An Assessment of Current Conditions in the Informal Construction Labour Sector and whether these Conditions Accommodate Training

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SUBMISSION STATEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The informal sector of the construction industry makes a major contribution to the employment of unskilled labour. The intention of the government is to use the construction industry to help uplift the unskilled labour. The hypothesis presented is that the new system of employment (subcontracting) does not accommodate training and skills development for those working in the informal sector anymore than did the previous system. Information concerning the informal sector was gained through a literature review and fieldwork on 200 workers and 49 employers in the Cape Town area. The sites chosen reflected diversity in terms of economic range, geographic range, area, category of building, and type and size of structure and of project.

The political and socio-economic background to the construction industry in South Africa over the past 20 years shows the effects of marginalisation of Black and Coloured people under Apartheid in terms of education, training and employment. The literature traces the development of training over this period. Research showed subcontractors to be operating on such narrow margins that they cannot easily afford the 1% training levy to CETA required to run the new training schemes and that they thus remain unregistered.

The results of the investigation into workers revealed the demographic history and skills acquisition. Priorities given by the majority of the sample were skills and training, permanent employment, better communication and conditions on site.
The majority of the empoyers' sample operated as SMMEs. Insecure conditions for their workers were evident in the lack of contracts provided and poor wages.

The thesis concludes that the requirements of training and skills development are not being met by the new system of employment. Recommendations are that the new training initiatives need to accommodate the trend to subcontracting. There should be increased negotiation with subcontractors' associations for registration of their members and compliance with this obligation ensured.

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GLOSSARY

Informal sector workers	Those employees who do not have regular employment and/or who work for subcontractors who operate without being registered. See full definitions in section 2.2
Informal sector employers	Those employers who do not register their enterprises or employees and do not offer permanent employment. See full definitions in section 2.2
Learnership	A work-based route for learning and gaining a qualification within the NQF

ANC	African National Congress
BCAWU	Building, Construction and Allied Workers Union
BCI	Black Construction Industry
BIBC	Building Industry Bargaining Councils
BIFSA	Building Industry Federation of South Africa
BITB	Building Industry Training Board
BITS	Building Industry Training Scheme
CBMT	Competency Based Modular Training
CEITS	Civil Engineering Industry Training Scheme
CETA	Construction Education and Training Authority
CIB	Construction Industry Board
CIDB	Construction Industry Development Board
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DPW	Department of Public Works
ECDP	Emerging Contractors Development Programme
ILO	International Labour Office
MBA	Master Builders and Allied Trades' Association
NDPW	National Department of Public Works
NFA	New Framework Agreement
NQF	National Qualification Forum
PAYE	Pay as you earn

PWV	Pretoria Witwatersrand Vereeniging
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAFCEC	South African Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors
SASCA	South African Subcontractor's Association
SBA	Small Builders Association
SETA	Sector Education Training Authority
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise
SSCE	Small Scale Construction Enterprises
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. 1 Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the South African construction informal sector. It considers how their conditions have changed since the demise of Apartheid and whether these conditions now assist in the development of the sector. In particular the possibilities for and realisation of training is studied as the main indicator of the individual's potential for growth. This chapter gives an overview of the environment in which the construction labourer operates given South Africa's current economic situation and governmental policy. It also summarises briefly the options which the sector had for training and advancement under the Apartheid government, and available options now.

The problem statement and hypothesis for the research are presented and are justified. This is followed by an outline of the method, and the scope and limitations which impacted on the research. This chapter closes with a summary of the contents of the subsequent chapters.

1.2 Motivation and Background

In South Africa, there is a scarcity of recorded information concerning markets for, and conditions of, employment for 'informal' and 'casual' labour in the industries within the construction sector. However, it is known that they exist and that their numbers seem to be increasing (van Huyssteen and Chege 2001). In the construction industry, workers are in need of protection and the ability to protect and advance themselves. It contains industries that, in most countries, are characterised by dangerous work environments; extensive outsourcing (sub-contracting), temporary and insecure employment, poor working conditions and a high accident rate. The problems are most severe in the least developed countries, where very few workers are protected by collective bargaining agreements. These developments in the labour market have also made it more difficult for trade unions to organise in the construction sector

and generally weakened the position of labour. This has occurred in an environment where it is estimated that more than 50% of the workforce are either casual, temporary or fixed-term workers (van Huyssteen and Chege, 2001).

What applies to local labour equally applies to foreign labour: none of the foreign construction workers interviewed by Rogerson (2000) in Johannesburg was a member of a trade union. The attitudes of those in the study (Rogerson, 2000) towards the union were a mixture of disinterest, fear of being deported and strong doubts that the union would accept them. The two largest unions are said to represent approximately 70,000 workers, which is only about one fifth of the total workforce, and it is not known how many of these are actually paid up members (van Huyssteen and Chege 2001). Ironically, as Ngowi *et al.* (2002), describe, because resources in developing countries are scarce and control of them of importance to the profit margin in the construction industry, development of the workforce through skill acquisition and learning is as strategic issue.

From this research on sample groups of workers and subcontractors inferences can be drawn about the working conditions and inherent abilities of the workforce and the potential for improving these through training in technical and communication skills. Technical skills are acknowledged as essential. There is scant recognition, however, of the value of communication and language abilities as being advantageous to workers. Personal experience as a trainer, however, has reinforced the author's belief in the value of raising ability and, consequently, self-image through training. After a programme she ran for contracting firms on intercultural awareness, responses reflected increased senses of self worth (English, 2000) and commitment. Participants from all race groups and levels of workforce from unskilled worker to foreman attended the course in randomly mixed groups of 30. The two days allowed them, through structured experiences, to communicate about their cultures and the problems and solutions to communicating on sites on which many different cultures are represented. For some, it was the first opportunity they had taken, or been given, to spend time on communication. The subsequent improvement in their relative performance proved the value of their training. The experience could be related to Maslow's hierarchy of needs in that the participants experienced having their needs met for socialization, that is desire for companionship, and self esteem, that is positive self image and competence (Robbins, 1988). The job of the labourer traditionally meets only the requirements of safety and physiological needs.

1.3 The Environment and Policies affecting Construction Labour

Construction, as a labour intensive industry, is a microcosm of the macrocosm of the economic and sociological state of the country in which it functions. The reality for the construction industry in Africa is that it is characterised by extensive subcontracting; temporary and insecure employment; and poor working conditions - few workers are protected by labour laws or collective bargaining agreements (Wells, 2000).

In developing countries, the role of self-employed contractors and workers has existed for some time. "Unregulated" or "unrecorded" labour refers to construction labour who operate without the required legal permits (Wells, 2001). For this thesis, the emphasis is on informal labour and labour practices that are not regulated (i.e. not registered and therefore less subject to legal restrictions). It must be noted that lack of legal permits does not necessarily have a negative effect on the quality of construction. There is no single definition of informal sector but a number of conditions that apply to those workers defined as informal. The conditions supposed here are that the workers:

- are mostly self-employed and have little, if any, protections from regulations; and
- work for enterprises which are unregistered, small, have few resources and operate with little capital and simple technology (CIB Task Group 29, 2000).

The reality, however, of earlier conditions of employment, pre 1990, was that all labour in construction in South Africa was considered as "casual" labour. Even when formally employed by construction companies, workers could easily be fired. Their position had been weakened by the laws instituted under Apartheid which had marginalised workers. Legislation set in the Bantu Education Act (1953) allowed Coloureds, Indians, and Whites to enter trades, but not Blacks. These regulations had a significant impact upon skills acquisition and training in the construction industry in South Africa by restricting the opportunity for the black population (the majority in the country) to acquire education and skills. As a result, the construction industry during the apartheid era was largely in the hands of the white population.

The industry was also tightly controlled by a few bodies, namely:

- the built environment professions, supported by various Acts;

- employer associations: the Building Industry Federation of South Africa (BIFSA) for the building industry and the South African Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors (SAFCEC) for the civil engineering industry; and
- traditional 'white' trade unions.

These groups controlled procurement, industry employment conditions and the training of their members and the members' labour force. In fact it was largely control of the training levy funds that vested power in these organisations (DPW 1999).

A process of political and social transition began in South Africa in 1995 with the first democratic government. The end of the apartheid era changed governance, legislation, socio-economic practices and education and training structures. New legislation for labour and regulatory acts governing construction changed the conditions of job termination. The 1996 Constitution sets out the fundamental rights of citizens, in particular freedom of expression, assembly, demonstration and petition, trade, occupation and profession, and labour relations. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was established to activate these rights and eradicate the effects of apartheid by being people-driven, emphasising peace, security and justice for all, addressing inherited inequalities of income and development, driving growth through development, and at all times functioning democratically. The construction industry was seen from the start as an important facet of the RDP, both as a provider of infrastructure and housing and a manager of public assets, as well as an avenue for small enterprise development and the creation of employment (DPW, 1999).

The Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) was established by parliament (Act 38 of 2000) as a statutory body to stimulate sustainable growth, reform and improvement. Thus, the major tasks of the regulatory body for the CIDB were to enhance delivery, improve industry stability and industry performance, and to develop human resources and promote the capacity of the emerging sector (DPW, 1999). The White Paper on Reconstruction, Growth and Development in construction (1999) set the framework for the development of the industry so as to achieve these objectives. One of the key components of the strategy was to promote Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs). Owned and operated by 'previously disadvantaged groups', SMMEs in the construction sector are generally referred to as 'emerging contractors'. They were to be given preferential treatment in public sector procurement as part of an 'affirmative action' strategy. The 'Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act' of 2000 provides for 'targeted procurement' which affords 'affirmable'

enterprises, particularly SMMEs, preferential access to public sector contracts. It also obliges main contractors to engage subcontractors from targeted groups and/or provide employment opportunities for targeted labour.

The Emerging Contractor Development Programme (ECDP) of 1998 complemented the development of SMMEs by providing access to finance, training and information. The ECDP was developed in a collaborative effort between the Department of Public Works (DPW), the Department of Trade and Industry and the Black Construction Industry (BCI), an umbrella forum for black employer associations in construction. The essence of the programme is a database of emerging contractors and the facilitation of external support such as finance, credit and training (van Huyssteen and Chege, 2001).

According to the White Paper (DPW, 1999), training was perceived to be needed in order to:

- allow for skills formation of the necessary quantity and quality to meet the nation's development programme;
- create synergy with the changing structure of the industry;
- promote access to training and career progression by the workforce, labour-only subcontractors and emerging enterprises;
- introduce the principles of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) into construction industry education and training;
- create an equitable and sustainable financing system for training and education, incorporating the need for all participants to contribute while recognising that Government's limited contribution would continue to be directed at the marginalised sectors of the population;
- overcome historic inequalities, especially amongst professionals by boosting tertiary-level enrolment and performance of historically disadvantaged students and re-orienting the training of built-environment professionals in line with current development imperatives;
- align professional training needs to be more closely harmonised with development priorities and the required delivery approaches; and
- develop a focus on the specific requirements of public-sector delivery management.

In addition to measures aimed at easing unemployment, the post-apartheid government realised that it had to raise workers' skill levels and increase their 'employability' through

education and training. The African National Council (ANC) endorsed an integrated education and training system, at the core of which is the notion that:

"*Education and training must empower the individual, improve quality of life, and contribute towards development targets in the national economic plan through a national qualification framework.*" (Nel 1997:5).

In the 1970s and 1980s the main method of training artisans was by apprenticeship. However, by the mid 1980's it was found to be inefficient and by 1991 apprenticeship ceased to be the main training route for artisans (Merrifield, 1992).

Thus, in the 1990s the apprenticeship system was replaced by a system of non-continuous training, packaged into modules (Merrifield 1992) called Competency Based Modular Training (CBMT). Its aims were that employers recognise existing skills and competencies in employees, and that employees be enabled to move from lower to higher level of skills. It was, thus, intended that low educational qualifications would not be a deterrent to entry to the CBMT scheme as educational upgrading would also be provided (Prinsloo and Watters, 1996). The artisan in training qualified by demonstrating competency in each or as many modules as he was able.. Formal employers had to contribute a levy to the fund of the Building Industries Training Scheme (BITS). BITS also offered courses in supervisory management skills to informal sub-contractors in the evenings, but these were not covered by the levy and participants had to pay to attend.

The principles of developing capacity were developed further under the new government, with the establishment of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) in 1998 to assess competency-based education and training. It is based on a system of credits for "learning outcomes", which is also referred to as a "competency". Qualifications can be acquired through full or part-time study, distance learning, work-based learning or a combination of methods. It may also include an assessment of prior learning and/or experience. The purpose of NQF is to enable workers of all educational levels to gain work, and to advance the skills of existing employees. This is more relevant for a workforce without formal education than is the determinant of the entry level according to numeracy and literacy (Nel, 1997). The organisation of the training under the NQF is divided into five levels, each following the other, with the top level at N2 (National certificate for artisans).

Control over the use of funds for training was also made more democratic. There were two national training schemes in existence prior to 1995, the Civil Engineering Industry Training Scheme (CEITS) and the Building Industry Training Scheme (BITS). Both were funded by a levy on employers and the two major employer organisations BIFSA and SAFCECs decided how the funds would be applied. Consequently they designed and offered courses mainly to suit the needs of the large construction companies. BITS offered training to informal sub-contractors in the evenings, but these were not covered by the levy and participants had to pay to attend. The Small Builders' Association (SBA) protested against payment for many years, but to no avail (Cattell *et al.* 1996). BIFSA was seen to demonstrate resistance to change over a long period, despite warnings of the need to incorporate members from the disadvantaged racial groups (Ofori, *et al.* 1996). Although disadvantaged groups eventually formed their own associations, the power remained vested in the White associations.

In order to shift the balance of power, and ensure that all employers received equal weight in decisions on training, a new body known as the Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA) was created to control training funds and delivery. CETA is divorced from direct control by BIFSA and SAFCEC and is charged with addressing the training needs of the whole of the construction industry.

Whilst it would seem that there is now a more democratic environment in training delivery as a result of the loss of power by BIFSA and SAFCEC, the current situation is one in which there is no unity or shared objectives. Rwelamila *et al.* (1997) suggested that it is unlikely the various representative organisation will combine whilst one of the groups is benefiting from affirmative action in the procurement process. It is hoped that the newly established Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) which is responsible for driving industry development for all the stakeholders, will help to create a more cooperative atmosphere.

In South Africa the economy has become increasingly depressed since the early 1990s. A reaction of industry to failing economy and new labour legislation was to outsource labour. Through termination of regular jobs in favour of outsourcing there has been a shift from formal to informal employment. The number of voluntary liquidations increased dramatically after 1997 (BIFSA, 2000). Many smaller companies that are surviving the recession have done so only by ceasing to employ directly by retrenching personnel and outsourcing their

labour requirement through subcontractors. This has given rise to the self-employed contractor of skilled work, and increasingly, of labour only (the labour broker). Of those employees who were retrenched: some have never worked again as builders, some were able to gain employment on a casual basis, some on a semi formal basis by working for a sub-contractor, and a few built up their own ventures as entrepreneurs-cum-employers. Outsourcing of labour defused the effect of the unions and freed the employer of the restrictions imposed by both unions and provisional and national governing bodies. The labour-only subcontractor usually hires informal labour, that is labour with whom he has no contract, or at most only a verbal contract to cover a given task. Thus the labour force is now further removed from support structures and systems that once contained them.

The transition to a more democratic society and a more representative construction industry that South Africa experienced in the 1990s has been taking place in a context of stagnant or declining output and employment. While there was an increase in public investment in construction in the years immediately after the change of government, this was short-lived. Publicly funded construction is mostly (76%) in civil engineering works. The building works sector is dependent on the private sector which is responsible for 88% of residential building work and 75% of non-residential building. However, the private sector is influenced by economic conditions and interest rates and thus private sector investment remained more or less stagnant in the 1990s and fell steeply in 1998 and subsequent years (van Huyssteen and Chege, 2001).

The reduced demand for construction at a time when new entrants were being encouraged into the industry led to an oversupply of contractors and increased competition amongst them. Some of the more successful looked elsewhere, largely to other African countries, for work. The latest available statistics show that in 1999, 25% of the income of the South African civil engineering industry was received from outside the country (van Huyssteen and Chege 2001).

The increasing trend to outsourcing of labour has had a very clear impact on the pattern of employment. Official data shows a rapid decline in 'formal' employment in the construction industry after 1993 (see Table 1.1), even when output was still expanding . The extent of the decline can be gauged from the fact that the share of construction in total employment in the economy as a whole fell from 7.8% in 1990 to 4.8% in 1999. Official employment data does not capture those employed 'informally'. But the October 1999 household survey found

almost a quarter of a million people working in the 'informal' construction sector, which is only slightly less than those in formal employment (van Huyssteen and Chege, 2001).

Table 1.1: Employment trends in the construction industry

Year (June)	Formal employment	Informal sector
1970	317,814	
1980	370,698	
1990	424,134	
1992	401,531	
1993	401,914	
1994	394,635	
1995	325,926	61,000 (self-employed)
1996	325,926	
1997	313,608	
1998	282,089	
1999	254,022	243,000 (October)

Source: Statistics South Africa, 1999 October Household Survey

Thus the situation remains well and good for the formal employer, but outsourcing means there are limited in-service opportunities for training (Van Huyssteen and Chege, 2001). Furthermore, it is not entirely a viable system given that the informal employer or subcontractor operates in a depressed economy and on smaller projects. Subcontractors site the levy deducted by the government for training as being a reason for remaining unregistered since the charge is too high. In addition to contributing to a training scheme and carrying an apprentice who must be given leave from work to attend training, is too time consuming and costly for the sub-contractor to accommodate. It is, of course, untenable for the unemployed individual (Cattell and Hindle, 1997). Thus, the only possibility for the individual is to receive training on-site, on the job. However, this is not even a possibility for the labour-only sub-contractor who does not command his employees' working day.

Through new policies for the labour market, there has developed another detractor to employers' providing training. An asset, or even sometimes, requirement, in tendering on many construction and civil projects is that part of the work be contracted to local community contractors and/or workers. This means that others, even if previously employed and/or trained, cannot be used on a job. Likewise, it means that those locals employed are unlikely to be employable on the next project in a different area. Thus for the employer, training of an employee, be he unskilled or skilled, becomes a 'consumption item as it cannot be used more than once' (Langhoven, 2000).

The success of every employer-employee relationship is based in their effective interpersonal and verbal communication skills and any organisation only exist because of communication (Fielding, 1997). On building sites particularly the need is even greater (again the micro echoes the macro situation) because of the element of time pressure, risk and even danger. Ironically, however, the barriers to clear communication which exist there such as noise, physical distance, different languages, make the task harder than in other workplaces. In South Africa, as in other developing countries, there is a further challenge in that there will be different languages spoken on site, different cultures and varying levels of education, some very low. Well researched systems for communication and training (e.g. requiring written instructions, note taking) which are advised for first world countries cannot be adapted to the needs of developing countries for this reason (Ellis, 1999). Developing countries require their own models for training.

1.4 Problem Statement

The current structure, laws and practices pertaining to the informal construction industry are flawed in that they are counter productive to the training of those most in need of training. These are the unskilled and semi-skilled labour drawn principally from previously disadvantaged groups. Problems to be explored are deterioration of skills acquisition and conditions of work; how workers on short term contracts or no contracts cope with job insecurity; and the impact of casualisation on trade union membership, on collective bargaining and on the empowerment of workers.

1.5 Hypothesis

Thus it is hypothesised that the system of subcontracting and use of informal labour and its subsequent conditions does not accommodate training and does not allow workers and subcontractors to improve themselves anymore than did the system of formal employment. This hypothesis is explored through a survey of the terms and conditions of employment for the labour force in the informal construction industry in Cape Town and its environs.

1.6 Justification for the Research

Justification for this study is its relevance to the current training directives. The issues surrounding training need to be explored with employers and employees in order to assess the chances of successful implementation of current proposals and to suggest ways in which they might need to be modified. The conclusions and recommendations of the study will, hopefully, act as a guide to the relevant bodies in the Industry regarding development of its workers. This is particularly relevant as new legislation set by CETA, the construction arm of SETA (Sector Education Training Authority), is firming up on a levy which has to be paid via PAYE (Pay As You Earn) by employers and which contributes to training. Employers who have a turnover of R250 000 or more per year need to contribute 0.5% of their income.

1.7 Method

The research project was established in November 2000. The subject was studied through the collation of both quantitative and qualitative data and entailed a theoretical review followed by analysis of options for methodology. The empirical research was based on 249 interviews - 200 with workers and 49 with employers and/or entrepreneurs - which were supported by a questionnaires. A number of the formally employed and the unemployed construction workers were included in the sample.

Two questionnaires were designed, one tailored to the employer, the other to the workers. The interviews were conducted in various sectors such as domestic housing, commercial, industrial and community building projects. The interview was to go beyond the confines of

the questionnaire where applicable. This was particularly to gain qualitative data. As stated by Fox (1999) the strengths of qualitative data is that they focus on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings. Thus the data is not only statistical but is weighted in the real world and gives a holistic view of the study. Expanding the data collection beyond the questionnaire by means of the one-to-one interview method allowed for this holism to come through. The process by which the questionnaires were compiled, disseminated, and the data collected and analysed is discussed in Chapter 3. Interviewers were drawn from students on the Masters Programme in the Department of Construction Economics and Management at the University of Cape Town (see Appendix 4).

1.8 Scope and Limitations of the Research

This scope of the study encompassed construction companies, sub contractors and workers in the Cape Town area and it looked at the four dominant groups:

- those who have always been part of the informal sector;
- those who were part of the formal sector and are now part of the informal sector;
- those who are still part of the formal sector; and
- those who are unemployed.

A limitation existed in that the informal sub contractors were sometimes difficult to find (having no formal registration or source centre), and some were reticent at being interviewed. Interviewers needed to be sensitive to the situation to gain the trust of the respondents (Abdul-Rahman and Alidrisyi, 1994). There were similar problems with gaining permission from main contractors to go onto site to interview their subcontractors. See section 3.4 for details on the limitations on the study.

1.9 Detailed Objectives

In order to seek information concerning the conditions in which the informal sector function and whether these conditions accommodate training and skill acquisition, the study had the following detailed objectives:

- investigate levels of education, work histories, patterns of skill acquisition, and job status as defined by work conditions (hours of work, average earnings, periods of unemployment, occurrence of illness and accidents) of informal construction workers and subcontractors across the spectrum of unskilled to skilled;

- investigate the communicative abilities of informal labour and of informal subcontractors, including those who are acting as entrepreneurs in the construction environment (i.e. are successful though without formal employment);

- assess priorities of the construction workers, subcontractors and formal employers for upgrading skills and preferred methods of delivery of training;

- ascertain the level of self-awareness of employability and projection of business image and skills of informal labour across the spectrum of unskilled to skilled and of subcontractors;

- assess whether those who have become entrepreneurs ever had communication training, or assistance with business skills and creation of a positive image; and

- assess whether communicative skills and entrepreneurship talents assist informal workers and sub contractors in crossing the barrier into formal employment and therefore, whether there is a significant link between poor verbal communication skills and no training and the individual remaining as a basic labourer, or remaining unemployed.

An overall aim was to assess if current structure, laws and practices pertaining to the informal construction industry are flawed in that they are counter productive to the training of those most in need of training. (Those most in need are the unskilled and semi skilled labour drawn principally from the previously disadvantaged groups.) Likewise, a secondary aim was to assess if those subcontractors who are advancing in their field are doing so primarily because they have had the opportunity to acquire skills both technical and communicative.

1.10 Plan of Development of the Thesis

The literature review assesses research on informal construction labour, mainly those in Africa, and particularly those in South Africa. It offers definitions and descriptions of the informal workforce according to working conditions and writing on the impact of environmental and social developments on these conditions is considered. Literature on developing countries is reviewed in terms of the impact of African culture on the Industry and the acquisition of skills and training (both in the past and present). The methodology section sets out the procedures used in the process of designing and executing the surveys. A summary of the approach is given in section 1.7.

The findings of the surveys are given in Chapters 4 and 5 both in illustrative and textual form. The findings on the employees include their demographic history and education, training and skill acquisition, job stability and conditions of work, their perceptions of existing support and opportunities for improvement offered to them, and an assessment of the subjects' communicative abilities by the interviewers. The findings on the employers include their demographic history and education, career profile, profile of enterprises, profile of their employees, support and training provided for the workers, and an assessment of the subjects' communicative abilities by the interviewers.

From these results, the conclusions draw inferences about the inherent abilities of the workforce and its employers and recommendations are made as to areas for improvement in training and skills development and their implementation. Supporting information is given in the Appendices.

1.11 Chapter Summary

Construction labour in Africa is subject to insecurity and poor working conditions. In South Africa this has been exacerbated by the legacy of Apartheid. Under this system, the Black and Coloured peoples were marginalised in terms of education, skills acquisition and jobs. In particular, Blacks were not allowed to attend trade schools. The process of change began in

1995 with the ANC government instituting the Reconstruction and Development Programme and shifting the focus of training from apprenticeship of artisans to Competency Based Modular Training. The economic control of training shifted too from Industry managed organisations to CETA, the construction arm of the Sector Education and Training Association (SETA). However, this was accompanied by a falling economy, lack of jobs and a trend towards outsourcing. Outsourcing of labour increased during the 1990s so that by the end of 1999 almost a quarter of a million people were working in the informal sector (van Huyssteen and Chege, 2001).

The hypothesis presented by this thesis is that this new system of employment does not accommodate training and skills development for those working in the informal sector anymore than did the previous system. The objectives of the research are to gain information concerning this sector from which inferences can be drawn about the working conditions and the potential for improving these through training in technical and communication skills, and the ways in which such training can be provided. The method of research was through surveys of 200 workers and 49 employers in the Cape Town area.

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CHAPTER 2

ASSESSMENT OF LITERATURE ON THE INFORMAL CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of research into the environment in which the construction labourer and subcontractor has operated over the past two decades. The history of the informal workforce is traced and their current status defined by the literature. Consideration is given to writing on the economic environment and working conditions on the informal sector both in Africa generally and in South Africa in particular. Reviews on their opportunities for training and acquisition of skills are covered along with an assessment of the current views on the impact of subcontracting on training.

2.2 Studies in Defining the Informal Workforce

The concept of the informal workforce was first observed as such in the early 1970's. The term "*informal sector*" referred to those without regular employment, or those who own businesses which are out of the formal sector. This group, however, are somehow able to manage formal sector jobs where the terms of employment and conditions of work are regulated. In studies on developing countries, the formal industrial sector was seen to be able to absorb only a small percentage of the workforce, and yet there was little evidence of unemployment (Wells, 1998). The informal sector, thus, originally included those who did not draw a regular wage from an established employer and yet were making a living.

Wells describes Hart (1973) as being one of the first authors to use the term when describing employment relationships. He described the parallel labour systems in Ghana: some permanently employed waged workers, others not receiving a regular wage or having an

established employer. Thus, his definition is between employment and self-employment. At the same time the ILO mission to Kenya (1972) described characteristics of the informal sector as:

- small scale;
- unregulated and competitive markets;
- ease of entry;
- skills acquired outside the formal school system;
- labour-intensive technologies; and
- reliance on indigenous resources and family ownership of enterprises.

Wells described this definition, based on informal enterprises, as having been the most influential but asserts that the emphasis has shifted. In her opinion, additional characteristics of informal enterprises have developed, such as illegal or unremunerated labour, while features such as reliance on local resources and ease of entry do not always apply.

2.2.1 Ease of Entry for the Workforce

Work in informal enterprises offers economically and socially disadvantaged sectors of a population certain positive features: ease of entry, little or no need for formal training, paperwork, or capital. The informal sector also supplies the poor with goods that are not in the capacity of the formal sector to do so (Werna, 2001). Studies conducted by Werna (2001), though reflecting data of 15 years ago, show a similar growth in numbers in the informal sector in India. Werna found that casual employment for men increased in one year (1987-1988) by nearly 5%, and for women in the same period by over 3%.

In many instances, the distinction between informal and formal is blurred as individuals move between the two, sometimes as employers, sometimes as employees. In the construction industry, subcontractors who work in the formal sector, but fail to secure jobs, compete in the market for small jobs with informal contractors (Mlinga and Lema, 2000]. Ease of entry (that is, no qualification required) leads to the crowding of the market, causing Horwitz, (2000) to comment that ease of entry was now a fallacy as the market was overburdened. His study of contracting in the Western Cape concludes that the "*industry is over-traded with too many players with too little work*".

This viewpoint is corroborated by others (Cattell and Rwelamila, 1994; Werna, 2001). Over time the mass of informal workers in South Africa has grown due to increasing unemployment in all areas of the industry. The numbers gained from easy entrance level into the construction industry is coupled with the inclusion of those who have worked in the formal sector and now are in the informal sector. However, this combination has meant that the maxim that many can gain employment no longer applies and entry into the construction industry is no longer so easy. Ease of entry is detailed by Cattell and Rwelamila (1994) in a survey conducted on a sample of 96 black Small Scale Construction Enterprises (SSCEs). Results show that 25% of the sample had never been employed prior to start-up, while a further 15% had been employed before as unskilled workers, and only 17% as skilled workers. Cattell and Rwelamila (1994) drew conclusions from analysis of the survey on SSCEs that 42% of the respondents had become self employed, or entered the industry as self employed for negative reasons. As a result, many did not have theoretical knowledge of management techniques, or sufficient practical experience in trade skills.

2.2.2 Informal Enterprises

The construction industry is characterised by extensive subcontracting; temporary and insecure employment; and poor working conditions - few workers are protected by labour laws or collective bargaining agreements. This is true not only for the Western Cape but for most parts of Africa (Wells, 2000). Wells (2000) defines the features that comprise informal contractors and labour (in essence, those not regulated by governing laws and professional rules) as having the features described by Cattell (1994), but comments:

"In practice it is quite difficult to measure some of these characteristics and the size of the establishment is usually taken as the only criterion for inclusion in the informal sector with the cut off being 5 to 10 employees." (Wells, 2000)

In a subsequent document, Wells (2001) defined "unregulated" or "unrecorded" as terms referring to construction without the required permits. For most purposes and for this study, the emphasis is on informal labour and labour practices as being those that are not regulated (i.e. not registered and therefore less subject to legal restrictions) but that do not necessarily have a negative effect on the quality of the construction. The latter may meet all building regulations.

2.3 Impact of Environmental and Sociological Developments on Conditions for Subcontractors and Workers

Systemic changes have taken place in the economy globally. During most of the 20th century, industrial production was based on a rigid large-scale production of standardised items with firms that favoured long term and permanent employment. Now there is a movement to small-scale production, labour-intensive production, and informal, casual and mobile employment (Werna, 2001). Small-scale production lends itself more to generating new income and facilitating entrepreneurship. However, Werna (2001) comments on the concern that the labour market in developing countries has limited capacity to absorb increasing numbers of such small scale concerns. He suggests that small-scale enterprises need to be complemented by policies that foster income generation elsewhere, or facilitate redistribution.

Some small enterprises will favour labour-intensive production whereas other small concerns use capital-intensive technology and less labour. However, in developing countries, labour-intensive techniques are competitive with capital intensive ones. In a study undertaken in 1995 by UNCHS-ILO in Sri Lanka, it was conjectured that technology should be chosen so as to be appropriate for the sector it served (Werna, 2001). Thus it should also seek to achieve societal goals, and for developing countries this would mean the maximisation of labour (Ganesan, 1996). Ganesan suggests an integrated approach to technology that mixed modern and traditional building methods. The way to achieve this successfully was to evaluate a project in terms of the implications for labour. He gives four phases in design and construction where labour could be implicated:

Design:

- choice of resources, especially building materials; and
- influence of design on construction, particularly on assembly of resources at site

Construction:

- organisation of construction, especially contract systems and size of job awards; and
- choice of construction techniques at building sites (use of labour versus use of construction plant).

Construction workers in developing countries fall into two brackets: those for whom it is their only income, for the most part skilled workers, and those for whom it is not the only employment, for the most part unskilled workers (Uwakweh, 1999). It is the first bracket that is in short supply, and studies showed that the industry is in part responsible because of its cyclical nature in which training is neglected in a down phase (Hindle, 1993, Uwakweh, 1999). Lack of training, both vocational and on-the-job, was an outcome of fewer operators in the workplace and resulted in a shortage of skilled workers. This shortage was aggravated by skilled workers crossing over to employer status as sub-contractors.

2.4 Working Conditions

2.4.1 The Impact of the Developing World on Working Conditions

Ofori (2001) describes the UNCHS' (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements) indicators for measuring development of the construction industry in developing countries. In terms of labourers, they gave as indicators for measuring development: on-site productivity, employment engaged in the construction of dwelling units, and proportion of employed as wage labour.

A feature of construction, and one that affects working conditions, is that it is site- based and transitory. Small firms move frequently from site to site without any fixed business premises. It is this lack of permanency that creates problems for redeploying workers at the end of a contract and leads to the predominance of temporary and casual employment. It also means that there is little time for human resource structures to be created, such as eating areas, toilets, meeting and training areas (Prinsloo & Watters, 1996). The authors, in their study in the Western Cape, assert that the basic nature of building sites put strains on the workers who are already under other pressures such as meeting deadlines. Another aspect of construction is the need for a changing mix of skills unlike those consistent skills needed for manufacturing production. Hence the ideal worker needs to have a broad education and a flexible skill base. However, the reality is that there is a lack of skills.

A proportion of the literature on employment of labour in developing countries deals with findings from enterprises in the Third World being conducted by First World practitioners.

The factors which relate to recruitment are however still valid though for "in-house" production. Loraine (2000:78) cited factors to be considered which would apply to the South African scenario, such as:

- *tribal membership: the advisability of having homogenous groups working together;*
- *local preferment: the necessity of employing those who are in the immediate environment and whom it is politically advisable to employ in terms of the community;*
- *labour agents: the need to check their credentials to confirm they are not biased in choosing a workforce. Reference checks are suggested;*
- *trade Testing: testing of trade skills; and*
- *contract with the labour agent: the need to withhold part of the payment until each person supplied has completed a test period of three months on-site.*

Whilst suggestions such as the last would be desirable to effect, they are not always practicable. Readings reflect that conditions of work for labour are variable. An ideal is recommended which would cover the following items (Loraine, 2000:80):

- *normal working hours;*
- *minimum wages;*
- *allowances;*
- *travelling time;*
- *overtime rates;*
- *annual and public holidays;*
- *termination procedure;*
- *redundancy procedure;*
- *workman's compensation;*
- *severance pay;*
- *allowable deductions from pay;*
- *ration allowance;*
- *union dues (if collected by employer);*
- *union membership;*
- *taxation; and*
- *trade testing.*

Current findings on South Africa indicate that many of the above conditions have disappeared with the collapse of formal employment (Cattell, 1994, Horwitz, 2000). Construction labourers are usually paid by the day or week. This means that productive labourers can easily become demoralised by the absence of performance-based incentive schemes. For example, a bricklayer who consistently lays 400 bricks a day is paid the same amount as a bricklayer who lays 200 bricks a day. Furthermore, informal labour does not receive other benefits such as year-end bonuses, overtime pay and medical insurance. Legislation is in process to change some of this, see section 2.8.

2.4.2 Movement Between Formal and Informal Workplaces

As mentioned earlier, the majority of research has been undertaken into subcontractors and their needs, rather than that of labour. A particular area which has been researched extensively is the assistance sub-contractors need to cross the barrier from informal to formal employment. The International Labour Organisation (1987) highlighted key components for the success of SMMEs. One of the three requirements listed was for "*policies and programmes for training and advisory services*" (ILO, 1987:84).

The document of a Working Committee on the Emerging Contractor Support Programme analyses the problems for Small / Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) of crossing the barrier between informal and formal employment as being based in lack of education, training and experience (Working Opportunities and Market Forces, 1996). It cites other barriers as being lack of access to market information and not knowing the "*rules of the game*" (Emerging Contractor Support Programme 1996:17). The three basic outcomes the working group sought, were:

- *creation of a supportive environment;*
- *removal or reduction of barriers; and*
- *training and support of emerging contractors organization* (Emerging Contractor Support Programme, 1996:17).

Hindle (1996) gives a more detailed list of barriers which includes reference to levels of literacy, entrepreneurial skills, as in "*the ability to take risks, access resources and to manage them*", and (records of) track record/ experience, such as "*ability to demonstrate level of expertise by referring to successfully completed projects*".

In a recent publication Wells (2000) describes informal enterprises she visited in 1996 which illustrate the flexibility for operators in the management of their work. On one site, the contractor worked, in effect, as a foreman as he supervised labourers but did not pay them. (They were paid directly by the owner of the building.) On another site, the labour-contractor employed and supervised 12 labourers. He stated that he preferred to provide labour only as he did not want to purchase materials in case the owner was unable to pay him back. The systems are flexible and the weighting of responsibility carried by the contractor or subcontractor is dependent on a number of factors.

Wells (2000) comments that the concept of a construction firm no longer holds in many parts of Africa. Numerous larger firms have been replaced by small enterprises that often have no premises, capital, equipment or permanent workforce. The project as opposed to the firm is the unifying item and the item changes with each project (Wells, 2001). Thus, there is extensive mobility between projects and in the roles of employer and employee.

2.4.3 Migration and Workers

Research conducted by Rogerson (2000) gives the employment figures for construction as up to 450,000. A proportion of these are migrant labour, or labour who are working away from home. The South African Migration Project researched the role of foreign migrants in the South African construction sector (Rogerson, 2000). Interviews were held with representatives of 23 construction companies and 70 foreign construction workers. The research focused on Gauteng, particularly Johannesburg, the area where most migrant workers are working. The study found that the industry absorbs growing numbers of non-South Africans and is able to do so because of its characteristics. These were considered to be:

- segmented labour markets;
- casual forms of employment; and
- extensive use of subcontracted work.

Migrant labourers were found largely in the casual or temporary workforce. Four countries were the major suppliers of migrant labour: Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Botswana, with Mozambique the main supplier. Relevant to the situation of workers were the following data (Rogerson, 2000:3):

"Most (over 80%) were initially engaged as temporary workers and general labourers; overtime, many secured more specialised jobs as painters, tillers, bricklayers and plasterers."

The majority entered and/or were living in South Africa legally, but working illegally; about 75% of the workers admitted that they did not have a legitimate work permit; some obtained permits through bribery of officials, known as *"paying to be quickly served"*. None of the construction workers interviewed were current or past members of the construction trade union; attitudes towards the union were a mixture of disinterest, fear of being deported, and strong doubts that, as foreigners, the union would accept them. (Indeed examples were given of repeated arrest and deportation.)

Nearly 50% indicated a wish to stay in South Africa on a long-term basis; 54% indicated that they were in South Africa only on a temporary basis and did not wish to remain in the longer term; these may be representative, but what the survey seems to be picking up is a cohort of young single male migrants with few attachments, responsibilities and prospects back home. Key reasons employers gave for choosing foreign labourers were productivity, inherent skills and training, and the more disciplined character of foreign workers (Rogerson, 2000).

The report concludes with commentary on the Green Paper on International Migration in its support of skills-based immigration as immigrants can provide skills. Yet, in the construction industry the definition of skills was found to be problematic as many unskilled become skilled, even multi-skilled through work. The unions were found to be lacking in addressing the concerns of foreign workers. The government accommodates foreign mineworkers, but not construction workers. There should be a consistent policy. For protection of the working conditions of migrant labour, the report advises that the ILO standards concerning migrant workers be adopted and the United Nations Convention on migrant workers be enforced.

2.5 Review of the Impact of African and Western Culture on the Industry

Literature on developing countries reveals a different cultural environment to that operating in Europe. For many parts of Africa, part of the growth and achievement in the industry has been to become independent of colonisation. Such an industry existed in Nigeria where over 20 years ago indigenous firms had reached 40%. The remaining 60% was owned by foreign companies (Akeredolu-Ale, 1974). The environment was described as mixed, with both local and foreign, small and large firms, alongside, and with the comment that too many individuals were running one-man firms. Evidently, this was an early indicator of the development of small contracting enterprises. Indigenous firms had been confined to the lowest levels of operations whilst higher levels of contracts had been monopolised by non-nationals (Akeredolu-Ale,1974). Possibly one can criticize practice as a legacy of colonial, Euro-centric, cultural practice. Research has moved into analysing the effects of other cultures in Africa and there is an energetically researched field of literature on *ubuntu,* a philosophy held in Africa and undefined by Western mores.

Du Plessis (2001:374) describes Africa as a continent of "*contrast and dichotomies*". It is a place where different worlds co-exist in parallel: the rational and mystical, and the modern and ancient. The construction environment carries the mores of Western industry: ordered, employing technology, and emphasising economic growth and material wealth.

By contrast, the African worldview emphasises community and shared wealth, a philosophy embodied in the term *ubuntu. Ubuntu* is a Zulu word meaning "humaneness". *Ubuntu* is the basis of African social laws and encompasses values such as sharing, participating, generosity, co-operation and harmony between individual members of society. The belief is that there is an inter-connectedness between people and that people can improve their good fortune by sharing with others, thereby also enhancing their status in the community. *Ubuntu* is integrated into all aspects of daily life throughout Africa and is a concept shared by all tribal peoples of Southern Africa and those of Bantu origin living in Central, West and East Africa (Rwelamila *et al.*,1999; Du Plessis, 2001). Literature for enlightened management in South Africa calls for Afrocentric rather than Eurocentric organisational culture (Mbigi, 1993; Horwitz *et al.*,

1996). It appears, however, from other research that the call to acknowledge African culture in building is not being heeded.

The building mores of traditional African societies, therefore, are different from those in Europe. In Africa, construction was an activity for all members of the community. Thus training was intrinsic to the process. Through participation by members of the community, building skills were handed down from one generation to the next. The specialised roles in the industry that currently exist did not exist then (Ngowi, 1996). Ngowi asserts that modern industry could learn from training in traditional societies, not through a sentimental harking backwards, but from assessing what could be successfully adapted and incorporated into the current environment. His review of construction training in traditional societies, and in which local materials are used, shows that there was no clear demarcation between practitioners of crafts and construction professionals. Training was achieved through participation in the process, example and demonstration on site. However, for technologically sophisticated processes, which are usually not known to the user, the processes could not be learnt practically as the user needed to have some scientific and theoretical knowledge. This led to the tendency for students of the construction industry, particularly within developing countries, to become overly esoteric in their approach and to keep away from practical involvement on the worksite. This is, of course, the very antithesis to the traditional approach to learning.

Ngowi (1996) concludes that there is a need to integrate education and practical knowledge gained on-site in training. He found that in most developing countries, management skills in the industry seemed to be lacking. He recommended that to obviate this, adequate practical experience in a real work environment was needed.

Research emerging from Nigeria recently reflects an industry which is still beleaguered with problems such as prohibitive cost of production, discrepancies between planned and actual delivery time, poorly trained labour, inadequate technology and a struggling economy (Olatunji *et al.*, 2000). Trades are handed down through generations, although the authors' study in 1999 reveals that 42% of a sample of carpenters had attended technical college. Labourers were less fortunate. Firms were not in favour of retaining permanent workers or of sending operatives for training due to the cost and loss of man-hours. The findings also indicate that most skills were acquired by on-the-job training with practical demonstration being the next major source for operatives to learn.

Thus one can conclude from this research that in both previously colonised countries and those which historically have been independent, regulating construction and accommodating training have always been problematic.

2.6 Skills Acquisition and Training in Developing Countries excluding South Africa

Comparisons can be drawn between the findings on the acquisition of skills and training of the informal sector in other parts of Africa with those in South Africa. The debate surrounding the African versus European models for skills development reflects the preference for on-the-job training. In recognition of the need for the developing world to pursue labour-intensive modes of construction, the World Bank describes the conundrum that formal training is principally in modern technology and professionals emerging from such training are reluctant and ill equipped to apply themselves to labour-intensive technologies. The graduality of learning through constant practice is essential in a good apprenticeship system. In addition, an apprenticeship should normally be complemented with academic training in skills that are regarded as necessary management skills for potential foremen. Apprenticeships should follow high standards to avoid their becoming sources of cheap semiskilled labour (World Bank, 1984).

Extensive research by Wells (1986) outlines the origins of the training of the informal sector. In a study in the mid 1980s, the labour market in Kenya was described as having little formal training and that skills absorbed on-the-job were regarded as more valuable. Employment, particularly of skilled and unskilled labour was casual, with the boundaries between the divisions of supervisor; artisan/craftsman; and labourer often blurred. The post-independence slump in building in Kenya also saw an exodus of skilled construction labour from jobs as the workforce was attracted by foreign contractors which were working either locally or in other countries. In reaction, the Kenyan government encouraged employment and upgrading of local Africans through on-the-job training in the industry. A negative factor in the success of this was the reluctance of the employer to expend time and effort on training when there was a high risk of the trained employee then being recruited by other local or foreign firms.

The value of on-the-job training in terms of its practical advantages and quality of knowledge was recognised by the apprenticeship system. A document by the World Bank (1984) describes the success of Training Production Units that were established in Zaire, Brazil and the Dominican Republic. These were semi-autonomous units that completed work while training personnel. The Bank gave aid to support apprenticeship, such as the National Apprenticeship Board in Sri Lanka.

A study in Kenya showed that many supervisory positions were held by volunteers who did not have formal training. Training for those in charge of labour-intensive construction is of a practical nature: it requires knowledge of local materials and needs. Thus it is best offered "*to natural leaders who have, preferably, secondary education*" (World Bank, 1984:71). A recommendation of the research was, therefore, that foremen and their equivalents should be promoted to positions of leadership. One can infer from this varied research that training on the job is an effective model.

Ofori's (1984) studies on the construction industry in Ghana reflect an environment in which economic pressures for survival were so great that emphasis was on what construction could do to operate (whilst supporting training and skills acquisition) in a contracting economy. This was because the country's economy could not support it. The task of construction in many instances was to survive, yet to try to maintain the capability to increase capacity to match a future upturn in demand. To facilitate this, Ofori (1984) suggested that countries in Eastern and Southern Africa, which experienced shortages of skilled work force should initiate a manpower exchange programme between industries. This would develop links between institutions and associations, and would facilitate arrangements for sharing resources. Training institutions and research centres could be established which would avoid duplication and cost.

This policy could be applied to South Africa whilst the country does not have a sufficient number of skilled operatives. The following sections consider literature on the effect of apartheid laws on skills acquisition and training in construction.

2.7 Historical Review of Skills Acquisition and Training in South Africa

2.7.1 Background to Policy on Training

Greeff (1990) considered the effect of segmentation of the workforce on the basis of race on the current system of outsourcing. The ramifications of this in the long term have cultural implications. The laws which defined that different racial groups should live in separate areas have caused the sub-contract groups to become racially homogenous. This has reduced equality at work and social mixing and therefore has reduced opportunities for racial barriers to be broken down.

Vocational training of artisans existed in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. By this method, an artisan became qualified by completing a certain amount of time in training as deemed suitable by his trade (Nolan, 1987). The individual required at least Grade 9 (that is, have nine years of schooling) to qualify to become an apprentice. He had to be employed by an employer who was a paid up member of the Master Builder's Association (MBA), and would be released from work on site to attend courses. The artisan in training qualified by demonstrating competency in each or as many modules as he was able. Formal employers had to contribute a levy to the fund of the Building Industries Training Scheme (BITS). To have his employees trained under it, the employer had to register them as artisans in training or as apprentices. Only training of skills was covered by the levy. The extensive project managed by the Industry (the BITS project) provided nearly 28 000 people with skills training between 1971 and 1991 (Merrifield, 1992).

However, by the mid 1980s this method was recognised as not fully satisfactory and by 1991 the apprenticeship ceased to be the main training route for artisans (Merrifield, 1992). Apprenticeship was replaced by Competency Based Modular Training (CBMT). Its aims were to:

- provide a system which would give a career path;
- enable employees to move from lower to higher level of skills; and
- recognise existing skills and competencies: low educational qualifications would not be a deterrent to entry as educational upgrading would also be provided (Prinsloo & Watters, 1996).

The CBMT scheme, and BITS management of it, was part of the order of formal employment. To succeed, it required that:

- contractors register with the Industrial Council for Construction and pay into the training fund (Cattell, 1994);
- employers send their employees to the training centres and give them the time off to complete the modules;
- the candidate be literate; and
- course fees be paid by the employer who was then reimbursed by BITS (Cattell *et al.*, 1996).

However, Merrifield (1992) commented that this did not prove successful as the model for work no longer accommodated the requirements of the BITS model: the hierarchy of formal employer/employee had changed. Herein lay a problem with the BITS model. The majority of house building firms interviewed by Merrifield (1992) indicated that they trained on-site as it was not practicable to use the facilities offered by the Building Industry Federation of South Africa (BIFSA). Merrifield notes that BIFSA was aware that training was reaching an inadequate number of workers, with estimates that approximately 80% of formal industry members had received no training. Thus, whilst the training project managed by BITS project provided nearly 28,000 people with skills training between 1971 and 1991 (Merrifield, 1992), BITS has been deemed as being inefficient (van Huyssteen and Chege, 2001). It trained less than 1% of the workforce annually at a cost of about R20 million per year.

The following quotation (interview, David Matthews in Prinsloo and Watters, 1996) describes the outcome that once trained on site, the worker did not necessarily benefit by being paid for his new skills.

"That is where training takes place, on site. That is the most important place, but the laws mitigate against it because it is against the agreement to take a labourer and allow him to use a paint brush" (Prinsloo and Watters, 1996:6)

Cattell *et al.* (1996) describe the system that replaced this. On a big project, the hierarchical flow demanded that: the client financing the project handed the budget to a project co-ordinator. This project co-ordinator did not undertake any work, but provided only management and employed one or two main contractors; the main contractors confined their

input to management and supervision and co-ordination of site activities, relying on specialist and labour-only subcontractors to do the actual building. The authors described the problems that arise from this system:

In this process the main contractors have no knowledge, at the time of negotiating the contract, of whether or not sufficiently skilled and experienced personnel are available to produce work of the standard required by the specification. They can only assume the subcontractors to have such employees. However, when main contractors engage subcontractors, they usually bind them, by handing down fixed budgets, to contract amounts insufficient to remunerate properly skilled and experienced personnel at the statutory minimums and such "skilled" employees are usually unskilled or under-skilled and are usually employed on a casual basis (Cattell *et al.*, 1996).

2.7.2 Educational Levels of Subcontractors and Workers

The Western Cape Province has a large Coloured population. The racial composition of the skilled construction workforce, which was already skewed by the dictates of Apartheid (see section 1.1), was exacerbated between 1955 and 1980 by the Cape being declared a labour preference area for Coloureds (Horner, 1983). As a result, the majority of unskilled labour is drawn from the Black population, whilst the majority of artisans are from a Coloured background. Under the influence of these developments and other apartheid laws such as the Group Areas Act, sub-contract groups have also become racially homogeneous (Greeff, 1990). This is demonstrated in a number of studies of small contractors and subcontractors.

