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MENTORING IN THE VUK'UPHILE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME

MUZIWOKUTHULA NJOKO

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public Development Management).

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ABSTRACT

Skills shortages in the construction industry is well known, to remedy the situation government as a participant in the industry has come up with programmes to mentor young people who are interested in the industry. The purpose of this study was to determine if mentorship can be relied upon to improve the skills shortages in the construction industry. The study was conducted on the Vuk'uphile public works programme. One of the main findings of the research was that formal mentoring is best suited to get the desired results. The research also established that implementing a mentorship programme has to involve all stakeholders from the onset and the target for mentorship is well defined. Mentoring is costly; as such the beneficiaries must pay for the skills gained in the programme.

DECLARATION

I declare that this report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

_____

Muziwokuthula Njoko

February, 2012.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my lovely wife Busisiwe Njoko, for all her support and encouragement. To my two children, Sinokuthula and Kuthula, I hope and believe that they will grow up hungry for knowledge that will nourish their lives and souls. Also to my mother, Gcinekile Njoko (MaRadebe) for her encouragement. To all those who encouraged and prayed for me to get this research done.

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I wish to acknowledge God, my creator, for giving me the sound mind to finish this research. It is by grace that I did not give up.

I am grateful to my supervisor, Professor Mohamed Jahed for his guidance; in him I understood the very phenomenon of mentorship I was researching on.

Special appreciation goes to the two women in my life, wife Busi and mother Gcina for the constant support; my brother Nhlakanipho for always checking on the progress of my research.

Thanks to the colleagues at National Department of Public Works who understood when I was absent doing the research, Mrs Tebogo Mashifane for editing and putting this research report in the prescribed format, words will never be enough.

The colleagues at the EPWP unit; Carmen-Joy, Thembani, Kgomotso, Ignatius, and thank you for allowing me to invade your space.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	DESCRIPTION
ASGISA	Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
CETA	Construction Education and Training Authority
CIDB	Construction Industry Development Board
DPW	Department of Public Works
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
LIC	Labour intensive construction
NQF	National Qualification Framework
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
VCLP	Vuk'uphile Contractor Learnership programme

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

Despite efforts by government to strengthen the economy, unemployment and poverty continue to undermine economic growth and development. In general, socio-economic challenges are persistent in developing countries. In South Africa, the long term effects of segregationist policies are clear, more so on the economic front. In attempting to correct the situation, South African government has implemented the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). Building public infrastructure is the best way to generate mass employment. This is according to the research that has been undertaken on the link between infrastructural development and employment generation (McCutcheon 2000, 2001). Results points to the increased number of unskilled people getting employment be it short or long term.

In October 2005, the Department of Public Works launched the Vuk'uphile Contractor Learnership programme under the EPWP, (Department of Public Works 2009). It is a joint venture between the Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA), the Department of Public Works and various public bodies. The aims of the programme are job creation, poverty alleviation and entrepreneurship development. At the core of this public works programme is the realisation that there are scarce skills in the construction industry.

The Vuk'uphile Contractor Learnership programme (VCLP) is an integral part of the EPWP whose purpose is to ensure that small, medium and micro enterprises are established to provide the infrastructural needs of public bodies. In order to do this, they are guided and mentored so that they can (a) implement projects, (b) gain skills and (c) ensure sustainability.

This research report outlines the course of action undertaken by the researcher in investigating implementation of and the role of mentorship in the VCLP. Paramount in the report are the findings on how is the VCLP being implemented and whether mentoring is achieving the stated objectives of the VCLP.

1.1 Background to the Study

The establishment of EPWP by the government is for the sole purpose of alleviating poverty through the creation of work opportunities, whilst reducing the backlog in the provision of basic infrastructure to communities. EPWP is intended to be labour intensive in the provision of basic and vital infrastructural needs that are critical to the improvement of living conditions in communities around the country. The work opportunities that stem from the EPWP are meant to benefit unemployed and unskilled youth, rural women and disabled people. The assumption is that; targeted groups will acquire practical skills and therefore be able to gain much needed work experience that can able participants to take advantage of other economic opportunities after the completion of the programme.

In South Africa, the magnitude of unemployment crisis is such that, according to the Labour Force Survey in 2005, 26.5 percent of the working population is unemployed in terms of the strict definition; and 40.5 percent in terms of the broader definition (Statistics South Africa 2005). In response to these challenges, a range of interventions have been instituted. These have been accompanied by macroeconomic policy instruments. The Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA) is one such instrument tasked with designing targeted interventions in order to address the socio-economic challenges. The then Deputy President of South Africa (2006) captured the sentiment when she said:

"...to meet our social objectives we will have to ensure that the environment and opportunities for more labour-absorbing economic activities is considerably improved. More broadly, we need to ensure that the fruits of growth are shared in such a way that poverty comes as close as possible to being eliminated, and that the severe inequalities that still plague our country are considerably reduced. Our vision of our development path is a vigorous and inclusive economy where production products and services are diverse, more value is added to our products and services, costs of production and distribution are reduced, labour is readily absorbed into sustainable employment and new businesses are encouraged to proliferate and expand."

Human capital development is critical to position South Africa as a competitive global economic participant. There is a need to improve education system, together with macroeconomic policies as this will form part of the long term interventions to address unemployment and poverty. Improved education system increases the skills level and improves the chances of a person securing employment. There are changes in the economy that reflect a shift towards technology intensive methods which no doubt requires personnel with greater skills. Thus by improving the skills of the population, employment opportunity for them is also increased. In other words, investing in skills development is intended to contribute positively to increasing economic development in the country. The White Paper on Public Works (1997) looked at the issue of skills and advised that one of the objectives of the public works programmes was to:

"provide education and training to unemployed people, especially women, youth and rural dwellers, to increase their chances of becoming self-employed or entering the formal economy".

Moreover, the National Skills Development Act (1998) also serves to improve the skills base of the country. The act aims to develop the skills of the South African

workforce and to improve the quality of life of workers and their prospects of work. In addition, the act aims to improve productivity in the workplace and the competitiveness of employers and to promote self-employment (National Skills Development Act, 1998).It is submitted here that the focus on human capital development assist in improving opportunities for the poor to enter formal markets and allow South Africans to compete on a global stage.

The EPWP is being implemented through four government departments that are responsible for a particular sector (see figure 1). In this arrangement, the infrastructure sector is managed and implemented by the Department of Public Works; the social sector by the Department of Social Development; the economic sector by the Department of Trade and Industry; and the environmental sector by the Department of Environment. The segmentation of the EPWP serves to highlight the importance of Departments working together across the spectrum. The Vuk'uphile programme in the infrastructure sector will be explained in detail.

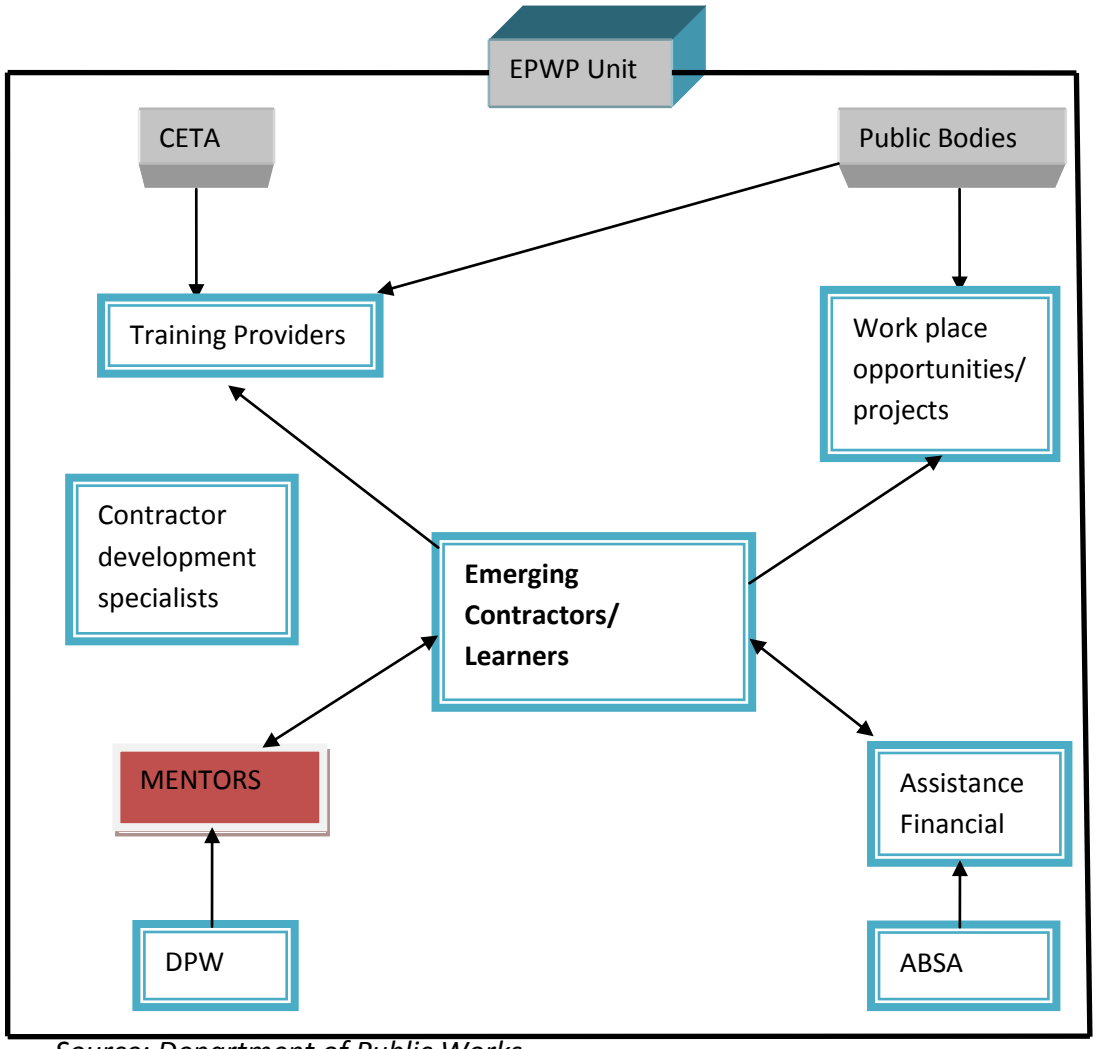
Table 1: Sectors Participating in the EPWP

Sector	Lead Department	Programme
1. Environment	Environmental Affairs	Working for Water
2. Social	Social development	Early Childhood Development
3. Economic	Trade and Industry	Number of income generating activities
4. Infrastructure	Public Works	Vuk'uphile

(adapted from the EPWP website-www.epwp.gov.za) Note:Programmes listed are flagship programmes in each sector.

The VCLP is implemented over a two year period, wherein CETA provides accredited training, the department of Public Works provides mentorship, ABSA bank provides finance and the public body provides the projects through which practical learning takes place, see figure 1 below.

Figure 1: VCLP Implementation Plan

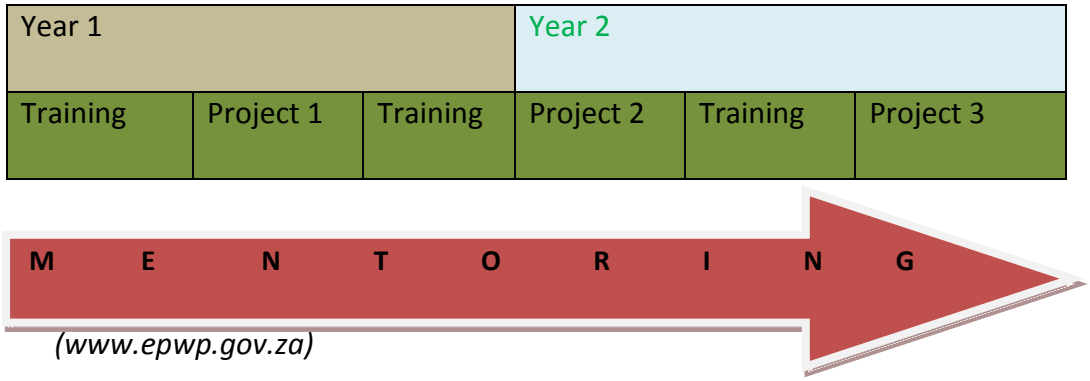


Source: Department of Public Works

The current structure of the VCLP allows participants to go through three training interventions over a two year period. Mentorship plays a critical role in this process, especially in the practical implementation of projects (Department of Public Works 2004). The assumption here is that the type and quality of training

and mentorship afforded is relevant to the market place and that the projects are of such kind as will ensure adequate learning skills. The greater goal is that the programme should lead to emerging contractors being able to compete for work in the market place such that they become integrated, in a sustainable way, to the first economy. To achieve this, effective mentorship will facilitate the transition beyond the period of training and public works contractual support .To this end, the mentorship programme plays a vital role in contributing to this process and is consistent with government's objective to draw a significant number of unemployed South Africans into productive work, in a manner that will enable them to gain skills and increase their capacity to earn income. The structure depicting the role of mentorship in the VCLP is shown in figure 2.

