

FET College Partnerships and Linkages

Case Studies

Conducted by Singizi c.c. for the

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LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT : CONCEPTS THAT WORK

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SECTION A: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1 INTRODUCTION

Singizi was brought on board by SSACI in January 2011 in order to conduct a review of partnerships and linkages between public FET colleges and external organisations, including the public and private sectors. The key focus of this review has been to:

- Establish how many partnerships and linkages are currently active in the FET college sector;
- Review what types of organisations these relationships have been developed with; and
- Review the nature and the focus of these relationships.

In order to address the above, Singizi adopted a two-phased approach to the review. The first phase focused on obtaining data on the numbers of relationships, the types of organisations involved in these relationships, and some key data on the nature of these relationships. This data was analysed and included in a report submitted in April 2010.

The key findings of the first phase included the following:

- That there appears to be large numbers of partnerships/ linkages;
- Many of these relationships are active over a long term period of time rather than short once off and ad-hoc;
- That these relationships are in a range of fields though there are certainly fields where relationships appear to be most in evidence;
- Further, that there is a range of types of partnership/ linkages: these range from the provision of programmes such as the N programme to relationships that focus directly on supporting learners to access workplace exposure and experience; and
- Few college/industry relationships appear to focus on lecturer development and very few on the provision of workplace experience for lecturers though it was found that some SETAs appear to enable these partnerships by supporting lecturer development.

The second phase of the review – this phase – aims to build on the findings of phase 1 and explore the nature of these relationships in more depth. As such, a number of partnerships were selected in order to provide “vignettes” or cameos that intend to give insight into the workings of these relationship.

In particular, this report focuses on understanding these relationships, considering the rationale for instituting the partnerships, and the anticipated and, where possible, actual benefits accrued to each of the partners. The report then provides an analysis of this data so as to understand the manner in which these relationships reinforce (or do not reinforce) each other, and the value of each of these different kinds of relationships.

Finally, it begins to suggest some of the implications of these findings for both policy and programmatic activities.

2 METHODOLOGY

The research team selected a sample of colleges and SETAs with whom to engage further. This included three FET colleges (Boland, Gert Sibande and East Coast Midlands) as well as relationships embarked upon by two SETAs (Merseta and ETDP Seta). These were chosen to ensure that we considered colleges that had an exceptionally large number of relationships, as well as those that have been able to form linkages in a range of contexts (urban/rural). In addition we considered SETAs which work actively with colleges and which are in sectors in which there are a large number of relationships, that is engineering and ETDP.

This engagement involved an interview with a central person in either the college or the SETA and then two relationships were explored further by conducting additional interviews with the different players involved in the relationship. This allowed the team to develop a number of cameos which are outlined below, and from which have formed the basis for further analysis.

SECTION B: AN OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN FEATURES OF EACH OF THE COLLEGE-EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS/LINKAGES

3 INTRODUCTION

This section will provide a description of each of the relationships, and will describe their key features, why the partnerships were initiated and will begin to explore the factors that enable these relationships and the challenges that relate to these relationships. These examples, or cameos, are captured under the relevant college or SETA, depending who the main role player was that we interviewed in order to understand the relationships that they are enabling. and are individually described so that the nuance related to each relationship can be understood before more general learning can be established (as outlined in Section C of this report).

4 BOLAND FET COLLEGE

4.1 CAMEO 1

4.1.1 Who are the partners?

Construction
Boland College and SAFCEC (South African Civil Engineering Contractors), TJEKA Training Matters and Academy for Construction Skills ACS (Both specialised private providers)

4.1.2 Rationale for entering the partnership/linkage

Construction
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• From Boland's' perspective, this partnership offered an opportunity to expand its scope into an area of training in which there is demand without incurring additional costs. This was seen as particularly important, as it was indicated that the college does not have budget to expand in this regard. In addition, the programme enabled the college to meet the requirements for accreditation (with respect to human and financial resources required), and to therefore be able to apply and receive accreditation.• The private provider, Tjeka/Conskills was looking for a dedicated site to set up a skills centre to service the construction industry, and for a partner who would provide the fundamentals. Up until that point, Conskills had been providing training on a mobile basis and providing the training on-site for clients. However, the learnership requirements meant that there was a requirement that they had a dedicated site, and so they began the discussions with Boland.• Conskills says: <i>'We see it as building lasting relationships where one can access</i>

opportunities together and if you look where we started off and where we are now – we have achieved it with Boland. Sometimes difficult decisions have to be made, but we are looking at longer term relationships.'

- From a key employer's perspective (Power Construction - one of the companies represented by SAFCEC in the partnership), industry wanted to create a pool of graduates that had the skills to meet their specific job outcomes. As long as this partnership is meeting those needs, then it should remain in place.

4.1.3 Broad objectives of the partnership/linkage

Construction

- To establish and implement a mutually beneficial partnership between a public FET and private provider and industry (including companies, SAFCEC and the Construction SETA).
- To establish an accredited facility where learners can receive fundamentals and construction and civil engineering related training and practical experience as part of a learnership or some other form of occupational programmes on the same site.

4.1.4 Level of formality of the partnership/linkage

Construction

- It was indicated that the partnership has been one of the longest partnerships entered into by Boland, and has been formalised for the past 8 years.
- The partnership is governed by an MOU which is evaluated every year and, based on the evaluation, is renewed annually.

4.1.5 How the partnership/linkage was initiated and who initiated it?

Construction

- The private provider (Conskill/ Tjeka) and the FET College (Boland) began discussions during 2003 at a Construction SETA meeting and then this process got taken forward and was consolidated in such a way as to include the other partners as well.

4.1.6 Main partnership/linkage activities

Construction

This partnership focuses on the following areas:

- Programme provision: fundamentals, core and elective training and practical experience.
- The skills centre at the Paarl campus of the FET was built by the learners and is now used as the site where training in construction and civil engineering related skills can be provided (the site has become an ISOE as well as a trade test centre).

4.1.7 How are the partnerships/linkages monitored, evaluated and learnt from?

Construction

- It was indicated that at the start of the partnership meetings were constant and ongoing and that as part of the contractual obligations reports are provided about the programme and the specific learners.
- However, in view of the fact that it is a long established relationship, the parties now meet biannually but if issues come up then they meet more regularly on an ad hoc basis.
- Boland does a yearly evaluation of the project and based on the results of this evaluation it is determined whether the contract will be renewed.
- Parties indicate that there is ongoing learning and sharing of experiences (both formally and informally).

4.1.8 Enabling factors for the partnership/linkage

Construction

- That there was mutual need for the partnership, which meant that each party benefitted and could see this benefit.
- The partnership offered the college a cost effective way of expanding its scope as it did not have to invest in additional resources – both in terms of infrastructure and skills to teach the core training.
- The college already had a hostel which was being under-utilized and could therefore be made available to this programme
- The college already had a presence in the community and within industry and this could be built upon.
- The person heading up the partnerships unit in the college is entrepreneurial, and saw the gap and acted on it. In addition, the person was able to persuade the college leadership to buy into the project.
- The driver of partnerships understands the need for partnerships and has been trained. The college stated: *'this requires a whole mind shift and every campus needs a partnership committee and if colleges do not work per campus and have a decentralised setup, then every department should have such a committee for evaluating, auditing and reviewing and cannot have one person to review – once a year I go around to each campus to review the partnerships.'*

4.1.9 Key partnership/linkage challenges

Construction

- There was a perception that learners entering the learnerships would be middle-age workers as compared to the younger learners in the rest of the college: it was felt that this could create problems on the campus.
- It was indicated that the FET faced a number of challenges in terms of selling the idea to top management, as well as to campus managers. One of top management's concerns were that the partnership would not effectively build internal staff capacity, as staff would be recruited per project/contract and as a result, this would not benefit the college in the medium to long term.
- Related to the previous point, it appears to have been difficult to establish real integration between the Partnerships Unit and the main college and, similarly, between this programme and the NCV.