One of the first major empirical enquiries was a case study comparing Coloured subcontractors in the Cape Peninsula low-cost housing industry with those in other parts of the developing world (Krafchik, 1990). The study found that operators in SSCEs (Small-Scale Construction Enterprises) generally had the same levels of education as the Coloured population from which they were drawn. Table 2.1 shows the level of formal education obtained by the sample of 112 operators. Functional literacy is obtainable after 5 years which means that virtually all (94.6%) the operators had this level. A large majority (65.1%) possessed some secondary education, with electricians having the most.

Table 2.1: Levels of formal education among Coloured subcontractors in the Cape

Operators By Formal Education And Trade						
Education	**Bricklayer %**	**Carpenter %**	**Plasterer %**	**Painter %**	**Electrician %**	**Plumber %**
None	0	4.8	0	0	0	0
3-5 years	6.9	0	0	7.8	0	11.1
6-8 years	32.5 years	19	37.5	46.1	20	11.1
9-10 years	44.3	61.9	56.3	23	50	77.8
11-12 years	14	14.3	6.2	15.4	30.	0
Tertiary	2.3	0	0	7.7	0	0
TOTAL %	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**
Mean	8.2	8.6	8.4	8.2	9.2	8.2
Av. Mean	8.5					

Source: Krafchik (1990: 90)

Krafchik (1990) found that the educational levels of these Coloured subcontractors in South Africa was in marked contrast to other parts of Africa, where less than 15% of the operators had any technical or vocational training and skill development was grounded in non-formal education and training, particularly in apprenticeship programmes.

The education level of coloured subcontractors is also very different from that of emerging black contractors and subcontractors. Cattell (1994) reports the results of a survey of 96 registered, black-owned SSCEs in Durban and Johannesburg. The sample comprised:

- 30% general contractors;
- 16% specialist contractors (e.g. plumbers and electricians);
- 23% labour and material subcontractors; and
- 31% labour only subcontractors.

Cattell found that the majority (87%) had completed primary school but only just over a third (35%) had completed secondary school and only 27% had any formal technical training. As a

result many did not have theoretical knowledge of management techniques or sufficient practical experience in trade skills. The respondents realised this deficiency with 34% expressing a desire for trade skills training, 45% for production skills training and 60% for general business skills training. Given that there were as many as 40,000 such enterprises, this reflected a serious shortfall in training (Cattell and Rwelamila, 1994).

Cattell and Rwelamila, (1994) also found that 25% of the sample had never been employed prior to start-up. A further 15% had been employed before as unskilled workers, and only 17% as skilled workers. The author concluded that many of the respondents had become self employed, or entered the industry as self employed for negative reasons. They had not voluntarily chosen self-employment but had circumstance force it on them. The construction industry is known to be one that is easy to enter. However, this can create 'crowding' in the market. In a later study of contracting in the Western Cape, Horwitz (2000) observed that ease of entry is now a fallacy as the market is overburdened.

Cattell and Rwelamila, (1994), in their literature review examined the development of certain black-owned SSCEs through a study on a range of 43 contractors operating in the Northern part of South Africa. The contractors had all been interviewed by Dan Padi, and these interviews were written up over 1988-1990. The accounts were published in a regular weekly column in the magazine, African Building Contractor. Cattell and Rwelamila, (1994) identify patterns in the employment and training records of the firm owners, sizes and activities of the firms, and the opinions of the owners.

What is telling is the lack of information on certain topics. The articles revealed little about formal education, only three stated that the subcontractor had completed his final school certificate (matriculation). One reported leaving school after Standard 8 (now Grade 10), and another after Standard 2 (now Grade 4). Catell and Rwelamila, (1994) deduced that the majority did not complete schooling. Equally unclear is the issue of technical secondary schooling. Only two interviewed claimed to have received any: one obtained the N1 and N2 (equivalent to Grade 11), while another reported that he held a NTC (National Training Certificate). Some stated that they had studied at technical colleges, but did not give details of their achievements so it was presumed that they did not complete the course.

None of the interviewees had received tertiary education. Meanwhile, it is apt to recall that this group are not representative of the workforce but have been more successful in that they have created and managed their own businesses. It can be assumed, therefore, that the majority of the labour would have had less formal education. Cattell and Rwelamila, (1994) proposed the hypotheses that underlying problems experienced were:

- low levels of basic education (which probably prevented access to certain training courses) and trade skills; and
- management expertise were deficient (probably because training institutions were unknown, too expensive or remote).

Neither Krafchik (1990) nor Cattell and Rwelamila, (1994) investigated the educational levels of the workers, only the entrepreneurs. But it may be assumed that the majority of the labour force would have had less formal education. This was confirmed by Prinsloo & Watters (1996) who surveyed 18,000 registered construction workers in the Western Cape and found that 41.7% were unable to read or write (see Table 2.2). A further 18.8% had between 4 and 7 years schooling and were probably functionally illiterate.

Table 2.2: Formal education of construction workers in the Western Cape

Level of Education	**Levels in the Construction Industry**	
	Number	**Percentage**
Unable to read or write	7 498	41,7
Less than Grade 4	1 520	8,4
Grades 4-7	1 873	10,4
Grades 8-10	1 136	6,3
Grades 11-12	472	2,6
Post Grade 12	107	O,6
Sub-Total	12 611	70
Unknown	5 395	30
TOTAL	**18 006**	**100**

Source: Prinsloo and Watters (1996:6)

The research quoted above appears to support the underlying hypothesis in this thesis that conditions in the informal construction industry inhibit training and advancement of lower level employees.

2.7.3 Impact of Subcontracting on Training

The Labour Relations Act of 1956 established and registered the Industrial Council for construction. The purpose of the council is to assist in the maintenance of stable relations by providing systems for settling disputes. Section 24(1) of the Labour Relations Act lists the following matters of common interest that the agreement covers (Cattell, 1994:B1-B2):

- minimum wages payable to defined categories of employees;
- overtime;
- closed shop provisions; and
- establishment of holiday, medical, death and training funds for employees.

Many subcontractors, however, remained outside these agreements as they are not registered with the Industrial Council. Cattell (1994) found that only 38% of the firms he canvassed were registered with the Council. Eighteen different reasons were given for not registering. The most common reason (15,5% of the sample) was that the firm was too small, or not professional enough to warrant registration. The second most common reason (12,1%) was that the respondent did not know such an authority existed. The tied third major reasons (each reflecting 10,3% of the sample) related to expense: the perception of the levy was that it was a form of tax, not that it supported employer-employee agreements.

A further finding of this study was the low numbers of sub-contractors who had received any formal training. The data indicated that 70,8% of respondents had never been formally apprenticed (Cattell, 1994). This would bear out the poor success rate that BIFSA considered the training project to have.

The labour-only subcontractor usually hires informal labour, that is labour with whom he has no contract, or at most only a verbal contract to cover a given task. Findings in a study conducted in Tanzania showed that most jobs carried out by informal contractors are labour-only contracts (Mlinga & Lema, 2000). There is a law that allows unregistered contractors to operate as long as the value of the projects does not exceed one million Tanzanian shillings (at the time of the study Tsh10 = R1.00). However, in reality, a big project may be executed

executed in short phases that allow for several contracts each under one million, but together exceeding the allowed amount. Thus informal contractors employing a great number of workers can remain outside labour regulations. For this to happen, furthermore, the client would have to package the contract in a way that facilitated it.

Subcontractors interviewed by Krafchik (1990) cited the levy (a direct cost) and other, indirect, costs (such as travelling to the local Industrial Council office to pay for the stamps) as reasons for remaining unregistered. In addition to reluctance to contribute financially to a training scheme, subcontractors find it too time consuming and costly to accommodate an apprentice who must be given leave from work to attend training.

The research here has shown that outsourcing of labour defused the effect of the unions and freed the employer of the restrictions imposed by both unions and provisional and national governing bodies. Horwitz (2000) confirmed that an adverse effect of subcontracting on the informal sector, was that this sector generally failed to buy stamps, which contribute to union dues. In the latest study of contracting in the Western Cape, he describes the reactions of 56 informal subcontractors to the requirements of the formal sector. Whilst some expressed a desire to re-enter the formal market, they felt strongly that the system did not encourage them to do so. The cost structure, that is the stamp system, they regarded as rigid, inflexible and a disincentive to them to register. Many simply stated "*we cannot afford the stamps*" and most felt forced to pay lower rates and purchase fewer stamps in order to survive in the intensely competitive market (Horwitz, 2000:9). Assessment of the unemployed individual is, of course, that becoming or remaining registered is untenable (Cattell *et al.*, 1997).

The trend to subcontracting, therefore, and the failure of subcontractors to pay for or to provide training, means that the majority of construction workers in South Africa, as in many other countries, are receiving what training they have informally on the site. The labour force is, therefore, further removed from both the support structures of traditional employment and from alternative systems such as unions that once contained them. As informal labour they have little protection (Horwitz, 2000).

Under the new structure, training is to be managed and promoted by the Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA), established in April 2000. Although this may be a more democratic organisation, funding is still expected to come from a levy collected from

employers, fixed at the rate of 1% of the total remuneration paid to their employees. Given the on-going trend to subcontracting, and the known reluctance of subcontractors to contribute to training funds, doubts must be expressed as to whether sufficient revenues will be collected for the new scheme to get off the ground. With contractors no longer employing permanent staff the number of in-service training opportunities will in any case be severely limited. These concerns were expressed by industry stakeholders during the drafting of the plan (van Huyssteen and Chege, 2001).

A further detractor to employers providing training may be found in the new procurement policies. An asset, or even sometimes a requirement, in tendering on many construction and civil projects is that part of the work goes to local community contractors and/or workers. This means that others, previously employed and possibly trained, cannot be used on a job. Likewise, it means that those locals employed are unlikely to be employable on the next project in a different area. Thus for the employer, training becomes *a "consumption item as it cannot be used more than once*" (Langhoven, 2000:6).

2.8 Impact of Conditions of Work on Training

In addition to its impact on training, previous studies indicate that the outsourcing of labour through subcontractors has impacted on conditions of work. This is because outsourcing has diffused the power of the unions and freed employers of the restrictions imposed by both unions and government. Existing regulations regarding wages are commonly ignored by employers. In a study that entailed 37 interviews and 56 written submissions from small construction employers, Horwitz (2000) describes widespread non-compliance with legal and employment obligations, including the collectively bargained agreements of the Bargaining Council of the Western Cape. The explanation given by respondents was that intense competition for work has led to tender prices that do not cover the cost of minimum wage rates and benefits. The recommendation that arose from his research is that a new framework agreement (NFA) be negotiated. Parties to such an agreement should be committed to negotiating a minimum entry pay rate based on piece work or production output rates for identified types of work, and three job categories: labourer/manual worker, semi-skilled employee and artisans (Horwitz, 2000).

A newsletter from the Building Industry Bargaining Council of the Cape of Good Hope in 2001 explains the outcome as formal employees having to accept lower wages without benefits or be replaced by unemployed work seekers. The Bargaining Council proposed (and the exemption was granted on 4 June, 2001) that building contracts entered into from June 2001 in the Cape should reflect the wages and benefits set out in Table 2.3. The agreement that emerged from this proposal (Kitshoff, 2002) is based on the fact that the basic conditions of employment mean the only area of flexibility in employment is in wages and pension allowance. The agreement reduced the wage of the entry level labourer to R6,26 per hour (approximately R67 per day; US $8 per day at the time of research). This includes sick and holiday leave but does not include pension. It is the lowest possible wage that can be given and was created so that SMMEs would be able to employ labour who probably would otherwise remain without any employment at all. It was accepted by the then newly formed South African Sub Contractors' Association (SASCA). In the eight months following the agreement, approximately 700 "new" employers registered (Kitsoff, 2002). However, this is not reflective of all the country.

Table 2.3: Proposed rates of pay as agreed by the Bargaining Council

Area	Take-home minimum pay		To Council Holiday Pay Contribution		To Council Sick Pay Contribution		Employer's Total cost	
	Hourly	Daily	Hourly	Daily	Hourly	Daily	Hourly	Daily
Cape Peninsula	6,64	56,44	0,52	4,38	0,10	0,83	7,26	61,65
Boland	5,39	48,51	0,32	2,90	0,07	0,61	5,78	52,02
Malmesbury	4,67	42,03	0,28	2,52	0,06	0,54	5,01	45,09

(Amounts in Rands and Cents. At time of research $1 = R8.00)

Conclusions to be drawn from the literature reviewed are that there is no established history of security for workforce in the construction industry. What security was offered by the formal sector, is not offered to the informal sector of both worker and subcontractor. The systems that were developed during Apartheid accommodated relatively few, and these systems have been disbanded. Findings of local research indicate that the current system is

dependent on contributions from employers, but many of these employers are themselves functioning in the informal sector and describe themselves as being unable to meet the requirements of them to provide for training and skills acquisition.

2.9 Chapter Summary

Studies on the informal construction sector indicate that it was first defined as such in the early 1970s. It is characterised as small scale, unregulated, offering ease of entry, using labour intensive methods and relying on indigenous resources and people who have skills acquired outside the formal education system. Many of these factors mean that the construction sector in a developing country employs a great number of people. In South Africa, the informal sector industry is overburdened (Horwitz, 2000) as it absorbs growing numbers of migrant workers as well as increasing numbers of South Africans, both those who were previously in the formal sector but lost their jobs, and those always in the informal sector. A further impact on the sector is the impermanence of project based as opposed to full time employment and the increased use of subcontracting (Cattell, 1994; Wells, 2000). There is also movement between informal and formal employment, and for the subcontractor, between acting as an employer or gaining employment as an employee.

The differences between African and Western building cultures were reviewed (Ngowi, 1996). The mores of Western industry which are ordered, technology based and emphasise material wealth (Du Plessis, 2001; Mbigi, 1993) are in contrast to those of African culture which emphasise *ubuntu*, participation by the community and knowledge gained practically. In Africa, there is an emphasis on on-the-job training (Ngowi, 1996; Wells, 1986).

An historical review of training and skills acquisition in South Africa showed attempts to formalise training through first, an apprenticeship programme, then in the 1990s, through Competency Based Modular Training. Though 28 000 people were reached through this approach, they represented less than 1% of the workforce, thus the scheme was considered unsuccessful (Merrifield, 1992). Ultimately, most employees gained their skills on site (Prinsloo and Watters, 1996). The racial composition of the skilled workforce was skewed by Apartheid as Coloureds, Indians and Whites were able to enter trade schools and not Blacks, and in the Western Cape the subcontractors are predominantly Coloured whilst the labour are

predominantly Black. Research also shows that, for the same reason, the education level of Coloured subcontractors was higher than that of Black subcontractors (Cattell, 1994; Krafchick, 1990).

Subcontracting has a negative impact on training and on conditions of work for labourers. This was found in numerous studies undertaken in South Africa (van Huyssteen and Chege, 2001; Langhoven, 2000; Horwitz, 2000; Cattell, 1994; Krafchick, 1990). Subcontractors working in the informal sector themselves are operating on such narrow margins that they cannot afford the 1% training fee to CETA. They remain unregistered to avoid monetary commitments of this nature. Workers are not protected as subcontracting has diffused the power of the unions and the restrictions imposed by the Government. The informal workforce in construction remains vulnerable.

2.10 Chapter References

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CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the methodology used to conduct and record the research. The basis of formulating the research method and a summary of the methods adopted are given. An overview of potential methodologies and their functions is given. The choice from the alternatives considered was made to meet the criteria of the study, that is: participant selection (the subject was studied through the collation of both quantitative and qualitative data); data collection; processing procedures and data analysis. Desk research was conducted in order to inform the design and content of the survey as well as to give additional information.

3.2 Choices of Methodologies

There are many methods which are available for research. Some are good for empirical or quantitative research, while others are more suited to qualitative research. The methods, including the area in which they are most applicable, are detailed in sections 3.2.1 to 3.2.4 below. In section 3.2.5 the methods used for data analysis are outlined.

3.2.1 Modelling and Simulation

A mathematical model can provide a simulation of a real situation (Fellows and Liu, 1997). Through manipulation of the model, the dynamics of a situation can be studied. Modelling or using a model to simulate a real sociological situation is usually done using a number of sociological statistics and the mathematical functions between them, that are known for a particular range of values of the variables, that is, statistics. A mathematical model can be built so that the functions relating the various independent variables of the model to the dependant

variables will ensure that when an independent variable of the model is changed, the appropriate dependant variable will change in the appropriate manner, and value. This change is assumed to match what would have happened in the real situation the model is simulating. It is assumed in order for the simulation to be valid and of value, that the mathematical functions remain approximately constant, within the range being used, outside the known values of the variables. When the independent variables are changed the resultant dependant variable is assumed to reveal the value that the subject of the model would attain in real life.

Simulation and modelling could be likened to a multi dimensional regression analysis, or extrapolation, and are usually only applied when the dependant variable being investigated is affected by a number of interrelated independent variables thus making simple extrapolation too complex or invalid (Fellows and Liu, 1997).

3.2.2 Random stratified sampling

Random stratified sampling is a technique for selecting sample groups which reflect the whole population in the study groups as closely as possible without the impossible task of trying to reach a full census (Maisel and Persell, 1996). The strata within each segment, groups information according to type. Strata do not have to be of an equal size, though the strata should be as differentiated from each other as much as possible whilst the items within each stratum should be as alike as possible (Casley and Lury, 1982; Kumar, 1996). Samples are chosen randomly from each strata. The method can underpin surveys. Statistical inferences are then made on the basis of samples. Parameters such as mean, standard deviation and median which are then used to calculate the statistics within standard deviations and confidence limits.

3.2.3 Surveys

Surveys usually use a substantial degree of statistical sampling. This is primarily because as the ratio of sample to population size increases, so the costs increase and the marginal improvement in accuracy of the results decreases. Thus, for example, the last 10% of a 100% sample would cost 10% but would contribute to the accuracy substantially less than 10% because each result has an inherent statistical uncertainty. The size of the sample depends on the homogeneity of the

population, the accuracy or certainty required and the finance available to cover the cost of the survey process. Surveys can be conducted by various means, *inter alia*:

- **Indirect surveys** use one or more assumptions about correlations between two or more variables in order to derive results about one variable. This is done by obtaining information on another variable that is probably more accessible. For example: the number of people who leave the room during TV advertisements can be estimated by the change in a city water flow rate while and just after the advertisements are running. (They leave the room and some use water.)
- **Direct surveys** obtain the information as directly as possible from the primary source of information. For example: the number of people who leave the room during TV advertisements can be estimated by the researcher telephoning a random selection of telephone numbers in the area and asking how many people watched and how many left the room.
- **Triangulation** is a technique often used to check results by comparing the same results obtained by different techniques or from different sources. (For example: The same information from employees and from employers, in this study).

3.2.4 Questionnaires

As a research tool, a questionnaire is subject to various kinds of limitations from several sources such as anonymity, socio-economic and educational differentials (Sudman and Bradburn, 1989). There are three ways for administering questionnaires.

- They can be posted or delivered and left to the respondent to complete and return. This method although initially less labour intensive is very prone to a very low return rate and a very high incomplete or incorrect response rate. In a study undertaken in Singapore (Dulaimi *et al*, 2001) 1 245 forms were mailed with a covering letter and a pre-stamped and self-addressed envelope to general and sub-contractors, and only 125 were returned. Likewise a project in Malaysia revealed that mailed questionnaires received a response rate of 13.3%. A reason given for this was lack of interest and difficulty in obtaining information when there is no tangible benefit to be had by the recipient (Abdul-Rahman and Alidrisyi, 1994).

- They can be delivered and collected. This improves only the return rate and is labour intensive.
- They can be used in an interview in which case the interviewer attends to the completion of each questionnaire. This method gives a very high efficiency rate in terms of information return, but can only be used on a limited number of respondents.

Questions can be phrased to assist in different ways the process of eliciting information.
The six types of questions considered were:

- ***Open-ended questions*** – respondents are given an opportunity to provide their answers to the questions. These allow respondents the freedom to contribute wholly to a study by allowing the respondents to frame their own answers. They can reveal much more information, but the answers will be less structured and comparatively complicated to analyse statistically.
- ***Closed questions*** – respondents are given limited opportunity to choose an answer as the question is framed to allow only one type of answer, for example the naming of the respondent's place of origin. Closed questions are easier to analyse statistically but information can be missed because the respondent was restrained. A partial solution is to follow closed questions with invitations to comment.
- ***Dichotomous questions*** – respondents are given the opportunity of only two responses, such as yes/no, did/did not. These types of questions are used because there is less chance of respondents' bias and the responses are easy to code, process and analyse.
- ***Filter questions*** are used sometimes to sort respondents into different groups.
- ***Funnel questions*** are used to guide respondents to different areas of the questionnaire.
- ***Normalising questions*** are sometimes interspersed in a questionnaire to desensitise or relax respondents when they might become biased, or predisposed to a view, as a result of previous questions, or as a result of some situation at the interview (Sudman and Bradburn, 1989).

3.2.5 Data analysis methods

Dainty *et al.* (2000) describe the problems in analysing large amounts of unstructured data and the solution they sought in computer software. To aid the textual analysis of text they used QSR

NUD*IST Vivo (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorising), also known as NVivo. It is specifically designed for use in Grounded Theory projects and thus was relevant to the survey (Bagilhole *et al.)*. The software provides tools to allow the analysis of data once it is arranged into nodes: systems and sub-systems. Coded data from a questionnaire is extracted into rich text format file and then into NVivo. This is used as a basis to allow for correlations to be made between sets of information. NVivo software was investigated, therefore, to ascertain its suitability on this project.

The alternate tool considered for data capture was the spread sheet software program, Microsoft Excel. Excel derives its convenience and versatility from the ease with which users can create and use their own functions and operations.

3.3 Choice of Research Method

This thesis is dealing primarily with informal construction workers who have low income and low levels of education and with the training of such persons because this is the area of prime concern to the country, the government, the industry and the SETAs.

3.3.1 Sources of information

The sources of information on the subject that were available and could be consulted were:

- Literature
- Department of Labour
- SETA (Sector Education Training Authority)
- Department of statistics
- BITB (Buildign Industry Training Board / MBA (Master Builders and Allied Trades Association)
- Industry organisations, such as: The Association of Civil Engineers; Cape Chamber of Commerce; employer's associations; unions and other employees' associations; employers and employees in the formal construction sector; and employers and employees in the informal construction sector.

The sources of available information were ranked in order of availability of information specifically on the low income and education subjects. The availability of information was assessed in each case on the basis of a brief interview sufficient only to obtain enough information for the ranking. It was found that the majority of the sources had very little information of the type that might give insight into the reasons for the success or failure of the training, specifically that of workers in the informal construction sector.

The three best sources of information were: the labour in question themselves; the direct employers of the labour in question; and the literature on the above labour and their employers

3.3.2 Method of information collection

The information on the labour could best be obtained by one-to-one interviews using a questionnaire because:

- the interviewer would be needed to record information because of low literacy levels;
- posted or delivered questionnaires have been documented in the literature as highly inefficient in that the majority will not be returned (Fellows and Liu, 1997; Dulaimi *et al*, 2001), and those returned are seldom complete (see section 3.2.4); and
- the information on the employers could also best be obtained by one-to-one interviews using a questionnaire, for the same reasons as above.

Quantitative and qualitative methodologies were both considered because a topic is more debatable under an analytical point of view. Methods like the structured questionnaire are more synonymous with quantitative methods, thus a structured questionnaire which underpinned an interview was employed. Research in construction management has been dominated by a linear perspective on methodology but research (Loosemore, 1999, Loosemore *et al.*, 1996, Edmon-Fotwe *et al.*, 1996) has indicated that linear methods such as non-participant observation, postal questionnaires and documentary inspection are based on one way communication and allow for little feedback. It has been their convenience and cost-effectiveness relative to non-linear methods that accommodate two way feedback, such as interviews, that has caused them to be used in applications where non-linear methods would be preferable (Loosemore, 1999).

An additional argument for a method based on two way communication is that it provides a more accurate presentation of information (Leavitt and Bahrami, 1988). By contrast, one way communication methods can result in frustration and uncertainty as the senders and receivers of the message are unable to be assured that there has been understanding (Leavitt and Bahrami, 1988).

Further arguments for a non-linear design in methodology was the dynamic nature of this study. Linear methods require advance planning because there is only one opportunity to gain data, hence the potential for frustration and uncertainty. There are strong implications for research conducted in cross-cultural situations given differences in perception of time and approaches to communication (Deresky, 1994, Atiyyah, 1995). Loosemore (1997:559) commented that "*the uninitiated researcher, operating across a cultural boundary, is less likely to understand the nuances of interpersonal relationships in the target culture and to detect subtle idioms in the body of the language or in the way it is said*". Thus, the empirical research, that is fieldwork, was based on interviews underpinned by questionnaires which were conducted by interviewees of the same cultural background as the majority of the respondents (see section 3.2.1). A total of 249 interviews were conducted and questionnaires completed: 200 with workers and 49 with employers and/or entrepreneurs.

Two questionnaires were designed to underpin the interviews, one tailored to the employer, the other to the workers. The positive and negative factors in using questionnaires as one of the main sources of data collection were considered. To address the problems inherent in the questionnaire method (see section 3.2.1), other methods of data gathering were considered: a case study and interviews (Robert, 1994; Stake, 1995). The case study method offered the advantage of process observation which can yield some understanding of the way a process is conducted or condition exists. In this context, Holt (1998) described process observation most often recorded as a narrative, that is case study. The advantage of this method is that it does not rely on the respondent's willingness to provide data. A further advantage is that certain types of data can be gained only through observation. However, the case study method was considered impracticable for the scope and range of subjects that were sought.

Interviews were semi-structured: structured in that they covered the questions in an accompanying questionnaire. The structure inherent in the questions was used in order to maintain uniformity in terms of the exploring the hypothesis addressed by the thesis. However, they were unstructured in that the interviewer could ask questions beyond the questionnaire and interviewees' comments which went beyond answering questions were recorded. Research (Ssegawa, 2000; Chimwaso, 2000) has shown that interviews and the contact gained through them, provided an opportunity to observe and verify practically the procedures in place. Furthermore, Loosemore (1999) asserted that *"participant observation, interviews and interactive quesionnaires facilitate feedback through two way communication"* (that is inherent to the process).

The process by which these questionnaires were compiled and disseminated, the selection of the sites and sample of subjects, the collection and collation of data, the limitations on the methodology and the analysis of the data is discussed in this chapter.

3.4 Questionnaires for Workers and Employers

3.4.1 Criteria for Compilation of Questionnaires

With the decision to use questionnaires, potential limitations were analysed and the questions were designed and ordered appropriately. The environment and context in which the collection of data would be conducted and the subjects who were sought to provide the information were considered. The following criteria emerged:

- lack of resources for writing at building sites;
- low education levels of workers, and of some employers;
- illiteracy;
- poor or no use of English language; and
- lack of time and motivation for completing a questionnaire.

It was also obvious that only a questionnaire that was supported by an interview (see section 3.2.4) could be considered for gaining information from workers. Building sites, particularly small domestic ones, do not have resources for writing. There is rarely an office. Workers have a

poor level of education. This was described in a study of 18 000 registered workers (Prinsloo and Watters, 1996) which showed that 60,4% of the workforce were functionally illiterate. One might conjecture that this figure could be even higher amongst the informal workforce which has not had the advantage of educational and training opportunities that the formal workplace may offer.

For employers, whilst education levels may be higher, the known standard for poor response levels (from all levels of readers) to questionnaires of approximately only 10-15% made the impersonal delivery of questionnaires inadvisable (Dulaimi *et al*, 2001).

The other major consideration was fluency in spoken English. The majority of labour force in the Western Cape is Black and Xhosa speaking, and the majority of subcontractors are Coloured and Afrikaans speaking (see Chapter 2). Good communication in itself is an important element in the research process and it was preferable therefore that they be interviewed in their vernacular and by an interviewer of their cultural background (Loosemore, 1999). This was particularly essential in interviews with Xhosa speakers as many would be itinerant labour who had recently come from a "homeland" *[an area created by the Apartheid government for the enforced domicile of black peoples]* or other rural areas. Afrikaans speakers in the latter instance would be from the Cape, and would probably speak English as well. The home language usually reflected the racial and ethnic group which the intervewee represented. The racial composition of the subjects or interviewees was:

- employers: Black 6%, Coloured 85% and White 9%; and
- workers: Black 73%, Coloured 27% and White 0%.

This language requisite presupposed the use of interviewers with those languages that the research team do not speak and so interviewers with those languages were sought. As the interviews were to be run by a team, it was necessary that the team members had a questionnaire to follow to ensure that essential data was always collected. However, the interview was to go beyond the confines of the questionnaire where applicable. This was particularly to gain qualitative data. As stated by Fox (1999) "*one of the strengths of qualitative data is that they focus on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings. Thus the data have a strong handle on real life, have a richness and holism*". Expanding the data collection beyond the

questionnaire by means of the one-to-one semi-structured interview method allowed for this holism to come through.

3.4.2 Content for Questionnaires

The questionnaires included some questions which were not needed for this thesis but which were required for a study for the International Labour Office. The specific questionnaires for the two types of recipient covered the same fundamental issues but from the aspect of worker or employer:

- demographic information;
- personal history;
- acquisition of skills;
- working conditions (experienced and/or provided);
- employment relationships;
- priorities for improvement to self and to working conditions;
- future plans;
- business/career skills and self-image; and
- interviewee's verbal communicative skills.

Attention was given to questionnaire design and a combination of three types of questions ranging from unstructured to structured response formats were used and in the appropriate order as suggested by Sudman & Bradburn (1989). The questionnaire and interview started with standard factual demographic questions. As an empathetic climate developed and the interviewee relaxed in the interview, so the open-ended, more personal or potentially threatening questions were posed (see Appendices 1-3 for questionnaires).

3.4.3 Pilot Studies

The questionnaires initially included 57 questions for the workers, and 66 questions for the employers. An initial pilot study was conducted and the questionnaires were developed over two months. The pilot study covered five samples of the employer's questionnaire and 10 samples of the workers' questionnaire. The interviews were conducted on informal domestic housing sites

by two members of the research team and one Xhosa speaking interviewer. The questionnaires were then revised, particularly in rephrasing certain questions for greater clarity.

A second pilot study was conducted on the revised questionnaire using a team of interviewers. Once the team had conducted approximately a further 15 interviews, final revisions were made. Again, these were mainly to clarify terms, particularly for non-English speakers. The time taken for an interview was approximately 30 minutes which meant that the interview could take place within a tea or lunch break.

3.4.4 Language Policy and Translation

The two questionnaires were translated into Xhosa and Afrikaans (see Appendix 6). It was proposed that more Southern African languages should be accommodated, but the interviewers could not speak them. It was also found that the majority of workers were Xhosa speaking.

3.4.5 Time Management

A Gantt chart was prepared specifying the time allocated to the pilot study, interviews and data collection. A naturally occurring deadline was the approach of the wet Cape winter during which there is a fall off in informal building operations.

3.5 Selection, Training and Management of Interviewers

3.5.1 Selection and Training

A requirement of the interviews was that the interviewers go beyond the given questions when appropriate, so it was essential that they be knowledgeable in the field. An advertisement was placed on the campus of the University of Cape Town targeting Xhosa or Afrikaans speaking Masters students in the Department of Construction Economics and Management.

As the majority of the interviews were to be of workers, preference was given to Black, Xhosa speaking students. An important aspect of successful interviews is for the interviewee to feel at ease. It was felt that interviewees would feel more at ease with an interviewer of the same racial background. Students studying in the Department of Construction Economics and Management

were sought as some knowledge in the field was considered an asset in their encouraging the interviewees to speak and in understanding their answers and issues raised.

After a briefing presentation on the questionnaires, 23 students applied to take part. Each student conducted one to two interviews as part of the second pilot study. The research team discussed each form and analysed the feedback from the interview. After this session, the 15 most empathetic and exacting interviewees were invited to continue with the project.
From this session it also emerged that the Xhosa interviewers were fully bilingual and able to conduct the interviews in Xhosa whilst filling in the forms in English. This was done to facilitate the final analysis and transcription of quotations.

The racial composition of those conducting interviews was:

- research team: Black (1 person) 50%, White (1 person) 50%; and
- student interviewers: Black (13 persons) 87%, White (2 persons) 13%

3.5.2 Management of Survey

To ensure that the questionnaires were filled in as well as possible, the interviewer had to transcribe the answers, irrespective of whether the other party could have done so. This ensured that questions were correctly understood and the answers clearly transcribed. On the occasions when the interviewee had a different home language (e.g. Portuguese, Shona), the interview was conducted in English. On the few occasions a non-Xhosa or Afrikaans speaker conducted the interview, the vernacular questionnaire form was shown to the recipient to ensure that the latter was not misunderstanding the interviewer.

The interviewers were invited to suggest the sites they knew of, or had contacts at, and were given transport and refreshment expenses to cover their pursuit of these. Other interviews were conducted in groups accompanied by one of the research team. As a motivator for the worker or employer to give up time to be interviewed, a gift of a pen, or where possible, food or a cool drink, was offered. These were well received.

At the end of each week, the researcher went through every form in detail with the interviewer so that there was mutual comprehension of the data. These sessions were effectively mini tutorials in which the interviewer's style could be modified and capacity for data collection improved.

3.6 Selection of Sites and Subject Sample

3.6.1 Selection of Sites

Stratified random sampling was the method considered for selecting sites where workers and employers were to be interviewed. The samples for analysis fell into two major groups: unskilled to skilled labourers; and informal sub contractors. A third group, comprising formal employers and employees occurred on the large sites run by major contractors. This group was interviewed for information to compare with that of the other two groups. (In some cases this group represented individuals who originally came from the informal sector themselves.)

However, in meeting the defining criteria for selecting sites that there be a cross section of sites represented, it was found impractical to define the parameters prior to the study for the random sampling method. It was considered to be potentially inhibiting to the interviews to be conducted if prior indication of the visit was given by a survey of sites to meet the sampling method. It was assumed that a range in sites sought iteratively would reflect a range in types, terms and conditions of employment in the subject sample. Variety in sites was sought in terms of the following categories:

- economic range (from low cost toilet blocks to extensive commercial developments; from low income to high income areas);
- geographic range (within environs of Cape Town);
- area range (high income to low income residential, commercial and industrial sites);
- category of building (domestic, educational, public, etc.);
- type and size of structure (small single storey dwellings to multi storey buildings); and
- informally or formally contracted (informal sector subcontractors are employed on informal and on formal sites).

Sites were defined as *informally* or *formally contracted* according to indicators such as size, activity, type of contractor. These indicators are explained below.

Sites described as informally contracted are those which are small (have one team of approximately 6-12 working on them) and/or have a personal owner/builder (e.g. domestic dwellings, renovations). The terms used to describe these are Residential, Residential - renovations, Alterations, Social and Religious (though large structures, mosques and churches are procured by private groups and not the government and, therefore, are categorised as informal not formal). See Appendix 4.

Sites described as formally contracted are those that are large and commercial (e.g. a block of flats, hospital, bank or shopping centre) or large and official in function and are council or government funded (e.g. mass housing, community buildings, toilet blocks). Thus, formally contracted sites are described as Commercial, Educational, Health, Industrial.
See Appendix 4.

Some sites were difficult to categorise as formally or informally contracted. It was not possible to define sites by asking the subcontractors if they were registered as there was an element of doubt surrounding the validity of their answers to this question (see section 3.3.2). Examples of those sites which could not be categorised were large multi-storey domestic sites where different construction and engineering consultants are needed. Such a site is privately funded but, because of its size and sophisticated building requirements, is probably contracted formally.

The range of sites was covered by an iterative process. At the end of each week the criteria met by the interviews for that period were recorded, and the criteria that needed to be met by the next round of interviews were noted. (See Tables 3.1 and 3.2 for sites defined by geographic areas, and economic and racial composition.)

Table 3.1: Description of areas in which interviews with workers were conducted

composition of Area	B / C, med low inc	W, upper inc	W, medium inc	W, upper inc	W, upper inc	W, upper inc	W, middle income	W, middle inc	W, upper inc	B, lower inc	C, lower inc	C / W, middle inc	C / W, middle to low inc	C, middle inc	C, low inc	C / W, middle income	W, middle income	B / W, middle inc	W, middle inc	B, lower inc	W, middle inc	C, middle lower inc	W, Middle inc	W, upper middle inc	W, upper middle inc	B / C, lower middle inc	B / C, lower middle inc	W, upper middle inc	W, upper inc	No fixed area	
Area Name	Athlone	Backhoven	Claremont	City	Constantia	Epping	Fishhoek	Gardens	Guguletu	Heideveld	Maitland	Mandalay	Manenberg	Milnerton	Montague Gardens	Mowbray	Noordhoek	Nyanga	Rondebosch	Rylands	Simonstown	Sea Point	Tamboerskloof	Thornton	Viking	Vredehoek	Waterfront	Unemployed	Unknown	TOTAL
Commercial			6	2			2				3				1							2								16
Educational																	1													1
Hospital																				2										2
Industrial						2									2	9														13
Religious																			8		2									10
Residential	1	5	5				3	13	4				1	5		4		4		2		4	14	1		4	7	14		91
Residential - renovation/alterations					1			7				1												5						14
Social	23									2																				25
Unemployed																												25		25
Unknown																									3					3
TOTAL	24	5	11	2	1	2	5	20	4	2	3	1	1	5	3	13	1	4	8	4	2	6	14	6	3	4	7	14	25	200
Economic and racial		B = Black			C = Coloured				W = White			Inc = income																		

Table 3.2: Interview Sites for Employers

composition of Area	B / C, med low inc	W, upper inc	W, medium inc	W, upper inc	W, upper inc	W, middle income	W, middle inc	W, upper inc	B, lower inc	C, lower inc	C / W, middle inc	C / W, middle to low inc	C, middle inc	C, low inc	C / W, middle income	W, middle income	B / W, middle inc	W, middle inc	B, lower inc	W, middle inc	C, middle lower inc	W, Middle inc	W, upper middle inc	W, upper middle inc	B / C, lower middle inc	B / C, lower middle inc	W, upper middle inc	W, upper inc	No fixed area	
Area Name	Athlone	Backhoven	Claremont	City	Constantia	Epping	Fishhoek	Gardens	Guguletu	Heideveld	Maitland	Mandalay	Manenberg	Milnerton	Montague Gardens	Mowbray	Noordhoek	Nyanga	Rondebosch	Rylands	Simonstown	Sea Point	Tamboerskloof	Thornton	Viking	Vredehoek	Waterfront	Unemployed	Unknown	TOTAL
Commercial			2	3										1					2								2			10
Educational																1														1
Hospital																			1											1
Industrial															1															1
Religious																														0
Residential	2		1				1	3	1				1						3				2		3	2				19
Residential - renovation/alteratic			1																											1
Social	8								1							1								2						12
Unemployed																														0
Unknown																													5	5
TOTAL	10	0	4	3	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	6	0	0	0	2	2	3	2	2	0	5	50

Economic and racial **B = Black** **C = Coloured** **W = White** **Inc = Income**

For the interviews of workers, the range of interviews conducted on informally and formally contracted sites was 44% (on informal sites), 41% (on formal sites), and for 15% the sites it was marginal and cannot be defined as informally or formally contracted. For the interviews of employers, the range of interviews conducted on informally and formally contracted was 20% (on informal sites), 71% (on formal sites) and for 9% the site it was marginal and could not be defined as informally or formally contracted.

There is no correlation between sites on which employers were interviewed and sites which workers represented. Whilst interviewers did attempt to interview both workers and their subcontractor on a site, they were not always able to do so. Another reason for the difference in proportion of sites between workers and employers is attributable to more informal sites sought for workers, plus there being proportionally more subcontractors to interview on formal, large sites as opposed to informal, small sites where usually there is only one subcontractor operating.

3.6.2 Gaining Access to Sites

During the pilot studies, the research team found that it was more effective to approach in person the foreman/supervisor/contractor on site, show the disclaimer letter, and ask to interview as soon as convenient, or return the next day to conduct interviews. At about half the sites, one was able to interview immediately. This was preferable as some spontaneity seemed to be lost if the site was apprised of the interviews. Furthermore, subcontractors overseeing more than one site were unwilling to commit themselves to being available at a pre-arranged time at a certain place.

To find sites across the spread of criteria, two methods were used. The first was by driving around areas and looking for appropriate sites, which was effective but very time consuming. The second was to telephone the building inspectors and ask them to describe and give addresses of sites in the areas in which they operated. This method was effective later in the fieldwork when certain criteria needed to be met more than other in order to reach the desired range. For example, it was easier to access small domestic sites, so it became necessary to ascertain where to go in the industrial areas.

3.6.3 Selection of Subject Sample

The subject samples for analysis fell into two major groups: unskilled to skilled labourers (referred to as workers); and informal subcontractors (referred to as employers). As with the range of sites selected, the range of subjects interviewed was monitored as the interview process developed. It was not possible to know before interviewing on site exactly what type of worker or employer, for example age, racial composition or trade, would be available for interview.

A third group, comprising formal employers and employees occurred on the large sites run by major contractors. This group was interviewed for information to compare with that of the former two groups. It was difficult to estimate accurately the exact number of formal employers or subcontractors and of workers as there was no proof of formal employment, such as a written contract, requested or shown. However, from assessing the type and size of site, some assumptions could be made.

For employers, approximately 31% of the sample appeared to be formally contracted on a site run by a large construction company. It was not assessed in the questionnaire whether they were reporting to the main or a subcontractor. Another indicator of whether subcontractors are formal is whether they are registered. Again this could not be taken into account in the planning of the interviews, and only 19% declared they were not registered. However, as is indicated in the Chapter 5, it is doubtful whether all of those who declared they are registered were indeed so.

The basis for workers having formal employment is a contract. Again this was difficult to assess as the workers' assessments of their contracts were not always realistic. Proof of contracts was not available and therefore not requested. The proportion of workers working on informally and formally contracted sites (see section 3.6.1 for definition of sites) and with or without contracts is as follows:

- Formal Sites: 17% said they had written contracts, 16% had verbal fixed term contracts (i.e. till job is finished), and 7% on formal sites had no contract at all.

- Informal Sites: 5% said they had written contracts, 20 % had verbal fixed term contracts (i.e. till job is finished), and 26% on Formal sites had no contract at all. 9% were unemployed.

A factor impacting on the interviews with workers was the need to have the subcontractor or foreman's agreement. Thus workers were chosen to be interviewed by virtue of the following factors:

- the interviewer had access to the site; permission from the supervisor to interview workers, permission from the worker to interview him; and
- the worker could take time off work, or was willing to give up a lunch or tea break. (Some workers refused to be interviewed as they were nervous of their supervisor's possible disapproval, or for more pragmatic reasons like wanting to eat lunch undisturbed.)

On those sites on which there was a mix of formally and informally contracted workers, the formally employed showed little interest in taking part, whilst the informally employed were willing to be interviewed. (The interviewers' comments on the interviews describe this.)

3.7 Limitations on the Study

Finding information was particularly problematic because South Africa has a pool of informal labour and informal enterprises which are fuelled from two sources. The one group was those workers from previously formal employment backgrounds and enterprises – a group that has grown recently. The other group is the already existing informal labour pool of poorly educated, semi skilled and unskilled workers who have never had formal employment. There was no organisation through which they can be accessed prior to meeting, or can be defined as belonging to the group that was previously formally employed or to the group that have never been formally employed.

A limitation existed in that one could not be assured of finding the subcontractor on the site where workers were interviewed. Therefore direct correlations between workers and their

employer cannot be drawn. Because they are informal, subcontractors were sometimes difficult to find (they have no formal registration or source centre). This meant that stratified random sampling could not be used effectively as no assessment of the characteristics of those working on a site could be made before the interviews were conducted. Thus, whilst the variance in sites could be pre-planned, there was no planned selection of interviewees. This was reinforced by the need for spontaneity: to gain access to a site and interview quickly without forewarning and losing them working time. Some sites were chosen because the interviewer had an existing connection with or had made a good connection with the supervisor or foreman.

Another limitation was that some employers were reticent at being interviewed as the questions could implicate them if the information were to be given to the Receiver of Revenue or Labour Office. A necessary factor in the interview process, consequently, was for the interviewer to appreciate the sensitivity of the topic and to gain the trust of the interviewees that their identities would not be disclosed. Problems in gaining access to such information have been outlined before. For example, Abdul-Rahman and Alidrisyi, (1994) approached 152 sub-contractors on the basis that they had completed a questionnaire. Only 12 agreed to be interviewed, and finally only nine allowed the interview to happen.

There was no predictor for the reaction of a contractor. For example, the researcher approached two major companies and asked for formal permission to take a team of interviewers to one or two of their sites. The one company responded positively by sending a list of five of their site managers' contact details. One of these managers was open, willing and enthusiastic about the visits. Another one on the same list would not accommodate any visit. Likewise, the researcher approached a large national company building a commercial centre. The site manager requested a full briefing on the study and asked for a copy of each of the questionnaires. He discussed the proposal with the sub-contractors on site. They did not allow the interviews.

In some cases where interviewers arrived and conducted spontaneous interviews outside the site and over the lunch period, the foreman or contractor told them to move on, or watched closely which had the effect of making the worker being interviewed anxious. In one instance, the interviewer had the interview interrupted and the questionnaire torn up.

3.8 Data Capture, Collation and Coding

The process of capturing the information from the questionnaires was carried over three months and involved the interventions described below.

The questions were coded to enable the information to be captured in Excel spread sheets and numerically processed. Trends were analysed and highlighted graphically. This method was effective for the capture of statistical and factual material, but was thought inadequate for the reflection of qualitative data. The latter, which comprises direct quotations recorded by the interviewers on the questionnaire forms, is incorporated in the relevant sections in the results (see Chapters 4 &5).

In the initial stages of exploring data capture (see section 3.2.5), NVivo was found to be more suited for larger blocks of qualitative data (see section 3.2) than was the case in this study in which the quotations are short and are not given consistently for every section. The comparison and correlation of data using Nvivo was unwieldy and it was decided thus to revert back to sorting the data using Excel spread sheets and using those as a basis for comparison. The results of the data collection were then represented, graphically, in tables or textually, for analysis. These results are given in Chapter 4 and 5.

3.9 Chapter Summary

The methodology employed was based on a theoretical study of the literature on construction in Africa, particularly South Africa, and a practical study of 249 members of the workforce. The data collated was both quantitative and qualitative. Separate questionnaires were designed for workers and employers so that pertinent information could be gained. The specific areas covered by the questionnaires were: demography; personal history; acquisition of skills; working conditions; employment relationships; priorities for improvement to self and to working

conditions and future plans. The interviews, based on the questionnaires, were conducted by a team who spoke in the language of the interviewee.

The sites were chosen to reflect the range experienced by the informal workforce and reflected diversity in terms of economic range, geographic range, area, category of building, type and size of structure and whether a informally or formally contracted project.

The subject sample fell into two major groups: unskilled, semi- and skilled labourers; and informal employers (subcontractors). A few members of the formally employed workforce were also interviewed. Limitations were that some employers were unwilling to be interviewed, and some workers anxious. The data was captured and sorted in Excel and the results presented in tables, figures and text for analysis.

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CHAPTER 4

INVESTIGATION INTO INFORMAL CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the profile of the workers as given by the sample. Their demographic history and education are given to provide a basis for analysis of their situation, opportunities and mobility. Their skills, and the manner in which they acquired them are described. Following from this is an assessment of their employment profile: their current jobs, their positions and trades, contractual agreements and wages. Other conditions of work and their rights are also analysed. The workers' perceptions of support systems available to them and opportunities for improvement, namely through training, is considered. Finally, the study considered their aspirations for their future and their opinions on ways to improve their lives in construction. The results are presented graphically and discussed in the text.

The following information is based on the data drawn from the interviews and the questionnaires. For each result 100% is given to the total number of respondents for that question. Non-responses for each result, therefore, are excluded from the sample.

4.2 Demographic History and Education

All of the 200 workers interviewed were men with the majority (73%) Black and the others (27%), Coloured. Almost three quarters of them (73%) were between 19 and 40 years old. Only 7% were over 50 and only one over 55. It can be conjectured that construction labour is physically demanding and not a job to be carried easily into later years or by women.

Table 4.1 shows that the overwhelming majority of respondents (81%) had only grade school education. Many had left school after only a few years of primary schooling and for this reason were barely literate. Only 7% had a school leaving certificate, and 5% had undertaken

a formal apprenticeship. These results are not very different from those of Prinsloo and Waters (1996) who found in 18 000 registered workers that 60,4% had attended primary grade school only and were functionally illiterate. Similarly, Cattell (1994) found that in emerging Black subcontractors, most (87%) had primary school but only a third (35%) had secondary school. The weaker levels of education for this sample indicates that these workers have less chance of self-improvement to the level of subcontractor.

Whilst it is too soon to witness the effect of the new democratic education system, the indicators are that mass education is not going to be able to remedy poor education levels in the near future. An emphasis in the NQF is to recognise acquired skills. For this group, especially, acquired skills are essential to their being able to develop.

Table 4.1: Educational level of workers

Educational level	No. of workers	Percentage
Some schooling (not well defined)	158	81
School leaving certificate	14	7
Apprenticeship	10	5
Single trade training	0	0
Multi-trade training	4	2
Crafts training	4	2
Other	5	3
Total	195	100

Low levels of education (the majority of 81% had had little schooling) also mean that workers have few options when it comes to employment. When asked why they had chosen construction as a career, 44% of the sample gave a lack of options as the reason for entering construction. A further 10% specifically stated that it was the only career possible with their level of education and skill.

The languages spoken by respondents reflected in part their racial origin and in part their level of education. Just over 40% of respondents said they spoke English well and the same

number spoke Afrikaans well. Fluency in English possibly was related to the level of formal education whereas fluency in Afrikaans was not.

The workers interviewed were found to be geographically immobile and generally working in the area they lived and grew up in. There were some who came from poorer regions such as the Eastern Cape but they did not move again in search of opportunity and it was difficult to find any who have moved more than once. However, for many of the older black workers their place of origin was in one of the "homelands", where many still had families. Two respondents were illegal immigrants from Angola. As Cape Town is relatively far from the country's border, it has comparatively fewer migrants.

4.3 Acquisition of Skills

4.3.1 Skill and Skill Use

The average length of time the respondents had been in the construction industry was 9.23 years. Over half the sample had been in the industry for more than 5 years. Prior to entering the construction industry, 18 respondents had worked in jobs outside construction, 10 were working for companies outside construction, but doing construction-related work such as maintenance, and 12 had not worked before.

