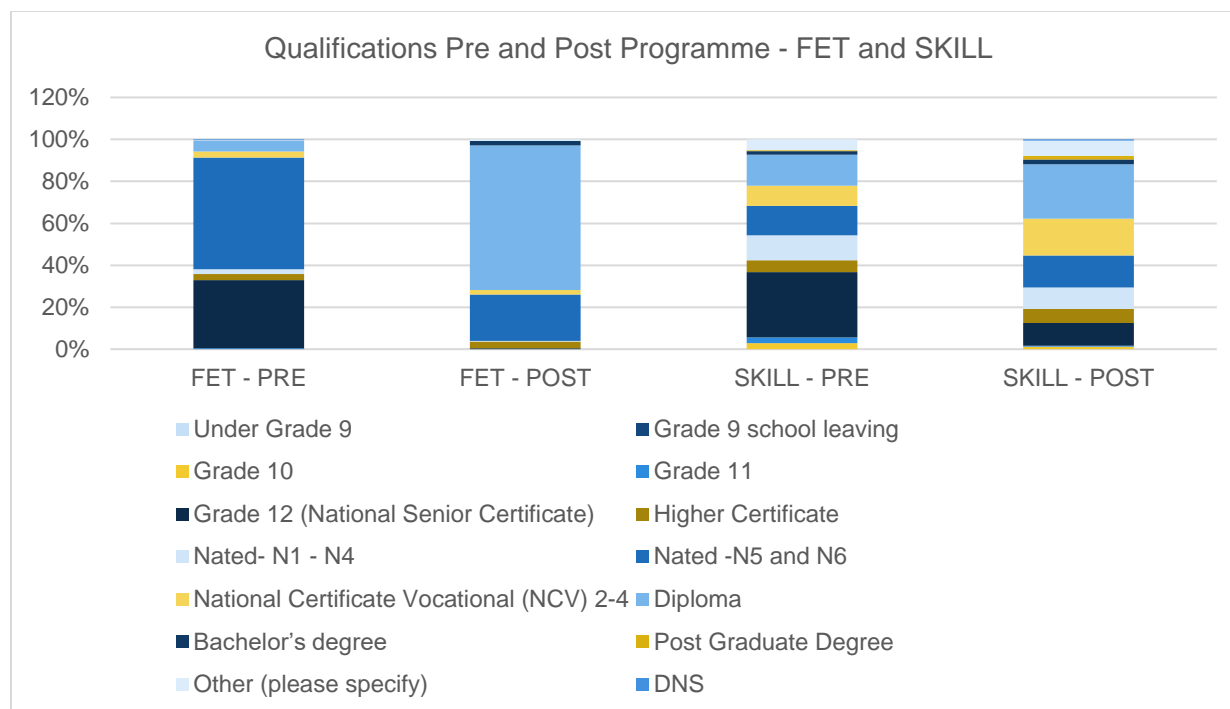


Figure 54: Highest qualification pre and post programme for FET placements and skills programmes

Respondents across all programmes responded that they believe that participating in the programme will assist them in finding employment, even if they are currently unemployed, with an average rating of 4.1 out of 5. Generally, respondents view the obtaining of a higher qualification as a positive outcome as it has given them greater confidence and better prepares them for work-seeking in the future. Below are some of the reflections from the respondents:

"It has helped me to gain a qualification that will work for me and also given me the skills needed by employers, I am a better candidate when applying for work based on the experience." Artisan

"I had Grade 11 before the programme, I had given up but I was given an opportunity to go into the programme and have a certificate. That meant a lot to me." Skills programme

"I'm educated. I have a diploma. I have been in the world of work at least. I have a lot more respect for myself and so does my family." FET placement

“It has a good impact on my life because I don't think I would be where I am right now if it wasn't because of the programme. I have a Diploma that scored me jobs other than having Grade 12 only.” FET placement

“It has opened door for me to keep busy, because of the certificate I got two more learnerships and some part time jobs to keep me financially afloat.” Learnership

“The programme impacted me educationally, I had N6 Electrical Engineering before I started then the programme gave an opportunity to study further now I have a qualification in instrumentation.” Artisan

“I was already employed by the company when I started the programme. I have now been working for the company for the past 13 years. However, I have been made permanent and received a better salary because I have the qualifications.” Artisan

Over 53% of learner respondents reflected that they specifically wanted to work in the FoodBev sector or gain qualifications to enable them to progress in the sector. This is compared to 18% who wanted to get any job. Targeting learners who have a genuine interest in working in the sector or are in fact already active in the sector and want to grow their skills, may lead to learners remaining within the sector and improving the contribution that they can make.

