An Evaluation of The Impact of SSACI's Support to the

BUSINESS SKILLS
AND
DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This review would not have been possible without the kind co-operation of BSDC, its staff and management.

Last but not least, thank you to the graduates, all of whom happily and candidly engaged in discussions as part of this evaluation. I wish them every success as they embark on their careers.

Fiona Cameron-Brown
13 February 2006

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Appendices:

I   The "SSACI" Groups: 2004 and 2005

II   Platinum Produce

III   Core course: Unit standards

IV   Example: Assessment Rubric

V   Sample Lesson Framework

VI   Business Monitoring Records

VII   Oval International College

VIII   Placement Tools

IX   Guided Interview Framework

X   Bursary Application Form

INTRODUCTION

The Swiss-South African Co-operation Initiative (SSACI) contracted FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING (FCC) to verify that BSDC did, between June 2004 and December 2005, implement the project to prepare 52 disadvantaged youths, for wage- or self-employment by providing them with training in generic business administration skills and entrepreneurship, and providing those who qualify, with a small start-up capital-grant to assist them start their own businesses.

This task was informed by Herman Kotze's evaluation (2002), also commissioned by SSACI. The management and staff of BSDC are to be complimented at the profound change and growth that has taken place since then.

This report outlines the brief, the process and includes discussions with those members of staff interviewed at the time of writing the Interim Report. It incorporates comments from both BSDC and SSACI and concludes with a series of recommendations.

The brief

In terms of the consultant's brief from SSACI, the evaluation had to address four key questions:

1. Did BSDC achieve the following specific outputs for the project, as follows:

    (a) at least 10 SSACI-funded trainees graduated from the training programme at the end of December 2004, of whom at least 8 were placed in wage- or self-employment by March 2005;

    (b) at least 35 SSACI-funded trainees graduated from the core business-skills training programme at the end of August 2005; and

    (c) by the end of December 2005, at least 10 of the new graduates were able to generate liveable incomes through their own micro-enterprises and at least another 20 had been placed in wage-employment?

2. Was the training programme implemented properly in terms of curriculum, methodology, educational value and compatibility with the principles of the NQF?

3. Did the project activities include the following?

    (a) As part of the course, were trainees placed in local businesses or non-profit organisations for a three-week internship?

    (b) On completion of this core training, were graduates given the choice of further training in one of two electives:

    - Call centre operations

    - Entrepreneurship for self-employment?

    Did each elective comprise another four weeks of contact training, either starting their own small business or seeking employment in established companies? Were entrepreneurs assisted with a small

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za

loan from BSDC and business support services for the remainder of the year? Were graduates who sought employment elsewhere assisted to find and apply for jobs?

(c) Were those trainees opting for the entrepreneurship course, and who produce satisfactory business start-up plans, given a grant of R500 as start-up capital?

(d) On completion of training, were trainees offered post-training support in the form of:

- Monthly mentoring visits by BSDC staff to assist them with practical business advice?

- Assistance in finding a vacancy and preparing for job interviews?

- Monthly meetings for all BSDC alumni, at which they share experiences and motivate those who are still struggling with their small businesses or are looking for formal employment?

- Access for all alumni to BSDC's help-desk for ex-students and outsiders who have small business or career queries?

- Access for all alumni to BSDC's small business corner at Lucida House, Salt River, which includes Internet and e-mail facilities, magazines and other literature and resources relevant to running a small business?

4. What can SSACI, and BSDC learn from the

(a) the strengths and successes of the programme to date?

(b) What have been the weaknesses and failures? How can we account for them?

(c) How can this learning inform the planning and implementation of similar projects in future?

Within this framework, the departure point was the BSDC project description, as provided by SSACI, specifically:

> *This project aims to prepare a total of 52 disadvantaged youths (12 from the June-December 2004 intake and 40 from the January-August 2005 intake) for wage- or self-employment by providing them with training in generic business administration skills and entrepreneurship, and providing those who qualify with a small start-up capital-grant to assist them start their own businesses.*

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za

TERMS USED IN THIS REPORT

To avoid confusion, certain of the terms used in this report are explained below:

- **Educator/facilitator**— the person who gives training in or information on a particular subject, making learning easier. These terms are used interchangeably.
- **Learner**—a participant in any learning programme.
- **Graduate**—an individual who has successfully completed the programme that s/he attended at BSDC.

ACRONYMS USED IN THIS REPORT

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
BSDC	Business Skills Development Centre
FET	Further Education and Training
FETI	Further Education and Training Institute
ICDL	International Computer Driver's Licence
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
SETQAA	Services SETA Education and Training Quality Assurance Body
SSACI	Swiss-South African Co-operation Initiative
YAC	Youth Advisory Centre at BSDC

The Process

Given both SSACI and the evaluator's intention that an evaluation can be an opportunity for constructive dialogue and learning, qualitative and quantitative data were collected using a participative approach. To date, the process has included the following:

1. Paper based review of reports, course outlines, assessment plans and other information provided by BSDC.

2. Interviews and discussions with:
   (a) management (the Centre Manager and one Director who also fulfils the role of Project Manager)
   (b) educators;
   (c) graduates of the training prior to this evaluation; and
   (d) where possible, employers.

3. A review of some educators' assessor portfolios for the 2005 programme, as well as some learning support materials.

LIMITATIONS

The key limitation influencing this evaluation was that when it took place, the 2006 classes had not begun for the new intake, although the orientation programme was underway.

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za

1. FINDINGS

The discussion below addresses a number of issues, separately, viz., the BSDC learner and curriculum, with particular reference to the course and cohort of learners supported by SSACI. It also examines the programme of ongoing support to BSDC graduates, with particular emphasis on fledgling entrepreneurs.

