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# **NARYSEC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND REFINEMENT OF THE NARYSEC EXIT STRATEGY - EVIDENCE-BASED REVIEW**

## **Final Report**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) established the National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC) in September 2010 with the aim of equipping unemployed rural youth with appropriate skills to enable them to gain enhanced access to employment opportunities and engage in productive activities that contribute to the realisation of the CRDP's vision of vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities.

The main rationale for the NARYSEC programme rests on the assumption that a lack of qualifications and skills required by the labour market is the main reason for massive rural youth unemployment, and that equipping youth with these skills and qualifications will render them employable. The first NARYSEC cohort was recruited in 2010 for an integrative upskilling programme initially planned for 48 months.

The policy review conducted in 2013/2014 led, in 2015, to a restructuring process and reducing the duration of programme enrolment to 24 months. The DRDLR has subsequently identified the need to formalise and streamline its support for participants as they prepare to leave the programme and has therefore drafted a NARYSEC Exit Strategy Framework document (2016) which aims to give form and structure to this support.

This exit strategy framework identifies three transitional paths to post-NARYSEC trajectories of participation in the socio-economic activities of society: 1: Enterprise development; 2: Sustainable employment; and 3: Further education and training.

The enterprise development pathway presents a gravity point to create vibrant and sustainable rural communities and is especially important considering the current depressed labour market. The aim of the strategy is to provide adequate support to NARYSEC graduates who wish to use the skills acquired through the programme in order to create self-employment by developing their own businesses or by joining forces to form cooperatives. Such support can be in the form of facilitating the procedure related to company registration, compliance with regulatory bodies, training in business management and funding modalities as well as funding support and linkage to existing value chain networks. This intention was to provide to graduates for up to two years after they exit the NARYSEC programme. The way this policy is implemented poses practical challenge to NARYSEC graduates, however. Firstly, despite a coherently articulated policy aimed at providing such support, in practice, few graduates have

benefited because of the absence of robust structures to keep track of exited participants or monitor their need of support. Secondly, there has been a consistent misalignment between the expressed business interests of learners who are recruited into the NARYSEC programme and the skills training they actually receive, because the technical and vocational skills training programmes are supply driven rather than need driven. Quite often, learners have been trained in programmes that do not necessarily prepare them for their preferred business activity. This in turn causes a disjunction between the practical skills graduates acquire through the programme and the tools they need to succeed in their business endeavours. Another sizable challenge has been the lack of funds and resources, such as land, which is necessary to help graduates with an entrepreneurial spirit to start businesses. In a market characterised by fierce competition, graduates coming mainly from disadvantaged family conditions in rural areas are unlikely to compete with other entrepreneurs without concrete material support in the form of starting capital. Lack of business networks in rural areas, which would help new start-ups integrate in value chains, is an additional obstacle facing young people coming from predominantly rural areas.

Existing support measures are principally based on administrative and procedural support for graduates seeking to overcome the first hurdles of establishing a business. Support for making the business actually operational and become viable is still wanting. Moreover, this support is provided in a haphazard way without any adequate procedure and seems to be decided on an ad-hoc basis. Partnerships exist between NARYSEC implementation officials and other stakeholders in charge of youth development (such as NYDA) and enterprise support (such as REID, RID, etc). The existing arrangements between these stakeholders have, however, not proved sufficient to influence enterprise development to the extent of having a visible impact on the strategic outcomes for which the programme was designed.

For the enterprise development support strategy to succeed, it is imperative that the coordination between various stakeholders in charge of rural enterprise development be optimised in order to reap the benefits of synergy and reduce redundancies and inefficiencies. It is equally important that the support should be systematised and the NARYSEC staff responsible for implementing this strategy are reinforced and provided with resources to ensure support is available. Better alignment of skills taught in the programme to the desired and needed trades according the comparative advantaged of each geographical location, is also important for success.

For this support to be adequately and systematically provided, it is crucial to have an adequate tracking system with a robust database enabling policy support officers to know, in real time, which graduates need what help, when and where, in order to timeously extend it to those in need.

The transition to the employment pathway presents the following challenges: The institution of NARYSEC was intended to address the existing massive youth unemployment, with the understanding that upskilling was necessary in order to enhance employability. The biggest challenge for this transition path has however been the mismatch between the kind of skills / qualifications acquired by the participants during their NARYSEC technical and vocational training programme and the prevailing labour market demand.

There is also a general consensus among key informants that the skills and qualification level acquired by NARYSEC graduates is still too low to enable them to compete with graduates from regular programmes of TVET colleges or those from universities, in a labour market characterised by high levels of unemployment. The qualifications are not even deemed sufficient to establish a niche of artisans that would shield NARYSEC graduates from that competition. The self-evaluation of NARYSEC graduates also suggests that only slightly more than a quarter of them find the acquired skills help them obtain employment.

Another challenge is the lack of a systematic tracking of, and structured support for NARYSEC graduates after completion of the programme. This is generally owing to understaffing in the Department's offices in charge of programme implementation. As a result, support by Department officials to graduates seeking to link to potential employers is casual and falls outside the policy framework.

The strategy proposed by the framework for supporting graduates on the labour market suggests engagement with contractors or service providers appointed by the DRDLR to absorb participants into full-time or contract work and partnering with recruitment agencies for possible placement of exiting participants in full-time or part-time employment. Support in increasing the visibility of graduate's curricula vitae through a job portal is also envisaged. This strategy however leaves unaddressed the main underlying challenges, which are the mismatches in types and levels of skills offered by NARYSEC training programmes and those that are in demand on the labour market.

An effective strategy should be based on an audit of the skills gaps in order to address the underlying challenges of mismatch and inadequacy of the skills training being offered. More generally, as NARYSEC was conceived as part of CRDP strategic vision, the DRDLR should embed the NARYSEC

labour market support in broader comprehensive development planning, involving large scale rural infrastructure development projects.

The transition to further education and training pathway, which has received limited attention in the design of the skills development programme, presents the following challenges. Owing to understaffing in the NARYSEC implementation offices, no meaningful structure or dedicated staff have been made available for supporting NARYSEC graduates who would like to choose this path after their graduation. Moreover, the majority of courses that are offered during the skills development phase of the programme are occupational qualifications, with an emphasis on practical rather than theoretical aspects. The qualifications are therefore not tailored to connecting NARYSEC graduates to further education and training. The few NARYSEC learners who are academically talented and manage to make this type of transition do it mostly with informal and unstructured support of NARYSEC officials, without adequate policy.

The strategy that is currently proposed to support learners who qualify to transition to this path advocates for availing special bursaries, scholarships and loans by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform to learners who excel academically during the programme. The plan to make this transition possible also includes taking advantage of funding made available by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). In order to increase the number of NARYSEC graduates who benefit from this transition route, it is important to systematise ways of identifying qualifying youth in early phases of the programme.

In conclusion, a number of conceptual, structural and implementation level recommendations are advanced, in addition to Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

At the conceptual level, this study proposes two main recommendations:

1. Align the NARYSEC skills development programme with the absorptive capacity and skills biased technological changes in rural socio-economic landscapes.
2. Re-focus the strategic approach and practical implementation of NARYSEC around the conception of 'Transition Path' rather than 'Exit'. This means replacing all references to 'Exit Strategy' with 'Transition Path Strategy'.

At the structural level, this study recommends the following:

3. Restructure the programme in favour of a dual-track focus on targeted youth. Facilitate the entry of unemployed Grade 12 recruits into 'bridging learnerships' for full-time higher education and training – track 1. Intensively capacitate unemployed college and university graduates for advanced capability and skills enhancement for labour market readiness or enterprise development – track 2.
4. Refine the psychosocial and life-skills interventions towards the provision of a diverse and fluid range of core capabilities to easily transition into carefully planned career pathways.
5. Upgrade the technical and vocational skills development components to higher-end skills demanded in local, regional and local economies that are changing fast.
6. Urgently appointment a qualified 'Transition Path Manager' in each province and a National Director.

Implementation level recommendations are the following:

7. Actively promote the transition of NARYSEC graduates into DRDLR priority work streams;
8. Streamline the national NARYSEC information management system, including standardising provincial databases, to capture meaningful administrative data for programme monitoring with an eye on periodic implementation evaluations;
9. Institutionalise standardised transition path orientation workshops in all provinces and timely provision of certificates to NARYSEC graduates.

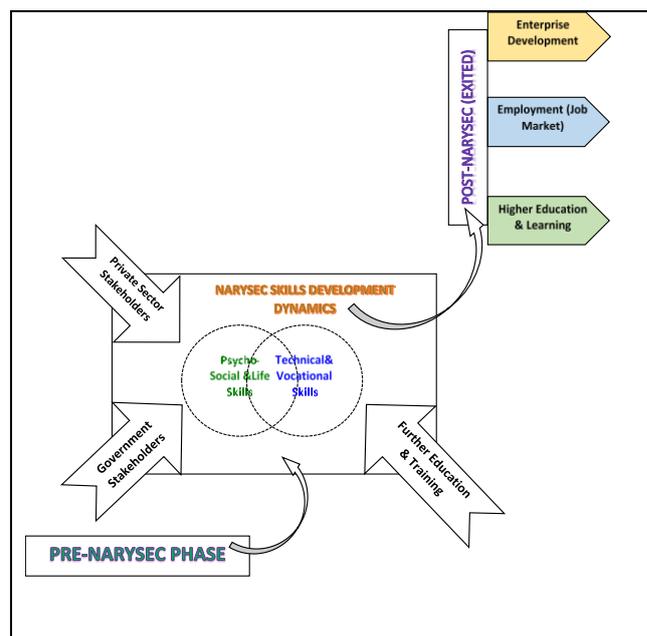
*Recommendations for Standard Operating Procedures are comprehensively captured in Table 14.*

## Section 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose and scope of the assignment

The National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC) was established by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) in September 2010 as a core sub-programme of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP). The CRDP was developed as a holistic strategy to develop rural areas. The aim of NARYSEC is to equip unemployed rural youth with the appropriate skills needed to gain access to employment opportunities and engage in productive activities that contribute to the realization of the CRDP’s vision of vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities.

It is a phased and multifaceted training or capability strengthening intervention aimed at helping participants enter sustainable livelihoods activities after they have graduated from the programme. The following figure depicts the underlying logic behind the programme:



**Figure 1: NARYSEC Major Phases, Capability Enhancements, Stakeholders and 'Transition Paths'**

The DRDLR has identified the need to formalise and streamline its support for NARYSEC enrollees as they prepare to leave the programme. It has therefore drafted a NARYSEC Exit Strategy Framework document (2016) which aims to give form and structure to this support. The articulation of the Exit

Strategy is intended to identify opportunities for participants who successfully complete the programme, as it was designed, to be transitioned into active participation in the mainstream economy. Three exit pathways have been identified by the NARYSEC Exit Strategy Framework:

1. Enterprise development
2. Employment opportunities
3. Further learning and training

As for the enterprise development (SMME and Co –operative development) pathway, it is intended to ensure that participants who follow it get support and benefit from opportunities whereby they can apply their skills and experience to set up their businesses individually or in partnership with their fellow NARYSEC alumni.

The employment opportunity exit pathway is intended to leverage work opportunities for NARYSEC participants where such opportunities are available. The corresponding strategy focuses on engaging contractors or service providers appointed by the department during project implementation to absorb participants into full-time or contract work. For the success of this strategy, DRDLR is called to partner with recruitment agencies for possible placement of exiting participants in full-time or part-time employment. It must also engage job portal administering agencies like the NYDA to place curriculum vitae of participants in order to reach prospective employers.

The further learning and training exit pathway is intended to enable participants to acquire a recognized further qualification that will enable them to chart their path to the career of their choice, be it in employment or SMME development. The corresponding strategy calls for the allocation of special bursaries by the DRDLR for NARYSEC exiting participants. It also urges DRDLR to make use of funding made available by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) administered at institutions of higher learning, including Further Education and Training (FET) colleges. Such a partnership is to be formalized through a memorandum of understanding (MOU).

For this *Review* in support of the intended ‘Exit Strategy’, it is crucial to understand how well the NARYSEC learning exposure prepares participants for productive and sustainable economic activities in the identified pathways when they leave the programme. That objective was achieved through a series of customised analytical tools using the following procedure:

- Study of the demographic and socio-economic (education, skills, occupation, job experiences, etc.) profiles of unemployed rural youth recruited into the NARYSEC and examine the dynamics of their progress from the time of their recruitment until ‘exit’;
- Document the challenges and opportunities of the respective pathways that NARYSEC youth may pursue when they leave the programme; and
- Explore options for strengthening the coordinated and integrated implementation of employment and enterprise development schemes targeting rural youth.

## 1.2 NARYSEC Programme – an overview of its evolution

It is also crucial to understand the extent to which the revised NARYSEC Policy has improved the chances of rural youth leaving the programme of being absorbed into productive and sustainable economic activities.

Since its inception in 2010, NARYSEC has targeted the recruitment of unemployed youth in disadvantaged families living in resource-poor rural wards to equip them with the necessary skills that can be ploughed back into various community development projects. Basic requirements for enrolment include the criteria of age - between 18 and 25 years- and completion of matric. The recruitment is premised on a basic gender equity principle whereby 50% of all participants must be women. In 2010/2011, recruitment targeted four youth per rural ward. In 2012 the intake was increased to six youth per rural ward, with an additional emphasis on the CRDP sites where more than 10 rural youth per CRDP site were to be recruited. Exposure of the youth to this multipurpose skills development intervention could lead to deployment of qualifying participants within DRDLR programmes. The objective of the programme was not only to equip the youth with adequate skills for the labour market and other economic activities, but also to use the stipend provided to the learners as a tool for income support in their communities as it was required of learners to share the stipend with their family members.

The intended trajectory for the youth consisted of various components intended to prepare them for participation in the realization of the CRDP vision:

- Character development (e.g. discipline, patriotism, rights awareness): For character development, DRDLR has partnered with the Department of Defence to provide a form of light military training to the youth in the military bases of Saldanha Bay and Kimberley, where the recruited young people receive not only leadership and discipline skills, but also a substantial physical training. Duration: 3 months.
- Community service: youth are sent to their local community to perform tasks to the service of their respective communities. Duration: 2 months.
- Skills development (construction, agriculture, disaster management, welding, electrical, records management, etc.) and practical training at workplace. This phase of the programme is provided by accredited TVET colleges and successful completions leads to a certificate in the corresponding discipline.
- Duration: 12 months.
- Deployment to rural wards in community service to participate in the social and economic development of rural areas. Duration: 5 months.
- Attendance of an exit workshop: Duration 1 day?

The initial skills development programmes aimed to fit the needs identified in the rural wards from which the youth were recruited. According to the DRDLR, housing always emerged as one of the five needs identified by rural communities during both household and community needs profiling. The NARYSEC skills training programme therefore gave priority to developing skills needed for the construction of houses in rural areas as part of the development of rural infrastructure in line with the CRDP framework. Training was thus focused on qualifying the youth as bricklayers, electricians, plumbers, carpenters, roofers and as welders. Training of the NARYSEC participants in construction started on 1 July 2011.

Following floods that hit many parts of South Africa in 2011, attention was drawn to the necessity for skills in rural disaster management. As a result, 110 NARYSEC participants were identified and trained to become environmental monitors with skills in environmental assessment, understanding weather patterns and climate change, disaster management, first aid and firefighting.

However, as a result of the inadequate planning that characterised the beginning of NARYSEC implementation, delays in skills acquisition made it necessary to extend the programme to 48

months for the cohorts recruited in 2010 and 2012. Following the programme review initiated in 2013/2014 and approved in 2015, the duration of the programme reverted to 24 months and the upper age limit was set to 25. The enrolments for 2015 and 2016 have been aligned with Agri-parks requirements, and the corresponding numbers and skills acquisition have consequently been adapted to Agri-parks objectives.

The NARYSEC Programme has, to date, enrolled 17 393 youth since its inception in September 2010 and 11 475 have exited the programme for various reasons, which include completing their skills programme, resignation, death, and termination due to absconding from training.

As attested by the NARYSEC exit strategy framework document (2016) and confirmed by interviews with various respondents in charge of the programme implementation, youth were recruited into the programme without a proper exit strategy. For over 5 years, youth have exited from the programme without such a strategy (NARYSEC exit strategy framework document, 2016).

### **1.3 Build Capabilities for the Socio-Economic Advancement of Youth – A Literature Review.**

The youth unemployment issue is particularly acute in South Africa, where, according to the Labour Force Survey (2017) the rate of unemployment among black youth aged 15-24 hovers around 70 % (using the expanded definition of unemployment). In such a context with deteriorating labour market conditions, active labour market intervention to ease the constraints to employment access is one of the social protection mechanisms that governments can use to alleviate the vulnerabilities resulting from long exposure to unemployment, social exclusion, deprivation and a virtually impossible transition to social adulthood that many young people are facing in Africa (Honwana, 2012). Such measures targeted to vulnerable groups of the society aim to enhance their capacity to manage economic and social risks, such as chronic poverty, unemployment, exclusion, sickness and disability (Barrientos and Hulme 2009; World Bank 2011).

Designing interventions to boost youth employment is an important policy instrument because youth employment experience is one of the most important determinants of subsequent employment trajectories in adulthood, as employer value previous work experience highly when deciding on hiring (National Treasury of South Africa, 2011).

Studies on youth skills development programmes are voluminous and continue to expand both in terms of the vast number of studies and the diverse questions or facets being explored (Balliester

and Elsheikhi 2018; Kilimani 2017; Robb et al 2014; Schoof and Semlali 2008; Knowles and Behrman 2003). There are multiple drivers of this rapid growth in the search for tailored capability enhancement programmes for youth, typically those in the 15-24 age cohort (or the 20-24 subgroup). A sound knowledge of these factors is crucial for at least two interactive reasons: it bolsters the rationale for the necessity to invest in capability development for youth coupled with how to design and implement fit-for-purpose capability building interventions that produce desirable outcomes. First, youth in the 15-24 age bracket makes up a rising proportion of the populations in Africa, Latin America and Asia. This trend is indicative of momentous demographic shifts across urban and rural localities in these regions of the globe. Second, above average rates, levels and duration of joblessness and underemployment afflict a disproportionately large share of young people not in education and training in developing countries (S4YE 2015). Furthermore, the increasing prevalence of precarious informal jobs and working poverty will compound the difficult transitions of youth into sustainable socio-economic activities, reinforcing their fears and uncertainties about realising their aspirations (ILO 2018; Hoppers 2002).

How this demographic trend (or 'youth bulge' as some have described this reality) is likely to evolve in the near or distant future is virtually impossible to forecast with any degree of accuracy. It seems inevitable that rising political, social and economic uncertainties ahead, complex macro-level factors beyond the control of young people, will severely limit the usefulness of predictions and intervention plans that exclude adaptations to least optimistic scenarios. In this context, the need for forward-looking development plans for youth that can stand the test of time is compelling but it is not easy to conceptualise, design and implement such plans. Assembling and analysing the best evidence available of the past can infuse greater realism in crafting options for the future. Comprehensive information about historical trends can deepen understanding of the forces that have shaped current predicaments and also significantly reduce the extent to which these macro-level unknowns and uncertainties might influence the futures of today's youth and the youth of the future.

Bridging the socio-economic barriers that frustrate the advancement of youth, particularly post-school youth who are jobless and underemployed in developing countries, has preoccupied scholars, policymakers and practitioners for decades (Hoppers 2002; Livingstone 1989). Even a cursory overview of past and emerging youth development policies suggest that these policies are firmly anchored in a specific world view of what determine the vulnerabilities youth face and measures to enable youth to realise their socio-economic aspirations. There is thus no paradigm neutrality in the youth policies and it is important to grasp the analytical approach and theoretical principles

entrenched in policies. In this regard, experiences of Ghana and Kenya in the design and implementation of initiatives to help realise the socio-economic aspirations of youth are particularly instructive and deserve closer attention.

Although perspectives on state-sponsored assistance to vulnerable youth vary considerable across the world, three conceptual approaches dominate the discourse, conceptual framing of interventions and actual practices. These perspectives can be schematically summarised as follows:

*Economic returns to youth development:* This approach basis itself on neoclassical economic theorising of individual optimisation and methodologies associated with testing hypotheses derived from this world view. Scholars in this tradition look at youth development through a lens of human capital in which investment in youth is reduced to the benefits of asset accumulation which yields future returns instead of the holistic enhancement of capabilities for a higher quality of life. In this framework is it common to test interventions for the youth by means of the efficiency-equity trade off. The typical questions turn on the costs and benefits of investing in youth capability enhancement programmes, who should invest and why.

*Social assistance for youth:* it has become standard practice for governments to premise youth policies on the principles of social assistance and safety-nets, justifying state investment in these schemes on the logic, hypothesis and observed longer-term developmental spin-offs that state assistance to vulnerable people in need yield. In order the benefit from youth targeted social assistance programmes, prospective beneficiaries must meet demographic selection criteria and comply with other socio-economic conditions (asset-based means testing, etc.). These schemes are typically structured as public employment schemes, with temporary assistance over a fixed period to encourage beneficiaries to actively search for jobs through the labour market (Benarjee et al 2017) or self-employment (enterprise development ventures) when they are no longer eligible to be part of a programme.

*Life-long learning:* expanding or enhancing the capabilities that facilitate learning over the course of an individual's life time is widely acknowledged as crucial for 'a self-fulfilling life and contribution to societal development' (Buchert 2014:166). With the emphasis on the holistic (all-round) development of a person, the capabilities to learn for life go beyond education for economic growth and skills for labour market participation. In contrast to cognitive skills, typical literacy and numeracy competencies, life-long learning is concerned with nurturing non-cognitive capabilities,

predominantly psychosocial or soft skills (Buchert 2014). The intrinsic learning areas, as Buchert (2014) suggests, such as learning to be and learning to live together and living with others, overlap with the instrumental competencies, especially the capability to democratically partake in multiple, complex and socially heterogeneous groups. Development along the lifelong learning trajectory has aptly been dubbed '21<sup>st</sup> century skills'.

