

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN CAPE

Creating an enabling learning environment at work
-A critical evaluation of the implementation of Workplace Skills Plan objectives-



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UNIVERSITY *of the*
RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
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KEY WORDS

Barriers to participation, learning environment, workplace learning, skills development, learning at work, learning organisation, workplace skills plan; employment equity, theories of participation, resistance to change.

ABSTRACT

This main aim of this research project is to help Rubber Wheels create an enabling learning environment. Factors motivating or deterring participation in learning and training at work are explored, and possible solutions recommended.

The study is therefore a critical evaluation of the implementation of Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) objectives in the Technical division of Rubber Wheels' City Deep depot.

Central to the study is the question: *What are the barriers to the successful implementation of the Workplace Skills Plans for 2001/2, 2002/2003, and how these (barriers) have impacted employment equity targets of the Rubber Wheels' City Deep, technical division.*

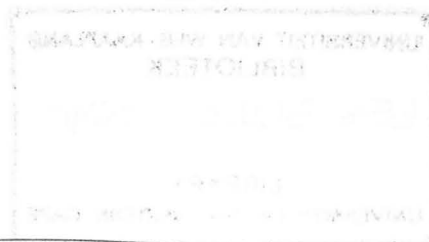
The findings made point to shortcomings in the implementation of the WSP objectives. Institutional, informational, and dispositional barriers are identified as possible contributors to the lack of WSP implementation, as well as the failure in meeting employment equity targets.

The study was motivated by the need of making learning a way of life at work in line with the national agenda of skills development. South African companies are legally required to make a qualitative contribution to the development of the South African community skills-base, especially those who were socially excluded. Rubber Wheels, as a government owned company, is expected to be in the forefront of bringing that dream into fruition.

In order to give perspective and context to the research, the study taps into the wealth of contemporary literature on workplace learning, adult education, learning organization and organisational change. Literature review places special emphasis on barriers to participation, inhibitors to becoming a learning organization and resistance to organisational change.

The research has adopted a qualitative approach to obtain and analyse data.

It is envisaged that the study would not only make visible the barriers associated with the implementation of learning and training at work, but would also contribute positively to the current debate on the successful implementation of the National Skills Development Strategy.



DECLARATION

I certify that the research project entitled

*Creating an enabling learning environment
- A critical evaluation of the implementation of Workplace Skills Plan -*

submitted for the degree of

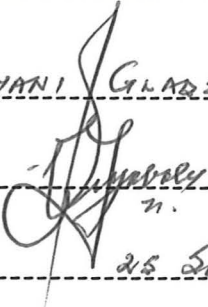
Master of Education

is the result of my own work and that where reference is made to the
work of others, due acknowledgement is given.

I also certify that any material in the research project, which has been
accepted for a degree or diploma by any other university or institution is
identified in the text.

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Full Name: VUYANI GLADSTONE NYOBONE

Signed: 

Date: 25 SEPTEMBER 2003.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Key words	i
Abstract	ii
Declaration	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Glossary & Acronyms	v
	
Introduction	1
Literature Review	7
Research Design and Methodology	19
Research Findings and Analysis	23
Conclusion and Recommendations	43
References & Appendices	47

GLOSSARY & ACRONYMS

1. INTERPRETATION OF KEY TERMS

"Workplace Skills Plan", at each workplace, a Skills Plan must be developed and submitted to the relevant SETA. There are regulations, which outline the format for this Plan. (Department of Labour, 2002:2).

"The Skills Development Facilitator" helps the organisation to develop a Workplace Skills Plan that is in the interests of the company and the workforce. These plans identify learning that is strategic by linking the skills needed to the priorities of the organisation as well as the society more broadly. (Department of Labour, 2002:1)

"The Skills Development Act" was passed in order to develop and improve the skills of people in the workplace by providing a framework for the development of skills of people at work. (Department of Labour, 2002:1)

"Employment Equity" is generally viewed as an organisational change strategy designed to prevent and remedy discrimination by identifying and removing job barriers in employment policies and practices in the culture of an organization, as well as improving the numerical representation and occupational distribution of designated groups (Thomas & Robertshaw 1999: 4).

"Workplace Learning", is that learning which derives its purpose from the context of employment. (McIntyre 2000:2)

"Learning Organisations", are those that have in place systems, mechanisms and processes that are used to continually enhance their capabilities and those who work with it or for it, to achieve sustainable objectives - for themselves and the communities in which they practice (Senge 1990:3)

2. ACRONYMS



AETS	Adult Education and Training Survey
EEA	Employment Equity Act
HRD	Human Resource Development
LO	Learning Organisation
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
OD	Organisational Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SA	South Africa
SDA	Skills Development Act
SDF	Skills Development Facilitator
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority Administers education and training within a particular industry sector with different chambers for specific interests.
WSP	Workplace Skills Plan. A yearly plan for the development of skills found to be lacking in an organisation. The identified training priorities and programmes must be in line with the Business imperatives. WSP must be approved by the SETA.

INTRODUCTION

1. AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The main aim of this study is to assist a company (which shall for purposes of this study be referred to as "Rubber Wheels"), to create an enabling learning environment. Factors motivating and deterring participation in learning and training are explored and possible solutions are recommended.

The study is therefore a critical evaluation of the implementation of Workplace Skills Plan (WSP), at Rubber Wheels' City Deep, Technical division. The specific question the study attempts to investigate is: What were the barriers to the successful implementation of the Workplace Skills Plans for 2001/2, 2002/3, and how these (barriers) have impacted employment equity targets of the Rubber Wheels' City Deep, technical division.

The findings will help Rubber Wheels to devise effective strategies for the implementation of learning and skills development, as well as offer solutions to the perceived lack of successful implementation of the WSP objectives, particularly the redress of past gender and racial imbalances, necessary for achieving Employment Equity (EE) targets.

The study also, in a small way, contribute to the current debate, within public and private sectors, on whether the national policy framework on "skills for productive citizenship for all", is achieving its intended

goal of "making every business a centre of learning" through "the quiet revolution" of skills development (Mdladlana 2003:3,5).

In summary therefore, the study provides a lens that clarifies why WSP objectives' implementation is not effective, a compass to guide the effective implementation of the WSP and a scale to weigh the impact of workplace skills development on employment equity targets.

2. RATIONALE

Since the current democratic government took over from the previous apartheid regime in 1994, it has introduced a number of workplace reforms. Amongst these, are reforms relating to skills development and employment equity. The intention of both these legislation processes is similar in that they are striving for the social inclusion of those who were discriminated against, under the apartheid rule.