1.1   The BSDC learner

The evaluator successfully contacted and interviewed six of the eight graduates whose contact details were provided. Attempts to contact the other two included leaving voice mail messages, messages with relatives, and arranging telephone appointment. Calls were not returned and/or appointments not kept.

Of those interviewed, the majority indicated that other graduates who were either friends or relatives had referred them to BSDC. One had responded to a newspaper advertisement.

All graduates interviewed are comfortable English speakers, although their home languages are isiXhosa (4), isiSotho and isiZulu (one of each). Interestingly, none of them consider Cape Town as merely "a place to stay", it is "my home". All indicate that they had been born in the metropole and grown up here. Two had attended former model C schools in the inner city.

1.2   The "SSACI" groups: 2004 and 2005

In 2004, SSACI provided top-up funding for 12 learners, and in 2005, there were 68 learners in the full-time programme, of whom 40 were supported by SSACI. Appendix I contains the relevant details of each individual supported through this programme. Table 1 indicates outputs achieved in respect of the 2004 group:

Table 1: Outputs achieved: 2004

	BSDC outputs	SSACI requirements	% success
Successfully completed the programme	12	12	100%
Employed/self-employed	10*	8	120%

* two of those listed as having started their own businesses could not
  be traced in January 2006

The average age of learners from both groups was 23. Table 2 on the next page represents the outputs achieved, to date, in respect of the 2005 group:

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za

Table 2: Outputs achieved: 2005

	BSDC outputs	SSACI requirements	% success
Successfully completed the programme	40	40	100%
Employed	20	20	100%
Self-employed/own business	4	10	40%
Volunteer work	1	n/a	-
Not yet placed	13	n/a	-
Resigned, untraceable	1	n/a	-

1.2.1 GRADUATES WHO ARE WORKING

Eight graduates are employed as call centre agents (as was the graduate who resigned). The call centres are both in-bound and outbound, generally dealing with sales (e.g. pre-paid electricity or air time), accounts queries and/or debt collection. One employer[1] reported that "their" BSDC graduate, who had started work in October, had been a "wonderful surprise", and had been "promoted" to a more difficult account. This employer also asked that BSDC make contact with the company's training manager.

1.2.2 GRADUATES WHO ARE SELF-EMPLOYED

Graduates' businesses range from retailing soft drinks to the design and crafting of clothing and jewellery. One graduate reported successful jewellery sales over the Christmas period, but expressed concern about the seasonality of her sales, and the implications for sustainability.

One of the 2004 graduates has blossomed in the last eighteen months: she started as a receptionist with her employer, who also sponsored her call centre training. She then became involved with in-house training, and is currently managing one of the company's franchised outlets. She has also been awarded a 25% share in a new store that is planned for the Vangate City Mall in Cape Town. Appendix II contains a newspaper report on the launch of the franchises, as well as a picture of one of the Platinum Produce outlets. A visit to the Cavendish Square store confirmed that product and related services are targeted at the high end of the market; they can also be accessed online.

Simultaneously, this graduate has continued her small business—the sale of hand crafted t-shirts. Her mother makes the garments, and although all the designs carried on the garments are the graduate's work, she sometimes sub-contracts someone to transfer them on to the t-shirts. Both her mother and the sub-contractor are paid for their work. This individual expressed her pride at being associated with BSDC and went on to say that it is her intention to give something back, as soon as she is able.

Visits to two fledgling entrepreneurs, both making and selling craft products revealed that these businesses face significant challenges (See also page 9, 1.4 Elective: Survivalist Entrepreneurship).

---

[1] A debt collecting agency for national chains, e.g. Edcon, Standard Bank, RCS

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za

In one instance the individual's widowed mother is sickly and unemployed. Consequently, any income from the business is diverted into survival, with little if any being ploughed back into the business. A problem identified by the YAC staff (see page 13), and confirmed in this interview is the parent-child power dynamic, compounded by the fact that the parent does not understand the mechanics of a product-based business. This cash-flow related issue also emerged in discussions with two other, older self-employed women: they did not know how to divert a portion of the income into the household (as a salary/wage), while still ensuring that there are funds with which to replenish their stocks to enable them to continue selling (and earning an income).

One of the two women referred to above, has assisted BSDC by teaching learners to bead. The other is a BSDC graduate (1989) and who has also had sales training at another Cape Town based NGO. She is able to purchase, at cost price, from this NGO, a range of products that sell well in her community. She sells these on at a recommended price. Because all the items are purchased up front, she retains all the money she earns, the cost price and the mark-up[2]. By all accounts this individual had been extremely successful, initially. She produced the NGO's newsletter (2004) in which she had been featured as their top sales person. She has, however, not managed to sustain this. The only income she currently receives is in the form of rent from a lodger. She says that this income does not enable her to purchase stock, even though she confirms that she had a good customer base. She also indicated that customers will not pay a deposit in anticipation of an order being fulfilled. This is probably a function of the type of product (e.g. lip balm, soap powder, etc.)

Unlike the above case, all the other participants reported that their major challenge was getting their product to, and finding customers (see page 9, 1.4 Elective: Survivalist Entrepreneurship)

In summary, the common problems that emerge are:

- Access to, and management of cash
- Marketing—creating visibility and/or awareness, as well as finding channels that effectively deliver the product to the customer.

1.2.3 GRADUATES' HIGHLIGHTS AT BSDC

In terms of the BSDC programme, graduates' highlights included:

- I was able to ask if I didn't understand.
- The call centre was fantastic!
- It was my first time on computers. The teachers are so friendly, and help you even with personal problems. I became not so dependent on others.
- Job shadow—I saw how much I can contribute in a business and how much I would enjoy it.
- ... the office, and dealing with people. I can do anything. I'm not shy any more.
- … particularly the bookkeeping—I excelled with 90%!