Figure 2: Vuk'uphile Structure



(www.epwp.gov.za)

1.2 Problem Statement

The Vuk'uphile programme uses mentors to develop skills in the construction sector. The programme seeks to achieve both job creation and entrepreneurship development. According to official documents (Department of Public Works:2004), Vuk'uphile has been developed to build capacity amongst emerging contractors to execute the increasing amount of labour intensive work

that will be part of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). There is evidence that a lot of funds have been spent on the programme. However, it has not been established whether the Vuk'uphile Programme is implemented in a way that will achieve the intended objectives. Complicating the issue further is the role of mentoring. Mentoring is the engine of the programme. However, its effectiveness has not been established. Furthermore, the effectiveness of EPWP's venture learnership programme has not been established which begs a question; is it job creation or entrepreneurship development or poverty alleviation?

1.3 Purpose Statement

The primary purpose of this study was twofold; first to establish whether mentoring as part of the programme can be relied upon to achieve the objectives of the programme. Secondly, to establish whether the implementation of the programme is geared towards the achievement of the intended objectives. The researcher will be presenting and analysing the findings and recommendations.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the researcher in attempting to shed light on the research problem as stated above:

- Can mentorship achieve the stated objectives of the Vuk'uphile programme?
- How is the Vuk'uphile programme being implemented?

1.5 Significance of the Research

Investing in people is investing in the development of South Africa. High unemployment rates hamper the country's march to become a developed economy. Scarcity of skills in the economy has propelled the government to intervene using various methods. These include skills development (as set out in the Skills Development Act of 2008) and the Extended Public Works Programmes. These policies and strategies needs to be examined.

There is lack of research in South Africa on how the learnerships are implemented and monitored. Despite the recognized importance of mentoring in general (Clutterbuck 2004; Hunt 1994) research on the role of mentoring for the unemployed in South Africa has not been done more so in the construction industry. This study must be viewed as an addition to the body of knowledge of learnerships programmes and mentorship in particular.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The researcher is currently employed by the Department of Public Works which is the custodian of the EPWP. As such, that could be susceptible to suspicions of bias. To tone down, the researcher applied the following interventions:

- In conducting the interviews, the researcher's role was confined to that of a patient and careful listener
- The researcher first had to obtain permission from the interviewees, to record the interview process

1.7 Outline of Chapters

The research report consists of six chapters presented as follows:

Chapter one: Introduction and background. This chapter deals with context of the research and it includes aspects of the research regarding research problem, purpose statement, research questions, significance of the research. It sets out the scene and focuses the attention on the particular problem to be investigated.

Chapter two: Literature review. Here, the chapter reveals the ability to collect and analyse literature relevant to the research.

Chapter Three: Research methodology. It seeks to demonstrate the ability of the researcher to collect and analyse data.

Chapter Four: This chapter gives an overview of the case study. It digs deep on the guidelines for the implementation of the Vuk'uphile contractor learnership.

Chapter five: Research Findings.

Chapter six: Conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In order to present a clear view of the research problem, it is important to present a study of the literature relating to the research topic (Neuman 2006). The aim of this chapter is to review the existing literature and theoretical frameworks in order to support issues under discussion.

The Vuk'uphile programme is a learnership programme which relies heavily on mentoring; as such the literature reviewed here informs the research on both mentoring and learnerships. Mentoring is the key ingredient of the programme, it is therefore important to review the literature on the subject. The main findings of the literature review are reiterated in the conclusion, which attempts to demonstrate how the reviewed literature will assist in answering the research problem.

2.1 Defining Mentoring

Literature agrees that the origin of mentorship dates back to the ancient Greece (Merriam 1983; Hunt 1994; Colley 2003). Throughout history, mentoring has been some kind of honourable duty. According to legend, Odysseus, the king of Ithaca, was engaged in the Trojan War, but before that, he arranged for his son Telemachus, to be advised and counselled by his wise and trusted friend, Mentor. The comprehensive influence of Mentor was an integral part of what

came to be known a mentoring in medieval trade guilds. Guild masters were responsible not only for the professional skills of protégés, but also for their social, religious and personal habits (Clawson 1985:36). From then onwards, anyone who was entrusted to guide a less experienced individual came to be known as mentor (Hunt 1994; Clutterbuck 2004).

Origins of mentorship help in providing the understanding of the concept. For this research, the origins of mentoring are relevant in that they illustrate a basic principle of human survival. People learn skills directly from other people they admire and look up. Without this Greek mythology, it is possible that there wouldn't be any need to research the concept of mentoring. Looking at the origins of mentoring as literature has ascertained, this research aims to imprint in the mind of the reader that the concept of mentoring is definitely not new and the essence of this Greek mythology is still relevant today.

Mentorship is a theme that is prevalent in the human resource management. It is commonly used to serve various purposes; from career development to affirmative action. It is usually related to situations in which formal learning outcomes are either absent or unstated. It is important to note that 'despite the abundance of normative literature on the subject...there is little consensus over what the essential characteristics of mentoring are, the methods by which it should be conducted and who should undertake it' (Stead 1997:219).

Mentoring is a process that is about enabling and supporting major change in people's life and work. This process should encourage new perspectives, changed ways of thinking and deeper self-knowledge, Kleovoulou (2007:6). This study shows that participating in the Vuk'uphile learnership has changed the lives of learners, in that the skills they gained they are now employable as

contractors. Levinson maintains that the mentoring relationship in one of the most complex and developmentally important in an individual's life. He goes on to identify functions of this relationship as teaching, guiding, sponsoring, socialisation into the occupation, counsel and moral support (1978: 15). Hunt (1994), whilst looking purely at business, asserts that mentoring takes place when a senior member (mentor) advises and supports a junior member (protégé) in order to facilitate the junior member's ability to climb the career ladder in a firm or profession. The Vuk'uphile programme as it is shown in chapter four, utilises the mentors to advise and support learners who are young in terms of both age and experience. This study demonstrates that ideal mentors should be old and matured in order for them to impart the knowledge to the learners who are young.

Stanz and Mosoeunyane (2005) define mentoring as a process involving a dynamic and reciprocal relationship in a work environment, whereby a more advanced and wise career incumbent assists a less experienced person to develop in some specified category. Furthermore, mentors guide, support and counsel youths as they navigate their way in the adult world. Mentoring is associated with a variety of activities, including role modelling, job shadowing, providing personal, academic and career advice, and networking (Kram 1985). Parsloe (1992) views the purpose of mentoring as that of helping and supporting people to manage their own learning in order to maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become people they want to be.

There is a common thread in the definitions above. Mentoring emphasise experience, knowledge transfer, motivation and support of the mentees. It is worthy to note that the most literature defines mentoring in terms of functions provided by a mentor or the roles played by a mentor in relation to the mentee.

In Kleovoulou, (2007:6), Peterson states that effective mentoring involves the transmission of skills, knowledge and attitudes as well as level of trust and communication which permits the person being mentored to risk making mistakes and to develop personally and professionally. This study will show that lack of trust between the learners and mentors led to the conflict that if left unchecked, it may lead to the failure of the Vuk'uphile programme.

It must be noted that there are writers, such as Clawson (1985) who argue that mentoring is not necessary. The writers contend that mentoring is a non-existent Holy Grail. At issue is that, people are interested in mentorship whilst overlooking the impact of the superior-subordinate relationship. People should worry more about the developmental quality of the existing superior-subordinate relationships in the organisation than about mentoring relationships that are hard to define and harder yet to institutionalise. The literature occasionally refers to the potential drawbacks or dangers of a mentoring relationship. Scandura (1998) argues that even the most comprehensive studies have failed to devote adequate attention to evidence of negative and damaging experiences in mentoring. However there are researchers like Levinson (1978) who writes that a mentor might be exploitative, egocentric, or too stifling and protective. This study found that indeed in the Vuk'uphile programme, mentors can be conflicted and that opens up space for moral hazards. The findings of this study will show that there are mentors who are exploitative because there is money involved.

Although a number of attempts have been made to provide concise definitions of mentoring or mentor, definitional diversity continues to characterise the literature. It is this researcher's view that the definitional problem of mentoring stems from the fact that there is no appropriate theoretical grounding for mentoring in the literature. Indeed, definitions of mentoring are both myriad and

elusive. Looking at the literature's review of the definitions, indeed it supports Merriam's (1983) contention that "the phenomenon of mentoring is not clearly conceptualised, leading to confusion as to just what is being measured or offered as an ingredient in success. Mentoring appears to mean one thing to developmental psychologists, another thing to business people, and a third thing to those in academic settings (1983:169)". The findings of this study show that though the learners acquire skills in the construction industry, they also get business skills and other social skills. This therefore means mentorship cannot be defined in terms of single specific disciplines.

2.1.1 Informal and Formal Mentoring

Broadly, literature distinguishes two types of mentoring. One is informal and the other is formal. Golian and Galbraith state:

Informal mentoring is a relationship that occurs that is unplanned, and, in most cases, not expected. Certain 'chemistry' emerges drawing two individuals together for the purpose of professional, personal, and psychological growth and development. Informal mentoring seems to be a qualitative experience that has great meaning for the parties involved (1996:102).

Formal mentoring is an intentional process that is the result of a planned and operating mentoring program. Again the authors define it as "*a method designed to reach a variety of specific goals and purposes, defined within the setting in which it operates* (1996:103)".

The basic distinction lies in the formation of the relationship; informal mentorships are not managed, structured or formally recognised by the organisation; in fact they are spontaneous without external involvement from the organisation (Chao, Walz and Gardner 1992). In contrast, formal mentorships are managed and sanctioned by the organisation (Chao et al.1992). More specifically, in formal programmes, the initiation of the relationship is externally directed and the mentor and the mentee are paired by a third party, programmes are contracted for a specific amount of time, the predetermined frequency and location of meetings are set and the goals are set at the beginning of the relationship. Formal mentoring within organisations is also generally conducted for specific categories of employees whereas informal mentoring can occur between any two people.

The formal type seems to be the one that is popular and easy to study. The reason for this is not clear however, an argument can be made. Firstly, organisations would like to gain the benefits of mentoring, but would not leave the potential gains for the firm and its employees to chance. Secondly, as Kram (1985), argues the paradox of mentoring is that although the process occurs naturally, organisations are requiring it to be accelerated and thus "*an essential informal relationship needs to be formalised without destroying the informality*". In the South African context, formal mentoring programmes have also become a tool for promoting the growth and development of junior employees and people from historically disadvantaged groups Pinho, Coetzee, Schreuder (2005). The focus of the study, mentoring in the Vuk'uphile programme, neatly fit the formal mentoring as defined by Chao et al.

From the above, this research will show that the Vuk'uphile programme involves formal mentoring. This is demonstrated by the multiplicity of stakeholders in the programme, established implementation processes, and as such the relationship

between the mentors and protégés is initiated externally, there is a contractual obligation between the mentor and the mentee. The formality of the programme makes it stand out in the skills development arena. Therefore the study suggests that in terms of skills development, mentoring must be formalised so as to have maximum impact.

