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Evaluation of the Khanyisa Project In Nelson Mandela Bay, Port Elizabeth, South Africa

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Executive summary

Africa Socio Economic Development Services (ASEDS) was appointed to conduct research among the beneficiary groupings of the Khanyisa Project in Nelson Mandela Bay, South Africa, to evaluate the impact that was generated by this programme since 2009.

Initial research was conducted among employers to identify the problems that they face when recruiting staff. A local training service provider, Siya Sebenza, was appointed to amend their existing Work-4aLiving employability training modules for unemployed work seekers to address the challenges that were raised by the employers. The third beneficiary group consisted of the unemployed work seekers who completed the employability training that was offered by Siya Sebenza.

Questionnaires were designed to obtain information to assess the impact of the initiative on these three groupings. The information generated was remarkable consistent across the samples of both employers and work seekers.

Sixty one work seekers that had completed the Work-4aLiving employability training were interviewed with the majority being females, most were under the age of 36 and fairly well-educated. While over one half had never previously been employed, almost one half had had some sort of job in the past, of which half were casual, temporary positions.

All the sixty one work seekers were unemployed at the time when embarking on the Work-4aLiving employability training.

Since completing the employability training, ninety percent of these unemployed work seekers had found employment and most of these attribute their successful job search to the Work-4aLiving training. Only a few of these had again become unemployed, but the proportion in employment at the time of the survey still stood at 85 percent.

Of those respondents that had been employed before losing their jobs prior to the Work-4aLiving training, all but one indicated that they had improved the quality of their jobs

since the training; ninety percent had improved their incomes, while more are employed in permanent positions than previously.

The respondents ranked job interview skills, financial literacy and work ethics as the most useful of the nine Work-4aLiving training modules. Among the few suggestions on additions to the existing programme, advanced communication skills and exposure of first-time work seekers to the workplace ('practical's) were mentioned.

Among the sample of employers, the majority indicated that they would continue to recruit staff from the Siya Sebenza data base of work seekers that had completed the Work-4aLiving training. Three quarters of the respondents rated the Work-4aLiving graduates very highly. A mixed response was received on whether these employees remained employed in the company for longer, as close to sixty percent of the sample of newly recruited workers had been in their current jobs for 6 months or less.

The training service provider listed the positive impacts that the Khanyisa Project had had on the organization. These include building capacity in the organization, adjusting the pre-existing training material to meet the recruitment and retention challenges facing employers, allowing the organization to establish new contacts and to receive new training contracts. Not only had the organization trained approximately 2 000 unemployed work seekers since the commencement of the Khanyisa Project, but it has extended its reach by providing employability training material to other training centers in Nelson Mandela Bay and beyond.

Although the training course for shop stewards fell outside the immediate ambit of the Khanyisa Project, many of the same managers and co-coordinators from the NMMU were involved in designing and presenting the courses. The courses aimed to improve the knowledge and the capabilities of the shop stewards to engage positively and confidently with management. The intention is to run the course again and to introduce a further higher level course.

It may be concluded that the Khanyisa Project had been a success, reaping positive benefits for the work seekers, the employers and the training service provider alike.

Evaluation of the Khanyisa Project in Nelson Mandela Bay, South Africa

1. Background and objectives of the Khanyisa Project

The Khanyisa Project developed out of a working partnership between Middlesex University, the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) and the Siya Sebenza Training Academy in Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. It started as an initiative of Middlesex academic Dr Michael Brookes, who secured funding for the project from the UK Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) after studying the labour markets in South Africa and identifying the failings on both the demand and supply sides of those local labour markets.

Working in partnership with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, the project was introduced to the business sector on 23 February 2009.

The first phase of the Project was to conduct a survey among businesses in Nelson Mandela Bay to identify the problems that employers experience when recruiting staff.

Based upon the outcome of the survey, the next phase of the Project was to bring about change in the employability skills of work seekers.

This was accomplished through the appointment of Siya Sebenza who adjusted their pre-existing employability training modules (Work-4aLiving) to address the concerns raised by the business sector.

2. The Evaluation Brief

Africa Socio-Economic Development Services (ASEDS) was appointed to undertake an evaluation of the impact of the Khanyisa Project. The objective of the assignment is to conduct research among the beneficiary groupings of the Khanyisa Project to evaluate the impact that was generated by this programme.

