

Private Technical and Vocational  
Education and Training (TVET) and  
national development: The South African  
reality

Mahomed Salim Ahmed Akoojee

*A thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy to the Faculty of Humanities,  
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.*

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Professor Shirley Pendlebury (University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa)

## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is my own work. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other university.

Signed  on this 16th day of February 2007.

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*To the almighty, without whose enduring presence, these achievements are just not possible.*

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## *Dedication*

*This work is dedicated to those whom we owe our very essence for learning and search for knowledge. Who understand with a passion the need to strive for learning without having had the opportunity to do so themselves. Who were unlettered but remain wise in ways we could never imagine. Who's selfless dedication, to those near and dear, is almost always taken for granted, but whose self-sacrifice always leaves an indelible, irreplaceable mark on those left behind.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the extent to which the private Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Sector in South Africa is responsive to national development. National development is understood as associated with a range of socio-economic imperatives which include challenges of poverty, unemployment, inequality, the ravages of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its associated impacts. In addition to these, the educational component of national development is to ensure access, redress and equity, which are necessary to undo the impacts of an apartheid-related skills regime. Skills development is considered a crucial means to respond to these challenges. Without skills for formal and informal labour markets, as well as productive self-employment, South Africa's capacity to respond to the new globalised era is likely to be considerably stunted and will negatively affect its developmental trajectory.

The methodology used in this study included a mix of quantitative and qualitative strategies to obtain the size, shape and nature of provision. The quantitative component, undertaken in the course of 2002, was supplemented by randomly chosen qualitative case studies. Together, they provided the basis for unravelling a sector distinct in nature, form and content.

Developing a comprehensive typology provides important insight into responsiveness of a sector characterised by wide-ranging provision forms. The typology of provider type based on profitability and form, i.e. 'for-profit', 'non-profit' and 'in-house' providers, was replaced with a multi-dimensional model. Learner type, as a primary typological category, includes the 'pre-employed', 'unemployed', the employed 'self-funded employee' and the 'corporate client'. Provider types responding to these learner types are distinguished on the basis of location, delivery patterns and programming. The various provider forms include 'multi-providers', 'specialist providers', 'consultants', 'in-house' and 'non-profit' providers. Provider purposes include those responding to employment, either formal labour market or self-employment, and self-development, including leisure-related skilling and lifelong learning.

Learner types and training purpose determine the manner, form and characteristics of provision. This understanding of a widely divergent and heterogeneous sector provides the context for assessing its contribution to national development in South Africa. The notions of responsiveness and receptiveness are used as conceptual devices to assess the role of the sector. *Responsiveness* describes specific labour market purpose, while *receptiveness* refers to the social development and educational imperatives of access, redress and equity.

The sheer size of the sector suggests an important demand-led element of provision and represents an important measure of receptiveness to national development prerogatives. The conservative estimate of 706 884 learners, located at 4178 sites for 864 providers that pre-registered with the Department of Education in 2001, provide the basis for serious consideration of the sector.

The sector adequately responds to the immediate short-term needs of employers. Programmes offered for corporate providers respond more deliberately to their immediate short-term skill requirements and which has made it possible for them to outsource a considerable proportion of their training. In addition, there is no other education and training form flexible enough to provide for the training needs of employees, and sometimes the customers of corporate concerns, as in product upgrading and support, at times and locations suitable to their requirements.

Private providers did not necessarily have more linkages with the formal labour market than do public providers and are not necessarily able to secure more effectively employment opportunities for their pre- and unemployed learners

With respect to receptiveness, the sector comprises learner patterns consistent with national demographics. The sector is associated with an older, employed learner type, typically enrolled in shorter-term courses. This demonstrates the sector's accessibility. In comparison with their public counterparts, costs were not prohibitive and programme structure allowed adequate flexibility to enable learners to weave in and out of the system. Variable admission requirements also allowed learners to slot into appropriate levels. The absence of data makes comparative judgements of throughput, and quality, with public institutions difficult to make.

The current need to regulate all providers equally may not be the most efficient way of dealing with the sector. In light of the national development prerogative to protect those most vulnerable from the risk of market failure, there is need to grant

support to those providers most responsive to this group - in this instance, those 'full time' providers responding to the pre- and unemployed learner set. The market adequately regulates providers responding to the employed and corporate client groups.

**Keywords:** South African Education, Private education, Private Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Private Further Education and Training (FET), Education and National Development, Skills development.



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## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

ADEC	Association of Distance Education Colleges
ANC	African National Congress
APCSA	Association of Private Colleges of South Africa
APPETD	Association of Private Providers of Education, Training and Development
AsgiSA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
CCEM	Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHE	Council for Higher Education
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CS (Educators)	College (and) School Educators
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DfES	Department for Education and Skills (UK)
DoE	Department of Education
DoF	Department of Finance
DoL	Department of Labour
DPRU	Development Policy Research Unit
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EE	Employment Equity
EFA	Education for all
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Authority
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FET	Further Education and Training
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GATS	General Agreement on Trade and Services
GATT	General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDS	Growth and Development Summit
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
GEIS	General Export Incentive Scheme
GET	General Education and Training
GJMC	Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council

HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HET	Higher Education and Training
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IFEP	International Foundation for Education with Production
ILO	International Labour Office
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISASA	Independent Schools Association of South Africa
ISETT SETA	Information Systems, Electronics and Telecommunications Technologies Sector Education and Training Authority
JIPSA	Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MIDP	Motor Industries Development Programme
NBI	National Business Institute
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NIC	Newly Industrialised Countries
NORRAG	Network for policy review research and advice on education and training.
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHS	October Household Survey
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
REC	Research Ethics Committee
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAITIS	South African Information Technology Industry Strategy
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SARS	South African Revenue Services

SETA	Sector Education and Training Authorities
SITA	State Information Technology Agency
SOC	Standard Occupational Code
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
SWAP	Sector-Wide approach
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNIRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UPE	Universal Primary Education
WCEFA	World Conference on Education for All
WGICSD	Working Group for International Skills Co-operation and Skills Development

# Chapter 1

## **AIMS, BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

In a globalised world, education and training for individual and national development is essential. Minimum education is neither sufficient nor adequate to enable citizens to prepare for the rigours of a rapidly changing knowledge economy. The existence of a vibrant post-school education and training system for personal and national development is therefore not an option anymore. It is arguably indispensable to national developmental outcomes. In this regard, the World Bank's Education Sector Strategy Update (ESSU) emphasises the growing importance of the knowledge economy and the need for a more skilled labour force to meet changing demands and maintain competitiveness (World Bank 2005b). While labour market imperatives are important, they are not the only rationale for the development and provision of an efficient, effective and relevant education and training system.

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), as a post-school provision form, represents an indispensable means to develop, at the individual level, skills which have indisputable impacts on national development in a developing context. The public sector in South Africa is associated exclusively with the training of a post-school, pre-employed youth component and has potential to respond to the lifelong learning needs of the population. As such, it has capacity to serve as an important means for responding to the continuing education and training of both the employed and non-employed elements of society (Foster 2005). Individual skills are thus able to translate into skills necessary to uplift communities. In this way, TVET has important implications for poverty reduction in a developing context. While skills alone are not able to generate formal employment, without skills, the capacity for individual and societal development is considerably stunted. Its absence would make it imperative for continuous direct social welfare interventions. The

importance of skills development for community and societal development, cannot therefore, be underestimated.

Despite its importance, TVET provision is nevertheless an expensive skilling intervention as compared to other education and training forms, especially schooling. Mass provision is likely to require a considerable commitment of funds. For this reason, and because of its traditional more direct link with labour market, the proposal for its provision by non-state actors has been emphasised. The benefit from a more direct articulation with the labour market would enhance learners' experiences with their future employment possibilities. Debate about provisioning has, therefore shifted from 'who' provides, to the nature and impact of the provision itself. This enhanced role of the private sector was considerably boosted by the World Bank position paper on TVET (World Bank 1991). What this overly non-state perspective tends to ignore is the role of the sector for national development.

Too close an articulation with the private sector might well allow a restricted notion of the historical and social development agenda to which governments have to respond. Considerations of access, redress and equity, which might not be as significant for some private interests, might well be sacrificed for immediate short-term labour market gains. A balanced perspective on the role of private and state interests is therefore necessary. The role of the non-State TVET provisioning has, nevertheless become particularly significant, giving rise to a host of studies around its varied provision forms.

In the sub-Saharan (SSA) context, David Atchoarena and Paul Esquieu (2002) note that the non-state TVET sector has become a particularly important feature of post school skilling in the latter part of the twentieth century. They suggest that the reason for this includes, in part, the ascendancy of what they call 'public-choice theory' (p. 31) which provides the basis for cost-sharing in the interest of greater efficiency. While this might well be the case, public choice theory is underpinned by a neo-liberal thread, which has, since the 1990s steadily eroded the role of the state in development and has, therefore, led to the prominence of private sectors in education and training.

Clearly, the development of a 'demand-driven' user system cannot be detrimental to the sector, needing, as it does, to be responsive to the labour market. Indeed, the

requirement to supplement state provision has been identified in numerous international TVET policy proposals for a (see for instance Johanson & Adams 2004). Joint and shared responsibility is considered an important prerogative if the sector has to be revitalised in light of the reduced state support in some sub-Saharan countries (McGrath *et al.* 2006 and Akoojee, Gewer & McGrath 2005). The attention of the state to co-ordinate rather than control TVET provision has become an important current. It allows the state to ensure a more direct role in quality. Atchoarena & Esquieu (2002: 31) point out that attention of government is focussed on 'value add' in terms of 'quality', 'relevance' and 'price'. The issue of private provision has thus become a particularly important one and recent evidence points to its significance as "... a growing component of the overall training system in most countries" (*ibid.*: 21).

This introductory chapter provides the context for this study on non-state TVET provision in South Africa. It begins by outlining the aims and background to the study and then elaborates the genesis of this study from its inception to the writing of this thesis. More importantly, it points out the manner in which this work intersects with that undertaken specifically for purposes of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). It includes an elaboration of my role in this work at various stages and more directly, the extent to which this work differs from that conducted for other HSRC purposes.

### **Aims of the study**

This study provides insight into the South African private TVET sector, referred to as the Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges sector in current discourse. In particular, this study explored the extent to which the private TVET sector has been able to contribute to the country's national development challenges in South Africa. It does this by detailing the way in which it has been able to respond to labour market imperatives and provides the basis for assessing its contribution to the redress, equity and access imperatives in South Africa. By describing the participants, the form and context of provision, the nature and extent of this contribution will be assessed.

A qualitative study of randomly selected cases undertaken in 2003 followed a comprehensive quantitative mapping of the sector. This latter undertaking

conducted in 2002, described the nature, participants and operational features of private providers. Together, the two elements of the study provide an understanding of the sector not before undertaken. It assesses provision on the basis of perceptions of the participants, locates their rationale for engaging in this sector and examines critical features of provision. The perception of owners and managers, educators and trainers and learners has therefore formed a crucial component of the study, augmenting the quantitative component.

The study provides insight into the diversity of provision purposes, types and provision foci and the extent to which these provision forms respond to national development imperatives. The study will, therefore, contribute to an understanding of, and engage in the debate on, the extent of the private post-school TVET provision in South Africa. It will shed light on the sector's contribution to the national education and training landscape more broadly and the post school FET sector in particular. The typology proposed enables the various private TVET provision forms in South Africa to be understood in their multifaceted heterogeneity.

As one of the first national studies of its kind, this work provided an empirical basis for establishing understanding of the nature and form of the sector. It will thus add to the growing literature on private provision in the country and internationally. This study has, therefore, provided much needed information about the private TVET education and training provision and is intended to:

1. examine the ways in which providers understand their role as education and training providers; and
2. explore critical features of the various institutions in a highly variegated landscape; and
3. identify the perceived mandate of the various providers and explore the extent to which role players understand these goals and the extent to which practices and features of provision are consistent with them.

The specific research questions, which underpinned this study, were:

- What is the nature of private post-school further education and training provision in South Africa?
- To what extent does the private FET sector respond to national imperatives of equity, redress and access?

- To what extent does the private FET sector respond to efficiency criteria?
- To what extent are developments in the private FET sector in South Africa consistent with international perspectives on private provision?

## Background

Private provision has been under-researched in South Africa, although a new wave of studies in this field is beginning to emerge. Recent studies include Mabizela (2000; 2002), Kruss (2002), and Garbers (1996), on private higher education, and Du Toit (2003) on independent schooling. Historically, studies into private further education are rare, with only a piece commissioned by the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) counterpart group and undertaken by the National Business Initiative (NBI) (Buckland et al. 1996).

Existing evidence does, nevertheless suggest the existence of a robust private ‘college’ sector in the post-Apartheid era. The *Report of the National Committee on Further Education* (DoE 1997a: 9) pointed out that the state of the private sector was particularly relevant but that its role in a post-Apartheid context was unclear. This explains, in part, the absence of any definitive study of the sector in the post Apartheid era. The various studies by Powell & Hall (2000; 2002; 2004) that provided data on public technical colleges have not been replicated in the private sector. This has paved the way for wide ranging ‘guesstimates’ of the extent of the sector. The *National Committee on Further Education* (DoE 1997a) designed to review FET provision warned that any data on private provision “must be treated as provisional” as information was “patchy and imperfect” (DoE 1997a: 9). It refers to the Buckland et al. study (1996), which estimated that there were only 42 214 students in the private FET sector: 7 214 technical students, 26 000 commercial students and 10 000 pursuing other FET courses, with an estimated value of R37 million. On the other hand, Kruss (2002) quotes the study by Garbers (1996), which refers to an estimated 241 000 students enrolled with an estimated value of R334 million in private colleges in 1995. These differential estimates make a quantitative assessment of the sector an important starting point for any study of its contribution.



## **Context of private provision**

The study is undertaken at a time when private provision is assuming global importance, not least because of the tendency of some national governments to favour its provision in light of declining budgets. The increasing tendency by international development organisations to favour its development is a further reason for its ascendancy. However, this interest has not been the product of intensive research into its provision nationally and internationally. It has been hailed as the answer to the manifold ills of the public system by those who favour its introduction, while it has been the product of significant critique by those favouring a social agenda. For the latter, especially, despite evidence of increased provision, it has not been considered an important enough phenomenon as a result of its alleged openly ‘economist’ inclinations and the resultant neo-liberal ideological baggage associated with it. A more ‘nuanced’ position has been proposed which suggests that some providers are effectively complementing demands for access to those previously excluded under Apartheid (Kruss 2002). This study takes neither position as a starting point for assessing the contribution of the sector. It does, however, attempt to evaluate the sector based on its contribution to outcomes on which national consensus has been attained. The imperatives of access, redress and equity and the need to ensure inclusivity have been considered an indispensable precondition for transformation in a post-Apartheid development context.

### *Regulation*

The national Department of Education (DoE) has focussed on the need for the regulation of the private FET sector following on the heels of the regulation of private higher sector and the independent schooling sectors. The pre-registration of private FET institutions undertaken by the DoE in 2000/1 was designed to garner information about the sector to enable regulation. In mid-2003, responsibility for developing registration further has passed to UMALUSI, the ‘Council for quality assurance in general and further education and training band on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)’. The latest legislative directive regarding regulation is set out in Chapter 6 of the *FET Colleges Bill* (RSA 2006a), which sets out the framework for the registration of private providers by the Department of Education (DoE).

*Contribution to national development*

As already pointed out, this thesis sheds light on the contribution of the role of the private further education and training sector to national development. The study will, therefore, unpack the notion of ‘contribution’. The extent to which participants believe that they are indeed ‘contributing’ meaningfully to national education and training provision in general and in particular to national prerogatives will be an important starting point for assessing their contribution.

Indeed, at the time this research was undertaken, there was a call for further research into the private sector by various political players. The Minister of Education is on record as stating:

Clearly, if Government is to hold the private sector to promoting the policy objectives of the sector as a whole, then we will require the necessary quantitative and qualitative assessment of the private sector. (Asmal 2002a: 127)

The sector’s contribution to national post-apartheid transformational imperatives is also emphasised. The same Minister is on record as requesting that the contribution of the private sector to issues of access be illustrated. For Minister Asmal, it is necessary to examine: “To what extent is the private sector enhancing access to higher education, especially for those previously disadvantaged?” (2002a: 128). The extent to which private providers respond to those marginalised and disadvantaged sectors will continue to be an important issue for national development in a post-Apartheid context.

This thesis answers this call in attempting to understand better the ‘black box’ of the private FET provision form in South Africa.

*Legislative and economic context of skills provision*

This section sketches the most salient reasons for conducting this research. The Review of the Literature in Part II (Chapters 5 to 7) elaborates on some of them.

Economic policy has concentrated attention on the power of the market to resolve social problems. Education policy in general and policy on Further Education in particular has been dominated by an almost blind faith in market mechanisms to resolve the perceived ‘waste’ in spending. In this context, private education provision has been considered the panacea to crucial education problems. This

tendency is no doubt reinforced by the World Bank, as in their 1991 position paper on TVET. However, often enough, the empirical evidence justifying confidence in market is just not there.

Historically, there has been some concern about South Africa's skills shortage (Malherbe 1965 & 1977). During Apartheid, non-whites were excluded by decree from certain trades by legislative means, for instance, the Apprenticeship Act of 1922. In order to respond to skills' deficits, the government of the time adopted a deliberate policy of supplementing white skills with those imported from Europe. Bearing in mind that as a result of Apartheid legislation, Africans only became legally entitled to become apprentices after the *Weihahn Report of 1979* (Weihahn 1982), and since the apprenticeship system itself declined in the 1980s and 1990s, African people were never really provided an opportunity en masse for skills development. This historical deficit has spilled over into the current era. It affects not only the skills available, but also its current nature and form.

The current notion of 'skills shortage' therefore needs to be understood within this historical context. It holds considerable sway over the reasons for the lack of developing or attracting intermediate skills of sufficient quantity and quality (Kraak 2004). This is ostensibly an important reason for the National Skills Development Strategy, as the Minister of Labour lamented: "...South Africa is not presently equipped with the skills it needs for economic and employment growth and social development" (DoL 2001: 4).

There is also a suggestion that the public FET colleges just cannot cope with provision of these basic skills. Thus the power of private provision becomes particularly significant as a means by which to achieve increased skills. The notion of complementarity between public and private providers is therefore particularly important. Thus without articulating it, there is an attempt to respond to the skills shortage, either real or imagined, in a way that suggests that public provision needs to be supplemented by sufficient high quality alternative provision forms, either for- or non-profit forms, to respond to the skills deficit.

While there is no doubt a shortage in certain high-skilled areas, the perceived shortage is an ideological construct that assumes South Africa's survival depends on a meaningful response to a high skills future as a result of globalisation and international competitiveness. But as King et al. (2002b) point out, although South

Africa's response is "useful in terms of long term aspirations...it is not an adequate starting point..." And the current crisis could be the result of an "inadequate reading of what specific opportunities exist for South Africa and its citizens." (King et al. 2002b: 31).

The link between education and market, and more particularly the way in which education is considered to hold the answer to challenges of the economy, is nowhere more deliberate than in private provision. Popular discourse suggests that private providers respond much more effectively to the market. While the notion of 'response' and 'education' appears quite narrow in this perspective, this research will identify considerations that underpin this understanding.

Contestations in education, for instance over the academic/practical or mental/manual debate, are long-standing and have their origins in the economic sphere. The growth of private provision has been considered to bridge these and other divides successfully by ensuring an appropriate mix of theory and practical in terms of programme provision or provision considered appropriate for purpose (World Bank 1991).

International trends which indicate a convergence of academic and practical training have become important as a result of economic developments. Japanese success, for instance, draws attention to effective education strategies and, in particular, to the importance of a good technical education. This experience has laid the basis for the crucial role of technical grounding for effective and responsive workplace training (see Gill, Fluitman & Dar 2000 and Johanson & Adams 2004). Whether public providers are able to supply this training as efficiently and cost effectively as their private counterparts is questionable. Indeed, a recent World Bank project into the South African tourism sector revealed that employers preferred graduates of private institutions (Chandra et al. 2000). While the underlying motivation for this finding is not surprising as it reinforces some conventional norms in South Africa, it is necessary to provide a comprehensive account of this type of private training to justify this understanding. This study is intended to explore whether private providers do, in fact, grant qualifications or programmes that are necessarily more responsive to the formal labour market and which, therefore, enable more effective employment outcomes. It has been found, for instance, that private providers concentrate on disciplines that require less capital outlay as a study in Zimbabwe

reflected (Bennell 2000) or that they simply provide the most cost effective programmes which justify significant profitability. This suggests a particularly focussed justification for private provision, but requires empirical evidence in different contexts, for it to be sustained.

While private provision has been considered more efficient and responsive as compared to its public counterpart (World Bank 1991), efficiency and responsiveness are both contested notions. This research will explore the import of these notions and examine the extent of their relevance in the sector. Significantly, the public FET sector in South Africa is also required to address these very prerogatives.

Private provision has become particularly important for foreign countries to secure market potential. The proliferation of foreign higher education providers, substantially reduced more recently in South Africa at least, has become a particularly important feature of the global education industry <sup>1</sup>. The acceptance of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) is likely to have a particularly significant effect on private provision for those countries that accept its stipulations. It will effectively deregulate education and training in national contexts.

As South Africa becomes more accepted as a development partner in other parts of Africa, particularly southern Africa, the private FET institutions will acquire opportunities for entering new markets for investment in neighbouring states. Evidence of the significant number of African students in the private higher education sector in South Africa and the more recent incursions of private providers into other parts of Africa provides indications that South Africa is likely to play a meaningful role as an education exporter in the continent. South Africa's infrastructure will play a valuable role in a context in which insufficient internal demand is forthcoming to generate an indigenous private sector. However, there is also the possibility of an exploitative relationship in which South African providers use their greater market power to capture emerging markets from local providers. There is evidence in the case of Zimbabwe, for instance, that there is a significant market for foreign qualifications (Bennell 2000) and that an increasing number of students from neighbouring countries are registered at South African institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> For instance the UK earns more than GBP7billion (more than R90billion) per annum from TVET exports (Bullivant 1998, cited in Brown and Keep 1999)

Current attempts to change the institutional landscape of FET provision in both the private and public spheres suggest that this study will serve an important purpose. Specific legislative directives likely to change the landscape include the National Skills Development legislation, incorporated in the National Skills Development Strategies (NSDS) 2001 and 2005 (DoL 2001 & 2005). The underpinning philosophy of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is that learning and its accreditation can take place at any institutional locale, thus focussing on the learning rather than on its institutional positioning.

Clearly, some private providers have been known to gain from this imperative. The NQF has related legislation including that of the 'Skills Development and Levies Act' (RSA 1999) which also saw the establishment of 25 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). Each SETA is armed with a substantial annual budget, sourced from the private sector in terms of this Act. In terms of legislation, funds are to be ploughed back into each economic sector through approved education and training programmes. Learnerships were to replace the old apprenticeship system, which incorporated theory and on-site training. Private providers indicate that they are ideally placed to offer courses relevant to the skills strategies of the various SETAs. New market opportunities have been opened up for them, which enable them to take advantage of the new skills regime in the country.

These are powerful incentives for growth in both the private and public sectors, and it is expected that this study will provide a solid initial foundation for on-going research activities in the private FET sector. After regulation, private FET is likely to make an ever-increasing impact on South Africa's socio-economic development.

## **Methodological considerations**

The fieldwork was conducted under auspices of the Human Sciences Research Council, the organisation in which I was employed at the time. A quantitative assessment of the sector, undertaken in 2002, and incorporated in this study reports on various institutional features that pertain to the national private post school vocational education landscape. This study used the data from a pre-registration exercise designed to better understand the sector in order to implement regulation that was conducted by the DoE in 2001. The database revealed details of 869

providers, supplying addresses and learner numbers for the year 2000 and which provided projections for 2001. Using this source database, the quantitative study shed light on details of provision including ownership, learner and staff composition and programme details. Ownership details included a working typology based on for-profit, not-for profit and in-house providers. The management and administrative composition of providers includes demographic details of management, employment status and gender composition. Learner details include employment status, age and demography. Data on the size of institutions was also collected. Educators' details include the educator-learner ratio, their qualifications, employment status (part or full time) and demographic and gender characteristics. Information about programmes included South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) fields in which most learners were registered and the SETA affiliation of the provider. Other information provided details of the mode of study (full/part time), form (distance/residence or both) and salient issues regarding quality procedures and linkages with local environments (labour, institutional and other community-based initiatives).

The follow up qualitative study undertaken in 2003, expanded and contextualised some of the information obtained in the quantitative component. The sample case studies of selected providers documented the details of the nature and form of provision. It explored the extent that providers responded to national development prerogatives in the process of provision and in particular, those prerogatives considered significant in the context of a post-Apartheid education and training structure including access, redress and equity.

In addition, the extent to which providers responded to objectives they themselves identified was considered a key issue for analysis. In this regard, it was particularly important that the extent to which organisational processes and procedures and the allocation of appropriate resources had been directed at responding to articulated objectives. The perceptions of learners, teachers and managers were a crucial component of this study. These were used as a basis for examining whether learner needs were being met (and the extent to which these indeed responded to national development criteria), and whether teaching staff were adequately qualified and resourced (both in terms of material and human resources) to undertake the task to which the institution had committed itself. Thus the extent to which managers and administrators succeeded in providing an appropriate level of support and direction

to achieve identified objectives was considered significant. The study also examined the linkages existent between providers and the business, community, other education and training structures, locally and nationally.

The nature of this study cannot but examine considerations of quality and relevance in unpacking national development imperatives. Conceptions of ‘quality education’ held by various role players and appropriateness for purpose were also unpacked. The way in which issues of race, class and gender intersect in this provision form represented an important component of this study. In addition, governance issues formed a significant component of the overall study in identifying the extent to which democratic transformation in the post-Apartheid context have been realised.

#### *Complexity of researching the private provider sector*

The issue of private FET provision was fraught not the least because of the impending implementation of regulatory mechanisms for the sector (as discussed in the introduction). The timing of the study had important implications for the ways in which data was reported by providers. Special effort had to be made to reassure the ‘private’ provider community that the research was not in any way intended to covertly undermine the sector or elements of it. Public contestations around the notion of privatisation needed to be taken into account.

These considerations meant that at every stage it was necessary to emphasise that this study did not form part of the envisaged regulation. That it would invariably aid understanding of the sector, which would benefit the sector as well as the regulators. Providers were particularly wary of the undue attention that this study might engender in the sector and needed to be assured that inappropriate disclosure would not be undertaken and that sensitive information would not be divulged. It was, therefore, necessary to handle information obtained sensitively to take account of provider fears that some ‘classified’ information might be used by competitors against them.

The underpinning context of working in this sector was the need to tread carefully through a terrain fraught with ideological baggage punctuated with considerable vested interests. In many cases livelihoods were perceived to be threatened as the very existence of the sector was thought to be under attack.



## **Definitional issues**

### *Boundaries by level of provision*

With respect to the focus of this study, the current legislative framework gives no easy location of the TVET level. Provision at this level is incorporated under the FET band of the NQF<sup>2</sup>. The FET band, however, is not restricted to post-school provision, which makes the private TVET post-school provision difficult to place neatly in the South African education system. The level also incorporates the last three years of academic schooling as well vocational and career-oriented courses in technical colleges and institutions that are equivalent to Grades 10 –12 in the academic stream. Both public and private providers operate in both the academic and vocational streams.

The Department of Education uses the term quite ambiguously in its characterisation of private TVET institutions (called FET institutions) in its call for pre-registration in 2001 and its current legislative framework to regulate the sector (RSA 1998a and RSA 2006a). Current conceptions of private FET used by the DoE refer to those institutions not registered with provincial authorities as ‘independent schools’ and who offer programmes at levels 2 to 4 on the NQF. Providers who offer school programmes of study in a vocational direction are thus excluded from the national FET registration process as falling under the ‘schooling’ category and therefore a provincial responsibility. As a result, the private TVET sector is identified by its focus on post-school vocational provision. The diagram below (Table 1) describes this distinct focus:

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<sup>2</sup> There are three distinct education and training bands or levels on the NQF established by the South African Qualifications Authority Act (Act 58 of 1995): General Education and Training (GET) at level 1, Further Education and Training (FET) at levels 2-4 and Higher Education and Training (HET) at level 5 and beyond (RSA 1995).

**Table 1: Definitional boundaries of the private FET sector in South Africa**

<b>Private FET (school)</b>	<b>versus</b>	<b>Private (non-school) TVET at the FET level</b>
Private FET institutions offering private senior secondary schooling.		Private post-school vocationally - oriented education and training.
These providers need to register with the Provincial Departments of Education		These providers need to register with the National Department of Education

*Source: adapted from Akoojee 2003.*

Table 1 illustrates the definitional boundaries of the FET band in terms of the current education and training framework and policy. The column on the left outlines the school-level provision which is distinguished from the non- or post-school vocational and skills development focus to the right. This distinction needs to be understood in context of the provision identified in Chapter 8 which shows that providers who are registered for FET programmes are also likely to offer programmes at other levels. This is especially important since the NQF is designed to be ‘programme’ driven, which is expected to result in “...greater permeability and articulation across boundaries between the differing sub-sectors of FET, and between FET and Higher Education and Training, thereby promoting progression and diversity of provision” (Kraak & Hall 1999: 52). Indeed, it is argued by Kraak (2003a) and McGrath (2003a) that there is a gap in public provision at level 5, which these private providers are likely to be filling. However, it is unclear whether these providers are, in fact, formally considered to lie in the FET or HET bands.

For convenience, the private TVET sector as defined above will now be referred to as private Further Education and Training (FET) in South Africa to distinguish it from other provision levels on the NQF. In this regard, the term private colleges, although used in some instances, is not particularly useful as it would refer to a type of private provision which would encompass all levels.

*Terminology - TVET and FET*

Internationally the terminology associated with the post-school vocationally specific training regime has undergone transition. There has, in effect, been a shift from vocational education and training to the notion of ‘skills development’ (King & McGrath 2002 and McGrath 1998). The rationale for this is explained by the existence of a new post-fordist production technique, which requires significant changes in the way in which skills are conceptualised. The shift to skills

development represents a broader notion of skills, incorporating multi-skilling, flexibility, and includes knowledge and attitudes for lifelong learning as a response to rapid economic and technological change. As King and McGrath note, the notion of skills development "...has both an equity and competitiveness importance under conditions of globalisation" (2002: 123). Further the lack of skills contributes in large measure to social exclusion as the International Labour Office (ILO) pointed out (ILO 1998).

In South Africa, the technical education sector has undergone a considerable shift in nomenclature recently. The transition from 'Technical' to 'Further' education is a recent phenomenon in South Africa (Badroodien 2003; Gamble 2002). The term FET was first adopted in legislation in 1998 (Badroodien 2003). The term was used in the Department of Education's *White Paper on Education and Training of 1995* and the *White Paper on Further Education and Training of 1998* (DoE 1995; DoE 1998) to define a more comprehensive, interlocking sector than that which had existed previously as Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The main reason for a shift after 1994 in terms of these documents was that FET emphasised inclusivity. It referred to the wide range of academic, pre-vocational, general vocational and occupationally-specific vocational courses to prepare young people for industry, as well as focusing on the overall learning needs of people from the wider community. This combined initiative, it was asserted, assisted in the broader policy goals of reducing (or even eliminating) pressing social problems of unemployment, income inequality and poverty (DoE 1995; Republic of South Africa 1998b; Gamble 2003: 12). The FET band also supposedly brought together under one conceptual framework widely diverse groups of learners and stakeholders, including the pre-employed, unemployed and employed youths and adults (DoE 1998a).

I contend, however, that more important than the inclusivity associated with the name change, the real reasons for the change in terminology rest elsewhere. Technical education was associated with sub-standard education designed for manual work associated with Apartheid economic social and educational exclusion. Chisholm (1992) shows how the divide between mental and manual labour assumes particular ideological forms. Also the shift to the term 'further' more than any other reason tends to reflect the changing landscape of education in South Africa and makes it responsive to 'level' on the NQF rather than education for a particular,

ostensibly economic, purpose. As a term removed from its past racial baggage and ‘depoliticised’, it now suggests a neutrality to describe a particular educational form. Seeing also that it incorporates the last three levels of schooling, it cannot be related in either purpose or form to the inferior technical education of the previous order.

### **Between the HSRC and the University: Challenges in design and process**

This section discusses the way in which this academic work came to fruition. It provides essential background to the work, its peculiar trajectory, challenges and complexities. In particular, it discusses the relationship between this thesis and the published documents on the data that have preceded it. It clarifies my role in the work and the involvement of multiple individuals in data-gathering, which served to both enhance and constrain aspects of this research. The section also examines the nature of knowledge production within the HSRC, in order to better locate my intellectual work within it.

This section locates this work which was conceived initially as a separate research undertakings of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and shows how this lead to further work specifically for this thesis.

#### *The research, the HSRC and the PhD*

My interest in the issue of Further Education and Training in general and private FET in particular was the result of joining the HSRC in the latter half of 2001 in a section undertaking research on issues related to supply and demand of Human Resources in South Africa. The role of intermediate skills as produced in FET colleges was an important focus of the research unit within the HSRC.

The unit had just been tasked by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) to undertake a scholarly analysis of key areas within national human resource supply and demand. This required an assessment of all facets of education and training from the supply perspective. While the groundwork for private provision of HET was laid by a Ford Foundation study into private Higher Education (Kruss 2004), the private FET and GET sector required considerable primary data gathering.

I undertook an assessment of private FET skills provision, which resulted in the publication of a quantitative assessment of the sector and consequently published as a chapter on 'Private FET provision' in the 2003 HRD Review (Akoojee 2003).

As that study ended, it became evident that much more information was required. It was decided that a qualitative component was required to supplement data gathered in this quantitative phase. The second study was conducted in the period 2003/4 and a monograph incorporating both the quantitative information and the qualitative case studies was published in 2005 (Akoojee 2005).

This PhD study represents the opportunity to undertake further work on a little known area in which I had already undertaken fieldwork. It represented an opportunity to reconsider both the quantitative data, gathered in 2002, and the qualitative case studies from 2003. The importance of the sector to national development required to my mind a much more theoretical basis to examining key trends taking into account the data gathered over time and regional and international developments in private education and training provision.

Thus, this particular undertaking is designed to analyse this issue in light of the data gathered for the HSRC studies. But it does this in a way that reassesses the data through a quite different analytical lens than that of the HSRC publications (see Akoojee 2003 and 2005). The focus of those publications throws light on the sector in terms of 'understanding' the sector before making any judgements on it.

Clearly, this thesis allows the critical reflection necessary after years of data-gathering and engagement in the sector. While it provides the space for reconsideration of the sector as a whole, it also allows for critical reflection on the previous published work. Thus the section on typologies, for instance, represents quite a radical reconsideration of the typological categories used in the published HSRC studies (see Chapter 8 in Part Three of this work). The thesis also allows additional feedback and consideration from outside of the organisation, while retaining internal expertise.

As a result of the overlaps in data gathering with the HSRC work, it becomes necessary to identify my role in that process. This is subject of the following section.

*My role*

The way in which data was collected and the participants involved were determined in large measure by the HSRC link. As project leader, I was responsible for the conception, design and management of the research undertaking, which required conceptualisation, managing data gathering and interpreting and documenting results.

Literature on doctoral work in the social sciences typically assumes that the fieldwork is to be done by the individual researcher who will ultimately be responsible for undertaking the thesis. As an HSRC project, the data gathering was done in concert with a host of individuals working in the organisation at the time. Additionally, the services of part-time temporary call centre operators were used to execute the survey, while for the case studies, a group of HSRC researchers assisted in conducting field visits.

The other projects in which I was involved at the time strengthened my understanding of the issues. These included notably one in which I was field worker for a private HET project (Kruss 2004) and another in which I undertook fieldwork for a public FET College Responsiveness Project (Cosser *et al.* 2003). In particular, the project on private higher education (Kruss 2004) was pertinent as the providers, in addition to their HET provision, also offered programmes at the FET level.

The other works related to sub-Saharan and international TVET trends in which I was engaged at the time of this study was also pertinent to my understanding of the sector. These studies included various national, regional and international comparative studies with South Africa as a focus. In particular, they explored the interaction between the South African socio-economic context and the public FET College sector. The following were the research investigations that fed into this work.

A field study for an HSRC project on public FET provision in South Africa required an examination of labour market linkages at one pre-merged public FET College in KwaZulu-Natal (Cosser *et al.* 2003). Another HSRC research project required insight into national priorities as understood by key government stakeholders as part of a six-country Department for International Development (DFID) study into the role of post-basic education and training and poverty in South Africa (the South African section is available in King *et al.* 2006). The latter

was particularly useful in developing a framework for the ‘developmental priorities’ of the government, which provided an important starting point for the conceptual framework undertaken for this work. It complemented earlier work undertaken for the Geneva-based RUIG research network exploring the role of globalisation and its impact on education and training in South Africa (results of this work are published in Akoojee & McGrath 2004 & 2006.)

In addition, expertise gained in the sub-Saharan studies into public (and private) further education and training was strengthened by my involvement in a co-funded British Council/HSRC/Joint Education Trust seven country comparative study into vocational education and training (VET) provision in Southern Africa. It identified key trends in TVET provision in the region and was subsequently published as a research monograph (Akoojee, Gewer & McGrath 2005).

All of these experiences fed into this project in various ways. While the national and cross-national studies enabled me to encompass a wider lens into the field of TVET provision, they also made it imperative that this thesis should have a clear focus of its own. It is therefore firmly located in the core issue of the impact of private FET skills provision on national development in South Africa.

#### *The study as an ‘HSRC project’*

The way in which this work was affected by the link with the HSRC requires some analysis of the relationship between the HSRC and the government and some of its structures, including the Department of Education, which was the entity with whom this work was linked. Each of these relationships and the way in which they affected this work are discussed in this section.

As identified earlier, there were two HSRC-linked publications which resulted from this work - a chapter on private FET provision in the *2003 HRD Review* (Akoojee 2003) and an HSRC research monograph (Akoojee 2005). My employment at the HSRC not only shaped the project and data gathering (as already discussed), but also determined the way it was reported. This makes it necessary to discuss the sometimes quite complex link between HSRC and its primary funder – the government.

The link between the HSRC and the government is a contested one. As a national research organisation, substantially subsidised by the state, there is an expectation

that it needs to serve a critical role but also that this critique needs to be muted. It, therefore, needs to exercise care about the extent of its critical faculty.

There have been calls for some distance between the organisation and the state, but the intention to make it less reliant is unfortunately hampered by financial imperatives. The historic relationship between the HSRC and the Apartheid government, in which the organisation was the de facto academic arm of the state, means that some critique might well be assumed to be the result of its reactionary past. Although to a large extent the old guard was not present, its liberal white leadership tended to be particularly sensitive to these accusations, at least at the rhetorical level. There was a tendency, at least at the time that this research was undertaken, to water down critique. Indeed, there was a concerted attempt to ensure that the HSRC was not wedded to the old order and that any vestige of its earlier Apartheid past was obliterated. As a result, at the time the study was conducted, there was an in-organisation muting of critique lest there be an accusation levelled that it was responding to an agenda that was reminiscent of its past. There was a sense at the highest level of the organisation that the role of the HSRC is one underpinned by what is called a 'policy-driven research' agenda (Orkin 2004). While there was, and still remains, some resistance from within the organisation that this contradicts the very nature of the research enterprise as a generally critical voice, it is evident that some of the research produced by the HSRC, while not ostensibly censored, is carefully reported to take on board the way in which it is likely to be received by government. It could be argued that this compromises its capacity as a critical arm of society. There have been calls for neutrality of the organisation, but neutrality assumes a relationship in which critique is not only possible but actively encouraged.

Lest it be construed that the research produced in the organisation is party political, it needs to be remembered that there is a remarkable degree of autonomy, both in terms of determining of its research agenda and the reports that result from it. It could also be argued, however, that critique is 'stunted' rather than 'muted'. In this regard the lessons of the Apartheid past appear to loom large in the minds of those government officials who have borne the brunt of being silenced by the Apartheid government. The kind of official position is particularly interesting as the following excerpt from the HSRC Draft Bill (2004) discussed at the time illustrates:



A science council such as the HSRC must be aware of and responsive to the political process, yet step aside from the political arena. It must be non political but not apolitical, disinterested but yet not uninterested. [Department of Science and Technology (DST) 2004: 5]

This is arguably a skilful way of ensuring that while the official position is that it is not to be considered an extension of government, yet it needs to be involved in its business, i.e., research. There is a hazy reference to its exact relationship. While it places itself as part of wider political developments, there is a sense that it needs to serve as an independent 'observer' of socio-political developments, with emphasis on scientifically appropriate, and possibly socio-politically neutral, conclusions.. Clearly, the way in which this role is managed would be the critical feature of any meaningful assessment of the organisation.

The organisation is, therefore, expected to be 'responsible' in the way in which it manages its autonomy. Research at the HSRC is a result of a delicate balance of 'relevance', 'appropriateness', 'critique' and 'debate', within bounds considered acceptable. As a result, there would therefore be some degree of screening within the research programmes about what can be admitted publicly and the extent to which the boundaries are to be trespassed.

#### *The HSRC and the Department of Education*

The contested relationship between the HSRC and the government has implications for the kind of co-operation secured from the DoE. While the DoE was keen to obtain more information on the size and shape of the private FET sector to assist it to understand its regulation responsibility, there was sensitivity about the issue of private provision of education and training from within. There was a sense that the department should not be seen as encouraging the sector. This was heightened by the context of a perceptible government-wide neo-liberal privatisation thrust. The department at that time was particularly sensitive to accounts that it was rationalising education spending. Thus, the DoE was trying to allay fears that it was promoting private provision as an alternative to public provision, in an attempt to downsize for cost-saving purposes. The department was under increasing pressure from some of its alliance partners to distance itself from private provision and not to be associated with its growth. For instance, the opposition to privatisation came from the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the opposition to private education came from Congress of South Africa Students (COSAS) who

accused the Minister of favouring private schools at the expense of the public ones. Indeed the National Youth Commission (NYC) vowed at one stage to close all unregistered colleges, despite the absence of a legal framework being in place (Magazi 2002). Thus the curt response to any suggestion in this article that the Department had possibly been motivated more by economic factors, rather than educationally sound ones, in its over-eager attempt to rationalise the educator labour force in the post-1994 period.

The results of this sensitivity meant that although the constitutional imperative for private provision was theoretically upheld, there was widespread vigilance from official quarters about their embrace of this reality. It was therefore considered necessary to publicly distance the Department from the accusation that it was encouraging private provision if it meant that it was accused of reneging on its social responsibility commitments.

This kind of guarded tolerance for all things private meant that information needed to be carefully managed. While the request for use of the pre-registration database was granted on the usual basis that any report that emerged from it was to be discussed with the Department, it was clear that such a discussion was less of a formality than might have usually been the case. This inevitably affected the way in which the reports were crafted and they clearly took government sensitivity into account, both at the point of writing and finalisation for publication.

While this study did not run into serious difficulties, a complementary study into private schooling was challenged by the DoE on the basis that it had not been rigorous enough in identifying the actual number of private schools. Other HSRC education research, on student choice (Cosser 2003) and private schooling (du Toit 2003), was also the subject of considerable critique by the DoE at around this time. The result was that I was particularly wary of the way in which this study was to be received. More specifically, it was important that, as an HSRC employee, I exercised caution in the recommendations that emerged from the study.

## **Organisation of this thesis**

The thesis is organised as follows:

Part One, which incorporates chapters 2 to 4, identifies the methodological considerations which underpinned this work. Chapter 2 provides the theoretical basis for using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Chapter 3 identifies the quantitative methodology employed, while chapter 4 provides an explanation of qualitative methods.

Part Two of this thesis reviews pertinent literature relevant to the complex questions of national development and the role of the developmental state in this. Chapter 5 unpacks the changing roles of the developmental state, with the focus on Globalisation and its impacts. This chapter outlines the way in which the South African national development is understood in terms of an international context. The way in which private and public sectors have currently been able to merge and become blurred both in terms of form and function is addressed in chapter 6. This part closes with an analysis of recent TVET debates internationally and regionally and identifies the role of skills development in national development. The way in which the South African FET sector has unfolded in the twentieth century is identified.

Part Three provides the results and findings of this work. Chapter 8 proposes a typology of the various elements that make up the sector in South Africa. The initial typology used to describe the sector, i.e., for profit, not for profit and in-house, represented an important starting point but was unable to capture the complexity of provision in the country. The alternative suggested in this work forms the primary category for understanding delivery and provision forms, including the necessity for providers to have premises for conducting programmes. Chapter 9 and 10 explores the extent to which elements of the sector are responsive and receptive. Responsiveness refers to labour market prerogatives, while 'receptiveness' identifies the extent to which various provision forms in terms of composition, delivery, product provisioning (programmes) and 'non-labour' market lifelong learning considerations.

# **Part I**

## **METHODOLOGY**

This part outlines the methods used in the data-gathering component of the study. It locates these methods in terms of the traditions from which they emerge; and identifies the various methodological challenges experienced in the course of this research. Chapter 2, which follows this introduction, situates my approach within the broader and conflicting paradigms of social science research and chapter 3 describes the quantitative research methods employed. Chapter 4 elaborates on the way in which case studies were undertaken to understand some of the quantitative data. The location of ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ phases of the study in separate chapters represents a structural rather than a theoretical position as the study as a whole provides the basis for a blending of both approaches.

## Chapter 2

### THE THEORETICAL LANDSCAPE: QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TRADITIONS

The role of the researcher in data-gathering is as important as the results that emanate from it. The very different research traditions chosen need to be understood as deliberative choices based as much on researcher philosophical orientation which determine particular research questions. This conceptual starting point is an important one as it determines not only what research needs to be undertaken but also the manner of its implementation. It provides the basis for understanding the way in which researchers at various historical moments have approached various questions over time. The research traditions encapsulated in the broad categories of ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ identified in the next section represent the starting point for understanding the way in which this research was undertaken and the results reported.

The manner in which the data gathering is undertaken in any research activity is underpinned by deliberate and conscious decision-making derived from one’s distinct philosophical orientation. It is not simply a technical exercise. It is underpinned not only by considerations about how human beings interact with each other and the world but also about perceptions of the way society functions and the way in which the social world is constructed. In other words, research is an intimately human exercise. Lincoln and Guba (2000) have argued that social science research is intrinsically linked to one’s paradigm, broadly interpreted as a set of beliefs that underpin human action. In keeping with these considerations, research undertakings are distinct in the way they offer explanations about the social world. The same authors point to issues of ethics (or axiology), epistemology and ontology in their deliberations about methodology, which determine, in an important manner, the way in which the researcher approaches, conducts and consequently reports on the research. Research undertakings are, therefore, to be understood as unique premises and assumptions held by the person or persons undertaking the research.

This is not to suggest that research is an amorphous undertaking - it has certain prescribed traditions, without which results cannot be considered legitimate. The point is that social research cannot be seen as objective and neutral, outside of the individual undertaking the activity.

This chapter sets the context for understanding the methods outlined in chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis. It provides the basis for understanding the actual methods employed by outlining the major theoretical research positions and the assumptions that underpin them. It begins with the premise that a distinction needs to be drawn between the preferred research approach and the conventional data-gathering methods associated with these. The first part of this chapter outlines the major research positions and the philosophical assumptions associated with each, which leads in to an elaboration of the critical interpretivist framework which serves as the central feature underpinning the choice of method.

## **The quantitative research tradition**

The quantitative research tradition is associated with a positivist perspective with its origins in the natural sciences. Taken from methods applied in laboratory experimentation, the uses of exemplars provide the basis for using variables, which control and manipulate for desired results. Quantitative research methodologies derive from a perspective that considers results to be value-neutral and research conducted within this 'positivist perspective' borrows from the natural sciences, which are committed to controlling variables and outcomes. Thus this perspective emerges from one that is designed to determine laws and principles; in the case of social science, those necessary for social action. This tradition, and the perspective from which it emerges, therefore, considers that it is essential that some attention be given to 'verifying' in order to ensure confidence in findings (Sechrest 1992). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) distinguish between positivists and post-positivist positions. Post-positivists tend to base their response to positivists on the 'falsification' of hypotheses, rather than their verification (Popper 1963).

Critics of both positivist and post-positivist traditions have been particularly wary of the way in which these traditions tend to predict and control human action, which according to them leads to a 'dehumanising of social science' (Poggenpoel et al. 2001; Schurink 1998). Although post-positivists have attempted to respond to some

of the more obvious criticisms levelled towards the positivist tradition, they have been accused of not having gone far enough in moving fundamentally from initial positivist positions committed to the confidence in ‘absolute’ truth. They have been accused of simply inverting the whole notion of verification with the rest of the constructs intact.

The *response* of quantitative researchers to the most obvious problems identified is to argue that the problem lies less with the choice of scientific methodology than the ‘frailty’ of human nature as this excerpt illustrates:

...it can be argued that science (or more appropriately the scientific approach) is a means not an end, with it we can better understand the human condition and predict the consequences of action, generalised to some degree. How this understanding is used or what action is taken will be based upon values, the realm of philosophy. Thus it may not be science that de-personalizes, but the values that the people who apply it have...if there is any corruption of the human spirit, it lies in beliefs and human nature, not in a scientific approach. (Black 2002: 2)

This kind of response, however, ignores the very nature of research as a human process, from inception, to design and to implementation. Human beings, as active participants are in the process of constantly engaging with their world. This engagement cannot simply be considered the product of survey or experimentation without the research becoming decontextualised. Because research undertaken within this perspective can, and needs to, assume a neutral value-independent stance, results might not be as comprehensive as might be required.

## **The qualitative research tradition**

Qualitative research is described as those “...paradigms (that) stem from an anti-positivistic, interpretative approach, is idiographic, thus holistic in nature, and its main aim is to understand social life and the meaning that people attach to everyday life” (Schurink 1998: 241). While it could be considered problematic to describe qualitative approaches in terms of what it is not, it does suggest a clearly defined epistemological distinction from the dominant quantitative approach. Similarly, Holliday (2002) suggests that the basis of the differences between the two traditions is to be found in the qualitative positions’, “...opposition to positivism...the philosophical basis for quantitative research” (p. 2).

While there are no unified approaches to qualitative research design, there are various positions within its broad ambit that illustrate key themes. The extensive literature developed by Denzin, Lincoln and Guba (Denzin & Lincoln 2002; Lincoln & Guba 2000.) described in their various *Handbooks of Qualitative Research*, now in its 5<sup>th</sup> edition, examines various conceptual issues necessary for undertaking qualitative research. Equally, the German tradition characterised by Flick (2002) and others (for instance Miles & Huberman 1994) have provided important insights into the field. Both have contributed to the need for using qualitative research methodologies and perspectives.

Qualitative research is arguably able to provide a richer understanding of human action as it is situated within the reality of the 'subject', to use a term favoured by quantitative researchers. It is, therefore, less divorced from the real world than quantitative 'abstract' accounts which paper over the reality on the ground and which arguably sanitise the social situation. As Ball (1990) points out in *Politics and policy making in education: Explorations in policy sociology*:

...the messy realities of influence, pressure, dogma, expediency, conflict, compromise, intransigence, resistance, error, opposition, and pragmatism...It is easy to be simple, neat and superficial and to gloss over these awkward realities...It is difficult to retain messiness and complexity and still be penetrating. (Ball 1990: 9)

In this landmark account on the causes and consequences of the 'political' factor in the development of education policy, Ball (1990) explains that reality is never neat and tidy, despite all the attempts to portray it as such. Large-scale survey instruments and consequent quantification of data, while they unveil the big picture, cannot capture the complexity of reality adequately and in this lies the qualitative contribution

Without simplifying the widely varied conceptual positions associated within qualitative research, as is also evident in quantitative traditions, the basis of this perspective stems from the need to unravel the uniqueness and complex nature of social phenomena. This takes the form of uncovering the sometimes considerably diverse sets of meaning of the participants involved as a way of unearthing reality - or at least a perspective of it, as Denzin & Lincoln (2000; 2002) remind us. Flick (2002) considers the purpose of qualitative research to be unravelling the nature of 'understanding' or *verstehen* (Flick 2002) unique to that particular social form.



Qualitative researchers dismiss the view that they lack methodological rigour; that they are accepting of all ‘taken for granted’ notions of human action; and that they are therefore far too subjective. Various mechanisms have been proposed to ensure that the excesses are kept in check including triangulation and mixed method approaches (described later in this chapter).

*Qualitative research within a critical interpretivist framework*

The constructivist perspective within qualitative research enables an understanding of the way in which meaning is unravelled and is considered to be socially embedded. It sees the subjects’ reality as one that is socially constructed and places emphasis on the processes by which meaning is constructed. It allows us a means by which to uncover the meaning imposed on the construct by the researcher. It suggests that those involved in the ‘meaning-making process,’ i.e., the researchers, essentially determine what it is that is fundamentally ‘real’ and ‘meaningful’. It cannot be otherwise, especially since it is the ‘understandings’ of these participants, which enables the grasp of the often complex and messy reality (Ball 1990). Since this component is at the core of unveiling social reality, it is ultimately these socially defined meaning-making elements that shape action, or inaction. What constitutes legitimate study is, therefore, conditioned by this conceptual understanding of the nature of social action. It is therefore not difficult to understand why the positivist tradition is at odds with a position that considers the human condition to be more constructed (Lincoln & Denzin 2000; Flick 2002).

Creswell (1998) identifies at least three ideological perspectives within qualitative studies. They are the postmodernists, critical theorists and feminists (*ibid*: 79- 84). Some postmodernists, tend to critique the emphasis on societal structures in light of the perceive failure as a result of the decline of the communist world order, with some forms rejecting notions of social justice as far too difficult to pin down (see for instance the work of Foucault 1988 and others). Feminism focuses on the way gender has been neglected as a social construct and which results in preservation of a patriarchal societal structure and critical theorists, who tend to explode myths of equity in society. What is required is an all-encompassing perspective that allows an insight into both these perspectives without ignoring them as significant in differing contexts. The critical theoretical school tends to be one such ‘catch-all’ perspective, which in varying degrees accommodates both the feminist as well as post-modern

concerns, without downplaying the role of economic elements, which are ultimately a significant determinant of social action.

Within a constructivist perspective, there is an orientation that considers the role of social transformation as critical to effective and relevant research. This perspective, associated with the critical research tradition, has roots in the German Frankfurt School of the 1920s. While there are obvious variations to the original thinking of a group of German scholars in the 1920s, the critical research perspective suggests that there is a need to understand the complex dynamic of social structures from a position that relates to historical problems of domination, alienation and social struggle. In the context of a commitment to engaging and actively shaping or transforming inequalities it serves as an enticing methodological lens by which to understand social structures. A key criticism of this perspective is the tendency to champion the cause at the expense of the processes that enable these to be played out, which can result of over-emphasising the economic dimension.

The agenda of critical research is, therefore, unwavering in its commitment to social justice, however understood. One position, as articulated by Kincheloe & McLaren (1998), is distinct by virtue of its commitment to a particular ideological position:

To engage in critical post-modern research is to take part in a process of critical world-making, guided by the shadowed outline of a dream of a world less conditioned by misery, suffering and the politics of deceit. It is, in short, a pragmatics of hope in an age of cynical reason...in terms of a frontal assault against the ravages of global capitalism and its devastation of the global working class (p. 303)

In particular, what critical theorists and researchers working within this paradigm respond to is the taken-for-granted nature of the excesses of an unfettered capitalist economic structure, which in this view is associated with economic inequity. They provide a lens by which to focus on the needs of the downtrodden and socially excluded - the voices that are often not heard in national decision-making fora. Notwithstanding the commitment to understanding and unravelling ideology, the concerns of the critical theorist are inherently prone to the danger of an ideological onslaught. There needs however to be some sort of balance as the overwhelming concern with economic justice tends to conceal consideration of other forms of inequity and power positions in society. It is important that this theoretical position

ultimately provides a lens for looking at society critically. In particular, it enables awareness of forms of inequity that otherwise might not be exposed.