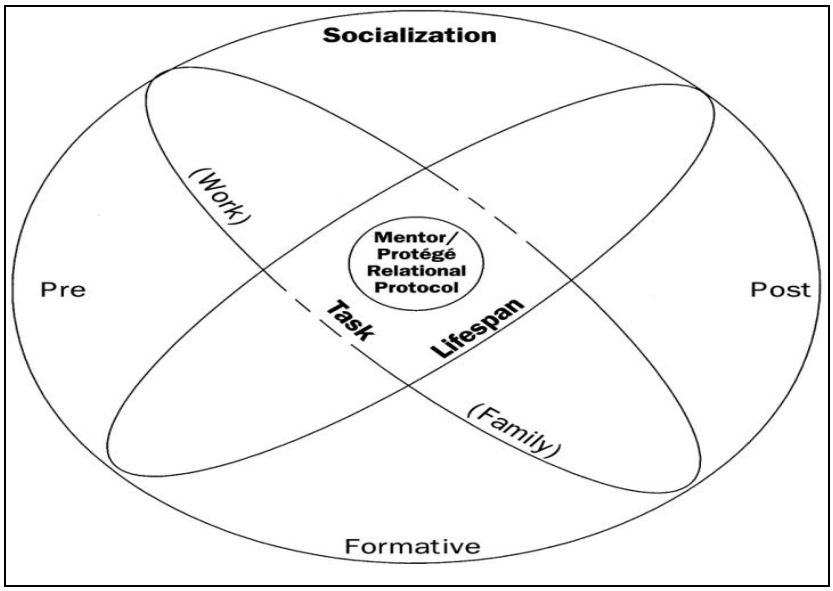
2.1.2 Theories of Mentoring

According to Meriam (1983) the inherent definitional problems in mentoring are due in part to the failure to ground mentoring in appropriate theory. The reason for this state is mainly because mentoring is commendably multi-disciplinary and this draws from various theoretical perspectives. Below are some of the theories of mentoring.

i. Three Dimension Model

Johnson, Geroy, Griego (1999) proposed a mentoring model that blends human development with the dimensions of mentoring, (Figure 3). This theory is premised on the fact that a mentoring relationship has the potential to be widely used throughout an individual's life span. The authors present the mentoring relationship as influenced by the culmination of the blending of the constructs of socialisation, task and lifespan. Socialisation is the largest element in the model because it embraces the environment in which task and lifespan dimensions engage. Task development is the second dimension. This dimension involves work and family. The two categories were identified by Kram (1985) as surrounding the mentor- learner relationship- that is career functions and psychosocial functions. Lifespan dimension examines the change and growth across an individual's lifetime. It is internal and personalised to the individual, Johnson et al (1999:387). In this dimension, mentoring should be viewed as having no boundary, impacting on all facets of life.

Figure 3: Three Dimension Model



(Source: Johnson et al 1999)

The dimensions as explained above play a role in shaping the interactive dynamic of the mentor learner relationship. The core embodies the outcome of the interaction; this can be one in which the exchange results in positive, growth-building activities or the results can be dysfunctional. By analysing each dimension and how they align with both the mentor and protégé can assist in explaining why the relationship is either a success or failure, Johnson et al (1999:388). Put differently, understanding what each dimension brings to the relationship and its influences helps to understand what make a mentoring relationship a flop or a success. At the centre of the model is a representation of a symbiotic relationship. This demonstrates that one individual has a need in a mentoring relationship (learner) while the other has the task capacity (mentor).

The three dimension model is applicable to this study. The study has found that the learners who are selected to the programme are affected by each of the dimensions. Socialisation plays a significant role for both learners and mentors in the programme. This study has found that all of the learners are black and thus socialised differently to their mentors who are white. The historical differences play a role in how perceptions are dealt with within the programme. Other dimensions include career functions- are the learners serious about the construction industry – and this research found that indeed the learners interviewed are serious and willing to gain skills in the construction industry.

ii. Transformational Model

The literature also differentiates between traditional mentoring and transformational mentoring. Geber (2003) mentions that the traditional type of mentoring is characterised by the apprenticeship-type of relationship, the mentor is more experienced and explicitly willing to help; the mentee is more junior and less experienced; the mentoring system is designed with organisational self-interest. Transformational mentoring according to Hay is based on a developmental alliance, and is defined as "*a relationship between equals in which one or more of those involved is enabled to increase awareness, identify alternatives and initiate action to develop themselves* (1995:3)". In this context, mentoring is a two way process with the mentor having as much to gain as the learner. The crux is to encourage both partners to contribute freely and operate as equals (Hay 1995). Age and experience are irrelevant. Hay (1995) further describes the mentoring lifecycle as comprising four definable stages which are; initiation, getting established, developing independence and termination.

According to Hay (1995) the first stage is about creating an alliance and consists of preparing for the relationship, forming a bond and agreeing to a contract. Contracting is a way of negotiating a learning agreement or framework for the relationship. It has many advantages and adds to the quality of the interactions. Contracting ensures that both parties are clear about:

- the purpose of the mentoring scheme within which the mentoring relationship is to occur
- the respective roles of mentor and mentee
- the responsibilities of both parties
- the boundaries of the relationship
- how mentor and mentee will be expected to behave
- the ground rules with regard to confidentiality, and accessibility
- the working methods to be employed
- the mechanism to seek agreement to make changes

The second stage, Hay (1995) suggests that it involves helping the learner to tell their story, that is, to review their situation, and describe their current situation. Put differently, this is a stage of personal stocktaking of strength and weaknesses, knowledge and skills. Third stage involves the mentor facilitating deeper learning by encouraging the learner to reflect. This is the stage wherein the mentor becomes a devil's advocate, confronting, stimulating and challenging the learner to take a different perspective, (Hay 1995). The final stage comes either prematurely or terminates naturally. Terminating the mentoring relationship must be carefully planned, (Hay 1995). Partners have to ensure the completion of agreed tasks.

As it will be shown in the coming chapters, the learners in the programme and mentors enter into contract. The documents accessed by this researcher confirm that in the contracts, all the points mentioned above are made relevant and clear to all the stakeholders in the programme. It is fair to state at this stage that the transformational model as espoused by Hay (1995) proves to be much relevant to this study.

Literature shows considerable disagreement about the characteristics of the mentor in relation to the mentee. Firstly, it is with regards to age. Levinson (1978) observed that a mentor is between eight and fifteen years older than the mentee; Hunt and Michael (1983) observed that mentors generally are older than their mentees. Secondly, the literature is divided on the importance of gender or racial similarity between mentors and mentees, (Blumenfield 2005). The assumption in the literature is that mentees are part of minority groups or women. Thirdly, the duration of the mentoring relationship is also not agreed upon by the literature. Levinson (1978) describe the typical mentoring relationship as lasting from two to ten years, others don't mention the duration at all (Clutterbuck 2004).

All of the above is relevant to this study. The findings in this study reveal that in the Vuk'uphile programme, the majority of the mentees are black, contradicting what most literature on the subject assumes. This is due to historical factors in the country. However, this contradiction does not nullify the role of mentorship in the programme. However, it points to a need for a further research on whether there is harmony in the mentorship involving different races. This study will also show that the duration of mentorship in the Vuk'uphile programme is not more than two years.

2.1.3 Mentoring Best Practices

Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) posit that implementing a managing and mentoring programme involve behind the scenes tasks upon which not only success of the initiative depends, but also the reputation of mentoring within the organisation for the foreseeable future. The objectives of the mentoring programme will determine the particular approach that should be followed in implementing the mentoring programme. Below I will deal with best practices that come from the literature and are based on the researcher's practical experiences and lessons learned by the organisations they were involved in.

Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002), identifies the best practice as preparing the implementation proposal and conducting the necessary research. According to them, the purpose of this practice is to evaluate the fit between the organisation and the intended mentoring programme, and to gather evidence that corroborates the argument in favour of the implementation of a proposed mentoring programme. Best practice number two is identifying key stakeholders and gaining organisational commitment. Cranwell-Ward et al (2004) states that the informed support of the key stakeholders for a mentoring programme is vital to the viability of the programme, because successful mentoring depends on the context and climate in which mentoring occurs. Clear statements of intent, programme scope, objectives and expectations, practical application and evaluation systems support the justification of such programmes, Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002).

Thirdly, mentoring programmes should be marketed and promoted in order to get support for the organisation in gaining interest and finding participants. Cranwell-Ward et al (2004) argues that methods such as distribution of booklets, mentoring website on the intranet, information workshops and communiqués

via email can support potential and interested participants in the programme by helping them gain a fuller picture of what might be involved. Best practice number four is the programme design and development. Cranwell-Ward et al (2004), Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) argue that the development and design of a mentoring programme starts by defining the key principles that will underpin the mentoring relationships. These principles include the values of the organisation, define the target group of the programme, indicate from where the mentors will be drawn and provide detailed guidance on how the programme will operate.

Once mentoring programme is implemented, all hurdles associated with the successful implementation of the programme should be addressed. Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) research revealed that mentoring programmes that do not deliver results have the following common failures:

- Poor planning
- Inability of some managers to adopt mentoring behaviours
- Inadequate training of participants
- Low clarity on roles and responsibilities of mentor and mentee- who does what
- Too little or too much formality
- Inadequate champion from the top

Finally, there must be an evaluation and review of a mentoring programme. Cranwell-Ward et al (2004) suggests that an evaluation strategy should use multiple methods and obtain both quantitative and qualitative data that should be in place at the beginning of the programme. The evaluation of a mentoring

programme includes people like the mentor and mentee themselves, line managers and other stakeholders, Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002).

There is a strong commitment on the part of the Department to coordinate all the key stakeholders in the public sector to increase the skills base in the construction industry. In the same vein, the study found that there is inadequate training of participants and the not so clear roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders. This is made clear by the complaints of the mentors regarding the classroom component of the programme wherein they feel that learners should not take much time doing theory in construction environment.

2.1.4 Challenges in Mentoring

As pointed out above, organisations often encourage mentoring through formal programmes, however, problems have been encountered Pinho et al (2005). Common challenges from the literature include the mismatch or (compatibility problems) between mentor and mentee expectations. The cause of this is the lack of clearly defined roles of both the mentor and the mentee in the programme (Clutterbuck 2002).There has also been problem associated with gender. It has been observed that female learners tended to expect a higher level of psychosocial support than their male counterparts. The literature points out to two major problems in the mentoring relationship for women. The first is the lack of women in high managerial positions who can be mentors to younger women, and secondly the sexual problems inherent in male mentor/female protégé relationships (Merriam 1983). Moreover, Ragins (2002) observed that mentoring relationships that vary on multiple group membership face greater challenges and demands than relationships that vary just a single group. All group memberships are not created equal. Differences within group membership

affect mentoring relationships. Mismatches may result in relationships being characterised by discontent, anger, jealousy, resentment, sabotage, deception or harassment, Pinho et al (2005).

From this study, it will seem that the Vuk'uphile programme faces the same challenges as identified by the literature review. Mentoring challenges in the programme were found to do with compatibility of the mentors and the mentees. This study did not find gender based problems, though the mentors were all males. Female learners interviewed were found to be most happy with the programme suggesting the nonexistence of gender based problems.

Various factors influence the nature and quality of the mentoring relationship. Some of the factors are external such as time issues. Time issues relates to potential limitations that may result from mentor or mentee work and life demands, costs or simply scheduling problems, Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002). Ragins (2002) cautions that failing to follow through with a relationship- by cancelling or not showing up for appointments just not demonstrating enough support to someone who depends on and looks up to you- is worse than never getting involved in the first place.

2.2 Learnerships

In October 1998, the then President of the Republic of South Africa, signed the Skills Development Act into law, (Department of Labour 1988). The act provides the legal underpinning of learnership. The Act put in motion a vision of an integrated skills development system, which promotes growth in employment, social development and the economy, through focusing on the integrated education, training and employment opportunities. Reading the act, it can be deduced that a major rationale for the provision of learnerships has been the equity consideration. Equity factor is closely related to the belief that this type of education (learnership) considerably improves the employment and income opportunities of individuals. Public provision of learnerships which ensures an equitable access to training opportunities by the various groups in South Africa would provide access to income earning opportunities and lead to the distribution of income/wealth and economic growth (du Toit, Serfontein and Dealers 2005). Another justification for learnerships is that it is a strategy to include those with low educational achievement and those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Learnerships aim to provide important opportunities for those in work to learn new theoretical and practical capabilities.