One issue that emerged related to attaining of a higher qualification is whether the learner, once qualified, has received their certificate and how important this has been on whether learners access employment.

Learner respondents suggest that the challenge with accessing a certificate varies across programme types. Two of the programmes with the highest levels of employment, namely artisans (84%) and bursaries (68%) report having received certificates, 87% in the case

of artisans and 79% for bursary respondents. Eighty-one percent (81%) of skills programme respondents received a certificate, but only 42% are currently employed.

Note that 24% of internship respondents received a certificate – which is surprisingly high as this is largely not applicable to their programme. However this programme is not included in this analysis as these learners would have had their certificates from programmes that they had previously completed as evidence of qualification and the internship fulfilled another role (as described previously).

	Received a certificate	Did not receive a certificate	N/A	Currently Employed
<i>Artisan</i>	87%	9%	4%	84%
<i>Bursary</i>	79%	7%	14%	68%
<i>FET Placement</i>	70%	26%	5%	38%
<i>Internship</i>	24%	45%	31%	71%
<i>Learnership</i>	82%	18%	0%	57%
<i>Skills Programme</i>	81%	18%	1%	42%
TOTAL	64%	26%	10%	60%

Table 26: Link between receipt of certificate and current employment

During the interviews with training providers the issue of not receiving their certificates as evidence of having qualified was highlighted as a real barrier for young people when they want to apply for jobs, and this inhibits their chances of accessing employment.

The training provider attributed these delays to the SETA administration not being up to standard and indicate that this challenge has created some mistrust between them and the learners. Employers added that there have been instances where graduation ceremonies have been held without certificates indicating that this matter appears to take a while to resolve with the SETA and that communication around the certificates is delayed.

An FET respondent noted the impact on their circumstances as a result of not receiving a certificate, *“Nothing changed, I don't even have a certificate to prove my participation.*

A skills programme respondent reflected on the implications of not receiving a certificate *“I cannot say that the skills programme impacted my life in a good way because I did not get a certificate at the end and what I am doing now is not related to what I learnt from the skills programme.”*

Length of the programme has some meaningful impact on employment outcomes where there is a longer duration than 2 years but only a few respondents participated in programmes longer than up to two years and less than this *does not* appear to be the factor that defined employment outcomes.

	< 1 year	1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	> 3 years	DNS	Currently Employed
<i>Artisan</i>	0%	13%	25%	55%	7%	0%	84%
<i>Bursary</i>	0%	39%	29%	25%	7%	0%	68%
<i>FET Placement</i>	0%	11%	84%	4%	0%	1%	38%
<i>Internship</i>	1%	85%	5%	4%	3%	1%	71%
<i>Learnership</i>	4%	84%	7%	3%	0%	2%	57%
<i>Skills Programme</i>	20%	68%	5%	2%	0%	6%	42%
TOTAL	5%	54%	30%	7%	1%	2%	60%

Table 27: Length of programme linked to current employment

Only artisan (62%) and bursary (32%) respondents reported participating in programmes of over 2 years. Of these groups, 84% of artisans and 68% of bursary respondents are now employed. On other programmes less than 10% of respondents participated in programmes with this duration,

The majority of respondents (85%) participated in programmes of from 1 to 2 years in duration, with varied employment outcomes. 85% of internship respondents participated in programmes of one year in duration, with a 71% employment outcome, while 84% of learnership respondents participated in programmes of the same duration, with only 57% currently employed. Of concern is that 84% of FET placement respondents participated in slightly longer programmes of between 1 and 2 years, with only 38% currently

employed. 68% of skills respondents attended a programme of one year, with 20% attending for less than one year, with an employment outcome of 42%.