This schematic overview of dominant analytical perspectives on youth development does not mean that hybrid approaches that purposefully combine elements that feature in pragmatic conceptions do not exist. On the contrary, such hybrid perspectives are increasingly common in this field. In this case, however, the trend is to anchor a purposeful conception around a set of core principles drawn from one school of thought and selectively adapt secondary principles from other approaches. It merits highlighting that a further characteristic of emerging studies on youth development is to either place the weight on how latent subjectivities (psychological, emotional, personality traits, idiosyncratic behaviour, etc.) or the influences of exogenous structural forces (economic globalisation) hinder or help the socio-economic prospects for marginalised youth. To explore if these conceptual approaches or elements of their underlying principles have been operationalised in the country-level policies for youth development, a snapshot of popular youth policies in Ghana and Kenya sheds light on how pathways in current discourse resonate in practical actions.

### ***Ghana Youth Policies***

State-driven interventions aimed at youth development in Ghana date back to the early 1970s but the primary impetus for the range of current programmes originate from the 2010 National Youth Policy for Ghana which prioritised youth employment creation. With this overarching youth development policy in place, the Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Agency was set up in 2012 and reconfigured into the Youth Employment Agency in 2015. The overhaul and reshaping of these programmes have resulted mainly from socio-economic and political imperatives to rapidly increase the number of jobs for youth, afflicted by rates of unemployment in the order of 30% compared to the national average rate of unemployment hovering around 5%, and to remove obstacles that have frustrated the effective and efficient implementation of the programmes. Many of the revamped youth development schemes have been reconfigured and rolled out in partnerships with foreign donors to enhance or scale up technical and financial assistance that can improve the performance of the programme.

Both the Youth Employment Agency (YEA) and Youth Enterprise Support Programme (YESP) are umbrella-like interventions that are made up of different types of projects connected to different government departments that often overlap in terms of purpose and scope. The typical age cohort for YEA and YESP is the 18-35 age bracket suggesting it targets post-school youth in which the age difference between the bottom and top boundaries of this age range is 17 years. Prominent examples of YEA that set out to attract rural youth participation include the community health assistants, youth in trade and vocation and youth entrepreneurship. The community health assistants' intervention, for instance, is a joint effort of the Ministry of Health and the Japanese government which responds to the growing gap between the rising demand for health services in rural areas and the inadequate supply of healthcare professionals able and willing to deliver healthcare in rural areas. Through this scheme, relatively educated youth living in a rural area receives the necessary training and skills to be employed as community health assistants to close the healthcare delivery gap in rural areas.

The YESP started in 2014 to enable qualifying youth to establish and build their own business ventures. It is essentially a self-employment scheme which combines a business skills training (mentorship) component with access to an interest-free loan for start-up enterprises. It particularly supports youth with well-crafted and feasible business plans who are committed to transforming creative ideas into competitive enterprises. In order to overcome the deficits in enterprise development capabilities among youth in rural areas, particularly their difficulties to effectively communicate compelling business propositions, a rural youth entrepreneurship programme was added to equip targeted participants with basic business development skills for their own on-farm and off-farm enterprises. Capability building projects for enterprise development that operate separate from YESP are the Local Enterprise Skills Development Programme (LESDEP) and the Rural Enterprise Project, an IFAD initiative which started in 1995 and recently completed its third phase (2013-2017).

What this panoramic glance at youth development policies and programmes in Ghana illustrates is that thinking and practices of the authorities in this regard took shape over several decades and continue to evolve. In terms of substantive contents, the interventions in Ghana reveal a gradual but systematic shift towards skills training in modern technologies, non-farm industries (service-based enterprise creation) and innovative thinking (creativity and reflective self-learning). Despite the refocusing and adaptation of skills interventions for rural youth in line with the demands of new breakthroughs in global information and knowledge revolutions, the policies and programmes

remain disjointed. Responsibilities for youth development continue to be split across various ministries, often competing with better-financed donor initiatives, and thus cannot accumulate and capitalise on the benefits from planning and coordinating the complementary policies with greater meticulousness and efficiency.

Whilst this rapid overview is not a substitute for a coherent and exhaustive assessment of the impact and how self-sustaining these interventions are in the long-run, it does reveal insights and pose questions for similar efforts in comparable countries. First, the wide age-range gap between the youngest and oldest age boundaries span almost two decades, worsening the trickiness to tailor interventions to the developmental needs of target groups defined for a smaller age interval of 3-5 years. Second, interventions tend to be modelled on the restrictive principles of 'short-run public employment schemes' which invariably expects that participants move out of the programme after a relatively short period. YEA, for example, limits the employment benefit to a maximum of 2 years without any promise or guarantee of sustainable employment after this period. Third, the likelihood of a youth development programme to directly jumpstart the local economies is limited and not sustainable given the tendency of beneficiary youth to migrate out of rural localities where they were intended to reinvest their enhanced skills.

### ***Kenya Youth Policies***

The government of Kenya finalised and adopted its National Youth Policy in 2002 (Sikenyi 2017), transcending the limits of the National Youth Service (NYS) which had been in place since the mid-1960s. Whilst the primary aim of the NYS was to transition youth into mainstream economic activities, what experiences of nearly four decades have shown is that it has not realised its ambitious goals. The country's daunting 'youth bulge' persists as those aged 15-35 make up thirty percent of the population and more than 75% of the labour force without jobs in an economy with weak absorptive capacity. Against this backdrop, the 2002 policy is a landmark achievement given than intends to offer a comprehensive institutional framework for youth development (Muthee 2010; Sikenyi 2017). This policy is a multifaceted response to persistent economic and social difficulties that frustrate the advancement of those in the 15-24 age bracket of the labour force, particularly young people who have exited the formal education and training system. Subsequently, youth policy in Kenya has undergone significant refinements, especially following the establishment of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs (MSYA) in December 2005 and the prioritisation of youth needs, economic participation and empowerment in the 2010 Constitution and National

Development Plans (Vision 2030). These efforts culminated in the 2006 revamped National Youth Policy.

The prioritisation of youth development in overarching government mandates and policies, in turn, has stimulated the web of programmes for youth that continue to proliferate. The Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) and Jobs for Youth (*Kazi Kwa Vijana* – KKV) are without a doubt the most prominent programmes. Whilst both YEDF and KKV hold out the promise of uplifting livelihoods of young people well beyond the foreseeable future, these interventions differ in terms of several features, such as: purpose and nature of assistance being offered (what type of assistance do eligible youth receive?); forms and mechanisms of assistance (how is the assistance provided?); livelihood improvements attributable to an intervention (has the intervention resulted in visible and lasting betterment in the circumstances of eligible youth?). A closer examination of each programme through the lens of these features sheds light on what has been achieved through the capability strengthening elements of these interventions.

Officially launched in 2007, YEDF is essentially a business financing scheme for eligible youth (18-35 cohort) to set up and successfully operate small, medium and micro enterprises (SMME). The finance ministry disburses the business loans through different financial intermediaries, ranging from banks, microfinance institutions and non-governmental organisations to business ventures owned by young people. It has been acknowledged that nurturing prosperous entrepreneurs from youth who are economically, socially and politically marginalised in a developing society demands more than affordable enterprise financing schemes. Although SMME financing is the core business of YEDF, it also facilitates networking between youth-owned enterprises and big businesses that are well-integrated in local and global markets. A group of youth can register an enterprise based on projects that have been approved by community committees at a constituency level. This is known as the Constituency Youth Enterprise Scheme (C-YES). An alternative loan scheme, called the Easy Youth Enterprise Scheme (E-YES), is accessible to individual young business owners and gives them options to borrow larger amounts but with stringent repayment conditions, such as the 10% deposit of funds borrowed.

KKV started in 2009 to address youth unemployment and destitution on a more ambitious scale through public works employment. This mass public employment initiative received a big boost in 2010 when the World Bank pledged financial support for the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) conceived to rapidly scale up the employability of youth in labour intensive state-funded projects

that will simultaneously improve social and economic infrastructure in communities. This operates alongside the private sector internships and training through the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA). KKV was revamped in 2011 with greater emphasis on skills training through internships with the rationale of providing youth with ‘a potentially good start for better long-term livelihoods’ (Hope 2012, p227).

What is clear is that both YEDF and KKV go beyond the active promotion of youth employability and self-employment (as in various enterprise development initiatives). Recent modifications of the underlying principles and objectives of YEDF and KKV, stemming from insights gained through extensive reviews and assessments of how well these schemes have worked, increasingly acknowledge the necessity to enhance multiple capabilities that bolster productive participation, uptake, empowerment and self-sustaining momentum. In the case of YEDF, for instance, through business training and mentorship modules the inadequacies of entrepreneurial skills are being addressed (Sikenyi 2017). This happens through informal social networks of youth-owned enterprises with established entrepreneurs or other learning-by-doing activities. Training relevant to work experience, through internships of 4-6 months, is a major contribution that KEPSA introduced in the youth empowerment project of under KKV (Hope 2012). One target of the revamped KKV, for instance, includes about 1200 projects for empowering youth with ‘lifelong skills, internships and long-term employment’ (Hope 2012: p227). In addition to strengthening the capability building aspects of YEDF and KKV, the longstanding TVET curriculum has also been overhauled to elevate the status of entrepreneurship education in the post-school education and training system. This provides scope for thinking through how the benefits of the revamped TVET curriculum, particularly courses for stronger entrepreneurial capabilities, can be used to strengthen YEDF.

The activist stance of the Kenyan state on promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship among young people not in employment, education and training, coupled with the allocation of substantial public finance to YEDF and KKV, has attracted mixed assessments in recent years. Some commentators have lauded the government for making enterprise development a centrepiece of its socio-economic policies for youth whereas critics have profoundly questioned the administrative, management and financial irregularities that have plagued YEDF. These irregularities coupled with corruption scandals that surround YEDF have placed the continuation of this flagship model for transitioning youth into sustainable socio-economic activities in the balance. In addition to the selective criticisms of YEDF and KKV, and calls for radical improvements in the design and implementation of these interventions, advocacy for a thorough reconceptualization of youth policy

in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has also gathered momentum. First, modern youth policy stands to benefit from resolving tensions between age-based targeting and programme fragmentation that might result from incorporating the heterogeneity of real-life circumstance that subsets of young people must grapple with into the conception of policy. Second, and connected with the urgency to customise interventions for youth, the spatial divide in access and uptake persists with urban youth better positioned than rural youth to participate in these schemes.

To conclude this section, it is important to ask and reflect on what this overview means for the NARYSEC Exit Strategy or broader rationale for and sustainability of it. The vast and growing scholarly literature on the prioritisation of the ‘youth question’ as well as the cases of Ghana and Kenya, respectively, hold fundamental lessons for NARYSEC even though no exclusive concern with the specificities of how youth exit the programmes stand out in these debates. Devising interventions for young people who have exited the formal schooling and education system but find themselves in under- and unemployment has powerful empirical resonance. The demographic phenomenon stylised as the ‘youth bulge’ coupled the increasing social and economic marginalisation of this cohort of the population (or labour force to be more precise) is a compelling developmental policy imperative of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In essence it reinforces the search for feasible solutions, grounded in sound evidence and progressive thinking, to ease the transition of young people who are jobless or underemployed into productive, empowering, rewarding and sustainable socio-economic initiatives for societal progress.

## Section 2: Methodology and data collection process

### 2.1 Methodological approach

The methodological approach used in this review was based on the need to construct consistent indicators for measuring ‘successful transitions into sustainable economic activities’. In so doing, the Review used a blended methodology by generating findings with a purposeful combination of diverse sources of information and analytical techniques. Identified source of information include government officials in charge of NARYSEC programme implementation as well as various stakeholders involved in providing leadership skills and personality training, vocational and technical education training and potential providers of employment opportunities or enterprise development support agencies.

Each of these categories of stakeholder holds unique perspectives with a potential to enlighten the overall coherence of the strategy since the success of the programme depends on an adequate alignment of the various functions performed by those stakeholders. In addition, a survey of experiences and perceptions of exited and near-exit participants engaged in all of the three transitional paths identified by the exit strategy framework was designed to enable a mapping of success and challenges that might enlighten the refinement and therefore increase the likelihood of success of the intended support strategy.

### 2.2 Databases and sampling strategy

A purposeful stratified sampling of past and current participants, representative of the underlying population of NARYSEC alumni in the three exit pathways, was used to the extent possible. It was intended to have a full geographical coverage of all provinces with at least 2 districts to be surveyed in each province. Table 1 summarises a scenario which generates a target sample of 351 past and present youth enrolled in NARYSEC with 70% of this sample comprising exited participants and the remainder consisting of current participants who are in the last stage of the programme (second phase of the community service) and are preparing to transition back into their community and settle on any of the three exit pathways identified by the exit strategy framework document.

**Table 1: Targeted Sample Based on Purposeful Stratification of Districts**

Respondent General Category	Respondents Per District*	Respondents Per Province	Total Sample (9 Provinces)	Share (%) of Target Sample
Exited NARYSEC Participants**	9	27	243	70.0%
Near-completion Phase Enrolees***	4	12	108	30.0%
<b>Total (Targeted Respondents)</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Notes: \*Three Districts Per Province (Exit/Quit Ratio). \*\*Assume 3 respondents per Exit Route interviewed. \*\*\*Target Participants within 1-3 months before leaving NARYSEC ('graduation').*

The final targeting of respondents was done on the basis of databases made available to the research team by the different provincial directors in charge of NARYSEC implementation. The aim was to reach a large number of exited and near exit participants with diverse characteristic and attributes, so as to realise a final sample that is as representative of the respective category as possible. During our December 2017 introductory meeting with the various NARYSEC provincial directors, we explained the purpose and scope of this study and requested both NARYSEC participant and stakeholder databases. Subsequently, electronic copies of the participants' database were emailed to the research team. It was not possible to determine whether the emailed copies represented the original database in use in the provinces or extracts of those databases to assist with our sampling strategy.

The following section briefly describes the information found in the various NARYSEC provincial databases for participants and key stakeholders with the view to clarify the usefulness of this information for the data sampling and data collection strategy on exited and near-exited participants.

### 1. Eastern Cape databases

The databases are divided into two: (a) the district-level master lists containing less details: these show only the names of all participants in a particular district, their ID numbers, year recruited, address and their wards, and (b) the local municipality-level lists showing more details of the participants. The municipality-level lists show, in addition to the variables shown in the district-level master list, the participants' gender, disability status, town, village/ settlement, grade when recruited, and the skills acquired during NARYSEC.

With regards to skills acquired, the databases list the previous training, current training as well as future training. The databases track the numbers of participants recruited per intake per local

municipality, the numbers of those went through the programme and were trained in various qualifications, those who dropped out or were suspended, etc. No indication is provided in the databases about community service phase 2 activities. There is also no information on the exit pathways of participants.

## 2. Free State database

The NARYSEC office in the Free State captures and stores information in an Excel spreadsheet. Each worksheet in the file is labelled with an intake number, such as 'intake 1 2', 'intake 4', 'intake 3 5 6 7'. Columns for the names and basic demographics of participants (gender and race) do not differ across the 'intake' worksheets. Each intake template has a column for 'Grade', which presumably refers to the highest grade of education achieved at the point of admission into NARYSEC. A quick scan of this column shows that youth were often admitted without a Grade 12 school leaving certificate. In many instances, it lists either grade 10 or 11 in this column.

Two columns record the names of the district municipalities and town for each participant. Scrolling down this column reveals that NARYSEC participants are recruited from the following districts in this province: Thabo Mofutsanyana, Mangaung Metro and Xhariep.

Two columns in the worksheets focus on learnership enrolment at TVET colleges, area of study and 'current placement'. In what appears to be the most recent worksheet (intake 3 5 6 7), it captures a descriptor on 'Status in the Programme' and 'Reason'. The Status could be: Exited, Active in Programme or Stipend Freeze. Reasons associated with the status alternate between course completed or extension of contract (reported for almost every participant in the stipend freeze category). The populated template does not show who has dropped out at any stage of the programme.

Whilst each intake worksheet includes a column on exit type, no provision has been made to capture details about the last community service phase. This information gap makes it impossible to establish the core activities of youth during this phase and, more importantly, how strongly such activities align with the actual training provided during enrolment or livelihood activities after the end of the NARYSEC contract.

In addition to absence of any data on training at TVET colleges, there is no information about 'exit workshops' and participation in such workshops.

### 3. Gauteng databases

The databases for Gauteng are rather fragmented and contain 7 distinct spreadsheet files, distributed over intake years. The file with the 2010 intake contains distinct sheets for various districts and skills programmes followed by participants. On each sheet, the list contains data on participants' names, surnames, gender, persal number, ID number, municipality and district, contact number (phone), round of intake in the cohort year, qualifications, elective or specialty chosen in the skills training programme and the current employment or placement status. The second file for 2010 participants, list learners who have completed the training but are still awaiting work placement. It gives the identifying details and the names of the skills programmes in which they were trained (BCC or electrical engineering L2) as well as the names of the training institutions. The file for 2012 participants contains the lists of participants arranged per district, with their identifying data and contact information as well as their current employment status.

The fourth file is for 2013 participants recruited in the City of Tshwane district. It is similar to that of 2010 in terms of data provided per participant but also lists the dates of their intake into and exit from the military bases (date and names of units). The fifth file is a consolidated file for 2012 and 2013 participants, with several lists distributed over distinct worksheets (34 sheets in total), each with a separate training programme. Names of training providers and date of graduation are provided for those who graduated. Some of the people in the list are from the 2010 intake as indicated by their data. The sixth file contains data for 2015 intakes for Randfontein municipality (35) with a final list of 20 exited participants who successfully completed the National Certificate of Plant Production Level 4.

### 4. KZN databases

With the exception of King Cetshwayo and Umkhanyakude districts, the databases received were not detailed, mostly indicating the names, gender, dates when recruited and when exited, district and local municipality, IDs and contact numbers. The databases for King Cetshwayo and Umkhanyakude districts were more detailed, indicating specific details of participants from recruitment until completion, highlighting information about when and where the participants completed the different NARYSEC phases. However, no information is provided on the exit pathways from other districts, and the two districts with detailed information only indicate the exited youths who formed cooperatives. Other exit pathways are not indicated.

## 5. Limpopo databases

The database of participants comprises data of near-exit participants (intake 2016) per district, organised according to the year of intake and the colleges in which they have been trained. For each participant, the database records the details of his/her identification, gender municipality of origin, Ward, contact details, educational level, the type of skills the participant has been trained in and the name of the college in which he/she received skills training. The database also contains similarly organised extensive lists of exited participants per district from the cohorts of the 2012 and 2015 intakes.

The stakeholders data base comprises a list of names, institutional affiliation and contact details (phone number and email addresses) of stakeholders that the provincial coordination liaise with in the recruitment processes (in municipalities, DAMC and CDM Economic Development) as well as those involved in the training of the youth in TVET colleges (Lephalale, Waterberg, Mopani, Sekhukhune, Letaba and Capricorn). Provincial coordination also maintains connections with 4 stakeholders in the Office of the Premier and with the youth entrepreneurship development project and Statistics SA.

## 6. Mpumalanga databases

The databases capture and store information of participants recruited from all three district municipalities of the province. Information captured on these databases included the month and year of enrolment, gender, local municipality of participant, qualification on enrolment, and whether they are disabled or not.

However, they contain no information regarding what happens to participants during community service and after they have transitioned out of the second community service phase. Again, the research team had to call individual participants to check on what exit route they had taken for the purposes of constructing our sample.

The stakeholder database provided included details of TVET colleges, municipalities and other government departments that engage with NARYSEC participants during and after the NARYSEC programme.

## 7. Northern Cape databases

The Northern Cape NARYSEC office captures and stores information in an Excel spread sheet which consists of worksheets for each intake year (or cohort). An intake year worksheet typically consists of columns for the names and basic demographics of participants (gender and race), recruitment location and the status of military training. It specifies the physical address of the enrolled (presumably at the date of recruitment) and a mobile phone number (sometimes listing more than 1 number). The template does not capture what learnership programme recruits enrolled for at TVET colleges.

Two columns record the names of the district municipalities and specific local municipality for each participant. A scan of this information shows that NARYSEC participants are recruited from the following districts in this province: John Taolo Gaetsewe, Frances Baard, ZF Mcgawu, Pixley Ka Seme and Namakwa. Geographic targeting evidently concentrates on predominantly rural districts across Northern Cape with substantial variation (rotation) in targeted districts for 2010, 2012, 2013 and 2014.

The database does not provide details on the last community service phase. It was therefore impossible to establish the core activities of youth during this phase and, more importantly, how strongly such activities align with the actual training provided during enrolment or livelihood activities after the end of the NARYSEC contract.

In addition to absence of any data on training at TVET colleges, there is no information about 'exit workshops' and participation in such workshops. The populated template does not show who has dropped out at any stage of the programme.

## 8. North West database

Two sets of databases were received covering information of exited and near-exiting participants drawn from all four districts of the province. The first one captured information for the 2010 intake group and the second one captured information for subsequent intakes comprising mainly of participants involved in the Agripark initiative over the years.

The databases contain no information on what happens to participants during and after they have transitioned out of the second community service phase. The research team had to phone individual participants to check on what exit route they had taken for the purposes of building up the study

sample. Information available on the databases included the number of participants who had completed leadership/military training and those who had completed the skills training phase at TVET colleges. Both databases also captured the particular districts from which participants came; however only the 2010 database captured the actual recruitment date, the start and end dates of skills training at TVET colleges, the courses undertaken, and whether the qualification attained was accredited or not. The stakeholder database provided only captured a list of TVET colleges involved in training NARYSEC participants in the province.

## 9. Western Cape

The Western Cape NARYSEC office captures and stores information in an Excel spreadsheet. The contents of this file is made up of worksheets with self-explanatory descriptors (worksheet labels). In addition to a worksheet for each exit pathway, it has a worksheet for unemployed graduates, youth still enrolled in the programme and a cohort that was scheduled to exit in February 2018.