The ideological perspectives of those undertaking the research serves as an important means for understanding the way in the research has been both produced and understood. As Jesse Goodman (1998) warns, “Conducting openly ideological research is filled with pitfalls, but the alternative of ‘value neutral’ research is spurious” (p. 63). It is necessary for this reason that disclosure is important. The extent of this disclosure is necessary to understanding the research is, however, uncertain. Thus in the South African context the issue of race is powerful in the context of our racially fragmented past. As Fine and Weis (1998) remind us, “Race is a social construction. But race in a racist society bears profound consequences for daily life, identity, social movements, and the way in which most groups ‘other’ (others)” (p. 18). This does not and should not mean that class and gender are neglected. It does suggest that in the South African case, the racial element serves a significant role in the unfolding of the research, both in terms of design and result. Thus, besides the difficulty of finding an appropriate theoretical description of describing one’s ideology, its influence and power in shaping the research cannot be underestimated.

### **Using quantitative and qualitative methods**

Up to now, my discussion of the very different paradigmatic positions behind qualitative and quantitative research has implied that there can be no engagement between these positions. This is not the case. There is a compelling reason for using qualitative and quantitative approaches and both can quite effectively use data collection techniques considered to be associated with the other ‘camp’. It is in the use of the data and the heeding of the health warning associated with each paradigm that good research can take place.

This section begins with an analysis of the synergy between quantitative and qualitative methods. It is followed by an illustration of the importance of multiple data gathering methods. A discussion of ethical considerations, considered crucial for contemporary research and data-integrity, is then undertaken.

*Synergy of method*

There are important features traditionally associated with qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data-gathering methods have been associated with the use of in-depth, open-ended interviews, direct observation and written documents (Patton 2002: 4). More ethnographic methods have also been utilised in the effort to understand the world of the subject by the researcher attempting to get inside the world of the subject by participation. Qualitative methods have been considered to have the advantage of identifying detail, context and nuance, while they are unable to explore the macro context in light of the limited number of subjects.

Data gathering methods associated with quantitative methods include surveys, experiment, analysis of official statistics, structured observation and content analysis (Bryman 1988:11/12.). As a result of their scope, they allow for, and require, complex statistical aggregation and analysis of time and spatial trends. While, they are associated with the use of standardised questionnaires, they are able to provide large-scale responses to pre-determined categories. As a means by which to obtain the breadth of responses to the particular phenomenon under study, they represent an invaluable means by which to unearth areas not able to be gleaned from the use of in-depth qualitative methods alone. The distinction between qualitative and quantitative research is sometimes described in terms of reference to quantitative researchers as those who work with a few variables and many cases, and qualitative researchers as those who work with few cases and many variables (Ragin 1987).

There have been some quite influential attempts to see some degree of synergy between the two data-gathering methods. Silverman (2000) sees the dichotomies as highly dangerous and describes them thus:

The fact that simple quantitative measures are a feature of some good qualitative research shows that the whole 'qualitative/quantitative' dichotomy is open to question...most such dichotomies or polarities in social science (are) highly dangerous. At best, they are pedagogic devices for students to obtain first grip on a difficult field. At worst, they are excuses for not thinking, which assemble groups of researchers into armed camps unwilling to learn from one another. (Silverman 2000: 11)

In similar vein, Patton (2002) argues for a pragmatic approach, which sees the differences based on 'numeric' and 'interpretive' terms. He points out that,

Because qualitative and quantitative methods involve differing strengths and weaknesses, they constitute alternative, but not mutually exclusive, strategies for research (and that therefore)...Both qualitative and quantitative data can be collected in the same study. (Patton 2002: 14)

Others have also joined the call to see in data collection, some degree of mutual acceptance of the qualitative and quantitative positions (for instance see Labuschagne 2003; Poggenpoel *et al.* 2001; Smeyers 2001). The pragmatism of this approach considers the need for a commitment to a ‘research question’, as opposed to a ‘research position’. One view considers that the “...object under study (is) the determining factor for choosing a method and not the other way round” (Flick 2002: 5). While there is also a need for methods used to be defensible, the focus is on ensuring that appropriate data is collected in a most effective and efficient manner. In the South Africa context, Poggenpoel *et al.* (2001) see the use of both qualitative and quantitative research strategies as important depending on the research problem. Thus it is not problematic to use quantitative data-gathering methodology within a qualitative paradigm, or vice versa.

#### *Multiple data gathering methods*

Both quantitative and qualitative research positions see the commitment to multiple data collection methods as the preferred *modus operandi*. Lincoln and Guba (2000) accept that the use of “mixed methodologies (strategies) may make perfectly good sense” (p. 169). Similarly, for Denzin and Lincoln (2000), the commitment to a multi-methods approach “reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question” (p. 5).

The use of multi-methods serves as a basis for considerably tolerance between traditions. Whereas, it would not be unusual in the early 90’s to have studies rejected on the basis of what would have been considered ‘methodologically unsound data-gathering techniques’, these are less common. It is indeed a welcome change when qualitative researchers see value in the large-scale data-gathering instruments used for quantitative analysis while those committed to quantitative methods see the importance of interviewing techniques to identify salient features.

The commitment to the use of multiple methods means that there would be some interesting permutations of the mix of data-gathering procedures in current large-scale research enterprises. Thus the large-scale surveys favoured by quantitative

approaches could be quite effectively used as a starting point for launching an interpretive investigation. Responses to open-ended questions in a written survey, for instance, traditionally indicative of the quantitative method has been considered to be constitutive of qualitative data. Similarly the development of a structured interview schedule to maximise time spent during interview, and sometimes used to guide the novice interviewer to obtain certain responses, could be considered to be quite useful quantitative elements within a qualitative tradition. Furthermore the various technical means by which qualitative data is computer coded for ease of analysis could easily be considered a quantitative imposition on data collected qualitatively. While these could be construed as evidence of mutual sharing, it simply reflects a pragmatic borrowing for appropriate data-gathering means.

#### *Ethical considerations*

The formalisation of ethical research considerations has become an essential element of conventional research practice, internationally and in South Africa (Wassenaar 2006). Concern for sound ethical research practice is underpinned by the understanding that it is, "...fundamentally concerned with assuring that the dignity of human participants is respected and is not abused or violated in the search for knowledge, scientific progress, or, more mundanely, for career advancement" (Wassenaar 2006: 77). Concerns about ethics, emerge from the natural sciences, where research conduct resulted in human rights abuses, especially during the German Nazi era which resulted in acceptance of the Nuremberg Code in 1948 (Amdur 2003). While these initial welfare considerations are still paramount, the concern for ethical research practice has come to encompass both 'scientific misconduct' as well as 'plagiarism' (Wassenaar 2006: 61) within its scope.

The notion of informed consent to prevent abuse by scientists has been especially prevalent on most studies on biomedical research since then. The social sciences have been slow in ensuring compliance both internationally and in South Africa, but practices are steadily becoming the standard (Israel & Hay 2006). The acceptance of compulsory ethics review of all research involving 'human participants' by the HSRC as the 'largest social science research organisation in Africa' (Wassenaar 2006: 61) represented a landmark achievement in the continent. Most South African universities now have formal research ethics clearance procedures in place (Israel and Hay 2006). Part of the reluctance for acceptance of formal ethical conduct is

the reality that effective research, by its vary nature, means that a moral code prevails.

In essence, the requirement for ethical research practice in the social science research requires clarifying the nature of the research and ensuring that the voluntary consensual participation is secured throughout the process. In addition, it also requires concerns about confidentiality and anonymity to be respected, and accepted by the researcher, prior to the reporting of the results (Easter Davis & Henderson 2004).

The inherent danger of ensuring research ethics protocols has implications for some research undertakings. For instance, some undercover social science qualitative research which requires participants to be unaware of their role as research participants, might well be in jeopardy. Such research might just not be available, but have in any event been considered less than acceptable from a moral and ethical perspective.

The requirements of formal research ethics consideration have implications for design and implementation of research undertakings. It suggests in future that there might be need for securing participant consent at the point of proposal development. This might require much more careful planning research proposal planning than has hitherto been the case.

The establishment, organisation and functioning of the HSRC's Research Ethics Committee (REC) after the fieldwork component of this research undertaking was conducted meant that formal ethical clearance was not obtained prior to the participant interviews, although research ethics protocols were routinely undertaken by the administrative and proposal review mechanisms in place. Retrospective ethics approval was consequently obtained by the University of the Witwatersrand REC (*Protocol 2006ECE37*).

#### *Data integrity at the level of analysis*

There are important caveats to bear in mind with regard to reconciliation of the two approaches. The need for mutual reconciliation should be tempered by a more sober assessment of the status quo. While the need for data integrity at the point of data-gathering technique appears to be bridged at least symbolically, what is required is a commitment to data integrity at the level of data interpretation. Thus the role of

the researcher/s as a crucial component in the process needs to be accepted. The centrality of the researcher in not only making the decisions which decide the research design needs to be established. Clearly, data do not speak for themselves and the imposition of the background and experiences of the researcher needs to be considered, although the intention should be to ensure that this is minimised. Thus, the notion of a 'neutral', 'unbiased', 'objective', and 'unadulterated' conception of knowledge is, and should be, contested if one is not to fall into the trap of sanitising research (Ball 1990).

## **Conclusion**

It has been argued that the qualitative perspective represents an important starting point for understanding human action and behaviour. A distinction is made between perspectives or research approaches and technical procedures or techniques for data gathering. While the distinction between qualitative and quantitative approaches at the level of data collection is possible, (the combination of technical procedures can be considered a pragmatic means to effectively respond to a research question (Patton 2002; Brannen 2005; Miles & Huberman 1994).

It is argued, therefore, that notions of research 'approach' can either be qualitative or quantitative, while 'data-gathering techniques' could incorporate elements of both depending on the research question. Thus the use of surveys and quantitative information and data-gathering methods is not inconsistent with qualitative approaches favouring observation, study of written material and documentation and verbal/oral evidence gathering. Similarly, computer-mediated methods in large-scale surveys (Sheehan & Hoy 1999) has been quite extensively utilised as is electronic means. Using e-mail has been considered an effective means by which to carry out asynchronous qualitative interviewing, with the benefit of overcoming time-space constraints, as in the work undertaken by Mann & Stewart (2000).

The strength of qualitative research techniques is its commitment to a multi-method focus for unpacking and understanding social structure. The characteristic feature of qualitative research includes appropriate choice of methods and theories, recognition and analysis of various perspectives, researcher reflections on their research act and the use of variety of approaches (Flick 2002). Conversely, an invariable advantage of quantitative techniques is that it enables the measurement of



the reactions of a large number of people to a limited set of questions and could provide the basis for facilitating comparisons and statistical aggregation of data, as Mouton and Marais (1996) argue. The challenges implicit in each of these methods need to be accommodated for any study to be rigorous and for conclusions to be legitimate and defensible.

Research should, after all, be committed to the uncovering of a particular reality or realities described by the research question. The means by which this is achieved is simply technical. Thus the research is rigorous because it is underpinned by a commitment to understanding the limitations of the data that is gathered and not simply by using appropriate data-gathering techniques to respond to a particular research question. In this regard what is up for analysis is the very reason for the choice of research question or area devised in that particular way. It is clear that the very nature of the subject and context in which the research is framed is the result of conscious decision-making, underpinned by ideology. This is not to say that results of the research should be influenced by ideology. There is a need to be rigorous and aware of pitfalls of each of the traditions.

Qualitative research is associated with multiple-methods (Denzin & Lincoln 2000), while quantitative research considers the rigour of even single methods to be paramount in ensuring validity. With regard to reliability and generalisability, there is need for research to be rigorous rather than expansive. The need for causal explanations is as important for qualitative approaches as they are for their quantitative counterparts. One of the reasons cited for the more favourable qualitative research climate in South Africa is partly the product of the changed political circumstance. The legacy of the previous political system, which favoured large-scale quantitative data-gathering methods, has in some measure given way to openness to explore qualitative methodologies. This has led in some respects to a form of qualitative enquiry that is simply tacked on to the dominant quantitative evidence, which still predominates as the primary form. While qualitative methods are considered to be important in some cases in complementing quantitative evidence - as was identified in a recent public account of poverty and its implications by a member of the Presidency<sup>3</sup> - the quantitative partiality still

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<sup>3</sup> In response to a public lecture at the HSRC, Allan Hirsch (2004) Chief Director in the Economic Council of the Presidency (considered to be the policy-making advisory council to the government) suggested the importance of qualitative understanding of poverty measures, and made specific reference to the work of Francie Lund (2004) and research into poverty indicators in KwaZulu-Natal.

predominates. However, as a result of the more substantial costs, it is seldom favoured as a realistic alternative to the current quantitative orthodoxy.

# Chapter 3

## USING QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

Chapter 2 provided some theoretical insights into this research and serves as a backdrop to understanding the way in which this research was conducted. Undertaking a quantitative assessment of the private FET sector prior to engaging a more detailed qualitative case study of selected providers concurs with the approach by Creswell (1998) who in favouring a “broad versus the more focussed view” (p. 16) lays the basis for conducting a quantitative analysis as a first step to understanding the research phenomena. In a context where very little was known about the nature, size or provision patterns as in the case of the private FET sector in South Africa, this strategy appeared to be a useful starting point. The quantitative analysis of the sector, conducted in the period May to June 2002 provided information regarding the size, shape, nature of provision and programmes offered by private providers in the country. The use of multiple methods (Denzin & Lincoln 2002) served as triangulation and affirmation of data. Chapter 4 provides an elaboration of the qualitative methods used following this component.

The first part of this section elaborates briefly on the DoE data used as a starting point for the quantitative assessment of this sector, while the second part discusses the quantitative data-gathering undertaken as part of this study. It focuses attention on the complexities of using electronic (e-mail) means of data collection, and follows with an assessment of the data-gathering, including the ethical considerations associated with electronic data-gathering means.

### **DoE pre-registration data**

A pre-registration exercise undertaken by the national Department of Education (DoE database 2001c) as reported in the 2003 publication (DoE 2003) laid the basis for the quantitative component of this study. In March 2001, the Minister of

Education published an ‘invitation’ to private FET institutions for information about aspects of their functioning to guide the process of registration (DoE 2003: 2). The purpose of the survey was to “...assess the administrative requirements for the registration of private FET institutions” to assist the Department to “know how many institutions there are, how big they are, and where they are located” (Asmal 2001b: Schedule B). Providers were required to submit details in a pre-registration form, which would incorporate the procedures for regulation as stipulated by section 41 of the FET Act (RSA 1998a). In terms of the pre-registration requirement, providers were expected to report on a number of categories including provider name, contact details, details of the person completing the questionnaire, number of sites of delivery by province and headcount enrolment in both FET and HET programmes in 2000 (actual) and 2001 (projection of approximations for the year following the survey). The questionnaire also required an indication of whether they had a management information system (MIS), an examination centre number, a company number and a SAQA registration number.

Providers were informed via advertisements placed nationally and regionally in all media (newspapers and radio) to ensure as comprehensive a survey as possible (DoE 2003). In addition various other organisations having a vested interest in the sector, including the private college association, the Association of Private Providers of Education, Training and Development (APPETD), and the various SETAs, were also asked to encourage pre-registration. The primary motivator for registration was that providers would be issued with a pre-registration acknowledgment letter, which would be an important first step in their efforts for interim registration, which would precede the final registration and would enable them to be compliant with legislation. It was unlikely that all providers would seek to become registered since there was no legislative compulsion to do so, but clearly enough had been done in terms of public announcements in the various media for adequate attention to be paid to the process. The exercise thus yielded the first systematic data about the extent of the private FET sector in the country.

The database provided information that could be quite usefully used for follow-up analysis. In addition to the valuable detail of learner headcount enrolments, the contact details of the 864 providers in the database represented the most comprehensive account of the extent of the sector. It also revealed an important difficulty in defining the sector in terms of level. Most providers did not cater

exclusively for the FET level, but also offered provision at the GET and HET levels (see chapter 8). This called for a sharpening of the definition of the study and the possibility that private FET providers were not an exclusive entity as initially envisaged.

### **The HSRC survey**

The survey conducted for the chapter for the HSRC Directory used initial quantitative figures obtained from the DoE database (DoE 2001c). While the database enabled an understanding of crucial quantitative aspects of the sector, it needed to be augmented with further details about the sector. These included details of ownership, types of providers, participants and programmes. It was therefore necessary to undertake a follow-up survey of providers using initial details provided in the DoE database (DoE 2001c). For the follow-up survey, providers' electronic details were particularly useful.

The survey method, a form of “self-reported data collection” (American Survey Association (ASA) 1995a: 1) is considered an ideal means by which to gather information intended to describe “...the nature of existing conditions, or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared, or determining the relationships that exist between specific events” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000: 169). While it is valued as a means for gathering comprehensive information, the particular advantage offered by this method included its ability to gather standardised data that would cover all providers at the same time in an ‘economical and efficient manner’ (*ibid*). It would also have the advantage in analysis of “ascertaining correlates” and allow the research team to “manipulate key factors to derive frequencies” (*ibid* 2000: 171).

#### *Electronic survey method considered*

The advent of electronic means provides an alternative mechanism for undertaking surveys. The advantage of having a large number of e-mail addresses from the DoE survey meant that it could be realistically used as an alternative to traditional postal means. The currency of the e-mail contact data list made possible the consideration of this alternative survey means to obtain responses from this ‘homogenous group’ for purposes of this research.

A cursory reading of the relevant literature suggested that using e-mail as opposed to traditional postal methods of data-collection has become particularly widespread of recent and is an often-used means for administering large-scale surveys in other countries (Selwyn & Robson 1998; Sheehan & Hoy 1999; Mann & Stewart 2000). Mann and Stewart (2000) point out that one consideration for the use of electronic means over postal surveys is that the group under study needs to be 'homogenous' (p. 69). Clearly this criterion was adequately met in this instance, where private providers, as a homogenous group, could be easily reached. The literature identified a range of advantages of electronic means over postal surveys, which included speed of feedback, with cost and time efficiency benefits. Some evidence even pointed to improved response rates as discussed in the following section.

Although the literature regarding response rates for electronic surveys was mixed, there was some reason to expect the means to achieve significant response rates. Selwyn and Robson (1998), for instance, found that 'e-mail surveys' increased response rates by between 20 and 50 per cent when compared to the traditional postal surveys (p.3). Mehta and Sivadas (1995) also found that e-mail surveys were generally found to achieve higher response rates, while others have reported success as high as 70 per cent (Sproull 1986; Kiesler & Sproull 1986). Some studies, however, reported lower response rates (Andreson & Gansneder 1995; Kittleson 1995). It has also been reported that success is sometimes attributed to using incentives and/or pre-notice and follow-up prompts (Mehta & Sivadas 1995), while others have suggested that a group cohesiveness effect inherent in e-mail sampling frames contributes to success (Sproull 1986; Kiesler & Sproull 1986). Yun & Trumbo (2000), who reported on comparisons between three modes: web, e-mail and postal forms, arrive at the conclusion that, "Considering the potential of the electronic survey method, it is only a matter of time before it becomes the major survey method" (*html web page*).

Another advantage of the electronic method was the almost immediate feedback provided by the medium and the likelihood of more efficient and speedier responses being received. The 'delivery feedback software mechanism' contained in most e-mail programmes, had the potential to provide information about whether the e-mail address was correct and allowed for immediate corrective action and verification. E-mail surveys also allow the benefit of tracking respondents, with previous respondents being easier to identify and eliminate from follow-up e-mail

notices and reminders. A particularly valuable feature of this method is its ability to serve as a filtering tool for contacting non-respondents (Sheehan & Hoy 1999: 5). The medium also allowed for a more rapid identification of duplicate responses, a time consuming process in postal surveys.

The implementation of the survey is reported under the following ‘steps’ identified in Mann and Stewart (2000) for conducting effective surveys. They include: instrument design, pre-test (piloting) and survey execution. Ethical consideration in the use of this data-collection means and mechanisms designed to ensure data integrity are also provided. Each of these is identified below.

#### *Instrument design*

The importance of survey instrument or questionnaire design cannot be underestimated (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000; ASA 1995b). According to the American Survey Association (1995c), planning the questionnaire is one of the most “critical stages in the survey development process” (p.2). While it might appear to be “plain common sense” the reward in careful planning of its construction is sometimes only discernible at the point of analysis. It is therefore particularly useful to be clear about its purpose and to ensure that it provides exactly what is required. According to the ASA, its implementation, “may involve some subtlety” (1995c: 2). Much attention was, therefore, paid to questionnaire design, with three workshops held with various participants to finalise its structure and design.

In the design of this survey, the considerable differences that exist in types and forms of private FET provision made the development of an all-encompassing ‘catch-all’ survey questionnaire challenging. It was necessary to develop a survey questionnaire that captured the nuances of the different types and forms of provision. It needed to respond to those providers who supply ‘consultancy’ facilitation at various sites and to companies that provided ‘in-house’ courses to their own staff and also ensure that it was able to speak to those who operated under licence from other larger providers. A comprehensive typology that could characterise the South African private FET landscape was not available and this made understanding the sector that much more challenging. Except for the broad characteristics of ‘for profit’, ‘not for profit’ and ‘in-house’ in sub-Saharan Africa (Atchoarena & Esquieu 2002), there was not much else in the existing literature on

private FET providers either internationally or in the country to guide questionnaire construction.

It was, therefore, necessary to utilise expertise from within the sector. The service of a consultant, a former executive member of the Association of Private Providers of Education and Training (APPETD), was solicited to assist with survey item development and verification and to ensure that terminology used was easily understandable by most providers in the sector. Thus in-depth knowledge of the sector was useful to unpack, for instance, the way in which particular terms<sup>4</sup> were likely to be understood. The same consultant was also used to assist in providing a working typology based on the categories, 'for-profit', 'not for profit' and 'in-house'. This was used as a basis for analysis (see results in Part III of this work); for identifying sites for piloting of the survey questionnaire and for sampling identification in the qualitative component following this study. In addition, using the consultant to provide a covering note on the survey was designed to allay fears of some providers who might be suspicious that it was an official government mechanism to covertly solicit information which might be used against them in the regulation process. This approach was particularly useful judging from the number of queries fielded by the consultant.

Terms used in public education, for instance, needed to be reconsidered to accord with those that the sector could recognise. The term 'institution' was replaced with 'provider' to allow for those that did not have premises and therefore were not 'premises-based'. In the same manner, the term 'curriculum', to describe both content and delivery was replaced with 'course' or 'programme', with distinctions made between each. It was also necessary for references to course duration, distinguished by semester or trimester as used in the public FET system, to be classified into 'hours of contact' or learning time. Similarly, terms like 'FET', 'HET' and 'GET', together with terms that were fully understood by anyone in the post-schooling sector, like 'headcount', 'SAQA' and 'NQF' were explained in a 'list of explanatory terms'.

Mann and Stewart (2000) suggest that an additional advantage of the electronic survey is that it allows for creativity in questionnaire design, which in the traditional

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<sup>4</sup> For instance the use of the term 'institution' was found to be particularly problematic in light of the very different provision forms. This kind of input provided by the consultant was particularly useful at this stage of the research.



postal format ‘...can appear dry and uninteresting’ (p.67). It was, however, decided to keep this survey design as simple as possible so as to save on download time. Providers were expected to access the attachment in ‘word format;’ and excessive use of graphics was avoided in order to make it more efficient and less cumbersome. In addition, some basic lessons on survey instrument design including length needed to be considered - it had to be short enough not to discourage respondents, whilst explicit enough to capture sufficient critical details of the sector.

*Pre-test (pilot)*

A pilot run of the questionnaire became all the more important as a result of the novelty of the exercise. The newness of the area of study and the lack of information on the sector required some thorough pre-testing, in addition to conventional reasons for piloting, i.e. to ensure that items comprehensible, free of possible misinterpretation and able to appropriate response for purpose and ease of analysis. A randomly selected sample of twenty providers (i.e. 5 per cent) was used for the pilot study, which was used to refine the questionnaire and develop a strategy to deal with the implementation of the survey. Site selection was undertaken on the basis of sites identified in the DoE database (DoE 2001c) that comprised more than 100 FET headcount enrolments. Four companies, seven *Business and Computer Colleges* and nine other FET sites were selected for this purpose. The pilot test was conducted in the Pretoria area, which would make it easier to conduct follow queries if this was necessary as a result of close proximity to researchers.

In addition to improving survey item intelligibility, feedback from this piloting phase also served to:

- Increase levels of clarity in the formatting of tables for completing in the survey;
- Improve levels of explicitness in the language, i.e., definitions and instructions in the instrument;
- Assess the general user-friendliness of the instrument;
- Measure the time required to complete the instrument and adjust accordingly. (Feedback suggested that it would take no less than half an hour to 45 minutes to complete.); and
- Elicit comments and suggestions from respondents on how to improve layout and intelligibility.

The piloting also provided some important indicators for the e-mail execution of the survey. It pointed out that the main message urging respondents to access the attachment had to be particularly effective. While it needed to convince respondents that this was indeed a serious attempt to obtain data, perhaps more importantly, it had to also reassure respondents that the accompanying attachment was free of any electronic ‘viruses’ and was not likely to damage other software. The process also made it clear that there was likely to be an additional phase of telephonic follow-up.

Piloting also revealed the complexity of the means of data provision from the perspective of the respondents. It illustrated the considerable expertise required from respondents as a result of the number of steps required to respond successfully. It requires respondents to open the attached file, complete the survey using the relevant programme, save the file and then attach the saved file to a return e-mail address. It is for this reason that Mann and Stewart (2000) remind us that the electronic means is ideally utilised in contexts where the “researcher knows the ability of the respondents or can provide training and support” (p. 68).

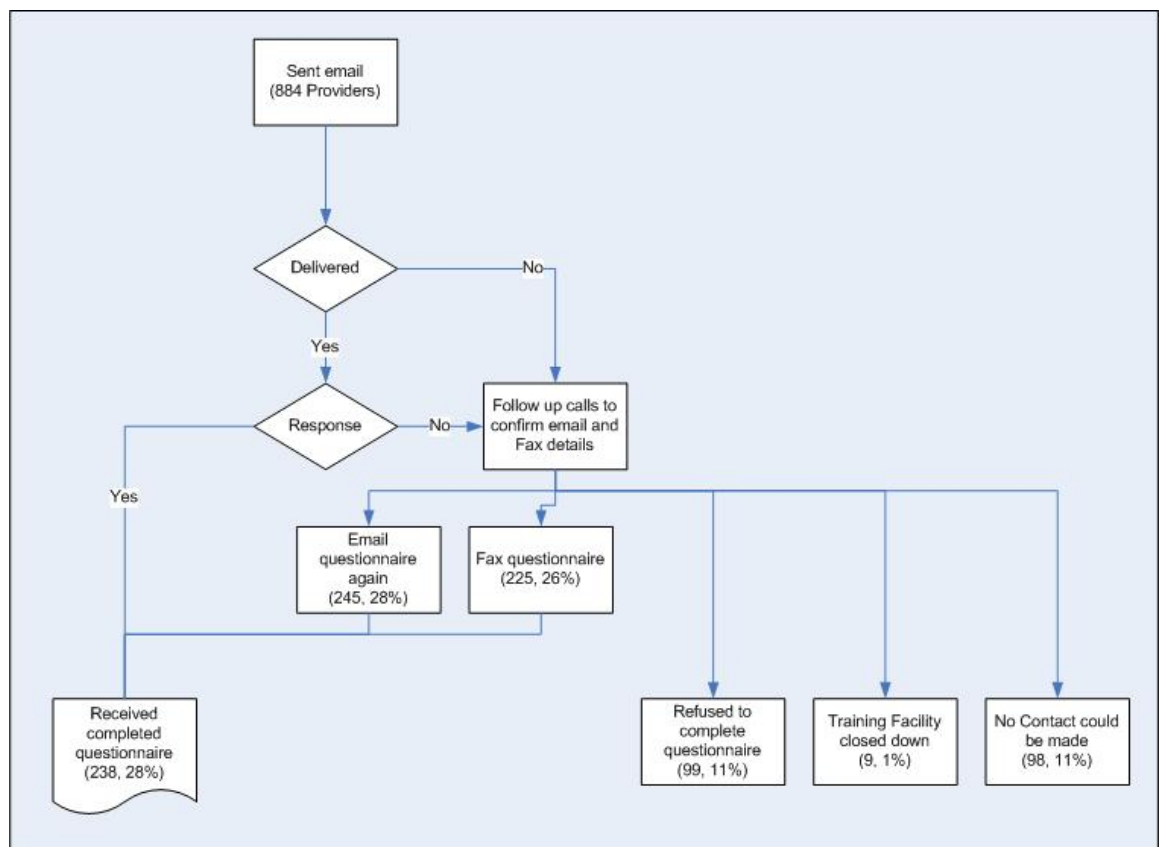
In order to maximise response rate and ensure a minimum number of glitches in each of these steps, the pilot enabled awareness of the more obvious challenges and prepare call centre personnel to provide appropriate support. Some issues were clearly unable to be solved. For instance, accessing the attachment by those that did not operate off a Microsoft Windows operating system. Most providers were, however, reasonably familiar with the technology and where problems were experienced, alternative mechanisms (e.g. facsimiles and postal system) were used to send and return questionnaires. Where there was willingness to use electronic means, appropriate support was provided.

#### *Survey execution*

Four individuals skilled in call-centre work were employed to undertake the survey after the initial survey design phase. Their work was conducted in a period of a month, during the period 13<sup>th</sup> May to 15<sup>th</sup> June 2002. The survey form required respondents to access the questionnaire, which was attached in ‘Microsoft Word’ format. Once the initial e-mail was sent, providers who did not respond were reminded telephonically about the survey. The importance of reminders to increase response rates has been addressed in the literature (see for instance Schaefer & Dillman 1998 and Ranchod & Zhou 2001). In addition to this solicitation means,

additional methods were used. Yun and Trumbo (2000), for instance, have suggested that it might be necessary to commence with e-mail and move to progressively more expensive methods for non-respondents until an acceptable response level is reached. In fact, using mixed mode approaches has been known to overcome population coverage errors and to increase respondents' motivation because people appreciate being able to choose their response mode (Dillman 2000; Schaefer & Dillman 1998). Figure 1 identifies the methods used and the response rate at each stage:

**Figure 1: The data-gathering process: Identification of steps and response rates**



Source: HSRC 2002

After telephonic contact with those who either did not respond or to whom the e-mail was not delivered, 28 per cent of providers opted to have their surveys e-mailed again. A further 26 per cent of providers opted to have questionnaires faxed because they were either unable to open the attachment or were less comfortable with the use of the electronic medium. Only 23 per cent either refused to complete the questionnaire or could not be contacted either because the facility had closed down or they could not be reached.

Table 2 Reaching method

	Number	Percentage
<b>List received from the Department of Education</b>	<b>864</b>	
Number of providers that were contacted by phone to confirm receipt of the e-mail containing the questionnaire or to get new fax number or e-mail address	613	71 %
Number of questionnaires e-mailed again	245	28 %
Number of questionnaires faxed to providers	225	26 %
Number of questionnaires faxed as well as e-mailed again	34	4 %
<b>Number of questionnaires received</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>28 %</b>
No contact with the provider could be made	98	11 %
Provider refused to complete questionnaire	99	11 %
Training facility closed down	9	1 %
<b>Response rate of survey</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>45 %</b>

Source: HSRC survey (2002)

Table 3 Success by reaching mode

	Number	Percentage
<b>Number of questionnaires received</b>	<b>238</b>	
Number of providers reached by only e-mailing the questionnaire *	150	63%
Number of providers reached by only faxing the questionnaire	74	31%
Number of providers reached by e-mailing as well as faxing the questionnaire	14	6%
* Includes some questionnaires that were posted ( $\pm 10$ providers)		

Source: HSRC survey (2002)

The Tables above (Table 2 and Table 3) show results of using this mixed method approaches. The survey yielded a 45 per cent response rate, if response rate is interpreted as those from whom some feedback was received (see below). Telephonic contact and follow up faxing of surveys represented a valuable means to follow up on e-mails sent and to solicit preferred follow-up methods. The 238 questionnaires received represented a significant 28 per cent return., Table 3 which reflects the results of the various 'reaching methods' shows that although a considerable proportion of surveys were received by the predominant electronic means (150 or 63 per cent) (numbers reached by both e-mail and facsimile tending to cancel those received by post), a considerable number preferred to return surveys by facsimile only (74 or 31 per cent).

*Ethical considerations and integrity*

The use of electronic surveys, as Selwyn and Robson (1998) argue, raises questions of 'liberty and ethics' (p. 3). It requires some 'invasion of the personal space' of the respondent and is arguably more intrusive than a postal box delivery. Clearly this issue was less significant in this study of private FET institutions that presumably use electronic media to enable prospective students to contact them. The medium's ability to provide the option of notification to the sender when messages are delivered is also considered problematic from an ethical perspective. While this facility is undoubtedly useful from an administrative perspective, the ethical dilemma regarding participant awareness of this feedback mechanism has been questioned. This is, however, not dissimilar to that of a tracking system used by postal means, suggesting that some of the issues are not that different from conventional means. In this study, the delivery notification was important from an administrative perspective to determine the extent of initial reach of the survey.

The questionnaire and the covering letter of the e-mail reassured respondents that the information obtained would be treated in strict confidence. But the issue of anonymity is particularly challenging when using the electronic medium. It needs to be accepted that, "...it is virtually impossible to guarantee the respondent anonymity as their last name (or at least their e-mail address) is automatically included in their reply (Selwyn & Robson 1998: 3).

Anonymity has also been considered for its effect on response rates. While previous research indicated that response rates might have been affected positively by the lack of anonymity (Kiesler & Sproull 1986), more recent findings (Couper, Blair & Triplett 1997) make the point that the lack of anonymity may not have any effect on response rates. Thus for purposes of this survey, the judgment call was made that questionnaires needed to identify the institution for analysis purposes. The covering note reiterated the point that "Any information provided will be treated in confidence and reported anonymously". In addition, in this survey, disclosure of respondent details served as an important validity check. Section A of the survey specifically required telephonic, electronic and postal details, together with the designation/position of the person completing the survey.

### *Data integrity*

Appropriate checks and balances were put in place to maximise the integrity of the data. In the words of the American Survey Association (1995), “Murphy’s Law applies here as elsewhere in life...not only is it true that ...if anything can go wrong, it will (but that), if you didn’t check on it, it did” (ASA 1995c: 5). This is especially true in the context of large-scale research, which requires considerable care in survey distribution, return and accurate collection and analysis of data. Various strategies were put in place to ensure data veracity. Firstly, at the level of the survey response, a random visual check of completed questionnaires was undertaken. Second, at the level of data input, the integrity of the data-capturing process was confirmed by ensuring that the processors were aware of ‘outliers’-easily identified discrepancies within the data capture stage, which is sometimes the result of carelessly completed responses or misinterpretation of the requirements of the survey question. In addition, a randomly selected sample of survey responses (5 per cent) was re-captured. This validation process confirmed an accuracy of 98 per cent in the data capture process.

## **Conclusion**

Some lessons of the electronic survey mode used in this survey include the issue of cost and resourcing of this electronic, as compared to the more traditional postal survey means. Yun and Trumbo (2000) point out that, “...the electronic-only survey is advisable when resources are limited and the target population suits an electronic survey” (*html web page*). For the purposes of this survey and in light of the large number of recently acquired e-mail addresses, this was an ideal medium.

The anticipated cost-effectiveness of the method was not borne out by this experience. The telephonic solicitation requirement and the use of facsimiles to maximise response rates meant that the method was not as cost and time efficient as was anticipated. Clearly, the extent of non-response to the initial e-mail request had not been anticipated. The extensive use of telephone and facsimile for providing and returning surveys made the procedure much more time and resource hungry. However, the use of this method did offer, as Selwyn and Robertson (1999) argue, “slightly more ‘control’ over the questionnaires once they have been sent” (p. 3). It did allow a much more quick identification of non-response than traditional postal

means. Although, in the course of this survey, some providers needed to be reminded at least twice before responding, the use of the medium did not remove the advantage of efficiency, as it was far more effectively expedited than traditional postal methods.

The return response from the providers' e-mails, which was set to indicate the status of receipt, signalled in a number of cases that the e-mail was opened but not responded to. This suggests that it might be useful to begin the process with telephonic contact to verify the preferred method prior to sending the e-mail. The method needs to be supplemented with others for maximum effectiveness.

# CHAPTER 4

## THE STUDY OF CASES

The qualitative phase, which followed the analysis of the quantitative information reported in a chapter in the *2003 HRD Review* (Akoojee 2003), was designed to provide depth to the information obtained by the survey. It was intended to provide qualitative information of provision patterns not obtained in the quantitative survey. Coming so closely after the quantitative survey, it is consistent with the use of multiple methods, which serve as a form of triangulation and affirmation of data (Denzin & Lincoln 2002).

The first part of this chapter identifies the rationale for using the case study method, while the second elaborates on the complexity of implementation as it unfolded in this particular study.

### **Design issues**

Case study research, which involves in-depth analysis of a pre-selected sample of providers, provides an important starting point for analysis of a particular social setting in context (Yin 1989 & 1993; Stake 1995 & 2000). It involves visiting the social setting and obtaining information by means of observation, interviews with participants and analysis of documentation. As such, the method is considered as involving more than the need to simply find out what is going on. Both Stake (1995 & 2000) and Yin (1989 & 1993) suggest that it can be considered both a 'method' and an 'approach'. In addition to these understandings, the notion of case studies as a comprehensive means by which information is systematically collected as Patton (2002) points out:

The case study approach to qualitative analysis constitutes a specific way of collecting, organizing, and analysing data; in that sense it represents an analysis process. The purpose of which is to gather comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about each case



of interest. The analysis process results in a product: a case study. Thus the term case study can refer to either the process of analysis or the product of analysis, or both. (Patton 2002: 447)

As both a process of collection and its ability to produce appropriate analysis, the notion of a case study as more than simply a method is evident.

The strength of case studies is that it could incorporate both qualitative and quantitative data gathering mechanisms in order to obtain appropriate information (Yin 1993). While it is agreed that the data gathering aspect of cases clearly fall within the ‘qualitative’ paradigm’ as Stake (1995) contends, this would not preclude the possibility of quantitative means being used to gather, represent and analyse information considered relevant.

The case study method, therefore, promised a comprehensive mechanism for the purpose of understanding private provision of education and training at the FET level in the country. This was especially so in a context where data needed to be gathered by multiple researchers and their varied approaches (both qualitative and quantitative) needed to be accommodated. The qualitatively rich data that the method promised to yield was an ideal means by which to supplement the survey data.

Case studies have a specific advantage in that they focus on particular features that bring out peculiarities of the social phenomenon. Qualitative data gathering considers that each case is unique and in need of consideration and understanding within that context. As Stake (1995) reminds us, “The real business of case study is particularization, not generalization. We take a particular case and come to know it well, not primarily as to how it is different from others but what it is, what it does. There is emphasis on uniqueness...” (p. 8). This suggests that understanding, and consequently replication, is only meaningful under particular conditionalities related to context.

#### *Identifying the case in this work*

Case study, as both a method and strategy, has a distinct set of conventions that enables collection of appropriate information in a systematic manner. The importance of theory in case studies specifies the way in which the research is to be bounded. According to Yin (1993), using theory will assist not only in selecting cases but also in specifying what is to be explored. Specifying what is to be studied

is considered a first step in the research design process. This means that considerations of access, convenience and logistics need to be considered 'non substantive' (Yin 1993: 4).

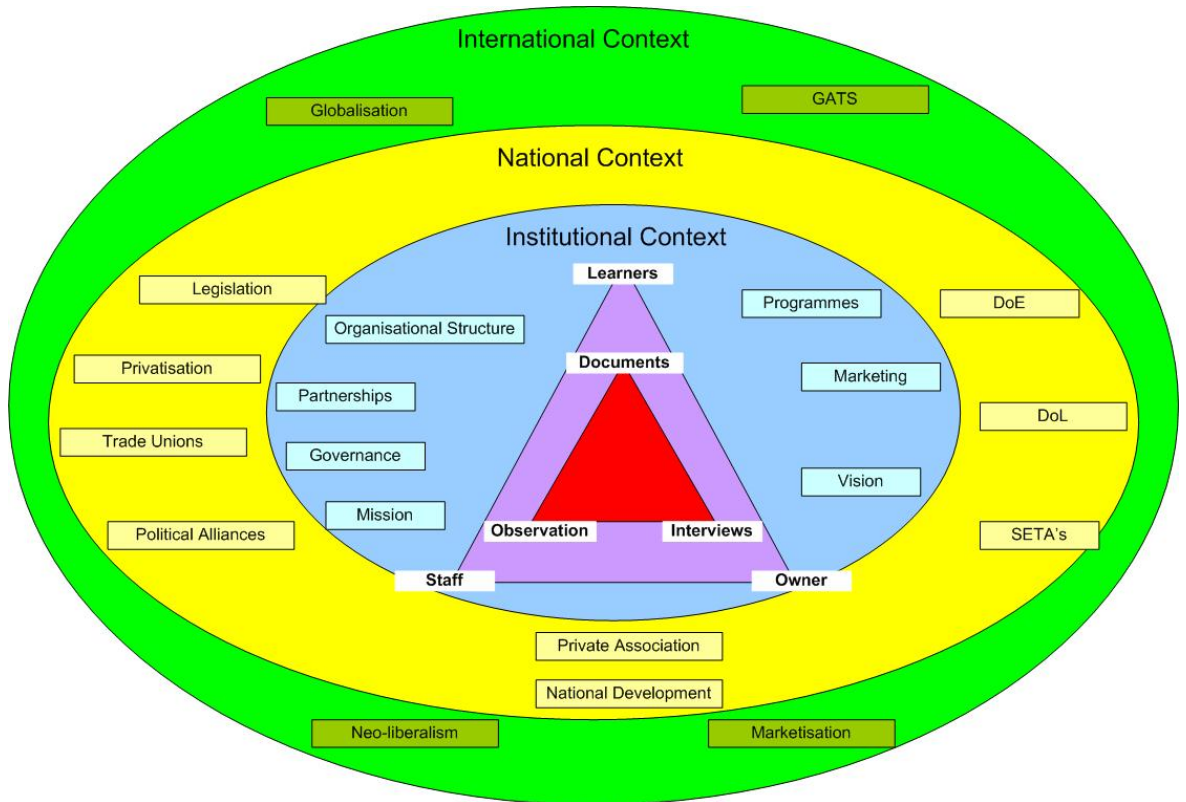
The importance of identifying the focus of the study in qualitative case study cannot be overemphasised. Yin (1989 & 1993) considers the delineation of the unit of analysis as the most important aspect of the case study approach. The identification of the unit of analysis and locating this within a clearly defined context is particularly useful in terms of design. The delineation of the case needed to be done in a manner that ensures that it provide adequate information for the intended purpose. In this study, it was necessary to ensure that the central focus was neither too narrow nor too wide-ranging and expansive and that it responded to the following broad objective identified by Stake:

In qualitative case study, we seek greater understanding of  $\Theta$  (theta i.e. the case). We want to appreciate the uniqueness and complexity of  $\Theta$ , its embedded-ness and interaction with its contexts. (Stake 1995: 16)

As a result of the contexts, it is quite easy in case study research to get lost in the maze of data and cast the net so wide as to render the information meaningless (Yin 1984; 1989; 1993 and Stake 1995; 2000). Linking the context of the case provides the necessary focus for delineating this study and is therefore a crucial first step in the study. It determines what will be studied and what emphasis will be placed on areas with which it interacts, i.e., the contextual elements.

Figure 2 identifies the way in which the case was identified in this study and the way in which it relates to context – immediate, national and international.

Figure 2: Diagrammatic representation of the case in this research activity: Determination of the case and its institutional, national and international contexts



The private FET provider is located in the centre of the diagram with the immediate, national and international contexts with which it interacts in ever widening circles around it. While the immediate environment represents the initial contact zone, this does not mean that it is the only contact point between provider and ‘client’ (learner). It is, for instance, likely that the provider is one that has placed particular emphasis on the international component by providing courses that are internationally delivered and accredited (by Microsoft for example). In this case, the international component would be considered the most important area of contact.

It would not be unusual, even for international providers, that the learners and/or facilitators would be sourced from the immediate context. The importance of the institutional context cannot, therefore, be ignored, even when the provider has national and international links. The institutional context is to be understood in terms of its varied functional elements including governance, programmes, mission and vision. The various local partnerships are also analysed, where available. This immediate neighbourhood or environment is also to be captured in terms of its overlap into the national context - which is depicted in the rung that surrounds the institutional context.

The second rung, the national context, captures the legislative and environmental framework within which private providers operate. Thus the various legislative developments since 1994, for instance the FET Act (RSA 1998a) and the Skills Development Act (RSA 1998b), are key to understanding the challenges to which the private FET sector needs to respond. In addition, an understanding of the national post-school sector is equally significant. The impact of and relationship with public FET providers is particularly significant and would need to be understood.

These national imperatives work within the international framework, informed as it is by the forces of globalisation and marketisation which is dominated by a neoliberal international framework (Akoojee & McGrath 2004), described in greater detail in Part II of this thesis.

There is a constant inter-relationship between the institutional, national and the international. Arrows A, B and C show that these contextual features are intrinsically linked and indicate a symbiotic relationship between the micro and macro contexts. They suggest that developments at the institutional level are not only influenced by national and international contexts, but that institutional features impact on the national and international picture albeit indirectly. Thus, in the same way that the institution impacts on other societal components, the elements in the macro societal structure are necessarily transformed by it.

Figure 2 not only indicates that the private FET provider is a crucial central focus of this study, but serves to indicate primary information sources pertinent to the fieldwork component. Primary information sources include learners, educators and managers, located in the centre. The triangulated testimony of participants provides as complete a picture of provision as is possible. This triangulation of data sources is significant for purposes of confirming or corroborating evidence - considered by Stake (1995; 2000) to be a form of data source triangulation.

The central section of Figure 2 also identifies the triangulated lens through which the case is studied. This multi-method characteristic of the study is also evident by using interviews, observation and scrutiny of artefacts. It was envisaged that *interviews* were to be conducted with key participants (owners/managers, staff and learners), in conjunction with *observation* of practices to assess the nature and extent of resources and space in which provision took place or is administered from, and

this was augmented by an assessment of *written artefacts*, including marketing and curriculum documentation, which would incorporate use of written electronic sources, where available.

## **Implementation issues**

### *My role in this phase of the research undertaking*

As overall research leader, I was responsible both for design, implementation and reporting of this research undertaking. It was expected that this would supplement the quantitative findings (Akoojee 2003). While this aspect would specifically result in the publication of an HSRC monograph which would capture both the quantitative and qualitative elements of the private FET sector (Akoojee 2005), there was need to see this research as a distinct one. Site visits were conducted in the course of May/June 2003.

This qualitative phase used the services of a number of researchers for case study visits. The use of multiple agents for data-collection suggested a very different responsibility than is to be envisaged in an individual research undertaking. While, I still assumed the fieldwork responsibility for two of the cases, the responsibilities of managing the process required quite different strategies than those envisaged in an individual research undertaking. Management included determining cases for study (in terms of the sampling criteria described in the following section), making initial contact with all providers selected and ensuring that researchers were fully briefed about the substance and content of the fieldwork and its subsequent reporting.

### *Sampling*

Selecting an appropriate sample with clearly defined criteria not only ensures the legitimacy of the results of the study, but also enables identified areas to be analysed without the researcher being unduly sidetracked. The rationale for selection is critical to ensure that the process has been conducted appropriately so that there is less of a possibility that particular outcomes are favoured.

Patton distinguishes between ‘illustrative’ and ‘definitive’ sampling made on the basis of the purpose to which the sampling decision is made. Illustrative samples are those whose, “...purpose (is designed) to describe and illustrate what is typical to

those unfamiliar with the setting...not to make generalised statements about the experiences of all participants” (Patton 2002: 236). Clearly definitive sampling can only be done when all possible cases are included, which would then make generalisations viable. This distinction provided an important rationale for the selection of the sample in this study. Because this particular sampling had less to do with generalisation than with trying to unpack peculiarities of provision within a specified context, selection was based on trying to unpack as many of the types as was possible.

Providers were selected based on a mix between ‘typical case’ and purposive sampling criteria. ‘Typical case sampling’ (Patton 2002: 236) responds to a pre-defined sample categorisation. ‘Purposive random sampling’ criteria (Patton 2002: 240) was employed to select specific cases after typical cases were identified, based on pre-selected criteria.

The ‘typical sampling’ was undertaken based on the three provider types i.e. ‘for-profit’, ‘not-for-profit’ and ‘in-house’ used in the quantitative study. These core categories (Table 4 below) were broken down further into 11 sub components (Appendix 1).

**Table 4: Sampling categorisation**

Core Category	Type	Nature	Minimum Sites	Maximum sites
A	For – Profit	Single/multiple ownership	4	5
B	Not For-profit	NGO/NPO or community organisations	2	3
C	In-house	Employer inspired	1	2
			7	10

‘Category A’ (For-Profit) was further divided into five sub-units (Categories A1 to A5), as indicated by provider size in terms of student numbers (small to large) and on the basis of whether the provider was ‘single owned’, ‘an agency’ or franchised provider. ‘Category B’ (Not for Profit providers) was also differentiated into three broad categories informed by provider size (large and medium/small), single or multiple course or discipline offerings and the number of provider branches (either single or multiple). Category C (In-house providers) was differentiated in terms of two considerations: provider size by student numbers and whether there were single or multiple sites in which provision took place (C1 were those that had single sites,

while C2 were those that involved multiple sites). This provided the 10 typical cases for visits to be undertaken as shown in Table 4.

Purposive sampling was implemented thereafter to identify the sites to be visited. Criteria included provider location (provincial spread), which took into account the various types including urban versus non-urban provision (provincial location used as a proxy for rurality), provider size in terms of student numbers (as opposed to course, staff or number of branches), the way in which provision was conducted, i.e. either single or multiple sites, and the number of fields of study offered with respect to SAQA categorisation. The final decision was made on the basis of the type of provision indicated by the name of the provider, as the name was suggestive of predominant course and programmes direction of the provider. There was also a deliberate attempt to enable a fairer spread of disciplinary specialisms. Thus in this respect, there was a deliberate decision made to steer away from an overwhelming predominance of ICT providers.

Five providers were selected from the ‘for-profit’ category, three from the ‘not-for-profit’ and two from the ‘in-house’ category. While most providers were located in Gauteng (5) and two located in KwaZulu-Natal, one provider was located in each of three other provinces - i.e., Northern Cape, Limpopo and Western Cape. The final selection of 10 providers is indicated in Appendix 1 (Sample selection). A brief description of each is given in the introduction to Part III of this thesis.

It is not unusual for providers to refuse get involved in the study. Visits to two providers did not materialise for various reasons. Information for these relied on an analysis of their responses to the HSRC questionnaire and the information available from websites, where available, and documentation made available by their marketing departments. In one case, a learner who had experienced studying there was used to recount experiences to complement documentary analysis.

#### *Undertaking the visits: Implementation challenges.*

The following section details some of the implementation challenges and the way they were resolved. It discusses the challenges of using multiple researchers in case study research and the strategies used to accommodate the various perspectives that invariably come to play.

*Before the field visit*

It was necessary to ensure that researcher flexibility and creativity were retained for the success of case study approach. Particularisation of cases, which brings out the uniqueness of the study, was emphasised, for, as Stake (1995) points out, “We do not choose as designs the optimisation of generalisations...” (p. 8).

Since particularisation represented an important purpose of case study work, its success depended in large measure on the expertise of the researchers undertaking the study. Clearly there was a need to isolate a large number of variables, as Yin (1993) suggests: “...the distinguishing feature of case studies is that the number of variables exceeds the number of data points” (p. 32). If this was to be realised, it was considered necessary to attend to fieldworker preparation. While there would be some need to make comparisons across each of the cases, the complexity of the particular cases needed to take precedence if the integrity of the method was to be respected. But at the same time, there was also a need to ensure that some comparisons across all of the cases were made. The dilemma with identifying just how much of similarity was required was particularly challenging. It became all the more difficult because multiple researchers were involved. It was evident quite early on in the study that each had differing perceptions of what was required and what was necessary unique and particular to the case under study. Another danger posed by using case studies within this multiple researcher perspective was that the variables can assume a life of their own and too much information might well detract from the essential questions.

The importance of continuous dialogue was, therefore, emphasised between the project leader and the researchers and amongst the researchers themselves. Strategies put in place to overcome what I have called ‘multiple researcher effects’ included holding a series of workshops, seminars and briefing sessions at various stages of the researcher visits. After the initial briefing identifying the research questions and areas to be investigated, researchers were requested to undertake a documentary analysis of their providers in a workshop designed to establish, in more detail, the kinds of issues that would need to be followed up. A ‘preliminary report’ was compiled on the basis of this initial interaction. This was followed up after the research visit where research experiences were discussed before finalisation of the report. More details of these interactions are provided below:



*Initial briefing sessions*

As recounted above, a number of briefing sessions were held prior to the visit to both clarify purpose and ensure that fieldworkers were aware of what was required in the field. The initial briefing session required researchers to undertake some initial ‘desktop research’ on the selected provider and develop some initial data on provision, where this was available. The results of the initial survey questionnaire were shared. The session identified features of an initial ‘draft template’ used to indicate preliminary data which could guide the visit. This process was expected to identify critical areas for investigation to maximise usefulness of the visit. The final template, which was based on this initial process, represented the written component of the report. Fieldworkers were expected to develop field notes which were to form the basis of a written report to be compiled and discussed after the visit.

*Documents for fieldwork*

A ‘Fieldworkers’ Guide’ served as an information pack for fieldworkers and contained information about the kinds of questions to be asked in interviewing various participants and contained information about what was to be provided in the report subsequent to the visit. As an attempt to provide some structure to the undertaking and to ensure that all were adequately prepared for the undertaking, the guide served the additional purpose of ensuring that at least some essential information could be compared across all providers. It contained guidelines about the nature of areas that needed to be reported on, incorporating issues of educator and learner composition, including provider demographics<sup>5</sup> where possible and management structure. While it was expected that this data needed to be supplemented with additional information designed to capture the uniqueness of provision, the document served as a baseline indication of what was expected in the field. Thus while it was considered important to allow as much of the data to emerge from the field as possible, there was some consideration for structure.

The guide also incorporated a ‘report template which was expected to guide the report that followed the visit. The template was developed from the draft used for initial data capturing. The template represented a means by which information could

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<sup>5</sup> Providers were, as a rule, reluctant to provide information about demographic information. The accuracy of the quantitative data was clearly in doubt. Where they were provided, they were problematic (see chapters 8-10 “Findings and results”)

be reported, with special emphasis on the context. The first section looked at the institutional biography, incorporating establishment, location (urban/semi-urban/rural/city/township etc); physical size and space occupied. This was followed by an analysis of the provider's context. Issues in this section included organisational goals, vision, mission, including primary source of funding, motivation for establishment and stakeholders (active and passive). The following section identified the institutional details, which included the broad linkages between the provider and its stakeholders, i.e., local government, employers and community organisations (if applicable). Other sections included the 'organisational structure' and the resources available (if necessary to purpose). The section on participants included that of 'educators' (called teaching personnel) and 'learners' (called students/clients), courses/programmes offered and evidence on quality. The last section incorporated 'process' issues designed to capture aspects related to the data-gathering experience to enable some sense of the kinds of experiences that might have affected data gathering – both positively and negatively.

*Data analysis using multiple researchers*

Using multiple researchers makes contextual understanding in qualitative research in general and case study research in particular quite a challenge. Besides the briefing and preparation of researchers for the visits, the report writer was challenged to obtain and record this information taking into account the context of the fieldworkers. It has already been mentioned that qualitative research traditions take on board the reality that contextual understanding is necessary in order to situate understanding within and through a particular social context. The 'who' in the research context is a fundamental construct and becomes all the more important when using other fieldworkers in a multi-site research context.

This brings us to the very real danger to which some qualitative researchers allude - that the research can "tell quite different stories and be at the mercy of political *spin*" (Holliday 2002: 7). While it could be argued that mechanisms need to be inserted to ensure that this does not happen, the reality is much more complex and difficult to deal with. Guarding against one's very history, experience and inclinations is not an easy process and while its elimination is unlikely, its reduction is necessary. Awareness can lead to reducing its more harmful elements. However, this awareness requires an unwavering pledge of commitment against any illusion of 'neutrality' and a rejection of the ability to be able to 'suspend one's reality'.

Furthermore, by admitting to the tangibility of subjectivity, there would be some awareness of the dangers of its more negative manifestations, leading to the likelihood of limiting its effects.