- There are a number of areas of risk for partners, which could have derailed the partnership. For example, if the DHET says that the facility is not aligned with policy, then players may have invested in a centre that they would then lose.
- It was felt that there is a real challenge with respect to expertise of lecturers: An employer representative says: *'the biggest problem at FETs country-wide is lack of expertise in our industry field and the affordability of good experienced lecturers. Private FETs have different relationships with lecturers and therefore have more of them with good industry expertise. Many retired industry experts work for them on ad-hoc/contract basis'*.
- It was also felt that the programme mix within the qualifications poses a challenge to the growth of partnerships.

4.2 CAMEO 2

4.2.1 Who are the partners?

Insurance

Boland College and the University of the Western Cape, Insurance Seta and the Financial Planning Institute (FPI).

4.2.2 Rationale for entering the partnership/linkage

Insurance

- Boland was looking for new opportunities to expand their coverage and they therefore had informal discussions with UWC about the possibilities of working with the insurance industry.
- The FPI was in the process of becoming a professional quality assurance body for the insurance industry. They have also acted as a private provider offering non-accredited financial planning courses. However, they felt that it would be preferable if they could offer the training together with another provider and in this process secure accreditation. The FPI also approached UWC and they discussed who should best take over the training (UWC directly or an FET College)
- The INSETA was motivated to become involved in the process, as it would enable the articulation between the training programme (which could be offered by the College and with a Higher Education institution) and would help to create an innovative partnership between industry and the FET College.
- UWC's rationale for involvement was to assist them to take forward their commitment to articulation. They also indicated that it would assist them to develop their relationship with industry and the FETs.

4.2.3 Broad objectives of the partnership/linkage

Insurance

- To develop a mutually beneficial partnership between the FETs in the Western Cape and the insurance industry in such a way that the capacity of the FETs to provide quality training to the insurance industry would be developed.
- To enable employees in the insurance sector who have a number of years

experience with access to training, which articulates with higher education (though it is intended that this be expanded for unemployed learners as well).

- To roll out this programme nationally if successful in the WC.

4.2.4 Level of formality of the partnership/linkage

Insurance

- Initial discussions began in 2007 but the programme was only implemented in 2010 as a result of the need to get certain processes underway
- The partnership is governed by an MOU and according to all parties, the programme is tightly managed as it is a pilot, and all parties want to learn from the process and ensure its success.

4.2.5 How the partnership/linkage was initiated and who initiated it?

Insurance

- This partnership was initiated by the FPI, who approached UWC to assist in either taking over the training around financial planning, or in assisting them to locate this training within the FET colleges. UWC, in turn, approached Boland and then the other Western Cape FETs.
- Once they were on board, all the parties approached the INSETA for funding and to assist with the accreditation of the colleges to provide the training, and a range of other areas of assistance, such as in relation to the learning materials.

4.2.6 Main partnership/linkage activities

Insurance

The main activities of the insurance partnership, include the following:

- Five of the six FETs in the Western Cape grouped themselves together and with the assistance of the INSETA and became accredited to provide the training (Wealth Management: NQF level 5) as well as to assess the learners. Each of the five FETs has enrolled 20 learners (that is, 100 pilot learners in total).
- The FPI has assisted to write the learning materials (together with the SETA) so as to ensure that the curriculum is sufficient to enable the learners to write the board exam for financial planners.
- UWC's Further Education and Training Institute (FETI) – a unit based at the University - acts as the project manager and as part of this role ensures that the learners that complete the programme can access the second year of a higher diploma in management studies and ultimately to complete a Bcom honours degree.
- INSETA is providing the funding of R20 000 per learner per annum to the colleges and will provide finances for students wishing to study further at university. In addition, they have assisted in getting the colleges accredited to provide the training and have monitored the implementation of the programme and assisted to ensure that the key stakeholders are on board.

4.2.7 How are the partnerships/linkages monitored, evaluated and learnt from?

Insurance

- It was indicated that because this project is a pilot, there are very clearly defined structures and reporting mechanisms so as to monitor the success of the programme.
- The project team, which includes UWC, insurance companies and colleges – which deals with operational issues of running the project - meets monthly.
- The task team, which includes the INSETA, UWC, insurance companies, FPI and colleges, meet every two months to discuss strategic issues.
- A third group comprising UWC, INSETA and FPI meet quarterly to discuss broader issues of the way forward, for example, of bringing in unemployed and getting them into level 4 NQF qualifications.
- Lessons and experiences are shared on an ongoing basis and within and between the different structures and stakeholders.
- UWC stated that the relationship is being comprehensively monitored and continually evaluated and the FPT is continually checking to ensure that the quality of exams is upheld.
- Differences in terms of college performance are also being monitored and are being shared in the various project meetings, as well as an attempt to develop models of best practice.

4.2.8 Enabling factors for the partnership/linkage

Insurance

- There was a mutual need for the partnership.
- A number of the FET colleges already had experience with similar type programmes, which made it easier for them to understand what would be involved. Further, many of these colleges have what is regarded as an 'entrepreneurial' culture.
- UWC had been working closely and has a good relationship with the FET colleges in the Western Cape, and has the capacity to monitor and check on academic levels and able to observe classes and teaching across the FETs to ensure some form of alignment.
- The Further Education and Training Institution (FETI , which is a unit within UWC) was in a position to broker a relationship between the FETs and universities.
- INSETA was committed to working with the FET colleges and to supporting them to develop their capacity and scope and specifically to assist them to begin to build relations with industry so that learners can be placed in employment.
- There was also an also increased willingness from insurance companies (who have their own training companies) to work with FET colleges.

4.2.9 Key partnership/linkage challenges

Insurance

- All parties agreed that the process of managing such a large number of stakeholders is complex and there were varied views as to whether an external project manager or the professional body should play this role.
- It was suggested that not all stakeholders were “*on the same page*” in the initial phases of the project and that this created a challenge for the programme.
- This was particularly felt to be the case for facilitators in the programme, with one stakeholder observing that the different facilitators are ‘*pulling in different directions*’. One example of this that was given is that the facilitators were recruited from the private sector and it was indicated that some have been critical of the FETs in front of the learners, which has unsettled these learners.
- Also it was felt that FET lecturers were not prepared to play the role required of them with respect to curriculum development. It was suggested that this is a challenge for the programme and for the development of FET capacity. One interviewee commented that, ‘*With this type of model, if the colleges are outsourcing and buying in the facilitator, then it is questionable to what extent they are building capacity and investing in their staff to provide the training...*’
- The process of getting the colleges accredited was a real challenge for the programme, and took much longer than anticipated.
- It was also indicated that a challenge for the FET’s is their ability to sell themselves to industry and appear credible to them.
- The programme had to deal with complaints from employers who want the facilitators across the colleges to train to the same standard and have the same approach. Hence, partners had to deal with the expectation of some employers who were expecting the ‘*sameness in everything*’ and had to explore what was and was not possible.