---

[2] Ranges from ±20% to as much as ±60% per item, and the Rand values are equally varied, from R 0.80 (bubble gum) to as much as R 162.00 (paint).

- … me being elected as an SRC member!

1.3   Learning programmes

By the end of the 2005 calendar year, BSDC had trained 143 learners in a range of full- and part-time programmes. Not all learners were out of school youth, as some programmes are designed for Grade 10 and 11 learners as well as for senior school educators. BSDC's flagship programme is its full time course, on which SSACI funded 40 learners.

The course attended by these learners is described in the BSDC brochure as a one-year full-time bridging course in Business Management and Entrepreneurship. It consists of the following learning areas:

Core	Elective
- End-user computing	
- Office Practice	- International Computer Driver's Licence (ICDL)
- Entrepreneurship	- Office administration/ Reception
- Basic bookkeeping	- Survivalist Entrepreneurship
- Life Skills	- Call Centre
- Business Communication	

An examination of the assessment plans reveals that a total of 20 unit standards are covered in the core course, mostly at NQF Level 2 (Appendix III). Successful completion of these would earn the learner 71 credits. All the core learning areas have been aligned to unit standards except Life Skills[3].

BSDC describes the core as a skills programme and the Centre Manager confirmed that as part of its application for an extension of scope of accreditation is that the Services SETA registered this as a skills programme. This is discussed in more detail later in this section.

Information about the unit standards to which the electives are aligned was not provided; however, in this regard, attention is drawn to the following:

1. The ICDL is an internationally recognised programme and negotiations are currently under way between the ISETT SETA and the ICDL Trust. It is hoped that this will result in the registration of a qualification that would incorporate and recognise the achievement of the ICDL. BSDC hopes that learners that complete both the core programme and the ICDL might be able to achieve this qualification.[4]

2. Quality Solutions, an accredited provider, is responsible for the call centre training.

---

[3] Unit standards are available and fall into learning areas 07 and 09 (Human and Social Sciences and Health Sciences and Social Services, respectively)
[4] In the event that this a qualification that BSDC's learners could achieve, BSDC may be obliged to register as an FETI with the Department of Education.

A key feature of the 2005 activities has been the call centre training[5].

1.3.1 Compatibility with the principles of the NQF: Curriculum, learning objectives and learning support materials

The Services SETA ETQA (SETQAA) has awarded BSDC provisional accreditation as a training provider. The SETQAA definition of this is as follows:

> *……the status attained after the SETQAA evaluation has found that a Provider of education and training has met the eight core criteria as specified by SAQA. And all learning programme(s) are aligned with registered NQF unit standards and/or qualifications, **but no learner results has been recorded and reported to SETQAA yet**.*

SETQAA emphasis

Achievement of this status is not insignificant and BSDC's staff are to be congratulated on having achieved this. A considerable amount of work has gone into ensuring that all aspects of the programme are unit standard aligned. It should be noted that this status is granted for a period of two years, at the end of which the training provider's status is reviewed. Assuming that all is in order, and it has recorded and reported learner results to the SETQAA, it will be granted full accreditation status, usually for a period of five years. This is defined as follows:

> *… the status attained after SETQAA monitoring has found that a Provider of education and training deliver quality education and training in line with all the criteria specified by SAQA and SETQAA and the provider recorded learner achievements against registered unit standards and qualifications, and SETQAA approved Certificates of competence had been issued to learners.*

SETQAA

As noted earlier, BSDC has submitted an application for an extension of scope to ensure inclusion of all its learning programmes[6]. The educators have already prepared their assessment plans for their learning areas and related unit standards.

To date, BSDC has not had a site visit from the SETQAA, and this informed the review of materials, and subsequent discussions with management.

A review of educators' assessor portfolios demonstrates their ability to facilitate learners' achievement of the specific outcomes in the various unit standards, and to assess them in terms of the appropriate criteria. The assessor portfolios generally revealed well-developed tools and rubrics for measuring learners' performance. Please see Appendix IV for an example of such a rubric.

Consequently, the considerable amount of effort put into the learning programmes, during 2005 has established a firm foundation on which to build. It

---

[5] Call centres continue to be a key area for employment growth in Cape Town. At the time of writing, a British-based company, TalkTalk, has just announced its intention to establish a 250-seat centre in the city. In addition, the Premier of the Western Cape, in his State of the Province address (10 February 2006) re-stated the goal that Cape Town be the third largest international out-sourced call centre hub.
[6] Includes application for registration of the BSDC's programmes as Services SETA skills programmes.

Compiled by Fiona Cameron Consulting cc

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za

was noted above that the SETQAA is still to do a site visit. Among the documentation that the SETQAA will want to see are the plans for each unit of learning (the equivalent of lesson plans), as well as the resource material on which the educators draw for each of their sessions. While each educator clearly does plan each day's lesson, it's unlikely that the current documentation will meet the SETQAA's expectations. A sample lesson framework is provided in Appendix V.

During discussions, it was suggested that BSDC source generic learning support material—this is becoming increasingly available as publishers respond to the needs of the education and training sector. There is, for example, a Cape Town based, boutique publisher that focuses specifically on the FET market, and which probably offers relatively inexpensive material that may be of use to BSDC. The advantage of this approach is that it can help facilitators in the design of assessment activities (formative and summative), as well as to find different and useful case studies to facilitate learning.

Finally, virtually all the interviewees commented on the burden associated with maintaining accreditation, particularly for the Centre Manager. This is of real concern, particularly given that the communication from the SETQAA is often confusing and contradictory. Consequently, the Centre Manager is distracted from day-to-day operational matters to attend to accreditation issues.