It was important to understand that researchers were provided with information considered relevant and that these documents needed to be assessed not only on what they reported, but also on what they did not say. Thus some 'gut feel' of why they were provided needs to be understood. For instance, at one provider, a document was provided to the researcher that indicated a refusal by the DoE to grant interim registration to a qualification. While this was likely to suggest the inadequacy of the provider, the provider explained that it illustrated the 'unreasonableness' of some registration criteria to which private providers could not comply. The provider explained that some individuals in the department were interpreting accreditation criteria in terms of their public experiences. In this instance, it was considered unreasonable to expect private providers to have library facilities similar to that of public institutions. This illustrates the deliberate sharing of information for particular purpose.

In addition, it is also necessary to understand the notion of reflexivity, which involves the process of understanding the world and the way in which the researcher's reporting of these observations – a constant dialectic between understanding the world and the role of the researcher within it (Tripp 1998).

Reflexivity worked at two levels in this research project. Firstly at the level of the individual researcher who undertook the research visit and, secondly at the level of my interpreting the data from the reports they provided. In addition to the rationale for claims made by field researchers, and critical awareness of what was reported based on data provided, there was also the need to ensure a form of internal validity within the case. In addition, there was also a need to understand the experiences of the researchers at the site in order to contextualise the information. Thus in a context where the 'researcher is the instrument', and the research is conducted using a 'multi researcher method', the additional responsibility for synthesis was quite challenging. It was necessary to ensure that the information provided be carefully considered in light of the other evidence presented, both within the case and in relation to other cases. This was challenging in light of the notion of agency which allows for the role of researcher in the research process. The central challenge was

to understand the perspective of other researchers involved in this work and to extract appropriate data considered relevant.

Carr and Kemmis (1986) make the point that research cannot be value free and that it is often informed by the values and orientations of the researcher. The multiple perspectives of the various researchers were important to this research and served to strengthen the findings. For this reason the ways in which researchers were asked to report experiences, both verbal and written, enabled me to gain insight into their experiences. The collective dialogue by means of the various workshops held also enabled researchers themselves to understand their experiences with respect to others. It allowed an important sharing of experiences designed to understand the uniqueness of the cases that they were assigned.

#### *Challenges in data gathering*

Two issues discussed in this section include access challenges experienced in this private sector and the issue of race and language that were still an important issue in researching the sector.

##### *Access to providers*

As identified earlier, the issue of access was particularly challenging in this sector as providers were wary about being overly scrutinised in a context of looming regulation. In addition, for the 'for-profit' sector there was an additional concern that if some of their successes were shared, that it might impact on their profitability. They were reluctant to have their provision model brought out in the public space. For this reason it was possible that some providers displayed extreme reluctance to participate in the study, even after initial permission was obtained.

Ethical considerations, discussed in chapter 2, were also considered in the design and implementation of the case studies. As project leader, I contacted each of the providers, and followed up with correspondence which clarified the purpose, nature and conduct of the research. This step reinforced confidentiality and anonymity consideration necessary for meeting the needs of ethical research practice. Fieldworkers then finalised logistical details regarding the research visit. In the pre-fieldwork workshops, fieldworkers were also briefed about ascertaining participant consent.

*Race and language*

Research in South Africa is intricately related to race, language and class (Chisholm 2005). It is important to define the researchers involved, as race and gender remain central to research to the research enterprise. Table 5 summarises the demographic background of the researchers used in this study.

**Table 5: Researcher profile: Race, gender and language profile of researchers**

Researcher	Gender		Race				Language		
	Male	Female	African	White	Coloured	Indian	English	Afrikaans	Sotho
A		X	X				X		X
B		X		X			X	X	
C	X		X				X		X
D	X				X		X	X	
E	X					X	X	X	

The gender, race and language profile of the researchers shows that there was adequate representation of both male and females and (two males and three females) with a diverse racial mix; two African and one from each of the other major racial groups (White, Coloured and Indian), accompanied with a significant diversity of language expertise. Case allocation was done in terms of the presumed language from geography and location of the selected providers. This diversity of backgrounds of the various fieldworkers ensured that multiple perspectives were accommodated. All researchers were in the age-profile 30 to 45.

**Conclusion**

The qualitative component of the research was designed to provide details of provision that could not be obtained within the limitations of a survey questionnaire. There was a concerted attempt to understand the nature of provision as observed by ‘multiple-researchers’ who served as my research ‘instruments’, providing information from their particular perspective. By means of interview; observation and examination of records, there was a real attempt to “try hard to understand how the actors, the people being studied, see things” (Stake 1995: 12). Case studies, challenges notwithstanding, allowed us an opportunity to examine aspects of provision to which I might not otherwise have been exposed.

While it is entirely possible in this undertaking that the interpretations of the researchers have been emphasised, this kind of subjectivity is difficult to avoid and

indeed, needs to be accommodated in this research. The inevitable ‘subjectivities’ associated with trying to understand the ‘multiple realities’ that characterise social structure and agents represented a real challenge in conducting this aspect of the research. The difficulty in this particular work was to unpack the multiple realities offered by the various researchers that undertook the fieldwork, which required considerable interaction between each of the researchers and myself. This was necessary in addition to providing detailed descriptive accounts of their experiences. As Stake urges us to remember, it is the task of the qualitative researcher to “preserve the multiple realities, the different and contradictory view of what is happening” (p. 12).

There is a tendency of understating the qualities required of qualitative researchers undertaking case studies. In addition, to conventional qualities of ensuring that appropriate data is obtained, there is a need for considerable interpersonal skills aimed at obtaining ‘the insider view’. The danger of data being tainted by an overtly subjective researcher is always present as is the capacity of this subjective agenda affecting the data collection process. There is also the matter of being sensitive to the identities of the providers and the area of provision. Securing the trust of the subjects is an important, but insufficient condition for effective data gathering. Furthermore, in this private sector, where competitiveness is critical for sustainability, there are aspects that need to be handled sensitively and which, if not done appropriately have the power to threaten the whole research undertaking.

## **Part II**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

This contextual analysis of the role of private provision of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) focuses on three interlocking themes: globalisation and notions of development, privatisation, and the way in which these aspects link to the national development of skills, and more pertinently, the role of private provision of these skills. While these aspects have been organised in separate chapters, they need to be considered as a coherent entity. Each is described below.

Chapter 5 locates the role of developmental states in sub-Saharan Africa in the context of decolonisation in the second half of the Twentieth Century. It provides basic understanding to current developmental imperatives in the country, within the context of a globalised knowledge economy. The chapter locates the role of government capacity to achieve development outcomes in the light of the conflicting evidence on the success of the Newly Industrialised Countries (NICs). The post-colonial shift from the centrality of the role of the state in the immediate post-independence period, to a ‘structural adjustment’ mode in the 1980s led to a sense of optimism regarding the private sector to deliver developmental outcomes. This has given way to a more accommodation-ist perspective, which sees the state as a significant player and partner in development. Current notions provide a basis for understanding the way in which the private sector is a partner in an international, globalised development paradigm that seeks national outcomes.

This partnership notion is evident in South Africa. The traditional dichotomy whereby the state is representative of the socially excluded is replaced with one that

sees the state as mediating traditional interests to the benefit of all. In some respects, this has been a product of globalisation, which moved the national competitiveness paradigm to the international sphere. This said, there are also significant national drivers that propose cohesive partnerships to achieve national development objectives.

In South Africa, the democratic transition secured the interests of capital and workers, giving rise to a tripartite governance structure in which the state, private sector and trade unions provide the context for social harmony and laid the basis for the role of the state as arbiter. Thus the notion of the new democratic state as the exclusive voice for the socially vulnerable is shifted to one of mediator. In this context the state serves to mediate the interests of private capital, which is itself less private, and public interests, which are less public, with its primary interest 'national competitiveness' in a global order. This is most effectively captured in the 'first and second' nation thesis advanced by the Mbeki Presidency. It is contended that while the state is required to reverse the ravages of the past by redress imperatives, its commitment to equity ensures that the transformation of the social structure to which it is committed is less possible. This is done to ensure that the excellence perceptibly inherited from the past is utilised to maximum advantage in the new global order. As Ramphela argues, the challenge is not to maintain standards, but to set new ones to benefit not only from the new international order, but the transformed new national order which harnesses the potential of all, rather than a select few (Ramphela 2006). This is a necessity if we are to cement the gains of the new order. Rethinking as a result of the ten-year review has, however, suggested that redress imperatives are unlikely to be realised without concerted state action in this respect. For this reason, the current notion of development points to a more engaging state to secure redress and equity.

Chapter 6 begins with a review of the evolution of the role of the public and private sectors in development. It outlines debates which have become particularly prominent in the 1980s. Spurred on by the Thatcherite and Reaganite reduction of the state's role and key elements in the World Bank supporting this position, the nature and form of the role of the state underwent significant transition. The debate has not abated. The latest UNDP's *Human Development Report* (UNDP 2006), which focuses on water provision, for instance, makes scathing reference to this debate when it says that, "In recent years international debate on the human rights to water



has been dominated by polarised exchanges over the appropriate roles of the private and public sectors. Important issues have been raised-but the dialogue has generated more heat than light” (UNDP 2006: 10).

These international currents have been played out at the national level. In South Africa, the privatization of some public assets and the often articulated lack of delivery on various social services have made engagement with the whole notion of public and private particularly pertinent. Ramphele (2006), in calling for a more effective and professional public sector, proposes that while the private sector is ‘responsible’ for profits, it needs to guard against ‘profiteering’. The intensity of the debate between what were the essentially separate and dichotomous roles of the public and private sectors has, therefore, not abated, and has been intricately linked with the responsibility of the state in its developmental role. It becomes necessary, therefore, to interrogate the origins, nature and context of the roles, purposes and functions of the public and private sectors and identify the way in which current notions of the development are understood.

Chapter 7 explores the role of TVET internationally, regionally and nationally, taking cognisance of the privatisation and developmental state arguments identified in the other chapters. It is argued that TVET has, and is continuing to play, a vital role in development. Both public and private forms enable a complementary role for effective realisation of national development.

Each of the parts explored in this section are therefore connected. Chapter 5 focuses on the issue of state development in context of a globalised world and its associated features as it has impacted on national development in South Africa. Chapter 6 locates the private sector in this context, both globally and nationally and specifically, the role of education and training provision in South Africa within this context, and chapter 7 elaborates on features of the TVET systems internationally, regionally and nationally, with a particular focus on development in sub-Saharan Africa and South Africa in particular.

# Chapter 5

## **GLOBALISATION, DEVELOPMENT AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT: INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES**

Development debates emerged as a result of post Second World War decolonisation era. They provide an important context for understanding the current ‘development discourse’ in South Africa. This discussion serves as a backdrop to the current ‘market versus state intervention’ development discourse which currently pertains and serves to reinforce the elements identified in terms of the public/private debate outlined in chapter 6 of this work.

This chapter begins with an overview of globalisation and its impacts on South Africa and then explores the development debates, identifying strands which characterise it and their associated historical antecedents. It then examines the developmental challenge in South Africa as currently understood. It is argued that notions of development are intrinsically linked to international imperatives, although there are important national considerations at play.

### **Globalisation and the African development context: The role of education and training**

The impacts of globalisation in general have been clearly identified in the literature (e.g. Amin, 1997; Held & McGrew, 2000; Went, 2000) and its manifestations in the education and training sector have been well documented (e.g. Burbules & Torres, 2000; King & McGrath, 2002; Robertson et al., 2002; Torres, 2002). It is clearly a significant force both at the level of discourse and phenomena and is “complexly intertwined” with other major contemporary discourses, such as neoliberalism and the knowledge economy (Akoojee & McGrath 2004, King & McGrath 2004).

The role of education in development has always been associated with a form of internationalisation. Development theory has powerfully shaped processes of development and has underpinned the way in which education policies have been understood in underdeveloped contexts. This aspect is explored in this section.

*Historical context: The role of development theory*

Since the 1950s there has been steady attention to the more resourced North and the underdeveloped and newly decolonised South: predominantly Africa, Latin America and Asia. Debate has focused on ways to close the widening economic gap. The response was to ensure that these inconsistencies are addressed by identifying ways in which the national and international systems interact to either reinforce them or reduce their negative effects. Development theory was the theoretical tool used to understand and explain the global inconsistencies. Linking development theory with inequality is the central theme of Frans Schuurman's thesis which speaks to the issue of development theory of the 1980s as one in which the field was associated with an 'impasse'. This was a result of the ascendancy of neo-liberalism which became the 'counter revolution' of development theory and policy, using John Toye's term (1987). In an attempt to get 'beyond the impasse', it was necessary that:

...development theories address situations where large parts of the human population suffer from substantial inequalities in emancipation, (where emancipation is defined as) a process whereby social actors try to liberate themselves from structurally defined hierarchical relations which are discriminatory and as such give unequal access to material (e.g. land, housing, services) and immaterial resources (e.g. ideology, political power). (Schuurman 1993: 31)

Thus neo-liberalism replaced the essentialist state-centred approach. The pendulum swing to the other end of the spectrum, as in privatisation, was understandable. But for Marxists and dependency theorists, it did not represent a 'new direction' and did not provide an alternative development path designed to respond to socio-economic inequality. In this view, although development theory still holds considerable promise to address critical global issues, the fixation with neoliberal solutions prevents any breakthrough.

The issue of the 'relevance' was addressed by Michael Edwards (1989) in a provocative article entitled *'The irrelevance of developmental studies'*, in which the central

issue was the perceived ineffectiveness of the field on the problem 'it seeks to address' (p.116). He argues that the central challenge for development theory is to place people at the centre of both the theory and practice of development. This participatory focus on development was particularly useful but, although it did democratise development, it did not address its perceived ineffectiveness. For Edwards (1993), however, the impasse appears to have been resolved. He notes "...encouraging signs that development theory and practice are moving closer together in ways which do empower poor people to control their own development" (Edwards 1993: 90).

Development theory is an important, though contested, means by which issues of socio-economic development can be addressed in non-OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries. An important point about its effectiveness is the need for democratic engagements which puts people at the centre, as Edwards (1993) suggests.

#### *State-centred development*

The Bretton Woods era is considered to have been associated with some degree of international harmony by those countries allied to the West. They not only achieved a veritable blueprint for future economic relations, but it provided a context for the economic prosperity that was promised. The resulting formation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1947 and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) in that period internationalised development (Martinussen 1998 & Leys 1996). Leys (1996) points out that at the time that the "the agent of development was the state (which) identified growth and unemployment as goals using the macro-policy instruments of fixing exchange rates and commodity price stabilization" (p.7).

The underpinning 'modernizing' theoretical approach used structural-functionalist analysis to promote a recipe for development using the 'model' of developed countries in order to catch up (Pye 1966 and Apter 1965). Economic growth was the key that would unlock potential and a mix of state and market mechanisms was designed to ensure maximum growth for development. The practical manifestation of this thinking was envisioned in modern day values being diffused by education and technology transfer. Clearly the notion of development was intricately linked to the ideological imperatives of the Cold War and the rationale for support was

intricately related to the international balance. Indeed, according to Leys (1996), its most ardent protagonists were prominent ‘cold warriors’. While the thrust of ‘modernisation’ was based on an expanded notion of ‘democratic values’ to secure economic growth, it had an implicitly non-socialist imperative but Leys notes that, “...its capitalist character was not acknowledged either” (Leys 1996: 11).

*Marxist critique and dependency*

Critics of modernisation emerged from a Marxist critique of ‘dependency and underdevelopment’ in the late 1960s and into the 1970s, espoused most famously in the work of Andre Gunder Frank (1969). Emphasis was placed on the ideological impacts of modernisation and its ineffectual results in the light of a dependence on the models of the North, which were considered to be inappropriate to the conditions of the South. In particular, the critique, borrowing from Marx and Hegel, was applied to the international context and accused modernisation of not only failing in its purpose, but actively sustaining inequity for the benefit of the North and at the expense of the ‘periphery’. While the role of the state was implicitly considered to be critical to development, the solution to dependence was not clearly defined. The logical approach would be to ‘disengage’, with isolationist consequences for those less resourced. As Leys (1996) points out: “Their perspective was to say the least, very long term, and offered no plausible line of immediate political action to improve matters” (p. 17). Inadvertently, this quite radical critique offered by Marxist and neo-Marxist dependency theories laid the basis for the ‘theoretical impasse’ in development theory in the 1980s just as the neo-liberal ascendancy was being felt (Schuurman 1993).

This response to modernization laid the basis for reasoned understanding of development and underdevelopment, as in the ‘World System analysis’ of Wallerstein (1974; 1979; 1984) and the political crisis identified in Heeger (1974), but did not provide a meaningful alternative developmental path. By default, it assumed that withdrawal from the international arena seemed the only alternative.

As a response to a political crisis of legitimacy, there was clearly much that could not be understood by this left critique. Heeger (1974), for instance, refers to this ‘crisis of legitimacy’ to which developing states were subjects and which appeared to be ignored as a significant component of development:

At the heart of the crisis of legitimacy in the underdeveloped states is a crisis of political consolidation. The power to rule effectively remains elusive (p. 135) (and)...In effect the fragmented intermittent process which is characteristic of underdeveloped state perpetuates itself. The power to accomplish national goals remains a scarce resource. In its absence, a government not only cannot deal with bettering the human condition of its people, it cannot even save itself. (Heeger 1974: 135-138)

The role of political stability as an end in itself offered very little hope for dealing with development imperatives, notwithstanding its significance.

Some element of this Marxist development was reflected in Africa, for instance, by Nyerere's socialist experiments in Tanzania and to some extent by the Botswana Brigades of Patrick van Rensburg (1978).

*The neo-classical market strand*

The shift from the state-centered classic modernisation approach to one which saw solutions that lay outside of the state, no doubt inspired in some measure by the Heeger-like left critique of political ineptitude, saw the market as an appropriate mechanism for development. The impact of this change has been referred to as a counter-revolution in development thinking (Toye 1987)<sup>6</sup>.

The early neo-liberal protagonists<sup>7</sup> provided the conceptual armoury for the neo-liberal orthodoxy which took hold of the international development agenda, especially via the World Bank and IMF in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Martinussen 1999; Leys 1996). The essential thrust of the argument was that government had proven to be the problem rather than the solution to development and that the civil service, in particular was not only inefficient but bloated in most developing contexts and was not able to deliver on key elements necessary to respond to the challenges. According to Martinussen:

The principal thesis advanced by these neo-classical economists was that free competition and market mechanisms, in all countries and under all circumstances, would bring about a more optimal allocation of production factors and a more optimal distribution of commodities, than a regulated economy with administrative control and central planning. (1999: 261)

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<sup>6</sup> Although extent of ideological homogeneity within these organisations should not be assumed (see for instance contestations within World Bank outlined in De Moura Castro (2002) and Psacharopoulos (2006) and King and McGrath (2004))

<sup>7</sup>These include PT Bauer, Deepak Lal, Bela Balassa and Ian Little (quoted in Leys 1996: 17).

It was evident that this post-Keynesian international analysis, which was led by abandonment of key elements of the Bretton Woods agreements in 1973, including the fixed exchange rate regime, was also reflected in national economic policy. Even developed nations faced the danger of capital outflows if they retained lower interest rates. Government was considered to be both inefficient and ineffective in generating the financial capacity or the technical know-how to deal with economic fundamentals. While the theorists admitted to failures of the market, they concurred that this failure was more pronounced in developing nations and where these were evident in the both the developed and developing world, they were less serious when compared to those of government.

The world order after 1990 held the prospects of becoming all the more unequal than the post-war era. The market reigned supreme so that “by the end of the 80s the only development policy that was approved was not to have one - to leave it to the market to allocate resources, not the state” (Leys 1996: 24). As Schuurman (1993) notes, although neo-liberalism resembled a re-assertion of modernization, “...it had less to offer because the role of the state has been minimalised” (p. 12).

The role of government became the central feature of development theory. According to Stiglitz (1998), the economists to the left called for more effective government while those to the right considered the interference of government in the ‘free market’ as part of the problem (p. 3).

*The counter-revolution – ‘rapprochement’*

The ascendancy of the role of the market was criticised. Killick (1989), for instance, refers to the way in which confidence in markets needed to be tempered as it had gone too far in criticising state-managed development. These kinds of considerations led to a more balanced identification of the roles of the state and market. This was nowhere more evident than in World Bank policy documents by the mid-90s, which a decade earlier had virtually ignored the state but now were inclined to see it at least as an important player in development.

Martinussen (1999) considers the ‘state-market’ dichotomy as untenable and argues that it is useful to see their functioning in terms of a ‘division of labour’, with each having mutually complementary roles. As Wolfe (1997) reminds us, there is a need to recognise, “.... the importance of both the public and private without absolutizing either” (Wolfe 1997: 201).

This notion of development is reflected in the work of Joseph Stiglitz. As senior vice president and chief economist of the World Bank from 1997 to 2000, and Nobel Laureate in 2002, Joseph Stiglitz represents an important voice in international development and economic thinking. The key thrust of Stiglitz's (1998 and 2006) thinking is that the appropriate balance of state and market needs to be ascertained. Thus the opposition to faith in markets, described as the "deep underlying flaws in International Monetary Fund (IMF) economics, in 'market fundamentalism,' the belief that markets by themselves lead to economic efficiency" (Stiglitz 2006: xiii). However opposition to an over-centralised command economy is equally resisted. Ensuring the right state-market balance is what needs to be strived for by different countries at various stages of their development. In this view:

Providing more resources and strengthening markets - the key element of the development strategy of the World Bank in early decades - are still important elements in successful development. Countries cannot grow without capital. Markets are essential; markets help allocate resources, ensuring that they are well deployed, which is especially important where resources are scarce. The comprehensive approach has involved strengthening markets, but equally important has been strengthening government and figuring out, for each country as it reaches each stage of development, what the right mix of government and market might be. (Stiglitz 2006: 48)

Thus the notion of a vibrant state-market interaction is emphasised, although the way in which less government intervention is being resisted even in the most developed context suggests that the notion of 'stage' of development needs to be unpacked, even in developed contexts.

Stiglitz identifies the term 'transformation' to reflect tangible and measurable outcomes necessary to track developmental outcomes. According to this view, socio-economic development represents the distinguishing feature of 'modern' societies' and provides the context for the shift from considering 'crude economic data' in isolation of its impact on developmental outcomes. It is intimately tied in to his earlier critique of globalisation which privileges economic criteria, and which is assumed to lead to equitable outcomes. The refusal to reduce development to economic fundamentals represents a significant shift from modernist and neo-liberal development theory.



Similarly, Mkandawire<sup>8</sup> and Rodriguez (2000) suggest in this regard:

The separation of social from economic policy is partly explained by an economic theorizing that separates distribution from efficiency issues...(and)...What is clearly necessary is social policy that no longer serves as a handmaiden to socially flawed economic policies, but is an integral part of the development model itself. (p. 16)

Stiglitz (1998 and 2006) refers to five 'inter-related components' of an effective developmental strategy, viz. the private and public (state) sectors, the community, the family and the individual. Although these 'internal' or national features are clearly in need of an international context for effectiveness, the widening of the criteria outside of the micro economic arena deserves commendation. The first two 'private' and 'public' sectors, considered to be pertinent to this work, are discussed in the following section.

#### *Private sectors*

This objective of developing “*a strong, competitive, stable and efficient private sector*” is foregrounded in this analysis. For Stiglitz (1998) in order for the private sector to flourish, there needs to be a legal, competitive and infrastructure-rich environment, which incorporates the following features: competition laws, bankruptcy laws and, more broadly, commercial law. This emphasis on an appropriate 'regulatory framework' which protects against the 'abuse of market power' provides the context for understanding the role of economy. This tendency of privileging this sector is reinforced by an equally pressing need for “protecting investors from abuses”, a particularly interesting comment in light of the argument that this group least needs protection in both developing and developed contexts. In defence, though, this emphasis on 'market protection' is tempered by an equally pressing need to protect the socially 'vulnerable'. Importantly, however, Stiglitz (2006) does not specifically refer to the social responsibility to which the private sector needs to respond. This is the responsibility of the state.

For Stiglitz (1998), the notion of complementarity between public and private is an important one:

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<sup>8</sup> Thandika Mkandawire, current director at the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD).

The key question behind the strategy for the public sector is to identify the role of the government both what the government should do and how it should do it. And the question should not be whether a particular activity should be carried on in the public or private sector, but how the two can best complement each other, acting as partners in the development effort. (Stiglitz 1998: 25)

Particular emphasis is placed on the capacity of government to fulfil its mandate, although its specific mandate, except for education and health is not clarified. Specific mention is made of the public sector's responsibility for creating an enabling environment for the private sector to flourish. The need for government to create safety nets for the vulnerable and to eliminate poverty is a valuable feature of the role of the public and counterbalances the overly 'private' dominance of the theory.

In addition to these facets, the role of the community as the most effective vehicle to realise 'local delivery' and engender a partnership approach to development is particularly important. The role of the family as an instrument of development represents an important element in the theory. Although it is evident that the perspective has an overly 'population growth' consideration, the centrality of female education to secure family and community development is important; so too is the identification of individual development as a means of empowerment. Clearly the education, health and well-being of the individual is critical for national development. The inter-relationship of the five elements represents a cornerstone of the theory, as (Stiglitz 1998) points out, "For instance, at the centre of the strategy for the development of the individual is education; but enhancing skills is also critical for the private-sector strategy, and the increase in wages for women that results from improved female education has a strong bearing on the family" (p. 27).

It is to the role of globalisation and its impacts on education in development that I now turn.

## **Globalisation, education and development**

Education has always been a significant component of development discourse. Amongst the more important calls for inserting the education dimension into development was that made by Phillip Coombes in his plea for the primacy of education in development in his renowned, *The World Educational Crisis*:

Education systems are falling far short of turning out the right combination of manpower needed for optimum development (p.74)...A particularly troublesome sector is TVT<sup>9</sup> at the secondary or post secondary level...The poor countries now face a priority task of non formal education which years ago confronted today's industrialized countries. *It is to bring the vast numbers of farmers, workers, small entrepreneurs who have never seen the inside of a formal classroom and perhaps never will- a spate of useful skills and knowledge which they can promptly apply to their own and the nation's development.* Industrialised and developing countries need to bring about a more effective relationship between formal and non-formal education to break down the walls between them and to achieve a more efficient division of labour between the two. (Coombes 1968: 144) *emphasis inserted*

Considerable attention has been paid to the role of 'rates of return of education' in developed and developing contexts at different levels (see for example Psacharopoulos, 1973; 1980; 1985; 1988; 1994; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos 2002, Palmer 2006). Research that explored the link between education and rural development found that four years of schooling had a positive relationship on farm productivity of about 10 per cent in 'a modernising environment' (Lockheed, Jamison & Lau 1980: 56).<sup>10</sup> Notwithstanding the critique of 'misquotation' in the current literature to justify the impact of schooling and the omission of 'enabling environments' (King & Palmer 2005), it is undeniable that this research has placed education and training on the international agenda, and has ensured development has longer-term perspective. There is a growing acceptance in international policy documents that successful development requires the building of capacity and enabling environments (e.g. World Bank 2002; Commission for Africa 2005) and that the role of post basic education is an important feature of development, despite the significant emphasis on basic education (Palmer *et al.* 2006).

The argument that four years of schooling by itself has an effect on development (Psacharopoulos 1994 and 2002) which has so frequently been used to support arguments for basic education in the formulation of the MDGs has been found wanting (Palmer 2006). There is, arguably, no 'automatic effect' of four years of basic schooling on 'improved agriculture, on reduced fertility, on later age of

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<sup>9</sup> TVT - refers to Technical and Vocational Training in line with terminology used at the time.

<sup>10</sup> The authors referred to instances where there were 'new crop varieties, innovative planting methods, erosion control, and the availability of capital inputs such as insecticides, fertilizers, and tractors or machines. Other indicators of [a modern] environment includes market-orientated production and exposure to extension services' (see for instance Lockheed *et al.* 1980).

marriage, on reduced child mortality, on better health or on entrepreneurship' (King & Palmer 2006b: 2). As they point out in the following:

If the above finding - that four years of education increase agricultural productivity - is used without a reference to the crucial importance of context or environment, there is a danger of misleading the reader. In other words, if the education is to make a difference to agricultural productivity, this particular research asserted, certain other things needed to be in place in the surrounding environment, - what we term 'critical system capacities'. (King & Palmer 2006b: 2)

The *importance* of critical systems in this analysis refers to the role of education in development in a particularly telling manner. Education by itself cannot be the panacea for the development fraternity but is an important means by which development could be realised. In this respect the role of TVET in adult education for community development is especially useful as I argue elsewhere (Akoojee (2006).

Thus the importance of education cannot be understated. For Stiglitz, the centrality of the role of education is emphasised:

Among the most important (developmental priorities) is *education*, because without education a country cannot develop, cannot attract and build modern industries, cannot adopt new growing technologies as rapidly in the rural sector. But most fundamentally, if development represents the transformation of society, education is what enables people to learn, to accept and help engender this transformation. Education is at the core of development. (Stiglitz 1998: 31 *emphasis in original text*)

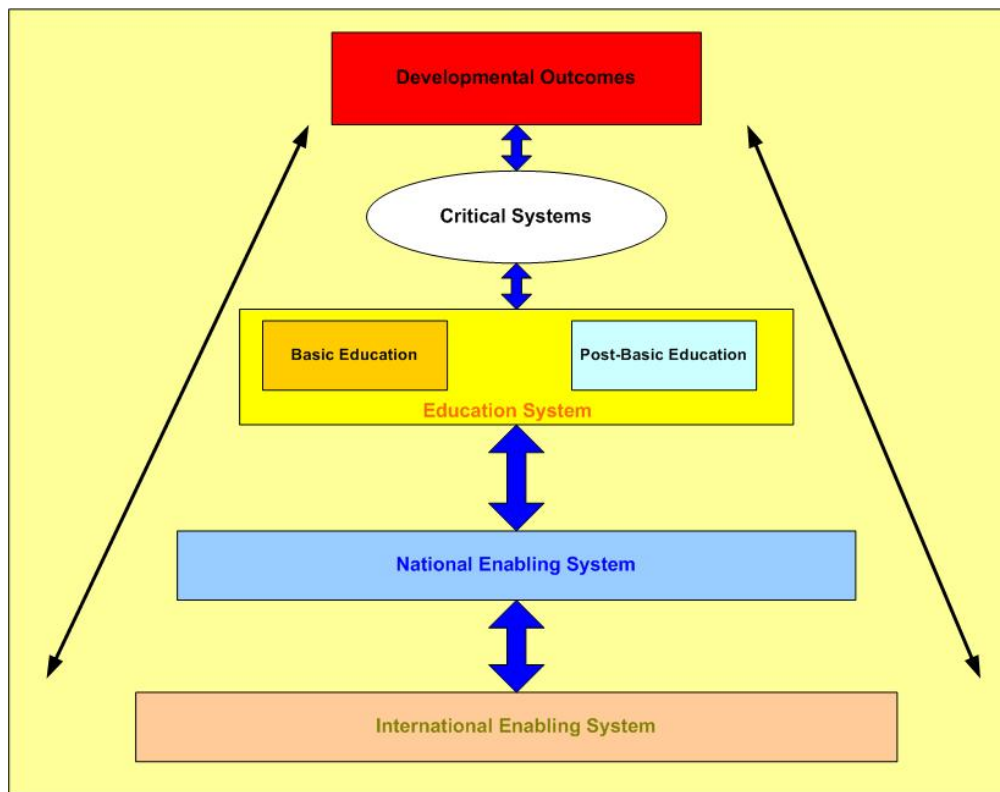
Thus while education is not a panacea, its importance is nevertheless significant. There needs to be appropriate accompaniment of infrastructure, health, knowledge and capacity building to support its benefit. These have been referred to as the supporting 'critical systems' without which the benefits of education are unlikely to be realised (King & Palmer 2005).

#### *Conceptualising education and development: The enabling environment*

The idea that basic education, i.e. primary education, can enable economic and political stability has been proposed in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The extent of buy-in from stakeholders has been uneven at best in terms of some EFA status reports (see for instance UNESCO 2004). While the importance of primary education cannot be disputed, the comprehensive focus on

primary education without some thinking about the articulation with the post-basic education represents an important missing link, although the initial thinking did not suggest this. Mass-based basic education not only requires all the elements in the education sphere to articulate, but also needs to take account of the contextual features which enable development to be realised. Articulation between basic, post-basic and both the national and international context not only informs the success of effective development strategy but is, crucially, also informed by it. These elements are represented diagrammatically in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Understanding development: The enabling environment and interplay of international and national factors**



If we assume that social development is to be addressed as a deliberate goal of post-basic education and training, the national and international context should be directed at achieving this. Post basic education and training (PBET) is a crucial feature of the eradication, or at the very least, the alleviation of poverty. Thus the importance of a relevant, responsive, supportive and appropriate post-basic education and training framework, which would see as a primary task the role of poverty reduction in the national development trajectory.

The importance of the international enabling system cannot be underestimated. International bilateral and multilateral agreements, both socio-economic and political, enable the realization of national goals. Thus the way in which MDGs expect to achieve specified objectives and the support provided for their achievement will impact to a large extent on the realizing espoused objectives. The extent to which these international agreements support nationally espoused goals will, in an important manner, determine the success of the objectives. In order to examine the way in which poverty reduction is affected by education quality (both basic and post-basic), it would be necessary to identify impact of national and international enabling systems, while the quality of these education interventions in themselves are the result of these national and international enablers.

The importance of international imperatives to development is another issue that is in need of further discussion, especially since this has not been appropriately analysed in development literature. The current global patterns of capital flows and the growing dominance of an Anglo-Saxon model of industrial structure are considered to be inimical to key elements of the South African development vision (Buhlungu & Webster 2006; Southall 2006). These processes tend to reduce the state's capacity to intervene in the workplace since major corporations are not as fixed as they were in the past. Globalisation has enabled them to move their stock market listings and headquarters offshore without too much effort. In addition, a select few large financial houses dominate ownership of the economy.

In summary, the notion of development which has held sway over the last 50 years suggest some quite contrasting approaches to the challenges faced. The various approaches have reconsidered the role of the state in development (as identified in chapter 5) and the way in which the private sector was first considered 'the problem' to the current 'partnership perspective that predominates. As Wolfe (1997) points out:

...we are best off if we give up the effort to force all moral, political, and theoretical issues into a dichotomous public/private frameworks; rather, we should recognise the existence of a third realm of social life, intermediate between public and private, that can resemble either in particular instances, but that can also be equated with neither. (Wolfe 1997: 182)

There is still evidence that current development discourse traces its origins to either the modernist, state perspective or the neo-classic association with the confidence

of the private sector. There is also an indication that the neo-liberal confidence in the market is still quite pervasive, although notions of development have been widened, and have become much more participative and consultative in approach. Stiglitz's conception represents an important widening of the parameters of development thinking in using community, family and individuals components. The state's role is considered to be essentially one that provides the context for effective market operation.

## **South African developmental context**

### *Background*

The early days of democracy made the link between the negative effects of Apartheid and globalisation appear powerful. The world order had been rapidly transforming since the late 1980s. Thus when political emancipation came in 1994, South Africa was totally unprepared (Akoojee & McGrath 2004). Catapulted onto the world stage by the euphoria of freedom and armed with a democratic constitution considered one of the most progressive in the world, the government had not only to transform political organs, but also had to ensure that social and economic aspirations were responded to. It had to keep pace with a world order that required economic integration and trade liberalisation in keeping with the imminent European Union. A major recession leading to high unemployment made a mockery of the expected social and economic benefits from democracy. The imperative of achieving social and economic equity in a context of past inequities had to be accompanied simultaneously by the requirement to achieve efficiency and managerial competence as integration into the world became an important dual imperative. South Africa also needed to be integrated into a world that required a free movement of capital, reduction of trade and tariff barriers and its enforcement. The decades of economic isolation meant that even business was not well equipped to respond to the impending trade liberalisation<sup>11</sup>, leading to, in some cases, further economic hardship.

The country has achieved relative success on a number of key indicators. GDP growth averaged 3 per cent between 1994 and 2003 and has moved to 4 – 5 per cent

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<sup>11</sup> South Africa signed up to GATT within a year of the first democratic elections.

since then. Inflation has fallen to 3.3 per cent from a high of over 20 per cent in 1986. Foreign direct investment and consumer confidence are booming; and the rand has doubled in value since the late 1990s. Nonetheless, there are a range of structural problems and a poor performance on poverty, inequality and unemployment that needs to be addressed. These are identified in the following section, which draws in part from Akoojee and McGrath (2004) and provides the economic context for development.

The accolades received by South Africa in the political sphere were not translated into economic terms. As Bhorat and Kanbur (2006) observe "...perhaps the greater struggle since the early post-Apartheid days has been the attempt to undo the economic vestiges of the system of racial exclusivity" (p. 1). In this regard, poverty, inequality and unemployment represent the most important challenge of the current national development challenge. An overview of each of these is outlined below:

#### *Poverty*

It has been estimated that between 45 and 55 per cent of the South African population are poor and between 20 and 25 per cent are in extreme poverty (Everatt 2003; Gelb 2003; Landman 2003; van der Berg & Louw 2003; Bhorat, Poswell & Naidoo 2004; Meth & Dias 2004; UNDP 2004). This means that between 18 and 24 million people are in poverty, including between 8 and 10 million in extreme poverty. Unsurprisingly, this poverty has pronounced spatial, racial and gender dimensions (Woolard & Leibbrandt 2001; Everatt 2003; Gelb 2003). Thus, one in ten Africans is considered to be malnourished and one in four African children are stunted (Woolard 2002; Everatt 2003: 77). Moreover, Roberts (2004) notes that hunger appear to be increasing across a range of measures. It is equally possible to think of poverty in terms of access to basic services. In terms of these criteria, it has been reported by Budlender (2003) that whilst access to services is improving, a significant poverty gap still remains. In the *State of Nation, 2005-2006*, Hemson and O'Donovan (2006), while noting the significance of the state's attempt to develop targets for delivery and evidence of some gains made in this respect, they caution that in regard to 'waste, sanitation and school infrastructure', for instance, the Presidential delivery targets set out in 2004, are unlikely to be met unless the cost of meeting these is 'acknowledged' (p. 39). Bhorat and Kanbur (2006), however, argue that while the new government fared reasonably well in terms of access to social services, "...there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that income poverty has



increased (since 1994)” (p. 4). They estimate that income poverty increased from 32 to 34 per cent between 1995 and 2000 on a \$2-a-day poverty-line and from 26 to 28 per cent in the period 1996 and 2001 (depending on data used).

### *Inequality*

South Africa has one of the most unequal income distributions in the world. The country’s level of inequality, however, is considered to be amongst the worst in the world, with the Gini coefficient still lying between 0.58 and 0.68 (Woolard 2002; Gelb 2003; Landman 2003; Bhorat & Cassim 2004; Roberts 2004). There is evidence that it has become worse since 1994 and declined from 0.58 in 1993 in terms of money-metric measures, although the accuracy of these measures have been disputed. Thus it is not unusual that the poorest 40 per cent of households are responsible for less than 10 per cent of total expenditure, while the richest 10 per cent of households consume 45 per cent of total spending (Woolard 2002: 6).

The latest Human Development Index (HDI) (2006) shows that South Africa has fallen to 121<sup>st</sup> place, a position that is considerably below par in terms of some international comparisons (i.e. considerably below Brazil at 69<sup>th</sup> place, although above India at 126<sup>th</sup>). Additionally, the rating of 53 on the Human Poverty Index (HPI) is significantly worse than Brazil (22) but slightly better than India (55)<sup>12</sup>. The very different population contexts between India and South Africa further reflects the poor rating of this country in this respect. Whilst South Africa is a strong performer in relative terms in the area of education, the HIV/AIDS pandemic is clearly having a major deleterious effect on life expectancy, with the probability at birth of not surviving till 40 estimated at 43.3 per cent (parallel figures for Brazil and India were 10.3 and 16.6 respectively) (UNDP 2006: Table 3). Crucially, the HDI indicates that South Africa is doing less well than it should be for a country of its income level. The GDP-HDI rank of -68 is amongst the worst in the world.

### *Unemployment*

There is a strong relationship between poverty, inequality and unemployment in South Africa. Measured by household income, 83 per cent of households in the

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<sup>12</sup> The comparisons with Brazil and India are done deliberately. These countries have also committed themselves to The Brasilia Declaration (6<sup>th</sup> June 2003), which provides the basis for working closely on political, social and economic arenas. This IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa), declaration makes the case for improved co-operation in the face of an increasing powerful and influential OECD bloc. It provides the basis for their increasing South-South co-operation on various social development issues in a quest to reduce dependence on the North.

bottom fifth have no people in employment. Looked at from another angle, 38 per cent of African households in 1999 contained no employed people – up from 32 per cent in 1996 (Everatt 2003: 78). As Roberts (2004: 488) notes, this means that 3.1 million households are workerless.

Although, unemployment is not new, its incidence peaked early in the current decade. Unofficial estimates were 12 per cent in 1970 and 21 per cent in 1980 and as at March 2006 official unemployment was 25.6 per cent on the narrow definition, or 39 per cent on the broad definition, which includes those who are “not actively seeking work” and are characterised as “discouraged” workers (SAIRR 2006) in terms of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) (StatsSA 2006) of March 2006. If this challenge is not dealt with, it is likely to lead to particularly serious consequences.

While part of the explanation for the high unemployment is insufficient growth, other possibilities include the inability of the economy to diversify adequately (Rodrick 2006) in the face of the new international circumstances such as the Chinese manufacturing challenge. The recent average growth of 3 per cent has not been good enough to generate sufficient employment. Between 1995 and 2002 about 1.6 million net new jobs were created in the South African labour market, an average growth rate of 2.1 per cent per annum (including informal work). However, over the same period, more than 5 million people entered the labour market (Bhorat 2003; Landman 2003; Bhorat & Cassim 2004). This leads Bhorat and Kanbur (2006) to note that while the economy did not experience what they call ‘jobless growth’, “...employment absorption was sufficiently poor to result in rising unemployment rates for all races and both sexes” (p. 6).

#### *Other challenges*

HIV/AIDS prevalence in the South African population is estimated at 11 per cent (4.8 million people), and is far higher amongst women (13 per cent) than men (8 per cent). The intersection of poverty and HIV/AIDS is evidenced by the spatial incidence of the pandemic. The highest prevalence has been found amongst people living in informal settlements (Shisana *et al.* 2004). The disease is expected to have a massive effect on future national development, with considerable national economic impacts.

*Overview: Between the national and the global*

South Africa's transition from Apartheid to democracy has been associated with a transition from a nationalist, racially-exclusive, inward-looking economy to one that it is trying desperately to benefit from external global interaction (Altman & Meyer 2003). However, South Africa finds itself frustrated by the political realisation that attempts to respond to the global agenda require, in some measure, the sacrifice of key 'welfarist' elements necessary for the majority's economic emancipation and the achievement of a racially inclusive new order. There remains a sense that the lack of effective service delivery in the first democratic decade is a result of fiscal contraction brought on by this global neoliberal agenda. This contradiction between national priorities and international neo-liberal 'capitalist' imperatives is particularly felt in the education terrain.

Hard choices have often been made to balance both national and international imperatives. Although there is a view that South Africa's relatively more advantaged position in the continent in terms of infrastructure and resources (physical and human) means that it will attract the necessary capital to enable benefits to accrue to its populace, this cannot simply be assumed and its effects have not yet been felt in the country.

### **Interplay between the national and global: From RDP to GEAR and to AsgiSA**

Before assessing state attempts to deal with the developmental challenge, a review of the resonance of international thinking with local developments is useful. The consistency between the Stiglitz (1998) notion of development and the South African discourse (identified earlier in this chapter) is striking. A brief note on this convergence will illustrate the current emerging developmental path. Firstly, the notion of 'transformation' is particularly resonant of the South African experience. The use of the term to describe the South African transition and as a means by which real and tangible change is to be affected is apparent. The need for 'long-term goal setting' and visioning is also evident in the developmental path intended

to, "...set forth the *vision* of the transformation, what the society will be like ten to twenty years from now" (Stiglitz 1998: 34).

Thus the reference to halving poverty and unemployment by 2014 in government policy commitments (RSA 2003, 2004a & 2006b), while it reflects commitment to MDG1, is consistent with this particular transformational discourse. Another issue particularly evident in the Stiglitz discourse is one of an efficient and much reduced civil service, which according to him requires 'restructuring' to maximise efficiency.

#### *Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)*

The initial policy position of the ANC was designed to take account of redress and equity rather than the imperatives of global efficiency and integration. In 1994, the government launched the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which had formed the essence of the ANC's first election manifesto (ANC 1994). The RDP was placed under a separate Ministry, indicative of its importance, with the transformationalist thrust evidenced by increased state spending to improve delivery of key social services to promote equity (Nicolaou 2001). As a 'reconstructive' policy, it recognised that provision of housing, water and electricity supply, shortage of jobs, inadequate education and health care for the majority needed to be urgently addressed in order for the political gains to be cemented. But government did not quite anticipate the level of state spending required to achieve this.

When it came to implementing policies, therefore, the harsh reality of their economic effects was taken into account. Thus, in education, the strong 'welfarist' element evident in original RDP documents was watered down in the subsequent Education White Paper (DoE 1995). These and other imperatives opened the space for an alternative socio-economic trajectory in GEAR.

#### *GEAR and globalisation*

GEAR was launched in June 1996. Rather than represent a turnaround from RDP (Marais 1998; Bond 2000), some commentators have proposed that there was some degree of continuity (Daniel, Southall & Lutchman 2002; Gelb 2004). Kraak (2005) refers to the roots of GEAR as going as far back as November 1993 when the ANC's Transitional Executive Council together with representatives from the then Apartheid government's Department of Finance and Reserve Bank negotiated a secret deal with the World Bank to secure a \$850 million loan. The ANC agreed to

maintain existing monetary policy, prioritise inflation reduction, contain government expenditure and desist from raising taxes - the key premises of the future GEAR strategy. Webster and Adler (1999: 15) show how these two tendencies - 'Left Keynesianism' and 'macro-economic conservatism'<sup>13</sup> - ran parallel to each other from 1993 onwards, but with the former having a significant influence over the latter.

Although the political rhetoric suggested that government was committed to the principles of the RDP as depicted in the GEAR policy position proposed (DoF 1996), the 'new direction' was ostensibly designed to respond to securing economic fundamentals: faltering growth, rising inflation and unemployment. GEAR was intended to contain inflation in large measure through curtailing spending in the public domain while stimulating spending in the private sector. It proposed that macro-economic stabilisation was essential for economic growth, employment and redistribution. Key components included fiscal deficit reduction, gradual relaxation of exchange controls, maintaining interest rates, reducing taxes to stimulate competition, reducing tariffs, and privatisation of state assets (called restructuring) while containing public debt and spending. Thus the policy emphasised South Africa's competitiveness in an attempt to respond to what was perceived to be the new global playing field. These features served to ensure that, "...the policy was essentially a domestic version of structural adjustment, designed to ensure South Africa's competitiveness and insertion into the global economy." (Akoojee and McGrath 2004:27).

In terms of the economic policy various changes were put in place ostensibly to ensure macro economic stability and pave the way for increased growth. In an effort to encourage Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) some blockages were removed. The dual exchange rate system was abolished to stimulate capital flows, considered a key requirement for entry into world markets. The gradual liberalisation of exchange controls and the limits on foreign investment transactions were removed, paving way for major South African companies to list on foreign stock markets. In a parallel bid to increase capital inflow from outside the country, key state assets were

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<sup>13</sup> These refer to the requirement for economic stability necessary for the new political order by ensuring that fiscal contraction is achieved (macro economic conservatism), while still providing the basis for key welfarist prerogatives necessary for redressing Apartheid inequity (referred to as Left Keynesianism).

to be privatised. Just how the latter was to be achieved was not clear. But the wave of international privatisation initiatives provided the context for this move.

Whilst the state still committed itself to moving away from the closed Apartheid economic system, with its high interest rates; foreign exchange restrictions<sup>14</sup>; capital-intensive manufacturing sector; and an essentially low skills populace<sup>15</sup>, it was clear that any 'reconstruction' was to be done within a context of fiscal austerity.

GEAR has been criticised on its basic economic premise. John Weeks argues that, "While many factors influenced the performance of the economy during 1996-1998, there is *prima facie* case that the GEAR policy package made a significant contribution to the collapse of growth in South Africa due to its emphasis on deficit reduction" (Weeks 1999: 4). The policy was criticised for being 'a neo-liberal attack' by trade unions and progressive organisations. There is a view that considers that it is simply responding to the Washington Consensus (Sociowatch 2002: 1). It is difficult to ignore the similarity of key themes: deregulation, export-orientation, privatisation, reliance on FDI and curbing budget deficits by cutting social expenditure represent significant elements of economic globalisation (Went 2000; Held *et al*, 2000). It has also been contended that it had an essentially negative impact on equity (Whiteford & van Seventer 1999).

A recent assessment of the economy has this to say regarding GEAR:

The significant macro-economic stabilisation achievements of the new dispensation have not been sufficient to shift the South African economy onto an alternative growth path, and the post apartheid economy retains the low growth and low employment growth characteristics of the previous dispensation. (McCord 2003: 58)

The macro-economic stability provided by GEAR, did not, however, address the fundamental crisis of unemployment and poverty. It also did not meaningfully respond to rising economic disparities.

The contradiction between national priorities and international neo-liberal 'capitalist' imperatives is felt in the education terrain, where as a result of fiscal contraction, there is still an increasing perception that there is a lack of effective service delivery.

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<sup>14</sup> Until 1994 capital flows were subject to strict control measures, including a dual exchange rate system with business subject to a financial rand

<sup>15</sup> More than 50 per cent of African men and 43 per cent of African women have received little or no formal training

Emphasis on GEAR led to the conclusion that the transition from apartheid to democracy has been associated with a switch from a nationalist, racially-exclusive, inward-looking economy to one that it is trying desperately to benefit from external global interaction (Altman & Meyer 2003). However, as some recent commentators have noted (e.g., Daniel, Southall and Lutchman 2004; Gelb 2004), the RDP was neither so “unambiguously progressive” nor was GEAR so “simplistically pernicious” (McGrath & Akoojee 2007).

The process of reviewing the first ten years of South African democracy in 2003-4 does seem to have encouraged the state to take a more developmental stance, whilst acknowledging the globalised context in which this had to take place (Daniel, Southall and Lutchman 2004; Gelb 2004; Southall 2006a). In this new approach, there was an acceptance that fiscal stability had to be built upon in order to deliver both economic growth and greater social inclusion, and that the state would have to take a stronger leadership role in delivery (Daniel, Southall and Lutchman 2004; Gelb 2004; Southall 2006a). This shift to AsgiSA is discussed in the following section.

*Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA)*

This section, adapted from McGrath and Akoojee (2007b), reflects the origins of and complexities of current socio-economic policy. By the time of the tenth anniversary of the new government, the consistent pressure from the left of the tripartite alliance to shed the political baggage associated with GEAR bore fruit. The shedding of the GEAR label was formally launched in July 2005. President Mbeki announced the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA). This new development strategy was ostensibly designed to help the South African state meet the following ANC’s (2004) election pledges, which included the following:

- halve unemployment;
- halve poverty;
- accelerate employment equity; and
- improve broad-based black economic empowerment (ANC 2004)

After victory at these elections, in his May 2004 State of the Nation Address (Mbeki 2004), the President outlined a three-pronged approach to addressing these challenges:

- Encouraging the growth and development of the First Economy<sup>16</sup>, increasing its possibility to create jobs;
- Implementing a programme to address the challenges of the Second Economy; and
- Building a social security net to meet the objective of poverty alleviation.

In pursuit of these objectives, the Government then published a *Programme of Action* (RSA 2004a). Progress against the programme is posted onto the Government website every two months as a sign of the President's own personal commitment that the Government should be held publicly accountable for its performance against the national development vision.

The *Programme* is organised in line with the five clusters that have been identified for intra-governmental collaboration:

- Economic, investment and employment;
- Governance and administration;
- International relations, peace and security;
- Justice, crime prevention and security; and
- Social development

The Programme comprises 36 themes and over 100 sub-themes with designated lead and partner departments and agencies.

AsgiSA came into being a year after the Programme was announced, led by the Deputy President. It was consistent with the thrust of the Programme of Action but focuses more particularly on the first two of the five clusters and aims, in particular, at overcoming the short- to medium-term barriers to the country's larger developmental vision.

It has been pointed out that AsgiSA outlines a very different development path from the current orthodoxy of the Millennium Development Goals and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers in spite of the common commitment to halving poverty (McGrath & Akoojee 2007a). In this new approach, there was an acceptance that fiscal stability had to be built upon in order to deliver both economic growth and greater social inclusion, and that the state would have to take a stronger leadership

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<sup>16</sup> The notion of first and second economy not discussed in this work refers to the analysis, first identified by Mbeki in which South Africa's skewed development rooted in Apartheid was associated with a robust and efficient, essentially white 'first economy' and an inefficient and increasingly neglected and black 'second economy', which both needed to be responded to.



role in delivery (Daniel, Southall & Lutchman 2004; Gelb 2004; Southall 2006a & 2006b).

The title of the new initiative makes clear its core focus. GDP growth in the first democratic decade averaged 3 per cent but this was still only half of the growth rate of 6 per cent promised by GEAR. AsgiSA revises down the growth target to 5 per cent per annum for the next decade, and divides this into a 4.5 per cent target for the first five years, followed by 6 per cent for the second five. The “shared” part of the initiative’s focus continues the concern of the ANC 2004 Manifesto with making sure that this growth is reflected in reduced poverty, inequality and unemployment and improved black economic participation and diversification of the economy to reduce reliance on the commodity sector and the elimination of the second economy (see below).

These objectives led to six themes being identified for AsgiSA (RSA 2006b). They are:

- investing in infrastructure programmes, and the increased spending associated with this;
- sector investment (or industrial) strategies, focusing particularly on business process outsourcing and tourism, with biofuels intended as a third focal area over time.;
- skills and education initiatives;
- improved access to procurement, linked to infrastructure development which would preference black people including women and youth and the
- removing inefficiencies in the regulatory environment for small businesses and enhancing the effects of the Expanded Public Works Programme<sup>17</sup> and
- attention to enhancing and realising the value of poor people’s assets; macro-economic issues including attention to exchange rate volatility and with maintaining low inflation and improved budgetary management and
- improved delivery by capacitating departments and agencies at all levels to deliver on economic and social objectives.

Part of the rationale for this shift undoubtedly comes from an acceptance that policies have not been working well enough. The government’s *Towards a Ten Year Review* (RSA 2003), although it sent an overall positive about the performance of the state, provided a stark warning about the challenge ahead:

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<sup>17</sup> A programme designed to create employment by government infrastructure, hampered by inter alia the lack of funds for the initiative.

The advances made in the First Decade by far supersede the weaknesses. Yet, if all indicators were to continue along the same trajectory, especially in respect of the dynamic of economic inclusion and exclusion, we could soon reach a point where the negatives start to overwhelm the positives. This could precipitate a vicious cycle of decline in all spheres. (RSA 2003: 102)

This picture is reinforced by a sense that the relative success of GEAR in getting the macroeconomic fundamentals right had not had the expected social and microeconomic impacts. Relatively high growth rates did not result in significant improvements in poverty, inequality or unemployment. The government also interpreted failure as being due in large part to its own lack of leadership. For development to be achieved, it would require the state to be stronger both in capacity and in setting the direction for the economy.

This is also linked to an analysis in *Towards a Ten Years Review* that success has generally been greatest in areas where the state has had most control over the implementation of policy and an implicit understanding that the private sector have not played their part, especially in key transformative areas, namely employment equity (see Moleke 2006a & 2006b)

Southall (2006a) argues that this determination to take the lead in development has encouraged the South African state to look to the development states experience of East Asia, whilst also placating key elements within the Tripartite Alliance, African National Congress (ANC), Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP), was a typical response to development in the post apartheid era. This mix of stakeholder buy-in and 'leadership' provided the basis for some degree of disappointment.