Columns per worksheet indicate the names and basic demographics of participants (gender and race), recruitment location and enrolment status for each stage or step of the programme. In addition, it specifies the physical address of the enrolled (presumably at the date of recruitment) and a mobile phone number (often more than 1 number is specified). Sequencing of the columns seems to be strongly aligned with the major stages of NARYSEC training, especially military training and the learnership enrolment at TVET colleges. Two columns record the names of the district municipalities and specific local municipality for each participant. A scan of this information shows that NARYSEC participants are recruited from the following districts in this province: Central Karoo, Cape Winelands, Eden, Overberg and West Coast. Geographic targeting therefore focuses on predominantly rural districts across Western Cape.

As stated before, the columns are closely aligned with the actual implementation phases of NARYSEC, except for the lack of information about community services and actual completion date of the programme (or contract end date). Closer inspection of this template reveals that it captures both the timeframe of military training and the site where youth had undertaken this training. Columns for the formal training undertaken during NARYSEC enrolment, shows the name of the TVET college, field of study, accreditation status and enrolment dates. The populated template does not show who has dropped out at any stage of the programme.

A reliable source of information is essential for NARYSEC graduates to be allocated to a well-defined path of economic activities after graduation from the programme. In addition to verifying the information, this study also aimed at to find out and document how long graduates have been engaged in this activity after they have transitioned out of the formal training and the second community services phases.

Because the database does not provide details on the community service phase, it was impossible to establish how strongly it is aligned with the actual training provided during enrolment or livelihood activities after the end of the NARYSEC contract.

There is no information about 'exit workshops' or participation in such workshops. The database excludes basic verifiable information about efforts to begin involvement in a specified exit path, such as business or enterprise plans development or registration, job applications submitted or employment status, registration for further higher education.

### 2.3 Data collection process

A qualitative data collection and analysis strategy was applied on the targeted respondents as identified above. In addition to key informant interviews, this study also involved a survey of exited and near exit NARYSEC participants and document collection and analysis for the purpose of a systematic documentation of the proposed exit pathways. Semi-structured schedules were used for key informant interviews, whilst structured questionnaires were used in interviewing exited and near-exiting NARYSEC participants. Key informant schedules contained questions to trace the evolution of participants and the programme itself from its inception to date. They were administered in face-to-face interviews with NARYSEC Provincial Directors and other senior officials who have directly interacted with participants. Interviews were also conducted with other direct stakeholders, including service providers appointed to implement capacity building programmes for NARYSEC and where possible with economic opportunity providers. In total 3 key informant interviews were realised in Eastern Cape, 4 in the Free State, 1 in Gauteng, 5 in KZN, 6 in Limpopo 4 in Mpumalanga, 3 in Northern Cape 8 in North West and 5 in the Western Cape.

The 3 key informant interviews in Eastern Cape involved three different government officials, 2 of them are respectively in charge of programme coordination and programme implementation in the province, whereas the third in in charge of skills development in the Office of the Premier of the Eastern Cape Province.

In the Free State, the 4 interviews were held respectively with the NARYSEC provincial director, a NARYSEC official in charge of skills development, one with a director of operations in the Thaba Nchu College, and a final one was held with a representative of one of the TVET colleges that provide vocational and technical training to the NARYSEC learners. The key informant interview in Gauteng was held jointly with 2 Narysec officials in charge of programme coordination and implementation.

The 5 interviews in KwaZulu Natal involved 3 NARYSEC officials in charge of project coordination (1) and project implementation (2), a project manager of one of the TVET colleges that provides vocational and technical training to NARYSEC learners and a skills development manager in the office of the Premier of the KZN province. In Limpopo, one interview was held jointly with three NARYSEC officials in charge of programme coordination and implementation, another interview involved one rural municipality officer in charge of recruitment, yet another interview was held with two programme officers in charge of implementing skills development in one of TVET colleges, and an additional interview with an official in charge of the Agriparks management council.

In Mpumalanga, 4 key informant interviews were conducted: 3 interviews were held with government officials and one interview with an official from a TVET college which trains NARYSEC participants in the province.

In Northern Cape, a total of 3 key informant interviews was realised although we had targeted many more. Two of these interviews were with government officials, one at provincial and one at district level, while the third interview was realised with a representative of a TVET college that trains NARYSEC participants in technical and vocational skills.

In the North West province, 8 Key informant interviews were conducted with 5 government officials in charge of programme implementation and other stakeholders including one official from the REID branch, one official from the RID branch, and one official from a TVET college involved in training NARYSEC participants in the province.

In the Western Cape province, the 5 key informant interviews that were conducted involved a NARYSEC government official at provincial level, one district coordinator, one youth development coordinator, one skills development coordinator, a commanding officer and a warrant officer at the SAS Saldanha Bay Navy base involved in the NARYSEC character building and leadership skills training.

The survey questionnaires were administered to 320 participants in the 9 provinces. As a result of practical constraints in the process (e.g. delays in obtaining contact data, difficulties to reach respondents by phones, delays in meeting targeted respondent on appointed times), the targeting yielded the following distribution according to each province:

### **Eastern Cape**

The survey process in Eastern Cape was relatively smooth for near-exit participants because HSRC researchers were able to arrange to meet all of them in one central place (an agricultural farm). Learners were still in skills development phase but they form the group closest to exit, so they were included in the study even though they have not reached the second community service yet.

For exited participants on the employment path and those who transitioned to further education and training, it was rather difficult to contact them. Equally difficult was to find those who were developing their businesses or forming cooperatives. As one fieldworker noted during the project fieldwork feedback meeting:

*“Most of the people on the Eastern Cape databases were unemployed. Going through a list of 200 participants who had exited, it was extremely difficult to be able to get the 9 people who met our criteria of FET 3, employed 3, and 3 who are into enterprise development”.*

In the KZN province, researchers were able to find the targeted respondents, with a shortage of only 2 near-exit, 3 graduates in enterprise development and 3 in further education and training. Researchers were able to reach the target number of respondents in employment, even though for the majority of them, their employment is not related to the NARYSEC skills acquisition.

The practical modalities for reaching survey respondents were, however, sometimes very tedious. Researchers struggled a lot to get near exit participants in North West, especially in Vryburg, Bojanala, and by using the strategy to ask the few they managed to reach that they bring their fellow graduates, the difficulty of reaching participants was circumvented. Thanks to the knowledge of the local language (Sesotho and Setswana) by one of the research team members, contact was made easy even though all graduates also spoke English fluently.

In North West and Limpopo provinces, contacts between NARYSEC alumni and HSRC research teams for the survey were arranged by contacting participants directly through telephone numbers that

were identified from the provided databases. HSRC researchers asked survey participants in each of the surveyed district what would be the closest place to meet them. Target survey respondents then suggested the place and HSRC researchers would meet all of them at the indicated venue.

For those participants who experienced difficulties in travelling to the suggested venue the HSRC research team organised to go and meet them in their villages or wherever was closest to them. Another strategy the researchers used was to ask the contacted survey participants to bring their friends, because all NARYSEC participants basically know each other since most of them have been classmates.

Therefore, whenever the research teams had trouble calling NARYSEC alumni identified from the database (such as when the call went to voice mail), the strategy of asking whoever they were able to contact to bring along their fellow NARYSEC alumni with the attributes that were explained to them made up for the difficulty to contact them directly.

Another practical difficulty was caused by the reluctance of some respondents to take part in the surveys without being given material or financial incentives. It is important to remember that most exited NARYSEC graduates are unemployed; therefore getting them to collaborate to a NARYSEC-related study in which they do not gain anything is not an easy exercise. This meant that researchers often had to travel long distances on gravel roads to reach targeted graduates in their villages because they were reluctant and most of the time had no financial means to make the traveling to any suggested venue. As one North West fieldworker noted:

*“Some of the targeted respondents did not want to talk to us. Some asked what they were going to gain from being interviewed and they became rude when we informed them that there was no material or financial incentive for participation, upon which they would then say they wouldn’t do it if they won’t be gaining anything. Some of the targeted respondents had also moved; they had left for the city. A number of them had gone to Gauteng and other provinces in search of work, so for the most part it was very difficult to reach our targeted sample”.*

In Mpumalanga, the HSRC research team also had difficulties especially in contacting near-exited participants. It was necessary to extend the initially planned data collection time by an additional week in order to reach enough respondents as intended in the sampling. With the additional week, more data were collected and sampling targets were met. In Gauteng there were many challenges as

well around travelling. Despite the relatively modest geographical expansion of the province, reaching some of the areas was quite a hassle for the researchers, also compounded by the fact that the databases that we obtained for the purposes of sampling were really not sufficiently informative to ease our work in identifying the people that our researchers wanted to include in the sample.

For Gauteng province, the sampling difficulties due to untimely reception of the required databases and the limited informativeness of the records were aggravated by logistical difficulties that arose for the research team. As a result, our researchers were unable to reach some of the targeted districts for data collection, especially the interviews with near exited participants did not reach the intended targets. In the Western Cape Province, the major logistical difficulty was travelling long distances before reaching respondent who are dispersed. Most of the targeted respondents turned out to be unemployed, so researchers had to go further to get employed respondents who could provide the needed information. As pointed out by one Western Cape fieldworker:

*“The participants would be listed on the databases as having gone for further studies or into employment; however, in many cases, when we called, most of them said they had not moved into any of that, so we then had to pass on to the next person”.*

In the Free State, the main obstacle encountered was the refusal to participate in survey by NARYSEC graduates with whom our HSRC researcher had made appointments but who suddenly said they didn't want to talk anymore at the moment that our researchers reached them. After explaining to them the legitimacy and the independence of the study, they finally accepted to cooperate. As for the Northern Cape, the data collection was also made difficult by the enormous travelling distances compounded with the lack of clarity in the databases. A Northern Cape fieldworker had the following to say on the state of the database in the province:

*“The Northern Cape database was quite messy. We got a database which had, in some cases, names of, say, 5 people with the same phone number, and therefore getting in touch with these people became a big problem”.*

The problem of long distances was solved by splitting the data collection team into two subgroups to more rapidly cover the targeted geographical areas. The other problem in Northern Cape was the language, especially in the Namaqualand area, where most of the interviews had to be in Afrikaans. The Afrikaans speaking team members had thus to jump in most of the time because most respondents insisted on speaking only Afrikaans.

At the end of the data collection process, we had realised the following sample:

**Table 2: NARYSEC participants sample per province and exit pathways**

Present Province	Transit Pathway				Total
	Enterprise	Employment	FET	Near Exit	
Eastern Cape	23%	23%	23%	31%	39 100%
Free State	23%	37%	14%	26%	35 100%
Gauteng	20%	36%*	28%	16%	25 100%
KwaZulu-Natal	26%	23%	21%	30%	39 100%
Limpopo	23%	27%	19%	31%	48 100%
Mpumalanga	26%	26%	26%	22%	35 100%
North West	17%	34%	19%	30%	47 100%
Northern Cape	6%	41%	19%	34%	32 100%
Western Cape	8%	42%	4%	46%	24 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>324</b>

\*One of the respondent works as a volunteer and has been considered as being employed

In terms of gender distribution, the sample statistics display a relatively larger number of female participants with respect to males but their percentage distribution of the employment transit path is quite similar.

**Table 3: NARYSEC participant sample by gender and transit path**

Gender	Transit pathway				Total
	Enterprise	Employment	FET	Near Exit	
Male	23%	30%	15%	32%	147
					100%
Female	17%	32%	23%	28%	174
					100%
Prefer not to disclose	33%	33%	0%	33%	3
					100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>324</b>
	<b>20%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>100%</b>

The following table (**Table 4**) characterises respondents who have completed the programme according to their skills and employment situation prior to recruitment:

**Table 4: Pre-recruitment skills & employment situation of exited**

Main activity (socio-economic) 3 months before NARYSEC	Transit path			
	Enterprise	Employment	FET	Total
Completing Grade 12	4	10	7	21
Attending FET	8	10	11	29
Actively searching for job	21	46	29	96
Owner & operator of business	7	0	0	7
Unemployed & discouraged	6	13	8	27
Employed	18	22	8	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>228</b>

**Table 4** presents NARYSEC participants according to their career aspirations at the time of recruitment. Nearly half of all respondents aspired to secure a sustainable job when they were recruited whereas only 28% of them hoped to establish and operate a business. Among surveyed participants about one in five hoped to connect to further education and training or register at an institution for higher education. As shown in **Table 5**, there is a strong connection between career aspiration and subsequent career realisation for the exited participants, even though a non-negligible number of participants end up with on a path that was not planned initially.

**Table 5: Distribution of career aspiration for all sample participants**

Career aspiration	Transit path				Total
	Enterprise	Employment	FET	Near exit	
Establish and operate a business enterprise	45%	22%	17%	15%	93
Secure a sustainable job	10%	42%	17%	31%	151
Enrol at a FET/higher education institution	8%	22%	26%	44%	73
Stay at home to analyse career opportunities	14%	0	43%	43%	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>64 20%</b>	<b>101 31.5%</b>	<b>63 19%</b>	<b>94 29%</b>	<b>324</b>

For example, only 53% of participants who aspired to establish and operate a business ended up establishing one, while the 26% of them ended up finding employment and another 20% found their way into further education and training. Likewise, over 60% of respondents who came to the programme with the intention to secure a job found a path on the labour market, while some of them changed their aspirations and enrolled for further education (25%) or established their own enterprises (14%). More than half of exited who intended to establish a business remained however on the initial aspiration, and this connection is significantly robust.

**Table 6: Career aspiration vs career realisation for exited**

Career aspiration	Transit path			Total
	Enterprise	Employment	FET	
Establish and operate a business enterprise	53%	26%	20%	79
Secure a sustainable job	14%	61%	25%	104
Enrol at a FET/higher education institution	15%	39%	46%	41
Stay at home to analyse career opportunities	25%	25%	50%	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>64 20%</b>	<b>101 31.5%</b>	<b>63 19%</b>	<b>228</b>

## Section 3: Enterprise Development Pathway

### 3.1. Transition Path Scope

Support to enterprise and cooperative development is an anchoring point of the NARYSEC exit strategy framework. In a labour market characterised by low demand and glaring skills mismatches, developing own enterprise is seen as a good alternative to finding remunerated employment. Deploying entrepreneurial spirit to apply the skills acquired through the NARYSEC programme in starting and sustaining a business is a creative way of becoming an agent of change by tapping into a latent market. In its NARYSEC policy framework, the DRDLR aims to encourage a large number of NARYSEC learners to proactively seek to deploy their talents in creating enterprises aligned with their interests and skills. The Department has therefore vowed to develop its own enterprise development policy aligned with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)'s Youth Enterprise Development Strategy that seeks to support youth enterprises by providing start-up funds, training, mentorship, business development support, incubation and other programmes that help young people overcome the hurdles of setting up a viable business. The objective of this strategy is to ensure that beneficiaries exiting from NARYSEC know and understand that opportunities exist where they can apply their skills and experience to for self-employment by setting up their own enterprises or cooperatives.

Encouragement and support of cooperatives, worker-initiated small enterprises are part of the NARYSEC policy priorities and forms an integral part of the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS)III.

The Youth Development Directorate at the NARYSEC national office is responsible for support to NARYSEC graduates pursuing enterprise development and collaborates in that with Skills Development and Project Implementation directorates.

The support to be provided includes:

- Seeking learner profiles from Skills Development to identify who wants to pursue enterprise development, what type of business they are interested in, the timing and the location as well as the procedures they intend to follow in order to start own enterprises or cooperatives.
- Referring NARYSEC youths to relevant stakeholders for services and products as follows:
- Training in enterprises or cooperatives (e.g. REID, NYDA etc.)

- Assistance with company registration for a PTY Limited or co-operative with the relevant agencies, e.g. Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) and Registrar of Cooperatives.
- Help with opening of a bank account;
- Assistance with statutory compliance (e.g., Tax Clearance Certificate (SARS), labour-related regulations and requirements from the Department of Labour (DOL), National Treasury regulations (e.g. BBBEE rating) etc.
- Training of participants in basic Business Management (relevant state departments/ agencies/ NPOs/ NGOs/ financial institutions)
- Business plan, resourcing (e.g. Funding etc.) and incubation and mentoring.
- Registration on supply chain databases in the public sector (e.g. RID)
- Connecting NARYSEC graduates with SMME development agencies such as Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA).
- Linkages with development financial institutions such as banks and micro credit providers.
- Development of business profile.
- Conduct monitoring on referrals and evaluate impact.
- Produce quarterly report on exit strategy framework implementation

In practice however, the support policy has been minimal as the DRDLR has recognised the difficulty for NARYSEC participants to secure business opportunities and develop their own businesses. Considering that NARYSEC learnerships offer a National Qualification Level 4 (improved from the initial Level 2), some training providers insist that one way of improving the chances of social participation prospects of NARYSEC participants after graduation is by providing substantial government support for graduates in the form of land for farming and capital to start business. However, NARYSEC graduates intending to start their businesses or to form cooperatives experience enormous difficulties in their quest for small business funding. Unfortunately, the Department does not provide funding support nor resources such as land to individuals or their cooperatives.

### 3.2. Prioritisation: conceptual, policy and implementation fit of the enterprise and cooperative development pathway

Although policies articulated in the strategic framework as presented above seem to offer a robust and systematised preparation and support to induce learners to choose a skills development path leading to enterprise development, the way the programme has been implemented so far has not been to the measure of the suggested policies.

Most key informants were of the view that there were inherent weaknesses in the design of the programme which did not foster the emergence and growth of interest of learners to venture on the enterprises development route in the way the programme implementation is structured right now. As one NARYSEC provincial programme director interviewed noted:

*“We have emphasised the issue of enterprise development in the programme, however, to be honest, we have not adequately supported that route with financial resources and other processes to chart a clear path for participants who are keen to pursuing that...”*

Learners are not even given the opportunity to select the field of their interests and develop skills that are commensurate with its requirements. In the first cohort recruited in 2010, for example, the construction programme was imposed on all learners without distinction or alternative. This compulsory approach discouraged their enthusiasm for garnering the skills that they thought they needed to succeed by pursuing their dreams.

The programme implementation also lacks an adequate monitoring framework that would enable NARYSEC offices to track the nature and levels of skills acquired during the near-exit phase. A number of interviewed NARYSEC provincial officers referred to the programme performance as “a numbers game” and attributed poor outcomes in business skills development to a strategy focused on recruitment without a proper plan for exit. Some described the programme as not being learner-focused since implementing officials and their managers were more interested in intake numbers of participants – those who come in and stay on the programme than paying attention to what the participants get out of the programme.

Decisions about fields of training to be provided to the learners were also frequently taken only on the basis of Integrated Development Plans without informed input from local private business owners even though they were considered to be important stakeholders. As a consequence, programme implementation seems disconnected from any coordination with relevant sector skills

plans and other youth development policy frameworks. Engagement with national and local actors including business owners appears to be done haphazardly and on an ad hoc basis.

### **3.3. Preparation: How are graduates prepared to succeed in this pathway?**

Only one in five NARYSEC graduates chooses the path of enterprise development in own business or in cooperatives (see Table 5). The skills needed to get ready for enterprise development are acquired and strengthened throughout the NARYSEC curriculum, from the character building phase until the last part of community service, each phases contributing its own specificity.

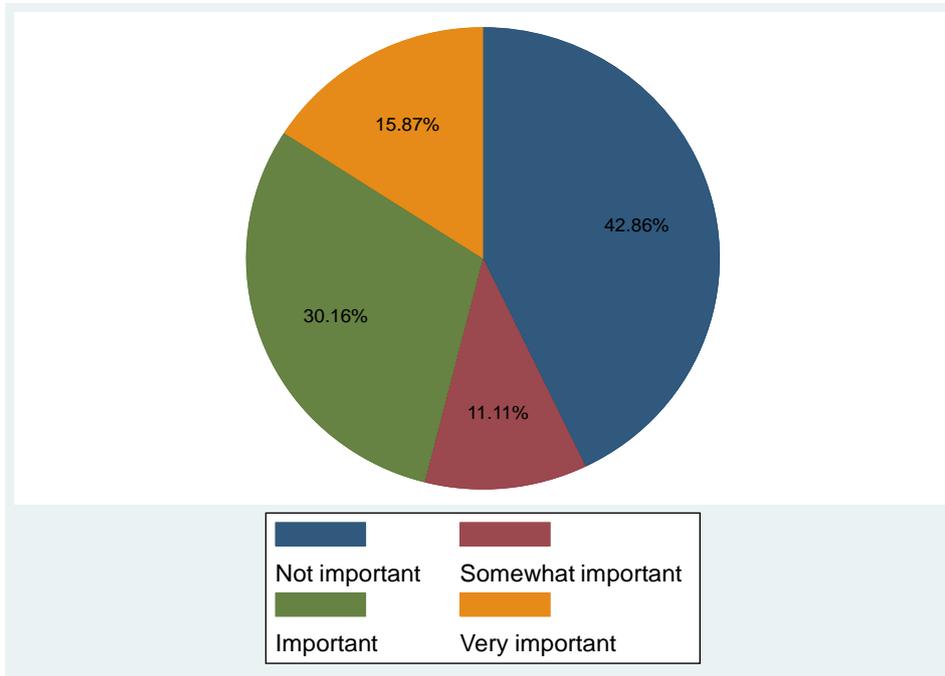
Together the different skills should prepare those who want to develop their sense of entrepreneurship to find their ways and leap over the hurdles that such an endeavour entails.

Although enterprise development occupies a central role in the exit strategy, the adequacy of acquired skills with respect to the competences that are necessary to succeed in face of challenges and fierce competition in a sluggish market need to be closely examined here.

Among graduates who are in the process of developing businesses or cooperatives three out of four value the contribution of officials from DRDLR directorates other than NARYSEC as being important/very important in equipping them with the skills they need to succeed in their business development endeavour. This means that they perceive enterprise development skills as multifaceted and requiring learning from various sources. Only a quarter of them see the role of other directorates as unimportant to their skills accumulation.