5 GERT SIBANDE FET COLLEGE

5.1 CAMEO 1

5.1.1 Who are the partners?

ECD

Gert Sibande and ETDP Seta

5.1.2 Rationale for entering the partnership/linkage

ECD

- The college wished to ensure that they attained accreditation status so as to expand their scope to provide ECD training and improve the quality of their lecturers and general support for ECD.
- In addition to the ECD component of the partnership, the ETDP SETA wished to secure a partner that could provide workplace experience for learners that they are supporting with a bursary. These learners are studying a Bachelors of Education qualification at UNISA and it was hoped that the College would

provide the workplace experience for them. For the college this in turn offered them the chance to work with learners that they could potentially employ as lecturers in the future.

- The SETA also wished to build partnerships with FET colleges and in this context they stated that they wished to become involved as they are committed to developing the capacity of the college in line with their longer term vision of working with the public providers (providing.

5.1.3 Broad objectives of the partnership/linkage

ECD

- To build the capacity of the public provider to provide quality service and ensuring the surrounding community benefits. This would be achieved by both additional training for existing lecturers in the college and in addition through the provision of a bursary for learners (10) to complete their studies at UNISA and to undertake their workplace experience at the college.
- To provide ECD training, learnership opportunities and possible employment of learners.
- To assist with establishing resources for ECD practitioners in the form of the setting up of a 'toy library' to provide ECD practitioners in the area with resources to utilise.

5.1.4 Level of formality of the partnership/linkage

ECD

This partnership began about 4-5 years ago and is governed by an MOU.

5.1.5 How the partnership/linkage was initiated and who initiated it?

ECD

- Gert Sibande initiated the partnership. The college approached the SETA to become accredited and to be supported to do the ECD training.
- As a result of this process and with the support of the (then) Department of Education, the college became an ISOE for the Seta.
- The college then requested that the SETA fund the 10 learners who are studying a Bachelor of Education through UNISA and who want to become college lecturers.

5.1.6 Main partnership/linkage activities

ECD

5.1.7 How are the partnerships/linkages monitored, evaluated and learnt from?

ECD

- As per the agreement of the MoU the parties (involved on the project team) meet formally on a quarterly basis to review the partnership
- In addition individuals involved in the different projects also meet separately and assist to monitor the progress being made in each of the projects using the agreed upon monitoring tools.
- The parties indicated that learning is shared between the parties on an ongoing basis.

5.1.8 Enabling factors for the partnership/linkage

ECD

- There was a will to become involved in the partnership from the college who wanted to expand its scope and get accredited to provide ECD training and in particular ECD related learnerships
- The SETA was keen to work with an FET college to ensure that it expanded the capacity to provide ECD learnerships in the country.
- The SETA wanted to become involved with the college, as they required a vehicle to place their learners, as they were concerned about them getting practical experience as well as employment.

5.1.9 Key partnership/linkage challenges

ECD

- There have been what are reportedly minor challenges in the relationship, which relates to the payment of stipends: it was indicated that these have since been resolved with the SETA.
- The SETA felt that the learnership might place an additional administrative burden on the college. However, the FET did not highlight this as an area of concern.

5.2 CAMEO 2

5.2.1 Who are the partners?

Public works

Gert Sibande and Mpumalanga Department of Public Works

5.2.2 Rationale for entering the partnership/linkage

Public works

- The college wished to develop new relationships.
- The provincial department was looking for a FET (as part of their commitment to building and strengthening relationships with FETs), which could provide training for unemployed youth, as well as provide community health building learnerships and placement for learners (as the department has a placement strategy which the college is part of).

5.2.3 Broad objectives of the partnership/linkage

Public works

- To assist the FET to secure their accreditation status with the Construction SETA so that the department could contract the college to provide the range of training it requires.
- To enable graduates to secure employment post the programmes.

5.2.4 Level of formality of the partnership/linkage

Public works

This relationship began in 2007/8 and is also governed by an MOU. Within the MOU there are a number of projects, which have specific business plans, time lines and reporting structures.

5.2.5 How the partnership/linkage was initiated and who initiated it?

Public works

- Public works approached the college after their Minister gave the department a mandate to strengthen their relationship with FET Colleges.
- The department approached three FET colleges in Mpumalanga, including Gert Sibande, and requested that they assist with training and placement of learners.

5.2.6 Main partnership/linkage activities

Public works

- The college initially focused on attaining their accreditation status with the Construction SETA (CETA)
- As part of the partnership learning materials were developed.
- Initially the college sub-contracted the provision for the Department, but by the second year it had developed the capacity to manage the programme and the college sourced its own facilitators who they trained, and are now on their database so that they can use them whenever they are requested to training in these areas.

- The Department funds the training.

5.2.7 How are the partnerships/linkages monitored, evaluated and learnt from?

Public works

- The parties holding monthly meetings to review activities that are going on in the programme. These meetings are informed by reports from the project manager who is responsible for very hands on project monitoring.
- Lessons are shared within the department and college.

5.2.8 Enabling factors for the partnership/linkage

Public works

- The Department was committed to utilise FETs to fulfil its mandate to enable training for individuals in the community. In particular, they felt that the FET colleges had the capacity to support their training requirement in terms of venues and resources to ensure that the programme could run smoothly (for example to cover the costs of stipends until they get paid back by the department). They also felt that they were trusted in the community.
- The FET College was willing to participate in the relationships as it enabled them to expand their scope in a credible manner and to build a relationship with the public sector, which it indicates that it finds useful, as they have not had much success in developing relationships with the private sector: *“Building relationships with government departments has been most useful because we are in the rural area and we find it difficult to get employers on board to take our learners for experiential training...if departments send their employees then they will get experiential training. As a result, we do a lot of government learnerships.”*

5.2.9 Key partnership/linkage challenges

Public works

- The parties did not raise any challenges with the relationship, although the college stated that they felt that the Construction SETA prefers to use private providers. They say that this perception is based on the fact they received provisional accreditation and the regional office in Nelspruit was supposed to do an inspection to grant the FET full accreditation. However, they say that this has still not happened, despite numerous attempts to get this addressed. Their concern is that this might affect their relationship with the department, for example, if this issue is not addressed. *‘If they let our accreditation lapse then the department won’t be able to use us in the future.’*
- The FET College did, however, indicate that they experienced challenges around building a relationship with the private sector. The college stated: *‘The mines use the colliery training college in Witbank and rather send staff there than to the FET. They only want to use the FET for theoretical training and not practical.’*

Even Eskom they send their people to Midrand to do the training there. The main employers in the area are not using the FET. Even Sasol do their own training. And only want to use the college for the N courses.' It indicated that to try and address this challenge, they are looking to see how they can accommodate small employers who might find it expensive to send staff long distances to be trained and may be willing to use the FET college in the area. In terms of the possible reasons why the larger companies are utilising training opportunities elsewhere, the college was not clear why these choices are being made, aside from the fact that they have always used these facilities.

