Labour Market Intelligence



employment services Working with South Africa's EMPLOYERS' EXPERIENCES

A study on employers' experiences and attitudes to the Employment Services of South Africa (ESSA) recommends the introduction of a far more sophisticated online ESSA platform and better coordination with

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Public employment services (PES) represent key libour marker policy instruments that governments all over the world use to facilitate employment. Their core function is to match job seekers with employers by facilitating access to and information shuring between organisations with vacancies and people seeking gainful employment.

In South Africa, the Employment Services of South Africa (ESSA) have been designed to play this vital

In a recent study, we analysed a survey which canvassed employers' attitudes to, interactions with and experiences of ESSA. The survey was supplemented by interviews with managers of ESSA bihour centres and a brief desktop study to place the South African experience in an international context.

Employers' use and perceptions of ESSA

In terms of the scale of use, a number of saleint results emerged from our survey. For secrulment purposes, employers use ESSA as one of several channels, ranging from the formal to the informal.

A slight majority of respondents (\$0.0%) do not post all their wearnies on ESSA. Employers also perceive ESSA to be mainly a source of information about intermediate and low-skilled workers. Public entires, which are required to list all their wearness on ESA, predominantly need to recruit high and intermediate-skilled workers, but ESSA has limited capacity to respond to this need, as the majority of work seekers are at intermediate and low-skilled levels.

In terms of the effectiveness of job matches, we observed that the majority (50%) of successful matches made through ESSA result in long-term

In terms of employer perceptions of future improvements, employers who participated in the survey were accustomed to accessing ESSA services

online via labour centres. However, employers signilled the need to improve the system through assisting work seekers to prepare for job searches and interviews. According to the employers, this can be achieved through programmes to improve employability, and by screening of candidates.

These trends lead us to explore how these patterns of employer behaviour impact on the quality of ESSA's administrative data and, by extension, its utility for skills planning.

Value of employment services for skills planning

Our research suggests that the ESSA system should remain committed to low-skilled worker hires. The system already has a preponderance of low-skilled vacancy registrations and work seekers, and has proven less effective in addressing medium or high-skilled vacancies. A focus on job placements for those who are most vulnerable is a critical role for ESSA.

If ESSA generates quality data in this regard, it can inform skills planning for the unemployed—a dimension that is often neglected in favour of a focus on forecasting, shortages, scarce and critical to the control of the control o

To ensure more effective darta, the introduction of a far more sophisticated online ESSA platform is highly desimble. Many ESSA clients have access to the technology necessary to unlike such a system, which could also create substantial storage in transaction costs while improving the ability to monitor employment data.

It is however, important to note that many potential users do not have access to computers, and few labour centres have their own workstations that clients can use. It is critical, therefore, that information generated at labour centres is captured electronically on the ESSA electronic platform. This will ensure the consistency, accuracy and validity of labour market information generated through the ESSA platform.

The Employment Services of SA (ESSA) system and skills planning

Reporting to the Department of Labour (Dol.), the ESSA system is located in formal ESSA hour centres across South Africa. A centralised ESSA dutabase comprase vicancy and work seeker information, which is either uploaded onto the system at the centres, which clients can physically visit (the predominant practice), or accessed through the less popular ESSA website. centres, which visit (the prede accessed throu ESSA website.

- While the ESSA system is still in its development phase, in theory it is hould fulfil two major skills-planning and employment functions:

 Courthules substantially to match labour demands with supply through acting as a formal internedation mechanism. To this end, the success of the ESSA service depends on increasing the number of job opportunities and work seekers registered across the spectrum of computions, from low-level to internedation and high-level skills.
- Depending on the quality of the information on the system, ESSA data should offer skills planners important insights into the specific characteristics and activities of the user population.

across the spectrum of work seekers registered of job opportunities and increasing the number service depends on The success of the ESSA

What makes a successful Public employment services (PES): International comparisons

We investigated models of PES provision from the United Kingdom, Singapore, Incarl and the Philippines. The models we selected were not intended to serve as templates for South African conditions; rather, they represent the divergent experiences of the selected countries, and offer lessons that may be absorbed by the local system in seeking to improve the service. Comparisons with other countries are useful, but it is important to distinguish between learning from principles and copying models mechanistically without taking models mechanistically without taking countext into account.

