Health and Welfare Sector
Education and Training Authority
HWSETA

MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE HWSETA FUNDED PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROJECT

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1. ABSTRACT

The mid-term evaluation had a specific focus on the design, process and implementation of the Pre-apprenticeship project established to enable unemployed learners without minimum requirements to enter into the artisan program. The intention of the mid-term evaluation was to appraise the performance of the HWSETA pre-apprenticeship project in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and sustainability.

The sequential mixed method research design guided the evaluation. Quantitative population data analysis preceded qualitative data collection. The Mid-term evaluation findings indicate that the Pre-apprenticeship project is not efficient. The project implementation in financial year 2013/14 was delayed by six months. Findings also showed that the project was not effective since 77% of learners supported were not able to pass the Nated level 1 since the project inception. The project was not sustainable because of dissatisfaction from TVET colleges with operations of the project such funding model as it relates to the second tranche of payment. The unsustainability was further worsened by a disconnect of the project to TVET systems such as academic plans and calendar year. However, pre-apprenticeship project remains relevant to learners who are the primary beneficiaries as it meets their socio-economic needs and correctly aligned to NSDS III priorities.

In conclusion, this report recommends that Pre-apprenticeship project be retained premised on its relevance and alignment to DHET SLAs, HWSETA APP, NSDS III, and most importantly beneficiary's views and needs. Evaluation findings clearly indicate project design and implementation failure.

2. INTRODUCTION

The mid-term evaluation of HWSETA funded Pre-apprenticeship project was conducted as part of the Research Information Monitoring and Evaluation (RIME) plan of action for financial year 2015/16. The study was conducted by the Monitoring and Evaluation officer from the Monitoring and Evaluation sub-division of RIME. The Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Plan (MERP) 2011-2016 was used as a guiding tool to evaluate and monitor the program using the Health and Welfare SETA (HWSETA) performance information from SETA Quarterly Monitoring Reports (SQMR).

2.1. Purpose of the evaluation study

The evaluation of the Pre-apprenticeship project of the HWSETA assessed and appraised the performance of the project in relation to its outputs and outcomes in order to establish the level of efficiency of delivery processes and effectiveness of the project. It also assessed whether there is continued relevance and sustainability of the project.

The mid-term evaluation is well suited for Pre-apprenticeship project considering its lifespan which began in 2011 and will now cease in 2018 due to the extension of the license of SETAs. This evaluation covered two financial years, which included 2012/13 and 2013/14, and provides information that will help strengthen the implementation of the project for the 2016/17 and 2017/18 financial years. It is the perspective of this study that the mid-term evaluation of the Pre-apprenticeship will give an insight about efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability. Consequently, the findings of this study may lead to the redesigning or re-orientation of operations of the Pre-apprenticeship project wherever necessary for better results.

3. BACKGROUND OF PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROJECT

3.1. Relevance of the project at policy context

HWSETA strategic objectives are informed by National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) III (2012, 15) outcome 4.2.1 focusing on skilling and upskilling through intermediate/middle level skills

to support national and sector development. This NSDS III outcome has been cascaded to HWSETA strategic objective which states *"increase the number of work-ready graduates in trades (artisans) demanded in health and social development sector through targeted funding in the strategic period"* (HWSETA APP 2016, 16). The latter HWSETA objective is reported on indicator 4. As such, HWSETA funded Pre-apprenticeship project is an intervention, which seeks to realise the NSDS III priorities within health and social sector vision of 'bridging the skills gap'.

The Pre-apprenticeship project was therefore included in the HWSETA 2011-2016 strategic plan. Its five-year strategic target aimed to support *"4000 learners in pre-apprenticeship training and N-courses,"* (Performance Information, 2013). As a result, in October 2012, the HWSETA Board approved the amount of R1 778 000 for the training of 889 learners in Pre-apprenticeship project by nine TVET colleges on various trades in the 2012/13 financial year (HWSETA 2012/13,). For the financial year 2013/14, the HWSETA Board approved a total funding to the amount of R2 180 000 for the training of 1090 learners in Pre-apprenticeship project by eight TVET colleges (Payment Schedule Information, 2013). It is important to note that the Pre-apprenticeship project of the HWSETA focused only on Level 1 engineering studies of the Nated Programme, although the entry requirements into artisan programmes through the Nated Programme route is N3.

3.2. Historical context

The inception of the Pre-apprenticeship[1] project at HWSETA emanates from the artisan programme led by Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) across all Sector Education Training Authorities (SETAs) under the campaign of 'the decade of the artisan'. HWSETA's conception of Pre-apprenticeship is enrolment of unemployed learners to Nated level 1 programmes in the science field by those who could not meet the minimum requirements to enter into an artisan related field (annual report 2012/13, 51). As such, the intention of Pre-apprenticeship project was *"to increase a pool of learners which can enter artisanship programme"* (SDP consultation 2015). The latter refers to the artisanship programme facilitated by DHET across all SETAs enrolling learners from N2 level in science-related fields.

[1] In this report, artisan programme generally refers to Report 191 Nated programme between level 2 to 6. While this report will adopt the view of pre-apprenticeship as only being specific to Nated level 1, it is important to note that TVET colleges view pre-apprenticeship as any Report 191 Nated programme level prior learner placement with an employer through an apprenticeship.

Pre-apprenticeship project was designed as a transient channel for unemployed learners not meeting minimum requirements for artisan programme. The establishment of pre-apprenticeship project by HWSETA was preceded by a project called 'The Implementation of Mathematics and Science (IPAP) 2009-2010'. This project was implemented by Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and aimed to afford *"post-school learners to rewrite these subjects in order to obtain the required marks so as to enter university or any other institutions of learning"* (Singh 2011, 1). This project was unfortunately not successful since 80% of the learners failed the subjects, (SDP consultations, 2015). Thereafter, it was decided to establish the Pre-apprenticeship project that would produce more artisans and technicians that are competent for the Health and Welfare sectors and other sectors.

Pre-apprenticeship project is part of the Report 191 Nated programme. In 2001, the Formal Technical College Instructional Programmes in the RSA report introduced the Report 191 Nated programme in South Africa. The report outlines the programme requirements for current technical college education in the Republic of South Africa. The report serves as a manual and an educational policy document, which lists all instructional programmes approved by the Minister of Education in accordance with the *National Education Policy Act 1996, (Act No. 27 of 1996)*. In 2007 a Ministerial Task Team appointed to review the *National Education Policy Act* produced a report indicating, "*the Nated programmes were developed by industry partners"* (2006, 2). This underscores the relevance of the programme to the industry as a whole since its curriculum orientation catered for the needs of the industry. The ministerial task team report (2006) informed the position of Department of Education to phase out the Report 191 Nated programmes. The FET guide to opportunities for further learning (2007, 1-5) stated:

> In 2007, FET colleges will be offering new, modern and exciting vocational qualifications aimed at providing young people with relevant knowledge and skills for employment and further learning. This qualification called the National Certificate (Vocational) will replace the outdated N programmes…The Nated programmes, whilst having some merit, do not provide for the development of cognitive skills or for an integrated approach to learning…Research has demonstrated that the mere acquisition of practical skills is insufficient to meet the broad economic and specific workplace challenges of the 21st century. Cognitive demands are increasingly being placed even on workers previously regarded as semi-skilled (FET guide to opportunities for further learning 2007, 1-5).

In 2009, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) reversed this position because of pressure from the industry. The Nated programmes however returned with conditions that students enrolled for N1 – N3 must have an agreement with industry for work experience placement prior to enrolling (Republic of South Africa 2010). This may suggest that the evolution of workplace challenges in South Africa, even in the 21st century where cognitive skills are prioritised, still requires personnel with skill supplied by Report (191) Nated programmes. It is this position that informed HWSETA, among other things, to implement Pre-apprenticeship project as a way of ensuring skill development for employability and meeting skills shortages within health and welfare sector and to other sectors of the economy.

3.3. Description of Pre-apprenticeship as the Report 191 Nated program level 1

TVET Colleges offer both NCV and Nated Programmes as tabulated in Table 1 and 2 below. Entry into apprenticeship requires a minimum of an N3 course.

Table 1: Description of National certificate vocational (fetcolleges.co.za)

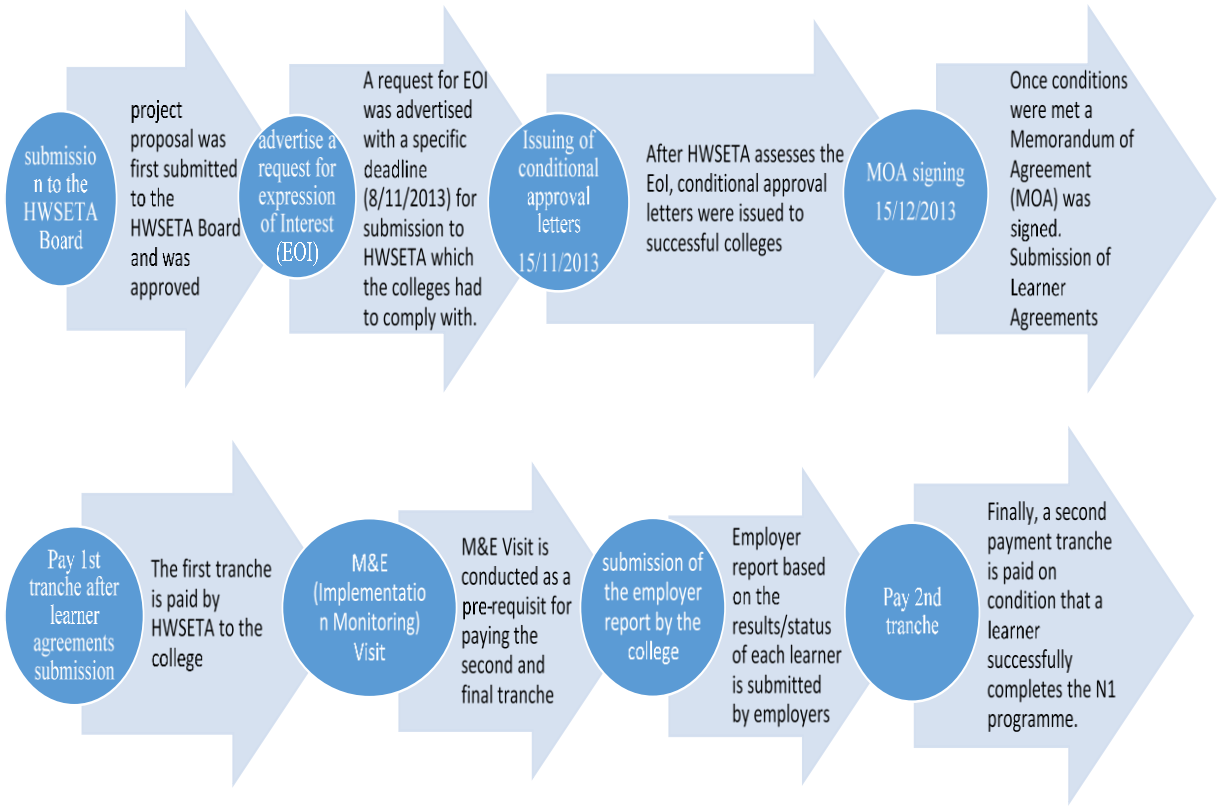
Course Type	**National Certificate (Vocational)**
Description / Definition	NC(V) programmes are delivered under the auspices of the Department of Higher Education and Training and quality assured by Umalusi. The programmes integrate theory and practice and provide students with a broad range of knowledge and practical skills within specific industry fields.
Duration	3 Years (1 year per level)
Qualification	Full Certificates on NQF Level 2, 3 and 4 NC(V) Level 4 Certificate is equivalent to National Senior Certificate (matric)
Admission Requirements	Grade 9 + college requirements set per programme

Table 2: Description of Report 191 Nated programme (fetcolleges.co.za)

Course Type	**NATED / Report 191**
Description / Definition	NATED / Report 191 programmes are delivered under the auspices of the Department of Higher Education and Training and quality assured by Umalusi. The programmes consist of 18 months theoretical studies at colleges and 18 months relevant practical application in work places. Engineering studies range from Nated level 1 – 6 while Business and Utility Studies range from N4 – N6.
Duration	1 Year for Nated level 1 – N3 Engineering Studies 1 Year for N4 – N6 Engineering Studies 3 Years (18 months theoretical studies + 18 months workplace application) for N4 – N6 Business and Utility Studies
Qualification	N6 Diploma
Admission Requirements	Grade 9 for Nated level 1 admission Grade 12 for N4 admission

While the duration of Nated level 1 to 3 is one year for engineering studies, each Nated level (e.g. N1) is completed within a trimester. The Pre-apprenticeship HWSETA funded project only focused to N1 that is only one trimester. The project did not have a documented project plan linking design to operations. In order to have an evaluation framework for the project, a reconstruction of the project plan and delivery processes through consultations with the SDP Project manager and staff was finalised (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Implementation process of the Pre-apprenticeship project designed by HWSETA 2013/14



3.4. Objectives of Pre-apprenticeship HWSETA funded project

The objectives of Pre-apprenticeship HWSETA funded project for the unemployed learners were to:

- Increase the pool (number) of learners eligible to enter artisanship program
- Broaden the opportunity to those who are disadvantaged

4. METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION STUDY

This section gives an account of evaluation design to frame in context the overarching logic of how evaluation was conducted. The design of the study further accounts for how reliability and validity was in-built within data collection, capturing, and analysis processes for credible evaluation evidence. The following sub-sections illustrate how the key questions of the enquiry informed the evaluation design, approach, methods, and data sources of the study

4.1. Evaluation questions, domains and criteria of the study

The evaluation design was informed by the evaluation questions premised on the very purpose of the pre-apprenticeship intervention. The evaluation questions of the study are specific to the following domains; design, implementation, and outcomes. The evaluation questions constitute of the following;

i) Is the project implemented efficiently to meet its planned targets at output and outcome level?
ii) Is the project on track to reach its targets?
iii) Is the project adding value to the lives of its beneficiaries?
iv) Will the project be able to maintain its operations, services and benefits during its lifetime?