Figure 4.1 shows the breakdown of respondents by trade. Labourers account for 42% of workers in the sample. One labourer outlined his tasks precisely: mix cement, push the wheelbarrow, also dig trenches for foundations. The second largest group was bricklayers followed by carpenters. Eleven workers (5%) had trade skills in more than one trade.

These findings are commensurate with comments made by Prinsloo and Watters (1996) on the transitory nature of construction. Small, informal enterprises as per this sample, rarely have fixed business premises or can offer continuous work. The worker to survive and develop needs to have a broad skill base. However, the reality shown in this study is that there is a lack of varied skills given only 14% had worked out of their immediate line of work and only 5% had trade skills in more than one trade.

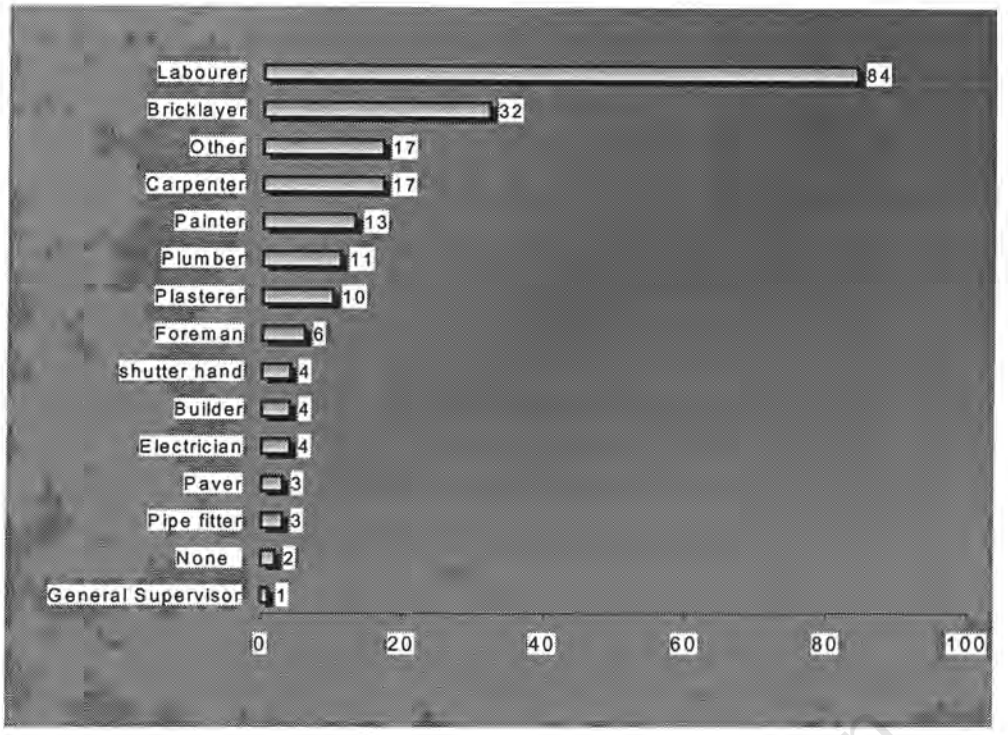

Figure 4.1: Number of respondents by trade

To seek further inferences of varied skills and employability, the workers' trade in those cases where there was a trade, was compared with his present job description to determine if he was working in the trade in which he was trained. 76% were found to be working in a job description that corresponded to their trade and 24% were working outside their trade. It could be assumed that the worker has skills beyond his trade. This finding also correlates with other research (Prinsloo and Watters, 1996, Cattell *et al.*, 1996) that workers acquire varied skills on the worksite.

To assess their divergent skills and increased employability, workers were asked about their previous job descriptions and the length of time worked in them. The workers' present job description was then compared with previous jobs descriptions. The responses, shown in Table 4.2 revealed a high degree of mobility in most trades as the lowest response to mobility was 50% (shutter hands) and the highest response was 100% (electrician, plasterer and foreman). A third of those categorised as labourers have been labourers for 10 years or more. The average labourer has been a labourer for 5,8 years but has been in the industry for 8,1 years. Some now working as labourers had previously worked as craftsmen, for an average of 5.5 years, which suggests that there is also downward mobility, with workers sometimes undertaking jobs below their skill level. An apparent reason for this is the depressed economy.

For those with trades, all except pavers and electricians had worked as craftsmen outside their trade for average periods ranging from 3.7 to 11 years. All except electricians had worked as labourers for average periods ranging from 1 to 5 years. This could indicate upward mobility for those fortunate to have acquired skills. Given that Blacks were marginalized from other race groups (Horner, 1983) and excluded from trade schools, many of the sample would have learnt theirs on the job starting as labourers and then acquiring skills on the job (Greeff, 1990).

Table 4.2: Mobility of different types of labour, by job description

Job description	Worked in other jobs in construction		Average years in other jobs			
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Labourer	Apprentice	Craftsman	Foreman
Shutter hand	50	50	1.0	2.0	4.0	
Pipe fitter	67	33	3.0		5.0	
Paver	67	33	2.0	7.0		
Carpenter	72	28	5.3	5.5	11.0	
Labourer	81	19	7.3	1.5	5.5	0.9
Other	83	17	4.9	4.3	14.3	5.0
Plumber	88	12	3.3	4.0	5.0	10.0
Painter	88	12	5.0	3.1	6.5	1.0
General Supervisor	90	10	3.2	3.0	13.8	6.7
Bricklayer	94	6	4.6	4.0	8.3	3.3
Electrician	100	0		3.0		0.5
Plasterer	100	0	2.3	7.0	3.7	
Foreman	100	0	3.7	5.1	11.0	8.0

4.3.2 Training and Skill Acquisition

Workers were asked how they had acquired their skills. 34% of those who answered this question had acquired their skills formally while 66% had acquired them informally (see Table 4.3). For some formal acquisition of skills would have been through the previous training system. This was principally through apprenticeship (Merrifield, 1992). From the late

1980s, a period during which a worker aged 42 years and less, training was packaged into modules; a system described as Competency Based Modular Training (CBMT). Two of its aims which heralded the NQF, were to:

- *enable employees to move from lower to higher level of skills; and*
- *recognise existing skills and competencies (low educational qualifications would not be a deterrent to entry as educational upgrading would also be provided)* (Prinsloo and Waters, 1996).

These aims support the upliftment of unskilled workers who have acquired skills on the job.

Table 4.3: Employees' acquisition of skills

Source of skills	No. of workers	Percentage
Formal	56	34
College/technical school	39	23
Industry organisations	13	8
Through apprenticeship	3	2
Through jail	1	1
Informal	111	66
Practical experience on site	84	50
Friends and relatives	14	8
Previous employers	13	8
Total	167	100

The artisan in training qualified by demonstrating competency in the different modules that made up the skills training. The model for work, however, by the mid 1990s did not accommodate these requirements: the hierarchy of formal employer/employee had changed. Less than 1% of the workforce were trained annually (van Huyssteen and Chege, 2001). Thus a connection is evident between the ages of workers and those varied skills. The younger segment have had less opportunity to benefit from training as the apprenticeship scheme ceased 20 years ago. A further correlation is that those from a Coloured racial background were more likely to have received training (Merrifield, 1992, Greeff, 1990).

The majority of the respondents (50%) had acquired their construction skills through practical experience on site, either by watching or by being actively trained by their fellow workers (see Table 4.3). A further 8% said they were trained by friends or relatives and 8% by previous employers. Technikons, colleges and training centres were the main formal sources of skills for 23% of the respondents. Industry organisations had trained only 8% of the respondents and only 2% had been trained through apprenticeship. One foreman interviewed commented that:

> *Skills are dying due to empowerment. Black labourers have to be taught on the job. Because of low tendering to win jobs, contractors cut costs by squeezing workers*

The content in this quotation is supported by Cattell *et al.* (1996) who described a problem existent in the Industry which arises from low tendering and impacts on training, or the lack of it. As the main contractors have no knowledge, at the time of negotiating the contract, of whether or not sufficiently skilled and experienced personnel are available to produce work of the standard required by the specification, they work on an assumption that the subcontractors have such employees. Once engaged, however, the subcontractors are often contracted to operate on amounts insufficient to remunerate properly skilled and experienced personnel at the statutory minimums. Thus, they then employ unskilled or semi skilled workers, rather than skilled (Cattell *et al*, 1996). The contractor who is working under such stringent conditions is not inclined to facilitate training for his workers.

Nonetheless: on occasion, skills can be acquired from unusual sources. One respondent had learnt his skills through prison training schemes. He commented that :

> *going to jail was a blessing in disguise. I learned a lot from going there, it also changed my life. You cannot survive in building construction with bricklaying only, you have to be multi-trade. To be able to start the house from foundation to roofing and to be able to do plumbing and paving*

If most training is on the job, then the best conditions for that training must be considered. On the job training is best provided through a stable work environment: one in which permanence can be used so that it (training) does not become or be perceived as a consumer item (Langhoven, 2000).

4.4 Job Stability and Contractual Conditions

4.4.1 Status and stability

If the most conducive environment for training is a permanent environment, it is pertinent to assess the degree of permanence or continuity in employers for the worker. In this sample, workers were asked to define their current employment status: permanent, fixed term, task or casual. Table 4.4 shows the result for the 183 workers who responded to this question. The greater number of those who did not respond was unemployed.

Table 4.4: Employment status of worker

Employment status	Number	Percentage
Permanent	40	22
Fixed term	63	34
Task	11	6
Casual	69	38

Table 4.5 shows the breakdown of workers' status of employment by the trade or activity they conducted. It can be seen that 38% of the sample overall were employed as casuals. But the figure rises to over 50% in the case of labourers, plasterers and those who described themselves as 'builders'. From the low wage given to some describing themselves as 'builders' it is apparent that they are employed as unskilled labourers – who happen to be working on building sites. As casuals, workers are employed on a daily basis depending on the workload and skills needed.

A more or less equal number are employed on a 'fixed term' or 'task' basis for the duration of a contract or job, as long as their skills are needed. Such workers usually have a long-term relationship with the employer and sometimes consider themselves to be 'permanent' employees. But even so, they have no real job security, as the duration of employment depends entirely on the availability of work. Only 10 'fixed term' workers had a written contract.

Table 4. 5: Relationship between trade and employment status

Trade	Employment Status (%)			
	Casual	Task	Fixed term	Permanent
Labourer	53	4	32	11
Electrician	33	0	32	33
Bricklayer	34	14	24	28
Plasterer	49	13	38	0
Plumber	0	0	50	50
Pipe fitter	33	0	67	0
Painter	20	0	40	40
Carpenter	19	13	37	31
Foreman	0	0	50	50
Builder	50	0	50	0
Paver	33	0	67	0
Supervisor	0	0	0	100
Shutter hand	0	0	100	0
Other	25	6	31	38

40 workers (22% of the sample) described their position as 'permanent', but only 12 had a written contract. The considerable confusion over the meaning of 'permanent' is illustrated by the following comments:

- " *every time the boss calls me when there is work* "
- "*my employer told me I will work for him until I die, so it means I am permanent*"
- "*no written or verbal contract but still working in this company for past 5 years*"
- "*the contract is verbal, not told when to finish, but we will work somewhere else when finished*"

It is clear that from these remarks that many workers use 'permanent' to refer to their relationship with their employer, rather than the continuity of work. Because they have a good relationship with an employer they feel sure that they will have work, but only when it is available. The reality of the status of employment is that only 22 workers out of the 200

interviewed had a written contract. Even this cannot be taken as absolute as no proof was asked of this document and some may have documents which they consider to be contracts, but which are not. Two such documents witnessed were in fact disclaimers of responsibility on the employer's behalf. See Appendix 6 for the examples. Thus, for the majority of this sample, the lack of permanence could mean reduced options for training and acquisition, with resultant recognition, of skills. It could also mean that unrecognised skills may be used by the employer who employs and pays them as labourers but uses them to do skilled work as described by Cattell *et al.* (1996).

In the sample, as a whole, the length of time with the present employer averaged 4.25 years. 40 respondents said they had been with their employer for more than 5 years. (Certainly, the latter group would have acquired skills on the job: in effect, received on the job informal training. Thus this situation is similar to that described by Merrifield (1992) in which the majority of house builders interviewed reported that the training they had received had been on site.)

47 workers (28% of the respondents to this question), had been with their employers for less than 1 year and 84 workers for one to five years making the overwhelming majority of workers (78%) having been employed by their current employers for less than five years. This means that there is a lack of continuity in employer. A worker who is employed consistently over an extended period would acquire skills on the job. His acquisition of skills would be a reason for the same employer to re-employ him.

The results also showed that 86 workers had been involuntarily retrenched at some stage in their career. Generally it may be assumed that this was due to lack of work and the weak economy. But other reasons for involuntarily changing jobs were also given with some of them pertaining to the issue of status and resulting conditions of employment:

- *I was fired because I was involved in a strike*
- *Because of taxi violence I came long after the holidays and I was fired*
- *I quarrelled with the boss: he promised to make me permanent after two weeks then after he refused*
- *I quarrelled with the boss, he did not want to pay me in time*

Others had left a job voluntarily. Examples of reasons for voluntarily changing jobs are:

- *I was working hard for little money*
- *My employer refused to give me a loan for (buying) the house after 15 years employment. Also after all these years, my boss never trained me or registered me for the training. There were no benefits. (The respondent was unemployed, was interviewed waiting at the gates of a site.)*
- *No transport for employees and no payment for overtime*

Not surprisingly, 77% of the sample said that they had been unemployed at some stage. The average period reported by respondents for being out of work was 10 months and the longest period, just over 2 years. Fifteen of the 200 interviewed workers (8%) were unemployed at the time of the interview. No recourse to training is available to the unemployed.

Respondents were asked what they did when unemployed (see Table 4.6). Those who said they did nothing or engaged in some form of leisure activity accounted for 40 % of the total, while 25% of the respondents did odd jobs outside the construction industry, for example fixing televisions and radios in townships or selling fruit.

The next largest group (19%) said they did odd jobs within the construction industry, such as renovation and maintenance jobs in the townships. Among the activities listed in the 'other' category were: 'begging on the streets' and 'going to school'. Respondents' comments about the time they spent out of work in construction were both about relaxing and about making, or hoping to make money. Again, the lack of recourse to training or an opportunity to improve skills, technical or communicative, when unemployed means that this was not an option for which they could hope.

Table 4.6: Activity when unemployed

Activity	No. of workers	Percentage
Always employed in construction	5	3
Do odd jobs in construction	31	19
Look for construction work	11	7
Do odd jobs outside construction	40	25
Work at home	4	2
Do nothing or engage in leisure	66	40
Socio-religious activities	3	2
Other	3	2
Total	*163*	*100*

4.4.2 Contractual conditions

When specifically asked about their preferred contract type, the response was overwhelmingly in favour of permanent or long term contracts, as shown in Table 4.7. Permanence is seen to be the key to better working conditions: better conditions come with skilled jobs. Comments supported the desire to work on projects offering permanent or long term work:

- *Any project as long as it gives money on long term contract*
- *Any project that will give money especially permanent*
- *Small projects and be permanent. Your rights are violated when you are a casual, therefore it is risky*

Table 4.7: Contract type preferred by workers

Type of contract	No. of workers	Percentage
Permanent	58	67
Long term	17	20
Fixed term	6	7
Any	2	2
Casual	2	2
Written	1	1

Assessments of the workers' acquisition of skills through training on the job can also be made through consideration of their wages and whether they think them and other conditions of employment sufficient. The extent to which the Industry supports the worker is illustrated not only through employment status and contracts, and wages, but also through interested organisations, education in his rights both in terms of employment and personal safety. Table 4.8 shows that most workers (95%) are paid on the basis of time served, with per hour or per day being most common. Most actually receive their pay on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis. The average working day is 8.3 hours but 66 said they worked for longer, up to 10 hours per day. Most work for 5 days per week.

Only 9 workers (5%) said they were paid according to output. One of them remarked:

> *What I don't like about constructing is when you are a bricklayer, you have to be fast. For example, you have to put 1000 bricks a day to earn the two hundred. Should you fall back on that 1000 bricks you earn less. Myself I earn R120, sometimes R80 a day.*

The wages received by respondents varied between R 20 and R 250 per day. [1] At the time of the study, the wage set by the Bargaining Council for the Western Cape was R9.47 per hour, or R75 for an 8 hour day. Thus wages below this can be considered low. This finding is supported by Horwitz (2000) who describes informal employers as frequently ignoring those regulations concerned with payment. There were generally no additional benefits: few workers received help with transport and none were provided with meals.

[1] At the time of the survey $1 = R8

Table 4. 8: Basis for payment of employees

Criteria	No. of workers	Percentage
Per hour	78	40
Per day	89	46
Per week	4	2
Per fortnight	7	4
Per month	6	3
Per piece	4	2
Per task	5	3
Total	*193*	*100*

The relationship between trade and pay is shown in Table 4.9. It can be seen that the highest wages were received by those employees with skills in plumbing and electrical work, who could earn more than those working in a supervisory capacity. ('Builder' refers to somebody who is multi-skilled, possibly also working in a supervisory capacity.) A positive correlation was also found between wages received and the length of service with the current employer. This reinforces the findings on some employers providing continuity in employment, if not permanent contracts.

A large number of workers expressed dissatisfaction with their wages, with 83% describing the wage as insufficient to live on (see Figure 4.2). The following is a sample of responses after which the wage the respondent said he received is given in brackets:

- *Yes – if I refuse this money they're going to fire me* [R60]
- *No because they were not given enough money, coloureds were given twice the amount of money they earned yet they did the same job* [R60]
- *No because I have two wives and children to support back home* [R45]
- *Not, the money is only for food, not clothes* [R50]

However, some on very low wages were uncomplaining and appeared to be resigned to receiving low wages in this work. One respondent said he was satisfied at receiving R75 per day, aware that he was receiving the minimum wage. .

- *I am satisfied by it at least* [R75]
- *It's better than stealing* [R50]

Table 4.9: Relationship between trade and wages

Trade	Average daily wage	Average weekly wage
Builder	220	1100
Electrician	195	850
Foreman	168	785
Plumber	148	567
General Supervisor	140	-
Carpenter	132	562
Other	127	563
Pipe fitter	120	1050
Bricklayer	118	571
Painter	108	485
Plasterer	104	564
Paver	70	900
Shutter hand	68	340
Labourer	64	387

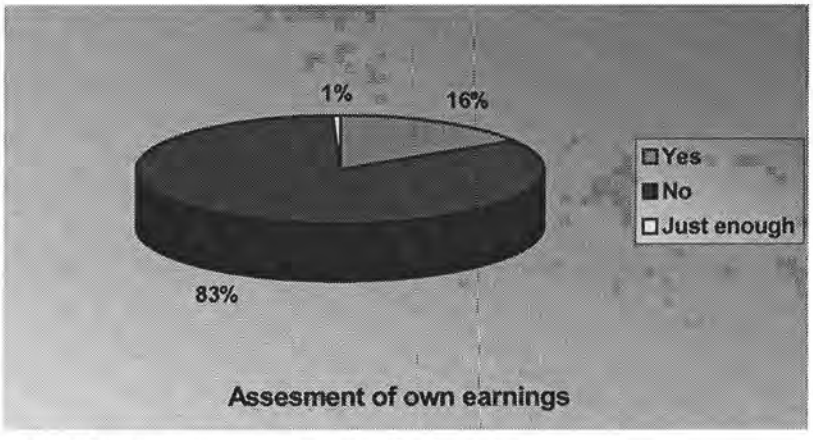

Figure 4.2: Workers' assessment of earnings

4.5 Conditions of Work

4.5.1 Perceptions of conditions and wages

Apart from wages, the majority of the labourers felt that their conditions of work were good (32%) or fair (34%). But 9% felt conditions were poor and 25% felt they were very poor (see Figure 4.3). These results must be reviewed in the context of the sample who are from a disadvantaged background and who, for the most part, have been offered no or very little opportunity for self advancement. They are thus unaware that working conditions could be better than they are or that training could be offered to them in order that they gain work with better conditions.

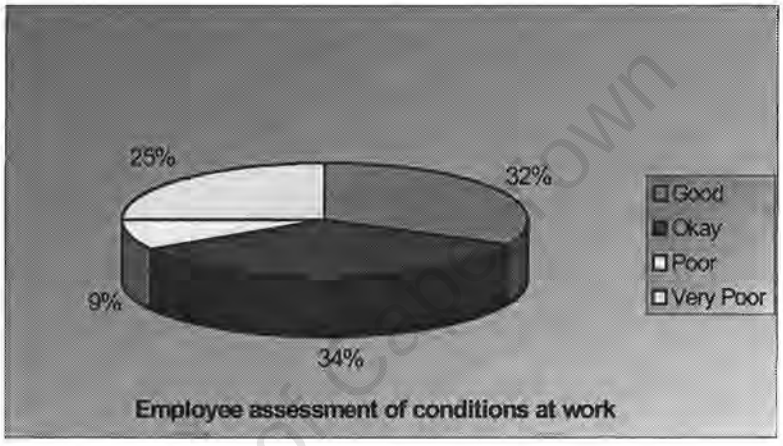

Figure 4.3: Workers' opinions of working conditions

In making the assessment of working conditions many respondents personalised conditions and referred to their supervisor or employer, in particular the attitude this person held towards his workers and their relationship with him. Ofori *et al.*, (1996) describe communication skills as a necessary component in the management of labour-intensive techniques. This comment supports their proposition:

- *Fine, the manager is a good person, he knows how to talk to his people*

Other positive comments were:

- *Not bad: the boss is not pushing us*
- *Good because our boss is easy to talk to when one is not happy*

But there were also negative comments, some relating to working rights:

- *Bad, because we are treated very unfairly. Sometime vulgar language is used as an instruction*
- *Bad, because my boss does not consider time. Sometimes we work until 6pm without being paid*
- *It is a hard job because there are times when there is no material and we have to go home. We don't get our money for that day*
- *Last month lost his niece. Wasn't able to get away to go to the funeral. Boss said had to reach the target, couldn't spare him*
- *They are killing conditions, even if you can get injured, you would not get anything*

Again, this indicates an overall lack of information about their rights in terms of working conditions. The workers' resignation to poor conditions could be attributed to their feeling powerless to address the problem. Steinberg's research (1996) found that labourers do not feel that they can approach their subcontractor. Communication skills are necessary on site (Ofori et al., 1996) and in this case could assist labourers to negotiate for their rights.Steinberg (1996) outlined the role for conflict resolution techniques in development communication. It could be proposed that training in which workers communication skills were also improved could assist them in negotiation (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10: The role for conflict resolution skills in development communication

Type of Conflict	Causes of Conflicts	Strategies for Conflict Resolution
Perceptual conflicts: differences in perceptions of situations	Differences in information	Communication/education Strategies
Goal conflicts (differences in desired states/standards)	Differences in values	Structural or systemic strategies
Strategies conflicts (differences in preferred courses of action)	Structural factors	Selection of people or strategies

Note: conflicts with strong personal or emotional undertones are not included here.

Source: Steinberg, 1996:571

However, previous formal training did not include interpersonal communication (BIFSA, 2000). Without communication skills to negotiate and manage conflict resolution, labourers often do not feel that they can approach their supervisor or subcontractor and see no option but to use trade unions as the vehicle for communicating with management. This leads to a loss of man-hours which could have been avoided if there had been intervention on site.

Table 4.11 presents a breakdown, by employment status, of wages and of employee satisfaction with regard to wages and conditions of work. It is not surprising to find that those who considered themselves in 'permanent' employment had the highest wages, and that a smaller proportion of permanent employees expressed dissatisfaction with their level of wages (67% compared with 83% for the sample as a whole). However, permanent employees were generally less satisfied with the conditions of work than those on casual or fixed term contracts, with 31% considering conditions to be 'very poor'. Permanent employees presumably have had sufficient access to information on workers' rights to appreciate the lack of benefits in their jobs.

Table 4.11 : Wages and employee satisfaction by employment status

	Wages per day	Wages per week	Enough to live on? (%)			Conditions at work? (%)			
			Yes	No	Just enough	Good	Okay	Poor	Very Poor
Permanent	121	560	30	67	3	36	28	5	31
Fixed term	108	547	10	90	0	28	41	10	21
Task	87	263	18	82	0	45	55	0	0
Casual	81	475	14	86	0	35	30	10	25

Two thirds of respondents professed to be familiar with their rights as workers (Figure 4.4). This correlates with the previous finding that a great proportion of workers are not dissatisfied. It cannot be assumed, however, that they are being treated in accordance with their rights, rather that they are unaware of them. Some comments that implied the workers knew that they had employment rights:

- *Yes - I am entitled to receive pension, sick-leave pay. For medical aid fund, a subscription of R37,50 per week goes to medical aid. I have to receive holiday pay*
- *Yes – I was once a member of union in Johannesburg. Here I don't think construction workers belong to any union that I know. In this industry people, they come and go*
- *Yes – I like getting bonuses*
- *Yes – after three weeks I have to be permanent. Have right to strike at three weeks past. Freedom of speech if not paid timeously. Right of reconciliation when I have done something wrong*
- *I am because I know that my pay has to rise as long as I am working for one boss*

Figure 4.4: Familiarity with workers' rights

Other results, such as those on status of employment reflect a different reality from that implied in the quotation on a worker becoming permanent if employed for longer than three weeks. Other answers implied either that the worker did not really know, or was not interested or was nervous about exercising his rights. Many of the most negative comments came from labourers, the unskilled and least paid in the sample:

- *I am not interested in these. I just work for money*
- *I am not sure because sometimes one gets fired and when one goes to report to the union, one does not get help*
- *There are no rights in construction building. If you try to talk about rights you are going to be out of a job*
- *Yes, but there is nothing I am doing about it. Because I am casual, I do not want to be dismissed*

- *Yes, I cannot practice them, I am afraid of being fired*
- *You have no rights if you work for a subcontracting firm*

One of the foremen commented that his boss was not registered and his explanation of the reason, quoted below, indicates an appreciation of the employer's dilemma.

> *If you are register, you get taxed even if you are not employed and you end up earning nothing and the tax money is buying arms and houses for the parliamentarians.*
> He added: *Sometime when there is big construction going one, like building Standard Bank, they ask for registration paper. But they get jobs anyway because other people, they don't need registration papers.*

4.5.2 Perceptions of rights to health and safety

Lack of awareness of rights extends to health and safety. The majority of workers (84%) thought that construction was a dangerous job and 41 workers reported having experienced one (83%) or more (18%) accident on site during their career. However a high proportion of respondents regarded accidents as being the fault of the worker or due to the physical nature of the job, rather than the responsibility of the employer as Table 4.12 indicates. This reflects inadequate training in health and safety rights, a situation that is found on building sites universally.

Enshassi (1997) described a study in which the Construction Industry in the USA was responsible for 12% of all industrial accidents whilst employing only 6% of the workforce. In developing countries safety levels are even poorer than those in developed countries (Smallwood, 1998). A contributory reason for the high levels of accidents is the transitory nature of the construction workforce (Barry, 1985); a problem that has been exacerbated by outsourcing.

Table 4.12: Workers' perceptions of the causes of accidents

Causes of accidents	No. of workers	Percentage
Own carelessness/negligence	81	43
Physical nature of construction	67	36
Poor handling/maintenance of machinery	10	5
Lack of proper machinery	8	4
Lack of knowledge of safety regulations	7	4
Poor planning and management	4	2
Lack of experience	4	2
Natural hazards	3	2
Poor safety procedures	2	1
Poor workmanship	1	1
Total	*187*	*100*

Added to the lack of personal knowledge about their rights in this regard, workers were uncertain about who was responsible for health and safety on site. Whilst the majority gave figures of authority or the Industry as being responsible (72%), they were divided in their opinions as to which body held responsibility (Table 4.13). Only one third thought the employer was responsible for safety education. A further 30% thought it was the responsibility of the foreman. But 29% thought nobody in particular was responsible. One illustrative comment was:

- *While working, a friend taught him sometimes, he did not know*

Table 4.13: Employees' perceptions of responsibility for safety

In charge of safety education	No. of workers	Percentage
The company		
The employer	*58*	*31*
Foreman	*55*	*30*
Colleagues	*4*	*2*
The construction industry		
Safety inspectors	*6*	*3*
Educational institutions	*4*	*2*
The industry	*2*	*2*
Department of labour	*1*	*1*
The worker		
No one	*37*	*20*
Don't know	*10*	*5*
Worker himself	*7*	*4*
Total	*184*	*100*

Whoever was responsible for health and safety education, 72% of workers (compared with 98% of employers) thought they were doing a good job. But there were also dissenting voices:

- *A foreman – yes, but he does not give to everybody*
- *Do not know since I have never seen them*
- *No, they just wander about on the site*

The employee's length of service in construction seemed to have some bearing on his knowledge of his working rights as well as those appertaining to health and safety. Workers who were familiar with the health and safety regulations had worked in the construction industry for 9.8 years on average, while those who were not familiar had been in the industry for 7.9 years on average. The workers who said they were familiar with their rights had been working in construction for 9.7 years, those not familiar had been in the industry for 8.1 years. Those familiar with both working rights and health and safety rights totalled 9,75

years' experience, whilst those who were unfamiliar with both totalled 8 years' experience. Thus, where training and its consequent exposure to education in rights does not exist, a reasonable degree of acquisition of knowledge takes place at the workplace. The difference is minimal but does imply that familiarity with rights does come with length of association with the industry.

4.6. Perceptions of Existing Support and Opportunities for Improvement

4.6.1 Membership and perception of associations

Trade unions were perceived by 25% of the respondents as responsible for keeping workers informed of their rights. 21% thought no one is responsible, 18% thought the employer should keep them informed of rights, and 13 % believed it was the duty of the foreman to inform them. Some (23%) workers had no idea as to who should inform them of their rights:

- *Nobody if you are casual workers because if you are fighting for your rights you are going to be fired*
- *I don't know. The government doesn't care about us. The only thing they are doing is to exploit us*
- *Nobody because no union*

83 respondents (43% of the total respondents to this question) said they were members of an organisation in the workplace (see Figure 4.5). But only 23 were members of trade unions. Many reasons were given for not joining trade unions. One respondent indicated that his employer expressly forbade him to join a union or workers organisation. But the comments indicate that many others are not members because they have no faith in unions:

- *No, the unions played us for fools years ago*
- *NUMSA – they don't do anything about workers' conditions. The union they take their money, they don't represent their interests*
- *No, there are no unions in construction and COSATU is not popular here either*
- *It is BCAWU but they don't do work properly for us and they pull almost R20 from our salary fortnightly*
- *No I can't join anything with little money. I am earning peanuts here and if I leave I will not get another job*

- *No, because fees are deducted from my salary*

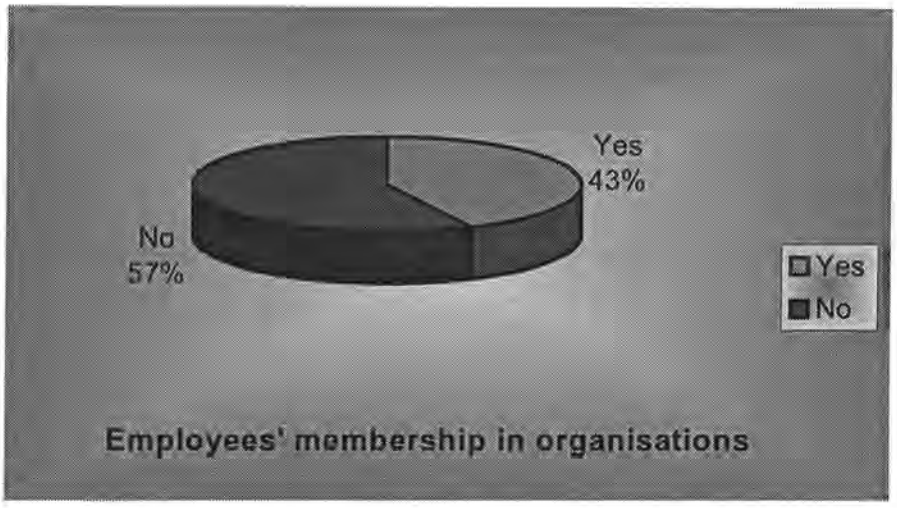

Figure 4.5: Workers' membership of organisations

The most important type of organisation which the workers had joined were burial societies. Ten workers mentioned having bank accounts and 2 considered taking out insurance as belonging to an organisation. Lack of commitment to unions can be construed to reduce the unions strength in bargaining for improved conditions. Training is an aspect of improved working conditions (CETA, 2000).

4.6.2 Perceptions of route to an improved future

For all their lack of knowledge of rights and poor membership of unions, workers are aware that having skills would up lift them. In response to the question of what skills might improve their lives (Table 4.14), 53% of workers said they would like to acquire skills in a construction trade, with carpentry and electrical trades being the most popular. Construction management and professional skills were cited by 9% of the respondents.

Skills workers wished to acquire that were not related to construction included driving, motor mechanics, seamanship, business and management skills and computer literacy. However, 28 of the respondents (15%) did not think there were any skills and training that would improve their lives. One respondent said that acquiring skills was useless as there was no work.

Table 4.14: Workers' perception of important skills

Skills	No. of workers	Percentage
Trades	101	52
Construction management & professional skills	17	9
Non-construction	15	8
Business	10	5
Computer	9	5
Yes but undefined	6	3
Increasing education	3	2
Apprenticeship	2	1
Personal	1	1
None	28	14
Total	*192*	*100*

The preferred place of training was at technical colleges (38 %). But 13% of the respondents had no particular place they wanted to receive training and 12% wanted training to take place on site. 7% wanted industry organisations like BIFSA to be in charge. Community training centre, university and driving schools were also identified as potential training places (see Table 4.15).

Table 4.15 : Employees' preferred place of training

Training place	No. of workers	Percentage
Technical college	70	38
Anywhere	23	12
On site	22	12
Industry organisations	12	7
Community/training centre	12	7
Don't know	7	4
University	4	2
Driving school	2	1
No training wanted	17	9
Other	15	8
Total	*184*	*100*

Given the low education level of the sample, it is unsurprising that very few showed interest in acquiring skills other than building ones pertinent to their jobs. Their preferred choice of places of training indicates weighting towards technical skills. However, the workers were also asked to assess their own language skills: shared language being an important factor in effective communication (Table 4.16). Workers were also asked if there were any communication skills they would like to acquire or improve upon. Almost half said they would like to improve their language skills. Although English was the preferred language, a sizable minority wished to become more proficient in Afrikaans or in one or more African languages. The comments revealed that this was in order to improve communication with their employer or with the workers on site:

- *I'd like to improve my communication skill – improve Afrikaans*
- *He would like to learn to speak Xhosa as well – because he is working with Xhosa speakers and he need to understand who (what) they say*
- *I would like to know one of the African languages*
- *English and Afrikaans, especially Afrikaans because here in Cape Town it is difficult to find a job without it*
- *Yes, I want to know a bit of Xhosa*

Foremen said they needed language skills in order to manage the workforce:

- *Yes (languages) so as to talk to other workers and manage them like a foreman*
- *Yes, managerial skills and different languages, example Xhosa, Sotho*

Table 4.16: Employees' perceived need for communication skills

Communication skills	No. of workers
Languages	98
English	*55*
Afrikaans	*19*
African languages	*16*
German or French	*1*
Languages generally	*6*
Leadership and interpersonal skills	13
Literacy	2
Driving skills	1
Construction skills	2
Yes but undefined	20
No	49
Total	*185*

In a socio-linguistic study of the intercultural workforce in a South African construction firm, research revealed that communication is influenced by levels of education and job positions, and also by the number of languages and dialects being spoken by the multicultural workforce (Dippenaar, 1999). The results of the sample certainly indicate that the need for common language is recognised which is supported by literature (Fielding, 1997). Some of the respondents were foremen who usually have a higher level of education and job position. This group said they needed language skills in order to manage the workforce:

- *Yes (languages) so as to talk to other workers and manage them like a foreman*
- *Yes, managerial skills and different languages, example Xhosa, Sotho*

While most respondents appreciated the need for skills, they were less aware of the importance of recording skills or experience for future employers. The need to do this, however, is greater in a volatile work market in which they operate and for those without

permanent employment. Less than half (48%) of the sample had asked for references or kept records of past jobs and employers. It could be conjectured that the lack of requests for references is linked to low levels of literacy. The individual concerned is not familiar with or accustomed to working with textual material so does not think to request it.

Positive responses to the question about obtaining references from employers referred to verbal references, and indicated the importance of the personal relationship between the worker and the employer. Examples of comments included the following:

- *A phone, address and his name: I ask for them*
- *Yes, provided we did not quarrel*
- *Yes, they write me a letter*

Negative responses were more numerous and demonstrated some resistance from employers:

- *No. Retrenched after strike – no letter. Didn't even receive money back*
- *I didn't know that I could ask for such things because I worked for a building contractor for a very long time*
- *Yes, I did and I still want them but I can't get them. They keep promising – up till now nothing*
- *Yes, though sometimes we do not get. They just refuse to give us*
- *All my years no one gave references. They want production and how good you can apply a skill and not who you work for*
- *They don't give the reference. They say you must go*
- *No, it is humiliating for making mud (mixing cement). Anyone can do it*
- *No, because here I am still on the lower ground*
- *No, you get paid for the hour and get nothing more*

In response to questions about the future, most workers saw themselves staying in the construction industry (Table 4.17). But most wished to work as craftsmen and this was why they wished to receive training in craft skills. Many expressed a preference for self-employment. A minority (15%) expressed a desire to work outside of construction.

Table 4.17: Preferred future job of workers

Job type	No. of workers
Trades	76
Self-employed	36
Jobs outside construction	31
Administration in construction	20
Same job	16
Professional	5
Permanent	4
General construction	3
Any	8
Total	*195*

When asked specifically about their preferred employment status there was a fairly even split between those who would like to gain permanent employment (49%) and those who would like to be self-employed (50%). None wished to remain as casual unskilled labour if the option existed to do something more. This again indicates the extent of need for skills development.

Low levels of education seem to affect aspirations. Comments from respondents indicated that they saw lack of formal education as a barrier to self-employment. Typical responses from those with little schooling to the question "what job would you like in the future?" were *"Nothing in mind, a job anywhere" or "I don't have any wild dreams. I need to survive if I'm not working"*. Workers with better education tended to have more ambition, with the majority expressing a desire to be self-employed. It can be assumed that ambition would include the desire to better oneself through acquisition of skills.

Workers were also asked where they wished to be in ten years time. This question was asked to ascertain whether workers considered handing down experience in their later years. Again a high percentage (50%) indicated that they wished to be self-employed (Table 4.18). Others saw themselves as retired from construction by that time or '*living comfortably at home*'. A

minority wanted to be in an administrative job or other permanent job in construction. Responses were also received from those who did not know where they wanted to be, those who wanted a better job, but not in construction, and those who wanted to move to a different area. Not one respondent had considered that he pass skills onto younger members of his family or colleagues. It could be construed from this that workers have not experienced this model for training.

Table 4.18: Workers' aspirations for the next 10 years

Aspirations	No. of workers	Percentage
Self-employed	98	50
Retired/ at home	24	13
Administration in construction	20	10
Permanent job in construction	14	7
Fulfilling personal goals	10	5
As a craftsman	8	4
Better job outside construction	5	3
In a different geographic area	3	2
Unsure	13	7
Total	*196*	*100*

The comments from workers indicated that their main requirement, whatever the job, was to be in a permanent position so as to create a bit of security for their future. Inherent in many of the comments from those wishing to remain in construction is the desire for permanence and for training to become skilled in an aspect of building or craft:

- *I want to be a bricklayer. I want to be permanent so that I get a pension fund, sick leave and other benefits. To have a formal job*
- *To be a floor tiler. To be permanent to earn more money and get a pension fund. To know everything on buildings and to be a foreman*
- *To be a plastering man. To have my own subcontract to tell the labourers what to do; enjoy the employers' status. To be the boss in construction*
- *Roof tiler, to be permanent to receive benefits. To have my own subcontract. In future being my own boss*

The implication of these comments is that workers wish for training that would give them trade skills.

It is a poor reflection on the Industry that when asked a number of questions designed to elicit their view of work in the construction industry, 23% percent could not think of anything positive to say about their jobs. A further 30% (made of 20%: *the job* and 10%: *regular work/income*) said they liked their jobs, but this was only because it provided work and income (Table 4.19).

Table 4.19: Positive aspects of construction work

Positive aspects	No. of workers	Percentage
Nothing	44	23
The job	38	19
Challenging/learning	24	12
Regular work/income	20	10
Meeting new people	14	7
Working in a team	12	6
Everything	11	6
Good working conditions	7	4
Work outdoors	7	4
Don't need education	6	3
Good income	5	3
Easy to find work	2	1
Travel opportunities	2	1
Opportunities to advance	1	1
Total	*193*	*100*

Smaller numbers did express some positive views of their job and from these it is clear that there is interest and response to the working environment. These responses indicate a positive attitude and energy which could be harnessed for the Industry if training in skills were provided:

- *Everyday you learn something new. One day he wants to build his own house so would have the relevant knowledge*
- *I am learning a new skill every time*
- *Gaining more skills and improve what I learned at Technical College*

It could also be considered that positive attitude to work contributes to motivation and a better workforce (Smithers and Walker, 2000):

- *Meet people with different cultures*
- *The relationship with his fellow workers*
- *Involvement in the thick of things and making buildings*
- *Working in open air, freedom*
- *Likes moving about from site to site*
- *It's challenging and very physical*
- *Togetherness*
- *Open spaces, freedom*

Smithers and Walker's (2000) assessment of motivation and de-motivation in the workplace summarise some findings of research into operational construction employee motivation amongst union members in America. They found that construction workers exhibit the same need for development as do other operational trade workers. An aspect of motivation for this group overall is that motivation can be achieved by linking important outcomes of the job to completion, or performance of a task. Furthermore, they found that the visible nature of construction – that the workforce can see the result of their efforts – is an effective motivator (Smithers and Walker, 2000).

Uwakweh (2000) conjectured that management is inclined to view workers as labour, therefore as units of production. One unit of labour is perceived as interchangeable with another. This view leads management to focus on the work as opposed to the worker. An assumption of this view is that the worker possessed the abilities to perform a task if he is provided with the necessary equipment. This view does not accommodate variables such as motivation and the correlation of time with effort. Thus, its deficiency is its base premise that units of labour are interchangeable, whereas in reality all workers are not equal. This attitude, is in antithesis to that underpinning the findings of Smithers and Walker (2000).

The human resource view, therefore, is that each unit of labour, the worker, is viewed individually. Furthermore, psychological factors dictate how he responds to work – that is how motivated he is. This view also believes that the Industry can improve the worker's performance through training, either off or on-site. The degree of responsibility, the variety of activities, and the feedback from supervisors to workers contained in the job, all affect how a worker responds to the job.

Workers also respond more positively to jobs in which they have the opportunity to receive training and acquire new skills. The opportunity for self-development through on-the-job training is a motivating factor for workers. Interpersonal dimensions of the job are important influences. The level of supervision that a worker receives, including such factors as the supervisory style, human relations, all influence the worker's response to the job. Psychological factors, a higher need as defined by Maslow (Robbins, 1988) are essential consideration in the analysis of workers' performance.

Thus, workers were asked to consider what aspects would improve their working environment. Some respondents (19%) felt that their working environment could not be improved (Table 4.20). Others requested better equipment, both for reasons of ease of labour and safety. It is interesting to note that improvement in communication was mentioned more frequently than improvements in working conditions and wages. Communication, however, was not directly mentioned as an area in which they needed skills. It is pervasive and underlies other activities. It, therefore, is not perceived as a separate quality. Neither is it perceived as a necessary skill by those whose concerns are with meeting basic needs, that is the requirements lower on Maslow's hierarchy of needs than are socialisation (desire for companionship) and self-esteem (positive self-image and competence), both of which require communication skills (Robbins, 1988).

Table 4.20: Ways to improve work in construction

Ways to improve workplace	No. of workers	Percentage
Cannot be improved	31	19
Better equipment	23	14
Improve communication	16	10
Improve working conditions	15	9
Education and training	14	8
Permanent employment	12	7
Better wages	10	6
More considerate employers	6	4
Unionisation	5	3
More supervision/inspection officers	5	3
Change in industry structure	4	2
Registration of employers	2	1
Other	8	5
Don't know	14	8

Research by Imbert (1990) highlights improved communication, not only skills acquisition, as a necessary inclusion in training. This awareness is, however, recent. Research previous to the past 20 years concentrated on business and technical skills. Imbert commented that technical competence in the developing world should be combined with characteristics such as cultural sensitivity and social conscience. Education and training thus have a role beyond improving the level and spread of skills. He states that the need for skills to be upgraded is "*extraordinary*" (as in additional to "ordinary" needs) and that education and training is needed at all levels (Imbert,1990:221). Furthermore, it has been shown that if training accommodates diversity in cultures it is more effective than that which operates from a Euro-centric stance (English, 2000, 2002).

4.7 Communication Skills of Workers as rated by the Interviewers

The fundamental need of a worker is to find employment, and to be employable. Communication skills are necessary for workers to find and retain work. The interviewers were asked to rate the respondents' abilities to comprehend the questions asked of them and to rate their communication skills in giving answers. Communication skills assessed were eye contact, verbal expression, ease of manner or self-confidence, and the ability to market themselves and/or their skills, that is, their employability.

A major limitation on this research, however, and one which negated it from the main thrust of the project was that no fixed method of assessment of communication was given to the interviewers. They were asked to make their own assessment of the subject's responses and grade them on a scale from 1:poor to 5:excellent (Table 4.21). The assessments thus are subjective. They are presented to reflect full analysis of the questionnaires. Further research into an assessment of this nature is recommended.

Table 4.21: Communication skills of workers as rated by interviewers

Query of interviewer	Average score out of 5
Did the worker easily understand the question?	3.97
Did the worker make eye contact?	3.95
Did the worker express himself well?	3.91
Did the worker appear at ease?	4.02
Would you employ the worker on the basis of this interview?	4.07

The average period reported by workers for being out of work was 0.83 years (10 months) and the longest period averaged at 2.10 years (see section 4.4). At the time of the study, 8% were out of work. Comparison of the communication scores of the unemployed sample with the employed sample shows that the unemployed workers were rated lower on communication skills with an average total of 3.71 than were the employed workers with a score of 4.

The results reflect high scores. The workers were told at the outset of the interview that the information was to be treated as confidential and that their contribution could in no way be

detrimental to their jobs. The interviewers developed a warm supportive climate and came across as non-threatening. Most respondents appeared increasingly relaxed as the interview progressed and became more open. However, some appeared to feel constrained and anxious all the time. The following are examples of interviewers' comments. Some reflect workers who were confident and expressed themselves well, and others who were less confident, anxious, or even poor communicators:

Interviews in which respondents appeared confident and assertive

- *He was very fluent and willing to share his experiences.*
- *Very well, confident enough, he knew what he was talking about, was a little suspicious (at first) but as we went along he was ok. Very convincing, he knew what he wants and what he is doing,*
- *Interviewee is very relaxed and confidence and able to express his feelings and sentiments*

Interviews in which workers found comprehending the question or communicating an answer difficult

- *Tired: has had enough. Seems to be in the right position now, passively overseeing others, has a sad cynicism about him*
- *Interviewee could not understand some questions addressed in Xhosa*
- *He was not hearing properly. I took more time with him, sometimes going off the question and rephrasing.*

Interviews which required some adjustment or clarification or in which workers were not confident

- *Not until the foreman appeared, seem reluctant to answer questions concerning his firm or what he did not like etc. Can do anything, but does not seem to be self driven*
- *There was no eye contact he was busy laying bricks. The foreman was coming to us now and again. Uncomfortable*
- *He was not at ease at all, when I asked the name of the Sub-contract he referred me to a paving foreman*

The results of the assessment of linguistic ability are also not a reflection of how the workers would communicate at work. This is because they were, for the majority, interviewed in their home language. This is not necessarily the language of their employers as in the Western Cape the majority of workers are Xhosa speaking and the majority of subcontractors, Afrikaans speaking.

4.8 Chapter Summary

The results show a conformity in the demographic history of the workers. The greater majority are Black (73%) and relatively young being between 19 and 40 years of age (also 73%). The overwhelming majority (81%) also shared lack of education, having only Grade 1 schooling. The sample also indicated that they do not move far from their original homes and generally work in the area in which they live.

On average, workers had spent just over nine years (9,23) in construction. For the 40% who can be described as unskilled labour this means that for the most part there has been no advancement. Half the sample had acquired the construction skills they had on site. Some, however, cited themselves as having acquired crafts. In some cases labourers described themselves as previously having worked as craftsmen before being labourers which suggests downward mobility. All those with trades, excepting electricians, had worked first worked as labourers for 1 to 5 years. This indicates mobility for those fortunate to have acquired skills. It also relates to the response given by 66% of those with trade skills that they had acquired them on the job. The remaining 34% had acquired them through formal training.

Over half the sample were employed as 'casuals': this proportion includes those who describe themselves as builders but have no contract and are employed at extremely low wages. Approximately 40% are employed as 'fixed term' or 'fixed task' which means their security rests in the length of the job. On average, however, the workers had been with the current employer for 4,25 years. 20% of the respondents said they had been with their current employer for over 5 years. This implies a successful working relationship as few of the sample had written contracts to support this "permanent employment".

High numbers have experienced retrenchment (43%) or unemployment (77%). When out of work, 40% had no other activity. 68% desired permanent jobs, a desire possibly related to a

weak economy. Wages vary from those that met the amount stipulated by the Bargaining Council for the Western Cape (R9,47 per hour) to those that were well below (R2,50 per hour) and 83% said the wages were insufficient to live on. Two thirds of the sample said they were aware of their rights, but some of the related results do not support this. Labourers most dissatisfied with working conditions were those unskilled and most low paid. Their lack of awareness extended to their rights to health and safety. The majority (83%) had had an accident during their careers. They were uncertain as to who should be responsible for health and safety on site. They were also negative about the role of unions with only 12% having membership of a union. The majority belonged to burial societies.

Workers were aware that having skills would uplift them with 53% desiring skills in a construction trade and almost half the sample wishing to improve their language skills (i.e. to speak the language of the employers). In terms of future work, most saw themselves as staying in construction and in terms of future desires, wished to be in permanent employment. For their immediate working environment, most responses varied between desires for better equipment, communication, conditions, education and wages. The lack of possibility for this group and their own low perceptions of their opportunities is reflected in the final assessment made of their responses to being asked what they think are positive aspects of working in construction. 23% replied that there were none, and for a further 30% the only positive thing was that it provided work and income.

