
NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING (NEET): *Challenges and success within the HWSETA space*

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1. DEFINITION

By definition of International Labour Office (ILO) technical Brief No.1 (2015, p.1), those Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) *“refers to persons meeting two conditions: (i) they are not employed (i.e. are unemployed or inactive), and (ii) they have not received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey”*

2. CHALLENGES AS PROBLEMATIZATION OF THE NEETs

- a) There is a correlation between income poverty and majority of the NEETs.

Evidence that supports this view states (De Lannoy 2019, p.12);

Analysis of General household Survey data shows that in 2017, the majority (71%) of young people who were NEET lived in households with an income of less than R1183 per capita per month”.

- b) Early school leaving mainly due to financial constraints, grade repetition and pregnancy renders young people unequipped to proceed with the educational trajectories thus entrapping them in the NEETs category since *“they do not meet the entry requirements to access further education and training and, importantly, bursaries...these problems are especially pronounced in the lower quintile schools”* (De Lannoy 2019, p.13).

Evidence that supports this view states (De Lannoy and Mudiriza 2019, p.5):

Almost half [49%] of all young NEETs have completed less than their final year of high school...these are young people who are more likely to remain in a state of NEET over prolonged periods of time.

- c) Majority of the NEETs are the ‘new entrants’ to the labour market meaning they *“had never worked before and that were currently looking for work”* (De Lannoy and Mudiriza 2019, p.7).

Evidence that supports this view states *“Of the young people who are NEET, 75% are so-called ‘new entrants’ to the labour market who are looking for work but have no previous work experience”* (De Lannoy 2019, p.11). Further evidence indicate, *“more than 45% of the new entrant NEET youths have been in the labour market looking for work at least 3 years”* (De Lannoy and Mudiriza 2019, p.7).

3. SUCCESSES WITHIN HWSETA SPACE

While the HWSETA interventions i.e. WBLs are guided by the transformation and equity imperatives which includes prioritising 70% youth (35yrs), there has not been any strategic objective until now stating *“Target Youth not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) for job creation”* (HWSETA strategic plan 2020-2025, p.11). As such, no controls have been in place before this financial year to effect the recruitment of the NEETs per se but of the Youth. Implicitly, HWSETA may have reasonably assumed that most of the unemployed recruited is part of the NEETs. However, few anecdotal studies indicate that when beneficiaries were asked of their main activity before joining WBL programmes, most had been coming from studying or employment itself. Implication is that WBL mainly link beneficiaries from education or training as a form articulation increasing skills level for more employability. Evidence supporting this view is shown below;

- a) Mthethwa and Plaatjie (2017, p.48) reports in the evaluation study of the HWSETA accelerated artisanship programme in partnership with SSACI from 2012 to 2016;

Phago (2016, 12) reported that, in a baseline study on student's perception and attitudes towards the HWSETA Artisan Programme, *“71.9% [learners] said they were studying as the main activity before the artisan programme”*. Therefore, it can be concluded that the pathway of the majority of learners was studying (especially at TVET colleges) then joining the HWSETA accelerated programme.

- b) From the baseline information collected in 2019, findings also indicate that only 34% of learners from the WBLs were under the NEET category (only

unemployed or volunteering) as their main activity before joining the programme.

The current setup of the skills development system is not tailored to target those who have not completed basic education (Matric), TVET, and university system. This current positioning of the skill development system reinforces the exclusion of the NEETs considering that *“Of 100 pupils that start school, only 50 will make it to Grade 12, 40 will pass, and only 12 will qualify for university...50 will drop out before Grade 12 (most of which happens in grade 10 and 11)”* (Spaull 2013, p.3). Document analysis of HWSETA strategic documents since 2013/14 indicate an oversight of NEETs since there has been no specific targeting of this group except on the current strategic document 2020-2025. Implication of these findings show that the strategic change for HWSETA of targeting the NEETs going forward is of utmost significance. This strategic objective is consistent with the post-school system that is expanded and integrated as defined by the White paper (2013, p.xi) *“as comprising all education and training provision for those who have completed school, those who did not complete their schooling, and those who never attended school”*. As such, this change can be viewed in light of HWSETA configuring its mechanisms to have more focused interventions beyond those who completed school towards those that did not complete school or never attended school. These niche areas are part of SETA mandate as conceived by the White paper and articulated by the NSDP.

4. PROPOSITIONS TO ASSIST WITH CHALLENGES GOING FORWARD

Proposition: A pipeline approach linking education [below and at matric level] to the workplace using Work-Based learning programmes

Context:

With respect to challenge 2(a) & (b), a significant portion (49%) of the NEETs who ultimately do not complete their final year of school do not meet the entry requirements for work-based learning programmes which *“are available for young people who have completed school, college or learning at other training institutions”* (www.saqa.org.za).

Yet it is the WBL programmes that results to occupational competence by providing exposure and work-based experience that directly resolve the challenge 2(c).

Approach:

This approach will require a pipeline approach that links NSDP outcome 5 ‘Support the growth of the Public College institutional type’ to NSDP outcome 2 ‘Linking education and the workplace’. NSDP outcome 2 and 5 uses WBLs, Community Education, and Training Colleges (CETCs) respectively. CETCs will “*cater mainly for youths and adults who did not complete their schooling or who never attended school and thus do not qualify to study at TVET colleges and universities*” (White Paper PSET 2013, p.xii). This, through multiple access and progression, will accommodate a significant portion of the NEETs when sourced from the relevant databases (NYDA and DoL Public Employment Services) while connecting/transiting them to the labour market through qualifying them to the WBLs. The process of targeting the NEETs for this approach could entail a direct partnership with organizations that are working with communities that have schools in low quintiles. A similar approach can be used in scaling-up the Pre-apprenticeship project [from N1 to N3] with continuity by linking it to the accelerated artisanship programme such as the one conducted by SSACI. The latter would also include the NEETs with interest in artisanship who would not have qualified for Accelerated artisanship without first acquiring N1 and N2 first.

5. REFERENCES

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