6 EAST CAPE MIDLANDS FET COLLEGE

6.1 CAMEO 1

6.1.1 Who are the partners?

Automobile manufacturing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Coast Midlands and the Uitenhage branch of Volkswagen (VW)

6.1.2 Rationale for entering the partnership/linkage

Automobile manufacturing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FET college wanted to offer occupational training in the auto field, but they did not have the capacity to offer the core training. The college explained that they also did not have a workshop to utilise for the occupational programme as the current resources are reportedly allocated to NVC training. • In addition, it was indicated that the college wished to form the relationship as they needed access to moderators and assessors • It was felt to be an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the FET college and industry. This was felt to be valuable as it was hoped that this would encourage industry to input into the curriculum to make it relevant to their needs so that graduates would be employable by industry. • It was also indicated that VW needed the relationship, as they were looking for a provider to provide components of the training for learnerships and apprenticeships

6.1.3 Broad objectives of the partnership/linkage

Automobile manufacturing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve the employment potential of learners. • To provide learning that is recognised and accredited by industry and institutions of Higher Education. • To provide the college with an opportunity to expand the scope of their training and to be able to integrate theory and practice more effectively, such that the training is more relevant to the needs of employers. • To increase the resource base of the FET college.

6.1.4 Level of formality of the partnership/linkage

Automobile manufacturing

- The relationship was formalised through a MOU which was signed in 2011. This sets out clearly the roles and responsibilities of each of the parties. Prior to the MOU the relationship had not been formally defined.

6.1.5 How the partnership/linkage was initiated and who initiated it?

Automobile manufacturing

- There was a long and established relationship, which existed between the company and the FET and which formed the basis of the current partnership.
- It evolved from the time that the VW training manager was on the FET college council, and discussions began on how to begin to collaborate together and share resources.

6.1.6 Main partnership/linkage activities

Automobile manufacturing

- The FET will implement a range of activities, including the provision of the fundamental training which forms part of the learnerships. It will also provide certain core modules against unit standards (and in particular the theoretical knowledge required by apprentices); it will also develop learning material that is industry orientated whilst covering the broader curriculum and will develop staff as facilitators of outcomes based learning.
- VW will provide core and specialised programmes applicable to the industry; it will clarify quality standard requirements; provide expertise to support practical training; assist with recruitment processes including entry requirements, screening of individuals and the provision of career guidance for all candidates interested in a technical career.

6.1.7 How are the partnerships/linkages monitored, evaluated and learnt from?

Automobile manufacturing

- The MOU sets out a clear process for the monitoring and evaluation of the partnership. This includes quarterly meetings, as well as weekly meetings if required (though these are reportedly not always held, which parties suggest is not a problem as they indicate that there is sufficient levels of informal interaction).
- The MoU indicates that in order to ensure accountability the quarterly meetings

will be documented so that learning can be shared on an ongoing basis.

- As part of the monitoring of the process, the MOU provides for the regular auditing of materials, learners and processes to ensure the effectiveness and impact of these different elements in the workplace.

6.1.8 Enabling factors for the partnership/linkage

Automobile manufacturing

- It was suggested that the partnership was made possible, as each party respectfully recognised each other's capabilities and focused on their area of expertise
- Related to this previous point, it was indicated that there is mutual need (VW wanted training for staff and FET College wanted relevant programme which would enable graduates to access employment - *'For a long time education determined the curriculum and industry was always unhappy as it did not meet its needs...now we invite stakeholders from the industry to look at our curriculum to make sure it meets their needs.'*)
- It was also suggested that what enables the partnership is a shared commitment to the programme and the recognition that the partnership ensures that the learning is recognised (through improving the capacity of facilitators, levels of resources and access to their assessors and moderators).
- It was also suggested that the long relationship established between the FET college and VW created sufficient trust between them and a basis for exploring what other programmatic options may be possible.

6.1.9 Key partnership/linkage challenges

Automobile manufacturing

- Industry indicated that there had been challenges with respect to the resources available for the programme including the limited range of courses they could offer, the quality of the learning material and the limited industry experience of the lecturers. The company observed, *'how will they (FETs) serve the industry unless they are aware of developments and are up to date in terms of their technical abilities?'*
- It was also suggested that it was a challenge that the partnerships unit – which has initiated learnerships and apprenticeships (as the rest of the college has been devoted to NCV) – does not have a dedicated site and a core staff complement paid for by the college: *'Up until now we put up 10 prefab classrooms on existing sites and the rest was normal classrooms and for practical training went to VW. The workshops are dedicated to NCV.'*
- The FET explains that because of the funding formula up until now, the only funding it could source for more occupational linked training was from SETA's, National Skills Fund or employers. The partnerships unit, he FET argues, (like other FETs) is generally a separate unit and it has to be cost effective and cover its own costs as well as provide a percentage to the main college for utilising

some of their resources. 'We appoint our own staff and buy our own equipment and money from projects goes back into the unit to sustain it – aside from a percentage given to the main college.'

- It was also felt that there are insufficient levels of support from the Council for these partnerships.

6.2 CAMEO 2

6.2.1 Who are the partners?

Metal and related sectors

- East Coast Midlands, Merseta and Welford Eddy (to provide workplace experience)

6.2.2 Rationale for entering the partnership/linkage

Metal and related sectors

- The FET College and SETA realised that they shared a common goal of ensuring the employability of NCV learners and they wished to seek ways of enabling the NCV graduates to access alternative pathways to employment
- The SETA wanted to pilot a project, which explored another pathway to artisanship through filling in the gaps between NCV4 and the artisan trade test.
- The SETA had also set itself the strategic objective of working with the FET colleges and this project provided them with the chance to strengthen this relationship and develop the capacity of the college.

6.2.3 Broad objectives of the partnership/linkage

Metal and related sectors

- To improve the facilities of the college through the upgrading of the college's welding centre (which has now become an ISOE).
- To implement a pilot, with 10 NCV 4 graduates, which enables them to access an accelerated artisan development which fills the gaps between the NCV level 4 and what is required in order to undertake a trade test. In doing this, the pilot will be implemented in accordance with RPL principles.

6.2.4 Level of formality of the partnership/linkage

Metal and related sectors

- The parties have had a relationship for a number of years which was not governed by a formal agreement. During this time, the welding centre was upgraded by the SETA and became an accredited ISOE in 2007.
- The current pilot programme is governed by an MOU. This has been operational since the beginning of 2011.

6.2.5 How the partnership/linkage was initiated and who initiated it?

Metal and related sectors

- The FET approached the SETA as it was concerned with the growing number of unemployed learners who had completed their NCV 4 and were not being absorbed into industry.
- Discussions with the SETA led to an agreement that they would jointly implement the pilot programme.

6.2.6 Main partnership/linkage activities

Metal and related sectors

- The SETA will provide the funding for the pilot: this is to cover payment to the FET as well as a stipend of R2 500 per month per learner for the 85 weeks of the accelerated artisanship programme.
- The FET College will manage the process including the time the learners are in the college where they will provide the theoretical input and then monitor the learners in the company where they will get the workplace experience.