These evaluation questions, in their sequence, are linked to the following criteria;

i) Efficiency which relates to the extent to which the HWSETA funded pre-apprenticeship project was able to use allocated resources and time to achieve targets
ii) Effectiveness relates to the degree to which set targets of the project were achieved across the results chain.
iii) Relevance or appropriateness of the project criteria seeks to establish the extent to which the project was able to meet the needs of the learners who were its beneficiaries
iv) Sustainability criteria assesses the level of ownership and commitment by all stakeholders in the success of the project.

4.2. Evaluation approach

The evaluation approach informed the data collection methods of the study. Theory-Based Approach (TBA) was utilized to state explicitly the program's theory and logic. This approach is able to link processes and activities to the theory of the program because *"the process is built around theory"* (Stern et al. 2012, 25). Implication is that processes and activities of the program intervention are logical components interacting as means and ends to realise the claims of the program theory implicit to design (Public service commission 2008). However, the use of TBA requires that the intervention be framed in the results framework after theory of change and logic have been clearly defined. Program theory and logic requires an appropriate problem analysis from which the objective tree will be formulated to inform theory of change.

4.2. Problem analysis

The relevance of the Pre-apprenticeship project is premised on its alignment to the two of the eight pressing challenges that NSDIII essentially addresses. These are stated in NSDS III progress report (2013, 19) as *"the longer term unemployed who lack basic numeracy and literacy, and do not possess entry-level… [and] The continuing skills shortages in the artisanal, technical and professional fields"*. NSDS III problem analysis identifies the problem at the surface as continuing skills shortages in intermediate skills while acknowledging the root cause of the problem as learners not meeting minimum requirements for artisanal fields. Thus, limited supply of enrolments in the artisanal field because of poor quality education has negative consequences in the sectoral development and growth.

4.3. Pre-apprenticeship project theory and logic

The logic of targeting learners without minimum requirements in the pre-apprenticeship project is premised on the view that supply (enrolment to Nated programme level 1) will increase when HWSETA funds the disadvantaged learners. Implicit to this view is that upon successful completion of Nated programme level 1, learners eligible to progress to Nated programme level 2 considered as artisanship programme will be identified and funded. This progression is anticipated to occur when HWSETA or DHET artisanship program identifies and funds learners from Pre-apprenticeship to apprenticeship. Therefore, learners passing Nated programme level 1 constitute implementation success and absorption to artisanship programme represents positive confirmation of the project

theory. Realization of the project theory will ultimately contribute towards increased number of qualified artisans/tradesman/technicians finding employment and improving health and social sectoral development and growth.

The reconstructed logic of the project as demonstrated in Figure 2 below can be summarised by its outcome statement which states, *"to increase a pool of learners which can enter artisanship programme"* (SDP consultation 2015). Table 3 below demonstrates the strategic goals and targets for Pre-apprenticeship as shown from HWSETA documents.

Figure 2: Reconstructed logic framework of Pre-apprenticeship project by SDP division

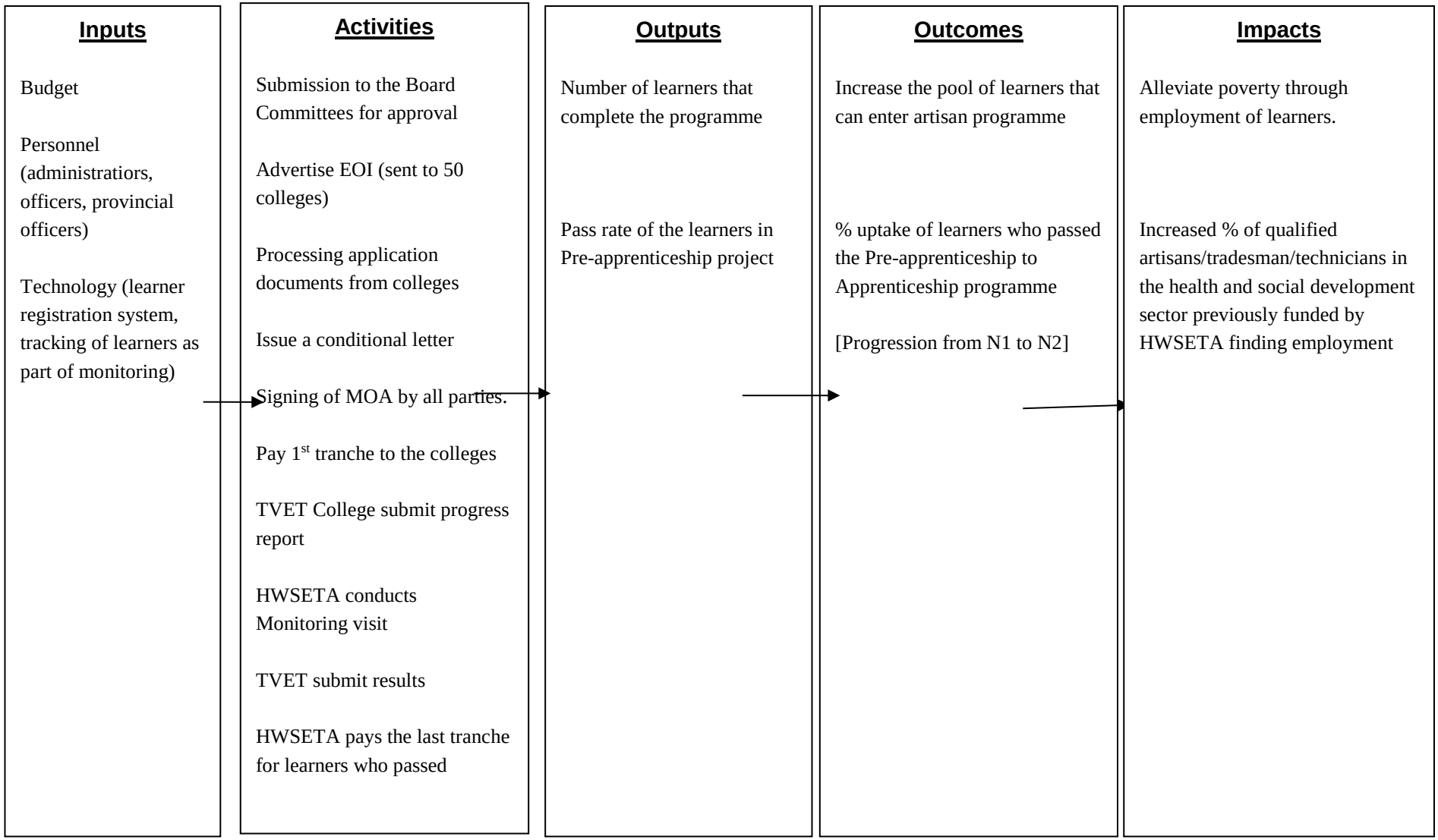


Table 3: Showing the targets set by HWSETA for the Pre-apprenticeship project

Result	**Indicator**	**2012/13 Target**	**2013/14 target**	**5-year (2011-2016) success indicator target**
Outcome				
Increased access to artisanship programme	Number of learners supported in pre-apprenticeship training and N-courses to enter artisan programme (progressed learners)	**1000** learners by 31 March 2013.	**1000** learners by 31 March 2014.	Support to **4000** learners in pre-apprenticeship training and N-courses (Equity imperatives:85% black,50% women, 5% people with disabilities,70% youth and 20% from rural areas)[2]
Output				
Increased number of learners successfully completing their N1 qualification	Number of learners that complete the programme Pass rate of the learners in Pre-apprenticeship project	**1000** **100%**	**1000** **100%**	-

[2] This information has been sourced from the following documents; Performance information 2012/13 and 2013/14, and also from the Service Level Agreements between DHET and HWSETA for 2012/13 and 2013/14.

4.4. Evaluation methods

The Sequential Mixed Methods research design guided the evaluation. Quantitative method was used first to collect data and then qualitative methods followed. According to Gray (2009) the sequential mixed method design makes use of at least one quantitative method first and then at least one qualitative method. On application, quantitative data collection and analysis preceded qualitative data collection in order to ensure that qualitative findings responded to the 'why' and 'how' questions established from quantitative findings.

4.5. Data sources and data collection

Various secondary sources of data were utilised in this study for descriptive analysis. Primary data was also collected from key stakeholders such as TVET officials and learners, and SDP officials based at HWSETA. The following subsections will state the data sources, and type of data collected while stating the relevant stakeholder that was involved. Data sources will be stated in the sequence that the study followed.

4.5.1. Secondary data sources

Three secondary data sources were used for descriptive statistics. They were Quarterly Monitoring Reports (SQMR), SDP databases, and payment schedule databases. In most cases, SQMR and SDP databases were complimentary except on the number of learners who completed the project and SDP database had additional variables. Nonetheless, information produced from SQMR was considered final because of its submission to DHET and publication to the public. Other secondary data sources were used for document review and analysis. These data sources were Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between HWSETA with each TVET college involved, HWSETA Board submissions in each financial year, and Monitoring and Evaluation site visit report conducted in each TVET college.

The masterfile for the study in terms of both sampling and analysis was the SQMR database. The 2012/13 and 2013/14 SDP databases of the learners who had enrolled for the Pre-apprenticeship

was used to identify the learners. The SQMR database was a sampling frame for both financial year 2012/13 and 2013/14. SQMR consisted of 270 learners from 2012/13 and 595 from 2013/14. All the learners (865) from committed TVET colleges were included in quantitative analysis (see Table 4 below).

Table 4: Learners enrolled in TVET colleges committed to the Pre-apprenticeship project

TVET College Name[3]	No of Learners [SQMR database]	No of Learners [Payment Schedule]	STATUS
TVET college 2	59	60	Committed
TVET college 5	114	119	Committed
TVET college 3	148	150	Committed
TVET college 1	416	345	Committed
TVET college 5	128	102	Committed
Total	**865**	**776**	

4.5.2. Primary data sources

Primary data was necessary to unpack in-depth underlying factors behind patterns and associations identified from the analysis of secondary data sources. Primary data was collected from HWSETA officials, learners, and TVET officials. Data collection from HWSETA and TVET officials was administered through consultations using the qualitative method to generate qualitative data.

i) HWSETA SDP unit consultation

The first step of data collection was to consult with the SDP unit as the project leader of Pre-apprenticeship project responsible for its design, implementation, monitoring, and data capturing. There were three official consultations with SDP unit (see table 5 below). These consultations culminated in a design of the evaluation study, criteria for selection of college officials and learners, and data analysis. The involvement of SDP unit was of utmost importance in this evaluation study.

[3] For confidentiality purposes, the actual names of the TVET colleges and their officials that participated in this study have been hidden.

Table 5: Consultations with the HWSETA SDP division

Name	***Date***
The first consultation with SDP at HWSETA to understand the purpose and design of the project	28 May 2015
The second consultation with SDP at HWSETA to have access to documentation of learner results, employer reports, and all communication between HWSETA and colleges	21 August 2015
Third consultation with SDP at HWSETA for reconstruction of the logic framework and other issues	29 September 2015

ii) TVET college officials interviews

With regards to TVET college officials, the selection criteria for qualitative interviews was both informed by the themes identified from quantitative findings and consultations with SDP unit. A college official selected either had direct involvement or knowledge of the HWSETA funded Pre-apprenticeship project. This involvement or knowledge of the college official referred to direct involvement in the operations or knowledge of the project as it relates to funding, recruitment, and teaching and training processes. The collection of primary data from the college officials and learners commenced on the 14th of September to the 15th of October 2015. In total there were 24 TVET officials interviewed in this study from eight different TVET colleges (see Table 6). Of the eight colleges, three of them were de-committed from the project in financial year 2013/14. It was the perspective of the study to interview TVET officials from these colleges regardless of their status in order to acquire more insight about challenges. However, there were no learners interviewed from the de-committed colleges except the college officials.

Table 6: Total number of TVET officials interviewed in the study across all six TVET colleges

College Name	***College status***	***Type of official***	***Name***	***Date***
TVET college 1	Committed	Managerial	TVET official B	14/09/2015
		Lecturer	TVET official C	14/09/2015
		Managerial	TVET official A	15/09/2015
		Lecturer	TVET official D	15/09/2015
		Lecturer	TVET official E	15/09/2015
TVET college 2	Committed	Managerial	TVET official F	28/09/2015
		Lecturer	TVET official G	29/09/2015
		Lecturer	TVET official H	29/09/2015
TVET college 3	Committed	Managerial	TVET official I	30/09/2015
		Managerial	TVET official J	30/09/2015
		Lecturer	TVET official K	30/09/2015
		Lecturer	TVET official L	30/09/2015
TVET college 4	Committed	Managerial	TVET official M	08/10/2015
		Managerial	TVET official N	08/10/2015
		Lecturer	TVET official O	08/10/2015
TVET college 5	Committed	Managerial	TVET official P	14/10/2015
		Administrator/lecturer	Training provider	14/10/2015
TVET college 6	De-committed	Managerial	TVET official R	07/10/1015
		Managerial	TVET official S	07/10/2015
		Lecturer	TVET official T	07/10/2015
TVET college 7	De-committed	Managerial	TVET official U	05/10/2015
		Managerial	TVET official V	05/10/2015
TVET college 8	De-committed	Managerial	TVET official X	05/10/2015
		Lecturer	TVET official Y	05/10/2015
Total		**24 TVET officials interviewed. 9 were lecturers and 14 were at managerial positions with 1 being a training provider.**		

iii) TVET college learner interviews

Learner interviews were conducted concurrently with TVET college officials. Majority of learners were not attending when data collection was administered because the colleges were closed. As a result, availability sampling was used. Nonetheless, a specific criterion in selecting learners for the focus group was designed. The criteria ensured that the focus group had the following learner characteristics;

a) Either from financial year 2012/13 and others from 2013/14

b) Some having passed N1 and others having failed N1

c) And some being males and others females.

Table 7 below shows the total number of learners (17) which were interviewed through five focus group across three committed TVET colleges (TVET college 1, TVET college 2, TVET college 3, and TVET college 5). Each member of the focus group was given a short individual questionnaire. However, one focus group was conducted at Polokwane prison on behalf of TEVT college 5 learners. This group had approximately 35 learners. The conditions of the prison environment did not allow for digital recorder, use of attendance register, and individual questionnaires could not be administered.