It has, however, been argued that the "shift to AsgiSA is, in part, one of packaging (as it) does not commit any new funds" (McGrath & Akoojee 2007b). Although, many elements of the strategy can be found within the RDP and GEAR, it can be read as part of a broader significant shift in emphasis within ANC policy. The impact of the initiative is still, however, to be assessed.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has traced the role of development theory and the role of globalisation in national development in the post 1994 era. It has been argued that the

international literature on development, influenced as it more recently by a globalisation impetus, has been an important precursor of the current development discourse. The current South African notion of development has evolved from national experience, and a need to respond to the international global context became particularly significant in the post-1994 era.

There is some synergy in the state-centred development strategy proposed with that of earlier notions of national development. There is an interaction between international and national development prerogatives. The GEAR strategy appeared to respond to international neo-liberal thinking on public fiscal retraction. While it enables macro-economic stability, it also simultaneously relegates equity considerations. The AsgiSA initiative is premised on a more deliberate state centred strategy of ensuring that national priorities are actively pursued.

There is evidence that AsgiSA and other recent proposals represent a more determined state-centric shift. Southall (2006a) sees that the shift towards a development state model brings tensions that need to be appropriately managed, especially in light of the absence in South Africa of a sense of social cohesion as is evident in the East Asian context. In so doing, he restates the importance that state capacity and bureaucratic cultures had in the successful development states and questions the plausibility of South Africa growing these quickly.

The role accorded to the state has changed from 1994, from one that attempted to engage and enable, by means of the RDP, to one increasingly associated with reduced interaction (GEAR) and recently to one that has recently become much more engaging (AsgiSA). Some have seen the weakness of the state as a product of the 1994 settlement. Joel Netshitenzhe, a prominent ANC intellectual and senior official in the President's Office, argues that the weakness and fragility of the state arises:

...from the political compromises made, most significantly, the reconciliation of both race and class relations that underpinned the settlement in 1990...This compromise has limited the new state's powers to act decisively. South Africa's re-entry into the global economy has also weakened the new state primarily because of the power of financial markets and their 'susceptibility to subjective manipulation'. (as quoted in Kraak 2001: 120)

Other reasons for this weakness include capacity problems of those employed in civil service, and the retention of Apartheid government departmental divisions,

which retained 'fiefdoms'. However, these divisions ought to have been resolved with the old guard having been either re-deployed or retired.

There is often a disjuncture between national socio-political imperatives and the economic means by which to achieve it. While state intervention in key economic and social sectors is required to achieve what are accepted developmental objectives, the constitutional imperative which protect the rights of those with economic power, is reported to undermine the very objectives of development. Government is then charged to carefully negotiate the minefield of constitutional rights and responsibilities in a socially responsible manner. This leads some to lament the loss of support to engage identified objectives. While protecting the rights of those with economic power, there is a special responsibility to be mindful of the rights of those dispossessed and negatively affected by an iniquitous past. The contradictory policy climate, while it impresses upon those with economic power to take on some responsibilities for national social development, tends to be less effective as a clearly defined government intervention for dealing with social development issues

More recent policy pronouncements from the President signal some re-thinking about the role of the state to achieve national development imperatives. President Mbeki outlined that the government's intervention was based on the conviction in a speech to African-American Institute on September 19, 2006:

...we would be making a fatal mistake if we decided that to depend on the market to correct the disastrous economic outcome of 350 years of colonialism and apartheid. In other words, we remain firmly of the view that not trickle-down effect, even in the context of an economy growing at high and sustained rates (sic), can succeed to help us produce the non-racial and non-sexist society that our objective reality and our constitution demand. (quoted in *The Star: Business report*, Sikhakhane 2006)

The role of the state needs to be assured. As has been pointed out elsewhere that, "In the South African development vision it is apparent that the state must play a leading role in creating such an environment" (McGrath & Akoojee 2007b).

## Chapter 6

### **BLURRING BOUNDARIES: THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS**

The inevitability of globalisation and its concomitant confidence in markets to resolve global and national challenges has been shaken. The private sector, which has been considered a panacea for a range of challenges which beset both developed and developing economies, has been replaced by a more nuanced understanding of its potential role and likely contribution in this respect. In particular, the view that the inefficiencies of the public sector could be resolved by utilising the elements of private sector has not had the necessary impacts leading to some reluctance that the public sector could indeed deliver more effectively on its mandate by using these measures without regard to organisational culture and ethos.

As a mediator of various interests, the role of the state and public service to serve all sectors – marginalised and affluent, private and other public departments – is evident. The state has a public mandate to protect those marginalised and to ensure that a robust and thriving private sector exists. The latter responsibility is necessary firstly in order to deliver on a mandate that promises to protect everyone and second, to ensure that it is able to respond to those in need of assistance. For both of objectives to be met, it requires the wealth generated by the private sector. Thus notions of ‘growth with equity’ or ‘pro-poor’ growth strategies are espoused to respond to the redistributive elements of state responsibility.

The state’s role as arbiter requires it to ensure that both the private and less privileged sectors are responded to in the context of an increasingly internationally competitive and globalised world. The institutional impact of this current has resulted in what I have considered to be a hybridity of social structures which, although they have originated in either the state or the private sector, display evidence of both the public and the private, in either their current form or function. Thus a ‘pure’ form of public and private is not easily identifiable.

This chapter explores the nature of private and public sector forms and functions. It identifies changing notions of private in the context of the public sector. It begins with a conceptual discussion of public and private sectors, which serves as a backdrop to understanding the current marketisation and privatisation thrust in a globalised context. The impact of this development to current education and training provision is then assessed. It is argued that both international and national factors impact on the post 1994 period, which lead in South Africa to a blurring of the boundaries of public and private in terms of form and function.

### **Understanding Public and Private and especially everything in-between**

A market rationality has permeated discourse to an extent that it is indeed difficult to identify a 'pure non-market' element within public services (Nkomo, Akoojee & Motlhanke 2007*forthcoming*). Confidence in the role of markets and private initiatives to solve macro socio-economic challenges provides the basis for what has been called a neo-liberal thrust. Although there has been some re-thinking about the role of markets in solving macro socio-political socio-economic challenges (Stiglitz 2003; 2006 and Mkandawire & Rodriguez 2000), private forms still predominate as a mechanism to achieve efficiency outcomes in the public sector.

Public and private are commonly understood as necessary for effective functioning of society. Social institutions have been traditionally associated with either a public (benefit of all) or a private (benefit to a select group) tendency. The public mandate, which is expected to be primarily the responsibility of government, is considered to be at odds with that of the private or corporate sphere, which is expected to respond to particular vested interests. Social institutions are, therefore, expected to focus on either a public or private purpose, largely dependent on their origin in either the government or the non-government (private) sphere. Their origins ensure that they are distinctive in terms of structure, functioning, purpose and organisation.

These conventional understandings of the terms correspond with what Chandler refers to as an 'liberal-economistic' pattern where private is conceived of as "individuals pursuing their self interests" in the realm of a market, while the public refers to government or state institutions who act for the collective benefit of the common polity (Chandler 1977). In this model, notions of public and private reflect

normative positions and they examine the extent to which benefit derives to the collective as opposed to the individual. As such, it represents one of the ‘grand dichotomies’ of Western thought (Bobbio 1989). The public and private sectors, as core societal structures, were considered to be at opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of function, purpose and organisation. More recent analyses, however, do not consider these as distinct categories.

This dichotomous public and private position has increasingly been questioned. Weintraub (1997) suggests that the public/private dichotomy “...is not unitary but protean’ (p. 2), and refers to the way in which a republican-virtue (and classical) approach sees the public as a political entity and analytically distinct from both the market and administration (pp. 10-16). It is argued that different ways in which the terms ‘public’ and ‘private’ are used “rest on different underlying images of the social world, (and) are driven by different concerns, generate different problematics, and raise different issues” (p. 2). There is also a view that the dichotomy is a product of an overemphasis on private forms. This is, however, unlikely to last as Wolfe reminds us:

It is by no means certain that the preoccupation with the public/private dichotomy that now shapes so many highly charged controversies will continue indefinitely (and that) once the current flirtation with privatism runs its course, a counter-emphasis on the importance of the public sector will emerge. (Wolfe 1997: 2000)

The reconceptualisation of public and private forms in a non-dichotomous manner is the subject of the next section.

#### *Reconceptualising realms of ‘public’ and ‘private’*

Globalisation and the associated information and communication technologies (ICT) revolution have shaped not only the international order but also traditional notions of public and private. By providing the context for the ascendancy of the rationality of the market, it also provided the basis for a form of global competitiveness. It led to a range of public and private forms that are not ‘pure’ anymore, although their origins are discernible. The various functional aspects of these forms are summarised in Table 6.

**Table 6: Functioning of public and private: Forms and function**

Sector	Function/Objective	Examples	Impacts
<b>(Pure) Public sector</b>	Social responsibility Vulnerable Poverty alleviation Aids awareness Employment creation	Government Departments and parastatals	Responsive to all citizens – but focus on dispossessed and vulnerable
<b>(Pure) Private sector</b>	Profitability/sustainability National and International competitiveness	Private corporations For profit	Sustainability Viability Expansion (and job creation effects) Increased taxes for improved delivery
<b>Private (isation) of Public</b>  <b>Private mandate of Public</b>	Efficiency gains Cost saving Improved delivery  A vibrant private sector enables effective public provision	Parastatals - Science Councils FET Colleges and Universities  Use of consultants Outsourcing of services FET Colleges and Universities Partnerships	Charged to cost-share and reduce dependence  Increased effectiveness Improved delivery
<b>Public (isation) of Private</b>  <b>(Public mandate of private)</b>	Long term sustainability and viability International competitiveness  (Effective governance enables conducive 'business' environment)	Social development division Corporate social responsibility units  Grameen Bank	Social development units established Social responsibility programmes
<b>Public-Private co-operation</b>	Maximise effectiveness, best of both – social development objective with co-operation of private	Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)	Increased efficiency of public and cost-sharing for maximum effectiveness

This convergence of public and private in terms of function, structure and modus operandi results in quite unique social forms. In particular, current public institutional forms are associated with the public sector taking on more and more elements of the private sector. Surprisingly, elements which are strongly associated with that of the ‘public sphere’ have also been found to exist in terms of their form and function in the private sphere in the South African context. This has led in higher education to a discourse which refers degrees of ‘public-ness’ and ‘private-ness’ of the various entities (Kruss 2003; Jonathan 2001 and Ntshoe 2002).



Table 6 provides the basis for a ‘third way’, which serves as a bridge for understanding the various forms. The work of Anthony Giddens (1994; 2002), who coined the phrase, provides insight into some degree of convergence between the public and private sectors in the current globalised era. For Giddens (2002), ‘late-modern’ societies require a ‘third way’ out of the socio-political dilemma in which they find themselves. It represents an attempt to strike a balance between socialism and neo-liberalism, both of which are inadequate as a response to imperatives for social inclusion and societal harmony. With reference to socialism, the collapse of the Soviet Union represented for Giddens (2002) an ‘exhausted project’. It declined as a result of not having come to terms with three social revolutions: globalisation; transformations in personal life, and the new relationship with nature. Similarly, neo-liberalism went too far in terms of a market rationality by providing too much of confidence in the capacity of markets to respond to issues of social exclusion, as Giddens is quoted as saying in an interview: “Very few people, I think, even on the political right, now think you can just run the world as though it’s a gigantic marketplace” (Quoted in Mann 1999). In the *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, Giddens observes:

Third way politics ...advocates a *new mixed economy* (which) ...looks...for a synergy between public and private sectors, utilizing the dynamism of markets but with the public interest in mind. (2002: 99-100, *emphasis in original*)

Third way politics represents a shift from the “old” mixed economies, where markets were subordinated to the state. For Giddens (2002), markets have an existence outside of the state but the state needed to pursue ‘active labour market policies,’ ensure sound macro financial responsibility by maintaining fiscal discipline and generally making government more accountable and responsive.

Giddens’ ‘third way’ is criticised more for what it is not than for what it is. The fact that it is neither ‘old’ left corporatist socialism nor free-market neo-liberalism, makes it a target for criticisms from all sides. But Giddens is clear about its ostensible focus:

It’s the modernising left...I mean, you’re still trying to follow the same kinds of values, the traditional left-of-centre values...Inclusion, do something about inequality, create a solidary society which cares more for vulnerable people - all those things are still core values. (as quoted in Mann 1999, *html web page*).

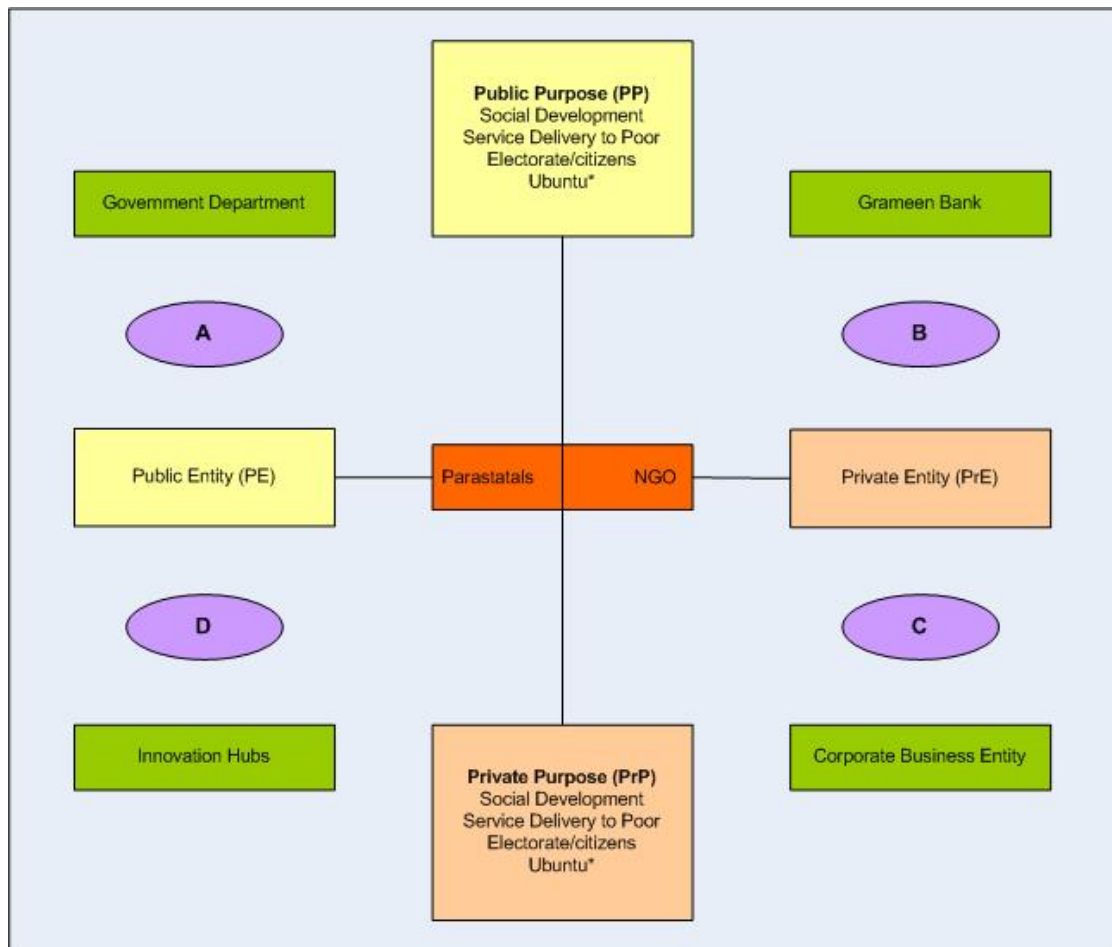
It is for this unambiguous 'leftist' proclivity that those on the right consider the third way to be a form of 'modernised socialism'. But, in response, Giddens (2002) is characteristically as clear when he points out that: "No one...any longer has any alternatives to capitalism-- the arguments that remain concern how far, and in what ways, capitalism should be governed and regulated" (pp. 43-44).

For this reason, Giddens has been viewed either as a champion for a realistic "social democratic renewal" or as a wishy-washy liberal parading as a socialist. Regardless of how we view Giddens, 'third way' politics has turned the notions of the public and private on their heads. Coming after the excessive marketisation of the Thatcher era, it represented a breath of fresh thinking about the role of private and its incapacity to offer a comprehensive framework by which to respond to those marginalised and need of state intervention.

#### *Mixing purposes*

In keeping with the third way perspective identified in Giddens (2002), Figure 4 illustrates the mixed purposes to which the public and private sectors are responsive and identifies the various dimensions of public and private entities.

Figure 4: Private and Public entities: Mixed purposes



\* Ubuntu - Sotho word meaning: respect, humanity, sharing, togetherness

The public (PE) and private (PrE) entities are located on the x-axis corresponding to the origins of the structure (either government or private or business sector). Purposes are located along the y-axis, with the upper end corresponding to public, collective or social development purpose, to which government has traditionally been associated. The bottom area corresponds to private, for profit, individual imperative. This allows various entities to locate themselves within this spectrum in terms of their functioning.

*Quadrant A* (located in the upper left) corresponds to the archetypical government organisation committed to social development, while the typical corporate for-profit organisation is located in *Quadrant C* (located bottom right). The area in-between is taken up by various other formations including NGOs (located towards the right) in light of their private origins and parastatals (located to the left) as government institutions.

*Quadrant B* and *D* represent the ‘new’ forms which have become a feature of the new order. Examples of entities in *Quadrant C* and *D* are those which have an expressed profit (in the case of government) or social development (in the case of a private company) purpose but have originated in the alternate sector. An example of a *Quadrant C* entity is the ‘Grameen Bank’ variant (discussed later in this chapter), which uses market principles for social purposes. The ‘innovation hubs’ are an example in *Quadrant D* where the state has intervened by providing part of the resources to establish private companies in order to secure competitive national advantage (see below).

It is argued that the prime responsibility of the state and public sector is to secure the conditions for good governance by ensuring that the benefits of society accrue to all. The way in which this is to be achieved has changed considerably as a result of the new social forms. Similarly, it cannot be said the private sector has absolved itself from the responsibility of social development. The illustration reflects the new forms which have evolved as a result of the convergent public and private sectors. These categories, which have traditionally been represented as dichotomous, are re-conceptualised in light of the quite different forms of public and private that exist in the current globalisation era in South Africa.

In addition, state organs were charged with the responsibility of ensuring social cohesion by serving a social development responsibility, including providing the safety net for those most vulnerable. Clearly these structures are considered to achieve the goals of social responsibility, including NGOs and parastatals, which although they have emerged from either the public or private sectors, tend to also respond to the core ‘origination’ agenda from which they originate. In the case of the NGO, while the ostensible social development purpose is evident, they are primarily engaged in ensuring sustainability in their attempt to respond to ‘market failure’ (Hansman et al. 2001). Parastatals, which have been the product of state formation, are expected to respond more effectively to the priorities of the government without the constraints of the traditional bureaucracy to which state institutions are subject in terms of financial accountability, a feature which is presumed to make them more efficient and effective in responding to the agenda of the state.

## **Public in private and private in public - new formations in a globalised era**

The very different forms of public and private are evidenced by the varied manner in which they are constituted. Evidence of this tendency is to be found in the introduction of market mechanisms to achieve improved delivery of social services. In some instances, state responsibilities have been privatised completely<sup>18</sup>, while in others, the state has retained major shareholder status, even after privatisation. Additionally, this has also resulted in the freeing up of the private competitive environment to allow the establishment of alternative organisational forms.

The globalised era is also associated with the entry of private entrepreneurs in what were traditionally public service delivery responsibilities. Thus the provision of basic infrastructure and services including housing, water, sanitation, health and education, traditionally considered public sector responsibilities, have been affected to a greater or lesser extent by privatisation and marketisation. The cost saving that will accrue is expected to result in more effective and efficient service delivery and indeed, the and indeed the additional resources available might well result in a widening of the net of those provided support.

Similarly, private prerogatives of some former state institutions resulted in some quite entrepreneurial corporate partnerships, for instance, those undertaken by Science Councils, i.e., The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

Similarly, the private sector is charged to take on increasing social responsibility. This is most directly felt when large government projects are directly linked to social development outcomes-like employment or environment enhancement for sustainability long after the business operation closes. More indirectly and perhaps more importantly, is the embracing of social responsibility projects and programmes of various corporate entities in championing specific national causes. There are numerous examples of social needs to which the corporate sector is responsive, including: aids awareness, poverty alleviation and employment creation.

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<sup>18</sup> In South Africa, examples would include privatisation of power (ESKOM) and the proposed freeing up of the telecommunications industry by privatising Telkom. In the British context, the privatisation of British Rail, for instance, comes to mind.

It is not unusual, therefore, for business in South Africa to get involved to ‘buy South African’ campaigns or some consumer product to add on a poverty alleviation mechanism to the purchase of a particular product<sup>19</sup> or HIV/AIDS awareness by major corporate undertakings either in association with a government department or on their own. While there is arguably much more that can be done, the involvement of the private corporate sector in national social development is evident.

Profit and profitability are not considered to be problematic in themselves because of the insertion of a social development component into functioning of private institutional forms. Profits have a human face and social development is not anymore considered an exclusive ‘public sector’ responsibility. This convergence of purposes and modus operandi suggest a new way of dealing with notions of private and public.

New forms of public and private societal structures represent an important component of the current societal structure. Each is described below:

#### *New forms of public*

The result of this convergence of activities is the increasing incidence of partnerships between public and private. Public sectors have also increasingly sought assistance of private companies in their quest to ensure delivery. Indeed, the development of key national expertise is to be secured with the active participation of the private sector. The example of Newly Industrialised Countries (NICs)<sup>20</sup> in East Asia (i.e., Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) has ensured that the co-operation between public and private sectors are crucial to the development of national competitive advantage in the globalised context (see Green 2003). The ICT innovation hubs which are aimed at encouraging South African ICT expertise on the one hand and widening the base of those involved in the sector, particularly African women, have been a particularly useful initiative in this respect. While these

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<sup>19</sup> Examples include the ABSA (Banking chain) ‘casual day’ promotion which raises millions for various welfare projects, the Cell C ‘take a girl child to work day’ to encourage female awareness of careers. Various other national chains which advertise purchasing of particular products, part of the proceeds go towards charitable purpose, e.g., a recent promotion by national fruit and vegetable chain to donate one fifth of the proceeds towards charity.

<sup>20</sup> Newly Industrialised Countries (NICs) refer to a socio-economic context referring to those countries, “...whose economies have not yet reached first world status but have, in a macroeconomic sense, outpaced their third world (*sic*) counterparts” Interestingly the current meaning of the term includes South Africa, with India and China as special cases. (Accessed from < [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newly\\_industrialized\\_countries](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newly_industrialized_countries)>).

hubs are primarily targeted at securing national centres of excellence with the ostensible aim of securing much needed Foreign Direct Investment, it is assumed that the social spin-offs in terms of job creation and exposing those previously excluded to new opportunities would have valuable social responsibility impacts. At some level, therefore, there is an understanding that the co-operation between public and private is absolutely imperative if national states are to be able to be globally competitive. Thus, while the benefit for government is to be found in the social responsibility imperatives, the private sector is able to see the potential for transnational expansion or improved research and development impacts (see Lorentzen 2006).

A distinction between public and private is made on the basis of their perceived functioning. Private corporate entities are considered to be efficient and effective organs as a result of their flexibility and responsiveness to various external forces. Public entities are associated with having large bureaucratic structures, stifled by red tape and procedure resulting in little efficiency, which mutes delivery. There is a sense that accountability mechanisms are markedly different, which accounts for this difference. There are, however, similar accountability measures.

*Converging accountability measure and efficiency*

Whereas, large government structures have to account to parliament for delivery impacts, private entities, in the case of larger corporations, have to account to shareholders in terms of profitability. Clearly the latter is easier to quantify in terms of clarity of purpose. Thus the urgency in the Mbeki Presidency for ‘delivery targets’ to be achieved which try to define outcomes and impacts. The convergence between public and private is clearly evident in terms of the accountability measures.

Despite some convergence in accountability, it would be problematic to see all state or private institutions as efficient or inefficient. In the same way as there are departments of state ‘with overlapping and frequently conflicting agendas and mandates’ (McGrath 2004: 210-211) that impact on delivery, there are private structures with similar conflictual tendencies. The competencies of both sectors are likely to be influenced by these, with each displaying elements of both efficiency and incompetence at various levels. While it is likely that efficiencies are dependent on capacities and skills of personnel, the mandate of public entities to ensure redress would suggest that much more needs to be done to ensure effective delivery in the

public sector. There are likely to be wide ranging differences between public and private entities and elements within these. In the same manner, the evidence does not point to automatic delivery impacts based on the use of either private sector models or the use of consultants from the private sector.

Indeed, the private sector cannot automatically be assumed to be the standard bearer of efficiency. It has been argued that larger corporations could become less, rather than more, efficient as a result of the new ICT enabled era. As Hugh Lauder and Phillip Brown (2005) argue with reference to the nature of the high skills economy and the skills perceived to be required:

What we are seeing now, as we have in the past, is that some of the 'archetypical' knowledge economy sectors such as banking are becoming routinised, that creativity and initiative for which graduates might be paid a premium is no longer required because what corporations want is to minimise risk, to make the processes of production predictable and to be able to diagnose with precision why things have not gone as predicted. (Lauder & Brown 2005: 33)

While the reference is made to the need for less sophisticated or routinised skills, the impact of this on the efficiency of the organisation is clearly evident. Private sectors are not as efficient and responsive as they are perceived to be. It could be argued, though, that if efficiency impacts on profitability, it is likely to be remedied to ensure sustainability.

#### *Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)*

The third variant of the public/private complementarity is the development of Public-Private Partnerships, internationally and nationally.

PPPs, launched in 2000 in South Africa, have been considered to serve both cost-saving, increased efficiency and national purposes by involving more private black economic empowerment partners (Minister Manuel August 2004, quoted in Olivier 2005). The official definition of a PPP is, "...contract between a public sector institution and a private party, in which the private party assumes substantial financial, technical and operational risk in the design, financing, building and operation of a project". It takes either of two forms:

- Where the private party performs an institutional function
- Where the private party acquires the use of state property for its own commercial purposes. (Treasury 2004: 4)



The PPP *is not* to be confused with ‘outsourcing’, private donations, privatisation or divestiture of state assets, ‘commercialisation’ of a public function by the creation of a State Owned Enterprises (SoEs) or *borrowing by the state* (Treasury 2004: 5). “This is what PPPs are about. The public gets better more cost-effective services; the private sector gets new business opportunities. Both are in the interests of the nation,” the minister said (quoted in Olivier 2005)

To this effect, although regulations regarding PPPs have been covered by the existing Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) financial framework, Regulation 16 was designed to specifically deal with PPPs, setting out procedures, ‘phases and tests’. The seriousness with which PPPs have been regarded is evidenced by the Treasury’s robust comment that it published a ‘world first’ manual on PPP<sup>21</sup>. There is furthermore, an admission elsewhere that this was necessary as a result of the increased risk associated with the concept in a developing context (Olivier 2006).

The take-up of PPPs is reportedly slow. By July of 2005, 13 partnerships had been sealed and a further 50 were ‘in the pipeline’ according to the head of the National Treasury’s PPP unit (quoted in Olivier 2005). There is also emphasis on the notion of ‘shared risk’ with the PPPs capacity to ensure that risk is shared in, “designing, financing, building, operating, infrastructure and services, and for owning and transferring assets” between both the public and private partner (p. 5). This also suggests that it is the public partner which bears the heavier burden of risk.

#### *Consultants*

Another common mechanism is the use of consultants to bring in expertise considered appropriate. An often quoted contradiction in the use of consultants immediately following the 1994 period was the offering of early retirement packages to key civil service personnel, only to find that the vacuum needed to be filled by those who had retired and re-emerged as consultants at considerable expense (see Akoojee and McGrath 2004 for this tendency in the schooling sector). The Department of Social Development’s use of private ICT companies to deliver on social welfare pensions and the use of various consultants to fill the current skills gap in the public sector are other examples where private skills are utilised by public organisations.

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<sup>21</sup> This PPP manual was published by the Treasury as a special module. Available at <http://www.treasury.gov.za/organisation/ppp/PPP%20Manual/Main%20Intro+Contents.pdf> Accessed 02.11.2006

Using consultants ensures that expertise from the outside is brought to bear on challenges. It provides an outside insight into the mechanisms to maximise efficiency. It has also been used quite effectively as a stopgap measure to retain delivery while implementing affirmative action employment practices.

*Corporatisation*

A variant of the privatisation is one referred to as a ‘corporatisation’ model (Smith 2006; Shirley 1999). The model is premised on the understanding that greater state involvement “...mitigate(s) the negative social risks inherent in privatisation” (Smith 2006: iv). Thus the benefit of corporatisation was designed to ensure efficiency gains while still retaining the access mandate. But implementation studies, as in the case of water provision in a local authority, Johannesburg Water, show the very fact that a set of managerial practices are chosen on the basis of articulated efficiency and cost saving rather than social development mean, there is danger of the public good being compromised (Shirley 2006: 44). But as the evidence in this chapter has shown, the efficiency gains resulting from this initiative might well serve an important public social development purpose.

*New forms of private: Private with public purpose*

Private organisations have taken on a range of responsibilities that were once considered the preserve of the public sector. Thus the various ‘corporate’ social responsibility units established by larger conglomerates are designed to respond to particular social issues. In South Africa, corporates have been involved in HIV/AIDS prevention programmes and poverty alleviation measures. The various King reports (IOD 1994 & 2002) have been designed to provide a coherent corporate social responsibility response. The education and training work of the National Business Initiative (NBI), while it has a clearly private mandate, is engaged in projects that are clearly related to national social responsibility. In the international arena, the recent international prominence of Grameen Bank is a particular example of a private sector organisation devoted to a public mandate.

*The Grameen variety*

There is also a variant of the private sector that is particularly involved in the ‘core’ target purpose of the public. The Nobel Peace prize achievement of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, awarded at the time of writing this chapter, is one such example. Its undisputed socially responsive agenda of lending to women

entrepreneurs and enabling them to free themselves from poverty (Yunus 1994 & 2002) suggests a form of private organisation dedicated to what the public sector was traditionally responsible for. It therefore represents a different form of the public/private dichotomy. Far from replacing the public sector, it represents an adjunct to the various ways private initiatives can be used to enable public development purposes. It is likely to become particularly important in light of the international exposure attained.

### **Private forms in public entities: Global education and training imperatives**

The effect of globalisation on national education and training systems has been identified by various contemporary thinkers (Robertson et al. 2002; Apple 2000; Carnoy 2001). There is debate about the extent to which nations are able to respond in a unique and creative manner to what has been considered the pervasive force of globalisation. This is so because while there are clear individual gains associated with education; the national competitive advantage to be gained by having an educated citizenry goes beyond economic benefits (Crouch, Finegold & Sako 1999; Brown, Green & Lauder 2001). The valuable national political gains to be ascertained as Green suggests:

Governments still seek to manage their national systems—indeed, in some ways, more actively than before with ever proliferating targets and audits. They know that education remains one area where they still have some control....despite the waning of the ‘national economy’ and despite the internationalization of most of the factors of production, human skills remain relatively immobile and national. Governments increasingly see them as state resources to be deployed in the battle for competitive advantage in the global market. They are not about to give up this prerogative. (Green 2003: 86/7)

This increased state involvement in the sector does not mean that it has been unaffected by key marketisation elements. As will be shown, the tension between involvement and non-involvement is sometimes contradictory and leads to considerable uneasiness and sometimes results in perceptions of a lack of direction as to exactly what is to be achieved - with unintended consequences.

The effect of globalisation has been complicated by the national redress agenda, with the latter having to be sacrificed to some extent at key moments (Akoojee and

McGrath 2004). This section will explore the way in which these private and public transitions have been impacted upon by the effect of globalisation and marketisation of education and training. While the focus is on skills development and the technical college sector, a brief assessment of the other levels is necessary, i.e. schooling and higher education.

*Schooling: The governance challenge*

Marketisation of public services in general, and education and training in particular, was associated with the onset of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme (GEAR), dedicated to public sector fiscal contraction, with the rationale of increased efficiency and ostensibly implemented to reverse the wasteful effects of Apartheid.

In the schooling sector, GEAR's commitment to contain public social spending resulted in accusations of poorer public school provision in terms of both quality and quantity. This was most clearly evident in the deliberate push to reduce in absolute terms, the number of teachers, which led to skills deficits in the sector. It has been contended that the policy gave way to an exodus of skills to the private sector and established new employment forms within the public sector (Akoojee & McGrath 2004). It gave way for instance to re-employment of those given lucrative retrenchment packages by governing bodies in some cases, the same schools from which these teachers were retrenched by the department. It also provided a further incentive for emigration and brain drain and consequently reduced the ability of the government to address the spatial disparities in provision necessary in a post-Apartheid context (Akoojee & McGrath 2004 and 2006). Clearly one of the reasons for 'rationalising' education by staff reduction was to ensure a balanced equity ratio which required a reduction of white staff and an increase in black staff.

*Higher Education: From massification to planned growth*

Two mutually reinforcing features represent important components of marketisation in the higher education sector, the first is restructuring and a consequent managerial tendency and the second is the distinct shift towards making universities produce more<sup>22</sup> in the context of "limited resources ... used efficiently and effectively" (DoE 2001b: Section 1.1).

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<sup>22</sup> The National Plan proposes that the participation rate in higher education should be increased from 15 per cent to 20 per cent in the long-term, i.e. ten to fifteen years, to address both the imperative for equity, as well as changing human resource and labour needs (DoE National Plan: 2001: *Executive Summary: parag.3*)

While historically advantaged institutions were calling for recognition of ‘efficiency’ and ‘excellence’, the historically disadvantaged institutions called for ‘redress’. For these and other reasons, the implementation of restructuring in the public higher education has been fraught with political difficulty. The reduction of 36 institutions (21 Universities and 15 Technikons) to 21 was clearly designed to ‘prune’ the sector and rationalise delivery, under sway of fiscal contraction imperatives. The proposals, nevertheless, were careful to ensure that the proposals were not to impact on national provision patterns by pointing out that restructuring as all the existing sites of delivery would continue to operate, although there would be ‘new institutional and organisational forms’ (DoE 2001b: Parag.10). It was described by the Minister in the following terms: “The *National Plan* therefore provides the strategic framework for re-engineering the higher education system for the 21st century” (Asmal 2001a: *Forward* to National Plan). How this was to be achieved in the context of an absolute reduction in number of institutions was not clear.

More recently attention has been directed to the symbolic nature of restructuring, in the light of its considerable costs. Bundy (2006) considers the restructuring exercise as a means by which the sector could move away from what the then Education Minister called the "geo-political imagination of Apartheid planners"(Asmal 2002b). This ‘re-imagination’ was, however, clearly underpinned by a perceived cost saving rationale. While it is likely that the cost benefit analysis will reveal some cost reduction in the medium to longer terms, the immediate restructuring costs appear to outweigh these.

While funding has not changed, funding priorities have been reviewed to respond to national development priorities guided by ‘planned growth’, rather than massification. As one Department of Education policy document entitled appropriately *Student enrolment planning in higher education* maintains:

The emphasis on planning is informed by the fact that if the higher education system is to respond to the national development agenda in terms of access, redress and human resource development needs, the size and shape of the system cannot be left to the vagaries of the market, in particular, unco-ordinated institutional decisions on student enrolments and programme offerings.... There can be no argument that enrolment planning is essential if the policy goals and objectives in the National Plan for Higher Education are to be realised, in particular, the need for a high quality and differentiated system to meet the human resource a knowledge needs of the country. (DoE 2005:3/4)

In this regard, it has been argued that the *National Plan* (DoE 2001b) signalled a radical shift from earlier commitments to massification (Bundy 2006; Fataar 2003; Cloete 2002). Universities have been required to set targets in certain key disciplines in an attempt to respond to the globalised ‘information-al’ world (Carnoy 2001). While they were ostensibly tasked to increase intake and output in science, engineering and technology, the context of managerial efficiency by which they were expected to achieve these imperatives served to undercut these intentions (Bundy 2006).

#### *Further Education and Training*

The South African FET policy debate displays a tension between a neoliberal discourse of college transformation into autonomous, efficient and market-led institutions serving the needs of industry, and a continuing espousal of a broader set of educational values around learning, personal development and citizenship (King & McGrath 2002; McGrath 2003a & 2005b).

The newly elected democratic government inherited two types of Technical Colleges in 1994, State and State-aided Technical Colleges. The dichotomy between state and state-aided technical colleges rests on the pre-1994 imbalance of historically advantaged versus historically disadvantaged colleges. Key differences include governance and legal status, and financing and financial management. State colleges were almost completely controlled by the Government. A governing body only exercised advisory powers and all operating costs were paid by the State with tuition fees paid into the State Revenue Fund. State-aided colleges, on the other hand, were essentially self-governing entities, funded by subsidy according to Full Time Equivalent (FTEs). Tuition fees were determined by council, with the college at liberty to raise additional funds and donations on its own.

Up to the time of the declaration of Technical Colleges as FET Colleges by the Minister of Education in September 2001, 46 per cent of Technical Colleges were state-aided and 54 per cent were state colleges.

#### *Responsiveness*

The impact of globalisation is most realised at public FET Colleges as they are expected to provide the grounding for the world of work. As a sector, it is considered to be ‘Janus-like’ in having to respond to both the education as well as

the vocational direction (Young 2006). FET policy clearly aims at building responsive public institutions that should address education and skills development goals for both individuals and industry, but their ability to deliver is constrained by “...their own internal challenges of quality and by the uncertainties provided by FET policy and its limited articulation with other relevant policies” (McGrath 2005c: 143). One way in which to deal with these and other challenges faced by FET colleges is to be found in a vigorous drive for marketing them effectively.

Marketisation is associated with the following transformation measures:

- Institutional structure and restructuring
- Programmes and course review
- Interaction with the world of work, which expects that it make more concerted links with the prospective employers of its charges
- Promotion of self employment

These measures are to be implemented in the context of a legacy of considerable disparity in provision forms between former black and white institutions in the Apartheid era. The disadvantage of former black institutions means, however, that they would need considerable support to reach acceptable levels. This will make the espoused realisation of a sector that is responsive, efficient and effective difficult to achieve without any concerted intervention. This means that the proposals for the reduction of government involvement, under the framework of a neo-liberal cost-sharing prerogative, are unlikely to be realised. Marketisation might, therefore, not be as effective a measure to transform the system as is currently anticipated in light of the differential legacy from which various institutions have emerged.

Although the notion of responsiveness of colleges is not new, white colleges were clearly much more aware of a labour market link. Resource differentials in large measure precluded black colleges from this function, except those whose leadership was most enterprising.

The broad transformational challenge in the post-Apartheid era is located within an assumption that South Africa must respond through its educational institutions to the pressures of globalisation. Such a response is expected to lie in greater national competitiveness, which in turn, depends on better skills development. Restructuring was a product of the accepted wisdom that (some) public providers were not delivering against these goals, and that drastic action was needed to ensure

that they were made more efficient and more responsive to the needs of industry. While this implied that those less advantaged colleges were to be enhanced, this was not articulated as such.

*The rationalisation of the public College sector*

The reduction of FET colleges has been intricately linked to the need for responsiveness, as a key component of the marketisation discourse in the college sector. The new institutional landscape was ostensibly required to make the sector more responsive to the ‘new South African’ post-Apartheid context:

A new institutional landscape for FET Colleges represents a significant and decisive break for the old apartheid system of technical/vocational education and training in South Africa. (DoE 2001a: 3)

This rationalisation of the 152 Technical Colleges into 50 FET Colleges, which was designed to produce ‘large multi-site colleges’, was dominated by a discourse of ‘responsiveness’. They were also designed to be much more in tune with South Africa’s human resource development needs and ensure ‘co-ordination’. The *New Institutional Landscape* identifies the rationale for “a co-ordinated, accessible and responsive system” (DoE 2001a: 4). There has also been a move to push colleges into more determined links with employers. The pressures for a more deliberate ‘responsiveness’ agenda, while a valid and important one, somehow tends to shift colleges into a narrow instrumentalist response to the market.

There was evidence that the ‘responsiveness’ agenda was undermined, in a number of ways (McGrath 2005c):

- DoE remains a firm believer in the merits of public education over private. Although private FET is accepted as part of the landscape, it is clear that the DoE remains focused on a reworking of the public, not an encouragement of the private.
- The policy process failed to ever develop a clear picture of what specific types of skills the new colleges were to deliver...although recent *re-curricularisation* initiatives to be implemented in 2007 might be more clearer in this regard
- The role of colleges in promoting self-employment or basic rural skills development is left undeveloped and uncertain.
- It is still unclear when these will become NQF-aligned and how they will respond to the above issues about the economic role of the college sector

In spite of the neo-liberal tone of much of the language of FET policy, the DoE has retained a strong belief in the broader purposes of FET as education. The



Department is strongly of the view that FET must be educationally rigorous and must build learners as individuals, members of communities and as citizens, but even here there is evidence, as McGrath (2004) points out, the “development of this educational vision also remains frustratingly limited” (p.162). This reflects the ineffectiveness of policy. Crouch, Finegold and Sako (1999) argue that a similar tension between addressing youth unemployment (related to the SMME/community development focus) and the needs of the knowledge economy (related to industry responsiveness) pulls colleges internationally in conflicting directions but tends to leave them addressing only the first.

*From responsiveness to receptiveness*

Responsiveness is more and more associated with the imperatives of the labour market, despite the appeal for a ‘differentiated understanding’ of the notion, see for instance McGrath (2003: 101) and Unwin (2003). Clearly the rhetoric of responsiveness suggests a move towards market imperatives as comments of the previous Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, indicates about the role of restructuring was that colleges should be able to “offer greater support to learners, innovative partnerships with business, industry and communities, and an even more responsive and flexible curriculum” (Asmal 2002: 127). The overtly market notion of a market responsiveness is also evident in other works. Butler (2000: 334) has argued that TVET institutions in particular have been at the forefront of becoming complicit actors in the educational marketplace, which has led to vocational knowledge being largely redefined as “industry relevant, just-in-time, ephemeral and disposable skills, with short use-by dates” (*ibid.*). Industry dictates its terms and the boundaries between educational sites and the sites of education’s ‘customers’ become increasingly blurred. So, there is evidence that as Unwin (2003) warns, “The ‘responsiveness’ agenda may push providers of further and higher education towards a more narrowly defined concept of HRD” (p. 3).

I argue that rather than expanding the notion of responsiveness to include the ‘expanded’ relationship between TVET and the world of non-work or in this instance, national social development, there is need to use a term specifically designed to this purpose. I offer a notion of *receptiveness* as a means to resolve this situation. The receptiveness of TVET to multiple agendas will be the focus of the next section.

Importantly, while the notion of *responsiveness* will be used with specific reference to labour market imperatives, the notion of *receptiveness* is used to refer to the way in which the sector responds to imperatives outside of the market, in this instance, access, redress and equity. This is understood as *inter alia* issues related to process including the composition of the sector (learners and staff); the way in which programmes are delivered and the nature and form of provision.

*Overview: Globalisation, marketisation and privatisation*

Globalisation's tendency to encourage private provision has tended to result in a distinct propensity to marketise public education provision and to result in a distinct blurring of public and private sectors in education.

In schooling, globalisation has led to a rationalisation of the teaching staff and a growing focus on market solutions and private sector management approaches in public schooling. The rationalisation of the post-schooling sector since 1994 has been associated with a mix of international influence for a reduction of national social expenditure, and national imperative to undo wastages of Apartheid. In addition, the growth of national private education provision has also importantly been a result of the manifestation of a global upsurge in private education forms.

In public further and higher education and training, the current reduction in absolute terms of the number of further education institutions and the mergers of a number of higher education institutions is perhaps testimony of this. The rationale for this is perhaps unique. While there is a stated imperative to undo practices of apartheid inspired social engineering, there is an equally strong imperative for 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness' to respond to demand. Similarly, while there is a need to undo the 'inequality' of the past, these very practices reinforce it. Indeed, the need for post-school state provision, as will be argued in the next chapter, is much more pressing in South Africa in light of the skills deficits and the need for black skills to redress the pernicious effects of Apartheid (Moleke 2005). Thus the argument that the post-schooling sector be left in private hands becomes less sustainable.

Private provision has also seen an unprecedented upsurge. Again two imperatives have had to work together to achieve this expansion. The early 1990s saw rapid liberalisation of regulation in education and training. As the Apartheid state realised

that a move from stark racial capitalism was inevitable, more and more choice was handed to individual white schools. This laid the basis for the decentralisation of state power and therefore undermined the successor state's capacity to transform as quickly as necessary.

Globalisation and marketisation unravels a creative tension in South Africa. Proponents and critics of the marketisation tendency in education are separated by imperatives of socio-economic redress on the one hand, and retention of Apartheid inequity on the other. Proponents suggest that the skills bind in which the country finds itself and the resource constraints within which skills have to be developed make marketisation a *fait accompli*. In effect, the challenge is much more daunting. Ensuring the immediate need for skills needs brought on by global competition and the longer-term objective of socio-economic transformation simultaneously is a difficult and somewhat elusive one. While the ideal would be to have both imperatives working in sync, its achievement is much more difficult and complex as I will illustrate in the next chapter. It requires significant state intervention for these needs to be met.

## Conclusion

This chapter on privatisation explored the way in which notions of private and public have been understood in the international and national literature. The dichotomous manner in which the two categories have been traditionally understood has been underpinned by particular notion of the purposes, form and function of the categories. It is argued that the private and public notions have undergone considerable transition and that a 'third way', which suggests a blurring of boundaries, is evident. There is evidence of a less distinct public and private sector as a result of two mutually complementary features. The first is related to purpose, the second to function. In terms of both there is a distinct convergence. The public becoming more and more private in form and functioning, while the tendency for the private to respond more and more to public purpose.

The discussion raises important considerations of the role of the state. In identifying the convergence of the public and private sectors, there is a *rapprochement* of the purposes and function, with the best of both used for national advantage. The arena of contestation and competition is an international one, with both government and

private seeking new markets in order to ensure that national interests are secured, economically and socially. The role of government in this context in delivery of services is to enable effective conditions for the market to operate as the following illustrates:

...democratically accountable state provision of a comprehensive public sector, twinned with democratically-accountable oversight of the workings of market or market-type activity both within and outside that sector, with the public good – that is to say, the well-being of the polity, as currently conceived by its citizens, with all voices carrying equal weight – taken as the fundamental criterion of assessment, is the only option for a polity which seeks to be *both free and fair*. (Jonathan 2001: 17)

This suggests that there is still need for a state to provide services associated with the public good and asserting influence where the market is either less effective or is unable to intervene effectively. The role of the state as a co-ordinating and engaging one is thus more necessary than ever before, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

# Chapter 7

## **TVET PROVISION: UNDERSTANDING PROVISION FORMS**

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) represents an important feature of education and training provision. As a means by which to both provide the initial and continuing education and training requirements of large numbers of people, it attempts to straddle the needs of lifelong education and training as well as the immediate requirements of the workplace. Moreover, it is also required to incorporate general occupational skills as well as the demands of the workplace. As Unwin (2003) succinctly points out:

By occupying this middle ground, colleges of further education face an immediate problem of identity. Unlike schools and universities, they have the potential to service a much wider community of learners and to offer a bigger range, type and level of programme. Such diversity can, however, mean that colleges struggle to achieve recognition and/or status for being specialists in particular types of provision. Attempting to service the needs of too many stakeholders also makes colleges subject to constant change and so can weaken their ability to stand firm when stakeholder pressure becomes overly intrusive... Trying to be all things to all people can result in a loss of identity and further marginalisation. (Unwin 2003: 3)

The enormity of the task means that it is more than likely to fall short in some respects. Colleges would therefore need to be selective as to their purpose and identify relevant values and missions.

All public TVET institutions nevertheless need to be aware of the national development imperatives to which they have to respond. As a mechanism for national development, TVET represents a key means by which to raise the general economic development and welfare of the country at the macro level, while ensuring that the needs of the populace to enhance their sense of self-worth is provided for. Indeed, it could be argued that without a critical mass of technical and

vocational skills, it is unlikely that any nation is able to ascend the value chain and achieve appropriate levels of development (Crouch, Finegold & Sako 1999; Brown, Green & Lauder 2001). A well-functioning and efficient TVET system, serving both national and individual needs, is indispensable to social and economic development.

This chapter explores the international and national context of skills development provision. It begins by identifying the international development context of skills development provision and the changing role of public TVET provision since the second half of the twentieth century. It then goes on to identify general debates in TVET provisioning internationally, before exploring the private provision forms in South Africa.

### **Reviewing international and regional TVET trends**

In reviewing the current status of VET and, in particular, identifying the various modalities by which skills development takes place, Palmer et al. (2006), identify in addition to public vocational training centres and non-state training provision, training in the informal/unregistered sector; enterprise-based training and agricultural education and training. Nonetheless, Public Vocational Education and Training has been the principal focus of development in Africa.

McGrath (2005b) has referred to the range of challenges faced by African countries since independence and the role of vocational education in responding to the challenge of youth unemployment. Reference is made to the dramatic increase in school enrolments in most countries, particularly at the secondary level, around the time of independence. However, because economic growth was generally not so rapid, most countries experienced a serious problem of youth unemployment (International Foundation for Education with Production (IFEP) 1990). This led to growth in a series of institutions and development of new programmes, such as the Botswana Brigades (van Rensburg 1978 and 2002). These initiatives significantly expanded the supply of skills in the region and placed skills development at the forefront of the agendas of most recently independent governments. However, because they were often targeted at a lower level of skills and knowledge than traditional artisanal programmes they "...had the effect of weakening the relationship between training provision and the formal labour market" (McGrath 2005b: 2).

The early period also saw many bilateral and multilateral donors and lenders identifying technical and vocational skills development as a crucial ingredient for development. It was considered a critical sub-sector for their support to developing nations in the 1960s and early 1970s (Jones 1992; King 1990 & 1991). In an era when rapid industrial and agricultural transformation was the aspiration of national partner governments, TVET appeared a very natural component of modernization strategies and their corresponding aid policies. Diversified or vocationalised secondary schools and national industrial and vocational training centres were popular in this period.

The underdevelopment critique led to a change in development policy (as discussed in chapter 6), with consequent impacts on Vocational and Technical Skills support and provision. Development initiatives before the 1970s centred on the tiny urban formal sectors of the developing economies. The crucial importance of the non-formal arena was recognised with recognition of the need for skills development in the recently 'discovered' 'informal sector' and other non-formal rural and urban training centres. The period was also associated with the ascendancy of non-formal education initiatives, with some quite interesting initiatives undertaken at the micro-level rural community project level (La Belle 1987: 2000). In this respect the Adult *non-formal* community development initiative of Paulo Freire in Latin America represented a radical alternative for education to be used as a tool for liberation (Freire 1997 *trans.*).

The 1980s saw the growing ascendancy of neoclassical confidence in the market, as was noted in the previous chapter. In the sphere of technical skills development, the result was that the diversified secondary schools and formal vocational training centres lost much of their external support. Kenya and Ghana, for instance had to rely on their own resources to vocationalise their formal education systems in the mid-1980s (King & Palmer 2006b). To reinforce the role of primary and academic education and to emphasise the impact of its role to development, a number of rates of return studies were commissioned during this time by the World Bank (see Psacharopoulos 1973, 1980, 1985 & 1994; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos 2002). The role of these to downplay the vocational element of developmental aid was crucial.

The impact of structural adjustment and years of neglect in the developing world left their mark on post-school TVET systems in the developing world. By the early

1990s, VET systems across sub-Saharan and Southern Africa were considered to be poorly articulated to the labour market. This led to two broad thrusts for reform, largely led by different multilateral agencies (McGrath 2005b).

The first emerged from the International Labour Office (ILO) which in 1989 published a volume *Training for the Informal Sector* (Fluitman 1989), based on more than a decade's work by the ILO on urban informal sectors (cf. ILO 1972). Contributors paid attention to specific training that took place away from the formal system in the informal sector itself. The policy impact of the book lay in raising the profile of training in, and for, the informal sector, which saw a significant increase in development agency thinking during the 1990s.

As the 1990s continued, this thrust also began to include an encouraging of formal TVET providers to become more responsive to preparation for self-employment. However, as a further ILO book acknowledged in the mid 1990s, success in these projects remained limited (Grierson & Mackenzie 1996).

The second thrust came from the World Bank and was crystallised by its 1991 paper on VET (World Bank 1991). It represented a shift in emphasis from public to private provision patterns under the influence of a neo-liberal strand, which saw a shift towards market solutions. The new policy paper made a case for a liberalisation of public TVET systems. The paper provided the rationale for the market rationality as the following indicates:

Training in the private sector-by private employers and in private training institutions ...can be the most effective and efficient way to develop the skills of the work force. In the best cases employers train workers as quickly as possible for existing jobs. (World Bank 1991: 7)

The solution to the expensive, inefficient and ineffective public provision pattern was seen to lie in private funding of the sector. The Bank justified this development by showing how public TVET provision was already being supplemented through the private sector, through schools, through training-for-equity schemes, and through the informal sector (World Bank 1991).

The challenge to the role of TVET in the 1990s was also accompanied by attention to another major area – that of primary schooling. The groundswell of international agreement on the important of basic education in the aftermath of the *World Conference on Education For All* (WCEFA 1990) led to the development of target-setting. The commitment to achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) and the



Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 (UNESCO 2000) served to direct funding away from post-basic education in developing contexts. Although, as King and Palmer (2006) point out, the thrust of the 'Education for All' (EFA) movement focussed on the role primary (or basic) education, this did not, in theory, exclude consideration of other education levels and forms. Early documents testify to the inclusion of skills training, apprenticeships, and formal and non-formal education programmes. These were considered a significant component of the basic education 'package' adopted by the *World Conference for Education for All* (WCEFA) (1990). An overly simplistic interpretation of 'basic', perhaps underpinned by the limited budgets of donor organisations, meant that a more narrowed conception of basic was preferred. It is perhaps understandable, therefore, that the easily 'trackable' goal of universal primary education (UPE), underpinned by the political imperative of the MDGs, was recognised as the main outcome of Jomtien.

There was, nevertheless, a strong current in this period within elements of the donor policy community on the reform of public TVET providers. The period was described as one associated with the "structural adjustment of training" (Bennell et al. 1999). Public TVET providers were required to become more responsive to the labour market, a thrust, which, in part, coincided with the ILO argument about orientation towards training for the informal sector. They were also required to try to cover more of their own operating costs by, *inter alia*, increasing fees, offering short courses at full cost and selling products and services.

There was also a strong call for more control to be given to employers, with a resulting reduction in control by public officials. At the national level, it was reflected in a donor drive to establish national training authorities, with major employer representation.

It was to this challenge that all post-basic education and training provision had to respond although higher education appeared more resilient to this threat as a result of government protection. The onset of globalisation and the importance of the knowledge economy to national development underscored the need for higher education in developing contexts. The role of higher education was being placed on the international agenda with various conferences funded by the World Bank to reiterate the role of the sector in the globalised, information and knowledge

economy (World Bank 2000)<sup>23</sup>. The role of TVET, however, was not similarly protected and was relegated in favour of other levels, namely basic and higher education. Agency interest, and consequently funding, followed this trend.

### **The current international skills development context**

A series of pressures on developing countries may suggest that development policy, and specifically aid policy in the field of education and training, may be shifting again. At the level of policy, a series of major developments including the Commission for Africa (2005), the Millennium Project Report (2005) and various World Bank papers on higher education (2002), skills development (2004), secondary (2005a) and on education in general (2005b), as well as the latest *World Development Report of 2007 on Youth* (World Bank 2006a), have all suggested that an integrated, inter-sectoral approach to the whole of the education and training domain will be required if countries are to reach the MDGs (Beveridge et al. 2005). The Millennium Summit of 2005 has underlined the need to ‘strive for expanded secondary and higher education as well as vocational education and technical training’ if poverty reduction and the other development goals are to be achieved. The same point is made by DFID in its new policy briefing about greater investment being needed “at all levels of education if we are to reach the Millennium Development Goals” (DFID 2006), as well as in published research supported by DFID (Palmer et al. 2006).