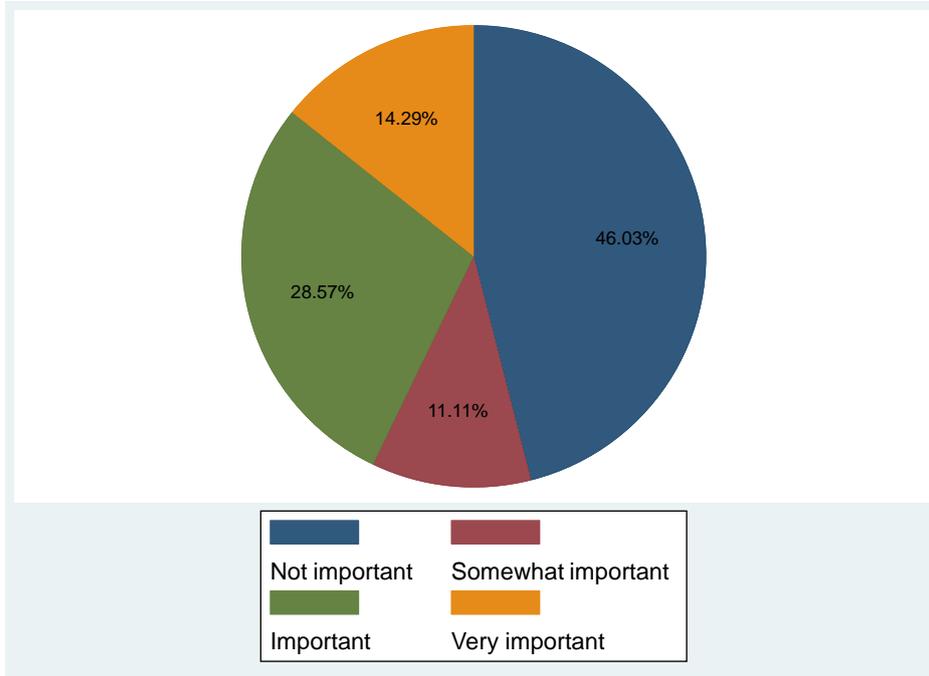
**Figure 2: Alumni's perception of importance of NARYSEC officials in equipping them with enterprise development skills**

Overall, less than half of NARYSEC alumni involved in enterprise creation (29 out of 63) consider the role of non-NARYSEC DRDLR directorates to be important or very important in equipping them with the skills needed to succeed in enterprise development (Fig. 2).



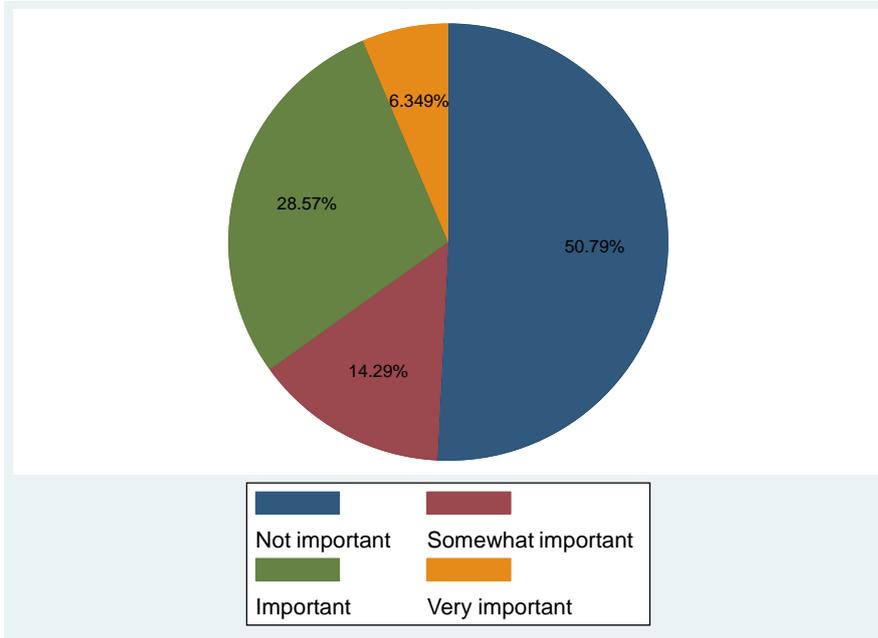
**Figure 3: Alumni's perceptions of role of non-NARYSEC directorates for their enterprise development skills**

Similarly, graduates' perceptions of the role played by SANDF trainers in preparing them for business development shows that more than 46% of those who chose to develop their own business consider the skills acquired during the military training and character building as not important for enterprise development. Only slightly more than half of them see those skills as somewhat important, quite important or very important (Figure 3).



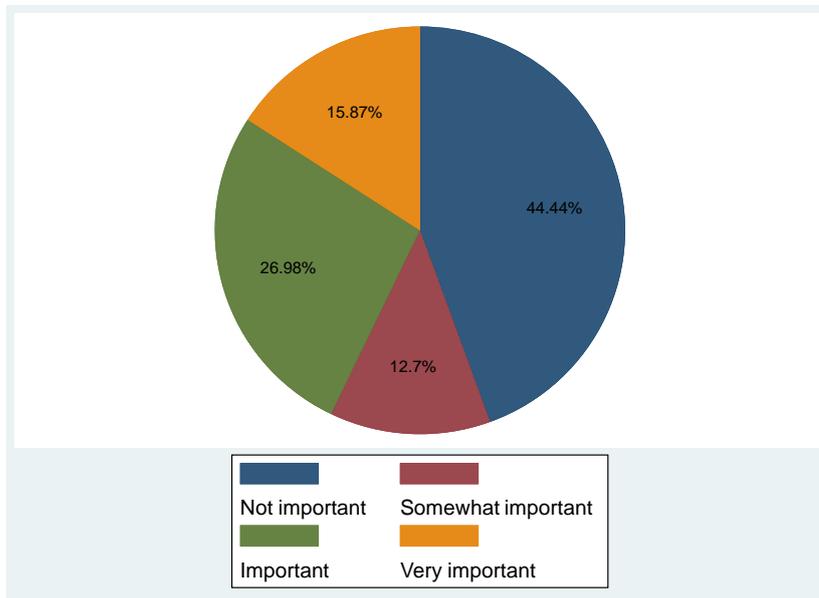
**Figure 4: Alumni's perceptions of importance SANDF trainers in equipping them with enterprise development skills**

A similar picture comes up for the evaluation of the importance of SETA trainings and the distribution is almost identical to the perceptions on military trainers. Slightly more than half of the graduates who are engaged in enterprise development find this SETA training not important for equipping them with the enterprise development skills they require (see Figure 4).



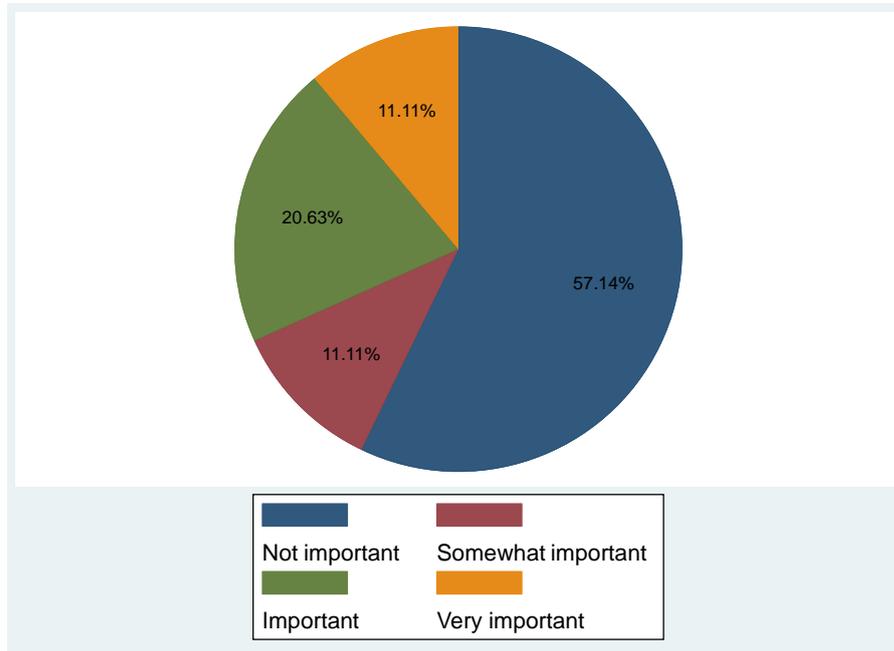
**Figure 5: Alumni's perceptions of importance of SETA trainings in equipping them with enterprise development skills**

Likewise, the perceptions of the importance of university/ college coaches in equipping NARYSEC graduates with enterprise development skills shows the same distribution: those who find college/university training important or very important for equipping them with the necessary entrepreneurial skills for succeeding in setting up their own businesses are hardly more than those who consider such trainers unimportant or only marginally important.



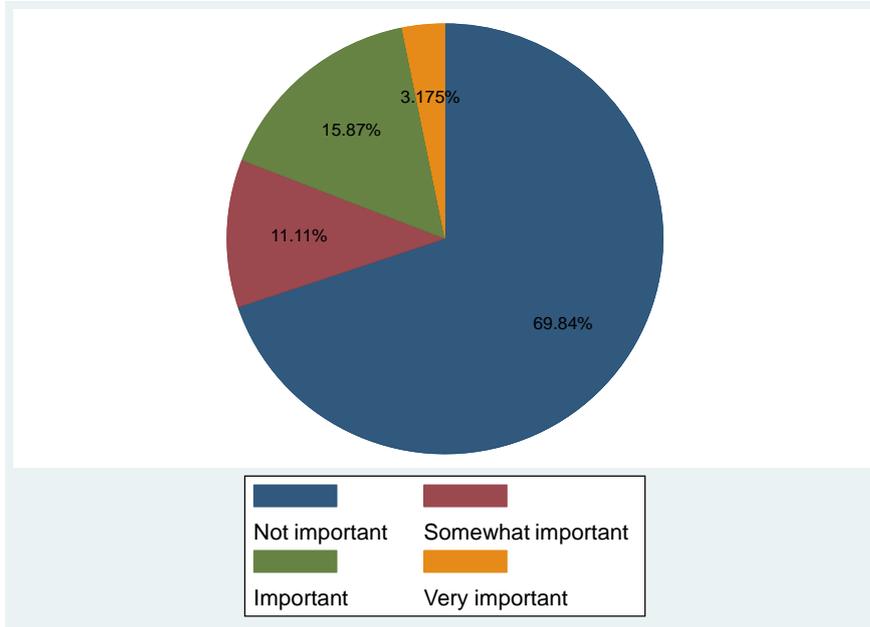
**Figure 6: Alumni's perceptions of importance of university/ college trainers in providing them with enterprise development skills**

As for the role of private businesses in inspiring skills for business development, the proportion of those who consider such a source of skill not important jumps to 57% and is thus larger than any of those who consider private sector as an important/ very important source of business inspiration (Figure 6).



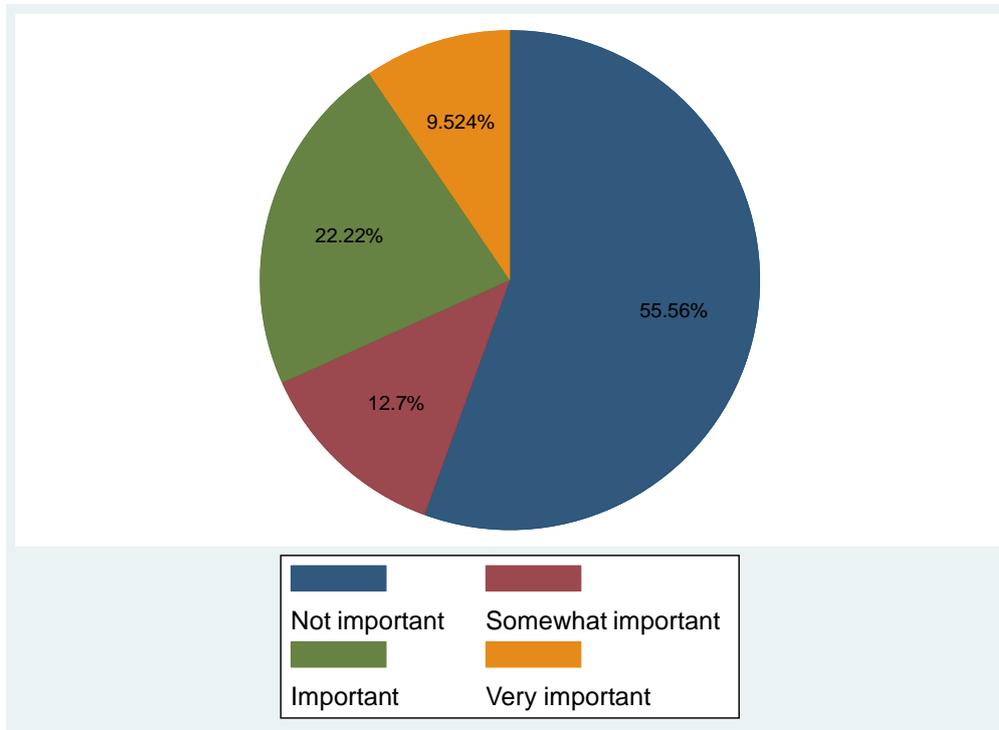
**Figure 7: NARYSEC graduates' perceptions of the role of private businesses in inspiring enterprise development skills**

The proportion of NARYSEC graduates who consider non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as important/very important in equipping them with business development skills is even lower than the comparable share for the private sector as an important/very important source of skills for business development (compare Figure 7 to Figure 6). Nearly 70 % of respondents consider NGOs at not important at all in their business skills acquisition (Figure 7).



**Figure 8: NARYSEC graduates' perceptions of the importance of NGO in their acquiring enterprise development skills**

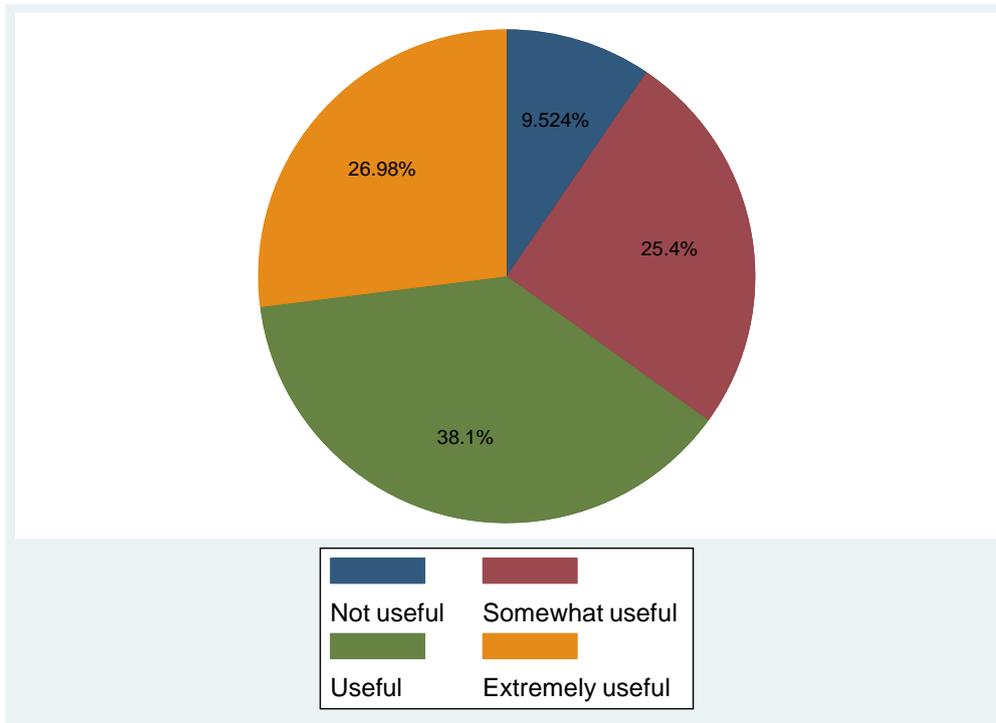
Finally, the perceptions are again equally distributed between those who perceive government department/ municipality as important/ very important and those who deem it not important for their enterprise development skills (Figure 8).



**Figure 9: NARYSEC graduates' perceptions of the role of Gvt department/ municipality in equipping them with enterprise development skills**

NARYSEC graduates who develop business ventures highly value the life skills that they acquired through the SANDF training as being useful to the success of their business, with more than 90% of them appraising those skills as either somewhat important, quite important or extremely important (Figure 9). The roles of NGO's and private businesses are therefore considered as the least important for equipping NARYSEC graduates with the necessary skills and more importance is attached to government officials and institutions, including training SETA facilities and military training.

Among the life skills that are stimulated during the character building phase of the training, leadership and networking skills are valued by NARYSEC graduates as having contributed to their business success. Tables 6 and 7 on the next page display respectively the perception of leadership skills and that of networking skills of respondents engaged in business development in relation to how they see the success of their post-NARYSEC business



**Figure 10: Perceived usefulness of acquired life skills for success of 1st business**

**Table 7: Improved leadership skills and self-perception of business success**

Improvement of leadership skills	Success of first post-NARYSEC business enterprise project (venture)				Total
	Unsuccessful	Somewhat successful	Successful	Extremely successful	
Same as before	3 37%	3 37%	0 0%	2 25%	8 100%
Somewhat improved	1 17%	1 17%	4 66%	0 0%	6 100%
Improved	5 18%	12 44%	9 33%	1 4%	27 100%
Greatly improved	3 14%	12 54%	5 23%	2 9%	22 100%
Total	12 19%	28 44%	18 29%	5 8%	63 100%

Networking skills are perceived as particularly important in equipping graduates with tools to succeed in their business ventures and the connection between these two dimensions is very significant as indicated by the corresponding Chi-square of 19.9 (for 9 d.f.):

**Table 8: Success of first business and improvement in networking skills**

Improvement of networking skills	Success of first post-NARYSEC business enterprise project (venture)				Total
	Unsuccessful	Somewhat successful	Successful	Extremely successful	
Same as before	33%	42%	8%	17%	12 100%
Somewhat improved	30%	50%	10%	10%	10 100%
Improved	15%	31%	54%	0%	26 100%
Greatly improved	7%	67%	13%	13%	15 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b> <b>19%</b>	<b>28</b> <b>44%</b>	<b>18</b> <b>29%</b>	<b>5</b> <b>8%</b>	<b>63</b> <b>100%</b>

NARYSEC graduates highly value their technical and vocational skills improvement through NARYSEC programme, with a clear large majority of those who started businesses deeming it useful or extremely useful for development and success of first business and only an almost insignificant fraction of graduates calling it not useful (Figure 10).

**Figure 11: Usefulness of technical/vocational skills acquired through NARYSEC programme for success of 1st enterprise**

**Table 9: Self-perception of business success and improvement of technical skills**

Improvement of main technical and vocational skills	Success of first post-NARYSEC business venture				
	Unsuccessful	Somewhat successful	Successful	Extremely successful	Total number
Same as before	29%	38%	24%	9%	21
Somewhat improved	20%	60%	20%	0%	20
Improved	13%	43%	43%	0%	23
Greatly improved	11%	44%	11%	33%	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b> <b>19%</b>	<b>28</b> <b>44%</b>	<b>18</b> <b>29%</b>	<b>5</b> <b>8%</b>	<b>63</b> <b>100%</b>

In contrast to the own perceptions of those who managed to start a business venture, the view of the effectiveness of the followed implementation for the whole group of learners is less optimistic. For example, 80% of graduates interviewed in the Eastern Cape and KZN provinces, most of them being part of the cohorts that had to follow a 4 year programme, are very bitter towards NARYSEC and

were even reluctant to speak to the HSRC researchers owing to their feeling of abandonment and a lack of support.

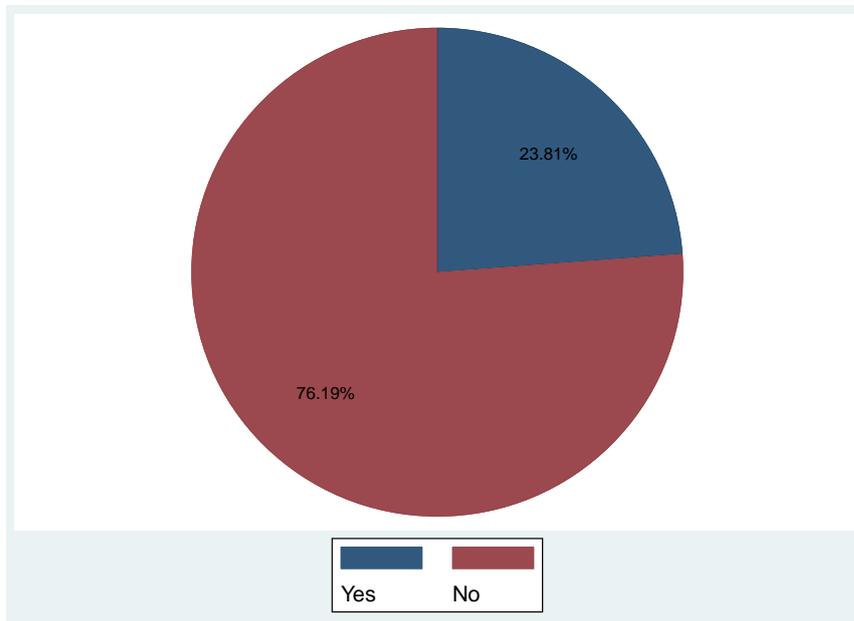
#### 3.4. Post-NARYSEC support for enterprise and cooperative development

Although the exit enterprise development is clearly specified as one of the three targeted exit pathways for NARYSEC graduates, the existing implementation methods do not appear to be geared towards a strong and effective support for enterprise development. A common mindset among involved actors at different levels of responsibility with the purpose to equip the recruited young people with the skills required to start sustainable business enterprises is still wanting. As a result, the practical support to NARYSEC graduates who attempted to set up their businesses has remained weak and has reached only less than a quarter of them as illustrated in the graph of Figure 11.

The main hindrances to business development are lack of start-up capital and limited development opportunities in rural areas. Agriculture and construction are capital-intensive, which makes them almost unrealistic ventures for youth from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, unless they receive comprehensive support from the government or other sponsors of youth development. As one provincial Skills Development Deputy Director noted:

*“There is simply no adequate funding support. There are those who have expressed clear interest and initiative in forming cooperatives for example, and we have referred them to NYDA but very few have managed to secure capital and because of that, very few of those cooperatives are kicking and running”*

Even those who are referred to the NYDA for help in securing the necessary funding for their business initiatives have therefore received very little help (Figure 11).