The purpose of the skills development strategy, as stated in the Skills Development Levies Act, is: "To provide an institutional framework to devise and implement national, sector and workplace strategies to develop and improve the skills of the South African workforce..."

(SA Government, 1998:1).

The Act is therefore seeking to encourage employers to use the workplace as an active learning environment, by promoting learning as a way of life at work.

The aim of the Employment Equity Act (EEA), on the other hand, is:

"To achieve equity in the workplace by:

- (a) promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination; and
- (b) implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce"

(SA Government, 1998:6)

The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS), which was launched by the Minister of Labour, Mr M Mdladlana, in February 2001, sets the vision, mission, objectives and specific targets that the skills development project ought to achieve by 2005.

The mission of the NSDS is stated as: "to equip South Africa with skills to succeed in the global market and to offer opportunities to individuals and communities for self-advancement to enable them to play a productive role in society" (Department of Labour, 2002:3)

The NSDS, relies mainly on individual employers, workers and community members for the ultimate implementation of the strategy, with the help of Sector Education Training Authorities (SETAs). SETAs are of the view that they 'can make people more employable, but have to make sure that the economy is ready to absorb their skills'.

It is therefore obvious that the South African government has identified workplace learning as a strategic priority in its campaign to

develop a competitive economy and to promote social inclusion of the previously disadvantaged groups. Through the SDA, EEA and NSDS, a policy framework has been laid down for the public and private sector role players to align their policies, as well as create a workplace where "learning is a way of life". Consequently skills development has become a key national issue in the drive of making South Africa competitive in the global market. This is a vision that is generally supported by all sectors of the South African society - labour, business, civil society and institutions of higher learning.

Companies do not disagree with these government initiatives, they presumably understand that the workplace is changing rapidly and that, to keep pace, their employees must continually acquire new skills. They (companies) realize that learning will increasingly need to be a lifelong activity. The rapid, unprecedented changes in the workplace require workers to be able to solve problems, work autonomously, make decisions, think creatively and communicate effectively, all of which have implications for learning and training in organisations. The challenge for companies is to transform legislation into an opportunity, instead of simply shrugging them off as unnecessary burden.

A recent survey, conducted by Cutting Edge, on the implementation of the Skills Development and Employment Equity, however, indicates that there is minimal progress towards meeting the national goals, as set in the SDA, EEA and NSDS (van Rooyen 2003:1). Many of the government sponsored sectoral training agencies have so far failed to make a meaningful impact on the huge skills backlog. This is a worrying factor

for the government, the labour movement and other organs of civil society.

One of the reasons advanced for this widespread resistance to the government's well-meaning skills development strategy is that "the complexity of the process has brought with it implementation challenges and administrative headaches" (Burton, 2003:2).

When one considers the central role skills development is supposed to play in 'improving the supply of high-quality skills which can be more responsive to societal and economic need', then effective implementation of the national skills development strategy, becomes crucial. There is therefore an urgent need to develop a better understanding of why there is slow progress and resistance with a view to improve the situation and ensure that the set targets are met.

The questions worth exploring are: whether the present workplace environment is accommodative of this 'new wine'; what may be inhibiting employers and workers from ensuring that the desired outcomes are achieved. In short, why are these government reforms not achieving their set purpose? How can the gap between the rhetoric about 'learning as a way of life at work' and the actual implementation of learning interventions at the shop floor level, be narrowed.

In an attempt to respond to this challenge, the study investigates the implementation of the Workplace Skills Plan, within a national road transport and logistics company, trading as Rubber Wheels. Rubber Wheels is a company solely owned by the government and is therefore

ideal as a case study, as it is expected to champion the successful implementation of workplace reforms, as envisaged in the SDA, NSDS and EEA.

The implementation of the WSP, within the City Deep, technical division, is evaluated with a view to establishing factors that facilitate or hinder workplace learning, and the attainment of Employment Equity targets.

3. ASSUMPTIONS

Central to the above questions is the assumption that the WSP, when properly canvassed, communicated and implemented, as stipulated in the Skills Development Act 1998, can play a pivotal role in inculcating a culture of learning at work, as well as in helping the company meet its employment equity targets. Creating an enabling learning environment hinges on implementing effective strategies for workplace learning.

The writer is not oblivious to the fact that there are other factors, that influence learning at work, but for the purposes of this investigation, focus is on skills development processes.

Furthermore, the writer is moving from the premise that, to a greater extent, the national skills development strategy, can help to create a conducive climate, context and environment for learning within a workplace, and its implementation can be a catalyst for growth. This is the challenge, not only for Rubber Wheels, but also for all other sectors in society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organisational development commentators generally agree that, in an era of continuous change, workplace learning forms the cornerstone through which organizations can achieve their short-term and long-term transformation strategies. But they also realize that there are barriers to the successful implementation of learning and training in the workplace. This study therefore seeks to surface some of the barriers, so as to help create an enabling learning environment at work.

The study draws from critical theory on workplace learning, adult education, research into learning organisations and change management. The barriers to participation in learning at work can be interpreted as obstacles to becoming a "learning organisation", which could also be manifestations of resistance to change. Workplace learning is seen as a catalyst to individual and organisational change, as it helps to eliminate barriers and resistance to change.

"Critical theory", explains Schied, "is based on a value orientation that is focused on the objectives of emancipation, empowerment, and the transformation of social inequalities and injustices" (2001:79). This value orientation influences what is chosen to be studied and what type of questions are asked.

As adult learning theories are a first recourse for understanding the significance of learning at work, as well as the issue of adult learner participation, it is necessary that we explore some of the factors that promote or inhibit adults from participating in learning.

In her seminal work, Cross (1981:97-108), classifies obstacles to participation into three categories:

- a. *Situational barriers* - arise because of the individual's life situation. The examples given are those of job commitment, home responsibility, lack of child care and money, transport problems;
- b. *Institutional barriers* - include location, red tape, course schedule, entry requirements, practices and procedures that hinder learning;
- c. *Dispositional barriers* - are attributed to factors, such as self-esteem, opinions of others, past experiences, values, attitudes, dispositions and beliefs towards learning.

Aiken et al (2001) in their study on factors motivating or hindering participation of black women in nursing education, use the same classification, substituting "dispositional" with "psychological". Their findings were that factors motivating black women were mainly "intrapersonal and cultural". They describe "intrapersonal" as "personal characteristics and beliefs, which included a belief in God and a sense of determination that was culturally based" (2001:311). What energised and sustained black women's participation therefore was their inner spiritual reservoir. The "cultural" factors were externally influenced, and "included mobility and previous nursing experiences" (2001:311).