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CHAPTER 5

INVESTIGATION INTO INFORMAL CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYERS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the profile of the employers as given by the sample. Their demographic history and education are given to provide a basis for analysis of their situation, career profile and mobility. An assessment is made of their enterprises, their degree of success and their reactions to lack of work. Details on their employees are given: the employee profile, job stability for employees and contractual conditions offered. Following from this is an enquiry in the support the employers offer employees through registration, wages, conditions, health and safety. Finally, the employers' perceptions of opportunities and improvements that could be effected for workers are considered. The results are presented graphically and discussed in the text.

The information in this section is compiled from the responses to the employers questionnaire. A total of 49 small employers were interviewed but not all of them answered all of the questions. For each issue, 100% is assigned to the total number of responses, with non-responses excluded.

5.2 Demographic History and Education

The majority of employers in the sample had emerged after working in the industry as employees. Thus most (75%) were in their 30s and 40s and none was under the age of 25. The majority of the respondents (86%) were Coloured, 3 (6%) were Black and 4 (8%) White. The Coloured population had also suffered under the apartheid government in terms of mobility and all of the employers (as the workers) lived and worked locally, within the environs of Cape Town.

As might be expected due to their racial composition (Greeff, 1990) and their position in the industry, the employers were better educated than the workers. Table 5.1 gives the highest level of formal education achieved by the respondents. Less than a third (15) left formal education without even the minimum school leaving certificate. The largest number (18 altogether) had some kind of formal craft training. Another 13 had 'other' qualifications which included 2 with civil engineering degrees, 3 with diplomas in civil engineering, 5 with Technikon certificates. Overall 23 respondents (50% of those answering) had trade skills, several having more than one trade.

Table 5.1: Level of education achieved by employers

Educational level	Number	Percentage
Some schooling	15	31
School leaving certificate	3	6
Apprentice	4	8
Single trade	2	4
Multi-trade	8	16
Craftsman	4	8
Other	13	27
Total	*48*	*100*

Only 8 respondents admitted to having no skills or to having acquired their skills informally. Some comments from this group were:

- *None, father did the same job*
- *Bricklaying, and informally acquired as I am always keen to learn*
- *None, still learning*
- *From father – dying breed of expertise*
- *No training but can do it*

These results show improved levels of education compared with the findings of Cattell (1994) on 43 subcontractors from which he deduced that the majority did not complete school. None of that sample had tertiary education though, like this one, they represent a more successful as they have succeeded in creating and managing their own businesses. The reason for this is

that this sample, being predominantly Coloured, received better education than did Blacks under apartheid. The age group of the majority of this sample indicates dates of birth between 1952 and 1972 which means they would have begun their education between 1960 and 1980. Thus this sample has been able to advance in the field of construction, unlike the labourers who being predominantly Black had less opportunity for education and training.

5.3 Personal Career Profile

More than 75% of the respondents had worked previously in the construction industry before starting their own business. The breakdown is shown in Table 5.2. The largest number had worked as artisans but 9 were consultants or managers of contracting companies and 3 were civil engineering technicians or managers. Two respondents said that they had started as labourers and worked their way up. Only 11 had worked in various jobs outside the industry, for example as barmen, naval officers, drivers and radio/TV technicians. Not surprisingly, a higher percentage of those previously working outside construction had no skills.

Table 5.2: Previous work experience of employers

Type of work	Respondents	Percentage
Artisan	13	28
Always in construction	1	2
General construction	9	20
Managerial/consulting construction	9	20
Civil works	3	6
Non-construction	11	24
Total	*46*	*100*

The reasons for leaving their previous jobs in construction are summarised in Figure 5.1. There was an even split between those who left for negative reasons and those leaving for more positive reasons. The negative reasons were either that they were retrenched or the company was liquidated. Positive reasons include the desire to be their own boss, to make money or to have greater job security. That they could take such a step voluntarily is, first,

partly attributable to the ease of entry into construction in the current economic and social environment (Wells, 2000). The Industry has seen a movement to small-scale production, labour-intensive production, and informal, casual and mobile employment (Werna, 2001). Small-scale production, in turn, lends itself more to generating new income and facilitating entrepreneurship: thus making a pathway for those who wish to leave formal employment and run their own enterprises. A second reason for their having the option to become self-employed: an option not evident amongst the workers (see Chapter 4) is that they have skills.

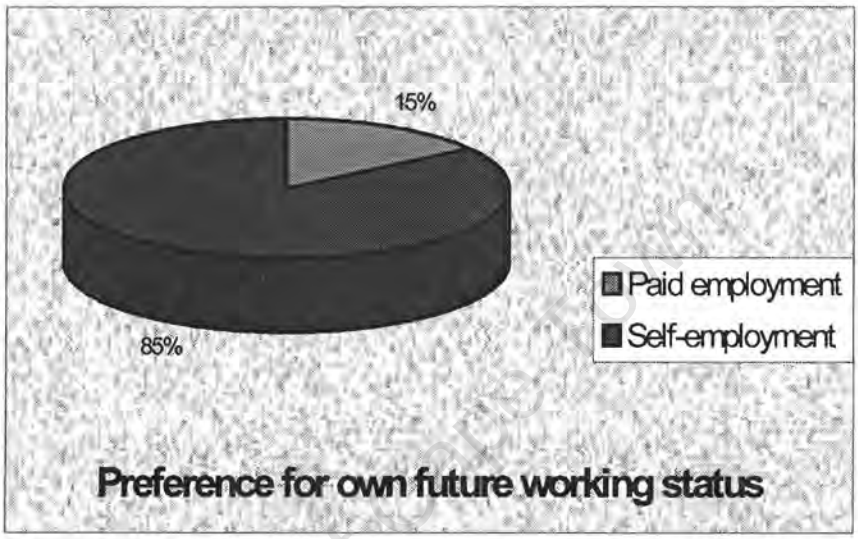

Fig. 5.1: Reasons for leaving construction employment

Respondents were also asked why they had decided to become self-employed. A much higher proportion gave positive reasons in answer to this question, probably because the question was formulated in a more positive way. The desire to increase their income was the most common response, followed by the desire to grow and become their own boss. Several said they were taking advantage of opportunities that had arisen following the end of apartheid (for example, affirmative action policies). The responses are summarised in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Reasons for becoming self-employed

Reasons	No. of respondents	Percentage
Desire for better income	15	33
Retrenchment	10	22
Desire to grow	7	16
Taking advantage of opportunities	6	13
Influence of friends	2	4
Effects of apartheid	2	4
No choice	2	4
Other	2	4

Some of the positive comments made by respondents on the reasons for leaving employment and becoming self-employed were as follows:

- *Yes, wanted to improve / better himself.*
- *because I always dreamt of being my own boss one day, and I decided to go for it.*
- *He was looked for better opportunities- like to be his own employer and to pay himself.*
- *I worked for ready mix concrete company, and I left to take over a cleaning contract, and for making more money.*

Some remarks indicated an awareness that there is potential in the Industry for better conditions and earnings. Workers did not make these assumptions.

- *Better money and to achieve certain goals.*
- *Wanted to be own boss and make more. I was being underpaid considering how much I brought to companies*
- *In apartheid, he felt he would never get anywhere but to be an artisan, therefore started his own business.*

From this remark, it would appear that the new political system has provided more opportunity for a person with construction skills and who is able act as an entrepreneur.

- *Affirmative action and the new South Africa – I decided to take advantage of the opportunity.*
- *The satisfaction derived after finishing a site and knowing you were in charge*

Once the respondents have become self employed, most are reluctant to become employees again. Only a quarter still sometimes work as employees. The vast majority said they wanted to remain as self-employed in the future (Figure 5.2). Only 7 respondents expressed a desire to return to working for others.

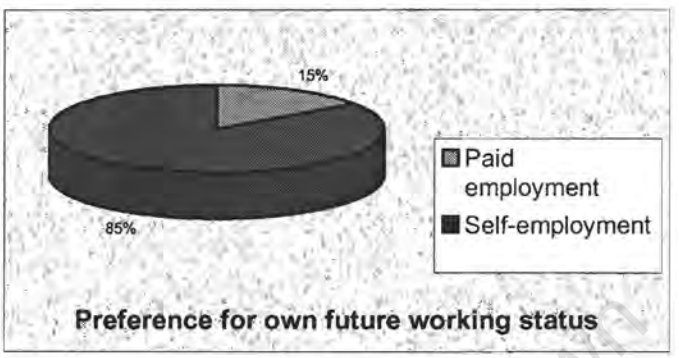

Figure 5.2: Employers preference for the future

5.4 Profile of Enterprises

Most of the employers interviewed fell in the 'small contractor' category, with 24% having fewer than 5 'permanent' employees and 44% fewer than 10 (Table 5.4). However, thirteen (26%) had more than 20. In this context 'permanent' should be interpreted loosely, as explained in section below.

Table 5.4: Number of 'permanent' employees

No. of employees	No. of respondents	%age
0-5	12	25
5-10	10	20
10-20	14	29
20-50	6	12
Over 50	7	14
Total	*49*	*100*

The majority of respondents (83%) answered 'yes' when asked if they were 'registered' and only 8 (17%) said 'no'. However, registration was interpreted by the respondents in different ways and a great variety of organisations were mentioned in this connection. The registering bodies are given as the Building Industry Council (16 respondents), the Workmen's Compensation Authority (3), National Home Builders Registration Council (3), the Master Builders Association (1), South Africa Revenue Service (1), Unemployment Insurance Fund (1) and the local municipality (1). After adjusting for doubtful answers it was concluded that 11 respondents (22%) were almost certainly not registered. 40 employers (83%) claim to be registered while 8 (17%) say they are not.

The following are the reasons given for non-registration:

- not in the main building industry
- reluctance to pay tax, and the perception that tax is paid even when there is no work
- not having enough work to be registered
- not having enough employees to be registered
- does not have the time
- has never seen the need
- already registered with the municipality

Those who had not registered indicated they would need the following requirements in order to register:

- time (1 respondent)
- constant work (2 respondent)
- more money (1 respondent)

Some respondents said:

- *It takes too much complicated procedures.*
- *Five minutes to register, no money needed.*
- *Not too long but it depends on the process.*

The reticence expressed in these examples is well accounted by Horwitz (2000).

Two respondents commented as follows:

- *I don't get many jobs to pay tax and if I paid tax it means that I had to tax my employees. There will be nothing to take home. That is unfair. Government is not*

doing for us anything. They are driving posh car and staying in posh houses. If there was good reason for paying tax believe me I would

- *Not registered with MBA. No one has' phoned me, no one has mentioned the benefits to me.....I think it* (membership) *is a reference and glorified advertising. Maybe am not eligible for certain tenders. But inspectors never ask. Don't know if it helps employees*

These findings are commensurate with those of Horwitz (2000) who described non-compliance with employment regulations as being widespread. Wells (2000) defined informal enterprises as being, for the most part, unregistered. The effect on the labourers of unregulated employment is also maximised by most employment being through subcontractors (Wells, 2000, Werna 2001).

On average, the respondents had been in business for 8.8 years. The longest time in business was 32 years and the shortest, 2 months. The vast majority of respondents were involved in building work, with only 4 in civil engineering. All but one were working in the private sector. When asked what type of construction work they undertook, 35% said 'general construction'. Roughly the same number (38%) cited a particular trade that had enabled them to move into subcontracting. Only 4 (12% of those answering the question) said they were labour-only subcontractors. In an analysis in the United Kingdom (Olomolaiye *et al.*,1998) the weighting of labour-only contractors (54%) as a force in the industry is very evident. The difference here between the developing world and the First world may be attributable to the multi-skills that subcontractors have and thus their abilities to manage varied work themselves.

When asked about the type of project they worked on, the residential sector was cited most frequently (34%), followed by industrial, commercial and maintenance. However Table 5.5 shows that the respondents' current projects were mostly in the commercial sector, with residential projects some way behind.

Table 5.5: Current projects of employers

Type of project	No. of respondents	Percentage
Commercial	18	28
Residential	11	17
Repairs and Alterations	9	14
Industrial	4	6
Social and religious centres	4	6
Renovations	4	6
General construction	4	6
Community	2	3
Educational	1	2
Government	1	2
Excavations	1	2
Restoring	1	2
Civil	1	2
Specialist work	1	2
Unemployed	1	2

Some respondents were undertaking very small jobs, such as a garage, or finishing an interior. This is concomitant with Wells' (2000) definition of informal enterprises as operating with basic resources, using local labour and undertaking small jobs. A few expressed a preference for these small jobs, but a greater number preferred to work on large projects as they perceived these to have financial or business advantages. Other reasons (quoted below) are an indicator that these operators are able to gain job satisfaction from their work and so achieve the levels in Maslow's hierarchy of needs above meeting basic needs (Robbins, 1998):

- *I prefer community projects: working with local guys is nice*
- *Housing, he loves it: the satisfaction he gains once the project has ended*
- *Big projects because I want to enhance my strengths: in small projects, one cannot fully prove ones potential*

Around three quarters (73%) of the employers said that they had regular customers. Two reasons emerged for this (i) residential clients call back the same builder for repair and further building work and (ii) companies that subcontract prefer to use the same subcontractors. Respondents who said they had regular work from companies had, in many cases, been formal employees of the company before they were retrenched.

The overwhelming majority of respondents (94%) said that they were rarely without work. 64% had *very* rarely been without work over the past three years, and when they were it was only for short periods (Figure 5.5). One respondent said that he had never been out of work, which he attributed to the high quality of the work that he did. Only 3 employers said they were often or very often without work. These findings are surprising, given the poor economic climate in South Africa. A possible explanation could be that many of the employers were not working in their normal line of business, which demonstrates a versatility in work probably associated with multi-skills. It is also probable that the sample is biased towards the more successful employers, as it was drawn only from those currently in work.

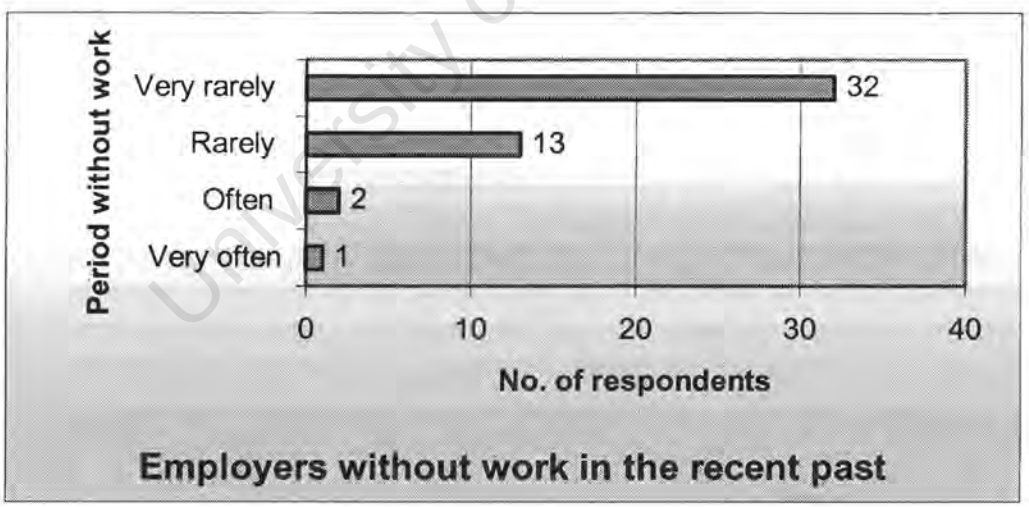

Figure 5.3: Employers without work in the recent past

Employers were asked what they do when out of work. The responses are shown in Table 5.6. Some comments from those who said they look for work were:

- *Looking for other job*
- *I approach the developers and I would say I have a group of people working under me, that way I would get the work very soon*
- *Drive around looking for work*
- *Do marketing and skate around*

Again, this sample presents as more motivated and aware of possibilities than do the sample of workers. Given the major difference between the two samples is level of education and skills (see section 5.2), it could be assumed that education has a direct bearing on later success.

Almost three quarters said that they only work in the construction industry. The minority who work outside the industry usually work in a related business associated with their trade, such as making staircases, fitting kitchens etc. This indicates, as mentioned earlier, the multi skills and craft skills held by this sample.

Table 5.6: Activities of employers when out of work

Occupations when unemployed	No. of respondents	Percentage
Carry out small business (outside construction)	5	23
Look for work	4	18
Do nothing	4	18
Carry out small jobs (in construction)	3	14
Work around own house	2	9
Work with relative/friend	2	9
Carpentry	2	9
Total	22	100

5.5 Employees: Profile, Job Stability and Contractual Conditions

5.5.1 Employee profile

Employers were asked how many workers they employed on their current projects. The number of employees varied widely with three reporting none and one employing 250. Content of many of the comments indicated that many enterprises fit the traditional size of an SMME as defined by Wells (2001). Two examples were:

- *It depends. Right now I have five guys with me, but if tomorrow there's a specific job that has to be done, I will employ more guys. Like I said, I cannot keep ten guys who need to be paid at the end of the week. My guys do every job. Even the foreman can help with labourers' work if it is necessary. I cannot afford to pay someone to stand all day*
- *Employees are ranging from 5 to 10, depends how big is the project. I cannot afford to employ lots of people who are not doing anything all day. If there is something to do I hire people for one or two days, when that particular job is finished I kick them out*

The latter remark emphasises the vulnerability of the workforce in the subcontracting system (Wells, 2000).

5.5.2 Job stability

Respondents were asked for a breakdown of employees on a typical project by function. The results are presented in Table 5.7. Labourers form the largest proportion of employees, roughly twice the number of craftsmen. Labourers are also employed for the longest period of time. But the standard deviations show the wide spread of results obtained from the survey. A substantial number of respondents (70%) employed no manager and around one half employed no foreman. SMMEs are confident that they can access labour as and when required and this comment indicates that there is an abundant supply of labour (Werna, 2001, Horwitz, 2000)

Table 5.7: Average number of workers and length of contracts

	Labourer	Apprentice	Craftsman	Foreman	Manager	Other
Average number on typical project	20.06	3.43	10.42	0.88	0.31	0.04
Standard deviation	38.18	6.74	20.93	1.39	0.47	0.20
Average length of employment (years)	1.31	0.32	1.02	0.75	0.36	0.02

Employers were also asked for a breakdown of employees according to their employment status: permanent, fixed term, fixed task or casual. The findings are shown in Table 5.8. It appears that the most common employment status is 'fixed term'. Fixed term and fixed task workers together make up almost 50% of the workforce. In some cases there was little to distinguish between fixed term and fixed task as the term was determined by the length of time the task took. The term "fixed" can be misleading: the workers were not necessarily employed with contracts or "fixed" to their jobs in any way.

5.5.3 Contractual conditions

Table 5.8: Employment status of employees

Category	Permanent	Fixed Term	Fixed Task	Casual
Total Number	392	441	147	245
Percentage of total	32	36	12	20

Permanent employees form 32%. However, these figures cannot be deemed reliable because of the confusion surrounding the real meaning of permanent. As was found with the workers, employers tend to describe as permanent those workers whom they regularly employ when they have work to offer. This does not mean they are employed on a continuous basis. Neither does it mean that the workers have a written contract, or that the employers make any formal arrangements for registration of employees.

21 employers (60% of those answering the question) said they had no written contracts for their permanent workers. Roughly the same proportion had no written contracts for fixed term workers. Only one employer said that he had a written contract for casual workers (see Table 5.9). Furthermore, the quality of some of the written contracts is doubtful. Two contracts provided for inspection by employers were not in fact contracts for employment but disclaimers of responsibility on the part of the employer (see Appendix 6). Thus the worker, for all the protective regulations, remains at the mercy of the employer.

Table 5.9: Employers with written contracts for employees

Written contracts	Permanent	Fixed term/task	Casual employees
Yes	14	10	1
No	21	19	26
Verbal	*5*	*8*	*10*
Sometimes	0	0	0

The plethora of negative comments made about written contracts supports Horwitz (2000) finding that few employers follow employment procedures. Some of the responses on the issue of written contracts were:

- *No, I will not tell you why it is not written*
- *No, I can't afford their benefits*
- *No, my contracts are always verbal*
- *No, they just come and go as they wish*

Two comments underlie the role of the relationship between employer and employee as being the true basis of an employment agreement (see section 4.3.1).

- *No, used to one another so there is no need*
- *No written contracts because I have established certain relationships with them.*

The preference of employers for permanent workers (as they understood the term) was very clear, as shown in Figure 5.4. Whilst the preference for permanence in workers existed, commitment to the true meaning of "permanent" was not (see Table 5.9). This is not peculiar to South Africa: Mlinga *et al.* (1999) describe many informal contractors as

employing a great number of workers whilst, through the set up of the contractual conditions, remaining outside labour regulations.

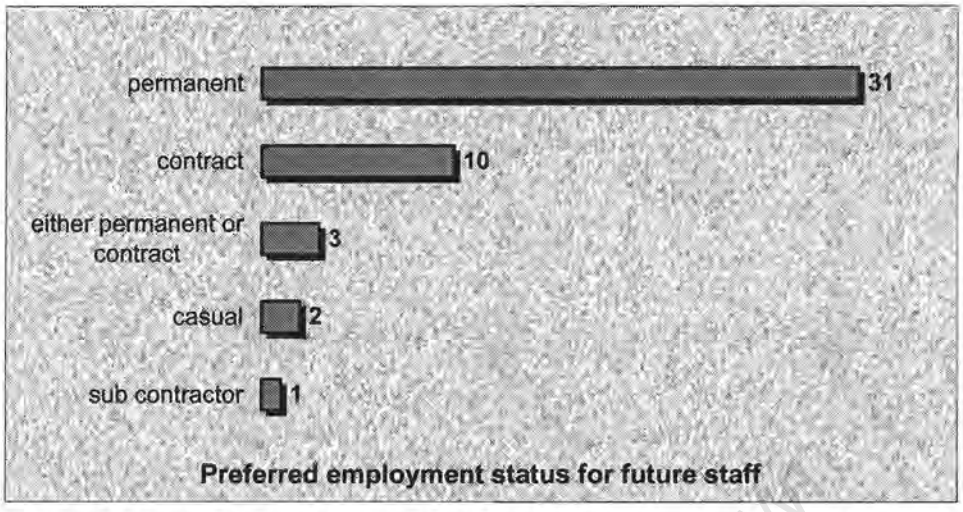

Figure 5.4: Employers' preference for various forms of employment

Figure 5.5 shows the responses of employers when asked to assess the performance of their workers according to their employment status. The permanent workers received much higher scores than the other groups in terms of quality of work, reliability, productivity and knowledge of safety procedures. These findings could be interpreted in different ways. It may be that status affects performance, but is more likely that the best performers were offered the more permanent status. Again, permanence in many instances could be assumed to be applied to those workers who are repeatedly employed by the same employer.

Recent results of a study in SA show that numbers of permanent employees are drastically reduced (van Huyssteen et al., 2001). Lack of permanent employment was also found in other parts of Africa, namely Nigeria (Olatunji, 2000) and Tanzania (Mlinga *et al.*, 2000).

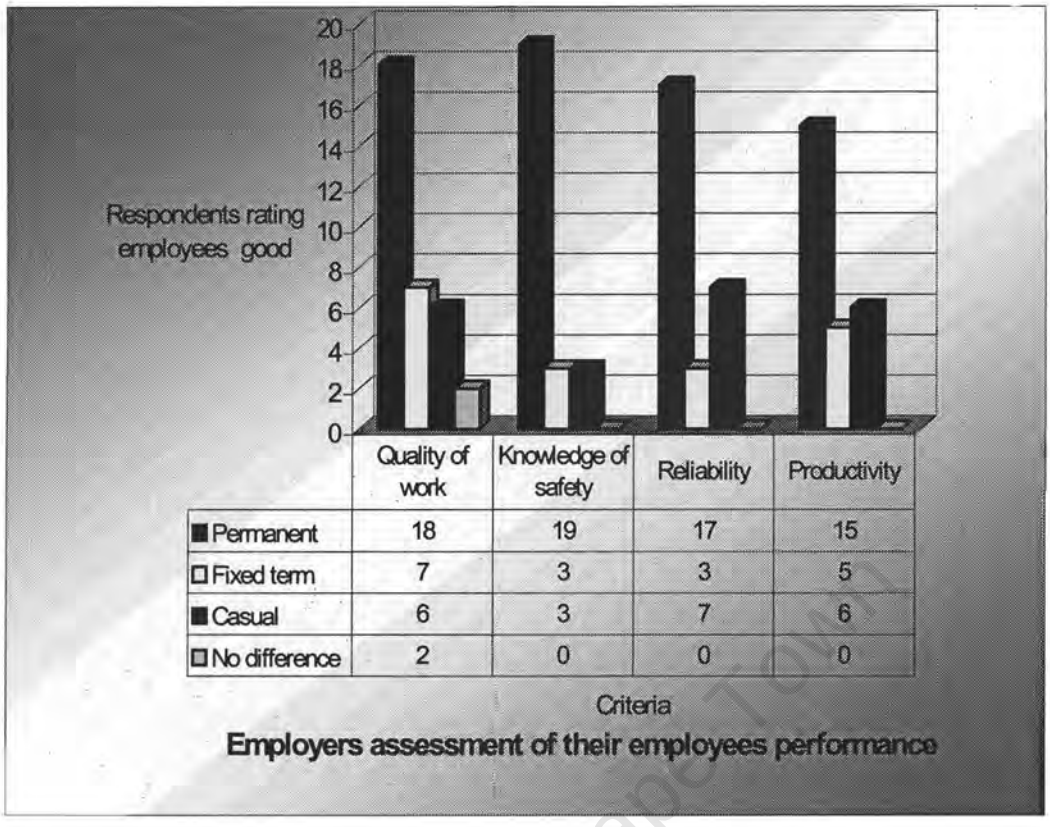

Figure 5.5: Employers assessment of their employees' performance

5.6. Support provided for Worker by Subcontractor

5.6.1 Wages

90% of employers reported paying their workers on a time basis and only 10% pay by task (Figure 5.6). The same proportion (90%) actually paid the wages fortnightly or weekly. The normal working week is 8 hours per day for 5 days, but these were not always adhered to (Horwitz, 2000, Cattell 1994, Krafchick, 1990).

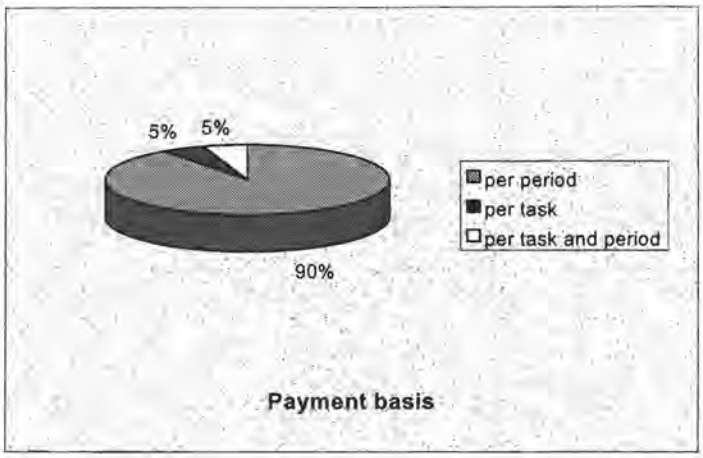

Figure 5.6:Basis of payment of employees

At the time of the survey, the minimum wage for a labourer as agreed by the Building Industry Bargaining Council for the Cape Peninsula was R9,47 per hour, or R75.76 for an eight hour day. This was subsequently reduced for an entry level labourer to R6.26 per hour (R50 per day). The evidence provided by employers showed wages varying between R40 and R120 per day, with an average of R68 per day. Pay varied according to the site and also according to skill. This comment reflects the finding that general workers become multi-skilled and are used in lieu of artisans (Prinsloo and Watters, 1996, Cattell *et al.*, 1996). Comments on the subject included the following:

- *His payment is ranging from R60 for labourer up to R220 for foreman (per day). The bricklayers are earning R160. I don't outsource plumbing and electricity. One of my employers is doing the job if necessary*

One respondent refused to say what he paid and stated:

- *The construction industry has laid off people, so it is difficult, people have to have skills and work hard if they want to earn more.*

5.6.2 Perception of workers' conditions and wages

When asked what they thought of workers pay, more than half of the respondents (56%) thought the workers were paid quite badly, but they claimed that they could not pay more and remain in business (Figure 5.7).

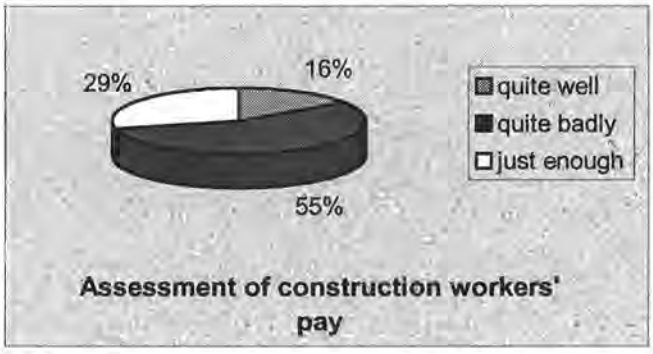

Figure 5.7: Employers'Assessment of construction workers' pay

Some insights are gained from the comments and the following remark, in particular, reflects the spiralling effect of the financial pressure main contractors place on subcontractors. Pressure which is ultimately transferred to the workers (Cattell *et al.*, 1996).

- *Because the main employers set standards, give them a certain amount of money. If they don't take it, then they don't have work*
- *Most of construction employees are exploited*
- *Problem in construction is that casuals can't get a lot of money, cause the work that employees getting is also little*
- *Can't afford to maintain their family with that amount of money, can't invest, government rules tend to discriminate construction workers because if they pay more they would not get work*

One subcontractor reported how he had wanted to buy a tiling business. The turnover was acceptable, but he did not go through with the transaction when he discovered that the basic labourers were paid under R30 per day and the foreman only R60.

Employers were asked if they provided other benefits to employees. Many respondents said they provided transport but this was generally restricted to lifts from pick-up points or to move specialist tradesmen from one site to another. Only one employer provided meals. No employer described offering training as a benefit. For subcontractors to accommodate the training of workers, off- or on-site, was perceived as a direct cost and loss of man hours (Olatunji *et al.*, 2000, Wells, 1986, Ofori, 1984). Possibly, training is not offered as an

options for improving conditions as there is no climate of training existing (van Huyssteen, 2001). Understandably, wages was the area that most employers felt needed improving, with job security in second place (Table 5.10).

Table 5.10: Changes employers would make for workers if possible

Suggested changes	No. of respondents	Percentage
Increase wages	17	42
Job security	9	22
No idea	5	13
Benefits	4	10
Safety conditions	3	8
Other	2	5

5.6.3 Perception of workers' rights to health and safety

Half of the respondents (51%) thought accidents were decreasing (Table 5.11) and two thirds of the respondents did recognise that they are responsible for the safety of their workers and for enforcing health and safety regulations (Figure 5.8). Three larger sites had appointed a safety officer. Work done by Barry (1985) indicated lack of safety officers on sites with only 40% of his sample having them. Furthermore, one subcontractor admitted he was not familiar with the rules, pleading that he did not build above two storeys. Some clearly wished to push responsibility onto the workers. One interviewer commented: *He is saying the only thing that causes accident and the increase of the incidents on the site is the stupidity of workers.*

Table 5.11:Perceived recent trends in incidence of accidents

Accidents	No of respondents	Percentage
Decreasing	21	51
Same	13	32
Increasing	4	10
Can't say	3	7

Figure 5.8: Employers' recognition of responsibility for enforcing health and safety regulations

Employers were asked whether they had a first aid kit on their sites; whether they knew the location of the nearest hospitals and whether they knew if their workers were familiar with health and safety regulations on site. The results were positive and reflected that the majority were aware of the requirements (Figure 5.9). However there was no check made to verify these statements. One respondent admitted, ruefully, that his equipment was inadequate. Awareness of the importance of health and safety did not seem to be related to level of education. That this is an area of concern is confirmed by Smallwood (1998) and he recommends that training interventions for contractors be instituted.

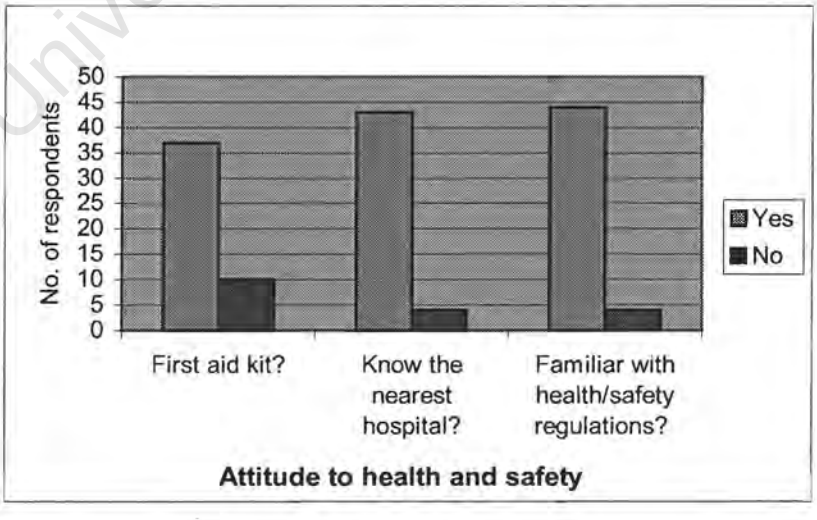

Figure 5.9:Employers' attitudes to health and safety

5.6.4 Workers' requests for references to gain future work

Nineteen respondents said they asked for references of some sort from potential employees (Figure 5.10). A higher proportion had themselves been contacted to give a reference for a former employee. It was more common for references to be offered to and requested for artisans than for labourers.

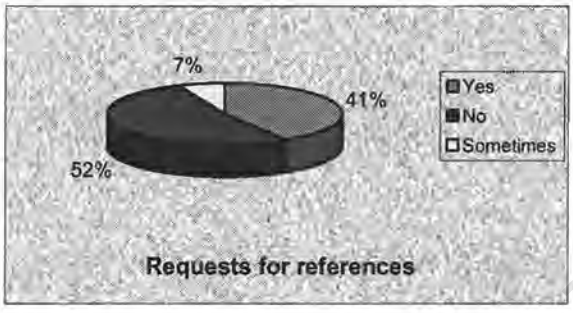

Figure 5.10: Respondents requesting references

Some comments on the issues of references were:

Positive:

- *Yes, I don't want to waste time with chancers*
- *Yes, it is important to have people to depend on. Employ people who have good references*
- *I cannot employ someone who says he is a builder without having a reference*

Negative:

- *No – I, ask him what he did, where he worked. But I judge his work after an hour*
- *No, I will see if the guys are good or not on my own*
- *No, but I ask if he was employed before in this field so that I don't fall into a trap*
- *Ironically I have received faxes which cold canvass market. I never use these people – prefer word of mouth*

The last remark reflects the wariness of paperwork described by Horwitz (2000).

5.7 Perceptions of Opportunities for Improvements for Workers

5.7.1 Training needs of employees

Employers were asked what skills they would like to see enhanced in their workers. Not surprisingly, skills related to construction were identified as most in need of enhancement, followed by general skills and business skills. The shortage of skills in the industry was a recurring theme amongst employers and in answering this question, most expressed a need for training (Figure 5.11).

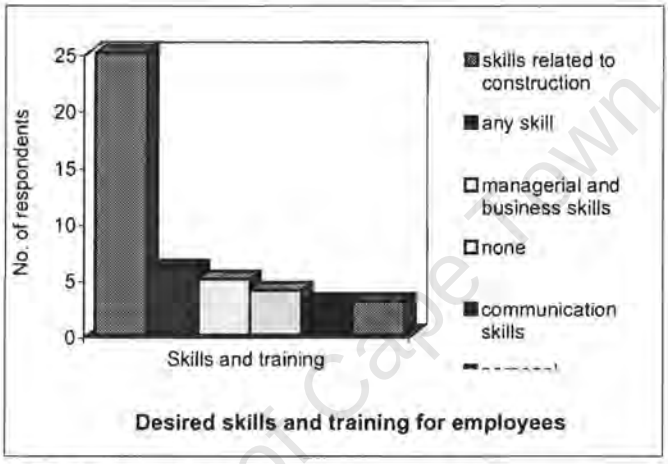

Figure 5. 11: Desired skills for employees

However, none of the respondents gave training as one of the factors that could improve workers' lives (see section 5.5.3 for a similar outcome), they apparently only thought of it as an asset to the employer.

A couple of responses reflected employers' awareness that there are skills other than technical that are valuable. Some of the respondents' comments were:

- *Everything – training has been neglected in the industry. Subcontractors don't have money*
- *Skills are being dedicated, doing the particular trade, need to be trained for the trade he is doing*
- *Everything to be computerising and to have their own business building instruction*
- *Managerial skills. They will know their rights and will not be easily cheated.*

Employers were also asked what communication skills (speaking, listening and understanding abilities) they would like to see improved in their workers (Table 5.12). The majority cited languages with English mentioned most often, followed by Afrikaans and Xhosa. Languages were also cited as the most important communication skill employers look for when selecting a subcontractor.

Table 5.12: Communication abilities requiring improvement

Ability	No of respondents
Languages	30
English	*14*
Afrikaans	*10*
Xhosa	*2*
None	7
General	4
Construction	4
Comprehension	2

Some of the views expressed by employers were:

- *Language that will put all of us in position to be able to communicate with each other and workers and employers*
- *English is a national language hence everyone should be fluent*
- *I would like them to know Afrikaans properly. Sometimes they don't understand what I am saying*

In work by Ofori *et al.* (1996) communication skills are described as a necessary component in the successful introduction and management of labour-intensive construction techniques. The authors state that the social and public relations skills of contractors, especially, needed enhancing. Given the focus on formally employed professionals to communicate well, the need for self-employed to have good communication skills in order to gain work is paramount. The Guidelines for Development of Small-Scale Construction Enterprises (ILO, 1987) describe talents needed by the small operator:

*It requires an **imaginative spark** and a degree of **self-confidence** to become a self-employed entrepreneur in almost any field. To enter the high-risk, insecure construction market requires a good deal of courage in addition. It is not surprising, therefore, that many small contractors – many more, in fact than can ever achieve it – do aspire to growth in their business activities.*

The need for such talents and communicative abilities is increased in a developing country where the informal sector operates largely by networking and contacts.

5.7.2 Responsibility for Costs of Training

The majority of the respondents thought that the employer should bear the costs of the training or that it should be funded by the industry. However a sizeable minority felt the Government should be responsible.

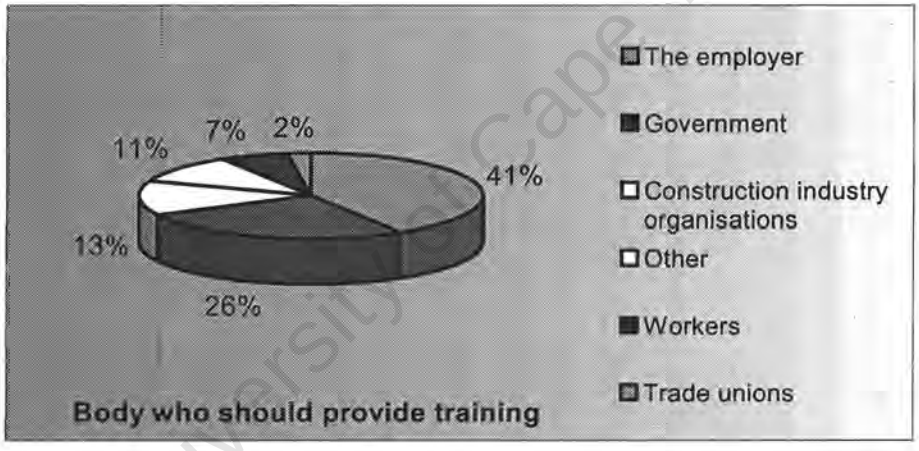

Figure 5.12: Body responsible for funding training

Opinion was evenly split as to who should deliver the training, with 9 respondents each suggesting the employer, 'any qualified person', or the construction industry's institutes.

Table 5.13: Body responsible for delivering training

Training deliverer	No of respondents
The employer	9
Any qualified person	9
Construction industry institutes	9
Government	5
Existing institutes or training centres	4
Retired trained construction people	3
Community training centres	2
Other	2

Only 5 respondents thought the government should provide training. However, one respondent stated:

- *It is a duty of the government to give people skill. The government* (should) *open training centres for the people, hire good people to train, educate these guys. I told them if a person is looking for a job, he is coming with his skill and I pay for the skill. I am not here to give training to anyone. I don't have time for that.*

5.8 Communication Skills of Employers as Rated by the Interviewers

The fundamental need of a subcontractor is to find self-employment and contracts for work. Communication skills are necessary for subcontractors to find and retain work and manage employees. The interviewers were asked to rate the respondents' abilities to comprehend the question and to communicate. Communication skills were considered as being eye contact, verbal expression, ease of manner or confidence, and the ability to market themselves and their skills. Overall, the interviewer tried to gain an impression of the respondents' self image. The ratings are ordinal data, but to aid comparison between respondents, an analytical shortcut has been taken and the data treated as interval data. The average score gives the interviewer's impression of the respondent's self image.

As for the assessment of the workers, a major limitation on this research, however, and one which negated it from the main thrust of the project was that no fixed method of assessment of communication was given to the interviewers. They were asked to make their own assessment of the subject's responses and grade them on a scale from 1:poor to 5:excellent (Table 5.14). The assessments thus are subjective. They are presented to reflect full analysis of the questionnaires. Further research into an assessment of this nature is recommended

Table 5.14: Communication skills of employees as rated by interviewers

Query of interviewer	Average score out of 5
Did the employer easily understand the questions?	4.56
Did the employer make eye contact?	4.49
Did the employer express himself well?	4.51
Did the employer appear at ease?	4.49
Did the employer sell himself, i.e., would you employ him based on this interview?	4.30

An assessment was made of the correlation between the employers' communicative skills and the degree of success they experienced with regards to work (Table 5.15). There was some indication of those who were rarely without work having better communication skills than those who had less work. However, there were only 2 respondents in the often and 1 in the very often category, so the results may not be representative of a larger population.

Table 5.15: Relationship between employers' communication skills and type of employment

Period without project	No. of respondents	Communication skills (1 = weak, 5 = good)
Very rarely	32	4.50
Rarely	13	4.52
Often	2	3.50
Very often	1	4.40

The overall communication results were very high. The average score for all communication skills was 4.47, the number of respondents scoring under the average was 16 and number of respondents scoring over the average was 29. The interviewers developed a friendly, supportive atmosphere and came across as non-threatening. The employers were made aware at the beginning of the interview that the information was for an independent research. Most of the employers were open and relaxed, but many were also very busy. The comments below reflect the respondent's communication skills, interest and openness to questions.

Interviews in which employers appeared interested and open

- *Interested – the person is highly articulate.*
- *Very confident. Articulate, came across as intelligent – having authority.*
- *He showed much interest and enthusiasm in regard to this survey as he asked so many questions. He is particularly concerned about training programmes funding to both employers and employees in construction.*

Interviews in which the respondents were occupied or distracted or negative

- *He was very busy, he kept on moving around and reluctant to answer other questions. Was confident about what he was doing. He was a very busy man so answered me very fast, could have left some points. However his answers correlate with the responses given by construction workers.*
- *The employer told me he wanted to answer because he saw me chatting with the workers. At the end, he did not want to tell me how much his employees are getting paid. I persuaded him.*
- *Seemed very unenthusiastic, a bit uncertain: seemed to have little thought or imagination regarding the job. Seemed defeated by his retrenchment and by having to start all over again at his age. Seemed older than his years.*

5.9 Chapter Summary

The results show that the majority of employers in the sample were informal employers, that is not registered with the building authorities. They had begun their careers as employees and

emerged as employers. They were, thus more mature, on average in their 30s and 40s with the largest group (27%) aged between 36 and 40 years. They had received formal education with 69% having a school leaving certificate. They were working in their area of origin. Half of the respondents had trade skills with several having more than one trade.

Over 75% had worked in construction, mainly as artisans, previous to starting their own businesses. Reasons for leaving their previous employment were evenly split between the positive ("wanted to be his own boss") and negative ("retrenched"). As employers, most ran small enterprises with 44% having fewer than 10 "permanent" employees. (Permanent can be interpreted as meaning employees employed on a regular basis as opposed to having permanent contracts). 22% were found to be unregistered and cited reluctance to pay tax as a principal reason. Approximately a third of the enterprises undertook general contracting and a third offered a particular trade. Most of their work was gained in the residential sector (34%) but current jobs were mainly in the commercial sector (28%).

Around three quarters (73%) of the sample had regular customers. They gave as reasons for this: first, that residential clients call back the same builder for repair work and further building, and secondly, that companies that subcontract prefer to use the same subcontractors. Possibly as a result of a strong client base, an overwhelming majority (94%) said that they rarely were without work. The sample interviewed were all in work, so it may be biased towards the more successful enterprises. When out of work, most actively seek new jobs and clients. Only a few seek work out of the industry.

The most common form of employment offered was "fixed term", with fixed term and fixed task workers making up 50% of the workforce. However, few contracts were provided to support these agreements. The only written contracts proffered were disclaimers of responsibility for the employers rather than binding documents. For all that employers do not commit themselves to providing permanence, the majority professed a preference for permanent employees as being more reliable, productive, having better knowledge of safety and providing more quality work.

The conditions of work provided for workers varied. The average wage provided was R68 per day (R8,50 per hour). Respondents (56%) considered workers to be badly paid but claimed that they could not afford to pay more. It was the aspect considered by employers to be most

in need of improvement. Two thirds of the employers recognised that they were responsible for health and safety, but some felt it to be the responsibility of the individual worker to avoid accidents. More than half (52%) the respondents did not request references.

Skills related to construction were deemed most in need of improvement in workers. Proficiency in languages (English and Afrikaans) were cited as the most important communication skill (60 %). The responsibility for financing training was thought to be, first, the employer (41%), secondly, the government (26%) and thirdly, the Industry (13%).

The advantages enjoyed by this group over the sample representing the workers is clear in the higher levels of education and skills and the opportunities for entrepreneurship which they have been able to act on.

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The construction industry in both the formal and informal sectors makes a major positive contribution to the economy of South Africa and the employment of her peoples. Its provision of large numbers of jobs to the informal sector plays a major role in absorbing unskilled labour and in helping to combat the high levels of unemployment. This thesis has concerned itself with this group: their conditions and prospects. The outcome of the study is, that at the time of writing, informal construction labour appear to be one of the most neglected groups in the employment system, notwithstanding their contribution to the country.

This chapter briefly summarises the contents of the previous chapters and then discusses the conclusions drawn as to whether or not construction labour have better conditions and are better able to receive training and skills development under the new system as driven by CETA. It closes with recommendations for the training and improved future of construction labour.

6.2 Chapter Summaries

6.2.1 Chapter 1: Purpose of the Study and Definitions

Chapter 1 reviewed the political and socio-ecomonic background to the construction industry in South Africa over the past 20 years. The marginalisation of Black and Coloured people under Apartheid in terms of education, training and employment hindered their careers in the construction industry. With the ANC driving the RDP, CETA has been instituted to manage the finances for and the delivery of training. However, CETA's initial two years has been accompanied by a falling economy, lack of jobs and an increase in subcontracting (see section 1.1).

The hypothesis presented by this thesis is that this new system of employment as driven by CETA does not accommodate training and skills development for those working in the informal sector anymore than did the previous system as driven by BITB. The objectives of the research were to gain information concerning this sector through a literature review and fieldwork on 200 workers and 49 employers in the Cape Town area.

6.2.2 Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2 reviewed literature appertaining to construction in Africa where an informal workforce has become a predominant feature. In South Africa this sector absorbs growing numbers of migrant workers as well as increasing numbers of South Africans (see section 2.5). The literature traces the development of training schemes from apprenticeships, through CBMT, to the current initiatives of CETA working with the NQF (see sections 2.5, 2.6).

The problems experienced by subcontractors and cited in the research show them to be operating on such narrow margins that they cannot easily afford the 1% training levy to CETA required to run the new training schemes (see section 2.6). They remain unregistered to avoid paying and thus the research has indicated that the intentions of the new system will not impact on informal labour until this problem is resolved.

6.2.3 Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter described the rationale for the methodology employed in selecting sites, the sample of employers and of workers, and the final design of the fieldwork. Problems and challenges experienced in reaching the sample were discussed (see section 3.3). The sites were chosen to reflect the range experienced by the informal workforce and reflected diversity in terms of economic range, geographic range, area, category of building, type and size of structure and whether an informally or formally contracted project (see section 3.4). The data was captured and sorted in Excel and the results presented in tables, figures and text for analysis (see section 3.6).

6.2.4 Chapter 4: Investigation into Workers

The results of the investigation into workers indicated patterns in origins, education, work history and skills acquisition (see section 4.2). The remnant effect of formal training schemes was in evidence in that findings given in Chapter 4 establish skills and training as being a priority need (see section 4.3). Workers were aware that having skills would uplift them with

53% desiring skills in a construction trade and almost half the sample wishing to improve their language skills, that is, to speak the language of the employers (see section 4.6). In terms of future work, most saw themselves as staying in construction and in terms of future desires, wished to be in permanent employment. However, over half the sample were employed as casual labour. Thus, for the majority of labourers, there was found to be no security in their jobs.

Further evidence of lack of security was the high proportion of workers who have experienced retrenchment (43%) or unemployment (77%). When out of work, 40% had no other activity: for reasons of lack of skills and the countrywide poor economic climate (see section 4.4). The vulnerability felt by workers was evident in repeated requests for and emphasis laid on permanent work: 67% desired permanent jobs (see section 4.4).

This chapter also documented responses to health and safety on sites. Safety awareness appeared to be insufficient as the accident rate reported was high with 83% of the workers having had experienced accidents on site (see section 4.5). Finally, the chapter considered the workers' perceptions of the construction industry and their conditions in it. The responses overall reflected the workers' opinions of the lack of opportunities available to them. Only 30 % had anything positive to say about working in construction and for most of them it was simply that it provided them with an income, that is, met a basic need only in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (see section 4.3).

6.2.5 Chapter 5: Investigation into Employers

It was clear from the results of the investigation into employers that the majority of employers in the sample were employers in the informal sector, that is not registered with the building authorities. This is commensurate with the findings in the literature on the growth of subcontracting. As the majority of the sample was Coloured, they had received a better education and opportunities for skills development under Apartheid than had their Black counterparts (see section 5.2). These higher levels of education and skills and the opportunities for entrepreneurship they had been able to exercise are reflected in their shift in status from employment to self-employment (see section 5.3).