How is learnership defined? According to Barker (2007:219) a learnership is a para-professional and vocational education and training programme that incorporates but also builds and improves on traditional apprenticeships. Skills Development Amendment Act of 2008 introduced and set the parameters for a learnership; A SETA may establish a learnership if-

(a) the learnership consists of a structured learning component;

(b) the learnership includes practical work experience of a specified nature and duration;

(c) the learnership would lead to a qualification registered by the South African Qualifications Authority and related to an occupation. (www.labour.gov.za Amended Skills Development Act 2008)

According to Sacht quoted in Stanz and Mosoeunyane (2007) learnerships are new work-based education and training programmes where learners not only learn why things are done but also how they are done. A learnership thus consists of both structured learning and structured work experience.

Hattingh (2008) mention key features of a learnership that distinguishes it from other formal learning programmes offered by institutions such as universities. The features are:

- A learnership is a tool for aligning education and training more closely with industry needs to equip learners with the skills that are required in the labour market.
- Learnerships promote the practical application of learning in the workplace through the planned transfer of learning to real work situations. This ensures that learners are actually able to apply what they have learnt in the real world in a way that contributes towards organisational growth.
- Learners who have completed learnerships understand the way things are done in the workplace, as opposed to only seeing the world of work in terms of what they have learnt from theoretical frameworks in text books.

- It also means that new recruits who have completed learnerships are ready to step into their jobs, without the company having to spend time and resources covering the gaps between formal learning and the workplace. They also understand what is required to comply with the policies, procedures, work ethic and values of the company.

Key learnership success largely depends on the quality of workplace learning, but the requirements are often misunderstood, Hattingh (2008). Two of the misconceptions that need to be corrected about learnerships are that learnerships combine institutional learning and workplace experience and; that learners on learnerships are a source of cheap labour. Hattingh (2008) provides correction by stating that workplace learning must be directed towards enabling learners to demonstrate competence in the outcomes that are clearly specified in the qualification and the curriculum. Furthermore, learners must be actively involved in learning at the workplace and therefore cannot carry a normal work load while in learnerships.

The Vuk'uphile programme, conforms to the parameters stated above. Learnership is a structured training programme that combines theoretical training at an accredited training institution with relevant experiential training at a workplace or in a simulated workplace environment. Put differently, learnership is both theory and practical work done to achieve a qualification. It is important to note that learnership is defined in the context of the National Qualification Framework (NQF). Complete learnership must result in a qualification that is registered within the NQF by the South African Qualification Authority, (Barker 2007).

Assessing the internal and external efficiency and effectiveness of learnerships, Smith et al (2005) found that eight out of ten learners selected a learnership that best suited the career path of their choice and 15% of the learners did so to gain qualifications and work experience and improve their prospect of future employment. Ninety four percent of the learners were satisfied with the availability of the information that they received at the beginning of the learnership on issues such as the curriculum, how the programme is to be delivered and how learners are to be assessed. The conclusion was that learnerships provide key avenues for unemployed people to gain skills and improve their employability. The positive findings of the study indicated that learnerships were meeting their three fold purpose, namely:

- that many learners were being provided with workplace learning by an accredited provider;
- that learners were being afforded the opportunity to make the link between structure learning and work experience;
- that learners were receiving training that culminated in a nationally recognised qualification (Smith et al 2005:556).

The outcome of learnership implementation has been marked by fluctuating fortunes, giving rise to the emergence of serious questions and problems around the learnership model. Babb and Meyer (2005) assert that the key obstacle to economic growth and social equity is lack of skills. Some of these obstacles were, learners were not offered a job after the learnership; learners abandoning the programme; allowance or stipend did become an obstacle; mentors were a resource in short supply (2005:74).There has been generally high drop –out rate across all SETAs and failure of many learners to gain employment upon completion of the programme. The debate around learnerships raises questions

about the effectiveness of the current model as prescribed in the Skills Development Act and the effectiveness of its implementation.

Another opinion is that learnerships have failed in the past because of many organisations not fully embracing learnerships due to a lack of understanding about relevance and value to the organisation or the discouraging amount of paperwork. Meyerson (2008) believes that the key problem areas around learnerships lie around NQF and SAQA requirements. She asserts that organisations are seriously challenged with scaling the hurdle of becoming "NQF'ed" or "SAQA'rised" meaning complying with the provisions of NQF and SAQA principles before they can practically succeed at learnerships. She views these quality requirements as a burden.

Again, Meyerson (2008) is of the view that documentation and legal contracts add another complexity to the learnerships. Recruitment of the right level of learners and the induction and management thereof is quite overwhelming for small businesses, thereby making prospects of participation and success at delivery more difficult. Whilst she is not advocating for the scrapping of learnerships, she is arguing for a more participant enabling environment and guidance to providers both of which could make a significant difference.

Success or failure of any learnership is largely influenced by different factors. Babb and Meyer (2005) explored some of the successes recorded in skills development and concluded that any successful learnership must have the following; overall purpose, aims and objectives of learnership study; governance system; learning outcomes expressed as a qualification, as well as broad individual and corporate objectives; selection of the learners; quality of learning provision and finally, provision of mentoring and coaching support. How the

application (or misapplication) of any of the above may have impacted on and influenced the delivery and outcome of the Vuk'uphile programme is of keen interest to the researcher. Davies and Farquharson (2004) are of the opinion that recruitment and selection of learners is crucial to the overall success of any learnership and advocates the need for effective and best practices around this phenomenon. This then implies the importance of selecting learners with the right motivation and aptitude. More importantly, it means learnership projects are a failure before they even begin if selection is done wrongly.

The literature here points out the importance of selection. This study will show that no matter how tight are the selection requirements in a learnership there are those instances where unsuitable people are absorbed into the programme. This is due to the message communicated at the selection stage of the programme. Some lapses in the selection process have a potential to derail the programme or cause it to fail. The fact that mentors are paid, also contributes to the need for careful selection of the mentors. This research will look at whether the selection of the mentors is vigorous.

2.2.1 Learnerships and Mentoring

In defining mentoring above, it was stated that it is a process involving a dynamic and reciprocal relationship in a work environment, whereby a more advanced and wiser career incumbent assists a less experienced person to develop in some specified category. In line with this definition, it is given therefore that a mentor is a person appointed to provide guidance to a learner. Learnership programmes succeed on the basis of the implementation of related knowledge in the workplace. In this regard the mentor plays a vital role.

Hattingh (2008) mentions areas in which mentors can contribute to the success of the learnership. First, mentors monitor the learners' progress throughout the learnership, e.g. in the attendance records, submission of assignments and assessment results, and follow up where there are problem areas. Secondly, they should timeously identify obstacles hampering learning, such as personal/family or transport problems, learning difficulties, or language problems.

Third, mentors must alert the relevant people in the organisation (and the training provider) to the problem areas identified, assist in finding solutions, and follow up to ensure that these issues are addressed. Fourth, mentors can play an important role in reducing the high dropout rate of learners from learnerships. They should be working with learners who are considering dropping out to motivate them to stay on the programme. They should also interview learners who have dropped out to determine their reasons to ensure that problem areas are addressed.

Fifth, mentors can also play a supportive role in the learning programme, for example by identifying resources, persons or process in the organisation that would support the learning process. They should then open doors in the company for learners, e.g. by arranging for learners to observe a particular work process, to visit a plant, or to interview a company executive. Sixth, they can also play a career planning role, for example, by helping learners to identify further learning opportunities and planning learning and career pathways.

Finally, mentors could also perform a coaching role in learning areas of a learnership in which they have the necessary technical expertise. They could also participate in formative or summative assessment, if they meet the requirements.

The best practices on implementing a learnership, as stated above, have been used in this study to determine how the Vuk'uphile programme is implemented and to understand whether the mentors in the programme know their role.

2.3 Conclusion

This literature review has presented the core issues relevant to this research. This chapter discussed the literature review on mentoring, definitions and two models of mentoring; best practices of mentoring implementation; challenges in mentoring and learnerships. What stands out from the understanding of mentoring is that defining it is difficult as it means different things to different disciplines. However, this review has also highlighted a common thread in all the definitions, that is mentoring emphasise experience, knowledge transfer, motivation and support for the mentees. In other words mentoring is about the experienced helping the inexperienced, regardless of whether this relationship takes place formally or informally. The point being made here is that mentoring happens in an environment conducive to learning.

Theories of mentoring were also explored. The three dimension model blends human development with the dimensions of mentoring. This theory is premised on the understanding that mentorship should have an impact throughout an individuals' lifespan. The transformational model argues that mentoring is a two way process which benefits both the learner and the mentor. The models are useful to understand why there is mentorship in the Vuk'uphile programme.

The definition of learnership as paraprofessional and vocational education and training programme put mentorship at the core of learnership programme such

as the one being investigated by this study. The argument pertinent to this study is that learnership programmes succeed on the basis of the implementation of related knowledge in the workplace. The interconnectedness of mentoring and learnership is of great interest to this study. The learnerships are an alternative way to bring equity and increase the chance of employability.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section constitutes a very important part of the research report, as it seeks to demonstrate the ability of the researcher to collect and analyse data. The qualitative approach used, together with the appropriate tools and techniques, is described. Furthermore, this section will tell more about how data were collected, managed and analysed. The explanation of the methods of the study constitutes an audit trail (Merriam 2002:21). The audit trail enhances the study's reliability.

3.1 Research Approach

A research methodology is a strategy of inquiry which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to research design and data collection. The approach adopted in this study was qualitative.

Qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible (Merriam 1998:5). Conversely, qualitative research attempts to understand and make sense of phenomena from the participant's perspective. This view is strengthened by Patton (1998:1) who state that qualitative research "is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interaction there. This understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of that setting-what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what

is going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting...the analysis strives for depth of understanding".

Qualitative methods create openness between all parties and can help generate new theories. Participating subjects can discuss issues that are important to them rather than responding to closed questions, and they can also clarify ambiguities or confusion over concepts. Additionally, observation can take place when participants are not able or willing to discuss the phenomenon under study (Merriam 2002:13).

The most important limitation of qualitative research is that the findings cannot be directly generalised to the larger population being studied. These limitations are due the reasons provided below:

- Participants are often not selected randomly.
- The number of participants in a typical qualitative research study is too small to be representative of the population.
- Qualitative research does not collect numeric data from a representative sample of the target audience. As a result, this type of research cannot be subjected to statistical analysis to estimate the extent to which the opinion expressed by participants reflects the opinions of the population studied.
- Some participants tend to express views consistent with social standards and try not to represent themselves negatively. This social desirability bias may lead respondents to self-censor their actual views, which leads to the collection of inaccurate data.
- The quality of the data collection and the results are highly dependent on the skills of the researcher. Because these methods are dependent on interpersonal exchanges with respondents, any number of variables, including the dress, demeanour and language used by the interviewer

may influence the quantity and quality of information given by respondents (Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion 2008).

The researcher used qualitative research methods as this allowed the researcher to conduct interviews with key players. During the interview, the researcher was able to obtain and distil meaning. The interviews helped the researcher to get an understanding of how the participants in the Vuk'uphile programme understood their expectations and roles.

3.2 Data Collection

Qualitative research draws from three major sources of data. These are interviews, observations, and documents. Merriam (2002) states that data collection strategy used is determined by the question of the study and by determining which sources of data will yield the best information with which to answer the question. This report utilised mostly interviews and documents as sources for data collection. The researcher went to the project site in Tsakane Township in Ekurhuleni Metro.

3.2.1 Interviews

The sole purpose of the interviews was to find out from people those things the researcher could not observe. The fact is we cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions. We cannot observe behaviours that took place at some previous point in time. Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit (Patton 2002).

Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are a more focused two way conversation than a formal interview. They rely on an adaptable, rather than a rigid or prescriptive, interview guide. The semi-structured interview is less intrusive. Interviewees can ask questions of the interviewer. Often the information obtained from semi-structured interviews will provide not just answers, but also the reasons for the answers (Patton 2002:347).

Semi-structured interviews were utilised to elicit as much information as possible. The researcher conducted interviews with twelve key players. Four of the interviewees were learners in the Vuk'uphile programme, three senior managers from the Department of Public Works, four mentors in the Vuk'uphile programme, and one from the Construction Industry Development Board. Participants outside the department of Public Works were located using the database provided by the department. All participants were telephoned to schedule interview appointments and informed in advance about the reasons for the study. A list of people interviewed is contained in the annexures.