Weaker employment outcomes for learnership and skills programme respondents on programmes of shorter duration suggests that the length of programme in these cases may need to be reviewed. However, the finding for the longer FET placement programmes indicates that the length of the programme needs to be reviewed alongside its content and structure.

During the interviews three employers felt that the duration of the programmes could be extended to give the learners a chance to get more exposure to certain other skills.

The **on-the-job technical and soft skills training they received was seen by the respondents across all the programmes to be relevant and useful in preparation for the workplace**, although only 44% of respondents reported receiving technical skills training and 39% soft skills training. Greater access to on the job training does improve employment outcomes. With the exception of artisan and bursary respondents, where employment outcomes are driven by other factors, the programmes facilitating greater access to training reflect higher levels of employment. This is particularly noticeable for internships and learnerships. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of internship respondents report having access to technical training and 49% to soft skills training, with current employment levels of 71%. For learnership respondents the figures are 51% and 44% respectively, with 57% currently employed. By comparison, FET respondents report limited access to technical (38%) and soft skills (39%) training, with only 38% of the group currently employed. Similarly, 38% of skills programme respondents received technical training, and 29% soft skills training, with 42% being currently employed.

	Survey Respondents	No. on the job technical skills	% On the job technical skills	No. on the job soft skills	% On the job soft skills	Currently Employed
Artisan	55	22	40%	20	36%	84%
Bursary	27	3	11%	4	15%	68%
FET Placement	289	110	38%	112	39%	38%
Internship	221	125	57%	108	49%	71%
Learnership	179	92	51%	78	44%	57%
Skills Programme	178	68	38%	52	29%	42%

Table 28: Link between on-the-job technical and soft skills training and current employment

Learners value the practical skills that they have received in the programmes and see their relevance in the workplace and more broadly in their lives. Below are some of the observations provided by learners:

“Education wise, the programme impacted my life; if I had not been part of the programme I would not have attained my diploma. I also learnt a lot of skills for example my writing and speaking skill were polished.” FET placement

“Personally being at work place changed how I thought the work place was, things like respect, discipline, time management shaped me to be a better person, Educationally I learned a lot through rotation system working as admin then doing HR work gave me better sense of what to expect in this field.” FET placement

“Occupational wise it has helped a lot since I’ve never worked so I gained so much experience and its not what the book always says , I learned how to behave a lot and my emotional intelligence grew from then.” Internship.

“Educationally I gained sector knowledge on how to bake, example the sector developed interpersonal skills and shaped my emotional well-being a lot, for instance, when baking a cake one will need to be very patient and understanding, with the addition of correct ingredients and measurements so you get finally get the correct and beautiful product,

with all mentioned, these became life principles that I am now applying and living with in my day to day life.” Learnership

“I learned new skills: baking, measurement, kitchen essentials, and food hygiene. I was given a new opportunity to start my life over. I learned a lot of soft skills: teamwork, time management, respect for others, and customer service.” Skills programme

“The programme helped me a lot. I know about food hygiene and can apply it in my catering business. I can help others in the same type of business with my skills and knowledge.... Even if I am unemployed now I can still help others.” Skills programme

81% of employers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they believe technical skills training provided in the workplace are useful to learners, on all programmes except the bursary programme, where 33% of employers noted that it has no value at all to learners. With regards to soft skills training, 67% of employers agreed or strongly agreed that it is useful to learners, with 33% again noting no value at all for bursary learners.

Employers report that a close working relationship with training providers is one of the key areas that has enabled successful implementation. Alignment between theory and what learners practically do in the workplace needs to be communicated from the onset of the programme. There also needs to be engagement between employers and training providers to monitor and ensure that there are linkages between what the learners are expected to learn at the training institution and how the knowledge gets implemented in the workplace. One respondent however noted that there needs to be more alignment across all learning curriculum as well as the structure of the programmes at the SETA as this will enable all learners to benefit from standardised training so they can compete fairly in the employment seeking market.

