



South Africa Siyasebenza

Learning Series

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CREATING JOBS AND SUPPORTING BUSINESSES

Findings from a three-year tracer study of selected Support for Work Seekers and Enterprise Development projects



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The Jobs Fund is a R9 billion fund established by the South African Government in 2011. It was established to encourage innovation and give greater impetus to initiatives with potential to generate sustainable employment. The Fund aims to catalyse innovation in job creation through structured partnerships with the private and public sectors as well as NPOs by awarding once-off grants to organisations through a competitive process. The Jobs Fund operates on challenge fund principles and aims to incentivise innovation and investment in new business approaches that directly contribute to long term sustainable employment creation.

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JET Education Services



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1 Introduction

In the second and third quarters of 2021, when the Wave 3 data for a Jobs Fund tracer study was collected, the official unemployment rate was 34.4% and 36.9% respectively, and the expanded unemployment rate¹ was 44.4% and 46.6% respectively, the highest it had been since 2008². Notwithstanding the context of the last couple of years, historically, South Africa's unemployment challenges are structural (supply of labour far exceeds the demand, although this varies by industry, and there are vast skills mismatches)³, youth in the 15-24 age group suffer the greatest burden of unemployment⁴, and South Africa lags other upper-middle income countries in terms of the contribution of self-employment to employment – 10% vs 30%⁵.

From March 2020 when South Africa (SA) was placed under a hard lockdown because of COVID-19, a substantial number of jobs were lost. The economy was already in decline before the COVID-19 restrictions that further affected the economy,⁶ leading to a 7% contraction of the economy,⁷ business closures and massive job losses.⁸

Against this backdrop, the Enterprise Development (ED) and Support for Work Seekers (SFW) Jobs Fund projects are critical in tackling unemployment and promoting businesses that can create employment and sustain livelihoods.

This summary report draws from findings of a tracer study conducted over three waves from 2019 to 2021 on five Jobs Fund ED projects and five SFW projects to highlight the changes that have occurred in the beneficiaries' lives since their participation in the Jobs Fund projects. Data was collected at the same time every year for the three years.

2 Methodology

The tracer study was an evaluation which employed a longitudinal telephone survey as the main method for gathering data (596 ED and 1 151 SFW project beneficiaries were surveyed annually, three times between 2019 and 2021). Survey data was augmented by analysis of data from the Jobs Fund's Grant Management System (GMS), beneficiary case study interviews and key informant interviews with Jobs Fund partners and representatives, large employers and experts on enterprise development and employment creation. A cost effectiveness analysis (CEA) and propensity score matching (PSM) were also undertaken, and a survey of employers was conducted in 2019.

¹ According to StatsSA's expanded definition of unemployment, which includes unemployed people looking for work as well as those who are discouraged work seekers who have given up looking for work, and those who could work but were not looking for work for other reasons.

² StatsSA. (2021). Quarterly labour force survey, Q3: 2021. Statistical release P0211. Pretoria: StatsSA.

³ Calvin, B., & Coetzee. G. (2016). A review of the South African micro-finance sector Volume II. Centre for Micro-finance, University of Pretoria, Pretoria.

⁴ StatsSA. (2021). Quarterly labour force survey, Q3: 2021. Statistical release P0211. Pretoria: StatsSA.

⁵ World Bank Group. (2021). Building back better from COVID-19, with a special focus on jobs. South African Economic Update, 13. Washington DC: World Bank Group.

⁶ StatsSA. (2021). CPI history. Table B1 - CPI headline index numbers.

⁷ World Bank Group. (2021). Building back better from COVID-19, with a special focus on jobs. South African Economic Update, 13. Washington DC: World Bank Group.

⁸ StatsSA. (2021). Quarterly labour force survey, Q3: 2021. Statistical release P0211. Pretoria: StatsSA.

2.1 Survey Sample

In 2019, a sample of 6 466 beneficiaries was drawn and 44.3% of this sample was reached, which became the sample for 2020 (2 851), of which 76.2% was reached. The sample for 2021 was 2 172, of which 80.4% was reached. The sample for each project from 2019 to 2021 as well as the attrition rate between waves are reflected in Table 1 for ED and in Table 2 for SFW. The attrition rate for ED was 22.9% while that for SFW was 44.3%.

Table 1: ED projects attrition between 2019 and 2021

Jobs Fund Partner	2019	2020	2019-2020 Attrition Rate	2021	2020-2021 Attrition Rate	2019-2021 Attrition Rate
ED1	451	381	15,5%	341	10,5%	24,4%
ED2	274	245	10,6%	222	9,4%	19,0%
ED3	14	12	14,3%	10	16,7%	28,6%
ED4	16	13	18,8%	9	30,8%	43,8%
ED5	18	15	16,7%	14	6,7%	22,2%
Total	773	666	13,8%	596	10,5%	22,9%

Except for ED4, a project that ended in 2015, the survey response rate was higher among ED projects. It is likely that the ED beneficiaries would be more invested in the study as they received more intensive support over a longer period of time as compared to the SFW beneficiaries.

Table 2: SFW projects attrition between 2019 and 2021

Jobs Fund Partner	2019	2020	2019-2020 Attrition Rate	2021	2020-2021 Attrition Rate	2019-2021 Attrition Rate
SFW1	314	197	37,3%	142	27,9%	54,8%
SFW2	203	145	28,6%	108	25,5%	46,8%
SFW3	297	213	28,3%	167	21,6%	43,8%
SFW4	902	663	26,5%	521	21,4%	42,2%
SFW5	364	289	20,6%	221	23,5%	39,3%
Total	2080	1507	27,5%	1159	23,1%	44,3%

3 Results & Findings

The findings mainly draw on 2021 data, which was the end point of the tracer study and reflected the beneficiaries' most recent situation. **Comparisons are drawn with 2019 and 2020 findings where pertinent.** **The tracer study learning questions are used to frame the findings.**

Because of the small samples for ED5 (n=10), ED3 (n = 9) and ED4 (n = 10), findings for these projects are presented in integers and not percentages so that findings are not misleading in comparison to ED1 and ED2 with large samples. While this is the case in narrative reporting, graphs are all presented in percentages.

3.1 Project Description

The 10 projects are diverse in terms of their focus and target beneficiaries. ED projects targeted retail, franchising, general entrepreneurship support and the health sector. An overview of the characteristics of the ED projects is provided in Table 3.

Table 3: ED projects

ED1: Grocery Retail	ED2: Clothing retail	ED3: Franchise	ED4: Generalist Incubator	ED5: Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets: Small retailers in townships • Project model: Technology solution to improve business practices, management, and revenue • Components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JFP provides technology that monitors sales, profit and stock and creates another revenue stream through sales of prepaid products • Six weeks of training and mentorship to facilitate adoption of the technology • Beneficiaries attend two hours of group training per month for the 180-day period of Jobs Fund support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets: Unemployed mothers • Project model: Provision of stock from clothing retailers • Components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large retailers donate their excess stock which ED2 then sells at discounted prices to the beneficiaries. • The first of the two-year intervention provides unaccredited training (business, finance and life skills) • The second year leads to a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level three qualification in small business practice • The participants are supported by an ambassador (an individual who has completed the programme), a business mentor, a life coach and a psychologist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets: Previously disadvantaged entrepreneurs • Project model: Franchise acquisition and support • Components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Franchisees contribute a minimum of 10% • The JFP provides a loan of up to 50% at commercial rates • Jobs Fund provides an interest free loan of up to 40% • Franchisees are also provided with training, technical assistance and mentoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets: Black-owned emerging business owners • Project model: Incubator to increase levels of entrepreneurship and improve success of black owned businesses • Components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-year intervention with a “pre-incubation” phase (three months), “ignition” phase (three months), “integration phase” (18 months) and “graduation phase” (12 months) • Support includes how to develop a business plan, training, mentorship, and access to subsidised business premises and facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets: Black professional women; health care sector • Project model: Franchise • Components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ED5 provides a fully equipped clinic, and grant funding for 2 years • Training which covers HR, financial management and standard operating procedures • Mentorship • Monitoring for two years • Networking

Three SFW projects provided specific sector skills development and placement support while two provided general work seekers support. The characteristics of SFW projects are reflected in Table 4.