6.2.7 How are the partnerships/linkages monitored, evaluated and learnt from?

Metal and related sectors

- The partnership is monitored by both the SETA and the FET college: The SETA's quality assurance body in the EC is responsible for the monitoring of the programme while the FET College monitors the learners both inside the FET and when they are in the company.
- There is also a task team, which is supposed to meet regularly and is responsible for reviewing monitoring reports. But it is indicated that it has not met as regularly as the parties would like.
- However, the FET college is providing the SETA with ongoing reports and records so that all aspects of the programme can be monitored (this includes the usage of the logbook system).
- It is suggested that the approach to the M&E is one that ensures that the pilot can be fairly structured, but remain experimental.

6.2.8 Enabling factors for the partnership/linkage

Metal and related sectors

- The FET college saw the potential of involving the SETA in a project which would benefit both parties and meet their broad objectives.

- The SETA was looking for an opportunity to test the pathway to artisanship and have an opportunity to document and establish it beyond the pilot.

6.2.9 Key partnership/linkage challenges

Metal and related sectors

- It was indicated that the current project is still unfolding and that there are no major challenges: where problems arise it was indicated that these are quickly addressed by both parties.
- The SETA, however, commented that the one challenge that faces the FET college and could become an obstacle to future partnerships if not addressed, relates to the speed at which the FET college could move from vocational to occupational training, so as to benefit industry.

7 MERSETA

7.1 CAMEO 1

7.1.1 Who are the partners?

Auto and metal

- MERSETA and the College of Cape Town

7.1.2 Rationale for entering the partnership/linkage

Auto and metal

- It was felt that the college could achieve ISOE status, which would enable the FET college to deliver programmes supported by the SETA.
- The SETA also indicated that they have an active commitment to supporting the FET colleges and this partnership therefore strengthened this work
- The FET college was eager to enter the partnership, as it meant that the SETA supported (with staff development) and funded the college to assist them to attain ISOE accreditation.
- For the FET college this was an important driver as it provided them with an opportunity to expand their scope of provision.

7.1.3 Broad objectives of the partnership/linkage

Auto and metal

- To accredit the FET as an ISOE (automotive division) so that it could provide quality training programmes which are aligned with the NQF.
- To build the colleges' capacity: not only in terms of the development of learning

materials but in terms of staff development with respect to both technical and management skills.

7.1.4 Level of formality of the partnership/linkage

Auto and metal

- The partnership is governed by a MOU which covers the period 2009-2011
- However parties indicate that it is anticipated that the relationship will continue beyond 2011 and that there will be follow up projects.

7.1.5 How the partnership/linkage was initiated and who initiated it?

Auto and metal

- This partnership was initiated by the MERSETA who called on FETs to provide a motivation to become accredited as an ISOE.
- Following this, the SETA ETQA manager reviewed the college's motivation and granted them ISOE status in 2008.
- As part of this process, the SETA also agreed to provide the FET with funding for a range of activities such as staff development.

7.1.6 Main partnership/linkage activities

Auto and metal

- Senior college staff went to the UK as part of a research process that was being conducted around developing best practices for managing colleges. The staff went for one month and this was followed up with a further month of interaction with their international colleagues – the intention was to ensure international benchmarking.
- The SETA provides funding for these interventions and ensures that their ISOEs are exposed to international experience so that *'we will be then able to work with them'*.
- In addition, staff members to go to VW in Uitenhage for a period of time to get training in engine management systems and electronic based training for a week

7.1.7 How are the partnerships/linkages monitored, evaluated and learnt from?

Auto and metal

- It was explained that the FET College is expected to report to the MERSETA on a quarterly basis. However, over the last two years it has reportedly only formally reported twice during that period. The SETA did not appear to be too concerned about this and presumably it has not been a priority. However, interviewees stated that after the UK visit, the college wrote a report which was sent to the

SETA and that outlined the developments that had taken place in terms of staff capacity issues.

- It was suggested that the monitoring aspect of the programme could be improved.

7.1.8 Enabling factors for the partnership/linkage

Auto and metal

- It was indicated that what assisted the development of this partnership is the fact that the particular FET college has established a footprint in industry and in the province and *'they can see that we have connections with industry.... Our relationship with industry is good and they are using the FET.'*
- The other factor that was seen to be enabling for the partnership is the commitment made in NSDS 3, which requires that public FETs became the main provider for skills development. It was indicated that this led to a change in the work that SETAs were doing with the FET colleges (though it was indicated that some of this work was already taking place)

7.1.9 Key partnership/linkage challenges

Auto and metal

- It was indicated that the one challenge is that the MERSETA has not followed up with implementation as needed, and has not intervened sufficiently where challenges emerge. For example, it was indicated that the college struggled to get companies on board in terms of finding opportunities for workplace experience and, particularly, if they are trying to place unemployed learners.
- Conversely, the SETA indicated that the big challenge is that the college needs to ensure that the curriculum is revised, and that the college moves more towards occupational qualifications. They also indicated that there is a real need for staff development at the colleges. This view was reinforced by the FET college who stated that in order to develop a real partnership, there was a need to ensure that they have proper skilled staff, resources and facilities that have equipment that is up to date: *'If the ISOE is to continue here we need to make a greater impact and need to place our staff in industry as our facilitators need to have up to date training.'*

8 ETDP SETA

8.1 CAMEO 1

8.1.1 Who are the partners?

ECD

- ETDP and the College of Cape Town

8.1.2 Rationale for entering the partnership/linkage

ECD

- The college suggests that it entered this relationship with the ETDP SETA as it provides them with the opportunity to focus on providing training to one of its niche markets, namely ECD, and to fulfil its mandate of up-skilling people and ensuring their employability.
- The SETA sees the relationship with the college as an opportunity to “*ensure that we have better outputs from the FETs.*” And to ensure that “*learners are more employable.*”
- It was also indicated that the college was motivated to enter the relationship as it assisted them to attain accreditation status to provide ECD training up to level 4, but also to provide level 5 (NQF) so that learners could access higher education.

8.1.3 Broad objectives of the partnership/linkage

ECD

- To enable the college – following its ISOE accreditation - to be in a position to deliver programmes on behalf of the SETA.
- To ensure that the SETA has a public institution that it can rely on to deliver quality ECD training.
- To enable the FET College to offer a level 4 and 5 course which provides learners access to higher education where they are able to do a Bachelor of Education through UNISA.

8.1.4 Level of formality of the partnership/linkage

ECD

- The relationship began before 2009 when the college was accredited as an ISOE. Since then, the relationship has grown and a number of programmes have been embarked upon, each being governed by an MOU or service level agreement which stipulates the deliverables and reporting mechanisms.

8.1.5 How the partnership/linkage was initiated and who initiated it?

ECD

- The partnership was initiated by the SETA as part of its drive to develop ISOEs.
- In this process, ECD training was identified as the key area.

8.1.6 Main partnership/linkage activities

ECD

- The college had to go through a process of accreditation which required staff capacity building, development of learning materials (which was done in conjunction with the SETA)
- Once accredited, the college can provide ECD training up to level 5, manage learnerships, as well as assist NGOs to train their staff around ECD.
- In turn, the SETA acts as the quality assurance partner, and provides funding for the training – if training goes out on tender – but also in some instances provides bursaries for learners and pays a stipend to those on learnerships and also sources learners when they issue a tender for a private for ECD training.
- The SETA acts as a facilitator in terms of developing relations between the FET and the sector, so as to increase the chances of learners being placed in employment.