Table 7: Total number of learners in Pre-apprenticeship interviewed in the study

Description	**Number of learners**
Number of learners interviewed through the focus groups and individual questionnaire	17 (3 focus groups)
Number of learners interviewed only through the focus group	35 (1 focus group)
Total number of learners interviewed for this study	52

4.6. Data capturing

The process of data capturing was two-fold. First, it involved the capturing of secondary data. Second, data capture of primary qualitative data collected through interviews and focus groups involved the transcription of the recorded audios in preparation for qualitative analysis. For capturing of secondary data, variables from learner agreements were added to SQMR/SDP databases for analysis.

4.7. Data analysis

The unit of analysis for quantitative analysis was at the learner level. Analysis was conducted at three levels; i) descriptive analysis ii) bi-variate analysis iii) and regression analysis. The reasons for these levels of analysis was to first understand the distributions of the learner population in Pre-apprenticeship project. This relates to the use of frequencies, percentages, and means. Second, it was to identify patterns and associations explaining the nature of the intervention. This relates to the use of chi-squared test or t-test to determine the association between independent variables and outcome variable. Lastly, regression was used to determine which of the independent variables significant in the bi-variate analysis were independent predictors towards the outcome variable (passing Nated programme level 1).

4.8. Limitations of the study

Two major limitations were encountered during the process of evaluation. The limitations included the following:

i) There was no documented project plan. This meant the absence of a detailed purpose of the project and how its outcomes were going to be achieved through implementation. As a result, the project plan had to be designed in preparation for the evaluation. The project plan was therefore designed as a logframe using documents from the project. Gaps that still existed were covered through consultations with the HWSETA.

ii) The SQMR/SDP databases for the project did not capture all information contained in the forms issued by HWSETA to participating TVET colleges. These include forms as

learner agreement forms and learner results sheet. The evaluator had to first capture this information before conducting the evaluation.

iii) HWSETA indicator system was only limited to output targets of the Pre-apprenticeship project. This meant effectiveness of the project at outcome level could not be established quantitatively.

iv) During data collection from the field, TVET college officials had inconsistent responses between structured and open-ended questions that were similar. It was observed that TVET college officials confused their responses with the nature of the Likert scale questions. As a result, primary data from structured questionnaires was not used during analysis.

All these factors prolonged the project evaluation from what was originally planned. In essence, data quality had to be prioritized for an objective and credible mid-term evaluation.

5. PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

This section is categorized into two subsections. Subsection 5.1 presents and interprets findings derived from secondary data through descriptive statistics, bivariate analysis, and regression analysis. Furthermore, findings from document review and analysis of secondary data sources relating to efficiency of the implementation process will be presented. Lastly, subsection 5.2 will present qualitative findings derived from primary data through paraphrases and verbatim quotations.

5.1. Descriptive findings from secondary data

Secondary data was drawn from the Advertisement for submission of Expressions of Interest for participation in the HWSETA funded Pre-Apprenticeship project, SQMR/SDP database of the project, MoA, learner agreement forms, implementation monitoring reports, approval schedules, and payment schedules. The sub-sections that follow present and interpret findings drawn from population and document analysis.

5.1.1. Demographics of the population

The SQMR/SDP database of pre-apprenticeships was used to draw information on race, gender, geography and province where beneficiaries come from. Analysis of these variables described the characteristics of beneficiaries identified for this project. The total population of learners in pre-apprenticeship was 865 from five TVET colleges shown in Table 8. Almost half (48%) of the population is from TVET college 1 with the least (7%) coming from TVET college 2.

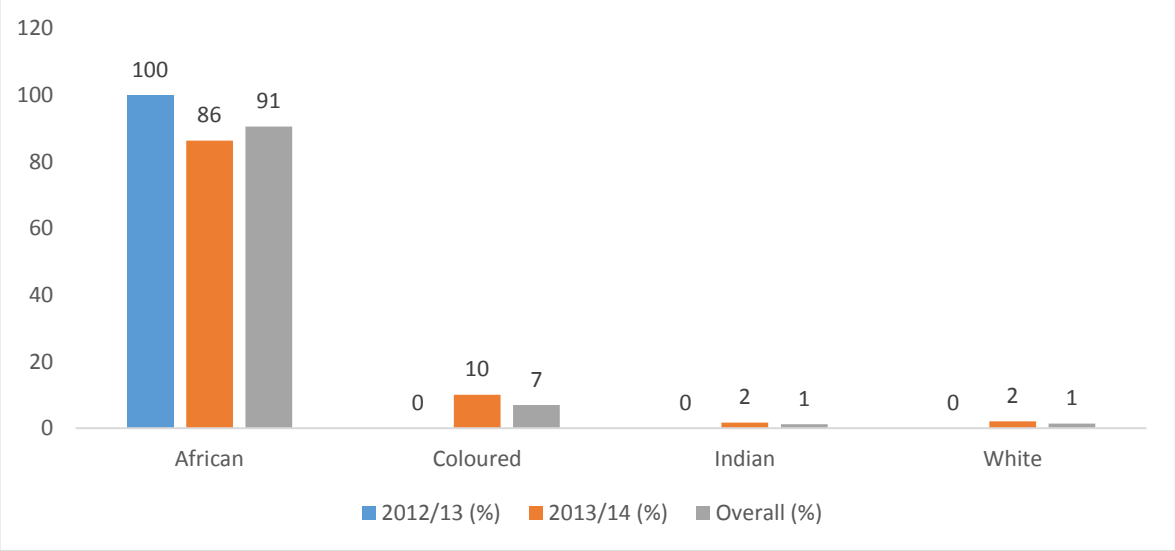
Table 8: Total population of learners in pre-apprenticeship by TVET colleges

TVET College Name	No of Learners [SQMR database]	Percentage
TVET College 2	59	7%
TVET College 5	114	13%
TVET College 3	148	16%
TVET College 1	416	48%
TVET College 7	128	15%
Total	**865**	**100%**

i) Profile of learners by race

In terms of race, overall, learners in Pre-apprenticeship were predominantly (91%) African.

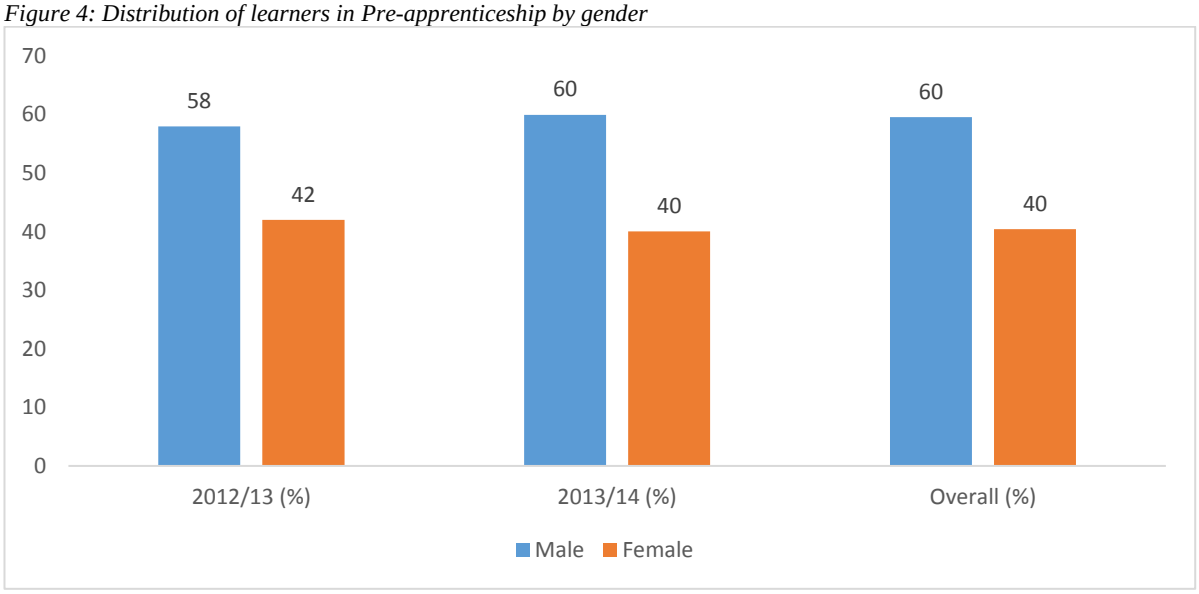
Figure 3: Distribution of learners in Pre-apprenticeship by race



ii) Profile of learners in Pre-apprenticeship by gender

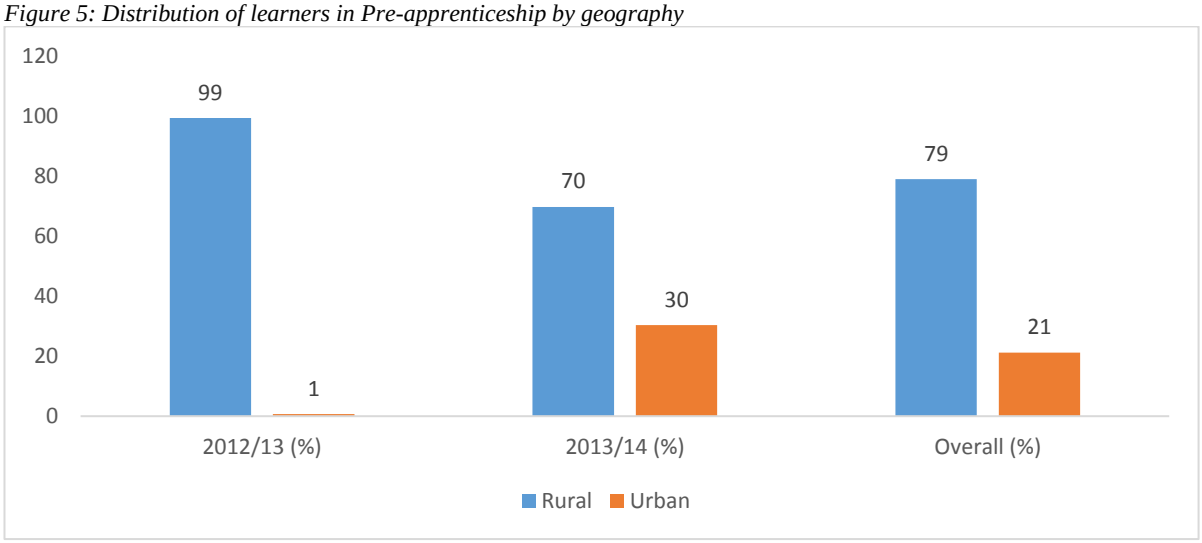
The findings show (figure 4 below) that overall 60% of the learners were males. This distribution was consistent both financial year 2012/13 and 2013/14.

Figure 4: Distribution of learners in Pre-apprenticeship by gender



iii) Profile of learners in Pre-apprenticeship by learner geography

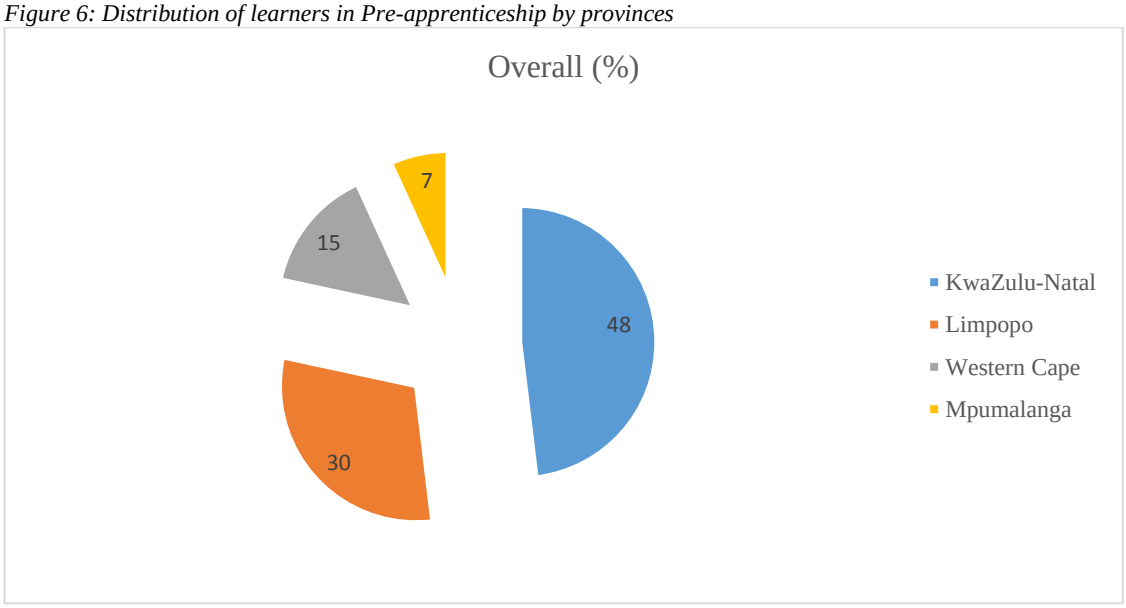
Figure 5: Distribution of learners in Pre-apprenticeship by geography



Overall (Figure 5 above), the population had 79% beneficiaries coming from rural areas. In financial year 2013/14, there was an inclusion of more beneficiaries from urban areas which resulted in an increase from 1% to 30%. Of these learners (from urban areas), 71% were coming from TVET

College 4 and 19% from TVET College 5. Figure 6 below shows that majority of learners were coming from KZN (48%) and Limpopo (30%). It is important to note that across all provinces, with the exception of Western Cape; more than 85% of learners in each province were coming from rural areas.