Table 4: SFW projects

SFW1: Call Centre Industry	SFW2: ICT Industry	SFW3: Supporting employment for PWD	SFW4: Supporting employment in all sectors	SFW5: Automotive industry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets: Previously disadvantaged youth with at least Grade 10 • Project model: Skilling and placement • Components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft skills and customer service/product training • Employment with SFW1 • Assistance with finding other employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets: Predominantly black youth who meet specific programme requirements • Project model: Skills training in ICT • Components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical ICT skills in demand by industry • Training is accredited and includes postgraduate programmes • All programmes include coaching and a funded internship for at least six months • Most beneficiaries employed by companies where they do their internship • Those who are not employed are assisted with finding jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets: Young people with disabilities (PWD) • Project model: Employment support for people with disabilities • Components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability sensitisation and awareness workshops for companies • Training in interview preparation • Job coaching • Placement in jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets: Previously disadvantaged youth • Project model: Training and job placement • Components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for general employability or for specific work opportunities • Job matching and placement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets: Matriculants, preferably with Maths and Science • Project model: Learning Academy for technical and manufacturing shop floor skills • Components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two months accredited skills programmes for general workers • Five artisan programmes leading to a trade test • Employment by Mercedes Benz • Placement with other employers

3.2 ED Findings

3.2.1 Beneficiary targeting

How effective were the selection and/or matching processes in selecting the right participants?

All partners for the ED projects reached their specified beneficiaries in terms of business focus, race, gender, socio-economic status and qualifications. ED3, ED4 and ED5 specifically targeted beneficiaries from previously disadvantaged race groups – 8/9 ED4 respondents met this criterion (and one preferred not to specify race), as did 9/10 of ED3 and all of ED5 respondents. Regarding gender, 1/10 ED3 respondent was female as were all respondents for ED2 and ED5. Considering qualifications, all ED5 respondents were professionally qualified nurses. ED5 was the only ED project with a criterion regarding qualifications.

3.2.2 ED outcomes

Primary economic activity of business owners

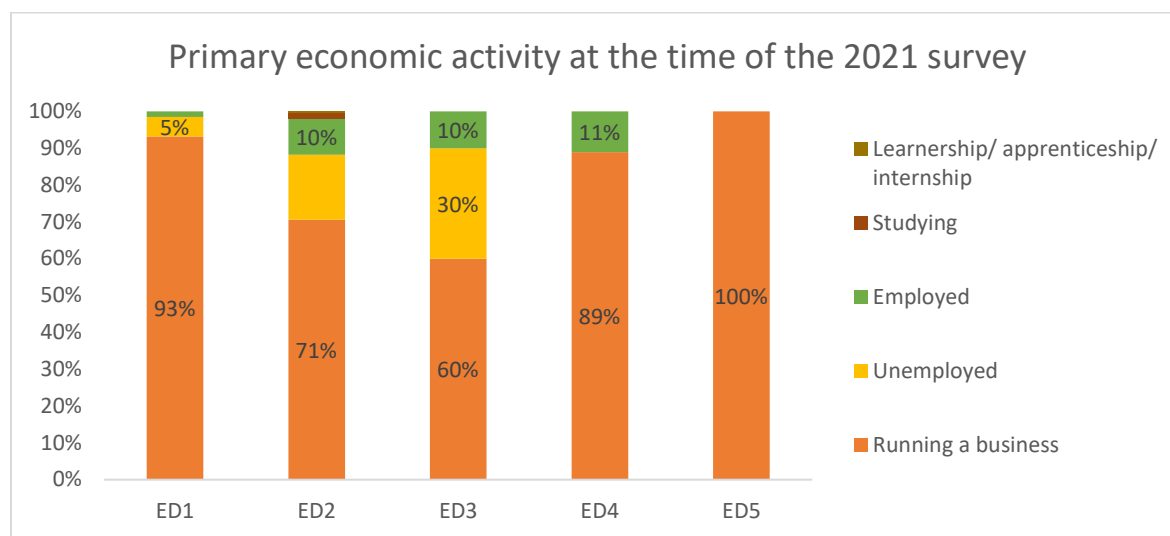
How many beneficiaries found employment (and left or continued running their businesses), and what are the characteristics of these individuals?

At the time of the 2021 survey, over 80% of ED survey respondents were running a business as their primary economic activity, and over 75% were still running the business initially supported by the Jobs Fund.

Over 10% of ED respondents whose supported businesses had failed reported that they were unemployed, and 4.9% reported that they were employed at the time of the 2021 survey. Unemployment rates were highest for ED3 (3/10), and ED2 (17.6%). All ED5 respondents were still running their supported businesses, and there was a high proportion of people running businesses in the ED1 and ED4 projects.

Figure 1 highlights the primary economic activity of ED respondents at the time of the 2021 survey.

Figure 1: Primary economic activity at the time of the 2021 survey



n=596 (ED1 341, ED2 222, ED3 10, ED4 9, ED5 14)

The number of people running multiple businesses had increased over time, with 115 individuals (19.3% of respondents) reporting that they were collectively running 246 other businesses⁹. The main reasons for running multiple businesses were “to make more money” (68.7%) and capitalising on opportunities of interest (38.3%). ED respondents also ran businesses while they were primarily engaged in another primary economic activity such as employment, studying or participating in a learnership/internship/apprenticeship – 23.4% of respondents

⁹ In the 2021 survey, respondents were asked “How many businesses do you run/own?” and selected from the following response options: “one”, “two”, “three”, “four or more”. Four was used for respondents who selected “four or more” to calculate the mean and maximum, thus the number of additional businesses may be higher

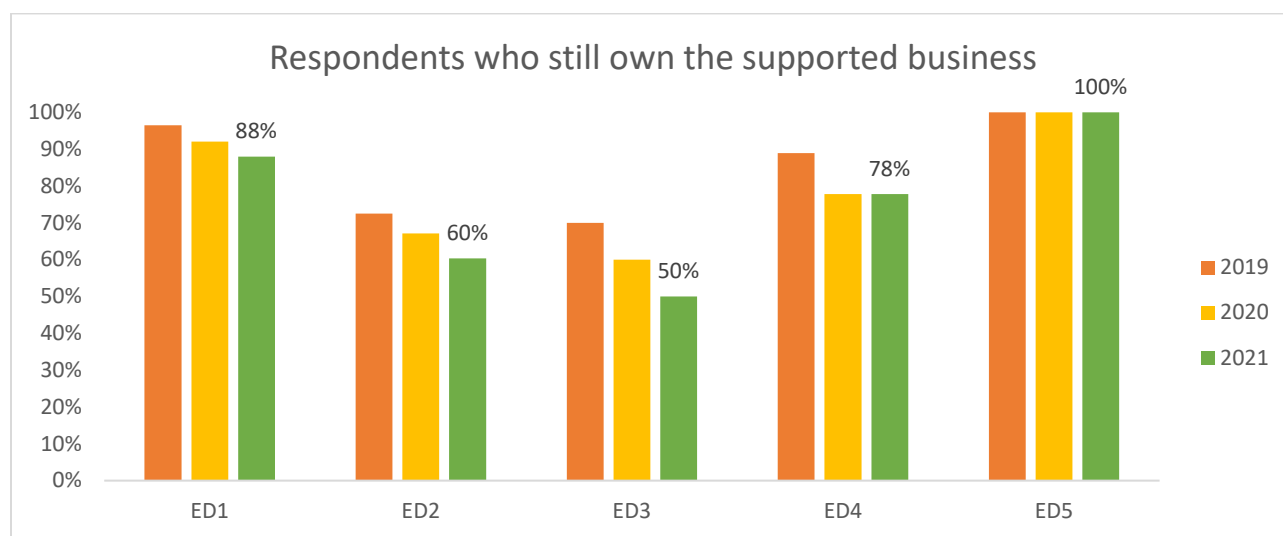
(15/64) were doing this at the time of the 2021 survey. That respondents ran businesses on the side in addition to another economic activity suggests that the projects had been successful in targeting people with entrepreneurial dispositions. However, while proliferation of businesses may be seen as positive, individuals may be broadening their economic activity as a risk diversification strategy and contributing to economic sprawl.