The majority of the sample was SMMEs having 10 or fewer employees (see section 5.4). Insecure conditions for their workers were evident in the lack of permanent contracts

provided by employers. The most common form of employment offered was "fixed term", with fixed term and fixed task workers making up 50% of the workforce. However, few contracts were provided to support even these agreements. The only written contracts proffered were disclaimers of responsibility for the employers rather than binding documents. Most of the employers were labour subcontractors overseeing general building, whilst a third specialised in a trade (see section 5.5).

The average wage claimed to be provided was R68 per day, that is, R8,50 per hour (see section 5.6). Respondents (56%) considered workers to be badly paid and conceded it to be the area most in need of improvement. In terms of training, the employer sample desired better skills in their labour. Many considered it to be the role of the employer to provide such training, but contrarily, they did not feel inclined to pay the levy to CETA (see sections 5.7; 6.2.1).

6.2.6 Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter summaries were provided and supported by relevant facts from the results.
The underlying theme in this chapter is the lack of support given to the workforce in the informal sector both in terms of conditions and of training and development. Reasons for this are debated in section 6.3 and possible solutions to the problem recommended are given in section 6.4

6.3 Conclusions

The growth in outsourcing of labour has resulted in a drastically reduced formal labour force. Thus the organisations that supplied the training schemes with employees for training under the BITB scheme have substantially fewer formally employed labour to send on training programmes. Most of the workforce is acquiring its skills informally.

6.3.1 Training Initiatives

The focus of previous studies has been on the employers, particularly on the emerging contractors. Little attention has been given to the issues that most affect the workers, notably the terms and conditions of employment and opportunities for advancement. Thus, this thesis

has proposed that subcontracting and outsourcing of labour have led to casualisation in the labour market, and that the consequences of this for the workforce is that they are not receiving anymore benefits or training than they did under the BITB system.

Training is vital to the future skill requirements of the construction industry. The government has recognised this in its creation of SETAs for different sectors, CETA for the construction industry. Employers in this study describe construction skills as being the most important area in need of upgrading in workers. However, there is a lack of permanent employment and there is no incentive for employers to train workers and improve their skills levels. This situation is exacerbated by the stipulation in some contracts that only labour from the area be employed, and no labour be brought in by the subcontractor. The lack of hope for labour here is encapsulated in it being described as a "consumer item".

The BITB database of learners has been taken over by CETA and is to be run in accordance with the NQF. The major task of CETA is to develop a skilled and motivated construction sector workforce. A feature of this will be the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), a process of assessment for people who have acquired skills but who do not have qualifications: namely, those who have developed in the informal sector. Given the predominance illustrated by the sample of workers without qualifications but with skills acquired on the job, this is a topical approach. CETA has committed to certain agreed targets in terms of training and is to develop learnerships in construction. These learnerships replace the apprenticeship system. Two of the 10 learnerships potentially accommodate all the sample in this study: *traditional building* and *construction worker*; whilst some other learnerships apply to some, such as those with trades or wishing to learn trades or become foremen. Learnerships or skills programmes need to be implemented against SAQA-registered unit standards and these have not yet been established by the relevant Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs) for the construction sector. Once these qualifications are registered , CETA will need to structure the learnerships. Only then can their effectiveness be assessed. However, at the time of writing, no learnerships or skills programmes have been started but are expected to start in the latter part of 2002.

6.3.2 Training within the Informal Subcontracting System

Workers in permanent or contract employment are comprehensively protected by statute, primarily by the Labour Relations and Employment Equity Acts but the effectiveness of these regulations has caused employers to engage workers on a casual or informal contract basis.

To succeed, the new training initiatives need to accommodate these changes in employment practices, that is the trend to subcontracting, and the problems that have arisen from them. Subcontracting *per se* is not a negative practice: it can provide specialisation of tasks, higher productivity and lower costs. It is when regulations are not adhered to and rights of employees violated, for example through lack of safety procedures, failure to pay social security contributions and wages below the legal minimum as found in this research, that the practice is negative. Apart from the negative impact this practice has on workers, it can undercut and create unfair competition for those subcontractors who do operate legally.

A measure of licensing or registering subcontractors needs to be effectively established so that employers may not practice illegal employment. For example, lower wages (for example, R2,50 an hour as opposed to the requisite R9,47 per hour) were found in the study on workers and are accepted as workers (83%) have no alternatives (see section 4.4.2). In the study on employers the lowest wage cited as given was R40 per day, or R5 per hour (see section 5.6.1). A tentative conclusion is that employers do not admit to undercutting the minimum wage to the extent that they do, and that employees are desperate enough for work to work for so little.

6.3.3 Workers' Conditions in the Informal sector

For those for whom there is no other option but to work for an informal subcontractor, given the low level of entry into such a job, they must manage on existing conditions. Unions have not effectively penetrated the construction industry, and there are few support mechanisms for labour. The workers in construction tend to remain there throughout their lives. Low educational level and the difficulty of acquiring new skills make it harder to move to any job where skills may be required. Even where long layoffs occur, workers have not the resources to acquire skills or move to other industries needing different skills. They described themselves as staying at home. One worker spoke positively of his time in jail, as it was there that he had learnt construction skills.

As casuals, workers are engaged on a day to day basis depending on the workloads and skills needed. On an informal contract basis, workers are engaged for the duration of a contract or job, as long as their skills are needed. Such workers tend to have a long-running relationship with the employer and consider themselves, in instances, to be 'permanent' employees. The duration of employment thus is heavily dependent on the availability of work. The general

consensus amongst employers is that they would prefer to have permanent employees, and even invest in their training, if they were not so driven by the need to cut costs and so uncertain about their next source and duration of work. Yet, the findings showed that relatively few employers (23%) cited job security as the item after wages most in need of improving for workers, and less than a third provided permanence. Thus, most workers are poorly paid as both they and employers admit. Wages are at or below minimum for many and they find their wages too little to live on. The nature of employment influences the wages: permanent workers earn far more than fixed term or task, and casual workers earn the least, an added misfortune as they are in work the least.

The great majority, 84%, of all workers considered construction a dangerous job and 54% had received support after an accident. However, the comments on treatment after accidents was positive, thus it can be concluded that regulations are so sporadically observed that 54% is regarded as a relatively good measure. These findings were confirmed by those of the employers as only 64% described themselves as being responsible for health and safety on site.

6.3.4 Workers' Potential for Development

Though they have no access to it, the desire for training is there: 53% of the sample expressed the wish to move into other areas of employment within construction as skilled workers rather than to move out of construction. Of the skills desired by the sample, carpentry and electrical trades were the most often cited though these are more demanding skills than workers with limited educational backgrounds can manage to acquire. (It was also ascertained that many of the employers, 46%, were not working in their normal line of skill. This versatility of employment is largely due to the multi-skills held by the employers and thus reflects the greater opportunities this sample had experienced over the workers.)

Workers reflected a desire to improve their language skills in the languages of their employers: 49% selected language as the most important communication skill. This emphasis on language was echoed by the employers. From a comparison drawn between their skills and abilities and their desires for training, the higher proportion were those who wished to improve languages and wanted to be permanently employed or self-employed. This may indicate that better language skills are perceived as a key to better prospects. Literacy is one of CETA's strategies for development as progression through the NQF unit standards will

require increasing levels of literacy and numeracy. But the delivery of literacy training while maintaining productivity poses problems. The working conditions in construction , for example, long working hours, physical location of sites, physical demands on employees and generally poor facilities, are not conducive to training of this nature.

Whilst they were aware of the need to receive training and have skills, they were less aware of recording skills or experience for future employers. Less than half the sample had asked for references or kept records of past jobs and employers; likewise, many employers (52%) did not request references from new employees. The conclusion is that this lack of knowledge about the workplace and gaining jobs in it could be attributed to low levels of education, lack of training and information and low self-esteem.

When asked about future aspirations, workers gave self-employment as the most desired status with 50% wishing to be self employed in the next 10 years. Reasons given for this relate to improved labour relations in that there would no longer be a boss. This finding was corroborated by those who gave reasons for disliking construction as bad treatment from superiors and job insecurity. The combined total of these labour relations issues was greater (27%) than the next major dislike given which was the physical conditions (17%).

The failure of the country to educate all its people and of the construction industry to provide its labour force with adequate conditions and rights and labour relations were reflected in the overwhelming negative response that workers gave to being asked if they wished their children to enter the industry. Negative responses were given by 84% and of the 16% who were positive, virtually all gave qualifiers, such as their children only enter the industry if they have education and skills.

The thesis concludes with the statement that at the present time the new systems under CETA which were instituted by the government have not had a positive impact on construction labour in the informal sector. This is because the requirements of training and skills development are not being met by the new system of employment, that is subcontracting, nor does the informal employment system accommodate the existing modes of training and development available.

6.4 Recommendations

6.4.1 Training Initiatives and the Informal Sector

Recommendations given here refer to skills and training of the informal sector. The conclusions have indicated that the implementation of government's plans for training will depend upon three factors. The first is the sufficiency of funds that must be collected through the levies. As 70% of the total of which is available to be claimed as grants, the potential for sufficient funds is there. The second factor is the co-operation of employers in the informal sector to register and pay the levy. The third factor is the willingness of employers to train and of employees to undertake training.

Whilst it can be argued that current economic conditions are making the achievement of government's plans for the sector in terms of employment, empowerment, training extremely difficult, the reality is that the government has to work within this less than ideal framework. For the intentions of the new laws to be manifested, employer associations and unions should enforce the protective regulations. Thus, recommendations for the successful implementation of the levy system are for increased negotiation with subcontractors' associations for registration of their members. To achieve CETA's aims, the employers need to recognise the importance of training and to work with the government and industry. Through closer and improved relations between CETA and employer associations, subcontractors can come to trust and believe that the new training system is of benefit to them even in the short term.

To build trust and commitment, CETA should involve subcontractors in the informal sector in identifying the key areas for skills development and the most practicable and positive learning interventions available. Subcontractors need their knowledge and needs to be recognised in order for them to commit to a training scheme. It is also important to obtain the workers' views on skills needed to improve their working lives and how they would like training to be delivered. A resurgence of training activity under the CETA could encourage more specialisation and better wages for workers.

In establishing the SAQA-registered unit standards, the SGBs and in producing the learning material, CETA should ensure that everything done is applicable also, and primarily, to the informal sector and its needs. The qualification structure should enable skills to be

transferable and recognised across the construction industry and that these skills must be certifiable. Recognition of Prior Learning certification should continue to be developed and the concept of lifelong learning should be fostered with retraining and refresher training for older workers.

To overcome the logistical impracticalities of training for construction workers, the importance of on-the-job training should also be recognised. Site based training schemes also seemed to be most popular with the workers, as they would be paid for working while being trained. It is worth noting, however, that currently the more experienced workers passing on the skills learnt their craft formally, for the most part, under accredited systems. Thus, for this system to be effective in future years, the continued assessment of RPL programmes will be required.

Mobile training units and distance learning programmes should be researched to meet the needs of subcontractors working in the informal sector. Such units and programmes could also address literacy skills training. Development of new trainers and capacity building of current trainers will be needed to enable them to adapt. CETA should provide a team of inspectors who could visit sites. They could supervise and advise a few learners through the task, thus being beneficial to the subcontractor as well as to the learner. They could at the same time supervise tests and issue RPL certificates.

6.4.2 Working Conditions and the Informal Sector

Communication between supervisors/employers and their workers on site should be improved to allow for better labour relations, for the "*more considerate employers*" desired by workers (see Table 4.21). Workers need to be more aware of their worth, to feel motivated and proud of their jobs. Improved wages cannot do this alone: better working conditions and having hope for developing a career through training and skill acquisition in construction are also crucial. Learnerships for all, not only management level courses, should be structured to recognise the person and not only the skill so that self-esteem is raised in the process of training. Workers should learn to have a career path and to keep records of past jobs and employers. Employers should recognise past experience.

To counteract the negative effect that informal subcontracting has had on occupational safety and health, greater attention should be given by the construction industry to ensuring full

compliance with existing legislation. Strict measures should be taken against negligent employers. The high rate of accidents can be reduced if everyone involved is trained to carry out work safely. All those working on site should be trained in health and safety. The appointment of a greater number of safety representatives to inspect sites and provide guidance could be an effective way of addressing the safety problems which are created by subcontracting, casual employment and the minimal presence of unions.

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APPENDICES

A STUDY OF THE CONSTRUCTION LABOUR FORCE IN SOUTH AFRICA
CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

Site: _____ **Date:** _____

Personal History

1. How old are you?

Under 18 ☐ 19 - 24 ☐ 25 - 30 ☐ 31 - 35 ☐ 36 - 40 ☐

41 - 45 ☐ 46 - 50 ☐ 51 - 55 ☐ over 55 ☐

2. What educational level did you achieve?

Grade passed ___ Matriculation ☐ Apprentice (specify trade) ☐

Single trade (specify) ☐ Multi-trade (specify) ☐ Craftsman ☐

Other _____

3. Place of residence? _____

4. Place of origin? _____

Employment History

5. What is your trade? _____

6. What is your present job description? _____

7. How long have you worked in the construction industry in this job description? _____

8. How long have you worked in the construction industry in any job? _____

9. How long have you been with your present employer? _____

10. What firm were you working for before that? _____

11. Please indicate if you have been employed in the construction industry in other job descriptions and for how long?

Title	Duration
Labourer (what speciality?)	_____
Apprentice	_____
Craftsman/Artisan	_____
Foreman	_____

12. Have you been self-employed or employed others? _____

13. What is your present employment status?

Permanent ☐ Fixed term ☐ Task ☐ Casual ☐

14. If fixed term, please indicate if written or verbal, and how long the contract period is

_____

15. How long have you worked in the construction industry in your present employment status (as permanent, fixed term or casual)? _____

16. Please indicate if you have worked in the construction industry in any other status, for how long and the reasons for changing?

Title	**Duration**	**Reasons**
Permanent		
Fixed term		
Casual		

17. How long do your construction jobs last, on average? _____

18. Where do you get to hear about construction work from? _____

19. Have there been periods when you did not have a job? _____

20. If yes, please state the average period you were out of work _____ and the longest period you were out of work _____

21. What kind of project do you prefer to work on and on what kind of contract?

_____

22. What do you do when you are not working in the construction industry?

_____

23. How well do you understand English? _____ and Afrikaans? _____

Skills development

24. How did you acquire your construction skills?

Formally ☐ ... through _____ for how long _____
Informally ☐ ... through _____ for how long _____

25. Who or what made you choose a career in construction? _____

26. Are there any skills and training that you think would improve your life?

_____

27. Where and how would you most like to receive this training? _____

28. Do you keep records of training or past jobs done? _____

29. Do you ask for references from your employers? _____

Working conditions

30. How many hours, on average, do you work in a day? _____

31. How many days do you work in a week? _____

32. By what criteria are you paid (per hour, day, piecework, task work etc.)? _____

33. At what intervals are you paid (daily, weekly, at tasks end)? _____

34. How much do you earn per day _____ or per week _____?

35. Do you find this sufficient to live on? _____

36. How would you describe conditions at work? _____

37. How do you travel to and from work? _____

38. Do you have any arrangements at work for meals? _____

39. Have you ever been sick while on the job? _____

If yes, when and how many times? _____

What was the employer's financial support? _____

40. Have you ever suffered an accident while on the job? _____

If yes, when and how many times? _____
What was the employer's financial support? _____

41. Do you consider construction a dangerous job? _____

42. What do you think is the major cause of accidents on construction sites?

_____

43. Are you familiar with the health and safety regulations on site? _____

44. Who was/is responsible for making sure you are kept informed of such regulations?

_____

45. In your opinion, are they doing a successful job? _____

46. Are you familiar with your rights as a worker? _____

47. Who was/is responsible for making sure you are kept informed of such rights? _____

48. In your opinion, are they doing a successful job? _____

49. Are you a member of any organisation related to the workplace, such as a union or savings group? If so state which. _____

Future Plans

50. Are there any communication skills you would like to acquire or improve on? _____

51. What job would you like to have in future? _____

52. What future employment status would you like to attain (e.g. permanent, self-employed)?

_____

53. Where would you like to be in the next ten years? _____

54. What do you like best about work in construction? _____

55. What do you like least about work in construction? _____

56. How can this be improved? _____

57. Would you like your children to go into construction? _____

Communication skills: Rate the respondent on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = weak, 5 = good)

a) Did the interviewee easily understand the questions? ____
b) Did the interviewee make eye contact? ____
c) Did the interviewee express himself/herself well? ____
d) Did the interviewee appear at ease? ____
e) Did the interviewee sell himself/herself, i.e., would you employ him/her based on this interview? ____

Interviewer: _____

A STUDY OF THE CONSTRUCTION LABOUR FORCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

EMPLOYERS

Site: _____ **Date:** _____

Company Information

1) What type of construction do you chiefly undertake? _____

2) How many permanent employees do you have?

0-5 employees	5-10	10-20	20-50	Over 50
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3) What type of projects do you chiefly undertake?

GENERAL CONTRACTOR or SPECIALIST CONTRACTOR		PROJECT TYPE (in the past (P) present (N) and in future (F))			
Size of Firm	Labour and Material (LM) or Labour (L) only	Repair and Maintenance	Housing	Industrial	Commercial

4) Do you have regular customers? _____

5) Within what geographical area do you firm operate? _____

6) What projects are you presently undertaking? _____

7) Do you undertake any work in addition to construction? _____

8) Have there been periods in the last three years when you did not have a project?

Very rarely ☐	Rarely ☐	Often ☐	Very often ☐
(0-25% of the time)	(25-50%)	(50-75%)	(75-100%)

9) If yes, please state when and, each time, for how long?

_____

10) What did you do when you had no work? _____

11) What type of work/markets do you prefer, and why?

_____

_____

_____

Personal History

12) How old are you?

Under 18 ☐ 19 - 24 ☐ 25 - 30 ☐ 31 - 35 ☐ 36 - 40 ☐

41 - 45 ☐ 46 - 50 ☐ 51 - 55 ☐ over 55 ☐

13) What educational level did you achieve?

Grade passed ___ Matriculation ☐ Apprentice (specify trade) ☐

Single trade (specify) ☐ Multi-trade (specify) ☐ Craftsman ☐
Other _____

14) Place of residence? _____

Place of origin? _____

Entrepreneurial Background

15) Were you ever employed in formal construction and if so, why did you leave?

_____

_____

16) Do you still work in formal construction at times? _____

17) What prompted you to become your own employer? _____

_____

18) How long have you been your own employer? _____

19) Do you sometimes work for others as an employee? _____

20) What type of work were you involved in previously, and in what capacity?

_____

21) What skills and training do you have in construction work? _____

Employee Profile

22) How many employees do you have on average in construction projects? _____

23) How many employees have you directly employed on your present job? _____

24) How many labour sub-contractors have you directly employed on your present job? _____

25) How many employees do the labour sub-contractors have employed on your present job?

_____

26) How many employees do you have on average in construction projects?

_____

27) What is your employee breakdown in terms of employment status (i.e., how many employees do you have in each category)?

Permanent ___ Fixed Term ___ Fixed Task ___ Casual ___

28) Is this a typical breakdown? If not please give an approximate typical breakdown per project (%)

Permanent ___ Fixed Term ___ Fixed Task ___ Casual ___

29) How many workers do you have on a typical project under the following categories and, on average, how long do you employ them for?

Title	Number	Length of employment
Labourer		
Apprentice		
Craftsman/ Artisan		
Foreman		
Manager		
Any other		

30) Do you pay them per task or period _____, and at what intervals do you pay them? _____

31) Where do you source your workers from (most used source to least used)?

(i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

32) Do you ask for any references before employment? _____

33) Do you have any written contracts for the employment of

permanent _____

fixed term or task _____

casual employees? _____

34) Do you sub-contract work/labour out? _____

35) If so, what kind of work/labour do you sub-contract and why? _____

36) Do you have a form of contract for your sub-contractors and where did you get it from?

_____

37) What communication skills influence you in selecting a sub-contractor or employer?

_____

38) What do you think are the qualities a self-employed person needs to be successful?

_____

Employee assessment

39) How would you assess your employees in terms of

a) Quality of work

Permanent ___ Fixed term or task ___ Casual ___

b) Knowledge of safety procedures

Permanent ___ Fixed term or task ___ Casual ___

c) Reliability

Permanent ___ Fixed term or task ___ Casual ___

d) Productivity

Permanent ___ Fixed term or task ___ Casual ___

Working conditions

40) How many hours, on average, do your employees work in a day? _____

41) How many days, on average, do they work in a week? _____

42) What do you pay your workers per day _____ or per week _____?

43) Do you find that workers in the construction industry are paid

quite well _____

quite badly _____

just enough? _____

44) Do you make any travel arrangements for your workers? _____

45) Do you make any meal arrangements for your workers? _____

46) Do you find the incidences of illness increasing, decreasing or about the same over the last five years in the industry? _____

47) Do you find the incidences of accidents increasing, decreasing or about the same over the last five years in the industry? _____

48) Do you have a first aid kit on any of your sites? _____

49) Do you know the location of the nearest hospitals? _____

50) Are you familiar with the health and safety regulations for work on site? _____

51) Who is responsible for keeping the workers informed of such regulations? _____

52) In your opinion, are they doing a successful job? _____

53) At the end of a job, do your employees or subcontractors ask for references? _____

54) Are you contacted by new employers for references? _____

Directions

55) Are you registered with the relevant construction industry authorities? _____

If not, why not? _____

56) What would it take to become formally registered? _____

57) What speaking, listening and understanding abilities would you like to see improved in workers? _____

58) What skills and training would you like to see enhanced in workers in future?

_____

59) Who ideally should pay for this training? _____

60) Who would be the best person to deliver this training? _____

61) What employment status would you like to employ your workers under in future?

_____

62) Would you prefer to employ permanent, contract or casual staff in future? _____

63) What employment conditions would you change if you could for your workers?

_____

64) How would this help the workers? _____

65) Would you like to go back to paid employment in the future or remain self-employed?

_____

Communication skills: Rate the respondent on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = weak, 5 = good)

f) Did the interviewee easily understand the questions? ____
g) Did the interviewee make eye contact? ____
h) Did the interviewee express himself/herself well? ____
i) Did the interviewee appear at ease? ____
j) Did the interviewee sell himself/herself, i.e., would you employ him/her based on this interview? ____

Interviewer: _____

UFUNDO MALUNGA NABASEBENZI BEKONTILAKA E-MZANTSI AFRIKA

ABAQESHI

Inkcukacha zenkampani

1) Hloboluni lokwakha oluthi lwenziwe yinkampani yakho ngamandla?

_____

2) Bungakanani ubukhulu benkampani kwaye projects zini enithi nizenze?

Umsebenzi jikelele okanye ukusebenza into enye			Uhlobo leproject (ngaphambili(P)Ngoku(N)ku nakwixa elizayo(F)			
Ubukhulu befemu	Umsebenzi kunye nezixhobo zokusebenza. (LM) okanye Impahla/izixho-bo zentsebenzo (M) imisebenzi/ums -ebenzi kuphela	Udwebo lwesakhiw o nolakhiwo (DB) okanye ulakhiwo kuphela	Ezingapha kathi/ ekhayeni	Kwicandel- o lolakhiwo lwwezindl-u	Kumizi- mveliso	ezorhwe
0-5 abaqeshwa						
5-10						
10-20						
20-50						
Ngaphezulu kwama-50						

3) Ungaba unabo abathenga kuwe rhoqo?

_____

4) Ingaba lo mzi-mveliso wakho ushishina kweyiphi indawo apha elizweni?

_____

5) Ziziphi I-projects oziqhububayo njengoba sithetha nje?

_____

6) Ingaba akho amathuba apho ubuke wanqatyelwa ngumsebenzi/ amaprojekithi kule minyaka mithathu idlulileyo?

nqabileyo ☐ (0-25% wexesha) nqabileyo ☐ (25-50%) rhoqo ☐ (50-75%) rhoqo kakhulu ☐ (75-100%)

7) Uba kunjalo chaza nganyenganye uba bekunini yaye ithathe ixesha elingakanani_____

_____

8) Loluphi uhlobo lomsebenzi/ amaziko entengiso othanda wona, ingaba kutheni ukhetha wona nje?

_____

_____

_____

9) Ikhona eminye imisebenzi oke uyenze engaphandle kwekontilaka zolakhiwo?

_____

Iimbali ngokhulo lobuchule bokushishina

10) Wawuke waqeshwa kwikontilaka yolakhiwo ngokupheleleyo?

_____

11) Uba kunjalo waze wayekalani?_____

_____

12) Wakhuthazwa yintoni uze ude uziqeshe nje?

_____

_____

13) Unexesha elingakanani uziqeshile?_____

14) Luluphi uhlobo lomsebenzi owawuwenza ngaphambili koku, wawubambe esiphi isikhundla?_____

15) Bobuphi ubuchule noqeqesho onalo kumsebenzi wekontilaka zolakhiwo?

_____

Inqanaba ngokwabaqeshwa

16) Bangaphi abantu obaqeshileyo kulo msebenzi uwenzayo ngoku?_____

17) Bangaphi abasebenzi onabo bebonke ngokwengqikelelo- manani kumaprojects olakhiwo owenzawo?_____

18) Ungabachaka njani abasenzi bakho ngokwexesha abazakuliphangela apha kuwe?(bangaphi kwisigaba ngasinye)

abesigxina ___ abexeshana___ amakhesele ___

19) Ingaba luhlobo obachaka ngalo olu, uba akunjalo sinike uhlobo obachaka ngalo oluchanekileyo kwiproject nganye.

abasisigxina ___ abexeshana ___ amakhesele ___

20) Bangaphi abasebenzi bakho kwiproject oqhele kuzifumana, ngokwale migqaliselo ilandelayo nangokwe-ngqikelelo manani,ubaqesha ilixa elingakanani, ubahlawula kangakanani?

Itayitile	Inani	ubede bexesha lenggesho	intlawulo
umalayisha			
iaprentisi			
iCraftsman/iArtisan			
Forumane			
umphathi			
Abanye			

21) Ungathi ubatyumba phi abakho abasebenzi (sinike imithombo ekuthululela abasebenzi ibemi-3 ngokokushiyana kwayo)?

(i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

22) Ubahlawula ngokowaphi amaxesha entlawulo? _____

23) Ingaba unawo amaxwebhu ezivumelwano- zomsebenzi nabasebenzi bakho?

Abesigxina _____
Abexeshana _____
Amakhesele wona? _____

24) Bakhona abenye okontilakha uke ubabele umsebenzi?

_____

25) Uba kunjalo, luhlobo luni lomsebenzi oyinikezela kwabanye okontilakha? _____

26) Luluphi uhlobo lwesivumelwano osisebenzisayo nabanye okontilakha xa ubanika umsebenzi? _____

27) Ziziphi ezona ngxaki zinkulu ujongene nazo ekwandiseni eli shishini lakho? _____

Uvavanyo Lwabasebenzi

28) ungabavavanya njani abasebenzi bakho ngokwalendlela ilandelayo:

a) izinga lomsebenzi wabo

abasisigxina ___ abexeshana ___ amakhesele ___

b) Ulwazi lwabo lwendlela nemigqaliselo yokhuseleko emsebenzini

abasisigxina ___ abexeshana ___ amakhesele ___

c) Intembeko

abasisigxina ___ abexeshana ___ amakhesele ___

d) imveliso

abasisigxina ___ abexeshana ___ amakhesele ___

Iimeko zempangelo

29) ngokwengqikelelo yabo xa bebonke, ungathi umsebenzi ngamnye uphangela iyure ezingaphi ngosuku? _____

30) Zingaphi iintsuku eziphangelwayo ngeveki ngokwengqikelelo yabo xa bebonke?

_____

31) Ngokokwakho ungathi abesebenzi bekontilakha bahluwula:

Ngcono gqitha _____
Kakubi gqitha _____
ngokwaneleyo? _____

32) Ingaba abakho abasebenzi uyababonelela ngenkonzo yothutho xabesiza/bephuma emsebenzini? _____

33) Uyabonelela na ngento edliwayo abasebenzi bakho?

_____

34) Ingaba iziganeko zokugula kwabasenzi zithande ukuxhaphaka okanye zehlile okanye akho mahluko xa ujonge kule minyaka mihlanu idlulileyo apha ezokontilakeni?

_____

35) Ingaba wena ubona iziganeko zokulimala kwabantu emsebenzini wekontilaka sisanda/ sisihla/ okanye kuyafana nje kuleminyaka mithathu idlulileyo? _____

36) Ingaba unazo izixhobo zoncedo lokuqala apha kule ndawo usebenzela kuyo? _____

37) Uyasazi isibhedlela esikufutshane kule ndawo? _____

38) Uyayazi na imithetho nemigqaliselo yokhuseleko emsebenzini? _____

39) Ngubani ohlala efundisa ngale mithetho nemigqaliselo yokhuseleko kubasebenzi bakho? _____

40) Ngokolwakho uluvo, ingaba benza umsebenzi oncomekayo? _____

Iimigaqo

41) Ingaba lo mzi-mveliso wakho ubhalisiwe kwabasemagunyeni kolushishino lwekontilakha zokwakha?

_____

42) Ukuba ngaba akunjalo, kutheni? _____

43) Ingaba ziziphi izinto eziyimfuneko ukuze eli shishini libe linokubhaliswa ngokusesikweni? _____

44) Luluphi uqeqesho nophuhliso lobuchule onga abasebenzi banganalo kwilixa elizayo?

_____

45) Xa bekusiya ngokokwakho inga ingangubani ohlawulela oluqeqesho noluphuhliso?

_____

46) Ngubani ongalenza ngcono oluqeqesho noluphuhliso? _____

47) Unga ungabeqesha phantsi kweliphi izinga abasebenzi bakho kwilixa elizayo? _____

48) Ungathanda ukubaqesha njengabasisigxina, abexeshana okanye amakhesele? _____

49) Ziziphi imeko zempangelo zabasebenzi onga ungazitshintsha xa unako? _____

50) Lungabenceda entweni abasenzi olotshintsho? _____

51) Uyanqwenela ukuphindela ube ngumsemnzi uyeke ukuziqesha kwilixa eli zayo?

_____

STUDIE VAN DIE KONSTRUKSIE AARBEIDSMAG IN SUID AFRIKA

KONSTRUKSIE WERKERS

Bouterrein:_____ Datum:_____

Persoonlike Geskiedenis

1) Wat is u ouderdom?

Onder 18 ☐ 19 - 24 ☐ 25 - 30 ☐ 31 - 35 ☐ 36 - 40 ☐
41 - 45 ☐ 46 - 50 ☐ 51 - 55 ☐ oor 55 ☐

2) Watter opvoedkundige vlak het u bereik?

Graad behaal ___ Matrikulasie ☐ Vakleerling (dui aan ambag) ☐

Enkel ambag (dui aan) ☐ Multi-ambag (dui aan) ☐ Vakman ☐
Ander _____

3) Waar woon u? _____

4) Plek van oorsprong? _____

Werk Geskiedenis

5) Wat is u ambag? _____

6) Wat is u huidige werk beskrywing?_____

7) Hoe lank werk u in hierdie posisie in die konstruksie industrie? _____

8) Hoe lank werk u in die konstruksie industrie in enige posisie? _____

9) Hoe lank werk u vir u huidige werkgewer? _____

10) Vir watter firma het u voorheen gewerk? _____

11) Dui asseblief aan as u voorheen in die konstruksie industrie gewerk het in ander posisies en vir hoe lank?

Titel	Tydperk
Werker (watter spesialiteit?)	_____
Vakleerling	_____
Vakman	_____
Voorman	_____

12) Was u ooit selfstandig of werkgewer/baas? _____

13) Wat is u huidige werk status?

Permanent ☐ Vaste tydperk ☐ Taak ☐ Los werker ☐

14) Indien vaste tydperk, dui asseblief aan of dit geskrewe of mondeliks is, en hoe lank die kontrak is?

_____

15) Hoe lank werk u in die konstruksie industrie in u huidige werk status (as permanent, vaste tydperk of los werker)?

_____

16) Toon asseblief aan of u in die konstruksie industrie gewerk het in enige ander kapasiteit, vir hoe lank en u redes vir verandering

Titel	**Tydperk**	**Redes**
Permanent		
Vaste tydperk		
Los werker		

17) Hoe lank is u konstruksie werk, per gemiddeld? _____

18) Waar hoor u van konstruksie werk? _____

19) Was daar periodes wat u nie gewerk het nie? _____

20) Indien ja, toon asseblief aan die gemiddelde periode wat u nie gewerk het nie _____ en die langste periode sonder werk _____

21) Watter tipe van projek verkies u om aan te werk en watter soort kontrak?

_____

22) Wat doen u wanneer u nie werk in die konstruksie industrie nie? _____

23) Hoe goed verstaan u Engels? _____ en Afrikaans? _____

Bekwaamheid Ontwikkeling

24) Hoe het u u konstruksie bekwaamheid ontwikkel?

Formeel ☐ ... deur _____ vir hoe lank _____

Informeel ☐ ... deur _____ vir hoe lank _____

25) Wie of wat het u laat besluit op loopbaan in konstruksie? _____

26) Is daar enige bekwaamheid en opleiding wat u dink sal u lewe verbeter?

_____

27) Waar en hoe sal u lyk om hierdie opleiding te kry? _____

28) Hou u rekords van opleiding of verlede werk wat u gedoen het? _____

29) Vra u vir getuigskrifte van u werkgewers? _____

Werk Omstandighede

30) Hoeveel ure, gemiddeld, werk u per dag? _____

31) Hoeveel dae werk u per week? _____

32) Op watter standaard word u betaal (per uur, dag, stukwerk, taak werk ens.)? _____

33) Wanneer word u betaal (daagliks, weekliks, einde van taak)? _____

34) Hoeveel word u betaal per dag _____ of per week _____?

35) Vind u dat dit genoeg is om op te lewe? _____

36) Hoe sal u verduidelik omstandighede by die werk?

_____

37) Hoe reis u na en van werk? _____

38) Het u enige reëling vir maaltye by die werk? _____

39) Het u ooit siek geraak by die werk? _____

Indien ja, wanneer en hoeveel keer? _____

Wat was u werkgewer se finansiële ondersteuning? _____

40) Het u ooit ongeluk gehad by die werk? _____

Indien ja, wanneer en hoeveel keer? _____

Wat was u werkgewer se finansiële ondersteuning? _____

41) Dink u konstruksie is gevaarlike werk? _____

42) Wat dink u is die hoof oorsaak van ongelukke by konstruksie bouterreine?

_____

43) Is u bekend met die gesondheid en veiligheids regulasies op bouterreine?_____

44) Wie was/is verantwoordelik om u op hoogte van sake te hou van sulke regulasies?

_____

45) In u opinie, doen hulle suksesvolle werk? _____

46) Is u bekend met u regte as werker?_____

47) Wie was/is verantwoordelik om u op hoogte van sake te hou van sulke regte?

_____

48) In u opinie, doen hulle suksesvolle werk? _____

49) Is u lid van enige organisasie verwant met die werkplek, soos unie of spaargroep? Indien so sê wie. _____

Toekomstige Plannne

50) Is daar enige kommunikasie bekwaamhede wat u wil kry of verbeter? _____

51) Watter soort werk sal u lyk om te het in die toekoms? _____

52) Watter toekomstige werk status sal u lyk om te behaal (byvoorbeeld permanent, selfstandig)? _____

53) Waar sal u lyk om te wees in die volgende tien jaar?

_____

54) Wat hou u die meeste van in verband met konstruksie werk?

_____

55) Wat hou u die minste van in veband met konstruksie werk?

_____

56) Hoe kan dit verbeter word?

_____

57) Sal u lyk u kinders moet werk in konstruksie?

_____

Kommunikasie Bekwaamhede: Bepaal die ondervraagde op skaal van 1 tot 5 (1 = swak, 5 = goed)

a) Het die ondervraagde maklik die vrae verstaan? ____
b) Het die ondervraagde oë kontak gemaak? ____
c) Het die ondervraagde hom/haar goed voorgedra? ____
d) Het die ondergvraagde gemaklik gelyk? ____
e) Het die ondervraagde hom/haar goed oorgedra, i.e. sal u hom/haar aanstel baseer op die verslag? __

Verslaggewer: _____

STUDIE VAN DIE KONSTRUKSIE AARBEIDSMAG IN SUID AFRIKA

WERKGEWERS

Besigheid Informasie

1) Watter tipe van konstruksie is u firma hoofsaaklik besig met? _____

2) Hoeveel permanente werkers het u?

0-5 werkers	5-10	10-20	20-50	Oor 50
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3) Watter tiepe van projekte is u hoofsaaklik besig met?

ALGEMENE KONTRAKTUUR of SPESIALIS KONTRAKTUUR		PROJEK TIPE (in die verlede (V) huidige (H) en in die toekoms (T))			
Grootte van Firma	Werk en Materiaal (WM) of Werk (W) alleenlik		Behuising	Industrieel	Kommersieel

4) Het u gereelde kliënte? _____

5) Binne watter geografiese area opereer u firma? _____

6) Watter projekte is u huidiglik besig met? _____

7) Doen u enige ander werk behalwe konstruksie? _____

8) Was daar periodes in die afgelope drie jaar wanneer u nie projek gehad het nie?

Baie Selde ☐	Selde ☐	Dikwels ☐	Baie Dikwels ☐
(0-25% van die tyd)	(25-50%)	(50-75%)	(75-100%)

9) Indien ja, asseblief sê wanneer en, elke keer, vir hoe lank

_____

_____

10) Wat doen u wanneer u nie werk nie? _____

11) Watter tipe van werk/markte sal u verkies en hoekom?

_____

_____

_____

Persoonlike Geskiedenis

12) Wat is u ouderdom?

Onder 18 ☐ 19 - 24 ☐ 25 - 30 ☐ 31 - 35 ☐ 36 - 40 ☐
45 ☐ 46 - 50 ☐ 51 - 55 ☐ oor 55 ☐

13) Watter opvoedkundige vlak het u bereik?

Graad behaal ___ Matrikulasie ☐ Vakleerling (dui aan ambag) ☐

Enkel ambag (dui aan) ☐ Multi-ambag (dui aan) ☐ Vakman ☐
Ander _____

14) Waar woon u? _____

15) Plek van oorsprong? _____

Ondernemer Agtergrond

16) Het u ooit gewerk in formele konstruksie en indien so, hoekom het u dit gelos?

_____

_____

17) Werk u somtyds in formele konstruksie? _____

18) Wat was u aansporing om u eie baas te word? _____

_____

19) Hoe lank is u u eie baas? _____

20) Werk u somtyds vir ander as werker? _____

21) Watter soort werk het u voorheen gedoen, en in watter kapasiteit?

_____

22) Watter bekwaamheid en opvoeding het u in konstruksie werk?

_____

Werker Profiel

23) Hoeveel werkers het u gemiddeld op konstruksie projekte? _____

24) Hoeveel werkers het u direk werkverskaf op u huidige projek? _____

25) Hoeveel werk sub-kontraktuurs u direk aan ander werkgewers op u huidige projek? _____

26) Hoeveel werkers het die sub-kontraktuurs op u huidige projek? _____

27) Wat is u werkers verdeeling in terme van werk status (i.e., hoeveel werkers het u in elke katagorie)?

Permanent ___ Vaste tydperk ___ Vaste taak ___ Los werker ___

28) Is dit tipiese verdeeling? Indien nie gee asseblief gemiddelde tipiese verdeeling (%)

Permanent ___ Vaste tydperk ___ Vaste taak ___ Los werker ___

29) Hoeveel werkers het u op tipiese projek onder die volgende katagorië en, per gemiddeld, hoe lank werk hulle?

Titel	Nommer	Lengte van werk
Werker		
Vakleerling		
Vakman		
Voorman		
Bestuurder		
Enige ander		

30) Betaal u hull per taak of periode _____, en wanneer betaal u hulle? _____

31) Waar kry u u werkers (eerste drie bronne in order van belangrikheid)?

(i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

32) Vra u vir enige getuigskrifte voor u werkers aanneem? _____

33) Het u enige geskrewe kontrakte vir die werkverskaffing van

permanent _____

kontrak _____

los werkers? _____

34) Sub-kontraktuur u werk/werkers? _____

35) Indien so, watter werk/werkers sub-kontraktuur u en hoekom? _____

36) Het u form vir kontrakte vir u sub-kontraktuurs en waar het u dit gekry?

_____

37) Watter kommunikasie bekwaamhede beinvloed u in die keising van sub-kontraktuur of werker?

_____

38) Wat dink u is die kwaliteite selfstandige persoon benodig om suksesvol te wees?

_____

Werker Skatting

39) Hoe sal u u werkers skat in terme van

a) Kwaliteit van werk

Permanent ___ Vaste tydperk of taak ___ Los werker ___

b) Kennis van veiligheids maatreëls

Permanent ___ Vaste tydperk of taak ___ Los werker ___

c) Vertroubaarheid

Permanent ___ Vaste tydperk of taak ___ Los werker ___

d) Produksie vermoë

Permanent ___ Vaste tydperk of taak ___ Los werker ___

Werk Omstandighede

40) Hoeveel ure, gemiddeld, werk u werkers per dag? _____

41) Hoeveel dae, gemiddeld, werk hulle per week? _____

42) Wat betaal u u werkers per dag _____ of per week _____?

43) Vind u dat werkers in die konstruksie industrie word betaal

Baie goed _____

Baie sleg _____

genoeg? _____

44) Maak u enige reis voorbereidings vir u werkers? _____

45) Maak u enige maaltyd voorbereidings vir u werkers? _____

46) Vind u die gevalle van siekte verhoog, verlaag of ongeveer dieselfde oor die afgelope vyf jaar in die industrie? _____

47) Vind u die gevalle van ongelukke verhoog, verlaag of ongeveer dieselfde oor die afgelope vyf jaar in die industrie? _____

48) Het u noodhulpkussie op enige van u bouterreine? _____

49) Weet u die lokasie van die naaste hospitaal? _____

50) Is u bekend met die gesondheid en veiligheids regulasies vir werk op bouterreine? _____

51) Wie is verantwoordelik om die werkers op hoogte van sake te hou van die regulasies?

_____

52) In u opinie, doen hulle suksesvolle werk? _____

53) Verskaf u werkers of sub-kontraktuurs getuigskrifte aan die einde van projek?

_____

54) Word u gekontak deur nuwe werkgewers vir getuigskrifte?

_____

Rigtings

55) Is u firma geregistreer met die toepaslike konstruksie industrie owerheid? _____

Indien nie, hoekom nie? _____

56) Wat moet u doen om u firma formeel te registreer? _____

57) Watter sprekende, luister en verstaandige bekwaamhede sal u lyk om te sien werkers verbeter? _____

58) Watter bekwaamheid en opvoeding sal u lyk om te sien u werkers verbeter in die toekoms?

_____

59) Wie hoofsaaklik moet betaal vir hierdie opvoeding? _____

60) Wie sal die beste persoon wees om hierdie opvoeding te lewer? _____

61) Sal u verkies om permanente, kontrak of los werkers te het in die toekoms? _____

62) Watter werk omstandighede sal u verander as u kon vir u werkers? _____

_____

63) Hoe sal die verandering die werkers help?

_____

64) Sal u lyk om terug te gaan na werker in die toekoms of bly selfstandig?

_____

Kommunikasie Bekwaamhede: Bepaal die ondervraagde op skaal van 1 tot 5 (1 = swak, 5 = goed)

a) Het die ondervraagde maklik die vrae verstaan? ____
b) Het die ondervraagde oë kontak gemaak? ____
c) Het die ondervraagde hom/haar goed voorgedra? ____
d) Het die ondergvraagde gemaklik gelyk? ____
e) Het die ondervraagde hom/haar goed oorgedra, i.e. sal u hom/haar aanstel baseer op die verslag? ____

Verslaggewer: _____

Appendix 4. Interviewers, Project Types and Location of Sites

WORKERS - 15 June 2001

	Athlone	Backhoven	Claremont	City	Constantia	Epping	Fishhoek	Gardens	Guguletu	Heideveld	Lansdowne Road	Maitland	Mandalay	Manenberg	Milnerton	Montague Gardens	Mowbray	Noordhoek	Nyanga	Rondebosch	Rylands	Simonstown	Sea Point	Tamboerskloof	Thornton	Vking	Vredehoek	Waterfront	Unemployed	Unknown	TOTAL
Allicia Ntontela	5						2							1		5		4				2			3			2	1		25
Astrid Michelson																								2			1				3
Dorothy Shikumo			3	2																											5
Fezeka Nhonho	3									2				1							2		2	2			3		1		16
Gary Mmulutsi								2									1						2								5
George Mbuthia	3																						2	2			2				9
Jane English		1						2															2								5
Kufakunesu Kahuni			3								3																	6			12
Mamello Ralehlolo	5								1							5			2							2			3		18
Nelisiwe Mathabela																				4								6			10
Nikelo Mzuvukile							1																								1
Nomakhosazana Mgweba	4	2					2	8	1					2					2			4	2						2		29
Olga Makaya Mugove																							2				1				3
Robert Hindle																										1					1
Simpiwe Poswa	4		5		1	2						1			3	3										1					20
Siyabulela Sikondo		2						8															2								12
Tinny Nombewu									2				1	1					4												8
																															0
TOTAL	24	5	11	2	1	2	5	20	4	2	3	1	1	5	3	13	1	4	8	4	2	6	14	6	3	4	7	14	7	0	182

WORKERS - 15 June 2001

	Athlone	Backhoven	Claremont	City	Constantia	Epping	Fishhoek	Gardens	Guguletu	Heideveld	Lansdowne Road	Maitland	Mandalay	Manenberg	Milnerton	Montague Gardens	Mowbray	Noordhoek	Nyanga	Rondebosch	Rylands	Simonstown	Sea Point	Tamboerskloof	Thornton	Vking	Vredehoek	Waterfront	Unemployed	Unknown	TOTAL
Commercial			3	2			2				3				1							2									13
Educational																	1														1
Hospital																				2											2
Industrial						2									2	9															13
Religious																			8		2										10
Residential	1	5	8				3	13	4				1	5		4		4		2		4	14	1		4	7	14			94
Residential - renovation/alterations					1			7				1												5							14
Social	23									2																					25
Unemployed																													7		7
Unknown																									3						3
																															0
																															0
																															0
																															0
																															0
																															0
																															0
																															0
TOTAL	24	5	11	2	1	2	5	20	4	2	3	1	1	5	3	13	1	4	8	4	2	6	14	6	3	4	7	14	7	0	182

EMPLOYERS - 15 June 2001

	Athlone	Backhoven	Claremont	City	Constantia	Epping	Fishhoek	Gardens	Guguletu	Heideveld	Lansdowne Road	Maitland	Mandalay	Manenberg	Milnerton	Montague Gardens	Mowbray	Noordhoek	Nyanga	Rondebosch	Rylands	Simonstown	Sea Point	Tamboerskloof	Thornton	Viking	Vredehoek	Waterfront	Unknown	TOTAL
Allicia Ntontela	1															1														2
Astrid Michelson																								1						1
Dorothy Shikumo																														0
Fezeka Nhonho																														0
Gary Mmulutsi																	1													1
George Mbuthia																								1			1			2
Jane English	2							3																						5
Kufakunesu Kahuni			2								1																			3
Mamello Ralehlolo	3								1						1											1				6
Nelisiwe Mathabela																				2										2
Nikelo Mzuvukile																														0
Nomakhosazana Mgweba	2						1							1																4
Olga Makaya Mugove																											1			1
Robert Hindle																														0
Simpiwe Poswa			1																							2				3
Siyabulela Sikondo																														0
Tinny Nombewu																													1	1
																														0
TOTAL	8	0	3	0	0	0	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	3	2	0	1	31

EMPLOYERS - 15 June 2001

	Athlone	Backhoven	Claremont	City	Constantia	Epping	Fishhoek	Gardens	Guguletu	Heideveld	Lansdowne Road	Maitland	Mandalay	Manenberg	Milnerton	Montague Gardens	Mowbray	Noordhoek	Nyanga	Rondebosch	Rylands	Simonstown	Sea Point	Tamboerskloof	Thornton	Viking	Vredehoek	Waterfront	Unknown	TOTAL
Commercial			2								1				1															4
Educational																	1													1
Hospital																				1										1
Industrial																1														1
Religious																														0
Residential	2		1				1	3	1					1						1				2		3	2			17
Residential - renovation/alterations																														0
Social	6																													6
Unemployed																														0
Unknown																													1	1
TOTAL	8	0	3	0	0	0	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	3	2	0	1	31

Appendix 5. Wages according to Bargaining Agreement 2001

Current Collective Agreement, which Subcontractors say they cannot meet:

Cost of Artisan Team per day:

Cost of artisan per day	8 hours @ R 20,83			R166,64
Total contributions by employer for social benefits				R 42,03
Cost of labourer per day	8 hrs @ R 9,47	1,5 lab		R113,64
Total contributions by employer for social benefits				R 23,85
Sub Total				R346,16
Add overheads and profit plus 34%				R117,69
Total Cost of Team per day				R463,85
ONE TEAM lays 500 bricks @ R500 less 10% reten.				R200,00
Shortfall plus profit			minus	R263,85

Collective Agreement proposed at Erinvale Accord:*

Cost of artisan per day	8 hours @ R 18,75			R150,00
Total contributions by employer for social benefits				R 42,03
Cost of labourer per day	8 hrs @ R 7,26	1,5 lab		R 87,12
Total contributions by employer for social benefits				
Sub Total				R279,15
Add overheads and profit plus 34%				R 94,91
Total Cost of Team per day				R374,06
ONE TEAM lays 500 bricks @ R500 less 10% reten.				R225,00
Shortfall plus profit			minus	R149,06

*(Subcontractor interviewed said he was already following the second option of payment)

Appendix 6. Contract Forms for Employees

XYZ SUB CONTRACTOR
&
MAINTENANCE

RELEASE FORM

I hereby declare that I ..... am joined as a sub-contractor by the above undertaking and that the above-mentioned is not responsible for:

1. Accidents on duty
2. Any construction regulations
3. Road accidents
4. Or any other unforeseen incident that could result in damage or might incur losses, which might result from the above-mentioned undertaking.

SIGNATURE OF SUB-CONTRACTOR

.....

WITNESS: 1 .....

WITNESS: 2 .....

DATE: .....

XYZ CENTRE (PROPRIETY) LIMITED

SPECIFIC PROJECT CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

It is hereby agreed:

1. Position and Duration of Appointment

   It is hereby agreed that you will be employed as a _____

   on the _____ Trial Project from _____ 2001.

   It is agreed that my employment will terminate on the completion/staged

   Demobilisation of the trial project, whichever occurs earlier.