Figure 6: Distribution of learners in Pre-apprenticeship by provinces



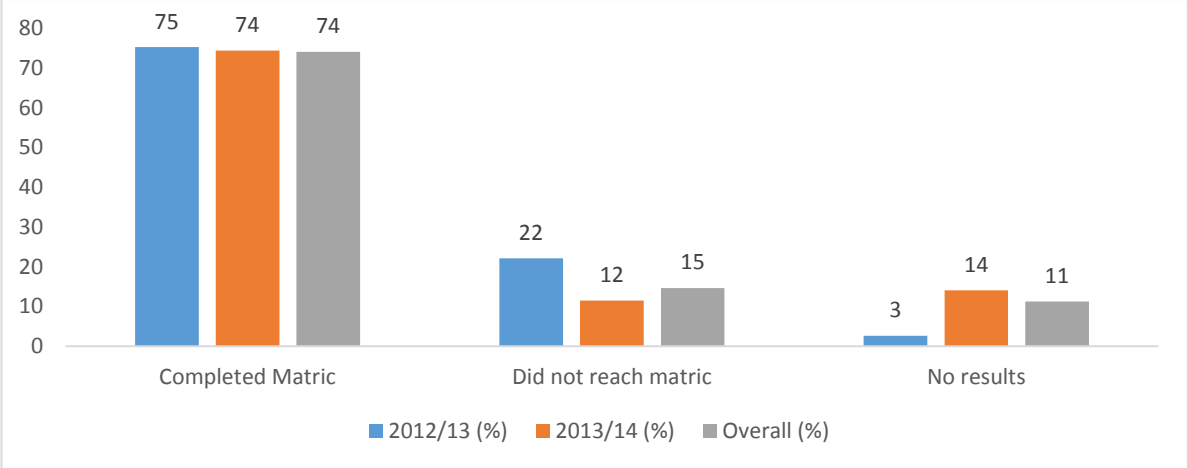
5.1.2. Socio-economic factors of the population

The SQMR/SDP database of pre-apprenticeships was used to draw information on socio-economic factors that learners were associated with before and as they entered into the project.

i) Level and quality of education of learners recruited into Pre-apprenticeship project

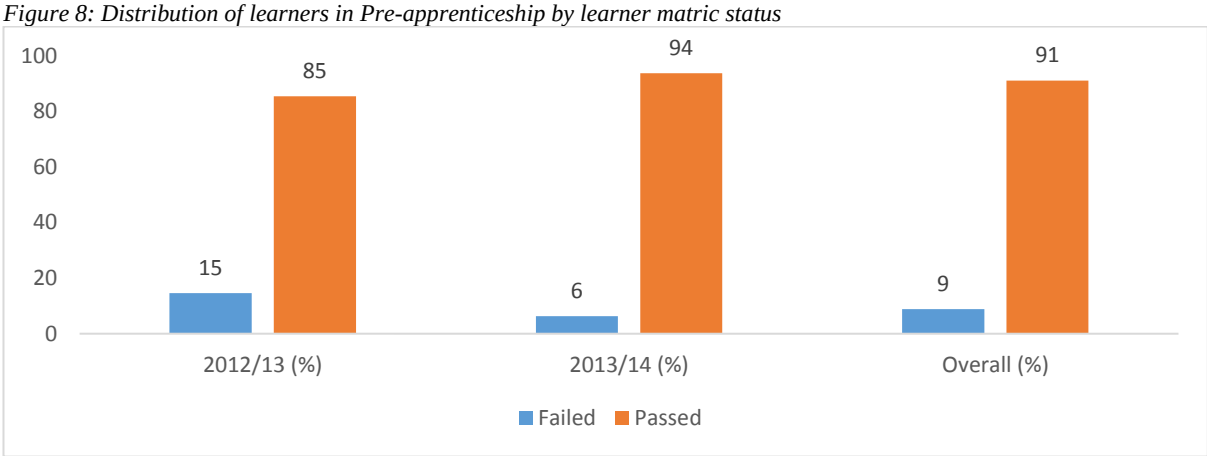
It was important for the study to establish the learner level of education when they enrolled into the Pre-apprenticeship project (see Figure 7). This variable communicates the recruitment standards of the TVET colleges. It also sheds light as to whether the level of education determines, to some degree, the level of achievement of learners for the Nated level 1 course.

Figure 7: Distribution of learners in Pre-apprenticeship by learner education level



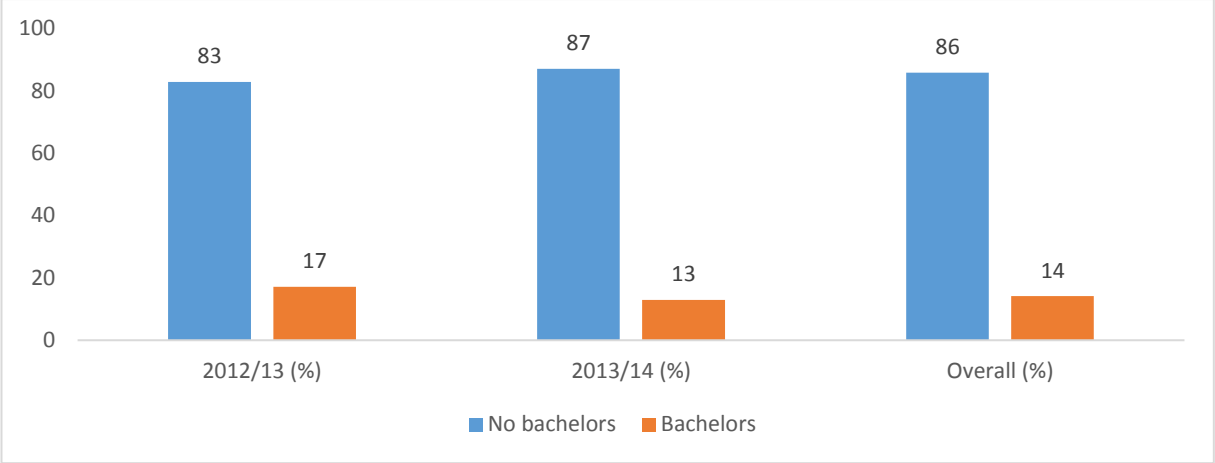
Although the minimum entry requirement for the Nated level 1 course is having Grade 9 as the highest level of achievement, figure 6 above illustrates that, overall, 74% of learners funded by HWSETA for pre-apprenticeship had already completed matric. Those who "completed matric" included learners who passed and those who failed matric. Figure 8 below demonstrates in detail that from all 646 learners who had completed matric, overall, 91% had passed matric.

Figure 8: Distribution of learners in Pre-apprenticeship by learner matric status



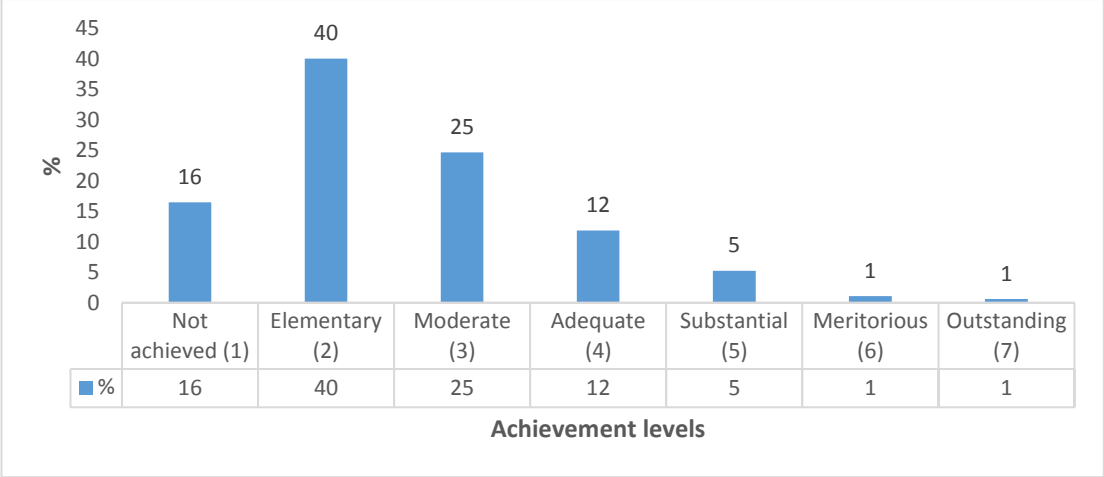
Although the matric pass rate for individual learners was not essential for entry into the learning programme it is important to note that overall, 14% of learners passed their matric and met the entry requirements to study bachelor's degrees (see Figure 9 below).

Figure 9: Distribution of learners in Pre-apprenticeship by type of matric pass



Since the majority of learners enrolled in the programme had completed matric, it is important to analyse their level of achievement as an indicator to future performance. Figure 10, below, illustrates this in detail.

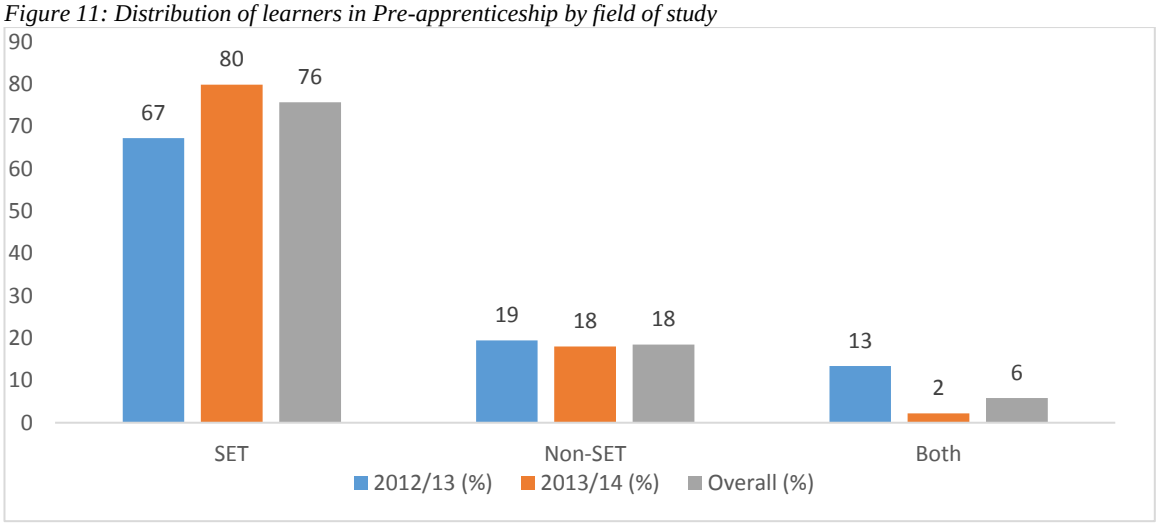
Figure 10: Distribution of learners in Pre-apprenticeship by achievement levels



On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 refers to 'Not achieved' and 7 'Outstanding', the findings show that achievement level 2 and 3 accounted for more than 65% of learner achievement levels (see Figure 10). This gives an indication that the majority of learners enrolled in this learning programme were an elementary to moderate achievers.

Given that the Pre-apprenticeship project is rooted in the science-related field, it was important to assess whether all learners were from the Science, Engineering, and Technology (SET) field of study (Maths and science) when recruited into the programme by the TVET colleges (see Figure 11). Again, this variable will show how recruitment was conducted and may determine, to some degree, whether the learners were likely to pass Nated level 1 or not if coming from the SET field.

Figure 11: Distribution of learners in Pre-apprenticeship by field of study

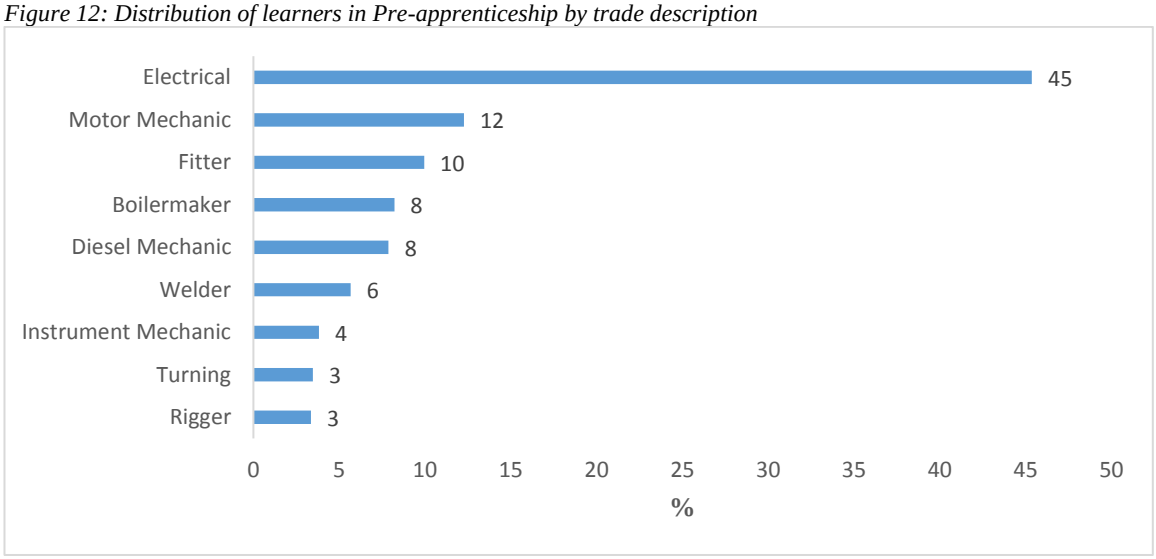


Overall, 76% of learners funded by HWSETA in Pre-apprenticeship had a background in the SET field of study. It is important to note the 13% increase of learners in SET in financial year 2013/14 being recruited by colleges particularly TVET college 3.

ii) Enrolment into Pre-apprenticeship project qualifications

Figure 12 below shows the learner distribution by qualification they were enrolled for. The graph is an overall presentation for both financial year 2012/13 and 2013/14.

Figure 12: Distribution of learners in Pre-apprenticeship by trade description



The findings show that learners in Pre-apprenticeship were predominantly enrolled for trades in electrical (45%) and least (3%) for rigger.