One employer respondent specifically mentioned that there needs to be more time dedicated to soft skills at the beginning of the programme as some learners lack the discipline to adhere to workplace rules and some drop out when they find employment

and miss the learning opportunities they could have had from the programme. A training provider noted the importance of developing soft skills in learners and making them work ready. *“Some of the employers employ learners based on how good their behaviour is. We need to motivate the learners during the programme and let them know that if they behave well, they have better chances of being employed.”*

Mentorship is a contributing factor to improved employment outcomes. Thirty-three percent (33%) of respondents reported being mentored in the workplace, with the highest levels of mentorship reported by internship (43%) and learnership (37%) and artisan (33%) respondents. The bursary respondents aside, the lowest levels of mentorship were received by FET placement (29%) and skills programme (23%) respondents. Higher levels of mentorship correlate with higher levels of current employment.

	Survey Respondents	No. Received Mentorship	% Received Mentorship	Currently Employed
Artisan	55	18	33%	84%
Bursary	27	3	11%	68%
FET Placement	289	85	29%	38%
Internship	221	96	43%	71%
Learnership	179	67	37%	57%
Skills Programme	178	41	23%	42%

Table 29: Link between mentorship and current employment

When asked about the challenges they experienced during workplace experience, those respondents (35%) that have issues often cited a lack of guidance or mentorship as a factor affecting them.

One artisan respondent reflected, *“there was change of management and caused conflict. Managers and mentors resigned, and we had to start with new mentors who were not interested in mentoring. We had to work hard to keep learning.”*

A second artisan respondent noted, *“They would pair you with a qualified technician. It was challenging to be given a task I had never done on my own. This happened from time to time.”*

A third artisan respondent reflected, *“The artisans there did not feel comfortable working with me and instead teaching me work they will send me around to collect stuff for them. I had to sit one of them down and ask him to be my mentor.”*

An FET placement respondent noted, *“The professionals in the field did not have time for us making it very hard for students to feel accepted. We felt out of place because of that.”*

A second FET placement respondent reported on the importance of good relations in the workplace, *“It was my first time working and training, so it was very hard and tiring, but I got used to it after some time. I was thrown into every department and I had very helpful colleagues who showed me what to do.”*

Below are some additional observations provided by FET placement learners:

“We need workstations tutoring or mentoring needs to be there”.

“I requested them to change my first mentor as I was not happy, and then the second mentor was much better”.

“Place us with mentor that will mentor us on what we actually studied”.

“It will be easy for us if the employees or mentors from the host company are trained or briefed on our coming and requirements”.

Mentorship was also mentioned by two employers and the training provider as a real need as learners require the right attitude to progress in the workplace and in their future work environments, therefore the programmes need to ensure that learners are technically and personally equipped.

Another employer felt that the learners generally lack soft skills and the programmes they offer do not offer any courses and feels that this together with mentorship should be

considered in the implementation of the programmes going forward commenting that “they technically might be very good, but dealing with people emotions, communicating and having the right attitude is not always good”.

Given that these programmes are designed to prepare young people for the workplace, activities like structured training and mentorship are important and should be further integrated into the programmes.

Programmes with higher levels of employment reflect greater movements of respondents from rural to urban or township locations. Urban areas show the greatest increase in the number of respondents now residing in them, up from 24% to 33%. Township areas also reflect an increase, from 43% to 45%. Rural areas show a decrease, from 33% to 22%. Notable changes are in the bursary programme, where only 18% of respondents originally resided in urban areas, now up to 54%.

The programmes that reflect the highest levels of employment also reflect the greatest movement out of rural areas. On the artisan, bursary and internship programmes, significant shifts from rural areas have taken place. On the FET and skills programmes, where employment is low, less movement is apparent. The question of whether these respondents have remained in rural locations because they couldn't find employment elsewhere or whether they haven't found employment because they chose not to leave a rural area would need to be probed further.