1.4   Elective: Survivalist Entrepreneurship

Essentially, participants in this elective are expected to start and run their businesses. To be accepted, the candidate must

- submit a business plan and budget that includes an anticipated loan instalment (as per the core),
- submit a break down of what it will actually cost to start the business
- identify an unemployed member of the community to work with him/her in the enterprise.

The documents are interrogated, and if the concept is deemed viable, a loan amount is calculated and the funds made available. The learner then starts his or her business and is mentored over a few weeks by the responsible educator. She works closely with the fledgling entrepreneurs and maintains excellent records of their progress. Please see Appendix VI, which is an example of such a record.[7]

1.2.1   THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY PARTNER

An innovative feature of this programme is the requirement that each new entrepreneur solicits the active assistance of an unemployed member of the community.

The rationale behind this is three-fold:

---

[7] It is interesting to note that two of the learners in this record are also two of the businesses visited as part of this evaluation. While supported, both businesses apparently showed potential, but this had not been realised at the time of this evaluation. This issue is discussed in more detail in the section on mentoring.

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za

- In recognition of the learner's primary goal which is to find employment—they generally see starting their own businesses as a last resort. Therefore, a business partner means that should the learner find employment, the partner could take responsibility for day-to-day operations in the business.

- Transfer of business skills to the partner

- Job creation

Although there are no criteria for identifying this person, it seems that mostly, learners select a family member, often their mothers. Experience has shown that the least successful community "partner" is a learner's friend, and this is usually related to a breakdown of trust.

Of the three young entrepreneurs interviewed

- One indicated that although she is employed, her business has not been neglected: her mother also continues to play a role in the business

- One indicated that her partner had been a friend, but that the partnership had not worked out. Although she is actively seeking work, and the day before our visit, had made yet another job application, she indicated that she would continue with her business even if she found employment.

- The other said that she would be starting a three-year business management course, the following week[8.] She indicated that she wanted to continue with the business while she was studying. She also pointed out that business management was not her first choice; she wished to pursue a craft option, but the college concerned only offers this at its Durban campus[9], and the family did not approve of the way in which a similar course was run by a local public provider (institute of technology): classes are only on three days in the week.

1.2.2 Challenges encountered with this model

Although the rationale behind this model is both logical and laudable, BSDC is not able to implement it in a way that allows it to achieve its full potential. Problems identified include:

- The community member does not always understand how a business operates, and the learner, who is also a novice, is similarly unfamiliar with the mechanics of running a business.

- The distance between the community member and BSDC.

- The tension that is often associated with how to manage the income from the business, particularly when the family is very poor.

It had also been intended that the community partners visit BSDC on a regular basis for group coaching and/or mentoring. However, funds were not available to pay for the participants' transport, which means that they do not come.

---

[8] Largely under pressure from her mother.
[9] Oval International—See Appendix VII

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za

Notwithstanding this, one meeting was held (March 2004). This meeting, *inter alia*, investigated of support that these businesses required was investigated. This revealed the following key areas for support[10]:

- **Marketing and sales**
  - o Finding a market
  - o Selling skills (and lack of confidence)
  - o Advertising
  - o Market Research
- **Structure and Finance**
  - o Access to finance
  - o Contractual issues (e.g. partnerships/ franchising)
  - o Bookeeping
  - o How to set up a business
- **Operations**
  - o Transport
  - o Sourcing affordable materials
  - o Access to suppliers

In addition the following problems were identified:[9]

- o Crime (Security and safety e.g. of the product and/or when carrying cash)
- o High default rate among customers that purchase on credit
- o Not controlling profits, i.e. how to manage the cash flow to ensure ongoing supplies for sale to customers.

1.2.3 SOME OBSERVATIONS

Clearly a great deal of thought has gone into this model of business building, but financial constraints have meant that BSDC has not been able to implement it to its full extent. There may be a case to be made for providing support so that the efficacy of this approach could be tested with a view to its application in other contexts. However, this should only be in conjunction with a structured mentoring programme after the elective is complete. Please see the relevant recommendation (page 21) at the end of this report.

1.5   Fees

Learners are required to pay an annual fee (R 2 900), and must pay R 1 000 of this amount as a registration fee on the first day of the programme. The balance (R 1 800) is payable on a term basis. The actual cost of the course attended by "SSACI" learners is R 18 500/capita, which means that donor funding is required to subsidise each learner in the amount of R 15 600.

Currently, learners who have not paid their fees by the end of the course, may attend the graduation ceremony but do not receive their certificates. Recognising that graduates need to be earning to be able to settle the debt, they are issued statements of results. It appears that not receiving the certificate is insufficient incentive for graduates to settle these debts.

---

[10] Entrepreneurs interviewed as part of this evaluation echoed these (see page 5)

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za

The total amount of fees outstanding for the entire SSACI cohort amounts to R 64 350.00. Table 2 shows the break down for the 2004 and 5 groups (See Appendix I for details).

Table 2: Fee default rate

	R	**% Default**
2004	R 11 750.00	37%
2005	R 25 600.00	45%
Total due	**R 64 350.00**	Average 41%

While it is acknowledged that BSDC's learners generally come from exceedingly poor communities, and must support their (often extended) families, a high proportion of graduates are now employed, and earn good incomes (see 1.6 below). They should therefore be encouraged to settle their fees, over a period, post completion of the course. Recommendations to this effect are presented at the end of this report (page 22).

1.6   Earnings

1.6.1 EMPLOYED GRADUATES

In respect of earning capacity salaries are, on average, R 3 388 a month (before deductions), with the lowest being R 1 800, and the highest, R 4 500. The former is still in his/her probationary period and expects to successfully complete this and receive an increase in income.