**Figure 12: Received support for enterprise development after graduation**

The envisaged collaborations in the Exit Strategy framework for supporting small business development are thus not effectively implemented. In some of the districts there are limited categories of partners, forcing local municipalities to be the main partners who provide opportunities for NARYSEC graduates.

Theoretically, programme participants should benefit from memoranda of understanding (MOUs) between the Department and stakeholders in various industries and state agencies. Such collaboration should include agencies in agriculture production, catering, construction, tourism, nature conservation and public funding (for example, the National Youth Development Agency) where the graduates could get relevant knowledge on business creation as well as financial support. The idea of signing memoranda of understanding between the DRDLR and partner stakeholders for enterprise development goals is considered by many of the key informants as necessary for unlocking some of the existing business opportunities in their regions.

Such partners include municipalities that are custodians of land and could allocate land to youth cooperatives for agricultural activities.

The success of business support strategy in a low- growth business environment requires more creative and innovative approaches to social investment and competency building. For example, exited learners pursuing business enterprises were likely to benefit if start-up capital was available, and some form of mentoring and other individualised support provided. Even though the approach to the near-exit phase to enhance enterprise development needs to be adapted to the local contexts, there is a need to coordinate support activities so as to make them more systematic.

As the situation stands at the moment, activities intended for this phase are largely fragmented and the personnel with the responsibility to support learners to make choices are not equipped, are sometimes not very enthusiastic about enterprise development pathway or do not actively encourage the learners to take this stream.

The key informants suggest the following for improvement of the exit strategy:

- Capacity development for officials in charge of implementing the NARYSEC programme and its exit strategy.
- Signing of MOUs with business partners and local municipalities to foster synergy in support of business development.
- Effective coordination of NARYSEC activities across different phases to ensure that the transition towards this exit pathway is coherently pursued from the early phases of the programme.
- A more proactive support for NARYSEC graduates with tangible resources such as land and start-up funds.

## Section 4: Labour Market Entry

### 4.1. Transition Path Scope

The labour market entry pathway deals with how the youths who have completed the NARYSEC programme succeed in securing sustainable employment in the labour market. The main rationale for instituting the NARYSEC programme rests on the assumption that the lack of qualifications and skills required in the labour market is one of the main reasons for the observed massive rural youth unemployment, and that equipping the youth with those skills and qualifications will render them employable. Once these skills have been acquired, the youths can be expected to be able to secure employment within the Department, other government departments and parastatals, contractors or service providers appointed by the Department, private players as well NGOs.

While the youths are responsible for their job search activities, the Department can assist with information as well as linking the youth with job opportunities. The Department aims to partner with recruitment agencies for possible placement of exiting participants in full time or part time employment. The Department also aims to engage job portal administering agencies like the NYDA to place curriculum vitae of participants in order to reach prospective employers.

### 4.2. Prioritisation: Conceptual, Policy and Implementation fit of the employment exit path

Ensuring that the youths find employment has been an important policy priority of the national government for the past several years. The National Development Plan (NDP), for instance, emphasises the need create jobs across various sectors of the economy to reduce the current high levels of unemployment among the youths. In line with the government priorities, different government departments have come up with several youth employment strategies, many of which revolve around creating opportunities for short term job experience. The DRDLR also highly prioritises the creation of job opportunities for the rural youths to reduce poverty and rural-urban migration.

For NARYSEC, the employment path is very important, and is expected to absorb the majority of the youths after their graduation. As already highlighted, the Department argued that while job opportunities are indeed scarce in the rural areas, the high unemployment rates prevalent among rural youths was also due to their particular lack of skills that would increase their chances of being employed. The focus for resorbing this massive youth unemployment, however, is now moving towards enterprise development. One of the main reasons for this shift of emphasis is the realisation

by the Department that the assumption that equipping the rural youths with some qualification would lead to employment may have been only partially correct, as the largest majority of the NARYSEC graduates have reverted back into unemployment.

While the Department's focus has shifted towards enterprise development, the majority of the youths still prefer to secure jobs instead of starting cooperatives or own ventures. An overwhelming majority of the youths would rather just work for an employer than take the risk of starting something of their own in a market with low growth prospects.

As one provincial NARYSEC Assistant Director noted:

*"You have to remember that the majority of these youths come from extremely poor backgrounds such that as soon as they complete, they are more inclined to look for employment rather than follow the other two exit routes, so as to have a quick source of income".*

This again implies that the employment pathway should continue to receive priority. Not many of the youths in general, and rural youths in particular, possess the entrepreneurial spirit together with financial and managerial capabilities necessary to start and successfully run enterprises. As others have argued, entrepreneurs are born and can hardly be made. Moreover, coming from an underprivileged family environment in rural areas adds additional challenges to the likelihood of success, because the network facilities that make business succeed are weak in such an environment in comparison to potential competitors in the same line of potential business. One of the issues that remain unanswered is the one regarding what must be done to ensure that the majority of the NARYSEC graduates have higher chances of being absorbed in the job sector. To what extent does NARYSEC programme prepare the youths for transition into jobs? The next sub-section discusses these issues.

#### **4.3. Preparation: How are graduates prepared to transition/succeed in this pathway?**

Transitioning into the labour market is a function of both the structural labour market factors (demand side) and the skills that the youths possess (supply side). The NARYSEC programme prepares the participants by addressing the skills and qualification side, empowering them with skills they can use in their search for job opportunities. The challenge, however, has been in matching the skills/qualifications offered with the labour market demand. While efforts are made in the programme to select the skills to be imparted to youth participating in the programme based on the priorities of a

particular district, this has not translated into job opportunities for the graduates. Various reasons explain this failure to convert skills acquisition into employment:

Firstly, there is a mismatch between the qualification/ skills types acquired by the participants during the programme and those that are in demand in the labour market. While the selection of skills for participants was to some extent informed by the developmental priorities of particular districts, this has not translated into job opportunities for the participants after they graduate. The reason for this slack is the disconnection between economic priorities as identified by the local economic development planning and the actual demand for particular skills related to those priorities. For example, the fact that a particular district's economy is mainly based on agriculture does not necessarily mean that there is a shortage of agro-skills and thus, chances of employment, in that sector. In fact, the agro-potential may even be due, among other factors, to an abundance of related human resource skills. A more effective approach would be to go beyond just the economic priorities of a particular district and perform a skills audit to identify skills gaps and determine the kind of skills that are in short supply, and then prioritising these skills during the NARYSEC training.

Secondly, there is a mismatch between the skills levels offered to NARYSEC participants and that demanded in the labour market. There was general consensus that the qualification / skills levels are too low. This, according to the stakeholders, has disadvantaged even those who would have done qualifications that are in demand. The qualification level 3 or 4 offered by NARYSEC does not produce graduates that are employable, to a larger extent. Several examples exist where the NARYSEC graduates have the engineering qualifications needed by the municipality, for instance, but cannot be employed as their qualification level is below that required for those jobs. Thirdly, in an environment characterised by high unemployment levels even among college or university graduates with higher qualification levels in the same fields of study, the NARYSEC graduates struggle to compete. Unless the objective is only to have these NARYSEC graduates start their own businesses, and not focusing on job search, it is very difficult to imagine how they, with those lower levels of qualifications, would be able to compete with university graduates in the job market. Even the argument that the focus is on producing artisans that are generally in lower supply in the country does not hold, as the level is such that the NARYSEC graduates remain largely unemployable as a result of the low content of their skills improvement. Consequently, most NARYSEC graduates have found themselves in jobs that are unrelated to the skills acquired during the programme. As one NARYSEC programme provincial coordinator noted:

*“It goes back to the issue of qualification levels. The qualifications are at a very, very low level such that the chances of NARYSEC graduates on the job market are very slim. Some do get employment, but in most cases that employment is not relevant to skills which they would have obtained from the programme. There are many graduates with the same qualifications at NQF levels 5, 6 and even 7 who are unemployed, and our learnerships, at just level 4 will not compete”*

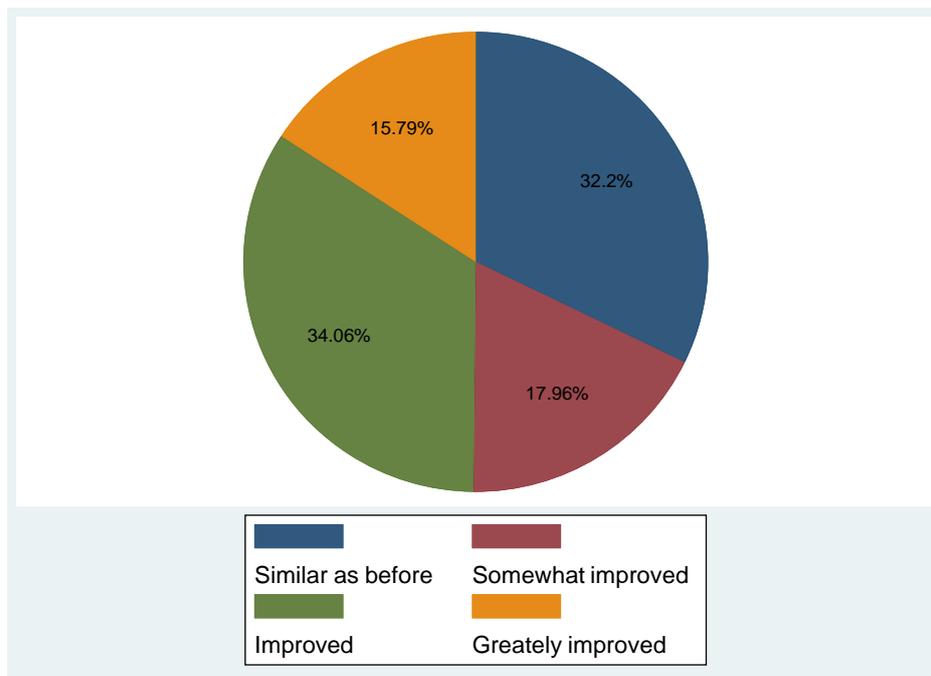
In practice, only about half of NARYSEC participants see the programme as having improved or greatly improved their technical or vocational skills, whereas the other half estimates that their technical skills have only increased marginally or not at all (Figure 12). The self-perception of the usefulness of acquired skills in advancing individual employment careers for NARYSEC participants who chose to pursue employment opportunities suggests that a large majority of them find psycho-social skills improvement to have usefulness of some various degrees in enhancing their chances to secure a job (Figures 13 ). For the vocational/technical skills, the picture changes slightly as the percentage of respondents who find it useful or very useful drops from 73 % for psych-social skills to 60%. Almost one in four finds it not useful at all, while an additional one in six finds it to be only somewhat useful (Figure 14).

The perceived importance of technical/vocational skills in enhancing the chances to find employment is however not matched by its assessment on job success of those who follow the employment path.

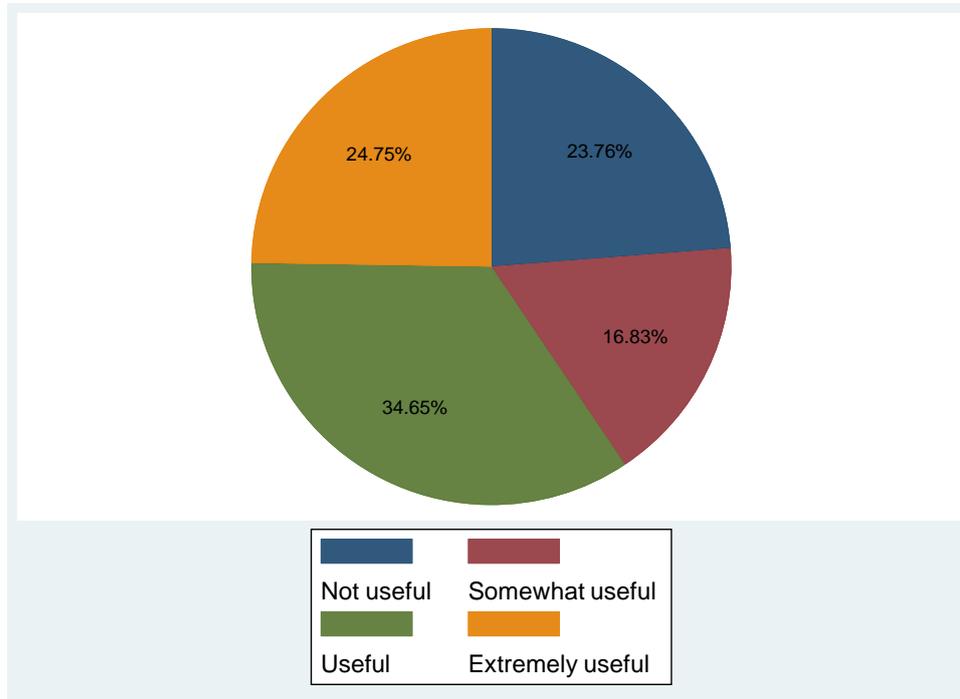
As can be seen in **Table 9**, there is no robust correlation between the degree of perceived improvement in technical/ vocational skills and the reported career success (compare to Table 8). In contrast, the high positive assessment of psycho-social skills have a larger majority with almost three out of four respondents considering them as important or very important, whereas more than 40% of respondents find acquired technical/vocational skills as being only somewhat important or not important for their employability (Figure 14).

**Table 10: Improvement of technical/vocational skills vs job success**

Improvement of main technical and vocational skills	Success of first post-NARYSEC job opportunity				Total number
	Unsuccessful	Somewhat successful	Successful	Extremely successful	
Similar as before	50%	20%	23%	7%	30
Somewhat improved	26%	21%	37%	15%	19
Improved	28%	28%	31%	13%	29
Greatly improved	37%	32%	21%	10%	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b> <b>36%</b>	<b>24</b> <b>25%</b>	<b>27</b> <b>28%</b>	<b>11</b> <b>11%</b>	<b>97</b> <b>100</b>



**Figure 13: Perceived improvement of main technical and vocational skill**

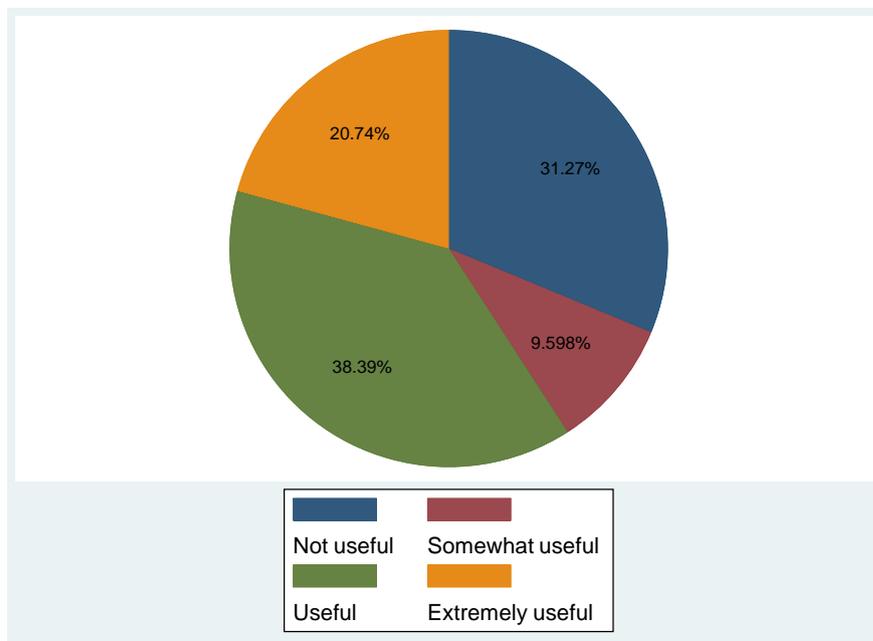


**Figure 14: Participant perception of usefulness of technical/ vocational skills for enhancing employability**

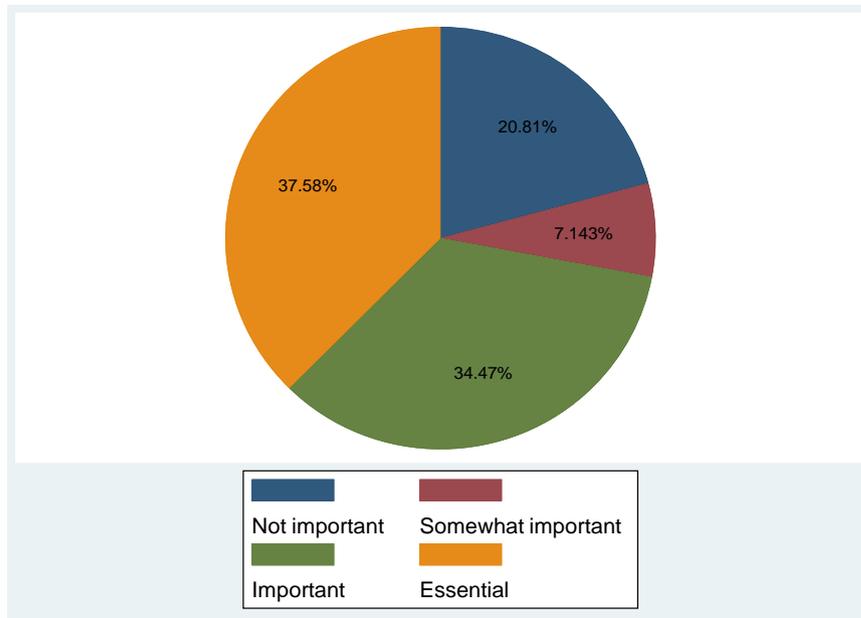
Fourthly, the dependency or entitlement problem that seems to develop among the graduates was highlighted as a problem. Participants who would have been used to the officials doing a whole lot of things for them from recruitment until the end of the programme find it difficult to have to solve the problems themselves in the process of job search. This entitlement problem developed to such an extent that often times participants would decide to skip classes, for instance, simply because of a delay in stipend payment. This signals a general lack of reflection on the intended beneficence of the programme for their sake, providing them with an invaluable opportunity that they should try to utilise by acquiring the skills necessary for their future work career. Fortunately, this attitude does not characterise the majority of participants, and it is generally being addressed where it appeared, but it gives signals of challenging behaviours that may arise in the course of the programme implementation. While these attitudinal problems are gradually changing due to information dissemination from the Department, the dependency problem has seen a number of graduates not actively searching for jobs as they expect the Department (i.e. DRDLR) to do it for them. In fact, some interviewed officials indicated that a number of NARYSEC graduates expect to be employed by the Department, and frequently call their coordinators demanding to be employed.

It might not be superfluous to point out here that a large majority of surveyed near completion and past participants consider their technical and/or vocational skills improvement as important for their future employment career, with nearly half of them deeming it essential (Figure 16). Skills improvement is also highly valued for helping graduates secure and sustain their economic livelihoods. Only less than one third of them consider skills improvement as not being adequately useful for facing enterprise development challenges and sustaining their livelihoods. The remaining two thirds of surveyed respondents estimated that the skills improvement was useful with more than one in five finding it extremely useful for their success in creating a livelihood out of their businesses or jobs (Figure 17).

Finally, the major disempowering issue identified was that, often times, graduates struggle to receive their certificates. Without certificates, the graduates have little proof that they acquired the skills and it is hard, if not impossible, for them to be hired. The certificates delay problems will have to be addressed if the youths are to have any chance to compete in the job market with their lower level qualifications. Participants who have their certificates and those who are about to obtain their skills training certificates value the usefulness of their skills improvement for enhancing their ability to define their career. More than three out of four of them consider the skills improvement as useful or extremely useful, with an additional 15% finding it somewhat useful and only less than 10 percent finding the skills improvement not useful for defining the employment career (Figure 16).

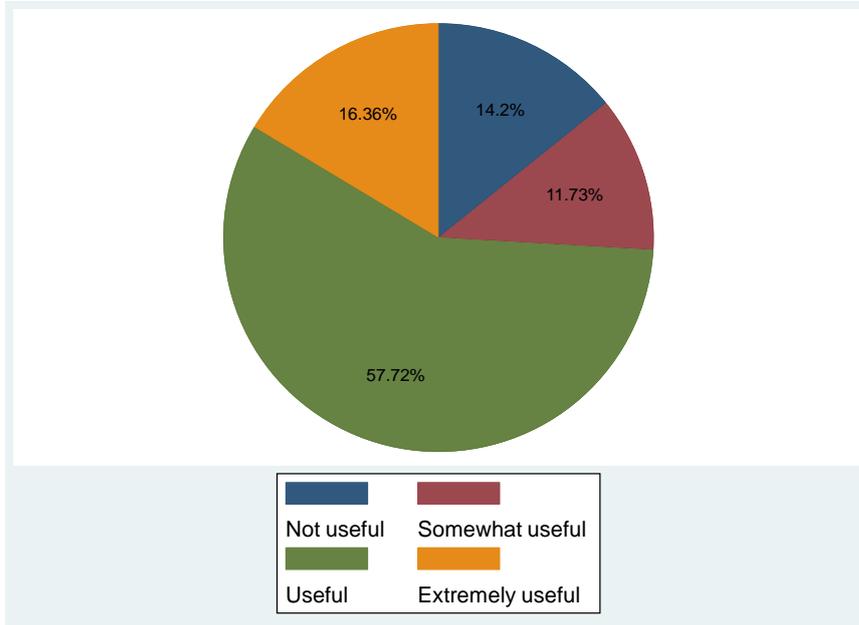


**Figure 15: Usefulness of improved technical and vocational skills for current livelihood/economic activity**



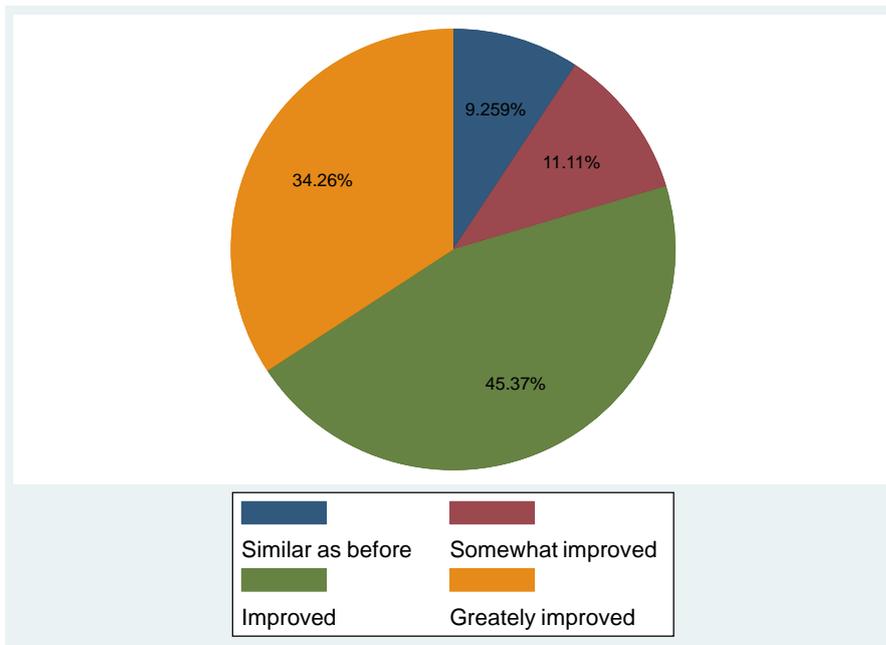
**Figure 16: Perceived importance of skills improvement for future career**

This raises the question of whether the character building training participants receive is adequate in preparing them to take responsibility of their lives and participate in analysing their socio-economic environment to solve the challenges they face. In that regard, survey among graduates and near graduation participants shows that more than two thirds of participants value the skills they acquire as having improved or greatly improved their capacity to define their personal development (Figure 17):



**Figure 17: Perceived usefulness of skills improvement for defining employment career**

An even larger majority of respondents report an improvement in leadership skills, with only a small fraction of less than 10 % reporting no improvement in leadership skills (Figure 18).