The factors that discouraged participation were grouped into two areas, namely: the experience of being the 'other' and the culture of racism.

"The Otherness" explain Aiken et al, "can be described as a constant psychological awareness that shadows Black and non-Black exchanges, despite the circumstances of the situation. The culture of racism describes an oppressive system in which the women were discriminated against or disadvantaged either implicitly or explicitly" (2001:313).

Aiken et al criticism of other research literature on adult participation is that it concentrates on the experiences of white, middle class and uses that as normative, without due cognisance of other different experiences.

The above study findings are supported by Kjell Rubenson (2001). He discovered that the Adult Education and Training Survey (AETS) analysis indicated that Canadians were more inclined to participate in training for job or career related purposes, than for personal reasons. Institutional barriers were therefore more prominent than situational barriers in his research.

The value of Rubenson's study however is its challenge to the way the standard institutional and situational barriers are understood and interpreted, as there may be unspoken reasons behind the verbalised reasons. Hence he argues that the standard barriers should not be taken at face value, as they are 'subjective' and often neglect the influence of structural factors, the 'objective world'. He contends that, issues of fear of failure; employers not valuing training; lack of basic education training and issues of control, must be seriously considered. Rubenson places considerable emphasis on the role of reference groups in shaping attitudes. If for example, fellow workers place a negative value on

learning at work, then individual's view may be negative and participation unlikely.

Rubenson concludes that: "Knowledge about how the individual interprets the world cannot by itself give an understanding of barriers and behaviour. Only when we also include structural factors and analyse the interaction between them and the individual conceptual apparatus does the interpretation become possible" (2001:30).

Merriam et al (1991) give a sociological perspective to the debate as they contend that adult learners may well be constrained by social factors, of which they may be unaware, hence "sociological correlations" are important. "Thus", argue Merriam et al, "the middle-class found in all studies of participation can be explained by the idea that adult education is organised by the middle class and the presentation of knowledge is middle-class both in language and in content" (Merriam et al, 1991:93). The argument advanced by Merriam et al is that the people's decisions to participate are determined more by their position in society and the social experiences that have shaped their lives, than by their needs and motives.

Although Aiken et al study did not make findings regarding "informational barriers" (Darkewald & Merriam, 1982:121) and 'political barriers', other research has found these to be playing a major role.

Darkewald & Merriam define "information barriers" as institutional failure in communicating information on learning opportunities, and the

failure of many adults, particularly the least educated and poorest, to seek out or use information that is available.

Alvin Toffler (1990) supports this view, albeit from a different angle. He suggests that the 'digital divide' is widening the gap between knowledge "haves" and knowledge "have-nots". He warns that: "Whatever gulf separates the rich from the poor, an even greater chasm separates the armed from the unarmed and the ignorant from the educated. Today, in the fast-changing, affluent nations, despite all inequities of income and wealth, the coming struggle for power will increasingly turn into a struggle over the distribution and access to knowledge" (1990:14).

Peter Kearns and George Papadopoulos, (2000) confirm this view. In their report on their investigation of five OECD countries, they observed that there was an increased participation in training among: employed adults compared to those who are not economically active; adults with higher level of education qualifications compared to those with lower educational attainments; younger adults compared to older adults; employees of large organisations compared to those in small organisation.

They also raised questions about who participated and who benefited in education and training, and how, through learning, the social exclusion of the disadvantaged groups could be overcome. They concluded that some of the barriers were institutional as they were mainly related to access to education and training opportunities, as well as lack of incentives.

Kearns and Papadopoulos reason that, in order for companies to keep pace with market forces and economic changes, there needs to be "a paradigm

shift from a training paradigm for skill formation inherited from industrial era, towards a learning and performance paradigm appropriate for an information age" (2000:49).

Adele Thomas and David Robertshaw (1999), write about the "hidden" barriers that may subtly sabotage the achievement of Employment Equity objectives. They note that some of these political barriers are discriminatory in nature and have "become embedded in workplace structures, policies, practices and culture" over the apartheid years (1999:69). According to Thomas and Robertshaw, these hidden barriers manifest themselves in subtle and covert discrimination practices that lead to exclusion of individuals and groups of people.

The point made by Thomas and Robertshaw, is echoed by Janet Spence (1999), when she writes: "The concept of equity in workplace is based on mythical notion of a 'level playing field'. Most past efforts to ensure equity in the workplace have been procedural rather than substantive" (1999:1). Spence further suggests that ultimately it is not possible to legislate equity completely, but it is necessary to eliminate the barriers so that learning equity means not only equal access, but also equal ability to participate.

The foregoing discussion is aptly summarised by Merriam and Caffarella (1991), when they convincingly argue that the question of participation and non-participation in adult learning is inextricably linked to the values of the social systems in which it takes place. In their response to the questions of who decides participation, for what purpose, and who benefits, they conclude that "adult education is in the hands of a ruling

elite whose interest in self-preservation and self-perpetuation determines the answers" (1991:280), and has thus become "a vehicle for solidifying a socio-economic structure contrary to stated goals of access and equality" (1991:284).

Consistent with this view is Schied's et al contention that: "Existing organisational structures and management systems are not neutral or apolitical" (2001:80).

The study of barriers to participation in learning at work cannot be divorced from the exploration of barriers to organisations becoming "learning organisations". The following section therefore explores some of the obstacles to becoming a learning organisation.

Discussions on the concept of "learning organization" have grown exponentially in recent literature. Although Daniels (1994), contends that there is no shared meaning of what constitutes a learning organization, there is consensus, amongst commentators, that learning has become an important part of the organisational image and that learning takes place through individuals, teams and organization. But organizations need to create a culture that supports learning.

Peter Senge (1990), the proponent of the 'learning organisation' (LO), defines LO's as: "Organisations where people continually expand their capacity to create the result they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to learn together" (1990:3)

In theory, argue most researchers, the learning organisation concept is appealing. However, according to Watkins and Marsick (1993:13), "everyone is talking about (it) but few are living it". Calvert et al (1994:40), also argue that there are no "true" learning organisations, but only organisations that exhibit certain attributes a learning organisation is expected to demonstrate. Marilyn Laiken found that "no organisation is a paragon of organisational learning" (2001:3). There seems to be a gap between the rhetoric about 'learning organisation' and the application thereof.

But there is also consensus amongst researchers that "being there" is not the point, as becoming a learning organisation is a process, a journey, not a destination, a philosophy, not a programme (West 1994:18). The important thing is that organisations must embark on that process in order to survive.

What barriers then prevent the learning organisation from becoming a reality? Farago and Skyrme (1995:3-4), identifies organisational barriers as a major contributor to organisations not transforming to 'learning organisations'. Organisational barriers identified are the following:

a. Lack of strong, visionary leadership.