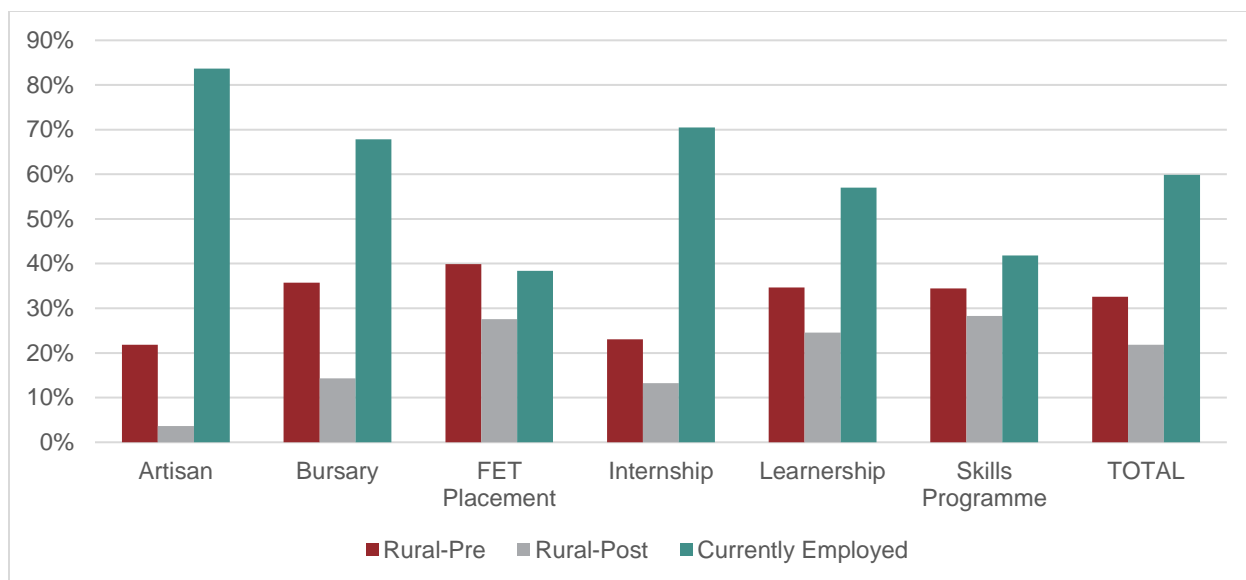


Figure 55: Movement from rural locations post programme linked to employment

The nature of the employment contract is an important factor in terms of whether the individual ultimately accesses sustainable employment. Ninety-six percent (96%) of currently employed artisans have such contracts, and 80% of internship respondents. FET placement, skills programme and bursary respondents are least likely to have permanent placements with 58% of currently employed respondents in each group reporting this.

6.3 How can the programmes be strengthened?

Guidance post completion is generally seen to be weak across the programmes.

This finding is not necessarily aligned to the ability of the respondents to find work. For example, bursary (75%) and internship (73%) respondents reported low levels of guidance and support but were in fact successful in finding employment - 68% and 71% respectively. However, FET placement (68%) and skills programme (62%) respondents did not receive guidance and were largely unsuccessful in finding employment – 38% and 42% respectively. Participants in specific learning programmes therefore require greater levels of support and guidance if they are going to be successful at work-seeking activities.