Some optimism is to be found in recent documents. The sector-wide approach (SWAP) and the recognition of the contribution of education to other sectors, such as health, agriculture, industry and infrastructure signals some change in perspective, although TVET is not mentioned specifically. Perhaps this will signal the appropriate shift in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) which have focussed predominantly on primary education (Caillods 2003; ILO 2005). King and Palmer (2006a), however, are convinced that, “...a recognition that coherence between the sector-wide approach and the PRSP process will become increasingly necessary, and that skills development will become integral to both” (p.3). It is likely

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<sup>23</sup> This international Conference was followed by regional conferences reinforced the importance of the role of higher education in developing nations, and so secured its significance for national development policy.

that the success of the EFA movement will ‘force’ some thinking about follow-on initiatives.

UPE schemes have placed enormous pressure on the still very small and often relatively high cost secondary education systems as well as on the inadequate public provision of technical and vocational education and training. Governments across Africa and South Asia are responding by currently planning for very substantial increases both in formal secondary education and in vocational education and training.<sup>24</sup> In such situations, some countries, e.g. Ghana, are proposing an increased vocationalisation of upper secondary education, although the sheer scale of the provisioning would require substantial commitment. Recent evidence suggests that about 70 million young people lack access to secondary schools (or other post-primary training) in Sub-Saharan Africa alone, and the great majority of these are drawn from poorer households (Lewin 2006).

In addition, the questionable quality of basic provision has placed doubt over the sustainability of UPE (Council for Education in the Commonwealth 2006; CCEM 2006) at least in its present form. It has been estimated that some learners graduate with a mastery of only 20 per cent of the expected basic education curriculum (World Bank 2006b). This, together with the lack of serious mobility resulting from primary education, has moved attention to post basic education and training provision - notably skills training in the informal sector or short-term skills training through non-government organizations.

Perhaps some optimism is appropriate from the latest Youth World Development Report (World Bank 2006). It refers to the need for youth to be appropriately skilled in order to facilitate their entry into the labour market. It requires that “training systems...not only prepare youth for entry into work, but provide pathways for continual learning over a lifetime in response to changing technologies and global economic requirements” (p. 111). Although the role of the private sector is emphasised by suggesting “increasing incentives for firms to train and reform training systems’ (*ibid*), the importance of post-school skills development as the next step signals a shift away from basic education.

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<sup>24</sup> See Saitoti, the then Minister of Education in Kenya (2005), for an endorsement of the role of TVET in national development (Quoted in King & Palmer 2006).

In addition, the new globalised era will ensure that countries can no more simply provide sub-standard post basic secondary education. As De Ferranti et al. (2003) remind us there is need for the ‘investments to be embedded in a dynamic information infrastructure and efficient innovation system’. While this ‘rhetoric’ is arguably less consistent with African and developmental contexts than is often admitted, its relevance for South African circumstances needs to be considered. Arguably, the many benefits associated with technical and vocational skills development, such as higher productivity, readiness for technological change, openness to new forms of work organization, and the capacity to attract foreign direct investment, all depend on the quality of the skills acquired, and a dynamic environment in which they can be applied (ADB 2004; King, Palmer et al. 2006). It is to this issue that I now turn.

*Globalisation and skills for national development: The South African context*

Skills have been moved up the agenda nationally and internationally. The growing acceptance of the spread of globalisation has seen skills development move up the political agenda both North and South, and from neoliberal and social democratic sources (Ashton 2004). This impact of globalisation and the knowledge economy have led policymakers to see education and skills as crucial to competitiveness.

The rationale for this is essentially two-fold, as McGrath and Akoojee (2007) note: First, globalisation tends to reduce the scope for state intervention in many traditional areas of social and economic policy (e.g., interest rate setting), leaving education as one of the few key areas of accepted state intervention. Second, the discourse of the knowledge economy heightens arguments about the centrality of human capital investment to individual and national economic performance. Governments internationally tend to see, or certainly claim that, education and skills are core tool for increasing economic competitiveness and promoting social inclusion (Crouch, Finegold & Sako 1999; Brown, Green and Lauder 2001; Akoojee, Gewer & McGrath 2005). The South African state has clearly accepted this logic, at least in the public domain.

However, this is not exclusively driven from the outside. It is also drawing on the powerful legacy of multiple domestic discourses. The traditional ANC vision to

ensure education for all contained in the Freedom Charter as a result of apartheid exclusion and In the face of such inequalities, the international concern about seeing education as central to advancement has been intensified. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) tradition also identifies the shift towards a post-Apartheid industrial system based on higher skills, wages and productivity, although it has been arguably influenced heavily by the Australian industrial transformation of the 1980s (McGrath & Badroodien 2006). In addition, business leadership has also been arguing for higher skills as central to a new industrial system and the concern for skills shortages (Kraak 2003c and 2004; McGrath 2004a).

In terms of national development, therefore, AsgiSA and JIPSA (discussed in chapter 5 of this work), continue the emphasis of the Presidential State of the Nation Addresses since 2004 in identifying education and skills as one of the most central elements in South Africa's national development strategy. This indicates that VET systems are beginning to shed some of their historical second-class status.

The international and national discourses taken together have brought education and skills to the centre of the dominant development approach in South Africa. They have also helped shape education and skills discourse in terms of which levels and segments of the overall education and training sector are seen as most important. In a context where most learners are already receiving more than the legislative minimum of 10 years schooling, concerns about education are focused on getting access to quality further and higher education. This reinforces the thrust of the international debate on high skills for the globalised knowledge economy and finds strong support internally (McGrath & Akoojee 2007: 428)

It has been argued that a lack of skills at the individual level is a major element in poverty. Without skills to sell in the labour market, or to make a viable living in subsistence or self-employment activities, individuals are far more likely to be in poverty (King & McGrath 2002; McGrath 2002).

This is also reinforced at the regional level. Recent accounts argue that skills development offers Africa a tool to deliver on both growth and social inclusion (Tikly 2003; Akoojee, Gewer & McGrath 2005). However, Crouch, Finegold and Sako (1999) point to the difficulties that have come in practice in managing these twin imperatives. They argue that in looking both to growth and poverty agendas,

skills development strategies tend to conflate and confuse the two and fail to deliver on either.

*Skills and employment and employability - demand discourse*

Skills development has also been linked over at least 35 years with the growing problem of youth unemployment. In OECD countries, the expectation that skills development systems could solve mounting youth unemployment was proposed strongly in the 1970s as the advanced economies underwent economic crises which followed the spectacular employment growth in the post war decades of the 1950s and 1960s. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, skills development systems were, therefore, considered to be the solution to this problem and were being revolutionised most spectacularly in the Anglophone countries (Crouch, Finegold & Sako 1999; Wolf 2002).

Interventions in skills supply are considered especially by politicians to increase employability and income generation, and ultimately growth (Wolf 2002). Education by itself is expected to reduce poverty, unemployment and crime, and to enhance community development. There are a number of problems with these claims as Ashton and Green (1996); Crouch, Finegold and Sako (1999); and Wolf (2002) point out. Not the least of these is the methodological problems with proving alleged links either between training and productivity, or training and employment. However, the greatest problem facing such accepted wisdom is the realisation that skills development is not sufficient in itself to generate increased levels of employment or even sustainable self-employment.

It has repeatedly been emphasised that supply side interventions are unlikely to achieve employment outcomes. However, the prevailing wisdom, undoubtedly as a result of how easy it is to intervene on the supply side, means that this is often the area of least resistance. It clearly does provide the most politically feasible solution (Wolf 2002). This is further complicated by an articulated mismatch between skills development policy and what employers require. In addition, in spite of the currency of the high skills (Brown, Green & Lauder 2001) discourse, interpreted in its many facets<sup>25</sup>, there continues to be competitive advantages in pursuing essentially Neo-Fordist/Taylorist approaches (Keep 1999; Kraak 2003b). Whilst it can be argued that the recipe for the NICs was successful in leveraging changes in

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<sup>25</sup> Whether considered as 'flexible specialisation' (Piore & Sabel 1984); Post-Fordism (Mathews 1989); knowledge work (Reich 1991); the knowledge economy (Leadbeater 2000).

work organisation through state intervention (Ashton & Green 1996; Brown, Green & Lauder 2001; Ashton 2004), this is unlikely to be a practical route for most poor or even middle income countries in the foreseeable future.

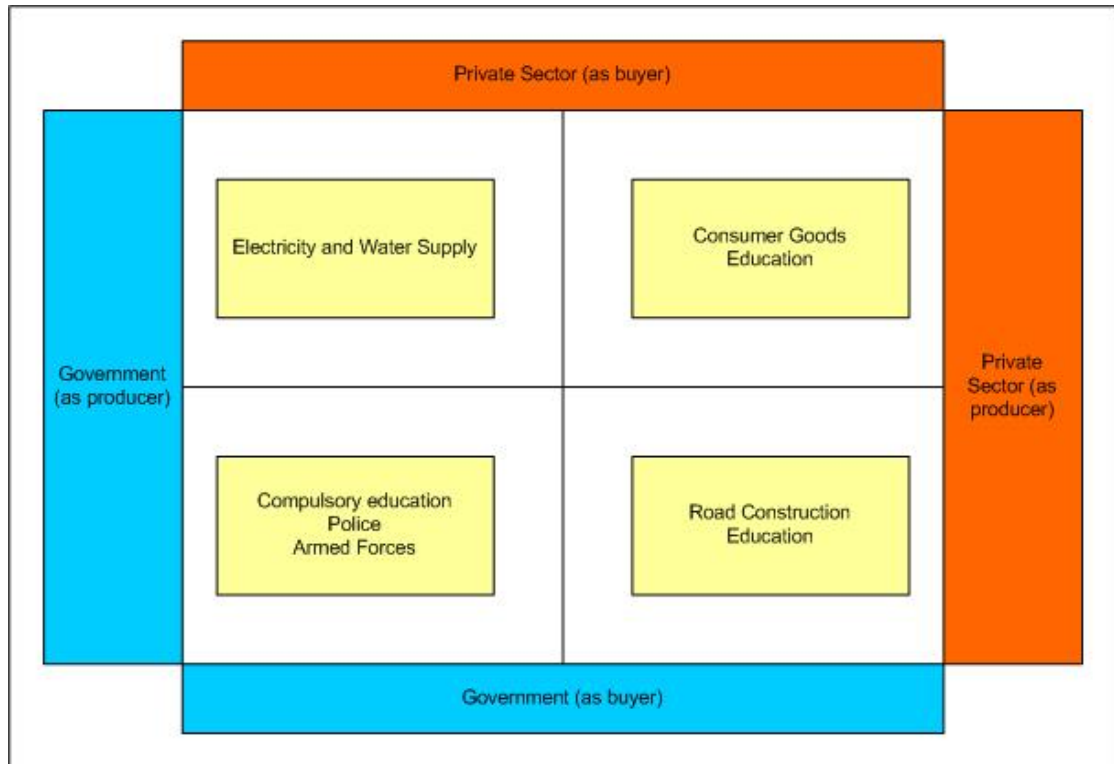
A number of practical issues at programme level are also considered to hamper development of TVET provision. These include the low status of youth unemployment programmes; the difficulty of developing new content in areas such as core skills; and the challenge of reorienting existing providers and/or creating new ones especially in light of the resource constraints and the unwillingness of governments to invest in the sector. Indeed, the fact that most enterprising initiatives, even in large enterprises, takes place informally (Lave & Wenger 1991; Engeström 1994 & 1998; Fuller & Unwin 2002 & 2003; Ashton & Sung 2002), means that government has been able to neglect the sector at the expense of other national priorities.

## **Understanding private provision**

### *Theoretical context*

Private education provision can be understood within the context of market. Figure 5 indicates the relationship between the production and consumption of various services. The four quadrants could be populated by fields associated with various public and private sector services. The illustration has important implications for the way in which public services are understood.

**Figure 5: Relationship between production and consumption of goods and services:  
Government and private sector**



Source: Martinussen 1999: 267 (based on Roth 1987)

Notwithstanding the notion of ‘buyer’ and ‘producer’ as corresponding to a commodification of essential public services, the left and right quadrants in Figure 5 show production by government (in the left quadrant) and the private sector (to the right quadrant). Thus the provision of compulsory education is placed in the bottom left quadrant, together with the police and armed forces, in the developmental model in Figure 5 indicating its crucial importance to national development. But clearly, education could be produced by both government and private sector for the benefit of both - its positioning towards the bottom and upper left quadrants suggests possible national development purposes. Although, the provisioning of compulsory education is to be produced by government, recent evidence pointing to a thriving non-state, pro-poor and ‘for-profit’ private school sector in less resourced contexts in New Delhi (India) have equity impacts (see Tooley & Dixon 2005 & 2007 *forthcoming*).

*Private TVET provision in Africa: A review of the evidence*

Private provision has been furthered by the discourse of globalisation and, given this context, is strongly contested. During the 1990s the World Bank-led reforms of



African TVET called for greater responsiveness to the market, as we have seen. Part of this was a growing encouragement of the opening up of a private provider market (Bennell et al. 1999). Thus private provision was considered to be much more efficient than its public counterpart. As opposed to the uncoordinated and inefficient supply of skills under state provision, the Bank's view was that the market was likely to promote the demand-led provision necessary for African revival.

Governments in Africa that formally disallowed or discouraged private education before the 1990s were encouraged to shift their position, especially those more in need of international donor funds. In Kenya, for instance, the higher education sector saw the rapid development of private provision. Although much of this was, and still is linked to churches, the move enabled them to draw on international sources of funding. In Zimbabwe, the further education and training sector saw a rapid expansion of private provision in the 1990s. Although this was largely indigenous in its ownership, it was still providing foreign rather than local qualifications. This kind of practice tended not only to result in legitimising foreign qualifications, but also impacted on the outflows of much needed foreign exchange out of the country. There has also been a considerable growth in flows of privately funded students out of Africa at both FET and HET levels. This latter phenomenon is being actively developed by OECD providers, who are increasingly under pressure to generate incomes to sustain themselves in context of reducing incomes from the national fiscus. This has resulted, in some cases, in serious engagement with the philosophy of aggressive capitalism to ensure survival, with many institutions actively developing delivery either through distance or franchising arrangements in the South.

This position has not changed drastically in the new millennium. More recently a study (Atchoarena & Esquieu 2002) outlined the growth of private provision in Sub-Saharan Africa by pointing to the 'perceived poor quality' of the public TVET sector, which resulted in the search for an alternative provision. The rationale for this was driven by the articulation with the needs of the labour market, and second, for its potential in providing an outlet for the 'shortage of opportunities' at public institutions. These demand-led and supply-motivated factors, according to this report resulted in a "heterogeneous and fragmented public sector in SSA (Sub-Saharan Africa)" (*ibid.*: 66).

The lack of regulatory oversight had important impacts on growth of the sector. The emergence of a very diverse sector made it even harder for the state to regulate or even understand the new sector. Thus Atchoarena makes the point with reference to the sub-Saharan context that:

...private providers have emerged in an uncoordinated and unmonitored fashion. In the absence of proper regulation in most countries, very little is known about the nature and operation of these entities. (Atchoarena 2002: 20)

It was evident that at least part of the story for the increase in private provision lies in the increased demand for TVET access and the associated deterioration of public providers in sub-Saharan Africa.

#### *Private TVET provision in South Africa*

The history of private post secondary education since the nineteenth century has been associated with the establishment of particular institutions responding to contemporary social needs. Malherbe (1977) makes the point that many institutions followed the trajectory of starting off as private before quickly obtaining some grants from Government. Thus, the first private institution, the South African College, started in 1829 as a private institution but received subsidies from the Cape administration by 1834. Many of these early institutions essentially served to prepare men for overseas higher education. The development of the mining industry after 1880 saw a significant increase in the development of technical and vocational institutions and fields of study. For instance the Dutch Reform Church established the first industrial school in Uitenhage in 1895. Various institutes were also established by business to develop to provide training for professionals, including the Building Societies Institute (1919), Institute of Bankers (1898) and the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (1909).

Public education provision was reflective of social attitudes that suggested that skilled trades were the preserve of Whites, but that unskilled manual labour was for Blacks (Malherbe 1977: 188). In the early part of the century, there were a growing number of technical and vocational institutions established to address the social plight of 'poor whites' (*ibid*). The establishment of vocational and technical education institutes therefore entrenched racial and class segregation.

The period 1918-1947 saw a significant increase in private post-secondary education for blacks. According to Mabizela, in this period, "...private post secondary institutions largely functioned to address the demand for vocational and technical education that had been denied to blacks by the government" (Mabizela 2002: 45). Equally, "the vocational training of Coloureds was relegated almost entirely to private initiatives" (Malherbe 1977: 190). Training mainly, but not exclusively for whites, occurred at various institutions, well known today, including Lyceum College (established in 1940), Rapid Results College (1928), Success College (1940) and Damelin (1945).

The first private initiative by the Indian community was recorded in 1929 with the provision of part-time commercial classes. The initiative was boosted in 1940 by a Durban businessman, Mr M L Sultan, who donated a significant amount of money for the erection of a technical college-named after him (Malherbe 1977: 188). Seventeen years later, the government provided a grant-in-aid.

The establishment of the Apartheid government after 1948 saw little government attention being paid to private provision. This was despite the finding by the Eiselen Commission on Native Education (the Commission on whose recommendation Apartheid Education was designed) that there was "an undetermined number of private institutions (which were operating) for gain" (DNE 1951, Paragraph 352, quoted in Malherbe 1977). It was also reported that there was a rapid increase in students and a "growing demand for correspondence education" (DNE 1951, Paragraph 357, quoted in Malherbe 1977). Although the Report suggested that government regulate the sector, little was done in this regard.

The expansion of the university sector for whites and the lack of public provision for blacks led to some increased demand for private provision. The Eiselen Commission's Report, which restricted education provision for Black people in general, was followed by the Extension of Universities Act (RSA 1959), which ensured limited post-school provision. The formal acceptance of private institutions came in 1965 when colleges offering distance education were required to register with the Correspondence College Council under the *Correspondence Colleges Act of 1965* (RSA 1965). The Council was tasked to ensure that "any person maintaining, managing or conducting any correspondence course or providing correspondence tuition for reward" (RSA 1965). The Act excluded those receiving

grants-in-aid from government, thus clearly using funding as a means to differentiate public from private. Registered colleges were considered 'inferior' to public institutions, since they were only allowed to register certificates and diplomas and not degrees. For this reason some private correspondence colleges served as access routes to more significant higher education opportunities (Andrew 1992; Mabizela 2002). In some respects, though, in the absence of public opportunities, it is more than likely that they simply served as alternatives to increase qualifications for the labour market.

Official agencies considered private providers to be of lesser quality. The Van Wyk de Vries Commission (DNE 1974, quoted in Malherbe 1977), a Commission of Inquiry into universities, for instance, reported that although private institutions offered certain higher education programmes, it was in some circles regarded as 'compensatory' education, encompassing adult education, academic bridging and enrichment programmes. Although they noted some collaboration between these colleges and some public higher education institutions, it did not appear to have impacted positively on the quality or private provision.

Private provision continued unhindered for important reasons. It did not serve as a challenge to Apartheid planning and in some respects enabled the training of a group of black mid-level supervisors. As long as there was no evidence of racial intermixing, it did not challenge the Apartheid racial structure and was therefore not considered a threat. Mabizela (2002) argues that it was possible that government deliberately allowed those sub-quality private institutions to operate on the fringes to "fulfil its objective of racially differentiated education" (p.47). This analysis, however, gives too much emphasis to deliberative social steering. Private post-school provision was peripheral to education in any case and was the preserve of those few who could afford it.

Until 1998 two voluntary bodies regulated the sector: the Association of Private Colleges of South Africa (APCSA) and the Association of Distance Education Colleges (ADEC). Those private institutions offering tuition-based instruction, however, were not required to register. At the start of the present decade, they were referred to as an "amorphous group of institutions (and) about which very little is known" (Bird 2001: 32).

*Current Developments: Regulation*

Regulation is a contested phenomenon. This need to regulate and guarantee market access, while at the same time preventing obstacles to the freedom of capital represents for Jessop (1999) the ‘central contradiction in the neo-liberal doctrine’. While on the one hand there is need to create a sustainable, vibrant and unrestrained socio-economic climate for the survival of the phenomenon; on the other, there is a call for ensuring that there is regulation.

Those for regulation emerge from the side of the providers as well as government. Providers favouring regulation require it in order to safeguard the industry from unscrupulous provision that discredits the whole sector, while those that consider it a threat cite the inevitable “tension between the need to retain sufficient autonomy to be true to their unique missions and the demand to be sufficiently accountable” (Hofmeyr & Lee 2002: 84). The issue of regulation has unleashed some quite vociferous critics, who see in regulation a “... a weapon against private institutions in a larger campaign to save the student market for the ailing government-subsidised universities and technikons” (quoted in Yeomans 2001a: 5). The scepticism and suspicion on the part of private providers (for instance Hofmeyr 2002) has also been mirrored by those critical of state policy. Government has been accused of allowing the private sector to prosper because of their need to cut back on social spending (see the section on GEAR above).

Critics of private provision argue that private FET is contrary to the notion of education as a public good. However, studies such as that of Atchoarena and Esquieu (2002), cited above, have argued that the limited responsiveness of public providers to the expressed skill needs of employers and individuals means that there is both a market and a need for private providers to contribute to individual, enterprise and national skills development. One study referring to the South African context has established that some companies prefer graduates from private institutions (Unicity tourism study, quoted in Atchoarena & Esquieu 2002: 43). It is evident, therefore, that the perceived ‘evils’ of the profit motive need to be counterbalanced by the obvious demand-led nature of at some forms of private provision.

In terms of national policy, the rationality of regulation is underpinned, on the one hand, by the need to ensure that skills produced are not disrupted and, on the other,

by the necessity of ensuring learner protection from unscrupulous or poor quality providers. The *White Paper on Higher Education* (RSA 1997a) makes the following key point about the need for regulation, although in reference to Higher Education:

The Ministry recognises that private provision plays an important role in expanding access to higher education, in particular, in niche areas, through responding to labour market opportunities and student demand. The key challenge in expanding the role of private institutions is to create an environment which neither suffocates educationally sound and sustainable private institutions with state over-regulation, nor allows a plethora of poor quality, unsustainable 'fly by night' operators into the higher education market. (RSA 1997a, *paragraph 2.55*)

This point was subsequently reiterated in *White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education* (DoE 2001d) provides the basis of government policy. It not only establishes the basis for the legitimacy of the sector but also importantly recommends an enabling environment for them to operate.

There is, nevertheless, an understanding within and outside the private sector for regulation. The need to secure learner protection is clearly an important reason for government regulation, but it has been challenged on the basis that the state is likely to be the one least able to provide it, considering the excessive bureaucracy in other sectors once regulation was introduced. The warning against 'over regulation' is dire.

In general, however, there has not been much resistance to regulation in South Africa. Whether this is because the system has not been able to be fully functional and that the 'overly bureaucratic' hand of the state has not been seen, or whether providers do in effect see the benefits of the sector in enhancing state education objectives, is not as yet clear. Early signs, however, indicate that there is consensus for some regulation of the sector to ensure sustainability of the sector. There are calls for the state to develop policy that would, on the one hand ensure sustainability, while on the other hand, ensure that irresponsible provision is restricted. The latter rationale becomes particularly relevant whenever the popular press exposes incidents of malpractice when learners are exploited as a result of unexpected provider closures.

Regulation, therefore, represents the first step to accomplishing two important principles, which are mutually supportive of and yet in contradiction to the limited 'free rein' hitherto enjoyed by private providers. On the one hand, it recognises in principle, the existence of the sector, and on the other, gets the sector to respond to

priorities considered appropriate from a national perspective. These twin effects of regulation works for the benefit of learners primarily, and are consistent with the needs of providers and the state. While providers are protected from the negative effects of the publicity of unscrupulous providers, learners are ensured of the legitimacy of registered providers, as consumers.

While the regulation issue has dealt with the right of providers to exist, it has been indicted for the tendency to ‘commodify’ education. The consumerist paradigm associated with seeing students as ‘clients’, programmes as ‘products’ and staff as means by which goods are delivered, suggests an ‘input-output’ model of education.

The National Qualifications Framework imposes a tripartite system of qualification levels on South African education and training to which all education and training providers, both public and private are expected to align themselves. Whilst public providers have been put under strong state pressure to concentrate within specific NQF bands, private providers have by their very nature to respond to the market rather than following the dictates of the NQF bureaucracy. As a result, private providers are more likely to straddle between the various levels. However, this leads to difficulty with regulation and this problem has still to be resolved.

In summary the in-principle acceptance of private provision in the constitution suggests that there are important equity issues that need to be resolved. The overarching concern with ‘race’, rather than ‘class’ has meant that there is a need to ensure that private provision does not perpetuate race differences. Thus, the Constitution makes special mention of the need to prevent racial discrimination by using private means by proclaiming that private providers would be allowed to operate provided that they “...do not discriminate on the basis of race” (RSA 1996: paragraph. 29.3.1). There are obvious equity issues in all this. Does the existence of private provision mean that public provision becomes an option for those with least money? What is the effect of private provision on quality in the public system? Supporters would argue that it would engender a competitive spirit, which cannot but be positive, while critics suggest that it has capacity to widen social disparities and entrench already endemic class and racial differences.

#### *The regulatory framework*

The Further Education and Training Act of 1998 (RSA 1998a) established the need for registration, or conditional registration, as a pre-condition for offering FET

training. Criteria for registration include financial capability, maintenance of acceptable standards, i.e., standards not inferior to standards at comparable public FET institutions, and compliance with SAQA's quality assurance procedures.

At present the new FET Colleges Bill (2006) has made some quite interesting changes to the registration requirement. Attention has been paid to the need for the private college to be a 'juristic person' in terms of the Companies Act (Act 61 of 1973), which would allow it to take responsibility for any malpractice<sup>26</sup> (RSA 2006a: section 28,1a). To reinforce tangible responsibility the Act specifies that a "juristic person...may not be a public company or a holding company as defined in the Companies Act" (*ibid*).

The legislative framework currently guiding the regulation process in addition to this includes the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Besides registration, a provider is to be accredited by a quality assurance agency, called an ETQA (Education and Training Quality Assurance) body. ETQAs have been established for economic sectors under the Sector Education and Training Authority (SETAs) established under the Skills Development Act or professional associations. For public education, different education and training levels have been accredited as ETQAs. The Higher Education Quality Council, currently under the auspices of the Council for Higher Education (CHE) is the ETQA for Higher Education, while UMALUSI is the ETQA for the general and further education and training sector. The functions of ETQAs include:

- accrediting providers;
- promoting quality amongst constituent providers;
- monitoring provision;
- evaluating assessment and facilitating moderation among constituent providers;
- registering assessors, the certification of learners;
- co-operating with relevant moderating bodies;
- recommending new standards or qualifications or modifications to existing standards and qualifications; and
- maintaining a database, submitting reports.

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<sup>26</sup> A bearer of rights and duties that is not a natural person (that is, not a human being) but which is given legal personality by the law is a juristic person - for example, a company.



While ETQAs do not set standards, they assure the quality delivery and assessment of registered standards and qualifications. They are primarily required to assure the quality of provision and assessment of accredited providers.

The DoE is currently in the process of putting in place the administrative framework for the registration process. A pre-registration process was undertaken in the course of 2000/1 to enable the Department to design an administration system to handle registration in an effective manner. This was followed in October 2002 by publication of the Draft *Regulations for the Registration of Private Further Education and Training Institutions, 2002* (DoE 2002), which sets out the criteria for registration. The process is now underway.

## **Conclusion**

The concern with private provision is indeed an important one in South Africa. The imperatives of skills development suggest that both private and public need to complement each other to produce the requisite skills. The issues of redress and equity are also critical to this. To what extent can legitimization of private provision enable the achievement of national development objectives? If private provision is to be required to serve social as well and developmental and national economic and social goals, there is a need to ensure the means by which this can be achieved. A firm empirical base from which to do this is necessary. Part 3 will make an important contribution to the development of such a base.

## **Part III**

### **FINDINGS: RESPONSIVENESS AND RECEPTIVENESS IN SOUTH AFRICAN PRIVATE FET PROVISION**

The three chapters that make up this section correspond to notions of national development identified and discussed in Section B - that of response to employment and labour market prerogatives and that of social development.

#### **Responsiveness reconsidered: The insertion of a receptiveness agenda**

The notions of responsiveness and receptiveness used in this analysis represent central conceptual categories. Responsiveness has become associated with the need to make colleges much more effective and relevant to their various constituents. In its varied understandings, it has, become singularly linked with that of the response to the labour market. Colleges have been required to respond to the local labour market, with a central need defined as employment outcomes for learners with the related need to ensure that the appropriate requirements of the employers are responded to. This has resulted in an unintended under-emphasis of the needs of learners, staff and the community empowerment agenda.

Gravatt and Silver (2000) have stressed that colleges need to challenge this 'responsiveness' rhetoric by remembering that they are nothing without their students and that these students are part of the families and communities, "which define their experience, education and identity" (p.127). In the South African context, appeals to ensure that this wider interpretation is taken seriously have been made (McGrath 2003a & 2003b and Unwin 2003), but have clearly not been

successful. This was most clearly evident at a recent national FET conference<sup>27</sup> where it was evident that the term was far too steeped in the discourse of the labour market to take account of this expanded notation.

The difficulty with ‘expanding’ an existing term, especially one so firmly rooted in popular discourse, is that traditional notions stubbornly persist. There is need for alternative terminology.

In this regard, the term ‘receptiveness’ is suggested to incorporate the ‘missing’ priorities to which the TVET sector needs to respond. The term incorporates the social development element of those priorities and foregrounds the needs identified in Unwin (2003) as those of staff, students, families and communities. While labour market responsiveness might arguably represent a significant element in TVET provision, its dominant role to the exclusion of process considerations needs to be resisted. The term receptiveness in the South African context would incorporate considerations of national priority in education including those of access, redress and equity, which are considered to be critical to socio-economic transformation.

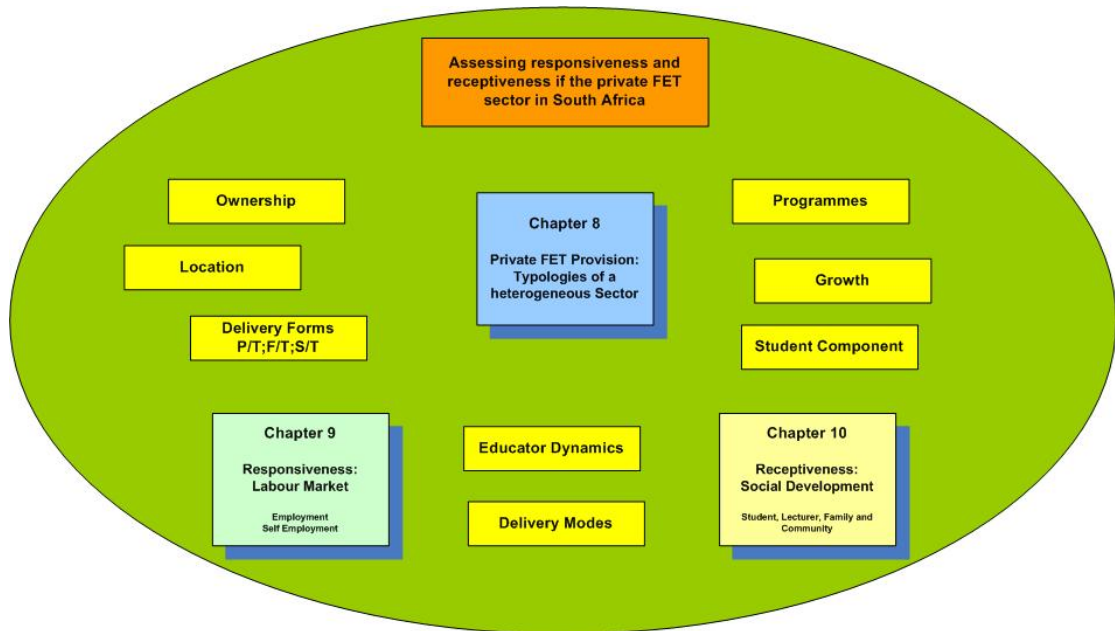
Thus while the term ‘responsiveness’ will specifically refer to conventional labour market connotations, receptiveness will refer to considerations related to processes of education and training institutions. The distinction is made with a cautionary warning, which suggests that these priorities are not at odds with each other, and that they indeed overlap. The extent to which they need to be mutually reinforcing will indicate their effectiveness in responding to national development prerogatives. These data chapters are, therefore, organised to accommodate this nomenclature.

The three chapters that make up this section examine the way the sector responds to national development imperatives as outlined above. The structure of these chapters is depicted in Figure 6.

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<sup>27</sup> DoE-HSRC Conference (2006) ‘A Responsive FET College System: Current form and future prospects’, DANIDA FET Conference, 27th-28 June 2006” held at Kopanong Conference Centre, Johannesburg.

Figure 6: Organisation of this section



Chapter 8 sketches the background to the sector, providing various typologies for understanding the sector, while chapters 9 and 10 identify the extent to which the sector, or elements within it, responds to the labour market and social development prerogatives respectively.

### Note on referencing of data sources

#### *Quantitative data sources*

Information used in this section is drawn from a number of data sources. Some clarification is necessary.

- Information obtained from the national Department of Education was the product of their survey into private providers in a pre-registration exercise. *Information was obtained for the 2000 academic year.* This database is referred to as 'DoE database: 2001' or 'DoE 2001c' in reference to the year in which data was gathered. The subsequent official publication in which the pre – registration report results were published is referred to as (DoE 2003).
- My quantitative data collection undertaking using the DoE pre-registration database was conducted in 2002. This survey obtained *information for the 2001 academic period/year* and is referred to as 'HSRC 2002' under auspices of the organisation in whose name the data was collected at the time.

- My qualitative analysis of the sector. The case study visits were undertaken in 2003 and obtained data for the 2002/3 academic period. This dataset is referred to as 'HSRC 2003'

Data on public FET data was drawn from the *Quantitative overview of South Africa colleges (2000)*, reporting on data collected in 1998; the *Quantitative overview of further education and training college: The new landscape* (Powell & Hall 2002), providing data for 2000, and the *Quantitative overview of the further education and training sector: A sector in transition* (Powell & Hall 2004), referring to data provided by colleges in 2002. Where, necessary, this was supplemented by additional official and non-official data.

#### *Qualitative case studies*

The profile of the cases finally selected for study is indicated hereunder (adapted from Akoojee 2005). (The sampling decision is provided in chapter 4).

- *Provider A: Vendor training by a large ICT multinational*

This provider, initially located in the for-profit category on the basis of its survey return, was subsequently found to be a part of the corporation's sales function. As an ICT company, it trades in both software and hardware, requiring company sales personnel and vendors to be trained in the use of the products.

- *Provider B: A large multi-purpose provider*

This 'for-profit' provider blends provision encompassing general upgrading, programmes for jobless youth and employee corporate training. As an institution open to the public, it liaises directly with the clients (learners) in most cases, but also links into the focused needs of the corporate sector for specialised purposes. It has a vast array of courses, many of which are directed at specialist labour market niches, offering courses in for instance in ICT project management, game ranging management and call centre management. It has branches nationally.

- *Provider C: A lean provider of NQF aligned training to the corporate sector*

This institution in the 'for-profit' category caters specifically to the corporate sector. It provides short courses tailored to client needs that are marketed explicitly as being aligned to the NQF. Considerable effort has been put into SETA and SAQA alignment and this appears to be seen as providing a market niche for the provider. The provider makes considerable use of consultants and at the time of the field visit was pursuing a black empowerment structure.

- *Provider D: A rural provider of ICT training*

An institution based in a small business centre in a rural setting. It provides basic ICT end user training to the area. It also provides photocopying, fax and e-mail services and has given ICT support to some local institutions such as the nearby public hospital.

- *Provider E: In-house delivery of continuous skills upgrading for the staff of a parastatal*

This parastatal in the chemical sector provides on-going training for its staff within the workplace. It uses computer-based self-paced learning programmes purchased from an international vendor, which is available to staff via strategically located computer terminals 24 hours a day. The programme is geared to automatically track learners and enable management to monitor progress. Training is linked to the performance management system of the company.

- *Provider F: In-house training in a large food and beverage franchisee*

This provider is an in-house provider located in one of the larger metropolises. It responds to the needs of employees by providing relevant programmes. It is characterised by an in-sourcing of those programmes it does not develop in-house. In keeping with a dual community and employee development focus, it also provides a number of scholarships to first time tertiary and further education students.

- *Provider G: Empowerment via training at a large mine*

Although, this large mine, located in an otherwise remote area, is also engaged in the in-house training of its own staff, the centre under study is a provider of skills development to the surrounding community. It offers programmes in areas such as plumbing, bricklaying, carpentry and needlework and also seeks to promote self-employment.

- *Provider H: Community development activities from a religious NGO*

This church-inspired NGO participates in national development by employing community outreach skill strategies. It has focused on teacher development in rural communities, and therefore works closely with provincial education authorities. It is linked to a large public university, which certifies its post-FET level courses and allows postgraduate articulation. It also offers teacher development courses on an ad-hoc basis as funding allows.

- *Provider I: Reaching out-of-school youth through the efforts of a small, local NGO*

This provider is a South African NGO specifically targeted to respond to the skills development needs of out of school youth unable to access the labour market. The institution is based in the capital of one province, with branches in other less resourced provinces with significant unemployment. Learners are put through initial courses intended to provide skills necessary to access the formal labour market, or are supported towards self-employment.

- *Provider J: A private school with a vocational interest*

This township-based private school has engaged in some technical skills-based programmes as part of its delivery. It intends to expand to post-school provision. It has also offered some computer programmes for the community.

Table 7 indicates features of provision of the cases described in this section.

**Table 7: Sample cases used in this study: Selection criteria and salient feature**

Case	Typology	Size	Location	
			Province	Position*
<b>A</b>	In-house	LARGE	Gauteng	C*
<b>B</b>	For Profit	LARGE	Gauteng	C
<b>C</b>	For Profit	LARGE	KwaZulu- Natal	C
<b>D</b>	For Profit	SMALL	Mpumalanga	NC**
<b>E</b>	In-House	LARGE	Free State	NC
<b>F</b>	In-House	MEDIUM	Western Cape	C
<b>G</b>	Non-Profit	MEDIUM	Northern Cape	NC
<b>H</b>	Non-Profit	MEDIUM	Gauteng	NC
<b>I</b>	Non-Profit	LARGE	KwaZulu-Natal	NC
<b>J</b>	Non-Profit	MEDIUM	Gauteng	NC

\* C indicates location in the city centre, while \*\*NC indicates location either in non-core (rural) areas or non-central area or semi-urban or areas peripheral to the city.

# Chapter 8

## TYOLOGIES FOR A HETEROGENEOUS PRIVATE FET SECTOR

This chapter provides an overview of typologies for the private FET sector in South Africa. It examines various institutional forms characterising the sector. Often enough the notion of the private FET sector masks particular perceptions of an ideal type - on the one hand a 'fly by night', exploitative education and training provision (as referred to by the Education White Paper III 1997) and on the other the preferred efficient provider of choice to the corporate sector (see, for instance, response by APPETD<sup>28</sup> to the College Bill and Yeomans 2001a and b). Terminology will assist in unpacking these broad generalisations associated with the sector. The analysis of the private FET sector undertaken in this chapter is, therefore, crucial in assessing responsiveness and receptiveness in the two subsequent chapters.

The chapter begins with an elaboration of the initial typology utilised in the study, which derived from existing literature on private TVET provision in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). It shows a sector characterised by significant diversity in provision types and forms. It identifies primary and secondary typological categories that enable an understanding of the kinds of provision associated with private post-school FET provision in South Africa. Primary categories include those of learner, client and provider type, while secondary categories include those of provider size, the issue of regulation and current legislation, delivery forms, function and institutional location. All of these have a bearing on access considerations.

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<sup>28</sup> Khatle T (2006) *Response by APPETD to the FET Colleges Bill*. Correspondence dated 24 October 2006, available at <Sabinet online>



## **Towards ‘developing a ‘general discourse of private FET provision in South Africa’**

Heterogeneity represents one of the defining characteristics of private TVET provision. This requires some concerted unpacking of its form to clarify various components. It is for this reason that Atchoarena and Esquieu (2002), in their assessment of private TVET in sub-Saharan Africa, point out that “It is...very difficult to develop a general discourse on private provision” (p.66). They found that the sector was associated with considerable diversity in terms of ‘status, offerings, size, student profile and performance’ (*ibid*).

This is as pertinent to South Africa as it is to other countries in the region. One way to develop a discourse of provision patterns is to be clear about the categories used to describe the sector. While the construct of ‘public technical college’ or ‘public (and private) university provision’ is clear, it is not as clear-cut in the private FET sector. To elaborate: the notion of a public university has some clearly defined features that could arguably be considered homogenous. These features include fixed premises; a defined qualification structure; a predominant post-school youth student component; and face-to-face instruction modes delivered essentially during ‘office hours’ (with some variation in the business faculty where delivery is conducted on Saturdays and evenings) over the ‘academic year’ by qualified personnel with significant post-school qualifications. The notion of a public university is therefore more easily subject to a common understanding of what is to be described. Not so with the private FET sector. Except for its ‘private’ nature, suggesting non-funding by the state, and the fact that it refers to courses that are at neither school nor university level, there is very little in terms of a clearly defined sector that is associated with it. This lack of a clearly defined institutional type makes it difficult to develop a ‘general discourse’ of private FET provision in the country. The varied client types; provision levels; programme types with varying course durations; diverse instructional and delivery modes; and different institutional location typologies suggest a considerable degree of heterogeneity of the sector.

As noted earlier, the initial typology used in this work was the one identified by Atchoarena and Esquieu (2002) in their assessment of private TVET in sub-Saharan Africa. They characterised institutions in terms of form and profitability, identifying

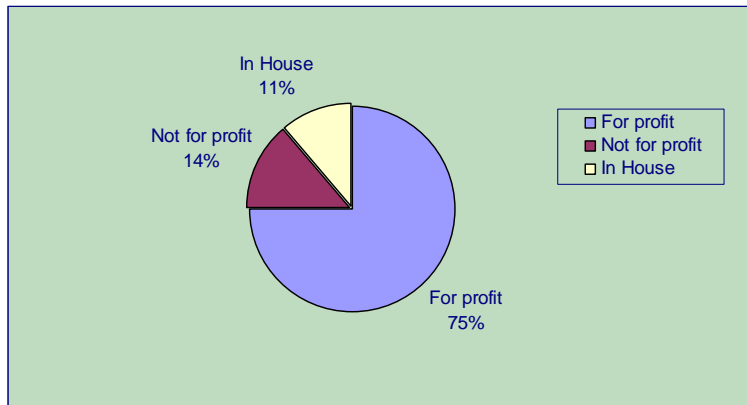
a 'for profit', 'not for profit' (the NGO sector) and an 'in-house' or 'in-company' employee training type. Preliminary considerations of these provider types were undertaken in terms of the following characteristics:

- *Private not-for-profit training institutions.* Institutions financed by *Non-Governmental Organizations* (NGOs), but were essentially 'subsidised denominational schools', usually registered and regulated by government legislation.
- *Private for-profit training institutions:* A predominantly urban, fee-charging sector sometimes subsidised in some countries. They were essentially responding to deficiencies of public provision.
- *Companies that supply in-house training:* to 'enhance the technical skills of their employees.' In some cases, company-training centres are also open to other target groups.

(adapted from Atchoarena & Esquieu 2002: 26)

This categorisation was customised for the South African sector in the course of my research. While the 'for-profit' and 'in-house' providers were similar, the 'non-profit' sector excluded schooling because of the definitional category identified in terms of the pre-registration requirement. The non-profit sector in the South African case included those post-school skills development donor or self-funded providers specifically directed at not-for-profit purposes, as well as those undertakings not registered under the Companies Act (RSA 1973).

This SSA categorisation was used as a starting point to analyse the sector in the quantitative component of the study (Akoojee 2003). It was also used to identify sampling categories for the qualitative study (Akoojee 2005). Figure 7 identifies the composition of the sector using this framework. It shows that three-quarters of providers that pre-registered in the DoE database (DoE 2001c) identified themselves as 'for profit' providers, with the rest identifying themselves as 'in-house' or 'non-profit'.

**Figure 7: Categorisation of provider types: For-profit, in-house and 'non-profit' providers**

Source: HSRC 2002

The predominant 'for-profit' nature of the sector in South Africa is consistent with sub-Saharan trends. The lack of a vibrant 'in-house' sector, while suggestive of increased outsourcing to 'for-profit' providers, also indicates a possible decline in the importance of employee training in light of the legislative impasse that pertained at the time (see chapter 9 for a discussion of this aspect). The inconsequential proportion of 'non-profit' providers is likely to be the result of the decline in donor activity in the sector in the post-Apartheid era, possibly occasioned by government emphasis on channelling funds via government departments. Interestingly, the absence of a vibrant religious oriented sector, private post-school is also particularly striking as compared to the Sub-Saharan study (Atchoarena & Esquieu 2002).

While this categorisation served an important starting point for understanding the broad funding pattern and its similarity with patterns in SSA, the typological categories needed to be expanded to assist in understanding the heterogeneity in the sector. In addition, this initial classification was subject to definitional conflation in that the 'in-house' provider category represented a provision form based on learner type rather than profitability, as compared to the other two categories (for- and non profit). Similarly, in-house providers could categorise themselves as both 'for' and 'not-for-profit' depending on their understanding of their role in the profitability of the enterprise. The initial categorisation would also leave a number of 'hybrid providers', outside of the strict provision patterns bounded in this typology. Thus the qualitative study revealed a range of providers that could be categorised as both 'for' as well as 'not-for' profit. The categories used by Atchoarena and Esquieu (2002) were found to inadequately explain the diverse provision forms in the sector in South Africa.

Similarly, while there were some ‘in-house’ provider types who were responding to the ‘employee upgrading’ function, there were also others who were more directly linked to profitability (Provider A) or social development (Provider G). This required an expanded understanding of the notion of in-house as a category that simply responded to in-company employee training.

Analysis of the qualitative data also revealed that the ‘predominant’ for-profit categorisation incorporated a range of organisational forms that required additional typological categories to describe provision patterns. Whilst providers in the NGO sector were not primarily engaged in ‘for-profit’ activity in a sense that the proceeds do did not accrue to shareholders, there was evidence of some ‘for-profit’ elements in terms of cost recovery or attempts to ensure longer term sustainability of the undertaking (as in the case of Provider H and I).

Two types of typological categories (primary and secondary) are identified in the following section is described below

### **Primary typology: Learner and provider groups**

#### *Typology by learner type*

Learner group represents the most significant feature of the new typology of private FET provision in South Africa, and serves as an all-encompassing framework for understanding the various learner cohorts. Previous work referred to two of these learner cohorts<sup>29</sup> namely, employed and unemployed. The categories have, however, been expanded in this work. Table 8 shows the expanded client categories identified in this study:

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<sup>29</sup> In that work, they were referred to as client groups (Akoojee 2005). In this work, the term client refers specifically to the ‘accountable agency’ (see Chapter 8=Accountable agency).

**Table 8: Categorisation of private providers in terms of client (learner) groups**

Category	Client/Learner category	Description	Rationale for training
L1	Pre-employed	Never employed- post school youth Full time or short term provision	Formal labour market
L2	Unemployed	Mature client, never employed or retrenched Full time/part time or short term provision	Formal Labour Market Self Employment
L3	Employed	Employed mature client Part-time provision	Formal Labour Market Non-Employment
L4	Employee	Short term provision	Upskilling Non-employment
L5	Customer	Short term/Part time	Awareness/Product familiarity

The five categories identified in terms of employment status provide the central distinguishing rationale for training. The pre-employed (post-school) category (L1) represents that learner group that is unlikely to have been employed, which is the primary client group of the public FET college sector, as will be discussed in chapter 9.

The following three categories are mature learners based on their employment status. Category L2, the ‘unemployed’ category, represents the currently unemployed sector of the countries who might have been employed at some stage and who are either seeking to access the labour market or need the new skills for self-employment purposes.

The third and fourth categories (L3 and L4) represent those learners that are employed. The former refers to those who are self-funding; the latter to those who are the clients of in-company reskilling, by employer decree. L3 is distinguished from the L4 learner by way of the sourcing of the training. L3 learners tend to source their own training, while L4 learners have training sourced for them.

For providers, the notion of a ‘walk-in’ client sector is used to distinguish those learners that have sourced their own training from corporate employees. This terminology is, however, only pertinent where providers respond to both sectors.

The ‘employee’ group, where training is specifically commissioned by the company, includes the L4 and L5 learner set. They are served by either the ‘in-house’ training provider, by multi institutes or by ‘specialist’ consultants. L4 learners represent a lucrative training market as a result of the skills development levy that their company is able to reclaim. These are distinguished from those companies that require customer training, provided by corporates as part of their ongoing product awareness and after-sales support and service.

Learner types represent the essential distinguishing feature between public and private post-school FET provision. The distinction between initial Vocational Education and Training (iVET) and continuous Vocation Education and Training (cVET) used in Akoojee (2005) is particularly pertinent on the basis of response to varied client groups. *Initial* Technical and Vocational Education and Training (iVET) refers to the training required subsequent to schooling path, while *continuous* Vocational Education and Training (cVET) is the training targeted at more mature learners, with ‘employed adults’ representing the ideal type. Table 9 illustrates the differences in provision forms and the type of learning and programmes offered.

Table 9: Distinction between iVET and cVET

Category	iVET (Initial Vocational Education and Training)	cVET (Continuous Technical Vocational Education and Training)
<b>Learners</b>	Post-school youth (pre-employed)-predominantly 'walk-in' clients	Employed mature learners
<b>Learner motivation</b>	Access formal employment	Employment Progression Lifelong learning opportunities
<b>Predominant provider base</b>	Public Colleges	Private Providers
<b>Admission requirements</b>	Emphasis on formal schooling qualification	Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or work experience
<b>Trainers</b>	Trainers with extensive theoretical expertise	Trainers with practical experience
<b>Type of Programmes</b>	Low-cost and concentration on in-house equipment requiring less maintenance and infrastructure and consequently cost	High cost and extensive range of courses
<b>Duration</b>	Predominantly theoretical Longer (12-36 months)	Predominantly practical 1-7 days (up to 18 months)
<b>Predominant assessment mode</b>	Written assessment with some practical component - on course completion	Ongoing practical and verbal (project based) to attesting presence
<b>Programme development</b>	Programmes developed at institution under auspices of (official) legislative guidelines (SAQA) etc	Programmes 'in-sourced' by private vendors or developed for particular purpose-market oriented licence

source: adapted from Akeojee 2005: 36

The most important aspect of these provision patterns is the labour market orientation of both the private and public sectors, with quite different client foci. This work will expand these definitional categories, in addition to analysing varied client groups in terms of the notions of 'responsiveness and 'receptiveness'.

#### *Typology by provider type*

Provider types represent an additional primary typological category. Six provider types are identified on the basis of the provision patterns, client focus and institutional forms. These are 'multi institutes' (Category P1), 'specialist institutes' (Category P2), 'consultants' (Category P3), 'in-house' provision (Category P4), NGOs (Category P5) and Lifeskill centres (Category P6), as indicated in Table 10.

Table 10: Private FET provider types

Category	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
	<b>Multi- institute</b>	<b>Specialist institute</b>	<b>Consultant</b>	<b>In-house</b>	<b>NGO</b>	<b>LifeSkill Centre</b>
<b>Description</b>	Multiple-site multiple programme, National provider  Franchise structure likely	Single/multiple site vocationally specific provider	Non-premises based trainer/materials developer/intermediary	In-company training	Non-profit donor or philanthropic provider	Non-employment life skilling or leisure skilling
<b>Learner (Client)</b>	All	Pre- or Un-or employed	Employee Product training	employee or customer trainings	Pre- or un - employed	Self-funded
<b>Delivery mode</b>	Contact or distance	Contact	contact	contact + electronic	contact	Contact or electronic
<b>Size</b> Small < 100 Medium 101-499 Large > 500	Large	Small/medium	Small	Small/medium	Small	Small
<b>Location (premises)</b>	Premises/head office	Premises-based	Non-premises	Premises-based	Non-Premises	Non- or Premises based
<b>Skill(ing)</b>	Multivariate	Single - related	Single focussed	single	Single-related	Single - focussed
<b>Nature</b>	Reputable and well known in the field (national or international)	'Fly by night' Smaller provider	Suitcase provider	In-company	Social development	
<b>Skills</b>	Employment and non-employment focus - ICT, HR, Marketing, Project management	Business skills training	Soft skills (HR) or specific plant-related company skilling	Soft skills or specific company related orientation	Life skills - either employment or self-employment	Life skill e.g. Leisure - photographic/home cooking Essential - driving licence

Each of the provider types represents an important component of the various provision forms. While there is likely to be considerable overlap in provision forms between various providers, each represents an ideal type with a particular focus.

The 'multi' and 'specialist' providers are those that best correspond with the notion of 'education institutions' in conventional terms. Their premises-based structure enables programmes to be delivered in contact mode to learners of all types. The larger multi providers have been known to develop specialist business units to respond to the corporate sector. The 'specialist' provider is responsive to either the pre- or unemployed and employed learner, referred to as the 'walk-ins' by one



provider (Provider B) to distinguish these from corporate clients. Since this provider responds to both corporate and the general public, those non-corporate learners, referred to as 'walk-ins' are distinguished from those on whose behalf training has been commissioned by a third party or accountable agency, i.e. the corporate learner.

The non-premises-based provider is designed to respond to the corporate sector. This smaller vocationally specific provider type is able to respond vigorously to market demand as a result of its size. Those providers that respond to the full-time pre- and un-employed sector are subject to robust competition. They are required to ensure cost effectiveness and, since they are unable to significantly recoup costs from their client group, will nominally constitute the 'fly by night' provider referred to by the White Paper 3 on Higher Education (DoE 1997b: paragraph 2.55). Personnel, especially teaching staff, are likely to be employed on a contract basis in these institutions to ensure minimum risk to the owner if learner numbers are not forthcoming. Their employment is, therefore, intimately linked to the sustainability of the provider.

The 'consultant' and the 'in-house' providers have a specialist client base - that of the corporate employee. Training is dependent on the needs of the company, and is provided at times and at venues determined by the needs of the organisation.

NGOs are distinguished by the marginality of the client group to which they respond. They are in need of particular life or employment skills for community or individual self-empowerment. The socially vulnerable group to which training is directed - i.e., the post school marginalised youth, HIV/AIDS-infected individuals, women or disabled people - represent a distinguishing feature of their provision.

The latter two provider types, P5 and P6, represent the non-employment specific nature of provision. This provider type includes those involved in life skills directed at fulfilling a particular life skill function or activity. Included in this category are driver training, firearms training, birding, photographic (for leisure), language training, and so on.

In order to elaborate on the nature of provision, the next section profiles two of the foremost institutional types, the multi and specialist institute.

*Multi-programme providers*

Public providers are ideally considered multi-programme providers, which represents a distinguishing feature of provision in that sector. The private sector appears to differ markedly from the public sector in this regard. In public FET colleges, 45 per cent of the enrolments at FET level are in Engineering Studies (Powell and Hall 2004: 43) whereas the private FET sector enrolments in the related fields of manufacturing, engineering and technology constitute only nine per cent. While this suggests an important market niche for public provision, private providers appear less interested, either because of the high overhead costs or the adequacy of public provision. Nonetheless, in light of the skill needs in this sector (Kraak 2003c & 2003d; McGrath, Paterson & Badroodien 2005), it might be necessary to encourage private provision in order to increase provision in this area.

One of the case studies provided insight into the profile of a private-multi programme provider. Provider B (a large multi-site, multi programme, distance and face-to-face institution, catering for all learner types) offered a range of courses situated within various department units. Some of the more lucrative segments, called departments, have incorporated a range of appropriate programmes catering to various levels. In terms of levels these providers respond to the GET, FET and the HET levels, providing opportunities for early school-leavers as well as those with a college-level certificate or diploma. The options of the 'Technical Department' of this provider includes 'Electrical/Electronic studies', 'Mechanical Studies', 'Civil Studies', 'Chemical Studies' and the 'Senior Certificate' (with specialisation in any one of the above for further study). These courses are directed at anyone interested in a career as a tradesman, for instance, 'Diesel Mechanic', 'Electrician' and 'Toolmaker'. These units are further divided into sub-component, offering courses at different levels. The various 'electrical' choices include following specialisms: 'Electrician' (N1 to N3), 'Installation Electrician' (N1 and N2), 'Motor Vehicle Electrician' (N1 and N2), 'Motor Mechanic' (N1 to N3), 'Diesel Mechanic' (N1 to N3), 'Fitter and Turner/Toolmaker' (at levels N1 to N3) and 'Mechanical Draughtsman' (N1 to N3).