1.6.2 SELF-EMPLOYED GRADUATES

It is difficult to gauge the income of those who are self-employed—none was able to indicate a monthly turnover, but some indicated that they had made a profit. One of the individuals interviewed said that she had made about R 600 over the festive season, and that this was being ploughed back into the business.

1.7   Youth Advisory Centre (YAC)

The Youth Advisory Centre (YAC) is run by two Placement Officers, and fulfils the following functions:

- Recruitment and placement of learners into the BSDC programmes

- Arranging for, and placing learners in, job shadow assignments

- Placement of graduates in employment (an ongoing service to all BSDC graduates

- Follow up and support of all BSDC graduates, including fledgeling entrepreneurs

Discussions focussed on placement of learners into the programmes, and the support of entrepreneurs.

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za

1.7.1 PLACEMENT PROCESS

The placement process is rigorous and competency based. It was designed with the assistance of one of the directors (from a personnel recruitment background) as well as the educators.

Notwithstanding the fact that all candidates for the core course must have successfully completed Grade 12, they all complete this process. It consists of three elements:

- Completion of a registration/application form

- Completion of a 2½ hour written literacy and mathematical literacy assessment

- A guided interview (conducted by a placement officer and educator)

The forms and tools that are applied are provided in Appendix VIII.

1.7.2 MENTORING

This discussion focused on the following three areas: The objectives of the mentoring programme, its structure, and the challenges associated with mentoring graduates particularly those in their own businesses.

1.7.2.1   Objectives of the mentoring programme

The programme is intended as a support to both learners and graduates of BSDC. The latter are provided with placement assistance. In addition, the placement officers do offer limited counselling services, but generally make use of a referral system. In the case of those wanting to pursue business initiatives, bodies to whom referrals are made, include:

- Red Door (An initiative of the provincial government, targeting low level SMMEs)

- MENNGOS (Micro Enterprise Network of NGOs)

- BRAIN (associated with the Small Enterprise Development Agency)

1.7.2.2   Structure

The programme is reactive, and therefore has no formal structure.

1.7.2.3   The challenges associated with supporting fledgling entrepreneurs

The themes identified in the interviews with entrepreneurs, as well as with the educator responsible for entrepreneurship were reiterated, and have already been discussed in depth.

A key concern was that it was very difficult to effectively support these people only through telephone contact—both placement officers expressed concern about the truthfulness of answers to their questions.

Similarly, both placement officers said that they believed in the value of face-to-face interaction with entrepreneurs, but that BSDC could not afford the cost of transport, either for field work, or for bringing entrepreneurs into the Centre.

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za

1.7.2.4   Some other observations

Clearly, the support that employed graduates receive is effective. Both placement officers were proud of the success of this part of the programme. They note that many BSDC graduates return to the YAC as their careers progress. They also use the placement officers as sounding boards, and as sources of work related support. One cited the example of a graduate whom she had counselled not to leave his position, but to persevere. He has recently been promoted, and his now substantial package includes a company vehicle.

1.8   Staff discussions

BSDC is overseen by Centre Manager, Celiwe Ngwenya, and there are five educators responsible for the courses that form part of this evaluation. The Information Technology Manager does a limited amount of facilitation, as does the Centre Manager. In addition, a member of the Board of Directors, Cathy Clarke, is the Projects Manager. Her current and temporary role is fundraising, and she was Centre Manager prior to Ms Ngwenya's appointment during 2005.

Discussions were held with all educators, the placement officers (2) the Centre Manager, as well as with one of the Directors who currently also fulfils the role of Projects Manager; she was also Centre Manager for a period during 2005. The framework that guided all the discussions with the staff and management is provided in Appendix IX.

1.8.1 EDUCATORS

The following educators were interviewed:

Learning Area	Educator
Bookkeeping, Entrepreneurship	M Wolhuter
End-user computing/ICDL	W Wise
Life Skills	L Willson
Office Practice, Business Communication	L Malone
	L Willson
Typing	C Ngwenya V Gonzo [11]

These discussions covered the following areas:

- Educational and appropriate biographical information
- The BSDC approach/philosophy and/or organisational ethos
- Attitude to/understanding of outcomes-based education and adult learning
- Opportunities for reflection and visioning

---

[11] Teaching assistant in 2005

1.8.1.1   Biographical Data

All the educators and management staff, except one, have a tertiary level qualification, ranging from bachelor's degrees to post school and/or professional certificates. The Centre Manager has a Higher Diploma in Education, as well as a Further Diploma in Education Management.

Subsequent to Kotze's report (2002), all the staff employed by BSDC at that time embarked on the ABET certificate programme through UNISA. While not all completed the programme, some have been awarded the certificate, and at least one continued with the programme and should be graduating with the diploma, shortly. The reasons for non-completion were varied, and included problems with the UNISA administration, appeals process and lack of adequate support; one educator indicated that her previous experience, coupled with her bachelor's degree meant that the programme did not introduce her to new concepts and thinking.

In addition, all educators, except the teaching assistant, have completed the requirements for registration and accreditation as assessors with the Services SETA. Two of these assessors are also registered moderators.

All the educators whose primary function is facilitation, other than the teaching assistant[12], have considerable experience either working in a similar environment[13], or in the corporate sector.[14] Three of the educators have, at various times, been involved in different aspects of curriculum and/or learning materials development.

The depth and breadth of educator expertise is considerable and is a valuable resource to BSDC.