Work seekers: A survey of approximately 100 work seekers¹ that attended the Work-4aLiving course to establish the following:

- The proportion of the attendees that have since gone on to employment;
- The quality of the employment in terms of job security, salary, full or part time employment;
- Whether the attendees would have got a job anyway, or whether the course helped them to get a job sooner, or to get a better paid job, etc.

Employers: A survey of approximately 30 employers² that participated in the initiative to establish the following:

- Whether they have effected changes in their recruitment and retention policies;
- The extent to which such changes were related to the research carried out and the support provided through this programme;
- Whether there have been changes in retention rates/job turnover.

Training provider: A survey of the training provider, Siya Sebenza and its training sub-contractors (if applicable) to establish the following:

- How the support through the programme has impacted on the training that they provide;
- What new contracts they received following the conclusion of the programme;
- The number of trainees that they have trained since the support from the programme;
- The extent to which an increase in training opportunities would have taken place without the Khanyisa programme.

Trade unions: A small sample survey will be undertaken within the following Trade Unions active in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro:

- National Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU)
- South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU)
- National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA)

To establish the following:

- How has the support impacted on the quality of the services they provide to their members;
- What new services have they offered their members following their participation in the training;
- What number of members have they helped since the support from the project,
- To what extent would have this happened without the project.

¹ While an attempt was made to survey 100 work seekers as indicated in the Terms of Reference, in the end only 61 usable responses were received and used for the analysis..

² A smaller sample of 12 employers provided useful information that was used for the analysis.

3. Methodology

Based on the brief, we engaged with the NMMU-based project coordinator, Sakhile Phiri, and he supplied documentation that relate to the Khanyisa Project.

Three questionnaires were designed to survey work seekers, businesses and the training service provider.

Work seekers

Siya Sebenza provided a selected list of people who had completed the Work-4aLiving course. From this list, attempts were made to contact as many as possible in the evaluation time available.

Siya Sebenza staff undertook to contact individuals from Walmer and was successful in completing 38 usable questionnaires. Another fieldworker attempted to reach individuals via mobile phones, which proved unsuccessful, as many of the numbers were no longer active. He then used Siya Sebenza's data base to engage with the work seekers at their physical addresses. This method yielded a further 23 survey participants from the following areas that are located to the north of the city, namely Kwazakhele, Zwide and Motherwell.

This resulted in a total sample of 61 work seekers that were interviewed and who provided usable information for analysis.

Participating businesses

A list of businesses that have an relationship with Siya Sebenza for the employment of the Work4aLiving 'graduates' was obtained from Siya Sebenza.

There were 23 businesses on the list, some of which were branches of national supermarket and fresh produce chains. Of the latter, the human resources managers for the local area were interviewed, rather than the individual branch managers. In the end, a sample of 12 businesses was interviewed. The businesses are from various sectors and varying in size.

Training Service provider

Information provided by Siya Sebenza indicated that they were the only training service provider initially utilised on the Khanyisa Project. The manager, Ena Richards, was subsequently interviewed.

Siya Sebenza is a training organisation that had developed a Work-4aLiving employability training programme. Through this programme, they teach young unemployed people how to look for employment, to secure employment and once they have it secured, how to progress in their career by working to a standard of excellence.

Several training organisations both locally and elsewhere now use the Work-4aLiving training modules to equip unemployed work seekers to become more employable.

Trade Unions:

Although the training course for NUMSA shop stewards fell outside the immediate ambit of the Khanyisa Project, many of the same managers and co-coordinators from the NMMU were involved in designing and presenting the courses. The courses aimed to improve the knowledge and the capabilities of the shop stewards to engage positively and confidently with management.

4. Analysis of Findings

Three sets of questionnaires were designed to conduct interviews with the three beneficiary groupings, namely the primary training provider, the students who had completed the employability training and businesses that have employed these students. A brief assessment of a training course for trade union managers that was conducted by the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), the intermediary for the Khanyisa Project, was added to the report.

4.1 Survey of work seekers that had completed the Siya Sebenza Work-4aLiving course

The analysis of the survey of work seekers that had completed the Work-4aLiving employability training is presented under the following headings: demographics, change in employment status since completing the employability training, their assessment of the training modules and recommendations for additions to the training modules. In conclusion they were asked to reflect on the impact of the employability training on their career paths and their lives.