Characteristics of supported businesses

How many businesses supported by ED are still in existence?

Of the ED respondents, 77.2% reported that they were still running the supported business at the time of the 2021 survey. This included all 14 of the ED5 respondents, 88.0% of ED1 respondents, 60.4% of ED2 respondents and half (5/10) of the ED3 respondents. ED4 had 7/9 of supported businesses still in existence. Figure 2 shows the proportion of beneficiaries who owned businesses supported by the Jobs Fund at the time of each of the three waves, from 2019 - 2021.

Figure 2: Respondents who still owned the supported business, by project



n=596 (ED1 341, ED2 222, ED3 10, ED4 9, ED5 14)

How many beneficiaries have started new businesses since participating in the interventions?

At the time of the 2021 survey, respondents had started 26 new businesses, 22 of which were less than a year old, after receiving Jobs Fund support.

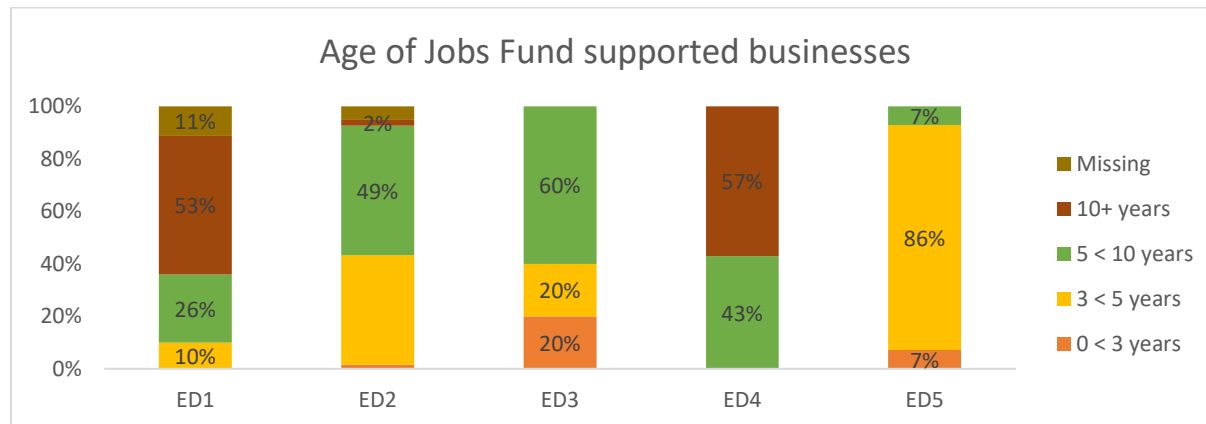
How successful have the ED projects been in creating sustainable businesses based on turnover and profit?

The Jobs Fund supported businesses varied in economic focus and start dates – ED3, ED2 and ED5 were new businesses, while ED1 and ED4 supported businesses at varying stages of development. Unsurprisingly then, the majority of ED4 (4/7) and ED1 (52.7%) businesses were more than 10 years old. The majority (3/5) of ED3 businesses and the largest share of ED2 (49.3%) businesses were 5-10 years old, while the majority of ED5 businesses (12/14) were 3-5 years old. The longevity of the Jobs Fund supported businesses is very positive considering that about 40% of informal business start-ups close within six months.¹⁰ However, there are no up to date national data on micro and small businesses and therefore no benchmarks for comparing business longevity.

¹⁰ Fourie, F (2018). "Analysing the informal sector in South Africa: Knowledge and policy gaps, conceptual and data challenges", in "The South African Informal Sector: Creating Jobs, Reducing Poverty". Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Figure 3 highlights the age of the businesses at the time of the 2021 survey.

Figure 3: Age of Jobs Fund supported business at the time of the 2021 survey

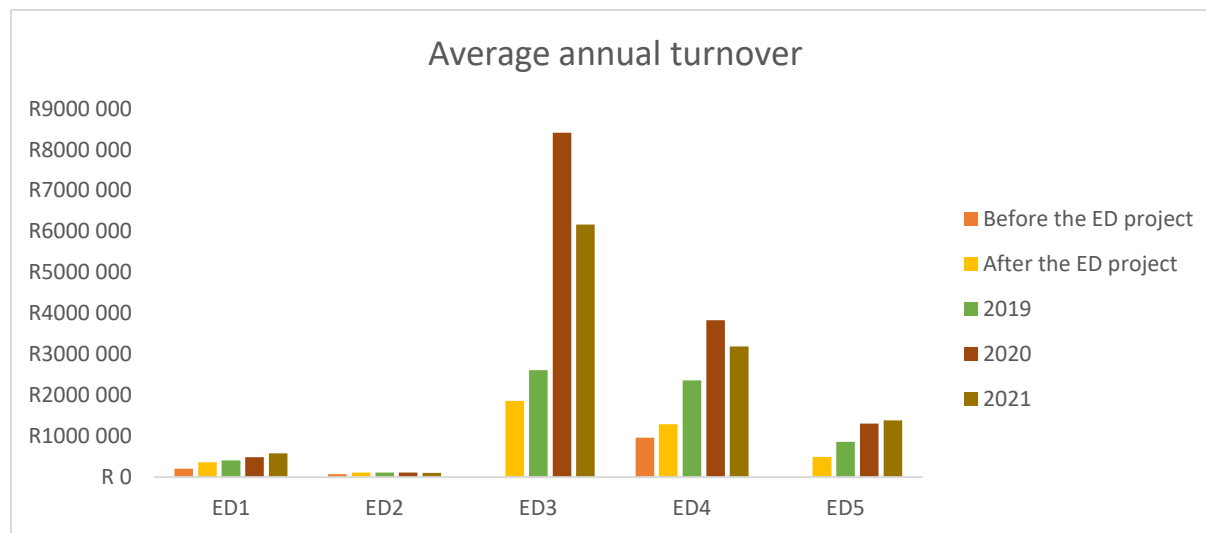


n=460 (ED1 300, ED2 134, ED3 5, ED4 7, ED5 14)

Turnover

In all waves, average annual turnover for businesses run by ED3 and ED4 was more than R2 million while ED5 businesses breached the R1 million mark in 2020. Businesses in the ED1 project had an annual turnover of less than R600 000 in all waves, and ED2 projects had the least turnover of less the R150 000 per annum in all waves. There was a sharp decline in turnover for ED3 businesses between 2020 and 2021, which could be due to lingering effects of the COVID-19 restrictions during various levels of national lockdown. Figure 4 shows annual business turnover for the projects over time.