1.8.1.2   Applying the Principles of Adult Education

The difference between the way adults and children learn emerged as an area of concern in Kotze's report. In light of this, and given that most educators had at least started the ABET certificate programme, management and educators were asked what they understood by the principles of adult learning, and how they applied them. This question generally elicited a description of an adult learner, as follows:

- Adults are generally more motivated, and less inclined towards ill discipline

- Adults have a greater locus of control and a higher sense of wanting to learn

- Adults have life experience that must be taken into account

- Adults have responsibilities outside the learning environment, that must be taken into account, e.g. child rearing and providing for the family

---

[12] She has just completed a B. Tech. and has been contracted to teach keyboard skills
[13] One educator taught in Soweto for a number of years; another was involved in both managing and tutoring for Protech, yet another taught on the Cape Flats, and at St Francis Adult Education Centre.
[14] Both in a clerical role and in the development of material for what was, at the time, labelled computer-based training.

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za

The above does reflect some of the principles, but not all, which are:

- *Adults learn best when they feel the need to learn. The learning programme must be structured to ensure that training courses are appropriate to the needs of the learner to be effective in his/her context. This "buys" learners into the course and improves motivational levels in the training environment.*

- *Adults use their life experience as a foundation on which to build their new learning and tend to reject new knowledge (learning) if they do not see how it fits with in, or expands on, what they already know. This means that any structured learning should create opportunities for adults to draw on their own knowledge and experience. Encouraging learners to share their knowledge with their peers encourages both reflection and peer-to-peer learning.*

<div align="right">Cameron, 2000</div>

What also emerged from this discussion is the fact that the educators are grappling with the change in the age profile of the BSDC learner from more mature learners to school leavers. School leavers are in a transition phase between adolescence and adulthood, and consequently do not necessarily have either the motivation or the life experience of their older peers. BSDC consequently faces the challenge of helping these young people "transition" into mature, responsible adults competent and confident to enter the world of work.

1.8.1.3   Attitude towards Outcomes-Based Education (OBE)

Questioning staff and educators about OBE was precipitated by both Kotze's report, as well as BSDC's own reports. Interestingly, no educator discounted it out of hand. Some are keen proponents of the approach, while others are more reserved, questioning its applicability in an under-resourced context (South Africa, as a whole, as well as BSDC). One educator commented that the approach makes it clear to both the learner and educator, what should be achieved (destination), and that she liked the freedom to be able to choose her own path to that end.

All the educators commented on the amount of work required to become OBE compliant, and the burden associated with assessment. Having said this, some also acknowledged that they are beginning to recognise that not all assessment activities require the same input and attention from the educator, and that this will make matters somewhat more manageable. Strategies to facilitate this should be actively explored through regular team discussions, and consideration should be given to asking experts to spend time with the educators helping them to address these issues—perhaps in a workshop format.

Of particular concern to most, and this too, needs addressing in a constructive way, is that some learners abuse opportunities for re-assessment. Perhaps this is a function of inadequate or inappropriate use of formative assessment opportunities and/or that the learners do not perceive the critical importance of summative assessment. In the absence of opportunities to explore this more deeply, it is difficult to arrive at a particular conclusion or to offer possible solutions.

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za

OBE, together with the demands associated with accreditation, clearly call for greater structure from the educators. Much has been done to develop some structure, which needs to be streamlined to best fit both the accreditation requirements and BSDC.

1.8.2 PLACEMENT OFFICERS

Discussions were held with the two Placement Officers, Xoliswa Myo and Zikhona Mantanga.

Both the placement officers who run the Youth Advisory Centre are graduates of BSDC (1998 and 1994). One was 28 when she did the course, and the other, 26. Both have, at different times embarked on tertiary qualifications that remain incomplete, largely because of the challenges associated with family and work responsibilities. They have broad and varied work experience, from selling insurance to working in a stock broking firm. Both have, at different times, left jobs when they discovered unethical behaviour among either colleagues or management. Their combined experience is vital in their work with BSDC graduates facing the new challenge of the world of work.

Both expressed a desire for professional development: one indicted that her computer skills needed upgrading and expressed a wish to do the ICDL course. Another has registered for, and has begun, a Bachelor of Commerce (Human Resources) through UNISA. Both are highly committed and somehow manage to cope with an inordinately challenging task with grace and enthusiasm.

1.8.3 BSDC APPROACH/PHILOSOPHY

There are three notices pinned to the board behind the computer in the staff room, where all the interviews were held. These notices say the following:

BSDC TRUST	The staff at BSDC share solutions, have structured meetings and work together in an honest and respectful manner to the benefit of BSDC and the students
BSDC CHANGE	BSDC has sound management structures and policies which support staff development and enable effective communication and interaction for the organisation to grow.
BSDC TEAMWORK	BSDC has an ethos of shared goals that is based on transparency, trust and open communication that enhances the self and the organisation as a whole. It identifies problems and opportunities for growth.

In light of the presence of these notices, it was interesting that the staff had difficulty articulating a philosophy and/or approach, per se. Most spoke about what motivates them, and what keeps them at BSDC.

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za

The following themes emerged:

- Community involvement—making a difference.
- People here are devoted to what they are doing.
- Helping the disadvantaged, particularly women.
- Helping people to see that they have real alternatives.
- Helping people to help themselves—they learn real skills that enable them both to get jobs and to be immediately productive in those jobs.
- The focus on the whole person: There is a real sense of care and concern about individuals and their lives, in general. BSDC offers a holistic service that supports and nurtures learners both during and after the learning programme.

Clearly, the BSDC staff all have strong personal values that they bring to the organisation, and happily they are congruent with what it is that BSDC strives to achieve. However, the difficulty associated with articulating what BSDC, as an organisation stands for, suggests that there is a need for re-examination and re-articulation of the vision, mission and values that inform its work.

2. COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS

Many of the comments and observations have been mentioned to BSDC, and the various role players, as part of the ongoing discussions that are part of this review process.

The section that follows includes the BSDC staff and management's observations, as well as those of the evaluator. The willingness of everyone to critically reflect on themselves and the organisation bodes well for the ongoing growth and development of BSDC.