Clearly this kind of 'multi-provider' is equivalent to a (huge) public technical college. Its origins and nature testify to its track record. More than 50 years old, its business model includes franchises as well as 'direct' branches. It has more than 30 sites of training, called 'campuses', located nationally. Some of the more popular fields have

also been hived off into separate and distinct business operations. For instance, a separate ‘Academy of Banking and Financial Services’ and a ‘School of Travel and Tourism’ have been set up to respond to these specialist sectors. These sub-units register separately with the different SETAs, despite the corporate unity, which assists in easing the administrative burden that could result from responding to various SETAs with very different criteria and legislative requirements. It therefore enables more effectively liaison with relevant authorities. In addition, this corporate provider which targets both the unemployed and employed sectors, is marketed as ‘...most employer recognised institution’, reinforcing its labour market focus.

This kind of multi provider, which provides both distance and face-to-face tuition, differs markedly from the single-focussed programme providers.

#### *Specialist provider*

This provider type, which has a specific programme and market niche, is ideally suited to the private FET sector. It responds to a particular training need and is able to offer programmes at various levels within its vocational area. The ICT provider is an ideal type of this kind of provision. The computer resource base allows it to respond to most needs of the market. There is a tendency for this provider to respond to both the corporate and pre-employed learner cohort (called ‘walk-ins’), with an interesting twist. It was found, for instance, that corporate provision subsidises the pre-employed component (see Akoojee, Arends & Roodt 2007).

#### *Provider types and learner groups*

Table 11 identifies the provider type that predominantly responds to various learner groups. Three categories of learner types: Category A indicating a pre and unemployed learner cohort (Learner type L1 and L2); Category B indicating a self funded employee type represented by Learner type L3; and Category C indicating the employed learner category funded by employers, represented by Learner type L4 and L5, employer funded training. Each of the provider groups is responsive to specialist niche client markets, although there is considerable overlap within these. Larger multi providers also cater predominantly to the pre- or un-employed and the self-paying employed learner group (the ‘walk-in’ client sector). The smaller premises-based, single owner type undertaking caters for the more cost-aware pre- and unemployed client.

Table 11: Learner and provider type

Cat	Learner type	Provider type					
		(P1) Multi-institute	(P2) Specialist institute	(P3) Consultant	(P4) In-house	(P5) NGO	(P6) LifeSkill Centre (Non-employment)
A	(L1)Pre-employed (Post-school sector)	X	X			X	
	(L2)Unemployed /Retrenched	X	X			X	
B	(L3)Employed - Self funded	X	X				X
C	(L4) Employee Corporate	X		X	X		X
	(L5) Customer/product training			X	X		

The ‘employed’ client category is also drawn towards the more reputable and costly multi provider, even if this means enrolling for the ‘distance’ and, therefore, more cost effective programmes that these larger companies offer. The reputation of these larger multi providers is likely to be an important draw card for this client category, although they might also attend programmes of the upper end of the specialist providers.

Employees are served by the ‘in-house’ and ‘specialist consultant’ types for more specialist training. It represents a lucrative market because of the levy-rebates to which it is subjected. One multi provider established a specialised unit to deal with this client group (as in the case of Provider B), while the more enterprising specialist provider (as in Provider C) were seriously considering their options about the potential that the group offered in making them financially feasible. It was evident that the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) compliance to which this provider was aspiring was designed to respond to government agencies who outsource their training.

NGOs have an unemployed, out-of-school and specific deprived constituency to respond to. Companies that provide client product training are best served by in-house trainers, but would also choose the consultant providers for company inspired training.

Thus the unemployed (post-school) youth are unlikely to be targeted by consultants who require premises from which to operate.

## Secondary typological categories

### *Typology by provider size*

With respect to scale of provision, Table 12 shows that most providers (52 per cent) are small scale. This finding is pertinent to the capacity of this generally 'lean' sector to be both responsive and receptive to its various constituencies: learners, lecturers, communities and labour market, as appropriate.

**Table 12: Size of SA sector in terms of SSA Typology (Atchoarena and Esquieu 2002): For-profit, non-profit and in-house.**

Typology - Sites	LS(>500)	MS (<101-500)	SS(<101)	Total	%
F/Profit	131	186	334	<b>651</b>	75%
	<b>20%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>51%</b>		
In-House	19	24	50	<b>93</b>	11%
	<b>20%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>54%</b>		
NGO	31	25	64	<b>120</b>	14%
	<b>26%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>53%</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>864</b>	
<b>%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>52%</b>		

*Source: DoE database (2001)*

This categorisation offers a particularly insightful understanding of the in-company component of training. The World Bank TVET position paper (1991) referred to this component of TVET training as a significant component of the overall TVET system. In the South African case, the smaller proportion of large-scale 'in-house' providers (20 per cent over 500 employees and a further 26 per cent between 101 and 499) suggests that employee training in these enterprises, where it happens, is outsourced to private providers. In addition, these providers are also completely reliant on public providers from which to draw their prospective employees. A number were also drawn from private companies or were former employees of government departments who exited the public service, as was the case of Provider G and E. This aspect will be discussed in chapter 9.

### *Typology by institutional location: 'Premises-based' and 'non-premises based' provision*

A distinguishing feature of some private providers is their 'non-premises based' locational character. This allows them the benefit of lower operating costs and enables a degree of responsiveness not possible if they only delivered programmes at their premises. It allows provision to suit the needs of clients at appropriate times and in venues that are mutually acceptable. These 'non-premises based' providers

are quite different from their 'premises-based' counterparts. Their identification as a distinct typological entity allows insight into the very different client types as a result of the very different delivery means.

'Premises-based' providers are those that have an institutional base from which learning and teaching occurs. Clearly the necessity for premises is dependent on the kind of training supplied. While 'soft' HR skills can be provided anywhere, including at conference venues, the company 'plant-based' training is undertaken by an on-site provision form as it allows for real, rather than simulated, training on actual equipment used. This is only, of course, possible where equipment is available for training outside of the plant operations. Often a simulated environment is created when new equipment is purchased to enable training to take place.

Consultants form the 'non-premises' component of the private FET provider. The non-premises base of consultants enables them to be flexible in time and place, and they are considered to be able to respond to employer programme demands in a meaningful manner. Courseware is tailor-made and fit for specific purpose. Referred to as 'suitcase-providers', they often use the premises of their client companies but, by agreement, may use an alternative hotel or workshop venue especially for delivery of soft skills. The 'multi' and specialist provider also undertake some novel client-responsive provision forms.

A variant of this kind of provider is what has been referred to as a 'training consultant' (Akoojee, Arends & Roodt 2007). These consultants secure training on behalf of the company by providing a function that sources, engages and assesses particular training requirements. Commissioned by the HR division, they source and arrange trained professionals in the particular field. The advantage to the company is that they are assured of reliable and quality training provision by the 'best in the business.' As opposed to identifying particular providers who might not be as reliable and effective as they would like, outsourcing to a consultant assures them of a 'one-stop-shop' in terms of their training needs. They serve as a reliable conduit for sourcing training on behalf of the company.

'Multi' and 'specialist' providers have also developed mechanisms to respond to the corporate client group by offering programmes at times and locations suitable to purpose. Some 'multi providers' have developed separate units, while some 'specialist' non-corporate providers have begun to make inroads into this provision

form. Thus, for one provider, programme delivery on Saturdays and some evenings allow companies to reduce downtime while enabling the provider to be responsive to different client groups (Provider C).

Most NGOs are not able to afford premises because of the inconsistent funding base, although the provider visited was in the process of negotiating premises after a grant from one of the donors (Provider C). Thus, larger more well-resourced NGOs, with a steady funding stream, are able to afford their own premises and lifeskills centres and are therefore able to respond to their disadvantaged client group much more cost effectively as a result, depending on the skills area.

*Typology by location: Core and non-core presence*

Provider location represents an important distinguishing feature of private TVET provision. The notion of ‘core’ and ‘non-core’ presence was identified in previous work (Akoojee 2003 & 2005). More than 50 providers in a given area represent a ‘core presence’, while ‘non-core’ areas are those between 10 and 50 providers in a given area.

In order to identify urban and rural locational patterns, notions of urban and rural were used based on the ‘Census 2001’ Enumerator Area (EA) classification (Stats SA 2003)<sup>30</sup>. In terms of this, an urban locational pattern is evident. Providers were located in areas of high urban populations as well as high economic growth in the ‘big three’ urban cores of Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape. A smaller concentration of providers was located in rural areas, considered to be ‘non-core’ locations (Map of Private FET providers Appendix 2). Distribution patterns indicated that none of the ‘non-core’ areas display a concentration of 10 or more private FET providers within a relatively small land area

Delivery sites per provider represent an important indication of accessibility. Table 13 compares the private and public sector per province and Appendix 2 and 3 shows this spatially. There are 4 178 learning sites for the 864 providers in the private FET sector as opposed to the 183 campuses for the 50 merged public institutions (Table 13).

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<sup>30</sup> The HSRC Geographic Information System (GIS) Unit overlaid the private FET shapefile onto the EA 2001 shapefile in ArcView 8.1 (a GIS application system), which contains automated techniques to produce the map shown in Appendix 01 (Urban areas corresponded with EA 11,12, 13, 14, while rural areas corresponded with EA33, 37 and 38).

**Table 13: Profile of the Private FET and Public FET Colleges: Provincial head offices/colleges and campuses/learning sites: 2001 (Private) and 2002 (Public).**

	Private FET			Public FET		
	Head Offices	D/Sites	D/Sites/Ho	College	Campuses	Sites/Campus
Eastern Cape	37	196	5.3	8	30	3.8
Free State	31	97	3.1	4	15	3.8
<b>Gauteng</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>2333</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>KwaZulu- Natal</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>3.6</b>
Mpumalanga	34	61	1.8	3	12	4.0
Northern Cape	9	20	2.2	2	6	3.0
Limpopo (Northern Province)	29	64	2.2	7	18	2.6
North-West	21	233	11.1	3	11	3.7
<b>Western Cape</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>4.5</b>
Total	<b>864</b>	<b>4178</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>3.7</b>
Big Three Urban	703	3507		23	91	
Big Three Urban (Proportion)	81%	84%		46%	50%	

Source: for Private FET DoE database (2001c) and (DoE 2004: 114)

Private FET providers have an average of 5 (4.8) learning sites for the 864 providers compared to an average 4 (3.7) campuses per public College, as Table 13 indicates. This comparison has important implications for the reach of providers rather than size and extent because in terms of size, public providers are much per head office site larger than are the private providers.

The location pattern of private providers is also surprisingly in metropolises in which public providers are situated, but this dominance is less pronounced. Whereas in the public sector, 81% of head offices and 84% of sites are located in the 'big three' provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and Westerns Cape, only 46% of head offices and 50% of sites, are located in these areas. This indicates that the colleges more widely dispersed amongst other provinces, than are public colleges.

Although the proportion of private FET providers in other non-metropolitan areas was higher, it needs also to be borne in mind that all provider head offices are located in these urban hubs for convenience to the market. Often the head offices of the providers are located in urban areas for ease of access to, for example, head offices of companies or government departments that are responsible for commissioning training, although the actual training might well happen in more remote locations.

Interestingly though, even in the non-core areas, most providers located in the non-urban areas were predominantly located in the 'for-profit' or 'in-house' category, indicating a significantly low proportion of 'not for profits' in these areas. One



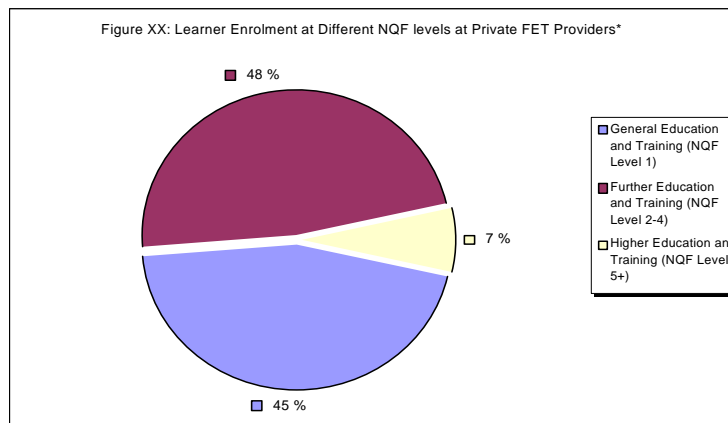
explanation offered for this was that most ‘non-profit’ providers had head offices in urban centres (as in the cases of Providers G and H).

#### *Typology by NQF level*

Typology by NQF level responds to the current legislative education and training context in South Africa. Legislation is designed to enable the education system to be more systematic with respect to programmes offered as well as the level at which they are pegged. It is designed for the benefit of streamlining qualifications to enable articulation in a quest for developing a seamless education and training system. While it could be argued that the implementation of the legislation still needed to be realised in the sector, the HSRC survey (2002) revealed significant diversity in terms of levels of provision.

The survey results depicted in Figure 8 below showed a 48 per cent headcount enrolment in FET (NQF levels 2 to 4), seven per cent in higher education (NQF level 5), and a significant 45 per cent enrolment in general education and training (NQF level 1)<sup>31</sup>.

**Figure 8: Private provider types by level**



*Source: HSRC (2002)*

These enrolment patterns reinforce the point made by Subotzky (2003b) about a similar tendency in the private HET sector for varied provision types by level. This provision pattern reveals a tendency for private FET institutions to fill the gap in adult education and training by providing offerings at the GET level. Overwhelming evidence in the qualitative component suggests that a considerable amount of

<sup>31</sup> At least one provider surveyed in the qualitative component of the study offered courses at school level, e.g. *Provider I*. Another provider also offered entry-level in-company courses in First Aid and Life Skills.

provision is inclined towards these providers catering for the 'failed matric' and 'matric re-write' schooling needs, which also fall within the FET sector.

Interestingly one provider selected and visited in the qualitative component of the study was a school, which had little or no skills development training. It considered itself a private FET provider, partly because of the possibility of entering the domain in the near future. It is likely that a number of these 'private school' type providers have been included in the database, with exact numbers being difficult to identify.

Some private FET providers also responded to the schooling needs of those adults who require a 'distance education' schooling option. This multi-band provision may lead to tensions with a regulatory regime that requires band-related registration and accreditation procedures.

Provider typology in terms of NQF levels reflects the extent of specialisation at a particular level. Those that specifically respond to the level 2-4 type training needs are markedly different from those who have a 'catch all' training model in terms of provision. Clearly those providers that are more specific in terms of provision levels are more likely to require fewer resources and are likely to be much more focussed in terms of specialism. Providers responding to the pre- and un- employed groups and to all levels are unlikely to be able to maximise effectiveness at every level in view of the costs associated with provision. Although it might be assumed that the equipment is able to support training immaterial of level. The findings in this work suggested that where providers attempt to respond to all levels, as in the ICT field, this is not done without considerable cost outlay of computer repair and maintenance. Those most likely to succeed are the providers responding to the employee sector, who are able to afford increased fees for ongoing equipment repair, maintenance and occasional and fairly consistent and steady upgrading.

Some considerations with reference to using this typology are that it is associated with some degree of confusion as well as some strategic decision-making. A consideration that is likely to see considerable changes once registration is put in place. At one level, the lack of a clearly understood FET level demarcation is clearly evident. In spite of being pre-registered as FET-level providers, many providers are engaged in delivery at other NQF levels. Indeed, some providers indicated that course levels had not yet been confirmed as a result of the evolving nature of the

framework. Some providers also reported that they had pre-registered as FET providers so that the legal requirement would have been met if they decided to offer programmes at this level.

Yet another ‘for-profit’ ICT provider also indicated that if they needed to be sustainable as private providers, they needed to diversify not only in terms of programme offerings, but also levels of provision (as in the case of Provider I). For this provider, the nature of the ICT medium allowed the opportunity for provision at all levels, which could be used to expand opportunities for sustaining the entity.

There are likely to be a number of providers pre-registered at the FET level that are likely to be hybrid or multi-level providers. This is likely to have important implications for legislation and the registration process. It would perhaps not be feasible for providers to register with the same department twice, if they offered programmes at both the FET and HET levels.

*Typology by function: Employment and non-employment purpose*

A typology of function has been identified. Providers could be categorised in terms of two categories: career specific purpose and ‘life skills’. Career-specific education and training is directed at particular education and training provision for employment or self-employment outcomes. Non-employment training is provision of a range of life skills, which might include driving licence, swimming instruction, self-defence and leisure-related courses (for instance, swimming, snorkelling, scuba-diving, birding and so forth). While these are not specifically directed at employment and career-pathing, it does not preclude further study for vocational purpose. It is likely also that there are a range of providers that offer these courses, from specific vocationally specific specialised training providers to multi providers.

Table 14 categorises various skills types in terms of this purpose. Category 1, ‘employment skilling’ is distinguished from ‘mandatory skills’ (Category 2), necessary as a pre-requisite for undertaking particular functions, and ‘life skills’ (Category 3), which includes those with a leisure and self-development needs.

Table 14: Skilling categories for employment and non-employment purpose

Purpose	Directed at	Examples	Learner component
<b>Category 01:</b>  <b>Employment skilling</b>	<b>Career/Employment</b> <i>Self-employment</i> <i>Employment mobility</i> <i>Effectiveness</i>  Career and business skilling	Business skills ICT skills HR Skills Finance skills Organisational Development Team Building Mentorship	Pre-employed (youth), Unemployed and employed (adult)
<b>Category 02:</b>  <b>Mandatory skilling</b>	<b>skills</b> training strongly recommended by legislation or as pre-requisite for undertaking particular activity e.g. Driver training or firearm training for firearm ownership	e.g. Driver training Firearms training required as pre-requisite for possession Awareness of the law for gambling licences	Adult - post 18 cohort
<b>Category 03</b>  <b>Discretionary life skills-</b>	Voluntary skilling for performing a particular life function	e.g. Safety courses Fire fighting and prevention Evacuation Civil protection HIV/AIDS Counselling	Pre-employed (youth), Unemployed and employed (adult)
	<i>Leisure</i>	e.g. Photographic Birding Sport: Swimming 4x4 driver training K4 Driver training	All
	<i>Finance</i>	Stock market skills Money management	Employed or self-employed adults
	<i>Health and medical</i>	First aid Life saving Pre-and post-natal HIV/AIDS awareness Alternative home medication (non-specialist) and treatment/s	adults
	<i>Philosophy and religion</i>	Religious studies (e.g. Bible, Quran and Bhagavad Gita). Philosophy/History	
	<i>Art and culture</i>	Other local languages Foreign languages Literacy Music Culture and anthropological studies	

Non-employment skilling categories were also determined by Erasmus (2002) in a study undertaken at the time that this quantitative study was being undertaken on behalf of the Education, Training and Development Practices (ETDP) Education and Training Authority (SETA). *TELKOM's CyberTrade* Directory was used to identify various institution types<sup>32</sup> to determine the nature and extent of employment in the sector. The employee component of private education and training providers, indicated in Table 15 indicates a significant non-career provisioning pattern. A significant number of providers were engaged in non-career education and training provision.

**Table 15: Private FET Provider types indicating non-career specific training provision**

Purpose	Category	Possible client group	No of Provider	Tota	Proportion
Employment/Career	Organisations (e.g. AngloGold)	Employee/Client	22	22	1%
General	Computer	Employee/Pre-employed	260		
	Business	Employee/Pre-employed	230		
	Account/Finance/Insure/Invest	Employee/Pre-employed	14	504	20%
Sector specific	Technology		76		
	Security		59		
	Supply		51		
	Medical		49		
	Hotel & Catering/Tourism	Employed/Pre-employed	46		
	Advert/Media/Print		9		
	Legal		6		
	Agriculture		5	301	12%
Life skills/Leisure/Art	Driving		499		
	Arts		105		
	Sport		58		
	Bible		56		
	Model & Beauty		46		
	Flying		19	783	31%
Unspecified	"School of"		36		
	College	Unspecified	291		
	Training/centre		615	942	37%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>2552</b>		

Source: Erasmus (2002) (adapted)<sup>33</sup>

While employment outcomes still make up a significant 33 per cent of providers, the non-career or life skills component is a significant 32 per cent, reinforcing findings in this study. Employment outcome is made up of Business and Accounting at 20 per cent and other sector specific fields comprising 12 per cent.

The non-career specific component was made up of life skills including: driving; arts (for instance, music, sculpture, painting and photography); sport (for instance, swimming, golf and cricket academies); leisure (for instance, birding, skiing,

<sup>32</sup> Keyword used included "centre", "college", "computer", "development", "driving school", "school of" and "training".

<sup>33</sup> Note: the category of providers of "dog training" was removed - amounting to 14 providers). One of the difficulties with using this data for this study was the extraordinary large number (37 per cent, i.e. 942 of 2552) of providers whose provision form could not be discerned in this study.

snorkelling and aquatic sports – e.g., scuba diving and snorkelling) and Religion (for instance, Bible and Quranic Studies). Modelling and beauty are likely to have a strong employment component.

The importance of this kind of skilling undertaken by the private providers is that they offer training often not catered for elsewhere, especially in the public sector.

*The franchised provider*

An additional typological distinction within the category of ‘premises providers’ is the single and multiple premises forms that are associated with it. One of the distinguishing features of the sector is its ability to respond meaningfully where demand deems necessary, thus the establishment of multiple sites.

Those providers that are premises-based can be differentiated on the basis on the number of sites, which reflect scale and extent of provision. The most obvious form of the multiple-site provider, with distinct campuses, is the category represented by the ‘franchised’ provider. Table 16 shows that extent of franchised providers in the sector as indicative of an exclusive multi-site undertaking.

**Table 16: Franchise component of private FET sector**

Typology - Sites	Large scale	Medium scale	Small Scale		%
F/P Single Owner	112	160	292	564	87
Franchise	14	17	31	62	10
Other	5	9	11	25	4
Total	131	186	334	651	
%	20	29	51		100

Source: DoE database (2001c)

Franchised providers in the DoE database (2001c) constitute only a small proportion of the total ‘for-profit’ component at 10 per cent. Half of these were characterised as ‘small scale’ providers suggesting that the market advantage of franchising was its accessibility to the market. Only 14 providers had more than 500 learners and were considered ‘large scale’ (over 500 learners).

**Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a notion of private FET that is not homogenous. It is especially not similar to the post-school public institutional brick and mortar reality

of classrooms, lecturers and clearly defined course and programme structures, although some sections of the sector clearly resembles these. In a private FET context, neither courses nor are clientele fixed. It is a sector where delivery forms vary, qualification structures are not clearly identified and where ‘non-premises’ forms of provision are particularly noteworthy. It is therefore important to develop typological categories that enable understanding with a view to demystifying the sector. Typologies provide insight into nature, form, function and context of provision.

The initial typology identified in the sub-Saharan Private TVET study (Atchoarena & Esquieu 2002) was used to understand the sector in South Africa. This included ‘for-profit’, ‘non-profit’ and ‘in-house’ training types. While these revealed significant aspects of provision forms, they needed to be expanded to gain a real understanding of the sector. An expanded typology based on learner and provider groups represents an important starting point in unpacking the various provision forms that exist on the sector - from employment outcomes to leisure and lifelong learning opportunities. Providers are categorised based on provision types, from multi-providers who respond to pre- and unemployed groups especially, but who also have a corporate provision component. Specialist providers are especially responsive to corporate providers in particular niche areas. The NGO and in-house providers are distinct for their specialist learner group to which they respond, the former marginalised and the latter specialising in in-company employee training.

Secondary provider categories include those based on provider size, location, function and NQF provision. They provide important insights into a sector associated with a diversity of provision forms. This quite expansive categorisation could be used quite effectively to convey various provision types, from those “... institutions which are remarkably well organized, wealthy and effective, providing high-quality instruction, to others, which are destitute and at permanent risk of closure” (Atchoarena & Esquieu 2002: 23).

It is likely that those less resourced of institutions, catering for the more vulnerable pre- and un-employed learner groups are likely to be more exposed within this sub-sector as a result of the excessive competition and the need to keep costs low. The next chapter explores the extent to which each of the provider types identified in

this chapter are responsiveness in terms of labour market imperatives, considered the strength of private providers.



## Chapter 9

### **RESPONSIVENESS: THE LABOUR MARKET, EMPLOYMENT AND EFFICIENCY**

This chapter examines the response of the private FET sector in South Africa to labour market imperatives, understood as both employment outcomes and training for self-employment. As such, it attempts an analysis of the way in which the sector responds to the skills development challenge in the country, by examining the extent to which the sector is responsive to employer needs.

Responsiveness has been associated with the labour market. It emerged at a time when the marketisation and ‘privatisation’ agenda reigned supreme resulting in conflation of the term with an industry-related responsiveness agenda (see also Butler 2000). The extent to which education and training does, and should, unproblematically respond to the imperatives of the labour market is, however, contested. As a component of the education and training system directly geared to employment needs or employability, the TVET sector is, however, expected to be crucially linked to the needs of the labour market, while ensuring that those who are its recipients are provided with essential life skills necessary to participate as full citizens, aware of rights, responsibilities and national prerogatives (Young 2006). As a form of education and training geared to be consistent with that of the labour market in this wider sense, one of the central criticisms of the post-colonial TVET system has been the perceived loosening of the relationship with the labour market. As such, one of the crucial issues considered necessary for the revisioning of public TVET sector is the interaction with the labour market (Johanson 2002).

This chapter begins with the various client groups to which the private FET sector needs to respond: the pre-, un- and employed learner groups identified in chapter 8. It isolates the different purposes and client groups to which different elements of the sector respond. This discussion is followed by an exploration of various provisioning characteristics associated with labour market responsiveness, or non-

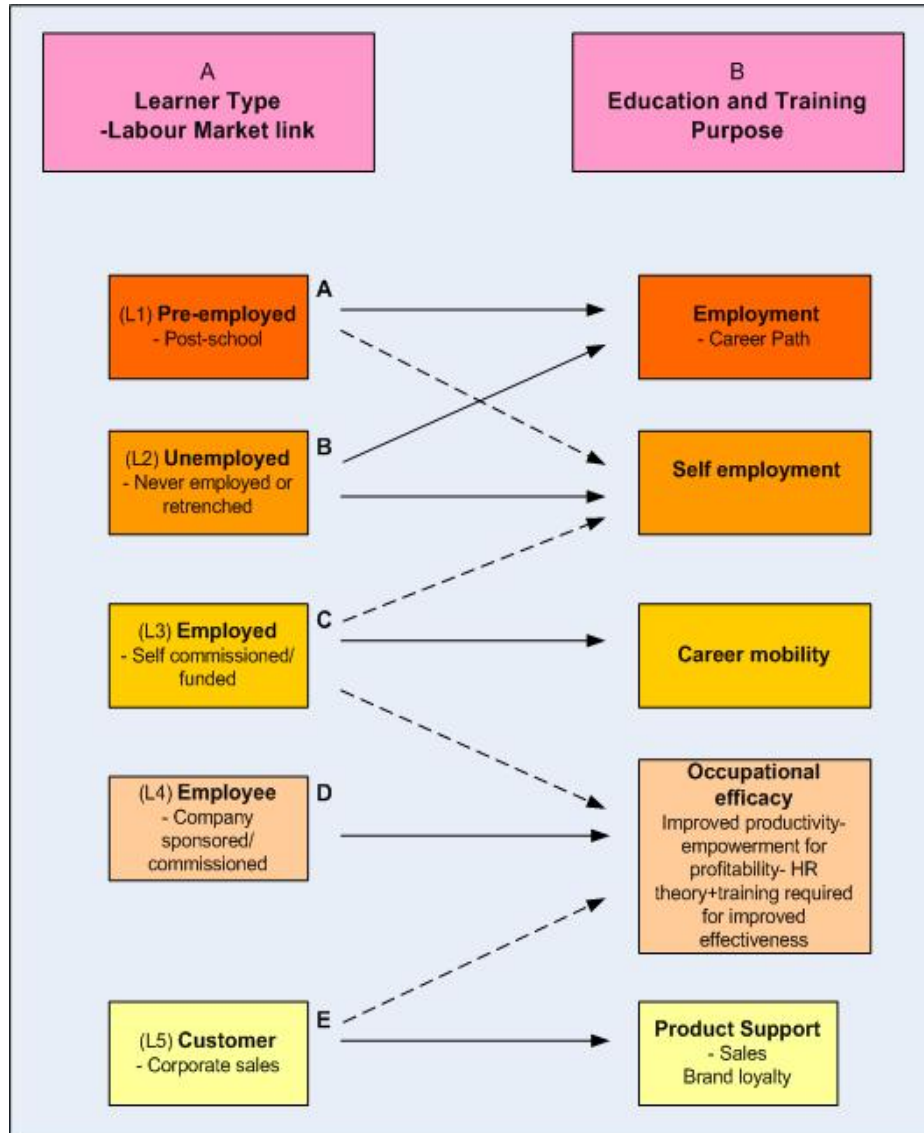
responsiveness where appropriate. The chapter thus examines issues related to learners, employment outcomes and programme delivery.

## **Responsiveness - TVET and employment purpose**

### *Learner types and motivation*

The rationale for training represents an important component of provision. It determines in an important manner the way in which provision takes place, its assessment and outcomes. Figure 9 illustrates the different purposes of training of each of the learner groups and indicates the employment-dominated purpose of almost all of the categories of learners.

Figure 9: Learner category and purpose



The column on the left identifies the various learner groups, from the pre-employed (L1) through to the ‘customer’ (L5) to which some corporate providers respond. The column to the right identifies various purposes of training, ranging from employment to ‘product support’. Arrows reflect purpose. Arrows at A (for L1) show the predominant need for formal labour market (placement) outcomes, with a staggered arrow indicating the fallback position of self-employment. It needs to be mentioned, however, that the ideal-type linear relationship assumed by this illustration is unlikely to be so neat in practice. The various purposes are likely to cut across all learner types, but are more likely to be associated with the particular

purposes indicated. The staggered arrow also tries to accommodate other purposes to which groups might be motivated. This list is not intended to be exhaustive and there is likely to be considerable overlap depending on nature of the training, although it is unlikely that ‘customer training’ could be directed or be used for ‘employment purpose’.

The first pre-employed learner group (L1) is essentially motivated by a labour market purpose. It might be equally important for this group to secure self employment in the absence of formal employment opportunities, represented by the staggered line, although they might not be motivated for this purpose or the training is unlikely to be directed to this purpose. There is also a likely motivational overlap between this group and the one immediately below it (i.e. the unemployed- L2). While it is equally likely that this group might be motivated by re-entry into the labour market, they are, however, more likely to be realistic about opportunities in this respect.

The third group, the ‘employed’ (L3) and the fourth, ‘employee’ (L4), are distinguished by the rationale for training, which is linked to the funding source. The ‘employed’ category is self-motivated by career transition or mobility and are therefore likely to be self-funded, while the ‘employee’ category are those whose training needs are directly linked to employment outcomes in most instances, funded and commissioned as it is by the employer. The latter is a particularly important component of the South African private FET provision scenario.

The last learner category, the customer (L5), is distinctive through its separate labour market purpose. It is linked to product development and learners (who are clients of that have purchased products, e.g., photocopiers/ICT hardware, etc.) are motivated by their own functionally in terms of their occupational effectiveness.

While it has been found that various providers cater to these very distinct learner groups, there is likely to be considerable overlap between the various learner groups responded to by particular provider groups. The nature of provision for the pre-employed is markedly different from that of the corporate employee, and provision to the latter is considerably different from that of the ‘customer’ (as will be identified in chapter 10).

All of these learner groups are importantly distinguished by the notion of ‘accountable agency’ as will be discussed in the following section.

*Learner types and the accountable agency*

Akoojee (2005) identified the notion of an ‘accountable authority’, which was responsible for commissioning and funding training. One example of this authority is the ‘HR division’ of corporate companies, who commission training on behalf of the line function management. This notion is an important one for this work, and has been broadened to incorporate a learner component where learners themselves are responsible for fees. Thus, in this work the term ‘accountable agency’ is used to distinguish it from the earlier study. The term ‘client’, therefore, specifically denotes reference to ‘accountable agency’, denoting the funding source and when the learner alone is responsible for payment, as in the case of learner category 3.

The labour market responsiveness agenda of learners is in an important manner related to external accountability. The role of an ‘accountable agency’ is, therefore, a central one especially in context of corporate training, where training is sourced by the line department or Human Resources division. It assumes the reality of a third party in the provision of TVET provision in South Africa, in general, and to the importance of the notion to the private TVET sector in particular. For iVET (initial post-school TVET providers, both public providers and some ‘multi-institutes’), the learner is targeted directly in marketing campaigns. In the case of the cVET provider, providers target those that decide on the training (HR or management), as opposed to those directly trained. The notion of an ‘accountable agency’ is therefore an important one for private providers and is used as an important operational feature. It also offers insight into the reality of the existence of other partners in skill acquisition.

This notion implies that in skills development, there are specific interests outside of the conventional ‘educator-learner’ interests that have to be taken into account. The ‘accountable agency’ determines the nature of provision - shaping not only the kinds of programmes that are considered appropriate. The agency also importantly determines when they are to be delivered, where they are to take place, and the delivery mode to be utilised.

The notion of an ‘accountable agency’ differs for various learner groups, and even amongst individual learners. For employed learners in either ‘in-house’ or ‘for-profit’ providers, the ‘accountable agency’ is represented by the company or department or division that has commissioned the training intervention, i.e., either

the company's human resource division in the case of outsourced training vendors or the immediate supervisors of the employees in the case of in-company provision. The 'accountable agency', therefore, determines the nature of programmes, the times at which delivery is to occur and the delivery mode.

For the 'not for profit' provider (Provider Type P5, see *Table 10: Private FET provider types*) the accountable agency is represented by the funder or governing body. While the nature of appropriate programme is often devolved to people that are operationally active, very little learner or community engagement is sometimes possible or even considered necessary. In this instance, the administrators take the role of 'experts' and determine what it is that is required, with considerable impact on the centrality of the learner in the learning equation. Thus, in the case of the 'self-employment' objective, the market for the products is sometimes located outside of the community, which threatens the viability of the self-employment initiative.

Programmes, therefore, are not only shaped by the complex nature of the labour market in the Private FET sector, but also by the direct needs of the 'accountable agency', which often determines the demand, purpose, form and nature of programmes that are delivered in the sector.

## **Labour market outcomes**

The private TVET provider sector makes a compelling case for their responsiveness and alignment with the formal labour market. Indeed, a 1999 World Bank survey of manufacturing companies in Johannesburg found that companies preferred graduates of private training colleges (42 per cent), with universities coming in fourth and Technikons, third (Chandra et al. 2000). Whether this is an indication of work-preparedness or an expressed need for sourcing a cheaper labour option was unclear. Haroon Borat of the University of Cape Town's, Development Policy Research Unit (DPRU), in response to the report points out that, "...while this may not be the case for all industries, or all cities...it certainly is an indicator of work-preparedness and the movement from higher education into the workplace" (quoted in Caelers 2004). Private providers point to this evidence of their market effectiveness. This was confirmed in this work.

Providers indicated their motivation for establishment as consistent with employment purpose. Table 17 shows that a little over a third (34 per cent) sought to respond directly to a particular labour sector, while a similar proportion (28 per cent) to a specific employer group, likely to be referring to a corporate or government sector. Another 28 per cent were responding to the needs of a particular community.

**Table 17: Motivation for establishment**

Motivation for the establishment of institution	% Response	
Serving the needs of a particular community	38%	
Serving the needs of a particular labour sector	34%	<b>62%</b>
Serving the needs of a particular employer group	28%	
Total	100%	

Source: HSRC 2002

Of course, the particular learner category determines their particular labour market rationality for training. While pre- and un-employed and employed learner groups (*L1-L3*) require access to the formal labour market or informal self-employment, the employee categories are in need of company-specific training - re-skilling or up-skilling - directed at immediate productivity benefits. The immediacy of skill utilisation represents for all learner groups a necessary and immediate imperative.

This 'responsiveness' agenda boldly embeds provision for industry purposes and, at the same time, assures synergy with learner goals. Responsiveness to particular learner groups has important implications for sustainability. Providers responding to the general public (pre- or unemployed), referred to as 'walk-in' clients, understand their role as primarily enabling learners for skills directly applicable to employment in the particular vocational area. For learners in this category, the motivation for acquiring skills is directly related to their value in the labour market. The ability of the institution to be 'recognised' is therefore linked to the perception of value that it provides. Thus in the case of Provider B, marketing is as much linked to securing learners as it is to ensure a 'branding' function that includes employer awareness.

In the same way, the non-profit provider also reported that they needed to create awareness amongst the development community about their role and effectiveness. Provider I pointed out that as a non-profit philanthropic organisation, they often

saw their role as making funders aware of what was required and their ability to respond appropriately to this prerogative.

Thus, an aspect of the alleged better responsiveness of private providers is that they lead to better labour market outcomes. Belief in this benefit is supposed to motivate learner enrolments. Certainly, providers concur with such sentiments, as Table 18 shows in regard to their response to the issue of reasons for learners choosing their institution:

**Table 18: Private FET provider perceptions of learner motivation for choosing to study at their institution**

Reasons	Response (per cent)
Possible job opportunities	42
Cost/value for money/affordability	30
Mid-career training	28
Total	100

Source: HSRC (2002)

At least from the provider point of view, learners view the *possibility of employment* as an important factor in their decision to access private training opportunities. Providers catering to the general public, e.g., Provider B and Provider D articulated this benefit in their public marketing endeavours, targeting those already employed and looking to improve employment prospects as well as addressing the needs of the unemployed. The use of images of white collar success as a result of qualifications was a powerful marketing tool. The capacity of these providers to actually secure employment for learners, however, has not been conclusively determined, but there are indications that this was done on an ad hoc basis, with links established by networks of some of the staff members.

#### *Linkages with labour market: relationships and partnerships*

It has been noted that one of the widely accepted roles of colleges internationally in placing students into employment lies in the effective establishment of student guidance and counselling systems, together with considerable placement systems. To some extent the extent of success is a result of the relationships colleges have with their environment. Public colleges internationally (King & McGrath 2002, 2004) and South African colleges in particular (Cosser 2003; Gamble 2003) have been deficient in this respect. Colleges have not been able to link with meaningful



labour market outcomes, either in terms of placement or even serving as a conduit for advice to students either as they enter college or leave them.

Private colleges appear not to fare much better despite their claims to the contrary in this respect. A significant proportion (59 per cent) of providers admitted to not having any job placement programmes in place. There is, therefore, no evidence to suggest that private providers are any better able to afford equivalent or superior work experience to the pre- or unemployed learner groups than are their public counterparts.

With respect to other kinds of links, Table 19 reflects the response of providers to the issue of linkages. The fact that most links were found to be ‘informal’ (41 per cent) suggests that relationships forged between staff and employers have been developed over time and not formalised. The extent to which these links benefit learners has, however, not been determined. Formal recognition agreements on the other hand are likely to directly impact on delivery. Forty-seven per cent of providers responded that they either had formal recognition agreements regarding tuition (25 per cent) or assessment (22 per cent).

**Table 19: Private provider relationships - links with outside organisations**

Links	Percentage
Informal agreements or links with other organizations	41
Formal recognition agreement regarding tuition	25
Formal recognition agreement regarding assessment	22
Licensing agreement	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: HSRC (2002)*

The latter is a particularly significant feature of private provision and has important impacts on quality. The ‘licensing agreements’ reflects a ‘franchising’ tendency of the sector. These links represent important features of private provisioning. They are often the result of student demand, but also serve to insert a quality element in provisioning.

Another element of partnerships is one associated with SETA qualifications and learnerships. Table 20 shows that the majority of providers (78 per cent) did not have learnership agreements with SETAs - considered one of the key areas for achievement of the first NSDS, 2001 – 2005 (DoL 2001).

**Table 20: Learnership agreements of private FET providers.**

	<b>Q4.6 Do you have a learnership agreement with a SETA?</b>	
	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	46	22 %
No	159	78 %
No response	33	14 %
Total	238	

*Source: HSRC 2002*

It is likely that after the launch of the NSDS (2001-2005), the Department of Labour (DoL) privileged and expected that private colleges deliver on the national skills promised. McGrath (2004b) points out in this regard:

Although the (public) colleges are potentially the key public provider institutions for delivering on the NSDS, there is a widespread perception that the DoL has not sought to privilege their role, and, indeed, that it prefers to use private providers. (McGrath 2004b: 172)

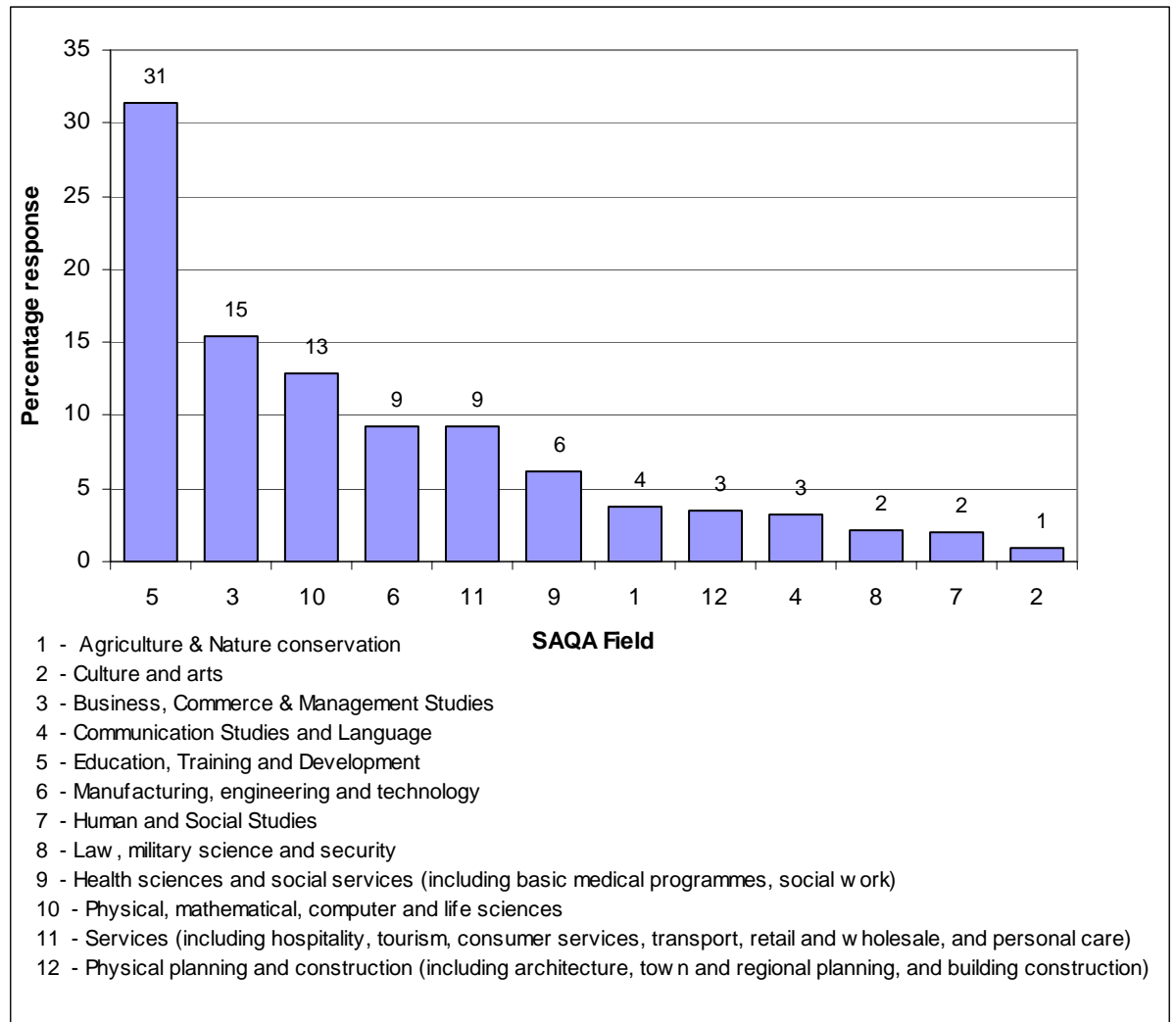
The second NSDS (2005-2010) strategy has, however, taken account of this critique and much more emphasis has been placed on public providers to deliver on skills required.

#### *Programme nature*

A distinction is drawn between the programmes directed at particular occupations, as compared to programmes offered by providers. The SAQA notion of a 'learning programme', defined as the "...formal recognition of the achievement of the required number and range of credits and other requirements at specific levels of the NQF determined by the relevant bodies registered by SAQA" (Powell & Hall 2004: 42), was used in this work. It therefore indicated programme direction rather than specific occupational categories.

Figure 10 indicates results of the providers' response to learning programmes offered.

Figure 10: Enrolment by SAQA programme field at private FET institutions



Source: HSRC (2002)

The HSRC study (2002) revealed that 31 per cent of learner enrolments were in the SAQA field referred to as 'Education, Training and Development' (ETDP)<sup>34</sup>. Figure 10 also shows a 15 per cent enrolment in business, commerce and management studies, followed by 13 per cent in the field called 'Physical, Mathematical and Computer and Life Sciences'. These three fields make up 59 per cent of the total learner enrolment of the twelve SAQA fields. It could be concluded that the sector in South Africa was found to be concentrated in 'light' vocational skills in business, commercial and service subjects. This confirms the trend of private TVET

<sup>34</sup> Evidence from the qualitative study suggested that the newness of the categories used in this survey meant that there was some uncertainty about the exact delimitations of these categories. Thus, ETDP courses which strictly include general education and training school-level qualifications for those wishing to work in education - schools, Adult Basic Education and Training and Early Childhood Development- were interpreted to include all kinds of education and training provision, including some non-career oriented fields including photography, birding and firearms training.

provision at individual country-level studies in Africa, in Senegal and Mali (Atchoarena & Esquieu 2002), Zimbabwe (Bennell 2000: 442) and Botswana (Mudariki *et al.* 1997: 2). Reasons given for its popularity in that context included the "...high capital costs involved in providing more industrial-type skills' (Johanson & Adams 2004: 55).

*Programme fields and occupational categories*

The SAQA programme fields have not been used for the public FET sector up to the end of 2006. The reason given for this is that: "The alignment of learning programmes provided by FET colleges with those of the National Qualifications Framework has not been resolved" (Powell & Hall 2004:42). Evidently the issue of alignment is expected to be resolved with the implementation of the college re-curricularisation process scheduled to be implemented in 2007. At the time that this study was undertaken, public college programmes were directed at particular occupational purposes, which meant it was not possible to make direct comparisons<sup>35</sup> between programmes in this study and those offered by the public college sector, although some broad trends are discernible.

There was a preponderance of enrolment in 'engineering' (45 per cent) and 'business studies' (45 per cent), which thus made up 90 per cent of national enrolment at public FET colleges (Powell & Hall 2004: 43). It was evident that the private sector's provision overlapped with that of public technical colleges in the business studies field. This suggests the likelihood that pre- and unemployed learners preferred not to, were excluded from or were not catered for at public institutions.

One provider (Provider B) suggested that the advantage of their courseware was that it was directly related to the labour market. They offered specific courseware related to specific needs, for instance a course in 'sport club management' or 'game ranging project management'. The content of these courseware was, however, not interrogated to examine the extent to which the skills were indeed different, although it is to be assumed the issue of 'management' would be generic, with some contextual differences. Clearly the consideration that a business skills course in a

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<sup>35</sup> Public colleges used the term 'vocational programme' or 'subfields' to define programmes offered; a qualification as "... a number of courses", while a course s considered to be linked to, "a number instructional offerings'(Powell & Hall: 46).

sport would be indeed be different from one in a corporate environment needs to be considered.

For other client groups (for instance the employed), there was a likelihood that there was no alternative to the private FET provider especially since they needed to be provided instruction at times outside of that offered at public institutions.

*SAQA categorisation*

The decision to align the study to an emerging qualification structure at the expense of vocational or occupational categories provides a valuable means to examine initial responses to an emerging framework. Thus the SAQA categorisation used provides important feedback about the response to the proposed new education and training architecture.

One issue is the one referred to by the public FET sector, which has identified significant overlap in learning fields. The example of ‘engineering studies’ is a useful one where the field cuts across a number of learning fields, including ‘manufacturing, engineering and technology’; ‘planning and construction’; and ‘law and military science’ and ‘security’ (Powell & Hall 2004a: 42).

While the SAQA programme structure allowed for providers to be current, there were some mechanisms that were particularly tedious. Accreditation by periodic review of outcome statements, for instance, was perceived as far too onerous a process to be feasible, especially for those less-resourced ‘specialist’ providers’, who reported that they found it a costly process.

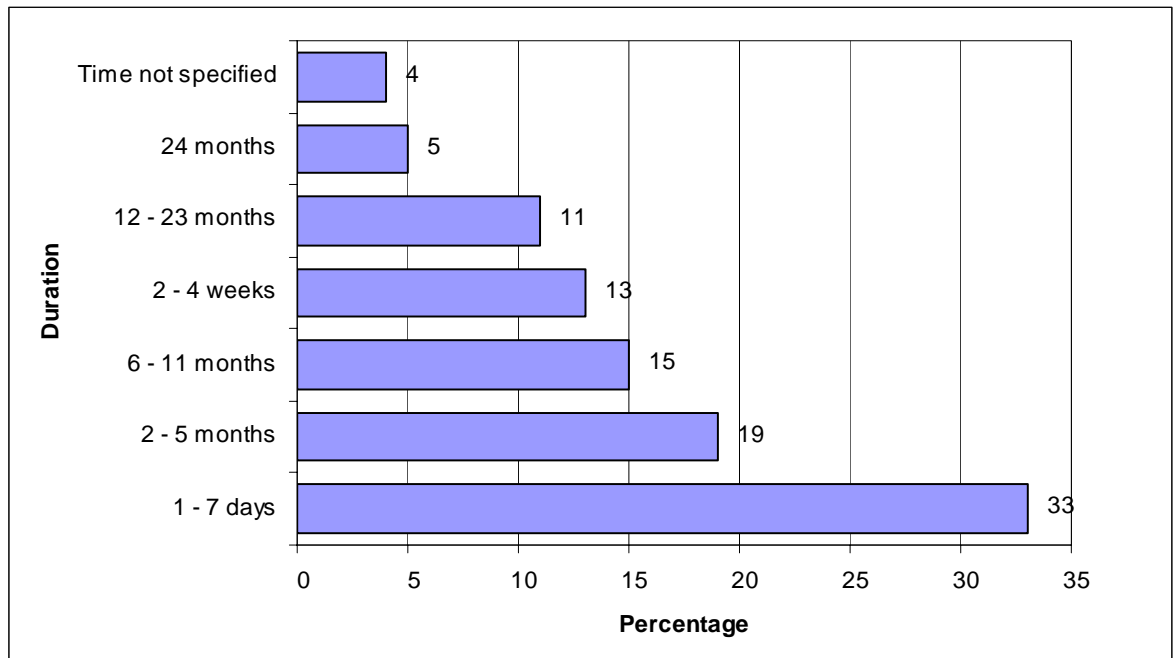
In addition, providers also needed to constantly change their programme structure to accord with client needs. In this regard, both the specialist and consultant providers expressed the need to constantly reinvent themselves in order to stay ahead of the game. As a result, they were constantly on the lookout for new programme areas and levels at which to offer them.

Any new quality monitoring structure needs to accommodate these considerations. A few well resourced consultants should not be able to hold monopoly over quality issues so as to make it difficult or impossible for less resourced providers to access (as would invariably happen to those like Provider C).

*Programme duration*

Programme duration serves as a significant feature of private provision. Figure 11 shows that 33 per cent of programmes are of short duration, between one and seven days. In addition, almost two-thirds (65 per cent) of programmes are short modular courses with a duration of fewer than six months.

**Figure 11: Programmes offered at private FET institutions by duration (2001)**



*Source: HSRC (2002)*

The graph shows that only 15 per cent of programmes are between six and eleven months duration, and a further 11 per cent between 12 and 24 months and only 5 per cent of programmes last for two years. This confirms the findings of an earlier private higher education study, which noted “the trend towards providing a wide range of programmes to attract non-traditional students and to capture market opportunities in income generating short-cycle courses” (Mabizela, Subotzky & Thaver 2000: 7).

The shorter course duration is consistent with the finding that showed a large proportion of providers (89 per cent) offering modular courses. Of these, 81 per cent report that these courses lead to further qualifications. This is significant from the perspective of the need for articulation identified in the NQF.

Course duration reflects importantly on client types. It is evident that most providers are indeed responding to the employee and 'employed' categories. Courses running from 1-7 days are specifically the preserve of the corporate employee who needs effective skilling over a short period (courses of shorter duration - 1-7 days). For the pre-employed and the unemployed, it is likely that courses in excess of 2 months are the likely option, for pre-employed (offered full time) or for 'unemployed' or the 'employed' offered part time (weekday evenings and Saturdays). It was also reported by one specialist provider of ICT that the short courses were also much more financially lucrative. They are sometimes used to subsidise the full time pre-employed or 'unemployed' training component, reflecting importantly on the sectors social responsibility imperatives.

However, this distinction with respect to duration makes less sense for some 'in-house' providers who extensively rely on computer-based self-paced learning for employee upgrading, as in the case of Provider E.

*Programme delivery modes: Full /part and short term*

A significant component of the responsiveness agenda is the provision of programmes at times and in forms that are convenient for the client. An earlier study into private FET (Buckland et al. 1996) showed that more than three-quarters of learners were enrolled in distance programmes. Indeed this was understandable since it was reflective of the convenience for learners. This study, in sharp contrast with that one, however, shows that the dominant mode of instruction is contact or instructor-led tuition – for 76 per cent of providers. Table 21 shows that while only four per cent of providers reported that they used distance mode exclusively, 20 per cent reported that they used a mixed mode of delivery. This finding is, however, consistent with the data on the private higher education sector (Subotzky 2003b) which shows that 75 per cent of institutions offer tuition in contact mode as compared with 15 per cent in mixed mode and 9 per cent in distance mode.

**Table 21: Description of educational mode at private FET institutions: Distance vs. contact tuition**

Education Model	%
Instructor-led instruction (Contact education)	76%
Mixed mode (Distance and contact)	20%
Distance education (via materials and supplementary tutorials)	4%
Total	100%

*Source: HSRC (2002)*

Where the mode of delivery was dominated by either ICT or pre-packaged material mediated through non face-to-face contact, learners expressed the need for more interaction (as in the case of Provider E). This is consistent with Unwin's cautionary note from the British experience:

And when flexible learning actually means being left alone in front of a computer screen or simply being shown where the library is, most learners will crave time with a knowledgeable teacher. (Unwin 2003: 9)

Significantly, provider interpretations of 'instructor-led' delivery were also found to include those where contact took place intermittently, or not at all where it was perceived to be unnecessary. The differing interpretations of 'instructor-led tuition' suggest that the notion in reality incorporates a whole range of quite diverse pedagogic practices. For example, in the case of Provider E where learners were expected to engage quite extensively with a pre-programmed computer-based learning programme, delivery was considered by the provider to be 'instructor-led', with the understanding that the information in the self-paced programme was of sufficient quality to be understood without the presence of an instructor, who would be available if required. In this case, the course co-ordinators were available for support.

#### *Programme specialisation*

The current discourse about job placement is that increased job-specific training will provide greater opportunities for placement has translated into specific programmes for specific purpose. Thus providers have created programmes in very specific employment niches, e.g., call centre management or game ranging management, although the distinction between the two in terms of management skills will be hard to clearly identify. This at least creates a perception that those who complete the course are more likely to be employed in the sector.



The popularity of tightly focused short courses in private provision is linked to a broader trend both nationally and internationally. There has been a shift of delivery in higher education, in some instance towards degree programmes intended to be more clearly linked to the labour market. They are expected to offer more expanded employment opportunities. However, these particular labour market programmes, close off, rather than open up, employment possibilities, especially in the context of a highly competitive labour market.