4.1.1 Demographics

Description	Number	%
Gender		
Male	17	28
Female	44	72
Age		
Under 25	16	26
25-29	27	44
30-34	4	7
35 and over	14	23
Education		
Primary	1	2
Secondary Grades 8-11	24	39
Matriculation Grade 12	36	59

The table indicates that

- 72 percent of the sample were females;
- 77 percent of the work seekers were in the category classified in South Africa as 'youth' (under the age of 35 years);
- 59 percent had completed the final year of formal education (Grade 12) and the majority of the remainder had completed the second last year of schooling.

4.1.2 Changes in employment status following employability training

Almost all of the people who embark on the Siya Sebenza employability training are unemployed. The course runs for three weeks on a full-time basis, making it unlikely that anyone in employment will have the time to attend all the classes.

This proved to be true for the surveyed sample, as they were all **unemployed** at the time of enrolling for the Work-4aLiving training course.

- **Previous employment history**

The respondents were asked to provide information on their previous employment experience.

Prior to approaching Siya Sebenza for employability training, over one half had never been employed. Almost one half of the people in the sample had, however, previously been in some form of employment. A proportion of these had been employed in short-term, temporary employment, as casual cleaners or domestic workers or in sales. A similar proportion had held permanent positions in the past. These occupations ranged from care givers to drivers and an apprentice motor mechanic.

Description	Employment status prior to employability training	
	No.	%
Never been employed	32	52.5
Employed in temporary jobs	15	24.6
Permanent employment	14	22.9

All of these that had been in prior employment had lost their jobs and were unemployed when then registered for the Work-4aLiving employability training offered by Siya Sebenza.

- **Employment following employability training**

The respondents were then asked whether the Work-4aLiving training had helped them to find employment.

As indicated earlier, although close to one half of the respondents had been employed at some stage before undergoing the employability training, these had all lost their jobs and were unemployed when they approached Siya Sebenza for training.

The table below indicates that since completing the Work-4a Living employability course, ninety percent of these previously unemployed work seekers had found employment, while one person (representing just over one percent of the sample) was a full-time student.

Description	Pre-employability training		Post-employability training	
	No.	%	No.	%
Employed	0	0	55	90.2
Unemployed, looking for work	61	100	5	8.2
Studying full-time	0	0	1	1.6

Of those that found employment since completing the Work-4a Living course, 94 percent attributed their successful job search to the employability training.

A breakdown of the employment status of those in the sample that had found employment following the training indicates that close to three-quarters had secured permanent employment. The remainder indicated that they had found temporary jobs, mainly as temporary cleaners or marketers.

Description	Employment status of persons employed after training	
	No.	%
Permanent jobs	39	71
Temporary jobs	16	29

Some of the respondents were apparently unable to distinguish between permanent but part-time employment (such as a domestic worker employed for only two days a week), and temporary short-term jobs (standing in for an ill friend). While the figures in the

table below reflect the information that was provided by the respondents, it should nevertheless be read with caution.

Of those respondents that had been employed before losing their jobs prior to the Work-4aLiving training, all but one (96 percent) indicated that they had improved the quality of their jobs since the training, 90 percent had improved their incomes, while more are employed in permanent positions than previously (71 percent, compared to 48 percent who had been employed at some stage before the training).

- **Current employment status**

The respondents were then asked whether they were *currently* employed.

Description	Current employment status	
	No.	%
Currently employed	52	85.3
Currently unemployed	8	13.1
Currently full-time student	1	1.6

A small number (three of the 61) of those that had found jobs following the training were once again unemployed at the time of the survey and looking for a job. This brings those *currently* neither employed nor studying to 13 percent of the sample.

The table below indicates that one quarter of the respondents had been employed for between one and three years since finding jobs after completing the Work-4aLiving training. A further 16 percent had been employed for between seven and 12 months, while the majority (almost sixty percent) had been employed for six months or fewer.

Period employed	Percentage
6 months and fewer	58.1
7 – 12 months	16.1
More than 12 months	25.8

4.1.3 Students' assessment of employability course modules

Students were requested to rate the relative importance of the different employability course modules.

The students rated job interview skills as most important in improving their chances of obtaining employment or a better job. Financial literacy and work ethics also scored highly.

It is interesting that paper work was not considered to be very important, which probably reflects the small proportion that is employed in administrative positions.