8.1.7 How are the partnerships/linkages monitored, evaluated and learnt from?

ECD

- The partnership is tightly monitored and there is on-going informal communication between the parties. In addition, it was indicated that the SETA has verification teams going to the college on an ongoing basis, while the provincial coordinator also monitors the project.
- There are also quarterly meetings in which the FET provides quarterly reports
- It was indicated that the SETA is very proactive in sharing such information, and is at the forefront in terms of ensuring this happens.

8.1.8 Enabling factors for the partnership/linkage

ECD

- The partnership was made possible because the college was identified as a possible site for an ISOE – which implies that the college has the standing in the community as well as with industry.
- As part of the process around accreditation, assistance and funding was made available in terms of building staff capacity as well as in terms of learning materials.
- It was suggested that this commitment, from the SETA, to support the colleges to enable them to deliver better quality training to young people and the community more broadly.
- It was indicated that being within DHET and having NSDS 3 creates an enabling environment for these relationships

8.1.9 Key partnership/linkage challenges

ECD

- The parties did not highlight significant challenges. However, the SETA acknowledged that they might have misjudged the extent to which they needed to provide guidance and assistance to the FET College once the MOU was signed. A SETA representative stated that as a result, the relationship took longer than normal to get off the ground. *'There was some misunderstanding of what was expected...We signed the MOU and then expected the FET to get on with things and provide regular feedback...In fact they needed more guidance and hand holding through the process then we realised, so we needed to have a closer relationship and more meetings to assist them.'*
- More generally, the SETA stated that, for partnerships to happen, FETs need to build capacity and have dedicated people to deal with partnerships and build experience that way. It was also indicated that there was a need for the FET college to build relationships with industry, '
- From the FET side, no real challenges were highlighted except for initial problems which emerged around the distribution of stipends to learners (also highlighted in the case of Gert Sibande) but it was reported that this has been sorted out so that there are no longer delays from the side of the SETA in providing the stipends which are now done by the FET.
- In terms of the colleges' commitment to partnerships, the unit stated that when it was first established it received the 'cold shoulder' from the academic staff, who had traditionally gone out on an *ad hoc* basis to industry to seek partnerships. With the centralisation of that function in order to ensure better controls and coordination, partnerships are working well and *'we ensure deliverables are met...effectively, we act as the project managers.'*

8.2 CAMEO 2

8.2.1 Who are the partners?

Gauteng

- ETDP and eight FETs in Gauteng

8.2.2 Rationale for entering the partnership/linkage

Gauteng

- The SETA indicated that it wanted to set up the Gauteng FET forum with the purpose of formalising its relationship with the FETs so as to find a way of increasing its provider footprint across the province.
- It was also felt that a forum created mechanisms for them to work with these colleges, and to develop a plan to strengthen their capacity and to consider which programmes should be supported.

8.2.3 Broad objectives of the partnership/linkage

Gauteng

- To build the capacity of the FETs in Gauteng and to assist them to secure accreditation for the scarce and critical programmes that should be rolled out by the SETA.
- This forms part of the SETAs overall commitment to working with and building FET capacity so that they can deliver on skills programmes.

8.2.4 Level of formality of the partnership/linkage

Gauteng

- There has been no MoU signed at this point though it was indicated that this remains an intention.

8.2.5 How the partnership/linkage was initiated and who initiated it?

Gauteng

The proposed partnership was initiated by the SETA.

8.2.6 Main partnership/linkage activities

Gauteng

- The SETA proposed the setting up of the forum with the purpose of coordinating skills development, capacitating the FET colleges and accrediting them to do scarce and critical skills training for the SETAs.
- The FETs in turn have identified the skills needs in their organisations and have presented this to the forum so that the SETA can fund the capacity building where required.

8.2.7 How are the partnerships/linkages monitored, evaluated and learnt from?

Gauteng

- Since the forum was established, there have been quarterly meetings and the intention is that there will be joint monitoring and impact studies of the various programmes which are to be implemented.

8.2.8 Enabling factors for the partnership/linkage

Gauteng

- The SETA and the FETs saw the potential benefit in working together – it was seen as a win-win situation for both sides.
- The NSDS 3 provided the added incentive for the SETA to initiate such a process which they want to expand beyond Gauteng.

8.2.9 Key partnership/linkage challenges

Gauteng

The relationship is still in its initial phase and no real challenges have as yet emerged.

SECTION C: ANALYSIS

This section focuses on those issues that have emerged across the cameos and considers the implications of these for the way in which college and workplace relationships can be conceptualised (either directly or through a SETA), and the implications of this for both policy and support.

9 ANALYTICAL FOCAL POINTS

9.1 FORMS AND OBJECTIVES OF PARTNERSHIP/LINKAGE ENGAGEMENT

The partnerships/linkages typically focus on one or more of the following:

- Delivery of a programme or a component of a programme;
- Programme and curricula: including reviewing and changing curricula, supporting assessment and related
- Institutional development: management support, lecturer development and assisting with infrastructure
- Learner support: Career guidance, workplace exposure and workplace experience

An exploration of the cameos points to the fact that the relationships entered into focus on different areas with some typically focusing on provision to industry, as well as a commitment to ensuring access for the broader community. In most of these cases the FET colleges indicate that their reasons for entering the relationships are to extend their scope, to reach a particular target audience and to receive accreditation status. It appears that in a number of cases, the agreement of the FET College to provide the programme meant that the SETA, or the company, was willing to support institutional development imperatives (including curriculum review, learner recruitment, assessment, etc).

For example, Gert Sibande has entered into relationships which ensures the delivery of programmes, institutional development through the building of staff capacity, as well as learner support through the placement of learner - either within their institution or to attempt, where possible, to place learners externally. In addition, Gert Sibande has taken advantage of opportunities presented by government departments, as it has not had a huge success in terms of the private sector engagement.

East Coast Midlands, has taken it one step further and sought to engage with industry in terms of reviewing and changing curricula to meet the needs of industry, as reflected in the partnership with Volkswagen. In addition, industry acted as moderators and assessors in the process. In the case of the insurance industry partnership with Boland (and other colleges in the Western Cape), the industry and UWC are constantly reviewing and assessing the level of training to ensure full articulation into higher education, as well as ensuring that the learners are able to be in a position to write the board exam for financial planners.

What is interesting is that there were very few relationships that support the improved implementation of the NCV: though the East Coast Midlands is piloting a project to explore a fourth pathway to artisanship which links in with a commitment to learner support. This relationship is an attempt to ensure the employability of its NCV learners.

The SETA partnerships have tended to focus not only on the delivery of programmes (ECD), institutional development (building FET management staff and lecturer capacity), learner support in terms of attempts to place learners as well as articulation between workplace learning and higher education.

9.2 ROLE OF THE DIFFERENT TYPE OF RELATIONSHIPS

This section looks at the roles of the different parties, as well as how colleges view different types of relationships, what impact these have on their institutions, which type of relationships are more beneficial to the different parties and whether linkages and formal partnership support colleges differently.