Figure 4: Average annual turnover before, immediately after and at the time of the 2019, 2020 and 2021 surveys



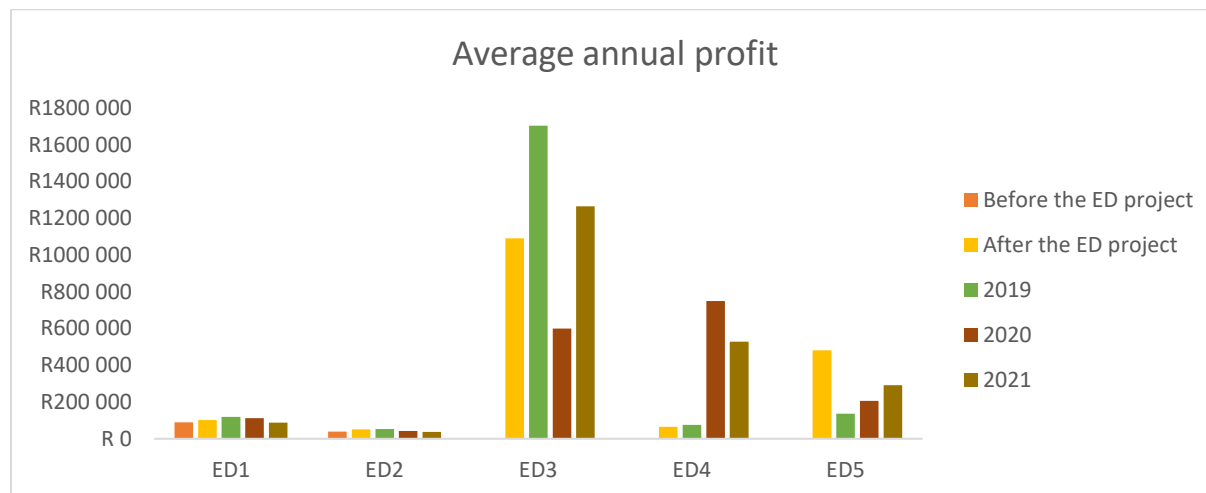
Before the ED project n=192 (ED1 133, ED2 57, ED4 2); After the ED project n= 377 (ED1 179, ED2 185, ED3 7, ED4 2, ED5 4); 2019 n= 357 (ED1 193, ED2 149, ED3 4, ED4 4, ED5 7); 2020 n=422 (ED1 246, ED2 154, ED3 5, ED4 3, ED5 14); 2021 n=425 (ED1 246, ED2 154, ED3 5, ED4 3, ED5 14)

Profit

Fluctuation is evident with respect to the real value of annual average profit, and it is difficult to determine any clear trends. The averages for all ED projects are affected by a few extreme outlier values. Average annual

profit was highest at the time of the 2021 survey for the formal businesses: ED3, followed by ED4 and ED5. A similar scenario was found at the time of the 2020 survey. Relatively speaking, average annual profit was highest in real terms for ED1 and ED2 at the time of the 2019 survey and had declined year on year since then, while ED5’ profits had increased during the same time period but less than in the time period directly after the ED project. Figure 5 shows average annual profit for projects over time – all data is adjusted for inflation.

Figure 5: Average annual profit before the jobs fund project, immediately after, and at the time of the 2019, 2020 and 2021 surveys



Before the ED project n=203 (ED1 145, ED2 58); After the ED project n=429 (ED1 221, ED2 189, ED3 7, ED4 3, ED5 9); 2019 n=399 (ED1 234, ED2 150, ED3 4, ED4 3, ED5 8); 2020 n=392 (ED1 223, ED2 157, ED3 6, ED4 8, ED5 14); 2021 n=502 (ED1 317, ED2 157, ED3 6, ED4 8, ED5 14)

How many (permanent and temporary, full time and part time) jobs do ED businesses maintain, and how many jobs have been created since the intervention?

At the time of the 2021 survey, a total of 502¹¹ business owners reported that – excluding the owner – their businesses employed 966 individuals, an increase of 72 as compared to the 894 employees that 517 businesses employed at the time of the 2020 survey and 783 employees that the same 517 businesses (operating at the time of the 2020 survey) employed when the 2019 survey was conducted. This is a positive outcome for these businesses and is encouraging given the massive increase in unemployment in South Africa in 2020 and 2021.

Businesses supported by ED1 had the highest number of employees overall, and ED3 and ED4 had the highest average number of employees per business. There was a steady increase in employment and average number of employees between survey waves for ED5 and ED1. The number of businesses with no employees declined between survey waves for ED1 and ED2. However, there was a net loss in employment for ED4, ED3 and ED2 businesses at the time of the W3 survey as compared to 2020, and the ED3 businesses employed fewer individuals than at the time of the 2019 survey. Table 5 shows employees by project, over time.

¹¹ Fifteen owners lost their businesses between 2020 and 2021 but stayed in the survey.

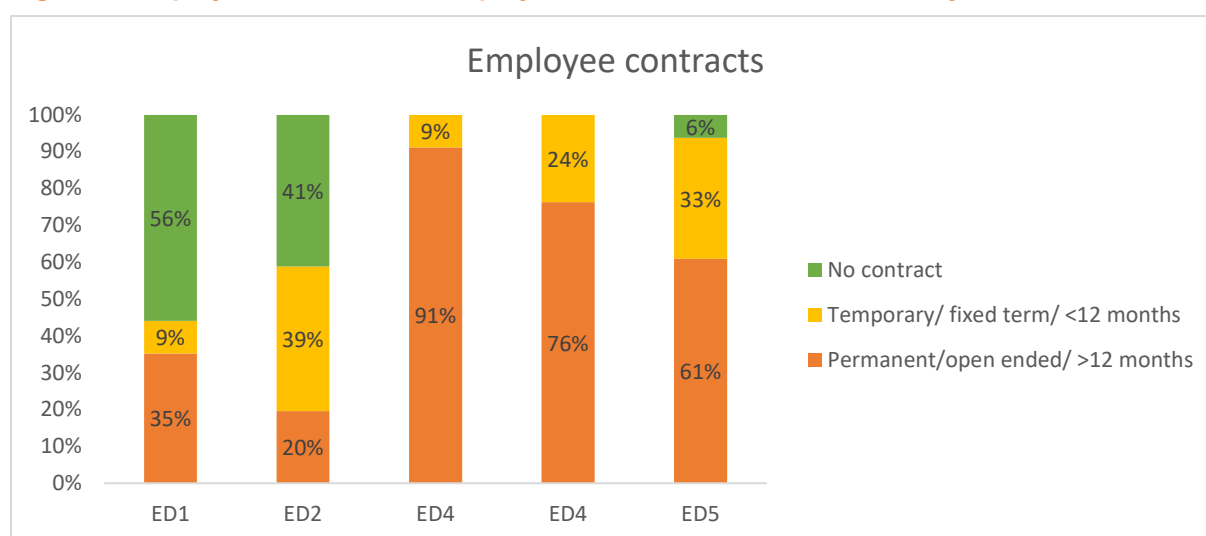
Table 5: Mean and total number of employees at the time of the 2019, 2020 and 2021 surveys

Jobs Fund Partner	2019 businesses with no employees	2019 employees	2019 mean	2020 businesses with no employees	2020 employees	2020 mean	2021 businesses with no employees	2021 employees	2021 mean
ED1	105	517	1.6	73	588	1.8	68	673	2.1
ED2	141	46	0.3	133	61	0.4	123	51	0.3
ED3	1	112	18.7	0	114	22.8	1	110	18.3
ED4	2	55	7.9	1	77	11	1	68	9.7
ED5	0	53	3.8	0	54	3.9	0	64	4.6

2019 n=517 (ED1 321, ED2 169, ED3 6, ED4 7, ED5 14); 2020 n= 516 (ED1 321, ED2 169, ED3 5, ED4 7, ED5 14); 2021 n=502 (ED1 317, ED2 157, ED3 6, ED4 8, ED5 14)

At the time of the 2021 survey, the largest share (44.7%) of employees of the ED business owners were reported to have permanent contracts, but this had declined as compared to the 2020 and 2019 surveys, where more than half of employees in 2020 and 48.2% in 2019 had permanent contracts. The reduction in permanent contracting is in line with national trends¹². In particular, there were sharp increases in the proportion of employees with no contracts in the ED1 and ED2 businesses, reversing gains made between the 2019 and 2020 surveys, probably because of the economic hardships borne by businesses as a result of COVID-19. Figure 6 highlights the types of employment contracts by project at the time of the 2021 survey.