Module	Rating
Job interviews	1
Financial literacy	2
Work ethics	3
World View	4
Professionalism	5
Service excellence	6
World of Work	7
Personal ethics	8
Paper work	9

4.1.4 Suggestions from students for additions to the employability training programme

Students that had completed the employability training programme were encouraged to make suggestions on additions to the existing programme. This elicited only a few suggestions, of which (a) advanced communication skills and (b) practical exposure of first-time work seekers to the workplace ('practical's) were most frequently mentioned.

Other recommendations included the need for evening classes for those already employed, writing CVs, additional time devoted to computer literacy training, time management, team building, conflict resolution and labour law.

A small proportion of students in elementary jobs and those that are unemployed expected that the training service provider should act as an 'employment agency', which was not one of the objectives of the Project. On the whole, however, the students praised Siya Sebenza for the quality of the training that equipped them with the skills to find employment and to improve the quality of their lives.

4.1.5 Reflections on the impact on the career paths and lives of the students

The students were encouraged to reflect on the impact of the employability training course on their career paths and their personal lives.

As may be expected, most of the responses centered around the impact on their careers. These included finding a better job and exposure to different career choices. Several mentioned that the interview skills contributed to their success in gaining employment or finding a better job. Several also noted that the training improved their self confidence.

A number stated that the training motivated them to study further and several took advantage of opportunities to train as care givers, cashiers and receptionists.

The students that gained employment or improved their employment status agreed that the training course contributed to their ability to earn higher wages.

An interesting observation was that the training module on financial literacy enabled the students to better manage their personal finances and taught them the importance of saving for a rainy day.

Personal testimonies

It [the training] is very useful and helpful for the first-time job seeker.

It [the training] was good to me because it taught me how to look for a good job and how to manage my budget.

I've improved my skills and want to study part-time.

I've developed in life because I'm working in a better place and I'm developing career wise.

I started as a packer, but after a year I became a cashier and now I'm a clerk.

It [the training] helped me to be more focused in life, not to settle for less, to try to find ways to better myself and to boost my career.

The training helped me to believe in myself and always be honest.

It [the training] helped me to see the world with different eyes. I am doing the job that was impossible for me to do, but because of the training I am doing it and I love my job.

The training helped to change my way of thinking. From a poverty mindset, I know now I can do it on my own and not to wait for someone to help me.

4.2 Survey of employers

Siya Sebenza supplied a list of 23 local businesses from various sectors and of various sizes that have engaged on the Project. Of these, 12 businesses were successfully interviewed. A few people responsible for human resources could not be reached as they had left the company, while two businesses had recently changed hands and the new owners/managers were not aware of Siya Sebenza and the employability training. A few of the telephone numbers or email addresses were no longer active, while the remainder displayed a lack of interest.

Employers responded as follows to questions on the recruitment and retention of employees that had completed the Work-4aLiving course:

- All but two of the surveyed employers considered that collaborated with Siya Sebenza had been a positive experience and that they would continue to recruit staff from the Siya Sebenza data base of work seekers that had completed the Work-4aLiving training.
- Over eighty percent of the respondents indicated that they now prefer to recruit staff from the Siya Sebenza data base rather than make use of employment agencies or take on walk-ins. Only the managers of two branches of a national franchise acknowledged that while they had employed a few workers with Work-4aLiving training, they did not actively recruit these employees.

- Three quarters (75 percent) of the respondents rated the Work-4aLiving graduates very highly. One respondent noted that ‘they are friendlier’ than his other workers, a second commended their positive attitude to their work and another that ‘some of my best workers have come through this (Work-4aLiving) programme’. The remainder reported that they could not really distinguish between the Work-4aLiving graduates and their other employees.
- A mixed response was received on whether these employees remained employed in the company for longer. Only ten percent agreed that they did remain longer, but a further 42 percent considered that they ‘probably’ stayed longer in their jobs than other employees. This implies a mainly positive response of over one half of employers. Most indicated that the Work-4aLiving recruits had not worked for long enough for the employers to give an opinion. This is consistent with the findings of the work seeker survey that indicated that close to sixty percent of the sample of employed people had been in their current jobs for six months or fewer.

4.3 Survey of training service provider

The manager, Ena Richards, of the training service provider, Siya Sebenza, was interviewed.

She considered that her collaboration with the Khanyisa Project had been a positive experience.