It is accordingly agreed that my Contract of Employment will terminate by agreement automatically on the demobilisation of the workforce on the conclusion of the aforesaid project. I accept that I am not entitled to any further notice and that I have agreed on a termination event in advance. The termination of my employment will accordingly not constitute a dismissal but a termination by agreement on the occurrence of a particular event.

I accept that my contract may be terminated prior to completion of the project for misconduct, incapacity or operational reasons.

_____ _____

For and on behalf of
XYZ CENTRE
(PROPRIETY) LIMITED

WITNESSES

1 .....

2 .....

DATE: .....

Appendix 7. Summary of Replies to Workers' Questionnaire

Note:

i) For each result 100% is given to the total number of respondents for that question. Non-respondents are excluded from the sample.

ii) Respondent's comments were included with the answers. Where these are quoted the numbers of the questionnaire is given in brackets at the end of the quotation.

Personal Histories

Question 1: How old are you?

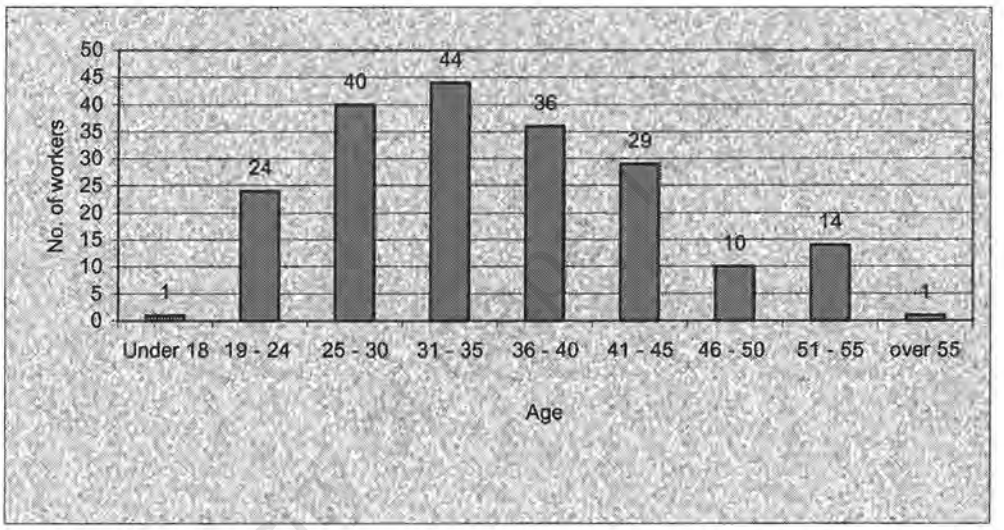


Figure 1 Workers by age

- Age 55 and over: *I want to work for myself because I will soon retire.* (71)
  I will be dead then. (126)

Even in the age groups which are, conventionally, considered to be prime working years, respondents had a different view to their working life:

- Age: 51-55: *Pensioner* (186)
  Take pension from the government (196)
  To know God more (160)
- Age: 46-50: *I want to be relaxed in my own house with my grandchildren* (83)
- Age: 41-45: *Retired and looking after my children and grandchildren.* (86)
- Age: 36-40: *Retired, I'll already be unfit to continue working* (84)

Question 2: What educational level did you achieve?

Educational level of workers		
Educational level	**No. of workers**	**Percentage**
Some schooling	158	81
School leaving certificate	14	7
Apprenticeship	10	5
Single trade training	0	0
Multi-trade training	4	2
Crafts training	4	2
Other	5	3
Total	195	100

Table 1: Educational level of workers

What job would you like to have in the future?

One interviewer wrote the following comment:

- *The guy seems uneducated. He seems to have no aspirations, possibly because he does not think it possible to do any better – low self worth, also money concerns.* (78)

Respondents replied to the question: What job would you like in the future? Their education level precedes the quoted comment.

- *No schooling: Nothing in mind, a job anywhere.* (149)
- *Grade 3: I don't have any wild dreams. I need to survive if I'm not working.* (121)

Workers with better education tended to have more ambition, with the majority expressing a desire to be self-employed.

- Grade 10: office job – Australia (pilot)
- Grade 11: Create something using your brain (74)

Those with other qualifications said they had a diploma in civil engineering, B Tech Construction Management or national (N1, N2, N3) certificates. It must be noted that many workers have acquired multi-skills on site through experience, but are not officially qualified.

Question 3: Place of residence

For the most part, workers lived in the area in which they operated.

Question 4: Place of origin

The effect of apartheid was to cause different peoples to reside in "homelands", such as Transkei, Venda and Ciskei, thus for many of the older black workers their places of origin were other parts of South Africa. Many of them would have families still in those "homelands" who they would visit annually, if that. Some workers are migrant labourers such as the two interviewed from Angola. Two single men lived in Nolantu Hostel Gugelethu, thus have no local home.

Employment

Question 5: What is your trade?

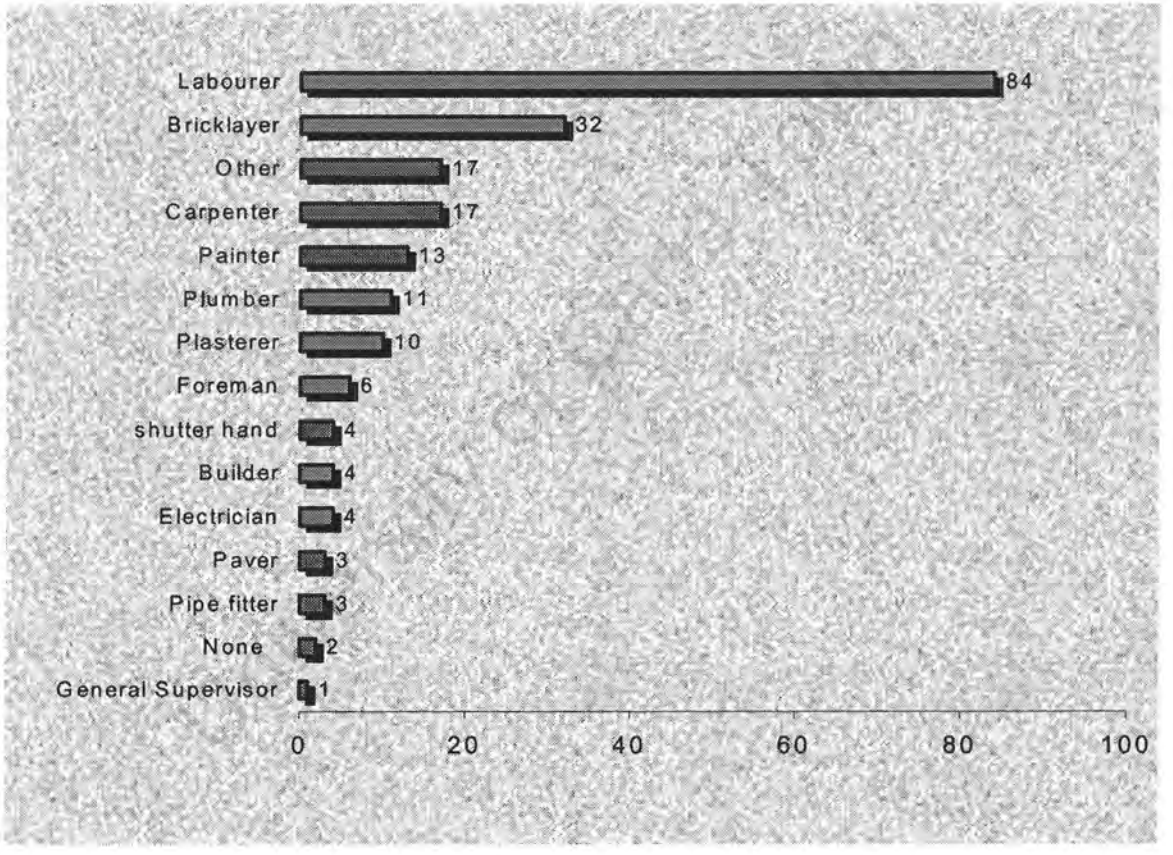


Fig. 1: Respondents by trade

Question 6: What is your present job description?

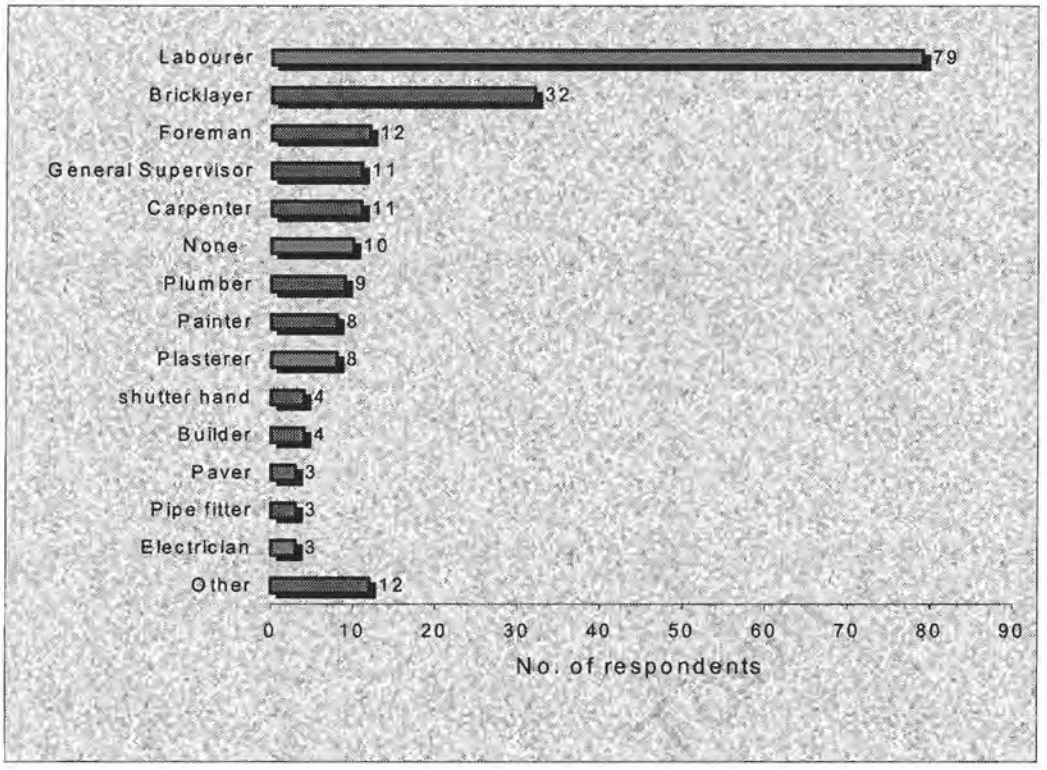


Fig. 2: Respondents by present job description

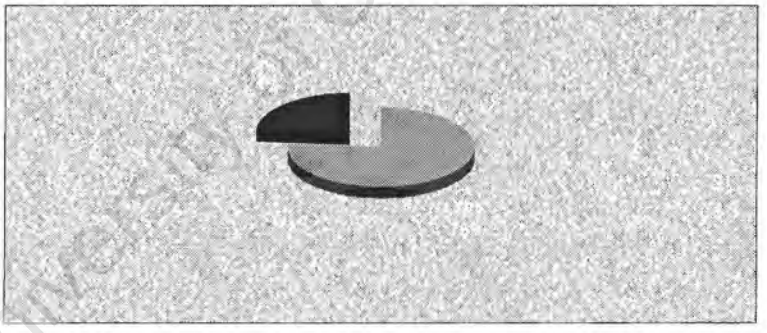


Fig. 3: Determining whether workers trade matches his job description

Question 7: How long have you worked in the construction industry in this job description?

Years in this job description	
Average	6.26
Maximum	35
Minimum	0
Standard deviation	6.84

Table 2: Years in this job description

One respondent commented on the changed nature of length of service in construction:

- *He reckons those were the days when the construction industry was powerful. A person would work in the same firm for over 10 years. However, things have changed now, the longest project takes only one year. The excitement is not that much. He says he knows so much in the construction industry, he even considers writing a book.* (134)

Question 8: How long have you worked in the construction industry in any job?

Years in the construction industry	
Average	9.23
Maximum	36
Minimum	0
Standard deviation	8.20

Table 3: Years in the construction industry

Question 9: How long have you been with your present employer?

Years with employer	
Average	4.25
Maximum	35
Minimum	0
Standard deviation	6.01

Table 4: Years with employer

Question 10: What type of firm were you working for before that?

Employment history	
Type of firm	**No of workers**
Construction company	140
Non construction work	18
Construction work but for a non-construction company	10
Consultant firm	1
Self-employed in construction	1
Nothing	12
Total	182

Table 5: Employment history

Question 11: Please indicate if you have been employed in the construction industry in other job descriptions and for how long?

Work outside the construction industry for different job descriptions				
	Labourer	Apprentice	Craftsman/Artisan	Foreman
No of workers	132	51	42	22
Average duration	5.97	3.91	8.90	5.20

Table 6: Work outside the construction industry for different job descriptions

Question 12: Have you been self-employed or employed others?

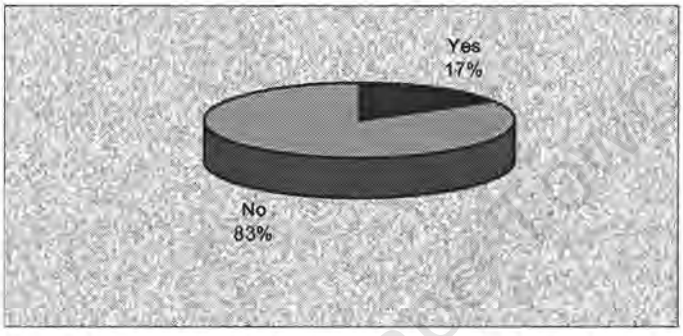


Fig. 4: Workers who have been self-employed

A number carried out renovation and maintenance tasks:

- *Yes, if someone asks me to renovate or do something like that* (119)
- *I did some private jobs* (120)
- *Building other people's houses in the townships in my spare time* (71)

Others were able to practise a specific skill:

- *Skimming* (195)
- *I do tiling for some project assisted by unskilled labour* (83)

Others gained work in other areas:

- *Selling biscuits in Cape Town* (146)
- *I sell food and beer, but my shack burnt down. But now I'm starting again* (32)
- *Selling cigarettes* (32)
- *Watch repairs and wall clocks* (95)

Others cited problems with becoming or being self-employed:

- *I help people in my community to build houses but it is not the work I like to do because people don't want to pay. You end-up having lots of enemies.*(61)
- *No, because I am uneducated* (84)
- *No phone so little chance to get workers* (152)

Question 13: What is your present employment status?

Employment status	Number	Percentage
Permanent	40	22
Fixed term	63	34
Task	11	6
Casual	69	38

Table 7: Employment status of worker

NOTE: Answers to questions 14 & 15 indicated that many of those who had replied to the affirmative, that they were permanent, in fact have no form of contract. One interviewer commented about a worker who said he was permanent: *He was trying to impress friends, I could see he was a casual.* (29)

Question 14: If "contracted" please indicate if written or verbal, and how long the contract period is?

Type of contract				
	No contracts	Written contracts	Verbal contracts	No response
Permanent employees	23	12	3	3
Fixed term employees	24	10	24	5

Table 8: Type of contract

Some remarks reflect the confusion surrounding contracts:
(Worker's definition of his employment status is given before the quotation.)

- Permanent: *Not fixed term, but signed a contract of no duration* (14)
- Permanent: *he is not sure whether he has a contract with company* (121)
- Permanent: *the contract is a waste of time as have to renew every six months* (154)
- Permanent: *just taken on* (140)
- Permanent: *my employer refused to give me a loan for the house after 15 years* (198)
- Fixed term: *verbal, not told how long it will take but we will be transferred to work somewhere else* (112)
- Fixed term: *verbal contract - just spoken about, does not bind* (30)
- Fixed term: *verbal until end of contract* (21)
- Fixed term: *verbal – not told how long the contract will take* (109)

Other comments indicate that the worker feels secure in his job:

- Permanent: *every time the boss calls me when there is work* (64)
- Fixed term: *written contract: my employer told me I will work for him until I die, so it means I am permanent* (117)

- Fixed term: *no written or verbal but still working in this company for past 5 years* (94)
- Casual: *it is verbal, not told when to finish, but we will work somewhere else when finished* (113)

Question 15: How long have you worked in the construction industry in your present employment status?

Permanent	Tixed Term	Casual
2.35	1.24	1.98

Table 9: Length of time in present employment status in years

Workers have been in the industry in their present status for an average of 5.16 years, with a standard deviation of 6.57.

Question 16: Please indicate if you have worked in the construction industry in your present employment status (as permanent, fixed term or casual)?

Time in construction in other status, and reasons for changing			
	Permanent	**Fixed term**	**Casual**
Involuntary	40	9	37
Retrenchment	28	1	1
Employment terminated	5	1	0
Employer closed down	4	1	3
Project was completed	2	6	31
Relocated to another area	1	0	2
Voluntary	21	9	17
Resigned because of poor benefits	2	1	3
Resigned because of poor salary	6	3	2
Got better job	1	2	2
Influence of others	0	1	1
Have always been in this job	12	2	9

Table 10: Time in construction in other status, and reasons for changing

Examples of reasons for involuntarily changing jobs are:

- *I was fired because I was involved in a strike* (172)
- *Strike – political* (173)
- *The contractor was taken to court for what I don't know* (73)
- *Because of taxi violence I came long after the holidays and I was fired* (174)
- *There was a fight between him (worker) and the foreman and after that he was retrenched* (165)

- *I quarrel with the boss he promised to make me permanent after two weeks then after he refused* (64)
- *I quarrelled with the boss, he did not want to pay me in time* (109)

Examples of reasons for voluntarily changing jobs are:

- *Looking for greener pastures* (170)
- *I was working hard for little money* (66)
- *Had to move to take care of family members* (149)
- *My employer refused to give me a loan for (buying) the house after 15 years (employment). Also after all these years, my boss never trained me or registered me for the training. There were no benefits. (The respondent was unemployed, was interviewed waiting at the gates of a site.)* (198)
- *No transport for employees and no payment for overtime* (95)

Question 17: How long do your construction jobs last, on average?

On average workers said their construction jobs lasted 1.74 years with a maximum of 11 years quoted by 1 worker and a minimum of 1 day by another. 3 figures of 30, 25 and 15 years were disregarded for being improbable.

Question 18: Where do you get to hear about construction work?

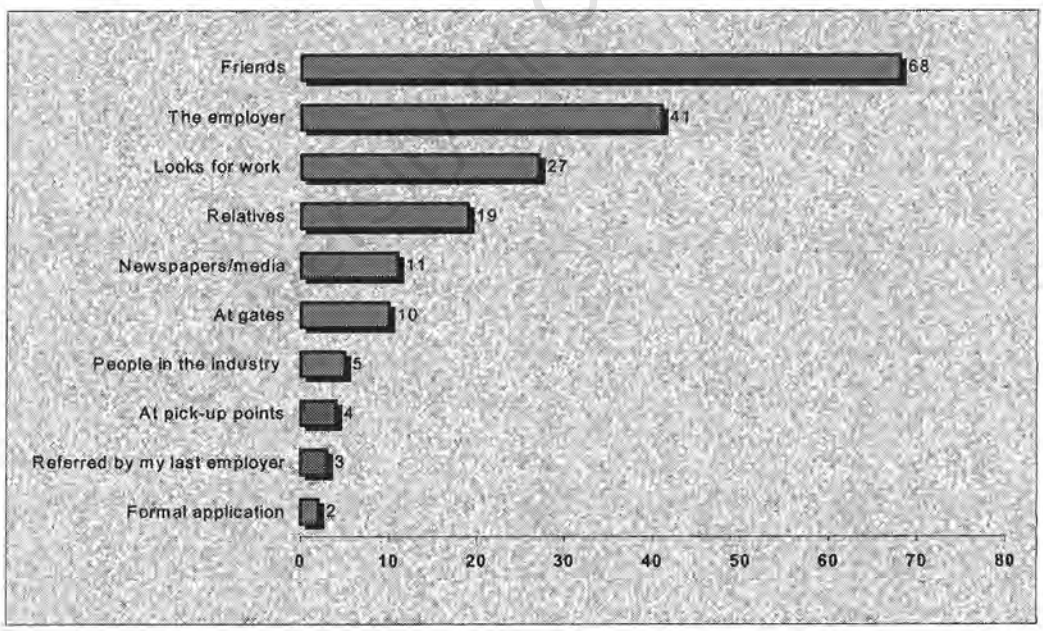


Fig. 5: Sources of information on work opportunities

These are a sample of the comments which support the data. Some reflect the individual's experience:

- *I was referred by one of my previous employers to this present job.* (106)
- *I don't stay without a job, one boss is having my CV and he distributes it to others.* (65)

Some reflect active seeking of work:

- *I was looking for a job every day: I took a train to look for the job.* (34)
- *Walk from place to place and see a construction site.* (49)
- *Read newspapers.* (39)
- *Driving around looking for work. Sometimes comes expensive as have to cover a long distance to identify a site.* (17)

Others were recruited:

- *We were recruited from our birth areas.* (186)
- *We were recruited from various places by various employers (TEBA)* (89)
- *I stand at robots until someone need me for work.* (113)
- *There was a coloured who I worked under – he told me to come here.* (126)

Question 19: Have there been periods when you did not have a job?

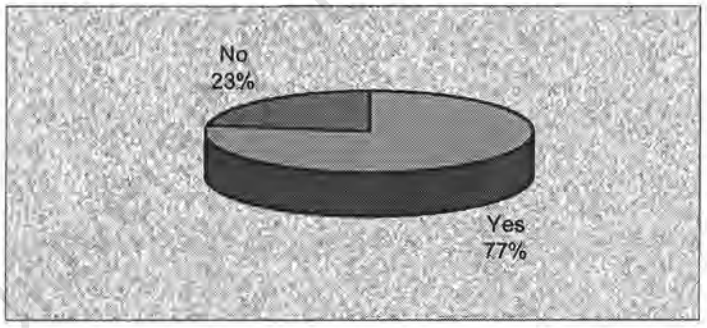
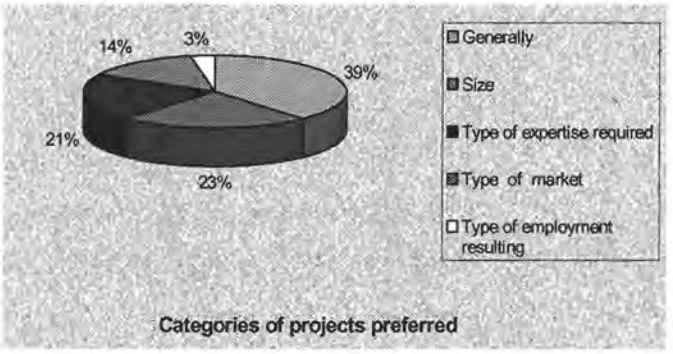


Fig. 6: Periods of unemployment

Question 20: If yes, please state the average period you were out of work.. and the longest...?

The average period reported by respondents for being out of work was 0.83 years (10 months) and the longest period averaged at 2.10 years. 15 out of the 200 interviewed workers (8%) were unemployed at the time of the interview.

Question 21: What kind of project and of contract do you prefer to work on?



Fig, 7: Categories of projects preferred

Some comments reflecting initiative were:

- *Big projects and be permanently employed because in these projects one is able to prove oneself.* (87)
- *Long term projects in order to improve on laying a 1000 bricks a day for big money.* (68)
- *I wish to work for Martin and East or other big contractors because money is better in those companies and one learns a lot.* (108)

Comments which reflected only the desire to work were:

- *I do any job that is coming along. I cannot risk my chance by choosing project people and not working.* (61)

Preferred project and employment period		
Category	**Type of Project**	**No. of workers**
Size	Large projects	38
	Medium sized	2
	Small projects	2
Type of expertise required	Trades	38
Type of market	Residential	9
	Commercial	7
	Civil	4
	Industrial	2
	Educational	1
	Hospitals	1
	Community	2
Type of employment resulting	Permanent	3
	Sub-contracts	2
	Short term	1
General construction		57
No opinion		4
Other		8
Total		*181*

Table 11: Preferred project and employment period

Preferred trade for employment	
Trades	No. of respondents
Bricklaying	14
Painting	5
Plumbing	5
Carpentry and woodwork	4
Demolition	2
Electrical works	2
Ceilings	1
Plastering	1
Woodwork	1
Sign-writing	1
Paving	1
Steelwork	1
General	1
Total	39

Table 12: Preferred trade for employment

However, some had a different emphasis:

- *I like paving because no accident on long-term basis.* (117)

- *I like the short-term contract in order to relax fully as I am dealing with the hardest work – concrete work.* (67)
- *Houses – permanent. Not the big contracts because of lots of bad working conditions. Build a hotel wasn't nice.* (133)
- *Have worked on multi-storey, prefer domestic work now I am older.* (75)

Preferred contract type		
Type of contract	**No. of workers**	**Percentage**
Permanent	58	68
Long term	17	20
Fixed term	6	7
Any	2	2
Casual	2	2
Written	1	1

Table 13: Preferred contract type

Question 22: What do you do when you are not working in the construction industry?

Activity when unemployed		
Activity	**No. of workers**	**Percentage**
Always employed in construction	5	3
Do odd jobs in construction	31	19
Look for construction work	11	7
Do odd jobs outside construction	40	25
Work at home	4	2
Do nothing or engage in leisure	66	40
Socio-religious activities	3	2
Other	3	2
Total	*163*	*100*

Table 14: Activity when unemployed

Making or hoping to make money:

- *Gardening* (135)
- *Coach soccer*
- *Roofing, door frames, plumbing* (17)
- *Helping other people in township* (2)
- *Taxi driver* (12)
- *Selling fruit* (107)
- *Shoemaking* (pilot)
- *Casual in bakery* (192)
- *Selling dagga (marijuana)* (136)
- *Anything to make ends meet as I have a large family* (149)
- *Courier service as a driver* (39)
- *Burglar bars, safety gates, anniversary keys* (pilot)
- *I work in road construction* (pilot)
- *Sell at tuck shop* (178)
- *Rasta person – sells herbs* (79)
- *Photographer* (176)
- *Selling beer to make more money* (114)

Relaxing and/or enjoying hobbies:

- *Reading novels* (58*) magazines* (85)
- *Drinking beer* (111)
- *I play with my last born who is seven years old* (67)
- *Church services* (186)
- *I play card with my family* (64)
- *I go out with my wife* (65)
- *Practise pistol shooting* (pilot)
- *Gardening* (pilot)
- *Spend my day playing pool* (110)
- *Play soccer* (156)
- *Draw tattoos* (47)

Development of Skills

Question 23: How well do you understand English? How well do you understand Afrikaans?

Language ability		
	English (%)	Afrikaans (%)
Well	43	42
Poorly	30	35
Average	27	24
Total	*100*	*100*

Table 15: Language ability

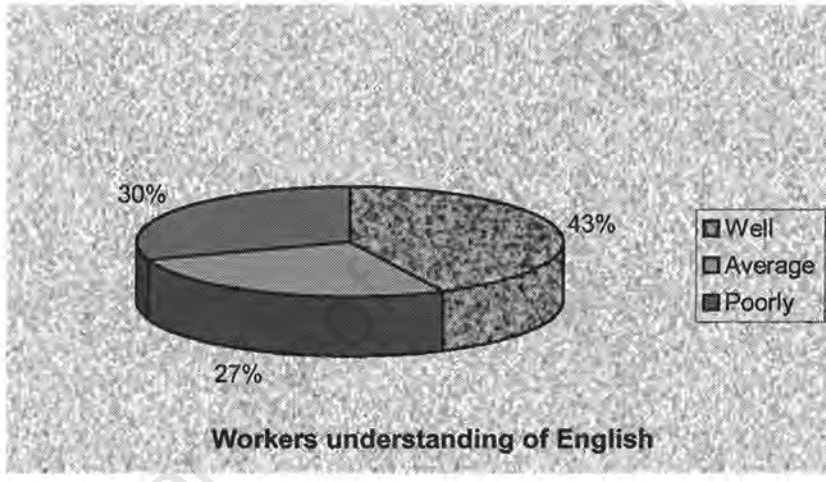


Fig. 8: Workers understanding of English

Comments about difficulties experienced in communication:

- *I can hear it but sometimes difficult to talk.* (67)
- *I do understand Afrikaans but it is difficult for me to speak. I guess it is a reason that I never do Afrikaans at school. Even in Jo'burg I was lucky to work with people who understand English.* (61)
- *Poor but I can hear* (Pilot)

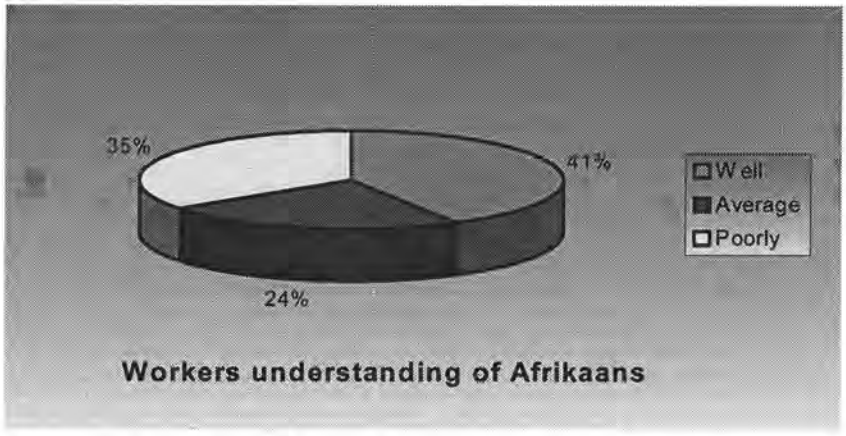


Fig. 9: Workers understanding of Afrikaans

Question 24: How did you acquire your construction skills?

Employee's acquisition of skills		
Source of skills	**No. of workers**	**Percentage**
Formal	56	34
College/technical school	39	23
Industry organisations	13	8
Through apprenticeship	3	2
Through jail	1	1
Informal	111	66
Practical experience on site	84	50
Friends and relatives	14	8
Previous employers	13	8
Total	167	100

Table 16: Employee's acquisition of skills

A positive comment about skills acquisition was:

- *He said going to jail was a blessing in disguise. I learned a lot from going there, it also changed my life. You cannot survive in building construction with bricklaying only, you have to be multi-trade. To be able to start the house from foundation to roofing and to be able to do plumbing and paving.* (59)

A negative comment about current levels of skills was:

- *Skills are dying due to empowerment. Black labourers have to be taught on the job. Because of low tendering to win jobs, contractors cut costs by squeezing workers.* (foreman) (180)

Question 25: What or who made you choose construction as a career?

Reasons for workers choosing construction		
Reasons for construction career	**No. Of workers**	**Percentage**
Few other options	87	44
Liked it	32	16
Influence of family/friends	22	11
Lack of education/skills	19	10
Ease of finding work	11	6
To achieve personal goals	10	5
Drifted into it	9	5
Good wages	8	4
Total	***198***	***100***

Table 17: Reasons for workers choosing construction

Remarks made were:

- *My parents needed me to work when the riots happened in 1980* (189)
- *Had to work from eleven years old – orphan.* (154)
- *When left school no other job open to Coloureds.*(74)
- *He was good at Science, English, Agriculture and History. He wanted his mind to work because in construction your mind is working.* (130)
- *Good times, used to be a lot of work during the Apartheid era.* (48)

Question 26: Are there any skills and training that you think would improve your life?

Workers' perception of important skills		
Skills	**No. of workers**	**Percentage**
Trades	101	53
Construction management & professional skills	17	9
Non-construction	15	8
Business	10	5
Computer	9	5
Yes but undefined	6	3
Increasing education	3	2
Apprenticeship	2	1
Personal	1	1
None	28	15
Total	*192*	*100*

Table 18: Workers' perception of important skills

Positive reasons for training:

- *I would like to gain a special skill in how to draw and make a housing plan.* (68)
- *He wants to improve on bricklaying. If you are a bricklayer your money will increase. I don't have the blue card although I am skilled – if I have the blue card I can earn more.* (128)

Negative attitude to training:

- *None because I am old now I can't perform any further duties.* (63 years old) (89)
- *No, because it is useless (as there) is no work.*(31-35 years) (17)

Question 27: Where and how would you most like to receive this training?

Employees preferred source for training		
Training place	**No. of workers**	**Percentage**
Technical college	70	38
Anywhere	23	13
On site	22	12
Industry organisations	12	7
Community/training centre	12	7
Don't know	7	4
University	4	2
Driving school	2	1
No training wanted	17	9
Other	15	8
Total	*184*	*100*

Table 19: Employees preferred source for training

Examples of comments were:

- *School near home.* (80)
- *An expert to train me on weekends.* (69)
- *If I could go to a special school to learn. He attended an adult learning centre to learn how to read and write. Doesn't want to have to learn with young boys.* (9)
- *In community centres where it is not expensive and I pay for myself.* (113)

Question 28: Do you keep records of training or past employment?

Fig. 10: Employee's record of experience

Types of records kept:

- *Certificates, payslips.* (163)
- *Yes, I have the whole file with training certificates and jobs I have done.* (66)

Reasons for not keeping records:

- *No, if you have a card you don't need any record.* (130)
- *No, only in my mind.* (157)
- *No, I used to but it's no use.* (19)
- *No, because I've been employed permanently.* (90)
- *No, because if you are working for a sub-contractor there is no record. They know in build construction.* (123)

Positive answers to obtaining references from employers:

- *Yes, because I'm always looking for greener pastures.* (163)
- *A phone, address and his name. I ask for them.* (157)
- *Yes, provided we did not quarrel.* (66)
- *Yes I have a big book keeping all that information.* (69)
- *Yes, they write me a letter.* (113)
- *Yes, I always do that so I can keep the boat sailing all the time.* (131)
- *I had one but I lost it.* (92)

Negative answers to getting references from employers:

- *Retrenched after strike – no letter. Didn't even receive moneys back.* (118)
- *No, I never thought of it.* (173)
- *I don't never know that I could ask for such things because I worked for a building contractor for a very long time.* (71)
- *No, he is a qualified bricklayer, just produces his qualification.* (138)

- *Yes, I did and I still want them but I can't get them. They keep promising – up till now nothing.* (106)
- *Yes, though sometimes we do not get. They just refuse to give us.* (73)
- *All my years no one gave references. They want production and how good you can apply a skill and not who you work for.* (43)
- *They don't give the reference. They say you must go.* (196)
- *No, it is humiliating for making mud (mixing cement). Anyone can do it.* (112)
- *No, because here I am still on the lower ground.* (114)
- *No, you get paid for the hour and get nothing more.* (75) *

* The respondent was able to give a full account of his previous jobs. He described himself as part of a crew that built a number of top Cape Town hotels. He knew the names of the hotels and was proud of the work.

Working Conditions

Question 30: how many hours on average do you wok a day?

The average working day is 8.3 hours, the longest day worked by a respondent was 10 hours and the shortest 7 hours. 1 respondent works less than 8 hours and 66 for more than 8 hours.

Question 31: How many days do you work in a week?

The average working week is 5.1 days, the longest week worked by a respondent 7 days and the shortest 2 days. 2 respondents work less than 5 days and 26 for more than 5 days.

Question 32: By what criteria are you paid (hourly, daily, piecework, task work etc.)?

Criteria for payment of employees		
Criteria	**No. of workers**	**Percentage**
Per hour	78	40
Per day	89	46
Per week	4	2
Per fortnight	7	4
Per month	6	3
Per piece	4	2
Per task	5	3
Total	*193*	*100*

Table 20: Criteria for payment of employees

One respondent paid according to piece work remarked:

- *What I don't like about constructing is when you are a bricklayer, you have to be fast. For example, you have to put 1000 bricks a day to earn the two hundred. Should you fall beck on that 1000 bricks you earn less. Myself I earn R120, sometimes R80 per day.* (66)

Question 33: At what intervals are you paid?

Intervals for payment of employees		
Criteria	**No. of workers**	**Percentage**
Per hour	0	0
Per day	6	3
Per week	76	39
Per piece	0	0
Per task	2	1
Per fortnight	53	28
Per month	57	29
Total	*194*	*100*

Table 21: Intervals for payment of employees

The relationship between the employees' trade (Q5) and the pay received (Q34) can be seen below.

Relationship between trade and wages		
Trade	**Average daily wage**	**Average weekly wage**
Builder	220	1100
Electrician	195	850
Foreman	168	785
Plumber	148	567
General Supervisor	140	-
Carpenter	132	562
Other	127	563
Pipe fitter	120	1050
Bricklayer	118	571
Painter	108	485
Plasterer	104	564
Paver	70	900
Shutter hand	68	340
Labourer	64	387

Table 22: Relationship between trade and wages

The length of employment (Q9) has a relationship with wages paid (Q34) as shown in the following table.

Relationship between length of service and wages		
	Average daily wage	Average weekly wage
Up to 3 months	91	492
3 to 6 months	83	583
6 months to 1 year	84	440
1 to 5 years	100	513
5 to 10 years	125	531
10 to 15 years	128	318
15 to 20 years	116	473
25 to 30 years	60	300
30 to 35 years	144	1110

Table 23: Relationship between length of service and wages

Question 35: Do you find this sufficient to live on?

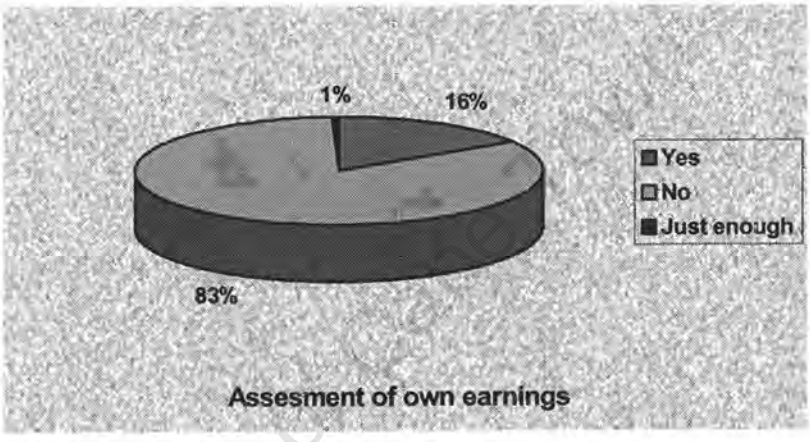


Fig. 11: Assessment of own earnings

Some remarks were positive:

- *I am satisfied by it at least* [R75,76] (191)
- *It's better than stealing* [R50] (139)
- *Yes, I was covering there and there* [R50] (193)

Whereas many others were negative:

- *No – he is having eight children* [R90] (196)
- *Yes – if I refuse this money they're going to fire me* [R60] (167)
- *No because they were not given enough money, Coloureds were given twice the amount of money they earned yet they did the same job* [R60] (135)
- *No because I have two wives and children to support back home* [R45] (70)
- *Not, the money is only for food, not clothes* [R50] (113)
- *No – it is only for transport* [R50] (100)

Question 36: How would you descrube conditions at work?

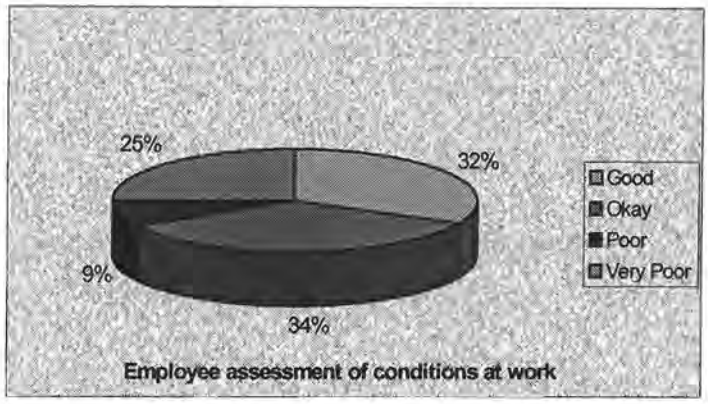


Fig. 12: Employee assessment of conditions at work

Here are some of the positive comments expressed:

- *Fine, the manager is a good person, he knows how to talk this people* (18)
- *Not bad: the boss is not pushing us* (118)
- *Good because our boss is easy to talk to when one is not happy* (108)
- *Good atmosphere, friendly* (79)

There were many negative comments:

- *Religious problems* (79)
- *Bad, because we are treated very unfairly. Sometime vulgar language is used as an instruction* (170)
- *They are killing conditions, even if you can get injured, you would not get anything* (126)
- *Aggressive* (48)
- *Bad, because working with paint is very harmful* (58)
- *Bad, no mask, dust goes into lung* (53)
- *Bad, no masks provided, you can catch asthma at any time.* (131)
- *Stressful* (38)
- *Bad, because my boss does not consider time. Sometimes we work until 6pm without being paid.* (173)
- *It is a hard job because there are times when there is no material and we have to go home. We don't get our money for that day.* (34)
- *Hard conditions, they were rushing us* (189)
- *Bad conditions, there is a lot of hard working, verbal abuse* (3)
- *There are no good conditions because we are under white people – there is still racism.* (124)
- *They are not protected, there is no safety boot and no helmet and no rainsuit.* (129)
- *No shelter for labour and no faculties, all people on site are subcontractors and main contractors has no facilities for them.* (187)

- *Last month lost his niece. Wasn't able to get away to go to the funeral. Boss said had to reach the target, couldn't spare him.* (9)

One worker was aware of the misuse of his skills in terms of employment rights:

- *The employee complains that the working conditions are not good. For example, if he gets injured or is sick, he will not be compensated for that. At the same time he performs a number of jobs, like being a labourer, a plumber and also helps with ceiling, but is not paid according to those tasks.* (94)

By comparing the workers employment status (Q13) with their average daily and weekly earnings (Q34), any relationships between employment status and salary can be ascertained. This can further be compared with Q35 (sufficiency of salary) to see if the worker perceives earnings as sufficient. This is also compared to the workers assessment of conditions at work (Q36).

Relationship between employees' wages and own assessment of conditions									
	Wages per day	Wages per week	Enough to live on? (%)			Conditions at work? (%)			
			Yes	No	Just enough	Good	Okay	Poor	Very Poor
Permanent	121	560	30	67	3	36	28	5	31
Fixed term	108	547	10	90	0	28	41	10	21
Task	87	263	18	82	0	45	55	0	0
Casual	81	475	14	86	0	35	30	10	25

Table 24: Relationship between employees' wages and own assessment of conditions

Question 37: How do you travel to and from work?

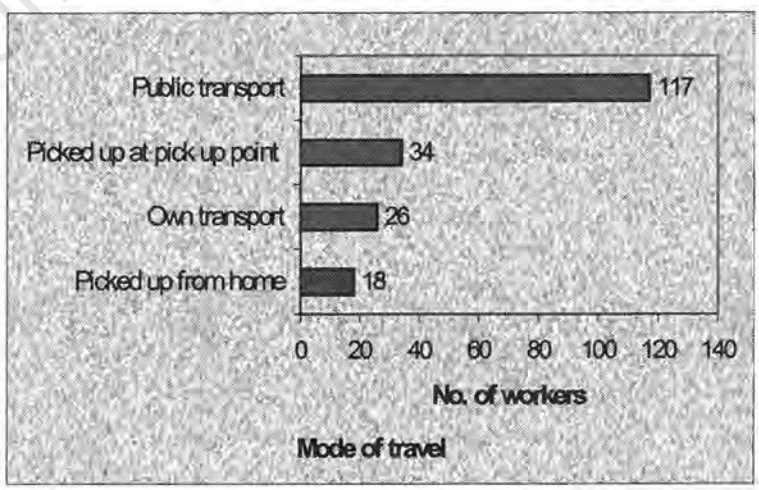


Fig. 13: Mode of travel

- *The boss' transport picks us up halfway.* (91)
- *Fetched from home but R10 deducted from R60 for transport* (57)

Question 38: Do you have any arrangements for meals at work?

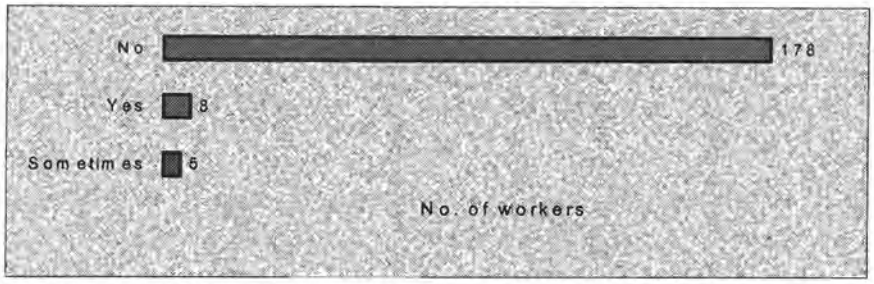


Fig. 14: Provision of meals at work

Some small sites provide a kettle and coffee and tea:

- *No, only coffee* (pilot)
- *No, eat my food, at times when we finish task earlier we are taken for a braai.* (64)

Health and Safety

Question 39: Have you ever been sick while on the job? If yes, how many times?

Frequency of illness		
	No of workers	**Percentage**
Once	39	64
Twice	4	7
3 times	4	7
More than 3 times	14	23
Total	*61*	*100*

Table 25: Frequency of illness

Support offered when ill		
	No. of workers	**Percentage**
None	27	46
Financial support	24	41
Moral support	5	8
Conditional support	3	5
Total	*59*	*100*

Table 26: Support offered when ill

Some negative comments from those who experience sickness on the job:

- *Seven days - operation on stomach, given nothing* (53)
- *Two days off – stomach cramps – no pay* (80)
- *He did not take the certificate, no money* (157)
- *I drank so much on Sunday and then the next Monday I could not work well. No financial support, I was told to drive home.* (65)
- *No support* (91)

However, there were some positive comments:

- *Took me to hospital and bought me medicine to gain back energy* (63)
- *He took me home to sleep, he bought me some medicine* (67)
- *I had a cough, sent to the nearest clinic for medicine, paid by the boss* (113)
- *Yes, union paid* (141)
- *He was so supportive* (5)
- *He borrowed me the money to go to the doctor and he showed sympathy.* (4)

Question 40: Have you ever suffered an accident while on the job? If yes, how many times?

47 (24%) of the workers reported having suffered an accident while on the job and 140 (76%) said they had not.

Frequency of accidents		
	No. of workers	Percentage
Once	33	83
Twice	2	5
3 times	2	5
More than 3 times	3	8
Total	*40*	*100*

Table 27: Frequency of accidents

The workers' ages (Q1) are compared with the incidence of accidents (Q40) to assess whether age makes them more or less prone to accidents.

Relationship between workers age and safety				
Age group	Ever had an accident? (%)		Is construction safe? (%e)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Under 18	0	100	0	100
19 - 24	83	17	27	73
25 - 30	92	8	24	76
31 - 35	75	25	9	91
36 - 40	86	14	26	74
41 - 45	90	10	25	75
46 - 50	90	10	25	75
51 - 55	86	14	64	36
Over 55	100	0	100	0

Table 28: Relationship between workers age and safety

The general trend shows that the older the workers the longer they have worked in construcing the more likely they are to perceive construction as a dangerous job, and the more likely they are to have had an accident.

Those who have suffered accidents on site have been in construction longer (11.0 years) than those who have not (9.0 years). They are also more mobile, with more of them (94%) having worked in other job descriptions than is the case for those who have never had an accident (84%).

Comparing mobility, experience and incidence of accidents			
Suffered an accident?	**Average years in construction**	**Worked in other job descriptions? (%)**	
		Yes	No
Yes	11.0	94	6
No	9.0	84	16

Table 29: Comparing mobility, experience and incidence of accidents

What was the employer's financial support?

54% received support and 46% received no support, most feedback from people who had been in accidents was still positive:

- *Cement poured on my eyes. I had to stay home for a week. I was paid for that week.* (117)
- *I was digging with a spade, I cut my foot. I was taken to hospital and paid for.* (116)
- *Compensated satisfactorily* (89)
- *Brick wall fell on me – two metres long - R400 compensation, insurance payout.* (81)
- *I saw someone falling from the roof to the floor. He was taken to the hospital by the boss and paid for. His blood was paid for as well* (64)
- *I was taken to Tygerberg hospital by the employer* (70)
- *It was a car accident. Boss was so supportive and he paid me the money.* (28)
- *I cut my finger. They paid all my hospital costs.* (73)
- *He fell from the scaffolding – but the insurance paid for the incident.* (130)
- *Cut by a grinder – my hospital expenses were paid as I was hospitalised for three weeks* (105)

There were still some negative comments however:

- *Your fault, not paid. Others fault, fill in compensation forms and wait three months for compensation* (178)
- *Injured in the right arm, boss did nothing.* (191)
- *Broken arm, he fell off scaffolding and no support.* (126)
- *Nothing, he promised but up till now I have not been paid* (106)

Question 41: Do you consider construction a dangerous job?

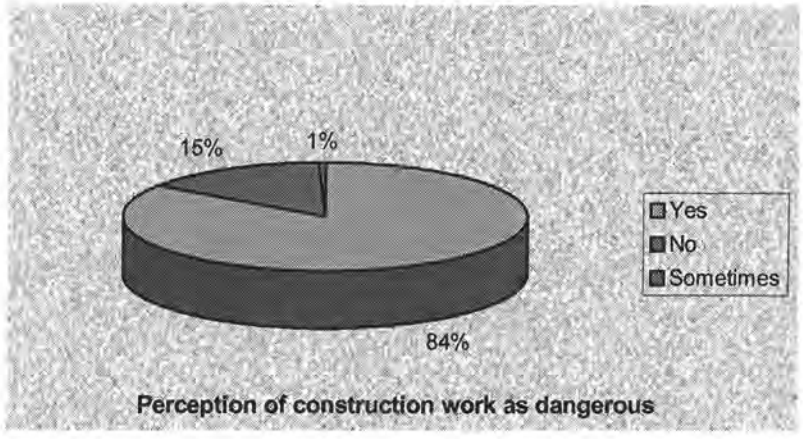


Fig. 15: Perception of construction work as dangerous

Question 42: What do you think is the major cause of accidents on construction sites?