Figure 6: Employee contracts for ED projects at the time of the 2021 survey



n=966 (ED1 673, ED2 51, ED3 110, ED4 68, ED5 64)

The net gain in employment was highest for ED1 businesses (85 employees) while there was a net loss of two employees for ED3. Gains were highest in percentage terms for ED4 (expanded by 23.6%, from 55 employees at the time of the 2019 survey to 68 at the time of the 2021 survey), and ED5 businesses (increased by 20.7%,

¹² StatsSA. (2021). Quarterly labour force survey, Q3: 2021. Statistical release P0211. Pretoria: StatsSA. <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/P02113rdQuarter2021.pdf>

from 53 employees at the time of the 2019 survey to 64 employees in 2021 survey). ED3 businesses employed the highest average number of employees (18.3), followed by ED4 (9.7).

That the majority of employees of the ED beneficiaries' businesses were aged 25-34 and over two thirds were youth aged 15-34 is commendable in supporting national objectives to reduce youth unemployment, and mirrors the trend in SFW employment where a large proportion of youth was also employed. This is also aligned with the goals/objectives of the Jobs Fund. According to StatsSA¹³ unemployment is highest amongst youth aged 15-24 (over 74% in Quarter 3 in 2020 and 2021), and then youth aged 25-34 – youth bore the brunt of job losses due to COVID-19.¹⁴ These businesses were therefore making an important contribution to employment in general and youth employment in particular.

Support

Targeted support can play a key role in enabling small businesses to thrive and work seekers to access job opportunities. In 2021, the value of ongoing/continued support by a number of the ED Jobs Fund Partners (JFPs) (i.e. ED5, ED1 and ED2), which took a variety of forms, became apparent. The proportion of respondents reporting that they were still in touch with and still receiving support from these JFPs, which was valued, increased over time. The exception was ED4 (a project which ended in 2015), where eight out of the nine beneficiaries indicated that they were not in contact with the JFP.

The COVID-19 support provided by ED1¹⁵ had limited reach at the time of the 2020 survey; however, in 2021, 74.8% of ED1 respondents reported that their businesses had received support to address the challenges of COVID-19, and the vast majority of these reported that this was provided by ED1. The vast majority of COVID-19 business support was provided by the Jobs Fund/JFPs, namely ED1 and ED5 (10/14 respondents received support). Some ED3 and ED4 businesses received support in the form of money from UIF/TERS. Support from the Jobs Fund/JFPs proved critical in the absence of alternative sources of business support – particularly for informal businesses - and suggests that JFPs can play a vital role in reaching and channelling support to small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) during times of crisis and unexpected shocks.

The ED5 case study respondents highlighted the important role that peer support in the form of a community of practice (CoP) that uses WhatsApp can play in facilitating information sharing and problem solving relevant to the nurses' work, for example, diagnosis of illnesses and clarification regarding business processes. The quote below illustrates this:

We are connected to other nurses. We have a group where we discuss anything. It's a WhatsApp group. But we also call each other, we do support each other. [Azania]

Changes in life circumstances

What have been the changes in the life circumstances of primary beneficiaries?

The vast majority (96.0%) of ED respondents indicated that they contributed financially to their households, with 95.0% reporting that they knew how their contribution was used, a slight increase as compared to at the time of the 2019 survey. Respondents who were still running the supported business were more likely to contribute financially than those who were not.

¹³ StatsSA. (2021). Quarterly labour force survey, Q3: 2021. Statistical release P0211. Pretoria: StatsSA

¹⁴ Ranchhod, V., & Daniels, R. (2021). "Labour market dynamics in South Africa in the time of COVID-19: Evidence from 2019 of the NIDS-CRAM Survey". Working Paper Series Number 265, Version 1. Cape Town: SALDRU, UCT.

¹⁵ ED1 received COVID-19 relief funding from the Jobs Fund and disbursed a once-off grant of R6 000 to supported businesses to assist with economic hardship resulting from COVID-19.

Average annual owner salary increased over time until the time of the Wave 2 survey for ED1, ED4, ED3 and ED5 respondents, but declined for all projects between the 2020 and 2021 surveys. The contraction of owner salary for ED3 and ED2 – of -67.5% and 56.5% respectively – was substantial. ED2 respondents' average salary has always been below R4 000/month¹⁶. ED3 and ED2 are the only projects to have experienced a decline in real terms in owner salary from the six months directly after participating in the project to the time of the 2021 survey; ED1, ED4 and ED5 average income increased to the time of the 2020 survey and dipped slightly in the past year.

ED5 respondents were overall happiest and gave the highest ratings¹⁷ for career satisfaction and financial situation as compared to all other projects while ED3 respondents gave the lowest happiness and financial situation ratings and the joint lowest (with ED2) rating for career ambition. Financial situation ratings were also lower at the time of the 2021 survey than in 2019. These findings are not surprising given the challenging context. More positively, average career ambition ratings increased despite the challenging times. Career ambition ratings were higher for the ED as compared to the SFW respondents (with the exception of SFW2, which equalled the ED3 and ED2 ratings), suggesting that running a business is a rewarding career choice.

Value for money, scaling and replicating

Which projects or project components display good value for money?

The CEA considered the money spent in relation to the number of jobs created. However, the CEA provides crude results given that the ED project models are very different in terms of the individuals targeted, types of businesses supported for varying durations of time, and the proven success and sustainability of the supported businesses over time. The research team identified criteria and developed indicators to enable a more holistic assessment of value for money. The criteria had one or more indicators, which were each rated on a five-point scale, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. The criteria and ratings are discussed in line with the results in Table 6. In terms of cost effectiveness, projects rated excellent were **very cost effective**, with a **cost per job (Jobs Fund Grant Cost only) less than the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita**, which was **R83 844** in 2020¹⁸. The cost per job for ED1 was R35 161, ED4 R29 635, ED3 R68 433 and ED2 R25 344 so all these projects were very cost effective. A score of 3 shows that a project was **cost effective**, with **the cost per job being less than three times the GDP per capita (that is, less than R251 532)**. Although more costly than the other projects, ED5 was still cost effective at R141 930. Considering permanent jobs created, a score of 5 signals that the target for creation of permanent jobs, based on the Jobs Fund contract, was exceeded, which was the case with four projects. ED1's score of 4 (indicating at least 81% and at most 100% achieved) shows that the the project target was achieved by 100%.

Table 6: ED projects value for money

	ED1	ED4	ED3	ED2	ED5
Cost effectiveness	5	5	5	5	3
Permanent jobs created	4	5	5	5	5
Equity	3	3	4	3	4
Still own supported businesses at least three years after starting the ED project	5	4	3	3	5

¹⁶ ED2 considers this the benchmark for eradicating poverty.

¹⁷ Respondents were asked to place themselves on a ladder with ten rungs from one (terrible) to 10 (excellent) in terms of general happiness, career ambition and financial situation.

¹⁸ JET Jobs Fund Tracer study Cost Effectiveness Analysis report

	ED1	ED4	ED3	ED2	ED5
Business growth/ development	3	1	1	2	3
Owner income	3	4	3	3	5
Total	23	22	21	21	25
Overall evaluation	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Good

Four equity indicators were generated using GMS data, for permanent jobs created (female employees, people with disabilities, previously disadvantaged individuals and youth). The criteria for the ratings for each indicator are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Equity criteria for evaluating success in employment in permanent jobs

	5. Excellent	4. Good	3. Adequate	2. Somewhat	1. Poor
Sex	At least 50% female employment	At least 45 and at most 49% female employment	At least 40 and at most 44% female employment	At least 35 and at most 40% female employment	Less than 35% female employment
Previously Disadvantaged Individuals (PDI)	At least 95% employment of PDI race groups	At least 90% and at most 94% employment of PDI race groups	At least 85% and at most 89% employment of PDI race groups	At least 80% and at most 84% employment of PDI race groups	Less than 80% employment of PDI race groups
People with Disabilities (PWD)	At least 2% ¹⁹ employment of PWD	At least 1.5% and at most 1.9% employment of PWD	At least 1% and at most 1.8% employment of PWD	At least 0.5% and at most 1.7% employment of PWD	Less than 0.5% employment of PWD
Youth	At least 80% youth (<35) employment	At least 70% and at most 79% youth employment	At least 60% and at most 69% youth employment	At least 50% and at most 59% youth employment	Less than 50% youth employment

The equity criteria were averaged and the overall score for equity was out of a possible 5 points. All four projects were good to excellent for indicators on sex, PDI and youth but only ED5 was somewhat satisfactory, with one business employing one employee with disabilities while all the other projects employed none.