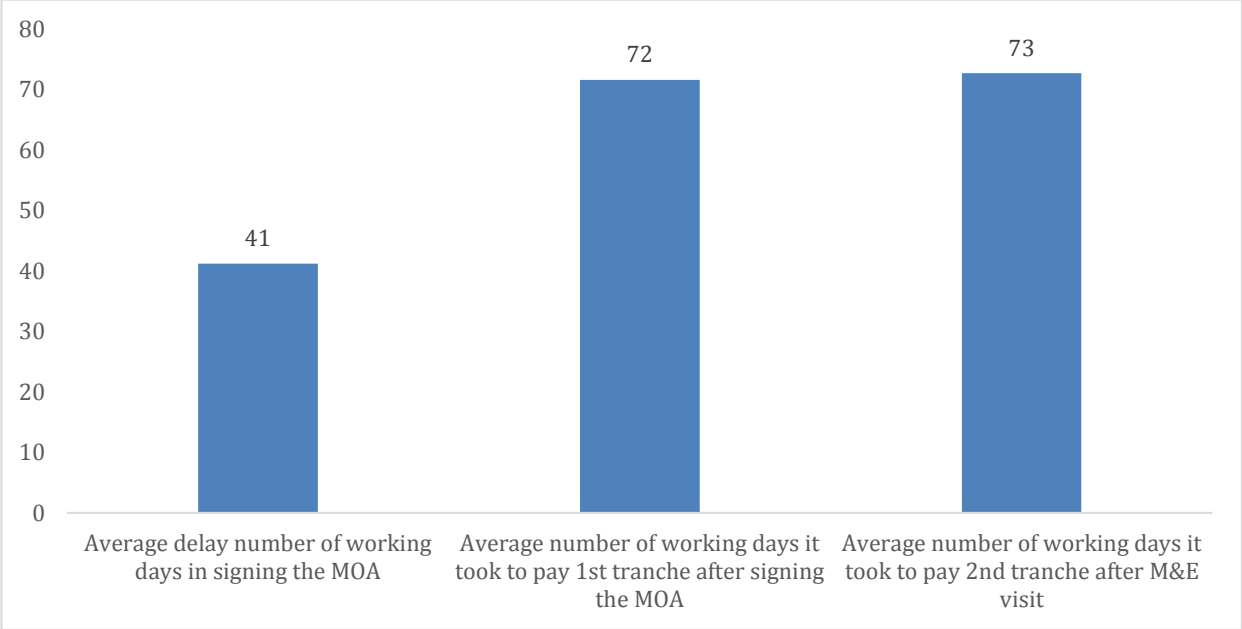
5.1.3. Document review and analysis findings on efficiency of project implementation

Document review and analysis used the advertisement for the submission of Expressions of Interest, approval schedules, MoAs, learner agreement forms; monitoring and evaluation site visit reports, and employer reports to;

- compare the time allocated for project processes and the actual time it took to implement the various stages of the project
- determine the degree to which the project was successful in producing the intended results for delivery processes
- assess the extent to which SDP monitoring tools were able to signal challenges and risks of the project and how this information was used to re-adjust delivery processes

The consultation with the SDP division described the implementation process of the Pre-apprenticeship for 2013/14 as outlined in Figure 2 in section 3.3. The 2012/13 project implementation delivery processes was excluded from the evaluation because all TVET colleges approved for pre-apprenticeship in financial year 2013/14 had been decommitted in 2012/13 with the exception of TVET college 1. The process of implementation for financial year 2013/14 was used because the project was implemented in all five committed TVET colleges. Figure 13 below shows the extent to which implementation was delayed across key stages of project delivery processes.

Figure 13: Delay by the number of working days in signing the MOA and paying 1st and 2nd payment tranche in Pre-apprenticeship project[4]



The deadline for the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was 15 December 2013, which is 20 working days (1 month) from the deadline date of submitting conditional letters to TVET colleges. The deadline for the signing of the MOA was not met across all the five TVET colleges committed to the Pre-apprenticeship project. Instead, on average, there was a delay of 41 working days (2 months) in the signing of MOA (see Figure 13). The signing of the MOA by HWSETA requires that the college must submit 1) completed and signed MOA by the college, 2) learner registration forms for all learners to be funded together with certified copies of their identity document, 3) and a project and training plan. Therefore, the 41 working days (2 months) delay by HWSETA to sign the MOA could be best explained by the processes linked to the three above mentioned activities of the college and HWSETA internal processes.

On average, it took 72 working days (more than 3 months) for HWSETA to pay the first tranche after signing the MOA and 73 days to pay the second tranche after the Monitoring and Evaluation visits were conducted by SDP. According to the conditional approval letter sent to colleges and the MOA document in section 5.2.1, the activities and processes required from the colleges are the same

[4] Average delay number of working days in signing the MOA = Average across all colleges (No of working days between Actual MOA signing date and HWSETA deadline for MOA signing date), average number of working days it took to pay 1st tranche after signing the MOA = average across all colleges (No of working days between 1st tranche payment date and actual MOA signing date), Average number of working days it took to pay 2nd tranche after M&E visit = average across all colleges [(No of working days between 2nd tranche payment date and actual M&E visit date by HWSETA) – 30 days after approval of employer reports]

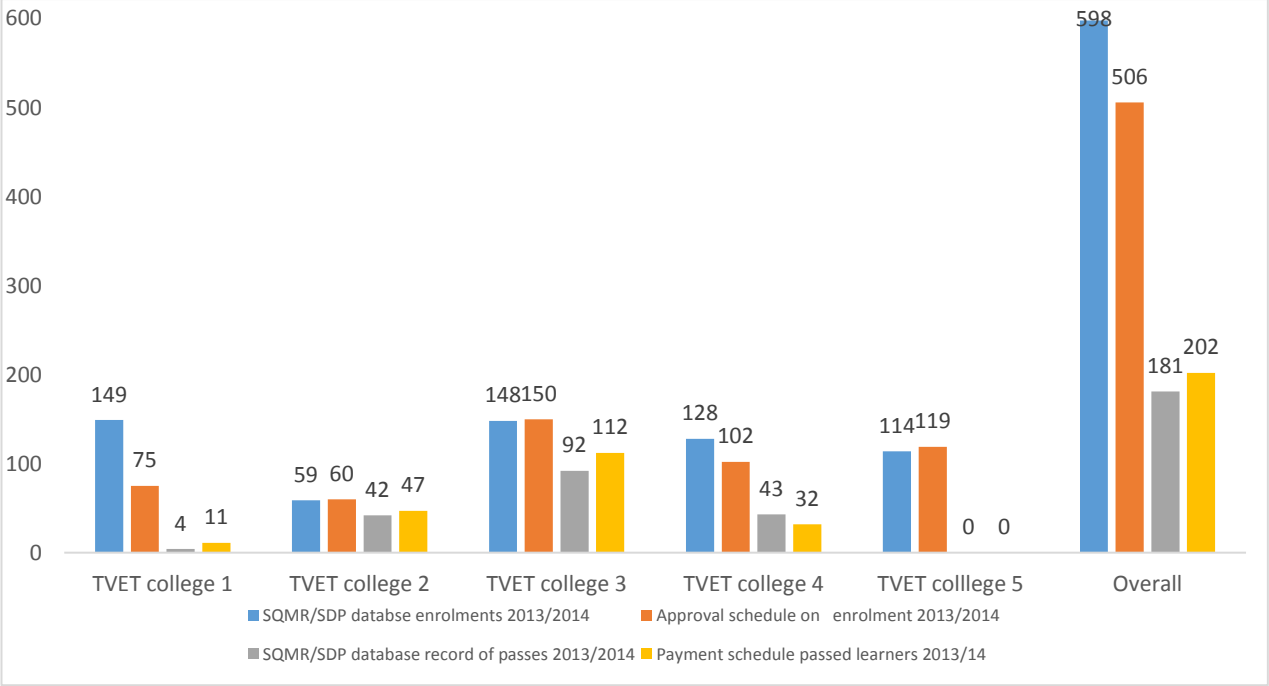
for both signing of the MOA and payment of the first tranche. Therefore, it is not clear what processes caused a delay of 72 working days (more than 3 months) by HWSETA to pay the first tranche after signing the MOA.

In terms of the processes involved for the second tranche, the MOA states that *"payment of the second and final tranche will be made within 30 days after approval of the first employer report, a monitoring and evaluation visit is conducted by an HWSETA official…"* (MOA 2013/14). The 73-working-days (more than 3 months) delay of the 2nd payment tranche to the colleges by the HWSETA can be best explained by employer report delays. The latter requires an account for all learner results, and also the monitoring and visits. The SDP holds the view that colleges' results *"are manual not electronic"* and that *"they [colleges] send all college results manually"* (SDP consultations 2015). This means that the learners' results are manual (hard copies) and mixed with those learners not funded by HWSETA. The implication is that more time is needed to identify HWSETA learners from all college learners thus causing more delay in making second payment.

5.1.4. Bivariate and regression findings on effectiveness of Pre-apprenticeship project

In terms of performance, descriptive findings showed that in financial year 2012/13, 270 learners were enrolled to Pre-apprenticeship with only 22 of them reported in SQMR/SDP database as having passed N1. However, there was no second payment tranche payment for these learners reported in the Payment Schedule information system. This questions the credibility of information between the SQMR/SDP database and Payment Schedule information system. Nonetheless, using the SQMR/SDP database, the pass rate for the financial year 2012/13 was 8% and 30% in 2013/14. Overall pass rate for the entire Pre-apprenticeship project was 23%. Similar discrepancies were observed between SQMR/SDP and Payment Schedule databases in financial year 2013/14 (see Figure14). Findings from Payment schedule database may suggest that more money was paid than was supposed to given that it had 21 more learners than in SQMR/SDP reported as having passed N1 level course.

Figure 14: Number of learners in Pre-apprenticeship who passed according to SQMR/SDP database and Payment schedule database



HWSETA SDP division is responsible for SQMR/SDP database through capturing of information from learner agreement forms. When learners complete the Nated level 1 course the results of their performance are reported by TVET colleges and recorded by the HWSETA SDP division on the SQMR/SDP database. A payment schedule is then compiled by HWSETA SDP division using the SQMR/SDP database as a source and approved by finance division of HWSETA. Therefore, the enrolment and results data from the SQMR/SDP databases for funded students should correspond with the data from the approval and payment schedule respectively. In contrast, SQMR/SDP database and payment schedule database did not contain the same number of learners who passed the Nated level 1 course.

In synthesizing the information shown above, two pass rates were created. One was based on the results recorded on the SQMR/SDP database and the other on the payment schedule database (see Figure 15 below). The intention with figure 15 is to demonstrate the effect of the data discrepancy.

Figure 15: Pass rate (%) of learners in Pre-apprenticeship project who passed accord to SQMR/SDP database and Payment schedule databse in financial year 2013/14

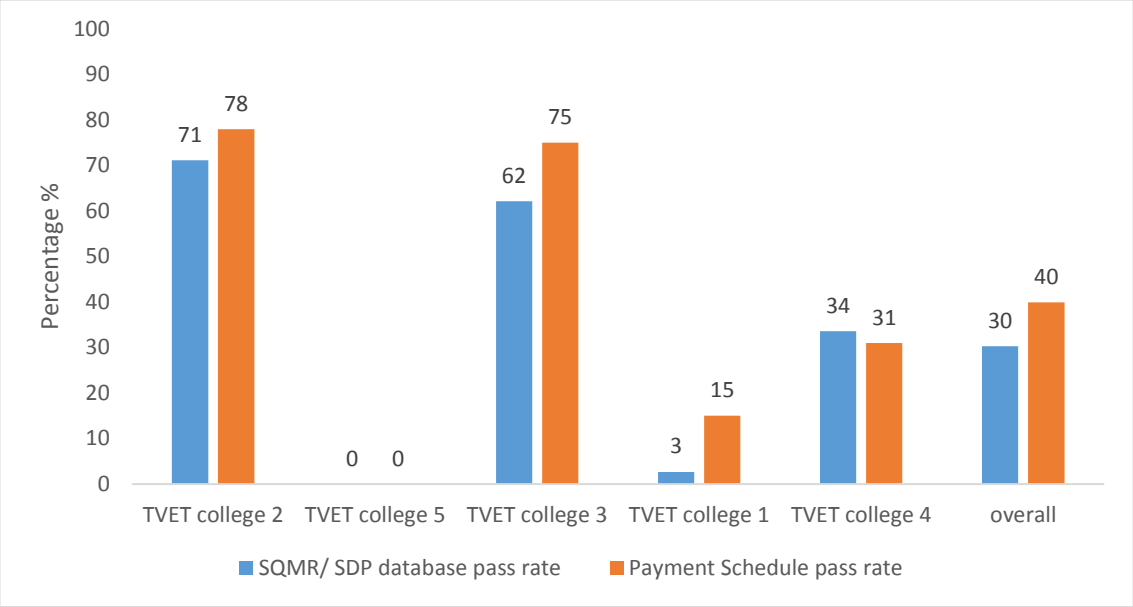


Figure 15 above, irrespective of the discrepancies noted, illustrates that the TVET colleges that had good pass rates (using SQMR/SDP database) were TVET college 2 (71%) and TVET college 3 (62%) college. On the other hand, TVET college 5 (0%) and TVET college 1(3%) college were the worst performers. It is Imperative to note is that the pass rate for TVET college 1 dropped from the 8% in 2012/2013 financial year to 3% in 2013/14 financial year. TVET college 4's performance was poor as less than 50% of the learners passed, but was above the overall (23%) pass rate. These findings demonstrates low performance of the HWSETA in terms of achieving its set outputs thus affecting the achievement of the planned outcomes. Table 9 below depicts this clearly.

Table 9: Performance of Pre-apprenticeship project against set targets using the SQMR/SDP database

Result	Indicator	2012/13 Target	2012/13 Achievement	2013/14 target	2013/14 Achievement	Overall Achievement
Outcome[5] Increased access to artisanship programme	Number of learners supported in pre-apprenticeship training and N-courses to enter artisan programme (progressed learners)	**1000** learners by 31 March 2013.	Unknown	**1000** learners by 31 March 2014.	Unknown	**Unknown**
Output Increased number of learners successfully completing their Nated level 1 qualification	Number of learners that completed[6] the programme	**1000**	267	**1000**	598	**865**
	Pass rate[7] of the learners in Pre-apprenticeship project	**100%**	8%	**100%**	30%	**23%**

Table 9 above shows that there was no monitoring of outcome indicators in the pre-apprenticeship project. As a consequence, bivariate and regression analysis could not focus on learner progression from pre-apprenticeship project to artisanship programme as an outcome variable. Instead learner N1 results, as an indicator of output target of the project contributing towards outcome (progression), was used to identify factors that best explain the success or failure of project implementation. To this end, bivariate analysis was conducted to assess association between various factors and learners passing N1 level course (see Table 10).

[5] At the outcome level, achievement indicators could not be established because the indicator system of HWSETA did not monitor the outcomes of the project. The whole design of the project was input-and-output-driven on things like value of funding and enrolment rates.

[6] The number of learners who completed the programme refers to those learners that wrote the final examinations of the programme. It therefore includes both those who passed and failed but excludes the dropouts. This number was unknown when the learners were replaced.

[7] The pass rate has defined the dropouts as a fail.