Perception of the causes of accidents		
Cause of accidents	**No. of workers**	**Percentage**
Own carelessness/negligence	81	43
Physical nature of construction	67	36
Poor handling or maintenance of machinery	10	5
Lack of proper machinery	8	4
Lack of knowledge of safety regulations	7	4
Poor planning and management	4	2
Lack of experience	4	2
Natural hazards	3	2
Poor safety procedures	2	1
Poor workmanship	1	1
Total	*187*	*100*

Table 30: Perception of the causes of accidents

Some comments from workers were:

- *We fall from scaffolding because sometimes its not balanced from the ground. Grinder could cut ones arm when cutting bricks.* (106)
- *Bad or no maintenance of equipment, and lack of knowledge to operate equipment.* (6)
- *You have to look carefully when you work upstairs because the material sometimes can break down – who knows* (28)
- *Things that have to be pitched up are heavy and working on high rise buildings so high, likelihood of toppling over* (146)

- *Sub contractors don't get given safety kits* (pilot)
- *No because there is nothing dangerous to a man. They are meant to take risks.* (70)
- *Not knowing the work properly; coming to work being drunk.* (113)
- *It is working on old buildings; and if something is not properly fixed.* (65)
- *Not given an opportunity to clear out first where we are going to work for the day* (47)
- *Pushing work too fast, carelessness, neglecting of safety rules.* (pilot)
- *But the lack of safety in the site causes these accidents like here there are no helmets, gloves and boots. In some instances if the wall is not built properly it falls and if that happens people get hurt especially if you don't have protection.* (61)
- *Negligence, scuffles and bad monitoring, it is negligible from the side of the foreman.* (87)
- *You have to stay alert all the time. You know that there is something going on top of you and below you. The building construction is no place where people they come to relax* (60)

Question 43: Are you familiar with the health and safety regulations on site?

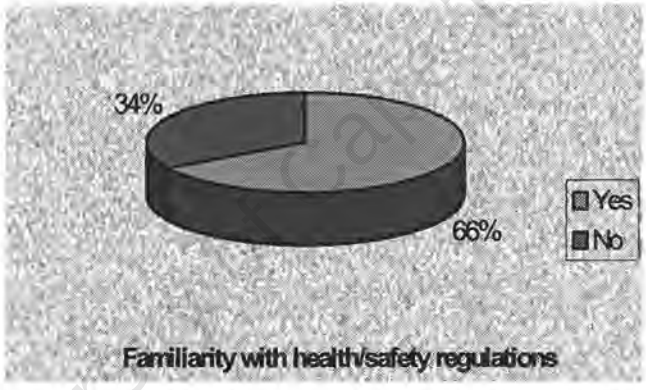


Fig. 16: Familiarity with health/safety regulations

- *Yes, I make sure I am safe all the time.* (110)
- *Sometime they (safety equipment) cause danger/accidents because when you are wearing helmet, you don't see proper, and with gloves, things slip out of your hands. He said he is not using these things, he is not believing that they can help him in any way.* (60)

The relationship between experience in construction (Q8) and the employees' perceptions of the major cause of accidents on construction sites (Q42) is given in the table below.

Causes of accidents according to employees' experience									
Years of experience in construction									
Cause of accidents % of workers	0 - 1	1 - 5	5 - 10	10 - 15	15 - 20	20 - 25	25 - 30	30 - 35	35 - 40
No idea	13	2	12	0	0	0	29	0	0
Poor workmanship	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poor planning and management	0	2	0	0	0	18	14	0	0
Physical nature of construction	25	44	33	36	38	18	29	0	0
Carelessness/negligence	44	32	39	44	43	37	28	60	50
Poor handling or maintenance of machinery	6	6	9	4	0	9	0	0	50
Lack of proper machinery	0	6	0	4	6	18	0	40	0
Lack of experience	6	2	5	4	0	0	0	0	0
Never taught safety regulations	6	4	2	8	13	0	0	0	0
Natural hazards	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 31: Causes of accidents according to employees' experience

Question 44: Who is responsible for giving you information concerning health and safety regulations?

Employees perceptions of responsibility for safety		
In charge of safety education	**No. of workers**	**Percentage**
The company		
The employer	*58*	*32*
Foreman	*55*	*30*
Colleagues	*4*	*2*
The construction industry		
Safety inspectors	*6*	*3*
Educational institutions	*4*	*2*
The industry	*2*	*2*
Department of labour	*1*	*1*
The worker		
No one	*37*	*20*
Don't know	*10*	*5*
Worker himself	*7*	*4*
Total	*184*	*100*

Table 32: Employees perceptions of responsibility for safety

Some of the comments expressed were:

- *While working, a friend taught him sometimes, he did not know* (140)
- *Myself, I ensure that everything is in good condition* (95)
- *We were told and taught in mining* (183)
- *The employers should be responsible* (pilot)
- *Site safety meeting* (39)
- *He reads the business blue book, which gives him all the information* (137)

Question 45: In your opinion, are they doing a successful job?

Success of person responsible for safety education		
	No. of workers	Percentage
Yes	115	71
No	44	27
Don't know	3	2
Total	*162*	*100*

Table 33: Success of person responsible for safety

- *A foreman – yes, but he does not give to everybody* (109)
- *Yes, because I have not been injured as yet* (95)
- *Yes because we are always supervised and warned* (72)
- *Do not know since I have never seen them* (175)
- *Yes, I also got a certificate on that, I'm sorry that it is not with me right now* (162)
- *No, they just wonder about on the site* (33)

Q45 (workers' questionnaire) and Q53 (employers questionnaire) both ask whether the respondent thinks those responsible for making sure employees are kept informed of health and safety regulations are doing a successful job.

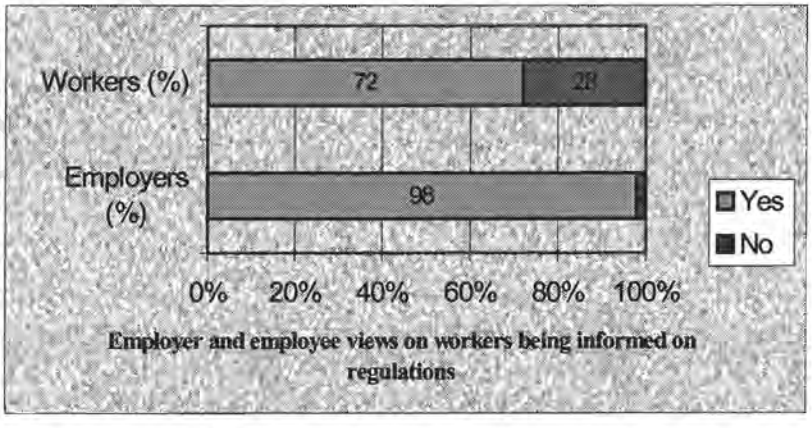


Fig. 17: Employer and employee views on workers being informed on regulations

Question 46: Are you Familiar with your rights as a worker?

Fig. 18: Familiarity with workers rights

Some comments that implied the workers knew of their rights were:

- *Yes - I am entitled to receive pension, sick-leave pay. For medical aid fund, a subscription of R37,50 per week goes to medical aid. I have to receive holiday pay.* (artisan) (69)
- *Yes – I was once a member of union in Johannesburg. Here I don't think construction workers belong to any union that I know. In this industry people, they come and go.* (bricklayer) (61)
- *Yes – I like getting bonuses* (labourer) (93)
- *Yes – after three weeks have to be permanent. Have right to strike at three weeks past. Freedom of speech if not paid timeously. Right of reconciliation when I have done something wrong.* (bricklayer) (63)
- *I am because I know that my money has to rise up as long as I am working for one boss* (labourer) (67)
- *As worker, should be treated fairly and be provided with all required safety equipment.* (labourer) (85)
- *Yes – if the company retrenches him he has to be paid some money, the rest should be paid to the industrial council and he will be given it later* (bricklayer) (138)

Other answers implied either that the worker did not really know, or was not interested or was nervous:

- *Stated that if they insisted on their rights they would be fired* (painter's assistant) (187)
- *I am not interested in these. I just work for money.* (labourer) (111)
- *I am not sure because sometimes one gets fired and when one goes to report to the union, one does not get help.* (labourer) (71)
- *There are no rights in construction building. If you try to talk about rights you are going to be out of a job.* (labourer) (200)
- *Yes, but there is nothing I am doing about it. Because I am casual, I do not want to be dismissed.* (labourer) (157)
- *Yes, if money is promised to be raised. When that takes time we go on strike.* (labourer) (194)

- *I don't care about that, the only thing I want is to get enough money to support my family. If the money I'm getting here is not enough, that's the only thing I'm worried about.* (plumber) (159)
- *No, I don't have time for other things except me doing the job and getting paid* (plasterer) (118)
- *Yes, I cannot practice them, I am afraid of being fired.* (labourer) (114)
- *You have no rights if you work for a sub contracting firm.* (labourer) (144)
- *No, because we are not allowed to talk about such things* (labourer) (104)
- *He complained that the construction industry is very unfair to its employees. Especially casual workers because they have to go to work even during harsh weather conditions because when they don't turn up, they simply don't make money.* (supervisor) (17)
- *Yes, I am familiar, I know I have to take lunch at one o'clock and come back at two o'clock.* (bricklayer) (68) *he was unaware of other rights
- *No, but treated well by employer.* (plasterer) (150) *employer was around so was more cautious than expected
- *My boss is not register. If you are register, you get taxed even if you are not employed and you end up earning nothing and the tax money is buying arms and houses for the parliamentarians. He said, sometime when there is big construction going one, like building Standard Bank, they ask for registration paper. But they get jobs anyway because other people, they don't need registration papers.* (foreman) (60)

The employee's length of service in construction (Q8) may have a bearing on his knowledge of his rights (Q46). Workers who were familiar with the health and safety regulations had worked in the construction industry for 9.8 years on average, while those who were not familiar had been in the industry for 7.9 years on average.

The workers who said they were familiar with their rights had been working in construction for 9.7 years, those not familiar had been in the industry for 8.1 years and those who had some inkling had been working for 11.0 years on average.

Relationship between employees' length of service and knowledge of rights				
Experience in construction	**Familiar with regulations? (%)**		**Familiar with rights? (%)**	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
0 – 1	31	69	56	44
1 – 5	63	37	60	40
5 – 10	73	27	76	24
10 – 15	70	30	65	35
15 – 20	76	24	82	18
20 – 25	92	8	73	27
25 – 30	83	17	57	43
30 – 35	40	60	100	0
35 – 40	50	50	50	50

Table 34: Relationship between employees' length of service and knowledge of rights

Question 47: Who is / was responsible for informing you of such rights?

Person responsible for informing workers of rights		
	No. of workers	**Percentage**
Formal sector	8	5
Media	6	4
Government	0	0
Technikon	1	1
Building council	3	2
Unions	39	22
Employer	26	16
Foreman	16	9
The worker	7	4
No one	36	22
Don't know	16	10
Pick up knowledge on site	2	1
Friends/relatives	7	4
Total	*165*	*100*

Table 35: Person responsible for informing workers of rights

Examples of comments:

- *Timekeeper (96)*
- *Government (65)*
- *Gets letter from the Industry council, always keeps informing each other (137)*
- *Building Industry Bargaining Council (BIBC) (69)*
- *Department of Labour (66)*

Some workers had no idea as to who should inform them of their rights:

- *Nobody if you are casual workers because if you are fighting for your rights you are going to be fired* (130)
- *I don't know. The government doesn't care about us. The only thing they are doing is to exploit us.* (59)
- *Nobody because no union.* (110)

Question 48: In your opinion, are they doing a successful job?

Success of informant on employee rights		
	No. Of workers	**Percentage**
Yes	91	59
No	56	36
Don't know	8	5
Total	*155*	*100*

Table 36: Success of informant on employee rights

Question 49: Are you a member of any orginnization related to the workplace, such as a union or savings group? If so, state which.

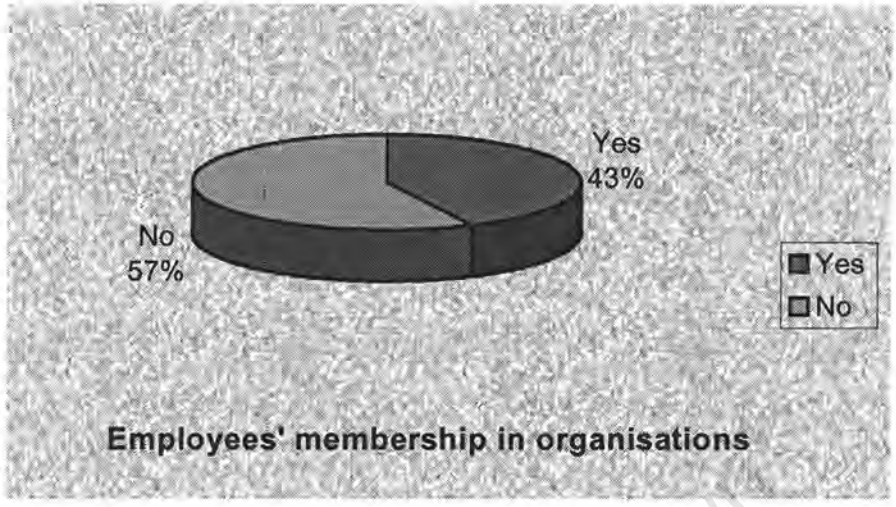


Fig. 19: Employees' membership in organisations

Type of employees' associations	
Organisation	**No. of workers**
Burial society	43
Union	23
Bank account	10
Building council and bank account	3
Industry associations	2
Insurance	2
Total	*83*

Table 37: Type of employees' associations

Some are not members because they have no faith in unions:

- *No, the unions played us for fools years ago* (50)
- *NUMSA – they don't do anything about workers' conditions. The union they take their money, they don't represent their interests.* (196)
- *No, there are no unions in construction and COSATU is not popular here either.* (45)
- *It is BCAW but they don't do work properly for us and they pull almost R20 from our salary fortnightly* (109)
- *I used to be a member of FAGUS union in Somerset west. I cancelled it because it did not work for me.* (114)

There were other reasons for not having membership:

- *Not a member but attends union meetings *his employer doesn't want him to join* (37)
- *No, I speak to the boss himself if I am having a problem, there is no need to join the union.* (145)

Many cited money as a reason:

- *No I can't join anything with little money. I am earning peanuts here and if I leave I will not get another job.* (59)
- *No, because fees are deducted from my salary* (65)

Some saved with organisations but had become disenchanted:

- *He was once a member of a burial society, but one day he went to visit the society building. He found out that it had moved to somewhere else. He never heard about it after that.* (60)

Future Plans of Workers

Question 50: Are there any communication skills you would like to aquire or improve on?

Employees' perceived need for communication skills	
Communication skills	**No. of workers**
Total Languages	97
English	*55*
Afrikaans	*19*
African languages	*16*
German or French	*1*
Languages generally	*6*
Leadership and interpersonal skills	13
Literacy	2
Driving skills	1
Construction skills	2
Yes but undefined	20
No	49
Total	*4*

Table 38: Employees' perceived need for communication skills

Some workers' aspirations on communication skills were:

- *I can speak English, Afrikaans and Zulu. I learn my Zulu at jail because I was in Joburg at Bryston Prison. So I got friend who was Zulu speaking and even my warden was Zulu speaking.* (59)
- *I'd like to improve my communication skill – improve Afrikaans.* (61)
- *He would like to learn to speak Xhosa as well – because he is working with Xhosa speakers and he need to understand who (what) they say.* (128)
- *Sotho and a bit of English, but English is difficult.* (147)
- *I would like to know one of the African languages.* (65)
- *English and Afrikaans, especially Afrikaans because here in Cape Town it is difficult to find a job without it.* (162)
- *Yes, I want to know a bit of Xhosa.* (63)
- *Yes, speak and write good English and Afrikaans.* (72)
- *Yes, speak languages and understand them better.* (103)
- *Yes, so as to talk to other workers and manage them like a foreman.* (108)
- *Yes, managerial skills and different languages, example Xhosa, Sotho.* (139)
- *We need a managerial skill and interpersonal skill.* (130)
- *Leadership skills.* (3)

The skills and training that employees think would improve their lives (Q26) is compared with their preferred future employment status (Q52) to assess if the skills improvement requested would support the preferred status.

Relating desired skills and training with desired communication skills									
	Desired communication skills (No. of workers)								
Desired skills or training	Languages	Leadership skills	Literacy	Driving skills	Construction skills	Yes but undefined	No	Permanent	Self-employed
None	4	3	0	0	0	6	10	12	12
Trades	43	6	0	1	0	7	16	48	48
Apprenticeship	1	1	0	0	0	0	23	2	0
Non-construction	5	2	0	1	1	2	0	8	6
Construction management	5	1	1	0	0	2	6	4	12
Business skills	2	3	1	0	0	0	3	4	4
Computer skills	4	0	0	0	0	2	0	7	2
Increasing education	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	2
Personal skills	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Yes but undefined	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	6

Table 39: Relating desired skills and training with desired communication skills

Question 51: What job would you like to have in the future?

Employees preferred choice of job	
Job type	**No. of workers**
Trades	76
Self-employed	36
Jobs outside construction	31
Administration in construction	20
Same job	16
Professional	5
Permanent	4
General construction	3
Any	8
Total	*199*

Table 40: Employees preferred choice of job

Question 52: What future employment status would you like to obtain?

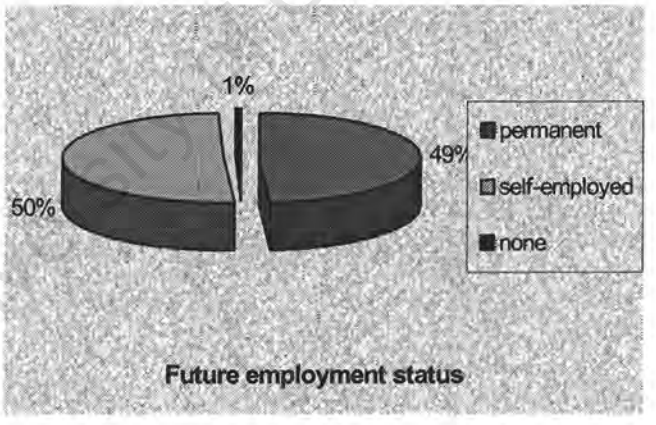


Fig. 20: Future employment status

The training and self-improvement skills listed by the employee (Q26) are compared with this desired future employment status.

Relationship between desired skills and preferred employment status		
	Preferred future employment status	
Desired skills or training	Permanent	Self-employed
None	12	12
Trades	48	48
Apprenticeship	2	0
Non-construction	8	6
Construction management	4	12
Business skills	4	4
Computer skills	7	2
Increasing education	2	2
Personal skills	0	1
Yes but undefined	0	6

Table 41: Relationship between desired skills and preferred employment status

Question 53: Where would you like to be in ten years hence?

Aspirations for the next ten years		
	No. of workers	Percentage
Self-employed	98	50
Retired/ at home	24	12
Administration in construction	20	10
Permanent job in construction	14	7
Fulfilling personal goals	10	5
As a craftsman	8	4
Better job outside construction	5	3
In a different geographic area	3	2
Unsure	13	7
Total	*196*	*100*

Table 42: Aspirations for the next ten years

To stay in construction:

- *I want to be a bricklayer. I want to be permanent so that I get a pension fund, sick leave and other benefits. To have a formal job.* (116)
- *To be a floor tiler. To be permanent to earn more money and get a pension fund. To know everything on buildings and to be a foreman.* (111)
- *To be a plastering man. To have my own subcontract to tell the labourers what to do; enjoy the employers' status. To be the boss in construction.* (117)
- *Running my own construction business.* (171)
- *Roof tiler, to be permanent to receive benefits. To have my own subcontract. In future being my own boss.* (114)
- *I would like to see myself as a big boss of construction. I would like to be self-employed having my own subcontract.* (60)

Outside the construction industry:

- *To drive a taxi, have his own taxi business.* (136)
- *To be a security guard, to be permanent in order to be entitled to certain benefits such as UIF.* (113)
- *An office work to stop wearing dirty clothes all the time. To be permanent to receive all my monies in bulk at the end of work.* (118)
- *Self-employed, own a business. Not in the building industry, want to work for the government* (139)
- *He don't want to work as a bricklayer at the age of 48. At least if he can work at any company, be a driver of that company and if he was have the money, he can buy a taxi (minibus used in the private taxi service) and help the children. Send them to school and the workers that are working in the restaurant so that he can be self-employed.* (26)

Will accept anything:

- *Any jobs. I don't have wild dreams.* (121)
- *Secure safe job. Permanent.* (38)
- *To be registered and given a contract. Also to be paid according to the qualifications.* (Pilot)
- *Nothing in mind, job anywhere. No change, doesn't see himself going anywhere.* (149)

Migrant labour:

- *(Return to) Angola, expecting to be work after war. (79)*
- *Out of country (USA) (191)*

Question 55: What do you like best about work in construction?

Favourite aspect of construction work		
	No. of workers	**Percentage**
Nothing	44	23
The job	38	20
Challenging/learning	24	12
Regular work/income	20	10
Meeting new people	14	7
Working in a team	12	6
Everything	11	6
Good working conditions	7	4
Work outdoors	7	4
Don't need education	6	3
Good income	5	3
Easy to find work	2	1
Travel opportunities	2	1
Opportunities to advance	1	1
Total	*193*	*100*

Table 43: Favourite aspect of construction work

Positive aspects mentioned about the construction industry:

- *It's an easy job for me because I can read plans clearly.* (83)
- *Everyday you learn something new. One day he wants to build his own house so would have the relevant knowledge.* (139)
- *I am learning a new skill every time.* (64)
- *Gaining more skills and improve what I learned at Technical.* (105)
- *It needs no standard of education.* (117)
- *Being paid on a daily basis.* (67)
- *I have to say I like everything because I receive my bread.* (113)
- *Meet people with different cultures.* (161)
- *The relationship with his fellow workers.* (140)
- *Involvement in the thick of things and making buildings.* (43)
- *There is no scarcity of jobs in building construction.* (34)
- *Working in open air, freedom.* (178)
- *Likes moving about from site to site.* (36)
- *It's challenging and very physical.* (Pilot)
- *Togetherness.* (24)
- *Open spaces, freedom.* (188)

Question 55: What do you like least about work in construction?

Least liked aspect of construction work		
	No. of workers	**Percentage**
Nothing	48	24
Physical nature of construction	34	17
Bad treatment from superiors	23	12
Accidents	21	11
Job insecurity	18	9
Low pay	18	9
High-pressure work	13	6
Difficult work	7	4
Cheating on payments	5	3
Working hours	4	2
Constant supervision	3	2
Poor community relations	1	1
Total	*195*	*100*

Table 44: Least liked aspect of construction work

Negative aspects mentioned about the construction industry:

Physical nature:

- *We do not get paid when raining.* (84)
- *Dust, mud, unreasonable demands of employer.* (188)

Health and safety:

- *It affects health in the long run.* (Pilot)
- *Dangerous tools used and bad conditions.* (104)
- *Accidents and cheating by employers.* (106)

Working conditions:

- *Not permanent, if something happens no compensation.* (11)
- *Insecurity.* (21)
- *Abuse – I get less money. .They promise to pay you a certain amount but you get less amount.* (195)
- *Boss treat them badly, not paid overtime.* (159)
- *Not being paid timeously sometimes.* (118)

Labour relations:

- *To be ill-treated as it is happening currently. My employer does not give respect to his employees.* (170)
- *Being cheated by subcontractors; they are receiving a lot of money but cheat us.* (117)
- *There is lot of exploitation in this field. We earn little but this guy are making money out of us.* (59)

Lack of options:

- *To tell you the truth, I am just working here because I don't have a choice.* (131)
- *There is no money or future.* (22)

Question 56: How can this be improved?

Ways to improve work in construction		
	No. of workers	**Percentage**
Cannot be improved	31	19
Better equipment	23	14
Improve communication	16	10
Improve working conditions	15	9
Education and training	14	8
Permanent employment	12	7
Better wages	10	6
More considerate employers	6	4
Unionisation	5	3
More supervision/inspection officers	5	3
Change in industry structure	4	2
Registration of employers	2	1
Other	8	5
Don't know	14	8

Table 45: Ways to improve work in construction

Negative feedback:

- *Only the legal people can resolve this as we are always divided.* (85)
- *There is nothing that can be done.* (2)
- *I foresee no improvement so long as there is racism.* (182)
- *Nothing.* (59)
- *It depends on workers but shop stewards are close to foremen and boss there is just no solution.* (109)

Equipment to be installed:

- *Machines which will help to lift those heavy objects.* (185)
- *Work with machines although my machine will take my own job.* (125)
- *We need to have a formal uniform.* (64)
- *Equipment such as a vacuum grinder.* (188)

Communication improvement:

- *Workshopping the foremen on communication skills.* (96)
- *Good interrelations amongst us as workers should be improved/promoted.* (170)
- *Maybe he must show us what he received from the buyer of that site.* (117)
- *Would like employers to take more responsibility.* (11)
- *By negotiations with foremen.* (90)
- *More inspectors coming to sites.* (40)
- *Bosses should have better communication with workers.* (161)

Education and training:

- *By teaching us more.* (177)
- *By properly training the labourers.* (98)
- *To train all those involved.* (101)

Financial improvement:

- *Full day payment that is all.* (86)
- *Maybe by putting our monies in bank.* (118)
- *To get your money even if you do not work during rainy days.* (4)
- *Let's have packages when we retire at least.* (22)
- *Improvement of the wages of the workers.* (100)

Health and Safety:

- *There should be safety materials/equipment provided.* (Pilot)
- *Introduce safety by building strong scaffolding, service grinder every time because their blades are dangerous.* (106)
- *More supervision, service of grinders, hard hats to be used by everybody.* (102)

Unions and industry help:

- *Unions must be more active.* (159)
- *By being transparent (employers) we be taught of our rights and know who to contact we having complaint.* (70)
- *Unions should help us.* (21)

Question 57: Would you like your children to enter construction?

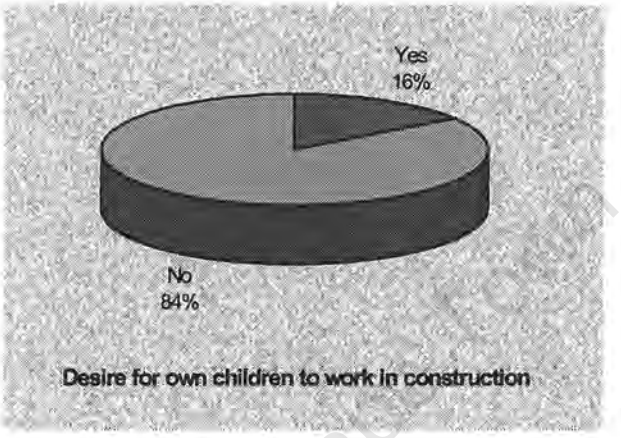


Fig. 21: Desire for own children to work in construction

Supportive of their children working in construction:

- *Yes, it's their choice.* (21)
- *Yes-because they would be interested in money.* (100)
- *Yes, they must follow my footsteps as qualified shutter-man.*(42)
- *Yes, because it is near the house.* (191)

Against their children working in construction:

- *No, because I have worked hard myself and my children must not do it again.* (116)
- *No, they must follow other careers, they must not copy mine.* (69)
- *No, because it is dangerous to work here.* (102)
- *No, I know the way of working in construction, it is bad.* (125)
- *No, that is why I am educating them. Because here there is too much accidents, one is not covered for injuries by bosses in the end.* (106)
- *Never, I send my children to school so they can get formal education and employment.* (22)
- *No, because this is the place for the uneducated.* (118)
- *No – this job is not good, I want my kids to be educated.* (101)
- *No – there is not enough money for a living.* (98)
- *No, my children have to do white collar jobs with security.* (40)

- *No, I want them educated for a better future.* (90)
- *No; this is a dull work for them and dirty work. I always go home dirty everyday.* (117)
- *No, because this job is for uneducated people like me. If they have to do it, they should be trained for it first.* (177)

Communication Skills of Workers as rated by Interviewers

The interviewers were asked to rate the respondents abilities to comprehend the question and to communicate. Communication skills were considered as being eye contact, verbal expression, ease of manner or confidence, and the ability to market himself and his skills.

The ratings are ordinal data, but to aid comparison between respondents, an analytical shortcut has been taken and the data treated as interval data. The average score gives the interviewer's impression of the respondent's self image.

Communication skills of respondent as rated by interviewer	
Interviewer's comment	**Average score**
Did the interviewee easily understand the questions?	3.97
Did the interviewee make eye contact?	3.95
Did the interviewee express himself well?	3.91
Did the interviewee appear at ease?	4.02
Did the interviewee sell himself, i.e., would you employ him based on this interview?	4.07

Table 46: Communication skills of respondent as rated by interviewer

The comments given below were assessments offered by the interviewers. Some reflect those who were confident and expressed themselves well, and others who were less confident, anxious, or even poor communicators in their own language.

Interviews in which respondents appeared confident and assertive

- He was very fluent and willing to share his experiences.

- He was an easy person to talk to and had quiet an experience. He began working in the construction industry since 1963 [23/25] (140).

- He was satisfied with where he was, would however like to get training as a foreman. He also stressed that he likes to keep conductive relationship with other workers[25/25] (134)

- Very well, confident enough, he knew what he was talking about, was a little suspicious but as we go along he was ok. Very convincing, he knew what he want and what he is doing,[24/25] (105)

- Interviewee is very relaxed and confidence and able to express his feelings and sentiments.[23/25] (107)

- The interviewee excited that there is a division amongst his fellow workers i.e. there is no unity some seem to favour the unbearable management. He is an outspoken person and very unhappy about his boss treatment [25/25] (85)

- He made an eye contact, because I got him on lunch time [24/25] (117)

- Yes very well, because he was bold & confident with lots of experience. Yes confident sure of facts, was a little suspicious he kept asking why I do this, he is experience [24/25] (106)

- The interviewee answered me with a brilliant mind, I understood everything he was telling me first time [20/25] (68)

- He was very genuine, at one stage he wanted to show me his payslip to show me exactly how much they are being paid. He also enjoys working with wood doing anything and selling it to people [25/25] (138)

- He was very cool and relaxed. He answered questions with understanding. He sounds to be very current in present issues. [24/25] (171)

- The interviewee was relaxed, but showing signs of despondence. He is from Transkei and has spent 4 years in Cape Town without getting a permanent job. [21/25] (162)

- We had an eye contact with the guy. He asked whether we are coming with any help because he getting little money [24/25] (158)

- They answered well will eye contact and they thought we gonna come up with some employment [19/25] (155)

- Fully understood questions and answering with great confidence [24/25] (87)

- He has good visions for his future [25/25] (90)

- He seems eager to learn [25/25] (93)

- Seemed fairly educated and a positive personality. [25/25] (77)
- Would give a lot of information, bold and confident, was a very talkative person, because he showed the sense of knowledge of his work. He knew what he was talking about, showed the experience [24/25] (73)

- He like the construction and he is proud of construction. He has been in building construction for a long time and he love the job. He think when you work at building construction you have brains – He insisted that I must write his name [22/25] (130)

- In fact, while he was being interviewed, a certain guy came to him and asked if he could look out for some pipes while the concrete guys were pouring, to ensure that those pipes were "plum" or straight after pouring, he got a R20 note for that. Says that's what also makes him to enjoy his work, confidence in him.[24/25] (145)

- I get the feeling that he is very close to the boss because he was keep on talking about the tax and the employing of casual worker. When I got there he was also helping the other employee to pull up the rubbish on the hole which they dig. [20/25] (60)

- A solid person – gentle ambition. Not surprising he is "permanent" (but no perks! Thinks he is permanent not really) [22/25] (76)

- Very bold and little bit well informed. He could answer questions with confidence and showing great ambitions for future [25/25] (131)

- Very cool relaxed, focused and answering questions with great confidence [19/25] (173)

- Very ambitious and outspoken completed with political awareness [25/25] (163)

- We exchanged words very nicely even the boss asked us to go somewhere because it was noisy at the site [21/25] (157)

Interviews which required some adjustment or clarification or in which workers were not confident

- Not until the foreman appeared, seem reluctant to answer questions concerning his firm or what he did not like etc. Can do anything, but does not seem to be self driven [16/25] (14)

- There was no eye contact he was busy laying bricks. The foreman was coming to us now and again. Uncomfortable [24/25] (63)

- Somewhat not confident of himself [19/25] (88)

- He was very keen in answering but later on he was getting tired of me. I had to follow him up and down [23/25] (116)

- He was not at ease at all, when I asked the name of the Sub-contract he referred me to a paving foreman [19/25] (113)

- He was so keen in answering, he was suspicious when I asked him about the wages [23/25] (69)

- At first, he was refusing but persuasively I talked to him and later he answered me very well [20/25] (115)

- At first was reluctant to talk to me, but opened up as we talked [18/25] (139)

- I don't know whether I must describe him as shy because I find little hard difficult with him [20/25] (32)

- He was bitter about the former employer [25/25] (198)

- Good communicator, speech a bit slurred/fast, interested in the questions – some clarification needed good eye contact, overall- sad & cynical, worse economy coming. Never be any work, love my country but must go to Australia [pilot]

- Lacks self confidence as far as his job is concerned [22/25] (100)

- He really doesn't enjoy working in the construction industry. He only does it for money. One could sense that he only does the job because his brother is a boss otherwise would prefer to do something else if he had enough more [22/25] (16)

- But seems to have gone into construction because of no employment available and having to feed many people with whatever he gets [22/25] (143)

- He is working because he need a job, had a negative attitude and employees it can either be bad experience or just because of a young man [14/25] (46)

- He was a little shy, scared to talk freely, suspicious. I had to probe hard. I was not sure whether he enjoys himself in contractor in the first place [15/25] (104)

- He was a little shy, suspicious at first. Out of desperation one could pick it up that he thought by giving the info would make him get a job there & then [19/25] (174)

- He seemed very down hearted or rather not a peace with his life experience. Feels he has nothing to do outside the construction industry because he lacks the necessary skills but would not improve his skills because he has family responsibilities, a wife and children to look after and take care of them so would rather educate them with the little he has rather than use that money to get more skills [19/25] (18)

- Reserved cautious about answering [25/25] (55)

- He is old and seems content with what is doing and is not interested of finding other job. Probably afraid he might be worse off. As for future plans, well [24/25] (50)

- Are these questions going to improve my current situation? He asked. [21/25] (164)

- Very attitudinal towards construction industry, he also stated and emphasised the unfair treatment he has experienced from construction [20/25] (184)

- He keep on asking the people and some time he was acting as if he is shy. Insecure, worried if he should be speaking [14/25] (128)

- Communication in English 50/50. Understanding missed – used translator, Gentle manner, resigned good eye contact [pilot]

- Moderate (threatened by foreman) who could overhear [18/25] (80)

- He was not interested at first but later I picked up that he doesn't like the job he was doing. He keep on telling me that it was the suffering that brought him here at the first place [15/25] (127)

- He was very understanding and he was goon in expressing himself. Felt that he love his job and wanted to talk about it and he wanted to some changes [15/25] (34)

- Answered very well but kept on asking that is there any help that I am coming with [20/25] (114)

- He kept on saying "come again", yes 80% at the same time concentrating on his work, yes I could hear him first time, yes but saying I must not black mail him, yes I would promote him to a foreman job [16/25] (66)

- No eye contact that much because he was busy laying bricks but communication between us was happening [20/25] (110)

Interviews in which workers found comprehending the question or communicating an answer difficult

- He gave almost all the relevant information, I had to dig up now and again [20/25] (109)

- Tired: has had enough. Seems to be in the right position now, passively overseeing others, has a sad cynicism about him [21/25] (74)

- Interviewee could not understand some questions addressed in Xhosa [17/25] (182)

- I have to repeat the question and sometimes he responds by saying, "Come again?" He was so serious. Sometimes when he was talking he used body language. I can employ him because he is young and he is very strong and he shows interest of what he is doing and he knows the job. [16/25] (31)

- Even in Xhosa, he did not understand the questions well. I tried to make it clear all the time. (Born in Venda) [18/25] (112)

- This interviewee has a language problem as he is more comfortable with Afrikaans. However, I had to give him an Afrikaans questionnaire so that he could understand some of the questions better. He was also relaxed in most responses though was in a hurry.[17/25] (83)

- He seems like he would ditch his job the moment he gets a better offer. [16/25] (79)
- The interviewee looked so desperate for work. [15/25] (190)
- Interviewee was very interested in talking to me and answered very well with eye contact. [19/25] (191)
- He was not hearing properly. I took more time with him, sometimes going off the question and rephrasing. [17/25] (118)
- Asked about the project – interested. [22/25] (81)
- He was so excited, maybe he thought I am an employer. [19/25] (192)
- The interviewee was very busy, I had to follow him all around. He also got nervous when the boss was around him. [19/25] (67)
- Was very slow to understand. [11/25] (146)
- The interviewee seemed to be threatened by the presence of other people in the place where I interviewed him. The interviewee needed some clarity in most of the questions. He demonstrated dissatisfaction with the length of the interview questionnaire. [No rating] (Pilot)
- He was trying to tell me anything about himself. [15/25] (61)
- He was very unsure of himself and he could not understand some of the questions. Very panicky. He also does not know about his age. [8/25] (172)
- Got the general impression that he was very suspicious of what was going on. Was not very co-operative, in the end wanted it over and done with. [7/25] (148)
- Poor communicator, very tense and not relaxed. [No rating] (Pilot)
- So excited in answering me, but told me that I must make sure he is safe. [18/25] (62)
- I don't think he knows about safety regulations. [12/25] (78)
- He looked very scared, he used to look at his boss before commenting. The way I saw him, I don't think he will be in the industry for long. [11/25] (136)

Comparing employee's level of education (Q2) with the interviewer's grading of the worker's communication ability (Q58) shows that those workers with school leaving certificate qualifications are rated the best communicators while those with multi-trade training are rated the worst.

Relationship between employee's educational background and communication skills	
Educational level	**Communication skills**
Some schooling	3.97
School leaving certificate	4.41
Apprentice	3.66
Single trade	-
Multi-trade	3.47
Craftsmen	3.55
Other	4.4

Table 47: Relationship between employee's educational background and communication skills

The worker's communication skills score (Q58) can further be compared with the skills and training that he thought would improve his life.

Relationship between skills and training and communication skills	
Desired skills or training	**Rating of communication skills**
None	3.9
Trades	4.0
Apprenticeship	4.4
Non-construction	4.2
Construction management	3.8
Business skills	4.0
Computer skills	4.6
Increasing education	3.3
Personal skills	4.6
Yes but undefined	4.3

Table 48: Relationship between skills and training and communication skills

Appendix 8. Summary of Replies to Employers' Questionnaire

Note:

iii) For each result 100% is given to the total number of respondents for that question. Non-respondents are excluded from the sample.

iv) Respondent's comments were included with the answers. Where these are quoted the numbers of the questionnaire is given in brackets at the end of the quotation.

Company Information

Question 1: What type of construction do you chiefly undertake?

Type of construction work undertaken by employees		
Category	**Type of construction**	**No. of respondents**
MARKETS		
	General construction	17
	Civil	4
	Residential	2
	Maintenance	2
	Industrial	1
	Commercial (Shopping centres)	1
	Community projects	1
TRADES		
	Brickwork	7
	Concrete work	2
	Plumbing	2
	Restoration	2
	Electrical	1
	Excavation and earthworks	1
	Formwork and decking	1
	Painting	1
	Plastering	1
	Reinforcement	1
SPECIALIST CONSTRUCTION		
	Labour only	1
	Lift and escalator installation	1

Table 1: Type of construction work undertaken by employees

Question 2: How many permanent employees do you have?

Number of permanent employees		
No. of employees	**No. of respondents**	**%age**
0-5	12	24
5-10	10	20
10-20	14	29
20-50	6	12
Over 50	7	14
Total	*49*	*100*

Table 2: Number of permanent employees

Question 3: What type of projects do you undertake?

Type of projects undertaken by employers			
	No. of employers in the		
Type of projects	Past	Present	Future
Residential	4	32	0
Industrial	3	24	1
Repair and Maintenance	6	18	0
Commercial	3	19	0

Table 3: Type of projects undertaken by employers

Type of delivery method used by employers			
	No. of employers in the		
Method of carrying out projects	Past	Present	Future
Labour and Material	0	22	0
Design build	0	7	0
Labour only	0	4	0

Table 4: Type of delivery method used by employers

Question 4: Do you have regular customers?

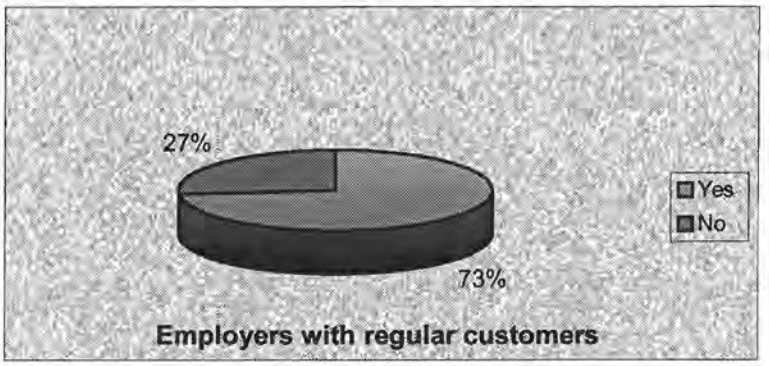


Fig. 1: Employers with regular customers

Some comments were:

- *Yes – tender for the job (*with the company) (43)
- *Yes, I seldom stay without them* (40)
- *Yes, different ones, my old friends in the industry keep me informed of contracts to come.* (9)
- *Yes, maintenance following renovation.* (49)
- *Restoration, repair work, and maintenance* (1)

Others did not have regular clients:

- *No, gives labourers lifts and hears of work.* (24)
- *No, but I don't struggle to get them* (20)

Question 5: Within what geographical area does your firm operate?

The subcontractors interviewed all worked in the environs of Cape Town. Most worked across the whole city if they could obtain the work.

Question 6: What projects are you presently undertaking?

Current projects being undertaken by employers		
Type of project	**No. of respondents**	**Percentage**
Commercial	18	28
Residential	11	17
Repairs and Alterations	9	14
Industrial	4	6
Social and religious centres	4	6
Renovations	4	6
General construction	4	6
Community	2	3
Educational	1	2
Government	1	2
Excavations	1	2
Restoring	1	2
Civil	1	2
Specialist work	1	2
Unemployed	1	2

Table 5: Current projects being undertaken by employers

Question 7: Do you undertake work in addition to construction?

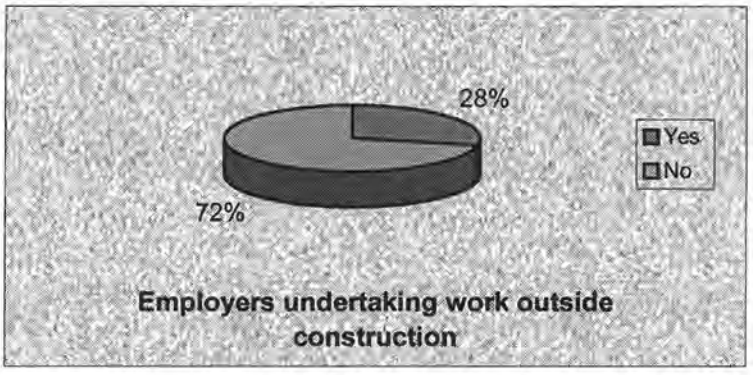


Fig. 2: Employers undertaking work outside construction

Examples of other work:

- Carpentry – staircases (12)
- Interiors of cars (7)
- Replicas of designs in wood, brass, copper, cast-iron etc. (1)
- Tuckshop at home (28)
- Yes – cabinet work. I do building in built in kitchen units and all that stuff (11)

Question 8: Have there been periods in the last three years without a project?

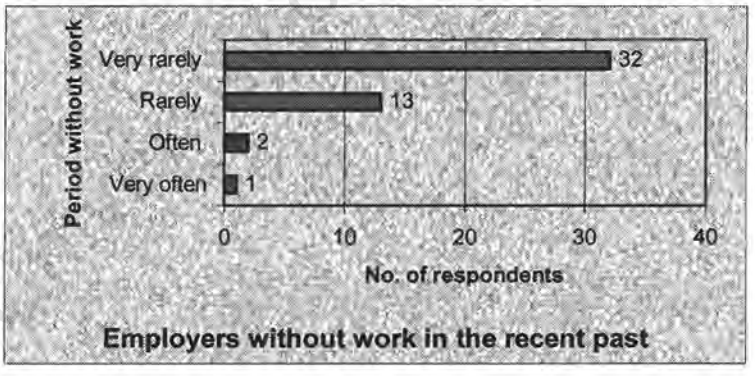


Fig. 3: Employers without work in the recent past

Question 9: What was the length of time without work?

There was a wide variance of the period spent without work, with the average time spent being 0.46 years (5.52 months), the shortest time reported without work 2 weeks (2 respondents) and the longest 4 years (1 respondent).

- *Two to three months (out of work), must put money away for rainy day.* (28)

- *1999, for about a year, doesn't have work every year for about three to six months.* (24)
- *Unpredictable - sometimes weeks, sometimes months.* (25)
- *I am not saying (often) because in rainy season I use my boys in carpentry. I work with them. There is always something to do.* (11)

Question 10: What do you do when out of work?

Activities undertaken by employers when out of work		
Occupations when unemployed	**No. of respondents**	**Percentage**
Carry out small business (outside construction)	5	23
Look for work	4	18
Do nothing	4	18
Carry out small jobs (in construction)	3	14
Worked around own house	2	9
Worked with relative/friend	2	9
Carpentry	2	9
Total	22	100

Table 6: Activities undertaken by employers when out of work

- *Nothing, sat at home and wife provided* (25)
- *Looking for other job* (21)
- *Have other contract work.* (26)
- *Sometimes I help my brother as he also runs the same business* (42)
- *I approach the developers and I would say I have a group of people working under me, that way I would get the work very soon.* (36)
- *Small tuck shop at home, brother lent me R500 to start.* Makes 30% (of income). (12)
- *Drive around looking for work.* (4)
- *Do marketing and skate around* (43)
- *Mechanical* (work) (39)

Question 11: What type of work and/or markets do you prefer and why?

Preferred work and markets by employers		
Category	**Market/work type**	**No. of respondents**
MARKETS		**20**
	General construction	5
	Residential/housing	5
	Civil	3
	Industrial	3
	Commercial	2
	Renovations/alterations	2
SECTORS		**2**
	Public	1
	Private	1
TRADES		**12**
	Brickwork	2
	Concrete work	2
	Plumbing	2
	Wet trades	2
	Carpentry	1
	Electrical works	1
	Lift installation	1
	Painting	1
SPECIALIST NICHES		**2**
	Precast walling	1
	Site preparation	1
PROJECT SIZE		**8**
	Large projects	7
	Small projects	1
IRRELEVANT	Irrelevant	5
TOTAL		**44**

Table 7: Preferred work and markets by employers

Some reasons were:

Self-Achievement:

- *I prefer community projects. Working with local guys is nice* (pilot)
- *Big projects because I want to enhance my strengths. In small projects, one cannot fully prove ones potential.* (20)
- *Housing, he loves it. The satisfaction he gains once the project has ended.* (17)
- *Building/ construction industry, because of the skill I have learnt in this type of job.* (6)
- *I liked to build the housing in different communities around Cape Town, especially those who stay in the location.* (2)

Financial:

- *I prefer to sub-contract for larger contractors because they usually don't have cash flow problems. They also have work 90% of the time* (16)
- *I would like to construct firms* (commercial) *and shopping centres because there are no limits in cash flow, unlike building government subsidies.* (36)
- *Sub contract for the government, we are never out of work, the gov is never bankrupt. We are sure to be paid.* (23)
- *High rise buildings and housing. It takes longer, hence there is a lot of money involved.* (39)
- *Commercial, because of more money, and it takes longer. Would only do housing when double story* (37)
- *Pre cast walling, alterations – cash flow as payment intervals and bank charges small, and outlays large so no loans* (25)

Pragmatic:

- *Housing, quick and easy.* (28)
- *Doesn't matter it's the same work, tiling, in a big or small building. Would like to work in Malaysia.* (12)

Personal History

Question 12: How old are you?

Ages of employers		
Age group	**No. Of respondents**	**Percentage**
Under 18	0	0
19 – 24	0	0
25 – 30	5	10
31 – 35	8	16
36 – 40	13	27
41 – 45	8	16
46 – 50	8	16
51 – 55	5	10
over 55	2	4

Table 8: Ages of employers

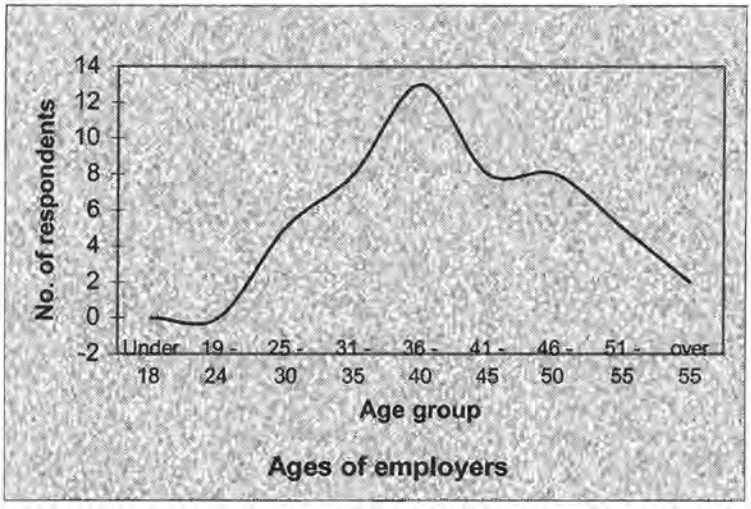


Fig. 4: Ages of employers

Question 13: What level of education did you achieve?

Level of education achieved by employers		
	Educational level	**Percentage**
Some schooling	15	31
School leaving certificate	3	6
Apprentice	4	8
Single trade	2	4
Multi-trade	8	16
Craftsman	4	8
Other	13	27
Total	*48*	*100*

Table 9: Level of education achieved by employers

Question 14: Place of residence?

All the respondents in the sample lived in the environs of Cape Town, that is, lived and worked locally.

Place of origin?

Only two respondents were not South African, one immigrated from Belgium (1) and one from England (9).

Entrepreneurial Background

Question 15: Were you ever employed in Formal Construction and if so your reason for leaving?