With regard to scores for ownership of supported businesses, among ED1 and ED5 businesses, at least 85% of respondents were still running a business supported by the Jobs Fund while 70%-84% of ED4 businesses were running a business supported by the Jobs Fund (4), and among the ED3 and ED2 projects, 50-69% respondents were running a business supported by the Jobs Fund.

Considering business growth, only ED1 and ED5 businesses scored a 3 (adequate), meaning that growth in average business turnover was between 1-25% between 2020 and 2021. Turnover for ED1 businesses increased by 19% while that for ED5 businesses grew by 6.3%. ED4 and ED3 both scored a 1, meaning that their average business turnover declined by 10+% between 2020 and 2021. Turnover for ED4 declined by 16.7% while that for ED3 declined by 26.6%. ED2 businesses' turnover decreased the least, by 6.0%, hence the score of 2 (Average business turnover increased by 0% or declined by up to 9% between 2020 and 2021).

Regarding owner income, only ED5 scored a 5 (At least 90% of business owners earned an income – salary and/or withdrawal from the business) as 92.9% of business owners were drawing a salary from their businesses.

¹⁹ Based on national targets for employment of PWD

ED4 scored a 4 (Between 80%-89% of business owners earn an income – salary and/or withdrawal from the business) as 7/9 businesses owners were drawing a salary. ED1, ED3 and ED2 had the lowest rating of 3 (Between 70%-79% of business owners earn an income – salary and/or withdrawal from the business).

Overall, and considering all the indicators, four of the ED projects can be considered adequate and ED5 considered good. All projects offered fair value for money. ED1, ED2 and ED4 are potentially good candidates for scaling to other provinces and settings (i.e. rural) and types of business. However, in the case of ED4 participant dissatisfaction with some aspects of the support model should be addressed. All projects should improve their targeting of people with disabilities. For ED2, a key consideration is that saturation has been reached in terms of all major clothing retailers donating their excess stock, and potential scalability should be explored with respect to other product areas. ED5 is a promising model which offers good value for money. It adds considerable social value and could be attractive to impact investors; however, it is relatively early to be able to assess the full employment creation potential and sustainability of ED5 businesses.

3.3 SFW findings

3.3.1 Beneficiary targeting

How effective were the selection and/or matching processes in selecting the right participants?

For the SFW projects, SFW2 and SFW4 reached their target groups in all specified criteria. SFW1, SFW2 and SFW4 targeted youth, and the mean ages of respondents at the start of the project were 26.5, 25 and 23.8 years respectively. SFW1 fell short on education level as their target was individuals with at least Grade 10 but no tertiary qualifications; yet 20% of the respondents had tertiary qualifications, and 11% were graduates before starting the project. Disability was a criterion only for the SFW3 project, and there was excellent targeting as almost all beneficiaries had disabilities. However, SFW3 did not do so well in recruiting as many young people as the mean age for respondents was 34.6 years when they started the project.

3.3.2 SFW outcomes

How successful have projects been in placing beneficiaries in jobs?

Each project had agreed targets against the relevant job placement categories, as reflected in Table 8,²⁰ which highlights that to a great extent, targets were mostly met or exceeded in several of the job placement categories. SFW1 and SFW2 met or exceeded all set targets, and SFW3 met one of its targets by a huge margin, missing the other target narrowly. SFW4 exceeded two of three set targets, and SFW5 exceeded one of three targets. Altogether, the **SFW projects created 49 396 job opportunities exceeding a collective target of 45 818.**

Table 8: Placement of SFW beneficiaries into jobs & creation of jobs by ED beneficiaries

Project	Permanent jobs created		Placement in permanent jobs beyond project partners		Placement in permanent jobs with project partners		Short term jobs created	
	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
SFW1	1 445	1 678 (116%)	NT	-	1 116	1 197 (107%)	173	173 (100%)
SFW2	NT	-	NT	-	301	301 (100%)	NT	-
SFW3	NT	-	NT	-	1 190	1 172 (98%)	8	117 (1463%)
SFW4	NT	-	7 482	1 051 821 (141%)	10 133	9 146 (90%)	23194	23 387 (101%)

²⁰ The data in the table is not survey data but data reported to the Jobs Fund by project partners on GMS.

²¹ Jobs Fund Partners could adjust agreed targets when a request for approval to do so was granted by the Jobs Fund and authorised by the Head of Fund.

Project	Permanent jobs created		Placement in permanent jobs beyond project partners		Placement in permanent jobs with project partners		Short term jobs created	
SFW5	600	657 (110%)	176	36 (20%)	NT	-	18	9 (50%)

NT = no target specified

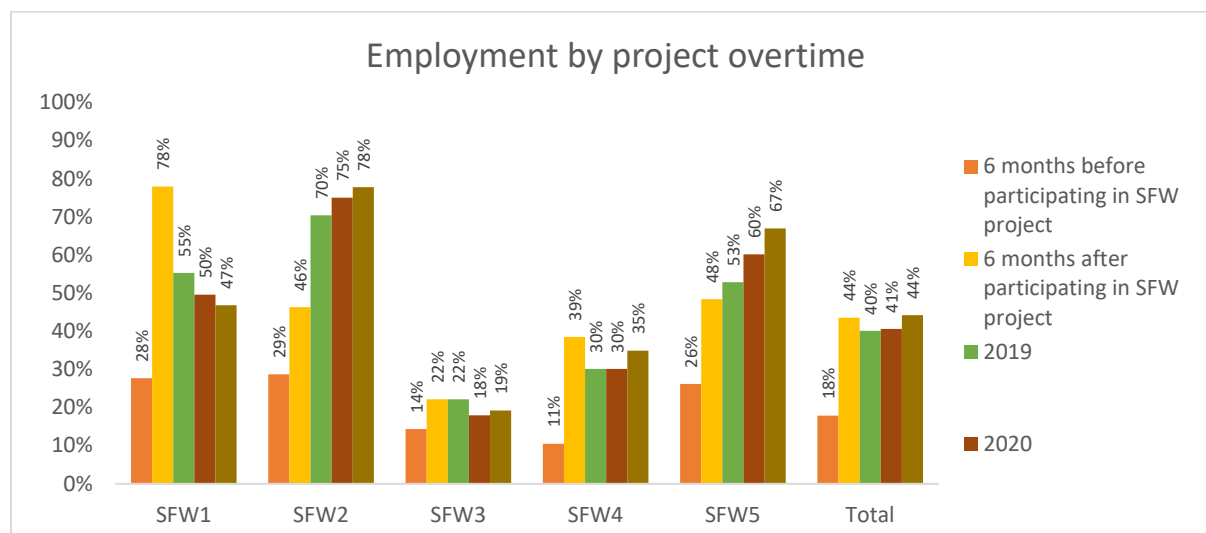
Source: GMS data, 31 March 2021

What is the rate of employment amongst the beneficiaries?