Integrating work and learning in the new economy requires fundamental rethink on the part of everyone. In such situations, leaders play pivotal, advocacy role - as champions, coaches, mentors, designers and 'stewards of the collective vision' (Senge 1990:34). Organisational leaders are therefore responsible for driving learning and training.

b. *Inability to recognise and change existing mental models.*

The learned helplessness, tunnel vision, truncated learning, individualism and culture of disrespect and fear.

c. *Lack of a learning culture*

Learning is not seen as core value and a sustainable resource.

The organisation not structured and managed in a way that encourages continuous, spontaneous learning. The culture of most organisations is one of non-learning, if not anti-learning.

d. *No recognition of informal learning.*

There is a tendency to confuse education with training, hence the failure to leverage inherent learning in action and conversational discussions

e. *Learning is removed from immediate work environment, which it is expected to impact.*

This results in frustration as there is very little or no transfer of skills and understanding back to the work milieu.

f. *No leverage of knowledge*

Although knowledge may be recognised as a key source of competitive advantage, there may still be little understanding of how to create and leverage it in practice

g. *Lack of workers participation*

Workers are not part of the process of creating, refining, communicating, and using knowledge.

It is frequently said that the people are the most important resource, yet seldom is the truism understood in terms of the communities through which individuals develop and share the capacity to create and use knowledge.

It may be concluded that as an organisation is like a living organism, it needs oxygen to survive and therefore learning is the oxygen that keeps the organisation alive and vibrant. Lack of a learning culture can therefore lead to the demise of an organisation.

Obstacles to organisational learning are often manifestations of resistance to change. A consideration of the literature on resistance to change throws more light on the subject of resistance to participation.

Researchers on Organisational Development (OD), see the creation of an enabling learning environment, climate or culture as a prerequisite for organisational change. They see a link between workforce development and organisational change. They recognise that innovative company programmes succeed or fail depending on the human factors, such as skills, attitudes, and organisational climate.

It is Lähteenmäki (2001) who reminds us that: "In the organisational turmoil learning reduces uncertainty and thus inevitably also helps in reducing change resistance" (2001:6). He further observes that, as learning in organizations is both facilitated and necessitated by change,

successful change management becomes the key of organisational learning. Therefore, the factors relating to obstacles to learning organization are, in most instances, manifestations of resistance to change. People, according to Lähteenmäki, resist change and learning in order to maintain the status quo and to feel secure. He contends that organisational learning and change are not different, but parallel, simultaneous and interactive processes. In other words, he sees learning as playing a mediating role in the change process.

Laurie Mullins (1996) notes that despite the potential positive outcomes, change is often resisted at both individual and organisational level. Resistance to change appears to be a common phenomenon. "Resistance to change", observes Mullins, "can take many forms and it is difficult to pinpoint the exact reasons for the resistance" (1996:732). He cites the main reasons for organizational resistance against change as: maintaining stability; investment in additional resources; past contracts or agreements; threats to power or influence; insufficient information about the nature of change; fears of shift in power; changes to social structure and working conditions, conflicting commitment and fear of failure under changed conditions.

But Marquardt (1996:67) convincingly argues that change has become a way of life and therefore businesses have to embrace change and make continuous learning their prime objective. This, he contends, is the only way to survive during these volatile times.

The foregoing discussion on literature gives a useful theoretical framework. What the situation is in practice, remains to be seen. The

empirical research therefore helps to determine how far the distance between theory and practice is. What is however clear from the literature reviewed is that learning and training are catalysts for individual and organisational change.

If this assertion is true, it would then be of interest to investigate why individuals do not fully participate in learning and training at work, as well as what prevents organisations from becoming 'learning organisations'.



RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1. METHODOLOGY

As this investigation follows a case study approach and use of documentary evidence, a qualitative methodology, in its various forms, was used. Applying qualitative methodology in adult education, placed value on people's knowledge, drawing from their wealth of experience. This enabled respondents to express their opinions and perceptions. The assumption was that participants, as adults, are able to talk about their own situations, analyse it, and design their own solutions.

Methods applied for data collection and analysis, varied from the review of Rubber Wheels documents; electronic and printed governmental reports/articles; observations; literature review, as well as narrative inquiry for individual stories in the form of interviews.

The focus of the individual interviews gave data about the experience of individuals seen from their perspectives. The study took a form of a case study, which "looks at individuals or organisations from a multiple perspective of key actors" (Purdon et al 2001:16).

2. RESEARCH SAMPLE

The sample for interviews was drawn randomly from employees at the Rubber Wheels' City Deep, technical division and a Skills Development Facilitator (SDF) for the depot. The composition of employees interviewed was made up of two workshop supervisors, two motor mechanics, two trade hands and two process workers. The service period

of those interviewed ranged from six (6) to twenty seven (27) years. The sample was representative of the division, consisting of mainly Black and White male. The only female employee in the division did not avail herself for the interview. Her choice not to participate was respected, as participation in the research interview was voluntary.

The Human Resources Officer, who also acts as a Skills Development Facilitator for City Deep, was also interviewed. So in total nine (9) people were interviewed.

3. RESEARCH PROCESS

Data collection followed a semi-structured interview method. Interviews were conducted in the form of conversation. Aiken et al describe this method as "Dialogic exchanges, in which the researcher as well as the participants share personal information, in an effort to equalize the power dynamics, between the researcher and the researched" (2001:309). As a result the respondents were able to talk freely about how they felt, and added some of their general concerns about training and development. This proved to be useful as it allowed the respondents "to offer answers in a narrative format" (2001:310), as well as helped to surface opinions and perceptions and led to a shared understanding.

This approach is also supported by constructivists, where somebody's partial understanding compliments somebody else's understanding and "together start to weave a coherent kind of interpretation of the information - one that is socially generated and socially scaffolded" (Brown & Duguid, 2000:6).

The interviews were conducted in an office not far from the respondents' place of work. Respondents took turns to come to the interviews. All came in their overalls, except for the supervisors who wore blue dustcoats, Rubber Wheels golf shirt and blue trousers. As respondents were pulled out of their jobs when their turn came, they came in their oily overalls, with hands still oily, although hurriedly rinsed. Respondents were made 'to feel at home' at the beginning of the interview and thanked for their time and input at the end of the interview.

Although the purpose of the interviews was made clear to the respondents, the expectation seemed to be that the researcher, as someone "in a position of authority" would be able to address the requests and concerns about training. All seemed to be enthusiastically looking forward to the interview, and welcomed the opportunity to speak to someone "from the head office".