The questions of the interview were designed to enable respondents to give their impression on the implementation of the Vuk'uphile programme. Question 1 deal with the selection of both the learners and mentors to the programme. This is followed by the understanding of the aims of the programme in that the question examined the reasons for applying to the programme for both the learners and mentors.

In qualitative research, sampling is dependent on what the researcher hopes to achieve, the purpose of inquiry, what will be useful, what will have credibility and what can be achieved within available resources and time. The validity, meaningfulness and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information-richness of the case selected and the analytical capabilities

of the researcher than with sample size (Patton 2002:244). It must be emphasised that there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Since qualitative inquiry seeks to understand the meaning of a phenomenon from the perspective of the participants, it is important to select a sample from which the most can be learned. This is called purposeful sampling (Merriam 1998:61; Patton 2002:230). The study targeted individuals who are involved in the Vuk'uphile programme as learners, administrators and mentors.

Writers such as Merriam (1998) and Patton (2002) highlight the importance of clearly articulating the aims of the research. In engaging this process at the beginning, the researcher is able to earn the trusts of the respondents who then feel at ease and speak openly. It must be stated that no payments of any kind were offered to the interviewees.

The researcher captured the contents of the interview using a recorder. Patton (2002) lists benefits of using a recorder are:

- The interviewer can concentrate on listening and responding to the interviewee and is not distracted by trying to write down what has been said.
- The discussion flows because the interviewer does not have to write down the response to one question before moving onto the next.
- In note taking there is an increased risk of interview bias because the interviewer is likely to make notes of the comments which make immediate sense or are perceived as being directly relevant or interesting.
- Tape recording ensures that the whole interview is captured and provides complete data for analysis so cues that were missed the first time can be recognised when listening to the recording.

3.2.2 Documents

The documents used as data in this inquiry included reports, articles, pamphlets and memoranda relevant to the Vuk'uphile programme. The documents were both public and official .These documents were obtained from the department of Public Works. These documents were a useful source of information on programme activities and processes (as explained in chapter one), they can also generate ideas for questions to be pursued through observation and interviewing. Moreover, documents can provide valuable information that may not be accessible by other means. As an example, they can provide information about things that the evaluator cannot observe because they took place before the evaluation began, they were part of private interchanges in which the evaluator did not participate, or they reflect plans that have been realised in actual programme performance (Patton 2002:293).

The data found in documents can be used in the same manner as data from interviews. The strength of documents as a data source lies in the fact that they already exist in the situation, they do not intrude upon or alter the setting in ways that the presence of the investigator might. Nor are they dependent upon whims of human beings whose cooperation is essential for collecting data through interviews. In short, the advantage in using documentary material is its stability (Merriam 1998:126).

When going through the documents, the researcher was aware of the problem of authenticity and accuracy the documents could pose. Even public records that purport to be objective and accurate contain built-in biases that a researcher may not be aware of (Merriam 1998).

3.3 Data Analysis

All research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner. Quantitative research takes issues of validity and reliability very seriously. Validity and reliability are crucial to the effectiveness, acceptance and relevance of research. While reliability focuses on the effectiveness of the research tools in obtaining and eliciting accurate data consistently, validity is largely about whether what was initially intended to be measured was successfully measured by the researcher (Merriam 1998:200). This study has proved that mentoring and proper implementation of a learnership is crucial for the achievement of stated objectives of a learnership programme.

In analysing data, I utilised what Leedy and Ormrod (2005:150-151) calls the 'data analysis spiral', which essentially entailed the following:

- Data filing, capturing and organizing;
- Carefully examining the data on a number of occasions to get an overall sense of it;
- Identifying themes and categories and grouping the data under each of these accordingly, and
- Summation and analysis of data so it made sense, as well as drawing overall recommendations/conclusions.

Analysis of data was consistently analysed so that patterns and themes could be detected throughout the process.

3.4 The Researcher

Patton (2002) opines that because the researcher is the instrument in qualitative inquiry, a qualitative report should include some information about the researcher. The aim here is to establish investigator credibility.

My career background has been predominantly in the area of public administration. I am currently working for the Department of Public Works in the Intergovernmental Relations unit. It must be stated that I have no personal connection to the EPWP branch of the department. However, being an employee of the department, it was easy for me to access documents and to contact interviewees. I have no prior knowledge of the Vuk'uphile programme.

My background gave me a good understanding of how government operated, and this research afforded me the opportunity to explore one of the programmes that government uses to better the lives of ordinary South Africans. I was able to look at a particular programme and see how it is implemented in the fight against poverty and unemployment. I also realised the importance of investigating the implementation of government programmes as this can contribute towards the improvement of these programmes in the longer term.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodology used to look into mentoring in the Vuk'uphile programme. Overall, this research is a qualitative research. A qualitative research is characterised by search for meaning, researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and that the final product is descriptive rather than in numbers.

This chapter has also revealed that the sampling in this research is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling seeks to understand the meaning of a phenomenon from the perspective of the participants. Participants in this research represent the learners, mentors and departmental officials who are the custodians of the Vuk'uphile programme. Data was collected using document analysis and interviews. The interviews were audio recorded; permission was obtained from the interviewees prior to the interview. The results are presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4: VUK'UPHILE CASE STUDY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to give an overview of the Vuk'uphile programme, with special attention to the implementation as planned or specified in the delivery protocols. It is also in this chapter that the relevance of the lessons learnt from the literature review will be explained.

4.1 Vuk'uphile Contractor Learnership Programme

Vuk'uphile programme is a joint venture between the Construction Education and training Authority (CETA), the Department of Public Works (DPW) and various public bodies (see figure 2). Vuk'uphile is a CETA recognised learnership that emphasises labour intensive construction so that those learners are able to meet the requirements of the EPWP- create employment by using labour intensive methods of construction.

Initially, DPW applied to CETA for 750 emerging contractors to enrol in a learnership to gain the necessary skills to build infrastructure labour intensively. The contractors create a contracting firm that will typically consist of a contractor and two supervisors. Contractors are at NQF level 2 and supervisors at NQF level 4.

The aim of Vuk'uphile programme is to identify and train emerging contracting firms. Both DPW and CETA have vested interests in producing small contractors qualified to execute the work in accordance with the guidelines (DPW, July 2005). Furthermore, 'EPWP-Vuk'uphile learnership programme' document of 2005, states that the objectives of the Vuk'uphile programme are:

i. To provide a contracting entity that is able to operate locally and wider.
ii. Provide a contracting entity that is able to sustain itself in the open market after the completion of the learnership programme.
iii. Skills transfer with contractors and supervisors to emerge with:
    - Recognised qualification
    - Project track record
    - Financial track record
    - Relationship with a financial service provider (bank) and
    - a Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) ranking of Grade 3 to 4.

According to the delivery protocol, 'Specification for mentorship services within the EPWP Learnership Programme (DPW August 2004:6-7), the applying Learner Contracting Company must apply as a team of three persons comprising one learners contractor who will enter at NQF level 2 contractor learnership and two learner supervisors who will enter at NQF level 4 site supervisor. The lower NQF level 2 applies to the contractor who is approaching the learnership as a 'business entrepreneur' whereas the supervisors are higher NQF4 as they target the technical execution of the works. Over and above this, learners must meet the following criteria: be literate and numerate; have academic qualifications of grade 10 (standard 8) or higher. (Applicants with qualifications below grade 10 should obtain Recognition of Prior Learning); be willing to enter into a full time two-year learnership contract for Construction Contractor NQF Level 2; must

have at least 51% ownership of the company and be the manager or managing director.

In the selection process the following characteristics counts in favour of the applicant learners:

- experience in the construction or contracting sector
- experience in owning / running or managing a business
- higher qualifications than the minimum specified
- access or ownership of capital or assets that would be useful for a contracting company

It is interesting to note that Vuk'uphile programme does not specifically target the unemployed or unskilled. This learnership programme targets those people that fall within the Historically Disadvantaged Individual target and that will have the best chance of succeeding as small contractors and site supervisors.

The learnership allows for stringent selection of the learners in an attempt to ensure that candidates who participate have a higher likelihood of success.

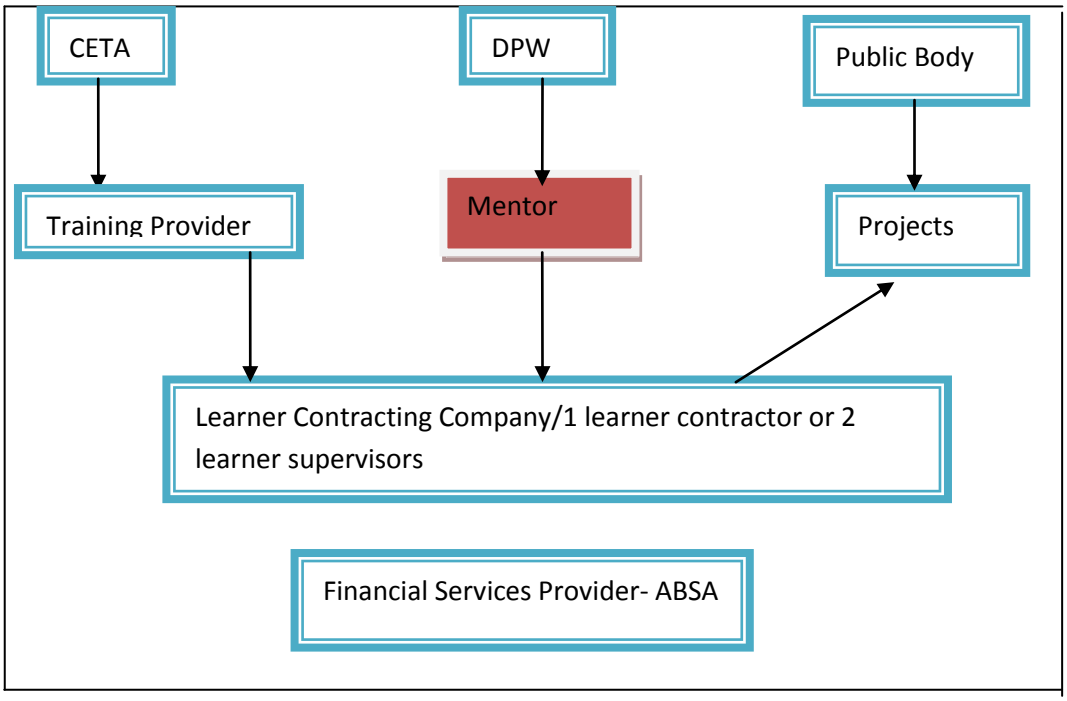
The learnership is undertaken over a period of two years and includes blocks of formal training followed by projects, which are undertaken by the learner as practical experiential training as illustrated in Figure 2.

Delivery protocol of the Vuk'uphile programme stipulates that all learners are selected through an open and transparent advertisement and selection process. 'The learnership opportunities must be advertised in the local media (for a municipality, this means at least media which operate in the area of the municipality; for provinces, this means at least media which operate in the area of the province). The Public Body will be expected to finalise the advertisement based on the standard advertisement from EPWP and will need to cover the costs of placing the advertisement in the media' (DPW August 2006:12).

The selection process is very strict. After receiving applications, a management committee is formed (that is the national Department of Public Works, CETA, Public Body and ABSA).Two written assessments are done, at this stage those who score below 20 percent are eliminated at first and those who score 24 points out of a possible 35 are eliminated at a second stage of the written assessment. Scoring more than 24 points identifies possible learners who will then be ranked and finally selected as learners.

It must be noted that during the selection process stakeholders play important role in recruiting candidates who have a chance to complete the learnership.

Figure 4: Depicts the Roles and Responsibilities of Each Stakeholder



Source: DPW, August 2004:6

4.2 Roles and Responsibilities

This subsection looks at the roles of every stakeholder involved in the implementation of the Vuk'uphile programme as specified in the learnership delivery protocols (DPW, January 2005, August 2004 and March 2006). As can be seen from figure 4 above, the following are identified as role players in the learnership; CETA and training provider, DPW, Public body, financial service provider, and mentors.

The CETA is custodian of the Construction Contractor- NQF level 2 (LIC) and Construction Supervisor-NQF level 4 (LIC) learnerships and therefore becomes

the custodian of the learning guides, learning programmes and assessment instruments for use by the construction industry at large. The training provider provides theoretical training in terms of the learnership requirements (classroom training), conduct on and off the job assessment in terms of the learnership, and provide reports to employer on learner's performance, (DPW 2006:8).