The employment rate among SFW beneficiaries at the time of 2021 was 44.2%, a clear indication of how the SFW projects had improved employment outcomes as compared to six months before the Jobs Fund project. The overall employment rate for the cohort improved by 25.7 percentage points, from 17.9% six months before the SFW projects to 43.6% six months after participating in the SFW project. The employment rate of SFW2 and SFW5 beneficiaries consistently increased from the period six months after the Jobs Fund project, but in contrast, the employment rates for the SFW1, SFW3 and SFW4 projects started fluctuating after initial success. **Despite these fluctuations, none of these projects' employment rates reverted to the levels that they were at six months before Jobs Fund participation.** We could not find national data for benchmarking the data on employment of people with disabilities.

Employment outcomes over time were highly differentiated by project, with SFW2 and SFW5 consistently exhibiting improvements in the employment rate of beneficiaries over time, as reflected in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Employment by project over time



n = 1 159 (SFW1 141, SFW2 108, SFW3 167, SFW4 522, SFW5 221)

A unique feature of SFW5 and SFW2 projects is that they were sector specific projects that trained people in areas of skills needs, and the JFPs had strong relationships with employers, which most likely explains their exceptional success in placement. Further, for SFW2, most of the respondents were graduates, and nationally, employment outcomes are favourable for graduates.²² Moreover, the SFW2 respondents had also been exposed to workplace based training, which for some culminated in being employed permanently. Workplace exposure may also have improved the employability of SFW5 graduates.

²²StatsSA. (2021). Quarterly labour force survey, Q3: 2021. Statistical release P0211. Pretoria: StatsSA.

The PSM showed that SFW beneficiaries were more likely than similar individuals who were part of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) to be employed in Waves 2 and 3. The significant difference held true for both male and female respondents, all race groups, all age groups, all educational levels and respondents from all provinces. SFW beneficiaries, therefore, exhibited good ability to withstand external shocks in terms of retaining employment, particularly during COVID-19. The PSM also suggests that supported work seekers programmes catalyse access to employment.

Sustainability of jobs

How long, on average, are beneficiaries retained in the jobs in which they were placed?

Of the 505 respondents who had been employed six months after the SFW project, 115 (22.8%) were still employed by the same employer at the time of the 2021 survey. These beneficiaries overall had been employed by the same employer for an average of 4.1 years, from an average of 3 years for SFW1 beneficiaries to an average of 4.7 years for SFW2 beneficiaries. The minimum and maximum average number of years they were employed with the same employer ranged from 1.9 to 7.6 years.²³

To what degree have the projects enabled job mobility among beneficiaries?

In 2021, 30.5% of respondents who were employed stated that they had moved jobs and were in a new job with a new employer, and more than two thirds had stayed with the same employer, highlighting a high security of tenure among beneficiaries. Across the waves, 80% or more of beneficiaries who were employed had permanent contracts, and 92% in 2021 were contracted with the companies they worked for. The average annual salary of those who were in a new job with a new employer in 2021 was more than what it had been in 2020, suggesting that respondents may have moved for better opportunities.

Support

Work seekers from disadvantaged groups and low-income households experience several interrelated barriers in their search for jobs, including high costs of job searching²⁴. The SFW projects – to differing degrees – offered multiple forms of support including information about jobs, training, placement into jobs and mentoring. Some SFW respondents, some from projects that had ended five years prior to the 2021 survey, stayed in contact with their JFP. At the time of the 2021 survey, 29.3% (340) of the respondents reported that they were still communicating with their JFP. This was an increase from those who reported being in contact in Waves 1 and 2. In 2019, 22.7% (263) of respondents reported this and in 2020, 26.1% (303). Staying in contact with JFPs enabled beneficiaries to continue receiving support and made it easier to track respondents. The most valued support respondents mentioned receiving and wishing they would receive (those not receiving support) was information about jobs, employment and follow up calls and visits. In 2020, 75.5% (474) of those not receiving support wished they were still receiving employment support, and 56.2% (323) wished they were still receiving information about job opportunities. In 2021, 72.3% (68) of those wishing they were still receiving support indicated they would have liked to have received information about jobs while 48.9% (68) mentioned requiring support with accessing employment. There was a greater demand for this support among respondents from SFW1, SFW3 and SFW4, projects, where placement in jobs was more challenging for beneficiaries than it was for SFW2 and SFW5 beneficiaries. This suggests that beneficiaries require ongoing work seeking support since their challenges do not end because their Jobs Fund project has ended.

²³ Note: The dates when respondents completed their participation in the SFW projects differed, which impacts on the number of years between finishing the SFW project (and therefore six months after completing the SFW project) and the time of the 2021 survey

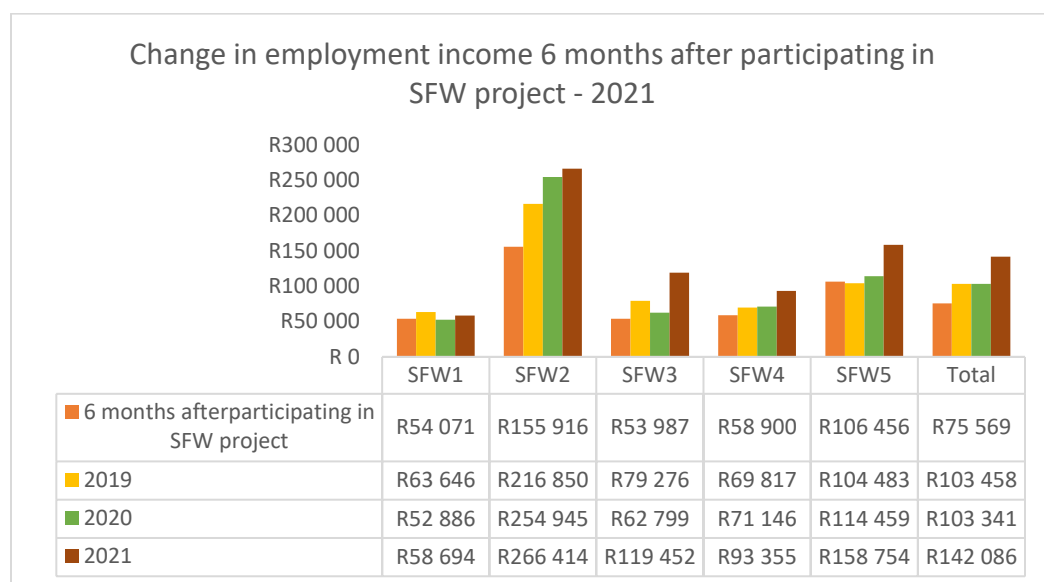
²⁴ Open Dialogue. (2021). The cost of job-seeking

Changes in life circumstances

Access to financial resources seemed to have improved agency in the economic participation and decision making of respondents in their households. In 2021, over 90% of SFW employed respondents indicated that they were contributing to household finances as compared to 48.4% of those who were unemployed. There was an increase among respondents indicating that they actively participated in household decision making – 58.8% indicated that they were involved in decision making. Those who were employed, followed by those running a business, then those in a learnership were more likely to report that they were involved in household decision making. Most respondents were struggling in terms of happiness and career ambition²⁵, with 54% indicating they were struggling with happiness in Waves 1 and 2 and just under 50% reporting the same in 2021. Over two fifths of respondents were struggling with career ambition in Waves 1 and 3 while more than half were struggling in 2020. While more than half indicated they were suffering because of their financial situation in 2019, the situation improved somewhat, and less than half of the respondents reported they were suffering in Waves 2 and 3. SFW2 had the most respondents indicating that they were thriving in terms of career ambition and happiness but they were mostly struggling in terms of financial situation.

The average income grew for employed respondents in all projects. as highlighted in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Change in employment income 6 months after participating in the SFW project



n 6 months after participating in the SFW project 367 (SFW1 85, SFW2 36, SFW3 21, SFW4 159, SFW5 66)
 n 2019 312 (SFW1 51, SFW2 57, SFW3 26, SFW4 115, SFW5 63)
 n 2020 280 (SFW1 44, SFW2 39, SFW3 25, SFW4 106, SFW5 66)
 n 2021 327 (SFW1 34, SFW2 48, SFW3 28, SFW4 119, SFW5 98)

Value for money, scaling and replicating

Which projects or project components display good value for money?