The interviews presented a challenge for the researcher, as they had to be conducted in a language that both the respondent and the researcher would be able to understand, ranging from English, Zulu, Afrikaans, South Sotho, North Sotho, Tswana and something in between. Translating such a variety into English (for the purposes of this paper), proved to be an even greater challenge. One of the limitations of this research therefore may be that in the process of translation something of essence, which the respondents may have said could have been unintentionally lost.

The main objective of data collection was to establish the understanding about the WSP, what it was, what it was expected to achieve, and what was expected of different role players. Questions also related to who

participated or did not participate in training, what were the reasons thereof. Perceptions about the barriers to learning and training and related issues were also tested.

The data was analysed and interpreted in a manner that would illuminate and explain discrepancies regarding implementation of WSP objectives and barriers to full participation. Deductions and inferences were made from a variety of in-company documentary evidence.

Extracts from interviews and other sources are used to validate findings, as far as possible.

The respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, hence the use of fictitious names in the findings section. It is possible though that the interviews may have been influenced by the researcher's position of authority within the company.



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RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

1. RESEARCH CONTEXT

As indicated before, Rubber Wheels, is a government owned company, that provides road transport solutions and logistics services. Like all other players in the road freight industry, Rubber Wheels, continues to experience racial and gender discrimination, inherited from the apartheid era. This invariably runs against the principles of equality and social justice, as stated in the South African constitution, and other government policies.

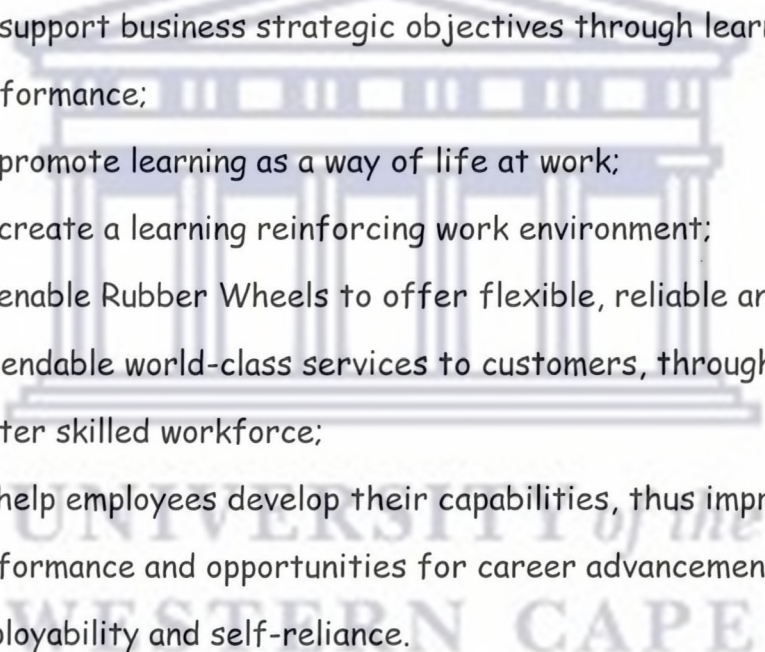
Rubber Wheels is also facing the challenge of depletion of skills through the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The latest surveys conducted on the N3 Corridor reveal that 56% of truck drivers are HIV positive. It is predicted that over 50% of the investment in skills development will be lost to this disease, in the next ten (10) years.

All these challenges are complicated by the fact that the road freight industry is not attractive to new entrants into the market due to negative perceptions.

Rubber Wheels has an asset base of just over 1 000 trucks and 3 000 trailers, with a national workforce strength of approximately 1 200. It is therefore one of the five (5) largest freight transporters in the country. The road freight industry plays a major role in South African economic growth.

The critical challenge facing Rubber Wheels, therefore, is to strategically leverage people development, reverse the legacy of the past, and equip employees to render world-class services, thus enhancing the quality of life of the majority of South Africans.

In responding to the skills development challenge Rubber Wheels has devised a Human Resources Development (HRD) strategy, the aims of which are:

- 
- a. To support business strategic objectives through learning and performance;
 - b. To promote learning as a way of life at work;
 - c. To create a learning reinforcing work environment;
 - d. To enable Rubber Wheels to offer flexible, reliable and dependable world-class services to customers, through its better skilled workforce;
 - e. To help employees develop their capabilities, thus improve performance and opportunities for career advancement, employability and self-reliance.

Although the goals seem to be broad, vague and may be difficult to measure, they nonetheless, demonstrate that Rubber Wheels views learning and training as a powerful vehicle for organisational change. It can therefore be assumed that Rubber Wheels acknowledges that commitment cannot be contracted, but should be nurtured through a supportive work environment, encouragement, a compelling vision and development.

Rubber Wheels complies fully with the legislative requirements pertaining to employment equity and skills development. It has registered for employment equity and skills development purposes; it has duly submitted its EE plans and WSP; it pays its levies and reports accordingly to the respective government departments. It can therefore be concluded that Rubber Wheels is, in all intents and purposes, an organization that is governed by the Skills Development Act and other related legislations.

2. ANALYSIS OF SITUATION

This section analyses City Deep Technical division in terms of its workforce composition, the EE status and interview results.

The purpose of the first two sub-sections is give a snapshot of the division whilst the latter gives an full blown picture of the employees' opinions and perceptions about learning and training as it is practiced in the division.

As indicated before, the views expressed by the respondents may not necessarily be an accurate reflection of training practices within the whole division and/or the company. The interviews, were as far as possible, conducted in a non-threatening, conversational manner. However a possibility exists that the researcher, as part of the company, may have been perceived to be in a position of power. This posed a dilemma in terms of building an equal, trust-based interviewer/ interviewee relationship.

The interview results are divided into five (5) categories, namely:

- a. Perceptions on WSP;
- b. Reasons for participation;
- c. Reasons for non-participation;
- d. Identification of barriers; and
- e. Perceptions of training

The sub section on barriers attempts to give views from different significant 'actors' within the environment, to give a representative view.

2.1 Current Workforce Profile (Technical Division, City Deep)

Table 1

Occupational Category	Male				Female				Total
	A	C	I	W	A	C	I	W	
Managers	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Supervisors	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Mechanics	2	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	11
Trade Hands	17	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	21
Process Workers	16	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	17
TOTAL	35	0	0	17	1	0	0	0	53

The Technical division constitutes 21% of the City Deep workforce strength.