In short, CETA gets the ball rolling for the learnerships to get recognised. The role can be said to be that of overseeing and managing the implementation of the learnerships through formulation of on-going guidelines and processes.

The training provider is responsible for classroom training, site checks on performance, assessing learner contractor and providing training to suit the type of projects and gaps in learners' performance.

The DPW must ensure that the NQF qualifications framework for the labour intensive construction, learning guides, learning programmes and assessment instruments are put in place to facilitate the NQF accreditation of training providers against the qualifications: which are labour intensive construction, learning guides, learning programmes and assessment instruments (DPW 2006:9). It is responsible for the overall-co-ordination and quality assurance of the learnership programme. The Vuk'uphile Project Management team liaises with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that the learnership is implemented successfully.

The participation of the Public Body in the programme is voluntary. For participation, the Public Body must first sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with both DPW and CETA. The Public Body act as "lead employer" in

terms of the Learnership Agreement; together with other stakeholders, Public Body select contractor and construction supervisor learners according to selection criteria formulated by DPW and CETA; The Public Body must, finally, arrange to launch the programme locally.

This is the coalface of the programme, the Public body must select a project and set the rate of pay, identify the project scope, determines the project execution strategy, designate the project as a labour intensive project for execution under the learnership programme. The Public must also appoint the consultants including a brief to undertake the works in a manner suited to a Learner Contracting Company and in accordance with the Guidelines for the Implementation of Labour-Intensive Infrastructure Projects under the EPWP. Public Body must sign contract with the Learner Contracting Company and must pay the Learner Contracting Company within two weeks of receiving certification for payment (DPW August 2004;9; DPW March 2006:10).

The Department of Public Works has an agreement with ABSA Bank for provision of credit and financial services to those learners who require it. This enables the learners to purchase the hand-tools, vehicles and light construction equipment which they need to carry out the work and to have access to working capital until they receive their progress payments (DPW August 2006:19).

The role of the financial service provider is to: assess risk; provide finance; monitor the contractor's cash flow and account; provides financial training; interface with the Learner Contracting Company on a frequent and regular basis.

The Management Plan of the Vuk'uphile programme stipulates that as soon the learners are selected into the programme, DPW and ABSA must obtain all relevant information from Learner Contractors in order to register new Close Corporations (CCs) for all Learner Contractors, open bank accounts in the name of the newly formed CCs and to ensure that the credit approval and granting process are implemented, (DPW March 2006:20).

Mentors work hand in hand with the Public Body in workplace training. The mentor's role is to; develop a Learner Contracting Company's skills in the technical, managerial, administrative, contractual and commercial areas. Assist the Learner Contracting Company to identify at an early stage any potential problem areas which, if left unattended, may result in costly rectification measures or the inability to hand over the works on time to the Public Body; enable the Learner Contractor Company to work independently as quickly as possible and ultimately to compete for work outside of the Learnership Agreement in an open market; enable the learner to put in place business system before the completion of the Learnership Agreement (DPW 2004:3)

After the selection and prior to the start of classroom training learner, Public Body and training provider enter into a Learnership Agreement which specify the terms and conditions of the agreement, amongst those terms and conditions is the duration and structure of the programme content. The duration of the learnership is for the period of up to 24 Months for Construction Contractor (NQF Level 2) and 39 months for the Construction Supervisor (NQF Level 4). The instructional learning component is provided through three (3) separate classroom sessions and the structured workplace experience is structured through three (3) separate and independent on-site training projects provided by the province or municipality (Public Body), (DPW March 2006:16). At the end of the third project, learners should be ready for assessment of the unit standards,

those who are found competent receives the National Certificate for the CETA (DPW August 2004:12).

As it has been shown in the literature review learnership is stakeholder rich. This means for it to be successful it requires the stakeholders to participate and take ownership of the process from the beginning. Davies and Farquharson (2004) in their study revealed that people tend to support initiatives that they have been involved in creating. This study recommends that what is being done as stated above, must be done from the onset. This will provide a check point to ensure that important stakeholders have not been taken on board late or even left out.

4.3 Challenges and Constraints

The structure of the Vuk'uphile programme has a multiplicity of stakeholders. From the onset this raises the issues of co-ordination, communication and speed at which the programme can be implemented. Having so many players creates unnecessary complexity of interaction both at government level and between the intended beneficiaries and government and those appointed by government, and between all of these. Meyerson (2008) contends that the key problem around learnership lie around the NQF and SAQA requirements. The requirements prove to be a burden to the implementation of the learnership. It has also been found that some stakeholders are dissatisfied with the learnership because of the non-availability of and access to information, Mummenthey and du Preez, (2010).Moreover, non-completion of learnership is ascribed to the financial controversies between training providers and CETA. The Vuk'uphile programme is partly insulated from this challenge as some of the money comes from the department of Public Works.

Learnership content is also a challenge in that it is out-dated and no longer meets the construction industry requirements, Mummenthey and du Preez (2010). The classroom training in the programme is the case in point. Most learning takes place on site because the classroom training has no practical component. What this means, is that only until the learner is on site, will he or she learn to lay bricks. No amount of classroom training prepares them for this, so another amount of time is needed to provide training in practical skills.

Training projects are regarded as one of the most valuable components of the Vuk'uphile programme as they provide an avenue for the acquisition of skills and construction industry experience. Constraints on the projects are, again, a function of poor preparation and coordination on the part of the Public Bodies. In terms of scheduling of projects public bodies are responsible for ensuring the availability of projects (DPW March 2006). Public Bodies have not been entirely able to plan how they make projects available to learner contractor companies in time to coincide with the completion of the classroom training components. With mentors looking after learners, the distribution and location of projects inevitably reduces the amount of time that the mentor can spend with learners.

From a design perspective: Vuk'uphile is not clear on the priorities. Is it entrepreneurship development, job creation or poverty alleviation? This has implications for the kind of both the learners and mentors selected to participate in the programme and the manner in which programme success is defined. Although the programme has the guidelines for identifying and selecting learners it must be stressed that a number of learners will try and join the programme to get rich quickly, Smith et al (2005). Implicit in this is the notion that not all applicants who enter the process will go on to build sustainable enterprises and

that certain applicants will be more suited to the programme objectives than others.

The appointment of mentors to the programme is made late, after the selection of learners. As literature has shown, the drawback of this is that mentors are unable to participate in the selection of who they would like to mentor. Mentors in the programme have to tender to be mentors. This is what stands out in this programme because mentors get paid for mentoring. This is against what the literature offers as a proper selection procedure of the mentors in that they should be selected in terms of their willingness. With money involved, it is possible to have a situation where the mentors may not have the objectives of the programme at heart (Meyer and Fourie 2004), and rather become involved in mentoring for their personal objectives.

Challenges and constraints stated above are to do with implementation of the Vuk'uphile programme. The challenges and constraints as explained above beg the question of whether the programme is implemented in a way that will achieve the intended objectives. Mentoring, is at the core of the programme, however, its effectiveness has not been tested or established.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter gave an overview of the Vuk'uphile programme. Primarily, the implementation of the programme was explored. The Vuk'uphile programme is a venture between the CETA and the department of Public Works. This means that the programme is recognised as a learnership in terms of the Skills Development act. The aim of the programme is to identify and train emerging contracting

firms. Amongst other objectives of the programme, is to provide a contracting entity that is able to sustain itself in the open market and also the skills transfer. This is in line with what the literature review recommends as a best practice for implementing a learnership. Babb and Meyer (2005) concluded that any successful learnership must have the following; overall purpose, aims and objectives of learnership study; governance system; learning outcomes expressed as a qualification, as well as broad individual and corporate objectives; selection of the learners; quality of learning provision and finally, provision of mentoring and coaching support.

Selection to the programme is through an open and transparent advertisement. Selection to the programme consists of an interview and a written test. It was noted with interest that the programme does not specifically target the unemployed or unskilled. Instead, the programme targets those who will have a best chance of succeeding as small contractors and site supervisors. Selection to the programme is made by the department together with CETA and the training provider. Mentors come late into the programme after the learners have been selected. This is against what the literature recommends for a successful mentorship.

The structure of the programme reveals a number of stakeholders coming in at different stages of the programme. It is this multiplicity of stakeholders that renders the implementation of the programme complex. This study will show that the inclusion of different stakeholders at different stages of the programme is a cause for problems.

The number of stakeholders raises concerns of co-ordination, communication and the speed with which the programme can be implemented. Other challenge

for the programme is its very design; it is not clear whether the priority for the programme is entrepreneurship development, job creation or poverty alleviation.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

5.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide an account of the results obtained from the data collected from the documents as well as interviews conducted by the researcher. From the literature review, it was found that the best way to see the benefits of mentorship is to formalise it. Also, getting into a mentorship programme must be voluntary for both the mentor and the mentee. Vuk'uphile programme, it was shown, is a learnership which means, as literature has shown, is stakeholder rich and stakeholders needs to be on board from the onset. Literature has shown that failure to recognise this have very negative consequences for any mentoring programme.

Interviews conducted have shown a degree of understanding of the expected outcomes of the programme. Participants in the programme have shown understanding of the importance of mentorship in the programme. However, this understanding is not without its own shortcomings.

Based on the best practices and what was found in the interviews, it is shown below that mentorship is vital for the success of the Vuk'uphile programme, as such, it must be maintained. The analysis below is divided into two sections, lessons learnt or best practices as espoused in the literature review and the findings from the documents; and the outcomes of interviews conducted on the participants.

5.1 Best Practices

Setting up and running a mentoring scheme involves behind the scene tasks upon which not only the success of the initiative depends, but also the reputation of mentoring within the organisation for the foreseeable future. Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) assert that implementing a mentorship programme, a thorough research must be done to evaluate the fit between the organisation and the intended mentoring programme. It is helpful to think not only about who it will be aimed at, but also about which model of mentoring will be best suited for the implementing organisation. In short, organisations must conduct a needs assessment or a business case for mentoring.

According to literature, the next stage should be a decision on the nature of the mentorship programme. Broadly, literature distinguishes two types of mentoring. One is informal and the other is formal. According to Chao et al. (1992) formal mentorships are managed and sanctioned by the organisation, the initiation of the relationship is externally directed and the mentor and the mentee are paired by a third party, programmes are contracted for a specific amount of time, the predetermined frequency and location of meetings are set and the goals are set at the beginning of the relationship. Evidence from the literature seems to point towards the benefits of establishing a formal framework for mentoring, with clear objectives and commitment from both parties. However, equally important is that the relationship itself is informal and flexible in nature in order to achieve the most impact to benefit the mentee (Kram 1985).

A mentoring programme needs support from the stakeholders. According to Cranwell- Ward et al (2004) argues that the informed support of the key

stakeholders for a mentoring programme is vital to the viability of the programme. This means that individuals or group of people who are crucial to the success of the mentoring programme are identified and influenced to obtain their support. It is at this stage that discussions on the risks and benefits to all stakeholders take place.

Literature identifies marketing the mentoring programme as another best practice. Cranwell-Ward et al (2004) posits that once buy in has been given, marketing a mentoring programme should start. Marketing methods identified vary, however, policy or process document has been found to be an effective tool to market mentorship, Cranwell-Ward et al (2004); Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002). This practice is very crucial as it involves the selection criteria to the programme. It has been shown in the literature review that weaknesses in the selection stage can undo the whole learnership programme.

Best practice number four is the programme design and development. Cranwell-Ward et al (2004), Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) argue that the development and design of a mentoring programme starts by defining the key principles that will underpin the mentoring relationships. These principles include the values of the organisation, define the target group of the programme, indicate from where the mentors will be drawn and provide detailed guidance on how the programme will operate. This is the stage wherein participants develop a standard mentoring agreement to be used in the programme. Hay (1995) suggests that at this level of implementation, a mentoring agreement should contain the roles, responsibilities, and expectations for both mentor and protégé during the programme, a confidentiality clause and termination of agreement rules. In short, this practice is aimed at developing an instruction guide for all the participants.