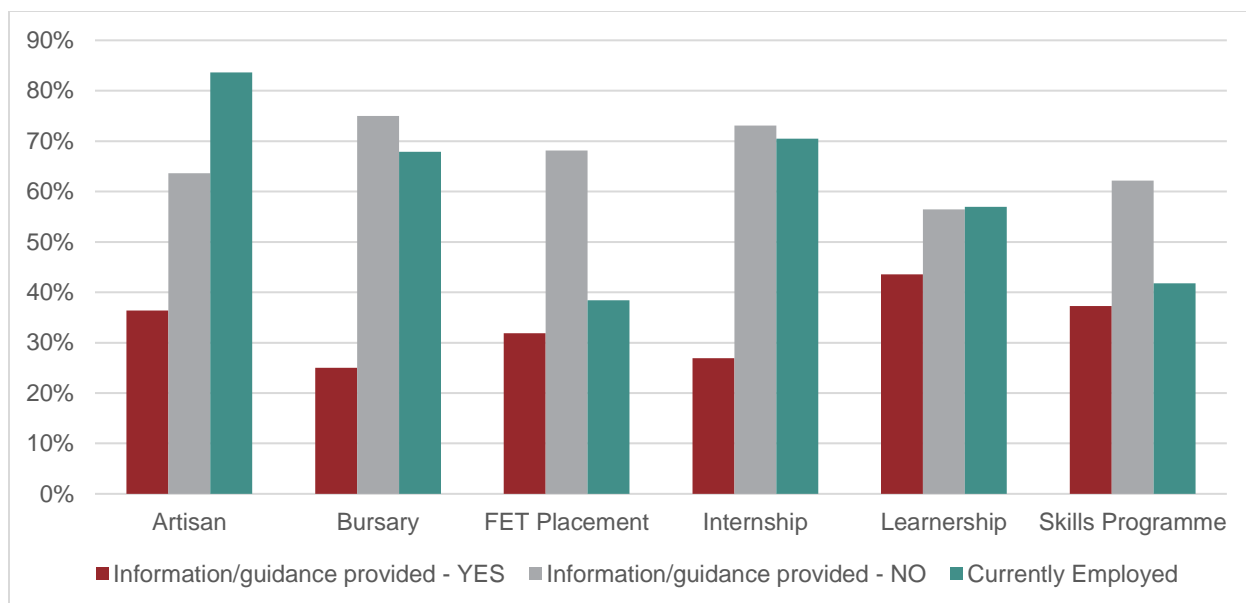


Figure 56: Link between access to information/guidance and current employment

Employers interviewed during the evaluation noted that they support learners as much as possible to gain employment elsewhere if they are not able to absorb them directly, by means of referral letters, as well as recommendations to partner organisations and also try through personal networks to support them to get other opportunities. One company commented that *“we approach some of our customers or suppliers to see if there's any availability there as well, some of the managers and staff also try and see if they know people in the industry that they can approach as well.”* Another company indicated that they have developed a career portal on their website where all the profiles and CVs of learners that have completed the programme are stored and suppliers are encouraged to recruit from this pool of candidates.

The feedback received from the employers interviewed did not correlate with the quantitative and qualitative data from learners. Only 2% of respondents reported that they received help from the employer in finding a job elsewhere (bearing in mind that 22% of respondents are currently employed by the company where they did work experience) and 2% of respondents received assistance from the training providers. The activities that yielded the most value in finding employment were their own endeavours – sending their CVs to companies (26%) and searching online and applying for jobs (25%).

More structured support to FET placement and skills programme learners in particular may help to improve employment outcomes.

Alignment of the theory and practical was seen as critical as some respondents specifically within the FET placements reported that the practicals were not always linked to the theory. Employers shared that they engage with training providers to ensure that this alignment is created however employers also suggest that this could be strengthened through ensuring that the curriculum and workplace skills are structured and standardised across the programmes as currently the view was that the employers and training providers deliver the programmes differently according to their own discretion.

As stated earlier not all candidates received a certificate on completion as total of 26% of respondents did not receive a certificate. The late issuing of certificates was also highlighted as a challenge by employers and training providers. In this regard all respondents strongly suggest that the **SETA works on its administrative delays so certificates are issued on time** and learners can continue their job seeking journeys with less burden.

Learners also indicate that the **work experience could be extended to allow them to gain more experience and exposure**, to gain the technical skills that will build their employability and employers likewise indicate that the programmes could be extended to ensure learners get more exposure and work on their soft skills which will make them more employable. To this end learners also indicate the need for the SETA to involve more companies in running the programmes so that they can rotate across different companies and gain maximum exposure suggesting that this will increase learning opportunities especially in instances where these are limited as some companies have specific focus while some have various departments.

Furthermore, employers indicated that the SETA needs to provide enough funding for the implementation of the programmes as the cost of hosting learners is high as there are

resources and workstations that are associated with individual learners and therefore SETA needs to ensure that these costs are met.