As it can be observed the picture reflects an "Irish coffee scenario", where the whites are at management and supervisory levels, with the bulk of the workforce, which is black, at the bottom. Analysis of the above

statistics, show that out of the 32% white males in the division, 24.5% are qualified artisans, compared to the 3.8% black qualified artisans. That means only 7.5% whites are semi-skilled artisans, compared to 64.2% blacks, who are semi-skilled.

It is also interesting to note that out of fifty-two (52) males in the division, there is only one (1) female.

When it comes to salary differentials, which are important for EEA reporting purposes, the total actual earnings of the 32% whites in the division compose 47% of the payroll bill, compared to the 53% earned by 68% blacks, which means the average per capita income for white employees is R7 530 per month, as opposed to R3 800 per month for black employees.

2.2 Employment Equity Targets

The EE targets set for City Deep, technical division, for the period 2001 to 2003, were projected to be as follows: (%)

Table 2

Category	A/M	C/M	I/M	W/M	A/F	C/F	I/F	W/F	D/P*
2001	68	2	0	30	0	0	0	0	0
2003	67	2	1	27	2	1	0	0	0
Current	66	0	0	33	1	0	0	0	0
Variance	1	(2)	(1)	6	(1)	(1)	0	0	0

* Disabled Persons

The statistics reflect that the targets set have not been met. Both African and White males are still 1% and 6% above the target respectively. Targets set for Coloured male, African female and Coloured female have not yet been realized.

The national equity targets require that beneficiaries of training be: 85% black, 45% women, and 4% people with disabilities.

The main reasons for failure to meet the targets are attributed to the transformation process the company went through in 2002, resulting in employees leaving the company, as well as the shelving of training plans.

3. RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS

3.1 Perceptions about WSP

[Fictitious names are used to identify respondents]

Information gathered from the interviews showed that seven (7) of the respondents demonstrated a general understanding of the WSP. Thabo, one of the respondents explained WSP as "a process whereby employees are developed through training in a way that the objectives of the work environment are achieved". The responses to the questions about WSP, however, reflected a limited understanding of what the WSP is meant to achieve for the employees.

When the respondents were asked to explain what the WSP was asking Rubber Wheels, managers/supervisors and employees to do, the responses varied - 62.5% felt that the company and managers/

supervisors should drive the skills development process as "they know what skills are required to do the job satisfactorily". (Andries)

This may be interpreted as an abdication of responsibility on the part of the respondents as literature on becoming a learning organisation highlights the importance of joint responsibility.

3.2 Reasons for non-participation

Prominent amongst the reasons advanced for non-participation were those related to unavailability of training schedule and training opportunities, as well as lack of information about accessing training. More than 60% of the respondents indicated that they did not know what to do to get training.

Some responses were tainted with fear and insecurity. Responses like this were common: "It's due to continuous transformation, I am not sure if I will be retrenched" (Kobus)

One interviewee complained about training not being rewarded: "I don't see the need (for training), if I am not getting more pay or chances for promotion" (Fanie)

When one looks beyond these statements, the real question being posed is 'training for what?' The issues of fear of retrenchment, combined with slim chances for upward mobility or incentive, seem to be playing a major de-motivating role.

3.3 Reasons for participation

Although more than 80% of the respondents had not attended training for the last three to four years, they were able to recall what motivated their participation then. These are some of their responses:

- a. "It's a challenge to learn something new and explore other avenues" (Patrick)
- b. "It (training) makes me to do the job easier, quicker and better" (Andre)
- c. "I was encouraged by my manager" (Andries)
- d. "I want to learn more, I am inspired by people who have succeeded" (Thomas)
- e. "I love and enjoy my work (welding and mechanical repairs), it inspires me more when there are no return jobs" (Mbazima)
- f. "I don't want to remain behind, otherwise they (workers) will laugh at me" (Kobus)

The statements reflect an appreciation for learning and training, as a way of being socially included at work, as well as giving inner satisfaction and pride.

3.4 Identified Barriers

3.4.1 Supervisors' view

The two supervisors interviewed, Andre and Kobus, indicated reluctance of employees to learn. In describing employee attitudes, they used phrases, such as: "They think they know"; "They want to stick to the way

they have done things"; "They are negative, complacent and lack interest"; "Work pressure gives us no time for training"; "We have a business to run, training does not contribute to the bottom line"; "My employees view training as 'slaapies'" (sleep time). Otherwise, they appreciated "the value of investing in training".

Andre and Kobus's views reflect their ambivalence towards training. On the one hand, they seem to see the need for training; on the other hand, they advance untested reasons why employees under their supervision were not trained.

3.4.2 Employees' view

One respondent, Mbazima, did not know of any barriers. He last had an opportunity to be trained four (4) years back. Other responses revealed that the employees believed that the company had no money to fund their development; there was no acknowledgement or reward for their achievement; there was no training schedule available; managers did not care about their development. "They are just interested in making profit," quipped Andries. "No one asks what course I want to do", remarked Patrick.

It is clear from these extracts that employees were not informed nor were they aware of their rights to training.

3.4.3 Labour's view

Only one Labour representative, Thomas, was interviewed and his overall impressions were that the company did not care for its people.

"Management", grudgingly observed Thomas, "was worried about profit, not employee development or well being; workers were not informed about their rights, especially regarding training". "Even now", continued Thomas, "I do not know what you people (management) are reporting on skills development, because there is no training taking place, management is not committed to training, and moreover the training we did long ago was not accredited. Some employees had been stuck in the Trade Hand grade, they know the work of a mechanic, but there is no one to assess and accredit them".

Thomas raised questions regarding the non-functioning of the Training Committee, as one of the barriers, as it meant (for him) that workers views were not taken into consideration.

3.4.4 Skills Development Facilitator's view

The SDF, Ntombi, indicated that training was the responsibility of line management, and her view was that most of the training was "sabotaged" by line management, under the guise of: "transformation process"; "possible downsizing"; "'bleeding' company".

She however felt the main barriers were "the chronic low morale" that was typical of a company undergoing restructuring and the "non-functioning training monitoring structures".

Although there was no apparent reason for the seeming paralysis of the SDF, what was clear was that there could be communication and co-operation problems.

3.4.5 Company's view

According to the Rubber Wheels Employment Equity Plan, the barriers envisaged towards the attainment of the EE targets were:

- a. loss of market share and poor performance of the company, inhibiting business growth;
- b. excess of human resources/capital;
- c. low labour turn over, coupled with 'jobs-for-life mentality'; and
- d. lack of financial resources to create space/opportunities for improvement of demographics;

3.5 Perceptions of training

All respondents shared the view that training/learning at work was important and has benefits for both the company and the employees.