Lastly, the literature identifies evaluation and review of the programme. There are five compelling reasons for the evaluation process. According to Cranwell-Ward et al (2004), this practice aims to identify issues and barriers that need to be overcome, ensuring that the needs of all the stakeholders identified earlier are being met, to motivate existing participants, to identify unworkable relationships and to assess whether the programme has met its original objectives. In other words, it is important for a formal mentoring programme to capture relevant information, for it to be a successful programme going forward.

The above-mentioned best practices helps to distinguish mentoring programmes that are weak and bound to fail from those that can be said to be strong and stand a good chance of success. For this research, the importance of finding out the applicability of the best practices in the Vuk'uphile programme is crucial.

Departmental documents indicate that the Vuk'uphile learnership programme is a formal programme. As explained by Chao et al (1992) above, the Vuk'uphile programme is sanctioned and managed by the department of Public Works, the duration of the programme is two years, the objectives of the programme are stated as: to provide for a contracting entity that is able to operate locally and wider; provide a contracting entity that is able to sustain itself in the open market after the completion of the learnership programme and skills transfer.

The stakeholders in the programme are identified early, although they come in at different stages of the programme. The stakeholders are DPW, CETA, Public Bodies and financial service provider. DPW together with CETA and public bodies form an executive committee to oversee and manage the implementation of the learnership through formulating on-going guidelines and processes (DPW:

2006:2). Vuk'uphile programme, is marketed through local media, booklets, policy documents and through the internet.

Selection to the programme is vigorous. Documents indicates that all learners are selected through an open and transparent advertisement and selection process (DPW: 2004; 2006).There is a selection committee which oversees the selection process. In selecting learners, the committee looks for experience in the construction sector, higher qualifications than the minimum specified, experience in owning/running or managing a business and access or ownership of capital or assets that would be useful for the contracting company. The selection steps consist of an interview and a written test. Based on the written assessments applicants are ranked on their numeracy and communication skills.

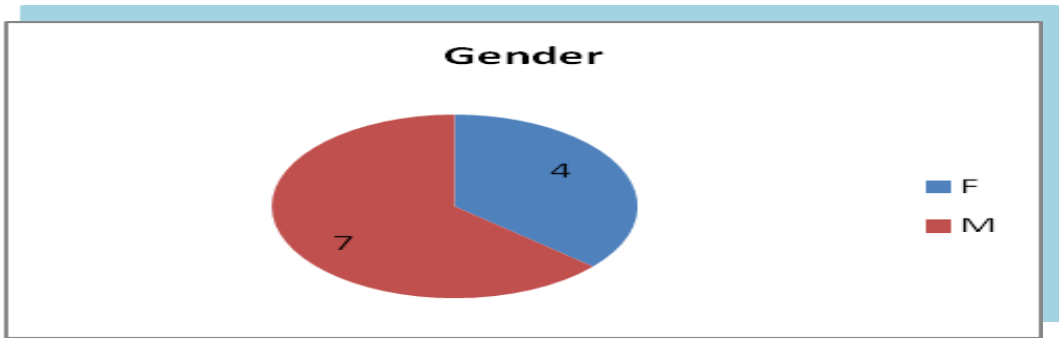
It has been found that mentors join the programme after the learners have been appointed. This is inconsistent with what the literature regards as a common practice of pairing the mentors and the mentees. According to a document titled "Terms of reference for mentorship services within the EPWP learnership programme', a mentor guides the learners whilst they are undertaking their on-site training project, oversee the construction activities ensuring compliance and conduct on site assessment in terms of the learnership programme (DPW: 2006). The learner role and responsibility in the programme is that he or she must be available for and participate in all learning and work experience required by the learnership; comply with workplace procedures; complete any timesheets and written assessment tools supplied by the stakeholders to record relevant classroom and workplace experience and finally to undertake all learning conscientiously, (DPW: 2006).

From the above, it will seem that the implementation of the Vuk'uphile programme is consistent with the best practices as found in the literature .The delivery protocols from the department of Public Works are clear in terms of identifying the stakeholders and implementation processes, however, reading from the documents is different from hearing what the participants have to say about the programme. The report now turns to the findings of the interviews conducted with the participants.

5.2 Interviews Results

This section describes the demographics of the sample according to the characteristics of gender, race and educational qualifications. The researcher had access to a total of 11 learners who are in the programme. Seven (64%) of them were males and four (36%) females, (Figure 5). This state of affairs could be ascribed to the awareness strategy not effectively reaching women, or few women are interested in the programme either way, this call for a different approach in marketing the programme. Racially, all the learners were black and African, which fulfils the historically disadvantaged criteria of the programme. None of the respondents were disabled, which point out the difficulty of attracting this category to the construction industry.

Figure 5: Gender ratios of learner respondents



The age of the learners varied from 24 to 36 years. The average age of the respondents was 29. This is the age range at which 'normal' individuals are active economically. This average also points to the difficulty in finding people owning companies, yet, the programme set company ownership as criteria for selection. The alternative is found in other criteria such as educational qualification.

Figure 6: Education levels of learner respondents

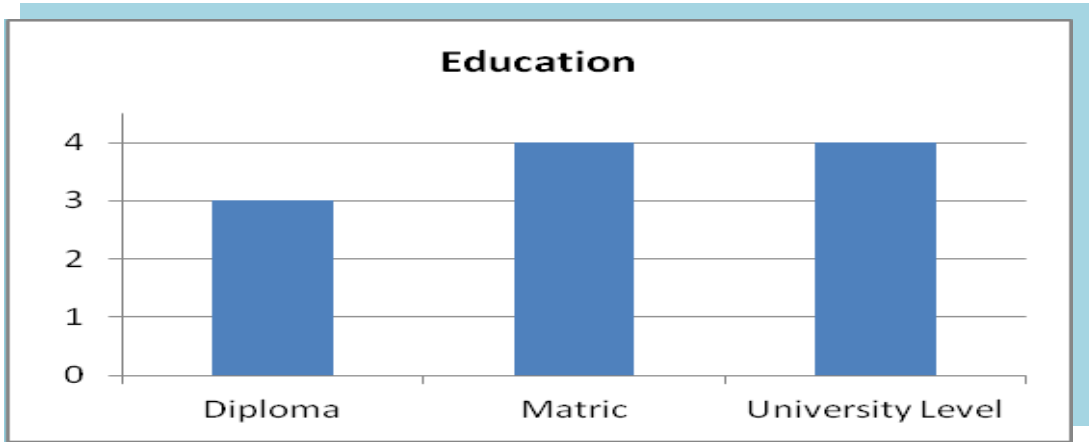
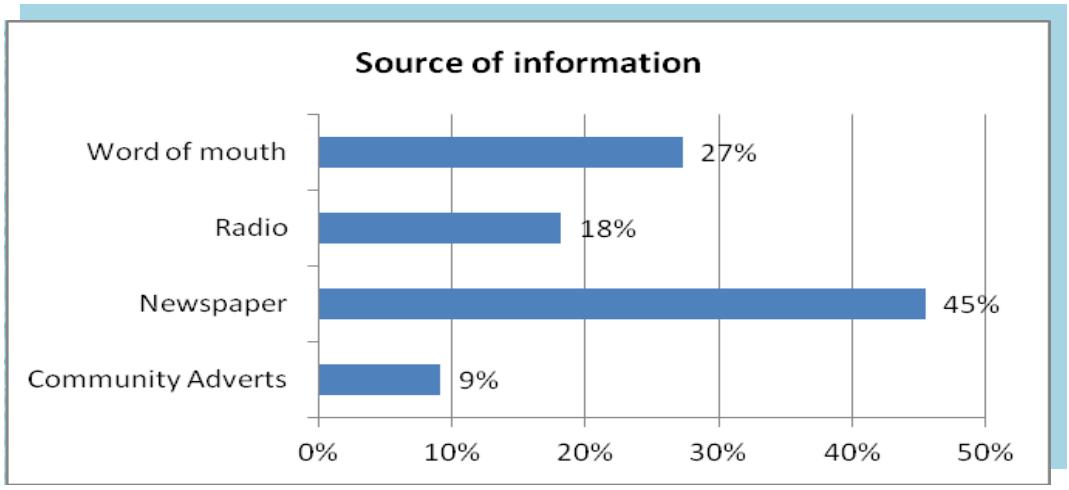


Figure 6 shows that with regards to educational qualifications, four (36%) respondents have matric and three (27%) have diplomas and the other four are university graduates (36%). All respondents have passed matric which is the minimum criteria for selection to the programme. However, disparities in educational levels should be a cause for concern. The levels are too unequal for the training to be efficient. Furthermore, the tensions between the learner supervisors and learner contractors largely are caused by different levels of NQF wherein the supervisors are at the higher level compared to contractors.

According to Departmental officials a total number of applications to the programme in Gauteng alone were more than three thousand. The number of

applicants validates the strength of marketing the programme. According to the managers, Vuk'uphile programme was advertised mostly in newspapers. Learners were asked to indicate the sources of information about Vuk'uphile programme before they joined. The findings of this research as depicted in figure 7 below corroborates what the managers said. Programme awareness is driven mainly through the newspapers (45%) and the word of mouth (27%). The findings suggest that the media used for creating awareness is effective for the target groups. However, this does not explain the low number of female applicants to the programme.

Figure 7: Awareness of the Vuk'uphile programme



Coupled to the above, the researcher went on to find out about the level of satisfaction with the information given about the programme. The aim of the question was to look at whether prospective learners are given enough information to enable them to make an informed choice of what was required of them. The information was concerning the orientation programme, explanation of the curriculum and training schedule. Accordingly, six of the learners agreed

and five strongly agreed that there was sufficient information to make informed decisions about Vuk'uphile, figure 8 below.

Figure 8: Satisfaction with information prior to joining Vuk'uphile



Furthermore, both learners and mentors were asked their reasons for applying to the programme. This question was aimed at finding those whose reasons and motivation corresponds with the objectives of the programme. Reasons for applying to the programme vary and thus illustrate a range of expectations about the programme (figure 9 below). It must be noted that reasons for applying are informed by the information at the disposal of the learners about the programme. Again, this is connected to the interpretation of the programme objectives. The findings confirm the relevance of the programme as a learnership, (that is, need for skills training). A total of 5 learners (45%), wanted to get skills. Two of the respondents (18%) applied because they wanted to be employed an equal number also wanted to start their own business. From these results it is difficult to see the programme creating more entrepreneurs, when learners enrol just to get skills, it will seem that uppermost on their minds is employment to be gained from the skills and not to create more employment

opportunity. Interestingly, perceptions of some mentors and departmental officials differ to that of the learners themselves. They hold the view that learners are not necessarily motivated by the interest in the construction industry; rather, it is the desire to take advantage of the subsidies on the programme. It was beyond the scope of this paper to validate such a perception.

Mentors responding to the same question (why they joined the programme), revealed that money is the main reason driving them to join Vuk'uphile. Three of the mentor respondents mentioned that the programme presents work opportunities for them. Imparting the skills came second. This is due to the fact that mentors are paid and they are not in the programme voluntarily as one would expect according to the literature. Paying mentors in the programme also has some moral hazards. This was revealed in the relationships between learners and mentors. Departmental officials talked about mentors taking over projects for quick bucks or signing off cheques without verifying the funds. Instances of mentors bullying the learners were also mentioned. Another official observed that mentors and other top people in the industry poach the learners for their companies thus rendering the programme ineffective.