Value and payment of stipends remains an issue for learners. The tracer study of FoodBev seta-funded learnerships and artisans for the period 2011 to 2016 recorded training providers as noting the need to increase stipends. Consistent feedback from learners across the programmes reflects that payment of stipends remains an issue, both with regards to amount and to paying them on time. This was noted as a challenge particularly by FET placement and skills programme respondents, and was raised again in the discussion on how the programme has impacted on the lives of learners.

An intern noted, *“Please improve by increasing the stipend. Its too little to survive.”* When asked what challenges they had faced, another intern noted, *“Only in terms of service providers over the payment of stipends. They always paid us late and we were not sure what the problem was.”* An FET placement learner noted, *“The stipend was not enough for transport and accommodation. I had to use my child's SASSA grant to buy food.”*

It is important to emphasise the value that the stipend has for learners. As an artisan noted *“The stipend as well was a form of financial freedom”*. Generally respondents used the stipend for transport and food, but some were able to stretch it to other items. An artisan noted, *“Financial wise I was able to use the R4000 stipend in many things such as being able to buy airtime and data so that I can be able to downloads required content and watch videos to improve myself, I was also able to use the money for transport and buying food.”*

More companies need to be encouraged to participate in training programmes and hosting learners. This requires more actively communicating with the sector on the value of the programmes and the possible benefits to employers. A training provider reflected that the gap between universities and host employers is widening and there is a need for these two entities to come together and work with a common purpose. *“Most host employers are not aware of the benefits that come with hosting students or turning*

their workspace into a training space. Benefits such as tax rebates and BBBEE compliance are not effectively communicated, or they just stay away because of the administrative work that comes with participating in skills development of young people.”

Training providers were asked what can be done to address challenges faced in the programmes. One provider noted that in some areas there is an enormous shortage of employment opportunities. *“We work in very poor communities where relocating for job opportunities is a challenge.”*

6.4 How can the training system and sector commitment be strengthened?

Employers responding to the survey noted that the primary areas of support received from the SETA were payment for running the programme (44%), communicating the training programme offered by the companies through its channels (33%), and assisting to ensure that relevant qualifications were generated (33%). The employers further noted that no support is received with regards to the provision of technical resources, assisting with placing learners after the programme is complete and ensuring that a relevant curriculum is in place.

During interviews with employers, further issues were noted, including delays in registration, delays in payments of funds and administrative challenges that result in late certification of learners. Another company expressed that there needs to be coordination indicating that all three parties (employers, training providers and the SETA) need to come together and discuss these challenges and set expectations or objectives. Another respondent further commented that there needs to be closer monitoring during and at the end of the programmes where all stakeholders including learners as well as managers and supervisors that work with the learners to discuss openly what went well, what didn't go well, and what can be improved as evaluations that take place at a later period cause more gaps and delays in improving the implementation of the programmes.

The findings from the tracer study on learnership and artisan programmes for the period 2011 to 2016 also cited the need to review the curriculum of training programmes,

as well as improving on the administration processes (53%) which include communication, turnaround times, and reduction of red tape.

All four companies interviewed shared the same sentiments about their commitment to continue supporting the FoodBev SETA learning programme in future. As part of this commitment respondents noted that they are contributing to alleviating the unemployment crisis in the country.

One respondent commented that *“we feel it gives back to the community that we are doing business with, we are very well aware of the situation in the country that there's a lot of unemployed youth, it is sort of almost like a corporate social responsibility thing that we're trying to do just to give people an opportunity, even if it's not with us, but at least giving them a fighting chance out there”*. A training provider also shared that skills development is the only way to get people employed while considering the number of unemployed youth in the country all stakeholders need to continue getting involved in the programmes.

The challenge for the FoodBev SETA is to grow the level of commitment and involvement across more companies in the sector, to increase the number willing to take in learners, and further to support their absorption into sustainable employment.