The cameos point to the fact that the various parties play different roles and their involvement differs. For example, the linkage between Gert Sibande and Public Works appears rather straight forward, with the Department providing funding and the FET acting as a service provider. A similar scenario exists between ETDP SETA and the College of Cape Town. However, in this case, the SETA is committed to ensuring full articulation between workplace learning programmes and higher education through the accrediting of the FET to provide a level 5 course, which provides learners access to higher education. So over and above the role of funder, the SETA has assisted in building capacity in the institution as a result of the accreditation process. The partnership between the insurance industry and Boland (and other WC FETs) is also aimed not only at providing training for financial planners, but ensuring articulation between vocational training and higher education.

There are a number of instances where the partnerships between SETAs and FETs are aimed at capacitating the FETs to become public providers, as well as ISOEs and fulfil the SETA mandates and their obligations in terms of NSDS 3. The examples of these include MERSETA (College of Cape Town) and ETDP SETA and, in such, cases the SETAs have provided funding for capacity building (staff development), assistance with the development of learning materials and the like.

In the case of the partnership between VW and East Coast Midlands, the relationship is a much deeper one, with parties not only sharing resources, but filling the gaps for each other in terms of where training is required. The result is that VW trains the FET learners, and the FET trains VW employees. In addition, as highlighted above, there is engagement around the curriculum and constant process of refining it to ensure it meets industry needs. Ultimately, without VW, the FET would not be able to do the training it is currently doing. What is also interesting about this partnership is that it highlights the fact that through one form of linkage – involvement of the governance structure of the college – a deeper partnership was developed. The same goes for Boland in relation to its partnership with its private provider, Tjeka. In both cases, the parties are filling the gaps for each other – as well as ensuring resources – workshops, skills centre – to meet each other's needs.

The East Coast partnership with MERSETA is also interesting in that it is not just a straight forward relationship of the FET acting as a training provider (as in the case of the ETDP SETA and the Collage of Cape Town) and the SETA providing the funding. Rather, the parties are jointly exploring one of the pathways to artisanship so that it could be rolled out more extensively. This is seen as an important contribution to ensuring the employability of NCV learners.

In terms of exploring which relationships are more beneficial and the impact of these on colleges, it should be highlighted that in the majority of cases, the institutions did not differentiate between partnerships and linkages, except for Boland and East Coast Midlands. They both argued that a partnership was, firstly, long term and, secondly, was based on meeting specific needs identified and, thirdly, for mutual benefit.

Having said this, what these cameos point to is the fact that it is difficult to establish where on the continuum a different relationship sits. On the face of it, a relationship might look like a straightforward contractual relationship (such as in the case of Gert Sibande and Public Works with the Department funding training and the college acting as a training provider). However, because the Department required a particular service, it worked with the college to get accredited with the CETA so that it could provide the training the department required. Through the accreditation process, the department assisted the college in a range of areas. Similarly, the involvement of VW on the board of an FET college led to a relationship developing that has ultimately led to an exciting partnership. Conversely, a long and old established partnership between Boland, private providers and others has not necessarily led to the building of institutional capacity. Hence, what the cameos are showing is that one type of relationship, for example, what could be termed a linkage, does not necessarily support and/or benefit colleges to a lesser extent than partnerships.

In view of what is emerging, all types of relationships need to be supported and enabled as it is not clear where a particular linkage/partnership will lead to and what impact it will have on the college. It is however, necessary to monitor the extent to which these relationships are evolving in a way that ensures access, relevance and quality are addressed. For example, whilst Boland might not currently be contributing towards institutional capacity, it is ensuring communities have access to the college through the types of partnerships it has embarked upon.

In another example we can see that whilst Boland has not necessarily led to the improvement of the quality of lecturers but what its partnership with VW is doing is contributing towards the improvement of learning materials as a result of industry input.

These relationships illustrate a number of factors: firstly, that while the relationships may not directly contribute to the core programmes of the college they can support the achievement of the college objectives. Also that one type of relationship may lead to another and that this highlights the value of different forms of relationships.

9.3 LEVELS OF PARTNERSHIP/LINKAGE ENGAGEMENT

This section considers the level of partnerships and how partners engage and the challenges that may emerge in this process and whether the relevant players are involved in these partnerships/linkages.

The case studies show that within partnerships there can be either two partners, multiple partners or partners at different levels (local and national), fulfilling different roles. The partnerships involving two partners include, for example, the one between East Coast Midlands and VW. In this partnership, the parties understand each other's need to the extent that VW has offered to allow the FET lecturers to spend time in their workshops and upgrade their skills and knowledge. However, the institution has, as yet, not taken up this offer, as it claims that it cannot release staff because of time constraints. It is questionable, however, how balanced the partnership is in terms of mutual benefit, as without VW and access to their workshops for training and workplace experience, the FET would not be able to do the training it would like, or have the learnerships it currently has. A key challenge in the relationship has been around the quality of learning materials provided by the FET, as well as the fact that the institution is able to provide the basic training around learnerships and apprenticeships, but not in relation to more specified and hi-tech training at this point.

An example of a multiple partner relationship including having partners at different levels is the insurance partnership between Boland (and other colleges in the WC), UWC, FPI and INSETA. Whilst this partnership is in its early stages and is effectively being piloted, it provides the opportunity for real learning and sharing of experiences. The parties have acknowledged that managing multiple partners is challenging and especially trying to manage the differing expectations of employers, as well as ensuring that the different colleges – who are using the same learning materials – are providing learners with the same level of training. The development of the learning materials between INSETA and the FPI proved to be quite a lengthy process, as they sought to ensure that it met industry needs. Linked to this is the issue of the facilitators – who have been contracted from the private sector and are set in their ways. *'They are used to getting a handout and teaching from that. We wanted a project that can change and take on new curriculum and they don't want to put in anything in terms of the development of the curriculum. This is an issue as the project is also aimed at building FET capacity.'* As a result of on-going interaction, the parties are getting to understand each other's needs and they all want the partnership to succeed as it will be to the benefit of all.

These cases suggest, then, that the different numbers of partners (from two to multiple) have implications for the extent to which resources need to be invested in managing the relationship and ensuring a shared understanding of the goals of the programme. The cases also highlight, however, that imbalances can come to the fore in partnerships, and that there is a need to reflect on the extent to which different parties are playing the anticipated roles.

9.4 FACTORS THAT ARE ENABLING OR HINDERING THESE RELATIONSHIPS

This section looks at the factors enabling and hindering relationships, and whether external assistance is required in facilitating or assisting in relationships.

The case studies highlight that positive and beneficial relationships can emerge if:

- Colleges are commitment to partnerships/linkages;
- This is reflected in the Key Performance Indicators of relevant managers and staff;

- That resources are allocated to partnerships;
- That there is a champion driving partnerships who understands what is required;
- That the college has a good standing in terms of industry, or has a presence in the community;
- That there is a willingness on the part of industry to consider working with FETs, and the college shows that it understand and/or is willing to cater to the needs of industry.