For those within the sector, the employed seeking entry into it and those employees requiring upskilling within it, these education and training opportunities are likely to increase their chances for progression.

This has implications for the kinds of skills required of educators in this sector. For instance, they are not expected to be skilled in curriculum development (see chapter 10 for an explanation of the implications of in-sourcing and the purchase of pre-packaged courseware on educator skills).

*Delivery means: Time and place*

A feature indicating responsiveness, mentioned previously in this work needs elaboration in the sector's need to become responsive. Convenience of the means of delivery, in terms of both time and place, represents an important consideration for the ability of the sector to be responsive.

Programme selection powerfully determines when and where training happens. Thus, practical training for and on in-plant systems located at company premises cannot be done but at premises, while the 'soft skills', Human Resource Management (HRM) or labour relations training for managers can be done at a range of locations from hotel conference centres to provider premises. In the case of the latter, training is undertaken at times suitable for those commissioning the training, especially when training is required for a collective entity, in the case of a corporate training undertaking.

Timing of delivery is often considered to be a distinctive feature of the private FET sector. For employed learners for whom 'face-to-face' interaction was the preferred mode of learning, the company ethos and attitude to training determined when training happened. Most companies, of course opted for training outside of working hours, when this was possible. Much non-contact learning also takes place out of

hours, although one case study did illustrate the practice of learning being seen as an integral part of the working day.

In general, specialist and multi-providers of face to face instruction preferred to use working hours to provide training, except when tasked to conduct group training by the 'accountable commissioning agency'. Those who catered to community or public needs generally used working hours. For those employed learners who paid for training themselves, training was structured for 'after-hours' and on Saturdays. In this case, the clientele determined the time at which instruction happened. Where there was no need to train after-hours, for instance in the case of the pre- or unemployed learner, learning took place during the course of the working week.

Learner type has implications for the provider's need for premises. Where corporate providers were provided for, there was no need for established premises. One 'for-profit' owner affirmed that all they required was a 'spot' from which to operate (Provider C). This describes the extent to which this private provision form differs from the brick and mortar reality of the public education and training 'institution'. Understandably, the kind of courses provided enables provision at different sites, including the employer premises.

Space requirements are determined by the kind of client. Those providers dedicated to responding to the pre-, un- and employed require dedicated premises from which to operate. While the first two groups used the general working times used by public providers, the unemployed groups were also comfortable with evening and Saturday tuition forms.

The form of provision also determines the space required. One 'in-house' provider that used a 24-hour accessible work centre for employees to access continuous training, for instance, required workstations in accessible locations within the company. Although this was very convenient from a time/space perspective, it had some shortcomings regarding the level of individual support and relevance to South African conditions.

#### *Programme responsiveness*

Content and curriculum process are heavily influenced by the employment context and are focused on 'practical' and 'on-hands' skills acquisition. The mission and general thrust of the provider often underpin these.

- User-demand driven courseware

Programmes have been used in numerous ways as a means of responsiveness. As a result of user demand, providers find it necessary to offer programmes that have some commercial relevance. Programmes in-sourced include for instance, the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) programme, which certifies learners' computer competence, and the Pitman's international secretarial qualification, as an international standard for business purpose. Providers argued that these demand-driven qualifications not only achieve a degree of programme integrity, but also enabled quality assurance to be built in to the programmes.

There is, however, a need for a more concerted attempt to make these learning packages respond to South African conditions. It was found, for instance, that programmes bought from outside the country were directed at learners for whom English was a first language. While these programmes had the attraction of saving development time and costs, there was concern that such packages were not relevant for South African conditions. The non-accreditation of some MBA programmes was linked to these factors.

The nature of provision is associated with 'best practice', which tends to conceptually close off and eliminate debate about relevance and appropriateness for South African contexts. However, it could be argued that the transnational nature of some manufacturing practices requires a degree of uniformity in production practices, irrespective of national circumstance. In addition, the new globalisation discourse of 'world standards', in keeping with conceptions of 'world class manufacturing', suggests universal applicability immaterial of context. By and large, this is consistent with the transnational movement of capital to which Castells (2001) refers and the national push to encourage its attraction for national benefit.

The way in which these courses are expected to be delivered has implications for the kind of personnel required for 'mediation' as well as the setting of the interaction, with clearly defined learning outcomes which are contained in the assessment activities. There are also embedded notions of learning and skilling that might well be construed as narrowly focussed and not really taking account of where the 'group' is at any one time. The pre-packaged nature of the course, while it allows for different learning contexts and provides clear guidelines for facilitators, has embedded within it certain assumptions about learning.

'In-sourcing' of pre-packaged skills also provides a niche market for another type of expertise for purposes of facilitation- that of the technical specialist. This is so especially when learning is mediated by ICT technologies. Thus for pre-packaged computer related teaching programmes (e.g. ICDL), an assistant *au fait* with the technical aspects of computing is often used to 'double up' for facilitation. Providers considered this an efficient deployment of personnel so that these individuals would be able to deal with problems of a technical nature when they arise. The implication of this personnel deployment for effective and relevant programme delivery, however, still needs to be assessed.

There is a focus on knowledge transfer where programmes were purchased from elsewhere. In this case, the engagement with the information is favoured above more critical association with the knowledge. The focus is on ready-made recipes for successful integration of the learning into practice. The 'purchase of programmes' and the duration of programmes purchased from vendors makes the characteristics of the 'facilitator' materially different from that specified in the 'norms and standards for 'educators' by the Department of Education (2000) .

➤ In-sourcing tailor made courses

The kind of programmes required for the corporate employee is what I have referred to as programme 'in-sourcing' (Akoojee 2005). These programmes have been tailor made for the needs of particular clients.

For corporate clients, providers often boast that they are able to tailor courses for each particular context. Tailoring to client needs sometimes simply implies putting together a range of disparate modules, with the client logo boldly displayed on the cover. The widespread practice of modularisation in the sector might well explain this private sectors understanding of tailoring for appropriate outcomes. There was an almost unanimous affirmative response to the survey question about whether providers offer short or modular courses (89 per cent), and an equally strong, but 10 per cent lesser, response to the issue of whether they lead to further qualifications (79 per cent). This indicates that while these short or modular course could lead to further qualifications, the possibility exists that the kinds of courses offered do not require further 'qualification' and are self contained directed at short occupation-specific skilling.

The attention to developing extensive manuals specifying exactly what skills are to be developed is a peculiar feature of the sector. These serve not only as evidence of what is to be provided for recording purposes, but also represents the product of the mediation between institution and ‘accountable agency’. It is this feature which enabled at least one for profit provider in this study to speak of provision in terms of ‘back-end’ and ‘front end’ parts of the business operation, where ‘back end’ represented the operational side including the programme development and courseware development while ‘front end’ refers to the marketing and liaison with the corporate client. The separation of these features suggests that the actual curriculum is decided outside of the educator-learner relationship- suggesting a particular role for the personnel involved in the relationship.

One specialist provider who developed courses for particular corporate purposes ‘in-sourced’ the services of a specialist ‘research and programme developer’ whose task it was to customise programmes for ‘client needs’. In this case, modules were comprehensively compiled for both learner and facilitators, which tended to involve putting together a range of modules considered appropriate for the outcomes required.

#### *Short courses for employee upgrading*

Findings suggest that the trend towards short vocation-specific courses designed to respond to a particular employment direction is related to demand. The appropriateness of these courses is therefore significant from the perspective of value, perception and maximisation of resources. They serve the purposes of the employee for qualifications that are likely to secure employment progression, while for the employer it enables the attainment of employee skills in a short time without extensive effects on productivity.

The extent to which these short courses are able to deliver what Kraak (2003a: 662) regards as ‘broad and polyvalent’ skills necessary for national skills development is less clear. Indeed, a study into learners’ evaluation of 3- and 6-hour ICT courses found that they enjoyed the experience when they were provided with adequate individual support by tutors (Kirk & Kirk 2002), a finding that was confirmed in this study.

Even if these short courses are considered to be “...narrow and functionally dedicated to a single activity” (Kraak 2003a: 664) and are considered to be of limited

quality, they are likely to have a vital role to play in upgrading employee skills. As identified elsewhere, the impact of these skills for the individual in progressing up the ladder in the National Qualifications Framework needs to be better evaluated (Akoojee 2005). These programmes also create the expectation that the skills obtained through them can be immediately utilisable by those who require them. However, there is no clear evidence to back up this expectation, not least because the empirical proof of impact of training is particularly challenging.

In order to ensure that quality is provided, the kind of checks and balances in place resembles that of a manufacturing process. In some cases, modules specify not only what skills are to be acquired but also all ‘facilitation’ activities that are to be conducted. For instance, learner and educator manuals identify possibilities for the initial ‘ice-breaker’ which is expected to enable effective communication amongst participants during the session. They also stipulate what should happen during breakaway sessions and specify the assessment tasks to be conducted. The resonance with the franchising and subsequent ‘commodification’ of education cannot, therefore, be ignored, although the purpose for which it is done is understandably consistent with the need for uniformity of provision and quality enhancement.

## **Conclusion**

There is evidence that the sector is able to market itself as one that is responsive to the labour market and employer demands. Provider B, for instance, captures this ethos when it proclaims confidently in its marketing literature that it is the ‘...most employer recognised college’. Claims for the linkage are made explicit.

The evidence leads to the conclusion that the sector is responsive much more effectively to the corporate and employee client group than any other. It is clear that the sector has been able to market itself extensively and sometimes promises more than it can deliver. For instance, fewer providers than anticipated had job-placement links with employers. Although providers promised employment based on their skill provision, they admitted that they could not guarantee employment and had no mechanisms in place to secure these. Some providers suggested that the historical and current informal links that educators had secured with employers

sometimes secured for their more enterprising learners some workplace experience which sometimes led to employment. But this was not institutionalised.

With regard to the employee learner group, consultants have been especially suited to the time, place and programme requirement necessary to ensure that training is suited to the purposes of the group. Some multi and specialist providers have become responsive to this employee group, with specialist providers reporting that it was more lucrative and allowed some cross subsidisation of the pre- and un-employed sectors.

The notion of 'accountable agency' assists in understanding who the course is responsive to. For specialist providers, the HR unit is the ideal accountable agency ensuring not only what course is put on, but when it is delivered and where.

For the pre and un-employed there is the inevitable need for the qualification to be marketable. For the latter group therefore, the sector is less responsive than anticipated.

Although for the pre- and un-employed, the sector is less able to secure employment, programme design allows learners to manoeuvre in and out of the private education and training system, allowing them to gain valuable experience while learning.

Programmes of private FET providers allow some articulation with employers, although in many cases programmes are in-sourced for particular purpose, indicating a distinctly different role for educators.

The various learner types, from pre-employed through to customer, reflect the various employment-linked purposes. The ideal-type education and training purpose indicates the predominant 'employment' purpose of the pre- and un-employed, while the employee imperative for increased efficacy and product support of 'customer training is indicated.

# Chapter 10

## RECEPTIVENESS: EQUITY, REDRESS AND ACCESS

This chapter elaborates on aspects of provision related to the sector's social development prerogative. While chapter 9 explored the sector responsiveness agenda, this chapter identifies the receptiveness agenda- i.e., the extent to which the private TVET sector is receptive to the needs of students, staff and community outside of the employment need discussed in chapter 9.

In this work, the notion of receptiveness is associated with a social transformational agenda. While it is more than likely that responsiveness and receptiveness cannot in fact be separated, the overly labour market connotation of the responsiveness agenda requires some balance with social equity imperatives. Both features are clearly ultimately designed to create a skilled cadre of people able to take their place as productive citizens. This chapter focuses more deliberately on education and training process than does the previous chapter and provides the context for understanding whether this private FET sector is able to respond meaningfully to issues of equity, redress and access

The chapter begins by assessing the notion of receptiveness and then identifies ownership patterns and participants (both learners and staff). Key issues particularly pertinent to the receptiveness agenda are then addressed.

### **Background: Assessing receptiveness in the South African context**

Education institutions, like all societal structures in South Africa, are challenged to respond to imperatives of economic development, while at the same time ensuring that that equity and redress imperatives are clearly foregrounded (Akoojee & Nkomo 2007*forthcoming*). These are not mutually exclusive entities in South Africa and it could be argued that the achievement of the equity goal in the context of



retention or improvement of quality represents the 'grand prize' in all social development endeavours. The point is that equity considerations could so easily be sacrificed for the immediate short-term economic gains to which the various privatisation debates have alerted us (see chapters 5 to 7).

Public post-school institutions are challenged to ensure that institutional transformation is achieved with clear emphasis on imperatives of access, redress and equity in form, provisioning and functioning. In all of this, there is a pressing challenge to ensure that appropriate notions of quality are still achieved. But the central educational challenge, as in other social settings, is the need to balance equity and quality. Ramphele (2006), on being appointed as the first female vice-chancellor to the University of Cape Town, recounts when asked by journalists about whether standards would be retained. She responded by rejecting the assertion, to the visible surprise of the audience that this response elicited. She went on to point that the retention of standards would result in stagnation. There was a need to exceed them in order that quality standards needed to be exceeded (Ramphele 2006). Clearly this response is important not only for its assumptions regarding quality and standards in South African education but also for the overall need to pay attention to quality in the post-Apartheid order. The notion of 'standards' as being fixed is to be rejected, but there is a popular discourse that assumes that, (a) standards during Apartheid were indeed to be lauded and that (b) there is a 'gold' standard by which others need to aspire. But as Nkomo and I (2007 *forthcoming*) argue, these notions of quality held under the previous Apartheid order need to be challenged. While Ramphele's response legitimises notions of quality held under the previous order, by not questioning its essential basis, it reinforces current commonsense notions of quality. The notion of quality in an Apartheid context needs to be re-interrogated and the perception that standards necessarily need to be compromised for equity to be achieved needs to be reconsidered (Akoojee & Nkomo 2007 *forthcoming*).

Indeed, while this work does not indulge the debate on standards, partly because of the difficulty of having these judged in a uniform manner in such a heterogeneous sector, some indicators will provide some pointers to its achievement. Attempting to judge quality in terms of standards in the public sector would be, as one recent assessment into matriculation subjects between schools and colleges, undertaken by UMALUSI, admitted like comparing oranges with apples (Umalusi 2006). While

some comparisons are undertaken with the sector's public counterpart, this is done merely to serve as a guide, with all the accompanying health warnings inherent in such an attempt.

If public institutions are charged to ensure quality, private institutions which are assumed to have quality imperatives in place, are very carefully scrutinised to ensure that their track record for achieving equity is in place. There is a sensitivity to ensure that the sector is not perceived to be exclusive (as opposed to being inclusive) and elite, which in the South African context translates as 'white' and 'affluent'. The extent to which the sector is deracialised would, therefore, reflect its overall transformation. Indeed one of the constitutional imperatives of private provision of post-school education and training entities in South Africa, besides their requirement to be 'registered' with the governing authority, is the stipulation that they do not discriminate on the basis of race as already identified in terms of the constitution (RSA 1996: Article 29.3).

Private providers of education have, therefore, been especially wary that they are not considered either elitist or racist in terms of their student and staff composition and practices. The private schooling sector has, for instance, been particularly sensitive towards ensuring that independent schools shed their elite status. Evidence of the racial diversity of private schools has been used as proxy for its socio-economic diversity. While it is evident that schools have become racially diverse, it is equally clear that pro-poor self-funded private schools find it difficult to sustain themselves. However, this does not mean that quality necessarily has to be compromised. For instance, Tooley and Dixon (2007) have found evidence of reasonable quality in poorer private schools in a district in India.

In South Africa, evidence of some concerted attempts to respond to the equity challenge has been recorded. Hofmeyr and Lee (2005) point to not only an increasing divergent demographic student composition in the private schools sector, but also a sector that is increasing sensitive to the racial dynamic.

For the private FET sector, the national imperative for upskilling has been paramount. Calls for state sponsored support<sup>36</sup> to enable student choice by providing training vouchers, to allow students an opportunity to choose institutions

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<sup>36</sup> Submission of the APPETD to the new FET Bill (SABINET online 5.11.2006) (Khatle 2006).

they consider necessary (Khatle 2006) has been resisted on the basis that it would indirectly subsidise private institutions at the expense of public colleges.

This brief context suggests a cautionary note about the nature of the survey data obtained. Questionnaires were completed by those likely to have more to gain by ensuring that the sector was receptive to learners and able to respond meaningfully to post-Apartheid developmental imperatives. While the qualitative component served as a check to elaborate on the information obtained, it was more than likely that information recorded would be more positive than was the case. Thus, although information provided with regard to equity indicators, for instance, needs to be treated with caution, it does represent the only information available. Importantly, information from other studies of the private post-school intermediate sector (Erasmus 2002; Akoojee, Arends & Roodt 2007) is also used to supplement the data obtained in this study. It represented an important means of verifying the trend analysis.

The extent to which the sector is receptive is to be achieved on the basis of participants, form and functioning. Participant composition includes ownership details and learner and staff numbers while form describes locational aspects related to access considerations. Functioning includes education and training process imperatives including learning and assessment processes and, to a lesser extent, labour market outcomes. This will serve as an important indicator of the extent to which the overall receptiveness of the sector is to be judged. It will indicate the extent to which the sector is considered to be elitist, exclusive and less responsive to less affluent participants.

### **Ownership by race**

The perception that the sector is dominated by whites implies that that the sector is unable to respond to national imperatives. However, data on the ownership of private FET provision indicates a significant diversity of racial categories. There was a significant white presence (ownership was 44 per cent), as compared to Black ownership at 56 per cent (African 32 per cent; Indian 13 per cent and Coloured 11 per cent).

The qualitative case studies revealed a number of understandings of ownership. This, in part, explains the 272 responses for the 209 respondents to this issue. There were a number of providers with multiple or joint ownership arrangements. In addition, the notion of ownership is complex in terms of the various provider types. For single, for-profit institutions, it refers to those that manage the ‘institution’; and ensure its profitability. This would represent the closest notion of direct ownership, as implied by the survey item. For ‘in-company’ providers, ownership is understood as referring to the corporate shareholder structure which, in larger corporations, is related to their initiatives to become compliant with imperatives of BEE. These larger corporates would, in theory, have a range of ‘sleeping partners’, which would translate into their provision being considered as ‘black owned’. This was evident in the case of Provider C which was, at the time that the field visit was conducted, in the process of securing BEE partners in a bid to secure larger government and some private corporate business interest, intent on aligning themselves with government transformational imperatives.

For NGOs, there have been significant moves to solicit black trustees in order to ensure that they attract funding from the larger internal (and to a lesser extent external) funding sources. For those in ‘franchise’ agreements it is necessary for the profile of the ‘parent franchisor’ to be BEE-compliant.

## **Learner profile**

This section identifies the learner profile in terms of race, gender and age.

### *Headcount enrolments*

The quantitative estimate of the learner headcount enrolment of the private FET sector in 2001 was 706 884 learners for the 864 providers. Although this is the most updated figure available for the sector, it is likely to be a conservative estimate based on those providers who responded to the call by the DoE for pre-registration. This pre-registration data reflect the ‘turnstile’ enrolment for the estimated 4 178 delivery sites that comprise the database (DoE database 2001).

Even these ‘conservative’ figures are considerable when compared to the public sector. Estimated headcount enrolments for the public sector a year after this estimate, stood at 406 144 in 2002 (Powell & Hall 2004: 34), up from 350 000 in

2000 (Fisher et al. 2003). It also far exceeds estimates of the private higher education sector, which comprised 86 DoE 'reporting institutions' with a headcount enrolment of 85 657 students in 2000 (Subotzky 2002 & 2003b). However, a number of caveats need consideration before this figure is compared to its public counterpart. Learner headcount enrolments in this sector need to be understood within the context of the nature of learning, curriculum design and the form in which learning occurs. This means that even an individual who has undergone a one-week training course, e.g., in first aid, can be considered part of the total headcount, thus swelling numbers considerably. The full time equivalent (FTE) calculation is not meaningful in this system, which is extensively reliant on courses of shorter duration (see course duration below).

Additionally, the way in which some providers, at least, have defined learning suggests that a considerable degree of flexibility has been built into provision. Providers use various means by which to determine learner numbers, from the period of attendance to the number of courses that were offered. Provider E, for instance, gauges headcounts by the number of course offered in the calendar year despite the various courses being taken by the same learners, rather than the number of learners completing selected courses. This suggests not only a completely novel means of thinking about course completion, but also gives the impression of a considerable flexibility and course adaptability to learner needs. Of course, in this case the dominant mode of instruction was computer self-paced learning, which in itself might not have adequately addressed the issue of local learner contexts (see the section on programmes).

There were also some providers who admitted to not keeping any records, as in the case of Provider D in this study. In this case the implementation of regulation might well encourage some administrative responsibility.

Despite these caveats, the numbers suggest considerable activity in the sector. The enrolment profile of learners in the private FET sector surveyed in this study corresponds with the demographic profile of the country. White enrolment stands at 10 per cent, while black enrolment (African enrolment at 73 per cent, Indian enrolment at 6 per cent, coloured enrolment at 11 per cent) makes up the rest.

Comparisons can be made with national DoE published data available for public colleges (Powell & Hall 2004). Table 22 shows a degree of similarity between public

and private learner profiles. The proportion of white enrolment in the public colleges was higher, at 17 per cent, than that of enrolment at private providers, at 10 per cent, for this group, in 2002.

**Table 22: Comparison of headcounts by race between public technical colleges (2000) and private FET providers (2001) (by %)**

	African	Indian	Coloured	White	Total
Public TVET (1991)	15 (+4)*	7	7	67	100
Private TVET (2001)*	73	6	11	10	100
Public TVET (2002)**	73	2	8	17	100

Source: HSRC 2002; Powell & Hall 2004; and TVET Sector Review 1992: 4.23 (from HRD data warehouse 2003).

[\* the original study did not have a racial breakdown for the 4% of learners in the homelands – we can assume that these were almost entirely African.]

Table 22 also shows the extent to which the public sector has become transformed in little over ten years, from an African enrolment of 15 per cent (19 per cent if the figures for the TBVC States are included) to the current 73 per cent. The sector has, therefore, become responsive to the racial profile of the country, from a high of 67 per cent white down to 17 per cent in little over twenty years. It is nevertheless important to remember that the public figures reflect a predominant pre-employed group, while the private sector is likely to constitute an employed client group in the main. Thus, it is likely that the public sector essentially responds to the group most likely to be unemployed and in need of skills. As Rodrick (2006) observes in this regard: "... unemployment is heavily concentrated among the young, unskilled, and the black population (which) ... represents (sic) not only an economic tragedy, it poses a significant threat to the stability and eventual health of the South African democracy" (Rodrick 2006: 2).

Enrolment figures for the private FET sector shows that the racial profile of learners closely followed the provincial demographic profile. African enrolment predominates except in Western Cape and the Northern Cape, where Coloured enrolment is significant at 67 per cent and 32 per cent respectively. Indian enrolment is found mostly in KwaZulu-Natal, accounting for 86 per cent of nationwide Indian enrolment (Akoojee 2005: 21).

#### *Gender profile*

The gender profile of learners in the private FET sector determined in the HSRC study (2002) suggests a predominant male component (57 per cent). This gender

profile is not unusual. The public FET sector had an overall 60 per cent male enrolment in 2002 (Powell & Hall 2004). It is also consistent with an earlier private FET study (Buckland et al. 1996: 11), which found a 42 per cent female enrolment.

A gendered programme enrolment pattern is particularly evident in public FET colleges, with male enrolment biggest in the 'hard' subject of 'Engineering' (81 per cent), which makes up almost 44 per cent of overall enrolment. Female enrolment was located predominantly in 'soft' areas: 'Educare/Social service' (92 per cent) which constitutes only 1 per cent of total enrolment; 'Utility services' (75 per cent) which constituted only 7 per cent of total enrolment; and 'Business Studies' (67 per cent), constituting 45 per cent of enrolment (Powell & Hall 2004: 43). This pattern has been found to hold for those private providers responding to the 'pre-employed' sector, as well as the employed 'self paying' learner group. Females were attracted to business and administrative (call centre type) activity. The qualitative component of the study indicated that providers responding to the pre-employed sector believed that females were in demand for call centre-type activity and business administration and marketed programmes with this in mind (as articulated by Provider D).

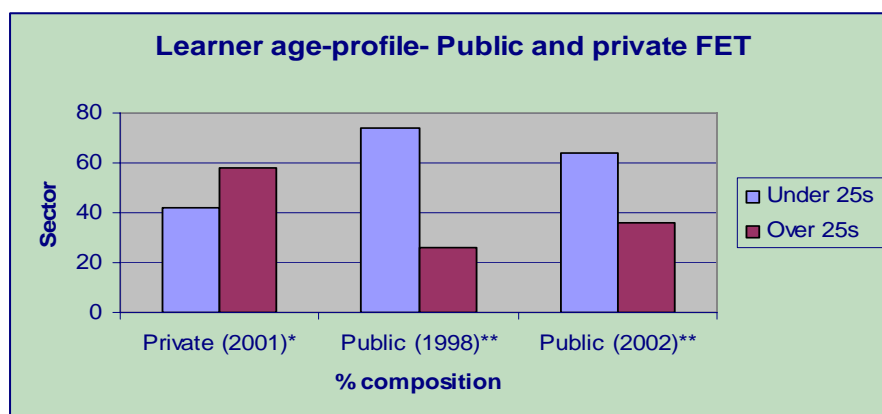
Provider I, an NGO with a skills development focus, had a majority female component in crocheting and needlework and a predominant female component (5 male and 21 females) in sewing and needlework skills.

#### *Learner age profile*

Age-level enrolment trends provide an important indication of the kind of client group to which the sector responds. The public FET sector has been firmly set on a course of responding to the pre-employed youth, although latest trends have indicated a shifting towards more mature learners in the period 2000 and 2002. Policy statements, however, have indicated a refocusing since 2004 to the 15-19 group, which makes the future in terms of an "...adult focus and its role in responsiveness...unclear" (Akoojee, McGrath & Visser 2007 *forthcoming*). It is likely that the private FET sector might well be appropriately placed to respond to this group.

Broad comparative trends<sup>37</sup> for the public and private FET sectors indicated in Figure 12 shows the remarkably different age-profiles of the public and private sectors and the changing age profile of the public sector over a significantly short period (4 years) from 1998 to 2002.

**Figure 12: Learner age profile (Public technical colleges - 1998/2002 and private FET colleges)**



Source: Private (HSRC 2002)\* Private FET sector database; Public (Powell & Hall 2000)\*\*Quantitative NBI data (adapted); Source: Public (Powell & Hall 2004)\*\*\* Quantitative Overview of the Further Education and Training College Sector April 2004 - A Sector in Transition (adapted)

Enrolment trends in the private sector at 58 per cent contrasts with that of the public at 26 per cent in 1998. Despite an increase by ten percentage points, it is still lower than of the private sector. This is no doubt understandable in light of the significant number of employed learners.

The age profile of the private FET sector suggests that it is one that is more receptive of an older, 'non-traditional' client set and that it was responding to the provision gap for the lifelong and career-related learning needs of this group. In this way, it is evident that the sector is responding to a need that is 'different' in terms of the assertion that the private Higher Education sector is responding to the imperatives for 'more', 'better' and 'different' provision forms (Mabizela 2002; Kruss 2004; Geiger 1986a & b).

Significantly, the fact that there is also a noteworthy enrolment (42 per cent) for the under 25 component, suggests that it is also providing an outlet for this age group. Evidence from the qualitative case studies suggests that these providers are able to

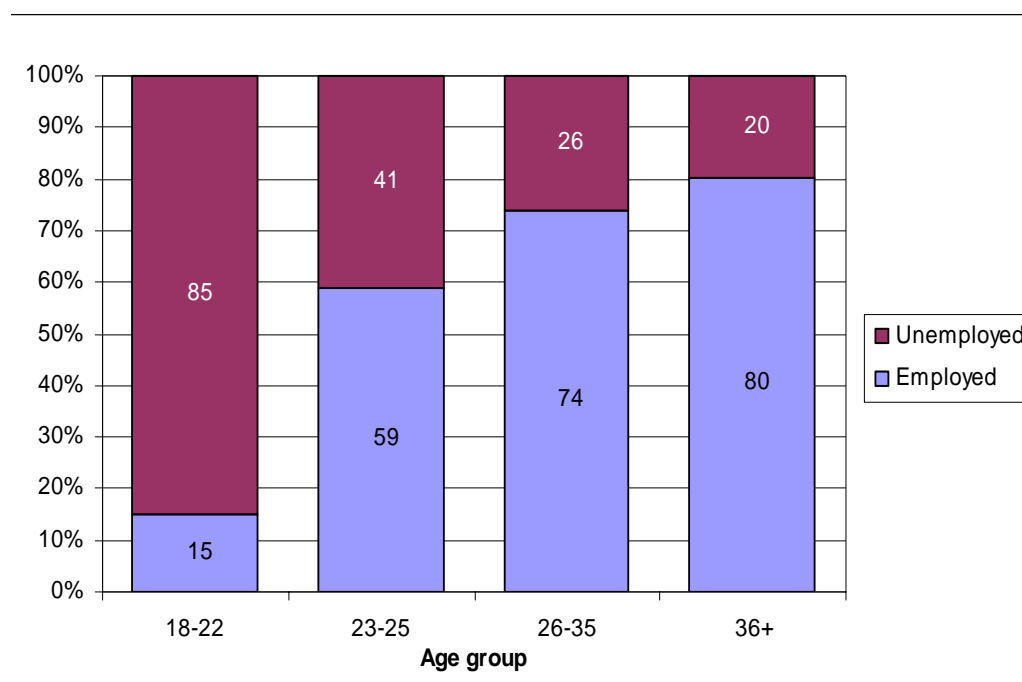
<sup>37</sup> Exact comparative categories are not possible in light of the different data sources (this is true even for the different years for the public sector figures). Broad age-related categories are used to reflect trends as Figure 12 shows.



attract learners on the basis that programmes allow more flexibility where learners are desperate to enter the labour market and require intermediate skilling in order to get there. The way in which programmes are structured at private FET ‘institutions’ would allow these learners to continue studying. The sector was also found to cater for those learners who studied at public providers, but have not been able to complete their courses ‘full time’ at the public FET institutions as a result of the fixed programming structure. There is a sense that private providers make available a skills development outlet that would otherwise not be there. It is evident, therefore, that the private sector responded to the demands for ‘more’ (access) and ‘different’ (flexible programme provisioning) not available in the public sector.

This age profile is interestingly correlated with the likelihood of employment. Figure 13 shows the proportional relationship between age and likelihood of employment, with 80 per cent of learners over 36 employed as compared to only 15 per cent employed in the age cohort 18-22.

**Figure 13: : Learner employment status by age at private FET providers (2001)**



*Source: HSRC (2002).*

While the employment profile is not unusual, it is evident that the sector is responding largely to mid-career adults. However, the nature of these programmes, both from the perspective of demand-driven responsiveness and improved user-driven employability, is unclear and further research is required.

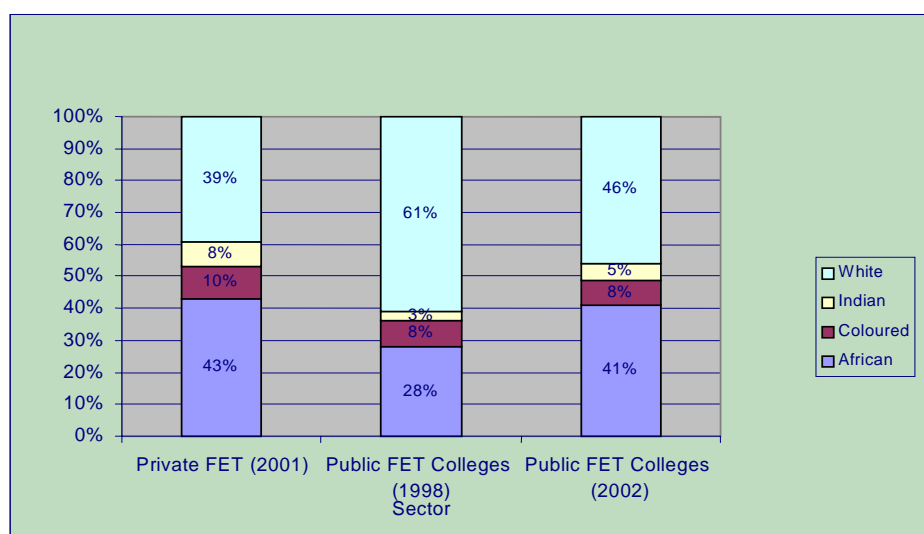
## Staffing profile

The staffing profile is an important component of the general receptiveness of the sector. This section explores the race and age profile of the sector, which indicates the extent to which the demographic profile is reflective of national trends.

### *Staffing race profile*

There is evidence that the post-school education and training provision in South Africa is still dominated by a profile that responds to an Apartheid legacy. This is especially true of the higher education sector where the academic workforce has not transformed from its Apartheid past (Subotzky 2003a; Sennett et al. 2003; Akoojee & Nkomo 2007*forthcoming*). Figure 14 shows the racial profile of staff in the private FET sector as compared to the public FET sectors in 1998 and 2002.

**Figure 14: Race profile of Private FET (2001) compared with the public FET sector (1998 and 2002)**



*Source: Private (HSRC 2002)\* Private FET sector database; Public (Powell & Hall 2000)\*\*Quantitative NBI data (adapted); Source: Public (Powell & Hall 2004)\*\*\* Quantitative Overview of the Further Education and Training College Sector April 2004 - A Sector in Transition (adapted)*

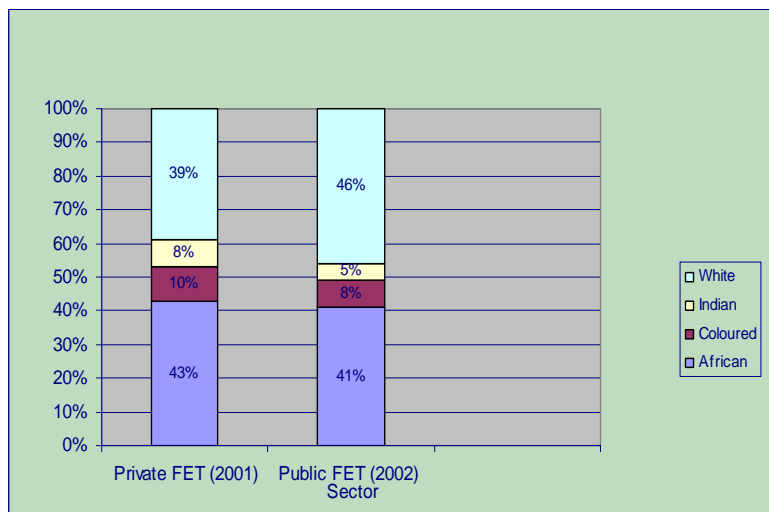
The racial composition of staff has changed in the public FET sector, with a reduction in the White staff component from 61 per cent in 1998 to 46 per cent in 2002. Despite this reduction, there are still proportionally fewer white staff in private FET (39 per cent). While the African staff component is consistent with public FET (41 per cent and 43 per cent for public and private respectively), the

overall black (African, Coloured and Indian) staff figure was higher for the private sector than the public counterpart (61 per cent in total as compared to 54 per cent for the public).

#### *Teaching profile by race*

Figure 15 compares the African teaching staff at public FET colleges in 2002 with that of this private FET sector in 2001. The African staff complement, which comprises 43 per cent of the total, is similar to that of the private sector, at 41 per cent. Interestingly, the proportion of White staff is, however, lower for private providers, at 39 per cent, than that of the public FET sector, at 46 per cent. This racial staffing pattern is also ahead in terms of African teaching staff in the public university sector at 21 per cent in 2000, although available figures are separated by a year (Subotzky 2002 & 2003a). Reasons for this include the inability of the public FET sector to become more racially diverse more speedily, possibly as a result of public service tenure considerations.

**Figure 15: Comparison of race profile of teaching staff at private FET (2001) and public FET (2002).**



Sources: HSRC database (2002); Powell and Hall (2004)

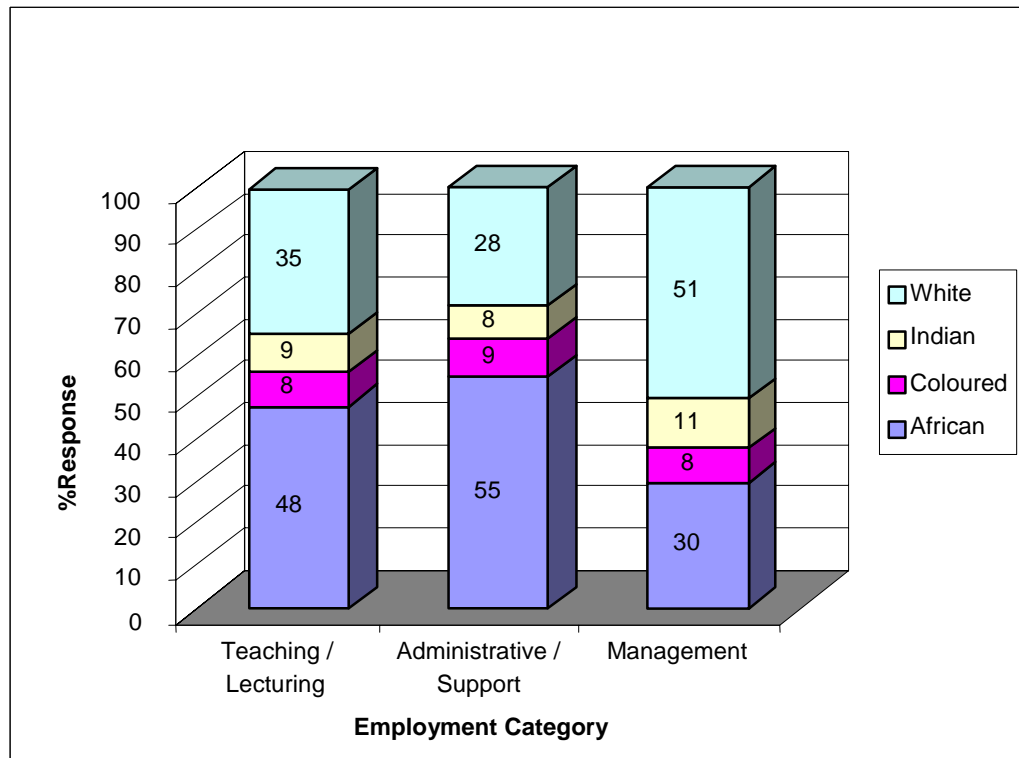
In general, there were proportionately more black staff in the private FET sector (61 per cent) in 2001, than there were at public colleges (54 per cent) in 2002. The private FET sector has more Indian (3 per cent), Coloured (by 2 per cent) and African (by 2 per cent) staff, which make up for the reduced White component in this sector.

It is likely that the private FET sectors' more recent genesis (as opposed to the public counterpart) meant that it tended to use internal unemployed graduates, who were likely to be black (see student profile). While most providers did not have any racial preference in terms of staffing, there was clearly a tendency amongst corporate providers to become racially diverse. Some corporate providers, of course, needed to employ African staff to respond to equity legislation. One non-profit provider pointed out that its employment practices tended to show a preference towards its own graduates.

*Management profile by race*

The predominance of African staff is not reflected at management level as upper echelons of the private FET sector. Figure 16 shows the racial profile of staff at various staffing levels.

**Figure 16. Demographic profile per staffing category in private FET (2001)**



Source: HSRC (2002)

The racial profile of management staff mirrors ownership patterns in the sector. There are proportionately more white managers (51 per cent) as compared to other levels: 'teaching' (35 per cent) and 'administration/support' (28 per cent). This racial

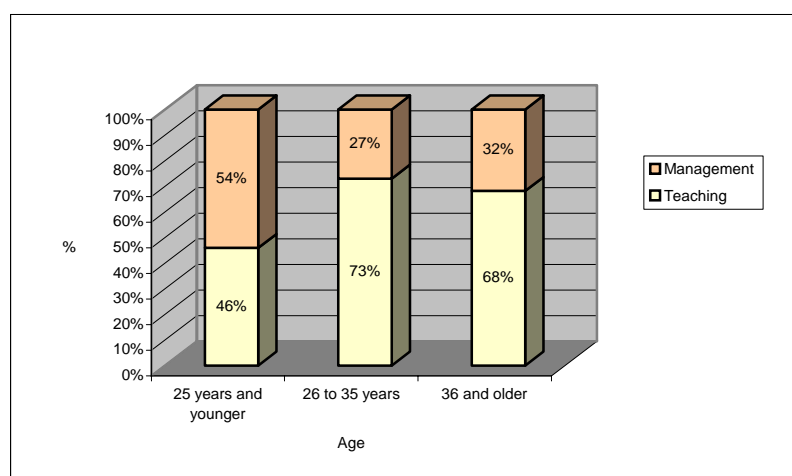
composition is disproportionately related to the African teaching (48 per cent) and support (55 per cent) staffing component. This suggests that historical inequalities are still present.

This trend was confirmed by Erasmus (2002) who found the majority (68 per cent) of managerial staff were white in contrast with almost a quarter (22 per cent) African. Similarly, that same study also found almost half (46 per cent) of all educators in private FET institutions were white and 41 per cent, African.

#### *Age profile by employment level*

The staff age profile shows some peculiar inconsistencies at various employment levels. Figure 17 shows the profile of the sector's management and teaching component.

**Figure 17: Staff age-profile: Management and teaching staff in Private FET (2001).**



*Source: HSRC (2003)*

Interestingly, the employment profile reveals a far younger management set with 54 per cent under 25. Teaching staff was older, 73 per cent were between 26 and 35 and another 68 per cent were over 36. Whether this older staffing profile reflects the sub-Saharan study's finding that most educators are drawn from the public FET sector (Atchoarena & Esquieu 2002) has not been verified.

Owners reported that they considered the younger management component necessary to invigorate institutions with new ideas. Other staff, however, indicated that the employment of younger personnel in management was more cost-effective than employing older more experienced managers who would require larger salaries.

In this respect, the nature of the task that managers had to undertake, at multi-provider institutes catering to the pre-and unemployed especially, was focussed on marketing. Except for a small full time administrative component, their people management responsibility was based on their ability to match teaching staff with delivery of particular courseware. The bulk of their task, therefore, revolved around marketing to ensure a steady learner base. Managers were, however, required to provide strategic direction in terms of expanding the client base.

*Administrative/support profile by race*

The HSRC survey (2002) did not make a distinction between administrative and support staff. The Erasmus survey, however, made this distinction on the basis that the ‘administrative’ staff component refer to office and resource maintenance staff (e.g. IT hardware specialists maintenance staff in the case of the ICT premises provider), while support staff referred to staff considered to not have anything to do with ‘core business’, which includes security, cleaning or building maintenance staff. Table 23 reveals a remarkable degree of consistency between the HSRC (2002) study, which incorporated both administration and support staff for all categories, and the Erasmus findings (for example, the African staff were 55 per cent as compared to the figure of 56.5 per cent).

**Table 23: Administration and support staff by race (comparison with Erasmus (2002) (in per cent.)**

	African	White	Indian	Coloured
<b>HSRC Study (2002)</b>				
Admin/Support	55	28	9	8
<b>Erasmus study</b>				
Admin	38	40	13	9
Support	75	11	9	6
<b>Average (Erasmus)</b>	<b>56.5</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>7.5</b>

Source: HSRC (2002); Erasmus (2002)

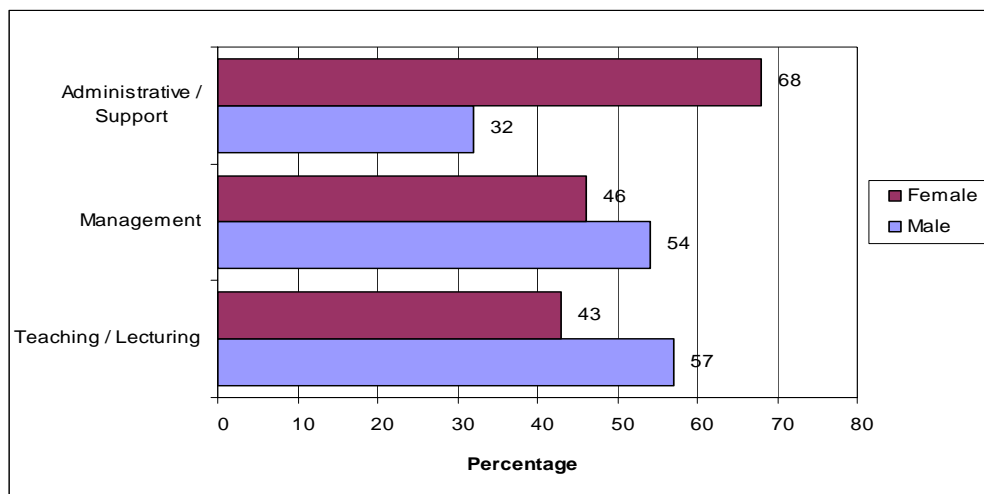
The most interesting finding of the Erasmus study was the finding that three-quarters of support staff was African, while the administration component was shared almost equally between White (40 per cent) and African (38 per cent). There were far more whites in the ‘administration’ function as compared to the ‘support’ component. This trend coincides with the South African labour market, where most

unskilled/manual work is undertaken by African people. Results indicate that much could be done to transform the racial labour market pattern, with African people located in the lower echelons of the system.

### *Staff gender profile*

Figure 18 represents the gender distribution of staff in private FET institutions by the various employment categories.

**Figure 18: Gender distribution of staff by employment category at private FET institutions.**



*Source: HSRC (2002)*

There is almost parity in overall employment by gender, with 48 per cent males and 52 per cent females employed in the sector. Figure 18, however, indicates a gendered pattern with females most likely to be employed at administrative and support levels (68%), and less prevalent in management and teaching levels (46 per cent and 43 per cent respectively).

There is a need for the sector to address the current gender labour market imbalances and respond to national priorities in this regard.

### **Access and structure: Admission, assessment and funding**

Admission, assessment and funding are intricately linked to access. In public provision, they have been considered to prevent, rather than enable, institutions to be responsive to all. In higher education, they have been considered ‘exclusionary’,

as opposed to ‘inclusionary’ mechanisms. This section explores the extent to which these elements serve to enable the receptiveness agenda.

*Access and admission requirements (as a means by which access is realised)*

Admission requirements, which have been instituted to reflect potential of success, have also been considered to exclude, rather than identify potential. In a context where schooling has been less than effective, traditional admission requirements which have been used as a means by which to include learners, tend to have the impact of exclusion. As a result of its historic inequity in providing for black pupils, formal schooling has been used to maintain an exclusionary post-school sector (Moleke 2006a). Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has been proposed to resolve this inequity at the post-compulsory level (see Breier 2001 and Thaver, Naidoo & Breier 2002).

The issue of access or lack of access is dominated in the public post-school sector by one of admission requirements. Most post-school admission is based on the certification provided after matriculation. This is considered exclusionary, especially since the failure rate at that level is particularly worrying. For instance, of the total number of candidates (528 525), only 16 percent had achieved university entrance passes, and only 5 and 6 per cent achieving higher grade passes in mathematics and science respectively (Pandor 2006).

Table 24 shows the private sector’s response to the issue of ‘admission requirements’. As compared to the public sectors reliance on formal schooling certification, it shows that only a little over a third of providers (38 per cent) use certification for admission. While this accords with the more mature learner cohort, it does indicate less reliance on formal certification. Thus it is understandable that an almost equal proportion used either ‘on-the-job experience’ (32 per cent) or ‘recognition of prior learning (RPL)’ (30 per cent) as criteria for learner admission. While ‘on the job experience’ is useful, referring to RPL as an admission feature is especially interesting, and perhaps worrying, since the practical mechanisms for evaluating ‘prior learning’ have not been finalised.

The fact that almost two-thirds (62 per cent) of providers used non-school certification, incorporating ‘on the job experience’ and ‘RPL’, for entry into programmes, is especially interesting for its marked difference with public providers.



Table 24: Admission requirements at private FET institutions (2001)

Admission requirements	Percentage
1 School certificate	38
2 On-the-job experience	32
3 Recognition of prior learning (RPL)	30
Total	100

Source: HSRC database (2002)

It may be that some learners are attending private institutions because they are unable to attend public institutions owing to more stringent admission requirements. The extent to which this feature represents a positive flexibility that is pro-equity or indicates a market-driven disregard for the appropriate learning foundations being in place is not clear. In addition, there was little evidence in the qualitative study to suggest additional support for those who are unable to cope with existing programmes, although options for ‘free’ tuition following failure are sometimes promised.

There is also a distinction with regard to inclusion of the pre-employed full-time client group as compared to the corporate sector. For the corporate client set, the ‘accountable agency’ determined who was to be trained. Providers had to ensure that programmes took account of the learner set that needed to be trained. Often enough, training needs were underpinned by company requirements. In addition, since assessment was not exclusively in a written form, verbal proficiency was at least as important. Prior formal qualifications have also sometimes been used as a starting point for programme suitability.

There were also some quite interesting alternative entry requirements in the NGO sector, for instance. It was found that for Provider I, for instance, where need far outstripped capacity and demand for skills programmes, schooling certification (especially matric) was used as an initial screening criteria to select candidates. This was supplemented by an interview undertaken by representatives of the provider as well as the community. This was done ostensibly to ensure that the programmes responded to community development imperatives, but also was intended to promote community buy-in to the programmes of this NGO. The philosophy underpinning this was a community-oriented vision, as opposed to an individualised notion, of social development according to the programme officer of this provider (Provider I). By including community members at strategic levels it was assumed that the benefits of skilling would be shared. The impact of this strategic inclusion

of community representation would, of course, need to be assessed. It was pointed out that these interventions should be made at other levels of the programme as well for maximum effect.

For 'walk-in' learners, providers used a range of mechanisms including formal prior qualifications. Learners were slotted into programmes on the basis of school qualifications as a starting point, but systems typically included a pre-admission interview, where prior formal certification, including school certification, was used to make learners aware of the requirements of the programme field in which learners were interested. Learners were then slotted into an appropriate level of the field in which they were interested.

Larger multi-campus providers also appear to emphasise school qualification in certain programme areas. For example, Provider B has stipulated entrance requirements to specialist courses. It was reported that chemical and engineering courses require strict 'formal' requirements to ensure suitability. Entry into engineering required at the least a Grade 9 Certificate, together with prior experience of mathematics and sciences. Access is secured in these multi-institutions by learners having an option to register for programmes at the appropriate level. It is also significant that these entry requirements are necessary as the qualification is registered with the Department of Education, whose admission criteria are stipulated.

Entry requirements are evidently dependent on the course of study and the purposes to which the qualification is directed. Thus, the skill empowerment, adult education, type courses are unlikely to have require any formal entry requirement.

#### *Assessment practices*

Assessment represents the double-edged sword by which on the one hand, quality is assured and, on the other hand, exclusion is effected for those unable to achieve prescribed standards. Moreover, it has been contended that success is determined by the quality of instruction, and failure has more to do with inadequate preparation than learner ability. The extent to which providers ensure successful outcomes in terms of both achieving paper qualification as well as developing appropriate skills is critical to their perceived success.

In this regard, the private FET sector has been found to demonstrate various measures to ensure successful outcomes. A number of specialist providers committed themselves to providing 'free' instruction to pre- or un-employed learner groups (walk-in clients) should candidates not be successful at external assessments after completing the course, provided that attendance was satisfactory. While this mechanism could well be dismissed as a marketing ploy, there is embedded within it a remarkable commitment to quality instruction. It was evident that learners did not have any recourse to redress except an appeal to the institution to correct the issue. Whether anything was done about the problem has, however, not been determined. This might suggest that there is a need for the establishment of a consumer council, to whom learners might be able to turn for recourse. Although this proposal has not been articulated, a neutral agency outside of regulatory system would provide a useful 'ombudsman' role to ensure some measure of protection.

Assessment practices differ with respect to programmes and learner type. For corporate providers, it was also felt that the level of reading and writing proficiency of employees was not sophisticated enough to warrant written assessment. The assumption was that skilling at a particular level did not require significant written expertise. The veracity of this view is questionable considering the need for students to move upwards into the education and training system. It also suggests a form of 'short-termism' and immediacy of the skills for tasks at hand on which companies appear to focus.

Most courses for 'walk-in' providers had some degree of written assessment embedded into the course. Written assessment conducted internally did not have any other internal or external moderating procedures built in to the assessment procedure. The certificates provided in this instance were internal and while no claims for external legitimacy were made, the value of these needed to be reviewed. Much responsibility was placed on the instructor to ensure that the skills were indeed adequate and that the certification was legitimate. Some courses, however, were externally moderated, where the certification was externally provided and served to verify the skilling provided.

Most computer programmes, for instance, had externally prepared assessments. The role of the provider in this instance was to prepare students for these. In this case,

the existence of assessment agencies which guarded certification provided adequate quality assurance mechanisms.

With regard to assessment, the private FET sectors' contention that their provision was driven by a concern for quality suggests a materially different conception of quality as compared to that of the public provider. As argued elsewhere, the private providers emphasised critical skills acquisition features, for instance, process issues including venue selection and comfort, which differed markedly from the public sector (Akoojee 2005). With reference to external assessment measures, only 63 per cent of private providers responded that they had them in place, while a large proportion of providers (38 per cent) did not have any in place. A significant proportion of providers (9 per cent) did not respond to this item. The assumed negative response of almost half (47 per cent) of respondents (those non-respondents and those who did not have any assessment in place) is likely to point to the possibility of a markedly different notion of assessment than that found in conventional (i.e., public) education and training provision. This was confirmed in some of the cases studied. It was found, for instance, that for Provider E, assessment was based on the provision of individual learner support and verbal 'testing'.

Tests and examinations are still, however, the dominant assessment mechanism in the sector. Table 25 shows that 'ongoing or end of course tests/examinations' made up 74 per cent of assessments conducted in the sector. 'End of course projects' represented only 17 per cent of total respondents.

**Table 25: Assessment policy of private providers (2001)**

Assessment policy	Number of providers	Percentage
1 Ongoing or end of course tests/examinations	151	74
2 Ongoing or end of course projects	35	17
3 Both	18	9
No response	34	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>100</b>

**Response rate is 86% (204 providers answered question 6.2)**

Source: HSRC 2002

This is consistent with findings in the qualitative study where assessment was pre-defined. When courses were purchased, the assessment procedure was in-built. Even where this was not the case, traditional assessment was favoured. This often meant that assessment was removed from the hands of the facilitator/educator. The

assessment procedure in use, either tick-boxes or computer-generated methods of assessment, not only made the assessment 'objective', but also enabled speedy response of the results to learners. In some cases, programmes that needed to be assessed long after the course was delivered normally required working experience. Where end-of course assessment was not conducted by tests or exams, the provider gave a certificate of attendance. In the latter case, training was expected to result in improved employment competency. In the case of corporate clients, feedback was provided to the HR department. In some instances, where there were no complaints, this took the form of assumed quality.

### *Funding*

The issue of affordability was more important for the 'pre- and unemployed' learner type than others, who consider the prestige and the value of the qualification as more important. In the case of the latter group of learners, costs signalled value in the market, which was based on the public profile of the qualification. Thus for some ICT-specific skilling, including ICDL and related skills, the qualification is driven by the marketplace, with a number of providers offering tuition towards assessment. Thus, providers targeting this group ensure that attention is paid to delivery. Often the number of providers offering the course makes it difficult to charge excessive rates. Costs of these courses have to be in keeping with the market, while providers are wary to ensure that costs are market-related and that programmes articulate with the purpose for which they have been designed, especially because of the external assessment criteria to which they have to respond.

For corporate training, costs for the training are borne by the company and, in terms of the new skills development regime, are reclaimed from the levies paid. This goes for group learning commissioned by the company as well as those programmes chosen by employees and considered to be relevant for their employment. Group training is provided by in-company training units or outsourced to private providers who specialise in particular aspects of training. The latter represents a cost-efficient means of skilling because the company does not have to employ the expertise as would be necessary in an in-house training unit.

The programmes of private specialist providers responding to the pre- and unemployed sectors are typically based on minimal to low-cost in order to ensure sustainability and speedy cost recovery. Some providers who provide services for

this sector have tended to branch out to the corporate sector because of its more lucrative nature. One provider reported that in this instance, the corporate section of the operation subsidised that of the pre- and un-employed sectors.