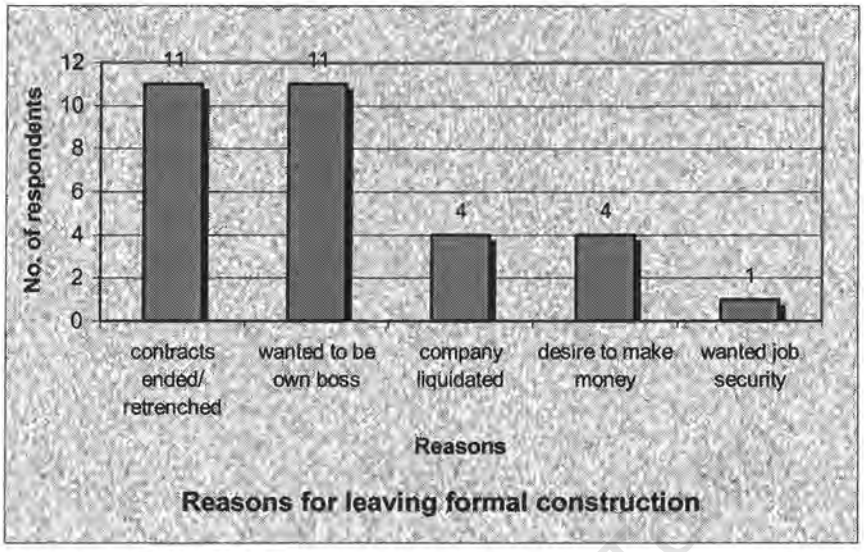


Fig. 5: Reasons for leaving formal construction

Negative Reasons:

- *Julius Cohen for 20 years – liquidated* (14)
- *42 years* (company*) liquidated* (15)
- *Murray & Stewart – 13 years, left because work sub-contracted* (retrenched*). No package, three days back pay.* (12)
- *The company was bankrupt* (17)

Positive Reasons:

- *Yes, wanted to be his own boss.* (22)
- *Yes, wanted to improve better for himself.* (43)
- *Yes, because I always dreamt of being my own boss one day, and I decided to go for it.* (36)
- *I was working in construction for along time, and my employer decided to make me a share holder. That's why I am defining myself as an employer. The other guy doesn't make any decision without my consent.* (pilot)
- *Yes, as a casual, project ended.* (20)

Financial

- *Yes, because work was irregular.* (37)
- *He was looked for better and he saw better opportunities – like to be his own employer and to pay himself.* (44)
- *I worked for ready mix concrete company, and I left to take over a cleaning contract, and for making more money.* (41)

Personal reasons

- *Worked on buildings and fell off scaffold.* (19)

- *Yes, I left because I was away from home too much, because work for an international company.* (16)

Question 16: Do you continue work in Formal Construction at times?

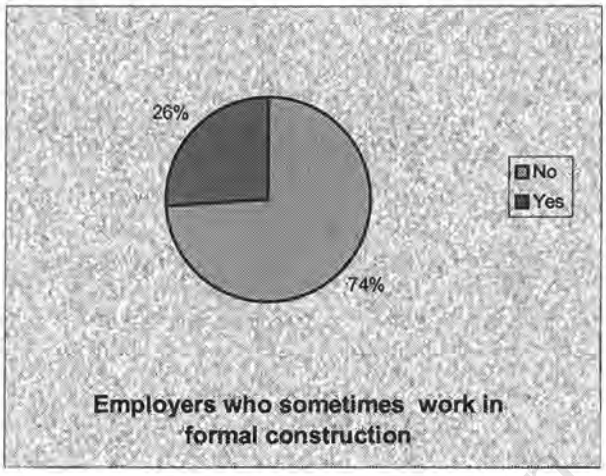


Fig. 6: Employers who sometimes work in formal construction

Positive Reasons:

- *Works as a Foreman* (39)
- *Yes, if it is paying well.* (16)
- *Yes, now and then* (27)

Negative Reasons:

- *No I can't see myself go there anymore.* (33)
- *Does not, but will work on site if projects are there.* (1)
- *He cannot go back and work for another person.* (44)
- *No, I'm independent.* (7)

Question 17: What prompted you to become your own employer?

Reasons for becoming self-employed		
Reasons	**No. of respondents**	**Percentage**
Desire for better income	15	33
Retrenchment	10	22
Desire to grow	7	15
Taking advantage of opportunities	6	13
Influence of friends	2	4
Effects of apartheid	2	4
No choice	2	4
Other	2	4

Table 10: Reasons for becoming self-employed

- *Better money and to achieve certain goals.* (44)
- *Wanted to be own boss and make more. I was being underpaid considering how much I brought to companies.* (9)
- *In apartheid, he felt he would never get anywhere but to be and artisan, therefore started his own business.* (13)
- *Affirmative action and the new South Africa – I decided to take advantage of the opportunity.* (7)
- *The satisfaction derived after finishing a site and knowing you were in charge. Also saw some bosses making money so wanted to join the club.* (22)
- *I could not get work, I thought of starting on my own.* (27)
- *Can't rely other people.* (30)
- *I was able to do the work and had a lot of contact people.* (16)

Question 18: How long have you been in self-employment?

On average, the respondents had been their own employers for 8.8 years. The longest a respondent had been in business was 32 years and the shortest, 2 months. This gave a standard deviation of 7.1 years.

Question 19: do you sometimes work for others as an employee?

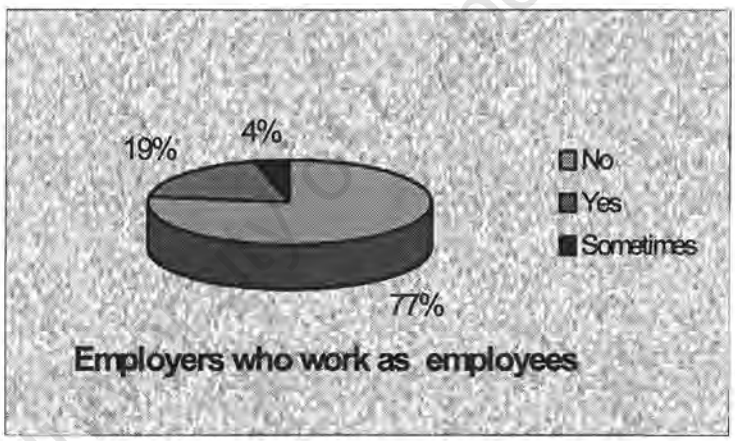


Fig. 7: Employers who work as employees

Comparing the question "What did you do when you had no work?" (Q10) with the question "Do you sometimes work for others as an employee?" (Q20) the following correlation is evident. Those looking for work as employers, working around their own houses whilst unemployed or those carrying out small jobs in construction are least likely to work as someone else's employee.

Relationship between lack of work with alternative activity pursued when out of work		
Activity when without work	**(%) sometimes working as an employee**	**(%) never working as an employee**
Look for work as an employer	0	100
Worked around own house	0	100
Carry out small jobs (in construction)	0	100
Carry out small business (outside construction)	20	80
Do nothing	50	50
Worked with relative/friend	50	50
Carpentry work	50	50

Table 11: Relationship between lack of work with alternative activity pursued when out of work

Question 20: What type of work were you involved in previously, and in what capacity?

Previous types of work		
Type of work	**Respondents**	**Percentage**
Artisan	13	28
Non-construction	11	24
General construction	9	20
Managerial/consulting construction	9	20
Civil works	3	6
Always in construction	1	2
Total	*46*	*100*

Table 12: Previous types of work

These comments illustrate some points:

- *Building industry: started as a normal labourer, but learned and was eventually high enough to be a sub-contractor.* (22)
- *Primarily building construction and carpentry. These are working hand in hand.* (11)
- *Casual, worked as a labourer in carpentry.* (20)
- *I've been an apprentice then. I worked for LTA as a bricklayer, for eight years as a foreman.* (42)
- *Defence force* (17)
- *He was a construction: contracts manager* (25)
- *Production in concrete and as a concrete plant controller.* (41)

Question 21: What skills and training do you have in construction work?

Employers' skills and training		
Skills and training	**Respondents**	**Percentage**
Trade	23	50
College	10	22
None/informal	8	17
N1, N2, N3	3	7
Apprentice	1	2
University	1	2

Table 13: Employers' skills and training

23 of the respondents (50%) had trade skills, 10 had been to college, 8 had no skills or had learnt informally, 3 had technical qualifications, 1 had apprentice level skills and 1 was a university graduate. Some comments are:

- *None, father did the same job* (18)
- *Bricklaying, and informally acquired as I am always keen to learn.* (20)
- *Supervision, Maintenance, Planning, Labour, Estimating and costing programming, dispute resolution* (17)
- *Tiling, bricklaying, drawing and drafting plans* (41)
- *None, still learning* (31)
- *Everything necessary – electrician / plastering / skimming and bricklaying* (47)
- *From father – dying breed of expertise* (38)
- *Building and Managerial skill and computer skill – everything is done by computers, even the payment of workers is made by computer.* (10)
- *No training but can do it* (14)
- *He said I wouldn't be my own boss if I didn't have managerial skill. It starts by managing your own affairs / your life. You have to make decisions that are affecting other people in a big way and making changes that are going to affect you and I guess I never made a decision that I regret.* (11)
- *He was very keen: approached me* (interviewer), *striking, well spoken, seems impassioned, bitter at the drop in standards. Felt so proud to be in construction in the old, formal system. Went to an inferior college because was coloured, but was trained well by employers who only cared about the colour of money. Now feels everything is done badly – poor skills all around. No pride in the job, no training* (15)

Table 14 compares the educational level achieved (Q13) with the skills and training they have in construction work (Q22). This is to assess the correlation between educational level and skills and training and then to compare these levels with the assessment by the interviewer of employer's communication skills.

Relationship between employer's education, training and communication skills								
	Trade	College	None/ informal	N1, N2, N3	Apprentice	University	Communi-cation skills	Total
Some school	8	1	3	1	1	0	4.44	14
Finished schooling	1	1	0	1	0	0	4.50	3
Apprentice	2	2	0	0	0	0	3.53	4
Single trade	0	0	0	0	1	0	4.00	1
Multi-trade	6	2	0	0	0	0	4.40	8
Craftsman	3	0	0	0	0	0	4.60	3
Other	4	4	2	2	0	1	4.78	13
Total	24	10	5	4	2	1		46

Table 14: Relationship between employer's education, training and communication skills

Results of comparing their previous employment in formal construction (Q16) with skills and training they have in construction work (Q22) are given in Table 15. This is to assess whether the type of skill has bearing on the employer having been previously employed in formal construction.

Relationship between employers' skills and training and former employment status				
Skills and training in construction	Employed in formal construction?			
	Yes	%	No	%
None	3	43	4	57
N1, N2, N3	3	100	0	0
Trade	19	83	4	17
College	10	100	0	0
Apprentice	1	100	0	0
University	1	100	0	0

Table 15: Relationship between employers' skills and training and former employment status

Employee Profile

Question 22: Average number on employees on construction projects?

Average no of employees	
Average	34.3
Standard deviation	42.7
Minimum	0
Maximum	200

Table 16: Average no of employees

- *Five for brickwork, one for plastering, one labourer and I work.* (12)
- *I seldom work with a labourer, he watches while I watch.* (15)

The employer's current project (Q6) is compared with the type of construction he chiefly undertakes (Q1) to assess if it is in line with what he normally does. A correlation is then drawn with the number of employees he has (Q23). This presents a profile of his business.

For 27 of the respondents, the type of project they were undertaking corresponds to those they normally undertake. 16 reported working on projects different from the norm, and 6 of the responses were inconclusive. The average number of workers per employer working in his fields (i.e. on typical projects) was 37.5, and for those employers not working in their fields, the workers per employer numbered 25.78.

Question 23: How many employees are directly employed on your present job?

Average no. of employees on current job	
Average	33.7
Standard deviation	42.5
Minimum	0.00
Maximum	200

Table 17: Average no. of employees on current job

The number of permanent employees (Q2) is compared with the present projects (Q6) to assess the relationship between number of employees and type of project. The type of project (Q6) is then compared with the number of employees on the current job (Q24) to see how many of his overall range of employees are employed on his current job.

Project type	*Average no. Of workers on project*	*Average no. of permanent workers on project*	*Additional no. of workers recruited for the project*
Social	41.3	4.0	37.3
Commercial	21.1	3.2	17.9
Industrial	17.7	3.0	14.7
Community	14.0	3.0	11.0
Residential	8.9	2.3	6.6
Educational	9.0	2.0	7.0
Civil	12.0	1.5	10.5
Renovations and Alterations	5.3	1.5	3.8

Table 18: Relationship between number of employees and type of project

Question 24: How many labour subcontractors are employed on your present job?

Average no of labour sub-contractors on current job	
Average	2.6
Standard deviation	5.2
Minimum	0
Maximum	21

Table 19: Average no of labour sub-contractors on current job

- *No, better to work with own guys, need to select them -lot of technical work involved.* (38)
- *I would try to reuse labour only sub-contractors who would, in turn, supply the labour as necessary ... Subcontractors often complain that I am only just covering their expenses. Last year things were quiet and I put my own business on hold and went to work for Neil Muller Construction. The subcontractors who had worked for me decided to set up their own teams. They now had to employ labour. When I started* (on my own) *myself again this year, I had a couple of them comment to me that they now saw my point of view, that it was difficult covering all the cost, and* (they) *realised I had not been unreasonable.* (48)

Question 25: How many workers are employed by the labour sub-contractors on your present job?

Average no of employees employed by labour sub-contractors	
Average	4. 3
Standard deviation	5.6
Minimum	0
Maximum	20

Table 20: Average no of employees employed by labour sub-contractors

Most subcontractors were their own employers of labour.

Question 26: How many employees do you have on average in construction projects?

Question 27: What is your employee breakdown in terms of employment status?

Employment status of employees				
Category	**Permanent**	**Fixed Term**	**Fixed Task**	**Casual**
Average Number	15	12	28	11
Average Percentage	40	18	20	23

Table 21: Number and employment status of employees

Note: These figures and percentages cannot be deemed reliable because of the confusion surrounding the real meaning of permanent. The question was so poorly answered that it was not considered worth analysing the responses. Employers define the term 'permanent' loosely to describe an employee whom they employ regularly. This does not mean permanent employment in the formal sense, but is more an indication that the employer has continuous work himself and can offer it to his employees.

Question 28: What is your employees' status by percentage?

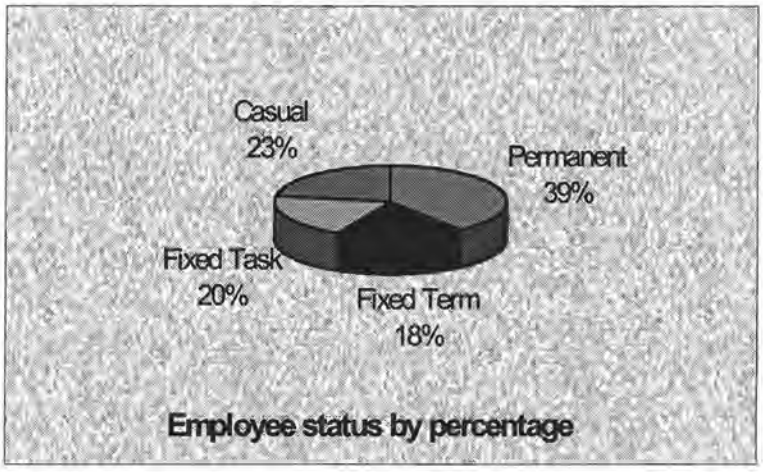


Fig. 8: Employee status by percentage

Question 29: How many workers do you have on a typical project and what is their average length of employment?

Number of employees and length of employment contract						
	Labourer	Apprentice	Craftsman	Foreman	Manager	Any other
Average number on typical project	20.06	3.43	10.42	0.88	0.31	0.04
Standard deviation	38.18	6.74	20.93	1.39	0.47	0.20
Average length of employment (years)	1.31	0.32	1.02	0.75	0.36	0.02

Table 22: Number of employees and length of employment contract

The number of employees on average on construction projects (Q24) was compared with workers on a typical project under the different categories of employment (Q30). This correlates the number of employees on the current job with typical jobs, i.e. the norm in the labour employment practice of the subcontractor.

Employers reported having an average of 14.31 employees less on their current projects than they do on average. Comparing Q24 with Q30, both in effect asking the same question in a slightly different way, gives an average difference of 1.94. As a check, it shows that there is consistency in the answers. The average number of workers on a project is 33.70 (Q24) or 31.76 (Q30).

Question 30: Do you pay them by task or period and at what interval?

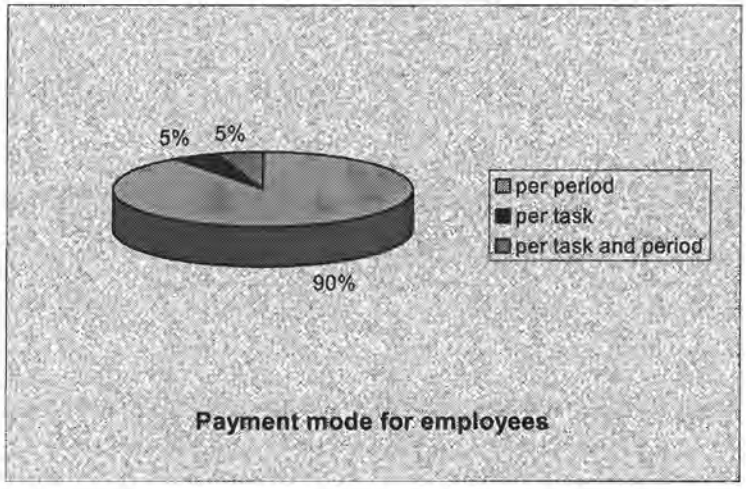


Fig. 9: Payment mode for employees

Frequency of employee payment		
Payment interval	**No. of respondents**	**Percentage**
Fortnight	25	60
Weekly	11	26
Daily	3	7
Fortnight and weekly	2	5
Monthly	1	2

Table 23: Frequency of employee payment

Some comments were:

- *My function – subcontractors pay individual rates.* (R9.47/hour) (28)
- *It is run by subcontractors so don't know how much the number of people working. They pay the subcontractor who in turn pay their workers.* (17)
- *R90/day – Labourer, R180/day for a brikkie.* (21)
- *I will not disclose how much I pay.* (7)
- 32 hour week is required to earn stamp/holiday money but pay fortnightly because of admin. (48)

Question 31: Where do you source labour workers?

1

Preferred source for seeking employees	
First choice source of workers	**No. of respondents**
From those coming around to ask for work	11
Current workers recommendations	10
Regular employees	7
From pick-up points	5
Former workmates	4
From the local people	3
Personal contacts	3
From other companies	2
Other sources	1

Table 24: Preferred source for seeking employees

Question 32: Do you ask for references before employment?

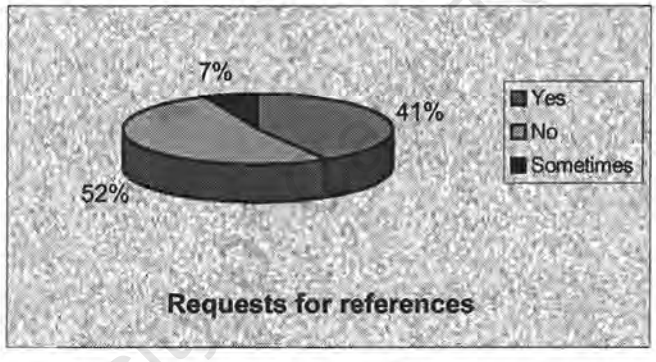


Fig. 10: Requests for references

Some comments are listed below:

- *Yes, I don't want to waste time with chancers.* (8)
- *Yes, it is important to have people to depend on. Employ people who have good reference.* (11)
- *Yes- because he cannot employed someone who say he is a build without having records about him.* (Pilot)
- *Yes, this is a complex job, I can't have Tom and Dick here.* (7)
- *No – I judge him, ask him what he did, where he worked. But I judge his work after an hour.* (38)
- *No, I will see if the guys are good or not on my own.* (9)
- *No, but I ask if he was employed before in this field so that I don't fall into a trap.* (20)
- *Ironically I have received faxes which cold canvass market. I never use these people – prefer word of mouth.* (48)

Question 33: Do you have any written contracts for permanent, fixed term or task and casual employees?

Written contracts for employees			
	Permanent	Fixed term/task	Casual employees
Yes	14	10	1
No	21	19	26
Verbal	*5*	*8*	*10*
Sometimes	0	0	0

Table 25: Written contracts for employees

Some responses were:

- *Yes, because they have registered pension funds.* (42)
- *Yes, except for one who was drunk.* (3)
- *Yes they fill in forms.* (8)
- *Will have – drafting one.* (15)
- *No, I will not tell you why it is not written.* (9)
- *No, I can't afford their benefits. No, my contracts are always verbal.* (16)
- *No, they just come and go as they wish.* (22)
- *No, used to one another so there is no need.* (39)
- *No written contracts because I have established certain relationships with them. Verbal contract up until end of project.* (33)

The breakdown of employees in terms of employment status (Q28) is compared with the number of written contracts that are offered for permanent, fixed term or task and casual employees (34).
25 employers (51%) have permanent or fixed term/task workers. Of these, 12 have contracts for such workers and 13 do not. Nine of the 24 who do not have permanent or fixed term/task workers have a contract for such workers, indicating they regularly employ in that category.

Question 34: Do you subcontract work/labour out?

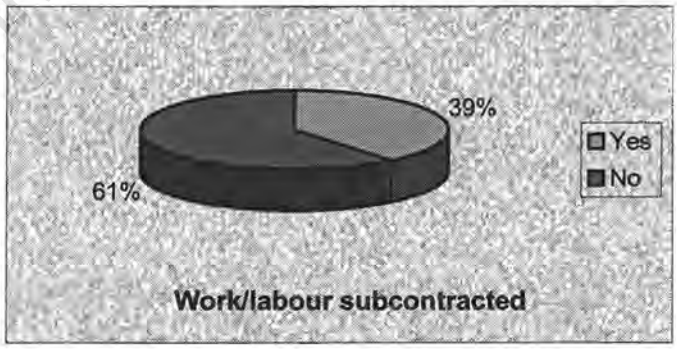


Fig. 11: Work/labour subcontracted

- *Yes, gets work on tasks* (in fact he employs one person at the maximum) (1)
- *No, my workers can do everything.* (16)

Question 35: What kind of work/labour do you outsource?

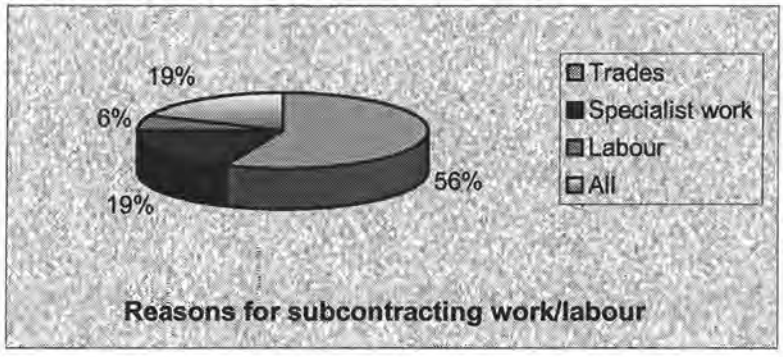


Fig. 12: Reasons for subcontracting work/labour

The trades sub-contracted out by the respondents were:

- Bricklaying
- Concrete work
- Excavating
- Electrical work
- Formwork
- Painting
- Plastering
- Plumbing
- Roofing
- Tiling

Specialist work includes restoration, craftwork and steel fixing.

Question 36: Do you have a contract for sub-contractors and, if so, where did you get it?

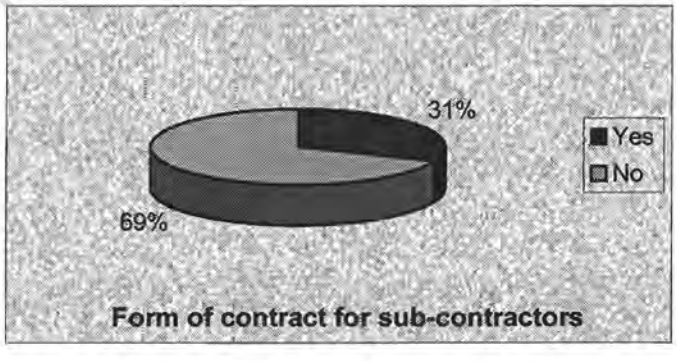


Fig. 13: Form of contract for sub-contractors

Source of contract for sub-contractors	
Source of contract	**No of respondents**
Company's own	2
From consultation	2
Industry organisations	5
Verbal	3

Table 26: Source of contract for sub-contractors

Assessment of Skills and Qualities

Question 37: What communication skills influence you in the selection of subcontractor or employees?

Desired communication skills in sub-contractors and employees	
Communication skills	**No of respondents**
Language	12
Personal and interpersonal skills	10
Work attributes	6
Managerial and leadership skills	3
Negotiating skills	2
None	13

Table 27: Desired communication skills in sub-contractors and employees

- *Guy's reputation and of the company – go on gut feeling. Must do it for love of job.* (29)
- *My experience in this trade contribute a lot to get employers.* (41)
- *I've got high interpersonal skills coupled with fairness, honesty, faithfulness.* (21)
- *Word of mouth is best, and communication skills do not influence the situation much.* (48)

Question 38: What do you think are necessary qualities for a self-employed person to be successful?

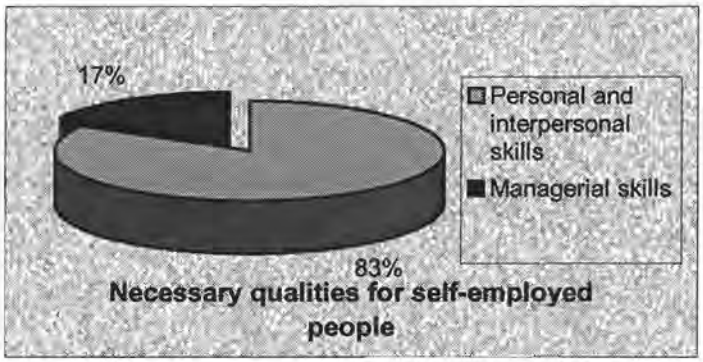


Fig. 7.5.2: Necessary qualities for self-employed people

- *I employ the one who comes and asks me for more work when he is finished, does not wait, doing nothing.* (pilot).
- *Pride in my work – come from father. Ten years with Neil Muller – strong on quality.* (38)
- *He said he had a quick eye – sometimes he depend on his feeling and the character of the person.* (43)

The skills of the individual (Q22) were compared with the qualities the employer considers important for an entrepreneur (Q39)

Desirable entrepreneurial skills according to employers with various skills and training		
Skills and training in construction	**Personal and interpersonal skills**	**Managerial skills**
None	86	14
N1, N2, N3	100	0
Trade	96	4
College	75	25
Apprentice	0	100
University	100	0

Table 28: Desirable entrepreneurial skills according to employers with various skills and training

Question 39: How would you assess your employees in terms of quality of work, knowledge of safety, reliability, and productivity?

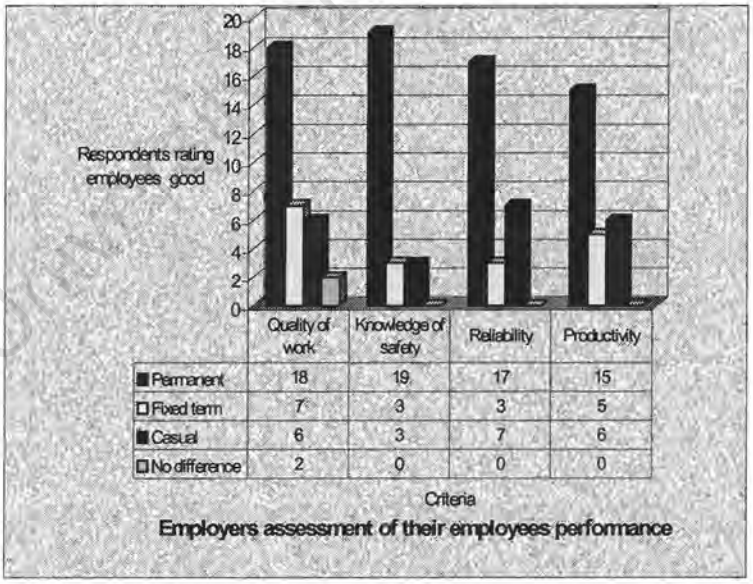


Fig. 15: Employers assessment of their employee's performance

Respondents assessed their employees on whether the status of employment affected the workers' performance in terms of: quality of work, knowledge of safety procedures, reliability and productivity

Working Conditions Provided for Employees

Question 40: How many hours is your average working day?

The average working day for employees is 8.3 hours long, with the longest reported working day of 11.5 hours and the shortest day 7 hours. 29 out of 47 (62%) respondents work their employees for eight hours. 17 (36%) work more than eight hours and 1 (2%) works less than eight hours.

Question 41: How many days do they work in a week?

The average working week for employees is 5.1 days long, with the longest reported working week being 7 days and the shortest week 2.5 days. 39 out of 47 (80%) respondents have their employees work for 5 days, 6 (13%) of them work more than 5 days and 2 (4%) less.

Question 42: What do you pay per day and per week?

Employees pay amounts		
	Per day	Per week
Average wages	68.78	148.13
Highest wages	120	220
Lowest wages	40	100
Standard Deviation	16.91	33.96

Table 29: Employees pay amounts

Pay varied according to site and also according to skill:

- *His payment is ranging from R60 for labourer up to R220 for foreman (per day). The bricklayer are earning R160. I don't outsource plumbing and electricity. One of my employers is doing the job if necessary.* (11)

Question 43: What is your assessment of construction workers' pay?

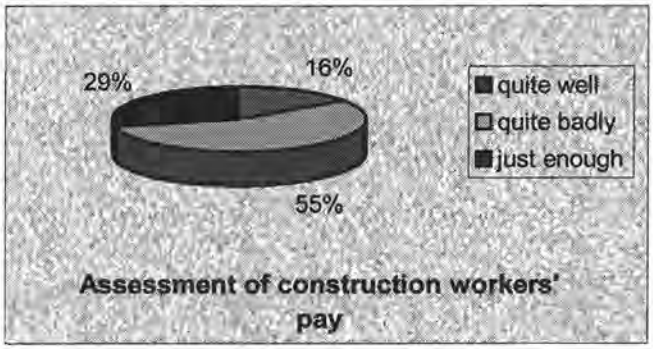


Fig. 16: Assessment of construction workers' pay

The daily wage employers paid workers (Q42) was compared with the employers' opinions of whether this was an adequate amount (Q43) to see if the answers correlated, e.g. to assess if better payers considered construction workers well paid (Obj.4)
Employers who said workers were paid just enough handed out R69.42 and R146.09 to their unskilled and skilled workers respectively. (The figure for unskilled workers is skewed by a high sum of R116.00, which if not considered reduces the average to R62.77).

Question 44: Do you make any assessment of travel arrangements for your workers?

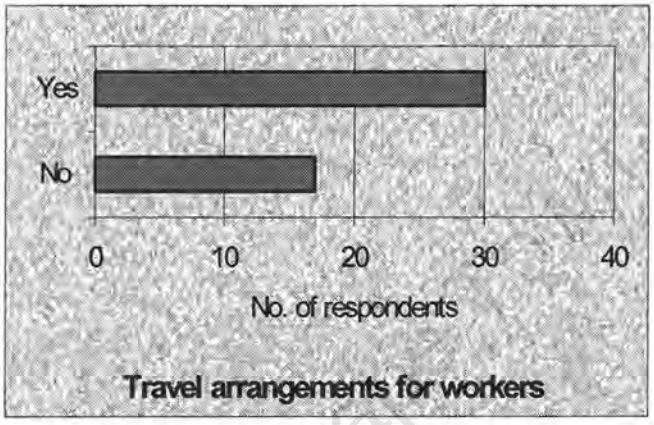


Fig. 17: Travel arrangements for workers

Question 45: Do you make any meal arrangements for your workers?

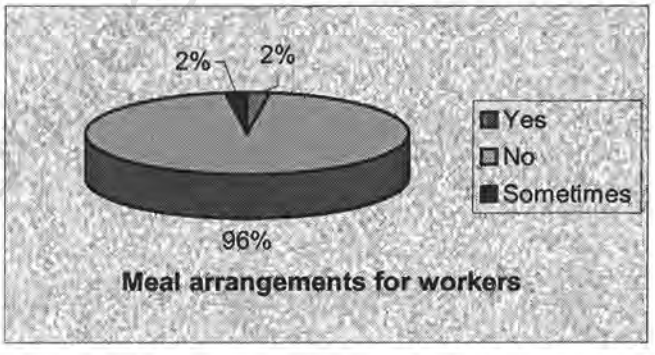


Fig. 18: Meal arrangements for workers

Question 46: Do you find incidences of illness increasing or staying the same over the last five years in the industry?

Changes in incidences of illness		
	No of respondents	Percentage
Increasing	22	49
Decreasing	12	27
Same	8	18
Can't say	3	7

Table 30: Changes in incidences of illness

- *No, it's increasing. I don't know it's AIDS/HIV.* (8)
- *About same because nothing in the industry has been done.* (9)

Question 47: Do you find incidences of accidents increasing, decreasing or staying the same over the last five years?

Changes in incidences of accidents		
	No of respondents	Percentage
Decreasing	21	51
Same	13	32
Increasing	4	10
Can't say	3	7

Table 31: Changes in incidences of accidents

Question 48: Do you have first aid kid on any of your sites?

Question 49: Do you know the location of the nearest hospital?

Question 50: are you familiar wit the health and safety regulations for work on site?

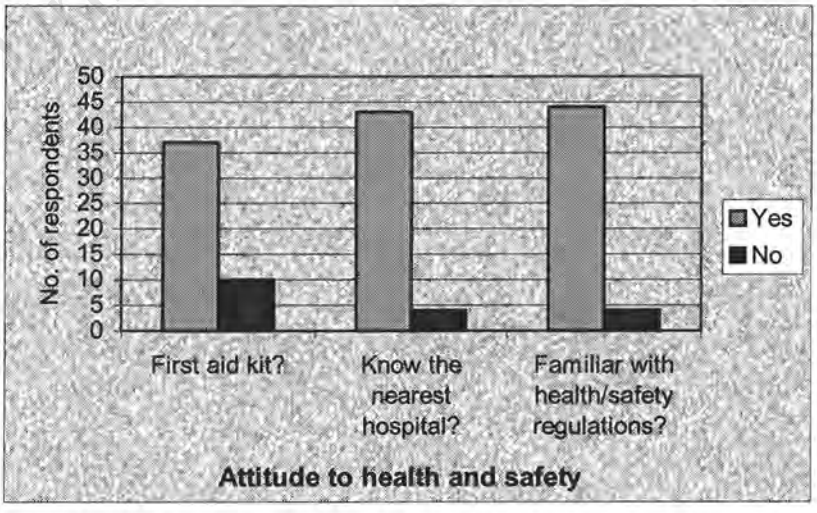


Fig. 19: Attitude to health and safety

Question 51: Who is responsible for keeping workers informed of regulations?

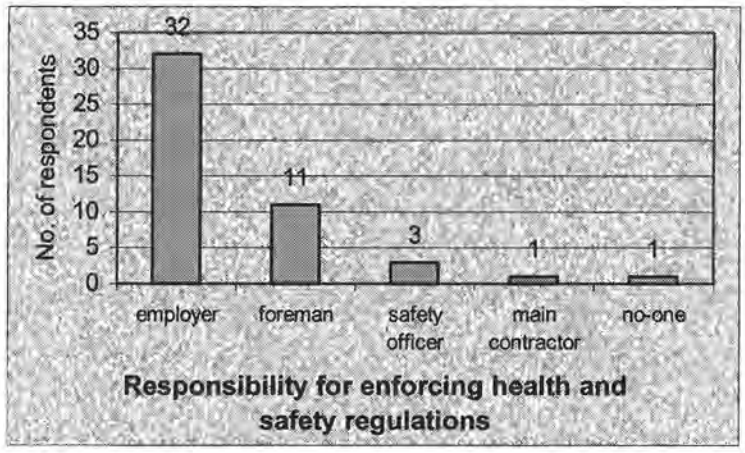


Fig.20: Responsibility for enforcing health and safety regulations

Table 32 correlates the level of education achieved by the employer (Q13) with his knowledge of the person responsible for keeping the workers informed of health and safety regulations (Q52).

Relationship between educational level and level of responsibility					
	Person responsible for keeping the workers informed				
	Employer	Foreman	Safety officer	Main contractor	Workers themselves
Grade school	46	27	13	7	7
Matriculation	67	33	0	0	0
Apprentice	67	33	0	0	0
Single trade	0	100	0	0	0
Multi-trade	62	38	0	0	0
Craftsman	75	0	25	0	0
Other	100	0	0	0	0

Table 32: Relationship between educational level and level of responsibility

Amongst all classes of employers with the exception of those with single-trade qualifications, the person seen as responsible for keeping the workers informed of health and safety regulations was the employer himself.

Question 52: In your opinion, are they (the health and safety informants) doing a successful job?

44 respondents think that the persons in charge of keeping the workers informed of health and safety regulations are doing a good job. Only 1 did not and the person in charge was himself.

Some responses were:

- *Yes, because it cuts down the number of accidents.* (33)
- *Yes, teaches them and workers from the government also come regularly.* (3)

The level of education achieved by employers (Q13) was compared with the presence of a first aid kit on site (Q49), knowledge of the location of the nearest hospital (50), familiarity with the health and safety regulations for work on site (51) and the employers' opinions of whether those responsible for keeping the workers informed of health and safety regulations were successful (53). (Obj.6)

The least knowledgeable group of employers were those who had school certificate qualifications, i.e., had gone up to standard 12. The next least knowledgeable were the group who had technical education, followed by those with some schooling.

Relationship between educational level and awareness and practice of health and safety								
	First aid kit?		Know location of the nearest hospital? (%)		Familiar with health and safety regulations? (%)		Are informers doing a successful job? (%)	
Highest educational level	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Some school	67	33	87	13	87	13	93	7
School certificate	67	33	100	0	100	0	50	50
Apprentice	67	33	100	0	100	0	100	0
Single trade	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0
Multi-trade	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0
Craftsman	75	25	50	50	100	0	100	0
Other	85	15	100	0	85	15	91	9

Table 33: Relationship between educational level and awareness and practice of health and safety

Question 53: At the end of a job do your employees or subcontractors ask for references on completion of work?

33 employers or sub-contractors ask for references and 15 do not.

Question 54: Are you contacted by new employers for references?

New employers have contacted the respondents for references, according to 28 of them. 15 respondents were not contacted for references by the employers.

Question 55: Are you registered with relevant construction industry authorities?

40 employers (83%) claim to be registered while 8 (17%) say they are not. The registering bodies are given as the Building Industry Council (16 respondents), the Workmen's Compensation Authority (3), National Home Builders Registration Council (3), the Master Builders Association (1), South Africa Revenue Service (1), Unemployment Insurance Fund (1) and the local municipality (1).

It not and why?

- time (1 respondent)
- constant work (2 respondent)
- more money (1 respondent)

Question 56: What would it take to be formally registered?

Some respondents said:

- *It takes too much complicated procedures.* (42)
- *Five minutes to register, no money needed.* (27)
- *Not too long but it depends on the process.* (2)

Improvements to Communication Skills and Conditions

Question 57: What speaking, listening and understanding abilities would you like to see improved in workers?

Employees communication abilities requiring improvement	
Ability	**No of respondents**
Languages	30
English	*14*
Afrikaans	*10*
Xhosa	*2*
None	7
General	4
Construction	4
Comprehension	2

Table 34: Employees communication abilities requiring improvement

Opinions expressed by employers:

- *Language that will put all of us in position to be able to communicate with each other and workers and employers.* (42)
- *English is a national language hence everyone should be fluent.* (3)
- *Obey and get work done well.* (33)
- *They must stop swearing.* (27)
- *I would like them to know Afrikaans properly. Sometimes they don't understand what I am saying.* (36)

Question 58: What skills and training would like to see enhanced in workers in the future?

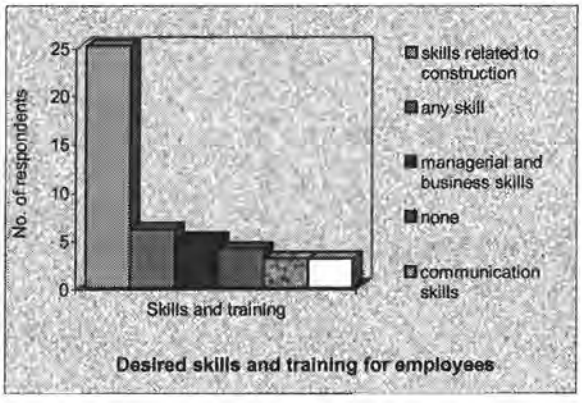


Fig. 21 Desired skills and training for employees

Respondents comments were:

- *Everything – training has been neglected in the industry. Subcontractors don't have money.* (45)
- *Skills are being dedicated, doing the particular trade, need to be trained for the trade he is doing.* (35)
- *Everything to be computerising and to have their own business building instruction.* (2)
- *Managerial skills. They will know their rights and will not be easily cheated.* (3)

Q58 (communication skills to be acquired) and with the speaking, listening and understanding abilities desired in workers and with general skills and training the employer would like to see enhanced in workers in future (Q59).

Question 59: Who should pay for training?

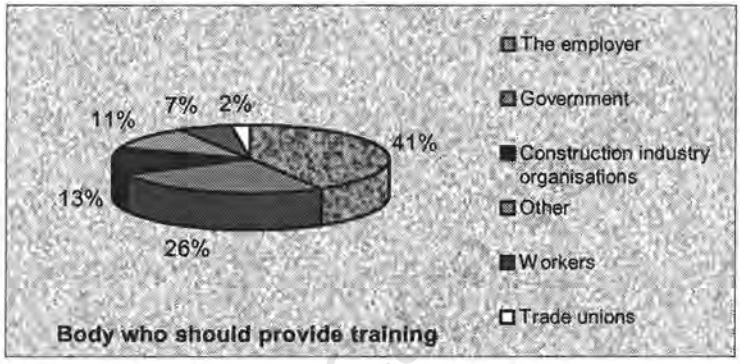


Fig. 22: Body who should provide training

- *It is a duty of the government to give people skill. The government open training centre for the people, hire good people to train, educate these guys. I told them if a people is look for a job, he is coming with it, his skill and I pay for the skill. I am not here to give training to anyone. I don't have time for that.* (11)

Person/organisation who should fund training		
	No of respondents	**Percentage**
The employer	19	41
Government	12	26
Construction industry organisations	6	13
Workers	3	7
Trade unions	1	2
Other	5	11

Table 35: Person/organisation who should fund training

Question 60: Who would be the best person to deliver this training?

Person/organisation who should deliver training	
Training deliverer	**No of respondents**
The employer	9
Any qualified person	9
Construction industry institutes	9
Government	5
Existing institutes or training centres	4
Retired trained construction people	3
Community training centres	2
Other	2

Table 36: Person/organisation who should deliver training

Question 61: What employment status would you like to employ your workers under in the future?

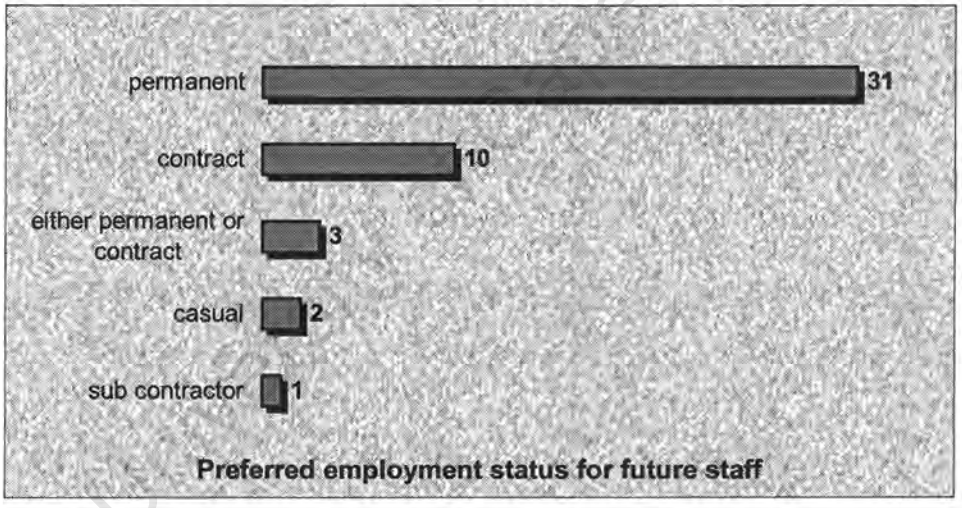


Fig. 23: Preferred employment status for future staff

Question 62: Would you prefer to employ permanent, contract or casual staff in the future?

31 respondents would prefer to employ permanent workers, 10 preferred to employ contract workers and three chose either permanent or contract. Only two opted for casual labourers and 1 indicated that they would prefer to sub-contracted work out.

Question 63: What employment conditions would you make for workers if possible?

Suggested changes to employers' conditions		
Conditions	**No. of respondents**	**Percentage**
Increase wages	17	43
Job security	9	23
No idea	5	13
Benefits	4	10
Safety conditions	3	8
Other	2	5

Table 37: Suggested changes to employers' conditions

Question 64: How would this help the workers?

Five broad ways in which employers recommendations could help workers were identified.

These were:

- By improving their living conditions (9 respondents)
- By motivating them (9 respondents)
- By improve their working conditions (7 respondents)
- By increasing their pay and improving benefits (4 respondents)
- By making them more productive (2 respondents)

Question 65: Is your preference for paid employment or self-employment in the future?

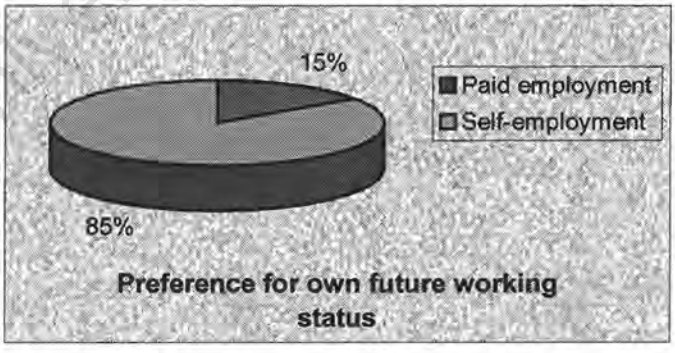


Fig. 24: Preference for own future working status

Communication Skills of Employers as Rated by the Interviewers

The interviewers were asked to rate the respondents' abilities to comprehend the question and to communicate. Communication skills were considered as being eye contact, verbal expression, ease of manner or confidence, and the ability to market himself and his skills. Overall, the interviewer tried to gain an impression of the respondents' self image. The ratings are ordinal data, but to aid comparison between respondents, an analytical shortcut has been taken and the data treated as interval data. The average score gives the interviewer's impression of the respondent's self image.

Communication skills of respondent as rated by interviewer	
Interviewer's comment	**Average score**
Did the interviewee easily understand the questions?	4.56
Did the interviewee make eye contact?	4.49
Did the interviewee express himself well?	4.51
Did the interviewee appear at ease?	4.49
Did the interviewee sell himself, i.e., would you employ him based on this interview?	4.30

Table 7.8: Communication skills of respondent as rated by interviewer

The comments below reflect the respondent's communication skills, interest and openness to questions:

Interviews in which employers appeared interested and open

- Interested – the person is highly articulate. [25/25] (48)
- Yes, but not Q34 and Q35. [21/25] (42)
- He was a nice person to talk to. Did not give me any problems. [25/25] (39)
- He was very open and willing to give me any information I asked for, for instance was prepared to show me the contract forms filled in by employees. He also showed some concern regarding the rules and regulations set by the govt, which often sideline employees, particularly with payment. His argument being that if employers pay more than the set amount they will not be selected in any project. [23/25] (3)
- Was busy but attentive, confident and hardworking. Understands the construction industry. [Would employ him] but has no intention of being employed, is self-driven. [23/25] (1)
- Good communicator (pilot)
- Very confident. Articulate, came across as intelligent – having authority. Yes [would employ him] but I would get a quote first! [25/25] (15)
- Excellent verbal/eye–contact (pilot)
- He answered very well. He had even a second questionnaire in front of him. [25/25] (35)
- He showed much interest and enthusiasm in regard to this survey as he asked so many questions. He is particularly concerned about training programmes funding to both employers and employees in construction. [23/25] (21)

Interviews in which the respondents were occupied or distracted or negative

- He was very busy, he kept on moving around and reluctant to answer other questions. Was confident about what he was doing. He was a very busy man so answered me very fast, could have left some points. However his answers correlate with the responses given by construction workers. [22/25] (17)
- He did not have much time. I had to ask him very quickly. He also said it was the pay-day for his workers. [25/25] (36)
- He was in a hurry. I had to make quick in questioning. [24/25] (34)
- He looked like someone I was disturbing, was very busy. Complained that the questionnaire was too long, he was a busy man, had a lot of work to do. At one stage he left me and came back later. [22/25] (22)
- Some of the answers seem not to be a true reflection e.g. Q55, Q56 and Q44. Very relaxed and confident. [20/25] (20)
- The employer told me he wants to answer because he saw me chatting with the workers. At the end he did not want to tell me how much his employees are getting. I persuaded him. [22/25] (16)
- Seemed very unenthused, a bit uncertain: seemed to have little thought or imagination regarding the job. Seemed defeated by his retrenchment and by having to start all over again at his age. Seemed older than his years. [15/25] (14)
- Seemed quite depressed – very. No hope for the future; eyes almost seemed to mist over at the hopelessness of the situation. [22/25] (12)
- He was very sensitive when I talked about money. [25/25] (27)
- Inconsistency between what he says and what he does e.g. says started own company in order to provide employment, yet employs no one. [14/25] (24)
- None of the workers interviewed said they signed any contract but the employer said they signed a contract. Money mentioned by the boss was not the same as the one mentioned by the workers. [25/25] (23)

A comparison of whether good communicators voluntarily became self employed more than weak ones (Obj.4) was achieved by comparing the reasons they became self-employed (Q18) with the interviewers' evaluations of their communication skills (Q67)

34 of the employers voluntarily became self-employed compared to 11 who were forced by circumstances. The average communication skills score for those voluntarily self-employed was 4.44, while that for those involuntarily self-employed was higher at 4.56.
An assessment was made in Table 7.8.1 of the correlation between the employers' communicative skills (Q67) and the degree of success they experienced with regards to work (Q8).

Relationship between employers' communication skills and type of employment

Period without project	*No. of respondents*	*Communication skills (1 = weak, 5 = good)*	*% preferring paid employment*	*% preferring self-employment*
Very rarely	32	4.50	21	79
Rarely	13	4.52	8	92
Often	2	3.50	0	100
Very often	1	4.40	0	100

Table 7.8.1: Relationship between employers' communication skills and type of employment

However, there were only 2 respondents in the often and 1 in the very often category, so the results may not be representative of a larger population.