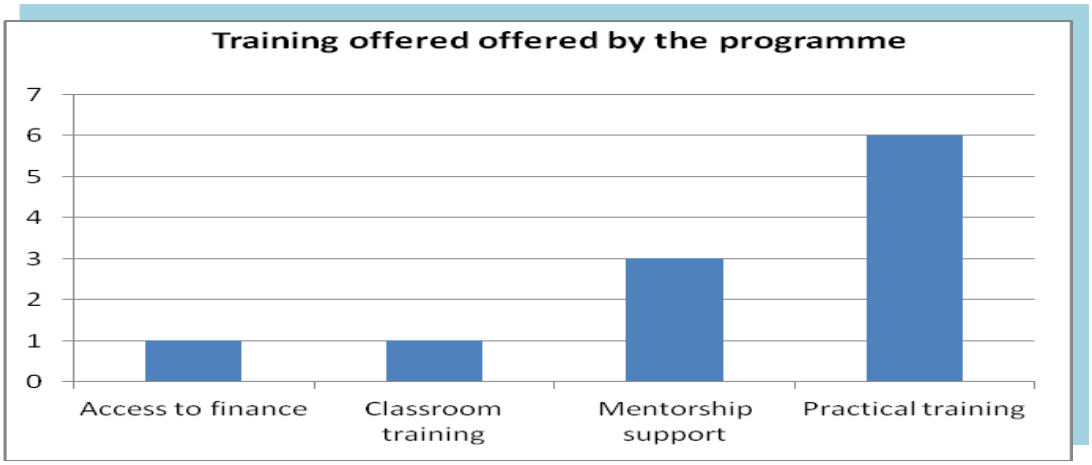
Figure 9: Reasons for applying to the Vuk'uphile programme



Figure 10 illustrate the findings on the relationship between practical training and classroom (theoretical) training and mentorship. Delivery of Vuk'uphile need to integrate workplace-based learning with classroom based learning. Vuk'uphile programme has three distinct learning processes, namely the classroom training, practical training and mentorship. Depending on who I spoke to, learners rated practical training significantly higher than mentorship, six out of eleven learners (55%) rated the practical training more highly than mentorship (27%). Classroom training and access to finance scored only 9% of the respondents. When probed, learners were of the opinion that practical training provides experience whereas classroom training provides theoretical base through which nobody can be employed. It seems that learners are aware that practical training is relevant and related to workplace situations.

Mentors were not happy with the classroom training as they feel that they spend too much time compensating for the inadequate training. Two of the mentors were of the opinion that the classroom training should be abolished because most learning takes place on site. What this means, is that no amount of classroom training will ever prepare learners in the construction industry. This is also the reason why mentors come late in the programme. The mentors feel that, if classroom training is not done away with, they should be part of that training as they have both practical industry experience as well as theoretical knowledge. The feeling expressed above, calls into question the suitability of training providers in construction learnership.

Figure 10: Training processes in the Vuk'uphile programme



According to the interviews conducted with the departmental officials and mentors, it was clear that mentors are appointed after the learners have been selected. Mentors were of the opinion that they should be appointed before the learners so as to minimise problems experienced in the programme.

Connected to the late appointment, mentors complained about not being advised on projects type and locations. This, they argued leads to mismatch of the projects and mentors. Mentors complained about the workload which was not anticipated before they joined the programme. This workload involves a significant amount of administration and compensating the inadequacies of classroom training. Asked whether are there enough mentors in the programme, all four mentors pointed that there are few mentors hence the mentor-learner ratio is high, rendering quality time with mentees short and not so much productive. The conflicts between the learners consumed too much time for the mentors to focus on the job at hand.

Figure 11 presents the assessment of mentors by the learners. This was in relation to the contribution to the success of the programme. A total of three

learner respondents (27%) indicated that mentors contribute 'a little' this is against a total of eight learners (73%) who felt that mentors contributed 'a lot'. For those in the minority, it could be that their expectations were not met or that they are learner supervisor in the programme who perceives mentors to spend much time with the learner contractors. However, this finding bolsters the need for mentors in the Vuk'uphile programme.

Figure 11: Mentor contribution to the success of the programme

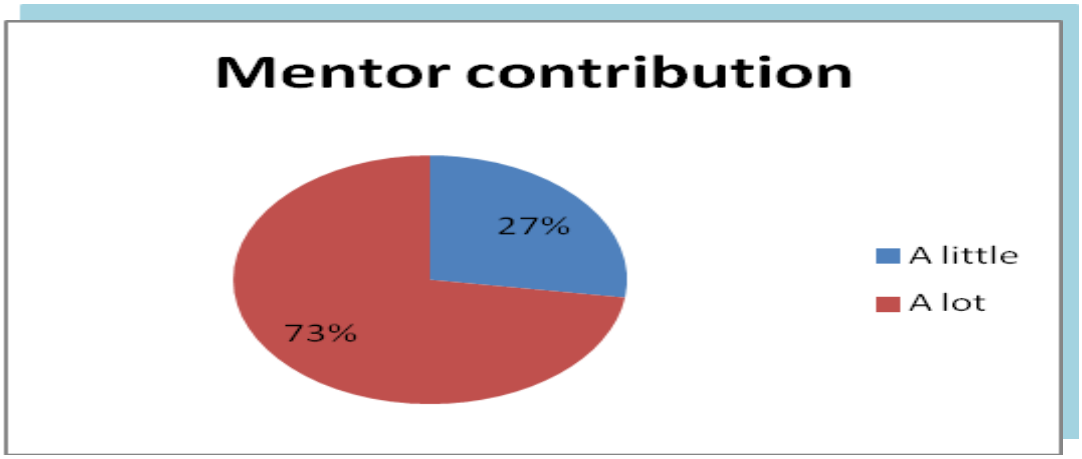
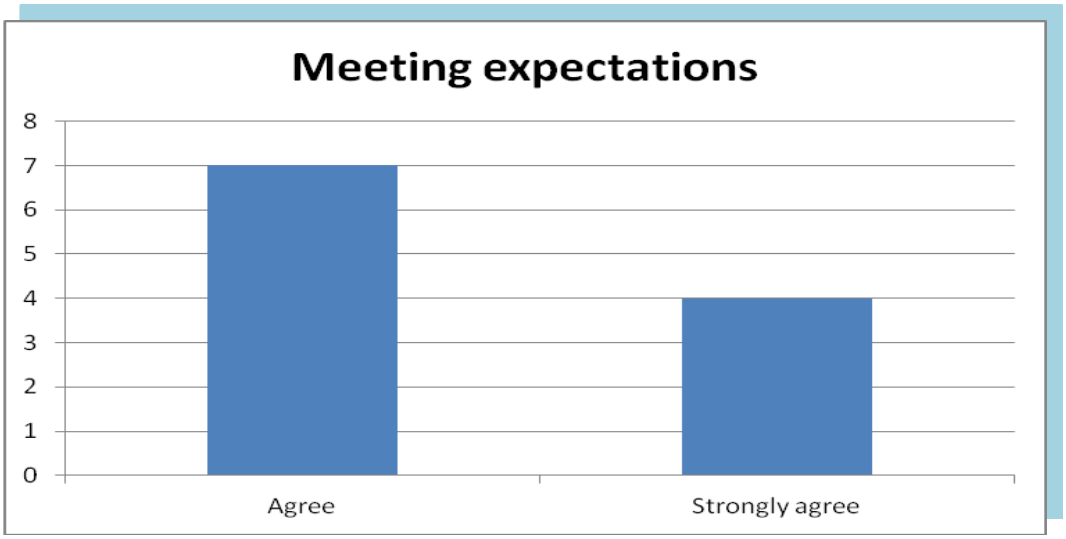


Figure 12 reveals the learners' overall rating of the Vuk'uphile programme. Learners were asked whether or not Vuk'uphile met their expectations. Seven out of eleven learners (64%) agree that the learnership programme met their expectations and four out of eleven (36%) strongly agree. Learners were also asked if they could recommend the programme to a friend or person interested in construction industry. All respondents responded by saying yes. This vote of confidence in the programme should not be underestimated as it comes from the beneficiaries themselves.

Figure 12: Assessment of the Vuk'uphile programme by learners



5.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings with reference to the literature review and also from the interviews. The implementation of the Vuk'uphile programme is consistent with what the literature regards as the best practice.

It has been found that for mentorship to work, implementing organisations must have needs assessment first, so as to determine the fit between the organisation and the intended mentoring programme. Need assessment confirms the necessity of the programme. For mentoring to have a measurable outcome, it was found that it has to be formalised. This formality must not take away the natural ways of engagement, that is, the mentor-mentee relationship can be informal and flexible. It was also found that implementing a learnership calls for a stringent stakeholder management. The Vuk'uphile programme was found to be lacking in this important area. Implementing a mentoring programme needs

an unambiguous marketing strategy. This is basically where recruitment begins. Mentoring lives or dies by its reputation, so getting the right people the first time is useful and this must be done early on in the process. It was also found that explaining the roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders is crucial for the success of a mentorship.

Interviews with the participants revealed that the programme is marketed through the print media. The target for the mentorship programme is not difficult to meet. Selection of the learners in the programme is vigorous; however, it is not watertight. Mixing learners with different educational levels is asking for trouble as their level of comprehension is different. Learners get on the programme for different reasons based on the selection criteria which is open to interpretation.

It was also established in this research that mentors in the Vuk'uphile are paid for their services. The literature is almost silent on the issue of paying the mentors. Mentors in most of the literature are assumed to volunteer their services. This research has found that there are moral hazards for the mentors in the programme because they are paid. The costs for mentoring are very high in the programme. They will have to be reduced in order to sustain the programme.

Learners' views of mentor contribution to their success are rated highly. This bodes well for the programme going forward. Their positive views calls for the continuation of mentorship in the programme.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This concluding chapter of the report presents a conclusion and recommendations for future research. The purpose of this research was to establish whether mentoring in the programme can be relied upon to achieve the objectives of the Vuk'uphile programme. This was investigated by examining the role of mentoring and how the programme is implemented.

It has been established that mentorship in the Vuk'uphile programme is formal. Formality of the programme has advantages that set the programme apart from informal ones. Formal programmes are easy to measure and evaluate because they have clear objectives and commitment from all the parties. It would appear that mentoring is particularly relevant in a learnership to impart the much needed skills in South Africa. Mentorship plays an insurance role- one that should come into force when other sources of support are not available.

When implementing a mentorship programme, organisations should be conscious of who are the targets or the role players in a programme. When all the stakeholders have been identified, managing them should be the next priority. Literature has shown that managing stakeholders is indeed critical for the success of any learnership programme. Mentoring programmes must be marketed vigorously to ensure that some of the best brains in the construction industry are grouped together and nurtured.

Mentors in the programme should be appointed before the learners so that they can help in identifying quality learners who have the capacity to complete the programme. Matching the mentors and mentees is a crucial factor for

mentorship, evidence suggests that matching personal aspects and learning styles works best. Barriers to effective mentoring are largely due to the mismatch between the values of mentor and learner, mismatch between the aims of the mentoring programme and the needs of the learner. Instances of a mismatch are almost guaranteed to happen, however carefully the matches are made. The conclusion here is that mentors must always be the ones who choose their mentees. In case of unworkable relationship between the mentor and the mentee, policy dealing with problems should be in place, including for terminating relationships where necessary.

Mentorship in the Vuk'uphile programme is very costly. The costs of mentoring are borne by the department only. Mentors who are paid for participating in the programme do not join because of altruistic reasons. Profit driven mentors are susceptible to moral hazards. It is concluded here that ideally, mentorship should not be driven by profit. However, this is almost impossible in the skills development area as this is largely a partnership between public and private sectors.

In light of the findings in this research, the recommendations are, in no order of importance, made as follows:

The Vuk'uphile learnership should continue as a formal mentorship programme. Its formality is a guarantee that skills will be transferred in the male dominated construction industry. As part of transforming the industry, new blood is very much needed in this profession. Mentors and learners who wants to forge a long term mutually beneficial relationship should be encourage without terminating the relationship at the end of the specified mentoring period. In the long run,

learners should perceive mentors as their long term strategic partners rather than their gatekeepers.

Best practices as found in the literature must be reinforced. This reinforcement should start with the management of the stakeholders. There must a frank engagement between the tiers of government to ensure that the programme has a national profile. Public bodies must be coerced to be participants in and champions of the programme so as to gain maximum skills transfer.

Learner success must be profiled and communicated to the industry. This will ensure that opportunities are further opened up for the learners to continue to play a meaningful role in the industry. Communicated properly, the other benefit could be that learner markets their skills to a wider audience, builds confidence and interest in the programme and allows successful learners to be role models for other learners.

Refine selection process such that those who are selected are on the more or less same academic level. The department of Public Works as the custodian of the learnership must look at getting recruitment specialists to devise and manage the recruitment process from start to finish. This will hopefully, reduce some of the problems experienced in the programme.

Mentoring costs must be shared between the public bodies. Also, learners at some stage in the programme must finance some of the costs so that a sense of ownership is nurtured.

The Vuk'uphile programme must be evaluated every six months to ensure that all the problems associated with implementation are eliminated, and mentorship is enhanced. Mentors must also be subject to this evaluation.

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