Table 10: Association of eight factors with learner N1 results status using chi squared

Factors	Factor values	Learner N1 results status		P-value
		Failed	Passed	
TVET College where a learner went to	Colleges without proper recruitments	95%	5%	0.000
	Colleges with proper recruitment	47%	53%	
Learner field of study	Non-SET	97%	3%	0.000
	SET	68%	32%	
Trade qualification area	Other trades	92%	8%	0.000
	Electrical trade	58%	42%	
Time it took the learner to join the programme	Greater than 3 years	87%	13%	0.000
	3 years or less	69%	31%	
Learner achievement Level prior the programme	Not achieved to elementary	76%	24%	0.005
	Moderate to outstanding	66%	34%	
Learner level of education	No matric	98%	2%	0.000
	With matric	71%	29%	
Learner gender	Male	79%	21%	0.036
	Female	73%	27%	
Age category	Above 33	95%	5%	0.001
	33 and below	75%	25%	

Using chi squared, an association with statistical significance was found between learner N1 results and eight factors shown in Table 10 above. The association was strongly significant across all factors with the exception of learner gender, which had a slightly significant association. The statistical significance in the association only confirms that the factors either influence or are influenced by learner N1 results. As a result, it was crucial to take these factors to a binary regression model to establish the nature of relationship. Other factors such as learner geography (rural vs urban) and race had no association/influence with learner N1 results.

The regression was used to test relationships between these eight factors and learner N1 results. Further, it was used as a tool that can best inform re-orientation of the project by identifying factors that should be prioritised over others based on their level of influence to learners passing N1 level course. To this end, a binary logistic regression was employed. The unit of analysis was at the learner level with all variables being categorical coded 0 and 1.

The findings of the binary logistic regression are displayed below (table 11). The regression model could only accounts for 36% (R squared= 03567) of the sample and was significant (0.0000). The findings show that when other variables are held constant, the odds of passing Nated level 1 course by learners who had enrolled at the TVET colleges with functional recruitment systems were ten times greater than the odds of learners from the TVET colleges without functional recruitment systems. This factor had a significant statistical relationship with learners passing N1 level course.

Table 11: Relationship between learner N1 results and other factors

Variable[8]	**Model [all factors] Odds ratio**	**P > |z| (significance level)**
TVET College where a learner went to	**9.925498**[9]	0.000
Learner field of study	**7.612356**	0.002
Trade qualification area	**2.698113**	0.000
Time it took the learner to join the programme	**1.724325**	0.036
Learner achievement Level prior the programme	1.344832	0.204
Learner level of education	1.26385	0.718
Learner gender	0.8139916	0.385
Age category	7.085106	0.077
Number of observations = 628		

Findings showed that the odds to pass the Nated level 1 course by learners with a background in SET were 8 times greater than their counterparts. Findings further showed that the odds of passing

[8] For the purpose of analysis, variables as seen in table 10 were recoded. Variable 'TVET College where a learner went to' has value '0' for the TVET colleges (TVET college 1 &5) which had no proper recruitment and '1' for all other remaining three colleges with proper recruitment. Variable 'Learner field of study' has value '0' for those learners who had indicated that they were either 'non SET' or 'both' and value '1' for those learners who had indicated that they had 'SET' background. Variable 'Trade qualification area' has value '0' for all other qualifications with the exception of 'electrical' which is value '1'. Variable 'time it took the learner to join the programme' has value '0' for learners who took more than 3 years to join the programme and value '1' for learners who took 3 years or less to join the programme. Variable 'Learner achievement level prior the programme' has value '0' for learners who had achieved 2.5 or less in the scale of achievement level and value '1' for learners who had achieved more than 2.5 in the scale of achievement level. Variable 'learner level of education' has value '0' for learners who had not done matric at all and value '1' for learners who had done matric before joining the programme. Variable 'learner gender' has value '0' for male learners and value '1' for female learners. Variable age category has value '0' for those above 33 and '1' for those at 33 and below.

[9] The odds ratio results are written in bold when the P value for the variable concerned has statistical significance

the Nated level 1 course by learners enrolled in electrical qualification were three times higher than their counterparts. The odds of passing Nated level 1 course by learners who took three years or less in joining the programme since their previous schooling were two times more than the odds of learners who took more than 3 years in joining the programme. In essence, these findings suggest that the learners are more likely to pass Nated level 1 course when enrolled in TVET colleges with functional recruitment processes, having a background in Maths and Science, enrolled for electrical qualification, and joining the programme sooner after finishing school.

There was no statistical significance obtained for other variables such as achievement level prior joining the programme, level of education, and gender. This means that there was no relationship between these factors and passing the Nated level 1 course. While these findings may be considered as credible evaluation evidence, it is important to note that the model excludes the process-related factors that were not collected at a quantitative level. It, therefore, cannot be established whether the delay in processes of different stages of Pre-apprenticeship project explains the pass rate better than the factors analysed in this model.

There are two key lessons that must be considered from this model as explanatory factors of passing Nated level 1 course. These factors are at institutional level of TVET colleges and individual level of learners with specific reference to background knowledge. Functional recruitment systems at the institutional level of TVET colleges ensured that suitable learners were recruited to the Pre-apprenticeship project. Suitability was more linked to learner academic background than socio-economic background. The nature and pace of Nated level 1 course requires a learner to have sufficient knowledge and understanding of maths and science. This was evident when the learner background's field of study prior the Pre-apprenticeship project was the second factor with more influence towards passing Nated level 1 course. The background knowledge was so crucial that learners who had spent more than three years after their previous schooling had less chance of passing Nated level 1 course than their counterparts. Further, learner background knowledge had an effect on how learners coped in their chosen trades. It is the view of the study that the failure of most learners in other trades that were more complex than electricity explains this rationale. Ultimately, the inference from this model is that Pre-apprenticeship project is confronted with a fundamental conflict between its social relevance to target the most disadvantaged against those with more prospect of succeeding in the project (from SET field of study and recently finished their schooling in a year or so especially from grade 12). The latter is consistent with findings made by

Nick Taylor (2004) which imply that in South Africa better performance is directly linked to better resources and high socio-economic status.

5.2. Qualitative findings from primary data

The study has two sets of primary data, one that was collected from the TVET college personnel and learners through semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview was administered either after an individual qualitative interview or after focus group. Using thematic analysis, the primary qualitative data yielded information on the following identified and emergent themes:

- Recruitment and selection processes of the TVET colleges;
- Process of awarding HWSETA funding to selected beneficiaries;
- The implications of the delays that occurred during the implementation of the project by the HWSETA.
- Misinterpretation of the scope of the Pre-apprenticeship project
- Relevance of the HWSETA funded Pre-Apprenticeship project
- Propositions made by all Pre-apprenticeship stakeholders

The sub-sections below presents and interprets the above-mentioned themes.

5.2.1. Selection and recruitment of learners

The findings drawn from this theme indicate that learners were specifically recruited for the HWSETA funded Pre-apprenticeship project. Findings further show that the criteria for selection encompassed academic field of science and performance, financial neediness and the region where learners came from, i.e. rural or urban. While the minimum entry requirements for Nated level 1 is grade 9, most TVET college recruitment policies expected each candidate to have studied grade twelve and passed Maths and Science with a minimum score of 40%. Candidates who met this criterion were assessed for aptitude through a test called “CAP” test or “PACE”, which tested knowledge in Maths and English.

The findings of this study indicate that not all TVET colleges applied the selection criteria for academic performance. These included TVET colleges 1 and 5. The selection processes of the two colleges were therefore looked at more closely, and the following were the findings:

TVET college 5 case

The findings indicate that this TVET college was not the initiator for participating in the HWSETA funded Pre-Apprenticeship project. Instead, a training provider approached the TVET college 5 and offered to facilitate the process and implement the project on its behalf. When interviewed, the skills development provider stated;

> The HWSETA advertised the programme in a newspaper, as a service provider, I took the advert to Lephalale TVET college and approached the principal with it because I have a good relationship with the Lephalale TVET college and all the prisons in Limpopo (Training provider, interview, 15 October 2015).

As a result, the whole HWSETA funded pre-apprenticeship project for TVET college 5 was outsourced to the training provider. Training provider recruited and selected persons who were incarcerated (offenders) at Polokwane Correctional Centre. The advantage of this undertaking was that the offenders, as a disadvantaged group, were targeted as the primary beneficiaries of the project. The Department of Correctional Services (DCS) officials facilitated the recruitment and selection of these learners (offenders). The criteria for selection was premised on three elements namely; 1) proof of South African ID, 2) Level of education (particularly grade 10 and above), and 3) the inmate had to at least be guaranteed a stay within the prison for a duration of 2 years. This criterion was different from the standard one. This meant that, no learners registered by TVET College 5 met the standard selection criteria for entering the Nated level 1 course.

TVET college 1 case

The findings demonstrate that Nated level 1 course was not fully integrated at TVET college 1 as an academic programme considering that it had to be re-instituted particularly for the HWSETA funded Pre-Apprenticeship project. Most importantly, the findings show that all learners admitted for the Nated level 1 course were those who did not meet the entry requirements for the Nated level

2 course. A lecturer from this TVET college narrated how learners were admitted into the Nated level 1 course for the 2012/13 HWSETA funded Pre-Apprenticeship project:

> This programme [Pre-apprenticeship project] when it came here there was no N1 course. We were starting from N2 up to N3 as full time. There was an introduction that Sundumbili [campus] will focus on artisan development starting from N1 to N3. Now there was no clear guideline to say…in terms of recruitment what criteria are we going to follow…We were saying if you don't have grade 12 or you did grade 12 but never passed it and you aren't able to go back [supplementary]… then we say you go back and do N1…to us we were not in a position to turn the students away we had to look at what they had. If their maths and science were not good our only route was to say go to N1 (TVET official C, interview, 14 September 2015).

This implies that no standard was used to select learners for admission into the 2012/13 HWSETA funded pre-apprenticeship project. The findings show that those facilitating learner recruitment processes had to apply their discretion in identifying learners without any specific guideline. Finally, the college officials perceived N1 as a 'bridging course' or 'second chance' learners who could not meet the standard required at N2 level. The implication is that there was no specific standard set for N1 by the college in 2012/13 financial year. Instead, the recruitment of learners to N1 was broad and accommodative of anyone who did not meet N2 requirements. One of the lecturers from TVET college 1 admitted that "*earlier on [2012/13] we took the learners who had not done grade 12 but after realised the negative effect of this decision we then emphasized on grade 12 results [in 2013/14]"* (TVET official D, interview, 15 September 2015*)*. The college reported to have used their experience to improve their recruitment processes in the following financial year.

The cases TVET colleges 1 and 5 provides examples of the challenges experienced by some of the TVET colleges during recruitment and selection of learners. HWSETA SDP division maintains that the HWSETA did not prescribe the selection criteria for academic performance to the TVET colleges. It, therefore, was upon each TVET college to determine their entry requirements.

5.2.2. Process of awarding HWSETA funding to learners

Learners meeting requirements for candidature for the HWSETA pre-apprenticeship were informed by telephone or SMS messages. One of the learners from TVET college 1 explained, *"I received a phone call from the college that I was accepted for the bursary, they also gave me the starting date*

for the course, they showed us the premises, the teacher/lecture, books, school bags, stationery, pencil case etc," (TVET college 1 learner focus group, interview, 16 September 2015). Other learners confirmed this and went further to state that the message also requested that they bring their identity documents and matric certificates. These documents were attached to the HWSETA learner agreements, which were completed and signed by the learners. One of the learners stated this challenge as follows, *"When I remember there were agreements we had to sign at that time. However, I will be lying if I say I know the value of the bursary which funded me"* (TVET college 1 learner focus group, interview, 16 September 2015). Most learners confirmed that they were not informed about the amount of funding they would receive and what HWSETA was about. For some learners, it was the first time they heard of HWSETA.

5.2.3. The implications of the delays that occurred during implementation of the project by HWSETA

i) Implications of the delays in signing the MOA and payment of funds to the TVET colleges

The findings of the study indicate that the delay in the signing of MoA by HWSETA not only delayed the first payment tranche but also affected the academic programme of the N1 learners. First, without a signed MoA by HWSETA as a legal binding document of commitment, the TVET colleges could not procure resources necessary to implement the HWSETA funded pre-apprenticeship project. *"This is the policy of the college; we will never start to implement a project that we do not have a fully signed MoA in place by all parties"* (TVET official S, interview, 07 October 2015). This illustrates the importance of signing the MoA timely since each party has an obligation to comply with their internal organizational accounting processes. The delay in signing of MoA therefore resulted in the training commencing way after the first trimester started.

Second, the delay to commencing training for the project had serious implications for the recruitment and selection process. The TVET colleges reported that by the time they started implementing the project *"some of the students had decided to enrol in other programmes. So as an institution we had to start afresh to recruit learners"* (TVET official A, interview, 15 September

2015). This meant that the learners whose learner registration forms were submitted to the HWSETA for registration into the project were replaced. The new learners however were not given HWSETA learner registration forms to complete and sign. As thus, no notification was made to HWSETA that the learners initially registered on the project had been replaced. This caused further problems to reporting, as the TVET colleges reported based on the new learners that were not registered with the HWSETA while the HWSETA expected reports on learners registered on its database.

The third, notable delay, which had a significant negative effect on the TVET colleges and the learners, was the delay of the payment of both tranches, particularly the second tranche. The first tranche was supposed to be paid immediately after the MoAs were signed. For three of the TVET colleges (TVET college 1, 3, and 5) the first tranche was paid during the third trimester. The other two TVET colleges (1 and4) received the first tranche ten working days, on average, before the first trimester ended. As the second trimester commenced on 5 May 2014 learners who were beneficiaries to the HWSETA funding owed either the total fees or 50% of the fees. The implications of these delays were dire to some of the learners because they could not progress to the Nated level 2 course since they could not pay for their tuition fees on their own. The delays in the payment of the second payment tranche affected both the TVET colleges and learners. *"The 2nd tranche is always the problem,"* (TVET official B, interview, 14 September 2015). All the TVET colleges shared this view. A TVET official F confirmed that the second payment tranche *"took very long…that I even forgot until finance [division] reminded me,"* (Interview, 28 September 2015). While the TVET colleges blamed the HWSETA for the delay, the HWSETA also blamed the TVET colleges stating that *"the problem is with the second tranche because of results…their results are manual not electronic,"* (SDP consultation, 29 September 2015). It was, therefore, important for the study to test the views of both stakeholders (HWSETA and TVET colleges) in relation to the process of implementation.