**Figure 18: Participant self-perception of improvement in leadership skills**

**Table 10** compares the perceptions of improvement in leadership skills and the self-reported job success for participants who completed the NARYSEC programme. Similar to the association found in **Table 6**, we observe here a strong correlation between improved leadership skills and perception of success in current job.

**Table 11: Improvement in leadership skills and job success**

Improvement of leadership skills	Success of first post-NARYSEC job achievements				Total
	Unsuccessful	Somewhat successful	Successful	Extremely successful	
Similar as before	43%	29%	21%	7%	14 100%
Somewhat improved	15%	23%	54%	8%	13 100%
Improved	39%	24%	29%	8%	41 100%
Greatly improved	37%	27%	13%	23%	30 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b> <b>35%</b>	<b>25</b> <b>26%</b>	<b>26</b> <b>26%</b>	<b>12</b> <b>12%</b>	<b>98</b> <b>100%</b>

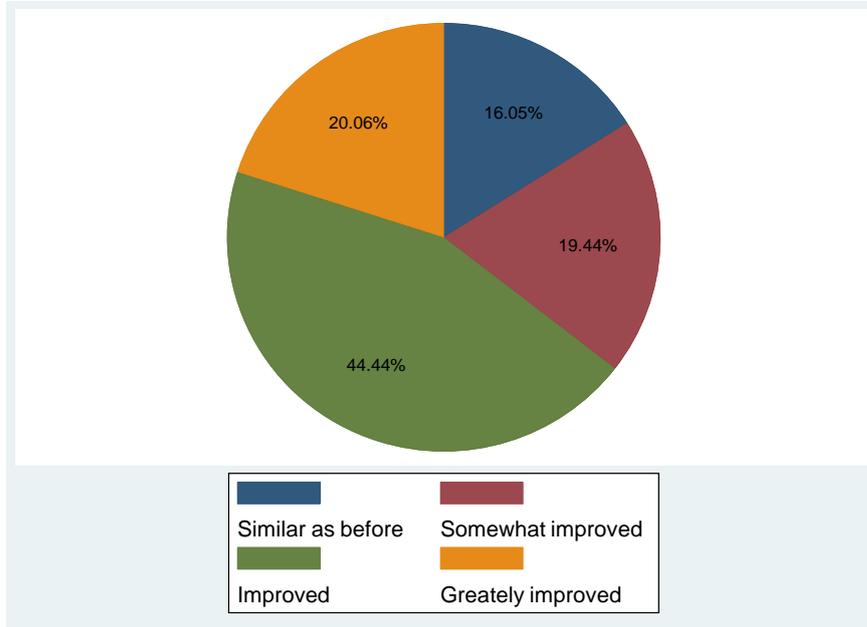
Networking skills are equally important for securing and keeping employment (**Table 11**). The connection found between networking skills and success in business is equally present for success in securing and successfully keeping employment (compare to **Table 7**).

This is a good indication of the need to keep an emphasis on this aspect of the programme and even strengthen/ customise the related skills training for a better preparation of the post-NARYSEC career.

**Table 12: Improvement in networking skills and job success**

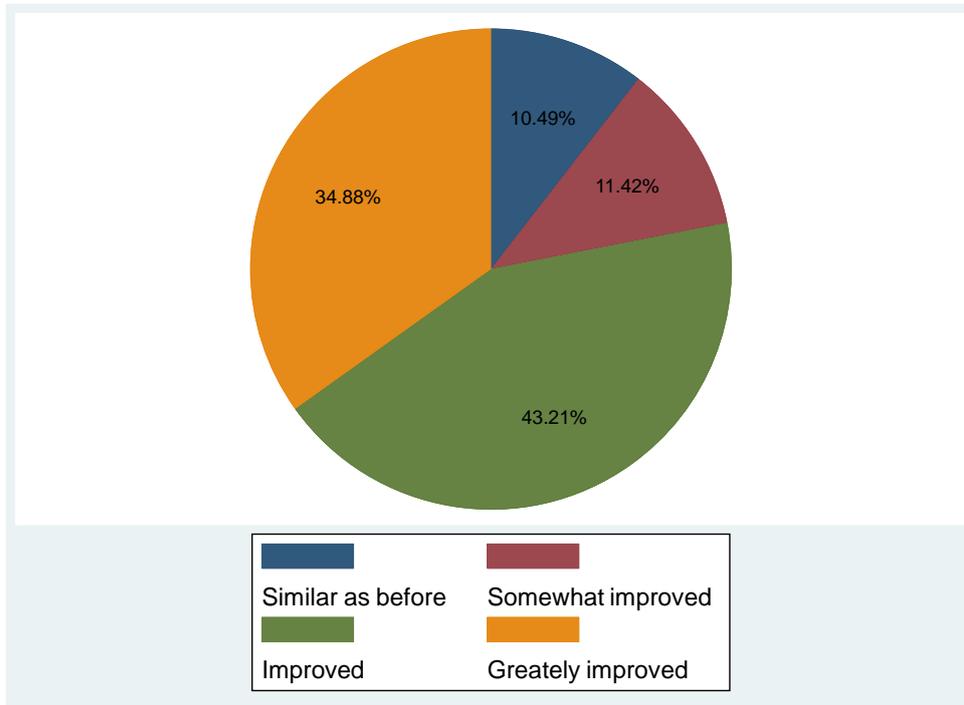
Improvement of networking skills	Success of first post-NARYSEC job achievements				Total
	Unsuccessful	Somewhat successful	Successful	Extremely successful	
Similar as before	56%	18%	19%	7%	27 100%
Somewhat improved	22%	28%	39%	11%	18 100%
Improved	24%	30%	36%	9%	33

					100%
Greatly improved	42%	21%	16%	21%	19 100%
Total	35 35%	24 25%	27 28%	11 11%	97 100%



**Figure 19: Improvement in participants' skills to clearly define personal development goals**

The self-reported improvement in effective communication skills is in any case a good indication of their better self-confidence when searching for a job (Figure 20). Only a small fraction of participants does not report any level of improvements in effective communication skills.



**Figure 20: Perceived improvement in effective communication skills**

In contrast, the expected correlation between problem solving skills improvement and job success is not confirmed in the respondents' assessment as shown in **Table 12**, with a low Chi-square of 10.67 for 9 degrees of freedom.

**Table 13: Improvement in problem-solving skills and job success**

Improvement of problem solving skills	Success of first post-NARYSEC job achievements				Total number
	Unsuccessful	Somewhat successful	Successful	Extremely successful	
Samee as before	43%	29%	14%	14%	14 100%
Somewhat improved	50%	17%	28%	5%	18 100%
Improved	39%	25%	33%	3%	39 100%
Greatly improved	20%	28%	28%	24%	30 100%
Total	35 35%	26 26%	28 28%	12 12%	101 100%

#### 4.4. Post-NARYSEC support for transition to sustainable employment

Currently, the strategy proposed by the framework for supporting graduates on the labour market suggests the engagement with contractors or service providers appointed by the DRDLR to absorb participants into full-time or contract work and partnering with recruitment agencies for possible placement of exiting participants in full-time or part-time employment. Also envisaged is increasing the placement of curriculum vitae of participants on job portals by engaging job portal administering agencies in order to reach prospective employers. A streamlined or coordinated post-graduation support to facilitate the transition into the job market is however still lacking. The interventions are currently informal, uncoordinated or ad hoc and rarely involve consultation with the alumni. Exit workshops are the only exception where some of the youths who have graduated are also invited. Even then, only a very limited number of them are invited. The exit workshops assist in giving the youths information about the job opportunities that exist. Presentations are also done on how to develop professional CVs, how to navigate through the interviews and other tips for the youths to successfully secure their dream jobs. The focus of these workshops, however, are for those who are about to exit the programme

The challenge is that the Department does not systematically track the whereabouts of the graduates. As such, they are not always sure of the status of these graduates. Some of the interventions that were highlighted to be done in favour of participants after their graduation, although not systematic, are instances in which NARYSEC officials link up the graduates with some recruiters in search of people with particular skills. This is however also piecemeal. For this to work, the Department needs to have a database that shows who graduated, and with what skills, and where they are. This has to be updated frequently, so that officials are able to quickly forward CVs of the unemployed graduates whenever there is a recruiter who is in search of such. What is currently happening is that the officials have to start calling whenever there is a request.

A more systematic support system that addresses the underlying challenges is necessary if the Department is to address the high levels of youth unemployment in any meaningful way. The mismatch between the acquired skills and the prevailing skills requirements cannot be addressed by more visibility of CVs if those CVs do not represent a reasonable sourcing of adequate vocational and technical skills. A mere reliance on the existing market forces is unlikely to yield any meaningful change in the staggering levels of youth unemployment.

A more effective strategy should conceive the NARYSEC skills acquisition programmes as part of a larger development planning strategy in which the skills for which the youth are trained serve as input for large scale rural development projects. For example, in conjunction with the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure Development, DRDLR can embed the NARYSEC skills development programme as an input for marshalling identified skills requirements in the deployment of large-scale CRDP projects for rural infrastructure development.

This would enable the resulting utilisation of the acquired skills to have a meaningful impact, not only on reducing unemployment, but also on optimising human capabilities and competencies for a comprehensive rural development. Although such an alignment with national development objectives is explicitly evoked in the skills development strategy (e.g. alignment with 18 Strategic Integrated Projects, NDP and Industrial Policy Action Plan), in practice the programme works as a stand-alone strategy and as a consequence, most of its graduates end up in their previous condition with only marginal skills improvement that is inadequate to enhance their local employability or labour mobility. The current alignment of the recruitment with the skills requirements of Agriparks has resulted in reducing the numbers of youth recruited into the programme rather than boosting them, in a context where poverty is increasing and where the recruited youths are but an insignificant fraction of those who need upskilling. A more integrated strategy bringing together multiple players involved in rural development planning within and outside government, with a more concrete alignment between skills acquisition and planned development projects, is more likely to reap the benefits of synergy and thus more likely increase rather than decrease the numbers of recruited youth per yearly intake.

To sum up, the NARYSEC graduates are generally not well-prepared to enter the job market. There are mismatches between skills types or levels acquired and those demanded by the market. This disadvantages them as they have to compete with other highly qualified job seekers on the market, especially considering the unfavourable high unemployment levels for youths in South Africa. There are other logistical challenges, such as the delays in the issuance of certificates, which further disadvantages the NARYSEC graduates. These challenges have resulted in the majority of the NARYSEC youths not getting employed in the skills acquired during NARYSEC. For the minority of youths who were employed, the overwhelming majority were employed in menial jobs that do not require more than their matric qualifications. Except that the youths received the stipend during the NARYSEC phase, and thus had some income flow during that period, there seems to be insignificant difference in their preparedness for the job market before and after the programme. As a result,

many feel that the time being spent in NARYSEC was not worth their while. Of course, it should be noted that the high unemployment problems in South Africa is a national issue, which will require structural problems to be addressed. Even then, the skills aspect also has to be addressed to lift the NARYSEC participants to a level where they become employable.

## Section 5: Further Education and Training: Beyond Learnership

### 5.1 Transition Path Scope

The NARYSEC Exit Strategy Framework draft document provides the aim for the further education and training exit path as being “intended to ensure that participants receive a recognised further qualification which they can utilise to chart their way for their chosen career path, whether it be employment or SMME development”.

Besides advocating for the availing of special bursaries, scholarships and loans by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform to learners who excel academically during the programme, the plan around this transitional path also includes taking advantage of funding that is made available by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), particularly through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) at universities and Technical and Vocational Training (TVET) colleges. The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform also envisages that this route should be supported through the mobilisation of such key stakeholders as the private sector, other government departments and international partners towards the availing of resources and exploration of opportunities for exchange programmes. Through this path selected NARYSEC participants can gain access to further training and exposure at local and/or international institutions with the goal of enhancing their qualifications and expertise in any of the fields related to the mandate of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform.

As articulated in the NARYSEC Exit Strategy Framework draft document, the NARYSEC Skills Directorate is responsible for spearheading the further education and training exit route, and this should be undertaken through a number of activities, which include: (a) ensuring the incorporation of discussion around the further education and training exit route in the induction phase of the programme, (b) identifying opportunities and resources for further education and training such as bursaries, scholarships, loans, NSFAS and learnerships, and (d) referring participants to Universities, TVET colleges and local municipality youth desks for access to such facilities as computers, scanners and emails for application purposes.

### 5.2. Prioritisation: conceptual, policy and implementation fit of further education

Whereas the further education and training exit route has received increased attention in recent years, it appears that at conception the NARYSEC programme was primarily focused on enterprise development and labour market entry. This is clearly apparent in the four initial stated strategic

outcomes of the programme, which include (a) decline in the level of youth unemployment in rural areas, (b) increased literacy and skills amongst participants who successfully complete the programme (c) increased disposable income to participants as a result of employment and entrepreneurial opportunities and (d) decreased dependency on social grants and transfers from family members working in urban areas.

Whilst 'training youth through further education and training' comes up and is explicitly stated in NARYSEC's specific objectives, it appears this was not clearly built into the actual initial conceptualisation of the programme. A closer look at the structuring of the programme and the components that constitute different programme phases shows a clear orientation towards labour market and enterprise development routes. This has resulted in a structure in which only a limited number of NARYSEC learners make the transition to further education and training. One of the limiting factors is that the majority of learner courses that are offered during the skills development phase of the programme, for instance, are occupational qualifications, with a heavy leaning towards practical rather than theoretical aspects. At the policy level, NARYSEC is a core sub-programme of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP), whose major strategic thrust is job creation mainly through enterprise development.

The qualifications are therefore mostly workplace learning qualifications rather than tailored for further education and training. Moreover, the NARYSEC Booklet of 2013 also gives the impression that the programme envisions only two exit pathways: indeed, the options offered during the second community service phase, which comes after the skills development phase, are workplace application deployment (which links to the labour market exit route) and taking the route of a job creator (which links to the enterprise development exit pathway).

The booklet, and by extension the programme, is silent on the further education and training pathway in as far as this last community service phase is concerned. establishment of village industries. From that perspective, the primary policy concerns for NARYSEC, therefore, have tended to centre around the facilitation of employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for participants rather than pushing them towards the further education and training exit route. This inference is based on evidence gathered during the fieldwork process of this Exit Strategy review exercise.

Most NARYSEC officials interviewed across the country's nine provinces emphasised that, over the course of programme implementation, they primarily encourage programme participants to start

their own business ventures once they finish, and specifically to form co-operatives. The majority of key informants interviewed, however, noted that of the three envisaged NARYSEC exit routes, most graduates have ended up taking the labour market path, though not into jobs linked to skills that they would have acquired in the NARYSEC programme.

This was corroborated by data from the questionnaire survey administered to exited participants. It was unanimous across all provinces though, that a huge majority of NARYSEC graduates have failed to break into any of the three routes and have subsequently found themselves with nothing to do. As for the further education and training route, both key informants and exited participants interviewed were clear that those who undertake this path are in the minority, when compared with the other two exit routes. In as far as the conceptualisation, policy basis and implementation of the NARYSEC programme therefore, it is clear that the further education and training exit route has not been highly prioritised, which is, therefore, not a coincidence that very few NARYSEC graduates have (successfully) taken that path. Many rural youths who are recruited into the NARYSEC programme, although a minority have talents and capabilities that are not necessarily revealed in the skills training for workplace and business venture creation. Their talents may not necessarily find expression in the offered programmes, but has also not found a way in the higher education and training because of the often disadvantaged family environment from which most NARYSEC youth are recruited. Specific attention and support is necessary to identify those talented young people from disadvantaged families and help them bloom.

### **5.3. How well prepared are graduates prepared to succeed in this pathway?**

As noted earlier in Section 5.1, the NARYSEC Skills Directorate is responsible for spearheading the preparation of participants into the further education and training exit pathway

Preparatory processes should include inviting relevant stakeholders linked to this exit route, such as the DHET, TVET colleges and institutions of higher learning to speak to participants during the induction phase at the beginning of the programme, as well as in exit workshops at the end – sensitising those who would like to pursue this route on the available opportunities and resources that they may utilise, as well as key requirements they have to meet in order to be able to succeed in following that path. The Directorate is also mandated for taking the lead in identifying and arranging bursaries, scholarships, loans, learnerships and exchange programmes for deserving NARYSEC participants as well as arranging the necessary facilities, resources and advice for near-exiting participants who wish to further their education and training. Both key informants and (near-exiting

and exited) participants interviewed noted that various relevant stakeholders who appraise participants of the opportunities around the transition to further education and training are indeed invited during the induction phase of the programme. It was apparent, however, that only a few provinces, particularly Western Cape and Mpumalanga, have managed to consistently conduct such exit workshops at the end for near-exiting participants – where these stakeholders (and others who provide information on opportunities around the other two exit routes) come back to appraise and remind those who are close to graduating of available and potential opportunities that they may seek to take advantage of. Three main issues, which appear to hamper the preparedness of NARYSEC participants who would wish to pursue the further education and training route, came up during the fieldwork exercise. Firstly, whilst the Exit Strategy Framework draft document states that opportunities (i.e. bursaries, scholarships, NSFAS, loans, learnerships, exchange programmes) should be actively sought by the Department and availed to ‘deserving’ and/or excelling participants, this appears not to be concretely built into the programme.

From interviews conducted with near-exiting and exited participants, we have not come across anyone who has benefitted from this arrangement, and among those who have managed to pursue the further education and training route, very few, across all provinces, indicated that they had received advice and/or assistance to enter into and thrive in that path by NARYSEC officials. Secondly, the majority of key informants we interviewed were of the view that the qualification levels of NARYSEC learnerships were considerably low and could therefore not be considered as a concrete starting point of entry into enrolling for such higher qualifications as a university degree programme for example. An official at one of the TVET colleges that train NARYSEC participants in KwaZulu Natal province, for instance, noted that:

*“if (these learners) have to go to university...they will have to start from scratch”*

This was in line with the following response from a NARYSEC official in Western Cape Province who had been asked on the status of NARYSEC graduates who had undertaken the further education and training route:

*“There are some at the University of Western Cape, and some (have)... gone to TVET colleges. [You] find that what they are doing is not related to what they were trained for in NARYSEC. Maybe they are now pursuing their first love of whatever they wanted to study...”*

Similar to issues within the labour market route, the last main issue that came up as a challenge hindering the preparedness of NARYSEC participants wanting to pursue the further education and training route is the problem of certification as expressed by numerous respondents in all provinces. There were concerns around delays in the issuing of accredited certificates to NARYSEC graduates across all provinces. It was noted that some graduates, even those from the 2010 intake cohort, had not received their skills training certificates yet. As one NARYSEC official in KwaZulu Natal province noted,

*“There is a long delay by the different SETAs (in issuing certificates). We do have youth who have long exited the programme (but)...the main issue (is that they) do not have anything tangible to show that they completed the programme.”*

Delays in the issuing of certificates therefore becomes a huge challenge if a graduate wishes to apply for further education and training along similar lines of the NARYSEC skills training undertaken, as the NARYSEC certificate will almost always be needed as proof of initial qualification.

#### **5.4. Post-NARYSEC support and facilitation for connecting to further education and training**

For the further education transition path, support is minimal for participants who are interested in pursuing it during the programme, and, from evidence gathered through key informant interviews and participant surveys, no meaningful post-NARYSEC support is currently available for those who have already taken this exit route. As noted by most NARYSEC officials across the 9 provinces, the main factor which constrains ability to devote attention to those who have exited the programme, is the issue of understaffing. This affects not only the further education and training exit route, but is valid for all graduates in general.

Commenting on the amount of work that has to be covered and the staff that is there, a NARYSEC official in Free State province for example had the following to say:

*“It’s 5 districts, ideally we would want to have a coordinator in each and every district but that is not the case. You have only 3 coordinators in the districts and they are supposed to do your monitoring and all those tasks, now what do you do with other two districts that don’t have an assistant director, you have to stretch these three and remember in their performance agreement they are talking only about their area, now anything that you want them to do would be additional and extra, so for me that has been a kind of a challenge...”*

As one NARYSEC official in North West province also pointed out, they are always under pressure to focus on making sure that the different cohorts coming in and already in the programme are progressing smoothly.

