

# “Is TVET Working?”

## Employment Trajectories of TVET College Graduates in South Africa



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# ***According to the 'White Paper'...***

“The main purpose of [TVET] colleges is to train young school leavers, providing them with skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for employment in the labour market.” (p11)

“Key objectives in strengthening colleges include... placement of college graduates in jobs” (p12)

# ***What data do we have?***

- Some academic research on employment outcomes of TVET college programmes in SA, e.g. Cosser (2003), Gewer (2007), Rankin *et al* (2007), Altman & Marock (2008), Marock & Gewer (2008)
- A growing body of occasional papers & presentations from college personnel, e.g. Karen Hendricks (FBC), Gugu Mahlangu (GSC) and Elsie Potgieter (SCC), all in 2015
- **There is a high degree of correlation between findings to date**
- The rapidly changing context, infrequency and limited scale of research mean that our understanding of the pathways to employment for college students is still incomplete

# Two new studies from SSACI

1. Analysis of data on graduate placements from the *Skills Accord* reports submitted by colleges to DHET in 2013-14 & 2014-15:
  - Eight quarterly reports from each of 50 public TVET colleges
  - Includes data on NATED & NC(V) graduates: total of 9'562 work placements in 2013-14 & 12'867 in 2014-15
  - Excludes data on ±18'000 repeat or duplicated placements
2. Tracer study of the TVET college 'class of 2010' (in conjunction with JET & NBI)
  - Follow up on 18'000 NC(V) Level 2-4 learners in 30 colleges in 2010
  - 9'000 randomly selected & contacted
  - 3'113 (37%) completed telephonic interview

# Who's getting work?

- Employment of recent TVET graduates not studying further was 52% in 2014 and 47% in 2015
- Placements roughly reflect demography of enrolments: 87% African, 10% Coloured, 2% White & 1% Indian
- Women get twice as many placements as men (67:33)
- **NC(V)** course graduates, who make up 10% of all graduates, get 42% of all placements
- **N6** course graduates, who comprise 60% of all graduates, get 54% of placements
- **N3** course graduates, who make up 30% of all graduates, get 5% of work placements, i.e. less than 1/10<sup>th</sup> of what N6 graduates get and 1/8<sup>th</sup> of what NC(V) graduates get

# ***What kind of work do they get?***

- In 2015, 30% of recent college graduates were in ordinary employment, 6% in internships & 2.5% in apprenticeships; 14% were studying further & 46% unemployed
- Most graduates have had more than one job in the past four years and, on average, have worked for just 2.5 years of this period
- Contracts are often short: 46% were less than 1 year in 2013-14 and 48% in 2014-15
- Gross earnings are generally low:
  - 53% of employees earn <R3'000 p.m.
  - 5% earn less than R1'000 p.m.
  - 6% earn more than R9'000 p.m.

# ***Where are they getting jobs?***

- Gauteng province accounts for 20% of all placements, KwaZulu-Natal 18%, W/Cape 16% & Limpopo 16%
- 70% of employed graduates got work in their home area & 30% moved elsewhere for a job
- Graduates of business services programmes seem to get work more easily than graduates of engineering or construction programmes
- In 2014-15, 60% of work placements were in the private sector & 40% in the public sector, compared with 77% & 23% respectively in 2013-14
- Men predominate slightly in the private sector (54%); women are more numerous in the public sector (57%)

# *How are they getting jobs?*

- Graduates rely heavily on 3 pointers to their first job:
  - Personal or family connections (38%)
  - Contacts provided by the college or its staff (17%)
  - Adverts in the media (13%)
- Graduates believe their college prepared them well for work in terms of knowledge and skill, but not in terms of job-hunting, contacting employers or preparing for interviews
- Only 2% of college graduates to date got workplace-based experience during their studies but 90% of all employed graduates rate WBE as 'important' or 'very important' in preparing them for work & getting a job

# *So, growing evidence that...*

- Employment outcomes of TVET college programmes are comparable to, but not better than, a matric on its own
- Most college graduates take 6-12 months to find their first job and have 2 or 3 short work placements before getting a contract longer than 1 year
- Job prospects (including apprenticeships & internships) are about equal at 50% for an N6 or NC(V)4 graduate but are very poor for an N3 graduate
- Even with the current programmes & qualifications, colleges can significantly improve employment outcomes for graduates by engaging more closely with employers
- On-course WBE improves employment outcomes

# Let's work to get them into jobs!



*Thank you!*

"We have an opening for a part-time unpaid intern, which could lead to a full-time unpaid internship."