The respondents mentioned that most of the work on the new range of trucks was being outsourced, as Rubber Wheels mechanics did not have the necessary expertise to work on computerized engines and gear boxes. Working on these modernized trucks also required advanced technological skills. The upgrading of mechanics' skills would benefit the company, as well as improve productivity.

The reasons cited on why training/learning was important were that employees would benefit as they would be "better people", "build strong teams" and prepare them for "self employment, in case they are retrenched".

Mbazima, one of the mechanics, who joined the company as a general worker, seventeen (17) years back, proudly shared this story: "When I joined the company, I couldn't read and write, I knew nothing, I was blind. But now I know where I'm going. I can see, because of training. It (training) changed my life. That is why I am always thirsty for training. I know what it can do for me. What makes me proud is that I never get return jobs. Once I work on a truck, I know it won't stop on the road".

Judging from this and other responses, it is evident that learning and training was seen as "passport to success", "a ticket to prosperity", as one respondent stated. It is also obvious from the conversation with the mechanic, as cited above, that employees are eager to learn.

4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

This research was an attempt to critically evaluate the effective implementation of the WSP at the Rubber Wheels' City Deep, technical division. The study sought to do this by examining barriers as perceived by different stakeholders within the case study area.

The ultimate objective of the study was to help Rubber Wheels create an enabling learning environment, in order to achieve its business objectives through people development.

There is a plethora of literature in the field of participation in adult learning, but Patricia Cross's (1981) theory on barriers to participation was found to be a useful tool for the purposes of this analyses. The usefulness of Cross's work was that it provides a framework for classifying the barriers into broad components, showing trends, conflicts and discrepancies in the results.

Barriers to participation

The data analysis, as reflected in the preceding section, reflects three dominant barriers to participation, namely: Institutional, Informational and Dispositional barriers. Although there are traces of situational, structural and political barriers, they are more implicit than explicit. The ensuing discussion is therefore confined to the identified three major factors.

a. Institutional barriers

Institutional barriers are defined as practices and policies, which exclude and discourage people from participating.

Lack of participation

It is evident from the data gathered that not all stakeholders were involved in the formation, compilation, implementation and monitoring of the WSP. Evidence suggests that employees were not aware that they had been scheduled for training. The WSP remained the document compiled and owned by the managers. The trade unions also seem to have been kept out of the process. This

is an anomaly, as the SDA requires that Trade Union representatives endorse the WSP. Common sense also dictates that all beneficiaries of skills development interventions should actively participate in the planning and design of the workplace skills plans, if it is to succeed.

Lack of learning and training culture

Evidence gathered from interviews show that there was a lack of a learning culture within the division. For instance, most of those interviewed last attended training in the last three (3) to four (4) years. This may be the reason why the company is not competitive and is seen to be 'bleeding', resulting in the 'chronic low morale'. It is Leanne Burton's view that "skills development is the only reliable insurance policy for future business growth and competitiveness" (2003:2). Companies tend to cut down on training when they are not doing well, but analysts have observed that training is much more crucial in a tight economy. And so, lifelong learning is not an option for companies any more, but a necessity. The best way to survive is to develop the performance of the people.

It was clear from the perusal of policy and strategy documents that at the level of policy, there was a commitment within Rubber Wheels to promote learning as a way of life at work. For instance, the HRD policy states that: "Each employee shall be encouraged to spend a minimum of 40 hours (5 days) per annum on training", and another clause states: "Three percent (3%) of the annual payroll bill shall be allocated for training". But this rhetoric was

not matched by what was happening at shop floor level, according to those interviewed. It is however possible that the picture may be different in other divisions.

Marquard (1996:69) reminds us that, a learning organization is about nurturing a culture of learning within the organization, where each person is valued and all are empowered and enabled to learn. He suggests several principles to consider in the empowerment and the enablement of employees and managers.

These are:

- a. that employees must be treated as mature, capable workers and learners, who are able to make responsible decisions;
- b. that there needs to be a balance between individual and organisational needs;
- c. that managers need to move from controlling to empowering, from being a commander to being a steward, from acting as a "transitional manager" to acting as a "transformational leader".

This move would encourage employees to grow and develop. Investing in the learning and training of employees may also be a way of showing how much the company values them.

Lack of rewards

The issue of rewards was mentioned more than once in the interviews, and in all instances the respondents felt strongly about learning and training not being rewarded. As the old saying goes, 'that which gets rewarded, gets done'. The rewards were

seen in the form of benefits - promotion, more pay, recognition for achievement, self-development for employability and other incentives. Kearns and Papadopoulos, in their study, also observed that: "Developing incentives to participation in learning activities is necessary for building a learning culture" (2000:33)

The views expressed gave the impression that there was a general perception that Rubber Wheels did not really support learning and/or value training. The SDA also encourages organizations to align their training to the National Qualification Framework (NQF) standards.

b. Informational barriers

Informational barriers are defined as institutional failures in communicating information on learning opportunities to workers, and the failure of many adults, particularly the least educated and poorest, to seek out or use information that is available.

Lack of awareness

The communication gap between the different stakeholders was apparent in the interviews. The Labour representative, the supervisors and employees were not aware of the existence of training plans for their division nor did they know that there were funds available for training.

This general perception that there were no funds available for training because of the financial state of the company, was contradicted by the SDF, who confirmed that the company

continued to pay skills levy in the hope of getting a refund through WSP implementation. This contradiction points to either a lack of knowledge about the skills development legislation and/or what the potential benefits training may have for business (return on investment).

Researchers on the concept of Learning Organization agree that open communication is key to successful implementation of workplace learning. Information sharing helps to enhance access to learning opportunities, whilst at the same time, creating a climate of openness and trust.

Tobin (1997:19) associates knowledge with power, and lack of knowledge with disempowerment. He reminds us that people have taught themselves to hoard knowledge over the years to achieve power. When it comes to supporting learning and training for employees, knowledge is not just power, it is also increased productivity, profit, and employee loyalty.

The perceived unavailability of information and inability of the workers to find relevant data, visibly demonstrated that company culture could also act as a barrier.

c. Dispositional barriers

Dispositional barriers are seen to relate to individuals beliefs and attitudes that interfere with participation. They usually manifest

themselves in disengagement, inertia, apathy and negative attitude.

As indicated before, when respondents were asked about what the WSP was asking of them, the responses shifted the responsibility to managers/supervisors - "for they know what training is needed". This explained the seeming complacency and disengagement, on the part of the workers, as they viewed WSP as a company/management instrument, which had no real relevance for their self-development.

This view is further emphasized by the fact that, in as much as all the respondents expressed willingness, enthusiasm and motivation for training, and saw its importance, only one had taken the initiative to talk to his immediate supervisor about training. That seems strange.