- The introduction of online portals does not render walk-in centres redundant. Walk-in centres are still an essential vehicle for the delivery of various PES. The delivery of various PES is the maching is most successful in environments where structural of long-term unemployment levels are relatively low. Deep-seared, structural abour market disequilibria call for strategies to support alternatives our formal employment intuitives.
- Some countries have linked the delivery of PES to the administration of unemployment benefits in different arrangements, with different effectiveness of PES remains a challenge for almost all countries. In the end, perception surveys of users may be the most reliable measure of effectiveness.

Job matching is most successful in environments where structural or long-term unemployment levels

Greater coordination with the Dol. is also desimble. Cooperation between Dol., and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) institutions would add value to ESSA services. Areas for cooperation could include a shared strategy for the ESSA system, and plans for the sharing of employment data generated through ESSA, which could help to identify appropriate target groups for skills upgrading.

Finally, ongoing research on ESSA rrends would be valuable. Future research should monitor changes in the employers who use ESSA, their employment needs and their opinions on services rendered.

who are most vulnerable is a critical role for placements for those A focus on job

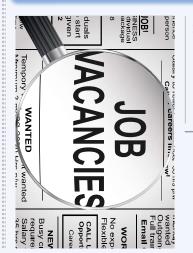
Going forward

Public employment services such as ESSA should generate potentially valuable and relevant administrative information about about market demand and supply that can be used for skills planning. The quality of service that ESSA offres depends on the integrity of the expured data. It deally, high-quality service and data will improve rates of matching which wall, in turn, atmost increased employer and worker participation consequently improving automal skills-planning capacities.

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The full report, Fabian Arends, Sybil Chabane, Andrew Paterson (2015)
Investigating Employer Interaction with the Employment Services of South Africa

Fig. (ESSA). Is available on www.lmip.org.za



SMOOTH, STAGGERED OR STOPPED? Educational transitions

among the youth

the education system and advises on how to succeed academically despite disadvantage. *Kathryn Isdale, Vijay Reddy, Lolita Winnaar* and *Tia Linda Zuze* report on the outcomes. Understanding educational transitions is vital to addressing basic skills shortages. Efforts to address these shortages have been hampered by a lack of high-quality longitudinal data. To gather this information, a new study provides the first in-depth look at how young people move through

In South Africa, basic education is compulsory and all learners follow the same curriculum up to the end of grade 9. The end of grade 9 is a transition point in the education and training system. Dorsgrade 9, students can choose to remain in the schooling system (making different subject choices) for a secondary education transition to a technical vocational education institution, transition to work or participate in neither education nor training

The next major transition point is at the end of grade 12, where students who sat for the major ext matriculation examination can, depending on the quality of their pass, enter different post-school education and training

This segment of the LMIP's multi-cohort panel study focuses on pathways and transitions of a group of students who we followed for five years from grade 9. Such research provides valuable information and melligence to skills planners on the different pathways that

students follow post-grade 9, and hence the pool of skills at different levels that subsequently enter the labour market.

Smooth, staggered or stopped?

progression and promotion policies are in place to address any possible amicipated interruption in overall learner journeys, smooth transition through each stage of an individual's schooling career is a core ann of chacation programmes the world over Year-on-year, incremental progress is the gold standard of education. While

New analysis from a longinudinal study of South A frican youth suggests that just under half of all learners are following this smooth type of pathway through the further education and training (FET) phase of schooling, with

the rest following three other distinct progression routes.

Understanding educational transitions is viral to addressing base skills shortages and improving the life chances of all South African learness. Efforts here have, however, been hampered by a lack of high-quilin' longitudinal data. In response to the lack of impropriate data to examine these status and to oblam a better understranding of the variation in pathways taken by our youth, the HSRC administered the South African Youth Panel Study (SAYPS).

This report provides the first in-depth look at what young people are doing, how they move through the education system, and how background and school-level characteristics influence those pathways.

Understanding educational transitions is vital to addressing basic skills shortages