7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The programmes have overall had a positive impact on the lives of the participants. Changes in personal circumstances are directly related to employment. Generally, the respondents who reflected that nothing had changed for them were FET placement and skills programme respondents, who also reported the lowest levels of employment. Where respondents are earning a salary and able to invest in both their well-being and that of their family, they reflect similar decision-making patterns across all programmes. The most meaningful way in which to impact on their lives is enabling sustained employment.

There are areas where improvements could be made, to better support sustainable employment outcomes.

- **Increase ability of work experience host companies and organisations to absorb learners.**

Large employers are better able to absorb learners, as reflected on the artisan programme. Public sector institutions are less able to absorb learners, hence the low levels of employment for FET placement learners who are mostly placed in government departments, hospitals, schools and colleges. The SETA should focus on better understanding what enables absorption of learners and how host companies and organisations could be supported to offer either short or longer term employment opportunities.

- **Increase access to on-the-job technical and soft skills training and mentorship**

Learner respondents across all the programmes who participated in technical and soft skills training found it to be valuable. All bursary and FET placements respondents said that the programmes gave them knowledge and skills that make them employable and 78% of artisan respondents and 22% of internship respondents shared this view.

Furthermore 86% of learnership respondents said that the certificate has given employers confidence to trust their skills. However, it appears that not all programme participants had the same level of exposure to training. This should be reviewed to ensure consistency and increase the percentage of learners receiving on-the-job training. Mentorship has great value for new entrants into the workplace and should be structured as part of the overall training programme, and not left to individual employers to provide. Guidelines relating to effective mentorship could be provided to employers.

- **Provide more support to learners to find job opportunities**

The respondents who were successful in finding employment largely used their own initiative to do so, through submitting their CVs to companies or through searching online for work opportunities and applying. While some received support from the workplaces where they had completed work experience, most felt that they would have welcomed greater guidance and assistance in the process. The area of feedback consistently rated lowest across all programmes was 'Guidance received after the programme.' Practical support to build the confidence and capability of learners to engage in work-seeking activities should also be considered, in addition to the soft skills training they are receiving in the workplace.

- **Encourage greater participation from employers in the programmes**

Employers should be engaged and educated on the broader social and economic value, as well as the tangible direct benefits, of participating in the learning programmes. The SETA should consider possible ways to build participation and address the shortcomings identified by companies such as the administrative burden linked to hosting learners. The SETA should also explore ways in which to create stronger work placement networks within the levy paying companies as well as perhaps with sectors adjacent to its immediate membership.

One practical suggestion from a training provider was to develop a database of qualified learners that employers could use to recruit candidates when required.

- **Focus on entrepreneurial skills**

While the feedback on the value of the programmes was positive, respondents generally noted that training and support in entrepreneurial skills and enabling them to start their own businesses could be improved. Only 2% of respondents reported that they participated in the programme because they thought that it would help them to start a business, and therefore their expectation was that the programmes would lead to employment and not them becoming a business owner. Furthermore, only 4% of respondents said they received information on how to start a business after the programme was completed.

Given general economic pressure on employers currently, and the decrease in levy-paying companies in the sector, full-time work opportunities are limited. The importance of small businesses which are able to grow and create work opportunities therefore needs to be emphasised. Already, over 87% of employers in the sector are classified as small businesses. The SETA should identify and work with small business support programmes who can provide additional training and support to entrepreneurs. In addition, the SETA should explore with the large employers in the sector how they could support the creation and contracting of small business within their supply chains, as means of growing work opportunities. This may be particularly important for skills programmes, where even if its by necessity a larger percentage of respondents in this programme appear to pursue an entrepreneurial pathway.

- **Improve mechanisms for ongoing tracking of learners**

Tracer studies are likely to attract participation from learners who are positively predisposed to the programme because they have benefitted from it. It will therefore not be a comprehensive view of all participants and their outcomes. In order to improve

tracking over a period of time, the SETA should consider developing an alumni system that encourages learners to self-identify and update their details as they progress in their careers. Social media platforms can also be utilised to retain contact with graduates and encourage them to participate in formal research studies when they are conducted. Some thought would need to be given to the incentives that could be offered to graduates to remain in contact with the SETA.

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