Those exiting therefore tend to fall off their radar as soon as they complete the programme. As one NARYSEC official in North West province also pointed out, they are always under pressure to focus on making sure that the different cohorts coming in and already in the programme are progressing smoothly. Those exiting therefore tend to fall off their radar as soon as they complete the programme.

## Section 6: Reflections on the alignment between the final community service phase and the transition paths

The second community service -which comes just before learners exit the programme, is an important phase in preparing the NARYSEC participants for life after exiting the programme. This phase occurs immediately after the completion of the skills development phase. It is the phase in which NARYSEC learners put to practice the skills that they developed throughout the preceding phases and act as agents of change in their respective communities. The idea is that the NARYSEC graduates give back to their communities through their acquired skills while gaining invaluable experience and networks that will help them after programme completion.

Graduates have thus largely had to take a lead in securing relevant organisations in order to be able to give back to their communities, even though with the help of the coordinators. The monitoring of this phase, while improving by now, is generally not very strict. According to the coordinators, there were instances where the graduate can just decide not to do any community service and yet receive the stipend while at home.

Reportedly, graduates also do not think of this community service phase as a chance for them to build relationships or impress their supervisors with a view of getting employed in some of the organisations they are attached to. An example was given in the Eastern Cape, where a private player took 25 construction/ building graduates with the aim of employing all of them at the end of the phase. However, he ended up releasing more than 50% of these graduates, and cited their negative attitudes and poor work culture as the main reason for his decision.

In conclusion, the implementation of the community service phase does not adequately serve its purpose, which is to harness the skills of the graduates for community benefit while the graduates get experience in preparation of life after exit. The challenge is that the department does not have enough links with other local players where the graduates can participate during the community service phase. While having graduates participating in some local charity or faith based organisations, for example, may ease the labour shortages of these organisations, and helps the department to tick some boxes, it is not an efficient allocation of labour as most of these graduates are qualified in skills hardly relevant for the work these organisations are doing. This points to the need of a carefully thought process, where the recruitment process is informed by the demands of labour or skills in the local areas.

## Section 7: Conclusions, Recommendations & SOP for ‘Transition Path’

In order to streamline the processes after participation in this capability building programme and align it with the desired outcomes as stipulated in the NARYSEC objectives and CRDP vision, a number of conceptual-, structural- and implementation- level recommendations are advanced, including specific recommendations around Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). The following subsections expand on these recommendations.

### 7.1. Conceptual-level recommendations

#### (a) Align the NARYSEC skills development programme with the absorptive capacity and skills biased technological change in rural socio-economic landscapes.

A strong alignment of the Transitional Path Strategy with the absorptive capacity and skills-biased technological change in rural socio-economic landscapes is essential. The corresponding skills development/capability building choices must be based on the broader national development vision and anchored in local development planning as part of a broader set of absorptive capacity to be deployed to achieve a structural transformation. The NARYSEC programme was born as a government intervention to bridge the skills gap, with the stated objective of providing disadvantaged rural youth with skills that they required in order to be better prepared to access the jobs requiring those skills or use the acquired skills to create their own businesses for self-employment. As such, NARYSEC should be seen in the context of neoclassical economic theory as a necessary state intervention to correct (labour) market failure. The problems of inadequacy in the ‘Exit Strategy’ are mostly due to an incomplete identification of the market failure, which has been simply assumed to be as such without a thorough analysis of the underlying dynamics. The fact that most NARYSEC graduates return to their pre-NARYSEC unemployment status despite having acquired the skills foreseen in the programme, is a consequence of this incomplete identification of market failure and the assumptions made as a result.

From the exchanges the research team members had with various key informants, it appears that many discussions concerning the NARYSEC ‘Exit Strategy’ tend to focus on addressing emerging operational and procedural issues related to implementation. It is however important to keep in mind that operations/procedures are tools of a strategy, not the strategy itself. Strategy should be seen as being even above policy: NARYSEC policy should serve for the success of its strategy. The lack of alignment between various operations and the stated objectives is obviously a major factor explaining the abysmal gap between the desired economic participation of youth post-exit and the

observed massive relapse into poverty and joblessness. The Department must think beyond the existing labour market and enterprises to orient skills acquisition and multi-faceted capability building towards future labour market scenarios, not just the immediate but distant future. In a voluntarist (developmental state) approach to the problem of skills mismatch, the skills required for strategic production would have been carefully identified and the programme would have been designed with the view to develop the capabilities necessary to achieve the desired outcomes. This means that the programme's success would thus have to be evaluated on how well it bridged the skills gaps and solved the unemployment problem, rather than on how many young people have gone through the training.

**(b) Re-focus the strategic approach and practical implementation of NARYSEC around the conception of 'Transition Path' rather than 'Exit'. This means replacing all references to 'Exit Strategy' with 'Transition Path Strategy'.**

It is of particular importance to rethink the meaning and use of "Exit" in capability enhancement interventions as well as the interpretations and the mind-set it fosters in NARYSEC strategic thinking. As a publicly-funded skill development programme which aims to bolster the transition from structural youth unemployment to participation in economic activities, the NARYSEC strategy should embrace the notion of 'Transition Paths' rather than "Exit". Rather than being a discussion on semantics, this calls for a reorientation of strategic conceptualisation, which is crucial, as it directly touches on the reconfiguration of the boundaries of the strategy and the respective responsibilities of its actors. The use of the notion of "exit" to refer to the pathways into economic activities after the completion of the skills development phase, gives the impression that the programme is only designed as an alternative route for a light form of technical/vocational upskilling, and therefore that graduates of this upskilling are "out" (=exeunt), on their own again, for finding a job or setting up their business for those who dare do so.

"Exit Strategy" as currently undertaken by the DRDLR, should be devised as a comprehensive [tactical, operational, procedural and logistic] approach that must enable the DRDLR to reach the stated objectives suggested in the NARYSEC policy review of June 2017, of developing youth with multi-disciplinary skills through civic education and ensuring that the exiting/exited youth can participate [in a significant way] in the mainstream of the economy. The existing formulation in the 2015 NARYSEC policy document stipulates that the Department will provide support to exited participants within two years after completing the skills training programme. In practice, in many geographical locations no tracking system has been put in place to keep contact with exited participants and provide them with this needed support. In order to honour this commitment of

continued support at least two years after graduation, the conceptualisation of these boundaries of support ought to revisit the semantic implied by the term “exit” in order to systematise the support to graduates who should no longer be considered as already being out. NARYSEC should seek to integrate the post-skills development phases more closely in its operational mandates since its very conception and design were meant as an intervention to facilitate movement (like a ladder, escalator or elevator) into sustainable economic activities beyond involvement in programmatic activities rather than simply being an alternative passage for skills acquisition. This reflection is the more important as NARYSEC was designed and implemented without any proper exit strategy as admitted by the DRDLR itself in its exit strategy framework and various interviews with NARYSEC provincial coordinators. The inexistence of such a strategy can be closely linked to the perspective that those who have completed the skills training have “exited” = gone out, and are therefore no longer covered by the mandate. Shifting to the notion of ‘transitional pathways’ will therefore directly promote strategic thinking and focus around facilitating and supporting the full transition of NARYSEC participants into appropriate envisaged pathways after they have graduated.

## 7.2. Structural-level recommendations

### (a) Restructure the programme in favour of a dual-track focus on targeted youth.

The recruitment of NARYSEC participants should be designed along a dual-track system. The idea is to move away from targeting recruits with the express aim of simply satisfying the numbers required for a particular cohort, but laying emphasis on the quality of recruits and the adequacy of the skills being offered on the programme with regards to the aspirations and the capacity of the recruits. The dual-track system suggested can be sub-divided as follows:

- Track 1: Unemployed G12 to be recruited into bridging learnerships for full-time FET and Higher Education
- Track 2: Unemployed college and university graduates – advanced and intensive skills development for labour market readiness or enterprise development

By structuring the targeting this way, it would be possible to reduce the exposure to NARYSEC capacity development interventions to 12 months, which can also reduce costs considerably.

**(b) Refine the psychosocial and life-skills interventions towards the provision of a diverse and fluid range of core capabilities to easily transition into carefully planned career pathways.**

In this study, we observed that psycho-social skills play a primordial role not only in shaping the attitude towards career success but also in ensuring the sustainability of this success in enterprise development and in employment. It is therefore recommended that the DRDLR refine the psychosocial and life-skills development interventions in order to make them more closely aligned with the career choices of participants. The existing military training is a necessary but insufficient intervention for character building. A diverse and fluid range of psychosocial and life-skills must be constructed to ensure a stronger preparedness of participants to the challenges of transitioning into their respective future careers. Consult the right counterparts at the Department of Social Development and Department of Higher Education and Training for guidance in his domain.

**(c) Upgrade the technical and vocational skills development components to higher-end skills demanded in local, regional and local economies that are changing fast.**

The challenges of the current sluggish labour market and business environment require an upgrade of the existing technical and vocational skills targeting to higher-end skills demanded in rapidly changing local, regional and national economies in order to prepare the youths who finish the programme for the fierce competition coming from various technical educational institutions. In the same vein, an immediate imperative is to reflect on the adequacy of the current qualification levels being offered. In essence, in line with the dual-track recruitment recommendation, the level of NARYSEC learnerships should be elevated beyond the current NQ Level 4, so as to appeal to such institutions of higher learning as universities for those who want to pursue the further education and training transitional pathway.

**(d) Urgently appointment a qualified 'Transition Path Manager' in each province and a National Director.**

This is an immediate imperative. The transitional path managers' main responsibility will be to assist those who have reached the near-completion phase of the programme for the next steps in their career advancement. In addition, the NARYSEC Unit should be capacitated, namely by hiring more staff, so as to deal with the problem of staff shortage which currently results in such challenges as lack of post-NARYSEC support for NARYSEC graduates.

### 7.3. Implementation-level recommendations

#### **(a) Actively promote the transition of NARYSEC graduates into DRDLR priority work streams.**

It is important for other branches within the DRDLR itself to systematically support the NARYSEC programme if the programme's graduates are to successfully transition into the envisaged pathways. An immediate way to actualise this support would be to promote the transition of graduates into DRDLR priority work streams. In addition, those pursuing the enterprise development pathway, for example, should be systematically supported in terms of the availing of such resources as funds, land, and advisory services through branches within the DRDLR, particularly Rural Enterprise and Industrial Development (REID), Rural Infrastructural Development (RID) as well as Land Tenure and Administration. Whilst there were cases of support from these branches in some provinces, these (cases) were fragmented and isolated. A systematic engagement of these branches towards supporting a specific percentage of NARYSEC graduates with specific resources in every province would therefore broaden opportunities of success.

#### **(b) Streamline the national NARYSEC information management system, including standardising provincial databases, to capture meaningful administrative data for programme monitoring with an eye on periodic implementation evaluations.**

A standardised and well-structured database management system is required to streamline the tracking of NARYSEC participants and to adequately ascertain their status and needs at each stage of their progression until they enter a meaningful economic activity. Such a database should contain tracking information about all relevant activities each learner engaged in since recruitment, the transitional path of her/his choice, the status of progression in past and current activities, performance during community service, type of activities being undertaken currently, support received and support required, in addition to all demographic and administrative information for each participant. This will enable NARYSEC programme implementation and programme support officials to check at a simple glance what the status of the youth under their responsibility is, and to identify the required action for furthering the desired outcomes of the overall strategy. A standardised and well-structured information management system will also be a good basis and valuable for systematic programme monitoring with an eye on periodic implementation evaluations. National and provincial data capture on programme performance will require a password protected database with useful information cells/fields.

#### **(c) Institutionalise standardised transition path orientation workshops in all provinces and timely provision of certificates to NARYSEC graduates.**

Standardised and consistent transition path orientation workshops should be organised at the end of the second community service phase in all provinces, whereby near-exiting participants are appraised on information around their desired transitional paths (just as at the beginning during the induction phase) and provided with helpful information that facilitates their transition to the economic activity of their choice in their community or wherever they choose to start it. To ease the constraints caused by delays in certification of acquired skills of NARYSEC graduates, certificates should be prepared timely and issued to all participants at the time they complete their skills training programme. This would particularly enable those who want to pursue the further education and training route as well as the labour market route to transition into those paths without delay.

Along with these recommendations, standard operating procedure aimed to increase the coherence between the practices of the suggested configuration and the realisation of the recommended structure are suggested in the following table:

**Table 14: Suggested Standard Operating Procedure for NARYSEC Transition Path to Sustainable Socio-Economic Activities**

MILESTONE - PER INTERVENTION STEP	OPERATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MILESTONES	DRIVING AGENTS	TIMEFRAMES/DURATION/FREQUENCY
<b>MODIFY/STREAMLINE NARYSEC ADMIN ARRANGEMENTS</b>			
1. Transition Path Manager	Draft Job Specifications/Duties for Transition Path Manager (TPM)- Province	National Office; Provincial Director	HIGH PRIORITY/3-6 months
	Appoint Suitably Qualified Transition Path Manager (Director/Facilitator) - Province		HIGH PRIORITY/3-6 months
	Manage Multi-Layered Social Media Network with NARYSEC Participants (Stratify: Cohort; Dual-Track)	Transition Path Manager	HIGH PRIORITY/3-6 months
	Report to Provincial Director and National Office	Transition Path Manager	Weekly/Monthly
2. Maintain Information Management System	Create Customised and Comprehensive Admin Info Management System [password protected]	National Office- M&E; Provincial Director; Transition Path Manager	HIGH PRIORITY/3-6 months
2.1. NARYSEC Participants/Beneficiaries	Template Modification: Incorporate Useful Indicators for Final Community Service Phase and Post-Capability Building Interactions	National Office- M&E; Provincial Director; Transition Path Manager	HIGH PRIORITY: Quarterly/Upon Signing of Contract
	Design and Institutionalise Customised Electronic Database for Participants – Template		Quarterly Update
	Capture Participant's Profile & Aspirational Socio-Economic Path		Quarterly Update
	Register via NARYSEC Web Portal & Multi-Layered Social Media Network (Cohort; Dual-Track)		Quarterly Update

MILESTONE - PER INTERVENTION STEP	OPERATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MILESTONES	DRIVING AGENTS	TIMEFRAMES/DURATION/FREQUENCY
<b>MODIFY/STREAMLINE NARYSEC ADMIN ARRANGEMENTS</b>			
2.2. DRDLR Stakeholders	Consult on & Monitor Capacity Needs/Demands	National Office- M&E; Provincial Director; Transition Path Manager	HIGH PRIORITY: Quarterly Update
	Identify Sustainable Socio-Economic Initiatives for NARYSEC Graduates		Yearly/ March-April
2.3. Other Government Stakeholders (Include Municipalities)	Consult on & Monitor Capacity Needs/Demands	Transition Path Manager; Provincial Director; Skills/Youth Development Director	HIGH PRIORITY: Quarterly Update
	Identify Sustainable Socio-Economic Initiatives for NARYSEC Graduates		Yearly/ March-April
2.4. Private Sector Stakeholders	Sectoral Profile Database of Enterprises (Local/Regional)	Transition Path Manager; Provincial Director; Skills/Youth Development Director	HIGH PRIORITY: Quarterly Update
	Consult on & Monitor Capacity Needs/Demands		Monthly

Identify Sustainable Socio-Economic Initiatives for NARYSEC  
Graduates

Monthly

MILESTONE - PER INTERVENTION STEP	OPERATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MILESTONES	DRIVING AGENTS	TIMEFRAMES/DURATION/FREQUENCY
<b>MODIFY/STREAMLINE NARYSEC ADMIN ARRANGEMENTS</b>			
2.5. FET/ Higher Education Institutions	Post-High School Education, Training and Skills Development Trends  Identify appropriate Diploma & Degree Programmes for Graduates & Facilitate networking with potential funders	Transition Path Manager; Provincial Director; Skills/Youth Development Director	HIGH PRIORITY: Quarterly Update  Yearly [3-4 Months Search & Apply]
<b>RECRUITMENT PHASE</b>	Verify Recruit's Profile & Aspirational Socio-Economic Path (TEMPLATE)		HIGH PRIORITY: Quarterly Update
	Participant Registers on NARYSEC Web Portal & Multi-Layered Social Media Network (Cohort; Dual-Track)	Transition Path Manager; Provincial Director; Skills/Youth Development Director	Quarterly Update
	<i>Transition Path Orientation Session - Provincial</i>		Yearly
	Track 1 Recruits: Engage with Appropriate Career Coaches; Psycho-Social & Life Coaches		
	Track 2 Recruits: Advanced Engagements with Professional Career Coaches; Psycho-Social & Life Coaches		

<b>CAPABILITY BUILDING ACTIONS [SKILLS TRAINING]</b>	Verify Participant's enrolment status (TEMPLATE, Stakeholder Register, Customised Web Portal & Multi-Layered Social Media Network)	Transition Path Manager; Provincial Director; Skills/Youth Development Director	HIGH PRIORITY: 2 Weeks - 1 Month Updates
	Periodic Training Centre Visits (Face-to-face sessions with participants)		Quarterly
	Systematise Implementation/Performance Assessment		Yearly
	Participants Assess Usefulness of Capability Building Activities		Yearly
	Capture and Analyse Feedback		Yearly
	Implement Performance Improvement Recommendations (Priorities)		Yearly
	<i>Transition Path Workshops Per Province</i>		Quarterly
	Track 1 Participants: FET/H-EDUC Stakeholders; Engage with Appropriate Career Coaches; Psycho-Social & Life Coaches		
	Track 2 Participants: Enterprise Representatives; Industry Associations; Advanced Engagements with Professional Career Coaches; Psycho-Social & Life Coaches		

<b>FINAL COMMUNITY SERVICE PHASE</b>	Monitor Participant's Community Services Assignments/Engagements (TEMPLATE, Customised Web Portal & Multi-Layered Social Media Network)	Transition Path Manager; Provincial Director; Skills/Youth Development Director	HIGH PRIORITY: 2 Weeks - 1 Month Updates
	Periodic Community Services Site Visits (Face-to-face interviews optional)		HIGH PRIORITY: 2 Weeks - 1 Month Updates
	<i>Track 2 Transition Path Workshops Per Province</i>		Yearly
	Track 2 Participants: Enterprise Representatives; Industry Associations; Advanced Engagements with Professional Career Coaches; Psycho-Social & Life Coaches		
	Facilitate Selection into "Post-NARYSEC" Socio-Economic Initiatives		Yearly
<b>POST-CAPABILITY BUILDING INTERACTIONS</b>	Facilitate Uptake of Sustainable Socio-Economic Initiatives "post-NARYSEC"	Transition Path Manager	HIGH PRIORITY: Yearly
	Monitor Facilitated & Pro-Active Engagements with External Stakeholders		HIGH PRIORITY: Monthly
	Maintain Database of NARYSEC Alumni Socio-Economic Engagements (TEMPLATE, Updated Contact Info, Customised Web Portal & Multi-Layered Social Media Network)		Quarterly (Or whenever substantial info changes)

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## APPENDIX A: PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO CLIENT

### INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

As per its universal definition, the labour force includes all people aged between 15 and 65 years who are able to work. This potential workforce, by definition, excludes children and pensioners. South African youth, officially defined as a subset of the population in the 14-35 years age cohort (see NYDA policies), make up at least 40% of the nation's labour force. However, while the country's average rate of unemployment continues to fluctuate in the 25%-30% range (using the narrow definition of unemployment), the average unemployment rate among youth hovers around 40% and for those in the 20-24 age category this rate is approaching 55% according to recent labour force surveys.

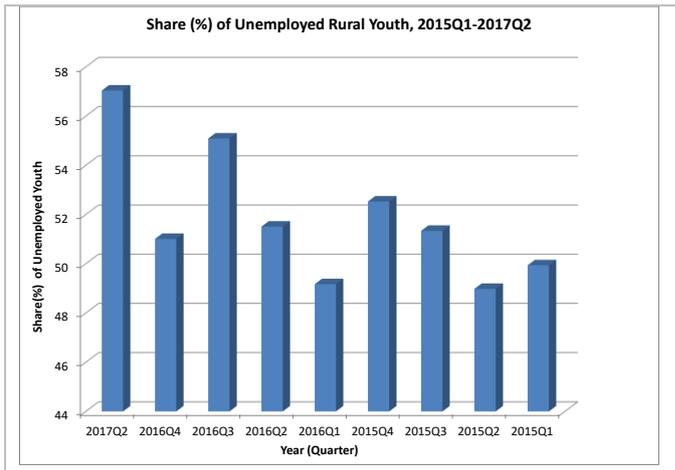
Looking at youth unemployment through a spatial lens reveals that, on average, the rate is even higher in rural areas albeit that a smaller number working age youth is jobless in rural areas. What this spatial comparison in Table 1 illustrates is that since the first quarter of 2015 there has been a marginal increase in the share of unemployed rural youth in this subgroup of the unemployed. This observation merits a fine-grained investigation into the driving forces behind the absolute and relative share of unemployed rural youth but also to trace out the implications for options to transition them into sustainable employment.

**Table A.1: Headcounts and shares of unemployed youth (15-34 age cohort), 2015Q1-2017Q2**

Year(Quarter)	Rural		National	
	N	%(Share)	N	%(Share)
2017Q2	1 040 922	42.83	3 951 753	39.19
2016Q4	944 634	38.75	3 701 298	37.06
2016Q3	962 644	41	3 816 021	38.25
2016Q2	900 643	39.42	3 635 890	37.52
2016Q1	841 516	36.2	3 748 022	37.69
2015Q4	840 319	36.97	3 411 916	34.87
2015Q3	872 635	36.91	3 537 419	35.77
2015Q2	830 612	36.94	3 454 774	35.47
2015Q1	903 709	38.94	3 645 724	36.88

Source: StatSA (Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Various Years)

The following graph zooms in on the rate of unemployment among a subset of rural youth aged between 20 and 24 years. This age cohort is significant because it includes a substantial share of those who have reached Grade 12 and might have qualified for post- high school education and training yet find themselves unemployed.



