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The functioning of Community Adult Education and Training Colleges to uplift the livelihoods of adult learners :a qualitative case study of a college in Johannesburg

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ABSTRACT

It is widely recognised that adult education and training can contribute to adults' personal and economic development. This is because adults can acquire knowledge and skills to enhance their livelihoods as well as develop their local communities. A need arose to provide better coordinated Community Education and Training (CET) that involves community participation. In order to be sensitive to the needs of communities, while targeting the youth and adults who did not complete their education, adult learning sites were later conceptualised as being community education and training colleges. However, there is limited research that provides an understating of how these colleges function to adequately meet the needs of adult learners. This study thus aimed to explore how the functioning of a community education and training college in Johannesburg contributes towards the empowerment of the adult learners. The study adopted a qualitative research approach and made use of a case study design to achieve its aim. A non-probability, purposive sampling method was used to recruit a sample of 15 research participants. The participants consisted of the key role players at the college, namely the centre manager, four educators working at the college and 10 adult learners. Data were collected through conducting face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with the college centre manager and educators and focus group discussions were conducted with the adult learners. Study findings indicated that although the education and training college does have tools to empower disadvantaged community members, they also face several challenges. It is recommended therefore, that the government invests a lot of time and resources in improving the conditions that educators work in, and learners receive education.

Key words: Community Education and Training (CET); Community Learning Centres (CLC); Adult Learner; Poverty, Empowerment, Social Development.