1.1   Weaknesses

In respect of some of the weaknesses mentioned, it was acknowledged that certain of these are being addressed. The identified weaknesses include:

- Ongoing stress associated with funding[15]
  (the impact that the Projects Manager has had is gratefully acknowledged)

- The number of learners that default on their fees, and the lack of rigour associated with debt collection.

- The rather "schizophrenic" role of the person who is both Project Manager and a member of the Board of Directors. In the former role she logically reports to the Centre Manager, but in her role as a member of the board, this is reversed.

- Lack of sufficient structure
  (it is acknowledged that this has begun to change with the 2005 appointment of the new Centre Manager who is universally seen as having a positive impact in this regard).

---

[15] At the time of writing this report, BSDC was awaiting feedback on a number of proposals, the total value of which is about R 3 million. The Projects Manager is confident that BSDC will receive the funding it requires.

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

- Insufficient support of the Centre Manager to develop a more inclusive, consensual approach to management and staff relationships

- Physical resources: shortage of furniture and equipment (the IT system runs on outdated, often obsolete, equipment that makes it highly unstable)

- Staff turnover is static—not enough new, fresh ideas

- Need for succession planning and more mentoring and coaching of staff

- Poor internal communication

While some of the above are, indeed weaknesses, some could also be seen as strengths. For example, the low staff turnover does provide BSDC with continuity and some sort of stability. In addition, the tenacity and commitment of those individuals who have, in the past, not received salaries is precious.

It is also worth commenting on the tension between lack of structure and a perceived shift towards too many controls. Discussions revealed that BSDC is coming out of a phase in which a *laissez fare* ethos tended to dominate. As often happens, when the pendulum necessarily swings in the opposite direction, there is resistance to change. This is also associated with different individuals' management styles.

Perhaps it is useful to consider that management and leadership must fulfil certain needs:

- Getting the job done

- Managing the organisation (meeting the needs of the team)

- Dealing with the individuals that make up the team (meeting the needs of the various individuals)

These needs often overlap, as reflected in the diagram below, and can be difficult to find a balance in meeting the needs of all three.
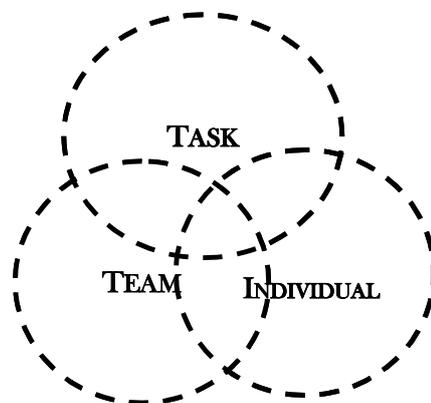
BSDC's challenge is to find a balance between freedom and autocracy, in which boundaries are negotiated and clear, but appropriately porous.

1.2   Strengths

As is often the case, the strengths can be seen as balancing out the weaknesses. However, while these ought to be enhanced, they should neither be taken for granted, nor seen as a panacea for the problems that do exist.

BSDC'S strengths include:

- Staff dedication
- Value attributed to graduates by businesses in which they are placed
- Being flexible and able to adapt to emerging trends
- Ability to track and place students through the YAC
- Being able to communicate with donors to keep them abreast of developments
- That BSDC is able to persevere through trying times, and continues meeting the needs of its (changing) target market
- The philosophy of the management
- BSDC is an outstanding example of the use and implementation of Open Source computer systems

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations that follow are intended to support and strengthen BSDC and the services it offers.

3.1 Building and supporting fledgling businesses

Building and supporting new businesses is difficult, particularly when the fledgling entrepreneurs are generally young women who would rather be in regular employment. The BSDC business-building programme consists of three elements:

• Entrepreneurship in the core course	Within the framework of the formal training, and supported by the responsible educator
• Survivalist Entrepreneurship elective	
• Ongoing support through the YAC	

The placement officers and the responsible educator identified significant weaknesses in the programme. One of those not articulated is that there appears to be little formal hand-over from the educator to the YAC.

The sharing and standardisation of records on the businesses would facilitate this process, which would be considerably enhanced by greater face-to-face interaction with the community members, and with the graduate entrepreneur.

Supporting and developing new business people is particularly challenging and it's virtually impossible to create a one-size-fits-all model. However, the formal learning may provide learners with insight into the both stumbling blocks facing new, small businesses, as well as the predictable milestones that need to be achieved.

It is therefore recommended that the programme be strengthened by

- Facilitating opportunities for bringing the community partners into BSDC where there can be a more co-ordinated transfer of business skills

- Strengthening the YAC (skills and personnel) to enable regular, on-site visits to fledgling businesses

- Creating a system of record keeping for monitoring the progress of fledgling entrepreneurs once they have graduated from BSDC. This will also provide the basis for monitoring progress and an ongoing system for identifying common problems and patterns. A series of checklists or meeting templates could be developed to facilitate this.

3.2 Finance and funding related issues

The staff remain rather raw following the period during which they received no salary; also, they have not received increases for about three years. Notwithstanding the improvement BSDC's financial situation things remain precarious. Positive steps have been taken to remedy this, including the

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za

proposed establishment of a call centre[16], which will generate unspecified income for the organisation.

3.2.1 FEE COLLECTION

In addition to this, BSDC needs to develop a stricter approach to the collection of fees. It is therefore strongly recommended that BSDC develop a bursary-cum-loan scheme. The strategy could include the following:

- More careful screening of applicants in respect of their ability to pay fees
- Should an applicant be perceived as unlikely to pay fees, the option of a loan to be repaid once the learner has graduated and is employed could be explored
- If the applicant indicates interest, and that s/he might like to make use of this opportunity, s/he is invited to apply
- Assuming that a bursary-loan is awarded, BSDC and the bursar entes into a contract that the fees will be repaid, over a period, at an amount to be determined once s/he is employed.
- Newly employed bursars could be supported in the management of debt by a short course in how to manage personal finances

Appendix X is an example of a bursary application form that could be adapted for such applications.