- It facilitated building capacity in the organization.
- It put the organisation in contact with various partners and employers.
- It enabled the organisation to equip other training centers to use its Work-4aLiving training material.
- The outcome of the research conducted by the Khanyisa Project addressed the challenges faced by employers in their efforts to recruit and retain previously unemployed staff.
- As a result of the employability research the organisation adjusted its training so that it would address the shortfalls experienced by the employers. For example, if the way employees resign was a problem (walking out without giving notice),

the organisation would add this to its Work-4aLiving programme as a special focus area.

- The organisation had received overwhelmingly positive feedback from employers that had employed Work-4aLiving 'graduates' since the inception of the Khanyisa Project.
- The organisation has received new training contracts since its collaboration with employers as part of the Khanyisa Project.

Since the launch of the Khanyisa Project in 2009, Siya Sebenza alone had trained approximately **two thousand work seekers**.

In addition, several other training organisations are now using the Work-4aLiving course material, such as Umzi Wethu and NETA in Port Elizabeth (Nelson Mandela Bay). The Port Elizabeth-based GM Foundation has entered into an arrangement with Siya Sebenza to include the Work-4aLiving employability training modules in their engagement with unemployed parents in the schools with which they are working. The facilitator reported that this training equipped a good proportion of previously unemployed parents to gain the confidence to successfully apply for employment.

Training centers in other parts of the country, such as in Cape Town and Pretoria, are likewise using the Work-4aLiving employability course modules when training unemployed work seekers.

'Graduates' of the Work-4aLiving course are encouraged to start their own businesses and also to further their studies, whether to complete the final year of formal school education or to undergo skills training. Following the completion of her Work-4aLiving course, one of the work seekers completed a driver's training course at the Eastern Cape Training Centre. This allowed her to open her own driver training school, which was used by subsequent Work-4aLiving 'graduates' to add practical skills to further improve their employability.

4.4 NUMSA shop steward training programme

During 2012 a short learning programme with 25 NUMSA shop stewards was conducted by the NMMU. The course, entitled *Labour in a Developing Economy: Strategy to Practice*, was aimed at building the knowledge and capacity of shop stewards to more effectively engage with management.

The course included the following modules:

1. Introduction to Development Studies
2. Financial literacy for development practitioners
3. Contemporary South African economic and development policy debate
4. The economics of production
5. Labour and development
6. Introduction to Development Communication

At the conclusion of the course, the participants provided the feedback on the course. It is clear from the responses that they have learnt a great deal and feel confident and competent to deal with challenges that they face in the workplace.

- *Accounting is interesting as it deals with every day transactions*
- *Everything was interesting*
- *The training was balanced and relevant*
- *Lecturers are enthusiastic and willing to listen to us*
- *I am encouraged, motivated and strong enough to deal with challenges I am faced with*
- *The course should be offered to other shop stewards*
- *I feel competent to continue with the task as I want to learn a lot about financial literacy*

The intention is to run the course again and to introduce a further higher level course.

5. Conclusions

It may be concluded that the impact of the Khanyisa Project has had a positive effect on the employability of work seekers.

- The sample clearly indicates that the employability training had improved the employment status of the majority of the participants, with ninety percent finding employment after completing the training course and all but a few of those still employed today.
- The businesses which have employed work seekers who had completed the employability training course consider these employees to be of a high caliber and they will continue to recruit people from the Siya Sebenza data base.
- The training service provider had built new capacity within the organisation, expanded its network of partners, gained new contracts and has extended its reach by providing the Work-4aLiving training material to other training providers.

The impact of the Project was particularly evident in the suburb of Walmer and its immediate surrounds. This is where the training organization is located. A significant proportion of work seekers live in the area and most of the successful work seekers belong to this group.

Localised training centers that are located close to areas with high numbers of unemployed work seekers appear to be an important factor in underpinning the success of the initiative.

The selection of an established and stable training service provider proved to be a critical factor in the success of the Project. In Nelson Mandela Bay, Siya Sebenza existed before the Khanyisa Project was launched and is still in business four years later. A further advantage is that Siya Sebenza had pre-existing training courses that related to job seeking skills and was able to amend these to fit the needs of employers that were identified by the employers' survey.

The Word-4aLiving course offered by Siya Sebenza continues to draw work seekers to the training centre to improve their employability and/or employment status. The positive response by employers is further testimony to the positive impact of the programme.