The challenges or the factors that hinder partnerships (as emerging from these case studies) include:

- If colleges do not understand or value the need for partnerships and do not have a strong person driving such initiatives;
- If the college does not have a relationship with industry,
- The capacity of college lecturers and whether they are up to date with industry developments;
- The quality of learning materials and whether they match industry needs;
- The limited resources available to the partnerships unit and the fact that in the majority of the colleges explored, the units are separate from the main college (and effectively operate almost autonomously which limits the potential impact of partnerships). Finally, in terms of the role of partnership brokers or external agents to assist in terms of partnership, there was little comment on this, except for some input around the need for an external agent to assist in terms of information sharing and the sharing of best practice around partnerships. The general view was that the partnerships function should be an internally driven function and was about having the 'right person' or champion to drive such processes otherwise it would 'always be a nice to have'.

10. CONCLUSIONS AND AREAS FOR DISCUSSION

This section considers highlights some key learnings from the analysis of the various relationships explored.

Firstly, the majority of relationships are considered to be partnerships with formal agreements in place governing the role and responsibilities of each party with clear guidelines around reporting on deliverables and progress. However, the nature of these partnerships vastly differs, and while they are formal, some may be referred to as a linkage (where only a programme is being offered) while others are more complex partnerships where there are multiple activities taking place and in some cases for more than one target group.

Secondly, and flowing from this, the case studies do not necessarily reflect that colleges benefit more from partnerships rather than linkages or, more importantly, that there is such as a clear distinction between them. Rather, the case studies provide a sense that

relationships are organic, and also potentially have significant unintended benefits to the parties involved. This suggests that there is no single formula for a successful partnership, per se, outside of the fact that commitment to the relationship is paramount.

Thirdly, there are some colleges, such as Boland, which has an unusually large number (over 300) of partnerships (and these are formal partnerships with MoUs and does not include what the college defines as informal relationships or linkages) as compared to Gert Sibande (12) and East Coast Midlands (14). The emerging data does not provide a clear indication as to why there is such a difference between the colleges, as they all have relatively small and tightly run partnerships and linkages units, most do not have extensive resources and rely almost entirely on funding from SETAs, NSF or employers to keep going. The KPIs of the majority of staff stipulate that they should support partnerships and the majority of top management appear to acknowledge the need for partnership. However, despite this, in all cases these relationships are generally viewed as 'extra work' and a burden to already overloaded lecturers.

The answer to the Boland-type case, therefore, appears to lie in the personalities of those driving partnerships in the FETs and whether or not they are able to:

- Identify potential partnerships
- Build up relationships with industry (there is an assumption that college staff know how to engage with industry. Interviews point to the fact that this is not always the case)
- Take advantage of opportunities that arise instead of merely being recipients of relationships initiated by the SETAs or other parties.

In addition to the above, however, is also the sense of not being hampered by a perceived lack of specific capacity and the ability to bring in the necessary resources to affect these partnerships. For example, in the case of Boland, the key driver is a real 'go getter' and someone with an entrepreneurial spirit who is extremely well connected both within industry and externally. It would also appear that the driver clearly understands what the role requires. To some degree, this spirit is evident in the driver of partnerships at the East Coast Midlands College, who is also continuously exploring opportunities.

A key part of this is not only identifying potential relationships, but being able to manage them. In the case of Boland the partnerships entered into on the different campuses are controlled from the centre, and no campus can enter into a partnership without approval from the head of the partnership unit who requires compliance with a standard template in order to properly evaluate the nature of the potential relationship. The risks of a Boland scenario is, however, that if the driver leaves, will the systems in place be able to ensure the various partnerships are maintained.

A related point is the fact that these units appear to operate quite separately and/or operate parallel to the main college. They do not appear to be moving into the mainstream part of the college to improve core provisioning: for example in the Construction programme in the Boland, it does not appear to be positively impacting on the quality of the lecturers providing the construction NCV or influencing the way in which this programme is delivered. This is, however, not always the case. For example, in the case of the College of Cape Town a different scenario emerges.

In addition, the units have to be self-sustaining as they do not receive funding from the college. Some interviews point to the fact that these units in fact pay the FET an

administration fee for the use of various facilities or services. It would further appear that revenue from that this unit generates goes back into the unit but not necessarily in the case of the College of Cape Town, where the revenue goes back into the college as a whole.

Fourthly, the case studies point to the need for further clarity around the purpose of partnerships. For example, what should the benefits of partnerships for colleges be? Should they be contributing to improved access – in which case to what, to the core programmes of the FET Colleges as defined in policy or to any programme? If quality – then for which programmes? The ones that form part of the partnership or those implemented across the college? Similarly, with respect to relevance, the same questions should be asked.

Fifthly, as highlighted above, relationships are benefitting colleges, learners and other stakeholders in various ways. There are some partners who are ensuring greater access for communities such as Boland and Gert Sibande. This raises the issue of the role of colleges in more rural areas, and the role they should be playing in terms of the broader community. Then there are relationships which are seeking to improve the quality of lecturers (College of Cape Town and Gert Sibande) and learning materials (insurance, East Coast Midlands) while others to ensure the programmes are meeting the needs of industry and are relevant (East Coast, Boland). However, whilst there are examples of attempts by colleges to ensure programmes are meeting the needs of industry, there does not appear to be an attempt to adapt existing college programmes, but rather to develop new ones.

Sixthly, it can be seen that the shift in policy and the imperatives outlined in NSDS III have all worked to encourage SETAs to play a critical role in terms of building institutional capacity in colleges and begin to ensure they network and build relationships with industry. This is critical if FETs are to become the provider of choice for industry and the public sector. This highlights the importance of the role of the SETAs in enabling capacity building of the colleges, but emphasises the imperative that there is clarity as to the types of programmes that should be supported and how.

Finally, the role of the SETAs raises the question of whether external parties can assist colleges in developing partnerships. The general view is that this should be an internal college function, but driven by a champion otherwise it will always be a 'nice to have'. The type of external support suggested included DHET (or other organisations) organising workshops where experts are brought in to share with colleges best practices and for them to learn which relationships work and most beneficial to colleges. This should also include international best practices. As one partnership manager stated, '*we need to expose more FETs to relationships that work*'.

In view of what has emerged, the following issues emerge that require further dialogue and concrete consideration, where possible. The appropriate fora for these discussions and considerations will require further review and discussion.

1. Consider what the objectives for partnerships are (including whether the objectives relates to the sustainability of almost "stand-alone" college units or the entire college as a public provider)

2. Linked to the above, there is a need to review the split between income generating and funded programmes and implications, both positive or negative, for the overall development of the college, as well as on the quality of learning.
3. Provide direction regarding the nature of programmes: most are in occupational and away from vocational. Is this appropriate? It may not be avoidable but what is the response?
4. It is suggested that there is a need to continue to encourage partnerships in policy (with respect to SETAs but also within the colleges themselves) as these appear to play a critical role in developing the capacity of the colleges: for example the message that SETAs should work with the FET Colleges appears to have opened the door to a number of new relationships.
5. Based on the results of these questions review the M&E framework relating to partnerships and establish whether it is tracking the relevant indicators (that is, the extent to which the partnerships are contributing to the agreed upon objectives)
6. Sharing information about partnerships and linkages across colleges, both as a platform for showcasing achievements and good practices, as well as fostering new potential linkages.