3.2.2 SHARING INFORMATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

Given the ongoing staff concern about BSDC's financial situation, it is suggested that there is greater sharing of information and responsibility. Strategies could include:

- Communicating funding/income successes to the staff on a regular basis, perhaps even using the old thermometer strategy in the staff room. The target income is reflected on the thermometer, and the "mercury rises" as the income is generated.
- Each learning and/or functional area should be encouraged to develop a budget and to provide a rational for proposed expenditure. This is not to suggest that these budgets would be approved, regardless. Proposals should be examined by management (perhaps a finance committee), and then allocated. The educators are then responsible for managing his/her learning area budget within the negotiated parameters.

3.3 Succession planning and addressing shortages in capacity

3.1.1 THE PROJECT MANAGER

The Project Manager acknowledges the ambiguities associated with her dual role as a member of the Board, as well as the legacy of her time as Centre Manager.

---

[16] This is scheduled to be operational in July 2006. IBM has promised equipment, but an inexpensive and reliable service provider is to be secured. Telkom is considered too expensive, and a Canadian option is being investigated.

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za

It is therefore recommended that an active programme be developed for handing over all operational functions to the current Centre Manager. It is understood that these relate primarily to fundraising. This programme (six or so months) should include

- Identifying and securing mentoring from an experienced fundraiser and NGO CEO.
- Independent professional development through, for example, the Southern Africa Institute of Fundraising.
- A campaign to communicate this change to donors
- A target date for the complete handover of responsibilities to the Centre Manager

3.1.2 Education Co-ordinator

Since shortly after Kotze's evaluation, the position of Education Co-ordinator has been vacant. More than one educator commented on the value of this function. It is also understood that this role was identified as a need during the organisation's end of year review (2005). It is therefore recommended that with the merging of the projects role, with that of the centre manager (outlined in 3.1.5 above), the position of Education Co-ordinator be re-established.

A key function of this role would be to take on the responsibilities of programme accreditation and liaison with the SETQAA, thus releasing the Centre Manager to deal with management and related issues.

3.4   Staff development

In terms of the criteria for the accreditation of training providers, all must have staff development programmes. It is recommended that BSDC's programme be extended to include:

3.1.3 Training in Mentoring and/or Coaching

It is recommended that all the professional staff (Educators, Placement Officers and Centre Manager) learn how to mentor and/or coach. The outcomes of such a programme would benefit both

- Learners and graduates because the quality of interaction with the staff will be enhanced
- Staff who will be able to coach and mentor each other[17] and will foster better relationships at all levels in the team.

---

[17] Peer helping/coaching is becoming a recognised mechanism for support in a range of organisations.

Compiled by Fiona Cameron Consulting cc

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za

3.1.4 EDUCATOR SUPPORT

- Outcomes based assessment is time-consuming and challenging. It is also new to most educators, even those who are competent assessors. Consequently, BSDC's educators would benefit from some hands-on support from an experienced assessor who could work with them to refine their tools and streamline the BSDC assessment system.

  Attention is also drawn to the fact that the SETQAA does not require the *external* summative assessment or moderation of unit standards below NQF level 4. Learner achievements are, however, verified by the SETQAA after they have been uploaded.

- The new educator would benefit from some training in facilitation skills. She, and all the educators should be encouraged to complete the requirements[18] for accreditation and registration as education and training development practitioners (and assessors) with the ETDP SETA.

3.1.5 LEADERSHIP TRAINING

It is clear that the Centre Manager is doing an excellent job—all the staff were at pains to point this out, acknowledging that this is a difficult and responsible task. Fulfilling a leadership role, in any organisation is difficult, but even more so in an NGO that is faced with the challenges confronting BSDC. It is therefore recommended that the Centre Manager does a course in leadership, preferably at NQF level 6 or above.

3.1.6 GENERAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Training and development help to keep people interested and motivated, i.e. prevents stagnation. Therefore staff should be actively encouraged and supported in their endeavours to learn and develop their skills. This can only enhance the quality of BSDC's staff and their work.

4. CONCLUSION

This is a generally successful project. With regard to the outputs required in terms of the contract with SSACI, BSDC has achieved those concerned with the training and exceeded those set for the placement of graduates in employment. However, there has only been a 40% success rate in terms of the number of graduates able to generate income through their own micro-enterprises, and recommendations have been made for strengthening this aspect of the programme.

FIONA CAMERON-BROWN (Ms)
13 February 2006

C:\Documents and Settings\Fiona Cameron\My Documents\S S A C I\BSDC\Final Report\Final report.doc

---

[18] Could be through the recognition of prior learning (RPL) for experienced facilitators

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

SOURCES:

AskOxford.com (http://www.askoxford.com, accessed 26/01/2006 15:36:39)

Cameron, F., 2000: *Practical steps aimed at amending existing training programmes to comply with unit standards and aid the swift implementation of the Skills Development Act to take full advantage of increased worker competence.* IRR Training, The Skills Development Act Conference, 26-28 July 2000, Cape Town

Kotze, H., 2002: Evaluation report, Commissioned by SSACI (unpublished)

Services SETA (http://www.serviceseta.org.za/ETQA/etqa_index.html 26/01/2006 15:47:41)

Compiled by FIONA CAMERON CONSULTING CC

Tel: +27 21 762-7016 Fax: 088 021 762-7016
Suite 63 Private Bag X3 Plumstead Cape Town 7801
e-mail: fcc@wbs.co.za
www.fionacameronconsulting.co.za