According to the process, the payment of the second tranche by HWSETA is determined by the following; operations monitoring visit by the HWSETA, and submission of the progress report by TVET colleges. Thereafter a payment is made only for those learners who passed to progress to the next Nated level. A TVET official B mentioned that the implementation monitoring visit by

HWSETA took place very late; *"they only came during the 2nd trimester…all learners had completed their course, as a result, they couldn't find any learners in the class. The learners had already written their exams and gone home,*" (TVET official B, interview, 14 September 2015). This negative effect on the project was a consequence of HWSETA actions because the HWSETA has the sole discretion on when and how to conduct the implementation monitoring visit. This means the TVET college had no power to dictate to HWSETA on when they could come for the implementation monitoring visit. Only when these visits had been concluded could the TVET colleges send the progress reports. The TVET colleges, however, admitted that they somewhat contributed to the delay of the payment of the second tranche. TVET official B stated, *"the [learner] results also affect the payment process because sometimes the results are not released [by the college] on time. And we had to wait maybe a month or so"* (interview, 14 September 2015). An official TVET College justified this, stating,

> The problem is by the time the results were needed for N1, most of the students were doing N3 and some had dropped out of the programme or left the college. So it became a challenge now because you (HWSETA) will say 'I need results of that ten' which you find that now we are in the third trimester of which you still require results for the first trimester. (TVET official X, interview, 05 October 2015)

This explanation demonstrates how slow HWSETA processes were against the TVET college's academic calendar and its nature of the operation. The latter was clearly stated by one of the TVET college officials that HWSETA drafted the MOA as if it had no "*understanding that the programme is going to be conducted on a trimester… on which date will it be signed and where will be the learners after that period"* (TVET official X, interview, 05 October 2015). As a result, there were delays from the TVET colleges in submitting employer reports because they either had incomplete or no information. This was so severe in other TVET colleges, such as TVET college 8, such that they were de-committed from the project by HWSETA. Indirectly, this underscores the point made by HWSETA SDP official about the weak data management systems of the TVET colleges. For an institution such as the public college, it is supposed to have academic learner results in its data management system electronically which could be retrieved at any time upon official requests. In this sense, the second payment tranche delay is a combination of weaknesses from both HWSETA and TVET colleges.

Fourth, the role of funding should create security for learners so that they focus on their studies. Learners are secure when their needs are met. In this project learner's needs mainly constitute; 1) an opportunity to study at the college for N1 and progress to N2 or N3, 2) money for transportation, renting and food. The HWSETA funding model creates a lot of insecurity for learners since it has no stipend to cover transportation, renting, and food. It also does not commit to support the learner for progression instead promises to only pay for N1 tuition fees in full only if the learner passes without giving the learner financial support for supplementary exams. One of the project coordinators from the colleges expressed his views in this regard:

> The learner needs security in terms of funding for his whole studies, not piecemeal funding because it creates uncertainty with the learner and the college… So the learners will prefer another funding model from another SETA which offers them a longer duration of security (TVET official S, interview, 07 October 2015).

This indicates that HWSETA funding is not a preferred funding to learners and the colleges because of the funding model that creates insecurity to learners and the colleges.

The level of insecurity because of the funding model of Pre-apprenticeship project was severe considering that most of the learners targeted were described as *"very disadvantaged,"* (TVET official F, interview, 28 September 2015). This characterization was best explained by the fact that *"they are from rural townships"* (TVET official G, interview, 29 September 2015). It was reported that because of where the learners were coming from, which was far from the TVET colleges, they needed money for transportation. Moreover, in cases where there was no effective mode of transport to take them to the TVET colleges, money for renting closer was a necessity. The project coordinators argued that a lack of a stipend for these learners was the biggest challenge for them. The view was that a stipend could best meet the needs mentioned above. The lack of a stipend made learners more vulnerable to hunger as well. More significantly *"sometimes learners are absent from classes but it's normally because of financial problems,"* (TVET official E, interview, 15 September 2015). This was crucial information as it presented itself primarily as an underlying factor for learners missing classes or dropping out of the pre-apprenticeship Nated level 1 course. In this way, socio-economic challenges ultimately affected learner's academic performance.

Fifth, learners raised concerns with regards to educational resources which generally refer to resources with a specific function and value to learning and training of a learner i.e. books, calculators etc. The findings indicate that some TVET colleges gave books to learners while others did not, but instead rented them out. The latter is premised on the fact that the HWSETA funding does not cover books or other educational resources but only pays for the tuition of the learners. The challenges associated with the TVET colleges that rented out books was that the books were limited. Some learners could not even afford to rent books considering that it was *"R1000 rand to get all the textbooks in each trimester"* (TVET official H, interview, 29 September 2015). The TVET colleges which gave books to the learners had challenges of their own. It is important to note that TVET colleges 1 and 5 belonged to this category. Learners said *"when we at the college attending, the books arrive very late…almost a month"* (TVET college 1 learner focus group, interview, 16 September 2015). It is important to consider that the duration of a trimester is three months. Therefore, a month delay of books, which are the primary learning material of the learners, would have had a significant effect on learner academic performance.

Similarly, the learners (inmates) from DCS under TVET college 5 were also affected. The view of the learners was that the calculators were not suited for the content of the course they were engaged in. i.e. calculators were not genuine scientific calculators. Learners also indicated that although the books were available for Nated level 1 course they had to find their own way around the books because there was a shortage of lectures. Most importantly, learners (inmates) had limited time for learning and training. The learners (inmates) indicated that they normally attend three days in a week. In each day, they normally took 2-3 hours for a learning session. Given the nature of the course and the pace needed (3 months), the learners felt it would have been better to have more time in a classroom and more frequently.

Lastly, the HWSETA Pre-apprenticeship funding model disadvantages colleges because they lose money of the second tranche when a learner fails to pass N1. A managerial official from one of the TVET colleges explained (TVET official A, interview, 15 September 2015):

> I feel it's unfair to the college or to any provider because it does not mean the provider did not perform its duties. The training did take place for the whole 3 months and the student sat for the exams. So it is upon the learner to succeed in the exam

The colleges argued that learners funded by HWSETA equally received their services in terms of learning and training and other resources as other learners. A college official emphasized that *"students have already attended, the lecturer has already been paid, the books are already given then the HWSETA says its [2nd payment tranche] is conditional. It's [HWSETA] working differently from all other SETAs, and from NSFAS as well"* (TVET official F, interview, 28 September 2015). The latter shows that this condition in the MOA isolated HWSETA from all other funders in the sector. HWSETA's perspective in this regard was that *"when a college recruits it is upon them to apply a recruitment process to ensure that a learner won't cost them"* (SDP consultation, 29 September 2015). HWSETA's stance places the responsibility of a learner passing or failing solely on the recruitment process performed by the college itself.

v) Implications of poor planning in project implementation

The study showed that there was poor planning of the project by HWSETA considering that its timing was not aligned to the operations of the TVET colleges. One of the TVET college officials (TVET official A, interview, 15 September 2015) mentioned that by the time Pre-apprenticeship was introduced to the college;

> We've already enrolled [learners]. The campuses have already met their targets of enrolments…which will mean that since they've already allocated students to lecturers so we need an extra person [lecturer] to support the programme because there will be extra numbers of learners.

Poor planning resulted to negative consequences for the TVET colleges by increasing the operational costs i.e. hiring of the part-time lecturers. This demonstrates a need for the HWSETA to embed the Pre-apprenticeship project to the academic calendar of the TVET colleges.

Furthermore, the delays associated with the process of implementation such as signing of the MOA created complications for the recruitment of the learners. A TVET college official S (interview, 07 October 2015) emphasized that *"because of the initial delays in the documentation and the approval processes, once all the documentation is in place the challenge is that the learners are not in place… So the programme managers struggle to recruit the learners."*. As a result, TVET colleges replaced the learners originally enrolled and submitted for funding to the HWSETA. In essence, poor

planning of the project by HWSETA increased operational costs for the TVET colleges unnecessarily and made implementation difficult.

Poor planning of the project also affected learners directly as it limited them from progressing to further levels of the Pre-apprenticeship training. *"There is no continuity in terms of the project which is a limitation"* (TVET official F, interview, 28 September 2015). The learners questioned the thinking behind the HWSETA design of the project as it relates to progression. *"So even if you have done N1 but it's something so useless. You won't see anything from the posts or even from the internet requiring N1it's always N2 and above"* (TVET college 1 learner focus group, interview, 16 September 2015). This is evidence that according to the learner's experience of the project, there is no value add in doing Nated level 1 course without progressing to Nated level 2 and 3 courses, which are more relevant for the prospects of finding employment, or becoming an artisan or technician. During consultation with HWSETA SDP division, there was an admission that it was incorrect for the design and planning of Pre-apprenticeship (Nated level 1 course) project not to be linked to apprenticeship. This meant the HWSETA funding model had no provision for the progression of learners to Nated levels 2 and 3 courses. The findings showed that confining the funding to Nated level 1 course did not benefit learners and TVET colleges but instead disadvantaged them.

5.2.4. Misinterpretation of the scope of the Pre-apprenticeship project

Across all the TVET colleges, the findings demonstrate that there was no clear indication of the scope of the Pre-apprenticeship project from the HWSETA to the TVET colleges. TVET college officials admitted that they *"…did not know the intent from the beginning"* (TVET official F, interview, 28 September 2015). TVET colleges attributed this confusion to the lack of a proper induction programme clearly defining duties, functions, and scope of the project. This view was also shared by HWSETA SDP division as stated in their implementation monitoring report *"there was no evidence of induction/orientation"* (Gila 2015, 6).

The TVET college officials had a different understanding of the Pre-apprenticeship training. The TVET college's view of Pre-apprenticeship training meant any level from Nated levels 1 to 3, and Nated levels 4 to 6 (before apprenticeship which takes place at the workplace); while to HWSETA's view this was only limited to the Nated level 1. Therefore, the expectation of the TVET colleges was for HWSETA to continue to fund the learners to other N-levels beyond Nated level 1 up to the apprenticeship training offered by companies. The following extracts from TVET college officials demonstrate their concerns in this regard;

> I feel very bad about what you guys did; you just dropped learners like hot potatoes… It's just N 1 then what? It's not even an exit level… It's like you haven't done... [anything]." (TVET official F, interview, 28 September 2015) … "At the end of the day, you find that you take a person to N1 he is still not an artisan you take him to N2 still he is still not an artisan. Don't talk to me about Pre-apprenticeship, or N1or N2 talk to me about getting him fully as an artisan (TVET official T, interview, 07 October 2015).

These views, as shown above, explain why TVET colleges naturally expected continuity of HWSETA commitment beyond the Nated level 1, in-spite of the Expression of Interest and MoA that stated otherwise. A TVET college official emphasized that HWSETA *"is the only SETA"* (TVET official B, interview, 14 September 2015) which does not take the learners through to the Nated level 3 course. This means, the HWSETA Pre-apprenticeship project operations went against the prevailing culture of artisan-related projects in TVET sector.

The findings also signaled that there was an expectation commonly held by the TVET colleges that the HWSETA should facilitate the placement of learners to employers for apprenticeship purposes. The TVET colleges expressed their disappointment that HWSETA had not been able to make this aspect a priority; *"our challenge on this side (the college) is to find the host employer to sign. The day we want to start the project we find out that HWSETA did not think about the workplace"* (TVET official S, interview, 07 October 2015). The view of the TVET colleges is that there is no apprenticeship without the employer in the middle of everything. This finding also indicates that the TVET college expected the funder to have a meaningful commitment from the beginning which would assist the learner all the way from pre-apprenticeship (as defined by TVET colleges Nated levels 1 to 3 or to 6) to apprenticeship (under an employer).

The misinterpretation of the scope of the Pre-apprenticeship project as a theme shows that absence of induction led to the TVET colleges and learners having different expectations from those of the

funder (HWSETA). Evidence from the Department of Labour shows that the view of HWSETA is not aligned to the TVET college's and industry's structuring of the Pre-Apprenticeship training (Department of Labour Apprentices pamphlet 2). Of the utmost importance from these findings is that TVET colleges, in general, begun to view HWSETA as failing the same learners it had intended to assist. This perception has to be attended to as it taints and challenges the reason why the HWSETA Pre-apprenticeship project exists.

5.2.5. Relevance of the HWSETA funded Pre-apprenticeship project to unemployed learners as primary beneficiaries

The findings drawn from the interviews show challenges that the Nated programme posed to the training of unemployed learners as its design was meant for employed persons.

A TVET college official explained;

> Nated programme was meant for companies to train their workers for a specific short period that is for 3 months then after that they go back to their workplace. So that is why they [the Nated programmes] were very short but as time goes by and the demand for training then there was a development of trimester and the semester programmes as well. (TVET official U, interview, 05 October 2015).

According to this perspective of the TVET college official, Nated programmes were specifically designed to serve the needs and interests of the companies by targeting the already employed workforce for upskilling. The nature of the Nated programme by design is theoretical and short. In this way, the practical component was guaranteed to take place through the employer in a workplace environment. Although this programme has seen a number of unemployed learners dominating in numbers, resource allocation at TVET colleges has not increased to accommodate the new demands. The NCV programme on the other hand was designed to cater for the needs of unemployed learners as thus TVET colleges have resources for the NCV programme much more than the Nated programme. TVET colleges try to spread the resources to cater for the Nated Programme as well, however, the NCV programme always get preference. A lecturer from one of the TVET colleges articulated this fact clearly as he stated that *"Nated programme is another session in the afternoon because we have two things that are running parallel; it's a Nated programme and NCV programme"* said (TVET official G, interview, 29 September 2015). This arrangement was arrived at because of the lack of classrooms at the TVET college campuses. It was indicated from the

interviews that sometimes learners enrolled in Nated programme did not attend if the NCV learners were using all the classrooms. *"We usually struggle to attend; we sometimes wait for the NCVs to finish attending so that we can use their classes"* said a learner from Letaba TVET college (TVET college 3 learner focus group, 30 September 2015). In addressing the resource challenge, TVET colleges *"source staffing from outside [and] getting the accommodation [for classes] from outside"* (TVET official T, interview, 07 October 2015) depending on the value of funding and conditions imposed by the MOA of the funder.