As was the case with the ED projects, six value for money criteria were developed for the SFW projects, and the results are presented in Table 9 for each indicator. There were some differences in the indicators as the

²⁵ The ladder ratings responses were grouped into three categories: suffering (1-4); struggling (5-7); and thriving (8-10).

SFW indicators included permanent contracts, employment rate at 2021 and job satisfaction, indicators specific to the SFW projects. Four of the SFW projects were **very cost effective**, the cost per job for SFW1 was R19 448, for SFW2 R56 720, SFW3 R12 322 and for SFW4 R6 938. The SFW5 project was the most expensive although still very cost effective at R102 477 per job. SFW4 and SFW1 exceeded their targets for permanent jobs created while SFW2 achieved a 100% success rate and SFW3 98% (although, as highlighted earlier, most jobs were not sustainable). SFW5 achieved the least of the required targets in permanent jobs created and managed a 65% success rate. As with the ED projects, the SFW projects performed poorly on employment of people with disabilities, with only SFW4 and SFW3 creating permanent employment for people with disabilities. With an employment rate of 78% in 2021 among respondents, SFW2’s employment rate stayed impressive over time, and SFW3 respondents struggled over time, with an employment rate among respondents of only 19% in 2021. SFW5 respondents reported the highest job satisfaction, with 85% reporting this.

Table 9: SFW projects’ value for money

	SFW1	SFW2	SFW3	SFW4	SFW5
Cost effectiveness	5	5	5	5	3
Permanent jobs realised	5	4	4	5	3
Permanent contracts	5	5	5	5	5
Equity (note that the equity criteria are averaged and the overall score for equity is out of a possible 5 points)	4	3	5	5	3
% employment rate at 2021 survey	2	5	1	2	4
Job satisfaction	3	3	3	3	5
Total score	24	25	23	25	23
Overall evaluation	Good	Good	Adequate	Good	Adequate

Overall, SFW1, SFW2 and SFW4 offered good value for money while SFW3 and SFW5 offered adequate value. All projects could be replicated and scaled, with modifications. SFW1 is suitable for setting up in townships and rural areas as part of the township and rural economy, it has the potential to enable remote work access for people with disabilities. SFW3 can partner with other government departments, particularly Supported Employment Enterprises that offer skilled employment for people with disabilities. All projects can also include people with disabilities in their targeting, and synergies can be created among projects where SFW1, SFW2, SFW4 and SFW5 recruit beneficiaries directly from SFW3.

4 Conclusions & Recommendations

The three -year tracer study highlighted that intentionality is critical in addressing employment challenges in South Africa. The dedicated focus by 4/5 SFW projects on the **recruitment of youth and their placement** in jobs showed that youth unemployment can be addressed through Challenge Fund projects. However while recruitment was largely successful for women and people with disabilities, results were not equally as good in job placement, suggesting that **both recruitment and placement** are integral to employment creation programmes.

The projects exhibited varied and mostly positive results considering the national contracting economic context and COVID-19. Business sustainability was high – 84.2% of ED beneficiaries were still running a business: 77.2% were running the business supported by the Jobs Fund, and 7.0% were running another business.

Among the ED projects, 2/5 supported informal businesses operating in the wholesale and retail trade sector, which is not a growth sector. Nonetheless, there was a high rate of maintenance/sustainability, signifying those informal businesses in non-growth sectors can be successfully supported to grow, and it is worth considering ED projects that support non-growth as well as growth sectors.

Inferential analysis found that SFW beneficiaries were more likely to be employed than similar individuals who participated in the QLFS at the time of the 2020 and 3 surveys. Importantly, in all waves, youth (15-34) who had participated in SFW projects were more likely to be employed than their counterparts in the QLFS, suggesting the power of targeting in catalysing and sustaining youth employment.

The ED and SFW projects displayed adequate to good value for money and most could be scaled, with modifications to maximise impact.

While on the whole, the findings are positive, some big and potentially impactful opportunities were missed, particularly to encourage the partners to collaborate to enhance impact.

Recommendation 1

Improve national data sets for employment of PWD and on small businesses for benchmarking

There was a constraint in getting benchmarks to ascertain the success of the ED projects in supporting sustainable business development and SFW3 in helping disabled persons to find employment. We therefore recommend improving the supply and availability of national data on small businesses (including informal businesses) and the employment and unemployment of PWD. Relevant studies could also enhance understanding of (and provide comparable data) on the challenges young people face in the labour market.

Recommendation 2

Utilise JFPs as conduits to provide information and support during times of crisis

The SMMEs in the study – and informal businesses in particular – received very limited support beyond that provided by the Jobs Fund/JFPs during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the case of ED1 and ED5 support provided by the JFP fulfilled a critical support role wrt funding, information and training. Other business owners – and work seekers - were less fortunate.

Recommendation 3

Provide continued support even after projects have ended

The lower survey response rates and refusal by some SFW respondents to participate was consistent with those receiving lower levels of post-project support. The numbers of respondents who accessed jobs and then lost them reinforces the need for on-going support beyond first job placement (to recognise the zig zags in the economy). A continuum of support and referral to other ED support initiatives should be offered to business owners, ensuring that if one business venture fails and another is started, this can also be supported.

Recommendation 4

Diversified support to different sectors addresses the needs of varied individuals

Although some projects did not impress in all aspects in terms of value for money, they nevertheless played a role in creating employment for their target beneficiaries. The Jobs Fund should therefore continue to support

job creation initiatives in identified growth sectors/areas including their value chains, but must not ignore support in other sectors/areas that may not have high growth potential, but can support sustainable livelihoods.

Recommendation 5

Improve targeting and incentivise employment of people with disabilities

Whilst the targeted participants were largely reached **greater consideration should be given to who is targeted**, given intersections of race, gender, disability, and geography which combine to entrench deprivation. Ensure that initiatives **target and accommodate female business owners** and **persons with disabilities** by factoring such considerations in at the design stage. Prioritise support for and the employment of disabled people, who are (with the exception of SFW3 and some other targeted initiatives) underrepresented in the SFW and ED interventions. For example, through application of the Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) codes, more points could be given to employers who employ disabled persons in permanent jobs and with market related salaries for long periods of time.

Recommendation 6

Expand geographic reach of projects

Most of the SFW and ED projects were offered in urban areas. Ensure that ED and SFW initiatives are also offered outside metropolises and target district and local municipalities that do not usually have budgets for catalysing employment in their localities. This could be done by having networked projects, where key projects in the metros are replicated in the rural areas, via the provision of remote/virtual support or through special windows where service providers working in remote areas could be given an opportunity to implement their own projects that can stimulate business development and employment creation.

Recommendation 7

Take a long-term view regarding support for ED and job creation and consider social value

The cost per job of ED projects ranged from R25 344 to R141 930, somewhat higher than that for SFW projects. This is unsurprising considering that SFW projects typically support work seekers directly - often matching them with vacant jobs - whilst ED projects support the start-up and development of small businesses, which provide self-employment and may create new jobs in time. The cost per job varied substantially within funding windows and the projects had social value - broader than job creation - which could be recognised via the use of value for money criterion and indicators and social return on investment (SRoI).

Recommendation 8

Promote integration between projects and across funding windows

Promote integration to create more fluidity for beneficiaries to move in and out of ED and SFW supported spaces. For example, SFW beneficiaries could be employed in ED beneficiaries' enterprises, work seekers who wish to start businesses could be referred to appropriate JFPs. Some innovative products that have proven to be successful (e.g. the ED1 Point of Sale (PoS) terminal) could be extended to other ED projects that may benefit from it (e.g. the ED5 projects that deal with cash and stock).

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