Funding does, nevertheless, represent an important exclusionary mechanism. Significantly, 44 per cent of providers had some bursary or financial assistance mechanism in place, a striking proportion for a predominantly for-profit sector. The qualitative study provided some interesting insights into the varied interpretations of financial assistance. There was no evidence of any 'subsidy' for tuition. Interpretations of 'funding assistance' ranged from discounting, sometimes for early registration, to offering additional tuition when students did not succeed. Yet another interpretation of assisting less able learners was the providers' referrals to private credit agencies that would make available financial assistance.

## **Regulation and accreditation**

One of the purposes of legislation is to ensure that delivery of an appropriate standard is maintained and that those who are most vulnerable are protected from the more extreme effects of market failure. While, at the time that this work was conducted, the regulatory framework was not put into place, there were initial indications about the nature of regulation and possible impact of regulatory compliance<sup>38</sup>. Legislation has been directed at, on the one hand, weeding out unsustainable providers and, on the other hand, enabling quality provision to be enhanced. In terms of the current stipulations providers are expected to:

- Only offer programmes registered on the NQF
- Not exceed the enrolment levels that the facilities can reasonably be expected to accommodate,
- Provide adequate space, equipment and instructional material of a particular standard
- Engage the services of the necessary academic and support staff with appropriate qualifications and experience to achieve the objectives of a particular offering

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<sup>38</sup> This regulation was instituted in March 2005, as a result of the publication of Government Gazette No. 25642, published on 31 October 2003 Pretoria, Vol. 460. The call for registration for all private FET providers was made on 6th June 2005.

- Implement a quality management system including assessment policies and procedures appropriate to the programme and
- Maintain student records

*(adapted DoE 2002)*

While there was little evidence about the institutional rationale for registration, the qualitative component revealed some interesting features complying with official requirements.

By far the most important reason for some providers to conform to legislation was to ensure that they were able to secure large contracts. Government departments require some official legitimacy from contractors and the pre-registration exercise in the meantime provided this despite the department's emphasis of its non-official status. Providers catering to walk-in clients also used the pre-registration number obtained to indicate official legitimacy.

For the 'not-for-profits', the survivalist rationale made pre-registration less significant as a result of the low or non-existent user fee. Equally, the corporate sector had a sense that the registration process was arduous, bureaucratic and unnecessary. For the NGO (Provider I), the responsibility of registration and accreditation was a cost that they could least afford. Some providers that responded to the corporate providers, however, saw compliance as an opportunity to seize market share (Provider C), while others saw it as an opportunity to re-invent the existing curriculum. The latter were often to be found represented on Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs) and were thus able to impact on the development of an alternative programme structure.

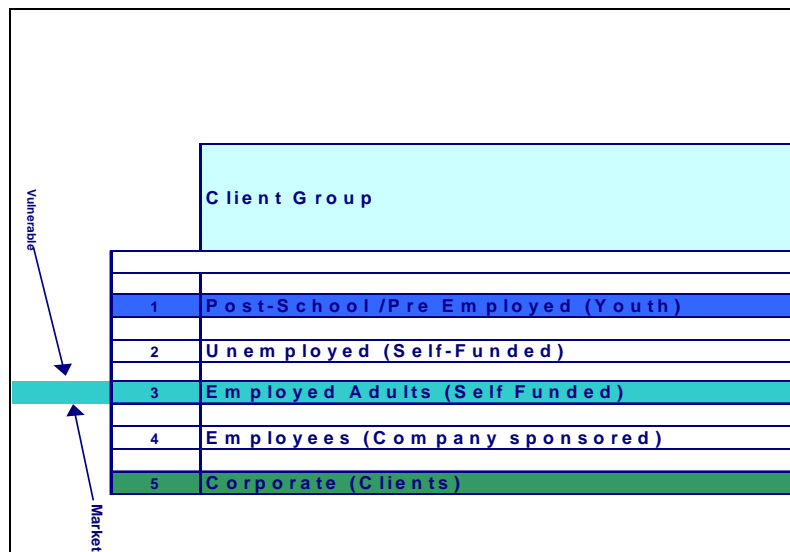
Registration has also been associated with a considerable degree of confusion as to the nature of the registration process. In this situation, some providers were unclear about which authority to use for registration. Some used what was the most relevant SETA, while others expressed the frustration that they had made extensive enquiries without any success. The unevenness and varying efficiency of SETA processes has meant that some providers have shopped around for the quickest route to accreditation rather than going to the most appropriate SETA. For instance, one provider who was training truck drivers was in the process of applying to the Services SETA, rather than the Transport SETA, because they were considered more efficient.

There was generally a sense that regulation was not a problem as long as there was clarity about the process and it could be conducted speedily and efficiently, with clearly defined protocols and processes. It was evident that respective roles of the DoE, UMALUSI and SETAs needed to be more clearly defined. Some providers welcomed the prospect of registration, especially those that catered for the pre-employed ‘full time’ client group - the sector that was most populated by ‘fly by nights’. It was seen as important in order to clean-up the image of the sector and to root out the competition, despite the increased bureaucratic burdens that might result.

*Regulatory focus and funding*

In light of the challenge of regulation, it is necessary to identify a regulatory focus to enable effective support and development of the sector. The learner types identified in Figure 19 provide a useful starting point for determining the regulatory emphasis.

**Figure 19: Learner groups identified in the private FET sector (indicating extent of learner vulnerability)**



Source: Excerpt - Appendix 4 in this thesis: Grid depicting typology of Private FET Providers in South Africa.

It represents an excerpt of a comprehensive typology grid useful for regulatory purpose (Appendix 4). It could be usefully used to categorise institutions based on a range of provision types, including delivery modes, purpose, delivery form and so forth. It could be usefully used to identify critical areas for identifying particular areas for support and development. It is necessary to ensure that those most vulnerable are protected. Thus category 1 and 2 learner types, and to a lesser extent, category 3 (self paying employed) learners, is those most likely to be in need of



protection from the regulatory authority. Since providers responding to these groups find themselves in a demand-driven sector where market-excess is most pronounced, competition leads to some quite excessive cost-cutting to the detriment of the learner. While it is possible that learners responding to other groups are also equally in need of protection, employees and corporate clients are more capable of ensuring some accountability. Their access to legal means to ensure that programme delivery of an appropriate quality is provided and the wariness of providers responding to this sector for reputation management makes this a much less exploitative sector. It was also evident that providers responding to this corporate client sector were also most eager to comply with official requirements, partly because of its value in obtaining more work and more importantly its role in accessing the business of clients interested in getting the skills rebate. They are also most capable of affording the administrative requirements necessary for regulatory implementation.

There is also a possible need to enable upskilling of the employed category by creating space for encouraging their upskilling. This could effectively be done by providing appropriate tax breaks, which would not only have the advantage of increasing the skills pool, but ensure that those with whom training is conducted comply with legislation in order to attract these clients. It would also serve the additional benefit of getting some of the specialist providers on a more firm financial footing. To be able to access this clientele, these providers would need to ensure minimum standards, which would work to the benefit of their less resourced learner clients.

Regulation is clearly a necessary feature of provision. While it was not possible to assess the regulatory process in its absence, some pointers as to possible challenges are clearly evident. The most important in this regard is the notion of defining provision at this level. The FET level, which straddles schooling and the 'pre-employment' vocational skills sector creates considerable confusion, despite vigorous attempts by the DoE to explain this difference. In addition, the reorientation of the notion of 'post-school FET provider' also needs to encompass those 'consultants', 'assessors', 'in-house' providers and 'non-employment skill centres'. The validity of NQF level programmes in all education and training provision forms needs to be reviewed, with the market ultimately becoming the means by which learners in corporate contexts are secured quality provision.

Those providers who respond to the pre- and un-employed learner cohort are in need of special attention especially since they are likely to be most ‘at risk’ of closure as a result of the robust competition and where cost effectiveness results in cost-cutting at the expense of quality provisioning.

## **Conclusion**

Judgement of the extent to which the sector is receptive to national development imperatives cannot be made without unpacking the various elements that comprise it. In terms of the various participants in the sector, ownership patterns suggest that the sector is becoming racially diverse, in keeping with current BEE patterns. It serves as a significant feature driving diversification, especially for those providers responding to government and corporate sector clients. In terms of participants, the sector is reflective of the demographics of the country, with not only significant transformation trends evident, but also some quite promising evidence of equity and redress mechanisms. The age profile of the sector suggests that the sector caters to an age cohort that is unique and is neglected in public education and training provision. Equally, the pre- and un-employed enrolment suggests inadequate provision by public providers.

As regards staffing, the predominant ‘contract’ nature of staffing is of concern. The general uncertainty of contract staff tends to impact on effective delivery. The racial imbalance of teaching staff to students is also in need of some attention, while the administrative and support element is reflective of a gendered employment pattern.

Some quite innovative admission requirements are in place, but whether they in fact lead to appropriate outcomes is a moot point. The absence of certification for admission suggests a move in the right direction, but it is not clear whether appropriate support is provided to make up for learning deficits as a consequence of the poor schooling preparation. Assessment practices are not consistent with those of public providers and evidence for assessment’s role as an indicator of quality is wanting. Notions of quality are not consistent with those of public provision in terms of efficiency measures; pass rates and effective placement (as identified in chapter 9). This makes comparisons between public and private provision difficult. It suggests a need for further research on this aspect.

Some aspects were, however, not seriously considered by private providers. They include responsiveness to the HIV/AIDS pandemic for instance. However, it is likely that there is some consideration given to this, but financial and operational features mitigate against serious attention being paid to this aspect of training despite it being written into policy. There is need for partnership with other structures, both state and non-state, including clinics and local government, to address this issue for those providers responding to the pre- and unemployed group. It is more than likely that the corporate client sees this kind of training as separated from the upskilling imperative necessary for employment purpose and that this training is undertaken separately.

In response to this issue, there is no perceptible difference between the private and public providers. Evidence suggests that a college-level response to HIV/AIDS has only become apparent quite recently (Gamble 2003).

There is evidence to suggest that the sector is responding much more effectively than anticipated in advancing the national development agenda. While the various providers respond differently to the agenda, the focus invariably falls on the 'for-profit' component which has as its primary client, the pre- and unemployed learner. In this regard, there is a sense that sustainability issues predominate. Providers in this category are required to sustain themselves financially and are able to achieve this by either cutting back on quality or expanding provision to include corporate clients. If they succeed with the latter strategy, they are able to secure quality by ensuring some form of cross-subsidisation. There is also a sense that national development is being fostered by learner and staffing trends, with evidence that the sector becoming much more racially diverse and reflective of the population.

As regards access, there is a sense that a large proportion of learners are able to access facilities of private providers. Novel entry requirements enable a larger proportion of learners who were less advantaged at school to access education and training opportunities to which they would not otherwise have been able to access.

The receptiveness agenda is also served by the kinds of programmes that this sector is servicing. In addition to education and training for employment, the variety of programmes offered to various learner types (for example, in leisure and life skills) reflects a form of provision to which no public entity responds.

While quality considerations loom large in the minds of those interested in professional and skilling competence, the sector is somehow able to ensure that learners are provided repeated opportunities for success. Whether this is in the corporate sphere or the pre- or un-employed learner cohort is unclear. The sustainability of providers requires successful learning outcomes. While, as argued in the previous chapter, this does not necessarily reflect direct employment effects, the value of the interaction to the 'client' is an important consideration for corporate providers.

# Chapter 11

## RESPONSIVENESS AND RECEPTIVENESS OF THE PRIVATE FET SECTOR REVIEWED

This work has provided a basis for understanding the extent to which the rapidly expanding private TVET sector, known as the Private FET sector, is responsive to national development imperatives in South Africa. The sector's heterogeneous nature established by the various provision forms make broad generalisations about the sector's responsiveness to national development imperatives a difficult one to sustain. Different provider types are likely to respond differently to various imperatives of national development.

This chapter is structured in the following manner. I will briefly review notions of national development that pertain to this work and the standard against which this sector is assessed. Critical features of responsiveness and receptiveness of the sector is assessed in terms of the current reality of private provision. The extent to which the sector, or elements of it, is responsive and receptive are then examined.

### **National development**

The notion of national development, while it could be subject to a range of interpretations, is understood as linked to criteria responding to current socio-economic imperatives. These are identified in government (and non-government) sources as poverty, inequality and unemployment (see for instance *State of the Nation* reports, HSRC 2005 and 2006; and socio-economic reports from the Presidency, PCAS 2003 and 2006). More recently the challenges of HIV/AIDS, crime and corruption have also been inserted into the national agenda. These challenges should, however, not underestimate the great strides made since the end of Apartheid with respect to stability in political and macro-economic terms. Important also is the range of initiatives launched since 1994 to deal with the legacy

of an Apartheid past. These include the RDP, GEAR and, currently, the AsgiSA initiative.

In the education and training system, the challenges of access, redress and equity have been augmented with the issue of quality. It has been realised that simply changing the racial composition of education and training institutions cannot be transformative in itself without attention to outcomes. Quality in terms of input and process has, therefore, become particularly significant. In this respect, skills deficiency has been identified as a central focus of attention.

Skills development is a central feature of the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative (AsgiSA), designed as an overarching means by which to address the central challenges of poverty and employment whilst securing economic growth to enable this to be addressed. Skills development represents one of the central tenets of the Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA), which focuses attention on the skill needs of the economy to achieve identified goals. Key interventions under JIPSA include:

- the renewal of the higher education system by attention to quality in the post the merger era;
- transformation of (public) further education and training system incorporating the institutional mergers and recapitalisation of the sector;
- a new skills development system driven by the national skills development strategy which features new vocational qualifications (learnerships) and the implementation of the levy-grant system under new SETAs and
- expansion of adult education and training system which incorporates new qualifications, delivery mechanisms and a (renewed) commitment to prior learning

*(adapted McGrath & Akoojee 2007b)*

While this is not new, the fact that it has assumed national importance under a national socio-economic development plan suggests that the issue of education and training in general, and skills development in particular, has taken centre stage in national development thinking.

The importance of skills is not new. The skills deficit has been articulated in government statements as the key constraint to development (see for instance PCAS 2006), not the least because it is considered one of the primary limitations of effective service delivery in the public sector.

Although its importance is an adequate reason for justifying more skill initiatives, it is by no means a sufficient justification of the existence of the private TVET sector in the country, although it could be argued that all skills development initiatives need to be embraced if the skills development challenge is to be adequately addressed. This is especially so in the context of this private sector because it is so demand driven. It represents an important contribution to national development. The story however, is not that simple.

Development in the South African context is understood as ensuring that key socio-economic challenges are met in a manner that ensures that the legacies of Apartheid are deliberately countered. Socio-economic development requires attention to both process and outcome and the sector's national development commitment is thus to be established based on its ability to respond meaningfully to both of these imperatives. Economic growth, poverty reduction and inequity needs to be undertaken in a manner which ensures that Apartheid inequity is reversed.

This requires that the education and training process be consistent with imperatives of access, redress and equity, which represent the core features of a post-Apartheid education and training system. The importance of process, as well as outcomes have, therefore, been emphasised as important components of national development in South Africa.

Thus the private FET sector's capacity to ensure appropriate access to those disadvantaged by the Apartheid system is considered a crucial aspect of its national development responsibility. Significant attention has been given to the responsibility of the private sector to respond to national development. A blurring of form and function between 'public' and private' sectors is evident in the South African context. Just as the public sector is expected to create the 'enabling framework' for private capital to flourish; the private sector is charged to respond to national interests in a manner that ensures its contribution to national development.

The role of the state, therefore, is redefined. From controlling and commanding economic activity, it shifts to being a cohesive force for the coexistence of both the demands of those that are socially excluded and those endowed with plenty. As such it needs to serve a regulatory function. The new globalised order requires more, rather than less government. It has a unassailable regulatory function to ensure that the national development imperative is established.

Thus responding to these national development prerogatives ideally requires synergy between state and non-state organs. The crucial importance of skills to national development, as is its inability to meaningfully respond has been well documented as the following indicates:

...concerns exist that skills in South Africa are inadequate at the individual, enterprise and economy levels in terms of quantity, quality and distribution (and that)...this contributes to poverty, unemployment, social inequality and lack of international competitiveness. (McGrath 2004a: 6)

Clearly this inadequacy needs to be responded to. The private sector in South Africa needs to be an active partner in responding to the skills challenge. Its sheer size means that it does indeed represent a significant component of education and training provision. The private TVET sector, as a component of the wider private sector, is on record as articulating its commitment to national development. It, therefore, represents a relevant and significant force in fulfilling this responsibility. It suggests that the skill development need of the country requires a range of providers and stakeholders in their varied forms to respond to the challenge.

This does not imply that the role of the public TVET should be any less important. While it was specifically established to respond to needs of the economy and the socially excluded, there is also a need to ensure that it is charged to provide programmes that are responsive to wider national needs. In this regard, the private sector is charged to respond to considerations of quality, relevance and appropriateness to the needs of learners, labour market and the community in its national development responsibility.

Notions of responsiveness and receptiveness have been proposed to assess the nature of private provision of TVET in South Africa. The notion of responsiveness represents a buzzword of the skills development commitment to labour market imperatives. Public colleges are charged to become responsive in terms of their operation to respond to employment outcomes. The notion has, however, come under the influence of an exclusive labour market interpretation, sometimes to the exclusion of other education process indicators necessary for transformation. This has led to a notion of 'receptiveness' in this work.

Receptiveness implies a commitment to issues considered to be outside of the labour market arena, including the racial composition of the participants in the



sector, programmes, delivery modes and participants. Receptiveness thus incorporates the process considerations, access, i.e., access, redress and equity considerations, of this education and training form. This would include considerations about the nature of programmes offered and the extent to which the sector responds to those unable to access alternative opportunities, e.g., non-traditional groups.

Receptiveness ensures that the interests of all constituencies are attended to, including advantaged and disadvantaged; previously excluded (as well as those advantaged by Apartheid); black as well as white; business and non-business interests. In particular, it will examine whether and the extent to which various elements in the sector are responsive to the socially excluded and vulnerable. Probably it needs to examine the way in which the system could eliminate exploitation and ensure redress where necessary.

The notions of responsiveness and receptiveness are explored in the next section in terms of some of the key themes identified in this work.

## **Responsiveness**

The extent to which the sector is able to respond to labour market imperatives is considered to be a significant element of national development. If elements within the sector are able to provide skills for use by employers or to enable self-employment for the pre- or unemployed, it would be considered responsive to national development imperatives.

### *Learner groups*

The various learner groups to which the sector is responsive suggests a responsiveness to a large variety of cohorts not responded to by public sector education and training provision.

Indeed, the large variety of learner groups served by this sector represents a defining feature of provision. While some elements of the sector respond to the traditional post-school, pre-employed learner group, catered for in the public system, there are other elements that are not catered for by any government institution. These include corporate level training aimed at staff development and customer needs. The

different learner types to which the sector responds signals an important responsive mechanism.

#### *Labour market and employment outcomes*

Private providers have been considered much more aware of the needs of the labour market than are their public counterparts. Certainly the range of marketing messages provided by private providers suggests that it is better in terms of the employment outcomes that it offers. While data in this study has revealed that this range of marketing material suggests a closer articulation with the formal labour market, there has been little in the way of hard evidence to suggest that private providers are able to better prepare for or secure opportunities in the labour market. Thus for the pre- and unemployed, the prospects of finding employment are not inevitably enhanced by obtaining skills through the private education and training sector. The advantage offered by private providers is the short-term skilling opportunities in specific occupations where skills shortages are evident, that might well serve to secure employment. Thus courses in call centre operations might well serve to make individuals aware of requirements of the sector. The uptake of graduates of these short courses and the impact of these skills provided has not, however, been determined and will be a valuable starting point for future impact research.

There was evidence that the part-time teaching staff were selected on the basis of their networking capacities and awareness of the industry from which they emerged. The extent to which these factors have been known to improve employment opportunities has not been determined.

The ability of the sector to provide more opportunities for employment has not, therefore, been empirically evaluated. Private providers, like public providers, did not have any follow-up mechanisms and typically did not have specialist placement or career guidance opportunities which learners could access, especially for the pre-employed or unemployed sectors, who are the most in need of these.

### **Receptiveness**

As noted in this work, the notion of receptiveness incorporates imperatives of access, redress and equity. The importance of quality has also been emphasised.

### *Learner and staff composition*

In general, there is evidence that the sector is receptive to national development prerogatives. The composition of the sector, both in terms of staff and learners, shows a sector that is reflective of the national population demographics. Evidence points to a degree of responsiveness to demographic diversity, considered to represent one of key national post-Apartheid challenges. The sector is particularly diverse with respect to participants, location and functioning. Staffing is also racially diverse, with a considerable part-time employment pattern making up the bulk of employment in the sector.

### *Learner needs*

Private providers tend to structure their operations around the needs of learners. This is necessary if they are to sustain provision. Responding to particular learner types represents an important distinguishing component of provision. Providers responding to the needs of the pre- and un-employed learner group provide programming flexibility in terms of delivery times and programming structure, which enables learners to weave in and out of the education and training system as necessary. For the corporate client, specially tailored programmes, delivered at convenient times and venues, enable those catering to this sector to sustain provision. Often providers that respond to this group do not need a fixed learning space, which reflect their flexibility in provision and is evidence of their responsiveness to this client group.

### *Provisioning*

Some providers in this sector make available education and training programmes not presented elsewhere. The state-sponsored system is not geared to providing for the lifelong needs of both employed and unemployed learners. This provision form, therefore, allows for skilling that would not otherwise be available. The provision of leisure and lifelong adult learning programmes represent an indispensable component of provision in this sector, as does training required for some quite pressing social imperatives, e.g. training related to HIV/AIDS awareness and its treatment. Similarly, there are some providers who specifically respond to programming areas that are not addressed in other sectors as in the provision of lifelong 'non-labour market' needs including leisure and life skills, e.g., birding,

swimming, snorkelling, language and so forth. Although JIPSA has given some attention to 'adult education', the interpretation of the composition of this sector is unclear.

#### *Skill relevance*

Clearly the central claim of private providers is that either the skills or the certification that accompanies them will be useful. Programmes delivered by private providers, therefore, are expected to deliver on skill needs immediately and functionally. The reality of this claim has, however, not been assessed in this work. Indeed, the lack of mechanisms to assess this aspect indicates that this is more a result of effective marketing than effective skilling.

#### *Provision form*

The limited use of written forms of assessment in parts of the sector makes it a non-threatening provision form, which enables the focus on practical hands-on skills development, rather than theoretical skilling.

In terms of course duration, shorter courses provided the formulae for convenient skilling. There is a sense that in providing skilling over a shorter time than their public counterparts, as is the characteristic practice in the corporate sector, it represents an effective and efficient means by which to resolve short-term skill deficiencies. The lack of written or verbal assessment, either internally or externally moderated, makes the quality of these programmes courses difficult to gauge. Impact assessments of training are rarely, if ever, undertaken.

Moreover, the way in which these courses are appraised by the commissioning agency by means of 'satisfaction surveys' represents an inadequate measure of impact or learning. For the commissioning agency, it was sufficient that there were no delivery complaints, while the provider focussed on process issues, e.g. refreshments, venue and expertise of the course facilitator and general experiences with the course. In addition, the certification of these courses in terms of 'attendance' also gives prominence to process, with impact assumed by presence.

#### *Purpose*

The purpose to which skills developed are to be put is particularly diverse. While labour market outcomes are the predominant purpose of offerings for the pre- and

un-employed groups; for the employed learner group, skilling objectives include particular company-specific training for staff and customers. The diverse needs served by elements in the private FET sector in South Africa makes this an important component of education and training provision not offered elsewhere.

#### *Access and flexibility*

The sector is able to respond quite effectively to the traditional learner 'market' of the public colleges. Reasons include the location, delivery and programme flexibility allowed by private FET institutions. Premises of providers are conveniently located in malls and near bus and train depots within easy reach of their learner groups. Private providers also ensure flexible delivery hours which enable access.

Access is also realised by some quite novel admission requirements. While school certification is important, most providers considered criteria other than schooling certification, including work experience and RPL. In addition, elements in the sector also respond to the pre- and unemployed learner group, and they need to ensure that costs are not prohibitive. Importantly, private provision was not found to be more expensive than public provision. The additional advantage offered by the sector, of easing out and back into the education and training system, allowed a degree of flexibility not found in full time public provision forms.

For employed learners, the advantage of having the opportunity of being provided with short bursts of skills at convenient moments in ones career appears to work well for lifelong learning purposes. It also allows learners to be provided with skills at times that are convenient.

The ease of access, more accessible admission processes and sometimes similar or lower costs by private providers make this a more appropriate education and training form than do public providers.

#### *Funding*

While public providers need the subsidy to deliver to their primary target market, the socially excluded, private providers need to ensure that quality is secured for the private fee-paying sector. Both sectors are enabled, therefore, to provide quality of the highest level in light of the differing primary resource basis. Where resources are inadequate, the role of the state is to serve as a mediating mechanism. The

establishment of a regulatory mechanism for the private sector can do this quite effectively, together with implementation of appropriate performance measures for public institutions. It would, for this reason, not be appropriate for the funding model to be reviewed. Government institutions should still be subsidised so that they would be able to respond to the socially excluded as their primary target market, while private providers remain self-funding, and ensure that they are able to secure training from the private corporate sector and those likely to afford provision. Indeed the nature of the private sector is such that it has been known to re-invent itself quite remarkably in terms of market demand. It needs to be flexible and responsive to both its target learner market as well as the current formal labour market needs. Although, the effectiveness of the short-term training provided at these private institutions are invariably dependent on the quality of education prior to their coming to these institutions. In addition, the ability of this sector to slot learners into an appropriate level also allows for some degree of access not found in public institutions.

#### *Regulation reconsidered*

The issue of regulation has taken centre stage recently with the adoption of the FET College Bill (RSA 2006a) and the reiteration of provisions related to regulation in the FET Act (RSA 1998a). Implementation requires that the sector be brought under government oversight. Whilst the responsibility of the state in co-ordinating provision and ensuring articulation with other state and non-state education and training provision is important, this work has revealed the need for circumspection about the manner in which regulations need to be implemented.

The very different provider types and their varied forms suggest that some providers require much more support and development than others. Thus those providers that respond to the same learner group as the public sector, i.e. the pre-employed, require a greater degree of oversight than others who are already quite effectively 'regulated' by the market in various forms. Those providers who cater to the corporate sector have adequate checks and balances in place to ensure quality delivery including as a minimum contractually binding agreements, which ensure adequate delivery. These service-level agreements, which exist for the private corporate sector, are, unfortunately not present for those desperate pre-employed school-leavers who seek occupationally specific training and who public colleges are

not able to absorb for various reasons. It is this learner cohort that requires most attention by regulatory authorities.

Paradoxically, it is also this kind of provider sector that is most unlikely to afford the costs that regulation might bring, since they respond to the socially excluded and are required to keep costs low. It is these providers that are most in need of post-school education and training to escape from the abject poverty and unemployment which their learners are likely to experience.

In extreme circumstances, these providers are most vulnerable to market failure, which results in overnight abrupt closure, reinforcing their 'fly by night' status. It is therefore necessary for attention to be paid to this kind of provider, who responds meaningfully to those most in need of it in terms of South Africa's national development responsibility.

## Conclusion

The findings in this work have suggested that the private TVET providers in South Africa are responsive and receptive to economic and social development imperatives as key elements of the national development challenge in South Africa. The World Bank paper on TVET (1991) emphasised the need to expand private provision for a number of reasons which included:

- Supplementing government limited resources
- Increasing efficiency and innovation, as a result of "profitability constraints" of the public sector
- Broadening access
- More effectively responding to the training requirements of high-growth markets

*(adapted World Bank 1991)*

This work has been able to confirm at some level the way the private sector has been able to complement public provision in South Africa. The sector can ideally be considered an alternative, rather than a substitute for public provision. In this regard, it is *different* in terms of its more immediate and short-term role as an education and training provider. Judgements about efficiency can only be made in a context where the same programmes are delivered with the very same outcomes using similar resources. This has not been assessed in this work. The issue points

importantly to further work that needs to be undertaken in comparative terms across the sectors. This work has, however, indicated that it is better to think of both sectors positively as contributors to national development rather than focusing on the private as a solution to the ills of the public.

This convergence between public and private suggests a joint co-operative undertaking towards shared national objectives, albeit within a competitive context. Competition is understood as mutually beneficial by enabling improved service and delivery, be it in the private or the public domain. In the same way, as the existence of the private sector provides a mirror for the public to evaluate its effectiveness, so the public serves as a yardstick by which to measure that of the private providers.

This study points to the possibility of the need for an expansion of the agenda of the public colleges to respond to the lifelong needs of adults. Evidence in this study points out that the differences between public and private FET institutions can be described in terms not only of who they provide the services to (i.e. their learners), but also of the kind of programmes provided to suit particular purposes. For instance, the current focus of public institutions on post-school youth is in sharp contrast to that of the private providers with their emphasis on employed learners.



# Chapter 12

## CONCLUSION

The role of private Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) on national development is contested. On the one hand, the idea that non-state provision forms can be responsive to a public-purpose agenda appears to be implausible, while on the other hand, the very notion of a societal organ not responsive to national development imperatives is clearly inconceivable in a post-apartheid South African context.

In education, the TVET sector especially, is not associated with an equity agenda. Part of the explanation might be linked to the perception that TVET is already the most market- and economy-oriented part of the education system and thus, not a place to expect pro-equity developments. However, just as part of the argument for a more nuanced view of private schooling arises out of the weaknesses of public provision; so scepticism about the pro-equity nature of private TVET, understood as incorporating both the for-profit, non-profit and in-house (in company) education and training sectors, needs to be tempered by a widespread discourse about the limited pro-equity performance of public VET.

The work is undertaken in a context where there is relative neglect of the study and research into intermediate-level skills provision in general, referred to as the further education and training college sector in South Africa. In a context where considerable attention is focused on basic education, driven by the *Education for All* (EFA) movement and knowledge-driven economic agenda of higher education in a globalised world, the attention to intermediate skills is relegated to the periphery (McGrath 2007). In South Africa though, the attention to skills development in a context of the national development prerogatives, suggests that attention to skills at this level is particularly crucial.

This chapter sums up this thesis by reviewing its central suppositions. It begins by identifying the research questions and methods used. It then reviews the conceptual

categories used to understand key features of the sector. The contribution of this work to academic policy debates is then assessed and possibilities for future research identified. The implications for state policy within the context of globalisation are also reconsidered.

## **Research aims**

In examining the role of private technical and vocational education and training in South Africa, this study provided insight into the South African private TVET sector and its contribution to the country's national development challenges. It does this by identifying the extent to which the sector has been able to respond to labour market imperatives, understood as responsiveness, and assess the extent to which the sector is able to contribute to national imperatives of redress, equity and access, understood as receptiveness. The extent of this contribution was based on an assessment of participants, form and context of provision.

This study has, therefore, provided much needed information about the private TVET education and training provision by examining the ways in which providers understand their role as education and training providers. By exploring provision patterns in a highly variegated landscape in terms of the perceived mandate of providers, the study ensured that practices were evaluated in light of practices that pertain in the sector.

## **Research methods**

Fieldwork conducted on the private FET sector in the period 2003 and 2005 was used as the empirical basis for this work. Fieldwork involved both a quantitative and qualitative assessments of the sector (see Akoojee, 2003 & 2005). The use of multiple methods was used to triangulate data. The initial quantitative analysis drew from a pre-registration call by the national Department of Education in 2002, designed to assess the size and some elements of the sector considered necessary for registration as private FET providers (DoE 2003). A follow-up electronic survey identified the features of context necessary for this study. Conducted in the period May to June 2002 under auspices of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), the survey of 864 providers reflected on the DoE database yielded information

regarding provider structure and provision form including, ownership, size, programmes and delivery means.

A qualitative case study undertaken with a sample of 10 providers followed this quantitative assessment. Purposive sampling on a basis of criteria selected nationally which incorporated location (extent of rurality), provider size in terms of student numbers, study programmes offered, and associated provision including extent of multiplicity of sites. The case studies undertaken nationally provided the basis for triangulating data determined quantitatively, both from the Department of Education database of providers and the HSRC electronic survey. Fieldworkers undertook visits in May and June 2003.

### **The conceptual framework**

The categories used for analysis in this thesis involved notions of ‘responsiveness’ and ‘receptiveness’. ‘Responsiveness’ refers to the sector’s alignment with market demand, while ‘receptiveness’ examines the alignment with the South African developmental goals of equity, redress and access. The distinction is, however, made with a cautionary warning that these priorities are not at odds with each other. The extent to which they need to be mutually reinforcing will reflect the extent of their effectiveness in responding to national development prerogatives. It is contended that both of these imperatives need to be served to provide the basis for national development to be accommodated. This conceptual lens enabled an analysis of provision patterns and provided the basis for this study.

Responsiveness and receptiveness are considered significant elements for public and private TVET provision. The need for TVET providers to become more responsive is reflected in academic literature of the past 15 or so years (cf. Cosser *et al.* 2003; Johanson & Adams 2004; MacAllum, Yoder & Poliakoff 2004). The drive for responsiveness comes from outside colleges and the sector, having its roots in the far larger economic and ideological shifts of the past quarter century.

Thus, public TVET providers need to become more responsive to various elements; to a new political economy; to the need for new sources of funding; to the necessity of new relationships with employers; and to the requirements of supporting employability for new cohorts of learners. In spite of the potential breadth of the

notion, responsiveness has become associated with the need to make colleges much more effective and relevant in their response to the labour market. This has resulted at least partially, in unintended under-emphasis of the wider needs of learners, staff and communities - referred to as receptiveness in this work.

The notion of receptiveness is not new. Gravatt and Silver (2000) have stressed that colleges need to challenge this 'responsiveness' rhetoric by remembering that they are nothing without their students and that these students are part of the families and communities, "which define their experience, education and identity" (p.127). In the South African context, appeals to ensure that this wider interpretation is taken seriously have been made (McGrath, 2003a and b; Unwin, 2003), but have clearly not been successful. This was most clearly evident at a recent national FET conference where it was evident that the term responsiveness was far too steeped in the discourse of the labour market to take account of this expanded notion of receptiveness. The difficulty with 'expanding' an existing term, especially one so firmly rooted in popular discourse, is that traditional notions stubbornly persist. In this regard, the term 'receptiveness' is used to incorporate the 'missing' priorities to which the TVET sector needs to be much more deliberately aligned to achieve national development goals. The term incorporates the social development element of those priorities and foregrounds the needs, identified in Unwin (2003), as those of staff, students, families and communities.

While labour market responsiveness might arguably represent a significant element in TVET provision, its dominant role in access, redress and equity considerations is critical to achieving socio-economic transformation in South Africa.

## **Main findings**

The thesis has argued for a nuanced perspective on the role of private TVET in South Africa. The finding that the private post-school further education and training sector is not a homogenous one is particularly useful and suggests the need for a typology based on characteristic features. The typology proposed based on learner categories, provider types and programme offerings provides the basis for an understanding of a sector associated with considerable diversity. Understanding that providers respond to particular client groups including the pre- and unemployed and employed sectors and sometimes a combination of these, is an important

starting point for understanding the sector. This typological category proposed complements conventional provider types associated with vocational skills and level-specific specialisation.

With respect to provider types, each of the provider groups is responsive to specialist niche client markets, although some overlaps exist. Larger multi providers cater to the pre- or un-employed and the self-paying employed learner group (the 'walk-in' client sector). The smaller premises-based, single owner type undertaking caters for the more cost-aware pre- and unemployed client. Consultants respond to the corporate market who need specialist courses provided at times and venues suited to their needs. This category of provider does not need fixed premises from which to operate.

Evidence presented in this work indicates that the private TVET sector or significant elements of it are indeed responsive and receptive to national development as understood in the South African context.

With respect to responsiveness, the employer-led nature of private provision ties it to the immediate short-term needs of employers. This demand-led nature of training provides the basis for the focus on short-course provision. It is both necessary and important that the gap of on-the-job training, necessary for increasing (or even sustaining) productivity is filled. Flexible provision forms both in terms of time and venue represent critical features of responsiveness to this sector.

The consideration of receptiveness is advanced by the understanding that the sector responding to the needs of those unwilling to, or unable to be, catered for by the public further education and training college sector. An analysis of demographic details of the sector provides a picture of a predominant African enrolment pattern clearly representative of the South African population. This is a feature that even public providers have to grapple with a post-apartheid context, with even success.

Financial factors are also less exclusionary than was anticipated. Fees are not less expensive than public colleges and the flexible fee-structure and varied payment forms, tailored to the needs of particular learner groups means that the sector is reasonably inclusive from the financial perspective. This feature explains the far more diverse socio-economic learner profile.

A brief assessment of each of the learner group types is identified.

For pre- and unemployed learners, the flexible programme structure and the ability of learners to weave in and out of the system and provides the basis for its 'competitive advantage' as compared to the public education and training counterpart. The advantage of the sector to allow continuation of learning in a context of changed life circumstances makes the sector a powerfully accessible. The ability, therefore, to respond to the lifelong learning needs of adults in South Africa provides the means for skills development in a context of redress. In this regard, the receptiveness of the sector to more mature learners outside of the labour market, especially those left out of the loop of public provision forms, provides an important basis for the sector to cater for a wider age-specific and level-specific learner component than is currently being served by public provision forms. The interests of national development appear, therefore, to be served by this complementary education and training provision form.

For employed learners especially, the sector is able to respond to the short-term demand-led imperative of the corporate sector. By ensuring that courses are designed to fit the particular skill purpose of the client, there is a clearly evident responsiveness to client needs in terms of time, space and programme structure, not offered elsewhere in the education and training system.

In addition to the corporate funded learner, this learner type is characterised by those self-paying learners in search of alternate career opportunities. In search of lifelong learning needs, driven by either self-employment or alternative career opportunities, these learners represent an important component of provision. Learners funded by employers are essentially directed at learning opportunities to suit employer needs, while another category of learner provides support to the product of the company. . Another category of learning is directed at customer needs, where the business enterprise. This category provides training as part of their initial and continuing product support, characteristically found in computer software and hardware enterprises.

Provider types include those consultant-type providers and the institutional providers, with the latter distinguished by those multi-providers (with multiple programme and sites structures) and specialist providers, associated with a singular programme purpose and provider identity.

Consultant providers provide education and training services companies, while multi-providers cater for the needs of those pre- and unemployed and self-paying employed learners. This group, referred to as ‘walk-ins’, to distinguish them from the company-solicited learner, are generally self-paying, with fee structures conveniently structured to cater for their needs.

The new typology proposed in this work, shows a sector characterised by significant diversity in provision types and forms. It identifies primary and secondary typological categories that enable an understanding of the kinds of provision associated with private post-school FET provision in South Africa. Primary categories include those of learner, client and provider type, while secondary categories include those of provider size, location, function and programmes.

### **Implications of this research**

The following are some of the implications of this research.

First, attention to responsiveness and receptiveness considerations does not imply that quality considerations are entirely in place. There is evidence to suggest that some providers responding to the less-advantaged sectors, because of their need to ensure sustainability, are less rigorous about quality than are their counterparts who respond to the employed sector.

Second, the study has important implications for the further development of skills in the country, especially the provision of skills by public FET colleges. Important lessons can be learnt by colleges in their skills development responsibility by considering the practices of private providers.

Third, considerations for receptiveness and responsiveness should be mutually complementary. Where necessary, considerations of receptiveness need to be strengthened by a responsiveness agenda. Similarly, responsiveness needs to be mediated by a deliberate attention to a receptiveness agenda.

Fourth, it might not always be necessary for the public or private sector to respond to particular learner components. While there is clearly a need to target client groups in particular sectors, attention to varied client groups strengthens provision. Thus, while it is clearly necessary for public colleges to respond more deliberately to traditionally excluded categories of learners, this should not be done to the neglect

of other learner components. In the same way, the needs of the corporate sector cannot be left solely to private providers.

Fifth, the notion of responsiveness by private providers to particular labour market imperatives is drawn essentially from experiences of staff and the networks that they bring to their entities. This is an important ingredient that public colleges need to consider in. Attention therefore might need to be paid to staff hiring practices, which appear to be a neglected element in the responsiveness discourse.

Sixth, the study has shown that deliberate attention to marketing of particular education and training 'products' of private providers have important implications for their practices. While marketing might well be antithetical to the notion of education as a public good, for the TVET sector, marketing for improved service delivery and accountability is to be encouraged to enable effective practice (McGrath and Akoojee 2007c *forthcoming*).

### **The contribution of this research**

The thesis contributes to an understanding of private TVET in South Africa by extending the existing typology of the sector to show the diversity of institutional types, modes of delivery and clientele.

In addition to an understanding of a sector, that needs to take cognisance of the varied private forms, the findings in this work have important implications for regulation. Arguing that regulation is necessary, there is a need to understand the varied types of providers and focus on those more vulnerable to market failure. Those providers responding to the corporate sector are, therefore, likely to be less in need of regulation, while those responding to the 'pre-employed' and unemployed sectors are likely to need more support and development. This is necessary because of the sectors tendency to complement public provision forms in ways not undertaken currently.

The contribution of the research, therefore, unpacks the multifaceted ways in which skills development takes place in South Africa. It provides the information necessary to ensure that appropriate synergies can be harnessed in a co-operative manner to respond to national development imperatives.



## **Absences, silences and recommendations for further research**

The following represents key areas for future research in this area.

Developments since this research was conducted could quite easily complement findings contained in this work. Despite the consideration that this work captured the most up-to-date data existent at the time, developments since then are likely to be more accurate about the nature of the sector. The establishment of a regulatory authority within the Department of Education (DoE) and the South African qualifications Authority National Learner Record Data-base (NLRD), means that much more systemic information is now available to expand the analytical framework developed for this thesis. For instance, the NLRD had registered over 4000 'interim registered' private providers operating in the post-school FET sector in 2006. Similarly, headcount enrolments are also likely to be considerably boosted as a result of these information sources. Updating the information and making use of recent improvements in the capabilities of the NLRD to provide ongoing data about the sector can quite effectively be used as a starting point for future research in the sector. The typology developed for this study, together with this updated database, would enhance any future study of skills provision in the country.

An insight into participant experiences has not been the focus of this work. The way in which provision is experienced by different learner groups would benefit those within the sector and provide some insight into effectiveness and impact of the various provision forms. A qualitative study into experiences of learners, in particular provider contexts, would be especially useful.

A 'graduate' tracking study would be especially valuable given the claims that private provision has been considered more effective for labour market outcomes. The post-provision experiences of those pre- and unemployed learners would be an especially useful way of identifying perceived areas of strength and weakness in the sector.

Some perspective on curriculum and programmes in terms of the skills developed by private providers would be a valuable follow-up to this study. This would allow insight into the practices of private providers and the extent of their resonance with labour market practices. In particular the links between providers and employers

could be explored further with a view to narrow education and training practices with national development imperatives.

More comparative work between public and private intermediate-level skills providers needs to be undertaken. This will enable a comparison of best practice and mutual complementarity in the interest of national development.

The ten case studies used to gather information provided an adequate sense of provision patterns. It can clearly, not be used to generalise all provision patterns in the sector. A useful qualitative follow-up of particular provider types might illuminate practices not referred to in this study.

Private education and training provision provides the context for an international education and training provision form. An examination of the practices of these international providers would provide the evidence needed to evaluate their suitability for national development.

While there was no deliberate attempt to conceal or deliberately highlight particular elements of the practices of private providers in this study, the close location of this author, and this work, to a parastatal, means that there is likely to be suspicions of ‘absences and silences’ are likely to prevail. Clearly, the limitations of time and resources within the constraints of an organisation dedicated to commissioned research means that a more qualitative assessment of the sector might yield insights not examined.

### **In closing**

This thesis has sought to break new ground in examining the extent to which private TVET forms are responsive to national development. The central argument contained in this thesis proposes that the sector contributes meaningfully to both poverty reduction and economic growth and thus serves the national interest by responding to both. TVET in South Africa can, therefore, provide an important route of access to skills for many who would otherwise not be able to access such skills elsewhere. The study has important implications for South African skills development in general and the feasibility of public and private skills development forms.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Sampling decision framework (based on HSRC (2002) database of respondents.

PROVINCE		A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	B1	B2	B3	B4	C1	C2	Total
EASTERN CAPE	1	1			2	1	1	1		2			9
FREE STATE	1			1		2	4			1	1		10
GAUTENG		14	4	5	29	13	3	3	3	4	8	1	87
KWAZULU NATAL		14	1	4	11	8	4	4	4	7	6	1	64
LIMPOPO				1	1	2		3		2			9
MPUMALANGA		1		1	1	3	1			1		1	9
NORTH WEST		3			2	3			1	1	1	2	13
NORTHERN CAPE					4	1					1		6
WESTERN CAPE		3	2		11	6		1	2	2	2	2	31
Total	2	36	7	12	61	39	13	12	10	20	19	7	238

A1: Type	=	Large single owner
A2: Type	=	Large franchise or agent/agency
A3: Type	=	Medium or small, franchise or agent/agency
A4: Type	=	Medium, single owner
A5: Type	=	Small, single owner

B1: Type	=	Large NGO
B2: Type	=	Medium sized NGO, multiple discipline and single/multiple sited provider.
B3: Type	=	Medium sized NGO, single discipline and single/multiple site provider
B4: Type	=	Small sized NGO

C1: Type	=	Single sited 'In-house' provider, small, medium and large.
C2: Type	=	Multiple sited 'In-house' provider (All sizes).

### Explanation

#### Category A: For Profit

*Characterisation: For profit single or multiple-owner/ single or multi-disciplinary/franchise or agency.*

- A1:** *A large urban-based multi-disciplinary, multi-site organisation (no particular specialisation). They have a track record of effective marketing (e.g. larger more visible provider with national presence).*
- A2:** *A transnational IT provider with extensive links with 'global' IT muscle-a particular disciplinary specialisation e.g. Microsoft.*
- A3:** *A franchised provider: National in character. No particular disciplinary specialism, but providing courses that are standard and 'packaged' for delivery site. Could be a specific IT provider (possibility of overlap with Category A2)*
- A4:** *Single owner/ single site located in an urban city (possibly a multi-ethnic/racial profile)*
- A5:** *Single owner/ single Site Urban (or peri-urban) lower-socio-economic township based profile (Black)*

#### Category B: Not For-Profit

*Characterisation: Not for profit catering to marginalised communities, rural/impoverished (economic)/ skills deficient/unemployed/ black)*

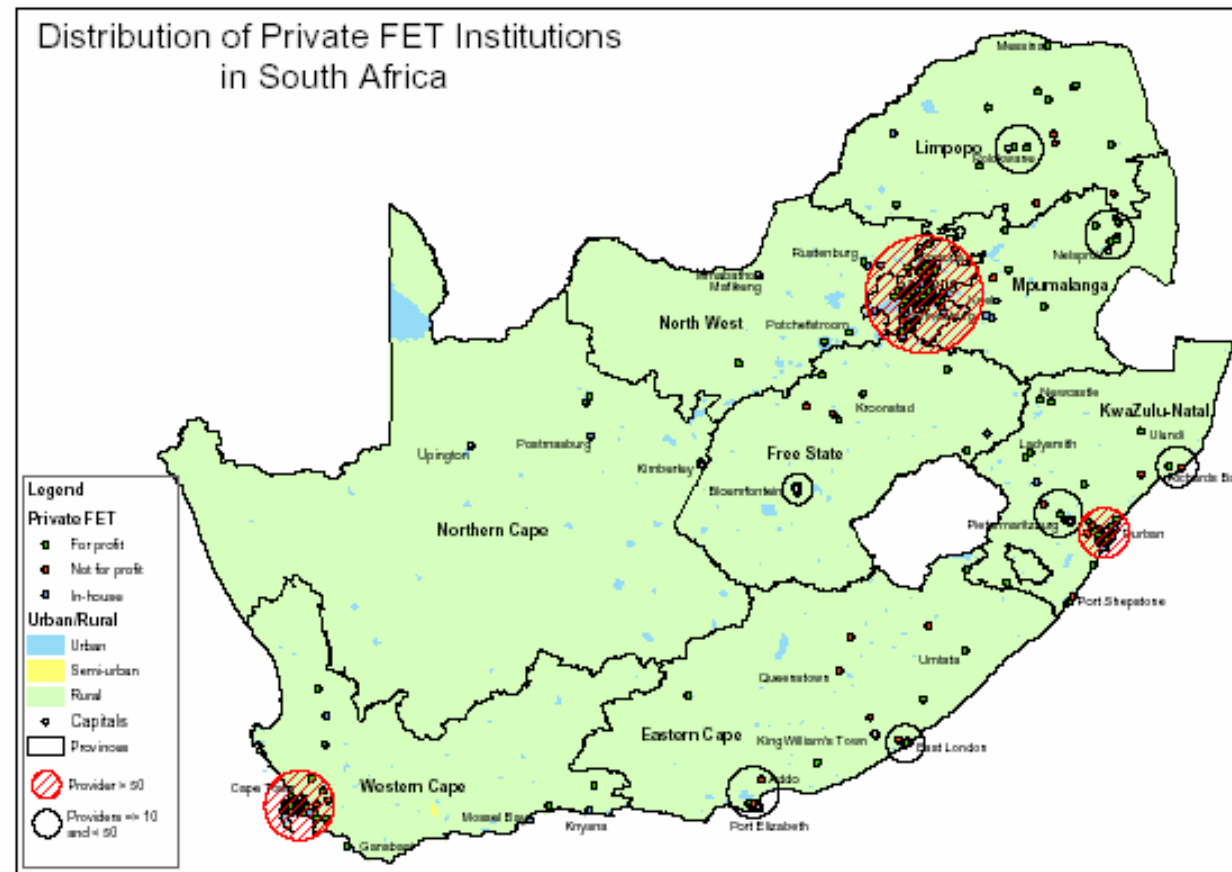
- B1:** A single or multi-site multi disciplinary job creation project possibly skills-based.
- B2:** A single or multi site *international donor inspired project* responding to *rural gender or race other marginalized communities*
- B3** A single or multi site *generic education and training urban project* (preferably not funded by a donor agency but self sustaining, for instance one catering for aids victims or other particular target groups.  
OR
- B4** *Religious Institution*: Possibly also one that has a ‘community focussed’ component.

**Category C: In-house providers**

*Characterisation: Those providers that are based within a company or business. They would essentially serve employees, but would not provide courses outside of the firm*

- C1:** A medium/large **single-site in-company** provider
- C2:** A medium/large single or multi-site **multi-company provider**

Appendix 2: Distribution of Private FET 'institutions' in South Africa<sup>39</sup>



<sup>39</sup> Two core areas were presented in the map:

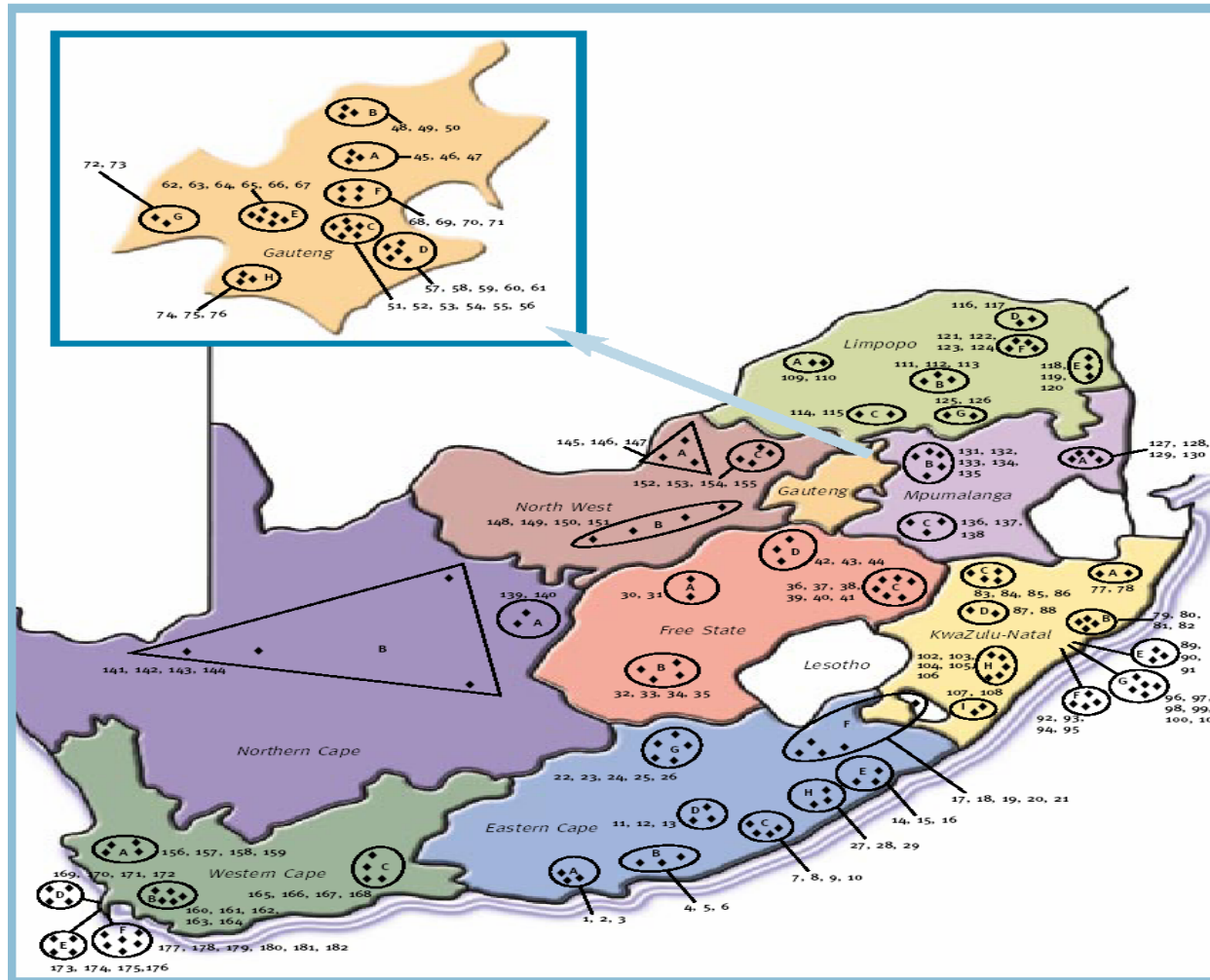
\* The black circle represents a region containing between 10 and 50 private FET providers. Areas include the Nelson Mandela Metropole, East London (Greater Buffalo), Pietermaritzburg, Richards Bay, Nelspruit and Polokwane.

\*\*The red circle with diagonal inner lines represents regions with more than 50 private FET providers, and includes the Greater Peninsula Metropole, the Greater Durban and Gauteng. Gauteng province has been included as a region due to the urban nature of the province.

Source: Akoojee 2005

### Appendix 3: Public FET Colleges: Post merger landscape

Source Powell & Hall 2004



Appendix 4: Grid depicting typology of Private FET providers in South Africa.

		1				2			3	
		Profitability				Purpose			Delivery Mode	
		For Profit		Not For-Profit		Career Orientation	Productivity	Lifelong/Adult Learning	Face to Face	Correspondence
		Single Owner + Partnership/s	Listed companies	NGO	In-House				Online	Postal
Vulnerable ↙ ↘ Market	Client Group									
	1 Post-School /Pre Employed (Youth)	A	XXX			XXX			XXX	
	2 Unemployed (Self-Funded)									
	3 Employed Adults (Self Funded)									
	4 Employees (Company sponsored)									
	5 Corporate (Clients)	E			XXX	XX	XXX	X	XX	

Appendix 4: (Continued)

	5		6			7				8			9			10		
	Provider Location		Programme Specialisation			Certification				Staffing			Assessment			Curriculum Development		
	Institutional	On-site	Specialist	Non-Specific Specialist	Multiple Provider	Certificate	Diploma	Presence	Skill Acquisition	Full Time	Part - Time	In-sourced	Internal	External (Specialist)	Agency	Internal	External (Specialist)	Purchased
Client Group																		
Post-School /Pre Employed (Youth)	XXX		XX	XX	XX		XXX											
Unemployed (Self-Funded)																		
Employed Adults (Self Funded)																		
Employees (Company sponsored)																		
Corporate (Clients)		XXX						XXX	XXX									
	Roll outs																	