These findings suggest that the design of the Pre-apprenticeship project had to acknowledge the changes that the Nated programme had undergone such as the shift from employed to unemployed learners. This should have entailed securing the transition of learners from Nated level 1 through level 3 and to apprenticeship (workplace) which offers a practical component. This would have made the Nated programme (theoretically based) to come full circle. Further, the findings illustrate that the value of funding and conditions attached to it shapes the form and sustainability of the project. Lastly, it can also be drawn from this theme that Nated level 1 course (consequently Pre-apprenticeship project) is not fully integrated to the TVET colleges at the policy, academic, and operational level.

5.2.6. Propositions made by all Pre-apprenticeship project stakeholders

According to the HWSETA SDP consultation (21 August 2015), *"the agreement from the word go should commit for the entire qualification"*. This was important, the official argued, because the normal pathway of the learners is through Nated levels 1 to 3 then it branches into two, either:

a. CMBI (6 months) then workplace experience for 2 and ½ years before the Trade test which, upon successful result, one becomes a qualified artisan.

or

b. Continues through Nated levels 4 to 6 and then goes to workplace experience which can be adjusted to short period depending on the competencies developed during studying. (HWSETA Projects sub-division official, consultation, 21 August 2015).

HWSETA SDP views suggest that the funding model should have a provision to support the learners from Nated levels 1 to 3. Thereafter, the HWSETA should decide whether it wants to continue funding the learners for the apprenticeship through the employer or progress learners from Nated levels 4 to 6. The TVET college officials also recognised the importance of funding Nated levels 1 to 3, but expressed a concern with progressing learners through Nated levels 4 to 6. In this regard, TVET officials stated the following:

> Enrolling them on N4 will just be a waste. The industries are looking for N2, N3 (TVET official B, interview, 14 September 2015)… you'll find that some of the students have done N4, N5, and N6 and are sitting at home and doing nothing. They are unemployable because according to the industry they are too qualified (TVET official A, interview, 14 September 2015).

This suggests that apprenticeship under an employer should be facilitated when a learner has finished the Nated level 3 course instead of progressing the learner to Nated levels 4 to 6. *"I think HWSETA should facilitate with companies around the college and offer stipends to students when placed to companies"* said a lecturer (TVET official E, interview, 15 September 2015).

Concerning the MoA condition for second payment tranche, it was suggested that the learners who fail need to be supported for supplementary exams. Challenges related to educational resources and socio-economic needs can be resolved by including their cost in the bursary pack from the beginning. The TVET colleges also suggested that the standard for recruitment of learners should be defined by HWSETA as a funder. This will give authority to the TVET colleges to select learners that meet the funder's standard.

A TVET official B (interview, 14 September 2015) stated that the key solution to all the challenges of Pre-apprenticeship project was *"to increase the level of communication between the college and HWSETA"*. The understanding is that communication will create a platform for proper consultation between HWSETA and TVET colleges in redefining the funding model and other issues for the betterment of the project. This, TVET colleges argue, will improve the practicality of the project by aligning it with the timeframe of the academic plan of the TVET colleges.

6. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation study was to assess if Pre-apprenticeship project is being implemented in an efficient manner according to set standards agreed upon project documentation. Thereafter, establish whether the project is effective in attaining set outcomes (learner progression from pre-apprenticeship to artisanship programme), sustainable and relevant to its key stakeholders. The evaluation was premised on a Theory-Based Approach embedded in a logical framework. The logic of the Pre-apprenticeship project was expressed in its outcome statement *"to increase a pool of learners which can enter artisanship programme"*. This outcome statement meant increasing the pool of learners who will progress to N2 and be part of the artisan programme.

6.1. Efficiency of the HWSETA funded Pre-apprenticeship project

Efficiency is *"a measure of how economically inputs (resources such as funds, expertise, time) are converted into results"* (Peersman and Rugg 2010, 61). To measure the efficiency of the HWSETA Pre-apprenticeship project, utilization of time and the value for funds invested in the project were evaluated.

The findings of the evaluation indicate that the sum of all the delays in terms of the number of working delays starting from signing the MOA, paying the first tranche to payment of second tranche was equivalent to 9 months and three weeks (41+72+73 = 186). HWSETA administered a project with a lifespan of three months for 9 months. Ideally, within 9 months (equivalent to three trimesters) a learner initially enrolled for Nated level 1 would have finished N3. In essence, the HWSETA funded Pre-apprenticeship project did not use time, as a resource, efficiently. The delays in signing the MOA, in particular, negatively affected the authenticity of learner registrations. Learners, initially recruited on the project, took up other sponsors because of the delays that resulted in an emergence of a different set of learners as informal replacements. These replacements were never reported to the HWSETA.

When the economic value of the project was assessed it was identified that a total value of R1,171,000[10] was spent in the project (Payment Schedule information of 2012/13 and 2013/14). This amount was the sum of the amounts paid on behalf of the 856 learners as a first tranche and to 203 (23%) of the same learners as a second tranche. The second tranche was paid only to learners who successfully completed the Nated level 1 of the Pre-apprenticeship training, but was paid way after the Nated level 1 training was completed. For example, the second tranche payment for learners enrolled at TVET college 2 for the financial year 2013/14 was paid during the 3rd trimester of the same year, and for learners enrolled at TVET college 3 and 4 second tranche was paid during the 3rd and 4th trimester of 2015. For learners to progress from Pre-apprenticeship (N1) to artisanship programme (N2), they had to find other sources of funds to pay 50% of the fees outstanding due to HWSETA delays.

As a result, the conversion of funds as a resource to set targets at output and outcome level was not achieved by the HWSETA because;

- the output achieved was only 23% of the funded learners; and
- none of these learners were supported to complete the Pre-Apprenticeship training nor enter the artisan programme

Therefore, no value for money was derived by the HWSETA from this project.

6.2. Effectiveness of the HWSETA funded Pre-apprenticeship project

Findings showed that in both financial years the HWSETA was able to fund 865 leaners instead of the targeted 2000 learners. This accounted for 43% of the set target. The main reasons for not achieving the input targets was because of decommissions of TVET colleges in financial year 2012/13 and 2013/14. Of these funded learners from committed TVET colleges, only 203 passed the Nated level 1 course bringing the overall pass rate to 23% for financial year 2012/13 and 2013/14. These learners accounted for only 10% of the target (2000) set for both years. This means that the HWSETA was able to produce 10% as a deliverable at output level. Even this 10% of

[10] Total value spent on Pre-apprenticeship according to Payment Schedule information = [1st payment tranche 2012/13 (R270 000) + 1st payment tranche 2013/14 (R731 000) + 2nd payment tranche 2013/14 (R170 000)] = **R1,171,000**

learners, which passed N1, could not be accounted for with certainty whether they were able to progress to an artisan programme because of the lack of indicator system at the outcome level. The lack of the indicator system at this level is attributed to the project design neither having a provision of funding learners to N2 (artisan programme). The implication of this information in relation to the five-year goal of Pre-apprenticeship is that only 5% (203/4000*100) of learners which passed N1 thus meeting the requirements for an artisan programme (N2 level) were produced. It is on this basis that the conclusion of the mid-term evaluation is that the Pre-apprenticeship project has not been effective by both design and implementation.

6.3. Sustainability of the HWSETA funded Pre-apprenticeship project

Sustainability refers to *"the ability of a project to maintain its operations, services and benefits during its projected life time"* (Khan 2000). Given the collaborative make-up of the project between stakeholders, central to the question of project sustainability is acceptability of the project by all stakeholders. The poor design of the project, particularly the funding model, has meant that TVET colleges may lose money implementing the project. The findings as presented in the results section shows the dissatisfaction of the TVET colleges in this regard. Similarly, learners were not happy with the current form of support since they have no guarantee of continued support even if they pass. This implies that the learner is prepared to leave the HWSETA funding whenever an alternative sponsor, with more security and assurance for the future, is available. The project in its current form is not sustainable particularly because of its funding model that affects all stakeholders negatively. The project will have to be redesigned and adjusted to TVET college's calendar and training programme for it to be sustainable going forward.

6.4. Relevance of the HWSETA funded Pre-apprenticeship project

Relevance is *"the extent to which the objectives, outputs, or outcomes of an intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, organisations' policies, country needs"* (Peersman and Rugg 2010, 61). According to the findings of the evaluation, the objectives of the HWSETA funded Pre-Apprenticeship project were consistent with the requirements of its beneficiaries who are learners determined to become artisans. The objectives of the project were also relevant to the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) III priorities.

The results further illustrate the relevance of the project through the socio-economic challenges confronting the learners as primary beneficiaries of the programme. Therefore, the necessity to assist disadvantaged learners in meeting the minimum requirements for artisan programme remains important. The only challenge is that implementation has been neither effective nor efficient in ensuring the realization of the project objectives.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Although the objective of the project was consistent with beneficiary priorities and those of the NSDS III, the design of the project was a major flaw which hindered the HWSETA from achieving desired outputs and outcomes. First, the project design was not documented in a project plan that would have facilitated a holistic view of the project. This view would have indicated whether the plan would lead to the achievement of the objective or not. This would have strengthened the project design and thus ensured that the planned activities lead to the achievement of the objectives of the project. Second, although the TVET colleges and HWSETA signed a Memorandum of Agreement, these partnerships were not negotiated with the TVET colleges. Instead, the MOA was issued as a contract that the TVET colleges had to sign if they wanted to participate in the project. Negotiation of partnerships with TVET colleges would have been beneficial to the HWSETA in that the HWSETA would have been made aware of the following:

- Nated level 1 Pre-Apprenticeship training is for one trimester, that is for three months
- The Nated Pre-Apprenticeship training includes level 1 to 3, and therefore to be eligible to gain entry into Apprenticeship training, learners were required to have passed the Nated level 3.
- Learners needed more than a tuition fee to successfully complete the Pre-Apprenticeship training

Third, the HWSETA did not follow normal practice of issuing bursary funding, which involves;

- the stipulation of minimum requirements for candidates to qualify for funding;
- that once a learner is recruited course fees are paid in full for tuition, books, accommodation, and meals;

- Commitment to continued funding for further levels of a training programme.

Fourth, the HWSETA did not use its implementation monitoring visits by SDP findings. Although this monitoring was conducted way after the Nated level 1 training had ceased, the findings drawn from these visits were the same findings identified by the mid-term evaluation. Had these findings been attended to, they would have improved the project by the time of this mid-term evaluation.

In conclusion, the mid-term evaluation established that the HWSETA funded Pre-apprenticeship was:

- not efficient in converting the resources (inputs) of the project into deliverables (outputs);
- not effective in producing the intended output (deliverables) and outcome (objectives);
- relevant, to a certain degree, to beneficiaries and key stakeholder's needs and priorities by design not implementation; and would
- not be sustainable through the lifetime of the project.

To improve this project, the HWSETA must consider the following recommendations.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the HWSETA redesigns the Pre-apprenticeship project in the following manner:

1. Develop a project plan and document it, which indicates the objectives and deliverables of the project; map out the activities that will lead to the achievement of the deliverables and objectives; detail the assumptions and risks associated with those activities; and create a lists of the resources of the project.
2. Negotiate partnerships with TVET colleges in order to design the project to fit the TVET college environment, especially the academic calendar, and for mutual benefits between the TVET colleges and the HWSETA.
3. Fund Nated level 1 to 3 so that learners become eligible to enter the apprenticeship training programme facilitated by HWSETA through Swiss-South African Cooperation Initiative (SSACI). This will create more chances of apprenticeship opportunities for learners since companies require Nated level 2. Alternatively, the learners will have an option to go for a trade test that requires Nated level 2. Funding from Nated levels 1 to 3 has more likelihood for HWSETA to have returns of investment.
4. Apply normal bursary funding practices that will protect HWSETA investment, benefit the learner as well as the TVET colleges.
5. Use findings of the implementation monitoring site visits conducted by HWSETA SDP division.
6. Directly link the HWSETA funded Pre-apprenticeship project to the HWSETA funded Apprenticeship programme (SACCI) and other Apprenticeship programmes existing in the SETA environment. This will ensure that learners funded through this project enter an Apprenticeship programme, thus achieving the objective of the HWSETA funded Pre-Apprenticeship project.

In view of Pre-apprenticeship project as a lens through which we can have a general view on how projects are designed, implemented, monitored, and evaluated at HWSETA the following recommendations should be considered:

7. The Research Information subdivision of RIME should be responsible for conducting mini-research for any particular new project emanating from SDP. This strategic role of Research and Information will entail establishing relevance, feasibility, and alignment of the proposed project to the NSDSIII and the updated Sector Skills Plan of HWSETA.
8. A redesign of the submission to HWSETA board template to include the results-measurement matrix with specific focus on outputs and outcomes. This will ensure that the manager proposing a particular project has clarity on the problem and outcome statements which the intervention seeks to resolve. The submission to the HWSETA board must be captured electronically (e.g. on Microsof Excel) by the data management personnel so that it can always be a reference point for the logic of the project linking concepts and indicators.
9. A new template/system (SMS or email-based) that will establish a direct link between learners (the primary beneficiaries) and HWSETA. This will ensure that the learners know who the funder is, the value of funding and its conditions, their rights and responsibilities and that of the college's. This will further assist HWSETA to validate the claims of the colleges and to constantly track the attitudes and well-being of the beneficiaries.

In view of the findings of this evaluation, it is recommended that the funding of the Pre-apprenticeship project be maintained given its relevance to beneficiaries, DHET through its SLAs, HWSETA APP, and NSDS III priorities. However, changes proposed above should be considered with special attention to changing the current model of funding to be aligned to funding learners from N1 to N3 over a period of a year. As such, HWSETA funding commitments to TVET colleges must be premised on continuity. It is the position of this report that TVET college 2, 3, and 1 should be retained in this project when new changes are implemented. A focus on these three TVET colleges will ensure efficiency as HWSETA will be managing less stakeholders (TVET colleges) while increasing the number of learners as per DHET SLA and HWSETA APP targets in each TVET college. TVET college 1 and 2 are suitable for this study primarily because of the disadvantaged learners they recruit to the program and also their proximity to engineering sector industries. The latter is crucial for HWSETA in facilitating placement of learners in employer organisations and increasing employment opportunities. Thus ensuring that 70% of all learners funded come from TVET college 2 and 3 and 30% from TVET college 1 will provide a balance between performance and appropriate targeting (disadvantaged learners).

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