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Evaluating the Directorate of Water Development's Graduates Training Programme as a Means of Capacity Building in the Water Sector: A Case Study of Water and Sanitation Development Facility, South Western Branch

The study was directed by the topic; evaluation of graduate training programme as a means to capacity building in the Directorate of Water Development (DWD). The objectives of the study were to determine whether the training standards influence the quality of personnel; to investigate whether the methods of training fresh graduates influence the quality of personnel; to examine the training processes and their effect on the quality of trainees during the training period and; to determine the extent to which the training programme influences the retention of trained fresh graduates in the water sector. The study was designed to conduct an evaluation of the graduate training programme in the Directorate of Water Development but focusing on the Water and Sanitation Development Facility South Western Branch (WSDF-SWB) as a case study. The findings of the study are, therefore, based on the information received from former graduate trainees, their current employers and the trainers from the WSDF-SWB. The evaluation is covering the training periods 2000 to 2008. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. The data were collected using self-administered questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. Data analysis was done using excel sheets and descriptive statistics were used to compute output in form of frequency indices and their measures. Forty-seven (47) of the fifty (50) targeted former graduate trainees responded and, therefore, the findings are based on the views and ideas of 47 former graduate trainee respondents, 10 employers and 5 trainers. Ethical standards were respected in this study. The study was conducted in a conducive environment. The study covered only those trained under the SWTWS I, II & III and their current employers and trainers (WSDF-SW staff). The significant point among the findings is that the graduate training programme is generally appreciated by all stakeholders involved in the research. Of the 65 trainees that were recruited from 2000 to 2008, 72.3% were employed in the water sector which serves the intent for the formulation of the programme to build capacity within the sector. The performance of the former trainees at their current work places was generally rated well by their employers. Although the graduate training programme conducted by the Water and Sanitation Development Facility-South Western was rated good, findings show that there are important gaps in the training standards, processes and methods that need redress. There is need to streamline the training standards, processes and methods for effective implementation and excellent results. For effective training, the training organisation needs to set and formulate clear objectives, use clear and formal recruitment and selection procedures, employ proper training methods and aids and use trainers that are qualified and knowledgeable. Regular assessment of the trainees is important and feedback from the assessment is paramount. The graduate training programme has remarkably contributed to the government's strategic plan of building capacity in the water sector. A significant number of skilled and knowledgeable human resources have been released in the water sector market. It is, therefore, recommended that similar training be started in other sectors so that capacity gaps are minimised.

Key words: Capacity, Water, Sanitation