Addressing South Africa’s extraordinary high rate of youth unemployment is a longstanding policy priority, as underscored in National Development Plan – Vision 2030 (NDP 2030) imperatives and government’s strategic outcomes. In response to the country’s large scale youth unemployment, various sectoral and spatial policies and programmes promote the participation of youth in the economy after completion of their schooling, particularly the immediate post-Grade 12 cohort. The resulting policies acknowledge that no one-size-fits-all solution exists for transitioning unemployed youth into productive and sustainable jobs. Diverse intervention frameworks exist yet almost all typically target skills development and set out to foster work place experience to ease entry into the labour market or entrepreneurial ventures.

Turning to the design of these state-driven programmes the prevalent practice is to copy the rules of ‘public works’ schemes in which eligible participants benefit from temporary employment as they earn income and workplace experience. The key assumption and point of departure of interventions grounded on public works models is that short-term employment in a government youth development scheme should increase the chances of participants to be absorbed into the economy on a long-term basis after exiting the

programme. Furthermore, policies invariably acknowledge that multifaceted and well-coordinated interventions are vital for finding lasting solutions to youth unemployment.

The National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC) is the flagship youth development intervention of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR). Since its inception in 2010, NARYSEC has targeted the recruitment of unemployed youth in resource-poor rural districts<sup>2</sup> to equip them with the necessary skills that can be ploughed back into various community development projects. Recruitment is premised on a basic gender equity principle whereby 50% of all participants must be young women. To date, this phased learning programme has included household and community profiling as well as fit-for-purpose short courses. Exposure to this multipurpose skills development intervention may also lead to deployment of qualifying participants within DRDLR programmes.

Following a change in the NARYSEC Policy, eligible participants could be enrolled for a maximum of 24 months compared with 48 months as in the initial policy. Even under the 24 month programme it is not unusual for an enrollee to 'exit' earlier for various reasons.

The NARYSEC Programme has, to date, enrolled 17 393 youth since its inception in September 2010 and 11 475 have exited the programme for various reasons which include completing their skills programme, resignation, death, and termination due to absconding from training. The DRDLR, through its **Branch: Rural Infrastructure Development**, is in the process of finalising its NARYSEC Exit Strategy and needs an evidence-based review of 'the how and why of exit' options, among other experiences, to inform this Strategy. In this concept note, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) proposes an approach and methodology to complete the 'Review' in support of the *NARYSEC Exit Strategy*.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

The rationale for NARYSEC stems from the imperatives to overcome high unemployment among youth residing in rural areas through redeployment in strategic rural development priorities. It is a multipurpose youth development intervention and, as such, participants are enrolled in it temporarily with the aim of equipping them with critical capabilities for sustainable economic activities when they exit the programme. The Department has identified the need to formalise and streamline its support for enrollees as they prepare to

leave the programme. In this context it is crucial to understand how well the NARYSEC learning exposure prepares participants for productive and sustainable economic activities when they leave the programme.

Intimately related to this knowledge gap are the following questions:

- What are the determinants of the average length of enrolment in NARYSEC?
- What factors influence the decisions of NARYSEC participants to leave the programme?
- How can Standard Operating Procedures (and relevant administrative protocols) of NARYSEC exit be enhanced to support enrolees leaving the programme?
- What are the standout lessons from best practice examples of NARYSEC exit?
- How adequate are the skills acquired through NARYSEC training with respect to existing and potential skills requirements in the region (i.e. in function of existing skills gap in the job market and the required skills in the NDP30-based development projects planned in their regions)?
- How mobile are the enrolled after they exit NARYSEC in transferring acquired skills across industries and geographic areas?

### **PURPOSE, SCOPE & OBJECTIVES**

As part of its systems review, the **Branch: Rural Infrastructure Development** is looking at sustainable youth employment options for NARYSEC enrolees who are preparing to leave the programme (termed the Exit strategy in the NARYSEC policy). The main purpose of this *Review for the NARYSEC Exit Strategy* is to develop an evidenced-based understanding of the early-stage experiences of NARYSEC participants after their enrolment in the programme. A synthesis of the findings of the *Review*, derived from available administrative information and easily accessible but reliable information gathered from a sample of near-completion and past enrolees, must be incorporated into finalisation of the *NARYSEC Exit Strategy*.

Project specific objectives:

- Construct a customised analysis frame to conduct a Review of evidence-based support to inform the completion of the NARYSEC Exit Strategy;
- Understand variations in the relative and absolute scales of rural youth unemployment;
- Examine the demographic and socio-economic (education, skills, occupation, job experiences, etc.) profiles of unemployed rural youth recruited into the NARYSEC;
- Document in a systematic manner the type of exit strategies that NARYSEC youth pursue when they leave the programme;
- Explore options for strengthening the coordinated and integrated implementation of employment and enterprise development schemes targeting rural youth;
- Investigate and diagnose how well high-intensity rural youth employment and enterprise development schemes have been structured and implemented;

The draft *NARYSEC Exit Strategy* conceptualises 3 exit routes namely further education and training options, job opportunities and business ventures. Some exited participants might not be absorbed into any of these exit routes when they graduate from NARYSEC. This makes up a cluster of unemployed rural youth post-exit and it is important to explore this phenomenon or ‘unintended outcome’. Determinants of whether NARYSEC participants exit along a particular pathway depend upon many factors. Analysis of the exit route thus hinges upon complex mechanisms and dynamics, whether latent or observable, along each path. Probing these mechanisms and dynamics, as illustrated in the table below, is critical to help with a more systematic approach to and analysis of what transpires along exit paths.

It is also crucial to understand the extent to which the revised NARYSEC Policy has improved the chances of rural youth leaving the programme to be absorbed into productive and sustainable economic activities.

Exit Mechanisms and Dynamics		Further Education and Training	Labour Market Entry	Enterprise Development (SMEs, Cooperatives etc.)	Unemployed post-exit
<b>Administrative Arrangements</b>	What is the (average) enrolment in NARYSEC? How has policy affected economic activities of exited participants? Have improvements managing arrangements resulted in better chances 'successful exit'?	<i>Specific Questions to be Framed</i>	<i>Specific Questions to be Framed</i>	<i>Specific Questions to be Framed</i>	<i>Specific Questions to be Framed</i>
<b>Skills Development Actions</b>	What formal and informal education and training methods optimise learning? How are skills development programmes structured and managed?	<i>Specific Questions to be Framed</i>	<i>Specific Questions to be Framed</i>	<i>Specific Questions to be Framed</i>	<i>Specific Questions to be Framed</i>
<b>Workplace Skills Acquired</b>	What critical skills and on-the-job experiences do participants acquire? How well are scheme participants (rural youth) equipped for sustainable jobs?	<i>Specific Questions to be Framed</i>	<i>Specific Questions to be Framed</i>	<i>Specific Questions to be Framed</i>	<i>Specific Questions to be Framed</i>
<b>Immediate Post-NARYSEC Activities</b>	What are the longer-term employment prospects of rural youth who have completed their participation in NARYSEC? How mobile are the enrolled after they exit NARYSEC in transferring acquired skills across industries and geographic areas?	<i>Specific Questions to be Framed</i>	<i>Specific Questions to be Framed</i>	<i>Specific Questions to be Framed</i>	<i>Specific Questions to be Framed</i>

The first task of the Review team is to construct a purposive Review framework to inform the customisation of the approach and methodology for this assignment.

## REVIEW APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Ideally, NARYSEC participants who do not drop out of the programme should move on to more sustainable and rewarding economic activities. There is a need to clearly define what 'exit' means as a necessary condition for constructing consistent indicators for measuring 'successful transitions into sustainable economic activities'. In addition to defining indicators of successful completion, it is critical to distinguish exit from those who have 'dropped out of NARYSEC', particularly former participants who did not comply with the resignation rules in the programme enrolment conditions. It is important to understand why enrollees would quit prematurely.

This Review uses a blended methodology in the sense that it generates findings with the purposeful combination of diverse sources of information and analytical techniques. It is not a 'Systematic Review' because the documented evidence on NARYSEC is too thin to support this data collection and analysis method. An eclectic and discretionary review of accessible documentation will be done (with an emphasis on policy and programme documents). Methodologically, the Review heavily leans on hybrid quantitative and qualitative methods in rapid appraisals, which is particularly suitable for research studies with a narrow scope and purpose coupled with the need to produce findings within six months.

That said, the methodology and findings of this Review can be strengthened through the selective inclusion of generic criteria (effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability) and questions used in early stage implementation evaluations. Stakeholders rely on this class of evaluations for evidence about whether there is merit in continuing an intervention or not and in what form it should possibly continue.

Usually the emphasis is on ironing out difficulties, overcoming implementation obstacles and making the case for scaling up and out.

Review versus Impact Evaluation: In considering the scope of and methodology for this project, it must be emphasised at the outset that this Review for the Exit Strategy is not a

replacement for evaluating the impact of NARYSEC. This distinction between a 'Review for' and impact evaluation deserves some clarification at this point, albeit briefly. Both the nature and duration of NARYSEC make it suitable for evaluating impacts based on actual results and outcomes or some formative evaluation to find out how its design and implementation might be improved. What our preliminary scan of the policy documents reveals is that NARYSEC is a mature intervention which is evaluable. However, upon careful consideration of the client's current needs, as explained in communiques and the TOR, a proper evaluation shall be undertaken at a later date.

### Data collection strategy

A qualitative data collection and analysis strategy is proposed. In addition to key informant interviews, and selective focus group discussions, this method also involves document collection and analysis in accordance with the evaluation dimensions and criteria explained above. Semi-structured questionnaires will be used for data collection with inputs from DRDLR (*Branch: Rural Infrastructure Development*) - especially on the contents of questionnaires. Themes and specific questions will be derived from the evaluation criteria and key questions for effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The instruments must incorporate questions to trace the evolution of the intervention over time through recall.

These will be administered in face-to-face interviews with NARYSEC Provincial Directors and other senior officials who have directly interacted with participants. Where feasible, interviews will be conducted with service providers appointed to implement capacity building programmes for NARYSEC. As noted above, the NARYSEC recruitment strategy targets unemployed youth resident in rural wards. It might however be too costly and time consuming to premise the sampling of respondents for the Review on this geo-political unit. Instead, the team proposes to purposefully select respondents per province. A maximum of 2 participants in the final stages of their enrolment and preparing to leave the programme will be interviewed per province.

Interviews with NARYSEC participants who have exited will form a core focal point of this Review as their experiences should produce a more realistic sense of experiences post exit. Past NARYSEC participants will be traced with advice from DRDLR senior officials in each district.

It is proposed that for each exit route we interview at least 1 NARYSEC ‘graduate’. In view of the limited time for the completion of this assignment, the next selection criterion is to restrict inclusion to respondents (*targeted sample of 3*) in their first post-NARYSEC economic activity as it is increasingly complicated to account for the ‘exclusive’ benefits of NARYSEC exposure for those for whom a long time have lapsed since ‘graduation’.

As an illustrative case, the following table summarises a scenario which generates a target sample of 351 past and present youth enrolled in NARYSEC with 70% of this sample comprising exited participants.

#### Targeted Sample Based on Purposeful Stratification of Districts

Respondent General Category	Respondents Per District*	Respondents Per Province	Total Sample (9 Provinces)	Share (%) of Target Sample
<b>Exited NARYSEC Participants**</b>	9	27	243	70.0%
<b>Near-Completion Phase Enrolees**</b>	4	12	108	30.0%
<b>Total (Targeted Respondents)</b>			<b>351</b>	

Notes: \*Three Districts Per Province (Exit/Quit Ratio). \*\*Assume 3 respondents per Exit Route interviewed. \*\*\*Target Participants within 1-3 months before leaving NARYSEC ('graduation').

#### DELIVERABLES AND OUTPUTS

With the skeleton Review frame of analysis, data collection and analysis activities mentioned above, this project will produce the following:

1. Construct a NARYSEC Exit Strategy Review framework and instruments for information collection: Approved format to collect information on effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability
2. Apply thematic analysis of collected info: Analysis of key dimensions of efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability based on interviews and information gathering conducted.
3. Draft version of Exit Strategy Review report (60-80 pages) for comments to project steering committee;

- Final version of the Exit Strategy Review report (60-80 pages, including an Executive Summary) taking into account feedback from the project steering committee for approval and sign-off by the project steering committee.

**TIMEFRAME: NARYSEC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND REFINEMENT OF THE NARYSEC EXIT STRATEGY**

It is expected that this *Exit Strategy Review* will be completed during a period of 20-22 working (non-consecutive) weeks from the date of appointment and the latest by *March 2018*.

REVIEW FOR EVIDENCE-BASED SUPPORT OF NARYSEC EXIT STRATEGY	Month 1				Month 2				Month 3				Month 4				Month 5			
	W1	W2	W3	W4																
<b>Research Activities, Deliverables &amp; Milestones</b>																				
<b>Preliminary, Preparatory Activities &amp; Admin</b>																				
<i>Proposal Development</i>	■																			
<i>Planning &amp; Inception Meetings</i>	■																			
<i>Document Reviews</i>	■	■																		
<i>Review Team Roundtables</i>	■			■				■				■				■				■
<b>Customised NARYSEC Exit Review Framework</b>																				
<i>Admin Date and Document Reviews</i>	■	■	■																	
<i>Synthesis Analysis Frame</i>			■	■																
<b>Instrument Development (&amp; Ethics Approval)</b>																				
<i>Develop Open-ended Instruments</i>				■	■															
<i>Share with Client</i>					■															
<i>HSRC Ethics Submission and Clearance</i>					■															

REVIEW FOR EVIDENCE-BASED SUPPORT OF NARYSECEXIT STRATEGY	Month 1				Month 2				Month 3				Month 4				Month 5			
	W1	W2	W3	W4																
<b>Research Activities, Deliverables &amp; Milestones</b>																				
<b>Data Collection (KII &amp; FGS)</b>																				
<i>Provincial Visits (ALL)</i>			■	■	■															
<i>Interviews &amp; Observe</i>					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■								
<b>Transcripts, Narrative Synthesis &amp; Presentation</b>																				
<i>Transcribe Interviews</i>											■	■	■	■						
<i>Draft Presentation (Synthesise Qualifying Information)</i>														■	■	■				
<b>NARYSEC Exit Review (Draft Report)</b>																				
<i>Write Draft Narrative Report</i>																	■	■		
<i>Circulate Draft Report for Comments</i>																	■			
<i>Document Inputs &amp; Comments for Revisions</i>																	■	■		
<b>NARYSEC Exit Review (Final Report)</b>																				
<i>Revise Draft Report (Incorporate Comments)</i>																			■	■
<i>Submit Final Report</i>																				■

### HSRC Researchers' Profiles

The Economic Performance and Development (EPD) Research Unit of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) hereby offer their professional research, capacity building and project management expertise for this purpose. Our institutional capacity and proposed core team combine extensive experience in the relevant areas covered by the RFP, rigorous research (including land restitution research) skills with strong capacity building and project management skills. The HSRC is a statutory research council specifically mandated to undertake and promote research in human and social sciences, focusing on aspects of human development and social change globally, with emphasis on

South Africa and Africa. The HSRC undertakes research studies in collaboration with counterparts and colleagues in South Africa, from other parts of Africa and beyond. The HSRC's reputation is built on the foundation of a talented group of highly qualified and experienced researchers and support staff; all based in South Africa, as well as a large portfolio of successful research projects.

The table below summarises the roles and responsibilities of the core HSRC Research Team. This is followed by a synopsis of the expertise and skills of the team.

### Roles and Responsibilities of Research Team

Name	HSRC Position	Project Specific Tasks
Prof. Ivan Turok	EPD Executive Director	HSRC Oversight and Quality Control
Dr Peter Jacobs	Research Director	Co-Principal Investigator (Project Leader); Draft & Present Inception Report; Design Research Instruments & Submit to HSRC Research Ethics Committee; Analysis of Findings, Draft & Present Final Report; Project Management
Dr Alexis Habiyaemye	Senior Research Specialist	Co-Principal Investigator (Project Leader); Draft & Present Inception Report; Design Research Instruments & Submit to HSRC Research Ethics Committee; Data Collection & Fieldwork Coordination; Analysis of Findings, Draft & Present Final Report; Project Management
Dr Mokhantso Makoae	Chief Research Specialist	Draft & Present Inception Report; Design Research Instruments & Submit to HSRC Research Ethics Committee; Data Collection & Fieldwork Coordination; Analysis of Findings, Draft & Present Final Report;
Dr Sikhulumile Sinyolo	Research Specialist	Draft & Present Inception Report; Design Research Instruments & Submit to HSRC Research Ethics Committee; Data Collection & Fieldwork Coordination; Analysis of Findings, Draft & Present Final Report;
Dr Admire Nyamwanza	Senior Research Specialist	Draft & Present Inception Report; Design Research Instruments & Submit to HSRC Research Ethics Committee; Data Collection & Fieldwork Coordination; Analysis of Findings, Draft & Present Final Report;
<b>Masters Interns</b>	Capacity Development Fieldwork	Data Collection & Fieldwork Coordination; Elementary and Supervised Data Analysis and Report Writing

**Professor Ivan Turok** is Acting Executive Director in the Economic Performance and Development Unit of the HSRC. He is Honorary Professor at the Universities of Cape Town and Glasgow and has a

PhD in Economics, MSc in Planning and BSc in Geography. Before returning to South Africa and joining the HSRC in 2010 he was Professor and Research Director of the Department of Urban Studies at Glasgow University. Professor Turok's fields of expertise include the spatial economy (regions, cities and neighbourhoods), local labour markets and economic development. His research on unemployment, regional development, city competitiveness, urban regeneration and spatial inequalities are highly cited internationally. He has published over 100 academic papers, chapters and books and has a B1 rating from the National Research Foundation. He was the principal author of the 2011 State of South African Cities Report. Other books include the State of English Cities (2006), Changing Cities: Rethinking Urban Competitiveness, Cohesion and Governance (2005), Twin Track Cities (2005), The Jobs Gap in Britain's Cities (1999) and The Coherence of EU Regional Policy (1997). Professor Turok has 30 years teaching experience in urban and regional economics, policy analysis and evaluation, local labour markets, economic development, urban regeneration and spatial planning. He has supervised 12 PhDs to successful completion and numerous Masters students.

**Peter Jacobs** is a Research Director in the Economic Performance and Development research Programme (EPD). He holds a PhD in Economics from Fordham University (New York) and a C1 research rating from the National Research Foundation (NRF). Before joining the HSRC, he was a senior lecturer in the Department of Economics at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). He also worked on land reform policy issues in the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) at UWC. His areas of research interest include: the economics of agrarian change and rural development, with special emphasis on land reform and small-scale farming, agro-food markets and food security. Dr Jacobs' publication record spans the authoring and co-authoring of more than 80 conference presentations, journal articles and book chapters on development, gender, agricultural markets, food security and pro-poor budgeting. He has recently edited a special issue of the journal *Development Southern Africa (DSA)* on *Sustainable Rural Development in South Africa*.

**Dr Alexis Habiyaremye** is a Senior Research Specialist in the Economic Performance and Development research Programme (EPD) of the Human Sciences Research Council. He holds a PhD in the economics and policy studies of technical change from the United Nations University/Maastricht University (Netherlands). Before joining HSRC, he was an assistant professor of economics and political science at Antalya International University (Turkey). He has many years of teaching experience both undergraduate and graduate students at Maastricht University as well as Antalya International University. His research interests include the role of industrialisation in sustainable employment, technological change, manufacturing productivity and export diversification,

innovation capabilities and inclusive development. Dr Habiyaemye will serve as the Project Manager and will be responsible for the meeting all procedural requirements, including submission of relevant documents and information to the entities for which this research is conducted.

**Mokhantso Makoae** is a sociologist and Chief Research Specialist in the Human and Social Development (HSD) research programme. She holds an MA in social research methods at the University of Surrey, and a PhD from the University of Cape Town. Before joining the HSRC in March 2007, she was a senior lecturer in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at the National University of Lesotho, where she taught since 1992. She has also worked on the SADC and national vulnerability assessment programmes in Lesotho as well as providing consultancy services for the FAO on HIV/AIDS, land issues and livelihoods. In 1999 she was awarded the Robert S. McNamara Fellowship on globalization, poverty, social exclusion and social capital by the World Bank Institute, Washington. Dr Makoae's publication record spans the authoring and co-authoring of conference presentations on the impact of HIV/AIDS on livelihoods, gender and household resource management and social capital; as well as policy documents, including the Vision 2020 for Lesotho. Her most recent work includes a knowledge review and gap analysis on vulnerability and social protection in Lesotho; a situational analysis of services for orphans and other vulnerable children in Lesotho; a qualitative study of South Africa's situation of the prevention of child maltreatment.

**Dr Sikhulumile Sinyolo** is a Research Specialist in the Economic Performance and Development (EPD) research programme of the Human Sciences Research Council. He holds a PhD in the Agricultural Economics from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Before joining HSRC, he worked as a rural development specialist at the Lima Rural Development Foundation in Pietermaritzburg. His research interests include the economics of grassroots innovations and entrepreneurship, rural and inclusive development, sustainable rural livelihoods, smallholder commercialisation and innovation/entrepreneurship metrics. Dr Sikhulumile has authored and co-authored several peer-reviewed journal articles and conference presentations on rural development, technology transfer and adoption, food security, social protection and welfare, smallholder irrigation and water security, rural innovation and entrepreneurship.

**Admire Nyamwanza** has a PhD in Development Policy and Management from the University of Manchester and a Masters in Sociology and Social Anthropology from the University of Zimbabwe. His research interests revolve broadly around livelihoods in developing country communities, vulnerability as well as household and community resilience. Admire has primary fieldwork

experience in Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Namibia and to a limited extent, Zambia and Mozambique where he has conducted research on livelihoods in rural communities, resilience to climate variability and change, and agricultural decision-making and climate information needs. Admire is passionate about research that makes a difference particularly around development and livelihoods in developing country contexts.

***Six HSRC Interns/Research Assistants dedicated to the Review for the NARYSEC Exit Strategy:*** As part of an effort to grow the capacity of rural skill development specialists, 2 Masters interns will be assigned to work on this project.