Elaine Folscher (2003), observes that many learners (workers) have "a belief that their development is the responsibility of their employer; an attitude that they are too busy to attend training courses; a reluctance to do any work associated with training and to be held accountable for what they have learned" (2003:7).

5. SUMMARY

In summary some of the most noteworthy findings are that:

- a. The qualitative and quantitative employment equity targets had not been met, as illustrated by the employee profile and salary differentials;
- b. Organisational culture at Rubber Wheels was not conducive to learning, as there had been virtually no structured learning and training for the last three years in the technical division;
- c. There was no ongoing communication and feedback, as the workforce was not informed about learning and training opportunities, as well as their (workers') accountability for their self-development;
- d. There was no evidence of collaboration, teamwork between the different role players and stakeholders, as there were no forums to discuss training plans and their implementation;
- e. There was an apparent apathy towards learning and training from both management and the workers;
- f. The SDF demonstrated a lack of awareness of her role and poor consultation and communication skills, as she was ultimately accountable for driving the WSP;
- g. The barriers were more institutional, informational and dispositional, than situational and political;
- h. Most employees were willing to upgrade their skills through learning and training;
- i. Rubber Wheels was generous on vision in terms of its policies and strategies, but short on implementation.

As it can be observed the barriers to participating or not participating in learning and training are often mixed and can operate at different levels. Cross (1981:125), confirms the above findings as she asserts that participation in learning and training starts with the individual and ends with external factors, in what she calls - "a chain of responses" - as each element is linked to the other. She sees participation as a result of a complex chain of responses originating within the individual. In this way the different categories of barriers that have been identified, as well as other findings are interconnected and often overlap.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study is about critical evaluation of the barriers to the successful implementation of the WSP and how these deterrents have impacted the employment equity targets.

The purpose for the literature review was to establish a framework for obstacles to the implementation of workplace learning and training. The review further revealed that there was a strong link between learning organization, workplace learning and organisational change. Hindrances to organisational learning and training could also be signs of resistance to change.

The literature reviewed identified useful categories for the classification of barriers to participation as institutional, dispositional, situational, informational and political. Although in terms of the findings of this study, only three were found to be applicable, existence of hidden situational and political barriers cannot be ruled out. The study therefore confirms earlier research findings.

Participation in learning at work is a means rather than an end.

Organizations are therefore promoting learning in order to be more competitive and thrive in a rapid, ever-changing global environment, hence the current interest in 'learning organisation'. The literature explored clearly illustrated that participation in learning at work is linked to the workplaces embracing the learning organisation concept. The growing interest in learning organisation, stems from the recognition that strategies on innovation, continuous improvement and a plethora of other

initiatives, by themselves, often do not work. Something more is needed to cope with dynamically changing situations, where existing 'programmed' responses are proving to be inadequate. The notion of a learning organization promotes the idea that it is only those companies that create a positive learning environment at all levels and application of that learning to the company's work that will thrive. Organisations must learn to love change.

Findings on Rubber Wheels case study are that becoming a learning organisation is easily said than done, as there is always resistance to change. This resistance to change manifests itself in institutional, dispositional, informational, structural and political forms. For these categories do not only apply to participation in learning, but also to other organisational systems. Rubber Wheels is a typical example. For instance, the study findings demonstrate that successful implementation of skills development plan is integral to the achievement of employment equity targets.

Organisational development theories also help us understand that organisational culture, provides the context for learning. But that can only happen if there is effective leadership. It is clear from a considerable body of anecdotal evidence that organisational life is strongly influenced by organisational leaders. Murrell and Walsh contend that: "One of the barriers to the successful creation of generative learning organization is lack of effective leaders" (1993:295). This may have been the case with Rubber Wheels as illustrated by the negative findings.

Peter Senge echoes this view, as he reasons that: "It is not enough to change strategies, structures and systems unless the thinking that produced those strategies, structures and systems also changes" (1990:10). On the other hand McIntyre (2000) warns against the idealisation of a learning culture as "a mysterious ethos that comes about through exhortation of managers alone, or the goodwill of employees persuaded that it is a 'good thing', *but as a result of organisational change managed in this direction*" (2000:8) (emphasis mine).

Of interest to note is the observation that though theories on adult participation in learning, are a first recourse for understanding learning at work, they are not adequate in themselves to explain the complexities of contemporary workplace, where 'learning' is being demanded of employees as part of their working conditions. Theories on learning organisation and organisational development help to complete the picture.

There is therefore consistency between the ideas of previous researchers as illustrated in the literature reviewed and the findings on Rubber Wheels case study.

The lack of critical research on skills development processes, especially its implementation, within the South African context, has been a limiting factor in terms of this study. But from the literature explored, it can be safely concluded that the creation of an enabling learning environment at Rubber Wheels, through the successful implementation of the Workplace Skills Plan, can be the key to its success.

Rubber Wheels' long-term survival further depends on how its leadership is able to change the organisational culture, so as to eliminate the identified barriers, strive to become a learning organisation and deal effectively with resistance to change, thus creating a positive, enabling learning environment.

It is envisaged that this study will open up new avenues for further exploration of how best the NSDS objectives could be achieved through effective implementation of the Workplace Skills Plan.



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ANNEXURE A

RESEARCH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Objective of the questions

The objective of the questions is to allow interviewees of Rubber Wheels to describe how they perceive the Workplace Skills Plan and what motivates and/or hinders their full participation in skills development interventions.

Questions for the interview

1. What do you understand about the Workplace Skills Plan (WSP)/skills development?
2. What do you feel the WSP/skills development is asking Rubber Wheels to do?
3. What do you feel the WSP/skills development is asking managers to do?
4. What do you feel the WSP/skills development is asking employees to do?
5. Do you feel the WSP/skills development is asking for change in the following aspects:
 - a) Employee Training?
 Yes No Not sure

If yes, change in what way? How do you feel about this change?

b) Employee participation?

Yes No Not sure

If yes, change in what way? How do you feel about this change?

6. What do you think are the barriers to successful implementation of training plans in your division?
7. Did you participate in training during the last two (2) years? If so, was the training in line with the training plans?
8. What made you to participate in training/not to participate?
9. Do you think training is important? Why?
10. What is your division doing to motivate and support learning?
11. Who decides what training you should do? How do you feel about that?
12. Have you demanded to be trained? When? What was the response?
13. If you had your way, how would you improve workplace learning/training?
14. Please share how you personally feel about learning at work and how it should be implemented?
15. What aspects of the skills development/WSP/learning at work are of most concern to you?
16. Any other comments?